
**PARADOX OF TEACHERS TURNED LEADERS: SYSTEMATIC
REVIEW ANALYSIS**

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INTRODUCTION

Although school leadership has been extensively studied as a critical factor influencing educational effectiveness, institutional development, and learner achievement, much of the existing literature has primarily focused on leadership styles, leadership effectiveness, and organizational outcomes in urban and well-resourced educational settings (Bush, 2022; Tintoré et al., 2022; Fernandes et al., 2023). Studies have consistently demonstrated the positive effects of transformational, distributed, and democratic leadership on school performance, teacher motivation, and student learning outcomes (Brill, 2023; Kilag & Sasan, 2023; Toloy, 2024). However, the experiences of educators transitioning from classroom teaching to formal leadership positions remain relatively underexplored, particularly in rural and geographically isolated communities where access to leadership preparation, professional development opportunities, and mentoring support may be limited (Bush, 2022; Fernandes et al., 2023).

In the Philippine context, research has documented the multifaceted challenges encountered by school leaders, including overlapping administrative responsibilities, limited access to professional development programs, inadequate resources, and the need to manage relationships with diverse stakeholders (Dellomas & Deri, 2022; Dorado et al., 2024). Similarly, Butangen (2026) highlighted that teachers transitioning into leadership roles often experience uncertainty, self-doubt, and adjustment difficulties before eventually developing confidence, empowerment, and commitment to collaborative leadership. While these studies provide valuable insights into teacher-to-leader transitions, they are generally situated within

broader educational contexts and offer limited evidence regarding how such transitions occur in rural, geographically isolated, and culturally unique environments where contextual realities may significantly shape leadership development and practice (Dorado et al., 2024; Butangen, 2026).

A further gap exists in the theoretical understanding of leadership transitions among educators. Although the Transtheoretical Model (TTM) has been widely applied in studies involving behavioral change, organizational development, and personal transformation, its application in educational leadership research remains limited (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1983). Specifically, there is a paucity of empirical studies examining how the stages of precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, and maintenance manifest in the experiences of teachers who assume leadership positions. Consequently, little is known about how these developmental stages influence the emotional, professional, and managerial growth of emerging educational leaders, particularly within the Philippine educational setting (Butangen, 2026).

Moreover, existing literature reveals a shortage of context-specific and evidence-based frameworks designed to support teachers transitioning into leadership positions. Leadership preparation programs are often developed using generalized models that may not adequately address the realities of rural schools characterized by resource limitations, cultural diversity, and unique governance structures (Bush, 2022; Tintoré et al., 2022). This gap becomes even more significant in light of recent educational reforms, particularly the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum, which has introduced additional instructional, managerial, and stakeholder-related demands on school leaders (Department of Education, 2022). Despite these reforms, there remains limited research investigating how newly appointed educational leaders navigate curricular changes while simultaneously adapting to their evolving leadership roles.

Given these gaps, there is a need to explore the lived experiences of teachers who have transitioned into leadership positions within the rural and culturally distinct context of Tinoc District. By examining their developmental journeys through the lens of the Transtheoretical Model, this study seeks to generate a deeper understanding of the challenges, coping mechanisms, and leadership competencies that emerge throughout the transition process. Ultimately, the findings may contribute to the development of a contextualized professional development framework that can inform leadership preparation, succession planning, and

support systems for aspiring educational leaders in similar educational contexts (Butangen, 2026; Bush, 2022; Dorado et al., 2024).

Synthesis of Literature and Research Gaps

The literature consistently demonstrates that the transition from classroom teaching to school leadership is a multidimensional process involving emotional, professional, and managerial transformations. Across international and local studies, leadership transition is characterized by increasing responsibilities, evolving professional identities, and the need to develop competencies beyond classroom instruction (Bush, 2022; Fernandes et al., 2023; Butangen, 2026). Despite extensive scholarship on educational leadership, the existing body of knowledge remains fragmented, with most studies examining emotional, professional, or managerial dimensions independently rather than as interconnected aspects of leadership development.

A dominant theme emerging from the literature is the emotional dimension of leadership transition. International studies emphasize the importance of emotional intelligence, resilience, and adaptability in helping novice leaders navigate uncertainty, self-doubt, and organizational pressures (Fernandes et al., 2023; Santos, 2025; Parveen et al., 2022). Similarly, Philippine studies reveal that teachers transitioning into leadership positions initially experience fear, hesitation, and uncertainty before gradually developing confidence and leadership identity (Butangen, 2026; Dorado et al., 2024). While these studies establish the significance of emotional adaptation, there is limited empirical evidence explaining how emotional experiences evolve throughout the different stages of leadership transition. Existing literature tends to describe emotional challenges as isolated experiences rather than examining their progression and influence on long-term leadership development.

The literature also highlights the professional transformation that accompanies leadership transition. Studies suggest that professional influence is earned through competence, continuous learning, mentorship, and demonstrated leadership capacity rather than through formal authority alone (Toloy, 2024; Fernandes et al., 2023; Parveen et al., 2022). Within the Philippine context, professional credibility is further shaped by organizational structures, access to training, and opportunities for professional development (Dellomas & Deri, 2022; Dorado et al., 2024). However, current scholarship provides limited understanding of how teachers progressively establish and sustain professional influence throughout their leadership

journey. The developmental process through which educators acquire authority, gain stakeholder trust, and strengthen professional legitimacy remains insufficiently explored.

Another recurring theme concerns the managerial demands associated with leadership positions. International and local studies agree that school leaders are expected to demonstrate competence in policy implementation, performance monitoring, resource management, and stakeholder engagement (Fernandes et al., 2023; Fullan et al., 2024; Kilag & Sasan, 2023). Research further indicates that managerial effectiveness significantly influences organizational performance and school improvement outcomes. Nevertheless, much of the literature focuses on leadership outcomes rather than on the developmental processes through which managerial competencies are acquired. Consequently, there remains limited understanding of how teachers develop managerial expertise, overcome operational challenges, and sustain performance while adjusting to leadership responsibilities.

The literature likewise identifies numerous contextual and organizational challenges influencing leadership transitions. Common challenges include role overload, inadequate leadership preparation, limited mentorship opportunities, competing stakeholder expectations, resource constraints, and organizational pressures (Tintoré et al., 2022; Bush, 2022; Tamadoni et al., 2024). These challenges become more pronounced during periods of educational reform and crisis, requiring leaders to demonstrate greater adaptability, emotional intelligence, and decision-making capacity (Chatzipanagiotou & Katsarou, 2023; Fullan et al., 2024). Although previous studies have extensively documented these challenges, they generally focus on the presence of barriers rather than examining how leaders navigate and adapt to them throughout different phases of leadership development.

A significant theoretical gap emerges from the limited application of the Transtheoretical Model in educational leadership research. While the model has been widely utilized in behavioral change, organizational development, and health-related studies (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1983), its use in explaining teacher-to-leader transitions remains underexplored. Existing studies acknowledge that leadership development is a gradual and evolving process; however, few have systematically examined how teachers progress through the stages of precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, and maintenance while simultaneously managing emotional, professional, and managerial demands (Santos, 2025; Butangen, 2026).

Furthermore, the reviewed literature reveals a contextual gap within rural and culturally distinct educational settings. Most leadership studies have been conducted in urban schools, developed educational systems, or institutions with greater access to professional support mechanisms (Bush, 2022; Tintoré et al., 2022; Fernandes et al., 2023). Consequently, there is limited empirical evidence explaining how leadership transitions occur in geographically isolated and culturally unique communities where leadership opportunities, mentorship structures, and organizational resources may differ substantially from mainstream educational contexts.

Overall, the literature establishes that teacher-to-leader transition is a complex developmental process influenced by emotional adaptation, professional growth, managerial competence, and contextual realities. However, existing studies remain fragmented and largely fail to provide a holistic understanding of how these dimensions interact across the different stages of leadership development. Moreover, limited research has examined these transitions through the lens of the Transtheoretical Model, particularly within rural Philippine educational settings. Addressing these gaps is essential to developing a comprehensive and context-sensitive understanding of leadership transition and to informing evidence-based leadership preparation and professional development programs for aspiring school leaders.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Transtheoretical Model (TTM) of Change developed by Prochaska and DiClemente (1983), which conceptualizes change as a dynamic and developmental process occurring through a series of progressive stages. Originally developed to explain behavioral change, the model has subsequently been applied in organizational transformation, professional development, and leadership studies because of its capacity to explain how individuals gradually adapt to new roles, responsibilities, and identities. The model proposes that individuals move through five stages of change: precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, and maintenance. These stages provide a useful lens for understanding how teachers transition from classroom practitioners to educational leaders.

The transition from teaching to school leadership represents more than a change in position; it constitutes a profound transformation of professional identity, authority, and organizational responsibility. Leadership transition requires teachers to navigate emotional uncertainties, establish professional credibility, and develop managerial competencies necessary for leading educational institutions. Consistent with the assumptions of the Transtheoretical Model,

leadership development is not viewed as an instantaneous event but as a gradual process influenced by personal readiness, contextual conditions, and continuous adaptation. Teachers progress through varying levels of awareness, commitment, and competence as they assume leadership responsibilities, making the TTM an appropriate framework for examining the developmental nature of leadership emergence.

The present study further conceptualizes leadership transition through three interrelated dimensions: emotional adaptation, professional influence, and managerial competence. Emotional adaptation refers to the psychological adjustments teachers experience as they negotiate uncertainty, self-doubt, anxiety, and evolving leadership identities (Fernandes et al., 2023; Santos, 2025; Butangen, 2026). Professional influence pertains to the process through which teachers establish credibility, gain stakeholder trust, and exercise leadership authority through competence, collaboration, and continuous professional growth (Parveen et al., 2022; Toloy, 2024; Dorado et al., 2024). Managerial competence encompasses the acquisition and application of administrative, organizational, and instructional leadership skills necessary for effective school governance and performance management (Fullan et al., 2024; Kilag & Sasan, 2023).

Within the TTM framework, these three dimensions are not independent constructs but developmental processes that evolve throughout the stages of change. During precontemplation, teachers may not yet perceive themselves as potential leaders and possess limited awareness of the emotional, professional, and managerial demands of leadership. In the contemplation stage, they begin recognizing leadership opportunities and challenges while evaluating their readiness for expanded responsibilities. During preparation, teachers actively seek professional learning opportunities, mentorship, and leadership experiences that strengthen their competence and confidence. The action stage is characterized by active engagement in leadership practices, including decision-making, instructional supervision, stakeholder management, and organizational leadership. Finally, during maintenance, leadership behaviors become integrated into the individual's professional identity, resulting in sustained leadership practice and organizational influence.

The framework further recognizes the role of Social Cognitive Theory, particularly the concept of self-efficacy proposed by Bandura (1997), as an important explanatory mechanism influencing progression through the stages of change. Leadership self-efficacy influences an individual's confidence in performing leadership tasks, overcoming challenges, and persisting

despite setbacks. Teachers with stronger leadership self-efficacy are more likely to embrace leadership opportunities, navigate role transitions successfully, and sustain leadership engagement over time. Similarly, decisional balance, a core construct of the Transtheoretical Model, influences how teachers evaluate the perceived benefits and costs associated with leadership responsibilities. The interaction between self-efficacy and decisional balance determines teachers' readiness to progress from one stage of leadership development to another.

The study also acknowledges the influence of contextual and institutional factors on leadership development. The implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum, organizational expectations, community demands, resource limitations, and the unique socio-cultural characteristics of rural schools constitute external conditions that shape leadership experiences. These contextual realities may either facilitate or constrain progression through the stages of change. Consequently, leadership transition is understood not merely as an individual developmental process but as a socially and institutionally situated phenomenon shaped by both personal agency and environmental conditions.

Drawing from the Transtheoretical Model, Social Cognitive Theory, and contemporary leadership literature, this study posits that successful teacher-to-leader transition occurs when teachers effectively navigate emotional adaptation, professional influence, and managerial competence across the stages of change while responding to contextual demands and leveraging personal efficacy beliefs. The integration of these perspectives provides a comprehensive theoretical foundation for examining leadership transition and understanding how teachers develop into effective educational leaders within rural and culturally distinct educational settings.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study illustrates the process through which teachers transition into school leadership positions within the context of Tinoc District. Guided by the Transtheoretical Model of Change, the framework assumes that leadership development occurs through a series of progressive stages influenced by contextual conditions, psychological mechanisms, and leadership-related experiences.

The framework begins with Institutional and Contextual Factors, which serve as external drivers of leadership transition. These factors include the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum, organizational expectations, community demands, resource availability,

mentoring opportunities, and the socio-cultural realities of rural schools. These conditions create both opportunities and challenges that encourage teachers to assume leadership responsibilities and engage in leadership development.

The central component of the framework consists of the five stages of the Transtheoretical Model: Precontemplation, Contemplation, Preparation, Action, and Maintenance. These stages represent the developmental pathway through which teachers progress as they assume leadership roles. Progression across these stages is neither entirely linear nor automatic; rather, it is influenced by individual readiness, contextual realities, and adaptive experiences.

As teachers move through these stages, they experience three interconnected developmental dimensions: Emotional Adaptation, Professional Influence, and Managerial Competence. Emotional adaptation involves the development of resilience, confidence, emotional intelligence, and leadership identity. Professional influence refers to the acquisition of credibility, authority, mentorship capacity, and stakeholder trust. Managerial competence encompasses the development of administrative skills, policy implementation capabilities, resource management practices, and organizational leadership behaviors. These dimensions collectively shape teachers' leadership experiences and serve as indicators of leadership development throughout the transition process.

The relationship between contextual factors and leadership development is moderated by Self-Efficacy and Decisional Balance. Self-efficacy influences teachers' confidence in their ability to perform leadership responsibilities, while decisional balance reflects their evaluation of the perceived benefits and challenges associated with leadership roles. These psychological mechanisms determine teachers' readiness to progress through the stages of change and influence their responses to leadership challenges.

The framework culminates in Leadership Development Outcomes, characterized by leadership identity consolidation, sustained leadership practice, organizational influence, and adaptive leadership capacity. Teachers who successfully navigate the stages of change are expected to demonstrate effective leadership behaviors, contribute to school improvement initiatives, and sustain leadership engagement despite contextual challenges.

Ultimately, the framework proposes that leadership transition is a dynamic interaction among contextual conditions, psychological readiness, developmental stages, and leadership

competencies. Through this process, teachers gradually transform from classroom practitioners into educational leaders capable of responding effectively to contemporary educational demands and organizational challenges.

The systematic review reveals that the transition from teacher to school leader is characterized by a series of paradoxes in which educators simultaneously experience growth and uncertainty, authority and vulnerability, as well as opportunity and challenge. Across the reviewed literature, teachers-turned-leaders are expected to demonstrate competence in instructional leadership, organizational management, and stakeholder engagement while navigating significant emotional, professional, and managerial adjustments. International and local studies consistently highlight that leadership transition is not a straightforward progression but a dynamic and often contradictory process in which individuals balance self-doubt with increasing confidence, collegial relationships with supervisory authority, and established teaching identities with emerging leadership responsibilities (Fernandes et al., 2023; Santos, 2025; Butangen, 2026; Dorado et al., 2024). These paradoxical experiences are further influenced by contextual realities such as institutional expectations, resource limitations, educational reforms, and community demands, which simultaneously serve as catalysts and constraints to leadership development.

The review further demonstrates that while substantial literature exists on leadership competencies, effectiveness, and leadership preparation, there remains limited understanding of how teachers navigate these paradoxes across the developmental stages of leadership transition. Existing studies often examine emotional adaptation, professional influence, managerial competence, or contextual challenges in isolation, resulting in a fragmented understanding of the leadership journey. Moreover, the application of the Transtheoretical Model in explaining teacher-to-leader transitions remains underexplored, particularly in rural and culturally distinct educational settings. Consequently, a significant gap exists in understanding how emotional, professional, and managerial dimensions interact throughout the stages of leadership development and how teachers reconcile competing demands while constructing a sustainable leadership identity. Addressing this gap is essential for developing evidence-based and context-responsive leadership development frameworks that can better support aspiring school leaders in navigating the complex realities of educational leadership.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a systematic review methodology to synthesize and critically analyze existing literature on the transition of teachers into school leadership roles. The review followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework to ensure transparency, rigor, and replicability in the identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion of relevant studies. Scholarly articles, dissertations, conference proceedings, and peer-reviewed publications published between 2022 and 2026 were retrieved from major academic databases, including Google Scholar, ERIC, Scopus, Web of Science, and ProQuest, using keywords such as “teacher leadership transition,” “teachers turned school leaders,” “leadership development,” “school leadership challenges,” “leadership identity,” and “Transtheoretical Model.” Inclusion criteria focused on studies examining emotional, professional, managerial, and contextual dimensions of teacher-to-leader transitions in basic and higher education settings, while studies unrelated to educational leadership or lacking empirical evidence were excluded. Following data extraction, the selected studies underwent thematic synthesis and systematic analysis, wherein recurring patterns, concepts, and findings were coded and organized into major themes, including emotional adaptation, professional influence, managerial competence, leadership development stages, and leadership challenges. Through comparative analysis, convergences, divergences, emerging paradoxes, and research gaps were identified, enabling the development of a comprehensive understanding of the complexities surrounding teacher-to-leader transitions and informing the proposed contextualized framework for educational leadership development.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Theme 1: Emotional Paradox – From Self-Doubt to Leadership Confidence

The systematic review revealed that one of the most prominent paradoxes experienced by teachers transitioning into leadership positions is the coexistence of uncertainty and confidence. Across the reviewed studies, teachers initially reported feelings of anxiety, fear, self-doubt, and emotional vulnerability upon assuming leadership responsibilities (Santos, 2025; Butangen, 2026; Fernandes et al., 2023). These emotions often stemmed from the shift in professional identity, increased accountability, and the expectation to lead former peers. However, despite these challenges, the literature consistently demonstrated that teachers gradually developed confidence, emotional resilience, and leadership efficacy through experience, mentorship, and reflective practice. This finding suggests that emotional

discomfort is not merely a barrier to leadership development but an essential component of the transformational process.

The paradox lies in the fact that effective leadership often emerges from periods of uncertainty rather than from immediate confidence. Teachers who successfully navigated emotional challenges were more likely to develop authentic leadership identities and stronger interpersonal relationships within their organizations. The findings support the view that emotional adaptation is a developmental process that contributes to long-term leadership effectiveness and organizational trust.

Theme 2: Professional Paradox – From Collegial Equality to Professional Authority

The review further revealed a professional paradox wherein teachers transitioning into leadership roles must maintain collegial relationships while simultaneously exercising authority and accountability. Several studies emphasized that newly appointed school leaders frequently struggle to balance their identity as former peers with their emerging role as supervisors and decision-makers (Parveen et al., 2022; Dorado et al., 2024; Toloy, 2024). Teachers-turned-leaders often face resistance, role ambiguity, and challenges in establishing credibility, particularly when leading colleagues with whom they previously shared equal professional status.

Despite these challenges, the literature indicates that sustainable professional influence is not derived from positional power but from demonstrated competence, ethical leadership, collaboration, and continuous professional development. Successful leaders gradually earn legitimacy through consistent performance, instructional expertise, and relationship-building. This finding highlights the paradox that authority in educational leadership is most effective when it is exercised through influence rather than control. Consequently, leadership development programs should emphasize professional credibility, communication skills, and collaborative leadership practices to facilitate smoother transitions.

Theme 3: Managerial Paradox – Increased Authority Amid Resource Constraints

Another major finding concerns the managerial paradox experienced by teachers who transition into leadership positions. While leadership roles grant increased authority and decision-making responsibilities, they simultaneously expose individuals to resource limitations, administrative complexities, and heightened accountability pressures (Kilag & Sasan, 2023; Dorado et al., 2024; Fullan et al., 2024). School leaders are expected to

implement policies, monitor performance, manage stakeholders, and ensure organizational effectiveness despite frequently operating under constrained conditions.

The review revealed that managerial competence develops progressively through practical experience, problem-solving, and adaptive leadership. Effective leaders learn to balance organizational demands with available resources while maintaining educational quality and stakeholder satisfaction. The paradox emerges because leadership success often depends not on the abundance of resources but on the leader's ability to mobilize limited resources strategically. These findings underscore the importance of experiential learning, leadership coaching, and contextualized managerial training in preparing future school leaders.

Theme 4: Developmental Paradox – Leadership as a Linear and Iterative Process

The literature consistently portrayed leadership transition as both a linear and cyclical developmental process. Studies grounded in the Transtheoretical Model identified sequential stages of leadership development, including precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, and maintenance (Santos, 2025; Prochaska & DiClemente, 1983). However, local studies demonstrated that teachers frequently revisit earlier stages when confronted with new organizational challenges, policy reforms, or contextual changes (Butangen, 2026; Dorado et al., 2024).

This finding highlights a developmental paradox wherein leadership growth follows an identifiable progression while simultaneously requiring continuous adaptation and relearning. Leadership development should therefore be understood not as a destination but as an ongoing process of professional renewal. The findings support contemporary leadership theories that view leadership as dynamic, context-dependent, and continuously evolving.

Theme 5: Contextual Paradox – Institutional Demands as Both Drivers and Barriers

The review identified contextual factors as both catalysts and constraints in leadership development. Educational reforms, including the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum, institutional accountability systems, community expectations, and organizational policies create opportunities for teachers to assume leadership roles and expand their professional influence. Simultaneously, these same factors introduce additional pressures, workload demands, and organizational challenges that complicate leadership transitions (Bush, 2022; Tintoré et al., 2022; Tamadoni et al., 2024).

This contextual paradox demonstrates that leadership development cannot be fully understood apart from the environments in which it occurs. Teachers' leadership experiences

are shaped not only by personal competencies but also by institutional structures, support systems, and socio-cultural realities. Consequently, leadership preparation programs must be context-responsive and aligned with the realities faced by emerging school leaders.

The systematic review established that the transition from teacher to school leader is fundamentally characterized by a series of interconnected paradoxes involving emotional adaptation, professional identity, managerial competence, developmental progression, and contextual influence. Teachers-turned-leaders simultaneously experience vulnerability and confidence, authority and collegiality, empowerment and constraint, progression and regression, as well as opportunity and challenge. These paradoxes do not represent contradictions that must be resolved; rather, they constitute essential developmental tensions that shape leadership growth. The findings further reveal that leadership transition is a complex, multidimensional, and context-dependent process influenced by personal, professional, organizational, and societal factors. Therefore, effective leadership development requires comprehensive support systems that address emotional readiness, professional credibility, managerial competence, and contextual adaptability to prepare teachers for the realities of contemporary educational leadership.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the systematic review, the transition from classroom teaching to school leadership is a complex, multidimensional, and developmental process characterized by a series of interconnected paradoxes. Teachers who assume leadership roles experience simultaneous emotional vulnerability and professional growth as they navigate uncertainty, self-doubt, and increasing leadership responsibilities. Emotional adaptation emerged as a critical component of leadership development, with confidence, resilience, and leadership identity evolving through continuous experience, reflection, and organizational support.

The review further concludes that professional influence and leadership credibility are not automatically acquired through appointment to leadership positions but are gradually established through demonstrated competence, ethical practice, collaboration, and continuous professional learning. Teachers-turned-leaders must balance collegial relationships with supervisory responsibilities, creating tensions that require adaptive leadership strategies and effective interpersonal skills. These findings suggest that leadership effectiveness is rooted more in influence and professional legitimacy than in formal authority alone.

Moreover, managerial competence develops progressively as teachers encounter the realities of organizational leadership. Effective school leaders learn to navigate administrative

responsibilities, stakeholder expectations, policy implementation, and resource constraints while maintaining school performance and educational quality. The review demonstrates that leadership success depends not only on technical competencies but also on the ability to respond strategically to contextual and organizational challenges.

The findings also confirm the applicability of the Transtheoretical Model in understanding leadership transition as a staged process involving precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, and maintenance. However, leadership development is not strictly linear, as teachers frequently revisit earlier stages when confronted with new responsibilities, reforms, or institutional challenges. This iterative nature of leadership development underscores the importance of continuous support, mentoring, and professional development throughout a leader's career.

Finally, the review concludes that contextual factors—including educational reforms, organizational culture, resource availability, community expectations, and institutional support systems—play a significant role in shaping leadership transitions. The paradoxes identified in the review suggest that leadership development occurs through the dynamic interaction of personal agency and environmental influences. Therefore, teacher-to-leader transition should be viewed not merely as a career advancement process but as a transformative journey involving identity reconstruction, competency development, and organizational adaptation.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of the systematic review, educational institutions should establish structured leadership development programs specifically designed for teachers transitioning into leadership positions. These programs should include leadership preparation courses, mentoring systems, coaching mechanisms, and experiential learning opportunities that address the emotional, professional, and managerial dimensions of leadership development.

School systems and educational authorities should strengthen leadership support structures by providing continuous professional development opportunities focused on emotional intelligence, conflict management, instructional leadership, strategic planning, and organizational management. Such initiatives can help emerging leaders navigate the challenges associated with leadership transition and improve their effectiveness in school administration.

Policymakers and educational leaders should institutionalize mentorship programs that pair aspiring and newly appointed school leaders with experienced administrators. Mentorship can

facilitate leadership socialization, strengthen self-efficacy, and provide practical guidance for managing complex leadership responsibilities within diverse educational contexts.

Given the influence of contextual factors on leadership transition, leadership development initiatives should be responsive to local realities, particularly in rural and geographically isolated schools. Training programs should consider cultural, organizational, and resource-related challenges to ensure that leadership preparation remains relevant, equitable, and contextually appropriate.

Future researchers are encouraged to conduct empirical investigations examining teacher-to-leader transitions using longitudinal, qualitative, mixed-methods, and phenomenological approaches. Further studies may also explore the applicability of the Transtheoretical Model in leadership development across different educational levels, geographical settings, and organizational contexts to validate and expand the findings of the present review.

Lastly, a contextualized Teacher-to-Leader Transition Framework should be developed and validated to guide leadership succession planning, leadership preparation, and professional development initiatives. Such a framework may serve as a valuable tool for educational institutions seeking to cultivate resilient, adaptive, and effective school leaders capable of responding to the evolving demands of contemporary education.

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