

A Bibliometric Analysis of Articles on Corporate Social Responsibility Topic

Kurumsal Sosyal Sorumluluk Konusu Üzerine Yapılan Çalışmaların Bibliyometrik Analizi

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Özet

Kurumsal sosyal sorumluluk konusu hem akademi hem de iş dünyası için hemen her zaman gündemde olan ve yaşanan ekonomik krizler, salgın ve afet gibi dönemlerinde özellikle gündeme gelen ve üzerinde farklı disiplinlerden araştırmacıların yoğun olarak çalıştığı bir konudur, öyle ki konuyla ilgili yazılan 40 binden fazla makalenin 16344'ü işletme, 13951'i yönetim, 6719'u çevre alanında, 5886 tanesi yönetim finansmanı alanında ve 5184 tanesi ise yeşil sürdürülebilir bilim teknolojileri alanında yapılan çalışmalarından oluşmaktadır. Bu çalışmada, alan yazında az veya çok çalışılan kısımlar, çalışma eğilimleri diğer araştırmacıların da faydasına sunulmuş ve kurumsal sosyal sorumluluk kavramı bibliyometrik olarak incelenmiştir. İsmi geçen kavramla ilgili yayınlar Vosviewer isimli yazılım kullanılarak nicel olarak taranmış ve detaylı bir çerçeve oluşturulmuştur. Analizde veri tabanı olarak Web of Science kullanılmış ve bu veri tabanında yer alan 1990-2023 yılları arasında yayınlanan yayınlar değerlendirilmiştir. Sonuçlar göstermiştir ki kurumsal sosyal sorumluluk projelerine gösterilen ilgi her geçen yıl artmış ve 2022 yılında 3720 yayın ile zirveye çıkmıştır. Alana en büyük katkıyı 6906 yayın ile ABD yaparken ardından 6209 yayın ile Çin gelmektedir. Sonuç olarak konunun dünyanın pek çok bölgesinde farklı farklı yazarlar tarafından dikkate alındığını ve önemini yitirmeyeceğini belirtebiliriz. Yapılan bibliyometrik çalışma konuyla ilgili son yıllarda yapılan en kapsamlı bibliyometrik çalışmalardan biridir ve kurumsal sosyal sorumluluk alanında literatür detaylı olarak taranmış ve konuya ilgi duyan akademisyen ve uygulayıcıların ilgisine sunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kurumsal Sosyal Sorumluluk, Etik, Sürdürülebilirlik

Abstract

The concept of corporate social responsibility is a subject that is almost always on the agenda of academia and business world, although it is popular and demanded every time it is especially expected during the economic crisis, pandemics and disaster times. It is possible to say that corporate social responsibility is an interdisciplinary area which researchers study on intensively, such as there are more than 40.000 articles written and published about CSR; 16344 of them are from business, 13951 management, 6719 from environmental sciences, 5886 from business finance and 5184 from green sustainable science technology. In this research, the aim is analyzing the literature in depth and revealing the quantitative statistics and underlining the gaps in the literature for the benefit of other researchers who are interested in this field. The publications on CSR between 1990 and 2025 years have been analyzed quantitatively by using Vosviewer software and a general framework is pointed out in this article. Web of Science is chosen as the database for the

analysis and the results have shown that the interest on corporate social responsibility has increased year by year since 1990 and in 2022 it has peaked with 3720 publications in Web of Science database. Analysis showed that the first contributor to this field is USA with 6906 articles followed by China with 6209 articles. As a result, CSR is in focus of researchers from different parts of the world, and the importance of this issue seems to continue. This research focuses on CSR and it is one of the most detailed bibliographic research of the last years and enables both academicians and practitioners to see the detailed analysis of literature on corporate social responsibility and see the area in depth.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility, Ethics, Sustainability

INTRODUCTION

Bibliometric analysis is a very useful way for conducting a research and also one of the most useful methods for researchers in many ways. Bibliometric analysis enables us to see the quantitative data on the subject of interest elaborately, such that how many researchers have studied on this topic or field, the proportions of indexes for example how many of them are published in the journals which are indexed in high quality journals such as SSCI, or in TR Index. Also this bibliometric analysis allows the researchers to show the regional statistics, provides country statistics, and a researcher who makes a bibliometric analysis or study the results of a colleague's work can gather the answers of the following questions easily; which countries are the most productive countries in this field, who are the mostly studying academicians and receiving the most of the citations, and what are the gaps in the field, how many documents have been published in different years, the interest through the topic whether increasing or decreasing, etc. Among many social sciences subjects, bibliometric analysis on SCR issue is not at the desired level, so this article aims to contribute to the area by answering the questions given above.

Also we have the opportunity to see the distribution of the authors according to their fields, such as management, business, environmental studies, history, etc. So, by providing this much quantitative information about a topic or a field; this kind of research provides the possibility to researchers to see the current situation and history of the subject which he or she wants to focus on. Additionally, there are some software commonly used in the academia for processing and visualization of the data, for example Vos Viewer is one of them, the data collected from Web of Science is analyzed by VosViewer and also the results are visualized by using the same software.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The issue of corporate social responsibility has an important place in the literature, the importance and popularity of this concept for business world, governments and academia has increased incrementally during the historical period (Zadek, 2006; Lindgreen, Swaen 2010). And it is possible to say that, this concept is very famous and approved in a wide segment of the society including both employers and employees, lawmakers, investors (Kılıç, Kuzey, Uyar 2015). Despite the fame of the concept, it is not easy to give a direct definition of corporate social responsibility

which is accepted by the academia directly (Rupp, Mallory 2015). As Rao underlines in his article, CSR term is sometimes used as the synonym with corporate conscience and citizenship but they do not overlap totally and they are not defining the same concepts (Rao, 2013).

It is not wrong to say that CSR has appeared in the literature as a result of the notion which supports; business or companies should not only earn money, they have obligations and responsibilities on society, and the benefits of them intersect at a point, and companies should make decisions and act voluntarily for the good of the society. As Moir mentions, companies give more importance to their social obligations towards the society and examining this to outside of the company (Moir, 2001).

Many examples can be given at this point, for example supporting the education in various parts of the country or all over the world which has low level of income, recycling plastic waste, designing 100% green offices for contributing to save the environment, preparing projects for disabled persons, etc. and it is possible to extend the list of examples. Making any of these projects or at least showing efforts for it leads to increase in organizational commitment, customer trust and also increase in the sales and revenue of the companies, and CSR acts as a bridge between society and companies (Asemah, Okpanachi, Edegoh 2013).

Kılıç et al makes a good summary and definition at this point, companies should concern about both financial issues and also about the society, act being aware of this and with this responsibility, not only investors but also people other than shareholders, investors and partners expect some good actions for their behalf (Kılıç et al, 2015).

During the literature review it is seen that Bowen has been the first person who used corporate social responsibility term in 1953, in his book *Social Responsibilities of the Businessman*, and also this book is accepted as the first book for discussing the ethics for the business (Bowen, 1953). After the Bowen's contribution, many researchers from all over the world have started to focus more on this subject. Such that when we analyze the data gathered from Web Of Science, it seen that there are 41090 articles written and published between 1990 and 2025 years. Archie Carroll who is a professor in Georgia College, is one of the most famous researchers who studied CSR, in 1979 he proposed a four step model for demonstrating the corporate social responsibility, and in 1991 he evolved it to a pyramid which is very well known and called as *Carroll's CSR Pyramid* which is given in the figure 1 (Carroll, 1991).

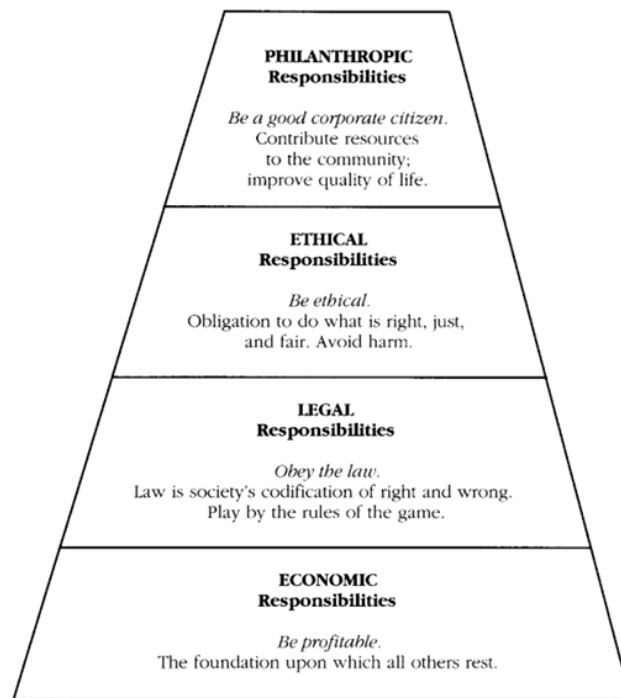


Figure 1. Carroll's CSR Pyramid (1991).

Among many depictions and figures, this pyramid has saved its place in the last 34 years. He basically supports the idea of, first of all an enterprise should earn money and gain profit to survive and by the way there are laws and regulations which everybody should obey, and then in the third step ethical issues come and lastly in the fourth step we see philanthropic obligations which are being beneficial for the society, supporting the community, etc. The logic is very similar to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, which claims basic needs in the first step including food etc., and self-actualization in the highest step of the pyramid which contains revealing the full capacity of a person and being beneficial to society.

Some opposing views have also been put forward like Friedman's ideas, which claims that a company should earn money and obey the laws and that is all, nothing more is required from professional companies, but today it is not a widely accepted notion and CSR is seen as a part of the companies and governments are also fostering it by making regulations and laws (Friedman, 1970).

Main argument of the corporate social responsibility is some kind of balancing the relations with the society and financial side equally, and as Carroll calls it as philanthropy, in today's world it is accepted as a strategy for many companies all over the world to support the reputation and building a better company image in the eyes of the society (Onyekwelu, Ezeafulukwe, Owolabi, Asuzu, Bello, 2024).

METHODOLOGY

In this section of the research, the purpose of the study, conducted analysis and results are going to be given.

Firstly, the aim of this study is to give a detailed and comprehensive framework on corporate social responsibility. For this purpose, there are some software which make researchers' job easier, for example; VosViewer, Bibliometrix and Biblioshiny. I chose to conduct my research by using VosViewer, there are a few reasons for choosing it, first of all it can gather data from databases easily and enables researcher to analyze it and visualize these data clearly and make it useful for the researchers.

The data is gathered from Web of Science which is a highly reliable and prestigious and large database, so it is chosen for the study. Also, this database enables us to make detailed research and filter the data according to our interests of the research. According to the search which was done in September 10, 2025 with the keyword "corporate social responsibility", 47990 articles were found, 41090 of them are articles, 3922 of them are proceeding papers, 2463 are book chapters, 1863 review articles and lastly 1804 are early access articles.

Majority of these articles are classified under business and management areas. 16344 articles are studied in business field and 13951 articles are from management field. Environmental studies area includes 6719 articles, 5886 business finance articles, 5184 green sustainable science technology. Then economics field follows them with 5054 articles, 5011 environmental sciences, 3260 ethics studies and hospitality and social sciences interdisciplinary research areas include 1593 and 1205 articles respectively.

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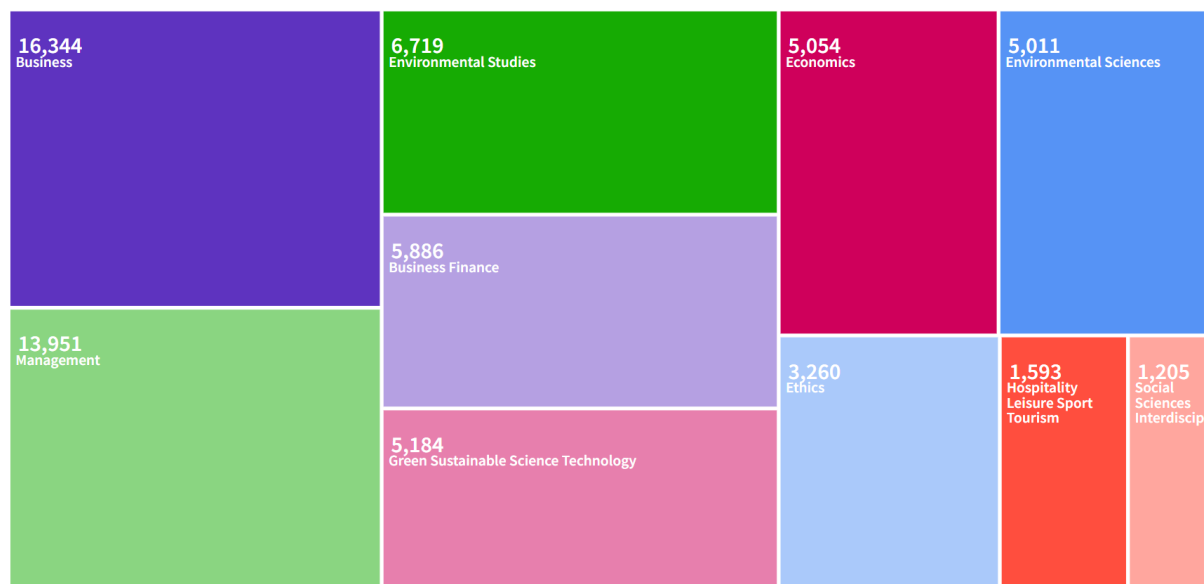


Figure 2. Distribution of articles according to the fields.

Co-authorship of Authors

First of all, to see the co-authorship situation in the database, the search results which filtered to the authors which has written at least two articles and received at least one citation to these articles show that from 12325 authors 1701 of them met the requirements. Results show that 276 authors have strong connections and 24 clusters occurred with 446 links. Ali Uyar, Abdullah Karaman and Cemil Kuzey are top 3 authors according to the total link strength criteria. On the other hand, when we rank the authors according to the citations, top 3 is different; Luc Renneboog is the leader of the list with 2594 citations, then Edward Freeman follows him with 2361 citations and Jeffrey Harrison is at the 3rd place with 2172 citations.

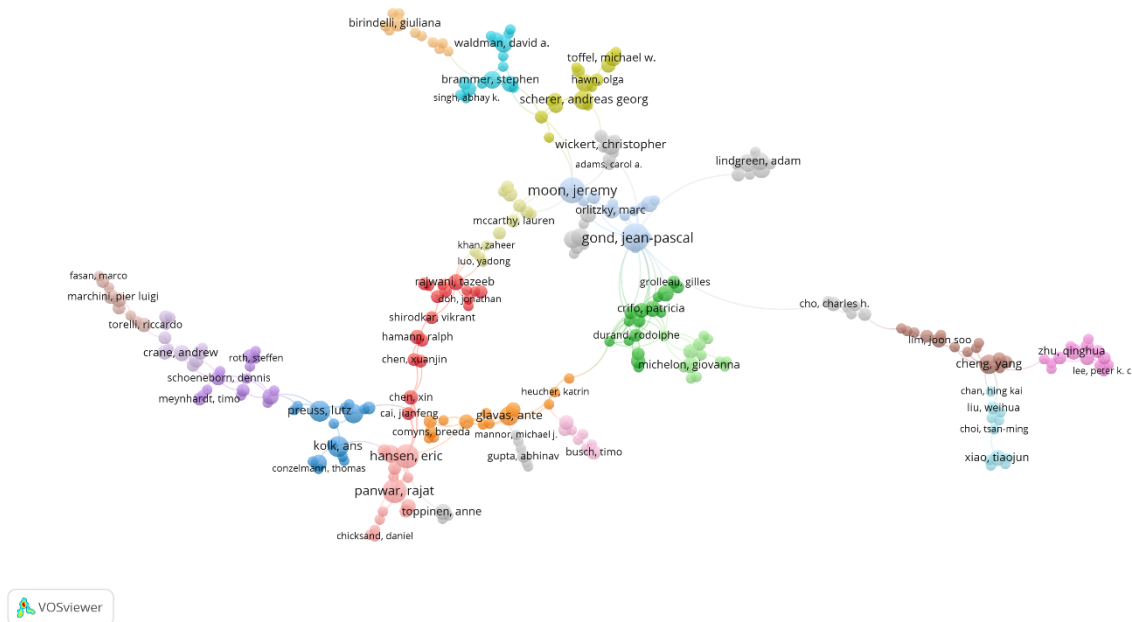


Figure 3. Co-authorship of Authors

Citation of authors

Again when we set the threshold to the results for authors with at least 2 documents and 1 citation, we get 29 clusters, 1602 items and 16433 links. The most cited authors are Luc Renneboog (2594), Freeman (2361) and Harrison (2172). But top 3 of the list changes according to the total link strength, Hansen, Godfrey and Uyar take the top 3 ranks.

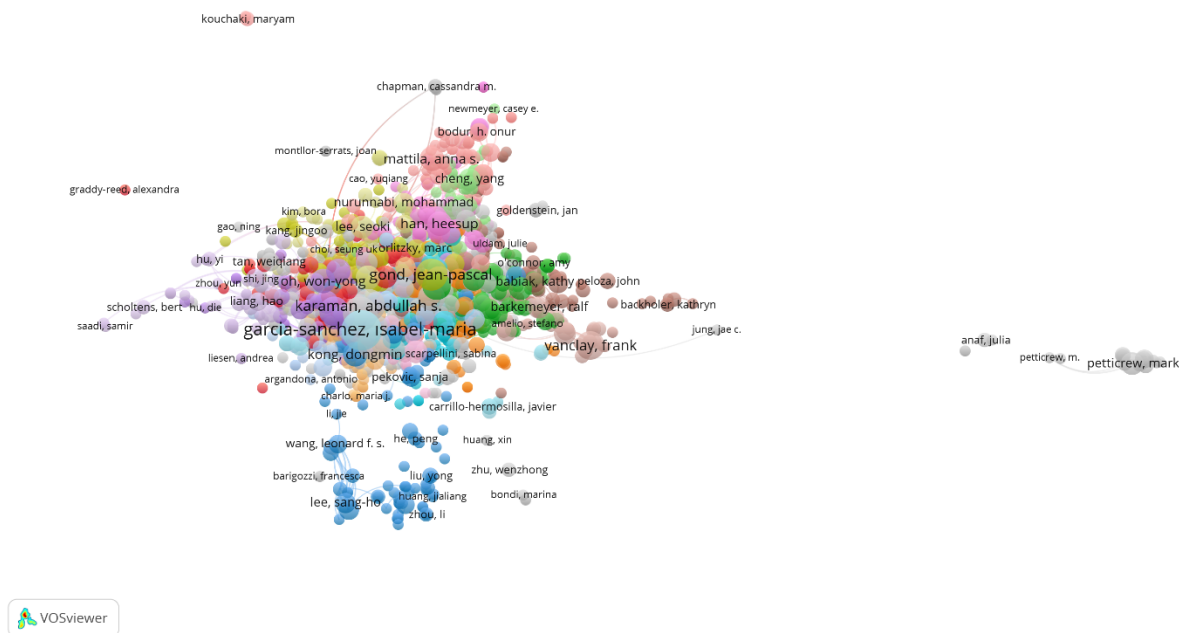


Figure 4. Citation of authors

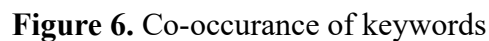
Citation of Sources

It is seen that Journal of Business Ethics is the leader in corporate social responsibilities studies because, journal has 44782 citations and the nearest follower is Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management Journal with 13052 citations, as it is clearly seen there is a big difference, and Strategic Management Journal is at the third place with 9394 citations, when the ranking criteria is chosen is total link strength, only 3 third place is changing with Sustainability Journal which has 6373 citations. And the research filter is like following, source with at least one document and one citation.



Co-occurrence of Keywords

Year 2025, Volume-12, Issue-5 Journal homepage: <https://share.google/0GGau8uM5Zqb1RwrI>



Bibliographic Coupling of Documents

Bibliographic coupling means a common work is cited by two independently cited documents. If the minimum number of citations of a document is set as 1, then 4874 documents meet the threshold and Griffin, Bauman and Lu share the top 3 positions with 12271, 9097 and 8978 total link strength values respectively. The situation changes when the list is ranked on citation numbers, such that Porter gets the leadership, Campbell follows him, and Mc Williams is at the third position.

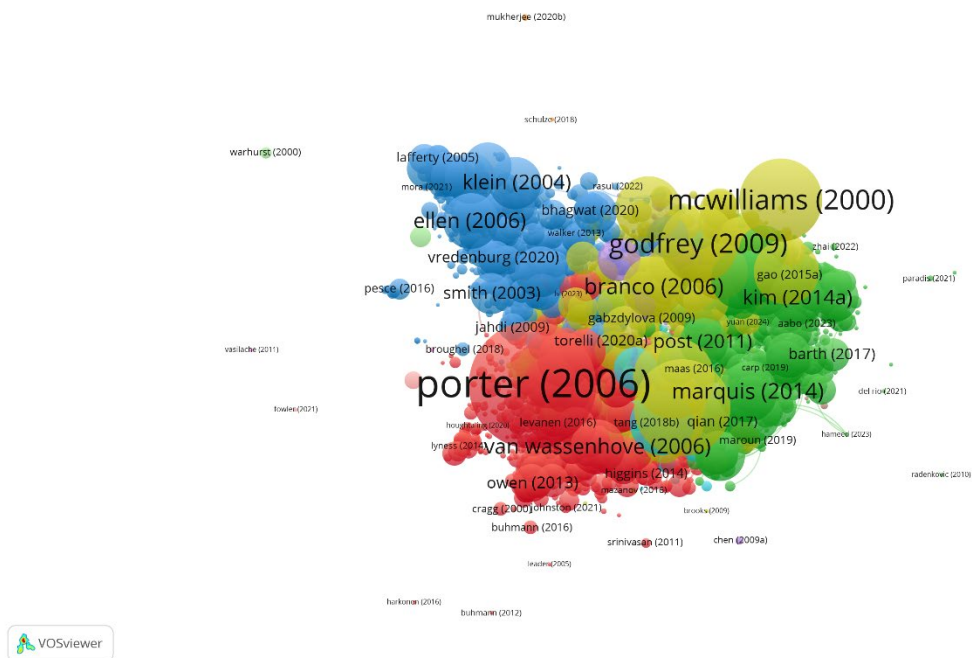


Figure 7. Bibliographic Coupling of Documents

Bibliographic Coupling of Authors

Only 1701 of the 12325 authors meet the condition of minimum 2 documents and 1 citation, and there has been a strong relation between 1696 of them. Isabel Maria Sanchez is seen at number one of the list with 24 documents, 1391 citations and 66009 total link strength, then Ali Uyar comes with 18 documents, 1075 citations and 54175 total link strength. Abdullah Karaman takes the third place with 16 documents, 803 citations and 47889 total strength of the links. 1696 units and 9 clusters occur with 822867 links, and 4611774 total link strength is seen as the result.

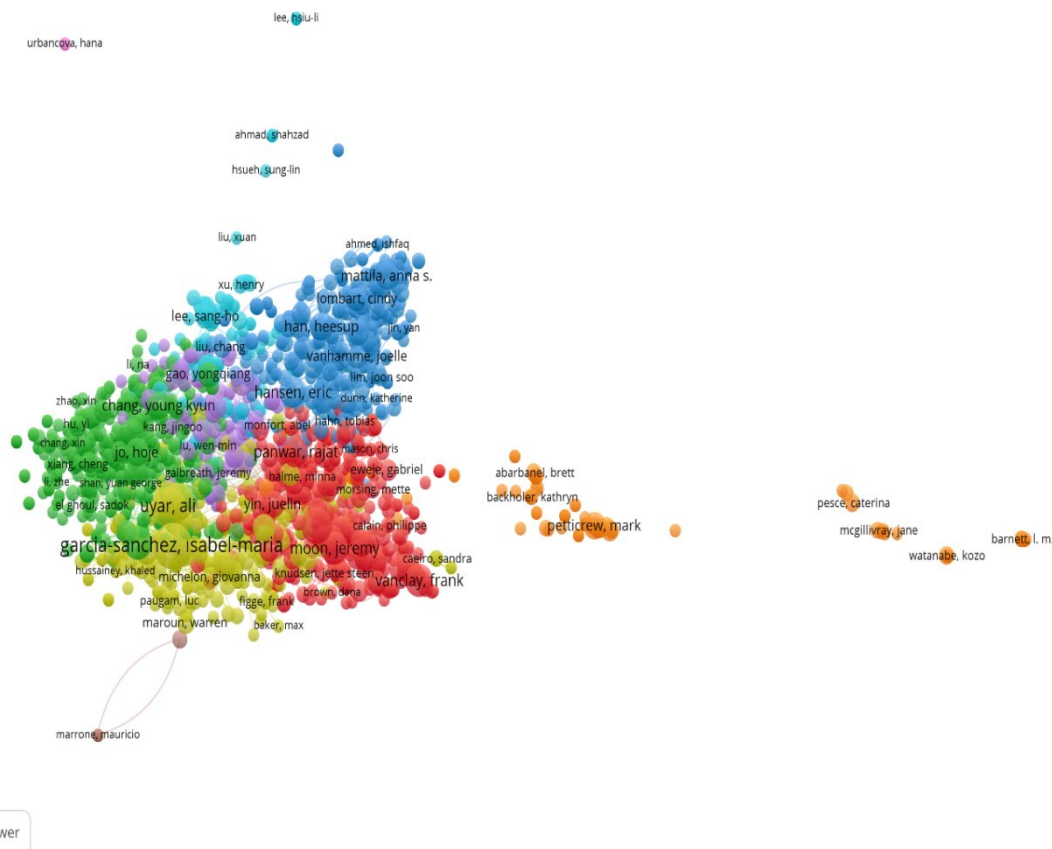


Figure 8. Bibliographic Coupling of Authors

CONCLUSION

To conclude, gaining profit and sustainable competitive advantage is not and should not be the only motivation for companies. As Carroll and other academicians mention given in the previous sections, at first companies should earn money to survive, but then they must do something beneficial to society.

CSR is a very important topic, and it is possible to say that corporate social responsibility is an interdisciplinary field which has a crucial importance for many disciplines like management, business, environmental studies, etc. As it is the situation for many social research areas, for corporate social responsibility the leading country of the field is USA again with 6906 documents and China is at the second position with 6209 documents. Third country which contributes to the field most is England with 4092 documents, Spain and Australia follows them with 2720 and 2479 documents respectively. Turkey takes place 32 with only 446 documents which is indexed in Web of Science.

The documents published about CSR have increased incrementally, in 1990s the number of documents published in Web of Science were about 4 or 5 or 7, but when we see the data of 2025, this amount reaches to 3697. In table 1, the change in the numbers of documents between 1990 and 2025 years are given. As it is seen in many research, there are limitations in this research, too. For example, despite many of the research is available online, some publications are not available for online access so it is one of the main limitations of the research and the other one is, only web of science database is used in the research, but next research could include TR Index, thesis center of higher education council, etc.

Table 1. Number of documents in years between 1990-2025

Publication Year	Count of documents
2025	2656
2024	3697
2023	3555
2022	3720
2021	3508
2020	3286
2019	2925
2018	2431
2017	2187
2016	1954
2015	1736
2014	1492
2013	1258
2012	1047
2011	1063
2010	894
2009	820
2008	571
2007	355

2006	220
2005	173
2004	74
2003	49
2002	22
2001	27
2000	20
1999	12
1998	10
1997	13
1996	12
1995	5
1994	9
1993	7
1992	4
1991	5

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