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Transformational Leadership Toolkit for Managing Global AI Companies: a Literature Review

Abstract

The *purpose* of this paper is to synthesise the key tools and practices employed by transformational leaders in managing international Artificial Intelligence companies. In the contemporary era, characterised by accelerated technological progress and the integration of global markets, the capacity for effective leadership is paramount for AI enterprises to innovate, adapt, and achieve global expansion. The study under discussion here highlights how transformational leadership extends beyond traditional charismatic influence to encompass strategic technological integration, ethical governance, and sophisticated talent management tailored for the AI sector. *Methodology*. In the context of this study, which encompasses publications from 2018 to October 2025, a meticulous search strategy was employed across multiple scientific databases. This approach facilitated the consideration of the latest achievements and discussions related to the development of artificial intelligence and leadership. A systematic search was conducted in the electronic databases Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and Business Source Complete. Key search terms and phrases used included: "Transformational leadership" AND "AI" OR "Artificial intelligence"; "Leadership toolkit" OR "Leadership tools" OR "Leadership practices" AND "AI companies" OR "Global corporations" OR "Transnational enterprises"; "AI strategy" AND "international competitiveness" OR "global market" AND "leadership"; "Ethical leadership in AI" OR "Responsible AI governance" AND "corporate strategy"; "Human-AI collaboration" OR "AI team" AND "leadership" AND "global". *Results*. A thorough review of contemporary scientific literature discloses a particular set of methodologies and approaches employed by transformational leaders in leading international AI corporations. This toolkit is comprised of a comprehensive set of practices and instruments that have been designed to empower leaders to operate effectively within the complex and dynamic AI industry. In addition to this, the toolkit also fosters innovation and human potential development, as well as adherence to ethical principles in international operations. *Practical implications*. This study's practical value lies in its provision of a comprehensive framework that enables leaders, policymakers and scholars to understand and implement effective leadership strategies in the ever-changing global AI landscape. *Value/Originality*. This study provides a fresh perspective by systematically synthesising fragmented literature to create a comprehensive and unified toolkit of transformational leadership practices specifically designed for the unique demands and global operations of AI companies.

1 Introduction

The advent of Artificial Intelligence has precipitated a paradigm shift in the global competitive landscape, compelling corporations worldwide to undertake a comprehensive re-evaluation of their strategic frameworks and leadership paradigms. In this landscape, the ability to innovate, adapt, and rapidly scale AI-driven solutions is paramount for achieving and sustaining international competitiveness. The contemporary discourse highlights AI's transformative potential across various sectors, from enhancing corporate performance (Zhang & Huang, 2024) to reshaping strategic decision-making (Vaishali

Rahate et al., 2025) and fostering inclusive digital transformations (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2025). Whilst the role of leadership in organisational success is universally acknowledged, the specific mechanisms through which transformational leaders guide AI companies to excel on the global stage remain an area for focused exploration.

Recent academic works emphasise the evolving nature of leadership in the AI era. For instance, Zaidi et al. (2024) emphasise the necessity for technopreneurs to comprehend the evolution of AI in organisational leadership, underscoring the importance of leaders possessing "tech-savvy" capabilities. Bevilacqua et al. conducted a systematic literature review suggesting that artificial intelligence enhances the leadership capabilities of top managers (Bevilacqua, Masárová, Perotti, & Ferraris, 2025). In the present study, Zhang and Huang explore the potential of transformational leadership to optimise corporate performance within the context of AI-driven ERP systems (Zhang & Huang, 2024). Furthermore, Kandasamy examines ethical leadership in the age of AI, outlining the challenges and opportunities this presents (Kandasamy, 2024), while Abasaheb and Rajagopal provide an empirical overview of AI's role in empowering leadership in digital transformation (Sabale Anjali Abasaheb & Rajagopal Subashini, 2023). Weiss, Nguyen and Shaik examine the broader impact of AI on corporate leadership (Nguyen & Shaik, 2024), while Rožman et al. explore how AI can reduce employee workload to boost company performance (Rožman, Oreški & Tominc, 2023). Meanwhile, Raisch and Fomina examine the potential of combining human and artificial intelligence for hybrid problem-solving in organisations (Raisch & Fomina, 2024). Pietsch and Mah emphasise the importance of a digital mindset when leading AI transformation in schools, a principle that is also applicable to corporate environments (Pietsch & Mah, 2024). Together, these studies demonstrate the growing academic interest in the implications of AI for leadership and organisational success.

Transformational leadership, characterised by an emphasis on inspiration, intellectual stimulation, personalised attention and positive role modelling, has long been recognised for its ability to drive organisational change and encourage innovation (Bevilacqua, Masárová, Perotti & Ferraris, 2025). However, the unique demands of AI companies, characterised by rapid technological cycles, complex ethical considerations and the need for cross-border collaboration, necessitate a deeper understanding of how this leadership style can be translated into actionable strategies. This paper argues that possessing transformational qualities alone is not enough. Rather, it is the deliberate application of a specialised leadership toolkit that empowers global AI corporations to navigate complex challenges and seize unprecedented opportunities on the international stage.

This review article aims to systematically explore and synthesise existing academic and practitioner literature in order to delineate the specific toolkit used by transformational leaders at global AI companies. The paper will examine how these tools – ranging from strategic visioning and cultural design to talent development and ethical governance – are used to encourage innovation, improve operational efficiency and, ultimately, strengthen international competitiveness. This paper provides a comprehensive overview of the practical applications of transformational leadership by focusing on the experiences of prominent global corporations at the forefront of AI development and deployment. It offers valuable insights for scholars, practitioners and policymakers navigating the evolving landscape of AI.

2 Literature Review

In the contemporary era of artificial intelligence, there is an imperative for a re-evaluation of conventional leadership paradigms. Transformational leadership, with its focus on inspiring followers, intellectual stimulation and fostering a shared vision, is particularly well suited to navigating the dynamic and disruptive nature of the AI industry. As Bevilacqua et al. (2025) systematically reviewed, AI can enhance the leadership of top managers. However, in the AI era, this leadership style's toolkit extends beyond conventional charismatic influence. Leaders must now become 'tech-savvy' and demonstrate a deep understanding of AI's capabilities and limitations. They must act as catalysts for technological adoption and strategic integration. Zaidi et al. emphasise how AI will transform organisational leadership from the perspective of technopreneurs (Syed, Aslam, Mahmood, Ahmad & Raza, 2024), while Weiss Nguyen and Shaik explore the wider implications of AI for corporate leadership (Nguyen & Shaik, 2024). These leaders play a pivotal role in fostering environments where AI is not merely implemented, but rather intelligently and ethically integrated into the organisational fabric. Abasaheb and Rajagopal, for instance, emphasise the potential of AI to enhance leadership during periods of digital transformation (Sabale Anjali Abasaheb & Rajagopal Subashini, 2023). The specific tools within this toolkit include the fostering of a culture of continuous learning and adaptation, the promotion of cross-functional collaboration to leverage diverse AI expertise, and the championing of ethical AI development and deployment. Kandasamy (2024) explores the challenges and opportunities of ethical leadership in the age of AI. Such leaders can effectively guide their organisations through digital transformations, ensuring that AI initiatives align with broader strategic goals and enhance long-term

profitability. This has been observed by Zhang and Huang in the context of AI-driven ERP systems (Zhang & Huang, 2024) and by Gupta and Verma in relation to transformational leadership in strategic management (Gupta & Verma, 2024). The ability to challenge traditional beliefs and inspire intellectual curiosity is paramount for fostering the innovation required to remain competitive in an ever-changing technological landscape (Zhang & Huang, 2024).

Artificial intelligence has had a profound impact on corporate strategy, offering unprecedented opportunities to enhance operational efficiency, drive innovation and secure a competitive advantage in global markets. In his 2024 publication, Menzies explores the use, challenges and suggestions for the deployment of AI in international business. For leading global AI corporations, the strategic deployment of AI is essential for international competitiveness. The World Economic Forum emphasises the importance of fostering an inclusive digital transformation as AI becomes more widespread among firms (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2025). This toolkit includes using AI for data-driven strategic decision-making, offering faster and more agile responses to market dynamics. Rožman et al. demonstrate that AI-supported workload reduction can enhance company performance (Rožman, Oreški & Tominc, 2023), while Rahate et al. explore the impact of AI on strategic decision-making processes (Vaishali Rahate et al., 2025). AI-powered analytics allow companies to identify emerging market opportunities, predict demand fluctuations and optimise global supply chains, thereby influencing internationalisation strategies directly. Chishty et al. (2025) examine the use of AI in the export performance of multinational corporations.

Leading corporations use AI to develop innovative products and services, enhance high-tech product development and stimulate workforce creativity. These factors all contribute significantly to their global market position. Ali et al. (2024) discuss how to maximise innovation and operational efficiency by synergising AI with business. The ability to implement and scale AI solutions effectively in diverse international contexts is a critical strategic tool that requires leaders to navigate complex technological and regulatory landscapes. Haefner et al. (2023) provide a framework for implementing and scaling artificial intelligence. Furthermore, AI facilitates the development of AI-powered business models, which are essential for maintaining a competitive edge in an increasingly digital global economy. Climent et al. (2024) elaborate on AI-enabled business models for competitive advantage. Transformational leaders play a pivotal role in orchestrating strategic shifts and ensuring that investments in AI translate into tangible improvements in performance and market share (Bevilacqua, Masárová, Perotti & Ferraris, 2025). Furthermore, they navigate the uneven global

adoption of AI, making strategic choices about market targeting and mitigating friction in new territories (Bearson & Wright, 2025).

Leading global AI corporations demonstrate a sophisticated toolkit of transformational leadership practices to cultivate international competitiveness. This includes:

Visionary Communication and Strategic Storytelling. Transformational leaders articulate a compelling AI vision that resonates across diverse international teams and stakeholders, inspiring commitment to ambitious AI initiatives. In the extant literature, Ofosu-Ampong and Adu-Ntim (2025) posit a link between transformational leadership, AI competitiveness and project performance. It is evident that they articulate the manner in which AI contributes to the company's mission and global impact, leveraging AI to enhance communication and feedback mechanisms, ensuring alignment across multinational operations, as discussed by Zaidi et al. (Syed, Aslam, Mahmood, Ahmad, & Raza, 2024).

Intellectual Stimulation and Capability Building. These leaders foster an environment that encourages continuous learning, experimentation, and critical thinking for AI development and application. Their strategic arsenal includes the establishment of AI academies, the promotion of cross-functional AI task forces, and the investment in advanced training programmes to enhance the competencies of their global workforce. Pietsch and Mah (2024) emphasise a digital mindset as a prerequisite for leading AI transformation in schools, a principle that is applicable to corporations. This intellectual stimulation is critical for solving complex problems and driving innovation in AI-centric domains, as highlighted by Raisch and Fomina (Raisch & Fomina, 2024).

Individualized Consideration and Talent Management. In the AI era, recognising human talent is paramount. Transformational leaders use tools for personalised mentorship and career development to attract and retain top AI talent globally, while fostering an inclusive culture. Zárate-Torres et al. (2025) study the influence of leadership on human–artificial intelligence collaboration. They recognise the importance of carefully managing human-AI collaboration. They design systems that augment human capabilities rather than replacing them outright. This mitigates the potential for dehumanisation, which Hang and Chen (2022) identify as a concern for realising the full potential of AI.

Ethical Governance and Responsible AI Frameworks. In light of the profound societal implications of AI, it is crucial to establish and enforce robust ethical AI guidelines and governance structures. Uddin (2023) stresses the importance of ethical leadership in the AI era, while Kandasamy (2024) outlines a framework for ethical leadership in the AI age. Leaders of global corporations engage with stakeholders, including ethicists and AI experts,

to prioritise transparency, fairness and accountability in the development and deployment of AI across all international operations. London (2024) discusses accountability for responsible AI practices and the ethical responsibilities of senior leadership. They integrate ethical considerations into strategic decision-making processes to ensure that AI systems align with societal values and build public trust worldwide. Meanwhile, Nyaribo et al. (2025) examine ethical decision-making using AI in multinational corporations, and Oladele et al. (2024) delve into the ethical implications and governance of AI in business decisions.

Cultivating a Culture of Hybrid Intelligence. The most effective corporations integrate human intelligence with AI capabilities. Transformational leaders utilise tools that facilitate human–AI collaboration, in which AI assists with complex and exploratory tasks while human judgement provides contextual understanding and ethical oversight. This concept is examined in the work of Raisch and Fomina (2024) and Zárate-Torres et al. (2025). As suggested by Zárate Torres et al. (2025) and Simón et al. (2024) for human-AI teaming for value creation, this requires identifying leadership profiles capable of managing human-machine teams and developing training that emphasises digital, adaptive, and ethical skills.

These examples demonstrate how leading global AI corporations implement transformational leadership by using specific tools and strategies to achieve and maintain a competitive advantage on the international stage.

Although the transformational leadership toolkit offers significant advantages, its deployment in the AI era presents challenges. Leaders must address issues such as algorithmic bias, data privacy concerns and the potential for AI to cause job displacement, all of which have ethical and societal implications (Kandasamy, 2024). The tension between the efficiency of global value chains and data localisation requirements creates complex ethical and logistical challenges. Hossain et al. (2025) highlight the influence of AI-driven capabilities on responsible leadership. Furthermore, building trust in AI systems among a diverse global workforce can be challenging due to differing cultural perceptions and understanding of AI algorithms. Ofem introduces a model for the ethical integration of AI into organisational behaviour (Ofem, 2024). Ultimately, the responsibility for ensuring ethical AI practices rests with human leadership, necessitating constant vigilance and proactive stakeholder engagement. As De Cremer and Narayanan (2023) point out, although AI tools can help, they also have limitations when it comes to making organisations more ethical. London emphasises the ethical responsibilities of senior leadership in promoting responsible AI practices (London, 2024). Effectively applying the transformational leadership toolkit requires navigating these complex ethical landscapes while simultaneously driving technological advancement and global expansion. Gabriel et al. (2024) discuss the ethics of advanced AI assistants.

Despite the significant body of research shedding light on various aspects of transformational leadership and its interaction with artificial intelligence, the existing literature often appears fragmented. Specifically, current works tend to focus on individual tools or challenges, yet a comprehensive, systematic approach that brings together this knowledge in the form of a "toolkit" for managing international AI companies is lacking. Although the importance of ethical governance and hybrid intelligence is widely recognised, the practical mechanisms for adapting leadership models to cultural and regulatory differences in a global context have not been sufficiently explored. Furthermore, additional empirical studies are needed to quantitatively assess the effectiveness of applying specific transformational tools in making AI companies internationally competitive. Thus, this review highlights the need for a more in-depth analysis and the development of a unified framework that would allow leaders to navigate the complexities of management in the AI era more effectively, particularly in a dynamic international environment.

3 Materials and Methods

This review article systematically synthesizes extant literature to delineate the toolkit of transformational leadership employed by leading global AI companies to shape their international competitiveness. The methodological approach adopted is intended to guarantee a thorough and meticulous evaluation of pertinent academic and practitioner contributions.

A multi-database search strategy was employed to identify relevant studies published between 2018 and October 2025, reflecting the rapid recent advancements and discourse surrounding AI and leadership. The following electronic databases were systematically searched: Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and Business Source Complete.

The primary keywords and their combinations used for the search included:
- "Transformational leadership" AND "AI" OR "Artificial Intelligence";
- "Leadership toolkit" OR "Leadership tools" OR "Leadership practices" AND "AI companies" OR "global corporations" OR "multinational enterprises";
- "AI strategy" AND "international competitiveness" OR "global market" AND "leadership";
- "Ethical AI leadership" OR "Responsible AI governance" AND "corporate strategy";
- "Human-AI collaboration" OR "AI teaming" AND "leadership" AND "global";

The Boolean operators were employed to combine search terms in an effective manner, with truncation symbols (e.g., "leader" to capture leader, leadership, leaders) being utilised as appropriate. The application of filters served to restrict the scope of the search to peer-reviewed articles, conference papers, and reputable book chapters published in English.

Articles were screened based on the following criteria:

Inclusion Criteria:
– Published in peer-reviewed journals, reputable conference proceedings, or academic books;
– focused on Artificial Intelligence in a business or organisational context:
– discussed leadership, particularly transformational leadership, or related leadership styles;
– addressed aspects of international competitiveness, global strategy, or multinational operations;
– published in English;
– published from 2018 onwards to ensure contemporary relevance.

Exclusion Criteria:
– Editorials, opinion pieces, dissertations, or trade publications without peer review (unless they provided unique, substantiated corporate examples);
– studies primarily focused on AI's technical development without a clear link to leadership or organisational strategy;
– articles where the primary focus was on sectors unrelated to global corporate AI operations (e.g., purely public sector, highly specialised niche technical applications without broader business implications);
– articles not available in full text.

The preliminary search yielded a substantial number of results. Titles and abstracts were initially screened for relevance against the established inclusion and exclusion criteria. The process of removing duplicate entries was carried out. The articles that were considered to be potentially relevant were subjected to a full-text review. Any discrepancies in article selection were resolved through discussion among the authors. A systematic tracking log was used to document the number of articles that were identified, screened, and ultimately included in the review.

For each included article, the following information was extracted:
– Author(s) and publication year;
– research question(s) or primary objective;
– type of study (e.g., empirical, conceptual, case study);
– key findings related to transformational leadership's toolkit in AI companies;
– specific examples or discussions of leading global corporations;
– insights into how these practices impact international competitiveness;

– identified challenges or ethical considerations.

A thematic synthesis approach was employed to analyse the extracted data. This involved several stages:
– Initial Coding. All extracted data were coded line-by-line to identify recurrent concepts, ideas, and specific leadership "tools" or "practices" relevant to transformational leadership in AI contexts.
– Developing Descriptive Themes. Codes were grouped into broader descriptive themes related to the toolkit, such as "Strategic Visioning," "Talent Development," "Ethical Governance," and "Human-AI Teaming".
– Generating Analytical Themes. These descriptive themes were then further analyzed to identify overarching analytical themes that address the core research question: "What is the toolkit of transformational leadership in shaping the international competitiveness of AI companies?" This stage involved looking for patterns, relationships, and contradictions across themes and studies, with a particular focus on how these instruments manifest in the experiences of leading global corporations.
– Identifying Gaps and Future Research. The synthesis also aimed to identify areas where current literature is sparse, highlighting avenues for future research.

This systematic approach ensures that the review provides a robust and evidence-based understanding of the transformational leadership toolkit in the context of AI-driven international competitiveness.

4 Results and Discussion

A comprehensive review of contemporary literature reveals a distinct set of tools employed by transformational leaders within prominent global AI corporations, directly impacting their international competitiveness. This toolkit is comprised of a sophisticated set of practices and tools that enable leaders to navigate the unique complexities of the AI domain, fostering innovation, talent development, and ethical conduct across diverse global operations.

Strategic Visioning and Global AI Integration

A fundamental component of the transformational leader's repertoire is the capacity to articulate and instil a lucid, persuasive AI vision that transcends national boundaries and cultural subtleties. As demonstrated by Ofosu-Ampong and Adu-Ntim, transformational leadership has been shown to be associated with AI competitiveness (Kingsley, Ofosu-Ampong & Adu-Ntim, 2025). This involves more than simply adopting AI technologies; it necessitates a strategic integration of these technologies into the fundamental business model, with the objective of attaining a global competitive advantage. In their discussion, Climent et al. explore the potential of AI-driven business models to generate competitive advantage (Climent

et al., 2024). Leaders effectively communicate how AI contributes to the company's overarching mission and global impact, using AI-driven insights for improved internal communication and feedback, ensuring alignment across multinational teams. As Zaidi et al. (2024) demonstrate, the evolution of organisational leadership is a key consequence of AI. This vision is imperative for the direction of innovation efforts and the securing of global market share, thus enabling companies to adapt swiftly to the uneven global adoption of AI and to make informed decisions regarding market targeting, as discussed by Bearson and Wright (Bearson & Wright, 2025).

Cultivating Intellectual Stimulation and Capability Building

Transformational leaders foster an environment of continuous learning and intellectual curiosity, which is paramount for AI companies operating in rapidly evolving technological landscapes. Their toolkit includes significant investment in the development of artificial intelligence capabilities, such as the establishment of internal AI academies, the promotion of cross-functional AI task forces, and the implementation of advanced training programmes for a global workforce. Pietsch and Mah (2024) emphasise a digital mindset as a prerequisite for leading AI transformation. This approach has been demonstrated to enhance the technical proficiency of employees, whilst also encouraging problem-solving and critical thinking, which are both essential for driving innovation in the field of AI. In their discussion, Raisch and Fomina explore the potential of integrating human and artificial intelligence to facilitate hybrid problem-solving methodologies (Raisch & Fomina, 2024). This finding is consistent with the prevailing conceptions that digital transformation necessitates the cultivation of a "digital mindset" among leaders (Pietsch & Mah, 2024). The continuous challenging of traditional beliefs and the inspiration of intellectual curiosity are critical for maintaining a competitive edge in a fast-paced technological environment (Zhang & Huang, 2024). The extant literature posits that intellectual stimulation is a direct driver of innovative solutions, which are indispensable for global AI competitiveness (Zhang & Huang, 2024).

Individualised Consideration and Global AI Talent Management

The unique demands of the AI sector necessitate a nuanced approach to talent management, forming a vital part of the transformational leader's toolkit. Leaders of global AI corporations prioritise personalised consideration, offering tailored mentorship and career development opportunities, and fostering an inclusive culture to attract and retain the best AI talent worldwide. Zárate-Torres et al. analyse the influence of leadership on human–artificial intelligence collaboration (Zárate-Torres et al., 2025). They recognise the importance of carefully managing human-AI collaboration, acknowledging that AI should enhance human capabilities rather than replace them, thereby mitigating the risk of dehumanisation. Hang and Chen (2022) discuss realising AI's full potential in the digital economy. The research of Raisch and Fomina (2024) and Zárate-Torres et al. (2025) highlights the importance of combining human and artificial intelligence, and the need for leaders who can manage hybrid teams effectively. As suggested by Zárate Torres et al. (2025) and Simón et al. (2024), this involves identifying leadership profiles capable of orchestrating human-machine teams and developing training that emphasises digital, adaptive and ethical skills. Retaining skilled AI professionals across international locations directly impacts a company's ability to execute global AI strategies.

Ethical Governance and Responsible AI Frameworks

In light of the profound societal implications and potential risks associated with AI, the establishment and enforcement of robust ethical AI guidelines and governance structures has become an essential instrument for transformational leaders. Leaders of global AI corporations are increasingly held accountable for ensuring responsible AI practices. London (2024) highlights the ethical responsibilities of senior leadership in this regard. They actively engage with stakeholders, including ethicists, to prioritise transparency, fairness and accountability in the development and deployment of AI across all international operations. Uddin (2023) stresses the importance of ethical leadership in the AI era, and Kandasamy (2024) provides a framework for ethical leadership in the age of AI. This ethical toolkit is essential for achieving regulatory compliance and building public trust, both of which are vital for the global acceptance and market penetration of AI products and services. Nyaribo et al. (2025) examine ethical decision-making using AI in multinational corporations. Meanwhile, Ifeoluwa Oladele, Adeyinka Orelaja and Oladayo Tosin Akinwande explore the ethical implications and governance of AI in business decision-making (Oladele, Orelaja & Akinwande, 2024). This proactive ethical stance sets leading corporations apart and contributes significantly to their international reputation and market positioning. However, challenges remain, such as managing algorithmic bias, addressing data privacy concerns and mitigating the risk of job displacement, all of which have significant ethical and societal implications (Kandasamy, 2024). The tension between global efficiency and local data regulations further complicates the ethical landscape, as discussed by Hossain, Fernando and Akter (2025).

Fostering Hybrid Intelligence and Human-AI Teaming

One progressive element of the toolkit is the cultivation of a culture of "hybrid intelligence", in which human and artificial intelligences are combined to solve complex problems and drive innovation. This concept

has been explored by Raisch and Fomina (2024) and Zárate-Torres et al. (2025). Transformational leaders use tools that enable humans and AI to work together, allowing AI to assist with complex and exploratory tasks while human judgement provides essential contextual understanding and ethical oversight (Raisch & Fomina, 2024). This requires leaders to understand not only the technical capabilities of AI, but also its limitations. The focus should be on creating collaborative ecosystems where humans and AI complement each other (Zárate-Torres et al., 2025). The ability to effectively integrate AI into organisational behaviour and foster human–AI collaboration is a key differentiator for internationally competitive AI companies. This has been demonstrated by Ofem with his AI-IOB model (Ofem, 2024), and by Simón et al. through a dynamic capabilities approach (Simón et al., 2024). As AI becomes more prevalent, there is a need for continuous effort to foster an inclusive digital transformation, as highlighted by the World Economic Forum (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2025).

Gaps and Future Research Directions

Notwithstanding the expanding corpus of literature on transformational leadership in the AI context, there are still several gaps in the understanding of the full toolkit. Further empirical studies are required in order to establish a quantitative link between specific leadership practices and measurable improvements in the international competitiveness of AI companies. While ethical considerations are discussed, a deeper exploration of how ethical AI frameworks can be practically implemented across diverse global regulatory environments is needed. The specific mechanisms through which leaders balance global standardisation and local adaptation of AI strategies also require further investigation. While the focus has been on the positive aspects, future research could explore the potential negative impacts or limitations of transformational leadership styles in highly automated or AI-driven environments. This is particularly important in relation to the potential for AI tools to perpetuate unethical practices

if they are not carefully managed, as highlighted by De Cremer and Narayanan (2023).

5 Conclusions

This review article systematically explored the toolkit of transformational leadership as a critical determinant in shaping the international competitiveness of AI companies. The analysis indicates that leading global corporations employ a sophisticated set of leadership practices that extend beyond traditional transformational attributes, with these practices being specifically tailored to the unique demands of the AI era. These key instruments include strategic visioning for the global integration of AI, the vigorous cultivation of intellectual stimulation and capability building, highly individualised consideration in the management of global AI talent, robust ethical governance and responsible AI frameworks, and the intentional fostering of hybrid intelligence and human–AI collaboration.

The findings directly align with the research goal, demonstrating how these specific tools empower transformational leaders to navigate rapid technological cycles, complex ethical considerations and cross-border collaborative imperatives in the AI industry. Synthesising existing literature has clarified how these instruments foster innovation, optimise operational efficiency and ultimately secure a competitive advantage on the global stage.

Further research could include empirical investigations to quantify the impact of specific leadership instruments on international competitiveness metrics within AI companies. Future studies should also examine the practical challenges and best practices involved in implementing ethical AI frameworks in culturally diverse global operations. Furthermore, investigating the role of transformational leadership in mitigating societal and organisational disruptions caused by advanced AI, such as job displacement and algorithmic bias, would be highly beneficial.

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