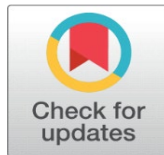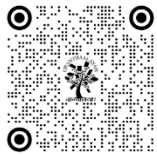# ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP IN THE INDIAN IT INDUSTRY

Awantika Tewari [1] ✉ , Dr. Vaishali Dhingra [2]

[1] Research Scholar, Rama University, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, India
[2] Professor and Dean, Faculty of Commerce & Management, Rama University, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, India

Corresponding Author
Awantika Tewari,
awantika.tewari@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

In an era of unpredictable environments marked by technological disruption, global crises, and societal challenges, traditional leadership models are gradually becoming inadequate, as they are deeply rooted in authority, direction, stability, and predefined solutions. This paper explores the introduction of Adaptive Leadership, a dynamic leadership model introduced by Ronald Heifetz and his colleagues at the Harvard Kennedy School. Adaptive leadership redefines leaders not as mere problem-solvers with set solutions, but as enablers of organizational learning and change. It focuses on developing individuals, teams, and organizations to overcome change, uncertainty, and ambiguity. A key feature of this framework is the different approach from the traditional style of working. Predefined solutions proved to be efficient in dealing with technical problems. In contrast, adaptive challenges gave rise to a necessity to rework values, behaviours, and assumptions among stakeholders. Adaptive leadership suggests that sustainable progress in these situations relies not only on traditional answers but on the collective ability to adapt to complex and uncertain circumstances.

The base of adaptive leadership is deeply rooted in complexity theory, systems thinking, and organizational behaviour. It emphasizes adapting to a new environment and becoming more flexible and responsive to every uncertain situation. Individuals and teams are encouraged to tackle and resolve conflicts by adapting new strategies and solutions. Adaptive leadership further advances the team and individuals to identify problems, test out solutions, and learn collaboratively. They do not provide solutions that the team is required to follow.

Through case studies from business, politics, social movements, and the military, the paper demonstrates the successful implementation of adaptive leadership across sectors. The paper shall also investigate the barriers and challenges to adaptive leadership, including resistance to change, emotional overload, time constraints, and organizational inertia.

The paper will also propose strategies for developing an adaptive leadership model, focusing on the importance of emotional intelligence, mindset shifts, and tools such as "getting on the balcony" and scenario planning. It emphasizes the need to transition from a traditional leadership model to an adaptive leadership approach. It also reiterates the need to move away from a controlling and authoritative style and target the one that promotes investigation, education, and continuous feedback.

To summarize, this essay will provide a theoretical framework and valuable resources for addressing the challenges of modern leadership.

The paper shall emphasize finding visionary facts and motivation for creating flexible methods that support collaboration, long-term learning, and continued success in an uncertain environment.

Keywords: Adaptive Leadership, Leadership in the IT Industry in India, Organizational Change in the Indian IT Sector, Technical Vs Adaptive Challenges, Digital Transformation Leadership India, Agile Leadership in Indian IT, Ronald Heifetz's Leadership, Leadership and VUCA in India

1. INTRODUCTION

Given the pace and scale of change in systems such as economic, technological, environmental, political, and social, it is crucial to introduce new technologies with advanced levels of complexity and volatility in organizations. Regular obstructions such as climate crises, digital transformation, social movements, geopolitical conflicts, and global pandemics highlight the limitations of traditional leadership models. Traditional leadership styles are hierarchical, authoritative, and focused on ancient working models. These are relatively stable environments where problems are well-defined, and experts prescribe solutions. In the modern era, adaptive leaders are finding it challenging to deal with upcoming changes with historical models.

The Information Technology (IT) industry in India has significantly contributed to the nation's economic growth, employment creation, and digital transformation. It has emerged as one of the most dynamic and globally integrated sectors. Several challenges, including artificial intelligence, automation, geopolitical instability, changes in the workforce, changing customer needs, and hybrid working models, frequently slow down the development pace. Thus, with these changes happening very often, the traditional leadership approach is losing its effectiveness. Traditional leadership models, focused on hierarchy, efficiency, and authority, are proving inadequate to navigate the ongoing shifts in technology, talent expectations, and business strategy.

Organizations in the Indian IT industry are no longer managing routine service delivery models alone; they are driving global digital transformation, managing cross-cultural teams, and rapidly adapting to emerging technologies such as cloud computing, generative AI, cybersecurity, and blockchain. These regular changes need more technical knowledge and expertise – this demands adaptive leadership. Adaptive leadership promotes continuous learning, dealing with uncertainty, and working on solutions for evolving challenges.

The concept of Adaptive Leadership was explored by Ronald Heifetz, Marty Linsky, and Alexander Grashow at the Harvard Kennedy School. It averts the idea of directing systems as per traditional ways to mobilize employees to deal with complex situations, and drive innovation. Adaptive leadership directs adaptive challenges – challenges where problems are not predefined and thus employees are required to change their working style, behaviours, and values. It is entirely contradictory to the traditional leadership style, which focuses on solving problems with previous experiences and directive authority.

This leadership model is particularly relevant to Indian IT leaders. These leaders constantly balance innovation with operational excellence and diverse teams across geographies. Challenges such as high employee turnover, digital skill gaps, generational workforce differences, and organizational resistance to agile transformation cannot be resolved by conventional approaches. These adaptive challenges require innovative solutions – like a culture of experimentation, delegated leadership, and an environment where employees feel comfortable speaking up, taking risks, and making mistakes.

Adaptive leadership facilitates leaders with the tools to address these changes, not through hierarchical directives, but by engaging teams in dialogue, empowering them to take ownership of solutions, and managing the emotional distress that often accompanies change.

This paper examines adaptive leadership as a timely and practical solution for the Indian IT industry. Using examples from lease businesses, including TCS, Wipro, Tech Mahindra, and Infosys, it examines the conceptual underpinnings and real-world significance. These organisations have experienced significant adaptive changes through leadership development initiatives, service delivery, and talent models.

- **Understanding Adaptive Leadership:** including its definition, origins, and distinctions from traditional leadership models within IT services.
- **Core Principles and Framework:** outlining how IT leaders can diagnose technical vs. adaptive challenges, regulate distress in agile transformations, empower delivery teams, and protect voices from diverse functions.
- **Real-World Applications:** presenting adaptive leadership strategies implemented in Indian IT companies during cloud migration, remote onboarding, digital upskilling, and project transitions.
- **Challenges and Criticism:** exploring resistance to leadership decentralization, emotional burnout among project managers, and structural rigidity.
- **Strategies for Developing Adaptive Leadership:** offering tools and mindset shifts to help IT leaders and organizations build adaptive capacity in a fast-paced global tech ecosystem.

By contextualizing adaptive leadership in the Indian IT industry, this paper contributes to both academic literature and practical management discourse. Project managers, IT specialists, and senior executives are to be upskilled with the strategic insight and adaptable abilities necessary to lead successfully in an industry where uncertainty is a constant state of affairs rather than a passing phase.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The increasing complexity of global industries has stimulated extensive research on leadership theories capable of navigating uncertainty, complexity, and change. Historical models have long dominated both corporate practice and academic literature. Nevertheless, in a dynamic environment, especially in Information Technology (IT), these models are proving to be inefficient for managing adaptive challenges in emerging economies like India. The origination of Adaptive Leadership, introduced by Ronald Heifetz and his colleagues at the Harvard Kennedy School, shifts the emphasis on mobilizing people to face and marks a significant evolution in leadership thought, shifting the focus from providing solutions to mobilizing people to face and address systemic challenges (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009).

1) Foundations of Adaptive Leadership

Adaptive leadership aims to deepen the concepts of complexity theory, systems thinking, and organizational learning with changes. Adaptive leadership motivates leaders to challenge curiosity, collaboration, and emotional intelligence, along with technical know-how and authority. According to Heifetz et al. (2009), leadership must be viewed as a process of managing situations rather than a position. Adaptive leadership focuses on diagnosing the nature of challenges. It aims at distinguishing between technical problems and adaptive challenges. Technical problems are usually solved by historical experience, whereas adaptive challenges are solved by behavioural and cultural shifts. Adaptive leadership further enables the employees to face brutal realities and work on innovation accordingly.

Adaptive leadership is a leadership style focused on overcoming unpredictable situations, as summarised by scholars like Northhouse (2021) and Yukl (2013). There is a dearth of research on adaptive leadership style in the IT industry. However, the concept of Adaptive Leadership has been researched in fields like healthcare (Marcus et al., 2015), public policy (Ospina et al., 2020), and education (Jansen, 2022), where broad structural transformation and stakeholder engagement are critical.

2) Leadership in the IT Industry: Global and Indian Context

The IT sector is known for its volatile, unpredictable, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environment. Thus, this industry becomes a good place for research on adaptive leadership. The Information Technology (IT) sector in India is essential to both economic growth and digital modernization. More than 5 million people are employed in this sector, and it is undergoing a prominent change because of automation, cloud usage, AI integration, and worldwide client demands, according to NASSCOM (2023). These changes necessitate the emergence of adaptive leadership that supports flexibility, experimentation, and delegation rather than command-and-control frameworks.

According to research by Avolio et al. (2009) and Kotter (2012), successful digital modernization emphasizes organisational culture and leadership flexibility and depends less on technology. Global firms are increasingly emphasizing alertness, psychological safety, and steadiness - core principles of adaptive leadership.

IT companies in India incur reasonable expenses on technology, but cultural change is obstructed by a traditional leadership approach (Sharma & Bedi, 2020). Therefore, it becomes crucial for adaptive leaders to possess abilities like collaboration, empathy, and collective problem-solving.

3) Adaptive Leadership and Organizational Learning in IT

Adaptive leadership and organizational learning are related to the versatile global environment. The skills are rapidly changing in the Information Technology (IT) organizations, and thus it is crucial for the organizations and employees to adjust to these changes and deal with them. Given this, the single-loop and double-loop learning theories of Argyris and Schön (1978) are becoming extremely relevant. Adaptive leaders encourage double-loop learning, where employees question core assumptions, challenge routines, and experiment with new approaches—essential in agile IT environments.

Research by Schein (2010) further emphasizes the role of leadership in shaping learning cultures. According to the scholar, Krishnan (2021), adaptive leaders emphasize thriving agile transitions, improved employee engagement, and enhanced upskilling. DevOps and agile approaches have become more prevalent in Indian IT companies; leaders must

change their working style from being directive to adaptive, as these can facilitate experimentation and ongoing development.

4) Emotional Intelligence, Resistance, and Adaptive Work

According to Goleman (1995), leaders with balanced emotional intelligence are more capable of handling ambiguity, navigating resistance, and controlling their level of anxiety. Emotional Intelligence requires adaptive leadership as a key element. In Indian IT firms, leaders must manage both technological transitions and psychological tensions. These firms often operate in complex situations, with high attrition and diverse generational workforces. During extensive digital migrations, Indian project managers encounter fatigue and morale issues, according to research by Singh and Thomas (2019). Trust and emotional Intelligence are the crucial elements for adaptive leadership, and guide in handling difficult situations.

5) Gaps in Literature and Research Opportunity

The majority of the leadership research in the Information Technology (IT) sector focuses on transactional and transformational leadership styles. However, there has been an increase in research on adaptive leadership worldwide; thus, there are a few empirical studies that are still relevant to the Indian IT sector. Very few explore how leaders in Indian IT firms engage in adaptive work, manage systemic resistance, or build distributed leadership capabilities across diverse teams. Additionally, there is a lack of data-based analysis, best practices followed, and failures of adaptive leadership in the Information Technology (IT) sector.

With this gap, it is being explored how adaptive leadership may be implemented methodically, taught, and assessed in the Indian Information Technology (IT) sector. This further aims at how leadership development programs integrate with adaptive leadership measures and also train managers and executives for long-term resilience and relevance.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN, METHODS, AND PROCEDURES

1) Research Design

In the Information Technology (IT) industry, adaptive leadership emphasises completing a comprehensive literature review. This study uses a qualitative, exploratory research approach to investigate the progress, usage, and vital relevance of adaptive leadership in the Indian Information Technology (IT) industry. The narrative review approach was selected due to its flexibility in synthesizing diverse sources—including conceptual papers, empirical studies, theoretical frameworks, industry reports, and practitioner insights—spanning leadership theory and organizational behavior within the IT context.

Given the relatively limited empirical research on adaptive leadership specifically within the Indian IT landscape, an exploratory design helps identify key themes, gaps, and future research opportunities. The approach also allows for comparative inferences between global adaptive leadership literature and its applicability to India's dynamic IT environment.

2) Data Sources and Inclusion Criteria

The literature review includes references from both business and academic areas for a better understanding of the research. For a detailed review and significant literature, the following repositories and databases were utilised:

Academic Databases: Google Scholar, JSTOR, Scopus, Elsevier (ScienceDirect), EBSCOhost, and SpringerLink.

Institutional Sources: MIT Sloan Management Review, Harvard Business Review, NSSCOM studies, publications from McKinsey and Company, and research papers from Indian business schools (such as IIMs and ISB).

3) Literature Review Methodology

The review followed a three-phase process:

Phase 1: Identification and Collection of Literature

Various research papers were reviewed using the identified keywords, and over 75 articles, white papers, and reports were thoroughly analysed.

For the proper significance of adaptive leadership in the Information Technology (IT) industry in India, various titles and abstracts were screened.

After initial classification, 42 sources were shortlisted for full-text review.

Phase 2: Thematic Categorization

Following review, the selected literature was categorised into the following main areas based on themes:

The theoretical foundations of adaptive leadership (systems thinking, organisational learning, Heifetz model)

Adaptable leadership in international fields (public service, education, healthcare)

Leadership concerns (talent management, agile transformation, and digital disruption) in the Indian IT sector

Resistance, organisational learning, and emotional Intelligence in leadership

Gaps in the literature on adaptive leadership in India

Each theme was utilized to establish the core arguments and analysis presented in the literature review.

Phase 3: Synthesis and Critical Analysis

Previous discrepancies, inconsistencies, core concepts, reasoning, and findings were combined to find patterns of adaptive leadership.

The shortcomings of historical leadership models, the need for cultural change, and leadership weaknesses in Indian IT companies were all given particular emphasis.

The synthesis informed the identification of a research gap: the lack of contextualized empirical studies on adaptive leadership in Indian IT.

4) Quality and Credibility Assurance

To guarantee the legitimacy and scholarly integrity of the literature evaluation, only reports with institutional support and peer-reviewed journal publications were used. The study from various scholars, like NASSCOM, McKinsey, etc., was evaluated. The logic and theoretical strength were also checked during the research.

4. RESULTS

1) Traditional Leadership Models Are Inadequate for Emerging IT Challenges

The inefficient philosophy of traditional leadership, such as transactional or just transformational approaches, to handle the dynamic and unpredictable problems that Indian IT companies encounter, is one significant finding. While these models offer structure and motivation, they do not adequately equip leaders to handle complex, systemic, and people-driven challenges like reskilling, cultural resistance, hybrid work management, or cross-functional integration.

Many Indian IT companies still use a hierarchical and authority-based leadership, which frequently leads to a slower adoption of change, less innovation, and a decrease in employee ownership during changes. Organisational agility and leadership intent become significantly separated as a result.

2) Adaptive Leadership Principles Align with VUCA Demands of Indian IT

The principles of adaptive leadership are well-suited to the complex, uncertain, volatile, and ambiguous (VUCA) environment of the Indian IT industry. It includes diagnosing challenges, regulating distress, empowering teams, and protecting varied interpretations.

Adaptive leadership emphasizes learning, teamwork, and experimentation. These drive agile implementations, cloud migrations, and digital migration. Leaders managing delivery and innovation will find the approach of adaptive leadership effective both at the mid-level and senior-level leadership.

3) Talent and Organizational Learning Are Central to Adaptive Capacity

The two fundamental doctrines for Information Technology (IT) companies experiencing fast technological change are easily managed with the profound support of adaptive leadership, as it promotes organisational learning and talent development, as an important conclusion of the study. Especially in DevOps and agile environments, adaptive leaders aim at learning by encouraging teams to disrupt conventional beliefs and experiment with innovative solutions. Adaptive leadership helps organisations encourage ongoing learning in the Indian industry.

4) Emotional Intelligence and Engagement Are Critical but Often Underdeveloped

The research reveals that in the Indian Information Technology industry, the core competency of adaptive leadership – emotional intelligence is often under-rated. Many project and delivery managers are promoted based on technical expertise rather than their ability to engage emotionally, regulate conflict, or manage resistance to change.

During difficult transitions like remote work, automation, innovation, and job redesign, there is a lack of emotional intelligence, which leads to employee dissatisfaction, resistance to innovation, and burnout situations.

5) Significant Gaps Exist in Contextual Research and Implementation

The literature study concludes by pointing out the dearth of empirical studies on adaptive leadership in IT that are specific to India. The majority of research focuses on Western settings or views leadership as a general function instead of examining how adaptive principles are implemented—or resisted—in Indian IT companies.

Moreover, while large IT firms (e.g., TCS, Infosys, Wipro) have initiated leadership development programs that hint at adaptive frameworks (like design thinking, agile leadership, or emotional Intelligence), these are often not formalized as adaptive leadership and remain inconsistently practiced across teams and business units.

5. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Leadership Fit

Adaptive leadership is more appropriate for complicated IT problems than traditional leadership approaches.

Strategic Pertinence

Agile methods and digital transformation in Indian IT companies are compatible with adaptive leadership.

Emotional Factors

Emotional Intelligence is overlooked, causing gaps in involvement and organizational transformation.

Research Gaps

These findings highlight the important areas for evolution in organizational culture, change implementation practices, and leadership development. It also demonstrates the significance and relevance of adaptive leadership in the Indian IT industry. The conclusions shall further open the way for action-oriented proposals in adaptive leadership and further empirical research.

6. INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS

The study's findings provide various considerable new conceptual lenses on the leadership situation in the Indian IT sector, the validity of adaptive leadership, and the deficiencies in practice. There will be a pivotal consequence of these findings on future research, organisational practice, and leadership development.

1) Adaptive Leadership Fills the Void Left by Traditional Leadership Models

The study highlights that historical leadership models are becoming stale with the changing needs of the Indian Information Technology (IT) sector. The traditional leadership model emphasizes motivation, efficiency, and directive guidance, but is gradually failing to manage stakeholder resistance to change, upskilling workforces, or switching to hybrid delivery models.

Implication:

Adaptive leadership helps in identifying more flexible and refined ways to deal with complicated issues. It encourages leaders in the Information Technology (IT) industry to promote others to find innovative solutions and avoid fixing through historical experiences. Adaptive leadership is therefore positioned as a fundamental need in this global era to promote long-term innovation and transformation.

2) Relevance to Digital Transformation and Agile Practices

The findings show that the traditional approach of leadership needs to be transformed. It must move towards a culture of agility, continuous learning, experimentation, and cross-functional collaboration. These are strong pillars of adaptive leadership.

It is adaptive leadership that enables cultural and psychological changes needed for digital transitions, which include managing vagueness, relinquishing old beliefs, and promoting self-organizing teams.

Implication:

Adaptive leadership multiplies the organization's move towards innovation, resilience, and employee-focused digital transformation. Adaptive leadership endorses the ability of organizations to accept agile methodologies and

develop a culture of maturity to face uncertain situations. It is thus important for the Information Technology (IT) industry in India to embrace adaptive leadership.

3) Adaptive Leadership Supports Organizational Learning and Talent Strategy

With the rapidly growing economy, technology is becoming outdated very often, and thus, to deal proactively with situations, it is important to adopt the culture of adaptive leadership. Adaptive leadership is the need of the hour to foster a culture of learning across organizations. Adaptive leaders motivate their employees to think beyond the technical solutions and work on innovative strategies. This is done through transparent communication, regular feedback, and precise examination of one's thoughts, feelings, and mental processes.

Implication:

Adaptive leadership has the potential to become a talent multiplier, enabling Indian IT firms to retain and grow high-potential talent in a hypercompetitive labor market. Organizations that institutionalize adaptive leadership can expect higher employee engagement, better retention, and faster capability development—essential for competing globally.

4) Emotional Intelligence and Change Management Require Greater Focus

The fundamental component of adaptive leadership is emotional intelligence. As per previous findings, many of the Indian IT executives are lacking in emotional intelligence. Due to this, executives face difficulty in dealing with global teams during unforeseen situations, handling obstructions, and establishing trust amongst them.

Implication:

Leadership development programs are needed to bridge the gap in leadership styles to upgrade them to adaptive leadership. Thus, IT organizations should organize leadership development programs including self-regulation, empathy, and psychological skills in addition to technical competence requirements.

5) Lack of Contextual Research and Structured Implementation

Given the Indian organizational culture, which is full of generational diversity, leadership hierarchies, and global presence, it becomes really challenging to apply global theories at the local level. Various analyses are done, and empirical research indicates that there is a lack of research on adaptive leadership specific to the IT industry.

Implication:

Academic and industry researchers have a unique opportunity to conduct case-based, field-oriented studies to evaluate how adaptive leadership is practiced—or resisted—in Indian IT settings. Such studies could help develop contextualized frameworks, measurement tools, and best practices for adaptive leadership in South Asian business environments.

7. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In the context of the Indian IT industry, one of the most vibrant and fiercely competitive industries in the world, this study examined the idea, applicability, and outcomes of adaptive leadership. The research included a thorough review of industry reports and various scholarly theories.

7.1. KEY THEMES INCLUDED:

The limitations of traditional leadership models in managing complex, rapidly changing environments are typical of IT.

The strategic alignment of adaptive leadership with digital transformation, agile practices, and innovation.

The key catalysts of adaptive leadership are emotional intelligence, teamwork, and continuous learning.

Insufficient empirical data and contextual implementation tailored to the Indian IT environment.

The empirical studies show that Indian IT companies have yet to adapt or understand the principles of adaptive leadership. It is irrespective of the fact that adaptive leadership provides a strategy to deal with complex and agile situations in a smooth manner. Adaptive leadership requires volatile, unpredictable, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) skills to deal with a versatile environment successfully.

7.2. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Future research is recommended for a detailed understanding of adaptive leadership in the Indian IT industry. The study shall deep dive into the following areas:

1) Empirical Case Studies of Adaptive Leadership in Indian IT Firms

Perform comprehensive and detailed case reviews in leading IT organizations like Infosys, Wipro, and TCS to understand practical implementations of adaptive leadership.

Investigate organizational reactions, leadership practices, and results in a challenging environment, particularly those involving agile methodology and AI implementation.

2) Development of Contextualized Adaptive Leadership Framework

Tailor global adaptive leadership frameworks, including Heifetz's framework, to align with the culture, structure, and workforce dynamics of Indian organizations.

In the Indian IT industry, adaptive leadership must consider hierarchical norms, a collaborative approach, generational diversity, and employee expectations.

3) Quantitative Measurement of Adaptive Leadership Capabilities

Evaluate the correlation between performance metrics like employee retention, positive solutions, effective innovation measures, and adaptive leadership.

Formulate and validate assessment instruments – questionnaire or psychometric measures to assess adaptive leadership qualities and results among IT leaders and their teams.

4) Role of Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Safety

Evaluate the leaders in dealing with change management, distress, and resistance during transformation.

Analyse how adaptive leaders in the Indian IT industry succeed in managing empathy, emotional intelligence, and psychological well-being.

5) Adaptive Leadership in Startups vs. Large IT Enterprises

Investigate how startups and established businesses in the Indian IT industry deal with situations like risk-taking, leadership discretion, and employee opinion while simultaneously dealing with adaptive leadership techniques.

6) Gender and Inclusion in Adaptive Leadership

Explore how gender, diversity, and inclusion influence or are influenced by adaptive leadership in Indian IT companies.

Study whether adaptive leadership creates more inclusive, equitable workplaces and improves participation from underrepresented groups.

7) Longitudinal Studies on Leadership Development

Conduct longitudinal research tracking managers who undergo adaptive leadership development programs over several years by looking at their career growth, team results, and organizational outcomes. Adaptive leadership can be applied in the Indian IT industry by transforming it from a conceptual model to a practical, workable, and quantifiable model. This will help in bridging the gap between practice and theory.

8. CONCLUSION

An essential driver of innovation, international competitiveness, and organizational transformation in the rapidly evolving digital economy is the Indian IT industry. This research has examined the growing demand for adaptive leadership in understanding the challenges and intricacies that IT firms face. An overview of global frameworks, fundamental principles, and sectoral dynamics specific to India highlights that adaptive leadership is not merely a theoretical notion but also an applied necessity.

In the contemporary IT landscape, customer-focused innovation, agile practices, and cross-functional collaboration prevail, and adaptive leadership aligns seamlessly with these priorities. Unlike the outdated, hierarchical models that still shape leadership approaches in many Indian IT organizations undergoing digital transformation, adaptive

leadership offers a strategic alternative. It emphasizes continuous learning, experimentation, emotional resilience, and collective accountability, making it highly relevant in navigating present-day complexities.

Despite its promise, adaptive leadership remains insufficiently recognized and practiced within the Indian setting. This study situates adaptive leadership in the Indian IT sector, encouraging both scholarly and practical dialogue while outlining directions for continued inquiry and organizational advancement. A transition is advocated from authority-driven leadership to learning-oriented leadership—one that accepts uncertainty and galvanizes people to face harsh realities in pursuit of sustainable progress.

To achieve this, organizations must prioritize cultivating adaptable capabilities in leaders across all levels and embed them into strategy, culture, and everyday operations.

9. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Although this study offers reasonable information, it is critical to identify its limitations:

Lack of Primary Data:

This analysis was compiled through the examination of industry studies, scholarly articles, and professional white papers. However, the absence of primary evidence—such as surveys, interviews, and case analyses—limits the breadth of empirical substantiation. The findings are also shaped by a theoretical inclination, with Western-derived frameworks, particularly Heifetz's model, exerting considerable influence. While efforts have been made to contextualize the discussion, further research is necessary to capture the organizational and cultural distinctiveness specific to India.

Industry Scope:

Although adaptive leadership dynamics have been illustrated across fields like healthcare, education, and other industries, the unique context of the Indian IT sector remains underexplored. In contrast to these well-documented domains, its organizational dynamics have yet to receive adequate scholarly attention.

Rapidly Evolving Context:

Given the rapid evolution of the IT industry, certain highlighted practices and trends may quickly lose relevance, particularly in areas such as workforce automation, artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity.

Selecting Literature Subjectively:

There may have been inadvertent exclusions of pertinent works or varying interpretations of leadership theory due to the selective and qualitative nature of the literature review.

Due to these constraints, more empirical research is required, especially field-based studies that examine the application, perception, and development of adaptive leadership in Indian IT organisations.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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