

Krishna as the archetypal guru: A theoretical framework of divine pedagogy in the Bhagavad Gita

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Email: sapkotah2@gmail.com

Received:
15 September 2025

Revised:
09 November 2025

Accepted:
18 November 2025

Published:
11 December 2025

How to cite (APA 7th style): Sapkota, H. P. (2025). Krishna as the archetypal guru: A theoretical framework of divine pedagogy in the Bhagavad Gita. *Indonesian Journal of Education and Pedagogy*, 2(3), 151-169. <https://doi.org/10.61251/ijoe.v2i3.267>

Abstract

This theoretical article explores the pedagogical qualities of Lord Krishna, considering his role as the ideal guru in Hinduism and his practice within the holistic approach to transformational pedagogy in contemporary educational institutions. Despite extensive study, a gap remains in systematically applying Krishna's classical pedagogical principles to modern classrooms, including holistic teaching, crisis-responsive strategies, and transformational learning approaches. It employs qualitative analysis focused primarily on the Bhagavad Gita to analyze the higher-order pedagogical processes through which Krishna taught, the guru-disciple relationship, and its profound transformative impact on student development. This study explores Lord Krishna's exemplary pedagogy, emphasizing individualized diagnostic assessment and adaptive multi-modal communication as foundational strategies. Further, Krishna's crisis-responsive teaching and systematic consciousness transformation demonstrate adaptive and transformational excellence, fostering ethical empowerment. These principles transcend cultural boundaries and hold practical implications for modern education, leadership development, and therapeutic practice, offering a holistic framework that bridges classical wisdom and contemporary educational challenges. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of intercultural dialogue, moral resilience, and social-emotional and holistic growth on a global scale. Future research is recommended to empirically validate these frameworks and develop assessment tools and training programs, integrating Krishna's pedagogical principles with contemporary educational and leadership practices.

Keywords: consciousness transformation; cross-cultural pedagogy; guru-disciple relationship; holistic education; Krishna's pedagogy

INTRODUCTION

Lord Krishna is one among the numerous spiritual instructors worshipped throughout the entire body of Hindu scriptures, whose status as *Krishnam vande jagadgurum*—the guru of all gurus, the preceptor of teachers—is unparalleled and universally recognized. He is the supreme pedagogical master, whose practices have had a profound impact on the thought of education over the millennia and continue to provide incalculable value to modern education and development (Bansal & Srivastava, 2024). This name is cross-sectoral and is known in traditions that consider Krishna and his unique success in merging divine power with personal closeness, transcendent knowledge with practical application, and general



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principles with individual guidance. Krishna has historical relevance in the pedagogical aspect, extending beyond religious education, in that the principles of Krishna can be applied to effective teaching techniques, leadership, crisis management, and consciousness transformation, with direct contemporary implications.

Krishna is not only a divine incarnation, according to ancient literature, but also the greatest teacher; his teachings are characterized by a high degree of harmony in various techniques, which are attractive to the cognitive, emotional, experiential, and spiritual aspects of human learning. Lord Krishna is considered the ideal teacher not just due to his adoration but also because his methodology proved to be very productive. His teaching is methodical and powerful; his treatment of problematic situations is philosophical in depth, and his advice has long-lasting and profound impacts on student development, which are rarely found in the education literature (Baral & Giri, 2025). Krishna imparted a lesson on transformational teaching, explaining how his exemplary pedagogy led to a profound change in even the most challenging circumstances, as evident in the seven hundred verses of the Bhagavad Gita, set on the battlefield of Kurukshetra (Joshi, 2024).

The battlefield setting forms a perfect laboratory to test crisis-responsive pedagogy, where current conceptions of education have become ineffective, and new teaching practices have become the primary focus of effective education. In this example, Krishna demonstrates that extreme adversity can also catalyze learning and transformation, which in turn summarizes the pedagogical teachings that have been very useful to teachers, therapists, and leaders in the stress and uncertainty of the present day. This aligns with contemporary scholarship demonstrating the Bhagavad Gita's enduring relevance in guiding self-realization and spiritual development, which modern practices such as mindfulness and meditation continue to embrace (Kalita et al., 2025).

The Bhagavad Gita, which is among the most critical educational books, offers a detailed account of the approach to the teaching used by Krishna because it shows how he addressed the existential crisis, moral paralysis, and the inability to synthesize the traditional knowledge of Arjuna (Maharaj et al., 2021). This discussion demonstrates that Krishna possesses knowledge based on complex diagnosis, multi-level communication, advanced-level crisis intervention, and the process of methodical change of consciousness through ethical incorporation and empowerment of the student (Ghosh, 2023). These ideas have stood the test of time, crossing and surpassing cultural and historical frontiers, and revealing that they will never grow out of fashion in terms of how human beings learn and grow. The sophisticated level of Krishna in pedagogy is further illustrated in the views of educational and psychological science of those times. His analysis of crises, gradual assessment of coping with feelings, and promotion process of cognitive reorganization of values, self-identity, and independence gives a clear picture of human psychology, which predetermines the genesis of secular educational science, as well as discloses the insights inaccessible through the prism of only the modern method. Based on Krishna's teachings, several areas of research have been established, such as management, education, psychology, organizational development, and spiritual pedagogy (Kunwar et al., 2024).

Such an interdisciplinary focus means that his methodology is general and can apply to both non-religious and religious education. Moreover, business schools, educational institutions, and therapeutic courses are recognizing the wisdom in his pedagogical approach in its various forms. However, despite the large amount of research produced, most works rely on individual factors and lack a conceptual framework for his overall teaching system, including his leadership qualities or crisis-management abilities

(Song, 2022). This discontinuity inhibits the ability to perceive Krishna as a whole as a pedagogue and constrains the methods of his use.

Although there is an increasing interdisciplinary interest in Krishna pedagogy, most of the previous studies have focused on individual aspects of the phenomenon, including dialogic pedagogy, value pedagogy, or therapeutic pedagogy, without creating one comprehensive, evidence-based conceptualization that would help understand the concept of diagnostic assessment, multimodal communication, crisis-responsive teaching, and the process of transforming consciousness into one model of pedagogical practice. Therefore, a distinct gap exists in the literature regarding the process of summarizing primary sources in Sanskrit and modern literature, as well as a definitive theoretical explanation of Krishna's excellence as a guru and specific points of application in contemporary education, leadership, and counseling practice. Filling this research gap, the current study conducts a methodical qualitative content analysis of classic Hindu texts (grounded on the Bhagavad Gita) together with the current empirical and conceptual research to represent an integrative framework and to prove its practical applicability in the cases of assessment that is student-centered, inclusive communication, crisis pedagogy, and ethical empowerment in a secular and spiritual context. Three research questions are proposed in this study to investigate the pedagogical strategies and transformative teaching of Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita:

1. Which pedagogical strategies and approaches present Lord Krishna as the archetypal guru in Hindu tradition?
2. How do Krishna's teaching methods demonstrate adaptive and transformational qualities?
3. What modern educational, leadership, and personal-development insights can be drawn from Krishna's teachings in the Bhagavad Gita?

The study of Krishna's pedagogy presents positive insights to various stakeholders. Spiritual teachers can also use their systematic styles in consciousness building and empowering their students. Educational theorists can develop a comprehensive pedagogy that incorporates the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual aspects of learning. His multimodal communication and crisis sensitivity can teach managers to be better prepared to absorb external shocks, thereby facilitating the organization's resilience. Lastly, his methods of consciousness transformation and ethical assimilation can be used by counselors and therapists in their practice.

The depth of the present study lies in the opportunity to relate ancient wisdom to contemporary educational contexts and provide evidence-based analysis demonstrating how Gita teachings facilitate immediate faith strengthening, improved mental focus, and long-term personality development, including leadership and problem-solving abilities (Lolla, 2020). This integration opens pathways for a more comprehensive vision of education and human development, one that respects and challenges both traditional wisdom and modern scientific knowledge to address contemporary problems in education, leadership, and social development.

Literature review

The pedagogical and leadership skills of Krishna have received increasing academic attention in various fields of study over the last several decades. The classical Hindu scripture *Mundaka Upanishad* (as cited in Gurubhaktananda, 2019) states that the ideal teacher is knowledgeable in the scriptures and established in Brahman -the ultimate truth (*śrotriyaṁ brahma-niṣṭham*). It includes both theoretical knowledge and practical

application. This definition has been expanded over time by modern research to include effective teaching as a practice, transformative ability, and sensitivity to students' diverse learning needs. Krishnananda (2016) writes about Krishna as the Jagadguru and explains that his vision of omniscience and his approach to teaching, based on compassion, have not been replicated in the area of spiritual upbringing. This study examines the integration of indigenous Indian knowledge systems with modern educational paradigms.

Recent studies have significantly deepened the understanding of Krishna's pedagogical methods through a post-2020 lens, building upon these earlier insights. **Subedi** (2024) argues that Krishna's dialogical style in the Bhagavad Gita, his way of questioning, guiding, and gently correcting Arjuna, is not just philosophical but pedagogically rich. In modern classrooms, adapting this method could foster critical thinking, self-reflection, and ethical reasoning. By framing learning as a relational conversation rather than the transmission of knowledge, Krishna's pedagogy challenges traditional teacher-centered models and invites a more democratic, student-responsive approach.

Kaushik et al. (2025) highlight how traditional values such as the guru-shishya relationship, experiential learning, and ethics-centered teachings combine with digital tools like artificial intelligence and virtual reality to foster holistic development and critical thinking, drawing inspiration from Krishna's pedagogical model. Recent literature has explored how the teaching methods practised by Krishna can be applied in modern educational institutions. **Kunwar et al.** (2024) examine the Bhagavad Gita's educational philosophy and its impact on holistic development, self-realization, and moral values. They highlight how the Gita fosters intellectual, emotional, ethical, and spiritual growth, promoting qualities like self-discipline, resilience, and mindfulness. The study concludes that integrating Gita teachings into school curricula can nurture comprehensive student development, including academic achievement and emotional well-being.

To understand the mechanisms through which the wisdom of the Bhagavad Gita can be applied to enhance teacher performance and the well-being of students in educational institutions, **Joshi** (2024) conducted in-depth research on the practices of transformative learning. His qualitative and quantitative empirical research demonstrated that the implementation of spiritual pedagogical principles leads to educational success. The results showed a higher level of satisfaction with teachers and a higher expression of interest in applying Krishna-based principles of pedagogy in the classroom. Additionally, **Song** (2022) examined the systematic application of spiritual pedagogy to second-language pedagogy, reviewing the cultural and spiritual values that inform classroom pedagogical practices. The researchers concluded that Krishna-mediated teaching techniques play a significant positive role in the acquisition of linguistic proficiency and human development in general.

The works have highlighted the therapeutic and psychological benefits of Krishna's teaching methods. The literature review of the study by **Kalia et al.** (2025) was limited to the systematic integration of Bhagavad Gita teachings, based on the results of large research databases, including PsycINFO, PubMed, and Google Scholar. Their review summarized the evidence of other studies conducted on the topic that showed significant stress reduction by Gita-based mindfulness training and cognitive functioning abilities in adolescents with ADHD who underwent Krishna consciousness training. The results of the studies showed that incorporating karma yoga practices (detachment) and dharma-based ethical decision-making principles into cognitive-behavioral therapy procedures yielded

positive and statistically significant therapeutic results. Participants of the stress management program had also demonstrated significant improvements in psychological well-being and resilience. It was this analysis that determined convergent validity between ancient yoga practices and modern self-determination theory, which empirically supported the use of the teachings of Krishna on self-regulation and equanimity into the evidence-based psychotherapeutic intervention of anxiety, depression, and existential issues across culturally diverse patient populations.

[Magar](#) (2024) brings in a psychological dimension by applying the Triguna theory—sattva, rajas, and tamas from the Gita to both teachers' and students' behaviors. He shows that recognizing which guna predominates in an individual can help educators tailor their teaching strategies. For instance, encouraging more sattvic dispositions fosters clarity and calm, while understanding rajasic or tamasic tendencies can help in designing interventions that reduce conflict or inertia. This offers a nuanced model for character-centered pedagogy grounded in indigenous philosophical psychology. These findings complement earlier work by [Kunwar et al.](#) (2024) by providing practical insights into classroom-level interventions.

Critically examining the applicability of the Krishna methods of teaching the Bhagavad Gita to the contemporary learning environment as well as assessing the usefulness of the various pedagogical strategies which include dialogue-based education, value-based learning, selfless action, mindful detachment, [Ghosh](#) (2023) endeavors to discuss how the classroom settings and overall student development could be enhanced through intelligent application of the aforementioned strategies by a teacher. In his presentation, he lists the potential ways the Krishna-based pedagogy can be applied to morality, emotional stability, and holistic learning in modern educational institutions.

[Biswas et al.](#) (2025) elaborate on leadership traits rooted in Indian cultural frameworks, detailing how Krishna's influence permeates adaptive and servant-leadership models, which prioritize selfless service and ethical empowerment in organizational settings. They argue that the Indian philosophical heritage, particularly Hindu traditions, offers a rich repository of leadership concepts that can enrich global leadership paradigms. The study of education can view Krishna from the perspectives of outstanding crisis management and transformational leadership. [Maharaj et al.](#) (2021) applied the Bhagavad Gita as a pedagogical resource by using the Bhagavad Gita to explain how this text could be used to fulfill the requirements of contemporary-day education, which allowed them to use the hermeneutical approach to the analysis of the problem under question and apply the new National Education Policy 2020 to India.

[Das](#) (2023) explores how Krishna's teachings inform moral education. She links the concept of atman, or self, in the Gita with dharma-based decision-making, arguing that self-understanding and duty can guide not only personal morality but also communal ethics. According to Das, when teachers integrate these ideas into their pedagogy, students develop a deeper sense of purpose and moral agency rather than simply following rules. This perspective bridges the gap between classical philosophical concepts and contemporary character education initiatives.

The research employed a qualitative feedback analysis approach, collecting individual written responses from 300 undergraduate engineering students who voluntarily shared their experiences after completing the Bhagavad Gita course at Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Hyderabad campus, between January 2012 and May 2019. The study also incorporated insights from 28 alumni who returned to provide

retrospective feedback on the course's long-term impact. [Lolla's](#) (2020) systematic analysis of student feedback revealed measurable outcomes across three distinct levels: immediate effects, including sanctity and strengthening of faith; intermediate improvements in mental clarity, enhanced focus, and calm disposition; and long-term personality development demonstrating improved leadership qualities and problem-solving abilities among students. The findings established that Bhagavad Gita teachings, when integrated into higher education curricula, contribute significantly to students' professional competence and stress management capabilities across diverse academic disciplines. Validation studies have been used to analyze Krishna in the context of modern-day management and leadership literature. [Subedi](#) (2024) opines that the system of education and the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita are valuable concepts that can significantly transform classroom and student behaviors. He will be able to demonstrate that the Gita encompasses not only moral and philosophical teachings, but also the means that are even more attractive in the contemporary world, such as dialogical and value-based pedagogy. Using the teaching strategies presented by [Masbur](#) (2022) in the context of qualitative research, the author discusses the so-called spiritual approach to pedagogical methodology, which enables the researcher to comprehend the spiritual orientations of learners.

[Chand](#) (2025) offers a structured educational framework by mapping Krishna's three yogas, jnana, bhakti, and karma, onto Bloom's three domains: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. By doing so, Chand provides a practical model for curriculum design. Jnana-yoga can inform knowledge acquisition, bhakti-yoga can nurture emotional and spiritual development, and karma-yoga can guide action-based learning and service. This mapping holds promise for educators seeking to implement Gita's wisdom in a way that aligns with modern pedagogical objectives and measurable learning outcomes. This also connects the philosophical teachings to actionable classroom strategies.

The paper has demonstrated that these activities can be considered central values that contribute to the motivation of learners and the overall development of the individual, enabling learners in a values-based school environment to be supported by educators in their growth and development. Despite the increased academic attention to Krishna in the role of a pedagogue, research gaps do exist. Most empirical studies conducted by individual researchers have not addressed the holistic teaching approach of Krishna, as they are based on a holistic and systematic approach. Small samples in most empirical studies limit the extrapolation of the results. Besides the aspects that are the center of interest for scholars such as [Joshi](#) (2024) and [Song](#) (2022), the systemic model of Krishna-excellence in education does not exist, nor does a systematic and qualitative analysis of Krishna crisis-intervention strategies or methods of a transformational approach to consciousness. The research conducted by [Maharaj et al.](#) (2021) cannot be characterized as pursuing a specific teaching strategy, and much of the study is not presented in the form of empirical findings on the transformational process or an assessment of its long-term effectiveness. Further, transitivity and penetration via interdisciplinarity across time are low (as the literature in place indicates). The details of the conceptions of the holistic ideals of guruship are not presented by other scholars, such as [Kalia et al.](#) (2025) and such issues as the theoretical framework of defining the practice of diagnostic testing recognition, adaptive interaction, intervention design, crisis-driven, consciousness building, ethical incorporation, and student empowerment are among the primary themes that can be used to construct general theoretical frames. This kind of a gap restricts the application of Krishna pedagogies, which are informed by the evidence-

based cognition of transformational teaching practices, to modern educators, leaders, and spiritual educators who are interested in an advanced, evidence-based perspective on transformational pedagogies that are informed by ancient wisdom practices and are practiced in a wide range of religious and spiritual contexts. This paper seeks to mitigate these serious shortcomings by conducting systematic research on Krishna as a pedagogue, with a qualitative study of Hindu literature, including classical texts, and an overview of modern literature.

The current study aims to determine, define, and elaborate on selected strategies, techniques, and principles that make Krishna the ideal prototype guru, and build on viable models that can be applied in modern educational, leadership, and developmental settings. By critically analyzing the entire teaching method used by Krishna throughout the Bhagavad Gita and related texts, this study aims to draw a correlation between ancient teaching and modern pedagogy and offer evidence-based information on the transformational teaching dynamics that can be applied in the context of individual growth and social betterment in the more complex modern context.

METHOD

The current research employs a qualitative content analysis method to conduct a thorough examination of the pedagogical excellence of Lord Krishna as depicted in classical Hindu literature, particularly the Bhagavad Gita. Juxtaposing the latest trends in qualitative research method interpretation and applying them to the interpretation of the primary findings of the proposed research, the paper combines the traditional hermeneutical approach to the interpretation with the modern one to qualitative content analysis, thus making the necessary rigour of scholarly research, without losing the cultural, spiritual, and historical appeal of the original texts. This methodological model offers nuanced insights that bridge old wisdom with contemporary pedagogical theory and practice, drawing on both historical context and current topicality.

Research design and approach

A qualitative research study is presented in the paper, employing an interpretive approach based on a systematic content analysis design to analyze the textual descriptions of Krishna's teaching methods. This way, it is possible to create pedagogical ideas deeply embedded in religious works, and simultaneously maintain objectivity as a scientific work. The hermeneutical element provides a culturally sensitive understanding of the Sanskrit concepts and philosophical paradigms. The content analytic element, on the other hand, offers thematic progression and systematic sorting, without which they are unable to become scholastic.

Data sources and selection criteria

The primary corpus of data consists of the authoritative Sanskrit scripture, primarily the Bhagavad Gita, which thoroughly describes the teacher's philosophy and modes of teaching as depicted by Krishna. All verse citations in this study are drawn from Prabhupada's (1972) *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. The selection of texts has been influenced by scholarly consensus on authenticity and a bias in favor of familiar translations, which preserve the original meaning of the Sanskrit and also provide an accessible interpretation. To accurately include all the points and become familiar with them, multiple versions and translations have been utilized. Reviews and cross-referencing of classical Sanskrit commentaries by prominent Sanskrit scholars, as well as those by

contemporary scholars, have made triangulation of Krishna as a pedagogical strategy in both past and present interpretive models a possibility, leading to a better understanding.

Data collection procedures

The studies have been selected based on the following criteria: relevance to spiritual pedagogy, sound methodology, and publication in a reputable academic journal. The literature selection criteria were that it must be pertinent to spiritual pedagogy and methodologically sound, and it had to be published in reputable academic journals. Classical commentaries on Sanskrit by renowned Sanskrit scholars and analyses by modern scholars were reviewed and cross-referenced, allowing for the triangulation of Krishna's pedagogical strategies in both past and present interpretive frameworks to become possible and more clearly understood.

Data analysis

The data analysis was an organized, multi-purpose process that developed improved knowledge over time and was a carefully designed task. The preliminary stage of familiarization involved the extensive and in-depth reading of the complete set of information to identify the preliminary themes applicable to the Krishna pedagogical approaches. This was followed by a process of systematic inductive coding to identify textual illustrations related to diagnostic assessment, communication methodologies, crisis intervention techniques, techniques for transforming consciousness, working with ethics, and empowering students. The initial readings and existing literature on pedagogical theory and spiritual education served as a basis for creating an iterative coding scheme. Data were coded manually using a structured codebook developed iteratively from the texts and relevant pedagogy literature; codes were applied and refined across successive readings with memoing to track analytic decisions. The coding procedure aimed to identify explicit and implicit mentions of teaching practices, communicative processes, and transformational effects in the texts (Nowell et al., 2017). The coding-based thematic classification was based on the coded information, which was divided into logical units and referred to a definite dimension of pedagogy and instructional practices. Those patterns of identification outlined general principles and methodological regularities, on which the Krishna system of pedagogy is based. The final synthesis step involved applying the knowledge of analysis to an analytical frame of reference that could be extended to the entire process of imparting Krishna and its significance in modern learning settings.

Validity and reliability measures

To enhance credibility and dependability, the study used manual double-coding guided by a structured codebook developed iteratively from primary Sanskrit scriptures and authoritative translations, with reflexive memoing to document analytic decisions and code refinements. Shared subsets were coded in two rounds. In the first round, the two analysts independently coded the shared subsets. In the second round, the coded versions were reconciled in meetings of intercoder calibration until any discrepancies were completely resolved. Thereafter, the final codebook was applied to the entire corpus. Sanskrit scholars were the experts on whom validation was sought, and they consulted on code definitions, passages illustrating exemplars, and the resulting thematic map, focusing on adherence to Sanskrit ideas and thematic coherence. The reliability of the themes was determined through triangulation of the Bhagavad Gita, the chosen Upanishads, and the classical commentaries, thereby minimizing the influence of a single source and confirming their reliability. A peer debriefing of emerging interpretations and external

checks of the origin of analytic moves was made possible by an audit trail (date-stamped codebook versions, memos, and decision logs) and peer debriefing with academic colleagues. Given the interpretive, theory-building aim, agreement was monitored qualitatively through consensus, rather than quantitatively, consistent with consensus-based approaches to conceptual qualitative synthesis.

Ethical considerations and limitations

Ethical considerations were carefully observed throughout this study, recognizing the profound cultural and religious foundation of the central texts. A key limitation is the inherent subjectivity in interpreting classical Sanskrit literature like the Bhagavad Gita, as meanings may vary according to the researcher's perspective, despite consulting multiple translations. The research focuses primarily on the Bhagavad Gita and a limited corpus of Upanishads, which may overlook other important Hindu pedagogical texts and traditions. As a theoretical study, it lacks empirical validation in contemporary educational settings, which limits direct practical application. Finally, while cross-cultural applications are suggested, their universal applicability requires further investigation and contextual adaptation. Future research should address these limitations to broaden understanding and applicability.

Reproducibility and audit trail

This cultural sensitivity has given me a solid foundation in the pedagogical excellence of Krishna. His strategy is critical to educational, leadership, and transformational learning theory. The process of development of knowledge and understanding during the research was recorded in detailed memos. These ensured the systematic coding, peer review, and thematic decision-making. Krishna is a good example of thorough diagnostic analysis before teaching. It leads to a student-centered model that forms the basis of modern educational innovation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of Krishna's pedagogical excellence identifies four basic dimensions structured around three fundamental research questions, with evidence present in both classical and modern writings. Those aspects demonstrate Krishna as an exemplary guru who offers guidance that remains relevant even in modern pedagogy. All the dimensions are unique yet interrelated, reflecting the holistic nature of Krishna's approach to spiritual and transformational education.

Foundational pedagogical strategies

The preliminary inquiry concerns the nature of the pedagogical strategies and approaches that define Lord Krishna as the model of an ideal guru in the Hindu tradition. The Krishna pedagogical base is laid on two core dimensions: individualized teaching with systematic diagnostic evaluation, and the multi-mode communication strategies that can meet the needs of diverse learning.

Individualized instruction and diagnostic assessment

The motivation behind this somatic awareness is that effective teaching should consider the entire person, as the body is in better health and the mind is clearer when the body and mind are relaxed (Kalia et al., 2025). Instead of preparing it or informing the student of what they need to have learned, Krishna's dynamic assessment, through well-organized observation, helps create a positive climate of transformational learning. This diagnostic savoir-faire reflects knowledge about the psychology and processes of learning, including

aspects that cannot be easily learned in a secular view. This holistic attitude is a perception that transformation is not merely academic but also embodied, as tension in the body constrains the openness of the mind. Such preoccupation with somatic symptoms marks a maturity in pedagogy, and it was subsequently confirmed in the modern psychology of education that in any diagnostic process, there is a demand to observe the whole student and identify the physical manifestation of emotions and moods. By acknowledging these cues, the teacher validates the reality that the learner is experiencing, and subsequently, creates an atmosphere of trust that enables the learner to disclose themselves at deeper levels.

The text notes that Krishna is witness to overt signs of learning impediments in Arjuna, as described in verses 1.28-30:

दृष्टेमं स्वजनं कृष्ण युयुत्सुं समुपस्थितम्।
सीदन्ति मम गात्राणि मुखं च परिशुष्यति॥ १.२८॥

वेपथुश्च शरीरे मे रोमहर्षश्च जायते।
गाण्डीवं संस्ते हस्तात्त्वक्चैव परिदह्यते॥ १.२९॥

न च शक्नोम्यवस्थातुं भ्रमतीव च मे मनः।
निमित्तानि च पश्यामि विपरीतानि केशव॥ १.३०॥

*dṛiṣṭvemam sva-janam kṛiṣhṇa yuyutsum samupasthitam
sīdanti mama gātrāṇi mukhaṁ cha pariśuṣyati (1.28)*

*vepathuśh cha śharīre me roma-harṣhaśh cha jāyate
gāṇḍīvarṇ sraṁsate hastāt tvak chaiva paridahyate (1.29)*

*na cha Śaknomy avasthātum bhramatīva cha me manah
nimittāni cha paśhyāmi viparītāni keśhava (1.30)*

"O Krishna, seeing my kinsmen assembled here eager for battle, my limbs fail me, my mouth is parched, my body trembles, and my hair stands on end. The bow Gandiva slips from my hand, and my skin burns. I am unable to stand steady, and my mind seems to be reeling. O Krishna, I see only adverse omens."

Acknowledging these cues validates the learner's experience and builds the trust necessary for deeper self-disclosure. The latter emotional interpretation is justified by the identification of specific fears that Arjuna possessed, including fear of his family, karma, of his duty, and of the latent grief of approaching violence. Krishna does not disprove them but assures them of their reality and slowly broadens the frames of reference and vision that Arjuna possesses (Joshi, 2024). This reflexive and dialogical approach proves that an approach to pedagogy is not the inhibition of fear, but rather the positive intake of fear into bravery and clarity. The one-to-one strategy is valuable because conformity is not an effective teaching approach; rather, it allows for the student's personality to be considered (Song, 2022). Krishna comes out very clearly in showing that he knows the kind of learner Arjuna is; He is a warrior with warrior capabilities, a devoted warrior, and a rational learner. Such dynamism is coupled with the fact that quality teaching is responsive to the needs of the individual learner, wherein the role of the teacher is not to impose, but to identify and nurture the inherent gifts of the student, making them instruments of change.

Multi-modal communication methodologies

As illustrated in the discussion, Krishna recognizes that teaching should be multimodal to cater to the diverse needs of students and promote knowledge acquisition among all (Maharaj et al., 2021). Instead of adopting only one approach, which would limit the appeal to students with other interests, Krishna logically chooses to use different means of communication so that students with diverse interests can hear and learn the material, and utilize multiple channels of reinforcement to enhance learning and retention. This is to explain that the pedagogy of Krishna does not remain fixed, but rather it is adaptable, as the learner's individuality should primarily determine the pedagogic approach to be used. Combining narrative, reasoning, experiential involvement, and dialogic inquiry serves as a unified grid to maintain attention and bring about real change in learners, as opposed to the short-term learning of facts. On this premise of multimodal thinking, Krishna explains how we can apply our rational and logical thinking, as other parts of the Bhagavad Gita have already demonstrated. In this instance, Krishna engages in a conversation with Arjuna on the topic of responsibility, utilizing reason and logic.

Krishna develops a logical chain in his evidence of the immortality of the soul: beginning with the phenomena that we can see, he is led to the conclusions about the things that we are not able to see. In verse 2.13, Krishna explains:

देहिनोऽस्मिन्यथा देहे कौमारं यौवनं जरा।
तथा देहान्तरप्राप्तिर्धर्मस्तत्र न मुह्यति॥ २.१३॥
*dehino 'smiṇ yathā dehe kaumāram yauvanam jarā
tathā dehāntara-prāptir dhīras tatra na muhyati (2.13)*

"Just as the soul has passed through the course of developments in this body, so he is modified into another body; the wise are not deceived by this."

The logical neatness of this argument is a valuable aspect of pedagogy-construction towards the abstract, which remains considered a precept of good instruction in contemporary education. Krishna further establishes the eternal nature of the soul in verse 2.20:

न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचिन्नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः।
अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे॥ २.२०॥

*na jāyate mriyate vā kadāchin nāyam bhūtvā bhavitā vā na bhūyah
ajo nityah śāśvato 'yam purāṇo na hanyate hanyamāne śharīre (2.20)*
"For the soul, there is neither birth nor death at any time. He has not come into being, does not come into being, and will not come into being. He is unborn, eternal, ever-existing, and primeval. He is not slain when the body is slain."

Besides being rational, Krishna realizes that nothing could be modified without the presence of more than intellectual knowledge. He becomes emotionally sensitive in his leadership, which does not reject the insecurities and fears of Arjuna harshly or severely, but supports them in the most sincere way possible. Given that this patient recognizes his vulnerability, this fact opens up the role of the teacher, who is not supposed to extinguish doubt, but rather to refine it into a sense of curiosity and encourage further exploration of himself. The revelation of his universal form, which he had outlined in Chapter 11 of the Bhagavad Gita, can be considered the ultimate goal of experiential pedagogy, in the sense

that we do not discuss ultimate truths, but rather experience them in the moment. As Arjuna witnesses the *Vishvarupa* (universal form) in verses 11.15-16:

पश्यामि देवांस्तव देव देहे सर्वास्तथा भूतविशेषसङ्घान्।
ब्रह्माणमीशं कमलासनस्थमृषीशं सर्वानुरगांश्च दिव्यान्॥ ११.१५॥
अनेकबाहुदरवक्तनेत्रं पश्यामि त्वां सर्वतोऽनन्तरूपम्।
नान्तं न मध्यं न पुनस्तवादि पश्यामि विश्वेश्वर विश्वरूप॥ ११.१६॥

*paśhyāmi devāns tava deva dehe sarvāns tathā bhūta-viśheṣha-saṅghān
brahmāṇam iśham̄ kamalāsana-stham̄ ṛśhīnś̄ cha sarvān uragānś̄ cha divyān (11.15)*

*aneka-bāhūdara-vaktra-netram̄ paśhyāmi tvām̄ sarvato 'nanta-rūpam̄
nāntam̄ na madhyam̄ na punas tavādīm̄ paśhyāmi viśhveśhvāra viśhva-rūpa (11.16)*

"O Lord of the universe, I see within Your body all the gods and various beings—Lord Brahma seated on the lotus, all the sages, and the celestial serpents. I see You everywhere, infinite in form. I see neither your beginning, middle, nor end, O Lord of the universe, O universal form."

Collectively, these strategies constitute the fundamental pillars of pedagogical excellence that Krishna enforces through the holistic evaluation of students and flexible communication policies that address various learning needs without compromising intellectual sharpness and emotional delicacy. The harmonious nature of clarity of reasoning, sensitivity of emotions, and immediacy of experiences makes Krishna another example of an integrative, resilient, and timeless teaching model.

Adaptive and transformational excellence

The second research question explores how Krishna's teaching methods are utilized to reveal their adaptive and transformational excellence in various circumstances and in response to the needs of students. This excellence is manifested in two dimensions: crisis-responsive teaching methodology and systematic consciousness transformation methods.

Crisis-responsive teaching methodology

A higher order of meaningful crisis intervention is evident in the way Krishna reacts to the crisis of battle, as Arjuna responds by directing the insurmountable obstacles toward radical learning and self-growth. His approach can provide procedural models for assessing crisis, emotional regulation, cognitive restructuring, and gradual de-escalation, which are highly applicable to the contemporary management of crises in schools, therapy, and organizations (Maharaj et al., 2021). Such a crisis-reactive approach demonstrates how well-proactive pedagogues can apply crises to promote accelerated learning and development. Krishna also offers a step-wise approach to dealing with the crisis, providing contemporary educators, counselors, and leaders with the knowledge of crisis pedagogy. The initial step he takes during empathetic recognition is to confirm to Arjuna that he is in distress and to remain in reflective silence, allowing him to process his emotions and think more deeply (Ghosh, 2023).

Krishna provides Arjuna with the psychological basis for applying higher-order thinking, first stabilizing his emotional state. This demonstrates a developed insight that emotional distress is a key impediment to sound thinking, the concept that has since become the focus of trauma-informed instruction. He employs superior techniques to manage emotions, addressing Arjuna's anxiety and confusion with strategies that include controlling breathing, observing thought patterns, broadening perspectives, and

developing confidence through systematic reassurance (Kalia et al., 2025). In Chapter 2, verse 3, Krishna directly addresses Arjuna's crisis:

क्लैब्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ नैतत्त्वयुपपद्यते।
क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्त्वोत्तिष्ठ परन्तप॥ २.३॥

*klaibyam mā sma gamah pārtha naitat tvayy upapadyate
kshudram hṛidaya-daurbalyam tyaktvottishtha parantapa (2.3)*

"Do not yield to unmanliness, O Partha. It does not befit you. Cast off this petty weakness of heart and arise, O scorcher of enemies."

Krishna further motivates steadfast determination in verse 2.37:

हतो वा प्राप्स्यसि स्वर्गं जित्वा वा भोक्ष्यसे महीम्।
तस्मादुत्तिष्ठ कौन्तेय युद्धाय कृतनिश्चयः॥ २.३७॥

*hato vā prāpsyasi swargam jitvā vā bhokṣyase mahīm
tasmād uttiṣṭha kaunteya yuddhāya kṛita-niśchayā (2.37)*

"If you fight, you will either be slain on the battlefield and go to the celestial abodes, or you will gain victory and enjoy the kingdom on earth. Therefore, arise with determination, O son of Kunti, and be prepared to fight."

This verse underscores the struggle we all face in life and the call for steadfast determination. It encourages educators and students to confront hurdles with courage, understanding that fulfilling one's duty with dedication, regardless of outcomes, embodies the principle of "duty for duty's sake" central to transformational pedagogy.

Krishna primarily addresses Arjuna's crisis by focusing on systematic cognitive reframing, which enables Arjuna to adopt new insights into his situation. Rather than denying or evading difficult scenarios, Krishna offers alternative intellectual concepts to manage the challenges that should enable Arjuna to contextualize his crisis as part of a larger cosmic mission (Maharaj et al., 2021). This developmental problem-solving plan is the source of ethical and practical self-sufficiency. This method has a wide and systematic characteristic, presenting a transferable model that can be applied in various crises. It also makes it an effective intervention, one with high ethical standards, thus rendering it a developmental process rather than a short-term solution.

Consciousness transformation methods

On an analytic level, we can again narrow down Krishna to an intellectually advanced view of consciousness-transformation (Kalia et al., 2025), which is theorized to be the ultimate goal of ideal pedagogy as an implication of following systematic approaches, and which actually translates into a paradigmatic shift in consciousness to spread sustainable change in every area of human experience. The core of Krishna's approach to transformation is the rational understanding of what I actually am and the differentiation between bound or time-related modes, associations, and circumstances, and the timeless or eternal spirituality that remains unchanged, even under different circumstances. Krishna guides Arjuna through the process of rational questioning to help him see what he truly is, not just as a warrior, a prince, or a family member, but as himself. The belief in the never-born, never-dying soul provides a logical representation of an identity that cannot be altered by any material or social circumstances, and it serves as the basis of confidence, calmness, and effective action (Krishnananda, 2016).

The strategies Krishna advocates for change are building value hierarchies, advancing spiritual experiences, and pursuing the common good, rather than focusing on concrete attraction and ego fulfillment, as long-term happiness is more important than short-term pleasure. The rationality of the Krishna explanation of spiritual and moral concepts, their applicability to the decision-making process, and the flexibility of virtues depending on the nature of life as it progresses result in the development of a moral-ethical action conceptualization. Krishna introduces the foundational principle of *nishkama karma* (desireless action) in Chapter 2, verse 47:

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि॥ २.४७॥

*karmaṇy-evādhikāras te mā phaleṣu kadāchana
mā karma-phala-hetur bhūr mā te saṅgo 'stv akarmaṇi* (2.47)

"You have a right to perform your prescribed duty, but you are not entitled to the fruits of action. Never consider yourself the cause of the results of your activities, and never be attached to not doing your duty."

This principle transforms motivation from outcome-attachment to duty-fulfillment, generating sustainable ethical action and professional dedication. For educators, this teaching inspires focus on professional responsibilities with faith that challenges can be met gracefully, accepting outcomes while maintaining commitment to teaching excellence. One of the characteristics of Krishna is the empowerment of students through effective pedagogy. Krishna progressively transfers the role of making decisions to Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita so that he may be prepared to take on more responsibilities and become more competent. In the final instruction of Chapter 18, verse 63, Krishna states:

इति ते ज्ञानमाख्यातं गुह्याद्गुह्यतरं मया।
विमृश्यैतदरोषेण यथेच्छसि तथा कुरु॥ १८.६३॥

*iti te jñānam ākhyātaṁ guhyād guhyataram mayā
vimṛiśyaitad aśeṣheṇa yathechchhasi tathā kuru* (18.63)

"Thus, I have explained to you that the knowledge is still more confidential. Deliberate on this fully, and then do what you wish to do."

This cultivation of critical thinking, ethical thought, rational decision-making, and spiritual awareness enables us to make informed decisions based on our knowledge, rather than being dictated by external forces. The adaptive and transformational excellence of Krishna is evident in his capacity to turn crises into learning opportunities and systematically redesign consciousness in a way that sustains change that is both ethical, developmental, and student empowering.

Modern educational applications

The third research question examines the current educational, leadership, and developmental implications that can be inferred from Krishna's teaching methods. The four pedagogical dimensions expose the wide-ranging current uses in various fields.

Educational institution applications

The pedagogical paradigm offered by Krishna is a powerful tool for changing the current educational institution by shifting the focus from memorization to the overall improvement of students. His personalized method of diagnostic tests illustrates how to build a comprehensive system of testing of students, surpassing the inadequacy of

standardized testing. Such a system would not only evaluate cognitive skills but also assess the emotional, physical, and social preparedness of a student to study, as obstacles to learning are often compounded (Subedi, 2024; Jana & Adhikary, 2025). As an example, teachers may be educated to recognize somatic signs of stress or anxiety, as Krishna did to Arjuna when he was physically manifesting signs of distress, so that early and more efficient intervention is possible. This integrated approach will make teaching strategies more student-centered, making learning more effective and inclusive for all students. In this way, schools will be able to create settings that encourage individual contributions from students, allowing their personal attributes to be identified and developed, thereby enhancing their performance and emotional well-being.

Moreover, the multi-modal communication used by Krishna offers educators a flexible set of tools to support inclusivity and a wide range of learning styles. The classroom based on this paradigm would be characterized by rational discourse (logical arguments and critical thinking), emotional involvement (storytelling and value-based discussions), and experiential learning (project-based learning and problem-solving in real-life situations). This confirms that all students, regardless of their preferred learning style, can learn and retain knowledge on a deep level. In addition, these multidimensional approaches allow for some flexibility, even among teachers themselves, thereby promoting reflective practice and professional development (Dhakal, 2022).

This includes fostering safe environments for emotional sharing, facilitating cognitive reframing, and empowering students to develop autonomous problem-solving skills. These trauma-informed strategies build long-term resilience and adaptive capacity, enabling students to navigate challenges effectively rather than conforming temporarily (Kurian, 2022; Wright, 2023).

Therapeutic and counseling applications

Krishna's approach can be effectively integrated into contemporary therapeutic and counseling practices, thereby enhancing their depth and efficiency. His method of diagnostic assessment, which considers the overall person, aligns with the biopsychosocial model of psychotherapy because it encourages practitioners to go beyond the symptoms manifested to comprehend the interrelationship between emotional, cognitive, and even somatic states of a client (Gairola & Mishra, 2022; Kapuriya et al., 2025; Risal, 2024). Reading between the lines of the body language and emotional expression, therapists can discern the indicators of latent psychological barriers, just as Krishna could discern the indicators of bodily and emotional expression in Arjuna. The Bhagavad Gita, as a reflection of crisis intervention strategies, can provide a highly developed clinical intervention framework. In any case, cognitive reframing, emotional control, and problem-solving in bits are the methods that could be systematically applied to help an anxious, depressed, or existential crisis client. All these strategies are grounded in experiential knowing, whereby clients are invited to experience and resolve their feelings directly, rather than discussing them within the scope of theoretical knowledge.

These principles are being increasingly supported by research. Research has demonstrated that integrating concepts such as karma yoga (the practice of unattached action) and dharma-oriented ethical decision-making into more traditional approaches to treatment, such as Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT), could bring significant therapeutic value (Dhillon 2023; Kalia et al., 2025). Learning to do without being bothered by the products of their work, clients will be able to eliminate performance apprehension and will not tie their own self-image to any outer successes. Moreover, the concept of

reflective self-inquiry and conscious awareness taught by Krishna offers therapists a means of helping clients explore their most firmly held belief systems and redesign maladaptive thought patterns. The techniques of transformation of consciousness provided by Krishna offer a point of entry where interventions can go beyond symptom reduction and facilitate a profound change in a client's identity and worldviews. It is a highly effective way of addressing existential causes and can be tailored to suit patients from diverse cultural backgrounds, which will be a step towards universal participation in the process of enhancing psychological strength and wellness. The combination of Krishna's holistic, adaptive principles in pedagogy can enhance therapeutic practice by fostering cognitive and emotional change in clients across various situations (Neupane, 2025).

Organizational development applications

The managers in this model serve as mentors, developing independent and critical thinking among employees. They offer guidance and early assistance, but over time, they assign decision-making responsibilities. They instill an ownership culture and can become future leaders within an organization. This can help employees become more innovative and develop problem-solving skills through initiative and seeking out creative solutions, thereby generating a fast-paced and self-reliant workforce. Ultimately, the emphasis on moral inclusion ensures that the organization's creation aligns with social welfare. When the mission, values, and operations of an organization align with its ethics, not only does the organization benefit in the public eye, but it also results in a more active, motivated, and goal-oriented workforce. With ethics embedded in decision-making, organizations can ensure long-term sustainability, enhance trust among the stakeholders, and establish a company culture where performance, responsibility, and social consciousness all thrive together (Martínez et al., 2020).

The managers in this model serve as mentors, fostering independent and critical thinking among employees by gradually transferring decision-making responsibilities. This ownership culture empowers employees to take initiative, driving innovation and enhancing problem-solving abilities (Dhamija et al., 2023). Embedding ethics as a core organizational value supports sustainability and builds trust with stakeholders (Mallik, 2024). Ethical leadership promotes employee engagement and motivation by creating an inclusive workplace where social responsibility flourishes (Subedi & Bhandari, 2024). Ultimately, organizations that align mission and operations with moral principles experience improved public perception and cultivate a resilient, goal-driven workforce committed to performance and accountability.

CONCLUSION

This study's findings provide answers to three central research questions concerning Krishna's pedagogical strategies, their adaptive-transformational excellence, and their contemporary applications in education, leadership, and therapy. The four most important pedagogical domains Krishna incorporates to support the contention that he is the best prototype guru are: a multi-dimensional model of communication, a multi-dimensional model of crisis-responsive teaching, a multi-dimensional model of comprehensive diagnostic assessment with individual instruction, and a multi-dimensional model of systematic transformation of consciousness that brings ethical practice through empowerment of students through autonomous growth. Krishna has not only managed to

do so due to the knowledge God gave him, but also because of his skills in leading students in a way that is practical, understanding, and learner-centered, making confusion clear.

Integrating spiritual and practical knowledge, Krishna offers a perfect example of transformational pedagogy, which ensures balance in authoritative and guiding instructions, empathy, and student choice. As this paper illustrates, the teaching principles of Krishna are not limited by religious/cultural constraints and offer universal pedagogical interpretations that can be applied to secular learning processes through a methodological approach, aided by systematic qualitative content analysis. The perennial applicability of Krishna approaches has been confirmed by modern scientific research, and we now have evidence-based models of crisis intervention at the school level, consciousness formation in therapeutic settings, and ethical leadership in the business world. The Krishna Guruship Model is a significant addition to transformational pedagogy, as it offers educators, leaders, and practitioners' valuable tools that are grounded in both ancient wisdom and modern educational theory.

These frameworks should be empirically tested in various contemporary settings in future research. Researchers should design the assessment scales to assess the transformational outcomes. They should also develop training programs that integrate the pedagogical principles of Krishna with the best practices in training and leadership development currently available.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to thank the Sanskrit scholars for their insightful interpretations of the Bhagavad Gita. I also appreciate the reviewers and editorial team for their profound feedback, which improved the clarity and rigor of the analysis.

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Conflict of Interest Statement: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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