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MAPPING CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY RESEARCH: A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

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Abstract

This study uncovers the intellectual structure of the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) research field, analyzes its evolution, and develops both a comprehensive framework and future research agenda for CSR scholarship. We conducted bibliometric and text analysis using topic modeling on a dataset of 9,391 CSR publications extracted from the Web of Science. First, we applied bibliographic coupling to analyze the field's evolution, identifying eight research streams. Second, we employed topic modeling on the same dataset, revealing five additional streams not captured by bibliographic coupling alone. This dual approach yielded a comprehensive map of thirteen distinct research streams within CSR scholarship. Our analysis reveals that CSR literature is evolving toward narrower research gaps, increased practical orientation, and greater interdisciplinarity. Notably, significant changes in the external environment catalyze new research directions while simultaneously rekindling interest in established theories. Based on these findings, we propose a detailed future research agenda and an integrative framework for CSR research. By combining bibliometric and text analyses, this study captures both seminal and emerging publications, revealing a more comprehensive and nuanced intellectual structure of the CSR field than previous reviews. This methodological integration advances the conceptualization of the CSR research domain and provides scholars with a robust roadmap for future inquiry.

Keywords: *Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Map of the CSR field, Topic modeling, Bibliographic coupling, Evolution of the CSR field*

1 INTRODUCTION

Over the past four decades, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has evolved from a peripheral business concern into a central pillar of corporate strategy and governance, generating tens of thousands of scholarly publications. Yet the field remains fragmented and diverse (Frerichs & Teichert, 2023; Kumar & Srivastava, 2022). Changes and challenges in the external environment continuously spawn new, often interdisciplinary research topics (Kumar & Srivastava, 2022), while foundational debates, such as the relationship between CSR and financial performance, remain unresolved after decades of inquiry.

This rapidly expanding body of literature demands regular reassessment of the field's intellectual structure and future trajectory. Recent studies have examined CSR's productivity, intellectual architecture, and emerging research streams (Cucari et al., 2023; Frerichs & Teichert, 2023; Kumar & Srivastava, 2022). Scholars have also begun exploring CSR through specialized lenses: financial performance (Velte, 2022), employee perspectives (Low & Siegel, 2019), finance (Hamid et al., 2022), strategic management (Nicole et al., 2022), SMEs (Guillén et al., 2022) and green orientation (Ameer & Khan, 2023), among others. However, despite these valuable contributions, most reviews rely primarily on keyword analysis, providing limited interpretation of the field's underlying thematic clusters. Moreover, existing research often captures the field at a single point in time, failing to illuminate its dynamic evolution. This study extends the academic debate by segmenting our dataset into distinct periods and providing comprehensive interpretations of clusters derived from both bibliographic coupling and topic modeling, thereby revealing both the structure and temporal dynamics of CSR scholarship.

We aim to uncover the intellectual structure of the CSR research field and analyze its evolution over time. We examine the forces driving changes in the field's intellectual structure and, by analyzing CSR research clusters and their dynamics, identify emerging patterns that signal future research directions and methodological shifts. Our multimethod approach combines bibliographic coupling with topic modeling, enabling a more comprehensive analysis than either method alone, as each technique compensates for the limitations of the other. This integrated methodology advances the conceptualization of CSR research and provides a foundation for developing a robust future research agenda.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 reviews previous literature syntheses of the CSR field. Section 3 presents our methodological approach and describes the dataset extracted from the Web of Science. Section 4 reports the results of our bibliometric and text analyses. Section 5 synthesizes these findings into a comprehensive map of the CSR field and proposes a future research agenda. The final section concludes with implications for CSR scholarship and practice.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Literature reviews of the CSR field

As CSR research expanded and diversified in the early 21st century, scholars developed numerous definitions emphasizing different dimensions of the phenomenon (Baumgartner, 2014). Given the comprehensive scope of our review, we adopt a broad conceptualization of CSR that synthesizes the perspectives of Baumgartner (2014) and O'Riordan & Fairbrass's, (2008). We define CSR as an approach that integrates social and environmental considerations into corporate activities while addressing stakeholder expectations.

This expanding and diversifying research landscape has prompted numerous efforts to map CSR literature systematically. De Bakker et al., (2005) conducted the first comprehensive review of the field, documenting its growing diversity while noting that a clear intellectual structure remained elusive. Subsequent traditional literature reviews further illuminated the field's complexity. Taneja et al. (2011) identified major research categories but highlighted the persistent absence of accepted definitional frameworks and theoretical foundations for CSR strategy development. Aguinis & Glavas (2012) found that the relationship between CSR and profitability varied across multiple dimensions: stakeholder involvement, firm size and type, and competitive strategies; yielding positive, negative, or neutral effects on financial performance depending on contextual factors.

We identified 18 publications dedicated to a bibliometric review of the CSR domain, published since 2018. However, only three of these studies aimed to construct a comprehensive intellectual structure of the entire field (Cucari et al., 2023; Frerichs & Teichert, 2023; Kumar & Srivastava, 2022). These studies documented the growing importance of niche research streams (Frerichs & Teichert, 2023), analyzed the productivity of CSR research (Cucari et al., 2023), and identified CSR dimensions (Kumar & Srivastava, 2022).

The remaining 15 bibliometric studies adopted more focused approaches, examining CSR through specialized lenses. Specifically, the authors examined CSR alongside employee engagement, strategic management, leadership, board impact on sustainability,

communication discipline, consumer behavior, profitability, and family business perspectives. The research covered various industries/ sectors, including tourism, banking, finance, and economics. Some systematic literature reviews on CSR were conducted for specific countries and regions, such as Latin American countries (Jaén et al., 2018) and India (Sudesh et al., 2022). Notably, most studies adopted a broad conceptualization of CSR encompassing both social and environmental dimensions (Table 1).

2.2 Methods and data used for literature reviews of the CSR field

A notable methodological shift has occurred in CSR literature reviews. Before 2018, scholars employed both traditional literature reviews (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012; Taneja et al., 2011) and bibliometric analysis (De Bakker et al., 2005) to map research trends. Since 2018, however, bibliometric methods have become the dominant approach for analyzing the field's intellectual structure (Table 1) (Bartolacci et al., 2020; Vinayavekhin et al., 2023).

These bibliometric studies vary considerably in their temporal scope and dataset construction strategies. While some researchers analyze datasets spanning from the early 1980s to the present (Ji et al., 2022; Say, 2023), others focus on shorter periods ranging from five (Cucari et al., 2023) to ten years (Low & Siegel, 2019). Commonly, scholars used a 20-30-year period to extract data for the research (Hassan et al., 2023; Kumar & Srivastava, 2022; Low & Siegel, 2019; Raza et al., 2021). In addition, some researchers divided the period into multiple sub-periods to analyze CSR field evolution (Dwekat et al., 2020; Sudesh et al., 2022; Zhao et al., 2023). Researchers utilized the data from Scopus (Sudesh et al., 2022) or Web of Science (Santos-Jaén et al., 2021) databases. Some datasets were created by combining data from several databases to maximize coverage (Kumar & Srivastava, 2022; Mariani et al., 2023).

2.3 Overcoming the limitations of previous literature reviews

While existing reviews have significantly advanced understanding of the CSR field's structure (Frerichs & Teichert, 2023), productivity patterns (Cucari et al., 2023), and relationships with various phenomena (Zhao et al., 2023), important gaps remain. Most critically, previous studies lack both temporal dynamism and adequate cluster interpretation (Cucari et al., 2023; Frerichs & Teichert, 2023; Kumar & Srivastava, 2022). Many scholars rely predominantly on keyword frequency to interpret results, which often proves insufficient for identifying substantive research streams (Kumar & Srivastava, 2022). Furthermore, the conceptualization of CSR research itself requires continued development (Silvestri & Veltri, 2020). While bibliometric methods effectively capture snapshots of the field, they typically fail to reveal its evolutionary dynamics unless temporal dimension is explicitly brought in.

We address these limitations through a dual-method approach that combines bibliographic coupling with topic modeling-based text analysis. First, we apply bibliographic coupling to a dataset divided into multiple tome periods to trace the CSR field's evolution. Second, we perform topic modeling on article abstracts to provide richer cluster interpretations beyond simple keyword counts. This complementary approach enables us to incorporate both foundational and recent publications, yielding a more nuanced intellectual map while offsetting the limitations inherent in each method. Our analysis draws on a comprehensive dataset of 9,391 publications, substantially larger than previous reviews. Ultimately, we synthesize these findings into an integrated map of CSR research streams and propose a future research agenda for the field.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Data

We collected data from Clarivate Web of Science database, which is the most used database in bibliometric reviews (Zupic & Čater, 2015). We searched the database for keywords "corporate social responsib*" OR "csr" in the topic of document records, meaning the search would return all records with keywords appearing in the title, abstract or author keywords. To ensure comprehensive coverage of the field, we did not apply manual filtering to the initial results. However, we refined the dataset by limiting it to publications within Business and Management WoS categories and publications indexed by the Social Sciences Citation Index

Table 1: CSR and bibliometric analysis: previous research

No	Authors	Title	Year published	Data	Period	Findings
1	Frerichs and Teichert, (2023)	Research streams in corporate social responsibility literature: a bibliometric analysis	2023	- 1902 CSR journal articles	1994-2020	The study showed the importance of employee-oriented CSR research and research on consumer skepticism streams. It also identified process-oriented, micro-level research and mergers between themes as perspectives for future research.
2	Low and Siegel, (2019)	A bibliometric analysis of employee centred corporate social responsibility research in the 2000s	2020	- 2,385 publications	2000-2018	The study also revealed the growing number of publications on the connection between employee CSR, organizational commitment, and performance.
3	Zhao et al., (2023)	Trends in the Dynamic Evolution of Corporate Social Responsibility and Leadership: A Literature Review and Bibliometric Analysis	2022	- 1432 articles	1994–2020	The study identified seven clusters within the CSR-leadership field and highlighted the increasing significance of institutional theory.
4	Cucari et al., (2023)	A bibliometric performance analysis of publication productivity in the corporate social responsibility field: Outcomes of SciVal analytics	2023	- 57028 publications	2015–2020	The study analyzed the productivity of quantitative and qualitative CSR researchers at macro, meso, and micro levels.
5	Dwekat et al., (2020)	The effect of the board on corporate social responsibility:bibliometric and social network analysis	2020	- 242 articles	1992–2019	The researchers identified a network of authors researching the impact of boards on CSR.
6	Jaén et al., (2018)	Bibliometric analysis of indexed research on corporate social responsibility in Latin America (2000-2017)	2018	- 148 articles	2000-2017	The study showed the fragmented state of the CSR research in Latin America.
7	Ji et al., (2022)	Theoretical Insights of CSR Research in Communication from 1980 to 2018: A Bibliometric Network Analysis	2022	- 290 articles	1980-2018	The study reported that management, psychological, and public relations concepts and theories influenced CSR research in communication.
8	Nicole et al., (2022)	Corporate Social Responsibility and Strategic Management: A Bibliometric Analysis	2022	- 132 articles	2010-2022	The study revealed journals with the highest number of publications in CSR and strategic management.
9	Raza et al., (2021)	Determining corporate social responsibility and consumer behavior trends and forecast by a historical review: A bibliometric analysis	2021	- 272 articles	2001-2020	The study identified the research knowledge base and reported that the scholars mostly originated from developed societies.

10	Say, (2023)	Bibliometric Analysis of Studies on Corporate Social Responsibility and Profitability	2023	- 376 publications	1985-2021	The study mapped the CSR and profitability field.
11	Sudesh et al., (2022)	Corporate Social Responsibilityin India: A Bibliometric Analysis	2022	- 685 papers	2004-2021	The study showed an increase in the importance of financial performance for CSR activities and a positive influence of CSR on company brand image.
12	Yoopetch et al., (2022)	Bibliometric Analysis of Corporate Social Responsibility in Tourism	2023	- 571 articles	from 2002 to 2022 (August)	The research showed that CSR in the tourism field expanded from Europe to developing countries and identified the five main research schools in the field.
13	Zainuldin and Lui, (2022)	A bibliometric analysis of CSR in the banking industry: a decade study based on Scopus scientific mapping	2022	- 548 articles	2009-2019	The study identified the primary research themes and trends in CSR within the banking sector.
14	Mariani et al., (2023)	Corporate social responsibility in family firms: A systematic literature review	2021	- 168 publications	1900-2020	The article revealed the drivers, outcomes, processes, and strategies of CSR in family businesses.
15	Santos-Jaén et al., (2021)	The Effect of Corporate Social Responsibility on Earnings Management: Bibliometric Review	2021	- 329 publications	January 1990 - February 2021	The paper uncovered the research gaps in the CSR-earnings management relationship.
16	Hamid et al., (2022)	A Bibliometric Retrospection of CSR from the Lens of Finance and Economics: Towards Sustainable Development	2022	- 1134 articles	2000-2021	The scholars revealed the main topics in CSR research from an economic lens.
17	Hassan et al., (2023)	Bibliometric and Scientometric analysis on CSR practices inthe banking sector	2023	- 551 articles	1993-2021	The scholars reported an increase in the number of publications in the CSR within the banking sector, as well as the main research trends of this research stream.
18	Kumar and Srivastava, (2022)	Trends in the thematic landscape of corporate social responsibility research: A structural topic modeling approach	2022	- 14523 articles	1991-2020	The scholars contributed to the discussion on the update of the CSR concept and provided a view of the CSR dimensions.

(SSCI), thereby focusing on research subjected to rigorous peer review. This process yielded a final dataset of 9,391 bibliographic records for analysis.

3.2 Methods

We used bibliometric techniques (Marzi et al., 2024, 2024; Zupic & Čater, 2015) and topic modeling (Blei, 2012; Kraus et al., 2023) to analyze the body of literature on CSR. Bibliometrics refers to the practice of applying statistical methods to the study of academic literature, focusing on the citation patterns of publications, a concept initially introduced by de Solla Price in 1965. These techniques leverage citation data from bibliographic databases to uncover insightful patterns and relationships within scientific fields.

Our approach involved three stages. In the first stage, we employed bibliographic coupling to study the evolution of the CSR field and identify the research streams. In the second stage, we applied topic modeling to uncover research streams based on textual similarities. Finally, in the third stage, we combined the results from both bibliographic coupling and topic modeling to create a comprehensive map of the CSR field.

Bibliographic coupling involves assessing the similarity between the reference lists of scholarly articles. For instance, if two research papers share ten common references, they are considered to have a bibliographic coupling strength of ten. A stronger bibliographic coupling link suggests a higher degree of conceptual similarity between the papers. By collecting such data across all pertinent publications in a given scientific field, it's possible to construct a network map illustrating the field's landscape. Papers with conceptual similarities appear closer together on this map. Additionally, clustering techniques can be applied to this network, helping to clearly define the structure of the field and pinpoint distinct research sub-areas. Finally, dividing the literature into several time periods provides insight into how the research evolved over time.

Topic modeling involves a collection of machine learning techniques designed to autonomously identify thematic elements within a body of text documents. The most commonly employed method in this field is Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) (Zupic et al., 2024). First introduced by Blei et al., (2003) LDA operates as a Bayesian generative model, effectively uncovering significant topics within unstructured text. It can be likened to principal component analysis (PCA) for text, distilling raw text into distinct topics represented by distributions over a predetermined vocabulary.

In LDA, the creation of documents is presumed to follow a generative model of text, with the aim of uncovering the model's concealed parameters. A 'topic' in this context is understood as a distribution across a set vocabulary. The model presupposes that topics are established prior to the generation of any documents. The generation of words within a document then follows a two-stage process: first, selecting a distribution over topics, and second, for each word in the document, choosing a topic from the first stage and then selecting a word from that topic's vocabulary distribution. The LDA model's hidden structure includes the distribution of topics per document and the association of words with topics. Recent studies have applied LDA to analyze topics in disruption research and innovation systems (Hopp et al., 2018).

Our application of topic modeling aimed to uncover the underlying thematic framework of CSR literature. We began by importing bibliographic data into the R environment. For implementing LDA analysis, we utilized the 'topicmodels' package, along with 'tm' package for preprocessing steps. We excluded all entries without abstracts, converted all words to lowercase, and removing numbers, punctuations, and stopwords (both generic and research-specific ones).

We constructed a Document-Term matrix with documents as rows and terms as columns. The entries in this matrix indicate the frequency of each term in the documents. Due to the vast vocabulary leading to a sparse matrix, we enhanced processing efficiency by eliminating terms appearing in fewer than 1% of the documents, resulting in the final Document-Term matrix ready for LDA analysis in R. The concluding phase involved employing the LDA algorithm to determine the thematic structure of the CSR research.

4 RESULTS

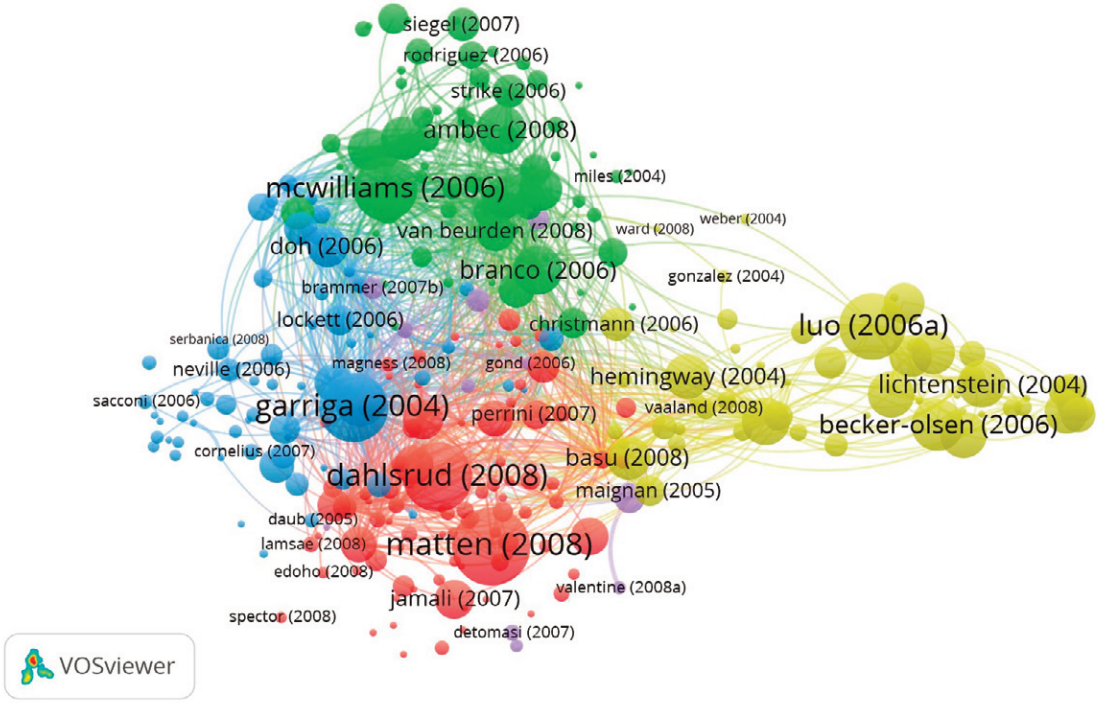
4.1 The evolution of CSR field based on Bibliographic coupling

We applied bibliographic coupling to the dataset, divided into periods, to analyze the evolution of the CSR field (Fig. 1). The interpretation of the clusters obtained from bibliographic coupling for various periods is presented in Appendix 1 to this article.

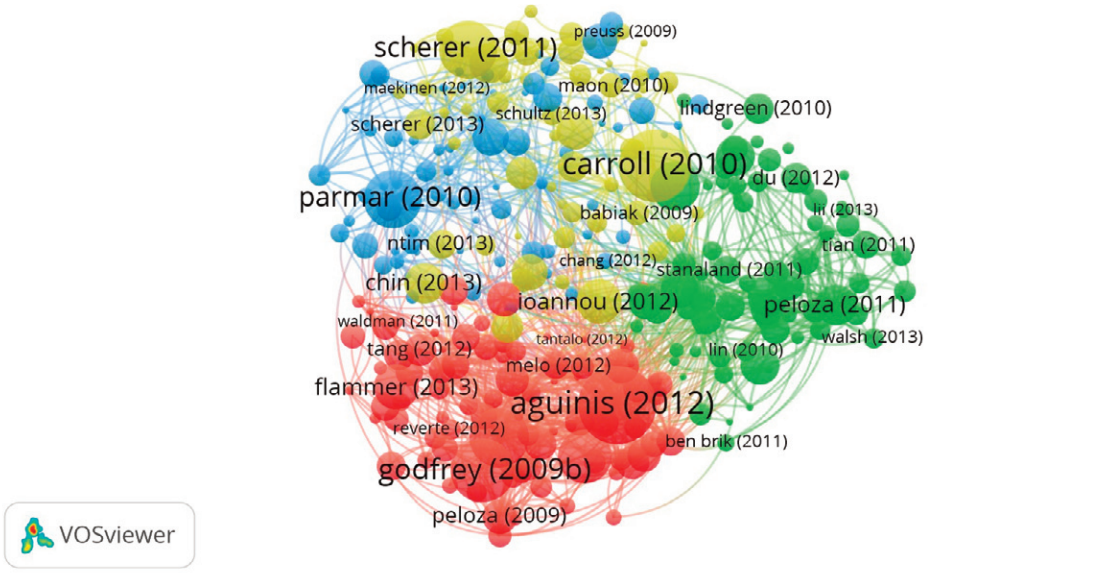
Period 1

Bibliographic coupling analysis of Period 1 revealed five distinct clusters (Fig. 2). The "Aspects of CSR" and "Early CSR concepts and theories" clusters were merged into **Stream 1**, "CSR theory," as both addressed foundational theoretical dimensions. This

Figure 1: CSR Bibliographic coupling results

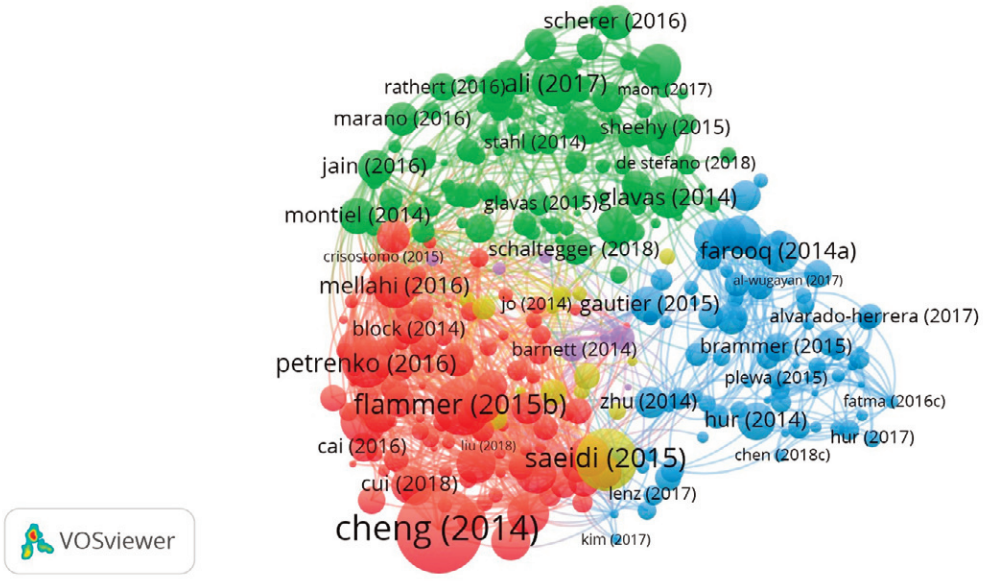


Period 2004-2008

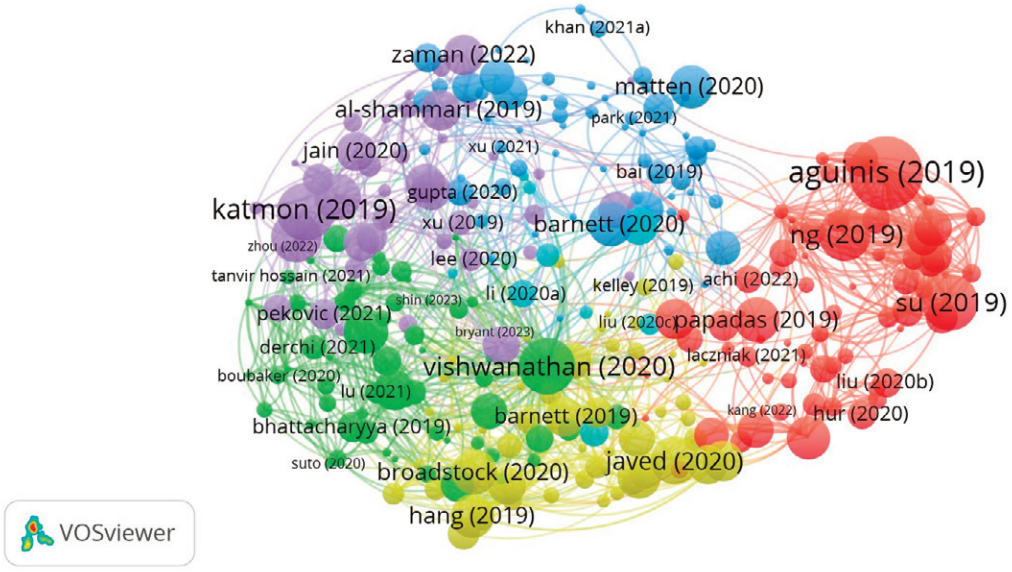


Period 2009-2013

stream persisted across subsequent periods as researchers developed new theoretical directions. The "CSR and financial performance" cluster initiated **Stream 2**, examining how CSR influences profitability, shareholder value, and sustainability, a trajectory that continued for three additional periods. The "CSR and marketing" cluster evolved into **Stream 3**, "CSR and stakeholders," which expanded over four periods to explore interactions between CSR and diverse stakeholder groups. In contrast, **Stream 4**, "CSR: international perspective," did not extend beyond this initial period (Table 3).



Period 2014-2018



Period 2019-2023

Period 2

The 2007-2008 financial crisis catalyzed renewed interest in stakeholder theory, which researchers increasingly viewed as a corrective to shareholder-centric models implicated in the crisis. This attention generated a new "Stakeholder theory" cluster in Period 2, launching **Stream 5**, "Development of stakeholder theory," which gained prominence in Period 3 before declining in Period 4.

Period 3

Between 2014 and 2018, the "CSR motivation" cluster emerged, initiating Stream 6, "Incentives for implementing CSR initiatives." This stream initially examined factors driving CSR adoption and corporate attractiveness benefits, then evolved in Period 4 to address whether CSR delivers expected outcomes and the underlying rationale for implementation.

Period 4

Period 4 witnessed the emergence of two additional streams: **Stream 7**, "CSR at companies of different size and ownership," and **Stream 8**, "CSR and corporate governance". These developments signal the field's maturation toward more targeted, sophisticated inquiry. Researchers increasingly focused on specific gaps (e.g., ownership structures, firm size, board diversity) while adopting interdisciplinary perspectives that connected CSR to market structures, feminist theory, and social impact. Several streams demonstrated growing responsiveness to societal changes and shifts in the external environment.

4.2 Topic modelling results

We complemented the map of the CSR field by performing text analysis using a topic modeling algorithm (Blei, 2012). The interpretation of the topic names and top terms is presented in Table 2, while the detailed interpretation of topics is included in Appendix 2.

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 Building a comprehensive map of the CSR field and its contributions to the literature

Our dual-method approach yielded thirteen distinct research streams within the CSR field (Table 3). Bibliographic coupling identified eight clusters, while topic modeling revealed twelve topics, with partial overlap between the two methods. This convergence validates our findings while demonstrating how each method captures different dimensions of the research landscape.

Three streams emerged exclusively from bibliographic coupling: **Stream 1** "CSR theory", **Stream 6.** "Incentives for implementing CSR initiatives", and **Stream 7**. "CSR in various types of companies". Five streams appeared in both analyses, confirming their centrality to the field: **Stream 2** "The impact of CSR on financial performance and company value", **Stream 3** "CSR and stakeholders", **Stream 4** "CSR: an international perspective", **Stream 5** "Development of stakeholder theory". Topic modeling uniquely identified five additional streams:

Figure 2: Dynamics of CSR research domains received from applying bibliographic coupling for four periods

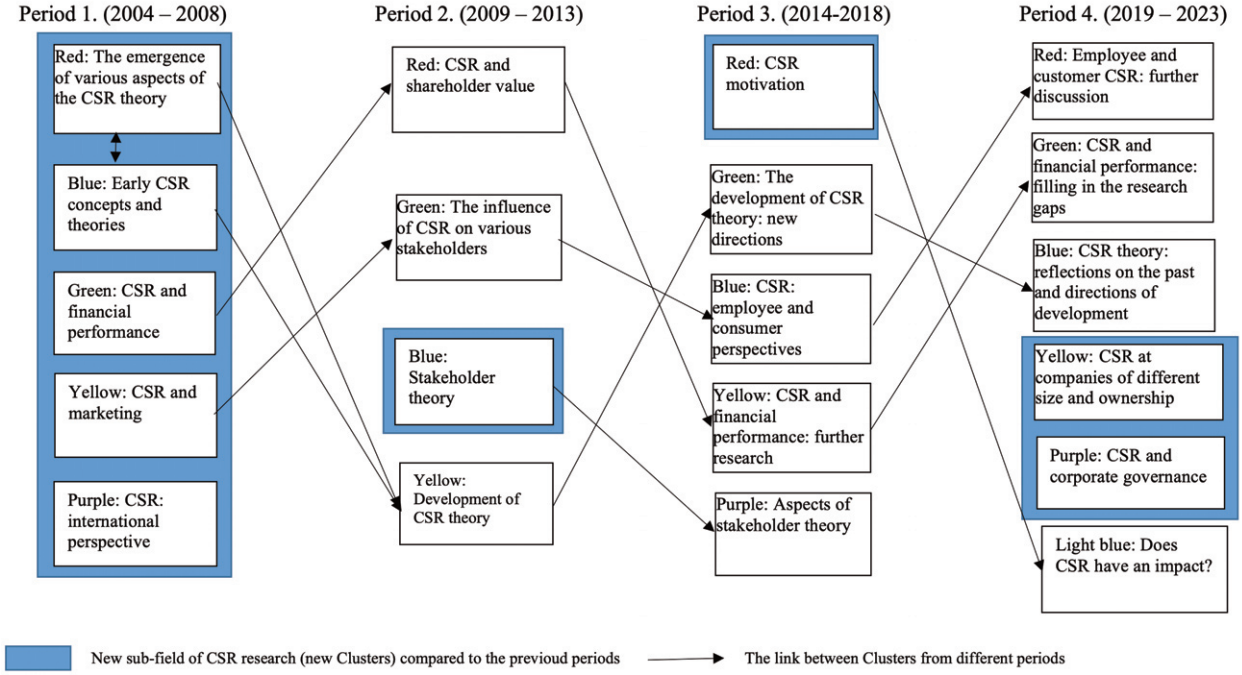


*Table 2: Topics revealed as the result of topic modeling**

No	Topic name	Top terms	Short topic interpretation
1	Environmental CSR/ CSR and market structure	responsible, socially, market, higher, investment, increase, firms, benefits, decisions, investors, cost, high, price, profit, policy, level, efficiency, benefit, investments, growth	The topic papers focused on studying environmental and market structure issues.
2	CSR in services	purpose, green, relationship, model, originality, design methodology approach, influence, customer, practical, impact, customers, role, relationships, significant, dimensions, service, reputation, literature, structural, positive	The article topics examined CSR across various types of services.
3	CSR reporting	companies, information, analysis, reporting, disclosure, reports, financial, quality, company, industry, sector, banks, content, level, stakeholders, disclosures, transparency, factors, voluntary, report	The topic's research explored various aspects of non-financial reporting.
4	CSR employee's perspective	organizational, employees, ethical, employee, behavior, organizations, work, organization, leadership, theory, internal, values, external, support, moral, individual, perceptions, outcomes, behaviors, commitment	The topic articles examined the employee perspective in CSR research.
5	CSR initiatives/ activities	csr, social, corporate, responsibility, activities, initiatives, engagement, engage, actions, activity, involvement, dimensions, role, community, dimension, csi, csr-related, attention, terms, engaging	The scholars of the topic focused on the interdependencies between CSR activities and various aspects of business operations.
6	CSR governance and policies	business, public, society, corporations, community, case, governance, political, power, relations, change, global, rights, issues, actors, private, human, concept, question, problems	The topic's research focused on governance and policies based on CSR principles.
7	CSR and financial performance/ CSR and family firms	firms, performance, firm, financial, relationship, risk, positive, impact, governance, esg, family, negative, ceo, stock, evidence, ownership, period, listed, association, capital	The scholars of the topic examined the relationships between CSR and financial performance and CSR and family firms.
8	Sustainability issues	environmental, sustainability, practices, sustainable, management, supply, board, chain, development, economic, performance, diversity, directors, gender, environment, issues, suppliers, chains, role, policies	The articles in the topic covered a wide range of sustainability-related issues.
9	Mapping CSR field	business, literature, future, ethics, management, review, field, studies, analysis, recent, potential, provide, current, development, issues, attention, framework, knowledge, practice, key	The topic's papers applied different approaches to uncover the intellectual structure of the CSR domain.
10	CSR in multinational enterprise (MNE) subsidiaries	institutional, countries, international, enterprises, global, local, emerging, china, developing, legitimacy, chinese, smes, country, institutions, small, economic, markets, context, practices, national	The theme's research focused on a wide range of topics related to CSR in subsidiaries of multinational enterprises.
11	Customers and CSR marketing	consumers, brand, consumer, marketing, company, product, communication, media, perceived, negative, products, positive, brands, intention, responses, perceptions, crisis, intentions, image, attitudes	The papers in the theme examined the relationship between CSR initiatives and marketing.
12	Stakeholder theory	stakeholder, stakeholders, strategy, theory, strategic, innovation, framework, strategies, approach, managers, process, perspective, management, model, competitive, develop, case, implementation, processes, organizations	The research on this topic explored various aspects of stakeholder theory.

** extracted by topic modeling and interpreted by the authors.*

Table 3: The Comprehensive Map of the CSR Research Domain

The CSR research streams	CSR research streams identified by bibliographic coupling	CSR research streams extracted by topic modeling	Focus	Possible future research
Stream 1. CSR theory	CSR theory	*Not identified by the method*	The research stream examined the evolution of CSR theory from its early beginnings to later developments.	The CSR field will continue to evolve by considering new trends and changes in business and social life. The rapid emergence and development of AI will likely lead to a new direction in CSR theory. According to recent research on AI – CSR interrelations, studies will focus on the ethical aspects of AI (Camilleri, 2024) and the use of AI in implementing CSR initiatives (Khan, Mehmood, & Ali, 2024).
Stream 2. The impact of CSR on financial performance and company value	The impact of CSR on financial performance and company value	CSR and financial performance/ CSR and family firms. (Topic 7)	The stream studied the connection between CSR and financial performance. However, the research did not give an unequivocal response on the type of influence.	This stream has been diminishing in recent years, with research bringing contradictory results. This trend will continue. However, some new studies exploring the relationship between CSR and financial performance will still emerge. The scholars will also generalize the previous research on the topic through regular systematic literature reviews and meta-analyses (Orlitzky et al., 2003).
Stream 3. CSR and stakeholders	CSR and stakeholders	CSR employee's perspective. (Topic 4) Customers and CSR marketing. (Topic 11)	The research stream explored the impact of CSR initiatives on various stakeholders. The stream's focus was on the influence of CSR initiatives on a company's attractiveness to employees and customers.	This stream will continue to unfold as was predicted by Aguinis & Glavas, (2012), who emphasize the need to study different elements and aspects of CSR. Consequently, the scholars will initiate more research focused on specific stakeholders and CSR initiatives.
Stream 4. CSR: an international perspective	CSR: an international perspective	CSR in MNE subsidiaries (Topic 10)	The research stream focused on CSR standards in MNEs and the comparison of CSR standards in MNEs' home country and their subsidiaries.	CSR standards, practices, and initiatives are expected to rapidly develop in various countries, necessitating further research. The CSR contingency theory, which suggests that company CSR strategy should be defined by local conditions rather than being universal, will lead to more country-specific research (Cheng et al., 2014).
Stream 5. Development of stakeholder theory	Development of stakeholder theory	Stakeholder theory (Topic 12)	The stream studied theoretical aspects of stakeholder theory.	This stream's research will likely decline as stakeholder theory is now well-established. Scholars will shift their focus toward practical aspects of stakeholder engagement, which will probably merge with the "CSR and stakeholders" stream. At the same time, there will be further attempts to conceptualize stakeholder theory from different angles (J. Wu & Wokutch, 2015).
Stream 6. Incentives for implementing CSR initiatives	Incentives for implementing CSR initiatives	*Not identified by the method*	The stream examined the reasoning behind implementing the CSR practices into the company activities and the company benefits from putting into practice CSR initiatives.	This stream has a broader scope than Stream 2, as it emphasizes aspects beyond just financial performance. Therefore, it will evolve in the direction of finding the company benefits from the implementation of CSR practices. The scholars will focus on various aspects of the behavioral theory of the firm related to CSR.

Stream 7. CSR in various types of companies	CSR in various types of companies	*Not identified by the method*	This is a relatively new research stream focusing on CSR in various companies (size, ownership, etc.).	This stream will be enriched by research conducted in various corporate settings. The research will align with contingency theory (Cheng et al., 2014), resource-based view in CSR (Branco & Rodrigues, 2006), and SME CSR theories (Spence & Schmidpeter, 2003). Furthermore, the rapid advancement of AI technologies will contribute to unfolding this research stream. Additionally, this stream is likely to evolve in an interdisciplinary direction.
Stream 8. CSR and corporate governance	CSR and corporate governance	CSR governance and policies (Topic 6)	The stream explored how CSR would change depending on different board compositions.	Societal demands for companies to adopt CSR practices and initiatives are increasing. Consequently, the need to develop new CSR policies and standards will drive further research in this area. The research will further explore the application of institutional theory in CSR (Campbell, 2007; Matten & Moon, 2008).
Stream 9. Sustainability aspects, including environmental CSR	*Not identified by the method*	Environmental CSR/ CSR and market structure (Topic 1) Sustainability issues. (Topic 8)	The stream examined various sustainability issues, including environmental initiatives and concerns.	This stream will rapidly grow as the importance of sustainability aspects, including climate change and other environmental issues, continues to increase. The latter will lead to the emergence of a wide range of interdisciplinary research on CSR initiatives. Scholars will further focus on a natural-resource-based view of the company (Hart & Dowell, 2011).
Stream 10. CSR in services	*Not identified by the method*	CSR in services (Topic 2)	The stream analyzed CSR in different types of services.	The stream is likely to progress towards exploring CSR across different service industries.
Stream 11. CSR reporting	*Not identified by the method*	CSR reporting (Topic 3)	The stream examined various kinds and aspects of non-financial reporting.	In recent years, the role of CSR reporting has grown in various regions and countries. In the coming years, this growth will be related to determining and probably unifying frameworks for non-financial reporting.
Stream 12. CSR initiatives/ activities	*Not identified by the method*	CSR initiatives/ activities (Topic 5)	The stream researched interdependencies between CSR activities and various aspects of business operations.	This stream received from topic modeling was the most difficult to interpret and consisted of various sub-topics. It will probably merge with the other streams.
Stream 13. Mapping CSR field	*Not identified by the method*	Mapping CSR field (methodology, literature review, and bibliometric analysis) (Topic 9)	The research stream focused on mapping previous CSR research and identifying the main research streams.	The scholars will provide regular updates on the state of the CSR domain, covering various aspects of company activity and the social environment. Considering the large number of CSR research studies, the results would likely be much more diverse compared to those reported by De Bakker et al. (2005) at the beginning of the century.

Stream 9 "Sustainability aspects, including environmental CSR" (received as the result of merging (Topic 1) Environmental CSR/ CSR and market structure and (Topic 8) Sustainability issues), **Stream 10** "CSR in services", **Stream 11** "CSR reporting, Stream 12. CSR initiatives/ activities", and **Stream 13** "Mapping CSR field".

This comprehensive map both confirms and extends previous reviews (Cucari et al., 2023; Frerichs & Teichert, 2023; Kumar & Srivastava, 2022). We validate the field's high productivity levels (Cucari et al., 2023) while corroborating several established research streams identified by other scholars, including CSR's impact on financial performance, CSR

theory, and employee/consumer perspectives (Frerichs & Teichert, 2023; Kumar & Srivastava, 2022). Our approach reveals emerging niche areas likely to expand in response to external environmental changes: international CSR perspectives, implementation incentives, CSR across diverse organizational types, and CSR reporting practices. The complementary application of bibliographic coupling and topic modeling thus provides a more granular and dynamic view of the field's intellectual structure, illuminating both established trajectories and emerging frontiers discussed in the following section.

5.2 CSR research framework: finding the links between the research streams

To illustrate the relationships among the thirteen research streams (Table 3), we developed an integrated CSR research framework (Fig. 3) that distinguishes between internal organizational factors and external environmental influences.

Within companies, CSR research centers on the relationship between CSR initiatives and financial performance, a dominant focus in contemporary scholarship. This stream examines how CSR activities and reporting practices influence profitability and firm value. A closely related direction explores the interplay between corporate governance and financial outcomes. Governance structures shape how CSR affects financial performance, while financial results, in turn, influence organizational attitudes and incentives toward CSR adoption.

The external environment encompasses four key contextual dimensions: stakeholder relationships, market structure, international variation, and organizational diversity. Stakeholder engagement has gained renewed scholarly attention as emerging challenges—including rapid AI development and evolving sustainability expectations—reshape corporate-stakeholder dynamics. Growing environmental awareness among stakeholders is generating new CSR initiatives and activities (Block et al., 2024).

International perspectives further complicate the CSR landscape. Regional and national preferences shape how organizations approach CSR in different territories (Arthaud-Day, 2005), leading multinational companies to adopt significantly different policies for home versus host countries. Industry context and market structure also play critical roles. CSR practices vary considerably across industries, while company characteristics (e.g., size, ownership, and organizational type) substantially influence CSR implementation (Yáñez-Araque et al., 2021). In competitive markets, effective CSR policies can serve as sources of competitive advantage (Tichý et al., 2022).

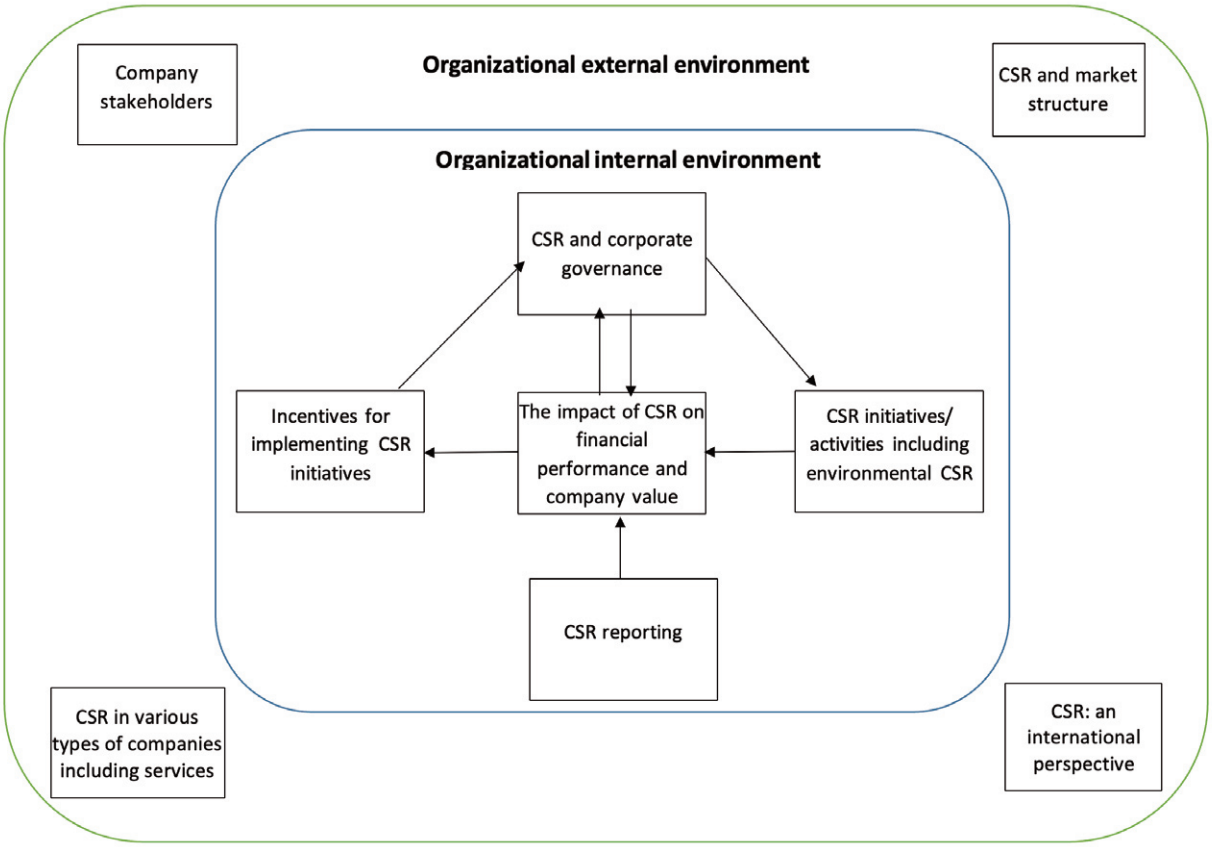
5.3 Future development of CSR field

The CSR domain is unlikely to converge on a single, universally accepted concept because CSR is inherently broad and context dependent. As a result, long-standing debates will persist and continue to attract new empirical evidence rather than definitive resolution. A prominent example is the relationship between CSR and corporate financial performance (CFP): although research will continue to refine contingencies and mechanisms, a stable consensus on the direction and strength of this association remains improbable.

CSR theories will evolve in response to emerging business and societal challenges. Just as the 2007-2008 financial crisis revitalized stakeholder theory, we anticipate that the widespread adoption of artificial intelligence will catalyze new theoretical directions and potentially transform the CSR concept itself. This pattern suggests that external disruptions serve as critical inflection points for theoretical innovation.

Several established areas, such as CSR in relation to employees, consumers, and marketing, are also expected to remain central. These streams would benefit from more multi-level research across contexts and conditions, consistent with calls to strengthen the field's explanatory power and external validity (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012). At the same time, regulatory and societal pressures to implement CSR initiatives and to adopt CSR reporting requirements are likely to expand research on implementation drivers and institutional effects. This environment will encourage further growth of niche streams, including CSR reporting, CSR in multinational enterprises, and CSR in firms with different

Figure 3: Framework for CSR Research



ownership structures. In line with prior observations, the field may therefore become increasingly fragmented as more specialized subdomains develop (Frerichs & Teichert, 2023).

Another important trajectory is greater interdisciplinarity. CSR research is increasingly engaging with perspectives such as feminist and diversity theories, reflecting broader efforts to understand how CSR interacts with social change and inequality. Relatedly, the agenda is likely to become more practice-oriented as environmental challenges and other urgent societal problems intensify demand for actionable insights on CSR design, implementation, and outcomes.

Methodologically, data constraints in some CSR settings will likely sustain interest in qualitative designs, including case studies, particularly for examining emerging practices and complex causal processes. At the same time, continued growth in the volume of CSR scholarship will increase the value of systematic evidence synthesis, including meta-analyses and advanced text-analytic approaches, to consolidate findings, identify robust patterns, and generate new integrative conclusions.

5.4 Research limitations

From a technical standpoint, the joint application of bibliometric and text analysis helped mitigate the shortcomings of each method and build a more comprehensive picture of CSR research. At the same time, changes in the external environment have a significant impact on the direction of CSR research. Therefore, we can presume that such changes can substantially alter the landscape of CSR research. It would benefit the field if scholars repeated such a type of study after significant changes in social and economic life.

6 CONCLUSION

We analyzed the evolution of the CSR field by applying bibliographic coupling to the dataset extracted from the WoS and divided it into four periods. The latter showed that new clusters emerged in each period in response to crises or other trends in social development. Specifically, the interest in stakeholder theory emerged as a response to the 2008 crisis. Since 2014, the interest in research on specific aspects of CSR has grown, which has led to the emergence of "Employee and consumer perspectives" and "CSR motivation" clusters. Since 2019, the research has become much narrower, more sophisticated, and more interdisciplinary. The scholars explored CSR in conjunction with board diversity, feminist theory, and the social impact of CSR.

As a result of the evolution analysis of the CSR research domain, we identified eight research streams. Performing the topic modeling generated twelve topics. We developed a comprehensive map of the CSR field by merging the results of two methods. The map included the following clusters: CSR theory, The impact of CSR on financial performance and company value, CSR and stakeholders, CSR: international perspective, Development of stakeholder theory, Incentives for implementing CSR initiatives, CSR in various types of companies, CSR and corporate governance, Sustainability aspects, including environmental CSR, CSR in services, CSR reporting, CSR initiatives/ activities, Mapping CSR field. By building a comprehensive map of the CSR research field, we contributed to the debate on the evolution and conceptualization of CSR.

As in the past, future CSR research will be significantly influenced by new trends and changes in business and social life. Therefore, we identified interdisciplinary, niche, and practical research as the directions for future explorations.

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EXTENDED SUMMARY/IZVLEČEK

Ta študija razkriva intelektualno strukturo raziskovalnega področja družbene odgovornosti podjetij (CSR), analizira njegov razvoj ter oblikuje celovit okvir in prihodnjo raziskovalno agendo za raziskave CSR. Izvedli smo bibliometrično in besedilno analizo z uporabo tematskega modeliranja na naboru 9.391 publikacij s področja CSR, pridobljenih iz baze Web of Science. Najprej smo uporabili bibliografsko povezovanje za analizo razvoja področja in identificirali osem raziskovalnih tokov. Nato smo na istem naboru podatkov uporabili tematsko modeliranje, ki je razkrilo dodatnih pet tokov, ki jih samo bibliografsko povezovanje ni zajelo. Ta dvojni pristop je omogočil oblikovanje celovitega zemljevida trinajstih ločenih raziskovalnih tokov znotraj raziskav CSR. Naša analiza kaže, da se literatura CSR razvija v smeri ožjih raziskovalnih vrzeli, večje praktične usmerjenosti in večje interdisciplinarnosti. Pomembne spremembe v zunanjem okolju spodbujajo nove raziskovalne smeri, hkrati pa ponovno oživljajo zanimanje za uveljavljene teorije. Na podlagi teh ugotovitev predlagamo podrobno prihodnjo raziskovalno agendo in integrativni okvir za raziskave CSR. Z združevanjem bibliometrične in besedilne analize ta študija zajame tako temeljne kot nastajajoče publikacije ter razkriva celovitejšo in bolj niansirano intelektualno strukturo področja CSR kot prejšnji pregledi. Ta metodološka integracija poglablja konceptualizacijo raziskovalnega področja CSR in raziskovalcem zagotavlja trden zemljevid poti za prihodnje raziskovanje.

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Appendix 1. Interpretation of bibliographic coupling results

Period 2004-2008

Red Cluster "The emergence and development of various aspects of the CSR theory"

In some respects, the cluster was closely aligned with the blue and purple clusters in its ideology. Scholars explored the development of CSR theory and the interrelation of CSR with corporate governance (Jamali et al., 2008), analyzed the definitions of CSR (Dahlsrud, 2008) and CSR in developing countries (Jamali and Mirshak, 2007). Furthermore, the cluster research targeted the aspects of stakeholder theory (Fransen & Kolk, 2007).

Green Cluster "CSR and financial performance"

This cluster included early studies of the relationships between CSR and financial performance. Specifically, the authors researched whether the investment in CSR brought additional financial benefits for the companies (Brammer and Millington, 2008). The cluster research reported contradictory results by confirming or rejecting relationships between CSP and financial performance.

The cluster research also targeted the influence of CSR on building a company's competitive advantage (Branco & Rodrigues, 2006) and the role of CSR in a company's international diversification (Strike et al., 2006) and again showed contradictory results.

Blue Cluster "Early CSR concepts and theories"

The most frequently cited articles in the cluster reviewed the basics of CSR theories. In addition, the cluster authors analyzed the sources of CSR emergence. Specifically, the scholars reviewed the CSR origins (Norman & MacDonald, 2004) and the early CSR policies (Scherer & Palazzo, 2007). The cluster also included papers with early mapping of the CSR field (Garriga & Melé, 2004), studied the place of CSR in management studies (Lockett et al., 2006), and built the CSR conceptual framework (García-Marzá, 2005). The aspects of stakeholder theory, such as stakeholder interaction and institutional stakeholder perspective, were also examined in the cluster (Neville and Menguc, 2006).

Yellow Cluster "CSR and marketing"

The cluster scholars focused on conceptualizing CSR from the marketing perspective (Maignan et al., 2005). The cluster also studied various aspects of the CSR-marketing interaction. Specifically, the cluster scholars explored the effect of CSR on company reputation and customer donations (Sen, 2006) and the links between CSR and customer satisfaction/ consumer behavior (Luo and Bhattacharya, 2006).

Purple Cluster "CSR: an international perspective"

The cluster research targeted the international aspects of CSR. Specifically, the authors studied whether MNEs transferred CSR practices from home to host countries (Arthaud-Day, 2005), the role of MNEs in spreading CSR standards, and the link between CSR and religion in cross-country research (Brammer et al., 2007).

Period 2009-2013

Red Cluster "CSR and shareholder value"

The cluster articles included studies of various aspects of the influence of CSR on shareholder value. The scholars researched the relationship between CSR and shareholder value (Godfrey et al., 2009) and showed contradictory results. In addition, the cluster articles examined different aspects of the relationship between CSR and shareholder value. In particular, cluster studies examined the importance of environmental issues for shareholders (Flammer, 2013) and the impact of CSR on credit ratings (Attig et al., 2013). Furthermore, cluster research contributed to studying the interrelationship between CSR activities and financial performance by conducting industry-specific research (Wu & Shen, 2013). One of the most frequently cited literature reviews, which focused on mapping the CSR field, belonged to this cluster (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012).

Green Cluster "The influence of CSR on various stakeholders"

The cluster focused on the role of CSR for different stakeholders. The scholars researched CSR initiatives mutually beneficial for companies and stakeholders (Bhattacharya et al., 2009) and how CSR created value for stakeholders (Peloza & Shang, 2011). Additionally, the cluster explored the importance of CSR activities for individual stakeholders. Specifically, the research was conducted for consumers (Castaldo et al., 2009), investors (Luo & Bhattacharya, 2009), and employees (Bauman and Skitka, 2012).

Blue Cluster "Stakeholder theory"

The cluster articles examined various aspects of stakeholder theory. In particular, one of the most frequently cited articles mapped the stakeholder theory (Parmar et al., 2010). Additionally, the cluster research examined the influence of stakeholder theory on corporate strategy (M.-D. P. Lee, 2011) and studied various aspects of stakeholder management and stakeholder responsibility (Fassin, 2012). The theoretical implications for business, and society regarding stakeholder theory implementation were also developed in the cluster (Marcus et al., 2010).

Yellow Cluster "Development of CSR theory"

The scholars proceeded with the normative explanation of CSR theory. In particular, CSR was characterized as a contested theory (Okoye, 2009). The frequently cited authors tried to rediscover the role of CSR, focusing not only on financial performance but also on social and political obligations (Scherer & Palazzo, 2011). In addition, Scherer et al., (2009) examined challenges for CSR in the globalizing world.

Period 2014-2018

Red Cluster "CSR motivation"

The cluster research focused on various aspects of CSR motivation (Petrenko et al., 2016). Specifically, the cluster's frequently cited articles explored access to financial resources as an incentive for implementing CSR initiatives (Cheng et al., 2014b), examined the effect of CSR on investment recommendations (Ioannou & Serafeim, 2015), and company bond ratings (Branzei et al., 2018). Furthermore, the cluster studies identified CEO motives for implementing CSR activities in the firms (Tang et al., 2015).

Green Cluster "The development of CSR theory: new directions"

The research in the cluster focused on new directions in CSR theory. The determinants of CSR for developing and developed countries were identified in the cluster (Ali et al., 2017). The authors reported on the importance of specific stakeholders for CSR in developed countries and external stakeholders, such as international bodies, for CSR in developing countries. Scherer et al., (2016) developed the theory of political CSR and explored the recent changes in companies relevant to political CSR. In addition, the cluster scholars explored the impact of corporate governance on CSR (Jain & Jamali, 2016). Finally, yet importantly, the cluster articles investigated the issues related to socially responsible leadership (Stahl & Sully De Luque, 2014).

Blue Cluster "CSR: employee and consumer perspectives"

This cluster consisted of two sub-clusters, namely employee and consumer perspectives.

The employee perspective sub-cluster included the research focused on employee perception of CSR (De Roeck and Maon, 2018). The cluster research also targeted different aspects of the problem, such as the impact of CSR on employee motivation (Brammer et al., 2015), organizational commitment (M. Farooq et al., 2014) and employee productivity (Romi et al., 2018). In addition, the scholars examined how different groups of employees perceived CSR activities (M. Farooq et al., 2014).

The research of the second sub-cluster focused on the impact of CSR on consumers. In this respect, the cluster scholars explored the attributions influencing CSR-consumer relationships (Marín et al., 2016). Furthermore, the effect of CSR on corporate reputation and, consequently, on company performance was researched in the cluster (Zhu et al., 2014). Finally, yet importantly, the scholars of the cluster explored the impact of CSR on consumer value creation (Currás-Pérez et al., 2018) and consumer brand preferences (Tingchi Liu et al., 2014).

Yellow Cluster "CSR and financial performance: further research"

The yellow cluster was placed between the three clusters Red, Blue, and Purple. The research in this cluster focused on creating new value for the company and developing CSR theory. The studies became more country, industry, and environment-specific, targeting some narrow gaps in the problem. Specifically, the cluster scholars researched whether CSR practices were beneficial for East Asian companies (Hou M. et al. (2016)) and if the SMEs performed better if they were socially responsible (Courrent et al., 2018)**.** Husted et al., (2015) moved from the CSP-financial performance discussion to the CSR-company value discussion.

Purple Cluster "Aspects of stakeholder theory"

The purple cluster was the smallest cluster of the period. It included just seven publications. Five publications from the cluster focused on narrow aspects of stakeholder theory. Helmig et al., (2016) researched stakeholder pressure to implement CSR initiatives at the companies, while Ahn & Park, (2018) studied the issues of forming social capital with key stakeholders. The lack of stakeholder punishment for the company's inappropriate behavior was also reported by scholars (Barnett, 2014).

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Red Cluster "Employee and customer CSR: further discussion"

The red cluster is the largest cluster of the period. Its research examined the role of CSR for employees and consumers of the company.

The employee sub-cluster continued to focus on studying employee perception of CSR activities. The research findings on CSR activities' influence on employee perception were contradictory (Rodrigo et al., 2019). The cluster scholars performed a meta-analysis of previous research on this topic (Aggarwal & Singh, 2022) and consequently suggested examining CSR employee perception for specific industries, regions, and cultures. Some studies also considered employee perceptions as a mediator of CSR influence on company performance (Luu, 2020).

The cluster scholars investigated the cause-and-effect relationship between CSR and company perception by the customer, and the influence of CSR on marketing effectiveness (Papadas et al., 2019), company reputation, customer loyalty (Aramburu & Pescador, 2019) and consumer choice (Kuokkanen & Sun, 2020).

Green Cluster "CSR and financial performance: filling in the research gaps"

The studies developed research on the effect of CSR on financial performance. The meta-analysis of previous CSR-company performance research showed the positive impact of CSR initiatives on various aspects of corporate strategy (Vishwanathan et al., 2020). The cluster research targeted the impact of specific CSR initiatives on financial performance. The scholars examined the impact of obligatory CSR corporate expenditures on financial performance (Bhattacharyya & Rahman, 2019). Moreover, the cluster research studied the channels through which CSR influenced company performance (Naseem et al., 2020) and the CSR-performance relationship considering risk factors (Lu et al., 2021).

Blue Cluster "CSR theory: reflections on the past and directions of development"

The cluster was placed amongst the Red, Purple, and Yellow clusters. Its research analyzed past studies and identified new challenges and directions for the development of CSR theory. Specifically, (Carroll, 2021) outlined the new CSR construct based on the reflection of previous studies. (Matten & Moon, 2020) conducted a similar type of research by analyzing the dynamics of CSR development. (Barnett et al., 2020) suggested ways of constructing CSR initiatives to increase their social impact. Furthermore, some new concepts, such as the development of the CSR concept in connection with feminist theory, appeared in the cluster (Grosser & Moon, 2019).

Yellow Cluster "CSR at companies of different size and ownership"

The cluster research analyzed CSR in companies of different sizes and ownerships. The scholars conducted research in various countries, including India, Pakistan, and Eritrea, e.g., Bahta et al., (2021) reported that CSR had a significant influence on the performance of SMEs with the mediating role of corporate reputation. The scholars also targeted companies with different ownership. In that respect, Yáñez-Araque et al., (2021) examined differences in CSR practices at small and medium enterprises with various types of ownership.

Purple Cluster "CSR and corporate governance"

The cluster research focused on different aspects of corporate governance. In particulary, the cluster examined the diversity and characteristics of boards and CEOs. The researchers reported a positive relationship between CSR engagement, political influence, and international and business experiences in developing countries (Al-Mamun & Seamer, 2021). A positive relationship between board diversity and the implementation of CSR principles was found in France (Beji et al., 2021). The researchers also attempted to build a conceptual model of corporate governance, considering CSR (Aluchna & Roszkowska-Menkes, 2019; Pekovic & Vogt, 2021).

Light Blue Cluster "Does CSR have an impact?"

The cluster focused on studying the impact of CSR on marketing (Paolone et al., 2022), company financial performance (Al-Shammari et al., 2022), and social perception/impact of CSR (Li & Wu, 2020). The cluster articles are thematically close to the Red and Green Clusters of this period.

Appendix 2. Interpretation of topic modelling results

Topic 1. Environmental CSR/ CSR and market structure.

The topic consisted of the following sub-topics: environmental CSR and market structure.

The first sub-topic focused on the study of various environmental issues. More precisely, the articles on this topic targeted the relationship between emissions taxes and CSR (Xu et al., 2022), the timing of environmental policies (García et al., 2018), and the relationship between CSR and carbon emissions (Zhou et al., 2023). In addition, the cluster authors studied different aspects of emission taxes and their relationships with CSR (Xu et al., 2022).

The second sub-topic studied CSR in different market structures to consider various competitive conditions. More precisely, CSR was investigated in the conditions of oligopoly (Tichý et al., 2022), duopoly (Kopel & Brand, 2012), and monopoly (Aloui & Jebsi, 2022).

Topic 2. CSR in services.

The topic articles analyzed CSR in different types of services. Specifically, the scholars studied the influence of CSR on customers in the banking and hotel industries (Khan et al., 2015), the impact of customer capital on societal sustainability in high-contact service startups (Verma et al., 2023), and the role of CSR for the restoration of loyalty after service failures (Choi & La, 2013). The studies on these topics were mostly empirical and conducted in both developing economies, such as Pakistan, China, and India, as well as developed economies, including Spain and Portugal.

Topic 3. CSR reporting.

The articles representing the topic researched different types and aspects of non-financial reporting. The topic research covered internet corporate reporting (Saeid Homayoun, 2011), integrated reporting, which includes CSR aspects (Buitendag et al., 2017), reporting on stakeholder engagement (Romero et al., 2019), and sustainability reporting (M. B. Farooq et al., 2021). Most researchers focused on examining the types and quality of reports, audits/assurance of CSR reports, as well as the relationships between CSR/sustainability reports and company market value. Additionally, most studies on CSR reporting were country-specific. The studies were conducted for Iran, Italy, South Africa, Malaysia, Spain, Poland, the UK, Indonesia, Germany, France, and Lithuania.

Topic 4. CSR employee's perspective.

The topic articles investigated the employee perspective in CSR research, addressing various issues related to the influence of CSR initiatives and motivation on employee organizational commitment.

Specific studies on the topic investigated the influence of employee CSR perception on employee engagement, finding a positive correlation (Shao et al., 2017). Some topic studies contributed to the discussion on the impact of external and internal CSR on employee job attitudes and behaviors. This research confirmed the dependence between external CSR and job satisfaction and found no relationships between internal CSR and work behavior (Chatzopoulou et al., 2022).

Some of the research on the topic did not directly study CSR initiatives but were CSR-related, e.g. Tu et al., (2022) researched the impact of leadership support and learning culture on employee engagement.

Topic 5. CSR initiatives/ activities.

This topic was the most difficult to interpret, as the gamma values of articles were relatively low. The scholars focused on the interdependence between CSR activities and various aspects of business operations. In particular, the scholars studied the impact of corporate governance on CSR activities (Shin et al., 2015), and the effect of CSR initiatives on engaging new employees (Smith & Langford, 2011). Moreover, the topic research confirmed the complementarity of CSR and corporate political activities (Kamasak et al., 2019), and the positive impact of community capital on CSR activities (Hoi et al., 2018).

Topic 6. CSR governance and policies.

The topic studies described governance and policies based on CSR principles and were conducted at both the societal and corporate levels. Specifically, the scholars developed recommendations for the implementation of multi-stakeholder governance (Fougère & Solitander, 2020), and explored the role of multi-stakeholder initiatives in transnational corporations (Moog et al., 2015). The research on the topic also targeted the role of CSR in corporate policy (Padayachee, 2021). Researchers developed several CSR-related policies, including policies on the improving trade union rights (Egels-Zandén & Merk, 2014), the working conditions in the industry (Alamgir & Banerjee, 2019), and resolving business-society conflicts (Maher et al., 2019).

Topic 7. CSR and financial performance/ CSR and family firms.

This topic consisted of two subtopics: CSR and financial performance, and CSR and family firms. The first sub-topic contributed to the academic debate on the relationship between the implementation of CSR initiatives and company financial performance, yielding controversial results. Ma & Yasir, (2023) reported that the relationship between CSR and CFP has a U-shape. In comparison, Nollet, Filis, & Mitrokostas, (2016) found no relationship between CSR and CFP in the short-term perspective and reported a U-shape relationship between the governance sub-component of CSR and CFP in the long-term perspective. Furthermore, Vuong, (2022) found a positive impact of effective ESG performance in previous periods on company value.

The second sub-topic explored different aspects of CSR in family firms. Labelle, Hafsi, Francoeur, & Ben Amar, (2018) reported a lower level of CSP in family firms compared to non-family-owned companies. At the same time, the family firms with lower levels of owner control tend to invest more in CSR initiatives. Moreover, Kashmiri & Mahajan, (2010) revealed that family firms had a higher level of corporate citizenship compared to non-family firms. The topic studies also showed that if the CEO of the family company is a member of the controlling family, the company is more likely to invest in CSR initiatives (Cui et al., 2018).

Topic 8. Sustainability issues.

The topic represented a broad range of sustainability-related issues. In particular, the topic studies examined the influence of various factors on sustainability performance, sustainability of different industries and value chain activities, gender equality/diversity issues, and sustainability trade-offs.

The research showed that lean management and sustainability-oriented innovations contributed to the company's sustainability performance (Dey et al., 2020) and green supply chain management positively impacted corporate sustainability (Z. Khan et al., 2015). Furthermore, the researchers studied gender issues together with sustainability and paid significant attention to exploring the influence of board diversity on sustainability performance (Biswas et al., 2021; Cambrea et al., 2023).

Topic 9. Mapping CSR field (methodology, literature review, and bibliometric analysis).

The topic presented different approaches to building the intellectual structure of the CSR domain. It also included articles devoted to the methodology of literature reviews of the CSR research (Rojon et al., 2021).

Most of the topic literature applied various methods of bibliometric analysis (Jaén et al., 2018). Some scholars utilized more advanced bibliometric techniques, e.g. Chandrasekar & Rehman, (2023) used a hybrid method for systematic literature review.

Topic 10. CSR in MNE subsidiaries.

The topic covered a wide range of themes related to CSR in subsidiaries of MNEs. Scholars analyzed whether MNEs transfer their CSR standards to the host countries (Reimann et al., 2015), the impact of political hostility on the CSR of MNE subsidiaries (Tian, 2022), the impact of institutional pressures at home and host countries on MNE CSR initiatives in the host country (J. Y. Lee et al., 2021), and the organization of CSR in the home and host country (Muller, 2006). The topic research commonly targeted the MNE subsidiaries in developing countries, specifically China, Nigeria, and Mexico. However, some research has been conducted in developed countries, such as Australia and South Korea.

Topic 11. Customers and CSR marketing.

The topic research showed a positive interdependence between CSR initiatives and customer brand loyalty (Nan & Heo, 2007). Furthermore, the scholars explored how CSR initiatives could be leveraged for marketing purposes. In particular, the topic research focused on customer attachment to different types of products when charitable donations are added to the sale (Zemack-Rugar et al., 2016), different aspects of CSR marketing (Huang & Liu, 2020), and CSR communication strategies in social media/ networks (Ma and Bentley, 2022).

Topic 12. Stakeholder theory.

The topic research covered various aspects of stakeholder theory. Some of the articles contributed to the conceptualization of stakeholder theory. Specifically, Menon, (2022) developed the theoretical foundation of corporate sustainability-stakeholder relationships, while Minoja, (2012) built the theoretical framework to integrate stakeholder theory, stakeholder management, and ethics.

The other articles in the topic targeted the narrow gaps in stakeholder theory. Specifically, Thelisson & Meier, (2022) suggested using CSR as a legitimation strategy for mergers to deal with different stakeholders, and Murphy & Arenas, (2010) developed the model of cross-sectional collaboration for stakeholder interaction.