Exploring The Intellectual Structure of Mindful Leadership Research: A Comprehensive Bibliometric Analysis

Meneroka Struktur Intelektual Penyelidikan Kepimpinan Penuh Kesedaran: Satu Analisis Bibliometrik Komprehensif

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Abstract

This research identifies the primary areas and current trends in mindful leadership and proposes future directions for exploration. Based on the Scopus database from 2016 to 2025, a bibliometric analysis of 898 studies related to mindful leadership was conducted to identify and reveal current publication trends, the most active source titles, the top 5 highly cited documents in the leadership and management area, and the top 10 most influential and productive authors in the field of mindful leadership. We also examine the key themes and topics that emerge from co-occurrence analyses of author keywords in the mindful leadership literature. The analysis reveals that the most prominent cluster focuses on the psychological aspects of mindful leadership, with keywords such as emotional intelligence, stress, well-being, and mental health being prominently linked. Although research activity on mindful leadership is emerging globally, there is a notable scarcity of research and collaboration in Asian countries, where ninety per cent of current research activity is concentrated in Western countries. We recommend an in-depth analysis and propose potential research directions within the field of mindful leadership.

Keywords: bibliometric analysis, mindful leadership, mindfulness, educational leadership, Scopus database

Abstrak

Kajian ini bertujuan mengenal pasti bidang tumpuan utama serta trend semasa dalam penyelidikan kepimpinan ketara sedar dan hala tuju kajian masa hadapan. Berdasarkan data daripada indeks Scopus bagi tempoh 2016-2025, analisis bibliometrik telah dijalankan melibatkan sebanyak 898 dokumen berkaitan kepimpinan ketara sedar.

Analisis ini meneliti pola penerbitan semasa, jurnal paling aktif, lima dokumen yang paling kerap dirujuk, serta sepuluh penyelidik paling berpengaruh dan produktif dalam bidang ini. Selain itu, kajian ini turut mengenal pasti tema dan topik utama yang muncul melalui analisis kebergandingan kata kunci penulis. Dapatan menunjukkan bahawa kluster paling dominan tertumpu kepada aspek psikologi dalam kepimpinan ketara sedar, khususnya yang berkait dengan kecerdasan emosi, tekanan, kesejahteraan dan kesihatan mental. Walaupun bidang ini menunjukkan pertumbuhan penyelidikan yang pesat di peringkat global, aktiviti penyelidikan dan kerjasama dalam kalangan negara Asia masih rendah dengan lebih 90 peratus penerbitan tertumpu di negara-negara Barat. Kajian ini menekankan keperluan untuk memperluas skop penyelidikan ke konteks yang lebih pelbagai dalam bidang kepimpinan ketara sedar.

Kata Kunci: *analisis bibliometrik, kepimpinan ketara sedar, kepimpinan pendidikan, pangkalan data Scopus*

INTRODUCTION

Mindfulness is an emerging concept in organisational behaviour and organisational psychology. In the dynamic and constantly changing educational management landscape, leadership paradigms are increasingly embracing mindfulness practices within organisations. Mindful leadership, rooted in ancient contemplative traditions, has recently gained prominence as an effective approach to managing the complexities of educational administration (Vreeling et al., 2019). These practices have been associated with enhanced decision-making, stronger teamwork, greater organisational resilience, reduced stress, and the promotion of eco-centric leadership (Walsh & Arnold, 2020). A conceptual review highlights that mindful leaders can take compelling and productive actions while maintaining their groundedness (Sanyal & Rigg, 2021).

In educational contexts, emerging evidence suggests that mindfulness plays a significant role in shaping teachers' emotional well-being and professional experience. Studies examining the relationship between leader mindfulness and teacher outcomes report reductions in emotional exhaustion and improvements in relational quality, highlighting the relevance of mindful leadership for school outcomes. The positive outcomes of mindful leadership are further supported by studies by Kearney et al. (2013) and Hoy et al. (2006), who suggested that mindfulness among school leaders positively impacts student achievement, particularly through reflective practices and relationship-building strategies. It fosters a school environment that promotes a collaborative culture, critical thinking, and adaptability. Collectively, these findings position mindful leadership as a promising framework for fostering adaptive, supportive, and resilient educational organisations.

Despite the growing interest, the intellectual structure and thematic evolution of mindful leadership research remain insufficiently synthesised. Existing studies are dispersed across multiple disciplines, including psychology, healthcare, management, and education, making it difficult to identify research directions, influential contributors, and emerging themes. Moreover, most research has concentrated on the Western, individualistic context, while studying mindfulness in Eastern, collectivist countries, such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and other Asian countries, remains elusive compared to different leadership styles. Conceptual discussions frequently highlight potential cultural differences in how mindfulness and leadership are understood and enacted, particularly between Western individualistic and Eastern Collectivist contexts (Hofstede, 2011; Tan, 2023). While these perspectives are theoretically grounded, a systematic mapping of the literature is necessary to empirically examine publication patterns, intellectual influences, and thematic emphases across various contexts.

To address this gap, the present study conducts a bibliometric analysis of mindful leadership documents indexed in the Scopus database, ensuring consistency and transparency in data collection and analysis. Using Bibliomagika and VOSviewer tools, the study examined annual publication trends, publication by the source title, author productivity, highly cited documents and co-occurrence analysis to comprehensively understand the evolution and development of mindfulness research as an academic discipline. The objective of this research was to reveal the fundamental structural patterns and citation trends within the field of mindful leadership in the educational context. Accordingly, this study addresses the following research questions (RQ):

RQ1: What are the current publication trends in mindful leadership studies according to the year of publication?

RQ2: What are the most active source titles?

RQ3: Which documents are the most highly cited in the educational leadership and management literature on mindful leadership, and what topic do they address?

RQ4: Who are the top 10 most productive authors in mindful leadership, and how have they contributed to the development of the mindful leadership field?

RQ5: What are the key themes and topics that emerge from keyword co-occurrence analyses in the literature on mindful leadership?

METHODOLOGY

Research design

Bibliometric studies present unique opportunities to contribute to both theory and practice in research (Mukherjee et al., 2022). The analysis has become a popular technique for exploring and analysing the literature in business and management (Öztürk et al., 2024). It combines, manages, and investigates bibliographic information from scientific publications (Verbeek et al., 2002) and involves complex techniques, such as document co-citation analysis and general descriptive statistics, such as publishing journals, publication year and the primary author classification (Hallinger & Kovačević, 2022; Zupic & Čater, 2015). An iterative sequence of suitable keywords, literature search, and analysis is required to effectively review literature, build a bibliography, and achieve reliable results (Hallinger & Nguyen, 2020). This study focuses on top-tier publications to gain insights into the theoretical development of the research domain. To achieve this, the study relied on the Scopus database for data collection, which is known for its extensive journal coverage but is more focused on recent articles (Tan, 2023a). Only articles from carefully peer-reviewed, high-quality academic journals were included.

Search strategy

The 1 presents the final search string strategy used to retrieve publications from the Scopus database in May 2025. The search was conducted using the TITLE-ABS-KEY field to capture studies that explicitly address leadership-related constructs. The query combined leadership-related terms with mindfulness-related keywords to ensure comprehensive coverage. The search was limited to peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2016 and 2025, written in English, and indexed as final publications.

Table 2 outlines the inclusion and exclusion criteria used during dataset refinement. Articles published before 2016, written in languages other than English and classified as conference papers, proceedings, and book chapters were excluded. These criteria were consistently applied to enhance the reliability, transparency, and reproducibility of the bibliometric analysis (Zupic & Čater, 2015). A total of 898 final documents were retrieved from the Scopus database and exported into CSV format for further analysis.

Table 1.
The search string

Database	Search string
Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY ((leader OR leadership OR principal) AND (mindful OR mindfulness) OR ("leader mindfulness" OR "mindful leadership")) AND (LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2016) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2017) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2018) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2019) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2020) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2021) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2022) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2023) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2024) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2025)) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (PUBSTAGE , "final")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English"))

Table 2.
The selection criterion is searching

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Language	English	Non-English
Time line	2016-2025	< 2016
Literature type	Journal (Article)	Conference, Book Chapter, Proceedings
Publication Stage	Final	In Press

Screening and Cleaning

Data cleaning and harmonisation are necessary to ensure complete and accurate formatted data (Ahmi, 2021; Wan Liah et al., 2025). A manual screening of unrelated topics were conducted in before the CSV data were exported from Scopus database. Meticulous filtration, screening, and cleaning are important to ensure the reliability, accuracy, and error-free data (Hallinger & Kovačević, 2022b; Zupic & Čater, 2015). A total 898 relevant datasets were exported to the Bibliomagika for subsequent analysis. Bibliomagika Split is particularly effective in supporting the identification of missing metadata, detecting anomalies and automating the recognition of institutional affiliations and country names (Ahmi, 2021). This process requires thorough cleaning to accurately identify the different names or authors' IDs. Once the data had been cleaned and processed, it was exported from OpenRefine in a CSV format for further cleaning analysis. Clean and ethical data is important to generate an accurate keyword occurrence map in VOSviewer. This integrated workflow enhances data quality and streamlines the preparation process for subsequent bibliometric analysis.

Data analysis and tools

A total of 898 datasets containing the study publication year, publication title, author name, journal, citation, and keyword in PlainText format were retrieved from Scopus, covering the period from 2016 to May 2025. They were analysed using Bibliomagika 2.2, OpenRefine and VOSviewer software version 1.6.19. Bibliomagika 2.2 revolutionises bibliometric analysis by transforming Scopus data into insightful metrics, such as citation counts, h-index, and g-index. It also simplifies the cleaning and harmonisation of author, affiliation, and country data, ensuring accuracy and reliability before uploading it to VOSviewer or Biblioshiny (Ahmi, 2021). After completing the cleaning and transformation processes, the OpenRefine tool was used to export the refined data in various formats for further analysis or visualisation. Subsequently, Vosviewer was employed to generate the author's keyword co-occurrence maps using the VOS clustering and mapping methods (van Eck & Waltman, 2017). By employing visualisation techniques in VOSviewer, the study uncovered patterns within the dataset based on mathematical relationships. This integrative approach enhances the data robustness, offering a comprehensive understanding of the field's scholarly development over the past decade.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The bibliometric data presented in Table 3 provide a comprehensive overview of the mindful leadership research landscape from 2016 to 2025.

Table 3.
Mindful leadership research comprehensive review

Main Information	
Publication Years	2016 - 2025
Total Publications	898
Citable Year	10
Number of Contributing Authors	3447
Number of Cited Papers	731
Total Citations	13,205
Citation per Paper	14.70
Citation per Cited Paper	18.06
Citation per Year	1467.22
Citation per Author	3.83
Author per Paper	3.84
Citation sum within h-Core	9,440
h-index	51
g-index	84
m-index	5.10

Publication trends

To address the first research question on publication trends, Table 4 and Figure 1 reveal the development of mindful leadership studies from 2016 to 2025. Over the past decade, the field has experienced a steady increase in scholarly attention, as evidenced by the significant growth in total publications (TP) and citations (TC). In 2016, the field emerged with 50 publications (5.57%) and 1,458 citations, setting a strong foundation (m-index = 2.100). In 2017, output declined slightly to 41 publications (4.57%), but citations rose sharply to 2,298. This suggests that early contributions gained recognition and had a lasting influence. In 2018 and 2019, the number of publications increased to 74 and 77, respectively. Although 2019 marked the highest cumulative publication share (26.95%), the total number of citations dipped, possibly due to topic diversification and the emergence of new subfields.

During the COVID-19 period (2020-2022), scholarly output surged. Publications rose from 93 in 2020 (10.36%) to 114 in 2022 (12.69%). This trend aligns with global interest in leadership resilience and mindfulness during crises. However, citations declined from 1,778 in 2020 to 964 in 2022. This could indicate a period of scholarly exploration characterised by diverse but less immediately impactful research outputs, possibly reflecting rapid publications addressing urgent contemporary concerns rather than foundational theoretical advancements.

The most recent period (2023-2025) highlights continued scholarly momentum. Both 2023 and 2024 reported 114 and 144 publications, respectively, with 2024 marking the highest annual publication volume (16.04%). However, total citations experienced a marked decline to 602 (2023) and 462 (2024), and only 44 citations in 2025. This phenomenon is common in bibliometric studies, likely due to the citation lag pattern for recent publications. This trend is typical of newer research that has not yet reached peak citation potential. The m-index, a critical measure of research impact over time, reported the highest impact in 2024 (5.500), indicating accelerated academic influence, increased scholarly attention, and possibly enhanced quality and relevance of publications within the domain of mindful leadership.

In summary, research on mindful leadership is expanding rapidly, with increasing intellectual depth and practical relevance. Early works laid a strong theoretical base, while recent studies emphasise applied insights and responses to global challenges. Future research should explore emerging themes, cross-cultural comparisons, and long-term impacts to deepen and diversify the field's contributions.
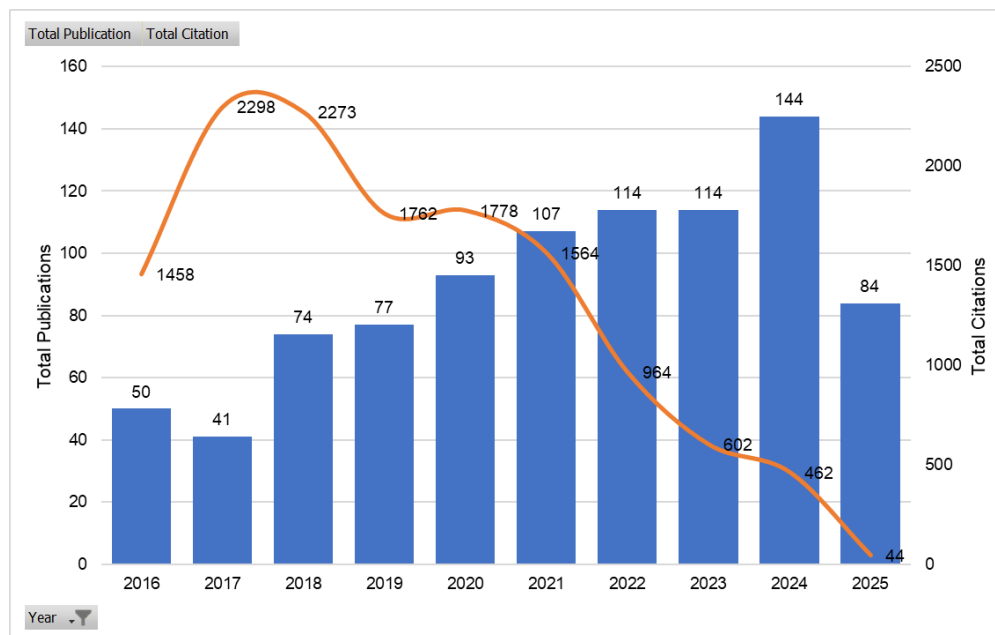
Table 4.
Year of Publication

Year	TP	%	Cumm. TP	Cumm. %	NCA	NCP	TC	m-index
2016	50	5.57%	50	5.57%	153	44	1458	2.100
2017	41	4.57%	91	10.13%	124	37	2298	1.889
2018	74	8.24%	165	18.37%	271	71	2273	3.375
2019	77	8.57%	242	26.95%	271	74	1762	3.143
2020	93	10.36%	335	37.31%	326	86	1778	4.333
2021	107	11.92%	442	49.22%	417	94	1564	4.600

2022	114	12.69%	556	61.92%	476	108	964	3.500
2023	114	12.69%	670	74.61%	441	96	602	4.333
2024	144	16.04%	814	90.65%	595	96	462	5.500
2025	84	9.35%	898	100.00%	373	25	44	4.000
Grand Total	**898**	**100.00%**			3447	731	13205	

Notes: TP=total number of publications; NCP=number of cited publications; TC=total citations

Figure 1.
Trend in total publications and citations from 2016 to 2025

Publications by source titles

To answer research question 2, what are the most active source titles? Table 5 illustrates the source titles that play a crucial role in disseminating research on mindful leadership. The "Frontiers in Psychology" is the most prolific publisher, suggesting its significance as a platform for advanced research in this field. With 28 publications and 551 citations, this source title from Frontier Media S.A. has a CiteScore of 6.3, an SJR of 0.872, and an SNIP of 1.213. This journal's broad scope and focus on psychology make it a suitable platform for studies on mindful leadership, given the intrinsic connection between mindfulness and psychological well-being in the context of leadership. The prominence of journals such as "Mindfulness" and the "International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health" highlights the multidisciplinary nature of mindful leadership research, with implications extending beyond psychology and public health. The Mindfulness has published 19 articles with a total of 380itations, standing out as a leading source for in-depth exploration of mindfulness practices and their application in mindful leadership (Good et al., 2016). The "International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health", with 17 publications and 99 total citations, likely includes articles on topics beyond environmental research, possibly including studies on mindful

leadership in public health contexts. The "PLoS ONE" has 12 publications and 347 total citations. The Journal of Business Ethics, published by Springer Nature, is highly impactful, with 9 publications boasting the highest total citations (420), a Cite Score of 14.4, an SJR of 3.039, and an SNIP of 3.010. While not focused solely on mindful leadership, it likely includes studies on ethics in leadership, which may encompass mindfulness principles. The metrics included (CiteScore, SJR, SNIP) further highlight varying degrees of impact and prestige among these sources, indicating that publications in these journals generally garner substantial attention and citations within the mindful leadership research community.

Table 5.
Most active source title

Source Title	TP	TC	Publisher	Cite Score	SJR 2024	SNIP 2024
Frontiers in Psychology	28	551	Frontier Media S. A	6.3	0.872	1.213
Mindfulness	19	380	Spring Nature	6.9	1.820	1.401
International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	17	99	Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute (MDPI)	8.5	0.919	1.219
PLoS ONE	12	347	Public Library of Science	5.4	0.803	1.065
Journal of Business Ethics	9	420	Springer Nature	14.4	3.039	3.010
Current Opinion in Psychology	8	28	Elsevier	13.2	3.036	2.841
Journal of Managerial Psychology	8	168	Emerald Publishing	4.4	1.135	0.971
Sustainability (Switzerland)	7	239	Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute (MDPI)	7.7	0.688	1.113
Journal of Nursing Management	7	314	John Wiley & Sons	10.0	1.706	1.737
Global Advances in Integrative Health and Medicine	6	72	SAGE	3.8	0.729	0.876

Notes: TP=total number of publications; TC=total citations; CiteScore = average citations received per document published in the source title; SJR = SCImago Journal Rank measures weighted citations received by the source title; SNIP=source normalised impact per paper measures actual citations received relative to citations expected for the source title's subject field.

Highly cited documents

To answer research question 3 on the most highly cited documents in the leadership and management field, specifically in the mindful leadership topic. Table 6 reveals a strong interest in applying mindfulness practices within various contexts. The collaborative work of Williams et al. (2017) in the article "Organisational Response to Adversity: Fusing Crisis Management and Resilience Research Streams" has accumulated an impressive 1211 citations, highlighting the merging of crisis management and resilience in high-pressure environments. Their work resonates with Weick & Sutcliffe's (2001) exploration of high-reliability organisations, emphasising mindfulness as a key component in fostering resilience to crises. However, the connection between leadership practices and this study is underexplored. Crossan et al. (1999) argue that leadership should explicitly involve reflective practices that guide organisational learning during crises, which could deepen the analysis of mindfulness in this context.

Reb et al. (2019), in their paper published in the Journal of Business Ethics, demonstrate that leader mindfulness operates as a foundational self-regulatory capacity that shapes the quality of the leader-follower relationship and, in turn employee performance outcomes. The findings indicate that mindful leaders become more attentive, fair, and respectful, which reduces employees' stress and enhances their perception of interpersonal justice. These relational and psychological conditions foster higher quality LMX, which subsequently translates into improved in-role and extra-role performance. More importantly, the study extends previous mindfulness research that focused on individual mindfulness by showing the importance and benefits of collective mindfulness in organisations.

Drawing on the social mindfulness perspective, Gerpott et al. (2020) in their study demonstrate that a respectful leader promotes follower knowledge sharing by activating other-oriented motivational mechanisms, particularly perspective-taking as a robust cognitive mediator, and emphatic concerns show a lesser effect. The findings extend leadership and knowledge-sharing research by highlighting the importance of integrating the leader and follower level other-oriented process. Moreover, this study extends social mindfulness theory by indicating that cognitive and affective facets may interact, with perspective-taking serving as a key enabling condition for effective knowledge sharing.

The "Authentic leadership and mindfulness development through action learning" article published by Baron (2016) demonstrates that action learning-based leadership development programmes can foster sustained growth in both authentic leadership and mindfulness over time. Drawing on mix-method evidence, the study shows that integrating mindfulness practices into experiential learning enables leaders to develop greater self-awareness and authenticity, particularly through engagement with real organisational challenges in a supportive yet demanding peer environment. This work advances the developmental perspective of mindful leadership by linking mindfulness-based interventions with leadership training processes, offering practical implications for leadership development in educational and organisational contexts.

Finally, Schuh et al. (2019) in the "The interpersonal benefits of leader mindfulness" article provide strong empirical evidence that leader mindfulness positively shapes leadership behaviour through the enactment of procedural justice. Their findings show that mindful leaders are more attentive to fair decision-making processes, which reduces employee exhaustion and enhances performance outcomes. By demonstrating that mindfulness operates through interpersonal and ethical mechanisms rather than solely intrapersonal regulation, the study

extends mindfulness research into the leadership domain. It reinforces its relevance for promoting fairness, well-being, and sustainable performance in educational and organisational settings.

Collectively, these highly cited studies indicate that mindful leadership research within educational leadership and management has evolved into an interdisciplinary and integrative body of scholarship. The study discusses the theoretical integration of mindfulness with resilience and sensemaking, as well as the empirical examination of ethical, relational, and justice-based mechanisms, and leadership development through mindfulness-based practices. These influential studies collectively highlight mindful leadership as a multidimensional construct that bridges cognitive, relational, and ethical dimensions of leadership, offering a strong conceptual foundation for future empirical and context-specific research in educational settings.

Table 6.
Top 5 highly cited documents in the leadership and management area

No.	Author(s)	Title	Source Title	TC
1	Williams et al. (2017)	Organisational response to adversity: Fusing crisis management and resilience research streams	Academy of Management Annals	1211
2	Reb et al. (2019)	Leader mindfulness and employee performance: A sequential mediation model	Journal of Business Ethics	113
3	Gerpott et al. (2020)	Respectful leadership and followers' knowledge sharing: A social mindfulness lens	Human Relations	94
4	Baron (2016)	Authentic leadership and mindfulness development through action learning	Journal of Managerial Psychology	73
5	Schuh et al. (2019)	The interpersonal benefits of leader mindfulness	Journal of Business Ethics	70

Top 10 most productive authors

To answer Research Question 4 on the most productive author in the mindful leadership domain, Table 7 presents the top authors, along with their respective numbers of publications, affiliations, and countries. The findings indicated that the majority of top authors, such as King, E., Badham, R., Boswell, J.F., and Doucette, J.N., are affiliated with institutions in developed countries with high economic expenditure, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada. Countries with a high Gross Domestic Product (GDP) output are closely associated with research productivity. Developed countries often invest significantly in research and development, advanced infrastructure, and skilled talent, thereby fostering academic productivity in cutting-edge areas such as mindful leadership. In the United States, approximately 3% of its

GDP is allocated to research and development (Morina et al., 2023), enabling scholars like King to explore areas that combine psychology, leadership, and mindfulness.

Four publications place Badham among the top contributors, indicating the United Kingdom's robust research culture in management and leadership. The U.K. is recognised for its emphasis on evidence-based leadership practices and cross-cultural research, which is supported by substantial governmental funding for higher education outlined in the U.K. Research and Innovation Report (UKRI) (Edwards, 2018). Additionally, Boswell's research contributions highlight Australia's commitment to leadership and mental health research. Despite Australia's relatively lower GDP compared to the U.S., it allocates a significant portion to education and research (World Bank, 2021), fostering innovation in niche areas such as mindful leadership. Furthermore, affiliations with prestigious universities such as Harvard Medical School, the University of Toronto, and Karolinska Institute highlight the importance of institutional support in driving research productivity. While the top authors come from diverse contexts, their productivity is closely tied to their country's GDP and research infrastructure. High-GDP nations dominate due to greater access to funding and institutional support. However, emerging economies like India and South Africa have the potential to provide culturally rich contributions, enhancing the global relevance of mindful leadership research.

In summary, the number of publications among these scholars suggests a diverse range of perspectives and relationships between individual academic excellence, institutional support, and national research culture. While high GDP nations lead in output, including diverse voices from emerging economies will enrich the field, ensuring its global applicability and impact.

Table 7.
Most productive authors

Author Name	No of Publication	Affiliation	Country	Percentage (%)
King, E.	5	Harvard Medical School	United States	0.64
Badham, R.	4	University of Toronto	Canada	0.52
Boswell, J.F.	4	Emory University	United States	0.52
Doucette, J.N.	4	Arizona State University	United States	0.52
Oeij, P.R.A.	4	Karolinska Institutet	Sweden	0.52
Pipe, T.	4	University of Washington	United States	0.52
Reb, J.	4	Singapore Management University	Singapore	0.52
Arnold, K.A.	3	Universitat de València	Spain	0.39
Arnow, D.	3	Macquarie University	Australia	0.39
Barlow, D.H.	3	Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam	Netherlands	0.39

Keywords' co-occurrence analysis

To answer research question 5, what are the key themes and topics that emerge from the co-occurrence analysis of author keywords in the literature of mindful leadership? Figure 2 indicates the strength of the association among those keywords. The map reveals three prominent themes and clusters:

Figure 2.
Network visualisation map of keywords' co-occurrence (van Eck & Waltman, 2010)
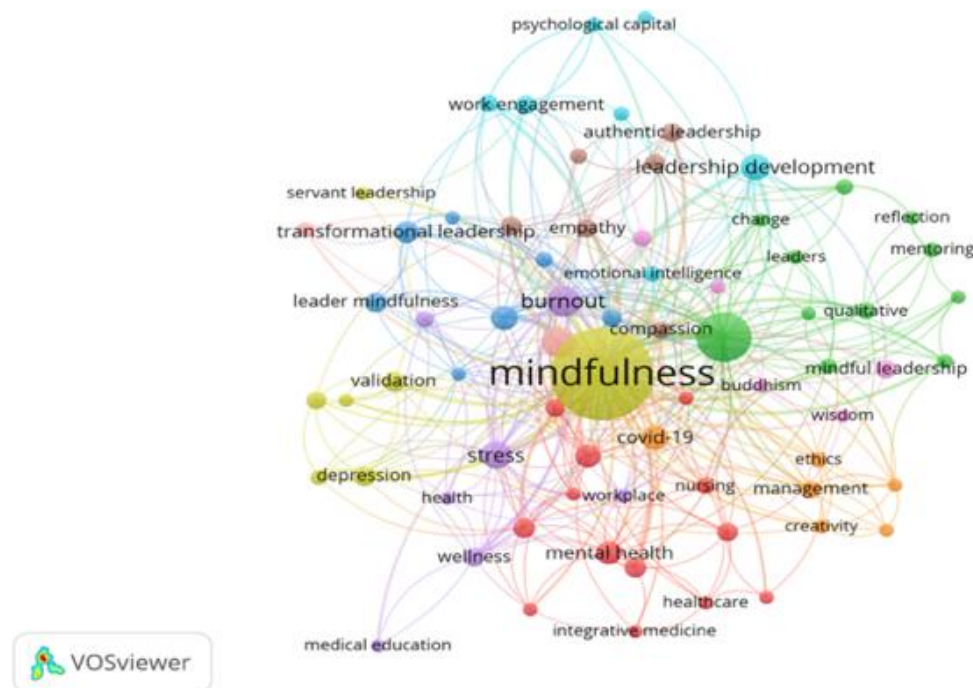
i)   Cluster 1: Leadership development and leadership style (Green and Blue Cluster)

The blue and green clusters emphasise the connection between mindfulness and transformational, servant, authentic, and leadership development. Mindfulness operates as a mechanism through which leaders cultivate ethical awareness, relational sensitivity, and professional identity over time (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). From an educational leadership perspective, this integrated cluster shows scholarly traditions that conceptualise leadership as a socially embedded and developmental process, wherein mindful awareness enhances leaders' capacity to engage others, foster commitment and work engagement, and enact values-driven change. Nielsen et al. (2013) demonstrated that transformational leaders can benefit from mindfulness practices to enhance team performance and innovation. In summary, these clusters indicate a maturing research direction that positions mindful leadership not as a discrete style, but as an enabling condition underpinning relational effectiveness, leadership growth, and sustainable organisational improvement.

ii) Cluster 2: Psychological and emotional health (Pink and Purple Cluster)

Keywords such as burnout, stress, emotional intelligence, well-being and depression in the blue cluster highlight the relationship between mindfulness and its psychological relation. Research in this area examines how leaders' mindful awareness shapes emotional regulation, ethical judgement, and interpersonal sensitivity, reinforcing contemporary leadership models that prioritise social-emotional competencies in educational settings. Stress and burnout also reflect the growing reliance on mindfulness interventions for leader well-being. As Goleman et al. (2002) mentioned, emotional intelligence is closely linked to mindfulness as it enhances self-awareness and emotional regulation. Shapiro et al. (2018) demonstrated that mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) programs effectively lower stress and improve mental well-being. Furthermore, Roche et al. (2014) linked mindfulness to psychological capital, enhancing leader resilience and optimism.

iii) Cluster 3: Well-being, stress and mental health (Red Cluster)

Keywords such as burnout, stress, mental health, wellness, and COVID-19 dominate this cluster, reflecting a substantial body of research linking mindfulness and leadership to individual and organisational well-being. This stream has expanded rapidly in response to crisis contexts. It reflects that mindful leadership is a protective resource against exhaustion and psychological strain, an issue of increasing relevance in schools and higher education institutions.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the network reveals that mindful leadership research within educational leadership and management has evolved from its clinical and psychological roots toward a more integrative leadership-oriented framework. Mindfulness is no longer examined solely as an individual trait or antecedent but increasingly as a relational, mediating, and developmental mechanism that shapes leadership behaviour, ethical decision-making, and well-being outcomes. The strong interconnections across clusters suggest a maturing field characterised by theoretical convergence and expanding relevance for leadership development and organisational sustainability in educational contexts.

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