

Leadership and corporate social responsibility: a comprehensive review and bibliometric analysis (1980–2023)

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Abstract

Purpose – The aim of the paper is to conduct a comprehensive review and bibliometric analysis of the relationship between leadership and corporate social responsibility (CSR). It seeks to investigate the impact of different leadership styles on CSR outcomes and organizational performance while exploring key themes such as transformational leadership, ethical leadership and responsible leadership, and their influence on CSR initiatives and stakeholder engagement.

Design/methodology/approach – The study examines a vast array of literature from 1980 to 2023 across various disciplines using the Scopus database. The analysis focuses on identifying the mediating role of organizational factors, such as ethical culture and intellectual capital, in the relationship between leadership styles and CSR outcomes.

Findings – The study highlights the significance of responsible leadership in promoting CSR practices and enhancing firm performance. It identifies the influence of transformational, ethical and responsible leadership styles on CSR initiatives and stakeholder engagement, emphasizing the importance of an ethical culture and intellectual capital as mediating factors.

Originality/value – This study provides a theoretical and practical implications of the intersection between leadership and CSR. By synthesizing an extensive literature and conducting a bibliometric analysis, it offers valuable insights and suggests directions for future research, thereby contributing to the understanding of how leadership styles impact CSR initiatives and organizational performance.

Keywords Leadership, Corporate social responsibility, Bibliometric analysis, Ethical leadership, Transformational leadership, Organizational performance

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

The emergence of globalization, liberalization and international trade has elevated the importance of corporate social responsibility (CSR), necessitating greater transparency and corporate citizenship (Chomvilailuk and Butcher, 2024; Barriga and Escandon-Barbosa, 2024). Traditionally, governments were solely responsible for enhancing living conditions, but societal needs now exceed governmental capacity. Consequently, businesses are increasingly expected to play a role in addressing societal challenges, leading progressive corporations to actively engage in CSR initiatives (Kavadis *et al.*, 2024). However, this



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presents a strategic dilemma for businesses, as they must balance immediate concerns of survival and competition with achieving social and environmental sustainability (Maside-Sanfiz *et al.*, 2024; Bag *et al.*, 2024). Modern organizations recognize the importance of addressing economic, political and social aspects of society (Nugroho *et al.*, 2024).

Bowen (1953) defines the social responsibility of businessmen as their obligation to adopt policies, make decisions and undertake actions that align with society's goals and values. CSR is defined as a process involving the ethical and responsible treatment of a corporation's stakeholders and has evolved over time (Hopkins, 1998, 2006). CSR goes beyond mere legal compliance, emphasizing a firm's consideration for stakeholders beyond shareholders (Ledi *et al.*, 2024; Freeman, 1999). Corporate practices associated with CSR can positively impact various aspects of operations, including environmental management, sustainable development, corporate reputation, financial performance, customer loyalty and stakeholder relationships. Therefore, it is essential for leaders and managers to actively engage in CSR measures as integral parts of their roles in leading or managing organizations (Hakimian *et al.*, 2017).

Leadership refers to influencing and directing a group toward desired outcomes (Benmira and Agboola, 2021; Robbins, 1996; Stogdill, 1950). Bass (1990) expanded this definition to include the interactive process among group members. Top leaders have significant influence over decision-making processes, shaping corporate culture and long-term strategies due to their strategic capabilities (Graham *et al.*, 2022; Zhao *et al.*, 2023). In the context of strategic objectives like CSR, top management teams play a crucial role in policymaking and implementation (Zhao *et al.*, 2023). Their strategic vision and organizational direction guide CSR initiatives, highlighting the importance of leadership in promoting CSR.

Proactive leadership is pivotal for achieving CSR and sustainability goals, transforming companies into socially responsible entities (Zhang *et al.*, 2022). The approach to sustainable business ethics critiques neoclassical economics, advocating for a broader interdisciplinary perspective on corporate norms and values (Rendtorff, 2019). Research suggests that starting CSR initiatives from the perspectives of leaders and managers enhances productivity (Castaldo *et al.*, 2023; D'Amato *et al.*, 2009). Numerous studies emphasize leadership's crucial role in promoting CSR initiatives (Gu and Liu, 2022; Wu *et al.*, 2021; Du *et al.*, 2013; Waldman *et al.*, 2006b). However, leadership can hinder CSR intentions and implementation if perceived as a threat (Christensen *et al.*, 2014). Understanding previous research on the relationship between CSR and leadership is vital because both concepts are closely linked to business legitimacy, which is fundamental for a company's ability to operate and prosper in society (Zhao *et al.*, 2023; Rendtorff, 2020). Leadership plays a critical role in shaping and guiding a company's CSR initiatives (Rendtorff, 2020). Moreover, stakeholder theory emphasizes prioritizing not only shareholders' interests but also those of other stakeholders (Rendtorff and Bonnafous-Boucher, 2016). Leadership must balance these expectations to serve long-term interests (Groves and La Rocca, 2012a, 2012b; Maak, 2007). This balancing act is crucial in stakeholder management, as highlighted in the *Encyclopedia of Stakeholder Management* (Rendtorff and Bonnafous-Boucher, 2023), which provides a comprehensive exploration of the various dynamics at play. Additionally, exploring the leadership-CSR relationship enhances understanding of both objectives (Zhao *et al.*, 2023). A bibliometric analysis of CSR and leadership is essential to identify emerging trends, fill research gaps and adapt to global challenges like climate change and social justice. By integrating insights from various disciplines, bibliometric analysis provides a comprehensive understanding that traditional reviews may overlook (Ramsawak *et al.*, 2024). It highlights influential scholarship, guiding future research and practice by pinpointing key contributions to the field. Additionally, it offers valuable insights for policymakers and business leaders, helping

them align leadership strategies with CSR goals to enhance corporate legitimacy and societal impact.

Understanding the intersection of leadership and CSR is paramount for promoting sustainable business practices and societal well-being. This intersection explores how leadership behaviors and decisions shape corporate responsibility initiatives, thereby influencing organizational culture, stakeholder relationships and long-term performance. By understanding the mechanisms through which leadership influences CSR, this review empowers organizations to cultivate ethical leadership practices that prioritize societal impact alongside financial success. Moreover, it underscores the transformative potential of leadership in driving positive change, emphasizing the imperative for leaders to champion CSR as a strategic imperative rather than a peripheral concern. In essence, exploring this intersection facilitates the cultivation of responsible leadership paradigms that align organizational objectives with broader societal needs, fostering a more equitable and sustainable future.

Reviewing the literature on the relationship between leadership and CSR is crucial for several reasons. First, it helps to understand the impact of leadership styles and behaviors on CSR initiatives within organizations. By identifying effective leadership practices that promote CSR, companies can enhance their social responsibility efforts, leading to positive outcomes for both the organization and its stakeholders. Second, this review fills a significant gap in the domain by synthesizing existing research and highlighting key findings and trends. It provides a comprehensive overview of the current state of knowledge on leadership and CSR, allowing scholars and practitioners to identify areas for further research and development. Therefore, the main objective of this study is to synthesize and analyze the existing literature to develop a comprehensive understanding of research trends regarding the relationship between leadership and CSR. This study is specifically designed to address four pivotal research questions:

- RQ1. What are the publication trends in leadership and CSR research?
- RQ2. Which authors, countries and institutions have made the most significant contributions to the field of leadership and CSR, and what are the most influential sources, and publications?
- RQ3. What predominant themes have surfaced in leadership and CSR research?
- RQ4. What gaps exist in the literature, and what potential directions can future research take in this domain?

Few literature review papers have been conducted on this topic to date. Notably, [Zhao et al. \(2023\)](#), [Saha et al. \(2020\)](#), [Lis \(2019\)](#), [Mazutis and Zintel \(2015\)](#), [Strand \(2011\)](#) and [Marshall \(2007\)](#) have made significant contributions to this area, and their findings are discussed further in detail. [Zhao et al.'s \(2023\)](#) research is the most recent, covering the period from 1994 to 2020. However, this study differs by extending into the postpandemic era, offering more timely and valuable insights. [Saha et al. \(2020\)](#) conducted a systematic review of the literature analyzing the link between CSR and ethical leadership, covering the period from 1958 to 2016, with a smaller sample size of 114 papers ($n = 114$). Similarly, [Mazutis and Zintel's \(2015\)](#) study, which used narrative and systematic review methods, had a limited sample size of 95 papers covering the period from 1976 to 2014. [Strand \(2011\)](#) and [Marshall \(2007\)](#) conducted narrative reviews of the literature, with [Strand \(2011\)](#) focusing on the link between various leadership styles and CSR, while [Marshall \(2007\)](#) examined CSR through a gendered lens. Hence, this study provides a comprehensive systematic review of papers

exploring the link between CSR and leadership, with a particular focus on the postpandemic era. It contributes to recent developments in this research domain, which, to the best of our knowledge, have not been addressed in previous studies.

After the introductory section, this review study unfolds as follows. Section 2 explores a comprehensive literature review on the intersection of leadership and CSR. Section 3 outlines the research methodology employed in this study. Subsequently, in Section 4, the findings derived from the literature review are presented, integrating both bibliometric and content analyses of pertinent scholarly papers. Section 5 suggests themes derived from the study's findings. Following that, Section 6 discusses potential research topics for future exploration. Finally, the last section (Section 7) concludes by identifying the theoretical and practical implications of the study's findings and discussing the limitations of this review.

2. Literature review

The field of CSR and leadership has garnered substantial scholarly interest, as indicated by the findings of bibliometric analysis (Zhao *et al.*, 2023). The growing attention to this intersection has resulted in significant contributions from numerous authors, shaping the evolution of this field. Particularly noteworthy is the substantial increase in publications on CSR-leadership since 2009, underscoring the rising interest and academic research focus on this subject. Numerous researchers have explored the relationship between various leadership styles and CSR, with ethical leadership emerging as a key factor. Studies have consistently shown that ethical leadership positively impacts CSR initiatives within organizations, consequently improving organizational performance (Alkhadra *et al.*, 2022; Kim and Thapa, 2018; Nguyen *et al.*, 2021; Williams and Seaman, 2016). For instance, a systematic review by Saha *et al.* (2020) proposed a conceptual framework highlighting the positive impact of ethical leadership, driven by personal values, on CSR and its direct and indirect influence on firm performance. Various studies have examined the role of ethical leadership and CSR in various organizational outcomes, including financial performance (Bouichou *et al.*, 2022a, 2022b; Nguyen *et al.*, 2019), organizational culture (Alkhadra *et al.*, 2022; Pasricha *et al.*, 2018), firm reputation (Nguyen *et al.*, 2021; Zhu *et al.*, 2014) and employees' turnover intention (Lin and Liu, 2017; Nejati *et al.*, 2021). These studies suggest that organizations can improve performance and other work-related factors by adopting an ethical leadership approach and prioritizing CSR strategies. Furthermore, responsible leadership has been identified as playing a crucial role in the effective implementation of CSR within organizations (Amir *et al.*, 2022). Moin *et al.* (2024) found that green transformational leadership (GTL) directly influences task performance, with CSR mediating the positive relationship between GTL and performance in the Chinese hospitality industry.

The concept of leadership style arises from the recognition that companies must address the interests of multiple stakeholders, representing a convergence of ethics, leadership and CSR (Antunes and Franco, 2016; Maak and Pless, 2006). Responsible leadership, a prominent theme in academic literature, is of significant importance within organizations. It enables the enhancement of various aspects, such as job performance, financial performance, organizational commitment and employees' positive behaviors, through the effective implementation of CSR initiatives (Bouichou *et al.*, 2022a, 2022b; Castro-González *et al.*, 2022; Javed *et al.*, 2020; Piñeros Espinosa, 2022). Moreover, research in this field has examined the impact of other leadership styles, such as transformational leadership, authentic leadership and servant leadership, on the successful implementation of CSR within organizations. These leadership styles have been linked to positive outcomes at both individual and organizational levels across a range of sectors (Besieux *et al.*, 2018; Iqbal

et al., 2018; Mallén Broch *et al.*, 2020; Sayed and Ansari, 2020; van de Bunt and Salomons, 2018; Yang and Kim, 2018).

Gender in leadership emerges as a crucial factor influencing CSR and organizational outcomes. Ali *et al.* (2023) found that leadership gender diversity, characterized by the inclusion of both male and female leaders offering diverse perspectives, positively influenced CSR. Additionally, CSR played a mediating role in the relationship between leadership gender diversity and organizational performance. Female leaders, in particular, have been linked to the enhancement of CSR practices within organizations. Alonso-Almeida *et al.* (2017) observed that female leaders demonstrated greater adaptability and effectiveness in driving company sustainability, particularly in Spain, through transformational and dual leadership styles. Furthermore, CSR reports signed by female leaders were found to be more readable and fostered a greater sense of solidarity, which positively correlated with organizations' future social performance (Harjoto *et al.*, 2020). Similarly, Hyun *et al.* (2022) found a positive relationship between CSR ratings and increased female participation in top executive teams, which led to a heightened focus on addressing CSR concerns. However, Tichenor *et al.* (2022) reported a different finding, where, although leadership gender diversity increased nonpersonnel Environmental, social and governance (ESG) scores, a higher number of female executives was associated with lower nonpersonnel ESG scores. This may be due to pressures on female leaders to prioritize financial performance over ESG considerations. Wang *et al.* (2024) conducted a meta-analysis of 318 samples to consolidate findings on the influence of executive and board attributes on CSR. They found that board characteristics have a stronger relationship with CSR than executive characteristics, with limited moderating effects from country-level managerial discretion and the strength of investor protection.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has had detrimental impacts on the global economy and societies, it presents a remarkable opportunity for businesses to transition toward a more genuine and real-world form of CSR, actively contributing to resolving crucial global social and environmental issues (Freze *et al.*, 2023). Despite extensive studies on the pandemic's adverse economic effects (Nicola *et al.*, 2020; Naseer *et al.*, 2023; Maheshwari and Maheshwari, 2021), limited attention has been given to its optimistic aspects, including the resurgence of concepts related to social responsibility, sustainability and green practices (Jian *et al.*, 2020). Furthermore, there is a paucity of research examining the relationship between leadership, CSR and organizational outcomes during and postpandemic (Freze *et al.*, 2023; Pham and Vu, 2023). Freze *et al.* (2023) found that the presence of a director or general manager who was also the owner of the organization positively influenced the effective implementation of CSR initiatives in the Czech Republic and the Russian Federation postpandemic. Additionally, Pham and Vu (2023) discovered that public value commitment leadership (PVCL) positively impacted accountants' productivity and CSR during the pandemic period and the new normal in the Vietnamese public sector, with CSR mediating the relationship between PVCL and accountant productivity.

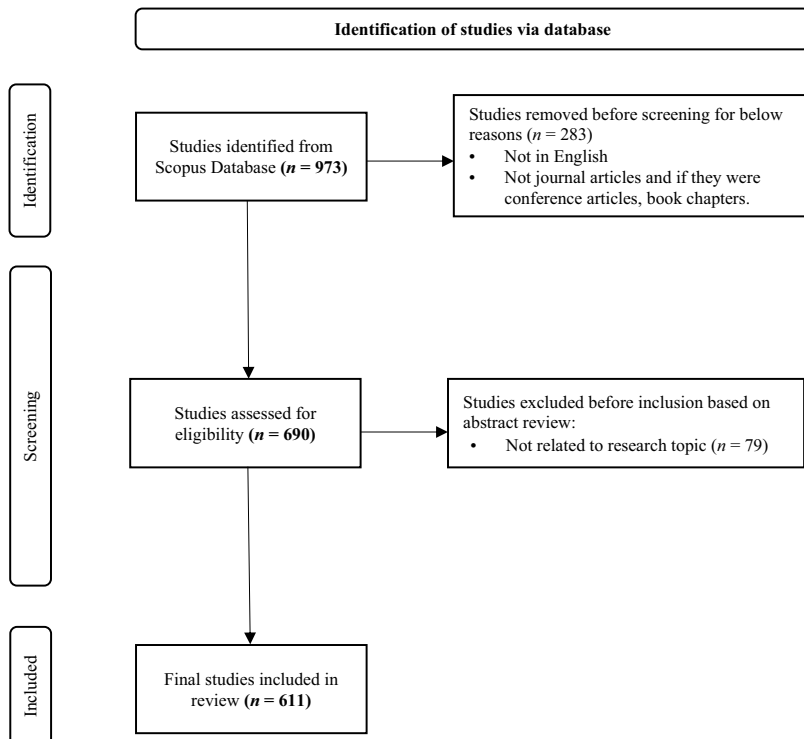
3. Methodology and data collection

A comprehensive literature review was conducted adhering to the preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA) guidelines (Page *et al.*, 2021), using the Scopus database, recognized as one of the largest databases (Chadegani *et al.*, 2013) to identify relevant papers in the field of leadership and CSR. This review focused on exploring publication patterns, influential authors, institutional affiliations, research methodologies and emerging themes (Maheshwari *et al.*, 2024) within the intersection of leadership and CSR. Additionally, the aim is to identify topics studied by scholars and highlight gaps in the existing literature to inform future research directions. This review considered papers

published from 1980 to 2023 to encompass both past and contemporary perspectives on research trends within the study's domain.

The search query used different combinations of keywords such as “Leadership,” “Leader,” “Corporate social responsibility” and “CSR” in the article title, abstract and keywords, yielding an initial pool of 973 documents. Subsequently, the search was refined to include only articles written in English and was further narrowed to exclude conference papers and book chapters, resulting in 690 documents. Following the abstract review, an additional 79 articles were excluded because they were not directly related to leadership and CSR, resulting in a final sample size of $n = 611$ articles for the analysis conducted in this review (as in [Figure 1](#)).

To ensure the validity and trustworthiness of this systematic review, several measures were implemented. The transparent and comprehensive search strategy, guided by PRISMA ([Figure 1](#)), involved clearly defined inclusion and exclusion criteria (as mentioned above) to minimize selection bias and ensure robust coverage of relevant literature. Furthermore, the search and selection process were carefully evaluated to enhance the reliability of study selection and reduce bias. Each step of the review process was meticulously documented, ensuring the methodology's transparency and replicability, thereby contributing to the robustness and trustworthiness of the study's findings ([Maheshwari and Kha, 2023](#)). The



Source(s): Adapted from Page *et al.* (2021) and refined by the author

Figure 1. Articles selection process following PRISMA guidelines

Bibliography Shiny tool from R software was used to address the first two research questions, while VOSviewer was used to answer the third research question of our paper.

4. Analysis

In this section, a total of 611 identified articles focusing on leadership and CSR research domains were used for further analysis using performance analysis and science mapping methods.

4.1 Performance analysis

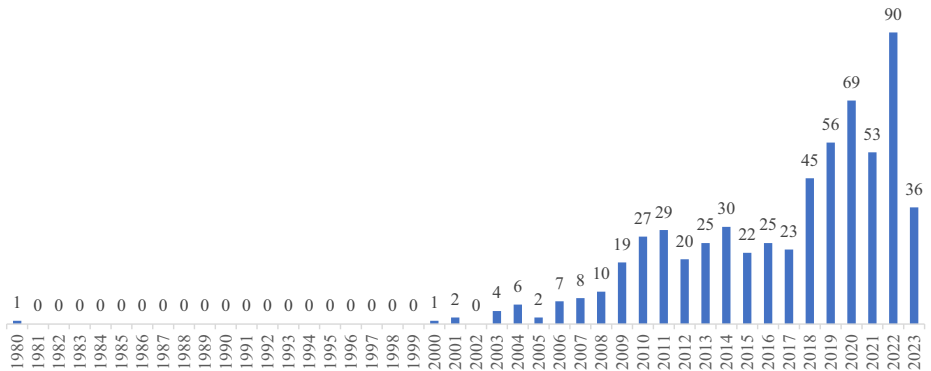
4.1.1 Trend in the research field (RQ1). Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to offer an overview of publication trends spanning from 1980 to 2023 to answer the first research question of this study (as shown in [Table 1](#)). According to the descriptive findings, a total of 611 documents were sourced from 315 outlets, comprising 604 articles and 122 single-authored documents. The publications demonstrated an annual growth rate of 8.69% during this period. On average, each document accrued approximately 31 citations, with a cumulative total of 39,211 references cited across the selected publications. Concerning author collaboration, each document exhibited an average of three coauthors, with an international coauthorship rate of 28.97%.

[Figure 2](#) illustrates the number of documents published on the subject of leadership and CSR from 1980 to 2023. The initial scholarly paper in this area emerged in 1980, followed by a 19-year hiatus until academic researchers began showing interest in the topic around 2000. Although progress remained sluggish over the subsequent decade, with only 10% of

Table 1. Main information of data using descriptive statistics

Description	Results
<i>Main information about data</i>	
Timespan	1980:2023
Sources (journals, books, etc.)	315
Documents	611
Annual growth rate %	8.69
Document average age	6.2
Average citations per doc	30.8
References	39,211
<i>Document contents</i>	
Keywords plus (ID)	752
Author's keywords (DE)	1,693
<i>Authors</i>	
Authors	1,509
Authors of single-authored docs	113
<i>Authors collaboration</i>	
Single-authored docs	122
Coauthors per doc	2.72
International coauthorships %	28.97
<i>Document types</i>	
Article	604
Others	7

Source(s): Author's own work



Source(s): Author's own work

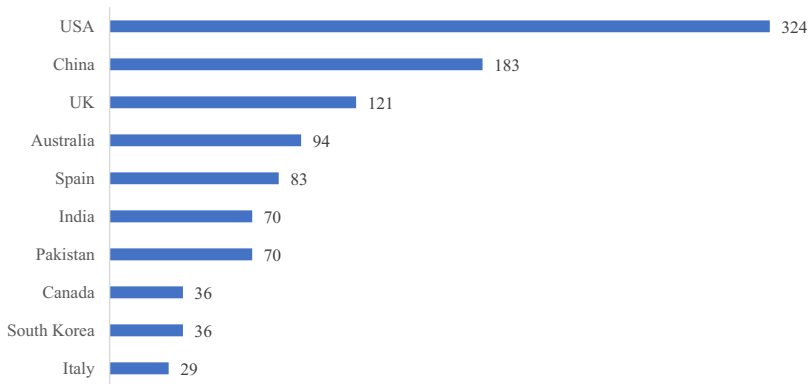
Figure 2. Total number of publications from 1980 to 2023

papers published during this period, there was a notable surge in publications since 2010. The majority of articles (90%) were published within the past six years, indicating a significant increase in research activity. Particularly in the past six years, there has been a pronounced uptick in research interest, with 57% of total articles published during this period. This suggests that the field of leadership and CSR is still relatively novel and gaining traction, with ongoing growth anticipated in future publications. Overall, the upward trend in publications reflects a growing acknowledgment among researchers of the importance of this research domain over time.

4.1.2 Regions of research (RQ2). RQ2 of this study is explored through the following three subsections and Section 4.2.1. **Figure 3** illustrates the top 10 countries with the highest number of publications on the intersection of leadership and CSR from 1980 to 2023, collectively constituting 68% of total publications. The USA leads with the majority of papers (324), followed by China, the UK and Australia. This concentration of research underscores the focused nature of this field, with a select few countries taking the forefront. Notably, most of these countries are developed nations. However, the research topic has garnered significant global attention, with studies conducted in a total of 72 countries. This global collaboration may be attributed to the trends of globalization and increased recognition of CSR's importance in the context of international business.

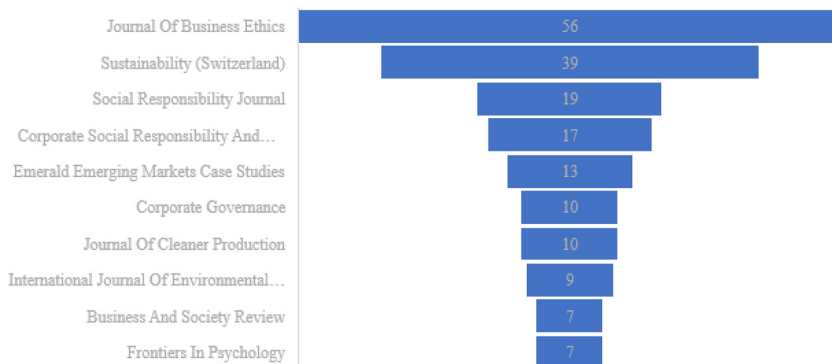
4.1.3 Publication sources (RQ2). **Figure 4** displays the top 10 impactful journals featuring a substantial number of publications on the intersection of leadership and CSR, encompassing a total of 611 relevant papers across 315 journals. These top 10 journals accounted for 187 articles, constituting approximately 31% of the total papers. The *Journal of Business Ethics* emerged as the leading journal in this domain, with 56 published articles. Following closely were *Sustainability* (Switzerland), *Social Responsibility Journal* and *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*. These journals are characterized by their thematic focus on ethical considerations, sustainable development and the social and environmental responsibilities of businesses.

4.1.4 Contributors impacting the research field (RQ2). **Table 2** presents the top 20 influential authors who have made significant contributions to the research on leadership and CSR from 1980 to 2023. Their impact on the field was assessed based on several metrics,



Source(s): Author's own work

Figure 3. Number of papers by countries



Source(s): Author's own work

Figure 4. Top 10 journals by number of publications

including the h-index, g-index, m-index, total citations and number of publications. The h-index or Hirsch index, is a widely recognized metric that evaluates an author's research output and influence by considering the number of papers that have received at least h citations. Introduced by [Egghe \(2006\)](#), the g-index offers a more comprehensive measure of citation performance by considering the cumulative citations of the top "g" articles. Additionally, the m-index, derived from the h-index, provides insight into an author's productivity over time by indicating the h-index per year since their first publication.

Nicola M. Pless emerges as a prominent scholar in the field, publishing the highest number of papers (6) along with the top h-index and g-index of 6. Following closely is Naveed Ahmad, with five published papers and an h-index and g-index of 5, along with the highest m-index of 1.667, indicating consistent productivity over time. Noteworthy is the substantial impact of Waldman's publications, accumulating the highest number of citations

Table 2. Top 20 most impactful authors according to h-index and number of publications

Authors	h_index	g_index	m_index	Total citations	No. of publications	Year of first publication
Pless NM	6	6	0.353	619	6	2007
Ahmad N	5	5	1.667	122	5	2021
Groves KS	5	5	0.385	273	5	2011
Maak T	4	4	0.333	381	4	2012
Nurunnabi M	4	4	0.667	149	4	2018
Voegtlin C	4	4	0.333	463	4	2012
Waldman DA	4	4	0.222	1,154	4	2006
Benn S	3	3	0.214	366	3	2010
Chen Y-RR	3	4	0.3	74	4	2014
Huang SYB	3	3	0.6	19	3	2019
Hung-Baesecke C-JF	3	4	0.3	74	4	2014
Larocca MA	3	3	0.231	240	3	2011
Li X	3	3	0.375	77	3	2016
Lindgreen a	3	3	0.231	215	3	2011
Manz CC	3	3	0.231	137	3	2011
Panagopoulos NG	3	3	0.273	411	3	2013
Samad S	3	4	1	60	4	2021
Stahl GK	3	3	0.25	128	3	2012
Swaen V	3	3	0.231	289	3	2011
Tuan LT	3	3	0.25	175	3	2012

Source(s): Author's own work

(1,154 citations). Waldman's work predominantly focuses on the role of leadership in CSR engagement and the CSR values of businesses (Waldman *et al.*, 2006a, 2006b). Additionally, authors from diverse disciplines and backgrounds have contributed significantly to the field of leadership and CSR research, enriching its breadth and depth.

Table 3 presents the top 20 institutions and their respective countries which have contributed the most publications on the topic of leadership and CSR from 1980 to 2023. Pepperdine University in the USA is leading, with an impressive 12 publications, closely followed by Swinburne University of Technology in Australia, with 11 published papers. Additionally, institutions such as Hong Kong Baptist University in Hong Kong, along with Tsinghua University, Wuhan University and Zhejiang University in China, have also made substantial contributions to the research literature, each with nine publications. Notably, the majority of institutions listed in the table come from the USA and China, indicating their significant role in advancing research in this field.

4.2 Science mapping

4.2.1 *Citation network analysis (RQ2)*. Citation network analysis serves as a method to gauge a paper's impact by assessing the frequency with which it has been cited in other works (McLaren and Bruner, 2022). This analytical approach enables the identification of the most influential publications within a research domain, elucidating the interconnectedness between various works when one paper cites another (Donthu *et al.*, 2021). Scholars frequently use citation network analysis in bibliometric review papers to scrutinize citation patterns within a specific field, providing insights into the flow of ideas and the prominence of key contributions (Martinez-Perez *et al.*, 2020; Mihalic *et al.*, 2021).

Local citations indicate the number of citations that a paper receives from other works within the same field or research network (Batista-Canino *et al.*, 2023). Table 4 highlights the

Table 3. Top 20 affiliations publishing in the domain

Affiliation	Country	Articles
Pepperdine University	USA	12
Swinburne University of Technology	Australia	11
Hong Kong Baptist University	Hong Kong	9
Tsinghua University	China	9
Wuhan University	China	9
Zhejiang University	China	9
Arizona State University	USA	8
Macquarie University	Australia	8
University of Central Punjab	Pakistan	8
Comsats University Islamabad	Pakistan	7
Ghent University	Belgium	7
University of the Punjab	Pakistan	7
Wageningen University	The Netherlands	7
Indiana University	USA	6
Macao University of Science and Technology	Macao	6
Pennsylvania State University	USA	6
Prince Sultan University	Saudi Arabia	6
Renmin University of China	China	6
Universidad autónoma De Madrid	Spain	6
University of Michigan	USA	6

Source(s): Author's own work

top 20 papers with the highest local citations, with [Waldman *et al.*'s \(2006a\)](#) study leading the list with 73 local citations. The studies garnering high local citations predominantly examine the influence of leaders and various leadership styles adopted by top management teams, including transformational, transactional and responsible leadership, on CSR implementation in organizations ([Du *et al.*, 2013](#); [Groves and LaRocca, 2011](#); [Maak *et al.*, 2016](#); [Waldman *et al.*, 2006a, 2006b](#)).

Global citations, in contrast, indicate the number of times a paper is cited by other papers in different disciplines and diverse backgrounds ([Batista-Canino *et al.*, 2023](#)). [Table 5](#) presents the top 20 globally cited publications, with the most cited paper being [Jo and Harjoto \(2011\)](#), accumulating 709 global citations. This research examined the impact of corporate governance and firm value on CSR activities and engagement in the business sphere. Following closely is the study by [Jenkins and Yakovleva \(2006\)](#) with 594 citations, followed by two studies by [Waldman \(Waldman *et al.*, 2006a, 2006b\)](#) with global citations of 474 and 481, respectively.

4.2.2 Cocitation analysis (RQ3). Cocitation, as defined by [Small \(1973\)](#), refers to the frequency of two papers being cited together. The occurrence of cocitation suggests a conceptual similarity, indicating a shared subject matter between the two publications ([Hjørland, 2013](#)). Through cocitation analysis, researchers can identify the underlying knowledge base within a particular research field and uncover similarities among the authors cited in papers within the domain ([Bang *et al.*, 2023](#)). The primary objective of cocitation analysis is to discern relationships among cited publications and facilitate content analysis. This method illuminates the interconnectedness of ideas and concepts within the scholarly literature, providing valuable insights into the intellectual structure and evolution of a research field over time.

The cocitation analysis was conducted using VOSviewer, with a minimum citation threshold of 50 for each author. The outcomes suggested the presence of five research clusters,

Table 4. Top 20 locally cited articles

Document	Year	Local citations	Global citations
Waldman DA, 2006 J Manage Stud	2006	73	481
Groves KS, 2011 J Bus Ethics	2011	31	173
Christensen LJ, 2014, Acad Manage Perspect	2014	29	173
Du S, 2013 J Bus Ethics	2013	29	141
Angus-Leppan T, 2010 J Bus Ethics	2010	28	125
Pless NM, 2012, Acad Manage Perspect	2012	25	156
Waldman DA, 2006 J Int Bus Stud	2006	25	474
Voegtlin C, 2012 J Bus Ethics	2012	22	213
Maak T, 2016 J Manage Stud	2016	19	147
Wu L-Z, 2015 J Bus Ethics	2015	18	144
Zhu Y, 2014, Asia Pac J Manage	2014	15	194
Afsar B, 2018, Corp Soc Responsib Environ Manage	2018	13	125
Kim M-S, 2018, Sustainability	2018	13	48
Groves KS, 2011 J Bus Ethics-A	2011	13	46
Saha R, 2020, Corp Soc Responsib Environ Manage	2020	12	95
Manzoor F, 2019, Sustainability	2019	12	71
De Roeck K, 2018 J Bus Ethics	2018	12	145
Pasricha P, 2018 J Bus Ethics	2018	11	57
Vlachos PA, 2013 J Bus Ethics	2013	11	211
Khan HUR, 2018, Corp Soc Responsib Environ Manage	2018	10	54

Source(s): Author's own work

encompassing a total of 95 authors cocited in a network of 611 papers. Cluster 1 consisted of 37 authors, Cluster 2 with 37 authors, Cluster 3 with 8 authors, Cluster 4 with 7 authors and Cluster 5 with 6 authors. These clusters are visually distinguished by the colors red, green, blue, yellow and purple, as depicted in [Figure 5](#). Waldman emerged as the most impactful author in the leadership – CSR research field, cited 306 times, closely followed by Carroll with 271 citations. Papers authored by renowned researchers within Cluster 1 primarily focused on the roles of leadership, CSR and their effects on various components in organizational contexts. This cluster also contained authors whose works presented frameworks and conceptual models related to CSR within organizational contexts. Numerous studies explored strategic management aspects and examined CSR strategies along with their implications for organizations.

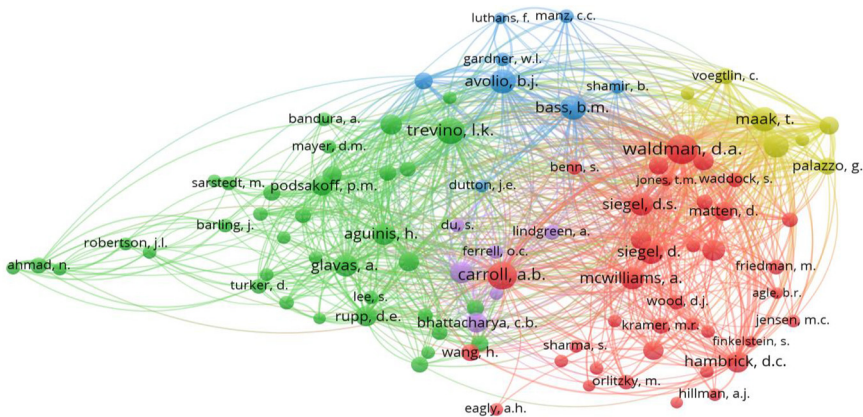
In Cluster 2, a predominant concentration was placed on ethical leadership and organizational justice, with some authors' works addressing research methodology concepts such as common method biases. Avolio and Bass, prominent authors in Cluster 3, have been leading in the research domain of leadership, known for their influential transformational leadership theory and the full range of leadership model. Other researchers in this cluster had papers discussing organizational image and identification. Finally, the most cited works of authors in Clusters 4 and 5 addressed responsible leadership and the impact of CSR on stakeholders in organizations. These clusters contributed significantly to the understanding of leadership and CSR dynamics within organizational settings.

[Table 6](#) presents the top ten publications identified through PageRank analysis. This method serves as an additional means to assess the authors' impact within the research field, highlighting the prominence of papers frequently cited by influential works. PageRank analysis originated from the algorithm initially developed by Google to rank Web pages in search results. In bibliometrics, it has been adapted to evaluate the importance and weightings of a citation network. The fundamental principle behind the PageRank algorithm

Table 5. Top 20 globally cited articles

Document	Year	Local citations	Global citations
Jo H, 2011 J Bus Ethics	2011	3	709
Jenkins H, 2006 J Clean Prod	2006	1	594
Waldman DA, 2006 J Manage Stud	2006	73	481
Waldman DA, 2006 J Int Bus Stud	2006	25	474
Epstein MJ, 2001, Long Range Plann	2001	3	467
Mcguinness PB, 2017 J Corp Financ	2017	7	339
Gillan SL, 2021 J Corp Financ	2021	2	261
Yin J, 2012 J Bus Ethics	2012	0	251
Azapagic A, 2003, Process Saf Environ Prot Trans Inst Chem Eng Part B	2003	0	228
Voegtlin C, 2012 J Bus Ethics	2012	22	213
Vlachos PA, 2013 J Bus Ethics	2013	11	211
Zhu Y, 2014, Asia Pac J Manage	2014	15	194
Metcalf L, 2013 J Bus Ethics	2013	6	188
Garavan TN, 2010, Adv Dev Hum Resour	2010	4	177
Groves KS, 2011 J Bus Ethics	2011	31	173
Christensen LJ, 2014, Acad Manage Perspect	2014	29	173
Mallin CA, 2011, Account Bus Res	2011	3	172
Mcshane L, 2012 J Bus Ethics	2012	9	167
Klettner A, 2014 J Bus Ethics	2014	1	167
Pless NM, 2007 J Bus Ethics	2007	0	167

Source(s): Author's own work



Source(s): Author's own work

Figure 5. Cocitation authors analysis by VOSviewer

Table 6. Cocitation analysis identifying PageRank

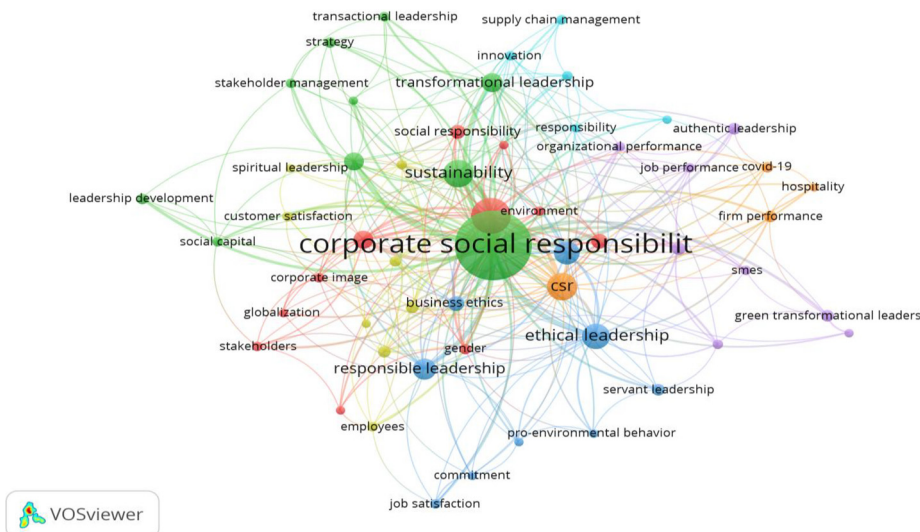
Document	Cluster	Betweenness	Closeness	PageRank
McWilliams A. 2001	1	79.61466104	0.014705882	0.044611997
Waldman D.A. 2006	2	84.73011143	0.014925373	0.044126397
Freeman R.E. 1984	1	26.66218199	0.014285714	0.035424308
Orlitzky M. 2003	1	20.19018979	0.014084507	0.034182031
Carroll A.B. 1979	2	56.60429574	0.014705882	0.026911508
Turker D. 2009–1	3	45.6768326	0.014285714	0.025831752
Brown ME 2005	3	27.24210738	0.013888889	0.025752066
Margolis J.D. 2003	1	5.179610205	0.012658228	0.025294611
Bass B.M. 1985	2	14.54673163	0.013513514	0.024016707
Waddock S.A. 1997	1	1.295942474	0.011904762	0.023327315

Source(s): Author's own work

aligns closely with the concept of “journal influence,” considering not only the number of citations among journals but also the significance of the citing journal. According to the findings, the study conducted by [McWilliams and Siegel \(2001\)](#) achieved the highest PageRank index. Their research primarily focused on examining the effects of CSR initiatives on the financial and organizational performance of firms. Additionally, the paper by [Waldman et al. \(2006a, 2006b\)](#) attained the second-highest PageRank index, indicating its significant influence within the academic realm. This study used the framework of transformational leadership theory to investigate the crucial role of chief executive officers (CEOs) in their firms' involvement in CSR practices. Moreover, this research garnered the highest number of local citations and was among the studies with the highest global citations, as evidenced by [Tables 4 and 5](#) presented earlier.

4.2.3 Cooccurrence analysis (RQ3). Cooccurrence analysis involves investigating two keywords appearing together in an article, indicating a linkage between the respective concepts ([Sedighi, 2016](#)), and this along with cocitation analysis (in Section 4.2.2) is used for addressing the third research question of the study with identification of three major themes in Section 5. This analytical technique has been widely employed by researchers across multiple disciplines, as demonstrated by the works of [Lis \(2019\)](#) and [Yoopetch et al. \(2022\)](#), who have leveraged it as a significant method for exploring the relationship of interconnected concepts. The objective of cooccurrence analysis is to determine thematic themes and effectively synthesize the diverse contents found in scholarly articles concerning the domain of leadership and CSR research.

Based on the cooccurrence analysis of authors' keywords, [Figure 6](#) presents a network visualization showing the connections among various terms. This analysis considered keywords that appeared a minimum of 5 times, resulting in a total of 55 items distributed across 7 clusters. Notably, the most frequently occurring keywords within the related research topics were “corporate social responsibility” (318 times), followed by “leadership” (84 times), “sustainability” and “CSR” appearing 52 times each, “ethical leadership” (42 times), “corporate social responsibility (CSR)” (36 times), “responsible leadership” (29 times), “transformational leadership” (25 times), “ethics” (23 times), “sustainable development” (22 times), “business ethics” (16 times), “corporate governance” (15 times), “China” (14 times), “social responsibility” (13 times) and “organizational identification” (12 times). Most of the keywords within the top 15 frequently occurring terms revolve around the themes of leadership or leadership styles (“leadership,” “ethical leadership,” “responsible leadership” and “transformational leadership”), CSR (“corporate social responsibility,” “sustainability,” “ethics” and “sustainable development”) and organizational



Source(s): Author's own work

Figure 6. Cooccurrence analysis by VOSviewer

contexts (“business ethics,” “corporate governance” and “organizational identification”), implying a significant linkage between leadership and CSR in organizational settings. This observation also highlights that the connection among variables has been identified and examined by a considerable number of studies since 1980.

The analysis of each cluster reveals distinct thematic areas within the intersection of leadership and CSR (which are discussed in detail in Section 5). Cluster 1 encompasses 11 keywords primarily addressing corporate governance and accountability. Cluster 2 focuses on the exploration of transformational and transactional leadership, along with keywords related to sustainability and sustainable development. Keywords in Cluster 3 revolve around ethical leadership, responsible leadership, servant leadership and the topic of business ethics and values. Cluster 4 aligns with the overarching theme of stakeholders’ engagement and corporate sustainability. In Cluster 5, the keywords center around environmental sustainability and organizational performance. The main topics of keywords in Cluster 6 include leadership’s responsibility, innovation and organizational performance. Finally, Cluster 7 represents thematic areas of crisis response, such as COVID-19, and the social impact. This comprehensive analysis highlights the diverse dimensions of research within the leadership and CSR domain, spanning corporate governance, leadership styles, ethical considerations, stakeholder engagement, environmental concerns and crisis management.

5. Content analysis of research themes (RQ3)

The identification of clusters was carried out in Sections 4.2.2 and 4.2.3, and subsequent major themes were developed based on these clusters by integrating the most influential papers. Three key themes emerged from the analysis of the most influential papers (as presented in Section 4.2.3, Table 6), which are discussed herein to address the third research question of this study.

The first theme revolves around the effects of ethical leadership and CSR on various organizational and employee factors. This theme delves into how ethical leadership practices and CSR initiatives influence organizational culture, employee behavior, job performance and other related factors. The second theme focuses on the impacts of responsible leadership and CSR on stakeholder engagement and innovative sustainability-oriented factors. It explores how responsible leadership approaches and CSR strategies contribute to enhancing stakeholder relationships, fostering sustainability initiatives and driving innovation in organizations. The third theme centers on transformational leadership and CSR's influence on sustainable development, employee well-being and organizational outcomes. This theme examines how transformational leadership styles and CSR activities intersect to promote sustainable development goals, enhance employee satisfaction and improve overall organizational performance.

In the following sections, a content analysis is conducted on the existing literature to further explore and discuss the implications of these themes in the context of leadership and CSR research.

5.1 Theme 1: the influence of ethical leadership and corporate social responsibility on various organizational and employee factors

Numerous studies in the domain of leadership and CSR have explored the intricate relationship among different leadership styles, CSR and various organizational and employee factors. A thorough content analysis reveals that a significant portion of influential studies has concentrated on unraveling the role of ethical leadership in propelling CSR initiatives within organizations. Ethical leadership is defined as the demonstration of normatively appropriate behavior through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, coupled with the cultivation of such behavior through effective mutual communication, reinforcement and decision-making processes (Brown *et al.*, 2005). The ethical leadership of management teams has been found to foster the congruence of ethical values among employees, thereby nurturing a socially conducive environment within organizations (Wu *et al.*, 2015). Moreover, CSR aligns with the value congruence inherent in ethical leadership, signifying organizations' recognition of their ethical and philanthropic duties toward stakeholders alongside their pursuit of economic prosperity and adherence to legal compliance (Zhu *et al.*, 2014). Ethical leaders are driven to enhance their organization's environmental, social and ethical performance to meet stakeholder expectations (Zhu *et al.*, 2014).

Brown *et al.* (2005) underscore that ethical leadership places a more explicit emphasis on evaluating the ethical attributes of a leader compared to transformational leadership. Indeed, prior research has shed light on the pivotal role of ethical leadership as a foundational element for the successful implementation of CSR initiatives in organizations (Tian *et al.*, 2015; Yin and Zhang, 2012). Various studies, including those by Saha *et al.* (2020), Kim and Thapa (2018), Nguyen *et al.* (2021) and Williams and Seaman (2016) have underscored the significant impact of ethical leadership on CSR and organizational performance. Ethical leadership has also been observed to moderate the relationship between CSR and firm performance (Bouichou *et al.*, 2022b; Zhu *et al.*, 2014). Furthermore, several researchers have delved into the vital role of ethical leadership in enhancing CSR initiatives through organizational culture (Pasricha *et al.*, 2018; Ullah *et al.*, 2022; Wu *et al.*, 2015).

On the employee level, ethical leadership and CSR have been found to positively influence socially responsible behaviors, attitudes and engagement among employees (Choi *et al.*, 2015; De Roeck and Farooq, 2018; Nejati *et al.*, 2019). Ethical leaders play a pivotal role in shaping their followers' understanding and acknowledgment of the significance of ethics and CSR in augmenting organizational effectiveness (Choi *et al.*, 2015). Moreover, ethical leadership and CSR have been linked to employees' organizational citizenship

behavior (Gao and He, 2017; Tourigny *et al.*, 2019), job satisfaction, organizational engagement (Lin and Liu, 2017; Nejati *et al.*, 2021; Tran *et al.*, 2023) and job performance (AfTable *et al.*, 2022).

5.2 *Theme 2: impacts of responsible leadership and corporate social responsibility on stakeholder engagement and innovative sustainability-oriented factors*

In today's business landscape, leaders are increasingly expected to not only deliver economic results but also to consider their social and environmental impact (Baranova and Meadows, 2017). Responsible leadership is characterized as a relational and influential process between leaders and stakeholders, emphasizing accountability in creating organizational value (Maak *et al.*, 2016). Leaders play a pivotal role in shaping organizational vision, mission, strategic direction, CSR initiatives and stakeholder interactions, thereby influencing how businesses manage their societal responsibilities (Maak *et al.*, 2016). Responsible leaders actively cultivate sustainable relationships with stakeholders to pursue shared objectives and contribute to the broader welfare of society (Schinzel, 2018).

Previous research highlights the crucial role of responsible leadership in fostering organizational sustainability by effectively addressing societal, environmental and economic concerns. Responsible leaders demonstrate an adeptness at identifying and addressing the needs and interests of stakeholders, using relational, governing and orientational perspectives to meet their demands and contribute to societal welfare (Amir *et al.*, 2022). They fulfill their social responsibility practically by prioritizing customer needs, ensuring employee equality and actively participating in community and network activities (Simunaniemi *et al.*, 2023).

Moreover, responsible leadership and CSR initiatives significantly impact various employee factors, including CSR engagement (Luu, 2023; Maak *et al.*, 2016), green behavior (He *et al.*, 2021), work engagement (Dong and Zhong, 2022; Yasin, 2021) and organizational citizenship behavior (Bouichou *et al.*, 2022a). Fostering a proactive and committed workforce, which enhances overall organizational efficiency, necessitates promoting responsible leadership, demonstrating genuine intentions behind CSR initiatives and ensuring equitable treatment among employees (Dong and Zhong, 2022). Additionally, Castro-González *et al.* (2019) found that responsible leadership positively influenced salespeople's creativity through the mediation of CSR perception. This suggests that sales leaders can cultivate a creative work environment by engaging in responsible leadership practices and effectively communicating CSR strategies. However, responsible leadership was also found to negatively moderate the relationship between CSR reputation and performance. Overemphasizing stakeholder values may lead socially responsible firms to excessively engage in CSR initiatives, which could potentially undermine organizational performance (Javed *et al.*, 2020).

5.3 *Theme 3: transformational leadership and corporate social responsibility influence on the sustainable development, employee and organizational factors*

Scholarly inquiry into the intersection of leadership and CSR has recognized the profound influence of transformational leadership and CSR on sustainability, various organizational components and employee dynamics in business contexts. Transformational leadership entails inspiring subordinates by articulating and promoting a shared vision, motivating them to transcend personal interests for the collective benefit of the team and the organization (Avolio and Bass, 1991; Bass, 1985). These leaders demonstrate advanced moral development, considering the interests of all stakeholders and actively engaging in organizational governance guided by universal ethical principles (Graham, 1995).

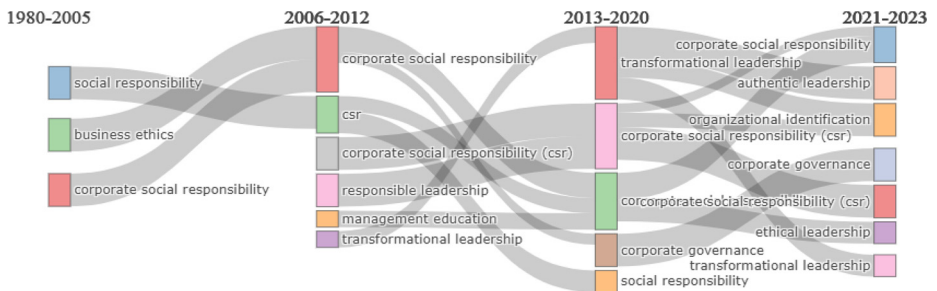
As a distinctive contribution of this paper, a thematic analysis was performed on the identified papers for this study. The thematic map presented in Figure 7 provides insights into

prevailing research topics from 1980 to 2023. Initially, between 1980 and 2005, scholarly attention primarily focused on CSR and business ethics. From 2006 to 2012, the research landscape advanced, witnessing the emergence of themes such as responsible leadership, management education and transformational leadership. Another phase of theme progression occurred from 2013 to 2020, with the inclusion of corporate governance. In recent years (2021–2023), the domain of CSR research has expanded to incorporate authentic leadership, organizational identification and ethical leadership. This evolution reflects the dynamic nature of research within the intersection of leadership and CSR, demonstrating shifts in emphasis and the exploration of new dimensions over time.

Previous research has shown that transformational leadership plays a crucial role in enhancing environmental performance (Hussain *et al.*, 2022; Niazi *et al.*, 2023; Tosun *et al.*, 2022), fostering green innovation (Sobaih *et al.*, 2022), and promoting CSR and environmental engagement within organizations (Goffnett, 2018; Waldman *et al.*, 2006a). Through environmentally specific transformational leadership, organizations can inspire employees to embrace pro-environmental values by effectively communicating a clear environmental vision, resulting in increased green advocacy among employees (Crucke *et al.*, 2022). Furthermore, the integration of transformational leadership and CSR practices within organizations has been linked to enhanced employee job performance (Hongdao *et al.*, 2019; K and Ranjit, 2020; Manzoor *et al.*, 2019), increased work commitment (Chandra *et al.*, 2023; Sayed and Ansari, 2020), organizational citizenship behavior (Alshihabat and Atan, 2020; Goswami *et al.*, 2018; Groves and La Rocca, 2012a, 2012b; Srour *et al.*, 2020), adoption of pro-environmental behavior (Deng *et al.*, 2022; Soni, 2022) and positive stakeholder perceptions of CSR (Groves and La Rocca, 2012a, 2012b, 2011). Consequently, these factors contribute to favorable outcomes at both individual and organizational levels. Several studies have also examined the substantial impact of transformational leadership, CSR and firm performance (Khan *et al.*, 2018; Kusi *et al.*, 2021; Manzoor *et al.*, 2019), organizational innovation (Khan *et al.*, 2018; Sobaih *et al.*, 2022) and organizational identification (Allen *et al.*, 2017; Chandra *et al.*, 2023; Goswami *et al.*, 2018).

6. Research gaps and directions for future research (RQ4)

In this section, the last question of this study (RQ4) is addressed by providing the avenues for future research. A comprehensive review of the literature on leadership and CSR reveals several significant research gaps and points toward future research directions to advance theoretical knowledge, inform managerial practices and guide policy interventions aimed at promoting responsible leadership and sustainable CSR initiatives. Based on the analysis



Source(s): Author’s own work

Figure 7. Thematic map of publications from 1980 to 2023

conducted in this study, the eight specific directions for future research are proposed, which are discussed next.

First, while existing studies have delved into the relationship between leadership styles and CSR in the pre-pandemic era, there is a pressing need for studies that examine this link in the post-pandemic era. Second, existing studies have predominantly focused on a single leadership style to understand its relationship with CSR. There is a necessity for research that integrates multiple theoretical perspectives, such as transformational leadership, servant leadership and ethical leadership, to offer a more comprehensive understanding of how various leadership approaches influence CSR initiatives within organizations.

Third, future research could explore the impact of contextual factors, including organizational culture, industry characteristics and national cultural dimensions, on the relationship between leadership and CSR. Comparative studies across diverse cultural contexts could shed light on the universality or contingency of leadership-CSR dynamics. Fourth, future research studies could explore the mediating variables, such as organizational climate, employee attitudes and stakeholder perceptions, as well as moderating factors, such as firm size, industry type and environmental uncertainty, to offer valuable insights into the complexity of leadership-CSR relationships.

Fifth, to capture the dynamic nature of leadership-CSR interactions, longitudinal designs could be used to assess the temporal effects of leadership behaviors on CSR performance over time. Sixth, multilevel analyses that scrutinize leadership-CSR dynamics at both the individual and organizational levels could provide a more nuanced understanding of the mechanisms underlying these relationships. Seventh, given the evolving nature of CSR and leadership practices, future research should explore emerging trends, such as responsible leadership, sustainable innovation and stakeholder engagement, to identify innovative practices that enhance organizational sustainability and social impact.

Finally, future research could explore the ethical dimensions of leadership and CSR across various cultural contexts, acknowledging the significant role that ethics plays in shaping economic and social systems (Rendtorff, 2023). By examining ethical theories and practices in different cultures, researchers can better understand the diverse conceptions of ethics that influence leadership behaviors and CSR initiatives. This avenue is particularly important for identifying humanity-based alternatives to mainstream economic thinking, ultimately contributing to more equitable and just economic systems worldwide.

7. Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to explore the relationship between leadership styles and CSR initiatives within organizations. Through a comprehensive review and synthesis of the literature from the studies conducted from 1980 to 2023, the findings shed light on the complex interplay between different leadership approaches and CSR outcomes, offering valuable insights for both theory and practice.

7.1 Theoretical implications

There are several theoretical implications regarding the role of leadership in driving CSR initiatives and fostering sustainable business practices. First, the integration of multiple theoretical perspectives, including transformational leadership, ethical leadership and responsible leadership, emerged as a key theme in understanding the dynamics of leadership-CSR relationships (Rendtorff, 2019). The findings suggest that effective leadership in promoting CSR goes beyond transactional behaviors and encompasses transformative processes that inspire, empower and engage employees in socially responsible actions (Rendtorff and Bonnafous-Boucher, 2023; Rendtorff and Bonnafous-Boucher, 2016).

Moreover, the review highlighted the dynamic and contingent nature of leadership-CRS relationships, emphasizing the importance of contextual factors, organizational characteristics and stakeholder dynamics in shaping the effectiveness of leadership behaviors (Rendtorff, 2020). While certain leadership styles, such as transformational leadership, were found to be positively associated with CSR outcomes across different contexts, the effectiveness of leadership behaviors may vary depending on industry norms, regulatory environments and cultural dimensions. Furthermore, the identification of mediating and moderating mechanisms provided insights into the underlying processes through which leadership styles impact CSR outcomes. From organizational climate and employee attitudes to stakeholder perceptions and regulatory pressures, various factors were found to mediate or moderate the relationship between leadership and CSR, highlighting the importance of considering intraorganizational dynamics and external stakeholder influences in understanding leadership-CRS dynamics. Overall, this review suggests that effective leadership plays a critical role in shaping organizational culture, fostering stakeholder relationships and promoting responsible business practices. By integrating theoretical insights into practical strategies, organizations can enhance their leadership effectiveness, drive CSR initiatives and contribute to sustainable development goals in an increasingly complex and interconnected global business environment. Finally, this review expands beyond the postpandemic era, a deviation from previous systematic literature reviews, thus further enhancing the existing literature.

7.2 Practical implications

This review suggests several practical implications for organizations aiming to bolster leadership effectiveness and instill responsible CSR practices within an organization. First, investing in leadership development programs geared toward fostering transformational, ethical and responsible leadership competencies among managers and executives is crucial. These programs can include practical workshops, real-world case studies and mentorship opportunities to equip leaders with the necessary skills and attributes to motivate and empower employees to actively participate in CSR initiatives. Additionally, organizations must prioritize effective stakeholder engagement strategies characterized by transparent communication, open dialogue and collaborative partnerships. Implementing mechanisms such as regular stakeholder meetings, feedback surveys and cocreation sessions can ensure that leadership objectives align with stakeholder expectations, thereby creating trust and cooperation in CSR endeavors. Moreover, cultivating a supportive organizational culture and climate that places value on ethical conduct, social responsibility and sustainability is essential. Embedding these values into core policies, performance evaluation criteria and reward systems helps leaders create an environment conducive to CSR implementation and employee engagement. Furthermore, taking a long-term perspective and integrating CSR considerations into strategic decision-making processes is imperative. Using tools like sustainability dashboards and CSR impact assessments to monitor progress ensures the sustainability of CSR initiatives, enhancing organizational resilience, reputation and competitive advantage in an increasingly complex global landscape.

7.3 Limitations of the study

While this study has provided valuable insights, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations and identify opportunities for future research. Primarily, the study focused exclusively on papers available in the Scopus database, potentially overlooking significant contributions from other databases or publication formats. Additionally, despite efforts to ensure diversity in the selection of articles, the presence of publication bias might have influenced the

findings, thus impacting their generalizability. Furthermore, the exclusion of conference papers and book chapters may have restricted the scope of the review, potentially missing out on unique perspectives and insights. Moving forward, researchers could conduct more extensive literature reviews encompassing multiple databases and languages to ensure a more comprehensive examination of the literature. Moreover, employing alternative methodologies, such as qualitative case studies or longitudinal designs, could offer deeper insights into the dynamics of leadership and CSR over time. Exploring emerging topics and trends, such as the influence of technological advancements or global events on leadership and CSR practices, would also be valuable for staying abreast of evolving organizational landscapes. By addressing these limitations and exploring new avenues for research, scholars can contribute to advancing knowledge and understanding in the field of leadership and CSR.

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