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Bibliometric Analysis of University Social Responsibility: Advancing Transparency and Sustainability in Higher Education

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Abstract

While the importance of University Social Responsibility (USR) is widely acknowledged in academic discourse, there remain substantial gaps in understanding how it interacts with sustainability, especially in terms of transparency as a measurable outcome. This study specifically addresses these gaps by employing bibliometric analysis to comprehensively explore the scope of literature on 'University Social Responsibility,' establishing it as a crucial transparency indicator for sustainability practices in higher education institutions. Using the VOSviewer tool, data from 356 scientific articles, published between 2006 and 2023 and sourced from Scopus, were meticulously analyzed. This analysis elucidates the relationships between authors, journals, and keywords, providing fresh insights into the evolving research landscape. These insights identify emerging trends that link USR to sustainability initiatives in higher education and elucidate the relationship between USR and transparency in achieving sustainability goals. The findings offer valuable insights for researchers and policymakers, underscoring the importance of transparency-based USR practices in promoting sustainable development.

Keywords: university; social responsibility; sustainability; environmental accounting; circular economic

INTRODUCTION

In the face of recent global challenges, such as climate change, inequality, and the evolution of digital technology, there is an amplified demand for universities to adopt socially responsible and transparent practices. Although the importance of USR is widely recognized, significant gaps remain in understanding its integration with sustainability, particularly regarding transparency as

a measurable outcome. This study seeks to address these gaps by offering a novel perspective that conceptualizes USR as a transparency indicator for sustainability in higher education. Diverging from previous research which primarily focuses on the theoretical underpinnings of USR (Findler et al., 2019; Valencia-Arias et al., 2024), this research employs bibliometric analysis to provide an empirical overview of research trends, interconnections, and future directions. The findings challenge traditional views by demonstrating how transparency in USR practices can act as a catalyst for achieving sustainability goals. Additionally, recent studies such as those by García-Aracil et al. (2023), have highlighted the integration of USR with global frameworks like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the pivotal role of digital technologies in enhancing transparency. Building on these insights, this research explores how emerging trends and methodologies, as revealed through VOSviewer analysis, can reshape the understanding and application of USR in higher education.

By addressing these aspects, the study enhances the evolving discourse on University Social Responsibility (USR), not only by mapping existing knowledge but also by identifying actionable strategies for higher education institutions to align their sustainability initiatives with global standards of accountability and transparency. Academics in higher education are among the key implementers of USR, which is not as well-known to the public compared to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). USR essentially embodies an ethical policy that universities implement, influenced by the performance of all higher education stakeholders, including students, managers, teachers, and all employees (Huang, 2020; Suhartini et al., 2022). Through its management, higher education is responsible for the resulting educational and environmental impacts, leading to interrelated interactions between universities and communities in achieving sustainable development goals. Moreover, as higher education institutions also function as business entities, the concepts and ideas of CSR are applicable to universities as well (Castillo-Villar, 2021; Lo et al., 2017). The role of universities is crucial in creating the social and cultural conditions necessary for sustainability, promoting public understanding and sustainability awareness (Agustina, 2022).

The concept of University Social Responsibility (USR) has evolved in tandem with a paradigm shift in higher education, which has moved from focusing solely on teaching and research to placing greater emphasis on the social role of higher education in community development (Morawska-Jancelewicz, 2022; Terán-Yépez et al., 2020). USR refers to the responsibility that universities hold towards the community and the surrounding environment (DeLa Rey et al., 2020; Hollister, 2021; Poff, 2019).

Research on USR from various countries, including both developed (Smith et al., 2017; Stensaker et al., 2019) and developing nations (Patel et al., 2020), reveals limitations in current practices. Notably, in developing countries like Indonesia, the implementation of USR and environmental performance reporting is minimal (Ronaldo & Suryanto, 2022). Despite this, USR helps universities integrate sustainability principles into their operations and actively contribute towards a sustainable future (Sepasi et al., 2018).

Despite recent growth in USR research (Joshi, 2020; Suhardiyah & Nurdina, 2019), a systematic literature review is necessary to provide an updated overview of ongoing research and offer valuable direction for future studies. University Social Responsibility (USR) helps universities integrate sustainability principles into their operations and play a more active role in creating a more sustainable future. The research on the perception of USR (University Social Responsibility) by Almutawa dan Hewaidy (2020) dan Barnett dan Guzman-Valenzuela (2022) indicates a lack of theoretical models for social responsibility in higher education. Therefore, despite the tremendous growth in the field of USR research recently, a systematic literature review is needed to provide an up-to-date picture of ongoing research and provide useful direction for future research (Tashakor et al., 2019).

In this context, we have four research questions. The first question is, "What are the most influential publications, authors, and institutions that deal with the research on USR activities in higher education?". We seek to identify the most influential publications, authors, and institutions that have significantly contributed to research on USR activities in higher education. The second question is, "How has the literature in the field of integrating USR in higher education developed historically, and how has it spread

geographically?". We aim to explore how literature regarding the integration of USR in higher education has developed over time and spread across different geographical regions. The third question is, "What is the scope of research, and what are the key trends for future scientific research in integrating USR in higher education activities?". Our objective is also to determine the scope of current research on integrating USR into higher education activities and identify key trends that may shape future scientific research in this area. Finally, the last research question is whether USR is integrated into higher education activities. Finally, we wish to examine whether there has successful integration of USR into higher education activities.

In facing these four questions, researchers contribute to two streams of literature, namely the USR and the Sustainability Report (SR). The researcher illustrates the evolution of the research field at the intersection between USR activities in universities and SR and sheds light on the factors that drive college SR to adopt USR and the impact of USR practices. So far, especially in Indonesia, there has been no systematic literature review or bibliometric research mapping between SR and USR in higher education environments.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Bibliometrics is the application of mathematical statistical concepts in information science focused on analyzing books, articles, and other publications. The bibliometric approach has several advantages over traditional methods such as literature review or study. First, through bibliometric methods, a comprehensive picture of the network of research topics can be produced by analyzing hundreds to tens of thousands of documents contained in complete databases using professional software and high-performance computing (Garfield, 1955; Mota et al., 2021; Pritchard, 1969). Second, the impact of a research field, a particular group of researchers, or even a specific paper can be quantitatively measured through citation analysis conducted in a bibliometric approach (Markoulli et al., 2017). Third, this approach also efficiently identifies classical literature and significant research topics within a research field (Jones & Gatrell, 2014; Kraus et al., 2023).

METHOD

This study uses the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method and Bibliometric Analysis, which the research objectives have selected. Both generate quantitative data

involving publications, sources, authors, organizations, countries, keywords, topics, and trends in USR in higher education (Monteiro et al., 2021; Yu et al., 2020).

To understand the development of USR from 2006-2023 and summarize the driving factors and results of USR adoption in universities, researchers conducted a systematic literature review (SLR) utilizing the Elsevier Scopus database supported by bibliometric mapping. SLR is necessary to systematically evaluate a given literature framework (Ginsberg & Venkatraman, 1985). In addition, as a thorough, structured, and analytical tool for accurately managing reviews, SLR is an efficient method of spotting future research opportunities (Jones & Gatrell, 2014; Klassen et al., 1998; Kraus et al., 2023).

The Data

This study used data sources from Elsevier Scopus and was analyzed through Bibliometric Analysis to determine its impact. Bibliometric analysis aims to "summarize large amounts of bibliometric data to describe a research topic or field's intellectual structure and emerging trends (Dey & Russell, 2022; Donthu et al., 2021). The data for this study were sourced from the Elsevier Scopus database, renowned for its comprehensive coverage of peer-reviewed literature across various disciplines. The search process was conducted directly on the Scopus platform at www.scopus.com to ensure reliable and high-quality data collection.

To gather relevant articles, the keyword "University Social Responsibility" was used. The search strategy included the following steps:

1. Keyword Input: The primary keyword was entered into the Scopus search bar within quotation marks ("") to ensure exact matches and to exclude irrelevant results.
2. Search Fields: The search was conducted across titles, abstracts, and keywords to capture comprehensive data on relevant publications.
3. Exporting Data: The search results were exported in CSV format, including metadata such as author names, publication titles, journal names, keywords, and citation counts. This format was chosen for its compatibility with bibliometric tools like VOSviewer.

Bibliometric analysis is carried out in stages, namely, Descriptive Analysis, to understand the contribution of the analyzed object to a particular scientific field through science mapping through VOSviewer.

Science mapping is a collection of methods and techniques that allow us to develop visualizations of science maps to reveal structural and dynamic aspects of scientific knowledge (Petrovich, 2021; Shah et al., 2020). This research uses VOSviewer version 1.16.19 based on scientific principles to create maps, networks, and useful data.

Science mapping is a critical tool in research, providing visual representations of the relationships and interactions within scientific domains (Manetti & Bellucci, 2016; Ogilvy et al., 2022). These techniques allow us to understand and visualize scientific fields' structure, dynamics, and evolution. The main methods for science mapping include bibliometric analysis, network analysis, co-citation analysis, and co-word analysis (Donthu et al., 2021). Bibliometric research involves quantitative evaluation of published material to track trends over time or across different geographical regions. Network analysis maps relationships between entities such as authors or institutions. Co-citation analysis identifies frequently cited pairs of publications to discern key works in a field, while co-word study reveals thematic connections by examining continually occurring keywords together. These techniques can see at Table 1, these is offer valuable insights into the landscape of a particular scientific field by highlighting influential works, prominent themes, collaboration patterns among researchers or institutions, and emerging trends.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The search results from the Scopus web show that the research development with the keyword "University Social Responsibility" is still small. From 2006 to 2023, only 356 studies. The following Figure 1 provides a visual representation of research trends and patterns in the University Social Responsibility (USR) field. This graph, or University Social Responsibility Research Graph, is designed to provide an overview of the evolution and current state of USR research. It highlights key publications, authors, and institutions significantly contributing to the field (Ajmi et al., 2019; Mota et al., 2021). Moreover, it analyzes how USR research has developed and spread across different geographical regions. The graph also identifies major themes or areas within USR research by examining frequently occurring keywords in published articles (Marrone et al., 2020). By visualizing these complex relationships and trends in a single

Table 1. Main Techniques for Science Mapping

No	Technique	Goal	Link	Node	Metadata
1	Citation analysis	To identify the most influential authors, publications, and sources in the research field	Relationships among publications	Documents	Author name Citations Title Journals References
2	Co-authorship analysis	To identify the most influential authors, institutions, or countries in the research field	Relationships among authors and their affiliations	Authors Affiliations	Author Affiliation (institution and country)
3	Bibliographic coupling	To understand the themes and the scope of a research field	Relationships among citing publications	Documents	Author name Title Journals DOI References
4	Co-citation analysis	To understand the development of the foundational themes in a research field	Relationships among cited publications	Documents	References
5	Co-word analysis	To explore the existing or future topics in a research field	Relationships among topics	Words	Title Abstract Author key words Index keywords Full text

figure, we can understand the landscape of USR research – from its historical development to emerging trends that may shape its future direction (Quinn et al., 2022).

The development of research has seen a significant increase, particularly after 2020. This upward trend is visualized in Figure 1, which captures the temporal progression and highlights the surge in interest, possibly driven by global sustainability initiatives and the heightened focus on higher education's role in addressing societal challenges.

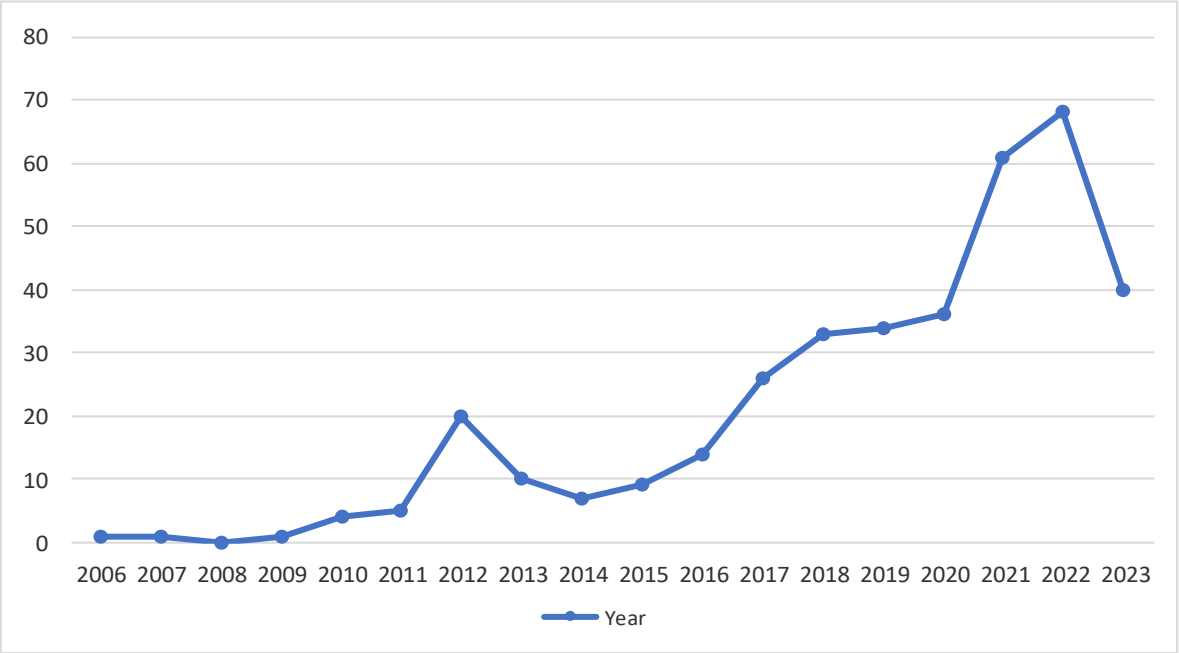

Figure 1. USR Research Graph 2006-2023

From Figure 1, it can be seen that the development of research on USR has increased, especially after 2020, as can be seen in Table 2. Table 2 presents a comprehensive overview of the development of research in the "University Social Responsibility" (USR) field. This tabular representation provides an organized and detailed account of various facets associated with USR research, such as key publications, influential authors, leading institutions, and primary themes. It also highlights the geographical distribution and temporal progression of this research field. The table illustrates trends over time, showcasing how USR has evolved in academia. By exploring these patterns , we can gain insightsinto historical shifts in focus areas and anticipate potential future directions for USR research. This systematic review will provide readers with a structured understanding of where the field stands today based on its trajectory.

Network Visualization Co-words

The network serves to show the network between visualized terms. If the trajectory or network in bibliometric analysis is bold, it offers a relationship between one term (term) and another term (term) that is quite numerous and strong. On the other hand, if the relationship between words and one another is a

Table 2. Research Development "University Social Responsibility"

No	Publication Year	Amount
1	2006	1
2	2007	1
3	2008	0
4	2009	1
5	2010	4
6	2011	5
7	2012	20
8	2013	8
9	2014	7
10	2015	9
11	2016	14
12	2017	26
13	2018	32
14	2019	33
15	2020	36
16	2021	60
17	2022	67
18	2023	32
	Total	356

thin print with a small circle, then it shows a weak relationship between the terms observed (Hirawan et al., 2022; Sood et al., 2021).

Using VOSviewer, a co-occurrence keyword network was generated, identifying 46 keywords meeting the minimum threshold of five occurrences. These keywords were grouped into six clusters (Figure 2), each representing thematic areas within USR research.

Clusters in network visualization in this study are as follows:

1) Cluster 1, its red color comprises 13 items: curriculum, education, environmental education, human, human experiment, knowledge, learning, perception, responsibility, service learning, student, teaching, and university sector. Focused on educational aspects, including curriculum, teaching, and environmental education. This cluster emphasizes the central role of academic frameworks in promoting USR
2) Cluster 2, it has a green color consisting of 11 items, namely economic and social efforts, education computing, higher education institutions, knowledge management, planning, service learning, social aspects, social responsibilities, student

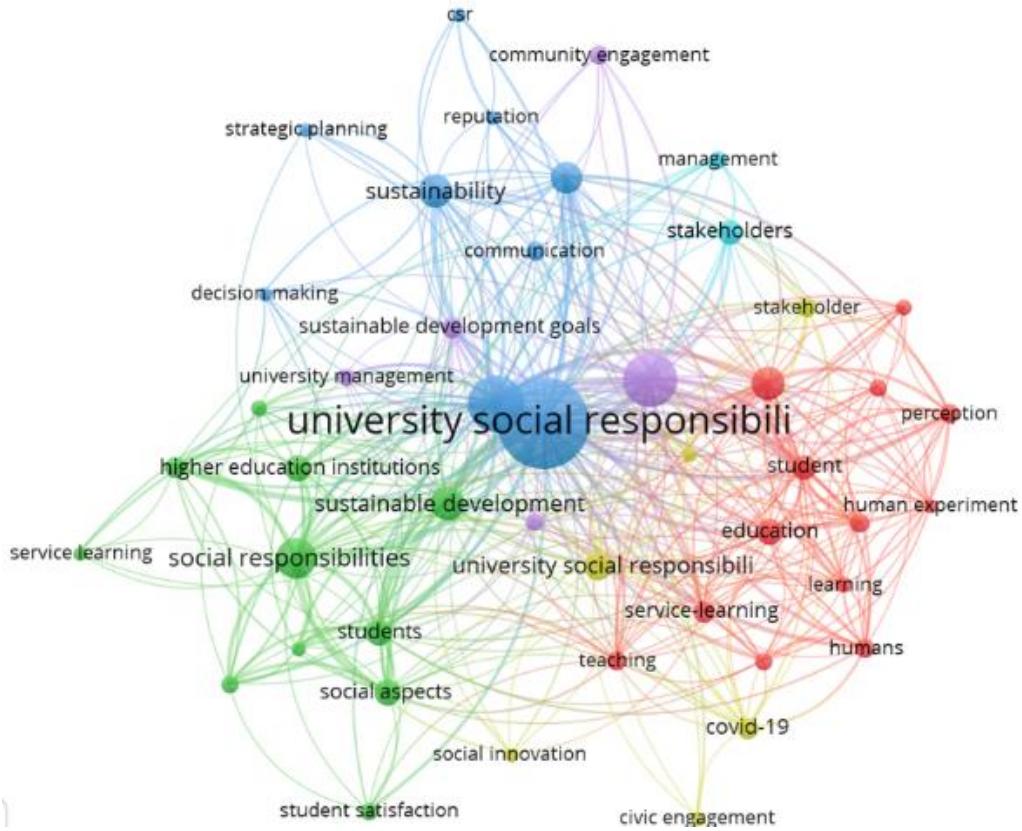

Figure 2. Network Visualization

satisfaction, students, and sustainable development. It means related to sustainable development and student satisfaction, reflecting the growing integration of sustainability with student-centered outcomes.

3) Cluster 3, it has a dark blue color consisting of 9 items: communication, corporate social responsibility, csr, decision making, higher education, reputation, strategic planning, and university social responsibility. This cluster are highlighted strategic elements such as corporate social responsibility (CSR) and reputation, suggesting the influence of organizational strategies on USR practices.
4) Cluster 4, it has a yellow color consisting of 6 items: civic engagement, covid-19, social development, social innovation, stakeholders, and university social responsibility.
5) Cluster 5, it is purple and consists of 5 items: community engagement, social participation,

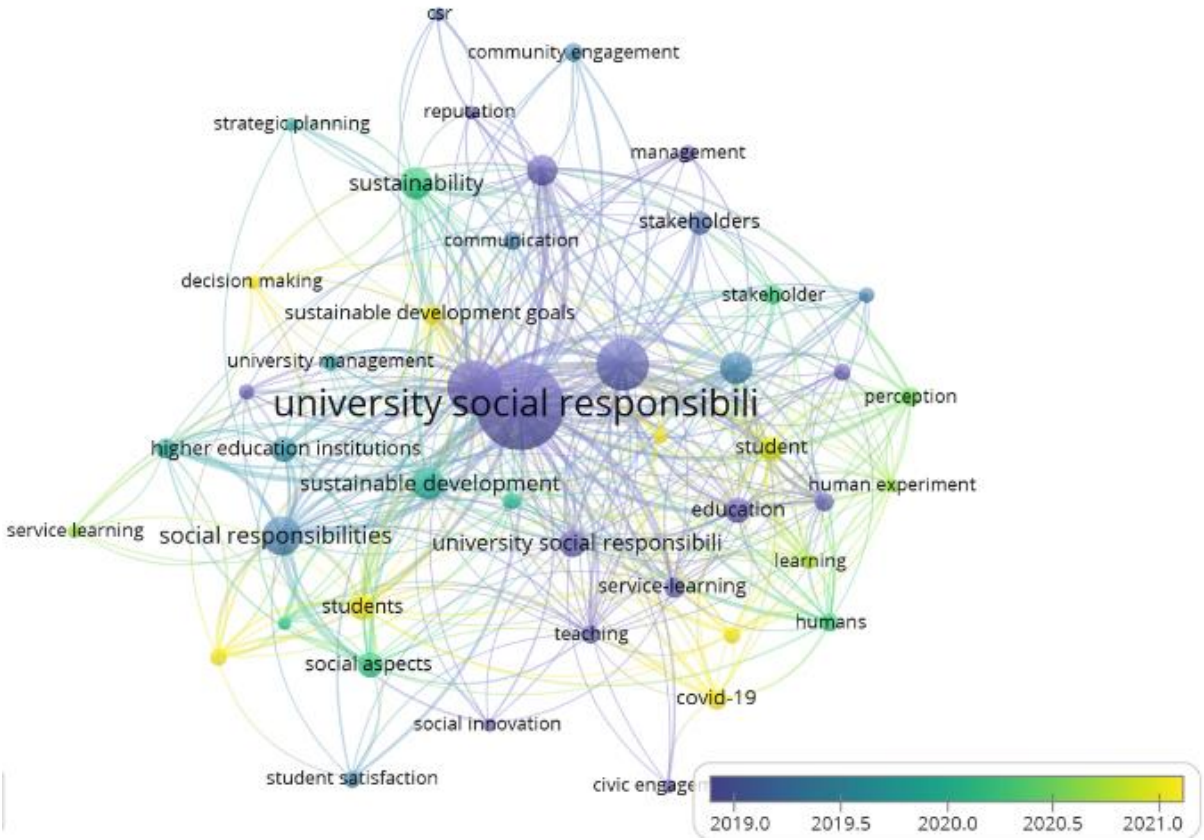

Figure 3. Overlay Visualization.

social responsibility, sustainable development, and university management.

6) Cluster 6, it has a light blue color consisting of 2 items: management and stakeholders.

Thematic clusters highlight key intersections between education, management, and sustainability in USR research. However, the relatively fragmented nature of these clusters' points to the need for more integrative frameworks that can unify these themes under a cohesive theoretical model.

Overlay Visualization Co-words

One of the key features of VOSviewer is the Overlay Visualization Co-words function. This feature allows users to visualize how specific terms or 'co-words' are distributed across different points in time within the body of literature being analyzed (van Eck & Waltman, 2014; Ye, 2018). This type of visualization provides an intuitive and easy-to-understand representation of trends over time in a given field's VOSviewer provides additional mapping methods based on scientific literature - showing which terms are

Table 3. Type Research USR 2006-2023

No	Research	Amount
1	Article	251
2	Book chapter	44
3	Conference paper	42
4	Review	12
5	Note	3
6	Book	2
7	Conference Review	7

most common and how relationships between these terms have evolved over time. The map of University Social Responsibility research development analyzed using VOSviewer software can be seen in Figure 3.

From Table 3, researchers conduct bibliometric analysis to help researchers conduct comprehensive investigations of variables from various angles and highlight their development (Fellnhofer, 2019). Researchers use VOSviewer version 1.16.19 to visualize the bibliometric web because VOSviewer provides additional mapping methods based on scientific principles in the form of maps, networks, and data (Shah et al., 2020). VOSviewer software has three visualization views in bibliometric analysis: network, overlay, and density visualization.

The overlay visualization in Figure 3 shows the increasing relevance of terms like "sustainable development" and "stakeholders," which gained prominence after 2019. This trend aligns with the growing expectation for universities to act as agents of societal change, integrating environmental and social objectives into their operational strategies.

Research on USR documented in Scopus from 2006-2023 is dominated by social sciences at 35.8% and business, management, accounting at 16.4%. The data can be seen in Figure 4.

Overlay Visualization Co-words

Density visualization is an item (label) marked the same as the visible item. Each item point has a color that depends on the item's density at the time. It identifies that the color of points on the map depends on the number of items associated with other things (Muktiarni et al., 2023). This section is very useful for obtaining an overview of the general structure of the bibliometric map by paying attention to the parts of items that are considered important for analysis (Guleria & Kaur, 2021). This worksheet lets you interpret the most widely used author keywords in a

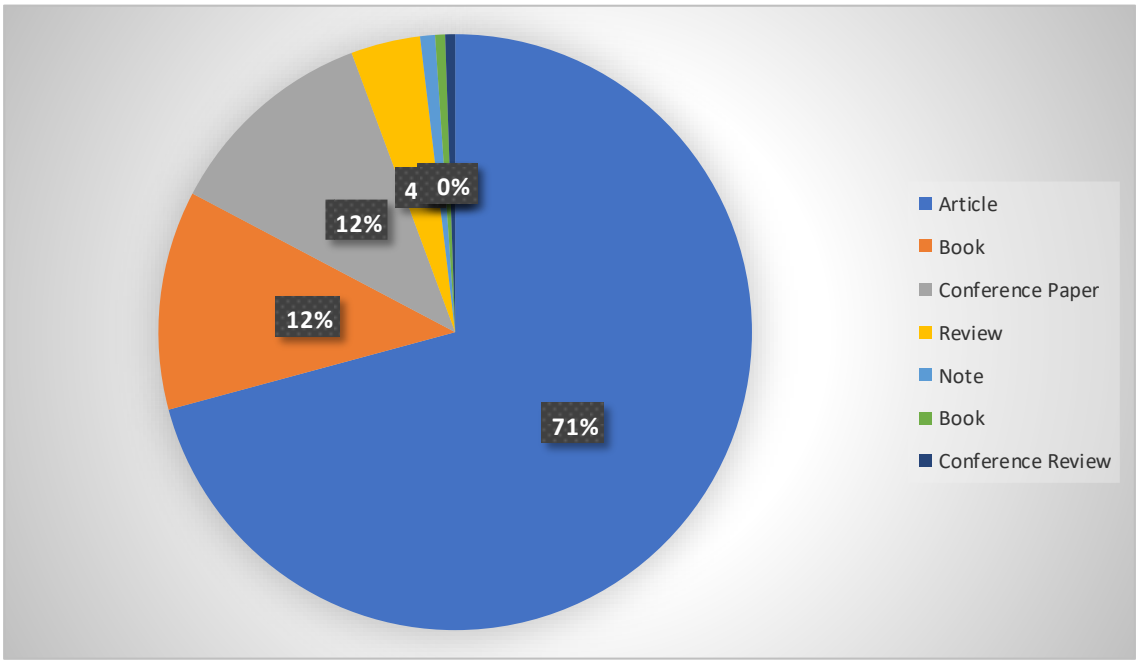

Figure 4. Type Research University Social Responsibility

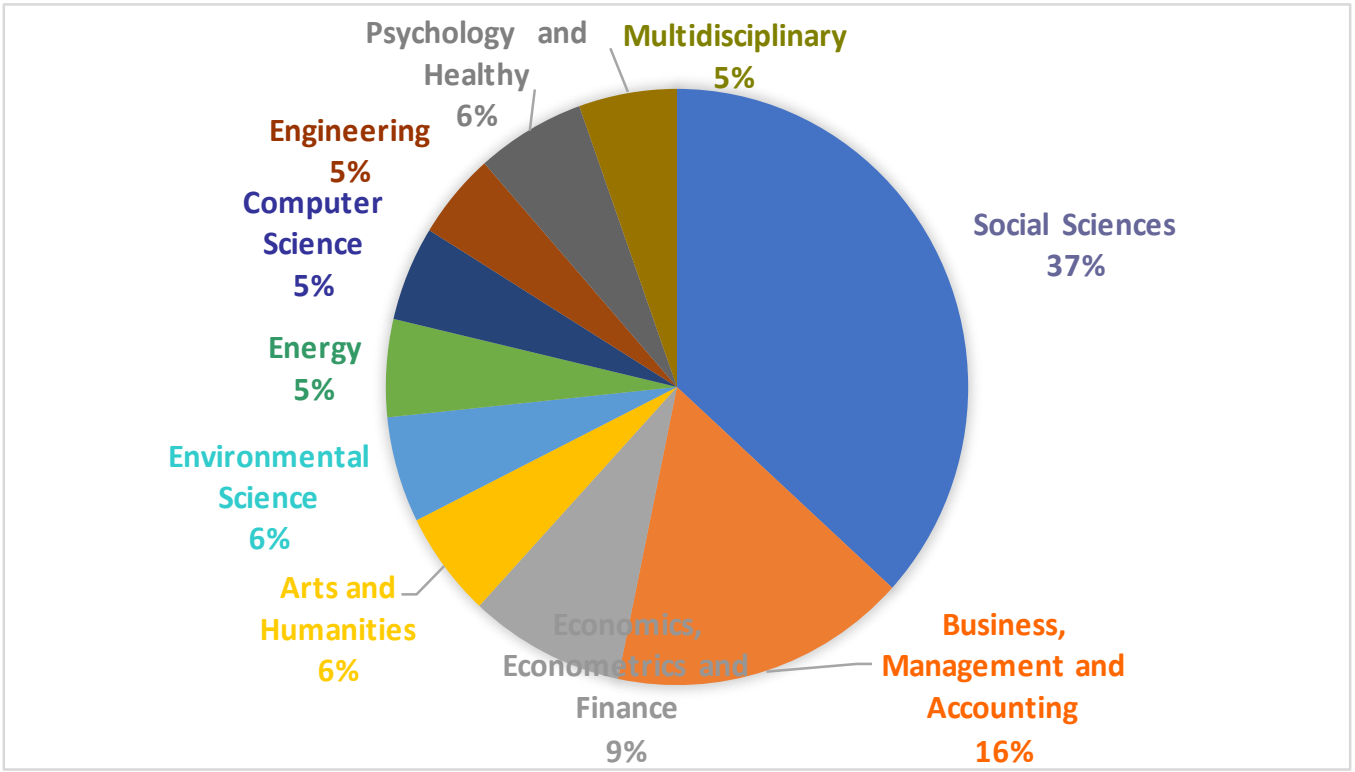

Figure 5. Scope Destination of USR

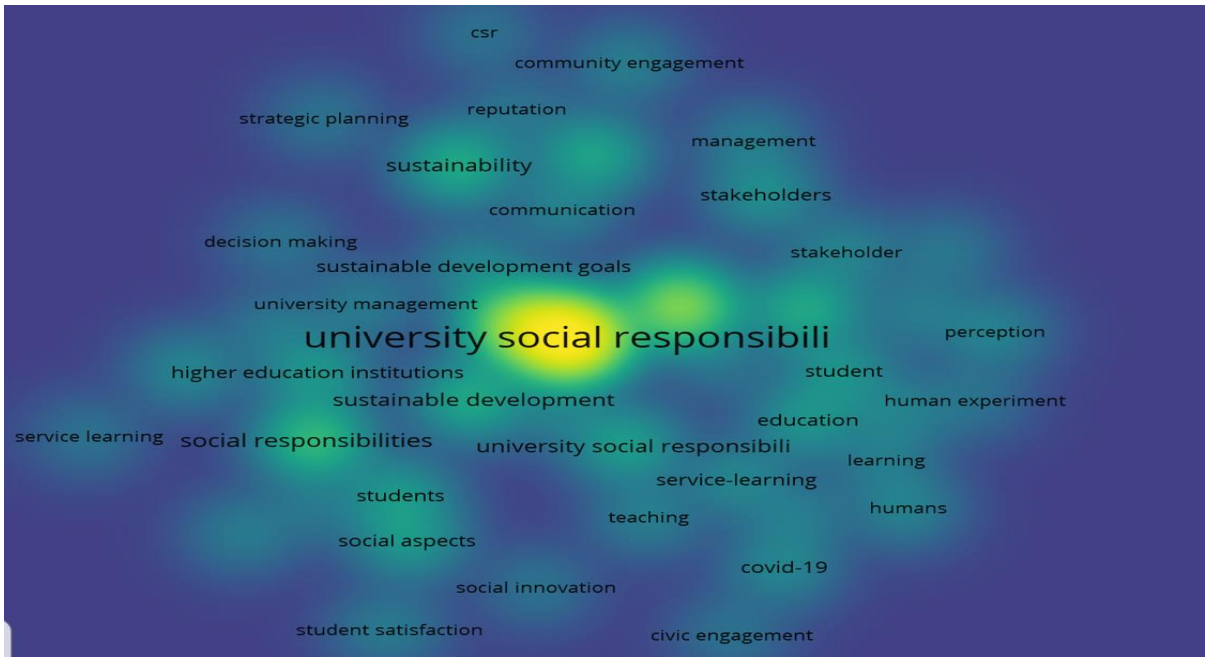

Figure 6. Density Visualization

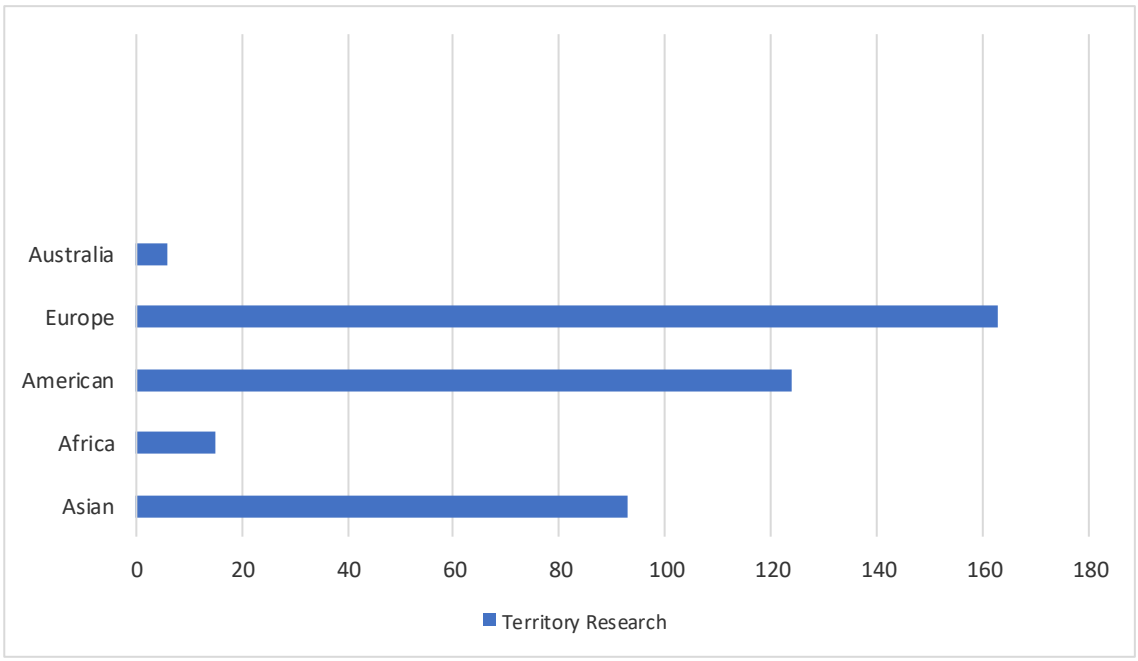

Figure 7. Territory Research USR

publication. Visualization of density map co-word development of USR research can be seen in Figure 5.

Figure 6 shows that many USR research variable items are carried out by directly involving the object of research or using primary data. Most of the research objectives lead to sustainability programs through the

management of higher education management.

Based on data from Scopus in Figure 7, it can also be seen that countries have done a lot of research on USR from 2006-2023. The data also indicate regional disparities in USR research. As depicted in Figure 7, Europe dominates the field, contributing 73 studies, reflecting the region's long-standing emphasis on integrating sustainability into higher education policies. This finding underscores the potential for cross-regional learning and collaboration, particularly in regions where USR research remains nascent.

Discussion

VOSviewer bibliometric analysis in this study revealed increased research interest in USR in the context of universities focusing on sustainability. Based on the concept of seven University Social Responsibilities for sustainable social responsibility (Hollister, 2021; Poff, 2019) in Figure 2, The VOSviewer bibliometric analysis revealed an increasing research interest in USR), particularly in the context of sustainability within higher education. While this study identified 46 keywords across six clusters, the interpretation of these findings requires a broader conceptual and practical framework to fully understand their implications. This discussion synthesizes the results with existing literature, critically evaluates conflicting evidence, and highlights actionable strategies for practitioners and policymakers.

Based on the results of SLR then inserted into mind mapping, it can be seen that USR research that dominance of the Human concept in USR research underscores the centrality of education, curriculum, and stakeholder perceptions. This aligns with Stakeholder Theory (Freeman & Harrison, 1984) which emphasizes the importance of engaging all relevant parties students, staff, and the surrounding community in social responsibility initiatives. The findings also resonate with studies emphasizing the role of curriculum improvement and resource allocation in fostering sustainability (Gallardo, 2023; Jami & Hoseini, 2019; Liu, 2022) and from the results of the study it was obtained that curriculum improvements and additional competent teaching resources are needed. The Human concept also examines many perceptions from students, staff, lecturers, and the environment around universities (Almutawa & Hewaidy, 2020; Flores-Fernandez et al., 2022; Kouatli, 2019; Šimić et al., 2022; Reichel et al.,

2023), the research discusses how important the implementation of higher education social responsibility to the community. Research on the perception of the importance of implementing USR is still minimal in Asia, most of which are carried out in Europe and America. In Asia, research on perceptions of USR in Dubai only discusses comparisons about the implementation of CSR and USR (Kouatli, 2020), while research in India and Croatia by Šimić et al. (2022) says that the level of concern of Croatian students about USR is higher than in India and there is still a lack of curriculum modification about USR. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, research on USR shows that student perceptions are high, but implementation is still lacking (Agustina, 2022).

The implementation of higher education social responsibility is the authority of university management. It aligns with research by Vasquez-Torres and Tavizón-Salazar (2021), which aims to determine the USR management model by distributing questionnaires to students in Mexico as a sample. The minimal implementation of USR, especially in developing countries, is shown by research by Thanasi-Boçe and Kurtishi-Kastrati (2022), where the results showed that concept identification in 14 universities in Albania and North Macedonia turned out to be low scores on USR disclosure. Research in developing countries in Pakistan also indicates that if the perception of USR is implemented, the level of satisfaction and service in universities will also increase (Latif et al., 2021).

The mapping results in Figure 8 also show that the limited focus on environmental and economic aspects indicates a gap in research connecting USR to broader sustainability practices. While ecological accounting and environmental audits are critical for decision-making, the lack of significant exploration in these areas limits the ability to create a comprehensive framework that integrates human, social, environmental, and economic dimensions (Hammoudi et al., 2020). Appropriate management decision-making is one of the links to create social and economic value for universities. It was researched in 23 universities in Poland and found that a practical model is needed to guide universities to carry out their social responsibility (Karwowska, 2021).

The results of the mapping analysis according to bibliometrics with VOSviewer and mapped with mind mapping, then because of the

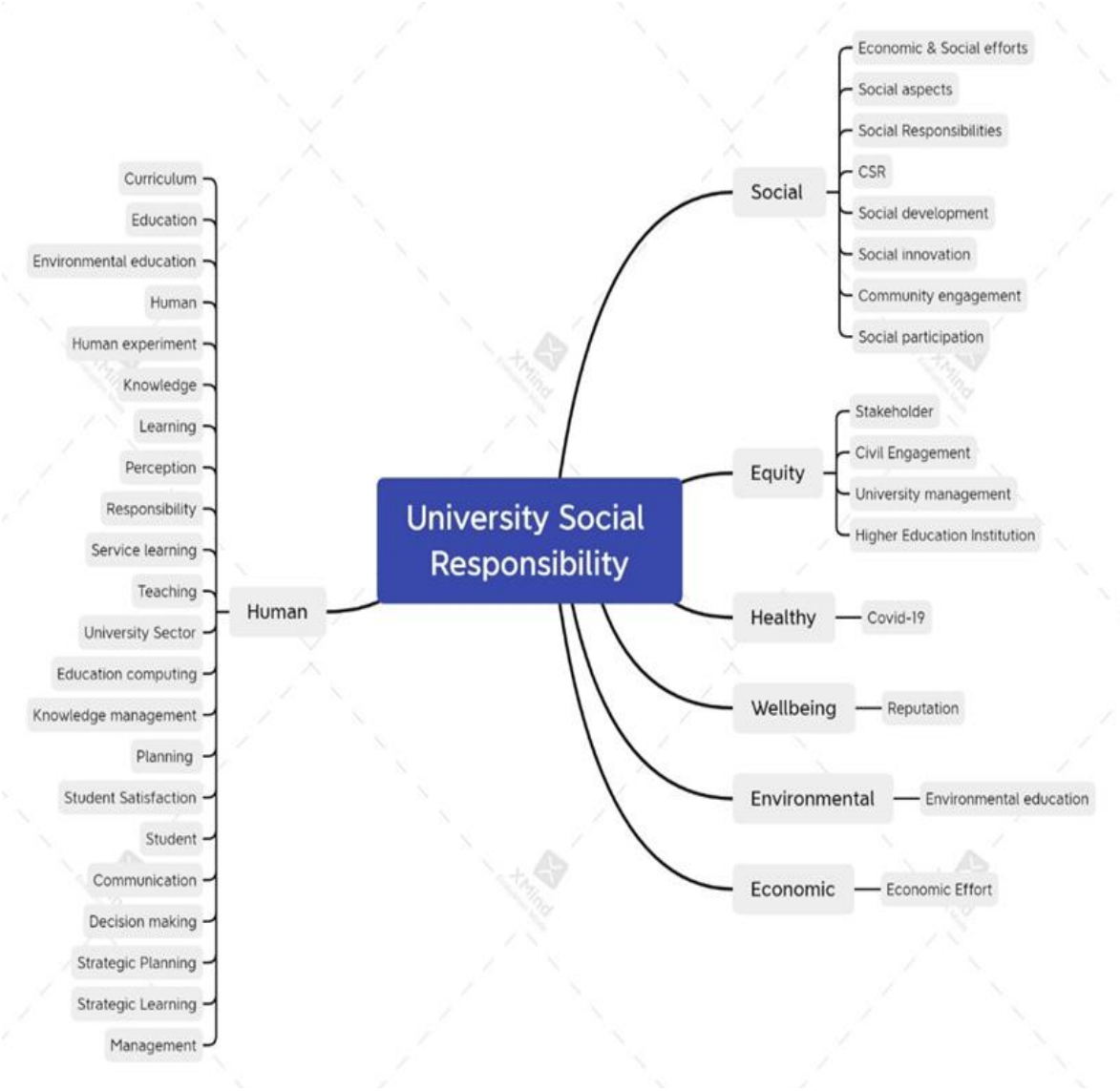

Figure 8. Mind Mapping USR

application of the USR concept that universities have widely done is the concept of Human and Social. The findings align with research by Meseguer-Sánchez et al. (2020), which states that future research should focus on analyzing the relationship between higher education sustainability responsibilities, which should have a financial and economic impact in the short term.

This study highlights the need for multidisciplinary collaboration in USR research. The complexity of sustainability issues requires contributions from various fields, including environmental sciences, economics, and social sciences. Future research should focus on

expanding environmental research like exploring the links between ecological accounting, environmental audits, and stakeholder decision-making. The future research can enhance regional focus like conducting more studies in underrepresented regions like Asia, Africa, and Latin America to ensure a global understanding of USR practices.

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION, AND LIMITATION

Our bibliometric analysis of USR underscores the need for increased collaboration among researchers from diverse disciplines. The multifaceted nature of USR, which encompasses various aspects of sustainability, necessitates a multidisciplinary approach for comprehensive understanding and effective solutions (Oxana, 2021). It is not merely a suggestion but a crucial requirement to address the intricate challenges USR presents.

In addition, our findings emphasize the significance of transparency and accountability in USR literature. It's paramount that higher education institutions demonstrate their commitment to sustainability through explicit, measurable reporting of their social initiatives and impacts. By doing so, they can ensure accountability while fostering trust and engagement with stakeholders.

Research on USR was conducted in several countries, especially in Asia, such as Vietnam, where the results showed that a comprehensive teaching system is needed for sustainability purposes (Khanh & Nguyen, 2022). Universities on the Asian continent need to immediately implement the USR concept because of the large population of Asia and the number of developing countries, so it must be implemented immediately to realize sustainability goals. The implementation of USR implementation in developed countries in Europe and America is a role model for developing countries in America USR is the main strategy in the development of a university (Barnett & Guzman-Valenzuela, 2022; Scavarda et al., 2022).

Moreover, our review indicates that contemporary literature recognizes the vital role external stakeholders play - such as local communities, industries, and government entities - in shaping and evaluating USR initiatives. It underlines the importance of cross-sector collaboration in achieving sustainability goals within university settings. From the results of this study, it can be seen that most

universities, especially in Asia, do not have sustainability reports, which shows that universities have not communicated effectively with stakeholders (González Alcántara et al., 2022). Research on the application of USR in universities that has been carried out mostly only discusses the perceptions of students, staff, academics, and the public about the importance of USR (Comoli et al., 2021; Gosi et al., 2020; Lamperti et al., 2021; Reichel et al., 2023; Reisinger & Dános, 2022)

The novelty lies in our systematic approach to understanding current trends and gaps within the field through bibliometric analysis – an aspect often overlooked by traditional reviews. The novelty of this study is to include the variables of previous research into seven USR concepts, namely Human, Social, Equity, Healthy, Well-being, Environmental, and Economic (Meseguer-Sánchez et al., 2020) so that gap research was obtained that Human and Social concepts dominated research on USR from 2002-2022. The idea of USR on environmental and economic has not been widely studied even though the concept is important to realize sustainability goals.

The limitation of this study is that there is no concrete data from universities on how to apply the USR concept in supporting sustainability programs. Our review is based on available literature; thus, it may not fully capture practical applications or innovative practices not yet documented in academic research. Recommendations for future research: First investigate the causal relationships between USR initiatives and tangible outcomes, such as community well-being or institutional reputation, second develop metrics to assess the short- and long-term impacts of USR programs on financial and economic sustainability, as suggested by (Meseguer-Sánchez et al., 2020) and third explore the role of technology and digital platforms in enhancing the visibility and effectiveness of USR initiatives.

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