

Bibliometric Analysis of CSR in Business and Management

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to map the intellectual structure and research trends of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) within the field of business and management using a bibliometric approach. Data were collected from the Scopus database and analyzed using VOSviewer to explore keyword co-occurrence, overlay visualization, density mapping, and collaboration networks among authors, institutions, and countries. The results reveal that CSR serves as a central research theme interconnected with sustainable development, corporate governance, stakeholder theory, ethics, and innovation. Temporal analysis indicates a shift from early governance- and ethics-oriented discussions toward more strategic and sustainability-driven perspectives, including ESG integration and business development. Collaboration networks highlight the dominant roles of scholars and institutions from developed countries, particularly the United States and the United Kingdom, while emerging economies increasingly contribute to the expansion of CSR scholarship. Overall, the findings demonstrate that CSR research has evolved into a strategic and multidisciplinary domain, emphasizing sustainability integration and global collaboration in addressing contemporary business challenges.

Keywords: *Corporate Social Responsibility, Bibliometric Analysis, Business and Management, Sustainable Development, VosViewer*

1. INTRODUCTION

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has emerged as a central theme in contemporary business discourse due to increasing expectations from stakeholders regarding ethical conduct, sustainability, and social impact. Over recent decades, corporations have shifted from a narrow focus on profit maximization to a broader understanding of their role in societal well-being, encompassing environmental stewardship, community engagement, and ethical governance [1]. This evolution has been driven by growing awareness among consumers, regulators, and investors who demand transparency and accountability from firms on non-financial outcomes. As a result, CSR has progressively integrated into strategic management and organizational performance frameworks, transforming from a peripheral concept into a core business imperative [2], [3].

In parallel with its practical application, CSR has generated substantial scholarly interest across disciplines including business ethics, sustainability studies, and organizational behavior. Researchers have examined CSR from multiple perspectives—ranging from normative theories that define corporate duties to empirical studies that evaluate the impact of CSR on financial performance and stakeholder relations [4]. This rich and diverse literature has produced a large volume of publications, reinforcing CSR as a vibrant area of academic inquiry. Studies have explored multidimensional aspects of CSR such as environmental reporting, CSR communication strategies, and the role of CSR in emerging markets, reflecting the interdisciplinary and evolving nature of the field [5].

Despite the proliferation of CSR research, differences persist in how CSR is conceptualized and operationalized across contexts. Some studies focus on instrumental motivations—linking CSR to competitive advantage or risk management—while others emphasize ethical responsibilities and moral agency [6]. Additionally, CSR research methodologies vary widely, including case studies, surveys, content analyses, and experimental designs, which underscores both the complexity and

fragmentation of the field. As CSR scholarship expands, understanding the intellectual landscape, dominant themes, and research gaps becomes increasingly important for both academics and practitioners. It is within this context that bibliometric analysis offers a systematic approach to mapping knowledge structures, identifying influential contributors, and revealing temporal trends in CSR scholarship [7], [8].

Bibliometric analysis—rooted in information science—provides quantitative tools to analyze publication patterns, citation networks, and thematic evolution within a research domain [6]. When applied to CSR, bibliometric techniques can highlight which topics receive the most attention, which authors or institutions are most influential, and how research collaborations have developed over time. These insights are valuable for understanding not only the state of the CSR literature but also its trajectory and potential future directions. For example, co-citation analysis can uncover how theoretical frameworks are linked across studies, whereas keyword co-occurrence analysis can reveal emerging themes that have gained prominence in recent years.

In business and management research, bibliometric studies have become increasingly common as a way to assess the maturity and dynamics of specific fields. Bibliometric analyses have been conducted on topics such as corporate governance, sustainable supply chains, and innovation management, demonstrating how such studies can offer comprehensive overviews of complex scholarly landscapes [9]. However, there remains a need for comprehensive bibliometric work focused specifically on CSR within business and management, as existing reviews often concentrate on narrow subtopics or specific geographical contexts. A dedicated bibliometric analysis can help synthesize diverse bodies of CSR research, clarify thematic clusters, and support the development of robust theoretical and practical insights.

While CSR continues to generate extensive scholarly output, the literature remains dispersed across journals, disciplines, and methodological approaches, making it difficult for researchers and practitioners to gain a holistic understanding of the field's development. Moreover, previous literature reviews on CSR have tended to be narrative or qualitative, limiting their ability to capture large-scale patterns in publication and citation data (Seuring & Müller, 2008). Without a systematic bibliometric approach, key questions about the structural evolution, dominant themes, and influential contributors to CSR research in business and management remain unresolved. This fragmentation impedes efforts to consolidate knowledge, identify underexplored areas, and guide future research agendas in a rapidly expanding academic domain. The objective of this study is to conduct a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of CSR research within the field of business and management.

2. METHODS

This study employs a quantitative bibliometric research design to systematically analyze the development of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) scholarship within the field of business and management. Bibliometric analysis is appropriate for examining large volumes of academic publications and identifying structural patterns within a research domain. The study focuses on peer-reviewed journal articles indexed in a major academic database to ensure data reliability and scholarly relevance. A structured search strategy was developed using keywords such as "Corporate Social Responsibility," "CSR," "business," and "management," applied to titles, abstracts, and author keywords. To maintain consistency and academic rigor, only articles published in English and categorized under business and management subject areas were included. The time span of the

philanthropic activity. The presence of leadership and perception also suggests an emphasis on managerial attitudes and stakeholder expectations, implying that CSR implementation is influenced by internal organizational culture and strategic positioning.

The blue cluster centers on sustainable development, innovation, and supply chain management, showing the strong alignment between CSR and sustainability-oriented business practices. This cluster reflects the growing integration of environmental and operational perspectives, particularly through topics like climate change, environmental economics, and supply chains. The inclusion of SMEs and innovation indicates that CSR research is expanding beyond large corporations to include smaller enterprises and innovation-driven sustainability strategies, highlighting a shift toward practical and operational applications of CSR.

Meanwhile, the green cluster emphasizes stakeholder theory, corporate governance, and stakeholder management, reinforcing the theoretical foundation of CSR within management literature. The connections between stakeholder theory and corporate governance indicate that CSR is often analyzed through relational frameworks that consider multiple stakeholders, including communities, regulators, and investors. This cluster suggests that stakeholder engagement remains a dominant lens for understanding CSR effectiveness, reflecting the enduring influence of Freeman's stakeholder theory in contemporary CSR discourse. The yellow and purple clusters relate to social aspects, competitive advantage, and social responsibility, illustrating how CSR research bridges ethical values with performance outcomes. The presence of decision making, investments, and competitive advantage suggests that CSR is increasingly associated with value creation and business performance rather than solely social impact.

3.2 Overlay Visualization

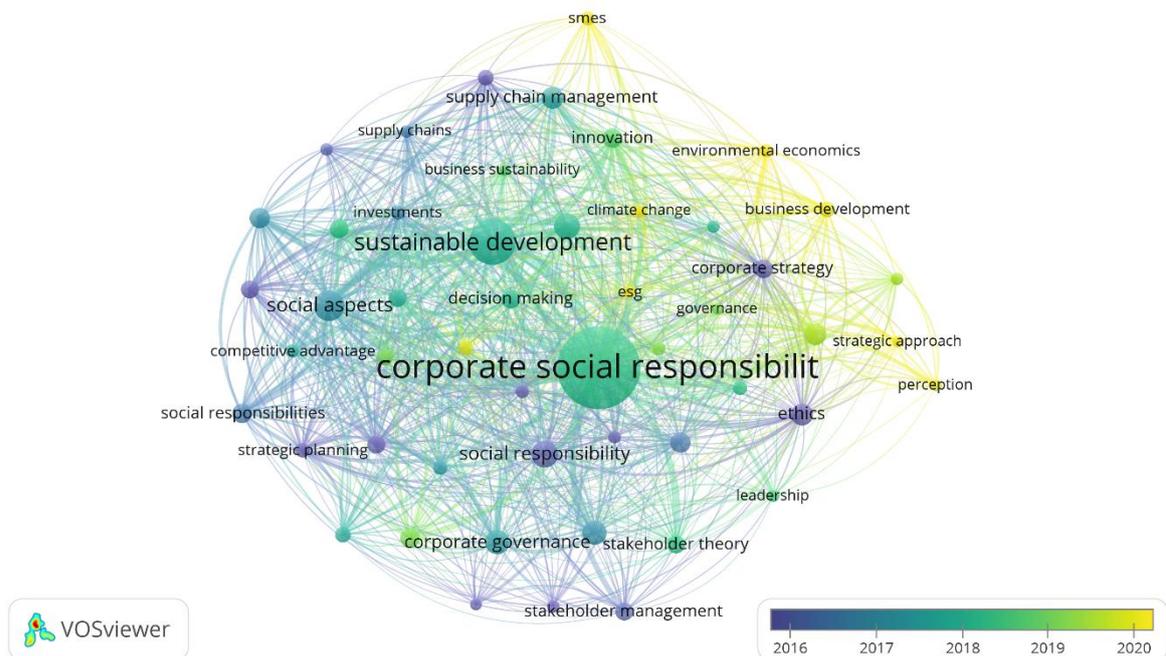


Figure 2. Overlay Visualization

Source: Data Analysis Result, 2026

Figure 2 presents the temporal evolution of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) research within the business and management field, where colors represent publication periods from earlier studies (blue/purple) to more recent themes (yellow). The keyword corporate social responsibility remains central across time, indicating its consistent importance as the core research focus. Earlier studies appear to concentrate on foundational concepts such as stakeholder management, corporate

governance, and ethics, which formed the theoretical basis for CSR scholarship. These earlier nodes suggest that initial research emphasized normative frameworks and governance mechanisms as the primary drivers of CSR implementation.

As the field evolved, the visualization shows a transition toward sustainability-oriented topics, particularly sustainable development, supply chain management, and innovation, which appear in green tones representing mid-period research. This shift highlights how CSR research moved beyond ethical discourse into operational and environmental integration, aligning with global sustainability agendas. The emergence of climate change, business sustainability, and ESG-related terms indicates that researchers increasingly linked CSR with environmental performance and long-term strategic value creation within organizations. More recent keywords, displayed in yellow, include business development, environmental economics, strategic approach, and perception, reflecting contemporary research directions. These themes suggest a growing emphasis on strategic transformation, managerial perception, and economic evaluation of CSR initiatives. The presence of SMEs also indicates expanding interest in how smaller firms adopt CSR practices within competitive markets.

3.3 Citation Analysis

Table 1. The Most Impactful Literatures

Citations	Authors and year	Title
2657	[10]	The business case for corporate social responsibility: A review of concepts, research and practice
2538	[11]	Corporate social responsibility theories: Mapping the territory
2500	[12]	Putting the s back in corporate social responsibility: A multilevel theory of social change in organizations
1952	[9]	Maximizing business returns to corporate social responsibility (CSR): The role of CSR communication
1656	[13]	The New Political Role of Business in a Globalized World: A Review of a New Perspective on CSR and its Implications for the Firm, Governance, and Democracy
1339	[14]	Toward a political conception of corporate responsibility: Business and society seen from a habermasian perspective
1180	[15]	Determinants of sustainability reporting: A review of results, trends, theory, and opportunities in an expanding field of research
942	[16]	Determinants of corporate social responsibility disclosure ratings by Spanish listed firms
941	[17]	Business cases for sustainability: The role of business model innovation for corporate sustainability
816	[18]	Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): Theory and practice in a developing country context

Source: Scopus, 2025

3.4 Density Visualization

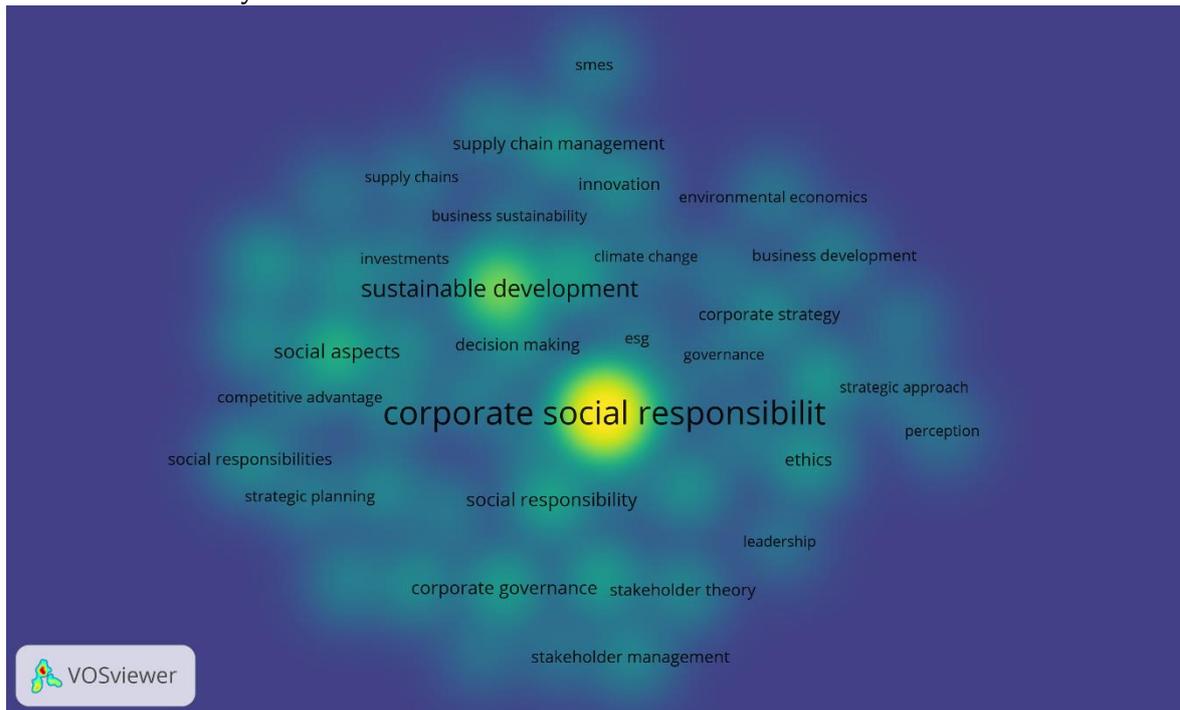


Figure 3. Density Visualization

Source: Data Analysis Result, 2026

Figure 3 highlights the concentration and intensity of research themes within the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) literature in business and management. The bright yellow area centered on corporate social responsibility indicates that this keyword dominates the scholarly landscape, reflecting its strong frequency and central role in connecting various related topics. Surrounding green areas such as sustainable development, social responsibility, ethics, and governance show that these themes are also highly studied and closely integrated with CSR discussions. This pattern suggests that the field has developed around a core sustainability-oriented discourse where ethical governance and social impact remain primary research pillars.

Meanwhile, areas with lower density, shown in darker colors, represent emerging or less saturated themes such as environmental economics, strategic approach, perception, leadership, and stakeholder management. Although these topics appear less intense, their proximity to the central cluster indicates growing relevance within contemporary CSR research. The distribution implies that while traditional discussions about governance and social responsibility remain dominant, newer managerial and strategic perspectives are gradually gaining attention, reflecting a shift toward performance-oriented and decision-making frameworks in CSR scholarship.

3.5 Co-Authorship Network

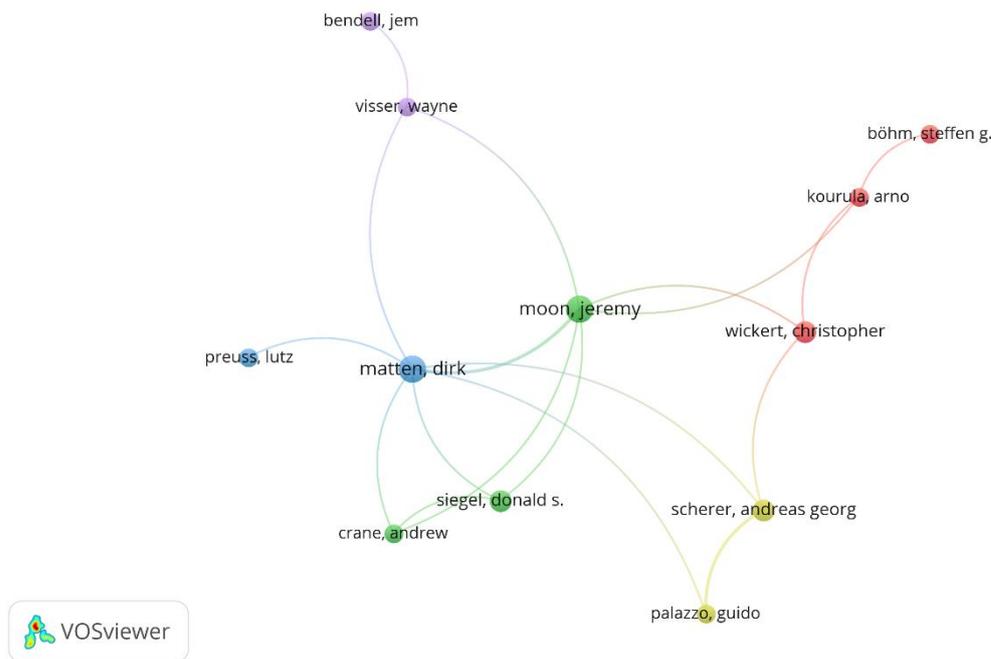


Figure 4. Author Visualization

Source: *Data Analysis Result, 2026*

Figure 4 reveals the collaborative structure of leading scholars in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) research within business and management studies. Jeremy Moon appears as a central bridging author, connecting several clusters and indicating his influential role in linking different research streams such as governance, institutional CSR, and strategic management perspectives. Other clusters show smaller collaborative groups, including scholars like Dirk Matten, Donald S. Siegel, and Andrew Crane, who are commonly associated with theoretical development and institutional approaches to CSR, while authors such as Christopher Wickert and Steffen Böhm form another cluster emphasizing critical and sustainability-oriented CSR research. The relatively fragmented structure suggests that although there are several prominent collaboration groups, CSR scholarship is still characterized by diverse intellectual communities rather than one tightly unified author network.

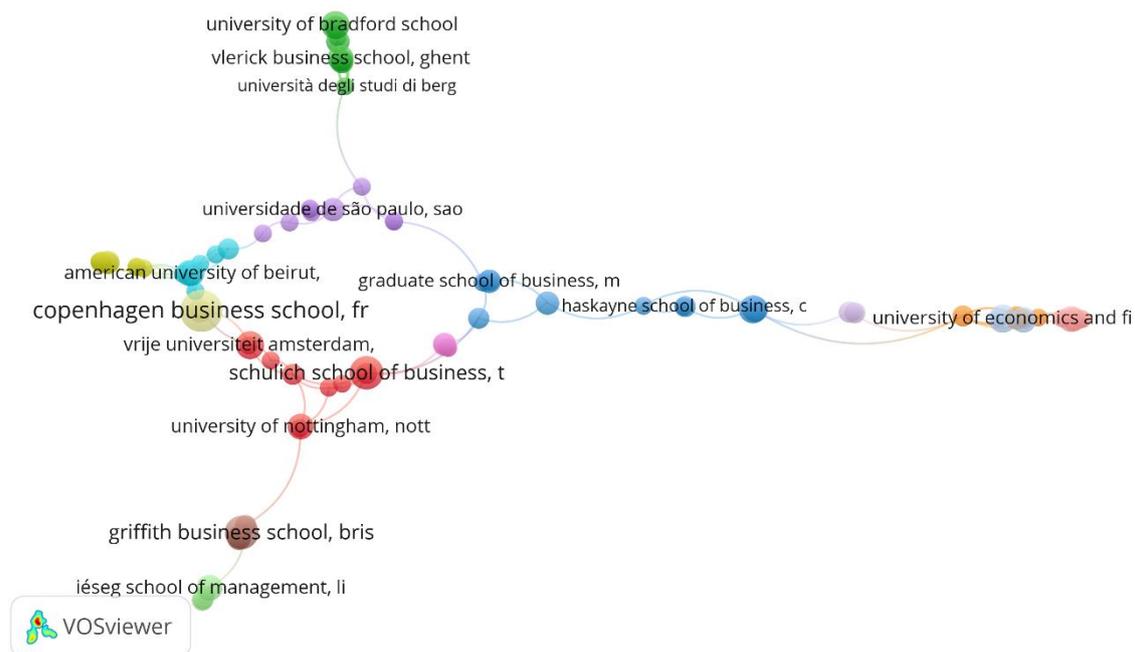


Figure 5. Affiliation Visualization

Source: Data Analysis Result, 2026

Figure 5 highlights the key universities and business schools contributing to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) research within business and management studies, revealing several interconnected academic clusters. Institutions such as Copenhagen Business School, Haskayne School of Business, and Schulich School of Business appear as important hubs that bridge different collaborative groups, indicating their strong role in international CSR scholarship. European institutions like Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, University of Nottingham, and Vlerick Business School form another closely linked cluster, reflecting regional collaboration patterns within European research networks. Meanwhile, the presence of universities from diverse regions, including Universidade de São Paulo and American University of Beirut, suggests that CSR research is globally distributed and supported by cross-continental academic partnerships.

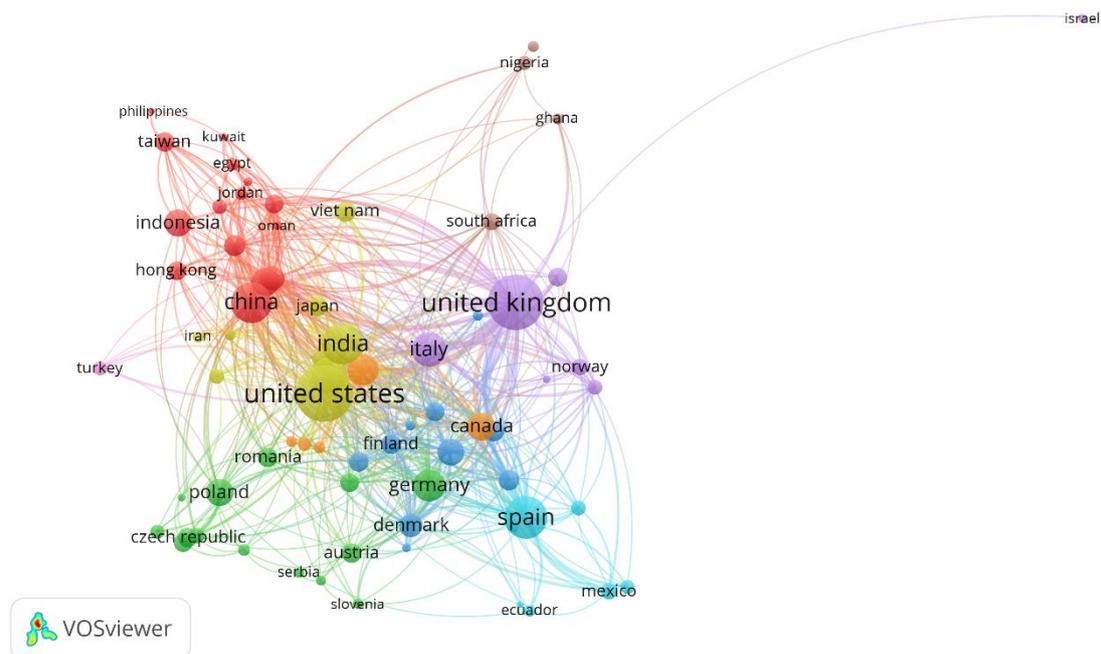


Figure 6. Country Visualization

Source: Data Analysis Result, 2026

Figure 6 illustrates the global distribution and partnerships in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) research within business and management studies. The United States, United Kingdom, and China emerge as dominant hubs, indicated by their large node sizes and dense interconnections, reflecting their significant publication output and strong international collaboration networks. European countries such as Spain, Germany, Italy, and Finland form another highly interconnected cluster, suggesting active regional cooperation and a strong European contribution to CSR scholarship. Meanwhile, Asian and developing countries—including Indonesia, India, Vietnam, and several Middle Eastern nations—are positioned around these central hubs, showing increasing participation in CSR research through collaborative ties rather than isolated production.

Discussion

The bibliometric analysis of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) research in business and management reveals a mature yet evolving intellectual landscape characterized by strong theoretical foundations and expanding strategic orientations. The keyword co-occurrence network demonstrates that CSR remains the central construct linking diverse themes such as sustainable development, governance, stakeholder theory, ethics, and innovation. This indicates that CSR scholarship has moved beyond its early philanthropic orientation toward a multidimensional framework that integrates environmental sustainability, organizational strategy, and performance considerations. The strong connection between CSR and sustainable development highlights the alignment of management research with global sustainability agendas, suggesting that CSR is increasingly positioned as a mechanism for achieving long-term business resilience.

The overlay visualization further shows the temporal evolution of CSR research, reflecting a shift from governance- and ethics-based discussions toward more strategic and economic perspectives. Earlier studies primarily focused on stakeholder management and corporate governance as normative frameworks, while more recent research emphasizes innovation, environmental economics, and strategic approaches. This evolution implies that CSR is no longer treated solely as a moral obligation but as a value-creating strategic capability. The emergence of

themes such as perception, business development, and SMEs also suggests that contemporary CSR research is becoming more practice-oriented, examining how organizations operationalize CSR to enhance competitiveness and legitimacy in dynamic markets.

The density visualization reinforces these findings by highlighting the concentration of research around core themes such as sustainable development, social responsibility, and governance. High-density areas indicate that the field has established strong conceptual anchors, while peripheral themes such as leadership and strategic approach represent emerging opportunities for future investigation. This pattern reflects a typical trajectory of academic maturity, where foundational theories stabilize while new managerial and operational perspectives begin to expand the research frontier. The integration of ESG-related discussions within the CSR landscape also demonstrates the convergence between traditional CSR frameworks and broader sustainability and accountability discourses in modern business research.

From an intellectual collaboration perspective, the co-authorship network suggests that CSR research is shaped by several influential scholarly communities rather than a single unified research cluster. Central scholars such as Jeremy Moon and Dirk Matten appear to bridge different research streams, indicating the importance of institutional theory and strategic CSR perspectives in shaping the field. However, the relatively fragmented collaboration patterns imply that CSR research remains interdisciplinary, drawing from diverse academic traditions including management, sustainability studies, and organizational theory. This fragmentation may encourage theoretical diversity but also suggests opportunities for more integrated and cross-disciplinary collaboration in future studies.

Institutional collaboration analysis highlights the dominant role of leading business schools and European research institutions in shaping CSR scholarship. Universities such as Copenhagen Business School and Schulich School of Business act as important connectors within the academic network, facilitating knowledge exchange across regions. The presence of institutions from emerging economies demonstrates that CSR research is becoming increasingly global, although collaboration patterns still appear concentrated among established academic hubs. Strengthening partnerships between developed and developing country institutions could foster more context-sensitive CSR research, particularly in emerging markets where sustainability challenges are often more pronounced.

The country collaboration network reveals that CSR research is strongly influenced by Western countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom, while China and India represent rapidly growing contributors. The inclusion of countries like Indonesia and Vietnam indicates the expanding relevance of CSR in developing economies, especially within the context of sustainable business transformation. This global diffusion suggests that CSR research is transitioning from a predominantly Western-centric discourse toward a more diverse and inclusive knowledge domain.

CONCLUSION

This bibliometric analysis demonstrates that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) research in business and management has evolved into a mature and multidimensional field that integrates sustainability, governance, stakeholder theory, and strategic management perspectives. The findings reveal that CSR remains a central concept connecting diverse research themes, while recent trends show a shift toward innovation, environmental economics, and strategic value creation. Collaboration networks indicate that influential scholars, leading business schools, and dominant countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom continue to shape the intellectual structure of CSR research, although participation from emerging economies is steadily increasing. The study highlights that CSR is no longer viewed merely as an ethical obligation but as a strategic and sustainability-oriented framework, suggesting that future research should focus on interdisciplinary integration, global collaboration, and practical applications that address complex business and societal challenges.

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