

Mapping Intellectual Structure in General Management Studies Using VOSviewer

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the intellectual terrain of general management research using bibliometric research and visualization techniques with VOSviewer. Drawing on data obtained from the Scopus database between 2000 and 2025, examination graphed co-citation, co-authorship, and keyword co-occurrence networks to unveil the topical structure of the field. The results indicate that the concept of the general manager serves as the hub node linking multifarious clusters of research, ranging from leadership and strategic management to talent management and career development, sustainability, and employee job satisfaction. The visualization reflects both the continuity of traditional concerns—leadership development, globalization, and strategic direction—and the aggregation of new ones like competencies, sustainability, and organizational well-being. These findings bear witness to the multidisciplinary nature of management scholarship, bridging human capital, strategic leadership, and global responsibility. The book enhances management literature through the presentation of an replicable and systematic intellectual mapping of the domain, which will serve as a valuable handbook for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to harmonize their agendas with evolving knowledge patterns.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The field of general management has long included the intellectual foundation for research across a range of business fields, from strategy and organizational behavior to leadership, innovation, and operations. As management research has expanded over the decades, it has built a rich yet complex body of knowledge that is increasingly interdisciplinary. This has made it challenging to map, categorize, and understand the intellectual organization of

general management research. Scholars draw on partial reviews or thematic syntheses that capture only a portion of the field, with resulting gaps in understanding how key theories, methods, and knowledge clusters connect and evolve over time. To this end, bibliometric mapping and visualization methods have emerged as an empowering strategy to systematically seek and portray the intellectual structure of management research.

Bibliometric analysis provides a quantitative view to monitor the development

of scientific fields by studying publication trends, co-citation patterns, and co-occurrences of keywords. When applied in general management research, bibliometric mapping not only discovers influential writers, journals, and publications but also explains new frontiers of research. This approach enables researchers and practitioners to identify the mainstream intellectual trends that shape management theory and practice, and the peripheral but promising areas that may define its future. Bibliometric methods are contrasted more positively with traditional narrative reviews in terms of objectivity, rigour, and reproducibility. Software such as VOSviewer, CiteSpace, and BibExcel has been implemented with great speed in a bid to map knowledge networks, with VOSviewer standing out in particular for its user-friendly interface and ability to provide natural visual maps of scientific landscapes.

The rapid growth of management literature in the last decades has only served to enhance the validity of such mapping exercises. Globalization, digitalization, sustainability, and the rise of knowledge economies have extended the boundaries of management research, incorporating contributions from other disciplines as diverse as psychology, sociology, information systems, and economics. As such, the intellectual framework of general management research is no longer limited to conventional theoretical silos but rather demonstrates a growing cross-fertilization of ideas. To capture this vibrancy necessitates sophisticated analytic tools that can render meaningful large amounts of data and display them in a manner that is both exhaustive and user-friendly. Bibliometric visualization fills this gap since it offers a meta-level perspective on the structuring, clustering, and interconnectedness of management knowledge.

At the same time, management practice has been transformed by technological change, altering labor markets, and growing global uncertainty. Concepts such as agile management, digital transformation, and sustainability

governance are redefining organizational strategy and managerial jobs. These trends require novel theoretical contributions and robust empirical evidence. Yet, without a coherent knowledge base to understand how earlier and current research streams converge, diverge, or converge, management scholarship faces redundancy, fragmentation, and irrelevance. Mapping the intellectual structure of the field not only improves scholarly wisdom but also improves dialogue between research and practice. It allows scholars to place their research in the broader intellectual context, but provides practitioners with a clearer sense of what theory and frameworks can assist in advising on decision-making in complex business situations.

Moreover, the growing deployment of digital bibliometric tools has served to democratize the access to knowledge mapping such that scholars globally can perform research synthesis that previously was within the purview of institutions with resources. Precisely, VOSviewer has been a popular software since it can handle large sets of data, create appropriate visualizations, and enable co-authorship, co-citation, and keyword co-occurrence mapping analyses. With the use of VOSviewer in the general management field, scholars can trace the intellectual structure of the field, discover dominant groups of thinking, identify core-periphery relationships, and find unknown subjects. Such study is significant not just to sum up the past but also to map the trajectory of future management studies.

While general management research has made exemplary contributions to scholarly research and practice, there is still no comprehensive, systematic mapping of its intellectual terrain. While numerous literature reviews and meta-analyses have been conducted on lower-level domains such as leadership, organizational learning, or strategy, few if any studies have taken a comprehensive bibliometric approach for general management as an umbrella top-level field. This disconnect gives researchers a partial picture of how main streams of research are connected to each other, where

intellectual frontiers lie, and where potential for theoretical and practical advancement can be found. Without this mapping, the risk still exists that management scholarship will remain fragmented, with replicated streams of research and missed opportunities for integration across subfields. The present study aims to bridge this lacuna by mapping the intellectual landscape of general management research systematically using VOSviewer as the primary bibliometric visualization tool.

2. METHODS

This study employed a bibliometric analysis approach to cartographically map the intellectual structure of general management research in a systematic manner. Bibliometric analysis was chosen since it allows researchers to quantify, visualize, and interpret large numbers of scholarly papers in a reproducible and systematic way. Data were pulled from the Scopus database because it was selected for its strong coverage of peer-reviewed articles and the simplicity of performing large-scale citation and bibliometric analysis. Keywords utilized in the search were "general management," "management studies," and their synonyms, with peer-reviewed journals, reviews, and conference papers as filters from the period

2000-2025. The period was chosen to include both the established foundation and recent developments in management studies. The original database was then cleaned out by removing duplicate documents, non-English written documents, and irrelevant items, to leave a refined corpus of publications for analysis.

To analyze the intellectual structure of the field, the dataset compiled was processed in VOSviewer, a popular software tool for constructing and visualizing bibliometric networks. VOSviewer was used in generating visual maps based on three main approaches: (1) co-citation to identify influential authors and documents that have shaped the discipline, (2) co-authorship to reveal collaboration patterns among researchers and institutions, and (3) keyword co-occurrence to bring to light predominant themes and emerging study fields. The strength of association among items (i.e., authors, keywords, or journals) was computed using VOSviewer's association strength normalization method so that the relationships among items are well reflected regardless of dataset size. The maps so derived allowed knowledge clusters and their relationships to be determined, providing an overview of the intellectual structure of general management research.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Citation Analysis

Table 1. Top Cited Literature

Citations	Author's	Title
684	[1]	Artificial intelligence, robotics, advanced technologies and human resource management: a systematic review
535	[2]	Unlocking the value of artificial intelligence in human resource management through AI capability framework
489	[3]	Global value chains: A review of the multi-disciplinary literature
448	[4]	A critical look at the use of SEM in international business research
268	[5]	Strategic marketing and marketing strategy: Domain, definition, fundamental issues and foundational premises
241	[6]	Supply Chain Management for Extreme Conditions: Research Opportunities
201	[7]	COBIT 5 and enterprise governance of information technology: Building blocks and research opportunities
179	[8]	A review of the internationalization of Chinese enterprises

161	[9]	Management accounting in small and medium-sized enterprises: Current knowledge and avenues for further research
159	[10]	Technology management tools: Concept, development and application

Source: Scopus Database, 2025

Co-Authorship Analysis



Figure 1. Author Visualization
Source: Data Analysis

Figure 1 displays a co-citation network of key authors in general management literature.

Every node is an author, and the size of the node indicates relative citation frequencies, and the lines (links) indicate the strength of the co-citation relationship between them. Color clustering maps intellectual clusters or theme communities that tend to get cited together. For example, researchers such as Baum, Bidwell, and Anderson (red cluster) are highly inter-

connected in a central group, suggesting that their works collectively sit on a principal stream of research. Authors such as Ayou, Best, and Amarjit S. (green and yellow clusters) are peripheral but they have nexus-like relationships, which may suggest specialist subjects or newer streams. On the other end, Caligiuri, Child, and other related scholars (blue and purple clusters) tip towards a different intellectual pole, perhaps around international management and organizational development.



Figure 2. Affiliation Visualization
Source: Data Analysis

Visualization of Figure 2 is a co-authorship and institutional collaboration network centered on Sejong University, Seoul. The photo depicts how Sejong University is the central node connecting a host of international and regional partners. On its left are collaborations with other institutions such as Georgia State University (USA), University of Waikato (New Zealand), Youngsan University (Korea), and even industry representation such as the Intercontinental

Hotel Group. These partners form a red cluster that suggests a mix of academic and business collaborations with emphasis on applied business, management, or hospitality studies. Sejong University at the right side heavily connects with Hanyang Cyber University (Korea), forming a green cluster that signifies an intra-national-level of research association in areas like online learning, cyber management, or cyber research.

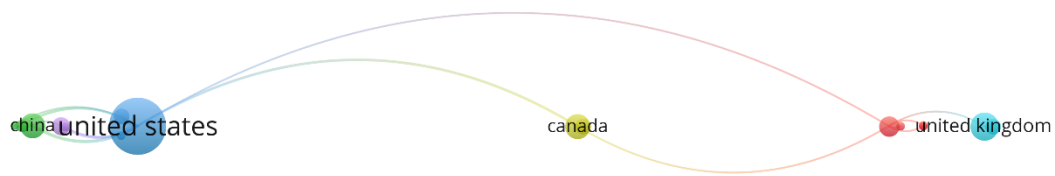


Figure 3. Country Visualization

Source: Data Analysis

Figure 3 shows a country-level co-authorship network in management research, with authors from the United States emerging as the central hub with the largest node, signifying its dominant status and largest number of contributions. The U.S. is strongly connected to China, Canada, and the United Kingdom, indicating both regional and transcontinental research collaboration. China is shown to be a close collaborator with the

U.S., suggesting widespread bilateral collaboration, while Canada and the U.K. act as bridging partners that connect North America and Europe. The distribution of clusters suggests that the U.S. is the anchor of the network, reaching across Eastern and Western academic communities, and that the U.K. is an important bridge to European research.

Keyword Co-Occurrence Analysis

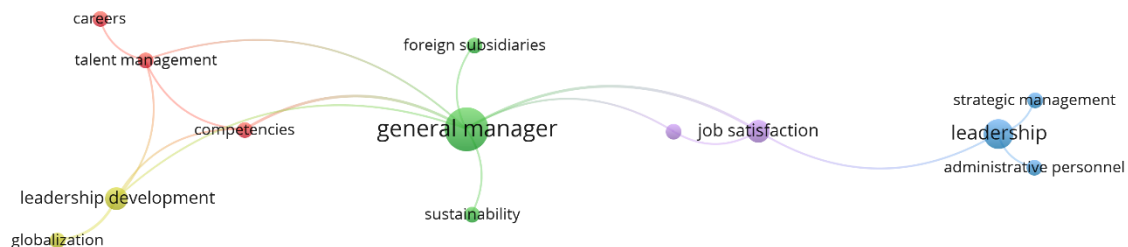


Figure 4. Network Visualization

Source: Data Analysis

Figure 4 shows a keyword co-occurrence network by the theme of general manager, which gives an insight into the intellectual structure of general management research. Node size reflects the frequency of keyword occurrence, and links and colors denote thematic clusters and relational strengths. In the middle, general manager is a node that bridges a number of thematic areas, suggesting its centrality as a concept that binds numerous subfields such as leadership, job satisfaction, globalization, and sustainability. The layout exhibits a symmetrical pattern of managerial concerns that range from human resource development to strategic and organizational performance.

On the left side of the map, the cluster comprising talent management, careers, competencies, and leadership development embodies the human capital perspective in management research. This theme emphasizes the need for leadership

development, career management, and competency development to enable long-term organizational effectiveness. Its linkage with globalization means that each of them is normally framed in the context of global competitiveness and labor mobility across borders. The network infers that scholar in this tradition are primarily concerned with equipping managers and employees with adaptive competencies to handle global issues. In the center, general manager's strong correlation with terms such as foreign subsidiaries and sustainability reflects strategic and operational emphases.

General managers are shown to be central to the handling of global subsidiaries, the ensuring of organizational alignment across borders, and the integration of sustainability into decision-making. This collection illustrates that management research increasingly situates the role of general managers within the broader

dynamics of corporate governance, international expansion, and responsible business practices. The addition of sustainability indicates a shift in expectations where managers are not only accountable for financial performance but also for social and environmental impacts. On the right side, the clustering around leadership, strategic management, and administrative staff emphasizes the organizational leadership and governance dimension of management education. General managers herein are linked to both formal leadership responsibilities as well as broader strategic roles.

The emphasis on administrative personnel reflects concern with the practical, structural, and managerial dimensions of running large-scale organizations. The

addition of strategic management also shows how general manager-level leadership is implicated in shaping organizational direction, reacting to market changes, and ensuring competitive advantage. This cluster shows how general management studies continue to link individual leader action to macro-level organizational strategy. The interaction between general manager and job satisfaction forms a critical employee-focused aspect of management studies. This means that general managers are not just analyzed as strategic decision-makers, but as key determiners of workplace culture and employee satisfaction. Job satisfaction, in turn, translates back into performance, retention, and organizational health, which is the human element of managerial effectiveness.

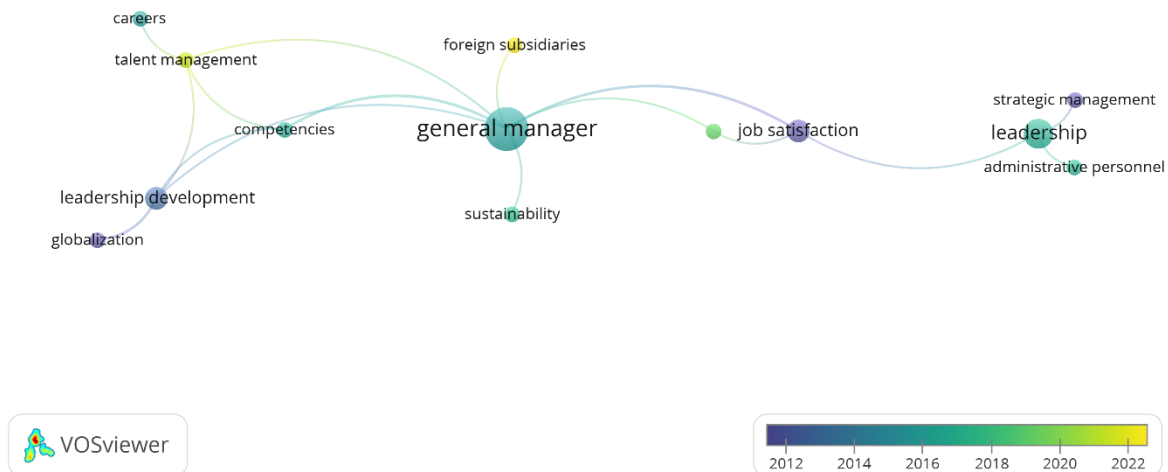


Figure 5. Overlay Visualization
Source: Data Analysis

The fifth graph shows trends in research topics related to general managers across the years.

Blue color gradient to yellow (previous years, circa 2012–2015) to yellow (recent years, 2020–2022) indicates shifts in priorities among concepts. Earlier research was strongly associated with themes such as leadership development, globalization, and strategic management. This means that in the early 2010s, the studies emphasized the general managers' functions for managing global markets, building leadership capability, and making organizational strategy in more competitive environments.

Recently, the emphasis switched to talent management, careers, competencies, and foreign subsidiaries, as the yellow and green nodes illustrate. This change is in line with growing concern for human capital, international operations, and the managerial competencies required in globalizing contexts. Stress on sustainability and job satisfaction also means that the field has begun to integrate higher-order social and organizational well-being issues into management scholarship, relating managerial roles to performance outcomes as well as organizational long-term responsibility and employee engagement. The repeated salience

of general manager throughout the visualization reiterates its bridging role, linking mainstream topics like leadership and strategic management with newer topics like sustainability and talent management. The direction indicated is the manner in which the

intellectual topology of management scholarship is constricted yet fluid: leadership and strategy are fixed foci, but newer goals like sustainability, worker satisfaction, and competency building are refocusing the field.



Figure 6. Density Visualization

Source: Data Analysis

Figure 6 shows general manager as the most in-depth and in-depth considered concept, captured in the heavy yellow clustering in the center. This suggests that studies in management research consistently place the general manager at the core of scholarly interest, linking them with far-flung subjects ranging from foreign subsidiaries to job satisfaction and sustainability. The density of the surrounding terms reflects their salience as emergent themes that connect managerial activities to broader organizational outcomes like global operations, ethics, and employee well-being. Clusters around right-hand side terms like leadership and strategic management, and the left-hand side terms of talent management, leadership development, and globalization, suggest secondary research topics. While these clusters are less dense than the focal theme, their green glow indicates active but more concentrated streams of scholarship. The map generally indicates that general

management scholarship is multidimensional: it combines the classic themes of leadership and strategy with emerging issues like sustainability and building human capital.

Practical Implications

The findings of this study offer several important implications for management practitioners. First, by revealing the intellectual clusters of general management (including leadership development, talent management, sustainability, and job satisfaction) organizational managers and leaders are able to align their efforts with existing and future research topics. In doing so, practitioners can apply evidence-based practices in developing leadership programs, managing global subsidiaries, and incorporating sustainability into decision-making. Second, the mapping of cooperation networks reveals possibilities for universities, businesses, and policymakers to develop stronger cross-institutional and

international partnerships, thereby keeping managerial practices current in an expanding globalization setting. Third, by demonstrating how managerial roles synthesize diverse topics such as human capital formation and strategic leadership, this study provides practitioners with a roadmap for exchanging short-term organizational performance for long-term social responsibility and employee welfare.

Theoretical Contribution

This study contributes to the literature through systematic bibliometric mapping of research on general management using VOSviewer, a method that offers objectivity and replicability in comparison to narrative reviews. The results illustrate the intellectual landscape of the field and how core concepts like general manager act as a hub that unites ancient leadership and strategy theories with contemporary issues such as sustainability and global talent management. This is consistent with the view of management as an evolving, multidisciplinary discipline in which conventional frameworks are mixed with new paradigms. The study is also theoretically significant in expanding the range of bibliometric methods applied to management research, demonstrating how network visualization can reveal patterns of relations among themes, authors, and institutions not evident in conventional literature reviews. In doing this, it enriches theoretical discussions about the balance to be struck between people-centred and strategy-centred perspectives in management studies.

Limitation

While this research is full of findings, there are several limitations that should be mentioned. Firstly, the dataset was drawn only from the Scopus database, which although wide-ranging, may not include all the correct publications listed on other databases such as Web of Science or Google

Scholar. This could lead to a less than perfect perspective of the field. Second, bibliometric mapping relies on keyword frequency and co-occurrence, citations, and authors, which will not always reflect the richness and nuance of theoretical argument within individual works. Third, choice of search terms and time period can influence the scope of the study, possibly excluding emerging or niche fields that use other vocabularies. Finally, as with all bibliometric analysis, the cluster and network interpretations do have an element of subjectivity, such that while the maps give evidence of structural patterns, extra qualitative analysis needs to be done to understand fully the conceptual underpinnings of each research stream.

4. CONCLUSION

This study has mapped the intellectual terrain of general management literature with the assistance of bibliometric analysis and visualization through VOSviewer, which confirms the centrality of the idea of the general manager as a node that synthesizes different themes such as leadership, strategic management, sustainability, talent management, and job satisfaction. The findings capture how the field has evolved from an old focus on globalization and leadership development to newer themes of sustainability, competencies, and employees' wellbeing. By establishing significant clusters and their relationships with each other, the study provides academics and practitioners with a better understanding of the knowledge architecture behind general management. Ultimately, the research emphasizes that while the field is rooted in classic theories of management, it is also expanding to encompass multidisciplinary methods for handling world and organizational concerns.

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