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A BIBLIOMETRIC EXPLORATION OF HIGH PERFORMANCE WORK SYSTEMS IN MANUFACTURING: INSIGHTS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Rajukumar Singh*, Shashibhushan**

Abstract *The aim of this study is to offer a comprehensive overview of the research landscape on High Performance Work Systems (HPWS) within the manufacturing sector using bibliometric analysis. A total of 451 articles were retrieved from the Web of Science (WoS) database and were analysed through citation analysis, source evaluation, country level publication assessment, and keyword exploration. Research activity in this field has steadily grown since 2011, with the highest publication volume observed in 2020. China contributes the largest share of publications, followed by the United States and several other emerging and industrialised economies. This study examines HPWS related literature from 2005 to 2021 and utilised VOSviewer software to conduct scientific mapping. Keyword co-occurrence analysis is applied to identify emerging themes, while co-authorship and citation network analyses reveal patterns of scholarly collaboration and intellectual influence within the field.*

Keywords: *HPWS, Manufacturing, Bibliometric, VOSviewer, Web of Science (WOS)*

INTRODUCTION

High Performance Work Systems (HPWS) have become a central strategic lever for manufacturing firms seeking sustainable improvements in productivity, quality, and financial returns, as extensive empirical research links coherent bundles of selective staffing, skill development, participation, and performance-contingent rewards to superior results (Combs et al., 2006; Huselid, 1995; Ichniowski et al., 1997; MacDuffie, 1995). In parallel, integrative reviews and meta-analyses suggest that HPWS influence performance primarily through human capital accumulation and motivational mechanisms consistent with the Ability Motivation Opportunity (AMO) framework, underscoring the importance of internally aligned HR bundles rather than isolated practices (Becker & Huselid, 1998; Boxall & Macky, 2009; Jiang et al., 2012; Posthuma et al., 2013). Within manufacturing specifically, plant-level and line-level studies demonstrate that complementary sets of HR and production practices such as teams, training, problem-solving routines, and contingent pay are associated with higher productivity and quality, particularly when adopted as mutually reinforcing systems (Ichniowski et al., 1997; MacDuffie, 1995; Pil & MacDuffie, 1996). At the same time, debates persist regarding potential trade-offs, as some evidence indicates that HPWS can intensify job demands and produce mixed effects on employee well-being, suggesting context-dependent contingencies that merit closer scrutiny (Godard, 2004; Kroon et al., 2009; Ramsay et al., 2000; Van de Voorde et al., 2012).

Contemporary manufacturing is also being reshaped by Industry 4.0 technologies, including cyber physical systems, IoT, analytics, and advanced automation, which reconfigure work design and capability needs. These developments raise new questions regarding how HPWS should evolve to complement digital operations and lean practices (Frank

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et al., 2019; Pagliosa et al., 2019; Tortorella & Fettermann, 2018). These shifts heighten the value of a comprehensive synthesis to reveal foundational themes, emerging clusters, and research gaps at the intersection of HPWS and manufacturing, moving beyond narrative reviews or isolated studies (Boxall & Macky, 2009; Combs et al., 2006; Posthuma et al., 2013). Bibliometric science mapping provides a panoramic lens by systematically tracing influential works, knowledge flows, and collaboration networks across large bodies of literature, enabling an evidence-based research agenda for future inquiry (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Donthu et al., 2021). The bibliometric analysis conducted in this study aims to examine the impact of HPWS practices in manufacturing sector and to chart intellectual structures, temporal trajectories, and methodological trends, while integrating insights form production systems and digital transformation literatures to situate the field's evolution (Frank et al., 2019; Jiang et al., 2012; Mac Duffie, 1995; Tortorella & Fettermann, 2018). By combining performance-driven evidence with the growing body of work on employee outcomes, this analysis also aims to reconcile both the mutual gains and critical perspectives, and to identify the conditions under which HPWS simultaneously enhance operational excellence and worker wellbeing (Boxall & Macky, 2009; Godard, 2004; Kroon et al., 2009; Van de Voorde et al., 2012). Ultimately, the contribution of this study is two-fold: first, to deliver a rigorously mapped overview of the HPWS manufacturing knowledge base that clarifies core domains, influential sources, and frontier topics; and second, to propose a forward-looking research agenda that prioritises system complementarities, digital-lean integration, multi-level mechanisms, and balanced performance well-being outcomes supporting scholars and practitioners in designing people-centric HPWS for the next era of manufacturing (Becker & Huselid, 1998; Donthu et al., 2021; Posthuma et al., 2013; Tortorella & Fettermann, 2018).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To systematically map the publication trends and leading contributions in HPWS research within the manufacturing sector.
- To identify major themes, clusters, and influential works in the field.
- To propose future research directions that link HPWS with modern manufacturing challenges.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Table 1: Profile of the Data Collected for the Study

Procedure Followed	Explanation and Details
Sources of data collection	Web of Science
Time span of data collected	2005-2024
Keywords used	HPWS, Manufacturing, High Performance Work Systems
Total paper found in initial stage	5,56,376
Refinement done by	Time period, Document types (Articles and Review articles), Subject category, language etc.
Web of Science subject category included	Management and Business
Refine by citation topic included	Organisational Behaviour, Corporate Social Responsibility, Manufacturing Scheduling, Industry 4.0, Organisational Theory, Bibliometrics
Final Documents selected for bibliometric analysis	451

The authors formulated and applied the following search query for the initial data retrieval:

('High Performance HRM Practices' OR 'HPWS' OR 'HR System' OR 'High Involvement HRM' OR 'HRM Bundles' OR 'High-Performance Work Systems' OR 'HPWP' AND 'Manufacturing Industry' OR 'Manufacturing' OR 'Railway Manufacturing' OR 'Indian Railways' OR 'Indian railways Manufacturing').

This study draws its bibliometric data from the Web of Science (WoS) database, which is recognised as a reliable source of high-quality, peer-reviewed research. To capture both the historical roots and recent developments in the field, the data collection covered the period from 2005 to 2024. The initial search was carried out using the keywords 'HPWS', 'Manufacturing', and 'High Performance Work Systems,' which resulted in 556,376 records. Given the breadth of this span, filters were applied based on document type (limited to journal articles and review papers), subject category (restricted to Management and Business), and language (English only). In addition, the search was refined by citation topics, including Organisational Behaviour, Corporate Social Responsibility, Manufacturing Scheduling, Industry 4.0, Organisational Theory, and Bibliometrics. After applying these criteria, the final dataset consisted of 451 documents, which formed the basis for the bibliometric analysis.

Bibliometric Examination

Bibliometric analysis provides an organised and quantifiable method for studying scientific literature by examining publication, citation, and keyword patterns that reveal the structure and development of a research field (Donthu et al., 2021). Among the available tools, VOSviewer, developed by Van Eck and Waltman, has become one of the most widely used software applications for creating and visualising bibliometric networks (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010). Researchers can create maps of co-authorship, co-citation, and co-occurrence relationships, thereby uncovering influential authors, institutions, and thematic clusters using the VOSviewer software (Waltman et al., 2010). Its ability to process large datasets with user-friendly visualisations makes it particularly valuable for identifying emerging trends, evaluating intellectual structures, and guiding future research directions in a given domain (Perianes-Rodriguez et al., 2016).

OUTCOMES OF THE BIBLIOMETRIC AND NETWORK VISUALISATION STUDY

Part-A: Evaluation of Performance

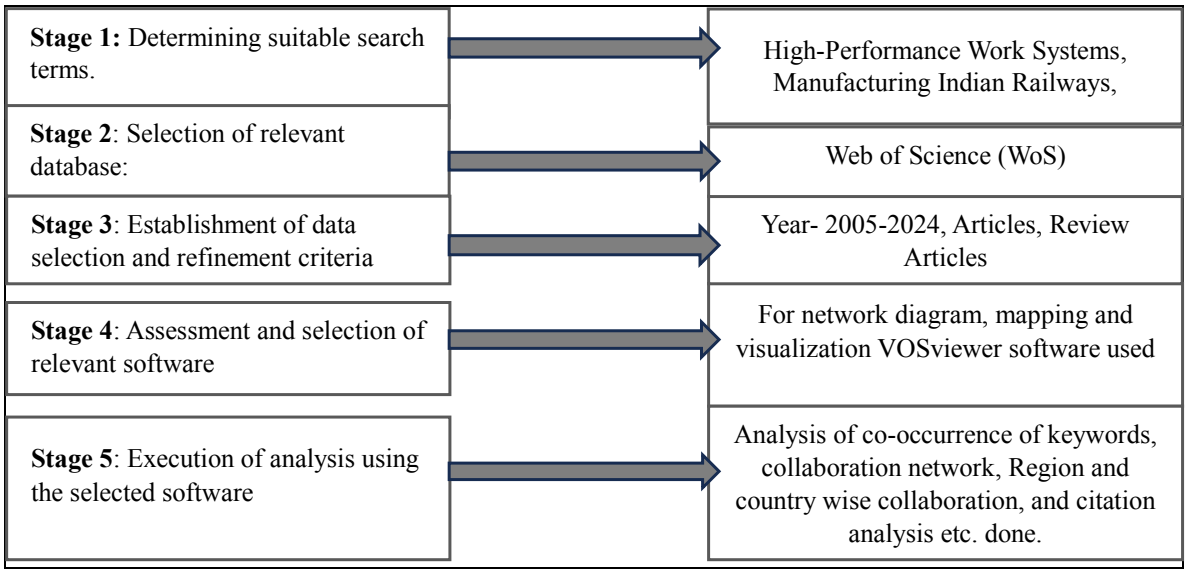


Fig. 1: Approach to Network Visualisation and Bibliometric Analysis

Study of Publication Trends

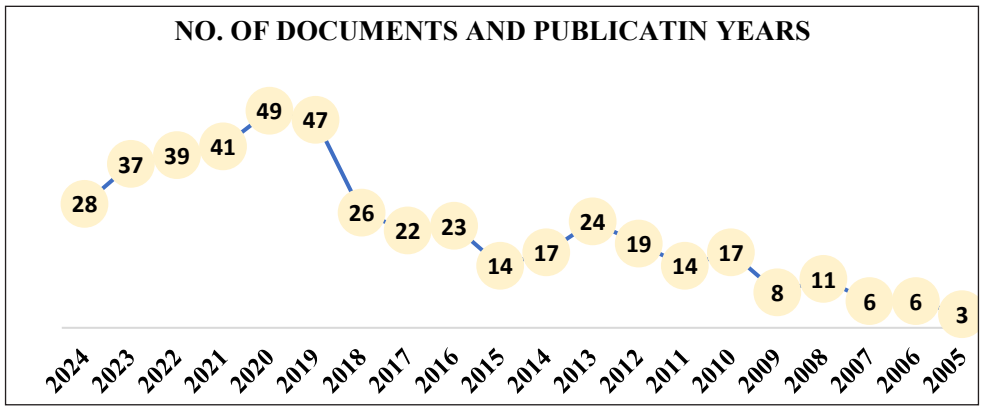


Fig. 2: Documents Publication HPWS and Manufacturing from 2005 to 2024

Table 2: Documents Publication Trends from 2005 to 2024

Publication Years	No of Documents	% of 451
2024	28	6.208
2023	37	8.204
2022	39	8.647
2021	41	9.091
2020	49	10.865
2019	47	10.421
2018	26	5.765
2017	22	4.878
2016	23	5.100
2015	14	3.104
2014	17	3.769
2013	24	5.322
2012	19	4.213
2011	14	3.104
2010	17	3.769
2009	8	1.774
2008	11	2.439
2007	6	1.330
2006	6	1.330
2005	3	0.665

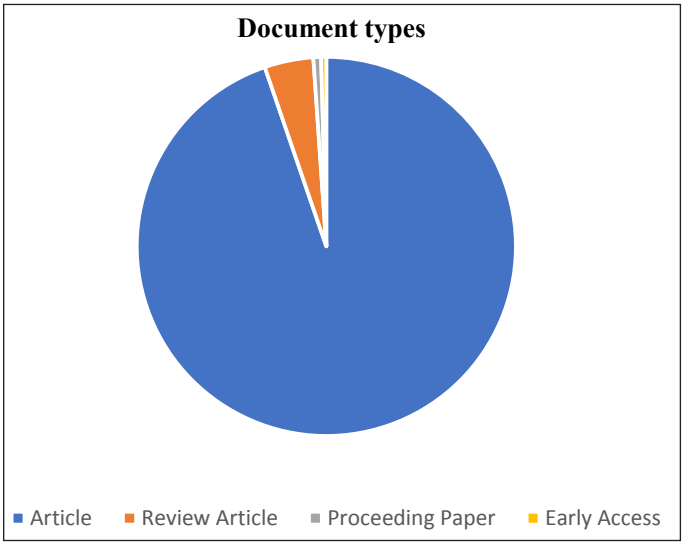


Fig. 3: Documents Published from 2005-2024

Table 2 and Fig. 2 show how research publications have evolved between 2005 and 2024. In the early years, from 2005 to 2010, research activity was quite low, with fewer than 20 publications per year. From 2011 to 2018, output grew slowly but steadily, averaging between 14 and 26 documents annually. A sharp increase occurred between 2019 and 2021, when publication numbers reached their highest point, with 49 in 2020, followed closely by 47 in 2019 and 41 in 2021. This period marks the peak of research productivity. After 2021, the numbers began to decline gradually, with 39 publications in 2022, 37 in 2023, and 28 in 2024, although the lower figure for 2024 may be due to incomplete data. Overall, the trend reflects a long-term rise in research activity, reaching its peak around 2019-2021 before showing signs of decline in recent years. The data shown in the above Table 3 and Fig. 3 indicate that most publications are articles (95.7%), followed by review articles (4.21%), with minimal proceedings papers and early access publications.

Table 3: Types of Documents (from Year 2005-2024)

Document Types	Record Count	% of 451
Article	432	95.79
Review Article	19	4.21
Proceeding Paper	3	0.67
Early Access	2	0.44

Institutional Contribution Assessment

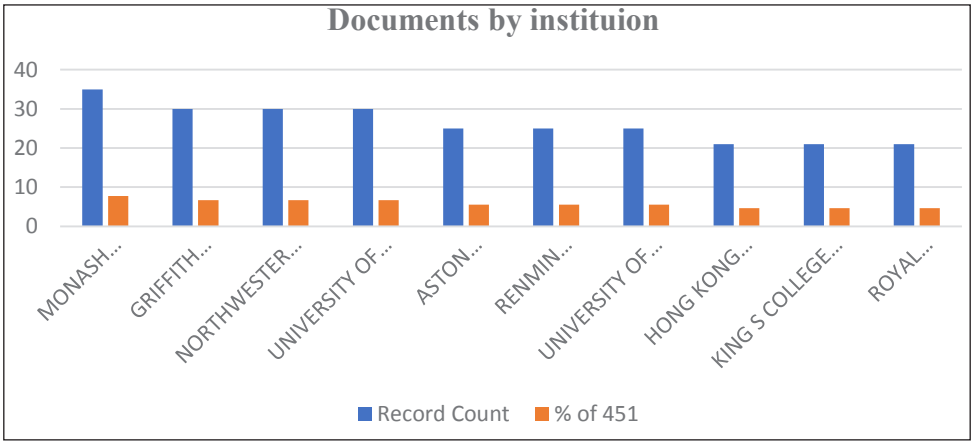


Fig. 4: Top 10 Institution Contribution From Year 2005 to 2024

Table 4: Top 10 Universities Contribution in Documents

Affiliations	Record Count	% of 451
Monash University	35	7.761
Griffith University	30	6.652
Northwestern Polytechnical University	30	6.652
University of New South Wales Sydney	30	6.652
Aston University	25	5.543
Renmin University of China	25	5.543
University of London	25	5.543
Hong Kong Polytechnic University	21	4.656
King S College London	21	4.656
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology RMIT	21	4.656

Fig. 4 and Table 4 show which institutions contribute most to research publications. Monash University leads with 35 papers, making up 7.76% of the total. Close behind are Griffith University, Northwestern Polytechnical University, and the University of New South Wales (UNSW) Sydney, each with 30 publications (6.65%). Aston University, Renmin University of China, and the University of London follow with 25 publications each (5.54%). The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, King's College London, and RMIT University also make notable contributions, with 21 papers each (4.66%). Overall, the data highlight strong research activity from universities in Australia, China, and the UK, showing how a few key institutions account for a significant share of the output.

Subjects and Journals Analysis

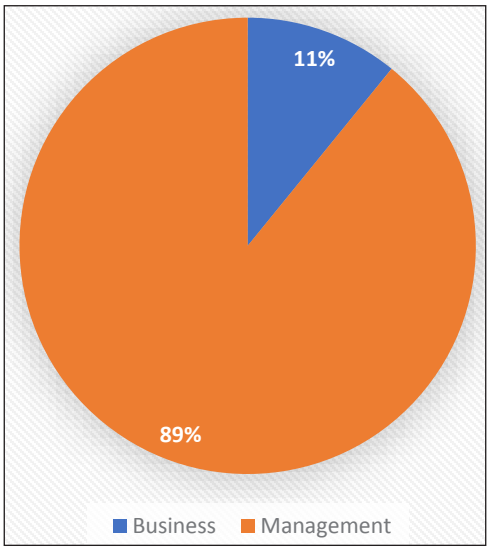


Fig. 5. Subject-Wise Contribution of Documents

Table 5: Subject Categories of Documents

Web of Science Categories	Record Count	Percentage (%)
Business	49	11
Management	402	89

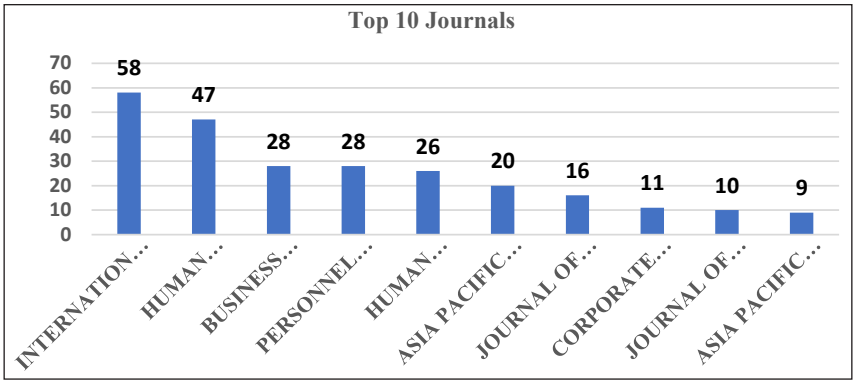


Fig. 6: Top 10 Journal with Their Trend of Publication

Table 6: Top 10 Journals Which Contributed the Most of the Documents

Publication Titles	Record Count	% of 451
International Journal of Human Resource Management	58	12.86
Human Resource Management	47	10.421
Business Strategy and the Environment	28	6.208
Personnel Review	28	6.208
Human Resource Management Journal	26	5.765
Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources	20	4.435
Journal of Business Ethics	16	3.548
Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management	11	2.439
Journal of Business Research	10	2.217
Asia Pacific Journal of Management	9	1.996

The data in Fig. 5 and Table 5 show that most publications fall under the Management category, with 402 records (89%), while Business contributes 49 records (11%). This indicates that research is strongly focused on management, with business playing a smaller but meaningful role.

The data presented in Fig. 6 and Table 6 highlight the leading journals contributing to research publications in this field. The International Journal of Human Resource Management stands out as the top source, publishing 58 articles (12.86% of the total). It is closely followed by Human Resource Management, with 47 records (10.42%), showing the dominance of HR-related outlets. Business Strategy and the Environment and Personnel Review each account for 28 publications (6.21%), reflecting strong attention to both environmental strategy and workplace studies. The Human Resource Management Journal also plays a key role with 26 records (5.77%). Other journals, such as the Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources, Journal of Business Ethics, and Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management, provide additional contributions, highlighting the multidisciplinary nature of this research landscape.

Assessment of Country Contributions

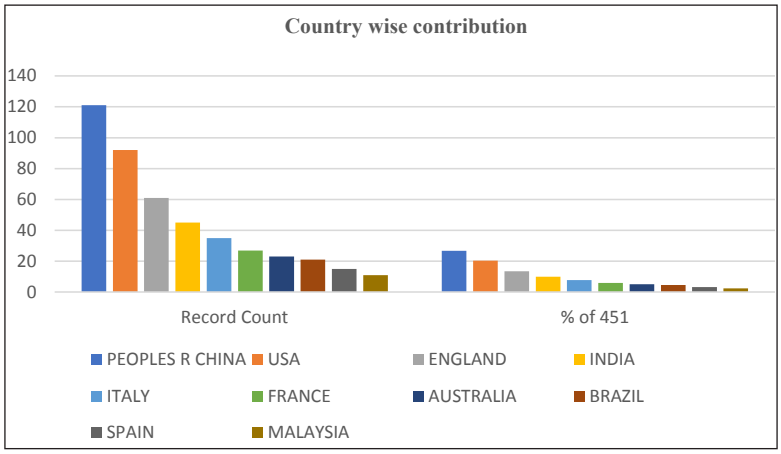


Fig. 7: Documents Contributed by Different Countries

Table 7: Document Contributed by Top 10 Countries

Countries/Regions	Record Count	% of 451
Peoples R China	121	26.83
USA	92	20.40
England	61	13.53
India	45	9.98
Italy	35	7.76
France	27	5.99
Australia	23	5.10
Brazil	21	4.66
Spain	15	3.33
Malaysia	11	2.44

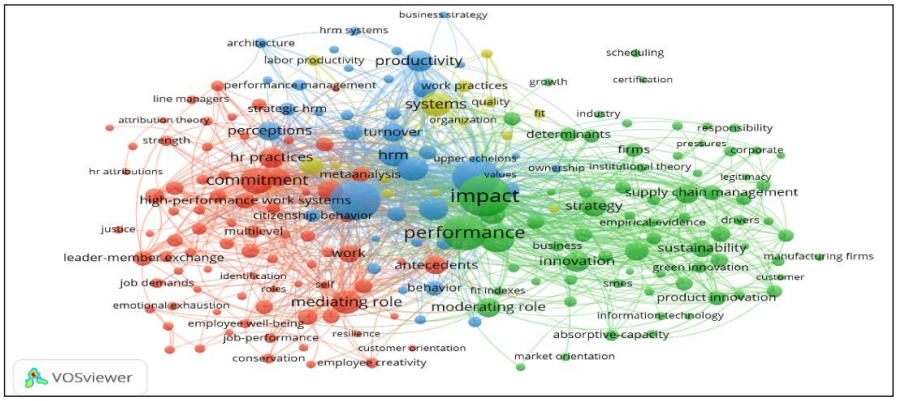
The data illustrate the distribution of research contributions across different countries and regions. China leads significantly with 121 publications, representing (26.83% of the total), followed by the United States with 92 records (20.40%). England also makes a strong contribution with 61 publications (13.53%). Together, these three countries account for more than half of the total output, reflecting their strong influence in this research area. India ranks fourth with 45 publications (9.98%), while Italy and France contribute 35 (7.76%) and 27 (5.99%) publications, respectively. Other notable contributors include Australia (5.10%), Brazil (4.66%), Spain (3.33%), and Malaysia (2.44%). Overall, the data indicate a broad global research presence, though dominated by China, the United States, and England (Table 7 and Fig. 7).

Part-B: Representation of the Network Diagram

Keywords Co-Occurrences Analysis

Co-occurrence of keywords in bibliometric analysis refers to the simultaneous appearance of two or more terms within a single scholarly document, indicating a conceptual relationship (Dehdarirad et al., 2014). This technique, also referred to as co-word analysis, is widely applied to reveal the intellectual framework of research fields (Van Eck & Waltman, 2014). By analysing co-word networks, researchers can identify thematic clusters and visualise connections among key concepts (Chen et al., 2016). Moreover, keyword co-occurrence helps trace the evolution of scientific domains, revealing emerging topics and research hotspots over time (Cobo et al., 2011).

A keyword co-occurrence network was constructed using VOSviewer, drawing on authors' keywords for the analysis. To ensure relevance, only terms appearing at least five times were included. From a total of 2,261 keywords recovered from the WoS database, 209 met the threshold. The resulting visualisation maps illustrate how these terms are interconnected. As shown in Fig. 8, the keyword 'Impact' appears most frequently in co-occurrence patterns. The breadth of the connecting lines between keywords reflects the strength of their relationship, with HPWS displaying the strongest associations with concepts such as human resource management, firm performance, and commitment. These network visualisations highlight the close ties between HPWS and themes like manufacturing, organisational performance, and HRM. Moreover, the visualisation underscores potential opportunities for further exploration in the field. The accompanying Table 8 confirms the most frequently occurring keywords, and their overall link strength.



Source: VOSviewer.

Fig. 8: Keywords Co-Occurrences Diagram

Table 8: Top Five Keywords' Co-Occurrences with Their Total Link Strength and Link

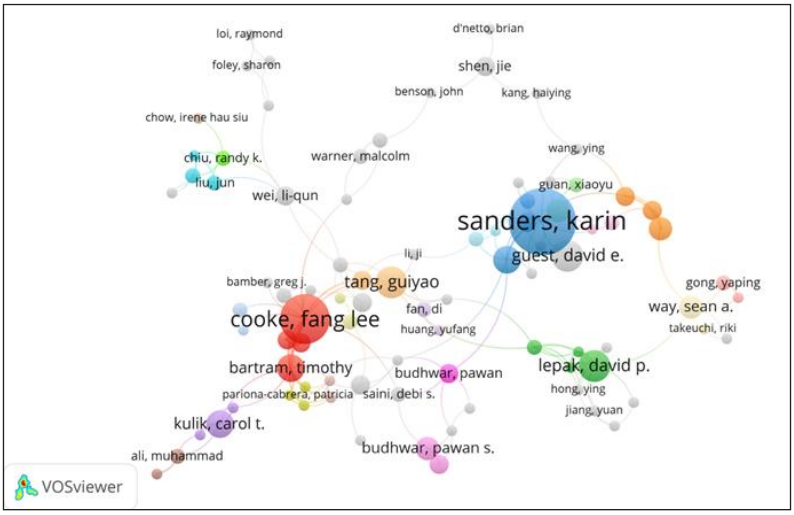
Sr. No.	Keywords	Occurrences	Total Link Strength	Links
1	Impact	138	1054	191
2	Human-Resource Management	130	998	173
3	Firm Performance	114	866	177
4	Performance	102	649	187
5	Commitment	59	445	143

Analysis of Co-Authorship Links

Co-authorship analysis in VOSviewer helps to understand how knowledge is created through collaboration. Each author or country is shown as a point on the map, and the connecting lines represent shared publications. Larger points indicate higher productivity or stronger influence, while thicker lines show closer cooperation. At the author level, these maps reveal research groups and leading contributions, whereas at the country level, they highlight international partnerships and patterns of global scientific collaboration.

Network Diagram of Authors' Co-Authorship

Based on data retrieved from the Web of Science, and after setting a minimum criterion of two publications and four citations, a total of 235 records were selected. These records were organised into 58 clusters to examine the co-authorship patterns among authors. Fig. 9(a) presents the resulting network, where each colour highlights a group of researchers collaborating together, while the connecting lines illustrate their cooperative relationships. Table 9 highlights the top five authors with the highest overall link strength, showing that Sanders stands out with the greatest number of publications, citations, and collaborations per paper, making his network the most influential in the field. The visualisation in Fig. 9(a) also reveals that, although there are many authors in the field of "HPWS," collaborations between them remain limited. Furthermore, the number of active researchers is relatively small, which presents significant opportunities for scholars in HPWS and manufacturing to engage in stronger collaborations and expand the body of research.



Source: VOSviewer.

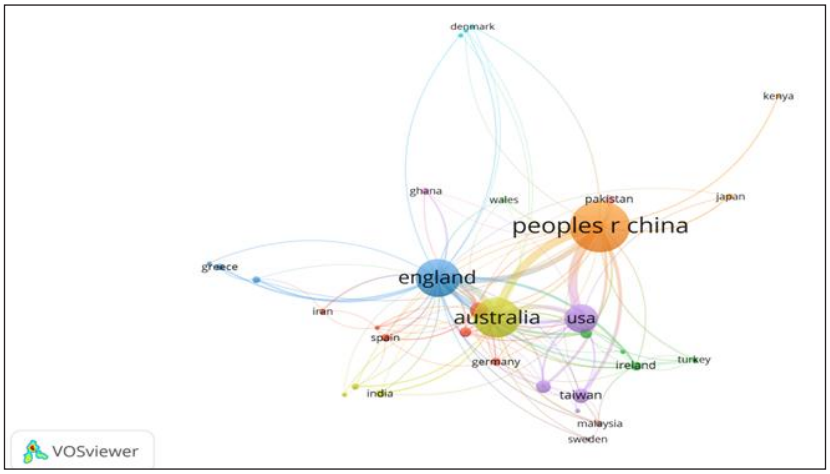
Fig. 9(a): Authors' Collaboration Network of HPWS and Manufacturing

Table 9: Topmost Five Authors Coauthorship Network

Sr. No.	Authors Name	No. of Publications	Total Citations	Total Link Strength
1	Sanders, karin	17	863	24
2	Cooke, fang lee	12	836	23
3	Bartram, timothy	6	254	19
4	Alfes, kerstin	7	794	17
5	Feng, taiwen	10	607	17

Countries' Co-Authorship Network

The visualisation map highlights the collaborative links among the leading countries contributing to this research field. In the map, the thickness of each connecting line indicates the intensity of co-authorship between nations. For the analysis, only countries meeting the threshold of at least two publications and four citations were considered, resulting in 34 records, which were organised into 22 clusters, retrieved from the WoS database. Fig. 9(b) portrays this global co-authorship network, while Table 10 lists the top five countries with the strongest collaborations. The findings reveal that China, England, Australia, the United States, and the Netherlands demonstrate the highest levels of international cooperation, with link strength ranging between 117 and 176. Notably, China leads with 235 publications, 117 total connections, and the strongest collaboration strength at 176. The visualisation in Fig. 9(b) highlights how different nations collaborate on HPWS and Manufacturing research. It suggests that, while global collaboration exists, many developing countries still display weaker connections compared to developed nations. Strengthening partnerships between developing and developed countries could therefore play a key role in enhancing research output and increasing visibility in the field of HPWS and Manufacturing.



Source: VOSviewer.

Fig. 9(b): Coauthorship Network Diagram by Countries and Region-Wise

Table 10: Co-Authorships' Based Top Five Countries

Sr. No.	Name of Countries	No. of Documents Published	Total Links	Total Citations	Total Link Strength
1	Peoples R China	235	117	13472	176
2	England	136	82	9436	166
3	Australia	149	97	7556	152
4	USA	79	86	5497	113
5	Netherlands	26	28	2010	46

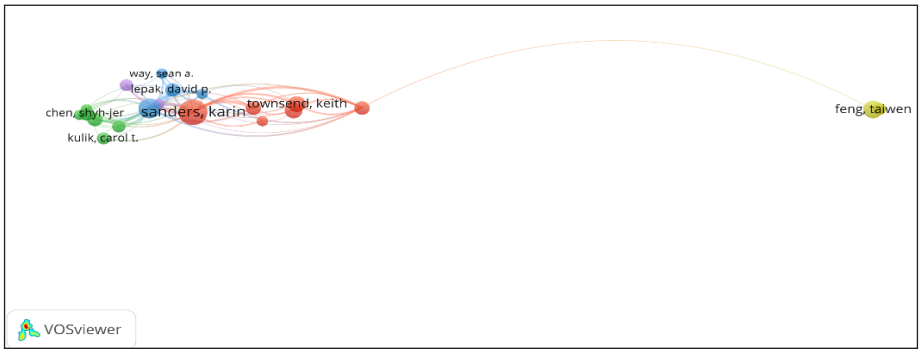
Analysis of the Citation

Citation analysis examines how often, and in what patterns, scholarly works are cited to assess influence and knowledge flows within a field (Tsay, 2009). It is a core bibliometric method that maps the structure of scientific domains, evaluates research impact, and tracks intellectual trends (Raan, 2003). To evaluate the influence of a research publication, citation analysis is one of the key tools (Tsay, 2009). Here, we conduct citation analysis in two parts, namely author citation link examination and country citation link examination**.**

Author Citation Network

Citation analysis was carried out to identify the key research themes behind the most frequently referenced studies and prominent authors in the field. By setting a minimum threshold of five publications and seven citations, a group of 22 interconnected authors was identified. Their citation network is illustrated in Fig. 10(a), which highlights the authors with the highest number of contributions. The visualisation is divided into six clusters, each represented by a different colour, indicating potential collaboration patterns among authors within the same cluster. An author's

influence is reflected not only by the volume of their publications but also by the number of citations they receive (Dzikowski, 2018). Table 11 presents the top three author connections, along with their total link strength derived from citation counts. Among them, Cook, Fang Lee, and Sander, Karin emerged as the most impactful scholars. However, when focusing purely on publication volume, only a limited number of researchers ranked highly in citation impact. This suggests that although HPWS research has expanded, scholars' engagement in the field has not reached the expected intensity. Moreover, a higher publication count does not necessarily equate to greater influence. Therefore, citation analysis in HPWS serves as an essential foundation, encouraging authors to produce work that not only adds to the literature but also receives greater citation recognition.



Source: VOSviewer.

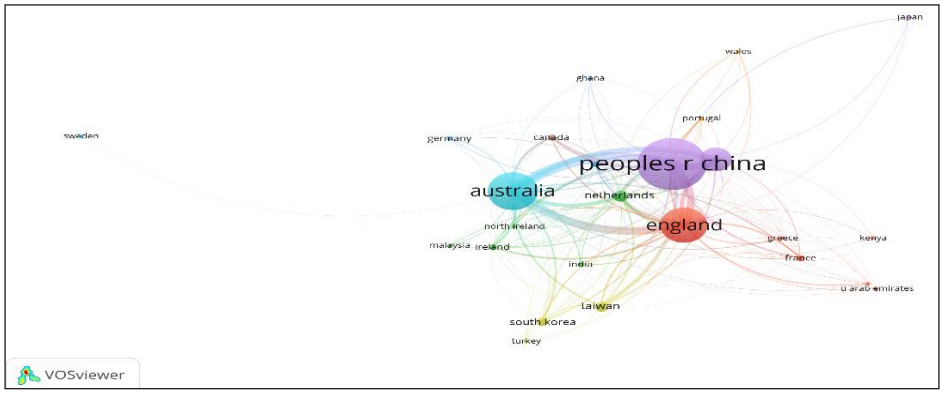
Fig. 10(a): Diagram of Authors Citation Network Analysis

Table 11: Top Three Authors with Highest Citation and Link Strength

Sr. No.	Name of Authors	Citations	Publications	Links	Total Link Strength
1	Cook, Fang lee	836	12	15	84
2	Sanders, Karin	863	17	17	71
3	Lepak, David p.	706	7	11	30

Countries Citation Network

Bibliographic data from WoS were analysed using VOSviewer to create a citation network map across countries (see Fig. 10(b)). To qualify for inclusion, countries were required to have a minimum of three publications and six citations. The analysis revealed 26 countries, grouped into eight clusters. Among them, Australia emerged as the leading contributor, with 149 publications, 24 citation links, and a total link strength of 915. Table 12 lists the top five countries with the strongest citation connections. As illustrated in Fig. 10(b), the most frequently cited nations are primarily developed economies, led by Australia, followed by China, England, the United States, and the Netherlands. These results highlight the potential for researchers in developing nations to engage more actively in HPWS and manufacturing research, thereby enhancing their citation impact.



Source: VOSviewer.

Fig. 10(b): Countries' Citation Network Analysis

Table 12: Top Five Countries with Highest No. of Publication and Total Link Strength

Sr. No.	Name of Countries	No. of Publications	Total Link	Total Citations	Total Link Strength
1	Australia	149	24	7556	915
2	People R China	235	23	13472	860
3	England	136	24	9436	689
4	USA	79	22	5497	451
5	Netherlands	26	20	2010	266

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

In this paper, we conducted a bibliometric review focusing on research developments related to HPWS within the manufacturing sector. The publications analysed were indexed in the WoS database and covered the period from 2005 to 2024. A total of 556,376 articles were retrieved and examined using established bibliometric techniques. Instead of relying solely on raw database outputs, we employed network visualisation tools to illustrate how the research landscape has evolved over time. The results indicate significant growth in HPWS-related manufacturing research over the past nineteen years, demonstrating that scholarly interest in this field continues to expand rapidly.

The present study explores a range of bibliometric indicators, including leading authors, institutions, countries, keyword co-occurrence, and patterns of collaboration among researchers and nations. Methodologically, it adopts a comprehensive approach, combining bibliometric performance analysis with network analysis to ensure rigor. Country-specific contributions and journal publications across diverse fields provide the foundation for examining HPWS practices in depth. The results highlight that China and the United Kingdom are the most significant contributors in this area of research. Key performance indicators such as publication trends, institutional outputs, subject areas, and journal analysis were found to be strongly interconnected. Keyword mapping further reveals that scholarship on HPWS in manufacturing is centred on themes like impact, human resource management, firm performance, organisational performance and commitment.

Notable contributors to this literature include Sander, Cooke, Bartram, Alfes, and Feng, with a significant proportion of publications affiliated with institutions such as Monash University, Griffith University, and Northwestern Polytechnical University. Spanning the years 2005 to 2024, this work provides a global readership with the most recent insights and evidence-based perspectives in the field. By reviewing various research streams, it offers valuable guidance for scholars interested in HPWS in the Manufacturing sector. However, the study is limited to data from the WoS and relies solely on VOSviewer for analysis. Future research could expand by incorporating additional databases, applying diverse analytical tools, and adopting emerging techniques to generate new perspectives. Overall, the evidence suggests that investigations into HPWS within the Manufacturing domain are experiencing significant and sustained growth.

The WoS database presents certain limitations, particularly in its coverage of specific sectors, which may restrict the breadth of future investigations.

- This review relied exclusively on English-language publications, potentially overlooking valuable studies published in other languages. Expanding future research to include multilingual sources could help overcome this limitation.
- Research on the bibliometric evaluation of HPWS and the manufacturing sector remains relatively scarce, highlighting a promising avenue for future exploration.
- Most of the existing literature originates from countries such as China, the UK, Australia, the US, and the Netherlands. However, there is a noticeable gap in contributions from India, where studies on HPWS and manufacturing practices are limited.

Addressing this shortage through expanded research in Asian contexts and fostering stronger collaborations between Western and Asian institutions could significantly enrich the field and broaden its global perspective.

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