

# Literature Review on the Role of Strategic Leadership in the Implementation of Organizational Strategy Theory

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## Abstract

Strategic leadership and strategic theory are two fundamental pillars in the management of modern organizations, particularly amidst the increasing complexity of the global environment. This study aims to explore and synthesize the relationship between strategic theory and strategic leadership practices through a comprehensive literature review. A qualitative, systematic approach was employed to analyze fifteen relevant national and international scholarly articles, selected based on inclusion criteria such as topic relevance, methodological rigor, and publication recency (2020–2025). Findings reveal that the success of organizational strategy is closely linked to the quality of leadership in navigating both external and internal dynamics. Adaptive strategies such as strategic imitation and redeployment require leaders who are analytically sharp and agile in decision-making. Furthermore, leadership styles such as transformational, servant, and authentic leadership significantly contribute to improved organizational performance, employee engagement, and the fostering of innovative cultures. The personal values of leaders, digital competencies, and the ability to interpret socio-political dynamics also emerge as key factors in effective strategy execution. This review provides theoretical contributions to the understanding of how leadership and strategy co-evolve and offers practical insights for leadership development and organizational transformation. The study underscores the importance of interdisciplinary approaches in preparing future-ready, ethical, and innovation-driven strategic leaders.

*Keywords:* Strategic Leadership, Strategic Theory, Organizational Innovation, Transformational Leadership, Adaptive Change

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## 1. Introduction

In an increasingly complex global landscape, rapid and unpredictable change is commonplace. The rise of digital technology, economic uncertainty, political dynamics, and social and environmental pressures demand that organizations demonstrate strategic adaptability. Organizational success is now determined not only by operational efficiency but also by the ability to think and act strategically. In this context, strategy theory and strategic leadership have become important topics in modern management studies. Strategy theory addresses how organizations can gain and maintain competitive advantage in a changing business environment. It encompasses the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of strategies at various organizational levels. Concepts such as competitive advantage (Porter, 1985), the resource-based view (Barney et al., 2001), and dynamic capabilities (Teece et al., 2009) serve as key frameworks for understanding how organizations formulate their strategic moves. These theories have evolved in line with the complexity of the challenges facing modern organizations.

On the other hand, leadership plays an irreplaceable role in transforming strategy into concrete action. Strategic leadership is the ability to direct an organization toward a long-term vision through decisions based on a deep understanding of the internal and external environment. Strategic leaders not only manage resources but also create a vision, align values, and inspire organizational members to move together toward established goals (Boal & Hooijberg, 2000). Strategic leadership is needed in all types of organizations, both public and private, large and small. In the business world, strategic leaders must be able to make decisions that significantly impact market position, business

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models, product innovation, and organizational culture. Meanwhile, in the public sector, strategic leaders play a role in designing long-term policies, building cross-sector collaboration, and ensuring the sustainability of public services.

Strategic leadership is inseparable from the dimensions of ethics and social responsibility. Strategic leaders in the modern era are expected to consider not only profitability but also environmental sustainability and social welfare. This aligns with the Triple Bottom Line concept, which combines economic, social, and environmental aspects as the basis for strategic decision-making (Elkington, 1997). Therefore, strategy and leadership theories must be examined holistically to address the multidimensional challenges facing organizations.

Furthermore, contemporary approaches to leadership have shifted from hierarchical models to more participatory and adaptive ones. Leadership styles such as transformational (Bass & Avolio, 1994), transactional, servant (Greenleaf, 1977), and authentic leadership have been integrated into strategic contexts. Leaders who are able to combine the characteristics of these leadership styles with a strategic approach are believed to be able to create agile, resilient, and highly competitive organizations.

A leader's role in the strategic process also involves their ability to understand data, make analytical decisions, and respond to market and technological dynamics. In the era of big data and artificial intelligence, strategic leaders are required to rely not only on intuition but also on a robust analytical approach. Therefore, data and digital literacy are integral to a leader's strategic competency. The phenomenon of disruption also reinforces the urgency of strategic literacy and adaptive leadership. The COVID-19 pandemic, for example, has forced many organizations to radically pivot their strategies. In situations like this, leaders with strategic capacity and the courage to take risks are crucial for organizational survival. In other words, strategic leadership is not an option, but a necessity in an era of volatility.

Literature shows that the correlation between strategy and leadership has a direct impact on organizational performance. A study by (Rowe, 2001) found that strategic leadership can simultaneously create innovation and improve operational efficiency. This demonstrates that a sound strategy alone is insufficient without a leader capable of effective execution. Therefore, understanding the relationship between strategy theory and leadership is key to building an effective organizational framework. Based on this background, this literature review aims to develop a theoretical and practical understanding of the relationship between strategy theory and leadership, by reviewing various conceptual approaches, empirical research findings, and future trends and challenges. This study is expected to contribute to the development of more adaptive, innovative, and sustainability-oriented managerial theory and practice.

## 2. Methods

This research uses a literature review design as its primary approach. This literature review was chosen because the purpose of this research is not to collect primary data from the field, but rather to summarize, evaluate, and synthesize various previously published scientific findings on strategy and leadership theory. This approach allows researchers to build a strong and in-depth conceptual framework regarding the relationship between strategy theory and the role of strategic leadership in various organizational contexts. The literature review method was used because of its ability to construct a comprehensive overview (map) of the phenomenon being studied. In this case, researchers attempted to explore and critically evaluate academic contributions from various journals, scientific books, conference proceedings, and research reports relevant to the topic. The primary focus was on identifying how strategy theory develops, how leaders influence the strategic process, and how the combination of the two impacts organizational performance and sustainability.

A systematic approach was used to maintain quality and consistency in the literature search and selection process. In this context, the researchers employed the SPIDER (Sample, Phenomenon of Interest, Design, Evaluation, Research Type) technique, as suggested by (Methley et al., 2014). The SPIDER approach is considered more suitable for qualitative and mixed-method research, compared to the PRISMA method, which is more suited to quantitative systematic studies. SPIDER allows for in-depth exploration of the dynamics of theory and practice in the context of strategic leadership.

In the Sample element, the researcher determined that the literature sources reviewed came from various organizational fields, including the private, public, and social sectors, focusing on the topics of strategy and leadership. This literature encompasses business, education, government, and nonprofit organizations. By encompassing diverse contexts, this study is expected to generate cross-sectoral understanding.

The Phenomenon of Interest element in this study centers on the relationship between strategy theory and leadership styles and roles. The primary focus is on how leaders direct, influence, and execute organizational strategy. Researchers

explore various dimensions, including strategic, transformational, transactional, servant leadership, and authentic leadership styles, and their relationship to strategy implementation. For the design element, this research draws on previous studies using qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches. The literature reviewed includes case study research designs, quantitative surveys, experiments, and grounded theory. With a multidisciplinary approach and varied methods, researchers can compare study results holistically.

In the evaluation aspect, researchers evaluate findings based on parameters of leadership effectiveness in strategy implementation. Indicators such as organizational performance improvement, innovation, job satisfaction, competitiveness, and sustainability are part of the critical evaluation. The evaluation also covers how strategy and leadership mutually strengthen or weaken organizational achievements. In Research Type, the literature reviewed includes academic articles from peer-reviewed journals, dissertations, institutional research reports, and scientific conference proceedings between 2020 and 2025. The search was conducted through various scientific databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, JSTOR, ScienceDirect, and ProQuest, with keywords such as: "strategic leadership", "strategic theory", "leadership and organizational performance", and "leadership in strategy implementation".

The article selection procedure was carried out in stages, starting from an initial search with results of more than 2000 articles, then filtered through the following inclusion criteria: (1) topic relevance; (2) publication within the last 15 years; (3) available in open access or institutional; (4) having adequate methodological quality based on the assessment of journal reviewers. After the screening process, as many as 40 main articles were used as core reference sources. Finally, the results from the selected literature were analyzed using a thematic approach, in which the researchers grouped key issues based on themes: (1) the evolution of strategy theory; (2) the characteristics of strategic leadership; (3) the relationship between strategy and leadership style; (4) the challenges of strategy implementation; and (5) the impact on organizational performance. Each theme was analyzed in depth to build a systematic narrative and conceptual synthesis.

### 3. Result and Discussions

A search of scientific articles in Google Scholar, Scopus, JSTOR, ScienceDirect, and ProQuest identified 15 articles meeting the inclusion criteria from a review of approximately 2000 clinical and research articles published between 2020 and 2025.

**Table 1.** 15 articles meeting the inclusion criteria

| No | Article Title   | Writer              | Year | Method                          | Key Findings   | Link |
|----|---|---------------------|------|---------------------------------|--|------|
| 1  | Construct validity analysis of the strategic imitation practices scale                | LAY Al-Hakim        | 2024 | Construct validity analysis     | Strategic imitation as a tool of organizational adaptive leadership                          | Link |
| 2  | Organizational Learning and Sustainability  | S. Singh et al.     | 2024 | Interdisciplinary Review        | Adaptive strategies to deal with the characteristics of the Gen Z workforce                  | Link |
| 3  | Strategic Redeployment Planning   | AJ Critchley        | 2024 | Conceptual                      | Re-planning strategy after efficiency is achieved  | Link |
| 4  | Strategic Leadership and Innovation Management in The Pharmaceutical Industry         | A Patel             | 2025 | Pharmaceutical industry studies | Integration of leadership strategy with innovation management in the pharmaceutical industry | Link |
| 5  | The Impact of Religious (In) Congruence Between the Top Management Team and the Board | YA Kim, T Heubeck   | 2025 | Faultline theory study          | Conformity with religious values in top management influences strategic alignment            | Link |
| 6  | The Impact of Servant Leadership on Financial and Green Performance                   | H Kwistianus et al. | 2025 | Quantitative survey             | Servant leadership enhances organizational commitment and environmental performance          | Link |
| 7  | Sustainability of Private Historically Black Colleges or Universities                 | H.A. Stewart        | 2025 | Qualitative study               | Five important strategic themes in the sustainability of educational institutions            | Link |
| 8  | Creative and Innovative Behaviors in the Modern Workplace                             | M Hughes et al.     | 2025 | Study summary editorial         | Strategic leadership is correlated with a culture of innovation                              | Link |
| 9  | Employee Engagement Strategies for Purchasing Managers                                | WL Sewell           | 2025 | Pragmatic situational studies   | Work engagement is directly influenced by strategic leadership practices                     | Link |

| No | Article Title   | Writer                  | Year | Method                         | Key Findings  | Link                 |
|----|---|-------------------------|------|--------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| 10 | Transformational Leadership: Its Impact on Employee Performance                       | MY Syafei et al.        | 2025 | Case study                     | Transformational leadership has a significant influence on HR performance     | <a href="#">Link</a> |
| 11 | CEO Severance Security and TMT Gender Diversity                                       | A Purkayastha, G Martin | 2025 | Behavioral theory              | CEO protection affects gender representation in management teams              | <a href="#">Link</a> |
| 12 | Practice Inspired Critical Success Factors for “Doing” Digital Transformation         | P McCarthy et al.       | 2025 | CSF studies & transformation   | Critical success factors in real-world digital transformation                 | <a href="#">Link</a> |
| 13 | Bolt-on Acquisitions: A Corporate Strategy for Generating Value                       | LRG Alvarracin          | 2025 | Corporate study                | Acquisition strategy as a value-based growth approach                         | <a href="#">Link</a> |
| 14 | Dynamics of Conflict in Organizations: A Case Study of Organizational Conflict Theory | A Rachmawati et al.     | 2025 | Case study                     | Organizational conflict can be managed through adaptive strategic leadership. | <a href="#">Link</a> |
| 15 | Application of NLP Models to Extract Pricing Information in Business Process          | DV Bokarev et al.       | 2025 | Technology application studies | NLP integration in strategic decision making based on unstructured data       | <a href="#">Link</a> |

The concept of strategic leadership has become a major focus in various organizational management research, especially when organizations face uncertainty and rapid changes in the external environment. In this context, LAY (Al-Hakim, 2025) in his article on the construct validity of the strategic imitation practice scale asserts that strategically intelligent leaders must be able to recognize successful practices from competitors, imitate them closely, and adapt them to their own organizational conditions. This approach reinforces that strategic imitation is not a weakness, but rather an adaptive strategy guided by careful analysis by the leader.

Meanwhile, (Singh Sarika et al., 2025) article raises the issue of adapting strategy to the needs of the Gen Z workforce. In this context, strategic leaders are not only responsible for formulating corporate strategy but also for building a work environment that resonates with the values of the new generation. This demonstrates that strategy theory cannot be separated from the social and cultural context that influences the effectiveness of its implementation. (Critchley, 2013), in his article on strategic redeployment planning, highlights the importance of leaders navigating the strategy cycle—that is, how strategy must continue to be adjusted even after organizational efficiency is achieved. Criticism of the linear strategy model is emphasized by arguing that organizations that have achieved efficiency must still reconsider resource allocation to remain competitive, emphasizing the importance of ongoing strategic reflection.

In the context of the pharmaceutical industry, (Patel, 2025) demonstrated that strategic leaders play a dual role: as guardians of regulatory stability and as innovators in a dynamic market environment. This research demonstrates that the success of product innovation is largely determined by the synergy between strategic vision and a leadership structure that supports experimentation, research, and cross-sector collaboration. The issue of value alignment also emerged in (Kim & Heubeck, 2025) article, which discussed how religious incompatibility between the board and management impacts the effectiveness of strategic decision-making. This study asserts that leaders' personal values play a crucial role in shaping a cohesive strategy. This extends strategy theory into the realm of organizational behavior, emphasizing the importance of values and identity in the strategy formulation process.

In the context of servant leadership, (Kwistianus et al., 2025) demonstrated that a leadership style focused on service and empathy can improve both financial and environmental performance. This means that leaders who prioritize altruistic values are able to integrate economic and sustainability strategies, demonstrating a positive relationship between value leadership and organizational strategy within the triple bottom line framework. (Stewart, 2025) highlights the strategic challenges facing historically Black institutions of higher education (HBCUs) in the US. Five key strategic themes identified (including differentiation, collaboration, and leveraging cultural heritage) demonstrate that strategy is determined not only by the business environment but also by historical and political context. The role of strategic leadership in preserving heritage while building for the future is highlighted.

An editorial by (Huang et al., 2025) concluded that innovative cultures in modern organizations are largely determined by the capacity of strategic leaders to encourage experimentation, tolerate failure, and empower teams. An innovative organizational culture cannot thrive without a leadership model that supports risk-taking and the exploration of unconventional solutions. Meanwhile, a study by (Sewell, 2004) provides a micro-perspective on how employee engagement strategies in purchasing departments are significantly influenced by the leadership style employed. When

leaders implement open and collaborative communication strategies, engagement and job satisfaction levels increase significantly. This demonstrates that strategies are not only implemented at the macro level but are also implemented in concrete, daily practices across every level of the organization.

In the Indonesian context, (Siahaan, 2025) confirmed the importance of transformational leadership in improving employee performance. Using case studies, this research demonstrated that inspiring vision, idealized influence, and individualized attention to subordinates are crucial elements in grounding organizational strategy in concrete, motivating and productive actions. The aspect of leadership protection was also discussed in a study by (Anish Purkayastha, 2025), which examined the relationship between severance security and gender diversity in management teams. The study found that the security of a CEO position enabled leaders to make more inclusive and long-term decisions, including forming gender-diverse teams. This demonstrates how the structural context influences the effectiveness of strategic leadership.

Patrick et al., (2025) present critical success factors (CSFs) in digital transformation inspired by industry best practices. One key finding is that the leader's role as a digital champion is a significant differentiator. This demonstrates that digital transformation cannot be driven solely by technology but requires a visionary and collaborative leader. Acquisition strategy as a tool for corporate growth is explored in a study by LRG (Alvarracin & Rene, 2025). This study examines how a bolt-on acquisition strategy enables rapid and efficient expansion, especially when supported by leadership capable of systematically evaluating synergies and risks. These findings enrich corporate strategy theory, emphasizing portfolio-based strategic decisions.

In the context of Indonesian organizations, (Rachmawati et al., 2025) highlighted the dynamics of conflict as an inevitable part of the strategic process. This case study demonstrates that strategic leadership plays a crucial role in mitigating conflict and fostering cross-departmental collaboration. Leaders who are capable of acting as mediators and facilitators significantly influence organizational stability and cohesion. Finally, (Bokarev & Nikishov, 2025) highlight strategic innovation through the application of natural language processing (NLP) technology for information extraction in pricing decision-making. This study demonstrates how strategic leaders need to understand and integrate advanced technologies into managerial processes to improve the speed and accuracy of decision-making.

Overall, these 15 articles reveal a close, dynamic, and mutually reinforcing relationship between strategy theory and leadership. These studies demonstrate that a sound strategy requires visionary, adaptive, and participatory leadership. Conversely, a strategic leadership style will fail if it is not accompanied by a clear and relevant strategic foundation. There are also indications that the effectiveness of strategic leadership is influenced by contextual factors such as organizational culture, political structure, market conditions, and the leader's demographic characteristics. In other words, there is no single formula that can be applied universally. Success depends largely on the leader's ability to read and adapt strategy to their environment.

From a methodological perspective, the diversity of approaches in these 15 articles—ranging from quantitative to qualitative to conceptual—enriches our understanding of the phenomenon of strategic leadership. This demonstrates that the study of strategy and leadership must continue to develop with an interdisciplinary and cross-contextual approach. Ultimately, the integration of strategy and leadership theory is not only an academic necessity but also a practical challenge for modern organizations. Strategic leadership is a catalyst for organizations to not only survive but also grow and innovate sustainably amidst the pressures of globalization, technological disruption, and social crises.

#### 4. Conclusions

Based on the results of a literature review conducted on fifteen scientific articles from various contexts and methodological approaches, it can be concluded that strategy theory and leadership are two dimensions that interact and reinforce each other in shaping organizational success. Strategy theory provides a conceptual framework for achieving competitive advantage, while strategic leadership is a key element in transforming strategy into effective action. The two are inseparable, because a strong strategy without leadership capable of executing it will be a dead document, and strong leadership without strategic direction will lack direction and purpose.

Strategic leadership has been shown to play a significant role in guiding organizations in facing various environmental challenges, from technological disruption and changing workforce generations to sustainability issues. Articles such as those by (Singh Sarika et al., 2025) demonstrate that leaders who can adapt to the characteristics of new generations and balance financial and environmental performance are key to future organizations. This demonstrates that strategic leadership is not just about technical and analytical skills, but also about sensitivity to evolving social and ethical values within society.

Furthermore, studies such as those conducted by Critchley, Patel, and Alvarracin underscore the importance of leaders in dynamically responding to the need for strategic renewal. Strategic leadership requires the ability to manage change, redesign strategies, and make data-driven decisions while taking into account long-term risks. The role of leaders is no longer merely that of administrators or policy implementers, but also that of organizational architects, continuously shaping the structure and direction of the institution in accordance with external and internal conditions.

Another interesting finding from this study is the importance of values and identity in strategic leadership. Studies such as Kim and Heubeck's demonstrate that value alignment between leadership and the board significantly impacts the effectiveness of an organization's strategy. Furthermore, leadership styles such as transformational, servant, and authentic leadership have been shown to be more effective in building trust, engagement, and innovation in the workplace. This reinforces the view that organizational strategy must align with the values of the leadership, and not rely solely on structural or administrative mechanisms.

From a technology and innovation perspective, the articles by Bokarev et al. and McCarthy et al. demonstrate that today's strategic leaders are required to understand technologies such as NLP and business process digitalization as part of a transformational strategy. The integration of technology into strategic decisions is an unavoidable element in today's business landscape. Therefore, digital competence and data literacy are key requirements for future leaders to design responsive, measurable, and reality-based strategies.

Based on the discussion, researchers and practitioners are advised to further strengthen the integration of strategy theory and leadership practice in organizational development. Management educational institutions should also emphasize interdisciplinary learning that encompasses a deep understanding of strategy theory, leadership psychology, and digital competencies. Organizations should develop leadership training systems that emphasize long-term vision, social empathy, and systemic thinking. Further research is expected to shed further light on the role of local cultural dynamics, power structures, and geopolitical shifts in shaping strategic leadership practices across the globe.

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