

STRATEGY, CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY: a bibliometric analysis

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Introdução

Recent strategy evolution emphasizes flexibility, benchmarking, and core competencies (Porter, 1996), with Barney's resource-based view (1991) pivotal. CSR and sustainability rise in importance. Porter (1998) underscores strategy's role in competition, while CSR (Carroll, 1979) expands beyond economics. Sustainability includes social, economic, and environmental aspects. Research links CSR and sustainability to strategy amid rising concerns. Existing research lacks integration, prompting a review to identify trends in strategy, CSR, and sustainability literature.

Problema de Pesquisa e Objetivo

This study aims to integrate literature on strategy, CSR, and environmental sustainability using bibliometrics. It analyzes the structure and development of these fields, identifying research gaps and offering insights on strategy's role in CSR and sustainability. Bibliometrics is chosen for its ability to systematically analyze academic literature. The study provides a structured view of these concepts and intellectual guidance for future research, facilitating informed discussions on strategic objectives, social responsibility, and environmental sustainability.

Fundamentação Teórica

RBV theory states competitive advantage relies on valuable, rare, hard-to-imitate, and organized resources. Companies must focus on these for sustainability (Barney, 1991; Grant, 1991) and consider resource diversity (Peteraf, 1993). CSR encompasses economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities, contributing to sustainable development. It benefits companies by enhancing reputation and loyalty. Carroll's (1991) CSR Pyramid guides ethical approaches. Organizational responsibility has evolved from profit-centric to holistic, acknowledging social impacts as indicators of success.

Metodologia

The text discusses the use of bibliometrics in management, strategy, and CSR research. It explains co-citation and bibliographic coupling methods and their combined benefits. The study used Scopus and VOSViewer software for a comprehensive analysis. The research identified key papers, authors, universities, journals, and countries in the field, offering valuable insights for knowledge advancement.

Análise dos Resultados

Bibliometric analysis summarizes the bibliometric and intellectual structure of a field, examining the social and structural relationships among different research components (Donthu et al., 2021). The descriptive analyses are conducted, encompassing most cited authors, papers, prominent journals and countries with the highest publication output, and frequently used keywords, co-citation analysis, and bibliographic coupling. Co-citation analysis was conducted with 51 papers generating 3 clusters; and bibliographic coupling analysis was conducted with 153 papers generating 5 papers.

Conclusão

This study used bibliometric analysis to integrate literature on strategy, CSR, and sustainability. It identified key research clusters including CSR's impact on business performance, and CSR in the context of financial performance. The study also emphasized the focus on public policies promoting sustainability in the industry. However, limitations include the use of one database, Scopus. Future research should delve deeper into these topics and explore the connection between public policies and CSR strategies in organizations.

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Palavras Chave

Corporate Social Responsibility, Strategy, Environmental Sustainability

STRATEGY, CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY: a bibliometric analysis

1. INTRODUCTION

The concepts related to strategy have evolved and improved in recent years. For nearly two decades, managers have been learning new rules in strategy, such as organizational flexibility, continuous benchmarking, and the cultivation of core competencies in relation to competitors (Porter, 1996). Currently, the resource-based view of strategy, as proposed by Barney (1991), is essential in the field of strategy. Simultaneously, corporate social responsibility (CSR) and environmental sustainability have emerged as important concepts in new areas of academic research and management practices for the 21st century.

Strategy, as outlined by Porter (1998), is central to achieving organizational objectives in a competitive environment, while CSR, as proposed by Carroll (1979), can be understood as the expansion of the business role beyond its economic scope and legal obligations, assuming that companies must also consider the social and ethical implications of their actions. Sustainability, applied to the context of organizations, involves relationships between social, economic, and environmental aspects, aiming for the security and well-being of present and future generations through rational and conscious use of available resources (Kuzma, Doliviera & Silva, 2017). This interconnectedness among strategy, CSR, and environmental sustainability sets the stage for the ensuing research.

In a context where sustainability and social responsibility issues are gaining increasing prominence in business management, previous studies highlight the relationship between these terms and organizational strategy. Schmitt *et al.* (2013), conducting a bibliometric study on sustainability as a competitive advantage, identified that most articles associate sustainability with government regulations and global concerns, encouraging companies to adopt sustainable practices due to societal pressure. Furthermore, the study confirms the link between sustainability as a competitive advantage and the concepts of development, management, CSR, and the environment (Schmitt *et al.*, 2013).

Paz and Kipper (2016), in another study, highlight the growing importance of sustainability for organizations, pointing out advantages such as improved financial performance, innovation stimulation, enhanced management, and stakeholder engagement. However, they also identify two critical challenges: the need to assess an organization's maturity in adopting sustainable practices and the preparation of human resources for this organizational change (Paz & Kipper, 2016).

In these evaluated researches, reviewing and synthesizing existing academic contributions on strategy, CSR and environmental sustainability became imperative to identify gaps and trends in the literature. Despite the growing interest and progress in understanding these topics, past research faces some notable limitations. Some studies are limited in scope, focusing on isolated aspects of these concepts, while others lack an integrated approach that considers the complex interactions between strategy, CSR, and environmental sustainability. Moreover, the lack of a unified conceptual framework hinders knowledge synthesis and the identification of relevant gaps in the literature.

Given the presented context, **the purpose of this study is to integrate the literature on strategy, corporate social responsibility, and environmental sustainability, which have so far been defined disparately, using bibliometrics as an analytical tool.** Through this bibliometric analysis, the aim is to create a conceptual framework that can guide future research opportunities in the field and thus contribute to advancing knowledge in the field of administration.

To achieve this objective, this research aims to answer the following research question: how is the literature on strategy, CSR, and environmental sustainability structured, and what

can be expected for the development of this field of study? The results of this investigation provide valuable insights into the organization and evolution of these fields of study, as well as help identify research areas that require more attention. Additionally, this study provides a reflection on how strategy can be employed in the realm of CSR in the transition or expansion of management practices focused on sustainability.

The choice of bibliometrics as the methodology is justified by its ability to systematically analyze large volumes of academic literature and map relationships between key concepts and authors (Van Eck & Waltman, 2014). Bibliometric studies can significantly enhance field knowledge, enabling and empowering scholars to gain a holistic perspective, identify research gaps, and conduct contextually grounded critical assessments of research issues (Arora & Chakraborty, 2021).

The main contributions of this study lie in its ability to offer a comprehensive and structured view of the current literature on strategy, CSR, and environmental sustainability, while also providing an intellectual map that can guide future investigations and discussions. This research aims to deepen the understanding of these interconnected concepts and promote more informed and effective discussions about how organizations can achieve strategic objectives while fulfilling their social responsibilities and contributing to environmental sustainability.

The following are the concepts that underpin the present study. Subsequently, the methodology is presented, outlining the path taken to obtain the results discussed and analyzed in the subsequent section.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, the main concepts and theoretical discussions on which this study is based are presented.

2.1 Resource-based View (RBV)

According to the RBV theory (Barney, 1991; Grant, 1991), a company's competitive advantage is determined by its ability to create, develop, and utilize valuable, rare, difficult-to-imitate, and organized resources (VRIO). Valuable resources are those that allow the company to create value for its customers, while rare resources are those not easily available to other companies. Difficult-to-imitate resources are those that other companies cannot easily replicate, while organized resources are those that are effectively integrated and coordinated by the company. Wernerfelt (1984) presents one of the earliest formulations of the RBV theory, emphasizing the importance of a company's internal resources and capabilities in determining its competitive advantage.

The RBV theory suggests that companies should focus on developing resources and capabilities that meet these VRIO criteria to attain sustainable competitive advantage. Additionally, the RBV theory highlights the importance of resource and capability heterogeneity among companies, meaning the significance of each company possessing unique and distinct resources and capabilities compared to its competitors (Peteraf, 1993). The RBV theory emphasizes the importance of a company's internal resources and capabilities in determining its competitive advantage and suggests that companies should concentrate on developing resources and capabilities that meet the VRIO criteria to achieve sustainable competitive advantage (Barney, 1991).

2.2 Corporate Social Responsibility

The concept of CSR refers to the actions that companies take to contribute to the sustainable development of society and the environment (Carroll, 1991; McWilliams & Siegel, 2001; Wood, 1991). CSR is composed of four components: economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities (Carroll, 1991; McWilliams & Siegel, 2001; Wood, 1991). Economic responsibility refers to the company's obligation to generate profit and create value for its shareholders (Carroll, 1991; McWilliams & Siegel, 2001). Legal responsibility pertains

to compliance with applicable laws and regulations (Carroll, 1991; McWilliams & Siegel, 2001). Ethical responsibility relates to the company's moral and ethical behavior toward its stakeholders, including employees, customers, suppliers, and the broader community (Carroll, 1991; McWilliams & Siegel, 2001). Philanthropic responsibility involves the voluntary actions of the company to contribute to society and the environment (Carroll, 1991; McWilliams & Siegel, 2001).

Companies have a significant impact on society and the environment, and CSR can help them contribute to sustainable development through their business activities and voluntary actions (Carroll & Shabana, 2010). CSR can also bring benefits to companies, such as enhancing their reputation, increasing customer loyalty, and improving employee satisfaction. The Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility is a framework that illustrates how the four components of CSR are interconnected and how companies can progress towards a more ethical and responsible approach (Carroll, 1991). The base of the pyramid is economic responsibility, followed by legal responsibility, ethical responsibility, and philanthropic responsibility (Carroll, 1991).

The CSR Pyramid serves as a valuable tool for companies to assess their approach to CSR and identify areas for improvement (Carroll, 1991). In summary, CSR is an important concept that refers to the actions companies take to contribute to the sustainable development of society and the environment (Carroll & Shabana, 2010).

2.3 Organizational Sustainability

The evolution of organizational responsibility over the decades reveals a trajectory of transformation and growth. From its early origins to its current place in the framework of business thinking, this evolution has tracked the shifting perspectives on the role of companies in society.

In its origins, organizational responsibility was mostly perceived as an economic imperative, aligning with the ideas of the time of *laissez-faire* commerce (Bowen, 1953). The primary goal was the pursuit of profits and growth, relegating social and environmental concerns to a secondary role. However, the landscape began to change as the implications of corporate actions became more evident.

The shift towards organizational social responsibility occurred as companies began to understand that their operations do not take place in an isolated vacuum but rather within an interconnected social and environmental fabric. This movement was catalyzed by voices from academia, civil society, and visionary leaders who called for a more holistic and sustainable approach. Currently, organizational responsibility is solidifying as a central pillar of business strategy. Conscious companies not only acknowledge their role in social and environmental issues but also realize that adopting responsible practices is crucial for building a strong reputation, engaging employees, and satisfying consumers.

The evolution of organizational responsibility essentially reflects a paradigm shift. From a sole focus on financial gains to a mindset that embraces social and environmental impact as indicators of success, this trajectory highlights the ongoing maturation of business awareness regarding its role in global society. By acknowledging their responsibilities not only as profit generators but also as agents of positive change, organizations immerse themselves more deeply in the social fabric, playing a more active role in shaping a sustainable future.

3. METHODS

Research in the fields of management, strategy, and corporate social responsibility has evolved, keeping pace with the changes and challenges faced by organizations in pursuit of corporate social responsibility. Given the increasing complexity of administrative-social phenomena and the proliferation of studies and publications, the choice of appropriate research methodology becomes crucial to ensure the relevance and validity of the obtained results. In

this context, bibliometrics has been recognized as the most suitable research approach for analyzing and synthesizing the accumulated knowledge in these areas.

Bibliometric analysis serves as a robust source for examining scholarly production, tracing the evolution of themes, theories, and approaches over time, and is particularly relevant in dynamic fields with extensive publication (Goyal & Kumar, 2021). Moreover, bibliometrics facilitates the identification of collaboration networks among researchers and institutions, shedding light on the flow of ideas and influences (Broadus, 1987). Through the analysis of citations, co-citations, and bibliographic coupling, this approach enables the identification of influential authors and papers, contributing to the understanding of contemporary debates and the recognition of key thinkers and essential concepts (Sáez-Ortuño et al., 2023).

Co-citation is a powerful technique for revealing intellectual interconnections among authors and works by analyzing frequent and joint citations in studies. This results in identifying clusters of thinkers and inherently related concepts, which, through conceptual network mapping, allows for delineating clusters of authors and papers that support interconnected lines of thought (Small, 1973). Besides identifying debates and theoretical streams around specific topics, co-citation assists in understanding various existing perspectives and their interrelationships. It also has the capability to highlight central authors whose contributions are frequently cited together with other relevant authors, thus enabling the identification of key thinkers and their impact in the field (Maucuer et al., 2022; McCain, 1990; Small, 1973).

Bibliographic coupling involves identifying papers that share bibliographic references, revealing patterns of relationships between them, even when they are not explicitly co-cited (Kessler, 1963). While co-citation emphasizes joint citations, bibliographic coupling identifies papers with common references, making it valuable for detecting more subtle relationships (Song et al., 2023). When used in conjunction with co-citation, it provides a comprehensive analysis of relationships in the literature, with co-citation emphasizing direct connections and bibliographic coupling offering additional insights (Maucuer et al., 2022). Moreover, bibliographic coupling can help identify gaps in the literature by revealing related papers that share references but might diverge in other aspects, allowing for the exploration of conceptual convergences and divergences.

Despite being less commonly used, the combination of co-citation and bibliographic coupling as methodological approaches is justified by the cohesion they offer, allowing for a comprehensive view of knowledge networks by identifying direct and indirect connections among authors, theories, and papers, as well as mapping trends and research gaps (Maucuer et al., 2022). The integration of these approaches aims to provide deeper and well-founded insights to significantly contribute to the advancement of scientific knowledge.

To identify contributions to knowledge formation regarding the themes "Strategy, CSR, and (environmental) sustainability," a two-part bibliometric analysis was conducted: (i) an exploratory search based on keyword intersections in the Scopus database and (ii) the selection of papers in which the theme intersections occur. The choice to conduct the research in Scopus was due to the comprehensiveness of its international database.

The research in Scopus, which formed the basis of the utilized database, was carried out on August 14, 2023. The search query was: "strateg*" AND "CSR" AND "environment*" AND "sustainab*." The use of the truncation asterisk was motivated by the need to broaden the search scope, considering variations of the keywords. The application of quotation marks aimed to delimit specific and precise terms, directing the search to results containing the exact word sequence (Pizzani *et al.*, 2012). The Boolean operator AND was chosen to restrict the search terms, generating results that simultaneously meet all specified conditions (Picalho *et al.*, 2022).

The research was conducted by searching for the search query in the fields of title, abstract, and keywords. To form the research sample, final articles published in journals and written in English were selected. As the subject covers various research areas, the research was

not restricted solely to the fields of administration and business. In addition to "Business, Management and Accounting," areas such as "Environmental Science," "Economics, Econometrics and Finance," and "Decision Sciences" were considered relevant for this study. A sample of 661 documents was obtained.

The third stage of the research was carried out using the software VOSViewer 1.6.19 as a support tool. The choice of this software for conducting the research is due to its capability to provide visualizations and analyze relationships between terms and authors through co-citation and bibliographic coupling maps (Van Eck & Waltman, 2014). The software was used to perform bibliometric analyses with the aim of quantifying the most cited, co-cited, and heavily bibliographic coupled papers. Descriptive analyses were also conducted to identify the most relevant authors, the universities of origin of the majority of researchers, the journals where the most papers are published, the countries from which most research is published, the publication trends over the years, and the most utilized keywords. The research involving descriptive statistical analysis was divided into three stages: descriptive analyses, co-citation analysis, and bibliographic coupling analysis, following the framework proposed by (Walsh & Renaud, 2017)).

To obtain the results that allowed for Co-Citation analysis, the research was conducted in VOSViewer, selecting "Co-citation" as the "Type of analysis" and "Cited References" as the "Unit of Analysis." The minimum co-citation threshold set for each citation was 10. The sample consisted of 39,336 cited references, of which 51 reached the established threshold.

For the Bibliometric Coupling analysis, the selected "Type of analysis" was "Bibliographic coupling," and the "Unit of Analysis" was determined as "Documents." A minimum of 36 occurrences was established as the threshold. Out of the 661 documents in the sample, 153 reached the minimum threshold. Bibliometric coupling occurrences that were graphically distant from their respective clusters were excluded from the analysis.

In the following chapter, the analysis and discussion of the research results will be conducted. Trends and connections identified through bibliometric analyses will be explored.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Bibliometric analysis summarizes the bibliometric and intellectual structure of a field, examining the social and structural relationships among different research components (e.g., authors, countries, institutions, topics) (Donthu *et al.*, 2021). In the following sections, descriptive analyses are conducted, encompassing most cited authors, papers, and universities, prominent journals and countries with the highest publication output, publication trends by year, and frequently used keywords, co-citation analysis, and bibliographic coupling.

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

In the conducted bibliometric analysis, a group of authors has been identified who stand out with a high number of citations in academic papers. In the aggregate of all articles where the following authors have been cited, Carroll A.B. appears first, with 335 citations, reflecting their significant influence in the field of the studied research. As shows in Table 1, following Carroll, M.E. Porter comes next with 241 citations, and Freeman R.E. with 231, both showcasing a strong presence in academic research. Moon J. and Kramer M.R. also rank among the most cited authors, with 185 and 183 citations respectively. The individual relationship of authors and the formation of clusters are further explored in section 4.2 of this study.

Table 1

Most cited authors in the aggregate of all evaluated studies

Author	Nº Of Citations
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Carroll A.B.	335
Porter M.E.	241
Freeman R.E.	231
Moon J.	185
Kramer M.R.	183

Source: Compiled by the authors, 2023

The most cited papers were identified, ranging from 21 to 72 citations among the least and most cited papers in the investigated sample. The most cited article in the sample is "Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach" by Freeman, published in 1984, with 72 citations. Following it is "Social Responsibilities of the Businessman" by Bowen, from 1953, with 30 citations. In third place, "How Corporate Social Responsibility is Defined: An Analysis of 37 Definitions" by Dahlsrud, published in 2008, with 28 citations. Subsequent articles include significant contributions by Carroll, McWilliams, Siegel, Orlitzky, Schmidt, Rynes, Shabana, and Wright, all with more than 20 citations each. These papers, highlighted in Table 2, represent an essential body of literature in the field of CSR, business strategy, and environmental sustainability.

Table 2
Most cited papers

Autor/Paper	N° of citations
Freeman, R.E., Strategic management: a stakeholder approach, (1984)	72
Bowen H.R., Social responsibilities of the businessman, (1953)	30
Dahlsrud A., How corporate social responsibility is defined: an analysis of 37 definitions, corporate social responsibility and environmental management, 15, 1, pp. 1-13, (2008)	28
Carroll A.B., A Three-dimensional conceptual model of corporate performance, academy of management review, 4, 4, pp. 497-505, (1979)	27
Carroll A.B., The pyramid of corporate social responsibility: toward the moral management of organizational stakeholders, business horizons, 34, 4, pp. 39-48, (1991)	25
McWilliams A., Siegel D., Corporate social responsibility: a theory of the firm perspective, academy of management review, 26, 1, pp. 117-127, (2001)	25
Orlitzky M., Schmidt F.L., Rynes S.L., Corporate social and financial performance: a meta-analysis, organization studies, 24, 3, pp. 403-441, (2003)	25

Source: Compiled by the authors, 2023

Another category analyzed was journals with the most publications. The journal "Sustainability" from Switzerland leads the list with 81 published articles, accumulating a total

of 1342 citations, showcasing its influence and relevance in the field of sustainability and corporate social responsibility. In second place, "Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management" presents 41 published articles, with a total of 2316 citations, closely followed by the "Journal of Cleaner Production," with 40 articles and 2908 citations. These journals play a pivotal role in disseminating research related to sustainability and corporate social responsibility issues, providing a strong foundation for future studies and discussions in the field.

Regarding production by countries, it is evident that the United States leads the global landscape in terms of academic publication on the studied themes, with a total of 80 published articles accumulating 5632 citations. The United Kingdom also stands out as an active research hub, with 73 articles and 3783 citations. China, Spain, and Italy also demonstrate their significant contributions to the body of knowledge, with 63, 60, and 60 published articles, and 1199, 2173, and 1209 received citations, respectively.

As the last conducted descriptive analysis, the key keywords used in publications related to the studied themes are presented. "Sustainable Development" is the most frequent keyword, appearing in 141 publications, closely followed by "Corporate Social Responsibility" with 134 occurrences, and "Sustainability" with 120 occurrences. These results emphasize the relevance of these concepts in the research field, reflecting a strong emphasis on seeking sustainable solutions and socially responsible corporate strategies.

Additionally, as shown in Table 4, "Corporate Strategy" is mentioned in 67 publications, while "Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR)" and "Stakeholder" also play significant roles, with 62 and 44 occurrences, respectively. These keywords indicate the complexity and interconnection of the analyzed topics, with a predominant focus on CSR and sustainability, while the axis centered on strategy appears to be less utilized in current literature.

Table 4
Most used keywords

Index keywords	N° of occurrences
Sustainable Development	141
Corporate Social Responsibility	134
Sustainability	120
Corporate Strategy	67
Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR)	62
Stakeholder	44

Source: Compiled by the authors, 2023

4.2 Co-citation Analysis

Co-citation analysis (Garfield, 1979; Small, 1973) is one of the most common bibliographic techniques used in management sciences. It was developed with the aim of

investigating the reasons behind the development and legitimization of a discipline, research field, or concept. The main purpose of this method is to analyze citation patterns in a set of scientific publications, considering that two documents are co-cited by a third when the latter cites them simultaneously (Small, 1973).

It helps understand the structure and evolution of knowledge in a research field, identifying influences and connections in the academic literature of previously published studies, i.e., the theoretical foundations frequently used in the analyzed field. In this regard, co-citation analysis is based on two assumptions: the repetition of citations of two articles demonstrates their complementarity (Callon, 1993), and researchers who co-cite the same references share the same representation and perspectives of their research domain (Small, 1973). Thus, the similarity between two references in each field of study is measured by the frequency of co-citation between them (McCain, 1990).

Based on the analysis of the 661 articles in the collected sample, with a minimum of 10 references, three co-citation clusters were generated. Each cluster demonstrates the most cited authors and their main study topics. In this context, Table 5 displays the theoretical foundations that support the production of studies that integrate strategy, CSR, and environmental sustainability.

Table 5
Clusters and identified authors in co-citation

Cluster 1 (21 articles) Purple	Cluster 2 (20 articles) Green	Cluster 3 (10 articles) Blue
Corporate Social Responsibility and Strategic Management of Stakeholders	Corporate Social Responsibility and Business Performance	Corporate Social Responsibility, Financial Performance and Resource-based View
Freeman, R. E. (1984); Bowen, H. R. (1953); Carroll, A. B. (1979); Carroll, A. B. (1991); Garriga, E., & Melé, D. (2004)	Dahlsrud, A. (2008); Orlitzky, M., Schmidt, F. L., & Rynes, S. L. (2003); Carroll, A. B., & Shabana, K. M. (2010); McWilliams, A., Siegel, D. S., & Wright, P. M. (2006); Margolis, J. D., & Walsh, J. P. (2003)	McWilliams, A., & Siegel, D. (2001); McWilliams, A., & Siegel, D. (2000); Hart, S. L. (1995); Russo, M. V., & Fouts, P. A. (1997); Waddock, S. A., & Graves, S. B. (1997)

Source: Compiled by the authors, 2023

Cluster 1, named "Corporate Social Responsibility and Strategic Management of Stakeholders," is primarily centered around the paper "Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach" by (Freeman, 1984). The five main articles in this cluster are interconnected by their focuses on corporate social responsibility and strategic stakeholder management. The studies by Carroll (1979, 1991) and Freeman (1984) lay the conceptual foundations for considering stakeholders in strategic management. Bowen (1953) contributes with the pioneering view on corporate social responsibilities. Garriga & Melé (2004) further enrich the cluster by presenting a comprehensive analysis of corporate social responsibility theories, enhancing the understanding of the various approaches to the topic.

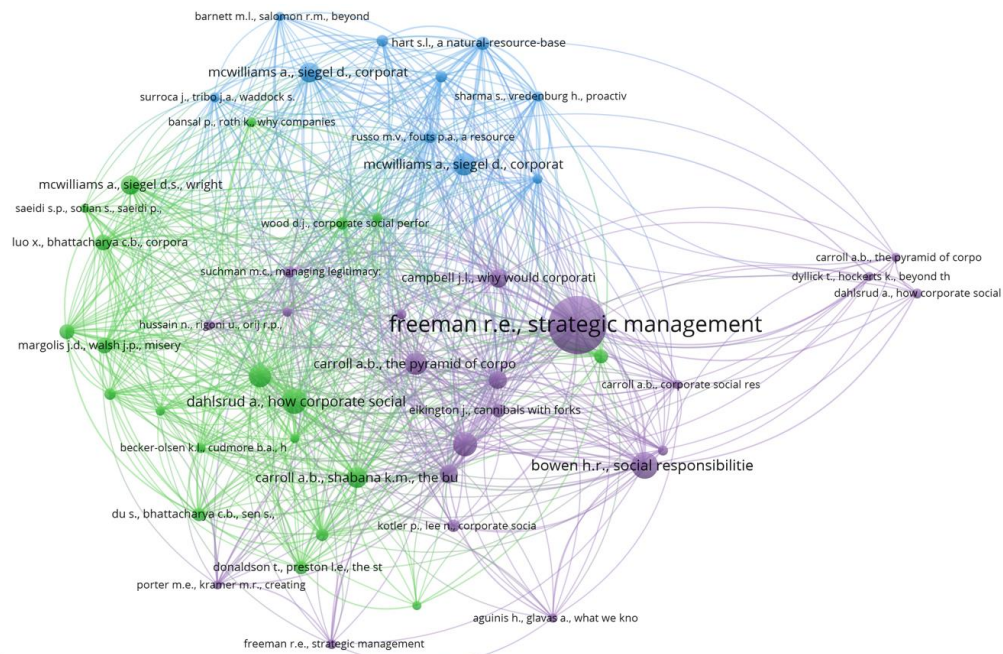
The collection of research in Cluster 2, "Corporate Social Responsibility and Business Performance," addresses the relationship between CSR and business performance, a crucial topic in the contemporary business world. Each paper approaches this topic from different angles, including the definition of CSR (Dahlsrud, 2006; Orlitzky *et al.*, 2003), the reasons for adopting CSR (Carroll & Shabana, 2010), conceptual frameworks for understanding it, and the tension between profit-seeking and social responsibility (Margolis & Walsh, 2003). The papers in this cluster highlight the difficulty in clearly defining CSR, despite ongoing efforts in this direction. They analyze corporate social/environmental performance (McWilliams *et al.*, 2006),

develop conceptual frameworks, and additional research agendas related to CSR. The set of papers in "Corporate Social Responsibility and Business Performance" provides a comprehensive and diverse view of the relationship between CSR and business performance. These studies not only emphasize the importance of CSR for companies but also contribute to the evolution of thought on how this relationship is conceptualized and measured, paving the way for future investigations in the field of corporate social responsibility.

Cluster 3, named "Corporate Social Responsibility, Financial Performance and Resource-based View," addresses the relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility, financial performance, and the resource-based view. The five key papers forming this cluster discuss the relationship between CSR, financial performance, and the resource-based view. The articles by McWilliams e Siegel (2000, 2001) establish the foundations for understanding CSR and its relationship with financial performance. Hart (1995) and Russo & Fouts (1997) broaden this discussion by introducing the resource-based view. Waddock e Graves (1997) conclude the cluster by exploring specific connections between corporate social and financial performance. Together, these papers offer a comprehensive view of the complex interactions between CSR, financial performance, and resource-based strategies.

Despite some thematic overlap among the three clusters, Figure 1 demonstrates clear differentiation in their scopes of study. Thus, when conducting research that integrates strategy, corporate social responsibility, and environmental sustainability, there are mainly three theoretical streams that underpin studies in the field. Literature on Corporate Social Responsibility is present in all three clusters, but each possesses a specific theoretical analysis stream that distinguishes them. Cluster 1 differentiates itself by giving specific attention to stakeholder management, Cluster 2 has a focus on organizational performance, and Cluster 3 incorporates the Resource-based View to narrow down studies on CSR.

Figure 1
Co-citation Clusters



Source: Developed by the authors using VOSViewer software, 2023

After conducting the co-citation analysis, which examined the main theoretical streams that underpin research on strategy, corporate social responsibility, and environmental

sustainability, the following discussions and analyses arising from the investigation of the 661 papers in the sample will be presented, using bibliographic coupling as the methodology.

4.3 Bibliographic Coupling

Bibliographic coupling analysis (Kessler, 1963) demonstrates bibliometric coupling, which helps to understand the relationships and connections between scientific documents based on the bibliographic references they have in common (Jarneving, 2005). In other words, its result shows the interrelations between authors and their topics, providing insights into the main topics of discussion and possible future research trends for the field. The method posits that the higher the number of common references between two documents, the closer the two units are.

In the analysis of the 661 sample documents, a minimum threshold of 36 references was adopted as the criterion to establish connections among the database documents, resulting in 153 occurrences and generating 5 clusters, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6
Clusters and identified authors in bibliographic coupling

Cluster 1 (29 articles) Purple	Cluster 2 (27 articles) Green	Cluster 3 (25 articles) Blue	Cluster 4 (25 articles) Yellow	Cluster 5 (17 articles) Red
CSR, Innovation, Business model and performance	Governance, reporting and CSR	Public policies, industry and sustainability	Sustainability Reports and Social Entrepreneurship	CSR practices as a strategy to expand business capabilities
Schaltegger S.; Lüdeke-Freund F.; Hansen E.G. (2012); Yawar S.A.; Seuring S. (2017); Jenkins H. (2004); Hansen E.G.; Schaltegger S. (2016); Torugsa N.A.; O'donohue W.; Hecker R. (2013)	Holcomb J.L.; Upchurch R.S.; Okumus F. (2007); Amran A.; Lee S.P.; Devi S.S. (2014); Adams C.A.; Frost G.R. (2008); Steurer R. (2010); Helfaya A.; Moussa T. (2017)	Albareda L.; Lozano J.M.; Ysa T. (2007); Abbas J. (2020); Shahzad M.; Qu Y.; Javed S.A.; Zafar A.U.; Rehman S.U. (2020); Amini M.; Bienstock C.C. (2014); Suganthi L. (2019)	Tate W.L.; Ellram L.M.; Kirchoff J.F. (2010); Brown H.S.; De Jong M.; Levy D.L. (2009); Rosati F.; Faria L.G.D. (2019); Baron D.P. (2007); Kolk A.; Hong P.; Van Dolen W. (2010)	Cheng B.; Ioannou I.; Serafeim G. (2014); Babiak K.; Trendafilova S. (2011); Yasser Q.R.; Al Mamun A.; Ahmed I. (2017); Luu T.T. (2017); Mcwilliams A.; Parhankangas A.; Coupet J.; Welch E.; Barnum D.T. (2016)

Source: Elaborated by the authors, 2023

The set of papers in Cluster 1, titled "CSR, Innovation, Business Model and Performance," addresses a variety of complementary topics. These include the creation of economic value alongside improved environmental and social performance (Schaltegger *et al.*, 2012), the social dimension of sustainable development and its impact on supply chains (Yawar & Seuring, 2017), CSR strategies adopted by companies (Torugsa *et al.*, 2013), the mining industry and how it has responded to growing criticism regarding its environmental and social impacts (Jenkins, 2004), and the state of the art in Sustainability Balanced Scorecards, which modify the Balanced Scorecard performance measurement and management system to explicitly consider environmental, social, or ethical issues (Hansen & Schaltegger, 2016). The research argues that addressing sustainability and social responsibility issues strategically and integrating them into business models is essential for the long-term success of companies.

Furthermore, they emphasize the need to measure and manage performance in these areas to ensure sustainable creation of economic and social value.

Cluster 2 primarily addresses Governance, Reporting, and CSR, integrating these thematic cores in different contexts. Holcomb *et al.* (2007) focus on the analysis of socially responsible activities disclosure by hospitality companies. Amran *et al.* (2014) explore the relationship between governance structure and the quality of sustainability reports. Adams and Frost (2008) examine the integration of sustainability indicators in management practices. Steurer (2010) analyzes public policies on CSR in Europe. Helfaya e Moussa (2017) investigate the influence of board-level CSR strategies on environmental sustainability disclosure. These articles examine CSR practices in various sectors and regions, underscoring the importance of transparency and disclosing sustainability-related information. They emphasize that companies are increasingly recognizing the significance of demonstrating commitments to socially responsible practices.

Cluster 3 prominently features research related to Public Policies, Industry, and Sustainability, with a focus on specific issues within different contexts. While some articles explore the relationship between CSR, performance, and green innovation (Shahzad *et al.*, 2020), others analyze how total quality management impacts companies' green performance, mediated by corporate social responsibility (Abbas, 2020). Additionally, there is a focus on the analysis of public policies and governmental strategies related to CSR and sustainability (Albareda *et al.*, 2007). The literature on corporate sustainability is integrated and deepened through an analytical framework (Amini & Bienstock, 2014), while Suganthi (2019) explores the relationships between CSR, green practices, and employees' pro-environmental behavior. This cluster provides insights into how companies can adopt sustainable strategies, engage stakeholders, and contribute to a more equitable and environmentally conscious society.

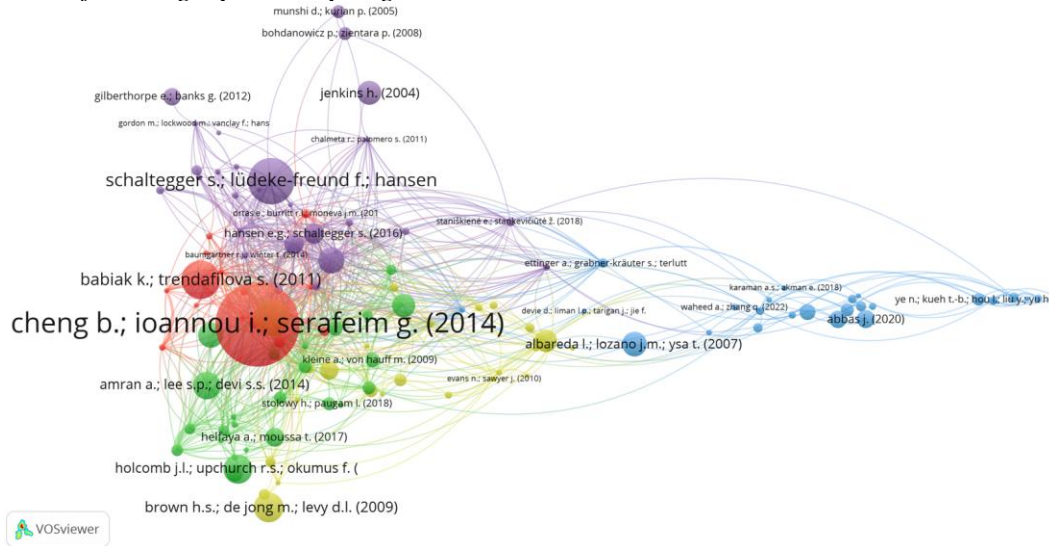
Collectively, the research in Cluster 4 provides a rich and holistic view of the intersection between corporate social responsibility, sustainability reporting, and social entrepreneurship (Tate *et al.*, 2010), highlighting the complexity and significance of these issues in the contemporary context. These studies contribute to the body of knowledge and offer valuable guidance for businesses, investors, and policymakers on a global scale (Rosati & Faria, 2019). The overarching theme across all these research papers is Corporate Social Responsibility and Business Sustainability. Each study explores different aspects and angles related to CSR, including its institutional influences (Brown *et al.*, 2009), costs and benefits (Baron, 2007), and variations across national contexts (Kolk *et al.*, 2008). Essentially, all of these research endeavors contribute to the understanding of CSR practices and challenges in the global business context, providing a comprehensive insight into this critical area.

Cluster 5 emphasizes the role of adopting CSR strategies to enhance the capabilities of companies. The papers in this cluster focus on the theme of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and its implications in various areas, such as access to finance (Cheng *et al.*, 2014), adoption of environmental management practices (Babiak & Trendafilova, 2011), gender diversity (Yasser *et al.*, 2017), organizational citizenship behavior for the environment (Luu, 2017), and strategic decision-making aligned with the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) (McWilliams *et al.*, 2016). The articles share an interest in exploring how socially responsible actions of companies impact various aspects of their operations, including finance, organizational behavior, environmental practices, and competitive strategies.

While there is some complementarity among the themes of the five different clusters, Figure 2 shows that clusters 1, 2, 4, and 5 are closer to each other, whereas cluster 3 seems to be developing divergently, emphasizing the role of public policies related to promoting sustainability in the industry. Another important observation is that cluster 3 seems to suggest a certain trend for future research, considering a significant number of recent papers and the

shift of the central axis towards research involving the relationships between strategy, CSR, and environmental sustainability.

Figure 2
Clusters of bibliographic coupling



Source: Compiled by the authors using VOSViewer software, 2023

The comprehensive analysis of the five research clusters reveals a remarkable convergence around the central theme of Corporate Social Responsibility and Business Sustainability. Each cluster provides valuable insights into different dimensions of CSR, ranging from its impact on economic and environmental performance to its role in corporate governance, public policies, and business strategies. These collective studies underscore the growing significance of CSR as a critical factor for long-term business success, emphasizing its ability to generate economic, social, and environmental value. Moreover, they emphasize the need for transparency, disclosure, and strategic integration of CSR in business practices, offering valuable guidance for companies, investors, and policy makers in an increasingly conscious world regarding the importance of social responsibility and sustainability.

By conducting an integrated analysis of the results obtained from the methodological application of bibliographic coupling and co-citation, it is evident that authors, when conducting research on strategy, CSR, and sustainability, often rely on classical theoretical frameworks to support their studies (Carroll, 1979, 1991; Carroll & Shabana, 2010; Freeman, 1984; Porter & Kramer, 2006, 2006). These frameworks help establish the connection between strategic stakeholder management and Corporate Social Responsibility. The integration of these theoretical foundations, coupled with the necessity for businesses to adapt to a globally-oriented sustainability transition, drives the capabilities and performance of companies, a focal point in current research efforts. Therefore, given the field's growth trend (Chart 1), it is evident that much remains to be explored, particularly concerning issues related to public policy formulation, corporate governance, and organizational performance.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to integrate the literature on strategy, corporate social responsibility, and environmental sustainability using bibliometric analysis. Given the prominence of discussions related to the sustainability transition and the need for organizations to adapt, we suggest that the incorporation of strategies specifically focused on these purposes can enhance the capacity and performance of companies.

The bibliometric analysis revealed that despite significant development, this field of study has gained momentum in the last five years. From co-citation analysis, we summarized

the foundational literature that underpins research in the area into three major groups: (i) corporate social responsibility and strategic management of stakeholders, (ii) corporate social responsibility and business performance, and (iii) corporate social responsibility, financial performance, and resource-based view. All clusters share CSR as a common theoretical framework, varying in their application of strategies. In addition, from bibliographic coupling analysis, it is evident that current research in the field is concentrated in five clusters, discussing topics related to (i) CSR, innovation, business model, and performance, (ii) governance, reporting, and CSR, (iii) public policies, industry, and sustainability, (iv) sustainability reports and social entrepreneurship, and (v) CSR practices as a strategy to expand business capabilities. While there is a certain complementarity among the themes of these clusters, contributing to the robust development of the field, the analysis revealed a growing trend towards research focused on analyzing public policies related to promoting sustainability in the industry.

As contributions, this research provides an overview of the theoretical foundations for conducting research on strategy, CSR, and environmental sustainability, as well as highlighting the current research directions in the field, organizing the literature for future studies. Moreover, this study emphasizes the importance of reflecting on the development of strategies specifically geared towards corporate social responsibility and sustainability transition as potentially capable mechanisms of expanding organizational capabilities and performance, contributing to managerial practices' contemplation.

Among the limitations of this study is the utilization of only one database, Scopus, making it possible to replicate and compare results through other portals. Similarly, other search methods within databases can be employed by combining additional descriptors and Boolean operators.

Future research should continue to narrow the gap in the literature by employing methodologies such as systematic reviews within each cluster to identify the state of the art on the topics they address. Furthermore, researchers should endeavor to address the strategy formation process for promoting corporate social responsibility within a sustainability transition context. Finally, we suggest that the literature delve deeper into the relationship between the promotion of public policies and the development of CSR strategies within organizations.

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