

FROM TRADITIONAL TO MODERN LEADERSHIP IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Leadership plays a crucial role in determining the effectiveness and quality of education in secondary schools. In recent years, educational leadership has experienced a significant shift from traditional leadership approaches characterized by hierarchical authority and centralized decision-making toward modern leadership models that emphasize collaboration, innovation, and organizational transformation. This study aims to examine the evolution of leadership from traditional to transformational approaches in secondary schools, identify the factors that facilitate or hinder this transition, and explore its implications for school effectiveness, teacher performance, and educational innovation. This study uses a Systematic Literature Review design with a PRISMA approach to analyze 10 articles obtained through the Scopus, ScienceDirect and Google Scholar databases. The findings include five main themes: (1) Impact on School Effectiveness; (2) Drivers of Leadership Transformation; (3) Evolution of Leadership Models; (4) Transformational Leadership Practices; and (5) Future Leadership Trends. The study shows that effective leadership in secondary schools requires a balanced integration of traditional leadership strengths and modern transformational practices to address the challenges of contemporary education. These findings provide valuable insights for educational institutions, educators, and researchers seeking to enhance leadership effectiveness in secondary schools.

Keywords: Traditional Leadership; Modern Leadership; Secondary Schools; Systematic Literature Review.

ABSTRAK

Kepemimpinan memainkan peran penting dalam menentukan efektivitas dan kualitas pendidikan di sekolah menengah. Dalam beberapa tahun terakhir, kepemimpinan pendidikan telah mengalami pergeseran signifikan dari pendekatan kepemimpinan tradisional yang dicirikan oleh otoritas hierarkis dan pengambilan keputusan terpusat menuju model kepemimpinan modern yang menekankan

kolaborasi, inovasi, dan transformasi organisasi. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji evolusi kepemimpinan dari pendekatan tradisional ke transformasional di sekolah menengah, mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor yang memfasilitasi atau menghambat transisi ini, serta mengeksplorasi implikasinya terhadap efektivitas sekolah, kinerja guru, dan inovasi pendidikan. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain *Systematic Literature Review* dengan pendekatan PRISMA untuk menganalisis 10 artikel yang diperoleh melalui basis data Scopus, ScienceDirect, dan Google Scholar. Temuan penelitian ini mencakup lima tema utama: (1) Dampak terhadap Efektivitas Sekolah; (2) Faktor Pendorong Transformasi Kepemimpinan; (3) Evolusi Model Kepemimpinan; (4) Praktik Kepemimpinan Transformasional; dan (5) Tren Kepemimpinan Masa Depan. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan yang efektif di sekolah menengah memerlukan integrasi yang seimbang antara kekuatan kepemimpinan tradisional dan praktik transformasional modern untuk menjawab tantangan pendidikan kontemporer. Temuan ini memberikan wawasan berharga bagi lembaga pendidikan, pendidik, dan peneliti yang ingin meningkatkan efektivitas kepemimpinan di sekolah menengah.

Kata Kunci: Kepemimpinan Tradisional; Kepemimpinan Modern; Sekolah Menengah; *Systematic Literature Review*.

A. Introduction

Leadership is really important for making schools function well, especially in secondary schools. School leaders influence how teachers teach, the overall vibe of the place, and whether students succeed or not. They also drive innovation and keep everything moving smoothly. For a while, school administrators used a strict, top-down approach – lots of rules, control from the top, and an emphasis on order and productivity. This worked for the educational needs back then, but times have changed. Societies, technology, and teaching methods have all evolved, making those older styles look simplistic when dealing

with today's complex school problems (Abidin et al., 2025; Okunola & Naicker, 2025).

In the twenty-first century, teachers have to get more creative with technology. Now, school leaders pay extra attention to digital stuff and teamwork. They are going for methods that spark change, give power to teachers, and help everyone learn together. So, transformational leadership is becoming pretty important because it drives change, motivates teachers, and improves student results. Studies show that in tough times, schools led transformationally have more effective teaching, committed staff, and a really positive environment

(Alzoraiki et al., 2024; Khorsandi et al., 2024). Digitalization is ramping up changes in educational leadership too. Nowadays, school leaders need to blend tech into classrooms, steer digital shifts, and inspire creative atmospheres. Research on digital leadership shows that, to be effective, leaders must do more than just manage they have got to use tech to boost long-term performance and help their organization grow (Khaw et al., 2022). Along the same lines, cool new leadership moves can amp up school quality and back big education reforms (Ridwanulloh et al., 2022; Sutopo, 2024). So, we see educational leadership moving beyond old admin roles and leaning more into transformative, innovation-led methods.

But even with lots of study on this topic, the current research still feels pretty disjointed. For one thing, many papers look at leadership styles as separate ideas instead of pieces of a bigger, changing picture. Before, you'd find studies on transformational leadership, digital leadership, instruction leading, or spread-out leadership, they would not join the dots on how these practices evolve from basic styles to advanced strategies in actual high schools (Gümüş et al., 2026). Thus, we don't fully grasp the path that leadership takes as it morphs within school walls.

Second, most studies look at the outcomes of transformational leadership like teacher performance,

school culture, innovation, and organizational effectiveness (Alzoraiki et al., 2024; Khorsandi et al., 2024). However, not much focus is given to the actual processes, drivers, and contextual factors that help move from old leadership styles to these new practices. Knowing about these shifts is really important since changes in leadership typically happen in complex settings, which include influences from culture, technology, policies, and organization structure.

Third, even though some scholars suggest integrating both traditional and modern leadership methods in education (Abidin et al., 2025), there is not much concrete or theoretical evidence about how these different leadership types relate to each other. Often, traditional and transformational leadership are seen as competing frameworks instead of things that could work together and develop over time. By looking at these paradigms as separate, we limit our understanding of how schools manage to strike a balance between stability, accountability, innovation, and adaptability when going through changes.

Another limitation is the way leadership research is done. Gümüş et al. (2026) found big differences in how educational leadership studies are conducted across various places and approaches. Their review covered many leadership models but did not look into transformations specifically in secondary schools.

Other studies examined digital leadership and organizational performance (Khaw et al., 2022). Still, there's no comprehensive analysis mapping the shift from traditional to transformational leadership in secondary education. Because of this, information is spread out over different frameworks, systems, and regions. This makes it hard to piece together a clear picture of what works in transforming school leadership.

Considering the existing constraints, we really need a solid systematic literature review to put together what we know about how leadership practices in secondary schools have changed. This type of review would help us figure out which leadership models are used the most, look at why leadership styles are changing, see what context affects these changes, and understand how these shifts impact how well schools do.

Our current study fills some important gaps by looking at how leadership in secondary schools has transformed. Instead of focusing just on single leadership styles like earlier reviews did, this study thinks of leadership as something that moves between different forms from more traditional methods to more transformative ones. We systematically check out how these models have shifted over time, spot the main things making this shift happen, and see how these changes affect stuff like school success, teacher performance, the overall

school culture, and how innovative the place is.

The novelty of this study lies in three significant contributions. First, it blends traditional and transformational leadership into one analysis, which expands how we look at educational leadership. Second, it focuses on evidence from secondary schools, an area that hasn't gotten as much focus in other reviews. Lastly, it spots new trends about digitalization, innovation, and change in organizations where all big drivers for school leadership today. Overall, this review gives us a thorough grasp of leadership evolution and helpful tips for researchers, policymakers, and educators aiming to boost leadership in secondary schools.

Therefore, this systematic literature review seeks to answer the following research questions: (1) How has leadership evolved from traditional to transformational approaches in secondary schools?; (2) What factors facilitate or hinder this transition?; and (3) What implications does this leadership transformation have for school effectiveness, teacher performance, and educational innovation? Addressing these questions is expected to contribute to the advancement of educational leadership theory and provide practical guidance for policymakers, school leaders, and educational stakeholders seeking to strengthen leadership capacity in secondary education.

This review adds to the educational leadership literature by suggesting a framework that shows how leadership in secondary schools has evolved from traditional to transformational. Unlike earlier reviews which look at different leadership models in isolation, this study combines recent evidence. It identifies the mechanisms, context, and outcomes linked to leadership changes in the digital age and amid organizational shifts.

B. Method

Research Design

This research used a systematic literature review (SLR) to look at how secondary schools have moved from traditional to transformational leadership. They followed PRISMA guidelines by Page et al. (2021) for their review to keep things thorough and clear.

The goal was to track how leadership methods changed over time in secondary education, find what factors affected those changes, check the results reported, and point out any new research trends. By putting together findings from different settings and methods, the study aimed to get a full grasp of modern leadership transformations in secondary schools.

Search Strategy

The literature search was conducted systematically to identify

relevant studies examining the transition from traditional leadership to transformational leadership in secondary school settings. Following the PRISMA approach, a comprehensive search strategy was developed using a combination of keywords, Boolean operators (AND, OR), phrase searching, and truncation techniques. The search was performed across three major academic databases: Scopus, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar. These databases were selected because they provide extensive coverage of peer-reviewed research in educational leadership, school management, and organizational studies.

The search process was carried out between January and February 2026, focusing on publications published from 2022 to 2026 to capture recent developments in educational leadership. Keywords were derived from the study objectives and from recurring concepts identified in the educational leadership literature. The primary search terms included *traditional leadership*, *conventional leadership*, *transformational leadership*, *school leadership*, *secondary schools*, *high schools*, *junior high schools*. These keywords were combined using Boolean operators to maximize search sensitivity and specificity.

The search was limited to peer-reviewed journal articles published in English. Furthermore, backward and forward citation

tracking was conducted on the selected articles to identify additional relevant studies that might not have been retrieved through the database searches. This multi-stage search strategy ensured a comprehensive and systematic identification of the literature, thereby enhancing the reliability, transparency, and reproducibility of the review process.

Table 1. Keywords for Article Selection

No	Operator	Keywords	Number of Articles
1	AND & OR	"traditional leadership" AND "modern leadership" OR "transformational leadership" AND "secondary schools"	Scopus: 27 Science Direct: 39 Google Scholar: 117
2	AND & OR	"conventional leadership" AND "school leadership" AND "senior high schools" OR "junior high schools"	

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

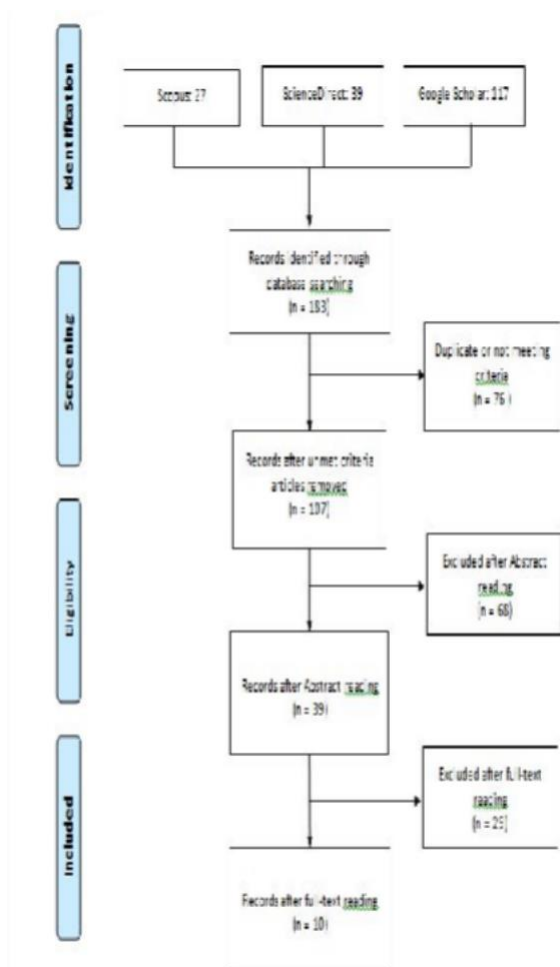
Criteria for the selection of articles have been defined to make sure that the review includes only the most relevant research articles. These criteria include: (1) articles published from 2022 to 2026; (2) studies addressing traditional leadership and transformational leadership; (3) studies conducted in the setting of secondary schools contexts, including middle schools, junior secondary schools, high schools, or studies whose findings were directly applicable to secondary education; (4) peer-reviewed articles available in Scopus-indexed journals or SINTA Journals; and (5) articles published in English language. Research articles that were not included in the current review include non-peer-reviewed articles, studies not related to traditional leadership and transformational leadership, studies not employing higher education or corporate organizations without implications for secondary schools, duplicate articles, and inaccessible articles.

Study Selection Process

In the identification phase, a total of 183 documents were retrieved from the database sources Scopus (27 papers), ScienceDirect (39 papers), and Google Scholar (117 papers). In the process of screening, after discarding duplicates and other unrelated papers, 107 papers were selected. In the screening phase, a title and abstract-based analysis was

conducted on all the selected papers, following the criteria established by this paper. On the basis of the inclusion and exclusion criteria, 68 papers were discarded. After the screening phase, 39 papers were selected for full-text reading. Out of these, 29 papers were discarded on the basis of the full-text review, leaving behind 10 papers for analysis. The PRISMA flow diagram of the study selection process is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. PRISMA Flowchart of Selection Study Process



Based on the study selection process, a total of 10 articles were included in the final review. The selected studies consisted of nationally accredited journals, including SINTA journals. These studies were further categorized based on their research design, publication source, and main focus related to traditional leadership and transformational leadership in secondary schools. The distribution of reviewed articles is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Final Sorted Articles

No	Name of Journal Author/ Year	Title	Research Method	Indexed
1	Journal of Management Development, Tze Yin Khaw, Ai Ping Teoh and Siti Nabiha Abdul Khalid (2022)	The impact of digital leadership on sustainable performance: a systematic literature review	SLR	Scopus Q1
2	Education Management Administration &	Review of leadership models in education:	Systematic Review	Scopus Q1

3	Leadership Sedat Gümüş, Mehmet Şükrü Bellibaş, Murat Esen, and Emine Gümüş (2026)	Exploring geographical, methodological, and conceptual variations	Comparative Study	Scopus Q1	Opinion Hosna khorsandi, Mahsa Mohsenib eigzadeh, Arash Tashakkori, Behzad Kazemi, Parisa Khorashadi Moghaddam, Zahra Ahmadirad	in Education: The Role of Transformational Leadership and Knowledge Sharing Strategies	Review		
	European Journal of STEM Education, John Olayemi Okunlola, Suraiya Rathankumar Naicker (2025)	Deconstructing Leadership in The Post-Industrial Era: A Comparative Study of Traditional Leadership Styles and Digital Leadership Practices in High Schools			6	The Knowledge, Muhammad Waseem, Tabassum Faiz Solehria, Asim Bashir (2026)			Exploring Factors Affecting Headteachers in Becoming Transformational Leaders at the Private Secondary School Level in Korangi East Karachi: A Qualitative Study
4	Frontiers in Education, Mohammed Alzoraiki, Abd Rahman Ahmad, Ali Ateeq, Marwan Milhem (2024)	The role of transformational leadership in enhancing school culture and teaching performance in Yemeni public schools	Quantitative Study	Scopus Q1	7	Scaffolding: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam dan Multikulturalisme, Langgeng Sutopo (2024)	Innovative Leadership of School Principals in Promoting Digital Transformation in the Learning Process	Qualitative Study	Sinta 2
	5	Current			Driving Innovation	Conceptual	Scopus		

8	Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia, Yadi Suryadi, Diding Nurdin, Deisye Supit, Rita Hayati (2025)	Leadership Effectiveness in Educational Management in Secondary Schools: A Review of Teacher Perspectives in Indonesia	Literature Review	Sinta 2		Achievement in Primary and Secondary Schools		
9	Journal of Islamic Education, Management, Zainal Abidin, Faishol Ahmad, Ahmad Qusairi, Fadhel Mubarak (2025)	Integrating Traditional and Modern Leadership in Education: Strategies to Increase Effectiveness	Library Research	Sinta 4				
10	PPSDP International Journal of Education, Dian Andriadi, Urip Sulistiyo (2024)	The Influence of Transformational and Instructional Leadership Styles of School 's Principals on Teacher's Performance, Motivation, Job Satisfaction and Student	Literature Review	Sinta 5				

Figure 2. Distribution of Leadership Themes in Selected Articles

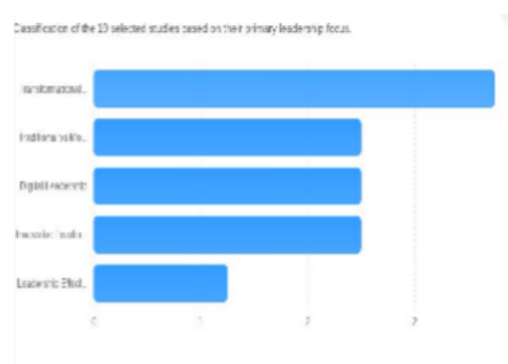


Figure 2 shows the leadership themes from ten chosen studies in this review. The results point to transformational leadership being the most talked about, mentioned in three papers. This highlights that recent research sees transformational leadership as really effective for tackling issues in secondary schools. These schools face quick changes and big shifts, so this style of leadership can help improve teacher performance, create a good school atmosphere, and make the organization work better.

Right behind it were studies on traditional versus modern leadership, digital leadership, and innovative leadership, all mentioned in two studies each. These look into how

leadership adjusts due to educational and societal shifts. They show that although traditional leadership keeps order and responsibility, which is still very important, there's more need for modern methods to aid flexibility and team effort in today's schools.

The rise of digital leadership in research shows how tech changes have affected education management. As digital tools get more integrated in classrooms, school leaders aren't just doing admin tasks anymore. They're also pushing for tech innovation and handling big changes. Studies on innovative leadership back this up, showing how leaders need to boost creativity and help schools keep improving.

On the other hand, there was only one study looking at how effective leadership is actually seen from teachers' viewpoints. This means while lots of research is out there on different leadership models, not many check in with teachers about what really works for them. So, this might be something we should explore more in future studies.

The overall theme shows a clear move away from old leadership styles toward newer, tech-savvy methods in the literature. Results show that secondary school leadership is shifting from traditional hierarchies to more transformative approaches emphasizing empowerment and collaboration. This highlights the growing need to address modern educational challenges innovatively. The current

systematic literature review fits right into this by aiming to gather evidence on how leadership in secondary schools has progressed from conventional practices to these new transformational methods.

Data Analysis

The selected articles were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach to identify patterns, similarities, and differences related to leadership transformation in secondary schools. Relevant data, including study objectives, methodologies, leadership models, and key findings, were extracted and organized systematically. The findings were then coded and grouped into major themes based on the research questions. The findings include five main themes: Five main themes emerged from the analysis: (1) Impact on School Effectiveness; (2) Drivers of Leadership Transformation; (3) Evolution of Leadership Models; (4) Transformational Leadership Practices; and (5) Future Leadership Trends. In addition, descriptive analysis was conducted to summarize the distribution of studies by publication year, research focus, and methodological approach. This process enabled a comprehensive synthesis of the existing literature on leadership transformation in secondary schools.

C. Findings and Discussion

The analysis reveals that just two studies, or 20%, looked at traditional

leadership in connection with modern methods. On the other hand, eighty percent consisted of eight studies focusing on newer leadership styles like transformational, digital, innovative, and adaptive leadership. This shows a definite move in research towards these contemporary models which stress innovation, collaboration, and digital transformation. With only a few looks at conventional leadership, it is clear that current thinking leans toward how school leaders deal with today's educational challenges. Therefore, there is a strong push in the literature for more dynamic and participatory leadership forms in secondary schools. This finding backs up the idea that educational leadership is changing from old-fashioned top-down management to something much more adaptable and engaged.

Table 3. Emerging Themes from Studies on Traditional to Transformational Leadership

The me	Frequ ency	Sub- them es	Key Findin gs	Support ing Studies
Evol ution of Lea ders hip Mod els	5	Tran sition from traditi onal to trans form ation al leade rship; Integ ratio n of traditi onal	Leader ship in secon dary school s is evolvin g from hierarc hical and authori ty-based leader ship toward	Abidin et al. (202 5); Okunlol a & Naicker (2025); Gümüş et al. (202 6); Wasee m et al. (202 6); Suryadi

The me	Frequ ency	Sub- them es	Key Findin gs	Support ing Studies
		and mod ern leade rship	collabo rative, transfo rmatio nal, and adapti ve approa ches. Traditi onal leader ship remain s import ant for mainta ining stabilit y, while transfo rmatio nal leader ship suppor ts innova tion and organi zation al chang e.	et al. (202 5)
Driv ers of Lea ders hip Tran sform ati on	6	Digit al trans form ation; Innov ation; Kno wled ge shari ng; Profe ssion al devel opm	Techn ologica l advan cemen t, innova tion deman ds, knowle dge sharin g, and educat ional reform	Khaw et al. (202 2); Khorsan di et al. (202 4); Sutopo (2024); Ridwan ulloh et al. (202 2); Abidin et al. (202 5);

The me	Frequ ency	Sub- them es	Key Findin gs	Support ing Studies	The me	Frequ ency	Sub- them es	Key Findin gs	Support ing Studies
		ent; Educ ation al refor ms	s are major drivers of leader ship transfo rmatio n. These factors encour age school leader s to adopt more adapti ve and collabo rative leader ship practic es.	Okunlol a & Naicker (2025)	Imp act on Sch ool Effe ctive ness	7	Teac her perfo rman ce; Scho ol cultur e; Innov ation; Orga nizati onal effect ivene ss	Transf ormati onal leader ship positiv ely influen ces teache r perfor mance , school culture , organi zation al commi tment, innova tion, and overall school effectiv eness.	Alzoraiki et al. (202 4); Suryadi et al. (202 5); Khaw et al. (202 2); Khorsan di et al. (202 4); Wasee m et al. (202 6); Sutopo (2024); Ridwan ulloh et al. (202 2)
Tran sfor mation al Lea ders hip Prac tices	4	Visio nary leade rship; Teac her emp ower ment ; Colla borat ion; Stak ehold er enga gement	Transf ormati onal leader s inspire teache rs, encour age partici pation in decisio n-makin g, and build collabo rative school culture s that suppor t contin uous improv ement.	Alzoraiki et al. (202 4); Wasee m et al. (202 6); Khorsan di et al. (202 4); Suryadi et al. (202 5)	Eme rgin g Futu re Lea ders hip Tren ds	4	Digit al leade rship; Innov ative leade rship; Sust ainab le leade rship	Future school leader ship is increa singly charac terized by digital compe tencies , innova tion orienta tion, and sustain able leader ship practic es that respon d to	Khaw et al. (202 2); Sutopo (2024); Okunlol a & Naicker (2025); Gümüş et al. (202 6)

The me	Frequ ency	Sub- them es	Key Findin gs	Support ing Studies
			conte mporar y educat ional challen ges.	

Impact on School Effectiveness

The study shows that transformational leadership boosts school effectiveness in secondary education. Unlike the traditional method, which is mainly about controlling administration and maintaining stability, transformational leadership is all about teamwork, inspiration, and constant growth. Teachers and staff thrive under leaders who inspire them rather than just manage them.

Several studies show that leaders using transformational methods create better learning atmospheres, boost school spirit, and generally improve performance. These leaders make the school environment more trusting, united, and engaging, which helps make teaching more effective (Alzoraiki et al., 2024). Transformational leaders also excel at boosting teacher performance. They offer lots of support, encourage input, and help teachers feel like the school belongs to them. When teachers get more pumped up and dedicated, the school is better at meeting its goals and handling new issues (Waseem et al., 2026). Plus, Suryadi et al. (2025)

found that good leadership leads to positive teacher feelings, higher school performance, and better results for students.

The connection between transformational leadership and innovation is another key finding. When school leaders promote knowledge sharing and creative collaborations, they foster an atmosphere of ongoing learning and innovation. This helps schools handle educational reforms and tech updates better (Khorsandi et al., 2024). Also, leadership that's innovation- and digitally-focused supports long-term school growth and effectiveness. They do this by pushing digital change and making the institution more adaptable (Khaw et al., 2022; Sutopo, 2024).

To sum up, the studies highlight how transformational leadership boosts school effectiveness. It improves teacher performance, builds a stronger school culture, strengthens team commitment, and sparks innovation. Basically, this kind of leadership isn't just about changing how you manage things. It's a strategy for helping secondary schools deal better with today's education needs (Alzoraiki et al., 2024; Suryadi et al., 2025).

Drivers of Leadership Transformation

The findings show that leadership in secondary schools changes due to tech, organizational, and educational stuff. The biggest

driving force is the digital shift, altering management styles and teaching methods. With more schools going digital, principals need new skills and must go from just admin to being super flexible and creative. Studies, like those done by Khaw et al. (2022) and Sutopo (2024), back this up, showing that these new leadership types boost performance and help schools grow.

Schools also really need to get better at being innovative and spreading knowledge. For this to happen, leaders have to inspire teamwork and let teachers pitch in on what the school does next. According to Khorsandi et al. (2024), sharing info within the school and having this transformational leadership boosts innovation and makes things run smoother. Then, Ridwanulloh et al. (2022) point out that leading with fresh ideas pumps up the school's quality and helps it grow too.

The findings show that organizational culture and professional development help with transforming leadership. When schools foster trust and allow for collaborative decision-making, they do better with adopting successful transformational leadership practices. Leaders need those pro learning chances to gain skills for handling change and dealing with new education issues.

Abidin et al. (2025) argue that blending old strengths with fresh approaches can boost leader effectiveness by balancing stability

with innovation. But the literature highlights some barriers too. Hurdles like old-fashioned hierarchies, change resistance, and strict practices can slow down transformational leadership implementation. Okunlola and Naicker (2025) noted conventional models make adapting to the demands today is harder. So, to make leadership transformation work, you need more than skilled individuals. Supportive environments that spur innovation and keep learning must be there too.

As a result, the findings indicate that leadership transformation in secondary schools is largely driven by digitalization, innovation demands, knowledge sharing, organizational culture, and professional development. At the same time, resistance to change and deeply rooted traditional leadership structures remain significant challenges that schools must overcome to achieve effective transformational leadership (Khaw et al., 2022; Khorsandi et al., 2024; Abidin et al., 2025; Okunlola & Naicker, 2025).

Evolution of Leadership Models

The findings show that school leadership in secondary settings has really evolved from old-fashioned methods to more modern, transformative ones. Traditionally, leadership meant rigid hierarchies, all decisions coming from the top, and sticking strictly to rules for efficiency's sake. School heads mainly handled duties like keeping everything running

smoothly and following through on school policies. Although this kept things stable and accountable, it didn't always allow teachers to be involved in decisions or offer much room for teamwork (Abidin et al., 2025; Okunlola & Naicker, 2025).

Now, due to the growing complexity of teaching environments, there's been a shift toward transformational leadership. Instead of just giving orders, leaders now focus on sharing a vision, working together, and boosting teacher power and big changes in the system. According to Gümüş et al. (2026), today's educational leaders are moving towards participatory and flexible styles to tackle various issues. Also, Waseem et al. (2026) highlighted how good school heads encourage trust, back staff development, and promote new ideas in their schools.

The reviewed studies show that the move from traditional to transformational leadership isn't about completely replacing one style with the other. Many schools actually blend both approaches to keep things stable while still encouraging change. According to Abidin et al. (2025), this combo can make leadership way more effective because it keeps things organized but also flexible and team-focused. This really highlights the growing understanding that leading successfully means being good at managing and inspiring change too.

For the most part, the results point to a big shift in how educational leadership works. There is a move away from the old power-central management towards more teamwork, vision-setting, and transformative methods. This change fits the evolving needs of secondary education, where leaders aren't just expected to run the place, but also to be key players in making it a learning hub, innovating, and developing the whole organization (Gümüş et al., 2026; Waseem et al., 2026; Suryadi et al., 2025). In today's world, having leaders who can adapt on the fly and constantly improve their schools is crucial.

Transformational Leadership Practices

According to the findings, transformational leadership plays a big role in making school leaders more effective in secondary schools. Unlike old-school leadership that leans on authority and control, transformational leadership is about inspiring, collaborating, and empowering. When school heads use these methods, they get teachers involved in making decisions, sharing duties, and contributing to the school's progress. This leads to more ownership and dedication from teachers, making for a much more positive and productive environment (Alzoraiki et al., 2024).

One of the main things about transformational leadership is setting a clear vision for improvement and communicating it well. Leaders using

this style inspire teachers by laying out goals, building trust, and encouraging growth. Waseem et al. (2026) said headteachers who do this build stronger relationships with their staff and develop a culture where everyone keeps learning. Then, Khorsandi et al. (2024) stressed that these leaders really push knowledge sharing and teamwork, which drives innovation and helps the whole organization grow.

Another key practice highlighted in the literature is teacher empowerment. Transformative leaders motivate teachers to come up with new ideas, try fresh teaching strategies, and participate in pro learning activities. When these leaders acknowledge the hard work of teachers and back their growth, it boosts their motivation and loyalty to the organization. Not only do teachers benefit personally, but the whole school gets more effective because of it too (Alzoraiki et al., 2024; Suryadi et al., 2025).

Moreover, the research underscores the need for involving everyone through collaborative leadership. These leaders connect with teachers, students, parents, and others to build a supportive learning atmosphere. This teamwork improves communication, builds trust, and helps put plans for school enhancement into action smoothly. Because of all this, schools are way better prepared to tackle education challenges and meet their

development aims (Khorsandi et al., 2024; Waseem et al., 2026).

Overall, these insights show that vision building, giving teachers power, fostering cooperation, and engaging stakeholders really drive school progress and make the organization work better. With these approaches, leaders spark innovation, deepen commitment among professionals, and craft positive school climates that boost success over the long haul (Alzoraiki et al., 2024; Khorsandi et al.,

Future Leadership Trends

The research shows that digitalization, innovation, and adaptability are shaping the way we look at school leadership in the future. While traditional methods focusing on oversight and control are still around, they're being joined by newer models that highlight tech skills, teamwork, and ongoing development.

As schools deal with quick changes in both education and technology, leaders need to handle digital shifts without forgetting good management. So, digital leadership is becoming more and more crucial for running schools nowadays (Khaw et al., 2022; Sutopo, 2024).

Another key point is that leaders will have to be big supporters of innovation too. Instead of just keeping things going, they must create an environment where creativity thrives, new ideas get

tested, and the whole organization learns from its experiences. According to Ridwanulloh et al. (2022), when leaders push for constant improvement and new ways of doing things, it really boosts school quality. In the same vein, Khorsandi et al. (2024) note that being a great leader today means making sure everyone shares knowledge and feels inspired to innovate.

The literature suggests that future leadership needs a blend of old-school values and modern, transformational techniques. While innovation and tech skills get more crucial every day, maintaining accountability, stability, and good decision-making is key too. According to Abidin et al. (2025), mixing these types of leadership can really boost effectiveness, by combining strict organizational rules with being adaptable and open to new ideas. Plus, Okunlola and Naicker (2025) say leaders today have to embrace digital stuff and work together more, but without losing those fundamental leadership traits that keep everything tied up neatly.

Another big thing for future leadership is getting everyone on board. Leaders have to involve teachers, kids, parents, and community members when solving tough issues. Gümüş et al. (2026) point out that recent models call for shared responsibility and teamwork among staff, promoting an overall collaborative approach in schools.

The study shows that upcoming secondary school leaders need to be digitally savvy, innovative, and adaptable. They must also be great at teamwork. Successful leaders will blend tech skills with old-school stability while encouraging their staff to keep learning. This approach aligns with the changing needs of modern education, aiming for lasting progress in schools, according to Khaw et al., 2022, Abidin et al., 2025, and Gümüş et al., 2026.

D. Conclusion

This review looked at how leadership in secondary schools shifted from traditional to transformational methods, analyzing ten studies from 2022 to 2026. It shows a move away from old-school hierarchical management towards more collaborative and visionary approaches. Leaders now need to do more than just run schools; they've got to lead changes and push for constant improvements too.

Several things help make this shift happen. Think about tech upgrades, more openness to sharing ideas, and extra training opportunities. However, there are downsides as well. Some staff resist change, and rigid systems can get in the way. Also, not everyone might have the skills needed for this type of leadership.

Despite these challenges, transformational leadership pays off.

It boosts teacher performance and creates a stronger school community. Plus, it increases everyone's buy-in and sparks fresh thinking in education. So overall, it looks like these new methods really benefit the schools and kids they serve.

The review shows that good leadership in secondary schools needs a mix of traditional strengths like keeping things organized and being accountable, along with traits that promote flexibility, teamwork, and creativity. This blend is key to handling modern educational challenges and opportunities.

Given these insights, schools should enhance their leadership programs to equip leaders with transformational skills. That means offering ongoing training in strategic planning, tech proficiency, managing change, and group decision-making. Plus, schools ought to cultivate a culture that supports innovation and involves all stakeholders. These actions will help leaders tackle current issues more effectively and boost school performance overall.

Teachers need to dive into collaborative leadership and keep up with professional development. Not only should they join in making school decisions and growing through professional learning communities, but they should also push for innovations. This helps in boosting instruction, school morale, and long-term improvement.

There's plenty left to look at for researchers too. They ought to keep digging into how leadership changes vary by context, whether that's district, grade level, or culture. Plus, using both long-term studies and a mix of research methods would help trace these shifts over time. Another key thing is to study new challenges like AI, digital learning spaces, teacher wellness, and how kids do academically. Probing deeper into these could show us how transformational leadership keeps pushing for great education in today's tech-savvy world.

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