

GREEN TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN TOURISM – STATE OF THE ART

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to conduct a thorough review of the academic literature on Green Transformational Leadership in the context of the tourism industry. A bibliometric analysis was conducted using articles indexed in the Scopus database, employing a methodological approach that integrates performance analysis and science mapping techniques. The study goes beyond quantitative metrics and includes a qualitative investigation aimed at identifying current research themes. A key focus is on content analysis of the most influential publications to provide an overview of emerging research topics, discover potential research gaps and offer practical implications for managers in the tourism industry.

Key Words: *green transformational leadership, tourism, bibliometric analysis, science mapping, content analysis*

JEL classification: *L83, O15*

Introduction

Green Transformational Leadership (GTFL) refers to a leadership style that focuses on promoting environmentally sustainable practices within an organization while inspiring and motivating employees to adopt sustainability initiatives (Mittal & Dhar, 2016). GTFL promotes a culture of environmental responsibility that can improve employee morale, satisfaction and retention (Patiar & Ying, 2016). Employees are more likely to engage with companies that prioritize sustainability (Albrecht et

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al., 2022). A study by Deloitte found that more than 40% of Generation Z and Millennials have changed jobs or industries due to climate concerns or plan to do so in the future. Climate change and environmental sustainability are therefore increasingly becoming critical factors for companies when it comes to attracting and retaining employees (Segal, 2023).

Climate change poses major challenges for the tourism industry, including extreme weather events, sea level rise and changes in biodiversity (Gordon, 2023). The GTFL promotes adaptation and resilience strategies to mitigate these risks (Çop et al., 2021). This includes initiatives such as reducing carbon emissions, conserving water resources, protecting ecosystems and promoting biodiversity (Schlaepfer & Lawler, 2022). In addition, GTFL enables tourism businesses to differentiate themselves in the marketplace by implementing sustainability initiatives and promoting responsible tourism practices among their employees (Hameed et al., 2022). Companies that prioritize sustainability can attract a niche segment of travelers (e.g. LOHAS) who value environmental protection, which contributes to higher visitor numbers, longer stays and higher revenues (Seočanac, 2019).

In response to these significant issues, the main objective of this paper is to consolidate existing academic research on GTFL in the context of tourism and provide a comprehensive overview of key findings and emerging trends to inform future research and practice in this area. In this way, potential research gaps will be identified.

Methodology

The data collection was carried out in February 2024. The Scopus database was searched for articles on GTFL in tourism, with a specific query created to narrow down the selection of relevant articles. The database was instructed to display only articles containing green and transformational (or transformative) leadership and tourism (or hotel or hotels) in the title, abstract or keywords of the article, and to display only English-language articles published by the end of 2023.

The obtained papers are then analysed using the VOSviewer software developed by Van Eck and Waltman (2010). First, a descriptive analysis was performed to examine the year of publication, journal performance, authors and countries, and co-occurrence keyword analysis was then used

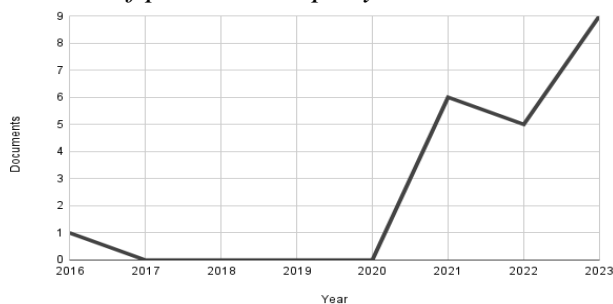
to identify the main research topics. Following this analysis, the content of each article was examined in detail. Based on a thematic review, the main research contexts, regions and research methods as well as potential research directions were identified.

Results

Descriptive analysis

A total of 21 articles were identified. The first article was published in 2016 by Mittal and Dhar. After the first publication, no articles on GTFL in tourism were published in the following four years. In 2021, there is a sudden increase in the number of articles when six articles were published, while the peak of published articles is reached in 2023 when nine articles were published on the observed topic (Figure 1).

Figure 1: *The number of publications per year*

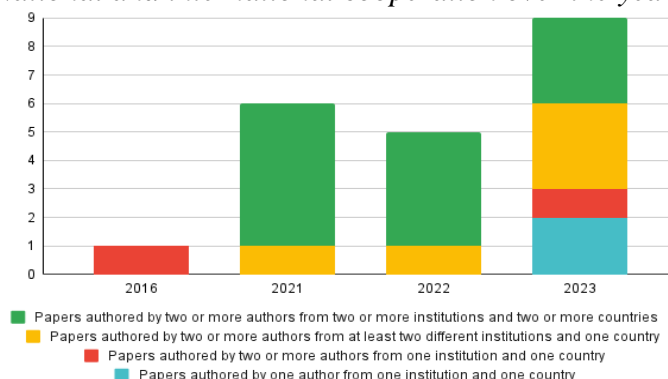


Source: *Scopus*

The articles were published in 17 different journals. Most of the articles were published in *Sustainability* (four articles) and *Business Strategy and the Environment* (two articles). *Tourism Management* received the largest number of citations for one published article (224 citations).

A total of 76 authors were identified in the obtained articles. All identified authors had written only one article on GTFL in tourism. Based on the classification proposed by Okumus et al. (2018), the articles are categorised into four groups based on the collaboration between the authors, as shown in Figure 2. A considerable number of articles (57.14%) are the result of collaboration between authors from different countries, while 23.81% of the articles are the result of collaboration between authors with different affiliations but from the same country.

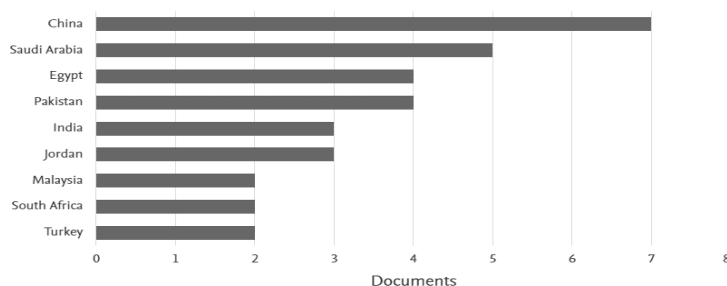
Figure 2: *National and international cooperation over the years*



Source: *Author*

The articles were published by authors from 21 different countries. As can be seen in Figure 3, China is the country with the most publications on GTFL in tourism (seven articles). Countries with only one article include Australia, Italy, Jordan, Spain, Qatar, etc.

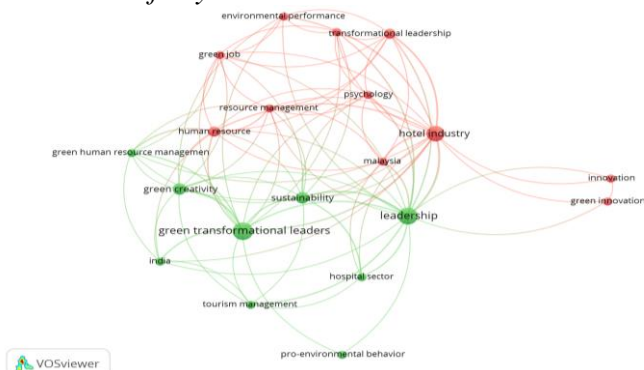
Figure 3: *Author's countries of affiliation*



Source: *Scopus*

A keyword analysis was carried out to identify the most important research topics. The VOSviewer software identified a total of 136 keywords in the observed articles (Figure 4). Of the total number of keywords, 116 or 85% occur only once and 10% occur twice. The remaining 5% occur in at least three articles. The keywords that occur most frequently are the name of the analysed topic (e.g., „green transformational leadership“, „hotel industry“, etc.). Apart from these terms, „sustainability“, „green creativity“ and „green job“ are repeated most frequently.

Figure 4: Network of keywords co-occurrences



Source: Author

Content analysis

A content analysis of the articles was carried out in order to obtain an overview of the most important topics in the field of GTFL in tourism (Table 1). This analysis shows that GTFL is mainly researched in the context of hotels. Most of the analysed hotels are located in Egypt (four articles), India (two articles), Malaysia (two articles), Pakistan (two articles), and Turkey (two articles). A quantitative methodology was used in 95 percent of the articles, while only one article used a qualitative methodology to examine GTFL in tourism. Based on the conceptualization of GTFL in the research model, the articles fell into two broad categories:

1. GTFL as an exogenous latent variable with 15 articles and
2. GTFL as a moderator with five articles.

Table 1: Articles overview

Author(s)	Context	Country	Methodology (Method)	Type of the variable
Agrawal & Pradhan (2023)	Hotels	India	Quantitative (PLS-SEM)	Exogenous
Ayad et al. (2023)	Hotels	Egypt	Quantitative (PLS-SEM)	Exogenous
Chen et al. (2023)	Service firms	Pakistan	Quantitative (PLS-SEM)	Moderator
Cheng (2023)	Hospitality and tourism organizations	China	Quantitative (PLS-SEM)	Exogenous

Dong et al. (2023)	Luxury hotels/resorts	Vietnam	Quantitative (CB-SEM)	Exogenous
Fatoki (2023)	Hotels	South Africa	Quantitative (PLS-SEM)	Exogenous
Suliman et al. (2023)	Three and four star hotels	Egypt	Quantitative (CB-SEM)	Exogenous
Sunarya et al. (2023)	SMEs	Indonesia	Quantitative (PLS-SEM)	Exogenous
Xin & Wang (2023)	Hotels	Spain	Quantitative (CB-SEM)	Moderator
Elshaer et al. (2022)	Hotels	Egypt	Quantitative (CB-SEM; PLS-SEM)	Exogenous
Farooq et al. (2022)	Luxury hotels/resorts	Morocco	Quantitative (CB-SEM)	Moderator
Öğretmenoğlu et al. (2022)	Hotels	Turkey	Quantitative (PLS-SEM)	Exogenous
Sobaih et al. (2022)	Hotels	Saudi Arabia	Quantitative (CB-SEM)	Exogenous
Xu et al. (2022)	Hotels	Pakistan	Quantitative (CB-SEM)	Exogenous
Ababneh et al. (2021)	Hotels	Jordan	Quantitative (CB-SEM)	Moderator
Ahmed et al. (2021)	Hotels	Malaysia	Qualitative (Interview)	/
Çop et al. (2021)	Four and five star hotels	Turkey	Quantitative (CB-SEM)	Exogenous
Iftikhar et al. (2021)	Hotels	Pakistan	Quantitative (MSEM)	Moderator
Moin et al. (2021)	Hotels	Malaysia	Quantitative (CB-SEM)	Exogenous
Riva et al. (2021)	Hotels	Bangladesh	Quantitative (PLS-SEM)	Exogenous
Mittal & Dhar (2016)	Hotels	India	Quantitative (CB-SEM)	Exogenous

Source: *Authors*

Based on the conceptualization of GTFL in the observed papers, the classification of the main themes is formed. In the following part of the paper, each article is classified accordingly and the most important conclusions of the paper are drawn.

1. Studies on the impact of GTFL

Overall, the studies underline the significant and positive effects of GTFL on various dimensions of the hotel and tourism industry. Most of the studies used PLS-SEM (7 articles) and CB-SEM (7 articles), while only one study used their combination.

1.1 Impact on environmental practices

The findings highlight the central role of green transformational leadership in shaping environmentally conscious practices and strategies in various hospitality and tourism contexts. Sunarya et al. (2023) show a significant impact of GTFL strategy on green supply chain management in small and medium-sized tourism enterprises, while Dong et al. (2023) find that GTFL has a positive impact on promoting green innovation practices in hotels.

1.2 Impact on employee engagement and behavior

The results of the study by Suliman et al. (2023) show a significant positive influence of GTFL on the environmental commitment and environmental performance of hotel employees. Çop et al. (2021) show that GTFL has a positive impact on employee commitment to green work and green team resilience. In addition, GTFL was found to have a positive impact on green innovation (Sabaih et al., 2022), green creativity (Riva et al., 2021), and pro-environmental behavior (Xu et al., 2022). Elshaer et al. (2022) and Öğretmenoğlu et al. (2022) found that GTFL has a positive effect on employees' environmental citizenship behavior, while Fatoki (2023) found a significant positive correlation between GTFL and environmentally friendly employee behavior. The positive effect of GTFL on employee satisfaction is also confirmed (Moin et al., 2021).

1.3 Impact on competitive advantage and organizational reputation

A study by Mittal and Dhar (2016) found a positive correlation between GTFL and green organizational identity. Cheng (2023) shows the positive correlation between GTFL and a company's environmental reputation and states that this relationship is mediated by environmental awareness. Agrawal and Pradhan (2023) also confirm the existence of a positive relationship between GTFL and the organization's green image. Ayad et al. (2023) report that GTFL has a direct positive impact on organizational pride.

2. Studies on the moderating role of GTFL

Five articles examined the moderating effect of GTFL on various relationships in the hotel industry. All articles used quantitative methods, with CB-SEM being the most frequently used method (three studies), while PLS-SEM and M-SEM were used in only one study each. The study by Xin and Wang (2023) explores solutions for hotels undergoing a green transformation to gain a competitive advantage by adopting green practices. The study examines the role of GTFL in enhancing the relationship between green intellectual capital, green product innovation and green competitive advantage and provides evidence that GTFL is significant in achieving sustainability in the hotel industry. The findings of Ababneh et al. (2021) show that GTFL plays a critical role in strengthening the links between four green HR practices (recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, and employee engagement) and employee commitment to environmental initiatives. Similarly, Iftikhar et al. (2021) found a positive impact of GTFL on the relationship between green HRM practices and employee environmental engagement, while Chen et al. (2023) confirmed a positive effect on the relationship between employee green mindfulness and green intrinsic motivation. On the other hand, a study by Farooq et al. (2022) conducted in hotels in Morocco failed to confirm the moderating effect on the relationship between green HRM and green creativity.

Discussion and conclusion

The findings of previous studies highlight the critical role of green transformational leadership in promoting environmentally friendly practices, influencing employee behavior and achieving positive organizational outcomes in the tourism industry. GTFL has a significant impact on the promotion of green practices, both within organizations and in the broader context. GTFL inspires and guides teams to adopt sustainable initiatives, leading to environmentally conscious behavior among employees that extends beyond their professional roles and into their personal lives. This focus on green practices not only enhances the company's reputation, but also provides a competitive advantage in the tourism industry, where consumers increasingly value sustainability. To maintain these advantages, it is necessary for both management and employees to stay informed about environmental issues and constantly strive for improvement. Future research could benefit from longitudinal studies to observe the lasting effects of GTFL on company outcomes and

employee behaviors. Examining the relationship between GTFL, employee engagement and well-being, and consumer behavior and preferences regarding sustainable tourism practices would provide valuable insights. Future studies should also consider examining GTFL in contexts other than hotels and in countries that have been neglected in previous studies (e.g. in Europe and the Americas).

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