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Supply Chain Management, Total Quality Management, and Circular Economy: A Bibliometric Analysis and Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

The primary purpose of this study is to review and synthesize the extant literature on the various key Operations Management areas such as; Supply Chain Management (SCM), Total Quality Management (TQM) and Circular Economy (CE) to address the critical challenges faced by organizations and develop a comprehensive framework to improve overall operational performance; and to identify future research directions. A bibliometric analysis of 1877 articles (published 1998-May 2023) and a systematic literature review using Scopus as a reliable source of academic literature. The analysis was based on an insightful combination of descriptive, thematic, and content analysis techniques. The comprehensive investigation into SCM, TQM, and CE yields significant findings contributing to these domains' evolving research landscape. The key insights include the substantial growth in interest and recognition of these topics from 1998 to 2023, suggesting dynamic shifts in research focus. The study also reveals a symbiotic relationship between SCM, TQM, and CE, enhancing traditional operational dimensions and extending the focus to sustainability, resilience, and adaptability. The study also revealed methodological diversity, incorporating quantitative and qualitative approaches, adding depth to these findings, and providing a comprehensive understanding for future research endeavors. Finally, six critical future research directions are identified. The study's implications extend beyond its immediate findings, offering a roadmap for future research, guiding practical strategies in SCM, and contributing significantly to the theoretical foundations of SCM, TQM, and CE.

Keywords: Supply Chain Management, Total Quality Management, Circular Economy, Bibliometric Analysis, Systematic Literature Review

1. Introduction

In today's ever-changing business world, the importance of Supply Chain Management (SCM), Total Quality Management (TQM) and Circular Economy (CE) cannot be overstated. These concepts are not only of academic interest (Burgess, Singh, & Koroglu, 2006; UNEP, 2017; World Bank, 2019), but have also become critical for companies aiming to achieve sustainability and maintain a competitive edge in the marketplace. They are crucial to achieving organizational success, especially in the face of complex supply chains (Huang, He & Li, 2018; Saragih, Tarigan, Pratama, Wardati, & Silalahi, 2020; Sharma & Modgil, 2020), strict quality standards (Cua, McKone, & Schroeder, 2001; Shah & Ward, 2003; Prajogo & Sohal 2004; Prajogo, 2005; Flynn, Huo & Zhao, 2010),pressures for sustainability (Nasir, Genovese, Acquaye, Koh & Yamoah, 2017), and the need for operational efficiency (Fynes, Voss & De Búrca, 2005). These multifaceted dynamics are intrinsically intertwined with the fundamental concepts of Supply Chain Management (Burgess et al. 2006; Li, Ragu-Nathan, Ragu-Nathan, & Rao, 2006; Saragih et al. 2020), Total Quality Management (Prajogo, 2005; Sila, 2007; Kim, Kumar & Kumar, 2012) and Circular Economy (Nasir et al, 2017).

Over the years, multiple studies have delved into the relationship between SCM and TQM practices, and their impact on improving organizational performance. For example, an early study by Flynn, Schroeder & Sakakibara (1995) discovered that integrating TQM and SCM practices can substantially enhance organizational performance. The study emphasized that companies that integrated these practices reported higher quality performance, lower costs, and greater customer satisfaction than those that did not. However, Kwon & Suh (2004) research found that

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information sharing reduces the level of behavioral uncertainty, which, in turn, improves the level of trust in the supply chains. Contributing to the same debate research conducted by Prajogo& Sohal (2006) revealed that TQM practices, particularly employee empowerment, leadership, and continuous improvement, can significantly enhance SCM performance by reducing lead times, improving quality, and enhancing delivery performance. Furthermore, Prajogo (2005) demonstrated that implementing TQM practices is positively associated with quality performance in both manufacturing and service firms. The findings underscored that companies that adopt SCM practices, including supplier selection, supplier development, and collaborative partnerships, reported higher quality performance levels than those that did not.

Furthermore, previous scholars such as (Cooper et al. 1997; Sila & Ebrahimpour, 2005) and more recently (Frank, Dalenogare& Ayala, 2019; Sharma & Modgil, 2020) advocate for a well-integrated SCM infused with TQM principles, foreseeing its potential to contribute significantly to operational performance. Similarly, implementing Circular Economy practices into this integrated framework is anticipated to fortify environmental responsibility and resilience further, creating a holistic and robust business model. While existing policies, systems, and structures often endorse adopting SCM and TQM practices (Stewart, 1997; Bolstorff & Rosenbaum, 2007; Council SC, 2008; ISO 9001 for Quality Management), there is a global surge in policies advocating sustainability and circular economy principles (Circular Economy Action Plan, 2015; Switch Africa Green, 2017; European Green Deal 2019; United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2030; ISO 14001 for Environmental Management; Aoki-Suzuki et al., 2023). For example, the Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP) outlines specific measures, such as establishing sustainable products as the standard within the EU, empowering consumers and public buyers, and minimizing waste, promoting circularity as a mechanism that benefits individuals, regions, and cities and focusing on sectors with high potential for circularity. These sectors include electronics, ICT, batteries, vehicles, packaging, plastics, textiles, construction, buildings, food, water, and nutrients. The CEAP is a positive step towards a more sustainable and circular economy in the EU. Similarly, (Geissdoerfer et al., 2017; Sehnem, Vazquez-Brust, Pereira & Campos, 2018; Aloini et al., 2020; Aoki-Suzuki, et al., 2023; Arai, Calisto & Vermeulen, 2023) recognized Circular Economy for its potential to offer social, economic, and environmental benefits by minimizing waste and creating business opportunities.

However, Saragih, et al., (2020) and Hashmi, Amirah, & Yusof (2020) have produced valuable insights into the effects of SCM practices on firm performance. However, an unexplored and nuanced dimension still involves the complex relationships among SCM, Total Quality Management (TQM), and Circular Economy (CE). Saragih et al. (2020) discovered that TQM, SCM practices, and operations capability all positively and significantly impact firm performance in the Indonesian manufacturing industry. The study also suggested that SCM practices mediate between TQM and operations capability, underscoring the importance of interconnected dynamics for organizational success. On the other hand, Hashmi et al. (2020) focused on the positive impact of SCM practices on integrated systems and public healthcare performance in Pakistan, demonstrating the broad applicability of SCM beyond traditional manufacturing sectors. Interestingly, the findings of Hashmi et al. (2020) implied that integrated systems mediate the relationship between SCM practices and public healthcare performance. However, the specific role of TQM in this healthcare context and how Circular Economy principles may contribute to these relationships remain unexplored.

Currently, many organizations are implementing elements of SCM and TQM independently, missing opportunities for synergy. Circular Economy practices might be adopted sporadically, lacking integration into mainstream SCM and TQM frameworks. Literature in SCM (Cooper et al., 1997; Mentzer et al., 2001; Burgess et al. 2006), TQM (Sila & Ebrahimpour, 2005; Yee, Yeung & Cheng, 2008) and CE (Frank et al., 2019; Winter & Knemeyer, 2013; Kirchherr et al., 2023) reveals a fragmented landscape, with individual studies providing valuable but fragmented insights. This scarcity of comprehensive investigations into the synergies among these constructs signifies a significant research gap, potentially leading to missed opportunities for efficiency, quality improvement, and sustainability, thereby jeopardizing long-term organizational viability.

Finally, while the individual impacts of SCM, TQM, and CE on operational performance are widely acknowledged in the literature (Prajogo & Olhager, 2012; Zhong, Ma, Tu, & Li, 2016; Sehnem, Vazquez-Brust, Pereira & Campos, 2019; Huang et al., 2019; Saragih, et al., 2020; Sharma & Modgil, 2020), the intricate, interconnected dynamics among these factors and their combined overall effect are less explored in the existing literature. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to systematically analyze the interconnections and patterns within the literature on Supply Chain Management, Total Quality Management, and the Circular Economy through bibliometric analysis and systematic review. The study is informed by two (02) specific research objectives, and they include: (a) to evaluate the performance of SCM, TQM, and CE using quantitative bibliometric indicators such as; publication trends, countries, key influencers and prolific authors, and collaboration networks; and (b) to identify the central concepts and overarching topics in SCM, TQM, and CE and the current research frontiers to understand the cutting-edge areas

scholars are exploring within these domains. The paper is structured into five sections, Section 1 presents the background of the study. Section 2 reviews the key theoretical frameworks underpinning SCM, TQM, and CE, while Section 3 discusses methods and materials employed in this study, including the data collection and analysis techniques. This is followed by Section 4, which presents the study findings and discussion of results according to each objective. Finally, Section 5 offers conclusions and recommendations for future research directions in these fields.

2. Literature Review

This section presents a brief review of the SCM, TQM and CE variables.

2.1Supply Chain Management (SCM)

Supply Chain Management (SCM) is a holistic approach to coordinating and integrating various business processes involved in producing and distributing goods or services. Cooper, Lambert & Pagh (1997) define SCM as "the integration of key business processes from end-users through original suppliers that provide products, services, and information and add value for customers and other stakeholders." According to the authors, SCM is more than just a rebranding of logistics; it involves the strategic alignment of key functions within and between organizations. Mentzer, DeWitt, Keebler, Min, Nix, Smith & Zacharia, (2001) emphasize the importance of defining SCM as integrating key business processes across the supply chain, emphasizing collaboration and coordination. Effective SCM involves coordination and collaboration among various supply chain partners, including suppliers, manufacturers, distributors, and retailers. SCM has been recognized as a source of competitive advantage and a means of achieving superior performance in the global market (Oliver & Weber, 1982; Mentzer et al., 2001; Waiyawuththanapoom, Aunyawong, Poolsawad, Thumawongchai, Boonrattanakittibhumi&Jermsittiparsert, 2023). It entails the orchestration of planning, sourcing, producing, delivering products efficiently and returning, which require strategic coordination and integration (Stewart, 1997; Chopra & Meindl, 2007; Council, 2008; Drucker 1998 cited by Habib, 2011; Ellram & Cooper, 2014; Huang et al., 2018).

An extensive body of research has demonstrated that the effectiveness of SCM practices significantly impacts organizations' operational performance (Miguel & Brito, 2011; Li et al., 2006). Efficient SCM has been linked to streamlining operations, reducing costs, and enhancing customer satisfaction (Lambert & Cooper, 2000; Halldorsson, Kotzab, Mikkola, & Skjøtt-Larsen, 2007; CSCMP, 2013; Nasir et al., 2017). There is also substantial evidence on wider application of SCM practices in various industries such as retail (Christopher, 2016), healthcare (Schneller, Smeltzer, &Kotzab, 2018), construction (Setijono, 2010), hospitality (Wang, Tse & Law, 2018), and agro-industry (Borah, Naik, Patgiri, Bhargav, Phukan, Basani, 2020) hence, it is not confined solely to the manufacturing industry (Mentzer, Flint & Hult, 2001). Furthermore, Flynn et al. (2010) found that SCM practices such as supplier development, supplier selection, and information sharing positively influenced TQM practices such as continuous improvement, employee empowerment, and customer focus. The authors suggest that SCM can facilitate TQM by providing the necessary resources and information for organizations to improve their quality management practices. Despite the recognized importance of SCM, there are notable gaps in its implementation that could limit its effectiveness in achieving a competitive advantage. Integrating SCM with CE principles can create a powerful synergy, enabling organizations to optimize their supply chain processes while contributing to a circular and sustainable economy.

2.2Total Quality Management (TQM)

TQM is a crucial concept in operations management that focuses on achieving excellence in all aspects of an organization. Total Quality Management is another critical variable that centers on quality improvement, process optimization, and customer focus. TQM advocates integrating quality considerations into all aspects of an organization's operations (Deming, 1988; Juran, 1986; Kanji, 1990; Suarez, 1992; Stevenson, 2020). Stevenson (2020) defined TQM as a philosophy that involves everyone in an organization in a continual effort to improve quality and achieve customer satisfaction. In simple terms, it refers to a quest for quality in an organization.

The amalgamation of TQM principles, such as top management commitment and support, an organization for quality, continuous improvement, customer focus (includes customer satisfaction and orientation), information and communication, employee participation, employee training, improvement of the quality system, recognition and reward, statistical quality technique use, and supplier quality management (Deming 1986; Powell, 1995; Reed et al, 2000; Prajogo & Sohal, 2003; Lakhal, Pasin &Limam, 2006; Talib, Rahman & Qureshi, 2011; Shafiq, Lasrado & Hafeez, 2019; Kim et al, 2012; Sharma & Modgil, 2020) into an organization, fosters a culture of excellence and continuous improvement. The emphasis on process efficiency, quality assurance, and customer satisfaction inherent in TQM contributes significantly to superior operational performance (Lakhal, Pasin & Limam, 2006).

Kim, et al (2012) highlights the relationship between quality management practices and innovation, indicating that TQM fosters a culture of continuous improvement that can lead to increased innovation within an organization. Additionally, Rahman & Bullock (2005) examined the relationships between soft TQM, hard TQM, and organizational performance, highlighting the multifaceted nature of TQM. This suggests that TQM is not a one-size-fits-all approach; instead, its operationalization can take different forms based on organizational context and specific practices. Further insights into the operationalization of TQM are provided by Sharma & Modgil (2020), who investigated the pharmaceutical industry in India, and revealed the empirical link between TQM, SCM and operational performance. Similarly, Talib, Rahman & Qureshi (2011) conducted a study focusing on the relationship between TQM and supply chain management practices, highlighting the interconnected nature of these two management approaches. This indicates that TQM is not confined to internal processes but extends to collaborative efforts with suppliers and partners.

2.3 Circular Economy (CE)

The Circular Economy paradigm has emerged as a driving force for sustainability. The concept, gaining prominence globally, particularly in European Union (EU) countries, represents a shift from the linear "take-make-use-dispose" model to a restorative and regenerative economy (Geissdoerfer, Savaget, Bocken, & Hultink, 2017; Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2013). CE principles prioritize the recycling and reuse of materials, reducing waste and minimizing environmental impact (Zhen, 2017). The environmental and economic benefits of CE practices are well-documented. For instance, CE can reduce waste and improve resource utilization (Sehnem et al., 2019). According to Ellen MacArthur Foundation (2013), CE is a restorative and regenerative economy by design, aiming to keep products, components, and materials at their highest utility and value at all times, Oppen, Godard Croon & Bijl de Vroe, (2018) defined Circular Economy as an economic system that minimizes waste and maximizes the value retention of resources. Critical to CE are the 3Rs principles: 'reducing resource reuse, reusing, and recycling' (Zhijun & Nailing, 2007; Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2013).

The shift from the traditional linear model is evident in Germany, Japan, and China, which have incorporated CE into their national laws, recognizing the economic benefits and environmental necessity (Geissdoerfer et al., 2017; Zhijun & Nailing, 2007). European countries such as Denmark, Sweden, Scotland, and Finland have embraced CE policies, aiming for high recycling rates and reduced landfill disposal by 2030 (State of Green, 2018). The Ellen MacArthur Foundation's ReSOLVE framework further extends the 3Rs, emphasizing regeneration, sharing, optimization, looping, virtualization, and exchange (Stuchtey, Tjahjono & Sulistyani, 2020; Singer, 2017). Circular Economy is recognized for offering environmental benefits, innovation, cost savings, job creation, competitive advantages, and a healthier environment (WHO, 2018; Zhijun & Nailing, 2007; Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2013; Sehnem et al., 2019; Aloini et al., 2020). Although the CE framework emphasizes the importance of efficient resource utilization, recycling, and restorative aspects of the economy, but its connection with TQM principles needs to be established more cohesively in the literature.

In conclusion, numerous studies have delved into the practices of TQM, with some conducted by (Reed et al, 2000; Lakhal, et al, 2006; Nair, 2006; Prajogo, 2006; Sila, 2007; Aized, 2012). However, only a handful of these studies have explored the connections between innovation performance (Prajogo & Sohal, 2003; Sila, 2007; Kim et al 2012; Li, Zhao, Zhang, Chen & Cao, 2018), SCM practices (Tabil et al, 2010), organizational performance (Rahman & Bullock, 2005; Lakhal, et al, 2006; Singh, Kumar & Singh, 2018), operational performance (Shafiq et al. 2019; Sharma & Modgil, 2020), firm performance (Nair, 2006) and competitive advantage (Reed et al 2000). Furthermore, no study has yet focused on the combined relationships between TQM, SCM, and CE, presenting an opportunity for further examination.

2.4The Integration/ Relationship between SCM, TQM and CE

The principles of CE are inherently aligned with TQM's emphasis on continuous improvement and waste reduction. Saragih et al (2020) findings suggest that TQM practices enhance sustainable performance by improving operational capabilities such as process efficiency and innovation. The study concludes that fostering operational capabilities through TQM is essential for achieving long-term sustainability goals in manufacturing firms. Research by Ghisellini, Cialani & Ulgiati (2016) and Bocken, De Pauw, Bakker & Van Der Grinten (2016) has shown that integrating CE strategies, which prioritize resource efficiency and waste minimization, can significantly enhance TQM practices such as continuous improvement and process optimization. These findings are consistent with the observations of Murray, Skene & Haynes, (2017), who highlighted that CE's focus on creating closed-loop systems, where products and materials are reused, refurbished, and recycled, complements TQM's objectives of defect reduction and improved product quality. Integrating CE practices into TQM can lead to the development of products

designed for disassembly and reuse, thereby reducing the environmental impact of manufacturing processes (Ghisellini et al., 2016; Geng, Fu, Sarkis, & Xue, 2017; Sarkis et al., 2019; Saragih et al., 2020). This integration not only improves environmental sustainability but also brings economic benefits by reducing material costs and increasing operational efficiency (Walker, Di Sisto & McBain, 2008; Genovese, Acquaye, Figueroa, & Koh, 2017; Sarkis et al., 2019; Jabbour et al., 2019). However, despite these advantages, there is limited empirical research examining the direct impact of CE practices on TQM outcomes, indicating a notable gap in the existing literature.

Integrating Circular Economy (CE) principles into Supply Chain Management (SCM) is crucial for establishing sustainable supply chains. SCM seeks to streamline the movement of materials, information, and finances from suppliers to customers. Walker et al. (2008) argue that integrating CE principles into SCM can bolster resource efficiency, minimize waste, and enhance the sustainability of supply chain operations. Similarly, according to Sarkis et al. (2019) and Genovese et al. (2017), CE practices like reverse logistics, which involve returning products for refurbishment and reuse, can notably diminish the environmental impact of supply chains. Moreover, CE practices promote collaboration among supply chain partners to extract value from waste materials and by-products, transforming traditional linear supply chains into circular ones (Mishra et al., 2018). Additionally, the findings of Lee, Nam & Hwang (2020) demonstrate that strong supply chain relationships can mitigate the adverse effects of environmental uncertainties on supply chain performance, ultimately bolstering financial performance. The study concludes that cultivating robust relationships within the supply chain is imperative for high-tech firms to uphold performance levels amidst environmental uncertainties. This transformation improves environmental performance and unlocks new business opportunities and competitive advantages (Li et al., 2006; Hopkinson et al., 2013). Concerning obstacles, Masi, Day & Godsell (2017) argue that the implementation of CE practices in SCM is often impeded by challenges such as lack of awareness, financial constraints, and regulatory barriers, emphasizing the necessity for more empirical studies to explore effective implementation strategies.

The pressure on the manufacturing industry to adopt sustainable practices that improve economic performance while mitigating environmental impacts is increasing. Stakeholder pressure is crucial in driving sustainable business performance, significantly influencing the adoption of SCM, TQM and CE practices (Sarkis et al., 2009; Osei, Asante-Darko, &Quayson, 2024). External stakeholders, such as customers, regulators, and NGOs, push firms towards sustainability and environmental responsibility (Sarkis et al., 2009). Research by Sarkis et al. (2009) and Osei et al. (2024) emphasizes that stakeholder pressure promotes the development of innovative capabilities necessary for implementing environmental practices within SCM, thus facilitating the adoption of CE principles. Furthermore, adopting CE practices has been demonstrated to stimulate innovation, reduce resource consumption, and enhance sustainability performance (Ghisellini et al., 2016). However, effectively implementing these practices often hinges on the extent of stakeholder pressure, aligning organizational goals with broader societal expectations. Despite its significance, the mediating role of stakeholder pressure in integrating SCM and CE is underexplored, particularly when considering the additional element of TQM. Notably, a review of 1,877 papers identified a notable research gap: the lack of studies delving into integrating SCM, TQM, and CE practices. Most existing literature concentrates on the bilateral relationships among these practices, overlooking their combined impact on sustainable business performance. This gap presents a significant opportunity for future research to comprehensively understand how these practices can be integrated to achieve superior sustainability outcomes.

3. Methods and Materials

This study used a systematic literature review (for qualitative data) and a bibliometric method (for both qualitative and quantitative data). Researchers such as Donthu, Kumar, Mukherjee, Pandey, & Lim (2021) and Snyder (2019) argued that systematic review and bibliometric analysis when used well, provide insights into the existing body of knowledge and produce high-impact research since the contribution will be positioned to the field and provide novel ideas for future studies

3.1 Searching for Literature

Figure 3.1 presents a combined/integrated bibliometric and systematic review protocol for studying SCM, TQM, and CE.

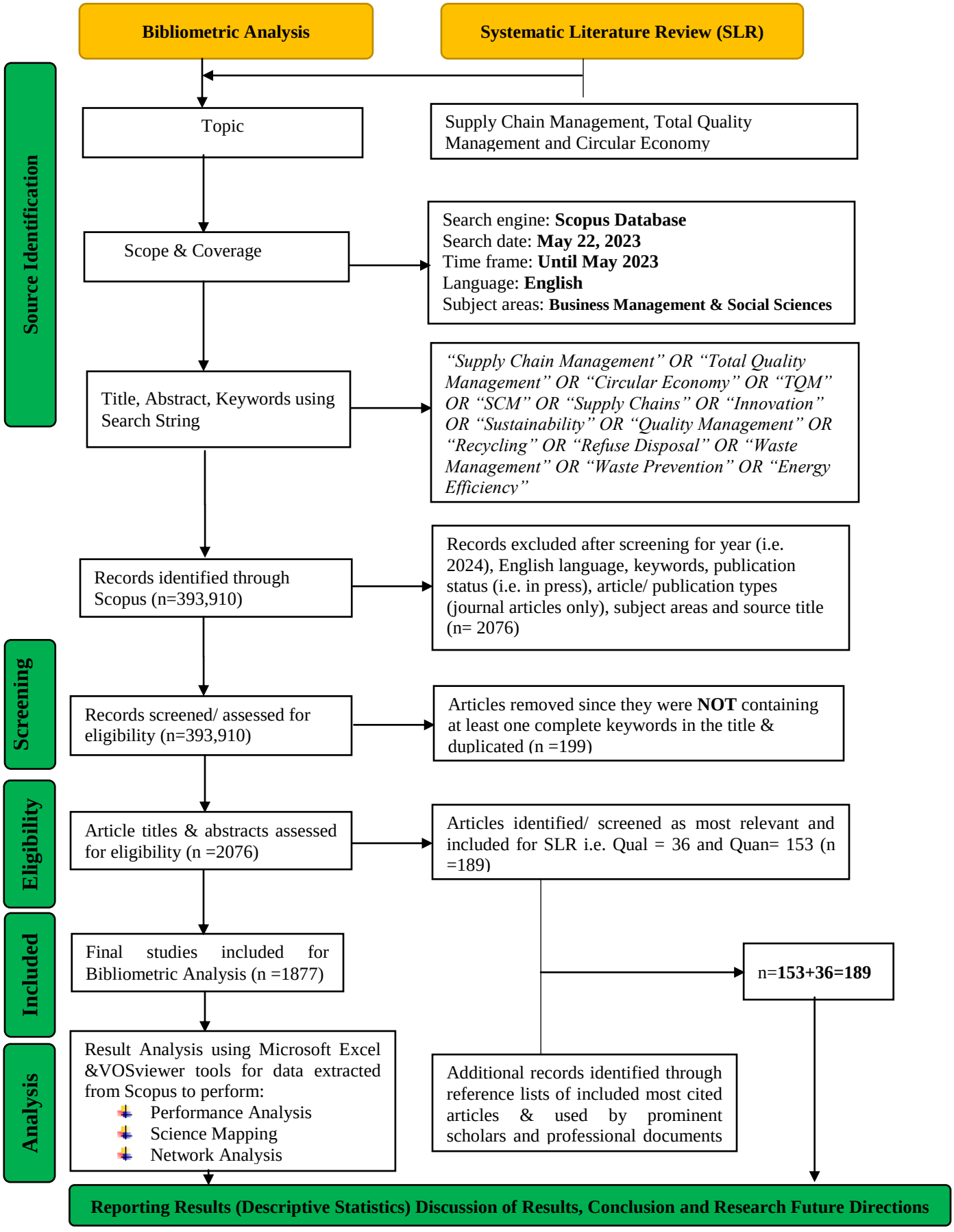


Figure 3.1: The Framework for Systematic Literature Review and Bibliometric Analysis

3.1.1 Stage I: Source Identification

Before the actual review, the researchers thoroughly examined existing literature on methodology, practical applications, and theoretical frameworks. This initial step allowed them to shape their research topic and develop the research questions. Scholars such as Carey, Kumar, Goyal & Ali (2023) and Trandfield et al. (2003) argued that formulating research hypotheses/ questions is a foundation for quality systematic review/ bibliometric analysis since another process depends on it. Subsequently, the researchers defined the study's scope, determined the type of data to be collected, selected data collection methods, databases, and the timeframe for consideration based on the identified topic. The emergence of various web-based tools for data collection, such as Scopus, Clarivate Web of Science, Dimensions, PubMed and Google Scholar (Carey et al 2023; Donthu, et al 2021), in addition to bibliometric software like Bib Excel and VOSviewer, has increased researchers' interest in using bibliometric analysis today (Van Eck & Waltman, 2023; Mageto, 2022; Donthu, et al 2021; Luo et al, 2018). As described by Van Eck & Waltman (2023), VOSvieweris utilized to construct networks of researchers, scientific journals, research organizations, scientific publications, countries/ territories and keywords from reputable bibliographic databases like Scopus, Clarivate Web of Science, Dimensions and PubMed. The maps can be visualized using overlay visualization, network visualization and densityvisualization.

For this study, Scopus was preferred because several earlier and recent studies that used systematic review and/ bibliometric methods predominantly used the Scopus database to provide a substantive review (Carey et al 2023; Mageto, 2022; Donthu, et al 2021; Kumar, Pandey, Lim, Chatterjee & Pandey, 2021; Danese, et al 2020; Sony, 2020; Mokhtar, Genovese, Brint & Kumar, 2019; Genovese, Brint & Kumar, 2019; Bastas & Liyanage, 2018; Soosay & Hyland, 2015). Regarding available literature, Scopus has made significant strides in its database collection since its establishment in 2004 and is now considered the largest database of peer-reviewed articles (Mageto, 2022; Donthu et al., 2021; Kumar et al., 2021; Soosay& Hyland, 2015).

3.1.2 Stage II: Screening

After conducting a thorough screening process, the researchers narrowed down the research dataset from 393,910 to 2076 articles of high relevance and quality. We excluded articles published in 2024 /after May 2023 (03 articles), those not written in English (12,545 articles), and those marked as "in the press" (445 articles) as we wanted to ensure that all articles were peer-reviewed and published. The researchers also focused on journal articles only (127,126 excluded), keywords (128,839 articles excluded), subject areas, and source titles aligned with the study's topics and excluded 122,876 subject areas and source titles that did not match our research focus. The researchers refined the dataset using these rigorous screening criteria to ensure its accuracy and reliability.

3.1.3 Stage III: Eligibility

During this stage, our research team meticulously analyzed the titles and abstracts of 2,076 articles from the refined dataset. Our primary objective was to determine whether each article satisfied the predetermined eligibility criteria established earlier in the screening process. These criteria were intended to ensure that the chosen papers were directly pertinent to the research subjects of Total Quality Management, Supply Chain Management and Circular Economy. We eliminated a subset of 199 articles during this phase of the screening process for specific reasons. Articles lacking at least one complete keyword from the predefined list of research keywords in their titles and articles identified as duplicates were excluded. These measures helped us refine the dataset, narrowing the selection to articles that met the thematic criteria and contained complete keywords in their titles, while avoiding duplication. Consequently, we guaranteed that the remaining articles in the dataset were highly pertinent and unique, paving the way for the subsequent phases of the systematic review and bibliometric analysis

3.1.4 Stage IV: Included

In this stage, researchers meticulously analyzed the titles, abstracts and keywords of 2,076 article from the refined dataset. The primary objective was to determine whether each article satisfied the predetermined eligibility criteria established earlier in the screening process. These criteria were intended to ensure that the chosen papers were directly pertinent to the research subjects of TQM, SCM and CE. After reviewing each article's titles, abstracts, and keywords, a subset of 199 articles were excluded. This was because they either didn't contain the necessary keywords or were duplicates of other articles. By removing these articles, the researcher created a more focused and relevant dataset for analysis. This was an essential step in ensuring that the remaining articles were both unique and highly relevant to the research objectives

3.1.5 Stage V: Analysis

This is the final crucial stage in using the information from the Scopus database. It involves analyzing data to gain valuable insights into the research on TQM, SCM and CE. This involves using two broad techniques; first, a bibliometric analysis is performed using BibExcel in section 4.2 to gather additional statistics, such as publication trend, author, affiliation, and keyword data. BibExcel was adopted because it offers exceptional flexibility in data management and analysis regarding modifying and adjusting input data from different databases such as Scopus and Web of Science. Moreover, it provides comprehensive data analysis suitable for various network analysis tools like VOSviewer, Pajek and Gephi (Persson, Danell & Schneider, 2009; Fahimnia, Sarkis &Davarzani, 2015). Additionally, BibExcel is used to prepare the input data for the second part of the analysis, which is the network analysis.

Secondly, the network analysis is conducted in section 4.3 using VOSviewer to conduct a citation analysis and classify the existing literature on TQM, SCM and CE based on its topical content. VOSviewer is the preferred software for network analysis as it primarily intended. The software was is primarily intended to analyze bibliometric networks to create, visualize, and explore maps based on any type of network data (Van Eck & Waltman, 2023). VOSviewer is preferred over other network analysis tools, such as Pajek and Gephi, because it provides three (3) visualizations of a map: (i) network visualization, (ii) overlay visualization, and (iii) density visualization. This analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of the research landscape, identifies significant contributions, and finds potential areas for future research. This stage is also essential for drawing conclusions, making recommendations, and furthering knowledge in these critical fields.

4. Results and Discussion

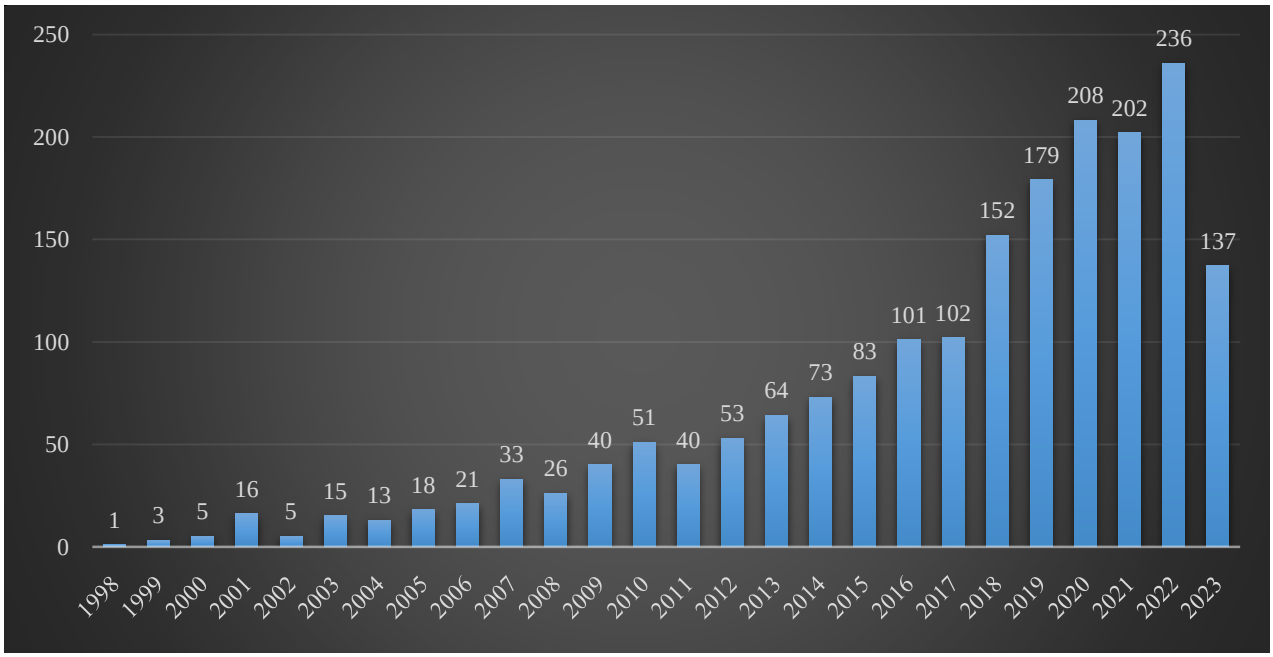
4.1 Bibliometric Analysis Results

The first research objective (RO1) evaluated the performance of SCM, TQM and CE using quantitative bibliometric indicators such as; publication trends, countries, key influencers and prolific authors, and collaboration networks. The results of this objective are discussed in the following sub-sections.

4.1.1 Publication Trends from 1998 - May 2023

The trends in publications from 1998 to 2023 (see Figure 3.1) in the field of SCM, TQM, and CE reveal compelling patterns and insights. Between 1998 and 2003, the trend began with a small number of publications in 1998 (1), which gradually increased over the next few years. Notably, there is a significant spike in 2001 (16 publications), followed by fluctuations in subsequent years, with peaks and troughs in publication counts. These early years likely represent the foundational research stage in the field, with researchers exploring various aspects. From 2004 to 2007, there was a consistent upward trajectory in publication counts. This could indicate growing interest in the research topics SCM, TQM, and CE, possibly driven by emerging trends or increased recognition of their relevance in various domains.

From 2008 to 2013, there was a significant increase in publication counts, indicating heightened research activity and interest, potentially reflecting a maturation of the field and the emergence of new research directions, especially in circular economy and sustainable SCM. Subsequently, from 2014 to 2020, there was a continued expansion in the number of publications to 47.8% (898) with an annual growth rate of at least 14%. This isconsistent with Luo et al. (2018) and Donthu et al. (2021), who noted a substantial increase in business and social science research activity. According to their analysis of the Scopus database, the number of publications rose from 437 in 2010 to 1950 in 2020, demonstrating an annual growth rate of 10-16%. Similarly, there were 575 publications (30.63%) during 2021, 2022, and the first five months of 2023, indicating a continuous increase. These results align with Rajeev et al. (2017) systematic review, which identifies steady growth in supply chain management research, mainly focusing on sustainability. Additionally, Merli, Preziosi & Acampora (2018) noted a significant increase in circular economy research in 2016 and a dip in 2017 due to data collection only up to the year's first four months. In conclusion, the publication trend indicates significant growth and interest in studying SCM, TQM, and CE, which have distinct phases of expansion, peaks, and potential transitions. Further analysis, such as content or citation analysis, could provide deeper insights into the specific research directions and influential works within this domain presented in 4.2 onwards.



Source: Data Extracted from Scopus Database, May 2023 **N = 1877**

Figure 4.1: SCM, TQM & CE Publication Trends from 1998-May 2023

4.1.2 The Leading Countries in the Field

The findings presented in Table 4.1 highlight the top countries that have contributed to the advancement of research in SCM, TQM and CE between 1998 and May 2023.

Table 4.1: Top Most Research Productive Countries in the Field

S/N	Country/ Region	No of Documents Published		Citations		Total Link Strength
		Frequency	% age Rate	Frequency	Average Citation/ Doc	
1.	USA	427	14.46	46,655	109.26	618,934
2.	UK	248	8.40	14,537	58.62	355,564
3.	China	239	8.10	14,913	62.40	341,346
4.	India	162	5.49	6,374	39.35	203,309
5.	Spain	153	5.18	7,629	49.86	266,101
6.	Australia	120	4.07	7,404	61.70	192,868
7.	Italy	102	3.46	4,326	42.41	119,265
8.	Malaysia	102	3.46	2,403	23.56	120,139
9.	Brazil	87	2.95	3,729	42.86	93,265
10.	Indonesia	77	2.61	1,151	14.95	35,207
11.	Hong Kong	62	2.10	9,213	148.60	133,242
12.	Canada	61	2.07	5,817	95.36	105,135
13.	France	57	1.93	4,267	74.86	86,677
14.	Thailand	54	1.83	2,050	37.96	70,346
15.	**Others (75 Countries)**	1,001	33.9	37,287	37.25	1,909,756
16.	**Total**	**2,952**	**100.00**	**167,755**	**56.83**	**4,651,154**

Source: VOSViewer Data Extracted from Scopus Database, May 2023 N = 104

Of the 104 countries, only 14 have contributed at least 50 documents that translate to knowledge in these domains. The USA has emerged as the leader in research productivity with 427 (14.46%) published documents and the highest number of citations (46,655). This is reflected in the 109.26 highest average citations per document, which

shows US research's significant impact and influence in the field. The UK ranks second with 248 (8.40%) documents, 14,537 citations, and 58.62% average citation per document. Other countries such as China, India, Spain, Australia, Italy, and Malaysia have also demonstrated significant research influence with at least 100 publications between the periods analyzed.

During the analysis, the researcher considered the quality and quantity of research to assess each country's contributions to the field. Hong Kong emerged as the country with the highest average citation per document (148.60) from 62 documents, accounting for 2.10% of the total publications. Other countries that followed the rank with at least 70% average citation are Canada, the USA, and France, respectively. This indicates that research from these countries, particularly Hong Kong, substantially impacts SCM, TQM and CE. The "others" category includes contributions from 90 other countries, including African countries, specifically Ghana, Morocco, Egypt, Nigeria, and Tunisia, which accounts for the largest share of publications (1001 or 33.9%) and 37,287 citations. While the results demonstrate contributions from diverse countries and the global nature of research in these areas, there is still limited research in the field, especially in Africa.

4.1.3The 12 Most Influential Authors in SCM, TQM, and CE Research Domain between 1998-May 2023

This section highlights the top 12 scholars who have played a significant role in advancing the study of Total Quality Management, Supply Chain Management and Circular Economy as indicated in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: The 12 Most Influential Authors in SCM, TQM and CE between 1998-May 2023

S/N	Author	Total Publications	Total Citations	Total Link Strength	Average Citation/ Doc
1.	Sarkis J.	11	5527	699	502.45
2.	Zhu Q.	5	4094	535	818.80
3.	Huo B.	18	3305	1281	183.61
4.	Zhao X.	13	3107	1037	239.00
5.	Schroeder R.G.	11	2796	519	254.18
6.	Flynn B.B.	4	2667	654	666.75
7.	Shah R.	5	2346	363	469.20
8.	Ward P.T.	2	2190	326	1095.00
9.	Gunasekaran A.	14	2011	438	143.64
10.	Kaynak H.	4	1603	491	400.75
11.	Lai K.-H.	8	1580	264	197.50
12.	Wong C.W.Y.	11	1558	611	141.64

To thoroughly grasp any academic discipline, it is crucial to recognize the scholars who have significantly contributed to its development. During the study, the researchers used a minimum of 1,500 citations, of which only 12 authors out of 4,444 authors met the thresholds and were considered for in-depth analysis. Various criteria, such as total publications, citations, and link strength, were used to identify the 12 most influential authors in the field. Baofeng Huo from Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, China has the most publications (n=18) with the 384.86 total average citations of 183.61 per publication and 1281 link strengths. AngappaGunasekaran is followed by (n=14), Zhao (13) with both Sarkis, Schroeder and Wong having made significant contributions with at least 10 publications. Overall, Joseph Sarkis, a Professor of Management, Worcester Polytechnic Institute's Business School stands out in particular with a notably high total citation count of 5,527 against 11 publications, indicating the impact and influence of his work while Zhu Q, Huo B and Zhao X have at least 3,000 total citation counts against 5, 18 and 13 publications respectively. The result shows that the works of the top 12 scholars have been cited at least 1,500 times with 309.3 average citations per document. This implies that the research field has attracted well-known researchers who are subject experts and their work has been widely cited in operations management.

Furthermore, Huo, Xiande Zhao, Sarkis and Flynn are the top 4 authors with the highest total link strength (at least 650 links), which indicates the power of their collaboration and co-authorship relationships with other researchers in the field. The data showcases authors from different regions contributing to the research domain, adding breadth and depth to the field by bringing diverse perspectives and expertise. Collaboration and network building are crucial in advancing knowledge in the area, as seen in authors like (Huo, Zhao, Wiengarten, Sarkis and Flynn) who have strongly influenced collaboration patterns within the research community.

It is important to note that authors like (Kaynak H., Peter T. Ward, Quanyan Zhu, Shah R., and Flynn) have at most five (fewer) publications with high average citations per document, which indicates that their research is highly impactful and have captured the attention of the academic community. The most effective authors are those who publish prolifically and make a lasting impact on the research community, contributing to the growth and development of the field of study.

4.1.4Top 10 Influential Journals Contributing to the Study of SCM, TQM and CE

Table 4.3 shows the 10 top journal outlets most that contribute to the area of SCM, TQM and CE published during the study period (1998-May 2023).

Table 4.3: The Top 10 Journals Contributing to the Study

S/N	Source	Documents	Citations	Citations per Doc
1.	Sustainability (Switzerland)	270	304	1.13
2.	International Journal of Production Economics	189	1071	5.67
3.	International Journal of Production Research	129	0	0.00
4.	Journal of Cleaner Production	122	70	0.57
5.	Journal of Operations Management	117	8559	73.15
6.	International Journal of Operations and Production Management	108	43	0.40
7.	International Journal of Supply Chain Management	84	0	0.00
8.	Supply Chain Management: An International Journal	82	218	2.66
9.	Total Quality Management and Business Excellence	82	1	0.01
10.	TQM Journal	79	64	0.81

Based on the analysis of journals, it is evident that there are different aspects to consider when assessing academic impact across various fields. The number of documents published, citations, and citations per document all provide valuable insights into the performance of journals. The "Sustainability (Switzerland)" journal was ranked first with a high document count (270) despite a relatively low number (1.13) of citations per document, indicating that while it contributes significantly in volume, individual papers may not garner exceptionally high recognition. Following in the rank are the "International Journal of Production Economics," "International Journal Of Production Research," "Journal Of Cleaner Production," "Journal Of Operations Management," and "International Journal Of Operations and Production Management" contributing to high publication outputs in SCM, TQM, and CE, respectively. Notably, only the "Journal Of Operations Management" enjoys a substantial citation count (8,559), reflecting its papers' impactful contributions and a high citations per document ratio (73.15%) and accounting for 82.86% of total citations. The analysis, therefore, shows the diversity in journal performance, ranging from high document-count journals that contribute significantly to their fields to low document-count journals that wield exceptional influence per paper. Each category offers unique insights into these journals' academic impact and focus.

4.1.5 Network Analysis

4.1.5.1 Country Collaboration Network

Figure 4.2 shows the country network associated with SCM/ TQM and/ CE authors. The United States, United Kingdom, India, and Spain are among the major players noted, with a high degree of centrality in the network. Other notable contributors include Malaysia, China, Italy, Indonesia, and Australia, indicating active participation in research collaborations across various domains. The map reveals a strong presence of European and Asian countries in the research landscape, significantly contributing to the advancement of research in these domains.

While African countries such as Nigeria, Egypt, Ghana, Morocco, and Tunisia have made essential contributions to the field, they are emerging players with growing connections. These findings suggest that African countries, especially the five mentioned, are increasingly engaging in research collaborations related to SCM, TQM and CE. Additionally, countries with smaller node sizes in the network, such as Jordan, Turkey, Hong Kong, Thailand, France, Portugal, Hungary, Germany, Sweden, and Brazil, contribute significantly to connecting and advancing research clusters. The collaboration between American authors and authors from other countries such as South Korea, the United Kingdom, India, Turkey, Portugal, Japan, and Hong Kong in SCM, TQM and CE signifies a global collaboration network. This network fosters diverse perspectives to advance knowledge and address global issues, including sharing expertise and resources, interests, challenges, and goals.

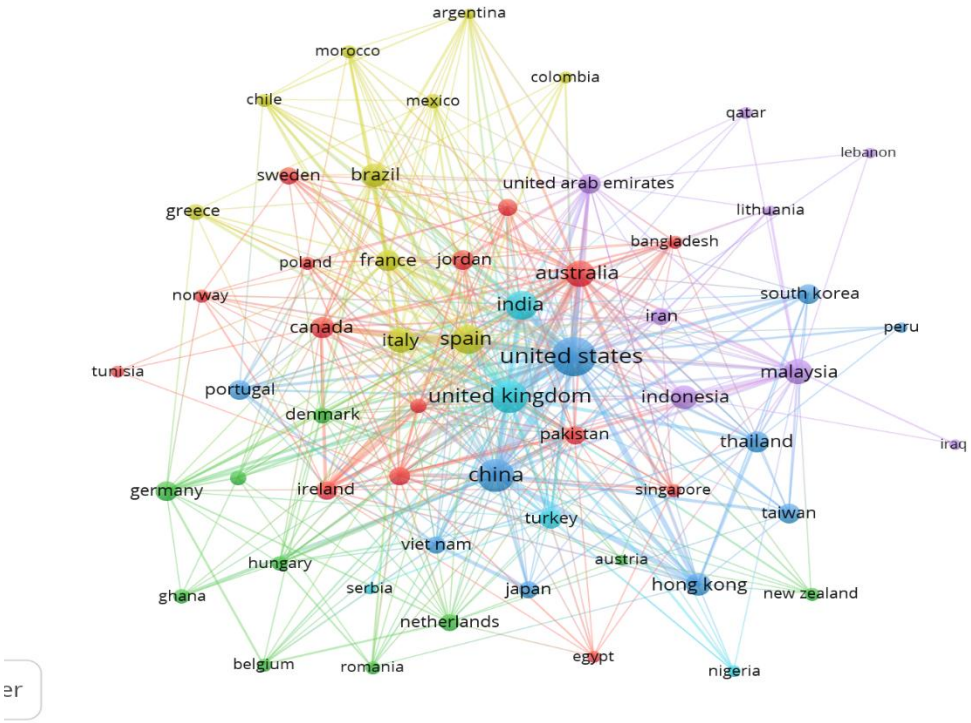


Figure 4.2: Country Collaboration Network in SCM, TQM & CE

4.1.5.2 Co-Authorships Network

Figure 4.3 shows the network of highly prolific authors in the fields of SCM, TQM and CE research. The nodes' sizes represent each author's level of network connectivity, while the lines connecting them indicate the extent of co-authorship. The thickness of these lines reflects the frequency and strength of collaboration among authors in this domain. It is worth noting that the network includes many prominent authors (Sarkis Joseph, Angappa Gunasekaran, Jose Arturo Garza-Reyes, Frank Wiengarten, Baofeng Huo and Barbara B. Flynn) and their activity level correspond to their prominence. For example, Zhu Q. has multiple co-authored publications with Sarkis J., Geng Y., and Lai K., in various aspects of SCM, TQM and CE, indicating the interdisciplinary nature of these fields and the importance of collaborative efforts to advance knowledge and practices in these areas. Of recent, the authors are heavily involved in researching Green Supply Chain Management (GSCM) practices and their performance outcomes, indicating the growing importance of sustainability in supply chain management.

However, Frank Wiengarten stands out as a critical figure in the network, with substantial node size and sustained contributions over several years. On the other hand, while authors such as; T. C. Edwin Cheng, Christina WY Wong, Guilherme Luz Tortorella, and Daniel Prajogo are not among the most prolific authors, they play significant roles in this collaborative network. These five authors have consistently contributed to the research area of SCM, TQM and CE. Their extensive publication records and co-authorships signify their impact and influence in the academic community, as well as their contributions to advancing knowledge in these domains.

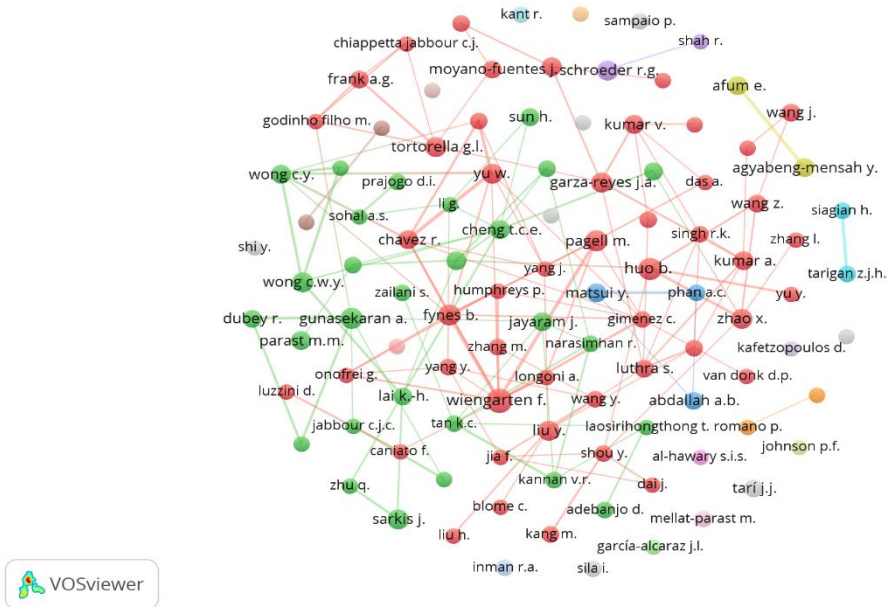


Figure 4.3: Co-authorship Network in SCM, TQM & CE Research

4.2 Co-Occurrence Author Keywords

The second research objective (RO2) aimed to identify the central concepts and overarching topics in SCM, TQM, and CE and the current research frontiers to understand the cutting-edge areas scholars are exploring within these domains. For this, Bibliometric analysis and systematic review were used to present an exceptional opportunity to gain valuable insights into the ever-evolving landscape of research fields. This approach was beneficial for identifying emerging trends and focal areas of research, especially in the domains of SCM and TQM their association with, and CE. The researchers examined the intricate relationships between these concepts through keyword co-occurrence analysis, shedding light on their interconnectedness within the scholarly literature. This approach enabled the researchers to identify pivotal themes and research frontiers, with clustering techniques used to derive thematic categories based on central subject matter.

Of the 1877 articles published between 1998 and May 2023, 4140 author keywords appeared in all the collected literature. The author's keywords have varying levels of occurrences (i.e. 1-368 number of appearances). Due to the large number of author keywords (4444 words) that appeared in the title, abstract, and keywords, the researcher defined selection criteria in the VoSviewer to identify relationships between the published articles in the study area under investigation. Therefore, author keywords with at least ten (10) occurrences were considered for analysis, in which only 124 keywords met the thresholds. The 124 keywords with at least ten (10) occurrences yield six (6) clusters by VoSviewer, as shown in Figure 4.4. Each cluster has different colors (Red, Green, Blue, Black, Yellow, and Purple) and represents a distinctive thematic area of inquiry. Each node in a network represents a keyword, with links connecting the two nodes representing the relationship between the two keywords. Based on the data, the researcher used bibliometric analysis, systematic review and content analysis to identify and analyze the sub-themes.

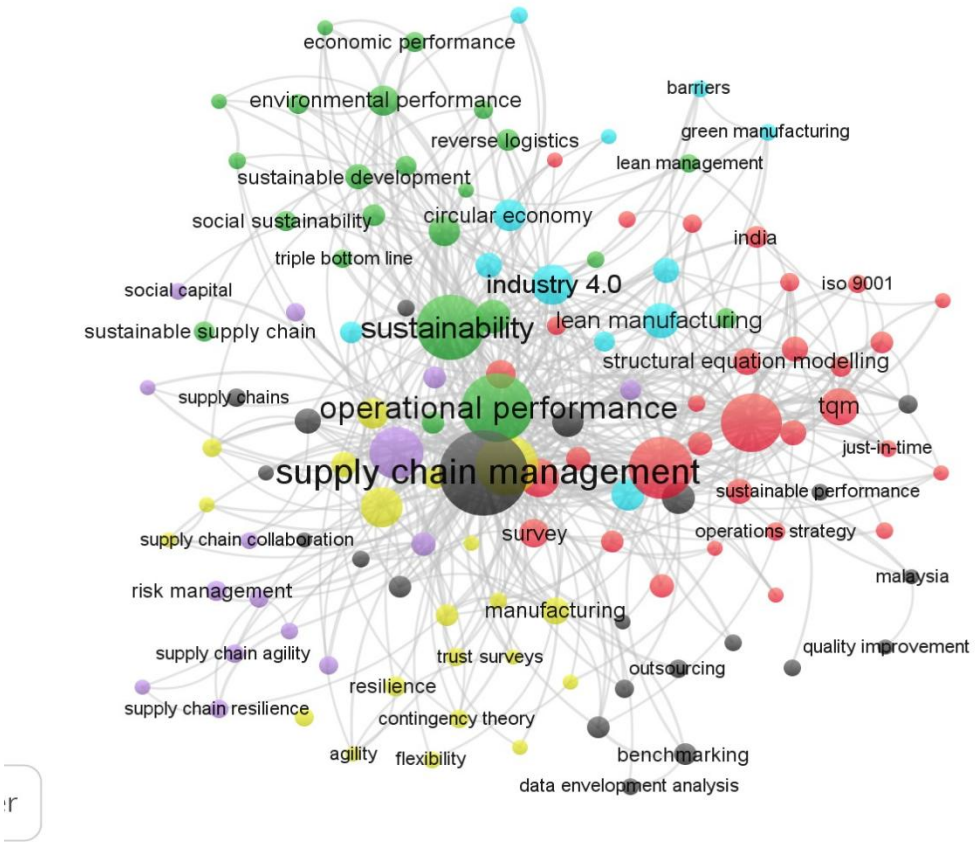


Figure 4.4: Keywords Co-Occurrence Network of SCM, TQM and CE

4.2.1Emerging Themes and Trends

Using VOSviewer, researchers conducted bibliographic coupling to identify the themes and clusters evolving in SCM, TQM and CE domains. This analysis, as suggested by Donthu et al. (2021), provides valuable insights to business scholars regarding the current developments in the research field. By utilizing the output from keyword analysis, cluster analysis, and content analysis (Donthu et al., 2021; Saini, Lievens & Srivastava 2022), the researcher identified the following themes and trends as presented in Table 4.4:

Table 4.4: The Details of Keywords in the Cluster with at least 10 Occurrences

Cluster-ID	Main Theme	No. of Items	Cluster Theme Constructed Title	Top 10 Terms in the Cluster
1 (Red)	Total quality management/ TQM (368)	31	Enhancing operational excellence and quality management in business	Structural Equation Modelling / SEM (64), Innovation (62), Survey (34), customer satisfaction (29), continuous improvement (26), lean production (26), lean practices (25), empirical research (24), knowledge management (21), Six Sigma (20), ISO 9000 (17) and operations strategy (15)
2 (Green)	Operational performance (197)	23	Sustainable performance and environmental responsibility in supply chain management	Sustainability (180), Green supply chain management/ GSCM (52), financial performance (50), environmental performance (38), sustainable development (27), sustainable supply chain (22), reverse logistics (21), dynamic capabilities (20), social sustainability (17), green supply chain (17), Tripple Bottom Line (15) and innovation (13)
3 (Black)	Supply chain management /SCM (326)	22	SCM, benchmarking and performance management	Organizational performance (44), business performance (41), collaboration (26), information technology (21), benchmarking (20), organizational culture (12), performance measures (12), data evolvement analysis (12), logistics (11), Malaysia (11) and quality improvement (10)
4 (Yellow)	Supply chain integration (70)	21	Strategies for achieving supply chain resilience and competitive advantage	Performance (148), firm performance (38), manufacturing (32), China (28), information sharing (15), trust (14), contingency theory (14), supply chain risk management (14), flexibility (12) and institutional theory (11)
5 (Purple)	Supply chain (116)	15	Enhancing supply chain resilience and responsiveness in the era of disruptions	Competitive advantage (25), SMEs (21), risk management (19), Corporate Social Responsibility (18), supply chain performance (16), supply chain resilience (16), Covid 19 (14), Resource Base-view Theory (14), supply chain agility (14) and supply chain collaboration (13)
6 (Blue)	Industry 4.0 (66)	12	Sustainable practices and innovation in manufacturing and the automotive industry	Lean manufacturing (55), circular economy (45), quality (45), case study (31), automotive industry (27), environmental management (27), productivity (19), green manufacturing (13), barrier (13), and cleaner production (12)

Source: VoSViewer Data 2023

4.2.1.1Cluster One (1): Enhancing Operational Excellence and Quality Management in Business

Thematic analysis within this theme (Cluster 1) highlights several vital components integral to the implementation and success of TQM. Kim et al 2012) delve into the relationship between quality management practices and organizational performance. For example, Kim et al (2012) found that quality management practices such as management leadership, customer relations, training, employee relations, supplier quality management, quality data and reporting, process management, product/service design, and people management have a positive relationship with all the five types of innovation (radical product, radical process, incremental product, incremental process, and administrative innovation). Continuous improvement, a fundamental principle of TQM is underscored by the importance of benchmarking and technology-driven refinements, although global scalability remains a research gap (Sanders, 2007; Frank et al., 2019). Customer satisfaction has also been demonstrated to enhance TQM objectives and supply chain integration globally (Cua et al., 2001; Flynn et al., 2010; Prajogo & Olhager, 2012). Although the relationship between quality management practices and organizational performance has been explored, further research is needed to investigate the interplay between quality management, innovation, and operational practices and their contribution to overall performance.

Innovation and the role of knowledge management in promoting quality excellence and continuous improvement are evident, yet more research on their cross-validations and global implications is essential (Kim et al., 2012; Dubey et al., 2017). ISO quality standards, JIT, and leadership exhibit their central roles in TQM across global contexts (Kaynak, 2003; Sila, 2007; Sadikoglu & Zehir, 2010; Prajogo & Olhager, 2012; Dubey et al., 2015). Lean practices, operations management, process innovation, and quality performance are essential dimensions of TQM (Bruce, Daly & Towers 2004; Ketokivi and Schroeder, 2004; Nair, 2006; Flynn et al., 2010; Kim et al., 2012; Martinez-Jurado & Moyano-Fuentes, 2014), but their implications for diverse industries and international applications require further exploration. This comprehensive discussion unveils the critical components of TQM and emphasizes their global relevance while highlighting the need for more extensive research to bridge gaps and provide holistic insights.

Studies in this Cluster also exhibit a strong preference for empirical research methodologies. For example, numerous papers, including Fernando, Jabbour & Wah (2019), Lin, Chow, Madu, Kuei & Yu (2005), and Sila & Ebrahimpour (2005), employed quantitative research methods, such as surveys, questionnaires, and quantitative models to decode the complex relationships between sustainable practices, innovation, supply chain management, and performance outcomes. These surveys engage professionals in the manufacturing and automotive sectors, providing invaluable insights into practices, challenges, and their corresponding results. Additionally, statistical techniques like regression analysis and structural equation modeling are observed (Fynes et al., 2005; Hoang, Igel & Laosirihongthong, 2006; Yee et al. 2008;). While case studies are employed, they are frequently paired with data-driven analysis, providing in-depth examinations of specific manufacturing and automotive companies to elucidate the impact of sustainable practices and innovation. Furthermore, secondary data analysis, as found in Bagchi, Chun, Skjoett-Larsen & Boege (2005) and Browning & Heath (2009), leverages existing datasets and reports, amplifying the depth of understanding through comprehensive empirical assessments. This reliance on empirical research ensures that findings are substantiated with concrete evidence and statistical rigor.

4.2.1.2Cluster Two (2): Sustainable Performance and Environmental Responsibility in Supply Chain Management

This theme covers a broad range of topics related to sustainability, economic and financial performance, environmental and social responsibility, and integrating green practices in supply chain management. Thematic analysis within this theme would aim to explore the interconnectedness of these concepts and how they collectively contribute to our understanding of sustainable supply chain practices and their impact on economic and environmental performance. Researchers such as (Sousa & Voss, 2002; Ahmad & Schroeder, 2003; Frank et al., 2019) shed light on how operational practices are closely linked to sustainability and performance. Frank et al. (2019) explore Industry 4.0 technologies and their implementation patterns in manufacturing companies, highlighting the modern technological dimension of operational practices. Ahmad & Schroeder (2003) recognize the role of human resource management practices in operational performance, emphasizing contextual and industry differences. Additionally, Sousa & Voss (2002) provide a reflective review of quality management, bridging the understanding of how operational practices can contribute to overall performance.

The reviewed literature highlights a strong association between environmental responsibility and improved organizational performance. The works of (Flynn et al., 2010; Green Jr. et al., 2012; Dubey et al., 2015) emphasize the significant outcomes linked to integrating green practices in supply chain management. Specifically, Flynn et al. (2010) offer a comprehensive view of the impact of supply chain integration on performance while Green, Zelbst, Meacham & Bhadauria(2012) delve into green supply chain management practices and their influence on performance. Dubey et al. (2015) provide a sustainable supply chain management framework. This

adds depth to our understanding of how prioritizing green practices can lead to greater environmental responsibility and better economic performance.

Furthermore, authors such as Zhu & Sarkis (2004) and Sarkis, Gonzalez-Torre & Adenso-Diaz (2010) contribute to the multifaceted advantages of sustainable/ green supply chain practices. Specifically, Zhu & Sarkis (2004) specifically emphasize the adoption of green supply chain management practices in Chinese manufacturing enterprises and how these practices positively affect organizational performance with respect to environmental and economic performance. Sarkis, et al. (2010) introduced the aspect of stakeholder pressure and its mediation through training in adopting environmental practices, highlighting a more holistic perspective. These papers collectively affirm that sustainability initiatives within supply chain management yield benefits across multiple dimensions. Finally, research conducted in Cluster 2 reveals that incorporating green practices in supply chain management yields significant benefits, positively impacting economic and environmental performance. However, the literature lacks specific mechanisms and strategies for effectively integrating sustainability practices into supply chain management.

4.2.1.3Cluster Three (3): SCM, Benchmarking and Performance Management

A prominent theme within Cluster 3 of studies on enhancing business performance and sustainability through supply chain management is collaboration for sustainability. Within Cluster 3, the subtheme of "SCM, Benchmarking and Performance Management" is underscored by several studies. Sarkis et al. (2010) delved into the impact of stakeholder pressure and environmental practices mediated by training, underscoring the critical role of collaboration in implementing sustainable practices. Their study, which drew upon data from multiple countries, highlights the global significance of collaborative efforts for sustainable supply chain management. Furthermore, Sanders (2007) explores the impact of e-business technologies on supply chain collaboration and performance across diverse countries, emphasizing the role of benchmarking. Contributing to the same debate, Carter & Rogers (2008) propose a sustainable supply chain management framework, highlighting bench-marking's importance in sustainability but relying primarily on conceptual discussions and case examples, suggesting the potential for broader empirical research. Zhu et al. (2005) also investigate benchmarking practices within green supply chain management in China, contributing a unique perspective but with some limitations regarding generalizability. These studies highlight the pivotal role of benchmarking in enhancing performance and sustainability in supply chain management while showcasing specific strengths and areas for further research and improvement, such as broader global perspectives and more diverse empirical data.

4.2.1.4Cluster Four (4): Strategies for Achieving Supply Chain Resilience and Competitive Advantage

Cluster 4 brings forth a collection of studies that delve into various aspects of supply chain management, emphasizing the importance of resilience and competitive advantage. It highlights the significance of supply chain agility, competitive strategies, contingency planning, and risk management in today's dynamic business landscape. The research within this cluster showcases how organizations have successfully developed strategies to achieve supply chain resilience while gaining a competitive edge. It is evident in the literature that supply chain agility is crucial for organizations to respond effectively to disruptions and changes. Several studies, including those by Christopher (2000), Zsidisin et al. (2004), and Melnyk et al. (2014), have emphasized the importance of agility strategies in managing supply chain risks and achieving competitiveness. Melnyk et al. (2014) specifically highlighted how supply chain agility contributes to resilience and competitiveness.

Christopher (2000) considered agility as a key competitive strategy for organizations, while Zsidisin et al. (2004) explored the relationship between supply chain agility and supply chain risk management, emphasizing the role of agility in addressing supply chain disruptions and enhancing resilience. Despite the growing importance of supply chain agility, there is still a need for more empirical studies that explore the specific methodologies and tools organizations employ to enhance supply chain agility in different contexts. Such studies would provide further insights into the strategies and practices that organizations can adopt to improve their supply chain performance and achieve competitive advantage in today's dynamic business environment. Li & Zhao (2008) examined the impact of supply chain integration on competitive advantage, emphasizing how strategic integration enhances a firm's competitive position in the market. Additionally, Frohlich & Westbrook (2001) focused on competitive strategy in the context of supply chain management, highlighting how different competitive strategies influence supply chain structure and performance. Similarly, Fawcett & Magnan (2002) explored the impact of supply chain integration on competitive advantage, emphasizing the role of integration in developing competitive strategies that improve firm performance. While the role of supply chain integration in competitive strategies is explored, there is a gap in studies that delve into the nuances of competitive strategies tailored to diverse industries or markets. More in-depth industry-specific research is needed.

Wu et al. (2015) investigated the influence of supplier integration on supply chain performance, emphasizing how supplier integration strategies impact the overall competitiveness of the supply chain. Similarly,

Ivanov (2018) focused on supply chain flexibility and risk management, highlighting the role of supplier integration in achieving flexibility and resilience. McKinnon & Cullinane (2014) discussed the role of institutional theory in shaping supply chain risk management practices, illustrating how supplier integration is influenced by institutional pressures and expectations, impacting supply chain resilience and competitiveness. Contrarily, Handfield et al. (2009) explored the alignment between supply chain and business strategy, emphasizing the importance of supply chain integration in achieving competitiveness. Hendricks & Singhal (2003) studied the effect of supply chain glitches on shareholder wealth, showing the negative consequences of disruptions and the significance of effective supply chain integration. Moreover, Sila (2007) examined the effects of contextual factors on TQM and performance, highlighting the role of supply chain integration in enhancing quality performance and competitiveness across different contexts. However, addressing the identified research gaps will help organizations better prepare for an uncertain future and maximize their competitiveness on a global scale. For example, Wu et al. (2015) and Ivanov's (2018) research focus on supplier integration strategies and supply chain flexibility and risk management, respectively. There is a necessity for a more profound comprehension of how these strategies differ across various industries and the specific challenges they present. Similarly, although Sila (2007) delves into TQM and performance within the context of supply chain integration, the integration of new technologies and digital tools in enhancing quality performance remains unexplored.

4.2.1.5Cluster Five (5): Enhancing Supply Chain Resilience and Responsiveness in the Era of Disruptions

The discussion in Cluster 5 centers on various subthemes related to supply chain management, such as supply chain agility and resilience, risk management, technological advancements, supply chain responsiveness, and comparative advantage. The role of SMEs, supply chain collaboration, and social capital are also explored, along with the unique impact of events like the COVID-19 pandemic. Flexibility in the supply chain is crucial for adapting to changing circumstances. According to Mason-Jones et al. (2000), a study on the role of flexibility in supply chain management revealed that flexibility strategies are essential for achieving competitive advantage. Similarly, Holweg & Miemczyk (2003) explored the concept of flexibility in the context of supplier integration and showed how flexibility influences the relationship between firms and suppliers. Furthermore, Ivanov & Sokolov (2019) argue that adopting agility and reconfigurability in supply chains is pivotal for achieving resilience, particularly in modern disruptions. Therefore, the discussion on supply chain agility and resilience raises the research gap of novel methods and strategies that can make organizations more adaptive to emerging disruptions, which range from technological advancements to global events.

Effective supply chain risk management strategies are essential to navigate the challenges posed by disruptions. Numerous studies, including those by Zhang et al. (2005) and Ivanov & Sokolov (2019), accentuate the significance of flexibility and adaptability, illuminating the research gap in terms of novel strategies to enhance adaptability to emerging disruptions, spanning from technological advancements to global events. Furthermore, Tang (2006) presents a study focusing on risk management, asserting that a proactive approach is critical; while Manuj & Mentzer (2008) extend this argument, emphasizing the importance of risk identification and mitigation. Contributing to the same debate, Vanany et al. (2016) discuss the complexities of managing supply chain risks in the modern business environment. From the literature, there is a significant research gap that still exists in understanding how organizations can improve their risk management strategies, mainly when dealing with emerging threats like cybersecurity risks and the unique challenges they pose.

Several researchers have highlighted the importance of supply chain resilience and responsiveness for SMEs. Wagner et al. (2010) have stressed the unique position of SMEs in global supply chains, while Zsidisin et al. (2004) have also contributed to this discussion by focusing on supplier relationship management for SMEs. However, there still exists a research gap that needs to be addressed with more specific strategies tailored to SMEs to enhance their supply chain resilience and responsiveness, particularly in light of the resource constraints that are typically faced by smaller businesses.

Given the recent impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, this subtheme explores its effects on supply chains and the lessons learned. Ivanov (2022) focuses on supply chain disruptions during the pandemic and offers insights for supply chain redesign. Snyder et al. (2020) discuss the impact of the pandemic on global supply chains and resilience strategies developed as a response. Dubey et al. (2022) address supply chain disruptions caused by COVID-19, emphasizing the role of digital technologies. The research gap in this context urges further investigation into specific strategies that emerged during and after the pandemic and how these can be adapted to other types of disruptions, making supply chains more adaptable to diverse challenges. This cluster provides a valuable overview of the evolving landscape of supply chain management, focusing on resilience and responsiveness. To address the identified gaps, future research should examine practical applications and the sustained effectiveness of strategies presented while exploring ways to make these strategies accessible and adaptable across diverse contexts.

4.2.1.6Cluster Six (6): Sustainable Practices and Innovation in Manufacturing and the Automotive Industry

The papers in Cluster 6 highlight the significance of sustainable manufacturing practices and their correlation with innovation in the manufacturing and automotive industries. Frank et al. (2019) discuss the implementation of Industry 4.0 technologies in manufacturing firms. They stress the increasing importance of adopting intelligent technologies in manufacturing. Dubey et al. (2017) provide a sustainable supply chain management framework, offering valuable insights into how businesses can integrate sustainability into their supply chain practices. These findings reflect the growing importance of leveraging technological advancements and sustainable practices in manufacturing to enhance competitiveness and environmental responsibility.

The circular economy concept has become increasingly crucial in supply chain management to reduce waste and environmental impact while promoting sustainability and economic growth. Several studies have explored different aspects of circular economy practices. For instance, Frank, et al (2019) investigated the implementation of Industry 4.0 technologies in manufacturing companies, emphasizing the pivotal role of technology in enabling circular practices through smart manufacturing and working. Similarly, Dubey, et al (2017) provided a framework for sustainable supply chain management, highlighting the importance of integrating circular economy principles within supply chains. All these studies underscore the role of technology, supply chain management practices, and sustainability in promoting circular economy principles. However, further research is needed to explore the implementation challenges and the holistic impact of circular economy practices on supply chain performance.

Winter &Knemeyer (2013) also emphasized integrating sustainability and supply chain management, advocating for resource efficiency, closed-loop systems, and minimal waste in supply chain operations to align sustainability goals with circular economy principles. According to Winter &Knemeyer, despite the extensive focus on supply chain processes, only a few articles (12 out of 196) examined the social dimension of sustainability. This indicates that there is a significant opportunity for further research to explore how SCM processes relate to the social dimension, as well as how they intersect with other dimensions of sustainability.

The papers by Bode & Wagner (2015) and Gligor et al. (2015) address supply chain agility and adaptability, revealing their substantial influence on performance outcomes. Bode and Wagner discuss the structural drivers of upstream supply chain complexity and the frequency of supply chain disruptions, showcasing the critical need for adaptability in managing disruptions. Furthermore, Gligor et al. (2015) investigated the performance outcomes of supply chain agility, shedding light on the importance of agility in addressing rapidly changing business environments. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of how adaptability and agility can enhance supply chain performance.

Studies in this Cluster also exhibit a strong preference for empirical research methodologies. For example, numerous papers, including Fernando, Jabbour & Wah (2019), Lin, Chow, Madu, Kuei & Yu (2005), and Sila & Ebrahimpour (2005), employed quantitative research methods including surveys, questionnaires, and quantitative models to decode the complex relationships between sustainable practices, innovation, supply chain management, and performance outcomes. These surveys engage professionals in the manufacturing and automotive sectors, providing invaluable insights into practices, challenges, and their corresponding results. Additionally, statistical techniques like regression analysis and structural equation modeling are observed (Fynes et al., 2005; Hoang, Igel & Laosirihongthong, 2006; Yee et al. 2008;). While case studies are employed, they are frequently paired with data-driven analysis, providing in-depth examinations of specific manufacturing and automotive companies to elucidate the impact of sustainable practices and innovation. Furthermore, secondary data analysis, as found in Bagchi, Chun, Skjoett-Larsen & Boege (2005) and Browning & Heath (2009) leverages existing datasets and reports, amplifying the depth of understanding through comprehensive empirical assessments. However, these studies primarily focus on the manufacturing and automotive sectors, indicating a gap in research across other industries such as services, healthcare, and retail. Additionally, there is a scarcity of qualitative research that could provide deeper insights into the motivations, challenges, and contextual nuances influencing sustainable practices and supply chain management.

5. Conclusion

The comprehensive study on SCM, TQM and CE reveals a wealth of knowledge, theoretical perspectives, and methodological approaches. The findings showcase the evolving research landscape in these domains, offering valuable insights and identifying critical areas for further exploration. The analysis of publication trends from 1998 to 2023 reveals a significant growth in interest and recognition of these topics, with potential shifts in research focus. Further research, such as content or citation analysis, is essential to provide deeper insights into specific research directions and influential works. Examining leading countries and productive journals highlights the collaborative nature of research and the importance of a diverse and inclusive perspective in these domains.

The study on TQM highlights the critical components of continuous improvement, benchmarking, and technology-driven information. It also emphasizes the importance of customer satisfaction, information technology, human resources management, innovation, knowledge management, ISO quality standards, just-in-time (JIT), and effective leadership. The study showcases the significance of flexibility and adaptability in supply chain and risk management concerning emerging challenges like cybersecurity risks. The study further reveals the significance of lean practices, operations management, process innovation, and quality performance in TQM, although their implications for diverse industries and international applications warrant further exploration.

The study further underlines the core components of SCM. It underscores the vital role of flexibility and adaptability, customer relationship management, level and quality of info sharing, process management, postponement, and inventory management as essential for responding to evolving disruptions. Supply chain risk management, especially concerning emerging challenges like cyber security risks, remains a central theme. Collaboration and the fostering of trust and information sharing within supply chains are of paramount importance. Furthermore, the profound impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for adaptable strategies in supply chain management.

The study also emphasizes the significance of transitioning towards a Circular Economy and the adoption of the 9Rs (Refuse*, Rethink, Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Refurbish, Remanufacture, Repurpose, Recycle & Recover). These principles underscore the imperative of redefining our approach to resources and waste. By promoting these Rs, we can reduce environmental impact, conserve resources, and promote sustainability. The CE framework, with its 9Rs, offers a holistic and eco-centric model for businesses and societies to reshape consumption and production patterns, ultimately fostering a more sustainable and resilient future. The study also revealed that a symbiotic relationship between SCM, TQM, and CE not only bolsters traditional dimensions of operational performance like cost-effectiveness, product quality, and responsiveness, but also extends the focus to include sustainability, resilience, and adaptability, aligning businesses with the demands of a rapidly changing world. Finally, the methodological diversity employed in this study encompasses an array of research methods, ranging from quantitative approaches such as surveys, questionnaires, models, and statistical techniques to qualitative methods, including case studies, data analysis, and secondary data usage. This methodological diversity adds depth to the research in these domains, ensuring a comprehensive and multifaceted understanding. The conclusions from this study guide future research endeavors.

5.1 Future Research Direction

To extend and contribute new knowledge in the field of SCM, TQM and CE, researchers can focus on the following future research directions:

a) To ensure that supply chains can continue to meet the needs of their customers while also addressing the concerns of the environment and society, it is essential to explore constructive ways in which they can become more environmentally and socially responsible. With this in mind, future research should focus on identifying strategies and best practices that can improve the sustainability of supply chains while maintaining or enhancing their operational performance. By doing so, we can promote more sustainable and responsible supply chain practices that benefit organizations and society.

b) Future research endeavors could focus on exploring the potential of emerging technologies such as Blockchain Technology (BoT), Internet of Things (IoT), Big Data, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to enhance SCM, TQM, and CE practices and their impact on performance. This area of research could provide valuable insights into how these technologies can be applied to improve supply chain operations and overall organizational performance. By examining the transformative potential of these technologies, researchers can identify new opportunities for innovation and growth within the field of supply chain management.

c) To gain a more comprehensive understanding of SCM dynamics in the African context, it could be useful to conduct comparative studies that examine the similarities and differences between African and non-African contexts in supply chain management, total quality management, circular economy, and operational performance. These studies could incorporate quantitative and qualitative comparative methodologies, providing a more nuanced understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities within the African region.

d) To enhance our understanding of SCM dynamics in the African context, there is a need to adopt more constructive research approaches. A promising avenue is to explore the effectiveness of mixed-methods research approaches that combine quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Such an approach would allow for a more nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities within the region, and enable development of more effective SCM strategies tailored specifically for the African context.

e) To further advance our understanding of how Total Quality Management can enhance operational performance in Africa, conducting cross-cultural studies that compare TQM implementation and outcomes between African countries and other regions would be valuable. By examining the unique contextual factors that may impact TQM implementation and effectiveness in the African context, we can identify opportunities for

optimization and improvement. This research could provide valuable insights into developing more effective TQM practices to enhance operational performance in Africa and beyond.

f) Finally, the effective implementation and success of SCM, TQM, and CE initiatives depend on various human factors, including effective communication, training, participation, leadership, and employee engagement. These factors influence employees' attitudes and behaviors toward the initiative, which can either facilitate or hinder its implementation and success. Therefore, it is crucial to consider human factors such as employee motivation, empowerment, and participation in the implementation and success of SCM, TQM, and CE initiatives. By embracing these factors, organizations can create a culture that supports the initiative's success and encourages employees to contribute positively.

The researchers' major limitations are that researchers restricted the review to only articles written in English and utilized the Scopus database up to May 2023, which could potentially exclude some valuable contributions in other languages and databases, limiting the study's global inclusivity. Researchers and practitioners should be cognizant of these limitations when interpreting and applying the results of this study to diverse and global contexts.

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