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# Unveiling Research Landscape in Social Media and Corporate Social Responsibility: A Bibliometric Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has evolved beyond traditional philanthropy into a strategic imperative for organisations, and social media now serves as a vital channel for promoting, implementing, and evaluating CSR initiatives. This intersection has transformed how businesses engage with stakeholders, respond to social expectations, and build reputational capital. There are three research questions in our study: (1) What is the demographic information of the social media and CSR?; (2) What are the dominant themes?; and (3) which countries are leading the conversation, and how are they collaborating? Our study presents a bibliometric analysis of academic research at the intersection of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and social media, covering the period from 2009 to 2025, based on the Scopus database. Prominent themes include communication and consumer behaviour, empirical studies and methodology, CSR communication strategies, stakeholder and legitimacy, and reputation and activism. Key contributors, such as Cheng, Y., Chen, Y.R.R., and Hung-Baeseke, C.J.F., while journals like Sustainability and The Journal of Business Ethics, were among the five most prolific journals in the field of social media and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Geographically, the United States was the dominant country in the publication, followed by other countries like China, Spain, the United Kingdom, Australia, Italy, and Canada. The co-authorship and co-citation networks highlight the collaborative and interdisciplinary nature of CSR-social media research. Our study identified five (5) key themes occurrences in published CSR and social media research. This paper includes a discussion of the limitations encountered as well as further suggestions for future research.

**Keywords:** *CSR, social media, Scopus, bibliometrics analysis, corporate social responsibility.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has garnered increasing attention within the domains of corporate and strategic communication (Chan et al., 2024; Cornelissen, 2023; Cucari et al., 2023) in both scholars and practitioners (Dong et al., 2024). Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has evolved from a peripheral philanthropic activity to a central component of strategic business operations. Previous studies have shown that CSR activities contribute positively to outcomes such as corporate image, reputation, communication engagement and brand loyalty (Chan et al., 2024; Cheng et al., 2024; Villamor & Wallace, 2024). Organisations are increasingly expected to integrate ethical, environmental, and social considerations into their core strategies to meet stakeholder expectations and achieve sustainable growth.

Social media comprises Internet-based apps that use the conceptual and technological principles of Web 2.0, facilitating the creation and exchange of User Generated Content (UGC) (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Social media acts as one of the crucial platforms that provide fast information to stakeholders, especially in this digital era (Kurniawan et al., 2024). The unique characteristics of social media platforms have made them a potent medium for sharing information, ideas, and opinions. Social media facilitates users' interaction through digital platforms, allowing them to communicate, share experiences, and seek opinions (Sharipudin et al., 2023). The role of social media has progressively transformed from a mere marketing tool to a source of marketing intelligence, enabling organisations to observe, analyse, and forecast client actions (Li et al., 2021). Hence, it is important to understand social media characteristics since it can help to achieve an organisation's objective effectively (Ayub et al., 2024), especially in CSR.

The integration of CSR and social media has also led to new challenges. The risk of 'greenwashing', misleading claims about environmental responsibility, has increased, as has public scrutiny. Moreover, users on social media often hold corporations accountable, amplifying CSR failures just as readily as successes. Thus, authenticity, consistency, and responsiveness have become critical dimensions of CSR in the digital age. Concurrently, the proliferation of digital technologies, particularly social media, has transformed the landscape of corporate communication, enabling real-time engagement with stakeholders and broader dissemination of CSR initiatives.

The intersection of CSR and social media has garnered significant scholarly attention in recent years. Bibliometric analyses reveal a marked increase in research focusing on CSR communication via social media platforms. Table 1 shows that there are already a few existing studies using bibliometric methods to examine CSR and/or social media. Nonetheless, to our best knowledge, only a few studies specifically focus on the intersection of social media and CSR with bibliometric analysis as their primary methodology (see Table 1). From our findings, several studies such as "The Performance of Corporate Social Responsibility Communication in the Web2.0 Era: A Bibliometric Analysis of CSR Communication in Social Media Field", published in 2023 by Hua et al. (2023) and the 2020 study by Jedynak, which have very similar approaches and focus areas. On the other hand, studies from Ji et al. (2021), Ji et al. (2020), and Lin et al. (2020) have similarities in terms of the topic that has been focused on in their studies.

Table 1: Past studies that have been conducted in the area of social media and CSR

| Title | Authors | Year | Journal/Source | Methodology | Key Findings | Focus Areas |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Performance of Corporate Social Responsibility Communication in the Web2.0 Era: A Bibliometric Analysis of CSR Communication in the Social Media Field | Zhou Hua, X., Hasan, N. A. M., & De Costa, F. | 2023 | Studies in Media and Communication | Bibliometric analysis using CiteSpace software of 490 research articles (2007-2023) | 1. Research trend shows increasing state year by year, with explosive growth beginning in 2017<br>2. The US, China and Spain contribute the most in this field<br>3. The network of co-authors is decentralised<br>4. Twelve high-concern clusters identified with "institutional theory," "web," and "citizenship", having been around longer<br>5. Evolution is divided into three phases: initial (2007-2011), debate (2012-2017), research specialisation (2018-2023) | CSR communication, social media, Web 2.0 |
| Social Media and CSR – Systematic Literature Review | Jedynak, M. | 2020 | Zarządzanie Mediami | Systematic literature review and bibliometric analysis of 37 articles (2011-2020) from EBSCO, ProQuest, JSTOR, Google Scholar | 1. A small number of publications associated with a relatively short period<br>2. Upward trend in publications<br>3. Authors are primarily from the USA<br>4. Research spans numerous areas<br>5. Significant research gap identified | Social media, CSR communication, stakeholder engagement |
| Integration of Digital Technologies in Corporate Social Responsibility: A Systematic Literature Review and Bibliometric Analysis | Atanasov, A., Chipriyanova, G., & Krasteva-Hristova, R. | 2023 | Journal of Risk and Financial Management | Systematic literature review and bibliometric analysis of 129 articles (2014-2023) | 1. Digital technologies transform CSR strategies<br>2. Social media significantly enhances stakeholder engagement in CSR initiatives<br>3. Identifies research clusters and evolution trends | Digital technologies, CSR, social media |



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| Social Media Platforms and Social Enterprise: Bibliometric Analysis and Systematic Review | Ali, Balta & Papadopoulos | 2023 | International Journal of Information Management | Bibliometric analysis using VOS Viewer with a systematic review of literature | 1. Key research clusters identified related to social media use in social enterprises<br>2. Analysis of keywords co-occurrence patterns<br>3. Evolution of research topics over time | Social media platforms, social enterprise, and bibliometric analysis |
| Corporate social responsibility and marketing: A bibliometric and visualization analysis of the literature between the years 1994 and 2020 | Quezado, Cavalcante, Fortes and Ramos | 2022 | Sustainability | Bibliometric view of marketing-related CSR research with visualization analysis | 1. Identification of state-of-the-art literature<br>2. Analysis of 2000+ documents between 1994 to 2020<br>3. Visual mapping of research evolution | CSR, marketing, and visualization analysis |
| Corporate Social Responsibility Knowledge Base: A Bibliometric Analysis | Nyabakora, W. I., & Mohabir, S. E. | 2024 | Modern Finance | Analysis of the current landscape of CSR research using the Scopus database and the PRISMA methodology | 1. Comprehensive perspective on CSR knowledge base<br>2. Identification of research trends and gaps<br>3. Social network analysis of formal scholarly networks | CSR knowledge base, bibliometric techniques, social networks |
| A bibliometric analysis of corporate social responsibility in sustainable development. | Ye, N., Kueh, T. B., Hou, L., Liu, Y., & Yu, H | 2020 | Journal of Cleaner Production | Bibliometric analysis using the 'CiteSpace' software is applied to analyse and visualise the knowledge map | 1. Four stages of the evolution can be identified: initial phase (1997–2004), debating phase (2005–2009), rapid developing phase (2010–2013), and research specialization phase (2014–2019) | CSR research related to sustainable development (SD) |
| Social media marketing research: A bibliometric analysis from Scopus. | Shaheen, H. | 2025 | Future Business Journal | The PRISMA framework ensured structured selection, while VOSViewer | 1. Emerging research themes such as AI-driven marketing, tourism marketing, digital advertising-<br>ing, and virtual marketing were identified.<br>2. The research also reveals regional disparities in research output, particularly in the Arab region | Social media marketing research |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A Bibliometric Analysis on Corporate Social Responsibility in the Tourism Sector between 2018-2023 | Ateş, A. | 2025 | Uluslararası Ekonomi Siyaset İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Dergisi, | Bibliometric method and systematic literature review | Seven potential research areas in the tourism sector have been suggested, including secondary stakeholders like residents, government, media, and activists. | Corporate Social Responsibility in the Tourism Sector |
| The relationship and development trend of corporate social responsibility (CSR) literature: Utilizing bibliographic coupling analysis and social network analysis. | Lin, Y. C., Padliansyah, R., & Lin, T. C. | 2020 | Management Decision | Bibliographic coupling analysis and social network analysis | 1. The results identified 15 research topics in CSR research<br>2. Most of the leading authors of CSR research came from English-speaking countries. On the other hand, researchers from developing countries simply focused on limited issues. | Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) |
| Mapping corporate social responsibility research in communication: A network and bibliometric analysis | Ji, Y. G., Tao, W., & Rim, H. | 2020 | Public Relations Review | Conducts co-authorship and co-citation network analyses | limited collaborations among researchers with expertise in and outside the communication discipline or across different communication sub-disciplines | Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) |
| Theoretical insights of CSR research in communication from 1980 to 2018: A bibliometric network analysis | Ji, Y. G., Tao, W., & Rim, H. (2021). | 2021 | Journal of Business Ethics | Invisible college was adopted as the conceptual framework. | 1. This body of literature tends to gravitate toward certain selected groups of theories and concepts, resulting in denser article networks over time. | Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR |

Source: Researcher (2025)



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Despite this growing interest, there is still a lack of consolidated understanding of the intellectual structure of this field. Hence, this bibliometrics analysis intends to answer the following research question:

1) What is the demographic information of social media and CSR?
2) What are the dominant themes?
3) Which countries are leading the conversation, and how are they collaborating?

Our study addresses these questions by conducting a bibliometric analysis, leveraging data from the Scopus database and visualising the results with VOSviewer. This method enables a systematic mapping of the knowledge structure of CSR and social media research, identifying core areas of interest, influential authors, key journals, and geographical trends. Through the visualisation and analysis of these patterns, our study not only enriches the academic literature but also provides actionable insights for communication strategists, policymakers, and corporate decision-makers. Understanding the trajectory and focal points of CSR-related social media research can inform better strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, and policy formulation in a digitally connected world.

## METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a bibliometric analysis approach to uncover patterns, structures, and developments in the research domain at the intersection of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and social media. Bibliometric analysis is a quantitative method for analysing academic literature, allowing for the evaluation of publication trends, citation networks, co-authorship patterns, and thematic clusters (Donthu et al., 2021; Zupic & Čater, 2015). It is an efficient instrument for statistically analysing and providing a greater perspective of research fields (Calderón et al., 2020; Kant Paliwal et al., 2024). This also aligns with Ahmi and Mohamad (2019) definitions of bibliometrics as a tool for measuring publication characteristics—such as conference proceedings, papers, and other formats—as indexed in databases like Scopus. Moreover, numerous studies have employed the Scopus database for conducting bibliometric analyses (Kant Paliwal et al., 2024; Lalisan et al., 2023; Shaheen, 2025). Similar to previous studies (e.g. Dong et al., 2024; Ling et al., 2023), we employed VOSviewer as a mapping tool in our study to further visualize the co-occurrence of researchers in this field. This method is particularly useful for identifying the intellectual structure of a field, mapping key contributors, and tracing the evolution of topics over time.

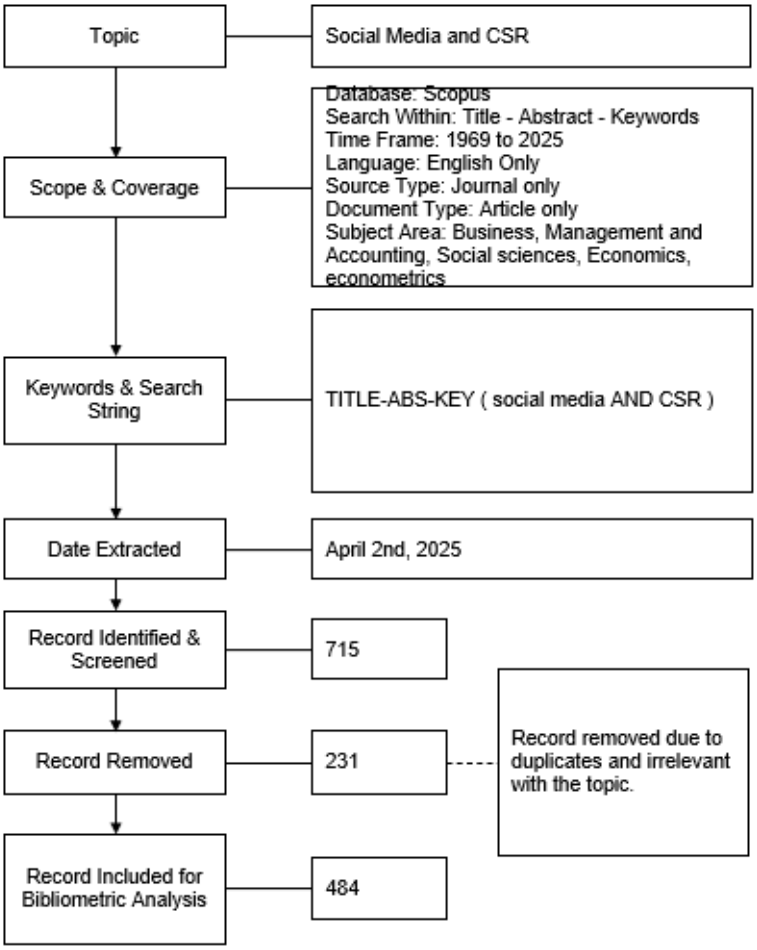



Figure 1: Flowchart for data extraction from the Scopus database
Source: Researcher

Figure 1 illustrates the workflow performed during the data extraction phase on 2nd April 2025. To avoid the duplication and inconsistency of the final number of records that were used for the bibliometrics analysis, we only conducted the data extraction phase once. During data extraction, we documented the details shown in Figure 1.

For the scope and coverage, we used only the Scopus database, and there were several justifications for this selection, namely: 1) it is one of the most reputable and credible databases in the academic world, aside from the Web of Science; 2) In the Southeast Asia (SEA) region, this database was heavily used to determine the university ranking, as the publication in the Scopus database is calculated, and becomes one of the weightages for the QS World University Ranking (QS Ranking, 2025); and 3) This database might not be the most accessible, considering that only a certain university that able to subscribe to it, although the subscription fees are not as high as compared to the Web of Science (WoS).

We perform our search strategy using the Title-Abstract-Keywords, which means, in the Scopus database, it will automatically capture any manuscript that has the keywords either in the title, abstract and keyword sections. We also attempt to start the searching as early 1969 (for the

starting date) to find if there is any manuscript that has been published in the Scopus database about this topic and put the end date the current year, just to see how many manuscripts have been published until towards the second quarter of 2025. Only peer-reviewed articles in the English language were selected, a research article/research paper/original article or original research, and we narrowed down our focus to four (4) major social science fields only was included. We conducted a one-time search utilising the Scopus database to eliminate potential biases since the database's ongoing updates. As a result, we managed to gather 484 records that will be used in the bibliometrics analysis, as suggested by Rogers et al. (2020), which implies that the ideal number for the records extracted to conduct a bibliometrics analysis is around 600 records.

Here is the search strategy that we used in the Scopus database: TITLE-ABS-KEY ( ( "corporate social responsibility" OR "CSR" ) AND ( "social media" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "BUSI" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "SOCI" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "ECON" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "MULT" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( DOCTYPE , "ar" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( PUBSTAGE , "final" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( SRCTYPE , "j" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( LANGUAGE , "English" ) )

Once the data were exported in .csv and .txt formats compatible with bibliometric software, VOSViewer was used to visualise and analyse the networks. VOSViewer is a specialised tool designed for constructing and displaying bibliometric maps based on network data. It provides visualisations for co-authorship, co-occurrence (keywords), citation, bibliographic coupling, and co-citation relationships (Ali et al., 2023; Ling et al., 2023; Zhao et al., 2023).

As previously mentioned, we utilized VOSviewer in our study. Below are the analyses which we have planned accordingly:

I. Keyword co-occurrence analysis: This method identifies common themes in the literature by analysing the frequency and co-presence of keywords. It highlights core research topics and their interrelations.
II. Country collaboration network: This analysis maps out collaborative relationships between countries based on co-authored publications. It provides insights into global research partnerships and regional leadership.
III. Author co-citation analysis: This focuses on authors who are frequently cited together, revealing intellectual influences and foundational contributors in the domain.

To support the bibliometric findings, visual data were used, including network diagrams and heat maps representing the clustering of keywords, countries, and authors. Each visual was interpreted based on colour-coded nodes and connecting lines, where the size of nodes indicated frequency or centrality, and links represented co-occurrence strength or citation frequency. This methodology ensures a systematic, data-driven approach to literature review and complements traditional narrative reviews by providing measurable evidence of trends, gaps, and key contributors. It is especially relevant in fields experiencing rapid evolution, such as CSR in the context of social media, where emerging research directions require clear mapping and synthesis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

*Keyword Co-occurrence*

The keyword co-occurrence analysis provides valuable insights into the thematic landscape of the intersection between social media and corporate social responsibility (CSR). Figure 2 shows a visualisation of frequently co-occurring keywords in the analysed literature. At the centre of the network lie the terms 'corporate social responsibility' and 'social media', which are the most prominent and central keywords, suggesting they are the main anchors of our literature corpus. Their central position and strong link indicate frequent co-occurrence, reinforcing that a significant body of research connects these two. The size of the nodes reflects the frequency of each keyword, while the proximity and thickness of the connecting lines indicate their degree of co-occurrence. Next, our study discusses the thematic clusters identified in the keyword co-occurrence analysis. Each colour in the VOS Viewer map represents a distinct cluster of closely related keywords, which correspond to specific thematic research areas within the literature on social media and corporate social responsibility.

The network visualisation reveals five main thematic clusters, each representing a distinct area of research within the intersection of social media and corporate social responsibility (CSR). The first cluster, highlighted in red, centres on communication and consumer behaviour. This group includes keywords such as communication, ethics, internet, trust, greenwashing, social media marketing, message framing, consumer behaviour, and Instagram. The focus here is on how companies utilise social media platforms to communicate CSR initiatives and the impact of these efforts on consumer perceptions and trust. The presence of terms like greenwashing and ethics also reflects critical perspectives on the authenticity of CSR communication.

The second cluster, marked in blue, reflects empirical studies and methodological approaches. It includes keywords such as advertising, marketing, perception, COVID-19, human experiment, article, and questionnaire, indicating a concentration on context-specific and data-driven studies. This cluster suggests a strong emphasis on measurement techniques, survey methodologies, and geographical focus areas, such as research conducted in China during the pandemic.

The third cluster, shown in green, is oriented toward CSR communication strategies. Keywords such as content analysis, communication strategy, social networking, sentiment analysis, and corporate communication dominate this area. The cluster highlights analytical and strategic approaches to CSR communication, including the use of specific platforms like Twitter and Facebook. The presence of sentiment analysis and text mining suggests the adoption of computational methods in examining CSR narratives.

The fourth cluster, illustrated in purple, emphasizes stakeholder engagement and legitimacy. This thematic area includes terms such as stakeholder engagement, legitimacy, trust, purchase intention, and CSR disclosure. Research within this cluster often draws on stakeholder theory to explore how CSR communication via social media enhances organisational legitimacy and influences stakeholder behaviour.

Finally, the orange cluster focuses on corporate reputation and activism. With keywords like corporate reputation, activism, and interactivity, this cluster highlights how CSR is used as a strategic tool for reputation management and how social media platforms enable user-driven activism and critical engagement with CSR efforts.

Based on our findings from the keyword co-occurrence analysis indicate that research at the intersection of social media and CSR is multifaceted and evolving. The five identified clusters reflect a broad range of scholarly interests. First, the prominence of communication and consumer behaviour suggests a strong focus on how CSR messages disseminated via social media influence consumer attitudes and trust, including critical concerns about greenwashing. Second, the presence of a methodology-driven cluster emphasises the field's empirical grounding and the increasing use of surveys and experimental designs, especially in context-specific studies such as those conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Third, the emphasis on CSR communication strategies and computational methods signals the growing adoption of advanced analytical tools such as sentiment analysis and text mining to study CSR discourse. Fourth, the stakeholder and legitimacy cluster underscore the importance of relational dynamics, showing how CSR efforts are framed to gain legitimacy and influence behavioural outcomes like purchase intention. Finally, the cluster on reputation and activism points to the strategic use of CSR for reputation management while also highlighting the role of social media in enabling public scrutiny and activism.

Collectively, these clusters reflect an interdisciplinary and methodologically diverse field, where CSR is both a tool for corporate positioning and a subject of critical engagement facilitated by digital platforms.

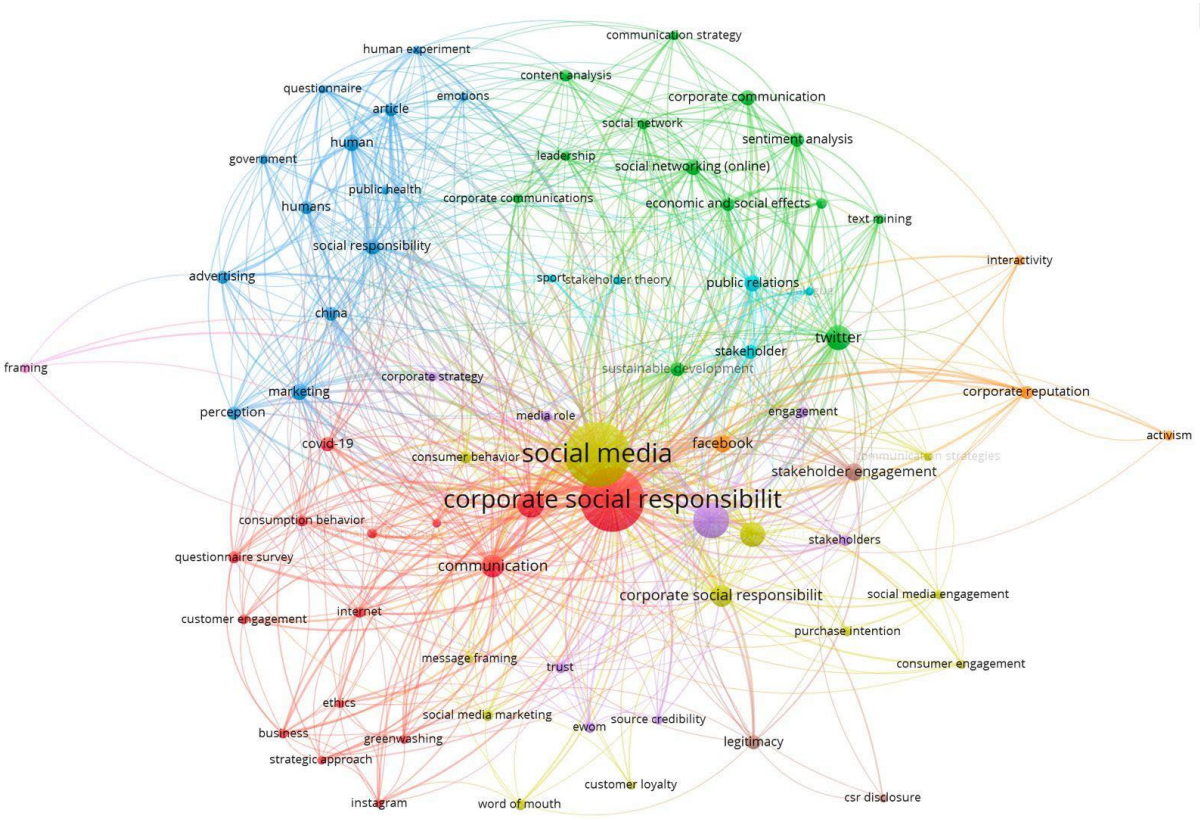



Figure 2: Keyword co-occurrence map highlighting major research clusters
(this figure was generated from: VOSViewer)

*Evolution of Research Trends*

Figure 3 demonstrates a notable temporal progression in research focus related to social media and corporate social responsibility (CSR). Research published between 2019 and 2020 predominantly focused on themes such as communication strategy, corporate communication, stakeholder theory, and public relations (see blue-toned keywords). The prominence of keywords like social networking (online), content analysis, corporate reputation, and activism suggests that early scholarship emphasized the strategic use of social media for communicating CSR. These studies often adopted qualitative or conceptual approaches, highlighting CSR's role in shaping corporate image and participating in broader public discourse.

Research published between 2020–2021 (see green-toned keywords) focuses on keywords like trust, greenwashing, ethics, stakeholder engagement, sustainable development, and text mining. This period reflects a shift towards more critical examinations of CSR, addressing issues of credibility, ethical considerations, and stakeholder legitimacy. Moreover, the inclusion of computational methods such as text mining and sentiment analysis, alongside growing attention to platform-specific studies (e.g., Twitter, Facebook), signals a notable methodological diversification in the field. Furthermore, the inclusion of computational methods such as 'text mining' and 'sentiment analysis,' alongside growing attention to platform-specific studies (e.g., 'Twitter,' 'Facebook'), signals a notable methodological diversification in the field."

More recent studies between 2022-2023 have shifted toward consumer-centric and empirically grounded research (see yellow-toned keywords). This is evidenced by the presence of keywords such as purchase intention, social media engagement, consumer engagement, COVID-19, questionnaire survey, and perception. The appearance of Instagram and word of mouth (WOM) reflects a growing interest in consumer-generated content and its role in shaping CSR outcomes. Additionally, terms such as message framing, customer loyalty, and source credibility underscore heightened attention to communication effectiveness and behavioural responses within the digital CSR landscape.

The findings indicate a clear evolution in scholarly interest and methodological sophistication in the study of social media and CSR. Initially, research emphasised strategic communication and image management, reflecting a corporate-centric perspective. Over time, this shifted toward a more critical lens, addressing ethical issues, stakeholder legitimacy, and credibility, with increasing use of computational tools. Most recently, the focus has moved to consumer perspectives and behavioural outcomes, signalling a broader engagement with audience reception, platform dynamics, and measurable impact. Our findings corroborate with Chen et al. (2023), since this progression suggests that CSR communication via social media is no longer just about corporate messaging, since it now involves interactive, data-driven, and consumer-responsive strategies.

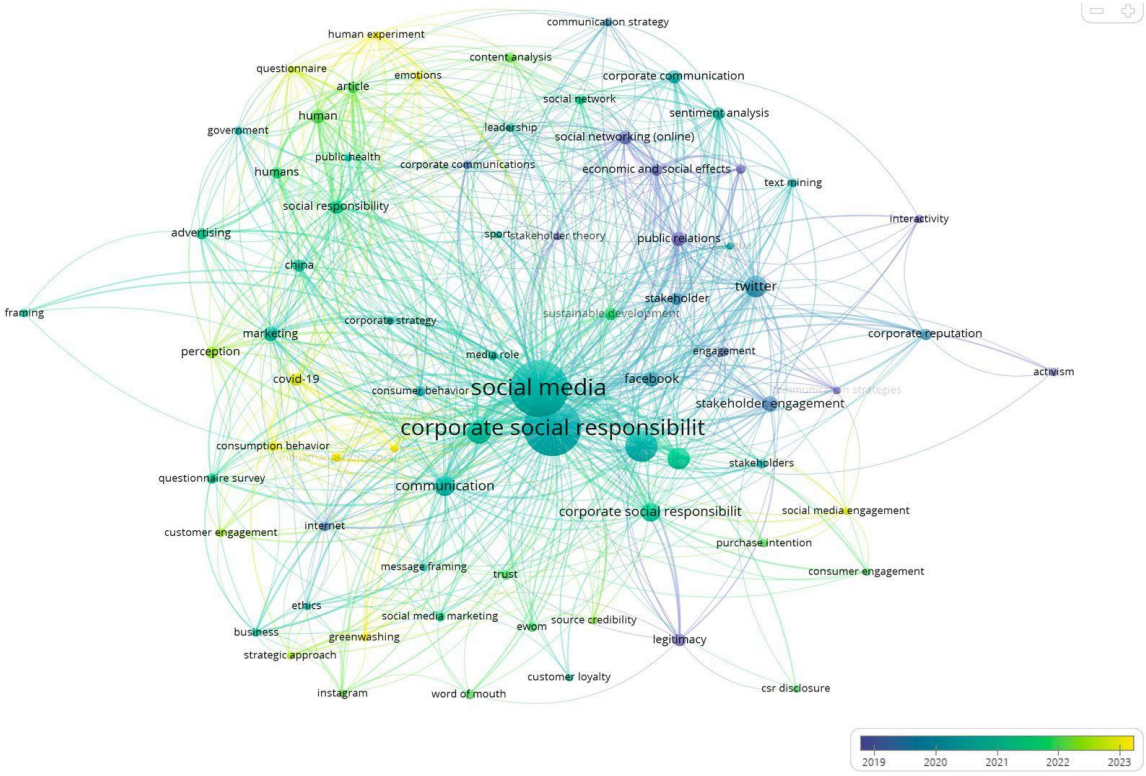



Figure 3: Evolution of research themes (this figure was generated from: VOSViewer)

*Annual Trend of Publications*

Figure 4 shows the annual trend of the publication in the Scopus database, which revolves around the topic of CSR and social media. The trend of publications from 2011 to 2025 shows a clear upward trajectory overall, indicating growing research interest in the field. From the same figure, we can observe that the first publication was recorded in 2011. The two research papers entitled "General sentiment: How value and affect converge in the information economy" by Arvidsson (2011) and "Abraaj Capital Limited: Celebration of entrepreneurship (CoE)" by Balakrishnan and Michael (2011). These two manuscripts were the earliest studies about this topic, and we can see that the trend was inconsistent, showing some increase but a decrease in the next year or a few years later. The highest number of publications in this topic was 79 last year. Based on the current trend, we expect that this topic will get some traction from the researchers and subsequently increase the number of manuscripts in this topic. This pattern suggests increasing scholarly engagement in the field, with notable growth over the past five years.

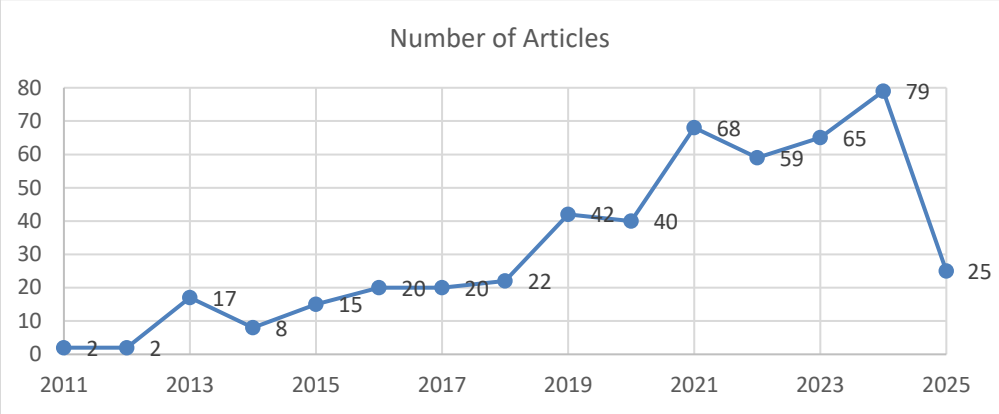



Figure 4. Annual trend of publications
Source: Scopus Database

*Articles Published by the Authors*

Figure 5 shows the productivity of the authors in this topic. From the top 10 authors, the most productive authors in this area were seven (7), and the average number of manuscripts per author was 4.2. Based on the figure, Cheng, Y. had the highest publication rate with seven (7) articles, indicating a strong and consistent presence in the research area. Remarkably, a recent study by Cheng et al. (2024), titled "Social Media Influencer Effects on CSR Communication: The Role of Influencer Leadership in Opinion and Taste", has already garnered 57 citations despite being published just last year. Meanwhile, Chen, Y.R.R. and Hung-Baeseke, C.J.F. follow closely with six (6) articles each. The rest of the authors managed to publish four (4) articles. Nonetheless, if we deep dive into the number of manuscripts and citation count, the most productive authors might not be the same person who has the most manuscripts authored.

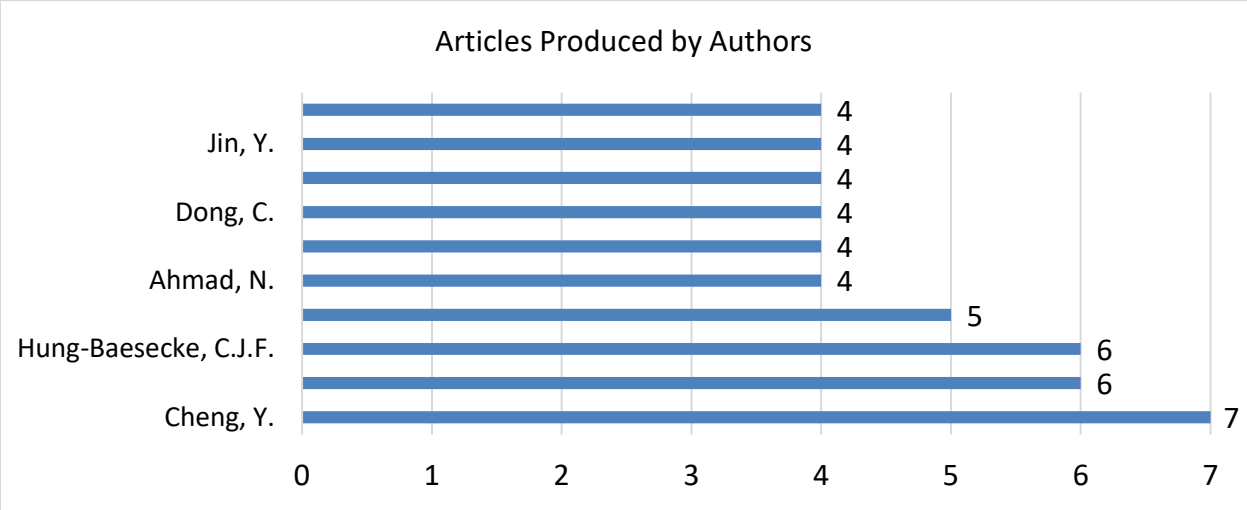



Figure 5: Articles published by the authors
Source: Scopus Database

*Number of Manuscripts Published by the Institutions*

Figure 6 depicts the institutional productivity in terms of the number of published papers related to your CSR and social media field. Based on the figure, the Hong Kong Baptist University leads with 10 publications, making it the most active institution in the field. It is followed by three other institutions, namely, Pennsylvania State University, NC State University, and the University of Georgia, with 7 publications each. University of Florida, Copenhagen Business School, Wuhan University, Syracuse University, and York University follow closely, and contributed 6 papers. Several institutions such as Kozminski University, Universidad de Oviedo, and Universiti degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca have published 5 papers each. This distribution suggests a relatively broad engagement across multiple institutions, with a small number demonstrating particularly strong output.

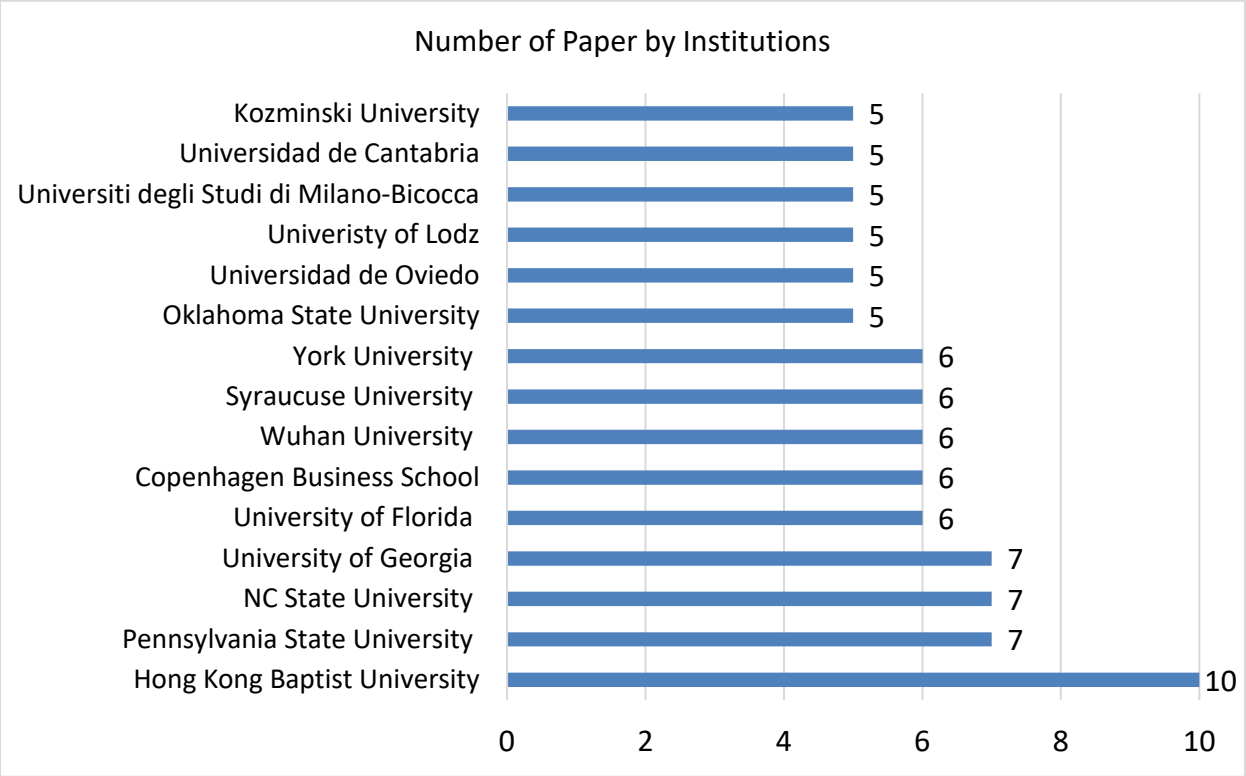



Figure 6: Number of manuscripts published by the institutions
Source: Scopus Database

*Number of Manuscripts Based on the Countries*

Figure 7 was the continuation from the previous figure, which shows the number of manuscripts published by institutions. This figure primarily highlights the dominant position of the United States in terms of paper publications, with 141 papers. It visually demonstrates a significant disparity in publication output between the US and other prominent countries like Canada, China, and Australia, which show much lower numbers. For instance, the second-highest country, China, only recorded 57 manuscripts published, lagging almost twice the number of publications in the USA. This not only happens to China as the second largest economy in the world, but also with

the rest of the countries also such as Spain, the United Kingdom, Australia, Italy, and Canada, which are considered among the high-income countries. The same figure also indicates to us how the USA compare to other countries in terms of research endeavour. Our finding corroborates Hua et al. (2023), where the study found that the USA had the highest number of publications in CSR and social media.

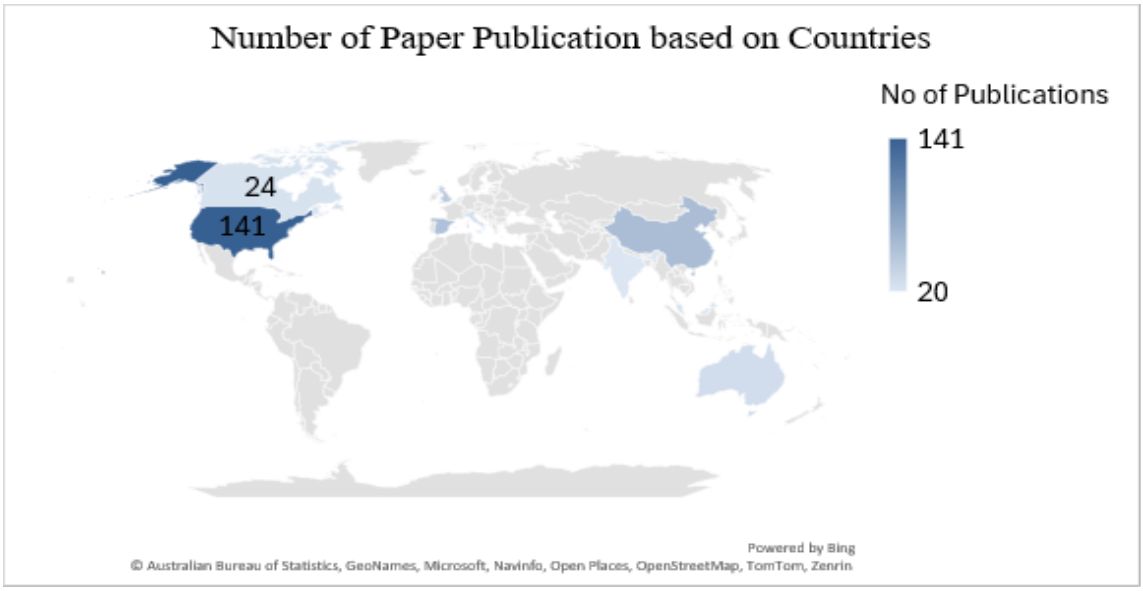



Figure 7: Number of manuscripts based on the countries
Source: Scopus Database

*Number of Manuscripts Based on Discipline*

Figure 8 shows the number of manuscripts produced according to the discipline. We can see that in business, management, accounting and social sciences, this topic has garnered attention from the researchers in that area. Additionally, since the topic is in social sciences, hence, most of the topics in hard and life sciences, such as engineering, medicine, earth and planetary science and the rest, have the least number of manuscript publications in these fields of study compared with the social science field.

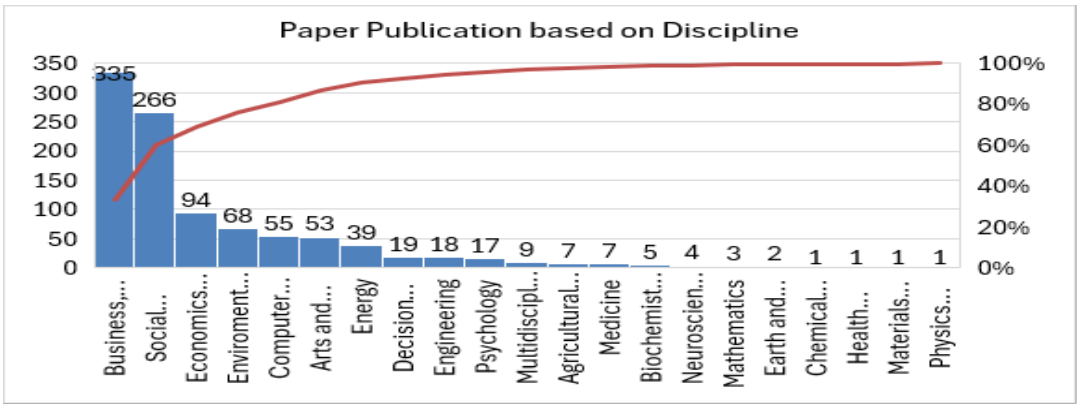



Figure 8: Number of Manuscripts based on Discipline (Source: Scopus Database)

*Number of Publications by Journals - Source Analysis*

Figure 9 presents the annual publication trends from the top five most prolific journals concerning the intersection of social media and CSR between 2012 and 2025. An outstanding increase in research output is evident from approximately 2018 onwards, signalling a growing academic interest in this interdisciplinary field.

Among these sources, Sustainability has emerged as the leading publication outlet, demonstrating a significant and consistent surge in articles since 2018. Its output peaked at 8 documents in 2022 and has maintained substantial contributions in subsequent years. This prominence highlights the increasing integration of social media and CSR research within the broader sustainability discourse. The Journal of Business Ethics served as an early contributor to this area, particularly in 2013, though its publication volume on this specific intersection has fluctuated more in recent years.

Journals such as Public Relations Review and Corporate Communications also show steady, albeit more moderate, contributions. Their consistent presence reinforces the critical role of communication and public relations theories in understanding how organisations leverage social media for CSR. Similarly, Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management consistently publishes relevant studies, solidifying its position as a dedicated venue for this research. The overall pattern across these leading journals underscores the growing and multidisciplinary nature of scholarly inquiry into social media and CSR, with Sustainability currently at the forefront of this publishing landscape. These trends reflect a gradual diversification of research efforts across various disciplinary perspectives, particularly after 2018, highlighting an expanding recognition of the CSR-social media nexus within communication, ethics, and environmental studies.

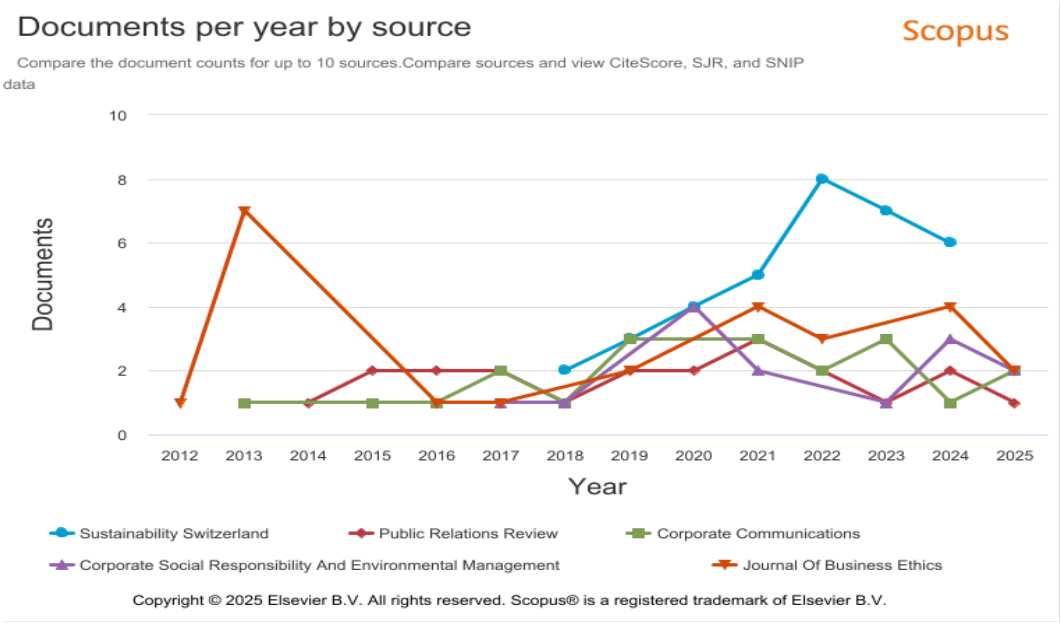



Figure 9: Source analysis
Source: Scopus Database

## CONCLUSION

Our study set out to explore the evolving landscape of social media and CSR by addressing key demographic information, identifying dominant themes, and mapping international collaborations. Through a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of the Scopus database, visualised with VOSviewer, we shed light on the structural and intellectual development of this interdisciplinary field.

Our keyword co-occurrence analysis revealed the primary research themes, illustrating the prominent topics and their interconnections within the social media and CSR discourse. Furthermore, the country collaboration network provided crucial insights into global research leadership and the dynamics of international partnerships, pinpointing which nations are at the forefront of this conversation and how they are engaging in collaborative efforts. For instance, our study found that most of the social media and CSR publications were from the US institutions, and similar to previous studies' findings (e.g. Hua et al., 2023; Jedynak, 2020). Finally, the author's co-citation analysis identified the foundational intellectual contributions and the most influential scholars, thereby mapping the intellectual genealogy of the field.

By visualising and analysing these intricate patterns, our findings not only make a significant contribution to the academic literature by systematically charting the trajectory of social media and CSR research but also offer practical insights. Our study sheds some light for communication strategists aiming to refine their digital engagement, policymakers developing regulations around corporate responsibility, and corporate decision-makers seeking to optimise their CSR initiatives in the digital age. These insights contribute to both academic understanding and practical applications by informing future research agendas, fostering international collaboration, and guiding communication strategies in the evolving CSR landscape.

Despite the contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the analysis was confined to the Scopus database, which, although comprehensive, may exclude relevant literature indexed in other databases such as Web of Science (WoS), PubMed, or Google Scholar (Kant Paliwal et al., 2024). Additionally, the dataset was limited to English-language publications, potentially omitting significant research published in other languages. Second, bibliometric methods are inherently quantitative and may not capture the nuance, context, or depth of the content within the publications analysed. For example, the presence of a keyword does not reveal how it is conceptualised or critically discussed in the paper. Similarly, co-citation does not guarantee intellectual agreement between authors.

Third, visualisations from VOSViewer, while insightful, rely on threshold settings and algorithmic clustering that can influence interpretations. As such, results should be triangulated with qualitative literature reviews for deeper insight. Fourth, the keywords used can be expanded, instead of only using a few phrases. Extension of the keywords used for the research string will automatically increase the number of records that researchers are able to retrieve. Also suggested to add artificial intelligence keywords in the search string, as this field is worth focusing on.

Future research can build on this study by incorporating full-text analysis, using tools like text mining and natural language processing to examine sentiment, rhetorical framing, and discursive strategies in CSR and social media. Longitudinal studies could trace how specific events such as global crises, social movements, or regulatory shifts influence CSR and social media

narratives over time. Comparative studies across different regions or industries would also enrich understanding of context-specific CSR practices and their digital manifestations.

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