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REVIEW ARTICLE

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Unraveling contemporary trends on United Nations sustainable development goals: A new global bibliometric and literature review analysis

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Abstract

This review presents a bibliometric performance and systematic literature review of research publications related to the 17 United Nations (UN) sustainable development goals (SDGs) in business studies. The study employs the 2020 revised Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework to systematically evaluate and identify 583 articles sourced from esteemed academic databases, including Scopus and Web of Science, as well as seven reputable publishers and digital libraries, for subsequent analysis and synthesis. The identified 583 papers on SDGs, authored by 1610 scholars and published in 207 peer-reviewed sources, are analyzed using VOSviewer and R Studio software. The analysis reveals the existence of nine independent clusters of SDGs business research: artificial intelligence and digitalization (red cluster), business collaboration (green cluster), corporate sustainability (blue cluster), circular economy and corporate social responsibility (yellow cluster), entrepreneurship and innovation (purple cluster), education for developing countries (aqua-cluster), climate change and tourism (orange-cluster), Africa perspectives (brown cluster), and sustainable investment (black cluster). This review highlights the foundation of the business studies debate linked to the advancement of the SDGs after the adoption by the United Nations. Key insights, future research directions and conclusion including implications are discussed.

KEYWORDS
business research, PRISMA, sustainability, systematic review, UN sustainable development goals (SDGs)

1 | INTRODUCTION

The advancement of the 17 United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is gaining increasing attention across every nation due to its critical importance toward humanity and the planet (Guang-Wen et al., 2023; Lauwo et al., 2022). There is a global partnership between all countries and stakeholders to achieve the SDGs before 2030 (Agrawal et al., 2022; Song & Jang, 2023). The 17 SDGs established in 2015 by 193 UN member states after the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) intended to combat hunger, poverty, disease, environmental degradation, illiteracy, and discrimination against women (Beloskar et al., 2024; Halisçelik & Soytas, 2019). Economic disparity and research have been identified as the main reasons for the non-achievement of the MDGs by most countries before the end of 2015 (Lauwo et al., 2022). Hence, global partners and stakeholders anticipate that intensive business research on SDGs could be a panacea for countries to achieve them before 2030 (Bebbington & Unerman, 2020). In view of this, business scholars are calling for more innovative research strategies that can advance the five critical areas of importance of the SDGs (people, planet,

prosperity, peace, and partnership). Accordingly, Mio et al. (2020) argue that business systematic literature review (SLR) research provides reliable information to help countries strategize to accomplish the SDGs.

The extant literature has already recognized SDG business review papers (Gyimah et al., 2023). However, bibliometric performance and SLR analysis explicitly using extant literature on business, management, or accounting, and SDGs between 2015 to date is sparse with segregated outcomes. For instance, Pizzi et al. (2020) analyzed 266 papers from the Scopus database that focused on keywords, titles, and abstracts containing either "sustainable development goal*" or "sdg*." The authors' approach, therefore, neglects other important papers focusing on other SDGs' names such as the global agenda, sustainable development agenda, 2030 agenda, or UN global goals. Additionally, Pizzi et al.'s (2020) review includes papers from 2012 to 2014 published before the SDGs' official adoption in 2015. In a post SDG adoption review, Mio et al. (2020) used 101 papers between 2015 and 2020. However, their study was limited to papers focusing on the strategic role of businesses. Other recent review studies are also limited in several aspects. For instance, Voola et al. (2022) review 58 B2B marketing scholarships and SDGs, and Aravindaraj & Chinna (2022) review 63 papers related to Industry 4.0, warehouse management, and SDGs including papers that date back to 1978 and 2008. Agrawal et al. (2022) focus only on supply chain practices and business strategies, neglecting other business themes. Overall, an all-inclusive business review study on SDGs post-adoption by UN member states seems missing. This suggests that the generality of outcomes by extant reviews within the SDGs context may be challenging. Our paper, therefore, attempts to fill this gap by adopting bibliometric analysis and SLR of SDGs publications from multidisciplinary business, management, or accounting fields between 2015 and 2023. In addressing its research objectives (RO), this study:

RO1 Identifies the outstanding authors, countries, journals, papers, most linked references, and bibliographic coupling of business, management, or accounting studies contributing to the SDGs;

RO2 Uncovers independent research clusters or themes to deepen the understanding and knowledge within the academic business, management, and accounting community about the SDGs after the post-adoption; and

RO3 Examines research taxonomies such as jurisdictions, organizations, geographical settings, SDGs studies, methodologies, and frameworks or models advancing the SDGs for further research directions.

This current paper varies in scope from extant reviews in several ways. First, the paper relies on Scopus and Web of Science databases and includes other cross-validation data from seven recognized publishers and digital libraries of papers published after the post-adoption of the SDGs. Second, it includes articles with keywords, titles, and abstracts containing other terminologies that describe SDGs, such as global agenda, sustainable development agenda, 2030 agenda, or UN global goals. Third, the paper does not center solely on explicit literature streams or industry themes. Instead, it includes contemporary interdisciplinary business, management, or accounting fields advancing the 17 SDGs. Thus, the paper systematizes scientific knowledge generated from the business, management, or accounting studies advancing the 17 SDGs to provide relevant information on literature and methodological gaps that can be of interest to scholars and practitioners to advance new inquiry to advance the attainment of global goals before 2030. By analyzing 583 scholarly articles authored by 1610 researchers and published in 207 esteemed journals, this study showcases a novel approach to understanding the burgeoning scholarship on SDGs. It contributes to the extant literature by providing a critical synthesis of existing research, thereby informing academic discourse, professional practice, and policy formulation. The study pioneers a mixed-methods approach, integrating bibliometric and systematic literature review techniques using VOSviewer and R Studio software, yielding fresh insights into SDG research. The selection of a combined bibliometric and systematic literature review methodology is informed by the desire to identify and critically examine the primary debates and thematic that distinguish the SDG-related research agenda in business, management or accounting journals, with the aim of gaining a deeper insight into the intellectual currents and scholarly dialogs.

The paper follows the following structure: Section 2 provides the background or context of the SDGs. Section 3 provides methods including the research approach, data, screening and selection procedures, and sample analysis. Sections 4, 5, and 6 provide bibliometric analysis results, SLR analysis results, and discussions and future research agenda, respectively. Section 7 provides the concluding remarks, and Section 8 provides the limitations and suggestions for future studies.

2 | SDGs CONTEXT

The SDGs are a set of 17 goals (Figure 1) adopted by the United Nations in 2015 to address global challenges and promote sustainable development (Gyimah et al., 2023). The SDGs build upon the MDGs aimed to address poverty, hunger, and disease that were developed through a participatory process involving governments, civil society, and international organizations (Fukuda-Parr & Hulme, 2024). The SDGs are grounded in the concept of sustainable development, which aims to balance economic, social, and environmental dimensions (Chaparro-Banegas et al., 2024). Additionally, the SDGs are theoretically grounded in the capability approach and human rights, which together provide a comprehensive framework for addressing sustainable development's economic, social, and environmental dimensions (Fukuda-Parr & Hulme, 2024). Additionally, other theoretical frameworks like social justice, gender equality, and environmental justice also inform the SDGs, ensuring a comprehensive and nuanced approach to achieving sustainable development and leaving no one behind (Schlosberg, 2024).

Regarding the applied importance, the SDGs tackle a myriad of pressing global issues, including anthropogenic climate change, which

FIGURE 1 The 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) (Source: United Nations, 2023).

has profound implications for ecosystem resilience, human well-being, and economic viability; multidimensional poverty, encompassing extreme deprivation, food insecurity, and inadequate access to essential services; systemic inequality, characterized by disparities in income distribution, opportunities, and social safeguards within and across nations; and structural social injustice, perpetuating discrimination, marginalization, and exclusion of vulnerable demographics, such as women, children, indigenous populations, and individuals with disabilities, with the ultimate objective of fostering a more equitable, just, and sustainable global society (UNDP, 2020). In addition, the SDGs offer a unified paradigm for multi-stakeholder collaboration, facilitating concerted efforts among governments, corporations, and civil society organizations to collectively pursue shared objectives (United Nations, 2015). This collaborative framework enables diverse actors to coalesce around a common purpose, leveraging their respective strengths and resources to drive progress toward sustainable development (Mariani et al., 2022). Furthermore, the SDGs has the potential to usher in a future characterized by heightened equity, prosperity, and environmental sustainability, thereby ensuring a more resilient and thriving world for present and future generations (UNDP, 2020). By addressing the interlinked dimensions of sustainable development, the SDGs can help mitigate global challenges, improved human well-being, and a reduced ecological footprint (Sachs, 2019).

Due to the significant contributions of the SDGs, they have garnered significant attention and support from various stakeholders, particularly global business entities, including research in the fields of business, management, and accounting, which play a crucial role in cultivating high-impact studies and policies that drive progress toward the SDGs (Hörisch, 2021). Furthermore, business, management, and accounting bodies are indispensable collaborators in the pursuit of achieving the SDGs, as their expertise and resources are essential for translating the SDGs into actionable strategies and practices (Ordonez-Ponce et al., 2021). Thus, this paper systematizes SDG-related research in business, management, and accounting,

highlighting literature and methodological gaps to guide future inquiry and practice, and accelerate progress toward the 2030 global goals.

3 | METHODS

3.1 | Research approach

This study maps knowledge stimulated by scholarly business, management, and accounting authors using different research methodologies to advance the 17 SDGs. We do this by employing bibliometric, and SLR approaches using in-depth content and topics techniques (systematic qualitative review) and quantitative bibliometric tools. We follow the steps of 2020 updated Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) by Page et al. (2021) to describe the review methods (Figure 1).

We begin with a comprehensive literature search using two recognized databases as well as seven other recognized publishers and digital libraries. The two databases included in the search are Elsevier's Scopus and Thomson Reuters' Web of Science (WoS). Scopus and WoS are the most extensive literature sources covering diverse interdisciplinary scientific fields (Singh et al., 2021). Though most published business papers may be found either in Scopus or WoS, new and emerging journals with less than 5 years in existence but making vast contributions to the SDGs may be excluded from these databases. Thus, to ascertain all business-related literature perspectives on the SDGs, we expand our search to seven recognized publishers using the advanced search engine of these journal publishing companies and digital libraries from 2015 to 2022: Journal Storage (JSTOR), Springer Publishing Company, Taylor and Francis Company, Emerald Publishing Limited, Wiley Online Library, SAGE Publishing Company, and Inderscience Publishers.

3.2 | Data search

The scope and retrieval of all SDG literature focused on business, management, and accounting perspectives from 2015 to 2022. The study broadens the scope and retrieves all relevant SDG papers by searching similar phrases such as the "Global Agenda," "sustainable development agenda," "2030 Agenda", or UN Global goals that are the same as SDGs. The study, therefore, uses the following search Boolean string to generate the first set of data (or papers): "sustainable development goal*" OR "SDG*" OR "Global Agenda" OR "sustainable development agenda" OR "2030 Agenda" OR "UN Global goal*."

3.3 | Sample, inclusion, and exclusion criteria

Focusing on the literature of business, management, and accounting perspective, a total of 45,089 papers are retrieved from Scopus, WoS, and the other seven digital libraries or publishes (Scopus, $n = 22{,}054$, WoS, $n = 16{,}542$, JSTOR, $n = 550$, Springer, $n = 387$, Taylor and Francis, $n = 860$, Emerald, $n = 3265$, Wiley Online, $n = 597$, SAGE, $n = 416$, and Inderscience, $n = 418$), focusing on the papers published in English. Following the PRISMA framework (see Figure 2), the study first screened the entire retrieved documents ($n = 45{,}059$) and excluded papers ($n = 11{,}587$) that are abstracts, editorials, conferences, reviews, books, book series, book chapters, forthcoming articles, and papers in press, which reduces the papers to 33,502.

We identified and removed 31,115 duplicates explained by our inclusion of other search engines, leaving 2387 papers. We then screen the title, abstract, and keywords to remove an additional 1584 papers that are unrelated to the SDGs. To ensure essential substantive suitability, the authors read the remaining 803 papers to select final documents aligned with the study's objectives or research perspectives. Mio et al. (2020) use this inclusive approach to determine final papers. Hence, a usable sample of 583 papers is retained for the bibliometric analysis and SLR, the highest sample so far on SDGs review papers.

3.4 | Sample analysis

The data retrieved from the databases and digital libraries are entered in Microsoft Excel. The usable sample ($n = 583$) is converted to BibTex and CSV Excel for Biblioshiny in R and VOSviewer software, respectively. The Biblioshiny in R software and VOSviewer are used to report bibliometric descriptive and basic inferential statistics on the sample information, publication per year, country scientific production, top-cited journals or sources, and prolific authors. In addition, the R and VOSviewer report on the bibliometric analysis, such as the bibliographic coupling of articles, journals, authors, keywords, and themes on SDGs.

The study presents the results in tables and visualization (diagrams or figures) for discussion and interpretation. Regarding the SLR, the study performs manual content scrutiny by reading each paper consistent with the best practice of qualitative analysis of SLR (Pizzi et al., 2020). Following Pizzi et al. (2020), the papers are coded and grouped according to five taxonomies (Table 1).

4 | BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS RESULTS

4.1 | Sample statistics

The descriptive statistics in Table 2 show that the mean citation per paper is 11.94, suggesting that SDGs papers from accounting, management, or business perspectives have an approximate average of 12 citations for each paper published from 2015 to 2022. The sample also shows that authors of 1610 accounting, management, or business scholars have contributed to SDG advancement. Out of the 1610 scholars, only 5.6% ($n = 90$) are sole authors, and 94.4% ($n = 1520$) have published with other authors (multi-authored) advancing the SDGs. The study records a collaboration index of 3.11, indicating a

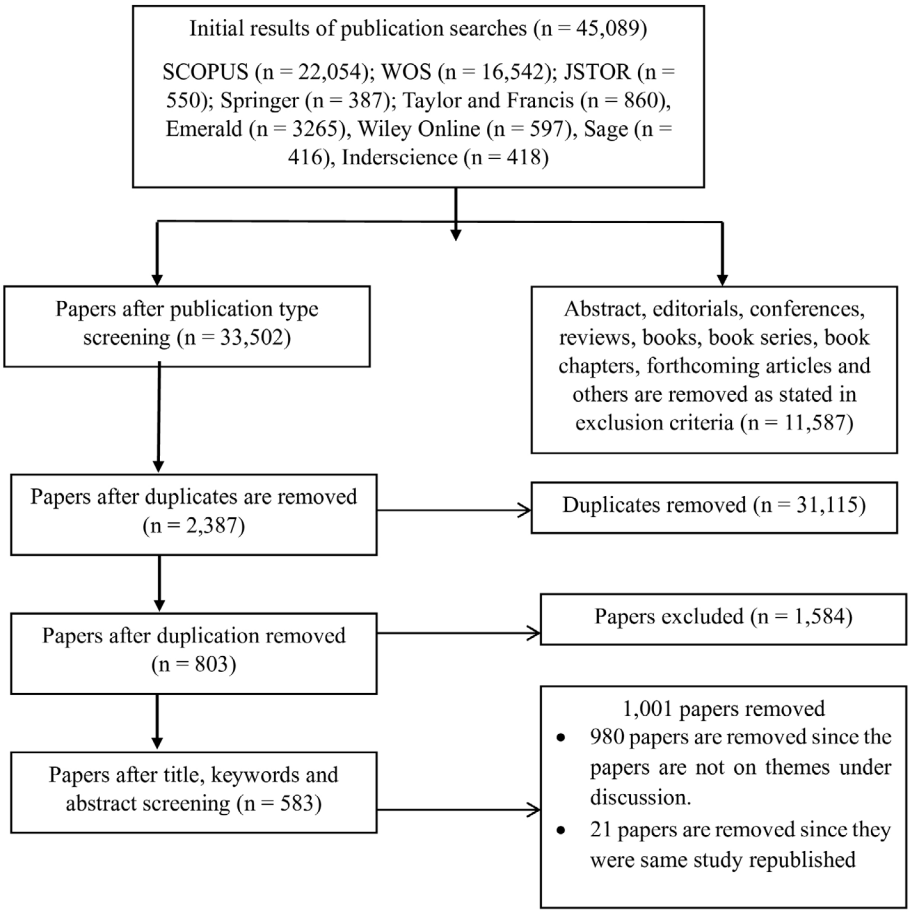


FIGURE 2 Screening and selection procedures.

high collaboration or team publications among scholars researching SDGs. Regarding paper per author, authors per paper, and co-authors per paper, the study records average scores of 0.362, 2.76, and 3.05, respectively.

In addition, the SDGs have witnessed an extraordinary 57.46% annual growth rate, signifying a burgeoning academic and industry interest in this domain. Based on the selection and inclusion criteria, the data shows that one paper was published when the UN member states enacted and signed the SDGs in 2015. Six papers were published in 2016, followed by 24 papers (2017), 43 papers (2018), 78 papers (2019), 114 papers (2020), 153 papers (2021), and 164 papers in 2022. The growing publication trend on SDGs is a positive sign, as scholars continue to contribute valuable knowledge, frameworks, and policy guidance to support the achievement of the SDGs before the 2030 deadline.

4.2 | Most prolific authors

Table 3 presents the most productive authors (top five) advancing the global SDGs. Leal Filho Walker is the most prolific business author on SDGs, with six papers receiving 282 total citations (mean: 47) and a high article fractionalization score (0.98). Leal Filho Walker's research focuses on sustainable development, climate change, and environmental management, contributing to SDGs 4, 8, 9, 11, 12, and 13 through policy, education, and practice-oriented studies (Leal Filho et al., 2019).

Sinha Avik follows as the second top author on SDGs, with seven papers, 276 total citations (mean: 39.4), and an article fractionalization score of 1.87, showcasing his substantial research impact. Sinha Avik's work has substantially contributed to SDG progress by proposing frameworks and policies for improved information technology, green financing, and environmental and social responsibility, contributing to SDGs 4, 8, 12, and 13 through studies on business sustainability and SDG integration (Sinha et al., 2020; 2021).

Regina Scheyvens is the third most productive SDG author, with five papers, 169 total citations (mean: 33.8), and an article fractionalization score of 2.17. Regina Scheyvens' research focuses on sustainable tourism, poverty reduction, and gender empowerment, contributing to SDGs 1, 5, 8, and 12 through empirical studies and policy-oriented analyses. (Scheyvens & Hughes, 2021).

Simone Pizzi is the fourth most productive SDG author, with five papers, 96 total citations (mean: 19.2), and an article fractionalization score of 1.58. Simone Pizzi's research focuses on sustainable development, innovation, and entrepreneurship (Pizzi et al., 2020), contributing to SDGs 8, 9, and 12 through studies on business models, innovation ecosystems, and sustainable tourism development.

TABLE 1 Classification system for analyzing sustainable development goal (SDG) articles.

Taxonomies	Specific taxonomies
1. Jurisdiction	a. Multinational/Global/Comparative
	i. General
	ii. Industry
	iii. Organizational
	b. Nationwide
	i. General
	ii. Organizational
	c. One institution/business/organization
2. Organizations	a. Private Sector—Multinational or Global Organization
	b. Private Sector—Small and Medium-Scale Businesses
	c. Cities
	d. Public Sector Organization
	e. Not-for-Profit Organizations (NPO)
	f. Training Institutions/Colleges
	g. General/Others
3. SDGs Literature Focus	a. Financial Reporting
	b. Non-Financial Reporting
	c. Policy-focused
	d. Business-focused Strategy
	e. Performance Dimension
	f. General/Others
4. Research Methods	a. Narrative/Interview/Case/Field Studies
	b. Content Analysis
	c. Questionnaire/Survey
	e. Normative/Commentary Studies
	f. Secondary/Archival Studies
	g. Theoretical: Literature/Empirical Reviews
5. Frameworks/ Models	a. Proposes No Model(s)
	b. Uses Existing Model(s)
	c. Proposes New Model(s)

Source: Adapted from Pizzi et al. (2020).

Andrea Venturelli, the fifth most productive SDG author, focuses on sustainable agriculture and food systems (Venturelli et al., 2021), contributing to SDGs 2, 8, 12, and 15 with 5 papers, 95 citations (mean: 19.0), and an article fractionalization score of 1.58.

4.3 | Most productive country

In Figure 3, the dark blue represents the most productive countries leading in SDG research, while the light blue indicates other countries contributing knowledge to the SDGs, and the dark color (gray/black) signifies countries with no or minimal research advancing the SDGs. The 10 topmost productive countries with the highest

TABLE 2 Sample Statistics ($N = 583$).

Description	Results
Citations per paper (mean)	11.94
Authors	1610
Author appearances	1781
Authors of single-authored papers	90
Authors of multi-authored papers	1520
Paper per author	0.362
Authors per paper	2.76
Co-authors per paper	3.05
Collaboration index	3.11
Annual growth rate (%)	57.46

number of papers on SDGs from the business perspective are the United States of America ($n = 144$), the United Kingdom ($n = 143$), Italy ($n = 109$), China ($n = 98$), Brazil ($n = 96$), Australia ($n = 90$), India ($n = 86$), Spain ($n = 84$), Germany ($n = 65$), and Malaysia ($n = 49$). Most of these researchers focus on sustainable development, climate change, energy, and environmental management, contributing to SDGs 7, 9, 11, 12, and 13 (Pizzi et al., 2020). Surprisingly, few studies from these countries are addressing the critical SDGs, including SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, which are urgent priorities in Africa. No African nation ranks among the top 10 countries driving progress toward the SDGs. This disparity underscores the urgent call by contemporary researchers for more studies focused on Africa, aiming to address the continent's critical development needs and bridge this knowledge gap (Gyimah et al., 2023).

Les Roches International School of Hotel Management in Switzerland; School of Business and Economics, Linnaeus University in Sweden; and Centre for Excellence in Sustainable Development, GOA Institute of Management in India are among the top bodies promoting SDGs. Les Roches, Linnaeus University, and GOA Institute of Management advance SDGs through sustainable education, research, and community engagement initiatives, integrating SDGs into curricula, promoting sustainable practices, conducting SDG-focused research, and fostering industry partnerships, preparing future leaders to address global sustainability challenges and achieve the 17 UN SDGs.

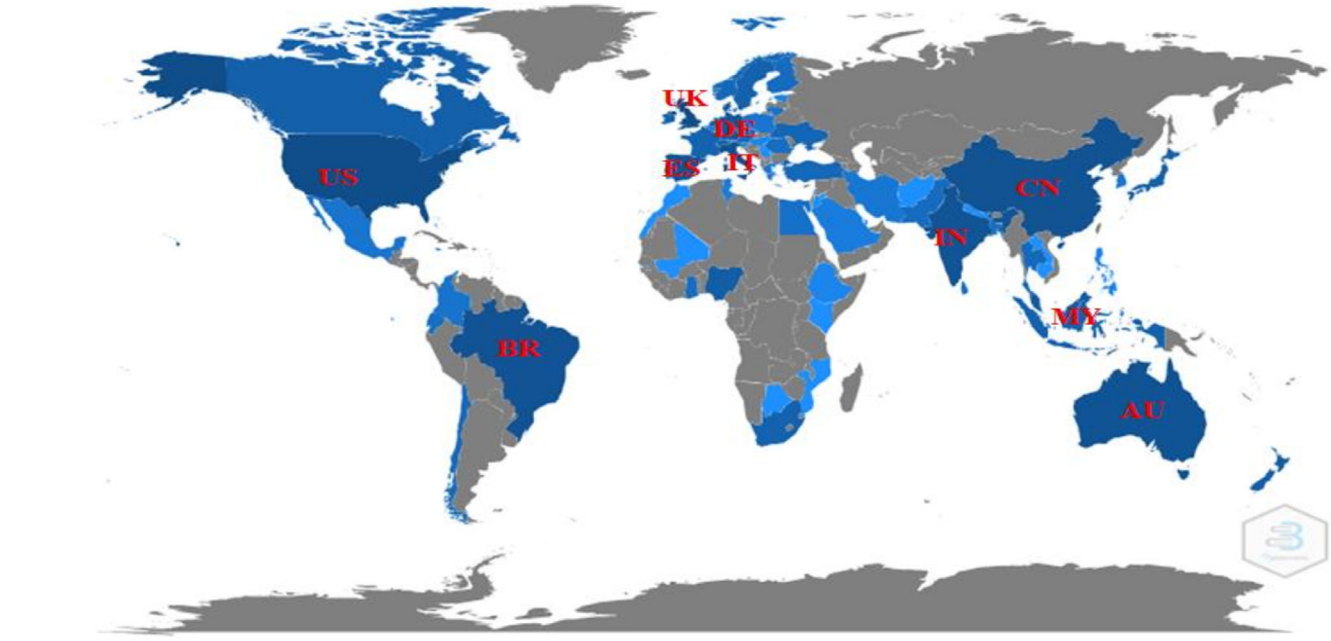
4.4 | Most productive journals

Table 4 presents the 20 most productive sources (journals) advancing the SDGs. The top five journals with the highest published papers are the Journal of Cleaner Production ($n = 108$), International Journal of Management Education ($n = 27$), Technological Forecasting and Social Change ($n = 23$), Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes ($n = 19$), and Business Strategy and Development ($n = 17$).

However, in terms of most-cited journals, the Journal of Cleaner Production leads with 2096 citations, followed by the International Journal of Management Education (citations = 551), Journal of

TABLE 3 Top five prolific cited authors.

Authors	Articles	Citations	Mean citations	Article fractionalized
Leal Filho Walter	7	292	41.7	0.99
Sinha Avik	7	276	39.4	1.87
Scheyvens Regina	5	169	33.8	2.17
Pizzi Simone	5	96	19.2	1.58
Venturelli Andrea	5	95	19.0	1.58



CODE	US	UK	IT	CN	BR	AU	IN	ES	DE	MY
Country	USA	UK	Italy	China	Brazil	Australia	India	Spain	Germany	Malaysia
Papers	144	143	109	98	96	90	86	84	65	49

FIGURE 3 Productive countries.

Sustainable Tourism (citations = 475), Technological Forecasting and Social Change (citations = 386), and Accounting, Auditing, and Accountability Journal (citations = 283). These descriptive statistics show that the most productive source advancing or discussing the SDGs is the Journal of Cleaner Production. In particular, the Journal of Cleaner Production is a global trans-disciplinary journal contributing to SDGs research focusing on sustainability and environmental assessments, sustainable cleaner production and consumption, education, governance, legislative policies, and corporate social responsibility practices.

Further analysis in Table 4 shows that most SDG business studies published papers in journals focusing on the sector's perspective. Twenty-five percent of papers are published in sector areas, 20% on regional studies, planning, and environment, and 10% in accounting journals. Other areas such as finance, marketing, ethics or corporate social responsibilities, social science, and organizational studies record 5% of published papers. In terms of the journal rankings, 45% of the top 20 papers are published in top-tier journals (A or A*, $n = 9$) based on the Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC), and 35% in above three stars (3*, 4, or 4* = 7) of the Chartered Association Business Schools journal ranking.

4.5 | Most cited papers

Table 5 presents the top five most cited papers of authors advancing the SDGs. The paper titled "*Three frames for innovation policy: R and D, systems of innovation and transformative change*" by Schot and Steinmueller (2018) is the most cited paper, with 351 citations. Schot and Steinmueller (2018) argue that the SDGs are unattainable unless public policies are reframed to focus on participation, experimentation, anticipation, and the directionality of individuals and industries. They also argue that researchers need to investigate innovative policies widely to transform and achieve the SDGs. Bebbington and Unerman's (2018) paper "*Achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: An enabling role for accounting*

TABLE 4 Top 20 productive journals.

Journals	Articles	Citations	Mean citations	ABS ranking	ABDC ranking	AREA CODE	Articles ranking	Citations ranking
Journal of Cleaner Production	108	2096	19.41	2	A	SEC	1	1
International Journal of Management Education	27	551	20.41	1	C	MGT	2	2
Journal of Sustainable Tourism	16	475	29.69	3	A*	SEC	6	3
Technological Forecasting and Social Change	23	386	16.78	3	A	INV	3	4
Accounting, Auditing, and Accountability Journal	5	283	56.6	3	A*	ACC	18	5
Business Strategy and the Environment	13	206	15.85	3	A	SOC	7	6
Journal of International Business Policy	6	161	26.83	–	–	RPE	10	7
Annals of Tourism Research	5	142	28.40	4	A*	SEC	16	8
Cities	5	142	28.40	2	–	RPE	18	9
Sustainable Development	11	137	23.51	–	C	RPE	8	10
Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management	6	136	22.67	1	C	RPE	10	11
Business Strategy and Development	17	102	6.00	–	–	RPE	5	12
Journal of Business Research	9	85	9.44	3	A	ETH	10	13
Futures	6	80	13.33	2	B	SOC	10	14
Corporate Governance (Bingley)	6	79	13.17	2	A	FIN	10	15
Sustainability Accounting, Management and Policy Journal	6	31	5.17	2	B	ACC	10	16
Organization and Environment	5	27	5.40	3	–	ORG	18	17
Marketing Intelligence and Planning	6	24	4.00	1	–	MKT	10	18
Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes	19	23	1.21	1	C	SEC	4	19
Tourism Management Perspective	6	21	3.50	2	A	SEC	10	20

Abbreviations: ACC, accounting; ETH, ethics–corporate social responsibility (CSR) management; FIN, finance; INV, innovation; MGT, management; MKT, marketing; ORG, organizational studies; RPE, regional Studies, Planning and Environment; SEC, sector; SOC, social science; STA, statistics.

TABLE 5 Top five most cited papers.

Title	Year	Citations
Three frames for innovation policy: RandD, systems of innovation and transformative change	2018	351
Achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: An enabling role for accounting research	2018	239
Constructing sustainable tourism development: The 2030 agenda and the managerial ecology of sustainable tourism	2019	168
Assessing research trends related to Sustainable Development Goals: local and global issues	2019	137
Comparative analysis of standardized indicators for Smart sustainable cities: What indicators and standards to use and when?	2019	134

research" follows with 239 citations. Their study explores the academic business community's significant roles in achieving the SDGs. Bebbington and Unerman (2018) use extant accounting studies on environmental, social, and sustainable development to propose new accounting frameworks for the attainment of the SDGs. The third most cited paper, with 169 citations, is "*Constructing sustainable tourism development: The 2030 agenda and the managerial ecology of sustainable tourism*" by Hall (2019). Hall (2019) adds that achieving the SDGs by 2030 extensively also depends on the tourism sector which is a valuable solution to the global predicaments. Hall (2019) also argues that tourism is the "sector of hope" and advocates the need to focus on a paradigm shift of instituting policies that commit humanity to achieving the SDGs. Salvia et al.'s (2019) paper titled "*Assessing research trends related to Sustainable Development Goals: local and global issues*" occupies the fourth position with 137 citations. Their study reveals that it is becoming challenging for African countries to fight against SDGs linked to reducing inequalities, alleviating poverty and hunger, and improving sanitation and access to water. However, the Europeans focus on SDGs related issues such as sustainable production, quality education, innovation and infrastructure. Finally, Huovila et al. (2019) paper titled "*Comparative analysis of standardized indicators for Smart sustainable cities: What indicators and standards to use and when*?" with 134 citations, is the fifth cited paper. Their contribution outlines the benchmarks for policymakers in selecting the appropriate indicators and standards for global goals.

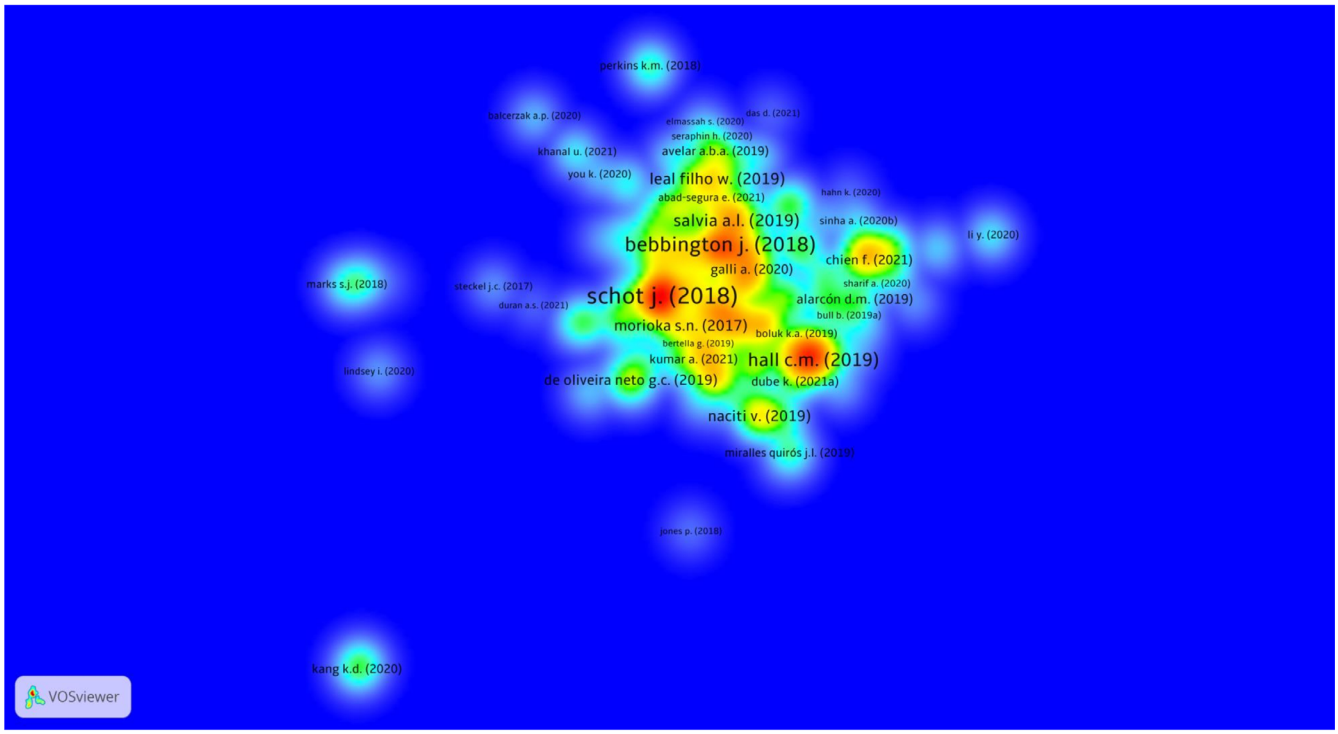


FIGURE 4 Bibliographic coupling of papers.

4.6 | Bibliographic coupling

Bibliographic coupling is a valuable technique used to determine the popularity and significance of existing studies. It shows the nexus among aggregations of authors or research works researched on the same topic (Appiah et al., 2022). Further, it examines whether two extant studies repeatedly cite the same studies or cite the same third study (Appiah et al., 2022). The following subsections discuss the outcome of the bibliographic coupling on papers, journals or sources, and scholarly researchers.

4.6.1 | Papers

The bibliographic coupling analysis (see Figure 4) on the units of published papers is to understand its theoretical foundations (Pizzi et al., 2020). Following Pizzi et al. (2020), the analysis limited the coupling of papers to minimum citations of two for the 583 sampled papers. The result shows that 61.6% ($n = 359$) are linked together, and the top five most strongly-linked papers are the studies of Pizzi et al. (2020), Mio et al. (2020), Modgil et al. (2020), and van Zanten and van Tulder (2021). However, in terms of the density connections, Figure 3 shows that Schot and Steinmueller's (2018) and Bebbington and Unerman's (2018) papers are extensively cited and considered in accounting, management, or business studies literature on SDGs due to their pioneering work on SDGs in business, interdisciplinary approaches, methodological rigor, and relevance to practice. Their expertise and timely contributions have made them foundational references, shaping research agendas and informing practice in SDG-related business studies.

4.6.2 | Journals/sources

Regarding the bibliographic coupling on the sources of journals, the study sets a minimum number of documents per source to two (Pizzi et al., 2020), and 69 journals out of 201 journals met the threshold.

Figure 5 indicates that the Journal of Cleaner Production, Business Strategy and Environment, Business Strategy and Development, Technological Forecasting and Social Change, and the International Journal of Management Education are among the top five indexed bibliographic coupling of journals advancing the SDGs. In addition, Figure 6 indicates that Sustainability Accounting, Management and Policy Journal, and Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Accounting are other central accounting journals advancing the achievement of the SDGs by 2030. These findings suggest that academic and professional accounting contributions are inevitable partners in research advocating the SDGs.

4.6.3 | Scholarly authors/researchers

Out of the 1620 scholarly authors, 7.7% ($n = 126$), 1.5% ($n = 24$), 0.56% ($n = 9$), and 0.31% ($n = 5$) authors have published 2, 3, 4, and 5 papers, respectively. The authors: Venturelli, Pizzi, Leal Filho, Sinha, and Rosati are the five scholars with the top bibliographic coupling

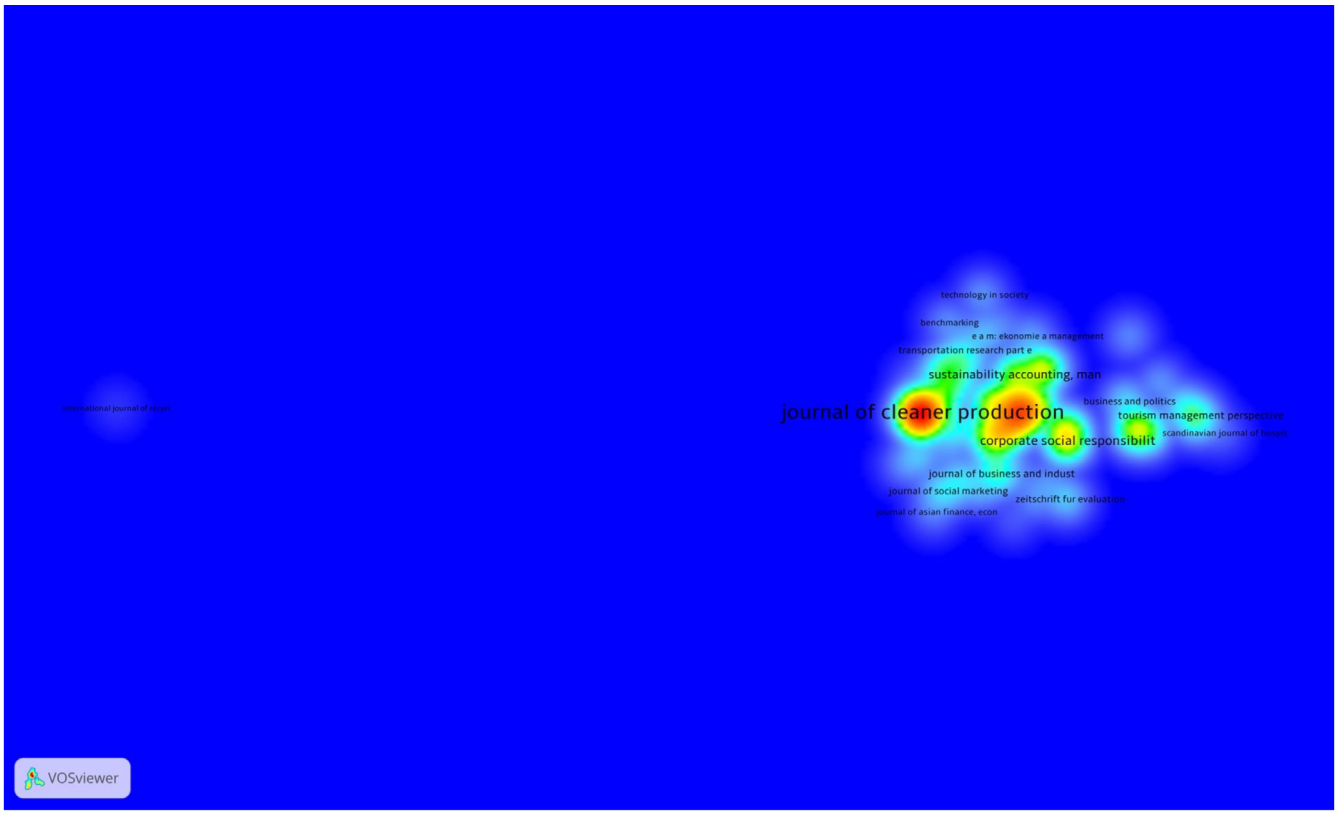


FIGURE 5 Bibliographic coupling of journals.

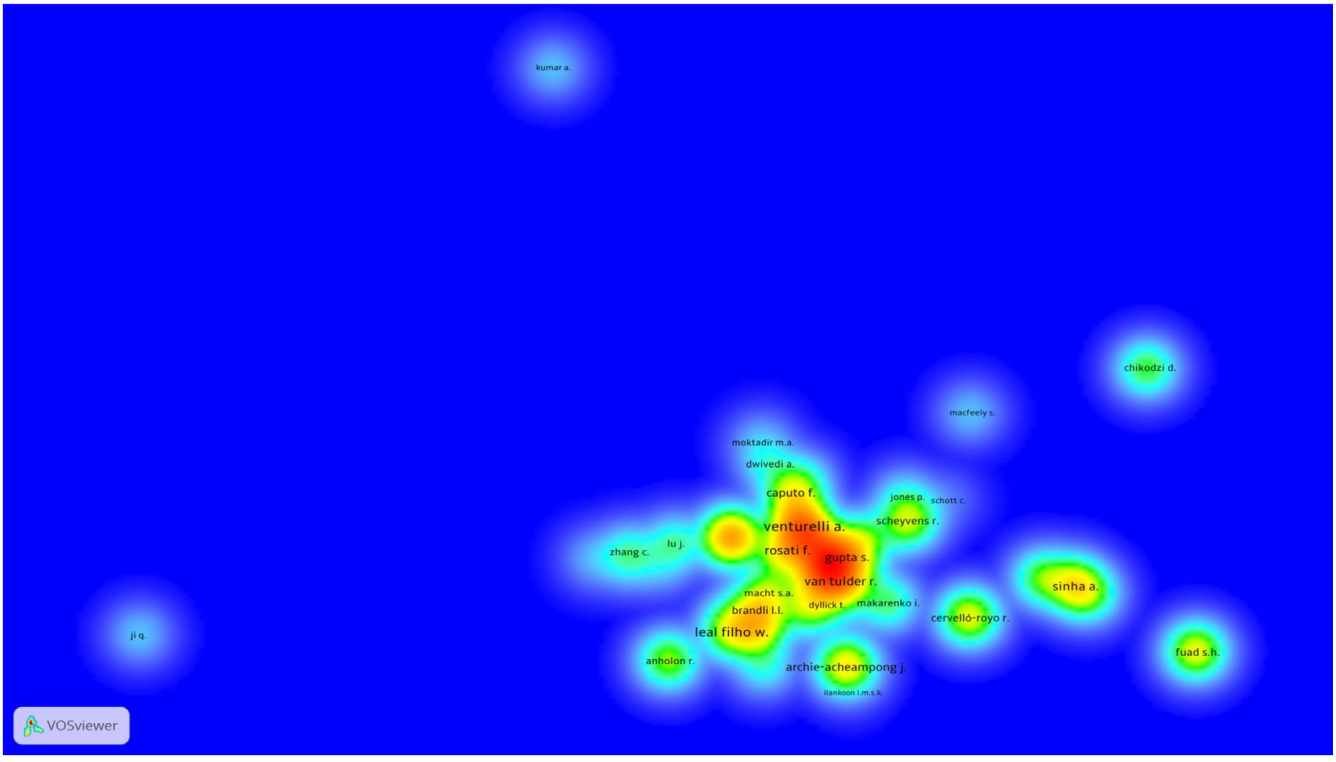


FIGURE 6 Bibliographic coupling of authors.

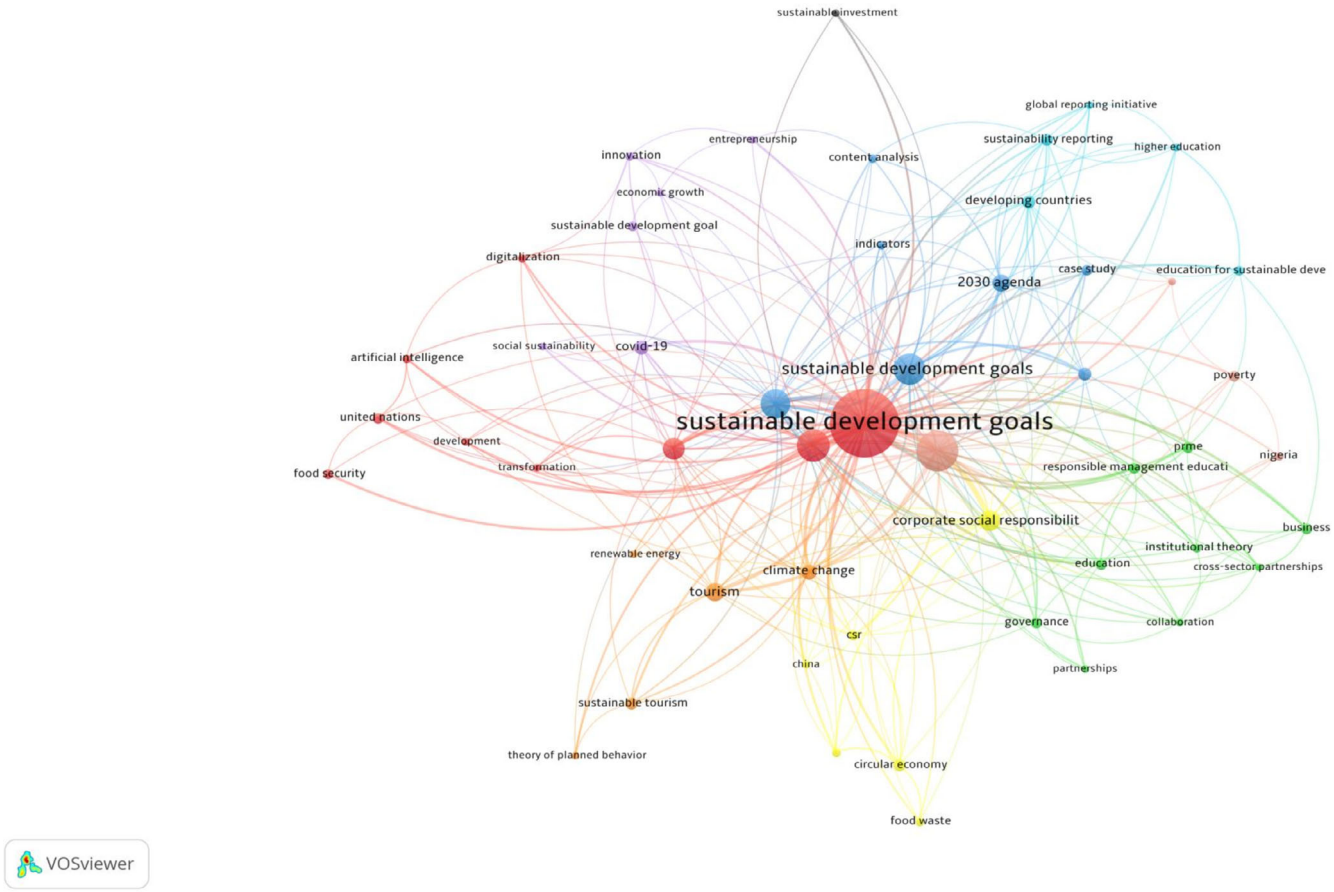


FIGURE 7 Co-occurrences of author's keywords.

indices. The crowded network of researchers in Figure 6 confirms a high collaboration or team publications among authors investigating the SDGs.

4.7 | Keywords analysis

The keywords analysis is to ascertain the vital words that designate the core SDGs research promulgated by scholarly authors from the accounting, business, or management perspective (Gyimah et al., 2023). Pizzi et al. (2020) argue that keyword analysis does not suffer intrinsic bias like bibliometric citation analysis, which is skewed toward older papers. This study investigates the author's keywords to discover the key clusters, trends, or topics advancing the SDGs. The study uses the VOSviewer to analyze the co-occurrence (analysis type) to analyze the unit of the author's keywords.

Using the full counting method and the minimum number of occurrences of five keywords, 52 out of 1908 keywords meet the threshold. Out of the 52 keywords, the most commonly related keywords are sustainable development goals, SDGs, sustainability, sustainable development, and corporate social responsibility. These keywords suggest that most authors in the accounting, business, or management perspective are putting much effort into contributing to knowledge geared toward the SDGs before the 2030 deadline. In Figure 7, the analysis of the keyword records nine clusters, namely:

1. Red cluster: Artificial intelligence and digitalization.
2. Green cluster: Business collaboration.
3. Blue cluster: Corporate sustainability
4. Yellow cluster: Circular economy and corporate social responsibility (CSR).
5. Purple cluster: Entrepreneurship and innovation.
6. Aqua cluster: Education for developing countries.
7. Orange cluster: Climate change and tourism.
8. Brown cluster: Africa perspectives.
9. Black cluster: Sustainable investment.

4.7.1 | Red cluster

The red cluster keywords comprise papers focusing on the roles of artificial intelligence, digitalization, and transformation toward achieving food security, sustainability, and sustainable development among the United Nations regions. For instance, Kulkov et al.'s (2024) study examines how artificial intelligence using robotics and machines drives

the sustainability or sustainable development of society, government, or business toward attaining the SDGs. Similarly, studies advancing the SDGs are connected to roles of digital automation and transformation (Lichtenthaler, 2021; Singh et al., 2023), information support systems (Modgil et al., 2020), big data, internet, and 5G communication systems (Walshe et al., 2020), and blockchain technology and food security (Mangla et al., 2021).

4.7.2 | Green cluster

The green cluster focuses on the role of business collaboration, such as cross-sector partnership or partnership, responsible management, governance, and education to accomplish the SDGs. Weybrecht's (2022) study explores how business education embraces the SDGs, and Hauser and Ryan (2021) investigate the nexus of education and partnership toward the SDGs. As stated earlier, accounting, management, and business contribution are vital partners in achieving the SDGs (Abhayawansa et al., 2021). Extant literature stresses how business operations are advancing the SDGs (López-Duarte & Vidal-Suárez, 2021; Ordonez-Ponce et al., 2021; Pizzi et al., 2020) through multi-stakeholders and institutional partnership (Eweje et al., 2020), responsible managers, and collaborative actions (Mintrom & Thomas, 2018).

4.7.3 | Blue cluster

The blue cluster indicates that the achievement of the 2030 agenda or the SDGs through research can be done by focusing on corporate sustainability indicators using content analysis and case study approaches. Calabrese et al. (2021), Cling et al. (2020), and Pfeiffer et al. (2017) studies are phenomenal in advancing the SDGs or the Agenda 2030 using sustainability indicators. Calabrese et al. (2021) use sustainability reporting indicators to develop a framework to achieve the SDGs using firm disclosures. Similarly, Cling et al. (2020) explore how the SDG indicators interconnect the differentials of European nations providing social and economic implications for the Agenda 2030. Pfeiffer et al. (2017) also used the 169 SDGs target indicators to advance the SDGs highlighting striving commitment and practical policies toward the 2030 Agenda. In terms of case studies and context analysis, Pineda-Escobar (2019) adds to extant literature using a case study approach across borders, providing insightful alternatives for moving the 2030 agenda forward. Further, using a case study at the operational and national level, Battaglia et al. (2020) provide viable systems and business orientation on embedding sustainability actively enhances the SDGs. Vildåsen's (2018) exploratory case study uses inductive reasoning to provide significant social and environmental concerns about corporate sustainability and the Agenda 2030.

4.7.4 | Yellow cluster

Yellow cluster focus on connected papers from circular economy like China and issues on corporate social responsibility (CSR), food waste, and hospitality contributing to achieving the SDGs. Business scholars in China are averting from the perspective of green finance and industry (Yuan et al., 2020), health, environment, climate change, and tourism (Sharif et al., 2020) to biodiversity, financial globalization, technology, and innovation (Zhang et al., 2022) toward achieving the Agenda 2030. Circular economy studies have taken a new SDG research arena where accounting, management, and business scholars use big data, innovative and industrial 4.0 revolutions (Dwivedi et al., 2021) to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Stombelli (2020) also has advanced SDGs studies focusing on corporate social responsibilities (CSR), hospitability, and food waste in circular economies.

4.7.5 | Purple cluster

The purple cluster composes connected papers based on economic growth, entrepreneurship, innovation, social sustainability, and the emergence of pandemics (covid-19). Entrepreneurship and innovation are inevitable in achieving economic growth, sustainability, and the SDGs (Gyimah et al., 2021; Moya-Clemente et al., 2020). Macht et al. (2020) discuss how business research can contribute to SDG achievement during and after the global pandemic (Covid-19). They argued that the factual prospect of recovery from Covid-19 rapidly strengthens entrepreneurship, innovative businesses, and social firms since they are the backbone of every economy.

Hörisch (2021) further stipulates that the global pandemic (Covid-19) has jeopardized economic growth, entrepreneurial sustainability, and the 2030 Agenda, and there is a likelihood that nations may be unable to achieve the SDGs even after 2030. Chen (2021) provides some insightful sustainability innovative strategies for digital businesses or technological industries to recover from Covid-19 to contribute their quota toward the SDGs. Studies in the purple clusters are developing conceptual models or frameworks for firms to capitalize on gains or increase profitability after the global COVID-19 pandemic that will eventually positively affect sustainability, economic growth, and SDGs.

4.7.6 | Aqua cluster

The Aqua cluster comprises studies on developing countries, education, global reporting initiative, and sustainability reporting. Accounting, management, and business scholars are making strides toward the 2030 Agenda in developing countries. Biglari et al. (2022) conclude that most developing countries cannot advance the 2030 Agenda due to stakeholders' conflict, lack of credible evaluation tools, sanctions, environmental issues, and regional conflicts. Rosati and Faria (2019) highlight how businesses can contribute to developing countries using organizational drivers and SDGs reports.

Further, Kazemikhasragh et al. (2021) highlight some factors contributing to implementing the SDGs in developing countries. In addition, regarding the Aqua cluster, the connected papers delved into higher education by integrating competencies, transformation learning, and principles for responsible management education (PRME)

through collaborative phenomenon and SDGs innovative reporting (de Assumpção & Neto, 2020; Caputo et al., 2021; Cottafava et al., 2019).

4.7.7 | Orange cluster

The bulk of Orange Clusters focused on climate change, renewable energy, and tourism. Regarding climate change, most of the connected studies explore SDG 13 (Climate change) by focusing on renewable energy, smart cities, automotive vehicles, reduction of air pollution, and innovative mobility paradigms for sustainable climate (Grindsted et al., 2022).

Additional attention-grabbing papers in the orange cluster relate to sustainable tourism. Pizzi et al. (2020) argued that sustainable tourism could eradicate poverty and provide indigenous communities with social and financial benefits. For instance, Bianchi and de Man (2021) explore how tourism can contribute to decent work and inclusive development in an economy. Pasanchay and Schott (2021) provide community-based tourism strategies using a holistic, sustainable living viewpoint to advance the 2030 Agenda. Likewise, other tourism studies offer promising frameworks for the tourism sector as contributing drivers to attaining the SDGs (Hall, 2019).

4.7.8 | Brown cluster

For the brown clusters, the papers link the SDGs to Africa. The SDGs follow the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that characterize the first effort in creating policies to advance Africa's development. Studies in Africa examine the contribution of FDI (Aust et al., 2020), tourism (Maingi, 2021; Siakwah et al., 2020), education (Peeters, 2021), and technological gaps (You et al., 2020) toward attaining the SDGs. Scholars have been phenomenal in propagating SDGs research focusing on the contribution of agriculture (Pandey & Pandey, 2023) and small businesses (Adeola et al., 2021) in alleviating poverty that positively enhances the 2030 Agenda.

4.7.9 | Black cluster

The black cluster is the final cluster linking sustainable investment to the SDGs. Unlike other clusters, most papers investigating the relationship between sustainable investment and SDGs employ empirical analysis. For instance, Ikram et al. (2021) empirically assess how green technology affects sustainable investments in achieving the SDGs in an emerging country. Similarly, Arner et al. (2020) highlight the contributions of financial technology and inclusion and sustainability for achieving the SDGs. Furthermore, other studies use financial performance and sustainability analysis to provide a framework for sustainable investment to accomplish the SDGs (Folqué et al., 2020).

5 | SLR ANALYSIS RESULTS

Table 6 discusses the taxonomies – jurisdiction, organization, geographical setting, SDGs literature, research methods, and frameworks or models of connected papers advancing the SDGs research to identify gaps and further studies.

5.1 | Jurisdiction

Studies on general multinational, global, or comparative perspectives record 162 papers (27.79% of 583 papers) with total citations of 1928 (27.70% of 6960). The organizational-focused papers using multinational global data that compares two or more organizations follow with 27.1% of the total sample and 1153 citations (27.14%). The industry-focused papers of supranational, international, or comparative studies consist of 97 papers (16.64%) and 1153 citations (16.57%). For local or national studies, 13.55% ($n = 79$ papers) with 934 citations (13.42%) focused on organizations, whereas 12.86% ($n = 75$ papers) with 897 citations (12.89%) focused on general issues advancing the SDGs. Few studies ($n = 12$ papers, 2.06%) have focused on sole organizations championing the SDGs, and this is an avenue for further research.

5.2 | Organizations

The result shows that most studies on general organizations ($n = 155$, 26.58%) mostly cluster private corporations operating in similar industries. The analysis indicates that multinational firms or blue-chip organizations ($n = 124$, 21.27%) rank second in organizations making huge strides toward Agenda 2030. Multinational organizations are inevitable partners in advancing the SDGs by incorporating CSR policies and critical strategies for humanity and the planet (Pizzi et al., 2020). Another network of papers considers the cities (n = 98, 16.81%) toward urbanization and globalization in accelerating global goals. Government institutions' research ($n = 93$, 15.95%) strives to provide public policies that stimulate actions toward environmental, social, and economic dimensions geared toward the SDGs. The result indicates that accounting, business, or management scholars have provided some magnificent insights into how universities ($n = 67$, 11.49%) have contributed to the SDGs.

Appallingly, SDGs research is limited to SMEs ($n = 37$, 6.35%) and NGOs ($n = 9$, 1.54%). These organizations are also critical contributors to Agenda 2030, and accounting, business, or management scholars must focus on these neglected organizations. Small and Medium-scale firms are the backbone of every nation, and contemporary researchers are calling for more research on sustainable entrepreneurial practices contributing to the Agenda 2030 (Adeola et al., 2021; Gyimah et al., 2020). Finally, NGOs provide local and foreign advocacy policies related to the global agenda, and such overriding organizations should not be neglected in SDGs research (Hassan et al., 2019).

TABLE 6 Research taxonomies.

Specific taxonomy	Papers	Cited	Papers (percent)	Citation (percent)
Jurisdiction				
General—Multinationals/Global/Comparative	162	1928	27.79	27.70
Industry—Multinationals/Global/Comparative	97	1153	16.64	16.57
Organizational—Multinationals/Global/Comparative	158	1889	27.10	27.14
General—Nationwide	75	897	12.86	12.89
Organizational—Nationwide	79	934	13.55	13.42
One Institution/Business/Organization	12	159	2.06	2.28
Organizations				
Private Sector—Multinational/Global Organization	124	1253	21.27	18.00
Private Sector—SMEs	37	656	6.35	9.43
Cities	98	994	16.81	14.28
Public Sector Organization	93	955	15.95	13.72
Not-For-Profit Organizations (NPO)	9	258	1.54	3.71
Training Institutions/Colleges/Universities	67	818	11.49	11.75
General/Other	155	2026	26.58	29.11
SDG literature review				
Financial Reporting	15	199	2.57	2.86
Non-Financial Reporting	63	537	10.81	7.72
Policy-Focused	102	1571	17.50	22.57
Business-Focused Strategy	87	1074	14.92	15.43
Performance Dimension	29	378	4.97	5.43
General/Others	287	3201	49.23	45.99
Research methods				
Interview/Case/Field/Narrative Studies	136	1466	23.33	21.06
Content Analysis	88	1054	15.09	15.14
Questionnaire/Survey	102	1132	17.50	16.26
Normative/Commentary Studies	87	920	17.92	13.22
Secondary/Archival Studies	52	736	8.92	10.58
Theoretical: Literature/Empirical Reviews	118	1652	20.24	23.74
Framework				
No Model(s) Proposed	381	3760	65.35	54.02
Uses existing Model(s)	96	1177	16.47	16.91
Proposes New Model(s)	106	2023	18.18	29.07

5.3 | SDGs literature review

Most business studies (49.23%) on SDGs focus on general sustainability perspectives, with fewer exploring specific implementation aspects. The studies of Bebbington and Unerman (2018), Rosati and Faria (2019), and Salvia et al. (2019) are instrumental in advancing general perspectives of sustainability and business contributions toward the agenda 2030. Returning to Table 6, the SDGs debate centered on policies ($n = 102$, 17.50%) and business strategy ($n = 87$, 14.92%) of the total sampled papers. Pizzi et al. (2020) argued that accounting, management, and business researchers observed that the achievement of the SDGs depends on business strategies, models, or policies. Thus, most SDG studies integrate policies and strategies toward the Agenda 2030.

In addition, contemporary accounting, management, or business scholars use the non-financial reporting index ($n = 63$, 10.81%) and performance measures ($n = 29$, 4.97) to advance the SDGs. Khan et al. (2021) use integrated non-financial reporting to explore how green innovation drives a firm's performance and the SDGs. Similarly, Diaz-Sarachaga (2021) uses non-financial reports to monetize the economic contributions of Agenda 2030. In addition, Pizzi et al. (2020) employed the SDG non-reporting or qualitative scores to ascertain the determinants of business indicators affecting the SDGs. However, there is scarce literature on using the financial reporting index ($n = 15$, 2.57%) due to unavailable data. Business scholars can use financial reports and macroeconomic measures from the World

Bank, United Nations, and Continental SDGs to explore the determinants advancing the SDGs.

5.4 | Research methods

Most SDGs business studies employ a qualitative approach using cases, fields studies, interviews, or narrative studies ($n = 136$, 23.33%), followed by theoretical analysis ($n = 118$, 20.24%), survey or empirical questionnaire studies ($n = 102$, 17.5%), content analysis ($n = 88$, 15.09%), normative or commentary methods ($n = 87$, 14.92%), and quantitative studies using secondary data ($n = 52$, 8.92%). Achieving the 2030 Agenda needs multiple ex-ante estimates to derive innovative strategies, viewpoints, and implications, and thus, innovative SDG studies depend on reliable and valid methods to conduct the research (Soaita et al., 2020). The study suggests that SDG studies use heterogeneous or multidisciplinary research methodologies to develop policies, practices, and empirical and theoretical implications that advance the 2030 Agenda.

5.5 | Theoretical models

The theoretical framework result shows that there is no unified model(s) or framework(s) advancing SDGs from an accounting, management, or business perspective. The lack of composite model(s) or framework(s) used in SDGs studies is one of the major hindrances for accounting, management, or business academics, and it has remained pragmatic through several scholars in their studies (Pizzi et al., 2020). However, the accounting profession, such as the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC), has developed a roadmap or framework focusing the SDGs and also neglects an all-inclusive assessment of (un)sustainability indicators (Khargonekar & Samad, 2024). In addition, Goyal et al. (2018) and Schaltegger (2018) developed state-of-the-art SDG models within one jurisdiction focusing on sustainability. Their models may not be applicable in other contexts with varied cultural, educational, micro-and-macro environmental conditions and legal and political systems.

Recent academic works have failed to develop a model or framework using data across or within the 192 member states that adopted the SDGs. Returning to Table 6, 65.35% ($n = 381$ papers) propose no models or frameworks, and 18.18% ($n = 106$) propose new models. Studies employing previous models ($n = 96$, 16.47%) depend mainly on SDG indicators or targets. There is no consolidated framework(s) developed by accounting, management, or business scholars due to varied connections between businesses, countries, and SDGs within or across continents. Adams et al. (2020), Bebbington and Unerman (2018), and Diaz-Sarachaga et al. (2018) particularly posit that having a unified theoretical model(s) or framework(s) from accounting, management, or business researchers can aid stakeholders in policy or decision making toward the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

6 | DISCUSSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA

After the adoption of the SDGs by the UN, there has been an upsurge of scholars in business, management or accounting integrating the SDGs into their research paradigms. The expansive macroeconomic scope of the SDGs presents an opportunity for scholars to interrogate traditionally policy-centric concepts such as poverty alleviation, well-being, and peace through an organizational perspective. Our bibliometric analysis and literature review reveals the absence of a cohesive and unified body of literature pertaining to the SDGs within these disciplines, underscoring the imperative for further scholarly investigation. For instance, from the results of the top and other authors show that their studies concentrate on SDGs 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, and 15 (Leal Filho et al., 2019; Pizzi et al., 2020; Scheyvens & Hughes, 2021; Sinha et al., 2021 and Venturelli et al., 2021), neglecting SDGs 3, 6, 7, 10, 14, 16, and 17. It is not surprising that these neglected SDGs are non-business perspective. Business scholars need to collaborate with other academic disciplines in advancing these neglected areas of the SDGs. Future studies on SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) should examine sustainable business practices on public, mental, and employee health or well-being. In addition, future business studies can advance SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) by developing business models for water conservation and productivity, and exploring the accounting roles in water management practices. For SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), future studies should investigate sustainable energy-efficient business practices or policies in productivity and investment. Additionally, business scholars can SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) by developing unified sustainable models to address income inequality through fair labor practices. Moreover, future studies on SDG 14 (Life Below Water) should delve into sustainable fisheries and aquaculture practices or ocean conservation practices on financial operations and supply chains management. Future studies should also consider advancing the SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) by investigating governance, transparency, accountability, and corruption on the SDGs, as well as examining institutional factors on investment in conflict-affected regions. In terms of SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), business studies should analyze cross-sector partnerships and collaborative governance and policy-making models on the SDGs achievement.

The bibliometric analysis among the top countries and bodies advancing the SDGs shows that no African nation is ranked among the top 10 countries advancing the SDG business studies, and there is a need for more collaboration between countries toward achieving the 17 SDGs before 2030. Agrawal et al. (2022) document that there scanty of business studies advancing the SDGs in Africa, and thus, future studies could also identify why there are limited studies in some parts of the world, and comparative SDG analysis can be conducted between active and inactive countries.

Based on the top most cited papers in the bibliometric analysis of SDGs, a scientific development agenda should focus on advancing interdisciplinary research and policy integration to address complex sustainability challenges. The paper on innovation policy highlights

the need for transformative approaches, blending R&D with systems of innovation to promote sustainable transitions in key sectors such as energy, healthcare, and education. Expanding the role of accounting research is also crucial, as it can enhance transparency and accountability in measuring SDG progress through sustainability reporting and corporate governance. Additionally, the focus on sustainable tourism development underscores the need to use specific sectors, such as tourism, as models for achieving broader SDG targets, including economic growth, environmental conservation, and social equity. Research into local and global trends, as highlighted in the bibliometric analysis, should deepen the understanding of regional SDG challenges, enabling customized strategies that align with both global objectives and local needs. Lastly, the development of standardized indicators for smart sustainable cities presents a critical opportunity to enhance urban sustainability by integrating technology, policy, and innovation. This research agenda encourages collaboration across fields, promotes the adoption of standardized sustainability metrics, and ensures that SDG-focused strategies are context-sensitive, data-driven, and aligned with innovation and policy frameworks. By addressing these areas, the scientific community can better support the achievement of SDGs through informed research, effective policy-making, and sectoral innovations.

The nine clusters derived from the study shows a deep interconnection among the themes, and aligns with the views of other researchers (Agrawal et al., 2022; Mio et al., 2020; Pizzi et al., 2020; Voola et al., 2022) who support the inclusion of knowledge from different disciplines into business and management research in order to enhance policymakers' involvement in the discussion. The clusters of studies reveal unexplored topics such as culture or preservation of cultural heritage, religiosity, responsible leadership ethics, language-sensitive research, national value chain systems, economic dimensions drivers on each of the 17 SDGs, MSMEs, and rural entrepreneurship, sustainable supply-chain strategies, global sustainable marketing strategies, green human resources, and organizational behavioral strategies that need to be explored in further studies. In addition, the importance of the *Journal of Cleaner Production* underscores the multidisciplinary nature of the SDG research. Future study should explore the integration of ecological and socio-economic views to establish clear connections between specific SDGs and organizations.

Regarding the taxonomies of the literature review, the jurisdiction indicates that most business SDG literature focuses on general multinationals, comparative or global regions, with few studies concentrating on one institution. Due to the diverse institutional culture and systems among multinationals or corporate entities, the study recommends that future SDG business research use single institutional jurisdiction to come out of innovative findings that can be used as a benchmark for similar institutions or sectors. In the case of organizations, business SDG research again concentrates on general and private multinational or global firms and few studies on NPOs or private SMEs. SMEs are among the critical players that can advance SDGs, and it is dissuading that recent SDG studies are not focusing on entrepreneurship or SMEs. Business scholars should urgently need to conduct more research on small firms to provide theoretical and practical contributions toward the 2030 Agenda. The literature analysis further reveals that most business SDG studies do not explore financial reporting on firms. A firm's financial reporting gives transparency and understanding of a firm's financial position and operations. Thus, business scholars must delve into firms' financial and integrating reporting to develop unique strategies to advance the SDGs. Regarding the methods used in business SDG research, the analysis reveals that studies using interview, cases, field, narrative, content analysis, normative, survey, and reviews continues to dominate, and few others use secondary or archival data to conduct SDG studies. SDG studies are heterogeneous and require a mixed research approach, and the study recommends that future SDG research use the mixed research method to examine diverse viewpoints and uncover remedies to achieve the SDGs before 2030.

In summary, there is currently an absence of precise analyses on the 17 SDGs in business, management, or accounting studies. With less than a decade toward the end of the 2030 Agenda, no global unified theory or framework has been formulated to aid in policy formulation or decisions toward the SDGs. Further studies in these directions can advance SDGs research.

7 | CONCLUSION

Although the literature recognizes the significance of business review papers on SDGs (Gyimah et al., 2023), a substantial research void still exists. Specifically, comprehensive bibliometric analyses and systematic literature reviews that explicitly investigate the nexus between business, management, accounting, and SDGs, covering the period from 2015 onwards, are remarkably scarce and fragmented. By leveraging bibliometric analysis and SLR, we have identified areas of concentration and gaps in research, ultimately informing future scholarly agendas and practice-oriented initiatives aimed at advancing the UN SDGs. Our comprehensive study provides a systematic and quantitative snapshot of the SDGs research landscape, revealing key trends, patterns, and themes in the literature. The analysis yields a typology of nine distinct clusters in SDGs business research, each characterized by a unique thematic focus. These clusters encompass the intersection of artificial intelligence and digitalization, business collaboration and partnership, corporate sustainability, the synergies between circular economy and corporate social responsibility, the dynamics of entrepreneurship and innovation, education and its role in developing countries, the interplay between climate change and tourism, the distinctive perspectives and challenges of the African context, and the emerging field of sustainable investment.

Our findings offer a valuable resource for researchers, policymakers, and practitioners seeking to optimize their contributions to this critical global endeavor. For instance, our review provides researchers with a comprehensive understanding of global research landscapes and existing knowledge gaps to enable them to prioritize these gaps through collaborations, and develop context-specific solutions to accelerate SDGs achievement. To the policy-makers and

practioners, our findings can significantly inform policy makers and practitioners based on our current understanding of global research trends, knowledge gaps, and best practices. This enables evidence-based decision-making, prioritization of resource allocation, and development of targeted interventions to accelerate SDGs achievement. Governments should use the findings to identify effective solutions and strategies by replicating or adapting successful initiatives in diverse contexts toward the SDGs. Moreover, our analysis has identified research landscapes and knowledge gaps to foster collaboration and knowledge sharing among stakeholders. The study findings can also inform the development of context-specific SDGs implementation strategies, ensuring alignment with the latest research evidence. Furthermore, our analysis can facilitate the monitoring of progress toward SDGs by tracking areas of increasing or decreasing research attention. Ultimately, the integration of these insights into policy and practice can enhance the effectiveness of SDG-related initiatives and drive sustainable development.

8 | LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

This study, like all research endeavors, is not without its limitations, which are acknowledged and addressed herein, accompanied by recommendations for future investigations. Firstly, the timeframe constraint (2015–2022) should be expanded to capture longitudinal trends and evolutionary patterns in SDG research, enabling a more nuanced understanding of how business, management, and accounting disciplines have engaged with the SDGs over time.

Secondly, incorporating papers from diverse disciplines, such as environmental science, sociology, or political science, can enrich the understanding of SDG research by providing interdisciplinary perspectives and fostering a more holistic understanding of the complex issues surrounding sustainable development.

Thirdly, addressing geographical bias by including more papers from African or developing country contexts is crucial to ensure that the voices and experiences of diverse stakeholders are represented, and to facilitate a more inclusive understanding of SDG research.

Additionally, nuanced keyword searches and natural language processing techniques can enhance search results by capturing relevant papers that may have been overlooked by more conventional search strategies.

Contextual factors, such as political or economic conditions, should be integrated into the analysis to provide a more nuanced understanding of how SDG research is shaped by and responds to broader societal and environmental contexts.

Furthermore, future studies should consider incorporating gray literature, such as reports or policy documents, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of SDG research and its practical applications.

Finally, engaging in collaborative research efforts and fostering dialog between academics, practitioners, and policymakers can facilitate a more impactful and translational understanding of SDG research, ultimately contributing to the achievement of the SDGs.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Prince Gyimah: Conceptualization; writing—original draft; formal analysis; software; and editing. Kingsley Opoku Appiah: Supervision; Methodology; conceptualization; writing—original draft preparation; writing—reviewing and editing. Kwadjo Appiagyei: Supervision; Methodology; conceptualization; writing—original draft preparation; writing—reviewing and editing.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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