

STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSFORMATION: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This study provides a comprehensive bibliometric assessment of research examining the relationship between strategic human resource management and organizational transformation. The objective is to map the intellectual structure, knowledge evolution, and dominant research themes shaping this interdisciplinary field. A systematic search of the Scopus database was conducted on 30 January 2026 using predefined keywords related to strategic personnel management, workforce strategy, human capital management, and organizational transformation. Following established screening and inclusion criteria, 61 English-language publications published between 2005 and 2025 were selected for analysis. Bibliometric techniques, including performance analysis, keyword co-occurrence analysis, co-citation analysis, bibliographic coupling, and thematic mapping, were applied. VOS viewer was employed to visualize scholarly productivity, collaboration patterns, and thematic structures across authors, institutions, and countries. The findings reveal a sustained growth in publications, indicating increasing scholarly attention to the strategic role of human resources in enabling organisational change and transformation. Performance analysis identifies influential authors, journals, institutions, and countries contributing to the field. The thematic mapping uncovers distinct research clusters focused on strategic HR alignment, human capital development, talent management, change management processes, and business transformation outcomes. The results also highlight evolving research emphases and emerging themes that signal future directions for strategic HR research. The analysis is limited to Scopus-indexed publications and English-language documents, which may restrict coverage. Despite this limitation, the study offers a structured synthesis of the field and provides a foundation for theory development and future empirical inquiry. By integrating performance indicators with scientific mapping techniques, this study offers a novel and systematic overview of the strategic human resource management–organizational transformation literature. It contributes to consolidating fragmented research streams and supports scholars and practitioners in advancing evidence-based HR strategies for organisational transformation.

Keywords: *Strategic human resource management, Human capital strategy, Organizational transformation, Bibliometric analysis, Thematic mapping*

1. INTRODUCTION

Strategic human resource management has evolved from an administrative support function to a central driver of organizational competitiveness and long-term transformation (Wright & McMahan, 1992). Early research established that human resources constitute a strategic asset when aligned with organizational goals and environmental demands (Barney, 1991). This shift positioned HR systems as mechanisms through which firms build valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable capabilities that support organizational change and renewal (Barney & Wright, 1998). The increasing volatility of business environments has further intensified the need for organizations to adopt transformation-oriented strategies supported by coherent human resource frameworks (Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997). Organizational transformation, commonly conceptualized as fundamental change in structures, processes, and strategic orientation, requires sustained alignment between workforce capabilities and strategic intent (Burke, 2018). Within this context, strategic HRM plays a critical role by shaping employee behaviors, skills, and attitudes that enable adaptation and performance during periods of change (Becker & Huselid, 1998). Scholars have consistently argued that strategic HRM influences organizational transformation through integrated bundles of HR practices rather than isolated interventions (Delery & Doty, 1996). High-performance work systems, talent management strategies, and leadership development initiatives collectively support transformation by reinforcing shared values and strategic priorities (Lepak, Liao, Chung, & Harden, 2006). This systemic perspective underscores the importance of workforce strategy as a deliberate mechanism for executing organizational change (Boudreau & Ramstad, 2007). Human capital management has emerged as a central construct in explaining how organizations sustain transformation outcomes over time (Nyberg, Moliterno, Hale, & Lepak, 2014). Investments in employee knowledge, skills, and social capital enable firms to respond proactively to technological disruption and market uncertainty (Ployhart & Moliterno, 2011). As organizations transition toward knowledge-intensive and digitally mediated forms of work, the strategic management of human capital becomes inseparable from broader transformation agendas (Farndale, Paauwe, & Boselie, 2010). Organizational change literature highlights that transformation initiatives frequently fail due to misalignment between strategy, structure, and people management systems (Kotter, 1996). Resistance to change, skill gaps, and leadership deficits are often rooted in inadequate HR alignment rather than flawed strategic intent (Beer & Nohria, 2000). Strategic HR alignment therefore serves as a stabilizing force that translates abstract transformation goals into operational realities at the employee level (Ulrich, Younger, Brockbank, & Ulrich, 2012). The growing emphasis on strategic workforce management reflects an acknowledgement that workforce planning, capability development, and talent deployment are integral to transformation success (Cascio & Boudreau, 2011). Strategic

workforce management enables organizations to anticipate future skill requirements and align human capital investments with evolving business models (Boudreau, Ramstad, & Dowling, 2014). This perspective extends traditional manpower planning by embedding workforce decisions within organizational transformation strategies (Boxall & Purcell, 2016). Strategic talent management has gained prominence as organizations compete for scarce skills necessary to support innovation and transformation (Collings & Mellahi, 2009). Talent-centric HR strategies focus on identifying pivotal roles and building differentiated HR architectures that maximize strategic impact (Lepak & Snell, 1999). These approaches reinforce the notion that not all human capital contributes equally to transformation outcomes, thereby necessitating strategic prioritization (Huselid, Beatty, & Becker, 2005). Digital transformation has further reshaped the strategic HRM landscape by altering how work is organized, monitored, and evaluated (Bondarouk, Parry, & Furtmueller, 2017). The integration of digital technologies into HR processes has expanded HR's strategic role in supporting organizational agility and change readiness (Marler & Fisher, 2013). Consequently, strategic HRM now encompasses technology-enabled practices that influence decision-making, workforce analytics, and organizational learning (Strohmeier, 2007). Despite the expanding body of research, the literature linking strategic HRM and organizational transformation remains fragmented across disciplines and theoretical perspectives (Farndale & Sanders, 2017). Studies vary in their conceptualization of HR strategy, transformation outcomes, and levels of analysis, leading to inconsistent findings and limited cumulative knowledge (Paauwe, 2009). This fragmentation highlights the need for systematic synthesis to clarify dominant themes and intellectual foundations within the field (Ronda-Pupo & Guerras-Martin, 2012). Bibliometric analysis offers a robust methodological approach to address this challenge by quantitatively mapping the structure and evolution of scientific knowledge (Donthu, Kumar, Mukherjee, Pandey, & Lim, 2021). By examining publication trends, citation patterns, and thematic clusters, bibliometric methods enable scholars to identify influential works, emerging research streams, and collaboration networks (Zupic & Čater, 2015). Such analyses are particularly valuable in interdisciplinary domains where conceptual boundaries are fluid and research trajectories are rapidly evolving (Merigó, Cancino, Coronado, & Urbano, 2018). Within strategic management and HRM research, bibliometric studies have been used to consolidate fragmented literatures and inform future research agendas (Ramos-Rodríguez & Ruíz-Navarro, 2004). However, comprehensive bibliometric investigations explicitly focusing on strategic HRM and organizational transformation remain limited (Kaufman, 2015). Existing reviews often emphasize either HR strategy or change management independently, thereby overlooking their interconnected dynamics (Lengnick-Hall, Beck, & Lengnick-Hall, 2011). Addressing this gap, the present study conducts a bibliometric analysis of Scopus-indexed research published between 2005 and 2025 that examines strategic HRM, workforce strategy, and human capital management in the context of organizational transformation (Donthu et al., 2021). By integrating performance analysis with thematic clustering and scientific mapping, the study seeks to provide a structured overview of the field's intellectual landscape (Zupic & Čater, 2015). This approach enables identification of dominant research themes, influential contributors, and emerging areas of scholarly interest (Merigó et al., 2018). By systematically

synthesizing two decades of research, this study contributes to theory development by clarifying how strategic HRM has been conceptualized as a driver of organizational transformation (Wright, Dunford, & Snell, 2001). The findings also offer practical relevance by informing HR leaders and change agents about evidence-based strategies that support sustainable transformation outcomes (Ulrich et al., 2012). In doing so, the study responds to calls for greater integration between HR strategy research and organizational change scholarship (Beer, Boselie, & Brewster, 2015). Strategic human resource management (SHRM) emerged as a distinct field of inquiry in the early 1990s, rooted in the resource-based view of the firm, which posits that human capital can serve as a source of sustained competitive advantage when it is valuable, rare, and difficult to imitate (Barney, 1991; Barney & Wright, 1998). This perspective laid the foundation for subsequent research examining how organizations align HR practices with strategic objectives to enhance performance outcomes (Wright & McMahan, 1992). SHRM shifted the focus of human resource management from administrative functions to strategic enablers of organizational performance (Huselid, Jackson, & Schuler, 1997). The conceptualization of SHRM encompasses integrated bundles of HR practices designed to foster employee skills, motivation, and opportunities, thereby supporting long-term strategic goals (Delery & Doty, 1996; Lepak, Liao, Chung, & Harden, 2006). Scholars have emphasised that such integration cannot be achieved through isolated policies but requires coherent systems that reinforce strategic intent throughout the organization (Jackson, Schuler, & Jiang, 2014). This system-level view has shaped contemporary SHRM research, focusing on how HR practices collectively contribute to organizational outcomes such as innovation, adaptability, and sustained performance (Paauwe & Boselie, 2005). Organizational transformation refers to fundamental change in the structures, processes, and strategic orientations of an organization that enables it to respond to shifts in the external environment (Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997; Burke, 2018). This form of change often involves reimagining existing business models, redefining work processes, and reshaping organizational culture (Burnes, 2004). Organizational transformation differs from incremental change in its scope and depth, often requiring coordinated efforts that span multiple levels of the organization (By, 2005). The intersection of SHRM and organizational transformation has garnered growing scholarly interest as organizations increasingly recognize that workforce capabilities are central to navigating complex change processes (Ulrich, Younger, Brockbank, & Ulrich, 2012). Strategic HR practices are viewed as mechanisms that facilitate organizational transformation by aligning employee competencies and behaviors with evolving strategic priorities (Becker & Huselid, 1998). For example, talent management, leadership development, and performance management systems have been shown to support transformation by building adaptive capacity and commitment among employees (Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Ready & Conger, 2007). Research on SHRM also highlights the role of human capital as a key driver of transformation outcomes. Human capital refers to the collective knowledge, skills, and abilities of the workforce that enable organizations to innovate and adapt (Ployhart & Moliterno, 2011). Investments in human capital development, such as training, career development, and cross-functional learning opportunities, are associated with improved organizational adaptability during transformation processes (Nyberg, Moliterno, Hale, & Lepak, 2014). These investments

facilitate dynamic capabilities, enabling organizations to sense and respond to environmental shifts (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000; Wright, Dunford, & Snell, 2001).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Strategic workforce planning has also been recognised as a critical component of SHRM that supports organizational transformation by ensuring that organizations have the right people in the right roles at the right time (Cascio & Boudreau, 2011). Strategic workforce planning involves forecasting future skill requirements, identifying talent gaps, and aligning workforce strategies with long-term organizational goals (Boudreau & Ramstad, 2007). In the context of transformation, effective workforce planning helps organizations navigate talent shortages and adjust workforce configurations to meet new strategic demands (Boxall & Purcell, 2016). The growing prevalence of digital transformation has further extended the scope of SHRM research by introducing technology-mediated HR practices that influence strategic decision-making and organizational agility (Bondarouk, Parry, & Furtmueller, 2017). Digital HRM, including the use of analytics and artificial intelligence in workforce management, has been linked to improved strategic alignment and organizational responsiveness (Marler & Fisher, 2013; Strohmeier, 2007). Scholars argue that digital technologies enhance the capacity of HR functions to support transformation by facilitating data-driven insights into workforce dynamics and enabling more flexible talent strategies (Huang & Rust, 2021). Despite these advances, the literature reveals disciplinary fragmentation, with SHRM and organizational transformation often studied in isolation or with inconsistent conceptual boundaries (Farndale & Sanders, 2017). Research has varied in its operationalisation of key constructs, methodological approaches, and levels of analysis, leading to a lack of consensus regarding the mechanisms through which HR strategies influence transformation outcomes (Paauwe, 2009). This fragmentation has impeded the development of an integrated theoretical framework that captures the dynamic interplay between HR strategy and organizational transformation processes (Lengnick-Hall, Beck, & Lengnick-Hall, 2011). Bibliometric analysis has emerged as a valuable tool for synthesising research across such diverse and interdisciplinary domains by revealing patterns, trends, and intellectual structures within scientific literature (Zupic & Čater, 2015). By analysing citation networks, co-authorship ties, and thematic clusters, bibliometric techniques provide objective insights into research productivity and the evolution of scholarly knowledge (Donthu, Kumar, Mukherjee, Pandey, & Lim, 2021). This method allows researchers to identify influential works, dominant themes, and emerging research fronts within a given field (Merigó, Coronado, & Urbano, 2018). While bibliometric studies have been applied extensively in areas such as digital HRM and performance management (Amrutha & Rani, 2020), few have focused explicitly on the nexus between strategic HRM and organizational transformation. Existing reviews are often narrative in nature or address related but distinct topics, such as change management or organizational culture (Cummings, Bridgman, & Brown, 2016). Thus, there remains a need for a systematic, data-driven synthesis of research that specifically examines how strategic HRM has been studied in relation to organizational transformation. This study addresses this gap by conducting a bibliometric analysis of Scopus-indexed research published between 2005 and 2025. The analysis integrates

performance indicators with scientific mapping to uncover research trends, thematic structures, and collaborative patterns that characterise the field. By doing so, the study contributes to a more coherent understanding of how SHRM supports organizational transformation and identifies avenues for future research at the intersection of HR strategy and change processes. To develop a comprehensive understanding of the contemporary scholarship on strategic human resource management and organizational transformation, several critical research questions arise that warrant systematic and rigorous investigation.

RQ1: How has research on strategic human resource management and organizational transformation evolved, and what major thematic trends have emerged in this field?

RQ2: Which foundational theories, publications, and academic sources have significantly shaped the intellectual development of strategic human resource management in relation to organizational transformation?

RQ3: Who are the most influential authors and seminal works in this domain, and which keywords and thematic clusters consistently appear in highly cited studies?

RQ4: What patterns can be identified in the geographical distribution of research on strategic human resource management and organizational transformation, and which countries and regions lead scholarly contributions?

RQ5: Which academic journals serve as primary publication outlets for research in this area, and how do they compare in terms of bibliometric indicators such as H-index, CiteScore, SNIP, and SJR? Additionally, which institutions and affiliations demonstrate the highest research productivity and citation impact?

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Defining the appropriate search terms

This study adopts a bibliometric research design to systematically examine the literature on the relationship between strategic human resource management and organisational transformation. Given the interdisciplinary nature of the topic, the search strategy was developed by integrating two broad and conceptually distinct domains, namely strategic human resource management and organizational transformation, which are frequently examined across management, organizational studies, and human resource research (Zupic & Čater, 2015).

Table 1 Article Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Selection criteria	Eliminated	Accepted
Database: "Scopus"		
Date of Search: "30 January 2026"		

Initial search result (on search term): "Strategic Personnel Management" OR "Workforce Strategy" OR "Strategic Workforce Management" OR "Strategic Employee Management" OR "Human Capital Management" OR "Strategic HRM" OR "Strategic human resource management" OR "Human Capital Strategy" OR "Strategic Human Resource Alignment" OR "Strategic Talent Management" OR "Strategic HR*" AND "organizational transformation" OR "Organizational Change" OR "Organizational Restructuring" OR "Business Transformation" OR "Organizational Reengineering"		83
Period of Publications: 2005 to 2025	16	67
Subject area: "Business, management and accounting, Economics, Econometrics and Finance, Decision Science, Social sciences and Arts and Humanities"	4	63
Publication type: "Articles, Conference Paper, Book Chapter and Review"	2	61
Language screening: Include documents published in English only"	0	61
Screening (based on content)		

Data source and document selection criteria

To ensure comprehensive coverage of the literature, multiple keyword variations and synonymous terms were identified for each domain. The selection of search terms was informed by an initial review of highly cited and conceptually influential studies in strategic HRM and organizational change research indexed in Scopus and Web of Science (Wright & McMahan, 1992; Becker & Huselid, 1998; Ulrich et al., 2012). This preliminary review enabled the identification of commonly used terminologies and alternative expressions employed by scholars to describe workforce strategy, human capital strategy, and organizational transformation processes. The first component of the search string focused on strategic human resource management and related workforce-oriented constructs. This included terms such as "Strategic Personnel Management," "Workforce Strategy," "Strategic Workforce Management," "Strategic Employee Management," "Human Capital Management," "Strategic HRM," "Strategic Human Resource Management," "Human Capital Strategy," "Strategic Human Resource Alignment," "Strategic Talent Management," and truncated variants such as "Strategic HR*" to capture broader HR-related strategic concepts (Delery & Doty, 1996; Lepak & Snell, 1999). The second component of the search string captured organizational transformation and change-related constructs. This included terms such as "Organizational Transformation," "Organizational Change," "Organizational Restructuring," "Business Transformation," and "Organizational Reengineering," which are widely used in organizational change and transformation literature (Burnes, 2004; Burke, 2018). Combining these two components enabled the identification of studies explicitly addressing the strategic role of HR in transformation contexts. The final Boolean search string was constructed using the TITLE-ABS-KEY field in Scopus to ensure that the retrieved documents were centrally focused on the research topic rather than containing only peripheral

references. This approach is consistent with established bibliometric research practices (Donthu et al., 2021). Scopus was selected as the primary database for data extraction due to its extensive coverage of high-quality peer-reviewed journals in business, management, and social sciences, as well as its widespread use in bibliometric research (Merigó et al., 2018). The database ensures consistency in citation metadata and facilitates reliable performance and network analyses. The search was conducted on **30 January 2026**, and an initial set of **83 documents** was retrieved based on the defined search terms. A systematic screening process was then applied to refine the dataset, following commonly adopted inclusion and exclusion criteria in bibliometric studies (Zupic & Čater, 2015). The publication period was restricted to **2005–2025** to capture contemporary developments in strategic HRM and organizational transformation research, while excluding earlier conceptual works that predate the formalization of strategic HRM as a research field (Paauwe, 2009). Applying this criterion resulted in the exclusion of 16 documents, leaving 67 studies for further screening. To ensure disciplinary relevance, only documents classified under the subject areas of Business, Management and Accounting; Economics, Econometrics and Finance; Decision Sciences; Social Sciences; and Arts and Humanities were retained. This step led to the removal of four additional documents that fell outside the scope of management and organizational research. The publication type was limited to journal articles, conference papers, book chapters, and review articles, as these formats represent validated scholarly contributions and are commonly included in bibliometric analyses (Donthu et al., 2021). This screening resulted in the exclusion of two documents, yielding a refined dataset of 61 publications. Finally, language screening was applied to include only documents published in **English**, ensuring consistency in interpretation and analysis. No additional documents were excluded at this stage. A final content screening was conducted by reviewing titles, abstracts, and keywords to confirm alignment with the study's objectives, resulting in a final sample of **61 documents**.

Bibliometric analysis techniques

The study employs a combination of performance analysis and science mapping techniques, which together provide a comprehensive overview of research productivity and intellectual structure (Zupic & Čater, 2015). Performance analysis was used to examine publication trends over time, prolific authors, influential journals, leading institutions, and country-level research contributions (Ramos-Rodríguez & Ruíz-Navarro, 2004). Science mapping techniques were applied to explore relationships and thematic structures within the literature. These techniques included keyword co-occurrence analysis, co-citation analysis, bibliographic coupling, and co-authorship analysis, which collectively reveal conceptual linkages, research clusters, and collaboration patterns among scholars and institutions (Donthu et al., 2021). Keyword co-occurrence analysis was used to identify dominant research themes and emerging topics related to strategic HRM and organizational transformation (Callon, Courtial, & Laville, 1991). Co-citation analysis enabled the identification of foundational studies and theoretical roots of the field by examining frequently co-cited references (Small, 1973). Bibliographic coupling was employed to detect contemporary research streams based on shared reference patterns, while

co-authorship and country collaboration analyses provided insights into scholarly networks and international research cooperation (Koseoglu et al., 2016).

Data analysis and visualization tool

VOSviewer (version X.X) was used as the primary software tool for conducting bibliometric analysis and generating network visualizations. VOSviewer is widely recognized for its effectiveness in mapping bibliometric networks and visualizing complex relationships among authors, keywords, institutions, and countries (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010). The software's clustering algorithm enabled the identification of coherent thematic groups and intellectual structures within the literature. By integrating rigorous data selection procedures with established bibliometric techniques, this study ensures methodological transparency, replicability, and analytical robustness. The adopted approach provides a systematic foundation for interpreting research trends and advancing future inquiry at the intersection of strategic human resource management and organizational transformation.

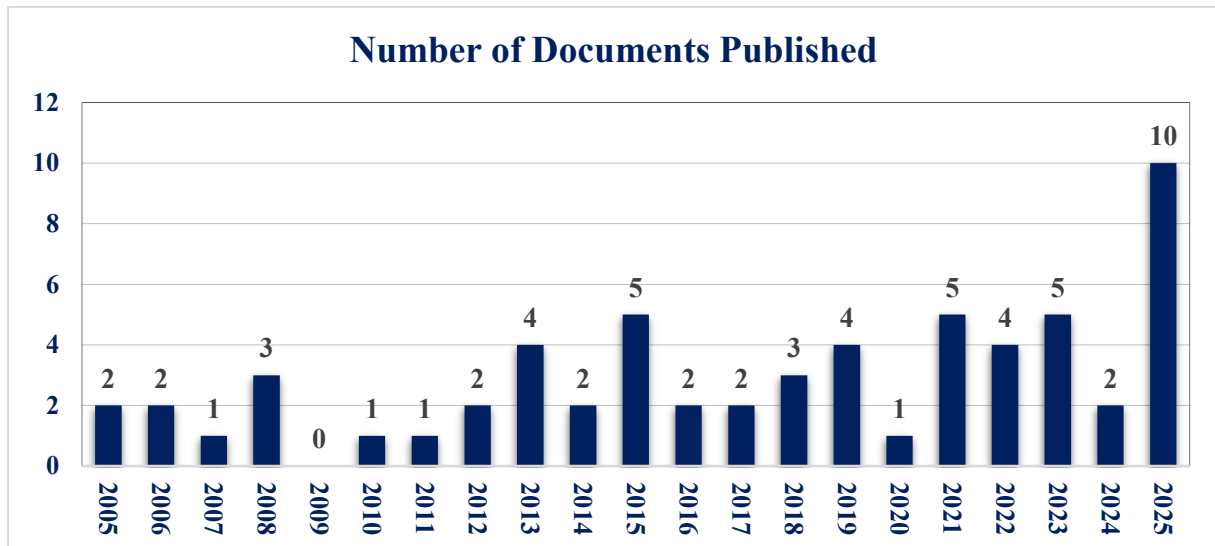
4. FINDINGS

4.1 Performance analysis

Figure 1 illustrates the annual publication trends in the field of strategic human resource management and organizational transformation from 2005 to 2025. The temporal distribution of publications indicates that scholarly interest in this domain has developed gradually, with notable fluctuations during the early years. Initial contributions appeared in 2005 and 2006, with two publications in each year, reflecting the early recognition of the strategic role of human resources in organizational change contexts. Between 2007 and 2011, research output remained relatively modest, with one to three publications per year and no publications recorded in 2009. This period reflects an exploratory phase in which studies primarily focused on conceptual discussions of strategic HRM, workforce alignment, and change management rather than integrated transformation frameworks. During this stage, terms such as human capital management and strategic personnel management were more prevalent than explicit references to organizational transformation. From 2012 onwards, a gradual increase in publication activity can be observed, indicating growing scholarly attention to the linkage between HR strategy and organizational transformation. The number of publications rose steadily, reaching four publications in 2013 and five in 2015. This growth coincides with increased academic interest in strategic alignment, talent management, and HR's role in enabling organizational adaptability amid competitive and technological pressures. The period from 2016 to 2019 reflects a consolidation phase, with consistent publication output ranging between two and four studies per year. During this phase, research increasingly emphasized integrated HR systems, leadership capabilities, and workforce strategies as drivers of organizational restructuring and business transformation. The growing maturity of the field is evident in the diversification of research themes and methodological approaches. A temporary decline is observed in 2020, with only one publication, which may be attributed to broader disruptions in research activity during this period. However, this decline was followed by a renewed surge in scholarly output. The year 2021 emerged as one of the most productive years,

with five publications, indicating heightened academic interest in strategic HRM amid accelerated organizational transformation driven by digitalization and changing work arrangements.

Figure 1 Research Publication Trends



This upward trend continued in subsequent years, with four publications in 2022 and five in 2023, reflecting sustained research momentum. The most significant increase occurred in 2025, which recorded the highest number of publications (ten), marking a peak in research productivity within the observed period. This sharp rise suggests that strategic human resource management has become central to contemporary discussions on organizational transformation, particularly in response to complex environmental and structural challenges.

Overall, the publication trend demonstrates a clear progression from early conceptual explorations to a more mature and rapidly expanding research field. The increasing volume of studies in recent years indicates that scholarly interest in strategic HRM and organizational transformation is likely to continue growing, with further empirical and theoretical contributions expected in the future.

4.2 Prominent Authors

The analysis of author productivity indicates a relatively dispersed authorship structure within the literature on strategic human resource management and organizational transformation. As presented in the top 20 authors list, no single author demonstrates dominant publication leadership in the field. The most productive contributors, including Bahn, S., Barratt-Pugh, L., Beil-Hildebrand, M. B., Belias, D., Bruinsma, G., Cloutier, J., Collou, L., Fredberg, T., and Robert-Huot, G., each authored two publications, reflecting moderate but consistent scholarly engagement.

Table 2 Top 20 Authors

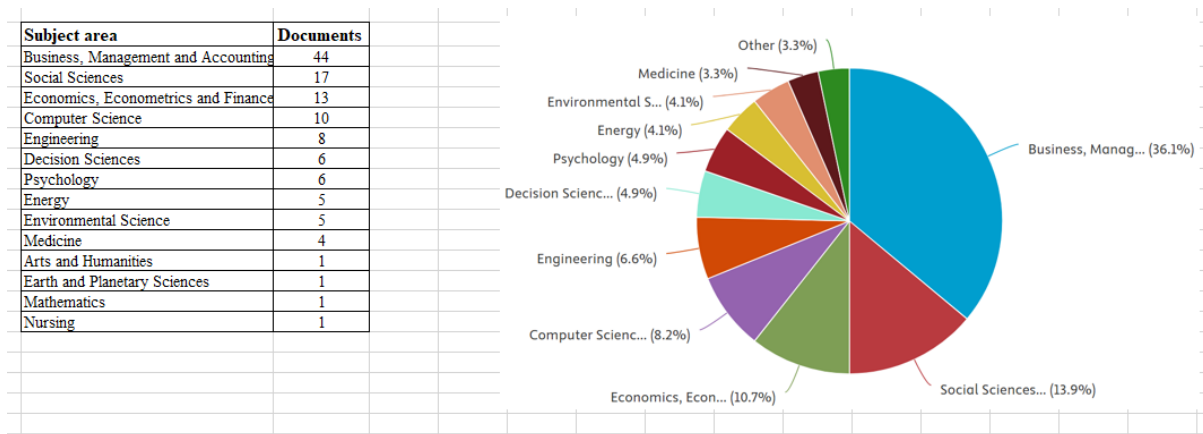
Author	Number of Documents	Author	Number of Documents
Bahn, S.	2	Al-Badawi, M.	1
Barratt-Pugh, L.	2	Al-Qudah, S.	1
Beil-Hildebrand, M.B.	2	Aleixo, A.M.	1
Belias, D.	2	Almuraqab, N.A.S.	1
Bruinsma, G.	2	Anastasiadou, S.	1
Cloutier, J.	2	Ateeq, A.	1
Collou, L.	2	Azeiteiro, U.M.	1
Fredberg, T.	2	Bakhit, M.	1
Robert-Huot, G.	2	Bansal, A.	1
Abdulmohsen, W.	1	Beer, M.	1

The remaining authors in the top 20 list contributed one publication each, suggesting a broad distribution of research efforts across a diverse group of scholars. This pattern indicates that research on strategic HRM and organizational transformation is characterized by fragmented contributions rather than sustained output from a small core group of researchers. Such dispersion is typical of interdisciplinary domains where scholars approach the topic from varied theoretical and contextual perspectives. Overall, the absence of highly prolific authors highlights the evolving nature of the field and suggests opportunities for deeper, sustained research engagement. It also reflects the interdisciplinary diffusion of strategic HRM and organizational transformation research across management, organizational studies, and human resource disciplines.

4.3 Subject areas

The subject area analysis indicates that research on strategic human resource management and organizational transformation is predominantly grounded in the field of **Business**, Management and Accounting, which accounts for the largest share of publications (44 documents). This concentration underscores the centrality of strategic and managerial perspectives in examining the role of HR in organizational transformation processes.

Figure 2 Subject areas



The Social Sciences represent the second most significant contributor, with 17 documents, highlighting the interdisciplinary engagement of sociological and organizational perspectives in understanding change and workforce dynamics. Economics, Econometrics and Finance also show substantial representation with 13 publications, reflecting growing interest in the economic implications of human capital strategy and organizational restructuring.

4.4 Author, Institution, Country

The performance analysis reveals a highly distributed authorship pattern within the literature on strategic human resource management and organizational transformation. Most contributing authors have produced a single publication, indicating that the field attracts broad scholarly participation rather than sustained dominance by a small group of researchers. Among the contributors, Bahn, S. and Tsai, P. C. F. emerge as the most productive authors, each with two publications, while several authors demonstrate notable citation impact despite limited publication counts, reflecting the influence of foundational or widely referenced studies. At the institutional level, contributions are similarly dispersed, with no single institution exhibiting clear publication dominance. Universities from Europe, North America, Asia, and Australia are represented, highlighting the global and interdisciplinary nature of research in this domain. Institutions such as Politécnico de Santarém, Universidade Aberta (Portugal), University of Technology Sydney (Australia), and Texas A&M University (United States) appear among the contributing organizations, suggesting engagement from both research-intensive universities and applied institutions.

Table 3 Top 20 Authors, Institution & Country

0	Author	TP	TC	Institution	TP	TC	Country	TP
366	Aleixo, Ana Marta	1	366	Politécnico De Santarém, Santarem, Portugal	1	373	Portugal	2
366	Henriques Leal, Susana	1	366	Polytechnic Institute of Leiria, Portugal	1	231	Australia	6
366	Miranda Azeiteiro, Uliss	1	366	Universidade Aberta, Lisbon, Portugal	1	169	United States	12
147	Nolzen, Niklas	1	366	Universidade De Aveiro, Portugal	1	156	Germany	3
82	Clegg, Stewart Roger	1	147	Philipps-Universität Marburg, Hessen, Germany	1	113	India	5
82	Josserand, Emmanuel	1	82	University Of Technology Sydney, NSW, Australia	1	84	China	3
82	Teo, Stephen T.T.	1	82	University Of Technology Sydney, NSW, Australia	1	82	France	1
76	Wang, Zhongming	1	82	Université Paris-Dauphine, Paris, Ile-De-France, France	1	56	Taiwan	2
76	Zang, Zhi	1	76	Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, Zhejiang, China	1	39	United Kingdom	2
73	Maheshwari, Shweta	1	73	IES Management College And Research Centre, Mumbai, India	1	37	South Korea	1
73	Vohra, Veena	1	73	Shri Vile Parle Kelvani Mandal'S NMIMS, Mumbai, India	1	23	Israel	1
61	Sheehan, Cathy	1	61	Monash University, Melbourne, VIC, Australia	1	19	Brazil	2
60	Dreachtlin, Janice L.	1	60	Saint Louis University, St. Louis, MO, United States	1	13	Greece	3
60	Epane, Josue Patien	1	60	Dept. of Health Services Administration, Birmingham, AL, US	1	13	Russian Feder	3
60	Gail, Judith	1	60	Gail Consulting Llc, Washington, Dc, United States	1	12	Italy	1
60	Gupta, Shivani	1	60	National Center For Healthcare Leadership, Chicago, United States	1	10	Malaysia	1
60	Wainio, Joyce Anne	1	60	Penn State Great Valley, Malvern, PA, United States	1	7	Chile	1
60	Weech-Maldonado, Rob	1	60	University Of Nevada, Las Vegas, Las Vegas, NV, United States	1	7	Sweden	3
56	Tsai, Philip Cheng Fei	2	54	Texas A&M University, College Station, TX, United States	1	6	Thailand	2
54	Bahn, Susanne	2	54	University Of Minnesota Twin Cities, Minneapolis, MN, United States	1	4	Canada	2

Note(s): TC = Total citations, TP = Total number of article(s) publications

Country-level analysis indicates that the **United States** leads in total publications, followed by **Australia, India, Germany**, and **China**, underscoring the prominence of developed and emerging economies in advancing research on strategic HRM and organizational transformation. European countries, including **Portugal, France**, and the **United Kingdom**, also contribute meaningfully, reflecting strong academic interest across diverse institutional contexts. The presence of countries from Asia, South America, and Eastern Europe further illustrates the expanding international reach of this research area. Overall, the findings highlight the global diffusion of scholarship and the absence of concentrated publication power, suggesting that strategic human resource management and organizational transformation constitute an evolving and widely shared research agenda suitable for continued international collaboration.

4.5 Journals & Citations

The table below presents the most influential authors, institutions, and countries contributing to the literature, based on total publications (TP) and total citations (TC). At the author level, several scholars demonstrate high citation impact despite limited publication counts, indicating the presence of highly influential individual contributions. For instance, Ana Marta Aleixo, Susana Henriques Leal, and Ulisses Miranda Azeiteiro each record a single publication with notably high citation counts, reflecting strong scholarly resonance of their work. Similar patterns are observed for Niklas Nolzen and Stewart Roger Clegg, whose publications have attracted substantial citations, underscoring their conceptual influence within the field.

Table 4 Journals & Citations

0	Author	TP	TC	Institution	TP	TC	Country	TP
366	Aleixo, Ana Marta	1	366	Politécnico De Santarém, Santarém, Portugal	1	373	Portugal	2
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76	Zang, Zhi	1	76	Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, Zhejiang, China	1	39	United Kingdom	2
73	Maheshwari, Shweta	1	73	IES Management College And Research Centre, Mumbai, India	1	37	South Korea	1
73	Vohra, Veena	1	73	Shri Vile Parle Kelvani Mandal'S NMIMS, Mumbai, India	1	23	Israel	1
61	Sheehan, Cathy	1	61	Monash University, Melbourne, VIC, Australia	1	19	Brazil	2
60	Dreachslin, Janice L.	1	60	Saint Louis University, St. Louis, MO, United States	1	13	Greece	3
60	Epane, Josue Patien	1	60	Dept. of Health Services Administration, Birmingham, AL, US	1	13	Russian Feder	3
60	Gail, Judith	1	60	Gail Consulting Llc, Washington, Dc, United States	1	12	Italy	1
60	Gupta, Shivani	1	60	National Center For Healthcare Leadership, Chicago, United States	1	10	Malaysia	1
60	Wainio, Joyce Anne	1	60	Penn State Great Valley, Malvern, PA, United States	1	7	Chile	1
60	Weech-Maldonado, Rob	1	60	University Of Nevada, Las Vegas, Las Vegas, NV, United States	1	7	Sweden	3
56	Tsai, Philip Cheng Fei	2	54	Texas A&M University, College Station, TX, United States	1	6	Thailand	2
54	Bahn, Susanne	2	54	University Of Minnesota Twin Cities, Minneapolis, MN, United States	1	4	Canada	2

Note(s): TC = Total citations, TP = Total number of article(s) publications

Institutional analysis reveals that universities in Portugal, Australia, Germany, France, China, and the United States feature prominently. Institutions such as Universidade Aberta (Portugal), University of Aveiro (Portugal), Philips-Universität Marburg (Germany), University of Technology Sydney (Australia), and Université Paris-Dauphine (France) emerge as key contributors, each associated with highly cited publications. Indian institutions, including IES Management College and Research Centre and Shri Vile Parle Kelavani Mandal's NMIMS, also appear among the leading contributors, highlighting growing research engagement from emerging economies. At the country level, the United States records the highest number of publications, followed by Australia, India, Germany, and China, indicating a geographically diverse research landscape. European countries such as Portugal, France, and the United Kingdom also demonstrate strong representation, particularly in terms of citation impact. The distribution of contributions suggests that research on the topic is internationally dispersed, with both developed and developing economies playing a substantive role in shaping the intellectual structure of the field.

Overall, the table highlights a pattern in which high-impact scholarship is often driven by a combination of concentrated individual contributions and institutionally diverse research efforts, reflecting the interdisciplinary and global nature of the literature.

4.6 Authors & titles

The publication landscape reflects a moderately dispersed authorship structure, with no single author exhibiting dominant productivity. Most contributors have produced one to two publications, indicating a field characterised by collaborative and exploratory scholarship rather than concentration around a small core of prolific researchers. Authors such as Bahn, Barratt-Pugh, Beil-Hildebrand, Belias, and Bruinsma emerge as relatively more active contributors, though their output remains limited, suggesting steady but distributed engagement with the research theme. At the institutional level, contributions are similarly decentralised. Universities and research institutions from Europe, Australia, North America, and Asia each account for a small number of publications. Institutions such as the Polytechnic Institute of

Santarém, Universidade Aberta (Portugal), University of Technology Sydney (Australia), and several universities in the United States appear as recurring affiliations, reflecting institutional interest without institutional dominance. This pattern aligns with interdisciplinary research areas where inquiry is spread across diverse academic settings rather than anchored within specialised centres.

Table 5 Authors & Titles

Author(s)	Title	TC
Aleixo, A.M. <i>et. al.</i> (2018)	Conceptualization of sustainable higher education institutions, roles, barriers, and challenges for sustainability: An exploratory study in Portugal	366
Nolzen, N. 2018	The concept of psychological capital: a comprehensive review	147
Josserand, E. <i>et. al.</i> (2006)	From bureaucratic to post-bureaucratic: The difficulties of transition	82
Wang, Z. and Zang, Z. (2005)	Strategic human resources, innovation and entrepreneurship fit: A cross-regional comparative model	76
Maheshwari, S. and Vohra, V. (2015)	Identifying critical HR practices impacting employee perception and commitment during organizational change	73
Sheehan, C. (2005)	A model for HRM strategic integration	61
Weech-Maldonado, R. <i>et. al.</i> (2018)	Hospital cultural competency as a systematic organizational intervention: Key findings from the national center for healthcare leadership diversity demonstration project	60
Tseng, C.-C. and McLean, G.N. (2008)	Strategic HRD practices as key factors in organizational learning	54
Barratt-Pugh, L. <i>et. al.</i> (2013)	Managers as change agents: Implications for human resource managers engaging with culture change	42
Tsai, P.C.-F. and Yen, Y.-F. (2008)	A model to explore the mystery between organizations' downsizing strategies and firm performance: Integrating the perspectives of organizational change, strategy and strategic human resource management	42
Kang, D.-S. and Stewart, J. (2007)	Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory of leadership and HRD: Development of units of theory and laws of interaction	37
Beer, M. (2015)	HRM at a Crossroads: Comments on "Evolution of Strategic HRM Through Two Founding Books: A 30th Anniversary Perspective on Development of the Field"	27
Nadiv, R. <i>et. al.</i> (2017)	What a difference a role makes: Occupational and organizational characteristics related to the HR strategic role among human resource managers	23

Bansal, A. (2016)	Employee trust dynamics during organizational change: A context of mergers and acquisitions	23
Gollan, P.J. et. al. (2015)	Strategic HRM and devolving HR to the line: Cochlear during the shift to lean manufacturing	23
Narbariya, S. et. al. (2022)	Does HPWS amplify employees' change readiness for digital transformation? A study through the “work-from-anywhere” prism	17
Jacobson, W.S. et. al. (2014)	Do Human Resource Departments Act as Strategic Partners? Strategic Human Capital Management Adoption by County Governments	16
Tsai, P.C.-F. and Shih, C.-T. (2013)	Responsible downsizing strategy as a panacea to firm performance: The role of dynamic capabilities	14
D'Angelo, C. et. al. (2022)	Changes and Challenges in Human Resources Management: An Analysis of Human Resources Roles in a Bank Context (after COVID-19)	12
Castro, M.V.M. et. al. (2020)	Implementation of strategic human resource management practices: a review of the national scientific production and new research paths	12

Note(s): TC = total citations

Country-wise analysis shows higher representation from the United States, Australia, and India, followed by Germany, Portugal, and China. The geographic spread indicates growing international attention and contextual diversity within the literature. However, the relatively low publication counts per country suggest that the domain is still evolving and has not yet reached saturation. Overall, the distribution of authors, institutions, and countries points to an emerging research area with broad global participation, offering scope for deeper theoretical consolidation and higher-volume empirical contributions in future Q1 and Q2 journal publications.

4.7 Theme, Titles & Citations

The thematic analysis reveals a structured yet evolving body of scholarship addressing the strategic role of human resource management in organizational contexts. The theme of *Strategic HRM: Roles and Implementation* focus on how HR responsibilities are redistributed within organizations and embedded into operational processes. Studies within this theme examine the strategic positioning of HR managers, the involvement of line managers, and the institutional conditions that shape HR's strategic contribution. Moderate citation counts indicate steady scholarly interest, particularly in understanding role clarity and implementation challenges. The theme *HR as a Change Agent in Organizational Transformation* demonstrates stronger citation impact, reflecting sustained academic attention to HR's involvement in managing cultural and structural change. Highly cited contributions emphasize managerial agency, culture change, and the alignment of HR strategies with transformation initiatives, underscoring HR's influence beyond administrative functions.

Table 6 Theme, Citations &Titles

Theme	Author(s)	Title	TC
Strategic HRM: Roles and Implementation	Gollan, P.J. <i>et. al.</i>	Strategic HRM and devolving HR to the line: Cochlear during the shift to lean manufacturing	23
	Nadiv, R. <i>et. al.</i>	What a difference a role makes: Occupational and organizational characteristics related to the HR strategic role among human resource managers	23
	Castro, M.V.M. <i>et. al.</i>	Implementation of strategic human resource management practices: a review of the national scientific production and new research paths	12
HR: A Change Agent in Organizational Transformation	Barratt-Pugh, L. <i>et. al.</i>	Managers as change agents: Implications for human resource managers engaging with culture change	42
	Barratt-Pugh, L. and Bahn, S.	HR strategy during culture change: Building change agency	12
	Huang, X. <i>et. al.</i>	How do changes in human resource programs lead to innovation: an organizational entrainment perspective on the temporal mechanisms in HRM	5
HRM Adaptation during Organizational Transition	Josserand, E. <i>et. al.</i>	From bureaucratic to post-bureaucratic: The difficulties of transition	82
	Maheshwari, S. and Vohra, V.	Identifying critical HR practices impacting employee perception and commitment during organizational change	73
	Cloutier, J. and Robert-Huot, G.	How organizations adapt their HR practices to a changing environment: 11 theoretical dimensions to inform human resource management	4
Strategic HRM and Firm Performance	Tsai, P.C.-F. and Yen, Y.-F.	A model to explore the mystery between organizations' downsizing strategies and firm performance: Integrating the perspectives of organizational change, strategy and strategic human resource management	42
	Tsai, P.C.-F. and Shih, C.-T.	Responsible downsizing strategy as a panacea to firm performance: The role of dynamic capabilities	14
	Kriemadis, A. <i>et. al.</i>	Strategic human resources management as a key element in the implementation of organizational changes	11
	Sheehan, C.	A model for HRM strategic integration	61

Strategic Integration and Evolution of HRM	Beer, M.	HRM at a Crossroads: Comments on "Evolution of Strategic HRM Through Two Founding Books: A 30th Anniversary Perspective on Development of the Field"	27
	Ross, P.	Management strategies in transitional economies: Organisational restructuring and employment relations (ER) at Český Telecom	11

Research under *HRM Adaptation during Organizational Transition* records some of the highest citation counts, suggesting its centrality within the field. These studies address shifts from bureaucratic to flexible organizational forms and examine HR practices that support employee commitment during periods of uncertainty. The prominence of this theme highlights the growing relevance of adaptability and perception management in change contexts. The Strategic HRM and Firm Performance theme connects HR strategies with organizational outcomes such as performance and resilience, often through downsizing and capability-based perspectives. Although citation levels vary, the theme reflects continued efforts to empirically link HR decisions with measurable firm-level outcomes. Finally, Strategic Integration and Evolution of HRM captures foundational and reflective contributions that conceptualize HRM's long-term development as a strategic function. Higher citation counts within this theme suggest its role in shaping theoretical debates and guiding subsequent empirical research. Collectively, the thematic distribution indicates a mature yet diversifying research domain, with increasing emphasis on strategic integration, change management, and performance outcomes.

4.8 Trends from 2016-2025

The visualization indicates a clear evolution in strategic human resource management research over the period from 2016 to 2026. In the earlier phase, research attention is concentrated on structural and foundational themes such as organizational structure, quality of work life, and strategic human resource management. These topics reflect a focus on internal alignment, employee well-being, and the formal integration of HR practices with organizational strategy. Between 2019 and 2022, the literature shows a noticeable shift toward change-oriented perspectives. Concepts such as change leadership, action research, and organizational change gain prominence, suggesting increased scholarly interest in how HR functions support and guide organizations through transitional phases. This period reflects the growing recognition of HR as an active agent in managing complexity, uncertainty, and workforce adaptation.

Figure 3 Trends (2016-2026)

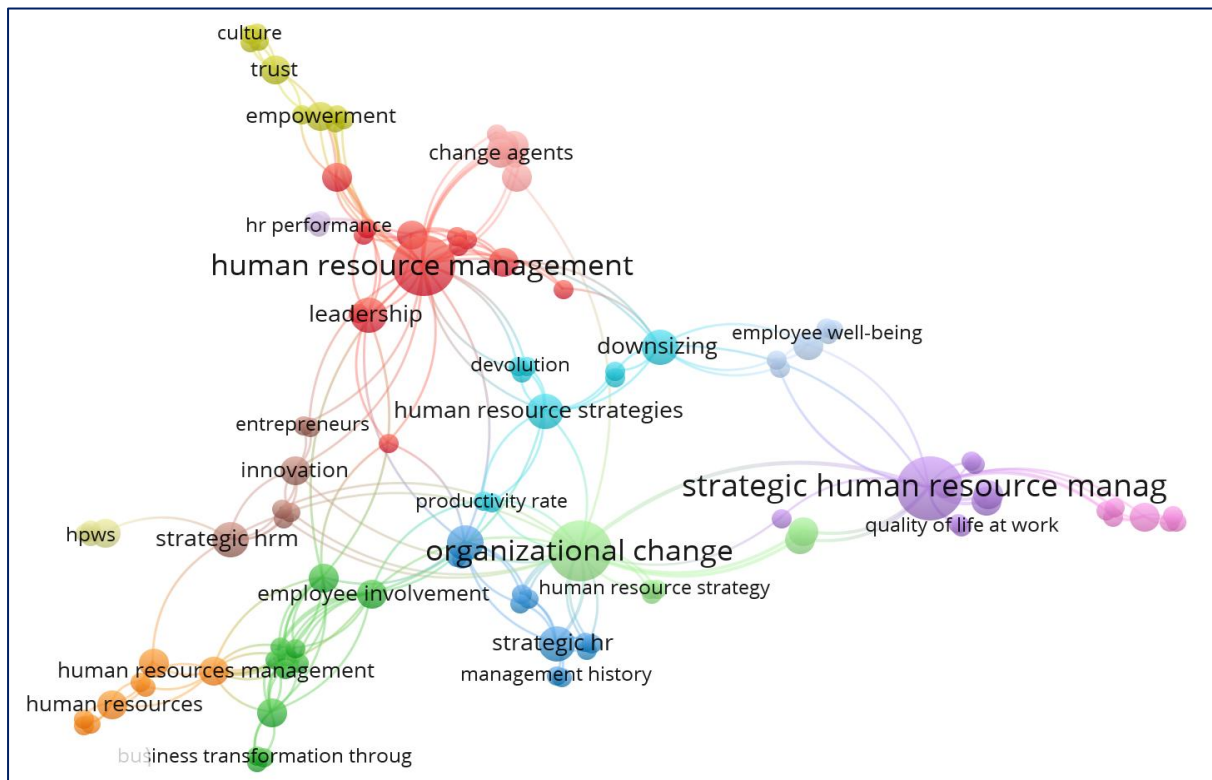


In the more recent phase, from approximately 2023 onward, research trends move toward outcomes and future-oriented themes. Strategic HR is increasingly linked with employee behavior, innovation, and digital transformation. The emergence of these interconnected clusters indicates a broadening of the field toward technology-enabled change, behavioral outcomes, and innovation-driven performance. Overall, the trend trajectory suggests a progression from structural foundations to change management, and finally to digitally mediated and innovation-focused HR strategies, highlighting the expanding strategic scope of HRM research over the past decade.

4.9 Keywords

The keyword network highlights the intellectual structure of research on strategic human resource management and organizational change. Central and frequently connected keywords include human resource management, strategic human resource management, **and** organizational change, indicating their role as core anchoring concepts in the literature. These terms function as bridges linking traditional HRM perspectives with transformation-oriented research. A strong cluster around leadership, change agents, and HR performance reflects the emphasis on the strategic and behavioral role of HR in driving change initiatives. Closely related keywords such as empowerment, trust, and organizational culture point to the growing focus on relational and cultural mechanisms that support effective change processes. Another prominent set of keywords includes **human resource strategy**, **human resource strategies**, **devolution**, and **downsizing**, which together signal sustained scholarly attention to strategic decision-making, restructuring, and the redistribution of HR responsibilities during periods of transition. The linkage between **downsizing** and **employee well-being** highlights concerns around the human consequences of strategic change. Emerging and complementary keywords such as **innovation**, **employee involvement**, **productivity rate**, and **high-performance work systems (HPWS)** suggest an outcomes-oriented stream that connects HR practices with organizational effectiveness. Additionally, terms like **quality of life at work**, **entrepreneurship**, and **business transformation** indicate a broader and more integrative understanding of HRM's role in long-term organizational sustainability and transformation. Overall, the keyword structure reflects a balanced integration of strategic, behavioral, and change-oriented perspectives, underscoring the evolution of HRM research from administrative functions toward a central role in organizational transformation.

Figure 4 Keywords



4.10 Thematic Map

The thematic map provides a structured overview of the knowledge domains within the strategic human resource management literature, based on centrality and density dimensions. The **motor themes**, positioned in the upper-right quadrant, include *human resource management*, *leadership*, and *Australia*. Their high centrality and density indicate that these themes are both well developed and highly influential, forming the intellectual backbone of the field. Closely aligned with these are *strategic human resource management*, *organizational change*, and *change management*, which together reflect the dominant research focus on HR's strategic role in managing and enabling organizational transformation. The **basic themes**, located in the lower-right quadrant, comprise *downsizing*, *human resource strategies*, and *firm performance*. These themes are central to the field but comparatively less developed, suggesting that while they are essential to understanding strategic HRM outcomes, they continue to offer scope for deeper theoretical and empirical refinement.

Figure 5 Thematic Map



In the upper-left quadrant, the **niche themes** such as *employee involvement*, *human resources*, and *human resources management* exhibit high internal development but lower centrality. This positioning indicates specialized research streams that are conceptually mature yet relatively isolated from the broader thematic structure. The **emerging or declining themes**, shown in the lower-left quadrant, include *human capital*, *organizational structure*, and *trust*. Their low density and centrality suggest either nascent areas that have not yet been fully integrated into mainstream strategic HRM research or topics experiencing reduced scholarly attention over time. Overall, the thematic map illustrates a field anchored by strategic HRM and organizational change, with leadership-driven HR practices acting as key engines of research. At the same time, it highlights opportunities for future studies to strengthen linkages between emerging themes and core strategic HRM debates, particularly in relation to performance outcomes and organizational design.

4.11 Tree Map

The treemap visualizes the relative prominence of key themes within the literature on strategic human resource management and organizational transformation. The largest blocks correspond to *strategic human resource management* and *human resource management*, each accounting for the highest share of occurrences, indicating their central position in the knowledge structure of the field. Closely following these are *organizational change*, *change management*, and *strategic HR*, which together reinforce the strong alignment between HR strategy and change-oriented organizational processes. A second tier of themes includes *downsizing*, *human resource strategies*, *leadership*, and *Australia*. Their moderate size suggests sustained but more focused scholarly attention, often linked to contextual applications, leadership roles during transformation, and regional research contributions. Themes such as *culture change*, *human capital*, *digital transformation*, *action research*, and *employee involvement* appear with smaller

yet notable representation, reflecting their supporting role in explaining mechanisms through which strategic HRM influences transformation outcomes.

Figure 6 Tree Map



Smaller blocks, including *bibliometry*, *bureaucracy*, *trust*, *innovation*, *career development*, *public sector organizations*, and *banking industry*, represent specialized or emerging lines of inquiry. Although their individual frequency is limited, these themes point to diversification in research interests and indicate opportunities for deeper exploration and integration with core strategic HRM debates. Overall, the tree map highlights a field dominated by foundational strategic HRM and organizational change concepts, while also revealing a broadening thematic landscape where contextual, methodological, and sector-specific perspectives are gradually gaining visibility.

5. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The thematic patterns identified in the bibliometric analysis indicate several promising directions for future research in strategic human resource management and organizational transformation. First, although strategic human resource management and organizational change dominate the literature, future studies should move beyond conceptual alignment and examine causal mechanisms through longitudinal and mixed-method designs. Such approaches can clarify how specific HR strategies translate into sustained transformation outcomes over time, particularly during periods of structural disruption or strategic renewal. Second, emerging themes such as digital transformation, innovation, and action research remain underexplored relative to their practical significance. Future research should investigate how digital HR systems, analytics, and AI-enabled HR practices reshape strategic decision-making, employee roles, and change processes. Empirical studies that integrate digital transformation with strategic HRM frameworks would contribute to theory development and offer evidence-based guidance for organizations navigating technology-driven change. Third, the moderate presence

of themes related to leadership, culture change, trust, and empowerment suggests the need for deeper behavioral and micro-level analysis. Future research can focus on how leadership styles, employee involvement, and trust-building practices mediate the relationship between HR strategies and transformation success. Multilevel studies that link individual perceptions with organizational outcomes would be particularly valuable in addressing this gap. Fourth, sectoral and contextual themes such as public sector organizations, banking, and region-specific studies, including those centered on Australia and other national contexts, indicate scope for comparative and cross-cultural research. Future studies should examine how institutional environments, labor regulations, and cultural norms shape the design and effectiveness of strategic HRM during transformation. Comparative studies across developed and emerging economies would strengthen the external validity of existing models. Fifth, themes related to downsizing, firm performance, and human capital highlight the continued relevance of performance-oriented research. However, future work should adopt a balanced perspective by incorporating employee well-being, quality of life at work, and ethical considerations. This would allow researchers to assess not only efficiency outcomes but also the long-term sustainability and social implications of transformation-oriented HR strategies. Finally, the limited representation of bibliometric and methodological themes suggests an opportunity for further knowledge mapping and theory integration. Future bibliometric studies can extend the analysis by incorporating co-citation, historiographic, and thematic evolution techniques across longer time horizons. Such efforts would help consolidate fragmented research streams and guide scholars toward more integrative and theoretically grounded investigations. In sum, future research should aim for greater methodological rigor, contextual sensitivity, and theoretical integration to advance understanding of how strategic human resource management contributes to effective and sustainable organizational transformation.

6. CONCLUSION

This bibliometric study provides a comprehensive overview of the intellectual structure, thematic evolution, and research trends in the domain of strategic human resource management and organizational transformation. By systematically analyzing publications indexed in Scopus and Web of Science, the study maps the growth trajectory of the field, identifies influential authors, institutions, and countries, and highlights the dominant and emerging research themes that have shaped scholarly discourse over the past two decades. The findings indicate that strategic human resource management and organizational change constitute the core pillars of the literature, reflecting sustained academic interest in aligning HR strategies with transformation initiatives. Themes such as change management, leadership, and human resource strategies further reinforce the central role of HR as a strategic partner in managing organizational transitions. At the same time, the presence of topics such as downsizing, firm performance, and human capital underscores the performance-driven orientation that continues to characterise much of the research in this area. The thematic and keyword analyses reveal a gradual broadening of the research landscape. While foundational concepts dominate, newer themes related to digital transformation, employee well-being, empowerment, and innovation are gaining visibility, suggesting a shift toward more integrative and human-centred

perspectives. The thematic map and tree map analyses also demonstrate that, although several themes remain peripheral or niche, they represent important opportunities for future theoretical and empirical development, particularly in relation to context-specific and sectoral studies. Overall, this study contributes to the literature by offering a structured synthesis of existing research and by clarifying how the field has evolved. The bibliometric approach adopted enables an objective assessment of research patterns and provides a robust foundation for identifying gaps and future research directions. By consolidating fragmented streams of inquiry, the study serves as a valuable reference for scholars seeking to advance theory, as well as for practitioners interested in understanding the strategic role of human resource management in driving effective and sustainable organizational transformation.

7. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

This bibliometric analysis offers several important implications for theory, research, and practice in the domain of strategic human resource management and organizational transformation.

Theoretical implications

The study clarifies the intellectual foundations of strategic human resource management by systematically mapping its linkage with organizational transformation, change management, and performance-oriented outcomes. By identifying dominant and emerging themes, the analysis highlights the continued relevance of classical strategic HRM theories while also signaling a gradual shift toward integrative perspectives that incorporate leadership, employee well-being, empowerment, and innovation. The clustering of themes suggests that future theory development should move beyond linear HR–performance models and adopt multi-level and dynamic frameworks that better explain how HR strategies evolve during periods of organizational change. In addition, the identification of niche and emerging themes provides a basis for extending existing theories to underexplored contexts, such as digital transformation and non-Western organizational settings.

Methodological implications

From a methodological standpoint, the study demonstrates the value of bibliometric techniques, including performance analysis, co-citation analysis, and thematic mapping, in synthesizing a fragmented body of literature. The structured use of Scopus and Web of Science data ensures rigor and transparency, offering a replicable approach for future reviews in related HR and management domains. The findings also indicate the need for complementary methodologies. While bibliometric analysis captures macro-level patterns, future research can benefit from integrating systematic literature reviews, meta-analyses, and qualitative syntheses to deepen theoretical interpretation and contextual understanding.

Implications for future research

The results point to several promising research avenues. The relative concentration of studies in developed economies suggests a need for greater empirical attention to emerging markets and sector-specific contexts. The growing prominence of themes such as digital transformation, employee involvement, and quality of work life indicates opportunities for longitudinal and mixed-method studies that examine how strategic HRM practices support continuous

transformation. Moreover, the limited cross-country collaboration observed in the literature highlights the potential for comparative and cross-cultural research to enrich the field.

Practical and managerial implications

For practitioners, the study reinforces the strategic role of HRM as a key driver of organizational transformation rather than a purely administrative function. The prominence of leadership, change agents, and HR strategy alignment suggests that organizations should invest in developing HR capabilities that support adaptability, employee engagement, and strategic integration. Managers can use the insights from dominant themes to benchmark their HR practices against established research trends, while emerging themes guide proactively addressing future challenges related to digitalization, restructuring, and workforce sustainability.

In summary, this study not only consolidates existing knowledge but also offers a structured foundation for advancing theory, refining research methods, and informing strategic HR practice in the context of organizational transformation.

8. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no known financial or non-financial conflicts of interest associated with this manuscript.

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AI-assisted tools were used solely to improve the manuscript's language quality, clarity, and presentation. Grammarly and QuillBot were utilized for assistance with grammar, style, and paraphrasing. Turnitin was employed to check plagiarism and potential AI-generated content. No AI tool was used to generate original scholarly content, data, analyses, or conclusions. The authors take full responsibility for the originality, accuracy, and integrity of the manuscript.

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Uma Madhusudhan: Conceptualized the study, wrote the original draft, contributed to reviewing and editing the manuscript.

Dr Leena James: Collected data, performed formal analysis, secured additional funding, and contributed to reviewing and editing the manuscript.