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Author(s): Amin, Atifa; Saleem, Sharjeel; Arslan, Ahmad

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Servant leadership research in emerging economies: An overview

Authors:

Atifa Amin, Department of Business Studies, University of Roma Tre, Rome, Italy.

Sharjeel Saleem, Lyallpur Business School, Government College University Faisalabad,
Pakistan.

Ahmad Arslan, Department of Marketing, Management & International Business,
University of Oulu, Finland & InnoLab, University of Vaasa, Finland.

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Servant leadership research in emerging economies: An overview

Abstract

Servant leadership is a leadership style characterized by service to the subordinates. An important tenet of servant leadership is that servant leaders transcend their own interests for the interests of the community/members/subordinates. So far, a significant portion of prior research on servant leadership has been undertaken in the developed (primarily Western) economies' context. Emerging economies, on the other hand, have received rather little attention. Also, a systematic review of servant leadership research in emerging economies has not been done by prior scholars. Hence, the current chapter aims to fill these gaps in the extant literature. The chapter comprehensively examines servant leadership in emerging economies by utilizing two distinct yet complementary review methods, bibliometric analysis and systematic literature review. The findings present the state of servant leadership research in emerging economies in terms of focus and theories used, contributions to literature, and geographical focus. Finally, the chapter presents gaps in existing research linked to future research directions on servant leadership in emerging economies, empirically, methodologically, and conceptually.

Key Words: Bibliometric analysis, emerging economies, servant leadership, and systematic literature review.

Introduction

Servant leadership, a term coined by Robert K. Greenleaf in the 1970s, characterizes it as a leadership style that is marked by the leaders' primary role as a servant to their followers (Greenleaf, 1977). A servant leader focuses on the followers' development, growth, and needs. In doing so, servant leaders transcend their own needs and put followers' needs first. Servant leadership is characterized by an intrinsic motivation to serve rather than a need for power (Luthans and Avolio, 2003). Servant leaders adopt employee-centric approaches (Jaramillo *et al.*, 2015) and act as stewards (Van Dierendonck, 2011). Such kindness-oriented characteristics serve to enhance the well-being and development of individuals, organizations and communities (Haq *et al.*, 2022). Many *Fortune* 100 companies, thus, identify servant leadership as their preferred leadership style (Haq *et al.*, 2022). Servant leadership is more robust in explaining behavioral, attitudinal and relational outcomes than other positive leadership styles, including transformational leadership, authentic leadership, ethical leadership, etc. (Hoch *et al.*, 2018). Servant leadership is marked by altruistic and ethical behaviors of leaders aimed at the enhancement of the well-being of others (Eva *et al.*, 2019). At the organizational level, servant leadership offers stewardship and service to various organizational members and stakeholders (Eva *et al.*, 2019). Various organizational performance indicators have been found to be enhanced in response to servant leadership, for instance, return on assets (Peterson *et al.*, 2012), financial performance (Giolito *et al.*, 2021), and productivity of organizations (Laub, 2018). In a recent study, Saleem *et al.*

(2022) found that servant leadership positively impacts organizational performance through the mediation of trust in the leader.

Liden *et al.* (2008) identify seven dimensions of servant leadership: (1) emotional healing, which pertains to providing emotional support to the followers; (2) creating value for the community by serving the community at large; (3) conceptual skills that help in solving the problem by proposing out-of-the-box solutions through knowledge and expertise; (4) empowering others and delegating the problem-solving to the subordinates; (5) helping subordinates grow and succeed by providing them with growth and career progression opportunities; (6) putting subordinates first and catering to their needs and problems on a priority; and (7) behaving ethically, by staying honest in interpersonal interactions with the followers.

Although servant leadership research is rooted in the Western cultural context and mostly studied in those economies, certain characteristics of the emerging economies, like in-group collectivism, make them an enabling context for studying servant leadership (e.g., Saleem *et al.*, 2022). Apparently, the servant leadership style might be more befitting in low power distance culture (Van Dierendonck, 2011), but the extant research indicates that the servant leadership style is effective in high power distance countries, too (Haq *et al.*, 2022). The role of servant leadership in emerging economies characterized by high power distance culture might stem from the collectivistic nature of these cultures. Collectivism is rich in values of care, empathy, attachment (Gambrell and Fritz, 2012), selflessness (Van Dierendonck and Nuijten, 2011), and social helping behavior (Van Dyne *et al.*, 2000). These values may make servant leadership effective in non-western cultures, too. In emerging economies, where socio-economic dynamics and organizational structures often vary from those in developed countries, servant leadership offers a promising framework for efficacious leadership strategies. One of the key advantages of servant leadership in emerging economies is its alignment with cultural values and societal norms prevalent in many of these regions. In collectivist societies commonly found in emerging economies, the emphasis on community, cooperation, and harmony resonates well with the servant leadership model, which prioritizes collaboration, empathy, and empowerment (Haq *et al.*, 2022; Saleem *et al.*, 2022). Leaders practicing a servant leadership approach are more likely to build trust and rapport with their followers, fostering a sense of belonging and commitment within the organization that ultimately leads to elevated organizational performance (Saleem *et al.*, 2022). By focusing on the growth and well-being of their followers, servant leaders encourage learning, skill development, and innovation among the followers (Liden *et al.*, 2008). This not only enhances individual performance but also cultivates a culture of continuous improvement and adaptability (Saleem *et al.*, 2022), essential qualities for navigating the complexities of emerging markets.

Power and politics are intrinsic elements of organizational dynamics. They influence decision-making processes, resource allocation, and the overall functioning of an organization. Organizational politics involves activities that are not formally sanctioned by the organization and are designed to benefit individuals or groups within the organization. Servant leadership can influence organizational politics in several ways. By fostering a culture of trust, transparency, and mutual respect, servant leaders

can reduce the negative aspects of organizational politics. The ethical framework of servant leadership can help ensure that organizational politics are conducted in a manner that is fair and just. By prioritizing the well-being and development of employees, servant leaders create a supportive and collaborative environment, mitigating the adversarial nature of organizational politics. Understanding and implementing servant leadership while being aware of the dynamics of power and politics can lead to a more harmonious and effective organizational environment.

Despite the vitality of servant leadership in emerging economies' context, so far (at least to our knowledge), a systematic literature review of this topic has not been done in this context. Hence, our chapter aims to fill this gap in the extant literature by undertaking two complementary analyses of extant literature, i.e., bibliometric analysis and systematic literature review (SLR). By doing so, our chapter offers two vital contributions to the extant servant leadership literature. Firstly, it is a pioneering work undertaking both bibliometric analysis and SLR for servant leadership research in the context of emerging economies. Secondly, by summarizing the key aspects of extant research, as well as highlighting the gaps in extant literature both theoretically and methodologically, our chapter opens several avenues for future exploration by scholars on a very relevant topic of servant leadership in emerging economies.

The rest of this chapter is organized so that the next section presents research design of review undertaken in this chapter. After that data collection and analysis details are presented. Then, the findings are presented followed by in-depth qualitative analysis of the literature. The chapter concludes with a presentation of research gaps and future research directions.

Research Design

This section presents this chapter's research design comprising two complementary analyses undertaken in this chapter: bibliometric analysis and systematic literature analysis (SLR). This study adopted bibliometric analysis to determine the current state of the discipline. Bibliometric review allows researchers to analyze data, map scientific knowledge, analyze social networks, and analyze text in a knowledge base (Singh *et al.*, 2011; Linnenluecke *et al.*, 2020; Chaparro-Banegas *et al.*, 2023; Iftikhar *et al.*, 2024). Figure 1 below presents our research design.

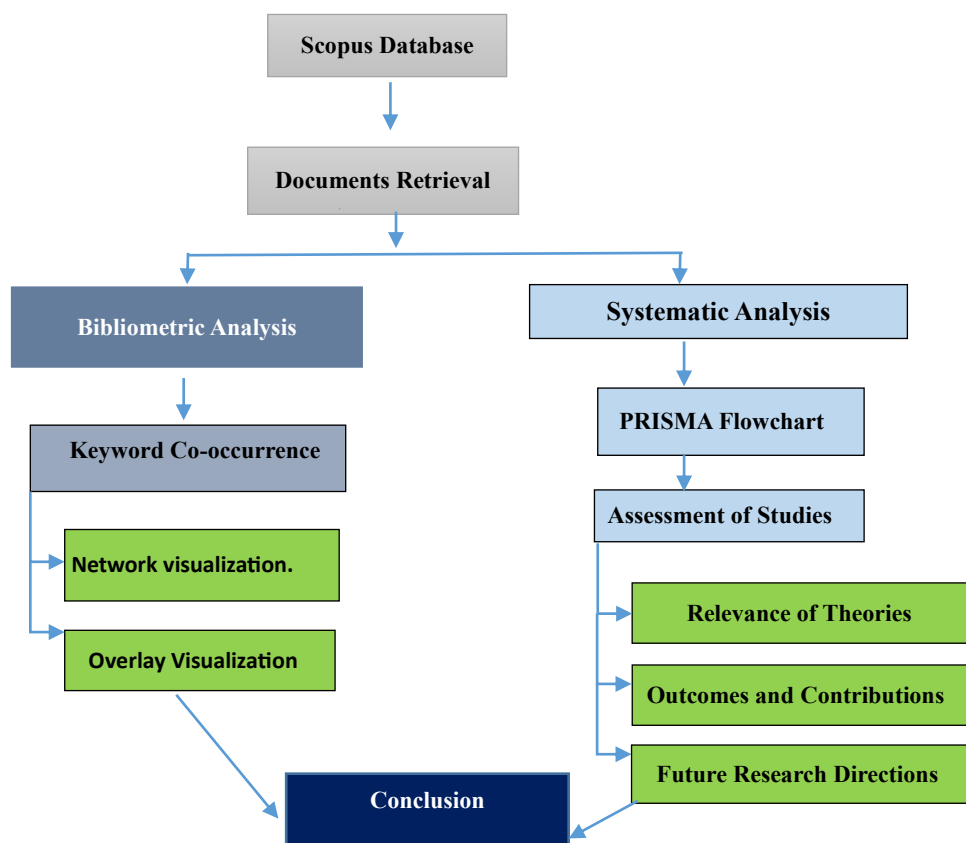


Figure 1: Research Framework

On the other hand, an SLR will provide a clear understanding of the existing knowledge derived from prior research and highlight any areas that require further investigation or can guide future research objectives. SLR is a systematic and evidence-based strategy used to perform literature reviews on a specific topic. Petticrew and Roberts (2006) propose that SLR is a valuable approach for ambiguous areas of literature and for pinpointing gaps in research where further studies are required. SLR is a unique approach compared to traditional literature reviews, as it utilizes a replicable, scientific, and transparent methodology (e.g., Samidi *et al.*, 2021). SLR minimizes bias through an exhaustive literature search of published and unpublished research (Ahmad and Omar, 2016). Unlike meta-analysis, SLR is not dependent on econometric and statistical procedures for producing relevant outcomes (Ahmad and Omar, 2016). This technique was traditionally used in the fields of medicine and healthcare research. However, it has increasingly been used in other disciplines, such as social sciences,

mathematics, and natural sciences. In management research, the traditional literature review has faced criticism for its lack of relevance and subjectivity (e.g., Becheikh *et al.*, 2006; Fink, 2005). Tranfield *et al.* (2003) presented specific rules for utilizing these reviews in management sciences and suggested ways through which SLR enhances the quality of the review by generating a systematic, reproducible, and transparent literature review. Various other scholars from the management sciences, for example, Wang and Su (2020), Pasca *et al.* (2021), and Parris and Peachey (2013), also utilize and recommend the SLR techniques; hence, the objective of this study is to provide a valuable addition to the existing body of knowledge on servant leadership in developing countries by a comprehensive and evidence-driven assessment. The results of this study can assist future researchers by offering precise information about the actions that have been taken, such as where, to what extent, and by whom, as well as identifying the tasks that still need to be accomplished in the relevant sector.

Our chapter utilized the fundamental recommendations put forward by Tranfield *et al.* (2003) for carrying out SLR on management topics. The technique consists of five steps, as shown in Figure 2 and explained below:

- (1) Formulating research inquiries.
- (2) Determining keywords and strategies for a search plan.
- (3) Choosing and assessing the quality of studies.
- (4) Data extraction refers to the process of gathering relevant information from various sources.
- (5) Data synthesis involves combining and analyzing the collected data to draw meaningful conclusions and insights.

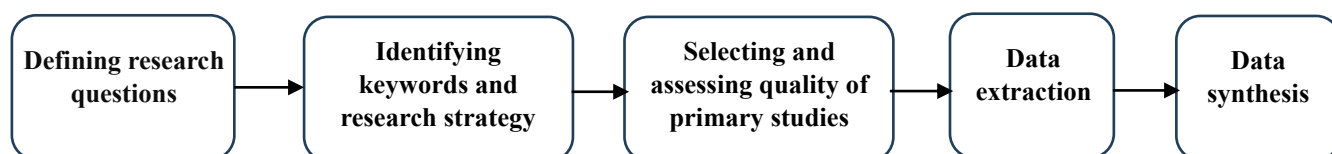


Figure 2: Systematic Review Process Source (Tranfield et al., 2003)

Our study's design is driven by the following main objectives concerning undertaking SLR and bibliometric analysis using keyword co-occurrence analysis:

1. To identify the main keywords linked with servant leadership and their division among clusters.
2. To systematically analyze servant leadership publications focusing on emerging (and developing) economies (markets) context.
3. Categorization of contributions and future research direction.

Data Collection

We performed a preliminary search by employing a basic keyword string, "Servant Leadership AND emerging economies or developing economies," across various electronic databases to locate relevant publications and conferences for publication. Consequently, we identified four databases that house peer-reviewed articles on the specified topic. The databases included EBSCO Host, Web of Sciences

(WOS), and Scopus, which are considered the most influential and widely utilized in academic work (Agrifoglio *et al.*, 2021). A keyword search was also performed through Google Scholar. The selection of these databases was based on their extensive historical records (Mengist *et al.*, 2020); Rejeb *et al.*, 2022) and comprehensive coverage of social science publications (Ankrah and Al-Tabbaa, 2015). This study did not impose any specific date restriction on the publication period during the search due to limited studies undertaken on servant leadership in emerging economies. Table 1 below displays the databases and publications that were retrieved. Journal articles, conference papers, and book chapters were collected with the aim of encompassing a wide range of studies. In this chapter, we focused on the publications that explicitly focused on servant leadership, emerging economies, emerging markets, developing economies or developing markets. Therefore, documents that did not fulfill these characteristics were excluded.

Table 1: Database selection and keywords

Database	Headword	Operator	Filters	Full terms	Publication
Web of Science Database	Servant Leadership			"Servant Leadership*" (Topic) And "emerging economy*" or "emerging Market*" or "developing econom*" or "developing market*" (Topic)	Nine
	emerging econom*	And	Limited to English		
	emerging Market*	Or			
	"Developing econom*"	Or			
	Developing Market*	Or			
Servant Leadership	And			"Servant Leadership*" (Topic) an "emerging econom*" or "emerging Market*" or "developing econom*" or "developing market*" (Topic)	Seven
emerging econom*	Or	Limited to English			
emerging Market*	Or				
"Developing econom*"	Or				
Developing Market*	Or				
Google Scholar	Servant Leadership			allintitle:"Servant leadership" "Developing economy" OR "developing market" OR "emerging economy" OR "emerging market"	Two
	emerging econom*	And	Limited to English		
	emerging Market*	Or			
	"Developing econom*"	Or			
	Developing Market*	Or			
Servant Leadership	And			"servant leadership" AND ("emerging econom*" OR "emerging market*" OR "developing econom*" OR "developing market*")	Four
emerging econom*	Or	Limited to English			
emerging Market*	Or				
"Developing econom*"	Or				
Developing Market*	Or				

Data Analysis

Our chapter uses “Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses” (PRISMA) (Moher *et al.*, 2009), which provides a screening process that identifies the relevant publications and lists the number of papers excluded in each step (Page *et al.*, 2021). Figure 3 below shows all the steps of the systematic assessment we have undertaken using the PRISMA approach. It reflects the number of records that were found, whether this study considered them or not, and why they were not included (PRISMA, 2020). In the first place, 22 records were found. Seven papers were excluded due to duplication. In the screening process, all 15 records were screened, and 14 were included through the reading of Title and Abstract. The full text of 14 publications is reviewed thoroughly. There were 2 publications that appeared to be relevant in the initial phase of this research, but after reading in detail, these publications were deemed irrelevant and were excluded. Four cross-references were included as these studies were relevant to our research objectives. Hence, in total, this study performed an SLR of 16 publications.

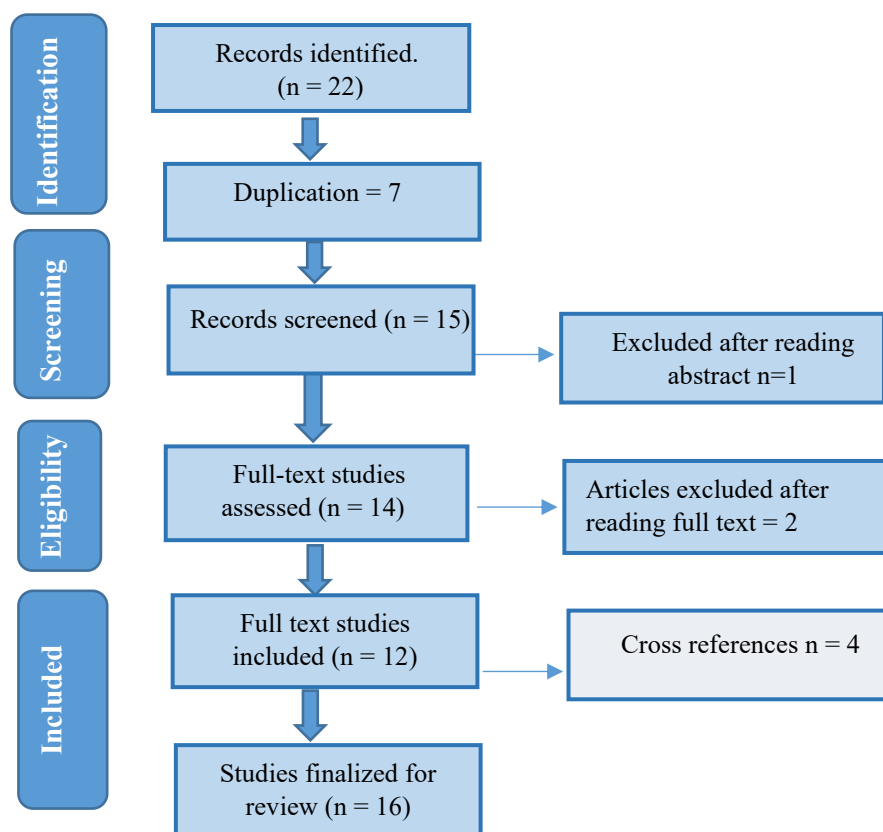


Figure 3: PRISMA Flowchart, Source (Pasca *et al.*, 2021)

Findings

A “keyword co-occurrence” study was first performed to examine the relationships between key terms in the literature. It includes visualizing keyword or subject relationships (Chen *et al.*, 2020). Text-mining method co-word analysis evaluates keyword pairings in review papers (van Eck and Waltman, 2014). This technique assumes that terms commonly appear together (i.e., co-occur) in the same review

documents (Narong and Hallinger, 2023). This review utilized VOSviewer (version 1.6.19) to construct a network map of keyword frequency and co-occurrence patterns. VOSviewer's bibliometric illustrations let readers swiftly examine and interpret maps (Hockerts *et al.*, 2018). Node proximity indicates term correlation, whereas size indicates publication number.

Figure 4 below shows the most frequently studied topics on servant leadership in emerging economies grouped into three clusters. The red cluster reflects most key concepts, which are individual levels such as work-life balance, psychological stability, and innovative behaviors and are directly linked with servant leadership. The green cluster depicts that most keywords are related to leadership level as they show servant leadership, leadership development, and leadership development programs. The blue cluster reflects a firm-level focus on those studies, comprising different kinds of organizations.

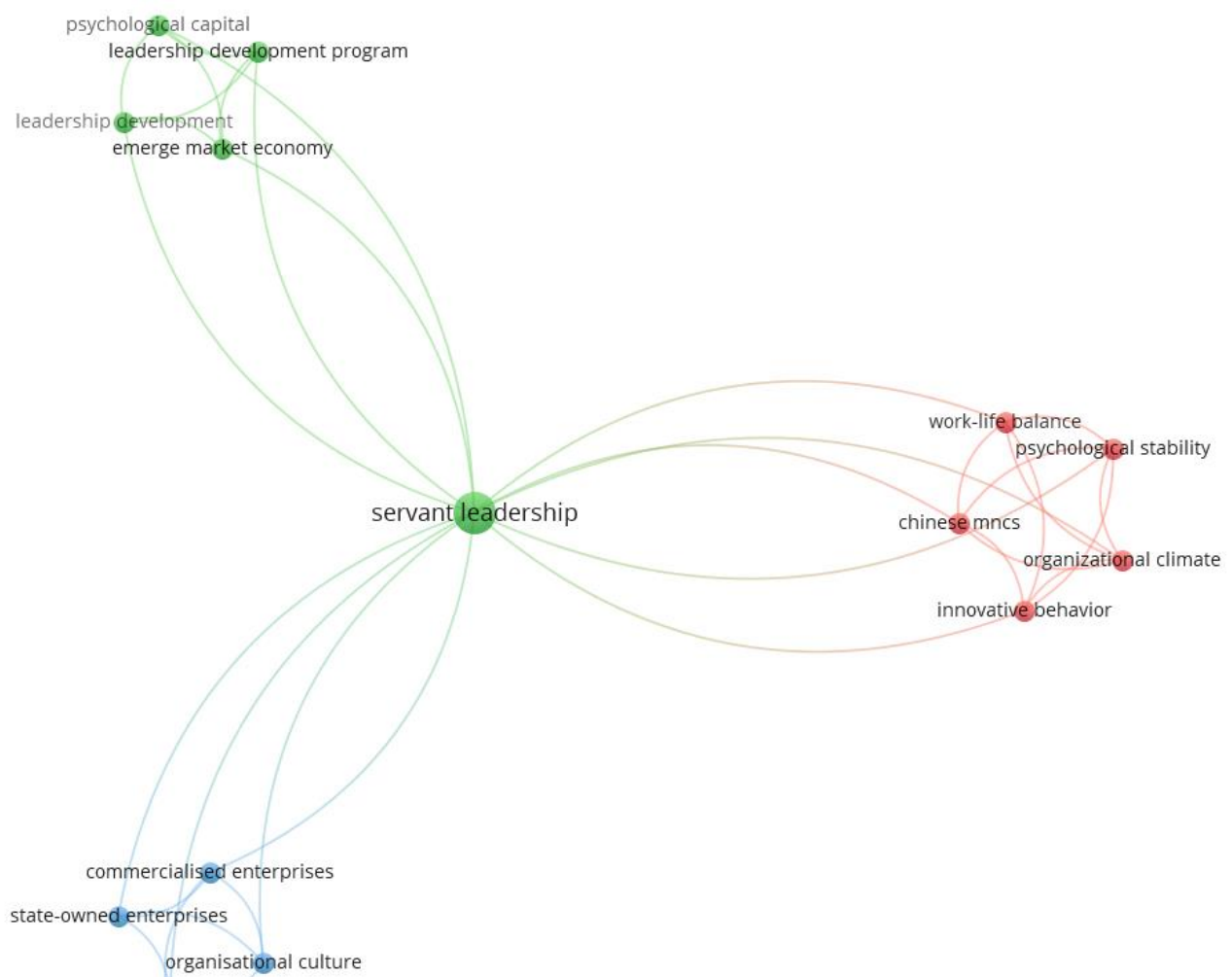


Figure 4: Keyword Network Visualization

Table 2: Keyword Co-occurrence

Cluster	Keywords	Year Publication	Average Citation
Cluster 1 Red	Work-Life Balance	2022	5
	Psychological Stability	2022	5
	Organizational Climate	2022	5
	Innovative Behavior	2022	5
	Chinese MNCs	2022	5
Cluster 2 Green	Servant Leadership	2021	3
	Psychological Capital	2017	3
	Leadership Development Program	2017	3
	Leadership Development	2017	3
	Emerge Market Economy	2017	3
Cluster 3 Blue	State-Owned Enterprises	2022	0
	Organizational Culture	2022	0
	Commercialized Enterprises	2022	0

Table 2 explains keyword co-occurrences with more detail, publication years for cluster 1 is 2022 with average citations of 5. In cluster two there are 5 keywords, publication years are from 2017 to 2021 with average citation of 3. Cluster 3 reflects three keywords, publication year is 2022, however, there is no citation for cluster 3. Most of the publications of cluster 2 are from 2017 to 2022.

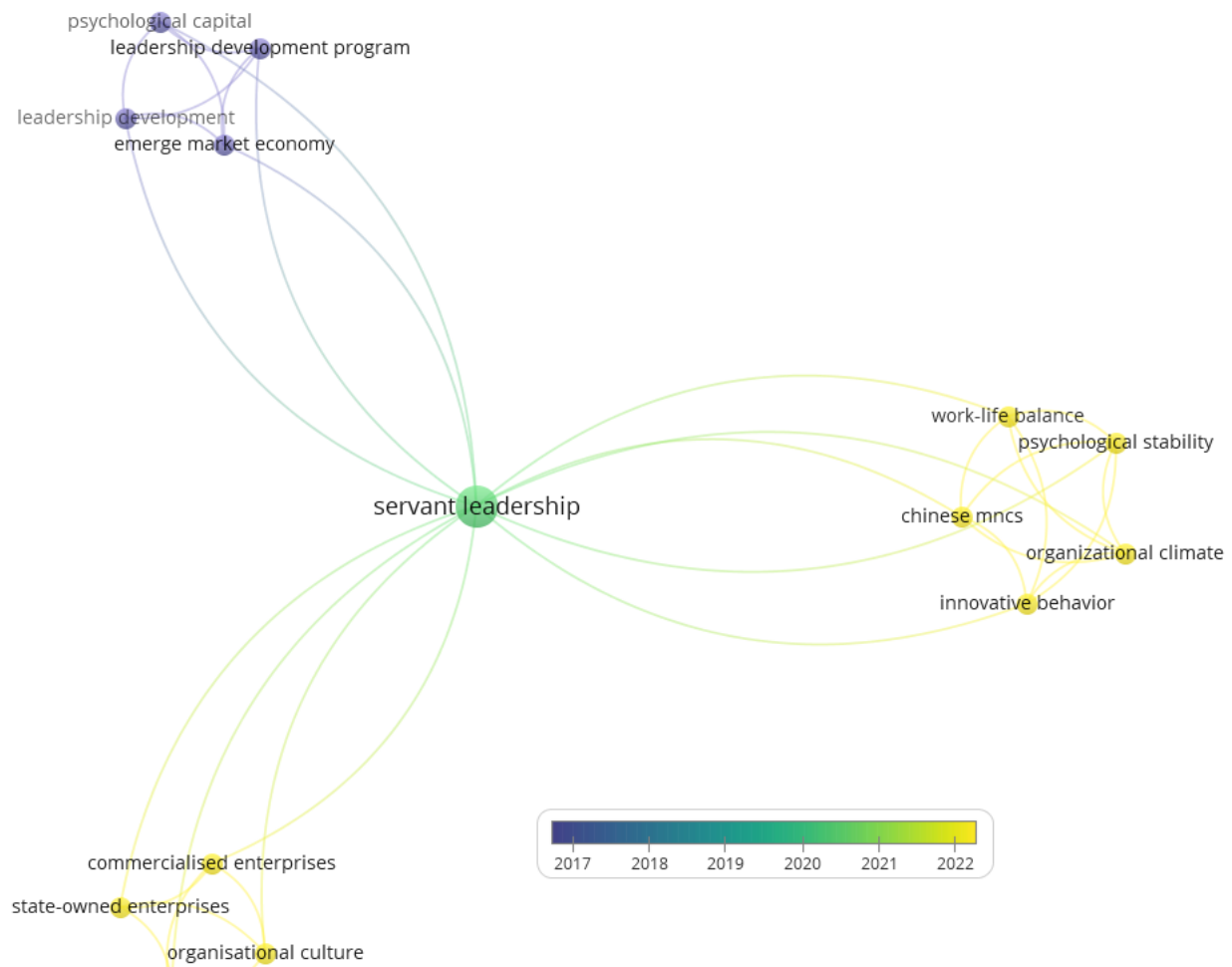
*Figure 5: Overlay Visualizations*

Figure 5 presents overlay visualizations with keywords; overlay visualization is helpful in analyzing the development of topics over time. Referring to the figure, the newest topics are in lighter colors, showing recent ones, while the darker colors are showing relatively older ones. Cluster one and three show the keywords in the lighter and consist of newly discussed concepts with servant leadership in the year 2022, whereas cluster two has relatively old key concepts discussed with servant leadership from 2017 to 2021.

Qualitative Analysis of the Literature

Referring to Figure 1, in this section, we elaborate on our SLR findings through the selected publications with the relevance of theories, contributions, and future research directions. In the first place, Table 3 highlights the main theories that are discussed and linked with the concept of servant leadership and emerging economies. Table 4 provides a quick overview to readers regarding research levels, contexts, study types, methodologies and aims of the publications. Afterwards, this section recognizes the major contributions of the selected studies. One of the important features of SLR is to identify the research gaps for future studies; hence, we categorize them into empirical, conceptual, and methodological research directions.

Relevance of Theories

Based on our review, we found several theories that have been used by scholars focusing on servant leadership in emerging economies. Table 3 specifically presents the linkage-reviewed studies with one or more of the above-discussed theories. We briefly explain the main theories and their application in this concern. Firstly, “servant leadership theory,” which emphasizes a leadership approach targeted on the development, welfare, and empowerment of employees, was the most-used theory, with it being applied in one way or another in five reviewed studies. Two studies (Wulumba *et al.*, 2010; Peng *et al.*, 2022) utilized Bandura's social learning theory (Bandura and Walters, 1977) to explain the relationship between servant leadership and employee attitudes and how this, in turn, affects organizational citizenship behavior (OCB).

Table 3: Link with Theories

Study	Theory
Maibvisira and Tefera, 2022 , Ghasemy <i>et al.</i> , 2021, Stouraitis <i>et al.</i> , 2021, Rezaei <i>et al.</i> , 2012	Servant leadership theory
Peng <i>et al.</i> , 2022, Walumbwa <i>et al.</i> , 2010	Theory of social learning
Khatri <i>et al.</i> , 2023, Khan <i>et al.</i> , 2021	Social cognitive theory; Social cognitive career theory
Tuan, 2021	Conservation of resources theory

Khatri <i>et al.</i> , 2023, Dahleez <i>et al.</i> , 2021, Walumbwa <i>et al.</i> , 2010	Social exchange theory
Ying <i>et al.</i> , 2020	Self-determination theory
Khan <i>et al.</i> , 2021	Trait theory
Allahar, 2019	Contingency theory

Two studies used social cognitive theory and social cognitive career theory (Wood and Bandura, 1989), which focus on behavior, beliefs, and goals as being a product of both environmental and personal influences. In this concern Khatri *et al.*, (2023) focused on the Indian context and showed that the interaction between the environmental component of the teacher as a servant leadership (TASL) and the cognitive mechanism of self-efficacy supports working professional creative career aspirations and intellectual capital-based intrapreneurial ability (ICIA). However, Khan *et al.* (2021) showed that social cognitive theory explains motivational intents and work behavior. They focused on servant leaders directly assessing the progress and advancement in the Pakistani context (Khan *et al.*, 2021).

We also see the use of the conservation of resource theory by servant leadership researchers in emerging economies. This theory suggests that when individuals have sufficient resources from their environment, they are more likely to adopt a proactive approach to acquiring additional resources, which leads to them going beyond the minimum expectations, thereby leading to extra-role behaviors (Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014). Tuan (2021) used this theory to investigate the impacts of environmentally-focused servant leadership (ESS leadership) on green performance at team and individual levels in Vietnam.

Social exchange theory, proposed by Blau in 1964, suggests that the level of satisfaction in social interactions creates implicit duties to reciprocate favors for those who have behaved in one's favor. Khatri *et al.*, (2023) also utilized social exchange theory argumentation to explore the dynamics of work relationships and analyzed how leaders may effectively foster learning and enhanced productivity in the Indian context. In the Palestinian context, Dahleez et al. (2021) developed a research framework that utilizes social exchange theory to explore the relationship between employee emotional commitment and servant leadership by highlighting the critical role of person-organization fit and psychological ownership in this concern. We can also observe the application of social exchange theory in the study by Walumbwa et al. (2010), where they assessed the impact of servant leadership on employee attitudes and corporate citizenship behavior in the Kenyan context.

Self-determination theory, which focuses on people having varying types and levels of motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2000), is also used by scholars focusing on servant leadership in emerging economies. This theory presents three different types of motivations for an individual, including autonomous, controlled, and motivated (Deci and Ryan, 2008). Specifically, autonomous motivation highlights the fact that intrinsic, integrated, and identifiable motivation are all components of an individual's self-determination (Gagné and Deci, 2005), leading to psychological empowerment.

Servant Leadership Research in Emerging Economies (2020) studied the impact of servant leadership on employees' voluntary green behavior (EVGB) through a mediation approach of psychological empowerment and autonomous motivation for the environment (AME) in the Pakistani context.

We also see the application of trait theory while studying servant leadership in the context of emerging economies. According to trait theory, an individual's personality can be described by their big five fundamental traits: agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, openness to experience, and neuroticism, which encourage an individual's independent thinking and self-motivation, which can benefit the community by fostering leadership (e.g., Colbert *et al.*, 2012). From the reviewed studies, Khan *et al.* (2021) focused on the Pakistani context and examined the impact of the link of these fundamental traits with sustainability-oriented entrepreneurial intentions as with the mediating effect of servant leadership. Finally, we also see the application of contingency theory, which proposes that a leadership style should be appropriate for the specific context and setting (Amanchukwu *et al.*, 2015; Buzdar and Fatima, 2018). The conceptual study by Allahar (2019) on servant leadership in developing and emerging countries based the arguments primarily on contingency theory.

Table 4 presents a summary overview (key characteristics) of all academic studies, including our SLR of servant leadership in emerging economies. Most of the studies that we analyzed performed empirical quantitative analysis, with one being a conceptual/theoretical study. Also, we found that the focus of servant leadership research in emerging economies has primarily been on the employee/manager level, with a few studies focusing on firm-level analysis. Regarding empirical (geographical) focus, three studies on servant leadership were undertaken in Pakistan, while the rest were done in India, China, Uganda, Palestine, Zimbabwe, United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, South Africa, Iran, and Türkiye. Table 4 highlights the aims of the studies, which provide the main purpose and a complete overview of previous work to the readers.

Contributions to the Literature

Our SLR revealed that servant leadership research in emerging economies can be categorized into the studies which focused on employee level dynamics, studies which focused on manager (leader) level dynamics and the studies which focused on firm (organizational) level dynamics. Below, we briefly go through the reviewed studies and their contributions to the extant servant leadership literature.

Employee-level contributions. Peng *et al.* (2022) explored that there is a direct correlation between servant leadership that is specific to the environment and employees' pro-environmental conduct related to energy and a direct correlation between an individual's belief in their ability to engage in environmentally friendly actions and their actual behavior in conserving energy. They also found that green self-efficacy plays a favorable role in mediating the relationship between environment-specific servant leadership and employees' pro-environmental behavior connected to energy. In their study, organizational support acts as a mediator, positively influencing the relationship between environment-specific servant leadership and employees' energy-related pro-environmental behavior.

Table 4: SLR Overview

Study	Research Level	Sector	Country	Study type /Methodology	Research Aim
Allahar, 2019	-	-	-	Empirical Qualitative Thematic analysis Secondary data	The primary objective of the essay is to delineate a framework for fostering team leadership in businesses, with particular emphasis on developing and rising nations.
Ardichvili and Dirani, 2017	-	-	South Africa	Conceptual	The discussion is around the utilization of Eurocentric and Afrocentric leadership approaches in South Africa. Afrocentric models promote human relationships and employee and community well-being, unlike Eurocentric models from the West that focus on profit maximization.
Dahleez <i>et al.</i> , 2021	Employee Level	Higher education sector	Palestine	Empirical Quantitative Regression analysis Regression	This study uses social exchange theory to analyze the relationship between employee affective commitment and servant leadership, using person-organization fit and psychological ownership as mediation roles.
Ghasemy <i>et al.</i> , 2021	Employee Level	Academic (educational sector - polytechnics)	Malaysia	Empirical Quantitative Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling	To examine how servant leadership, namely its characteristics of producing value for the community and conceptual skills, affects the job satisfaction and work motivation of academics.
Jin <i>et al.</i> , 2022	Employee Level	Internet, information technology, electronics, and e-commerce industries	China	Empirical Quantitative	This study investigates whether servant leadership in emerging-market multinationals improves staff innovation. It also explores how work-life balance, psychological stability, and organizational climate affect servant leadership and employee innovation in multinational organizations.
Karagöz, 2023	Employee Level	Rubber and plastic manufacturing products	Türkiye	Empirical Quantitative Regression analysis	This study seeks to establish the function of leader-member interaction in moderating the impact of servant leadership on affective commitment.

Study	Research Level	Sector	Country	Study type /Methodology	Research Aim
Khan <i>et al.</i> , 2021	Individual Level	Small and Medium Enterprises	Pakistan	Empirical Quantitative	To fill the gap, research how the "big five" personality traits—neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness—affect Pakistani entrepreneurs' sustainability-focused company objectives. The study also examines whether servant leadership moderates personality attributes and sustainability-focused company goals.
Khatri <i>et al.</i> , 2023	Individual level	Academics- students industry-academia partnership	India	Empirical Quantitative Partial least squares structural equation modeling	To improve industry-academia relations by studying how "Teacher as a servant leader" and self-efficacy affect working professionals' intellectual capital-based intrapreneurial abilities.
Maibvisira and Tefera, 2022	Firm Level	commercialized state-owned enterprises (SOEs)	Zimbabwe	Empirical Quantitative / Logistic regression	To examine the influence of the servant leadership model on the performance of Zimbabwe's State-Owned Enterprises.
Nangoli <i>et al.</i> , 2021	Manager Level	Health care	Uganda	Empirical Quantitative Regression analysis	To investigate the impact of servant leadership behavior, as a non-financial method, on changes in continuation commitment.
Peng <i>et al.</i> , 2022	Employee Level	Health Care / Hospitals	Pakistan	Empirical Quantitative / Structural Equation modeling	To analyze the hospital workers to behave in a more energy-efficient and environmentally friendly way within an environment specific servant leadership context.
Rezaei <i>et al.</i> , 2012	Firm Level	Tax Department	Iran-Gulian Province	Empirical Quantitative Regression Analysis	To elucidate the correlation between servant leadership and organizational trust, and endeavors to illustrate the intermediary function of leader trust and organizational communication in this correlation.
Stouraitis <i>et al.</i> , 2021	Manager Level	Social Enterprises	South-Africa	Empirical Quantitative Case Study	A connection between servant leadership attributes and gender, "title," and "options" is observed. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that the servant leadership qualities exhibited are linked to the selection of a certain social enterprise approach.

Study	Research Level	Sector	Country	Study type /Methodology	Research Aim
Tuan, 2021	Team Level and Individual Level	Tour Company	Vietnam	Empirical Quantitative Regression analysis	To evaluate how environmentally specific servant leadership affects green performance on both a team and individual basis.
Walumbwa <i>et al.</i> , 2010	Manager and Employee Level	Multinational	Kenya	Empirical Quantitative Regression analysis Regression	This study examines how employee attitudes and corporate citizenship behavior are affected by servant leadership.
Ying <i>et al.</i> , 2020	Manager and Employee Level	Power sector	Pakistan	Empirical Quantitative Regression analysis Partial Least Squares Structural Modeling (PLS-SEM)	This study investigated the effects of servant leadership on Employees' voluntary green behavior using the basic and sequential mediation of autonomous motivation for the environment and psychological empowerment, building on the theories of self-determination and psychological empowerment.

Jin *et al.* (2022) in their study inquired whether servant leadership has a favorable impact on employees' innovative behavior. This impact is influenced by work-life balance and psychological stability and is also affected by the corporate atmosphere. Additionally, the varying organizational climates of these multinational corporation (MNC) employees are also anticipated to substantially impact the connection between servant leadership and employees' innovative behavior. Ghasemy *et al.* (2021) indicated that both aspects of servant leadership (conceptual skills and creating value for the community) significantly predict academics' job satisfaction and work motivation.

Khatri *et al.* (2023) demonstrated that the interaction between the environmental component (teachers in the role of servant leadership) and cognitive mechanism (self-efficacy) contributes to the advancement of creative career pursuits (intellectual capital-based intrapreneurial ability) of work professionals. The suggested paradigm for industry-academia collaboration enables the evaluation of ICIA to boost business value in the current gig economy. The paper also emphasizes how important ICIA is, especially for developing nations. Examining the new ICIA can assist firms in creating a more comprehensive performance evaluation system in the knowledge-driven economy. The study of Nangoli *et al.* (2021) shows that the behavior of servant leadership significantly influences the variations in continuous commitment.

Karagöz (2023) assessed that servant leadership improves relationships between leaders and followers. Furthermore, emotional commitment is positively impacted by leader-member interaction. The influence of servant leadership on affective commitment was found to be somewhat mediated by leader-member interaction. Tuan (2021) examined how environment-specific servant leadership promoted green performance through many channels for both teams and individuals. Through the two-stage mediation path of green crafting and green climate, environment-specific servant leadership developed individual green performance while also promoting team green performance by cultivating a green climate. Ying *et al.* (2020) inquired about how servant leadership positively affects autonomous motivation for the environment; the followers feel more self-motivated when a leader exhibits the servant leadership style more. Additionally, the findings support the idea that autonomous motivation plays a mediating role in the environment in terms of the employees' voluntary green behavior relationship and servant leadership.

Manager-level contributions. Walumbwa (2010), through social exchange and social learning, found that leaders might increase the effectiveness of their leadership by affecting situational settings and individual attitudes. They also discovered that various mechanisms exist for the influence of servant leadership on organizational citizenship behavior and discovered the data supporting the roles of procedural justice environment and service climate as modifiers that enhance the impact of supervisor commitment on organizational citizenship behavior. Dahleez (2021) examine that psychological ownership has a major mediating role in the link between servant leadership and affective Commitments. This suggests that when workers view their leaders as more selfless and helpful, they will grow to feel a feeling of ownership in return for the leader's committed service

orientation. The servant leadership behaviors of selflessness, inspiring others, and empowering boost employees' self-esteem and help them identify with the company, which raises their psychological ownership. Consequently, it is anticipated that workers who possess greater psychological ownership will also exhibit greater commitment to their companies.

Firm-level contributions. Maibvisira and Tefera (2022) found that the servant leadership model has a beneficial and statistically significant effect on the performance of Zimbabwe's State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) at a significance level of 5%. The study suggested that Zimbabwe's SOEs should implement the servant leadership model, focusing on the qualities of charisma/role model, altruism, stewardship, and standing aside. This approach is recommended to improve the performance of the underperforming enterprises. Khan *et al.* (2021) confirmed that the five characteristics significantly impact sustainability-oriented business intents. Additionally, the relationships between intention and extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism are moderated by servant leadership. Stouraitis *et al.* (2021) demonstrated that when influenced by the variables of gender, job title, and education, servant leaders are most likely to launch a social venture that is less-commercialized in an emerging market. Furthermore, they can overcome unfavorable business environments, add value, and favorably impact workers by encouraging autonomy, adaptability, and performance. Thus, it is essential to comprehend how these factors influence servant leadership in order to run a mission-driven social organization. The study also demonstrated a relationship between "Options Mission Centric" and the kind of social company selected and a servant leader. This helps explain why, as opposed to being founded just for show and then veering towards total and unsustainable commercialization, some social companies are more mission-centric and typically have a defined purpose.

Research Gaps and Future Research Directions

A key purpose of any SLR is to highlight the gaps in extant literature and suggest directions for future research. Referring to the Figure 6, we present the gap and research directions being categorized into empirical, methodological, and theoretical (conceptual), as follows:

Empirical Research Directions

Our SLR revealed that servant leadership research in emerging economies has been rather limited, and many countries have not been studied at all. Future researchers should explore un-researched empirical contexts in different emerging economies located in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. We also found that most studies are so far single-country focused, and comparative research is rather lacking. Future scholars should explore the possibility of undertaking comparative studies on servant leadership dynamics, especially in neighboring countries that represent similar sociocultural dynamics.

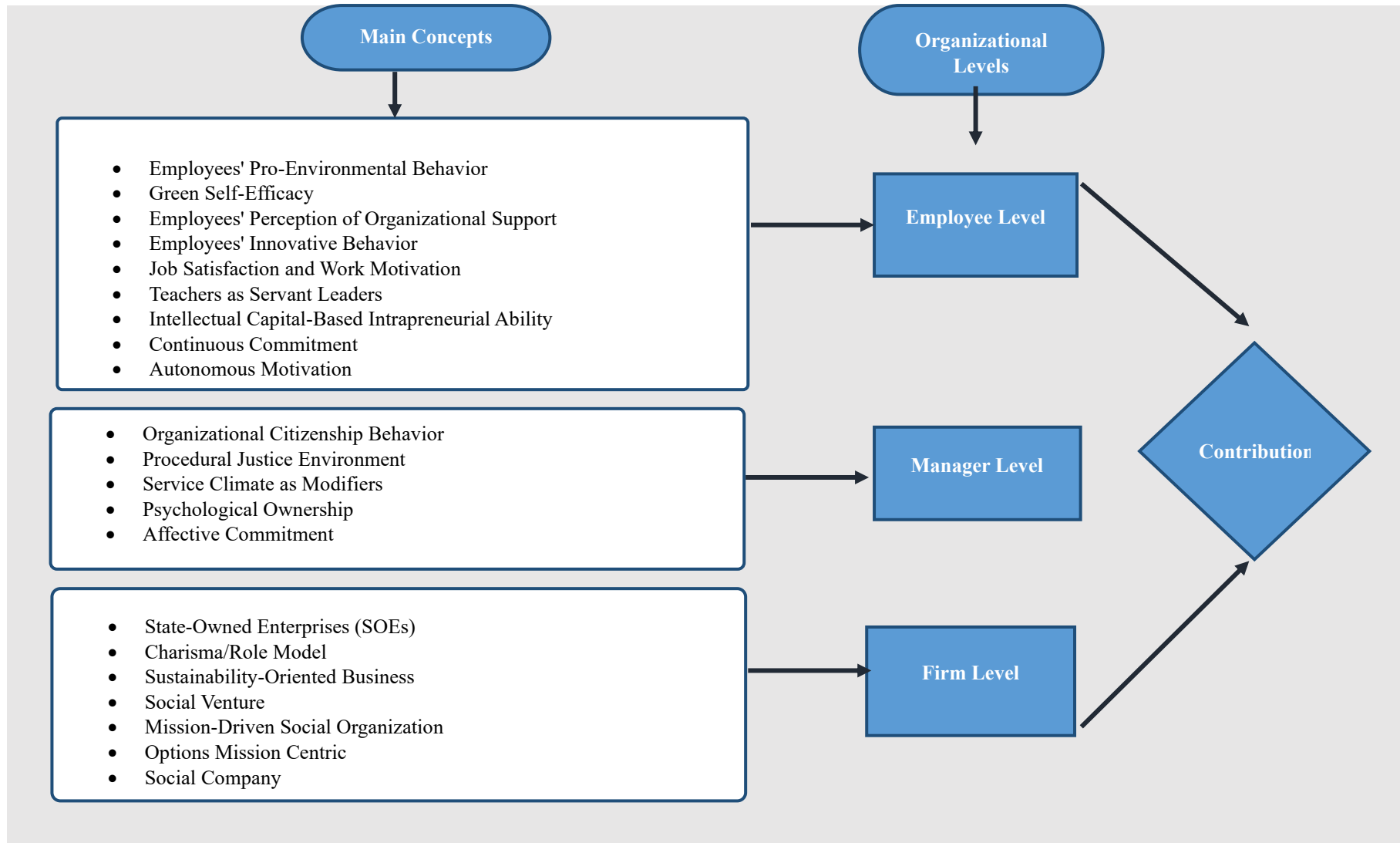


Figure 6: Contributions to literature

For example, a comparative study of the application of servant leadership in a specific sector in the Indian sub-continent (India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh) has significant potential to enrich the extant literature. Emerging economies are going through rapid changes primarily brought about by digitalization and globalization. Hence, the leadership style in their private sectors and startups is increasingly different from that of traditional family-owned firms and public sector organizations.

A comparative assessment in this regard (in different emerging economies) also holds great potential for contribution to the extant literature. Also, so far, a comparison of manifestation and application of servant leadership in developed vs. emerging economies (western vs. non-western contexts) has not been done. Such research has enormous potential for offering not only theoretical contributions, but also practical and policy implications. Hence, future scholars should consider this aspect as well.

Methodological Research Directions

We observed that most studies used cross-sectional data while focusing on servant leadership dynamics in emerging economies. While such an approach offers certain benefits, especially if the research focuses on an under-analyzed context, there are limitations to this approach. Undertaking longitudinal research can unveil the uncovered dynamics of servant leadership evolution in the context of emerging economies. Hence, future scholars should consider this idea. Also, the use of experimental design in research on servant leadership holds significant potential for enriching the extant literature.

So far, servant leadership scales have been adopted from prior studies undertaken in developed (mostly) Western contexts. Future scholars can aim to develop contextualized servant leadership scale for emerging economies incorporating unique local characteristics and dynamics.

There is a rather lack of qualitative research on servant leadership in emerging economies. In order to enhance the understanding of the intricate processes involved, we recommend future scholars undertake qualitative studies in different emerging economies focusing on different aspects and the application of servant leadership (in different sectors). These studies can use a range of qualitative data collection tools, including individual interviews, group discussions and field observations.

Conceptual Research Directions

Conceptually (theoretically), there is a need to further explore the micro-foundations of servant leadership in emerging economies using different theoretical lenses. Such research is also expected to bring more process-focused analysis and highlight different factors that play critical roles in the development and manifestation of servant leadership in emerging economy contexts in both large and small, as well as public sector and private organizations. Also, the role of emotions in servant leadership (development, manifestation, and influences) is an arena that needs the attention of future scholars. Further on, a comparative assessment of servant leadership with other types of leadership, such as transactional,

transformational, and ethical leadership in different emerging economies' settings and different sectors, holds significant promise to enrich the extant literature. In this concern, we suggest future researchers go beyond focusing on only environmental sustainability while studying servant leadership in emerging economies. Future scholars should also bring in elements of social and economic sustainability in the analysis, along with environmental sustainability in emerging economies, in order to present a relatively comprehensive picture of the role of servant leadership in this concern. So far, most prior studies have analyzed the interlinkage between servant leadership and performance (individual and organizational) at a rather generic level. Future researchers can try to explore the particular circumstances (both environmental and organizational) that enhance or reduce the effectiveness of servant leadership in emerging economies. For example, volatility (economic, political, and social) has been highlighted in some recent studies as a peculiar characteristic of many emerging economies (e.g., Ahmed *et al.*, 2022; Khan *et al.*, 2023; Morris *et al.*, 2023). To run organizations in such volatile contexts, leadership has a vital role. Hence, future researchers can address the role of the application of servant leadership in relation to different organizational management topics in volatile emerging economies and analyze if such an approach offers certain advantages that are missing in the case of other leadership approaches. In this concern, based on the suggestion of prior studies, the scholars can incorporate concepts such as resilience, agility, and ambidexterity (e.g., Ahmed *et al.*, 2024; Arslan *et al.*, 2024) at individual or organizational levels while studying servant leadership dynamics in relatively uncertain and volatile emerging economies. Finally, there is a need to examine the interlinkage in cross-level processes, such as innovation and creativity (at the employee and organizational levels), in relation to servant leadership in emerging economies.

Implications and Limitations

The purpose of this chapter is to undertake a literature review of servant leadership research in the context of emerging economies. Rather than relying solely on one approach to undertake a literature review, this chapter used a combination of bibliometric analysis and SLR to highlight key characteristics as well as specificities of servant leadership in emerging economies, as found by prior scholars. The review undertaken in this chapter revealed that despite the significant potential for application in emerging economies due to the collectivist cultural characteristics of most emerging economies, prior research on this specific topic has been very limited. Despite limited research, our literature review revealed that servant leadership research in emerging economies has benefited from the use of diverse theoretical lenses, including servant leadership theory, theory of social learning, social exchange theory and conservation of resources theory, among others. At the same time, we observed that methodologically, the focus so far has been overwhelmingly quantitative based on survey research, and other methodological approaches, including qualitative research, have not been applied much. Consequently, our chapter identified a range of

research gaps at empirical, methodological, and conceptual levels, which can be filled by future scholars focusing on servant leadership in emerging economies.

Our chapter's findings offer both theoretical and practical implications. From a theoretical perspective, a major takeaway from our review is that servant leadership theorization in emerging economies so far has rather been generic and contextual characteristics (which play a significant role in emerging economies) have not been particularly incorporated. Hence, this aspect needs the attention of scholars and theorists, who should attempt to enrich not only servant leadership theory but also other applicable theories in the context of servant leadership research, such as social learning, social exchange, traits, and conservation of resources theories, by bringing in elements of contextual theorization. In this concern, suggestions for future research suggested in this chapter offer several interesting avenues to be explored. From a practical perspective, it is important to highlight that the servant leadership approach has a significant potential for applications in emerging economies due to its relevance to cultural characteristics in most of those contexts (e.g., Haq *et al.*, 2022; Saleem *et al.*, 2022). Hence, leaders and managers in emerging economies need to consider this approach and develop associated capabilities while navigating their organizations through a range of challenges, including high risk, volatility, and uncertainty.

Our chapter also has limitations like any other academic work. Firstly, we analyzed only those academic studies that focused on both servant leadership and emerging economies (or developing economies) in the EBSCO Host, Web of Sciences (WOS), and Scopus databases. Although we did try to search further in Google Scholar, it is possible that some relevant academic studies may have been missed and not incorporated in our review. Hence, we acknowledge this limitation of our chapter. Also, it is possible that some academic studies may have focused on servant leadership dynamics (or similar characteristics) without explicitly referring to it in the context of emerging economies. Those studies are also not included in our review analysis, which can be considered a limitation. Despite these limitations, our chapter has offered a relatively comprehensive overview of extant research on servant leadership in emerging economies, which can be used as a basis for further exploration by future scholars.

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