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SYSTEMATIC INVESTIGATION OF THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON BUSINESS MANAGEMENT: A BIBLIOMETRIC APPROACH

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Abstract:

In the dynamic context of modern business, the role of religion in business management is increasingly attracting the attention of researchers and practitioners. Religion, seen as a set of spiritual beliefs and practices, deeply shapes people's values, behaviors, and decisions, thus impacting the way organizations are managed. Using bibliometric analysis allowed us to identify research trends, the links between the keywords underlying the selected studies, and the impact of the publications on the business environment. The study revealed that religious values can shape ethical behavior, leadership styles, and corporate social responsibility in business. Most studies focus on the influences of Islamic, Catholic, and Protestant religions, leaving a significant gap in understanding how orthodox values and practices influence organizational behavior and business ethics, even though this is the dominant religion in many Eastern and South-Eastern European countries. For a more comprehensive perspective, future research should include case studies and surveys in these geographical and cultural regions, combining qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis. This study provides a robust basis for future research, stimulating reflection on how religious values can shape the business landscape in the 21st century.

Keywords: *Religion, Business administration, Bibliometric Analysis, Ethics*

1. Introduction

In the complex and dynamic context of contemporary business, the role of religion in business management has become a topic of growing interest for researchers and practitioners alike. Religion, defined as a system of spiritual beliefs and practices, has a profound impact on the values, behaviours, and decisions of individuals and, by implication, on the way organizations are led and managed.

Religion, in its various forms and manifestations, profoundly influences how individuals perceive and interact with the world around them. In business, this impact is manifested in ethical values, leadership practices, and interpersonal relationships. In cultures where religion plays a central role, religious principles can guide business decisions, influencing human resources policies, corporate social responsibility strategies, and even business models.

Business, on the other hand, refers to the commercial activities carried out to produce goods and services, create value, and generate profit. Business administration, as a discipline, involves planning, organizing, managing, and controlling resources to achieve organizational objectives. In this context, management is the process of coordinating organizational activities through the efficient use of human, financial, and material resources.

Bibliometric analysis is a research method used to quantitatively analyze academic literature and to identify research trends, relationships between authors, and the impact of publications. In the study of the relationship between religion and business administration, bibliometric analysis can provide a clear picture of how these concepts are interrelated and studied in the literature. By assessing the number of publications, citations, and co-author networks, researchers can identify emerging themes, gaps in knowledge, and opportunities for future research.

In recent decades, interest in analyzing the impact of religion on business administration has grown significantly. Studies have highlighted various ways in which religious values influence ethical business behavior, leadership styles, and corporate social responsibility. A number of recent studies have shown that leaders of organizations are more likely to promote ethical practices and avoid fraudulent behaviour.

On the other hand, religion can also have negative effects on business, especially when religious values conflict with business practices or when religious discrimination occurs in the workplace. Thus, understanding the complexity of this relationship is essential for developing effective and ethical management strategies.

Systematically exploring the relationship between religion and business management through a bibliometric approach provides valuable insight into how these two fields interact and influence each other. By identifying trends and research gaps, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of religion in the contemporary business context.

This study is based on the analysis of bibliometric data obtained by processing information from the most valuable studies, indexed Web of Science, using two software programs: VOSviewer and Bibliometrix-R. The results obtained provide a good background for future research, inviting further reflection on how religious values can shape the business landscape in the 21st century.

2. Literature review

Religion is a fundamental part of life for many people (Sandıkcı et al., 2016), constituting a way of life, a set of moral norms, and a mechanism for transmitting knowledge and value systems from one generation to the next (Dana, 2009; Khurana et al., 2021). It has a major impact on societal values and these values, in turn, influence people's responsible behavior (Astrachan et al., 2020; Poruthiyil, 2020). Religion is not only a reflection of ethnic origin but also plays a significant role in defining personal identity, and the sense of being part of a collectivity (Pandey and Varkkey, 2020). For this reason, much of the research on the impact of religion in business management is conducted by researchers in the fields of psychology, sociology, and liberal arts (Smith et al., 2021).

Even though religion has been largely neglected and considered a sensitive topic in business administration (BA) (Thornton et al., 2011; Van Buren et al., 2020), recently there has been an expansion of research in this area across different cultures and geographical regions (Llanos-Contreras et al., 2020; Ramadani, 2021). In their study, Rietveld and Hoogendoorn (2021) state that religion provides the moral framework by which individuals live influencing them in decision-making, including career choice. Other studies have concluded that religious ideologies while not directly prescribing career choice, indirectly may influence it (Deller et al., 2018). Other research has concluded that some religions discourage the accumulation of assets and income, including entrepreneurship, by imposing various moral restrictions on those who choose to engage in commercial activities (Audretsch et al., 2013; Rauf and Prasad, 2020).

Religion affects economic activity, especially as a socio-cultural factor (Van Buren et al., 2020). Therefore, when business organizations are expanding abroad in search of new markets, their managers and entrepreneurs must adapt their corporate rules and regulations to the norms of the new markets, which are almost always influenced by the rules and the precepts of the indigenous religion (Murphy and Smolarski, 2020; Poruthiyil, 2020; Assmann and Ehrl, 2021; Vu and Tran, 2021).

The present study argues for the need to systematically survey high-quality academic publications on the topic of research on the influence of religion on business management to complement the already existing theoretical backgrounds of the connection of religion to BA and to illustrate the diverse, evidence-based scientific advances in research in this area over the years. The main objectives of this systematic review are (1) to assess and map existing research on the BA-religion connection and (2) to provide recommendations for future studies in this unique and promising area. This approach is in line with the call of Kumar et al. (2022) who talk about the need to conduct bibliometric literature reviews at certain periods for a clear understanding of the state of this vast field.

The research questions this study aims to answer are:

Q1. What are the publication dynamics of research on the connection between religion and BA?

Q2. What are the main journals, articles, authors, countries, and institutions involved in researching the connection between religion and BA?

Q3. What are the keyword clusters underlying these studies?

Q4. What are the limitations of this bibliometric research?

Q5. What opportunities exist for future research on the connection between religion and BA?

3. Methodology

Bibliometric analyses have become essential for assessing academic progress and understanding the dynamics of knowledge development in each field. Using specialized techniques and software, these analyses allow detailed visual representations of research trends, the exploration of relationships between studies, and the identification of new research directions.

By measuring the number of publications, citations, and impact of papers, the researcher can identify emerging trends and assess significant contributions by authors, institutions, or countries. These analyses allow for anticipating future research directions and highlighting topics that need further attention (Aivaz, Florea & Munteanu, 2024).

The main aspects studied by bibliometric analysis are:

a. Knowledge background. Bibliometric analysis helps to establish the background of knowledge in a field by identifying the most important seminal publications. These papers, being the most cited, are recognized as essential for the theoretical and methodological development of the field.

b. Conceptual Structure. Through graphs and representative pictures, researchers can identify the conceptual structure of a field. Conceptual maps show how different concepts and theories are interconnected and how they have evolved.

c. Social Structures. Bibliometric analyses allow observation of social structures within the scientific community. Social maps can illustrate connections between authors, institutions, and networks, highlighting influence and collaboration within the scholarly community. This helps to understand how knowledge is distributed and transferred between different entities.

d. Performance and impact. Bibliometric analyses measure the performance and impact of scientific papers through citations and impact indices. These measures allow to assess the influence and relevance of papers and authors and are useful for decisions on funding, promotion, and research collaboration.

Our study used the Web of Science database due to its reputation as a valuable resource for academic research. It is recognized for its extensive coverage, citation analysis capabilities, author profiles, search and analysis tools, and stringent quality control measures. Many researchers and institutions use the Web of Science to access, study, and analyze academic literature in their fields of interest.

Given the investigative nature of our study, we adopted a comprehensive interrogation methodology to identify relevant publications. Specifically, the keywords used were 'religion', 'business', and 'management', appearing in all titles, abstracts, and keywords indexed in the Web of Science database.

To refine the searches, we applied both inclusion criteria (articles to be in English, published in the final stage) and exclusion criteria (review articles and those published in 2024). The final dataset included 303 eligible articles, which were further bibliometrically analyzed using VosViewer and Bibliometrix-R software. The description of our sample is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Description of analyzed variables.

Variable	**Value**
Sample period	1992-2023
Sources (Journals)	303
Keywords	1581
Minimum number of occurrences of a keyword	10
Threshold	31

The analysis covers a 31-year period from 1992 to 2023. This indicates that the data included in the study provides a broad and longitudinal perspective on the evolution of research in the targeted area over three decades. The total number of sources (journals) analyzed is 303, and the diversity and large volume of publications are considered, having a wide coverage and significant representativeness in the literature. The total number of keywords identified is 1581, suggesting a broad spectrum of themes and topics covered in the literature analyzed, indicating the complexity and diversity of research in the field studied. The results were filtered as follows: a keyword must appear at least 10 times to be included in the detailed analysis; the minimum number of articles in which a keyword must appear relevant in the detailed bibliometric analysis is 31. This ensures that only keywords with a significant presence in the literature are included in the following graphs and interpretations.

4. Results/findings

The trends in the publication of research on the link between religion and business management are shown in Figure 1. It indicates that research published in high-quality journals has increased over the last 20 years, revealing significant trends.

In the early years, between 1992 and 2004, the number of publications was relatively low, ranging from 0 to 2 articles per year, with some notable exceptions in 2005 and 2006, when there were 7 articles each. This early period suggests an emerging and sporadic interest in this area of research.

Since 2005, there has been a steady increase in the number of publications, marking a consolidation of academic interest in this area.

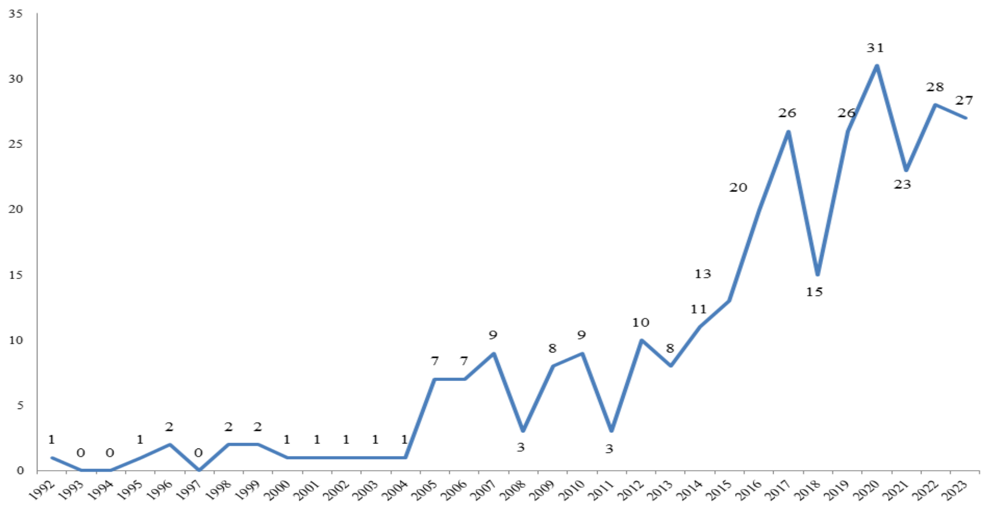

Figure 1. Publication dynamics of research on the relationship between religion and business administration

A significant jump in academic output is observed from 2016 onwards, when the number of articles published annually exceeds 20, with a peak of 31 articles in 2020. It should be noted that this dynamic emerged in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, suggesting that religion plays an important role in guiding business decisions during a crisis.

This period, between 2016 and 2023, is characterized by a substantial intensification of research in the analyzed area, indicating a maturity and diversification of academic interest.

The results shown in Figure 2, on the top journals that have published articles on the impact of religion on business administration (BA), indicate some key trends and points of interest in this area of research.

Journal of Business Ethics with 33 articles is the clear leader in publishing articles on the connection between religion and BA. The large number of articles published reflects the growing interest in ethical and religious issues in the business context.

The Journal of Management Spirituality & Religion, with 20 articles, focuses explicitly on spirituality and religion in management, which explains the significant number of publications. This journal provides a dedicated platform to explore the influence of religion in management and leadership.

The *International Journal of Islamic And Middle Eastern Finance And Management* (8 Articles) reflects a strong interest in how Islamic principles influence business practices and finance.

Figure 2. The top journals that have published articles on the impact of religion on business administration

The 2 journals, *Frontiers in Psychology* (5 Articles) and *Philosophy of Management* (5 Articles) suggest an interdisciplinary approach, combining psychology and philosophy with management to explore the influence of religion in business.

Journal of Business Research (4 Articles), *Organization* (4 Articles), and *Religions* (4 Articles) reflect the diversity of research in this area, covering various aspects of business from a religious perspective.

Business & Society (3 Articles), *Faith and Work: Christian Perspectives, Research, and Insights into the Movement* (3 Articles), *Heliyon* (3 Articles), *Journal of Islamic Marketing* (3 Articles), *Journal of Management History* (3 Articles), *Journal of Management Inquiry* (3 Articles), and *Journal of Organizational Change Management* (3 Articles), each with 3 published articles, suggest a diverse interest in the study of religion in the context of different sub-domains of business and management.

The authors' particular individual contributions to the connection between religion and business administration, as well as the weight of these contributions in the context of collaborative research, are shown in Figure 3.

BURTON N and DYCK B each published 4 papers, but the fractionalization of papers differs. DYCK B has a fractionalized value of 2.25 and BURTON N has a fractionalized value of 1.83. This suggests that DYCK B had a higher weight in contributions to published articles compared to BURTON N, indicating a frequent lead author role.

DRISCOLL C and DU X published 3 articles each. The fractionalized value for DRISCOLL C is 1.166, while for DU X it is 1.45. This indicates that DU X had a higher weight in contributions to the respective articles, suggesting an active role as lead author.

ISLAM M published 3 papers with a fractionalized value of 1, suggesting that his contributions were probably evenly distributed. In contrast, WIEBE E has a fractionalized value of 1.33 for 3 articles, suggesting a more significant involvement in each of the published articles.

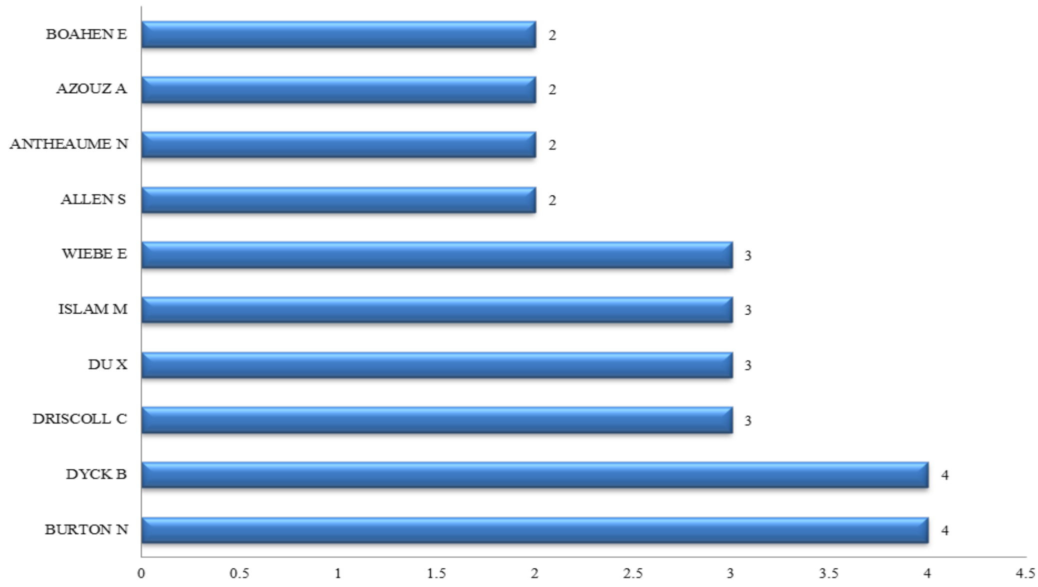

Figure 3. Contributions of authors who have published in the field of the link between religion and business administration

ALLEN S, ANTHEAUME N, AZOUZ A, and BOAHEN E published 2 articles each. The fractionalized value varies, with ALLEN S at 0.83, ANTHEAUME N and AZOUZ A at 0.66, and BOAHEN E at 1. These variations indicate differences in the weights of their contributions. For example, BOAHEN E appears to have made a significant and consistent contribution to both articles, while ANTHEAUME N and AZOUZ A had smaller contributions.

Analysis of the affiliations of authors who have published in this field reflects the significant and diverse contribution of academic institutions around the world to this area of research (Figure 4).

Xiamen University ranks first with 9 articles, indicating a major interest and intensive research activity in this field. This suggests that the university is investing considerable resources in studying the intersection between religion and business.

Northumbria University and the *University of Manitoba* each published 8 articles, reflecting a strong involvement in research on this topic. These are important centers for interdisciplinary studies that include the religious dimension in business administration.

Curtin University, *RMIT Univer*sity, *Texas A & M University*, and the *University of Lancaster*, each with 7 published articles, emphasize a serious academic concern for exploring the influence of religion in business and management. The presence of three universities from Australia (Curtin and RMIT) and one from the USA (Texas A&M) indicates a global interest in this area.

Chongqing University, *Galatasaray University*, and the *University of Kent* (6 articles each) indicate a consistent contribution to research on the influence of religion in BA. The geographical diversity of these institutions (China, Turkey, UK) shows that the topic is of international interest.

Several universities from various parts of the world, including *Baylor University*, *Johns Hopkins University*, *Kennesaw State University*, *Renmin University of China*, *St Mary's University*, *Sultan Qaboos University, Tel Aviv University, University of Chester, University Sains Malaysia and University of Texas El Paso*, have each published 5 articles. This demonstrates a widespread interest and involvement in research in this area from institutions in the USA, China, Israel, Israel, Malaysia and Oman, among others.

In terms of the frequency of publications from different regions (Figure 5), the leader in research is the USA (203 articles), reflecting the existence of significant resources and robust academic interest in the topic. The UK (110 articles) and China (101 articles) follow the USA, indicating major concerns and consistent contributions to the literature.

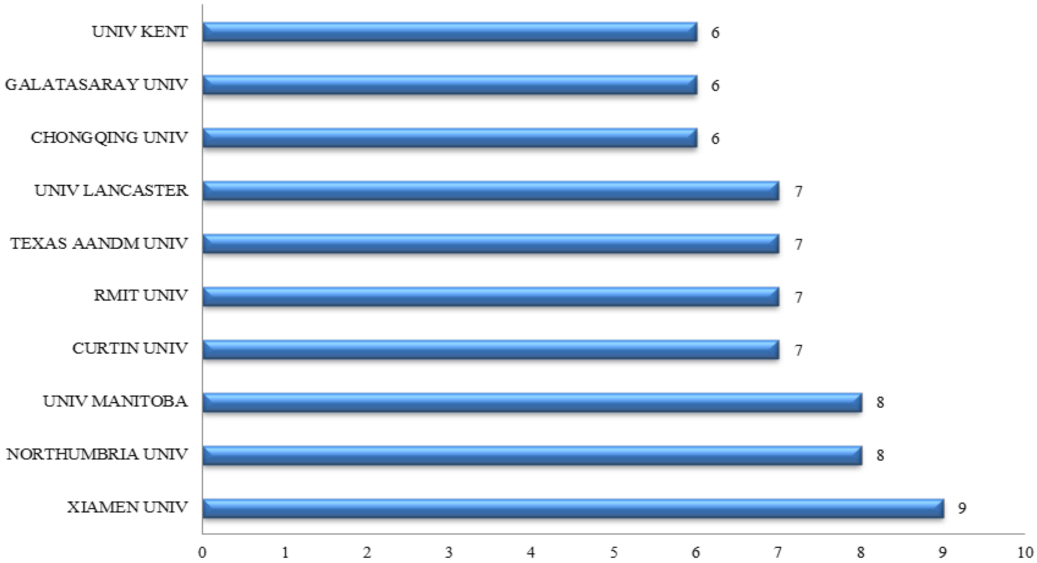

Figure 4. Affiliation of authors who have published in the field of the connection between religion and business administration

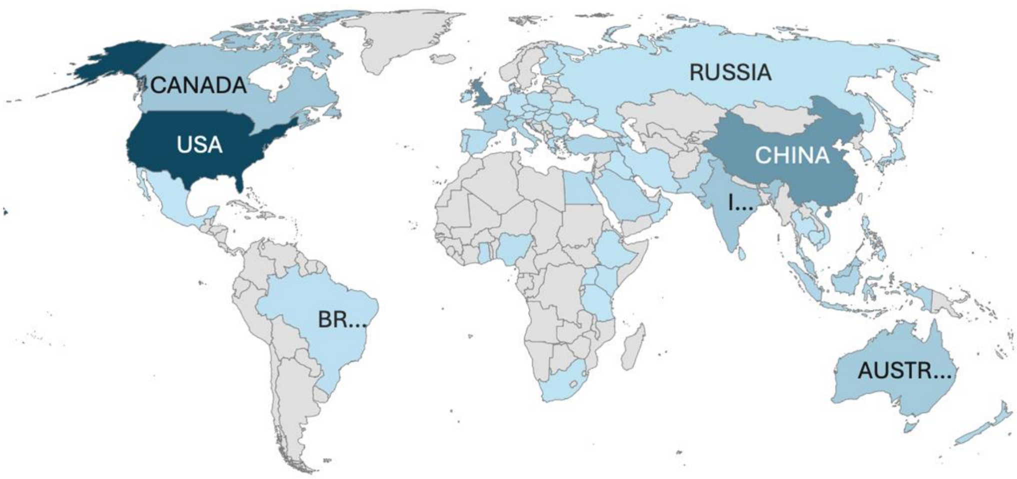

Figure 5. The frequency of publications from different regions

Remarkable contributions are provided by Canada and India (40 articles each), both countries show strong involvement, demonstrating diversified academic interests; Australia (35 articles) has significant academic activity, emphasizing the importance of religion in business in the Australian context; Malaysia (29 articles) and France (26 articles) reflect regional and cultural concerns in research. Low presence in these publications are countries such as Romania (8 articles), Greece (5 articles), Ukraine (4 articles), Croatia (3 articles), Japan (4 articles), and Russia (4 articles) suggesting possible research gaps. The unexploited potential is also found in countries such as Mexico, Bulgaria, and Tanzania, indicating opportunities for future exploration and expansion of research in these regions.

In conclusion, while there is a robust and diverse global engagement in exploring the influence of religion in business and management, certain regions present gaps and opportunities for the future development of this academic field.

Interpreting the data on total citations per article for different countries in Figure 6 reveals the significant contributions and impact of research globally. The United States leads the field with 1969 citations and an average of 27.7 citations per article, reflecting the considerable influence and resources invested in this field. The UK follows with 1247 citations and an impressive average of 34.6 citations per article, indicating the relevance and high quality of its research.

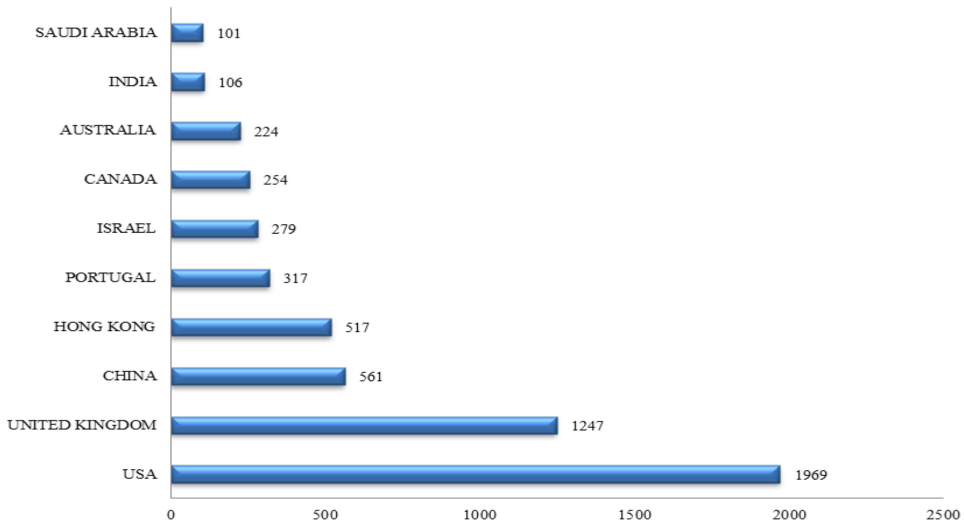

Figure 6. Total citations per article for different countries

China and Hong Kong also make notable contributions, with 561 and 517 citations respectively, with Hong Kong having an exceptionally high average of 517 citations per article. Portugal and Israel stand out with high averages of 105.7 and 93 citations per article respectively, suggesting a high impact of fewer articles.

Canada and Australia contribute significantly, with 254 and 224 citations respectively, demonstrating robust research activity. Countries such as Bahrain and Ireland, with high averages of citations per article (44 and 86), indicate highly influential work. Greece, Liechtenstein, and Ghana also have notable averages of citations per article, reflecting quality research.

4.1. Interpretation of keyword clusters in published articles

Following the selection criteria of the articles analyzed by the Vosview and Bibliometrix programs, for the study of the connection between religion and BA, the most numerous studies were in the area of Islamic religion (Figure 7).

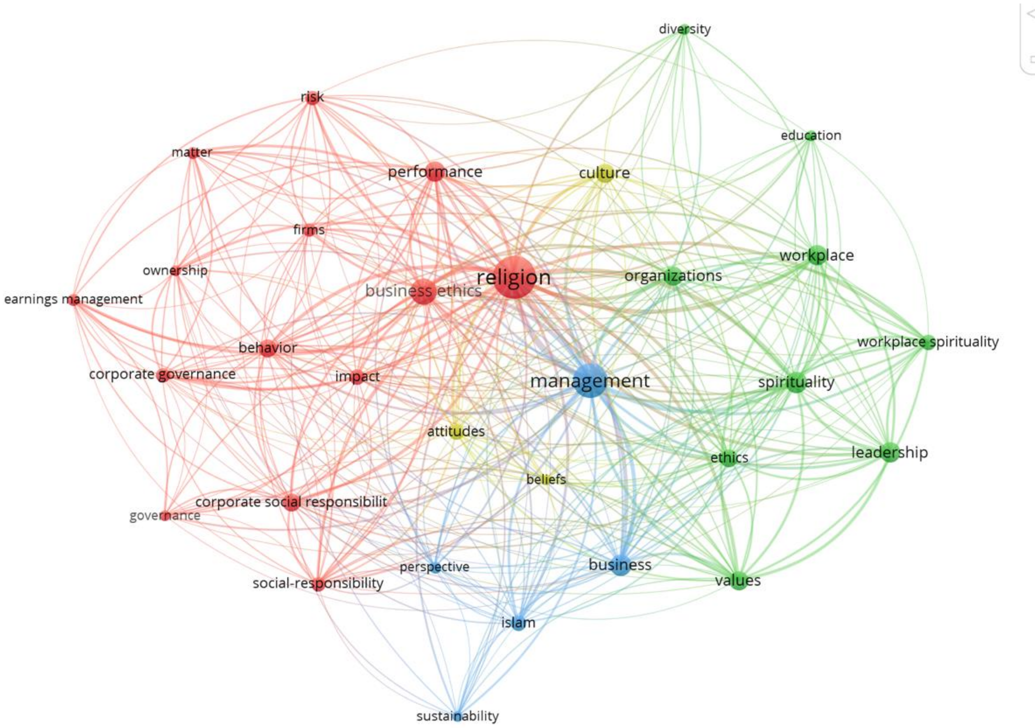

Figure 7. Keyword clusters

Cluster 1 (red): religion, business ethics, performance, behavior, behavior, social responsibility, impact, corporate governance, risk, firms.

Business ethics is deeply influenced by religious values and beliefs (Dvouletý, 2023). Religious beliefs can drive ethical behavior among employees and leaders, promoting integrity, honesty, and transparency. A firm that bases its governance policies on religious principles can develop practices that avoid corruption and abuse of power (Munteanu, 2018). Thus, religion can serve as a moral guide, providing a framework for ethical decision-making that benefits the organization and the entire community in which the organization operates.

A company's performance is not only determined by economic factors but also by its ethical behavior. Organizations that adhere to strong religious principles can see an improvement in their reputation, which can attract new customers and business partners. In addition, sound ethical behavior can lead to increased employee loyalty and reduced employee turnover, thus contributing to the long-term stability and performance of the firm (Linando et al., 2023).

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is another area where religion plays a central role. By promoting values of compassion and justice, religion can encourage firms to embrace CSR practices. These include environmental initiatives, programs to support disadvantaged communities, and fair labor policies. By assuming social responsibility, firms not only improve their public image but also contribute to the well-being of society.

The Islamic perspective on business, as reflected in the studies reviewed, also includes a strong emphasis on corporate social responsibility (CSR). Companies are encouraged to contribute to and improve the welfare of the society in which they operate through charitable acts (zakat) and by supporting community initiatives. This commitment to CSR is seen not only as a moral obligation but also as a business strategy that can lead to a positive reputation and better relations with stakeholders. By integrating these values, companies can build a strong brand and attract customers and employees who share the same ethical principles.

The impact of religion on corporate governance is also notable. Religious principles influence the way firms are run and controlled. Sound corporate governance based on religious values reduces the risk of unfair business practices and improves the trust of investors and other stakeholders (Dana, (2021).

Religion also influences business risk perception and management. Firms that base their decisions on religious principles may take a more prudent and responsible approach to risk, avoiding investments in projects considered unethical and therefore morally risky and promoting an organizational culture that values caution.

Cluster 2 (green): spirituality, workplace, leadership, organizations, ethics, education

In the modern business context, the concept of spirituality in the workplace has gained significant attention and has become an essential aspect of organizational culture. In this context, spirituality does not necessarily refer to religion, but rather to the sense of connection, meaning, and purpose that employees can experience in their daily work. It directly influences leadership, ethics, and education in organizations, having a profound impact on how they operate and achieve their goals.

In an organization, spirituality in the workplace can create an environment where employees feel valued and connected not only to their work, but to each other. Effective leadership in this context involves more than management and coordination skills. Leaders must be able to inspire and motivate employees, create a shared vision, and foster a sense of belonging and collaboration (Kumar, et al., 2011). True organizational leaders are those who lead their teams with empathy, integrity, and authenticity, promoting a culture of respect and accountability.

Ethics play a crucial role in these organizations, where spiritual values are integrated into every aspect of daily work. An ethical organization conducts its business with honesty and transparency, treating all employees and partners with respect and fairness (Singh et al., 2021). Ethics in this context is not just a collection of rules and regulations, but a set of fundamental principles that guide organizational behavior. Ethical leaders are role models, demonstrating through their actions the importance of fairness and respect for shared values (Mehari et al., 2024).

Education is another essential pillar in cultivating spirituality and ethics in the workplace. Organizations that invest in the continuing education of their employees, not only professionally but also in their personal development, create an environment where growth and learning are constant priorities. These organizations offer training and development programs that improve employees' technical skills as well as those related to leadership, communication, and conflict management. Thus, education becomes a tool through which ethical and spiritual values are transmitted and reinforced (Faliza, et al.,2024).

Spirituality in the workplace is beneficial for both employees and the organization. Studies have shown that employees who feel that their work has deeper meaning, and purpose are more motivated, more productive, and more loyal to the company. In addition, organizations that promote spirituality and ethics tend to have a better reputation, thus attracting top talent and building trusting relationships with customers and business partners (Aivaz, Misa & Teodorescu, 2024).

Cluster 3 (blue): management, business, Islam, outlook, sustainability.

In the context of globalization and cultural diversity, modern management requires a deep understanding of different religious and cultural perspectives to conduct business sustainably.

According to the studies reviewed, Islam, with its distinct principles and values, offers a unique perspective on how business can be managed ethically and responsibly, contributing to long-term sustainability (Soumena, 2024).

Management in the Islamic context is based on a set of values and principles that promote equity, justice, and accountability. These principles are deeply rooted in the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith, which emphasize the importance of honesty, integrity, and respect for others. In a business managed from an Islamic perspective, management decisions are influenced by the desire to create value for owners and shareholders, employees, customers, and the wider community (Taghavi & Segalla, 2023).

A central aspect of management in Islam is the concept of sustainability. Islam encourages responsible utilization of resources and avoidance of waste, thus promoting business practices that are economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable. Published studies have shown that businesses adhering to Islamic principles are more likely to invest in green technologies and adopt rigorous environmental policies to reduce negative impacts on nature.

In Islamic-inspired management, leadership plays a crucial role. Leaders are seen as guardians of ethical values and are expected to lead by example, demonstrating qualities such as empathy, humility, and moral courage. These leaders take responsibility for the financial success of the organization, and its impact on society and the environment (Melis & Nawaz, 2024).

This sustainable business model responds to the economic demands of the present while protecting the resources and interests of future generations, thus demonstrating a deep commitment to the principles of responsibility and business justice.

Cluster 4 (yellow): culture, attitude, belief.

In the context of studying the interplay between culture, attitude and belief, the complexity and depth with which these elements influence each other in modern organizations and societies is revealed. Culture, defined as the set of values, norms, traditions, and customs of a community, plays a key role in shaping the attitudes and beliefs of individuals. In turn, these beliefs and attitudes influence behaviors and decisions, both personally and professionally (Haddad, 2023).

Organizational culture is a microcosm of the broader culture in which a firm operates. It consists of the values, norms, and practices that guide the behavior of employees and leaders. For example, an organizational culture that values innovation and collaboration will encourage employees to be creative and collaborate to find new solutions to business problems, thereby increasing job satisfaction and performance.

Beliefs, deeply rooted in everyone's culture and upbringing, influence how they perceive and react to different situations. Religious beliefs, for example, can provide a sound moral framework for ethical business decisions. They can guide behaviors and attitudes, promoting values such as honesty, integrity, and respect for others (Sorenson & Milbrandt, 2023). In an organizational context, these beliefs can help to form a culture of responsibility and ethics that is shared by all members of the organization.

Attitudes, which are expressions of an individual's beliefs and values, directly influence workplace behaviors (Astrachan et al., 2020). A positive attitude towards changes and innovation, for example, can be crucial to an organization's success in a dynamic and competitive business environment. At the same time, negative attitudes, such as resistance to change or lack of engagement, can have a negative impact on organizational performance. Understanding and managing employee attitudes therefore becomes essential for leaders who want to build strong and productive organizational cultures.

The interplay between culture, attitudes, and beliefs is also essential for managing diversity within organizations. In an increasingly globalized world, organizations need to consider the complexity of the diverse cultures and beliefs of their employees. Respecting and appreciating cultural diversity will lead to innovative and effective teams. For example, an organization that recognizes and values the religious beliefs of employees can create an inclusive and motivating work environment where each individual feels respected and valued.

Understanding and integrating these elements coherently and respectfully is the key to success for many organizations that have sought to thrive in a complex and interconnected global environment.

5. Limitations and future research directions

The present study provides valuable insight into the intersection of religion, business ethics, performance, and organizational behavior. However, there are some limitations that need to be recognized and open new directions for future research.

Most studies focus on the influences of the Islamic, Catholic and Protestant religions, leaving a significant gap in understanding how orthodox values and practices influence organizational behavior and business ethics, even though this is the dominant religion in many countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe.

Second, this dominance of research from Western countries, particularly the US and the UK, limits the applicability of findings in the context of other cultures and economies. The lack of balanced representation in the literature may lead to partially correct or even erroneous conclusions.

Third, even if the bibliometric analysis undertaken is valuable for identifying trends and gaps in research, it may omit important nuances of the practical and empirical context.

Therefore, case studies and field research are needed to further the research objectives to validate and complement the findings obtained by bibliometric methods.

In terms of future research directions, an in-depth investigation of how Christian Orthodox values and practices influence business ethics and organizational behavior is essential. Future research should include case studies and surveys in Orthodox countries to provide a full and balanced picture of the influence of the Christian Orthodox religion on business.

Expanding the research to include more geographic regions and cultures may contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the interaction between religion and business management. In this regard, investigating religious influences in countries in Africa, South Asia and Latin America can bring valuable new insights.

To complement the bibliometric analyses, future research should integrate qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews and participatory observations, to explore individual perceptions and experiences more deeply. Quantitative methods, such as large surveys, will provide useful comparative data to validate results.

Future studies could investigate how other, yet unstudied religions and faiths influence sustainability practices in business, and promote corporate social responsibility, and green initiatives in diverse cultural and economic contexts.

Another research direction could be to investigate the differences or similarities between leadership styles influenced by different cultures and religious beliefs. This type of research could help to develop leadership models adapted to specific religious and cultural contexts.

6. Conclusions

This study, through a detailed literature review and identification of key trends and gaps, explored the complexity of the relationship between religion, business management, business ethics, organizational performance and behavior in the modern business environment. While existing research has provided valuable insights, our study emphasizes the need for a more balanced and diversified representation of religious influences, particularly the Christian Orthodox religion, which is dominant in many countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe but underrepresented in the reviewed literature.

One of the key issues identified is the profound impact of religious values on business ethics. Religious beliefs provide a moral framework that guides the ethical behavior of employees and leaders, promoting honesty, integrity, and responsibility. These ethical principles not only enhance the reputation of organizations but also contribute to long-term performance by creating a work environment based on trust and mutual respect.

Spirituality in the workplace, as an extension of religious beliefs, plays an essential role in shaping organizational culture, motivating employees to give meaning and significance to their work, and facilitating collaboration and innovation. By integrating spiritual values into leadership and management, organizations can develop robust and productive cultures that support both employee well-being and organizational success.

The study also emphasizes the importance of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the context of religious values. Commitment to supporting the communities in which entities operate is not only a moral obligation but also an effective business strategy. Companies that embrace religious principles in CSR improve their stakeholder relations, attract loyal customers and employees, thus contributing to sustainable and equitable development.

However, our study also recognizes existing limitations. The underrepresentation of Christian Orthodox religion and the dominance of research from Western countries limit the general applicability of the findings. In addition, the predominantly bibliometric analysis-based methodology needs to be complemented by case studies and field research to obtain a complete and more nuanced picture of the phenomenon under study.

Future research directions should focus on exploring the influences of the Christian Orthodox religion and studying cultural and religious diversity in varied geographical contexts. The integration of qualitative and quantitative methods will provide a deeper understanding of the individual perceptions and experiences of respondents and interviewees.

Deeper exploration and understanding of religious and cultural diversity will be essential for advancing knowledge and creating harmonious and prosperous working environments in business administration.

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