

# Transformational Leadership and Digital Transformation: Driving Positive Employee Behaviour in the Digital Era

Poppy Dwi Oktaviana<sup>1</sup>✉ and Ismi Darmastuti<sup>1</sup>

Universitas Diponegoro, Semarang, Indonesia

## ABSTRACT

This systematic literature review synthesizes evidence from studies published between 2011 and 2025, focusing on the interaction between Transformational Leadership (TL), Digital Transformation (DT), and employee behaviour. The review reveals that TL plays a crucial role in guiding organizations through the complex DT process by fostering vision, trust, and adaptability. Transformational leaders promote psychological empowerment, innovation, and proactive employee behaviour, thereby reducing resistance to technological change. Empirical findings indicate that TL enhances digital agility and engagement by aligning individual motivation with organizational digital goals. In addition, DT acts as both a driver and a mediator, turning leadership effectiveness into higher employee engagement, creativity, and sustained job performance. Studies in Asia, Europe, and the Middle East show that TL fosters a digital culture characterized by continuous learning, collaboration, and resilience amid technological turbulence. This review concludes that transformational leadership and digital transformation are mutually reinforcing forces. Leadership enables the adoption of human-cantered technology, while digital transformation enhances leadership influence through data-driven empowerment and participatory work design.

**Keywords:** *Digital Transformation, Employee Behaviour, Employee Engagement, Transformational Leadership.*

## CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Poppy Dwi Oktaviana

Universitas Diponegoro, Semarang, Indonesia

**contact:** [poppydwioktaviana@students.undip.ac.id](mailto:poppydwioktaviana@students.undip.ac.id)

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## 1. | INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of Digital Transformation (DT) has fundamentally changed how organizations operate, communicate, and create value. Beyond the adoption of digital technologies, DT involves changes in organizational processes, culture, capabilities, and employee behaviour. In this context, transformational leadership (TL) has become increasingly important because organizations require leaders who can guide employees through continuous technological and organizational change. Transformational leaders can provide direction, encourage innovation, and foster employee engagement, thereby supporting organizations in responding to the demands of the digital era (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Mihardjo et al., 2020).

Transformational leadership is particularly relevant to DT because successful transformation depends not only on technological capabilities but also on employees' willingness and ability to adapt. TL emphasizes inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and idealized influence, which can encourage employees to develop new skills, engage in innovation, and respond proactively to organizational changes (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Empirical studies have further demonstrated that transformational leadership is associated with digital innovation, employee adaptability, and organizational agility (Nguyen et al., 2021; Shafi et al., 2022; Khan et al., 2023). Mihardjo et al. (2020) also found that digital leadership contributes to innovation culture and digital capability, which subsequently support organizational performance.

However, digital transformation can also create challenges at the human and organizational levels. Changes in work processes and technological requirements may increase employees' uncertainty and resistance to change, making employee readiness an important component of transformation success. Susanti et al. (2023) demonstrated that digital leadership positively influences employee readiness for digital transformation. Similarly, Alsufyani et al. (2022) found that transformational leadership is associated with employee motivation, engagement, emotional intelligence, and performance. These findings suggest that leadership can help organizations address the human challenges of digital transformation by strengthening employee engagement, motivation, and positive behavioural responses.

Despite growing research on leadership and digital transformation, the existing literature remains fragmented in explaining the relationship between transformational leadership, digital transformation, and employee behaviour. Some studies emphasize leadership and digital innovation, while others focus on employee engagement, agility, or organizational performance (Mihardjo et al., 2020; Shafi et al., 2022; Khan et al., 2023). In addition, digital transformation can influence organizational value creation and requires leaders to align technological initiatives with organizational objectives and stakeholder needs (Massa et al., 2023). Therefore, an integrated synthesis is needed to clarify how transformational leadership contributes to positive employee behaviour and supports digital transformation.

Accordingly, this study conducts a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) of studies published between 2011 and 2025 to synthesize evidence concerning the interaction between transformational leadership, digital transformation, and employee behaviour. The review focuses particularly on employee adaptability, engagement, innovation, and other positive behavioural outcomes associated with digital transformation. The study follows the PRISMA 2020 approach to support a systematic and transparent review process (Moher, 2021).

This study contributes to the literature by integrating evidence on the role of transformational leadership in shaping employee behaviour within digital transformation contexts. It also identifies recurring relationships, contextual differences, and research gaps in the existing literature. The findings are expected to provide theoretical insights for leadership and organizational behaviour research and practical implications for organizations seeking to develop leadership practices that support employee adaptability, engagement, and innovation during digital transformation.

## **2. | LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Transformational Leadership in the Digital Era**

Transformational leadership (TL) refers to a leadership approach that emphasizes vision, motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and the development of employees. Bass and Riggio (2006) explain that transformational leaders motivate employees to move beyond individual interests and contribute to organizational goals. In the context of digital transformation (DT), these characteristics are particularly relevant because organizations require employees to continuously learn, adapt, and respond to technological and organizational changes.

Recent studies demonstrate that transformational leadership contributes to organizational and employee adaptation in digital environments. Mihardjo et al. (2020) found that digital leadership positively influences innovation culture and digital capability, which subsequently support organizational performance. Similarly, Nguyen et al. (2021) demonstrated that transformational leadership and emotional intelligence are positively associated with organizational outcomes, particularly in relation to ethical behaviour and sustainability in auditing. Pham et al. (2021) also emphasized the relationship between leadership style, emotional intelligence, and employee performance.

Transformational leadership is also associated with employee motivation and engagement. Alsufyani et al. (2022) found that transformational leadership, together with emotional intelligence, contributes to employee motivation and engagement, which subsequently influence performance. These findings indicate that leadership in the digital era extends beyond directing technological implementation. Leaders must also establish trust, encourage learning, and support employees in dealing with changing work requirements. Furthermore, Shafi et al. (2022) demonstrated that transformational leadership supports digital transformation through employee

engagement and innovative behaviour. Thus, TL can be understood as an important organizational mechanism for connecting leadership practices with employee responses to digital change.

### **Digital Transformation and Employee Behaviour**

Digital transformation represents a broad organizational change involving technology, processes, capabilities, and human behaviour. Susanti et al. (2023) show that digital leadership positively influences employee readiness for digital transformation, highlighting the importance of the human dimension in organizational digitalization. DT therefore cannot be understood solely as technological adoption because its implementation requires employees to accept new systems, develop digital capabilities, and adjust their work behaviour. Employee behaviour is particularly important because digital transformation frequently requires continuous learning, collaboration, innovation, and adaptability. Shafi et al. (2022) found that employee engagement and innovative behaviour play an important role in the relationship between transformational leadership and digital transformation success. Similarly, Khan et al. (2023) identified an interaction between digital technology, transformational leadership, and organizational agility, indicating that employee and organizational adaptability are important in technology-intensive environments.

The Job Demands Resources perspective provides an additional explanation of employee responses to changing work conditions. Bakker and Demerouti (2017) explain that job resources can support employee engagement and reduce the negative effects of demanding work conditions. In digital transformation, leadership support, feedback, motivation, and opportunities for learning can function as resources that help employees manage technological demands. Employee behaviour therefore includes engagement, innovation, adaptability, knowledge sharing, and willingness to learn. Miwardjo et al. (2020) associate digital transformation with innovation culture and digital capability, while Alsufyani et al. (2022) highlight the importance of motivation and engagement for employee performance. These findings reinforce the view that employee behaviour represents an essential component of successful digital transformation.

### **Transformational Leadership, Employee Behaviour, and Digital Transformation**

The literature indicates an interconnected relationship between transformational leadership, employee behaviour, and digital transformation. Transformational leadership can influence employee attitudes and behaviour by providing vision, motivation, support, and opportunities for participation. In turn, positive employee behaviour can facilitate the implementation and sustainability of digital transformation initiatives. Miwardjo et al. (2020) demonstrate that leadership contributes to innovation culture and digital capability, while Shafi et al. (2022) show that employee engagement and innovative behaviour provide an important pathway between transformational leadership and digital transformation. Khan et al. (2023) further emphasize the role of agility in connecting digital technology and transformational leadership with

organizational outcomes. These findings suggest that organizational transformation depends on the interaction between leadership capabilities, employee responses, and digital capabilities rather than on technology alone.

The relationship also has implications for organizational value creation. Massa et al. (2023) conceptualize leadership as an important element in aligning organizational objectives, resources, and stakeholder expectations to create value. In addition, AlNuaimi et al. (2022) identify leadership, agility, and digital strategy as interconnected elements in mastering digital transformation. These perspectives reinforce the importance of leadership in creating an organizational environment capable of responding to technological change. The reviewed literature suggests that transformational leadership functions as an important driver of employee adaptability, engagement, and innovation, while employee behaviour facilitates the implementation of digital transformation. However, the strength of these relationships may vary according to organizational context, including digital capabilities, industry characteristics, and organizational conditions. This provides a basis for systematically synthesizing the relationships among TL, employee behaviour, and DT in the present study.

### **3. | RESEARCH METHOD**

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to synthesize empirical and conceptual evidence concerning the relationships among transformational leadership (TL), digital transformation (DT), and employee behaviour (EB). The review was designed to identify, evaluate, and integrate relevant studies systematically. The reporting process followed the principles of the PRISMA 2020 framework to improve transparency in the identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion of studies (Moher, 2021).

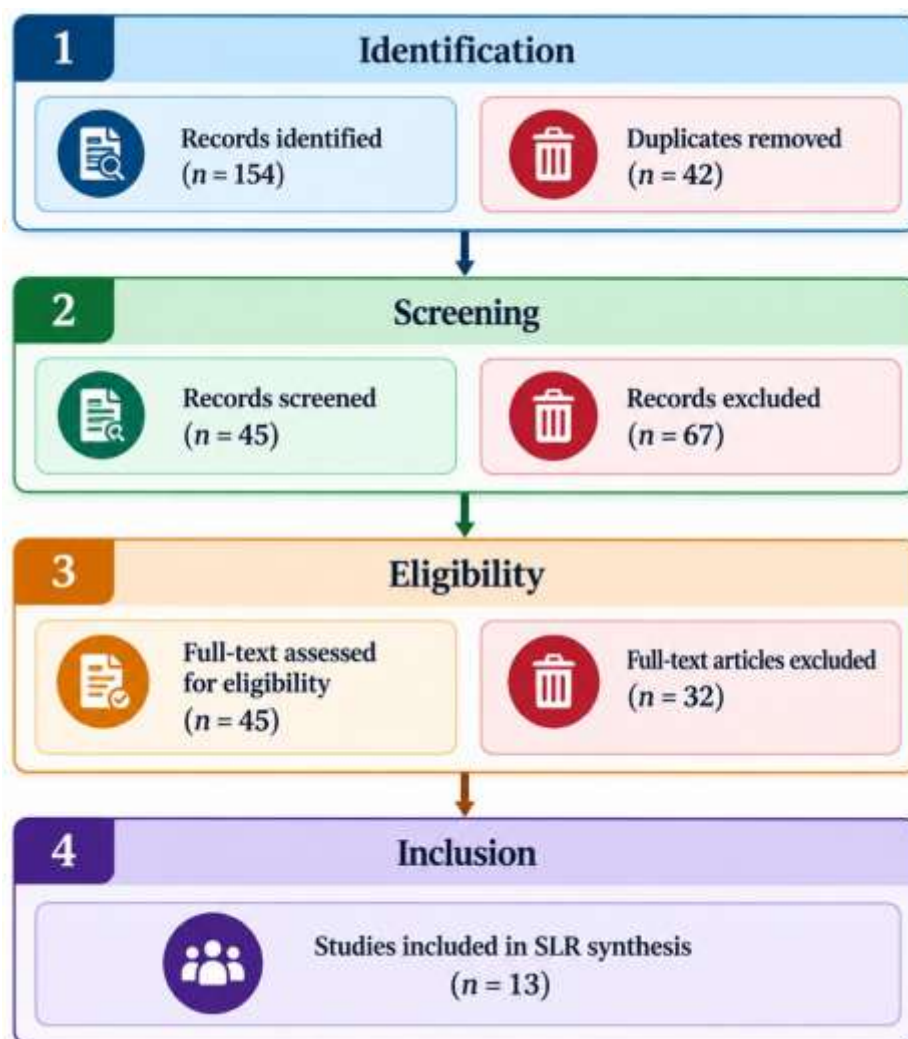
A comprehensive literature search was conducted using Scopus, Web of Science, Emerald Insight, and ScienceDirect, supplemented by Google Scholar to identify additional relevant publications. The search covered peer-reviewed English-language journal articles published between 2011 and 2025. Search terms were organized around the three main variables. Keywords related to TL included transformational leadership, leadership effectiveness, emotional intelligence, and leader-member exchange. DT-related terms included digital transformation, digitalization, digital leadership, and innovation culture. For EB, the search included employee engagement, proactive behaviour, learning agility, and digital agility.

Studies were included when they were peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2011 and 2025, focused on transformational or digital leadership, examined relationships involving employee behaviour, and were available in full text in English. Studies were excluded when they were non-peer-reviewed publications or conference abstracts, addressed unrelated leadership styles, focused solely on technology without a human dimension, or were duplicated or inaccessible.

**Table 1.** Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

| Inclusion Criteria                                           | Exclusion Criteria                                                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Peer-reviewed journal articles between 2011–2025             | Non-peer-reviewed or conference abstracts                             |
| Focused on transformational or digital leadership            | Studies addressing unrelated leadership styles                        |
| Empirical or conceptual relationship with employee behaviour | An article that focuses solely on technology without the human aspect |
| Available in full text and written in English                | Duplicated or inaccessible sources                                    |

The search initially identified 154 potentially relevant records. After removing 42 duplicates, 112 records remained for screening. Title and abstract screening identified 45 articles for further assessment, while 67 records were excluded because they were not sufficiently relevant to the research focus. Full-text assessment was then conducted on the 45 potentially eligible studies. After evaluating thematic and methodological relevance, 32 studies were excluded, resulting in 13 studies included in the final qualitative synthesis. The selection process is presented in the PRISMA flow diagram.

**Figure 1.** The PRISMA Flow Diagram

For data extraction, information was organized according to author and year, country, research method, sample and context, main variables, key findings, and contribution. The selected studies were subsequently coded thematically according to recurring concepts related to leadership, employee behaviour, digital transformation, engagement, innovation, agility, and organizational outcomes. The quality of the selected studies was assessed using the CASP (Critical Appraisal Skills Programme) criteria, focusing on clarity of objectives, methodological rigor, validity, and contribution to the field. Studies with weak empirical foundations, incomplete reporting, or substantial theoretical ambiguity were excluded from the final synthesis.

#### 4. | RESULTS

This systematic literature review synthesized findings from 13 peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2011 and 2025. The reviewed studies covered several sectors, including banking, education, healthcare, manufacturing, technology-intensive firms, and other service organizations, with studies conducted across Indonesia, Vietnam, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, China, the United Arab Emirates, Brazil, South Africa, and other contexts. Most studies employed quantitative approaches, particularly survey-based methods and structural equation modelling (SEM), while several studies used regression, conceptual review, or other approaches. Overall, the reviewed literature indicates that transformational leadership (TL), employee behaviour (EB), emotional intelligence (EI), and digital transformation (DT) are closely interconnected in explaining organizational adaptation and transformation outcomes.

**Table 2.** The Article Summary

| Author / Year                | Country   | Methods | Sample & Context                        | Main Variables                                                                           | Key Findings                                                                                                      | Contribution                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------|-----------|---------|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hariyani et al. (2025)       | Indonesia | SEM-PLS | Employees in state-owned enterprises    | TL, Digital Transformation, Sustainability Performance                                   | TL significantly drives digital transformation readiness                                                          | Positions leadership as enabler of sustainable DT                                                                    |
| Yamin & Murwaningsari (2023) | Pakistan  | SEM     | Employees in technology-intensive firms | Digital technology use, transformational leadership, organizational agility, performance | Digital technology and TL jointly enhance organizational agility, which mediates their effect on firm performance | Demonstrates interplay of TL and digital technology, introducing agility as key mechanism in digital-era performance |
| Abbu et al. (2022)           | Indonesia | SEM-PLS | Employees in Indonesian                 | Digital leadership, readiness for                                                        | Digital leadership positively influences                                                                          | Role of digital leadership in building                                                                               |

| Author / Year           | Country      | Methods    | Sample & Context                                               | Main Variables                                                                                         | Key Findings                                                                                                                                     | Contribution                                                                                             |
|-------------------------|--------------|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                         |              |            | companies experiencing digital change                          | change, digital transformation readiness                                                               | employee readiness for change, which then enhances overall digital transformation readiness                                                      | human readiness as foundation for successful DT                                                          |
| Wang & Esperança (2023) | China        | Regression | SMEs                                                           | DT, ESG, Market Performance                                                                            | DT improves ESG & market performance                                                                                                             | Links DT with ESG outcomes                                                                               |
| AlNuaimi et al. (2022)  | UAE          | SEM        | Managers in private firms                                      | Digital Leadership, Agility, Digital Strategy                                                          | Agility mediates link between leadership & DT success                                                                                            | Introduces agility as mediator in DT context                                                             |
| Baomar & Islami (2024)  | Saudi Arabia | Survey/SEM | Employees from various service organizations                   | Transformational leadership, emotional intelligence, motivation, engagement, performance               | TL and EI significantly enhance employee motivation and engagement, which in turn improve performance. TL partially mediates the EI–performance. | TL as a mediating mechanism between EI and work outcomes; integrates TL, EI, and engagement in one model |
| Gaglio et al. (2022)    | South Africa | Regression | Manufacturing SMEs                                             | DT, Productivity, Innovation                                                                           | DT significantly boosts productivity                                                                                                             | Provides evidence of DT in developing markets                                                            |
| Hooi & Chan (2023)      | Pakistan     | SEM        | Employees in organizations implementing digital transformation | Transformational leadership, employee engagement, innovation behaviour, digital transformation success | TL significantly boosts engagement and innovation behaviour; these two variables mediate the relationship between TL and DT success              | TL drives DT through employee engagement and innovative behaviour (human-centred DT pathway)             |
| Phan et al. (2021)      | Vietnam      | SEM        | Internal auditors and audit managers                           | Emotional intelligence, transformational leadership, audit quality, audit                              | EI and TL both positively impact audit quality and sustainability; TL strengthens ethical behaviour and professional judgement                   | Extends TL and EI research into auditing, linking them to audit sustainability outcomes                  |

| Author / Year               | Country        | Methods                             | Sample & Context                                                             | Main Variables                                                               | Key Findings                                                                                                                         | Contribution                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                             |                |                                     |                                                                              | sustainability                                                               |                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                              |
| Mihardjo et al. (2019)      | Indonesia      | SEM                                 | Managers and employees in Indonesian organizations undergoing digital change | Digital leadership, innovation culture, digital capability, firm performance | Digital leadership positively affects innovation culture and digital capability, which subsequently improve performance              | Positions digital leadership as driver of innovation culture and capability in digital transformation era                    |
| do Nascimento et al. (2018) | Brazil         | Survey/SEM                          | Volunteer workers                                                            | TL, Proactivity, Motivation                                                  | TL increases proactive behavior in volunteers                                                                                        | Expands TL research into non-profit sector                                                                                   |
| Bakker & Demerouti (2017)   | Various/global | Conceptual review, theory syntheses | Review of studies using JD-R framework                                       | Job demands, job resources, work engagement, burnout, performance            | Job demands–resources (JD-R) theory explains how resources foster engagement and mitigate strain from demands, affecting performance | Provides a comprehensive JD-R framework used to explain how leadership and resources shape employee behaviour and well-being |
| Franke & Felfel (2011)      | Germany        | SEM                                 | Employees in service firms                                                   | TL, Psychological Strain, Engagement                                         | TL reduces strain & increases engagement                                                                                             | Psychological mechanisms of TL                                                                                               |

The synthesis of the selected studies identified five recurring themes: transformational leadership and motivation; digital transformation as organizational renewal; employee engagement and innovative behaviour; leader emotional intelligence; and value creation through leadership and technology. These themes demonstrate that digital transformation is not solely a technological process but also involves changes in leadership, organizational culture, employee behaviour, and organizational capabilities.

**Table 3.** Literature Review Themes

| <b>Theme</b>                                     | <b>Focus Area</b>                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Transformational leadership and motivation       | Inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration |
| Digital transformation as organizational renewal | Strategic use of digital tools, culture change, agile structures                 |
| Employee engagement and innovation behaviour     | Proactive behaviour, creativity, digital agility                                 |
| Leader emotional intelligence (LEI)              | Mediating and moderating effects of empathy and trust                            |
| Value creation through leadership and technology | Integration of leadership and digital strategy for long-term value               |

Across the reviewed studies, transformational leadership consistently supports digital transformation by encouraging employee engagement, innovation, learning, adaptability, and organizational agility. Mihardjo et al. (2020) highlighted the role of leadership in developing innovation culture and digital capability, while Shafi et al. (2022) demonstrated the importance of employee engagement and innovative behaviour. AlNuaimi et al. (2022) and Khan et al. (2023) further emphasized organizational agility as an important mechanism linking leadership and digital transformation. Emotional intelligence also plays an important role in the leadership employee relationship. Nguyen et al. (2021), Pham et al. (2021), and Alsufyani et al. (2022) associated emotional intelligence and transformational leadership with employee motivation, engagement, performance, and organizational outcomes. These findings indicate that effective digital leadership requires not only strategic direction but also empathy, trust, and support for employees during organizational change.

Employee behaviour represents another important mechanism in digital transformation. Engagement, proactive behaviour, innovation, learning, and agility enable employees to actively participate in transformation rather than simply receive technological changes. Shafi et al. (2022) and Khan et al. (2023) demonstrate the importance of these behavioural mechanisms, while Bakker and Demerouti (2017) highlight the role of organizational resources in supporting engagement and employee well-being. The reviewed evidence also links leadership and digital transformation with organizational value. Gaglio et al. (2022), Massa et al. (2023), Susanti et al. (2023), Wang and Esperança (2023), and Hariyani et al. (2025) collectively indicate relationships with value creation, employee readiness, market and ESG performance, innovation, productivity, and sustainable digital transformation.

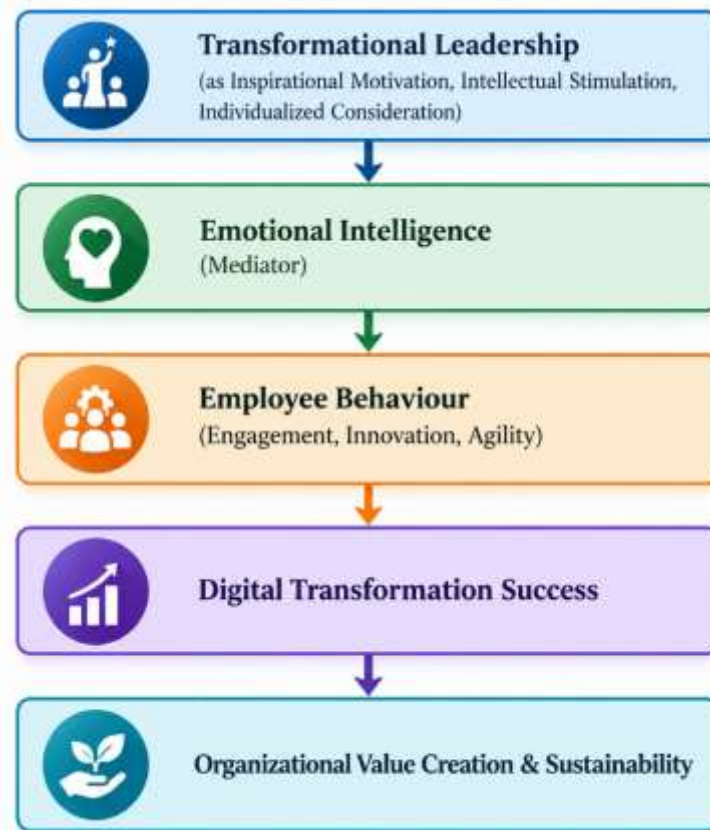


**Figure 2.** Integrated Conceptual Model

The findings can therefore be integrated into a conceptual relationship in which transformational leadership supports employee engagement, innovation, learning, and agility; emotional intelligence strengthens interpersonal leadership processes; and these employee-related mechanisms contribute to digital transformation outcomes. The resulting outcomes include improved organizational agility, digital capability, innovation, productivity, readiness for change, and organizational value. This interpretation is consistent with the combined evidence from Mihardjo et al. (2020), AlNuaimi et al. (2022), Shafi et al. (2022), Khan et al. (2023), Massa et al. (2023), and Susanti et al. (2023).

The reviewed studies also reveal contextual differences across industries and geographical settings. In Indonesia, Susanti et al. (2023) emphasizes employee readiness during digital change, while Mihardjo et al. (2020) highlights innovation culture and digital capability. In Pakistan, Shafi et al. (2022) and Khan et al. (2023) emphasize employee engagement, innovation behaviour, and agility. Other studies extend the evidence to Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Vietnam, China, Brazil, and South Africa. These differences indicate that the mechanisms through which leadership supports transformation may vary according to organizational, industry, and cultural contexts.

The synthesis also identifies several research gaps. First, limited empirical evidence directly examines how digital maturity may moderate the relationship

between transformational leadership and employee behaviour. Second, the integration of artificial intelligence with transformational leadership remains insufficiently examined in the reviewed literature. Third, longitudinal evidence concerning changes in employee behaviour throughout digital transformation is limited. Fourth, employee behaviour is examined through fragmented constructs, including engagement, innovative behaviour, agility, and commitment, rather than through an integrated behavioural framework. Finally, the relationships among transformational leadership, employee behaviour, organizational agility, and digital transformation require further empirical investigation across different sectors and geographical contexts.

Overall, the results indicate a consistent relationship among leadership, employee behaviour, and digital transformation. Transformational leadership provides direction, motivation, empowerment, and support for change, while employee engagement, innovation, learning, and agility function as important behavioural mechanisms. Emotional intelligence further strengthens interpersonal processes between leaders and employees. The resulting synthesis suggests the following relationship: Transformational Leadership → Emotional Intelligence/Leadership Influence → Positive Employee Behaviour → Digital Transformation → Organizational Value and Agility.



**Figure 3.** Summary of Findings

The overall findings therefore support a human-centred understanding of digital transformation in which technological change is closely connected to leadership capability and employee behaviour. The 13 reviewed studies collectively provide evidence that organizations require not only digital technologies and strategies but also leadership and behavioural capabilities that enable employees to adapt, innovate, and participate actively in transformation processes.

## 5. | DISCUSSION

The findings of this systematic literature review indicate that transformational leadership (TL) plays an important role in supporting digital transformation by shaping positive employee behaviour. Across the reviewed studies, TL is associated with employee engagement, innovation, learning, adaptability, and organizational agility. This is consistent with the foundational perspective of transformational leadership, which emphasizes vision, motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized support (Bass & Riggio, 2006). These characteristics are particularly relevant in the

digital era, where employees must continuously adapt to technological and organizational changes.

The findings further suggest that leadership influences digital transformation through employee-related mechanisms. Shafi et al. (2022) demonstrated that employee engagement and innovation behaviour contribute to the relationship between TL and digital transformation success, while Khan et al. (2023) highlighted organizational agility as an important mechanism connecting leadership and digital technology with organizational outcomes. Similarly, Mihardjo et al. (2020) showed that digital leadership supports innovation culture and digital capability. These findings indicate that employees are active participants in digital transformation rather than merely recipients of technological change.

Emotional intelligence (EI) also emerges as an important leadership-related mechanism. Nguyen et al. (2021), Pham et al. (2021), and Alsufyani et al. (2022) associate EI and leadership with employee engagement, motivation, performance, and organizational outcomes. In digital transformation, empathy, emotional regulation, and interpersonal awareness may help leaders maintain employee trust and involvement during organizational change. Thus, EI can strengthen the relational dimension of leadership.

The synthesis also indicates that leadership effects are context-dependent. AlNuaimi et al. (2022) and Khan et al. (2023) emphasize organizational agility, while Susanti et al. (2023) highlights employee readiness for change. Massa et al. (2023) further emphasizes leadership in aligning organizational resources and objectives to create value. Therefore, leadership, employee behaviour, organizational capabilities, and digital transformation should be considered interconnected elements. From a managerial perspective, organizations should develop leaders who combine transformational capabilities with digital awareness, emotional intelligence, and employee participation. Leadership development should emphasize vision, communication, empowerment, continuous learning, and innovation. Organizations should also create environments that support employee engagement and agility, as these behavioural capabilities contribute to successful digital transformation (Shafi et al., 2022; Susanti et al., 2023).

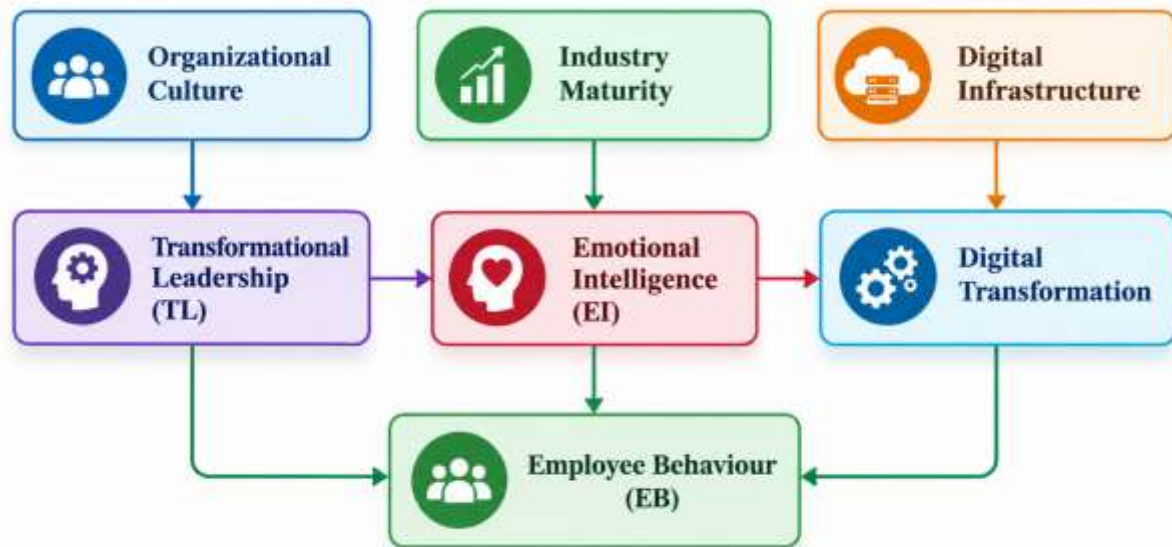


**Figure 4.** The Proposed Conceptual Model

The proposed conceptual model summarizes these relationships by positioning TL as a strategic driver, EI as an enhancing mechanism, employee behaviour as a behavioural pathway, and DT as the organizational outcome. This model extends the synthesis of the reviewed studies by emphasizing the interaction between leadership, people, and technology rather than treating digital transformation as a purely technological process.

## 6. | CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review concludes that transformational leadership plays an important role in supporting digital transformation through positive employee behaviour. The synthesis of 13 peer-reviewed studies indicates that effective leadership is associated with employee engagement, innovation, learning, adaptability, and organizational agility, which collectively support the implementation of digital transformation. The findings further indicate that digital transformation should be understood as a human-centred organizational process rather than solely as the adoption of digital technologies. Transformational leadership provides direction, motivation, empowerment, and support for change, while emotional intelligence strengthens interpersonal relationships between leaders and employees. Positive employee behaviour subsequently provides an important pathway through which leadership contributes to digital transformation and organizational outcomes.

The integrated findings provide a conceptual framework connecting transformational leadership, emotional intelligence, employee behaviour, and digital transformation. This framework emphasizes the interaction between leadership capabilities, employee responses, organizational conditions, and technological change. Practically, organizations should therefore strengthen leadership development, employee engagement, digital capabilities, continuous learning, and innovation-

oriented cultures to support sustainable transformation. Future research should further examine these relationships across different industries and cultural contexts, particularly through longitudinal and quantitative studies. Greater attention is also needed to digital maturity, organizational agility, and the evolving role of artificial intelligence in leadership and employee behaviour.

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The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

### ***Ethical Approval and Originality Statement***

Ethical approval was obtained for this study. The manuscript represents original work and has not been previously published, nor is it under consideration by another journal.

### ***Data Disclosure Statement***

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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