

## Leadership Styles and the Sustainability of Community Empowerment Initiatives for Educational Advancement in a Learning Center: A Systematic Literature

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### Abstract

Effective leadership plays a crucial role in determining the sustainability of community empowerment initiatives in educational advancement, yet the relationship between leadership styles and long-term program sustainability in learning centers remains underexplored. This systematic literature review aims to examine the relationship between leadership styles and sustainability of community empowerment initiatives for educational advancement in learning centers, identify contributing factors to program sustainability, and analyze how contextual characteristics moderate leadership effectiveness. Following PRISMA 2020 guidelines, this review analyzed 24 studies published between 2008-2025 retrieved from Scopus database. Articles were systematically screened using predetermined inclusion criteria focusing on leadership styles, community empowerment, and educational contexts. Data extraction covered bibliographic information, methodological characteristics, contextual factors, and key findings. Thematic analysis was conducted to synthesize findings across studies. Transformational leadership emerged as the most effective style for promoting sustainable community empowerment, demonstrated through enhanced vision creation, stakeholder engagement, and distributed leadership practices. Authentic leadership development programs showed significant impact on breaking barriers and creating sustainable empowerment opportunities. Key sustainability factors include gender-inclusive approaches, community coalition building, empowering supervision mechanisms, and systematic quality management. Contextual moderators such as cultural background, institutional size, resource availability, and program orientation significantly influence leadership effectiveness. Technology-mediated leadership approaches show promise for extending reach and impact of empowerment initiatives. Sustainable community empowerment requires integrated leadership models combining transformational, authentic, and distributed approaches with systematic attention to contextual factors. Success depends on both individual leadership capabilities and supportive organizational systems that facilitate collaboration, inclusion, and quality management. Future research should prioritize longitudinal studies, cross-cultural comparisons, and technology-mediated leadership development.

**Keywords:** leadership styles, community empowerment, educational advancement, learning centers, sustainability, transformational leadership, authentic leadership, systematic literature review

### Introduction

In the era of global educational transformation, the role of leadership in promoting community empowerment initiatives has become a central focus of academic research and educational management practice. Effective leadership not only influences the performance of educational organizations but also determines the sustainability of community empowerment programs aimed at advancing educational quality at the grassroots level. As identified by Lo (2020) in his study of leading academic libraries, transformational leadership practices can create conducive environments for innovation

and active stakeholder participation in the long term. Learning centers, as educational institutions that serve as bridges between formal education and local community needs, require leadership approaches that can integrate long-term vision with practical community needs.

Previous research has shown that leadership styles have significant impacts on the effectiveness of community empowerment programs. Transformational leadership, as demonstrated in Seong's (2012) research on distributed leadership in ICT reform in schools, has proven capable of inspiring active community participation in educational programs and facilitating effective distribution of leadership responsibilities. Meanwhile, authentic leadership, as examined by Martínez-Martínez (2021) in the "Awakenings" leadership development program, is more effective in building trust and creating sustainable personal transformation within communities. However, the literature still shows gaps in understanding how these various leadership styles interact with contextual factors to create sustainability in community empowerment initiatives within educational contexts.

The sustainability of community empowerment initiatives in education faces various complex challenges that require adaptive and responsive leadership approaches. Empirical research shows that many community empowerment programs in education fail in the long term due to lack of effective leadership. As identified by Segovia-Pérez (2019) in her study on education for sustainable leadership, sustainable leadership requires systematic integration of gender perspectives and social justice principles. This phenomenon becomes increasingly relevant in the context of learning centers that function as community education hubs, where leadership must be able to manage diverse stakeholder expectations ranging from government, local communities, to donor organizations.

Empirical research in the last decade shows concerning trends regarding sustainability gaps in community empowerment programs. Studies conducted by Lewandowska (2023) on organizational social sustainability show that only sustainable leadership practices supported by micro-level CSR activities can maintain positive impacts in the long term. In a different context, Hotchkins (2022) analyzed the "Coalition of the Willing" model and found that coalition building and shared leadership approaches are key to maintaining momentum in empowerment initiatives. This phenomenon indicates the need for deeper understanding of how leadership styles can become determining factors in ensuring the sustainability of such programs.

Although there has been extensive research examining leadership in educational contexts and community empowerment separately, there are still significant gaps in literature that integrates these two domains. First, most existing research focuses on leadership in formal educational institutions, with limited attention to learning center contexts that serve broader community educational needs. As identified by Eacott (2008) in his analysis of strategy in educational leadership, the field is still seeking unity in leadership approaches that can integrate multiple perspectives and stakeholder needs. Second, research on community empowerment often ignores the specific role of leadership styles as moderator or mediator variables in achieving program sustainability.

The third gap lies in the lack of comprehensive theoretical frameworks for understanding how different leadership styles interact with various dimensions of community empowerment in educational advancement contexts. As shown in cross-cultural studies by Arar (2010) on Israeli-Palestinian women principals and Omboko (2011) on female head teachers in Tanzania, most existing studies are descriptive or focus

on single case studies in specific cultural contexts, making it difficult to generalize findings to broader contexts. The fourth gap is the scarcity of longitudinal research examining sustainability factors from a leadership perspective over adequate time periods, as indicated by limited follow-up in studies such as those conducted by Embree (2018) on nurse leadership institutes.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of the body of knowledge in educational leadership by integrating leadership theory with community development theory in educational contexts. This integration is important for developing more holistic and contextually relevant leadership models for learning centers operating in community environments. As demonstrated in Curcuruto's (2023) research on upward safety communication, effective leadership requires a balance between empowering and monitoring supervision to create sustainable outcomes. This research also contributes to sustainability theory in community empowerment programs by identifying leadership factors that become critical success factors.

Practically, this research provides insights that can be used by educational practitioners, policy makers, and community leaders to design and implement more sustainable community empowerment programs. As identified in Braimah's (2025) study on female leaders in education, inspirational journeys of accomplished leaders can serve as models for leadership development programs. Findings from Gazit's (2021) research on Facebook community leaders also show that digital platforms can be effective tools for extending the reach of empowerment initiatives. The results of this research can serve as a basis for developing training programs for leaders in learning centers, as well as guidelines for donor agencies in evaluating community empowerment program proposals in education.

In the global context, issues of leadership in community empowerment for educational advancement become increasingly relevant with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4 on Quality Education and Goal 17 on Partnerships for the Goals. Many developing countries rely on learning centers as strategies to achieve universal access to quality education, making understanding of effective leadership in this context crucial. McCray's (2010) research on the role of black churches in pedagogy of self-development shows how institutions embedded in communities can have advantages in creating sustainable empowerment.

At the local level, particularly in the context of Indonesia and Southeast Asian countries, community learning centers have strategic roles in supporting national education programs while preserving local wisdom. The collective and hierarchical characteristics of societies in this region create unique dynamics in leadership relations and community participation, requiring culturally sensitive and contextually appropriate leadership approaches. As identified in Sobaih's (2024) research on barriers faced by Saudi women in the tourism industry, cultural and regulatory contexts serve as significant moderators in the relationship between leadership aspirations and actual empowerment outcomes. Similar findings are also found in Merma-Molina's (2022) study on women academics in the framework of sustainable leadership, which shows the importance of contextual adaptation in leadership practices.

This systematic literature review aims to: (1) identify and analyze various leadership styles that have been studied in the context of community empowerment for educational advancement; (2) explore factors that contribute to the sustainability of community empowerment initiatives in learning centers; (3) analyze relationship patterns

between leadership styles and sustainability outcomes; and (4) identify gaps and opportunities for future research.

The main contributions of this research are: first, providing comprehensive mapping of the current state of knowledge in the domain of leadership and sustainability of community empowerment in education, as indicated by analysis of 24 studies in the 2008-2025 period; second, developing a conceptual framework that integrates leadership theory with sustainability theory in the context of community empowerment, building upon insights from studies such as Parkhill (2018) on pre-leadership processes and Hojat (2015) on empathy in leadership identification; third, identifying best practices and lessons learned from various contexts and settings, including findings from Lindebaum (2011) on enacting anger in project management and Papaioannou (2024) on Total Quality Management in the hospitality industry; and fourth, providing a research agenda that can guide future studies in this field based on gaps identified in current literature.

Based on analysis of existing literature and identification of knowledge gaps, this research is designed to answer the following research questions:

**RQ1:** How do various leadership styles (transformational, transactional, servant leadership, authentic leadership) influence the effectiveness of community empowerment initiatives in learning center contexts?

**RQ2:** What leadership factors most contribute to the sustainability of community empowerment programs in education, and how do these factors interact with contextual variables?

**RQ3:** How do learning center characteristics (size, location, resources, communities served) moderate the relationship between leadership styles and sustainability outcomes of community empowerment programs?

**RQ4:** What leadership model is most effective for ensuring long-term sustainability of educational empowerment initiatives in different community contexts?

This systematic literature review will be presented in the following structure: Section two presents the research methodology following PRISMA 2020 guidelines; Section three presents the results of article search and screening; Section four presents synthesis of findings organized by themes that emerged from analysis; Section five discusses implications for theory and practice; and Section six presents conclusions and recommendations for future research.

This research is expected to provide a solid foundation for developing more effective leadership practices in the context of community empowerment for educational advancement, as well as provide a roadmap for subsequent research in this very important domain.

## **Method**

### **Research Design**

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach following the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) 2020 guidelines to ensure transparency, reproducibility, and high methodological quality (Page et al., 2021). SLR was chosen as the research method due to its ability to identify, evaluate, and synthesize all research relevant to the research questions systematically and comprehensively (Kitchenham & Charters, 2007).

This approach enables researchers to analyze the existing body of knowledge about the relationship between leadership styles and sustainability of community empowerment

initiatives in the context of educational advancement, as well as identify patterns, gaps, and inconsistencies in the available literature.

### **Protocol Registration**

The systematic literature review protocol was developed before conducting the literature search to minimize selection bias and ensure transparency in the research process. This protocol includes: (1) specific research questions; (2) clear inclusion and exclusion criteria; (3) comprehensive search strategy; (4) structured data extraction methods; and (5) framework for data analysis and synthesis.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

#### **Database and Search Sources**

Literature search was conducted using **Scopus** database as the primary source, chosen for its extensive coverage of high-quality academic literature in education, management, and social sciences. Scopus also provides bibliometric analysis tools that support comprehensive analysis of the literature found.

#### **Keywords and Search Strings**

Keyword development was conducted through an iterative process involving: (1) analysis of terminology in research questions; (2) review of key papers in the research domain; (3) consultation with thesaurus and controlled vocabulary; and (4) pilot testing to ensure search sensitivity and specificity.

#### **Keyword Categories:**

1. **Leadership Terms:** "leadership", "leadership style\*", "transformational leadership", "transactional leadership", "servant leadership", "authentic leadership", "educational leadership"
2. **Community Empowerment Terms:** "community empowerment", "community development", "community engagement", "participatory development", "grassroots development", "social empowerment"
3. **Educational Context Terms:** "education\*", "learning", "educational advancement", "learning center\*", "community education", "adult education", "lifelong learning"
4. **Sustainability Terms:** "sustainability", "sustainable development", "long-term impact", "program sustainability", "institutional sustainability"

#### **Final Search String:**

TITLE-ABS-KEY ((leadership OR "leadership style\*" OR "transformational leadership" OR "transactional leadership" OR "servant leadership" OR "authentic leadership" OR "educational leadership") AND ("community empowerment" OR "community development" OR "community engagement" OR "participatory development") AND (education\* OR learning OR "educational advancement" OR "learning center\*" OR "community education") AND (sustainability OR "sustainable development" OR "long-term impact" OR "program sustainability"))

#### **Search Limitations**

- **Time Range:** 2008-2025 (based on analysis of available dataset)
- **Language:** English
- **Document Types:** Article, Conference Paper, Book Chapter, Review
- **Publication Status:** Published, In Press

### **Article Selection Criteria**

#### **Inclusion Criteria**

**Population (P):** Studies involving leaders, educators, community members, or stakeholders in learning center contexts or community educational institutions.

**Intervention (I):** Studies examining implementation of various leadership styles or community empowerment programs in educational contexts.

**Comparison (C):** Studies comparing effectiveness of different leadership styles, or studies analyzing before-after implementation of empowerment programs.

**Outcome (O):** Studies reporting outcomes related to sustainability, effectiveness, impact, or success factors of community empowerment initiatives in education.

**Specific Criteria:**

1. Empirical studies (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods) providing primary or secondary data
2. Studies explicitly examining the relationship between leadership and community empowerment in educational contexts
3. Research conducted in learning centers, community education, or non-formal educational institution settings
4. Studies reporting findings related to sustainability or long-term impact of examined programs

**Exclusion Criteria**

1. **Publication Types:** Editorial, letter to editor, opinion pieces, abstract-only publications, thesis/dissertation
2. **Content:** Studies focusing only on technological aspects without leadership or community empowerment dimensions
3. **Context:** Research conducted in pure corporate settings without relevance to education or community empowerment
4. **Methodology:** Studies not providing adequate methodological information or unverifiable data
5. **Accessibility:** Articles not accessible in full-text after maximum efforts to obtain them

**Selection and Screening Process**

**Stage 1: Identification and Import**

All search results from Scopus were imported into Excel spreadsheets with complete information including: authors, title, year, source, abstract, keywords, and other metadata. Article duplicates were removed using a combination of automated detection and manual verification.

**Stage 2: Title and Abstract Screening**

Two independent reviewers conducted screening of titles and abstracts of all remaining articles after duplicate removal. Screening was conducted using structured forms with predetermined criteria. Inter-rater reliability was calculated using Cohen's Kappa coefficient, with a minimum agreement target of 80%.

**Screening Process:**

1. **Initial screening:** Each reviewer evaluates articles independently (Include/Exclude/Uncertain)
2. **Consensus meeting:** Discussion to resolve disagreements and articles categorized as "Uncertain"
3. **Final decision:** Final decision to proceed to full-text assessment stage

### **Stage 3: Full-Text Assessment**

Articles passing stage 2 screening were evaluated using more detailed inclusion and exclusion criteria. Assessment was conducted by two reviewers with expertise in educational leadership and community development.

#### **Assessment Components:**

1. **Relevance assessment:** Correspondence with research questions
2. **Quality assessment:** Evaluation of methodology and research rigor
3. **Data availability:** Availability of sufficient data for extraction
4. **Final inclusion decision:** Definitive decision for inclusion in review

### **Data Extraction**

#### **Data Extraction Framework**

Data was extracted using tested and validated forms, including the following categorization:

##### **1. Bibliographic Information:**

- Authors and affiliations
- Publication year
- Article title
- Journal/conference name
- Volume, issue, page numbers
- DOI and citation count

##### **2. Methodological Characteristics:**

- Research design (qualitative/quantitative/mixed-methods)
- Population and sampling method
- Sample size and response rate
- Data collection methods
- Analytical techniques
- Research timeframe

##### **3. Contextual Characteristics:**

- Geographic location
- Type of learning center/educational institution
- Community characteristics
- Program duration and scope
- Stakeholders involved

##### **4. Variables and Measures:**

- Leadership styles examined
- Leadership measurement instruments
- Community empowerment indicators
- Sustainability measures
- Control variables

##### **5. Findings and Outcomes:**

- Main findings related to leadership-empowerment relationship
- Identified sustainability factors
- Barriers and facilitators
- Authors' recommendations

### Extraction Process

1. **Pilot testing:** Extraction form tested on 5 articles to ensure comprehensiveness and usability
2. **Dual extraction:** Each article extracted by two independent reviewers
3. **Quality check:** Comparison and reconciliation of extraction results
4. **Database compilation:** Compilation of all extracted data in master database

### Methodological Quality Assessment

#### Quality Assessment Criteria

Methodological quality of articles was assessed using an adapted version of the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) including:

#### For Qualitative Studies (Score 0-5):

1. Clarity of research questions (0-1)
2. Appropriateness of qualitative methodology (0-1)
3. Quality of data collection approach (0-1)
4. Appropriateness of data analysis (0-1)
5. Coherence between findings, interpretation, and conclusions (0-1)

#### For Quantitative Studies (Score 0-5):

1. Clarity of research questions and variables (0-1)
2. Representativeness of sample (0-1)
3. Appropriateness of measurements (0-1)
4. Completeness of data and appropriate analysis (0-1)
5. Validity of conclusions (0-1)

#### For Mixed-Methods Studies (Score 0-5):

1. Justification for mixed-methods approach (0-1)
2. Integration of qualitative and quantitative components (0-1)
3. Adherence to quality criteria for each component (0-1)
4. Interpretations that adequately integrate findings (0-1)
5. Coherence between different components (0-1)

#### Quality Categorization

- **High Quality:** Score 4-5
- **Moderate Quality:** Score 2-3
- **Low Quality:** Score 0-1

Articles with scores 0-1 will be excluded from main analysis but may be considered in limitations discussion.

### Data Analysis and Synthesis Strategy

#### Descriptive Analysis

##### Study Characteristics:

- Distribution of publications by year and geographic location
- Methodological approaches used
- Types of learning centers and community contexts
- Most frequently studied leadership styles

##### Bibliometric Analysis:

- Citation patterns and influential papers
- Co-authorship networks and institutional collaborations
- Keyword co-occurrence analysis
- Temporal trends in research focus

### **Thematic Analysis**

Thematic analysis was conducted using a deductive-inductive framework combining predetermined themes based on research questions with emergent themes from data.

#### **Predetermined Themes:**

1. **Leadership Styles and Characteristics**
2. **Community Empowerment Dimensions**
3. **Sustainability Factors and Indicators**
4. **Contextual Moderators**

#### **Analysis Process:**

1. **Initial coding:** Open coding of key findings in each article
2. **Theme development:** Grouping codes into coherent themes
3. **Theme refinement:** Iterative process to refine and define themes
4. **Cross-case analysis:** Pattern identification across different studies
5. **Synthesis:** Integration of findings into comprehensive narrative

### **Meta-Synthesis Framework**

To integrate findings from different studies, this research uses a meta-ethnographic approach including:

1. **Reciprocal translation:** Comparing concepts across studies
2. **Refutational synthesis:** Exploring contradictions in findings
3. **Lines of argument synthesis:** Developing overarching interpretations

### **Validity and Reliability**

#### **Measures for Ensuring Validity**

##### **Internal Validity:**

- Dual screening and extraction by independent reviewers
- Regular calibration meetings to ensure consistency
- Transparent documentation of all decisions

##### **External Validity:**

- Comprehensive search strategy to maximize coverage
- Inclusion of diverse study types and contexts
- Clear reporting of limitations

#### **Reliability Measures**

- **Inter-rater reliability:** Cohen's Kappa for screening and quality assessment
- **Test-retest reliability:** Re-extraction of article subset after time interval
- **Audit trail:** Complete documentation of research process

### **Ethical Considerations**

This research uses publicly published data and does not involve human subjects, therefore does not require ethical clearance. However, this research adheres to research ethics principles including:

1. **Accurate reporting:** Reporting findings accurately without bias
2. **Attribution:** Proper citation of all sources
3. **Transparency:** Open reporting about methodology and limitations

### **Data Management and Documentation**

#### **Data Management Plan**

- **Data storage:** Secure cloud-based storage with regular backup
- **Version control:** Systematic versioning of all documents and databases
- **Access control:** Restricted access to ensure data integrity
- **Retention policy:** Data will be stored minimum 5 years post-publication

#### **Documentation**

- **Research log:** Chronological record of all research activities
- **Decision log:** Documentation of all inclusion/exclusion decisions
- **Change log:** Record of any protocol modifications

This methodology is designed to ensure that the systematic literature review is conducted with high methodological standards, producing valid and reliable findings that can be reproduced by other researchers.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Study Characteristics and Literature Distribution**

This systematic literature review analyzes 24 articles published in the period 2008-2025, with a temporal distribution showing increased research interest in the topic of leadership and community empowerment for educational advancement. The publication distribution shows the highest concentration in the 2018-2025 period (17 articles, 70.8%), indicating the relevance and urgency of this topic in the last decade. The analyzed articles encompass various geographical and institutional contexts, ranging from learning centers in Africa (Omboko, 2011; Arar, 2010) to higher education institutions in Europe and America (Segovia-Pérez, 2019; Martínez-Martínez, 2021).

Bibliometric analysis shows that the article with the highest citation impact is the study by Lindebaum (2011) with 100 citations, which examines the implementation of emotions in project management to achieve leadership effectiveness. Other highly cited articles include research by Segovia-Pérez (2019) on education for sustainable leadership (40 citations), Lo (2020) on transformational leadership practices in academic libraries (34 citations), and Hojat (2015) on empathy in identifying potential leaders in the medical field (33 citations).

### **RQ1: The Influence of Leadership Styles on Community Empowerment Initiative Effectiveness**

#### **Transformational Leadership in Educational Contexts**

Literature analysis identifies transformational leadership as the most effective style in promoting community empowerment initiatives in learning centers. Lo (2020) in his study of leading academic libraries worldwide shows that transformational leadership practices can create conducive environments for innovation and active stakeholder participation. This finding is reinforced by Seong's (2012) research analyzing distributed leadership in ICT reform in schools, showing that transformational approaches enable effective distribution of leadership responsibilities at various organizational levels.

In the context of women's empowerment, Braimah (2025) identifies that transformational leadership by women in education can inspire systemic change and create long-term impact. This study shows that female leaders who adopt transformational approaches tend to be more successful in building coalitions and encouraging community participation in educational programs.

#### **Authentic Leadership and Capacity Development**

Martínez-Martínez (2021) in their research on authentic leadership development programs shows that authentic leadership has significant impact on breaking barriers and creating empowerment opportunities. The "Awakenings" program examined in this research demonstrates how authentic leadership development can facilitate sustainable personal and organizational transformation.

Parkhill's (2018) research on pre-leadership processes in leadership training for adolescents provides insights into the importance of authentic development from an early

age. This study shows that strong foundations in authentic leadership principles contribute to long-term effectiveness in leading community empowerment initiatives.

### **Charismatic Leadership and Entrepreneurial Empowerment**

Maghdid (2025) explores the role of charismatic leadership in entrepreneurship contexts, showing that charismatic leaders can create inspiring visions and mobilize resources for community economic empowerment initiatives. This research identifies that government policy serves as a moderator in the relationship between charismatic leadership and entrepreneurial outcomes.

### **Community-Based Leadership**

Gazit (2021) in his analysis of leadership strategies in Facebook community leaders identifies emerging patterns in digital community leadership. This study shows that digital platforms enable new forms of community empowerment through distributed leadership and peer-to-peer learning mechanisms.

### **RQ2: Leadership Factors Contributing to Program Empowerment Sustainability Sustainable Leadership Practices**

Segovia-Pérez (2019) identifies that sustainable leadership at the university level requires integration of gender perspectives and social justice principles. This research shows that sustainability in women's empowerment programs depends on institutional commitment and systemic changes in organizational culture. This finding indicates that sustainability is not only a matter of individual leadership but requires an ecological approach involving multiple stakeholders.

Lewandowska (2023) in her study on organizational social sustainability shows that sustainable leadership practices contribute significantly to enhanced social sustainability outcomes. This research identifies that micro-level CSR activities serve as moderators in the relationship between sustainable leadership and organizational outcomes.

### **Empowerment through Interprofessional Collaboration**

Embree (2018) analyzes how nurse leadership institutes can empower nurses to lead interprofessional collaborative practice environments. This study shows that structured leadership development programs focusing on collaboration skills contribute to the sustainability of healthcare empowerment initiatives. This finding is relevant for understanding how professional development can become a foundation for sustainable community empowerment.

### **Quality Management and Sustainability**

Papaioannou (2024) in their research on Total Quality Management in sport tourism shows that systematic quality management approaches contribute to sustainability of service delivery in the hospitality industry. Although in a commercial context, principles identified in this research can be adapted for community empowerment initiatives in education.

### **Community Coalition Building**

Hotchkins (2022) analyzes the "Coalition of the Willing" as a model for promoting antiracism through empowering community college campus members. This research identifies that sustainable empowerment requires coalition building and shared leadership approaches involving diverse stakeholders in long-term commitment.

### **RQ3: Learning Center Characteristics Moderation on Leadership-Sustainability Relationship**

#### **Geographical and Cultural Context**

Cross-cultural studies analysis shows that geographical and cultural characteristics significantly moderate the relationship between leadership styles and empowerment outcomes. Arar (2010) in his study of Israeli-Palestinian women principals shows that cultural context and political tensions create unique challenges requiring adaptive leadership approaches. Similarly, Omboko (2011) in her research on female head teachers in Tanzania identifies that local cultural norms and resource constraints influence the effectiveness of different leadership strategies.

Sobaih (2024) analyzes barriers faced by Saudi women in the tourism industry, showing that cultural and regulatory contexts serve as significant moderators in the relationship between leadership aspirations and actual empowerment outcomes. This research indicates the importance of contextual adaptation in leadership development programs.

#### **Institution Size and Resources**

McCray (2010) in his study on the role of black churches in pedagogy of self-development for African American students shows that institutional resources and community connections play important roles in mediating leadership effectiveness. This research identifies that smaller, community-embedded institutions may have advantages in creating sustainable empowerment due to closer connections with local communities.

Seong (2012) analyzes distributed leadership in ICT reform, showing that school size and technological resources influence how leadership can be distributed effectively. This study indicates that larger institutions may require more formal structures for sustainable leadership distribution.

#### **Program Type and Orientation**

Hojat (2015) in their research on identification of potential leaders in medical education shows that program-oriented characteristics such as emphasis on empathy and social influence significantly moderate leadership development outcomes. This research shows that programs with strong social orientation tend to be more successful in developing leaders committed to community empowerment.

Merma-Molina (2022) analyzes satisfactions and opportunities of women academics in the framework of sustainable leadership, showing that academic institutions with strong research orientation can provide unique platforms for sustainable empowerment through knowledge creation and dissemination.

### **RQ4: Effective Leadership Models for Long-term Sustainability**

#### **Integrated Leadership Model**

Based on synthesis of analyzed literature, this research identifies an integrated leadership model that combines elements from transformational, authentic, and distributed leadership approaches. Eacott (2008) in his analysis of strategy in educational leadership emphasizes the importance of unity in leadership approaches that integrate multiple perspectives and stakeholder needs.

#### **Empowering Supervision and Voice Mechanisms**

Curcuruto (2023) identifies that upward safety communication in the workplace can be stimulated through a combination of empowering and monitoring supervision. This model shows that effective leadership for sustainability requires a balance between empowerment and accountability mechanisms.

### **Gender-Inclusive Leadership Development**

Multiple studies (Braimah, 2025; Sobaih, 2024; Segovia-Pérez, 2019; Merma-Molina, 2022) indicate that gender-inclusive leadership development is critical for sustainable community empowerment. These studies collectively show that models that explicitly address gender barriers and promote women's leadership capabilities tend to be more successful in creating lasting impact.

### **Technology-Enhanced Community Leadership**

Gazit (2021) provides insights into how digital platforms can enhance community leadership effectiveness. The model emerging from this research shows that technology-mediated leadership can extend the reach and impact of empowerment initiatives, particularly in contexts where traditional face-to-face interaction is limited.

### **Theoretical Implications**

Findings from this systematic review contribute to theoretical understanding in several areas. First, the research identifies that effective leadership for sustainable community empowerment requires a multi-dimensional approach integrating personal, interpersonal, and systemic factors. Second, sustainability in empowerment initiatives is significantly influenced by contextual factors that moderate leadership effectiveness.

Third, the research shows that traditional leadership theories need to be adapted to address unique challenges in community empowerment contexts, particularly in diverse cultural and resource-constrained environments. Fourth, findings suggest that technology can serve as an enabler for new forms of distributed and inclusive leadership.

### **Practical Implications**

For practitioners and policy makers, this research identifies several key implications. First, leadership development programs should incorporate multi-style approaches that address authentic, transformational, and collaborative leadership competencies. Second, sustainability planning should include explicit strategies for addressing contextual barriers and leveraging local resources.

Third, gender inclusion must be systematically integrated at all levels of leadership development and empowerment programming. Fourth, technology adoption should be strategically planned to enhance rather than replace traditional community engagement mechanisms.

### **Limitations and Future Research Directions**

This research has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the majority of studies analyzed were conducted in specific cultural contexts that may limit the generalizability of findings. Second, longitudinal data on sustainability outcomes is still limited, making it difficult to assess long-term impact of different leadership approaches.

Future research should prioritize longitudinal studies that track sustainability outcomes over extended periods. Additionally, more comparative studies across different cultural and institutional contexts are needed to better understand moderating effects of contextual factors. Finally, research on technology-mediated community leadership is still emerging and requires further investigation to understand full potential and limitations.

### **Conclusion**

This systematic literature review has analyzed 24 studies published in the period 2008-2025 to explore the relationship between leadership styles and sustainability of community empowerment initiatives in the context of educational advancement in

learning centers. Comprehensive analysis of available literature yields several key findings that provide significant contributions to understanding effective leadership in community empowerment initiatives.

First, this research identifies that transformational leadership emerges as the most effective style in promoting sustainable community empowerment, as demonstrated in studies by Lo (2020), Seong (2012), and Braimah (2025). Transformational leadership proves capable of creating inspiring visions, facilitating distributed leadership, and encouraging active participation from diverse stakeholders in long-term educational initiatives.

Second, authentic leadership development, as examined by Martínez-Martínez (2021) and Parkhill (2018), contributes significantly to breaking barriers and creating sustainable empowerment opportunities. The authentic leadership model shows high effectiveness in building trust, promoting transparency, and facilitating personal transformation essential for long-term community engagement.

Third, the research identifies that sustainability in community empowerment initiatives heavily depends on integration of multiple factors, including gender inclusion (Segovia-Pérez, 2019; Merma-Molina, 2022), community coalition building (Hotchkins, 2022), and systematic quality management approaches (Papaioannou, 2024). This finding indicates that sustainable empowerment requires a holistic approach that addresses structural, cultural, and individual factors simultaneously.

#### **RQ1: Leadership Style Influence on Empowerment Initiative Effectiveness**

Literature analysis shows that transformational leadership style has the most significant impact on effectiveness of community empowerment initiatives in educational contexts. Transformational leadership, as demonstrated in studies by Lo (2020) and Seong (2012), enables vision creation, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation essential for sustaining community engagement. Authentic leadership, explored by Martínez-Martínez (2021), provides foundation for trust building and transparency crucial for long-term empowerment success.

Charismatic leadership, as examined by Maghdid (2025), shows effectiveness in entrepreneurial empowerment contexts, particularly when supported by appropriate government policies. Digital community leadership, analyzed by Gazit (2021), emerges as a promising approach for extending reach and impact of empowerment initiatives through technology-mediated platforms.

#### **RQ2: Leadership Factors Contributing to Sustainability**

The research identifies several critical leadership factors that contribute to sustainability. Sustainable leadership practices, as conceptualized by Segovia-Pérez (2019) and Lewandowska (2023), require integration of social justice principles, gender perspectives, and environmental considerations in leadership decision-making processes. Empowering supervision approaches, demonstrated by Curcuruto (2023), balance empowerment with accountability mechanisms to ensure sustainable outcomes.

Coalition building capabilities, as shown in Hotchkins (2022), enable leaders to create support networks that extend beyond individual initiatives. Professional development focus, explored by Embree (2018), provides foundation for building leadership capacity that can sustain empowerment efforts over time. Quality management integration, analyzed by Papaioannou (2024), ensures systematic approaches to sustainability planning and implementation.

### **RQ3: Learning Center Characteristics Moderation**

Contextual factors significantly moderate the relationship between leadership styles and sustainability outcomes. Cultural and geographical contexts, as demonstrated in studies by Arar (2010), Omboko (2011), and Sobaih (2024), create unique challenges requiring adaptive leadership approaches. Institutional size and resource availability, explored by McCray (2010) and Seong (2012), influence how leadership can be distributed effectively across different organizational levels.

Program orientation and institutional mission, as shown in Hojat (2015) and Merma-Molina (2022), moderate effectiveness of different leadership approaches. Community-embedded institutions, as analyzed by McCray (2010), may have advantages in creating sustainable empowerment due to closer connections with local communities and better understanding of contextual needs.

### **RQ4: Effective Leadership Model for Long-term Sustainability**

Based on synthesis of literature findings, the research identifies an integrated leadership model that combines elements from transformational, authentic, and distributed leadership approaches. This model, informed by insights from Eacott (2008) on unity in educational leadership, emphasizes importance of collaborative approaches involving multiple stakeholders in shared leadership responsibilities.

The effective model for sustainable empowerment includes: gender-inclusive leadership development (Braumah, 2025; Segovia-Pérez, 2019), technology-enhanced community engagement (Gazit, 2021), empowering supervision mechanisms (Curcuruto, 2023), and systematic quality management integration (Papaioannou, 2024). This model recognizes that sustainability requires both individual leadership capabilities and supportive organizational and community systems.

This research provides several significant theoretical contributions. First, the study develops an integrated framework that combines traditional leadership theories with community empowerment and sustainability theories, creating more comprehensive understanding of leadership in community contexts. This framework bridges the gap between individual leadership competencies and systemic factors influencing empowerment outcomes.

Second, the research identifies contextual moderators that influence effectiveness of different leadership approaches, contributing to contingency theory understanding in community empowerment contexts. Cultural, geographical, and institutional factors emerge as critical considerations for leadership theory application in diverse settings.

Third, the study contributes to understanding of technology-mediated leadership in community empowerment, identifying new forms of distributed leadership enabled by digital platforms. This research extends traditional leadership theories to address contemporary challenges and opportunities in the digital era.

For practitioners and policy makers, this research provides actionable insights for designing and implementing sustainable community empowerment initiatives. Leadership development programs should incorporate multi-dimensional approaches addressing transformational, authentic, and collaborative leadership competencies simultaneously.

Sustainability planning should include systematic attention to gender inclusion, community coalition building, and quality management systems. Programs should be designed with explicit consideration of contextual factors, including cultural norms,

resource availability, and institutional characteristics that may moderate leadership effectiveness.

Technology adoption should be strategically planned to enhance rather than replace traditional community engagement mechanisms. Digital platforms can extend reach and impact of empowerment initiatives, but should be integrated carefully with existing community structures and relationships.

Based on analysis of current literature and identification of research gaps, several recommendations emerge for future research. First, longitudinal studies are critically needed to track sustainability outcomes over extended periods. Current literature predominantly consists of cross-sectional studies that cannot adequately assess long-term impact of different leadership approaches.

Second, comparative studies across different cultural and institutional contexts would enhance understanding of how contextual factors moderate leadership effectiveness. Multi-site studies using consistent methodologies across diverse settings would provide valuable insights for theory development and practical application.

Third, research on technology-mediated community leadership requires further development. Current understanding of how digital platforms can enhance community empowerment is still limited, and systematic research is needed to explore both opportunities and limitations of technology-enhanced leadership approaches.

Fourth, intervention studies testing specific leadership development models would provide stronger evidence for causal relationships between leadership approaches and empowerment outcomes. Experimental and quasi-experimental designs could provide more rigorous evidence for effectiveness of different leadership interventions.

Fifth, research on measurement instruments for assessing sustainability in community empowerment initiatives would enhance the field's ability to evaluate program effectiveness. Development of validated scales for measuring different dimensions of sustainability would support more consistent evaluation approaches across studies.

This systematic literature review demonstrates that effective leadership for sustainable community empowerment in educational contexts requires integrated, contextually-sensitive approaches combining multiple leadership competencies with systematic attention to sustainability factors. Transformational and authentic leadership approaches show particular promise, but their effectiveness is significantly moderated by cultural, institutional, and technological contexts.

Success in creating sustainable community empowerment depends not only on individual leadership capabilities, but also on supportive systems facilitating collaboration, inclusion, and quality management. Future research and practice should focus on developing integrated models addressing both leadership development and systemic factors supporting sustainability.

This research provides foundation for continued investigation in this important field and offers practical guidance for those working to create positive, lasting change in educational empowerment initiatives. Collaborative efforts between researchers, practitioners, and policy makers will be essential for advancing understanding and improving practice in this critical area of social development.

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