

The Public Sector's Research on Transformational Leadership: A Literature Review

Muhammad Hasyim Lalhakim¹, Bernadus Yulianto Nugroho², Rachma Fitriani³
{hasyim_91@yahoo.com¹, nugrohoyulianto@gmail.com², rachma.fitriati@ui.ac.id²}

Doctoral Program Studies, Faculty of Administration Science, University of Indonesia, Indonesia

Abstract. A well-known leadership approach for implementing significant organisational changes is transformational leadership. In addition to providing guidance, inspiration, and motivation to help staff members reach their objectives, transformational leaders also help them grow as people. The aim of this article is to present a summary of various studies conducted in the public sector regarding transformational leadership. The method is literature review and VOSViewer software is utilised to assist the process. By using Scopus database, 792 documents from the years 1988–2023 are displayed in the result and we used 719 documents (journal only) for the next analysis. 2023 mark the peak publication (91 documents) as the trend continues to rise over the years. Lowe, K. B.; Kroeck, K. G.; Sivasubramaniam N. (1996) is the most cited document (1.601 times) and the nation that produces the greatest articles about transformational leadership is the United States.

Keywords: Public Sector; Transformational Leadership; Literature Review

1 Introduction

In the workplace, it doesn't take long to discover that leaders have different leadership styles. Every leader approaches challenges, fosters growth, and inspires their team members in a unique way. This also happened in the public sector. The goal of public sector leadership is to maintain accountability, efficiency, and effectiveness in the management of public resources, the delivery of public services, and the making of decisions that have an impact on society. Leaders in the public sector have an obligation to fulfil community needs and accomplish public goals. Leadership in the public sector bears a significant responsibility for managing the government and offering the community high-quality public services. The primary duty is to carry out this work with integrity and dedication to the public interest. The primary goal is to create a just, safe, and prosperous society.

As role models, leaders encourage moral behavior by setting an example for the kinds of deeds they wish to see rewarded and encouraged. Leaders also act as educational guides regarding appropriate behavior. A leadership style known as transformational leadership has the power to encourage followers to make positive changes. In general, transformational leaders are vivacious, passionate, and enthusiastic. These leaders care about and participate in the process, but they also have the goal of ensuring that each individual in the group succeeds.

Transformational leaders engage their followers in the process of imagining a desirable future and motivate them to dedicate themselves to realising that future. Team spirit is fostered

by their determination, strong moral principles, honesty, and optimism. They also give their followers' work purpose and challenge, raising their degree of self-efficacy, confidence, meaning, and self-determination [1].

Particular issues that are worth looking into are how leaders make collective identities and values more prominent in followers' self-concepts, how they connect the organization's mission to the identities and values of its clients and members, and how they connect members' work behaviours to their identities and values [2].

The following research questions are intended to be addressed by this study:

- a. What were the research trends in the public sector from 1988 to 2023 regarding transformational leadership?
- b. Which authors had the greatest influence?
- c. What were the most influential organizations and country?
- d. Which keyword of the transformational leadership research were the most popular in the public sector?
- e. Which articles and journals about transformational leadership in the public sector were the most significant and popular?

2 Literature Review

Transformational leadership is now considered to be the most prominent topic in current leadership research and theories, whereas transactional leadership was the focus of most leadership research until the 1980s [3], [4]. Transformational leaders are able to inspire their followers to become more engaged in their work, which raises organisational commitment levels, by pushing followers to look for novel approaches to problems and challenges and by recognising their needs [5].

The qualities of idealised influence, intellectual stimulation, and inspirational motivation are defining characteristics of transformational leadership [6]. When it comes to close supervisory relationships as opposed to more distant ones, transformational leadership works particularly well [7].

When necessary, transformational leaders may employ transactional tactics, but they also frequently employ symbolism and imagery to elicit greater effort. The leader does this through instilling a belief in putting the needs of the team or organisation ahead of oneself, increasing or raising individual needs, and raising the level of intellectual awareness regarding the significance of valued outcomes [8].

Indeed, in line with transformational leadership's focus on the organisation mission's capacity to motivate, a fundamental principle of the research on public employee motivation states that "the more appealing, engaging, and worthwhile the mission is to people, the more the agency will be able to attract support from those people, to attract some of them to join the agency, and to motivate them to perform well in the agency" [9].

Socratic and Confucian typologies serve as examples of how the literature on virtue and moral character is related to the literature on transformational leadership. It also has a connection to the three main tenets of the contemporary Western ethical agenda: distributive justice, liberty, and utility. To establish the strategic and moral foundations of authentic transformational leadership, deception, sophistry, and pretence are examined alongside issues of transcendence, agency, trust, cooperative action, power, persuasion, and corporate governance [10].

3 Methodology

The Scopus database was chosen by the researchers to gather the data. Every pertinent publication was searched for bibliometric data. In the "Article Title, Abstract, & Keywords" categories, we perform a Boolean search using the terms "Transformational Leadership" AND "Public". The results show 792 documents from 1988 to 2023, including 719 journals, 28 books, 28 conference proceedings, and 18 book series. The process of additional analysis was limited to 719 documents that were in journal form. We present the findings of our bibliometric analysis using a tool called VOSViewer.

4 Results & Discussion

4.1 What were the Research Trends in the Public Sector from 1988 to 2023 Regarding Transformational Leadership?

Figure 1 has shown that publication research on transformational leadership starting from 1988 to 2023 in the Scopus database consistently increases from year to year. 2023 mark the peak publication (91 documents) as the trend continues to rise over the years.

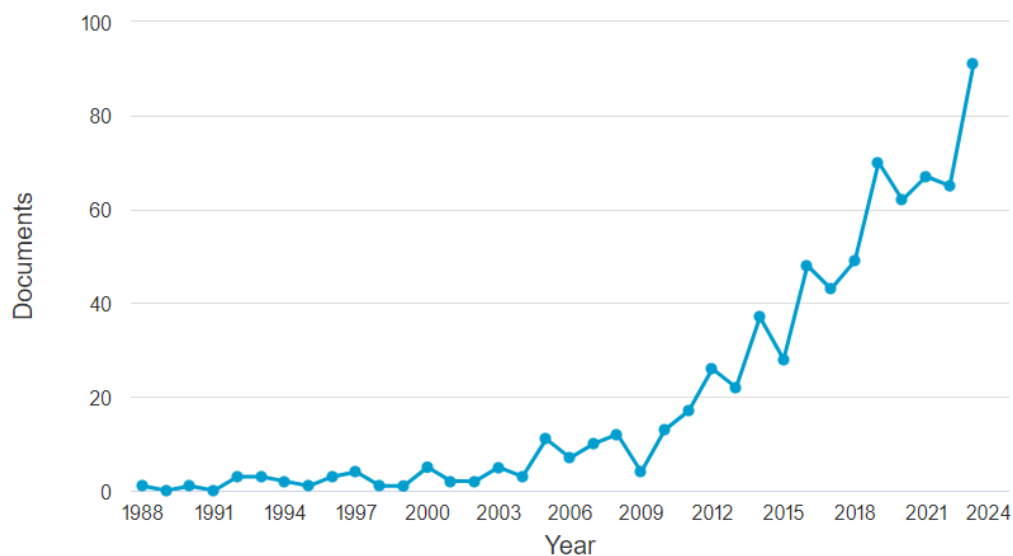


Fig. 1. Publication Trend

4.2 Which Authors Had the Greatest Influence?

Using Authors as our unit of analysis, we examined co-authorship. An author must have authored at least 2 documents. As a result, out of 689 authors, 27 satisfy the requirements. We present it in Figure 2 below:



Fig. 2. Co-Authorship Analysis by Author

Figure 2 shows that Andersen, L. B. and Bjornholt, B. are two authors who have coauthored more than two documents. We also discovered that Andersen L.B. has emerged as the most prolific author with a total of 12 publications published on Scopus, in Figure 3.

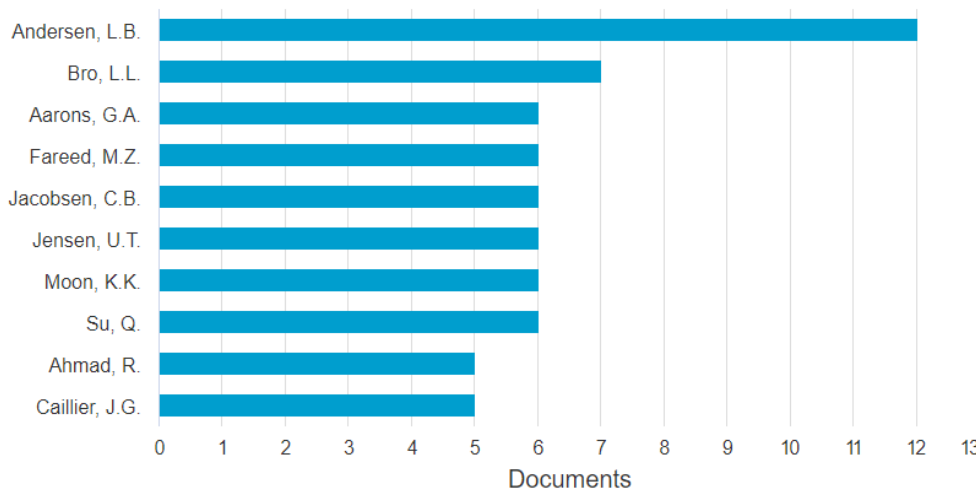


Fig. 3. Documents by Author

Using Authors as our unit of analysis, we examined citation. An author must have authored at least 2 documents and minimum number of document of an author is 30. As a result, out of 689 authors, 11 satisfy the requirements. We present it in Figure 4.

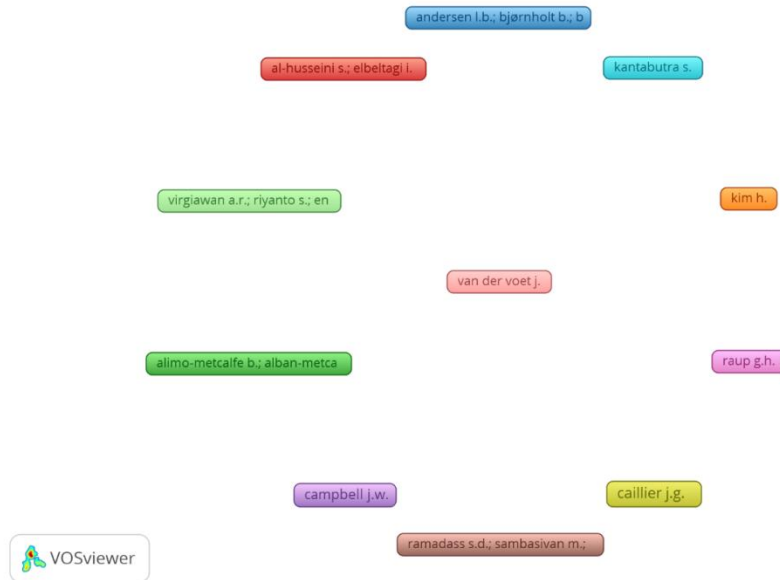


Fig. 4. Citation by Author

The most influenced author is Caillier J. G. with 5 documents and 235 citations. The rest of the author in the top ten, that also give high influence with minimum number of document is two (2), we present in the Tabel 1 below:

Table 1. Author(s) Documents & Citations

No	Author (s)	Documents	Citations
1	Caillier, J. G.	5	235
2	Campbell, J. W.	3	76
3	Van Der Voet J.	2	166
4	Alimo-Metcalfe, B.; Alban-Metcalfe, J.	2	165
5	Al-Husseini, S.; Elbeltagi, I.	2	126
6	Kih, H.	2	122
7	Raup, G. H.	2	64
8	Andersen, L. B.; Bjornholt, B; Bro, L. L.	2	63
9	Kantabutra, S.	2	39
10	Ramadass, S. D.; Sambasivan, M; Xavier.	2	31

4. 3. What were the Most Influential Organization and Country?

Using organization as our unit of analysis, we examined co-authorship. A minimum number of document of an organization is 3. As a result, out of 1.435 organization, 9 meet the thresholds. We present it in Figure 5.

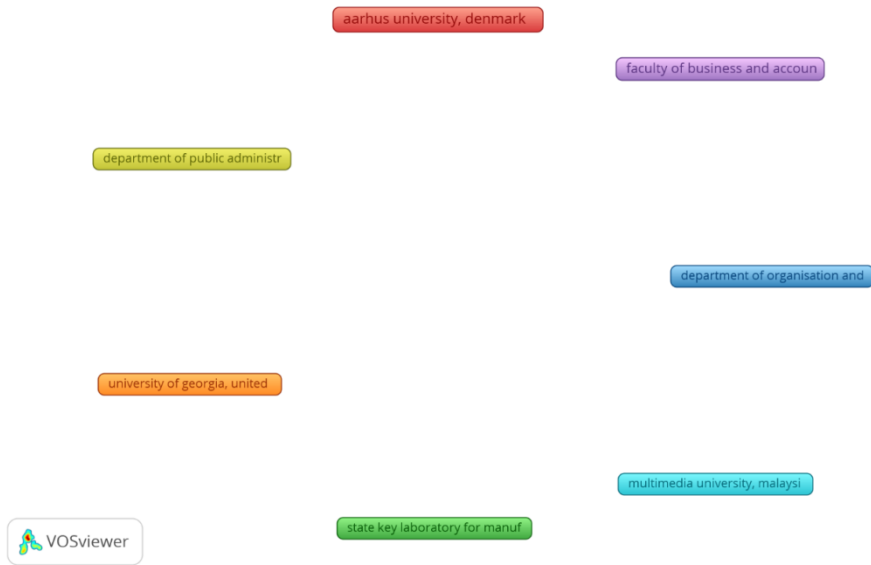


Fig. 5. Co-authorship by Organization

Using organization as our unit of analysis, we examined citation. A minimum number of document of an organization is 3 and minimum number of citation of an organizations is 10. As a result, out of 1.435 organization, 5 meet the thresholds. We present it in Figure 6.

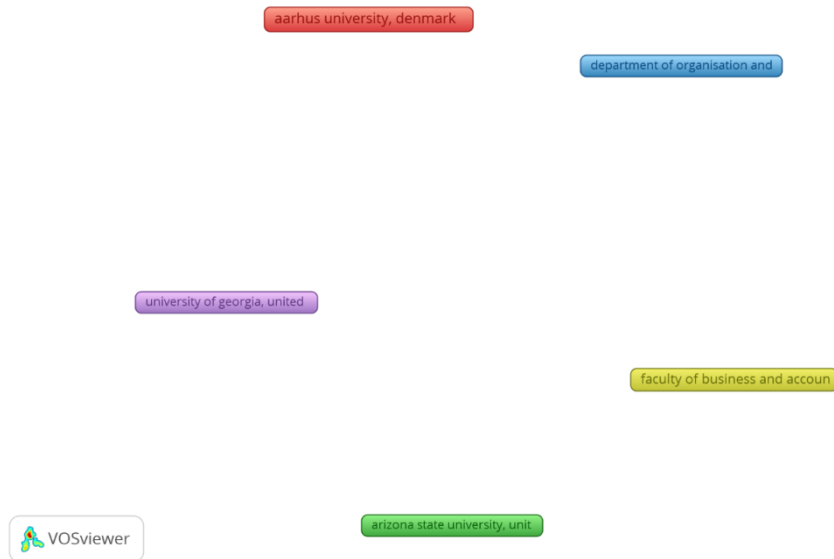


Fig. 6. Citation by Organization

The list of the organizations can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Author(s) Documents & Citations

No	Organization	Document	Citation
1	Aarhus University, Denmark	8	367
2	Arizona State University, United States	5	140
3	Departement of Organisation and Human Resource Management, University of Ghana	4	169
4	Faculty of Business and Accountancy, Lincoln University College (luc), Selangor, Malaysia	3	151
5	University of Georgia, United States	3	3

Using countries as our unit of analysis, we examined co-authorship. A minimum number of document of a country is 5. As a result, out of 95 countries, 37 meet the thresholds. We present it in Figure 7.

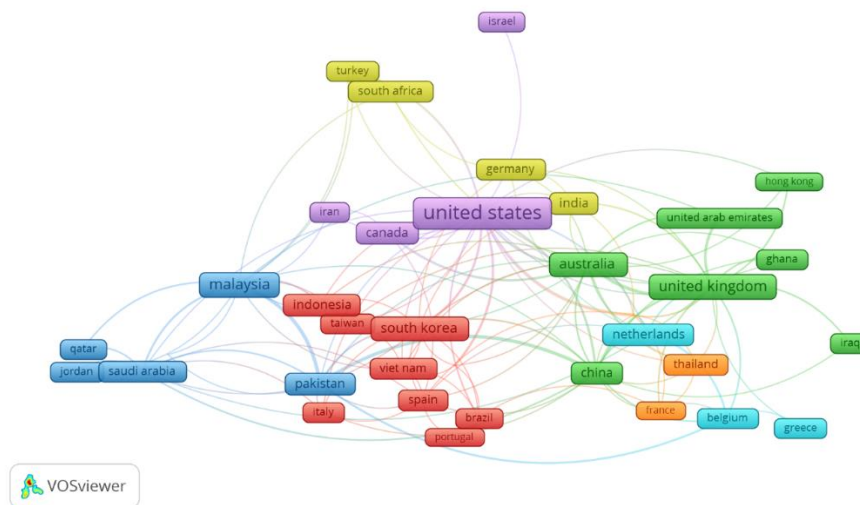


Fig. 7. Co-authorship by Countries

Using countries as our unit of analysis, we examined citation. A minimum number of document of a country is 5 and minimum number of citation of an countries is 30. As a result, out of 95 countries, 36 meet the thresholds. We present it in Figure 8.

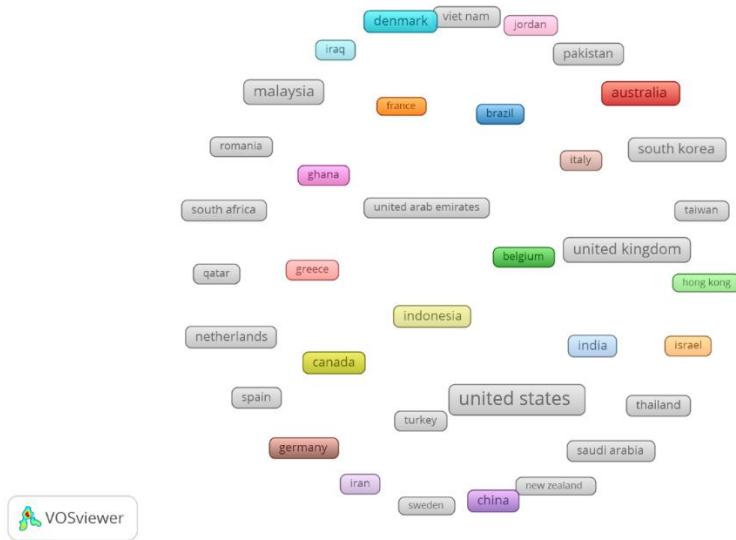


Fig. 8. Citations by Countries

4.4 Which Keyword of the Transformational Leadership Research were the Most Popular in the Public Sector?

Using All keyword as our unit of analysis, we examined Co-Occurance. A minimum number of occurrence of a keyword is 30. As a result, out of 2.423 keywords, 25 meet the thresholds. We present it in Figure 9.

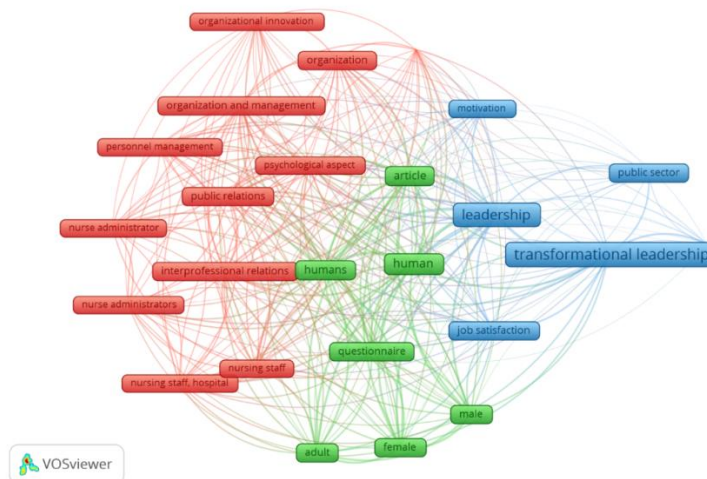


Fig. 9. Co-occurrence by All Keyword

Using Author keyword as our unit of analysis, we examined Co-Occurance. A minimum number of occurrence of a keyword is 10. As a result, out of 1.538 keywords, 28 meet the thresholds. We present the result in Figure 10.

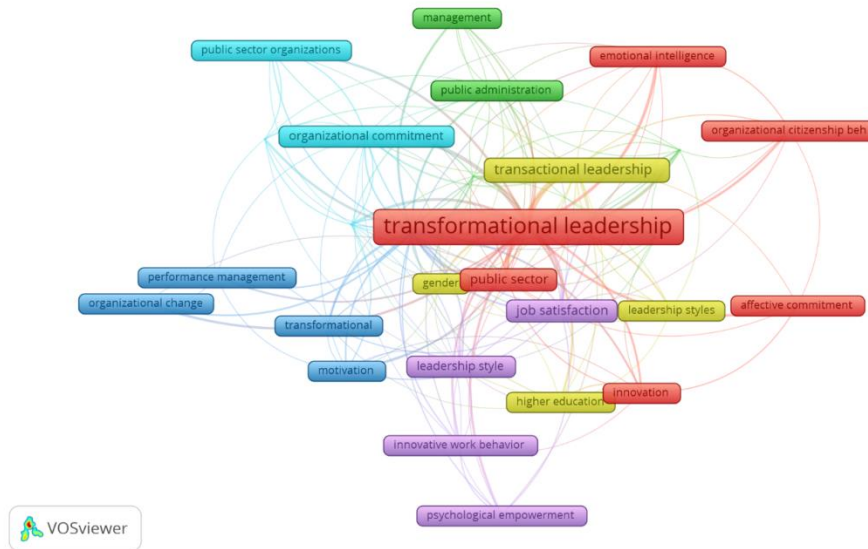


Fig. 10. Co-occurance by Author Keyword

Using Index keyword as our unit of analysis, we examined Co-Occurance. A minimum number of occurrence of a keyword is 30. As a result, out of 1.101 keywords, 19 meet the thresholds. We present it in Figure 11.

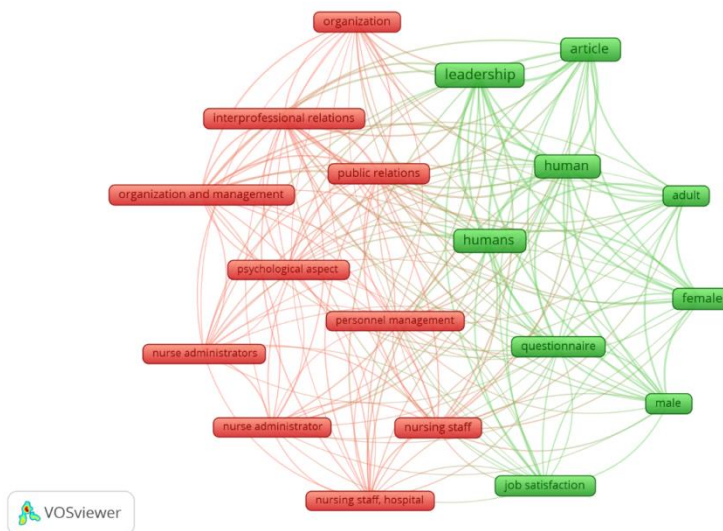


Fig. 11. Co-occurance by Index Keyword

Using Documents as our unit of analysis, we examined citation. A minimum number of citation of a document is 100. As a result, out of 709 documents, 35 meet the thresholds. We present it in Figure 12.



Fig. 12. Citation by Document

4.5 Which Articles and Journals About Transformational Leadership in the Public Sector were the Most Significant and Popular?

We present Table 3 and Table 4 to shown the most significant and popular articles and journals about transformational leadership in the public sector.

Table 3. Popular and Significant Articles

No	Author	Article Title	Citation	Source
1	Lowe, K. B.; Kroeck, K. G.; Sivasubramaniam, N. (1996)	Effectiveness Correlates of Transformational and Transactional Leadership: A Meta-Analytic Review of the MLQ Literature	1.601	[11]
2	Avolio, B. J.; Zhu, W.; Koh, W.; Bhatia, P. (2004)	Transformational leadership and organizational commitment: mediating role of psychological empowerment and moderating role of structural distance	866	[1]
3	Wright, B. E.; Moynihan, D. P.; Pandey, S. K. (2012)	Pulling the Levers: Transformational Leadership, Public Service Motivation, and Mission Valence	369	[12]
4	Bedi, A.; Alpaslan, C. M.; Green, S. (2016)	A Meta-analytic Review of Ethical Leadership Outcomes and Moderators	317	[13]
5	Aarons, G. A. (2006)	Transformational and Transactional Leadership: Association With Attitudes Toward Evidence-Based Practice	300	[14]

6	Stordeur, S.; D'Hoore, W.; Vandenberghe, C. (2001)	Leadership, organizational stress, and emotional exhaustion among hospital nursing staff	285	[15]
7	Walumbwa, F. O.; Lawler, J. J. (2003)	Building effective organizations: transformational leadership, collectivist orientation, work-related attitudes and withdrawal behaviours in three emerging economies	268	[5]
8	Belle, N. (2014)	Leading to Make a Difference: A Field Experiment on the Performance Effects of Transformational Leadership, Perceived Social Impact, and Public Service Motivation	215	[16]
9	Paarlberg, L. E.; Lavigna, B. (2010)	Transformational Leadership and Public Service Motivation: Driving Individual and Organizational Performance	211	[17]
10	Arnold, K. A. (2017)	Transformational leadership and employee psychological well-being: A review and directions for future research.	201	[18]

Table 4. Popular and Significant Journals

No	Article Title	Journal	Publisher	Reputation
1	Effectiveness correlates of transformational and transactional leadership: A meta-analytic review of the mlq literature	Leadership Quarterly	Elsevier Inc.	Q1
2	Transformational leadership and organizational commitment: mediating role of psychological empowerment and moderating role of structural distance	Journal of Organizational Behavior	John Wiley and Sons Ltd	Q1
3	Pulling the Levers: Transformational Leadership, Public Service Motivation, and Mission Valence	Public Administration Review	Wiley-Blackwell	Q1
4	A Meta-analytic Review of Ethical Leadership Outcomes and Moderators	Journal of Business Ethics	Springer Netherlands	Q1
5	Transformational and Transactional Leadership: Association With Attitudes Toward Evidence-Based Practice	Psychiatric Services	American Psychiatric Association	Q1
6	Leadership, organizational stress, and emotional exhaustion among hospital nursing staff	Journal of Advanced Nursing	Wiley-Blackwell Publishing Ltd	Q1
7	Building effective organizations: transformational leadership, collectivist orientation, work-related attitudes and withdrawal behaviours in three emerging economies	International Journal of Human Resource Management	Routledge	Q1
8	Leading to Make a Difference: A	Journal of Public	Oxford	Q1

	Field Experiment on the Performance Effects of Transformational Leadership, Perceived Social Impact, and Public Service Motivation	Administration Research and Theory	University Press	
9	Transformational Leadership and Public Service Motivation: Driving Individual and Organizational Performance	Public Administration Review	Wiley-Blackwell	Q1
10	Transformational leadership and employee psychological well-being: A review and directions for future research.	Journal of Occupational Health Psychology	Educational Publishing Foundation	Q1

5 Conclusion

- a. Between 1988 and 2023, there has been a steady increase in the number of publications on “Transformational Leadership” research in Scopus. 2023 mark the peak publication (91 documents) as the trend continues to rise over the years.
- b. Having published 12 papers on Scopus, Andersen reached to the top author position but not the most influenced. Cailier J. G. With 5 documents and 235 citations is the most influenced author.
- c. The most influential organization is Aarhus University, Denmark by 8 Documents and 367 citations, and the most influential country is United States
- d. The term "Transformational Leadership" has gained significant popularity as a means of describing transformational leadership within the public sector.
- e. Articles and journals about transformational leadership in the public sector were the most significant and popular is “Effectiveness Correlates of Transformational and Transactional Leadership: A Meta-Analytic Review of the MLQ Literature” written by Lowe, K. B.; Kroeck, K. G.; Sivasubramaniam, N. (1996) which were published in Leadership Quarterly (Q1) and have received 1.601 citations.

References

- [1] B. J. Avolio, W. Zhu, W. Koh, and P. Bhatia, “Transformational leadership and organizational commitment: Mediating role of psychological empowerment and moderating role of structural distance,” *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, vol. 25, no. 8. pp. 951–968, Dec. 2004. doi: 10.1002/job.283.
- [2] J. L. Perry and A. Hondeghem, *Motivation in Public Management: The Call of Public Service*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- [3] B. S. Pawar and K. K. Eastman, “The Nature and Implications of Contextual Influences on Transformational Leadership: A Conceptual Examination,” *Academy of Management Review*, vol. 22, pp. 80–109, 1997.
- [4] B. M. Bass, *Transformational Leadership: Industry, Military, and Educational Impact*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 1998.
- [5] F. O. Walumbwa and J. J. Lawler, “Building Effective Organizations: Transformational Leadership, Collectivist Orientation, Work-Related Attitudes, and Withdrawal Behaviors in

- Three Emerging Economies.,” *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, vol. 14, pp. 1083–1101, 2003.
- [6] T. Trottier, M. Van Wart, and X. Wang, “Examining the Nature and Significance of Leadership in Government Organizations,” *Public Adm Rev*, vol. 68, no. 2, 2008.
- [7] J. M. , Howell and K. E. Hall-Merenda, “The Ties that Bind: the Impact of Leader-Member Exchange, Transformational and Transactional Leadership, and Distance on Predicting Follower Performance,” *Journal of Applied Psychology*, vol. 84, pp. 680–694, 1999.
- [8] B. M. Bass, *Leadership and Performance Beyond Expectations*. . New York: The Free Press, 1985.
- [9] H. G. Rainey and P. Steinbauer, “Galoping Elephants: Developing Elements of a Theory of Effective Government Organizations,” *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* , vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 1–32, 1999.
- [10] B. M. Bass and P. Steidlmeier, “Ethics, Character, and Authentic Transformational Leadership Behavior,” 1999.
- [11] K. B. Lowe, K. C. Kroeck, and N. Sivasubramaniam, “Effectiveness Correlates of Transformational and Transactional Leadership: A Meta-Analytic Review of the MLQ Literature,” *Leadership Quarterly*, vol. 7, no. 3, 1996.
- [12] B. E. Wright, D. P. Moynihan, and S. K. Pandey, “Pulling the Levers: Transformational Leadership, Public Service Motivation, and Mission Valence,” *Public Adm Rev*, vol. 72, no. 2, pp. 206–215, 2011.
- [13] A. Bedi, C. M. Alpaslan, and S. Green, “A Meta-analytic Review of Ethical Leadership Outcomes and Moderators,” *Journal of Business Ethics*, vol. 139, no. 3, pp. 517–536, Dec. 2016, doi: 10.1007/s10551-015-2625-1.
- [14] G. A. Aarons, “Transformational and Transactional Leadership: Association With Attitudes Toward Evidence-Based Practice,” *Psychiatric Services*, vol. 57, no. 8, pp. 1162–1169, 2006.
- [15] S. Stordeur, W. D’hoore, and C. Vandenberghe, “Leadership, Organizational Stress, and Emotional Exhaustion Among Hospital Nursing Staff,” *J Adv Nurs*, vol. 35, no. 4, 2001.
- [16] N. Bellé, “Leading to Make a Difference: A Field Experiment on the Performance Effects of Transformational Leadership, Perceived Social Impact, and Public Service Motivation,” *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 109–136, Jan. 2014, doi: 10.1093/jopart/mut033.
- [17] L. E. Paarlberg and B. Lavigna, “Transformational Leadership and Public Service Motivation: Driving Individual and Organizational Performance,” *Public Adm Rev*, pp. 170–718, 2010.
- [18] K. A. Arnold, “Transformational Leadership and Employee Psychological Well-being: A Review and Directions for Future Research,” *J Occup Health Psychol*, vol. 22, no. 3, pp. 381–393, Jul. 2017, doi: 10.1037/ocp0000062.