






“Socially responsible human resource management and employee behavior: A 1998–2025 bibliometric analysis”

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SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEE BEHAVIOR: A 1998–2025 BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

Abstract

Growing stakeholder expectations regarding ethical employment and sustainability have increased academic interest in socially responsible human resource management (SRHRM) as a mechanism influencing employee behavior and organizational outcomes. This study performs a bibliometric analysis of 112 English-language publications indexed in the Scopus database from 1998 to 2025, using Bibliometrix and VOSviewer to assess publication performance, citation patterns, geographical distribution, and thematic relationships. The results show significant growth in SRHRM research since 2016, with publication output peaking in 2024, confirming SRHRM as a distinct research stream. Six key thematic clusters are identified. Sustainable and responsible HRM practices and employee citizenship outcomes cluster focuses on how HRM practices influence behaviors like organizational citizenship. Employee attitudes, ethical leadership, and workplace behavior cluster examines ethical leadership's role in shaping employee attitudes. CSR-oriented HRM systems and organizational performance cluster explores CSR-driven HRM systems and their impact on performance and employee outcomes. Strategic sustainability, work engagement, and person–organization fit cluster investigates sustainability-oriented HR strategies and employee engagement. Leadership, organizational culture, and workforce context cluster explore how leadership and culture influence SRHRM practices. Responsible leadership in emerging economy contexts cluster focuses on leadership in emerging economies, especially Vietnam. The findings demonstrate increasing integration of SRHRM with sustainability and ESG perspectives, reflecting the global, interdisciplinary nature of this research. These results highlight the growing strategic importance of responsible HRM practices in shaping employee attitudes and provide a foundation for advancing future research in sustainable HRM.

Keywords

socially responsible human resource management,
employee behavior, ethical leadership, sustainable HRM,
bibliometric analysis

JEL Classification

M12, M14, J24, D23

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, socially responsible human resource management (SRHRM) has emerged as a significant area of inquiry at the intersection of human resource management, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and organizational behavior. Intensifying stakeholder expectations regarding ethical conduct, social sustainability, and responsible employment practices have fundamentally reshaped the role of HRM systems. Organizations are increasingly required not only to enhance efficiency and performance, but also to institutionalize socially responsible principles within employment relationships. In this context, SRHRM represents a strategic mechanism through which organizations align internal HR practices with broader societal norms and sustainability imperatives.

Empirical research has consistently indicated that socially responsible HR practices influence employee attitudes and behaviors through social exchange and norm-based mechanisms (Shen & Benson, 2016;

Newman et al., 2016). Associations between SRHRM and outcomes such as organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), commitment, engagement, and moral voice have been documented across various organizational and sectoral contexts (Barrena-Martínez et al., 2017a; Zhao & Zhou, 2021; Zhao et al., 2023). Leadership configurations and institutional environments have further been shown to shape the effectiveness of responsible HR practices (Nie et al., 2018; Zhao et al., 2023; Casimiro Almeida & Coelho, 2019). These contributions collectively underscore the growing theoretical and practical relevance of SRHRM in explaining employee behavior within contemporary organizations.

Despite the rapid expansion of research output, the field of SRHRM and employee behavior remains conceptually dispersed and structurally fragmented. Studies are distributed across diverse disciplinary domains, theoretical perspectives, and contextual settings, without a consolidated understanding of how knowledge in this area has evolved or how its core intellectual foundations are organized. The co-existence of multiple theoretical lenses and heterogeneous empirical approaches has generated valuable insights, yet it has also produced ambiguity regarding dominant research themes, conceptual convergence, and developmental trajectories.

Accordingly, the scientific problem that underlies this study concerns the absence of an integrated and systematic clarification of the intellectual structure and thematic evolution of SRHRM and employee behavior research. Without such clarification, the field risks continued theoretical fragmentation, limited cumulative advancement, and insufficient identification of emerging research frontiers. Establishing a coherent understanding of how this body of knowledge is structured and how it has developed over time is, therefore, essential for consolidating SRHRM as a robust behavioral and sustainability-oriented HRM paradigm.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Socially responsible human resource management (SRHRM) has increasingly attracted scholarly attention as an extension of the corporate social responsibility (CSR)–HRM nexus, emphasizing the role of HR systems in embedding ethical and socially responsible values within organizational practices (Jamali et al., 2015; Sarvaiya et al., 2018). Conceptual and empirical studies consistently indicate that socially responsible HR practices signal organizational fairness, care, and moral commitment, thereby fostering positive employee–organization relationships and shaping employee attitudes and behaviors (Shen & Benson, 2016; Newman et al., 2016). From a social exchange perspective, employees tend to reciprocate responsible HR practices through enhanced organizational commitment, work engagement, and organizational citizenship behavior (Zhao et al., 2021; He & Kim, 2021).

A growing number of review-based studies have synthesized the conceptual development and empirical outcomes associated with SRHRM and related domains such as sustainable HRM and green HRM. These studies highlight that respon-

sible HR practices contribute to employee well-being, ethical conduct, knowledge sharing, and reduced turnover intentions, while also supporting long-term organizational sustainability and competitive advantage (Barrena-Martínez et al., 2017a; Barrena-Martínez et al., 2017b; Lombardi et al., 2020; Sypniewska et al., 2023). In addition, prior research emphasizes the role of contextual mechanisms, particularly ethical and responsible leadership, in strengthening the behavioral impact of SRHRM practices (Luu, 2021; Zhao et al., 2023). Although these narrative and systematic reviews provide important theoretical and empirical insights, they primarily focus on conceptual clarification or specific outcome variables rather than quantitatively mapping the intellectual structure of the field.

Bibliometric and science-mapping approaches offer complementary perspectives by enabling the systematic examination of publication trends, citation relationships, and thematic clusters within a research domain (Glänzel & Moed, 2002; Waltman et al., 2010). While bibliometric analyses have been conducted in related research areas such as sustainable HRM, CSR-related manage-

ment, and green HRM, studies specifically analyzing the bibliometric structure of SRHRM and employee behavior remain limited. Existing review-based contributions primarily focus on conceptual clarification or specific behavioral outcomes rather than providing a comprehensive mapping of the intellectual structure and thematic evolution of this field.

Although research on SRHRM has expanded significantly, some aspects of the literature remain underdeveloped. First, while key research themes have been identified, their interconnections and the overall structural framework of SRHRM research are not yet fully established or consistently agreed upon. Second, while geographical distribution and collaborative networks in SRHRM research have been examined, there remains a lack of clarity on the extent of contributions from different regions and on how international collaboration patterns influence knowledge production in this field. Third, despite the increasing volume of empirical studies, there is no clear consensus on the field's evolution over time, with some studies suggesting both thematic convergence and fragmentation, depending on the analytical approach. These uncertainties may limit the cumulative development of theoretical insights and challenge efforts to track emerging research trajectories in SRHRM and employee behavior. Therefore, this study aims to systematically map the intellectual structure and thematic evolution of socially responsible human resource management (SRHRM) research, with a particular focus on employee behavior. Specifically, it seeks to identify key research themes, their interconnections, geographical contributions, and collaboration patterns, thereby providing a comprehensive overview of the field's development and future research directions.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a quantitative bibliometric research design to systematically analyze the intellectual structure and research trends of socially responsible human resource management (SRHRM) and employee behavior. Bibliographic data were retrieved from the Scopus database, selected for its broad coverage of peer-reviewed international publications and suitability for bibliometric research.

The search was conducted on November 11, 2025, using a structured query applied to the article title, abstract, and keywords (TITLE-ABS-KEY) fields. The search query was defined as follows: (TITLE-ABS-KEY (“employee behaviour”) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (“employee behavior”)) AND (TITLE-ABS-KEY (“socially responsible human resource management”) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (“SRHRM”)). This query was designed to capture studies addressing employee behavior using both British and American spellings while ensuring coverage of publications explicitly focusing on socially responsible human resource management, including its abbreviated form. The initial search retrieved 140 records covering the period 1998–2025. The dataset was subsequently screened using predefined inclusion criteria, retaining only peer-reviewed publications written in English and excluding non-English documents, duplicates, and records not directly related to SRHRM and employee behavior. The overall research procedure used to construct the final dataset is illustrated in Figure 1. After the screening process, 112 publications constituted the final dataset for bibliometric analysis. The dataset was exported in CSV format for bibliometric processing and subsequently imported into Biblioshiny and VOSviewer for analysis.

The analytical procedure was conducted in two stages. First, descriptive performance analysis was performed using Biblioshiny, the web-based interface of the Bibliometrix package in R, to examine publication trends, citation patterns, document types, leading journals, productive countries, and collaboration networks. Second, science-mapping analyses were conducted using VOSviewer (version 1.6.20) to generate co-citation networks and keyword co-occurrence maps. A minimum keyword occurrence threshold was applied to ensure the stability and interpretability of the visualization networks. Based on the resulting clusters, thematic structures were identified and interpreted to determine dominant research themes and emerging research directions in the SRHRM and employee behavior literature.

This study is based exclusively on secondary bibliographic data retrieved from the Scopus database and uses bibliometric and scientometric techniques for analysis. It does not involve hu-

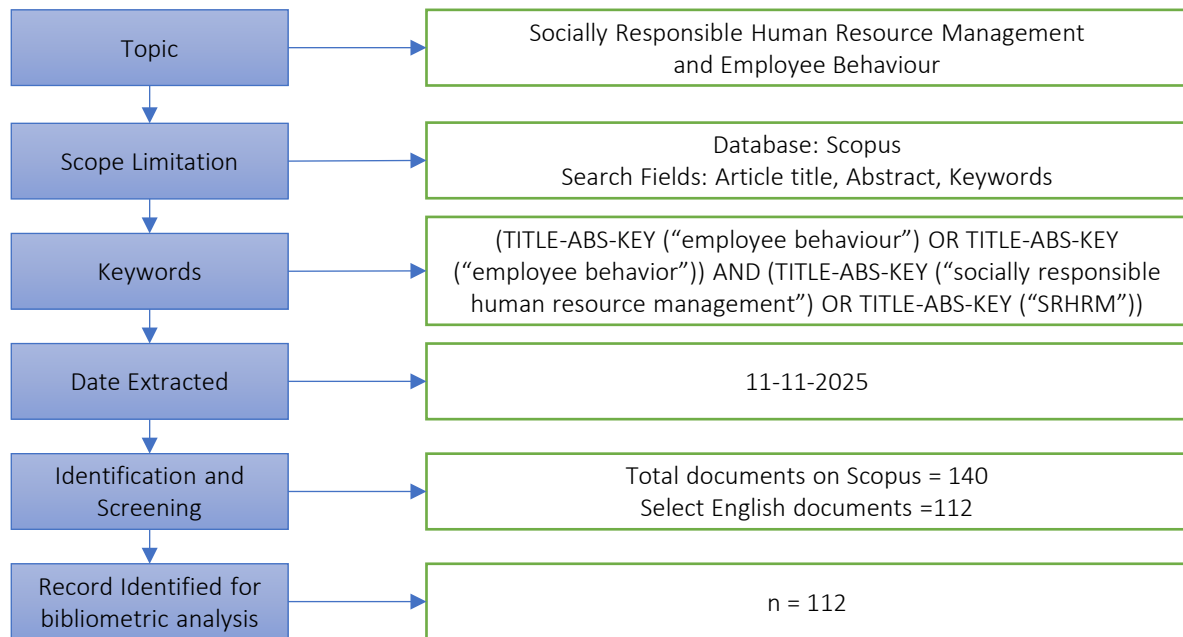


Figure 1. Research procedure

man participants, qualitative interviews, surveys, experiments, or the collection or use of personal or identifiable information. Consequently, ethical approval from an institutional review board and informed consent were not required. All data were analyzed in an aggregated manner and in full compliance with established publication ethics and data protection principles.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Descriptive statistics

3.1.1. Number of documents and citations

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the bibliometric dataset

Timespan	1998–2025
Sources (Journals, Books, etc.)	82
Documents	112
Document average age	4.6
Average citations per doc	25.06
References	875
Keywords plus (ID)	340
Author's keywords (DE)	397

Table 1 presents the key descriptive characteristics of the dataset. The review includes 112 publications produced between 1998 and 2025, drawn from 82

distinct sources such as journals, books, and conference outlets. On average, the documents are 4.6 years old, reflecting a relatively recent and actively developing research domain. Each publication receives approximately 25.06 citations, amounting to a total of 875 references across the dataset. Moreover, the corpus comprises 340 keywords plus (ID) and 397 author's keywords (DE), demonstrating the breadth and thematic diversity of scholarly discourse within this field.

Figure 2 suggests that research on SRHRM and employee behavior has moved from an exploratory stage to a phase of consolidation. The low publication volume before the mid-2010s indicates that the field remained peripheral for a considerable period, whereas the strong increase in output after 2016 signals a clear acceleration of scholarly attention and a more stable research trajectory. The sharp citation concentration in 2016, despite limited publication output, implies that the field has been shaped by a relatively small number of highly influential studies that helped define its conceptual and empirical foundations. By contrast, the rapid rise in publications in recent years, culminating in the 2024 peak, indicates that SRHRM is no longer an emerging niche but an increasingly recognized stream within HRM and sustainability research. The comparatively lower citation counts in the most recent years should therefore be in-

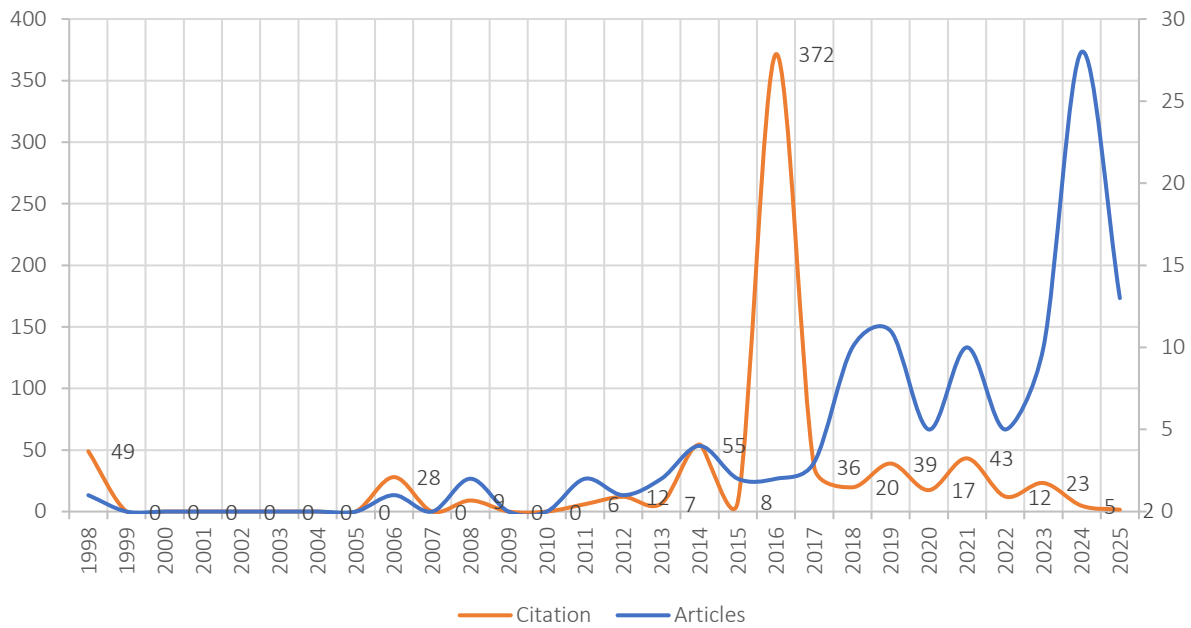


Figure 2. Number of documents and citations

terpreted less as weak scholarly impact than as a normal citation-lag effect associated with newly published work.

3.1.2. Central countries

Figure 3 indicates that scientific production in SRHRM and employee behavior is internationally dispersed but structurally concentrated. China’s leading position, with 58 publications, suggests that the field is being shaped disproportionately by a limited number of national research envi-

ronments. Although bibliometric evidence does not, in itself, establish causal explanations, this prominence may be associated with the increasing salience of CSR, sustainability-oriented management, and employment-related institutional transformation in a rapidly changing, emerging-economy context. China’s central position in the co-authorship network further reinforces this interpretation, as it implies that the country functions not only as a major source of publication output but also as an important hub in international knowledge exchange. Spain and the United States,

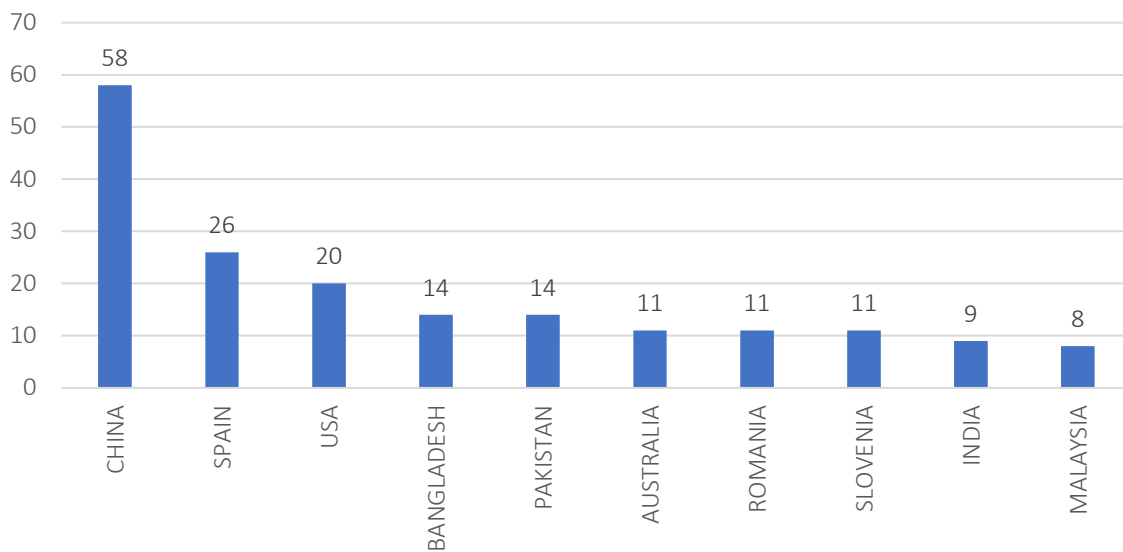


Figure 3. Countries’ scientific production

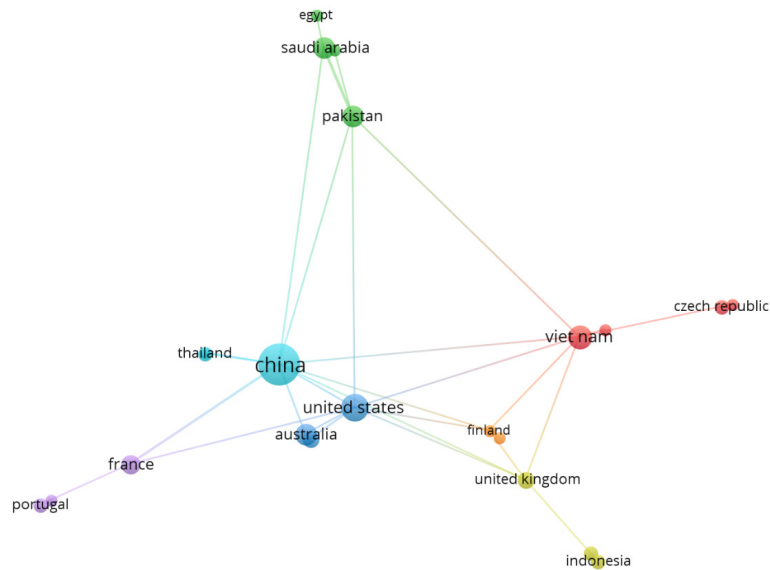


Figure 4. Network visualization map of the co-authorship by countries

with 26 and 20 publications respectively, remain influential contributors, reflecting the continued relevance of European and Anglo-American research traditions in responsible HRM and employee-related outcomes. At the same time, the growing presence of countries such as Bangladesh, Pakistan, Australia, Romania, Slovenia, India, and Malaysia indicates that SRHRM scholarship is extending beyond a small group of dominant centers and gaining traction across diverse institutional and developmental settings. Overall, this geographical pattern points to a dual dynamic of concentration and diffusion: while knowledge production remains clustered in a limited number of countries, the broader spread of contributions suggests that SRHRM is evolving into a more globally relevant and context-sensitive field of inquiry.

Figure 4 suggests that international collaboration in SRHRM and employee behavior research is developing, but it remains uneven and structured around a limited number of network hubs. China occupies the most central position, indicating that it functions not only as a leading source of publication output but also as a major connector in cross-national knowledge exchange. This centrality, together with its strong links to the United States, Australia, and Thailand, implies that collaboration in the field is concentrated around a small number of highly connected countries rather than being broadly distributed across the international research community. The clus-

ter involving Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt points to regionally oriented cooperation, while the Vietnam-centered cluster suggests an emerging pattern of cross-regional collaboration linking Asian and European research environments. The smaller France–Portugal cluster further indicates that some collaborative relationships remain more peripheral and indirectly connected to the wider network. Overall, the co-authorship structure reflects a field that is becoming increasingly internationalized, but one in which knowledge exchange is still shaped by selective partnerships and a limited set of influential countries.

3.1.3. Types of documents

Figure 5 shows that publication output in SRHRM and employee behavior research is concentrated predominantly in peer-reviewed journal articles, which account for 81% of the dataset. This pattern suggests that knowledge production in the field is being shaped primarily by formal scholarly outlets, which typically require stronger theoretical grounding, clearer methodological design, and more rigorous peer evaluation. Other publication types remain supplementary. Book chapters and conference papers, each representing 6% of the dataset, indicate that the field has also attracted attention in edited volumes and conference-based academic exchanges. However, these channels play a less central role in shaping the core literature. Review articles account for 5%, pointing

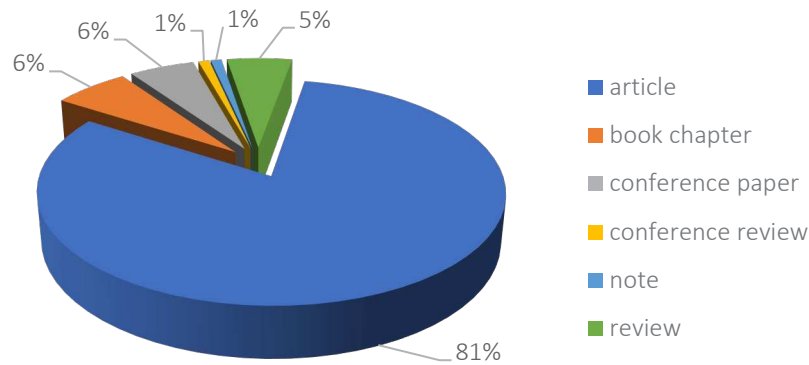


Figure 5. Statistics by the type of published documents

to a gradual effort to synthesize and consolidate an expanding body of research. By contrast, the very limited presence of conference reviews and research notes suggests that shorter or less developed forms of scholarly communication have had only a marginal influence on the evolution of this domain. Taken together, this publication profile indicates that SRHRM and employee behavior research have developed through relatively formalized and academically established channels, with journal publications serving as the main vehicle for advancing empirical and theoretical contributions.

3.1.4. Journals with the most publications

Table 2. Journals with the highest number of publications on SRHRM and employee behavior

Journal name	Number of publications
Sustainability (Switzerland)	9
Journal of Business Ethics	9
Cogent Business and Management	3
International Journal of Human Resource Management	3
Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management	2
Human Resource Management International Digest	2
International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	2
Journal of Cleaner Production	2
Journal of Industrial Engineering and Engineering Management	2

Table 2 presents the distribution of publications across the most influential academic sources contributing to the field of Socially Responsible

Human Resource Management (SRHRM) and employee behavior. The results indicate that Sustainability (Switzerland) and the Journal of Business Ethics are the two most prominent outlets, each publishing nine documents, demonstrating their central role in disseminating research on responsible HRM, CSR, and employee-related outcomes. These journals’ consistent engagement underscores their strong alignment with sustainability-driven management research and ethical organizational practices.

Following these leading outlets, Cogent Business and Management and the International Journal of Human Resource Management each contributed three publications, reflecting their growing interest in integrating socially responsible HRM perspectives into broader HRM and organizational behavior discussions. Additionally, several journals, including Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management, Human Resource Management International Digest, International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, Journal of Cleaner Production, and the Journal of Industrial Engineering and Engineering Management, each published two documents. Although their contributions are smaller in volume, they demonstrate the multidisciplinary nature of SRHRM, spanning fields such as sustainability, HRM, environmental studies, and industrial management.

Overall, this distribution suggests that SRHRM research is not confined to a single disciplinary outlet but is expanding across diverse scholarly communities. The strong presence of sustainability-oriented journals reflects the increasing in-

tegration of ESG principles into HRM research, while contributions from HRM and organizational behavior journals highlight the growing recognition of responsible HRM as a key driver of employee attitudes and behaviors.

Table 3 reports the most globally cited publications in the SRHRM and employee behavior literature, thereby identifying the studies that have had the strongest influence on the intellectual development of the field.

The most influential study is Shen and Benson (2016), published in the *Journal of Management*, which has accumulated 490 citations. This work stands out as a foundational contribution by establishing a strong theoretical link between socially responsible HRM practices and employee work behavior, and it has served as a key reference point for subsequent SRHRM research. Following this seminal study, Newman et al. (2016) in the *International Journal of Human Resource Management* rank second with 253 citations, highlighting the importance of organizational identification as a central mechanism through which SRHRM affects employee attitudes and organizational citizenship behavior.

Several other highly cited studies further demonstrate the breadth and maturation of the field. Zhao and Zhou (2021), in the *International Journal*

of Hospitality Management, with 156 citations, reflect the growing application of SRHRM frameworks in sector-specific contexts, particularly within the hospitality industry. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2014) in the *Journal of Business Ethics*, which has received 145 citations, underscores the long-standing integration of CSR-oriented HR systems with employee and organizational outcomes. Another study by Zhao et al. (2021) published in the *Journal of Business Ethics* has accumulated 121 citations, reinforcing the prominence of employee-oriented and environment-related citizenship behaviors within SRHRM research.

Additional influential contributions include Barrena-Martínez et al. (2017b) in the *International Journal of Human Resource Management* with 110 citations, which advances a configurational perspective on socially responsible HRM practices, as well as Shan et al. (2017) in the *Strategic Management Journal* and Casimiro Almeida and Coelho (2019) in *Corporate Reputation Review*, which extend the discussion to issues of equality, corporate reputation, employee commitment, and performance. More recent studies, such as Zhao et al. (2023) and Nie et al. (2018), despite having lower citation counts, further illustrate the diversification of research topics, including moral voice behavior and employee turnover intentions, thereby signaling emerging micro-level and behavioral orientations in the literature.

Table 3. Top ten studies with the highest citations

Title	Author	Total Citations
When CSR is a social norm: How socially responsible human resource management affects employee work behavior	Shen and Benson (2016)	490
The impact of socially responsible human resource management on employees' organizational citizenship behaviour: The mediating role of organizational identification	Newman et al. (2016)	253
Socially responsible human resource management and hotel employee organizational citizenship behavior for the environment: A social cognitive perspective	Zhao and Zhou (2021)	156
High-performance work systems, corporate social performance and employee outcomes: Exploring the missing links	Zhang et al. (2014)	145
How and when does socially responsible HRM affect employees' organizational citizenship behaviors toward the environment?	Zhao et al. (2021)	121
Towards a configuration of socially responsible human resource management policies and practices: Findings from an academic consensus	Barrena-Martínez et al. (2017b)	110
Corporate sexual equality and firm performance	Shan et al. (2017)	101
The antecedents of corporate reputation and image and their impacts on employee commitment and performance: The moderating role of CSR	Casimiro Almeida and Coelho (2019)	95
Socially responsible human resource management and employee moral voice: Based on the self-determination theory	Zhao et al. (2023)	80
Effects of responsible human resource management practices on female employees' turnover intentions	Nie et al. (2018)	77

Taken together, Table 3 indicates that SRHRM and employee behavior research have been strongly shaped by a core group of highly cited studies published in leading management and business ethics journals. These works have contributed to consolidating SRHRM as a distinct and influential research stream within HRM scholarship, while also providing the conceptual and empirical foundations for more recent studies that increasingly focus on specific employee behaviors and contextual applications.

3.2. Co-occurrence of author keywords

Based on the keyword co-occurrence analysis generated by VOSviewer, Figure 6 reveals a differentiated but internally connected intellectual structure within the SRHRM and employee behavior literature. Rather than being organized around a single dominant line of inquiry, the field appears to encompass several interrelated thematic domains that operate across multiple levels of analysis.

Cluster 1 reflects a strong concern with sustainable and socially responsible HRM practices and their implications for employee citizenship outcomes, indicating that responsible HR systems are frequently associated with extra-role behaviors, particularly in contexts where organizational identification and value-based alignment are salient.

Cluster 2 shifts attention to employee attitudes, ethical leadership, and workplace behavior, highlighting the importance of micro-level psychological and relational mechanisms in explaining how SRHRM translates into behavioral outcomes.

Cluster 3 brings together CSR-oriented HRM systems, performance concerns, and resource-related themes, suggesting that part of the literature conceptualizes SRHRM not only as an ethical or employee-centered construct but also as a strategic organizational capability.

Cluster 4 further reinforces this strategic dimension by linking sustainability, work engagement, and person–organization fit, thereby indicating that value congruence and employee involvement have become increasingly important in sustainability-oriented HRM scholarship.

Cluster 5 points to the relevance of leadership, organizational culture, and workforce context, suggesting that the enactment of SRHRM depends not only on formal practices but also on the broader cultural and contextual conditions in which they are embedded. Cluster 6, although smaller in scale, is analytically significant because it reflects the emergence of responsible leadership as a context-sensitive theme in emerging economy settings, particularly in relation to Vietnam.

Table 4. Keyword clusters and associated research themes

Cluster	Keywords	Theme
1 (Red)	Fifteen keywords: socially responsible human resource management, sustainable human resource management, green human resource management, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), organizational identification, citizenship, empathy, perception, employment, human resource, resource management, manufacturing, China, theoretical study	Sustainable and responsible HRM practices and employee citizenship outcomes
2 (Green)	Fourteen keywords: employee, employee attitude, ethical leadership, psychology, social behavior, workplace, manager, industry, adult, human, male, female, article, sustainable development	Employee attitudes, ethical leadership, and workplace behavior
3 (Blue)	Eleven keywords: corporate social responsibility, human resource management, human resources management, management, managers, information management, resource allocation, performance, economic and social effects, natural resources management, behavioral research	CSR-oriented HRM systems and organizational performance
4 (Yellow)	Eight keywords: sustainability, corporate social responsibility, social responsibility, competitiveness, person–organization fit, strategic approach, work engagement, Spain	Strategic sustainability, work engagement, and person–organization fit
5 (Purple)	Five keywords: leadership, culture, industry practices, occupational risks, workforce	Leadership, organizational culture, and workforce context
6 (Orange)	Three keywords: organization, responsible leadership, Vietnam	Responsible leadership in emerging economy contexts

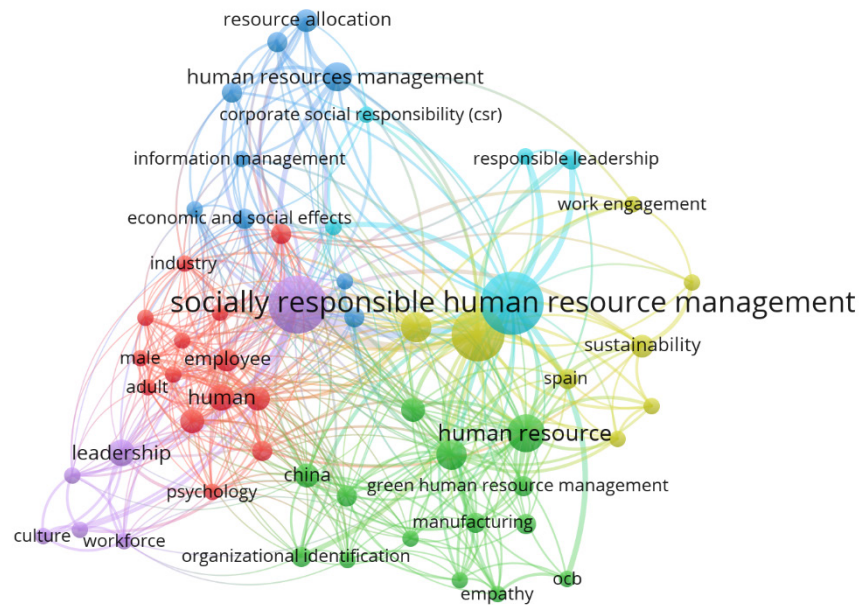


Figure 6. The network of co-occurring keywords

Taken together, these clusters, as summarized in Table 4, indicate that SRHRM and employee behavior research have evolved into a multidimensional and increasingly interdisciplinary field that integrates behavioral, leadership, organizational, and sustainability-oriented perspectives, rather than advancing along a single, uniform trajectory.

Figure 7 indicates that the evolution of SRHRM and employee behavior research has followed a process of thematic broadening across distinct time periods rather than a simple linear progression. During

the earlier phase, approximately 2016–2018, the prominence of keywords such as “socially responsible human resource management,” “human resources management,” “corporate social responsibility,” “leadership,” and “organizational identification” suggests that research was primarily concerned with establishing the conceptual foundations of the field and clarifying the relationship between CSR-oriented HRM and core employee-related outcomes.

Between 2019 and 2021, the increasing visibility of terms such as “resource allocation,” “informa-

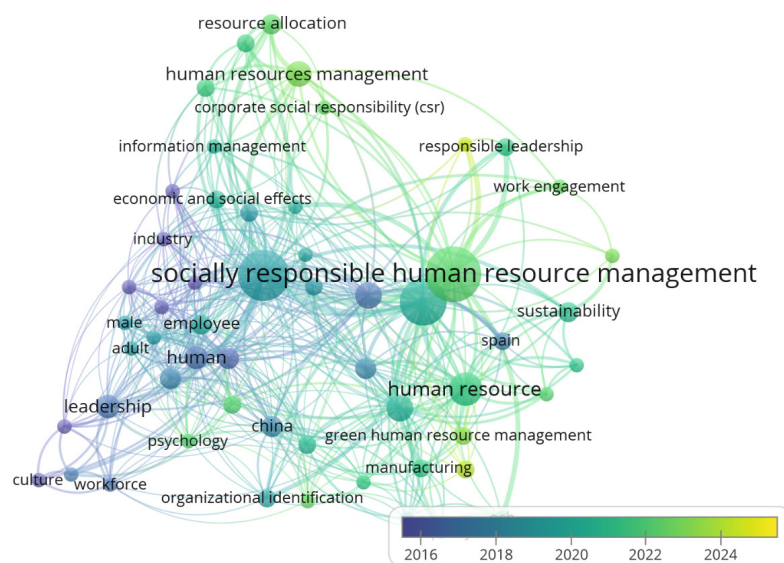


Figure 7. Keyword co-occurrence evolution

tion management,” “economic and social effects,” and “industry” points to a shift toward more strategic and system-level interpretations, in which SRHRM was increasingly positioned within broader organizational and managerial processes.

From 2022 onward, the stronger presence of keywords such as “sustainability,” “green human resource management,” “responsible leadership,” and “work engagement” indicates a growing integration of sustainability-oriented concerns with employee-centered perspectives.

In the most recent period, around 2023–2024, the greater emphasis on employee behavior, psychology, culture, and workforce-related issues suggests that the field has become more attentive to contextual and micro-level dynamics. Figure 7, therefore, shows that SRHRM research has evolved from a primarily conceptual CSR–HRM agenda into a more diversified and interdisciplinary field that incorporates strategic, sustainability-related, behavioral, and context-sensitive perspectives.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings of this bibliometric analysis provide a systematic understanding of how research on socially responsible human resource management (SRHRM) and employee behavior has evolved over time. The rapid increase in publications observed after 2016 indicates that SRHRM has transitioned from a peripheral extension of corporate social responsibility (CSR) into a more central research domain within human resource management and sustainability scholarship. This growth pattern is consistent with earlier conceptual and empirical research demonstrating the increasing integration of CSR principles into HRM systems and organizational practices (Jamali et al., 2015; Sarvaiya et al., 2018).

The strong behavioral orientation identified in the keyword and citation analyses confirms that SRHRM research has increasingly focused on employee-level outcomes, including organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, well-being, and ethical conduct. This result aligns with prior empirical findings that socially responsible HR practices influence employee attitudes and discretionary behaviors through social exchange and signaling mechanisms (Shen & Benson,

2016; Newman et al., 2016). Similar behavioral outcomes have been documented in earlier empirical studies examining employee commitment (Shen & Zhu, 2011), well-being (Abdelmotaleb & Saha, 2020; Celma et al., 2018), knowledge sharing (Jia et al., 2018), and turnover intention (Nie et al., 2018), thereby reinforcing the central role of employee behavior within the SRHRM research landscape.

Another important finding is the growing integration of SRHRM with sustainability-oriented HRM and ESG-related perspectives. The prominence of sustainability-related keywords and journal outlets suggests an increasing convergence between responsible HRM and sustainable HRM frameworks. This observation supports previous studies arguing that socially responsible HR practices contribute to long-term organizational performance and sustainable competitive advantage by improving employee engagement, well-being, and organizational identification (Barrena-Martínez et al., 2017b; Lombardi et al., 2020; Sypniewska et al., 2023).

The analysis also highlights the growing importance of leadership-related constructs within the SRHRM literature. Ethical leadership and responsible leadership emerged as significant thematic clusters, indicating their role as contextual mechanisms shaping the effectiveness of SRHRM practices. This finding is consistent with prior empirical research demonstrating that leadership behaviors translate formal HR policies into meaningful employee experiences and strengthen the behavioral effects of responsible HRM systems (Luu, 2021; Zhao et al., 2023).

In addition, the geographical distribution of publications reveals a noticeable shift toward emerging and transitional economies, particularly China and several Asian countries. This pattern supports earlier observations that CSR- and HRM-related research is increasingly expanding beyond traditional Western contexts as institutional environments and regulatory frameworks evolve in developing economies (Casimiro Almeida & Coelho, 2019; Zhang et al., 2014). The emergence of cross-national collaboration networks further indicates the growing internationalization of SRHRM research, although collaboration remains concentrated among a limited number of countries.

Taken together, these findings suggest that SRHRM research has evolved into a multidimensional field integrating behavioral, sustainability, and leadership perspectives. Compared with earlier narrative and empirical studies that focused primarily on individual behavioral outcomes, the present bibliometric analysis provides a broader structural perspective by identifying dominant thematic clusters, intellectual linkages, and emerging research directions within the field.

Based on the identified thematic patterns, several avenues for future research can be proposed. Future studies should further explore the intersection between SRHRM and digital transformation, examine the role of responsible HR practices in promoting employee well-being and sustainable organizational performance, inves-

tigate environmentally oriented HRM practices and pro-environmental employee behaviors, and conduct cross-national comparative analyses to better understand contextual variations in SRHRM implementation. Longitudinal research designs are also recommended to examine the long-term dynamic effects of responsible HRM systems on employee behavior and organizational outcomes.

Despite these contributions, this study is subject to certain limitations. The analysis relies exclusively on the Scopus database, which may not capture all relevant publications indexed in other databases such as the Web of Science. Future bibliometric research may integrate multiple databases and apply complementary analytical techniques to provide a more comprehensive mapping of SRHRM and employee behavior research.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to systematically examine the research landscape and major thematic directions of SRHRM and employee behavior research over the period 1998–2025 using bibliometric data retrieved from the Scopus database. The findings show a rapid increase in publications since the mid-2010s, revealing several dominant thematic clusters, including sustainability-oriented HRM practices, employee behavioral outcomes, responsible leadership, and the institutional factors influencing SRHRM implementation. Furthermore, the results indicate a growing integration of SRHRM with sustainability and ESG-oriented management perspectives, underscoring the global and interdisciplinary expansion of this field. These findings emphasize the increasing strategic significance of responsible HRM practices in shaping employee attitudes and behaviors, providing a solid empirical foundation for future research in sustainable and responsible human resource management.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

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AI DECLARATION

In preparing this manuscript, the authors used generative artificial intelligence tools (e.g., ChatGPT) solely for language editing and stylistic refinement. All substantive aspects of the research, including conceptual development, bibliometric design, data collection and analysis, interpretation of results, and formulation of scientific contributions, were conducted independently by the authors. No generative AI tools were used to generate research ideas, analyze data, or produce original scholarly content. The authors bear full responsibility for the accuracy, integrity, and originality of the manuscript.

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