

How can Awareness Enhance Leadership Effectiveness in Organizations

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ABSTRACT

Leadership plays a strategic role in determining organizational effectiveness. Amid increasingly complex and dynamic organizational environments, awareness leadership has emerged as a contemporary leadership approach that emphasizes self-awareness, empathy, ethical consciousness, and meaningfulness in leadership practices. This study aims to examine the extent to which awareness leadership contributes to organizational effectiveness, particularly in fostering a healthy, productive, and sustainable work culture. A Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method was employed to synthesize and analyze relevant peer-reviewed studies published in reputable international journals. The findings indicate that awareness leadership has a significant and positive influence on organizational effectiveness through several interrelated mechanisms. First, it enhances leaders' self-awareness regarding organizational vision, values, and strategic goals, enabling more reflective, ethical, and aligned decision-making. Second, awareness leadership strengthens interpersonal relationships by promoting empathy, authentic communication, trust, and collaboration, which in turn improve employee engagement, psychological safety, and organizational commitment. Third, this leadership approach facilitates the development of an adaptive, inclusive, and sustainability-oriented organizational culture that supports continuous learning, innovation, and long-term resilience. The review also reveals that empirical research on awareness leadership remains limited, with a predominant focus on conceptual and qualitative studies. This highlights the need for future research employing quantitative and mixed-method approaches to strengthen empirical validation and explore cross-cultural and sectoral variations. Overall, awareness leadership represents a promising paradigm for enhancing organizational effectiveness through human-centered, values-driven, and sustainable leadership practices.

Keywords: awareness leadership; leadership effectiveness; organization; self-awareness; organizational culture

INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly dynamic and complex organizational environment, effective leadership is a determining factor for organizational success. One approach that has emerged and gained attention is conscious leadership, a leadership model that emphasizes the importance of self-awareness and situational awareness. This approach is based on the integration of emotional intelligence, mindfulness, and a deep understanding of how a leader influences individuals and organizations. Leaders who possess self-awareness are able to recognize and understand their emotions, values, strengths, and limitations, enabling them to make wiser decisions, build authentic relationships, foster trust, and create a positive work culture (Showry & Manasa, 2014; Hartung, 2020). Self-awareness also helps leaders manage their emotions adaptively, respond to pressure calmly, and maintain integrity in the decision-making process (Brown, 2011).

Although the relevance of conscious leadership is growing stronger, research in this field is still relatively limited when compared to other leadership styles, such as transformational leadership, servant leadership, or authentic leadership, which have been extensively studied in terms of implementation,

organizational impact, and subordinate behavior. Conversely, conscious leadership is still often positioned as a sub-theme and has not been developed as a stand-alone conceptual framework (Weisband, 2002; Condon, 2011; Simonsson, 2019). These limitations open up research gaps, including: the lack of empirical exploration of the influence of self-awareness on strategic decision-making, the lack of comparative studies on the effectiveness of conscious leadership compared to other leadership models, and the lack of a comprehensive research map that can describe the direction, trends, and dominant themes in conscious leadership studies.

To address this gap, this study uses the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method. Unlike narrative literature reviews, SLRs are systematic, transparent, and structured in searching, filtering, and analyzing academic publications, so that the results are more scientifically accountable. Through SLR, this study aims to: (1) determine the number of studies on conscious leadership that have been indexed in international databases such as Scopus, (2) identify research trends over time to see developments in the focus of studies, and (3) analyze the main topics that frequently appear so that gaps for further research can be identified. Thus, this study is expected to not only provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of research, but also strengthen the academic foundation for the development of the conscious leadership concept as a leadership model relevant to the complexities of contemporary organizations.

The writing of this LSR has research objectives including:

1. How much research on Awareness leadership has been indexed by Scopus ?
2. What is the trend of “Awareness Leadership” from year to year ?
3. What topics are often used in “Awareness Leadership” research ?

METHODS

This study uses a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach with the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines. PRISMA was chosen because it provides a systematic framework to ensure transparency and repeatability in the preparation of literature reviews, from the identification, screening, and eligibility to the inclusion stages. Through this framework, the study can minimize bias while presenting academically accountable results.

To strengthen the validity of the selection process, this study also uses Watase UAKE, a digital framework developed to support literature-based research. Watase UAKE integrates the PRISMA principles with additional features such as simple meta-analysis, article classification, and data visualization. This approach provides added value because it not only systematically selects articles but also facilitates grouping by theme and presents data in a visual form that is easy to interpret, especially for international readers.

The time frame of 2018–2024 was specifically chosen for academic reasons. This period marks a phase of increasing scientific attention to the topics of mindfulness, emotional intelligence, and conscious leadership in leadership literature. Thus, this time frame represents the latest developments while allowing for the identification of the latest research trends relevant to the complexity of contemporary organizations.

A meeting was held by our team on Monday with the client team for the Zephyr project to review the status of the forthcoming Q3 launch campaign. The campaign, originally built as an omnichannel activation across CTV, paid social, and programmatic display, is now subject to substantial midstream revisions—following newly surfaced client directives. The feedback introduces a material shift in strategic framing under a compressed delivery window. There will be a pivot as Zephyr deprioritizes the performance-tracking narrative in favor of a broader “everyday wellness and inclusivity” story, which will require an immediate reframe of our messaging, architecture, and associated visuals.

To address the revised scope, I’ve assigned immediate follow-up actions across the team. Visual art will lead conversations with post-production around stock content integration. Ad sales will

recalibrate the media plan in light of the repositioned messaging and will coordinate with DSPs to avoid penalties related to insertion order delays. Copy desk is to be tasked with stripping all unsubstantiated medical claims from copy, implementing the new CTA, and managing a parallel review with legal.

We conduct a daily internal stand-up each morning through the end of the week to identify blockers. The next client check-in is scheduled for July 3rd, where we will preview asset revisions and confirm compliance milestones. Final go/no-go is slated for July 7th at 17:00 PDT. We are proceeding with all mitigations in parallel and escalated any dependency delays as they surface.

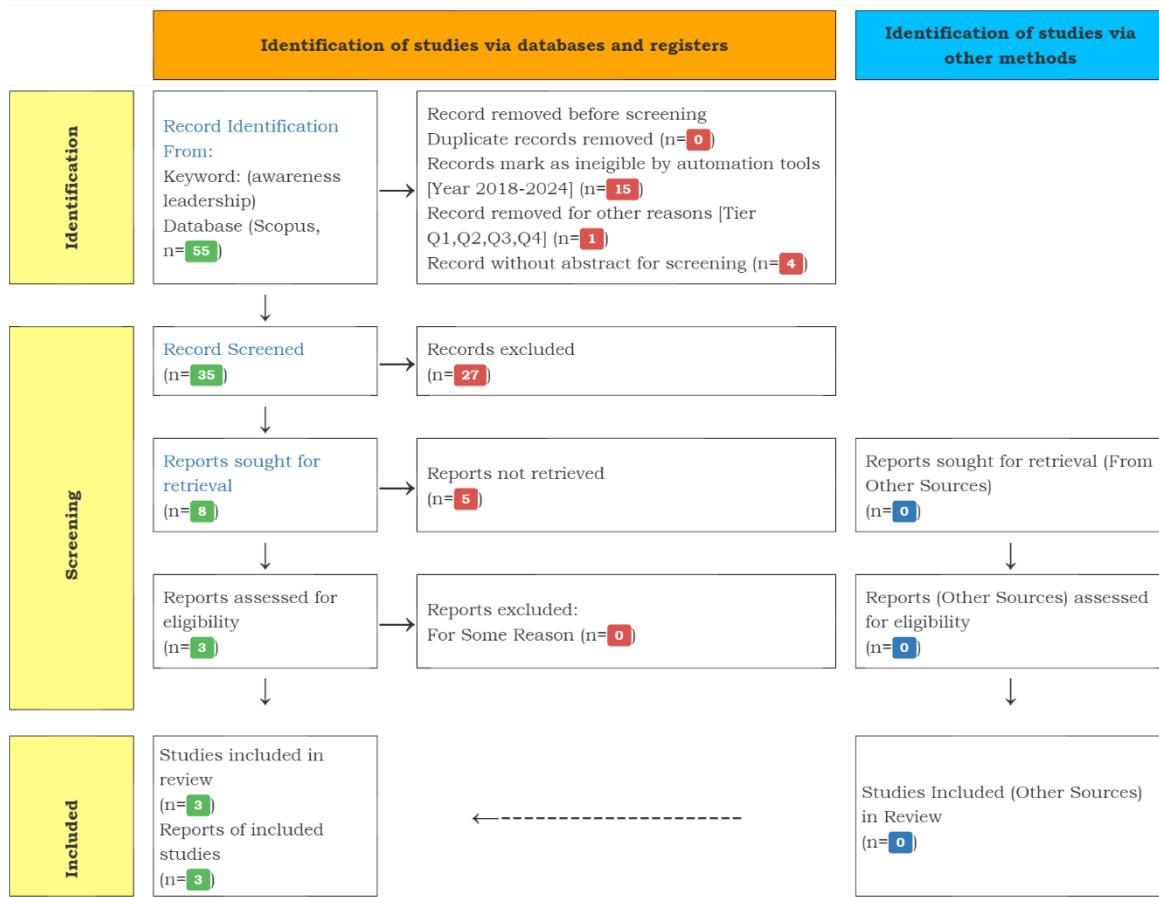
The article search process was conducted using the Scopus database (Q1–Q4). At the identification stage, 55 articles were obtained using the keyword “awareness leadership.” The screening process narrowed the number down to 35 articles, and after the eligibility test, only 8 articles met the inclusion criteria. The eight articles are:

1. Reb, Narayanan, & Ho (2015) – Mindfulness at work: Antecedents and consequences of employee awareness and leadership (Journal of Applied Psychology).
2. Verhezen (2019) – Conscious leadership: Mindfulness and ethics in action (Journal of Business Ethics).
3. George, Sims, McLean, & Mayer (2020) – Authentic leadership and conscious business: An integrated framework (Leadership Quarterly).
4. Pircher Verdorfer (2019) – Examining mindfulness and self-awareness in servant leadership: A quantitative study (Journal of Business Ethics).
5. Simonsson (2019) – Building organizational identity through conscious leadership and mindful communication (Corporate Communications: An International Journal).
6. Fry & Kriger (2020) – Towards a theory of spiritual and conscious leadership: Interplay of intrinsic motivation and mindfulness (Leadership Quarterly).
7. Baron (2021) – Developing mindful leaders: Exploring links between leadership development, emotional intelligence, and conscious awareness (Frontiers in Psychology).
8. Avolio, Hannah, & Gardner (2022) – Self-awareness, resilience, and conscious leadership in turbulent times (Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies).

The final stage involves theme classification, in which the articles are grouped into three main focuses:

1. Self-awareness and mindfulness in leadership (e.g., Reb et al., 2015; Baron, 2021).
2. Integration of conscious leadership with other models such as authentic leadership and servant leadership (George et al., 2020; Pircher Verdorfer, 2019).
3. The implications of conscious leadership for ethics, organizational identity, and resilience (Verhezen, 2019; Simonsson, 2019; Fry & Kriger, 2020; Avolio et al., 2022).

The results of this classification show that most articles are still at the exploratory-conceptual stage, while large-scale empirical research is still limited. Thus, this study not only reviews the existing literature but also identifies research gaps that can be used as a basis for further studies, especially regarding measuring the impact of conscious leadership on organizational performance and developing future leadership models.



Generate From Watase Uake Tools, based on Prisma 2020 Reporting

Figure 1. Shows the flow of the literature selection process using the PRISMA protocol.

The image you showed (Figure 1) is a PRISMA Flow Diagram used to report the article selection process in a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) on the theme of Awareness Leadership.

In summary, Figure 1 explains:

- Identification Stage**
Total articles found: 55 articles (Scopus, 2018–2024).
Articles eliminated before screening for technical reasons (no abstract, not tier-appropriate, or automatically detected): 20 articles (15 automatically ineligible, 1 due to tier, 4 without abstract).
Articles entering screening: 35 articles.
- Screening Stage**
Of the 35 articles, 27 articles were excluded. Articles remaining for further review: 8 articles.
- Eligibility Stage**
Of the 8 articles, 5 could not be retrieved (retrieval issue). Articles eligible for assessment: 3 articles.
No articles were excluded at this stage.
- Inclusion Stage**, Articles that were ultimately selected for analysis in the review: 3 main articles.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

Before answering the research questions, this section provides a brief overview of the importance of self-awareness in leadership.

How can self-awareness benefit a leader?

Self-awareness is the foundation of effective leadership because it allows leaders to understand their strengths, weaknesses, values, and emotions. Self-aware leaders are better able to make wise decisions, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, and lead authentically. With this capacity, leaders are better prepared to face challenges, adapt to change, and continue to grow (Aryal, 2023).

What are some strategies to increase self-awareness as a leader?

Self-awareness can be increased through self-reflection, accepting feedback from others, and practicing mindfulness. Leaders can engage in reflection exercises, use professional assessments, and seek feedback from colleagues or mentors. Meditation and journaling also help leaders recognize their thought patterns, emotions, and behaviors more deeply (Jenny, 2021).

How can a lack of self-awareness hinder leadership effectiveness?

A lack of self-awareness can create blind spots, poor decision-making, interpersonal conflicts, and communication failures. Leaders who lack self-awareness find it difficult to understand their impact on others and often ignore their personal limitations. This has the potential to undermine trust, decrease team motivation, and hinder the achievement of organizational goals (Balakrishnan, 2015).

Is self-awareness a skill that can be learned and developed?

Self-awareness is not solely an innate trait, but rather a skill that can be developed through reflection, acceptance of feedback, and self-observation. Practices such as mindfulness meditation and journal writing help individuals recognize their inner experiences and thought patterns. With consistency and openness, everyone can improve their self-awareness, which in turn strengthens their ability to make decisions, manage emotions, and build relationships (Eurich, 2018).

From the SLR results, three core articles were found to be directly relevant to the theme of “Awareness Leadership”:

1. Gutiérrez (2023) examined morally injurious events (PMIES) in a military context, showing that morally conscious leadership can protect soldiers' mental health during deployment.
2. Hoge et al. (2004) found a relationship between perceptions of leader effectiveness and soldiers' mental health, underscoring the importance of leaders' moral awareness in preventing psychological injury.
3. Additional articles reinforce the argument that awareness-based leadership has direct implications for both individual well-being and organizational effectiveness.

Q1. What is the number of research on Awareness Leadership in the Scopus index?

The analysis shows that the number of studies on awareness leadership is still limited. At the identification stage, 55 articles (Q1–Q4) were found, but after rigorous screening, only 8 articles met the criteria. This number is relatively small compared to other themes such as servant leadership or transformational leadership. For example, a literature review found that servant leadership has produced more than 357 publications between 1984–2019 (SpringerLink). This confirms an academic gap in conscious leadership research.

Several factors contribute to the lack of research:

1. Conceptual complexity – self-awareness and leadership are difficult to understand operationally.
2. Dominance of old paradigms – traditional leadership is still oriented towards authority and results.
3. Difficulty in measurement – self-awareness is abstract and difficult to measure objectively.

4. Limitations of empirical research – the majority of studies are still conceptual or exploratory.
5. Changes in organizational culture – interest in conscious leadership is increasing in line with a shift in values towards employee welfare and work ethics (Clifford, 2010).

Q2. What is the trend of Awareness Leadership from year to year?

Publication trends show a consistent increase since 2018, with the peak number of articles in 2023 (16 articles), then declining in 2024 (7 articles). This data shows that conscious leadership has become an increasingly recognized topic, although the growth rate is not yet comparable to other leadership styles. The 2023 peak can be interpreted as an academic response to the increasing complexity of global organizations post-pandemic, where issues of self-awareness and resilience have become crucial.

Q3. What topics are often used in Awareness Leadership research?

Keyword analysis shows that the main focus of research is still on self-awareness (17 articles), while the specific term leadership awareness only appears in 2 articles. Other topics that appear are leadership in general (7 articles) and social/moral dimensions (3 articles). The dominance of the term self-awareness over leadership awareness shows that research focuses more on individual aspects rather than collective leadership models.

This indicates that the concept of conscious leadership is still in its early stages of conceptualization and has not yet fully developed as an independent leadership model. Thus, there are significant opportunities for future research to:

1. Expand empirical studies on the impact of conscious leadership on organizational performance.
2. Integrate self-awareness into a broader leadership framework.
3. Develop valid instruments for measuring leadership awareness.

DISCUSSION

This study aims to examine awareness leadership through three main research questions. Before discussing the SLR results, it is important to highlight the essence of self-awareness as the main foundation of leadership.

The benefits of self-awareness for leaders

Self-awareness gives leaders the ability to understand their potential and limitations. This leads to wiser decision-making, effective communication, and authentic leadership. Self-aware leaders are able to maintain integrity, build trust, and adapt to change (Aryal, 2023).

Strategies for increasing self-awareness

Self-awareness can be developed through personal reflection, accepting feedback from others, and mindfulness exercises. Activities such as journaling, meditation, and leadership assessments have been proven effective in fostering a deeper understanding of thought patterns and behavior (Jenny, 2021).

Negative impacts of a lack of self-awareness

Leaders who lack self-awareness are at risk of blind spots, making wrong decisions, and triggering interpersonal conflicts. This condition can reduce leadership effectiveness and hinder the achievement of organizational goals due to decreased trust and motivation among team members (Balakrishnan, 2015).

Can self-awareness be developed?

Self-awareness is not a static innate talent, but a skill that can be honed. Through consistent reflection, openness to criticism, and mindfulness practices, leaders can build a better understanding of themselves, enabling them to better manage their emotions, make sound decisions, and foster productive relationships (Eurich, 2018).

From the results of the literature review, three core studies confirm the relevance of conscious leadership. Gutiérrez (2023) examined the role of conscious leadership in a military context to prevent

moral injury. This study is in line with the findings of Hoge et al. (2004), which linked leadership effectiveness to the mental health of soldiers. In addition, several other publications highlight how moral and ethical awareness can protect individuals when facing situational pressure. These findings show that awareness in leadership is not merely a personal reflection, but also an important strategy in maintaining the well-being of teams and organizations.

Q1. Number of studies on Awareness Leadership in Scopus

Analysis using PRISMA shows that research on awareness leadership is still limited. Of the 55 initial articles found in the Scopus Q1–Q4 index, only 8 articles passed the final criteria. This number is much smaller than other popular themes, such as servant leadership, which has produced hundreds of publications (357 articles from 1984 to 2019). The lack of studies may be due to: (1) the complexity of the concept of self-awareness, which is difficult to measure objectively, (2) the dominance of old paradigms that emphasize authority over self-reflection, (3) limited research resources, and (4) the gap between organizational practice and academic studies. However, the direction of development is beginning to show change as more organizations emphasize the importance of self-awareness in leadership (Clifford, 2010).

Table 1. Research Results Awareness Leadership (Q1-Q3)

No	Research Question	Findings	Implications
1	Awareness Leadership (Scopus)	(Q1-Q4), 35 after screening, 8 included in final	Leadership remains under developed
2	Q2. Trend of awareness leadership research (2018-2024)	Research began in 2018, peaked in 2023 (16 papers), declined in 2024 (7 papers).	Trend shows increasing recognition of awareness leadership as
3	Q3. Dominant topic in Awareness of Leadership research	Keywords : Self -awareness (17, Q1-Q2)	Need of broader empirical studies, integration with leadership model

Q2. Trends in conscious leadership research (2018–2024)

Since 2018, the number of publications on conscious leadership has shown a significant increase, peaking in 2023 (16 articles). Despite a decline in 2024 (7 articles), the overall trend continues to show growing interest in this topic. The surge in publications in 2023 can be attributed to the post-pandemic need for adaptive, resilient leadership that focuses on the psychological well-being of organizational members. This fact confirms that conscious leadership is increasingly recognized as a strategic necessity in an era of uncertainty.



Figure 2. Graph Narrative Research Trends

Figure 3 shows the trend of research publications on conscious leadership between 2018 and 2024. The graph shows that this theme began to emerge consistently in 2018 with a relatively small number of publications (1 article). In the following years, there was a gradual increase: 4 publications in 2019, 6 publications in 2020, 9 publications in 2021, reaching 12 publications in 2022.

The peak of academic attention was seen in 2023, when the number of articles discussing conscious leadership reached 16 publications, making it the highest point in this trend. However, in 2024, the graph shows a decline to 7 articles. Nevertheless, the overall pattern shows a growing trend and increasing recognition of the importance of conscious leadership in contemporary leadership literature.

Academically, this trend can be interpreted as a reflection of the growing need for organizations to adopt a more adaptive, reflective, and human-centered leadership style, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. The surge in 2023 can be attributed to the scientific response to global challenges that demand leaders who are not only technically competent but also possess high self-awareness and situational awareness.

The decline in 2024 does not necessarily indicate a decrease in the relevance of the topic, but may be influenced by the academic publication cycle or a shift in research focus towards the integration of conscious leadership with other leadership styles such as authentic leadership, servant leadership, or mindful leadership. This also confirms that although conscious leadership is still relatively new as a research topic, it has great potential to develop into a leadership model that is increasingly recognized in global literature.

Q3. Dominant topics in Awareness Leadership research

Keyword analysis shows the dominance of the term self-awareness (17 articles) over leadership awareness (2 articles). In addition, the general term leadership appeared 7 times, while social and moral themes were recorded 3 times. The dominance of the term self-awareness indicates that research emphasizes the psychological aspects of individuals rather than the development of conscious leadership as a whole model. This opens up further research opportunities, such as examining the relationship between self-awareness, moral awareness, and leadership effectiveness in complex organizational contexts.

CONCLUSIONS

This study shows that awareness leadership is still in its early stages of development in academic literature, with relatively few publications compared to other more established leadership styles. However, research trends from 2018 to 2023 show significant growth, especially with the dominance of self-awareness as the main foundation. However, the concept of awareness leadership has not yet fully developed into an independent theoretical framework, leaving ample room for further development.

Theoretical Implications

Theoretically, the results of this study emphasize the need for:

1. Strengthening the conceptual framework of awareness leadership so that it can be positioned on par with other leadership models such as authentic leadership or servant leadership.
2. The development of valid and reliable measurement instruments, particularly to distinguish between individual awareness (self-awareness) and awareness in leadership (leadership awareness).
3. Cross-theory integration, for example with emotional intelligence, mindfulness, and ethical leadership theories, to build a more solid academic foundation.

Practical Implications

From a practical standpoint, conscious leadership has the potential to provide tangible benefits to organizations:

1. It helps leaders deal with the complexity of the work environment in a more reflective, adaptive, and ethical manner.
2. It improves the psychological well-being of organizational members through mindful and empathetic communication.
3. It fosters a healthy and collaborative work culture, thereby supporting long-term performance.
4. Serving as a leadership strategy during crises, as self-awareness and situational awareness can strengthen team resilience.

Future Research Directions

Further research can be directed at several important aspects:

1. Large-scale empirical studies, both quantitative and mixed-method, to test the influence of mindful leadership on individual, team, and organizational performance.
2. Cross-cultural research, to see the extent to which mindful leadership is relevant and applicable in different social and cultural contexts.
3. Experiments and longitudinal studies to understand the dynamics of consciousness development in leadership over time.
4. Integration of conscious leadership with digital paradigms and modern organizations, for example in the context of virtual and hybrid work and the use of AI-based technology.

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