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A bibliometric analysis of value addition and its impact on economic growth: Global research trends

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Abstract: Value addition is increasingly recognised as a catalyst for economic growth, yet the evolution and intellectual foundations of this research field remain fragmented. This study applies a bibliometric analysis to 358 documents retrieved from Scopus (1983–2024) and processed using VOSviewer. The analysis investigates publication trends, disciplinary scope, authorship patterns, collaboration networks, and thematic structures. Results show that research spans Social Sciences, Business and Management, Environmental Science, and Engineering, with the Journal of Cleaner Production identified as the most prolific outlet. Keyword mapping reveals innovation, value creation, sustainability, entrepreneurship, and economic growth as dominant themes. Influential contributions include Du Plessis (2007) on knowledge management and Song and Di Benedetto (2008) on supplier involvement in product development, highlighting the field's multidisciplinary roots. Although publication outputs peaked in the mid-2010s before declining by about 62.9%, citation performance remains robust at roughly 20 citations per paper. International collaborations are extensive, with the USA, UK, and India emerging as the most productive countries, while institutions such as Duke University, Yale University (USA), and UFRGS (Brazil) demonstrate high citation influence. Overall, the findings provide a structured overview of the field and point to opportunities for advancing research on value addition as a driver of sustainable economic development.

Keywords: Value addition, Economic growth, Sustainable development, Innovation, Entrepreneurship, Bibliometric analysis

1. Introduction

Value addition has increasingly been recognised as a critical catalyst for economic growth, industrial competitiveness, and sustainable development. From firms striving to differentiate through innovation and product upgrading to policymakers embedding circular economy principles into national strategies, the capacity to create value across industries shapes both economic resilience and societal well-being (Du Plessis, 2007; Song & Di Benedetto, 2008; de Medeiros et al., 2014). The challenge lies not only in producing more but in embedding innovation, sustainability, and entrepreneurship into production systems in ways that expand long-term growth potential while addressing contemporary global demands (Damanpour & Schneider, 2006; Ranta et al., 2018). Against this backdrop, value addition research has grown into a multidisciplinary body of scholarship spanning economics, management, innovation studies, and sustainability science. The dynamic between value addition and economic growth reflects more than a linear link between firm-level upgrading and macroeconomic expansion. Research has shown that knowledge management and innovation capacity strengthen firms' ability to capture competitive advantage (Du Plessis, 2007; Asa, Campbell, & Nautwima, 2022), while supplier integration in product development directly enhances performance outcomes for new ventures (Song & Di Benedetto, 2008). Similarly, sustainable innovation frameworks reveal how environmental concerns and industrial symbiosis increasingly underpin competitive advantage (de Medeiros et al., 2014; Ranta et al., 2018). At the policy level, empirical studies in developing contexts such as Namibia highlight the intersection of entrepreneurship, inflation, unemployment, and SME development, underscoring that value creation is not purely technological but embedded in broader socio-economic dynamics (Asa et al., 2023; Nautwima & Asa, 2021; Nautwima et al., 2023). These insights confirm that value addition is foundational not only for firms but also for national economic trajectories.

Despite the breadth of this scholarship, existing reviews remain fragmented and narrowly scoped, often focusing on specific domains such as innovation adoption (Damanpour & Schneider, 2006), environmentally sustainable products (de Medeiros et al., 2014), or industrial symbiosis (Ranta et al., 2018). Such fragmented perspectives risk overlooking the integrative nature of the field, where innovation, entrepreneurship, sustainability, and policy frameworks converge to

shape economic development. Without a holistic bibliometric synthesis, research remains siloed, practitioners lack evidence-based roadmaps for designing value-driven strategies, and policymakers miss opportunities to align industrial upgrading with broader sustainable growth agendas. This study addresses these gaps by conducting a comprehensive bibliometric and science mapping analysis of 358 peer-reviewed documents retrieved from Scopus (1983–2024). Bibliometric methods provide an objective framework for evaluating scholarly impact, identifying intellectual structures, and mapping thematic evolution over time (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Donthu et al., 2021). By leveraging keyword co-occurrence, citation analysis, and thematic mapping, this paper highlights the dominant, supporting, and emerging themes in research on value addition and economic growth.

1. In particular, the study addresses the following research questions:
2. What has been the publication trend in research linking value addition to economic growth from 1983 to 2024?
3. Which authors, journals, and institutions have made the most influential contributions to this field?
4. Which countries are the most productive and impactful, and how are international collaborations structured?
5. What are the dominant thematic clusters framing the relationship between value addition and economic growth?
6. How have core, niche, and emerging themes evolved across time?
7. What new avenues can be identified for future research on value addition as a driver of sustainable economic development?

The findings of this bibliometric review have important implications. For academics, it offers a consolidated map of the intellectual landscape and thematic progressions, helping position future inquiries more strategically. For practitioners, it provides insights into how innovation, product development, and sustainability practices can enhance firm competitiveness. For policymakers, it highlights how value addition strategies can be aligned with broader economic and sustainability goals, particularly in emerging economies.

2. Theoretical background

The relationship between value addition and economic growth is grounded in a rich intellectual tradition that spans economics, strategic management, and innovation studies. At the core, Joseph Schumpeter's The Theory of Economic Development (1934) introduced the concept of innovation as the engine of "creative destruction," where entrepreneurial activity disrupts existing equilibria and generates new sources of growth. This Schumpeterian perspective remains highly relevant, particularly in linking entrepreneurship and technological innovation with processes of value creation in both developed and emerging economies (Nautwima, Asa, & Atiku, 2023). Building on this tradition, Nelson and Winter's Evolutionary Theory of Economic Change (1982) highlighted the role of routines and technological trajectories in shaping firm-level and national development paths, reinforcing the dynamic and cumulative nature of innovation. Complementing these innovation-centered views, Edith Penrose's The Theory of the Growth of the Firm (1959) positioned firms as repositories of resources and managerial capabilities, where growth is driven by how effectively resources are deployed. This resource-based perspective laid the foundation for later contributions such as Barney's (1991) articulation of sustained competitive advantage, which underscored the importance of valuable, rare, and inimitable resources in shaping firm performance. Wernerfelt (1984) further conceptualized the resource-based view (RBV), while Teece, Pisano, and Shuen (1997) expanded the discussion through the dynamic capabilities framework, emphasizing firms' ability to adapt, integrate, and reconfigure resources in response to environmental changes. Together, these perspectives establish the theoretical rationale for examining value addition as a process embedded in firm-level strategies and resource deployment.

From a strategic management standpoint, Michael Porter's Competitive Advantage of Nations (1990) and Competitive Strategy (1980) highlighted the importance of industry structures, clusters, and national contexts in shaping competitive advantage. Porter's frameworks emphasize that value creation is not isolated to firms but embedded in broader systems of rivalry, supply chains, and institutional support. These ideas are particularly relevant in the context of global value chains, where upgrading activities, such as product development, design, and innovation, determine how countries capture greater economic value (Song & Di Benedetto, 2008). In this way, Porter's work bridges the firm-level and national-level perspectives on value addition and competitiveness. Recent theoretical developments have extended these foundations to integrate sustainability, entrepreneurship, and policy perspectives. Social entrepreneurship research, for instance, highlights how entrepreneurial ventures generate both economic and social value, balancing profit with impact (Austin, Stevenson, & Wei-Skillern, 2006; Saebi, Foss, & Linder, 2019). Circular economy frameworks stress the role of industrial symbiosis, recycling, and resource efficiency in creating value that supports long-term sustainability (Ranta et al., 2018). Similarly, knowledge management has been identified as a central enabler of innovation, where effective systems for organizing and leveraging knowledge drive new value-creating opportunities (Du Plessis, 2007; Asa, Campbell, & Nautwima, 2022).

Within emerging economy contexts, scholarship demonstrates how value addition intersects with macroeconomic and developmental challenges. Studies on SMEs, microfinance, and employment dynamics in Namibia illustrate that value creation is not only about technological upgrading but also about enabling entrepreneurship, expanding access to resources, and addressing structural constraints such as unemployment and inflation (Asa et al., 2023; Nautwima & Asa,

2021). This reinforces that value addition operates at multiple levels, firm, industry, and economy, requiring integrative approaches that align innovation, competitiveness, and inclusive growth. In a nutshell, these theoretical traditions provide a multi-dimensional lens for analyzing value addition and economic growth. Schumpeter and evolutionary economics emphasize innovation and entrepreneurship as engines of transformation. Penrose, Barney, and Teece situate value creation within resource-based and dynamic capability frameworks. Porter highlights competitiveness at the national and industry levels, while contemporary work integrates sustainability, social entrepreneurship, and knowledge management into the conversation. This hybrid intellectual base underscores why bibliometric analysis is well-suited to map how these traditions converge, evolve, and shape the current state of research on value addition and economic growth.

3. Methodology

3.1. Search criteria and document selection

Table 1 shows that document retrieval process was guided by a targeted search strategy in the Scopus database, conducted on May 1, 2024. The search combined keywords associated with value addition (e.g., “value addition”, “value enhancement”, “product upgrading”, “value creation”, “output refinement”, “product development”) and economic growth (e.g., “economic growth”, “economic development”, “national economic expansion”, “GDP growth”, “macroeconomic growth”, “economic progress”). This initial query yielded 1,389 records. To ensure relevance and quality, several filtering steps were applied. First, duplicate entries, non-English records, and documents outside the core subject areas of Business, Management and Accounting; Economics; Econometrics and Finance; and Social Sciences were excluded. Second, the selection was restricted to peer-reviewed articles, reviews, and conference papers. Finally, records without valid author information were removed. Following this rigorous screening, the final dataset consisted of 358 publications spanning the period 1983–2024, which served as the basis for the bibliometric analysis.

Table 1: Search criteria and document selection

Filtering criteria	Exclude	Include
Search engine: Scopus Search date: 01-05-2024 **Search term:** (("value addition" OR "value enhancement" OR "product upgrading" OR "value creation" OR "output refinement" OR "product development") AND ("economic growth" OR "economic development" OR "national economic expansion" OR "GDP growth" OR "macroeconomic growth" OR "economic progress"))		1,389
Subject area: Business, Management and Accounting; Economics; Econometrics and Finance; Social Sciences	899	490
Document type: Articles, Conference papers, and Reviews	118	372
Language screening: English only	33	339
Erroneous records screening: Include documents with valid author information only, and delete duplicates	2	357
Total Selected Documents		**337**

Source: Authors’ depiction from literature (2024)

3.2. Techniques for analysis

We employed bibliometric mapping and network analysis using VOSviewer software (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010) to examine the selected corpus. VOSviewer was used to construct and visualize networks of co-authorship, country collaboration, institutional collaboration, co-citation, and keyword co-occurrence. Specifically, co-authorship networks were generated to identify influential authors and research groups, while country and institution-level networks highlighted international collaboration patterns. Citation analysis was performed to rank authors, institutions, and journals by total citations and link strength. Keyword co-occurrence analysis identified thematic clusters by grouping terms frequently appearing together (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010). We also analyzed journal sources for publication counts and citation impact. Network clustering algorithms in VOSviewer revealed the major topical clusters within the field. Throughout, we relied on standard bibliometric metrics (e.g., total publications, total citations, link strength) to quantify influence and connectivity.

4. Results

4.1. Year-wise publication trend

Figure 1 illustrates the annual research output on value addition and economic growth from 1983 to 2024. The results show that scholarly interest in the field was relatively modest until the mid-2000s, after which a gradual upward trend emerged. A notable surge occurred in the early 2010s, marking the beginning of a more consistent research phase. The publication count peaked in the mid-2010s and again in 2023, with around 34 outputs, before experiencing a sharp decline of approximately 62.9% by 2024. Despite the recent drop in output, the average citation rate per document (about 20.13 citations) indicates that the literature has maintained substantial academic impact. This suggests that earlier publications continue to shape ongoing debates and provide intellectual foundations for subsequent work. The trend implies that the

field may be moving from a phase of rapid expansion to one of consolidation, where established contributions are heavily referenced while fewer new studies are emerging. Overall, the pattern highlights both the historical growth of the research domain and the need to reinvigorate scholarly activity, particularly in addressing contemporary challenges of value addition as a driver of sustainable economic development.

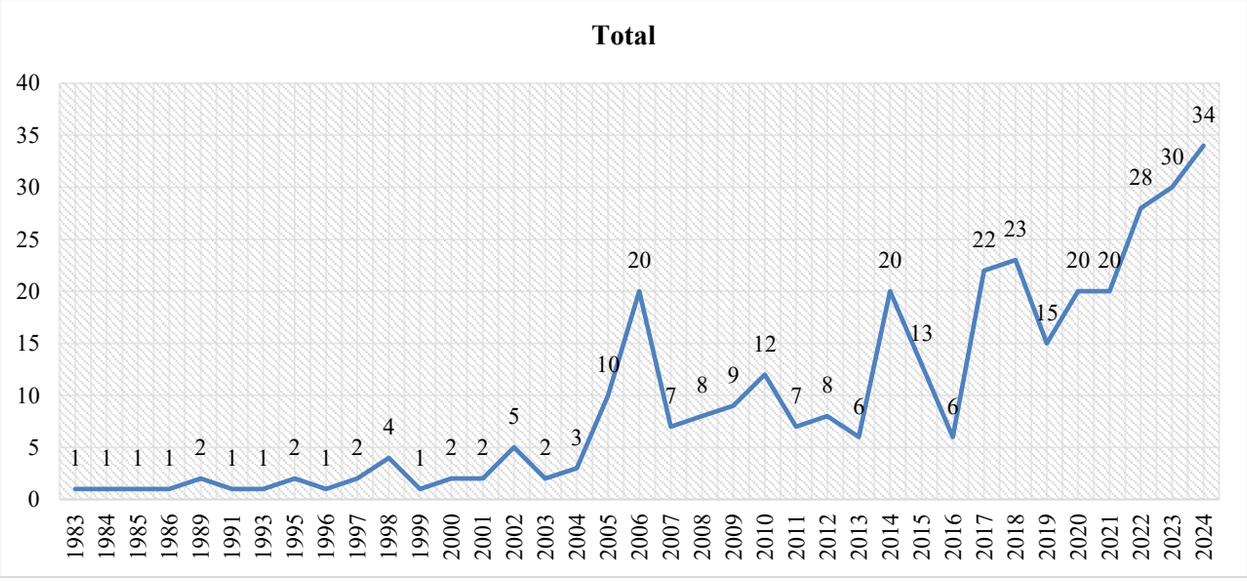

Figure 1: Year-wise publication trend
Source: Authors' computation from Scopus extracts (2024)

4.2. Bibliometric Citation Analysis of Top Influential Authors by citation

As shown in Table 2, authorship in the field of value addition and economic growth is characterized by a small number of highly cited, yet relatively low-output scholars. Marina Du Plessis (2007) stands out with a single publication that has accumulated 800 citations, underscoring the foundational role of her work on knowledge management in innovation. Similarly, Gary Gereffi (2012) and Joonkoo Lee (2012) have each produced one publication cited approximately 465 times, reflecting their authority on global value chains and industrial upgrading. Other notable contributors include Marcelo Cortimiglia, Janine de Medeiros, and Jose Duarte Ribeiro, each with one paper cited 448 times, which indicates the strong influence of their research despite limited publication volume. Interestingly, the total link strength (TLS) for most of these authors is zero, revealing limited co-authorship ties within this research domain. This suggests that highly cited contributions have often emerged from independent scholarly efforts rather than collaborative networks. Exceptions include Michael Song and collaborators (e.g., Johannes Halman, Ksenia Podoynitsyna, Hans van der Bij), whose modest co-authorship links (TLS = 6–8) demonstrate the presence of smaller research clusters. The prominence of Du Plessis, who anchors the innovation and knowledge management stream, alongside Gereffi and Lee, who dominate global value chain analysis, reflects the multidisciplinary foundations of the field. This dual orientation highlights how research on value addition bridges innovation studies and international trade, with independent thought leaders shaping its intellectual trajectory. The weak co-authorship structure further implies opportunities for strengthening collaboration to enhance knowledge integration and future research impact.

Table 2: Most prominent authors in the field by TC

Rank	Authors	TC	TP	TLS
1	Du Plessis, Marina	800	1	0
2	Gereffi, Gary	465	1	0
3	Lee, Joonkoo	465	1	0
4	Cortimiglia, Marcelo Nogueira	448	1	0
5	De Medeiros, Janine Fleith	448	1	0
6	Ribeiro, Jose Juis Duarte	448	1	0
7	Damanpour, Fariborz	432	1	0
8	Daniel Wischnevsky, J.	432	1	0
9	Song, Michael	401	2	8
10	Halman, Johannes I. M.	369	1	6
11	Podoynitsyna, Ksenia	369	1	6

12	Van Der Bij, Hans	369	1	6
13	Secundo, Giustina	345	2	0
14	Ghoshal, Sumantra	333	1	2
15	Moran, Peter	333	1	2
16	Park, Jacob	311	1	2
17	Sarkis, Joseph	311	1	2
18	Wu, Zhaohui	311	1	2
19	Mueller, Pamela	305	1	0
20	Stam, Erik	305	1	0

***Note(s): TP**: Total publications; **TC**: Total Citations; **TLS**: Total Link Strength*
Source: Authors' computation (2024)

4.3. Bibliometric Analysis of Top Influential Countries/Territories

Table 3 presents the bibliometric analysis of the top 20 countries contributing to research on value addition and economic growth, based on both publication output (TP) and citation impact (TC). By total publications (TP), the United States leads with 62 documents, followed by the United Kingdom (34), India (28), Italy (23), and China and Germany (22 each). This reflects the dominance of advanced and emerging economies in driving research productivity within the field. Malaysia (11), Finland (9), and Brazil (8) also make notable contributions, while countries such as Canada, Denmark, Hong Kong, Pakistan, and Lithuania appear with lower output (3–4 publications). The geographic spread suggests increasing global interest, with representation from North America, Europe, Asia, and selected emerging economies. By total citations (TC), however, the rankings shift significantly, highlighting the distinction between volume and influence. The United States again leads with 3,316 citations, confirming its intellectual centrality. Italy, despite having only 23 publications, ranks second with 1,218 citations, indicating high per-paper impact. Similarly, the Netherlands ranks tenth in output (9 publications) but fourth in citations (1,027), reflecting the quality and influence of its research. Australia (858 citations), Brazil (541 citations), and Hong Kong (397 citations) also demonstrate strong citation performance relative to their modest output. The comparison of TP and TC underscores that research influence is not strictly tied to output volume. Countries such as India and China contribute significantly in terms of productivity but have comparatively lower citation impact, suggesting that while these nations are expanding research activity, their global scholarly visibility remains limited. Conversely, Italy and the Netherlands illustrate the potential for smaller but highly influential contributions. Overall, the findings highlight a research landscape where the USA combines both productivity and impact, Europe demonstrates concentrated pockets of high-quality scholarship (Italy, Netherlands, UK, Germany), and emerging economies (India, China, Malaysia, Brazil) contribute to expanding the field's global reach. This distribution points to opportunities for South–North collaboration to enhance both the volume and impact of future research.

Table 3: Bibliometric analysis of top impactful countries by TP and TC

Top 20 based on Documents				Top 20 based on Citations			
Rank	**Country**	**TP**	**TC**	**Rank**	**Country**	**TP**	**TC**
1	United States of America	62	3316	1	USA	62	3316
2	United Kingdom	34	1140	2	Italy	23	1218
3	India	28	451	3	United Kingdom	34	1140
4	Italy	23	1218	4	Netherlands	9	1027
5	China	22	356	5	Australia	16	858
6	Germany	22	798	6	Germany	22	798
7	Australia	16	858	7	Brazil	8	541
8	Malaysia	11	355	8	India	28	451
9	Finland	9	351	9	Hong Kong	4	397
10	Netherlands	9	1027	10	Canada	4	361
11	Brazil	8	541	11	China	22	356
12	Russian federation	7	189	12	Malaysia	11	355
13	Singapore	7	267	13	Finland	9	351
14	Sweden	6	314	14	U Arab Emirates	6	321
15	United Arab Emirates	6	321	15	Sweden	6	314
16	Canada	4	361	16	Denmark	4	308
17	Denmark	4	308	17	Singapore	7	267

18	Hong Kong	4	397	18	Lithuania	3	240
19	Pakistan	4	180	19	Russia	7	189
20	Lithuania	3	240	20	Pakistan	4	180

***Note(s): TP**: Total Publications; **TC**: Total Citations*

Source: Authors' computation from literature (2024)

4.4. Bibliometric Analysis of Top Impactful Institutions

Table 4 highlights the most impactful institutions in the field based on citation counts. The results reveal that institutional influence is highly concentrated, with most top contributors represented by only one or two publications but achieving exceptionally high citation impact. By total citations (TC), Duke University and Yale University (United States) jointly lead with a single publication each, both cited 465 times. This indicates that individual landmark studies from these institutions have played a foundational role in shaping discourse on value addition and economic growth. Similarly, the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul in Brazil ranks third with 448 citations from one publication, reflecting the global reach of impactful scholarship beyond traditional U.S. and European centres. Fairleigh Dickinson University and Rutgers University follow closely, each with one paper cited 432 times, underlining the significance of targeted, high-quality contributions. The University of Missouri's Bloch School, with two publications cited 401 times in total, stands out for combining both productivity and impact, whereas other U.S. and European institutions, such as Eindhoven University of Technology, University of Twente, Cambridge, Imperial College London, and Utrecht University, feature with one publication each cited over 300 times. This pattern suggests that institutional impact in the field is driven less by volume and more by the visibility of pioneering works. Overall, the dominance of U.S. institutions reflects the country's centrality in advancing influential research, while the strong citation performance of select European (Cambridge, Imperial, Utrecht) and Latin American (UFRGS, Brazil) universities highlights the global and multidisciplinary nature of the field. The results imply that impactful research is not confined to prolific centres but often arises from specialized, highly cited contributions across diverse institutions.

Table 4: Bibliometric analysis of top impactful institutions by TC

Rank	organization	TC	TP
1	Duke University, United States	465	1
2	Yale University, United States	465	1
3	Universidad Federal Do Rio Grande Do Sul, Industrial Engineering, Brazil	448	1
4	Fairleigh Dickinson University 07666, 1000 River Road, United States	432	1
5	Rutgers University, Department of Management and Global Business,	432	1
6	Department of Marketing, Bloch School, University of Missouri, Kansas	401	2
7	318 Bloch School, University of Missouri-Kansas City, Kansas City, Mo 64	369	1
8	Department of Innovation Management, United States	369	1
9	Department of Management of Technology and Innovation, United States	369	1
10	Department of Technology Management, Eindhoven University of Technol	369	1
11	Eindhoven Centre For Innovation Studies (Ecis), Eindhoven University	369	1
12	University of Twente, Department of Construction Management and	369	1
13	College of Business, Oregon State University, Corvallis, Or 97331	311	1
14	Graduate School of Management, Clark University, Worcester, Ma 01610	311	1
15	Green Mountain College, Poultney, Vt 05764, One Brennan Circle, United S	311	1
16	Centre For Technology Management, University of Cambridge, Cambridge,	305	1
17	Innovation and Entrepreneurship Group, Imperial College London, London,	305	1
18	Max Planck Institute of Economics, Research Group Entrepreneurship, Gr	305	1
19	Scientific Council for Government Policy (Wrr), The Hague, Netherlands	305	1
20	Utrecht School of Economics, Utrecht University, Utrecht, Netherlands	305	1

***Note(s): TP**: Total Publications; **TC**: Total Citations*

Source: Authors' computation from literature (2024)

4.5. Bibliometric Analysis of Top Prolific Journals

Table 5 presents the most prolific journals publishing research on value addition and economic growth. By total publications (TP), the *Journal of Cleaner Production* leads decisively with 18 papers, far exceeding any other outlet. Its dominance reflects the strong intersection between value addition, sustainability, and environmental management, confirming the journal's role as a central hub for this body of research. The *Journal of Knowledge Management* ranks second with 8 publications, underscoring the relevance of knowledge-based perspectives in value creation. The *Journal of Product Innovation Management* follows with 6 publications, highlighting the importance of innovation and product development in the discourse. The *Journal of Engineering and Technology Management* ranks fourth with 5 papers, but its high citation count (652) suggests its contributions are both substantial and well-regarded. Other outlets such as the *Journal of Supply Chain Management* (3 publications), *Small Business Economics* (3 publications), and *Technovation* (2 publications) demonstrate the multidisciplinary nature of the field, spanning supply chains, entrepreneurship, and innovation. Interestingly, several high-impact journals such as the *Academy of Management Review*, *Annals of Tourism Research*, and *Research Policy* feature with only two papers each, but their contributions are highly cited, reflecting quality over quantity. Overall, the analysis indicates that while the *Journal of Cleaner Production* dominates in terms of volume, the spread of publications across management, innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainability journals underscores the multidisciplinary nature of the field. This dispersion also suggests that scholars approach value addition and economic growth from multiple angles, ranging from environmental sustainability to business strategy and knowledge management.

Table 5: Top prolific journals by total publications by TP

Rank	Sources	TP	TC
1	Journal of Cleaner Production	18	2137
2	Journal of Knowledge Management	8	215
3	Journal of Product Innovation Management	6	375
4	Journal of Engineering and Technology Management - Jet-M	5	652
5	Journal of Supply Chain Management	3	164
6	Small Business Economics	3	382
7	Tech Novation	2	311
8	Research Policy	2	249
9	Academy of Management Review	2	517
10	Annals of Tourism Research	2	912
11	International Small Business Journal	2	334
12	Management Decision	2	183
13	Decision Sciences	1	333
14	Technological Forecasting and Social Change	1	121
15	Tourism Management	1	231
16	Journal of Business Ethics	1	152
17	Journal of Technology Transfer	1	465
18	International Journal of Finance and Economics	1	120
19	California Management Review	1	163
20	Journal of Sustainable Finance and Investment	1	249

***Note(s): TP**: Total Publications; **TC**: Total Citations*

Source: Authors' computation from literature (2024)

4.6. Top Global Research Country Collaboration Networks

Table 6 and Figure 2 provide an overview of the leading countries in global collaborations on value addition and economic growth. The United States emerges as the central hub, with the highest total publications (62), citations (3,316), and collaboration strength (TLS = 29). This reflects its role as both the most prolific and most connected actor in the field. The United Kingdom follows with 34 publications, 1,140 citations, and TLS = 21, showing its influence as a strong secondary hub for international research linkages. Among emerging economies, India (28 publications, TLS = 6) and China (22 publications, TLS = 12) contribute significantly in terms of productivity, but their collaboration strength remains moderate compared to Western countries. Italy, Germany, and Australia combine strong citation impact with relatively high TLS, indicating that European and Oceania-based scholars are well integrated into international networks. Other countries such as Indonesia, South Africa, Malaysia, and Nigeria are visible in the network, but their TLS values (2–5) suggest more limited collaboration reach. Brazil (8 publications, 541 citations) shows high citation impact despite

weaker global ties, suggesting the presence of influential but less networked scholarship. The Netherlands is noteworthy for combining modest output (9 publications) with strong citation impact (1,027) and active collaboration (TLS = 8).

Table 6: Top countries in global research collaborations by TP

Rank	Country	TP	TC	TLS
1	United States	62	3316	29
2	United Kingdom	34	1140	21
3	India	28	451	6
4	Italy	23	1218	7
5	Germany	22	798	12
6	China	22	356	12
7	Australia	16	858	9
8	Indonesia	15	96	3
9	south Africa	12	135	2
10	Malaysia	11	355	5
11	Taiwan	11	175	5
12	Spain	11	138	7
13	Netherlands	9	1027	8
14	Finland	9	351	3
15	Brazil	8	541	3
16	Nigeria	8	39	3
17	Singapore	7	267	4
18	Russian federation	7	189	2
19	France	7	109	7
20	United Arab Emirates	6	321	5

***Note(s): TP**: Total publications; **TC**: Total Citations; **TLS**: Total Link Strength*

Source: Authors' computation from literature (2024)

Figure 2 complements these findings by visually highlighting the USA as the central connector, with prominent collaboration links to the UK, India, China, and Australia. This suggests that the intellectual exchange in this field is strongly anchored around U.S.-led partnerships, with Europe and Asia forming important secondary nodes. Overall, the results show that while the USA and UK dominate both output and collaboration, there is growing participation from Asia and Latin America. However, African countries such as South Africa and Nigeria remain underrepresented in terms of collaboration strength, pointing to opportunities for greater integration into global research networks.

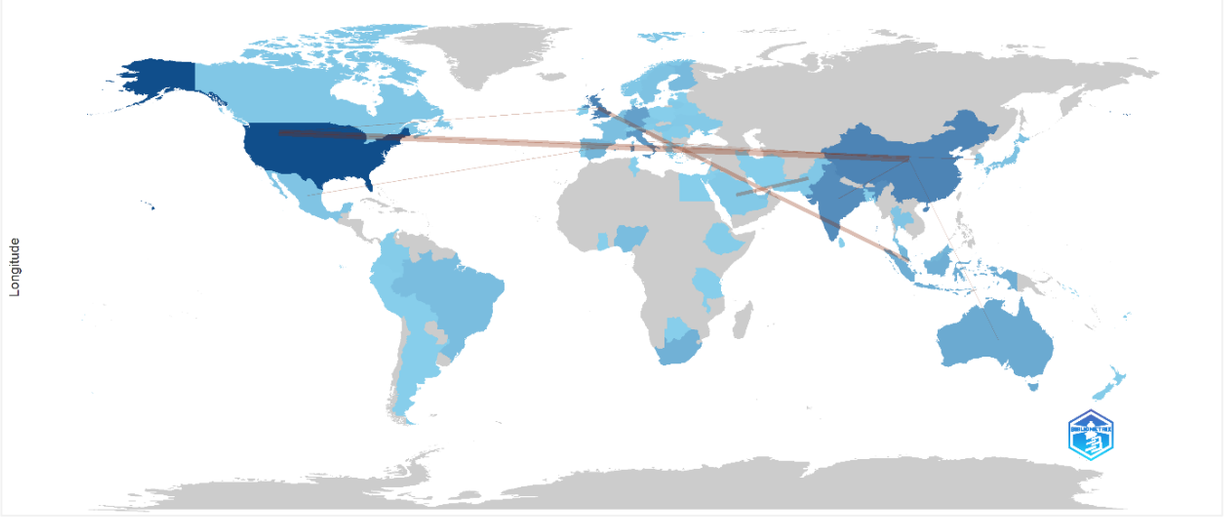

Figure 2: Top countries in global research collaborations by TP
Source: Authors' computation from Scopus extracts (2024)

Additionally, Figure 3 illustrates the structure of international research collaborations on value addition and economic growth. The network map shows clusters of countries linked through co-authorship ties, with node size reflecting publication output and link thickness representing collaboration strength. The United States and the United Kingdom appear as central nodes, confirming their dominant role in facilitating global research partnerships. Their extensive links with both developed (e.g., Germany, Netherlands, Australia) and emerging economies (e.g., China, India, Malaysia) highlight their bridging role in the knowledge network. European countries such as Germany, Spain, France, and Finland form a tightly interconnected cluster, reflecting strong intra-European collaboration. In Asia, China and India emerge as important nodes with multiple ties to both Western and regional partners, such as the United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, and Indonesia. However, their networks are somewhat more regionally concentrated compared to the broader global reach of the USA and UK. Africa is represented mainly by Nigeria and South Africa, which are connected to Asian partners (e.g., Malaysia, Indonesia) and to the UK, though their overall link strength remains relatively modest. Latin American participation is visible through Brazil and Mexico, often tied into European collaborations. The visualization highlights the collaborative but uneven structure of the field: while the USA and UK dominate as global connectors, other regions contribute through smaller but increasingly active clusters. This suggests that knowledge production on value addition and economic growth is both globally dispersed and highly dependent on a few central hubs, with opportunities for strengthening South–South linkages to balance the current North–South orientation.

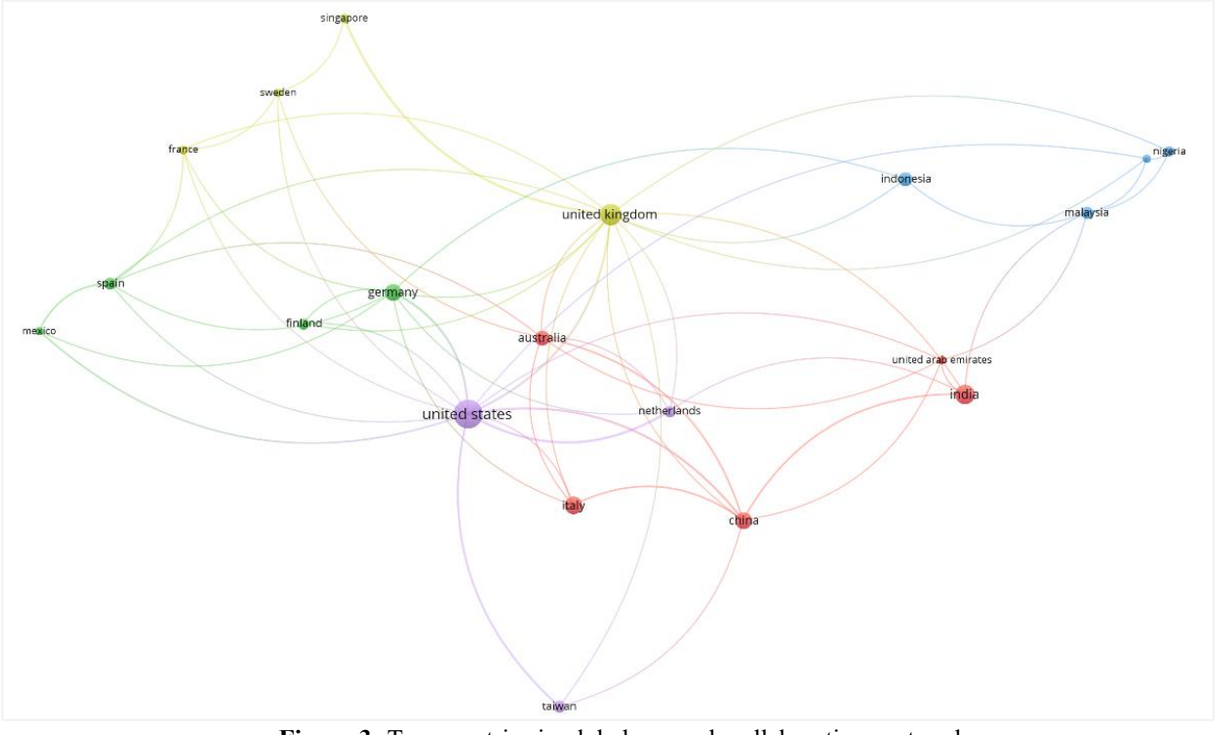

Figure 3: Top countries in global research collaborations network
Source: Authors' computation from Scopus extracts (2024)

4.7. Bibliometric Analysis of Top Referenced Documents

Table 7 highlights the intellectual foundations of research on value addition and economic growth, revealing the seminal works most frequently cited within the literature. The results show that the field draws heavily from classic economic theories, strategic management frameworks, and more recent contributions on entrepreneurship and sustainability. At the core are foundational texts by Joseph Schumpeter (1934) and Edith Penrose (1959), which together frame innovation-driven growth and firm-level expansion as critical building blocks. Schumpeter's The Theory of Economic Development (1934) leads with eight citations and high link strength (TLS = 9), underscoring the enduring relevance of innovation and entrepreneurship in explaining value addition. Penrose's The Theory of the Growth of the Firm (1959) is also widely cited (4 citations; TLS = 8), reflecting the importance of firm resources and organizational growth. From the strategy perspective, Michael Porter's work titled The Competitive Advantage of Nations (1990) with 7 citations and Competitive Strategy (1980) remains highly influential. These contributions highlight how industrial competitiveness and national-level strategies intersect with value creation and economic performance. Similarly, Jay Barney's resource-based theory (1991) anchors much of the discussion on firm resources and sustained competitive advantage, appearing multiple times with high citations and link strength. Methodological and empirical contributions also appear prominently. Fornell and Larcker's (1981) work on structural equation modelling and Montoya-Weiss & Calantone's (1994) meta-analysis on new product performance provide widely cited methodological guidance, demonstrating that measurement frameworks are as influential as theoretical ones in shaping the field. In terms of emerging themes, newer works such as Saebi, Foss, &

Linder (2019) on social entrepreneurship and the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015) show how the field is expanding toward sustainability, social impact, and policy relevance. These contributions signal a shift from purely firm-level and economic theories to more societally oriented perspectives. Overall, the distribution of references reflects a hybrid intellectual base:

1. Classical economic theory (Schumpeter, Penrose, Nelson & Winter).
2. Strategic management frameworks (Porter, Barney, Teece, Wernerfelt).
3. Empirical and methodological tools (Fornell & Larcker, Montoya-Weiss & Calantone).
4. Emerging sustainability and social entrepreneurship studies (Saebi et al., UN 2015).

This pattern demonstrates that research on value addition and economic growth is deeply rooted in long-standing theories of innovation, firm growth, and competitive advantage, while increasingly incorporating contemporary dimensions of sustainability and social enterprise.

Table 7: Top referenced documents by TC

Rank	Documents	TC	TLS
1	Schumpeter, J. A., The Theory of Economic Development (1934)	8	9
2	Porter, M. E., The Competitive Advantage of Nations (1990)	7	9
3	Eisenhardt, K. M., Building Theories from Case Study Research, Academy of Management Review, 14(4), 532–550 (1989)	6	0
4	Austin, J., Stevenson, H., & Wei-Skillern, J., Social and Commercial Entrepreneurship: Same, Different, or Both?, Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice, 30(1), 1–22 (2006)	5	5
5	Barney, J. B., Firm Resources and Sustained Competitive Advantage, Journal of Management, 17(1), 99–120 (1991)	5	5
6	Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F., Evaluating Structural Equation Models with Unobservable Variables and Measurement Error, Journal of Marketing Research, 18(1), 39–50 (1981)	5	4
7	Mair, J., & Marti, I., Social Entrepreneurship Research: A Source of Explanation, Prediction, and Delight, Journal of World Business, 41(1), 36–44 (2006)	5	4
8	Saebi, T., Foss, N. J., & Linder, S., Social Entrepreneurship Research: Past Achievements and Future Promises, Journal of Management, 45(1), 70–95 (2019)	5	4
9	Barney, J. B., Firm Resources and Sustained Competitive Advantage, Journal of Management, 17(1), 99–120 (1991)	4	6
10	Montoya-Weiss, M. M., & Calantone, R., Determinants of New Product Performance: A Review and Meta-Analysis, Journal of Product Innovation Management, 11(5), 397–417 (1994)	4	7
11	Nelson, R. R., & Winter, S. G., An Evolutionary Theory of Economic Change (1982)	4	2
12	Penrose, E., The Theory of the Growth of the Firm (1959)	4	8
13	Porter, M. E., Competitive Strategy: Techniques for Analyzing Industries and Competitors (1980)	4	1
14	Schumpeter, J. A., The Theory of Economic Development: An Inquiry into Profits, Capital, Credit, Interest, and the Business Cycle (1934)	4	1
15	Teece, D. J., Business Models, Business Strategy, and Innovation, Long Range Planning, 43(2–3), 172–194 (2010)	4	1
16	Teece, D. J., Pisano, G., & Shuen, A., Dynamic Capabilities and Strategic Management, Strategic Management Journal, 18(7), 509–533 (1997)	4	1
17	United Nations, Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015)	4	1
18	Wernerfelt, B., A Resource-Based View of the Firm, Strategic Management Journal, 5(2), 171–180 (1984)	4	6

***Note(s): TC**: Total Citations; **TLS**: Total Link Strengths*

Source: Authors' computation from literature (2024)

4.8. Bibliometric Analysis of Keywords Occurrences

The analysis of keywords provides a clear picture of the thematic foundations of research on value addition and economic growth. As shown in Table 8, the most frequent keywords are innovation (31 occurrences, TLS = 25), value creation (29 occurrences, TLS = 21), and economic growth (19 occurrences, TLS = 18). These concepts form the intellectual core of the field, where innovation is positioned as the driver of progress, value creation as the mechanism, and economic growth as the outcome. Their strong co-occurrence and link strengths confirm that these terms are consistently studied together, reinforcing their role as the central focus of the literature. Beyond these core terms, the keyword patterns highlight an emphasis on firm-level strategies such as product development (16 occurrences), new product development (12 occurrences), and technological innovation (5 occurrences). These terms, strongly linked to economic growth in Figure 4, underscore how upgrading products and processes is seen as a crucial pathway through which firms contribute to national and regional development. The presence of these keywords suggests that much of the scholarship treats value addition as a practical outcome of innovation-oriented business activities.

Another important cluster of themes revolves around sustainability and social impact. Keywords such as sustainability (15 occurrences), sustainable development (10 occurrences), circular economy (8 occurrences), and social entrepreneurship (8 occurrences) point to an expanding research frontier that connects value creation to broader societal and environmental goals. As illustrated in Figure 4, these terms are closely tied to both value creation and institutions, reflecting an integrated perspective in which competitiveness is increasingly linked with sustainability practices, regulatory frameworks, and social responsibility. Entrepreneurship and organizational perspectives also feature strongly in the analysis. Entrepreneurship (13 occurrences, TLS = 18), business model (7 occurrences), and strategy (5 occurrences) form a distinct cluster positioned between innovation and value creation. This positioning demonstrates that entrepreneurial activity and innovative business models are considered central mechanisms for translating technological progress into measurable economic outcomes. The relatively high link strength of entrepreneurship highlights its bridging role in connecting managerial practices with macroeconomic growth.

Finally, the inclusion of geographical and institutional terms provides additional context. China (5 occurrences, TLS = 6) and India (5 occurrences, TLS = 1) appear as key regional hotspots, signaling the increasing importance of emerging economies in shaping debates on value addition and industrial upgrading. Similarly, institutions (5 occurrences, TLS = 9) reflects recognition of governance structures and policy frameworks as important enablers of sustainable value creation. Meanwhile, less frequent keywords such as SMEs (6 occurrences) and supply chain management (5 occurrences) suggest that while smaller enterprises and supply networks are acknowledged, they remain relatively underexplored compared to the dominant innovation–sustainability nexus.

Table 8: Summary of top 20 keyword occurrences

Rank	Author Keywords	Occurrences	TLS
1	Innovation	31	25
2	Value creation	29	21
3	Economic growth	19	18
4	Product development	16	7
5	Sustainability	15	15
6	Entrepreneurship	13	18
7	New product development	12	9
8	Economic development	10	7
9	Sustainable development	10	14
10	Circular economy	8	7
11	Social entrepreneurship	8	10
12	Business model	7	7
13	SMEs	6	5
14	Technology	6	6
15	China	5	6
16	India	5	1
17	Institutions	5	9
18	strategy	5	5
19	Supply chain management	5	2
20	Technological innovation	5	2

Source: Authors' computation from literature (2024)

Overall, the keyword co-occurrence network in Figure 4 demonstrates a multidisciplinary structure. The blue cluster centers on innovation and economic growth, the green cluster emphasizes value creation and sustainability, and the red cluster highlights product development and social entrepreneurship. This clustering reflects the way research on value addition connects technological, economic, managerial, and social dimensions. The thematic overlap across clusters implies that the field is not fragmented but rather interconnected, with opportunities for future work to strengthen underrepresented areas such as SMEs, supply chain integration, and region-specific institutional dynamics.

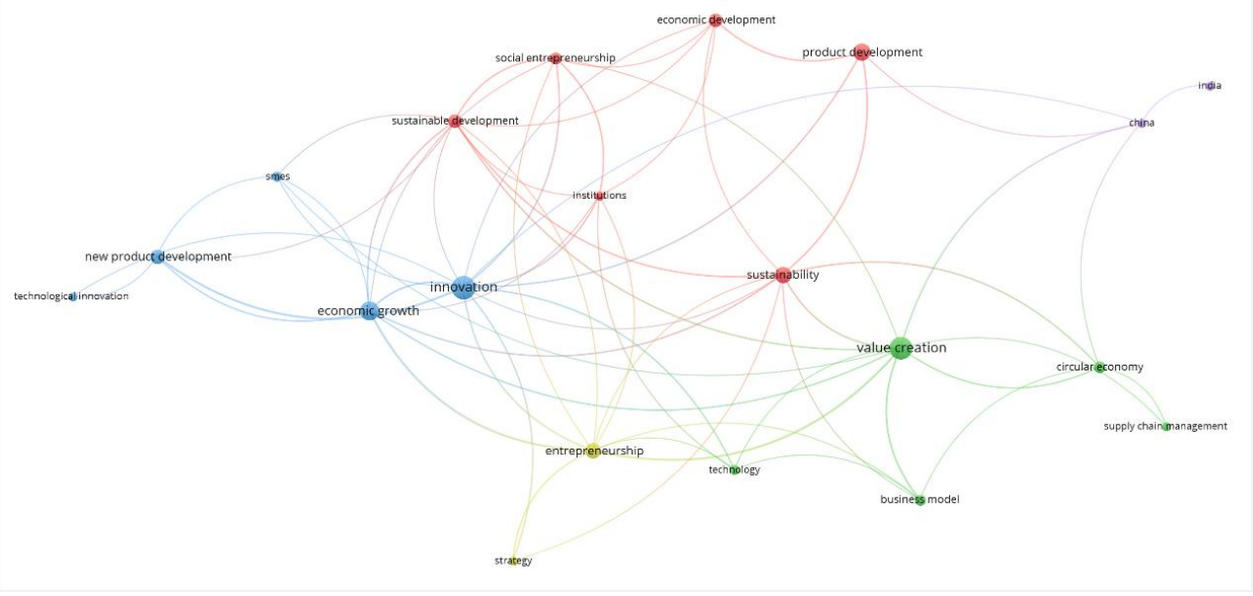

Figure 4: Keyword co-occurrence network
Source: Authors' computation from Scopus extracts (2024)

4.9. Bibliometric Analysis of Thematic Evolution

Figure 5 presents the thematic evolution of research on value addition and economic growth, using density and centrality to classify themes into four groups: motor themes, basic themes, niche themes, and emerging or declining themes. This framework provides insight into which areas of scholarship are central and mature, which remain foundational, and which are either specialized or still developing. In the motor themes quadrant, *economics*, *innovation*, and *sustainable development* stand out as both well-developed and central to the field. Their positioning indicates that these topics drive the intellectual agenda and act as the backbone of research on value addition and economic growth. The centrality of innovation reflects its role as a key driver of value creation, while the strong presence of sustainability illustrates how contemporary debates increasingly link growth with environmental and social responsibility. Basic themes include *product development*, *economic development*, and *economic growth*. These topics are highly relevant but less internally developed, meaning that while they remain foundational concerns of the field, they are often addressed in general terms without deep theoretical or methodological refinement. Their location in the map suggests opportunities for scholars to strengthen these areas by building more sophisticated frameworks and empirical approaches. The niche themes quadrant highlights specialized areas such as *biotechnology*, *investment*, and *industrial development*. These themes are relatively mature but remain peripheral to the broader literature, often attracting focused interest within particular sectors or regions. For instance, the presence of *China*, *industrial development*, and *technological development* reflects strong localized or sectoral contributions, but with limited cross-cutting influence across the field as a whole. Emerging or declining themes are represented by *social entrepreneurship*, *social enterprise*, *content analysis*, *value creation*, *circular economy*, and plural references to *economic growths*. Their positioning suggests that these themes are underdeveloped within the literature. However, given the increasing policy and academic interest in circular economy and social impact, these are better interpreted as emerging rather than declining themes. Their inclusion points to promising directions for future scholarship, particularly as debates expand toward sustainability-oriented and socially embedded models of value addition. Overall, the thematic evolution map suggests a field that has consolidated around economics, innovation, and sustainable development while still relying heavily on foundational but broad concepts such as economic growth and product development. At the same time, new opportunities are emerging in areas such as social entrepreneurship and circular economy, signaling a gradual shift toward integrating economic, technological, social, and environmental dimensions in the study of value addition.

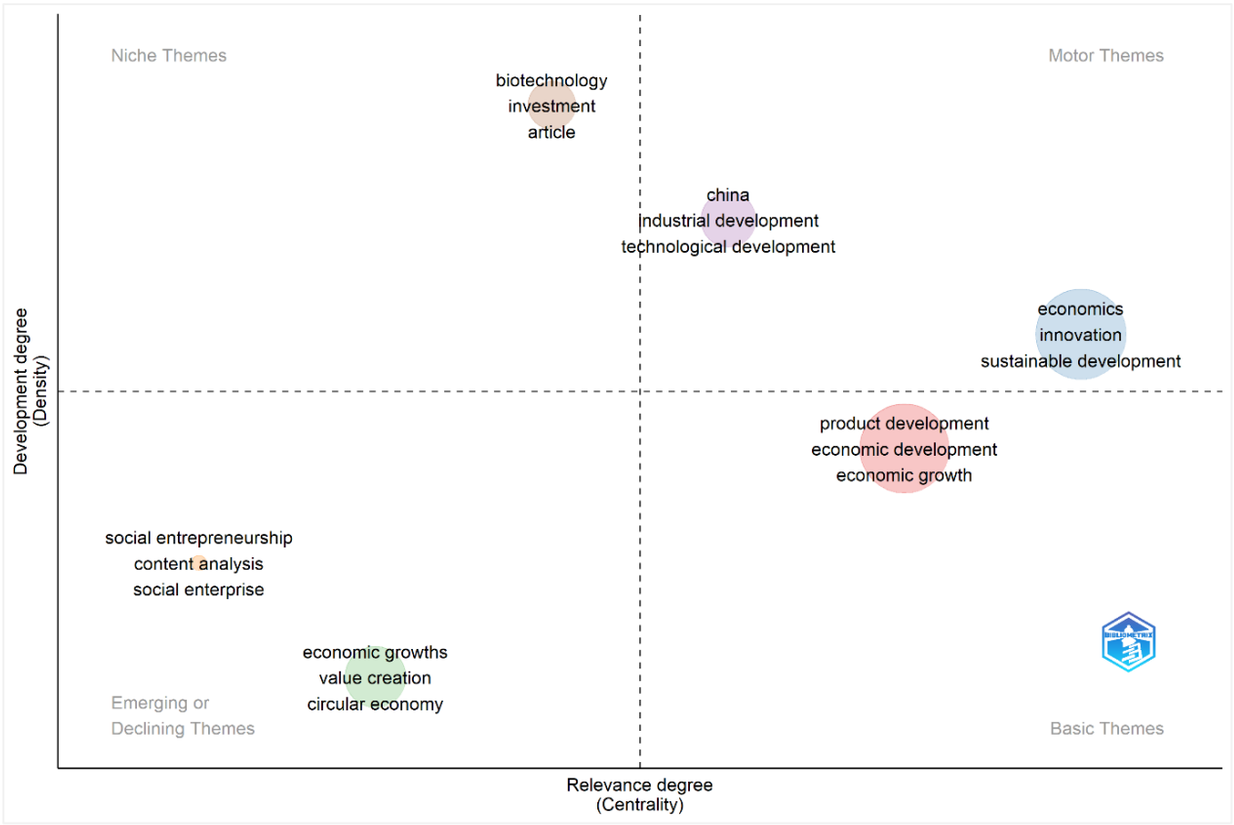

Figure 5: Thematic evolution
Source: Authors' computation from Scopus extracts (2024)

5. Discussions and Implications

This study has shown that research on value addition and economic growth rests on a diverse but interconnected intellectual foundation that blends classical economic theories with contemporary perspectives on sustainability, entrepreneurship, and innovation. The dominance of keywords such as innovation, value creation, and economic growth reinforces the continued relevance of Schumpeter's (1934) notion of creative destruction, where entrepreneurial innovation drives transformation and new growth opportunities. Complementary theories such as Penrose's (1959) resource-based perspective and Barney's (1991) articulation of firm resources and sustained competitive advantage provide further grounding by situating value addition within the strategic deployment of resources. The bibliometric evidence confirms that scholarship has consolidated around the central idea that firm-level innovation capabilities form the critical link through which value creation translates into broader economic outcomes. A notable finding is the growing integration of sustainability into discussions of value addition. Highly cited works such as de Medeiros et al. (2014) on environmentally sustainable product innovation and Ranta et al. (2018) on circular economy symbiosis highlight the importance of embedding ecological responsibility into innovation strategies. This shift aligns with Teece's (2010) argument that dynamic capabilities are essential for firms to reconfigure their resources in response to shifting environmental and societal pressures. The clustering of sustainability-related keywords further illustrates that value addition is increasingly understood not only as a driver of competitiveness but also as a pathway to long-term environmental and social resilience.

The analysis of author and institutional contributions revealed that highly influential works are often produced by individual scholars or small teams, such as Du Plessis (2007) on knowledge management and Song and Di Benedetto (2008) on supplier involvement in product development. While these contributions have been foundational, their limited co-authorship linkages highlight the fragmented structure of the field. By contrast, the global collaboration network shows that countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, and the Netherlands act as central hubs, reflecting their role in shaping knowledge exchange. This uneven pattern suggests that the field has developed through strong but independent intellectual contributions and could benefit from greater cross-institutional and South–South collaborations to enhance integration and diversify perspectives. Another significant implication arises from the emergence of entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship as growing themes in the literature. Saebi, Foss, and Linder (2019) argue that social entrepreneurship research broadens the understanding of value creation by integrating economic and social goals, a perspective reinforced by the UN's (2015) Agenda for Sustainable Development. Evidence from Namibia further demonstrates that entrepreneurship, microfinance, and SME development are central to addressing unemployment and fostering inclusive growth (Asa et al., 2023; Nautwima & Asa, 2021; Nautwima et al., 2023). This suggests that value

addition should be understood not only in terms of firm-level innovation but also in terms of enabling inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystems that contribute to sustainable national development.

The implications of these findings are threefold. For scholars, the results highlight the hybrid theoretical base of the field and the need for greater integration between innovation, resource-based, and sustainability perspectives. For practitioners, the evidence suggests that embedding knowledge management, supplier involvement, and sustainability practices into innovation strategies is central to achieving competitive advantage. For policymakers, the results underline the importance of building enabling environments that support entrepreneurship, encourage industrial upgrading, and foster international collaboration. These steps are vital if value addition is to contribute effectively to both firm competitiveness and national economic resilience.

6. Conclusion and Future Research Directions

This bibliometric analysis of 358 documents published between 2010 and 2024 has provided a comprehensive overview of the intellectual structure and thematic evolution of research on value addition and economic growth. The study shows that while research outputs peaked in the mid-2010s before declining, the field continues to exert strong academic influence, with average citation rates remaining high. It also reveals that the intellectual foundations of the field rest on classical theories of innovation, firm growth, and competitive advantage, while contemporary scholarship increasingly integrates sustainability, entrepreneurship, and policy perspectives. The findings point to several important conclusions. First, innovation remains the linchpin connecting firm-level strategies to economic growth, confirming the enduring relevance of Schumpeterian and resource-based perspectives. Second, sustainability has emerged as a core concern, positioning value addition as a process that must balance economic, environmental, and social goals. Third, the fragmented co-authorship structures highlight that although landmark contributions exist, collaborative networks remain weak, particularly in underrepresented regions such as Africa and Latin America. Finally, the growing visibility of entrepreneurship and social value creation signals an ongoing shift toward more inclusive and multidimensional understandings of value addition.

Future research should build on these insights in several ways. There is a need for stronger cross-regional collaborations to bridge fragmented streams and incorporate perspectives from the Global South. Thematic gaps, particularly around SMEs, supply chain integration, and region-specific institutional dynamics, warrant closer investigation. Further work is also needed to examine how circular economy practices and social entrepreneurship can be scaled to simultaneously enhance competitiveness and deliver societal impact. Methodologically, combining bibliometric analysis with qualitative reviews or case-based approaches would allow for a deeper understanding of how theoretical traditions are operationalized in practice. Overall, this study contributes a consolidated and structured overview of the field, providing a foundation for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers to advance the role of value addition as a driver of sustainable economic development. By strengthening collaboration, addressing underexplored themes, and integrating insights across theoretical traditions, future research can ensure that value addition strategies remain central to both economic transformation and social progress.

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