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Change Management and Organizational Performance: A Bibliometric Analysis of Scopus-Indexed Literature

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Abstract: Change management has emerged as a critical factor in enhancing organizational performance in today's rapidly evolving business environment. Although extensive research has examined this relationship, existing literature remains fragmented across disciplines, lacking a cohesive understanding of its intellectual structure and thematic evolution. This study employs a bibliometric review of recent Scopus-indexed publications to systematically analyze trends, influential authors and institutions, key research themes, and collaboration patterns in the field. Using PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews) method, the review aims to uncover how change management practices—particularly those involving digital transformation, agile strategies, and leadership engagement—are associated with performance outcomes. The analysis is expected to reveal dominant research clusters, evolving keywords, and increasing scholarly attention to technology-driven and human-centered change approaches. By synthesizing a decade of research, this study contributes to the academic literature by offering a structured overview of the field's development and highlighting gaps for future investigation. It also provides practical insights for organizations seeking to implement effective change initiatives aligned with strategic performance goals. The findings will support scholars in identifying future research directions and assist practitioners in applying evidence-based change management strategies across diverse organizational contexts.

Keywords: Change Management, Organizational Performance, Bibliometric Review, Strategic Adaptability.

INTRODUCTION

In an era marked by technological disruption, global competition, and shifting organizational environments, the ability to manage change has become critical to ensuring organizational success. Change management—defined as a systematic approach to dealing with transformation within organizations—has evolved into a key strategic function. It allows institutions to align internal processes, culture, and capabilities with external demands in a structured and responsive way (Touijer & Elabjani, 2025; S. B. Umar et al., 2025). Whether

in the private sector, public administration, or education, change initiatives are increasingly linked to performance outcomes, making the topic both timely and essential (Carrascal & Valenzuela, 2022; Pubodhya & Rajapakshe, 2025).

Multiple studies have demonstrated the positive effects of change management on organizational performance, including increased agility, innovation adoption, and improved stakeholder satisfaction. For example, in the context of education reform, (Todorović & Jovanović, 2025) highlighted how teachers' behavioral alignment with change objectives enhanced institutional performance. Similarly, (Stettina et al., 2021) explored how agile transformation strategies in IT-intensive firms accelerated digital capability development. Other scholars have examined leadership roles (Engida et al., 2022), and knowledge-sharing behavior (Abou-Moghli, 2025), all concluding that well-managed change efforts significantly influence strategic outcomes.

Despite the proliferation of research, the literature remains fragmented across sectors, conceptual frameworks, and methodologies. Some researchers focus on technological change (Bloem & Salimi, 2023), while others investigate structural or cultural transitions. This diversity underscores the need for a holistic synthesis of current knowledge. A bibliometric review is particularly well-suited to address this gap, as it systematically analyzes research output, intellectual structure, and thematic evolution in the field (Donthu et al., 2021).

Bibliometric methods offer an objective and replicable approach for understanding the scope and development of a research area. They allow researchers to identify influential authors (e.g., Moghaddasi et al. (2025), top-cited articles (e.g., S. B. Umar et al. (2025), and keyword patterns (e.g., "digital transformation", "agile change", "organizational performance") across large datasets. This study analyzes 20 Scopus-indexed articles published between 2015 and 2025, aiming to capture longitudinal developments and cross-disciplinary contributions to the study of change management.

This review is guided by the following research question: What are the key intellectual structures, thematic trends, and collaboration patterns in the Scopus-indexed literature on the role of change management in enhancing organizational performance from 2015 to 2025? Supporting sub-questions include: (1) Which institutions and countries have contributed most significantly to this field? (2) What journals and articles have been most cited? (3) What are the most common and emerging research themes in change management? Addressing these questions will help consolidate a fragmented field and guide future research agendas.

The expected results of this review include the identification of core research clusters, dominant keywords (e.g., "resilience", "strategic alignment", "digital maturity"), and citation networks. For instance, recent articles have highlighted the impact of agile management on project success (Moghaddasi et al., 2025), the role of digital maturity in performance enhancement (Touijer & Elabjani, 2025), and employee adaptation during organizational restructuring (M. A. Umar, 2023). These trends suggest a growing convergence around strategic agility, digital change, and human-centered approaches. This study contributes to both theory and practice by offering a structured overview of academic developments and their relevance to real-world organizational needs.

Moreover, the findings will help bridge sectoral divides and offer interdisciplinary insights by including articles from education (S. B. Umar et al., 2025), healthcare (Kanwar, 2025), engineering (Carrascal & Valenzuela, 2022), and corporate sectors (Stettina et al., 2021). The bibliometric approach not only reveals the evolution of knowledge in these domains but also visualizes collaboration networks and thematic convergence over time. This integrative lens will support more comprehensive and strategic applications of change management theories and practices.

In conclusion, this bibliometric review seeks to enrich the academic understanding of change management's influence on organizational performance while offering practitioners a

roadmap to evidence-based strategies. As the pace of change accelerates, the insights from this study will be crucial for organizations aiming to remain competitive, adaptive, and high-performing in an increasingly volatile world.

METHODS

This study aims to establish a comprehensive and rigorous foundation for understanding the development of organizational capability by employing a bibliometric review guided by the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) method. This methodological approach was selected for its transparency, replicability, and alignment with internationally recognized academic standards (Iksan et al., 2024; Saputra et al., 2024). As illustrated in Figure 1, the initial search process utilized the Scopus database, which yielded a total of 2,647 records. These records underwent a systematic multi-stage screening process to ensure their relevance, quality, and alignment with the research objectives. Following the screening of 1,166 publications, 64 full-text articles were reviewed in detail, resulting in the selection of 20 articles deemed most relevant for in-depth bibliometric and thematic analysis.

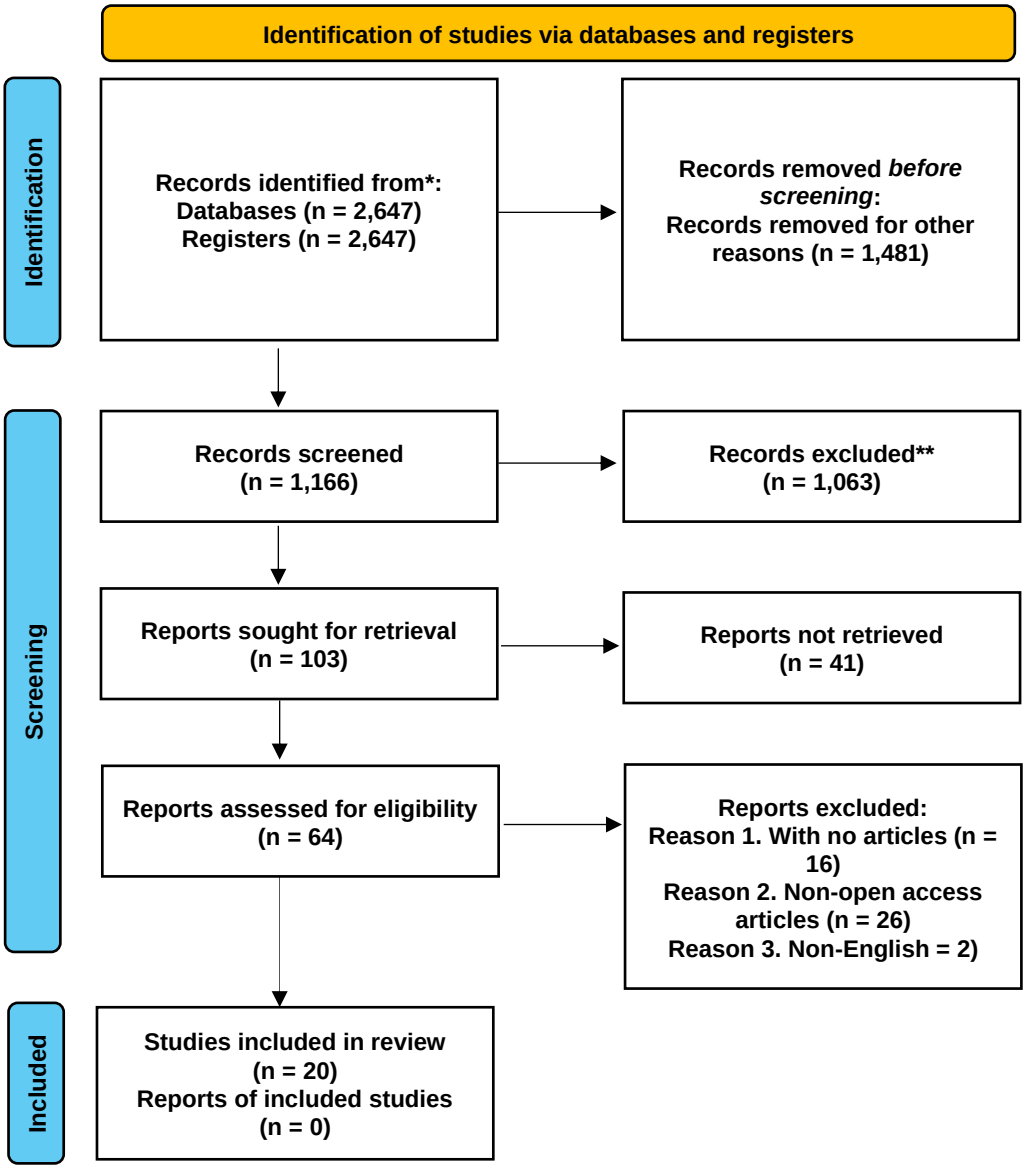


Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Chart

The search strategy was carefully designed and executed using Scopus, which offers access to a vast repository of peer-reviewed academic literature from more than 7,000 international publishers (Nishikawa-Pacher, 2022). As outlined in Table 1, the search utilized combinations of targeted keywords such as “change management” and “organizational performance”, further refined by filters including publication year (2015–2025), English language, journal article type, and final publication status. These search parameters ensured that only high-quality, up-to-date, and relevant sources were retrieved, in accordance with the indexing criteria set by Scopus. This strategic filtering enabled efficient identification of literature pertinent to the study’s core themes of organizational capability and performance development.

Table 1. Scopus database search string

Source	Search String
Scopus	(TITLE-ABS-KEY ("change management") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("organizational performance")) AND PUBYEAR > 2014 AND PUBYEAR < 2026 AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (SRCTYPE, "j")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "English")) AND (LIMIT-TO (PUBSTAGE, "final")) AND (LIMIT-TO (OA, "all"))

To further refine the dataset, the study implemented strict inclusion and exclusion criteria, as detailed in Table 2. Only peer-reviewed journal articles published in English between 2015 and 2025 were included. Publications that fell outside of this range—such as older studies, conference proceedings, book chapters, editorials, and closed-access materials—were systematically excluded. From the original 2,647 records, 1,063 were removed for irrelevance or failure to meet indexing standards, and 41 were excluded due to restricted access. This refinement process resulted in a final dataset of 20 articles and were selected for detailed analysis.

Table 2. The inclusion and exclusion criteria

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Year	2015-2025	Before 2015
Document Type	Article	Congressional proceedings, conference papers, review, editorial, books, book chapters and other non-peer-reviewed publications, closed access.
Source Type	Journals	Book, trade publications, book series, conference proceedings
Publication Stage	Final	Article in press
Language	English	Non-English

The selected studies were analyzed using a robust suite of bibliometric techniques, including citation analysis, co-citation analysis, bibliographic coupling, and co-word analysis. These methods were supported by advanced data visualization tools such as VOSviewer and Bibliometric, which enabled the mapping of the intellectual structure of the field, identification of dominant themes, and detection of underexplored research areas (Maharani et al., 2024). The bibliometric insights derived from this analysis provided a multidimensional understanding of the current landscape in strategic change and organizational performance research. This cross-disciplinary synthesis highlights the integrative power of the bibliometric review in consolidating fragmented knowledge across academic domains (Greener, 2022).

The decision to utilize Scopus as the primary data source was based on its reputation for quality, comprehensiveness, and analytical functionality. Scopus not only offers access to a wide breadth of peer-reviewed content but also provides advanced metadata search capabilities and reliable citation tracking tools, making it ideal for bibliometric analysis. By integrating the PRISMA-guided approach with data sourced from Scopus, this study ensures a

methodologically sound foundation that supports the generation of both theoretical and practical insights (Lirio-Loli & Dextre-Martínez, 2022). Ultimately, this methodology facilitates the development of a robust conceptual framework that can guide future research and strategic decision-making in dynamic organizational environments.

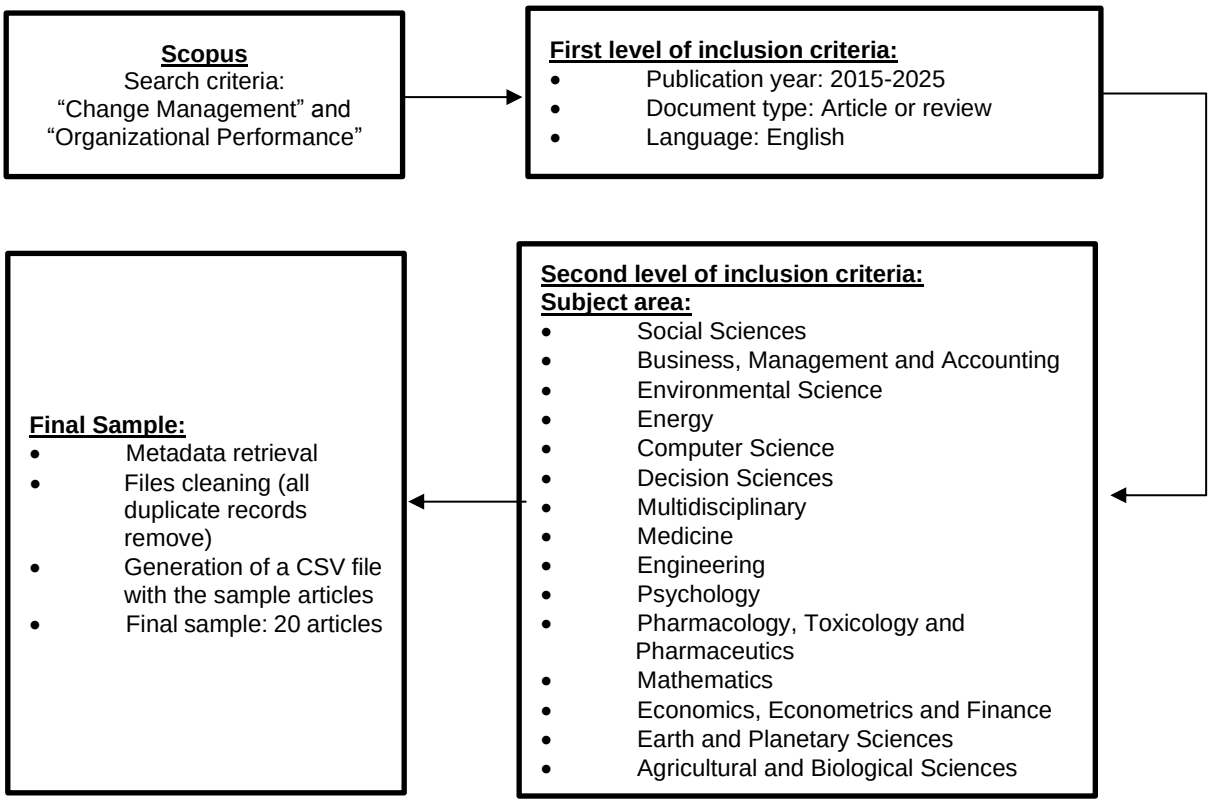


Figure 2. Protocol in This Study

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Number of Publications by Year

Figure 3 illustrates the annual distribution of Scopus-indexed publications related to change management and organizational performance from 2015 to 2025. The trend shows fluctuations in scholarly interest over the 11-year period, with a notable surge in recent years. In 2015, there were no recorded publications on this topic, suggesting limited academic focus on the intersection of change management and organizational performance at that time. The number increased slightly in 2016 with two publications, indicating the beginning of scholarly attention to this area. However, a gradual decline followed in 2017 and 2018, with publication counts dropping to one and then zero, respectively. This temporary decline may reflect shifting research priorities or a limited awareness of the strategic importance of change management during that period.

Starting in 2019, the trend reversed, with a modest increase in publications: one in 2019, followed by two each in 2020 and 2021. This steady growth signals a revived academic interest in how change management practices influence organizational outcomes—possibly influenced by growing organizational complexity and digital transformation trends. Despite the global disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of publications remained stable at one in both 2022 and 2023. This plateau might be attributed to delayed research output during the pandemic, although the relevance of change management during crises became increasingly apparent.

A significant shift occurred in 2024, with publications peaking at seven, the highest number across the entire period. This sharp increase likely reflects a heightened awareness of the critical role of change management in post-pandemic recovery, organizational resilience, and adaptation to emerging global challenges. In 2025, the number decreased to three, but it still remains above the average from earlier years, indicating sustained interest in the topic.

Overall, the bibliometric trend reveals a growing scholarly recognition of the impact of change management on organizational performance. The fluctuations across the years demonstrate how global events and organizational challenges influence academic focus. The recent surge in publications underscores the increasing demand for research-based insights into navigating change effectively to enhance performance and long-term sustainability.

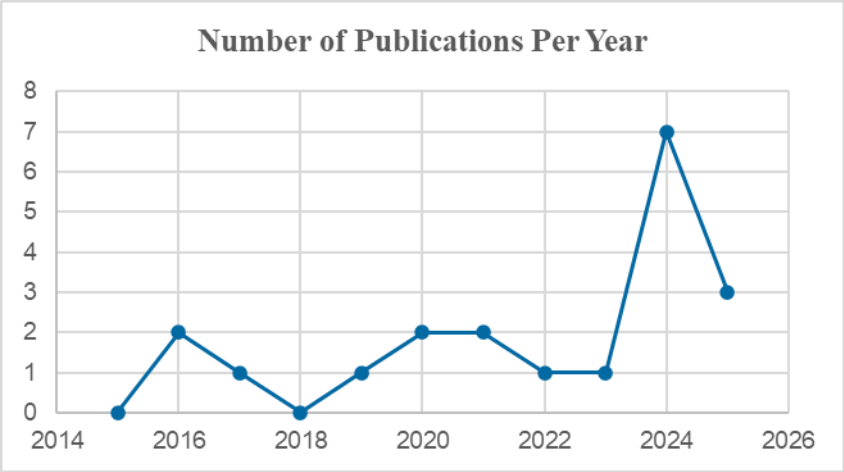


Figure 3. Publication Frequency by Year

Methodhology Used in the Study

The analysis of Scopus-indexed literature on change management and organizational performance from 2015 to 2025 reveals a predominant use of quantitative methods, appearing in 10 studies such as those by Atobishi et al. (2024) and Pubodhya & Rajapakshe (2025). These studies focus on testing hypotheses and measuring the relationship between change initiatives and performance outcomes using statistical tools. Conceptual methodologies were the second most common, featured in 5 articles like those by Elsaman et al. (2024) and Jayeola et al. (2020), contributing theoretical models and frameworks without empirical data. Meanwhile, qualitative methods were used in 4 studies, offering in-depth insights into change processes through case studies and interviews.

Mixed methods were the least utilized, applied in only one study Spring (2021), indicating a gap in combining qualitative and quantitative perspectives. The overall trend reflects a strong reliance on empirical data to validate findings, with complementary theoretical and exploratory approaches providing additional depth. This methodological diversity suggests a maturing field, though future research could benefit from increased use of mixed methods to bridge data-driven analysis with context-rich understanding, thereby enhancing the study of change management's impact on organizational performance.

Table 3. Types of methodology used in the article

No	Methodology	Total	Sample Articles
1	Conceptual	5	Elsaman et al. (2024), Jayeola et al. (2020)
2	Mixed Methods	1	Spring (2021)
3	Qualitative	4	Kantola & Kinnunen (2024), Touijer & Elabjani (2025)
4	Quantitative	10	Atobishi et al. (2024), Pubodhya & Rajapakshe (2025)

Top 10 Documents by Country

The geographical distribution of research on change management and organizational performance demonstrates a globally dispersed scholarly interest, with notable contributions from both developed and developing countries. According to Table 4, China stands out as the most influential contributor in terms of impact, with only one publication generating 71 citations, exemplified by Kantola & Kinnunen (2024). This reflects the high visibility and scholarly relevance of Chinese research in this field. The United Kingdom leads in terms of volume with five publications and 52 citations, suggesting a sustained and robust engagement with the topic, as represented by works from Felix et al. (2024) and Kantola & Kinnunen (2024).

Switzerland also shows strong participation, contributing three publications and 49 citations, indicating a consistent and influential research presence (e.g., Alnamlah & Nalband (2024), S. B. Umar et al. (2025)). In contrast, countries such as Brazil, South Africa, Greece, and Ukraine each contributed one article, but with varying citation counts. Greece achieved moderate impact with 15 citations (Jayeola et al., 2020), while South Africa and Brazil recorded 2 and 0 citations, respectively. Ukraine, despite contributing one article (Rumani et al., 2024), also had no citations, reflecting limited current influence.

The United States, typically a strong research hub, had only one publication in this dataset, with 4 citations (e.g., Anunciação & Geada (2021), Elsaman (2024)), suggesting a relatively lower focus or delayed emergence of interest in this specific context within the selected timeframe. Overall, the data reflect an increasingly international research landscape, with impactful contributions extending beyond traditional academic powerhouses. However, the disparity in citations also indicates varying degrees of visibility and influence, highlighting opportunities for greater collaboration and dissemination across global research communities.

Table 4. Top 10 documents by country

No.	Country	Total Publications	Total Citations	Sample Articles
1	Brazil	1	0	Felix et al. (2024)
2	China	1	71	Kantola & Kinnunen (2024)
3	Greece	1	15	Jayeola et al. (2020)
4	South Africa	1	2	Elsaman (2024)
5	Switzerland	3	49	Alnamlah & Nalband (2024), S. B. Umar et al. (2025)
6	Ukraine	1	0	Rumani et al. (2024)
7	United Kingdom	5	52	Felix et al. (2024), Kantola & Kinnunen (2024)
8	United States	1	4	Anunciação & Geada (2021), Elsaman et al. (2024)

Journal Distribution

Figure 4 illustrates the distribution of selected articles on change management across a range of peer-reviewed academic journals, highlighting the interdisciplinary reach and growing scholarly interest in the field. The Journal of Organizational Change Management and Sustainability (Switzerland) emerge as the most prominent publication outlets, each contributing three articles. Their prominence suggests a strong alignment with themes related to organizational transformation, strategic adaptation, and sustainability-focused change initiatives, positioning them as central platforms for research dissemination in this area.

The remaining journals, including Administrative Sciences, Journal of Higher Education Theory and Practice, SA Journal of Human Resource Management, and International Journal of Management, among others, each contributed one article. This relatively even spread across diverse publication venues reflects the multidisciplinary nature of change management

research. Contributions span fields such as human resource management, healthcare, technology, education, and organizational studies, indicating that the topic is being examined from both applied and theoretical perspectives.

The absence of a single dominant journal underscores the thematic and methodological diversity of the field. It also points to an open and evolving research landscape, where future scholars can explore change management from new angles and publish in both specialized and interdisciplinary journals. This distribution pattern highlights the opportunity for continued academic engagement, particularly in underrepresented domains and emerging research contexts.

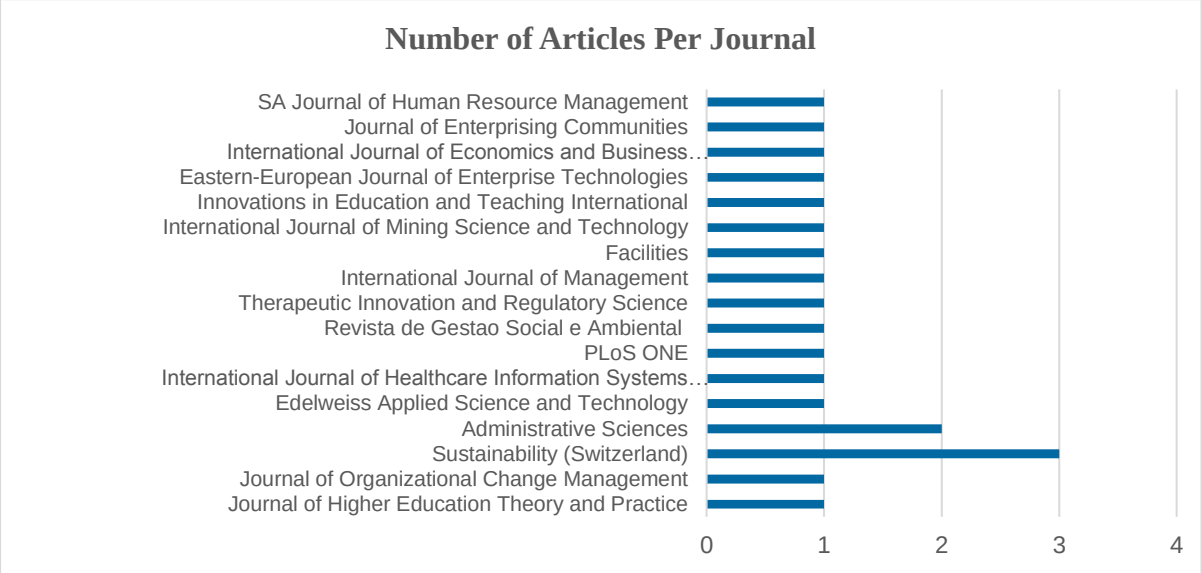


Figure 4. Top 10 Journals on Change Management

Keyword Co-occurence Analysis

Figure 5 depicts a keyword co-occurrence network generated using VOSviewer, illustrating the thematic landscape of research in the field of change management and its intersections with related concepts such as leadership, knowledge management, and organizational performance. This visualization is based on the co-occurrence of keywords from peer-reviewed literature published between 2015 and 2025, with the keywords grouped into thematic clusters. Each cluster reflects a core area of scholarly focus, providing insight into the conceptual structure and interrelationships in the change management domain.

At the center of the network, “change management” emerges as the dominant node, linking closely with multiple thematic clusters. Cluster 1 (orange) focuses on foundational elements of change management, including change agents, change capacity, and alternative terminology like change management (cm). This cluster underscores the operational dimensions of managing organizational transformation and the actors responsible for facilitating it. Cluster 2 (red) emphasizes the role of leaders and organizational change, situating leadership as a central enabler of successful change. This cluster highlights how leadership effectiveness is tightly connected to strategic and cultural transitions within organizations.

Cluster 3 (purple) connects leadership to business development, suggesting that change management is frequently positioned within broader organizational growth strategies. Cluster 4 (yellow) centers around “knowledge management” and “km”, indicating that managing organizational knowledge is viewed as a critical support system in change initiatives. The proximity of this cluster to change and performance-related terms implies that knowledge-sharing practices are pivotal in enabling smooth transitions.

Cluster 5 (blue) addresses the change management process, closely linked to organizational performance and organizational culture. This suggests that process-oriented approaches to change, such as structured models and frameworks, are often examined in terms of their impact on performance outcomes. Finally, Cluster 6 (green) incorporates keywords like risk assessment, further connecting the change process with efforts to mitigate uncertainty and manage organizational risks during transitions.

This keyword network illustrates that change management is not studied in isolation but intersects significantly with leadership, knowledge systems, organizational behavior, and performance. The visualization reveals an evolving research landscape where themes such as leadership roles, business development, knowledge transfer, and risk governance are integrally woven into the discourse on organizational change. Future research could benefit from further exploring the dynamic interplay between these clusters, especially in understanding how knowledge-driven and leadership-centric strategies influence the success of change management practices across diverse organizational contexts.

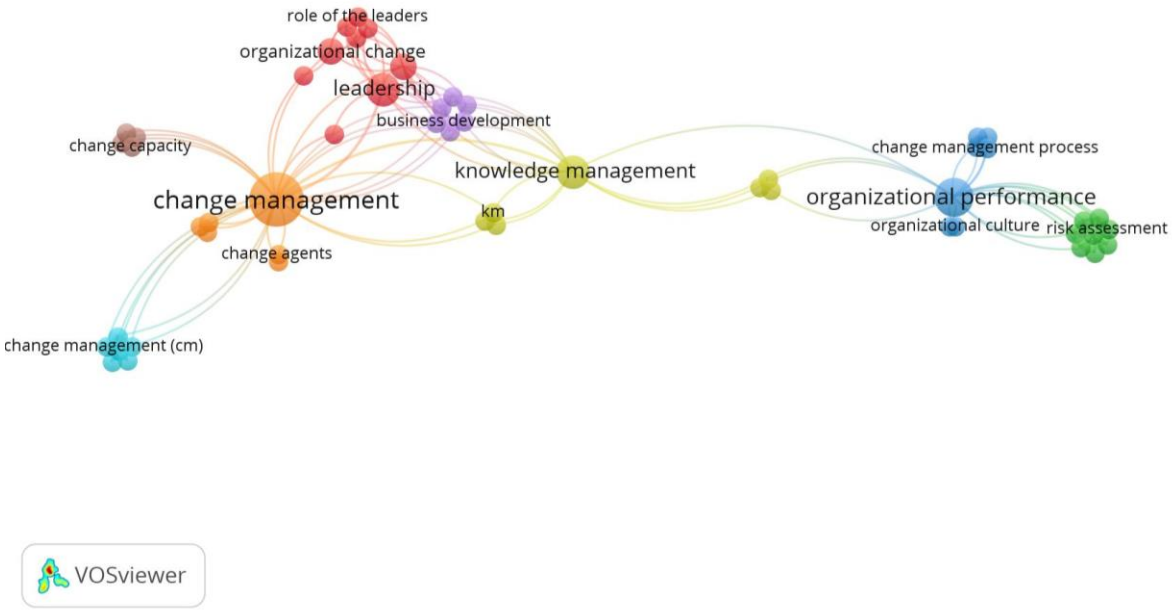


Figure 5. Keyword Co-Occurence Analysis

Mapping Central Keywords Over Time

Figure 6 presents a time-overlay visualization of keyword co-occurrences within the domain of change management and organizational performance, based on Scopus-indexed literature published between 2015 and 2025. This bibliometric map, generated using VOSviewer, reveals how central themes have developed over time, highlighting the trajectory of scholarly attention and the dynamic interplay between traditional concepts and emerging priorities. The color gradient from dark blue (older publications) to yellow (more recent ones) visually represents the chronological emergence of keywords.

At the core of the visualization, “change management” stands out as the most dominant and persistent theme, serving as the foundation of related research. Closely linked to it are keywords such as “change agents”, “change capacity”, and “organizational change”, which form an early and stable conceptual cluster. This indicates a foundational scholarly focus on the mechanisms, roles, and structures supporting effective change implementation within organizations. As time progresses, the emergence of “leadership”, “role of the leaders”, and “business development” (highlighted in green and yellow) underscores a shifting interest toward the strategic and human dimensions of managing organizational transformation.

Moving toward the right side of the map, themes such as “knowledge management” and “km” appear as intermediary concepts, acting as conceptual bridges that link change management to “organizational performance”. These links suggest that knowledge-related capabilities are viewed as critical enablers for sustaining performance improvements during and after change initiatives. Notably, “organizational performance”, along with related terms such as “risk assessment”, “organizational culture”, and “change management process”, form a more recent thematic cluster (shaded in green and blue), reflecting contemporary concerns with assessing the outcomes and long-term effectiveness of change strategies.

The map’s structure indicates a progressive shift from operational and implementation-focused studies toward more integrative, performance-oriented research. This evolution also reveals growing interest in aligning change efforts with broader organizational goals. The temporal visualization thus illustrates how the field has expanded from internal change facilitation to encompass leadership dynamics, knowledge-based strategies, and performance assessment frameworks. Overall, the map reflects a maturing scholarly discourse increasingly concerned with linking change initiatives to measurable organizational outcomes in an evolving and uncertain environment.

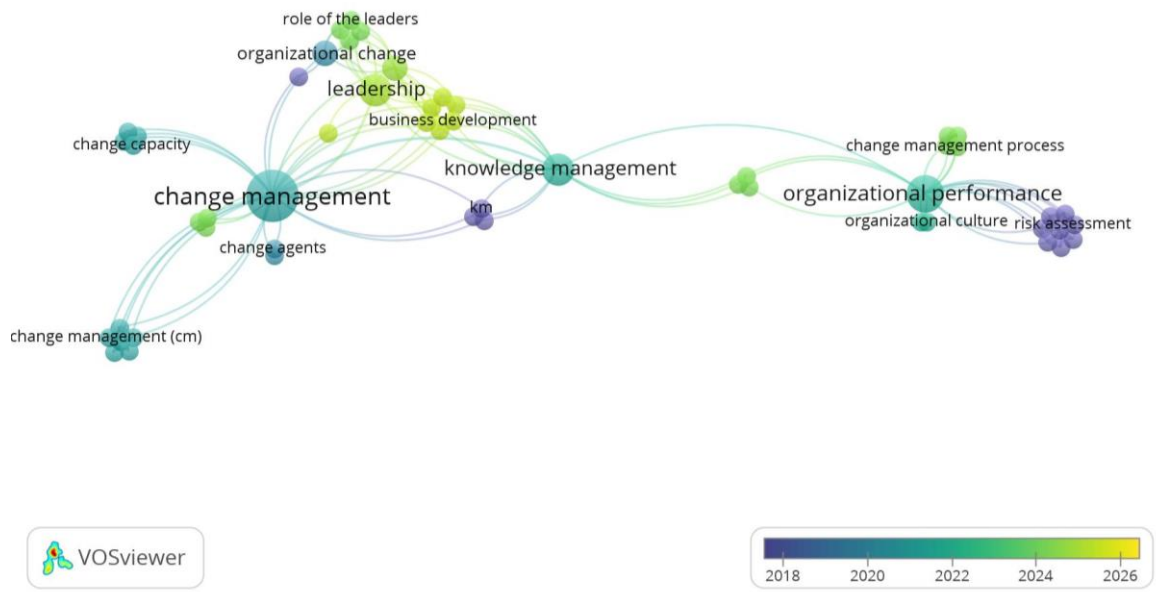


Figure 6. Mapping Central Keywords Over Time

CONCLUSION

This bibliometric analysis of Scopus-indexed literature from 2015 to 2025 provides a comprehensive understanding of how change management has evolved as a strategic driver of organizational performance. The study reveals that the intellectual structure of the field is shaped by a diverse mix of empirical, conceptual, and qualitative studies, with a predominant reliance on quantitative methods. Scholarly output has steadily grown—peaking in 2024—reflecting heightened interest in change management’s role in digital transformation, leadership engagement, and organizational agility. Influential contributions have emerged from countries such as China, the United Kingdom, and Switzerland, while journals like the Journal of Organizational Change Management and Sustainability have served as key platforms for disseminating impactful research. Keyword analysis further underscores the thematic evolution of the field, with foundational topics such as change agents and leadership gradually expanding toward more integrated themes like knowledge management, risk assessment, and performance outcomes.

The findings demonstrate that while the literature remains cross-disciplinary and somewhat fragmented, certain clusters—particularly those focusing on agile change, digital maturity, and human-centered transformation—are gaining prominence and scholarly convergence. Collaboration patterns, as shown in citation and co-authorship analyses, reveal increasing international engagement, though there is still a need for more cross-country and cross-sectoral integration. This review not only consolidates fragmented knowledge but also highlights emerging research priorities, including the need for more mixed-methods approaches and greater focus on long-term performance metrics. For both researchers and practitioners, the study offers a roadmap to navigate the evolving landscape of change management, supporting evidence-based decision-making and guiding future investigations toward more cohesive and impactful contributions. Future research should prioritize interdisciplinary collaboration and longitudinal studies that track the long-term effects of change initiatives across diverse organizational contexts. There is also a strong need for studies that integrate behavioral, technological, and cultural dimensions of change to develop holistic models. Additionally, the increased use of advanced data analytics, social network analysis, and real-time performance tracking can enrich understanding and bridge the gap between theory and practice in dynamic organizational environments.

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