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REVIEW PAPER

A View on Research Landscape of Export Performance: A Bibliometric Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Export performance plays a vital role in determining the growth of an economy as it empower the countries to take the benefits from outside world. The study attempts to summarise the research on export performance published from 1992 to 2023. The study presents a view based on 854 documents extracted from Scopus database. Thereafter relevant studies were bibliometrically analysed using Biblioshiny software in R studio, that help us to know the extent of studies done and identify the areas of future research. The analysis has helped us in unveiling the trend of publications on export performance, identifying most prolific authors, publication sources, affiliations and countries. In addition, keywords co-occurrence map and information about most cited research documents, add to refinement of the research outcome of export performance. Research on export performance has shown increasing trend. The most productive author and journal are not most cited. The most cited document is "Innovative capability and export performance of Chinese firms" by Guan J.; Ma N. (2003) with 464 citations published in Technovation. UK and USA are two top most productive and cited countries.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Research on export performance is growing year by year making it pressing issue among international business researchers.
- Total 854 research papers have been published during the period concerned.
- Leeds University Business School and Loughborough University, England are producing maximum publications.
- UK is the top producing and top cited country.
- India is in the list of top 10 most productive countries.

Keywords: Export, export performance, international business, export competitiveness, international trade, PRISMA

Export performance refers to the ability of a firm or nation to sell its domestically produced goods and services into international markets. It is an output-based indicator that analyses a nation's export growth, examines its export concentration and its footprint on the international market (Aayog, 2023). It reflects a firm-specific behaviour in capitalising or utilising its capabilities and resources in an international market at a given point of time (Beleska-Spasova, 2014).

While exploring critical internal enablers to SMEs export performance (Elsharnouby *et al.* 2024) identify five major enablers as networking skills, effective supply chain management, product diversifications, digitalisation and market intelligence capabilities. Global trade also act as a driving force for economic

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growth by providing excess to larger markets and only most productive firms enter the export market (Bandick *et al.* 2024).

Some progress has been achieved by the research on export performance, but still empirical studies reveal diversity in their findings which are conflicting. The reason behind this could be lack of synthetic theoretical base and different research methodologies (Chen *et al.* 2016).

The countries need innovation-led growth by doing investment in the technology sector. Export sophistication leads to increase in competitiveness and economic growth (Bancu), 2015). Besides export sophistication, there are number of internal factors like management strategies, export marketing and business strategies that act as potential mediators. The psychological distance has a positive impact on export (Safari & Saleh, 2020).

In literature, it has been found that disparities in export performance are enhancing due to rise in the competition, which increase due to globalisation and liberalisation. Both traditional as well as new measures of export performance suggest that diversification in export leads to economic growth and development. The ability of countries to upgrade and diversify into more important or complex products is crucial for economic development (Gaglio, 2017). There exists a significant correlation between adoption of sustainable management strategies that address both social as well environmental dimensions and export performance. Therefore companies that aim to enhance their export performance should focus on adopting sustainable management strategies (Palma *et al.* 2018).

Beside getting affected by internal factors, management strategies, innovation, diversification etc., the export performance of any economy is affected by FDI (Babatunde, 2017). FDI may help in increasing export of the host countries directly or indirectly. As presence of MNCs help the host county's local companies in improving the competitiveness through technology transfer, entrepreneurial and managerial skills and know-how and thereby help them in increasing their efficiency. (Okechukwu *et al.* 2018) applying ARDL model and using time series data for Nigeria, discovered a positive relationship between FDI and export.

In practice the managers and academician have different views in context to export performance measurement. For better outcomes, the academicians should align with manager's knowledge as there is no universal model for export performance (Carneiro *et al.* 2016).

Methodology and Data

This paper focuses on discovering the answers to the following questions:

1. **Q 1.** What is the annual trend of publication from 1992 to 2023?
2. **Q 2.** Which journal published the most articles on export performance during the years of 1992 to 2023?
3. **Q 3.** Who are the most prolific authors, most productive nations and institutions?
4. **Q 4.** Which research paper has the maximum number of citations?

To answer the above-mentioned questions, we examined the title and abstracts. The study looked at the research articles on export performance that were included in Scopus- indexed journals as considering its high editorial requirements, multidisciplinary nature and reputation (Rai *et al.* 2024), although Google Scholar can also offer a large amount of information but the data that is provided by it is less easily processed, hence making Scopus a more suitable choice for bibliometric analysis (Lal *et al.* 2023). In addition, the number of journals, book reviews, and conference proceedings are greater in Scopus compared to any other database (Calheiros-Lobo *et al.* 2023; Capobianco-Uriarte *et al.* 2019) hence can be considered as a better database for scientific studies. PRISMA technique was used to get data for the bibliometric analysis.

The term "export performance" has been used to obtain data from the Scopus database. We have enclosed the term export performance as a result of which 2732 articles were found. In the first phase, the articles were filtered on the basis of "article subject area, type, keywords" and as a result of which 1028 articles were found. In the second phase, articles were further screened on the basis of Article title, DOI, Author's keyword, as a result 174 articles were excluded and we have done bibliometric analysis based on 854 articles.

Though articles have been extracted only from Scopus database from 1992 to 2023, the literature is thoroughly examined. For bibliometric analysis, biblioshiny has been used which helps us to understand the distribution of research publication over time.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Most Relevant Sources

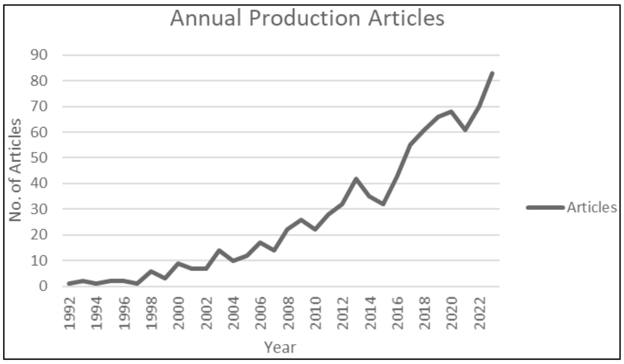
Fig. 1 shows the most relevant sources, that help researchers to decide about the sources that should be refereed for literature review. All 854 articles were published in 329 journals. The maximum research articles (41) were published in International Business Review, it is a premium international journal in international business discipline. It is the official journal of the European International Business Academy and supports open access, followed by International Marketing Review with 35 articles, which is further followed by Journal of Business Research where 23 articles were published. Almost similar numbers of articles have been published by Journal of International Marketing. All other sources presented in figure 1 have 10 or more publications.

***Source:** Authors' Elaboration.*

Fig. 1: Most Relevant Sources

Year- Wise Publications

Fig. 2 shows the annual production of articles on the topic of export performance. From 1992 to 2023, a total 854 articles were published. The line graph clearly shows that over a period of time the number of articles published have increased. During a few initial years, from 1992 to 1999, the number of articles produced were quite low, but after 1999, the number has increased substantially. This shows that this topic of export performance is continuously gaining researchers attention. In 2022, 70 articles were published and in 2023 this number further increased to 83.



***Source:** Authors' Elaboration.*

Fig. 2: Annual Production of Articles

Country wise annual production

Table 1 shows the top ten countries with their publications and citations for a period 1992 to 2023. The UK is the top most productive country with 219 publications, followed by the USA with 178 research publications, followed by China, Spain, Italy with 118,115,85 publications respectively. This is quite interesting to know that India is amongst the top ten countries in terms of production of research publications.

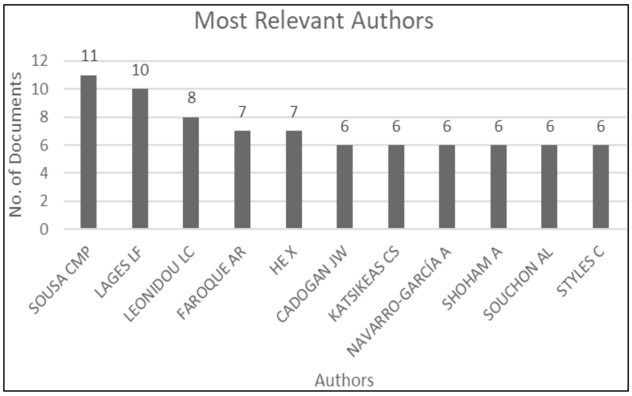
Table 1: Top 10 Countries with their Research Publications and Citations

Rank	Country	No. of research papers publish	No. of citations
1	UK	219	2819
2	USA	178	2679
3	China	118	1051
4	Spain	115	653
5	Italy	85	1391
6	Portugal	75	1364
7	Malaysia	74	266
8	India	70	151
9	Australia	68	839
10	France	65	199

***Source:** Authors' Elaboration.*

Most Relevant Authors

There are a total 1764 Authors so far, who have worked on the export performance. The Most popular researches having 6 or more articles on "export performance" have been presented in Fig. 3 after a rigorous analysis based on Scopus indexed journals. The results show that 11 articles were published by Sousa CMP. He is currently a Professor of Marketing and Business Strategy, Faculty of Business Administration and Social Sciences at Molde University College. The next most convincing researcher is Lages LF with 10 publications to his credit on export performance. The researcher is currently a Professor at Nova school of Business and Economics. The third most prolific researcher with 8 publications on export performance is Leonidou LC, Professor of Marketing at University of Cyprus, followed by Faroque AR, Associate Professor of International Business, University of Vaasa and He X, Professor at School of Chemistry and Molecular Engineering, East China Normal University, with 7 publications to their credit. All the other authors represented in figure 3 have 6 publications to their credit.

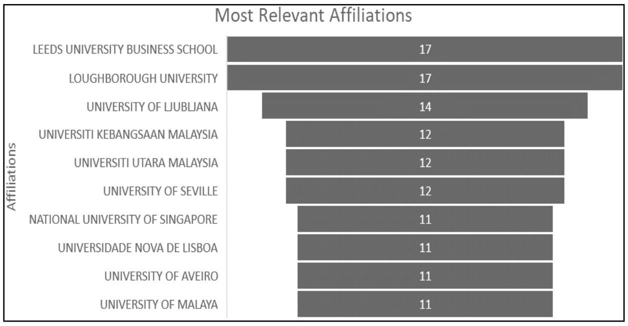


Source: *Authors' Elaboration.*

Fig. 3: Most Relevant Authors

Most Relevant Affiliation

The most relevant affiliation in terms of institutions/ universities with highest publications have been presented in figure 4. The institutions that have published more than 10 articles have been considered as the most relevant affiliation. Leeds University Business School, England and Loughborough University, England are the most productive institutions, with 17 publications. Followed by University of Liubliana with 14 research articles, which is followed by Universiti Kebangsaan, Malaysia; Universiti Utara, Malaysia; and University of Seville, Spain with 12 publications. All the other universities represented in figure 4 have 11 publications.

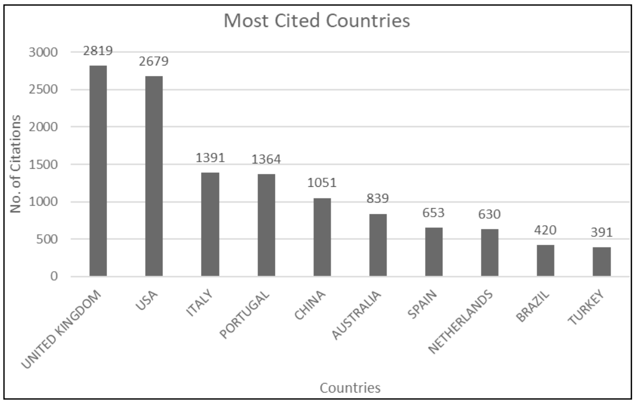


Source: *Authors' Elaboration.*

Fig. 4: Most Relevant Affiliations

Most Cited Countries

The study also talked about the most cited countries based on relationships with researchers. Fig. 5 shows the most cited countries along with their citation. With 2819 citations, the UK is the top most cited country, followed by the USA with 2679 citation score. The third most cited nation is Italy which is cited 1391 times, followed by Portugal with 1364 citation score. China is the fifth most cited country which is cited 1051 times, followed by Australia with 839 citation score. Spain, Netherlands, Brazil and Turkey have 653, 630, 420, and 391 citation scores respectively. India is at 26th position in terms of its citation.

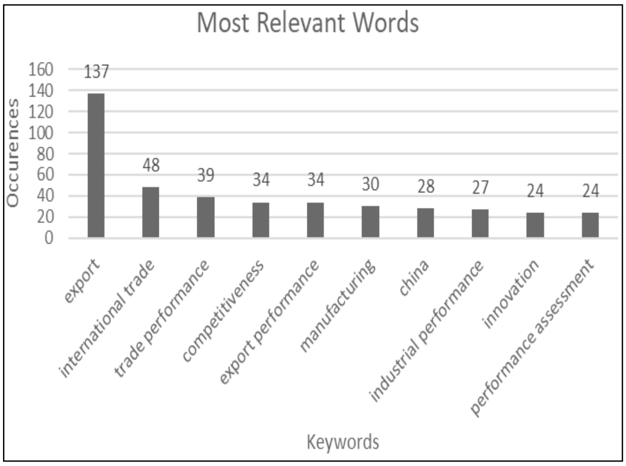


Source: *Authors' Elaboration.*

Fig. 5: Most Cited Countries

Keyword Occurrence Analysis

A total of 735 keywords have been used in various publications used in this analysis. The keywords analysis helps the researcher in the study of the subject. Fig. 6 shows the keywords that appeared more than twenty times in our data set. The term "export" occurred 137 times. The frequency of the term "international trade" is 48 which is almost one third of the frequency of the term "export".

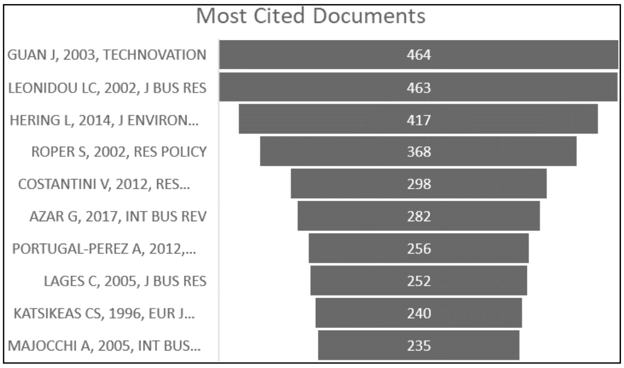


Source: *Authors' Elaboration.*

Fig. 6: Most Relevant Keywords (Appeared more than twenty times in data set)

Most Cited Documents

Fig. 7 shows top most cited research papers on export performance. Gaun J & Ma N. (2003) has published their paper on "Innovation capability and export performance of Chinese firms", in Technovation journal which has 464 citations. The next most cited work with 463 citation is by Leonidou L.C. *et al.* (2002), published in Journal of Business Research on "Marketing strategy of determinants of export performance: A meta -analysis". "Environment policy and exports: Evidence from Chinese cities" by Hering L. & Poncet S. (2014), is the third most cited work with 417 citations. Roper S. & Love J.H. (2002) and Costantini V. & Mazzanti M. (2012) are the next two most cited papers on the title "Innovation and export performance: Evidence from the UK and German manufacturing plants" and "On the green and innovative side of trade competitiveness? The impact of environmental policies and innovation on EU exports" with 368 and 298 citations respectively published in Research Policy. The next top five documents with their authors' name, publication year, source and total citation are given in Fig. 7. The citations of all these research papers are more than 200.



Source: *Authors' Elaboration.*

Fig. 7: Most Cited Documents

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

It is very much clear from the above analysis that research on export performance has increased over a period of time. There has been an apparent growth and development in the popularity of the topic. There are 1757 authors, who have worked in the area of export performance. Over a period of time, the graph of articles published on this topic has increased tremendously from one research article to eighty-three research articles in 1992 to 2023. Though there are a total 328 journals in which articles have been published by various authors, International Business Review and International Marketing Review are the top two journals. Out of 1757 authors, Sousa CMP and Lages LF have published maximum articles. In terms of affiliation Leeds University Business School and Loughborough University are top most institutions with seventeen research articles to their credit. From table 1, that show the total production and total citations received by different countries, it is clear that few countries like UK, USA, China, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Australia are amongst top ten producers as well as top ten cited countries. On the other hand, India, Malaysia and France are amongst top ten producers but not in the top ten cited countries. India is lagging behind and it is on 26th rank in terms of its citations.

Many countries like Malaysia, France and India, though doing good in terms of numbers of publications on the concerned topic, are not able to fetch as many citations. So, researchers working in these countries should work upon enhancing the quality of their research by doing rigorous research and put their research in open access.

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