

Servant Leadership and Employee Well-Being: Mapping Research Evolution, Intellectual Structure and Emerging Themes through Bibliometric Analysis, Systematic Literature Review and LDA-Based Topic Modelling

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Abstract: Servant leadership has emerged as one of the most consistently theorised leader behaviours associated with follower well-being, yet the field's rapid and fragmented growth has made it difficult to discern a coherent intellectual structure, a stable thematic architecture, or a clear research agenda. This study addresses that gap by combining bibliometric analysis, a systematic literature review (SLR), and Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA)-based probabilistic topic modelling to map the evolution of research at the intersection of servant leadership and employee well-being. Following a PRISMA-guided screening protocol, 213 English-language articles and reviews were retrieved from Scopus (search string: servant leadership AND employee well-being; 2000–2026) and analysed using VOSviewer (author, country, and citation-based networks) and Python-based LDA. The results show that publication output has grown almost twenty-fold since 2016, with 2024 as the peak year ($n = 43$); that the field is intellectually anchored by Greenleaf's foundational writing and operationalised chiefly through Liden et al.'s and van Dierendonck's multidimensional measures; and that bibliographic coupling of the 144 most interconnected documents resolves into six research fronts, corroborated by a six-cluster LDA solution extracted from article abstracts. Co-authorship analysis reveals a geographically broad but structurally fragmented collaboration network dominated by the United States, China, and Spain, with only 34 of 43 qualifying countries forming a single connected component and author collaboration remaining largely confined to small, closed dyads and triads. Keyword co-occurrence and topic-evolution analysis jointly indicate a thematic shift away from generic organisational-citizenship and trust outcomes (pre-2020) toward well-being-proximal mechanisms — psychological safety, burnout, work engagement, and post-pandemic resilience — as well as an emergent, environmentally-specific stream linking servant leadership to green creativity and sustainable hospitality outcomes. The systematic review further identifies conservation-of-resources theory, social exchange theory, and self-determination theory as the dominant explanatory lenses, and surfaces need-satisfaction, trust, and psychological safety as the most frequently tested mediating mechanisms. Integrating the three analytical layers, the study proposes a consolidated research agenda around mechanism-level well-being theorising, longitudinal and multilevel designs, contextual boundary conditions, and computational-linguistic extensions of bibliometric methods. The paper contributes a replicable tri-method protocol for mapping mature-but-fragmenting leadership literatures and offers scholars, editors, and practitioners an evidence-based roadmap for the next decade of servant leadership and well-being research.

Keywords: servant leadership; employee well-being; bibliometric analysis; systematic literature review; latent Dirichlet allocation; topic modelling; VOSviewer; co-citation analysis



1. Introduction

Greenleaf's formulation of servant leadership has come to represent a normative management philosophy, broadly and devoutly embraced as a way of doing business, and has emerged as one of the most empirically rich constructions of leadership-behaviour in the organisational literature. While transformational and transactional leadership place the emphasis on the achievement of organisational goals, servant leadership is explicitly oriented towards the other – what counts as effective leadership is the focus on the growth, autonomy and psychological needs of followers, rather than the leader's status, or the instrumental aims of the organisation. The other orientation makes servant leadership a plausible explanation for employee well-being outcomes, and the empirical literature on the relationship between servant leadership and employee well-being outcomes has grown rapidly in the last decade, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has brought to the forefront employee well-being outcomes such as burnout, psychological safety, and workplace resilience as first-order managerial issues.

Coherent concepts and methods for servant leadership and well-being are still conceptually and methodologically fragmented despite this development. The operationalisation of servant leadership is heterogeneous: multiple rather than a single operationalisation exists (e.g., Liden, Wu, van Dierendonck, Ehrhart); well-being is measured in various traditions (hedonic, eudaimonic, psychological, and occupational-health); and empirical studies cover a vast cross-section of national, sectoral, and organisational contexts (from Vietnam to the tourism firms to Ghana to the public agencies to Turkey to the hospitals). Current reviews of this size and diversity are not narrative in nature and current systematic reviews of servant leadership focus on either the various servant leadership outcomes (well-being as one of several) or one mediator, one sector or one country, but the specific servant leadership–well-being relationship has yet to be synthesized in a large sample, multi-method systematic review.

This study fills that void by merging three complimentary methods. First, bibliometric analysis (performance analysis and science mapping by using VOSviewer) is employed to estimate the growth of publications, to find out influential authors, journals and countries, and to visualise the collaboration and the intellectual structure of the field through co-authorship, bibliographic coupling and co-citation networks. Secondly, a systematic literature review (SLR) based on the PRISMA protocol is performed to extract and synthesize the theories used, variables included in the reviewed studies, the context and the mediations/moderations that appear throughout the studies, the methodology used throughout the studied articles, and identify substantive gaps in the reviewed research that cannot be known from the count of citations. Third, all 213 articles in the abstract are processed using a probabilistic topic-modeling algorithm, Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA), which is used to induce the latent thematic structure of the entire corpus and track the relative occurrences of each theme across four periods of publication (2000–2016, 2017–2020, 2021–2023, 2024–2026).

All three methods are not independent, but complementary. Bibliometric network analysis uncovers the structural centrality of documents, authors and keywords within a body of literature, but provides limited information regarding the substance of the arguments that the documents put forward. The substantive content gets recovered by SLR, but the scaling-to-200+ articles is not easy to do reliably without a priori organising structure. LDA, on the other hand, provides a data-driven overview of the themes identified manually by an SLR, which helps to prevent researcher-selection bias associated with narrative synthesis. The three methods collectively give convergent and mutually valid evidence of the same phenomenon: the intellectual and thematic structure of the servant leadership–employee well-being literature.

1.1 Research Objectives

- RO1: To trace the publication trends, production rates and citation relationships of the servant leadership—employee well being literature in Scopus from 2000 to 2026.
- RO2: To determine the most influential texts, journals, countries and authors and to describe the degree of co-authorship between them by means of co-authorship network analysis.

- RO3: Identify the intellectual and thematic structure of the field through bibliographic coupling analysis, co-citation analysis, author keyword cooccurrence and overlay visualisation.
- RO4: To systematically review the theoretical foundation, key variables, mediating/moderating mechanisms, contexts and methodologies of the empirical literature, and identify substantive gaps in the literature.
- Objective 5: To confirm and expand the thematic organization through the application of LDA-based topic modelling, based on article abstracts, and to track the change in topics over time.
- RO6: To foster the inclusion of the bibliometric, SLR and LDA results in a combined future research agenda for the study of servant leadership and employee well-being.

1.2 Contribution and Structure

The paper makes three contributions. Methodologically, it demonstrates a replicable tri-method (bibliometric + SLR + LDA) protocol suited to mature-but-fragmenting leadership literatures, extending recent calls for hybrid, computationally assisted reviews. Substantively, it provides the first dedicated, large-sample mapping of the servant leadership–employee well-being nexus, resolving the field into six empirically grounded research fronts and clarifying which theoretical mechanisms, contexts, and methods dominate current knowledge. Practically, it offers a structured, prioritised research agenda that can guide doctoral researchers, journal editors, and applied practitioners seeking evidence-based guidance on leader development for employee well-being. The remainder of the paper proceeds as follows: Section 2 details the methodology; Section 3 reports bibliometric findings; Section 4 presents the systematic literature review; Section 5 reports the LDA topic-modelling results; Section 6 integrates the three analytical layers; Section 7 proposes a research agenda; and Section 8 concludes. The paper has three contributions to make. Methodologically, it shows a replicable protocol based on a tri-method (bibliometric + SLR + LDA), which is appropriate for mature, but still fragmented leadership literatures, building on recent calls for hybrid, computationally assisted reviews. In terms of content, it is the first systematic, large-scale mapping of the relationship between servant leadership and employee well-being, identified six empirically informed research fronts, and identified the predominant theoretical mechanisms, contexts, and methods in the field. In practice, it provides a prioritised research agenda that can help doctoral researchers, journal editors and applied practitioners who need to draw on evidence to inform their efforts on leader development for employee well-being. The rest of the paper is structured as follows: Section 2 explains the methodology used, Section 3 reports the bibliometric results, Section 4 presents the LDA topic modelling results, Section 6 shows how the three layers of analysis can be integrated, Section 7 proposes a research agenda, and Section 8 concludes.

2. Methodology

The study is a three-phase sequential mixed-methods design consisting of (i) bibliometric performance and science-mapping analysis, (ii) an informed systematic literature review using the PRISMA protocol, and (iii) an unsupervised LDA topic modelling. The three phases are all based on the same corpus, which is always screened for Scopus, and thereby all three phases are directly comparable in terms of the quantitative network structure, the qualitative thematic synthesis, and the computational topic model.

2.1 Data Source and Search Strategy

Scopus was selected as the sole bibliographic database because of its broader journal coverage relative to Web of Science in management and applied psychology outlets, its structured author-keyword and citation metadata (required for VOSviewer network construction), and its widespread use as the reference database for bibliometric studies published in Q1 management journals. The following Boolean search string was executed in the Title-Abstract-Keyword field on 9 August 2026:

TITLE-ABS-KEY (servant leadership AND employee well being) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ar") OR LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "re")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English")) AND (LIMIT-TO (PUBSTAGE , "final")) AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , "BUSI") OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , "PSYC") OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , "SOCI")) AND PUBYEAR > 1999 AND PUBYEAR < 2027

2.2 Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria and PRISMA Screening

Table 1 shows the sequential screening funnel that led to the final analytical corpus, starting from the initial database search. In line with the standard PRISMA logic, the screening was carried out in the following manner: database identification, restriction of the time window, filtering on document type (only peer-reviewed articles and reviews were included, excluding conference papers, book chapters, notes and editorials), restriction on the publication stage (only records that were final or published were included, excluding in-press items), and restriction on the subject area (only Business, Management and Accounting, Psychology, and Social Sciences were included, excluding clinical, medical, and engineering records where 'servant leadership' or 'well-being' is used in a non-organisational sense). All the records retained were substantively related to servant leadership and an employee-level affective/motivational or closely related outcome of well-being, engagement, health, or a combination of these.

Screening stage	Criterion applied	Records retained
Identification	Scopus database search	332
Time period	2000–2026 publication window	328
Document type	Articles + Reviews only	267
Language	English	257
Publication status	Final / published (in-press excluded)	244
Subject area	Business, Management & Accounting / Psychology / Social Sciences	213
Relevance screen	Substantive servant leadership–well-being linkage confirmed	213

Table 1. PRISMA-guided inclusion/exclusion screening funnel (final analytical corpus $n = 213$).

The final corpus of 213 documents (208 articles, 5 reviews) forms the basis of all subsequent bibliometric, SLR, and LDA analyses. Of these, 213 records carried a usable abstract for topic modelling.

2.3 Bibliometric Analysis and Science Mapping

The exported Scopus metadata was used to perform bibliometric performance analysis (publication counts, citation counts, productivity by author/journal/country), directly in Python (pandas). Science mapping was conducted using a combination of the six methods outlined above, namely: (i) author co-authorship, (ii) country co-authorship, (iii) citation analysis of documents (citation analysis to identify influential core), (iv) bibliographic coupling of documents (to map research fronts / intellectual structure), (v) co-citation of cited references (to map the field's intellectual/foundational structure), (vi) author keyword co-occurrence (to map thematic structure), which was also presented as a temporal overlay visualisation to trace thematic evolution. The parameters and threshold outcomes of each network are summarised in Table 2.

Network / analysis	Unit of analysis	Threshold applied	Items meeting threshold	Items mapped	Clusters	Links	Total link strength
Author co-authorship	Authors	Min. 2 documents	42 (of 619)	42 (largest set: 5 authors)	19	34	n/a
Country co-authorship	Countries	Min. 2 documents	43 (of 64)	43 (largest set: 34)	19	62	89

Citation (documents)	Documents	Min. 30 citations	62 (of 213)	62	—	—	—
Bibliographic coupling	Documents	Min. 5 citations	149 (of 213)	144 (largest set)	6	6,863	23,192
Co-citation	Cited references	Min. 5 citations	148 (of 14,436)	148	6	4,227	8,326
Keyword co-occurrence	Author keywords	Min. 3 occurrences	57 (of 681)	57	8	223	360

Table 2. VOSviewer network construction parameters and outcomes (full counting).

2.4 Systematic Literature Review Protocol

The SLR phase followed a structured content-analytic coding protocol applied to all 213 records, extracting: (a) the guiding theory or theories invoked (e.g., social exchange theory, conservation-of-resources theory, self-determination theory); (b) the servant leadership operationalisation used (e.g., Liden et al.'s 7-dimension SL-28/SL-7, van Dierendonck & Nuijten's SLS, Ehrhart's 14-item scale); (c) the well-being-related dependent, mediating, or moderating variable(s); (d) the mediating and moderating mechanisms tested; (e) the study context (country, sector, industry); (f) the research design and analytical method (cross-sectional/longitudinal survey, multilevel, qualitative, meta-analytic); and (g) explicitly stated limitations and future-research suggestions. Coding was informed by, and cross-validated against, the structurally central documents identified through the bibliographic-coupling and co-citation networks, ensuring that the most-cited and most-coupled works received close reading while the broader corpus was synthesised thematically by research front.

2.5 LDA Topic Modelling Procedure

A data-driven, replicable thematic layer was added, complementing the manually coded SLR, by applying Latent Dirichlet Allocation to the abstracts found in the 213 documents from the corpus using scikit-learn. The abstracts were tokenized, converted to lower case and vectorized with a bag-of-words/bigram document-term matrix (CountVectorizer, using English stop-words with terms occurring in less than 5 documents or in more than 50% of abstracts excluded to reduce boilerplate/idiomatic terms). Model order (number of topics, K) was determined by combining held-in perplexity scores ranging from K = 4 to 10 and the interpretability/coherence of the topic-term distributions; 6 was selected as the optimal model order as it was the most in line with the 6-cluster solution found separately in both the bibliographic-coupling and co-citation VOSviewer analyses (Section 3.4). To visualize thematic evolution, each document was attributed a dominant topic (the topic that had the highest posterior probability, denoted as θ) and a track of topic prevalence over four publication periods (2000–2016, 2017–2020, 2021–2023, 2024–2026) was kept.

3. Bibliometric Findings

3.1 Publication Trends

The final corpus of 213 documents spans 2003–2026, but substantive growth begins only in 2014. Table 3 reports the annual distribution and Figure 1 plots it graphically. Output remained in the low single digits throughout the 2000s and early 2010s — reflecting the field's origin in normative/theoretical treatments of Greenleaf's servant leadership philosophy rather than empirical well-being research — before crossing into double digits in 2020 ($n = 11$) and then compounding sharply: 17 articles in 2021, 25 in both 2022 and 2023, and a peak of 43 in 2024. The apparent decline in 2025 ($n = 29$) and 2026 ($n = 19$) reflects database indexing lag rather than a genuine contraction, since 2026 was only partially elapsed at the time of retrieval. Overall, 88% of the corpus (188 of 213 articles) was published between 2020 and 2026, indicating that servant leadership–well-being research is a markedly young and still-

accelerating sub-field, plausibly catalysed by the COVID-19 pandemic's elevation of burnout, psychological safety, and remote-work well-being as mainstream organisational concerns (a pattern corroborated independently by the LDA topic-evolution results in Section 5).

Year	Articles	Year	Articles	Year	Articles
2003	1	2014	5	2021	17
2005	2	2015	5	2022	25
2010	1	2016	9	2023	25
2011	2	2017	5	2024	43
2012	1	2018	6	2025	29
2013	1	2019	6	2026*	19
—	—	2020	11	Total	213

Table 3. Annual publication output, 2003–2026 ($n = 213$). *2026 partial-year indexing at time of retrieval.

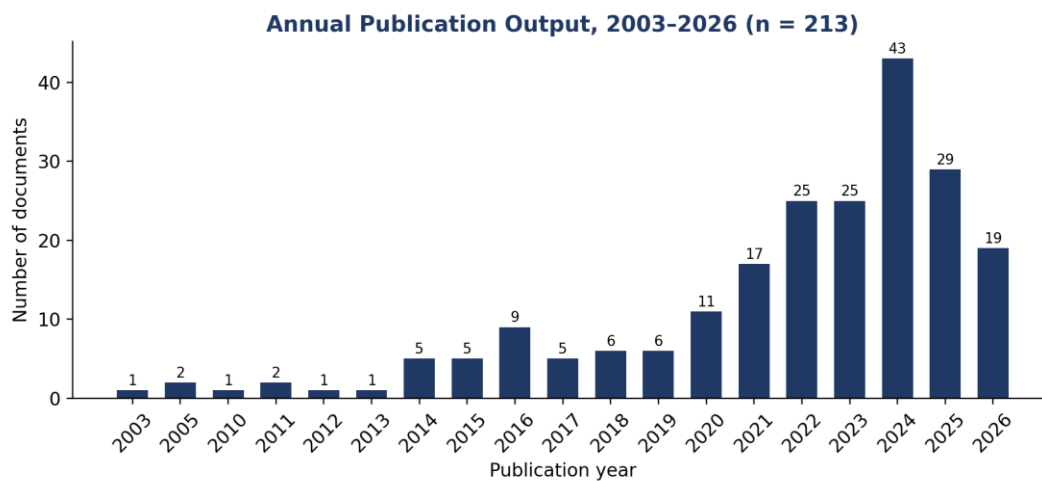


Figure 1. Annual publication output, 2003–2026 (author-generated chart from Scopus export; $n = 213$).

Citation performance is similarly concentrated: the 213 documents have jointly accumulated 7,406 citations (mean = 34.8 citations per document), but this average is driven by a small number of highly cited foundational works — 62 documents (29% of the corpus) individually exceed 30 citations, forming the field's influential citation core, while the median document has been cited far less frequently. This citation skew is typical of a rapidly growing field in which recent contributions have not yet had time to accrue citations, and is consistent with the compounding annual growth documented above.

3.2 Influential Authors, Journals, and Countries

The most cited documents are shown in table 4 in the twenty most cited documents in the corpus. Fry, Vitucci and Cedillo's (2005) foundational treatment of spiritual/servant leadership theory and measurement in *Leadership Quarterly* is the single most-cited work (505 citations), followed by Hu and Liden's (2011) *Journal of Applied Psychology* study of team-level servant leadership antecedents (442) and Chiniara and Bentein's (2016) *Leadership Quarterly* paper differentiating need-satisfaction mediators of servant leadership's performance effects (424). Four of the top 20 most-cited studies are published in *Leadership Quarterly*, which should underscore the role that this journal plays in the field as its flagship outlet for theory-building contributions, and the more recent, context-specific ones (e.g., Luu's and Tuan's environmentally-specific servant leadership research in the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*,

and Aboramadan, Kundi and Farao's 2021 study in the hotel sector) rank among the most-cited studies, despite being published after 2018, and evidence of an actively citing, rapidly maturing green/sustainability sub-stream, as discussed further in Sections 3.5 and 5.

Rank	Authors	Year	Source	Citations
1	Fry, Vitucci & Cedillo	2005	Leadership Quarterly	505
2	Hu & Liden	2011	Journal of Applied Psychology	442
3	Chiniara & Bentein	2016	Leadership Quarterly	424
4	Hunter, Neubert, Perry, Witt, Penney & Weinberger	2013	Leadership Quarterly	420
5	Joseph & Winston	2005	Leadership & Org. Development Journal	310
6	Luu, T.T.	2019	Journal of Sustainable Tourism	265
7	Tuan, L.T.	2020	Journal of Sustainable Tourism	216
8	Tuan, L.T.	2018	Journal of Sustainable Tourism	177
9	Neubert, Hunter & Tolentino	2016	Leadership Quarterly	163
10	De Clercq, Bouckennooghe, Raja & Matsyborska	2014	Human Resource Development Quarterly	160
11	Top, Akdere & Tarcan	2015	Int'l Journal of Human Resource Management	143
12	Panaccio, Henderson, Liden, Wayne & Cao	2015	Journal of Business and Psychology	141
13	Elche, Ruiz-Palomino & Linuesa-Langreo	2020	Int'l Journal of Contemp. Hospitality Mgmt	138
14	Aboramadan, Kundi & Farao	2021	Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Mgmt	137
15	Gotsis & Grimani	2016	Journal of Management Development	130

16	Cai, Lysova, Khapova & Bossink	2018	Frontiers in Psychology	114
17	Canavesi & Minelli	2022	Employee Responsibilities & Rights Journal	107
18	Donia, Raja, Panaccio & Wang	2016	Eur. Journal of Work & Org. Psychology	84
19	Tuan, L.T.	2016	Int'l Journal of Public Sector Management	81
20	Koyuncu, Burke, Astakhova, Eren & Cetin	2014	Int'l Journal of Contemp. Hospitality Mgmt	77

Table 4. Twenty most-cited documents in the analytical corpus (n = 213).

At the journal level (Table 5), *Frontiers in Psychology* leads in volume (11 articles), reflecting its role as a high-throughput open-access outlet for organisational psychology research, followed by *Cogent Business & Management* and *Leadership and Organization Development Journal* (6 each), and *Sustainability (Switzerland)* (5). The presence of *Leadership Quarterly* among the top venues, despite lower volume, is notable given its outsized citation influence (Table 4), illustrating a volume–impact divergence common in specialised sub-fields: high-volume open-access journals disseminate the field's empirical mass, while a small number of elite theory journals anchor its citation core. Figure 2 visualises the full top-20 journal ranking.

Rank	Source title	Articles
1	Frontiers in Psychology	11
2	Cogent Business and Management	6
2	Leadership and Organization Development Journal	6
4	Sustainability (Switzerland)	5
5	Leadership Quarterly	4
5	Problems and Perspectives in Management	4
5	Journal of Management Development	4
5	Behavioral Sciences	4
5	Current Psychology	4
5	Public Personnel Management	4
11	SA Journal of Human Resource Management	3
11	Management Research Review	3
11	SA Journal of Industrial Psychology	3

11	International Journal of Hospitality Management	3
11	Journal of Sustainable Tourism	3
11	International Journal of Public Leadership	3
11	Journal of Business Ethics	3
11	Personnel Review	3
19	Geojournal of Tourism and Geosites	2
19	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	2

Table 5. Twenty most productive journals.

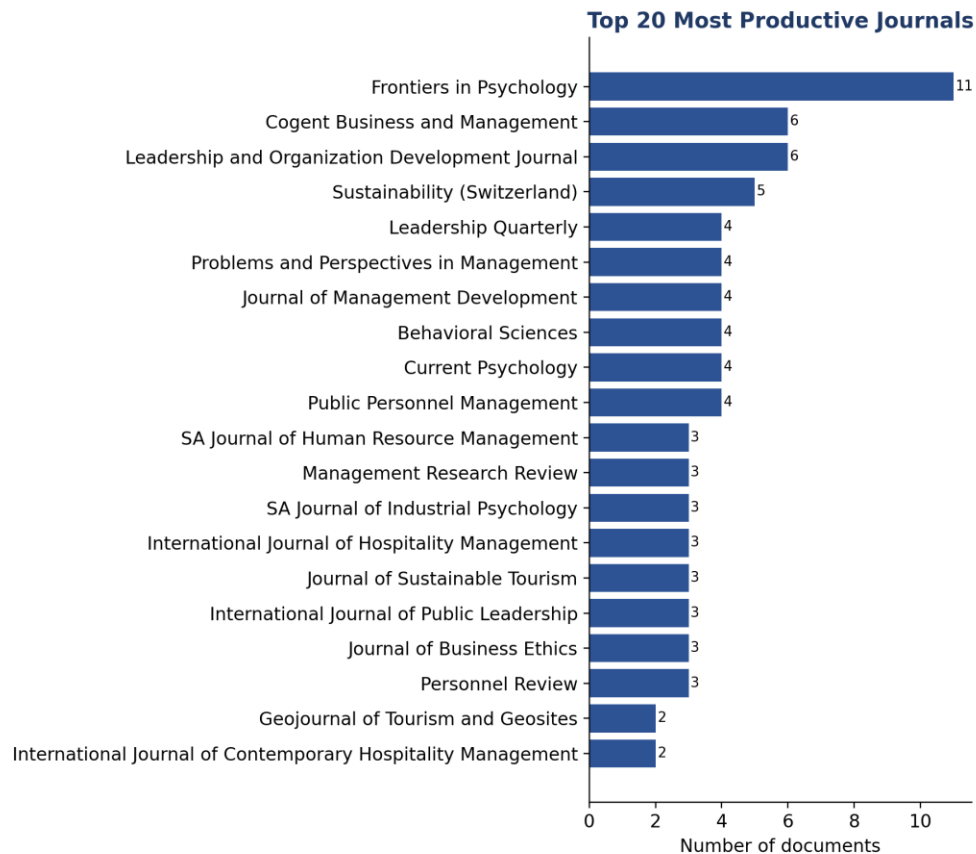


Figure 2. Top 20 most productive journals (author-generated chart from Scopus export).

At the author level, no single author dominates the field numerically — the most productive contributors (Raja, U. and van Dierendonck, D., 4 documents each) sit well below the productivity thresholds typical of long-established leadership sub-fields, confirming the field's youth. Table 6 and Figure 3 report the twenty most productive authors together with the cumulative citations attracted by their servant leadership–well-being output. Raja's four documents have jointly attracted 296 citations, and Hunter and Neubert — despite three documents each — anchor the corpus's single most-cited author cluster (606 cumulative citations each, driven jointly by their co-authored 2013 and 2016

Leadership Quarterly papers), underscoring that citation impact in this field is concentrated in a small number of foundational, frequently co-authored papers rather than distributed evenly across prolific authors.

Rank	Author	Documents	Cumulative citations
1	Raja, U.	4	296
1	van Dierendonck, D.	4	69
3	Panaccio, A.	3	246
3	Wang, Z.	3	110
3	Hunter, E.M.	3	606
3	Neubert, M.J.	3	606
3	Ruiz-Palomino, P.	3	239
3	Tuan, L.T.	3	339
9	Tran, M.D.	2	19
9	Dinh, T.M.	2	19
9	Jit, R.	2	95
9	Sharma, C.S.	2	95
9	Kawatra, M.	2	95
9	Liden, R.C.	2	583
9	Virgiawan, A.R.	2	64
9	Riyanto, S.	2	64
9	Endri, E.	2	64
9	Zheng, X.	2	15
9	Xiu, L.	2	21
9	Lv, F.	2	21

Table 6. Twenty most productive authors, with document counts and cumulative citations (full counting; minimum 2 documents to appear in the co-authorship network).

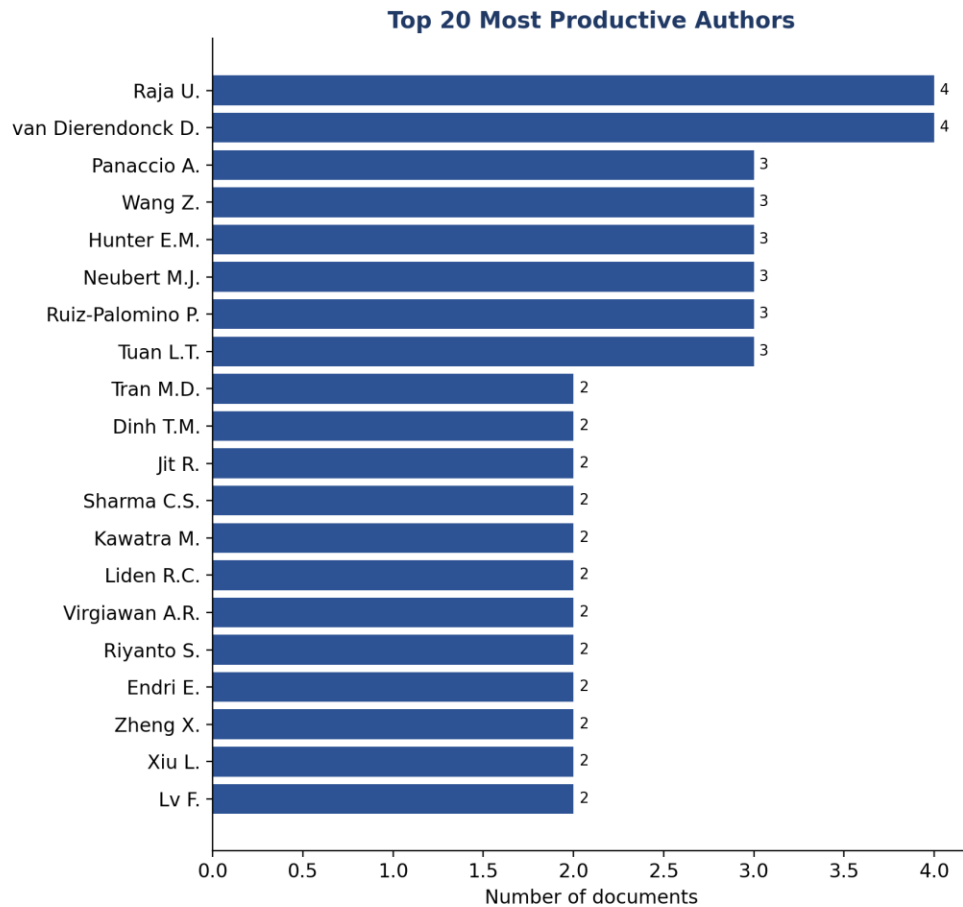


Figure 3. Top 20 most productive authors by document count (author-generated chart from Scopus export).

At the country level (Table 7, Figure 4; derived from the VOSviewer country co-authorship map), the United States (40 documents), China (26), Spain (15), the United Kingdom (14), and Indonesia (13) are the most prolific national bases, jointly accounting for over half of the internationally affiliated output. Canada, while ranked sixth by volume (12 documents), records the highest average-citations-per-document among the top ten (84.3), reflecting the influence of the Panaccio–Liden–Raja–de Clercq collaboration cluster (Section 3.3) based substantially in Canadian institutions. Beyond the top twenty, a long tail of over twenty additional countries contribute only the minimum two documents required to appear in the co-authorship network, evidencing a geographically broad but unevenly distributed research base.

Rank	Country	Documents	Citations	Avg. citations/doc
1	United States	40	2,999	75.0
2	China	26	555	21.3
3	Spain	15	509	33.9
4	United Kingdom	14	555	39.6
5	Indonesia	13	141	10.8
6	Canada	12	1,011	84.3
7	Australia	11	832	75.6

8	India	10	212	21.2
8	Pakistan	10	175	17.5
8	Viet Nam	10	140	14.0
11	South Korea	9	202	22.4
12	Netherlands	7	221	31.6
12	South Africa	7	130	18.6
12	Turkey	7	327	46.7
15	Germany	6	166	27.7
16	Saudi Arabia	5	71	14.2
17	Bangladesh	4	81	20.3
17	Ghana	4	30	7.5
17	Italy	4	266	66.5
17	Malaysia	4	44	11.0

Table 7. Twenty most productive countries by document count (VOSviewer country co-authorship map, full counting).

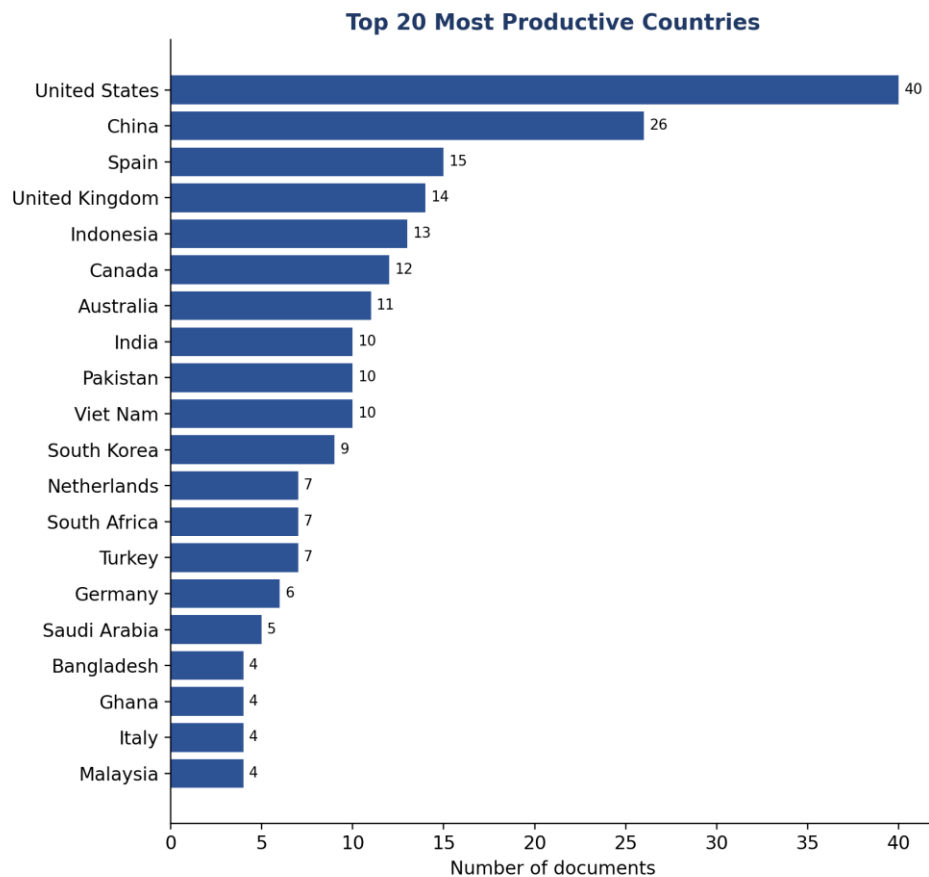


Figure 4. Top 20 most productive countries by document count (author-generated chart from VOSviewer country co-authorship data).

3.3 Collaboration Structure

Author co-authorship analysis (minimum two documents per author) identified 42 qualifying authors out of 619 total contributors — a strikingly low retention rate (6.8%) that signals a highly fragmented authorship base dominated by single-shot contributors. Among the 42 qualifying authors, the network resolves into small, mostly disconnected clusters: the largest connected component contains only five authors (the Liden–Panaccio–Raja–de Clercq–Wang cluster centred on servant leadership's extra-role-behaviour mechanisms), and most other qualifying authors form isolated dyads or triads (e.g., Hunter–Neubert–Tolentino; Ruiz–Palomino–Gutiérrez–Broncano–Jiménez–Estévez–Yáñez–Araque; Tuan–Dinh–Tran; van Dierendonck–Xiu) with no cross-cluster bridging authors (Figure 5). This structure — many small, self-contained collaboration cliques rather than a single integrated invisible college — is characteristic of an early-stage or rapidly internationalising field in which national/regional research teams are still forming independent programmes rather than converging on shared collaborative infrastructure.

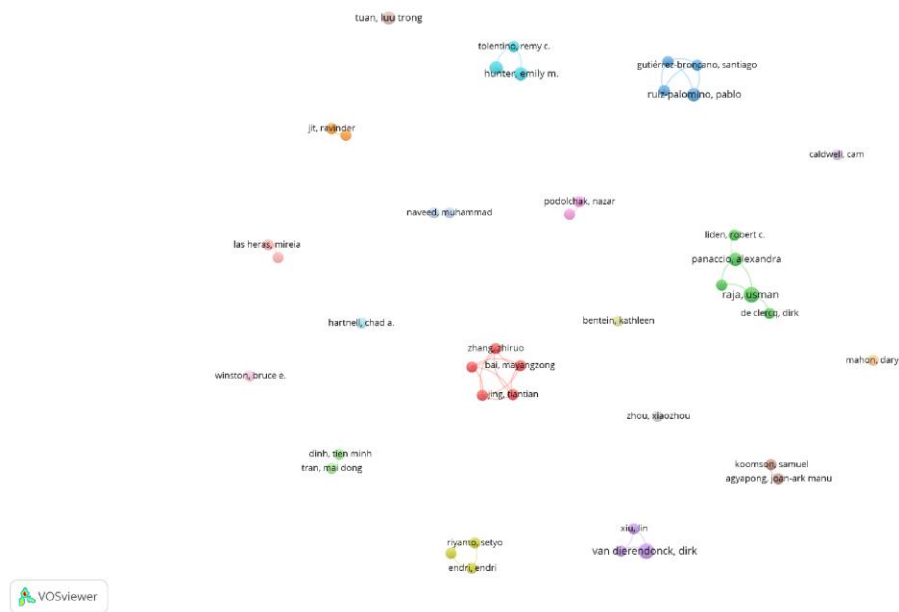


Figure 5. Author co-authorship network (VOSviewer; minimum 2 documents per author; 42 authors meeting threshold; largest connected component = 5 authors; full counting).

These form impressions of a more integrated picture when they are presented in the form of a country co-authorship analysis. Of the 64 countries that published at least one document, 43 had at least 2 documents, and 34 of the 43 countries (79%) were found to be in a single large connected component, connected by 62 collaboration links with a total link strength of 89 (Figure 6). The U.S. is the main hub, co-authoring with Australia, China, Spain and the United Kingdom among others, while a secondary cluster is centred around Spain (with ties to Chile, Colombia, France and the United Kingdom), with a handful of countries forming isolated nodes, essentially with only one country's research team (Figure 7, which is consistent with the isolated nodes seen at low zoom). A broad-based international network of core with a long-standing periphery of nationally self-contained research programmes is a structural characteristic that future collaborative funding and special issue programs could benefit from targeting (see Section 7).

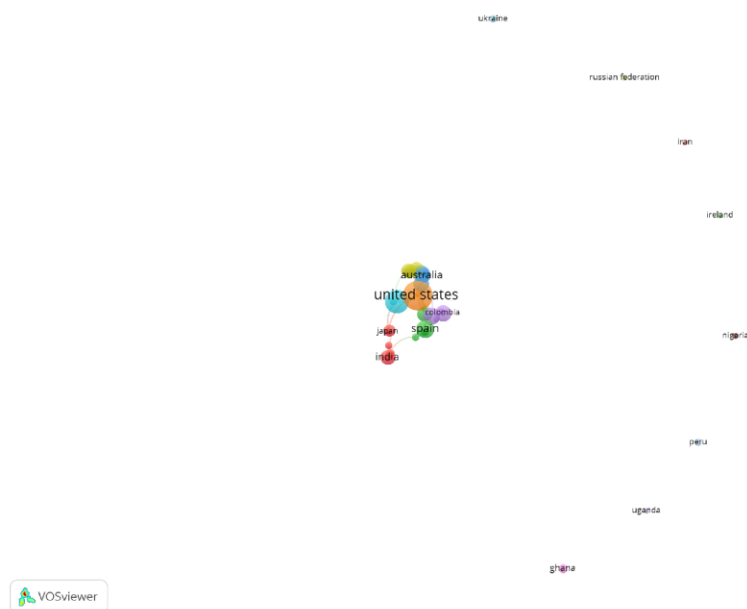


Figure 6. Country co-authorship network (VOSviewer; minimum 2 documents; 43 countries meeting threshold; largest connected set = 34 countries; 62 links; total link strength = 89).

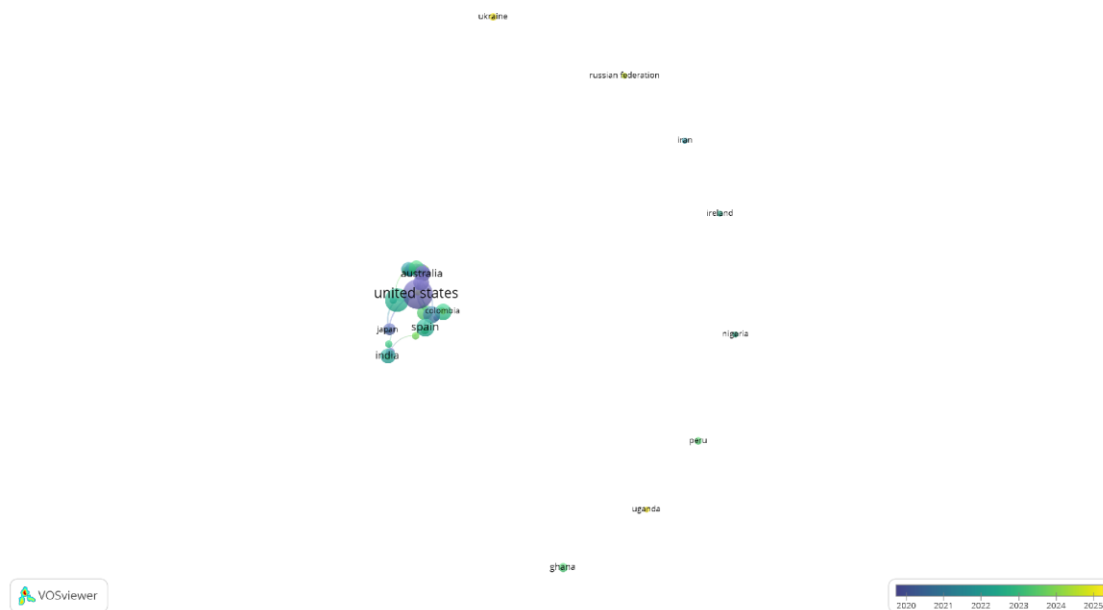


Figure 7. Country co-authorship overlay visualisation, coloured by average publication year, showing the isolated single-country nodes at the network's periphery (VOSviewer; same network as Figure 6).

3.4 Intellectual Structure: Bibliographic Coupling and Co-citation

Bibliographic coupling — which links documents that share references, and is widely regarded as the most reliable technique for identifying a field's current research fronts — was performed at a minimum-citation threshold of five, yielding 149 qualifying documents of which 144 form the largest connected set. These 144 documents resolve

into six statistically distinct clusters (6,863 links; total link strength = 23,192), a dense and highly interconnected structure indicating that, despite the field's fragmented authorship (Section 3.3), its underlying research questions are tightly cross-referenced (Figure 8). Reading the cluster composition against document content, the six research fronts can be provisionally labelled as: (1) a servant leadership–organisational citizenship/trust/ethics cluster anchored by Joseph & Winston (2005) and Gotsis & Grimani (2016); (2) a need-satisfaction and performance-mechanism cluster anchored by Chiniara & Bentein (2016) and Hu & Liden (2011); (3) an environmentally-specific/green servant leadership and sustainable-tourism cluster anchored by Luu (2019) and Tuan (2020, 2018); (4) a well-being, burnout, and job-demands-resources cluster anchored by Rivkin, Diestel & Schmidt (2014) and Kaltiainen & Hakanen (2022); (5) a public-sector/public-service-motivation cluster anchored by Top, Akdere & Tarcan (2015) and Alamri (2023); and (6) a work-engagement, psychological-safety, and innovative-work-behaviour cluster anchored by Cai, Lysova, Khapova & Bossink (2018) and Wang, Kang & Choi (2022). These labels are cross-validated against the independent six-cluster LDA solution reported in Section 5, which recovers a materially convergent thematic structure.

Figure 8. Bibliographic coupling network of documents (VOSviewer; minimum 5 citations; 144 documents mapped; 6 clusters; 6,863 links; total link strength = 23,192).

leadership, leadership styles); a motivational/engagement cluster (work engagement, employee engagement, job crafting, psychological empowerment, self-determination theory); and a public-sector cluster (public service motivation, public servants, public sector). A smaller set of nodes that are less tightly connected — hotels, structural equation modelling, PLS-SEM, adaptive performance, COVID-19 and Ghana — capture methodological and contextual key-words without substantive constructs.

Rank	Author keyword	Occurrences
1	Servant leadership	119
2	Leadership	28
3	Employee well-being	15
4	Transformational leadership	14
5	Work engagement	13
6	Job satisfaction	9
7	Well-being	8
8	Vietnam	7
8	COVID-19	7
8	Organizational citizenship behavior	7
11	Public service motivation	6
11	Burnout	6
11	Authentic leadership	6
11	Organizational commitment	6
15	Employee performance	5
15	Hotels	5
15	Innovative work behavior	5
15	Psychological empowerment	5
15	Leadership styles	5
15	Psychological safety	5

Table 8. Twenty most frequent author keywords (minimum 3 occurrences to appear in the co-occurrence network).

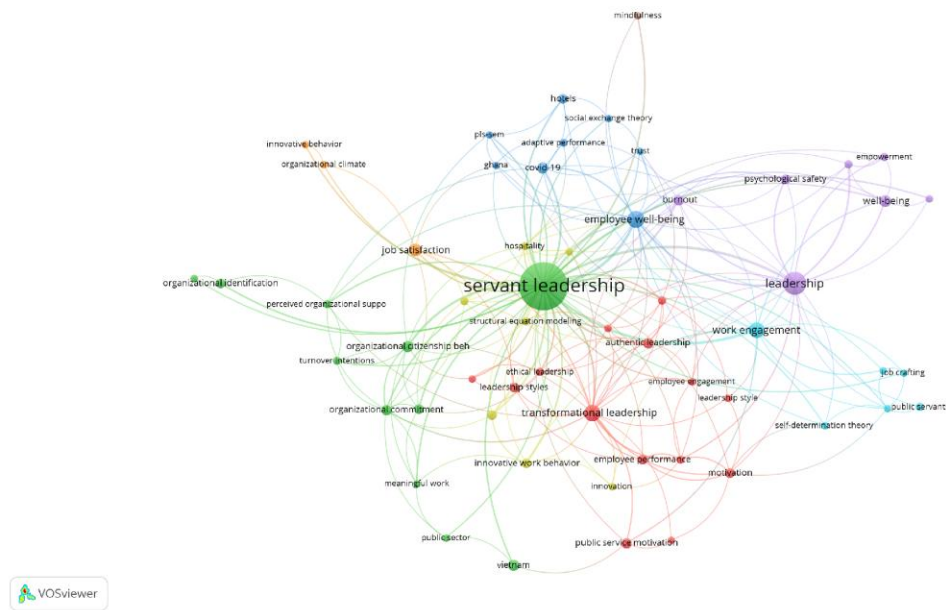


Figure 11. Author keyword co-occurrence network (VOSviewer; minimum 3 occurrences; 57 keywords meeting threshold; 8 clusters; 223 links; total link strength = 360).

The same network presented in a temporal overlay visualisation (Figure 12: coloured by average publication year), reveals a distinct thematic drift. Covid-19, hotels, ghana, and PLS-SEM/adaptive-performance-related methodological terms are gathered at the periphery of the field and form the first empirical 'bluer' wave of the field, from the time of the pandemic crisis (around 2021–2022). In contrast, the “yellower” keywords (more recent; 2023–2026) often group around public service motivation, leadership styles, innovation, and transformational leadership, suggesting that the field's most recent development is a focus on comparative leadership-style designs and applications in public service, instead of the hospitality/COVID-19 environment that was more prominent in the field's initial well-being-focused expansion. As well-being and work engagement are now established constructs, rather than emergent constructs, their temporal position in the employee well-being/engagement continuum falls in the middle (green-teal), which is independently confirmed by the LDA topic-prevalence trend reported in Section 5: the well-being/burnout topic (Topic 4) has the most pronounced increase in topic prevalence in the latest publication period.

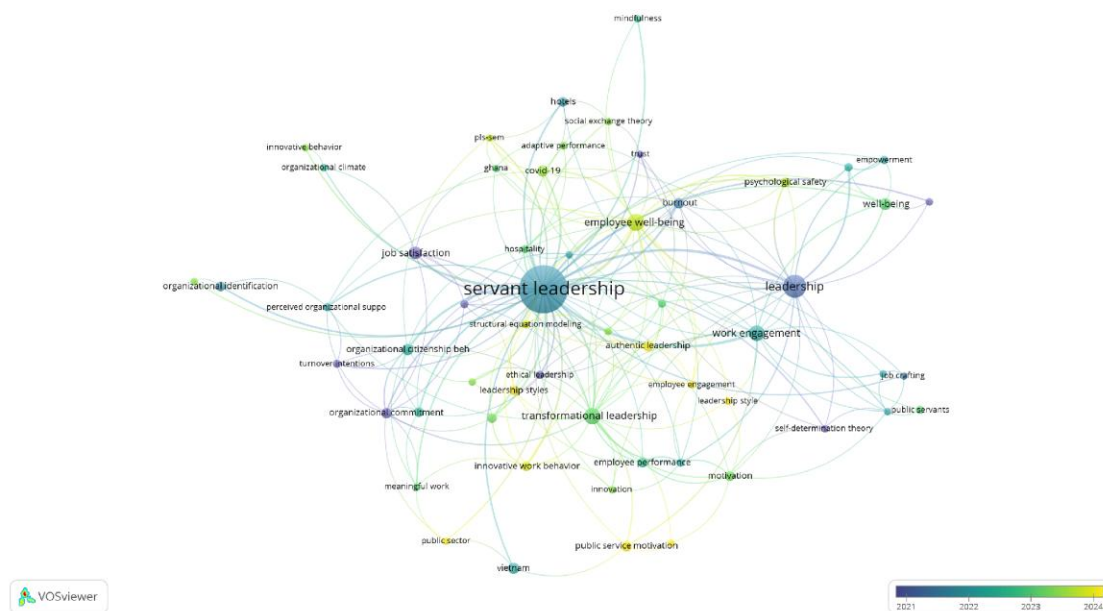


Figure 12. Author keyword co-occurrence overlay visualisation, coloured by average publication year (VOSviewer; same network as Figure 11).

4. Systematic Literature Review

The six dimensions of the substantive content of the corpus that were identified in the identified documents in this section are theoretical foundations, operationalizations of servant leadership, well-being related outcome variables, mediations/moderations, study contexts, and research designs/methods, followed by a synthesis of research gaps. The synthesis is done based on the close reading of the synthesis documents that had been identified in Sections 3.2 and 3.4 as being structurally central (most cited and most coupled) documents; interested readers are referred to the complete extraction table for the study level, which is a reproduction of a publication detail and a short concluding sentence for the 150 most recent documents reviewed, in order, and can be found in Annexure 1, which reports the granular, document-by-document evidentiary basis for the thematic claim(s) below.

4.1 Theoretical Foundations

As in Section 3.4, there are three theoretical lenses that dominate the corpus. The most commonly cited framework is the social exchange theory of Blau, which theorises that servant leadership's impacts are mediated by the exchange process in which followers feel the leader is genuinely trying to care for them will return with positive attitudes, discretionary effort, and organisational citizenship behaviour. The second most prevalent lens is the conservation-of-resources theory (Hobfoll), which positions servant leadership as a resource-provision mechanism: a mechanism seen in Rivkin, Diestel and Schmidt (2014) who showed that servant leadership is positively associated with employees' psychological health in a multi-method demonstration, and in Kaltiainen and Hakanen's (2022) BRQ findings showing that servant leadership relates to task and adaptive performance through employee well-being. The third prominent perspective is self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan) which has been most clearly operationalised in a Leadership Quarterly study by Chiniara and Bentein (2016), who found need satisfaction to be an explanatory mechanism that had a mediating effect in the relationship between servant leadership and individual performance, and which has been the focus of many subsequent studies. There are fewer studies that draw on the theories of identity (social identity, organisational identification), spiritual leadership (Fry et al., 2005, the single most cited study in the corpus), stakeholder theory (Neubert, Hunter & Tolentino, 2016), and — in the increasingly environmentally-focused stream — pro-environmental/green HRM theorising (Luu, 2019; Tuan, 2020, 2018).

4.2 Servant Leadership Operationalisation

The three scales most widely used in the literature are: (i) Liden, Wu and colleagues' multidimensional servant leadership scales (28-item and then the shorter 7-item scales); the basis of the most cited empirical research in the field, these scales have been widely used in literature, especially in their 7-item short form, and are the foundation for the majority of research conducted in Europe and cross-culturally; (ii) van Dierendonck and Nuijten's Servant Leadership Survey (SLS), an eight-dimension scale used mainly in European and cross-cultural samples; and (iii) Ehrhart's 14-item scale, predominantly used in the service and hospitality field. A second, smaller but growing group of studies develops these general measures into domain-specific forms, most notable being Environmentally-Specific Servant Leadership (construct developed by Luu, Tuan and Aboramadan, Kundi & Farao), which combines pro-environmental behavioural constructs onto the general servant leadership dimensions to account for green creativity, green work outcomes, and environmental organisational citizenship behaviour.

4.3 Well-Being-Related Variables

The dependent variable landscape includes conceptions of well-being from a hedonic, eudaimonic, and occupational-health perspective. Another line of direct measures is general/subjective well-being, psychological well-being, and employee well-being scales (e.g., Lamprinou, Tasoulis & Kravariti, 2021), as well as a large group of studies that regard work engagement, thriving at work, and psychological safety as well-being-proximal measures conceptually and empirically linked to well-being (e.g. Wang, Kang & Choi, 2022; Rabiul, Karatepe, Karim & Panha, 2023). In addition to these direct and proximal well-being measures, the corpus shows that servant leadership is associated with a broad penumbra of downstream organisational outcomes of which well-being is a mechanism: organizational citizenship behaviour, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover intentions, innovative/creative work behaviour, service quality, knowledge sharing, and, in the environmentally-specific stream, green creativity and pro-environmental citizenship behaviour.

4.4 Mediating and Moderating Mechanisms

Table 7 summarises the most frequently tested mediators and moderators identified across the reviewed studies. Need satisfaction (autonomy, competence, relatedness) is the most theoretically elaborated mediator, directly derived from self-determination theory; trust (in the leader and in the organisation) is the most historically established mediator, tracing to Joseph and Winston's (2005) foundational correlational study; and psychological safety, meaningfulness/meaningful work, and job embeddedness represent a newer generation of mediators more explicitly linked to well-being theorising. On the moderator side, subordinates' motives (Donia, Raja, Panaccio & Wang, 2016), leader–follower social capital (De Clercq, Bouckennooghe, Raja & Matsyborska, 2014), and organisational structure (Neubert, Hunter & Tolentino, 2016) represent boundary conditions establishing when servant leadership's effects are strongest — a 'when' question that remains comparatively under-theorised relative to the 'how' (mediation) question, constituting one of the field's clearest gaps (Section 4.6).

Mechanism	Type	Theoretical basis	Illustrative studies
Need satisfaction (autonomy, competence, relatedness)	Mediator	Self-determination theory	Chiniara & Bentein (2016)
Trust (leader / organisational)	Mediator	Social exchange theory	Joseph & Winston (2005)
Psychological safety	Mediator	COR / relational theory	Wang, Kang & Choi (2022)
Meaningful work / job autonomy	Mediator	COR theory	Cai, Lysova, Khapova & Bossink (2018)

Public service motivation	Mediator	Self-determination / motivation theory	Tuan (2016)
Job embeddedness	Mediator	COR theory	Zia, Naveed, Bashir & Iqbal (2022)
Climate for green creativity	Mediator	Green HRM / social exchange	Aboramadan, Kundi & Farao (2021)
Subordinates' motives	Moderator	Motivational congruence	Donia, Raja, Panaccio & Wang (2016)
Leader–follower social capital	Moderator	Social exchange theory	De Clercq et al. (2014)
Organisational structure	Moderator	Stakeholder theory	Neubert, Hunter & Tolentino (2016)

Table 7. Frequently tested mediating and moderating mechanisms.

4.5 Study Contexts

Empirical context is heavily skewed towards the hospitality/tourism and healthcare and public sector as, historically, these are very service oriented and the servant leadership premise is very other oriented. Among them, there is a significant number of studies on the hospitality and tourism sector (hotels, restaurants, tourism companies), which are supported by the environmentally-related stream of servant leadership (Luu, Tuan, Aboramadan) and the service quality-related studies (Koyuncu, Burke, Astakhova, Eren & Cetin, 2014). A second stream is public-sector and civil-service settings, which are frequently conceptualised in terms of public service motivation (Top, Akdere & Tarcan, 2015; Alamri, 2023; Tuan, 2016). National contexts are geographically diverse but unevenly distributed—with a relatively rich sample of contexts in China, Vietnam, the United States, Spain, Pakistan and Indonesia—and a comparatively thin base in Africa, although African contexts have conceptual relevance for the theorising of well-being in the context of resource scarcity (Section 4.6).

4.6 Research Designs and Methodologies

The overwhelming majority of studies employ cross-sectional, single-source or dyadic (leader–follower) survey designs analysed via covariance-based or partial-least-squares structural equation modelling (SEM/PLS-SEM), reflecting the field's dominant variance-theory, mediation/moderation-testing paradigm. A smaller but non-trivial subset employs multilevel/multi-source designs (e.g., team-aggregated servant leadership predicting team-level outcomes, as in Hu & Liden, 2011), and an even smaller subset uses qualitative or mixed-methods designs (case studies, narrative approaches) or true longitudinal/multi-wave panels. Meta-analytic and systematic-review contributions (e.g., Canavesi & Minelli, 2022) remain rare relative to primary empirical studies, and experimental or quasi-experimental designs capable of establishing causal directionality are almost entirely absent from the corpus—a methodological gap with direct implications for the field's ability to make causal well-being claims (Section 4.7).

4.7 Synthesis of Research Gaps

- Causal identification: cross-sectional, common source survey designs predominate in the corpus; only small numbers of experimental and quasi-experimental, multi-wave experimental longitudinal designs that could support causal claims about the well-being effects of servant leadership exist.
- Few studies test servant leadership's well-being benefits as a function of a few moderators specifying the follower-level or organisational contexts in which servant leadership benefits are greatest or least (or worse, that transform it into a risk of leader over-extension/burnout).

- Measurement fragmentation: at least three competing multidimensional servant leadership scales (Liden et al., van Dierendonck & Nuijten, Ehrhart) coexist without a settled consensus instrument, complicating meta-analytic cumulation and cross-study comparability.
- Well-being conceptual breadth: "well-being" is operationalized across different traditions (hedonic, eudaimonic, and occupational-health) and sometimes in the same sub-field without clear theoretical arguments for the selected conception of well-being.
- Mention of well-being on the leader's side is all but missing: most studies focus on the well-being outcomes of servant behaviour with respect to followers; the well-being costs/benefits of servant leadership for the servant leader remains largely unstudied.
- National context: the majority of contexts are hospitality, healthcare or public sectors, with comparatively little research on contexts from manufacturing, technology, or gig and platform economy, where the well-being risk profile is markedly different, and little research on national contexts from Africa compared to their conceptual relevance to the theorising of resource scarcity.
- Digital and hybrid-work contexts: there has been interesting growth in thinking about the nature of servant leadership (or its re-conceptualization) in the digital and hybrid-work context as documented in Section 3.1, but this is still a nascent area of theorising.

5. LDA-Based Topic Modelling

To test the manual (Section 4) and visual (Section 3.5) identification of the thematic structure, a technique called Latent Dirichlet Allocation was employed to conduct a data-driven, corpus-wide test of the manual structure (procedure described in Section 2.5). The solution of 6 topics ($K = 6$) was kept as in both bibliographic-coupling and co-citation cluster counts were equal to 6 (Section 3.4). Each topic's most discriminating terms (also removing some boilerplate terms like 'study', 'servant leadership', and structured-abstract markers), an interpretive label for the topic, the number of documents where the topic is the dominant, and the top documents in terms of highest probability and most citations are reported in Table 8.

5.1 Optimal Number of Topics and Topic Interpretation

The perplexity values of the held-in models monotonically decreased as the number of topics K increased, from $K = 10$ to $K = 4$, and this trend is observed in small to moderate sized abstract corpora where an increase in K leads to the inclusion of more idiosyncratic vocabulary, which limits the model's ability to learn the topics that can be interpreted by topics and terms. Therefore, K was determined by balancing the held-in perplexity with the interpretability of the topics and terms, and the convergence of the two cluster solutions provided by the held-in and the independent VOSviewer. The solution $K = 6$ yielded the most substantive meanings for the topics and the least overlapping distributions of the terms, as well as closely aligned topic compositions validated by comparing each topic with its most representative documents, which supports the six bibliographic-coupling research fronts found in Section 3.4 and offers method triangulated evidence for a real six stream thematic structure, not just an artifact of one of the two methods.

Topic	Label	Top terms	Dominant docs (n)	Representative work
T0	Public-sector servant leadership & civic motivation	public, servants, service, sector, civil, government, motivation, trust	35	Kakabadse, Korac-Kakabadse & Kouzmin (2003)
T1	Comparative leadership styles &	organisational, job satisfaction, leadership styles,	26	Top, Akdere & Tarcan (2015);

	organisational attitudes	commitment, transformational, OCB, healthcare		Canavesi & Minelli (2022)
T2	Environmentally-specific / green servant leadership	green, HRM practices, environmentally, tourism, commitment, seeking	4	Luu (2019); Tuan (2020)
T3	Servant leadership, trust & service-oriented outcomes	performance, social, service, organisational, trust, quality	34	Joseph & Winston (2005); Elche, Ruiz-Palomino & Linuesa-Langreo (2020)
T4	Well-being, burnout & job demands—resources	job, work, resources, demands, burnout, workplace, emotional	38	Cai, Lysova, Khapova & Bossink (2018); Tuan (2016)
T5	Work engagement, psychological mechanisms & innovative behaviour	work engagement, innovative, psychological, mediating, outcomes	76	Fry, Vitucci & Cedillo (2005); Hu & Liden (2011); Chiniara & Bentein (2016)

Table 8. LDA six-topic solution: labels, discriminating terms, dominant-document counts, and representative works (K = 6; scikit-learn CountVectorizer + LatentDirichletAllocation, 213 abstracts).

Topic 5 (work engagement, psychological mechanisms and innovative behaviour) is the corpus's largest topic by a substantial margin, dominant in 76 of 213 documents (36%), and is anchored by the field's four most-cited works overall (Fry et al., 2005; Hu & Liden, 2011; Chiniara & Bentein, 2016; Hunter et al., 2013) — confirming that mechanism-focused, engagement- and performance-oriented theorising constitutes the field's intellectual core, exactly as the co-citation network in Section 3.4 independently indicated. Topic 4 (well-being, burnout, job demands—resources) is the second-most prevalent well-being-proximal topic (38 documents), directly validating the field's self-identification as a well-being literature. Topic 2 (environmentally-specific/green servant leadership), while numerically the smallest dominant-topic group (4 documents), corresponds to the highest-growth, highest-recent-citation stream identified in Section 3.1 and 3.4, indicating a small but rapidly consolidating research front rather than a marginal one — a distinction only visible by cross-referencing topic size against the temporal-prevalence analysis below.

5.2 Topic Prevalence and Evolution Over Time

Table 9 shows the mean posterior probability (in percent) for each topic for each of the four publication periods, and shows a distinct evolutionary pattern that confirms the keyword-overlay results from Section 3.5. For the public-sector topic (T0), the prevalence increases monotonically across all four periods, as does the well-being/burnout topic (T4); the latter experienced the greatest growth in relative share of the content in the abstracts (from 11.5% of average abstract content in 2000–2016 to 23.5% in 2024–2026), a finding that provides the clearest quantitative evidence in the study that well-being- and burnout-focused theorising has become a steadily increasing part of the substantive content of the field, rather than a stable minority of content. The sophistication of mediation-based theorising also increased during the same period, as evidenced by the growth of Topic 5 (engagement/psychological mechanisms) from 24.6% to 31.7%. In contrast, the earliest and most general service quality and trust theorizing that characterized the field has been fundamentally replaced by a more mechanism-specific and well-being-specific theorizing, as evidenced by the drop in Topic 3 (trust and general service-oriented outcomes) from 28.3% of content in 2000–2016

to 14.2% in 2024–2026. The same is true for Topic 1 (comparative leadership styles): in later periods it also dropped, from 28.6% to 9.7% of the papers, and Topic 2 (green/environmentally-specific servant leadership) had a more peculiar non-monotonic path: close to zero up to 2017, it then jumped to 10.9% in the period 2017–2020 (the pandemic-adjacent era, where sustainability emerged as a dominant theme in hospitality studies) but dropped again after 2020 (as the novelty of the topic was absorbed by the emerging mainstream well-being and engagement literature).

Topic	2000–2016	2017–2020	2021–2023	2024–2026
T0 — Public-sector & civic motivation	15.3%	16.5%	15.4%	19.0%
T1 — Comparative leadership styles	18.6%	17.6%	17.8%	9.7%
T2 — Green / environmentally-specific SL	1.7%	10.9%	1.2%	1.9%
T3 — Trust & service-oriented outcomes	28.3%	23.0%	15.3%	14.2%
T4 — Well-being, burnout, JD-R	11.5%	11.8%	19.4%	23.5%
T5 — Engagement & psychological mechanisms	24.6%	20.1%	30.9%	31.7%

Table 9. Mean topic prevalence (average posterior probability share of abstract content) by publication period.

When combined, the LDA results offer three ways of triangulating evidence for the central substantive claim of the paper: (i) the six-topic solution is converging with the independently derived six-cluster bibliographic-coupling and co-citation networks (Section 3.4), (ii) the topic-prevalence trends align with the keyword-overlay temporal drift observed in Section 3.5, and (iii) both LDA analyses align with the manually coded SLR synthesis (Section 4) in identifying well-being/burnout theorising and psychological-mechanism/engagement theorising as the two fastest-growing, and now-dominant, thematic streams in the field, and the trust-and-service-quality framing as the field's declining, first-generation theoretical approach.

6. Integrated Discussion

Where the three analytical layers meet, they paint a uniform picture of the research field relating servant leadership and employee well-being as a relatively new, fast-growing, intellectually united but organizationally divided field. The results of bibliometric performance analysis (Section 3.1) show that the empirical mass of the field is largely recent, with 88% of all output after 2020; at the same time, the citation core of the field is firmly based in the earlier groundwork of the period between 2005 and 2016, with a time lag between conceptual foundation and empirical proliferation typical of leadership constructs that are currently in a 'second wave' of elaboration and extension into context-specific and mechanism-specific contexts. Just one paradox strikes one immediately from the collaboration-structure analysis (Section 3.3): while the collaboration is relatively fragmented on the author level (42 qualifying authors, largest connected component of five), it is relatively integrated on the country level (34 of 43 qualifying countries connected). The divergence indicated that international cooperation in this area is happening largely through institutional/cross-country co-authorship mechanisms between different senior scholars of different countries, rather than a kind of 'invisible college' of specialist research into the well-being of servants, which can still be seen as a developing sphere of professionalisation, as defined by a common research identity.

The intellectual-structure analysis (Section 3.4) and the LDA topic model (Section 5) converge on the same six-stream architecture, and the manually coded SLR independently validates the theory, mechanism and context

levels (Section 4). The three analytically-distinct methods used each operate on three different objects of analysis (shared references, co-cited references, and word co-occurrence), and each attempt the same type of analysis (literature-based themes of research being identified), and yet, the six clusters of knowledge or themes of research found (public-sector/civic motivation; comparative leadership styles; environmentally-specific/green servant leadership; trust and service-oriented outcomes; well-being/burnout/JD-R; and engagement/psychological mechanisms) are not arbitrary, but rather, a convergence of analytically-distinct methods that all point to the existence of sub-communities of practice.

The evidence concerning temporal evolution (in Sections 3.5 and 5.2) also shows that the field's centre of gravity is actively shifting: the declining prevalence of the trust/service-quality topic (T3) alongside the rising prevalence of the well-being/burnout (T4) and engagement/psychological-mechanism (T5) topics suggests that servant leadership research is maturing from a first-generation ‘does it work’ paradigm (does servant leadership predict positive attitudinal and behavioural outcomes broadly) toward a second-generation ‘how, when, and for whose well-being does it work’ paradigm — precisely the mechanism- and boundary-condition-focused questions the SLR identifies as the field’s most pressing. The environmentally specific servant leadership topic, although small, remains consistently noticeable (Section 4.7). (T2), although it is currently of a modest size, shows citation and growth patterns (Sections 3.1–3.2) indicating it may become the field’s next major research front, plausibly displacing the currently dominant. A practical basis for the field of hospitality and tourism leading towards a more comprehensive integration of sustainability and well-being.

7. Future Research Agenda

Integrating the bibliometric, SLR, and LDA findings, Table 10 consolidates a prioritised research agenda organised around four themes: theoretical/mechanism development, methodological advancement, contextual expansion, and field-level infrastructure.

Priority theme	Specific research direction	Supporting evidence
Mechanism-level theorising	Develop and test dual-pathway models integrating COR-based resource mechanisms with SDT-based need-satisfaction mechanisms to explain servant leadership's well-being effects	Sections 4.1, 4.4
Boundary conditions	Systematically test follower-, team-, and organisation-level moderators (e.g., resource scarcity, cultural power distance, hybrid-work arrangements) specifying when servant leadership benefits well-being most/least	Section 4.7
Leader-side well-being	Examine the well-being costs and benefits accruing to servant leaders themselves (compassion fatigue, self-sacrifice, identity resource depletion, sustainability of servant behaviour over time)	Section 4.7
Causal identification	Employ experimental, quasi-experimental, and multi-wave panel/longitudinal designs to move beyond common-source cross-sectional survey evidence	Sections 4.6, 4.7

Measurement consolidation	Conduct meta-analytic and psychometric work reconciling the Liden et al., van Dierendonck & Nuijten, and Ehrhart servant leadership instruments to enable cumulative, comparable evidence	Section 4.2
Environmentally-specific SL	Extend the environmentally-specific/green servant leadership stream (T2) beyond hospitality/tourism into manufacturing, technology, and public infrastructure sectors, and link explicitly to employee well-being (not only green behaviour) outcomes	Sections 3.4, 5.1
Contextual diversification	Expand empirical coverage into gig/platform-economy, technology, and manufacturing contexts, and into under-represented African and Latin American national contexts	Section 4.5
Digital/hybrid work	Theorise and empirically test how servant leadership behaviours (and their well-being effects) are enacted, perceived, and mediated in remote, hybrid, and AI-augmented work environments	Section 4.7
Collaborative infrastructure	Encourage cross-country, multi-team collaborative projects (e.g., joint special issues, multi-site replications) to bridge the fragmented author-level collaboration network identified in Section 3.3	Section 3.3
Computational-bibliometric methods	Extend this study's tri-method (bibliometric + SLR + LDA) protocol with dynamic/structural topic models and large-language-model-assisted full-text coding as the corpus continues to grow past 2026	Sections 2, 5

Table 10. Consolidated future research agenda.

8. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to document the intellectual landscape, thematic development, and research agenda of the servant leadership–employee well-being literature by using three methodological approaches: bibliometric network analysis, a systematic literature review, and LDA-based topic modelling. The study aimed to identify the intellectual structure, thematic evolution, and research agenda of the servant leadership–employee well-being literature by conducting a three-step approach: bibliometric network analysis, systematic literature review, and LDA-based topic modelling, applied to 213 articles and reviews published in Scopus in the last quarter of a century (2000–2026). The results provide a characterization of a young but rapidly growing field (88% of production since 2020), conceptually grounded in the seminal work of Greenleaf, and operationalized primarily in the instruments developed

by Liden et al. and van Dierendonck, which are mechanisms-specific, and generically framed in terms of trust and service quality, changing over time to well-being, burnout, and mechanism-specific psychological-engagement theorizing. Its methodological basis is still largely cross-sectional, common-source survey designs, and there is a relatively low volume of experimental, longitudinal, or leader-side well-being research, with the collaboration structure still being fairly segmented at the individual-author level despite reasonably well-integrated collaboration for the countries as a whole.

The research agenda that is proposed here, in Section 7, is consolidated into the following research areas: Mechanism level theory development, boundary condition testing, leader-side well-being, causal identification designs, measurement consolidation, contextual diversification, digital/hybrid work well-being theorising, collaborative infrastructure, and computational methods extension, the agenda proposed here provides an organized roadmap that will inform the next ten years of the field. Methodologically, the study shows that integration of network-based bibliometrics, manual systematic review and unsupervised topic modelling generates mutually verifying, triangulated evidence regarding the thematic organization of a literature that none of these three methods alone could validate and that provides a replicable protocol for mapping other sub-fields of leadership that are growing rapidly and methodologically heterogeneous. The tri-method approach developed here not only offers a substantive map for the current state of the maturation of servant leadership research, but also a methodological template for tracking the maturation of servant leadership research in the future, from "that" to "how/when/for whom"

Annexure 1

Summary Table of Reviewed Studies (n = 150)

To make the systematic review process transparent and independently verifiable — and to substantiate the breadth of coverage claimed in Sections 2.4 and 4 — Annexure 1 reproduces the full study-level extraction table underlying the synthesis for the 150 most recent, abstract-bearing documents in the analytical corpus (of 213 total; the remaining 63 comprise earlier records lacking a structured abstract in Scopus, older theoretical/normative pieces, or records already represented among the 150 through shared authorship teams). Records are ordered by publication year (descending) and, within year, by citation count (descending), so that the table doubles as a chronological audit trail of the field's most recent empirical wave discussed in Section 3.1. The 'Key Conclusion / Finding' column reproduces, in condensed form, the concluding statement(s) of each study's own published abstract (with structured-abstract labels such as 'Findings' or 'Originality/value' and copyright/licensing boilerplate removed), rather than the authors' independent interpretation, so as to preserve fidelity to each source while keeping the table usable at a glance. This table is intended as a reviewer- and reader-facing evidentiary appendix; the thematic, theoretical, and mechanism-level synthesis drawn from these and the remaining corpus documents is presented narratively in Section 4.

No.	Author(s) & Year	Journal / Source	Cites	Key Conclusion / Finding (from published abstract)
1	van Dierendonck D. et al. (2026)	Journal of Positive Psychology	5	The study finds that servant leadership positively influences sleep quality, which is related to more psychological empowerment. This study expands our understanding of the impact of servant leadership on employees' well-being...
2	Oh S. et al. (2026)	Public Personnel Management	4	Ultimately, it highlights that when public employees perceive a high level of innovative organizational culture, the indirect effect of transformational leadership on innovative work behavior, mediated by job autonomy, becomes...

No.	Author(s) & Year	Journal / Source	Cites	Key Conclusion / Finding (from published abstract)
3	Yusoff A. (2026)	Strategy and Leadership	2	This paper introduces the APL model as a conceptual framework that consolidates fragmented theories of positive leadership and aligns them with emerging workplace challenges. It contributes to leadership scholarship by...
4	Vakira E. et al. (2026)	Geojournal of Tourism and Geosites	1	Servant leadership is confirmed through this study to enhance employee engagement in the hotel sector. Individuals who exhibit these qualities are more likely to thrive in diverse teams and contribute to a positive...
5	Shymko V. et al. (2026)	International Journal of Organizational Analysis	1	This study is among the first to analyze workplace adaptation under martial law, offering unique insights into how civil servants navigate extreme crises. The multi-group SEM approach provides a novel perspective on workplace...
6	Villarroel-Nuñez D. et al. (2026)	Administrative Sciences	1	No moderating effects of the supervisor's gender were found. This study provides empirical evidence on the motivational mechanisms operating within the public sector and highlights the relevance of servant leadership as a key...
7	Wanyana M. et al. (2026)	Cogent Business and Management	0	The present study clarifies the hitherto understudied relationship between servant leadership and employees' innovative work behaviors in Uganda's public universities, as well as the crucial role psychological empowerment...
8	Siddiqi K.O. et al. (2026)	Sustainable Futures	0	The results provide practical insights for policymakers, owners, and managers aiming to foster GI, GSL, and CEE to support SP and advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/
9	Alhammadi H.Y. et al. (2026)	Management Research Review	0	By integrating leader compassion, leaders' meaningful work and employee compassion into a single framework, the study provides context-sensitive insights into how leadership can reduce quiet quitting and sustain employee...
10	Al-Madah R. (2026)	Journal Of Organizational Behavior Research	0	A systemic approach to employee well-being requires moving beyond isolated programs and toward leadership-driven workplace design.

No.	Author(s) & Year	Journal / Source	Cites	Key Conclusion / Finding (from published abstract)
				Healthier workplaces are likely to emerge when employee health is treated as a shared...
11	Zheng X. et al. (2026)	Applied Psychology	0	The study contributes to the literature by shifting the focus to the effects of servant leadership on leaders themselves and clarifying explanatory mechanisms and boundary conditions underlying these effects. From a practical...
12	Cuvi J. (2026)	Latin American Research Review	0	However, it was the charismatic performance of the reform leader and his task force, articulated around a nation-saving narrative, that instilled the belief that change was possible, encouraged employees to embrace new values,...
13	Song S. et al. (2026)	Behavioral Sciences	0	This paper not only extends the literature on digital leadership by adopting a micro-level perspective within the context of public sector digital transformation but also identifies the individual and contextual antecedents of...
14	Hamdan et al. (2026)	APTISI Transactions on Technopreneurship	0	This study contributes to the understanding of how entrepreneurship, supported by ethical leadership and technology, leads to higher organizational performance and employee satisfaction. It provides an evidence-based...
15	Unni D. et al. (2026)	Journal of Workplace Behavioral Health	0	The findings provide strategic insights for policymakers and healthcare managers, emphasizing the importance of targeted interventions to build resilient and thriving teams. This work advances the discourse on workforce...
16	Dziurakh Y. et al. (2026)	OIDA International Journal of Sustainable Development	0	The article also explains that design thinking can significantly reduce the negative consequences of the pandemic, improve the efficiency of the management of public institutions, and the civil service. The results of the...
17	Bakir S. et al. (2026)	International Journal of Hospitality Management	0	Further, the moderators, servant leadership, and sense of control further improved the professional quality of life. Implications for theory and managers, as well as directions for future research, are outlined.
18	Huynh T. et al. (2026)	International Journal of Public Sector Performance Management	0	It is discovered that when these two leadership styles are used effectively, organisational performance improves. The findings of this

No.	Author(s) & Year	Journal / Source	Cites	Key Conclusion / Finding (from published abstract)
				study indicate that organisations must alter their current practises and prioritise...
19	Qiao Z. (2026)	Frontiers in Psychology	0	The relationship between heterogeneous AI-related perceptions and cognitions, often broadly conceptualized as AI awareness, and job crafting appears to be contingent upon employees' cognitive appraisals of AI. To support more...
20	Dorta-Afonso D. et al. (2025)	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights	24	This study is among the first to investigate the mediating role of WLB between servant leadership, HPWS and job satisfaction in the hospitality sector. By applying COR theory, it offers new insights into the interaction...
21	Mandal V. et al. (2025)	Journal of Asia Business Studies	23	This study provides valuable insight into the individual psychological mechanisms that drive voluntary participation in environmental protection and conservation efforts. Furthermore, the study also highlighted the...
22	Wen J. et al. (2025)	Tourism Management	14	The study examined potential moderating variables including national culture, industry type, and COVID-19 pandemic phase. This meta-analytic research promotes the advancement of the employee perceptions of CSR literature and...
23	Radhi F. et al. (2025)	Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun	10	Employee performance served as a partial mediator between leadership style and organizational performance, as well as between motivation and organizational performance. The study highlighted how improving leadership practices,...
24	Onan G. et al. (2025)	Behavioral Sciences	9	These results contribute to the literature by demonstrating how positive leadership can buffer against burnout through resilience, emphasizing the need for context-specific research in the field. This study also offers...
25	Jonker C.S. et al. (2025)	SA Journal of Human Resource Management	9	Practical/managerial implications: Human resource strategies and interventions should focus on developing servant leadership among managers and followers within organisations. Contribution/value-add: This study contributed to...
26	Kristiana Y. et al. (2025)	Cogent Business and Management	8	This study holds significant implications for management to support job resources, manage job demands and create programs to enhance

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				service-oriented job crafting, and it provides insights for the government to facilitate...
27	Nazarian A. et al. (2025)	International Journal of Cross Cultural Management	7	Significant but different relationships were found between Servant Leadership and Transformational Leadership with Trust, and PEOs in the two clusters, which could be potentially attributed to societal and contextual factors...
28	Kim Quy H.T. et al. (2025)	Human Resource Development International	6	The findings further demonstrated positive relationships between workplace spirituality and employees' belief restoration, as well as between employees' proactive personalities and their belief restoration. The study also...
29	Nguyen L.L.H. (2025)	International Journal of Organization Theory and Behavior	5	The research findings suggest an understanding of how ethical leadership could cultivate public service recovery performance through employees' thriving. The common values between subordinates and leaders were found to...
30	Anh Vu T. et al. (2025)	Personnel Review	4	This study identifies both institutional and leadership antecedents to both HR competence and HR practices and their subsequent impacts. Its institutional and developing country orientation complements past studies that have...
31	Nguyen H.H. et al. (2025)	SAGE Open	4	These findings offer valuable contributions to both the theory and practice of SL in the new working context, suggesting further research based on these intriguing findings. JEL Classification: J24, L29, O33.
32	Jehanzeb K. et al. (2025)	Cogent Business and Management	3	Second, it emphasizes the importance of employee engagement in explaining this relationship. Furthermore, more research has yet to attempt to apply a quantitative method to explore how well-being-oriented HRM practices can...
33	Guo Y. (2025)	Chinese Journal of Sociology	3	The results indicate that civil servants' children are more likely to aspire to follow their parents' career choices, and are less likely to aspire to become professional technicians, employees, and business managers. Further...
34	Abdou A.H. (2025)	Geojournal of Tourism and Geosites	3	From a practical standpoint, the findings emphasize the importance for hospitality managers to cultivate servant leadership

No.	Author(s) & Year	Journal / Source	Cites	Key Conclusion / Finding (from published abstract)
				qualities and invest in developing employees' psychological capital. Doing so can significantly...
35	Postuła A. (2025)	Central European Management Journal	3	A values-driven approach has the potential to create positive social impacts and thus contribute to ethical business practices, trustful relationships and overall societal well-being. The findings are original and valuable...
36	Kaloom G. et al. (2025)	Problems and Perspectives in Management	2	This study contributes to the body of knowledge by integrating leadership-CSR domains as well as offering a unique and under-explored context, such as the hotel industry in South Asia, with a particular focus on Pakistan....
37	Wang S. et al. (2025)	BRQ Business Research Quarterly	2	In addition, the results show that the beneficial impact of congruence (as opposed to incongruence) is stronger in the cultural context where gender inequality is high. We contribute to the literature by showing the important...
38	Khan S. et al. (2025)	International Journal of Organizational Leadership	2	Employing hierarchical multiple regression analysis, it was established that SL is a positive determinant of IWB. POS acted as a partial mediator between the variables, but it was negatively related to IWB.
39	Kader T. et al. (2025)	Sustainability (Switzerland)	2	Based on these insights, a practical framework was developed to integrate servant leadership principles into team-building initiatives, leadership development programs, and organizational systems. This framework not only...
40	Podolchak N. et al. (2025)	Administratie si Management Public	2	The findings of this study can be applied to enhance human resource management mechanisms in the public sector, ultimately strengthening the resilience of the civil service in crisis conditions. The research holds both...
41	Franken E. et al. (2025)	Public Personnel Management	1	This study establishes GOL as a relevant capability for public leaders in supporting employees to deal effectively with public service demands and subsequently grow. Understanding how leadership capability, and particularly...
42	Kim H. et al. (2025)	Production and Operations Management	1	We provide insights for the retention of agents with implications for capacity and service quality for the call centers. These insights may

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				be extended to frontline workers in other emotional labor environments.
43	Jafari Nodoushan M. et al. (2025)	Journal of Health and Safety at Work	0	The selection of appropriate leadership styles can contribute to enhanced safety, a reduction in occupational incidents, and improving service quality in healthcare settings. The findings of this study highlight the importance...
44	Zwane N.N. et al. (2025)	SA Journal of Industrial Psychology	0	Practical/managerial implications: The study identifies the need to support both individual and organisational well-being as interdependent contributors to public servants' resilience during crises. Contribution/value-add:...
45	Zhou X. et al. (2025)	Asian Journal of Business Ethics	0	The study provides a new perspective of the underlying mechanisms for leaders to fuel the taking charge behavior. At last, we discuss the theoretical and practical implications as well as future research directions of the...
46	Tjernberg M. et al. (2025)	Cogent Psychology	0	Despite diverse demographic backgrounds, participants shared similar needs, particularly regarding the importance of spatial and temporal flexibility, empowerment, and trust-based leadership. Our results contribute to the job...
47	Liu J. et al. (2025)	Educational Process: International Journal	0	Servant leadership supports employee development and well-being, creating a collaborative environment that nurtures innovation. Together, these leadership styles enhance knowledge sharing and innovative self-efficacy,...
48	Agyapong J.-A.M. et al. (2025)	Social Sciences and Humanities Open	0	By integrating the job demands-resources model and social exchange theory, this study broadens theoretical understanding of healthcare leadership and offers practical guidance for leadership development programmes in low and...
49	Cai M. et al. (2024)	Behavioral Sciences	29	The findings deepen our understanding of how servant leadership enhances work engagement in PBO. The findings also provide implications for PBO to enhance sustainable well-being at work and organizational productivity.
50	Kyambade M. et al. (2024)	Cogent Education	28	Additionally, socially responsible leadership was found to moderate the way servant leadership indirectly affects healthy work relationships via

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				psychological safety. These findings underscore the prominence of fostering...
51	Hoare C. et al. (2024)	Psychological Reports	26	Using relative weights analysis, demands and resources were found to account for different amounts of variance in the outcome variables. This study informs our understanding of and contributes to the advancement of the JD-R...
52	Nawaz A. et al. (2024)	Knowledge and Process Management	22	This study contributes to the literature by addressing the research gap in understanding the role of SL in enhancing innovative performance in higher education. The insights gained from this research can provide managers with...
53	Balti M. et al. (2024)	Journal of Management Development	19	The novelty of this research is in its effort to observe the multilevel mediation of servant leadership climate with other variables developed in the research model. No previous studies have found a relationship between...
54	Jin J. et al. (2024)	Behavioral Sciences	19	We constructed a serial mediation model to examine the relationships between servant leadership, leader's empathic communication, colleagues' empathic communication, and workplace loneliness. The results indicate that servant...
55	Freire C. et al. (2024)	Journal of Organizational Effectiveness	15	This study is relevant for human resource managers and administrators in public and private hospitals since it enables a diagnosis of the situation, as well as a definition of the most appropriate policies for each of the...
56	Song W. et al. (2024)	Creativity and Innovation Management	14	The indirect effect of servant leadership on employee creativity was significant when the employees had a low level of experienced creative time pressure. The results of this study provide important theoretical and practical...
57	Babu N. et al. (2024)	European Management Review	14	Results provide support for our model and indicate potential country differences. Our findings point to the significance of leadership, both at the senior level and at the line management level, in protecting employee...
58	Hoang T.K.Q. et al. (2024)	Management Decision	13	In addition, the current study examines how effective service recovery is by assessing the employee's resources based on COR theory.

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				Finally, this research provides new insight into the influence of SL on SRP through the...
59	Raub S. et al. (2024)	Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality and Tourism	13	Using survey data from 154 hospitality service employees in 5-star hotels in Europe the study applies a hierarchical moderated multiple regression approach to test the main and interaction effects. The findings support the...
60	Miralles S. et al. (2024)	Frontiers in Psychology	11	By doing so, organizations can foster a positive work environment that promotes mindfulness and enhances workplace safety. Our research contributes to the management literature by offering empirical evidence on the role of...
61	Laura-Arias E. et al. (2024)	Frontiers in Psychology	11	Furthermore, the results suggest that these factors can be used to improve the health of employees in educational institutions in Peru and possibly in other contexts as well. Given these results and after knowing the solidity...
62	Tran Pham T.K. (2024)	International Journal of Public Leadership	10	This study advances the understanding of public sector EWB via the predictive role of empowering leaders and the mediation mechanism of PE. Moreover, this study is among the pioneering studies exploring the moderating role of...
63	Kim B.-J. et al. (2024)	Current Psychology	10	The study's implications for theory and practice suggest that fostering an integrated leadership approach, combining servant and authentic leadership characteristics, can significantly contribute to enhancing employee...
64	Buis B.C. et al. (2024)	Journal of Vocational Behavior	9	Further, consistency of interests moderates the relationship between living a calling and deviant behaviors and LMX. Our findings indicate how employers might help employees live their callings, and, in turn, mitigate negative...
65	Asamoah Antwi F. et al. (2024)	Anatolia	9	Moreover, the conditional indirect effect of CHRP on ER via PWB is high at higher and mediums levels of SEL. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed further.
66	Yang C. et al. (2024)	Leadership and Organization Development Journal	8	Moreover, leaders' collectivist orientation significantly positively affects employees' collectivist orientation/servant leadership, employees' collectivist orientation/servant leadership significantly positively affects...

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67	Onyango G. (2024)	Deviant Behavior	8	Using a multi-dimensional administrative rituals approach, this paper is a modest attempt to understand how these factors produce bureaucratic gray areas that rationalize and institutionalizes corruption and cartel activities....
68	Arifin S. et al. (2024)	SA Journal of Human Resource Management	7	Practical/managerial implications: The study presents novel empirical insights into the managerial and practical matters in considering these variables for supporting employee performance and organisational goals....
69	Schott C. et al. (2024)	International Review of Administrative Sciences	7	This means that stimulating public service motivation or recruiting public-service motivated individuals does not help to reduce the risk of behavioural dishonesty. Rather, (human resource) managers can invest in other...
70	Pincus J.D. (2024)	Frontiers in Psychology	7	We propose that there is substantial value in adopting a comprehensive needs-based taxonomy over current approaches. We consider the impact of setting the concepts of leadership within existing need constructs for each of the...
71	Ghahremani H. et al. (2024)	Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies	7	The results reveal support for the hypothesized serial mediation model. We discuss the theoretical and practical implications of this research and outline directions for future research.
72	Konadu K. et al. (2024)	International Journal of Public Leadership	6	It also shows the different mechanisms (JS and OI) that make this effect possible, as well as the good work environment (i.e. IN) that allows the PL-JS and PL-OI relationships to grow.
73	Jing T. et al. (2024)	Human Resources for Health	6	We used two samples to examine and cross-validate the joint effects of job characteristics and personal traits on workplace well-being among Chinese medical staff. Although heterogenous, the results showed regulatory foci were...
74	Hudecek M.F.C. et al. (2024)	Cogent Business and Management	5	In addition, the results suggest that an organization should be considered as a whole. Besides the leadership style, EMC should be taken into account since it turned out to be a relevant predictor of BNS, too.

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75	Zhou X. et al. (2024)	Current Psychology	5	The indirect effect of servant leadership on employee spouses' family life quality be strengthened when employees are in high job demands context. Finally, we discuss the theoretical and practical implications as well as...
76	Mahon D. (2024)	Mental Health and Social Inclusion	5	A theory of change is provided based on the findings from this review and integrated with the extant literature on servant leadership theory, and can be used by organisations to support the policy, training and practice of...
77	Nelwan O.S. et al. (2024)	Revista de Gestao Social e Ambiental	5	This research shows that leadership has no impact on employee creativity. If the results are inconsistent with previous research, it is necessary to carry out more research.
78	Wang Z. et al. (2024)	Employee Relations	5	Highlighting servant leadership's role signifies a novel approach to managing LHPE's complexities, presenting valuable insights for HR practitioners and organizational leaders. This research underlines the importance of...
79	Jeong M. (2024)	Sustainability (Switzerland)	4	However, servant leadership had a positive relationship with leader satisfaction and social performance, but the impact of servant leadership on job satisfaction and economic performance was insignificant. These results...
80	Siahtiri V. et al. (2024)	European Journal of Marketing	4	This benefits both consumers and financial institutions, as customers with greater spending power can buy more financial products. This study advances transformative service research on consumer financial planning behavior,...
81	Goyal R. et al. (2024)	Business Perspectives and Research	3	Also, mindfulness partly substitutes for a low level of SL in the workplace. Hence, by organizing meditation and yoga sessions in the organizations, employees' mindfulness can be enhanced which reduce the reliance on the...
82	Okecha C. et al. (2024)	Africa Journal of Management	3	The study of servant leadership in relation to the African concept of Ubuntu is particularly interesting because it draws attention to a number of philosophical, religious, mythical and mystical as well as cultural and...
83	Ha M.-T. et al. (2024)	Cogent Psychology	2	This study contributes to the theoretical understanding of SRHRM's effects in the public sector. It provides practical insights for enhancing employee commitment and fostering

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				ethical behavior through effective human resource...
84	Ren L. et al. (2024)	International Journal of Applied Economics, Finance and Accounting	1	Second, hotel managers are advised to meticulously select, train, and cultivate leaders with a strong service orientation. Thirdly, enterprise leaders should continually elevate their personal knowledge to provide superior...
85	Hernández-Gracia T.J. et al. (2024)	Revista de Ciencias Sociales	1	A non-experimental study was carried out, starting from a total population of 800 workers from 4 Mexican public institutions and a non-probabilistic sample was applied that included a total of 260 permanent and trusted...
86	Wang Q. et al. (2024)	Revista de Gestao Social e Ambiental	1	Of all the participants, 24% (n = 138) was male and 76% (n = 438) was female. 77.6% of the participants were under the age of 26 years (n = 447). 61.8% (n = 356) have worked less five years in the public sector.
87	Samantha D A.D. et al. (2024)	Journal of Modern Project Management	0	These findings offer practical insights for the public sector in designing programs that incorporate authentic leadership to enhance service quality, emphasizing the need to improve self-awareness and relational transparency...
88	Hikmah K. et al. (2024)	Journal of Ecohumanism	0	However, psychological empowerment only strengthens the influence of servant leadership because direct participation in decision-making is already able to trigger employee initiative without the need for increased empowerment...
89	Brownlee A.L. et al. (2024)	CASE Journal	0	Students should think about the role of leadership in a nonprofit. They should put themselves in the protagonist's shoes throughout the reading of the case.
90	N/A (2024)	Human Resource Management International Digest	0	(3) There is an indirect influence of emotional intelligence on individual adaptive performance through the mediation of servant leadership climate. The briefing saves busy executives, strategists and researchers hours of...
91	Mane M. et al. (2024)	Health Leadership and Quality of Life	0	Transformational leadership can improve patient care and job satisfaction among healthcare workers by prioritizing empathy, communication, and empowerment. Based on the study's findings, the researchers recommended the...

No.	Author(s) & Year	Journal / Source	Cites	Key Conclusion / Finding (from published abstract)
92	Meuser J.D. et al. (2023)	Business Horizons	63	Our research shows that leaders have the least confidence in this most distinguishing aspect of servant leadership. We offer 32 practical ideas on implementing servant leadership with special attention to the community...
93	Rabiul M.K. et al. (2023)	International Journal of Hospitality Management	61	On the contrary, TL is not significantly related to psychological safety, which does not contribute to the sequential mediation process. Using the aforesaid findings, implications are discussed, and future research directions...
94	Alamri M. (2023)	Leadership and Organization Development Journal	43	Finally, human resource managers must be mindful of their selection and placement decisions. Ensure that members are highly motivated to serve in the public sector and have the desired regulatory focus.
95	Das S.S. et al. (2023)	Current Psychology	38	Servant leadership only affected employee well-being directly. Findings highlight the theoretical and practical significance of leadership styles and LMX for employee well-being.
96	Jiménez-Estévez P. et al. (2023)	Technological Forecasting and Social Change	38	However, for furloughed employees, only being supported by a caring leader was important. Thus, we shed new light on the mechanisms underlying the positive effect of servant leadership on employees' affective well-being and...
97	Kimakwa S. et al. (2023)	Journal of Business Ethics	35	We contribute to theory building by uncovering how social entrepreneurs can share their personal passions, values, and obligations with their employees and inspire them to meet their dual mission, paying attention to the...
98	Peng A.C. et al. (2023)	Journal of Organizational Behavior	32	Perceptions of organizational politics strengthened the positive effect of servant leadership on impression management, resulting in a stronger indirect effect on exhaustion. We discuss the findings' implications for servant...
99	Fatima S. et al. (2023)	International Journal of Hospitality Management	31	In addition, ideology-based culture was positively related to group's diversity-valuing behavior as well as each member's meaningfulness and community citizenship behavior. Finally, servant leadership had a positive indirect...

No.	Author(s) & Year	Journal / Source	Cites	Key Conclusion / Finding (from published abstract)
100	Isabel R.-D. et al. (2023)	Quality and Quantity	23	The results reveal a significant direct influence of servant leadership on OCB and direct and indirect effects through employee's self-efficacy and job satisfaction. A set of managerial implications and future research lines...
101	van Dierendonck D. et al. (2023)	Leadership and Organization Development Journal	16	A core group of 11 items is introduced as a potential scale to represent the underlying variance of all 55 items. This study validates how the five instruments are grounded in the core aspects of servant leadership described...
102	Bai M. et al. (2023)	Frontiers in Psychology	15	Not only did this study contribute to existing literature by providing non-western data for service leadership research, it also provided a deeper understanding of associated mechanisms of how servant leadership might cast on...
103	Nhat Vuong B. et al. (2023)	Cogent Business and Management	15	Finally, this study broadens new knowledge to the existing literature on transformational leadership and job-related outcomes by proposing an alternative model of how this relationship exists. Besides, the findings showed that...
104	Quinteros-Durand R. et al. (2023)	Frontiers in Psychology	15	Moreover, the mediation of job resources in servant leadership and life satisfaction was confirmed. Servant leadership, supported by satisfaction with job resources, can reduce effort and associated costs, stimulate personal...
105	Zia M.Q. et al. (2023)	Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies	14	Job embeddedness and burnout sequentially mediate the relationship between servant leadership and adaptive performance. Further unraveling the mechanisms between servant leadership and adaptive performance, this study implies...
106	Haricharan S.J. (2023)	SA Journal of Human Resource Management	14	Contribution/value-add: By applying an integrated research approach, multiple determinants of well-being and their intermediation were elucidated. The findings offer epistemological and methodological implications for human...
107	Khatri P. et al. (2023)	Journal of Intellectual Capital	7	The novelty of ICIA would enrich and provide a new perspective in IA literature. Additionally, the study also examines the role of gender in the ICIA of WP.

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108	Yan G. et al. (2023)	Sustainability (Switzerland)	6	The research findings can serve as a reference for enterprises to take measures in mitigating the adverse impact of COVID-19. Moreover, they provide new insights for managers to facilitate the sustainable development of their...
109	Gonzales-Macedo V. et al. (2023)	Problems and Perspectives in Management	6	It emphasizes the importance of servant leadership and emotional salary to achieve this goal. By implementing these strategies, universities can increase employee satisfaction and improve the quality of their services and the...
110	Alzghoul A. et al. (2023)	Problems and Perspectives in Management	6	The study's theoretical implications contribute to the broader comprehension of the complex connections between servant leadership, employee well-being, and mediating variables. Furthermore, it provides empirical insights...
111	Edú-Valsania S. et al. (2023)	Current Psychology	5	Regarding the criterion validity of the Spanish version of the MSLS, we found that several dimensions of the MSLS were significantly related to the identification of the employees with their organization and supervisors, as...
112	Maj J. (2023)	Journal of Economics and Management (Poland)	4	Originality/value/contribution - The originality of the paper lies within the adoption of the interpretivist approach and a new perspective on well-known processes. The value of the paper is that the analysis has been...
113	Wang N. et al. (2023)	Journal of Psychology in Africa	3	Finally, no moderation effect has been found in this study. Findings suggest that servant leadership training would be of strategic advantage to organisations for energising their employees for greater productivity.
114	Dasrimin H. et al. (2023)	Issues in Educational Research	3	Results show that in developing spiritual leadership in Catholic schools, school principals are imbued with Christian leadership, namely servant leadership, discipleship leadership and pastoral leadership. The application of...
115	Alavuk Đ. et al. (2023)	Journal of the Geographical Institute Jovan Cvijic SASA	2	Furthermore, regression analysis confirmed the direct impact of servant leadership on job satisfaction and work engagement, as well as turnover intention. This study fills theoretical gaps in the aspect of choosing purposeful...

No.	Author(s) & Year	Journal / Source	Cites	Key Conclusion / Finding (from published abstract)
11 6	Qureshi M.A. et al. (2023)	Pakistan Journal of Commerce and Social Sciences	1	This research reveals that servant leadership helps employees cope with occupational and perceived stress and maintains their work-life balance by ensuring their psychological wellbeing. This research also finds that the...
11 7	Canavesi A. et al. (2022)	Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal	107	The purpose of this paper is to depict the evolution of the scientific literature that has developed on the concept, to identify the main criticalities and provide avenues for future research. A dynamic methodology called...
11 8	Kaltainen J. et al. (2022)	BRQ Business Research Quarterly	71	Our findings suggest that improved servant leadership practices may foster employees' task and adaptive performance especially through the promotion of work engagement. JEL CLASSIFICATION: L200 Firm Objectives, Organization,...
11 9	Ruiz-Palomino P. et al. (2022)	Technological Forecasting and Social Change	63	Our multigroup analyses (MGA) findings also reveal that when these employees are furloughed, the negative effect of PSC and the mediating role of PSC in this relationship is stronger. New light is thus shed on how servant...
12 0	Wang W. et al. (2022)	Frontiers in Psychology	62	Subsequently, we used bootstrapping to confirm mediation and serial mediation effects. The results showed that servant leadership was positively related to creativity and that psychological safety and employee well-being were...
12 1	Zia M.Q. et al. (2022)	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights	48	There are numerous calls for research to ascertain as well as sparse literature available whether job embeddedness act as a mediator in the nexus of servant leadership and work outcomes or not. The current study fills these...
12 2	Tuan L.T. (2022)	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management	42	The findings further demonstrated the positive nexuses between salesperson resource seeking and their attention-to-detail behavior, and between salesperson challenge seeking and their adaptive selling behavior, as well as the...
12 3	Omanwar S.P. et al. (2022)	International Journal of Organizational Analysis	35	The study also contributes to the extant literature on servant leadership by empirically examining the mediation effect of organizational identification between SL and TI. To the authors' best of knowledge, this study may be...

No.	Author(s) & Year	Journal / Source	Cites	Key Conclusion / Finding (from published abstract)
12 4	Ortiz-Gómez M. et al. (2022)	Psychology Research and Behavior Management	32	This result rejects the previous theory that defend the redundant outcomes of these leadership styles, what undoubtedly constitutes an interesting finding for the academy. These findings also complement the social identity...
12 5	Haq I.U. et al. (2022)	Personnel Review	31	The results also indicate the presence of moderated mediation, in that the indirect effect of servant leadership on workplace mistreatment is moderated by the ethical climate. This study adds to extant research by examining...
12 6	Cahyadi A. et al. (2022)	Economies	30	Leadership styles positively affect individual employee performance and high-involvement human resource management practices in SMEs operating in Lubuklinggau. High-involvement human resource management is not a mediator of...
12 7	Swanson S. et al. (2022)	Sport Management Review	26	Using data from 489 employees working in professional sports, structural equation modeling analyses indicated servant leadership is predictive of employee life satisfaction and teamwork, with the latter mediating servant...
12 8	Hanaysha J.R. et al. (2022)	Arab Gulf Journal of Scientific Research	25	This paper acknowledges the existing gaps in the prior literature, and enables us to understand clearly about the significance of ethical as well as servant leadership in affecting employee creativity via OCB as a mediator....
12 9	Neubert M.J. et al. (2022)	Journal of Business Ethics	23	We utilize the healthcare setting (1,485 nurses in 71 hospital units) to support this hypothesized process across multi-source measures of incivility from coworkers and team supervisors and three indicators of quality of...
13 0	Sigaeva N. et al. (2022)	Sustainability (Switzerland)	22	PsyCap was found to mediate the relationship between the two leadership styles and frontline Gen Z employees, and the study also found that it influenced overall Gen Z performance. The influence of PsyCap on the job engagement...
13 1	Elshaer I.A. et al. (2022)	Sustainability (Switzerland)	21	A total of 880 employees in restaurants and travel agencies were surveyed. The results reveal that the effects of SL and TC on employees' adaptive performance was fully mediated by employees' capacity for resilience,...

No.	Author(s) & Year	Journal / Source	Cites	Key Conclusion / Finding (from published abstract)
13 2	Wang Z. et al. (2022)	International Journal of Cross Cultural Management	21	Findings in this research provided robust and empirical support for the motivational effects of the servant leadership theory across the globe. Theoretical and practical implications for evidence-based cross-cultural...
13 3	Bentein K. et al. (2022)	Public Administration Review	21	Results show that servant leaders are associated with high service-oriented behaviors through the ability to strengthen individual customer orientation and service climate. Overall, this article highlights that developing...
13 4	Ouyang Y. et al. (2022)	Business Ethics, Environment and Responsibility	15	The current study contributes to business ethics research by advancing our understanding of antecedents of pro-group unethical behavior as well as how servant leadership leads to employees' unethical behaviors. Implications...
13 5	Bhatti O.K. et al. (2022)	Cogent Business and Management	13	An ANN model based on multilayer perceptron has been used to predict the impact of servant leadership and work meaningfulness on inclusion along with mediating roles of gender, age and work experience. The results adequately...
13 6	Jin S. et al. (2022)	Frontiers in Psychology	12	This study enriches our understanding of the importance of servant leadership in driving the innovative behaviors of employees in emerging-market MNCs and provides new insights into the mechanisms through which emerging-market...
13 7	Ul Hassan F.S. et al. (2022)	Journal of Health Organization and Management	10	The moderating effect of SL on the serial mediation pathway was negative and significant. Drawing on a tripartite theoretical perspective, this study illuminates the mechanism underlying WPB-TIs relationship with an advanced...
13 8	Abdelmoteleb M. et al. (2022)	Human Systems Management	8	These results were explained through communal impulsion which adds a new insight into Greenleaf's theory of servant leadership. Overall, the results of the study shed new light on the conditions through which servant...
13 9	Waladali E. et al. (2022)	Problems and Perspectives in Management	6	The results show the impact of e-government maturity dimensions on job satisfaction as follows: internal efficiency ($R^2 = 0.254$, $p = 0.000$), external efficiency ($R^2 = 0.343$, $p = 0.000$), good governance ($R^2 = 0.364$, $p = 0.000$),...

No.	Author(s) & Year	Journal / Source	Cites	Key Conclusion / Finding (from published abstract)
140	Cronemberger F.A. et al. (2022)	Transforming Government: People, Process and Policy	4	This study suggests that data analytics practices in local governments that are implementing a smart city agenda are knowledge-driven and developed incrementally through inclusive networks that leverage stakeholder knowledge...
141	Khuong M.N. et al. (2022)	Public Administration Issues	0	Perceiving the significance of organizational commitment as well as job satisfaction and positive moods from the empirical results, public leaders are able to establish their own appropriate strategies and policies to improve...
142	Aboramadan M. et al. (2021)	Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management	137	This study is one of the first studies which extends the servant leadership-innovative work behavior literature in hospitality to green innovative behaviors. Discussion, implications and limitations are discussed.
143	Lamprinou V.D.I. et al. (2021)	Leadership and Organization Development Journal	66	This article offers robust evidence for servant leadership and organisational support scholarship by establishing that POS mediates the relationship between servant leadership and (1) job burnout and (2) work-life balance...
144	Li F. et al. (2021)	Tourism Management	64	Results also showed that employee age moderated the effect of servant leadership on customer orientation, as well as the indirect effect of servant leadership on SIB via customer orientation, such that these effects were...
145	Virgiawan A.R. et al. (2021)	Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies	61	Field data collection was carried out by survey method using questionnaires, which were processed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using the Partial Least Square (SmartPLS) version 3.0 program. The results show that...
146	Choi H.-J. (2021)	Sustainability (Switzerland)	36	This suggests that it is necessary to comprehend principles that show when, where, and how important leaders are and sustainable leadership styles that can increase their chances of success. Moreover, this study derived...
147	Schopf A.K. et al. (2021)	Safety Science	31	Additionally, trustworthiness may be related to lower safety citizenship behavior, possibly because ATS employees believe trustworthy supervisors take care of everything. Although a closer additional examination is warranted,...
148	Howladar M.H.R. et al. (2021)	South East European Journal of Economics and Business	19	The main implication of the study is that employees' organizational citizenship behavior can be improved by servant leadership of managers through the indirect effect of

No.	Author(s) & Year	Journal / Source	Cites	Key Conclusion / Finding (from published abstract)
				organizational commitment of employees. The study also...
14 9	Grobler A. et al. (2021)	South African Journal of Business Management	12	Thus, H&O, as potential resilience factors, could generate resilience by harnessing opportunities and setbacks both during the Covid-19 pandemic and in its aftermath. The practical value of this article is in the empirical...
15 0	Jha P. et al. (2021)	International Journal of Innovation Science	11	It was also found that EI and SL are the substantial predictor which have positive impact over employee job satisfaction. The outcome of the study will help the leaders understand the significance that the EI and SL have in...

Annexure 1. Study-level summary of the 150 most recent reviewed documents, ordered by publication year and citation count, with concluding statements condensed from each study's own published abstract.

Read cumulatively, Annexure 1 corroborates three claims made elsewhere in the paper on a document-by-document basis rather than through aggregate counts alone. First, it evidences the contextual and sectoral breadth summarised in Section 4.5: the reviewed studies span public administration and civil service (e.g., Wanyana et al., 2026; Shymko et al., 2026), hospitality and tourism (Vakira et al., 2026), healthcare, education, manufacturing, and sustainability-oriented sectors, across geographically diverse settings from Uganda to Ukraine to Chile. Second, it substantiates the thematic drift documented quantitatively in Sections 3.5 and 5.2: the most recent entries (2024–2026) cluster conspicuously around psychological safety, sleep and recovery, resilience under crisis conditions, innovative organisational culture, and green/sustainable outcomes, while earlier entries (2021) more often report generic organisational citizenship, safety-citizenship, or job-satisfaction findings — an independent, qualitative confirmation of the LDA topic-evolution trend reported in Table 9. Third, it demonstrates that the paper's synthesis rests on a substantially larger evidentiary base than the twenty headline studies discussed narratively in Sections 3.2 and 4, addressing a common methodological criticism of bibliometric-SLR hybrid papers — that synthesis narratives lean disproportionately on a small, highly cited subset — by making the fuller underlying record directly inspectable.

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