

Alisa Mujkić, PhD¹

Senad Softić, PhD²

A BIBLIOMETRIC OVERVIEW OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP - PERFORMANCE RELATIONSHIP

ABSTRACT

Previous research highlighted undoubtedly positive impact of transformational leadership on a wide range of performance, including its follower, individual and organizational levels. However, the focus to date has mainly been on the concept's empirical underpinnings and, hence, the purpose of this study is to present and clarify the intellectual structure of transformational leadership – performance relationship studies. Building on the bibliometric analysis, we have provided the information on publishing trends, the most prolific countries and authors that shape this relationship, whereas term analysis provides a taxonomy for ongoing and recommended upcoming research in the field. The results showed a) the field is under a surprisingly strong influence of a diversified research context along with the focus on the well-recognized and expected Anglo-American region; b) there are five clusters which have been recognized as representatives of the field; c) scarcity of research into sales and managerial performance has been identified which indicates that there is a considerable potential for wide-ranging research in fields of marketing and management in general. In the context of contribution, this study provides a reference to researchers entering this field, as well as guidance for future research.

Keywords: *transformational leadership, performance, bibliometric analysis, term analysis, intellectual structure*

1. INTRODUCTION

Transformational leadership (hereinafter TRL) research unanimously emphasizes Bass's (1985) contribution to this field (e.g., Boehm et al., 2015; Lim and Ployhart, 2004; Charbonneau, Barling and Kelloway, 2001). Transformational leadership theory, after its birth, has been revised by including four types of transformational behaviour, namely *idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individualized con-*

1 The School of Economics and Business Sarajevo, University of Sarajevo; alisa.mujkic@efsa.unsa.ba

2 The School of Economics and Business Sarajevo, University of Sarajevo; senad.softic@efsa.unsa.ba

sideration, and intellectual stimulation (Bass and Avolio, 1993). Individuals who possess these traits are described as transformational leaders (Yukl, Gordon and Taber, 2002), capable of working with different types of people and of motivating them to provide an extra effort in doing their job (Yukl, 2006).

Idealized influence presents a behaviour model of a leader which people around follow and respect (Bass and Riggio, 2006). In addition, Yukl (2006) claims that this characteristic not only enhances an individual's emotions but also results in emergence of a process of identification with the leader him/herself. Inspirational motivation is described as a leader's ability to successfully communicate a vision of an organization in order to inspire followers to accomplish the vision and organizational goals (Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999). Some scholars have linked this dimension with the concept of ethics (Banjeri and Krishnan, 2000), although all other views overlap in their approaches (Yukl, 2006; Kent, Crotts, and Azziz, 2001). Individualized consideration includes those leaders who pay special attention to each individual and act more as mentors or coaches than as superiors (Avolio et al., 1999). Practice and science revealed that this approach is most commonly used when there are new opportunities for growth and development of individuals, but exclusively within a supportive organizational climate (Bass, 2000). Intellectual stimulation encourages employees to reassess managerial decisions and group processes (Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999). Avolio et al. (1999) describe this dimension as a pure stimulation for followers to find appropriate solutions to different types of problems, which in its core aims at nothing else but to enhance their intellectual development.

In context of the extent of the paradigm's influence, over the past 50 years numerous studies have detected the positive impact of transformational leadership on performance (Wang, et al., 2005; Paarlberg and Lavigna, 2010; Ishikawa, 2012). Garcia-Morales, Jimenez-Barrionuevo and Gutierrez-Gutierrez (2012) have proved that TRL has a positive impact on organizational performance through learning and innovation, while its positive effect on team performance is also described in a concept paper by Dionne et al. (2004). The fact that TRL influences a wide range of performance has been additionally proven in the study by Geyer and Steyrer (1988), which examined its role in objective performance in banks. The impact on managerial performance is supported by the results of the study authored by Cavazotte, Moreno and Hickmann (2012), while all other studies support these results while examining different types of performance.

However, the proposed relationship has been evaluated mainly through empirical research, which presents the main rationale why this study employs a bibliometric approach, as it aims to present the intellectual structure of existing research in this field. In this sense, the study addresses three research questions:

1. What kind of publishing trends and journals shaped the evolution of the relationship between transformational leadership and performance?
2. What are the most prolific countries and authors from this field of study?
3. Which relationships have formed the intellectual structure of this field and is it possible to provide a taxonomy of existing and upcoming research?

2. Methodology and Data Statistics

This study employed bibliometric analysis, as an approach capable of illuminating intellectual condition of a specific field (Zupic and Cater, 2015). Previously used in different research disciplines (e.g., Stopar and Bartol, 2019) computer skills, information literacy and related abilities represent a crucial element in ICT education (Information and Communication Technologies; Govindaradjou and John, 2014; Hallinger and Kovačević, 2019), the analysis itself presents a quantitative and powerful tool for research performance and intellectual structure identification (Chen et al., 2012). Following the structured methodology proposed by Rowley and Slack (2004), we used a four-step approach that resulted in revealing the publishing trends, as well as in identifying of the most prolific journals, countries and authors. The approach also contributed to creating an intellectual structure of the field in the form of a taxonomy of existing research.

1. *Database and search term defining.* We choose the Web of Science (WoS) database as it is considered to be one of the most influential sources for bibliometric investigations (Van Leeuwen, 2006). Our search criteria included strict terms (Quental and Lourenco, 2012) *transformational leadership AND performance* in the titles of the documents published during 1994-2019 (as the period covered by WoS).
2. *Search and editing of the results.* Our search resulted in 163 available articles, excluding books and book chapters. We manually scanned all abstracts, and then decided to keep all of them, as their subjects fit into our search criteria.
3. *Data statistics.* This part answered our first research question. In this context, Figure 1 presents the publishing trend in the field. Although the growth is not geometric, the trend has been consistently on the rise, whi-

ch shows that the field is still in its infancy. It should also be noted that a slightly lower number of articles were published in 2017, while in 2018 the growth trend intensified. Table 1 summarizes in detail the most prolific journals which published 64 articles in the field (thresholds=more than 2 articles), comprising around 40% of the total. Leadership Quarterly, which, starting from 2009, published seven articles, emerges as the most prolific journal, followed by the Journal of Business Research with six published articles. It is noteworthy that the first published paper on this topic was published in 1995 by the Journal of Organizational Behaviour, which third by the intensity of its orientation on this field.

Figure 1: Publishing trend for TRL-performance relationship

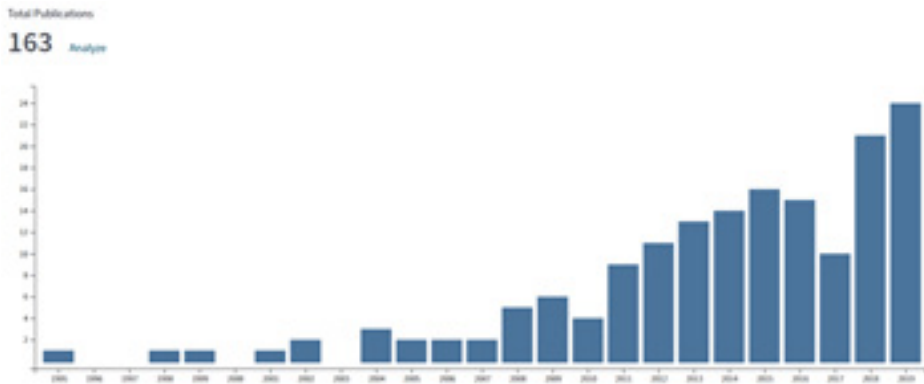


Table 1: The most prolific journals from TRL – performance relationship studies

Journal title	'94	'95	'96	'97	'98	'99	'00	'01	'02	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	Total*
Leadership Quart																1	1	1	1	1		2	1	1			7
J Bus Res														1					1	1	2		1			1	6
J Organ Behaviour	1																			2		1				1	5
J Organ Change Manag										2					1						1	1					5
Sustainability																				1	1		1	1	1	2	5
Group Org Manag					1											1	1				1						4
J Appl Psychol								1	1	1															1		4
J Occup Organ Psychol															2		1			1							4
Acad Manag J								1				1					1										3
Asia Pacific J Manag																	1				1		1				3
Inter J Hosp Manag																1										2	3
Inter J Hum Res Manag																1			1				1				3
J Bus Psychol																1			1	1							3
J Lead Organ Stud																					1		1	1			3
J Manag																1						2					3
Quality-Access to Success																									3		3
Total	1	1				1			1	3	1	1	1	2	3	3	3	3	6	5	7	4	5	4	5	6	64

*Only journals that published more than two articles from the field are included.

4. Data analysis. This part encompasses using WoS viewer software that allows storing and extracting documents (n=163) in Excel format. The data included the option full *record and cited references*, which we also stored in *Tab-delimited (Win)* format. Furthermore, we divided the usage of bibliometric analysis in three phases. The first one consists of citation analysis, which played a reliable and objective role in previous research (Gmur, 2003; Ratnatunga and Romano, 1997), in order to present the most prolific countries in the field. The second stage encompasses the co-citation analysis, which identified the most influential authors. The logic behind co-citation analysis is that it counts the number of times a specific paper was cited in other research simultaneously (Culnan, 1986). Finally, in the third phase bibliometric analysis has included a term analysis, which allowed us to highlight existing relationships by providing their taxonomy in terms of present and upcoming research in the field.

3. Results

3.1. The Most Prolific Countries and the Authors

Our second research question requires revealing the contributions of the most prolific countries and authors to the evolution of the TRL – performance relationship. At the outset, we have compiled a list of geographic sources of the articles that treat this relationship by employing citation analysis (Small, 1973). We have identified that, of the 48 countries, only 13 meet our search criteria (threshold<5). In this light, this field is dominated by developed countries, mostly from the Anglo-American region (USA=39, U.K.=13, Canada=9, Australia=9), but Chinese research should not be neglected either (see Table 3).

Table 2: Geographic sources of articles

Country	No. of documents	No. of citations	Link strength
USA	39	3986	297
China	25	1221	244
Taiwan	14	315	97
Spain	13	577	77
U.K.	13	369	74
Germany	13	510	72
Canada	9	1177	106
Australia	9	705	92
Indonesia	7	12	9
South Korea	6	142	32
Iran	6	93	9
Portugal	5	216	37
Pakistan	5	25	32

Note: treshold minimum is five documents per contry.

Next, we have employed an author co-citation analysis (ACA) as a tool applicable to a wide range of disciplines (e.g., Podsakoff, et al., 2008; Borman and Mutz, 2015; Volberda, Foss and Lyles, 2010). Marked as a prospective approach, ACA discovers association forms between scholars based on their co-citation frequencies (White and McCain, 1998). Of the 5100 authors identified and setting a threshold of at least 20 citations of a given author, we have found that 65 meet the proposed criteria. As expected, Bass, Avolio, Podsakoff, Judge, and Shamir appear as the most influential authors within the observed body of research although they are specialized in different but connected fields, such as leadership, psychology and behavioral research. The presence of Albert Bandura should be noted as well, although, at first glance, his research focus does not fit into this domain. However, his social cognitive theory was used by McCormick (2001) to propose a new leadership approach according to which self-efficacy of leaders is a key cognitive element of successful behavior in unpredictable environment, which presents only one of the examples how Bandura's theory was absorbed into the field.

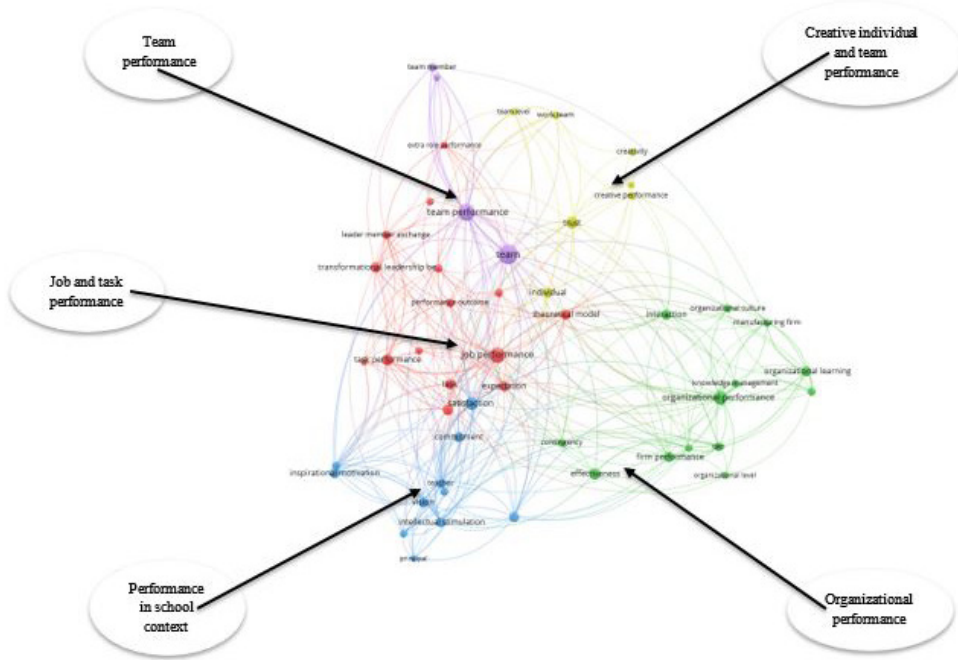
Table 3: Twenty most influential authors in the field of TRL-performance relationship, based on ACA approach

Author	University	Co-cites	Link strength
Bass, B. M.	Binghamton University	485	9,240
Avolio, B. J.	University of Washington	138	3,269
Podsakoff, P. M.	Indiana University	198	4,484
Judge, T. A.	Ohio State University	108	2,816
Shamir, B.	Hebrew University of Jerusalem	83	2,195
Walumbwa, F. O.	Florida International University	64	1,921
Jung, D. I.	Yonsei University	70	1,745
Howell, J. M.	Western University	60	1,640
Conger, J. A.	Claremont McKenna College	54	1,495
Bono, J. E.	University of Florida	48	1,467
Kark, R.	Bar-Ilan University	48	1,438
Yukl, G.	University at Albany	59	1,421
House, R. J.	n/a	56	1,384
Waldman, D. A. Arizona	State University	55	1,355
James, L. R.	n/a	52	1,213
Burns, J.	Williams College	57	1,210
Yammarino, F. J.	Binghamton University	39	1,141
Piccolo, R. F.	University of Central Florida	37	1,110
Shin, S. J.	Portland State University	35	1,096
Bandura, A.	Stanford University	36	1,091

3.2. Term analysis: existing taxonomy of transformational leadership–performance relationship studies

We employed term analysis to detect research trends used in this field. More specifically, this analysis created a term co-occurrence map based on text data extracted from titles and abstracts in selected studies ($n=163$), which helps us create a taxonomy of present and recommended upcoming research in the field. After setting a minimum number of occurrences of a term ($n < 4$), 217 of 2802 terms met the threshold, while Figure 1 displays 37 most commonly co-occurring terms, such as *Team* ($n=30$), *Team performance* ($n=24$), *Job performance* ($n=18$), *Organizational performance* ($n=16$).

Figure 2: Term co-occurrence map based on transformational leadership – performance relationship studies



According to the map, we have revealed five different clusters: *Team performance*, *Job and task performance*, *Performance in school context*, *Creative individual and team performance* and *Organizational performance*. Also noteworthy is the fact that the cluster *Team performance* plays a major role in the map, which was expected, as this term's co-occurrence rate is the highest (team, $n=30$; team performance, $n=24$). The discussion below presents the explanation of each cluster in terms of the most important authors who authored the bulk of 163 studies included in our list.

Team performance cluster. This cluster encompasses terms related to teamwork and the significance it has in achieving performance. These terms indicate the relevance of the research in this relationship, probably since Levine and Moreland (1991) claimed that performance is a construct strongly influenced by group values and norms. In terms of relevance, this cluster is dominated by the paper authored by Jung and Sosik (2002), which scored 789 citations on Google Scholar. The paper thematizes the importance of TRL and its effects on teamwork proving that this leadership style creates a more cohesive group. Support to this research was later provided by Lim and Ployhart's (2004) paper which postulated that leadership in general may have a serious prominence within teams. In the context of other content of the cluster, the paper by Schaubroeck et al. (2007) identifies more constructs relevant for this relationship, such as team potency as the important mediator. The cluster also helped reveal other authors important for the field, such as Keller (2006) and Braun and Clarke (2014) who appear in the list of top twenty most cited authors in the field (705 and 725 citations respectively on Google Scholar). Other relevant features of this cluster include papers by Dionne et al. (2004), Callow et al. (2009) and Kearney (2008) all focused on revealing the influence of TRL on team performance in different research contexts.

Job and task performance cluster. This cluster encompasses terms that reflect the relevance of job outcomes. Terms such as task, expectation, performance outcome and extra-role performance point to the conclusion that this cluster highlights the relationship with task and job performance. The most cited paper (n=2,568 on Google Scholar) that fits into this cluster is the one by Dvir et al. (2002) which illuminates the causal relationship between TRL practice and follower performance. Their field experiment suggested the significance of a developmental role of a leader's TRL in follower outcomes by enhancing the social bonds between them. This cluster is also dominated by Wang et al. (2005) research paper (1,703 citations on Google Scholar) in which they proved that leader-member exchange mediates the relationship between TRL and followers' task performance. In the context of influence that shaped this cluster, it is also noteworthy to mention an important article by Walumbwa, Avolio and Zhu (2008), with 618 Google Scholar citations. Besides TRL – job performance relationship, their paper also examines the significance of self-efficacy within this context, based on Bandura's observations according to which self-efficacy plays an important role in job performance outcomes. And, as noted before, it is in the context of this cluster that Bandura appears on the list of the twenty most influential authors in the field (see Table 4).

Performance in school context cluster. This cluster is led by the research paper written by Koh, Steers and Terborg (1995) which scored 929 citations on Google Scholar. It proves that TRL, besides its positive effects on organizational commitment,

organizational citizenship behavior and teacher satisfaction, has an indirect positive role on student performance. Also interesting to note is the research context of this study (school context in Singapore) which provides additional support to our previous analysis according to which Chinese research influence in expanding the scientific corpus of the field is strong (see Table 3). The school context is also in the focus of the multilevel study authored by Camps and Rodriguez (2011) and conducted in Costa Rica. Besides finding that the effects of TRL on performance are channelled through organizational learning capability, their study has also established that this cluster is influenced by a context different from the Anglo-American pattern. Finally, it is important to note that this cluster encompasses not only the terms related to school context (e.g., teacher, principal), but also the terms that are connected to the dimensions of transformational leadership, such as intellectual stimulation, as a crucial feature in learning and educational environment.

Creative individual and team performance cluster. The term creativity in the context of the observed relationship is a relatively new construct, as it first appears in the two studies published in this decade. The study conducted in Taiwan and authored by Chen and Chang (2012) presents the first research in this field in the context of creative performance (73 citations) and could be considered as the research trend that sets a solid foundation for future research. Although they thematized green creativity as a term, this was a sufficient lead for the study conducted by Gilmore et al. (2013) to follow this trend by considering creativity as a term independent from different prefixes (such as green). Also placed in a similar research context as previous studies (China), they have proven that positive influence of TRL on creative performance, and on organizational citizenship behavior as well, has been reduced for those followers who are higher on positive affectivity. In conclusion, it should also be emphasized that the studies related to creative performance in our main sample (n=163) include both individual (e.g., Banerjee, Alen and Gupta, 2017) and team applicability level (e.g., Shin and Eom, 2014) as the levels crucial for TRL implications.

Organizational performance cluster. This cluster encompasses terms mainly related to the treatment of performance on the organizational level. More specifically, the terms occurring within this cluster clearly indicate that the organizational performance is of immediate importance as it offers the highest number of terms in comparison with other clusters (see Green Cluster, Figure 1). The cluster is dominated by the study that recorded 797 Google Scholar citations (Garcia-Morales, Jimenez-Barrionuevo and Gutierrez-Gutierrez, 2012). The study offers the analysis of indirect effects of the relationship between TRL and organizational performance on a sample of Spanish companies and proves that this relationship is possible through organizational learning and innovation. Further relevance of innovation has also

been recognized in Garcia's et. al (2008) empirical study (415 citations) making this construct important for this relationship. Besides innovations, the study conducted in the Indian context has also proven the existence of a positive relationship, including intrinsic motivation as an additional outcome of TRL.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study employs a bibliometric approach with the aim to present the intellectual structure of existing research into the relationship between transformational leadership and performance. Through answering three research questions, the study offers the analysis of publishing trends and the journals which shaped the evolution of this relationship, which is followed by an overview of the most countries where the research in this field has been most prolific. By using author co-citation analysis we generated a list of the most prolific authors, whereas a term co-occurrence map identified five important clusters, each equally relevant for growing the intellectual structure of the field. The results have showed that the field is still in its infancy, as the total number of identified papers is still low. More precisely, only 163 papers that cover topics in this field have been found, and these constituted the main body of research used to generate the results of this study. Starting from 2009 onward, Leadership Quarterly has been identified as the most prolific journal, while the first paper from this field appeared in the Journal of Organizational Behavior. Furthermore and especially important is the fact that this field is not dominated by the Anglo-American research context, and that it reflects other cultural and environmental influences. China (e.g., Gilmore et al., 2013) or India (e.g., Garcia et al., 2008), in particular have considerably influenced the field, which makes it diversified and enriched by different and mixed cultural and research perspectives. Additionally, this study also recognizes most prominent authors in the field (e.g., Bass, Avolio, Yukl), and identifies additional authors important in terms of the influence exerted by their papers (e.g., Kark, James, Bandura).

Term analysis has revealed five different clusters that shaped TRL – performance relationship studies. In this context, this taxonomy includes clusters we have named Team performance, Job and task performance, Performance in school context, Creative individual and team performance and Organizational performance clusters, and for each we described the relative importance of contributing authors. However, this analysis also provided some important conclusions regarding gaps in the existing research in the field. Although the insight into our main sample (n=163) identified several studies that look at this relationship in different settings, it is conspicuous that only four out of 163 research papers offer the analysis of the relationship between TRL and sales performance. It is also noteworthy that this relationship has only become interesting in the current decade, which leaves vast space for improvement.

Notably, the first two studies on this relationship were published in 2013 (Shannahan, Bush and Shannahan, 2013; Schwegker and Good, 2013), with a long interval until the next studies appeared (Banerjee, Alen and Gupta, 2017; Kashani and Shabani, 2018). An even smaller number of studies that treat the relationship between TRL and managerial performance has been detected: only three 2012 onward (Cavazotte, Moreno and Hickmann, 2012; Kissi, Dainty and Tuuli, 2013; Nguyen et al., 2017). Taken together, additional research relationship to sales performance and managerial performance, constitutes our main recommendation.

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Alisa Mujkić, PhD

Senad Softić, PhD

BIBLIOMETRIJSKA ANALIZA ODNOSA IZMEĐU TRANSFORMACIJSKOG LEADERSHIPA I PERFORMANSI

SAŽETAK

Prethodna istraživanja nedvojbeno naglašavaju pozitivan utjecaj transformacijskog leadershipa na širok raspon performansi, uključujući nivo sljedbenika, individualni i organizacijski nivo. Međutim, taj fokus uglavnom obuhvata empirijska objašnjenja, te je, stoga, svrha ovog rada da prezentuje i razjasni intelektualnu strukturu studija koje su tematizirale ovaj odnos. Primjenjujući bibliometrijsku analizu, ovaj rad omogućava uvid u trendove objavljivanja, najproduktivnije zemlje i autore koji su oblikovali ovu oblast, dok analiza termina obezbjeđuje taksonomiju postojećih uz preporuke za buduća istraživanja. Rezultati ove studije pokazuju: a) da je oblast pod iznenađujuće snažnim utjecajem diverzifikovanih istraživačkih konteksta, pored već postojećeg anglo-američkog utjecaja; b) unutar oblasti je identifikovano per različitim klastera koji su prepoznati kao reprezentivni oblasti; c) identifikovan je dosta oskudan broj istraživanja koja tematiziraju odnos sa prodajnim i menadžerskim performansama, što ujedno predstavlja indicaciju za značajan istraživački potencijal u oblastima marketinga i menadžmenta u općenitom smislu. U kontekstu doprinosa, ova studija daje temeljni pregled budućim istraživačima zainteresovanim za istraživanja u ovoj oblasti, te daje smjernice za nadolazeća istraživanja.

Ključne riječi: transformacijski leadership, performanse, bibliometrijska analiza, analiza termina, intelektualna struktura