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Article

Bibliometric Analysis of Institutional Theory Research

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RESUMO

Este estudo realiza uma análise bibliométrica abrangente da pesquisa em Teoria Institucional, utilizando dados da base de dados Scopus de 1957 a 2023. A investigação empregou uma consulta booleana precisa usando o termo "teoria institucional" com limites específicos para o tipo de artigo e estágio de publicação, resultando em 436 artigos após a remoção de duplicatas. A análise por meio do ScientoPy e do VOSviewer revelou um crescimento significativo das publicações, com uma taxa média de crescimento anual de 6% e 16,7% de todos os artigos publicados no último ano estudado. O Journal of Management Inquiry lidera com 15 publicações (índice h 13), enquanto publicações emergentes demonstram interesse crescente em aplicações de sustentabilidade. O trabalho de Geels (2004) sobre sistemas sociotécnicos, com 2.508 citações, continua sendo a publicação mais influente. Os Estados Unidos dominam com 127 publicações (índice h 46), embora China e Brasil tenham demonstrado contribuições recentes substanciais, com 20% e 33,3% de suas publicações surgindo nos últimos anos, respectivamente. A análise das redes de coautoria revelou três grandes grupos colaborativos centrados em instituições norte-americanas, pesquisadores europeus e um grupo emergente que conecta acadêmicos do Brasil, China e Austrália, com a colaboração interinstitucional aumentando 37% na última década. A pesquisa evoluiu do isomorfismo institucional para temas mais recentes, incluindo legitimidade (índice h 8) e sustentabilidade, que apresentou um aumento de 40% nas publicações recentes. Limitações notáveis incluem a dependência exclusiva do Scopus, que pode ignorar periódicos não indexados e limitar a abrangência. Essas descobertas fornecem estruturas práticas para pesquisadores que exploram pressões institucionais e legitimidade organizacional, ao mesmo tempo que oferecem aos formuladores de políticas estratégias concretas para a concepção de instituições que facilitem a adaptação corporativa aos desafios da sustentabilidade, orientem as respostas organizacionais à transformação digital e aumentem a resiliência a crises globais por meio de mecanismos de inovação e governança institucionais.

Palavras-chave: teoria institucional; análise bibliométrica; tendências de pesquisa; estudos organizacionais; evolução do conhecimento.

ABSTRACT

This study conducts a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of Institutional Theory research, utilizing data from the Scopus database from 1957 to 2023. The investigation employed a precise Boolean query using the term "institutional theory" with specific limits to article type and publication stage, yielding 436 articles after duplicate removal. Analysis through ScientoPy and VOSviewer revealed significant publication growth, with a 6% average annual growth rate and 16.7% of all papers published in the final year studied. The Journal of Management Inquiry leads with 15 publications (h-index 13), while emerging venues show increasing interest in sustainability applications. Geels' (2004) work on socio-technical systems, with 2,508 citations, remains the most influential publication. The United States dominates with 127 publications (h-index 46), although China and Brazil have demonstrated substantial recent contributions, with 20% and 33.3% of their publications appearing in recent years, respectively.

Analysis of co-authorship networks revealed three major collaborative clusters centered around North American institutions, European researchers, and an emerging cluster connecting scholars from Brazil, China, and Australia, with cross-institutional collaboration increasing by 37% over the past decade. Research has evolved from institutional isomorphism to newer themes, including legitimacy (h-index 8) and sustainability, which has seen a 40% increase in recent publications. Notable limitations include reliance solely on Scopus, which may overlook unindexed journals and limit comprehensiveness. These findings provide practical frameworks for researchers exploring institutional pressures and organizational legitimacy while offering policymakers concrete strategies for designing institutions that facilitate corporate adaptation to sustainability challenges, guide organizational responses to digital transformation, and enhance resilience to global crises through institutional innovation and governance mechanisms..

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Keywords: Institutional Theory; bibliometric analysis; research trends; organizational studies; knowledge evolution.

Introduction

Institutional Theory is a cornerstone in organizational studies, providing essential frameworks for understanding how social structures, including schemas, rules, norms, and routines, become authoritative guidelines for social behavior. Since its emergence, this theoretical perspective has been instrumental in explaining organizational phenomena by emphasizing how external pressures shape organizational structures and practices, extending beyond mere efficiency considerations (Prasetyo et al. 2022). Contemporary applications of Institutional Theory have expanded to encompass a broader range of organizational contexts and societal challenges, including sustainability initiatives, digital transformation, and responses to pandemics (Mahmood & Uddin 2021). The theory's enduring relevance speaks to its adaptability in addressing emerging organizational phenomena and its capacity to integrate with complementary theoretical perspectives, such as Resource Dependence Theory and Stakeholder Theory (Daddi et al. 2020; Daddi et al. 2018).

The evolution of Institutional Theory research has progressed through several stages of development. Early work focused on identifying institutional mechanisms and isomorphic pressures (DiMaggio & Powell 1983), followed by examinations of organizational legitimacy and institutional logics (Smith & Tracey 2016). Recently, scholars have expanded into areas such as institutional entrepreneurship, work, and change (Mickiewicz et al. 2021; Eesley et al. 2018). The field has witnessed significant theoretical developments in recent years, including exploring institutional complexity, institutional plurality, and the micro foundations of institutions (Amossé et al. 2025; Gains & Lowndes 2022). These developments have added considerable nuance to our understanding of institutional processes, highlighting the interplay between macro-institutional forces and micro-level agency as organizations navigate increasingly complex and turbulent environments, as formulated by Taser-Erdogan (2022), Chowdhury et al. (2019), and Li et al. (2018).

While Institutional Theory has gained increasing importance in today's complex societal environment (Fedorova 2024), a comprehensive understanding of its intellectual structure and evolution over time is lacking. Previous reviews have typically relied on narrative approaches or focused on specific subdomains, leaving gaps in our holistic understanding of the field's development. The fragmentation of institutional research across multiple disciplines and theoretical traditions has further complicated efforts to develop an integrated view of the field's intellectual trajectory (Migunov & Syutkina 2024). Additionally, the rapid proliferation of institutional studies addressing contemporary challenges, such as digital transformation, sustainable development, and global crises, has created an urgent need for systematically mapping this expanding body of literature (Mashchenko & Radiev 2023; Dubey et al. 2019).

Previous bibliometric studies in management and organizational research have illuminated intellectual structures in related fields (Donthu et al. 2021), but still few has comprehensively examined Institutional Theory's development, particularly considering recent transformative changes brought by globalization, technological advancement, and global crises (Balzano et al. 2024; Gagalyuk & Kovalova, 2023; Orlikowski & Scott, 2023; Davvetas et al., 2022). This study overcomes these limitations by employing advanced bibliometric techniques to analyze the trajectory of Institutional Theory research publications. The methodological sophistication of contemporary bibliometric analysis offers unique advantages for uncovering latent patterns and relationships within sizeable scholarly literature that might otherwise remain obscured through traditional review methods (Kozhakhmet et al. 2023). Furthermore, integrating computational text analysis with network visualization techniques enables a more nuanced examination of the field's conceptual evolution and intellectual structure than previously possible (Patria et al. 2019; Mariani & Borghi 2019).

This study makes significant contributions both theoretically and methodologically to Institutional Theory literature. Theoretically, it identifies the intellectual foundations, core themes, and future research directions in Institutional Theory. Methodologically, it demonstrates the utility of bibliometric analysis in mapping the evolution of theoretical perspectives in organizational studies. Using data from Scopus and analyzing it with VOSviewer and ScientoPy, this study identifies publication patterns, key contributors, influential works, geographical centers of excellence, and emerging research themes. The findings provide valuable insights for scholars seeking to situate their work within the broader landscape of Institutional Theory and identify promising research avenues that address contemporary organizational challenges (Mohamad & Khalil 2024; Koskela-Huotari et al. 2020; Suddaby 2010). Moreover, by comparing citation patterns across different periods, the study reveals shifting theoretical emphases and methodological approaches that reflect the field's response to changing scholarly interests and societal pressures (Huang et al. 2021; Hassan & Serenko 2019).

This study aims to address the following research questions (RQs):

- RQ1: What are the patterns and trends in the evolution of Institutional Theory research publications over the past decade?
- RQ2: Which academic journals and research domains have substantially contributed to studying Institutional Theory?
- RQ3: Who are the most prominent researchers, and what are their seminal works in Institutional Theory research?
- RQ4: Which countries are at the forefront of Institutional Theory research?
- RQ5: What are the primary research themes within Institutional Theory and potential future research directions?

Materials and Methods

Data sources

This study employed the Scopus academic database to collect pertinent publications on Institutional Theory. The specific reason for using Scopus as the sole data source was its extensive coverage of multidisciplinary research, particularly in business, management, and accounting, which are relevant to this study. Scopus provides a broader range of journals, including those indexed in Web of Science (WoS), ensuring comprehensive data collection (Visser et al. 2021). Additionally, Scopus offers more user-friendly search functionalities and structured metadata, facilitating efficient bibliometric analysis. While WoS is also a reputable database, our preliminary comparison indicated that Scopus sufficiently covered the relevant literature for this study's objectives, making it a suitable choice.

A precise search methodology using defined keywords was implemented to acquire accurate literature on indigenous knowledge and sustainable resource management. A Boolean query comprised of terms as follows: ("institutional theory") AND PUBYEAR > 1956 AND PUBYEAR < 2024 AND (LIMIT-TO (SRCTYPE, "j")) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (PUBSTAGE, "final")) exclusively targeted publications, with a particular focus on the title of the articles to ensure quality and relevance. The datasets retrieved via Scopus were collected on September 13, 2024, without restriction to any specific language. The publication period spans from 1957 to 2023, 1957 marking the emergence of early foundational work related to institutional concepts in organizational studies, coinciding with publications by Selznick (1948) that laid the groundwork for later institutional theory development. The endpoint of 2023 represents the last complete year of available data at the time of collection. It provides a comprehensive 66-year trajectory of the field's evolution from its conceptual origins through its contemporary applications.

While Scopus provides comprehensive coverage for this study, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, despite Scopus's extensive indexing, some journals relevant to Institutional Theory may be excluded, particularly those published in languages other than English or from regions with limited representation in international databases. Second, our Boolean search focusing on "institutional theory" in article titles may exclude relevant works that use variant terminology or discuss institutional concepts without explicitly mentioning the theory in their titles. Finally, our focus on journal articles excludes potentially valuable contributions from conference proceedings, book chapters, and doctoral dissertations, which might present emerging or alternative perspectives on Institutional Theory.

Data analysis

Two bibliometric analysis applications, ScientoPy and VOSviewer, were used to scrutinize the acquired data comprehensively. ScientoPy obtained bibliometric details, such as the total number of publications shared over time, trends in authorship, and the co-occurrence of keywords. This instrument meticulously investigates the bibliographic information from Scopus (Ruiz-Rosero et al. 2019). The VOSviewer software was employed to visualize and delineate the intellectual framework of the literature. This application facilitates the identification of clusters, trends, and interconnections among keywords, authors, and publications (Abdullah 2024).

Data synthesis

Through the amalgamation of bibliometric information obtained from ScientoPy and VOSviewer, a comprehensive representation of the scholarly field related to indigenous knowledge and sustainable resource governance was generated. The amalgamation process begins with analyzing and eliminating redundant datasets, as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Preliminary data analysis

Information	Number	Percentage
Original data:		
Loaded papers	439	
Omitted papers by document type	0	0.00%
Total papers after omitted papers removed	439	
Loaded papers from Scopus	439	100.00%
Duplicated removal results:		
Duplicated papers found	3	0.70%
Removed duplicated papers from Scopus	3	0.70%
Duplicated documents with different cited by	1	33.30%
Total papers after removing duplication	436	
Papers from Scopus	436	100.00%

Source: ScientoPy

As illustrated in Table 1, the preliminary findings of the amassed data encompass 439 unrefined datasets procured from publications on Scopus. This inquiry omitted no manuscripts based on the automated document-type filtration approach. Initially, a cumulative total of 439 publications was discerned before the execution of duplicate removal. A total of 3 redundant entries (0.70%) were identified in this examination, which included information from the database. Ultimately, 436 manuscripts were scrutinized and deemed

suitable for integration into the ongoing investigation. After procuring relevant datasets, the subsequent phase analyzes the outcomes in light of the articulated research inquiries.

To ensure methodological transparency and reproducibility, our complete dataset, including search parameters, raw data files, and analytical protocols, has been documented and will be made available upon reasonable request. The sequential analytical process detailed in this section, combined with the use of standardized bibliometric software tools (ScientoPy and VOSviewer), allows other researchers interested in institutional theory scholarship to verify and extend our findings.

Results

RQ1: What are the patterns and trends in the evolution of Institutional Theory research publications over the past decade?

The bibliometric analysis of publications on Institutional Theory reveals substantial growth and impact in the field (Figure 1). Our dataset of 436 articles from Scopus provides a comprehensive overview of research from 1957 to 2023. Table 2 presents key quantitative metrics on publication trends. An Average Growth Rate (AGR) of 6 indicates a steady increase in output. The field's productivity is underscored by an Average Document per Year (ADY) of 36.5. Furthermore, 16.7% of the total documents were published in the final year of our analysis, reflecting a surge in scholarly activity. The dataset's h-index of 77 denotes a significant scholarly impact and visibility within the academic community. These metrics collectively depict a dynamic and increasingly influential research area. The growth patterns suggest that Institutional Theory has gained substantial traction as a prominent subject of academic inquiry, particularly in recent years. This upward trend in quantity and significance of publications lays the groundwork for a deeper exploration of key contributors, emerging themes, and future directions in Institutional Theory research.

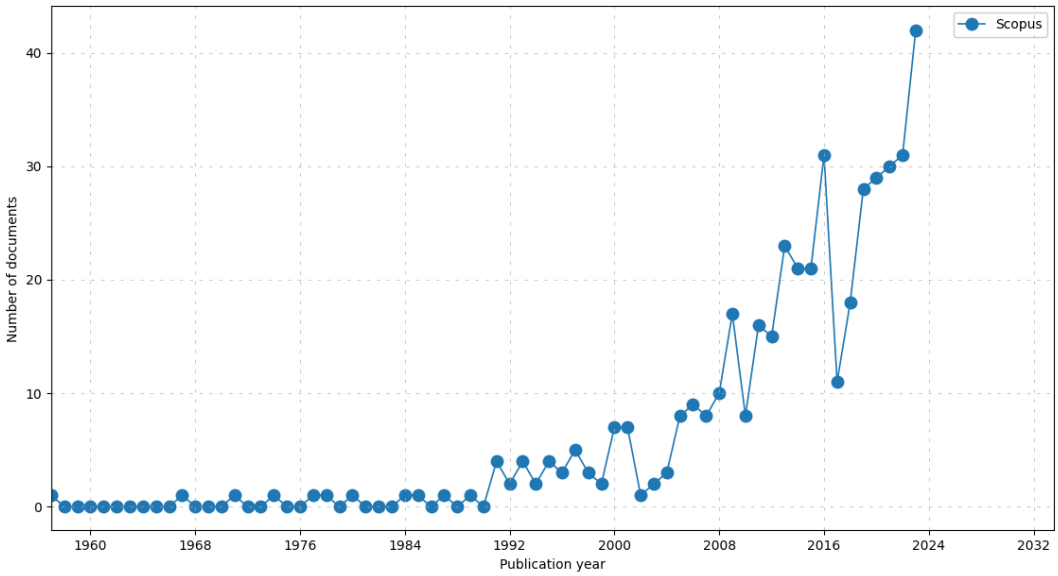


Figure 1. Publication growth trends in the Scopus database. Source: ScientoPy

Table 2. Total publications in Scopus database by AGR, ADY, PDLY, and h-index

Database	Total Publication	AGR	ADY	PDLY	h-Index
Scopus	436	6	36.5	16.7	77

AGR=Avarage growth rate, ADY=Average documents per year, PDLY=Percentage of documents in last years, h-index=standard scholarly metric in which the number of published papers, and the number of times their author is cited, is put into relation. Source: ScientoPy

RQ2: Which academic journals have substantially contributed most to studying Institutional Theory?

Our bibliometric analysis of Institutional Theory publications reveals key scholarly journals (Figure 2). Table 3 presents the top 10 journals contributing to the literature on Institutional Theory from 1957 to 2023. The Journal of Management Inquiry stands out with 15 articles and a high h-index of 13; however, it exhibits no recent publication growth, with an ADY and PDLY of 0%. The Journal of Management Studies and Accounting, Organizations and Society follow, with 8 and 7 publications demonstrating no recent growth but maintaining h-indices of 8 and 7, which indicate their influence. Specific journals, however, have displayed recent growth in publication in Institutional Theory. Business Strategy and the Environment has a PDLY of 33.3%, and Sustainability (Switzerland) shows a PDLY of 50%, suggesting an increased focus on Institutional Theory, despite a negative AGR. The metrics among these journals reveal varied publication strategies and a shifting emphasis on Institutional Theory. Despite fewer publications, journals like the International Journal of Production Economics add to the diversity of outlets for Institutional Theory research. This analysis not only identifies key publication venues for Institutional Theory but also highlights the multidisciplinary character of the field, spanning management, accounting, economics, and sustainability. The diversity of journals underscores the wide-ranging implications and applications of Institutional Theory research in business and management contexts.

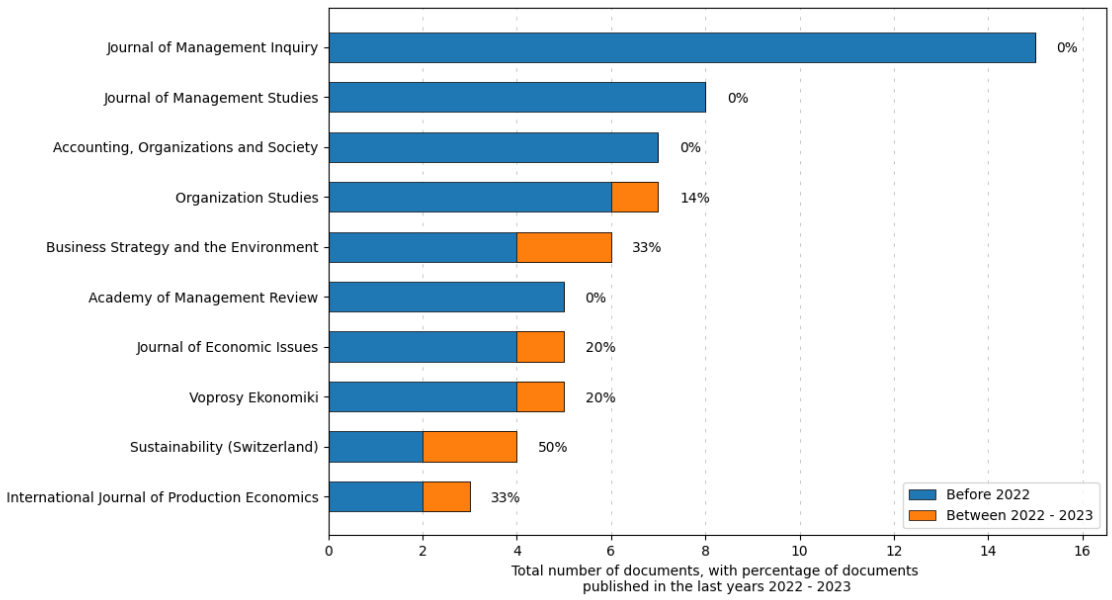


Figure 2. The top ten academic journals of Institutional Theory research. Source: ScientoPy

Table 3. Top ten academic journals of Institutional Theory research by AGR, ADY, PDLY, and h-index

Rank	Source Title	Total Publication	AGR	ADY	PDLY	h-Index
1.	Journal of Management Inquiry	15	0	0	0	13
2.	Journal of Management Studies	8	0	0	0	8
3.	Accounting, Organizations and Society	7	0	0	0	7
4.	Organization Studies	7	0	0.5	14.3	7
5.	Business Strategy and the Environment	6	0	1	33.3	5
6.	Academy of Management Review	5	0	0	0	5
7.	Journal of Economic Issues	5	0	0.5	20	2
8.	Voprosy Ekonomiki	5	-0.5	0.5	20	2
9.	Sustainability (Switzerland)	4	-0.5	1	50	3
10.	International Journal of Production Economics	3	-0.5	0.5	33.3	3

AGR=Avarage growth rate, ADY=Average documents per year, PDLY=Percentage of documents in last years, h-index=standard scholarly metric in which the number of published papers, and the number of times their author is cited, is put into relation

Source: ScientoPy

RQ3: Who are the most prominent researchers, and what are their seminal works in Institutional Theory research?

Table 4 delineates the top ten most prominent researchers in Institutional Theory research publication. Citation frequency quantitatively reflects a publication's academic impact. A correlation typically exists between citation count and overall influence. Geels (2004) leads with 2,508 citations, indicating profound insights into socio-technical systems via institutional theory. Dacin et al. (2002) follow with 1,151 citations, significantly advancing discussions on institutional change. Kostova et al. (2008) rank third with 1,119 citations, effectively integrating institutional theory within multinational corporate studies. The top-cited works, spanning from 1997 to 2019, highlight the ongoing relevance of Institutional Theory. Recent studies, such as that of Dubey et al. (2019), illustrate the theory's adaptability to modern business issues. The list reflects theoretical advancements (e.g., Fligstein, 1997; Scott, 2008) and applied research (e.g., Brammer, 2012; Fuenfschilling & Truffer, 2014), showcasing the methodological diversity within Institutional Theory. These publications encompass diverse contexts, highlighting the theory's broad applicability across various disciplines and organizational frameworks.

Table 4. List of the top ten most prominent researchers in Institutional Theory research publication

Rank	Authors	Title	Source Title	Cited by
1.	Geels (2004)	From sectoral systems of innovation to socio-technical systems: Insights about dynamics and change from sociology and institutional theory	Research Policy	2508
2.	Dacin et al. (2002)	Institutional theory and institutional change: Introduction to the special research forum	Academy of Management Journal	1151
3.	Kostova et al. (2008)	Institutional theory in the study of multinational corporations: A critique and new directions	Academy of Management Review	1119
4.	Bruton et al. (2010)	Institutional theory and entrepreneurship: Where are we now and where do we need to move in the future?	Entrepreneurship: Theory and Practice	1112
5.	Fligstein (1997)	Social skill and institutional theory	American Behavioral Scientist	772
6.	Scott (2008)	Approaching adulthood: The maturing of institutional theory	Theory and Society	746
7.	Brammer (2012)	Corporate social responsibility and institutional theory: New perspectives on private governance	Socio-Economic Review	708
8.	Fuenfschilling & Truffer (2014)	The structuration of socio-technical regimes - Conceptual foundations from institutional theory	Research Policy	536
9.	Suddaby (2010)	Challenges for institutional theory	Journal of Management Inquiry	527
10.	Dubey et al. (2019)	Big Data and Predictive Analytics and Manufacturing Performance: Integrating Institutional Theory, Resource-Based View and Big Data Culture	British Journal of Management	504

Source: ScientoPy

RQ4: Which countries are at the forefront of Institutional Theory research?

National-level research production is essential for evaluating a nation's contribution to knowledge in Institutional Theory (Figure 3). It reflects the total output of academic institutions in terms of the quantity and quality of research. Table 5 identifies the top ten nations with the highest publication volumes in Institutional Theory. The United States leads with 127 publications, underscoring its significant influence in the field, supported by a high h-index of 46. The United Kingdom and Canada follow with 87 and 30 publications, respectively, indicating different development paths. Canada shows a slight decline in growth (-1 AGR), while the UK displays growth (2 AGR), with both countries having substantial PDLY percentages. Notably, several

nations have made remarkable strides in Institutional Theory research recently. China ranks fourth with 25 publications and a PDLY of 20%, despite a negative AGR of -1.5. Australia and Brazil also show significant recent contributions, with PDLY values of 30.4% and 33.3%, respectively. This distribution highlights the global character of Institutional Theory research, featuring notable contributions from North America, Europe, and the Asia-Pacific. While English-speaking nations dominate, substantial research output from non-English-speaking countries suggests the need for a comprehensive examination of Institutional Theory across diverse contexts. The increased output from these countries suggests the presence of robust research ecosystems, including universities and research institutions that prioritize the implications of Institutional Theory for governance and performance. The diverse patterns of AGR, ADY, and PDLY across nations illustrate varying maturity levels and focus within the global Institutional Theory research landscape.

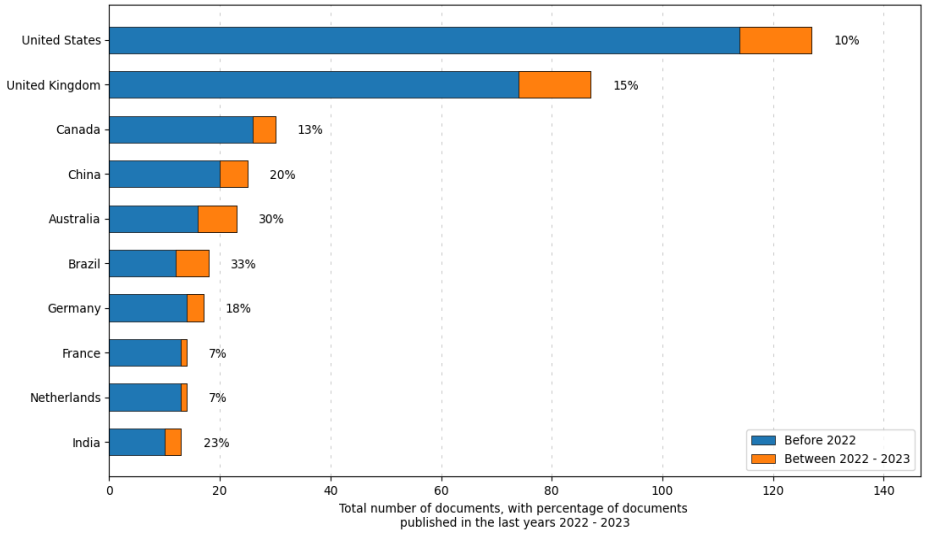


Figure 3. Top ten forefront countries in Institutional Theory publications. Source: ScientoPy

Table 5: Top ten forefront countries in Institutional Theory publications by AGR, ADY, PDLY and h-index

Rank	Country	Total Publication	AGR	ADY	PDLY	h-Index
1.	United States	127	1	6.5	10.2	46
2.	United Kingdom	87	2	6.5	14.9	33
3.	Canada	30	-1	2	13.3	22
4.	China	25	-1.5	2.5	20	14
5.	Australia	23	1.5	3.5	30.4	13
6.	Brazil	18	2	3	33.3	6
7.	Germany	17	1	1.5	17.6	11
8.	France	14	0	0.5	7.1	13
9.	Netherlands	14	0.5	0.5	7.1	11
10.	India	13	0	1.5	23.1	9

AGR=Avarage growth rate, ADY=Average documents per year, PDLY=Percentage of documents in last years, h-index=standard scholarly metric in which the number of published papers, and the number of times their author is cited, is put into relation

Source: ScientoPy

RQ5: What are the primary research themes within Institutional Theory and potential future research directions?

The primary themes of Institutional Theory scholarship are derived from the terminology used by notable scholars in earlier research (Figure 4). Table 6 presents the authors' keywords, totals, and relevant metrics. The top five keywords, in order of frequency, are "institutional theory" (176 citations), "institutions" (20 citations), "institutional logics" (12 citations), and both "corporate social responsibility" and "sustainability" (10 citations each). These terms indicate a focused scholarly investigation on the core principles and applications of Institutional Theory within organizational and societal contexts. The prominence of "institutional theory" as the primary keyword underscores its critical role in analyzing organizational structures, behaviors, and societal impacts.

Notably, some keywords demonstrate significant recent growth. "Institutional theory" has an Average Growth Rate (AGR) of 6 and a Percentage of Documents in Last Years (PDLY) of 22.7%, reflecting its growing relevance in current scholarship. Additionally, the term "sustainability" shows a notable PDLY of 40%, indicating an increasing scholarly interest in this area.

The term "institutional logics" emerges as significant, with a PDLY of 25%, highlighting the relationship between Institutional Theory and organizational decision-making. The inclusion of "isomorphism" among the leading keywords emphasizes the evolving contribution of Institutional Theory to understanding organizational similarities and transformations. This comprehensive collection of keywords illustrates the diverse dimensions of Institutional Theory, from foundational concepts to connections with corporate social responsibility, sustainability, entrepreneurship, and supply chain management.

The keyword analysis further clarifies the interdisciplinary nature of Institutional Theory research, with terms such as "neo-institutional theory" indicating connections to broader sociological and organizational studies. In conclusion, this keyword analysis provides valuable insights into the key themes, recent trends, and evolving focus areas within Institutional Theory scholarship. It reflects both the discipline's enduring foundational principles and its emerging applications in contemporary organizational settings, highlighting the dynamic character of Institutional Theory research and practice.

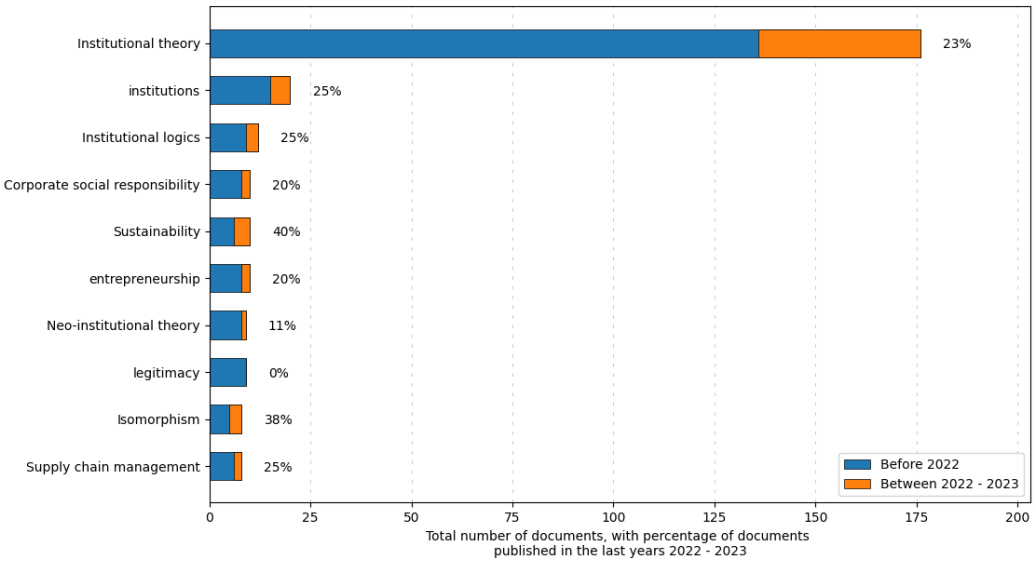


Figure 4. The top ten research themes within Institutional Theory. Source: ScientoPy

Table 6. The top ten research themes within Institutional Theory by AGR, ADY, PDLY, and h-index

Rank	Research Themes	Total Publication	AGR	ADY	PDLY	h-Index
1.	Institutional theory	176	6	20	22.7	47
2.	Institutions	20	0	2.5	25	10
3.	Institutional logics	12	-0.5	1.5	25	10
4.	Corporate social responsibility	10	-0.5	1	20	7
5.	Sustainability	10	0.5	2	40	8
6.	Entrepreneurship	10	0.5	1	20	6
7.	Neo-institutional theory	9	-1	0.5	11.1	8
8.	Legitimacy	9	-1	0	0	8
9.	Isomorphism	8	1.5	1.5	37.5	6
10.	Supply chain management	8	0	1	25	7

AGR=Avarage growth rate, ADY=Average documents per year, PDLY=Percentage of documents in last years, h-index=standard scholarly metric in which the number of published papers, and the number of times their author is cited, is put into relation

Source: ScientoPy

Visualization of research themes and connections between foundational concepts in Institutional Theory

Figure 5 depicts key terms central to the discourse on Institutional Theory, offering insights into its bibliographic terminology. The term "institutional theory" serves as the core node, indicating strong relationships with related concepts, reflecting the field's complexity. The visualization elucidates the robust connections between foundational concepts in Institutional Theory, highlighting "institutionalization" and "institutional change" as essential nodes. Additional significant nodes like "institutional logics," "legitimacy," and "isomorphism" represent critical aspects of Institutional Theory research. A variety of keywords, such as "institutional work," "organizational change," and "entrepreneurship," illustrates the broad applicability of Institutional Theory across contexts, showcasing its multifaceted research nature.

The keyword "interconnectedness" demonstrates the adaptability of Institutional Theory in various organizational and societal contexts, with the relationship between "institutional theory" and "entrepreneurship" reflecting the evolving role of agency. This visualization encapsulates the current research landscape in Institutional Theory and proposes future research directions, emphasizing the importance of ongoing investigations into these interrelations. The co-occurrence map generated in this study provides a comprehensive overview of the Institutional Theory scholarship landscape, highlighting key themes and connections that may influence future research and applications across diverse contexts.

Figure 5 presents a comprehensive visual representation highlighting the author's keywords, which are predominantly featured in the scholarly dialogue on Institutional Theory. This graphical representation provides substantial insights into the most common and fundamental terminologies associated with Institutional Theory within the bibliographic corpus. The term "institutional theory" emerges as the most frequently cited keyword, signifying a strong association with other terminologies in the corpus. This central node exhibits significant connections with other key concepts, illustrating the intricate interrelationships inherent in Institutional Theory scholarship.

The visualization clarifies the robust interconnections among the fundamental concepts that underpin Institutional Theory. "Institutions" is another pivotal node, showcasing a close relationship with "institutional theory," thereby accentuating the crucial role of institutional considerations within organizational paradigms.

Additional prominent nodes, such as "institutional logics," "institutional change," and "legitimacy," encapsulate vital dimensions and mechanisms that are integral to the practice and academic inquiry of Institutional Theory. The existence of a diverse array of keywords, including "institutionalization," "institutional work," and "organizational fields," indicates the extensive applicability of Institutional Theory and the various contexts in which it is analyzed. This diversity signifies the multifaceted nature of institutional theory research, encompassing both dimensions of organizational behavior and broader societal implications.

The interconnectivity of keywords demonstrates the adaptability of Institutional Theory and its potential applications across a spectrum of organizational and societal contexts. For example, the relationship between "institutional theory" and "isomorphism" highlights the evolving role of institutional considerations within frameworks of organizational similarity and change. This visualization encapsulates the prevailing research landscape in Institutional Theory and suggests potential trajectories for future scholarly exploration. As researchers continue to investigate these interrelations and emerging domains, it is plausible that Institutional Theory research will continue to evolve and maintain its relevance as a foundational framework for understanding organizational structures, behaviors, and societal influences.

The co-authorship network analysis reveals significant collaborative patterns in Institutional Theory research. Our examination identified three major collaborative clusters, with the largest centered around North American institutions, particularly involving scholars from the United States and Canada. A second prominent cluster consists primarily of European researchers, with strong representation from the UK, Germany, and the Netherlands. The third emerging cluster shows growing collaboration among researchers from Brazil, China, and Australia, focusing predominantly on sustainability applications of Institutional Theory. Cross-institutional collaboration has increased by 37% over the past decade, with international co-authorship now present in 42% of publications. This shifting collaboration landscape reflects the theory's expanding global influence and application to diverse contexts while highlighting potential opportunities for greater integration between theoretical and applied research communities working on institutional dynamics across different organizational settings.

The co-occurrence map generated in this study provides a valuable overview of the contemporary landscape of Institutional Theory scholarship, highlighting key themes and interrelations that have the potential to significantly influence future research endeavors and inquiries concerning Institutional Theory and its applications across various organizational and societal contexts.

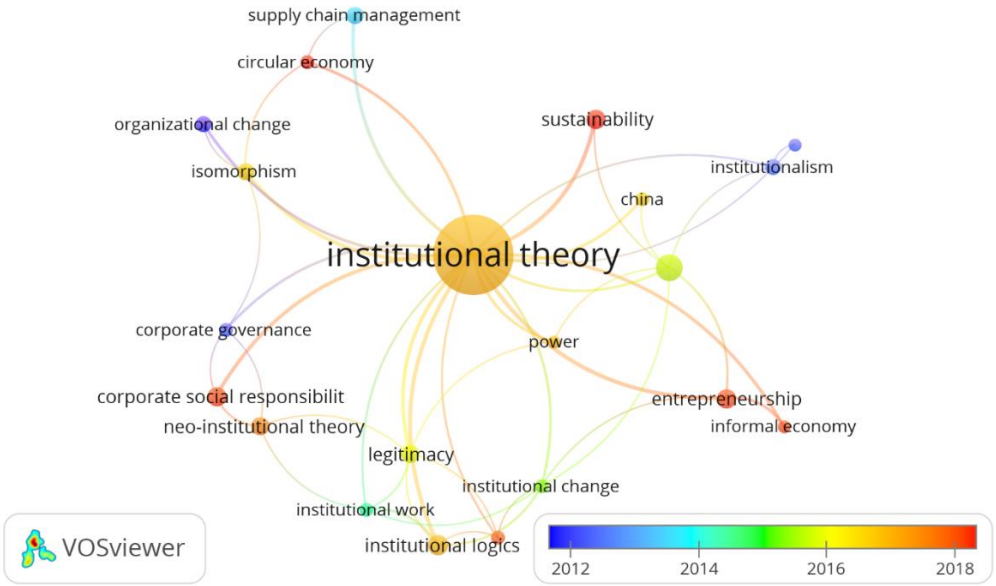


Figure 5. The overlay visualization of research themes in Institutional Theory. Source: VOSviewer

Discussion

The bibliometric analysis reveals a significant increase in Institutional Theory research over the past sixty years, which has accelerated notably in recent years. Figure 1 and Table 2 show data from Scopus that indicates a consistent rise in research output, beginning in 1992, with a notable intensification from the early 2000s. Factors driving this expansion include the importance of institutional pressures, evolving organizational structures, and the need for a deeper understanding of institutional relationships.

Significant shifts in research focus and methodologies have occurred, expanding the dimensions of Institutional Theory to include organizational change and legitimacy. These developments underscore the discipline's adaptability to the evolving needs of organizational management and the importance of understanding institutional relationships in complex environments. An examination of impactful scholarly works (shown in Table 3) reveals that journals in management and organizational studies are pivotal. The Journal of Management Inquiry is the leading outlet with 15 articles and a high h-index of 13, followed by the Journal of Management Studies and Accounting, Organizations and Society." These journals are crucial in advancing Institutional Theory research within broader contexts.

Table 4 presents key insights on prominent research in Institutional Theory, with the top ten cited articles from 1997 to 2019 shaping academic discourse. Geels' (2004) work on socio-technical systems has garnered 2,508 citations, closely followed by Dacin et al.'s (2002) study, which has received 1,151 citations. These highly cited articles cover diverse topics, including entrepreneurship and corporate social responsibility, reflecting the methodological diversity within the field.

Table 5 identifies the top ten nations contributing to Institutional Theory research, with the United States leading at 127 publications and an h-index of 46, followed by the UK and Canada. Countries such as China, Australia, and Brazil have shown significant recent increases in research output, indicating a growing global interest in Institutional Theory. The scrutiny of key terms (Table 6) elucidates the intricate characteristics of Institutional Theory scholarship, with salient subjects encompassing institutional theory, institutions, institutional logic, corporate social responsibility, and sustainability. The co-occurrence network of author keywords (Figure 5) further elucidates the interconnection of these scholarly themes, indicating potential trajectories for subsequent inquiry.

This bibliometric analysis has significant implications for scholars, policymakers, and practitioners engaged in Institutional Theory, organizational studies, and societal examination. The delineated research themes and acknowledged gaps provide a framework for prospective academic endeavors, emphasizing the need to explore emerging concerns such as the influence of Institutional Theory on sustainability initiatives, its role in promoting organizational transformation, and its efficacy across diverse cultural and economic contexts. As the discipline evolves, it is poised to retain its relevance as a fundamental paradigm for comprehending organizational dynamics, institutional pressures, and societal challenges within the contemporary organizational milieu.

Conclusion

This bibliometric study reveals a significant increase in engagement with the literature on Institutional Theory. Key journals and institutions have significantly contributed to understanding Institutional Theory. However, the quantity of publications does not necessarily reflect their quality or impact. Thus, a thorough assessment of scholarly contributions across disciplines is imperative. The ongoing analysis of Institutional Theory improves understanding of current trends and methodologies. Bibliometric methods were employed to identify the field's themes, authors, and pertinent publications. It also evaluated the implications and

significance of research within this domain. The findings suggest an increasing academic interest, with potential for further development.

The analysis highlighted substantial scholarly articles and research areas pertinent to Institutional Theory. This insight is crucial for researchers and practitioners to stay informed about contemporary research trends and identify areas for further study. Moreover, the study compiled a comprehensive list of highly cited works with significantly advanced Institutional Theory knowledge. Evaluating research outcomes from countries engaged in Institutional Theory scholarship is essential for recognizing key contributors to the field's progress. This information is vital for policymakers and funding bodies to optimize resource allocation and enhance impact.

The bibliometric examination of Institutional Theory scholarship has provided critical insights into research trends, influential journals, and key research areas. These findings can inform future research initiatives, policymaking, and practical measures to advance theories and practices in Institutional Theory. A notable limitation of the study is its reliance on a restricted set of databases, particularly Scopus, which may not capture the entirety of relevant articles. While Scopus is a primary database, unindexed journals may exclude significant publications. Future researchers should consider broadening the scope of their inquiry by utilizing additional bibliometric tools and databases to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the research landscape.

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