

Mapping the Landscape of Sustainability Reporting : A Bibliometric Analysis

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Abstract

Purpose : The purpose of this research was to identify, map, and evaluate the body of literature on sustainability reporting. The study aimed to enhance understanding of research trends and gaps in this field.

Design/Methodology/Approach : The study utilized a bibliometric analysis approach to explore scholarly publications cataloged in the Scopus database. The analysis was conducted using VOSviewer software to uncover dominant themes, influential authors, key sources, highly cited articles, and leading countries in the domain of SR. The keyword "sustainability reporting" was employed to ensure the relevance of the findings.

Findings : The research revealed significant insights into publication patterns, notable articles, and prominent authors within the field of SR. It identified key trends, influential contributions, and gaps in the existing literature.

Practical Implications : The findings provided a thorough understanding of SR practices, which was beneficial for all stakeholders, including consumers, investors, and industries. The study's findings could help stakeholders make wise choices and improve their understanding of SR practices and trends.

Originality/Value : The study filled up existing gaps and provided a thorough mapping of the research environment, which added to the body of knowledge on sustainability reporting. What makes it unique is the thorough bibliometric analysis that gives a thorough summary of the field and identifies areas that require more research.

Keywords : sustainability reporting, bibliometric analysis, biblioshiny, VoSviewer

JEL Classification Codes : M14, Q01, Q56

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Businesses are leading the way in achieving sustainable development goals and adhering to changing standards established to enhance the systems of the global economy in response to the global community's demand for greater equality, less poverty, less corruption, and less environmental stress. With the COVID-19 pandemic, common business functioning was totally knocked out, thereby elevating the call

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for new sustainability norms and compelling organizations and governments to redefine strategies for business sustainability. This trend is taking place not only due to the persistent problems and the growing concern of developing economies but is also the norm in developed economies. Therefore, concerns about sustainability have taken their role at the heart of management decisions, accounting practices and standards and have become embedded in corporate and public sector reporting. Financial reporting is well recognized and the most significant part of a corporation's transparency. It is considered a critical source of information on the state of affairs of the company and a guide to any internal policy execution and investment projects that have an arrow in the right direction. Improvements in disclosures on sustainability and refinement of reporting practices help companies respond best to the enhanced expectations from stakeholders. These trends should be understood to serve the purpose of effective global alignment and meeting the demands of society.

Financial reporting has long been a standard practice for businesses to give information about their past transactions, current performance, and prospects. This information is crucial for making investment decisions and for ensuring stakeholder transparency. However, black swan events like the COVID pandemic have changed the scenario of financial reporting manifold. The importance of additional sustainability disclosures has increased. On the other hand, there has been a lot of emphasis on integrating sustainability into financial reports as companies have had to rethink themselves in response to rapidly shifting reality. Investors, regulators, and other stakeholders have become interested in the issue and are calling for more thorough and open reporting on sustainability, which is encouraging businesses to combine their different sustainability strategies. Several difficulties come with these additional demands. Companies must, therefore, find ways of meaningfully integrating sustainability metrics into conventional financial reporting frameworks while still being sure that such disclosures reflect actual Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) performance. This involves striking a balance between maintaining financial accuracy and meeting the evolving requirements for sustainability reporting. Businesses now face the challenge of effectively communicating sustainability efforts while maintaining the accuracy of financial data.

Although scholarly research on sustainability reporting (henceforth SR) has increased significantly, there is a dearth of thorough assessments of the scientific output in this field (Benameur et al., 2024). This study combines different bibliometric aspects of SR to fill this gap. According to Ferreira et al. (2014), when a field of research matures, scholars should “periodically seek some sense of the knowledge produced and accumulated, to identify novel contributions, detect trends and research traditions, understand which topics are addressed, the theories and methods employed, delve into the intellectual structure of the discipline and its knowledge base, and prospect areas of future inquiry” (p. 1900). In order to track disciplinary development, research hotspots, and research frontiers in a given research area, it is necessary to conduct an integrative assessment of research trends, methodologies, and theoretical contributions in SR and to visualize the SR publications gathered through advanced digital databases.

This work has the potential to contribute to the debate using a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of SR, which clarifies the intellectual structure and predominant topics by determining the influential articles, authors, and journals. That way, identification can be made in terms of emerging research themes and topics within the area of focus. This deeper comprehension will direct scholars and professionals by offering a framework that can indicate both theoretical advancement and real-world implementations. The underexplored opportunities for conducting the present study will help to identify further research advancements and allow more sophisticated development in the area of reporting sustainability. The study proceeds with the following two research questions:

- What are the key influential articles, authors, or journals that have made significant contributions to the field of sustainability reporting?
- What are the emerging research themes and topics within the realm of sustainability reporting and disclosure?

This research on SR is certainly progressively in demand due to numerous noteworthy dynamics in the current global context. In the case of investors' decision-making strategies as well as corporate strategies, one of the prime causes of this requirement is the growing significance of ESG factors. The present study, which explores the relevant literature on SR, is therefore highly pertinent, as it offers a critical understanding of how these practices are evolving in response to stakeholder demands. Furthermore, there are necessary regulatory requirements for consistent SR, with governments and international bodies making stringent regulations and compelling adherence to frameworks. The present study is specifically timely in this context, contributing a comprehensive investigation that can apprise both policymakers and businesses about current practices and trends in SR. The study provides valuable insights that can guide regulatory compliance and best practices, thereby contributing to more effective and standardized reporting across industries. Concerns about corporate responsibility and openness are also growing as companies face a greater obligation to disclose their environmental and social reports. In order to fill this gap, the present study delves into how companies can practice SR as a tool to meet statutory requirements. Sustaining investors' confidence and satisfying stakeholder expectations depend on improving reporting practices, which the study provides by mapping the scholarly landscape of SR. Additionally, the study recognizes the association between corporate sustainability, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and SR concepts that are becoming widely acknowledged as essential to a business's overall strategy.

The present research employs bibliometric analysis alongside the VOSviewer software and examines scholarly publications cataloged in the Scopus database. The study gains additional rigor when a bibliometric analysis is used, and its findings are also more valuable and accessible to a wider range of stakeholders, including lawmakers, business executives, and academics. This study closes the gap between academic inquiry and practical application in a scholarly landscape that is increasingly focused on research with practical implications. The research adds to the body of knowledge on sustainability reporting by offering an organized analysis of previous studies, which benefits academic research as well as the actual enhancement of business practices. Sustainability is still a major priority for governments and businesses worldwide; thus, research that looks at and enhances sustainability reporting procedures will be highly sought after. This will advance theoretical concepts and practical solutions in the sector.

Review of Literature

A key component of corporate transparency, sustainability reporting demonstrates an organization's commitment to ESG factors. Bradford's law, average citations per year, most relevant sources, most relevant affiliations, most cited countries' challenges, annual scientific production, and co-occurrence into sustainability reporting are just a few of the significant topics this literature review aims to explore. Businesses can freely share with stakeholders their non-financial performance and effects, both positive and negative, by using sustainability reports. The shift from creating "social disclosures to broader social and environmental reports" marked the beginning of the non-financial reporting practice in the 1970s. Since then, many businesses have adopted sustainability reporting as a standard practice (Kend, 2015). The terms "accountability," "corporate (social) responsibility/CSR," and "responsibility" are some of the names used to publish SR. They can be included in annual reports or stand-alone sustainability reports (Clement Roca & Searcy, 2012).

In recent years, there has been a gradual increase in the number of companies publicly disclosing various aspects of their environmental and social performance, with the term "sustainability reporting" becoming more prevalent to encompass not only the longstanding environmental focus but also the newer social and economic dimensions introduced into this report. Marx and van Dyk (2011) observed that SR within public sector entities remains at a nascent stage, with the reporting quality of South Africa's largest public sector entities varying from exceptional to subpar. Hahn and Kühnen (2013) conducted a literature review on SR from 1999 to 2011,

contributing by offering a comprehensive summary of findings regarding the factors influencing sustainability reporting; the descriptive analysis uncovered that existing literature often lacks comprehensive reporting across all three sustainability dimensions. Ehnert et al. (2016) analyzed SR in large global companies, comparing HRM and environmental aspects while exploring the influence of country of origin on such reporting, revealing unexpected trends in HRM disclosures and international differences. The subject of SR has garnered significant attention from researchers seeking to condense earlier studies.

Nevertheless, the majority of these investigations have concentrated on singular facets of the topic. The quantitative analysis conducted by Torelli et al. (2020) revealed that stakeholder engagement, along with indirectly associated factors like industry affiliation and GRI application level, significantly influences the report production process, especially concerning the materiality analysis. Papoutsis and Sodhi (2020) found that the constructed indicators derived from sustainability reports demonstrated a substantial explanatory capability for both Dow Jones Sustainability Indices (DJSI) and ESG sustainability metrics, indicating that sustainability reports effectively reflect tangible sustainability performance.

The systematic literature review (SLR) conducted by Kumar and Joshi (2022) revealed a predominant emphasis on urban development, succeeded by water resources and environmental development, while themes such as social sustainability, social equity, dairy, green accounting, and biotechnology have been comparatively underexplored. Zieba and Johansson (2022) conducted a systematic review focusing solely on airline SR. Their analysis emphasized how inconsistent SR practices are caused by the industry's lack of consensus and policy around sustainability metrics. This blurred genuine actions with promotional communication, permitting airlines to legitimize operations. Wagenhofer (2024) judged sustainability reporting from a financial reporting viewpoint. He concluded that sustainability reports lack the aggregation of data points, leading to an absence of quantifying sustainability performance, effectiveness, and efficiency. Asian SR research primarily focuses on how SR influences financial performance and strengthens networks of economic stakeholders. In the Asian context, this emphasizes the need for more study to deepen the connections between SR, sustainable corporate conduct, and stakeholder engagement (Calderon et al., 2021).

Nadeem and Singh (2024) examined the ESG implementation contexts in India and around the world, evaluating the viability of selling ESG as a product through financial and governmental institutions. This highlighted the potential for reaching net zero emissions by 2070 with the effective advancement of ESG standards, while also drawing attention to the unique challenges faced by India and the backlog of completed social and environmental goals. Through the use of research from investment firms, consultancy firms, and ESG rating agencies, as well as conference presentations, the study investigated promotional strategies used by governmental institutions to increase ESG adoption and awareness. In addition to addressing India's challenges with population growth, inflation, and corruption, they also highlighted the significance of ESG investing through the 4Ps of marketing and demonstrated how national ESG promotion may increase public knowledge of its advantages. The study made comparisons between government-sponsored social programs and ESG investing.

Govindasamy et al. (2018) examined the CSR disclosures of textile enterprises in Malaysia and South India and their strategic implementation of CSR. The study discovered significant differences in the perceived and real levels of CSR in both nations, using paired *t*-tests and binary regression on data from annual reports and corporate websites. The results found that these companies misrepresent their CSR efforts, adding to the body of knowledge by supporting greater relevance and transparency in CSR reporting. Ahuja and Madan (2022) conducted a bibliometric study of Vedic studies from 1970 to 2020 using the Scopus dataset on Vedic publications. They found that people are curious about the potential applications of the Vedas in fields like computer science, social science, humanities, and management. Shetty and Ashalatha (2022) observed that just 425 out of millions of businesses adhered to GRI rules; the majority of these businesses were long-listed and in the ESSI sector. The poor compliance rate is noteworthy even in the face of demands for transparency. They emphasized the need for improved adherence to ethical governance norms and showed the implications for both research and practice.

Charumathi and Ramesh (2017) investigated the impact of Indian non-financial corporations' reporting trends on corporate social and environmental issues on market valuation in the study. They discovered that the introduction of business responsibility reporting led to a considerable improvement in social and environmental disclosures, which in turn increased market valuation. Patro and Pattanayak (2017) employed discretionary accruals to evaluate conservatism and the GRI criteria for CSR reporting to investigate the effects of CSR disclosure on accounting conservatism among Indian mining businesses between 2000 and 2015. The findings from 34 mining companies showed a strong inverse association between CSR disclosure and accounting conservatism. Santhi et al. (2024) discovered unidirectional causality between Tobin's Q and ESG, ESG and net worth, and ESG and return on sales, as well as a bidirectional association between ESG and social and governance scores. Soni (2023) discovered that mutual funds with better ESG scores did not significantly produce positive risk-adjusted returns during either the normal or COVID-19 periods. The findings implied that the alleged financial benefits of investing in mutual funds with an emphasis on ESG may be outweighed by the increased expenses related to social responsibility, such as opportunity costs and screening.

There is a lot of reporting that covers several scientific aspects, such as the theoretical foundations of SR (Ali et al., 2021), "antecedents" (Ong & Djajadikerta, 2020), "consequences" (Shahzad & Sharfman, 2017; Nguyen, 2020), "triple bottom line and GRI" (Perkiss et al., 2021), "investor and stakeholders' perception" (Diouf & Boiral, 2017), and "assurance" (Buica et al., 2021) of sustainability reports. Rhoden et al. (2023) examined the differences between industry-reported sustainability initiatives and real operational procedures, emphasizing the disconnect between theoretical frameworks and their real-world implementation. Toke and Kalpande (2024) examined the particular difficulties in putting Green Accounting and Reporting Practices (GARP) into practice in the Indian auto industry, determining important performance metrics and the obstacles to the successful implementation of the global context. According to data from the KPMG Global Survey of Sustainability, 96% of the interview results are highly accepted for global reporting, and no worldwide standard has yet been established.

Paridhi and Arora (2023) recently analyzed 133 sustainability reporting studies and discovered that numerous articles were published after 2018 and that the subjects had changed after 2017. Their study found key themes like SR, board gender diversity, content analysis, and ESG disclosure signal future research areas. Cross-country evaluations and word definition difficulties were also emphasized. They contend that for better airline SR, comprehensive stakeholder and disclosure investigations are required. Khatri and Kjærland (2023) revealed through a baseline model using ordinary least squares regression that issuing sustainability reports and adhering to GRI standards correlate positively with environmental performance. However, external assurance is meaningless. Interestingly, companies that are not CSR-awarded or ecologically certified believe that sustainability reporting is linked to better environmental performance. SR serves as a bridge between financial and non-financial data, serving as an ideal instrument to enhance both internal and external communication concerning environmental, social, and ethical facets (Benvenuto et al., 2023). Traditional reporting systems struggled to capture these aspects effectively, making SR a more suitable tool for identifying and conveying such elements. Imperiale et al. (2023) highlighted the crucial role of environmental and social indicators for utilities, signaling a commitment to sustainability amid reputation risks. Surprisingly, corporate governance's common link to reporting quality is absent, while a negative tie exists between independent directors and reporting quality, suggesting inadequacy in assessing sustainability reports for US utilities. Empirical evidence supports legitimacy theory by indicating that specific corporate governance factors, in addition to other firm attributes and regulatory considerations, have a significant impact on sustainability quality. Additionally, higher reporting quality generates positive market reactions, which is consistent with the business case perspective (Velte, 2023). Luque-Vílchez et al. (2023) emphasized the ongoing need for improved and consistent SR quality and debate on materiality, comparability, and the potential integration of GRI principles into primary assurance standards at the EU level.

Methodology

This study is a bibliometric research investigation designed to analyze the field of SR. A sample of 2,049 documents was obtained by searching the Scopus database for pertinent academic publications published between 1994 and the present using the phrase "Sustainability Reporting." The keyword was chosen strategically to align with the study's aims and scope, ensuring the retrieved articles are pertinent to the topic. Bibliometric analysis employs the Bibliometrix R-package and VOSviewer for data processing. Biblioshiny, a feature of the Bibliometrix R-package, was selected for its robust bibliometric capabilities, providing a comprehensive analysis of the literature. An in-depth analysis of research relationships and trends was made possible by the construction of bibliometric networks based on co-citation data using VOSviewer (van Eck & Waltman, 2010). The sample framework encompasses a broad temporal span and includes a significant number of articles to ensure a thorough understanding of the field's development. The reliability of the results depends on the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the database rather than the reliability of standard reliability values of scales because this study uses secondary data from Scopus rather than primary data collecting. The research was conducted with a focus on English-language articles to maintain relevance and accessibility. This approach provides a detailed bibliometric overview of SR, helping to identify key influential articles, authors, and emerging research themes in the field. The results of the study will provide insightful information about the development and status of sustainability reporting research today.

This study's published materials are then categorized according to their subject areas, as indicated in Table 1. Table 1 demonstrates the growing interest in SR across a range of academic disciplines, with significant contributions from Business Management & Accounting (1,477 documents); Social Sciences (887 documents); Economics, Econometrics, & Finance (119 documents); Decision Science (696 documents); and Multidisciplinary (10 documents). Additionally, SR studies have appeared in diverse fields, including Computer Science, Psychology, Environmental Science, Agricultural and Biological Sciences, Engineering, Energy, and the Arts & Humanities. This approach provides a detailed bibliometric overview of sustainability reporting, helping to identify key influential articles, authors, and emerging research themes in the field.

Table 1. Subject Area of Sustainability Reporting

Subject Area	Number of Documents
Business Management & Accounting	1,477
Social Sciences	887
Economics, Econometrics, & Finance	696
Multidisciplinary	10
Decision Science	119

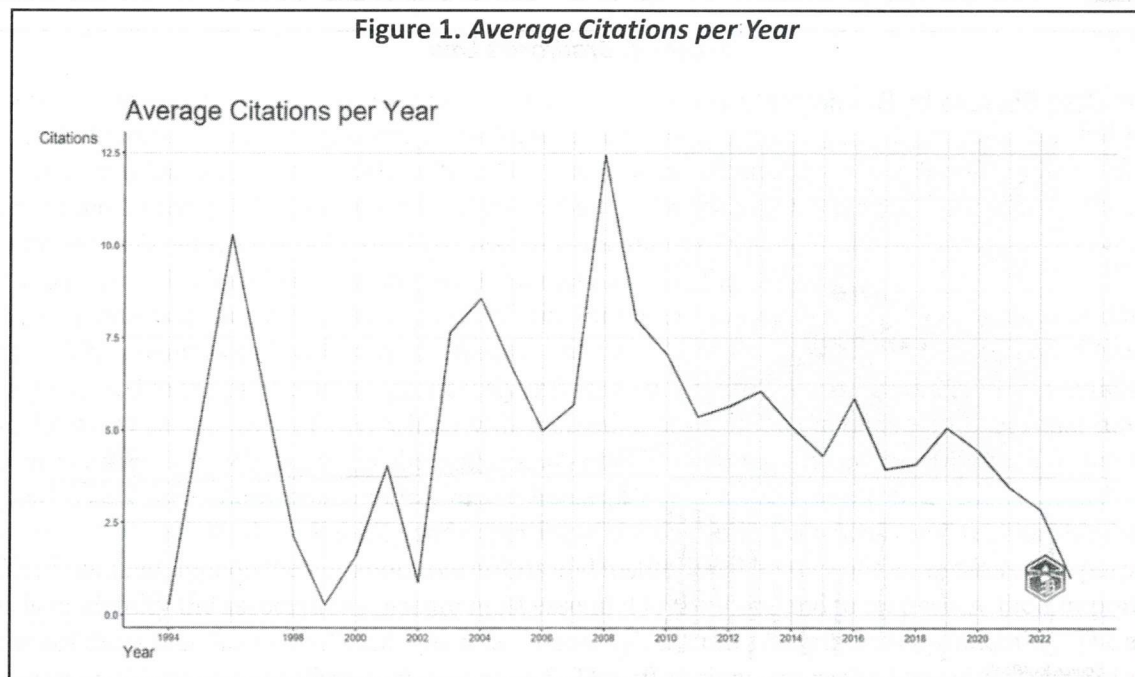
Analysis and Results

This section presents a comprehensive examination of SR practices, addressing research questions and objectives. The Scopus database was utilized to gather the key data for 2,049 papers used in the current study on SR. These documents were published in 679 sources, and the average score for the number of citations per document was 29.95, indicating a significant amount of past research. Journal articles, books, book chapters, conference papers, editorials, notes, reviews, and short surveys were among the nine categories into which the 2,049 documents were divided. Table 2 also shows that journal articles are the most prevalent document type, with 1,613 documents. Conference papers (four), conference reviews (four), and brief surveys (one) made up the smallest amount of documents used. This demonstrates that the sources looked at for this research were trustworthy.

Table 2. Document Type

Description	Results
Timespan	1994 : 2023
Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	679
Documents	2,049
Average Citations Per Doc	29.95
Document Types	
Article	1,613
Book	24
Book Chapter	228
Conference Paper	82
Conference Review	4
Editorial	4
Note	10
Review	83
Short Survey	1

Figure 1. Average Citations per Year



Studies are also carried out using the average citation rates for SR publications, both annually and per piece. A total of 29 years of research on this subject were published between 1994 and 2023. Figure 1 shows that up to 275 documents were released in 2022, which is when the majority of articles on the topic of the SR research were published. However, this does not rule out the prospect of additional research being done in 2023 in comparison to the year before. In terms of the average number of citations per article, 1996 had the highest average (288). The study with the most citations on a yearly average basis was published in 2008, receiving 12.46 citations. This indicates that more articles about SR were released in 2008 than in any other year.

Figure 2. Most Relevant Sources

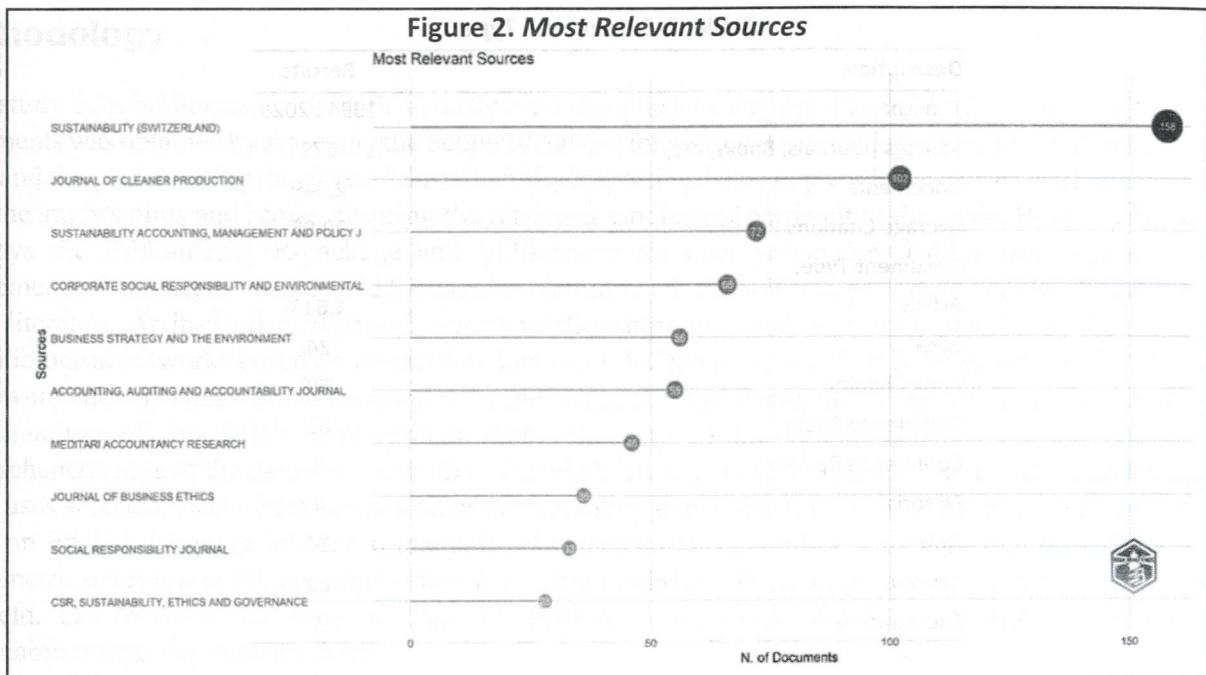


Figure 3. Bradford's Law

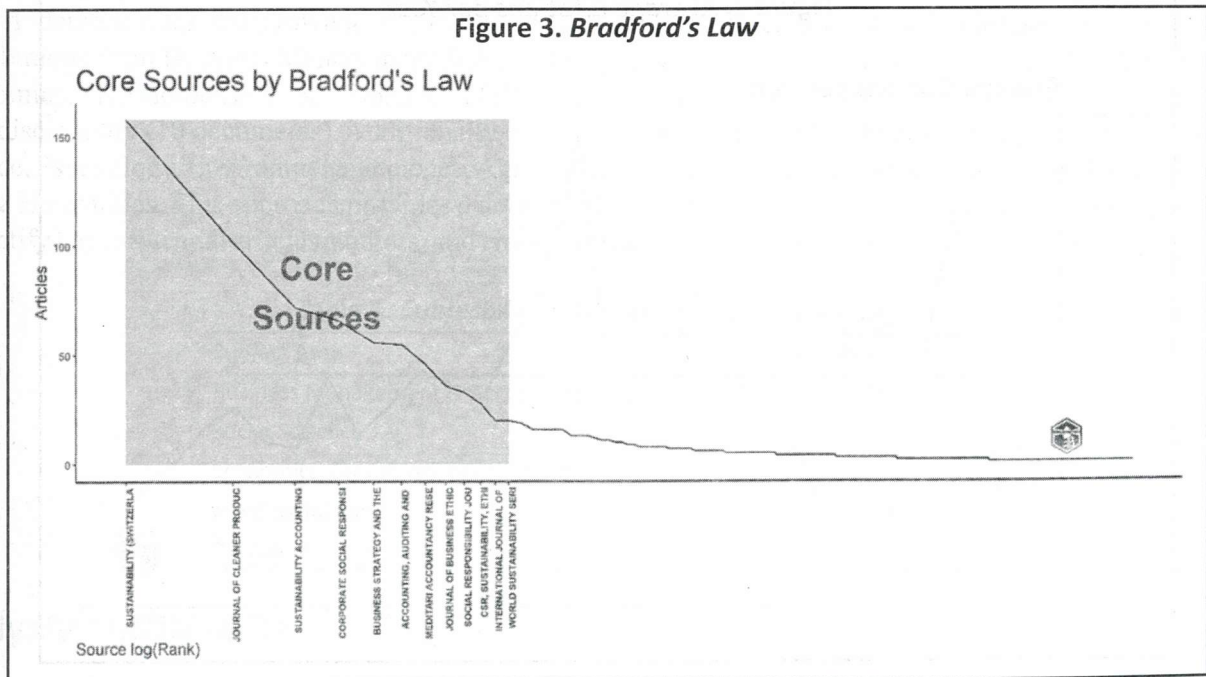
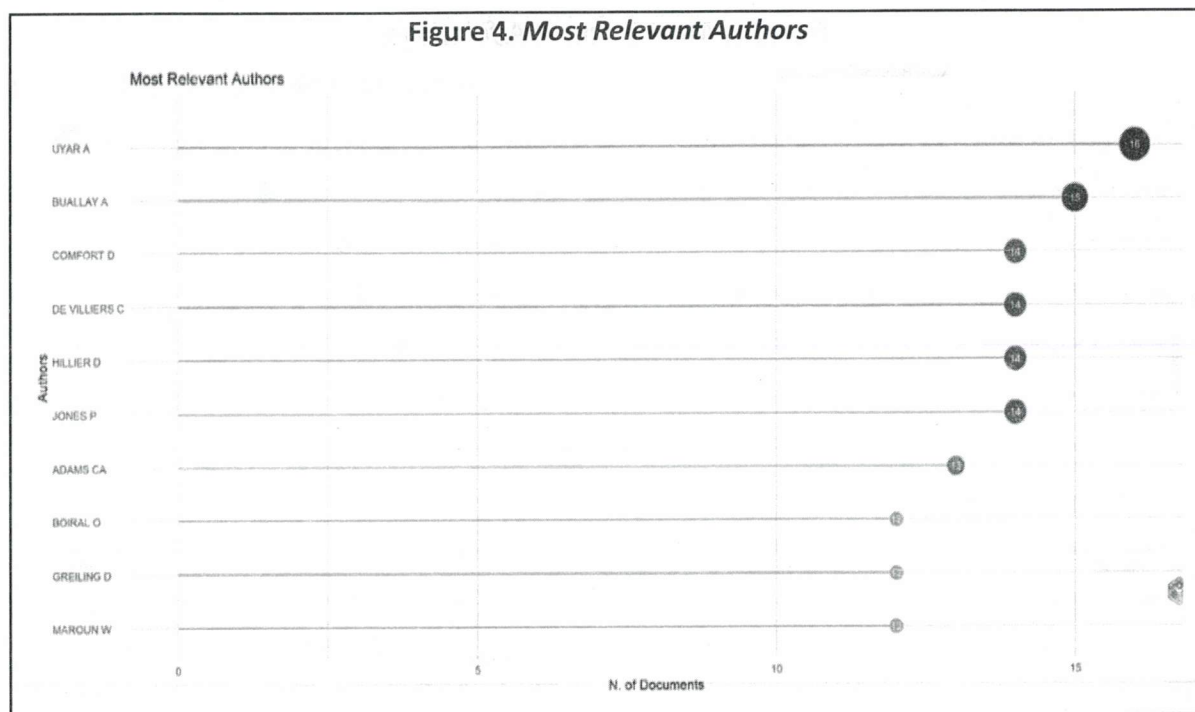


Figure 2 shows the number of papers published by each journal based on how closely their research papers related to sustainability reporting. The data show the names of the leading journals along with the number of published documents, ranging from 1 to 158. *Sustainability (Switzerland)* has the most published articles compared to other journals, ranking first (158 documents). This is so because the journal has a bearing on the subject matter covered.

Bradford's law is a pattern that was first discovered by Samuel C. Bradford (1934). It computes the exponentially declining returns of searching scientific journals for references. Bradford's law is used to categorize the journals in Figure 3. They are divided into three groups: the core journal group, the intermediate journal group,



and the broad journal group. It classifies journals according to their productivity level. Shaded sections and key sources with annotations show the main journal groupings. Over a given period, journals that fall within this category have produced the most work on SR. The graph demonstrates that *Sustainability (Switzerland)* is the journal with the largest publication volume of more than 150 research documents. Additionally, the *Journal of Cleaner Production*, which has published 102 research documents, is in second place, followed by other journals that fall under the umbrella of core research work sources and have the topic of SR.

Identifying and assessing relevant authors is crucial for understanding the study's background and intellectual foundation. This analysis's objective is to identify and talk about the key authors whose contributions to the research presented in the publication significantly influence it. Figure 4 shows the most listing authors with the most publications in the area of SR, which will recognize associations about researchers that have made a significant contribution. We highlight the authors who have made significant contributions to the discipline. Buallay A. has authored 15 research publications ; whereas, Uyar A. has the most (16).

In order to demonstrate the reliability and expertise of the research, the researchers' relationships are crucial. The affiliations shed light on the collaborative efforts and institutional history of the research. The purpose of this analysis is to identify the associations that are most essential to the work and to emphasize their importance. The affiliations of the researchers significantly increase the study's overall strength and dependability. The affiliations with the most publications are displayed in Figure 5. The affiliations are ranked based on the total number of articles cited in each research discipline. This will facilitate the identification of research collaborators who have significantly impacted the industry. The University of South Australia has the most article publications (43) followed by the University of Airlangga (33) (Figure 5).

The patterns of citations across national borders are a crucial indicator of the study's global impact and collaborative nature. The goal of this analysis is to pinpoint and examine the most frequently mentioned nations, illuminating their roles in and effects on the research that is reported in the article. A dynamic and interconnected landscape of academic collaboration is revealed by an analysis of the most cited countries. A large number of citations from specific countries highlights their significant contributions to the subject and highlights the study's

Figure 5. Most Relevant Affiliations

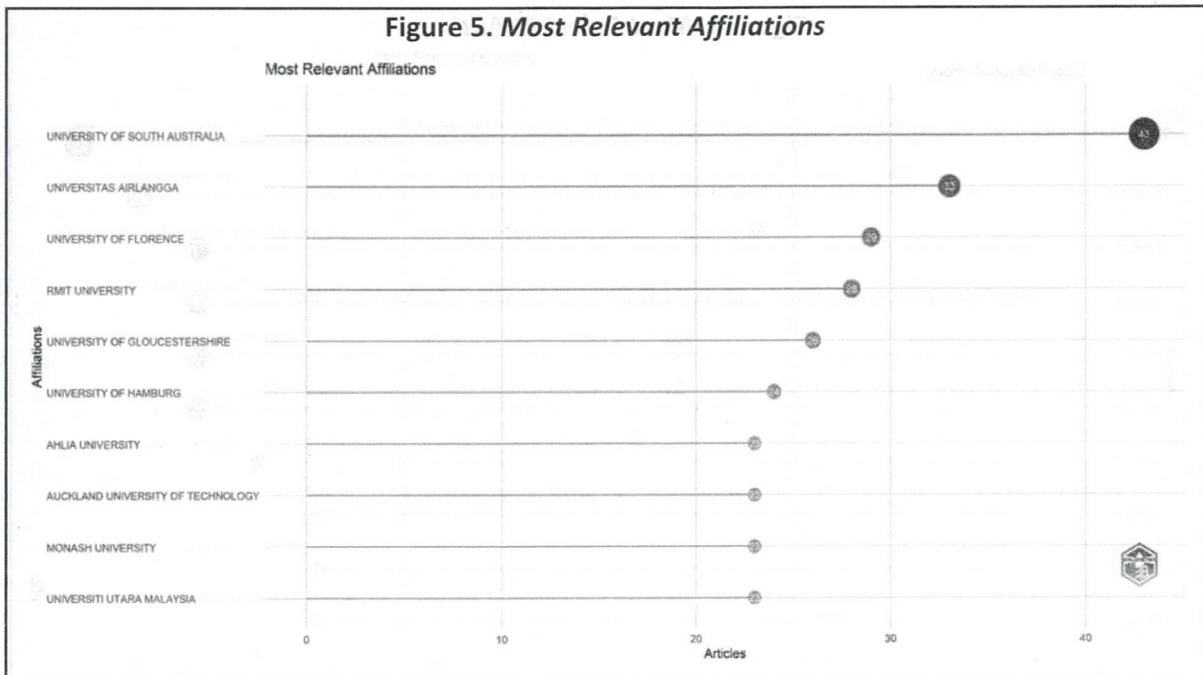
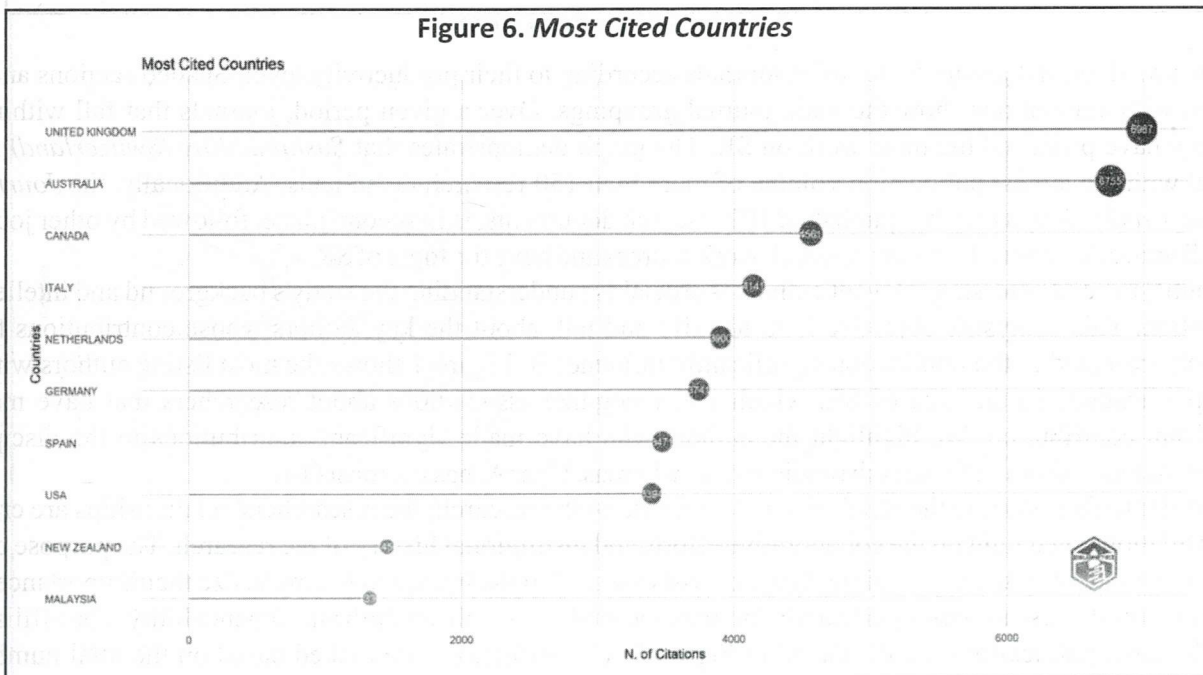


Figure 6. Most Cited Countries



global impact. Figure 6 shows the most cited countries in SR research. Australia (6,755), Canada (4,561), Italy (4,135), the Netherlands (3,900), and the United Kingdom (6,987) received the most citations. A total of 6,987 citations were received by articles in the UK, with an average of 59.20 citations per article. The average number of article citations in the Netherlands had the highest value with 105.40, despite the fact that Australia, which is in second position, had the most overall citations. The study shows a global interest in the topic by citing a wide range of international sources. The analysis deepens our understanding of the paper's reach while also highlighting the importance of international cooperation in promoting knowledge and research.

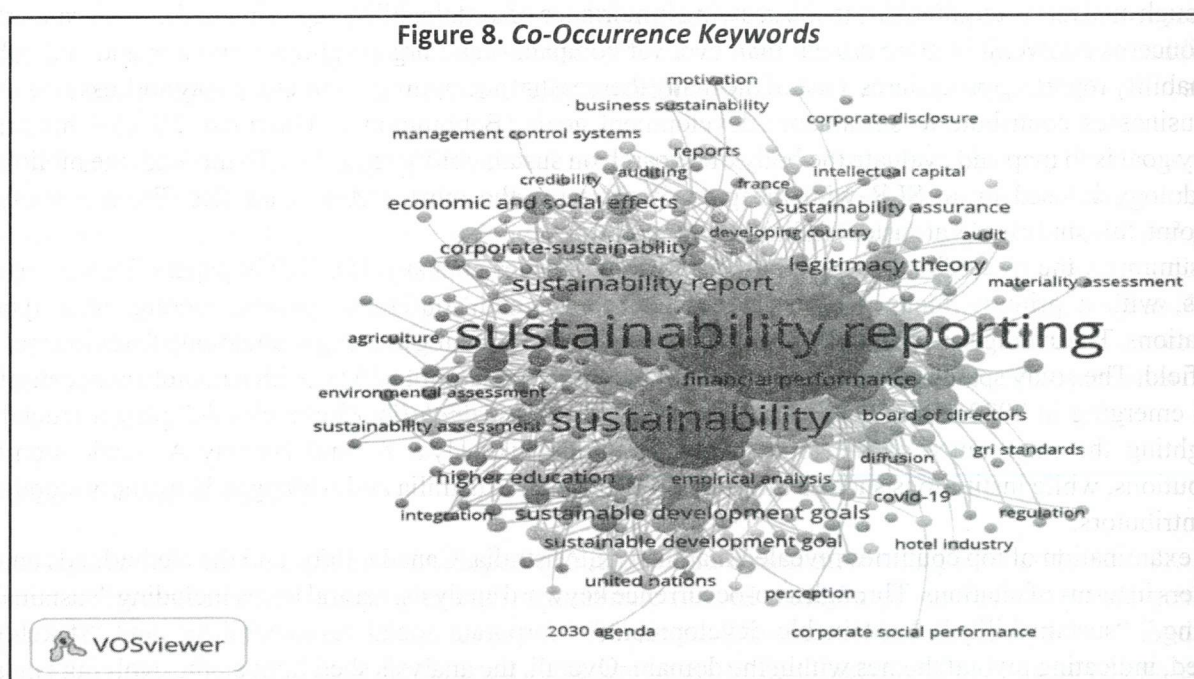
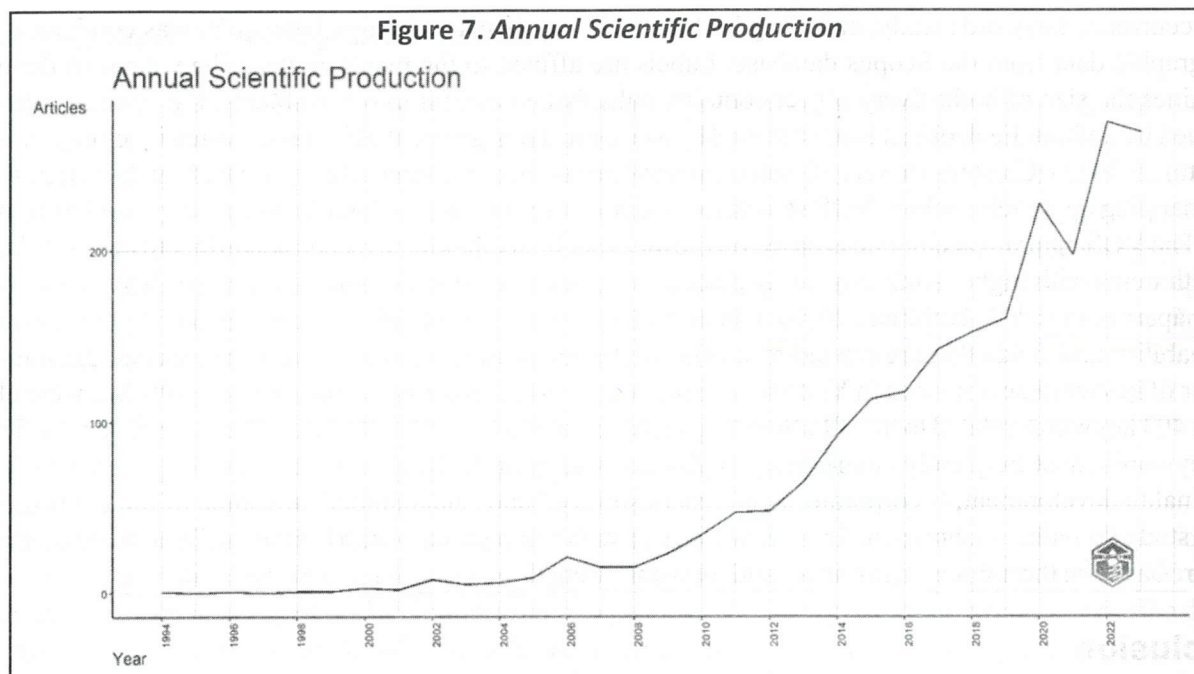


Figure 7 illustrates the yearly scientific output in the field of sustainability research. According to the investigated data, 2023 ($N = 269$) saw the highest number of publications pertaining to SR. The annual scientific output on these subjects spans the years 1994 to 2023, according to a search of the Scopus database. In general, more publications were produced up until 2023 than in 1994. There are 275 publications in 2022 compared to the single item on SR that was looked up in Scopus in 1994. After 29 years, the number of articles increased from 1994 to 2023.

A co-occurrence keywords study, including both authors' key terms and index keywords, was conducted using bibliographic data from the Scopus database. Labels are affixed to the map's circles. The weight of the object determines the size of both. Every object contains links that connect it to other objects; the strongest links are displayed by default. Each object is represented by a color that designates the cluster to which it belongs (van Eck & Waltman, 2013). Clusters are sets of interconnected nodes that are automatically created by the program. The VOS mapping approach, "where VOS stands for Visualization of Similarities," is particularly used to construct maps. The VOS mapping technique is based on the idea that items should be placed according to how similar they are, with items with higher similarity being placed closer together and those with lower similarity being placed farther apart (van Eck & Waltman, 2007). Clusters can be seen in Figure 8. The clusters deal with reporting on sustainability and fields that are related to it. The words are found in the clusters. When we set the minimum number of keyword occurrences in VOSviewer to 5, we got 403 author keywords out of 4,795. We were able to extract 403 keywords related to the SR after merging or removing keywords that were the same or similar. The top five keywords most frequently connected with SR research include "sustainability reporting," "sustainability," "sustainable development," "corporate social responsibility," and "stakeholder" are some of the hot subjects in the SR study domains, as shown in Figure 8, which shows the map for co-occurring terms. Thus, it can be said that these are based on the number of instances and total link strength.

Conclusion

A thorough analysis is required due to the growing importance of sustainability reporting in the modern world. As ESG concerns evolve, it is more crucial than ever for companies and organizations to understand and enhance sustainability reporting procedures. One of the many themes that accounting researchers may address is assessing how businesses contribute to sustainable development goals (Bebbington & Unerman, 2020). This article's primary goal is to map and evaluate the body of research on sustainability reporting. To this end, the bibliometric methodology is used in an SLR with the goal of choosing the most pertinent articles. From a legitimacy standpoint, this study looks at sustainability reporting practices.

In summary, the research on sustainability reporting includes an analysis of 2,049 papers from a variety of sources, with a primary focus on journal articles, books, and conference papers, among other types of publications. The average citation score per document is 29.95, reflecting a strong foundation of previous research in the field. The study spanned 29 years, covering the period from 1994 to 2023, with a notable concentration of papers emerging in 2022. Prominent journals, particularly "*Sustainability (Switzerland)*," play a crucial role, highlighting the importance of the topic. Notable authors like Uyar A. and Buallay A. made significant contributions, while institutions such as the University of South Australia and Airlangga University stood out as key contributors.

An examination of top countries revealed that the UK, Australia, Canada, Italy, and the Netherlands emerged as leaders in terms of citations. Through a co-occurrence keyword analysis, central terms including "sustainability reporting," "sustainability," "sustainable development," "corporate social responsibility," and "stakeholder" surfaced, indicating pivotal themes within the domain. Overall, the analysis shed light on the evolving landscape of sustainability reporting research and the discernible trends within the field.

Based on the analysis of the study, we urge academics to conduct empirical research on the impact of qualitative information on sustainability and expand materiality on satisfying the demands of various stakeholder groups. The present research is a small step toward comprehending sustainability reporting. The research has considered only a few key parameters for bibliometric analysis. Due to a shortage of time, various other criteria to summarize the bibliometric analysis could not be included. Hence, the opportunity to conduct further research with wider parameters will bring prudent results.

Implications for Theory and Practice

The findings discussed above have important implications for both theoretical understanding and practical applications in the context of sustainability reporting. On a theoretical level, the substantial body of previous research, coupled with the recent surge in publications, highlights the growing significance of sustainability reporting as a subject of scholarly interest. From a practical perspective, the identification of key journals, authors, and affiliations offers valuable insights for researchers, policymakers, and organizations aiming to engage in this field. The insights gained from the co-occurrence keyword analysis can guide the formulation of strategies to facilitate effective communication and stakeholder involvement in sustainability reporting. These findings collectively contribute to advancing both the foundational theories and real-world applications of sustainability reporting. However, comprehending the various dynamics of sustainability as a whole requires more detail.

Limitations of the Study and Scope for Further Research

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, due to time constraints, the analysis focused on a limited set of bibliometric parameters, potentially overlooking other factors that could have provided a more comprehensive understanding of the bibliometric landscape of sustainability reporting. Second, while the dataset spans from 1994 to August 2023, offering a broad perspective, it may not fully capture the most recent advancements and trends in sustainability reporting. Third, although the results offer valuable insights, they are based on a specific dataset from Scopus and may not fully represent all facets of SR across different areas and industries. These limitations suggest that further research could address these gaps by including additional bibliometric parameters, extending the time frame, and exploring data from various sources to provide a more holistic view of the field.

Further research into SR could explore several promising avenues. First, investigating the intersections between SR and other academic fields, such as environmental science, social sciences, and the humanities, may reveal new perspectives and applications. Second, examining the impact of regulatory frameworks and policy changes on SR practices could offer valuable insights for both firms and policymakers. Third, expanding the scope of the research to include non-English language publications and additional databases, such as Web of Science and Google Scholar, could provide a more comprehensive view of global SR research and uncover trends and findings that are not captured within the current English-language dataset. These approaches would contribute to a deeper understanding of sustainability reporting and its broader implications.

Authors' Contribution

Shahni Singh conceived the idea and developed qualitative and quantitative designs to undertake the study. Ms. Singh extracted research papers with high reputations, filtered these based on keywords, and generated concepts and codes relevant to the study design. Dr. Debabrata Sharma verified the analytical methods, and Dr. Sudeshna Dutta contributed to the implications. The same were further transcribed and translated into English by all the others. Shahni Singh, Dr. Debabrata Sharma, and Dr. Sudeshna Dutta — all three authors together wrote the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The authors certify that they have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest or non-financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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