

Sustainable Competitive Advantage: A Literature Review and Future Research

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Received : August 1, 2023

Revised : August 9, 2023

Accepted : August 10, 2023

Online : September 5, 2023

Abstract

Sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) is very important for companies in analyzing the quality of human resources and the company's environment that continues to change. Besides that, SCA is also able to provide short-term revenue increases and product advantages to customers. This research aims to map the topic of SCA in various scientific fields by visualizing it into a landscape map to see its development and novelty using bibliographic data. Thus, the novelty of research related to strategic management from previous studies can be known with certainty. This research is quantitative research with a descriptive approach. Documentation and literature studies in this study were obtained through the Scopus database with the keyword "sustainable competitive advantage". Bibliometric techniques were used for analysis and processed using Vosviewer software. The results of this study indicate that from 2017-2023, there are 205 articles related to the keywords used, the results of the Vosviewer analysis show 168 keywords that are connected to the keywords used, keywords that are widely used related to the keywords in this study are SCA, Sustainability, Sustainable Development, Innovation, while keywords that are rarely used are SME, Supply Chain, Competitive Strategy, these rarely used keywords can be used as a choice of future research topics.

Keywords: *Sustainable Competitive Advantage; Systematic Literature Review; Future Research*

INTRODUCTION

Companies that exist today are required to be able to create advantages in the face of existing competition. Companies are also required to be able to develop the advantages they already have, especially the advantages of human resources (Ge et al., 2018). To be able to maintain the sustainability of its advantages, the company must be able to maintain and develop excellence in each component of the company (Pratono, 2022), especially in its human resources and at the top manager level who can decide and determine what things can realize sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) (Feng et al., 2020). The concept of Sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) is important in analyzing the quality of human resources and the company's changing environment (Elidemir et al., 2020). The basis of a company with a sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) can be seen when potential competitors of the company cannot duplicate, or it will cost a lot to imitate the marketed product (Battour et al., 2021). In addition, the company's competitive advantage is not only limited to activities but also related to all company-owned resources (Makhloufi et al., 2021).

Khan et al., (2019); Kurniati & Susilowati, (2019); Yang et al., (2018), in their research, explain that the creation and maintenance of competitive advantage in today's business environment are very important to be able to generate revenue in the short-term and provide superior value to customers, and maintaining a competitive advantage over competitors has also become more important than anything else. Banmairuroy et al., (2022); Gupta et al., (2022); Hossain et al., (2022) explain that Sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) is a concept related to the resources-based view (RBV). Sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) in the resource-based view (RBV), is interpreted as a core competency that can form a specific competitive advantage in the company (Gupta et al., 2022), besides intangible resources, such as control and learning,

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making these core competencies can provide benefits in developing new products and markets. Furthermore, Pu et al., (2023) dan Toseef et al., (2022) explain that strategic imitation in a company toward core competencies is generally difficult because companies that want to imitate must make a series of irreversible investments and learn. Camisón-Haba et al., (2022); Deqiang et al., (2021); Kong & Suntrayuth, (2021) state that core competencies can be a source of competitive advantage because they can last for a long time, are part of the company's knowledge creation system, and depend on unique interrelationships between people that are very difficult to imitate.

Furthermore, Elgarhy & Abou-Shouk, (2023) and Hossain et al., (2022) explain that in management strategy, research related to sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) is carried out to determine whether the company's resources and operational characteristics have a relationship with competitive advantages that create sustainable performance. Competitive advantage, including short-term and sustainable competitive advantages (Haseeb et al., 2019), is oriented toward large profits. However, at the same time, this advantage also attracts competitors to get involved, so the competitive advantage carried out has a limited time (Lin et al., 2020). Sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) is an advantage that develops in a company in assessing and surpassing its competitors continuously (Gao et al., 2021). Companies need to build SCA and gain excess advantages by effectively integrating resources and developing resources that meet the needs for future development (Gonyora et al., 2021).

Research related to sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) has previously been conducted in various scientific fields, such as research conducted by Adi et al., (2019); An & Oh, (2019); Ayeni et al., (2021); Çağlıyan et al., (2022); Camisón-Haba et al., (2022); Jarosiński et al., (2023); Lin et al., (2020); Özkan et al., (2021); Ramadan et al., (2020); Rizki et al., (2023); Wang et al., (2018); and Yang et al., (2018) who conducted research related to sustainable competitive advantage (SCA). The concept of Sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) is often associated with macro-scale companies or large companies (Xi et al., 2022), but there are few studies related to Sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) focused on micro-companies or in smaller-scale companies such as MSMEs Al-Shahwani, (2020); and Ma et al., (2019). This research aims to map the topic of sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) in various scientific fields. Mapping is a method used to visualize a particular scientific field into a landscape map to see the development and novelty of a particular scientific field using bibliographic data, keywords, citations, and countries that play a role in scientific research. Thus, the novelty in this research is related to organizational performance in the public sector among previous studies can be known with certainty.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Abubakar et al., (2022) and Pratono, (2022) explain that strategic management has the ultimate goal of being able to realize competitive advantage by creating better value than its competitors. Al-Shahwani, (2020); Jarosiński et al., (2023); Maulini et al., (2022) state that competitive advantage is the ability of a company to maintain its competitive strategy. Competitive advantage is the core of a company's performance in a competitive market (Quaye & Mensah, 2019). Still, after a period of tremendous expansion and prosperity, many companies have forgotten their competitive advantage in the struggle for greater growth in pursuit of diverse marketing strategies (Agyei et al., 2023). Sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) refers to the long-term efforts of companies/organizations that can maintain a competitive advantage position in the industry (Ioannou & Serafeim, 2019).

Al-Shammari, (2023) and Pu et al., (2023) in their research explained that sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) can be achieved through learning effects and valuable, rare, difficult to imitate, and irreplaceable company resources. Al-Shahwani, (2020) and Palácios et al., (2021) explain that companies must continuously create innovations that cannot be imitated by

competitors through the empowerment of resources and capabilities that cannot be replaced to obtain sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) (Battour et al., 2021). In the resource-based view (RBV) theory, the source of competitive advantage includes four key resource elements: value, scarcity, irreplaceability, and unsubstitutability (Abbasi Kamardi et al., 2022). Sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) comes from the theory of competitive advantage (Banmairuroy et al., 2022). Besides, sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) is an advantage that can develop a company to surpass its competitors continuously (Abbasi Kamardi et al., 2022). Companies need to build sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) and gain greater profits by effectively integrating their resources through the development of resources that meet future development needs (Yuan & Ferreira, 2022).

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is quantitative research with a descriptive approach. Quantitative research is research where the data is taken from a mixture of numerical data and narrative data but does not use statistical analysis or mathematical formulations (White & Borgholthaus, 2022). This research uses analysis with bibliometric techniques. Bibliometric indicators are used to evaluate bibliographic data, which includes the total of authors, published articles, citations, institutions, and countries participating in research development (Carneiro et al., 2021). Documentation techniques and literature studies in this study were obtained through the Scopus database. Scopus is used as basic data, a popular platform among other databases in terms of the very high quality of articles related to research on strategic management. The keyword used in this research is "sustainable competitive advantage". The journal articles found at the initial stage of searching with the keyword "sustainable competitive advantage" were 204 documents from the Scopus database. The articles are research/studies conducted in the period 2017 to 2023. The article's findings are still raw because no exploitation has been done to find out the relevance of the research that the author will do. Furthermore, the analysis in this study was carried out using Vosviewer software.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The search results show that scientific publications with the keywords "sustainable competitive advantage" in the title, abstract, and keywords for the period 2017-2023 in the Scopus database were found in as many as 204 documents. The number of articles used are published in 2017-2023. It is done to find the relevance and novelty of research related to sustainable competitive advantage in the last seven years.

Number of Publications and Publication Sectors on Scopus Database

From Figure 1. above, it can be seen that in the last seven years, 204 articles related to the keyword "sustainable competitive advantage" were published in the Scopus database from 2017 to 2023. It can also be shown that the publication of articles analyzed through the Scopus database shows that the number of publications from 2017 to 2022 continues to increase. It can be seen from the number of publications each year on the keywords used in this study, namely "sustainable competitive advantage." in 2017, there were 11 publications of scientific articles. In 2018, there were 26 publications of scientific articles. In 2019, there were 32 publications of scientific articles. In 2020, there were 32 publications of scientific articles. In 2021, there were 39 publications of scientific articles. In 2022, there were 42 publications of scientific articles, while in 2023, it was lower than the previous year, namely 22 publications of scientific articles.

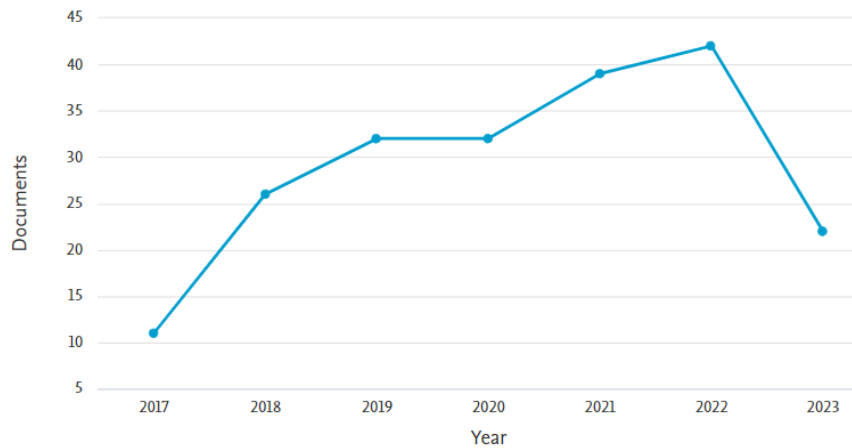


Figure 1. Publication of articles related to the keyword "sustainable competitive advantage"

Furthermore, if analyzed based on the research sector as in Table 1. above, it can be seen that the research sector on "sustainable competitive advantage," which has been carried out the most from 2017 to 2023, is in the business, management, and accounting sector, this explains that research analysis related to "sustainable competitive advantage" is research that researchers often use in analyzing competitive advantage in the business, management, and accounting sector, but based on the results of the analysis, research related to sustainable competitive advantage focuses more on large companies, there is still minimal research related to the sustainable competitive advantage that focuses on micro-companies.

Table 1. Bibliometric search results by the research sector

| Sector | F | Presentation |
|--------------------------------------|-----|--------------|
| Business, Management, and Accounting | 117 | 26.1% |
| Social Sciences | 71 | 15.8% |
| Environmental Science | 51 | 11.4% |
| Computer Science | 42 | 9.4% |
| Engineering | 42 | 9.4% |
| Energy | 41 | 9.2% |
| Economics, Econometrics, and Finance | 27 | 6.0% |
| Decision Sciences | 20 | 4.5% |
| Arts and Humanities | 7 | 1.6% |
| Mathematics | 7 | 5.1% |

Authors, Country, and Affiliation

From the results of data analysis based on Scopus database searches, it can be shown that there are authors with the most contributions in research related to "sustainable competitive advantage". The contribution of these authors is not only measured by the number of papers per year but also by the number of derivative articles that cite their names as research citations, as shown in Figure 2.

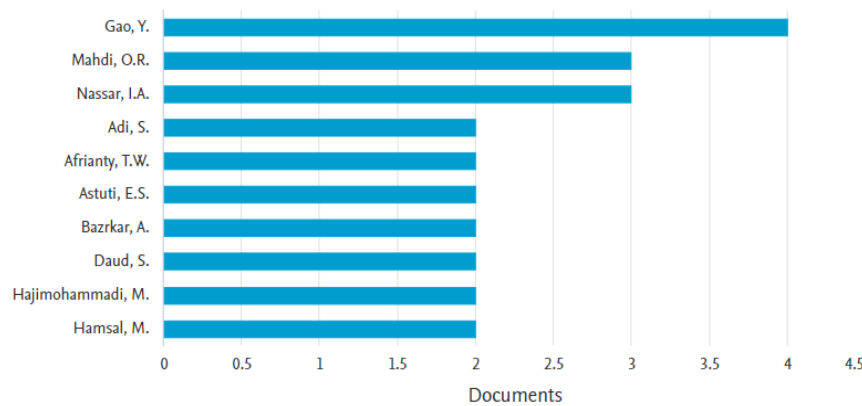


Figure 2. Most contributing authors in research related to "sustainable competitive advantage"

From Figure 2. and the table can be seen that the author with the most contributions in research related to "sustainable competitive advantage" is Gao, Y, with a total of 4 articles, followed by Mahdi, O.R. and Nassar, I.A. in the same study with a total of three articles, while Adi, S; Afrianty, T.W; Astuti, E.S; Bazrkar, A; Daud, S; Hajimohammadi, M; and Hamsal, M. for two articles.

Table 2. Author with the most citations related to "sustainable competitive advantage"

| No. | Author | Publication | Cite |
|-----|-------------------|-------------|------|
| 1. | Gao, Y. | 4 | 93 |
| 2. | Mahdi, O.R. | 3 | 166 |
| 3. | Nassar, I.A. | 3 | 166 |
| 4. | Adi, S. | 2 | 10 |
| 5. | Afrianty, T.W. | 2 | 12 |
| 6. | Astuti, E.S. | 2 | 12 |
| 7. | Bazrkar, A. | 2 | 14 |
| 8. | Daud, S. | 2 | 2 |
| 9. | Hajimohammadi, M. | 2 | 14 |
| 10. | Hamsal, M. | 2 | 0 |

Furthermore, when viewed from the number of citations used in the research conducted by these authors, the research conducted by Mahdi, O.R., and Nassar, I.A. has the highest number of citations, namely 166 citations, followed by Gao, Y. with 93 citations, Bazrkar, A. and Hajimohammadi, M. with 14 citations, Afrianty, T.W. and Astuti, E.S. with 12 citations, Adi, S. with 10, Daud, S. with 2 and Hamsal, M. Has no citations from 2 published articles.

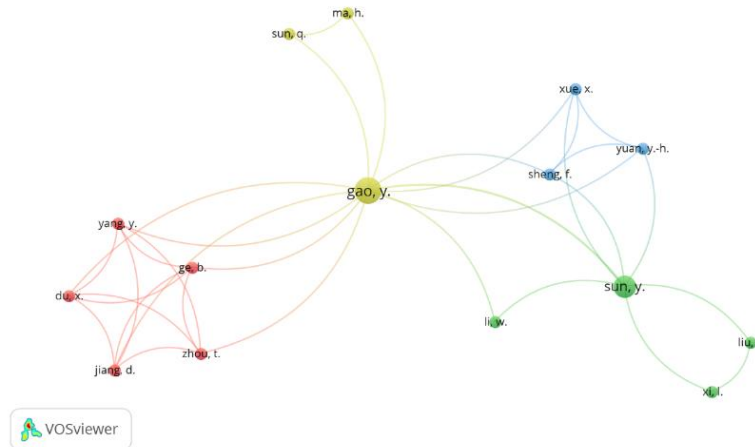


Figure 3. Linkage of cooperative relationships between authors related to "sustainable competitive advantage"

Based on the results of the analysis as in Figure 3. It can be seen that the strength of the relationship between authors is displayed in the results of bibliometric analysis with a network visualization display. It shows that the results of cooperation between authors are divided into three groups or color clusters, namely red, green, and blue. From the results of the analysis, it can also be seen that Gao, Y. is one of the authors who encourage other studies to conduct research related to "sustainable competitive advantage".

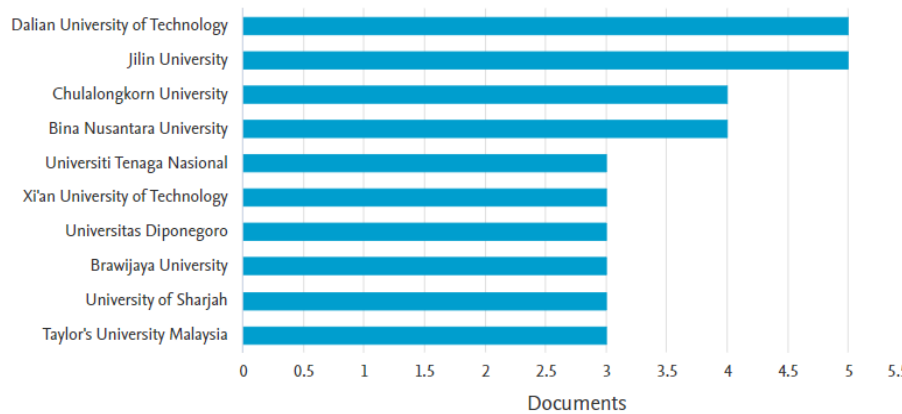


Figure 4. Research on "sustainable competitive advantage" in 2017 - 2023 based on affiliation

From Figure 4 above, it can be seen that research related to "sustainable competitive advantage" is mostly conducted or written by researchers from the Dalian University of Technology and Jilin University, with a total of five published articles each. Chulalongkorn University and Bina Nusantara University each have 4 published articles. At the same time, other institutions, namely Universiti Tenaga Nasional, Xi'an University of Technology, Diponegoro University, Brawijaya University, University of Sharjah, and Taylor's University Malaysia, have three published articles each.

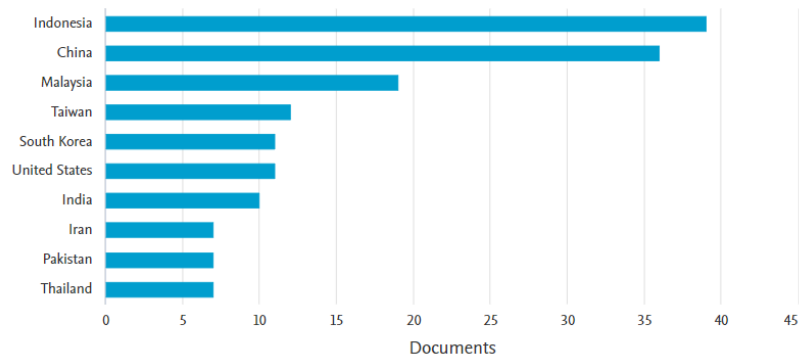


Figure 5. Research on "sustainable competitive advantage" in 2017 - 2023 based on country region

Based on Figure 5. Above, it can be seen that the country with the most contributions related to "sustainable competitive advantage" research is Indonesia, with a total of 39 published articles, followed by China with 36 articles, Malaysia with 19 articles, Taiwan with 12 articles, South Korea and the United States 11 articles, India 10 articles, while Iran, Pakistan and Thailand 7 articles each.

Co-occurrence keywords

Keywords in a published study are an indication of the most frequently used words in a study. Based on the results of the Vosviewer analysis conducted, it was found that word extraction from titles and abstracts with 168 Co-occurrence connections through 6 clusters are displayed in the visualization in Figure 6.

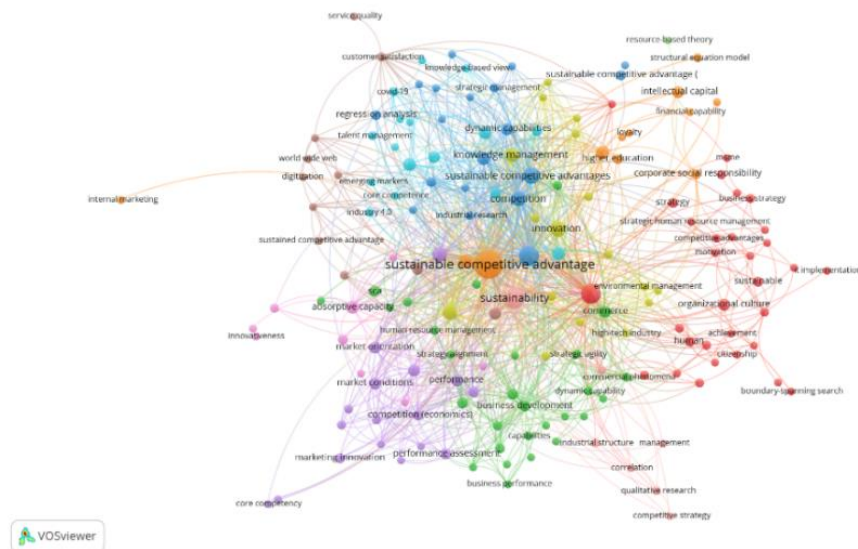


Figure 6. Keywords co-occurrence visualization.

The visualization above shows that the concept of "sustainable competitive advantage" has been used as a research topic. However, looking at the network that connects the keywords, there are still gaps with thin nodules, especially in customer orientation, customer orientation, and MSME. It can be interpreted that the keywords customer orientation, customer orientation, and MSME are still rarely used in research related to "sustainable competitive advantage". Furthermore, from Figure 6, it can also be seen that several keywords with bright nodules are related to other keywords, namely sustainable competitive advantage, sustainability, sustainable development, innovation, competitiveness, knowledge management, resource management, leadership,

resources-based view, and knowledge as described in Table 3. these keywords are the most used and analyzed terms in a study.

Table 3. The most used keywords related to "sustainable competitive advantage"

| Rating | Keywords | Total Link Strength | Occurrences |
|--------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Sustainable Competitive Advantage | 354 | 108 |
| 2 | Sustainability | 260 | 38 |
| 3 | Sustainable Development | 245 | 32 |
| 4 | Innovation | 120 | 17 |
| 5 | Competitiveness | 114 | 13 |
| 6 | Knowledge Management | 81 | 11 |
| 7 | Resource Management | 60 | 8 |
| 8 | Leadership | 52 | 8 |
| 9 | Resources-Based View | 51 | 8 |
| 10 | Knowledge | 48 | 4 |

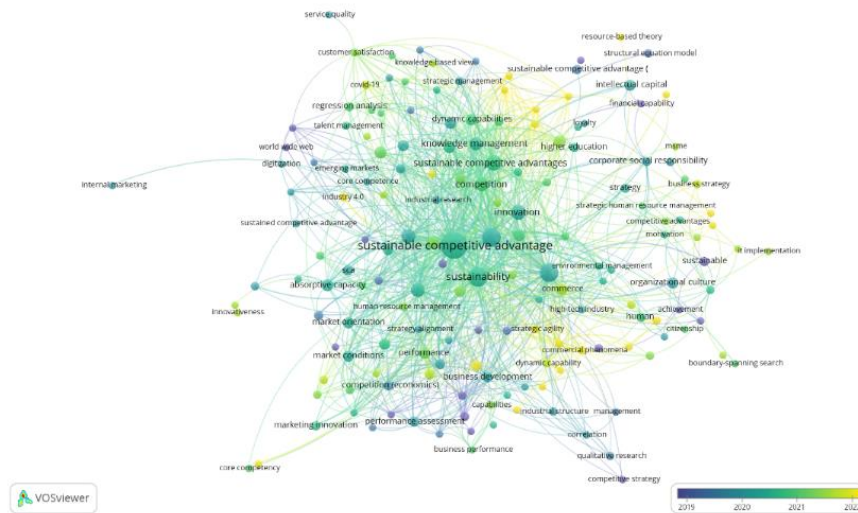


Figure 7. Keyword overlay visualization

The analysis results from the Overlay Visualization on Vosviewer also show that ten keywords are the least used but influence keyword links, as shown in Figure 7 and Table 4. The ten (10) least common keywords indicate that the topic is still rarely discussed in broad and specific research. Of the ten least frequently used keywords in research related to "sustainable competitive advantage", in addition, there are five keywords that show low density with a dimmer visualization color than other keywords, namely small and medium enterprises, supply chain, competitive strategy, customer orientation, and MSME. These least frequent keywords can be a recommendation for researchers and practitioners to conduct specific research related to these keywords.

Table 4. Rarely used keywords related to "sustainable competitive advantage" in 2017-2023

| Rating | Keywords | Total Link Strength | Occurrences |
|--------|----------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Talent Management | 7 | 3 |
| 2 | Capabilities | 6 | 3 |
| 3 | Financial Capability | 5 | 2 |
| 4 | Knowledge Sharing | 5 | 2 |

| Rating | Keywords | Total Link Strenght | Occurrences |
|--------|------------------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| 5 | Organizational Performance | 5 | 2 |
| 6 | Small and Medium Entreprises | 5 | 2 |
| 7 | Supply Chain | 5 | 2 |
| 8 | Competitive Strategy | 4 | 2 |
| 9 | Costumer Orientation | 4 | 2 |
| 10 | MSME | 4 | 2 |

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of bibliometric analysis using the Scopus and Vosviewer databases, it can be concluded that Scopus is a database of research articles that are credible and specific to the keywords used in this study so that comprehensive bibliometric indicators can be known, starting from country, institution, and author name. In addition, it can also be seen the number of scientific publications related to the research topic, namely sustainable competitive advantage, then the type of publication such as articles, proceedings, or reviews (in this study, all documents from Scopus are articles). From the analysis using Vosviewer, it can also be seen the keyword network between one study and another so that the most frequently used keywords and the least used keywords by researchers can be known.

Furthermore, from the results of the analysis, it can be seen that articles from 2017-2023 recorded in the Scopus database related to the keyword sustainable competitive advantage are 204 articles. These keywords are keywords that are often used as research topics. Other analysis results also found 168 keywords that are connected to the keyword sustainable competitive advantage.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

This study also shows the existence of keywords that are often used, namely sustainable competitive advantage, sustainability, sustainable development, innovation, competitiveness, knowledge management, resource management, leadership, resources-based view, and knowledge. Some keywords are rarely used, namely small and medium enterprises, supply chain, competitive strategy, customer orientation, and MSME. So that other researchers can be careful in choosing research topics that are more actual and have a strong originality value in future research.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The researcher would like to thank the Doctoral Program Human Research Development Airlangga University, Surabaya, and all parties involved in this research.

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