West Science Interdisciplinary Studies
Vol. 4, No. 06, June 2026: pp. 1042-1051

A Bibliometric Analysis of Cultural Change Management in HR

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ABSTRACT

The current study performs a bibliometric investigation of the field of cultural change management in HRM and investigates its intellectual structure, the process of thematic evolution, and the global collaboration pattern. With the help of bibliometrics methods, the analysis of keywords co-occurrence, density visualization, citation impact, co-authorship network, and country level of collaboration is carried out. The results show that the concept of HRM represents the main hub of scientific research and is closely related to concepts of organizational culture, change management, HRM, knowledge management, and information systems. Thematic evolution shows the evolution of the scientific field from the fundamental research on HRM and knowledge management towards research on organizational behavior and organizational culture and more recent research on digital transformation in terms of artificial intelligence, HR analytics, and IT-enabled HRM. The citation analysis suggests that most influential papers combine various disciplines like healthcare, operations management, and organizational studies. Finally, the collaboration network shows that the UK and the USA are leaders in terms of scientific production, whereas Australia, Germany, and Netherlands are intermediators for other countries in the field.

Keywords: *Human Resource Management, Cultural Change Management, Bibliometric Analysis, Organizational Culture, VOSviewer*

1. INTRODUCTION

The modern organization works in an environment where there is fast technological development, globalization, demographic trends, and changing expectations of employees. Such developments have led to the requirement of organizational structures, processes, and cultures to be constantly transformed in order to ensure competitiveness and sustainability [1], [2]. The organizational culture is viewed as the combination of the values, beliefs, assumptions, and norms of the organization, which help control the behavior of employees [3]. Cultural transformation in relation to organizational transformations like digitalization, restructuring, mergers and acquisitions, and sustainability has become a strategic issue in Human Resource Management (HRM). HRM specialists are required to manage cultural transformation processes in order to align the behavior of employees with organizational values and objectives.

Management and HRM literature has recognized the notion of cultural change management as an important area since there have been many cases where organizational change initiatives failed not because of operational but cultural reasons. According to research, organizational culture has a significant effect on commitment, innovation capacity, knowledge sharing, and organizational effectiveness [4]. Therefore, cultural change needs to be managed through purposeful measures such as leadership development, communication approach, employees' involvement, talent management, and organizational learning. HRM is responsible for developing the necessary policies and practices that would facilitate cultural adjustment and change in behavior. It is vital to understand how cultural change management is addressed in HRM as organizations are becoming more complex.

It is also worth mentioning that the increasing significance of cultural change management is evident in the increased number of academic studies in the last twenty years. Studies have considered a range of factors in the context of culture changes such as change readiness,

organizational development, employee resistance, leadership influence, diversity management, digital transformation, and strategic HR practices [5]. The advent of a new reality of the workplace environment, especially the one that has been affected by the Industry 4.0 technology revolution and the phenomenon of remote working, has led to a broadening of the field of cultural change studies. Today, it is necessary for organizations to develop cultures that promote agility, innovation, inclusiveness, and learning. Such developments have resulted in a rather fragmented academic literature on the topic.

In reaction to the growing complexity of scientific information, bibliometric analysis has proven to be an effective tool to conduct systematic assessments of research advancements in the chosen field. Bibliometric tools allow scientists to analyze the publication output, citation network, collaborative relations, and themes of scientific publications in a quantifiable manner [6]. As opposed to conventional literature reviews that mainly focus on qualitative evaluation, bibliometric analysis gives scholars an opportunity to get objective data about the intellectual landscape and development of a certain research field. Thanks to citation analysis, co-authorship analysis, co-citation analysis, and keyword co-occurrence mapping, bibliometric studies may identify influential works and new areas of research. In recent years, bibliometrics have been widely used in HRM, organizational behavior, leadership, and change management research.

While the relevance of cultural change management in HRM is increasingly recognized, there is an absence of bibliometric evidence in the extant literature that could systematically examine the intellectual structure of this discipline. The current body of knowledge in this domain has concentrated on the issues related to either organizational culture or change management without offering an in-depth examination of the development process of cultural change management research. In addition, the adoption of the latest digital technologies, sustainability efforts, diversity and inclusion programs, and global HRM practices has offered new grounds for conducting research in this area. A bibliometric study could provide insight into the theoretical roots, research topics, most important scholarly works, and trends in the field. These findings would be highly useful both for researchers who wish to expand their theoretical knowledge about the subject and HR managers needing practical guidance on cultural change management.

Despite the rising importance of cultural change management as a subject matter in Human Resource Management, current knowledge in this area is not well-organized and spread across various academic fields, theoretical backgrounds, and organizational settings. The fast proliferation of publications on organizational culture, change management, leadership, employee behavior, and HR activities has created an intricate knowledge base which is hard to summarize using traditional review techniques. As a result, there is no comprehensive overview of the intellectual roots, key authors, collaboration patterns, thematic development, and current research tendencies in the area of cultural change management research in Human Resource Management. Such a lack of information makes it hard for researchers to detect new areas for investigation and prevents practitioners from accessing summarized information needed for efficient cultural transformation activities. This paper will try to conduct a systematic analysis of the scientific field of cultural change management research in Human Resource Management using the bibliometric method.

2. METHODS

This research utilizes the bibliometric analysis technique to investigate the development and intellectual structure of research on cultural change management in the realm of Human Resource

Management (HRM). The bibliometric analysis technique is an evaluation method based on the quantitative analysis of scientific publications to analyze the patterns, connections, and trends of a certain literature field [6]. The bibliographic sources were gathered from the Scopus database, which was chosen due to the fact that it is one of the largest and most inclusive multidisciplinary citations databases comprising numerous high-quality peer-reviewed journals, conference papers, and scholarly publications. The search was done through the use of appropriate keywords regarding "cultural change management" and "human resource management," used for searching articles' titles, abstracts, and keywords. The search was restricted to the English language documents only. After data screening and filtering, the final set of data was downloaded in the CSV file format, including citation details, authors, affiliation, abstracts, and keywords.

The bibliometric analysis and mapping were done using the software program known as VOSviewer, a commonly used program to create and visualize bibliometric networks [7]. The use of VOSviewer was done to analyze co-authorship, co-citation, citation, and keyword co-occurrence to determine the key authors, institutions, countries, and clusters of research themes in the field. The network visualization technique was used to find out the relationship between research elements, while the overlay visualization technique was used to study the time-based development of research themes.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

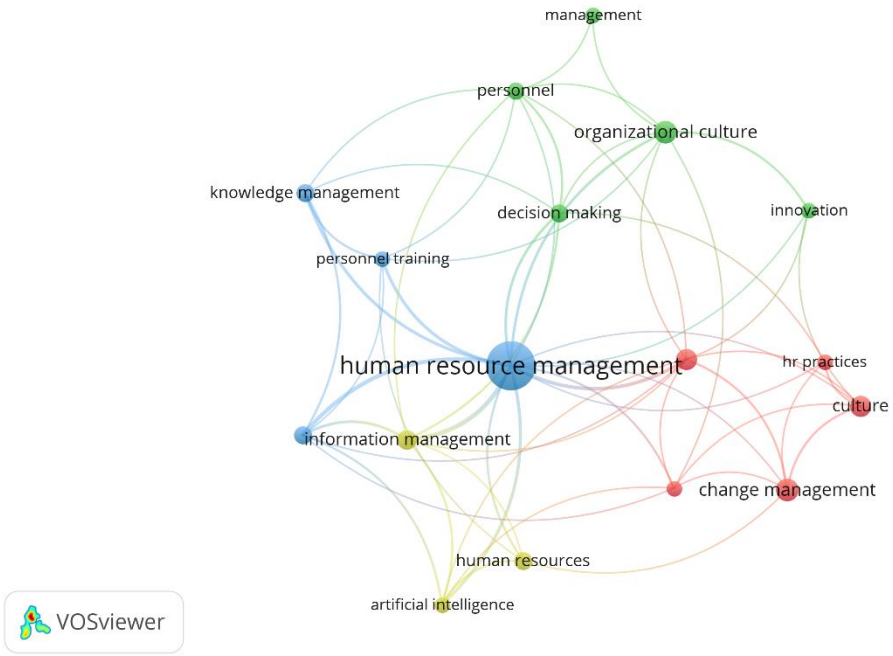

Figure 1. Network Visualization
Source: Data Analysis Result, 2026

Figure 1 network shows the intellectual structure of HRM research in connection with cultural change and change management. In the middle of the figure, the keyword "human resource management" is presented as the most dominant and frequent keyword and hence works as the major concept. The centrality of the keyword suggests that the majority of thematic areas in the dataset are either directly or indirectly related to the concept of HRM. This shows that research on cultural change management is mainly carried out under the umbrella of HRM. The first important group is the organizational culture and management group (in green color), with concepts like organizational culture, management, people, decision-making, and innovation. This cluster is associated with the strategic and behavioral approach to HRM, in which the cultural alignment is

considered a managerial process that affects decision-making process and effectiveness of organizations. The fact that the innovation concept is close means that the cultural change is often considered from the perspective of its ability to foster adaptability and transformation of organizations.

The other group comprises the change management-hr practices group (red) with keywords like change management, culture, and hr practices. This particular cluster brings to light the practical dimension of the domain as far as cultural change through interventions and HR is concerned. The connection between change management and culture implies that organizational culture is considered both as an input and an output of change efforts, indicating that hr practices serve as the means of implementing change.

The third cluster covers knowledge and information systems in HR (blue/yellow interface) encompassing such topics as knowledge management, personnel training, information management, and human resources management. This cluster reveals increased interdisciplinary interaction between HRM and knowledge-based approaches. The inclusion of personnel training and information management implies the importance of cultural change being facilitated through capabilities development and data-based HR systems. The inclusion of artificial intelligence on the periphery shows the emergence of a weakly integrated research direction regarding digital HR transformation.

Network structure shows that cultural change management in HRM is a multidimensional domain consisting of three major perspectives – strategic (culture and innovation), operational (change management and HR practices), and capability-based (training, knowledge, information systems). Density and centrality of HRM show its maturity as a core field, whereas peripheral nodes like artificial intelligence are indicative of the early thematic development stage. Moreover, one can see from the map that further research will be more focused on the digitalization and HR transformation based on AI technologies, yet still framed by HRM and organizational culture.

3.1 Overlay Visualization

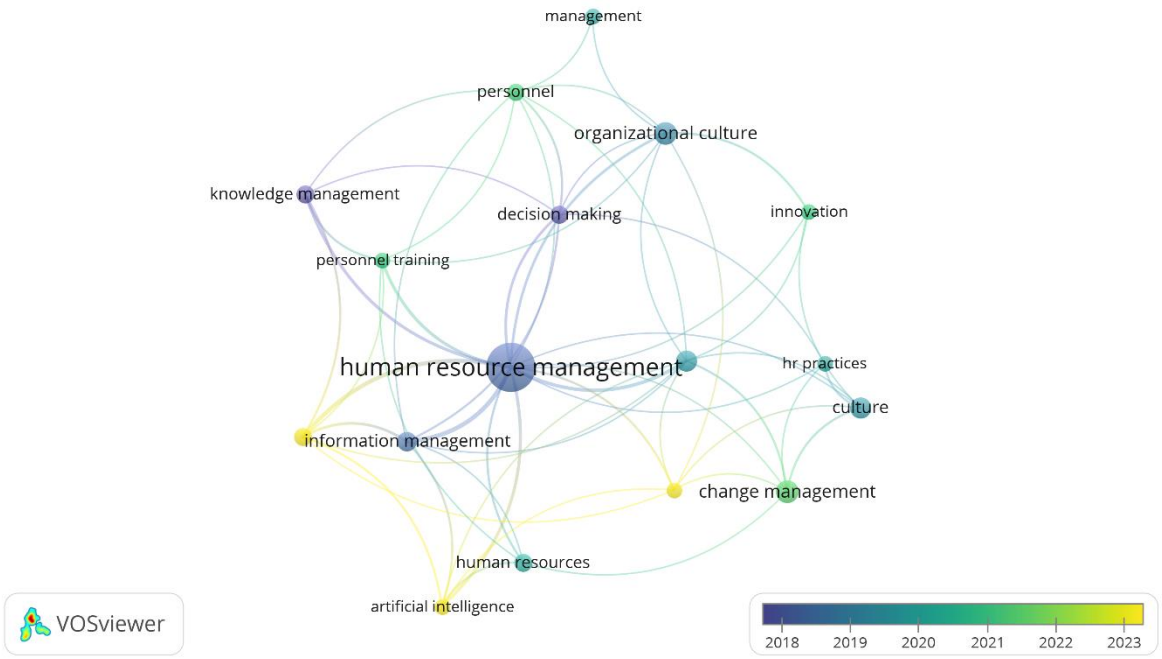

Figure 2. Overlay Visualization
Source: Data Analysis Result, 2026

In the graph, the field of human resource management has been marked out as the most powerful and most connected node, which means that it is the structure of the literature under study. From this core, the network has been structured into a number of clusters with different but related research fields: (i) organizational culture and management (organizational culture, management, personnel, decision making, innovation), (ii) change management and human resource practices (change management, culture, HR practices), and (iii) knowledge-information systems in human resources management (knowledge management, information management, personnel training).

Considering the historical aspect (coloring for 2018-2023), the development of the area can be easily identified. Older studies (bluish colors, approximately 2018-2019) mostly deal with structural constructs like human resources management, knowledge management, and information management. That means that the early stage of development was characterized by attempts to understand how HRM systems can be systematized. The middle stage (greenish colors, approximately 2020-2021) is characterized by such topics as organizational culture, decision making, personnel, and management. It is obvious that there is a trend towards behavioral interpretation of HRM systems. The latest advances (yellow shades, ~2022-2023) relate to artificial intelligence, change management, and human resources and point to a developing trend towards digital and transformational directions. The inclusion of artificial intelligence on the periphery but within the latest color scale implies that this is a relatively new but fast-developing area of research in the sphere of HRM.

3.2 Citation Analysis

Table 1. The Most Impactful Literatures

Citations	Authors and year	Title
246	[8]	Herbicide-resistant crops: Utilities and limitations for herbicide-resistant weed management
245	[9]	From a blame culture to a just culture in health care
220	[10]	Critical success factors for the effective implementation of Lean Sigma: Results from an empirical study and agenda for future research
148	[11]	Herbicide resistant weeds: A call to integrate conventional agricultural practices, molecular biology knowledge and new technologies
129	[12]	Big data and HR analytics in the digital era
128	[13]	The role of IT-based technologies on the management of human resources in the COVID-19 era
102	[14]	Organisational effectiveness and agility
99	[15]	A framework for the human resources role in managing culture in mergers and acquisitions
88	[16]	The vital liaison role of host country nationals in MNC knowledge management
47	[17]	Human resource management in China: what are the key issues confronting organizations and how can research help?

Source: Scopus, 2026

From the distribution of citations shown in Table 1, there is a very heterogenous intellectual framework whereby influence at the foundation level occurs in only a few articles that have received many citations in areas such as agriculture, health care, operations management, and HR analytics. In fact, the first and second most cited articles ([8]– 246 citations, Khatri, Brown & Hicks, 2009 - 245 citations) come from outside the realm of traditional HRM, indicating that there is an interdisciplinary approach to the theoretical foundation of cultural change management, which includes systems of herbicide resistance and “just culture” in health care.

The second group of high-cited mid-range papers, including [10] on Lean Sigma and [11] on integrated weed management systems, contributes to the further strengthening of the diffusion of concepts of process optimization and systems thinking into organizational sciences. Both papers are focused on issues of efficiency, integration and multi-systemic coordination – concepts that are quite close to those of HR-led cultural change and transformation. Another example is provided by [15], as well as [16]. Some more recent significant contributions, specifically those of [12] and [13], reflect an obvious move towards digital HRM transformation, pointing to HR analytics, big data, and IT-based management in the age of and beyond the COVID-19 period. [14] also reinforce the move towards agility, organizational effectiveness, and context-specific HRM issues in emerging countries, e.g., China.

3.3 Density Visualization

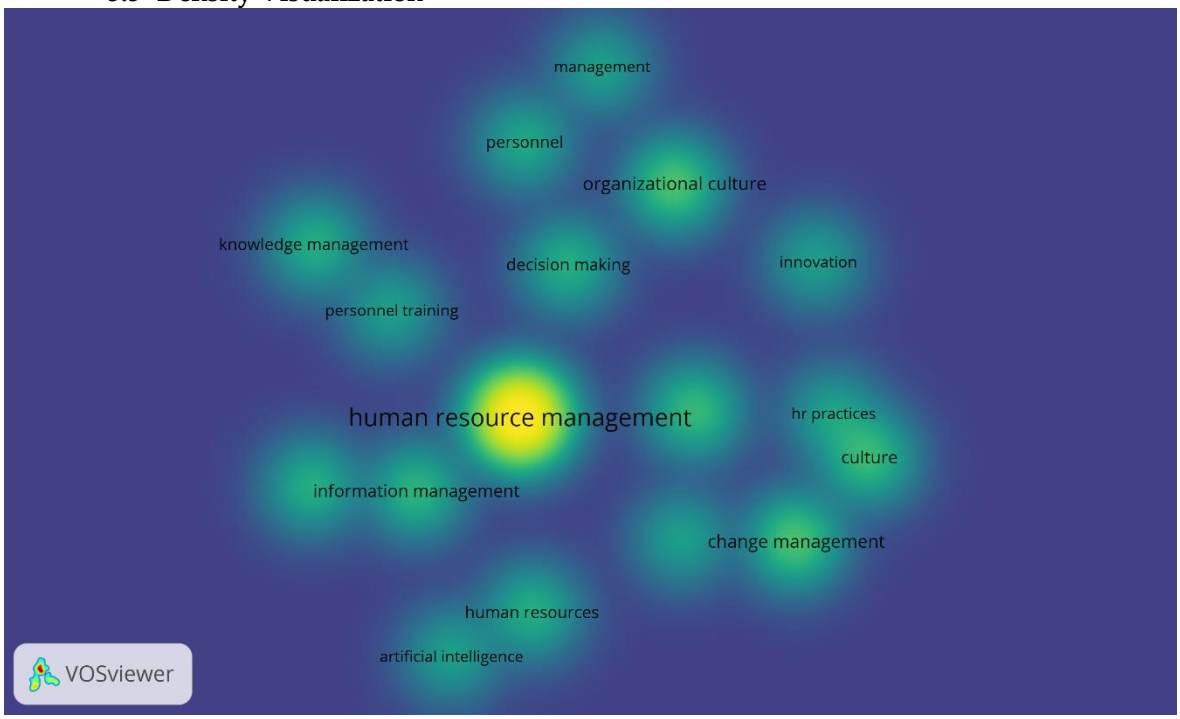

Figure 3. Density Visualization
Source: Data Analysis Result, 2026

From the density mapping it is clear that human resource management (HRM) holds the dominant and the most impactful place within the conceptual framework since it is placed within the zone of high intensity. It validates the idea that HRM acts as the thematic pivot of the different subfields of research on cultural change management. Around this central theme there are moderately dense zones like organizational culture, HRM practices, change management, and information management which implies that these concepts form the applied knowledge base of the transformation process. From a structural point of view, the diagram presents a multi-layered architecture of knowledge. The medium density clusters like knowledge management, decision making, personnel training, and innovation can be seen as facilitating structures for cultural change through HR. They are enabling capabilities and not the primary constructs; it seems to be the case that the literature sees cultural change as a result of HR capabilities and decision making processes.

3.4 Co-Authorship Analysis

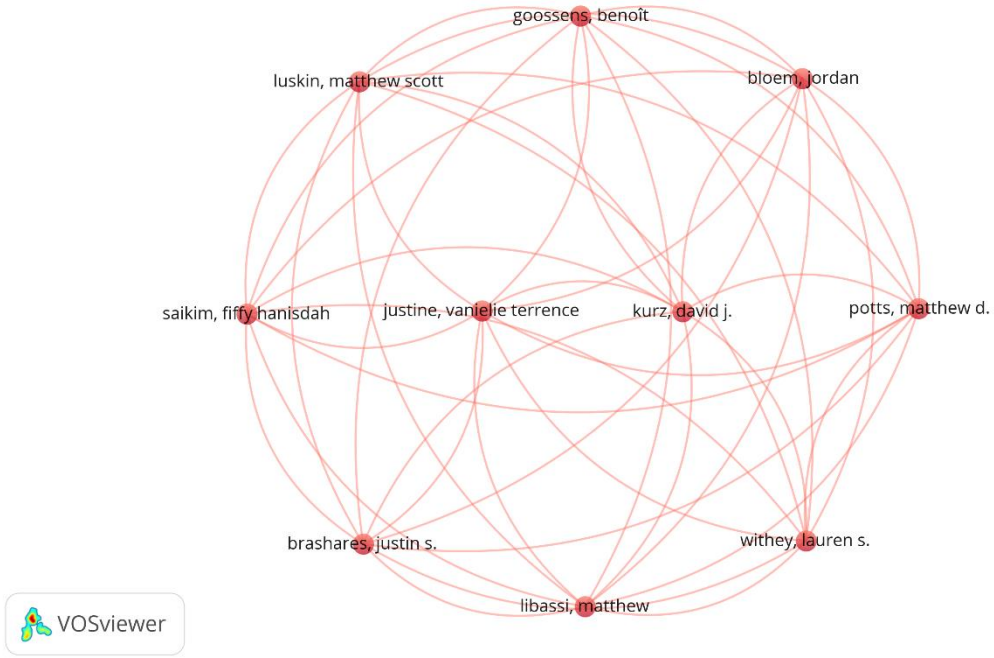

Figure 4. Author Visualization
Source: Data Analysis Result, 2026

The network visualization is an illustration of a very interconnected structure of author co-citations and collaboration in the area of cultural and change management in HRM. Nodes like Kurzdavid J., Potts Matthew D., Justine Vanelie Terrence, and Libassi Matthew hold quite central positions in the network through high-density connectivity, implying that such authors serve as the intellectual focal point of the literature. Their constant occurrence in citation with other authors reveals that their contributions are extensively cited in studies focusing on organizational behavior and leadership issues. The circular pattern of connections suggests the absence of hierarchy in the influence exercised among the authors. On the other hand, peripheral but still relevant authors including Goossens Benoît, Bloem Jordan, Lusk Matthew Scott, Saikim Fiffy Hanisdah, and Brasheres Justin S., help to form a bigger multidisciplinary knowledge base, connecting neighboring fields of research to the focal one. Overall, the map demonstrates a well-developed and coherent system of thoughts, featuring high inter-citation links among the authors, implying the relative consolidation of the research field.

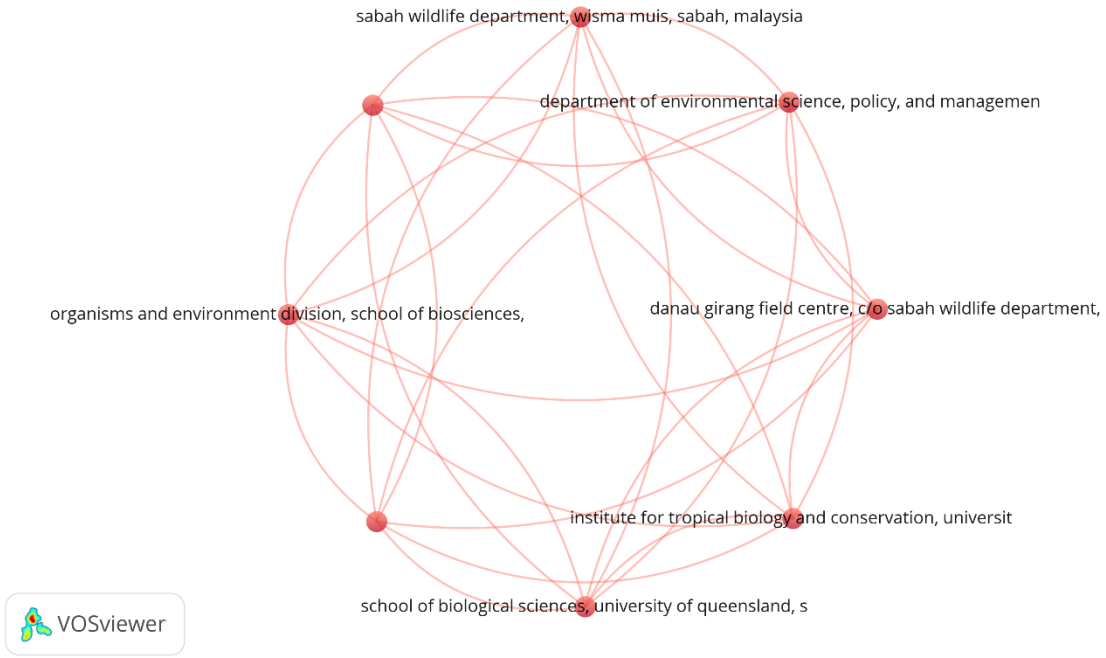

Figure 5. Institution Visualization
Source: Data Analysis Result, 2026

The network visualization is a visual representation of co-authorship among institutions in environmental and biodiversity research, with a heavy emphasis on tropical ecology and conservation research. Some of the nodes that can be seen in the visualization include the Sabah Wildlife Department (Wisma Muis & Danau Girang Field Centre), and the Institute for Tropical Biology and Conservation at Universiti Malaysia Sabah, showing that Malaysian field conservation agencies are the most central part of this research network. The second important cluster includes international academic organizations like the University of Queensland, School of Biological Sciences, that demonstrates abundant connectivity with conservation institutions in Malaysia. This indicates strong international collaboration, where global research universities offer methodologies, analysis and theory while the local organizations provide ecological access and expertise. The abundant connectivity indicates an integrated process of field to academic research rather than isolated activities of individual organizations.

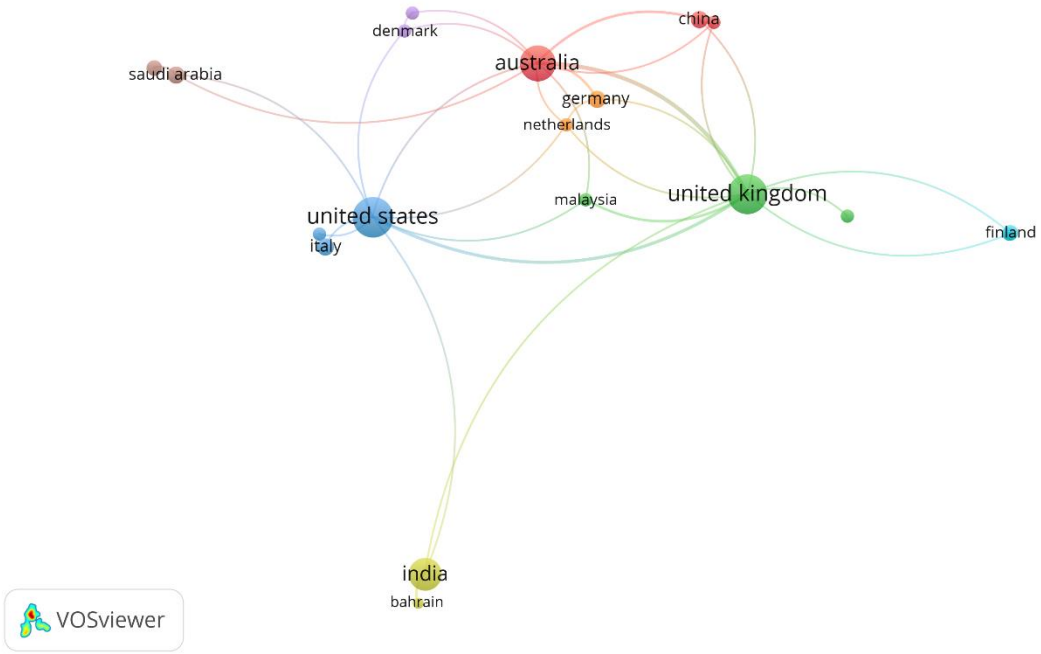

Figure 6. Country Visualization
Source: Data Analysis Result, 2026

Figure 6 below shows a research structure that is globally spread out but regionally concentrated with the United Kingdom and the United States acting as the two main central hubs. The United Kingdom stands out as the most well-connected node, being very much associated with countries like the United States, Finland, Malaysia, the Netherlands, and Germany, making it act as one of the important coordinating centers in international research collaboration. The United States is shown as one of the important hubs with associations to Australia, Italy, and Saudi Arabia among other European countries. The second level of collaborations is occupied by nations like Australia, Germany, the Netherlands, and China, which bridge Anglo-American nodes to involve the whole of Europe and Asia. Australia, especially, acts as an important broker to bring UK and the US together with their Asian counterparts like China and Malaysia. This shows that Australia acts as an important brokerage nation for academic exchange between regions. Peripheral nodes such as India, Bahrain, Denmark, and Saudi Arabia exhibit relatively weaker connectivity and more limited collaborative ties, indicating emerging or less integrated participation in the research field.

CONCLUSION

The bibliometric study on cultural change management in relation to Human Resource Management (HRM) presents a clear structure of an evolving intellectual domain. The findings show that HRM still acts as the key concept and has strong connections with organizational culture, change management, HRM practices, knowledge management, and information systems. In addition, it becomes evident that the visualizations of co-occurrence and density of terms show the high integration of the domain, where the processes of cultural change become seen as multidimensional involving strategy, behavior, and technology. At the same time, the research direction changes from the initial focus on HRM and knowledge management to organizational culture and decision-making and, lately, digital transformations like artificial intelligence and HR analytics. Regarding intellectual impact and the form of collaboration, both citation analysis and network analysis show that there is an interdisciplinary base for this topic, where important works from the other fields outside the scope of HRM greatly contribute to theory formation. At the international level, it can be seen that the collaboration network shows a high contribution from the UK and USA, where

countries such as Australia and some European countries serve as mediators between the two and other parts of the world.

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