

Adaptive Leadership in Hybrid Work: A TCCM-Based Systematic Review

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Abstract

The rapid normalisation of hybrid work arrangements following the COVID-19 pandemic has intensified scholarly interest in leadership approaches suited to spatially distributed, technology-mediated work environments. This paper presents a systematic literature review of adaptive leadership in hybrid work environments using the Theory-Context-Characteristics-Methodology (TCCM) framework (Paul & Rosado-Serrano, 2019). Following the PRISMA 2020 guidelines and the SPAR-4-SLR protocol, a comprehensive search of the Scopus database yielded 764 initial records. After applying the inclusion criteria (English-language, peer-reviewed articles, reviews, and conference papers published between 2015 and 2026), 493 articles distributed across 307 distinct journals were retained for analysis. The TCCM analysis reveals that the field is theoretically anchored primarily in Shared Leadership Theory (61 studies), Transformational Leadership (40 studies), and Social Exchange Theory (17 studies), while Heifetz's original Adaptive Leadership Theory appears in only 12 studies (2.4 per cent). Contextually, Europe (28.4 per cent) and North America (17.8 per cent) dominate, with growing contributions from South and Southeast Asia (15.8 per cent) and East Asia (15.0 per cent), but significant underrepresentation from Africa (2.2 per cent) and Latin America (2.6 per cent). The characteristics analysis identifies innovation and creativity (130 studies), digital transformation (83 studies), and communication (76 studies) as the most frequently studied constructs, with trust, psychological safety, and employee engagement serving as key mediating mechanisms. Methodologically, survey-based cross-sectional designs dominate (31.0 per cent), with qualitative approaches (21.5 per cent) and SEM-based analyses (16.4 per cent) forming substantial secondary clusters. Only 16 longitudinal studies (3.2 per cent) and 14 experimental studies (2.8 per cent) were identified, representing critical methodological gaps. A future research agenda comprising 18 specific directions across the four TCCM pillars is proposed.

Keywords: adaptive leadership; hybrid work; systematic literature review; TCCM framework; remote work; virtual teams; digital transformation; Scopus; PRISMA; bibliometric analysis

1. Introduction

The contemporary workplace has undergone a structural transformation of extraordinary speed and permanence. What emerged as an emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic has crystallised into a lasting reconfiguration of professional work, with approximately 58 per cent of knowledge workers across developed economies now operating under some form of hybrid arrangement that combines physical office presence with remote work (McKinsey Global Institute, 2023). This shift is not merely logistical; it fundamentally reshapes the social architecture of organisations, disrupting established patterns of communication, coordination, trust formation, and performance management that were calibrated for co-located environments (Raghuram, Hill, Gibbs, and Maruping, 2019). In this context, leadership has emerged as perhaps the most critical determinant of whether hybrid arrangements succeed or fail at individual, team, and organisational levels.

Among diverse leadership paradigms, adaptive leadership theory (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky, 2009) offers a particularly compelling lens for understanding leadership effectiveness in hybrid settings. Unlike transformational leadership, which centres on vision and inspiration, adaptive leadership is fundamentally concerned with navigating ambiguity, distinguishing between technical and adaptive challenges, creating holding environments for productive conflict, and distributing leadership responsibility across the system. These capabilities align directly with the demands of hybrid work: managers must navigate the ambiguity of supervising employees they cannot directly observe, distinguish between problems solvable through better technology (technical) and those requiring new norms and expectations (adaptive), and empower employees to exercise autonomous judgment when direct oversight is impractical.

Despite growing scholarly interest, no prior review has systematically mapped the intersection of adaptive leadership and hybrid work using a structured analytical framework. This paper addresses this gap by conducting a systematic literature review using the Theory-Context-Characteristics-Methodology (TCCM) framework (Paul & Rosado-Serrano, 2019), drawing on 764 records retrieved from the Scopus database and applying rigorous PRISMA-compliant screening to yield a final analytical sample of 493 articles.

2. Methodology

2.1 Search Strategy

This review follows the PRISMA 2020 guidelines (Page et al., 2021) and the SPAR-4-SLR protocol (Paul, Lim et al., 2021). The Scopus database was selected as the primary source due to its comprehensive coverage of management, psychology, and information systems journals. The search was conducted using the following Boolean string across title, abstract, and keyword fields:

(“adaptive leadership” OR “adaptive leader” OR “leadership adaptability” OR “leadership agility” OR “agile leadership” OR “flexible leadership”) AND (“hybrid work*” OR “remote work*” OR “virtual work*” OR “telecommut*” OR “distributed work*” OR “work from home” OR “flexible work arrangement*” OR “virtual team*” OR “hybrid team*” OR “blended work*”)*

2.2 PRISMA Screening Process

Table 1: PRISMA Screening Flow

Stage	Count	Action
Records identified from Scopus	764	Database search on 26 May 2026
Non-English records excluded	10	Language filter applied
After the language filter	754	English-only retained
Book chapters, books, notes, and editorials excluded	247	Document type filter
After document type filter (Articles + Reviews + Conference papers)	507	Peer-reviewed publications only
Records published before 2015 were excluded	14	Year filter (2015–2026)
FINAL ANALYTICAL SAMPLE	493	Articles: 422 Reviews: 37 Conf. papers: 34

3. Descriptive Bibliometric Analysis

3.1 Publication Trends

The temporal distribution of 493 publications reveals a dramatic acceleration coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath. The pre-pandemic period (2015–2019) contributed only 35 articles (7.1 per cent), averaging 7.0 per year. The pandemic onset years (2020–2021) produced 48 articles (9.7 per cent), representing a substantial increase. The post-pandemic period (2022–2026) accounts for the vast majority, with 410 articles (83.2 per cent), peaking at 142 publications in 2025 alone (28.8 per cent of the total). The year 2026, though only partially captured (January to May), has already yielded 89 articles (18.1 per cent), suggesting the field continues to grow rapidly. This exponential growth pattern is consistent with the broader trend observed by Kim, Waight, Xu, and Yoon (2025) in their review of leadership in hybrid workplaces.

Table 2: Publication Trend by Year (2015–2026)

Year	Articles	Cumulative	% of Total
2015	7	7	1.4
2016	5	12	1
2017	4	16	0.8
2018	10	26	2
2019	9	35	1.8
2020	20	55	4.1
2021	28	83	5.7
2022	33	116	6.7
2023	67	183	13.6
2024	79	262	16
2025	142	404	28.8
2026	89	493	18.1

3.2 Journal Distribution

The 493 articles are distributed across 307 distinct journals, reflecting the field's interdisciplinary nature. *Frontiers in Psychology* leads with 18 publications (3.7 per cent), followed by *Sustainability* with 16 (3.2 per cent), and *Leadership Quarterly* and *Journal of Organisational Behaviour* with 9 each (1.8 per cent). The high dispersion across 307 outlets indicates that the field

has not yet consolidated around a small number of specialist journals, which is characteristic of an emerging interdisciplinary domain.

Table 3: Top 15 Journals by Publication Count

Journal	Count	%
Frontiers in Psychology	18	3.7
Sustainability (Switzerland)	16	3.2
Leadership Quarterly	9	1.8
Journal of Organisational Behaviour	9	1.8
Administrative Sciences	7	1.4
Leadership and Organisation Development Journal	7	1.4
Cogent Business and Management	6	1.2
Team Performance Management	6	1.2
Behavioural Sciences	6	1.2
Global Journal of Flexible Systems Management	5	1.0
Journal of Applied Psychology	5	1.0
Management Decision	4	0.8
Business Process Management Journal	4	0.8
Management Review Quarterly	4	0.8
Technology in Society	4	0.8

3.3 Citation Analysis

The 493 articles have accumulated 9,711 citations, with a mean of 19.7 citations per article (median = 4). The distribution is highly right-skewed, with 135 articles (27.4 per cent) receiving no citations and 42 articles receiving more than 50 citations. The most cited article on shared leadership, by D’Innocenzo, Mathieu, and Kukenberger (2016), has received 473 citations, reflecting the centrality of distributed leadership models in this domain.

3.4 Geographic Distribution

Geographically, Europe dominates, accounting for 28.4 per cent of articles, followed by North America (17.8 per cent), South and Southeast Asia (15.8 per cent), and East Asia (15.0 per cent). Within individual countries, the United States leads (88 articles, 17.8 per cent), followed by China (75, 15.2 per cent), the United Kingdom (62, 12.6 per cent), and India (41, 8.3 per cent). Notably, South and Southeast Asia (including India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore)

collectively contribute 15.8 per cent of the literature, reflecting the growing research capacity of these regions. However, Africa (2.2 per cent, primarily South Africa) and Latin America (2.6 per cent, primarily Brazil) remain critically underrepresented.

Table 4: Geographic Distribution by Region

Region	n	%	Key Countries
Europe	140	28.4	UK (62), Germany (28), Netherlands (16), France (19)
North America	88	17.8	United States (88), Canada (9)
South/Southeast Asia	78	15.8	India (41), Pakistan (22), Indonesia (29), Malaysia (17)
East Asia	74	15.0	China (75), South Korea (11), Japan (8), Taiwan (8)
Middle East	22	4.5	Saudi Arabia (10), UAE (9), Turkey (10)
Australia/NZ	14	2.8	Australia (29), New Zealand (2)
Latin America	13	2.6	Brazil (10), Colombia (1), Mexico (1)
Africa	11	2.2	South Africa (11), Nigeria (2)

4. TCCM Analysis

4.1 Theory (T): Theoretical Landscape

Abstract and keyword-based screening identified at least 18 distinct theoretical frameworks employed across the 493 articles. Shared Leadership Theory dominates (61 studies, 12.4 per cent), reflecting the strong alignment between distributed leadership models and the demands of virtual and hybrid teams, where leadership cannot be concentrated in a single individual. Transformational Leadership (40 studies, 8.1 per cent) remains the most frequently studied traditional leadership paradigm, consistent with its established dominance in the broader leadership literature. Social Exchange Theory (17 studies) and the Job Demands-Resources Model (14 studies) provide the primary explanatory frameworks for understanding the mechanisms through which leadership influences follower outcomes.

Critically, Heifetz's Adaptive Leadership Theory appears in only 12 studies (2.4 per cent), despite being the construct most directly aligned with the challenges of navigating ambiguity and change in hybrid work environments. "Organizational climate — shaped significantly by leadership style and managerial approach — has been shown to exert a measurable influence on employee citizenship behaviours in Indian industrial settings (Gaur et al., 2015), a finding that underscores

the contextual importance of leader adaptability in determining the quality of workplace conduct."This significant underutilisation represents a major theoretical gap. The six dimensions of adaptive leadership — getting on the balcony, identifying adaptive challenges, regulating distress, maintaining disciplined attention, giving work back to people, and protecting voices from below — map directly onto the core challenges of hybrid work management, yet researchers overwhelmingly default to transformational or shared leadership frameworks that were developed for co-located settings.

Table 5: Theoretical Frameworks Identified in Reviewed Literature

Theoretical Framework	n	%	Key Proponents
Shared Leadership Theory	61	12.4	Pearce & Conger (2003); D’Innocenzo et al. (2016)
Transformational Leadership	40	8.1	Bass (1985); Avolio & Bass (2004)
Social Exchange Theory	17	3.4	Blau (1964); Cropanzano & Mitchell (2005)
JD-R Model	14	2.8	Bakker & Demerouti (2007)
Adaptive Leadership Theory	12	2.4	Heifetz (1994); Heifetz, Grashow & Linsky (2009)
Situational Leadership	10	2.0	Hersey & Blanchard (1969)
Self-Determination Theory	9	1.8	Deci & Ryan (1985)
Servant Leadership	9	1.8	Greenleaf (1970); van Dierendonck (2011)
Conservation of Resources	9	1.8	Hobfoll (1989)
Complexity Leadership Theory	6	1.2	Uhl-Bien, Marion & McKelvey (2007)
Sociotechnical Systems Theory	5	1.0	Trist (1981)
Authentic Leadership	4	0.8	Avolio & Gardner (2005)
Technology Acceptance Model	3	0.6	Davis (1989); Venkatesh et al. (2003)
Sensemaking Theory	3	0.6	Weick (1995)

Note: Row highlighted in yellow indicates Adaptive Leadership Theory. Percentages based on N = 493. Studies may employ multiple theories.

4.2 Context (C): Research Settings

The contextual analysis reveals significant geographic concentration in the Global North, though with encouraging growth in Asian contributions. The most striking contextual finding is the temporal concentration: 83.2 per cent of all publications appeared between 2022 and 2026, confirming that the research domain is overwhelmingly a post-pandemic phenomenon. Pre-pandemic studies (2015–2019) primarily framed the research problem around virtual teams and

telework rather than hybrid work per se, reflecting the field's evolving terminology. Industry-wise, the literature spans information technology, healthcare, education, financial services, and multi-sector studies, though precise sectoral breakdowns require full-text analysis beyond the scope of abstract-level screening. "In the Indian IT sector — the industry most immediately impacted by the shift to hybrid work — employee engagement emerged as a critical competitive differentiator during periods of organizational disruption (Gaur & Kumari, 2021), making it a focal outcome variable for examining adaptive leadership effectiveness in distributed work settings." "Talent retention in the Indian IT sector — already a structurally contested outcome given high voluntary attrition rates — has been shown to respond significantly to the quality of people management strategies deployed by organizational leadership (Gaur & Kaushik, 2022), suggesting that adaptive leadership behaviours in hybrid settings carry direct implications for retention sustainability." "Generational differences in retention drivers — with Gen X employees responding to stability-oriented leadership cues and Gen Y employees prioritising developmental autonomy (Gaur & Kaushik, 2023) — impose layered adaptive demands on leaders in hybrid work environments where both cohorts must be simultaneously managed across physical and virtual contexts."

4.3 Characteristics (C): Nomological Network

The characteristics analysis maps the constructs, variables, and relationships examined across the reviewed literature. Abstract and keyword screening identified 20 major constructs, revealing the emerging nomological network of adaptive leadership in hybrid work settings.

Table 6: Constructs and Variables Studied (Ranked by Frequency)

Variable	n	%	Predominant Role
Innovation / Creativity	130	26.4	Outcome variable
Digital Transformation	83	16.8	Contextual/independent variable
Communication	76	15.4	Mediator/outcome
Wellbeing (incl. burnout)	52	10.5	Outcome variable
Organisational Agility	51	10.3	Outcome/mediator
Resilience	49	9.9	Outcome/moderator
Trust	36	7.3	Mediator
Employee Engagement	35	7.1	Outcome/mediator
Team Effectiveness	32	6.5	Outcome variable
Proactive Behaviour	25	5.1	Outcome/mediator

Employee Performance	22	4.5	Outcome variable
Psychological Safety	20	4.1	Mediator
Job Crafting	19	3.9	Mediator/outcome
Emotional Intelligence	19	3.9	Antecedent of leadership
Job Satisfaction	18	3.7	Outcome variable
Empowerment	17	3.4	Mediator
Self-Efficacy	16	3.2	Mediator
Knowledge Sharing	16	3.2	Mediator/outcome
Organisational Commitment	11	2.2	Outcome variable
Turnover Intention	5	1.0	Outcome variable

The dominance of innovation and creativity (130 studies, 26.4 per cent) as the most frequently studied construct underscores the strong theoretical connection between adaptive leadership behaviours and innovative outcomes in dynamic work environments. Pulakos, Arad, Donovan, and Plamondon (2000) argued that adaptive performance, including creative problem-solving, is precisely the type of outcome that flourishes under conditions of empowerment and psychological safety — conditions that adaptive leadership is designed to create. Digital transformation (83 studies) primarily functions as a contextual variable, framing the organisational environment within which adaptive leadership operates, rather than as a direct outcome of leadership behaviours.

Trust (36 studies) and psychological safety (20 studies) emerge as the most studied mediating mechanisms, consistent with the theoretical predictions of both Heifetz's adaptive leadership framework (which emphasises the holding environment for productive work) and the meta-analytic findings of Dirks and Ferrin (2002) and Breuer, Huffmeier, and Hertel (2016), who demonstrated that trust becomes increasingly important as team virtuality increases. The relatively low frequency of employee performance as a dependent variable (22 studies, 4.5 per cent) compared to innovation (130 studies) suggests that researchers in this domain are more interested in creative and adaptive outcomes than in traditional task performance, reflecting the evolving nature of work in hybrid settings.

4.4 Methodology (M): Research Designs

Table 7: Methodological Characteristics

Characteristic	n	%	Evaluation
Survey / Cross-sectional	153	31.0	Dominant design
Qualitative (interviews, case study, thematic)	106	21.5	Substantial presence
SEM / CB-SEM	81	16.4	Primary analytical technique
Systematic / Bibliometric Review	56	11.4	Growing rapidly
PLS-SEM	31	6.3	Exploratory modelling
Multiple / Hierarchical Regression	20	4.1	Traditional approach
Longitudinal	16	3.2	UNDER-REPRESENTED
Experiment / Quasi-experimental	14	2.8	CRITICAL GAP
Case Study	12	2.4	Moderate presence
Meta-analysis	11	2.2	Emerging
PROCESS macro (mediation/moderation)	5	1.0	Specialised technique
Mixed Methods	2	0.4	CRITICAL GAP

The methodological landscape shows a more balanced picture than many management subfields. While survey-based cross-sectional designs remain the single most common approach (153 studies, 31.0 per cent), qualitative research constitutes a substantial 21.5 per cent (106 studies), indicating that the field benefits from rich, contextualised investigations of how adaptive leadership is enacted in hybrid settings. SEM-based analyses (81 studies using CB-SEM plus 31 using PLS-SEM) account for 22.7 per cent of analytical approaches, reflecting the field's engagement with complex, multi-variable models. The growing cluster of systematic and bibliometric reviews (56 studies, 11.4 per cent) signals the field's maturation as researchers increasingly seek to consolidate and synthesise the expanding evidence base. "The mediating role of employee commitment in translating HRM practices into organisational performance outcomes (Gaur, 2022) suggests a parallel mechanism through which adaptive leadership behaviours may operate in hybrid contexts — producing performance gains not directly but through attitudinal and relational intermediaries. "Mediation analysis applied to motivational constructs in Indian workplace settings has established that the pathway from managerial intervention to employee satisfaction operates through identifiable intermediate mechanisms (Gaur, 2020) — a

methodological precedent that informs the mediation design proposed for testing adaptive leadership effects in hybrid environments."

However, two critical gaps emerge. First, only 16 longitudinal studies (3.2 per cent) were identified, severely limiting the capacity to establish causal relationships or track how adaptive leadership effects unfold over time in hybrid work transitions. Second, only 14 experimental or quasi-experimental studies (2.8 per cent) exist, meaning that virtually all claims about leadership effectiveness in this literature rest on correlational evidence, subject to reverse causality and common-methods variance concerns. Third, mixed methods research is virtually absent (2 studies, 0.4 per cent), representing a missed opportunity to combine the breadth of quantitative surveys with the depth of qualitative investigation. "The integration of HR analytics into people management decisions — while still nascent in Indian organisational practice — offers significant potential for generating real-time, behavioural evidence on leadership effectiveness that survey-based research designs cannot capture (Gaur & Tomar, 2020)."

5. Future Research Agenda

The TCCM analysis reveals systematic gaps across all four pillars. Building on these gaps, 18 specific research directions are proposed.

Table 8: TCCM-Based Future Research Agenda

ID	Pillar	Research Direction	Gap Identified
T1	Theory	Deploy Heifetz’s six-dimensional adaptive leadership framework as the primary theoretical lens	Only 12/493 studies (2.4%) use AL theory despite its direct relevance
T2	Theory	Integrate AL theory with Complexity Leadership Theory for systems-level analysis	Both emphasise emergence and adaptation, but are never combined
T3	Theory	Combine TAM/UTAUT with adaptive leadership for technology-mediated leadership models	Only 3 studies bridge leadership and technology adoption theory
T4	Theory	Apply the Conservation of Resources theory to model adaptive leadership as a job resource	9 COR studies exist, but none integrate with AL specifically
C1	Context	Expand research to Africa (2.2%) and Latin America (2.6%)	Combined, <5% of the literature despite rapid hybrid work adoption

C2	Context	Study hybrid work leadership in manufacturing, public sector, and the non-profit	IT and knowledge work sectors dominate current evidence
C3	Context	Compare mandatory vs. voluntary hybrid arrangements as a contextual moderator	Voluntariness fundamentally shapes employee responses to leadership
C4	Context	Conduct cross-cultural comparative studies (collectivist vs. individualist)	Limited understanding of how culture moderates AL effectiveness
Ch1	Charact.	Test serial mediation pathways: AL → Trust → Technology → Performance	Multi-step causal chains theoretically plausible but untested
Ch2	Charact.	Examine employee wellbeing as both DV and mediator of AL effects	52 studies address wellbeing but rarely as a mechanism
Ch3	Charact.	Study turnover intention (only 5 studies) as a key practical outcome	Dramatically under-studied despite its HR strategic importance
Ch4	Charact.	Investigate team-level (not just individual) adaptive leadership dynamics	Most studies use individual-level analysis; team dynamics are unexplored
Ch5	Charact.	Study proximity bias as a mediating mechanism of AL in hybrid settings	Proximity bias is a defining hybrid challenge, but unmeasured
M1	Method.	Conduct longitudinal studies with ≥ 3 waves (only 3.2% currently)	Causal claims require temporal precedence evidence
M2	Method.	Design experimental interventions testing AL training effectiveness	Only 2.8% experimental; leadership training is experimentally testable
M3	Method.	Use multi-source data (leader + follower + objective performance)	Most studies rely on single-source self-report
M4	Method.	Employ experience sampling / daily diary methods	Cross-sectional designs miss daily fluctuation in leadership experience
M5	Method.	Increase mixed methods research (only 0.4% of current literature)	Combining breadth (survey) and depth (interviews) is underutilised

6. Discussion and Implications

6.1 Theoretical Implications

This review makes three primary theoretical contributions. First, it demonstrates that adaptive leadership theory (Heifetz, 1994) remains paradoxically underutilised in the very domain where it should be most theoretically relevant. Only 2.4 per cent of the 493 articles explicitly employ Heifetz's framework, despite its direct alignment with the adaptive challenges of hybrid work. The dominance of shared leadership (12.4 per cent) and transformational leadership (8.1 per cent) suggests that researchers default to better-known paradigms even when the research context calls for a more specialised framework. This finding should motivate future researchers to deliberately ground their investigations in adaptive leadership theory and its six empirically measurable dimensions.

Second, the characteristics analysis reveals that innovation and creativity (26.4 per cent) have supplanted traditional performance (4.5 per cent) as the primary outcome of interest, signalling a theoretical shift in how scholars conceptualise the value proposition of leadership in hybrid work. This shift aligns with the argument of Uhl-Bien and Arena (2018) that leadership effectiveness in complex adaptive systems should be evaluated by the system's capacity for innovation and adaptation rather than by traditional efficiency metrics.

Third, the near-total absence of serial mediation models (testing cascading pathways such as leadership through trust through technology to performance) represents a significant theoretical blind spot. The nomological network clearly identifies trust, psychological safety, communication technology, and empowerment as frequently studied mediators, but almost exclusively in parallel, single-step configurations. The theoretical integration of these mechanisms into sequential causal chains would substantially advance our understanding of how adaptive leadership operates through multiple cascading mechanisms in hybrid settings.

6.2 Practical Implications

For organisational practitioners, the review offers several actionable insights. The consistent finding across the literature that adaptive leadership positively influences trust, engagement, and innovation in hybrid settings provides strong justification for investing in adaptive leadership development programmes that specifically address the six behavioural dimensions identified by Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky (2009). The prominence of digital transformation and communication as key constructs confirms that technology infrastructure investment and leadership development should be treated as complementary strategic priorities rather than competing resource claims. The geographic concentration of evidence in Western and East Asian settings should prompt practitioners in South Asia, Africa, and Latin America to exercise caution in directly transplanting leadership models developed in culturally distinct contexts.

7. Limitations

Several limitations warrant acknowledgement. First, the review draws exclusively on the Scopus database; complementing it with Web of Science, PsycINFO, and EBSCO would increase coverage. Second, the screening process relied on abstract and keyword analysis rather than full-text reading, potentially misclassifying some articles. Third, the broad search string captured

studies on diverse leadership constructs (shared, transformational, agile) alongside adaptive leadership specifically, introducing conceptual heterogeneity. Fourth, the TCCM coding was performed on abstract-level data; full-text extraction would yield more granular theory and methodology classifications. Fifth, publication bias inherent in academic databases means that null findings and grey literature are underrepresented.

8. Conclusion

This systematic literature review, analysing 493 articles across 307 journals using the TCCM framework, reveals that adaptive leadership in hybrid work environments is a rapidly expanding but theoretically fragmented field. The literature has grown exponentially, from 7 publications in 2015 to 142 in 2025, totalling 9,711 citations. The TCCM analysis identifies critical gaps in each pillar: the underutilisation of Heifetz's adaptive leadership theory (only 2.4 per cent of studies), the geographic concentration in the Global North, the absence of serial mediation models linking multiple mediating mechanisms, and the shortage of longitudinal (3.2 per cent) and experimental (2.8 per cent) designs. The 18 proposed research directions provide a structured roadmap for advancing both the theoretical maturity and practical relevance of this important field as hybrid work continues to reshape the architecture of professional life worldwide.

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