Mapping the Landscape: A Bibliometric Analysis of Employee Voice Research

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Abstract. This study aims to systematically map the literature on "employee voice" through a bibliometric analysis. Research data were collected from 1,157 articles in the Scopus database, focusing on publications between 1982 and 2024. Using VOSviewer software, the study identifies intellectual structures, key themes, and emerging research trends. Findings show a significant growth in publications, with the United States, China, and the United Kingdom leading in contributions. Key journals such as the International Journal of Human Resource Management and Frontiers in Psychology are pivotal in shaping the field. Dominant themes include employee voice behavior, leader-member exchange, workplace conditions, and the growing role of digitalization, particularly post-COVID-19. Co-authorship and keyword analyses reveal increasing interdisciplinary collaboration and a global research network. The study highlights gaps in research related to cultural differences, digital transformation, and post-pandemic organizational dynamics. It emphasizes the need for future studies to foster cross-disciplinary and international collaborations to advance theoretical frameworks and practical applications. Overall, this bibliometric mapping provides comprehensive insights into the evolution and current state of employee voice research.

Keywords: Bibliometric Analysis, Employee Voice, Employee Voice Behavior, Global Collaboration, Research Trends

1   Introduction

The concept of employee voice has garnered significant attention across diverse academic disciplines, owing to its profound implications for organizational dynamics, employee engagement, and broader management practices. Rooted in Hirschman's seminal work *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty* [1], employee voice represents the mechanisms through which employees communicate their ideas, concerns, and perspectives to influence decision-making processes within organizations. Over the decades, this construct has evolved into a multifaceted research area encompassing fields such as organizational behavior (OB), human resource management (HRM), and industrial relations [2,3]. Despite its interdisciplinary appeal, the literature on employee voice remains fragmented, characterized by disparate theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches [4,5].

Employee voice is increasingly recognized as pivotal in enhancing organizational performance by fostering employee engagement, innovation, and ethical practices [6,7]. However, the growing body of research also highlights significant challenges. Scholars have pointed out inconsistencies in defining and operationalizing employee voice, resulting in siloed research streams that often fail to build on each other's findings [8,9]. This disjointedness not only impedes theoretical advancements but also limits the practical applicability of research findings to diverse organizational contexts. Moreover, while recent years have witnessed a surge in studies employing bibliometric techniques to map intellectual structures and research trends [10], a comprehensive bibliometric analysis specifically focused on employee voice remains scarce.

Against this backdrop, this study aims to bridge the existing gaps by conducting a bibliometric analysis of employee voice research. By leveraging advanced bibliometric tools, this paper seeks to uncover the intellectual underpinnings, prevailing themes, and emerging trends within this domain. The objectives of this study are threefold: (1) to provide a systematic mapping of the employee voice literature, (2) to identify key scholarly contributions, and (3) to highlight opportunities for future research that transcends disciplinary boundaries. By doing so, this study aspires to offer a nuanced understanding of the current state and potential trajectories of employee voice research, thereby contributing to its theoretical and practical enrichment.

2   Methods

Bibliometric analysis is used in this research to examine the recent trends in the literature concerning the topic of Employee Voice. Pritchard [11], first introduced bibliometrics, which is concerned with statistical analysis of bibliographic data (Broadus, 1987) for determining the intellectual structure of any scientific field [12]. The current study uses bibliometric methodology for three reasons[13]. First, bibliometrics is an widely recognized field of study with applications in many disciplines including management [13] . Second, it can process large quantities of data. Third, the method uses quantitative rather than qualitative techniques, which helps to provide an objective interpretation of the research findings The results from this research are helpful in providing guidelines and motivations for upcoming research work in this area. Bibliometric analysis focuses on the performance of publications in a particular field such as understanding the research growth, most productive and highly cited authors, top journals and highly influential papers [10].

A bibliometric analysis is employed in this study to explore recent trends in the literature on Employee Voice. Bibliometrics, introduced by Pritchard [11], involves the statistical examination of bibliographic data [14] and is widely used to uncover the intellectual structure of scientific fields [12]. This research adopts bibliometric methodology for three key reasons [13]. First, bibliometrics is a well-established and widely applied approach across various disciplines, including management [13]. Second, it efficiently processes large volumes of data. Third, it relies on quantitative techniques, providing an objective interpretation of research findings.

The insights derived from this analysis offer valuable guidance and inspiration for future research in the domain of Employee Voice. Specifically, bibliometric analysis assesses the performance of publications in a given field by evaluating factors such as research growth, the most productive and frequently cited authors, leading journals, and influential papers [10].

The authors gathered bibliometric data from Scopus, one of the most widely used repositories. The extracted data included information such as authors, titles, abstracts, countries, citation records, and author affiliations. Additionally, several performance metrics were obtained for the bibliometric analysis, including [10]: Total Papers (TP), representing the overall number of publications from the source; Total Citations (TC), indicating the total citations received by the publications; and Total Publications per Country (TPC), which reflects the number of publications originating from the top contributing countries.

The collection of articles conducted on January 7, 2025 by concentrating on the main theme around the research articles of 'Employee Voice', for this research followed the various stages outlined in the PRISMA-ScR (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews) guidelines [15]. In the initial stage, the researchers identified the main topic to serve as the focus for the article search. Subsequently, a screening process was conducted by establishing inclusion criteria. The researchers then selected relevant articles by filtering titles and abstracts from the database, ensuring that the chosen articles would be reviewed comprehensively. The PRISMA diagram, adapted from [15] and illustrating this process, is presented in Figure 1 below.
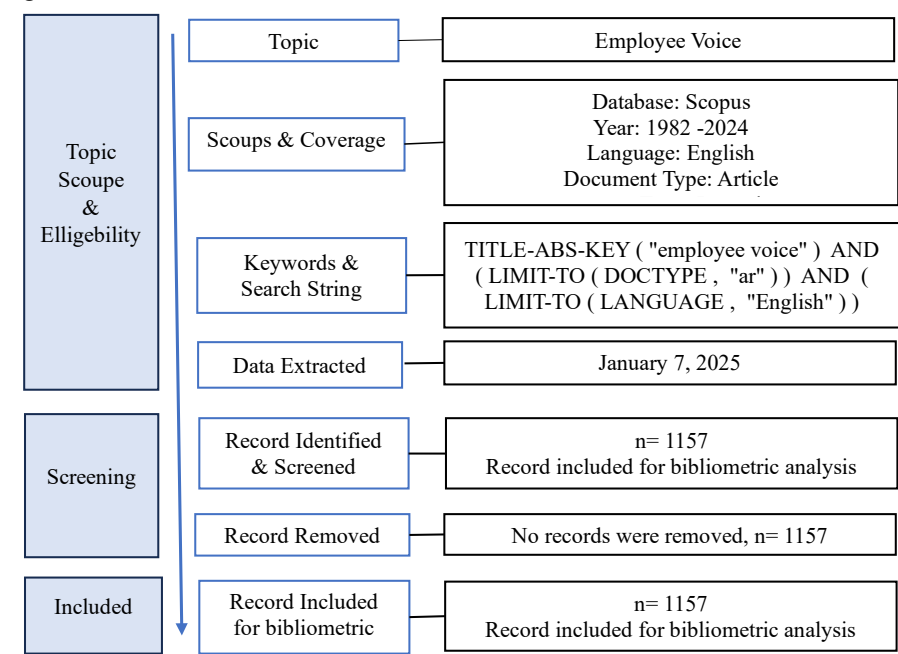

Fig. 1. Flow Diagram of Research Strategy

3 Result and Discussion

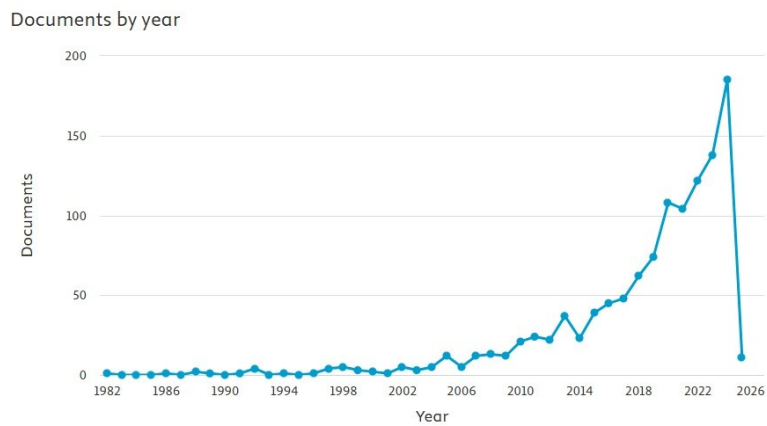### 3.1 Research Growth Analysis

Fig. 2. Flow diagram of research strategy.

Analysis of publication trends within the dataset reveals significant growth in research activity over time. The earliest publication dates back to 1986, marking the initial appearance of this research topic within the dataset. Research efforts began to intensify around 2005, with the annual growth rate accelerating sharply; publications in 2005 nearly tripled the number published in 1997, initiating a consistent upward trend. From 2009 to 2019, the field experienced rapid growth, increasing from 10 journal articles in 2009 to 86 in 2019. This exponential growth suggests that the research topic gained considerable attention and recognition during this period, indicating likely continued expansion in the future. A particularly rapid growth phase is observed from 2015 onwards, culminating in a peak of 185 publications in 2024. Notably, as of 2019, only 8.6% (38 articles) were open access. To enhance readability and knowledge dissemination, increased open access to journal papers is recommended.

Top Productive Journals Analysis. In this section, the authors have extracted the top ten journals which were published most frequently in the context of Employee Voice. Table 1 compiled all the results concerning the total publication and total citation for the top ten journals from Scopus database. The leading journals were ranked according to the total number of publications.

Table 1. Leading journals on employee voice studies (based on total publication).

Rank	Journal Name	Quartile	TP	TC	Percentage of Total Publications	Cite Score	Most Cited Article (Reference)	Times Cited	Publisher
1	International Journal of Human Resource Management	Q1	51	796	18.5%	5.5	The meanings and purpose of employee voice (Dundon, Wilkinson, Marchington, Ackers, 2004)	215	Taylor & Francis
2	Frontiers in Psychology	Q1	34	428	12.3%	4.1	Psychological contracts in the workplace (Rousseau, 1995)	98	Frontiers Media
3	Social Behavior and Personality	Q2	32	319	11.6%	3.8	Social and psychological dimensions of trust (McAllister, 1995)	87	Scientific Journal
4	Economic and Industrial Democracy	Q1	27	290	9.8%	3.0	Filling the gaps: Patterns of formal and informal participation (Townsend, Wilkinson, Burgess, 2013)	35	SAGE Publications
5	Human Relations	Q1	27	341	9.8%	7.1	Employee voice and organizational commitment (Freeman, Medoff, 1984)	68	SAGE Publications
6	Human Resource Management Journal	Q1	26	254	9.4%	6.0	HR practices and performance: The mediating role of employee voice (Boxall, Purcell, 2011)	77	Wiley
7	Personnel Review	Q2	24	240	8.7%	5.4	Empowering employees through voice	58	Emerald Group

8	Employee Relations	Q2	24	230	8.7%	4.9	Patterns of employee voice (Dundon, Wilkinson, 2014)	65	Emerald Group
9	Journal of Applied Psychology	Q1	22	211	8.0%	8.3	Exploring employee engagement (Kahn, 1990)	85	American Psychological
10	Journal of Industrial Relations	Q2	19	180	6.9%	3.7	Industrial relations in the 21st century (Budd, 2004)	49	SAGE Publications

The table highlights the ranking and influence of academic journals in the fields of human resource management, psychology, and industrial relations based on various metrics. The International Journal of Human Resource Management (Q1) leads with the highest number of publications (51), the most citations (796), and a significant 18.5% share of total publications. Its most cited article, *The meanings and purpose of employee voice* (Dundon et al., 2004), has been referenced 215 times. Journals like the Journal of Applied Psychology (CiteScore: 8.3) and Human Relations (CiteScore: 7.1) excel in impact, with their most influential articles focusing on employee engagement and organizational commitment, respectively.

A recurring theme across these journals is "employee voice," explored in depth by several articles and publications, including in the International Journal of Human Resource Management, Human Resource Management Journal, and Employee Relations. The publishers SAGE Publications and Emerald Group contribute significantly, showcasing their influence in this domain. While most journals, such as Frontiers in Psychology and Human Resource Management Journal, rank in the prestigious Q1 quartile, a few, like Social Behavior and Personality and Personnel Review, fall under Q2. Together, the top three journals account for over 42% of the total publications, reflecting their prominence in the field

Top Nations, Collaboration, and Institutions Analysis Based on the country-wise analysis, this section highlights the top 10 leading nations in terms of the number of publications from Scopus. Table 2 identifies the most productive countries contributing to the growth of Employee Voice studies at the global level, sorted by total publications (TPC).

Table2. Leading nations in employee voice studies.

Rank	Country	Total Publication	Total Citations
1	united states	300	17179
2	China	252	5064
3	United Kingdom	180	5585

4	Australia	131	3619
5	India	60	1171
6	Pakistan	53	969
7	Germany	48	870
8	Netherlands	44	1786
9	South Korea	38	572
10	Taiwan	36	1359

The table highlights the leading nations in employee voice studies, ranked by their total documents and citations. The United States leads significantly with 300 documents and 17,179 citations, demonstrating its dominant role in both research productivity and influence. China follows with 252 documents but a much lower citation count of 5,064, suggesting high research activity but comparatively less impact per study. Similarly, the United Kingdom, with 180 documents and 5,585 citations, reflects a balance of productivity and influence, securing its position among the top contributors. Australia ranks fourth with 131 documents and 3,619 citations, while India, with 60 documents and 1,171 citations, highlights the growing contributions from the Asia-Pacific region. Other notable contributors include Pakistan, Germany, Netherlands, South Korea, and Taiwan, each showing varying levels of research output and influence. Notably, the Netherlands, despite having only 44 documents, achieves a high citation count of 1,786, indicating impactful research relative to its output.

In summary, the table illustrates the global interest in employee voice studies, with the United States clearly leading in both volume and influence. China and the United Kingdom also stand out as major contributors, while nations like the Netherlands emphasize quality over quantity. This diverse representation underscores the widespread academic engagement with employee voice as a critical area of study.

Table 3 showcases the top 10 academic institutions contributing to the study of employee voice, ranked by their total publications and citations. Griffith University, Australia, leads with 11 publications and 567 citations, highlighting its productivity and influence. However, the School of Management at Xiamen University, China, stands out with the highest citations (628) from just four publications, emphasizing the exceptional impact of its research.

Table 3. Leading Institutes in Employee Voice Studies

Rank	Institution	Total Publication	Total Citation
1	Griffith University, Australia	11	567
2	Macquarie University, Australia	7	127
3	Monash University, Australia	5	32
4	School of Labor and Human Resources, Renmin University of China, Beijing, China	5	562
5	Department of Management Studies, Indian Institute of Technology Madras, Chennai, India	5	79
6	University of Sheffield, Sheffield, United Kingdom	5	48
7	University of Maryland, United States	5	227

8	School of Management, Xiamen University, Xiamen, China	4	628
9	School of Business, Yeungnam University, Gyeongsan, South Korea	4	117
10	Robert H. Smith School of Business, University of Maryland, United States	4	104

Similarly, the School of Labor and Human Resources at Renmin University of China has made a strong impact with 562 citations from five publications. In contrast, institutions like Monash University and the University of Sheffield have five publications each but lower citation counts (32 and 48), indicating less recognition in the field. The list features institutions from diverse regions, including Australia, China, India, South Korea, the United States, and the United Kingdom, reflecting the global interest in employee voice research. Institutions with fewer but highly cited studies, such as Xiamen University and Renmin University, highlight opportunities for impactful collaboration.

In summary, the table highlights the balance between research productivity and impact, with Griffith University leading in output and Xiamen University excelling in influence. It underscores the leadership of institutions from China and Australia in advancing employee voice studies. In general, international journals do not prefer the use of statistical language (such as: significantly different, treatment, etc.) in the discussion section. Avoid copying and pasting statistical analysis tables directly from statistical software.
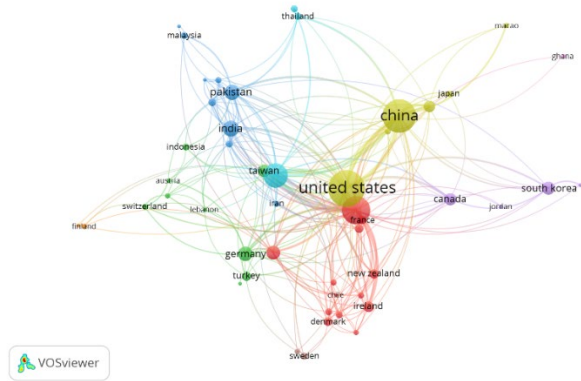
Fig. 3. The Bibliometric map of co-authorships.

The VOS Viewer co-authorship analysis for countries in employee voice studies reveals a complex and interconnected global research network. The United States is the central hub, with the strongest total link strength of 163, indicating its pivotal role in fostering collaboration across nations. It connects extensively with key players such as the United Kingdom (link strength of 159), China (126), and other regions, bridging diverse research communities. China and the United Kingdom also stand out as highly

interconnected nodes, showcasing their roles as regional research leaders. They maintain strong linkages with other countries, including Australia, Germany, and the Netherlands, emphasizing their collaborative contributions to global research. Notably, nations like India, Pakistan, and South Korea exhibit significant ties within their networks, reflecting active regional collaboration and engagement.

The visualization underscores a dynamic web of partnerships, where countries leverage their connections to share knowledge and advance the study of employee voice. These linkages highlight the importance of international cooperation in expanding the field's impact and fostering a collective understanding of the subject matter

Most Productive and Highly Cited Authors The top productive authors for Scopus were extracted and sorted base on the number of publications. Her is the result of the analysis by VOSviewer
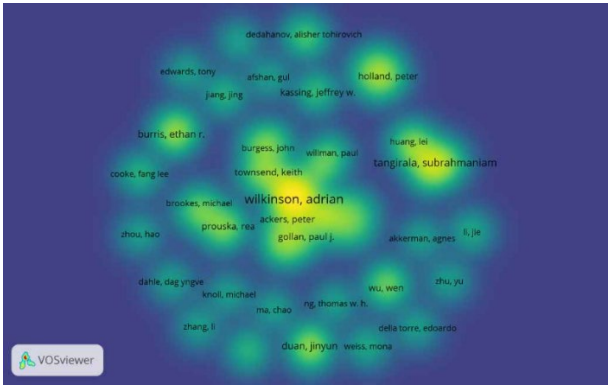

Fig. 4. The density map of highly cited authors.

Tabel 4. The top 10 productive scholars in employee voice research rank.

Rank	Author Name	Total Publication	Total Citations	Total Link Strength
1	Wilkinson, Adrian	36	1814	9554
2	Tangirala, Subrahmaniam	16	1576	5757
3	Dundon, Tony	15	1054	2930
4	Duan, Jinyun	11	197	5056
5	Burris, Ethan R.	10	3199	5477
6	Mowbray, Paula K.	9	377	5583
7	Wu, Wen	8	139	3608
8	Liu, Wu	7	930	4489
9	Detert, James R.	6	2510	3658
10	Barry, Michael	6	350	2832

A VOSviewer density map, combined with bibliometric data, reveals key dynamics in employee voice research. Adrian Wilkinson's central position in a high-density area reflects his significant output (36 publications, 1,814 citations). Subrahmaniam

Tangirala also shows strong influence (16 publications, 1,576 citations) within a connected cluster. High link strengths for researchers like Dundon and Cullinane suggest their contribution to dense collaborative regions, while Ethan R. Burris's high citations (3,199) despite a low link strength highlight his impactful individual work. Ackers and Barry's moderate density suggests focused collaboration, while Timming and Townsend likely occupy less dense areas, reflecting their emerging influence. This combined analysis reveals a research landscape with both central collaborators and impactful individual contributors advancing employee voice studies.

Author Keywords Analysis

Fig. 5. The Density Map of Author Keywords Analysis

The central theme shown that at the heart of this analysis, "employee voice" emerges as the central keyword, forming dense connections with related topics like "voice behavior," "employee participation," and "industrial relations." These terms underscore the emphasis on how employees express opinions and contribute to decision-making processes. Leadership styles and workplace conditions also play a significant role, as evidenced by links to "leader-member exchange," "psychological empowerment," and "job satisfaction." For example, leader-member exchange theory frequently highlights how trust and communication with supervisors affect employees' willingness to speak up.

Additionally, nuanced sub-themes like "promotive voice" (suggesting improvements) and "prohibitive voice" (raising concerns to prevent harm) provide deeper insights into the different types of employee engagement. Cultural factors, such as "power distance" and "authoritarian leadership," further reveal how organizational hierarchies and cultural norms influence employee voice. High power distance cultures and authoritarian workplaces, for instance, often suppress voice behavior, presenting opportunities for organizational reforms. Other themes, including "social exchange theory" and "organizational citizenship behavior," highlight relational and prosocial drivers of voice, focusing on mutual respect and collective benefits.
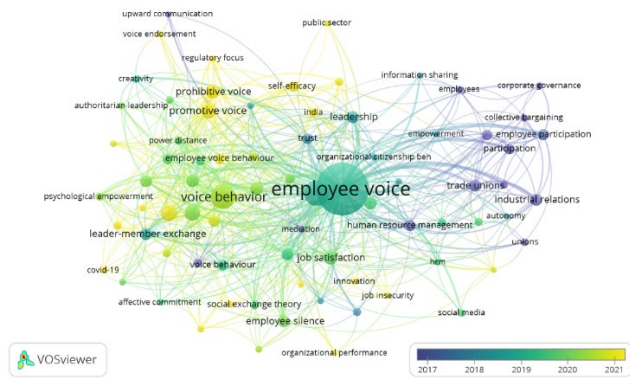
Fig. 6. The overlay map of author keywords analysis.

The overlay map reveals contemporary relevance and temporal trends. Notably, there has been an uptick in research on "COVID-19," reflecting the pandemic's transformative impact on employee voice. Remote work, job insecurity, and leadership challenges in virtual environments have reshaped how employees voice their concerns or ideas. Additionally, the increasing prominence of "social media" and "innovation" signifies the growing influence of digital tools and innovation-driven workplaces on modern employee voice mechanisms.
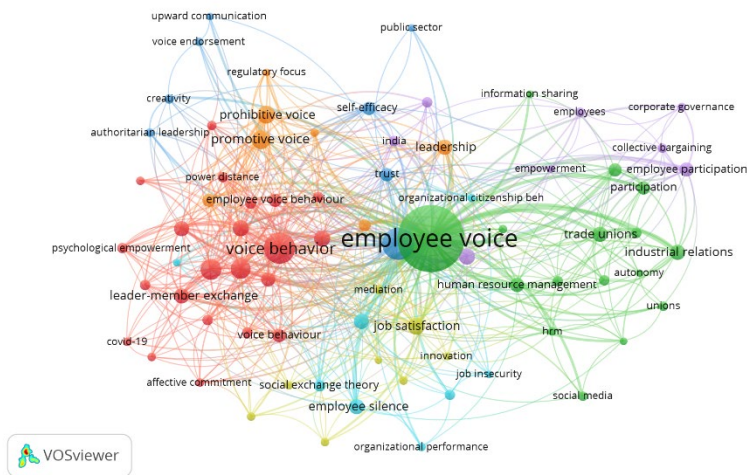
Fig. 7. The Network map of author keywords analysis.

The cluster analysis provides a structured view of interconnected themes:

Green Cluster (Institutional Factors): This cluster focuses on collective mechanisms like "employee participation," "industrial relations," and "trade unions." It highlights how organizational structures and HR policies influence employee voice, especially through formal systems like collective bargaining and union representation.

Red Cluster (Psychological and Behavioral Factors): This cluster emphasizes individual-level dynamics such as "voice behavior," "leader-member exchange," and "psychological empowerment." It explores how trust, leadership, and empowerment impact employees' willingness to speak up, alongside distinctions between promotive and prohibitive voice behaviors. Contextual factors like "power distance" and "authoritarian leadership" are also significant.

Yellow Cluster (Contemporary Themes): This cluster reflects emerging research on topics such as "COVID-19," "job insecurity," and "remote work." It also includes themes like "social media" and "innovation," showcasing the influence of digital tools and global disruptions on employee voice.

Blue Cluster (Sector-Specific Themes): This cluster focuses on leadership and organizational contexts, including "self-efficacy," "information sharing," and "public sector." It highlights unique challenges and opportunities for fostering employee voice in structured environments like government organizations.

In addition to mapping research productivity, this study emphasizes the interdisciplinary nature of employee voice (EV) research. EV has been examined through multiple lenses such as organizational behavior, human resource management, and industrial relations. As noted by Zhu et al. [2] and Paulet et al. [3], EV is increasingly acknowledged as a mechanism to foster sustainable performance, innovation, and ethical practices within organizations. Furthermore, Mowbray et al. [8] illustrate how line managers in HRM contexts can strategically repurpose voice mechanisms to meet performance goals, while Adisa [5] and Joseph & Shetty [7] highlight the psychological and cultural dimensions of voice and silence in organizations. In healthcare and public institutions, voice is also connected to participatory structures and employee well-being [6,9]. These diverse disciplinary approaches underscore the need for integrative models that combine behavioral, institutional, and systemic perspectives in understanding employee voice.

3.2   Research Opportunities

The analysis identifies several future research directions, including digital transformation and the role of social media in supporting employee voice, particularly in remote and decentralized teams. Cross-cultural studies on factors like power distance and individualism versus collectivism could deepen understanding of cultural impacts on employee voice. Post-pandemic workplace issues, such as job insecurity, mental health, and remote leadership, present opportunities for long-term studies on their effects. Ethical leadership in fostering voice on sustainability and social responsibility remains underexplored, as does the role of employee voice in advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and environmental goals. Psychological factors like self-efficacy, empowerment, and commitment warrant further study, especially in high-stress or hierarchical environments, while examining "employee silence" could reveal barriers to participation.

4   Conclusion

This study underscores the significant growth and evolving trends in "employee voice" research over the past decades. The bibliometric analysis revealed that this field is characterized by increasing interdisciplinary collaborations and a growing body of impactful literature. Key contributors, including the United States, China, and the United Kingdom, have driven the global discourse, while top journals and influential authors have shaped its intellectual foundation. Central themes such as employee participation, leadership dynamics, and workplace culture emerged as crucial areas for advancing theoretical and practical insights. Future research should focus on exploring underrepresented regions and contexts, leveraging digital tools, and addressing contemporary challenges such as the impact of COVID-19 and remote work environments. By fostering deeper collaborations across disciplines and geographies, the study of employee voice can further enrich organizational practices and employee empowerment globally.

5   Acknowledgement

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