University social responsibility: the present and future trends based on bibliometric analysis

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this study is to review university social responsibility (USR) using a well-known quantitative approach of bibliometric analysis. Compared to corporate social responsibility (CSR), USR is in its infancy stage, requiring further exploration of its meaning and impact toward higher education institutions (HEIs).

Design/methodology/approach – A total of 306 publications and 9,530 cited references were retrieved from the Web of Science database. Bibliographic coupling analysis was applied to uncover present themes, while co-word analysis was used to predict future trends.

Findings – Findings suggested that themes are centralized toward the impact of USR on HEIs. USR is important for HEIs to attain excellence in today's challenging business environment.

Research limitations/implications – USR could develop HEIs into world-renowned institutions by establishing a good reputation and engaging with the broader community, locally and internationally. USR is regarded as HEIs' new value proposition in marketing its brand within the competitive environment in higher education.

Originality/value – This study is the first that reviews USR by extracting the knowledge structure and providing visualization on the implicit themes of the subject interest.

Keywords University social responsibility, Corporate social responsibility, Higher education institutions, Bibliometric analysis, Web of Science

Paper type Literature review

1. Introduction

The role of higher education institutions (HEIs) in recent times has diversified, extending the traditional assumption of knowledge production and dissemination (Ali *et al.*, 2021). HEIs serve as institutions that act as national gateways for sharing and disseminating knowledge to the community (Fauzi *et al.*, 2019). HEIs are influential in shaping society through values and ideas. HEIs are expected to expand into other disciplines, particularly portraying their contribution to the community. This responsibility toward the community has led to the concept of "university social responsibility" (USR). The USR concept has grown rapidly for the past 10 years (Chen and Vanclay, 2021; Meseguer-Sánchez *et al.*, 2020). The expected social responsibility is that HEIs, as social organizations and social knowledge centers, should contribute to people's quality of life as a stimulator for social improvement (Baptiste *et al.*, 2022).

The competitive and vibrant market environment has created a corporate social responsibility (CSR) concept in business organizations. USR is derived from the CSR concept that assumes organizational responsibilities beyond the legal and economic business (Latif *et al.*, 2022). Despite authors are defining CSR within HEIs (Rahman *et al.*, 2019; Galvão *et al.*, 2019; Binsawad, 2020), the terminology of USR has attracted the attention of many scholars