

LEADERSHIP AND CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: RESEARCH TOPIC PROFILING

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Abstract

The issue of a relationship between leadership and corporate social responsibility is getting more popular and is examined in different contexts. For this reason, the aim of the paper is to map trends in the research on the interface between leadership and corporate social responsibility. Topic profiling methodology is applied to scan a wide body of publications in order to identify key topics and research patterns. The data for analysis were retrieved from Scopus database. The paper discusses the following areas: general topic profiling, journals/topics profiling, authors/topics profiling, subject areas/topics profiling, core references/topics profiling. Finally, the article provides conclusions and recommendations for further studies.

Keywords: *leadership, corporate social responsibility, CSR, bibliometric analysis, topic profiling.*

1. Introduction

The concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has been in the center of interest of scholars and practitioners for many years. At the same time it is worth to stress that due to easier access to information on the market, stakeholders of modern organizations expect the more mature approach to the idea of CSR. It means that CSR becomes one of the key elements of enterprise's competitive advantage. To manage this challenge; it is important to engage leaders that can initiate solutions by actively involving and supporting different stakeholders. In this context, the interface between leadership and corporate social responsibility becomes one of the crucial fields of research.

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Specifying the scope of the paper we observe, following Karaszewski and Lis (2014a, p. 1056; 2014b, p. 54), that many scholars discuss both CSR as well as leadership, but nowadays it is important to study these concepts together. Moreover, the emergence of the *Journal of Corporate Responsibility and Leadership* focused on both issues may be considered as another manifestation of the growing interest among researchers in studies on the interface between leadership and CSR.

The aim of the paper is to map trends in the research on the interface between leadership and corporate social responsibility. The study is focused on the following research questions: (1) What are key topics observed in quality publications dealing with the interface between leadership and CSR? (2) How is the attention of source titles (journals) and authors in the field distributed among the identified key topics? (3) How are key topics and keywords distributed among subject research areas? (4) What are the most influential publications related to key topics in the research on the interface between leadership and CSR? (5) What are the recommendations for further studies in the field?

Bibliometric analysis is commonly considered as the methodology relevant to identify research fronts. Referring to the works of Nicholas and Richie (1978), and Potter (1988), Osareh (1996) divides bibliometric analyses into two categories: descriptive studies and behavioral studies also referred to as citation studies. Descriptive studies are used to explore the characteristics of the body of knowledge, while citation studies aim at studying relationships between publications within the research field (Osareh, 1996, pp. 150-151).

Topic profiling methodology (cf., Porter, Konghton & Lu, 2002) was applied to map the field of research on the interface between leadership and corporate social responsibility. Topic profiling is a component of the research profiling method and represents the stream of descriptive studies in bibliometric analysis. The main idea of this methodology is to scan a wide body of publications in order to identify key topics and research patterns. Data for analysis were retrieved from Scopus database. First of all, publications dealing with the interface between the issues of leadership and CSR were identified. The details of the sampling procedure are explained in the following section. Secondly, keywords included in these publications were analyzed in order to find out those of the highest frequency in the sample. Thirdly, keywords were grouped in clusters used to map most representative research topics in the field (general topic profiling). Then, the identified topics (keyword clusters) were studied in relation to source titles (journal), authors, research areas and core (most cited) references. The studies by Choi, Lee and Sung (2011), and Martinez, Jaime and Camacho (2012) were used as benchmarks for the research procedure.

Some limitations of the aforementioned methodology should be made explicit. Firstly, Scopus database does not include all the publications in the field, focusing on top-end papers published in high-quality journals, which obviously limits the number of records in the sampling process. Secondly, the database is biased to English language publications. Thirdly, grouping of keywords in clusters considered to represent key topics in the research field is flawed with the subjectivity of authors embedded into this procedure.

2. Research sampling

Scopus database was used to retrieve data for bibliometric analysis aimed at topic profiling of research on the interface between leadership and corporate social responsibility. Scopus is one of the world most recognized databases of quality research papers. As of January 2016, over 21,500 source titles from more than 5,000 publishers are indexed in the database. Scopus provides access to over 60 million records (Scopus, 2016).

In the sampling process, the pair of phrases ‘leadership’ and ‘corporate social responsibility’ / ‘CSR’ was searched in article titles, abstracts, and keywords of publications indexed in Scopus database. In result, as of July 5, 2017, 432 publications were retrieved. The majority of them (361; 84%) was issued between 2009 and 2017. All the publications under the study received in total 5352 citations. Certainly, the highest number of citations was noticed in recent years. Both characteristics of the research sample confirm the growing interest of the academia in exploring the interface between leadership and corporate social responsibility. Yearly distribution of the number of publications included in the sample and citations they received are presented in Figure 1.

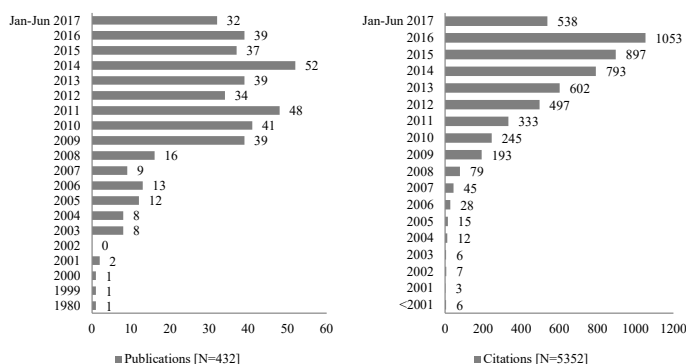


Figure 1. Scientific productivity of research on the interface between leadership and CSR

Source: own study based on data retrieved from Scopus database (accessed July 5, 2017).

3. General topic profiling

Keywords included by the authors in publications dealing with the interface between leadership and corporate social responsibility were used for topic profiling of the research field. In order to identify the issues and aspects receiving the most of researchers' attention top keywords were enumerated. The list (Table 1) shows top keywords listed in at least ten publications.

Table 1. Top keywords in research on the interface between leadership and CSR

Keywords	[N]
Corporate social responsibility	185
Leadership	94
CSR	33
Sustainable development	30
Ethics	29
Sustainability	29
Business ethics	21
Social responsibility	20
Corporate social responsibilities (CSR)	19
Social aspects	16
Human	15
Responsible leadership	15
Corporate strategy	14
Economic and social effects	14
Corporate social responsibility (CSR)	13
Article	11
Ethical leadership	11
Humans	11
Stakeholders	11
Corporate governance	10
Transformational leadership	10

Source: own study based on data retrieved from Scopus database (accessed July 5, 2017).

Certainly, 'corporate social responsibility' (in various forms) and 'leadership' are found to be the most often used keywords. However, some other aspects receive a lot of researchers' attention, too. There is observed a strong focus on such issues as ethics, sustainability, human and social aspects, corporate strategy and governance, stakeholders or economic and social effects. In order to find out research patterns, keywords were grouped in clusters mapping most representative research topics in the field. Further analysis included only

clusters consisting of keywords represented in at least 20 publications. In the majority of the cases, categorizations were exclusive, i.e., keywords were assigned to a single cluster. However, we decided to assign the keyword ‘ethical leadership’ to two categories (attributive leadership and ethics). Identified key topic areas (keyword clusters), ranked by the number of publications they relate to, are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Key topics in research on the interface between leadership and CSR

Topics/keyword clusters (number of publications)	Keywords (number of publications)
corporate social responsibility (249)	corporate social responsibility (185); CSR (33); social responsibility (20); corporate social responsibilities (19); corporate social responsibility (13); corporate responsibility (6); social responsibilities (5); CSR policies (2)
leadership (107)	leadership (94), leadership development (9); leadership style (3); leadership styles (3)
ethics (62)	ethics (29); business ethics (21); ethical leadership (11); ethical decision making (4); leadership ethics (3); code of conduct (2); code of ethics (2)
sustainability (57)	sustainable development (30); sustainability (29); corporate sustainability (6); environmental sustainability (4); sustainable business (3); business sustainability (2)
attributive leadership (46)	responsible leadership (15); ethical leadership (11); transformational leadership (10); servant leadership (5); self-leadership (3); spiritual leadership (3); transactional leadership (3);
strategic management issues (38)	corporate strategy (14); competition (7); strategic planning (7); strategy (6); competitive advantage (5); business strategy (4); business model (3); strategic management (3); business models (2); competitive intelligence (2); competitive position (2)
values, attitudes and behaviors (35)	social behaviors (8); corporate citizenship (7); organizational culture (5); motivation (4); citizenship (3); shared value (3); values (3); values congruence (3); attitude (2); attitude of health personnel (2); commitment (2)
environmental issues (23)	environmental management (6); environment (5); environmental sustainability (4); climate change (3); environmental impact (3); environmental issue (3); environmental planning (3); environmental protection (3)
knowledge management and innovations (22)	innovation (7); knowledge management (6); knowledge sharing (6); information management (5); excellence (3); learning (3); best practice (2)

Source: own study based on data retrieved from Scopus database (accessed July 5, 2017).

The key topic areas in the studies on the interface between leadership and CSR are corporate social responsibility, leadership, ethics, sustainability, attributive

leadership, strategic management issues, values, attitudes and behaviors, environmental issues and knowledge management and innovations.

4. Journals/topics profiling

Top five journals dealing with the issues of the interface between leadership and CSR are *Journal of Business Ethics* (58 papers), *Corporate Governance* (16), *Social Responsibility Journal* (9), *Academy of Management Perspectives* (7) and *Strategic Direction* (6). As there are no keywords included in the records of *Academy of Management Perspectives*, this journal was excluded from the analysis. For all remaining top journals, top keywords were enumerated (Table 3).

Table 3. Most frequent keywords in top journals in research on the interface between leadership and CSR

Keywords	JoBE	CG	SRJ	SD
corporate social responsibility	38	14	8	5
CSR	8	-	-	-
leadership	10	14	-	6
responsible leadership	6	-	-	-
ethics	-	4	3	2
business ethics	10	-	-	-
sustainability	6	-	-	-
sustainable development	-	4	-	-
innovation	-	2	-	2
corporate image	-	-	2	-

Source: own study based on data retrieved from Scopus database (accessed July 5, 2017).

The analysis indicates some trends in journals/topics profiling. In all the journals, corporate social responsibility and ethics (business ethics) are included among top keywords.

What is interesting, *Social Responsibility Journal* leadership is not found among most frequent in case of keywords. *Journal of Business Ethics* shows a lot of interest in responsible leadership and sustainability. The issues of sustainable development are also often presented in *Corporate Governance*. Moreover, the focus on innovations is observed in *Corporate Governance* and *Strategic Direction*, while the corporate image is listed among top keywords in *Social Responsibility Journal*.

In order to ensure comprehensive journals/topics profiling, we complemented the study with pointing out top journals in each of key topic areas in the field (Table 4).

Table 4. Top journals in research on the interface between leadership and CSR

Topics/keyword clusters (number of publications)	Journals (number of publications)
corporate social responsibility (249)	Journal of Business Ethics (48); Corporate Governance (15); Social Responsibility Journal (8); Strategic Direction (5)
leadership (107)	Corporate Governance (15); Journal of Business Ethics (11); Strategic Direction (6)
ethics (62)	Journal of Business Ethics (16); Corporate Governance (4); Social Responsibility Journal (3); Management Decision (2); Strategic Direction (2)
sustainability (57)	Journal of Business Ethics (7); Corporate Governance (5); Corporate Governance Bingley (2)
attributive leadership (46)	Journal of Business Ethics (18); Responsible Leadership (3); Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies (2)
strategic management issues (38)	Strategic Direction (3); Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research (2)
values, attitudes and behaviors (35)	Journal of Business Ethics (7)
environmental issues (23)	Journal of Environmental Management (2); Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences (2)
knowledge management and innovations (22)	Corporate Governance (3); Strategic Direction (2);

Source: own study based on data retrieved from Scopus database (accessed July 5, 2017).

As deduced from the data collected in Table 4, the majority of key areas in the field share the attention of the same journals. *Journal of Business Ethics* is represented in six among nine categories, while in five cases it is the most prolific source title in the area. Other highly represented journals are *Corporate Governance* (5) and *Strategic Direction* (4).

5. Authors/topics profiling

The most prolific authors in the field are Maak (the University of South Australia), Waldman (Arizona State University), Pless (the University of South Australia) and Stahl (Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien). Their research is mainly focused on the issues of responsible leadership (Maak, Pless), transformational leadership and CSR (Waldman), leaders' orientation to social responsibility (Waldman, Pless) and responsible leadership in the international and global

context (Stahl). In order to map researchers' interests more comprehensively, there were identified top authors for each key topic area in the field of studies on the interface between leadership and CSR (Table 5).

Table 5. Top authors in research on the interface between leadership and CSR

Topics/keyword clusters (number of publications)	Authors (number of publications)
corporate social responsibility (249)	Benn, S. (4); Groves, K.S. (4); Swaen, V. (4); Voegtlin, C. (4); Lindgreen, A. (3); Maak, T. (3); Metcalf, L. (3); Pless, N.M. (3); Stahl, G.K. (3)
leadership (107)+	Maak, T. (3); Angus-Leppan, T. (2); Benn, S. (2); Kakabadse, A. (2); Kakabadse, N.K. (2); Pless, N. (2); Tuan, L.T. (2)
ethics (62)	Voegtlin, C. (3); Kakabadse, A. (2)
sustainability (57)	Benn, S. (3); Metcalf, L. (2); Stahl, G.K. (2)
attributive leadership (46)	Groves, K.S. (5); Voegtlin, C. (4); LaRocca, M.A. (3); Swaen, V. (3)
strategic management issues (38)	Barabel, M. (2); Couzineau-Zegwaard, E. (2); Hamman, R. (2); Meier, O. (2)
values, attitudes and behaviors (35)	Groves, K.S. (3); Pless, N.M. (2)
environmental issues (23)	Barabel, M. (2); Couzineau-Zegwaard, E. (2); Meier, O. (2); Nwafor, A.O. (2)
knowledge management and innovations (22)	Tang, H. (2)

Source: own study based on data retrieved from Scopus database (accessed July 5, 2017).

The analysis of the data gathered in Table 5 enables us to point out some patterns and trends in authors/topics profiling. First of all, some topic areas share the interest of the same scholars, e.g., corporate social responsibility and attributive leadership or strategic management issues and environmental issues. Secondly, the list of most the influential authors should be supplemented with Benn (University of Technology Sydney), Groves (Pepperdine University), Swaen (Universite Catholique de Louvain) and Voegtlin (Universität Zurich). The Benn's research is focused on the issues of leadership and sustainability. Groves is mainly interested in transformational leaders' values in the social responsibility context. Swaen examines the interface between corporate social responsibility and human resources management aspects. Voegtlin deals with the ideas of responsible leadership including their studies in the global context.

6. Subject areas/topics profiling

The top five subject areas in the field are Business, Management & Accounting (317 related publications); Social Sciences (179); Economics, Econometrics and Finance (127); Arts & Humanities (74) and Engineering (30). Distribution of papers across subject areas and key topic areas in research on the interface between leadership and CSR is presented in Table 6. The subject areas excluded from top five for each of key topic areas are highlighted.

Table 6. Top subject areas in research on the interface between leadership and CSR

Topics/keyword clusters (number of publications)	Bus Mgt Acc	Soc- Sci	Eco- 2Fin	Ar- tHum	Eng	Other
corporate social responsibility (249)	184	105	69	53	13	EnvSci - 20
leadership (107)	76	46	18	13	3	Med - 9
ethics (62)	50	29	21	16	1	Psy - 5
sustainability (57)	39	22	10	5	11	EnvSci - 8
attributive leadership (46)	39	23	22	21	0	DecSci - 5
strategic management issues (38)	20	13	5	1	11	EnvSci - 8
values, attitudes and behaviors (35)	22	13	11	5	1	Med - 7
environmental issues (23)	8	8	5	3	6	EnvSci - 6
knowledge management and innovations (22)	15	1	4	0	4	Comp- Sci 4 DecSci - 2

Note: Business, Management & Accounting (BusMgtAcc); Social Sciences (SocSci); Economics, Econometrics & Finance (Eco2Fin); Arts & Humanities (ArtHum) and Engineering (Eng); Environmental Science (EnvSci); Medicine (Med); Computer Science (CompSci); Psychology (Psy); Decision Sciences (DecSci).
Source: own study based on data retrieved from Scopus database (accessed July 5, 2017).

Publications representing the subject areas of Business, Management & Accounting, and Economics, Econometrics & Finance are found to be highly relevant to all nine key topic areas identified by keyword clustering. Social Sciences are excluded from the catalog of top five subject areas in case of studies on the aspects of knowledge management and innovations. Art & Humanities and Engineering papers are listed among top subject areas in relation to around half of topics in the field. Moreover, in some cases, other subject areas such as Environmental Sciences, Computer Sciences or Medicine are represented.

7. Core references/topics profiling

Top five most cited publications in the field are Jenkins (2006), Jenkins and Jakovleva (2006), Waldman et al. (2006); Epstein and Roy (2001), and van Dierendonck (2011). In order to gather data for core references/topics profiling, we identified top five most cited references within each of nine key topic areas, excluding the references with the number of citations lower than 20. The results of this operation are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Top references in research on the interface between leadership and CSR

Topics/keyword clusters (number of publications)	Most cited references (number of citations)
corporate social responsibility (249)	Jenkins (2006) – 258; Jenkins & Jakovleva (2006) – 255; Jo & Harjoto (2011) – 125; Orlitzky, Siegel & Waldman (2011) – 120; Azapagic (2003) – 107
leadership (107)	Waldman et al. (2006) – 215; Székely & Knirsch (2005) – 149; Camburn, Rowan & Taylor (2003) – 127; Datnow (2005) – 71; Boddy, Ladyshewsky & Galvin (2010) – 45
ethics (62)	Arjoon (2000) – 92; Voegtlin, Patzer & Scherer (2012) – 44; Pies, Beckmann & Hielscher (2010) – 41; Sauser (2005) – 28; Mostovicz, Kakabadse & Kakabadse (2009) – 22
sustainability (57)	Epstein & Roy (2001) – 212; Orlitzky, Siegel & Waldman (2011) – 120; Azapagic (2003) – 107; Hamann (2003) – 72; Datnow (2005) – 71
attributive leadership (46)	van Dierendonck (2011) – 202; Arjoon (2000) – 92; Fry & Cohen (2009) – 57; Groves & LaRocca (2011) – 55; Pless (2007) – 51
strategic management issues (38)	Epstein & Roy (2001) – 212; Hamann (2004) – 73; Hamann (2003) – 72; Liedtka (2008) – 33; Pivo (2008) – 25
values, attitudes and behaviors (35)	Fry & Cohen (2009) – 57; Juholin (2004) – 55; Pless (2007) – 51; Pies, Beckmann & Hielscher (2010) – 41; Panjwani & Caraher (2014) – 29; Hillestad, Xie & Haugland (2010) – 29
environmental issues (23)	Jenkins & Jakovleva (2006) – 255; Epstein & Roy (2001) – 212; Orlitzky, Siegel & Waldman (2011) – 120; Azapagic (2003) – 107; Hamann (2003) – 72
knowledge management and innovations (22)	D’Amato & Roome (2009) – 43; Newell (2008) – 39; Hillestad, Xie & Haugland (2010) – 29

Source: own study based on data retrieved from Scopus database (accessed July 5, 2017).

Among 44 papers listed in Table 7, there are only three publications shared by three topic areas. The papers authored by Orlitzky, Siegel and Waldman, *Strategic Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Sustainability* (2011), and Azapagic *Systems Approach to Corporate Sustainability: A General Management Framework* (2003) are common for the keyword clusters

referring to corporate social responsibility, sustainability, and environmental issues. The Hamann's study of *Mining Companies' Role in Sustainable Development: The 'Why' and 'How' of Corporate Social Responsibility from a Business Perspective* (2003) is shared by topic areas of sustainability, strategic management issues, and environmental issues.

Five other publications are shared by two topic areas. The study by Jenkins and Yakovleva on *Corporate Social Responsibility in the Mining Industry: Exploring Trends in Social and Environmental Disclosure* (2006) represent top cited references in the topic areas of corporate social responsibility and environmental issues. The topics of leadership and sustainability have in common the work of Datnow titled *The Sustainability of Comprehensive School Reform Models in Changing District and State Contexts* (2005). The paper authored by Pies, Beckmann and Hielscher dealing with the issues of *Value Creation, Management Competencies, and Global Corporate Citizenship: An Ordonomic Approach to Business Ethics in the Age of Globalization* (2010) is found among top cited references for the topic areas of ethics as well as values, attitudes, and behaviors. The keyword clusters related to attributive leadership, and values, attitudes and behaviors share the article of Fry and Cohen focused on *Spiritual Leadership as a Paradigm for Organizational Transformation and Recovery from Extended Work Hours Cultures* (2009). The work of Hillestad, Xie and Haugland on *Innovative Corporate Social Responsibility: The Founder's Role in Creating a Trustworthy Corporate Brand through 'Green Innovation'* (2010) is common for the topic areas of values, attitudes and behaviors as well as knowledge management and innovations. All remaining 36 papers are listed only once among most cited references within key topic areas related to studies on the interface between leadership and corporate social responsibility.

The highest level of interconnectivity among the most cited references is represented by the items included in the topic area of environmental issues. All the five publications from this area are shared with other keyword clusters. Other areas having a lot of co-shared publications are sustainability (5 items), corporate social responsibility (3), and values, attitudes and behaviors (3).

8. Conclusions

In the article, we decided to map trends in research on the interface between leadership and corporate social responsibility. To do so, we used topic profiling methodology. The research was based on 432 publications retrieved from Scopus database.

The analysis shows the growing interest of the academia in exploring the relationships between leadership and corporate social responsibility. This indicates a great importance of the topic and the need for further research.

From data, we conclude that leadership and CSR are analyzed in different contexts, as top keywords in the research refer to ethics, strategic management, sustainability, values and attitudes, environmental issues, knowledge and many others.

What is worth noticing, the issue of leadership and CSR concept are examined not only in Business, Management, and Accounting but also in Social Sciences, Economics, Econometrics and Finance, Arts & Humanities and Engineering. This proves a wide range of interest of researchers in the discussed subject.

Although there are some differences between journals in reference to most frequent keywords dealing with the issues of the interface between leadership and CSR, we state that top journals focus on similar aspects. In all the journals, corporate social responsibility and ethics emerge as top keywords. Moreover, the data analyzed for the purpose of the article show that scholars do their research on similar topics. We named the most influential authors together with fields of their interests.

Finally, we pointed top most cited publications in the field of the interface between leadership and corporate social responsibility. We also identified top five most cited references within each of key topic area. The conclusion is that cited papers cover only some of key topic areas (maximum three at the same time). Most of the papers refer to only one key topic areas related to studies on the interface between leadership and corporate social responsibility. This, in turn, can show the need for a more general research project that would cover more topic areas.

On the other hand, we are aware that topic research profiling of the publications dealing with the interface between leadership and corporate social responsibility should be considered as the first step to explore the field and comprehensively identify research fronts within it. It is recommended to continue the study and apply citation analysis which is found to be a useful tool for “outlining the topical structure of different fields” (Osareh, 1996, p. 154 referring to Marshakova, 1981, p. 13) and “identifying and mapping research fronts” (Osareh, 1996, p. 154 referring to Garfield, 1983, p. 136). For further analyses, the choice should be made among various techniques of citation studies, i.e., direct citation, bibliographic coupling, co-citation coupling and co-citation analysis (Boyack & Klavans, 2010).

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