

A Bibliometric Analysis of the Literature on Leadership Qualities Enshrined in the Bhagavad Gita

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to present a bibliometric examination of the scholarly literature focusing on leadership qualities derived from the Bhagavad Gita. The study aims to identify major publication trends, influential authors, prominent institutions, productive countries and dominant document types within this research domain. It also seeks to understand the evolving academic interest in integrating the philosophical and ethical leadership principles of the Bhagavad Gita into contemporary management and organizational studies.

Design/methodology/approach – The data for this study were retrieved from the Scopus database on 2 March 2026 using the search keywords “Bhagavad Gita” AND “leadership” within article titles, abstracts and keywords. A total of 56 documents were identified and analysed using bibliometric techniques. Various performance indicators such as year-wise publication trends, author productivity, institutional contributions, country-wise research output, document types and funding patterns were examined. In addition, science mapping techniques were employed using VOSviewer software to generate visualization maps including country collaboration networks, author citation influence and institutional research linkages.

Findings – The findings indicate that research on leadership principles derived from the Bhagavad Gita has gradually expanded, particularly after 2016, with the highest publication output observed in 2023. The analysis shows that India is the most productive country in this research area, followed by the United States and Malaysia. Among the contributing scholars, Muniapan, Balakrishnan emerges as the most influential author in terms of citation impact. The results further reveal that journal articles represent the dominant form of publication, highlighting the increasing academic recognition of Gita-inspired leadership studies. Institutional contributions are distributed across several universities, reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of this research field.

Originality/value – This study contributes to the existing literature by providing a structured bibliometric overview of research on leadership qualities enshrined in the Bhagavad Gita. By systematically mapping

the intellectual structure and research patterns in this domain, the study offers a comprehensive understanding of its development and emerging global relevance. The findings may assist researchers and scholars in identifying key research directions and opportunities for future investigations in spiritually grounded leadership and management studies.

Keywords: Bhagavad Gita, Leadership, Bibliometric analysis, VOSviewer, Management philosophy, Spiritual leadership

1. Introduction

Leadership is generally understood as a distinctive human behaviour embodied by a selfless and experienced individual who guides others toward the attainment of a definite goal. In organizational settings, working and supervising cannot effectively occur simultaneously; a worker, however skilled, may struggle to monitor direction, quality, and long-term vision while performing assigned tasks. (Northouse) Thus, the presence of a competent leader becomes essential to provide timely guidance, moral support, and strategic direction. Leadership is not about personal achievement but about enabling others to succeed; the worker remains the actual achiever, while the leader derives moral satisfaction and goodwill. From time immemorial, leadership has been a universal and enduring phenomenon, evident across cultures, nations, and fields of human activity. (Dubrin, 2008 p.s.03)

Although contemporary leadership literature is vast, relatively fewer studies explore its ethical, philosophical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions. In this regard, the Shrimad Bhagavad Gita, a part of the Indian epic Mahabharata, offers profound insights into leadership principles that remain relevant even in the twenty-first century. (Chatterjee, 2012) The dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna on the battlefield symbolizes not only a spiritual discourse but also a powerful illustration of mentoring, guidance, and transformational leadership. Concepts such as duty, selfless service, moral responsibility, vision, motivation, empowerment, and righteous action—central to modern leadership theories like authentic leadership, servant leadership, and values-based leadership—are deeply embedded in the teachings of the Gita. (Jgnatioous, 2015) Its continued relevance has been acknowledged by thinkers such as Aldous Huxley, Mahatma Gandhi, and Peter Senge, who recognized its universal philosophical and managerial significance.

Despite the richness of ancient Indian wisdom on governance and human relations, management practices in many contemporary organizations, particularly in India, have largely drawn upon Western theoretical frameworks. This creates a compelling need to systematically examine indigenous sources of leadership thought. The present study, therefore, undertakes a bibliometric analysis of the existing literature on leadership qualities enshrined in the Bhagavad Gita. By mapping publication trends, authorship patterns, institutional contributions, citation impact, and geographical distribution, this research seeks to assess the scholarly evolution of this domain and to understand how the Gita's leadership principles have been interpreted and integrated within modern organizational discourse. Through this analytical approach, the study aims to highlight the growing academic engagement with Gita-based leadership and its emerging significance in contemporary management scholarship.

2. Methodology

The present study adopts a bibliometric research methodology to systematically analyse the scholarly literature on leadership qualities enshrined in the Bhagavad Gita. Bibliometric analysis is widely used to examine the development, structure, and trends of research within a specific academic domain. For this purpose, bibliographic data were retrieved from the Scopus database, which is one of the most comprehensive sources of peer-reviewed academic literature. The search was conducted using the keywords “Bhagavad Gita” AND “leadership”, limited to the article title, abstract, and keywords, and a total of 56 relevant documents were identified for analysis. The collected data were further examined using various bibliometric indicators in order to understand the productivity, impact, and intellectual structure of research in this area.

For analytical clarity, the study divides bibliometric analysis into two main components: Performance Analysis and Science Mapping. Performance analysis focuses on measuring research productivity and impact through parameters such as year-wise publication trends, most prolific authors, institutional affiliations, country-wise distribution of publications, document types, and funding patterns. These indicators help in identifying major contributors, influential institutions, and geographical patterns of research development. On the other hand, science mapping explores the structural relationships within the research field by analysing collaboration networks, citation relationships, and institutional linkages. The visualization and mapping of these relationships were carried out using VOSviewer software, which enables graphical representation of bibliometric networks. Through these techniques, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of the evolution, influence, and global research landscape of leadership studies inspired by the Bhagavad Gita.

3. Results

The present study employs bibliometric analysis to systematically examine the scholarly literature on leadership qualities enshrined in the Bhagavad Gita. For analytical clarity, the bibliometric investigation is divided into two major categories: Performance Analysis and Science Mapping. Performance analysis evaluates the productivity and impact of research through parameters such as year-wise publication trends, author contributions, institutional affiliations, country-wise distribution, document types, and funding patterns. In contrast, science mapping focuses on the structural relationships within the research field by examining collaboration networks, citation influence, and institutional linkages. The interpretation of the following charts and visualizations is based on these bibliometric indicators, and the analysis has been conducted using VOS viewer software, which enables graphical representation and mapping of scholarly data to better understand the intellectual structure and development of the research domain.

3.1 Performance Analysis

3.1.1 Year-wise Distribution of the Documents

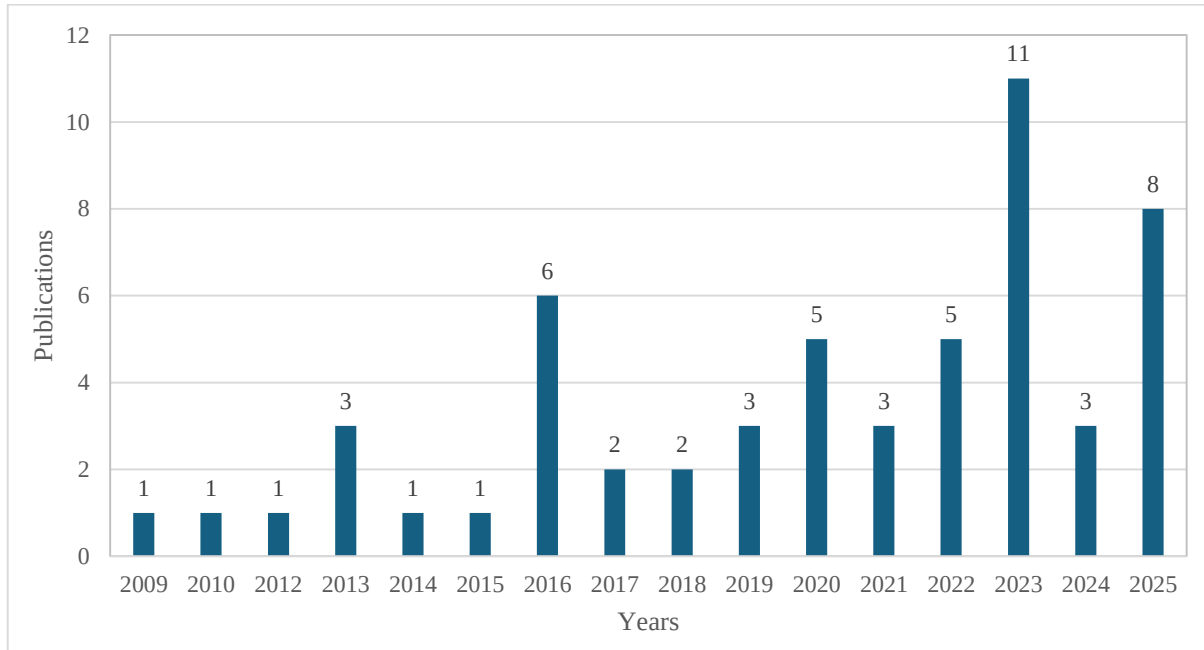


Figure 1. Year-wise Distribution of the Documents

The year-wise publication trend retrieved from **Scopus** reveals a gradual yet notable growth in scholarly interest in leadership qualities enshrined in the **Bhagavad Gita** over the period 2009–2025. The publication activity shows a clear long-term growth trend, indicating increasing interest or development in the field over time. The early period (2009–2015) reflects a low-output phase, suggesting the topic was either emerging or not yet widely explored. The sharp rise starting in 2016 marks a turning point, likely due to increased awareness, funding, or breakthroughs. The period after 2020 indicates accelerated productivity, with the peak in 2023 suggesting the field reached a high level of maturity or popularity. Although there are occasional declines (e.g., 2017 and 2024), these appear temporary and do not disrupt the overall upward trajectory. The strong rebound in 2025 after a dip in 2024 suggests the growth trend is sustained rather than declining.

Overall, the bibliometric trend reflects an emerging and expanding field of inquiry. The increasing publication output, particularly in the last five years, underscores the growing recognition of the Bhagavad Gita as a significant source of leadership philosophy, ethical decision-making principles, and value-based management insights in modern organizational studies.

3.1.2. Most Prolific Authors

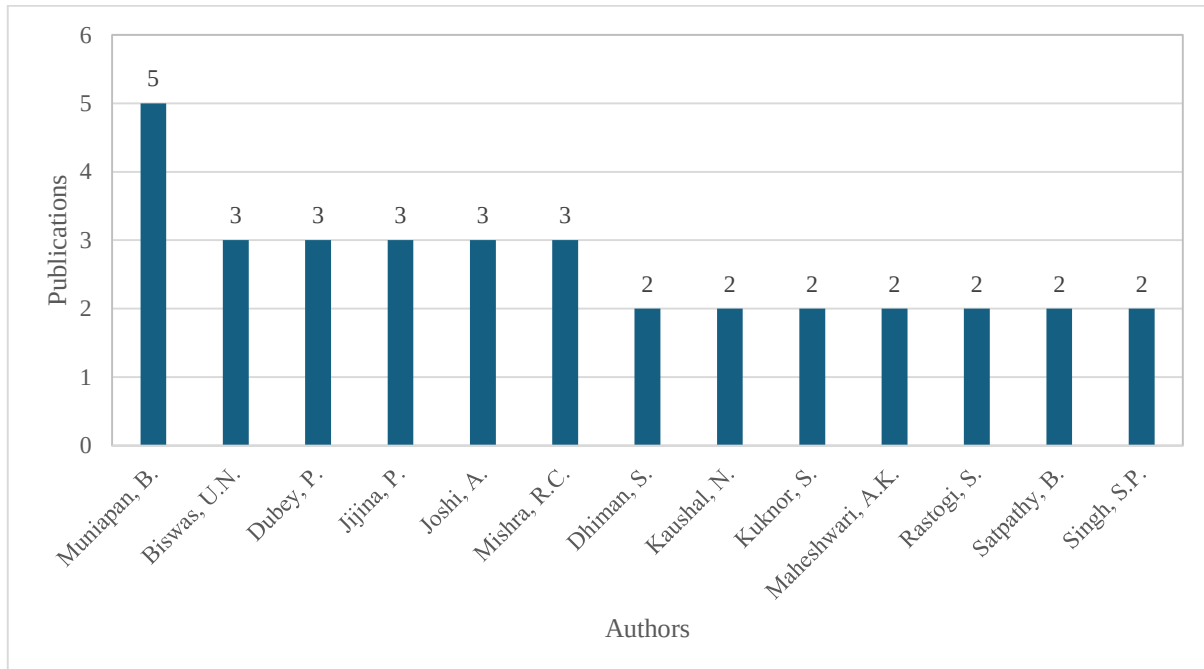


Figure 2. Most Prolific Authors

The author-wise distribution of publications, as retrieved from **Scopus**, highlights the key contributors to the scholarly discourse on leadership qualities enshrined in the **Bhagavad Gita**. The data indicate that the research domain is characterized by a moderate concentration of contributions among a limited group of scholars, reflecting an emerging yet specialized field of inquiry. The data shows that research contributions are somewhat concentrated among a few authors, with Muniapan, B. leading (5 publications). A group of authors—Biswas, U.N., Dubey, P., Jijina, P., Joshi, A., and Mishra, R.C. each contributed 3 publications, indicating a moderate and consistent level of involvement. The remaining authors Dhiman, S., Kaushal, N., Kuknor, S., Maheshwari, A.K., Rastogi, S., Satpathy, B., and Singh, S.P. have 2 publications each, suggesting lower but still notable contributions.

Overall, the author productivity pattern suggests that while a few scholars play a central role in shaping and sustaining the research discourse, the field does not yet demonstrate extreme author concentration typical of highly mature domains. Instead, it reflects a developing research area with distributed scholarly engagement. There is no extreme dominance by a single author, but rather a collaborative research landscape with multiple active contributors. The relatively small difference between most authors (2–3 publications) suggests balanced participation across the group. The presence of multiple authors contributing two or more publications underscores sustained academic attention and indicates the progressive institutionalization of research on leadership insights derived from the Bhagavad Gita.

3.1.3. Affiliation-wise Distribution of Publications

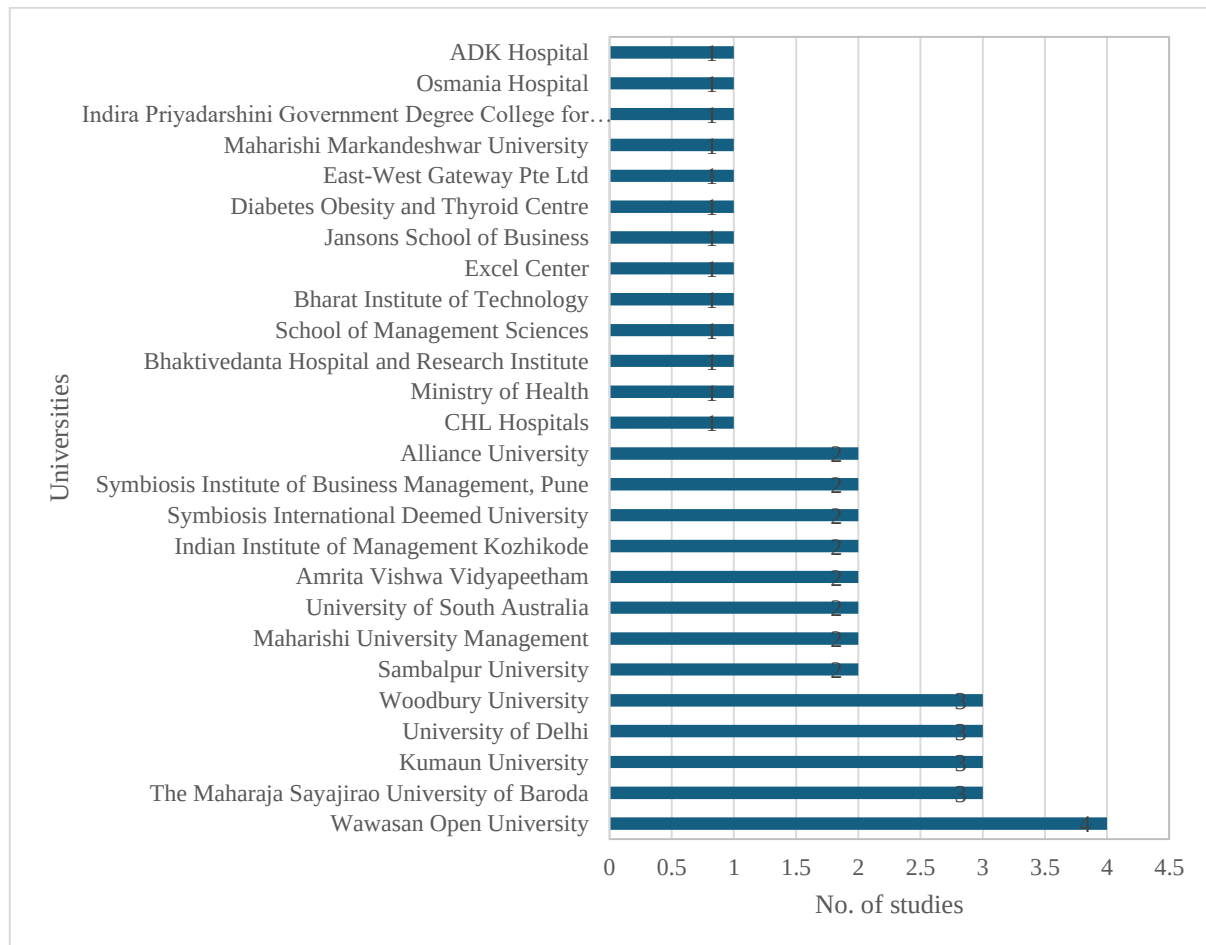


Figure 3. The Most Prominent Universities

The affiliation-wise distribution of publications extracted from Scopus demonstrates that research on leadership qualities enshrined in the Bhagavad Gita is being undertaken across a diverse range of universities and institutional settings. The distribution of studies is skewed, with most institutions contributing only one study and a few contributing multiple studies. Wawasan Open University stands out as the top contributor, indicating a relatively stronger research focus or involvement in this area. A small cluster of universities such as University of Delhi and Woodbury University show moderate contribution (3 studies each), forming the second tier. The presence of many institutions with single contributions suggests broad but shallow participation, rather than concentrated expertise. Overall, the field appears fragmented, with limited dominance and wide institutional spread, implying opportunities for deeper, more sustained research contributions by leading institutions. This distribution reflects the expanding academic and practical relevance of leadership principles derived from the Bhagavad Gita, signifying its growing institutional acceptance and the gradual consolidation of this research domain within global scholarly networks.

3.1.4. Global Research Trends (Country-wise)

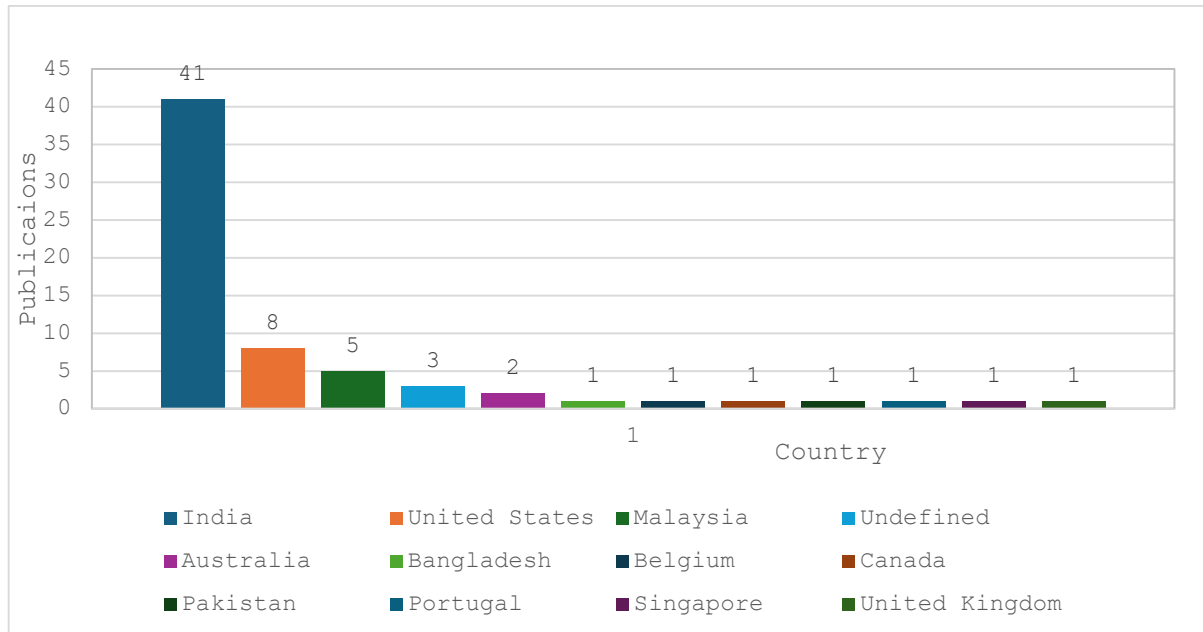


Figure 4. Country-wise Distribution of the Research Documents

The country-wise distribution of publications sourced from Scopus reveals a highly concentrated geographical pattern in research on leadership qualities enshrined in the Bhagavad Gita. The data clearly indicate that India dominates the field with 41 publications, accounting for a substantial majority of the total scholarly output. This predominance is expected, given the Bhagavad Gita's cultural, philosophical, and historical roots in India, where it holds profound spiritual and intellectual significance. The United States follows with eight publications, reflecting growing Western academic interest in integrating Eastern philosophical insights into contemporary leadership and management studies. Malaysia contributes five publications, demonstrating notable engagement from Southeast Asia in exploring value-based and ethical leadership frameworks derived from Indian scriptures.

Other countries—including Australia (three publications), Bangladesh (two publications), and single contributions from Belgium, Canada, Pakistan, Portugal, Singapore, and the United Kingdom—reflect a modest but geographically diverse participation. Additionally, a small portion of publications is categorized as undefined, indicating incomplete affiliation data in the database. Overall, the findings suggest that while India serves as the primary intellectual hub for this research domain, there is increasing internationalization of scholarship. The cross-continental contributions highlight the expanding global relevance of leadership principles embedded in the Bhagavad Gita, signifying its transition from a culturally rooted scripture to a globally acknowledged source of ethical and transformational leadership thought.

3.1.5 Distribution of Publications according to Document Types

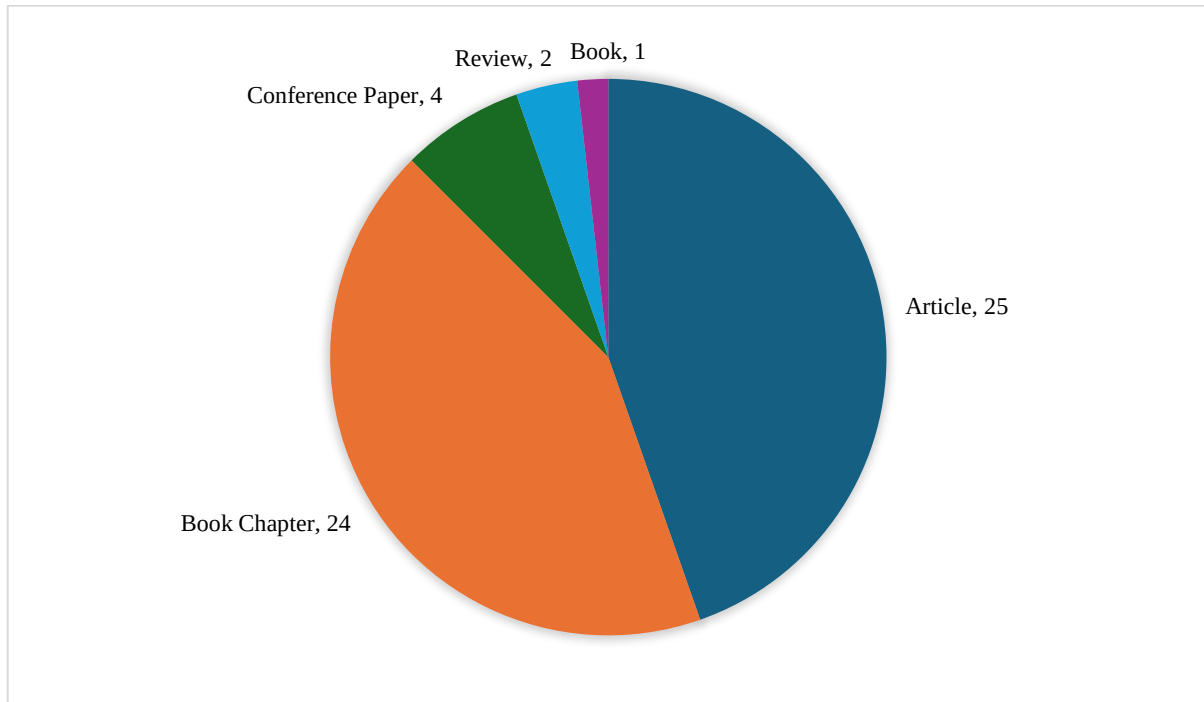


Figure 5. Distribution of Publications according to Document Types

The document-type analysis based on data retrieved from Scopus provides insight into the preferred modes of scholarly communication in research on leadership qualities enshrined in the Bhagavad Gita. The pie chart indicates that journal articles constitute the largest share of publications, closely followed by book chapters. This dominance of articles suggests that scholars primarily disseminate their findings through peer-reviewed academic journals, reflecting the field's growing theoretical rigor and empirical engagement. The substantial contribution of book chapters further indicates the inclusion of this theme in edited volumes and scholarly books, highlighting its relevance in broader discussions on management, ethics, and spiritual leadership.

Conference papers represent a smaller yet meaningful portion of the total output, signifying ongoing academic dialogue and the presentation of emerging research at scholarly forums. Reviews and standalone books account for the least proportion of publications, indicating that while conceptual syntheses and comprehensive monographs exist, they remain comparatively limited. The distribution demonstrates that the research area is largely journal-driven, with supplementary contributions through book chapters and conference proceedings. This pattern reflects the progressive formalization and academic consolidation of leadership studies inspired by the Bhagavad Gita, underscoring its deep rooted recognition within mainstream management and leadership scholarship.

3.1.6. Funding Sponsor

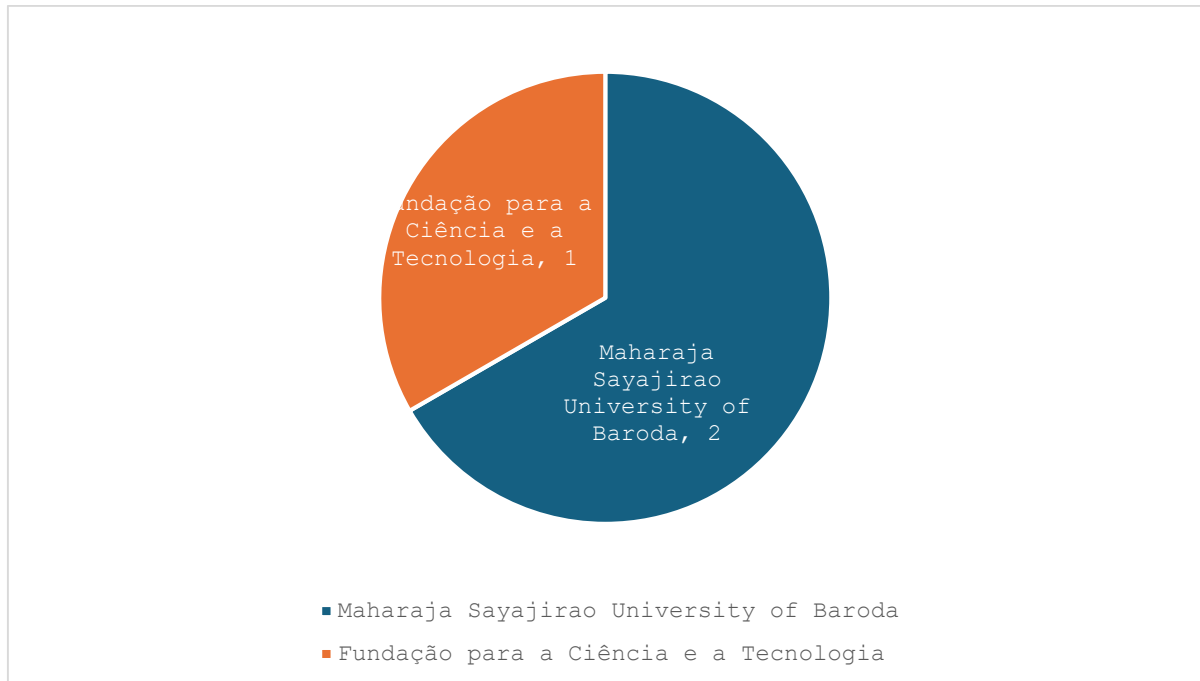


Figure 6. Distribution of Research Publications according to Funding Agencies

The funding pattern derived from data retrieved through Scopus highlights the institutional financial support behind research on leadership qualities enshrined in the Bhagavad Gita. The pie chart indicates that two primary funding sponsors have supported research in this domain. A larger proportion of the funded publications is attributed to Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, reflecting its comparatively stronger financial engagement and institutional encouragement for research in spiritually grounded leadership and management studies.

The remaining share of funded research is supported by Foundation for Science and Technology, demonstrating international interest and cross-national funding involvement in this thematic area. Although the overall number of funding sponsors appears limited, the presence of both Indian and international agencies suggests emerging global recognition of the academic relevance of Bhagavad Gita-based leadership research. The funding distribution indicates that while institutional backing is presently concentrated among a few organizations, there is potential for broader funding diversification as the field continues to expand and gain interdisciplinary importance.

3.2 Science Mapping

3.2.1 Country wise Collaborations

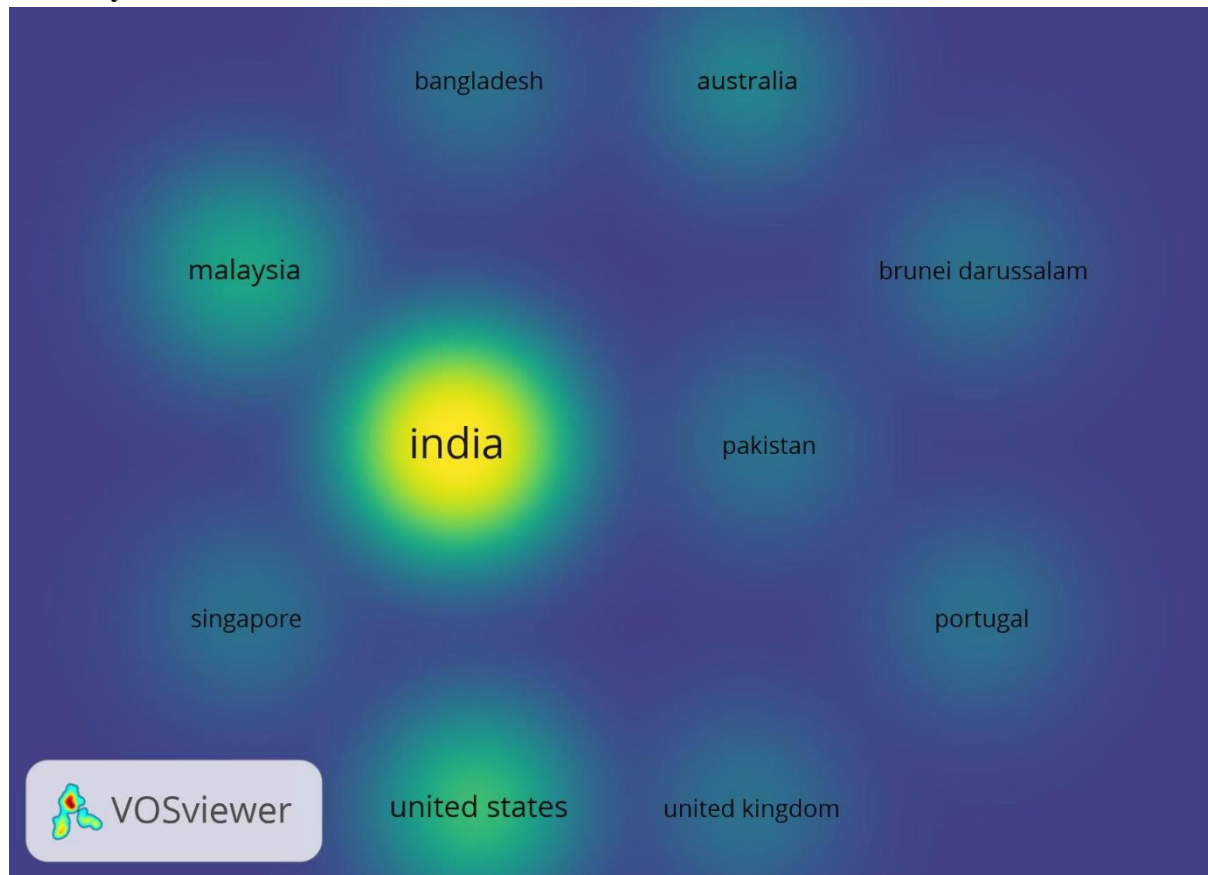


Figure 7. Country-Wise Collaborations

The VOSviewer density visualization generated from data extracted through Scopus illustrates the geographical spread and relative research intensity of countries contributing to the literature on leadership qualities enshrined in the Bhagavad Gita. The map highlights approximately ten countries actively engaged in this research domain, including India, United States, Malaysia, Australia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Singapore, United Kingdom, Portugal, and Brunei Darussalam. The density gradient indicates that India occupies the most prominent and intense position, signifying the highest research concentration and strongest scholarly presence in this field.

The surrounding countries appear with comparatively lighter density, reflecting moderate to emerging research contributions. The visible clustering around India suggests that it serves as the central intellectual hub, while nations such as the United States and Malaysia show noticeable yet secondary engagement. The presence of countries from South Asia, Southeast Asia, Europe, and Oceania indicates a growing internationalization of scholarship. Overall, the visualization demonstrates that although the research area remains strongly anchored in India, it is gradually expanding into a globally collaborative and cross-cultural domain, underscoring the increasing global relevance of leadership principles derived from the Bhagavad Gita.

3.2.2 Author Citations and Influence Analysis

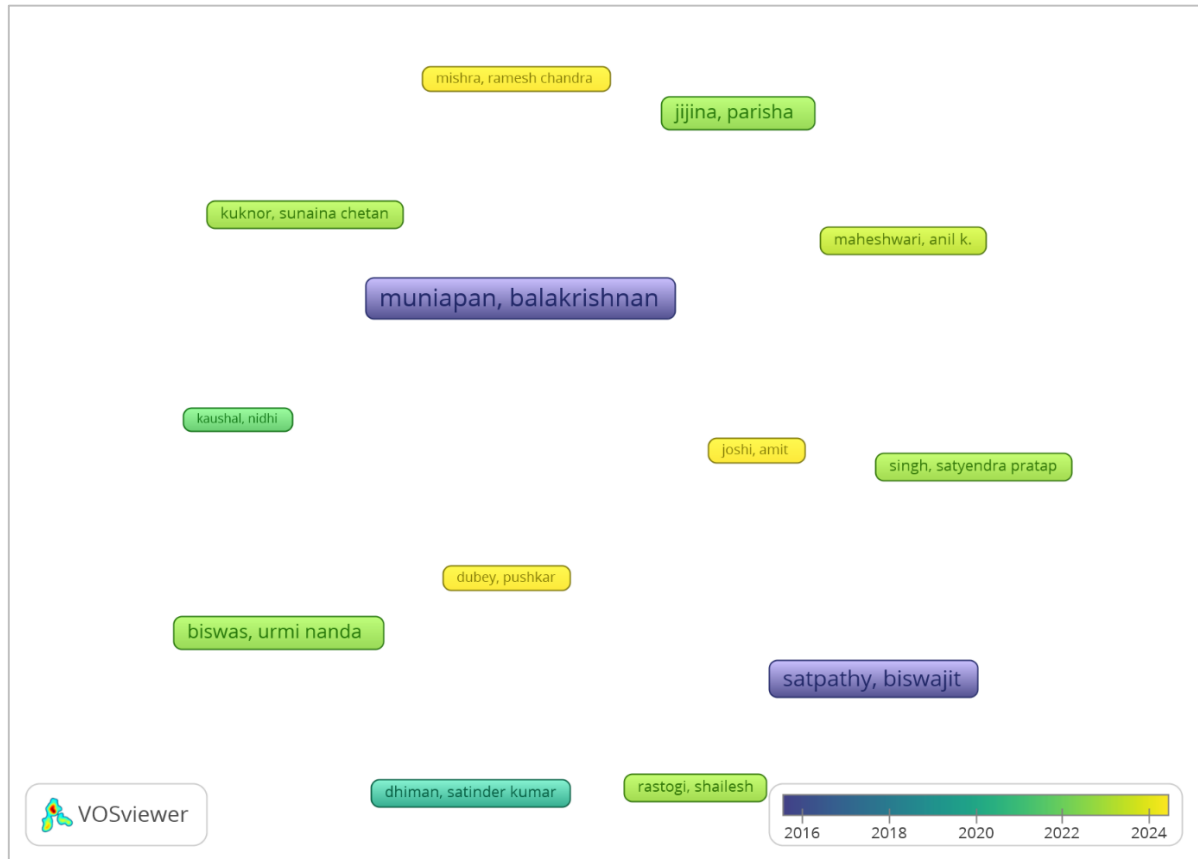


Figure 8. Author Citations and Influence Analysis

The citation analysis derived from **Scopus** and visualized using VOSviewer highlights the most influential authors contributing to the literature on leadership qualities enshrined in the Bhagavad Gita. Among the selected authors, Muniapan, Balakrishnan emerges as the most impactful scholar, with five publications and a total of 58 citations, indicating both productivity and strong academic influence. This is followed by Satpathy, Biswajit, who, despite having two publications, has accumulated 43 citations, reflecting high scholarly recognition per publication. Similarly, Biswas, Urmi Nanda and Jijina, Parisha each record 25 citations with three publications, demonstrating consistent academic engagement and citation impact within the domain.

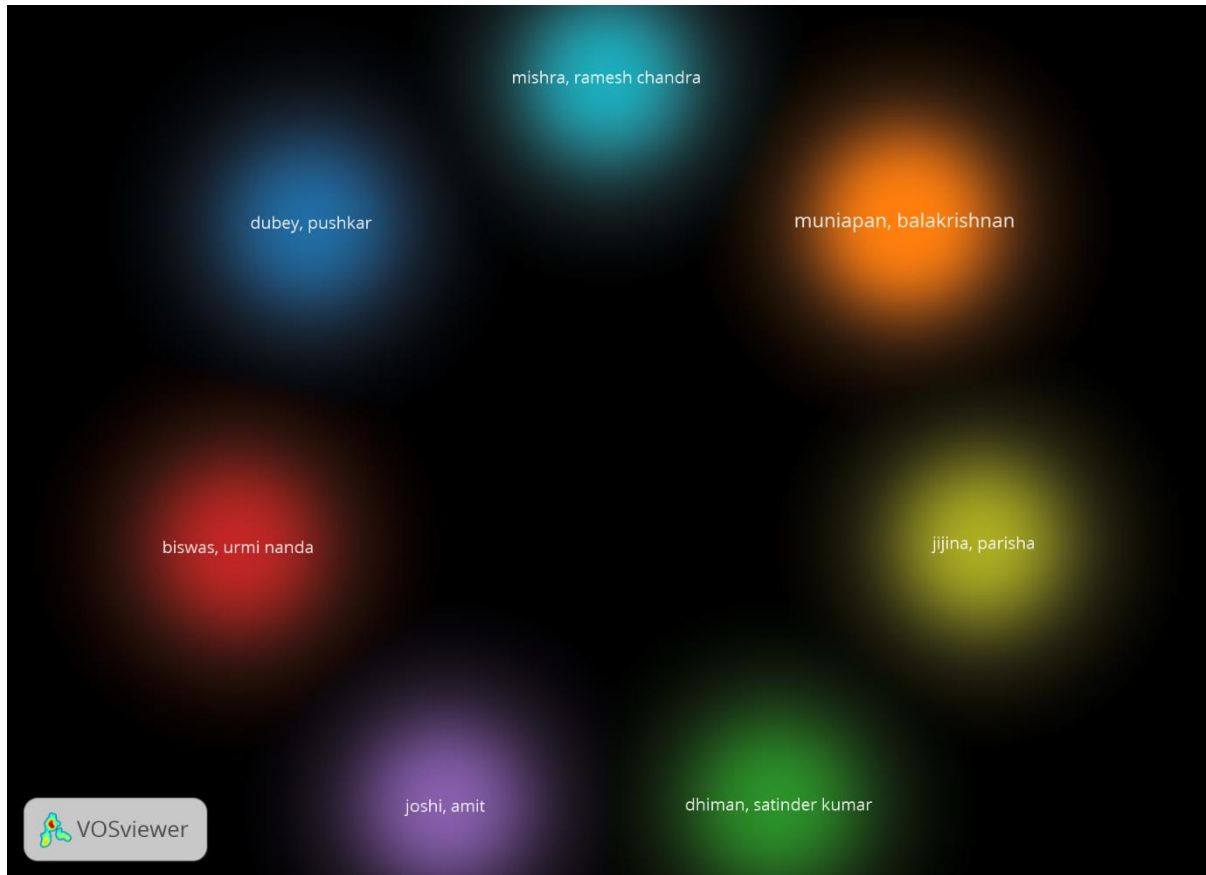


Figure 9. Author Collaborations

Other notable contributors include Dhiman, Satinder Kumar (6 citations), Maheshwari, Anil K. (6 citations), Kuknor, Sunaina Chetan (9 citations), Rastogi, Shailesh (9 citations), and Singh, Satyendra Pratap (9 citations), along with authors such as Dubey, Pushkar, Joshi, Amit, Mishra, Ramesh Chandra, and Kaushal, Nidhi, who show moderate citation counts. The VOSviewer overlay visualization further indicates temporal patterns of contribution, with earlier foundational works appearing in cooler shades (earlier years) and more recent contributions in warmer tones. Overall, the citation distribution suggests that while several scholars contribute to the field, a few key authors serve as intellectual anchors, shaping and advancing the discourse on Bhagavad Gita–based leadership studies. This pattern reflects a developing yet increasingly structured research domain with identifiable thought leaders and growing scholarly influence.

3.3.3 Institutional Citation and Research Influence Analysis

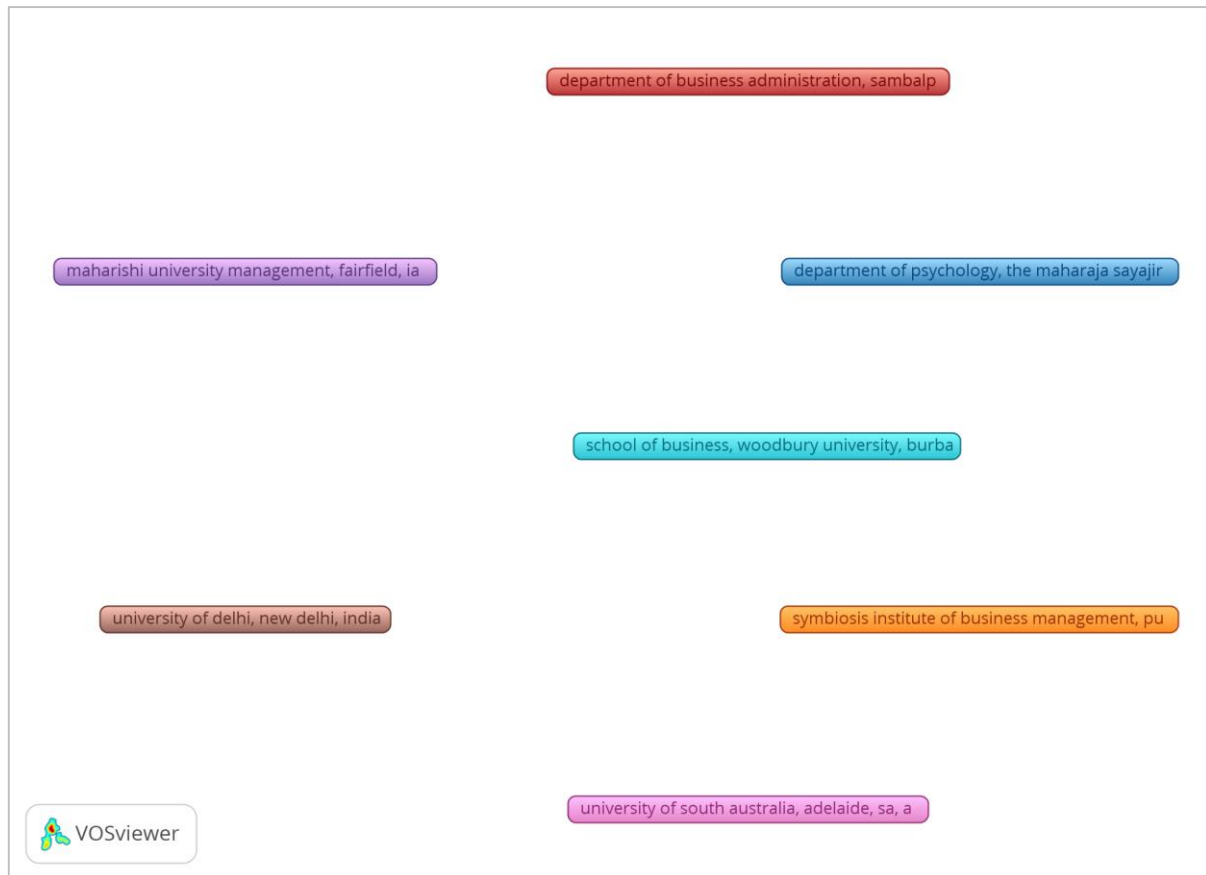


Figure 10. Institutional Citation and Research Influence Analysis

The institutional citation mapping generated through Scopus and visualized using VOSviewer identifies the most influential universities and academic units contributing to research on leadership qualities enshrined in the Bhagavad Gita. The visualization highlights several prominent institutions, including the Department of Business Administration, Sambalpur; the Department of Psychology, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda; the School of Business, Woodbury University; Symbiosis Institute of Business Management, Pune; Maharishi University of Management, Fairfield, IA; the University of Delhi, New Delhi; and the University of South Australia, Adelaide. The spatial separation of nodes indicates independent yet significant scholarly contributions from these institutions, reflecting distributed centres of academic engagement rather than a single dominant institutional cluster.

The presence of both Indian and international universities demonstrates the cross-national academic interest in Bhagavad Gita-based leadership studies. Indian institutions appear prominently, reaffirming India's foundational role in advancing research grounded in its philosophical heritage. At the same time, universities in the United States and Australia signify the global diffusion and adaptation of Gita-inspired leadership concepts within broader management and psychology disciplines. Overall, the institutional citation landscape suggests that while contributions are dispersed across multiple universities, certain academic departments—particularly those in business administration and psychology—serve as key intellectual contributors, reinforcing the interdisciplinary and globally expanding nature of this research domain.

4. Conclusion

This bibliometric analysis of 56 documents indexed in the Scopus database (as of 2 March 2026) provides a comprehensive overview of the scholarly landscape concerning leadership qualities enshrined in the Bhagavad Gita. The findings clearly indicate that this field, though relatively young, is experiencing steady and meaningful growth. The year-wise publication trend demonstrates a marked increase in academic interest, particularly after 2016, with a significant peak in 2023. This upward trajectory reflects the expanding recognition of the Bhagavad Gita as a valuable source of ethical, spiritual, and transformational leadership principles applicable to contemporary organizational contexts. The dominance of journal articles further indicates that the field is gaining formal academic legitimacy and is progressively being integrated into mainstream leadership and management discourse.

The author-wise and citation analyses reveal that while the domain does not yet exhibit extreme concentration typical of mature research areas, it has identifiable intellectual anchors who are shaping and advancing the discourse. Scholars such as Muniapan, Balakrishnan and Satpathy, Biswajit demonstrate notable citation impact, indicating strong scholarly influence despite the relatively modest size of the literature base. Similarly, institutional and affiliation analyses highlight the role of key universities and departments—particularly in India, the United States, Malaysia, and Australia—in nurturing and disseminating research on Gita-based leadership. Although funding support remains limited and concentrated among a few sponsors, the presence of both national and international funding agencies suggests emerging global recognition and the potential for broader financial engagement in the future.

Geographically, the research remains predominantly anchored in India, which accounts for the majority of publications, reaffirming the text's cultural and philosophical roots. However, the participation of multiple countries across South Asia, Southeast Asia, Europe, North America, and Oceania signals a gradual internationalization of scholarship. Science mapping through VOSviewer further confirms India's central role while also illustrating the expanding global network of contributors. Overall, the study concludes that research on leadership qualities enshrined in the Bhagavad Gita is transitioning from a culturally rooted and conceptually exploratory domain to a structured and globally relevant field of academic inquiry. The growing publication output, identifiable thought leaders, international collaborations, and interdisciplinary engagement collectively indicate that Gita-based leadership studies hold substantial potential for future theoretical development, empirical validation, and practical application in contemporary management and organizational leadership.

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