



## Bibliometric Analysis of Paternalistic Leadership



### Paternalist Liderlik Yazınına İlişkin Bibliyometrik Analiz

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#### Abstract

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The study presents a bibliometric analysis of 520 publications found through a Web of Science database search to identify trends and developments in the academic literature on paternalistic leadership. It is also expected that the study will identify existing gaps in the “paternalistic leadership” literature, where the frequency of study tends to increase after 2018, and potential opportunities for future research. As a result of the analysis, it was determined that the highest number of citations in the publications reached in the field of paternalistic leadership was in 2022, and the most frequently used keywords were “paternalistic leadership” and “authoritarian leadership”. In addition, it was determined that the country that conducted the most studies and had the highest citation score was Peoples R China. According to the findings of the analysis, it was concluded that Cheng Bs is the researcher with the highest number of publications and citations in this field. The study is expected to contribute by raising awareness for researchers who want to study leadership literature in the field of management.

**Keywords:** Paternalistic leadership, authoritarian leadership, bibliometric analysis.

#### Öz

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Çalışma, paternalist liderlik konusundaki akademik literatürdeki eğilimleri ve gelişmeleri belirlemek amacıyla Web of Science veritabanında yapılan tarama sonucu ulaşılan 520 yayına ait bibliyometrik analizi sunmaktadır. Ayrıca çalışma ile 2018 yılı sonrasında çalışılma sıklığının artış eğiliminde olduğu “paternalist liderlik” literatüründeki mevcut boşlukların ve gelecek araştırmalar için potansiyel fırsatların belirlenmesi de beklenmektedir. Yapılan analizler sonucunda paternalist liderlik alanında ulaşılan yayınlarda en yüksek atıf sayısının 2022 yılında gerçekleştiği, en sık kullanılan anahtar kelimelerin “paternalistic leadership” ile “authoritarian leadership” olduğu belirlenmiştir. Ayrıca en fazla çalışma yapan ve en fazla atıf puanına sahip olan ülkenin Peoples R China olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Analiz bulgularına göre, Cheng Bs'nin bu alanda en fazla yayın yapan ve atıf alan araştırmacı olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Çalışmanın yönetim alanında liderlik literatürüne yönelik çalışma yapmak isteyen araştırmacılar için farkındalık yaratarak katkı sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Paternalist liderlik, otoriter liderlik, bibliyometrik analiz.

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## 1. Introduction

One of the factors that enable employees to engage in extra role behaviors is the leadership style and behaviors of the leader. Leadership is one of the most important and most researched topics of social sciences, but perhaps one of the least agreed upon areas of definition. While leadership is so important for organizational effectiveness, a leadership style that is valid in all conditions and societies has not been put forward. Today, with globalization, cultural differences have emerged as a factor affecting the business world. The need for managers who manage companies to develop a leadership style suitable for these cultural differences is increasing day by day. A leadership style that is effective in one country or culture may not be accepted in another country or culture. In this context, with the recent studies, the validity of the leadership styles put forward in the West in Eastern societies has been questioned. Studies have shown that paternalistic leadership style, which emphasizes family structure and common bonds unlike leadership styles in the West, is a more valid leadership style for cultures with more collectivist characteristics such as Turkey (Aycan et al., 2000; Pellegrini and Scandura, 2006). Based on this context, paternalistic leadership is a concept that has been included in the management literature especially in the last two decades. However, there are still significant disagreements among researchers about the definition and effectiveness of paternalistic leadership (Pellegrini and Scandura, 2008: 567).

Paternalistic leadership has been defined in various ways in the literature, but Gelfand et al. (2007) defined paternalism as an approach in which the leader guides the personal and professional lives of subordinates in hierarchical relationships, in a way similar to a family, and expects subordinates to be loyal in return. Paternalistic leadership guarantees the leader's help and support, sets a moral example, and establishes authority for followers. Farh and Cheng (2000), argued that paternalistic leadership stems from the values of traditional societies where paternalistic benevolence and strong discipline and authority coexist in a nurturing, caring, connected, but authoritarian, demanding, and disciplinary father figure. In paternalistic relationships, subordinates respond to the leader's benevolence, care, and protection by showing commitment, belonging, and compliance (Pellegrini et al., 2010; Pellegrini and Scandura, 2008). According to Westwood and Chan (1992), paternalistic leadership is defined as "a leadership style that resembles a paternalistic relationship in which strong authority is combined with caring and thoughtfulness," while Redding et al. (1994), defined paternalistic leadership as "authoritarian leadership in which followers are provided with endless guidance, care, and protection". Based on all these definitions, the concept of paternalistic leadership was chosen since no bibliometric analysis related to the concept of paternalistic leadership was found in the literature. In addition, the concept of "paternalistic leadership", which is one of the types of leadership that is attracting more and more attention due to its potential to increase the motivation and commitment of employees by emphasizing emotional intelligence and cooperation in the workplace, is easier to understand the literature, of the most important work in the field, the bibliometric analysis was aimed at revealing authors, citations, variables, and all other relevant details.

## 2. Literature Review

Paternalism, or paternalism as it is commonly used in the literature, is a concept derived from the Latin word "pater" meaning father. Paternalism is a cultural trait that is common in collectivist and power-distanced cultures where the relationship between subordinate and superior is similar to that of parent and child (hierarchical, interdependent and emotional in nature). The concept has its roots in Pacific Asian cultures. It is also found in Middle Eastern and Latin American countries. In Asian cultures, paternalism is rooted in the traditional family structure that emphasizes patriarchal relationships within the family. In Western and industrially developed societies, paternalism is generally perceived negatively. However, despite their negative attitudes, paternalism is nowadays being looked at as a solution to some social and organizational problems in Western societies (Cüce,

2022). Therefore, it would not be wrong to argue that fatherhood has exceeded its natural boundaries and started to be seen as a tool that contributes to social development both in the East and the West (Aycan, 2006: 446).

Studies (Farh and Cheng, 2000; Westwood and Chan, 1992), which laid the groundwork for the conceptual basis of paternalistic leadership, have generally revealed that the understanding of leadership in Eastern societies differs from that in the West. Hofstede (2006), also argues that leadership studies are generally based on Western values and are the result of North American research. However, it is stated that leadership theories developed in one culture cannot be valid in other cultures, and leadership practices that are effective in one culture cannot have similar effects in other cultures (Dağlı and Ağalday, 2018). It is stated that the haphazard application of Western leadership models to the East damages the original image of Eastern leadership models (Farh and Cheng, 2000: 85). There are also conflicting interpretations and definitions of paternalism as a cultural characteristic. Among these definitions, “well-intentioned dictatorship” (Northouse, 2000, “legitimate authority” (Padavic and Earnest, 1994: 277), “the sweetest persuasion” (Jackman, 1994), “strategic flexibility” (Padavic and Earnest, 1994: 278), “iron fist in a velvet glove” (Jackman, 1994) are particularly noteworthy. Today, the western management world and the field of industrial psychology continue to conduct research on this culture, which it criticizes but at the same time wants to incorporate some of its characteristics into management and leadership practices. As mentioned before, this cultural characteristic is mostly observed in Pacific Asian, Middle Eastern and Latin American societies. Today, however, paternalism is seen by both Eastern and Western societies as a solution to deal with a number of problems related to work and social life (Aycan, 2006: 446). In Özyılmaz and Ataç Oral (2019), the existence of a paternalistic cultural context is seen as paternalistic leadership behavior having a positive effect on employees’ attitudes towards work. Additionally, research shows that paternalistic leadership increases the job satisfaction of subordinates (Uhl-Bien et al., 1990) strengthens leader-member interaction (Martinez, 2003). It also shows that it increases the level of organizational commitment (Pellegrini et al., 2010) and trust (Apaydın, 2017).

Since paternalistic leadership is rooted in feudal and patriarchal societies, it is perceived differently in western and eastern societies. In Western societies, as Northouse (2000) states, it is characterized as well-intentioned dictatorship. In eastern societies it is an important and desired leadership (Aycan, 2001: 450). In feudal and patriarchal societies, people’s responsibilities were provided by the chieftain, khan, big families, dynasty, etc. who were in charge of the community. As a result of the organization of the working class that emerged with industrialization, unionization increased, and the rights of individuals in industrialized Western societies were secured by the state through laws. As a result, the perception of paternalistic leadership has weakened and even started to be perceived as interference with the freedom of individuals (Düzenli, 2021). The paternalistic leader’s motivation of employees is based on dominance, superiority, and control applied admirably. This means that the people being led are dependent. If employees behave correctly and obey, they endear themselves to the paternalistic leader and act in a more motivated way. However, this situation prevents employees from taking initiative and acting independently and weakens their participation in organizational goals. Thus, organizational innovation and creativity are reduced or postponed until the paternalistic leader says “Okay.”. The solution to this problem is to allow employees to be more participative, earn their respect, and encourage them to improve their problem-solving skills (Blake and McCanse, 1991: 121).

When the structure of the concept of paternalistic leadership is examined, it is seen that it is analyzed in four dimensions in the literature. These dimensions are benevolent leadership, moral leadership, authoritarian leadership and manipulative leadership. In benevolent leadership, it is essential for the leader to show individualized, long-term and holistic attention to the followers for the good and welfare of the followers. Benevolent behaviors include the leader’s individualized, long-term and holistic attention to the followers for the good and welfare of the followers, as well as the leader’s interest in the personal and family problems of the followers, protection and forgiveness

(Aycan 2006; Dağlı and Ağalday, 2018). In moral leadership, it is important for the leader to have a high degree of personal integrity, self-cultivation and not to think only about himself/herself. Moral behaviors include being unselfish, being honest and responsible, leading by example and not mixing personal interests with business relationships. In authoritarian leadership, the leader asserts his/her unquestionable and absolute authority, asserts tight control over subordinates and demands total obedience from them. In transactional leadership, the ultimate goal of the leader is to gain the obedience of the employee in return for the attention given, and the leader's priority is organizational returns (Dağlı and Ağalday, 2018: 519). According to the studies conducted by Cheng and a group of colleagues at different times; paternalistic leadership is considered to include three dimensions: benevolent, authoritarian and moral (Farh and Cheng, 2000). Especially in studies conducted in China, Taiwan, Japan and South Korea, the validity of the benevolence, authoritarianism and moral dimensions of paternalistic leadership has been determined in these countries. It has been tested for the first time that paternalistic leadership with the dimensions of authoritarianism, benevolence and moral leadership is perceived by employees in these four countries with the same meaning and its generalizability in the context of these four East Asian countries. In addition, paternalistic leadership has emerged as one of the important leadership styles in Asia with the same study (Cheng et al., 2013).

Silin (1976) also identified the main characteristics of paternalistic leadership, although he did not call it paternalistic leadership, and argued that business owners use four different control tactics: First, the leader tries to maintain the power imbalance with subordinates. To this end, he or she rarely expresses publicly that he or she trusts subordinates. Second, the leader uses divide and rule tactics among employees. He encourages subordinates to compete with each other. Thirdly, the leader does not fully inform his subordinates about his plans. In this way, he/she keeps them under control by preventing them from gaining power. Finally, the leader keeps other employees and jobs under control by placing employees close to him/her and whom he/she trusts in key positions.

Redding (2013) found similar results to Silin's findings on paternalistic leadership in in-depth interviews conducted in the late 1980s. However, in addition to the authoritarianism and moral elements emphasized in Silin's study, Redding's study also pointed to benevolent leadership in Chinese society. Redding observed that Chinese society has a strong tendency towards individualism and that the influence of individual factors is important in decision-making processes.

In this context, it was stated that the leader's authoritarianism and benevolence may not be equal for all subordinates and may affect different subordinates at different levels (Cheng et al., 2004). In Redding (2013)'s study, 7 characteristics of paternalistic leadership were listed as follows (Farh and Cheng, 2000):

- Subordinate dependence.
- Personal commitment that leads subordinates to obey the leader.
- Authoritarianism.
- Indivisible authority.
- Distance from subordinates within the hierarchy.
- The leader keeping his/her intentions secret.
- The leader as a role model and educator.

These characteristics can enable the leader to manage effectively and have a positive impact on subordinates (Cüce, 2022).

In a study conducted by Çıraklar et al. (2016) on 148 employees in three different industries in Izmir province, it was found that trust in leader has a full mediating role in the relationship between the benevolence dimension of paternalistic leadership and organizational identification. This study revealed that benevolent leadership behavior can lead subordinates to identify with their leaders and organizations (Çıraklar et al, 2016: 84).

In a study conducted by Durmuş (2016), on 155 employees working in three companies in Istanbul, it was found that as the educational and relationship-oriented leadership behaviors of managers become stronger, the emotional, normative and continuance commitment of employees to the organization also strengthens. In the same study, a significant positive relationship was found between emotional commitment and educational leadership and relationship-oriented leadership (Durmuş, 2016: 203).

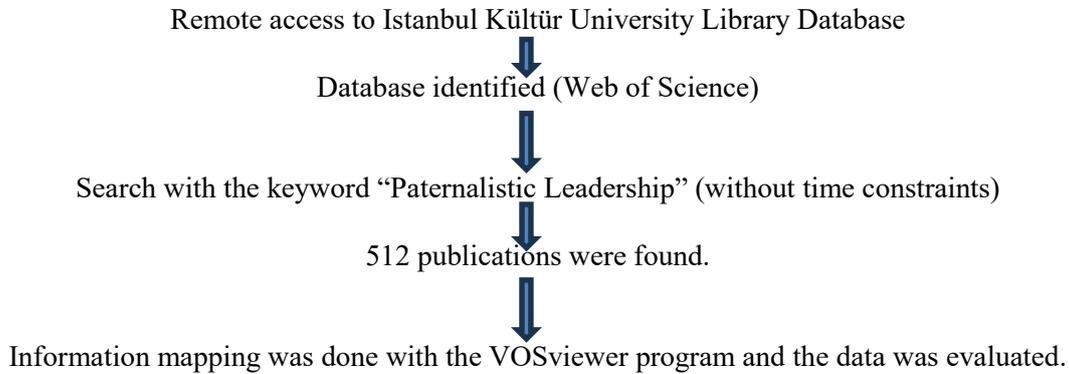
Paternalistic leadership can be considered as the most widespread leadership in the world in terms of the regions it affects (Kagıtcıbaşı, 1996). It is known to be effective in Europe and North America until the early industrial periods. Especially since the 2000s, studies on cultural contexts have revealed the dominant influence of paternalistic leadership worldwide (Aycan, 2006; Cheng et.al, 2004). In Christianity, which has influenced Western and European nations, God is symbolized as a father and believers are considered as a family. Since Orthodox and Catholic Christians are more traditional denominations, their paternalistic tendencies are higher. This influence is seen in South American and African cultures (Düzenli, 2021).

The nature of paternalism, which is more common in Eastern societies defined as collectivist and patriarchal, is the parent-child relationship. This is not a common tendency in Western societies where individualism is common. For example, the self-interest dimension of paternalism is considered as interference in private life in Western cultures. These cultural differences have caused paternalism to be considered as a more appropriate approach for organizations in Eastern cultures. In this framework, in Eastern societies and in Turkey, paternalistic leadership tendencies emerge as a result of the influence of organizational culture on the leadership style within the organization. In this leadership model, the leader shows close attention to his/her employees and the employees, in return, respect and obey their leaders (Kılınç, 2018: 2).

### 3. Method

The bibliometric research method, one of the qualitative research methods, is used in the study. Leadership, which is one of the important issues in the field of management, and paternalistic leadership, which is one of the leadership types, are included in scientific research together with many different concepts. For this reason, the case study design was adopted in the study because it was desired to determine the current situation by examining academic research on the concept of paternalistic leadership with bibliometric parameters. The study aims to examine the trends, developments and important points of the publications identified by searching with the keyword “paternalistic leadership” in all fields in the Web of Science database, since it is one of the most preferred and reliable (Zupic and Čater, 2015) databases by researchers worldwide, by bibliometric analysis method. The bibliometric analysis method includes the analysis of all sources (articles, books and all related documents) and statistics available in the literature in order to determine the nature and development process of a discipline as a result of combining, interpreting and analyzing statistics (Donthu et al., 2021). The main component of bibliometric study (Pritchard, 1969: 348), which is the application of mathematical and statistical methods to scientific communication environments, is the scope of the database (Thompson, 2018). The data search for the bibliometric analysis of “paternalistic leadership” was conducted on February 27, 2024. As a result of the search, 512 publications were reached and the analysis was performed and visualized with the VOSviewer package program. VOSViewer software is an analytical tool used to create maps based on network data and to visualize and explore these maps (Van Eck and Waltman, 2018: 3). In VOSviewer, distance-based maps were used for analyzes targeted by our own research questions. In other words, since the relationships between items are a research problem, bibliometric analysis was used using distance-based maps. Additionally, many different clusters and elements emerge as a result of analysis in VOSviewer. The resulting clusters are very important for studies carried out with text mining. The clustering method performed in the VOSviewer program focuses on the total level of

elements. The clustering process begins with associating publications with each other in bibliometric analysis and assigning publications to each cluster; In this way, a broadcast that is not assigned or has a cluster conflict does not occur. In VOSviewer, the close location of clusters or elements to each other is due to the relationship between them (Artsın, 2020). The biggest limitation of the study is that it is limited to the WOS database.



**Figure 1.** Study Stages

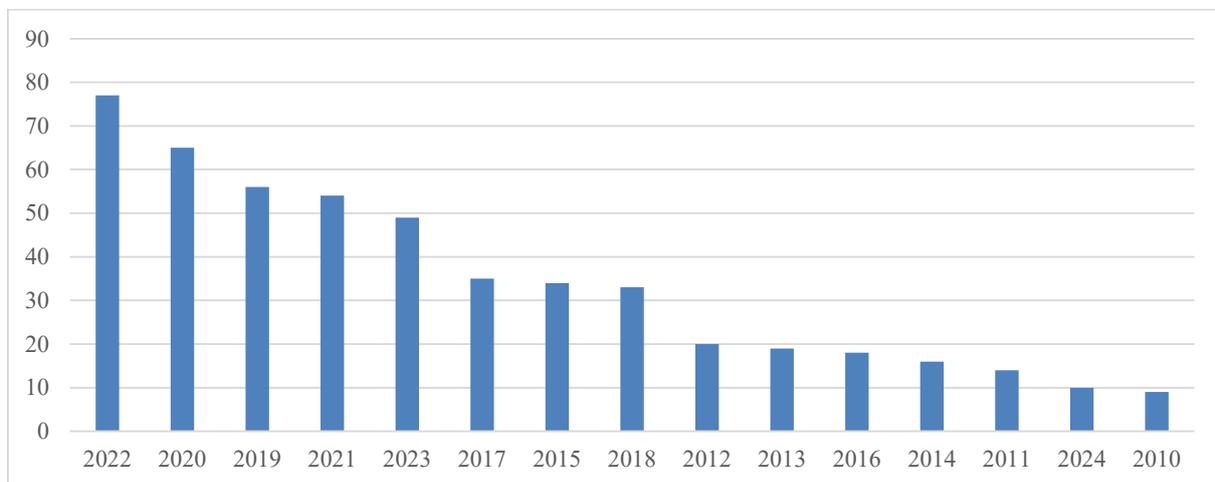
For this purpose, answers were sought to the following questions;

- What is the distribution, Web of Sciences Categories, Document Types, authors, and citation analysis (by years) of publications that bring together the concepts of “paternalistic leadership” in all fields without time constraints?
- Publications related to the concept of “paternalistic leadership” in all fields, without time constraints, include “Co-authorship of Authors”, “Citation of authors”, “Citation of Countries”, “Citation of Organizations”, “Co-occurrence of Author Keywords”, How are “Co-citation of Co-authors and bibliographic coupling of documents “VOSviewer maps?

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. Number of Publications by Year

Figure 2 above shows that 77 publications were published in 2022, 65 publications in 2020 and 56 publications in 2019 in the Web of Science (WOS) database. It is also observed that the number of publications related to “paternalistic leadership” has been increasing over the years.



**Figure 2.** Number of Publications by Year

## 4.2. Document Type

In the Web of Science (WOS) database, it is understood that the most common type of publication is the article type with 447 publications and the article type is followed by the proceeding paper with 41 publications.

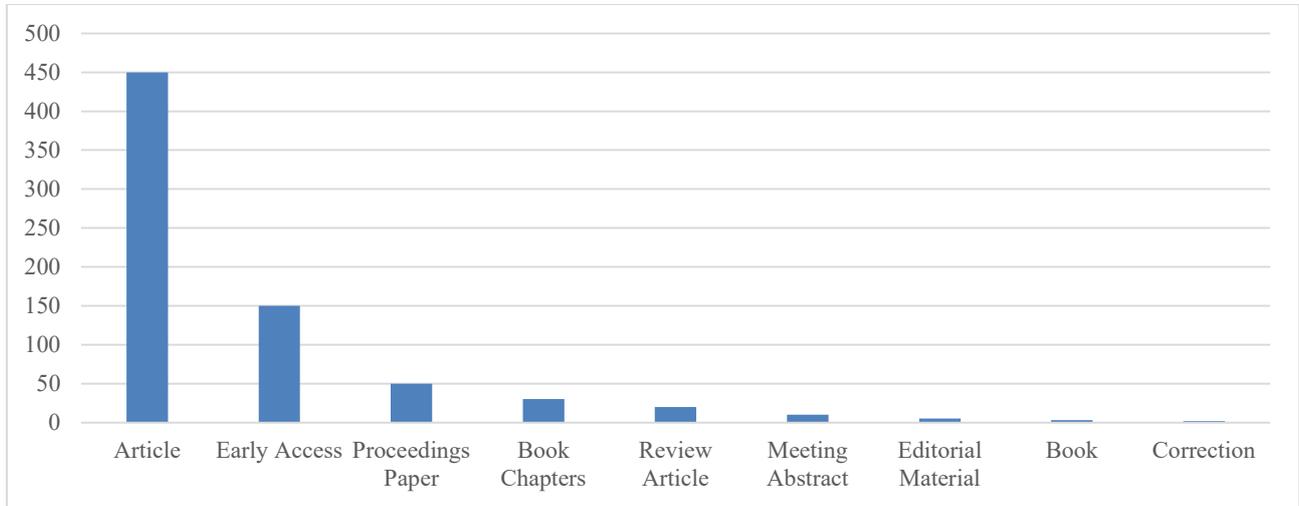


Figure 3. Document Type

## 4.3. Authors

In the Web of Science (WOS) database, Cheng Bs is the most published author with 15 publications. Then Scandura TA and Wang Ac are seen as the authors who have published the most on this subject with 8 publications.

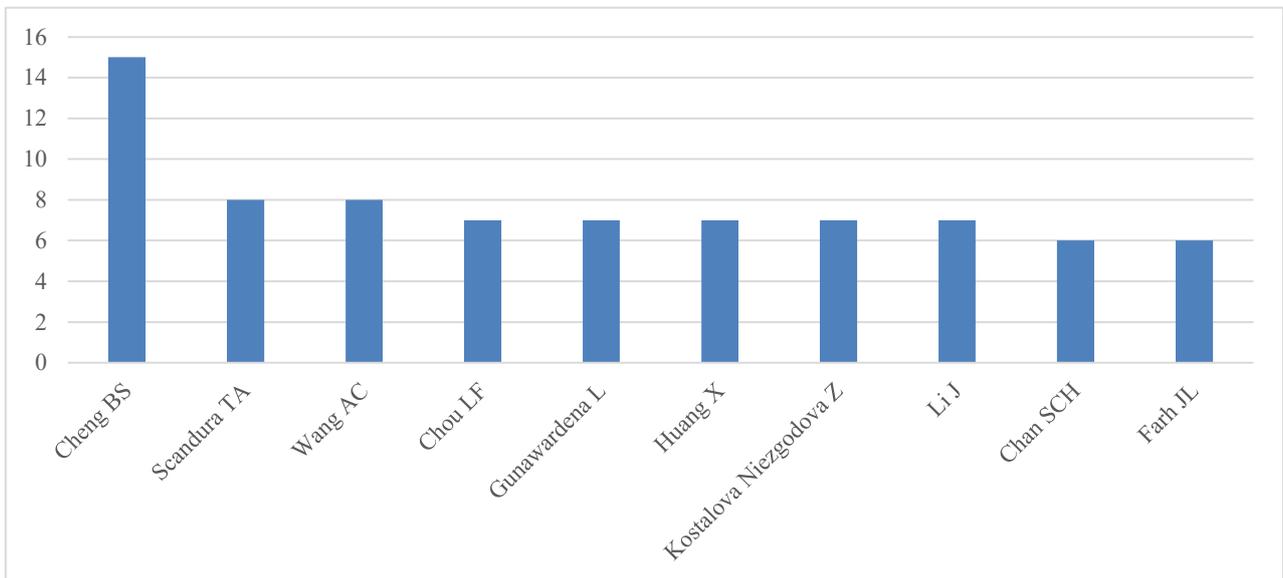


Figure 4. Authors

## 4.4. WOS Categories

In the Web of Science (WOS) database search, 248 publications were made in management, 111 in business and 66 in Psychology Multidiscipline category.

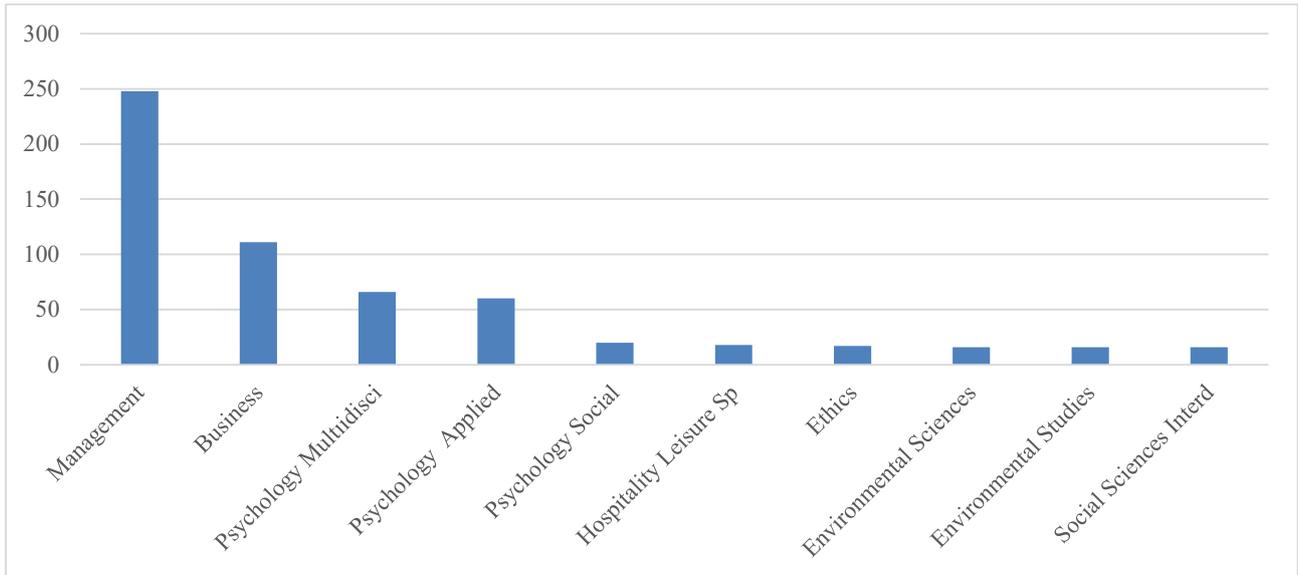


Figure 5. WOS Categories

#### 4.5. Citation Analysis of Publications by Year

It is also observed in the Web of Science (WOS) database that the year 2022, the year in which the most publications were made, was the year with the most citations (2255 citations), as can be seen from the figure above.

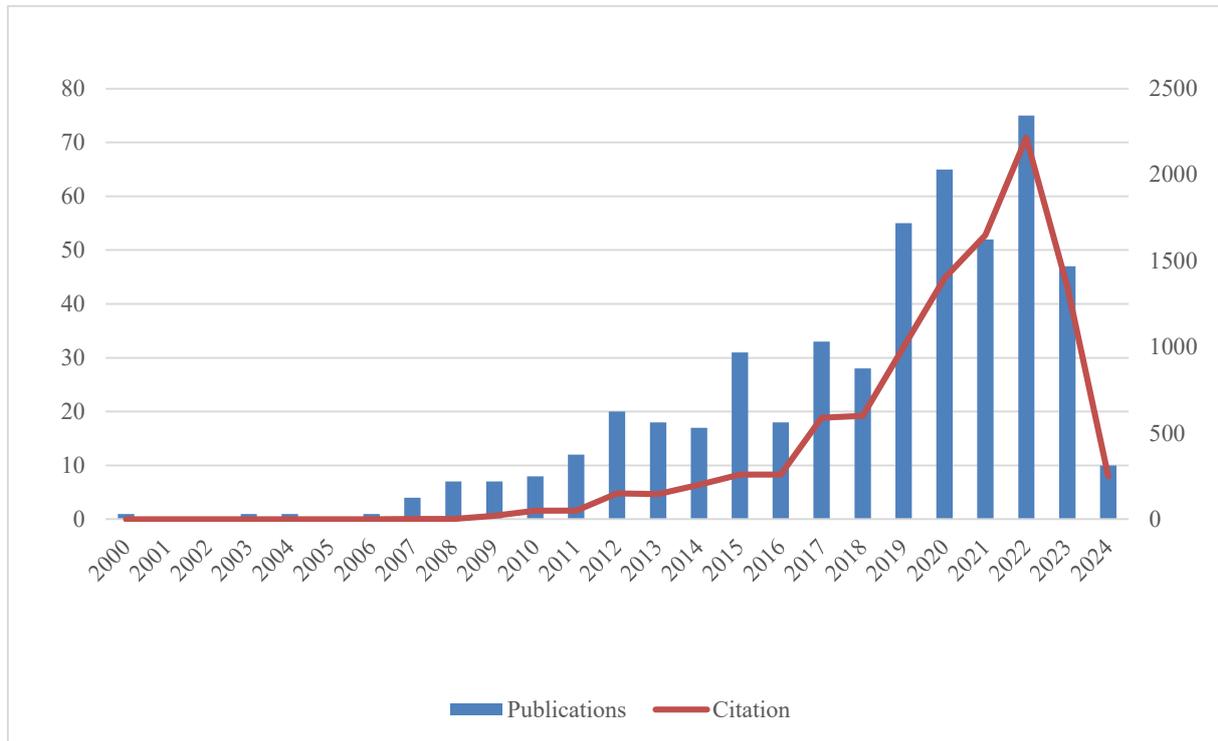


Figure 6. Citation Analysis of Publications by Year

#### 4.6. Co-authorship of Authors

According to the co-authorship analysis of the authors, a network map was created by determining at least 1 publication and at least 1 citation criteria to identify the most connected and collaborating authors. According to the analysis conducted among the names with the highest number of

connections between them, 132 names and a total of 417 connections are seen in 14 clusters. The 132 most connected authors in the cluster are shown in Figure 1 below. The author with the highest connection strength is Cheng Bor-Shiuan with 35 connections.

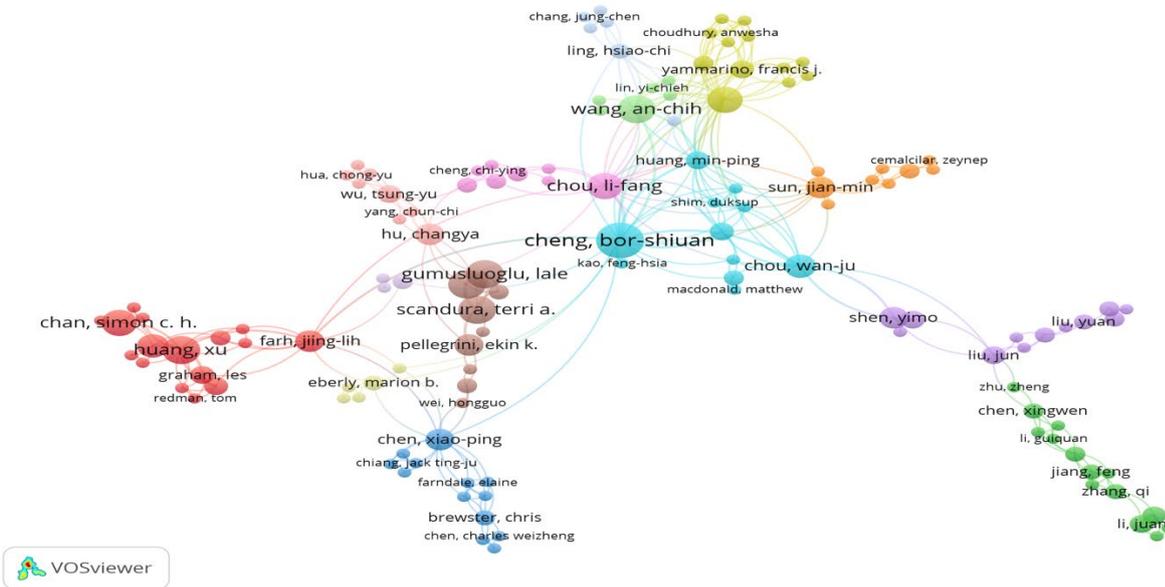


Figure 7. Co-authorship of Authors

#### 4.7. Citation of Authors

In order to determine the citation networks, a network map of author citation analysis with at least 1 publication and at least 1 citation criterion was created. In the analysis of 1000 units (authors) that were found to be connected to each other, 32 clusters, 26515 connections and total connection strength was determined as 34214. The most cited author was Cheng, Bor-Shiuan with 996 citations. After Cheng, Bor-Shiuan, Scandura, Terri A. comes with 742 citations. These two authors also rank first in terms of total link strength.

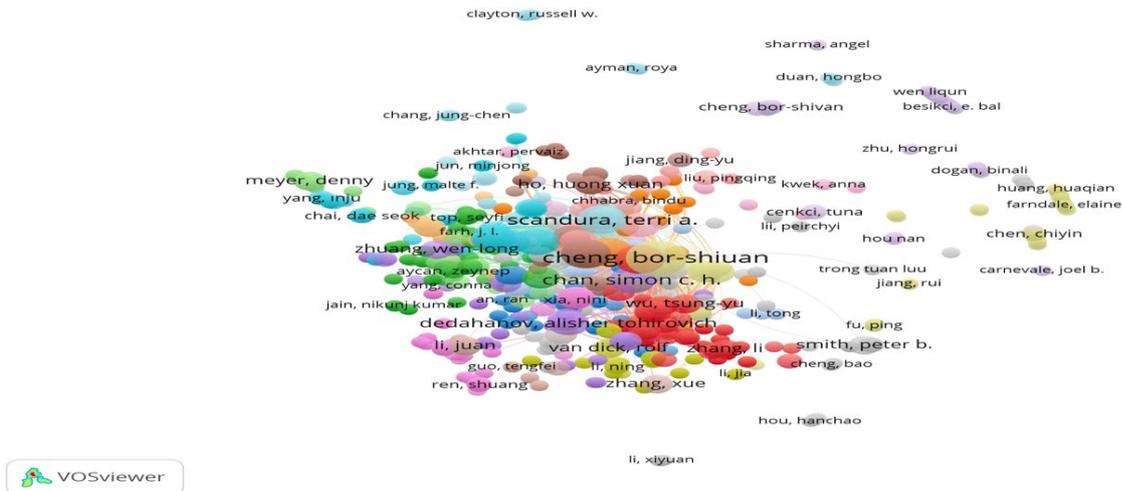


Figure 8. Citation of Authors







#### 4.12. Bibliographic Coupling of Documents

In this analysis, type of analysis and counting methods in VOSViewer were chosen as Bibliographic coupling of documents. Bibliographic coupling occurs when two scientific papers have the same reference in their bibliographies (they both cite the same third document). For this analysis, the minimum number of citations of a document was set to 1 of the 520 documents, 407 meet the threshold. As can be seen from the figure below, the most cited studies in the analysis are Cheng (2004) and Pellegrini (2008a), with 525 citations belonging to Cheng (2004) and 418 citations belonging to Pellegrini (2008a). In terms of total link strength, Cheng (2004) has 422 citations and Pellegrini (2008a) has 1544 citations. The highest total link strength is Hiller (2019), with 3041 links.

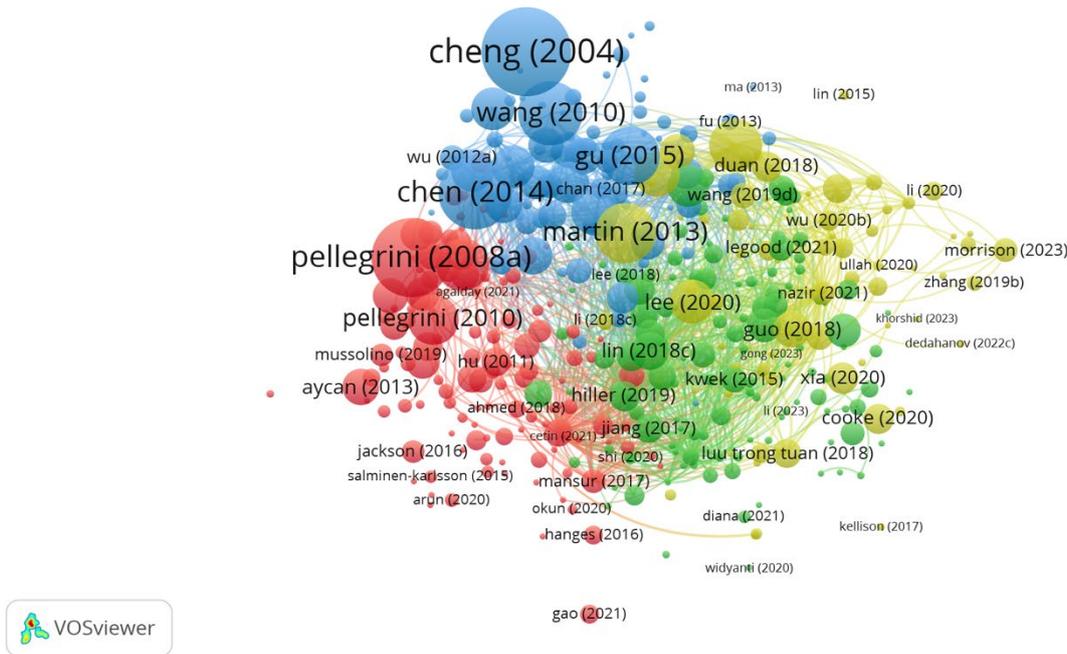


Figure 13. Bibliographic Coupling of Documents

#### 5. Conclusion and Discussion

Paternalistic leadership, characterized by a hierarchical and familial relationship between the leader and their subordinates, is gaining traction in organizational behavior research. As the study suggests, the surge of studies on paternalistic leadership can be attributed to the changing paradigms within leadership theories that increasingly value employee well-being alongside organizational goals (Pellegrini and Scandura, 2008). A key element of paternalistic leadership is the combination of authority with benevolence, reflecting traditional familial roles where leaders are expected to take a protective and guiding stance towards employees (Cheng et al., 2004). Farh and Cheng (2000), were among the early scholars who analyzed paternalistic leadership within the Chinese context, laying the groundwork for the subsequent proliferation of literature on the subject. The focus on East Asian cultures, particularly China, in paternalistic leadership studies is indicative of the cultural roots of the concept. Farh et al. (2008), argue that the cultural norms and values associated with Confucianism, which emphasize respect for hierarchy and reciprocal duties between rulers and subjects, inform the dynamics of paternalistic leadership in these regions.

However, Pellegrini et al. (2010) propose that the appeal of paternalistic leadership extends beyond Asian organizations, deeply resonating due to its emphasis on leader-member relationships that foster not only a hierarchical order but also cultivate a familial sense of belonging. This inclusive and nurturing dimension of paternalistic leadership can harmonize with global organizational

cultures, indicating a versatility that transcends more traditional, rigid leadership frameworks. Correspondingly, bibliometric analysis emerges as an instrumental review methodology, offering significant advantages to researchers. As Şimşir (2021) outlines, it facilitates an examination of scientific data on a given topic, organizes them into specific categories, tracks the progression of a field and its connection to other domains, as well as uncovers areas that have yet to be explored. This analytical approach not only provides insightful reviews of literature like the studies on paternalistic leadership but also maps the academic terrain, guiding future research directions. Bibliometric analyses provide a basis for ideas for new research in a field, and offer opportunities for researchers to relate the field to other subjects and try new perspectives. The bibliometric analysis utilized in this study provides important information to understand the trends and developments in the academic literature on paternalistic leadership. The data obtained from the techniques used are used to provide researchers with information about the development of the “paternalistic leadership” subject, its connections and new perspectives. By analyzing the 520 publications obtained as a result of the search, it was observed that there has been a significant increase in the paternalistic leadership literature over the years and that the research in this field reached the highest number of citations in 2022. When the distribution of publications on paternalistic leadership by years is analyzed, it is seen that the concept is not actually very old, with the concept being used in articles as of 2000, and the number of publications has increased in recent years. According to Price’s law, which is one of the models explaining the overall growth of scientific publications in a particular research field, the growth of a research field takes place in four phases:

- Phase one: the first remarkable work phase: when a small group of scientists begins to publish research in a new area that has not been studied before,
- The second phase: the phase in which the number of publications increases many times over as a result of new perspectives compared to the previous period,
- Third phase: the phase of strengthening the body of knowledge and
- Fourth stage: the stage of decreasing number of publications (Bütüner, 2021).

When paternalistic leadership is evaluated through Price’s law, it can be positioned in the third stage, the stage of strengthening the body of knowledge. The reason why the literature on paternalistic leadership has shown an increasing trend of publications since 2000 can be considered to be related to the efforts to adapt to the changing dynamics and leadership approaches in the business world. During this period, while the sustainability of traditional leadership models was questioned, paternalistic leadership attracted more and more attention due to its potential to increase employee motivation and commitment by emphasizing emotional intelligence and collaboration in the workplace. The increase in the number of publications may reflect the tendency for organizations to move towards people-centered leadership approaches, reflecting efforts to adapt to social and cultural changes in the world of work. The most frequent keywords used to understand and explain paternalistic leadership include “paternalistic leadership” and “authoritarian leadership”. The emphasis on these keywords indicates that various dimensions and characteristics of this leadership approach have been examined in the literature.

Within the scope of the study, as a result of the analysis of the data obtained from the WoS database through the VOSviewer package program, it was seen that 447 of the 520 publications on paternalistic leadership were articles, and Cheng Bs was the most published and cited author with 15 publications. Furthermore, the analysis was conducted on a country basis and it was found that the highest number of paternalistic leadership studies were conducted in the People’s Republic of China. This country is also noteworthy for having the highest citation score.

The results of the analysis in the context of countries reveal that Peoples R. China ranks first with 240 publications and 5497 citations. According to WoS categories, it was seen that the concept of paternalistic leadership was mostly studied in the category of management sciences with 248 publications. It was determined that the most co-cited author was Farh, JI with 550 citations.

Beyond helping us to understand the current state of paternalistic leadership literature, the study also reveals potential opportunities for future research. More in-depth studies on paternalistic leadership are important to better understand the effects of the leadership style in different cultures. In addition, research that fills gaps in the literature and offers new perspectives should be encouraged. Future studies should examine in more detail the effects of paternalistic leadership on important areas such as job performance, employee satisfaction, and organizational culture. Such an examination could be valuable in providing both leaders and managers of organizations with a more comprehensive understanding of the potential advantages and challenges of this leadership approach.

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