

# A Bibliometric Study of Research on Social Responsibility in the Scopus Database

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## Abstract

The aim of this research is to show a bibliometric study of research related to the term Social Responsibility from different themes, only considering scientific contributions socialized in the Scopus database. To achieve this objective, a search is carried out in the aforementioned database, under the search criteria: “social responsibility” in the title, abstract and keywords of publications such as scientific articles, review articles, conference documents and books. The information detected is processed by the bibliometric tools of the Scopus database itself and is also analyzed with the VOSviewer software. Using this tool, text mining is performed on the information detected under the previously declared search criteria. The main results of this research focus on the following points: 1) Bibliometric analysis of the scientific contributions detected. 2) Discussion of the main research trends in the Social Responsibility theme, through the most cited contributions.

## Keywords

Impact of Social Responsibility, Literature Review, Bibliometrics, Text Mining, Term Map

## 1. Introduction

From increased productivity to attracting top talent, there are numerous benefits to adding social responsibility initiatives within an organization. It also enhances the overall reputation of the organization, which can open doors to unlimited new opportunities. Choosing which initiative is most appropriate for your organization requires careful consideration, as the effort can be costly (Purcărea & Purcărea, 2008). In this article, we discuss what is social responsibility, its main types, and the advantages of social responsibility. We also cover a variety of examples of social responsibility that many companies are choosing to initiate

(Botescu et al., 2008).

Social responsibility is a term that refers to the burden, commitment or obligation, of the members of a society either as individuals or as members of some group, both among themselves and for society as a whole. The concept introduces a positive or negative assessment of the impact that a decision has on society (Luna-González & Rodríguez-Hurtado, 2014). This valorization can be both ethical and legal, etc. It is generally considered that social responsibility differs from political responsibility because it is not limited to the assessment of the exercise of power through a state authority (Da Silva Pereira Martins et al., 2016).

Social responsibility is the ethical or ideological theory that an entity whether it is a government, corporation, organization or individual has a responsibility towards society. This responsibility can be “negative”, meaning that there is a responsibility to refrain from acting (“abstention” attitude) or it can be “positive”, meaning that there is a responsibility to act (proactive attitude) (da Silva, 2002).

The human being by necessity, must relate to others and for this he must comply with a series of rules of behavior, depending on the place and time in which he finds himself; these obligations that each individual must fulfill with others are called social responsibilities. The idea that individuals have a responsibility to their society dates back to the Greek philosophers and the Roman system of law (Scarpato et al., 2011).

Now then, “in ancient Greece, the free people had the habit, in an atmosphere of open debate, to participate and question the arguments of open dialogue in the agora or main square; however, slavery was a fundamental part of their social and economic structure; people’s lives were public, therefore, the responsibility of each person who was part of this free society was the participation of all in any public matter (Villarroya Lequericaonandia, 2012).

In the European Middle Ages, beliefs were those that showed the rules of coexistence and the daily life of each person. “Everything was done with the sole purpose of obtaining the salvation that was accredited in the creed of the only and true Church”, with this private life, modesty, intimacy and property appeared; the responsibility was to demand respect for private spaces and at the same time ensure that the laws established by the church were complied with (de Andrade et al., 2013).

The Modern Age was characterized by a great intellectual movement; reason became the center of everything, the rights of man appeared and with these slavery ceased to exist; therefore “one of the main obligations of social actors was to defend freedom and promote human rights” in addition, the State was given responsibility with individuals and with demanding compliance with the social rules of the time (Turpo-Gebera et al., 2019).

Thus, for example, Stoicism emphasizes civic duties, social responsibility, the importance of a good law, and equal citizen rights. One of its great representa-

tives, Cicero, in the first book of “The Duties”, talks about the duties that man has towards society and towards himself and proposes that there is only one true law.

This law is right reason, which, according to nature, rules over all men, is eternal and does not change. It drives men to fulfill their duties, prohibiting them from doing evil (Rechenmann et al., 1976).

After this came the Contemporary Age, where technology and scientific progress predominate, every day it is easier to access information, it is necessary to accumulate goods to have a better quality of life; “values such as efficiency and effectiveness, positive attitudes towards commitment, compliance, a good education, as well as communication and negotiation skills empower people to be a productive part of society”. These behaviors become a responsibility for society; the State is no longer the most important thing, now the companies have power, since the market is what predominates (Bessa, 1999).

It is well known that as time passes, social responsibility changes; what was good for some time later became a crime and vice versa, people have the obligation to be morally and legally responsible to society, regardless of whether they disagree; It should be noted that the rules of conduct are determined by the entity that has the most power at the time, such as the church, the State, companies, among others; they determine the accepted rules according to the situation in which they live (de los Santos Menéndez, 2021).

Currently, social responsibility is considered a non-binding normative concept or “soft law” (that is, without the force of law), such as those embodied in some international agreements, for example, the “Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights”. Humans adopted by UNESCO4 etc (Holt, 1955).

This has given rise not only to different “sectoral” attempts or perceptions of establishing “social responsibility” mechanisms—the most notable among which are those referring to corporate social responsibility or “corporate social responsibility” (CSR)<sup>67</sup>—but also to new proposals about the institutional implications of the concept (Muzur, 2016).

Notable among these new insights is that of Claus Offe, for whom social responsibility has, chief among its functions in complex modern societies, to act as a mechanism for the creation and promotion of an autonomous morality and civilized self-control of its members [or, to put it the other way around, to the extent that they cannot sufficiently compensate for the deficits of such self-control with the contribution of the (coercive) means of law and (stimulants) of money (Brundusino & Longo, 1999)].

The purpose of this scientific contribution is to show a bibliometric study of research related to the term Social Responsibility from different themes, only considering scientific contributions socialized in the Scopus database. To achieve this objective, a search is carried out in the aforementioned database, under the search criteria: “social responsibility” in the title, abstract and keywords of publications such as scientific articles, review articles, conference documents and

books. The information detected is processed by the bibliometric tools of the Scopus database itself and is also analyzed with the VOSviewer software. Using this tool, text mining is performed on the information detected under the previously declared search criteria. The main results of this research focus on the following points: 1) Bibliometric analysis of the scientific contributions detected. 2) Discussion of the main research trends in the Social Responsibility theme, through the most cited contributions.

## 2. Materials and Methods

To develop this research, a review is carried out in the Scopus database, using the search criteria “social responsibility” in the title, abstract and keywords of contributions such as scientific articles, review articles, conference documents and books. This search is limited to the years 1980 to 2020. In this period of time, 190 scientific contributions were detected.

The Scopus database was considered for this research, because it is a bibliographic database of abstracts and citations of articles from scientific journals. It covers approximately 24,500 titles of serials (journals, conferences, research book series) from more than 5000 publishers in 140 countries, including peer-reviewed journals in the fields of science, technology, medicine, and social sciences, including the arts and humanities. The technological platform is developed by Elsevier and is accessible on the Web for subscribers, but entry into the index and its revaluation is managed by an editorial committee independent of Elsevier (Bravo Hidalgo & León González, 2018).

The information detected under the aforementioned criteria and limits was exported from the Scopus database in (.ris) format to be processed in the VOSviewer software. This computer tool is a software to build and visualize bibliometric networks. These networks can include, for example, journals, researchers, or individual publications, and can be built on the basis of citation, bibliographic coupling, co-citation, or co-author relationships (Bravo-Hidalgo, 2018). VOSviewer also offers text mining functionality that can be used to build and visualize co-occurrence networks of important terms extracted from a body of scientific literature. The functionality of VOSviewer can be summarized in two main points: 1) creation of maps based on network data. You can create a map based on a network that is already available, but it is also possible to build one from the network. The VOSviewer can be used to build networks of scientific publications, scientific journals, researchers, research organizations, countries, keywords, or conditions (Bravo et al., 2018). The elements of these networks may be connected by co-authorship, co-occurrence, citation, bibliographic coupling, or co-citation links. To build data from Web of Science, Scopus, Dimensions, PubMed, RIS, or Crossref JSON files can be used. 2) View and explore maps. VOSviewer provides three views of a map: the network view, the overlay view, and the density view. The pan and zoom feature allow you to explore a map in full detail, which is essential when working with large maps containing thou-

sands of items.

### 3. Results and Discussion

The results of this research focus on two main areas. First: the bibliometric analysis of the scientific contributions detected. Second: discussion of the main research trends in the Social Responsibility theme, through the most cited contributions.

#### 3.1. Results of the Bibliometric Analyzes

The detected publications, of the Open Access type, are divided into the following categories, within the Scopus database. **Table 1** shows the categories, definitions and the list of scientific contributions, only Open Access type. 26.31% of the scientific contributions detected are of the Open Access type, which is why it is necessary to expose the information shown in **Table 1**.

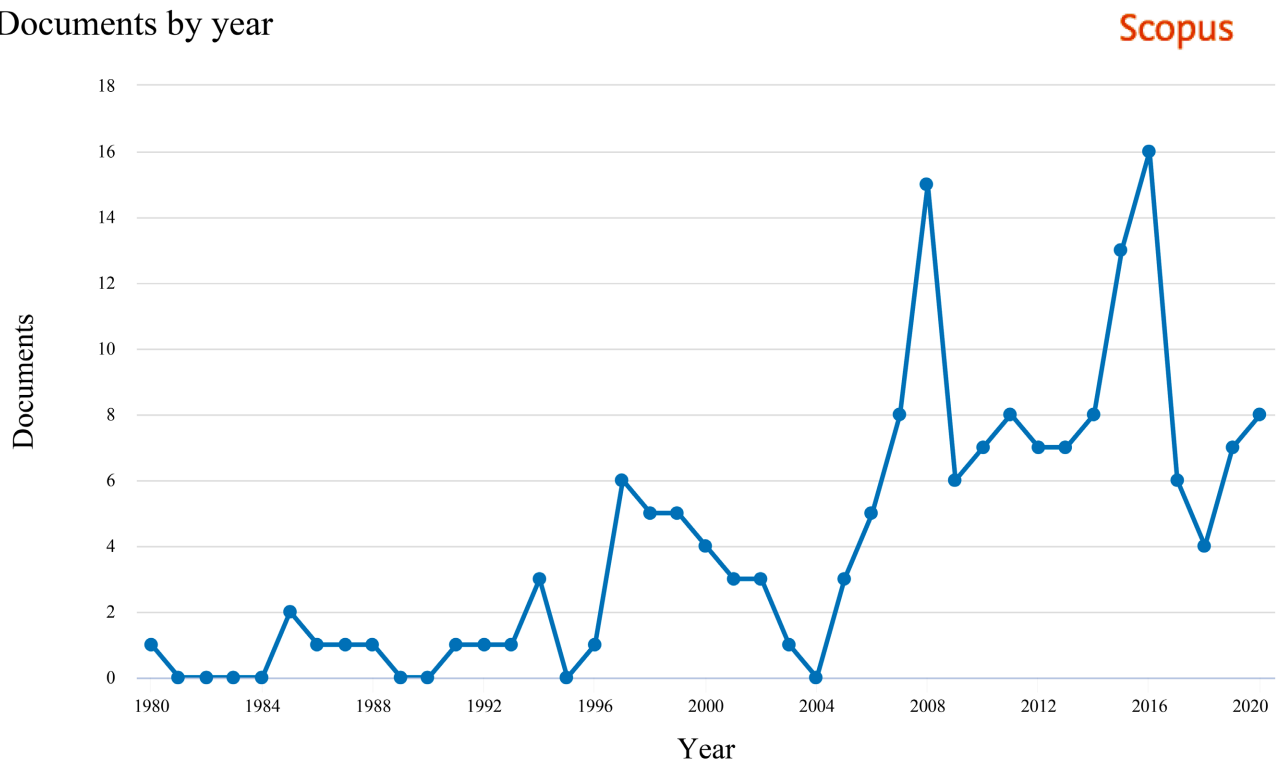
The international scientific community between 2005 and 2008, within the Scopus database, had a notable increase in the number of scientific contributions published on the Social Responsibility theme. Between 2009 and 2014 there was a significant decrease in the number of published contributions and this is mainly due to the sociopolitical conditions of the business sector after the 2008 real estate crisis on a global scale (Schinckus et al., 2019). Then, between 2015 and 2016, there was a new upturn in the number of publications in this area of knowledge within the aforementioned database. And from this date until the year 2020 the number of publications has decreased, because this topic has been merged a lot with other topics such as medicine, business and management, as well as arts and humanities. **Figure 1** graphically shows what has been explained.

The nations that exhibit the most results on this subject, through contributions contained in the aforementioned database, are France, Spain, and Brazil. I consider the contributions made by Cuban researchers in this Social Responsibility

**Table 1.** Open Access types available in Scopus.

Categories	Definition	Number of scientific contributions
All Open Access		50
Gold open	Documents that are in journals which only publish open access.	31
Hybrid Gold	Documents that are in journals which provide authors the choice of publishing open access.	5
Bronze	Published version of record or manuscript accepted for publication. The publisher has chosen to provide temporary or permanent free access.	13
Green	Published version or manuscript accepted for publication, available at repository.	31

## Documents by year



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**Figure 1.** Documents by year.

theme to be an anomaly, considering that there is a dictatorship in Cuba, a totalitarian regime that exercises power as a joint criminal enterprise. **Figure 2** is evidence of the previously argued.

The scientific contributions detected are divided into the following subject areas: Social Sciences 76 publications, Medicine, 51 publications, Arts and Humanities 30 publications, Business, Management and Accounting 26 publications, Economy and Finance 21 publications, Computer Science 14 publications, Sciences Environment 13 publications, Engineering 12 publications, Psychology 10 publications, Decision sciences 6 publications, Biochemistry, molecular genetics 4 publications, Agriculture 3 publications, Earth and planetary sciences 3 publications, Mathematics 3 publications, Nursing 3 publications, Energy 2 publications, Pharmacology 2 publications, Chemical Engineering 1 publication, Health Professions 1 publication, Multidisciplinary 1 publication. **Figure 3** shows the distribution of the documents published by subject area in percentage values.

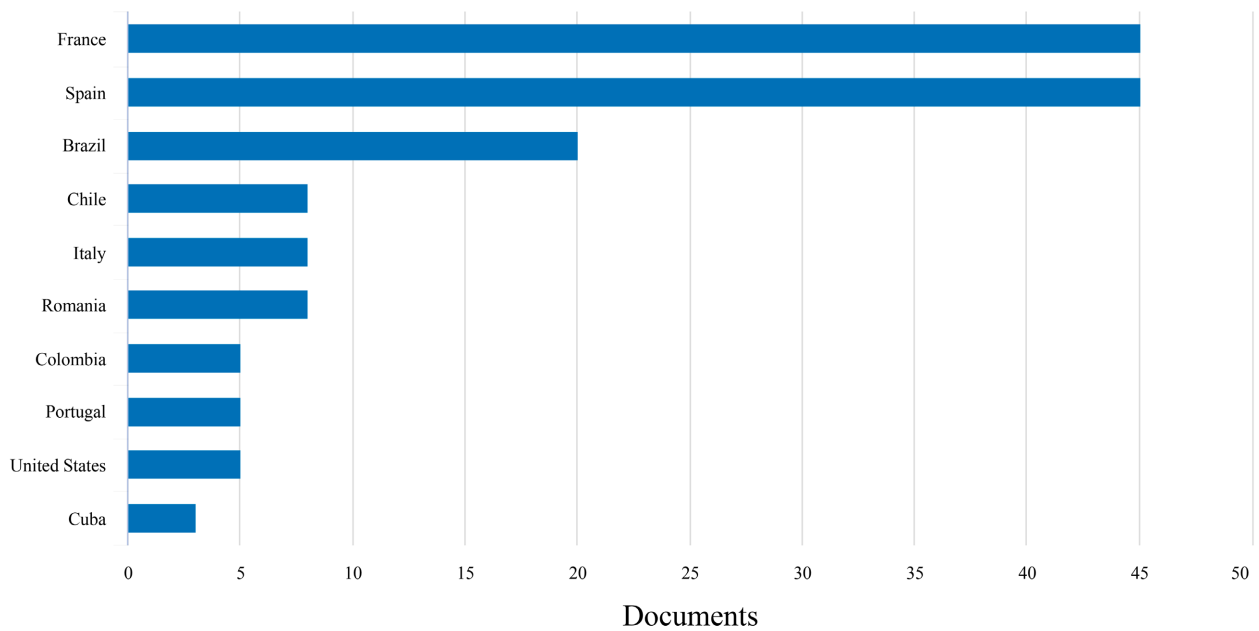
Of the 190 documents detected in the Scopus database, 141 of them are of the scientific article type, 17 are of the Reference paper type, 17 are of the Review type, 6 are of the Book Chapters type, 4 are of the Editorial type, 2 are of the Note type, 1 Conference review type, 1 Letter type, and finally 1 Short survey type document. **Figure 4** shows in percentage values the distribution of the types of documents detected.

The information detected under the search criteria and with the limits declared

## Documents by country or territory

Scopus

Compare the document counts for up to 15 countries/territories.

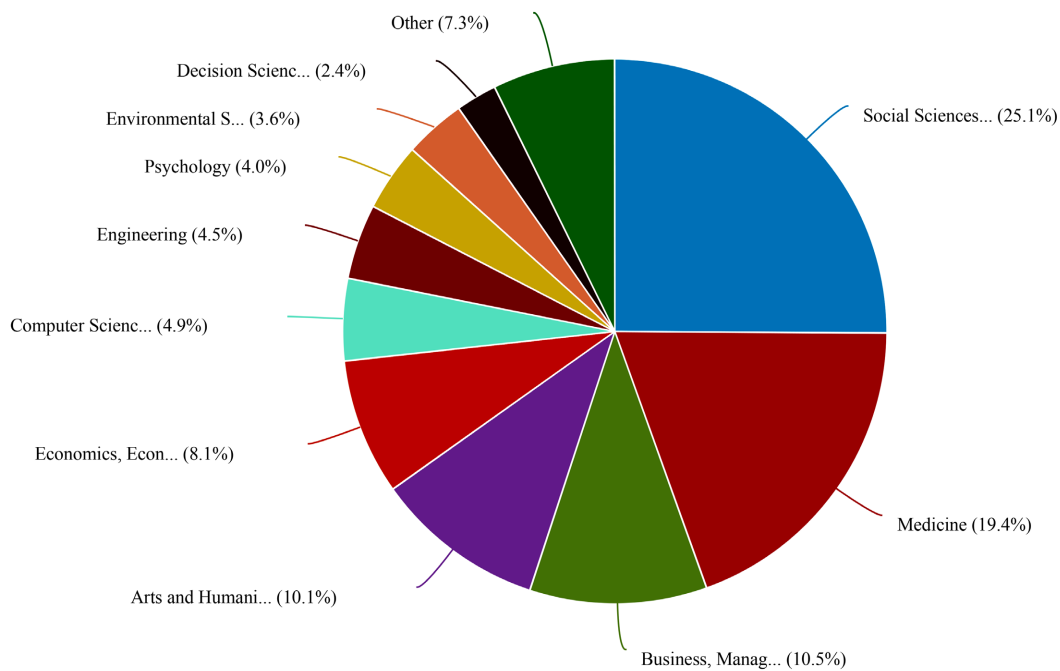


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Figure 2. Documents by country or territory.

## Documents by subject area

Scopus

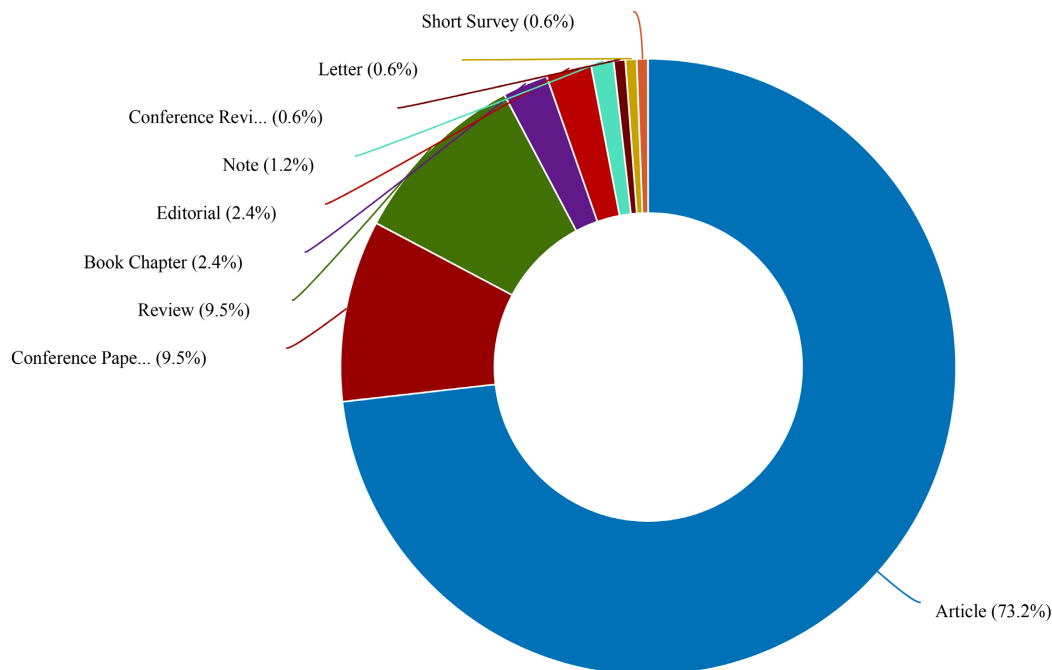


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Figure 3. Documents by subject area.

## Documents by type

Scopus



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**Figure 4.** Documents by type.

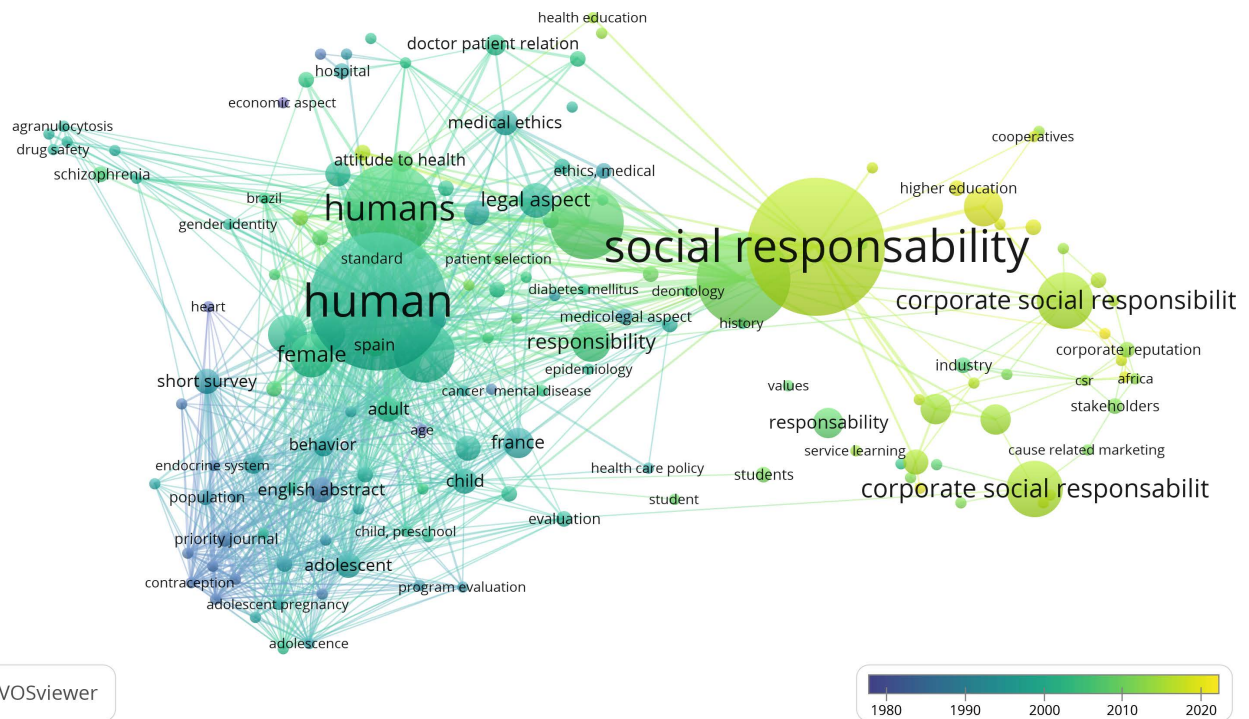
in the Materials and Methods section of this document, was exported from the Scopus database, in format (.ris) to be processed in the VOSviewer scientometric analysis software. Through this powerful computer tool, a term map was made with the indexing keywords of the detected contributions. This map of terms visualizes the main themes related to research in Social Responsibility. **Figure 5** shows the map of terms made with the indexing keywords of the scientific contributions detected. The term map covers the time period between the years 1980 and 2020. The hue of the colors indicates the displacement in time. The dimension of the spheres indicates the co-occurrence of the term and the lines establish the interconnection of the terms.

This map of terms obtained from the process of mining texts on the information detected under the search criteria declared in the Materials and methods section of this document, shows the evolution of research related to the Social Responsibility theme.

### 3.2. Discussion of the Main Research Trends in the Social Responsibility Theme, through the Most Cited Contributions

The contribution of the authors (Oliva & De Oliveira, 2008) highlights that: World population has experienced a fast urbanization process in almost every country, producing disastrous consequences for people, for example housing conditions. People also started to worry more about environmental and social





**Figure 5.** Map of terms by keywords.

issues. This social conscience has reflected in trends that have foster programs, projects and actions in different productive segments in many countries. Civil construction, historically out of these issues, has recently slightly tilted towards this new trend. This paper wants to map some of these social responsibility actions done in civil construction in Brazil aiming to lift a new attitude, training to create a link between reality and precarious housing conditions in most of the population. The methodology applied was a national bibliographical research and technical visits in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil. The conclusions were that although the civil construction sector constitutes a strong, uneven force and powerful industry; its social responsibility related to housing is nearly nonexistent and far from the population’s immediate demands.

The authors’ manuscript (Velosa et al., 2010) highlights that: science can be thought as the knowledge generator for the benefit of human kind. As knowledge is to be applied by humans, provisions must be taken for its correct application and implementation. Science, as knowledge generator, has the capacity to establish how to apply that knowledge and, to determine how the people who implement it, must proceed. Then, science has the ability to determine how to prepare the professionals who will apply and implement that knowledge. Human well-being is the Social Responsibility of Science and a key strategy to attain it, is to establish how to educate the professionals.

The research of (Fernández et al., 2015) states that: we analyze whether the adoption of voluntary disclosures practices on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) by several communicational channels has influence over financial performance and corporate reputation. Once we identify four CSR dimensions (so-

cial, ethical, environmental, partners) using a sample of 55 Chilean traded firms for the period 2007-2012. Our results show that the adoption of the four CSR dimension at the same time, and the social and ethical dimension improves financial performance, while a strength relationship with partners improves Corporate Reputation. Thus, we provide new evidence for an emerging market economy about the importance of CSR strategies adoption.

The paper by (V́ctor, 2020) considers that: training for the performance of professions in contemporary societies and with a view to the future involves significant challenges. In that sense, this article aims to determine the value and scope of educational innovations in the training of professionals derived from the application of criteria and guidelines on sustainability contained in the Programs of the United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture, studying the concept of training for sustainability, as a space located between the exercise of social responsibility and the implementation of a culture of integrity. A qualitative hermeneutic-documentary method is applied, through the analysis of content on sustainability, social responsibility and academic integrity. Among the results, it is found that the training proposals contained in these programs lead to overcoming the limitations of the profession as survival management, supported by a passive vision and without a future project, and building the possibilities of an administration as direction and management of the life. It is concluded that professionals, trained in a reflective, critical and creative perspective, are called to be agents of a sustainable future through their responsible action in relation to society and the environment.

The scientific contribution of (Moura & Tortato, 2021) is summarized in: Social responsibility is very important in the acceptance of companies by their customers and in their success in the market. This means that for an organization to be well-determined and meet the expectations of its stakeholders, it needs to be accepted by its customers. Today, many people are looking for companies that not only aim for profit but also show interest in operating sustainably, by contributing to the environment and society. Thus, social responsibility can be understood as a form of competitive advantage between companies. To explain this issue, this article brings a literature review about what is being studied internationally on this subject and also checks through the websites of cooperatives of Paran, which social responsibility practices are adopted in the processes and routines of these organizations. Cooperatives were chosen as the object of this study because of their representativeness in the market, as today there are nearly three billion cooperatives around the world, which generate millions of jobs and serve over one billion members and customers.

The work of (De Lima et al., 2016) states that Hydroelectric Power Plants (HPP) are currently the main source of energy in Brazil. For its construction, it is necessary, theoretically, that entrepreneurs take responsibility for the implications of the project. The literature suggests that those who are affected are actors who should effectively participate in the decisions related to the implementation of

the projects, as they are the ones who suffer the most impacts. In this context, this study aims to identify and analyze the implications of the implementation of HPP Funil, from the perspective of affected people. Thus, interviews were conducted with the Funil's community and the data was processed using Content Analysis. The results reveal the existence of several implications, involving social, environmental, and economic aspects. Although entrepreneurs promote social actions to minimize the implications, mitigation measures are inadequate, as are occasional and only comply with the law, not considering important aspects about the impacts on the affected lives. We concluded that essential aspects of CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) are put aside in the relationship with affected people, exposing them to a vulnerable position during a power plant implementation process. This work contributes to point out that business practices are far from the ethical and socially responsible discourse by the companies, which often relegate the interests and rights of the weakest stakeholders.

The author's contribution (Castellanos, 2019) explains that: this paper analyzes the application of social responsibility in the daily management of public Administrations, its inclusion in the guiding principles that govern its activity and in the responsible actions that Administrations must carry out in the different sectors of life in which they affect, such as education, research, culture, sport, the consumption of socially responsible products and services, including policies, employment, environmental protection and development cooperation. Particularly, in the Region of Valencia, Law 18/2018, of July 13, has been enacted for the promotion of social responsibility, which aims to regulate not only these issues, but also, the promotion of social responsibility in companies by granting certain incentives and recognitions.

#### **4. Conclusion**

This scientific contribution is focused on showing a bibliometric study of research related to the term Social Responsibility from different themes, only considering scientific contributions socialized in the Scopus database. 26.31% of the scientific contributions detected are of the Open Access type. Despite the irregularities in the quantitative evolution of published research, there has been a growth trend in the number of publications. The nations that exhibit the most results on this subject, through the contributions contained in the aforementioned database, are France, Spain, and Brazil. The scientific contributions detected are divided into the main subject areas: Social Sciences 76 publications, Medicine, 51 publications, Arts and Humanities 30 publications, Business, Management and Accounting 26 publications, Economy and Finance 21 publications, Computer Science 14 publications, Sciences of the environment 13 publications, Engineering 12 publications, Psychology 10 publications. Of the 190 documents detected in the Scopus database, 141 of them are of the scientific article type, 17 are of the Reference paper type, 17 are of the Review type, 6 are of the Book Chapters type, 4 are of the Editorial type, 2 are of the Note type, 1 Conference review type, 1

Letter type, and finally 1 Short survey type document.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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