

Strategic Leadership and Organizational Innovation: Bibliometric Overview (1993-2022)

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ABSTRACT

This study maps the development of the intersection between strategic leadership and organizational innovation through a bibliometric analysis of 111 Scopus-indexed articles published from 1993 to 2022. Addressing a gap in the literature, this research explores the patterns and trends of this intersection, which had not been holistically analyzed. The novelty of this study lies in its comprehensive identification of thematic clusters, publication trends, and key contributors to the field, providing a unique and detailed bibliometric perspective on how strategic leadership influences organizational innovation, particularly in the context of Industry 4.0 and technological advancements. Our findings reveal substantial growth in scholarly interest post-2005, peaking in 2020-2021, driven by the rise of Industry 4.0 and the increasing importance of leadership in fostering organizational innovation. The United States, China, and Australia are the leading contributors, with key institutions such as Tennessee Technological University and the University of Pretoria driving research in this field. The analysis, conducted using VOSviewer and Bibliometrix, identified five thematic clusters: strategic leadership traits, open innovation, leadership's impact on firm performance, competitive advantage, and contextual factors influencing leadership. This underscores the critical role of strategic leadership in navigating technological advancements and fostering organizational adaptability. Co-citation analysis highlighted seminal works by Bantel, Hambrick, and Howell, shaping the foundational frameworks of the field. Despite the inherent limitations of bibliometric methods, the study emphasizes the need for further exploration of emerging themes, such as CEO leadership styles, ambidexterity, and grassroots innovation. The findings suggest that adaptable leadership practices and enhanced collaboration between CEOs and Boards of Directors are vital in driving innovation and shaping governance structures. These insights should inform future policy-making and encourage cross-border research collaborations in strategic leadership and innovation.

Keywords: Bibliometric, Strategic leadership, Organizational innovation, VOSviewer, Bibliometrix, Science mapping, Cluster analysis, Scopus.

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INTRODUCTION

To thrive in today's competitive business environment requires effective strategic leadership anchored in progressive practices adopted by organizations.^[1] Extensive scholarly work has examined the interrelationship between strategic leadership and organizational innovation,^[2,3] emphasizing how these elements enable organizations to establish sustainable growth while promoting resilience to foster competitiveness in dynamic marketplaces.^[4] The importance of capable strategic leaders cannot be overstated, as they shape an organization's decision-making

processes, vision, and direction while positioning it uniquely in a highly competitive market.^[5] Singh *et al.*^[6] argue that leaders drive successful adaptations through a culture of adaptation bolstered by well-executed plans that enable firms to navigate and emerge winners in complex market landscapes. Organizational innovation is equally vital to effective strategic management as it enables firms to differentiate themselves from their competitors through superior differentiation strategies and adaptiveness toward dynamic industry trends.^[3,7]

However, it is crucial to analyze strategic leadership through lens that considers the power dynamics within organizations. Power dynamics significantly influence organizational change, where both formal and informal types of power can drive or hinder innovation depending on how they are exercised by leaders.^[8] Leadership influence often reflects these power dynamics, where coercive, legitimate, and reward power can shape strategic



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decisions that might prioritize the interests of powerful groups over collective innovation efforts.^[9] Furthermore, institutional pressures and norms often dictate strategic leadership practices, leading to innovation that conforms to established norms rather than challenging them, potentially stifling broader organizational innovation in favor of maintaining legitimacy.^[10] Strategic leadership can also become a tool for consolidating power, leading to innovations that serve specific interests rather than the collective good, raising ethical concerns.^[11] Additionally, postmodern perspectives challenge the notion of a single "right" way to lead, highlighting the fragmented and subjective nature of leadership practices and questioning whether strategic decisions truly benefit the entire organization.^[12]

With better problem-solving capabilities for rapid growth and increased capacity for resilience building towards uncertain times, organizational innovation is the passport to success at the organizational level.^[13] Although much emphasis has been placed on exploring how strategic leadership intersects with organizations' capacity for innovation, challenges persist. These challenges primarily stem from the complexity of understanding how the integration of high-ranking positional authority, essential functional capabilities, and cognitive aspects within strategic leadership aligns with the multifaceted nature of organizational innovation.

This relationship requires leaders to align organizational components, adapt to changing environments, and drive innovation across managerial actions, business methods, and structures.^[11,14] While prior research has discussed systematic literature review,^[3] there remains a need for mapping and performance analysis to capture the holistic trends within this intersection. Such an approach would provide a more complete understanding of how strategic leadership and organizational innovation interact over time, revealing broader patterns and insights that a systematic review alone may overlook. This highlights the importance of bibliometric analysis to map literature and provide a more integrated perspective on these critical issues.

Our analysis aims to provide a bibliometric overview within strategic leadership and organizational innovation domains using a relational methodology that deploys analytical approaches such as bibliographic coupling, co-authorship analysis, co-occurrence word analysis, and thematic mapping.^[15] This approach provided new insights into the intellectual structure of strategic leadership and organizational innovation, highlighting key aspects from existing literature. This study synthesizes larger datasets than typically seen with critical or narrative synthesis methods deployed in traditional reviews. We also leveraged advanced tools like VOSviewer software^[16] and Bibliometrix (Biblioshiny).^[17] The standard practice for bibliometric reviews guided us through analyzing performance and science mapping, demonstrating two intertwined structures within our field: one focused on

the bibliometric structure and the other on the intellectual structure.^[18]

To contribute novel insights into strategic leadership and organizational innovation, we examined publication trends in our area of focus (RQ1), highlighted vital publishing journals (RQ2), and identified significant contributors and groups to the body of knowledge (RQ3). Regarding the intellectual structuring aspect, we identified the seminal paper that is being cited in these discourses (RQ4), examined significant themes from current research in this field (RQ5), and forecasted potential future directions for exploration (RQ6). These research questions provide an extensive assessment of the current state and possible evolutions of the strategic leadership and organizational innovation domains. The entire process is driven by our aim to stay current on relevant theoretical frontiers while maintaining objectivity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Strategic leadership is the judicious amalgamation of high-ranking positional authority and essential functional capabilities within an organizational milieu. Rooted in historical paradigms by Andrews and Andrews,^[19] Child,^[20] and Mintzberg^[21] and informed by subsequent nuances introduced by Boal and Hooijberg,^[22] Crossan *et al.*,^[23] and Hitt and Duane^[24] this leadership paradigm transcends mere positional descriptors. It emphasizes the integration and operationalization of strategies, the alignment of organizational components, and the ability to navigate complex strategic landscapes. Singh *et al.*^[6] further expands on this by describing strategic leadership as leadership that is focused on strategic consequences—whether economic, environmental, or social—across various types of organizations, including multinationals and small to medium enterprises. This form of leadership extends beyond strategic visioning, encompassing a wide range of high-level administrative, engagement, innovation, operational, and supervisory responsibilities. It is not confined to any specific leadership style, such as authentic, autocratic, bureaucratic, democratic, transactional, transformational, or servant leadership.^[11]

The concept of strategic leadership gained significant traction after the introduction of the upper echelon theory by Hambrick and Mason,^[25] which posits that organizational outcomes are reflections of top executives' managerial characteristics. This theory underscores that a leader's background, past experiences, personality, and values significantly influence strategic decision-making and, consequently, organizational outcomes.^[26] Davies and Davies^[27] refine the concept by highlighting inherent traits of strategic leaders, such as an appetite for transformative change, adaptability, and discerning wisdom. Concurrently, Samimi *et al.*^[11] contribute by emphasizing the multifunctional roles these leaders undertake, ensuring holistic organizational outcomes. Thus, strategic leadership encapsulates both the

quintessential characteristics and diverse functional roles, ensuring alignment with overarching strategic imperatives and yielding optimal organizational dividends.

On the other hand, the landscape of organizational innovation has continually evolved. Schumpeter initially highlighted its essence as introducing novelty by transforming how things are done within the organizational ambit, spanning product creation, operational methods, and business frameworks.^[28] Crossan and Apaydin^[29] amplified the concept, presenting innovation as the crafting, embracing, internalizing, and leveraging of novel, value-driven changes, viewing it as both a journey and its culmination. In a similar vein, Alves *et al.*^[30] drawing inspiration from Damanpour^[31] and Hamel,^[32] posited that organizational innovation is the metamorphosis of managerial dynamics, frameworks, and connections. This aligns with Hollen *et al.*^[33] interpretation of innovation as the introduction of bespoke managerial actions. Notably, the Oslo Manual offers a panoramic definition, identifying three pivotal realms: business methodologies, organizational structures, and external collaborations.^[34]

The nexus between strategic leadership and innovation has been a focal point in management literature. Historically, strategic leaders have been recognized for their ability to drive innovation due to their decision-making authority and influence.^[35] Their capacity to steer innovation, whether through fostering new ideas or guiding innovation pathways, has been well-documented. However, recent studies delve deeper into the cognitive and psychological dimensions of leadership, such as how attention patterns and information processing enable leaders to seize innovative opportunities.^[36,37] These insights show how leadership shapes innovation beyond positional power. Traits like narcissism or risk aversion also impact leaders' willingness to embrace or avoid new initiatives.^[38,39] This focus on behavioral characteristics highlights that innovation outcomes are not solely dependent on the formal structures of leadership but also on the personal attributes and decision-making approaches of those in power. Furthermore, collective intelligence within Top Management Teams (TMTs) and the diversity of the board of directors play an integral role in fostering an environment conducive to innovation.^[40] The interaction of diverse perspectives within these groups leads to more comprehensive strategic decisions, which, in turn, positively impact firm performance and innovation trajectories.^[41] This underscores that innovation is shaped not just by individual leaders but by the dynamic interplay of the entire leadership team, situating leadership in a broader context.

METHODOLOGY

Data source

The bibliographic data for this investigation were carefully gathered through the Scopus database, which was chosen as the primary source due to its extensive scope of abstracts and

references. Compared to other databases such as the Science Citation Index (SCI), Social Science Citation Index (SSCI), and Art and Humanity Citation Index (A&HCI), Scopus is known for its considerably more comprehensive coverage of social science publications.^[42] Although Google Scholar has a larger citation count than Scopus, it was disregarded because of its metadata quality and automated citation count for any document that appears academic.^[43,44] This platform also includes citations from non-academic sources, requiring extensive manual cleaning to obtain reliable information for evaluation purposes.^[45] The present study initially did not impose a specific time frame constraint when using the search terms "strateg* leadership" AND "innovat*" to capture a broad spectrum of research related to strategic leadership and organizational innovation. Unlike many other bibliometric studies that define a strict temporal range at the outset, this investigation aimed to allow the data to guide the selection. However, upon reviewing the results, a natural focus emerged between 1993 and 2022. This period was chosen for detailed analysis, as it reflects the increasing academic attention and the evolution of both leadership and innovation as critical research areas. The timeframe was ultimately selected to trace the development of scholarly discourse over nearly three decades, identifying key contributions and trends in this growing field. Filtering criteria were applied to refine the dataset, ensuring that only peer-reviewed journal articles were included. Papers with significant contributions to both strategic leadership and innovation were retained, excluding those that tangentially referenced either term without substantive engagement. The result was a set of 111 unique papers, relevant to the research objectives, providing a robust foundation for analysis. A systematic process was employed to select and process the data (Figure 1).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Publication output and growth trend (RQ1 and RQ2)

The graph depicted in Figure 2 illustrates the annual growth of publications within the field of strategic leadership and organizational innovation since its inception in 1993. Early contributions were minimal, with a single article published during the initial years. However, from 2005 onwards, there was a notable surge in research activity, culminating in peak figures during 2020-2021, with eleven articles published in each of those years. This sharp increase in publications post-2005 aligns with the emergence of Industry 4.0 and its profound impact on organizational innovation. The 4th industrial revolution, characterized by digital transformation, automation, artificial intelligence, and the integration of cyber-physical systems, necessitated a fundamental shift in leadership approaches. Strategic leaders were increasingly recognized for their critical role in navigating these technological advancements, driving organizations to innovate to remain competitive in rapidly evolving markets. The integration of Industry 4.0 into business processes required leadership to adopt new decision-making frameworks

that emphasized agility, innovation ecosystems, and a strong alignment between digitalization strategies and organizational goals. The peak in publications observed in 2020-2021 can be attributed to the accelerated push toward digital transformation across industries, particularly in response to growing pressures for organizations to innovate not only in products and services but also in processes and management practices. This period also reflects the global academic community's recognition of the importance of leadership in shaping and guiding the transition to more technologically driven, innovative business models.

Table 1 further highlights key contributor to this expanding body of literature. The United States leads with 26 publications, driven by its strong entrepreneurial culture, significant R&D investments, and proactive strategic leadership. U.S. CEOs and TMTs are known for leveraging decentralized decision-making structures to drive innovation, supported by BoD that balance risk and long-term growth. China follows with 9 publications, reflecting its shift from manufacturing to technological leadership, where government-led initiatives like "Made in China 2025" push CEOs and TMTs to adapt to competitive pressures. Australia's 5 publications are influenced by its emphasis on sustainability and technological integration, particularly in sectors like mining and healthcare, with collaborative leadership structures fostering innovation. The United Kingdom, also with 5 publications, focuses on long-term strategy, with R&D investments in areas like AI and clean energy, and strong corporate governance frameworks ensuring that CEO, TMT, and BoD align innovation efforts with market demands and regulatory standards. These countries reflect the global leadership in organizational innovation, particularly under the influence of Industry 4.0.

Of the 18 articles housed within *Strategy and Leadership* alone, five more were in the affiliated *Emerald Emerging Markets Case Studies* journal, and three items were sourced from *IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management*, *Journal of Strategy and Management*, and *Leadership Quarterly*. This concentration of publications reflects the strong alignment between these outlets and the core themes of strategic leadership and organizational innovation. *Strategy and Leadership* is a natural hub for research focused on leadership's role in driving strategy and innovation. Similarly, *Emerald Emerging Markets Case Studies* emphasizes leadership's critical role in navigating complex environments in developing markets, where innovation is essential for growth. *IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management* bridges the gap between technology and management, making it particularly suited for studies on tech-driven leadership and innovation. *Journal of Strategy and Management* delves into strategy formulation and the influence of leadership on innovative initiatives, while *Leadership Quarterly* focuses on leadership theory, examining how leadership drives innovation within organizations. These outlets consistently publish research that explores how strategic leadership shapes and implements

innovation strategies in a rapidly evolving, technology-driven world, reflecting their relevance to this field. The data provided in Table 1 show the contributions of different authors to the field under study. Brian Leavy leads with six publications, followed by Tor Guimaraes with four contributions. Robert J. Allio is next with three contributions, while Andres Felipe Cortes, Alistair Davidson, Pol Herrmann, Michael A. Hitt, Justin J. P. Jansen, Peter Charles Murray, and Ketan Paranjape have each authored two papers, highlighting their significant roles in shaping the discourse in this area of research.

Tennessee Technological University leads with four pieces in our corpus, likely due to its strong focus on engineering and technology management, which aligns with leadership in tech-driven innovation. The University of Pretoria and the Gordon Institute of Business Science, both in South Africa, each contributed three papers, reflecting their emphasis on leadership in emerging markets where strategic leadership plays a key role in navigating complex organizational and economic challenges. Iowa State University and Western University, with two publications each, highlight their strengths in business, leadership, and interdisciplinary research, focusing on how leadership fosters innovation across sectors like agriculture, industry, and various global markets. These institutions' prominence in the field underscores their commitment to advancing the understanding of strategic leadership's role in driving organizational innovation.

Mapping analysis of publications and authorship (RQ3)

To ensure fair credit distribution among co-authors compared to the complete counting approach, our study employed the fractional method as the unit for analysis while focusing on publications authored by at least two individuals. For instance, each author received a fractional credit of 0.25 in a four-author article. We sourced our data set of 111 articles with 227 authors on strategic leadership and organizational innovation from Scopus (1993-2022), using a minimum inclusion threshold of two-authored documents. As a result, only 14 authors qualified for this study, with only 6.2% (14 out of 227) and 1.3% (3 out of 227) credited with two and three publications, respectively.

Figure 3(a) provides insight into crucial academic relationships and researchers developed from our study's ten clusters linked by collaborative connections: "Davidson" - "Leavy," "Paranjape" - "Guimaraes," alongside unique clusters like "Cortes" - "Herman." Figure 3(b) presents author links' weightings based on an average publication year gradient from blue to yellow spanning between 2005 and 2020, including strong author link-weights in recent publications such as "Cortes" - "Herman" and "Xu" - "Wang."

Additionally, we evaluated country-level data for our study using Scopus (1993-2022) by requiring a minimum inclusion threshold of two documents per country. Thus, only 17 countries qualified among 39 analyzed articles, reflecting an eleven-and-a-half

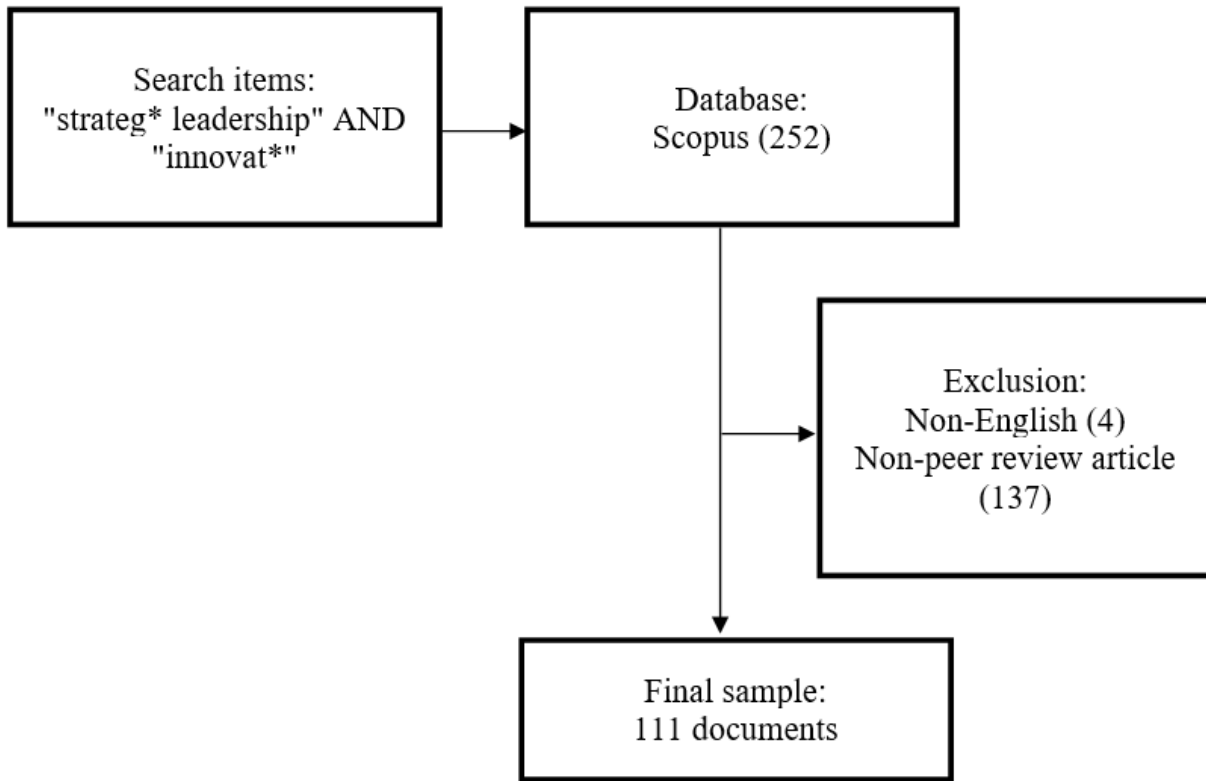


Figure 1: Data extraction process.

Table 1: Listing of top 10 contributing countries, sources, authors, and affiliations.

Top Countries	F	Top Sources	F	
USA	26	Strategy and Leadership.	18	
China	9	Emerald Emerging Markets Case Studies.	5	
Australia	5	IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management.	3	
United Kingdom	5	Journal of Strategy and Management.	3	
Malaysia	4	Leadership Quarterly.	3	
South Africa	4	International Journal of Innovation Science.	2	
Thailand	3	Journal of Business Strategy.	2	
Canada	2	Leadership and Organization Development Journal.	2	
Indonesia	2	Long Range Planning.	2	
Italy	2	Strategic Management Journal.	2	
Top Authors	Scopus id/Orcid id	F	Top Affiliations	F
Brian Leavy	55910286600	6	Tennessee Technological University.	4
Tor Guimaraes	7004845422/0000-0003-0717-1438	4	University of Pretoria.	3
Robert J Allio.	8891142200	3	Gordon Institute of Business Science.	3
Andres Felipe Cortes	57208388727	2	Iowa State University.	2
Alistair Davidson	15730270300	2	Western University.	2
Pol Herrmann	55691730700/000-0001-7368-9871	2	San Diego State University.	2
Michael A. Hitt	8092411400	2	Texas Christian University.	2
Justin Jansen	12244592100/ 0000-0001-7757-078X	2	Monash University.	2
Peter Charles Murray	9276591100	2	Harbin Institute of Technology.	2
Ketan Paranjape	14834107700	2	University of Southern Queensland.	2

strength result shown in Figure 3(c), which features three color-coded clusters connected by thirteen links outlining country-level collaborations. The clusters outlined in this study shed light on collaborative patterns among authors from different countries based on document weights and the average year of publication with minimum scores.

Notably, the countries with substantial linkages are the United States, Canada, and Italy in one cluster, and another contains France, the United Kingdom, and Germany. Figure 3(d) circles indicate each country's article contribution through document weights. The gradient color from blue to yellow reflects the average publication year from 2012 to 2020, with a considerable inflow of recent publications from France and Germany.

We used Bibliometrix^[17] to produce bibliometric results of author-country collaboration (Table 2), distinguishing between Single-Country Partnerships (SCP) and Multi-Country Partnerships (MCP). The United States led with 26 articles; 25 were written exclusively by US authors (SCPs), while one involved international collaboration (MCP), accounting for

roughly 23.4% of total articles with a 3.8% MCP ratio. China followed with nine articles, eight SCPs, and one MCP, making up approximately 8.1% of total articles and an 11.1% MCP ratio. Australia and the United Kingdom shared third place with five articles each. However, they had distinct SCP and MCP ratios, resulting in a combined frequency rate of around 4.5%, which varied when comparing their respective MCP ratios. At the same time, Canada demonstrated the highest MCP ratio of 50% despite only two articles.

Co-citation mapping analysis (RQ4)

The notion of co-citation analysis put forward by Fellnhof^[46] provides an effective tool for exploring the intellectual structure inherent in scientific fields. By examining how frequently pairs of references are cited concurrently within a document, this analysis offers insights into author co-citation, whereby researchers instructively maintain ties with various authors via source citations in new documents.^[47] As time progresses and focal points change over time within research endeavors, such fluctuations find reflection in ever-shifting variations toward co-citation counts.^[48]

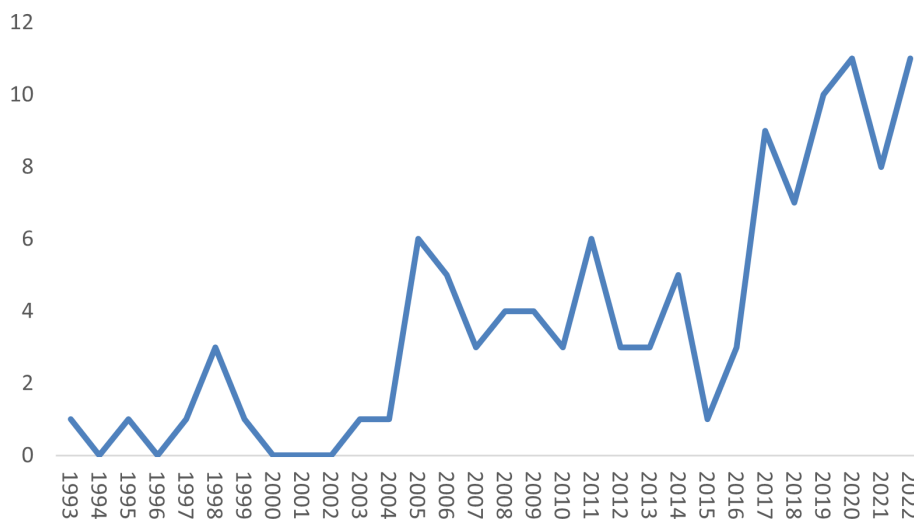
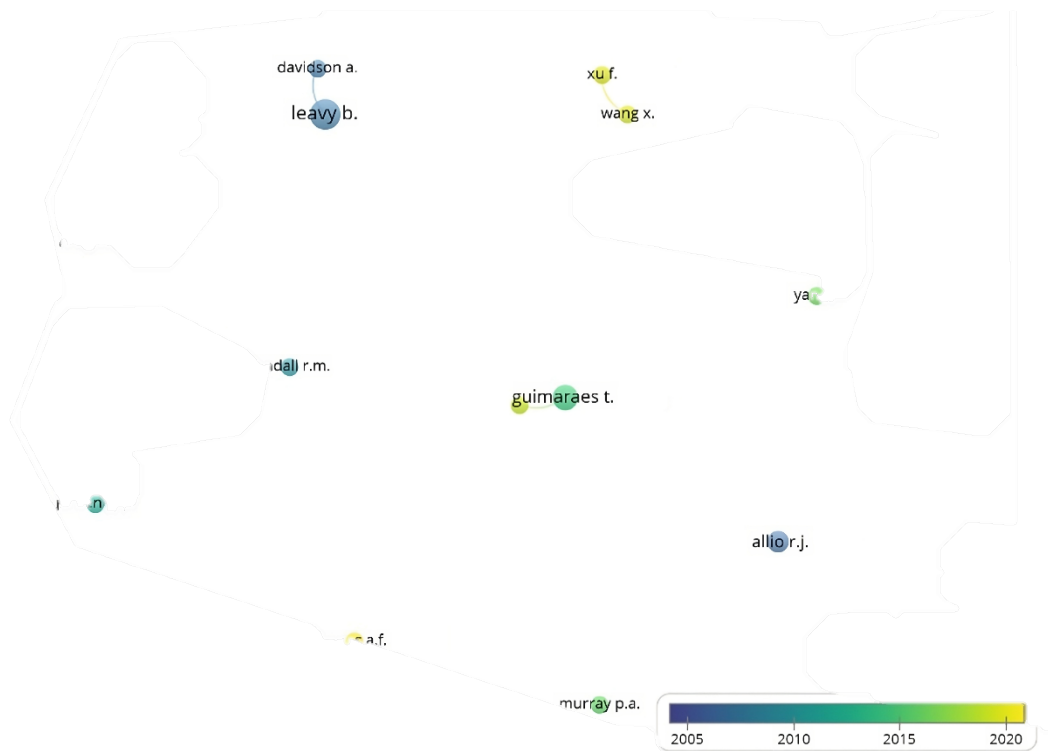
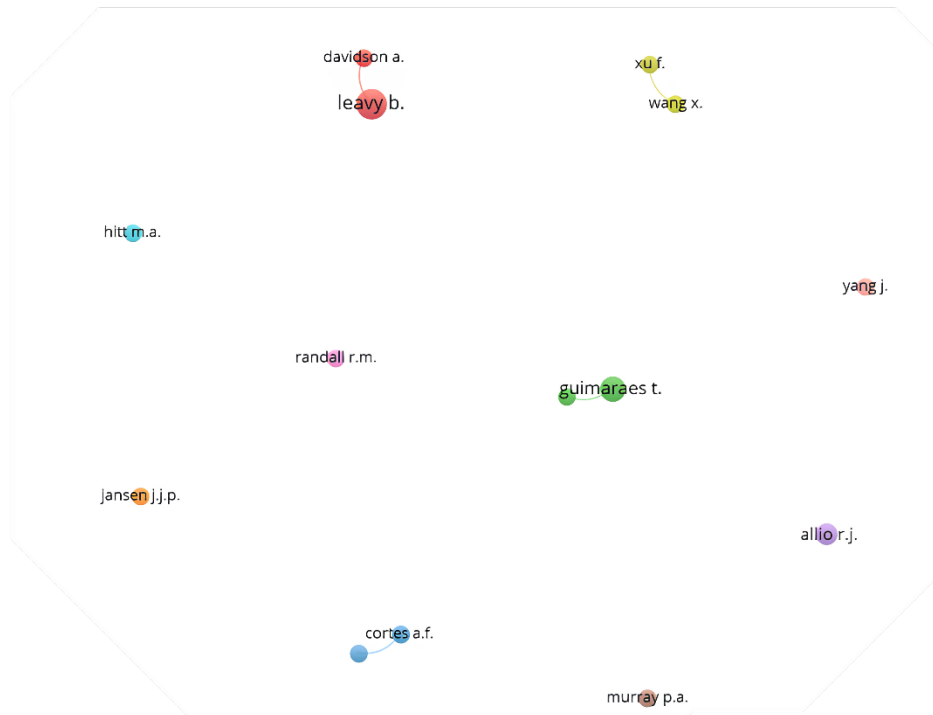


Figure 2: Annual Scientific Production.

Table 2: The cumulative number of collaborated documents and partnerships between authors from different countries.

Country	Articles	SCP	MCP	Freq	MCP_Ratio
USA	26	25	1	0.234	0.038
China	9	8	1	0.081	0.111
Australia	5	4	1	0.045	0.200
United Kingdom	5	3	2	0.045	0.400
Malaysia	4	3	1	0.036	0.250
South Africa	4	4	0	0.036	0.000
Thailand	3	2	1	0.027	0.333
Canada	2	1	1	0.018	0.500
Indonesia	2	2	0	0.018	0.000



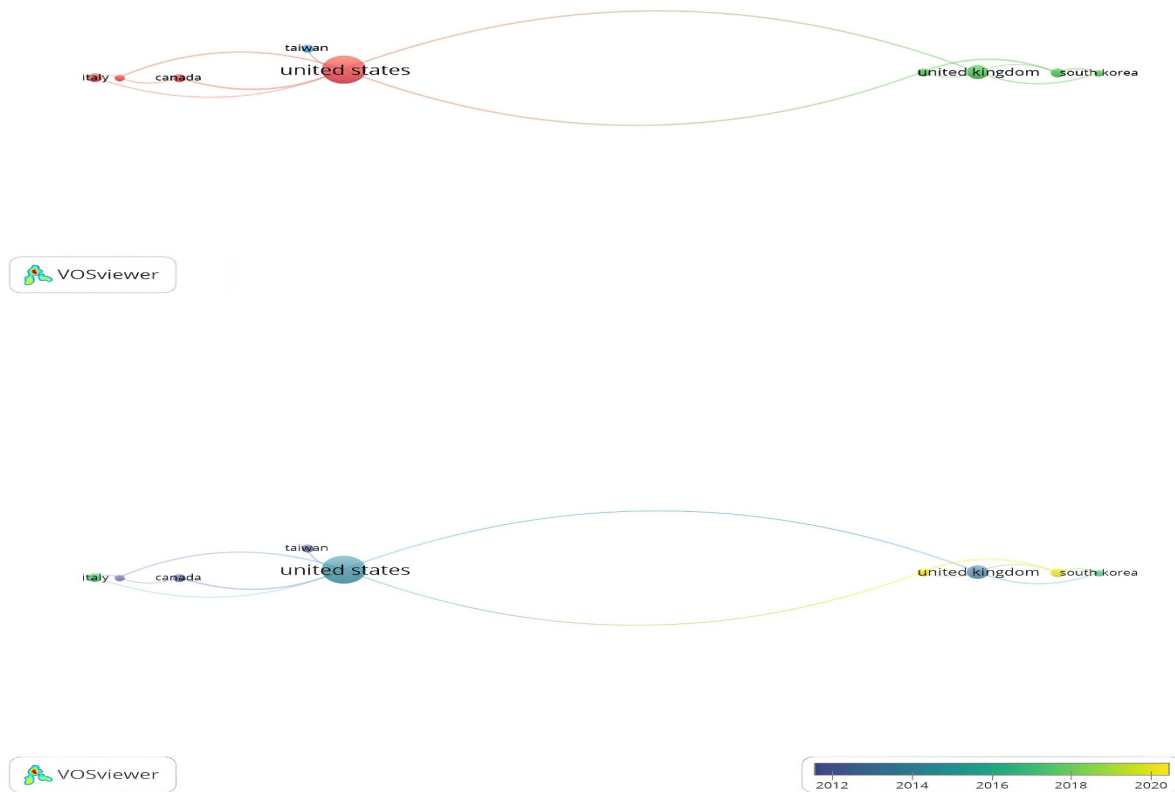


Figure 3: The network of cooperation among authors.

As far as strategic leadership and organizational innovation are concerned, analyzing the most cited articles using co-citation analysis reveals how scholarly works' interconnectedness acts as a guide to understanding contemporary and emerging research practices. Scholars often cite each other repeatedly within specific research themes, mainly due to shared knowledge sources, making distinct relationship patterns difficult to establish. This analysis illuminates three distinctive clusters, each emblematic of a unique theme and a core set of theoretical frameworks yet connected in a broader intellectual landscape.

The inaugural decade of strategic leadership and organizational innovation research (1993-2003 in Figure 4a) witnessed the advent of a distinguished research cohort inclusive of scholarly luminaries such as Bantel, Hambrick, Huffman, Howell, Kim, Lewin, and Miller. Their intellectual pursuits centered predominantly on examining strategic leader traits, idiosyncrasies, and personality traits, using upper-echelon theory as a critical investigative lens. Their trailblazing work established the conceptual bedrock of the field, enabling future scholars to explore this domain further. For instance, the study conducted by Bantel and Jackson^[49] forged a compelling narrative about the

sybiotic relationship between TMTs' educational and functional diversity and their tendency for innovation adoption.

This paradigm-setting investigation catalyzed a new era of empirical exploration, buttressed by the rigorous methodologies developed by Huffman and Hegarty.^[50] Their cross-cultural investigation illuminated the multifaceted influences of executive traits on the propensity for innovation, offering nuanced insights into the cultural variations impacting these dynamics. Howell and Higgins^[51] advanced the understanding of transformational leader behaviors, innovativeness, and risk-taking propensity, emphasizing their pivotal role in driving technological innovations to fruition. Hambrick and Mason^[25] seminal upper-echelon theory presented a series of propositions linking top management's demographic characteristics to a broad spectrum of strategic decisions, including those related to innovation. Miller *et al.*^[52] revealed insightful correlations between top executives' locus of control and their strategic orientation. They uncovered that leaders exhibiting a robust internal locus of control were more inclined towards product-market innovation, risk-taking, and leadership in competitive landscapes. Together, these pioneering studies created the foundational scaffolding for the burgeoning

discourse on strategic leadership and organizational innovation, underscoring the role of leadership traits and characteristics as indispensable components in this domain.

During the second time slice of strategic leadership and organizational innovation research (2004-2013 in Figure 4b), the focus expanded, forming four distinct research groups. The first, a group featuring authors like Bass, Burns, Carmines, Day, Kanter, Pawar, Waldman, and Yoon (marked in red), directed their scholarly inquiry toward leadership styles. Meanwhile, the second group, including Hambrick, Jassawala, Lyon, Michel, Nunnally, Roth, and Wiersema (marked in green), reinforced the theoretical framework laid in the previous decade, further examining upper-echelon theory. The third assembly (marked in blue), consisting of Ahmed, Vera, and Elenkov, ventured into new thematic territory: process learning, dissecting the mechanics of organizational knowledge acquisition and application. Lastly, the fourth research collective (yellow), composed of March, Cohen, and Von Hippel, devoted their efforts to leadership and its role in fostering organizational innovation.

Spanning the years from 2014 to 2022 (Figure 4c), the third time slice of inquiry into strategic leadership and organizational innovation unveils the instrumental contributions of four primary scholarly understanding the sources of learning and the concept of absorptive capacity, which encapsulates an organization's ability to identify, assimilate, and utilize new, external information. These research clusters broadened and deepened our understanding of strategic cohorts. They are spearheaded by eminent figures such as Hambrick, Haynes, and Wiersema (red color), who focus on intellectual collective engagement with the upper-echelon theory, examining its implications in the realm of shifts in innovation decision-making. This focus on high-level executive influences underscores the profound impact of top management on strategic shifts and the firm's innovative capacity. Simultaneously, the (blue-colored) scholarly assemblage, represented by Elenkov, March, Rosing, and Smith, delves into the intricate balance that strategic leaders are tasked with maintaining between exploring novel concepts and exploiting extant innovations. This equilibrium is the fulcrum of sustained organizational innovation, necessitating a strategic approach to navigate this duality. Running in parallel, the (green color) research ensemble-comprising Pawar, Teece, Vera, and Waldman-ventures into the intricate dynamic managerial capabilities intersection with organizational learning to pursue innovation. Their exploration spotlighted the adaptability, integration, and reconfiguration of internal and external competencies, which form the bedrock for organizations operating in a rapidly mutable environment. Lastly, the (yellow) research contingent, led by Cohen and Dahlander, underscores the pivotal role of open innovation and absorptive capacity in contemporary innovation topography. The accentuation here is on the ability of organizations to engage in innovation processes not solely confined to their internal ecosystem but also the broader

external milieu. By assimilating and leveraging knowledge, ideas, and technologies from external sources, organizations demonstrate absorptive capacity, a salient factor in fostering a vibrant innovation culture.

Bibliographic coupling analysis (RQ5)

Bibliographic coupling is a framework for analyzing the connections between two articles that cite a common source in their bibliographies. These shared references can indicate a shared conceptual or theoretical basis, leading to the identification of a thematic cluster within the research field.^[53] It is essential to consider that an article's list of references, and thus its bibliographic coupling links, remain unchangeable over time.^[54] Consequently, bibliographic coupling provides an effective method for identifying and clustering the primary themes of the article that are being reviewed in bibliometric analysis. In strategic leadership and organizational innovation research, bibliographic coupling has identified five distinct thematic clusters that form the pillars of scholarly discourse in this field.

Strategic leadership characteristics and orientation theme (red color in Figure 5). A notable area of emphasis in this cluster is the influence of CEO characteristics on the adoption and modalities of Open Innovation (OI). Studies conducted by Ahn *et al.*^[26] and Hung^[55] illuminate the interplay between the personal traits of strategic leaders and the enactment of various OI modes. They highlight how CEO attitudes, entrepreneurial orientation, patience, and educational background can significantly facilitate OI adoption within small and medium enterprises. Importantly, these studies underscore the necessity of understanding OI as a broad innovation spectrum, in which CEO characteristics have differential effects based on the uncertainty inherent to each OI mode.

Furthermore, studies by Ismail^[56] and Limba *et al.*^[57] provide a keen exploration of the processes involved in institutionalizing change within government organizations. Using the lens of organizational learning, these studies emphasize the crucial role of power dynamics and strategic leadership in fostering sustained change. They explain how learning flows can be cultivated in government organizations undergoing change by integrating power mechanisms into the learning framework. In addition, it is noteworthy how Makri and Scandura^[58] and Puaschunder^[59] introduced two dimensions of strategic leadership, operational and creative, tailored explicitly for leaders in high-technology firms. The creative leadership dimension underscores the strategic emphasis on fostering social and human capital and bolstering the firm's internal knowledge development.

In contrast, operational leadership underscores the exploration of new growth paths and exploiting existing ones, broadening the firm's boundaries to new product and market domains. Wu^[60] connects social media marketing strategy with organizational culture, strategic leadership, learning, social networks,

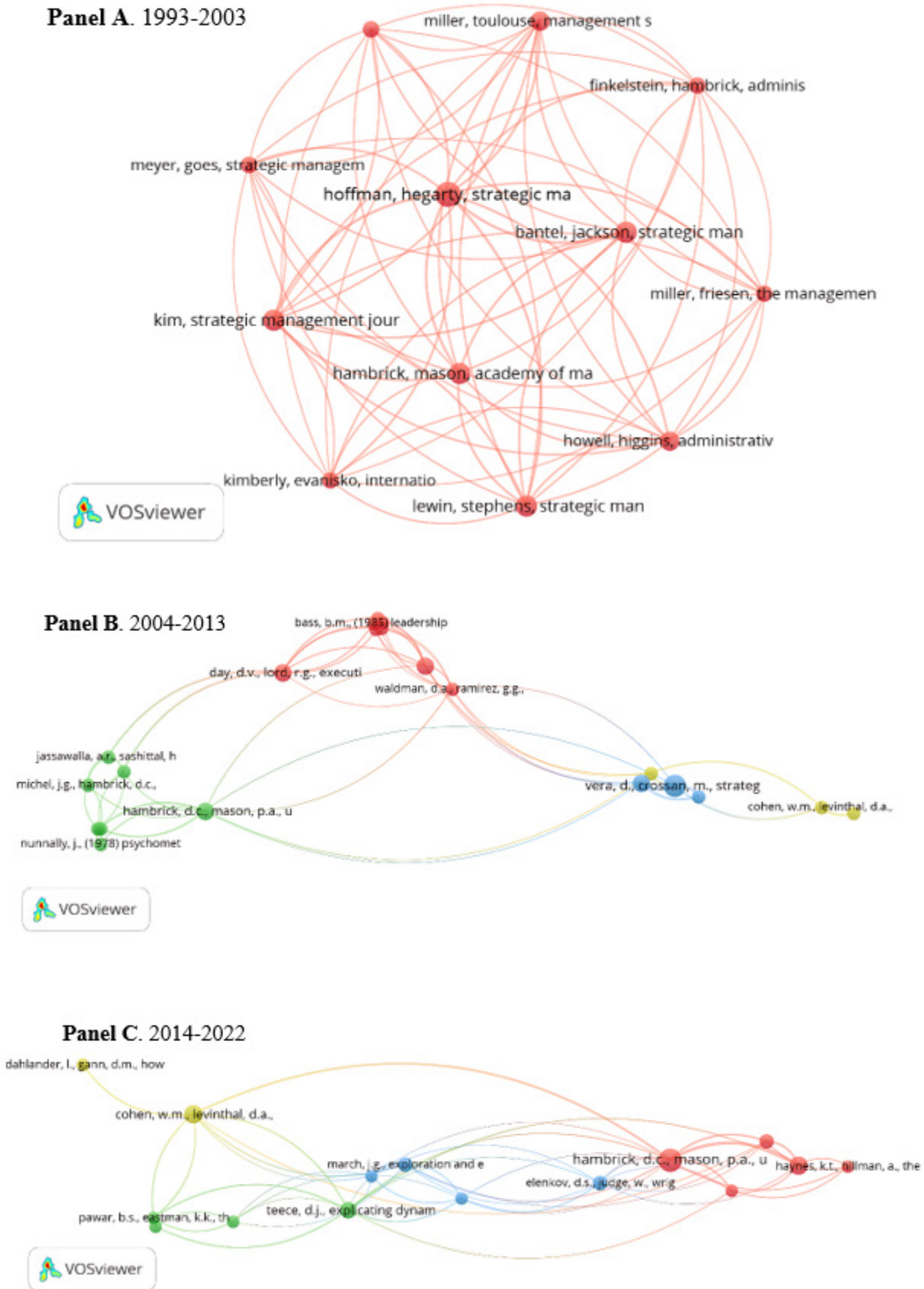


Figure 4: Co-citation analysis.

and innovation orientation, showing their impact on firm performance in chain stores and franchises. This highlights the key role of strategic leadership in driving innovation, managing change, and promoting learning across various organizational contexts.

Influence of strategic leadership on innovation and performance theme (green color in Figure 5). This cluster focuses on the impact of upper-echelon leadership, including CEOs and TMTs, their characteristics on driving innovation and firm performance, and the role of corporate governance and leadership diversity in innovation. Starting with Abatecola,^[61] the evolution of

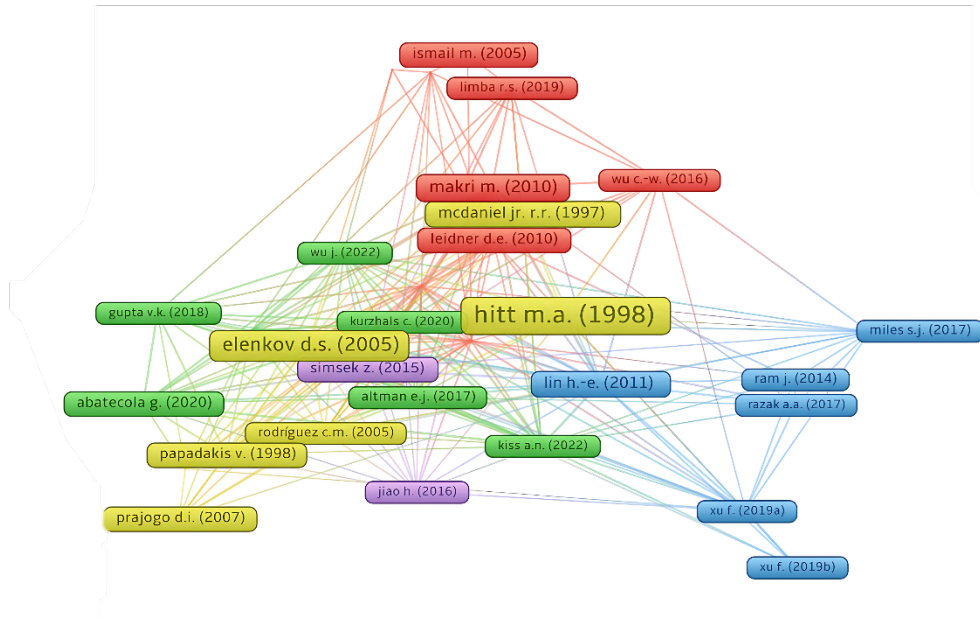


Figure 5: Bibliographic coupling analysis.

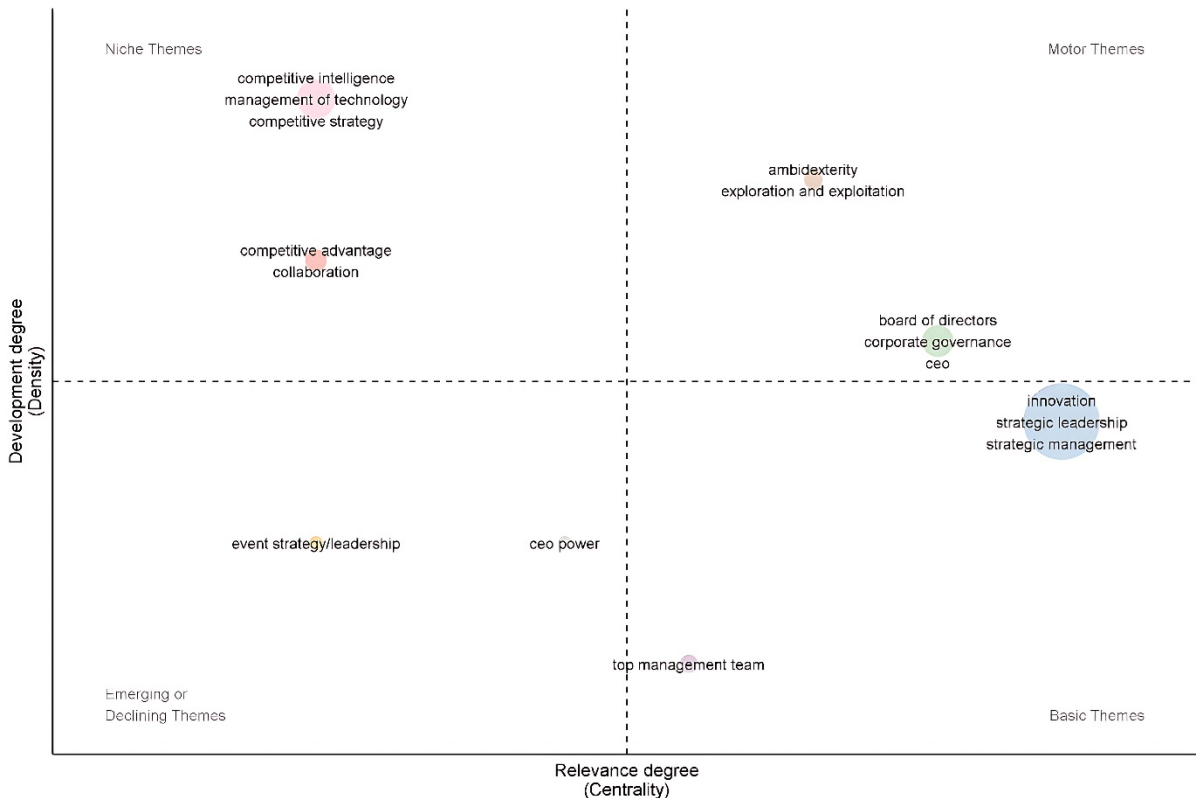


Figure 6: Thematic Mapping.

Upper Echelons Theory (UET) is presented, and a model based on co-evolutionary lenses is proposed. This theory, focusing on leadership in strategic decision-making, has shifted to co-evolutionary perspectives, highlighting the interaction between leaders' traits and situational factors. The influence of strategic leadership on organizational decisions and outcomes is a key theme in the cluster. Altman and Tushman^[62] highlight the complexity of strategic leadership in modern business through the shift to open, externally focused strategies, which introduce new institutional logic and challenges for managers and organizations.

Gupta *et al.*^[63] present a dichotomy between agency and strategic leadership theories, particularly regarding CEO power and its implications for firm performance. Their study reflects on the controversial performance consequences of CEO power, especially during industry turmoil, again highlighting the importance of context. Kiss *et al.*^[64] delve deeper into the role of CEO personality, focusing on proactiveness and its impact on different facets of organizational innovation and firm performance. Similarly, Kurzhals *et al.*^[65] review the relationship between strategic leadership and technological innovation, employing the lenses of agency theory and UET to explore the role of strategic leaders in driving technological innovation. Li and Yang^[66] discuss the impact of CEO tenure and CEO-chair duality on the balance between exploitative and exploratory innovation. Their study integrates upper echelons and behavioral agency theories, arguing that the board's monitoring role could inhibit CEOs from pursuing more exploratory innovation. Wu *et al.*^[67] focus on gender diversity within both TMTs and BoDs, arguing that high levels of gender diversity in both of these leadership teams can result in increased organizational innovation and improved firm performance. These studies collectively using underscore the significant influence of strategic leadership-considering aspects like CEO power, personality, tenure, and gender diversity-on organizational innovation and performance. They also highlight the importance of incorporating intra-organizational factors and external environmental conditions into strategic decision-making.

Strategic leadership, innovation, and competitive advantage (blue color in Figure 5). Miles and Van Clieaf^[68] and Calabrò *et al.*^[69] emphasize organizational capital as a critical intangible asset. They argue that it is a continuous creator of value, particularly through fostering innovation, improving operational efficiency, and nurturing stakeholder relationships. Strategic leadership is central to creating organizational capital and a fitting amalgamation of strategy and organizational design. The claim being made here is essentially about the integral role of strategic leadership in harnessing and managing organizational capital to spur innovation, drive growth, and create value.^[68,69] However, one could rebut this idea by suggesting that it is not leadership alone but other factors, like corporate culture and workforce capabilities, that play into this equation. Lin and McDonough III^[70] support this argument, suggesting that strategic leadership is

essential in mediating exploration and exploitation forces within an organization, fostering a culture that facilitates innovation. Empirical data from their study strengthens this proposition, proving that a knowledge-sharing culture propelled by strategic leadership leads to innovation ambidexterity. Exploring a tangential point, Ram *et al.*^[71] explored the role of strategic leadership in implementing Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) projects. They provide empirical evidence that understanding system quality and organizational readiness at the planning stage of an ERP project significantly aids in achieving a competitive advantage. This understanding, facilitated by strategic leadership, is vital in strategizing, allocating resources, and committing to ERP projects.^[71] The works of Razak and Murray^[72] and Xu and Wang^[73] further explore the role of strategic leadership in promoting innovation and subsequently achieving commercial success. They emphasize the significance of open innovation, strategic leadership, and collaborative advantage in driving commercialization success.^[72] They also shed light on the distinct dimensions of transactional leadership that foster dynamic capabilities based on regulatory focus.^[73]

Contextual factors of strategic leadership on innovation theme (yellow color in Figure 5). Elenkov *et al.*^[74] underscored the pivotal role strategic leadership behaviors play in driving innovation and how such effects are further influenced by the tenure heterogeneity of the TMT and the social culture of an organization. These findings highlight the concept of leadership dynamics-that the effectiveness of leadership behavior may not be static but can be influenced by the composition of the leadership team and the broader social culture. This contextual understanding of leadership helps expand the conventional view of leadership as a one-dimensional force, considering organizational factors such as TMT tenure heterogeneity as potential modulators of leadership effectiveness. Building on this understanding, Guimaraes^[75] investigated the potential moderating effect of industry clock speed on various determinants of innovation success, including strategic leadership. His findings emphasized the significance of context, with the rate of industry change influencing the relationships between the determinants of innovation success significantly. This research adds another dimension to the theme, underscoring that internal organizational factors and external industry conditions influence leadership dynamics.

Similarly, Hitt *et al.*^[76] discussed the changing competitive landscape, requiring organizations to cultivate strategic flexibility and other competencies to remain competitive. This perspective further illustrates the contextual nature of leadership dynamics. As the external environment evolves, leadership strategies and behaviors must also adapt effectively. While the studies mentioned above highlighted the role of internal and external contexts, Rodriguez^[77] focused on the cultural aspect, elucidating the impact of national and organizational cultures on leadership in international strategic alliances. This study revealed that the

leadership styles of American and Mexican managers converged into a participative, consultative style within the alliance, forming a "third culture" that balanced task innovation and social relationships. This finding provided an intriguing perspective on leadership dynamics, demonstrating that leaders could reshape their styles to create a new, shared culture in intercultural contexts. This theme shows that the effectiveness of strategic leadership in driving innovation is dynamic, influenced by internal factors (e.g., TMT tenure, organizational culture) and external factors (e.g., industry pace, national culture). Organizations and leaders must adapt to these factors to foster innovation.

Entrepreneurial leadership on innovation theme (purple color in Figure 5). Jiao *et al.*^[78] and Simsek *et al.*^[79] provide insightful perspectives, emphasizing how entrepreneurial abilities and strategic leadership influence innovation, particularly in entrepreneurial contexts and under varying ownership structures. The moderating effect of ownership on the relationship between entrepreneurial ability and technological innovation, bringing forth the importance of social responsibility, strategic leadership, and the Chinese concept of "guanxi" (networking ability) as positive drivers of innovation.^[78] The researchers found that a higher proportion of state-owned shares enhance a company's ability for technological innovation. This study highlights how ownership structure influences leadership's impact on innovation, emphasizing the importance of context in leadership effectiveness. There is also a growing interest in exploring strategic leadership in entrepreneurial settings. They posit that entrepreneurial settings, laden with constraints, challenges, and unique characteristics, can offer new avenues for understanding strategic leadership effects.^[79] The focus on entrepreneurial contexts, which are often characterized by dynamism, uncertainty, and resource constraints, underscores the adaptability aspect of leadership. This underlines the concept that effective leadership may require navigating and thriving under varied and often challenging conditions, thus influencing the innovation process within such entrepreneurial contexts. The synthesis of these studies illuminates the significant impacts of entrepreneurial abilities and strategic leadership on technological innovation, which are modulated by contextual factors such as the ownership structure of the company and the unique demands of entrepreneurial environments.

Thematic mapping (RQ6)

This study utilizes thematic mapping to investigate strategic leadership and organizational innovation themes through the interaction of keywords across academic publications. Within this analytical framework lie two key metrics: centrality and density, foundational in creating the thematic map presented in Figure 6. Centrality anchors one dimension by evaluating how influential a theme is beyond its immediate context, while density assesses its strength concerning internal robustness and development concept resilience.^[80] Using these metrics in tandem makes it evident when evaluating the four quadrants (Q1

through Q4). The first quadrant (Q1) highlights "niche" themes while exhibiting limited relevance regarding broader literature. In contrast, the second quadrant (Q2) presents "motor" themes driven by significantly linked clusters demonstrating internal solid development. The third quadrant (Q3) identifies "basic" themes with compelling ties externally but lacking substance internally. The fourth quadrant (Q4) contains either "emerging or declining" themes that are not yet relevant to be considered pertinently scholarly because their publication growth rate is low compared to established perspectives.

Thematic mapping is an excellent technique for better understanding strategic leadership and organizational innovation discourse. The beauty of this approach lies in its ability to elucidate possibilities for future research by highlighting gaps in the literature while illuminating underdeveloped topics that can benefit from further inquiry. For instance, quadrants 3 and 4 contain "basic" and "emerging or vanishing" themes that are vital areas calling out for more detailed investigations. These areas offer significant potential for a deeper understanding of strategic leadership and organizational innovation concepts. By providing a nuanced depiction of existing ideas, limitations within current literature can be documented, thereby triggering new directions toward new terrain waiting for exploration. Through their isolation from broader discussions, prospects for building connectivity among "niche" themes identified within Quadrant 2 where even isolated entries may have potential if viewed from broader perspectives, fostering a broadening scope of scholarly dialogue expansion on strategic leadership and organizational innovation.

Niche Themes (Q1)

Strategic leadership, pivotal to driving innovation and competitive advantage, plays a cardinal role in melding Competitive Intelligence (CI), Management of Technology (MOT), and collaborative strategies.^[75,81] The nuanced synergy between CI and MOT, as elucidated by Guimaraes and Paranjape,^[81] posits that efficacious leadership not only deciphers market data but also forefronts pioneering technological evolutions. In this context, Bryson *et al.*^[83] and Razak and Murray^[72] accentuate that collaborative endeavors, while potent, derive true efficacy from sagacious leadership strategies. Xu and Wang^[73] insights into transactional leadership's role in collaborative ventures further consolidate this narrative. Integrating those niche themes with other established themes will push the niche theme (Q1) into the motor theme (Q2). Pivoting to future research trajectories, there is an exigency to integrate these insights with seminal concepts like ambidexterity and exploration-exploitation, especially within corporate governance frameworks.^[82,83] A profound exploration into how BoD dynamics and CEO leadership paradigms, especially in high power-distance contexts, influence these interactions could unearth pivotal findings.^[72,73,84] The overarching aim is to

discern how strategic leadership can optimally orchestrate these variables, ensuring sustainable competitive advantage.

Motor Themes (Q2)

In this theme, the symbiotic roles of CEOs and the BoD are pivotal, especially when framed within the dynamics of exploration and exploitation. Langan *et al.*^[85] spotlight the nuanced hybrid executive board chair, suggesting it can harmoniously merge strategy with oversight, thus redefining governance structures. This is amplified by Makri and Scandura,^[58] who argue that CEOs in tech-centric sectors can drive multifaceted innovation by synergizing external operational focus with internal creativity. However, Calabrò *et al.*^[69] inject a dimension of board composition, emphasizing the unique innovation potential and challenges of family-dominated boards. Li and Yang^[66] further complicate the matrix, positing that CEO behaviors-especially those with extensive tenure and distinct governance roles-may oscillate between the poles of exploration and exploitation, potentially sacrificing radical innovations. Collectively, these insights accentuate that innovation ambidexterity, rooted in exploration-exploitation dynamics, hinges on the intricate interplay between CEO leadership, BoD composition, and overarching corporate governance structures.^[58,70,85,86] The "motor theme" in strategic leadership and organizational innovation hinges on the multifaceted dynamics between CEOs and BoDs, all underscored by the imperatives of exploration and exploitation. The pressing need to delineate the strategic contributions of different board roles, hinting at gaps in our understanding of governance mechanisms.^[85] Meanwhile, Avby^[86] amplifies the importance of the exploratory phase within the ambidexterity theory, a perspective reinforced by Jansen *et al.*^[87] and Lin and McDonough III^[70] who urge for an environment where exploration and exploitation harmoniously coexist. The emphasizing the nuanced interplay between CEOs and boards within the innovation paradigm. Collectively, future research must craft a comprehensive framework that intricately binds leadership styles, governance structures, and the exploration-exploitation dichotomy to truly unravel the potential of organizational innovation.^[66,70,86,87]

Basic Themes (Q3)

Within this basic theme exists a nuanced interplay between strategic leadership and organizational innovation, a consistent thread discernible throughout the corpus of 71 articles. Notably, Elenkov *et al.*^[74] highlight strategic leadership's direct role in spurring innovation. Yet the depth of this relationship, particularly if specific leadership styles champion innovation more than others, remains an open question. Kiss *et al.*^[64] underscore proactive CEOs as innovation catalysts, suggesting that contextual factors like organizational culture and economic environments could modify this role. While prior research^[74]

delve into the dynamics of TMTs and their innovative potential, there is a gap in understanding how these diverse teams manage internal disparities to optimize innovation. Abatecola and Cristofaro^[88] perspective on executive cognitive traits necessitates a deeper exploration of their interplay with organizational culture. Nag *et al.*^[89] further expand on this by examining CEO roles amidst industry challenges, indicating a need to differentiate these roles based on industry variations. With regard to emerging domains, the nexus between competitive intelligence, technology management, and leadership emerges as a promising research frontier. Strategic leadership, especially within TMTs, could be a pivotal informant for competitive intelligence, offering a roadmap for firms in tech-intensive sectors. Kiss *et al.*^[64] also allude to the unique competitive strategies of SMEs, hinting at the need to explore beyond conventional frameworks. As firms pivot towards leveraging technology and collaboration for competitive advantage, the cognitive and behavioral nuances of leadership, as emphasized prior research,^[74,89] could play an increasingly central role. This integrated focus promises a nuanced grasp of competitive dynamics, marrying leadership insights with technological and competitive imperatives.

Emerging or Vanishing Themes (Q4)

The evolving landscape of strategic leadership and organizational innovation is marked by the intertwined themes of CEO power and event strategy, each underscoring distinct yet interconnected facets of modern management discourse. Gupta *et al.*^[63] emphasize the vulnerabilities of CEO dominance, demonstrating the risks that organizations face, especially during tumultuous industry periods, and highlighting the exigency for diversified decision-making. Langan *et al.*^[85] further this discourse, advocating for a hybrid leadership approach where a CEO's might is counterbalanced with strategic board oversight, pointing towards a governance structure that synergizes concentrated power with collaborative insight. However, Zhang *et al.*^[90] introduce a different dimension, emphasizing the potential of powerful CEOs to spearhead environmental innovations, albeit within specific governance frameworks. These studies collectively hint at the multifaceted nature of CEO power, suggesting both its potential benefits and pitfalls. Similarly, the works of Chaker and Aminou^[91] and Meyer and Scheepers^[92] pivot the discussion towards the rise of event strategy, reflecting a paradigm shift from traditional, entrenched strategic models to dynamic, event-driven approaches. This shift highlights the need for adaptability and collaboration in times of rapid change and uncertainty. Expanding strategic leadership and organizational innovation into areas like grassroots innovation,^[93] can further explore complexities such as CEO power and event strategy, focusing on adaptability, collaboration, and untapped market and entrepreneurial opportunities.

CONCLUSION

This study contributes significantly to the theoretical and methodological understanding of strategic leadership and organizational innovation by employing thematic mapping to analyze the field's intellectual structure. Utilizing centrality and density as key metrics, the research identifies "niche" themes, "motor" themes, and underexplored areas, such as "basic" and "emerging or vanishing" themes, which offer substantial potential for future inquiry. Unlike most bibliometric studies, which tend to focus on dominant or well-established clusters, this research provides a detailed analysis of declining and niche clusters, underscoring their relevance to the broader discourse. The findings also highlight the fragmented nature of research in this area, with limited cross-national collaboration, and suggest that more diverse, cross-border studies could enrich the understanding of how leadership fosters innovation in various cultural and organizational contexts. The study's policy implications stress the importance of adaptable leadership in shaping governance structures and fostering innovation, particularly in response to the technological advancements of Industry 4.0. Socially, it emphasizes the role of leadership in managing disruption and building inclusive, forward-thinking cultures. However, the study is limited by its reliance on publications from 1993 to 2022 and specific search terms, potentially excluding emerging trends. Additionally, some publications may reflect the pressure of the publish or perish system, where students are required to publish articles as part of their graduation requirements,^[94] which could influence the quality or intent behind certain research outputs. Future research should expand on the synergy between competitive intelligence and strategic leadership, particularly in high-tech sectors, to understand how leaders can drive technological innovation and create competitive advantages. Investigating the role of collaborative leadership in open innovation ecosystems, with a focus on transactional and transformational leadership styles, could further enhance the understanding of how leadership influences cross-industry innovation. Studies on CEO leadership styles in SMEs should explore how proactive leadership drives innovation adoption and address the specific challenges SMEs face in fostering innovation. Additionally, research on the influence of TMT diversity—both cognitive and cultural—on innovation outcomes could provide insights into how diverse teams optimize their innovative potential. Finally, further exploration into the dynamics of CEO power during crisis situations could reveal how balancing CEO authority with board oversight affects strategic decision-making and long-term organizational performance.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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