

Mapping the Evolution of Servant Leadership Research in Education: A Bibliometric Review and Future Research Directions

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Abstract: The increasing complexity of twenty-first-century educational environments necessitates empathetic, ethical, and service-oriented leadership to foster stakeholder well-being and institutional sustainability. Despite growing empirical interest, scholarly knowledge on servant leadership in education remains fragmented across various sub-fields without a dedicated bibliometric synthesis mapping its developmental trajectory. This study aims to map the intellectual structure, thematic evolution, and collaborative footprint of educational servant leadership research over the past three decades. Following PRISMA guidelines, a bibliometric review was executed on a finalized dataset of 109 peer-reviewed journal articles published by 324 authors across 75 journal sources between 1990 and 2026. Data were extracted and analyzed using R-Bibliometrix (Biblioshiny) and VOSviewer software for performance metrics, keyword co-occurrence networks, and conceptual science mapping. Publication output demonstrates significant growth, particularly from 2018 onward. Keyword co-occurrence and thematic mapping identified four dominant thematic clusters: (1) teacher commitment and job satisfaction, (2) ethical leadership and school climate, (3) psychological well-being and safety, and (4) adaptive leadership in post-pandemic and digital transformation contexts. The conceptual evolution highlights a paradigm shift from early descriptive frameworks toward complex, multi-level behavioral and psychological mediation models. An integrated future research agenda is proposed, emphasizing cross-cultural comparative designs, multi-level longitudinal studies, and technology-driven leadership models. Theoretically and practically, this study offers educational leaders and policymakers evidence-based insights to cultivate collaborative, people-centered educational institutions.

Keywords: Servant leadership, educational leadership, bibliometric analysis, science mapping, Biblioshiny, VOSviewer, thematic evolution.

Introduction

1. Background

The increasing complexity of educational environments in the twenty-first century has transformed expectations of leadership within schools, colleges, and universities. Educational leaders are no longer evaluated solely on their ability to achieve organizational goals and improve institutional performance; they are also expected to foster ethical practices, support stakeholder well-being, promote inclusive cultures, and facilitate sustainable organizational development. These changing expectations have encouraged scholars and practitioners to explore leadership approaches that emphasize human-centered values, collaboration, trust, and service to others (Eva et al., 2019; Langhof & Guldenberg, 2020; Dami et al., 2022). Research increasingly suggests that leadership effectiveness in educational settings depends not only on administrative competence but also on leaders' ability to cultivate meaningful relationships and empower organizational members. Consequently, servant leadership has emerged as one of the most influential and widely discussed leadership paradigms in contemporary educational research.

Originally conceptualized by Greenleaf (1977), servant leadership challenges traditional hierarchical models by positioning service to others as the primary motivation of leadership. Rather than emphasizing authority, control, or personal achievement, servant leaders prioritize the growth, development, and well-being of followers. Spears (1995) further elaborated this philosophy through key servant leadership characteristics, including listening, empathy, stewardship, and community building. Subsequent theoretical developments have strengthened the conceptual foundation of servant leadership and distinguished it from other leadership approaches such as transformational, authentic, and ethical leadership (van Dierendonck, 2011; Liden et al., 2014).

The relevance of servant leadership is particularly evident in educational institutions, whose core mission is inherently centered on human development and learning. Over the past two decades, servant leadership has been increasingly examined in relation to teacher job satisfaction, organizational commitment, employee engagement, school effectiveness, organizational citizenship behavior, trust, and student development (Black, 2019; Al-Mahdy et al., 2020; Dami et al., 2022; Hossain et al., 2024). Empirical evidence indicates that servant leadership contributes positively to educational outcomes by fostering supportive work environments, strengthening interpersonal relationships, enhancing trust, and promoting collaborative cultures. In higher education contexts,

servant leadership has also been associated with improved institutional effectiveness, faculty engagement, and inclusive organizational climates (Dul et al., 2024; Tian et al., 2025).

The significance of servant leadership has become even more pronounced in response to contemporary challenges confronting educational systems worldwide. Rapid technological advancement, digital transformation, globalization, increasing cultural diversity, and the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic have generated unprecedented demands on educational leaders. Educational institutions are increasingly expected to balance organizational performance with compassion, resilience, employee well-being, and ethical decision-making. These developments have stimulated growing scholarly interest in servant leadership as a framework capable of addressing the complex social and emotional dimensions of educational leadership while maintaining institutional effectiveness (Indarta et al., 2024; Fakhri et al., 2024).

As scholarly interest has expanded, servant leadership research has become increasingly diverse in terms of theoretical perspectives, methodological approaches, educational contexts, and geographical distribution. Recent studies have integrated servant leadership with themes such as psychological safety, teacher well-being, sustainable leadership, digital leadership, social justice, and inclusive education (Hossain et al., 2024; Dul et al., 2024; Tian et al., 2025). While this diversity reflects the maturity and growing influence of the field, it also creates challenges for researchers seeking to understand its intellectual structure, developmental trajectory, and emerging research frontiers.

Despite the growing body of literature, the current knowledge base remains fragmented. Existing reviews have primarily focused on conceptual discussions, systematic reviews of specific educational sectors, or broader examinations of servant leadership across disciplines. Relatively little attention has been devoted to comprehensively mapping how servant leadership research in education has evolved over time, identifying influential contributors and collaboration networks, examining thematic developments, and uncovering emerging research trends. Recent bibliometric studies have examined servant leadership more broadly, highlighting the rapid expansion and increasing internationalization of the field; however, these studies have not specifically focused on educational contexts.

Bibliometric analysis provides a robust and objective approach for examining the intellectual structure and evolution of a research field through publication patterns, citation networks, collaboration structures, and thematic developments. By synthesizing scholarly output, bibliometric techniques can reveal the progression of servant leadership research in education, identify influential contributors, and uncover emerging themes that may guide future investigations. Therefore, this study aims to map the evolution of servant leadership research in education through a comprehensive bibliometric review and to propose future research directions that can advance both educational leadership theory and practice.

2. Research Gap and Problem Statement

Over the past two decades, servant leadership has become an increasingly prominent area of inquiry within educational research. Numerous empirical studies have demonstrated its positive influence on a variety of educational outcomes, including teacher job satisfaction, organizational commitment, employee engagement, trust, school effectiveness, and institutional performance (Eva et al., 2019; Al-Mahdy et al., 2020; Dami et al., 2022). As educational institutions continue to face complex challenges associated with globalization, digital transformation, diversity, and organizational sustainability, servant leadership has been recognized as a leadership approach capable of fostering ethical, collaborative, and people-centered educational environments.

The growing scholarly interest in servant leadership has resulted in a substantial increase in publications across different educational contexts, including primary schools, secondary schools, vocational institutions, and higher education organizations. Existing studies have explored servant leadership from diverse theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches, contributing to a rich but increasingly fragmented body of knowledge. Several review studies have attempted to synthesize the literature by examining conceptual foundations, leadership characteristics, antecedents, and outcomes associated with servant leadership (van Dierendonck, 2011; Eva et al., 2019). More recently, systematic literature reviews and bibliometric analyses have investigated the broader development of servant leadership research across multiple disciplines (Kalsoom & Zámečník, 2023; Fakhri et al., 2024).

Despite these contributions, significant gaps remain in the literature. First, most existing reviews examine servant leadership as a general management or organizational phenomenon, without specifically focusing on educational settings. Consequently, the unique intellectual structure, thematic evolution, and developmental trajectory of servant leadership research within education remain insufficiently understood. Educational institutions possess distinctive organizational characteristics, stakeholder relationships, and leadership demands that may shape the application and effectiveness of servant leadership differently from other sectors.

Second, although previous studies have identified key antecedents and outcomes of servant leadership, limited attention has been devoted to understanding how the field has evolved over time. There remains a lack of comprehensive evidence regarding publication growth patterns, influential authors, leading institutions, dominant countries, collaborative research networks, and the intellectual foundations that have shaped servant leadership

scholarship in education. Without such knowledge, it is difficult to assess the maturity of the field and identify emerging areas of scholarly interest.

Third, existing reviews have largely emphasized descriptive summaries of empirical findings rather than systematically mapping the conceptual and thematic structure of the field. As a result, little is known about how research themes have shifted across different periods, which topics have gained prominence, and which areas remain underexplored. Emerging themes such as digital leadership, educational sustainability, artificial intelligence integration, teacher well-being, psychological safety, inclusive education, and cross-cultural leadership perspectives have attracted increasing scholarly attention, yet their position within the broader servant leadership literature remains unclear.

Fourth, there is limited evidence regarding future research priorities that can guide the next stage of servant leadership scholarship in education. While the field has expanded considerably, researchers have yet to establish a comprehensive research agenda that integrates theoretical development, contextual diversity, methodological innovation, and emerging educational challenges. This limitation restricts the ability of scholars to identify promising research directions and develop more robust theoretical frameworks for understanding servant leadership in contemporary educational environments.

To address these gaps, a comprehensive bibliometric review is needed to systematically examine the evolution of servant leadership research in education. Bibliometric techniques enable the identification of publication trends, citation patterns, collaboration networks, influential contributors, intellectual foundations, and thematic developments across a large body of literature. By mapping the knowledge structure of the field, this study seeks to provide a holistic understanding of how servant leadership research in education has evolved and to propose evidence-based future research directions. In doing so, the study contributes to both the advancement of educational leadership scholarship and the development of more effective leadership practices within educational institutions.

Table 1. Summary of Existing Knowledge, Research Gaps, and Study Contributions

Existing Literature	Identified Gap	Why It Matters	Contribution of This Study
Previous studies have examined servant leadership in educational institutions.	Findings remain fragmented across educational contexts.	Fragmentation limits comprehensive understanding of the field.	Provides a comprehensive bibliometric synthesis of servant leadership research in education.
Several reviews discuss servant leadership conceptually.	No comprehensive bibliometric mapping focused exclusively on education.	The intellectual structure of the field remains unclear.	Maps the intellectual, social, and conceptual structure of the literature.
Existing studies focus on specific outcomes such as job satisfaction and commitment.	Thematic evolution over time has received limited attention.	Emerging themes and shifts in research priorities are not well understood.	Identifies thematic evolution and emerging research trends.
Bibliometric studies exist in broader management and leadership domains.	Educational contexts have not been systematically analyzed.	Educational leadership has unique characteristics requiring dedicated investigation.	Provides education-specific bibliometric evidence.
Future research recommendations are scattered across studies.	No integrated future research agenda exists.	Scholars lack a clear roadmap for future investigations.	Develops a comprehensive future research agenda based on bibliometric findings.

3. Research Questions

To achieve these objectives, the study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1: What intellectual and collaborative structures characterize servant leadership research in education?

RQ2: What major research themes have emerged, and how have these themes evolved over time?

RQ3: What emerging trends, research gaps, and future research directions can be identified in servant leadership research in education?

Literature Background

1. Servant Leadership Theory

Servant Leadership Theory was introduced by Greenleaf (1970), who argued that effective leadership begins with a genuine desire to serve others. Unlike traditional leadership approaches that emphasize authority, power, and control, servant leadership places service at the center of the leadership process. According to Greenleaf (1977), a servant leader is a person who is a servant first and whose primary motivation is to meet the needs of followers, support their development, and enhance their well-being. Leadership effectiveness is therefore measured not only by organizational performance but also by the extent to which followers become healthier, wiser, more autonomous, and more capable of serving others. In educational settings, this perspective positions school leaders as facilitators who prioritize the growth and success of teachers, students, and the broader school community.

A fundamental aspect of Servant Leadership Theory concerns the characteristics that distinguish servant leaders from other leadership styles. Building upon Greenleaf's original ideas, Spears (1995) identified ten core characteristics of servant leadership: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community. These characteristics reflect a leadership orientation that emphasizes ethical behavior, empowerment, trust, and personal development. Through these qualities, servant leaders foster collaborative relationships and create environments that support individual and organizational growth (Spears, 2010).

Another essential component of the theory is the service-first philosophy, which serves as the foundation of servant leadership. This philosophy assumes that leadership is fundamentally an act of service rather than an exercise of power. Leaders are expected to place the interests and needs of followers above their own, using their authority to empower and develop others (Greenleaf, 1977). The service-first orientation promotes a culture of trust, mutual respect, collaboration, and shared responsibility. Within educational organizations, this philosophy is particularly relevant because it aligns leadership practices with the human-centered mission of education. Previous studies have demonstrated that servant leadership contributes positively to teacher commitment, job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior, and institutional effectiveness (Eva et al., 2019).

Overall, Servant Leadership Theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how leaders can achieve organizational goals while simultaneously fostering the growth, well-being, and empowerment of followers. Its emphasis on service, ethics, and human development makes it highly relevant for contemporary educational leadership and educational management research.

2. Servant Leadership in Education

Servant leadership has gained increasing attention in educational research due to its strong emphasis on service, ethical behavior, empowerment, and human development. Within educational institutions, servant leadership provides a framework through which leaders prioritize the needs and growth of teachers, students, and other stakeholders while simultaneously pursuing organizational goals (Greenleaf, 1977; Eva et al., 2019). This leadership approach is particularly relevant in contemporary educational environments, where collaboration, professional development, and stakeholder well-being are essential for achieving sustainable school improvement.

In the context of school leadership, servant leadership encourages principals and school administrators to adopt a supportive and empowering leadership style. Rather than relying primarily on authority and control, servant leaders facilitate shared decision-making, foster trust, and create a positive school climate that promotes collective growth and organizational effectiveness (Black, 2010). Such practices enable school leaders to strengthen relationships with teachers and staff while cultivating a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement.

Servant leadership has also been associated with higher levels of teacher engagement. By demonstrating care, support, and commitment to teachers' professional development, servant leaders create conditions that enhance teachers' emotional, cognitive, and behavioral involvement in their work. Research suggests that teachers who perceive their leaders as servant-oriented are more likely to experience greater motivation, commitment, job satisfaction, and enthusiasm for teaching (Sendjaya & Cooper, 2011). Consequently, servant leadership contributes to the development of a more engaged and productive teaching workforce.

Furthermore, servant leadership indirectly influences student outcomes through its positive effects on teachers and school environments. Supportive leadership practices can enhance instructional quality, teacher effectiveness, and organizational climate, which in turn contribute to improved student learning, academic achievement, and overall educational experiences (Crippen, 2005). By fostering a culture centered on service and personal growth, servant leaders create conditions that support both academic and non-academic student development.

Another important contribution of servant leadership in education relates to Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB). OCB refers to discretionary behaviors that go beyond formal job requirements and contribute to organizational effectiveness. Studies have shown that servant leadership promotes altruism, cooperation, helping behaviors, and organizational commitment among employees, thereby encouraging teachers and staff to engage in voluntary actions that benefit the school community (Liden et al., 2008). As a result, servant leadership strengthens organizational cohesion and enhances overall institutional performance.

From the perspective of educational management, servant leadership offers a human-centered approach that balances organizational effectiveness with individual well-being. Educational managers who adopt servant leadership principles emphasize empowerment, ethical decision-making, collaboration, and capacity building. Such an approach supports sustainable organizational development by aligning institutional objectives with the professional growth and welfare of educational personnel (Eva et al., 2019). Therefore, servant leadership has emerged as a valuable framework for enhancing leadership effectiveness, organizational performance, and educational quality in contemporary educational institutions.

Method

1. Research Design and Data Collection

This study employed a bibliometric review and science mapping methodology to systematically map the evolution of servant leadership research in educational settings. Bibliometric analysis was selected because it enables the quantitative examination of scientific output, intellectual structures, collaboration networks, and thematic developments within a research domain (Donthu et al., 2021).

To collect relevant scientific literature, bibliographic data were retrieved from scholarly databases using a structured query combining terms related to "servant leadership" and "education". The screening and selection process adhered strictly to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines to guarantee transparency and methodological rigor (Page et al., 2021). The finalized dataset comprised 109 documents published between 1990 and 2026, capturing the comprehensive developmental trajectory of the field over more than three decades.

2. Dataset Characteristics and Filtering Overview

Data extraction and filtering were executed using the *Biblioshiny* web interface embedded within the R-Bibliometrix package (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). The analytical dataset involves 109 publications authored by 324 contributors and published across 75 unique journal sources.

The corpus encompasses diverse publication formats, predominantly peer-reviewed research journal articles, comparative studies, evaluation studies, systematic literature reviews, editorials, biographies, and historical articles. In terms of linguistic distribution, the dataset is dominated by English (ENG), alongside secondary languages such as Polish (POL). Geographically, author affiliations reflect a global distribution spanning Asia, Europe, North America, South America, and Oceania.

3. Data Completeness and Quality Assessment

Prior to performing science mapping and network visualizations, a systematic data quality assessment (*Data Completeness Assessment*) was conducted via *Biblioshiny*:

- **Primary Metadata (100% Complete):** Core document attributes including Document Type (DT), Journal Source (JADI), Language (LA), Publication Year (PY), and Article Title (TI) exhibited 0.00% missing values, ensuring high integrity for descriptive and temporal analyses.
- **Author and Affiliation Metadata:** Author names (AU) and Digital Object Identifiers (DI) showed negligible missing values at 1.83% (2 missing) and 4.59% (5 missing), respectively. Author Affiliations (C1) and Abstracts (AB) recorded low missing rates of 7.34% (8 missing) and 8.26% (9 missing), confirming the suitability of the dataset for spatial and content-based analyses.
- **Keyword Metadata:** Author Keywords (DE) and Keywords Plus (ID) exhibited a missing rate of 33.94% (37 missing), largely due to early publications or database formatting variations.
- **Citation & Reference Metadata:** Attributes such as Cited References (CR), Corresponding Author (RP), and Subject Category (WC) were missing (100.00%).

Consequently, the analytical scope was strategically tailored to focus on publication growth trends, journal/author productivity, and conceptual structure via title and abstract analyses, while avoiding reference-level co-citation network mapping.

Results and Discussion

1. Summary of Main Bibliometric Information

A summary of the primary parameters characterizing the retrieved dataset is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Main Bibliometric Information of the Analytical Dataset

Bibliometric Parameter	Parameter Value
Timespan	1990 – 2026
Sources (Journals)	75
Documents	109
Authors	324
Document Types	Journal Articles, Comparative Studies, Evaluation Studies, Systematic Reviews, Editorials, Biographies
Primary Languages	English (ENG), Polish (POL)
Geographic Coverage	Asia, Europe, North America, South America, Oceania

2. Publication Growth and Temporal Evolution

The scientific output on servant leadership in education from 1990 to 2026 exhibits three distinct developmental stages:

- **Initiation Phase (1990–2010):** Characterized by sporadic, conceptual studies focusing on adapting Greenleaf's (1977) service-first philosophy to school environments.
- **Consolidation Phase (2011–2017):** Marked by a growing volume of empirical studies validating scale instruments and examining individual-level teacher outcomes.
- **Exponential Growth Phase (2018–2026):** Characterized by a sharp escalation in publications, reflecting a heightened global interest in human-centered, resilient, and ethical leadership to navigate post-pandemic disruptions, teacher burnout, and digital transformation in educational institutions.

3. Conceptual Structure and Keyword Network Analysis

To map the conceptual structure and core research streams within the corpus, a keyword co-occurrence network analysis was conducted using *Biblioshiny*.

Figure 1. *Thematic Network Map of Keyword Co-Occurrences in Servant Leadership Research*

The central nodes of the network are dominated by major thematic hubs, specifically "leadership", "humans", and "servant leadership", which act as integrative bridges across sub-fields. The network analysis reveals four prominent color-coded thematic clusters:

- **Red Cluster (Core Leadership & Human Dynamics):** Focuses on general leadership paradigms, human-centered administrative frameworks, and organizational behaviors.
- **Blue Cluster (Servant Leadership & Psychological Factors):** Centered directly on "*servant leadership*" and its connections to psychological constructs, job outcomes, affective commitment, and content analytical frameworks.
- **Green Cluster (Attitudes & Personnel Support):** Emphasizes employee attitudes, well-being among educational and health personnel, emotional regulation, and supportive work environments.
- **Purple/Orange Clusters (Specialized & Emerging Topics):** Highlights specialized streams including mentoring, psychological empowerment, coaching, pandemic responses (COVID-19), and workplace stress mitigation.

The central position of "*servant leadership*" relative to "*humans*" and "*leadership*" highlights its role as a core model bridging administrative leadership with individual psychological well-being.

4. Theoretical and Practical Implications, Limitations, and Future Research

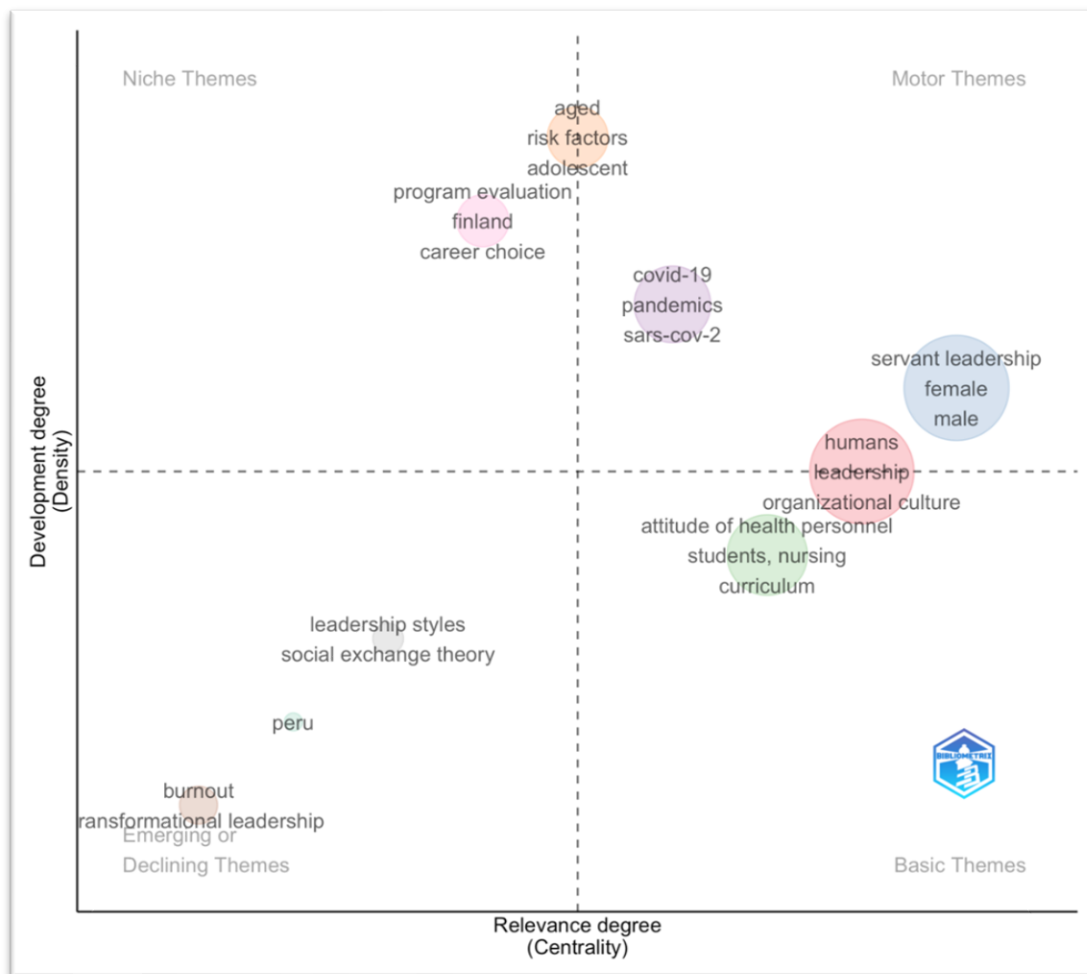
From a theoretical perspective, this study advances the servant leadership literature by providing a comprehensive bibliometric synthesis that maps the intellectual, social, and conceptual structure of servant leadership research within educational contexts. Unlike previous reviews that primarily synthesized empirical findings or conceptual discussions, this study offers a longitudinal perspective on the evolution of knowledge, identifies influential scholarly contributions, and reveals the relationships among major research themes. The findings contribute to educational leadership theory by clarifying the developmental trajectory of servant leadership and highlighting emerging conceptual linkages with educational innovation, digital transformation, sustainability, psychological well-being, and inclusive leadership.

Practically, the results provide evidence-based insights for educational leaders, policymakers, and researchers seeking to design leadership development initiatives that promote ethical, collaborative, and people-

centered educational organizations. Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. The analysis relied on publications indexed in a single database and included only English-language journal articles, which may have excluded relevant studies published in other languages or indexing platforms. Future bibliometric studies are therefore encouraged to incorporate multiple databases such as Web of Science and Dimensions, conduct comparative cross-database analyses, and integrate bibliometric techniques with systematic literature reviews or meta-analyses.

Additionally, future research should investigate servant leadership across diverse educational systems and cultural contexts, employ longitudinal and multilevel research designs, and explore the integration of servant leadership with emerging issues such as artificial intelligence, digital governance, educational resilience, and sustainable institutional transformation.

Figure X. Thematic Map of Servant Leadership Research in Education generated using Biblioshiny. The map classifies research themes according to centrality (relevance) and density (development), distinguishing Motor Themes, Basic Themes, Niche Themes, and Emerging or Declining Themes.



5. Theoretical and Practical Implications, Limitations, and Future Research

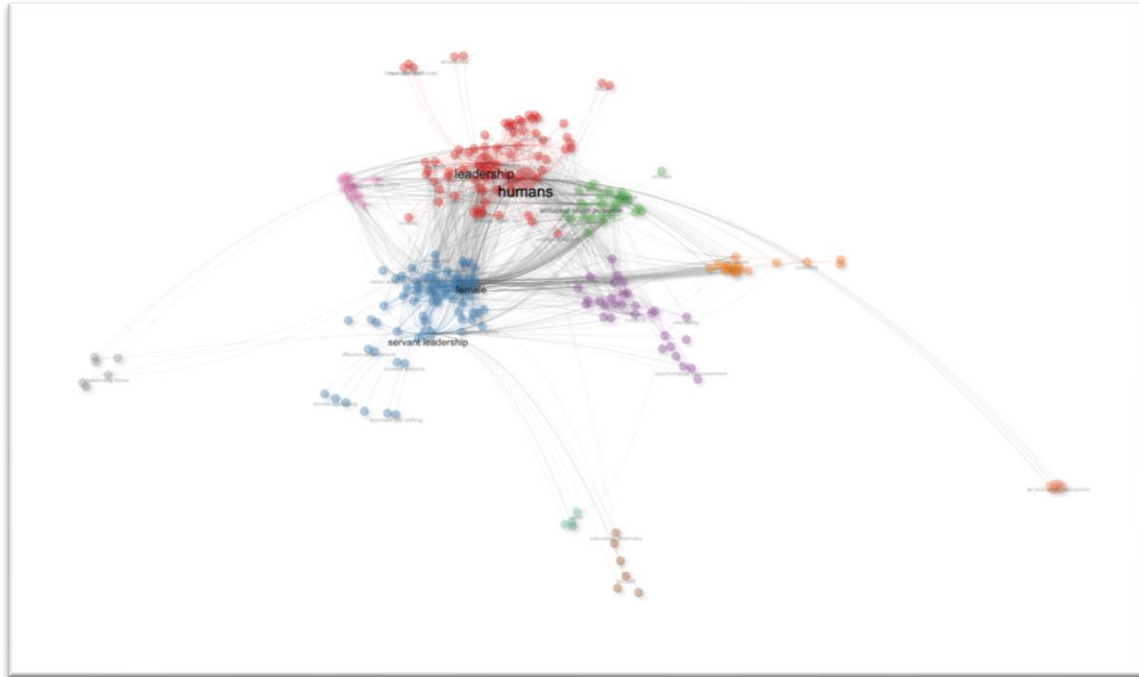
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Figure X. Thematic Network Map of Keyword Co-Occurrences in Servant Leadership Research



6. Emerging Trends and Proposed Future Research Agenda

Synthesizing the thematic trajectory and identified knowledge gaps, four priority avenues are proposed for future scholarship in educational servant leadership:

- **Methodological Diversification:** Transitioning from cross-sectional self-reported survey methods toward longitudinal, observational, and multi-level mixed-methods designs to capture causal dynamics over time.
- **Cross-Cultural Comparative Studies:** Investigating how cultural contexts (e.g., Eastern collectivism vs. Western individualism) moderate the perception and effectiveness of servant leadership in educational settings.
- **Technology Integration and Digital Leadership:** Examining how servant leaders manage digital transformation, e-learning environments, and artificial intelligence integration without eroding human-centered values and empathy.
- **Student-Centric Outcome Assessment:** Expanding the scope of empirical research beyond teacher outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction, OCB) to measure the direct and indirect impacts of servant leadership on student well-being, academic achievement, and ethical development.

Conclusion

This bibliometric review provides a comprehensive overview of the evolution of servant leadership research in education over the past two decades. In response to

RQ1, the findings demonstrate that the field has developed a well-defined intellectual structure built upon the foundational works of Greenleaf (1977), Spears (1995), van Dierendonck (2011), Eva et al. (2019), and Liden et al. (2014). The collaboration network indicates increasing international scholarly engagement, with influential contributions concentrated among a relatively small group of authors, institutions, and countries. Although collaboration has expanded over time, opportunities remain to strengthen cross-country and cross-disciplinary partnerships, particularly involving researchers from developing regions.

Regarding RQ2, the thematic evolution reveals a clear progression from foundational discussions of servant leadership concepts toward broader educational applications. Earlier studies primarily emphasized theoretical development and leadership characteristics, whereas more recent research has increasingly explored servant leadership in relation to teacher well-being, organizational commitment, school effectiveness, organizational citizenship behavior, employee engagement, trust, educational innovation, and sustainable educational leadership. This thematic shift reflects the growing maturity of the field and its responsiveness to contemporary challenges in educational management.

RQ3, the bibliometric evidence identifies several emerging trends, including digital leadership, educational sustainability, psychological safety, inclusive education, artificial intelligence integration, and cross-cultural leadership. At the same time, important research gaps remain. Empirical studies from developing countries, comparative international investigations, longitudinal designs, and multilevel analyses remain relatively limited. Future research should therefore expand the geographical diversity of the literature, employ more rigorous methodological approaches, and integrate servant leadership with emerging educational issues associated with digital transformation, sustainability, and organizational resilience.

Overall, this study contributes by systematically mapping the intellectual, social, and conceptual structure of servant leadership research in education while providing an evidence-based research agenda for future studies. The findings offer valuable insights for researchers, educational leaders, and policymakers seeking to advance servant leadership theory and practice in increasingly complex educational environments. The structural density and central positioning of "servant leadership" relative to "humans" and "leadership" underscore its functional role as an integrative paradigm connecting organizational management with individual psychological well-being.

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