

THE EFFECT OF DIFFERENT LEADERSHIP STYLES ON ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES IN TOURISM BUSINESSES: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

This systematic review aims to examine the effects of different leadership styles on organizational development processes in tourism enterprises. The study analyzed 20 academic studies published between 2010 and 2025 and conducted in the tourism sector in accordance with the PRISMA 2020 protocol. The review evaluated the effects of transformational, servant, ethical, empowering, authentic, inclusive, and transactional leadership styles on indicators such as organizational innovation, employee engagement, learning, ethical climate, sustainability, and service quality. The findings indicate that the most frequently studied leadership styles in the tourism sector are servant, empowering, and ethical leadership. Servant leadership strengthens employee engagement, trust, and ethical behavior; empowering leadership fosters innovation, knowledge sharing and a learning organizational culture. Ethical leadership, in turn, increases service quality and customer satisfaction by creating trust and a perception of justice. Transformational leadership is prominent in vision sharing and motivation, while authentic and inclusive leadership is prominent in the areas of belonging, citizenship behavior and sustainable development. The research reveals that leadership is not only a managerial tool in tourism enterprises but also a key determinant of organizational transformation and sustainability. By presenting a thematic synthesis using qualitative content analysis, the study makes three key contributions to the literature: (1) a theoretical framework integrating different leadership styles within the context of organizational development; (2) a methodological contribution using a PRISMA-based systematic review method; and (3) practical recommendations for tourism managers based on ethical, empowering and participatory leadership. The findings demonstrate the strategic importance of people-centered leadership approaches for innovation, employee well-being and sustainable competitiveness in the tourism sector.

Keywords: Tourism Enterprises, Leadership Styles, Organizational Development, Innovation, Sustainability, Systematic Review. Jel Codes: L80, L83, L89.

INTRODUCTION

Leaders have caused significant changes in the masses through their ability to influence throughout history. These change and interaction skills distinguish leaders from others and elevate them to a distinct position within society. Influencing individuals within an organization is just as crucial as influencing them within society (Erol & Köroğlu, 2013). As in every field, the leadership behaviors of managers in labor-intensive businesses, such as the service sector, have both positive and negative impacts on employees (Aktuna & Kılıçlar, 2019: 301). In recent years, research on leadership and related styles has increased. Many researchers focus on leadership styles as a key factor in the success of leadership in organizations (Fedele, 2020). The prevalence of this view stems from increasing global competition, rapid technological advancements and a changing workforce structure. Organizational transformations are becoming a crucial factor in the contemporary business world because they are essential for the successful progress of a business. Without transformation in processes, organizations may fail to achieve their goals or objectives due to the rapid pace of innovation in every sector (Rao & Zaidi, 2020). The links between leadership styles, organizational innovation and organizational performance can be developed. Furthermore, academic research reveals that different leadership styles can lead to different levels of organizational performance (Zumitzavan & Udchachone, 2014: 272).

Today, the concept of leader-member exchange is gaining prominence in management science literature. The emergence of the concept of leader-member exchange stems from the idea that there will be an interaction between leaders and subordinates. During this process, leaders and employees within the organization collaborate on organizational goals (Çalışkan, 2009: 219-220; Ayhün & Celep, 2019: 134). Ensuring that employees work efficiently and optimally, even under adverse conditions, is one of the significant challenges managers face. In other words, managers and business owners must ensure they have a highly efficient and productive workforce to achieve organizational goals. A manager's job primarily requires demonstrating leadership, excellent decision-making, and practical communication skills (Adekunle, 2017). In the tourism sector, considered a core area within the service sector, there are many types of tourism businesses that offer touristic and related products to consumers, such as tour operators, travel agencies, accommodation businesses and entertainment businesses (Tütüncü & Akgündüz, 2012: 59). Because tourism businesses operate in the service sector, they utilize a large amount of manpower. Therefore, effective management of tourism employees is crucial. Due to the nature of tourism businesses, customers and employees interact directly (Gülertekin-Genç & Gümüş, 2018: 210; Can & Atar, 2023: 76). Hotel managers can exhibit different leadership behaviors to achieve their businesses' goals and objectives. Some managers exhibit an employee-focused leadership style, while others may adopt production-oriented or change-oriented leadership behaviors. However, managers' leadership styles can affect not only the business's goals and objectives but also the productivity and performance of hotel employees (Cinnioğlu et al., 2019: 157).

In addition to the information provided above, small and medium-sized tourism businesses often face serious skill shortages due to the need for owners to manage each functional section of the business independently. Furthermore, due to seasonality, small-scale company structures and the large number of family businesses, the tourism sector can offer insufficient opportunities for attracting a workforce, particularly in terms of fast-track career paths and promotions (Peters, 2005). A literature review reveals numerous studies on leadership styles and organizational behavior in the tourism sector, particularly over the last twenty years. There are various studies on the subject in Turkish literature (Çalışkan, 2019; Tütüncü & Akgündüz, 2012; Erol & Köroğlu, 2013; Alagöz, 2016; Tanrıverdi et al., 2016; Gülertekin-Genç & Gümüş, 2018; Aktuna & Kılıçlar, 2019; Ayhün & Celep, 2019; Cinnioğlu et al., 2019; Can & Atar'ın 2023). In English literature, studies can be found (Peters, 2005; Babaita et al., 2010; Zumitzavan & Udchachone, 2014; Arsezen-Otamis et al., 2015; Adekunle, 2017; Fedele, 2020; Rao & Zaidi, 2020; Serçek et al., 2025).

Due to the large number and diversity of studies conducted, this study included studies examining the impact of different leadership styles (such as transformational, ethical, servant and sustainable leadership) on organizational development processes in tourism organizations. The purpose of the study was to systematically examine how empirical studies on leadership are positioned within the context of organizational development. Studies obtained through searches in Scopus, Web of Science (WoS), ScienceDirect, Emerald Insight, Taylor & Francis Online, TR Index and Google Scholar databases were examined.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Leadership in the Tourism Sector

A leader, in its dictionary definition, is someone who influences, directs and mobilizes people to achieve a goal (Webster II, 1994). The act of influencing, directing and guiding individuals to achieve a goal has been examined from various perspectives. While these definitions share similar elements, researchers examine leadership from different perspectives. Some studies consider leadership as a supportive component of group processes, while others view it as an interactional process or a means of establishing structure and achieving goals (Naktiyok, 2006: 21). Leadership is a phenomenon that has been extensively studied in the social sciences and organizational behavior literature for many years and has been the subject of numerous theoretical and empirical studies. Leadership is multifaceted and applicable across a variety of fields. However, despite this wide range of research, the concept of leadership is still not fully understood and is considered a complex phenomenon (Aktuna & Kılıçlar, 2019: 302). From this perspective, leadership has become a significant focus not only in academic studies but also in practical and informal discussions. Despite the intense interest in this topic, the literature in the field still contains clear conceptual gaps, theoretical inconsistencies and differing interpretations. This demonstrates that the phenomenon of leadership has a "black box" character that has not yet been fully understood (Çalışkan, 2009: 220). In tourism establishments, where production and consumption occur simultaneously, it is crucial for managers to be able to quickly adapt to changing environmental conditions and effectively manage unexpected crisis situations. In this context, business managers must closely monitor change and innovation as they achieve their goals. Today's complex and dynamic market conditions require leaders not only to adapt to the current situation but also to support employee creativity and encourage innovative thinking. Therefore, skill-based leadership approaches are said to play a critical role in the competitiveness and sustainable success of hotel businesses (Ünal et al., 2024: 113). The prominent leadership styles in the tourism sector are briefly described below.

Transformational Leadership: Leaders who integrate their own vision, values and work style into the organizational structure to help organizations achieve their defined goals. This leadership style is based on prioritizing the individual characteristics and needs of employees. Transformational leaders implement personalized interaction processes to recognize and develop each individual's potential. This allows them to systematically identify employees' strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, transformational leaders assign employees more responsibility to increase their self-confidence and sense of competence and they view mistakes made during this process as opportunities for learning and development. This style significantly contributes to increasing new ideas, motivation and commitment within the organization (Çevik et al., 2010: 81).

Ethical Leadership: Ethical leadership is crucial for an organization's sustainability and long-term success. Ethical leaders set a moral example for their employees by using principles such as honesty, fairness and consistency as the basis for decision-making and implementation. This leadership style aims to adopt, support and maintain ethical standards within the organization. Ethical leaders encourage employees to act in accordance with ethical values while also contributing to the development of a culture of trust, respect and responsibility. Consequently, ethical leadership is a critical element in maintaining organizational integrity, increasing employee engagement and sustainably enhancing corporate reputation (Erol & Kulualp Göktas, 2019: 697).

Servant Leadership: While the concept of "service" often evokes a negative connotation of being attached to a job or person, it actually has a deeper and more multifaceted meaning. From a servant leadership perspective, this concept means helping employees, empowering them and contributing to their development. Servant leadership is a leadership approach that prioritizes individuals' needs, expectations and desires over their own interests and accepts serving others as a conscious choice. With this approach, leaders aim to develop their followers into more knowledgeable, free, independent and responsible individuals. Important characteristics of a servant leader include a firm commitment to the principle of altruism and a desire to serve rather than manage others. Within this framework, servant leaders positively influence those around them through their own values, beliefs, and awareness and they demonstrate their leadership role through the development of others (Demirci, 2014: 178-179).

Sustainable Leadership: Sustainable leadership is a leadership style that brings together perspectives from diverse fields. This style is characterized by a vision that prioritizes systematic thinking, emotional intelligence, empathy and values. This long-term leadership style also embraces an innovative, volunteer-based and trust-building management approach. Sustainable leadership aims to create an inclusive learning and development environment by considering organizational diversity. This process encourages the sharing, dissemination and internalization of societal-based ideas. In this context, sustainable leaders prefer to manage conflict constructively rather than avoid it, viewing differences as a source of organizational enrichment and innovation rather than a threat. Thus, sustainable

leadership plays a crucial role in enhancing the learning capacity of organizations, effectively managing diversity and securing long-term successful outcomes (Çiçeklioğlu, 2023: 121-122).

Authoritarian Leadership: Authoritarian leadership is a management style in which the leader wields absolute and unquestionable power and clearly demonstrates this power in their interactions with subordinates. In this style, the leader completely controls their subordinates and expects them to obey orders with complete obedience. Unlike the "heroic" leadership style in western literature, where the leader derives his or her power from his or her position and formal authority, this style of leadership generally implies that the leader's legitimacy is shaped by respect for authority, familial connections and paternalistic control systems. Therefore, authoritarian leadership is viewed as a leadership style that prioritizes power and discipline and prioritizes hierarchy and obedience over participation (Çalışkan, 2009: 225).

Moral Leadership: A leader uses their authority not only for their own benefit but also for the benefit of their employees and the entire organization. In this respect, it reflects a leadership approach based on "social power." Such leaders exhibit a high degree of personal integrity. Instead of being egoistic, they exhibit respect and courtesy. Furthermore, by adhering to the principles of integrity, openness and honesty, they are careful not to prioritize personal gain over organizational interests. With these characteristics, they exhibit a leadership style that inspires trust in those around them and sets an example through their attitudes (Cheng et al., 2000).

Empowering Leadership: It is a key factor in achieving high levels of service delivery and customer satisfaction. This leadership style plays a critical role in the tourism industry, particularly because it requires employees who are proactive, open to risk, encourage innovation and able to cope with uncertainty. Improving service quality and customer satisfaction in tourism businesses depends on the effective implementation of empowered human capital strategies that support employees' independence, exercise of authority and participation in decision-making. Empowered employees in the tourism industry are better able to manage unforeseen circumstances that may arise during service delivery. Furthermore, their flexibility in service customization allows them to respond more effectively to diverse customer needs and expectations (Çeliker, 2022).

Organizational Development in the Tourism Sector

Tourism businesses are organizations at the heart of the service sector, requiring constant change and renewal due to their dynamic nature. In this context, equipping managers with leadership competencies and establishing an innovative and sustainable organizational culture are fundamental to sectoral success. Not only establishing organizational culture but also ensuring its continuity is critical for businesses' survival and competitive advantage. A strong and stable organizational culture supports the long-term success of tourism businesses by facilitating their achievement of their goals (Gürdoğan & Yavuz, 2013: 57). Organizational development fundamentally refers to the planned transformation of human, social and cultural structures. This concept involves organizations developing their internal processes to adapt to external environmental conditions and is also defined as the organization's ability to adapt to changes (Erdoğan & Sayın, 2022: 334). The values prevailing within an organization are fundamental elements shaped by the institution's natural structure and functioning. Organizational values consist of norms, rules, traditions and rituals that are created, shared and adopted by employees. These values not only determine the ways employees understand and evaluate their behavior but also serve as a binding element that ensures the unity and continuity of the organization (Çelebi, 2017: 86).

Relationship between Leadership and Organizational Development in the Tourism Sector

Leadership attitudes are one of the key factors shaping working methods, the structure, and functioning of an organization. Furthermore, the behaviors displayed by a leader directly influence the development of the leadership style that will exist within the organization (Eid et al., 2012: 55). Relationships between individuals and organizations enable employees, who constitute the most important components of the organization, to come together around common goals, values and organizational culture. This also helps develop employees' sense of belonging. Employees' fundamental bonds to the organization are explained by their emotional commitment to the organization's goals and values, which gives rise to the concept of organizational commitment, which refers to an emotional bond between employees and the organization. Organizational commitment is defined as the process by which the organization's values and goals merge or harmonize with individuals' individual values and goals (Diker, 2017: 27).

Related Research on the Subject

Garda (2024) conducted a study to help businesses in the tourism sector increase the success of their marketing activities and achieve competitive advantage. The author examined the effects of leadership styles and organizational climate on marketing performance and provided guidance for managers to consider these factors

during strategy development. Zein & Abdo (2024) found that transformational leadership has a strong and positive impact on the job satisfaction and performance of employees in the hotel sector. The study results indicate that transformational leadership improves organizational performance by increasing employee motivation. The study also found that job satisfaction has a negative impact on organizational performance. This suggests that the dynamics and employee expectations within the sector require a more in-depth examination. Sharma & Aggarwal (2024) examined leadership research in the tourism and hospitality sectors between 1990 and 2024. The study revealed the impact of leadership on organizational outcomes such as employee well-being, organizational agility, employee motivation and performance. The study also demonstrated how leadership practices have evolved in areas such as crisis management, digital transformation and sustainability. Hoang et al. (2024) examined the effects of self-respecting leadership on employee engagement, trust and organizational commitment in the tourism and hospitality sectors. The study also emphasized that self-respecting leadership strengthens employees' emotional bonds, increasing organizational commitment and highlighting the impact of leadership practices in the sector. Khairy et al. (2023) demonstrated in their study that transformational leadership in hotel businesses positively shapes organizational culture and contributes to organizational agility by increasing employee trust. This finding highlights the impact of leadership styles on organizational culture and agility.

Güler & Cinnioğlu (2021) in their study of employees at a five-star hotel in Antalya, identified the positive and significant impact of authentic leadership perception on organizational commitment and employee performance. The authors also determined that leaders' authentic behaviors positively impact employees' performance by increasing their job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Başkan & Mert (2021) in their study conducted in hotel businesses, identified significant relationships between leadership characteristics, organizational mastery and performance. The authors also determined that leaders' effective management characteristics are an important factor in enhancing organizational mastery and performance. Dülger & Cinnioğlu (2021) examined the effects of ethical leadership behavior perceived by hotel employees in their managers on careerism and performance. The authors found that while ethical leadership perception increases performance, it decreases careerism, while careerism negatively impacts performance. Another important conclusion is the prediction that managers who practice ethical leadership can improve employee performance.

In their study of five-star hotel employees, Tanrıverdi & Kahraman (2016) found that leader-member exchange reduced the level of alienation within the organization and varied according to demographic variables. This finding demonstrates that the quality of leader-member exchange plays a significant role in increasing employee commitment and motivation. Sandıkçı et al. (2015) stated that increasing competition and globalization in the tourism sector after the 1950s led accommodation establishments to implement new management techniques. They emphasized the importance of transformational leadership in organizational health, namely environmental adaptation, for business success. In this context, the authors examined the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational health in Ministry-certified thermal accommodation establishments in Afyonkarahisar.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Purpose of the Research

The primary objective of this research is to systematically examine the impact of different leadership styles on organizational development processes in tourism enterprises. Leadership is not merely a managerial function; it is also a strategic process that shapes organizational culture, employee behavior, innovation level and learning capacity (Bass, 1985; Schein, 2010). The literature emphasizes that transformational, servant, ethical, participatory and authentic leadership styles, in particular, have strong effects on organizational development indicators such as innovation, employee commitment, organizational learning and sustainable development (Kim & Brymer, 2011; Buil et al., 2019; Bavik, 2020). In this context, the research aims to holistically analyze academic studies examining the relationship between leadership and organizational development in the tourism and hospitality sector, published between 2010 and 2025, in line with the systematic review steps recommended by the PRISMA 2020 protocol (Page et al., 2021) and Petticrew & Roberts (2006). The sub-objectives of the study are structured around the following research questions:

1. *Which leadership styles (transformational, servant, ethical, transactional, authentic, etc.) are the most frequently researched leadership styles in the context of tourism businesses?*

This question aims to systematically reveal the diversity and frequency of leadership types in the literature (Bass, 1999; Northouse, 2021).

2. *What dimensions of organizational development processes (innovation, employee commitment, learning, sustainability, performance, etc.) do these leadership styles influence?*

Thus, the effects of leadership on organizational outcomes are classified based on these dimensions (Schein, 2010; Buil et al., 2019).

3. *What methodological designs (quantitative, qualitative, mixed) have been used to examine the effects of leadership styles on organizational development in the tourism sector?*

This question aims to reveal methodological trends and research designs in the field (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008).

4. *What are the similarities and differences in the effects of different leadership styles on organizational learning, innovation, and sustainability?*

This question provides a comparative analysis of the common and divergent aspects of leadership styles on organizational development (Senge, 1990; Valeri & Baggio, 2021).

5. *Through which mediating variables (organizational trust, justice, motivation, etc.) do leadership styles in tourism enterprises influence organizational culture and employee behavior?*

This question aims to explain the indirect relationships between leadership and organizational development (Kim & Brymer, 2011; Bavik, 2020).

6. *What new research directions (e.g., digital leadership, sustainable leadership, intergenerational differences) are emerging in the field of leadership and organizational development in tourism businesses in the future?*

This final question aims to identify gaps in the literature and future trends (Yukl, 2013; Pizam, 2021).

In this respect, the study aims to integrate findings on the leadership-organizational development relationship, which are scattered throughout the literature and to comparatively reveal the impact of leadership styles on organizational transformation, innovation and sustainability in tourism enterprises. Thus, the research provides both a theoretical framework and develops recommendations for practice.

Importance of Research

The tourism sector is a service area based on high human interaction, shaped by changing demands and requiring constant innovation. Therefore, the sustainable success of organizations depends largely on leaders' ability to manage change, motivate employees and create a learning organizational culture (Senge, 1990; Yukl, 2013). However, a review of the literature reveals that systematic reviews that holistically address the effects of leadership styles on organizational development in tourism enterprises are quite limited (Zopiatas & Constanti, 2012; Arasli, 2020). This necessitates researching this topic not only from the perspective of individual leadership but also within the contexts of organizational transformation, innovation, commitment, and sustainability. This study fills this gap in the literature and makes three key contributions:

1. *Theoretical Contribution:* It offers an integrative conceptual framework by relating leadership theories (transformational, servant, ethical, participatory, etc.) to organizational development in the context of tourism businesses (Bass, 1999; Northouse, 2021).

2. *Methodological Contribution:* It brings a unique analytical structure to the systematic review by combining the PRISMA 2020 protocol and qualitative content analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Schreier, 2012) approaches.

3. *Applied Contribution:* It offers concrete management recommendations to managers and policy makers in the tourism sector based on the effects of leadership styles on organizational performance and sustainability (Pizam, 2021; Valeri & Baggio, 2021).

In conclusion, this research aims to provide *a new holistic perspective* on leadership studies in the field of tourism, to explain how organization development processes are transformed by leadership dynamics and to guide future empirical studies.

Limitations of the Research

This systematic review has certain methodological and scope limitations. First, the study only included studies published between 2010 and 2025 and conducted in the tourism, accommodation, gastronomy, travel, or spa/wellness sectors. Therefore, studies published outside these dates or examining the leadership-organizational development relationship in non-tourism sectors were excluded. This limits the generalizability of the findings across time and sectors (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006).

Secondly, only accessible full texts from studies published in English and Turkish were included in the review. This language and accessibility limitation may have excluded valuable research published in other languages (Snyder, 2019). Thirdly, the possibility of publication bias should be considered because the databases used in the systematic review (Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, Emerald Insight, TR Index and Google Scholar) limitedly index certain publication types (e.g., book chapters, reports, or conference proceedings) (Page et al., 2021). Fourthly, this

study was conducted using a qualitative content analysis approach, not a meta-analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Schreier, 2012).

Therefore, the findings are based on thematic synthesis and interpretative inferences, not on a statistical effect size measurement. Finally, the concepts of leadership and organizational development can be defined differently across organizational, cultural and geographical contexts. Therefore, there is theoretical and methodological diversity among the studies included in this review and the interpretation of the results should be made with an awareness of this diversity (Yukl, 2013; Northouse, 2021). Considering all these limitations, while the findings of this study provide a strong synthesis in understanding leadership practices in the tourism sector, future studies are recommended to include meta-analytic assessments, cross-cultural comparisons and increased database diversity.

Universe and Sample of the Research

The universe of this research consists of academic studies examining the impact of leadership styles on organizational development processes in the tourism and hospitality sectors. The universe encompasses all scientific publications published between 2010 and 2025, including peer-reviewed journals, book chapters, and graduate theses. The scope of the research enabled the evaluation of the topic within the context of rapidly evolving managerial and organizational dynamics over the last 15 years (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006; Page et al., 2021). From this extensive literature pool, studies selected according to specific criteria were included in the systematic review. The sample was determined based on the following inclusion criteria:

1. *Scope criterion*: Studies examining leadership in service industries such as tourism, hospitality, travel, gastronomy, or spa/wellness.
2. *Topic criterion*: Publications addressing the impact of different leadership styles (transformational, servant, ethical, authentic, transactional, inclusive, etc.) on organization development, innovation, employee engagement, organizational learning, or performance.
3. *Type of publication criterion*: Articles published in peer-reviewed journals, doctoral and master's theses, and international book chapters.
4. *Language criterion*: Studies written in Turkish or English.
5. *Time period*: Publications published between January 1, 2010, and December 31, 2025.
6. *Access criterion*: Studies with full text available.

A literature search conducted using these criteria yielded a total of 168 records in the Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, Emerald Insight, Taylor & Francis, TR Index and Google Scholar databases. After removing duplicates and studies that did not meet the criteria, 20 studies were included in the final sample according to the PRISMA 2020 flowchart process. The research sample consisted of 20 studies that met the above inclusion criteria and were selected in accordance with the PRISMA protocol. These 20 studies represent the secondary data set of the systematic review. Table 1 provides a brief summary of the 20 studies reviewed for the systematic review, whose full citations are provided in the bibliography section of the article.

Table 1. Summary of Studies Included in the Systematic Review (2010–2025).

No	Writer/Writers	Year	Article Title	Publication/Journal
1	Kim & Brymer	2011	The effects of ethical leadership on manager outcomes and firm performance in hotels	International Journal of Hospitality Management
2	Buil, Martínez & Matute	2019	Transformational leadership and employee performance: The role of identification and engagement	International Journal of Hospitality Management
3	Bavik	2020	Servant leadership, organizational trust, and organizational learning in the hospitality industry	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management
4	Eluwole, Fagbemi & Tiwari	2022	Ethical leadership and service recovery performance: A study of hotels	International Journal of Hospitality Management
5	Lim, Rasoolimanesh & Ringle	2021	Empowering leadership and innovation behavior in tourism SMEs	International Journal of Hospitality Management
6	Wang, Tsai & Tsai	2022	Transformational leadership and innovation in hotels: The mediating role of knowledge sharing	Tourism Management
7	Yen & Teng	2024	Authentic leadership and organizational citizenship behavior: Evidence from tourism	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights
8	Hoang, Nguyen & Lee	2024	Ethical and authentic leadership in hospitality: A cross-cultural perspective	Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research
9	Cai, Zhang & Qiu	2023	Servant leadership and ethical climate in hospitality organizations	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management

10	Gui, Sun & Chen	2021	Servant leadership and job satisfaction among hotel employees	Tourism Review International
11	Siyal, Ahmed & Lee	2023	Inclusive leadership and green behavior in hotels	Sustainability
12	Asghar & Lee	2023	Inclusive leadership and employee engagement in hospitality	Current Issues in Tourism
13	Hoang & Doan	2021	Empowering leadership and employee learning behavior in tourism SMEs	Tourism Management Perspectives
14	Rescalvo-Martín, Hernández-Perlines & Aranda	2022	Empowering leadership and knowledge sharing in hotels	International Journal of Hospitality Management
15	Pizam	2021	Leadership and management in hospitality	International Journal of Hospitality Management
16	Alghamdi	2024	Transactional leadership and efficiency in tourism enterprises	Tourism Economics
17	Hoang, Nguyen & Pham	2023	Ethical leadership and trust in the hotel industry	Tourism Review
18	Ghosh & Khatri	2018	Servant leadership and organizational commitment: Evidence from hospitality	Tourism and Hospitality Research
19	Hoang, Lee & Nguyen	2022	Empowering leadership and organizational learning in hospitality	Service Industries Journal
20	Bavik & Chan	2021	Servant leadership and ethical behavior in hospitality	Cornell Hospitality Quarterly

Source: Systematic review of authors, (2025).

Data Collection Process of the Research

In this study, data was systematically collected from *secondary data* sources. In line with the research questions, studies addressing the impact of different leadership styles on organizational development processes in the tourism sector were identified through national and international databases. The screening process was based on the *PRISMA 2020* protocol (Page et al., 2021). In this context; Scopus, Web of Science (WoS), ScienceDirect, Emerald Insight, Taylor & Francis Online, TR Index and Google Scholar databases were searched.

The basic keywords and Boolean connectors used in the search process are as follows: (“leadership” or “transformational leadership” or “servant leadership” or “ethical leadership” or “authentic leadership” and (“organizational development” or “organizational learning” or “innovation” or “employee engagement” and (“tourism” or “hospitality” or “hotel management” or “travel” or “spa/wellness”). *Inclusion criteria*: being published between 2010 and 2025, addressing the relationship between leadership and organizational development in the tourism sector, being an empirical or compilation academic study, having full-text access, being written in English or Turkish. *Exclusion criteria* were leadership research conducted in fields outside the sector, only conceptual articles, conference proceedings, short notes and publications that do not have access.

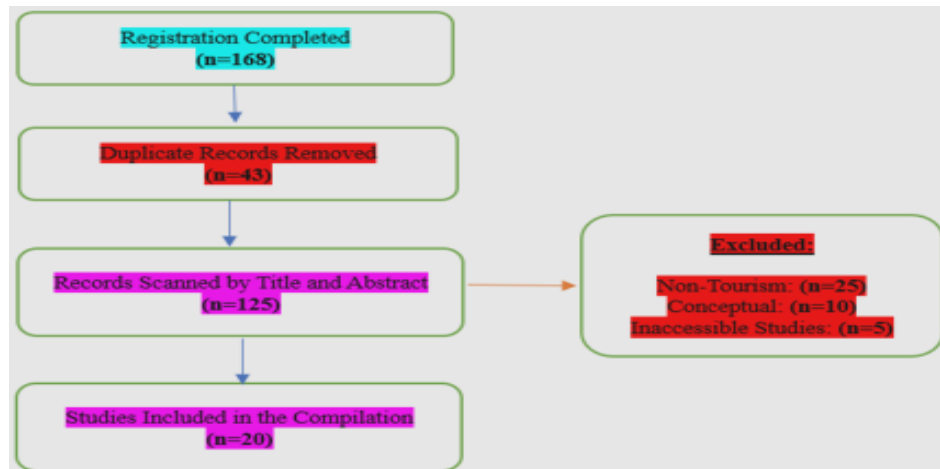


Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram.

The searches were conducted between October 1, 2025 and September 1, 2025. The literature search yielded a total of 168 records (articles, proceedings, book chapters, etc.). These records were obtained from various databases

(Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, TR Index, Google Scholar). Cases where the same study was listed more than once in different databases were identified. 43 records were removed because they were duplicates, leaving 125 unique records. The remaining 125 studies were evaluated at the title and abstract levels. At this stage, studies were excluded for the following reasons: non-tourism topics: 25 studies conceptual/theoretical articles (non-empirical): ten studies inaccessible texts (full text not available): 5 studies. Thus, 40 studies were excluded, leaving 85 candidate studies. In the final stage, 20 studies that met the criteria were included in the systematic review. These twenty studies are empirical studies that directly examine the effects of leadership styles on organizational development in tourism enterprises. The data collection process was conducted according to the principles of transparency and repeatability and the process was visualized using the *PRISMA Flow Diagram* (Figure 1).

Data Validity and Reliability of the Research

In this study, various methodological precautions were taken to ensure the scientific accuracy (validity) and replicability (reliability) of the findings obtained. The validity of the study was primarily ensured by structuring the systematic review process in line with the PRISMA 2020 guideline (Page et al., 2021). In this context, six different international databases (Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, Emerald, TR Index, Google Scholar) were searched during the data collection process. The search strategy was created using Boolean conjunctions ("and", "or", "not"), and keywords such as "leadership", "tourism", "hospitality", "organizational development", "innovation" and "employee engagement" were combined. Inclusion and exclusion criteria for studies were pre-defined and the process was reported with the PRISMA flow diagram. These steps were carried out in accordance with the methodological standards recommended by Petticrew & Roberts (2006) for systematic reviews in the social sciences; thus, *internal validity* (the findings originate from the analysis process) and *content validity* (the scope of the study represents the research topic) were ensured. Furthermore, themes and codes were derived based on a predetermined conceptual framework (Yukl, 2013; Northouse, 2021). This coding process was conducted with theoretical consistency using key concepts such as "leadership style," "organizational development," "innovation," and "ethical climate," strengthening construct validity.

Reliability of the study was ensured based on the principle of *internal consistency* in qualitative data analysis recommended by Miles & Huberman (1994). The coding process was conducted in two stages: in the first stage, the researcher conducted preliminary coding, and in the second stage, expert opinions were obtained to assess the compatibility of the codes with the themes. This process was conducted in accordance with the "reliability, confirmability and transferability" principles emphasized by Lincoln & Guba (1985) in the *naturalistic inquiry* approach.

Additionally, to ensure the replicability of the findings, the coding process, themes and subcategories were clearly presented in tables, bibliographic information for the twenty included studies was provided in detail and the process used in data analysis (narrative synthesis approach; (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006)) was explained in detail. These measures increased both the consistency and scientific transparency of the research. In this context, the validity and reliability of the research were ensured through methods such as a systematic search strategy in line with PRISMA 2020 standards, open coding and theme definitions, validation by expert opinion and a literature-based conceptual framework. Therefore, the study meets both the criteria for *qualitative analysis* (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994) and the principles of *systematic review* (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006; Page et al., 2021).

RESULTS

Data Analysis of the Research

Twenty studies included in the systematic review were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. Ensuring reliability in content analysis depends on a transparent description of the research process and the systematic documentation of coding and thematization decisions. Elo et al. (2014) emphasize that reliability in qualitative content analysis can be strengthened through the principles of "*traceability of decisions*" and "*conceptual consistency*". Similarly, in this study, the coding process was documented, themes were generated in line with the theoretical framework and the analysis process was structured in a reportable manner. The analysis process was based on the three-stage approach described by Elo & Kyngäs (2008) and Schreier (2012):

1. *Preparation Phase*: The full texts of the studies were read to identify semantic units appropriate to the research objective. In this phase, key variables (leadership type, research area, sample type and key findings) were extracted from each publication.

2. *Coding Phase*: The resulting semantic units were systematically coded. Codes were classified according to leadership styles (e.g., transformational, servant, ethical, authentic, inclusive, etc.); each code was matched with the relevant organizational outcome (innovation, commitment, learning, performance, sustainability, etc.). The coding process was conducted according to the "*category system development*" approach suggested by Schreier (2012).

3. *Reporting (Thematization) Phase*: Codes were grouped into categories based on their similarities and themes were derived from these categories. The analysis was summarized as "Leadership Style-Area of Influence-Key Findings". Four main themes were identified as a result of the data analysis: *Transformational Leadership and Innovation*; *Servant Leadership and Employee Engagement*; *Ethical Leadership and A Culture of Trust*; *Authentic/Inclusive Leadership and Sustainable Development*.

The analysis results are presented in Table 2 (Coding Theme Table) and with relevant examples in the text. This method is based on the narrative synthesis approach recommended for integrating qualitative data in systematic reviews (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006; Snyder, 2019).

This systematic review evaluated twenty academic studies examining leadership styles in the context of tourism and accommodation businesses, published between 2011 and 2024. The studies focused primarily on hotel management, tourism SMEs, the service sector and international accommodation chains.

Table 2. Summary of Findings on the Effects of Different Leadership Styles on Organizational Development in Tourism Enterprises.

Nu	Leadership Style	Area of Influence	Key Findings (Narrative Synthesis)
1	Ethical Leadership (Kim & Brymer, 2011)	Managerial Performance, Ethical Climate	Ethical leadership has supported the creation of an ethical climate by improving hotel manager morale and organizational performance.
2	Transformational Leadership (Buil et al., 2019)	Employee Engagement, Performance	Transformational leadership creates high performance through employee identity and engagement.
3	Servant Leadership (Bavik, 2020)	Trust, Organizational Learning	Servant leadership strengthens a culture of trust and encourages a learning organization.
4	Ethical Leadership (Eluwole et al., 2022)	Service Recovery	Ethical leadership has increased customer complaint management and service recovery success.
5	Empowering Leadership (Lim et al., 2021)	Innovative Behavior	Empowering leadership has facilitated the development of innovative behaviors in tourism SMEs.
6	Transformational Leadership (Wang et al., 2022)	Innovation, Knowledge Sharing	Transformational leadership has increased innovation in hotels through knowledge sharing.
7	Authentic Leadership (Yen & Teng, 2024)	Citizenship Behavior, Loyalty	Authentic leadership has increased employee citizenship behavior and organizational commitment.
8	Ethical & Authentic Leadership (Hoang et al., 2024)	Trust, Cultural Sensitivity	Ethical and authentic leadership together have increased trust and strengthened perceptions of justice despite cultural differences.
9	Servant Leadership (Cai et al., 2023)	Ethical Climate, Trust	Servant leadership has created an organizational climate based on ethical values.
10	Servant Leadership (Gui et al., 2021)	Satisfaction, Loyalty	Servant leadership has strengthened employee satisfaction and organizational commitment.
11	Inclusive Leadership (Siyal et al., 2023)	Sustainability, Green Behavior	Inclusive leadership has supported the development of pro-environmental behaviors.
12	Inclusive Leadership (Asghar & Lee, 2023)	Participation, Belonging	Inclusive leadership has increased employee engagement and a sense of belonging.
13	Empowering Leadership (Hoang & Doan, 2021)	Learning Behavior	Empowering leadership has increased employees' desire to learn and creativity.
14	Empowering Leadership (Rescalvo-Martin et al., 2022)	Knowledge Sharing, Innovation	Empowering leadership has increased knowledge sharing and innovation capacity in hotels.
15	Managerial Leadership (Pizam, 2021)	Service Quality, Employee Well-Being	Effective leadership is a key determinant of high service quality and employee well-being.
16	Transactional Leadership (Alghamdi, 2024)	Operational Efficiency	Transactional leadership increased operational efficiency in the short term.
17	Ethical Leadership (Hoang et al., 2023)	Trust, Loyalty	Ethical leadership strengthened employee trust and customer loyalty.
18	Servant Leadership (Ghosh & Khatri, 2018)	Commitment, Motivation	Servant leadership increased organizational commitment and motivation.
19	Empowering Leadership (Hoang et al., 2022)	Learning Organization	Empowering leadership made organizational learning a systematic process.
20	Servant Leadership (Bavik & Chan, 2021)	Ethical Behavior, Employee Engagement	Servant leadership ensured the internalization of ethical behavior.

Source: Prepared based on the Petticrew & Roberts (2006), PRISMA 2020 Guidelines and the authors' systematic review (2025).

An examination of Table 2 reveals that servant (n=6), empowering (n=4) and ethical (n=3) leadership styles are the most frequently discussed topics. These leadership styles are servant, empowering, ethical, transformational, authentic and inclusive. All research indicates that leadership styles have positive impacts on areas such as organizational trust, learning, innovation, employee engagement and service quality in tourism businesses. Servant leadership has been the most frequently studied leadership style in tourism organizations. This leadership style has a particularly strong impact on employee trust, organizational commitment, ethical behavior and job satisfaction. By centering employee needs, servant leaders create a participatory culture, which positively impacts both organizational learning and service quality. Furthermore, this leadership style facilitates the internalization of ethical values in hotels and strengthens the balance between customer satisfaction and employee well-being. Empowering leadership has had significant impacts on innovative behavior, knowledge sharing, a learning organization culture and creativity in tourism SMEs and accommodation establishments. This leadership style fosters a participatory and innovative climate by granting employees autonomy and decision-making authority. Findings indicate that empowering leadership, in particular, strengthens the relationship between innovation performance and organizational learning capacity. Ethical leadership has strengthened critical elements such as organizational trust, service recovery success, maintaining an ethical climate and customer loyalty in tourism businesses. Ethical leadership behaviors maintain high employee morale, particularly during crisis situations and support consistent service quality. Furthermore, ethical leadership plays an indirect role in maintaining corporate reputation and strengthening the destination image. Transformational leadership has become prominent in tourism businesses in areas such as innovation, vision sharing and employee motivation. This leadership style fosters organizational commitment and a culture of continuous improvement by creating a sense of unity of purpose among employees. Transformational leadership plays a decisive role, particularly in organizational learning processes mediated by knowledge sharing. Authentic leadership has become a prominent leadership style in the tourism sector in recent years. Studies show that authentic leadership increases organizational citizenship behavior, employee loyalty and a sense of trust. Inclusive leadership, on the other hand, is gaining importance in the context of diversity management and sustainability. By ensuring that employees from diverse cultural backgrounds feel a sense of belonging to the organization, inclusive leaders increase green behavior and engagement. Transactional leadership is more associated with operational efficiency and short-term performance outcomes. Managerial leadership, on the other hand, is an approach that outlines the concept of leadership in the tourism sector, emphasizing the connection between employee well-being and service quality and leadership. These studies demonstrate that daily operational leadership, as well as strategic vision, is critical to organizational success. All analyzed studies concluded that leadership styles positively impact organizational development processes. In tourism enterprises, leadership is shaped by values such as human-centered management, ethical responsibility, an innovative culture, employee participation and trust. These findings demonstrate that the tourism sector is inherently "based on human relations" and that leadership is not only a managerial but also a psychosocial interaction. Therefore, leadership styles in tourism enterprises are among the fundamental variables that determine organizations' capacity for change, innovation and sustainability. Ethical, servant and empowering leadership styles, in particular, play a key role in the formation of organizational cultures that are learning, innovative and value people. This table demonstrates that leadership is not merely a management function but also a tool for organizational transformation built on emotional intelligence, trust, vision and participatory values.

CONCLUSIONS

- The systematic review conducted in this study reveals the impact of leadership styles on organizational development processes in tourism enterprises. The findings demonstrate that leadership is not merely a managerial process but also a human-centered interaction inherent in the tourism sector. In particular, servant, ethical and empowering leadership styles were found to have the highest impact on indicators such as employee engagement, innovation and sustainable service quality. This demonstrates that within the "human labor-based" structure of the tourism sector, leadership styles shape not only organizational performance but also the emotional well-being of employees. Ethical leadership was decisive in trust and service recovery processes; servant leadership was decisive in commitment and job satisfaction; and empowering leadership was decisive in innovative behavior and organizational learning.

- The findings from the study reaffirm the "transformational-transactional leadership distinction" emphasized by classical leadership theorists such as Avolio & Bass (2004), Yukl (2013) and Northouse (2021) in the tourism context. Furthermore, in line with the strategic leadership perspective of Hitt et al. (2017) leadership in tourism is seen to be directly related to organizational vision and innovation processes. Compared to similar studies in the literature (e.g., Kim & Brymer, 2011; Bavik, 2020; Lim et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2022) the distinguishing feature of this review is that leadership styles are considered together within the context of organizational development, knowledge sharing, learning organization culture and ethical values. In this respect, the study offers a "multidimensional leadership-organizational development model" to the tourism literature.
- This research demonstrates that studies on leadership in tourism organizations can often move beyond a single-variable structure (e.g., leadership-performance) to multiple variables such as organizational learning, innovation, ethical culture and employee well-being. Furthermore, findings obtained through the narrative synthesis approach proposed by Petticrew & Roberts (2006) highlight the importance of qualitative integration in tourism leadership research. In this respect, the study provides the theoretical basis for the "tourism leadership model" by reinterpreting leadership theories (e.g., transformational, servant, empowerment) in the tourism context.
- This systematic review has highlighted the critical role of leadership in the transformation capacity of organizations in the tourism sector. Leadership styles are seen as not only a managerial tool but also a key driver of organizational resilience and innovation. These findings necessitate the development of ethical, participatory and empowering leadership approaches for sustainable success in the tourism industry. For tourism businesses, the impact of leadership styles on employee experience, innovation and sustainability is of strategic importance. In this context, the following recommendations stand out: *Training and Development*: Continuous training programs based on ethical, servant and empowering leadership should be implemented for tourism business managers; *Corporate Culture*: Knowledge sharing and innovation should be supported by strengthening the learning organization approach in businesses; *Human Resources Policies*: Performance evaluation systems should focus not only on numerical outcomes but also on the leader's contribution to employee well-being; *Sectoral Collaboration*: Joint projects focused on leadership development (e.g., Tourism Leadership Academy) can be established between universities, tourism businesses, and public institutions; *Sustainability-Focused Management*: Ethical and inclusive leadership principles should be integrated into destination management and environmental sustainability policies.
- The most important limitation of this study is that it only includes English articles focusing on tourism/hospitality published between 2011 and 2024. Future research: *Comparing leadership styles across different cultures*; *Examining local (TR Index) studies more broadly*; *Meta-analysis studies supported by qualitative data and Analyzing new themes such as e-leadership and remote team management in the digital transformation era*.
- Comparing the findings of the research with the results of previous studies conducted on the subject, Hoang et al. (2021) found that leaders approach developing an organizational climate to encourage innovation in small and medium-sized tourism enterprises and that when leaders frequently communicate and share information with their subordinates, an innovation environment that encourages innovation is perceived in tourism SMEs. This information is consistent with the positive relationship between knowledge sharing and innovation obtained in the research. Similarly, the same study concluded that interaction and communication in leadership styles increase empowerment and creativity in employees, which provides parallelism with the findings of the current study. As in Elkhwesky et al. (2022) leadership styles have positive effects on sustainability and the number of studies conducted in this area is increasing. In this context, it can be said that there is consistency between the results of the research and the literature. According to Moragolle (2022) it was concluded that rotational leadership in SME tourism enterprises contributes positively to organizational performance.
- According to Mai & Do (2023) there is a positive relationship between leadership competencies and organizational learning and development. This finding is similar to the results of the research. According to Ay & Tamer (2024) it was determined that the most studies on organizational culture in tourism enterprises were conducted in the master's theses type in 2019, in accommodation enterprises, and in İstanbul. The majority of the studies preferred quantitative research methods and simple random sampling methods. It can be stated that the findings obtained are similar. According to Huang et al. (2025) authentic leadership can have a positive impact in the tourism and accommodation sectors. In this context, the findings of the research are similar to the results in the literature.

- According to Mahran et al. (2025) there are studies demonstrating a positive relationship between leadership styles and employee performance and the results are similar to the results of this study. However, the focus is on employee performance and not on customer outcomes. The findings of this study suggest that an ethical climate fosters customer loyalty. Research results vary. According to Montañés-Sánchez et al. (2025) transformational leadership positively influences socialization and organizational climate within the organization by fostering trust among employees.
- According to Pinhal et al. (2025) employee empowerment fosters innovation, enables shared management, and facilitates organizational transformation in the face of potential challenges. Thus, this information is consistent with the results of the study. Reqib & Tariq's (2025) study examined the relationship between servant leadership and performance outcomes in various contexts such as hospitality and tourism, manufacturing, banking, sales, and airlines and concluded that the strongest relationship between servant leadership and performance was in the tourism sector. Thus, this result is similar to the findings of the study. Yorulmaz et al. (2025) indicate that the "Green Transformational Leadership" style has been most widely studied by academics in the tourism and hospitality sectors. In addition, "Green Servant Leadership" and "Green Inclusive Leadership" are also frequently studied leadership styles. Although less frequently, the concepts of "Green Authentic Leadership" and "Green Leadership" in general are also seen in studies. It can be said that this study has different results because it has reached a research examining green behavior.

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