

Innovative Leadership in Driving Organizational Innovation and Performance A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

This systematic literature review examines the role of innovative leadership in fostering organizational innovation and enhancing performance. Using the PRISMA framework, 131 relevant studies from 2015 to 2024 were analysed to explore the relationships between leadership styles, innovation processes, and organizational outcomes. The results highlight that transformational and creative leadership are pivotal in cultivating a culture of innovation by promoting knowledge sharing, employee engagement, and strategic adaptability. These leadership styles enable organizations to respond effectively to dynamic market demands and emerging challenges, such as digital transformation and sustainability. The study also emphasizes the importance of innovative leadership in achieving organizational performance by aligning strategies with innovation goals and improving overall adaptability. Emerging themes, including digital transformation, sustainability, and entrepreneurial leadership, illustrate the evolving demands placed on leaders in modern contexts. This review bridges gaps in the existing literature by providing a comprehensive synthesis of the impact of innovative leadership on both innovation and performance, while identifying key areas for future research. The findings contribute to the theoretical understanding of innovative leadership and offer practical insights for organizations seeking to thrive in competitive and fast-changing environments.

INTRODUCTION

Innovation is a key element in supporting organizational competitiveness in an era that continues to change due to globalization and technological disruption. Organizations that are able to drive innovation can not only meet market needs, but also create a sustainable competitive advantage. One of the important factors in creating innovation is innovative

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leadership, where the leader acts as a facilitator, motivator, and key driver in building a culture of innovation within the organization (Bass & Riggio, 2006). By leveraging approaches that focus on creativity, collaboration, and strategic change, innovative leadership is becoming increasingly relevant in the modern business context.

Various studies have shown that innovative leadership plays a crucial role in supporting innovation at all levels of organizations, from individuals to collectives. Innovative leaders not only inspire team members to generate new ideas, but also ensure effective implementation of innovations in the day-to-day operations of the organization (Amabile et al., 2004). In this context, innovative leadership is often associated with increased efficiency, reduced risk of stagnation, and building an organization's capacity to adapt to changes in the business environment (de Jong & Den Hartog, 2007). However, there hasn't been much research that provides an integrated understanding of how innovative leadership directly impacts organizational innovation and performance.

On the other hand, the literature on innovative leadership today tends to be scattered with different focuses. Most research only addresses specific aspects, such as leadership styles or their impact on individual creativity, without connecting them to the broader organizational context. This approach leads to a research void that includes a comprehensive synthesis of the role of innovative leadership in driving innovation and organizational performance. With the need to develop a clearer theoretical framework, studies that integrate the literature on innovative leadership are becoming increasingly important.

In addition, the development of bibliometric analysis methods provides new opportunities to explore the literature systematically. This approach allows researchers to understand publication trends, key influences, and collaboration patterns within a particular research area. In the context of innovative leadership, the use of bibliometrics can help identify important keywords, dominant topics, and relevant thematic relationships (Tranfield et al., 2003). This analysis not only provides insight into the direction of research that has evolved, but also uncovers gaps and opportunities for future research.

Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap by conducting a systematic literature review using the bibliometric method. By mapping research trends, inter-thematic relationships, and the key impacts of innovative leadership on innovation and organizational performance, this study is expected to make significant theoretical and practical contributions. This research will not only help deepen the understanding of the topic, but also provide a solid foundation for further studies focusing on the implementation of innovative leadership in various organizational contexts (Avolio et al., 2009).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a systematic literature review (SLR) approach with the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework to identify, filter, and analyse relevant literature (Moher et al., 2009). The process includes four main stages: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion, following the structured PRISMA guidelines (Page et al., 2021). This study uses the Scopus database as the main source to obtain relevant literature, ensuring comprehensive coverage of high-impact research. The analysis was carried out with a bibliometric approach using Bibliometrix software, which provides a robust methodology for mapping and analysing scientific knowledge (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017).

Identification

At this stage, the relevant literature is identified using the following search strings in the Scopus database:

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TITLE-ABS-KEY("innovative leadership" OR "leadership and innovation" OR "creative leadership" OR "strategic leadership for innovation") AND ( LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA,"BUSI" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA,"SOCI" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA,"ECON" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( DOCTYPE,"ar" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( LANGUAGE,"English" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( SRCTYPE,"j" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( OA,"all" ) ) .
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This search string is designed to include relevant literature with a focus on business (BUSI), social sciences (SOCI), and economics (ECON) subjects, and only includes English-language journal articles in the form of academic articles.

Filtering

Literature that has been identified from search results is filtered to remove duplicates using reference management software such as Mendeley (Mendeley, 2023). After that, the screening was carried out based on the title and abstract with inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria of this study include articles written in English to ensure uniformity of language understanding in the analysis (Moher et al., 2009). The selected article must be from a business, social sciences, or economics subject, as the focus of this research is on innovative leadership roles in the context of organizations (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). In addition, the article under consideration should be relevant to the theme of "innovative leadership" and discuss it in depth in relation to organizational innovation and performance (Page et al., 2021).

In contrast, some articles are excluded based on certain criteria. Non-academic articles, such as media reports or opinion articles, are not included due to lack of scientific validity (Moher et al., 2009). Articles that only mention the term "innovative leadership" without in-depth conceptual or empirical discussion are also excluded. In addition, studies that focus on irrelevant contexts, such as education or politics without a clear relationship to the organization, are excluded from the analysis to maintain the relevance of the findings to the research objectives.

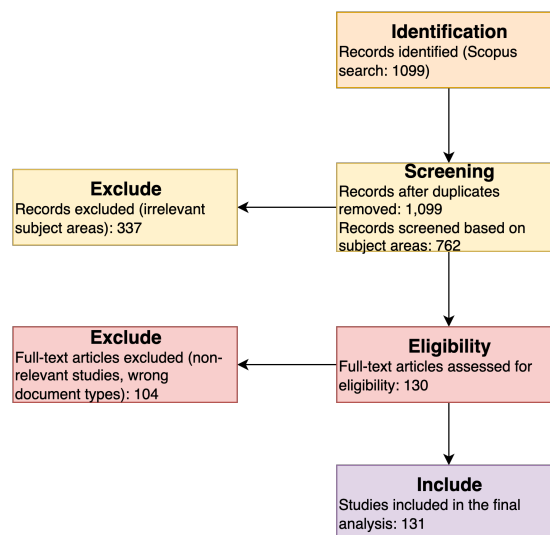


Figure 1. Filtering

Credentials

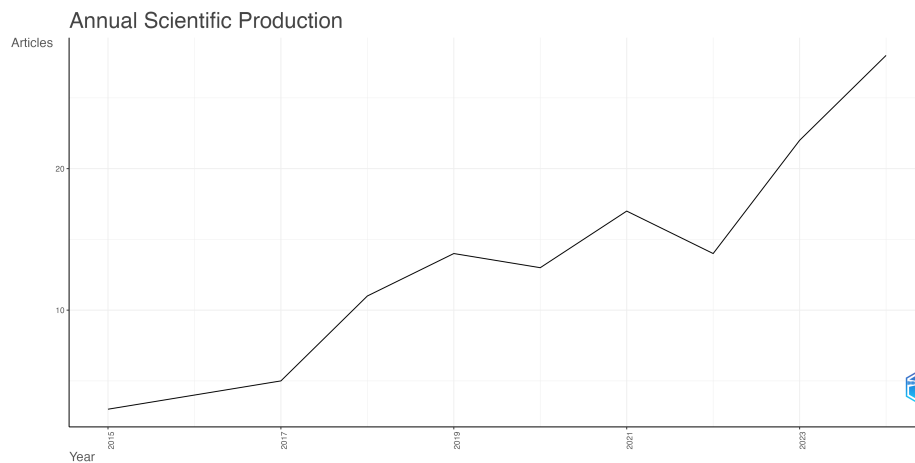
Articles that pass the screening stage are further evaluated by reading the full text to ensure relevance to the research question (Moher et al., 2009). This process involves assessing whether the article: (1) discusses innovative leadership in relation to organizational innovation and performance; (2) provides empirical data or significant theoretical insights; and (3) is relevant to the conceptual framework of the research (Page et al., 2021). Articles that do not meet these criteria are eliminated with the reasons for their exclusion duly noted (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017).

Inclusion

Articles that meet the eligibility criteria are included in the final analysis (Moher et al., 2009). This stage results in a collection of literature that is analysed using the bibliometric method (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). The analysis includes an evaluation of publication trends, the relationships between researchers and their work, and the identification of key keywords and themes within the literature (Donthu et al., 2021).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Publication Trend Analysis



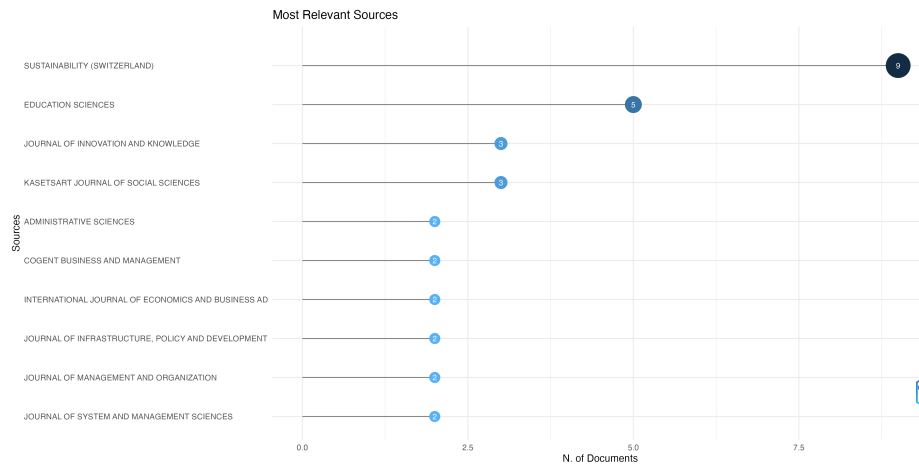
Source: Results of the researcher's analysis with biblioshiny, 2024

Figure 2. Annual Scientific Production

The scientific production related to *innovative leadership* research has shown a consistent increase from 2015 to 2024. In 2015, only 3 articles were published, reflecting relatively low interest in this topic at the start of the period. However, the number of publications gradually increased, reaching 11 articles by 2018, indicating growing attention to the field.

A more significant rise is observed in subsequent years. In 2019, the number of articles grew to 14, followed by relative stability in 2020 with 13 articles. The upward trend continued with 17 articles in 2021 and 14 in 2022. A notable surge occurred in 2023, with 22 articles, and peaked in 2024 with 28 articles.

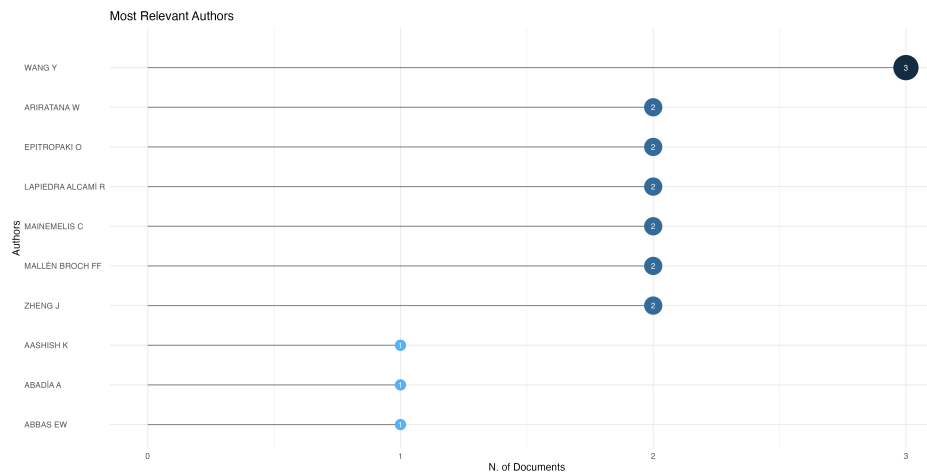
This data highlights the continuous growth of research on innovative leadership over the last decade, with a significant increase particularly during 2021–2024. This trend reflects the rising relevance of the topic in both academic and organizational contexts, driven by global challenges such as digital transformation and the need for innovation in dynamic business environments.



Source: Results of the researcher's analysis with biblioshiny, 2024

Figure 3. Most Relevant Sources

The analysis of the most relevant sources reveals that *Sustainability (Switzerland)* is the leading journal, contributing 9 articles, followed by *Education Sciences* with 5 articles, and *Journal of Innovation and Knowledge* and *Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences*, each contributing 3 articles. A range of other journals, such as *Administrative Sciences* and *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, contributed 2 articles each, while the remaining journals contributed a single article. This distribution highlights the multidisciplinary nature of research on innovative leadership, with a significant focus on sustainability, education, and organizational development.

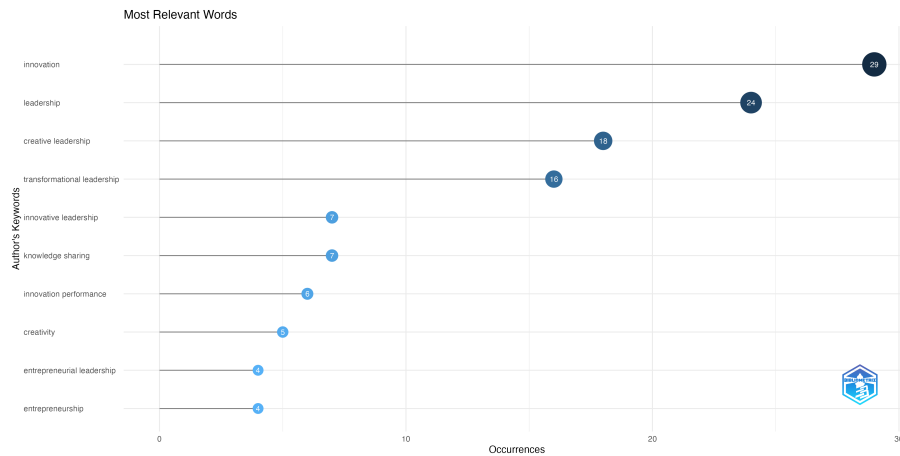


Source: Results of the researcher's analysis with biblioshiny, 2024

Figure 4. Most Relevant Authors

The analysis of the most relevant authors reveals that (Wang & Wang, 2022) is the leading contributor with 3 articles (1.50 fractionalized), followed by authors such as (Ariratana et al., 2019), (Epitropaki & Mainemelis, 2016), (Domínguez-Escrig et al., 2023), and (Zheng et al., 2017), each contributing 2 articles with varying fractionalized scores. The rest of the authors contributed a single article each, highlighting the collaborative and distributed nature of research on innovative leadership.

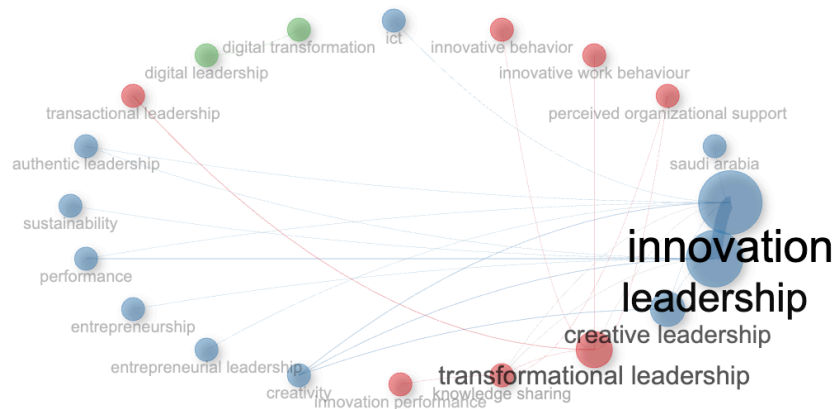
Keyword Analysis



Source: Results of the researcher's analysis with biblioshiny, 2024

Figure 5. Most Frequent Keywords

The analysis of the most frequent keywords reveals that **"innovation"** (29 occurrences) and **"leadership"** (24 occurrences) are the most commonly used terms, reflecting the central themes of the research. Other frequently occurring keywords include **"creative leadership"** (18), **"transformational leadership"** (16), and **"innovative leadership"** (7), emphasizing various leadership styles in fostering innovation. Additional terms such as **"knowledge sharing"**, **"innovation performance"**, and **"creativity"** indicate a focus on collaborative practices and outcomes. Keywords like **"entrepreneurial leadership"**, **"sustainability"**, and **"authentic leadership"** also highlight the multidisciplinary nature of the field, linking leadership with broader organizational and societal goals.



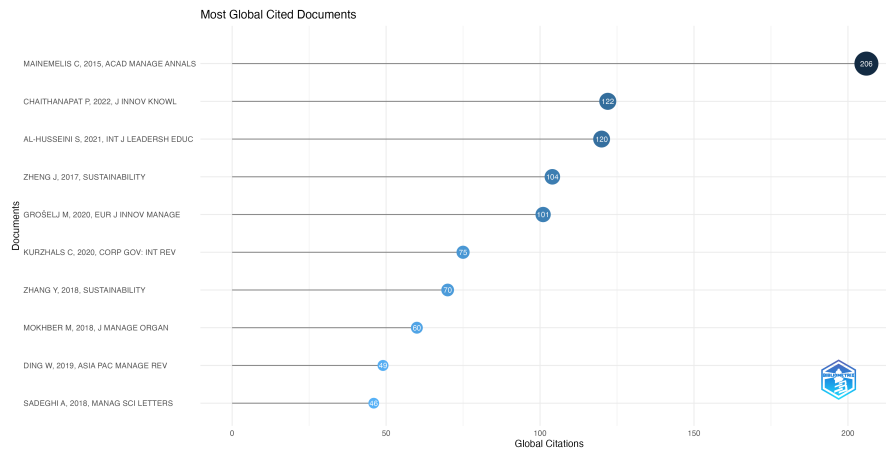
Source: Results of the researcher's analysis with biblioshiny, 2024

Figure 6. Co-occurrence Network Analysis

The co-occurrence network analysis highlights **"innovation"** and **"leadership"** (Cluster 2) as central terms with the highest betweenness and PageRank, emphasizing their key roles in the literature. **"Transformational leadership"** and **"knowledge sharing"** (Cluster 1) also play bridging roles, connecting behavioural and performance-related concepts. In Cluster 3, **"digital leadership"** and **"digital transformation"** dominate, reflecting the growing focus on digital aspects in leadership studies. The network underscores the integration of innovation, leadership

styles, and digital transformation within this field.

Bibliographic Analysis

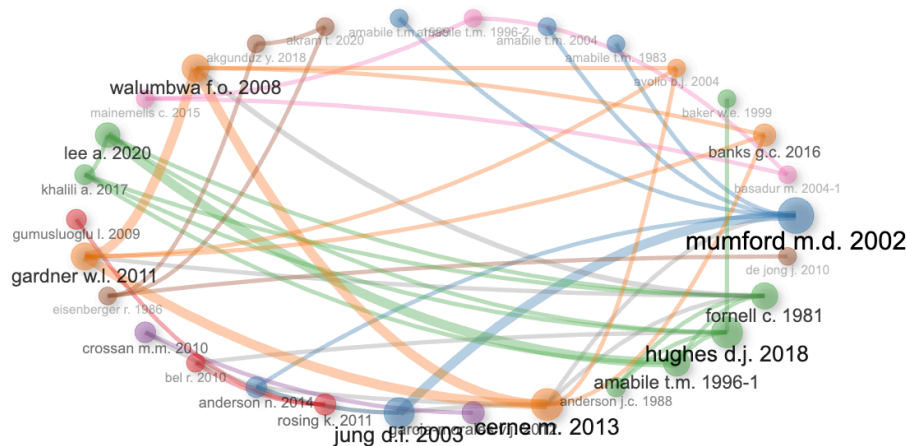


Source: Results of the researcher's analysis with biblioshiny, 2024

Figure 7. Most Cited Documents

The **most globally cited documents** reveal influential contributions to the field of innovative leadership. The top paper, by Mainemelis et al. (2015), published in *Academy of Management Annals* (Mainemelis et al., 2015), has 206 citations, with an annual citation rate of 18.73. Other highly cited works include Chaithanapat et al. (2022) in *Journal of Innovation and Knowledge* (Chaithanapat et al., 2022) and Al-Husseini et al. (2021) in *International Journal of Leadership in Education* (Al-Husseini et al., 2021), with 122 and 120 citations respectively. These works highlight critical themes such as transformational leadership, knowledge sharing, and sustainability.

The citation data underscores these documents' central role in shaping current research and their impact on understanding leadership and innovation dynamics.

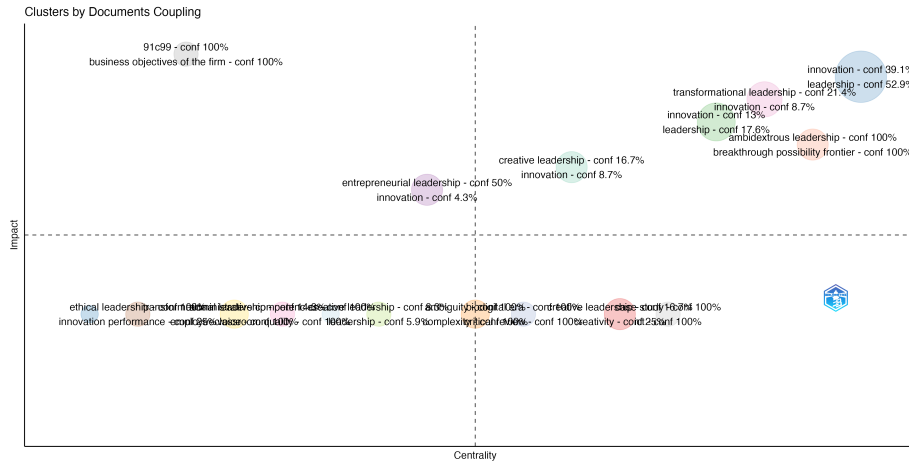


Source: Results of the researcher's analysis with biblioshiny, 2024

Figure 8. Co-Citation Network

The **co-citation network analysis** reveals influential authors and works shaping the field of innovative leadership. In **Cluster 1**, foundational works by (Rosing et al., 2011) and (Bell et al., 2011) demonstrate their importance in linking leadership and innovation, with moderate

betweenness and connectivity. **Cluster 2** highlights pivotal contributions from (Mumford et al., 2002) and (Jung et al., 2003), showcasing strong centrality in connecting creativity and organizational behaviour. In **Cluster 3**, emerges as the most influential with the highest betweenness (137.5), reflecting its critical role in methodological development. **Cluster 5**, including works by (Černe et al., 2013) and (Walumbwa et al., 2008), emphasizes authentic and transformational leadership frameworks. Lastly, **Cluster 7** features prominent works by (Mainemelis et al., 2015b) and (Amabile et al., 2018), focusing on creativity within leadership. These clusters highlight the interplay between creativity, leadership styles, and methodological advancements in driving research in this domain.



Source: Results of the researcher's analysis with biblioshiny, 2024

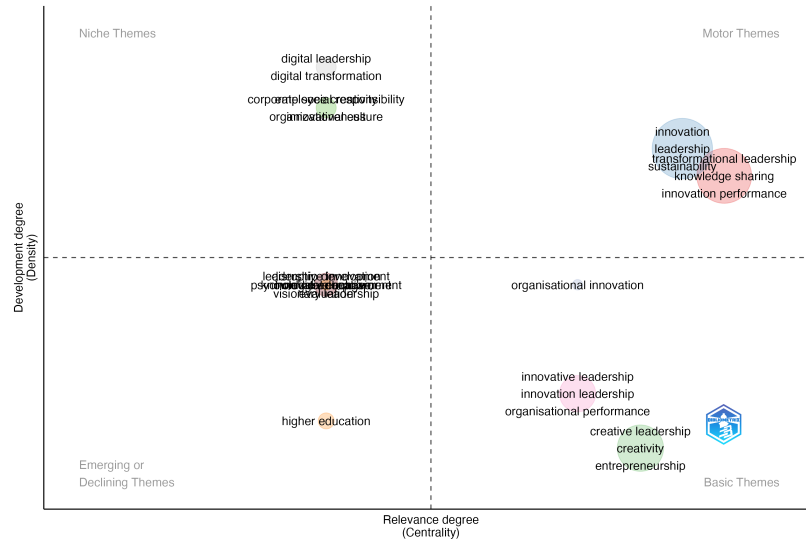
Figure 9. Clustering Coupling

The **clustering by coupling** analysis reveals thematic groupings of documents based on shared citations, illustrating the interconnected nature of research in innovative leadership. **Cluster 1** includes works such as (Koyuncuoglu, 2021) with a normalized local citation score (NLCS) of 9, focusing on educational and methodological approaches. **Cluster 2**, the largest cluster, highlights influential documents like (Chaithanapat et al., 2022) with an NLCS of 122 and (Al-Husseini et al., 2021) with 120, which emphasize the critical role of leadership in driving innovation and enhancing organizational performance. **Cluster 3** features governance and sustainability-focused studies, including (Bannay et al., 2020) with an NLCS of 35. **Cluster 4** addresses themes of educational leadership, as seen in works like (Ariyani et al., 2021) with an NLCS of 15. **Clusters 5 and 6** explore sustainability and administrative sciences through studies such as (Whittaker & Montgomery, 2022) and (Abuzaid et al., 2024). Notably, **Cluster 10** includes (Epitropaki & Mainemelis, 2016), the most influential document with an NLCS of 206, focusing on creativity and leadership in management. These clusters collectively reflect the diverse thematic landscape of innovative leadership research, spanning education, governance, innovation, and sustainability.

significant role in fostering global academic connections. Similarly, the **United Kingdom** demonstrates a wide-reaching collaborative network, engaging with countries like **Greece, Israel, Spain, Switzerland,** and the **USA**.

Other notable connections include **South Africa** collaborating with **Italy** and **Norway**, as well as **USA** partnering with **Denmark** and **Switzerland**. This map illustrates the diverse and distributed nature of international research collaborations, indicating a globally interconnected research community in the field of innovative leadership.

Thematic Analysis



Source: Results of the researcher's analysis with biblioshiny, 2024

Figure 12. Thematic Map

The **thematic map** analysis highlights key clusters of research themes in the field of innovative leadership. **Cluster 1: Transformational Leadership** emerges as a significant area, with terms like "transformational leadership," "knowledge sharing," and "innovation performance" reflecting its role in fostering innovative capabilities, enhancing employee performance, and driving organizational outcomes. Similarly, **Cluster 2: Innovation** underscores "innovation" and "leadership" as central themes, exploring their influence on governance, sustainability, and organizational success.

Cluster 3: Creative Leadership emphasizes the importance of creative leadership and creativity in fostering innovative thinking and entrepreneurial ventures. Meanwhile, **Cluster 7: Innovative Leadership** focuses on the role of innovative leadership in achieving organizational performance and fostering innovation-driven success. Smaller clusters, such as **Cluster 6: Disruptive Innovation**, explore niche areas like visionary leadership, while **Cluster 10: Psychological Empowerment** highlights the impact of leadership on employee empowerment.

Lastly, **Cluster 15: Digital Leadership** reflects the emerging importance of digital transformation and leadership in modern organizational contexts. Overall, the thematic map underscores the diverse yet interconnected themes that position leadership, innovation, and organizational performance at the core of this research domain.



Source: Results of the researcher's analysis with biblioshiny, 2024

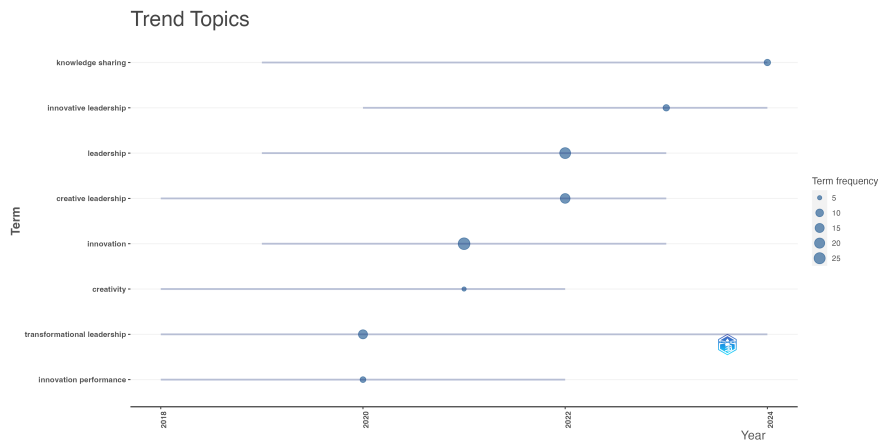
Figure 13. WordCloud

The **WordCloud** analysis provides a visual representation of key terms in the research domain, with term size corresponding to frequency. Dominant terms include **"innovation"** (29 occurrences) and **"leadership"** (24 occurrences), underscoring their centrality to the field. Other prominent terms are **"creative leadership"** (18), **"transformational leadership"** (16), and **"innovative leadership"** (7), highlighting various leadership styles in fostering innovation.

Additionally, terms like **"knowledge sharing"** and **"innovation performance"** (7 and 6 occurrences, respectively) emphasize collaborative practices and outcomes. Topics such as **"entrepreneurship"**, **"sustainability"**, and **"corporate social responsibility"** further demonstrate the breadth of themes connecting leadership to innovation and organizational contexts. Emerging themes like **"digital leadership"**, **"disruptive innovation"**, and **"psychological empowerment"** also reflect evolving priorities in leadership research, particularly in adapting to modern challenges.

This WordCloud captures the diverse thematic landscape of innovative leadership, offering a quick and intuitive overview of frequently discussed topics.

Topic Dynamics Analysis



Source: Results of the researcher's analysis with biblioshiny, 2024

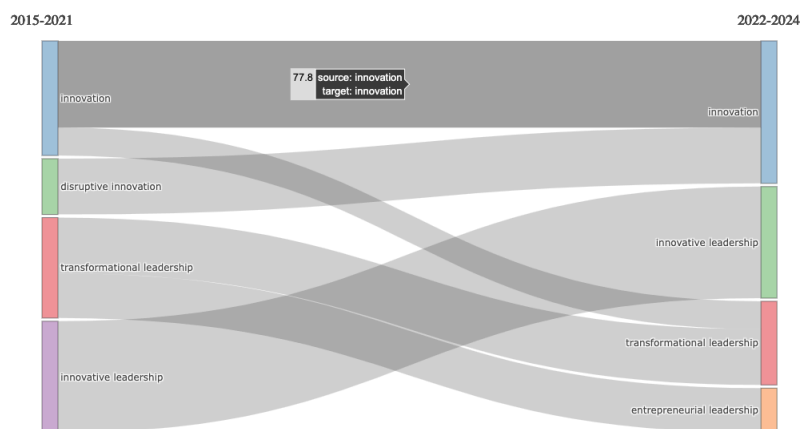
Figure 14. Trend Topics

The **trend topics** analysis reveals the evolution of key terms in the field of innovative leadership over time. **Transformational leadership** has shown consistent interest, with

significant focus emerging around 2018 and continuing to grow through 2024. Similarly, **innovation performance** began gaining traction in 2018, reaching a median focus in 2020, and continuing until 2022, reflecting its relevance in organizational studies.

The overarching term **innovation** remains highly significant, with a steady increase in attention from 2019, peaking around 2023. Terms such as **leadership** and **creative leadership** follow a similar trajectory, with their prominence increasing from 2019 and 2018, respectively, reaching a peak in 2023. Meanwhile, **innovative leadership** shows a more recent surge in interest, starting around 2020 and continuing strongly through 2024.

Emerging areas like **knowledge sharing** display a longer-term upward trend, beginning in 2019 and showing sustained importance through 2024. This analysis highlights the dynamic and evolving nature of research priorities, with growing attention toward innovation, leadership styles, and collaborative practices in recent years.



Source: Results of the researcher's analysis with biblioshiny, 2024

Figure 15. Thematic Evolution

The **thematic evolution** analysis highlights the progression of key themes in innovative leadership research over time. The transition from "**disruptive innovation**" (2015-2021) to "**innovation**" (2022-2024) incorporates terms like "entrepreneurship" with a moderate Weighted Inclusion Index (0.50), suggesting an evolving focus on entrepreneurial aspects within innovation.

The theme of "**innovation**" (2015-2021) continues to dominate in the later period (2022-2024), integrating terms like "leadership," "creative leadership," and "creativity" with a strong Weighted Inclusion Index (0.78) and a high occurrence count (17). This indicates a stable and growing emphasis on the interplay between innovation and leadership styles.

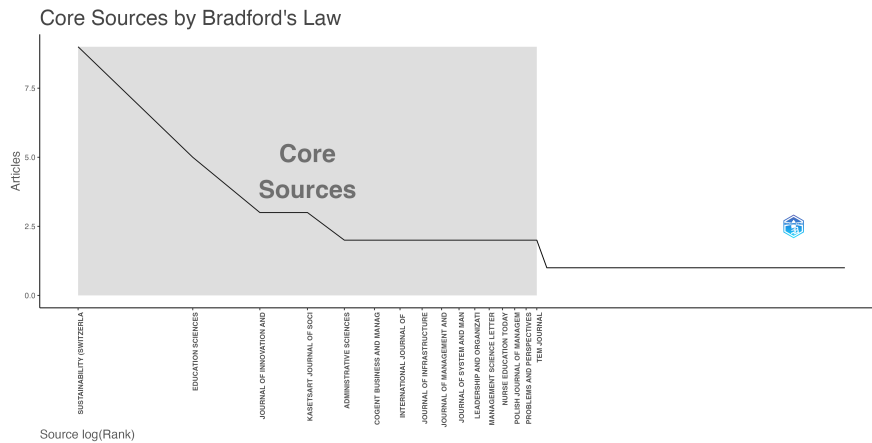
"**Innovative leadership**" exhibits a direct thematic continuation from 2015-2021 to 2022-2024, with complete thematic consistency (Inclusion Index 1.00, Stability Index 1.00). This signifies a sustained interest in understanding innovative leadership as a distinct research area.

Thematic transitions from "**transformational leadership**" (2015-2021) to both "**entrepreneurial leadership**" (2022-2024) and continuing within "**transformational leadership**" (2022-2024) reflect evolving priorities. Terms like "innovation performance" and "transformational leadership" highlight shifts in focus toward performance metrics and the enduring importance of transformational leadership in research.

Overall, the thematic evolution illustrates a maturing research landscape that continues to explore foundational themes like innovation and leadership while incorporating new dimensions

such as entrepreneurship and knowledge sharing.

Source Analysis



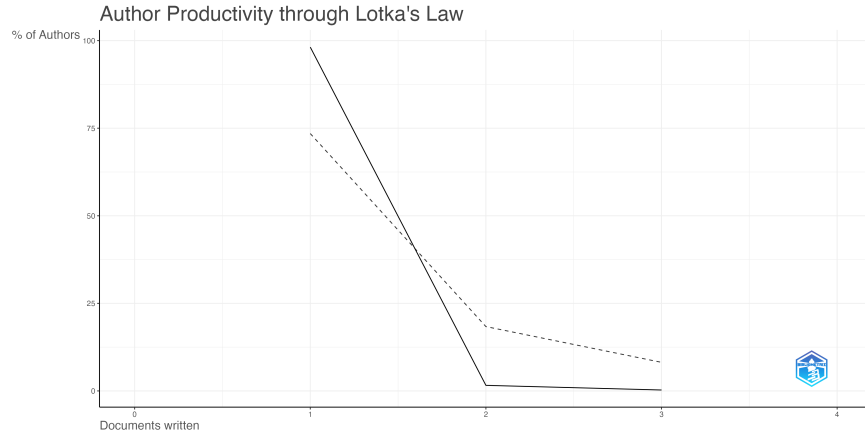
Source: Results of the researcher's analysis with biblioshiny, 2024

Figure 16. Bradford's Law

The **Core Sources by Bradford's Law** analysis categorizes journals into three distinct zones based on their contribution to the cumulative frequency of articles within the dataset. **Zone 1**, comprising core journals, includes highly productive sources that contribute the majority of articles. Notable among these are *Sustainability (Switzerland)* with 9 articles, *Education Sciences* with 5 articles, and *Journal of Innovation and Knowledge* and *Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences*, each contributing 3 articles. These journals are central to the research domain and represent the most significant sources for innovative leadership literature.

In contrast, **Zone 2** consists of secondary journals, which contribute less frequently but remain influential in shaping the discourse. Examples include *Academy of Management Annals* and *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, each contributing a single article. These journals provide important, albeit less concentrated, insights.

Finally, **Zone 3** represents peripheral journals, with minimal contributions of only one article each. Journals such as *Journal of Business Logistics*, *Journal of Knowledge Management*, and *Public Administration* fall into this category, offering specialized or unique perspectives that complement the findings from the core sources. This stratification underscores the prominence of Zone 1 journals while highlighting the diverse contributions of secondary and peripheral journals to the broader research landscape.



Source: Results of the researcher's analysis with biblioshiny, 2024

Figure 17. Lotka's Law

The **Author Productivity through Lotka's Law** analysis illustrates the distribution of authorship contributions to the research field. The majority of authors (98.1%) have authored only a single document, indicating a predominance of one-time contributors. A smaller proportion of authors (1.6%) have written two documents, while only 0.3% of authors have authored three documents.

This pattern aligns with Lotka's Law, which suggests that most contributions in a field are made by a large number of single-publication authors, while a smaller number of prolific authors contribute multiple works. This distribution highlights the concentrated productivity of a few authors and the broader participation of many occasional contributors, which is characteristic of collaborative and interdisciplinary research fields.

CONCLUSION

The bibliometric analysis reveals a significant upward trend in publications related to innovative leadership over recent years, indicating growing academic interest in the subject. The thematic focus has shifted from foundational concepts of leadership and innovation to more integrated discussions of innovative leadership's role in organizational settings. Key publication clusters highlight topics such as transformational and creative leadership, knowledge sharing, and innovation performance, emphasizing their interconnectedness in driving organizational success.

The evidence from the reviewed literature demonstrates that innovative leadership plays a critical role in fostering organizational innovation. Leaders who encourage creativity, knowledge sharing, and adaptability contribute to an organizational culture that supports innovation. This leadership style is shown to improve employee engagement, innovative behaviour, and knowledge-sharing practices, which collectively enhance organizational performance. Additionally, innovative leadership's impact extends to creating sustainable competitive advantages and aligning organizational goals with innovative strategies, ultimately boosting overall performance metrics.

These findings underscore the importance of innovative leadership as a catalyst for organizational innovation and highlight its multifaceted contributions to achieving superior organizational outcomes. This study provides a comprehensive understanding of the dynamic relationship between leadership, innovation, and performance, laying the groundwork for future research to explore practical applications in various organizational contexts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Foster Transformational and Creative Leadership Styles, organizations should invest in leadership development programs that emphasize creativity, adaptability, and strategic vision to nurture a culture of innovation.

Encourage Knowledge Sharing Practices: Implement systems and processes that facilitate collaborative knowledge exchange, enabling teams to leverage collective expertise for innovation.

Integrate Digital Transformation Strategies, leaders should prioritize technological advancements and digital competencies to remain competitive in rapidly changing markets.

Align Leadership with Sustainability Goals, incorporating sustainability into leadership agendas will ensure long-term organizational relevance and societal impact.

Promote Interdisciplinary Research, scholars should continue exploring the intersections of innovative leadership, digitalization, and sustainability to address complex organizational challenges effectively.

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