

Identifying core “responsible leadership” practices for SME restaurants

“Responsible leadership” practices

José Alberto Castañeda García and Juan Miguel Rey Pino
*Department of Marketing and Market Research,
Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, University of Granada,
Granada, Spain*

Zakaria Elkhwesky
*Department of Hotel Management, Faculty of Tourism and Hotels,
Alexandria University, Alexandria, Egypt, and*

Islam Elbayoumi Salem
*College of Applied Sciences, University of Technology and Applied Sciences,
Salalah, Oman and Department of Hotel Management,
Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Alexandria University, Alexandria, Egypt*

419

Received 29 September 2021
Revised 31 January 2022
23 April 2022
6 May 2022
23 May 2022
7 June 2022
Accepted 12 June 2022

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this study is to identify the core responsible leadership (RL) practices that are most relevant to small- and medium-sized enterprises (SME) restaurants. Furthermore, the authors adapt scales to measure these practices and conduct a pilot study to evaluate their impact on business performance in such establishments.

Design/methodology/approach – Exploratory sequential mixed methods are used to fulfill the research aims. In the first phase, a set of definitions and practices associated with RL are derived from a systematic literature review. Second, a projective method of data collection is applied, involving a panel of 16 experts. Third, a fuzzy cognitive map is developed, which captures the responses of 40 owners or general managers of SME restaurants.

Findings – Twenty-five practices are identified from the systematic literature review. The results show the five leadership practices that match the order of importance assigned by the experts: societal orientation,

© José Alberto Castañeda García, Juan Miguel Rey Pino, Zakaria Elkhwesky and Islam Elbayoumi Salem. Published by Emerald Publishing Limited. This article is published under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) licence. Anyone may reproduce, distribute, translate and create derivative works of this article (for both commercial and non-commercial purposes), subject to full attribution to the original publication and authors. The full terms of this licence may be seen at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode>

Zakaria Elkhwesky would like to thank the Erasmus Plus program, European Union for the financial support during his pre-doctoral stay at the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, University of Granada, Spain in 2019 (fully funded scholarship; Erasmus+). The current project was launched from this period as a part of the scholarship purposes.

Funding: This project is sponsored by FEDER/Junta de Andalucía-Consejería de Transformación Económica, Industria, Conocimiento y Universidades/Project CV20-09357; PID2019-110941RB-I00/SRA (State Research Agency/10.13039/501100011033); and the Erasmus Plus program, European Union.

Declarations of interest: none.



ethics, stakeholder involvement, power-sharing and environmental orientation. The relevance of those five practices is validated to explain SME restaurants' financial performance and innovation performance.

Practical implications – Innovation is the key to advancing business sustainability and resilience, and the results identify the specific RL practices that enable improvements to be made in innovation performance among SME restaurants.

Originality/value – This paper identifies the RL practices that are particularly relevant to the tourism field (specifically, the restaurant industry), offers measurement scales for those practices and provides empirical evidence of the relationship between these RL practices and business performance in SME restaurants.

Keywords Mixed methods, Fuzzy cognitive map, Responsible leadership, SME restaurants

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Responsible leadership (RL), a value-based approach to leadership (Haque *et al.*, 2021), has been “conceptualized as practice aimed at fostering cogent values in consideration of personal interests and degrees of power held by people within an organization and in the group of people it serves” (Prilleltensky, 2000, p. 141). The study of RL originates in the field of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and ethics literature (Han *et al.*, 2019). Hence, the responsible leader sees his or her purpose as to serve corporate stakeholders and maintain a steady focus on the social responsibility of the firm (Waldman *et al.*, 2020).

Leaders are often at the core of business success stories and failures at the societal level. All firms are particularly in need of leaders who consolidate insights and applications of business ethics, CSR and sustainability into their internal cultures (Abuelhassan and AlGassim, 2022; Aboramadan *et al.*, 2020; Elbaz and Haddoud, 2017; Frangieh and Yaacoub, 2017; Herhausen *et al.*, 2017). Mattila and Hanks (2012) asserted that firms spend time and money to position themselves as socially responsible to satisfy their customers in a highly competitive marketplace. Good leadership implies an open mind, charisma, natural authority, dominance and vision (Rijnierse, 1992). Leadership has been found to be particularly important for innovation (Hassi, 2019; Schuckert *et al.*, 2018; Zach, 2016), organizational improvement (Pamfilie *et al.*, 2012) and project outcomes (Wahab *et al.*, 2016).

In recent years, the hospitality business has encountered a terribly challenging operating environment, necessitating a thorough investigation of leadership styles (Elkhwesky *et al.*, 2022b; Huertas-Valdivia *et al.*, 2022; Rothfelder *et al.*, 2012; Kužnin and Walker, 2017). Considering the impacts of additional challenges and extreme and unprecedented events – such as the COVID-19 pandemic – on hospitality businesses (Salem *et al.*, 2021, 2022; Zhang *et al.*, 2020), there is a need for researchers to pay more attention to producing evidence-based knowledge that can assist management in complex environments (Arici *et al.*, 2021). More specifically, scholars have observed that progress toward better understanding RL is needed, to construct a fully used RL theory for upcoming academic research (Haque *et al.*, 2021). To achieve this, it is vital to conduct further research to investigate how to achieve RL in organizations (Tsui, 2019) and, equally important, empirical research assessing the impact of RL on business outcomes (Haque *et al.*, 2019).

According to a comparative study of over 45 countries by Beck *et al.* (2005), small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are essential for economic growth (GDP per capita) and can act as potential stabilizers in downturn periods (Varum and Rocha, 2013). In particular, in the restaurant sector, where SMEs predominate, the owner or general manager's RL practice is critical for ensuring the firm is managed from the perspective of equal benefits for all stakeholders including those of a social nature, not only those delivering financial

benefits. This is also a sector whose practices are customer-facing and therefore highly visible to society, and it is one that carries significant weight in all countries.

A systematic review (Elkhwesky *et al.*, 2022b) conducted on leadership approaches in hospitality confirmed that RL has not been examined in hospitality research, to date. Yet, we contend, RL is critical to the ability of contemporary hospitality to deal with the ethical challenges that may arise. Further research on RL can also help to achieve sustainability, which refers to initiatives and actions that are environmentally, socio-culturally and economically appropriate (Albrecht *et al.*, 2020; Elkhwesky, 2022a; Elkhwesky *et al.*, 2022c).

What is more, fresh research insights into RL would support enterprises in their efforts to accomplish organizational resilience and sustainability in challenging circumstances or times of crisis (Fleming, 2022). Pless *et al.* (2021) find that there is demand for research on RL because of certain major challenges being faced by society – most recently, the global COVID-19 pandemic.

The scholarship has endeavored to measure the practices associated with the responsible leader (Agarwal and Bhal, 2020; Eriksen and Cooper, 2018; Koh *et al.*, 2018; Waldman *et al.*, 2020). However, the approaches, measurements and perspectives adopted in the literature on this topic vary considerably. One explanation for this marked variety of practices associated with RL is the sheer diversity of sectors that have been studied in the literature. For example, Cameron *et al.* (2004) analyzed the effect of the virtues of the leader on the objective financial performance of the business, finding a positive relationship between virtuousness, which characterizes responsible leaders (Cameron, 2011), and profit margin. They also found a lower value of this latter variable for service firms compared to manufacturing. However, with regard to this result, it remains unclear whether adapting RL practices to service firms might improve their business performance.

In the field of tourism services, the few studies dealing with RL are very recent, being limited to literature reviews on big-cruise companies (Pounder, 2021) or studies on the hotel industry where RL is taken as a moderating variable of other main effects in business performance (Bouichou *et al.*, 2021; Luu, 2021) or where there is a specific focus on human resources management (Freire and Gonçalves, 2021; Tian and Suo, 2021) or environmental management (Zhao and Zhou, 2019). In the case of SMEs, the results of Mantikei *et al.* (2020) in the Thai tourism industry show the relevance of RL in explaining business performance, but they do not differentiate between RL practices – and it is reasonable to believe that not all practices will lead to the same business results.

Given the demonstrable relevance of RL, then, in explaining tourism and hospitality performance, the present study aims to identify the core RL practices that are most relevant to SME restaurants. To fulfill this aim, we undertake a systematic literature review of the past 12 years of RL research in the Web of Science (WoS) database, and we conduct two studies into the practices identified therein. The first study enables us to identify the practices most associated with the RL role in SME restaurants, using a qualitative projective technique based on a panel of 16 experts with extensive experience in restaurants, management, and human resources. The second study enables us to validate the results of the first, this time using a panel of 40 professionals from SME restaurants by testing the effect of RL practices on financial performance and business-innovation performance.

2. Literature review

2.1 *The concept of responsible leadership*

Before isolating the specific practices pertaining to RL, we need to conceptualize it and identify its distinguishing features. Although responsible relationships are at the hub of all

leadership, the RL concept is a multi-dimensional and complex phenomenon (Scully, 2015). According to Voegtlin (2011), RL focuses on a leader's relationship with all stakeholders in an organization and their capacity to engage in a productive dialogue with them. Responsible leaders focus on dealing with stakeholders effectively, sharing responsibility, solving problems jointly and giving them the chance to participate in decision-making (Voegtlin, 2016).

This approach enables a mutually balanced relationship with all stakeholders to be created (Maak, 2007; Paraschiv *et al.*, 2012; Stone-Johnson, 2014; Székely and Knirsch, 2005). Looking more closely at this definition, Waldman *et al.* (2020) argued that RL is the ability of executive-level positions to meet the needs, expectations, interests or wants of organizations' stakeholders, in addition to their competence to serve them in the best manner.

In this context, RL might be characterized as an interaction between internal and external stakeholders based on a shared vision, ethics, and values (Maak and Pless, 2006). This idea of RL as a vision that is shared with all the different stakeholders (Eriksen and Cooper, 2018; Szczepańska-Woszczyna *et al.*, 2015) and is associated with ethical values (Mousa, 2017; Voegtlin *et al.*, 2012) and social and environmental change (Voegtlin, 2016) is repeatedly underlined in the literature.

Meanwhile, Voegtlin *et al.* (2012) RL is distinct from other styles of leadership, such as ethical leadership. While RL draws on stakeholder engagement and is concerned with globalization challenges, conflict-resolution, democracy and the interaction between leader and stakeholders – and thus relies on ethical choices – it is broader than ethical leadership (Mousa, 2018). That said, both approaches focus on taking care of employees, listening to other perspectives and solving ethical problems (Voegtlin, 2011), but while RL should focus on the well-being of employees and on minimizing ethical conflicts in the organization, and also includes the social and environmental liability of leaders, ethical leadership is concerned with managing internal conflicts (Liu and Lin, 2018; Voegtlin, 2016).

In general, academics agree that RL should be distinguished from “traditional” leadership approaches because it is based on discourse ethics and deliberative democracy theory, transcends the traditional dyadic leader–subordinate relationship, and involves a long-lasting collaboration between the organization's board and surrounding stakeholders (Mousa, 2018; Voegtlin *et al.*, 2012).

In the restaurant industry, it has been found that important RL practices are related to employees and social improvements: empowerment of team members by delegating responsibilities wherever possible, conveying confidence in their ability to achieve certain predetermined goals, and giving them the support necessary to attain those goals, providing training and employment opportunities specifically designed for people with disabilities, implementing pro-environmental campaigns, offering food programs for the needy, providing medical insurance cover for employees and supporting charities (Balazs, 2002; Kozmal and El-Monem, 2018).

In the specific case of COVID-19, some restaurants have responded, on the one hand, by upping their social practices, such as donating funds to community initiatives, providing medical and daily necessities, providing free meals for medical workers, and hosting charity events to help ease the hardships associated with the pandemic. On the other hand, they have increased the health and safety measures they take in their service provision, turning to contactless deliveries for customers, with the assistance of technology, to guarantee food safety. They have also implemented measures to check customers' and employees' body temperature, and they have adopted environmental disinfection practices (Li *et al.*, 2021).

2.2 Responsible leadership and business performance

Business performance is defined by [Lebas \(1995\)](#) as the ability of a firm to achieve its objectives or targets by implementing a number of actions. In light of the multiple external factors pressurizing businesses to perform well, sound leadership is critical ([Avolio and Gardner, 2005](#)). In this sense, [Frangieh and Yaacoub \(2017\)](#) and [Friend et al. \(2020\)](#) highlighted that responsible leaders play a vital role in enhancing business performance and reputational gains. Furthermore, due to growing stakeholder activism and scrutiny in the marketplace globally, RL has become a critical issue, and particularly so under crisis conditions ([Väläkangas and Li, 2020](#); [Witt and Stahl, 2016](#)).

Most previous research dealing with leadership has focused on the relationships between transformational leadership and business performance ([García-Morales et al., 2012](#); [Ng, 2017](#); [Salem, 2015](#)), servant leadership and business performance ([Huang et al., 2016](#); [Kaya and Karatepe, 2020](#); [Saleem et al., 2020](#)), and authentic leadership and business performance ([Černe et al., 2013](#); [Gatling et al., 2016](#)). Although important efforts should be highlighted to analyze the relationship between RL and business performance ([Javed et al., 2020b](#)), its analysis is based on the manufacturing-sector context, with different characteristics in terms of company size and the relationship between the leader and stakeholders, employees and society.

RL has been found to be essential for employees, financial benefits and reputation, preventing the unethical treatment of personnel and sharing the leader’s vision with all stakeholders ([Cheng et al., 2019](#); [Frangieh and Yaacoub, 2017](#); [Voegtlin, 2011](#)). As well as its role in satisfying external stakeholders ([Jaén et al., 2020](#)), RL is also important for employee retention, motivation, commitment, and lower absenteeism ([Haque et al., 2021](#)).

[Kim et al. \(2018\)](#) found that, when the organization faces a high degree of competition, its financial performance can be improved by socially responsible activities. In the context of tourism SMEs, responsible practices are critical for financial performance ([Tamajón and Font, 2013](#)). In the restaurant industry, such practices (particularly in decision-making) play a pivotal role in sustainability ([Wellton and Lainpelto, 2021](#)) and avoiding business failures, specifically in small independent restaurants ([Putra and Cho, 2019](#)). Nonetheless, the direct relationship between RL practices and business performance is unclear ([Elkhwesky et al., 2022a](#); [Lynham and Chermack, 2006](#)). Thus, the combination of a high CSR and a strong responsible leader in the business could lead to an overemphasis on CSR that negatively affects financial performance ([Javed et al., 2020b](#)).

[Waldman et al. \(2020\)](#) affirmed the need for more research to understand the effect of RL on organizational performance, in addition to how to measure RL, as no clear measure has been developed in the literature, to date. Financial and institutional development are important for solving small-enterprise problems ([Beck and Demircug-Kunt, 2006](#)).

Even though the practices associated with RL are said to be vital for innovation ([Liao and Zhang, 2020](#); [Voegtlin and Patzer, 2020](#)), there are very few studies that have investigated this relationship, and even fewer in the context of SME restaurants. Innovativeness is essential for the recovery of economic activity in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic’s initial impact ([Ketchen and Craighead, 2020](#)), particularly in the restaurant sector ([Cha, 2020](#); [Kim et al., 2021](#)).

Business innovativeness can be improved by stakeholder collaborations ([Jiang et al., 2019](#); [Ozdemir et al., 2019](#)), and sustainable innovation can be enhanced by engaging with internal and external stakeholders and improving collaboration with government policy ([Ayuso et al., 2011](#); [Li et al., 2018](#)). Socially responsible practices, then, are important for building sound relationships with stakeholders and improving innovation performance ([Luo and Du, 2015](#)).

2.3 Responsible leadership in small and medium-sized enterprises restaurants

Although a significant body of literature is devoted to RL (Haque *et al.*, 2019; Marques and Gomes, 2020; Pless and Maak, 2011), most studies on the topic have been conducted in such fields as nursing (Uzarski and Broome, 2019), education (Mousa and Ayoubi, 2019; Stone-Johnson, 2014; Thrash, 2009) and hospitals (Mousa, 2019a, 2019).

Despite the importance of RL in the restaurant sector (Elkhwesky *et al.*, 2022a), there are very few studies that deal with this term *per se*. Most of the extant research has focused on individual RL practices, such as CSR, stakeholder involvement, ethics, sustainability and environmentally friendly actions (Alonso *et al.*, 2016; Iaquinto, 2014; Kasim and Ismail, 2012; Kim and Brymer, 2011; Lee and Heo, 2009; Raab *et al.*, 2018; Radwan *et al.*, 2010; Swimberghe and Wooldridge, 2014).

Managers must implement long-term responsible practices (Swimberghe and Wooldridge, 2014) because customers prefer green and socially responsible restaurants that contribute to protecting the environment (Elkhwesky, 2022; Park and Lee, 2009; Schubert *et al.*, 2010). Nonetheless, environmentally friendly, socially responsible and ethical practices are not so widely implemented by restaurant managers due to, among other factors, weak environmental laws and regulations (Kasim and Ismail, 2012).

Small restaurants, in particular, have struggled with achieving sustainability (Garcia, 2019). While some restaurant owners do implement certain practices to reduce waste – such as gifting edible leftovers to homeless shelters (Iaquinto, 2014) – truly responsible leadership calls for much wider and more varied actions, bearing in mind that green service-providers play a critical role in the transition to a more sustainable service economy (Chun and Giebelhausen, 2012).

In addition, ignoring the concerns and interests of stakeholders beyond owners and shareholders can cause SMEs considerable financial and reputational harm. Therefore, these activities should be part of a strategy that balances the perspectives of *all* stakeholders (including employees, suppliers or neighbors, for instance). In other words, when deciding which pro-environmental actions or investments to implement, it is important for owners and managers of SMEs to identify and understand the different environmental concerns different stakeholders may have – including customers, local community groups, environmental groups, suppliers and investors (Nejati and Amran, 2009).

During times of crisis, socially responsible activities are important to the survival and financial performance of SMEs (Magrizos *et al.*, 2021). Some restaurants are considering incorporating or expanding initiatives to address social concerns and increase communal and individual well-being as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic. Socially responsible corporate practices to support foodservice actors (staff, suppliers and providers); initiatives focused on customers' food-related wellness; and philanthropic efforts aimed at community well-being are among these techniques (Batat, 2020).

Small restaurants have to implement responsible food and community practices to build and enhance their brand image (Elkhwesky *et al.*, 2022a; Lin and Chung, 2019). Thus, this profile of establishment should concentrate on developing pro-community services, donating to local charitable organizations and sourcing locally grown food from local suppliers (Lin and Chung, 2019). Among the RL practices that SME restaurants can adopt is to reduce food waste to mitigate its adverse effects on the environment and the economy (Othman *et al.*, 2021).

Other RL practices that the literature recommends for managers of small restaurants are: communicating effectively with employees, giving them a sense of responsibility within the business, giving recognition to employees, being sociable and willing to engage in activities with employees, controlling negative emotions, especially during

busy hours, and being more respectful to employees (Putra and Cho, 2019). However, the scholarship recommends that more research be conducted on responsible practices in the context of tourism and hospitality SMEs because such firms lack knowledge about management systems and responsible practices (Putra and Cho, 2019; Tamajón and Font, 2013).

3. Study design

The exploratory sequential mixed methods (ESMM) approach is a research framework typically used to understand management practices (Berman, 2017). Mixed methods research (MMR) draws on the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research, resulting in “multiple ways of seeing and hearing” data (Greene, 2007, p. 20).

According to Berman (2017), in an exploratory design, qualitative data are collected and analyzed, and the resulting themes are then used to develop a quantitative instrument to further explore the research problem. In the present study, we take this same ESMM approach but we also precede it with a systematic literature review and follow it up with a scale pilot study (Figure 1). This more extensive, three-stage approach has also been taken by other authors, such as Grech and Grech (2021), who combine a systematic literature review with qualitative data to construct a quantitative questionnaire. We also took into account the recommendation of Saunders *et al.* (2007) that, prior to using a questionnaire to collect data, it should be piloted.

4. Systematic review of responsible leadership practices

4.1 Aim

Given that there are multiple proposals regarding RL practices in the literature, it is critical for further research to create a cohesive set of measurement tools to assess their implementation and effectiveness (Agarwal and Bhal, 2020; Frangieh and Yaacoub, 2017). RL’s characteristics also need to be better defined (Doh and Quigley, 2014). We systematically reviewed and synthesized the extant literature concerning RL, to map out the RL practices that different authors propose.

4.2 Methodology

The systematic review process undertaken in our research was adapted from Elkhwesky (2022), Elkhwesky *et al.* (2022b, 2022c), Elkhwesky *et al.* (2022a) and Pickering and Byrne (2014). First, we determined the most appropriate search terms and database for our analysis of published studies related to RL, opting for the keyword “responsible leadership” and the WoS database. WoS is considered a core database in the conducting of systematic literature reviews (Elkhwesky, 2022; Elkhwesky *et al.*, 2022a; Gusenbauer and Haddaway, 2020), and is one of the most well-established sources for such analyses (Elkhwesky *et al.*, 2022b, 2022c).

Second, we conducted the search, spanning the disciplines of “management”, “ethics” and “business”. This process identified 227 scholarly papers from the selected disciplines

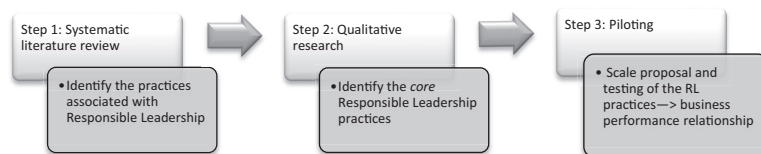


Figure 1. Exploratory sequential mixed-methods approach

(Figure 2). Third, we reviewed each of the 227 papers individually and in detail, covering the abstract, research methodology, results and conclusions, to cross-check their selection. The most relevant papers were those concerning the direct practices of RL. Of these, 20 studies were deemed suitable for indicating RL practices.

4.3 Results

Most of the 20 studies we reviewed were conducted in sectors such as manufacturing, technology, services and medicine. In contrast, there was a clear gap in the fields of tourism, restaurants and hospitality (Table 1). Although, between them, the papers suggest 25 different practices to characterize RL practices, some of these practices receive greater support in the literature. Given the great variety of RL practices, it is helpful to deepen the analysis of those that are considered core for the hospitality sector, on the basis that the scholarship broadly agrees on the *primary* features that help define RL. This general consensus enables us to draw on the extant knowledge surrounding RL and apply it to different sectors – in this case, hospitality.

According to the number of citations in WoS – an indicator of the academic influence of a proposal (Zhu *et al.*, 2015) – the 14 proposed practices that enjoy the most coverage in the literature are (in decreasing order of number of citations): power-sharing, morality and fairness, role clarification, stakeholder involvement, leader behavior toward employees, leader behavior toward owners, leader behavior toward customers, an aggregate of virtues, style of leader’s roles, leader behavior toward the natural environment, leader behavior toward suppliers, leader’s decisions affecting neighboring residents, leader behavior toward society and principles and ethical values. Other practices are supported by a single paper only or have a very low number of citations (Table 2).

To identify the core RL practices in SME restaurants, we conducted two complementary studies. In the first study, the practices most strongly associated with a responsible leader in the case of SME restaurants were identified by an international panel of 16 experts. The second study enabled the results of the first study to be validated by testing the effect of the RL practices on financial performance and innovation performance, based on the perspectives of 40 owners or general managers of SME restaurants.

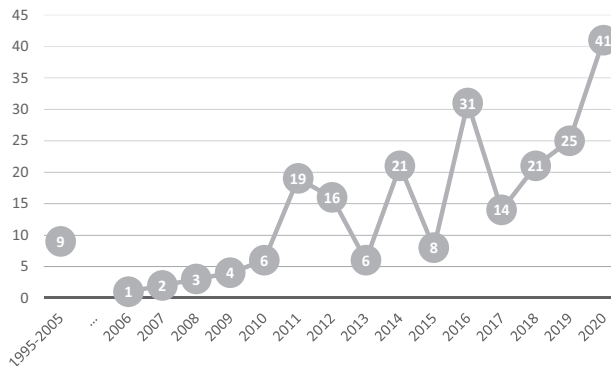


Figure 2.
Number of RL papers
published in the fields
of management,
ethics or business,
1995–2020

RL practices	Concept	Sector	Authors
Stakeholder culture	Responding to, and actively dealing with, stakeholders in an ethical manner	Technology (IT), manufacturing, and service companies	Tymon <i>et al.</i> (2010)
Human Resource practices	Dealing with employees as talent, and retaining the best of that talent	Technology (IT), manufacturing, and services companies	Doh <i>et al.</i> (2011)
Managerial support	Developing and supporting all employees effectively, achieving their well-being	Systematic review (medical, management, and leadership studies)	Frangieh and Yaacoub (2017)
Actively avoids becoming isolated or out of touch	Interacting effectively with stakeholders, and dealing with social and environmental issues	Industry sectors	Haque <i>et al.</i> (2019)
Forward-looking rather than backward-looking	Thinking about the social and environmental impact of running a firm and also the benefits for the firm	Businesses and non-governmental organizations	Voegtlin (2016)
Shared responsibility and collective problem-solving	Encouraging participation of all parties, specifically in problem-solving		
Critically evaluating prevailing societal norms, rules and conventions	Critically evaluating moral norms, making positive and ethical change, and setting values and ethical rules		
Aggregate of virtues	Being modest and motivating others	Companies (manufacturing, drinks distribution, agricultural machinery, clothing and technical college)	Antunes and Franco (2016)
Stakeholder involvement	Dealing actively with stakeholders and taking the interests of employees, state, suppliers, customers, future generations, etc. into account	Public hospitals	Mousa (2018)
Model of leader's roles	Impacting positively on society, ensuring transparency, and following organizational vision and values	Public hospitals	
Principles and ethical values	Communicating effectively based on moral values	Public business schools	Mousa and Puhakka (2019)
Relationship-building	Interacting with both external and internal stakeholders	Different industries, such as banking, insurance, medicine, teaching and services	Mousa (2019b) Han <i>et al.</i> (2019)

(continued)

“Responsible leadership” practices

Table 1.
RL Practices
identified in the
literature

Table 1.

RL practices	Concept	Sector	Authors
A sharing orientation	Strengthening relationships with all stakeholders and sharing risks with them	Manufacturing firms	Liao and Zhang (2020)
Relational governance	Coordinating and collaborating with stakeholders (e.g. clients, customers, suppliers, regulatory authorities) when making decisions and taking care of their interests and conflicts	Industries, including the chemical industry, machine manufacturing, electronics industry, food manufacture, pharmaceutical industry, and textiles industry	Rui and Lu (2020)
Positivity	Creating a positive climate, positive inspiration, positive connections and positive communication	Public listed companies Insurance companies High-tech industry	Javed <i>et al.</i> (2020a) Cheng <i>et al.</i> (2019) Liu and Lin (2018)
Morality Job performance	Being a moral person, well-respected by others Having charisma, the capacity to innovate, and skills associated with effective communication	Companies in 25 industries	Wang <i>et al.</i> (2015)
Reputation	Developing the company through a good reputation		
Social responsibility Capability	Implementing community-facing CSR activities Creating long-term competitive advantage and a comprehensive corporate governance structure		
Leader's behavior toward employees, owners, customers, natural environment, suppliers, neighbors, local community and society	Taking care of all stakeholders inside and outside a firm. Employees and customers are the most important stakeholders	Companies in the field of financial services, spatial planning and construction, manufacturing, trade and the hotel and restaurant industry	Frisch and Huppenbauer (2014)
Power-sharing	Allowing followers to participate in decision-making	Small and medium-sized organizations in different sectors such as services, manufacturing, construction, trade, transportation, information and repair and maintenance	De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2008)
Morality and fairness	Being honest, ethical and treating employees fairly		
Role clarification	Communicating effectively, clarifying responsibilities and expectations, and demonstrating transparency		

(continued)

RL practices	Concept	Sector	Authors
Sustainable growth focus	Implementing sustainability and social responsibility activities	Organizations in sectors, such as automobiles, lighting solutions, and IT client services	Agarwal and Bhal (2020)
Multi-stakeholder consideration	Nurturing the relationship with stakeholders and achieving their well-being		
Moral person	Demonstrating responsibility, justice, fairness, ethics and morals		
Moral manager	Promoting ethics and avoiding harm in dealing with subordinates		
People orientation	Taking care of people and empowering them, to achieve loyalty and trust		
Visible ethical actions and traits	Being a role model, showing consistency in all actions, being transparent in communication, setting ethical standards, taking care of the community when making decisions, and developing sustainable relationships with stakeholders	Diverse companies and organizations, such as a bank, an iconic theatre, a company operating holiday resorts and spas, a government agency, a chain of pubs and restaurants, a finance company, a real estate company, etc	Koh <i>et al.</i> (2018)
Setting ethical standards and accountability	Managing by values, using punishments and rewards, setting rules and a code of ethics to be followed by all. Being responsible for his/her actions and also those of their followers		
Broad ethical awareness	Decision-making that is based on ethics and values. All stakeholders receive benefits regularly. Maximizing profits, paying government taxes, ensuring people's welfare and caring about the perspectives of all stakeholders		

Table 1.

Practices	Papers that include the practice as part of RL	Total citations in WoS ^a
1. Power-sharing	Cheng <i>et al.</i> (2019); De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2008); Han <i>et al.</i> (2019); Javed <i>et al.</i> (2020a); Liao and Zhang (2020), Rui and Lu (2020); Voegtlin (2016)	358
2. Morality and fairness	Agarwal and Bhal (2020); De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2008); Wang <i>et al.</i> (2015)	345
3. Role clarification	De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2008)	328
4. Stakeholder involvement	Agarwal and Bhal (2020); Antunes and Franco (2016); Cheng <i>et al.</i> (2019); Doh <i>et al.</i> (2011); Frangieh and Yaacoub (2017), Han <i>et al.</i> (2019); Haque <i>et al.</i> (2019); Javed <i>et al.</i> (2020a); Liao and Zhang (2020); Mousa (2018); Mousa (2019b); Mousa and Puhakka (2019); Rui and Lu (2020); Tymon <i>et al.</i> (2010)	164
5. Leader behavior toward employees	Doh <i>et al.</i> (2011); Frangieh and Yaacoub (2017); Frisch and Huppenbauer (2014); Haque <i>et al.</i> (2019); Tymon <i>et al.</i> (2010)	158
6. Leader behavior toward owners	Doh <i>et al.</i> (2011); Frisch and Huppenbauer (2014); Mousa (2018)	63
7. Leader behavior toward customers		
8. Leader behavior toward the natural environment		
9. Leader behavior toward suppliers		
10. Leader behavior toward neighbors		
11. Leader behavior towards society	Frisch and Huppenbauer (2014); Wang <i>et al.</i> (2015)	51
12. Principles and ethical values	Antunes and Franco (2016); Mousa (2018); Mousa (2019b); Mousa and Puhakka (2019); Voegtlin (2016)	40
13. Aggregate of virtues	Antunes and Franco (2016), Mousa (2018); Mousa (2019b);	25
14. Model of leader's roles	Mousa and Puhakka (2019)	
15. Capability	Wang <i>et al.</i> (2015)	17
16. Job performance		
17. Reputation		
18. Not isolating the leader	Voegtlin (2016)	15
19. Forward-looking rather than backward-looking		
20. Positivity	Liu and Lin (2018)	5
21. Setting ethical standards and accountability	Koh <i>et al.</i> (2018)	1
22. Broad ethical awareness		
23. Visible ethical actions and traits		
24. People orientation		
25. Sustainable growth focus	Agarwal and Bhal (2020)	0

Note: ^aTotal citations in WoS received by the papers that include the practice as part of RL

Table 2.
RL Practices
reflected in WoS

5. Identifying core responsible leadership practices

5.1 Aim

The aim of the study is to identify the *core* RL practices from among the 14 practices of RL identified in the systematic review – that is, those with the greatest support in the literature.

According to [Endrissat and von Arx \(2013\)](#), the context under which leadership practices are tested is important, so we selected the restaurant sector and what we can define as a normalized socio-economic context (that is, pre-COVID-19).

5.2 Methodology

We used a qualitative methodology, which is considered appropriate when seeking common meanings for the characteristics most appreciated by stakeholders around the term being researched ([Denzin and Lincoln, 1994](#); [Giorgi and Giorgi, 2017](#); [Kvale, 2008](#)). We obtained a broad set of definitions and practices associated with RL from our systematic literature review and reduced these to the 14 practices most frequently associated with this type of leadership. To reduce them even further to a core set of practices, and given their disparate nature, we opted to present them to an expert panel built for this specific study, for their specialist assessment.

For the data collection, we used a projective technique ([Belk, 2007](#)) that involved creating a professional profile for each RL practice, presented in the form of 14 curriculum vitae (CVs) in which the RL practice in question was emphasized by the candidate in the Presentation, Skills and Previous Experience sections. All 14 fictitious CVs were homogeneous in format, with only the personal information and the specific attributes for each practice changing.

The CVs were then sent to the panel of 16 international experts (9 academics and 7 professionals from four different countries), with an average of 15 years' experience in either the restaurant sector, management or human resources. The fieldwork was carried out in June and July 2019. The experts' task consisted of selecting and ranking five of these RL/candidate profiles based on their suitability for the responsible leadership of an SME restaurant, and noting the relevant aspects in each selected profile. Experts had to note both the strengths and the weaknesses of each of the five candidates they had “shortlisted”.

For the expert panel, we chose to mix specialist academics and expert practitioners. In the management context, [Baldrige et al. \(2004\)](#) show that academics' and practitioners' evaluations of a topic often complement each other. While academics seek to determine the characteristics of the professional profiles that are best suited to different jobs, including leadership roles, for instance, practitioners have direct experience of those factors that, in practice, could deliver a better result. Combining the two perspectives, academic and practitioner, therefore provides a 360° view of the phenomenon to be analyzed in a qualitative study ([Lawless and Heymann, 1999](#)). Creating samples of participants from different fields helps achieve greater richness and depth around the problem studied ([Belk et al., 2013](#); [Kvale, 2008](#)), which was the rationale for the sample selection we made for this qualitative work ([Denzin and Lincoln, 1994](#)).

The data generated from this stage were analyzed via both semantic and content analysis, using CAQDAS software NVivo 12 Plus ([Rettie et al., 2008](#)). First, a coding structure according to the practices derived from the systematic literature review was applied to the comments and choices made by the experts. Second, a free coding derived from an auto-code search tool from the software was applied over those same comments ([Saldaña, 2009](#)).

A meaning reduction analysis was then implemented, to arrive at shared definitions of those practices considered relevant by all the panel members ([Giorgi, 1989](#)). Ethical requirements were fulfilled by providing all the panel members with detailed briefing information and seeking their permission to use their answers for further in-depth analysis.

Despite the difficulty of establishing unanimous criteria of reliability and validity in qualitative research, we can identify in the existing literature a series of criteria for academic quality and rigor that can be applied to the present work ([Denzin and Lincoln, 1994](#)). Thus,

our study has adhered to the following principles: credibility (textual transcriptions and extracts from these), transferability (by using a theoretical sampling and a saturation point), confirmability (results cross-checked with the literature review), dependence (detailed description of the process followed) and relevance of the research carried out.

5.3 Findings

The panel was asked to evaluate all 14 profiles for a management position in a restaurant SME interested in aspects of RL. At the end of the assessment document, the experts were asked to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate. When the experts were asked to rank the relative importance of the different leadership practices, from most to least important, power-sharing and societal orientation were rated the most important by the greatest number of experts ($n = 4$ and $n = 3$, respectively). When asked to select and rank the 'top 5' practices out of the 14 (that is, those the experts deemed to be most associated with a responsible leader), societal orientation, stakeholder involvement and ethics attracted the greatest degree of consensus among the experts.

Free coding was then performed (without taking into account a priori the practices that appeared in the literature review), based on the comments made by the experts regarding the strengths and weaknesses detected for each profile. Next, the automatic thematic coding tool of the software was used to perform an initial coding; and, finally, a further (manual) coding was performed, based on the results of the first one, to reduce the topics down. This enabled the main topics highlighted by the panel to be identified, and we then linked those topics to the practices named in the literature.

With regard to the leadership practices identified in the 14 CVs, there were expert comments in favor of those candidates where stakeholder involvement (19 comments), ethics (16), societal orientation (12) and employee orientation (10) predominated. A distinct case was that of environmental orientation, based on the emerging themes of environment (10 comments) and sustainability-oriented thinking (5 comments), both of which, combined, were taken to refer to this practice (15 comments).

Turning to the candidate weaknesses noted by the experts, they emphasized those profiles where they perceived a lack of stakeholder involvement (18 comments), which were given much greater weight compared to other skills such as societal orientation or employee orientation (5 comments each). Environmental orientation was another of the practices that was noted for its absence or weakness among candidate profiles (9 comments).

Finally, other practices such as morality and fairness, role-clarification, owner orientation, the model of leader's roles, or supplier orientation, were not flagged up by the expert panel as worthy of particular attention. [Table 3](#) shows the most notable results. We can observe that three practices stand out in particular – societal orientation, ethics and stakeholder involvement – due to the high number of experts that selected them and the high number of citations in the free coding. The power-sharing practice is also significant, with the highest number of experts rating it #1. Finally, environmental orientation is shown to be relevant due to the number of comments it presented in the free coding.

In the case of *societal orientation*, the high volume of comments made by the experts points to its importance. In general, they affirm that this practice represents global societal obligations that organizations need to fulfill by means of audit systems, commercial strategies, leader–stakeholder relationships or job-creation. Some members of the panel also observed that the societal practice – which aims to strengthen social bonds – constitutes a challenge for all sectors of society. There was one negative comment, to the effect that some candidates might have too great a focus on society, although no further explanations were given by the expert. In general, then, the comments on this practice were in a positive sense,

Practice selected	Expert panel's ranking of practices based on their relevance to RL		Free coding of the experts' comments			2nd coding (if applicable)
	N° of experts ranking the practice as the most important of all	N° of experts ranking the practice among the 'top 5 most important'	Free coding A: comments on CV strengths	Free coding B: comments on weaknesses in other CVs	Free coding (A + B)	
Societal orientation	3	12	12	5	17	Same Ethics Values
Principles and ethical values	1	8	16	3	19	
Stakeholder involvement	1	9	19	18	37	Same Sharing responsibilities
Power sharing	4	6	6	3	9	
Neighborhood relations	2	6	2	0	2	Same Environment and sustainability
Natural environment	1	5	15	9	24	
Aggregate of virtues	2	5	0	0	0	None
Employees	1	5	10	5	15	Same Fairness + honesty and integrity
Morality and fairness	1	4	6	0	6	Same
Role clarification	0	4	1	0	1	Same
Owners	0	1	0	1	1	Same
Model of leader's roles	0	5	0	0	0	None
Suppliers	0	3	1	0	1	Same
Customers	3	6	6	4	10	Same

Source: The authors, derived from the NVivo 12 Plus matrix coding tool

Table 3.
Summary of coding

either where the profiles presented the societal orientation or (in the negative) because they lacked it.

In terms of *stakeholder involvement*, this was one of the characteristics most commonly referred-to by the experts (again, both with respect to profiles where the practice was present and also where this characteristic was lacking). The ability to communicate effectively with stakeholders, both internal and external, was also valued. In the external context, another of the questions raised by the experts was the manager's capacity to hold a broad vision for the impact of the company's actions on external stakeholders.

Turning to the *power-sharing* practice, the experts highlighted those candidates whose leadership experience was based on the delegation of responsibilities, participative decision-making, shared problem-solving, or consensual solutions to the problems in the firms they had worked for. The relevance of this practice was expressed by the experts in both directions – that is, both when the CV profiles featured it and also when they lacked it.

Regarding practices relating to an *environmental orientation*, the experts discussed the importance of managers having had some “environment and sustainability” training and of ensuring that this learning tangibly translates into management practices and relationship strategies. Panel members' comments also conveyed the importance of actively avoiding environmental degradation practices – that is, making this a positive social purpose – as well as implementing responsible practices to protect it. This practice attracted the greatest number of comments in the free coding of themes. Finally, according to the experts, RL should include *ethical values* as well as integrity and moral responsibility.

6. Key responsible leadership practices to enhance restaurant performance

6.1 Aim

The aim of the pilot test was to validate the contribution of each RL practice to business performance, taking as a starting point the five practices that had attracted the highest degree of support from the expert panel. The restaurant sector is highly competitive and needs to constantly evolve and innovate if firms are to survive (Naranjo-Valencia *et al.*, 2011). Furthermore, the current climate due to the COVID-19 pandemic is putting the sector's adaptation and reinvention capacity to the test. Hence, it is important not only to test the contribution of each RL practice to financial performance but also to innovation performance (Broch *et al.*, 2020; Liao and Zhang, 2020; Voegtlin and Patzer, 2020).

6.2 Methodology

A draft semi-structured questionnaire was constructed, using validated scales to measure RL practices and business performance (Appendix). Qualitative fields were also included to record the restaurant owner or general manager's verbal opinion. This questionnaire was validated using a LinkedIn panel, with eight experts providing feedback to refine the questions. Their broad recommendations related to the need:

- to perform an on-site interview (not by phone or email);
- to re-word some parts of the questionnaire; and
- to include some general information about the restaurant (year of business creation, number of employees, etc.).

We therefore re-worded some of the items and included some additional questions to enable us to characterize the participants. We also included the option of an on-site interview.

The final questionnaire was completed by 40 owners or general managers of SME restaurants located in Spain. Most of the participants were owners (60%), 44.74% of the

restaurants had been in business for more than 10 years, and they employed an average of between 9 and 10 staff members. Fuzzy cognitive maps (FCMs) enable multi-attribute mental schemes (qualitative) and the strength of the relationship between variables (quantitative) to be calculated. FCMs present the advantage of allowing researchers to model new contexts where the degree of knowledge is low and the degree of performance is contingent. They start out from a definition of the problem and the identification of the set of variables that operate in that problem (RL practices and performance). Thus, in each phase that describes the problem, there will be a set of variables that are activated at different levels.

With regard to the relationship between the variables (practices \rightarrow performance), this may be established discreetly, based on a matrix of ones and zeros or the Pearson correlations, or using a fuzzy approach, with linguistic quantifiers (e.g. weak, moderate, strong) to which a reference value can be assigned (Cohen's [1988] effect sizes). The matrix-vector product in the different phases of the problem will generate an output vector that tends to converge. If the type of practice is placed as an input, and the financial and innovation performance are placed as outputs, we can test the impact of each practice on performance variables.

6.3 Results

To analyze the relationship between RL practices and business performance variables, we needed to take into account the complexity identified by the literature, both in the configuration of RL practices and in their relationship to business performance. FCM is well suited to modeling and simulating complex systems (Salmeron *et al.*, 2012), even in the case of small samples (Osoba and Kosko, 2019). Previous studies involving data analysis using FCMs have shown the need to evaluate the internal consistency of the measurement scales.

Appendix shows the Cronbach's alpha values for RL practices and performance variables. All measures present acceptable internal consistency values (Churchill, 1979; Nunnally, 1994), with the exception of the practices related to stakeholders. However, values of 0.5 and 0.6 can suffice for exploratory studies (Nunnally, 1994).

Using the FCMapper package for R (<https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=FCMapper>), we introduce the Pearson correlation matrix between practices and performance variables. The selected correlations indicated the causal relationships among any pair of concepts. Using Kosko's (1986) convergence criteria, the system reaches convergence in six iterations. Considered the combined strength of the effects of a practice on performance variables (outdegree index-OD), the convergence point shows that ethical values ($OD_{eth} = 1.1$) and societal orientation ($OD_{soc} = 0.8$) are the core practices that define a responsible leader in an SME restaurant. The practices related to power-sharing ($OD_{pow} = 0.6$), the environment ($OD_{env} = 0.5$) and stakeholder involvement ($OD_{stk} = 0.4$) present a lower, but still relevant, link to performance variables.

However, considering the total amount of effects received by each performance variable (indegree index-ID), the impact of responsible practices on innovation performance ($ID_{ip} = 2.2$) is higher than on financial performance ($ID_{fp} = 1.1$). Outdegree, indegree, and the sum of both (centrality) are shown in Table 4.

Figure 3 shows the strength of the relationships between each RL practice and both the financial and innovation performance of the restaurant. We place the more influential practices (societal orientation and ethics) on the left, and the less influential ones (stakeholder involvement, power-sharing and environmental orientation) on the right. The thickness of the lines reflects the degree of impact each practice has on performance variables. The relevance of the practices that reflect a societal orientation is mainly due to their impact on the innovation performance of the restaurant, while the ethical practices present relevance in both performance

variables. Concerning the practices with less outdegree, all of them show a greater impact on innovation performance than on financial performance.

In summary, the owner/manager panel confirmed the high degree of relevance of RL practices for both financial and innovation performance. The results show that differences in the relevance of the RL practices (ethical and societal values being more important) can be identified, that those practices have a greater impact on innovation performance, and that, for financial performance, the most important practices are those related to the ethical behavior of the leader.

7. Discussion of the results

RL is a highly topical research subject – indeed, most research on this theme has been published in just the past 12 years. It has acquired growing relevance due to its important role in strengthening business resilience (Salem *et al.*, 2021,2022; Tsui, 2020). Via a systematic literature review, we identified 25 distinct RL practices, that have been analyzed in sectors other than tourism – primarily, manufacturing, technology, services and medical

Table 4.
FCM concept indices

Concept	Outdegree	Indegree	Centrality
Societal orientation	0.8	0.0	0.8
Ethics	1.1	0.0	1.1
Stakeholder involvement	0.4	0.0	0.4
Power-sharing	0.6	0.0	0.6
Environment orientation	0.5	0.0	0.5
Financial performance	0.0	1.1	1.1
Innovation performance	0.0	2.2	2.2

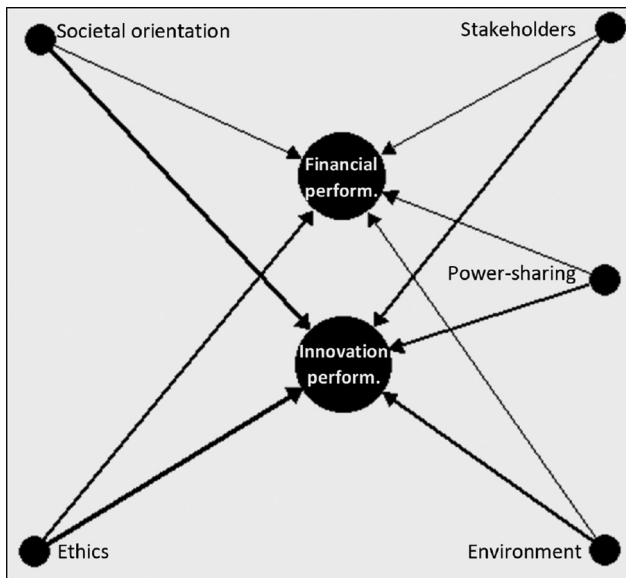


Figure 3.
Fuzzy map of relationships between RL practices and business performance

contexts (Antunes and Franco, 2016; Doh *et al.*, 2011; Mousa, 2018). This has left a lacuna in terms of a lack of RL practices proposed specifically for a sector with a high SME presence (e.g. restaurants), where the owner/manager is responsible for almost the entire strategic orientation of the firm and is the key figure active in relationship-building with its stakeholders.

In this sense, the recent literature review conducted by Arici *et al.* (2021) on leadership styles in hospitality points to a paucity of research into RL in this field. There are five RL practices that can be considered essential in the SME restaurant setting: societal orientation, ethics, stakeholder involvement, power-sharing and environmental orientation. These practices are the ones that attracted the greatest consensus among the panel of experts and are shown to make an impact on both financial performance and innovation performance. They are practices that focus on the local “impact” of the business (society and environment) rather than on the sustainable “growth” that is sought in industries such as automobile, lighting solutions and information technology (Agarwal and Bhal, 2020).

Furthermore, rather than showing a specific interest in each particular stakeholder (owners, customers, suppliers, neighbors, etc.) – a phenomenon identified by studies focused on large companies with more than 2,000 employees on average (Frisch and Huppenbauer, 2014) – in the case of SMEs, concern for the interests of stakeholders is approached from a more general perspective, seeking areas of *common* ground and not targeting practices at each of the publics individually).

Regarding employees, power-sharing practices were found to be essential in SME restaurants – a finding similar to the results obtained by De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2008) for SMEs in services, trade, repairs and so on. Finally, ethical behavior on the part of the leader is also identified as an essential practice in SMEs restaurants, a finding that echoes most of the literature, regardless of the sector and the size of the companies analyzed (Antunes and Franco, 2016; Koh *et al.*, 2018; Mousa, 2018, 2019b; Mousa and Puhakka, 2019; Voegtlin, 2016). In sum, the present results reflect the multidimensionality and complexity of RL (Scully, 2015), the need to adapt RL practices to the hospitality sector due to its particular characteristics (Freire and Gonçalves, 2021), and the positive impact on business performance of carrying out these practices (Salem *et al.*, 2021).

8. Conclusions, implications and limitations

The present study aims to identify the core RL practices that are most relevant to SME restaurants. To fulfill this aim, we applied an ESMM approach structured around three stages. In the first stage, the systematic literature review showed that RL involves taking a wider perspective than the more traditional leadership approaches. It considers the relationship between the leader and *all* the stakeholders of the business and includes a wide variety of managerial practices. In the second stage, we selected an expert panel of academics and practitioners, who selected the five core RL practices that they considered particularly pertinent for SME restaurants. These were: societal orientation, ethics, stakeholder involvement, power-sharing and environmental orientation. In the final stage of the study, using items proposed by the literature, a scale to measure the core RL practices was proposed and its internal consistency and criterion-validity tested among a sample of restaurant owners/managers. All five RL practices were found to be positively related to the financial and innovation performance of the restaurant.

RL is more concerned with the “why” of adopting certain practices – to conserve society and the environment, to secure stakeholders’ involvement and, particularly, employees’ collaboration – to be ethically driven and so on – and less concerned with the “how” (the specific behaviors to cultivate). In this sense, RL can be considered a higher-level, more all-

encompassing leadership that is more concerned with an outer perspective (that is, what people expect of the leader) than an inner or leader-centric perspective (what the leader sees fit to do).

In this study, we have focused on SMEs restaurants, where business size and the fact of being a service determine the particular RL practices that are most relevant, when compared to large manufacturing companies, for instance. What actions can a responsible leader in SME restaurants carry out under each of the five core practices we identified?

To be responsible leaders, the managers or owners of SME restaurants have to train employees on eco-friendly behavior and lifestyle, consider the consequences of environmental decisions for stakeholders and reduce the eco-impact of the service. Actions might include purchasing greener local produce; controlling pollution; implementing a recycling/reuse policy; saving water and energy; avoiding the use of hazardous materials; recycling fat, oil and grease; collecting and sorting waste; or donating leftovers to a charity, among others (Elkhwesky, 2022; Elkhwesky *et al.*, 2022c; Frisch and Huppenbauer, 2014; Jang and Zheng, 2020; Jang *et al.*, 2017).

Additionally, managers or owners of SME restaurants could demonstrate RL in their own practices, for example by actively supporting all employees who want to pursue further education, listening to employees' suggestions for improving the business, supporting all employees with dignity and respect; paying all employees a fair wage that recognizes and rewards their efforts; recognizing and rewarding employee effort (Cerchione and Bansal, 2020; Elkhwesky *et al.*, 2022c, 2018, 2019, 2021; Olya *et al.*, 2021). Furthermore, sustaining clear, honest, and ethical communication with all stakeholders is another means of improving relations with them and enhancing their involvement with the business.

Furthermore, owners or managers of SME restaurants could use RL principles and practices to improve the local environment by participating in different types of community activities and societal events. Enhancing the excellence of life of people in the local society by providing financial assistance (e.g. going to donate money to good causes); financially supporting education for local residents; organizing campaigns to boost healthy-eating education in schools, colleges and other community settings; critically appraising the restaurant's social impact; and incorporating supply chain management with corporate responsibility are examples of such actions (Elkhwesky *et al.*, 2022c; Jang and Zheng, 2020; Maynard *et al.*, 2020; Modica *et al.*, 2020; Shi and Tsai, 2020).

As noted by Elkhwesky *et al.* (2022b) and Muff *et al.* (2022), RL is a very young field of research with little sound data available. Pounder (2021) similarly recommended conducting further research on RL and its role during times of crisis. The present study therefore seeks to address this lacuna, and it holds important academic implications in three main respects:

- (1) it identifies the core RL practices for a key tourism service (SME restaurants);
- (2) it proposes and validates measurement scales for the most relevant RL practices in SME restaurants; and
- (3) it provides evidence of the impact of RL on business performance in SME restaurants.

The move toward formulating a shared understanding of what constitutes an RL practice is the cornerstone of constructing an RL theory (Haque *et al.*, 2021).

Looking ahead, and considering the potential for building RL theory into postgraduate training programs, the results of the present research point to the most pressing areas to address that will enable managers to attain the core RL competencies required by the tourism industry in the coming years. Better knowledge of those practices jointly referred-to

as RL will be of major importance in a world where these capacities are very much valued by citizens, civil society or even governments and, as a result, by tourism firms’ human resources departments.

Finally, the present study does have certain limitations that need to be considered. A typical drawback of qualitative research is a potential lack of generalizability, subjectivity and reliability. Nevertheless, the cross-validation we performed represents a good opportunity to acquire in-depth knowledge about the topic. Furthermore, future quantitative explanatory research could examine the impact of RL on product, financial, innovation and market performance among SMEs in general (Elkhwesky *et al.*, 2022a).

References

- Aboramadan, M., Turkmenoglu, M.A., Dahleez, K.A. and Cicek, B. (2020), “Narcissistic leadership and behavioral cynicism in the hotel industry: the role of employee silence and negative workplace gossiping”, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 33 No. 2, pp. 428-447, doi: [10.1108/IJCHM-04-2020-0348](https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-04-2020-0348).
- Abuelhassan, A.E. and AlGassim, A. (2022), “How organizational justice in the hospitality industry influences proactive customer service performance through general self-efficacy”, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 34 No. 7, doi: [10.1108/IJCHM-10-2021-1238](https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-10-2021-1238).
- Agarwal, S. and Bhal, K.T. (2020), “A multidimensional measure of responsible leadership: integrating strategy and ethics”, *Group and Organization Management*, Vol. 45 No. 5, doi: [10.59601120930140](https://doi.org/10.59601120930140).
- Albrecht, J.N., Haid, M., Finkler, W. and Heimerl, P. (2020), “What’s in a name? The meaning of sustainability to destination managers”, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, Vol. 30 No. 1, p. 20, doi: [10.1080/09669582.2020.1868483](https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2020.1868483).
- Alonso, A.D., Sakellarios, N., Jones, C., Cseh, L. and Cooper, S.J. (2016), “Value for money’ and the restaurant experience: a case study of supply and demand stakeholders”, *International Journal of Leisure and Tourism Marketing*, Vol. 5 No. 1, pp. 44-65.
- Antunes, A. and Franco, M. (2016), “How people in organizations make sense of responsible leadership practices: multiple case studies”, *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, Vol. 37 No. 1, pp. 126-152.
- Arici, H.E., Arici, N.C., Köseoglu, M.A. and King, B.E.M. (2021), “Leadership research in the root of hospitality scholarship: 1960–2020”, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 99, p. 103063.
- Avolio, B.J. and Gardner, W.L. (2005), “Authentic leadership development: getting to the root of positive forms of leadership”, *The Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 16 No. 3, pp. 315-338.
- Ayuso, S., Rodríguez, M.Á., García, C.R. and Ariño, M.Á. (2011), *Does Stakeholder Engagement Promote Sustainable Innovation Orientation? Industrial Management and Data Systems*, Vol. 111 No. 9, pp. 1399-1417.
- Balazs, K. (2002), “Take one entrepreneur: the recipe for success of France’s great chefs”, *European Management Journal*, Vol. 20 No. 3, pp. 247-259.
- Baldrige, D.C., Floyd, S.W. and Markóczy, L. (2004), “Are managers from Mars and academicians from Venus? Toward an understanding of the relationship between academic quality and practical relevance”, *Strategic Management Journal*, Vol. 25 No. 11, pp. 1063-1074.
- Batat, W. (2020), “How Michelin-starred chefs are being transformed into social bricoleurs? An online qualitative study of luxury foodservice during the pandemic crisis”, *Journal of Service Management*, Vol. 32 No. 1, pp. 87-99.

- Beck, T. and Demircug-Kunt, A. (2006), "Small and medium-size enterprises: access to finance as a growth constraint", *Journal of Banking and Finance*, Vol. 30 No. 11, pp. 2931-2943.
- Beck, T., Demircug-Kunt, A. and Levine, R. (2005), "SMEs, growth, and poverty: cross-country evidence", *Journal of Economic Growth*, Vol. 10 No. 3, pp. 199-229.
- Belk, R.W. (2007), *Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods in Marketing*, Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham.
- Belk, R.W., Fischer, E. and Kozinets, R.V. (2013), *Qualitative Consumer and Marketing Research*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Berman, E.A. (2017), "An exploratory sequential mixed methods approach to understanding researchers' data management practices at UVM: integrated findings to develop research data services", *Journal of eScience Librarianship*, Vol. 6 No. 1, doi: [10.7191/jeslib.2017.1104](https://doi.org/10.7191/jeslib.2017.1104).
- Bouchou, S.I., Wang, L. and Feroz, H.M.B. (2021), "How corporate social responsibility perceptions affect employees' positive behavior in the hospitality industry: moderating role of responsible leadership", *International Review on Public and Nonprofit Marketing*, pp. 1-34.
- Broch, F.F.M., Escrig, E.D., Gómez, R.C. and Alcamí, R.L. (2020), "Promoting firm innovativeness through servant leadership and corporate social responsibility to employees", *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, Vol. 41 No. 4, pp. 615-633.
- Cameron, K. (2011), "Responsible leadership as virtuous leadership", *Responsible Leadership*, Springer, Dordrecht, pp. 25-35.
- Cameron, K.S., Bright, D. and Caza, A. (2004), "Exploring the relationships between organizational virtuousness and performance", *American Behavioral Scientist*, Vol. 47 No. 6, pp. 766-790.
- Cerchione, R. and Bansal, H. (2020), "Measuring the impact of sustainability policy and practices in tourism and hospitality industry", *Business Strategy and the Environment*, Vol. 29 No. 3, pp. 1109-1126.
- Černe, M., Jaklič, M. and Škerlavaj, M. (2013), "Authentic leadership, creativity, and innovation: a multilevel perspective", *Leadership*, Vol. 9 No. 1, pp. 63-85.
- Cha, S.C. (2020), "Customers' intention to use robot-serviced restaurants in Korea: relationship of coolness and MCI factors", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 32 No. 9, pp. 2947-2968.
- Cheng, K., Wei, F. and Lin, Y. (2019), "The trickle-down effect of responsible leadership on unethical pro-organizational behavior: the moderating role of leader-follower value congruence", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 102, pp. 34-43.
- Chun, H.H. and Giebelhausen, M. (2012), "Reversing the green backlash in services: credible competitors help large companies go green", *Journal of Service Management*, Vol. 23 No. 3, pp. 400-415.
- Churchill, G.A. Jr. (1979), "A paradigm for developing better measures of marketing constructs", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 16 No. 1, pp. 64-73.
- Cohen, J. (1988), *Statistical Power Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences*, 2nd ed., Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Hillsdale, NJ.
- De Hoogh, A.H.B. and Den Hartog, D.N. (2008), "Ethical and despotic leadership, relationships with leader's social responsibility, top management team effectiveness and subordinates' optimism: a multi-method study", *The Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 19 No. 3, pp. 297-311.
- Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (1994), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Sage Publications.
- Doh, J.P. and Quigley, N.R. (2014), "Responsible leadership and stakeholder management: influence pathways and organizational outcomes", *Academy of Management Perspectives*, Vol. 28 No. 3, pp. 255-274.

- Doh, J.P., Stumpf, S.A. and Tymon, W.G. (2011), Jr “Responsible leadership helps retain talent in India”, in Pless, N.M. and Maak, T. (Eds), *Responsible Leadership*, pp. 85-100, Springer, Dordrecht, doi: [10.1007/978-94-007-3995-6_8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-3995-6_8).
- Elbaz, A.M. and Haddoud, M.Y. (2017), “The role of wisdom leadership in increasing job performance: evidence from the Egyptian tourism sector”, *Tourism Management*, Vol. 63, pp. 66-76.
- Elkhwesky, Z. (2022), “A systematic and major review of proactive environmental strategies in hospitality and tourism: looking back for moving forward”, *Business Strategy and the Environment*, doi: [10.1002/bse.3076](https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.3076).
- Elkhwesky, Z., Salem, I.E. and Barakat, M. (2018), “Age diversity management in five-star hotels: importance-implementation analysis”, *Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol. 20, pp. 74-88.
- Elkhwesky, Z., Salem, I.E. and Barakat, M. (2019), “Diversity management in hotels: the moderating role of empowerment and capability development”, *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*, Vol. 2 No. 2, pp. 166-185.
- Elkhwesky, Z., Salem, I.E. and Barakat, M. (2021), “Importance-implementation of disability management practices in hotels: the moderating effect of team orientation”, *Journal of Mediterranean Tourism Research*, Vol. 1 No. 1, pp. 22-38.
- Elkhwesky, Z., Castañeda-García, J.A., Abuelhassan, A.E. and Tag-Eldeen, A. (2022a), “A systematic and critical review of restaurants’ business performance: future directions for theory and practice”, *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, doi: [10.1177/14673584221104983](https://doi.org/10.1177/14673584221104983).
- Elkhwesky, Z., Salem, I.E., Ramkissoon, H. and Castañeda-García, J.A. (2022b), “A systematic and critical review of leadership styles in contemporary hospitality: a roadmap and a call for future research”, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 34 No. 5, pp. 1925-1958, doi: [10.1108/IJCHM-09-2021-1128](https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-09-2021-1128).
- Elkhwesky, Z., Salem, I.E., Varmus, M. and Ramkissoon, H. (2022c), “Sustainable practices in hospitality pre and amid COVID-19 pandemic: looking back for moving forward post-COVID-19”, *Sustainable Development*, doi: [10.1002/sd.2304](https://doi.org/10.1002/sd.2304).
- Endrissat, N. and von Arx, W. (2013), “Leadership practices and context: two sides of the same coin”, *Leadership*, Vol. 9 No. 2, pp. 278-304.
- Eriksen, M. and Cooper, K. (2018), “On developing responsible leaders”, *Journal of Management Development*, Vol. 37 No. 6, pp. 470-479.
- Fleming, R.S. (2022), “Crisis preparedness as a sustainability strategy”, in *Innovative Leadership in Times of Compelling Changes*, Springer, Cham, pp. 251-264.
- Frangieh, C.G. and Yaacoub, H.K. (2017), “A systematic literature review of responsible leadership: challenges, outcomes and practices”, *Journal of Global Responsibility*, Vol. 8 No. 2, pp. 281-299.
- Friend, S.B., Jaramillo, F. and Johnson, J.S. (2020), “Ethical climate at the frontline: a Meta-analytic evaluation”, *Journal of Service Research*, Vol. 23 No. 2, pp. 116-138.
- Frisch, C. and Huppenbauer, M. (2014), “New insights into ethical leadership: a qualitative investigation of the experiences of executive ethical leaders”, *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 123 No. 1, pp. 23-43.
- García, R.C. (2019), “Sustainability indicators of a small restaurant business: a case of a coffee shop in Thailand”, available at: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3418787> or doi: [10.2139/ssrn.3418787](https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3418787).
- García-Morales, V.J., Jiménez-Barrionuevo, M.M. and Gutiérrez-Gutiérrez, L. (2012), “Transformational leadership influence on organizational performance through organizational learning and innovation”, *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 65 No. 7, pp. 1040-1050.
- Gatling, A., Kang, H.J.A. and Kim, J.S. (2016), “The effects of authentic leadership and organizational commitment on turnover intention”, *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, Vol. 37 No. 2, pp. 181-199.

- Giorgi, A. (1989), "One type of analysis of descriptive data: procedures involved in following a phenomenological psychological method", *Methods*, Vol. 1 No. 3, pp. 39-61.
- Giorgi, A. and Giorgi, B. (2017), "The descriptive phenomenological psychological model", in *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research in Psychology*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA, pp. 176-192.
- Grech, P. and Grech, R. (2021), "Stroke knowledge: developing a framework for data integration in a sequential exploratory mixed method study", *Research Methods in Medicine and Health Sciences*, Vol. 2 No. 2, pp. 68-81.
- Greene, J.C. (2007), *Mixed Methods in Social Inquiry*, Vol. 9, John Wiley and Sons.
- Gunday, G., Ulusoy, G., Kilic, K. and Alpkan, L. (2011), "Effects of innovation types on firm performance", *International Journal of Production Economics*, Vol. 133 No. 2, pp. 662-676.
- Gusenbauer, M. and Haddaway, N.R. (2020), "Which academic search systems are suitable for systematic reviews or meta-analyses? Evaluating retrieval qualities of google scholar, PubMed, and 26 other resources", *Research Synthesis Methods*, Vol. 11 No. 2, pp. 181-217.
- Han, Z., Wang, Q. and Yan, X. (2019), "How responsible leadership motivates employees to engage in organizational citizenship behavior for the environment: a double-mediation model", *Sustainability*, Vol. 11 No. 3, p. 605.
- Haque, A., Fernando, M. and Caputi, P. (2019), "The relationship between responsible leadership and organisational commitment and the mediating effect of employee turnover intentions: an empirical study with Australian employees", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 156 No. 3, pp. 759-774.
- Haque, A., Fernando, M. and Caputi, P. (2021), "Responsible leadership and employee outcomes: a systematic literature review, integration and propositions", *Asia-Pacific Journal of Business Administration*, Vol. 13 No. 3, pp. 383-408, doi: [10.1108/APJBA-11-2019-0243](https://doi.org/10.1108/APJBA-11-2019-0243).
- Hassi, A. (2019), "Empowering leadership and management innovation in the hospitality industry context: the mediating role of climate for creativity", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 31 No. 4, pp. 1785-1800.
- Herhausen, D., De Luca, L.M., Miceli, G.N., Morgan, R.E. and Schoegel, M. (2017), "When does customer-oriented leadership pay off? An investigation of frontstage and backstage service teams", *Journal of Service Research*, Vol. 20 No. 4, pp. 409-425, doi: [10.1108/JSE-08-2020-0288](https://doi.org/10.1108/JSE-08-2020-0288).
- Huang, J., Li, W., Qiu, C., Yim, F.H.K. and Wan, J. (2016), "The impact of CEO servant leadership on firm performance in the hospitality industry", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 28 No. 5, pp. 945-968.
- Huertas-Valdivia, I., González-Torres, T. and Nájera-Sánchez, J.J. (2022), "Contemporary leadership in hospitality: a review and research agenda", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 34 No. 6, doi: [10.1108/IJCHM-05-2021-0658](https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-05-2021-0658).
- Iaquinto, A. (2014), "Sustainable practices among independently owned restaurants in Japan", *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, Vol. 17 No. 2, pp. 147-159.
- Jaén, M.H., Reficco, E. and Berger, G. (2020), "Does integrity matter in BOP ventures? The role of responsible leadership in inclusive supply chains", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 173, pp. 1-22.
- Jang, Y.J. and Zheng, T. (2020), "Assessment of the environmental sustainability of restaurants in the US: the effects of restaurant characteristics on environmental sustainability performance", *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, Vol. 23 No. 2, pp. 133-148.
- Jang, Y.J., Zheng, T. and Bosselman, R. (2017), "Top managers' environmental values, leadership, and stakeholder engagement in promoting environmental sustainability in the restaurant industry", *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 63, pp. 101-111.
- Javed, M., Ali, H.Y., Asrar-ul-Haq, M., Ali, M. and Kirmani, S.A.A. (2020a), "Responsible leadership and triple-bottom-line performance: do corporate reputation and innovation mediate this relationship?", *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, Vol. 41 No. 4, pp. 501-517.

- Javed, M., Rashid, M.A., Hussain, G. and Ali, H.Y. (2020b), “The effects of corporate social responsibility on corporate reputation and firm financial performance: moderating role of responsible leadership”, *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, Vol. 27 No. 3, pp. 1395-1409.
- Jiang, W., Wang, A.X., Zhou, K.Z. and Zhang, C. (2019), “Stakeholder relationship capability and firm innovation: a contingent analysis”, *Journal of Business Ethics*, pp. 1-15.
- Kasim, A. and Ismail, A. (2012), “Environmentally friendly practices among restaurants: drivers and barriers to change”, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, Vol. 20 No. 4, pp. 551-570.
- Kaya, B. and Karatepe, O.M. (2020), “Does servant leadership better explain work engagement, career satisfaction and adaptive performance than authentic leadership?”, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 32 No. 6, pp. 2075-2095, doi: [10.1108/IJCHM-05-2019-0438](https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-05-2019-0438).
- Ketchen, D.J., Jr. and Craighead, C.W. (2020), “Research at the intersection of entrepreneurship, supply chain management, and strategic management: opportunities highlighted by COVID-19”, *Journal of Management*, Vol. 46 No. 8, pp. 1330-1341.
- Kim, W.G. and Brymer, R.A. (2011), “The effects of ethical leadership on manager job satisfaction, commitment, behavioral outcomes, and firm performance”, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 30 No. 4, pp. 1020-1026.
- Kim, J.J., Kim, I. and Hwang, J. (2021), “A change of perceived innovativeness for contactless food delivery services using drones after the outbreak of COVID-19”, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 93, p. 102758.
- Kim, K.H., Kim, M. and Qian, C. (2018), “Effects of corporate social responsibility on corporate financial performance: a competitive-action perspective”, *Journal of Management*, Vol. 44 No. 3, pp. 1097-1118.
- Koh, C., Fernando, M. and Spedding, T. (2018), “Exercising responsible leadership in a Singapore context”, *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, Vol. 39 No. 1, pp. 34-50.
- Kosko, B. (1986), “Fuzzy cognitive maps”, *International Journal of Man-Machine Studies*, Vol. 24 No. 1, pp. 65-75.
- Kozmal, H. and El-Monem, A. (2018), “Corporate social responsibility in quick service restaurants: an exploratory study of social responsibility activities applied in global and local restaurant chains in Egypt”, *International Journal of Heritage, Tourism and Hospitality*, Vol. 12 No. 3, pp. 94-108.
- Kužnin, M. and Walker, J.K. (2017), “Contemporary leadership challenges in hospitality organizations in times of uncertainty and change”, In *DIEM: Dubrovnik International Economic Meeting*, Vol. 3 No. 1, pp. 455-468, Sveučilište u Dubrovniku.
- Kvale, S. (2008), *Doing Interviews*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Lawless, H.T. and Heymann, H. (1999), “Sensory evaluation of food”, in *Qualitative Consumer Research Methods*, Emerald Publishing, Bingley, doi: [10.1007/978-1-4615-7843-7_15](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4615-7843-7_15).
- Lebas, M.J. (1995), “Performance measurement and performance management”, *International Journal of Production Economics*, Vol. 41 No. 1-3, pp. 23-35.
- Lee, S. and Heo, C.Y. (2009), “Corporate social responsibility and customer satisfaction among US publicly traded hotels and restaurants”, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 28 No. 4, pp. 635-637.
- Liao, Z. and Zhang, M. (2020), “The influence of responsible leadership on environmental innovation and environmental performance: the moderating role of managerial discretion”, *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, Vol. 27 No. 5, doi: [10.1002/csr.1942](https://doi.org/10.1002/csr.1942).
- Lin, M.S. and Chung, Y.K. (2019), “Understanding the impacts of corporate social responsibility and brand attributes on brand equity in the restaurant industry”, *Tourism Economics*, Vol. 25 No. 4, pp. 639-658.

- Liu, C.M. and Lin, C.P. (2018), "Assessing the effects of responsible leadership and ethical conflict on behavioral intention", *Review of Managerial Science*, Vol. 12 No. 4, pp. 1003-1024.
- Li, J., Xia, J. and Zajac, E.J. (2018), "On the duality of political and economic stakeholder influence on firm innovation performance: theory and evidence from Chinese firms", *Strategic Management Journal*, Vol. 39 No. 1, pp. 193-216.
- Li, B., Zhong, Y., Zhang, T. and Hua, N. (2021), "Transcending the COVID-19 crisis: business resilience and innovation of the restaurant industry in China", *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, Vol. 49, pp. 44-53.
- Luo, X. and Du, S. (2015), "Exploring the relationship between corporate social responsibility and firm innovation", *Marketing Letters*, Vol. 26 No. 4, pp. 703-714.
- Luu, T.T. (2021), "Reducing unethical pro-organizational behavior in the hospitality sector through socially responsible human resource practices and responsible leadership", *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, pp. 1-29.
- Lynham, S.A. and Chermack, T.J. (2006), "Responsible leadership for performance: a theoretical model and hypotheses", *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*, Vol. 12 No. 4, pp. 73-88.
- Maak, T. (2007), "Responsible leadership, stakeholder engagement, and the emergence of social capital", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 74 No. 4, pp. 329-343.
- Maak, T. and Pless, N.M. (2006), "Responsible leadership in a stakeholder society: a relational perspective", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 66 No. 1, pp. 99-115.
- Magrizos, S., Apospori, E., Carrigan, M. and Jones, R. (2021), "Is CSR the panacea for SMEs? A study of socially responsible SMEs during economic crisis", *European Management Journal*, Vol. 39 No. 2, pp. 291-303.
- Mantikei, B., Christa, U.R., Sintani, L. and Negara, D.J. (2020), "The role of responsible leadership in determining the triple-bottom-line performance of the Indonesian tourist industry", *Contemporary Economics*, Vol. 14 No. 4, pp. 463-474.
- Marques, T.M.G. and Gomes, J.F.S. (2020), "Responsible leadership and/versus responsible management", in Laasch, O., Suddaby, R., Freeman, R.E. and Jamali D. (Eds), *Research Handbook of Responsible Management*, Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 138-154, doi: [10.4337/9781788971966.00017](https://doi.org/10.4337/9781788971966.00017).
- Mattila, A.S. and Hanks, L. (2012), "Antecedents to participation in corporate social responsibility programs", *Journal of Service Management*, Vol. 23 No. 5, pp. 664-676.
- Maynard, D.D.C., Zandonadi, R.P., Nakano, E.Y. and Botelho, R.B.A. (2020), "Sustainability indicators in restaurants: the development of a checklist", *Sustainability*, Vol. 12 No. 10, p. 4076.
- Modica, P.D., Altinay, L., Farmaki, A., Gursoy, D. and Zenga, M. (2020), "Consumer perceptions towards sustainable supply chain practices in the hospitality industry", *Current Issues in Tourism*, Vol. 23 No. 3, pp. 358-375.
- Mousa, M. (2017), "Responsible leadership and organizational commitment among physicians: can inclusive diversity climate enhance the relationship?", *Journal of Intercultural Management*, Vol. 9 No. 2, pp. 103-141.
- Mousa, M. (2018), "Inspiring work-life balance: responsible leadership among female pharmacists in the Egyptian health sector", *Entrepreneurial Business and Economics Review*, Vol. 6 No. 1, pp. 71-90.
- Mousa, M. (2019a), "Responsible leadership, diversity and organizational commitment: a study from Egypt", *International Journal of Emerging Markets*, doi: [10.1108/IJoEM-06-2017-0217](https://doi.org/10.1108/IJoEM-06-2017-0217).
- Mousa, M. (2019b), "Organizational inclusion and academics' psychological contract", *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, Vol. 39 No. 2, pp. 126-144.
- Mousa, M. and Ayoubi, R.M. (2019), "Inclusive/exclusive talent management, responsible leadership and organizational downsizing", *Journal of Management Development*, Vol. 38 No. 2, pp. 87-104.

- Mousa, M. and Puhakka, V. (2019), “Inspiring organizational commitment: responsible leadership and organizational inclusion in the Egyptian health care sector”, *Journal of Management Development*, Vol. 38 No. 3, pp. 208-224.
- Mousa, M., Puhakka, V. and Abdelgaffar, H.A. (2019), “Climate change, responsible leadership and organizational commitment”, *Management of Environmental Quality: An International Journal*, Vol. 30 No. 5, pp. 945-962.
- Muff, K., Delacoste, C. and Dyllick, T. (2022), “Responsible leadership competencies in leaders around the world: assessing stakeholder engagement, ethics and values, systems thinking and innovation competencies in leaders around the world”, *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, Vol. 29 No. 1, pp. 273-292.
- Naranjo-Valencia, J.C., Jiménez-Jiménez, D. and Sanz-Valle, R. (2011), “Innovation or imitation? The role of organizational culture”, *Management Decision*, Vol. 49 No. 1, pp. 55-72.
- Nejati, M. and Amran, A. (2009), “Corporate social responsibility and SMEs: exploratory study on motivations from a Malaysian perspective”, *Business Strategy Series*, Vol. 10 No. 5, pp. 259-265, doi: [10.1108/17515630910989150](https://doi.org/10.1108/17515630910989150).
- Ng, T.W.H. (2017), “Transformational leadership and performance outcomes: analyses of multiple mediation pathways”, *The Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 28 No. 3, pp. 385-417.
- Nunnally, J.C. (1994), *Psychometric Theory 3E*, Tata McGraw-Hill Education.
- Olya, H., Altınay, L., Farmaki, A., Kenebayeva, A. and Gursoy, D. (2021), “Hotels’ sustainability practices and guests’ familiarity, attitudes and behaviours”, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, Vol. 29 No. 7, pp. 1063-1081.
- Osoba, O. and Kosko, B. (2019), “Causal modeling with feedback fuzzy cognitive maps”, *Social – Behavioral Modeling for Complex Systems*, pp. 587-615.
- Othman, N.A., Simpong, D.B., Razak, N., Abd, F., Saidi, N.A., Samengon, H. and Ahmad, G. (2021), “Sustainable food waste practice among small medium enterprise (SME) restaurant operators in peninsular Malaysia”, *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Business and Government*, Vol. 27 No. 1, pp. 3507-3516.
- Ozdemir, S., Kandemir, D., Eng, T.Y. and Gupta, S. (2019), “Vertical stakeholder collaborations for firm innovativeness in new product development: the moderating roles of legal bonds and operational linkages”, *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 119, doi: [10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.08.014](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.08.014).
- Pamfilie, R., Petcu, A.J. and Draghici, M. (2012), “The importance of leadership in driving a strategic lean six sigma management”, *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 58, pp. 187-196.
- Paraschiv, D.M., Nemoianu, E.L., Langă, C.A. and Szabó, T. (2012), “Eco-innovation, responsible leadership and organizational change for corporate sustainability”, *Amfiteatru Economic Journal*, Vol. 14 No. 32, pp. 404-419.
- Park, S.Y. and Lee, S. (2009), “Financial rewards for social responsibility: a mixed picture for restaurant companies”, *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, Vol. 50 No. 2, pp. 168-179.
- Pickering, C. and Byrne, J. (2014), “The benefits of publishing systematic quantitative literature reviews for PhD candidates and other early-career researchers”, *Higher Education Research and Development*, Vol. 33 No. 3, pp. 534-548.
- Pless, N.M. and Maak, T. (2011), “Responsible leadership: pathways to the future”, In *Responsible Leadership*, Springer, Dordrecht, pp. 3-13, doi: [10.1007/978-94-007-3995-6_2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-3995-6_2).
- Pless, N.M., Sengupta, A., Wheeler, M.A. and Maak, T. (2021), “Responsible leadership and the reflective CEO: resolving stakeholder conflict by imagining what could be done”, *Journal of Business Ethics*, pp. 1-25.
- Pounder, P. (2021), “Responsible leadership and COVID-19: small island making big waves in cruise tourism”, *International Journal of Public Leadership*, Vol. 17 No. 1, pp. 118-131, doi: [10.1108/IJPL-08-2020-0085](https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPL-08-2020-0085).

- Prilleltensky, I. (2000), "Value-based leadership in organizations: balancing values, interests, and power among citizens, workers, and leaders", *Ethics and Behavior*, Vol. 10 No. 2, pp. 139-158.
- Putra, E.D. and Cho, S. (2019), "Characteristics of small business leadership from employees' perspective: a qualitative study", *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 78, pp. 36-46.
- Raab, C., Baloglu, S. and Chen, Y.S. (2018), "Restaurant managers' adoption of sustainable practices: an application of institutional theory and theory of planned behavior", *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, Vol. 21 No. 2, pp. 154-171.
- Radwan, H.R.I., Jones, E. and Minoli, D. (2010), "Managing solid waste in small hotels", *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, Vol. 18 No. 2, pp. 175-190.
- Rettie, R., Robinson, H., Radke, A. and Ye, X. (2008), "CAQDAS: a supplementary tool for qualitative market research", *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, Vol. 11 No. 1, pp. 76-88.
- Rijnierse, J.G.A. (1992), "Leading the largest catering firm in Holland: a matter of character", *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, Vol. 3 No. 2, pp. 23-29.
- Rothfelder, K., Ottenbacher, M.C. and Harrington, R.J. (2012), "The impact of transformational, transactional and non-leadership styles on employee job satisfaction in the German hospitality industry", *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, Vol. 12 No. 4, pp. 201-214.
- Rui, Z. and Lu, Y. (2020), "Stakeholder pressure, corporate environmental ethics and green innovation", *Asian Journal of Technology Innovation*, Vol. 29 No. 1, p. 17, doi: [10.1080/19761597.2020.1783563](https://doi.org/10.1080/19761597.2020.1783563).
- Saldaña, J. (2009), *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Saleem, F., Zhang, Y.Z., Gopinath, C. and Adeel, A. (2020), "Impact of servant leadership on performance: the mediating role of affective and cognitive trust", *SAGE Open*, Vol. 10 No. 1, doi: [2158244019900562](https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019900562).
- Salem, I.E.B. (2015), "Transformational leadership: relationship to job stress and job burnout in five-star hotels", *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, Vol. 15 No. 4, pp. 240-253.
- Salem, I.E., Elkhwesky, Z. and Ramkissoon, H. (2022), "A content analysis for government's and hotels' response to COVID-19 pandemic in Egypt", *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, Vol. 22 No. 1, pp. 42-59.
- Salem, I.E., Elbaz, A.M., Elkhwesky, Z. and Ghazi, K.M. (2021), "The COVID-19 pandemic: the mitigating role of government and hotel support of hotel employees in Egypt", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 85, p. 104305, doi: [10.1016/j.tourman.2021.104305](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2021.104305).
- Salmeron, J.L., Vidal, R. and Mena, A. (2012), "Ranking fuzzy cognitive map based scenarios with TOPSIS", *Expert Systems with Applications*, Vol. 39 No. 3, pp. 2443-2450.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2007), *Research Methods for Business Students*, 4th Edition. Financial Times Prentice Hall, Edinburgh Gate, Harlow.
- Schubert, F., Kandampully, J., Solnet, D. and Kralj, A. (2010), "Exploring consumer perceptions of green restaurants in the US", *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, Vol. 10 No. 4, pp. 286-300.
- Schuckert, M., Kim, T.T., Paek, S. and Lee, G. (2018), "Motivate to innovate: how authentic and transformational leaders influence employees' psychological capital and service innovation behavior", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 30 No. 2, pp. 776-796.
- Scully, N.J. (2015), "Leadership in nursing: the importance of recognising inherent values and attributes to secure a positive future for the profession", *Collegian*, Vol. 22 No. 4, pp. 439-444.
- Shi, Y. and Tsai, K.H. (2020), "Linking stakeholder integration to sustainability performance in the hotel context", *International Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol. 22 No. 5, pp. 677-691.
- Stone-Johnson, C. (2014), "Responsible leadership", *Educational Administration Quarterly*, Vol. 50 No. 4, pp. 645-674.

- Swimberghe, K.R. and Wooldridge, B.R. (2014), “Drivers of customer relationships in quick-service restaurants: the role of corporate social responsibility”, *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, Vol. 55 No. 4, pp. 354-364.
- Szczepańska-Woszczyna, K., Dacko-Pikiewicz, Z. and Lis, M. (2015), “Responsible leadership: a real need or transient curiosity”, *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 213, pp. 546-551.
- Székely, F. and Knirsch, M. (2005), “Responsible leadership and corporate social responsibility: metrics for sustainable performance”, *European Management Journal*, Vol. 23 No. 6, pp. 628-647.
- Tamajón, L.G. and Font, X. (2013), “Corporate social responsibility in tourism small and medium enterprises evidence from Europe and Latin America”, *Tourism Management Perspectives*, Vol. 7, pp. 38-46.
- Thrash, A.B. (2009), “Leadership in higher education: an analysis of the leadership styles of academic deans in Ohio’s 13 state-supported universities”, doctoral dissertation, Capella University, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.
- Tian, H. and Suo, D. (2021), “The trickle-down effect of responsible leadership on employees’ Pro-environmental behaviors: evidence from the hotel industry in China”, *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, Vol. 18 No. 21, p. 11677.
- Tsui, A.S. (2019), “Responsible research and responsible leadership studies”, *Academy of Management Discoveries*, Vol. 7 No. 2, pp. 166-170, Guidepost, doi: [10.5465/amd.2019.0244](https://doi.org/10.5465/amd.2019.0244).
- Tsui, A. (2020), “COVID-19 crisis: a call for responsible leadership research”, *Responsible Research in Business and Management*, available at: <https://blog.efmdglobal.org/2020/05/04/covid-19-crisis-a-call-for-responsible-leadership-research/>
- Tymon, W.G., Jr, Stumpf, S.A. and Doh, J.P. (2010), “Exploring talent management in India: the neglected role of intrinsic rewards”, *Journal of World Business*, Vol. 45 No. 2, pp. 109-121.
- Uzarski, D. and Broome, M.E. (2019), “A leadership framework for implementation of an organization’s strategic plan”, *Journal of Professional Nursing*, Vol. 35 No. 1, pp. 12-17.
- Välakangas, L. and Li, P.P. (2020), “Resilience, resilience, resilience”, *Management and Organization Review*, Vol. 16 No. 2, pp. 225-227.
- Varum, C.A. and Rocha, V.C. (2013), “Employment and SMEs during crises”, *Small Business Economics*, Vol. 40 No. 1, pp. 9-25.
- Voegtlin, C. (2011), “Development of a scale measuring discursive responsible leadership”, in Pless and N.M. and Maak T. (Eds), *Responsible Leadership*, Springer, Dordrecht pp. 57-73, doi:[10.1007/978-94-007-3995-6_6](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-3995-6_6).
- Voegtlin, C. (2016), “What does it mean to be responsible? Addressing the missing responsibility dimension in ethical leadership research”, *Leadership*, Vol. 12 No. 5, pp. 581-608.
- Voegtlin, C. and Patzer, M. (2020), “11 Responsible global leaders as drivers of responsible innovation”, in Mendenhall, M.E. Žilinskaite, M., Stahl, G.K. and Clapp-Smith, R. (Eds), *Responsible Global Leadership: Dilemmas, Paradoxes, and Opportunities*, Routledge, New York, NY, pp. 203-218.
- Voegtlin, C., Patzer, M. and Scherer, A.G. (2012), “Responsible leadership in global business: a new approach to leadership and its multi-level outcomes”, *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 105 No. 1, pp. 1-16.
- Wahab, S., Rahmat, A., Yusof, M.S. and Mohamed, B. (2016), “Organization performance and leadership style: issues in education service”, *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 224, pp. 593-598.
- Waldman, D.A., Siegel, D.S. and Stahl, G.K. (2020), “Defining the socially responsible leader: revisiting issues in responsible leadership”, *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*, Vol. 27 No. 1, pp. 5-20.
- Wang, S., Huang, W., Gao, Y., Ansett, S. and Xu, S. (2015), “Can socially responsible leaders drive Chinese firm performance?” *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, Vol. 36 No. 4, pp. 435-450.

- Wellton, L. and Lainpelto, J. (2021), "The intertwining of professional knowledge culture, leadership practices and sustainability in the restaurant industry", *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, Vol. 21 No. 5, pp. 550-566.
- Witt, M.A. and Stahl, G.K. (2016), "Foundations of responsible leadership: Asian versus Western executive responsibility orientations toward key stakeholders", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 136 No. 3, pp. 623-638.
- Zach, F. (2016), "Collaboration for innovation in tourism organizations: leadership support, innovation formality, and communication", *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*, Vol. 40 No. 3, pp. 271-290.
- Zhang, J., Xie, C., Wang, J., Morrison, A.M. and Coca-Stefaniak, J.A. (2020), "Responding to a major global crisis: the effects of hotel safety leadership on employee safety behavior during COVID-19", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 32 No. 11, pp. 3365-3389.
- Zhao, H. and Zhou, Q. (2019), "Exploring the impact of responsible leadership on organizational citizenship behavior for the environment: a leadership identity perspective", *Sustainability*, Vol. 11 No. 4, p. 944.
- Zhu, X., Turney, P., Lemire, D. and Vellino, A. (2015), "Measuring academic influence: not all citations are equal", *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, Vol. 66 No. 2, pp. 408-427.

Further reading

- Ahmad, N.H., Amran, A. and Halim, H.A. (2012), "Ethical and socially responsible practices among SME owner-managers: proposing a multi-ethnic assessment", *The Journal of Southeast Asian Research*, pp. 1-9, doi: [10.5171/2012.258185](https://doi.org/10.5171/2012.258185).
- Ma, Y. and Lin, S. (2010), "Credit crunch' and small- and medium-sized enterprises: aspects affecting survival", *Journal of Financial Services Marketing*, Vol. 14 No. 4, pp. 290-300.
- Szczepańska-Woszczyzna, K. (2015), "Responsible leadership contribution to human resource management: a study of CSR-HR interface", *Procedia Economics and Finance*, Vol. 34, pp. 403-409.

Appendix

“Responsible leadership” practices

Responsible leadership practices

Please indicate your degree of agreement with the following statements in relation to your role in charge of the restaurant^a:

	Reference	Cronbach's alpha
<i>Societal orientation</i>		
Soc1.I engage in charitable work	Frisch and Huppenbauer (2014)	0.72
Soc2.I offer professional training for graduates		
Soc3.I offer jobs to socially disadvantaged people		
Soc4.I take an active role in my community	Doh <i>et al.</i> (2011)	
Soc5.I tend to care about public-related aspects like education, health and poverty	Mousa (2017; 2019a)	
<i>Ethics</i>		
Ethic1. I am sincere when dealing with internal and external stakeholders	Antunes and Franco (2016)	0.89
Ethic2.I communicate fairly and honestly	Frisch and Huppenbauer (2014)	
Ethic3.I tend to take actions that are ethical	De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2008)	
<i>Stakeholder involvement</i>		
Stak1.I involve in-and-out of organization's viewpoints when making a decision	Mousa (2018)	0.59
Stak2.I have long-lasting relationships with various stakeholders		
Stak3.I respond well to a diverse group of stakeholders	Doh <i>et al.</i> (2011)	
Stak4.I take corporate social responsibility seriously (e.g. have a clear policy that reflects a commitment to one or more social causes)		
<i>Power-sharing</i>		
Power1. I reconsider decisions on the basis of recommendations by those who report to me	De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2008)	0.80
Power2. I delegate challenging responsibilities to subordinates		
Power3. I seek advice concerning organizational strategy from subordinates		
<i>Environmental orientation</i>		
Envir1. I train employees in eco-friendly behavior and lifestyle	Frisch and Huppenbauer (2014)	0.94
Envir2. I am aware of key stakeholder demands related to environmental problems	Jang <i>et al.</i> (2017)	
Envir3. I consider the consequences of environmental decisions for the key stakeholders		

(continued)

Table A1.
Scales to measure RL practices and business performance

	Reference	Cronbach's alpha
Business performance How do you rate the following performance indicators for your business? ^b		
<i>Financial performance</i>		
FinP1. Return on assets (profit/total assets)	Gunday <i>et al.</i> (2011)	0.85
FinP2. General profitability of the firm		
FinP3. Return on sales (profit/total sales)		
FinP4. Cash flow excluding investments		
<i>Innovation performance</i>		
InnP1. Renewing the administrative system and the mindset in line with firm's environment	Gunday <i>et al.</i> (2011)	0.70
InnP2. Innovations introduced for work processes and methods		
InnP3. Quality of new products and services introduced		
InnP4. Percentage of new dishes in the restaurant's offer		
Note: ^a Five-point Likert scale (1-strongly disagree; 5-strongly agree). ^b Five-point semantic differential scale (1- extremely unsuccessful; 5-extremely successful)		

Table A1.

About the authors

José Alberto Castañeda García is Professor at the Department of Marketing and Market Research, University of Granada, Spain. He has published articles in journals such as *Tourism Management*, *Tourism Management Perspectives*, *Journal of Travel Research*, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *Internet Research*, *Information & Management and Online Information Review*. José Alberto Castañeda García is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: jalberto@ugr.es

Juan Miguel Rey Pino is a social marketing researcher and qualitative methods expert. He has published in journals like *Tobacco Control*, *Gaceta Sanitaria*, *Biomass & Bioenergy*, *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, *Safety Science* and *Journal of Travel Research*.

Zakaria Elkhwesky is a PhD candidate and an Assistant Lecturer of Hotel Management, Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Alexandria University. He has been awarded a fully funded governmental scholarship at the Department of Management Theories, University of Žilina, Slovakia (2021–2022). He has also obtained a fully funded pre-doctoral stay at the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, University of Granada, Spain (Erasmus+) (2019). He has published a series of research in leading journals such as *Business Strategy and the Environment*, *Tourism Management*, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights and Sustainable Development*.

Islam Elbayoumi Salem is Associate Professor at the Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Alexandria University and University of Technology and Applied Sciences, Oman. He has published papers in scholarly journals, such as *Tourism Management*, *International Journal of Hospitality Management* and *Tourism Management Perspectives*.

For instructions on how to order reprints of this article, please visit our website:

www.emeraldgroupublishing.com/licensing/reprints.htm

Or contact us for further details: permissions@emeraldinsight.com