



A Scoping Review of Human Resources in Philanthropy: Research Landscape and Future Agenda

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Abstract: This study aims to map the trends and development of research on human resources in the field of philanthropy, based on journal articles indexed in Scopus during the period from 2002 to 2022. The study provides a foundation for the advancement of future research and the formulation of policies related to human resource management in the philanthropic sector. A bibliometric analysis was conducted using the R-Bibliometrix package on a total of 128 publications spanning two decades. The analysis produced a visual mapping of research patterns, popular keywords, the most productive authors, and thematic evolution within the field. The study reveals a significant increase in publications related to human resources in philanthropy since 2010. Dominant themes include "training" and the "European Social Fund", with Tome E and Potluka O identified as the most frequently cited authors. Furthermore, the study highlights a critical gap in the literature regarding the conceptualization of human resources, which are still often viewed merely as managerial assets rather than as agents of social development. Although this study does not directly critique the normative concept of human resources, its findings contribute to ongoing discussions on sustainability and inclusive development. This is reflected in the growing tendency of philanthropic institutions to invest in human resource development as a means of achieving long-term social impact. These findings support the agenda of sustainable and inclusive economic development. The results of this study provide direction for future research on human resources in the philanthropic sector, while also emphasizing the importance of more critical inquiry into the human dimensions of philanthropic work. To the best of the author's knowledge, this is the first comprehensive bibliometric review specifically focusing on the theme of human resources in philanthropic research. As such, it offers valuable insights into the evolution and future development potential of this area.

Keywords: Human resources, philanthropy, bibliometric analysis, sustainability, inclusive development.

1. Introduction

In 2015, the United Nations (UN) introduced the Seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through a document entitled *"Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development."* These goals are expected to be achieved by 2030, with a strong emphasis on sustainable and inclusive development (Abdullah et al., 2018).

Achieving inclusive development requires adequate funding, and social financing or philanthropy has emerged as a viable alternative source for sustainable financing. The

level of public participation is significantly influenced by the quality of human resources, particularly in managerial roles (Ndlovu et al., 2021). Research in this area explores how human resource quality affects the management of social funds (Syaikh et al., 2021). One prominent form of philanthropy is waqf, a unique instrument in Islamic finance that can be utilized to enhance a nation's economic strength.

According to Zarka, as cited in Huda (2010), waqf assets can be employed in a variety of service-oriented projects, such as free schools and hospitals for the poor, as well as income-generating ventures like the rental of commercial shopping centers. The fundamental principle of improving societal welfare through Islamic sharia is closely related to the operational system of waqf.

This study aims to identify research trends related to human resources in philanthropy, as published in leading academic journals. The dataset analyzed comprises 128 indexed research publications from 2002 to 2020. These data were processed and analyzed using the R-Bibliometric application to map the development of research on human resources in philanthropy.

2. Literature Review

Human resources represent a fundamental aspect of organizational success (Alheet et al., 2021; Mansion et al., 2020). It is essential to build human resource capacity, as the unique objectives of philanthropy require exceptional human talent (Alheet et al., 2021). A study by Li et al. (2017) found that human resources significantly enhance core economic efficiency. A well-structured human resource system supports the optimization of organizational performance (Singh et al., 2017).

Philanthropy—particularly through mechanisms such as waqf—plays a significant role in addressing poverty, especially within Muslim communities. Historically, waqf has provided essential services to the state at no cost, thereby reducing the burden on government expenditures (Kuran, 2001).

Waqf has strengthened the socio-economic position of Muslims and has served as a unifying social force throughout the Islamic world during the Ottoman Empire (Yaacob & Nahar, 2017; Ferlibaş, 2015). In the 16th and 17th centuries, philanthropy significantly influenced religious, social, and cultural life in Istanbul (Güner Zülfiyar, 2022). The successful implementation of waqf in Istanbul also facilitated the funding of public social services in mosques, in line with the region's predominantly Muslim population. Professionally managed waqf can provide vital funding for educational institutions, the development of hospitals, and economic empowerment initiatives (Yumarni & Suhartini, 2019; Gamon & Tagoranao, 2018; Huq & Khan, 2017; Erünsal, 2015; Joseph, 2014; Amedoski, 2012; Dale, 2010). Waqf serves as an alternative approach to community development (Sanusi, 2015). However, for such development to be effective, waqf management must take into account factors such as human resources and public awareness (Qurrata, 2019).

In addition, social funds in Europe have played a crucial role in developing training systems in several countries, including Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic (Tomé & Tracz-Krupa, 2019). Ongoing challenges related to the quantity and quality of human resources in Europe remain a central concern in human resource management policy, highlighting significant social issues (Tomé & Tracz-Krupa, 2019).

3. Data, Methodology & Model Specification

This study employs a bibliometric method to generate quantitative insights into the literature on human resources in philanthropy, based on an analysis of 128 Scopus-indexed journal articles published between 2002 and 2022. The combination of bibliometric and content analysis has become increasingly popular among researchers (Koskinen et al., 2008). To ensure reliability and validity, reviews such as descriptive, integrative, systematic, or meta-analytic are often integrated with bibliometric analysis to provide a quantitative perspective on the literature (Martínez-Climent et al., 2018).

Although bibliometric analysis has several advantages, it remains relatively underutilized in the context of Islamic finance (Alshater et al., 2020). Moreover, this method distinguishes itself from other review techniques by offering a more meaningful and in-depth examination of key aspects of the topic under investigation. Previous studies have explored the impact of various similarity measures (Ahlgren et al., 2003), which have been tested using mapping techniques (Boyack et al., 2005).

4. Findings/Results

Table 1 presents the types of documents utilized in research related to human resources in philanthropy. A total of 128 documents were categorized into five types: journal articles (93 documents), books (2 documents), book chapters (12 documents), conference papers (18 documents), and reviews (3 documents).

Journal articles represent the most frequently used document type in research on human resources in philanthropy, accounting for 93 documents or 72.6% of the total. This indicates that the references used are predominantly scientific and credible, as the majority of the sources consist of peer-reviewed academic articles.

Table 1. Document Types

No	Types of Document	Number
1	Journal article	93
2	Book	2
3	Book chapters	12
4	Conference	18
5	Review	3
	Total	128

Source: Data Processing Results

Table 2 presents the average number of citations related to the theme of human resources in philanthropy over a two-decade research period, spanning from 2002 to 2022. The year 2019 recorded the highest number of published documents, with a total of 13 publications. The highest average number of citations occurred in 2005, reaching 44.67 citations per document. Since 2010, there has been a gradual increase in the number of academic articles focusing on the theme of human resources in philanthropy. This trend indicates a significant research opportunity in this field that warrants further exploration.

Table 2. Average Citations per Year

Year	TP	Mean TC per Article	Mean TC per Year	Citable Years
2002	1	5	0,25	20
2003	5	3,6	1,93	19
2004	1	0	0	18
2005	3	44,67	2,63	17
2006	3	8	0,5	16
2007	3	25	1,67	15
2008	6	14,17	1,01	14
2009	2	5,5	0,42	13
2010	8	8,12	0,67	12
2011	6	16,17	1,47	11
2012	10	4,8	0,48	10
2013	11	3,55	0,39	9
2014	11	3,63	0,45	8
2015	6	7,5	1,07	7
2016	9	12,56	2,09	6
2017	6	5	1	5
2018	6	9,17	2,29	4
2019	13	3,54	1,18	3
2020	4	4,25	2,12	2
2021	12	1,75	1,75	1
2022	2	0		0
Total	128			

Source: Data Processing Results

TC : Total Citation
TP : Total Publish

Figure 1 presents an illustration comprising three interconnected elements: journal names, authors, and keywords used in the research. These three components are linked by grey lines. The diagram begins with the journal names, which are connected to authors who frequently contribute to those publications. Each author is subsequently linked to the keywords they commonly use in research related to human resources in philanthropy. The size of each rectangle represents the number of publications associated with each element.

The first element includes seven journals indexed in the Three Fields Plot, all of which focus on the theme of human resources in philanthropy. The journal with the highest number of publications in this field is the *European Journal of Training and Development*, represented by a red rectangle. This rectangle is connected to Tome E, the most prolific author contributing to this journal.

The second element, located at the center of the figure, displays the names of several authors associated with the listed journals. These authors are also linked to frequently used keywords, which appear on the right side of the figure. In this study, 16 researchers have been identified as major contributors to this theme. The size of each rectangle reflects the number of publications produced by each author. The most prolific authors in this area are Tome E and Potluka O, as indicated by the largest rectangles.

Finally, the third element on the right side of the figure illustrates the keywords frequently used in studies on human resources in philanthropy. A total of 14 keywords are listed, with “training” being the most frequently used term. “European Social Fund” ranks second in terms of usage frequency. This indicates that "training" and "European Social Fund" are closely associated with research in the field of human resources in philanthropy.

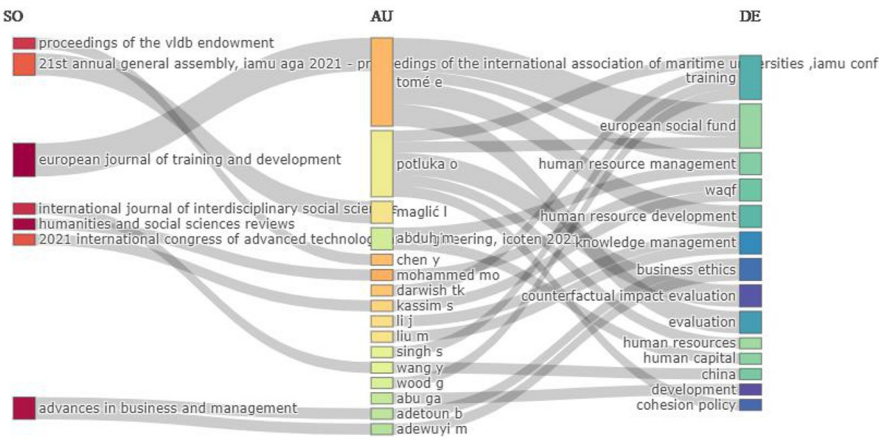


Fig. 1. Three Field Plots (Source: Data Processing Results)

Figure 2 illustrates the number of documents published by various journals, categorized based on their relevance to the theme of human resources in philanthropy. The data presents a list of the top 20 journals, indicating the number of published documents, which is marked with a sequence of blue-colored numbers. The intensity of the blue color reflects both the quantity and relevance of the published documents: the darker

the blue, the higher the quantity and relevance. The total number of documents published per journal ranges from 0 to 3.

The journals with the highest relevance—indicated by dark blue—are the *European Journal of Training and Development* and *Humanities and Social Sciences Reviews*. Journals positioned lower on the list are marked with lighter blue tones, suggesting lower levels of quantity and relevance in the context of human resources in philanthropy. Additionally, a total of 12 journals are marked with a light blue color.

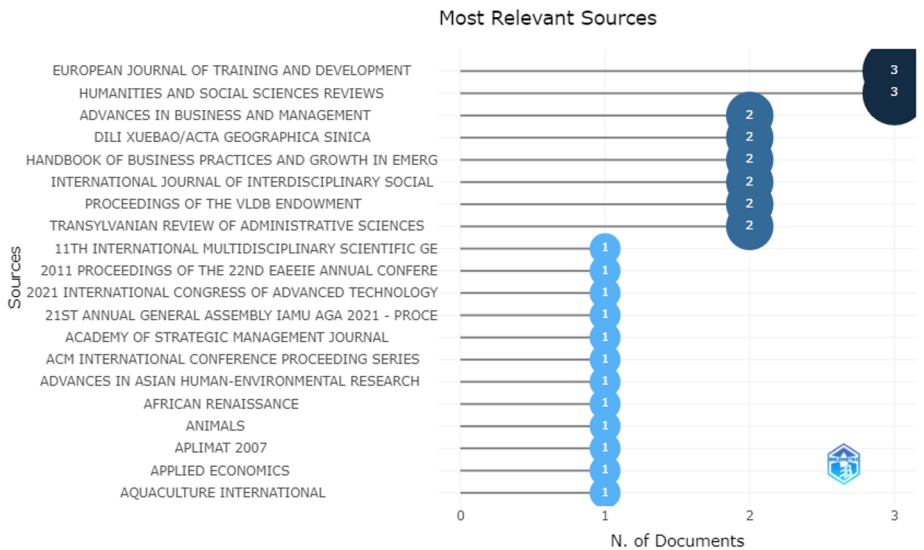


Fig. 2. Article Source (Source: Data Processing Results)

This study examines the evolution of journals that serve as key sources for research on human resources in philanthropy. Figure 3 illustrates the annual publication trends of each journal from 2002 to 2022, highlighting fluctuations in their publication frequency over time. The *Journal of Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences* was launched in 2002, followed by the *Proceedings of the VLDB Endowment* in 2007, the *Handbook of Business Practice and Growth in Emerging Markets* in 2009, and the *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences*.

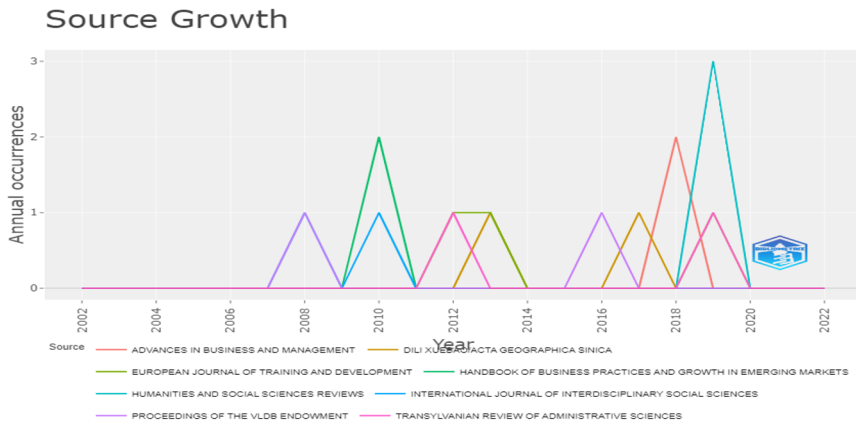


Fig. 3. Development of Journal Sources (Source: Data Processing Results)

Productivity in this context is not solely measured by journal publications, but also by the contributions of individual authors. Figure 4 illustrates the productivity of various authors conducting research in the field of human resources in philanthropy from 2002 to 2022. The red line in the graph represents the productivity of a particular author over time, highlighting the articles they have published and their subsequent research development. The circles along the red line indicate the number of scientific articles published each year.

Among the authors in this field, Abu GA and Ahrend R began their research on human resources in philanthropy in 2005 and demonstrated a relatively high level of productivity in their writing. Additionally, Chen Y, with a long publication history, contributed research from 2008 to 2019. Five authors—Abu GA (2005), Ahrend R (2005), Adetoun B (2018), Adewuyi M (2018), and Abduh M (2019)—produced scientific articles on this theme but have not published further work since then.

In contrast, Kassim S and Maglic L began their research in 2021, with Kassim S demonstrating a high level of productivity in publishing scientific articles on this topic, as indicated by the large blue circles in the graph.

Top-Authors' Production over Time

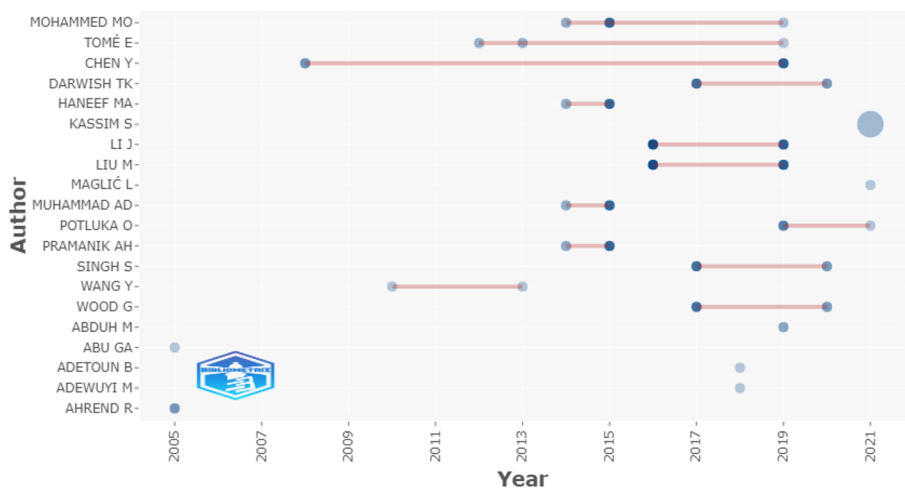


Fig. 4. Author Productivity (Source: Data Processing Results)

Authors who have published scientific articles can be evaluated based on their impact, which is measured using the H-Index. The magnitude of the H-Index is represented by dark blue in Figure 5. The analysis identifies a total of twenty authors, categorized according to their H-Index scores. Eleven authors have an H-Index of 2, while the remaining nine fall within the H-Index range of 1.

Author Local Impact by H index

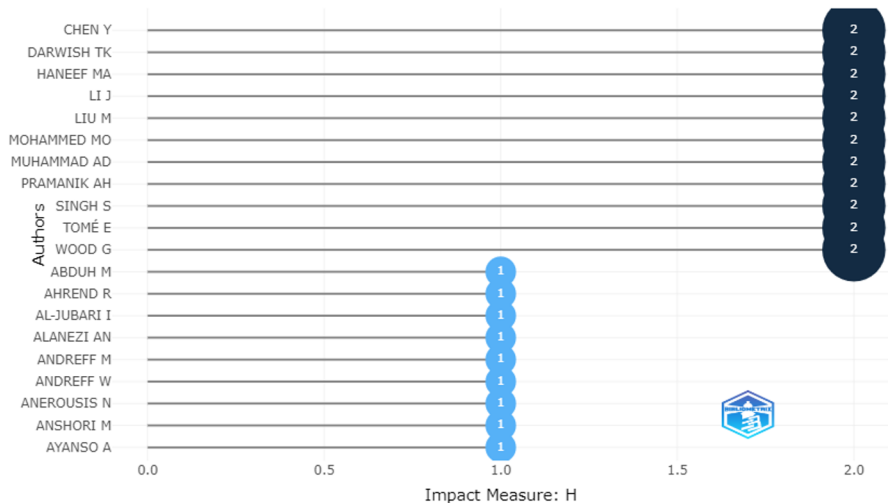


Fig. 5. H-Author Index (Source: Data Processing Results)

Table 3. In View of Lotka's Law

Written Documents	Number of Authors	Proportion of Authors
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1	313	0,95
2	13	0,04
3	2	0,006

Source: Data Processing Results

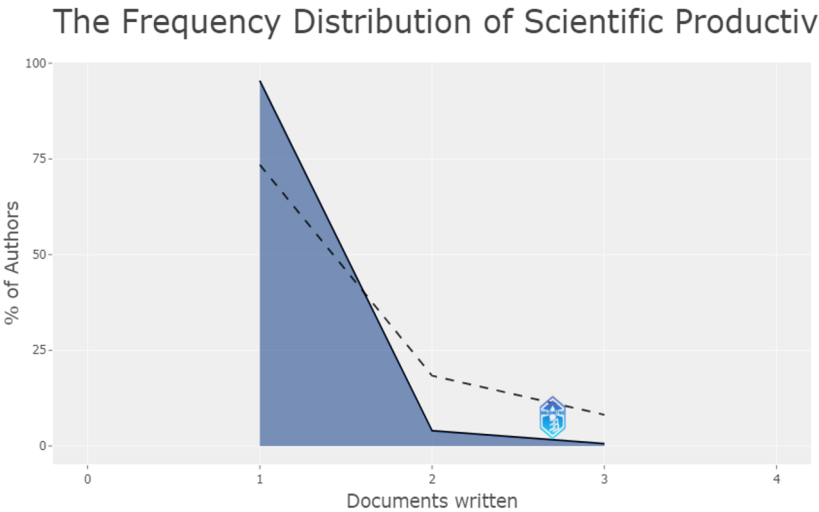


Fig. 6. Through Lotka's Law (Source: Data Processing Results)

Figure 6 and Table 3 analyze author productivity, revealing that researchers in the field of human resources in philanthropy exhibit a low level of research continuity. A total of 313 authors have published only one scientific article, while 13 authors have published two articles, and only two authors have produced three articles. Figure 6 clearly illustrates this sharp decline in productivity levels.

Figure 7 illustrates the countries of origin for each scientific article, highlighting the top 20 contributing countries. The top three countries are China, with 15 published articles; Romania, with 10 articles; and the United States, with 8 articles. Two colors are used in the bar chart: blue and orange. Countries represented with longer orange bars indicate a higher level of international collaboration. Increased collaboration typically results in more comprehensive scientific articles, as they are the outcome of cross-national research efforts.

Most notably, the United States demonstrates the highest level of international collaboration, whereas Romania, despite having a relatively significant scientific output, shows no involvement in international partnerships.

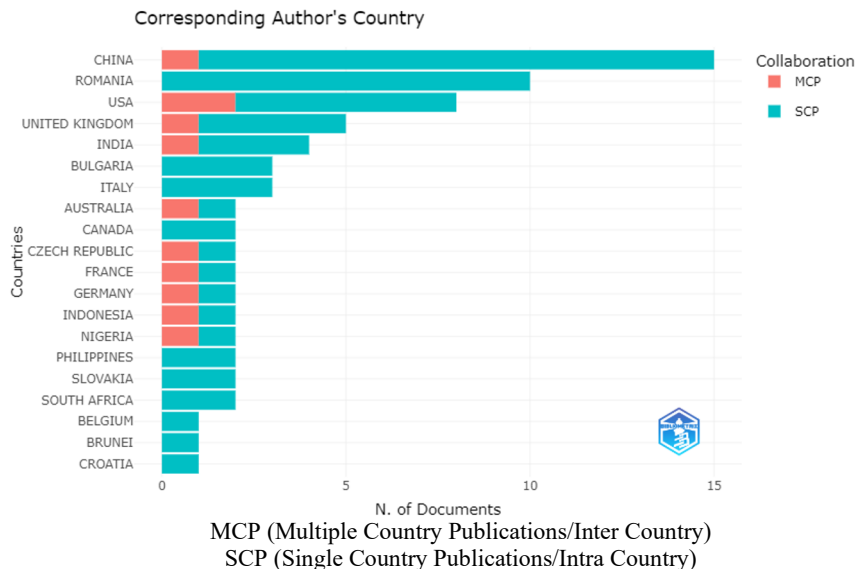


Fig. 7. The Author's Correspondent Country (Source: Data Processing Reults)

This study analyzes the key terms used in the documents under review. Some words appear between zero and five times, while the 50 most frequently mentioned terms are displayed in a diagram to illustrate their relevance to the theme of human resources in philanthropy.

The most frequently occurring term is *"human resources"*, which appears nine times, representing 7% of the total mentions, and is highlighted in blue. The second most common phrases are *"European Social Fund"* and *"human capital"*, each appearing seven times, accounting for 6% of the total mentions, and are marked in orange. This indicates that the concepts of human resources, the European Social Fund, and human capital are closely related to the theme of human resources in philanthropy.

The tree map shown in Figure 8 displays the frequency of these terms. In the map, each word is represented by a box, with the size of the box corresponding to the frequency of occurrence—the more frequently a term is mentioned, the larger its box.

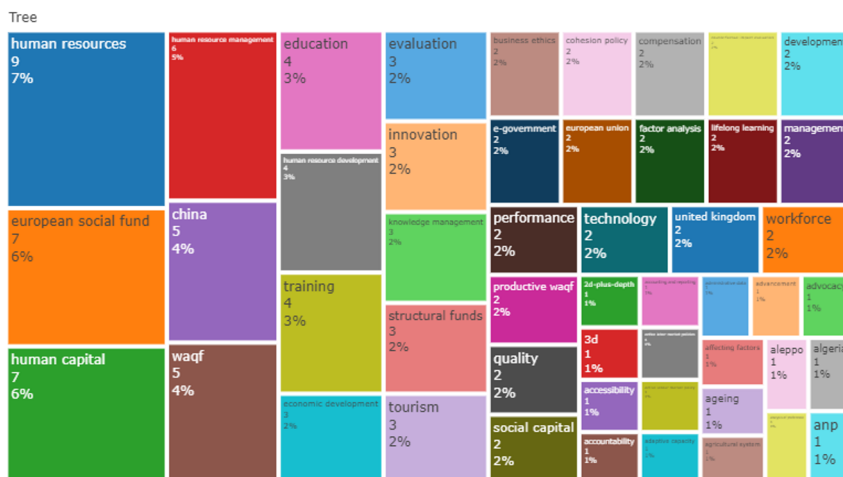


Fig. 8. Word Tree Map (Source: Data Processing Results)

Topic trends represent a crucial component of this study. Figure 9 provides an overview of how these topics have evolved over time, organized by year. This visualization allows us to identify which topics have maintained long-term relevance and which ones are more recent. The display of topics is based on the frequency of words used in research related to human resources in philanthropy.

In this visualization, larger blue circles indicate higher word frequency, while the darker the color of the circle, the more recently the term has been used in research. The data is constrained within the specified time range shown in Figure 9.

Since 2010, a significant shift in topic development has been observed. Research on the *European Social Fund* began to emerge more prominently in the context of human resources in philanthropy. In 2012, themes related to *human resources* and *human resource management* started to appear. Further developments in 2014 highlighted the emergence of topics such as *human capital* and *China*. In 2016, the concept of *waqf* (Islamic endowment) began to surface in studies related to human resources in philanthropy.

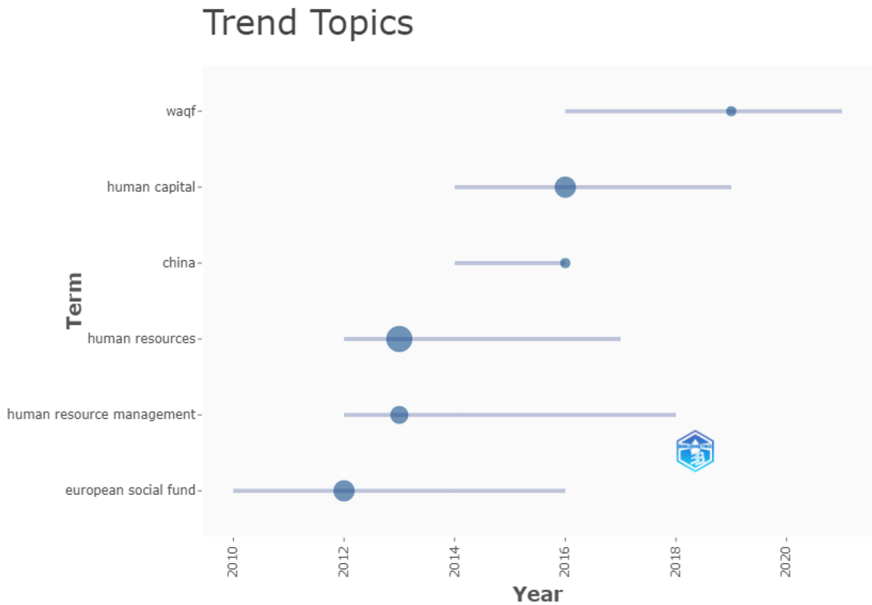


Fig. 9. Trend Topics (Source: Data Processing Results)

This study also analyzes the thematic map based on density and centrality, divided into four quadrants as illustrated in Figure 10. The results were obtained through a semi-automated algorithm that examined the titles of all references related to the subject of study, incorporating additional relevant keywords from the authors' own keywords. This approach allows for a deeper exploration of thematic variation.

- The upper-right quadrant displays themes with both high density and high centrality, indicating that these topics are well-developed, highly relevant, and important for future research.
- In contrast, the upper-left quadrant contains specialized and less frequent themes that demonstrate high density but low centrality, suggesting significant potential for further development.
- The lower-left quadrant comprises outdated or declining themes, characterized by both low density and low centrality.
- The lower-right quadrant represents fundamental themes with high centrality but low density, making them essential for inclusion in studies due to their general nature and relevance to ongoing research themes.

Figure 10 shows that:

- The upper-right quadrant includes themes such as *human resource management*, *industry*, *employee relations*, and *human capital*, suggesting that these are important but still require further research and development.
- The upper-left quadrant features themes such as *technology*, *regression analysis*, *information technology*, *e-Government*, *IT service personnel*, *education*, and *curriculum*. These seven themes exhibit high developmental potential and merit broader investigation in future studies.

- The lower-left quadrant does not contain any represented themes.
- The lower-right quadrant encompasses themes such as *human resource management*, *knowledge management*, *personnel training*, *competition*, *economy*, *information management*, *human resources*, and *economic development*. These nine themes are general and sustainable, playing a critical role in the transition from Industry 4.0 to 5.0, where high-quality human resources are essential.

Moreover, the theme of human resources in philanthropy can be integrated into each of these nine foundational themes.

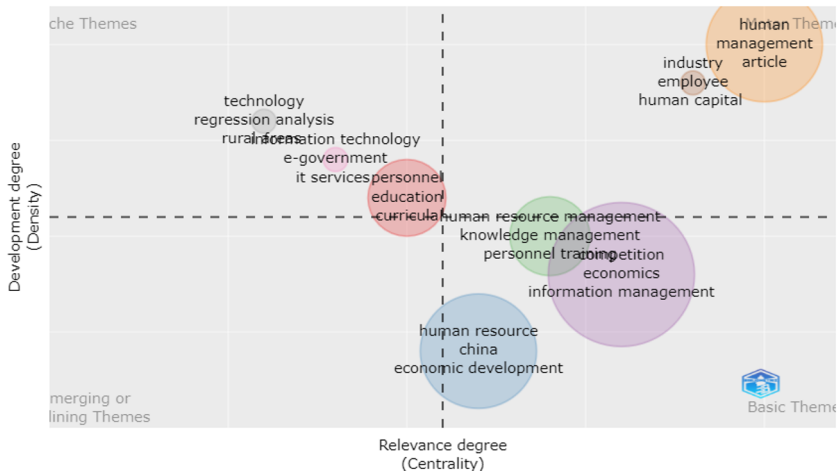


Fig. 10. Thematic Map (Source: Data Processing Results)

Figure 11 illustrates the thematic evolution within the context of this study, which focuses on human resources in philanthropy. While the central theme remains human resources in philanthropy, the figure also highlights several sub-themes that frequently appear in the scholarly literature related to this topic.

- On the left side of the figure, seven prominent themes are shown for the period between 2002 and 2012. The size of each theme label varies based on its frequency of use. The most notable themes during this period include *development*, *market*, *performance*, and *study*.
- The center of the figure displays seven themes that began to emerge during the 2013–2017 period. These themes evolved from those found in the earlier period and are conceptually linked. Interestingly, the theme *study* persisted from the previous period. A new theme, *China*, emerged during this stage as a transformation of earlier themes such as *development*, *market*, and *performance*.
- On the right side of the figure, the most frequently used themes from 2018 to 2022 are presented. Two dominant themes stand out as direct continuations from the previous period:
 - *Social*, which evolved from themes such as *Europe*, *resources*, and *capital*.

- *Business*, which developed as a continuation of the theme *study*.

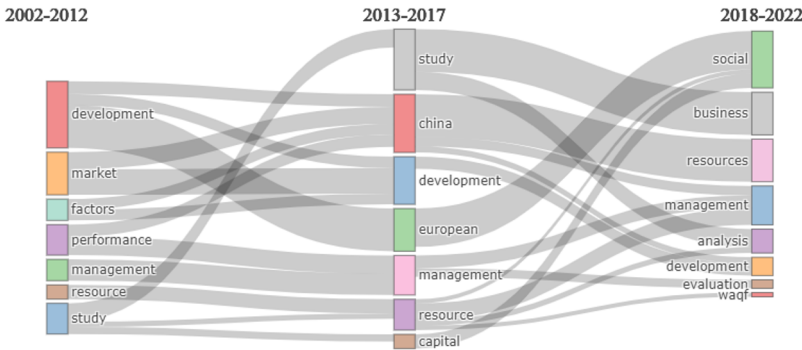


Fig. 11. Thematic evolution (Source: Data Processing Results)

This study presents a conceptual structure map that illustrates the relationships among frequently used terms in research on human resources in philanthropy. The mapping is based on the co-occurrence of terms, which are organized into specific regions or clusters. Each term is positioned according to its coordinates on Dim 1 and Dim 2, enabling the construction of a map that groups terms with similar values.

In the context of bibliometric analysis, Dim 1 and Dim 2 refer to the dimensions used to interpret bibliometric data. These two dimensions help elucidate the relationships among authors, scholarly works, and fields of study. A more detailed explanation of these dimensions is provided below:

1. Dim 1: Structural Dimension
 - This dimension pertains to the structure and relationships within scholarly networks, such as collaborations among authors, institutions, or countries in terms of knowledge dissemination.
 - For example, Dim 1 analysis may involve identifying clusters of frequently collaborating authors or tracing journals that consistently publish on a particular topic.
 - This dimension typically uses metrics such as co-authorship, co-citation, and bibliographic coupling to understand interaction patterns within the academic community.
2. Dim 2: Thematic Dimension
 - This dimension focuses on the content and themes present in academic literature. Its primary purpose is to analyze topics, keywords, and research trends.
 - Dim 2 analysis involves keyword analysis, topic modeling, or citation network analysis to explore dominant themes within a field.

- The goal is to identify emerging research trends, thematic gaps, or areas warranting further scholarly attention.

The data in this conceptual map are divided into two main areas: a red cluster and a blue cluster. Each area contains terms that are closely related to one another. As shown in Figure 11, the red cluster includes a greater number of terms, indicating a higher volume of scientific publications that connect the concepts within this area.

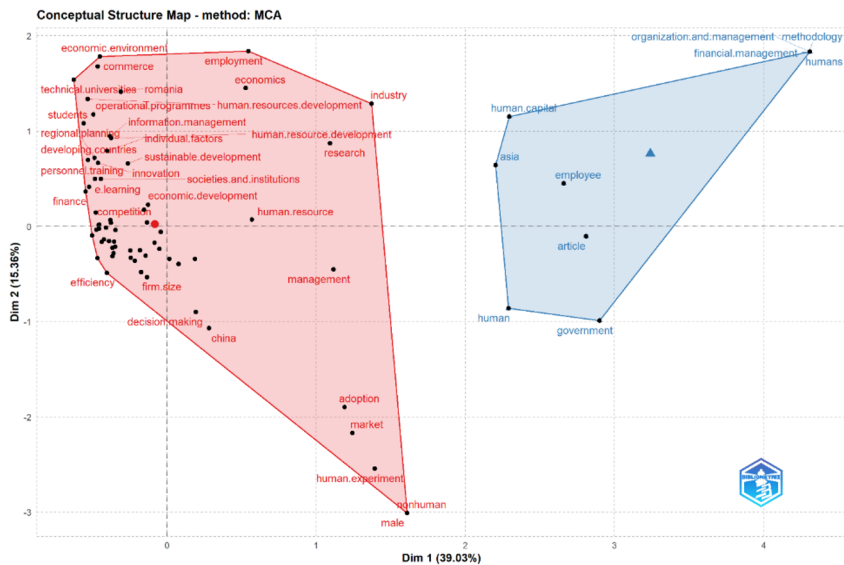


Fig. 12. Conceptual Structure Map (Source: Data Processing Results)

5. Discussion and Analysis

The need for and role of human resources (HR) across various sectors of life is both continuous and crucial. This importance extends beyond the formal economic sector to encompass social contexts such as households, philanthropy, and community empowerment. For instance, household sustainability requires adequate HR capacity (Wilkins, 2013), and economic development is highly dependent on the quality and quantity of the available workforce (Cao, 2022; Jokić et al., 2015).

In the context of philanthropy, HR plays a vital role in the effective management of social funds. Ndlovu et al. (2021) emphasize that the quality of philanthropic managers directly influences the success of social programs. Interestingly, the relationship between social funds and HR is reciprocal. Social funds such as waqf, for example, can influence societal behavior and attitudes—such as the adoption of eco-friendly technologies by farmers (Zhu et al., 2016).

At the public policy level, Cace et al. (2012) found that social funds from the European Union in Romania have improved labor adaptability and access to the labor market. A

skilled workforce not only accelerates investment but also enhances overall societal well-being (Volo et al., 2020). Increased productivity is closely linked to improved human performance, which can be achieved through training and development (Irimie et al., 2017; Molina et al., 2004).

A similar example can be found in China's tourism sector, where the expansion of star-rated hotels has been accompanied by significant investment in HR (Shi et al., 2016). Moreover, regional disparities in HR quality contribute to unequal development in urban areas, as explained by Zhang et al. (2013), who highlight the importance of HR accumulation in urban planning.

To develop high-quality human resources, a continuous improvement system such as knowledge management is required. Laallam (2021) underscores the importance of knowledge management within waqf institutions in Algeria as part of a broader institutional strategy. Qurra-ta (2019) also notes that success in managing productive waqf depends not only on financial aspects but also on HR capacity and public awareness.

In addition to knowledge management, talent management is essential to help HR develop the necessary capabilities to reach their full potential (Alheet et al., 2021). This approach aligns with global trends in HR development through the concept of lifelong learning, which is seen as key to economic efficiency (Volo et al., 2020; Li et al., 2017).

In Islamic institutional contexts, Syaikh et al. (2021) found that one of the main barriers to mosque-based economic empowerment is the low quality of its management personnel. The solution lies in capacity-building through professional training. Similarly, Mansion and Bausch (2020) emphasize that HR development remains a priority even in developing countries.

The MSME sector, which often relies on social funds, also requires institutional strengthening and improved HR quality (Susilowati et al., 2019). Saad et al. (2019) highlight that one of the main reasons for the underutilization of waqf assets is the weak capacity of HR managers. In modern organizational contexts, multinational companies in China prioritize HR management to respond to organizational challenges (Ouyang et al., 2019).

Hasan (2019) proposes an HR management model for zakat institutions in Malaysia, emphasizing the need for alignment between HR management and the goals of zakat collection, administration, and distribution. (Note: Zakat is a financial obligation for Muslims to allocate a portion of their wealth for the benefit of the poor and for other social purposes, managed by zakat institutions.)

The need for training and development is equally important in public institutions. Profiroiu et al. (2019) assert that employee training is essential for expanding knowledge and enhancing competencies.

More broadly, the theory of comparative capitalism explains that in advanced societies, regulatory systems and HR development reinforce each other to optimize organizational performance (Singh et al., 2017). For example, the labor market in the European Union promotes work-force mobility through cross-national partnerships (Gathmann et al., 2014).

6. Conclusion, Limitations, and Recommendations

This study aimed to examine the development of research on human resources in philanthropy over the period from 2002 to 2022. An analysis of 128 documents revealed a consistent increase in publication output since 2010, indicating a growing interest in the topic of human resources in philanthropic contexts. Nevertheless, a significant gap remains in the academic literature, which limits the establishment of a comprehensive knowledge base in this area (see Table 3). Over the past two decades, only 128 publications were identified, categorized into five types of documents (see Table 1).

The most prolific authors in this field are Tome E and Potluka O, as shown by their prominence in the visualization presented in Figure 1. The term "human resources" also appears frequently in the keyword analysis (Figure 7), underscoring the critical role of HR in organizations, including philanthropic institutions, as reflected by the growing number of related academic studies.

Effective management of social funds strongly depends on the availability of skilled human resources to ensure efficient utilization and maximize positive impacts on community development. Fund managers must be equipped with competencies in identifying funding sources, managing administrative tasks, and allocating resources appropriately. The findings of this study offer positive implications for stakeholders, including donors and beneficiaries, in enhancing the sustainable value of philanthropic initiatives.

While the findings of this study are applicable to other sectors, given the universal importance of human resource capabilities to organizational success, the research is limited to a bibliometric analysis and literature available within a specified timeframe. As such, further empirical studies and in-depth investigations are needed to better understand the dynamics of HR management in the philanthropic sector.

Future research could explore both qualitative and quantitative approaches to assess the real-world impact of HR management on the effectiveness of philanthropic programs. This may include case studies of *waqf* institutions, zakat organizations, and other social entities. Additionally, the development of HR management models specifically tailored to the philanthropic sector is necessary to support the optimal and sustainable administration of social funds.

Acknowledgments

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to all parties who contributed to the completion of this research, particularly in relation to the study of human resource trends within the philanthropic sector. It is hoped that the findings of this study will provide meaningful insights and inspiration for both academic development and practical implementation in this field.

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