Original Article

Trends and Insights in Servant Leadership: A Bibliometric Study on Workplace Outcomes

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Abstract. This bibliometric study addresses the absence of a comprehensive, quantitative synthesis of servant leadership research focused on workplace outcomes over the past decade. It aims to map the evolution, intellectual structure, and thematic directions of servant leadership scholarship related to employee and organizational outcomes from 2015 to 2025. Using the Scopus database, we retrieved peer-reviewed journal articles in business and management that contained the terms "servant leadership" and workplace outcome-related terms in their titles, abstracts, or keywords. Descriptive bibliometric indicators, co-citation analysis, and keyword co-occurrence analysis were conducted to examine publication trends, citation networks, and thematic clusters. The analysis of 15,846 cited references, of which 68 met the threshold for significant influence, reveals a strong upward trajectory in servant leadership publications over the 11 years, with a sharp increase beginning in 2017 and peaking in 2024. Co-citation and co-word analyses identify five major thematic clusters: psychological mechanisms (e.g., job demands-resources, self-efficacy), leadership measurement and innovation, affective commitment and performance outcomes, authentic and transformational leadership, and ethical leadership. Across these clusters, servant leadership consistently emerges as a multifaceted construct that integrates ethical behavior, psychological empowerment, and developmental support, thereby enhancing employee engagement, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and reducing burnout. The findings consolidate fragmented evidence on servant leadership and workplace outcomes, highlight influential works and patterns of collaboration, and clarify where research activity has been most intense. This study provides a stand-alone, evidence-based overview that guides scholars in identifying gaps and future research directions and supports practitioners in designing leadership development initiatives that promote ethical, people-centered, and sustainable organizational performance.

Keywords: Employee engagement; Ethical leadership; Leadership trends; Organizational commitment; Servant leadership.

In today's dynamic and complex organizational environments, effective leadership is crucial for promoting positive workplace outcomes, including employee engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Krywalski-Santiago, 2024). Among leadership theories, servant leadership has garnered considerable attention for its emphasis on serving others, promoting ethical behavior, and fostering employees' growth and well-being (Alagarsamy et al., 2020). This leadership approach contrasts with traditional hierarchical models by prioritizing followers' needs and encouraging a culture of trust and collaboration (Albrecht et al., 2018). Despite growing interest in servant leadership, organizations still face challenges in fully understanding how

these practices translate into tangible workplace outcomes (Breevaart & Bakker, 2018). While numerous empirical studies have examined the effects of servant leadership on various organizational metrics, a comprehensive synthesis that maps the evolution, trends, and geographic distribution of this research is lacking (Hu et al., 2023). This gap limits scholars and practitioners from identifying emerging themes, research hotspots, and potential areas for future investigation (Udin, 2024).

Existing literature reviews on servant leadership often rely on qualitative analyses or specific case studies. While valuable, these do not provide a holistic view of the research landscape (Indarta et al., 2024). Bibliometric analysis, a quantitative method that examines publication patterns, citation networks, and thematic clusters, offers a robust approach to addressing this gap (Zarei et al., 2024). By systematically analyzing a large body of academic publications, bibliometrics can reveal the development trajectory of servant leadership research and its influence on workplace outcomes over time (Shibani et al., 2025). This study focuses on the period from 2015 to 2025 to capture the most recent and relevant developments in servant leadership research. This decade has seen significant growth in leadership scholarship, driven by evolving organizational challenges and the increasing importance of ethical and people-centered leadership. Focusing on this timeframe provides a current and comprehensive overview of trends and future directions in the field.

The objective of this study is to conduct a bibliometric review of servant leadership literature published between 2015 and 2025. The analysis highlights key contributors, influential publications, collaboration networks, and thematic trends, offering a comprehensive overview of the field. Understanding these patterns is significant for academics seeking to build on existing knowledge and for practitioners implementing evidence-based leadership strategies to enhance workplace effectiveness (Hussain et al., 2025). By mapping the scholarly landscape, this research advances the theory and practice of servant leadership, offering insights that can guide future research directions and organizational leadership development initiatives (Adams et al., 2025).

Methodology
Research Design
This study adopts a bibliometric review design to systematically map and analyze scholarly work on servant leadership and its influence on workplace outcomes. A bibliometric design is appropriate because it enables the quantitative examination of publication patterns, citation networks, and thematic structures across a large body of literature, thereby directly addressing the research objective of understanding the evolution, intellectual landscape, and key themes of servant leadership research on workplace outcomes.

Data Source and Search Strategy
The primary data source for this study is the Scopus database. We selected Scopus for its comprehensive coverage of peer-reviewed journals across multiple disciplines, including business, management, social sciences, and psychology. Scopus offers extensive indexing, high-quality metadata, and advanced search capabilities, making it well-suited for bibliometric analysis compared with other databases, such as Web of Science and Google Scholar. A structured search captured relevant literature on servant leadership and workplace outcomes using the following search string:

> TITLE-ABS-KEY("servant leadership") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY("workplace outcomes" OR "employee engagement" OR "job satisfaction" OR "organizational commitment")

The search was limited to articles published between January 1, 2015, and December 31, 2025, to focus on recent developments and emerging trends in the field. Only journal articles published in English and classified under business and management subject areas were included. Open-access articles were also considered to ensure accessibility and transparency.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria
Inclusion criteria were: peer-reviewed journal articles, published in English, focused on servant leadership and its impact on workplace outcomes, and available in the final publication stage. Exclusion criteria included conference papers, book chapters, editorials, and articles not directly related to servant leadership or workplace outcomes.

Data Extraction and Processing

The retrieved dataset was exported from Scopus as a CSV file. We then cleaned the data to remove duplicates and irrelevant records—duplicate removal involved identifying records with identical titles, authors, and publication years. Irrelevant records were excluded based on manual screening of titles and abstracts. Key bibliometric indicators extracted included publication year, authorship, country of origin, source title, and citation counts. Author keywords and abstracts were analyzed to identify prevalent themes and research focuses. Country affiliations were standardized by standardizing correspondence addresses to reflect geographic contributions accurately. Data processing and visualization were performed using Python libraries, including pandas for data manipulation and Matplotlib for visualization.

Analysis Techniques

Descriptive statistics summarized publication trends over time, authorship patterns, and geographic distribution. Co-authorship and keyword co-occurrence analyses were conducted to explore collaboration networks and thematic clusters within the literature. Trends were visualized using line and bar graphs to illustrate the growth and distribution of servant leadership research globally. For the co-citation and co-word network analyses, we applied a minimum citation/occurrence threshold to focus on influential works and salient keywords and to enhance the interpretability of the maps. Documents and keywords that did not meet the threshold were excluded from the network visualization. The use of standard bibliometric indicators (e.g., citation counts, co-citation links, and keyword co-occurrences), clear inclusion criteria, and transparent reporting of search and screening procedures supports the validity and trustworthiness of the analysis.

Ethical Considerations

This study used exclusively publicly available bibliometric data from the Scopus database, which contains metadata on published academic articles. As such, it did not involve human subjects or personal data and, therefore, did not require ethical approval. The research adhered to ethical standards by accurately representing data sources, properly citing all sources, and ensuring transparency in data collection and analysis.

Results and Discussion

Publication Trends and Growth Trajectory

Figure 1 shows a clear and pronounced upward trend in the number of servant leadership publications over the 11-year period from 2015 to 2025. Starting from approximately 40 publications in 2015, the number of publications increased steadily each year, with a notable acceleration beginning around 2017. This upward momentum continued sharply through 2023 and 2024, peaking at 644 publications in 2024. The slight dip observed in 2025, with 628 publications, should be interpreted cautiously, as it may reflect incomplete data for the year rather than a true decline in research activity.

This growth pattern aligns with recent reviews and bibliometric studies highlighting servant leadership as an increasingly prominent topic in leadership and organizational research (Hu et al., 2023; Udin, 2024; Hussain et al., 2025; Zarei et al., 2024). The surge after 2017 may also reflect broader organizational and societal pressures—such as heightened attention to ethical leadership, employee well-being, and crisis resilience during the COVID-19 period—that have intensified scholarly interest in people-centered leadership approaches. Overall, the publication trend indicates that servant leadership has become a central framework for understanding positive workplace outcomes in contemporary organizations.

Figure 1. *Servant Leadership Publication by Year (2015 - 2025)*
(Trends in the publication of servant leadership publications per year.)

Influential Publications and Intellectual Structure

Among the 15,846 cited references, 68 met the threshold for significant influence. Table 2 lists the top 10 documents by co-citation count and total link strength. Anderson et al.'s work on structural equation modeling, with 105 citations, underscores its critical role in providing a robust statistical framework for leadership research. Other highly cited works include foundational texts on transformational leadership, authentic leadership development, and ethical leadership, reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of servant leadership scholarship. The prominence of these works indicates that servant leadership research is anchored in broader leadership theories and methodological advances. Transformational and authentic leadership frameworks provide conceptual foundations for understanding how leaders can inspire, develop, and ethically guide followers (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Bass, 1985, 1990). Ethical leadership studies contribute to the moral and normative underpinnings of servant leadership (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005), while methodological contributions such as structural equation modeling enable rigorous testing of complex, multilevel leadership models (Anderson & House, 2014). Together, these influential works form the intellectual backbone of servant leadership research and shape how workplace outcomes are theorized and measured.

Table 2: *Top 10 Documents with the Highest Co-citation and Total Link Strength*

Documents	Citations	Total Link Strength
Leadership and performance beyond expectation...	83	161
Avolio, Bruce J., Authentic leadership development...	73	148
Multiple regression testing and interpreting intera...	96	143
Anderson, James C., Structural equation modeling ...	105	141
Baron, Reuben M., The moderator-mediator varia...	84	119
Exchange and power in social life, (1964)	74	108
Social foundations of thought and action a social c...	40	95
Social learning theory, (1977)	55	90
Antonakis, John, On making causal claims: a review	47	89
Allen, Natalie J., The measurement and antecedents	73	86

Co-citation Network Analysis: Thematic Clusters

Based on the co-citation network visualization (Figure 2), five distinct clusters emerged, representing the main intellectual pillars of servant leadership research related to workplace outcomes. Each cluster reflects a coherent set of theories, constructs, and empirical findings that collectively illuminate how servant leadership influences

employees and organizations. Based on the network visualization, co-citation analysis produces five distinct clusters. Figure 2 shows the network structure used in the co-citation analysis. Each cluster is labelled and characterized using representative publications, based on the author's inductive interpretation and understanding of the five clusters.
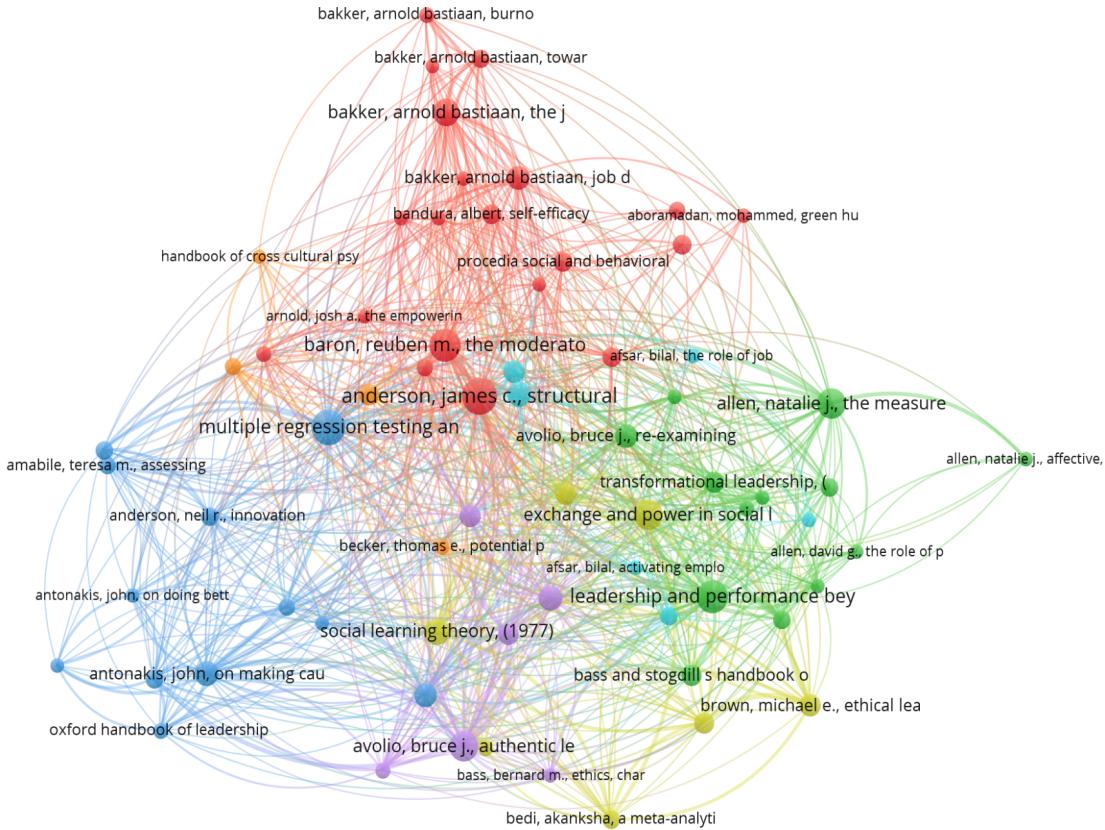
Figure 2. *Network Structure in Co-citation Analysis*

Cluster 1 (Red): Psychological Mechanisms in Servant Leadership

The first cluster, prominently featuring the works of Bakker and Bandura, focuses on the psychological mechanisms that shape workplace outcomes, particularly through the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory and self-efficacy. Bakker and Demerouti's (2007) JD-R model offers a comprehensive understanding of how job demands—such as workload and emotional stress—and job resources—such as social support and autonomy—interact to influence employee well-being and performance. This model is especially relevant to servant leadership research because it positions leadership as a vital resource that can buffer the adverse effects of job demands, thereby promoting outcomes such as increased engagement, reduced burnout, and better psychological health.

Complementing this, Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory emphasizes the critical role of an individual's belief in their ability to perform tasks successfully. Servant leadership, with its core emphasis on empowering and nurturing followers, closely aligns with efforts to enhance self-efficacy. By fostering confidence and competence, servant leaders motivate employees to overcome challenges, build resilience, and improve performance. The frequent co-citation of these foundational theories in servant leadership research highlights how psychological empowerment is central to understanding leadership's impact on employee attitudes and behaviors. This cluster underscores that servant leadership is not merely about serving others but also about actively developing followers' psychological resources. It enriches the discourse by integrating leadership theories with psychological frameworks, illustrating how servant leaders foster supportive environments in which employees can thrive despite workplace stressors.

Cluster 2 (Blue): Leadership Measurement, Innovation, and Motivation
The second cluster centers on leadership measurement, innovation, and motivation, highlighting how these elements intersect within servant leadership research. Anderson's contributions, particularly through structural equation modeling (SEM), provide a robust methodological foundation for empirically testing complex leadership theories. SEM enables researchers to examine relationships among latent constructs, such as leadership behaviors, employee motivation, and innovative outcomes, with greater precision and validity. This methodological rigor is essential for advancing servant leadership research from theoretical propositions to evidence-based conclusions.

Amabile's (1996) influential work on creativity and motivation further enriches this cluster by emphasizing the pivotal role leadership plays in cultivating innovative workplace environments. Her research demonstrates that leaders who support autonomy, provide meaningful feedback, and foster a psychologically safe climate significantly enhance employees' intrinsic motivation and creative performance. These insights align closely with servant leadership principles, which prioritize empowering followers and nurturing their growth, thereby creating fertile ground for innovation.

Antonakis and colleagues (e.g., Antonakis & House, 2014) complement this cluster by refining leadership theory and providing rigorous empirical tests of leadership effectiveness. Their work clarifies how servant leadership behaviors—such as support, development, and ethical guidance—translate into tangible outcomes, including increased motivation, creativity, and performance. Together, this cluster reflects a growing recognition that precise measurement and strong methodological approaches are crucial for demonstrating the value of servant leadership in motivating employees and fostering innovation.

Cluster 3 (Green): Leadership Measurement and Performance Outcomes
The third cluster focuses on leadership measurement and its direct influence on performance outcomes, with a particular emphasis on affective commitment and organizational effectiveness. Allen and Meyer's (1990) seminal work on affective commitment is central to this cluster. Affective commitment refers to the emotional bond employees feel toward their organization, reflecting their identification with and involvement in their workplace. Servant leadership, with its focus on serving and valuing followers, naturally fosters this type of commitment by creating a supportive and empowering environment where employees feel respected and cared for.

Research within this cluster demonstrates that servant leadership's emphasis on empathy, stewardship, and personal development strengthens affective commitment, which in turn mediates the relationship between leadership and performance outcomes. Employees who experience servant leadership are more likely to be engaged, motivated, and willing to go beyond formal job requirements, leading to enhanced productivity and reduced turnover. This cluster also underscores the importance of rigorous leadership measurement tools for accurately capturing these complex dynamics. By integrating affective commitment into leadership–performance models, researchers provide a nuanced understanding of how servant leadership translates into tangible organizational benefits.

Cluster 4 (Purple): Authentic and Transformational Leadership
The fourth cluster centers on authentic and transformational leadership, emphasizing the ethical and developmental dimensions of leadership that closely align with servant leadership principles. Avolio and Gardner's (2005) research on authentic leadership emphasizes leaders' genuineness, transparency, and moral grounding, which build trust and credibility with followers. This approach aligns closely with the core values of servant leadership: integrity, humility, and ethical stewardship. Both leadership styles prioritize the development of followers not only as employees but as whole individuals, encouraging self-awareness, personal growth, and ethical decision-making.

Transformational leadership, another key focus of this cluster, complements these ideas by inspiring and motivating followers to exceed expectations through vision, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 1985; Wang et al., 2021). Transformational leaders challenge the status quo and foster environments where followers feel empowered to innovate and develop their potential. This developmental focus aligns with servant leadership's commitment to nurturing and elevating followers. Research in this cluster demonstrates that authentic and transformational leadership positively influences workplace outcomes, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance. These leadership styles create ethical climates that

promote psychological safety and employee well-being, which are essential for sustainable organizational success. This cluster, therefore, reinforces the position of servant leadership within a broader family of positive, ethical, and development-oriented leadership approaches.

Cluster 5 (Yellow): Ethical Leadership and Foundational Theories
The fifth cluster centers on ethical leadership and foundational leadership theories, emphasizing the moral and principled dimensions that underpin effective leadership practices. Brown and Treviño's (2006) influential work on ethical leadership is a cornerstone of this cluster. Ethical leadership is characterized by leaders who demonstrate normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships and who promote such conduct among followers through communication, reinforcement, and decision-making. This focus on morality and ethics aligns closely with the core values of servant leadership: humility, stewardship, and a commitment to serving others with integrity. Servant leadership's emphasis on ethical behavior extends beyond compliance to embody a genuine concern for the well-being of followers and the broader community. This moral foundation fosters trust, respect, and fairness, which are essential for cultivating positive organizational climates.

This cluster also draws on foundational leadership theories, such as those articulated by Bass (1990) and Stogdill (1974), which provide the theoretical underpinnings for understanding leadership effectiveness. These classic frameworks help contextualize ethical and servant leadership within the broader leadership literature, reinforcing their significance as critical dimensions of leadership practice. Overall, this cluster underscores that ethical considerations are central to servant leadership and its impact on workplace outcomes.

Keyword Co-occurrence Analysis: Research Hotspots and Emerging Themes
To complement the co-citation analysis, a keyword co-occurrence analysis was conducted (Figure 3) to identify research hotspots and emerging themes in servant leadership studies focused on workplace outcomes. Five major clusters emerged, highlighting central topics, contexts, and mechanisms currently emphasized in the literature.

Table 3. *Summary Table of Clusters*

Cluster	Key Authors/Works	Main Themes
Cluster 1 (Red)	Bakker, Arnold Bastiaan; Bandura, Albert	Job Demands, Burnout, Self-Efficacy, Psychological Empowerment
Cluster 2 (Blue)	Anderson, James C.; Amabile, Teresa M.; Antonakis, John	Leadership Measurement, Innovation, Motivation
Cluster 3 (Green)	Allen, Natalie J.	Leadership Measurement, Affective Commitment, Performance Outcomes
Cluster 4 (Purple)	Avolio, Bruce J.	Authentic Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Ethical Development
Cluster 5 (Yellow)	Brown, Michael E.; Bass & Stogdill	Ethical Leadership, Foundational Leadership Theories

Cluster 1 (Red): Transformational and Servant Leadership
The red cluster, comprising 15 keywords such as servant leadership, transformational leadership, job satisfaction, and work engagement, represents the central theme in servant leadership research on workplace outcomes. This cluster highlights a robust scholarly interest in leadership styles that prioritize employee well-being, motivation, and psychological empowerment. Servant leadership, defined by leaders who prioritize the growth and needs of their followers, has been consistently linked to enhanced job satisfaction and increased work engagement—both critical drivers of organizational success (Liden et al., 2014, 2020). Transformational leadership, frequently examined alongside servant leadership, emphasizes inspiring and motivating employees to exceed expectations through vision and individualized consideration (Wang et al., 2021).

The cluster also reveals the psychological mechanisms underlying these effects, including affective commitment and psychological empowerment, which mediate the relationship between leadership behaviors and positive workplace outcomes. Recent empirical studies underscore servant leadership's role in cultivating supportive work environments that reduce burnout and foster organizational citizenship behaviors, thereby enhancing employee performance and retention (Adams, Feng, & Omar, 2025). Notably, the inclusion of COVID-19-related keywords signals emerging research exploring how servant leadership helps organizations navigate crises by promoting resilience, adaptability, and sustained employee engagement. Overall, this cluster establishes servant and

transformational leadership as vital frameworks for fostering positive employee attitudes and behaviors in modern organizational settings.
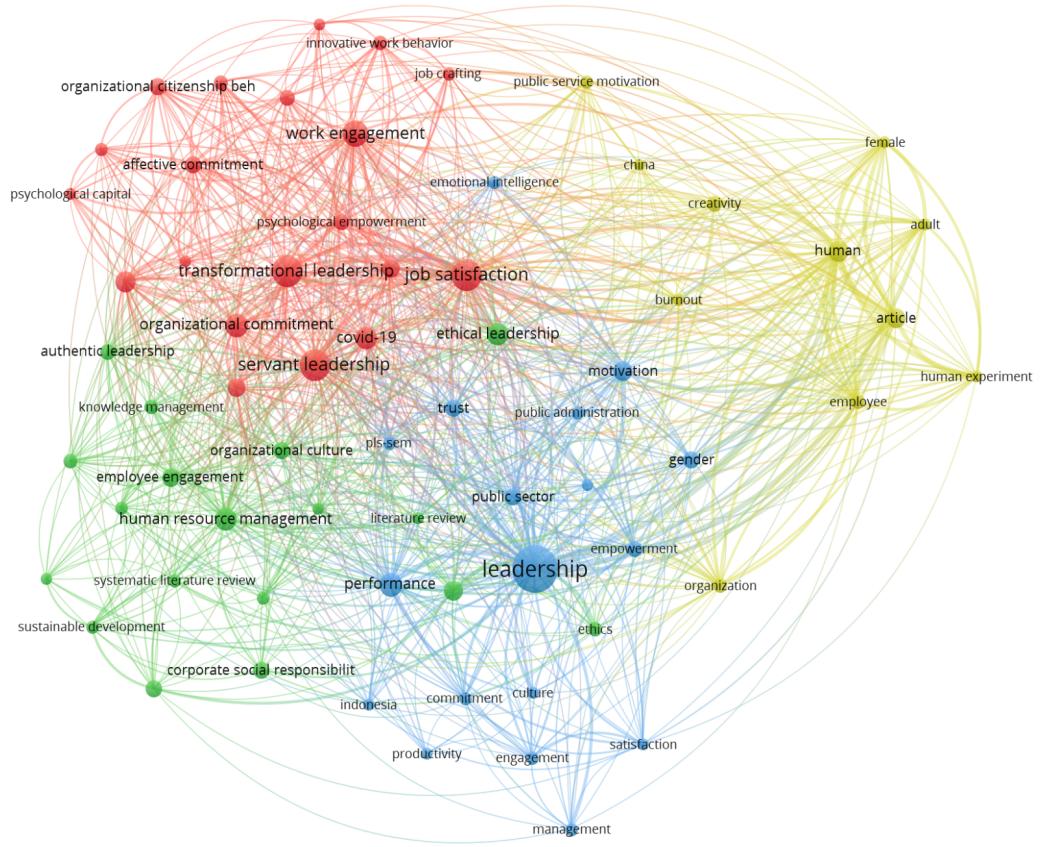
Figure 3. *Co-words*

Cluster 2 (Blue): Leadership in the Public Sector
The blue cluster, comprising 18 keywords including leadership, public sector, management, and empowerment, centers on leadership dynamics within public administration and governance. This cluster reflects a substantial body of research investigating how various leadership styles affect public-sector performance, employee motivation, and organizational effectiveness. Public sector leadership faces unique challenges, such as navigating bureaucratic constraints, political influences, and demands for transparency and ethical governance (Van Wart, 2017). These complexities require leadership approaches that balance efficiency with accountability and public trust.

A prominent theme within this cluster is empowerment, which underscores efforts to decentralize decision-making and foster employee autonomy in public organizations. Empowerment is associated with increased job satisfaction and motivation, both of which are crucial to improving public service delivery. Additionally, gender emerges as a key term, reflecting growing research on inclusive leadership and gender equity in public-sector workplaces. The cluster also emphasizes trust and commitment as vital mediators of leadership effectiveness. Research in this cluster examines how servant leadership principles—characterized by ethical behavior, empathy, and a focus on serving others—can be adapted to public administration contexts to enhance employee satisfaction and public trust.

Cluster 3 (Green): Organizational Culture and HR Management
The green cluster, comprising 13 keywords such as organizational culture, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and human resource management (HRM), focuses on the relationships among leadership, organizational culture, and HR practices. This cluster highlights how servant leadership shapes organizational culture by fostering environments that promote employee engagement, ethical behavior, and social responsibility. Servant leaders prioritize employees' growth and well-being, thereby cultivating a culture of trust, collaboration, and shared values.

Research within this cluster often explores how HRM strategies can embed servant leadership principles to enhance organizational effectiveness and sustainability. HR practices that emphasize employee development, empowerment, and ethical standards align closely with the values of servant leadership, fostering supportive workplaces that encourage high performance and commitment. The integration of CSR as a key theme reflects the growing recognition that organizations must balance profit with social and environmental responsibilities. Servant leadership's emphasis on stewardship and ethical conduct supports CSR initiatives, reinforcing the organization's role as a responsible corporate citizen. Additionally, studies on sustainable development underscore the strategic importance of aligning leadership and HR practices with long-term environmental and social goals.

Cluster 4 (Yellow): Human and Psychological Factors
The yellow cluster, comprising nine keywords such as human, creativity, burnout, and female, centers on the psychological and demographic factors that influence workplace outcomes. This cluster reflects an increasing scholarly focus on how servant leadership affects employee mental health, creativity, and diversity within organizations. Burnout, characterized by emotional exhaustion and reduced motivation, has become a critical issue in contemporary workplaces. Research highlights that servant leadership, with its emphasis on empathy, support, and prioritization of employee well-being, can mitigate burnout by fostering nurturing environments that promote resilience and psychological safety.

The cluster also emphasizes creativity as an important outcome influenced by leadership. Servant leaders foster autonomy and provide the psychological safety necessary for employees to express innovative ideas and take risks without fear of negative consequences. This nurturing environment enhances creative problem-solving and adaptability, which are crucial in today's fast-changing business landscape. Additionally, the presence of keywords related to gender and other demographic categories indicates research on diversity and inclusion. This cluster underscores the importance of servant leadership in promoting equitable and inclusive workplaces that value diverse perspectives and support underrepresented groups.

Cluster 5 (Light Blue): Ethics and Motivation
The light blue cluster, composed of nine keywords including ethical leadership, motivation, trust, and public administration, foregrounds the moral and motivational mechanisms by which leadership affects workplace outcomes. At its core, this cluster investigates how leaders' ethical behaviors—fairness, integrity, and concern for followers—build trust, stimulate intrinsic motivation, and shape employee conduct that supports long-term organizational goals. Ethical leadership communicates normative cues about acceptable behavior, which reduces ambiguity and social exchange costs while fostering psychological safety and organizational identification (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Mayer et al., 2009).

Trust functions as a central mediator: when employees trust leaders, they are more likely to internalize organizational objectives, volunteer extra-role efforts, and engage in cooperative behaviors that enhance collective performance. Intrinsic motivation in this cluster is linked to autonomy, mastery, and purpose; ethical and servant leaders enhance these needs by modeling values, granting discretion, and recognizing meaningful contributions, thereby improving engagement and reducing turnover. The cluster also links ethical leadership to outcomes such as reduced counterproductive work behaviors and greater willingness to report misconduct—issues that are particularly salient in public-sector and highly regulated contexts. Recent studies extend these ideas by examining boundary conditions (e.g., cultural norms, perceptions of organizational justice) and mechanisms (e.g., moral elevation, leader trustworthiness) that strengthen or weaken the motivational effects of ethical leadership.

Table 4. *Summary Table of Clusters in Servant Leadership*

Cluster No.	Cluster Name	Key Themes & Keywords	Focus & Insights
1	Transformational and Servant Leadership (Red)	Servant Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Job Satisfaction, Work Engagement, Psychological Empowerment, Affective Commitment, Burnout, COVID-19	Central theme on leadership styles prioritizing employee well-being, motivation, and empowerment; links to job satisfaction, engagement, and crisis resilience.
2	Leadership in Public Sector (Blue)	Leadership, Public Sector, Management, Empowerment, Gender, Trust, Commitment, Ethical Governance	Leadership dynamics in public administration; balancing efficiency, accountability, and inclusivity; empowerment and trust as key mediators of effectiveness.
3	Organizational Culture and HR Management (Green)	Organizational Culture, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Human Resource Management (HRM), Sustainable Development	Role of servant leadership in shaping ethical, engaged organizational culture; integration with HRM practices and CSR for sustainable, responsible workplaces.
4	Human and Psychological Factors (Yellow)	Human, Creativity, Burnout, Female, Diversity, Psychological Safety	Focus on psychological well-being, creativity, burnout mitigation, and diversity; servant leadership fosters supportive, inclusive, and innovative environments.
5	Ethics and Motivation (Light Blue)	Ethical Leadership, Motivation, Trust, Public Administration, Intrinsic Motivation, Organizational Justice	Examines moral and motivational mechanisms; ethical leadership builds trust, intrinsic motivation, reduces misconduct, and supports sustainable organizational culture.

Synthesis of Thematic Findings

The co-citation and keyword co-occurrence analyses jointly reveal five major thematic streams: psychological mechanisms; leadership measurement and innovation; affective commitment and performance outcomes; authentic and transformational leadership; and ethical leadership and motivation. These clusters collectively illustrate that servant leadership is a multifaceted construct that integrates psychological empowerment, ethical conduct, and developmental support to foster positive workplace outcomes.

Psychological theories such as the JD-R model and self-efficacy explain how servant leaders function as critical job resources that mitigate stressors and enhance engagement and resilience. At the same time, ethical and authentic leadership frameworks highlight the moral foundations of servant leadership, emphasizing trust, integrity, and stewardship as indispensable for sustainable organizational success. The prominence of clusters related to organizational culture, HRM, CSR, and public-sector leadership indicates that servant leadership is increasingly studied across diverse contexts and is linked to broader themes of sustainability, governance, and social responsibility.

Overall, the integrated findings demonstrate that servant leadership contributes to enhanced employee engagement, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, creativity, and reduced burnout. The thematic structure of the literature suggests that future research can deepen understanding of servant leadership by examining its role in crisis contexts, digital and remote work environments, and cross-cultural settings, and by further clarifying the psychological and ethical mechanisms that underpin its effectiveness.

Practical Implications

The bibliometric findings highlight servant leadership as a dynamic and evolving field with significant practical relevance for modern organizations. The consistent growth in publications and the identification of diverse thematic clusters suggest that servant leadership principles are increasingly recognized as vital for enhancing employee engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Organizations can leverage these insights to design leadership development programs that move beyond traditional hierarchical models to emphasize ethical behavior, psychological support, and follower growth. Specifically, the research on crisis resilience and diversity management offers timely guidance for practitioners navigating contemporary challenges, such as remote work transitions and the need for inclusive workplace cultures. By fostering a "serving culture," organizations can build more resilient, motivated, and ethically grounded workforces capable of sustaining high performance in complex environments.

Limitations of the Study

While this bibliometric review provides a comprehensive mapping of the field, several limitations should be acknowledged:

1. **Database Scope:** The exclusive use of the Scopus database may have omitted relevant studies indexed in other repositories (e.g., Web of Science, Google Scholar) or those published in non-English languages.
2. **Methodological Nature:** Bibliometric methods primarily focus on quantitative metadata and citation metrics; they may not fully capture the qualitative depth, nuanced arguments, or specific contextual findings of individual studies on servant leadership.
3. **Timeframe:** The study's focus on the 2015–2025 period captures recent trends but excludes earlier foundational works that provide the historical context for the theory's development.
4. **Data Quality:** The accuracy of the network visualizations and thematic clusters is dependent on the quality of the database records, including the consistency of author affiliations and the precision of keyword assignments.

Suggestions for Future Research

To build upon the findings of this study, future research should consider the following directions:

1. **Expanded Data Sources:** Future studies could incorporate multiple databases and include non-English publications to provide a more global and inclusive view of the servant leadership landscape.
2. **Qualitative Synthesis:** Complementing bibliometric findings with qualitative meta-syntheses or systematic reviews could help explore the lived experiences and specific behavioral manifestations of servant leadership in practice.
3. **Longitudinal and Cross-Cultural Analysis:** There is a need for more longitudinal research to understand the long-term effects of servant leadership on organizational performance, as well as cross-cultural studies to assess how these principles translate across different geographic and institutional contexts.
4. **Digital and Remote Work:** As organizations continue to evolve, a focused investigation into how servant leadership functions in virtual, digital, and remote work environments is warranted to determine how "serving" behaviors are effectively communicated through technology.

Conclusion

This study provides a significant contribution to the leadership literature by quantitatively mapping the intellectual evolution of servant leadership and its impact on workplace outcomes over the last decade. Its primary contribution lies in synthesizing fragmented empirical evidence into a coherent thematic framework, demonstrating that the field has transitioned from simple, trait-based descriptions to a complex, multidimensional construct that integrates psychological empowerment and ethical governance. By identifying the specific "hotspots" of research—such as crisis resilience and psychological safety—this study establishes a clear baseline for the current state of the art in servant leadership scholarship.

The implications of these findings extend across several domains. For practice, the study demonstrates that servant leadership is a viable strategic tool for reducing employee burnout and enhancing engagement, suggesting that organizations should prioritize "serving" behaviors in their leadership competency models. In terms of policy and education, the results underscore the need for leadership development curricula in both corporate and academic settings to move beyond traditional performance-driven metrics toward ethical and people-centered frameworks. For research, the identified clusters provide a roadmap for scholars to explore under-researched areas, particularly the intersection of servant leadership with digital transformation and remote work dynamics.

Ultimately, this study confirms that servant leadership is a foundational lever for creating resilient and sustainable organizational cultures. Future related works should build on this bibliometric foundation by employing longitudinal designs and cross-database analyses to further validate the long-term organizational impact of servant leadership across diverse global contexts.

Contributions of Authors

Author 1: conceptualization, data gathering, data analysis
Author 2: analysis, writing review and editing, publication

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Conflict of Interests

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