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CONTEMPORARY LEADERSHIP IN HOSPITALITY: A REVIEW AND RESEARCH AGENDA

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ABSTRACT

Purpose. This paper provides a comprehensive, structured, objective bibliometric review of the main leadership styles investigated in the hospitality industry from 1977 to 2021 (September) and depicts this field's conceptual structure.

Methodology. Bibliometric analysis techniques such as bibliographic coupling were employed using several software applications (VOSviewer, BibExcel, and Pajek, among others) to identify trends and research gaps in this literature. The paper provides an overview of the evolution of research activity on different leadership styles that yields important insights into research trends, most-researched themes, main authors, and key journals.

Findings. A total of 287 publications on leadership from the Web of Science and Scopus databases were summarized. The number of studies on leadership has been growing since 2013, evincing persistent interest in the topic. Eleven main streams of leadership research in the hospitality literature were detected and characterized, with transformational and servant leadership emerging as the most common approaches. Possible evolution of the topics and future research lines were also identified.

Implications. The findings can guide practitioners and scholars to further explore and implement emerging leadership styles in the hospitality sector. The paper also presents future research avenues to advance the field of leadership.

Originality. The current review provides a valuable framework for examining key leadership styles, understanding the most-researched styles, and illustrating leadership's critical role in organizational and individual outcomes in hospitality businesses.

Keywords: Bibliometrics, leadership, bibliographic coupling, knowledge structure, future research lines, hospitality.

1. INTRODUCTION

Leadership has been posited as a cornerstone in boosting hospitality employees' performance (Jiang *et al.*, 2020; Wu *et al.*, 2020). Research in hospitality has demonstrated the effects of certain leadership styles on positive work-related outcomes such as work engagement (Decuypere and Schaufeli, 2020; Huertas-Valdivia *et al.*, 2019), organizational commitment (Avolio *et al.*, 2004), enhanced service-oriented behaviors and service quality (Ling *et al*., 2016), greater employee and customer satisfaction (Namasivayam *et al.*, 2014), and increased employee retention (Gill *et al.*, 2011). Furthermore, in times of crisis like the Covid-19 pandemic, leadership emerges as one of the key qualities hospitality managers can use, especially to engage and motivate workers under lockdown and remote working conditions (Giousmpasoglou *et al.*, 2021).

Yet not all leadership styles contribute equally to making employees feel respected and validated, or to their perception that their well-being is a priority for their leader (Huertas-Valdivia *et al.*, 2019). Failure of leadership is expensive (Terglav *et al.*, 2016). Debates thus continue as to which leadership styles are best suited to the hospitality industry (Kara *et al.*, 2013), and "new traits, behaviors, styles of leaders and contextual factors that make the leader more effective in managing today's organizations are constantly being sought" (Samul, 2020, p.9).

As a result, leadership has become an essential topic in hospitality research in recent years (Guchait *et al.*, 2020). A few previous studies have conducted literature reviews to shed light on the antecedents and consequences of specific leadership behaviors. These studies usually explore behaviors associated with a single leadership style. For example, Bavik (2020) and Chon and Zoltan (2019) provide a systematic literature review of servant leadership in hospitality, and Gui *et al.* (2020) conduct a meta-analysis of transformational leadership. Moreover, qualitative methodology predominates in most of the methods employed to assess the evolution of the discipline, leading potentially to high subjectivity (Zupic and Čater, 2015).

To fill this gap and to achieve more comprehensive and objective quantitative study of publications on a specific phenomenon, Koseoglu *et al.* (2016) and Zupic and Čater (2015) encourage software-assisted bibliometric analysis. Not only do relatively few studies in leading hospitality and tourism journals utilize evaluative and relational bibliometric instruments, but "bibliometric studies are always needed at any maturity level of fields or disciplines" (Koseoglu *et al.*, 2016, p.192). Most of the few bibliometric studies in tourism and hospitality focus on the general publication activity of a single journal (e.g., Guzeller and Celiker, 2019; Sigala *et al.*, 2021). A noteworthy exception is the recent work by Arici *et al.* (2021), who conducted a bibliometric analysis of leadership based on the co-citation technique, reviewing seven hospitality-focused journals over sixty years. Although co-citation analysis enables presentation of growing subdomains and their interrelationships, data consist mainly of previously published articles, because these are cited more frequently than more recent articles. Recently published papers are thus less likely to be included in the analysis, and co-citation analysis may impede understanding of the overall picture, underestimate recent research, and provide incomplete scope and vision (Arici *et al.*, 2021; Köseoglu, 2020).

The purpose of this paper is thus to provide a critical and quantitative review of the leadership literature and the evolution of leadership research through bibliometric methods. While co-citation is essentially a forward-looking perspective, the results of bibliographic coupling are independent of the point in time at which the analysis is performed and thus help to identify current trends and future research agendas. This method is considered more suitable for analyzing areas with high publishing activity, such as leadership and hospitality.

Our study thus contributes to filling four main gaps in the hospitality literature. First, we provide a context-specific review of progress in leadership research. By identifying the general conceptual structure and level of development of leadership research in the field, the findings enhance researchers' and practitioners' understanding of this phenomenon. Analyzing the structural and dynamic aspects of leadership research in hospitality reveals the leadership styles that have received the most attention in the literature on hospitality and related topics. Such analysis reduces lack of systematization in the field.

Second, our study's scope and depth of analysis extend beyond those of previous approaches. Prior reviews have tended to focus on one specific leadership style or only a few journals. This study applies bibliometric techniques to depict objectively the full scope of the leadership research landscape in the field of hospitality. The study sample synthesizes the largest selection of hospitality leadership articles published in hospitality- and tourism-indexed journals by examining the Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus databases. Further, as bibliometric software enables researchers to portray the knowledge structure and intellectual connections in the field objectively, our study also used various software applications (VOSviewer, BibExcel, Excel, and Pajek) to analyze the evolution of number of publications and top journals in the field. Finally, our research identifies underdeveloped themes and emerging trends in the field of hospitality leadership. Our bibliometric analysis brings to light underexplored and promising areas to inspire a future research agenda.

The analysis seeks specifically to answer the following research questions: What is the historical evolution of the literature on leadership styles in the hospitality industry? What are the top journals? What leadership approaches are most and least investigated in the field? What topics and key outcomes related to leadership are identified in the hospitality literature? What are the specific research trends and gaps? This paper provides rich information to help readers better understand existing research landscape through the lens of distinct leadership approaches. Following Koseoglu *et al.* (2016, p.192), "all stakeholders of the field will win in the long run by creating the culture and support for bibliometric studies in tourism." The findings can guide practitioners and scholars to further explore and implement emerging leadership styles in the hospitality sector.

2. LEADERSHIP IN HOSPITALITY

The convergence of specific characteristics of the hospitality industry results in a unique and challenging environment for businesses (Whitelaw, 2013). Following Yu *et al.* (2020), hierarchical organizational structure, number of temporary workers, complex cultural diversity, importance of emotional well-being, and customer interaction are key

factors adding complexity to supervision and leadership in this industry. *People* are the main stakeholders (Joshi, 2019). Since certain employee behaviors are crucial to customer satisfaction, the workforce is one of the sector's most valuable resources (Úbeda-García *et al.*, 2016). Unlike manufacturing, hospitality requires managers to manage staff performance and guest expectations simultaneously.

Hospitality businesses often have classic bureaucratic structures with centralized decision-making and authority that tend to involve more abusive supervision (Dai *et al.*, 2019; Yu *et al.*, 2020). Øgaard *et al.* (2008, p.669) note the need for better and more participative leadership styles in the sector beyond the classic ones, indicating that "the hospitality industry might have a general problem with their managers, who are characterized by traditional leadership styles that fail to make the most of the employee's resources." Novel leadership approaches are thus needed in hospitality (Huertas-Valdivia *et al.*, 2019).

Diversity is also present in varied educational and sociodemographic backgrounds, dissimilar expectations and work values, and distinct understandings of and approaches to job tasks due to intergenerational differences (Gursoy *et al.*, 2013). For example, the large population of seasonal workers may have different needs and expectations than permanent workers, requiring a different type of supervision and leadership (Arasli *et al.*, 2020). Lack of awareness and understanding of diversity may create problems between managers and employees due, for example, to cultural differences in communication (Malik *et al.*, 2017).

Service must also be customized to each person's needs (e.g., early check-in, specific dietary requirements, problems connecting to Wi-Fi, very late room service, special amenities in the room). In this context, the level of empowerment and types of relationships among employees and between employees and their supervisors can greatly affect customer service. Emotional exhaustion is also common among hospitality workers, as their daily tasks involve a high degree of emotional labor (Teoh *et al.*, 2019), compromising their well-being. Employees are sometimes pushed to their limits and suffer damaging treatment from coworkers, supervisors, and even customers. Shum *et al.* (2020) found that industry managers often engage in abusive or destructive leadership behavior, especially in hotels and restaurants.

Research in hospitality supports the relevance of a manager´s leadership style to achieving positive or negative work-related outcomes (Ling *et al.*, 2016; Namasivayam *et al.*, 2014). Recent studies highlight servant leadership as an appropriate and promising style for the hospitality industry, as it promotes a serving culture and elevates work engagement (Bavik, 2020; Huertas-Valdivia *et al.*, 2019; Kaya and Karatepe, 2020). Servant leaders are empathetic listeners strongly committed to the growth of their teams. Such leaders manage with humility, compassion, and justice (Murari and Gupta, 2012). Ye *et al.* (2019) find that servant leadership can promote hospitality employees' proactive customer service performance by sequentially boosting their passion for work and customer orientation.

Gui *et al.* (2020) show that transformational leadership has been paid much more attention in hospitality than other leadership styles, due to its influence on employees' attitudinal and behavioral outcomes. Transformational leaders focus on preparing their followers to

assume more responsibility and perform better than initially expected. Wang *et al.* (2014) suggest that supervisors' transformational leadership positively influences employees' creative self-efficacy and creativity. Transactional leadership, in contrast, describes a relationship between managers and subordinates based on different types of exchange to achieve predetermined performance standards (Avolio *et al.*, 2004). It is thus not surprising that Dai *et al.* (2013) found a negative influence of transactional leadership on organizational commitment in hotels.

Because empowering leadership stresses autonomy, independence, and resolution among employees, it is "specially recommended for the hospitality industry" (Lin *et al.*, 2019, p.2). Hospitality organizations benefit from empowering leadership through increased psychological empowerment and engagement of employees (Huertas-Valdivia *et al.*, 2018), greater employee satisfaction (Namasivayam *et al.*, 2014), retention (Gill *et al.*, 2011), and psychological contract fulfillment (Wu and Chen, 2015). Furthermore, ethical leaders engage in proactive efforts to influence ethical behaviors among their workforce; they give ethics messages a prominent place in the organizational context by rewarding appropriate behaviors and disciplining inappropriate ones (Brown and Treviño, 2006). Garba *et al.* (2018), for example, demonstrate a positive effect on customer-oriented citizenship behavior via increased obligation felt by hospitality employees.

Finally, paradoxical leadership is related to the ability to display appropriate behavior toward contradictions at work (Zhang *et al.*, 2015). Although scarcely investigated in the hospitality industry, paradoxical leadership is especially advocated for working environments that evolve dynamically in response to changing conditions and demands. Huertas-Valdivia *et al.* (2019) found a positive relationship between paradoxical leadership and job engagement, mediated by psychological empowerment in a sample of Spanish hotel workers. She *et al.* (2020) suggest that paradoxical leaders have a positive effect on hospitality employees' identification with their leader, which subsequently predicts better service performance.

Given the highly complex and dynamic environment, and the plethora of leadership styles, leadership in hospitality can be challenging. As stated above, this study aims to summarize the main studies on leadership in hospitality to better understand key approaches. This analysis allows us to detect gaps that deserve further research and thus to craft a research agenda.
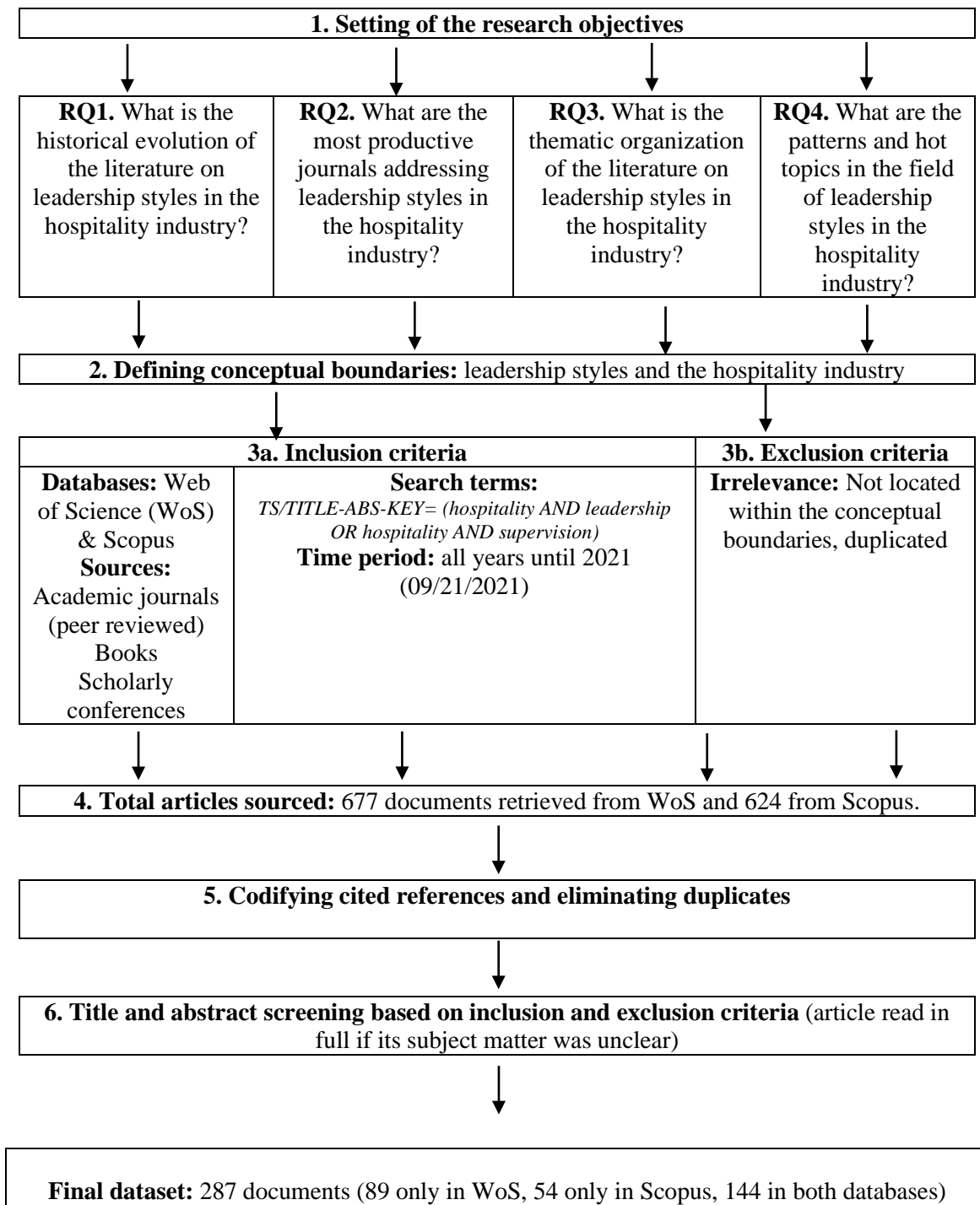
3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Data

The data were initially retrieved from the WoS Core Collection database. In reviewing our first sample, however, we realized that essential studies published in journals were not included in WoS but only indexed in Scopus. We thus replicated our search in Scopus and then combined the two outputs. We have used these databases because they allow us automatically to download the cited references of the articles, which are essential to performing the kind of bibliographic analysis in this paper. Moreover, these databases are sufficiently representative for use in an established field like this one (the first reference we found is from 1977).

When integrating the results from different databases, we had to overcome several difficulties to develop a single homogeneously formatted dataset. For this purpose, we used BibExcel—following Persson *et al.*'s (2009) guidelines—to edit the cited references manually and develop a homogeneous output that could then be analyzed. The bibliometric analysis followed workflow guidelines based on previous bibliometric studies (Zupic and Čater, 2015) (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Systematic literature review process

1. Setting of the research objectives

RQ1. What is the historical evolution of the literature on leadership styles in the hospitality industry?	**RQ2.** What are the most productive journals addressing leadership styles in the hospitality industry?	**RQ3.** What is the thematic organization of the literature on leadership styles in the hospitality industry?	**RQ4.** What are the patterns and hot topics in the field of leadership styles in the hospitality industry?

2. Defining conceptual boundaries: leadership styles and the hospitality industry

3a. Inclusion criteria		3b. Exclusion criteria
Databases: Web of Science (WoS) & Scopus **Sources:** Academic journals (peer reviewed) Books Scholarly conferences	**Search terms:** *TS/TITLE-ABS-KEY= (hospitality AND leadership OR hospitality AND supervision)* **Time period:** all years until 2021 (09/21/2021)	**Irrelevance:** Not located within the conceptual boundaries, duplicated

4. Total articles sourced: 677 documents retrieved from WoS and 624 from Scopus.

5. Codifying cited references and eliminating duplicates

6. Title and abstract screening based on inclusion and exclusion criteria (article read in full if its subject matter was unclear)

Final dataset: 287 documents (89 only in WoS, 54 only in Scopus, 144 in both databases)

In integrating results from the WoS and the Scopus databases, the first step was to eliminate duplicates. Two researchers then read the title, abstract, and keywords of all remaining documents to verify that they dealt with the target topic. When in doubt, the researchers read the full text. The degree of agreement between the two researchers in the first review was over 90%. The authors then read the documents on which opinions differed and discussed them until agreement was reached. After this final phase, the sample included 287 documents, 89 exclusively in WoS, 54 in Scopus, and 144 in both databases.

3.2. Bibliometric methods

The first step was to apply productivity assessment techniques—historical trends in publications and metrics on academic resonance and time of publication for the journals most frequently cited in the database. In the second step, relational techniques were applied to identify the topic's knowledge structure. More specifically, we conducted bibliographic coupling analysis. Bibliographic coupling occurs when two documents have a minimum of one or more references in common (the researcher can set a higher limit to ensure a substantive relationship between documents). Our study applies this technique for two main reasons. First, the results of bibliographic coupling are independent of the point in time at which the analysis is performed. Bibliographic coupling focuses on *citing* rather than on *cited* texts, thus helping to identify current trends and future research agendas. This method is considered more suitable for analyzing areas with high publishing activity, such as leadership and hospitality, in which around 74% of the total scholarly output has been published during the last six years (Boyack and Klavans, 2010; Vogel and Güttel, 2013). Second, bibliographic coupling analysis delineates the *knowledge structure*, as it studies the relationship between documents composing the field. Furthermore, our analysis seeks to identify the field's *intellectual structure* by studying the most frequently cited documents for each stream in the field.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Productivity assessment techniques

Analysis of the historical evolution of number of publications per year identifies a growing trend. The earliest articles retrieved in our search were from 1977 and 1989. Until 2004, articles focusing on leadership in the hospitality industry appeared erratically. After 2004, we observe two stages in development of the body of literature in the field, and both show persistent interest in the topic: 1) from 2004 to 2015, 68 works were published, constituting approximately 24% of all documents reviewed; 2) from 2016 onwards, a period of intense growth in publications began, with 212 documents (approximately 74%) published in less than six years.

Table 1 shows the journals that have published five or more of the articles included in our database. We analyzed different metrics on academic resonance and publication date: total citations in the database for all documents belonging to the journal, number of citations divided by number of documents, citations received per document per year, average publishing year for the documents, and percentage of documents published on

this topic since 2019. The *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* emerges as the most fruitful journal on this topic, with 53 articles, followed by the *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, with 40. Significantly, these top journals published over half of all publications reviewed for this study (55.8%). As to metrics on academic impact, the documents with the highest number of citations per year were published in *Tourism Management* and *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, and over half of the documents in *Tourism Management* since 2019 are on this topic.

Table I. Most frequent publications in the topic

Publication	# docs	Total citations	Citations per doc.	Av. citations per year per doc.	Average year of pub.	% docs published since 2019 (included)
International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	53	1046	19.74	4.59	2017.49	56.6%
International Journal of Hospitality Management	40	869	21.73	3.70	2015.70	50.0%
Tourism Management	13	533	41.00	8.32	2018.00	53.8%
Sustainability	10	33	3.30	1.38	2019.90	100.0%
Cornell Hospitality Quarterly	9	399	44.33	7.15	2015.89	22.2%
Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management	8	58	7.25	2.25	2019.63	75.0%
Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality and Tourism	8	67	8.38	1.54	2016.25	50.0%
Leadership & Organization Development Journal	8	202	25.25	4.68	2015.25	25.0%
Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management	6	39	6.50	2.12	2019.50	66.7%
Current Issues in Tourism	5	54	10.80	3.33	2019.60	60.0%

4.2. Relational techniques: bibliographic coupling

To identify thematic organization of the research topic—its *knowledge structure*—the literature (published before September 2021) was analyzed using bibliographic coupling (Kessler, 1963). This technique is grounded in the straightforward assumption that two documents have a thematic connection if they share the intellectual base—in this case, the references they cite (Zupic and Čater, 2015). The higher the proportion of cited documents that two documents share, the stronger the relationship between them. Four decisions had to be made to deliver this analysis. First, we had to establish a criterion for including a document to ensure that only documents with some minimum resonance were included. Besides being indexed either in WoS or Scopus, we required that works had been cited at least once per year. We tried different minimum criteria: two citations per year (met by 136 documents) and three citations per year (met by 103 papers). Still, the bibliographic networks derived from these analyses had lower density, with a significantly smaller main component and several other groups disconnected from that component. When we adopted a minimum of one citation per year for the 287 documents in our database, 168 met this criterion.

Moreover, we established *a minimum number of cited documents that two works must share* to ensure a substantial relation between them. This *coupling threshold* depends on multiple factors but is significantly affected by the field's dynamism. We tried different thresholds following the same approach as Mariani and Borghi (2019) and finally established this threshold at ten documents. This second criterion was met by 101 works from our database.

Third, we selected *a measure of similarity*. Several options can be used for this purpose (e.g., inclusion index, association strength, Salton's cosine). Following common practice (Diez-Vial and Montoro-Sanchez, 2017; Glänzel and Czerwon, 1996), we adopted Salton's cosine (Van Eck and Waltman, 2009). This measure is defined as:
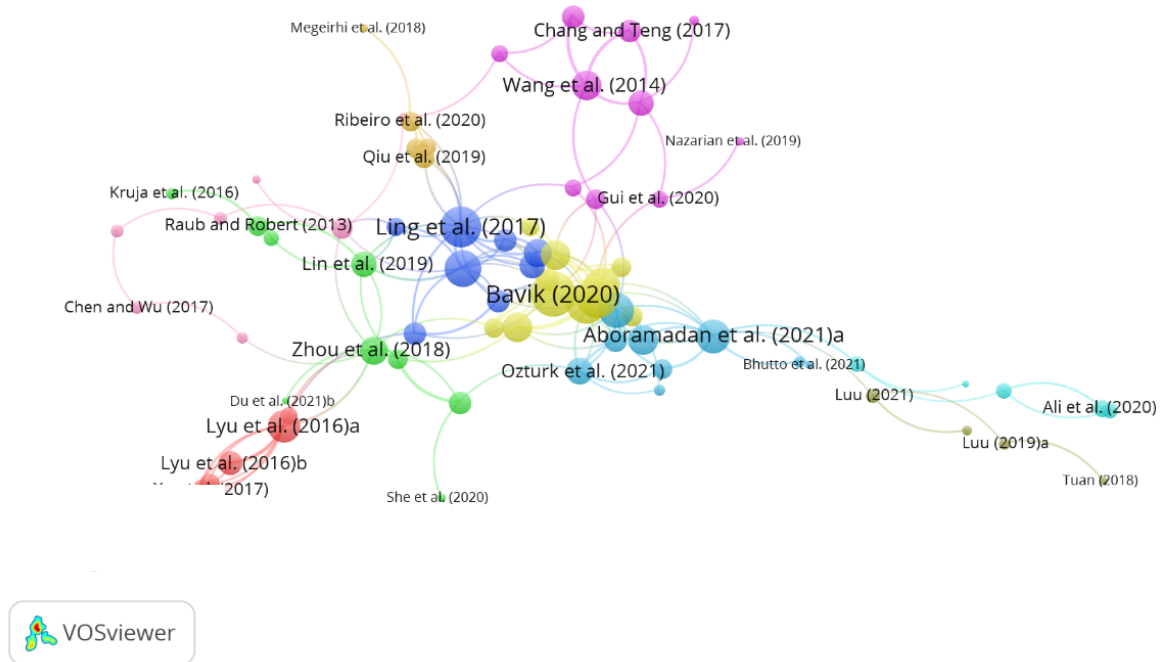
$$Salton's\ cosine_{ij} = \frac{c_{ij}}{\sqrt{s_i s_j}},$$

where c_{ij} is the number of cited references that documents i and j share, and s_i and s_j are the number of cited references in documents i and j.

Finally, we had to select a *grouping procedure* and chose the Louvain community detection algorithm (Blondel *et al.*, 2008) due to its accuracy (Liu *et al.*, 2012). Included in Pajek software (Batagelj and Mrvar, 1998), this algorithm analyzes the network and creates clusters based on the density of the sub-networks, thus maximizing this measure. We tried other algorithms (e.g., VOS) but obtained the best performance in terms of stability and interpretability from the Louvain method.

To present the results more visually, we used VOSviewer software and its VOS algorithm to configure the final look of the network (van Eck and Waltman, 2010). The larger the node size, the greater the intensity of connections between each document and the rest of the network. A document's position reveals the article with which that document shares the most references. The map represents the largest component, which includes 78 documents (Figure 2).

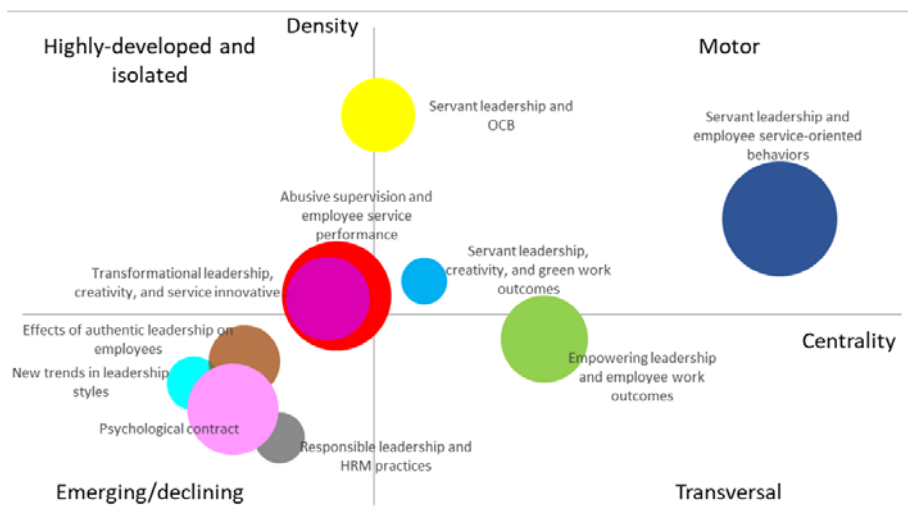**Figure 2.** Bibliographic coupling of documents

Ten groups predominate in the network. We used two additional tools to aid in interpretation of these clusters. First, Table 2 shows data on the clusters. We also calculated the *centrality* (weighted degree of each sub-network) and *density* (average weighted degree of nodes inside their cluster) of each group to build the strategic diagram proposed by Callon *et al.* (1991) (Figure 3). This tool differentiates four kinds of groups: Motor, Transversal and Basic, Highly Developed, and Isolated and Emerging or Declining groups.

The dark blue, yellow, and blue clusters are strongly connected with each other, since they contain papers that address different effects of servant leadership on hospitality workers. The dark blue group shows the highest impact metrics in terms of average year of citation, probably because it is the oldest. The strategic diagram shows that servant leadership has been broadly investigated in hospitality and constitutes a motor theme in this research field. The studies in the dark blue cluster analyze the *impact of servant leadership on employees' service-oriented behaviors* and advocate servant leadership for the hospitality industry, given the trickle-down effect of servant leadership within the organization (Ling *et al.*, 2016). This cluster's intellectual roots lie in social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), the most frequently used theory in the leadership studies in our sample. Nevertheless, some studies in this group also refer to other theories, such as service-profit chain theory (Qin *et al.*, 2014).

Table II. Bibliographic coupling analysis clusters

Topic	Color	# docs.	Average publication year	Cited reference average age	Average citations (WoS/ Scopus)	Main theory/ies
Servant leadership and employee service-oriented behaviors	Dark blue	8	2015.38	2001.03	48.13	Social exchange theory
Servant leadership and OCB	Yellow	11	2019.27	2006.66	19.91	Social exchange theory COR theory
Servant leadership, creativity, and *green work outcomes*	Blue	9	2020.78	2011.29	8.00	Social exchange theory Componential theory of creativity
Transformational leadership, creativity, and service innovative performance	Violet	10	2017.10	2003.94	44.00	Social exchange theory
Effects of authentic leadership on employees	Brown	5	2018.60	2005.83	19.00	COR theory Social exchange theory
Psychological contract	Pink	7	2017.00	2004.81	30.60	Social exchange theory Psychological contract theory
Empowering leadership and employee work outcomes	Green	9	2017.56	2004.65	27.78	Social exchange theory Social identity theory Self-efficacy theory
Abusive supervision and employee service performance	Red	10	2017.90	2004.54	25.40	COR theory
New trends in leadership styles	Light blue	5	2020.60	2011.08	10.80	COR theory
Responsible leadership and HRM practices	Grey	4	2019.25	2011.76	9.50	Social exchange theory

Figure 3. Bibliographic coupling analysis strategic diagram

Besides recent reviews and meta-analyses of servant leadership (e.g., Bavik, 2020; Gui *et al.*, 2021), the yellow group contains empirical studies examining the relationships between *servant leadership* and *organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB)*. Some studies in this cluster confirm that servant leadership fosters psychological capital either directly (Bouzari and Karatepe, 2017) or indirectly (Safavi and Bouzari, 2020). Although social exchange theory is still significant, some studies are based on conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 2001). The impact of *servant leadership on creativity* is investigated by the papers that form the blue cluster (e.g., Karatepe *et al.*, 2020). Significantly, *green work outcomes* predominate, such as green innovative behavior, green creativity, and OCB towards the environment. Congruently, these works are intellectually grounded not only in social exchange theory but also in theories such as the componential theory of creativity. *Environmentally-specific servant leadership* emerges as an interesting research topic, since it prioritizes environmental over economic benefits for both leader and organization, focusing on cultivation of pro-environmental values in organizational stakeholders, including employees and end customers (Luu, 2019a). According to its metrics and position, this group can be considered as a motor group.

The violet cluster is composed of documents that treat the effect of *transformational leadership* on *employee innovative behavior and creativity*. Transformational leaders mentor, coach, and stimulate their followers intellectually to prepare them to assume more responsibility and perform better than initially expected (Wang *et al.*, 2014). Such leaders identify followers' needs and encourage their teams to employ creativity and imagination to overcome obstacles in novel ways, motivating followers to become more involved in their work (Avolio *et al.*, 2004). Intrinsic motivation and creative self-efficacy are identified as crucial mediating factors (Ruiz-Palomino and Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara, 2020). Other studies in this cluster reveal that ethical leadership promotes service innovative behavior and that servant leaders foster creativity (Dhar, 2016). The main theoretical framework in this cluster is social learning theory (Bandura, 1977). That the group's density is proportionally higher than its centrality implies that it is a highly developed and isolated cluster.

The brown group comprises documents addressing the impact of *authentic leadership* style on employees' attitudinal and behavioral outcomes, such as commitment, career satisfaction, and turnover intentions. Authentic leadership develops from the leader's high personal and ethical standards and has four main elements: self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing, and internalized moral (Gatling *et al.*, 2016). Authentic leaders' actions are transparent and moral and thus affect service employees' emotional labor (Wang and Xie, 2020). This group is placed in the emerging/declining quadrant in the strategic matrix. COR and social exchange theory form the theoretical foundation of this group.

The papers in the pink cluster are connected to several groups and focus on employees' perceptions of their leaders (they address trust in leaders/supervisor; triggered positive affect; and perceived supervisor support) and these perceptions' effects on the *psychological contract* (Chen and Wu, 2017; Terglav *et al.*, 2016). Papers in this cluster also frequently address ethical behavior. The group's papers are more diverse in nature and publication date, which explains the cluster's position in the lower part of the diagram

(low density). This group is grounded theoretically in social exchange and psychological contract theory.

The green cluster comprises documents addressing the antecedents and consequences of *empowering leadership*. The studies in this group explore the effects of this type of leadership on work engagement, psychological empowerment, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions (Lin *et al.*, 2019; Namasivayam *et al.*, 2014). Empowering leadership styles enable leaders to share power with subordinates by granting them greater decision-making autonomy and confidence in their capabilities (Arnold *et al.*, 2000). We stress the significance of psychological empowerment as a moderating and/or mediating mechanism between empowering leadership and some of these outputs (Huertas-Valdivia *et al.*, 2018). This group is grounded theoretically in three theories: social exchange theory, social identity theory, and self-efficacy theory. The recentness of the publications and their academic resonance suggest a positive trend for the topics in this group. Further, the group is transversal; it shares its intellectual base with more groups, and the links among the cluster documents are not very strong. For example, the only two papers on paradoxical leadership in hospitality published to date are included in this cluster (Huertas-Valdivia *et al.*, 2019; She *et al.*, 2020). This finding can be explained by the similarity in the outputs explored and the fact that both empowering and paradoxical leadership styles grant subordinates some authority and autonomy.

The red cluster includes publications addressing the "dark side" of leadership, such as *abusive supervision*. The information on this cluster suggests that it is highly developed and isolated. Its intellectual base contains references published on average in 2004, although the appearance of several documents published in recent years suggests continuity of the research line. The articles in this group use several theories, but the main theoretical foundation is COR theory. We could label this group atemporal because it deals with specific topics repeatedly revisited in the academic literature, adding new nuances, or including new related issues. Abusive supervision is defined as "the subordinates' perceptions of the extent to which supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors" (Tepper, 2000, p.178). This cluster focuses on the detrimental effects of abusive supervision on the service performance of hospitality workers, measured in terms of reduced customer-oriented organizational citizenship behavior (Lyu, Zhu *et al.*, 2016), negative impact on proactive customer service performance (Lyu, Zhou *et al.*, 2016), and helping behaviors (Zhao and Guo, 2019). The paper by Yu *et al.* (2020) provides a clear systematic review of antecedents, consequences, mechanisms, and designs of research on abusive supervision.

New trends in leadership research in hospitality can be identified in the light blue cluster. This group is one of the "youngest" in terms of publication date (2020-2021), and its centrality and density metrics suggest its emerging nature. Novel forms of leadership can be found, such as spiritual leadership (Ali *et al.*, 2020; Usman *et al.*, 2021) and environmental transformational leadership (Kim *et al.*, 2020). Spiritual leadership is defined as "comprising the values, attitudes, and behaviors that are necessary to intrinsically motivate one's self and others so that they have a sense of spiritual survival through calling and membership" (Fry, 2003, p.711). Environmental transformational leadership involves "behaviors of leaders who motivate followers to achieve

environmental goals and inspire followers to perform beyond expected levels of environmental performance" (Chen and Chang, 2013, p.109) Both topics have hardly been explored in the hospitality literature. The variety of topics is also reflected in this group's theoretical underpinnings, although COR theory is the most frequent.

Leaders' increasing attention to stakeholders emerges in the papers in the grey cluster. *Responsible leadership behavior* emerges as a novel approach to leadership that cares about the different stakeholders' needs, including employees' well-being (He *et al.*, 2019). In this line, the studies in the cluster note the positive effects of socially responsible HRM practices and *disability-inclusive benevolent leadership* (Luu, 2019b). This cluster is placed in the emerging quadrant in the matrix, due to the novelty of the papers' research topics. As in other clusters, it is grounded theoretically in social exchange theory and COR theory.

5. DISCUSSION

Comparing our results on leadership in hospitality to other reviews and bibliometric studies on general leadership, we find some similarities and interesting differences. Zhu *et al*. (2019) found that transformational leadership remains at the center of leadership research, having been widely studied at the individual and group levels. These conclusions are compatible with Arici *et al*.'s (2021) and Gui *et al.'s* (2020) analysis in the field of hospitality, in which transformational leadership also emerges as a highly developed topic. These studies share this point of view because of their similar goal, to describe the field's cornerstones. In our analysis, transformational leadership is a traditional style that has been consolidated in hospitality research. Nevertheless, we argue that transformational leadership in hospitality stands out in terms of average publication year and bibliographic coupling connections. It appears as an isolated topic with fewer connections to recent research, contributing less to current development of the field.

The comprehensive review by Eva *et al.* (2019) analyzes servant leadership publications from 1998 to 2018. Their study detects fluctuations in publications on the topic, showing 2015 and 2016 as the years in which the most publications on servant leadership were published, predominantly in the discipline of business/organizational psychology. In the reviews by Eva *et al.* (2019) and Bavik (2020), the United States and China were the predominant countries conducting servant leadership studies. Arici *et al.* (2021) identify a cluster that contains the studies forming the intellectual foundations of servant leadership in hospitality, including papers such as van Dierendonck (2011) and Wu *et al.* (2013). Arici *et al.* (2021) argue that this approach may predominate in the future because of its focus. Our results reveal, however, that servant leadership is now a motor theme that has recently captured the academic community's interest. Moreover, we distinguish three clusters that treat this leadership style, suggesting the topics that show the highest potential for development in the coming years. We conclude that future trends in servant leadership in hospitality will be more oriented towards creativity, innovative behavior, and green outcomes at employee level.

The output of research on servant leadership in hospitality and the general literature (attitudinal, behavioral, and performance-wise) share many similarities. We found,

however, that the literature on hospitality has advanced more in this line because the philosophy of serving others inherent to servant leadership fits the essence of the hospitality industry better. Zhu *et al.* (2019) call for future studies to explore the relationship between servant leadership and the themes of followership, leader-member exchange, and leadership development in the general literature. These research lines differ clearly from those in hospitality research.

Zhu *et al.* (2019) identify authentic leadership as an emerging topic in the general literature and find that the topic of ethical leadership takes quite a central role in the general literature during 2011–2017. Vogel *et al.* (2021) also emphasize the influential role of topics related to authentic leadership. In the field of hospitality, Gatling *et al.* (2016) report a lack of studies on the specific outcomes of authentic leadership, but we believe this gap is due to the time period of the study, which confirms the topic's recent appearance. Similarly, Arici *et al.* (2021) find no specific cluster devoted to authentic leadership but identify several authentic leadership studies joined to the servant leadership cluster. They also affirm that research in hospitality should concentrate on authentic leadership, although attention has been limited to date. Our study identifies a specific cluster that focuses on authentic leadership outcomes. This cluster is located in the lower-left quadrant of the strategic diagram (emerging/declining), and its average publication year is 2018.6, confirming its emerging nature. As a whole, the metrics led us to conclude that interest in authentic leadership will rise in the coming years.

Ethical leadership has been explored only timidly in hospitality. The study by Hoch *et al.* (2016) suggests that the predominance of servant leadership research over other forms of leadership (such as authentic or ethical) could be due to the increasing validity of servant leadership. Arici *et al.* (2021) found some studies on this topic distributed across several clusters, especially the cluster on transformational leadership style, but they did not emphasize it as a future research line. Our analysis finds some studies of ethical leadership in a cluster that gathers new trends (such as spiritual leadership and environmental transformational leadership). All studies in this group have been published since 2020, and the group's citation figures advise us to be cautious. The results could be interpreted as a newly emerging line that is, nevertheless, in a very incipient phase.

Abusive supervision was a popular topic during 2011–2017 in general leadership research (Zhu *et al.*, 2019). Arici *et al.* (2021) define a cluster called abusive supervision, which contains a group of studies treating this topic. In their co-citation network, this cluster is less connected to the rest of the cluster and positioned farther from the center, suggesting that it is a more isolated group. Following Yu *et al.* (2020), increasing research interest may focus on the nature of the sector. Our results posit abusive supervision as a highly developed theme in hospitality, with a high proportion of the papers that study this kind of leadership published in recent years and a high citation rate per document and year. This finding highlights the academic community's interest in the topic. Nevertheless, consistent with other reviews, this cluster is not central in our network, and this lack of centrality suggests its isolation from the other clusters. This literature has its own intellectual base, which is only partially shared with other trends in the field. The line's citations and evolution over time suggest that it has high potential in hospitality research, as other reviews have also emphasized.

Although the general review by Zhu *et al.* (2019) found a small group of studies dealing with empowering leadership, this style is a transversal topic in hospitality research. Our finding is not surprising, considering that the field involves granting subordinates the authority and autonomy necessary for them to exercise control over workplace decisions (Huertas-Valdivia *et al.*, 2019; Lin *et al.*, 2019). These results are compatible with Arici *et al.* (2021), who found a cluster on *empowerment* located in the center of the network and connected to the other clusters, even though it contained only a few studies. In analyzing our results in the empowering leadership cluster, we agree with Hoang *et al.* (2021) that the focus on psychological outcomes (psychological empowerment, job autonomy, psychological contract fulfilment, self-efficacy) dominates at the individual level. This prevalence explains why self-determination theory and social learning theory are commonly employed to study how empowering leaders foster service performance.

As in leadership research in the general management literature, we note the predominance of theoretical frameworks borrowed from psychology and sociology (such as COR theory, social exchange theory, and social learning theory) to explain leadership phenomena in hospitality (Bavik, 2020; Eva *et al.*, 2019; Hoang *et al.*, 2021). This similarity can be explained by the focus on leadership's consequences at employee level in terms of attitudes, behaviors, and performance (job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover, OCB, engagement, etc.). Although LMX theory has some presence in our sample, its role is not as crucial as in Arici *et al.'s* (2021) study. This finding is, however, compatible with their conclusions, which do not consider the LMX theory cluster as a future trend.

Zhu *et al.* (2019) detect a shift in the leadership literature, from a focus on unilateral social influence to a focus on mutual influence, also called *followership*. This shift indicates academic interest in how followers can change their leaders' attitudes and behaviors. According to our results, however, hospitality research keeps the traditional approach that focuses on leaders' top-down social influence on followers. These authors define a stream of research addressing leadership in teams—more specifically, shared leadership in the general literature. This focus hardly appears in the hospitality literature.

6. GAPS DETECTED AND FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA ON LEADERSHIP

A comprehensive review of leadership in hospitality can guide scholars in planning their future research efforts. We find several research lines that we expect will be developed in the coming years. First, as to *established leadership approaches*, studies on servant leadership stand out in hospitality research. We identified several groups related to this topic, some with a very intense activity level and significant academic resonance, constituting a clear research line. Although transformational leadership has been the backbone of this field, our data suggest that this research line is slowing down, except on some specific topics (recent publications analyzing the association of transformational leadership with creativity). Finally, although abusive leadership is a highly developed and isolated research line, it has held the interest of academics for years. Its citations and academic production figures suggest medium/high potential.

Some *leadership approaches require further attention.* Paradoxical leadership has been oddly underexplored in the hospitality industry. Although some further research is forthcoming (e.g., Rescalvo-Martin *et al.*, 2021), our search results show that only two studies have analyzed it. The scarcity of research on paradoxical leadership in hospitality businesses is surprising, given the potential of paradoxical leadership behaviors to reconcile the opposing work requests common in the industry. Authentic leadership style also requires more attention from academics due to its effectiveness in some contexts. Moreover, some *novel styles of leadership should be explored.* Our results detected a cluster of papers on novel leadership, such as spiritual leadership, which has received little attention in hospitality research. We also find a striking emergence of more socially-oriented leadership styles that consider the company's impacts on different stakeholders (such as responsible leadership) (He *et al.*, 2019b) or disability-inclusive benevolent leadership (Luu, 2019b). These results align with Joshi, (2019, p.142) in showing a transition from the old paradigm ("personal power to control and be served") to the new ("empower others, influence and serve others"). Another future line of research, beyond new forms of leadership, could explore the relationship between different leaderships, as in Kaya and Karatepe's (2020) analysis of authentic and servant styles.

We note some trends highlighted in the general leadership literature that have no echo in the hospitality research—trends such as healthy and shared leadership. Researchers must determine whether these styles address the distinctive conditions of hospitality and are in fact being used in it. Hoang *et al.* (2021) suggest a potentially productive line in exploring leadership effectiveness during pandemics or natural disasters crises. All these topics could complement the research lines identified or create new ones. Furthermore, the thematic orientation of the clusters in the emerging themes quadrant demonstrates that *green leadership styles and sustainability-related topics* are receiving increased research attention. Novel approaches, such as that of environmentally-specific servant leadership (Aboramadan *et al.*, 2021), green inclusive leadership (Bhutto *et al.*, 2021), and environmental transformational leadership (Gurmani *et al.*, 2021) could be extremely productive for gaining knowledge of the impact of leadership on *greening* companies. Studies exploring connections of certain leadership styles to emergent sustainability topics (Chon and Zoltan, 2019) and green human resources practices could be of utmost importance.

The predominance of research on employees' behavioral and attitudinal outcomes related to OCB, turnover intention, job satisfaction, and commitment (whether as dependent variables, mediators, or moderators) reveals that extensive understanding of these topics has already been achieved through analysis of diverse leadership behaviors. Since 2019, topics such as innovative behavior and engagement have received increased research attention. For this reason, we advise researchers to explore *the less-known outcomes of leadership*. In line with Bavik (2020, p. 372), we recommend that studies focus on attributes "that are not mutually identified," such as interpersonal support, covenantal relations, transcendental spirituality, or egalitarianism. Apart from studying abusive leadership, leadership research in hospitality has focused on positive work outcomes (i.e., work engagement, commitment, satisfaction). It could be valuable to analyze the role of different leadership styles, such as despotic leadership (Albashiti *et al.*, 2021), in promoting negative workplace outcomes such as workplace deviance or incivility, ostracism, and other forms of misconduct (Hersel *et al.*, 2019).

The vast majority of the studies analyzed explored the impact of leadership on employee-level outcomes. Only a few studies in our sample measured *the impact of leadership on organizational-level variables*. From the perspective of the service-profit chain, provision of good internal services to employees (in this case, positive influences of leaders) spills over into high-quality services to clients, which in turn benefit performance (Heskett *et al.*, 2008). Although research on employee perceptions and feelings is advancing understanding of the "black box" mechanisms that affect employee performance, we also recommend empirically testing the real effects of these mid-level impacts in company-level outcomes.

Madera *et al.* affirm that leaders have different roles in different cultures and that "what may work in one country may not apply in another country" (2017, p.60). In the same line of thought, Nazarian *et al.* (2020) detect different relationships between servant leadership and OCB depending on country of origin. Given the *importance of national culture to leadership*, we propose two valuable directions for future research: more cross-cultural leadership studies comparing leadership differences among countries; and leadership research in underexplored countries in Africa or Europe. Such directions could enrich understanding of how leadership is enacted in different regions.

Study designs based on cross-sectional data and a single respondent predominate in research on leadership styles in the hospitality industry. *Alternative methodological avenues* (multiple respondents, multi-wave data collection, longitudinal studies to validate causality, experimental designs, qualitative case studies) are needed to understand the full complexity of leadership phenomena in hospitality. Additionally, leadership studies in hospitality explain the phenomena analyzed predominantly from theoretical perspectives borrowed from psychology or sociology. While this approach makes sense given the orientation towards measuring employees' feelings, we agree with Eva *et al.* (2019) in encouraging researchers to *consider alternative theoretical perspectives* with a stronger orientation to strategic management.

7. IMPLICATIONS

7.1. Theoretical implications

From a theoretical point of view, the current review provides a valuable framework for examining key leadership styles, understanding the most-studied styles, and illustrating leadership's critical role in organizational and individual outcomes in hospitality businesses. This review enriches the hospitality and human resources management literature by detecting and visually representing the most prevalent areas of study related to traditional and emerging leadership. The results provide a clear overview of the main research streams in the field, signaling the outputs (usually related to employee behavior) most frequently analyzed in relation to dominant leadership styles in the literature. We have also characterized each research line according to its intellectual foundations and evolution in recent years and delineated its likely future. Finally, based on this information and analysis of the most recent literature, we propose specific research lines for the field.

Our study underscores key theoretical frameworks most frequently employed in recent leadership research. Since most theories used by researchers when investigating

leadership derive from sociology or psychology (e.g., *social exchange theory, social learning theory, social identity theory)*, our findings may urge scholars to adopt other theoretical lenses (e.g., *Resource-Based View)* to explain and better understand leadership phenomena from a more performance-oriented perspective. These perspectives could enrich the field and clear up some inconsistencies.

7.2. Practical implications

This article provides helpful timely information on leadership for students, academics, industry managers, consultants, and human resources practitioners. The overview of leadership studies and styles in hospitality provides a solid research background for tourism and hospitality faculty and graduate students evaluating research in this area. The findings of this bibliometric study can inspire future innovative research by master's or doctoral students interested in gaining knowledge on less-known leadership styles identified as receiving little attention in the literature.

Min *et al.* (2016) find that leadership has consistently ranked among the top five course topics for industry professionals in the last ten years. The emerging leadership trends identified in our study can help educators in developing courses to foster different leadership skills among their students. Investigations of how different teaching methodologies (role-play, case studies of ethical dilemmas, in-class debates about appropriate or inappropriate leadership behavior) (Marnburg, 2006) can contribute to better understanding of the best tools for developing leadership abilities in the leaders of tomorrow. Moreover, when examining and designing hospitality program curricula, instructors must bear in mind the importance of including development of emerging leadership skills in their programs to ensure graduates' success in their future careers. In the same line, industry managers, consultants, and human resources practitioners will find an organized portrait of the main trends in the field to enable them to identify the most common practices today and inform them of the studies describing their implications for hospitality management. Ultimately, this paper reveals useful new patterns and research opportunities for researchers and academic journals and publishers.

From an industry-based point of view, the paper offers provides hospitality managers with insights into the most prevalent leadership styles. Butler *et al.* (2014), for example, demonstrated the importance of the leader's self-awareness and its impacts on perceptions of effectiveness in the hospitality industry in different cultures. Our paper may thus encourage managers to reflect on their own leadership style and explore different approaches when the situation or team so require. Hospitality firms, in turn, should consider all styles described when selecting their managers. This paper can help human resources professionals to identify and evaluate managers' predominant style to detect, praise, and encourage preferred behavior.

8. CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of leadership publication activity indicates increasing interest in leadership in the field of hospitality in recent years, with a notable increase in publication activity since 2016. Growth in this body of research shows leadership as a *hot topic* gaining

importance in recent years in the hospitality industry. Further proof of this increasing interest is the appearance of several reviews (with different foci and aims) on the topic. Further, two top journals have published more than half of all publications on leadership in the field. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* leads the ranking, with *International Journal of Hospitality Management* second and significant distance between these journals and the rest. Most journals in the ranking recognize hospitality and tourism explicitly in their aim and scope. That only two publications (*Sustainability* and *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*) have a non-specific industry orientation suggests the idiosyncratic nature of leadership in hospitality.

Our methodological approach has enabled us to identify the most recent trends in the field, sometimes confirming the predictions of previous reviews. Our study emphasizes the essential role of servant style in the current panorama of leadership in hospitality as the motor topic that helps drive advances in the literature. We conclude that the characteristics of this leadership style fit the industry's needs better than other styles, accelerating adoption of servant style in hospitality. In a way, the elevation of servant leadership has displaced transformational leadership, which does not appear in the most recent research. Ethical, authentic, empowering, and paradoxical leadership are finding their niches in this panorama, although all these styles remain underexplored at present. We call for new analysis of these research lines to complement the vision based on servant leadership.

Together with these changes in the dominant leadership style, we highlight emerging new topics related to innovation, creativity, and sustainability in hospitality firms. This finding is no coincidence; the change in the conception of leadership fosters the company's focus on a more value-oriented model that requires attention to the role and demands of different stakeholders. The incipient leadership styles mentioned here could help organizations to achieve new and more socially-oriented aims different from the classical market-oriented goals.

9. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has some limitations. First, searching for documents based solely on keywords does not ensure comprehensive results. The search pattern and number of documents analyzed may have restricted interpretation of some results. Second, we chose only documents published in journals indexed in WoS and Scopus to guarantee the quality of the work included (Kainzbauer and Rungruang, 2019). Although the advantages of curated databases for performing bibliometric analysis (such as data availability) further justify our decision, using databases such as Google Scholar and including other kinds of documents would illuminate very incipient trends in the field. As López-Bonilla and López-Bonilla (2021) suggest, comprehensive evaluation of performance requires the incorporation of other scholarly activities (e.g., editorship of research journals, participation in international conferences), as well as books and doctoral dissertations (Koseoglu *et al.*, 2016). For example, in their systematic research, Eva *et al.* (2019) also included unpublished documents from prominent scholars in the field whom they contacted by email. Finally, as Samul (2020) points out, a qualitative analysis of publications could be beneficial to confirm the results. We also encourage future

bibliometric studies to follow Yu *et al.* (2020) in adopting other systematic analysis techniques, such as content analysis, to explore multiple databases.

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