

# Key Managerial Leadership Strategies To Enhance Workforce Development: A Systematic Review

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## Abstract

*This research aimed to analyze the key strategies that are put into practice in managerial leadership based on job development between 2019 and 2025. Methodologically, a qualitative approach was addressed, based on a systematic review, a search was carried out in databases such as Scopus, Scielo and Redalyc during 2022 to 2025, applying inclusion and exclusion criteria, and selecting 23 articles. The results indicated that the most effective leadership strategies are focused on aspects such as participatory, formative and collaborative. In relation to leadership styles, participatory, transformational and ethical have an important and positive impact on motivation and the development of competencies. Additionally, practices such as management coaching and continuous feedback stimulate staff retention and productivity. It was stressed that strategies must be contextualized considering the cultural and institutional environment. Likewise, the way leadership significantly improves the performance, residency and cohesion of the organization in a more sustainable way. It was concluded that the most effective leadership strategy was focused on those with participative and adaptive training characteristics to the organizational context, considering that these stimulate and enhance motivation, autonomy and commitment.*

**Keywords:** Commitment, work development, motivation, managerial leadership.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

From a general perspective, organizations go through various stages and changing processes in today's globalized world, creating a need for adaptation in changing environments. Within this context, managerial leadership plays a critical role at the strategic level for managing change, empowering individuals, and achieving institutional goals. Certainly, leadership's influence goes beyond operational outcomes, as it primarily encourages internal well-being and sustainability in modern organizations, especially those requiring work dynamics with adaptability, motivation, and collective decision-making standards. Therefore, it is essential to identify which leadership approaches and strategies are most effective in sustaining workforce development processes, particularly in regions facing structural gaps [1]. Indeed, at the international level, organizations face major challenges related to human talent management, staff retention, and adaptation to constantly evolving work environments. Numerous investigations emphasize the need to implement and promote leadership through diverse strategies that enhance employee development and well-being. However, weaknesses are still evident in effectively applying such practices, as they often fail to align with organizational demands [2].

In Latin America, certain cultural, social, and economic traits present opportunities to improve the practice of managerial leadership. The region holds significant challenges such as informality, labor inequality, limited opportunities, and difficulties in professional development; factors that place obstacles to effective leadership. Although transformational and participative leadership are recognized as essential, there is a noticeable gap in their implementation. This is evidenced by deficiencies in soft skills and managerial competencies, which delay the strengthening of leadership [3].

It's important to highlight the several systematic reviews that reinforce these insights. For instance, Fuentes et al. [4] identified current trends and highlighted the need for integrated leadership at the organizational level. Similarly, Portilla et al. [5] emphasized the importance of managerial leadership in driving organizational change, from a people-centered perspective to reshaping organizational climate, by encouraging participatory work toward shared goals. Peche et al. [6] pointed to the pressing need for leaders capable of transforming environments creatively and innovatively, supporting continuous team improvement. Polat et al. [7] confirmed that authentic leadership is essential for nurturing behaviors, attitudes, and individual team performance within organizations.

Additionally, Chetitlán [8] established the importance of interpersonal relationships in affective leadership and its impact on organizational management, while Verdugo [9] highlighted the need to

develop leaders who can manage their emotions and help others to promote understanding among everyone. Collectively, these studies agreed that leadership should be viewed as a dynamic process that includes technical abilities and ethical relationships.

Likewise, Rada et al. [10] mentioned that transformational leadership encompasses multiple variables at the organizational level, yielding effective results such as horizontal communication, empathy, and empowerment. Agazu et al. [11] explored the impact of transformational leadership on business performance, identifying effectiveness as a key factor. Estrella et al. [12] confirmed that modern leaders must possess communication skills, the ability to motivate, and a commitment to lifelong learning to foster employee engagement with the company's strategic objectives. Furthermore, it is emphasized that cultivating effective leadership and cultivating a strong organizational culture are key to enhancing institutional competitiveness and sustainability.

This study aimed to analyze key strategies applied in managerial leadership focused on workforce development from 2022 to 2025 through a systematic review of scientific literature. The study established specific objectives: Identify the most effective managerial leadership strategies reported in the literature for employee professional development in organizational settings; Understand the impact of various leadership styles (transformational, transactional, situational, etc.) on skill development and staff motivation; Identify managerial leadership practices systematically linked to increased commitment, productivity, and human talent retention and determine the most effective leadership strategies for workforce development depending on the different sectors and cultural or geographical contexts. Additionally, identify existing evidence on the relationship between managerial leadership training and improvements in employee performance and professional growth in them.

## **II. Theoretical framework**

### **A. Managerial leadership**

Managerial leadership is associated with an individual's ability to motivate and guide work efforts toward common goals in order to achieve success. It is estimated that an effective managerial leader must have a balanced combination of soft and technical skills, as well as the ability to adapt to different contexts, communicate effectively, manage stress, and exhibit proactivity, being a compromised visionary and flexible [13], [14].

It is important to emphasize that leadership is not merely about directing a group of subordinates; it also involves building relationships, negotiating meaning, and ensuring a collective process of learning and adaptation to change [15], [16]. This type of managerial leadership involves several functions, among which the following stand out: challenging existing processes, inspiring a shared vision, fostering collaboration through cooperation and trust-building, and achieving outcomes that promote progress and reaffirm managerial commitment [17]. Clearly, managerial leadership should be considered a contextual and relational process that goes beyond staff supervision. It plays a crucial role in creating a shared vision, promoting collaborative environments, and managing change. It is also emphasized that effective leadership results from a balanced integration of technical and soft skills, communication abilities, flexibility, proactivity, and stress management, all grounded in the organizational context, an approach that requires planning appropriate strategies.

### **B. Leadership strategies in the managerial mield**

In regards with the strategies applied in managerial leadership, one key aspect is the strengthening of soft skills, particularly emotional self-control, self-confidence, empathy, and emotional balance. Equally important is the promotion of participative and transformational leadership, prioritizing the active involvement of staff in as many processes as possible [18], [19].

Another critical element is the consolidation of teamwork, which involves building a culture of mutual trust at work, shared responsibility, and the establishment of clear goals. In addition, it is essential to plan multidisciplinary strategies based on organizational reality to develop viable, educationally driven approaches. Another significant aspect is the identification and enhancement of human talent, recognizing each individual's strengths when assigning tasks and responsibilities. Finally, the improvement of institutional harmony and the management of organizational effectiveness [20]. It's important to highlight that communication strategies also play a decisive role. Therefore, appropriate techniques and methods must be employed to support cooperative work and ensure effective communication [21]. In the context of managerial leadership, applied strategies should be understood as holistic mechanisms aimed at optimizing organizational dynamics based on a participative, humanistic, and results-oriented vision.

Relevant literature consistently highlights the importance of strategies focused on soft skills, self-confidence, empathy, and internal emotional balance. These serve as a fundamental base for effective team management in complex and changing environments. Similarly, strategies focused on promoting transformational and participative leadership are also mentioned, as these encourage staff engagement through action, teamwork, and the formulation of clear goals; factors that help to achieve organizational objectives and improve the organizational climate.

#### C. Managerial leadership styles

Regarding the leadership styles applied in managerial contexts, transformational leadership stands out: it is centered on stimulation, commitment, and professional development. Additionally, it should promote cultural change and a positive attitude. This style also includes essential components such as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration [22]. Transactional leadership is also mentioned, which is characterized by: reward-based exchanges based on performance and the promotion of rule and task accomplishment. This style focuses on operational efficiency, short-term results, and structured control [23]. Additionally, ethical leadership is discussed. It is based on moral principles, values, and integrity-driven behavior, and it emphasizes collective well-being and the holistic development of employees [24]. Evidently, when analyzing leadership styles, it is important to recognize the diversity of approaches, as these significantly influence organizational culture, human talent dynamics, and the institution's internal climate. It is important to note that one of the most relevant leadership styles is transformational leadership, as it focuses on emotional commitment, intellectual stimulation, and professional growth, while fostering sustainable cultural changes and a positive attitude toward innovation.

#### D. Managerial leadership and organizational commitment

Managerial leadership plays a fundamental role in strengthening organizational commitment, as it significantly influences employees' trust, motivation, and sense of belonging among team members. It is estimated that when leaders adopt a participative, transformational, or ethical leadership style, they foster a work environment in which individuals feel heard, valued, and aligned with the company's goals [25]. It is important to mention the connection between managerial leadership and organizational commitment, it is estimated that transformational leadership has the greatest positive impact, particularly by fostering affective, normative, and continuance commitment among employees [26], [27]. Transactional leadership is also strongly linked to managerial leadership, as it directly affects organizational commitment and, in turn, employee performance, considering also organizations with hierarchical structures [28], [29]. Highlighting that managerial leadership plays a decisive role in reinforcing commitment within organizations, since it strongly influences key factors such as motivation, trust, and employees' sense of belonging to human talent. Another important aspect to highlight is the leadership style that is implemented, particularly transformational, participative, and ethical leadership, which has proven to have a positive impact on important areas of organizational commitment, such as normative, affective, and continuance.

#### E. Workforce development

Personal development is closely associated with an individual's beliefs, and self-awareness also plays a crucial role, taking into account that these actions are linked to aptitude and intelligence, and depend on a person's interest and motivation to develop the skills they wish to acquire [30]. There are also aspects of personal development related to soft skills, which are understood as essential for adapting to different situations, strengthening interpersonal relationships, and improving communication channels. In this same line of thought, the need to stimulate emotional intelligence in leaders is emphasized, so that they, in turn, can support others through empathy, self-awareness, and self-control [31], [32]. It can also be understood as personal growth within the organizational context, linked to a comprehensive process in which individual factors are involved, focused on beliefs, self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and motivation, from both internal and external perspectives. Clearly, from an organizational environment, leaders must encourage the workforce development of their teams by creating environments that stimulate self-reflection, empathy, self-regulation, and continuous learning. Indeed, it is important to highlight that such efforts can have a multiplying effect on the employees behavior and attitudes.

### III. METHODOLOGY

This research followed a qualitative approach, based on a systematic literature review; which implicated identifying and organizing information gathered from various scientific articles. [34] In this case, the databases used were Scopus, Scielo, and Redalyc, in the period from 2022 to 2025; bearing in mind the most recent advances related to managerial leadership and workforce development.

Within this same context, the research question is formulated using the PICO mnemonic framework, which stands for Population (P), Interest (I), and Context (Co) [35]. This framework is commonly used to guide systematic reviews and structure qualitative research. In this case, Population (P) refers to personnel working within organizations; such as employees, collaborators, and work teams. While Interest (I) is associated with managerial leadership style, focusing on its practices and competencies, while Context (Co) refers to workplace/organizational settings during the period 2022 to 2025. All the previous mentioned allowed the research question formulation as follows: How does managerial leadership influence the workforce development of employees within the contemporary organizational context during the 2022–2025 period?

Another key aspect of the methodology was the research strategy, which ensured appropriate article selection. This strategy followed four critical stages: Identification, Selection, Eligibility assessment and quality evaluation. Each stage followed predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria, taking into account the publication year, article quality, language, and relevance to the research objectives.

In addition, during the identification phase, a search strategy was designed to be replicable in order to gather relevant literary information. To this end, a controlled vocabulary was used to combine keywords with Boolean operators (AND, OR) [36]. The most frequently used search terms were: “managerial leadership,” “public management,” “workforce development,” “professional growth,” and “job performance.” The search was conducted in Scopus, Redalyc, and Scielo. All articles were managed using the Zotero reference manager to ensure efficient reference handling. The initial search yielded a total of 52 articles, distributed as follows: Scopus (n = 35), Redalyc (n = 11), Scielo (n = 6), with a total of 52 records, as shown in Figure 1.

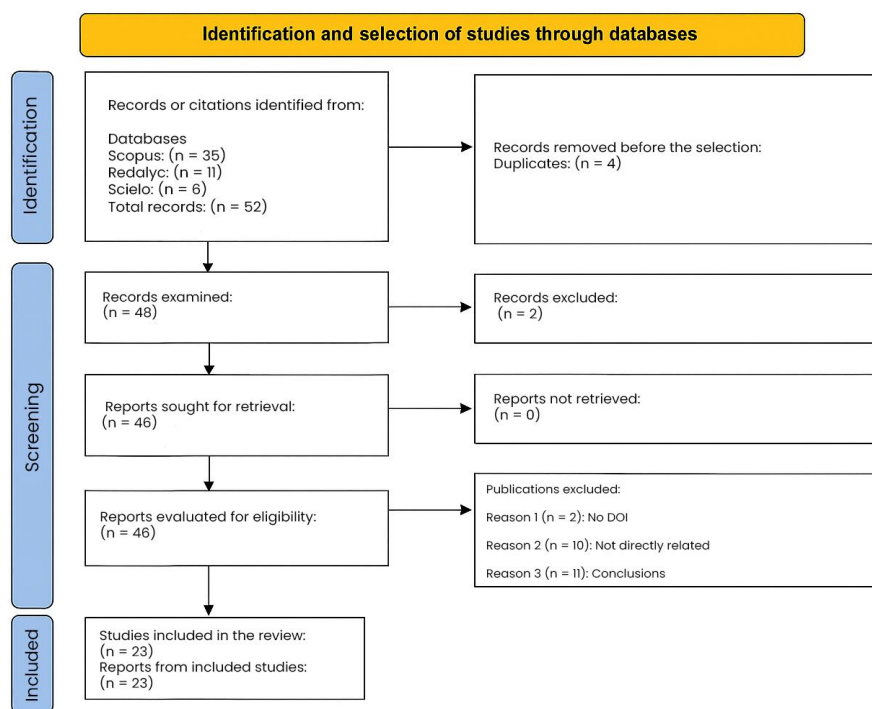


Figure 1. Prisma diagram

## IV. RESULTS

### A. General description of the studies

During the article selection process, various sources were consulted, allowing for the identification of 23 relevant articles published between 2022 and 2025. This section presents key characteristics of the studies.

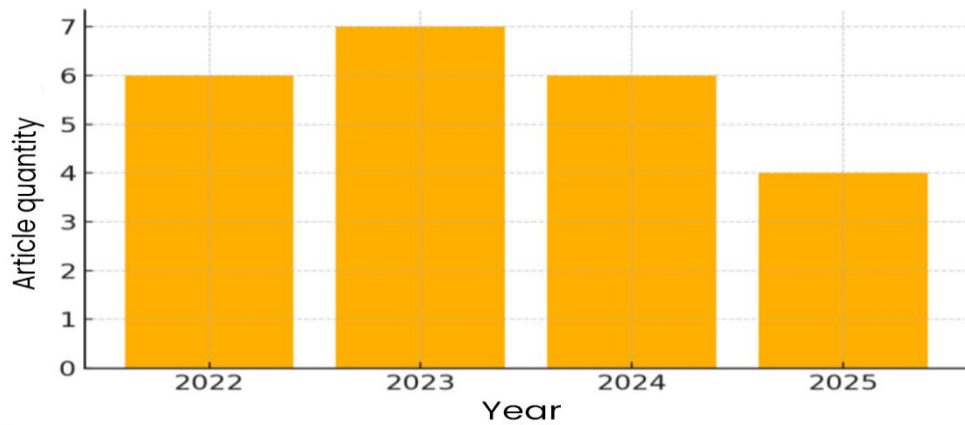


Figure 2. Articles by year of publication

Figure 2 shows the distribution of the 23 articles in relation to a year, revealing that the highest number of publications, 7 in total, were published in 2023; while a decrease in publications was observed in the following years.

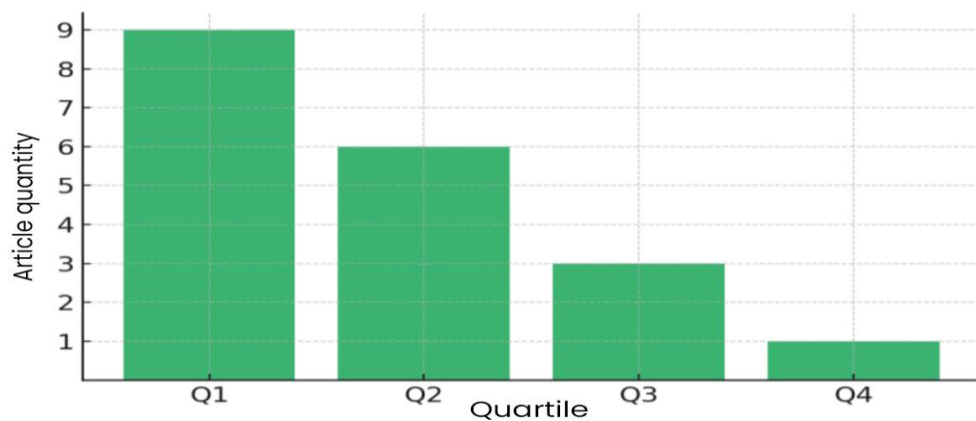


Figure 3. Articles published by quartile

As shown in Figure 3, most of the selected articles were published in Q1 journals, which allows to infer the quality of the studies reviewed, considering that the majority were extracted from Scopus.

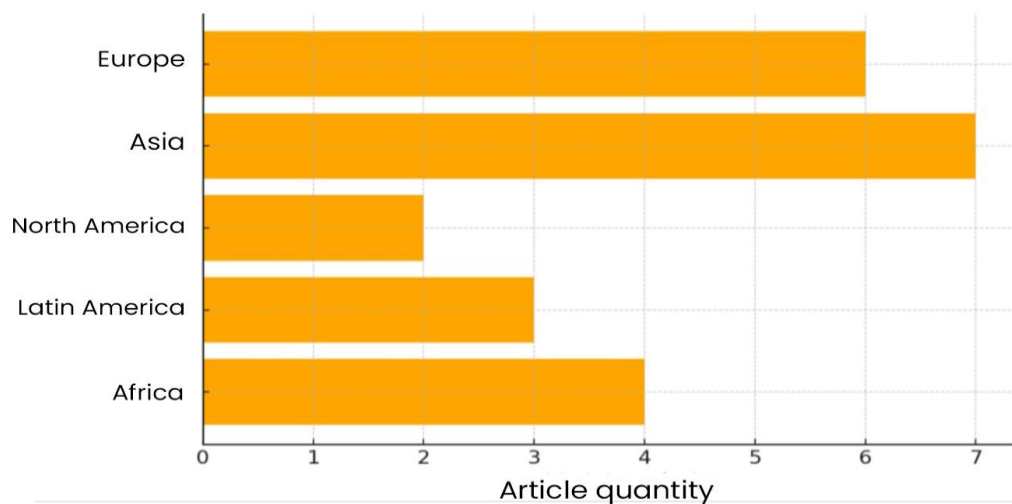


Figure 4. Distribution of reviewed studies by geographical region

Figure 4 indicates that Asia is the most represented region, with 7 publications. Europe follows closely with 6 articles, while Africa, especially South Africa and Ethiopia, contributed 4 articles. These previous numbers suggest a growing interest in leadership research within these regions. Latin America is represented by only 3 articles and North America by 2, indicating that Europe shows a stronger inclination towards research on managerial leadership and personal development.

B. Answers to the research questions

RQ<sub>1</sub>: What are the most effective managerial leadership strategies reported in the literature for the professional development of employees in organizational environments?

Table 1. Managerial strategies

Nº	Strategies	References
1.	Autonomy and culture	Ahumada et al. [37]
2.	Communicative and participatory	Ramírez et al. [38]
3.	Early-stage training	Botha y Aleme [39]
4.	Culture of trust and empowerment.	Bedenik et al. [40]

The evidence gathered through this systematic review demonstrated that the most effective managerial leadership strategies for professional development are centered on formative, collaborative, and participatory approaches. For instance, this is emphasized by Ahumada et al. [37] in the Chilean context, leadership is exercised and distributed through autonomy and organizational culture. Equally, Ramírez et al. [38] found that in Mexico, participatory and communicative strategies, along with formative delegation, promotes professional growth and organizational commitment. Also Botha and Aleme [39], in Ethiopian institutions, highlighted the importance of developing leadership from an early age to cultivate essential skills. Additionally, Bedenik et al. [40] highlighted the importance of cultivating a culture of trust through co-design practices that raise employee empowerment and support sustainable innovation and learning processes. They also emphasized the need for empathetic leadership to encourage participation and prioritize human development to create more engaged and improvement-oriented work environments.

RQ<sub>2</sub>: What impact do managerial leadership styles (e.g., transformational, transactional, situational) have on the development of job competencies and employee motivation?

Table 2. Managerial leadership styles

Nº	Styles	References
1.	Democratic participative	Ramírez et al. [41],
2.	Transformational (emotional and innovative)	Myeni y Singh [42]. Mohamad et al. [43] y Li y Ding [44].
3.	Ethical	Ayca [45].
4.	Humanized	Kaur [46]

In this same context, multiple studies agree that managerial leadership styles significantly influence employee motivation and the development of job-related competencies. Emphasizing studies such as Ramírez et al. [41] which identified that democratic and participatory leadership styles positively impact commitment and productivity in administrative contexts, whereas authoritarian styles have the opposite effect. Similarly, Myeni & Singh [42], Mohamad et al. [43], and Li & Ding [44] studies highlighted that transformational leadership fosters a shared vision, empowerment, and individualized development, which strengthens each one's trust, the emotional commitment and innovation on different areas. Ayca [45] emphasized that ethical leadership, grounded in justice and integrity, positively affects internal motivation and the compromise on a constructive organizational engagement. Kaur [46] states that leadership based on human relations and effective communication nurtures happiness and the retention of talent. Taken together, these findings highlight that leadership styles which prioritize ethics, participation, and human development are key to facilitating maintainable organizational environments that are motivating and oriented towards personal growth, as shown in Figure 4.

RQ<sub>3</sub>: What managerial leadership practices have been consistently associated with increased commitment, productivity, and human talent retention?

Table 3. Managerial leadership practices

Nº	Practices	References
1	Managerial coaching	Hauth et al. [47],
2	Competences	Zhylin et al. [48],
3	Trust, empowerment, and ethical	Milligan et al. [49],
4	Flexibility and cohesion	Kilcullen et al. [50].

The reviewed articles also consistently showed that certain managerial leadership practices have a direct impact on organizational commitment, productivity, sustainability, and the tendency to retain human talent. In this regard, Hauth et al. [47] emphasized that managerial coaching constitutes an effective practice centered on strengthening the relationship between leaders and team members with constant support, constructive feedback and individual development, leading to improvements in motivation, self-efficiency, and employee performance. To complement, Zhylin et al. [48] found that competency-based leadership, focused on participatory decision-making, transparent change management and the alignment with institutional values, increases internal motivation and the sense of belonging. Meanwhile, Milligan et al. [49] demonstrated that practices grounded in trust, empowerment, and recognition promote ethical and respectful work environments that benefit employee retention. For their part, Kilcullen et al. [50] emphasized that in virtual environments, the application of effective leadership, centered on flexibility and organizational support, becomes a key tool for maintaining team cohesion and boosting performance. These findings reaffirm that leadership approaches focused on human development, participation, and trust boost organizational sustainability.

RQ<sub>4</sub>: How do effective managerial leadership strategies for workforce development vary according to sector or cultural and geographic context?

Table 4. Effective strategies based on the environment

Nº	Strategies	References
1	Decision-making	Grill et al. [51]
2	Socioeconomic and cultural	Nkambule [52]
3	Social capital and cooperation	Nadirova et al. [53]

It is important to emphasize that strategies based on managerial leadership cannot be defined in a single way, since their effectiveness is directly related to the sector in which they are applied and the cultural and geographical context. According to Grill et al. [51], in the attention area, factors such as regulations and condition limitations, bearing in mind that strategies and decision-making processes must, in some cases, adapt to norms and institutional frameworks. In line with this, Nkambule [52] highlighted the need to consider the socioeconomic context, cultural diversity, and the environment complexity when applying the most effective leadership strategies, noting that contextualizing them leads to better effectiveness. Meanwhile, Nadirova et al. [53] emphasized that in non-governmental organizations led by women, transformational and situational leadership tends to adapt to authoritarian environments through the use of social capital and strategic cooperation maintained with the state. All of these studies highlight that leadership practices must be contextualized in order to respond effectively to the realities of each sector or locality, ensuring more equitable and sustainable professional development.

RQ<sub>5</sub>: What evidence exists about the relationship between managerial leadership training and improved employee performance and professional growth?

Table 5. Managerial leadership training

Nº	Types of Training	References
1.	Programs	Rowe et al. [40], Gold et al. [54].
2.	Mentorship	Bidwell et al. [55]
3.	Skills and competencies	Koo et al. [56]
4.	Adaptability to different contexts	Yu et al. [57]

It is also important to highlight that the training of managerial leaders has a significant impact on employee performance and professional development in various sectors. In the healthcare field, Rowe et al. [58] argued that leadership-centered programs align with organizational dynamics, promoting practical and reflective skills which strengthens trust, collaboration, and decision-making with sustainable effects. In a similar area, Bidwell et al. [55] emphasized that structured training and mentorship-based support are essential for improving the performance of leaders in different academic fields; especially in the strengthening of competencies and inter-institutional management. On another note, Koo et al. [56] highlighted that leadership programs not only improves communication and leadership skills, but also reinforces self-efficacy and team cohesion. From a wider perspective, Yu et al. [57] noted that leadership training increases psychological resilience, while also improving well-being, performance, and leadership capacity in different contexts. Complementarily, Gold et al. [54] found that formal programs for managerial development increase self-confidence, clarity, and compromise.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

This systematic review highlights that the most effective strategies are those centered on formative, participatory and collaborative aspects; because they promote autonomy, continuous learning, a culture of trust and commitment; trying to adapt to each organization's context and culture. On the other hand, transformational, ethical, and participatory leadership have a positive and significant impact on the development of job-related competencies and internal motivation; additionally, it promotes autonomy, active learning, and the co-construction of goals. Likewise, they help build an environment of trust, empowerment, and constructive feedback and all of which, stimulate human talent development.

In terms of practices related to organizational commitment, productivity, and talent retention, managerial coaching, empowerment, continuous feedback, and collaborative decision-making were found to increase organizational commitment; at the same time, they support employee retention and improve performance through flexibility and institutional support. Regarding strategies adapted to specific sectors or contexts, the findings highlight the importance of contextualization, taking into account geographical, cultural, and institutional factors, which condition their application. Finally, the training of managerial leaders significantly improves resilience, performance, confidence, and team cohesion; by implementing programs with a focus on reflection, mentorship, and soft skills, a sustainable impact on both the leader's and followers' professional development is ensured.

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