

A Bibliometric Study of Strategic Agility Based on the Scopus Database

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Abstract

This study aimed at identifying the current research trends and their areas, the most prominent researchers, countries, and research institutions in the field of strategic agility, and extracting future research topics and trends. This is achieved through a bibliometric analysis of 98 studies published in the Scopus database during the period (2019-2024), using three software tools: CiteSpace, VOSviewer, and KnowledgeMatrix Plus. The study concludes that there are seven research areas in the field of strategic agility (resulting from precedents, agile stagnation, supply chain agility, balanced agile project management, dynamic capabilities, evidence, and need). The study also concludes that this topic has not received adequate research attention in recent years, leading to several research gaps that may form excellent topics in the field of business management.

Keywords: *strategic agility, bibliometric analysis, scopus database.*

Introduction

Strategic agility has emerged as a valuable term that has attracted the attention of many researchers due to its importance in providing organizations with the ability to respond to and handle various changes in their business environment quickly. The term "agility" first appeared in the context of business in manufacturing; the term *lean manufacturing* was used by several researchers at the Iacocca Institute in (1991/1992) in a study sponsored by the U.S. Office of Naval Research (Reed, 2021, p. 130), titled "*Manufacturing Strategies for the 21st Century: An Expert Industry Perspective*".

In this study, it was suggested that agility, instead of mass production, represents the future of manufacturing in the 21st century. Over time, the concept of agility spread from manufacturing to supply chains, business strategy, and competition (Yousoufi, Fadili & Ilahiane, 2022, p. 479). Many studies have been conducted in these areas, offering several definitions of agility. Among these definitions is that of Goldman & Nagel, who define it as "the ability to change customer opportunities in a continuously competitive and unpredictable environment to enhance profitability" (Yildiz & Aykanat, 2021, p. 766). It is also defined as "the ability to survive and evolve in a competitive environment by responding quickly and efficiently

to market changes driven by products and services" (Yildiz & Aykanat, 2021, p. 766). From these definitions, it is clear that agility is essential for the survival and evolution of organizations in a competitive environment, as it provides them with the ability to respond swiftly to changes in their markets and customer preferences. The term *strategic agility* was first used by Roth (Reed, 2021, p. 130), who explained it in the context of manufacturing as *"the ability to create the right products in the right place, at the right time, and at the right price"*. Carl Long is "considered the first to discuss strategic agility from the perspective of strategic management" (Reed, 2021, p. 130), indicating that agility is not only used to maintain a quick response to changing conditions and emerging opportunities but also to focus on a clear strategic objective (Reed, 2021, p. 130). Later, Finnish researchers Yves Doz & Mikko Kosonen developed the concept of strategic agility by covering all its aspects, making it clearer and more comprehensive, which led to its widespread use in business research. Consequently, the fields of study on the subject have doubled and diversified, making it difficult to identify shared criteria among these studies and their direction, complicating the task of pinpointing research gaps that researchers can focus on for future research directions in the field of strategic agility.

Based on the above, this study aims to identify the aspects that previous studies have focused on regarding strategic agility, according to publications in the Scopus database (keywords: *research areas, researchers, countries, and research institutions*). The goal is to provide a clear and defined intellectual framework for researchers regarding the research gaps that could form future research directions on the topic of interest.

This objective is guided by the following research questions:

- What are the subfields of the topic of strategic agility?
- Who are the most influential researchers in the field of strategic agility?
- Which countries and research institutions are the most authoritative in the field of strategic agility?

1. Literature review: (strategic agility)

According to Doz & Kosonen, strategic agility generally refers to an organization's ability to continuously adapt to uncertain environments. These researchers identified three dynamic capabilities necessary for strategic agility: strategic sensitivity, resource effectiveness, and leadership unity. Strategic sensitivity refers to an organization's ability to detect market trends in order to quickly capitalize on new opportunities, while resource effectiveness is the ability to respond rapidly to market changes and stay ahead of the competition. Strategic speed, on the other hand, requires leadership unity and collective commitment, allowing the organization to benefit from growing opportunities without being slowed down by internal conflicts or disagreements (Vrontis et al., 2022, pp. 6-7). In this regard,

Teece (2007) argued that these dynamic capabilities can be grouped into three main categories that enable an organization to remain competitive and survive in the long run while facing various changes (Shams et al., 2021, p. 03). These categories are "sensing" by identifying key environmental changes, "seizing" through making correct decisions in resource allocation, and "transforming" through continuous renewal of competencies (Shams et al., 2021, p. 03). Notably, these categories are similar in nature to the dimensions proposed by Park Young Ki in 2011, which include sensing agility that refers to the ability to detect changes and developments in the external environment (Tsilionis & Wautelet, 2022, p. 03), decision-making agility, which means making the right decisions regarding systems or processes under resource allocation, so that the organization is prepared to seize the opportunity. Seizing opportunities requires bold and swift decision-making (Geiger, 2020, p. 20), and practice agility, which was referred to by Doz & Kosonen (2010) as the internal capability of the organization to quickly form capabilities and reallocate resources (Doz & Kosonen, 2010, p. 374).

In light of what has been presented, strategic agility appears in granting the organization the ability to sense various environmental changes that carry potential opportunities and threats, make correct and immediate strategic decisions to seize those opportunities and avoid those threats, all while quickly assembling, utilizing, and reshaping its capabilities and resources.

2. Methodology and Tools

2.1 Study Methodology

A correct understanding of the topic requires following a precise scientific approach that contributes to achieving the desired results. Therefore, the study methodology was determined based on the topic's requirements, which is represented by the theoretical exploration based on the inductive approach. This will be done through bibliometric analysis of data from 98 studies published in the Scopus database between 2019 and 2024, using three programs: VOSviewer, KnowledgeMatrix Plus, and CiteSpace.

2.2 Bibliometric analysis methodology and tools

Algamdi (2022) pointed out that bibliometric analysis is "one of the scientific mapping fields that uses methods to analyze data from previous research work and study how articles, researchers, fields, and resources are related to each other. This helps to identify research areas, keywords, researchers, countries, and research institutions, relying on several methods, including Citation, Co-citation, Bibliographic Coupling, Co-authorship, and Co-occurrence" (Algamdi, 2022, p. 153).

In this study, Co-occurrence was used to identify research areas in strategic agility, Co-authorship and Citation were employed to determine the most published and cited researchers, countries, and research institutions in this subject, and to identify research gaps and future trends. To do this, the VOSviewer software was used as the primary tool to obtain networks and bibliometric analysis indicators, and it was supported by KnowledgeMatrix Plus and CiteSpace for bibliometric analysis statistics.

2.3 Bibliometric analysis data

The bibliometric analysis database, according to the filtering criteria in the Scopus database, focused on studies related to Strategic Agility in the title, abstract, and keywords from 2019 to 2024. It included 98 studies in the field of business management. The following figure illustrates this:

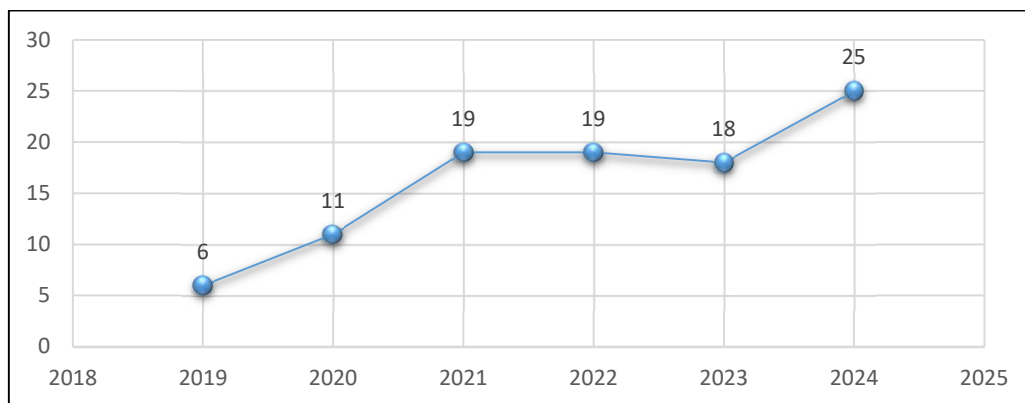


Figure 1: Annual Publications (2019-2024)

Source: Knowledge Matrix Plus and Excel outputs

The figure 1 above illustrates the distribution of the publications used in the bibliometric analysis, showing a significant increase in the number of publications from 2019 to 2021 (6, 11, 19), followed by a stabilization of the number of publications between 2021 and 2022 at 19 publications. This number slightly decreased in 2023 to 18 publications, but it increased again in 2024 to 25 publications. However, it is important to note the need for increased attention from researchers to this topic, especially since it has not recorded high publication rates in the Scopus database, despite its significant importance, which increases as the dynamism of the business environment of institutions grows. As for the different types of these publications, we illustrate them in the figure 2 below as follows:



Figure 2: Types of Publications

Source: Knowledge Matrix Plus and Excel outputs.

The figure 2 above indicates that the research was limited to 95 articles, 2 book chapters, and a book in terms of the number of books. This suggests that the topic of strategic agility has not received sufficient attention from researchers for publication in the Scopus database from 2019 to 2024. This may be due to the publishing criteria and conditions set by this database or the journals indexed within it, which made it difficult for researchers to publish in them, or it could be that this topic was not among the research focuses of these journals.

The following table illustrates the most important journals within the Scopus database that focused on strategic agility between 2019 and 2024:

Table 1: Journal most interested in strategic agility

Number of Publications	Journals
7	Journal of International Management
5	Uncertain Supply Chain Management
6	California Management Review
5	IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management
4	Journal of World Business
4	Journal of Business Research
4	Technological Forecasting and Social Change
4	Management Decision
4	Academy of Strategic Management Journal
4	Human Resource Management Review
4	Journal of Knowledge Management

Source: Vosviewer outputs

It can be observed from the table 1 that one of the journals most interested in strategic agility, based on the number of publications within the Scopus database, is the *Journal of International Management*. This will be beneficial for researchers interested in this topic, as they can focus on the journals listed in the table 1 above, with this journal being the primary one for publishing their research.

3. Presentation and discussion of bibliometric analysis results

In this section, the results of the bibliometric analysis are presented and discussed, aiming to enable researchers to understand the various research trends on the topic of strategic agility. This is achieved by identifying the most commonly used and popular keywords in the field, its main areas, the prominent researchers (whose publications can be cited), as well as the most referenced countries and research institutions (to provide an overview of contributions across regions and disciplines). Based on this, research gaps will be identified, which could form future research topics for researchers and scholars in the field of strategic agility.

3.1 Keywords

The term strategic agility shares a network-like relationship with many terms, totaling 589 terms, as indicated by the Scopus database using the VOSviewer software. The figure 3 below illustrates the most important keywords in the topic of strategic agility.

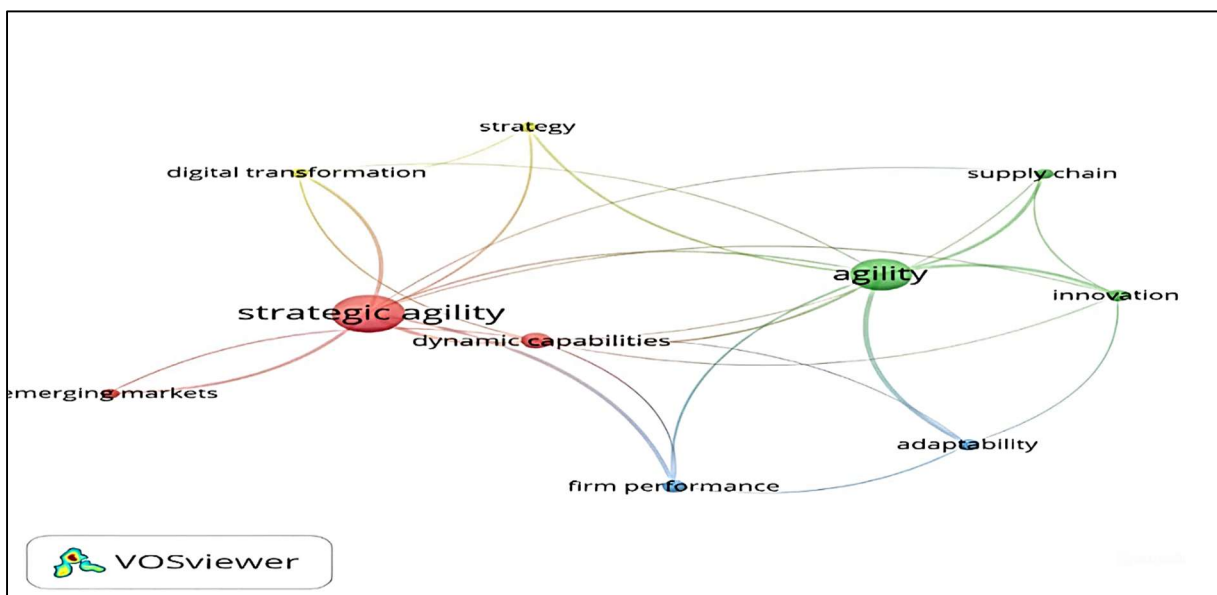


Figure 3: Keyword Network

Source: VOSviewer outputs

The previous figure 3 shows the most common and widely used keywords in the topic of strategic agility by researchers. This can be further clarified in the following table:

Table 2: Most common and widely used keywords by researchers

Keywords	Number of Uses	Colors
Strategic agility	105	Red
Dynamic capabilities	19	
Emerging markets	7	
Agility	73	Green
Innovation	10	
Supply chain	7	
Firm performance	11	Blue
Adaptability	10	
Strategy	7	Yellow
Digital transformation	7	

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on the outputs of VOSviewer

The table 2 above shows the most common and widely used keywords by researchers in the topic of strategic agility, which have been grouped into colored clusters as shown in Figure 3. The red cluster represents the keywords related to the research field of *Strategic agility*, *Dynamic capabilities*, and *Emerging markets*. The second cluster, in green, includes *Agility*, *Innovation*, and *Supply chain*. The third cluster, in blue, includes *Firm Performance* and *Adaptability*. Finally, the yellow cluster includes *Strategy* and *Digital transformation*. This clearly indicates that the topic of strategic agility has subfields for research.

To identify the most important of these subfields in detail from 2019 to 2024, the CiteSpace program was used. CiteSpace is a tool for visualizing information that translates the research field into mapping functions between research boundaries and intellectual frameworks. The figure 4 illustrates this as follows:

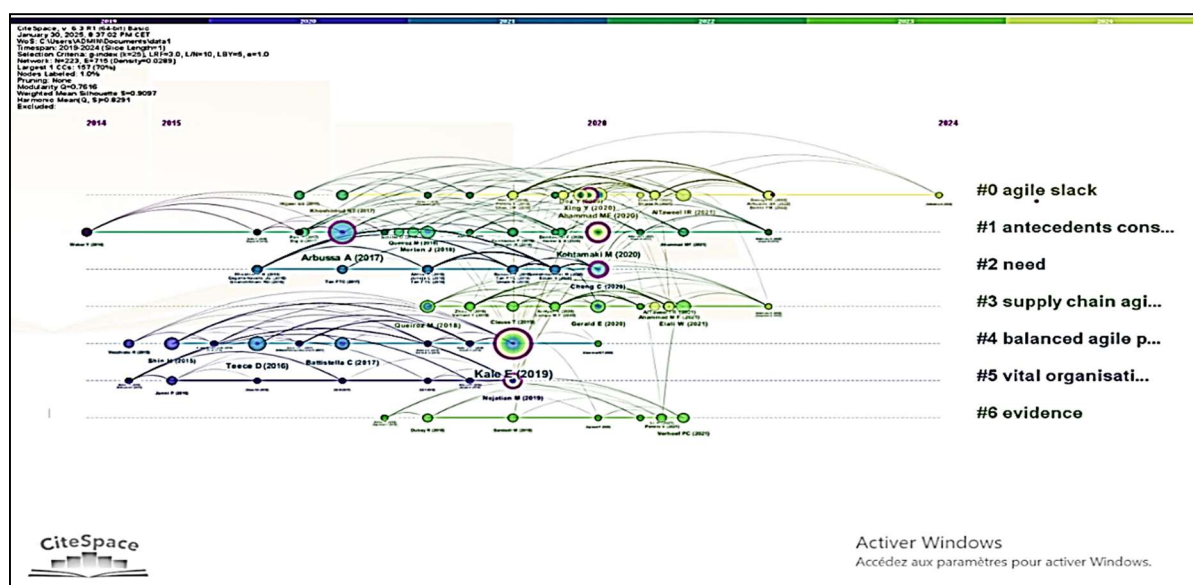


Figure 4: Visualization of Subfields Based on the Timeline

Source: CiteSpace outputs

The figure 4 above further clarifies the most important subfields of strategic agility, as illustrated in the table 3 below:

Table 3: Key Subfields in Strategic Agility

Terms (mutual information)	Top terms (LSI)	Silhouette	Size	Cluster ID	Cluster
Knowledge management (1.19)	Strategic agility	0.877	17	1	Antecedents Consequence
Knowledge-intensive SME (1.23)	Strategic agility	0.837	15	0	Agile Slack
Financial performance (0.25)	Strategic agility	0.921	10	3	Supply Chain Agility
Bet (0.76)	Strategic agility	0.93	10	4	Balanced Agile Project Management
Strategic agility (0.1)	Strategic agility	0.99	7	5	Vital Organisational Capabilities
Bet (0.1)	Evidence	0.915	7	6	Evidence
Strategic agility (0.17)	A literature review on agility – Is there a need to develop a new instrument?	0.999	6	2	Need

Source: CiteSpace outputs

According to the table 3 above, there are 7 subfields for research in the topic of strategic agility from 2019 to 2024, which are as follows (Appendix 1):

- **Antecedents Consequence:** This can be considered as prior studies that highlight the most significant publications based on citations. These studies, categorized as prior studies by LSI and Knowledge Management (1.19) using MI, address topics such as business model updates, innovation, and how to build and maintain strategic agility. The most cited article in this field is by Adomak, S (2022), titled "Strategic agility for small and medium-sized enterprises in emerging economies: antecedents, outcomes, and boundary conditions."
- **Agile Slack:** This subfield includes various researcher orientations identified through citations in strategic agility studies. These orientations focus on human resource management, entrepreneurial teams, and the role of innovation in organizational performance. Strategic agility helps achieve a competitive advantage, supported by Mohammad, As's 2022 paper titled "The impact of strategic agility on creating competitive advantage: Evidence from Jordanian insurance firms."

- **Supply Chain Agility:** This subfield highlights the role and importance of strategic agility during the COVID-19 pandemic in sustaining businesses and improving the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises.
- **Balanced Agile Project Management:** This subfield covers the research orientations of researchers on absorptive, dynamic, and focused capabilities, linking them to business model development, strategic agility, and its role in organizational performance. The primary cited article in this field is by Kurniawan, R (2020), titled "The effect of balanced agile project management on firm performance: The mediating role of market orientation and strategic agility."
- **Vital Organisational Capabilities:** This subfield includes the research orientations of the most cited researchers, focusing on acquisition processes, customer relationship management, and paving the way for strategic agility.
- **Evidence:** This subfield outlines the need for digital transformation and digitization to support strategic agility, which is a key factor in addressing crises.
- **Need:** This subfield involves a literature review on strategic agility, addressing whether there is a need to develop a new tool. The main research orientations in this area are business intelligence and technology and their role in supporting agility.

3.2 Researchers

The most prominent researchers interested in the topic of strategic agility, according to the Scopus database, are shown in the figure 5:



Figure 5: Prominent Researchers

Source: Knowledge Matrix Plus outputs

The figure 5 above shows the most prominent researchers interested in publishing on the topic of strategic agility, including Muthuveloo Rajendran and Khan Zaheer. It is important to highlight the necessity for researchers in this field to pay close attention to the works of these scholars and focus on their significance.

After reviewing the prominent researchers in this area, we will now focus on the most influential or cited researchers in the topic of strategic agility, based on the number of publications and citations, as shown in the figure 6:

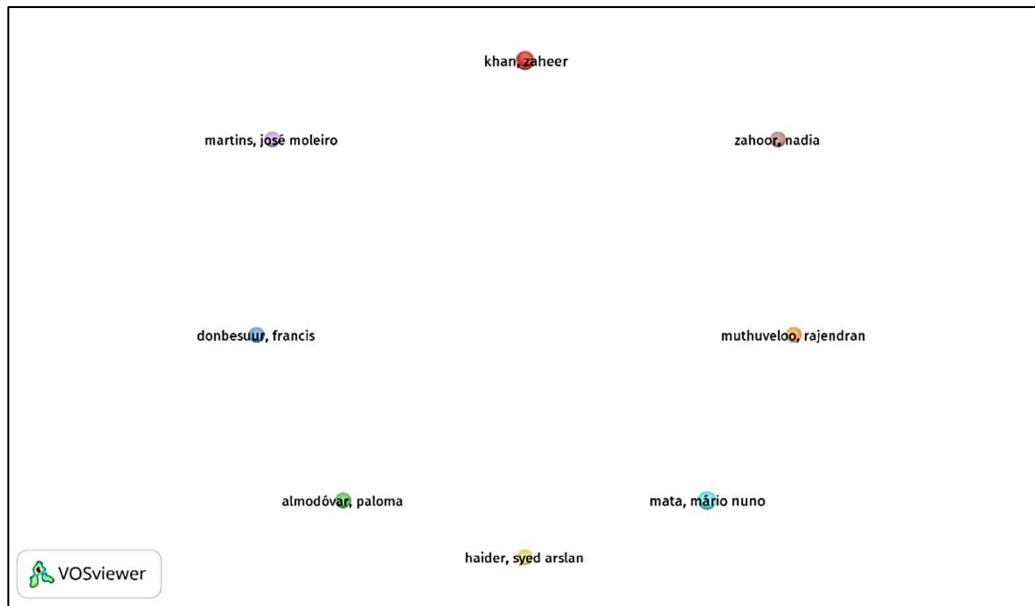


Figure 6: Researcher Network in Strategic Agility

Source: VOSviewer outputs

The figure 6 above shows that the most prominent researcher based on the number of publications is *Khan Zaheer*, with 4 publications. However, based on the number of citations, *Vrontis Demetris* is the most cited researcher, with 251 citations. This information is further detailed in the following table:

Table 4: Most Cited Researchers Based on Number of Publications and Citations

Researchers	Publications	Citations	Total Link Strength
Khan Zaheer	4	108	1
Vrontis Demetris	3	251	1
Almodovar Paloma	3	24	0
Donbesuur Francis	3	39	0
Haider Syed Arslan	3	86	0
Martins José Moleiro	3	32	0
Mata Mario Nuno	4	38	0
Muthuveloo Rajendran	3	29	0
Zahoor Nadia	3	69	0

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on the outputs of VOSviewer

Based on the above, we can conclude that understanding the most prominent researchers in the study of strategic agility, based on their number of publications, reveals the diversity of their research works. Meanwhile, the number of citations reflects the value of their publications, which can be considered as key references for future citations in scientific publications.

3.3 Countries and research institutions

The following figures 7 and 8 show the most cited countries and research institutions in the field of strategic agility, based on the number of publications, according to the Scopus database.

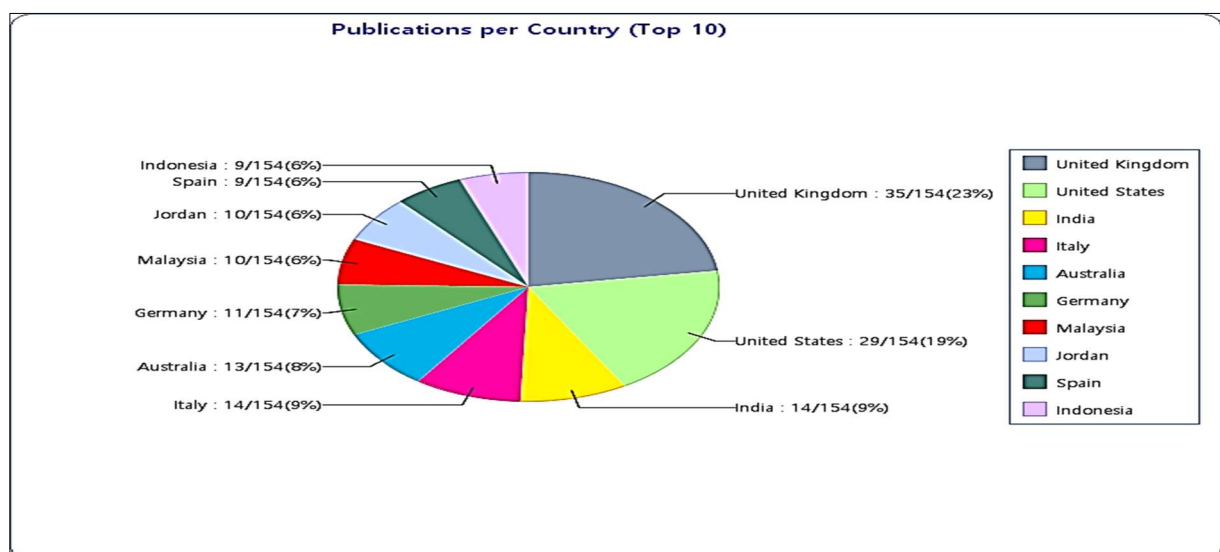
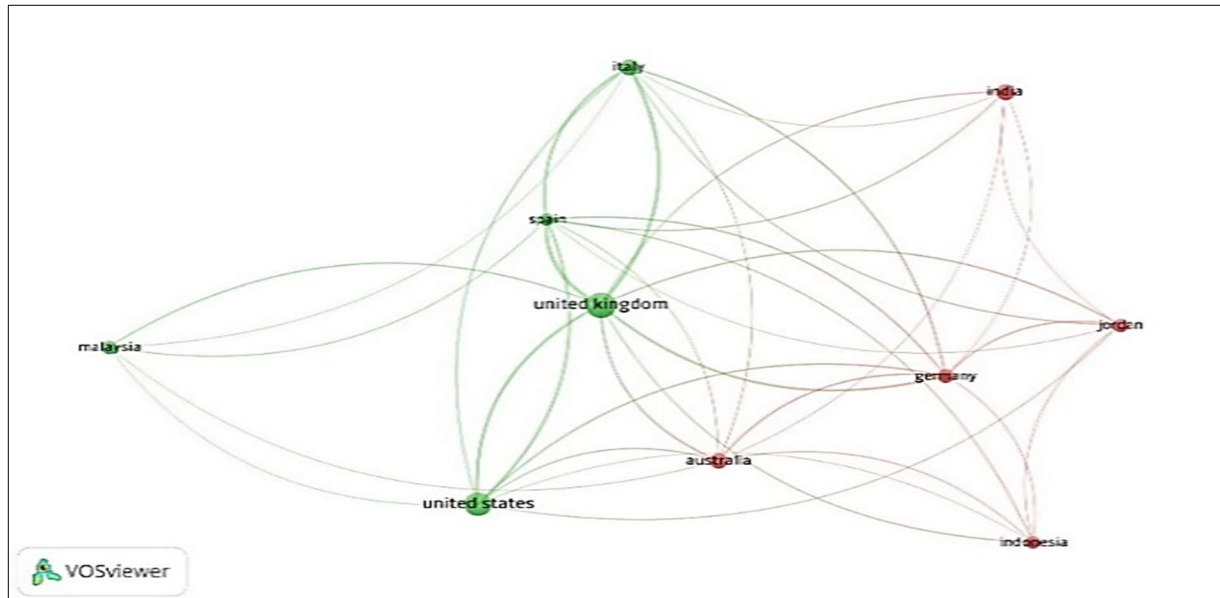


Figure 7: Referencing Countries

Source: Knowledge Matrix Plus and VOSviewer outputs

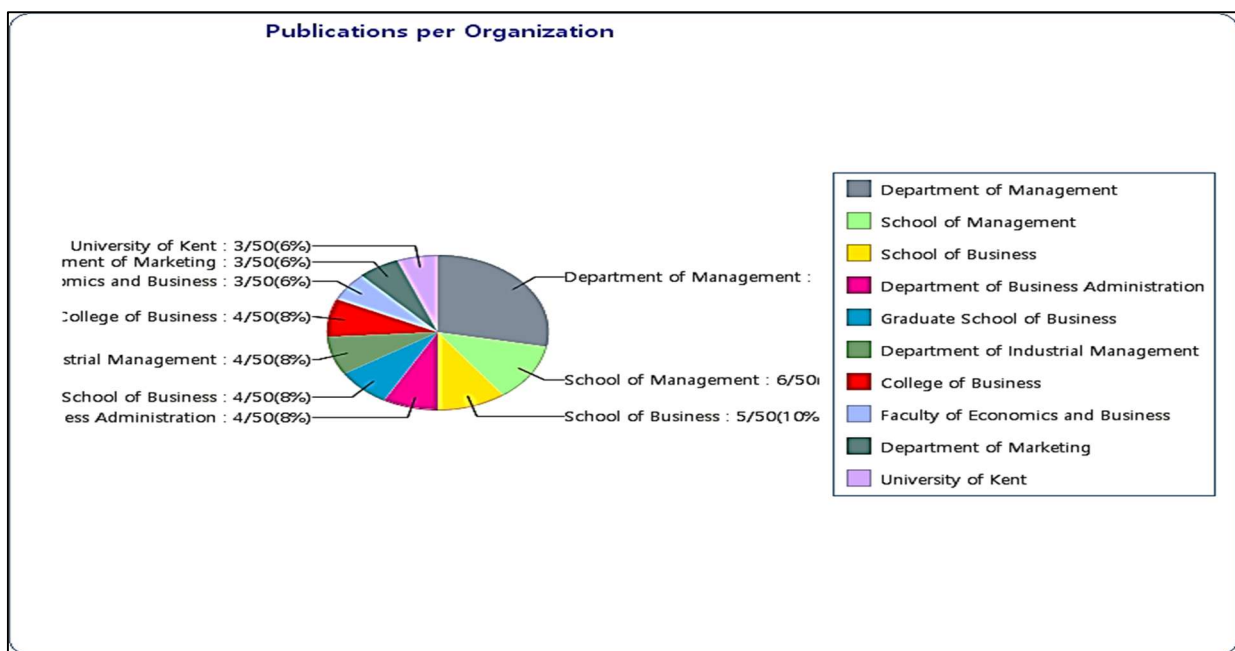
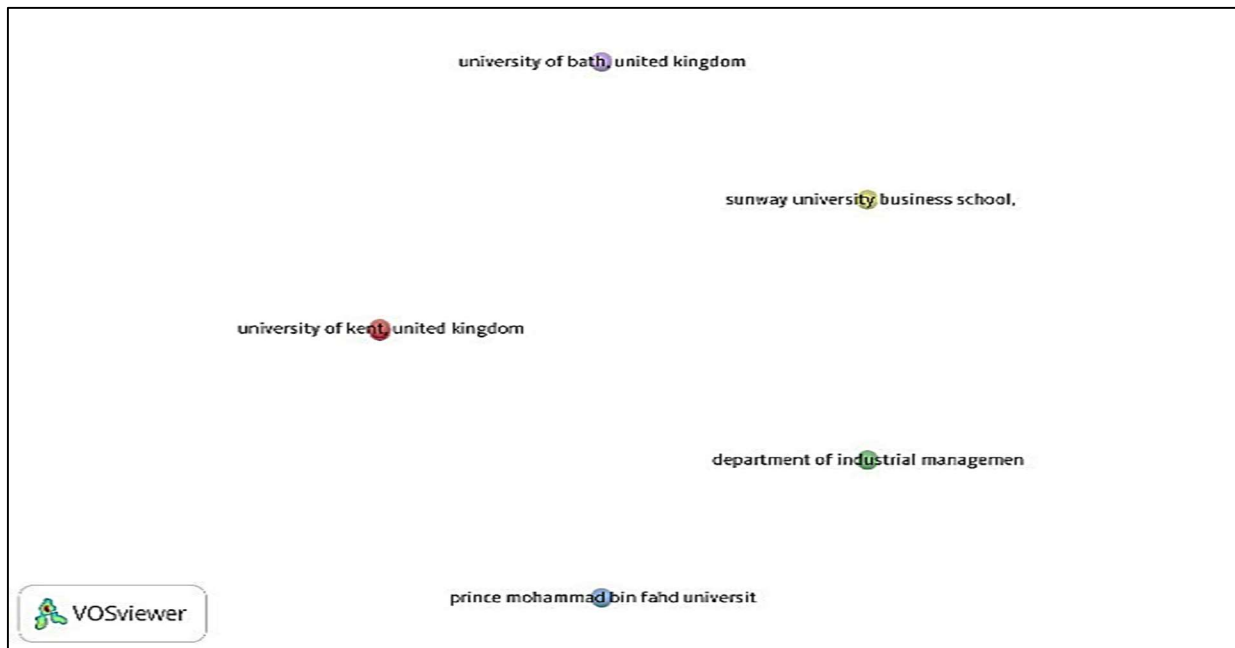


Figure 8: Referencing Research Institutions

Source: Knowledge Matrix Plus and VOSviewer outputs

Figures 7 and 8 show that the most prominent countries in the field of strategic agility, which are among the top 10 in terms of publications on this topic, include; the United Kingdom, the United States, India, Italy, Australia, Germany, Malaysia, Jordan, Spain, and Indonesia.

- **Department of Management** from various universities, including *Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy*.
- **School of Management** from various universities, such as *Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia*.
- **School of Business** from *University of Leicester, United Kingdom*.
- **Department of Business Administration** from various faculties and universities, such as *Faculty of Business, Amman Arab University, Jordan*.
- **Graduate School of Business** from various universities, including *North Dakota State University, United States*.
- **Department of Industrial Management** from *Management and Accounting Faculty, Shahid Beheshti University, Iran*.
- **College of Business** from *University of Nebraska, United States*.
- **Faculty of Economics and Business** from *University of Jember, Indonesia*.
- **Department of Marketing** from various universities, such as *School of Business, The University of Jordan, Jordan, University of Kent, United Kingdom*.

These results indicate that these countries stand out for their scientific production from 2019 to 2024 and are leading contributions in the field of research within the Scopus database. As for the research institutions identified based on the Scopus database, they are considered leaders in publishing on the topic of strategic agility, and they belong to the same countries that are most cited in this subject according to Scopus. Therefore, researchers who wish to pursue further studies in this field can consider these institutions for internships or collaborative research opportunities with the researchers from these institutions if they want to do so.

3.4 Discussion of bibliometric analysis results (research gaps and future direction)

Through the identification of the most commonly used keywords in the research on strategic agility within the Scopus database for the period 2019-2024, which belong to one of the subfields of this topic (Table 3), namely: *Antecedents Consequence* (Innovation and Emerging Markets), *Agile Slack* (Innovation and its Key Role in Organizational Performance), *Supply Chain Agility* (Firm Performance and Supply Chain), *Balanced Agile Project Management* (Dynamic Capabilities), *Vital Organisational Capabilities* (Strategic Agility), *Evidence* (Digital Transformation), and *Need* (Agility), we were able to deduce several potential research gaps that have been overlooked in the published studies within the Scopus database, particularly in the field of business management. These gaps include:

- *Lack of sufficient research on how organizations can build and maintain strategic agility* to benefit from it in enhancing innovation and renewing business models. Furthermore, there is no clear one-way direct effect of strategic agility on these two variables.
- *While there are literature reviews on strategic agility that indicate the role of business intelligence and technology* in achieving and supporting it, there is a need for more (theoretical-applied) research addressing other variables to clarify this. Achieving strategic agility doesn't solely rely on internal environmental variables (such as business intelligence that focuses on gathering and analyzing internal data); there is a need to consider external environmental variables, such as competitive intelligence, which focuses on gathering and analyzing data related to the external environment.
- *Although the importance of strategic agility for organizations in sustaining their operations and improving performance, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, is clear*, there is a need for research that highlights the essential pillars needed for strategic agility to become a key factor in addressing crises. Given that organizations today operate in uncertain environments where risks that threaten their continuity can appear at any moment, they need strategic agility based on strategies to deal with environmental uncertainty. The exploitation and exploration strategies emphasized by Lim, Wei, Sambamurthy, and Lee (2021), which are considered foundational antecedents of strategic agility (Ahammad et al., 2021), are particularly relevant here.

These research gaps have been identified based on the omissions in the publications available in the Scopus database, and these gaps have guided us toward outlining some future directions for research in strategic agility. These directions could be explored and published in one of the journals indexed in Scopus, as mentioned previously. The following are some of these future research directions:

- **The importance of applying strategic agility to enhance innovation:** Although an organization might possess strategic agility, there might be a gap in its application. This means there is a mismatch between the speed at which the organization adapts to change and the emergence of unforeseen challenges, making it difficult to achieve its objectives.
- **The reciprocal effect between strategic agility and business models:** For strategic agility to be effectively practiced, the business model must be flexible, adaptable, and focused on innovation, which aids in responding rapidly to changes. Conversely, organizations must have strategic agility to renew their business models. Strategic agility helps in quickly adjusting the business model in response to environmental changes.

- **The role of artificial intelligence and big data in supporting strategic agility:** Given the significant challenges organizations face amid the rapid developments in information technology (particularly digital technology maturity), organizations must be more agile and flexible in dealing with these changes to ensure their survival and continuity. Here, artificial intelligence and big data have emerged as methods that enhance an organization's ability to adapt, sense changes, predict them, and respond swiftly.
- **The role of competitive intelligence in achieving strategic agility:** Since strategic agility requires other variables such as business intelligence and technology, competitive intelligence is proposed as a crucial variable in achieving strategic agility. However, competitive intelligence has not been addressed in the publications available in the Scopus database.

These gaps and directions highlight areas that require further investigation and offer opportunities for future research to make significant contributions to the literature on strategic agility. By addressing these underexplored areas, researchers can enhance our understanding of how organizations can effectively implement and sustain *strategic agility*, especially in dynamic and uncertain environments. Additionally, exploring the integration of emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, big data, and competitive intelligence into strategic agility frameworks can provide valuable insights for businesses seeking to remain competitive in rapidly changing markets. Such research could also inform practical strategies for organizations aiming to improve their resilience and innovation capabilities in the face of disruption.

4. Conclusion

The topic of strategic agility has attracted significant research interest from many scholars and business management specialists, with numerous studies linking it to various variables. Among these, 98 studies published in indexed journals in the Scopus database (the focus of this study) from 2019 to 2024 were analyzed bibliometrically using the following tools: VOSviewer, KnowledgeMatrix Plus, and CiteSpace. The findings reveal that strategic agility reflects an organization's ability to quickly adapt to changes in its business environment. It consists of three core capabilities: sensing agility, decision-making agility, and action agility. Research on this topic has covered seven subfields: Antecedents Consequence, Agile Slack, Supply Chain Agility, Balanced Agile Project Management, Vital Organisational Capabilities, Evidence, and Need. Among the most notable researchers in this area are Khan Zaheer and Vrontis Demetris, based on the number of publications and citations. The United Kingdom, the United States, India, Italy, Australia, Germany, Malaysia, Jordan, Spain, and Indonesia are

among the leading countries and research institutions that are most cited, published, and referenced in the field of strategic agility within the Scopus database.

Based on the findings limited to the Scopus database, it was concluded that there are several research gaps that could serve as future topics for researchers in this area.

Despite the results of this study, it remains partial and specific to the Scopus database, focusing on publications in English during the period from 2019 to 2024 and relying on bibliometric analysis methods. From this perspective, the results are not comprehensive. Future studies, including research on other databases, would indeed broaden the scope and time frame of the studies, providing a more complete picture and enabling a more accurate identification of research gaps in the subject of the study of interest.

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