

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INNOVATION STRATEGY AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE: A BIBLIOMETRIC AND VISUAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Strategic innovation has become a critical driver of competitive advantage and long-term organizational performance in increasingly dynamic and technology-driven business environments. However, despite the rapid growth of research examining the relationship between strategic innovation and organizational performance, the existing literature remains fragmented across different theoretical perspectives and research contexts. This study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the research landscape on strategic innovation and organizational performance by identifying the intellectual structure, key research themes, and emerging trends in the field. To achieve this objective, the study adopts a bibliometric analysis combined with a systematic literature review approach. Data were collected from the Scopus database, resulting in a dataset of 902 journal articles published between 1990 and 2025. Bibliometric techniques were applied using VOSviewer and Bibliometrix to analyze publication trends, citation structures, co-citation networks, bibliographic coupling, and keyword co-occurrence patterns. The study also follows the PRISMA framework to ensure transparency and reproducibility in the literature selection process. The findings reveal a significant growth in publications on strategic innovation and organizational performance, particularly after 2010. The analysis identifies several dominant theoretical perspectives, including the Resource-Based View, dynamic capability theory, and the knowledge-based view of the firm. Furthermore, the keyword co-occurrence analysis highlights five major research clusters: sustainable innovation and dynamic capabilities, innovation strategies in SMEs and emerging markets, digital transformation and innovation management, organizational resources and innovation performance, and open innovation collaboration. This study contributes to the literature by providing a systematic mapping of strategic innovation research and identifying emerging directions for future studies. The findings also offer practical insights for managers and policymakers by emphasizing the strategic role of innovation capabilities, digital technologies, and collaborative networks in enhancing organizational performance and sustaining competitive advantage.

Keywords: Innovation Strategy, organizational performance, bibliometric analysis, visual study.

1. INTRODUCTION

Strategic innovation has become an increasingly important topic in the fields of strategic management, innovation management, and organizational studies as firms seek to sustain competitive advantage in highly dynamic and uncertain business environments. In an era characterized by rapid technological change, globalization, and digital transformation,

organizations must continuously innovate their strategies, products, services, and business models to remain competitive [1], [2]. Strategic innovation refers to the implementation of novel strategic approaches that fundamentally reshape how organizations create and deliver value. By integrating innovation into corporate strategy, firms can improve adaptability, strengthen market positions, and enhance long-term organizational performance.

A large body of empirical research has demonstrated the positive relationship between innovation-related strategies and firm performance across different industries and national contexts. Innovation-oriented firms are more capable of developing new capabilities, responding to environmental changes, and generating superior economic outcomes [3], [4], [5]. Strategic innovation can influence organizational performance through various mechanisms, including new product development, business model innovation, digital transformation, and collaborative innovation networks. As a result, understanding the strategic role of innovation has become a key research priority for scholars and practitioners.

The theoretical foundations of strategic innovation are supported by several influential perspectives in strategic management. The Resource-Based View (RBV) argues that firms achieve sustainable competitive advantage by effectively utilizing valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources [6]. From this perspective, innovation capabilities represent critical strategic resources that enable firms to outperform competitors. Complementing RBV, the dynamic capabilities perspective emphasizes the ability of firms to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competencies in response to rapidly changing environments [7]. These dynamic capabilities allow organizations to continuously renew their strategic resources through innovation activities. In addition, the open innovation paradigm highlights the importance of knowledge flows and collaborative networks beyond firm boundaries in fostering innovation outcomes [8], [9], [10]. Together, these theoretical perspectives suggest that strategic innovation plays a critical role in shaping organizational competitiveness and performance.

Despite the growing importance of strategic innovation, the literature in this area remains dispersed across multiple research streams, including innovation management, strategic management, entrepreneurship, and organizational studies. In recent years, research on strategic innovation has expanded to cover emerging topics such as digital transformation, sustainability-oriented innovation, and open innovation ecosystems [11], [12], [13]. These developments reflect the evolving nature of innovation strategies in response to technological and environmental changes. However, the rapid growth of the literature has also resulted in fragmentation, making it difficult to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the intellectual structure, key themes, and research trends within this field.

Given the increasing volume of publications on strategic innovation and organizational performance, a systematic synthesis of the existing literature is necessary to identify the major research directions and emerging themes. Bibliometric analysis has become a widely used method for mapping scientific knowledge and examining the development of research fields through quantitative analysis of publications, citations, and collaboration networks [14]. By applying bibliometric techniques, researchers can identify influential studies, dominant journals, key research clusters, and evolving thematic trends within a particular domain.

Therefore, this study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the research landscape on strategic innovation and organizational performance through a bibliometric and systematic review approach. Using the Scopus database, this study analyzes a dataset of academic publications covering the period from 1990 to 2025. Bibliometric tools such as VOSviewer and Bibliometrix are employed to examine publication trends, citation structures, keyword co-occurrence networks, and thematic evolution in the field. Through this analysis, the study seeks to identify the major intellectual foundations and emerging research themes related to strategic innovation and organizational performance.

This study makes several important contributions to the existing literature on strategic innovation and organizational performance. First, unlike prior reviews that primarily rely on either narrative synthesis or standalone bibliometric techniques, this study integrates bibliometric analysis with a systematic literature review (SLR) following the PRISMA framework. This combined approach enhances methodological rigor, transparency, and reproducibility, while providing a more comprehensive and structured synthesis of the research field.

Second, this study offers an updated and longitudinal perspective by analyzing a large-scale dataset of 902 Scopus-indexed journal articles published between 1990 and 2025. By covering an extended time horizon, the study captures the evolutionary trajectory of the field and identifies emerging research fronts, including digital transformation, sustainable innovation, and artificial intelligence-driven strategies, which have not been systematically synthesized in earlier studies.

Third, beyond descriptive mapping, this research advances the literature by uncovering the intellectual structure and thematic evolution of strategic innovation research through co-citation, bibliographic coupling, and keyword co-occurrence analyses. In doing so, the study addresses the fragmentation of prior research by organizing the literature into coherent thematic clusters and highlighting the underlying theoretical foundations, such as the Resource-Based View, dynamic capabilities, and the knowledge-based view.

Finally, this study contributes by identifying critical research gaps and proposing future research directions, particularly regarding the mechanisms through which innovation strategies translate into organizational performance in the context of digital transformation and sustainability. These insights not only enrich academic understanding but also provide practical implications for managers and policymakers seeking to leverage innovation for long-term competitive advantage.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 presents theoretical background, section 3 presents the research methodology and data collection procedures used in the bibliometric analysis. Section 4 reports the main findings of the bibliometric analysis and identifies the major research themes in the literature. Finally, Section 5 concludes the paper and discusses potential directions for future research

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Innovation strategy has become an important concept in strategic management and innovation research as organizations increasingly rely on innovation to sustain competitive advantage and improve organizational performance. Innovation strategy refers to a firm's deliberate approach to developing and implementing new ideas, technologies, products, processes, or business models that create value and strengthen competitive positioning. In rapidly changing business environments characterized by technological disruption, globalization, and digital transformation, firms must continuously innovate their strategic approaches in order to respond effectively to market dynamics and evolving customer demands. Early studies on innovation emphasized technological change and product development as key drivers of economic growth [15]. Over time, the concept of innovation has expanded to include multiple forms such as product innovation, process innovation, organizational innovation, and business model innovation, highlighting the increasingly strategic role of innovation in organizational development.

Organizational performance refers to the extent to which an organization achieves its strategic objectives and creates value for stakeholders. In management research, organizational performance is typically assessed using both financial and non-financial indicators. Financial measures such as profitability, sales growth, return on assets, and market share reflect the

economic outcomes of organizational activities, while non-financial indicators such as innovation capability, operational efficiency, and customer satisfaction capture broader aspects of organizational success and long-term competitiveness. Innovation strategies can influence organizational performance by enabling firms to develop new products and services, improve operational processes, and create differentiated value propositions. Consequently, firms that successfully integrate innovation into their strategic decision-making processes are often better positioned to achieve superior performance outcomes.

The relationship between innovation strategy and organizational performance has been widely explained through several theoretical perspectives in strategic management. One of the most influential frameworks is the Resource-Based View (RBV), which argues that firms achieve sustainable competitive advantage by effectively utilizing valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources [6]. From this perspective, innovation capabilities represent critical strategic resources that enable organizations to develop unique products, technologies, and knowledge that competitors cannot easily replicate. Complementing RBV, the dynamic capabilities perspective emphasizes the ability of firms to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external resources in response to rapidly changing environments [7]. Dynamic capabilities allow organizations to continuously adapt their strategies, renew their resource base, and transform innovative ideas into competitive advantages.

Another important theoretical lens is the knowledge-based view of the firm, which highlights knowledge as the most strategically significant resource for organizations. Innovation processes rely heavily on the creation, integration, and application of knowledge, making knowledge management and organizational learning essential factors for successful innovation strategies. In addition, the open innovation paradigm suggests that firms increasingly rely on external knowledge sources, collaboration networks, and inter-organizational partnerships to enhance their innovation capabilities [8]. Through collaboration with universities, research institutions, suppliers, and customers, firms can access diverse knowledge resources and accelerate innovation outcomes.

Despite the growing body of literature examining innovation strategies and their impact on organizational performance, the research remains fragmented across multiple disciplines such as strategic management, innovation management, entrepreneurship, and organizational studies. In recent years, new research themes have emerged, including digital transformation, sustainable innovation, and innovation ecosystems, reflecting the evolving nature of innovation strategies in modern organizations. The rapid expansion of this literature has created a complex body of knowledge that is difficult to synthesize through traditional narrative reviews. In this context, bibliometric analysis has become a useful methodological approach for systematically mapping scientific knowledge, identifying influential publications, and exploring emerging research trends within a particular field. By applying bibliometric techniques to the study of innovation strategy and organizational performance, researchers can better understand the intellectual structure of the field and identify promising directions for future research

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Method

To address the objective of providing an overview of the research field on strategic innovation and firm performance, this study employs a bibliometric analysis combined with a systematic literature review. Bibliometric analysis is widely recognized as an effective and reliable approach for analyzing large volumes of scientific publications and identifying patterns in academic research [16]. This method enables researchers to systematically map accumulated knowledge within a specific field, while also clarifying the relationships among

publications, authors, journals, and citation networks. Through bibliometric techniques, scholars can gain insights into the development of research topics, influential studies, and emerging academic trends.

Bibliometric analysis has been increasingly used in business, management, and accounting research to examine the evolution of research domains and to synthesize fragmented knowledge [17], [16]. In the context of innovation and management research, bibliometric reviews have become an important tool for identifying intellectual structures, thematic clusters, and future research directions. Therefore, this method is appropriate for analyzing the rapidly expanding literature on strategic innovation and its relationship with firm performance and management accounting systems.

In addition to bibliometric analysis, this study adopts a systematic literature review (SLR) approach to ensure a rigorous and transparent research process. The SLR method follows a structured procedure that allows researchers to identify, screen, and synthesize relevant studies in a systematic and reproducible manner [18]. This approach helps build a comprehensive map of existing knowledge and identify research gaps that can guide future studies. The review process in this study follows established guidelines for systematic reviews in management research to ensure transparency, consistency, and replicability [16], [18].

The bibliometric analysis was conducted using publications indexed in the Scopus database, which is widely recognized as one of the most comprehensive and high-quality sources for bibliometric research [17]. After applying the search strategy and screening process, the final dataset consisted of 902 journal articles related to strategic innovation. The data were exported in Excel format for further analysis and processing.

To analyze and visualize the bibliometric data, this study utilized two specialized software tools: VOSviewer and Biblioshiny. VOSviewer is a powerful visualization tool that uses distance-based mapping techniques to represent relationships among publications, authors, and keywords through network maps and clusters. Biblioshiny, the web interface of the Bibliometrix package in R, allows researchers to perform bibliometric analyses and visualize bibliographic data from databases such as Scopus through an interactive graphical interface. These tools facilitate the analysis of citation networks, keyword co-occurrences, and thematic development in the research field.

Overall, the combination of bibliometric analysis and systematic literature review provides a robust methodological approach for mapping the intellectual structure of strategic innovation research and identifying key themes and emerging trends in the literature.

3.2. Data collection and search strategies

This study used the Scopus database to collect publications because it is one of the most comprehensive academic databases, particularly strong in the fields of business, management, and economics. The search strategy focused on titles, abstracts, and keywords related to strategic innovation and firm performance. The search syntax in Scopus was defined as follows:

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TITLE-ABS-KEY ( ("innovat* strateg*") AND ("firm performance" OR "organizational performance" OR "business performance") ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "BUSI" ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( DOCTYPE , "ar" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( LANGUAGE , "English" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( OA , "all" ) ) ).
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After applying the search criteria, irrelevant documents were removed through title and abstract screening. The final dataset consisted of 902 journal articles published between 1990 and 2025. The data were then exported in CSV and RIS formats for further bibliometric analysis using VOSviewer and Biblioshiny.

The search scheme is shown in Figure 1.

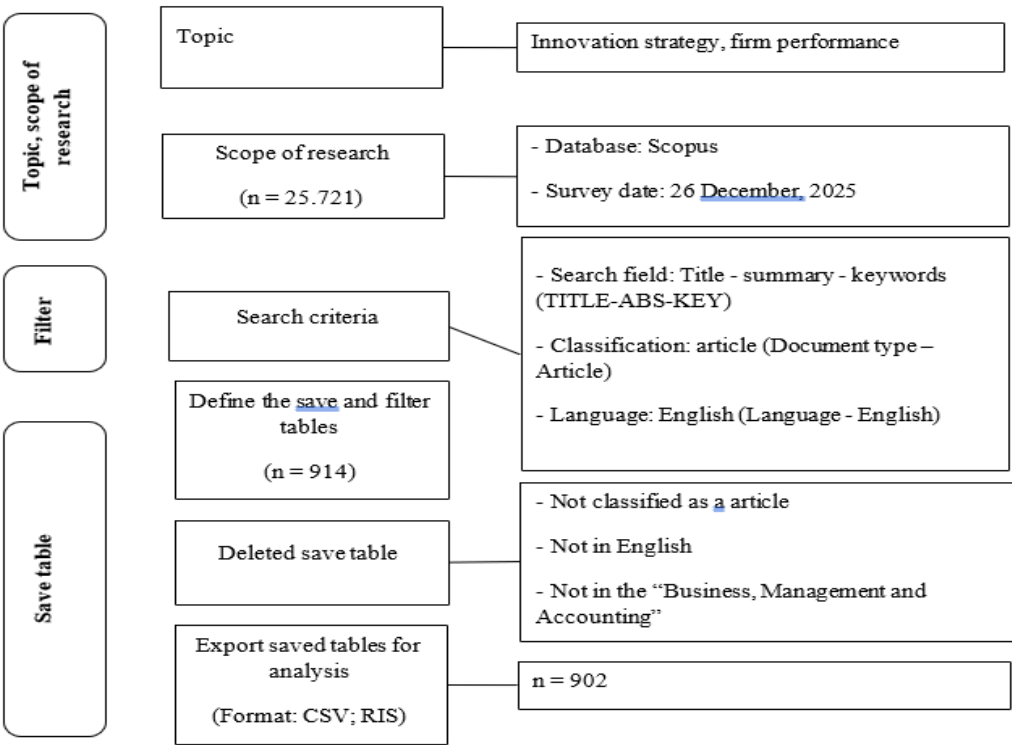


Figure 1. Search diagram

Figure 1 illustrates the systematic process of data collection and selection for the bibliometric analysis. The process began with defining the research topic as strategic innovation and firm performance, followed by searching the Scopus database. The results were filtered based on language, document type, and subject area. After removing irrelevant records, the final dataset of 902 articles was retained for analysis.

3.3. Analytical tools and techniques

VOSviewer and Bibliometrix software were used to conduct the bibliometric analysis. Based on the data collected from the Scopus database, this study analyzes and visualizes the overall research landscape related to strategic innovation and firm performance. These tools allow researchers to map and explore relationships among publications, authors, keywords, and countries within the research field. The bibliometric techniques applied in this study include descriptive statistics, social structure analysis, conceptual structure analysis, and intellectual structure analysis.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Key information about bibliometric data

Based on the search scheme presented in Figure 1, the final dataset consists of 902 journal articles published in the Scopus database during the period from 1990 to 2026. The results indicate a clear upward trend in the number of publications over time, reflecting the growing academic interest in strategic innovation and firm performance. The steady increase in publications suggests that this research field has developed rapidly, particularly during the last decade (Figure 2).

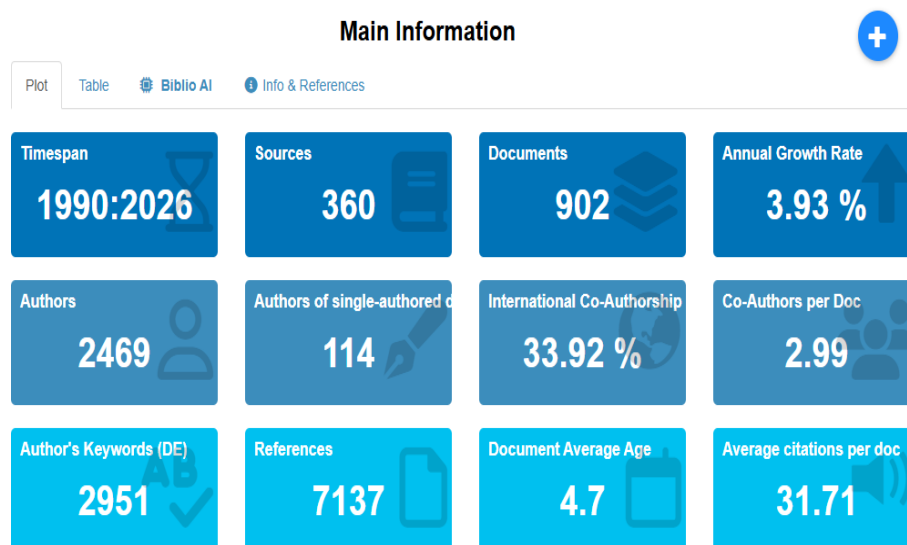


Figure 2. Main information.

The articles were published across a wide range of academic journals, indicating the interdisciplinary nature of the research field. A large proportion of the studies appeared in journals related to innovation management, strategic management, and business research, demonstrating the strong connection between innovation strategies and organizational performance.

Table 1. Most relevant journals

Journal Source	Number of Publications	Number of Citations
Research Policy	23	2213
Journal of Innovation and Knowledge	22	739
Administrative Sciences	22	208
Technological Forecasting and Social Change	21	1019
Business Strategy and the Environment	20	746
Journal of Product Innovation Management	15	1073
Journal of Technology Management and Innovation	15	249
Journal of Cleaner Production	14	785
Journal of Business Research	13	1211
Cogent Business and Management	13	144
Technology Analysis and Strategic Management	13	298
Sustainable Futures	12	85
Problems and Perspectives in Management	12	62
Journal of Innovation Management	12	110
R and D Management	10	204
Technovation	10	227
Foresight and STI Governance	10	184
International Journal of Innovation Management	10	166

The dataset also reveals a high level of collaboration among researchers. A total of more than 2,000 authors contributed to the 902 articles, while only a small number of publications were single-authored. On average, each article involved approximately three authors, indicating a collaborative research environment. In addition, a considerable proportion of the publications involved international collaboration, suggesting that research on strategic innovation is increasingly globalized and involves scholars from multiple countries (Figure 3).

4.2. Network analysis

A total of 97 countries have contributed to the research on innovation strategy and organizational performance, among which 49 countries have produced at least five publications. This global distribution highlights the widespread academic interest in understanding how innovation strategies influence organizational outcomes across different economic and institutional contexts. The analysis of international collaboration also reveals that research in this field is strongly driven by several leading countries, particularly those with well-developed research infrastructures and strong traditions in innovation and strategic management studies.

Table 2. International co-authorship statistics by country

Country	Number of publications	Number of citations	Total link strength
United Kingdom	142	7622	157
United States	97	6136	116
Italy	79	3384	86
France	60	3168	83
China	90	2766	90
Denmark	30	2437	47
Spain	91	2430	53
Netherlands	56	2363	59
Australia	40	1971	56
Germany	43	1809	42

Table 2 presents the international co-authorship statistics by country. The United Kingdom leads the field with 142 publications and the highest citation impact (7,622 citations), indicating its strong scholarly influence. The United States follows with 97 publications and 6,136 citations, reflecting its central role in shaping the theoretical foundations of innovation and strategic management research. Several European countries, including Italy, France, the Netherlands, Germany, and Spain, also demonstrate significant contributions to the literature. In addition, China has emerged as an important contributor in recent years, reflecting the growing global interest in innovation-driven development. The collaboration network among these countries suggests an increasingly interconnected research community that supports the development and diffusion of knowledge on innovation strategy and organizational performance.

The keyword co-occurrence analysis further provides important insights into the intellectual structure of the field. The results indicate that innovation strategy is frequently examined as a key determinant of organizational performance in the literature. Many studies emphasize how strategic innovation activities—such as new product development, digital transformation, and business model innovation—can enhance firm competitiveness and long-term performance. However, the bibliometric mapping also reveals that research in this area remains fragmented across multiple themes and theoretical perspectives.

In particular, while a large number of studies confirm the positive association between innovation strategies and organizational performance, fewer studies systematically explore the mechanisms through which innovation strategies translate into measurable organizational outcomes. The visual analysis of keyword clusters suggests that the literature has increasingly expanded toward emerging themes such as sustainable innovation, digital transformation, and open innovation ecosystems. These developments indicate that the relationship between innovation strategy and organizational performance is multidimensional and continues to evolve as organizations adapt to technological and environmental changes.

Overall, the bibliometric findings highlight both the growing importance and the increasing complexity of research on the relationship between innovation strategy and organizational performance. By mapping the global research landscape and identifying key thematic clusters, this study provides a clearer understanding of how the field has developed and points to promising directions for future research.

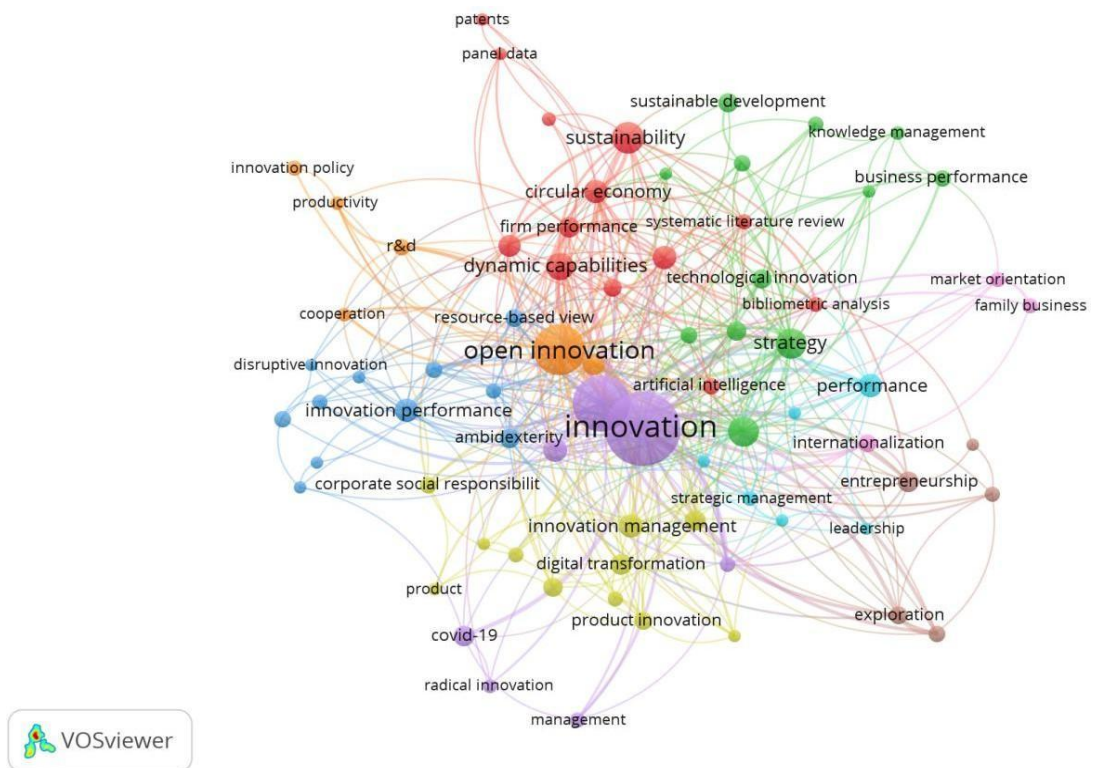


Figure 3. Keyword Co-occurrence Map. Source: VOSviewer.

4.3. Analyzing topic trends

The authors conducted a thematic evolution analysis to examine how research themes related to the relationship between innovation strategy and organizational performance have emerged, evolved, and expanded over time. Thematic evolution analysis allows researchers to trace the development of knowledge within a research field by identifying how key concepts are introduced, transformed, and interconnected across different time periods. Through this approach, it is possible to reveal the progression of research topics and the shifting focus of scholars in understanding how innovation strategies influence organizational outcomes. The results illustrated in Figure 4 present the thematic evolution of research on innovation strategy and organizational performance from 1990 to recent years, reflecting both the maturation of foundational concepts and the emergence of new research directions.

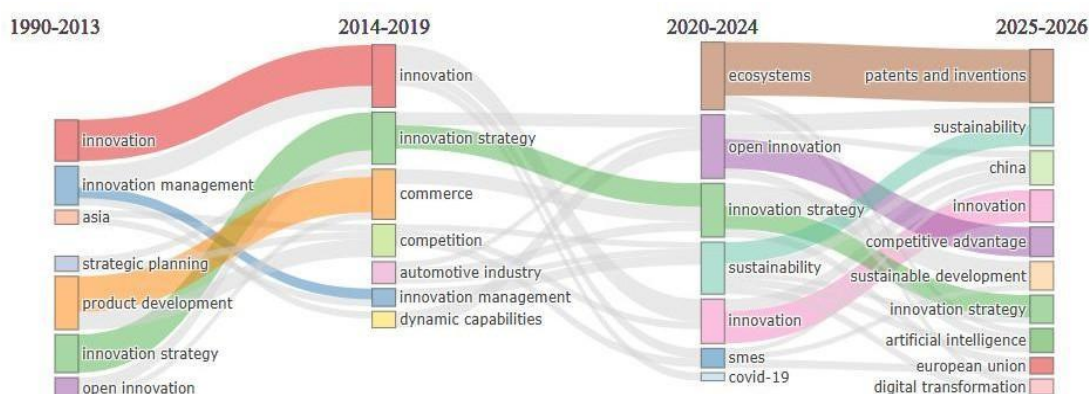


Figure 4. Results of thematic evolution analysis. Source: Bibliometrix software

During the period from 1990 to 2013, research primarily concentrated on foundational concepts such as innovation, innovation management, strategic planning, and product development. This stage represents the early development of the field, where scholars mainly examined the basic role of innovation activities in enhancing firm competitiveness and improving organizational outcomes. Studies during this period laid the theoretical foundations for understanding how innovation strategies could contribute to firm performance.

In the period from 2014 to 2019, research began to shift toward themes such as strategic innovation, dynamic capabilities, and competitiveness. This transition reflects a growing recognition that innovation must be embedded within broader strategic frameworks in order to generate sustainable performance advantages. Scholars increasingly emphasized the role of organizational capabilities in implementing innovation strategies and translating them into improved organizational performance.

From 2020 to 2024, research themes expanded significantly to include sustainable innovation, open innovation, and innovation ecosystems. These developments indicate a broader perspective on how innovation strategies interact with external environments, collaborative networks, and sustainability challenges to influence organizational performance. The emergence of crisis-related topics such as COVID-19 also highlights the importance of innovation strategies in helping organizations adapt to disruptive conditions.

In the most recent period (2025–2026), emerging themes such as artificial intelligence, digital transformation, intellectual property, and competitive advantage appear alongside innovation strategy. This evolution suggests an increasing convergence between technological innovation and strategic management research, emphasizing the role of digital technologies and advanced knowledge resources in shaping organizational performance.

Overall, innovation strategy can be identified as a central theme linking different stages of research development on organizational performance. At the same time, the thematic evolution analysis indicates that research in this field continues to expand toward new technological and sustainability-oriented contexts. By mapping these evolving themes, the study provides a clearer understanding of how the relationship between innovation strategy and organizational performance has developed over time and highlights promising directions for future research.

Beyond the descriptive bibliometric results, the identified patterns provide several important implications for the development of the field. The dominance of theoretical perspectives such as the Resource-Based View and dynamic capabilities suggests that research on strategic innovation has been largely grounded in internal capability-driven explanations of

performance. However, the increasing prominence of themes such as digital transformation, sustainable innovation, and open innovation ecosystems indicates a gradual shift toward more integrative and context-oriented approaches, where external knowledge, technological change, and sustainability pressures play a more central role. This evolution reflects a transition from viewing innovation strategy as a firm-level capability to understanding it as a multidimensional and ecosystem-embedded process. At the same time, the fragmentation across thematic clusters implies that the field still lacks a unified framework to explain how different dimensions of innovation strategy jointly influence organizational performance. Therefore, future research should move toward developing integrative models that connect internal capabilities, digital technologies, and external collaboration mechanisms in explaining performance outcomes.

5. CONCLUSION

This study provides a systematic bibliometric review of the literature on strategic innovation with a particular focus on its relationship with organizational performance. The findings indicate that strategic innovation has become an increasingly important topic in management and innovation research, forming a solid foundation for understanding how organizations develop competitive advantage in dynamic environments. At the same time, emerging themes such as digital transformation, sustainable innovation, and open innovation ecosystems have attracted growing attention from researchers, reflecting the evolving nature of innovation strategies in contemporary organizations.

From an academic perspective, this study contributes to the theoretical foundations of research on strategic innovation and organizational performance. The results support the RBV in explaining how innovation capabilities function as valuable organizational resources that enhance competitive advantage and performance outcomes. The findings are also consistent with the Dynamic Capabilities perspective, which emphasizes the ability of firms to continuously adapt and reconfigure resources in response to environmental changes. In addition, the results align with the Open Innovation paradigm, highlighting the increasing importance of knowledge sharing, collaboration networks, and external partnerships in generating innovation-driven performance improvements.

From a practical perspective, the results suggest that organizations should incorporate strategic innovation into their long-term strategic planning in order to enhance organizational performance and sustainability. Firms that actively develop innovation-oriented strategies, invest in new technologies, and foster collaborative innovation networks are more likely to achieve superior performance and maintain competitive advantage. In particular, organizations operating in emerging economies and technology-intensive industries can benefit significantly from strategic innovation initiatives that support digital transformation and knowledge integration.

This study has several limitations. First, the dataset was limited to publications indexed in the Scopus database, which may exclude relevant studies from other academic databases. Second, the analysis mainly focuses on bibliometric techniques and does not include empirical testing using quantitative or qualitative research methods. Future research should therefore expand the scope of analysis by incorporating additional databases such as Web of Science or Dimensions. Researchers may also apply advanced bibliometric techniques and altmetric indicators to examine the broader impact of strategic innovation research. Finally, future empirical studies are encouraged to investigate the mechanisms through which strategic innovation influences organizational performance, particularly in the context of digital transformation and sustainable business development.

Rather than treating the Resource-Based View (RBV), dynamic capabilities, and open innovation as separate theoretical lenses, the findings of this study suggest that these

perspectives can be more meaningfully understood as complementary components within an integrated framework. Specifically, RBV explains how valuable and rare innovation-related resources form the foundation of competitive advantage, while dynamic capabilities extend this view by emphasizing the firm's ability to reconfigure and renew these resources in rapidly changing environments. At the same time, the open innovation perspective highlights the increasing importance of external knowledge flows and inter-organizational collaboration in enhancing innovation outcomes. Taken together, these theories collectively suggest that organizational performance is not only driven by internal resource endowments, but also by the firm's capability to adapt, integrate, and leverage both internal and external knowledge in a dynamic and interconnected innovation ecosystem. This integrated perspective provides a more comprehensive theoretical explanation for the complex relationship between innovation strategy and organizational performance.

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