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Socially Responsible Human Resources Management: A Bibliometric Visualisation Review and Research Agenda for Sustainable Business and Distribution Studies

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Abstract

Purpose: Socially Responsible Human Resource Management (SRHRM) is a vital intersection of CSR and HRM, integrating ethical, social, and environmental values into HR practices. Its strategic role is evident in distribution-driven industries—such as logistics, trade, and global supply chains—where workforce decisions directly influence service efficiency, compliance, and labor resilience. However, existing studies are fragmented and lack a visualized overview of the field’s intellectual development. This study provides a comprehensive and replicable bibliometric review of SRHRM literature. **Research design, data, and methodology:** A systematic literature review combined with bibliometric analysis was conducted using Scopus and Web of Science data. Following PRISMA screening, 110 peer-reviewed articles (2008–2024) were analyzed with VOSviewer and Biblioshiny for keyword co-occurrence, author collaboration, and thematic mapping. **Results:** Five thematic clusters emerged: sustainable HRM; employee commitment and trust; CSR and resource management; ethical leadership; and organizational sustainability. Outcomes such as task performance, prosocial motivation, and moral identity are among the most frequently appearing and consistently linked, especially in logistics contexts. **Conclusions:** This review maps SRHRM’s intellectual structure and identifies emerging themes including ethical leadership, stakeholder engagement, and cultural diversity. **Future research:** Studies should examine SRHRM in digital transformation, developing economies, and public or multinational sectors to enhance ethical labor governance.

Keywords : Socially Responsible Human Resources Management, SRHRM, Bibliometric Visualisation, Distribution, Logistics, Trade

JEL Classification Code: M12, M14, J53

1. Introduction

In the era of global sustainability imperatives and increasing emphasis on Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) standards, organizations are expected to not only achieve economic efficiency but also embrace ethical, social, and environmental responsibilities (Luu, 2021; Mory et al., 2016). These pressures are particularly

evident in distribution-driven industries such as logistics, trade, and global supply chains, where workforce management directly affects operational efficiency, regulatory compliance, and labor resilience. These pressures have accelerated the strategic repositioning of Human Resource Management (HRM) from a primarily operational function toward a central driver of sustainable value creation (Shen & Benson, 2016). As a result, modern HRM is now

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tasked with aligning workforce management practices with broader goals such as social equity, employee well-being, and stakeholder engagement (Zhao et al., 2022).

Emerging at this intersection is Socially Responsible Human Resource Management (SRHRM), a concept that integrates Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) principles into HRM systems and policies (Shen & Zhu, 2011). SRHRM emphasizes internal CSR practices such as fair recruitment, inclusive development, safe working environments, and ethical leadership. It recognizes employees not only as internal stakeholders but also as critical agents of organizational change, thus playing a pivotal role in fostering trust, enhancing employee commitment, and contributing to sustainable performance (Barrena-Martínez et al., 2019).

Despite growing scholarly interest, the SRHRM literature remains theoretically dispersed and empirically fragmented, with diverse theoretical lenses applied across studies but lacking a unifying framework for integration. Most existing studies focus on specific sectors, themes, or country contexts, often lacking integration across disciplines or methodological consistency (Rawshdeh et al., 2023; Shen & Zhu, 2011). More importantly, no bibliometric research to date has systematically mapped the intellectual foundations and thematic structure of SRHRM as a knowledge domain. The lack of a visualized and cumulative understanding hinders the development of a coherent research agenda and limits the field's theoretical consolidation.

To address this gap, the present study adopts a dual approach that combines a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) with bibliometric analysis. Drawing on 110 peer-reviewed articles indexed in Scopus and Web of Science from 2008 to 2024, the study aims to (i) examine the development trajectory of SRHRM research; (ii) identify leading authors, journals, and contributing institutions; (iii) uncover core thematic clusters and keyword networks; and (iv) analyze the temporal evolution of research foci within the field (Öztürk et al., 2024).

This study contributes to the literature by offering a comprehensive, transparent, and replicable overview of SRHRM. It highlights the intellectual landscape of the field, visualizes emerging research trends, and proposes a forward-looking research agenda. By incorporating insights for distribution, logistics, and trade sectors, the study also provides practical guidance for organizations where workforce management is closely tied to operational efficiency, customer trust, and global supply chain sustainability.

Specifically, SRHRM in logistics and trade helps organizations manage human resources effectively within global supply chains, ensuring stable operations and compliance with international labor standards. Socially

responsible HRM practices further influence customer service quality, distribution channel management, and long-term competitiveness in logistics and trade industries, where workforce resilience and ethical practices are critical for sustaining market leadership.

In doing so, it provides valuable guidance for researchers, educators, and practitioners interested in advancing the role of responsible HRM in building sustainable and ethically grounded organizations.

2. Literature Background

2.1. Socially Responsible Human Resource Management (SRHRM)

Socially Responsible Human Resource Management (SRHRM) is a human resource management approach that systematically integrates the principles of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) into internal HR policies, practices, and strategies with the aim of achieving sustainable organizational effectiveness and creating social value. According to Shen & Benson (2016), SRHRM extends beyond the recruitment of socially responsible individuals to include the systematic integration of training, reward, and promotion practices that are explicitly linked to employees' contributions to CSR-related activities. Organizations that adopt SRHRM typically emphasize the protection of employee rights, the creation of safe and inclusive workplaces, and the encouragement of employee participation in social objectives in a coordinated, system-wide manner (Omidi & Dal Zotto, 2022).

In addition to reinforcing internal ethical conduct and organizational responsibility, employee perceptions of CSR have been shown to positively influence ethical behavior, particularly through the mediating role of organizational commitment—a dynamic further shaped by co-worker ethicality (Sarfó et al., 2021), SRHRM also functions as a vehicle for systematically embedding sustainability principles throughout the HR system (Ehnert et al., 2013). This perspective asserts that investing in human capital not only yields long-term business returns but also contributes to broader societal development. Rawshdeh et al. (2023) argue that socially responsible HRM should be embedded across all organizational levels, emphasizing that fostering trust and commitment requires coordinated efforts beyond the HR department alone. Recent studies argue that socially responsible HRM constitutes a new managerial paradigm, moving beyond strategic HRM to deliberately integrate ethics, sustainability, and performance into organizational practices. Empirical evidence from Lu et al. (2023) demonstrates that sustainable HRM practices enhance employee resilience and work engagement, which in turn

elevate individual performance.

Moreover, SRHRM is increasingly recognized as a corrective response to the burnout-inducing orientation of traditional HRM, as recent evidence suggests that sustainable HR practices significantly bolster employee resilience and engagement, thereby mitigating stress and enhancing performance (Lu et al., 2023). SRHRM initiatives—such as improving employee welfare, promoting work-life balance, and fostering a culture of knowledge sharing—are systematically designed and interlinked to not only enhance satisfaction, trust, and engagement (Tuan, 2016), but also support the development of organizational citizenship behavior (Shao et al., 2023). Importantly, SRHRM plays a crucial role in employee retention by cultivating a meaningful and supportive work environment (Pham et al., 2023).

In sum, SRHRM is not merely a set of HR tools aligned with CSR objectives, but rather a holistically integrated, value-driven strategic management philosophy capable of shaping a sustainable organizational culture and enabling dual success—both economic and social—for the firm.

2.2. Strategic Role of SRHRM in Organizations

The strategic value of SRHRM lies in its ability to systematically align organizational goals with broader societal expectations related to fairness, transparency, and human dignity. By implementing mutually reinforcing socially responsible HR practices, organizations strengthen internal legitimacy and foster a workplace culture based on trust, equity, and engagement (Barrena-Martínez et al., 2019). This, in turn, leads to increased affective commitment, organizational citizenship behaviors, and improved individual and collective performance (Mory et al., 2016). SRHRM also plays a key role in operationalizing ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) and SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) principles within the HR function, ensuring that sustainability values are not confined to external reporting but consistently embedded in employee experiences. Moreover, in a business environment increasingly shaped by stakeholder scrutiny and demand for ethical governance, SRHRM acts as a transformative force that redefines HRM as a driver of long-term value creation and sustainable organizational development. It supports the transition from transactional HR practices to strategically integrated, values-based people management that aligns economic, social, and ethical outcomes.

3. Methodology

To investigate the scholarly evolution of Socially Responsible Human Resource Management (SRHRM), this

study adopted an integrative methodological framework combining a SLR with bibliometric analysis. This hybrid design enhanced both the methodological rigor and the comprehensiveness of the review, enabling a systematic examination of research trajectories, intellectual structures, and thematic developments within the field (Somuah et al., 2025). Bibliographic data were sourced from two leading academic databases—Scopus and Web of Science (WoS)—renowned for their extensive disciplinary coverage and indexing quality, particularly in business and the social sciences. A targeted search strategy was employed using the following keywords: “Socially Responsible Human Resources,” “SRHRM,” “SR-HRM,” “Socially responsible HRM,” and “Socially responsible human resource practices.” The search was restricted to publications issued between 2008 and 2024.

To ensure methodological transparency and reproducibility, the review process adhered to the PRISMA 2020 guidelines (Haddaway et al., 2022; Page et al., 2021). A multi-stage screening protocol was implemented, commencing with duplicate removal, followed by title and abstract screening, and concluding with full-text eligibility assessment. Studies were included if they: (i) were peer-reviewed journal articles; (ii) were written in English; (iii) explicitly examined SRHRM or CSR-integrated HRM practices; and (iv) provided full-text access. Exclusion criteria encompassed conference proceedings, editorials, book chapters, dissertations, non-English publications, and works not directly related to HRM or CSR in organizational contexts.

Following the application of these criteria, 110 peer-reviewed articles were retained for the final analysis. Bibliometric mapping and network analyses were conducted using VOSviewer and Biblioshiny to visualize keyword co-occurrence, author collaboration patterns, thematic clusters, and the temporal evolution of research priorities.

4. Findings

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

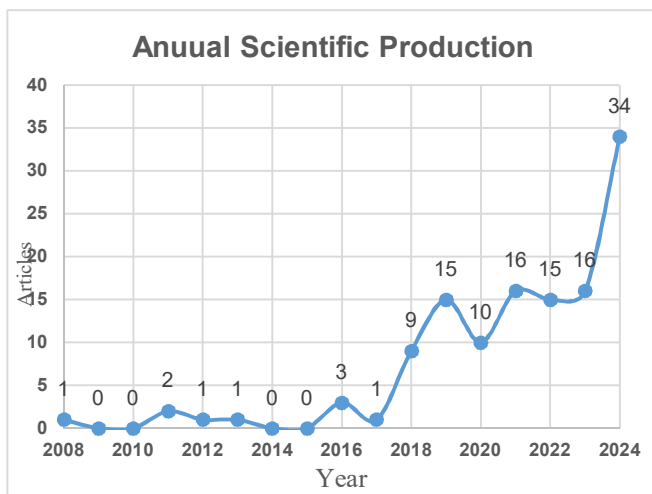
Table 1 outlines the fundamental characteristics of the dataset. The review encompasses 110 publications released between 2008 and 2024, derived from 73 distinct sources, including journals, books, and other scholarly outlets. On average, these documents are 3.54 years old and receive approximately 26.36 citations per publication, contributing to a total of 1026 references. Furthermore, the dataset comprises 177 Keywords Plus (ID) and 370 Author’s Keywords (DE), indicating a wide-ranging and multidimensional exploration of research themes within the field.

Table 1: Main Information of Data

Timespan	2008:2024
Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	73
Documents	110
Document Average Age	3.54
Average citations per doc	26.36
References	1026
Keywords Plus (ID)	177
Author's Keywords (DE)	370

Source: R Studio

4.2. Number of Articles over the Years



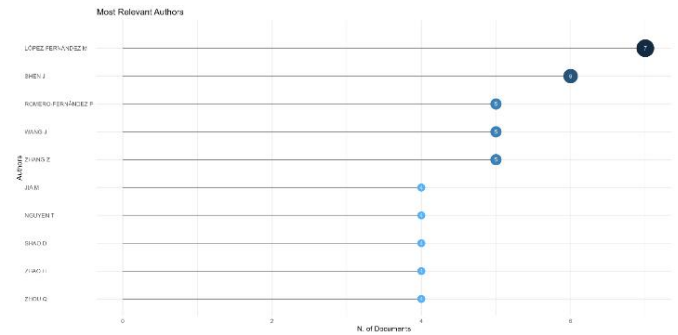
Source: R Studio

Figure 1: Annual Scientific Production

Based on the figure 1 titled *Annual Scientific Production*, the annual trend of publications related to Socially Responsible Human Resource Management (SRHRM) demonstrates a clear evolution in scholarly interest. From 2008 to 2017, the number of publications remained very low, fluctuating between 0 and 3 articles per year, indicating minimal academic attention to SRHRM during this period. However, starting in 2018, a notable upward trend began to emerge, with annual outputs ranging from 9 to 16 articles between 2018 and 2023. This steady increase suggests a growing recognition of SRHRM as a relevant and timely research topic within the broader field of human resource management and organizational studies.

The year 2024 marks a significant breakthrough, with 34 publications, more than doubling the previous years' output. This sharp rise likely reflects a shift in global academic focus toward sustainable and socially responsible practices in HRM, possibly influenced by the increasing prominence of ESG frameworks and post-pandemic reflections on employee well-being and corporate responsibility. The surge in publication volume also indicates that SRHRM is

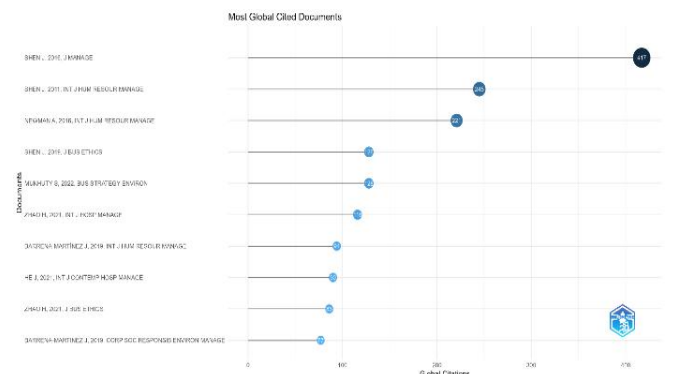
transitioning from a niche concept to a mainstream research theme, with broader implications for strategic HR practices and ethical organizational development.



Source: R Studio

Figure 2: Most Relevant Authors

Figure 2 highlights the contributions of authors to research on Socially Responsible Human Resource Management (SRHRM), showing the number of publications by each author. López-Fernández M. leads with 7 publications, followed by Shen J. with 6. Notable contributors include Romero-Fernández P., Wang J., and Zhang Z., each with 5 publications, indicating their strong engagement with the topic. Other contributors such as Jia M., Nguyen T., Shao D., Zhao H., and Zhou Q. each have 1 publication, reflecting a more limited yet diverse participation in the field. This ranking underscores the central role of a few core scholars in shaping SRHRM research, while also highlighting the growing interest among a broader range of authors.

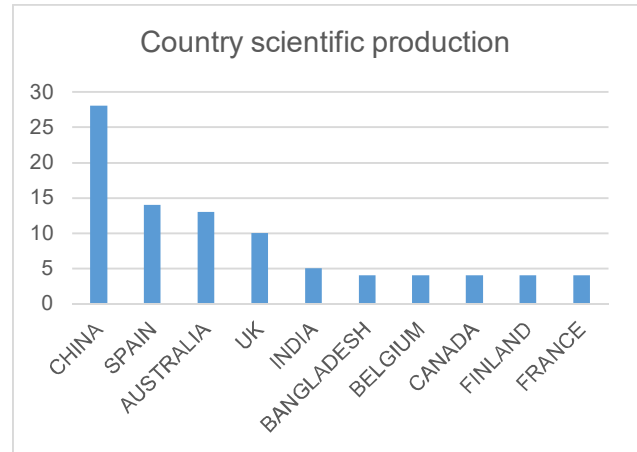


Source: R Studio

Figure 3: Most Cited Documents

Figure 3 highlights the most globally cited documents in the field of Socially Responsible Human Resource Management (SRHRM), ranked by total citations. Leading the list is Shen J (2016) in *Journal of Management*, with 417 citations, demonstrating its substantial academic impact and foundational role in shaping SRHRM research. Following is

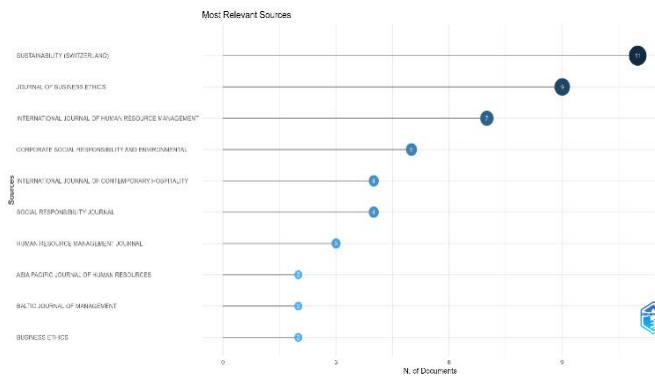
Shen J (2011) in *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, with 245 citations, and Newman A (2016) in the same journal, with 221 citations, both reflecting their significant scholarly contributions. Other prominent works include Shen J (2019) in *Journal of Business Ethics* and Mukherjee S (2022) in *Business Strategy and the Environment*, each receiving 128 citations, underscoring their importance in expanding the ethical and strategic dimensions of SRHRM. Additional influential documents by Zhao H (2021), Barrena-Martínez J (2019), He J (2021), and Barrena-Martínez J (2019) again in different journals garnered between 77 and 116 citations, highlighting the continued development and diversification of research in this domain. These citation patterns reflect the pivotal role of a few core studies in advancing the global understanding of SRHRM.



Source: R Studio

Figure 5: Countries' Scientific Production

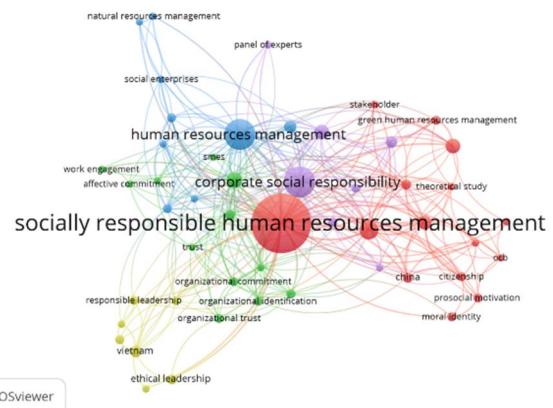
Figure 5 shows global scientific production on Socially Responsible Human Resource Management (SRHRM), with China leading the field with 28 publications, followed by Spain (14), Australia (13), and the United Kingdom (10). India contributed 5 articles, while Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, Finland, and France each published 4. This distribution indicates a clear dominance by China, reflecting its growing academic engagement with responsible HRM practices in the context of rapid economic and institutional transformation. Spain and Australia also demonstrate strong research interest in the field, while countries such as India and the UK maintain a moderate level of contribution. The presence of multiple countries with equal but modest outputs (4 publications each) suggests a broader international interest in SRHRM, although the depth of engagement may still be emerging.



Source: R Studio

Figure 4: Most Relevant Sources

Figure 4 offers a summary of the most important sources in the field of Socially Responsible Human Resource Management (SRHRM), ranked by the number of published documents. The vertical axis lists the leading academic journals, while the horizontal axis represents their article contributions. Sustainability (Switzerland) leads the field with 11 publications, followed by the Journal of Business Ethics with 9, and the International Journal of Human Resource Management with 7. Other notable journals include Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management with 5 articles, and both the International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management and the Social Responsibility Journal with 4 each. Additional contributors such as the Human Resource Management Journal (3 articles), Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources (2), Baltic Journal of Management (2), and Business Ethics (2) reflect a growing diversification of publication venues. This distribution underscores the interdisciplinary nature of SRHRM research and its relevance across sustainability, ethics, and HRM domains.



Source: VOSviewer

Figure 6: The Network of Co-occurring Keywords

The analysis using VOSviewer identified five distinct research clusters (Figure 6) within the literature on Socially

Responsible Human Resource Management (SRHRM). Each cluster represents a group of interrelated research concepts, based on the co-occurrence of keywords across the reviewed documents. The clusters are detailed as follows:

Cluster 1: Sustainable and Socially Responsible Human Resource Management

This cluster, as identified through the VOSviewer keyword co-occurrence analysis, comprises 15 keywords that collectively highlight the systematic integration of ethical, social, and environmental considerations into contemporary HRM practices. High-frequency terms include *green human resource management*, *sustainable human resource management*, *socially responsible human resource management (SRHRM)*, *prosocial motivation*, *moral identity*, *empathy*, *organizational citizenship behavior (OCB)*, and *task performance*. Additional recurrent terms, such as *citizenship*, *employment*, *human resource*, and *stakeholder*, indicate a research focus on the organizational–employee relationship within the broader framework of sustainable development.

The prominence of concepts such as OCB and prosocial motivation aligns with prior empirical findings that SRHRM fosters positive discretionary behaviors and enhances performance outcomes through the embedding of ethical values in HR policies (Barrena-Martínez et al., 2019; Shao et al., 2023). The frequent co-occurrence of “China” as a geographic keyword suggests that this thematic area is particularly active in the Chinese context, where scholars have emphasized responsible management models that integrate community engagement and environmental stewardship (Zhao et al., 2022).

From an analytical perspective, this cluster reflects the theoretical consolidation of SRHRM as a driver of both ethical conduct and productivity. It confirms earlier observations that sustainability-oriented HR practices are positively associated with employee commitment and performance (Shen & Benson, 2016), while also extending the discourse by revealing a geographic concentration of such studies. Thematically, it underscores the importance of SRHRM in globalized labor markets, particularly for organizations seeking to balance economic efficiency with ethical and social imperatives.

Cluster 2: Employee Commitment and Organizational Trust

Identified through VOSviewer keyword co-occurrence mapping, this cluster comprises 12 keywords centering on the relationship between HRM practices and employees’ positive attitudes and behaviors within organizations. High-frequency terms include *affective commitment*, *organizational commitment*, *work engagement*, *motivation*, *organizational identification*, and *organizational trust*, each reflecting the emotional bonds, loyalty, and sense of responsibility that employees demonstrate in contemporary organizational

contexts.

Additional recurrent terms, such as *performance*, *turnover intention*, and *impact*, indicate that studies in this thematic area frequently examine the links between trust, commitment, and work-related outcomes—particularly in *small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)*, where retaining skilled employees over the long term is a persistent challenge (Pham et al., 2023; Mory et al., 2016). The co-occurrence of *HR practices* and *trust* underscores the strategic role of human resource policies in cultivating a positive psychological climate that enhances organizational stability and mitigates turnover risk. Notably, socially responsible HRM has been shown to improve employee *retention* and *relationship satisfaction* through mechanisms such as *shared value* and *servant leadership*, reinforcing the trust–commitment–performance link (Pham et al., 2023).

From an interpretive standpoint, this cluster reinforces the notion that *employee trust* and *commitment* are not merely desirable HR outcomes but foundational elements of *sustainable* and *socially responsible organizational development*. By linking psychological constructs with measurable performance indicators, this body of work extends prior theoretical models of *SRHRM*, offering practical insights for organizations—particularly *SMEs*—seeking to balance profitability with social responsibility in *talent management* strategies.

Cluster 3: Corporate Social Responsibility and Resource Management

As identified through VOSviewer keyword co-occurrence mapping, this cluster comprises 9 keywords emphasizing the intersection between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and organizational resource management strategies. High-frequency terms include *corporate social responsibility (CSR)*, *internal CSR*, *ethics*, and *social enterprises*, signifying a strong orientation toward embedding ethical and socially responsible practices within internal business operations.

Other recurrent terms—such as *human resource management*, *resource allocation*, and *natural resource management*—point to a broader thematic focus on how organizations strategically align social and environmental objectives with decision-making and resource distribution. Recent scholars argue that *CSR-oriented HRM* acts as a catalyst for resource efficiency and sustainability integration (Amjad et al., 2021; Huang et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the co-occurrence of terms like *engagement* and *work* underscores the central role employees play in enacting and championing CSR principles across organizational processes. Consistent with earlier findings, CSR is conceptualized here not merely as an outward-facing strategy, but as a foundational component of organizational culture and responsible HRM (Shen & Zhu, 2011).

From an interpretive perspective, this cluster contributes to the understanding of how internal CSR practices,

supported by ethical governance and efficient resource utilization, can enhance long-term business performance. It extends the literature by linking CSR integration directly to internal resource strategies, offering a pathway for organizations to simultaneously achieve social responsibility objectives and operational efficiency.

Cluster 4: Ethical and Responsible Leadership

Identified through VOSviewer keyword co-occurrence mapping, this cluster comprises 7 keywords centered on the role of leadership in fostering ethical behavior and socially responsible HRM practices. Prominent terms such as *ethical leadership*, *responsible leadership*, *moral voice*, and *SRHR practices* indicate a concentrated research interest in shaping organizational cultures grounded in ethical principles and social responsibility.

The inclusion of keywords like *hospitality* and *job crafting* suggests that a meaningful portion of this research is situated within the service sector, particularly in Vietnam. This aligns with findings showing that ethical leadership plays a pivotal role in enabling employees to adapt and reframe their tasks—especially in less motivated contexts—thereby promoting job crafting and enhancing the meaningfulness of work (Luu, 2021).

Analytically, this cluster underscores that leadership behavior is a critical lever for embedding CSR principles into HRM systems. For example, studies reveal that ethical leaders act as moral exemplars whose behavior facilitates a psychologically safe environment, enabling employees to voice concerns and participate more actively in responsible practices. This, in turn, elevates employee engagement and boosts organizational legitimacy (Hoang, Yang, & Luu, 2023; Shen & Benson, 2016).

In doing so, this thematic area advances the SRHRM literature by reframing leadership from a managerial function to a strategic driver of ethical culture and sustainable performance, particularly in the hospitality service context where relational dynamics and service ethics are central.

Cluster 5: Organizational Perception and Sustainable Development

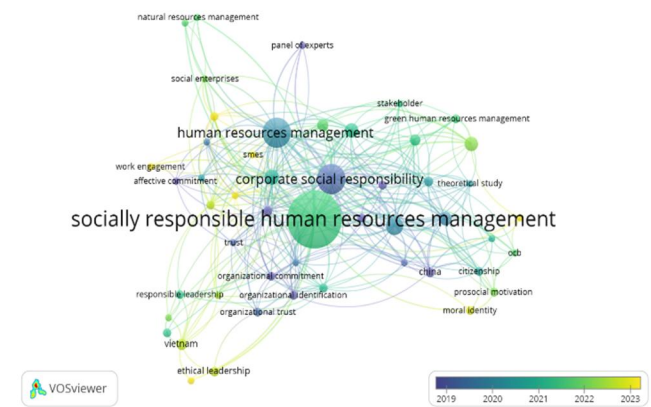
Identified through VOSviewer keyword co-occurrence mapping, this cluster comprises 7 keywords highlighting the interplay between *sustainability/perception* and organizational design. High-frequency terms such as *sustainability*, *corporate social responsibility*, and *organization framework* suggest an emphasis on embedding sustainable objectives into organizational structures and governance.

The presence of *perception* underscores interest in stakeholder (especially employee) interpretations of sustainability commitments. This aligns with empirical findings that SRHRM fosters green workplace behaviors, mediated by learning goal orientation and moral identity (Zhou & Zheng, 2023). Furthermore, SRHRM is shown to build employee environmental citizenship behaviors when

embedded with ethical frameworks and systems (Zhao et al., 2021).

Terms like *employee commitment* and *expert panel* reveal that this cluster often employs multi-source (including qualitative and expert) methods to assess how sustainability strategies shape behavior. The inclusion of *organization framework* reflects research indicating that institutionalized SRHRM policies enhance perception and engagement with sustainability measures.

Analytically, this cluster expands the SRHRM discourse by linking organizational perception of sustainability to structural and strategic enablers, emphasizing that embedding SRHRM holistically leads to stronger organizational commitment and environmental behaviors.



Source: VOSviewer

Figure 7. Keyword Co-occurrence Evolution

The color gradient from dark blue (2019) to yellow (2023) illustrates the evolution of research interests over time, providing insights into emerging priorities in the field. This analysis offers a comprehensive understanding of the field’s development—from the formation of foundational conceptual frameworks to contemporary research themes emphasizing sustainability, ethical leadership, and multicultural perspectives in human resource management (HRM).

During the initial period (2019–2020), research on SRHRM primarily focused on foundational topics such as “socially responsible human resources management,” “corporate social responsibility,” “human resources management,” and “organizational trust.” This stage laid the groundwork for conceptual development by linking CSR and HRM, clarifying the role of *organizational trust*, *organizational commitment* (including *affective commitment*), and *organizational identification* as key psychological and behavioral outcomes influenced by socially responsible HR practices.

From 2021 to 2022, the focus began shifting toward sustainable development and the integration of ethical

values into HR strategies. Concepts such as “green human resources management,” “sustainable human resources management,” “stakeholder,” and “responsible leadership” gained prominence, reflecting increased attention to environmental responsibility, stakeholder engagement, and the role of ethical leadership in promoting organizational values. During this phase, “ethical leadership” emerged as a model of ideal leadership, fostering ethical culture and trust between managers and employees.

By 2023, research had further evolved to explore individual behavioral aspects, with greater emphasis on intrinsic motivation and moral identity. Topics such as “prosocial motivation,” “moral identity,” “citizenship,” and “job crafting” received heightened attention, reflecting efforts to understand the mechanisms through which socially responsible HRM influences employee behavior and job outcomes. Concurrently, the appearance of terms like “task performance” and “employment” indicates a trend toward quantifying performance outcomes and measuring the concrete impact of SRHRM on individual productivity and career engagement.

Another important trend is the geographical diversification of research, which increasingly extends beyond Western contexts to focus on culturally diverse settings. This is evidenced by the rising academic interest in countries such as “Vietnam” and “China,” highlighting a shift from global theoretical discourse toward local applications. These studies contribute to assessing the relevance and effectiveness of SRHRM in varying cultural, institutional, and developmental contexts.

In summary, the evolution of SRHRM research reveals three major shifts:

- (1) from theoretical foundations related to CSR and organizational trust toward sustainable HRM strategies;
- (2) from organizational-level perspectives to micro-level aspects such as individual motivation and identity; and
- (3) from a Western-centric research focus to cross-cultural investigations in Asia.

These shifts underscore the increasingly strategic role of HRM in promoting sustainable development, enhancing job performance, and embedding ethical values by strengthening employee commitment, fostering organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), and advancing ethical and responsible leadership.

5. Research Gaps and Future Agenda

5.1. Research Gaps

Although the field of Socially Responsible Human Resource Management (SRHRM) has gained increasing attention in recent years, the current literature still presents

several notable gaps:

First, there is a lack of critical HRM perspectives in SRHRM research. Existing studies often adopt a normative or instrumental approach, emphasizing the benefits of SRHRM for organizational performance while overlooking potential contradictions, power asymmetries, and ethical dilemmas. This limits a more nuanced and reflective understanding of SRHRM in practice. Second, the predominance of cross-sectional and quantitative designs has constrained theoretical development. There is a clear need for qualitative and longitudinal research to uncover dynamic processes and contextual influences that shape the implementation and outcomes of SRHRM over time. Third, current studies remain largely concentrated in developed economies, with limited empirical evidence from emerging contexts such as Vietnam, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and the public sector. These underexplored settings may yield important insights into the contextual contingencies and institutional conditions influencing SRHRM practices and their effectiveness. Addressing these gaps is essential to develop a more comprehensive, context-sensitive, and critically informed understanding of SRHRM, particularly in light of growing global interest in ethical and sustainable management practices.

5.2. Future Research

In light of the identified gaps, future research on Socially Responsible Human Resource Management (SRHRM) should focus on several critical areas to advance both theoretical refinement and practical relevance.

First, the intersection between SRHRM and algorithmic or digital HRM represents a timely and underexplored research frontier. The growing integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and algorithmic decision-making tools into HR functions has introduced complex ethical dilemmas and governance challenges. While such technologies promise increased efficiency in strategic HR decision-making, they may also exacerbate risks related to bias, opacity, and the erosion of employee trust (Alabdali et al., 2024). To ensure that the digital transformation of HRM aligns with socially responsible values, future research should investigate issues such as fairness, transparency, and data ethics in AI-driven processes like recruitment, performance appraisal, and workforce analytics. A critical HRM perspective is essential to examine how these technological tools can either support or undermine the ethical foundations of SRHRM.

For distribution and logistics industries, where algorithmic systems are increasingly applied in workforce scheduling, warehouse management, and supply chain optimization, such inquiries are particularly crucial to ensure that digital transformation does not compromise

fairness and employee trust.

Second, the geographic and organizational focus of SRHRM studies remains disproportionately concentrated in developed economies and large corporations, leaving a significant research void in emerging markets and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Given their distinct institutional, cultural, and resource environments, these contexts may reveal alternative interpretations and adaptive implementations of SRHRM. Empirical studies in countries such as Vietnam and within SMEs could offer valuable insights into how socially responsible HR practices are shaped by local values, stakeholder expectations, and operational constraints (Pham et al., 2024). Such research would enhance the contextual sensitivity and cross-cultural applicability of SRHRM frameworks.

In particular, logistics SMEs and trade-related enterprises in emerging markets provide fertile ground for studying how SRHRM can address workforce shortages, compliance pressures, and sustainability challenges within global supply chains.

Third, the role of ethical and responsible leadership in facilitating SRHRM warrants deeper scholarly attention. Leadership behavior has been shown to influence critical outcomes such as organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), psychological well-being, and internal job satisfaction. In particular, Li (2024) found that ethical leadership fosters OCB through the mediating role of job satisfaction, and that this relationship is further moderated by leader empathy. Future research should therefore adopt multilevel and moderated mediation models to explore how leadership styles facilitate or constrain the translation of SRHRM principles into employee behaviors across organizational levels.

This line of inquiry is especially relevant for leaders in logistics and distribution sectors, where frontline employees play pivotal roles in ensuring service quality, delivery reliability, and customer trust.

Fourth, a more comprehensive understanding of SRHRM requires the integration of a multi-stakeholder perspective. Existing research predominantly emphasizes the views of employees and HR professionals, often neglecting the voices of external stakeholders such as customers, local communities, and regulatory bodies. Including these groups in SRHRM studies would provide a richer picture of how social responsibility values are interpreted, negotiated, and institutionalized across different constituencies. This approach not only enhances theoretical completeness but also contributes to the practical challenge of managing ethical pluralism in organizational decision-making.

Within distribution and trade industries, incorporating customer and supply chain partner perspectives will be essential to understand how SRHRM influences perceptions

of fairness, service reliability, and ethical compliance across networks.

Finally, more attention should be paid to the behavioral outcomes and underlying mechanisms through which SRHRM affects individuals. While existing studies have linked SRHRM to desirable outcomes such as task performance and extra-role helping behavior, the psychological processes driving these effects are not yet fully understood. Shen & Benson (2016) demonstrated that organizational identification mediates the relationship between SRHRM and helping behavior, suggesting that internalization of organizational values is a key pathway. Future studies should expand this line of inquiry by examining other constructs such as moral identity, empathy, and felt obligation. Employing longitudinal and mixed-method research designs will be essential to uncovering causal mechanisms and capturing the evolving nature of these relationships over time.

In distribution-intensive sectors, examining how these psychological mechanisms translate into reduced turnover, enhanced safety compliance, and improved supply chain resilience would significantly enrich both scholarly and practical understanding.

By addressing these research directions, scholars can contribute to a more holistic, context-sensitive, and ethically grounded understanding of SRHRM, thereby enhancing its theoretical robustness and practical applicability in diverse organizational settings.

6. Conclusion

This study provides a structured overview of the development and intellectual landscape of SRHRM through a combined Systematic Literature Review and bibliometric analysis. The findings highlight the field's evolution from CSR-based theoretical foundations to emerging themes such as sustainability, ethical leadership, and individual behavioral outcomes.

The integration of SLR and bibliometric methods demonstrates strong analytical value, enabling the identification of key research clusters, trends, and influential contributions. This approach enhances transparency and provides a macro-level understanding of SRHRM's trajectory.

Finally, the study underscores SRHRM's strategic role in advancing sustainable organizational transformation, especially in emerging markets. It opens new academic spaces for future research focused on digital HRM, multi-stakeholder perspectives, and context-specific applications of responsible HR practices.

From a business perspective, the study also highlights the relevance of SRHRM in distribution, logistics, and trade

sectors, where workforce management is directly linked to operational efficiency, service quality, and global supply chain resilience. Socially responsible HR practices in these industries contribute not only to employee commitment and organizational legitimacy but also to customer satisfaction, distribution channel reliability, and long-term competitiveness in sustainability-driven markets.

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