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A Decade of Business Continuity Management Practices in Oman: A Bibliographic Analysis

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Abstract

This bibliometric analysis explores the evolution of Business Continuity Management (BCM) studies in Oman in the last ten years regarding publishing trends, co-authorship, and emerging topics. Based on the data collected primarily from Scopus databases, the analysis of 69 articles was augmented by The Lens and Dimensions datasets to improve the interconnectivity and metadata of the research findings. Research findings highlight an increasing trend of scholarship in BCM in Oman, with variations in yearly publications and diversified thematic concern areas, including risk management, organizational resilience, and crisis management. The leadership and linkages map revealed that specific individuals and research groups were influential and active in advancing BCM in Oman. Referring to the global literature, Oman is a relatively recent addition to the BCM research within the context of the Middle East. The study highlights the importance of BCM in increasing organizational readiness and preparedness in the face of Economic risks and disruptions, particularly in Oman, as proposed research implications and practical implications for future studies.

Keywords: *Business Continuity Management, Oman, Bibliometric Analysis, Emerging Trends.*

Introduction

Economic growth is a crucial goal for all countries, influencing economic performance and social welfare. Oman, an oil-producing country, has recognized the importance of economic diversification without compromising growth. However, the country's heavy reliance on oil and gas revenues, subject to volatility due to global supply and demand shocks, has led to an economic crisis (Campbell-James, 2022). For instance, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the global economy, particularly in the healthcare services sector (Xiang et al., 2021). The lockdown has led to decreased service provision and quality due to shortages of employees and supplies. Oman, a Middle Eastern nation, has been severely impacted by its economic crisis, which heavily relies on oil and gas revenues (Jorwal et al., 2020). The volatility of oil prices has posed significant fiscal challenges, threatening to double Oman's national debt. The tourism and hospitality industry has also been severely affected (Albulushi et al., 2020; Mohammed Said Al-Mughairi et al., 2022).

Over the past decade, Business Continuity Management (BCM) has emerged as a critical practice for ensuring organizational resilience and sustainability, particularly in regions prone to economic fluctuations and geopolitical instability. BCM encompasses various business areas and plays a crucial role in an era of increased organizational risk, disasters, and crises. In Oman, the significance of BCM has grown substantially, driven by internal factors such as economic diversification efforts and external pressures such as global market dynamics and regional conflicts (Sawalha, 2020). BCM has been popular in Oman's education, healthcare, and market sectors since 2015 (Riglietti et al., 2022). Implementation is facilitated by programs like the National Business Continuity Plan (NBCP) and the Omani Standard for BCM (Ali et al., 2023; LAW & DADE, 2014; Riglietti et al., 2022).

The increasing emphasis on BCM in Oman reflects a broader regional and global trend where businesses and governmental organizations recognize the need to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disruptions. This analysis highlighted the academic and practical developments in the field and identified the key areas of focus and collaboration among researchers and practitioners. Understanding these trends

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is crucial for stakeholders aiming to enhance their BCM strategies and for academics seeking to contribute to this evolving field.

Objectives and Research Questions

This research aims to identify the state of development and practice of BCM in Oman over the last decade. It aims to provide insights into the growth and trends of BCM publications, compare these trends within Oman and the broader Middle Eastern context, analyze collaboration networks among researchers, and identify dominant themes and keywords in the literature. This comprehensive analysis is intended to inform both academic research and practical applications in BCM. The research questions of the study have been represented in Table 1.

Table 1. Research Questions

Research Question	Description
Q1) Evolution of publication	What is the trend of publication growth in the area of BCM?
Q2) Country of literature source	What is the global trend of BCM publications compared to Oman and other Middle Eastern countries?
Q3) Collaboration network analysis	What are the trends in collaboration and contributions in the area of BCM?
Q4) Main keywords	What keywords emerge and dominate themes in the literature related to BCM?

Methodology

Bibliometric analysis is a research method that uses bibliometric data to identify key authors, publications, nations, journals, and organizations and understand the growth of the body of knowledge. It is commonly used across various disciplines, particularly in management research, to measure and analyze research trends (Donthu et al., 2021; Muñoz-Villamizar et al., 2019; Pardo-Jaramillo et al., 2020). This approach will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the development of research related to BCM implementation in Oman. The main objective of the research was to study the growth and trends of BCM publications, compare these trends within Oman, analyze collaboration networks among researchers, and identify dominant themes and keywords in the literature.

Literature Search and Data Collection

The bibliometric analysis was conducted using the data extracted from Elsevier's Scopus, The Lens, and Dimensions. Scopus has been the largest database for extracting abstracts and citations of peer-reviewed journals, along with a significant number of documents for the analysis (Baas et al., 2020). The Lens offers free access to metadata, allowing scholars to search and study scientific and technical information spanning various knowledge domains (Peroni et al., 2014). Dimensions strengthen this by providing an interconnected perspective to research outputs such as publications, grants, patents, and clinical trials, making it easier to analyze the ultimate outcomes and trends for research (*Dimensions for Industry*, 2024). The five-step research design employed in this research is represented in Figure 1.

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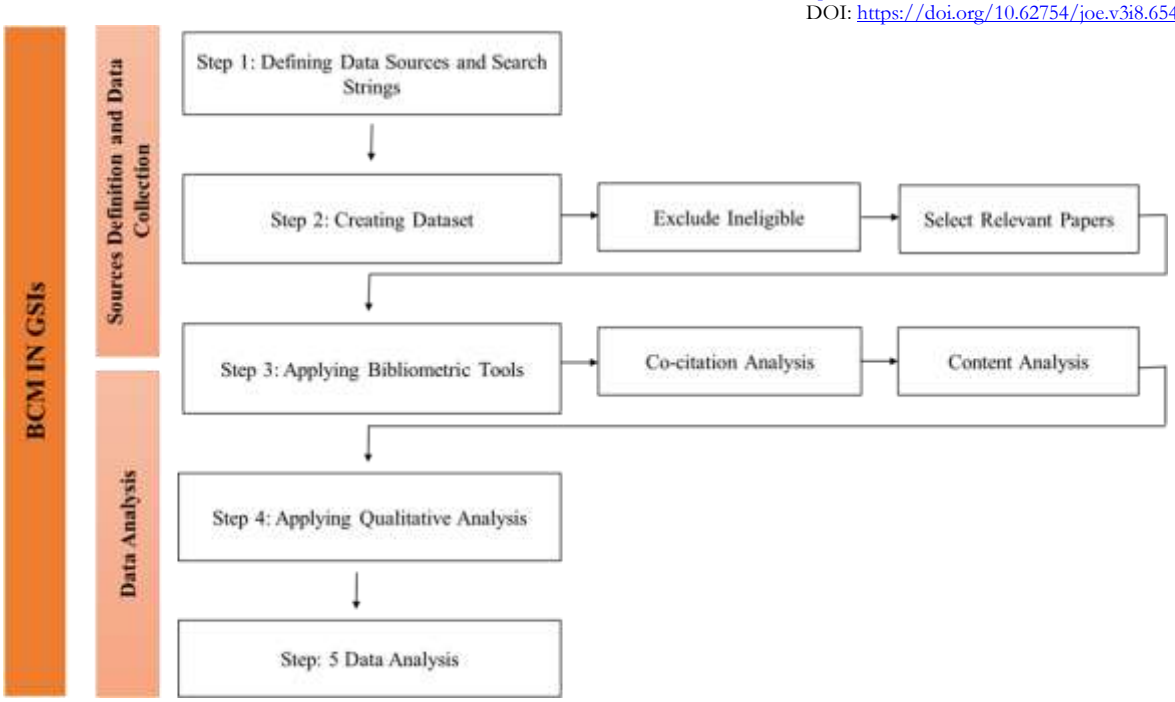

Figure 1. Research Design of the Study

The search strategy for this study involved several compound phrases connected by the OR operator. The words connected with the subject of "Business Continuity Management" AND "Oman" were entered in the initial search field. When no filter was applied, the overall number of documents returned was 2000. The search and retrieval of data were done in July 2024. These were further refined according to our inclusion and exclusion criteria to arrive at the final selected data. The details about the inclusion and exclusion criteria are shown in Table 2 below. After applying these filters, the search was refined to include 69 papers. These data were then exported for further analysis.

The summary information of the dataset is shown in Table 3. The h-index is a standard metric defined as the maximum value of h, such that the given author or journal has published at least h papers that have been cited at least h times (Hirsch & Buela-Casal, 2014). This index enables the researchers to evaluate the impact of an institution, journal, scientific paper, or country (Bornmann et al., 2011). The second index, Total Citation Count, counts the total number of citations a publication has received. It provides a straightforward measure of a paper's overall impact or influence within the scientific community.

Table 2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Code	Criteria
Inclusion Criteria	
IC1	Articles containing one of the keywords in either title, abstract, or keywords.
IC2	Documents written in the English language.
IC3	Articles in journals and conference papers.
IC4	Subject areas in Business Continuity Management and Government Services Institutions in Oman.
Exclusion Criteria	
EC1	Published articles before 2015.

Table 3. Data Synthesis Indicating Primary Information and Summary of the Dataset

Description	Results
Main Information About Data	

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Timespan	10 years
Sources (Journals, Books, etc.)	9
Documents	69
Annual Growth Rate (%)	51.38
Document Average Age	2.17 years
Average Citations per Document	9.33
References	1
Document Contents	
Keywords Plus (ID)	255
Author's Keywords (DE)	183
Authors	
Authors	325
Authors of Single-Authored Docs	5
Authors Collaboration	
Single-Authored Docs	5
Co-Authors per Doc	5.13
International Co-Authorships (%)	35.75
Document Types	
Article	37
Research Article	20
Article Conference Paper	1
Conference Paper	5
Conference Paper Article	1
Conference Paper Review	0
Review	5
Review Conference Paper	0

Research Results

Data Preprocessing with VOS Viewer

The most important step in the bibliometric analysis and visualization was data pretreatment, which makes the incoming dataset straightforward, relevant, and ready for further investigation. The primary objective of this step was to employ strict measures that would help reduce the number of times the same data is collected, maintain consistent metadata, and keep the data accurate. The VOS Viewer software was used for data analysis, which helps create meaningful visualizations from the data given (McAllister et al., 2022). It helps to visualize and analyze the supplied data. The text mining feature of VoS Viewer helped with bibliometric analysis and mapping by enabling users to examine vast volumes of text data (Van Eck & Waltman, 2014). The bibliometric mapping and analysis were possible due to VOS Viewer, which included a text-mining feature, making it easier to analyze large textual data.

The main objectives of this analysis were to understand the structure and dependencies of research data on the BCM in Oman. The first step of data gathering was to determine a frequency of at least 10, leading to the selection of 69 articles appropriate for visualization. These articles were subsequently clustered into four distinct topics, each represented by a different color in the visualization: the four major colors, including red, blue, green, and yellow, as shown in Figure 2.

The clusters show the connections between particular terms or unique keywords present in the set of data. For instance, the "red" link cluster comprises 82 strongly connected keywords, which reflects an overall research area or topic on BCM in Oman. Likewise, the "green," "blue," and "yellow" groups demonstrate the associative relationships between 50, 33, and 19 terms, indicating the existence of separate but interrelated subject areas within this field.

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The word cloud visualization in Oman, as shown in Figure 3, revealed key concepts and relationships in BCM research. The cloud consists of various topics and themes, including COVID-19, healthcare systems, data analysis, technology, industry sectors, and stakeholders involved in BCM. The color clusters represented distinct thematic groupings, indicating the importance and frequency of occurrence in the analyzed data.

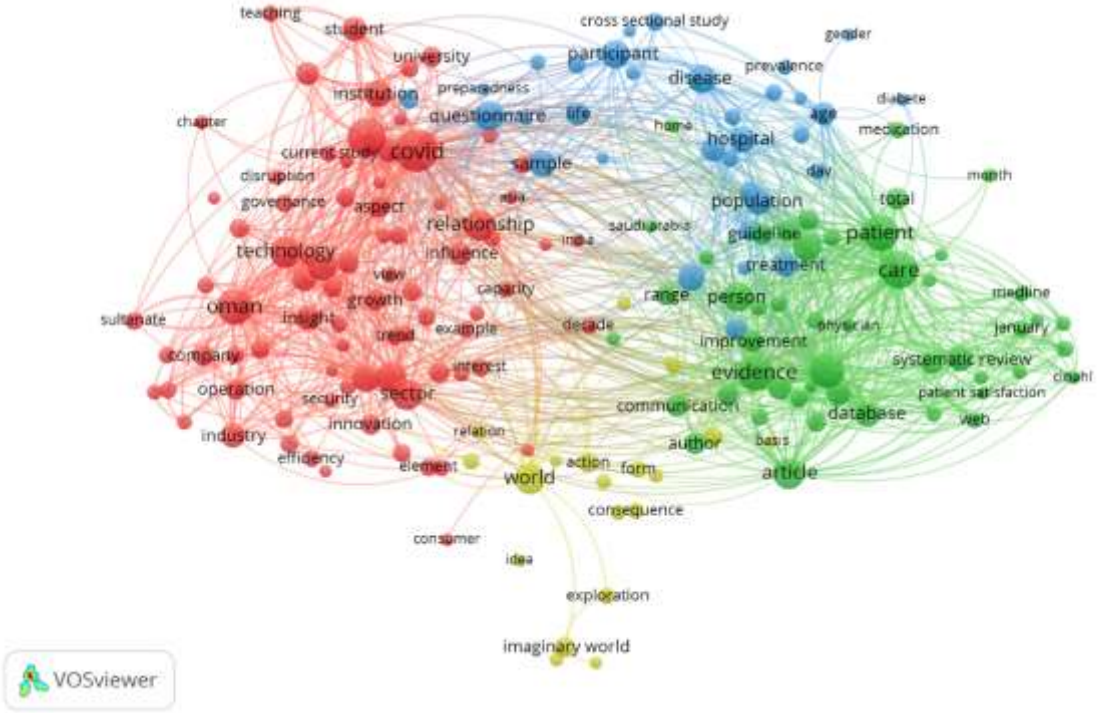

Figure 2. Vos Viewer Visualization

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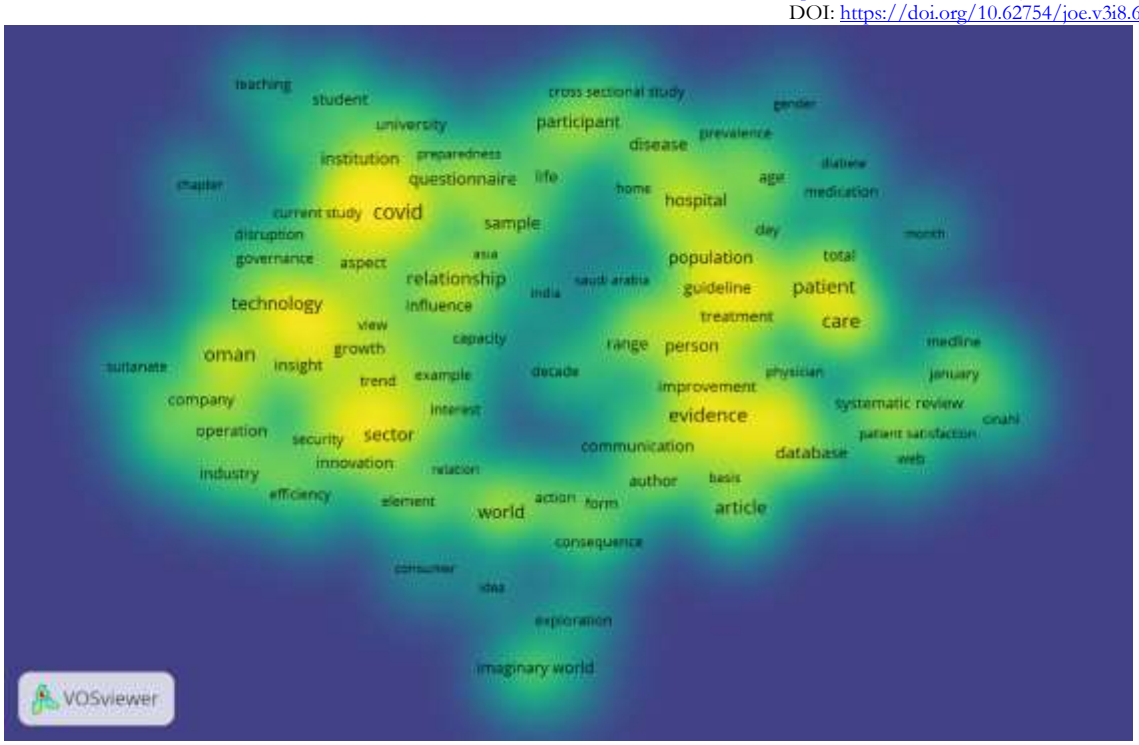

Figure 3. Visualization Vos Viewer for Theme Density

Data Analysis Using the Lens

The Lens is an open-access platform that provides a comprehensive bibliometric analysis tool for researchers, policymakers, and anyone interested in exploring the impact and dynamics of scholarly and technological innovation. It aggregates data from numerous sources, including major scholarly databases and patent offices, providing access to over 120 million scholarly publications and 100 million patent documents (*The Lens - Free & Open Patent and Scholarly Search*, 2024). The Lens offers advanced search and filtering capabilities, allowing users to precisely query databases based on keywords, authors, institutions, publication dates, and other criteria. It also offers bibliometric indicators and visualization tools, such as citation counts, h-index, and impact factors, to assess the influence and impact of research outputs. The Lens also allows users to create and share custom portfolios with colleagues, enabling collaborative research and analysis. To conduct a bibliometric data analysis using The Lens, users must define their research question, use advanced search and filtering capabilities, analyze the data using bibliometric indicators and visualization tools, and interpret the results to draw insights for research, funding decisions, or strategic planning.

Q1) What is the trend of publication growth in the area of BCM?

This section represents the annual scientific production of articles in BCM in Oman from 2015 to 2024 has shown fluctuations in the number of publications. The total number of publications increased from 7 in 2015 to 13 in 2023, indicating growing interest and activity in this research area, as shown in Table 4. However, the trend was not entirely linear, with some years experiencing a decline. For example, the number of publications decreased from 9 in 2016 to 3 in 2017 before increasing again to 5 in 2018 and 10 in 2019. Similarly, after a drop in 2020 and 2021, the number of publications rose sharply to 10 in 2022 and 13 in 2023. Journal articles have consistently been the dominant form of publication, as shown in Table 4 and the analysis results in Figures 4 and 5, accounting for most of the output each year. The data does not provide information on the average citation count for the publications in each year, which would have been useful to assess the impact and influence of the research in this field. Overall, the steady increase in publications suggests that the field of BCM has been gaining momentum and attracting more research attention.

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Table 4: Annual Scientific Production of Articles in The Business Continuity Management in Oman

Year	Book Chapter	Conference Proceeding Article	Dissertation	Journal Article	Other	Unknown
2015	0	0	0	7	0	0
2016	0	0	0	9	0	0
2017	0	0	0	3	0	0
2018	0	0	0	5	0	0
2019	0	1	0	7	1	1
2020	0	0	0	5	0	0
2021	0	0	1	3	0	0
2022	1	0	0	9	0	0
2023	2	1	0	10	0	0
2024	0	0	0	3	0	0

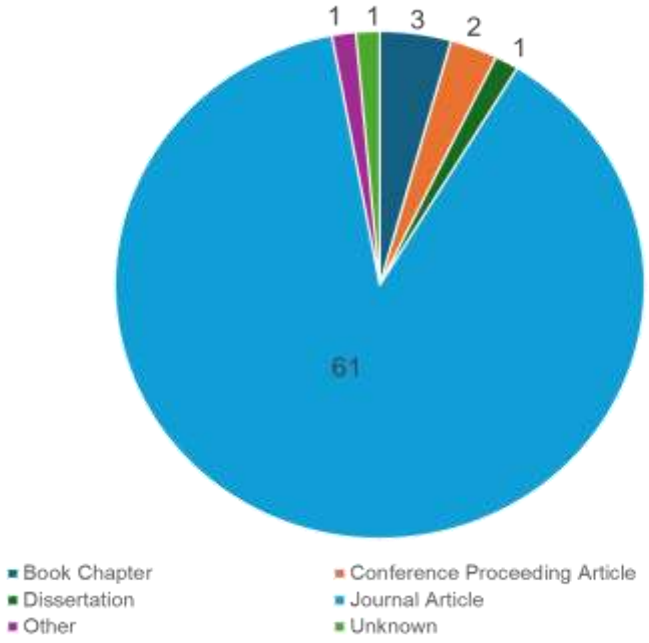

Figure 4. Type of Publications in the Business Continuity Management in Oman

The pie chart in Figure 4 shows that Journal Articles (blue) dominate BCM research in Oman, comprising 61 documents. This indicates a strong preference for peer-reviewed publications. Other types include 3 Book Chapters (dark blue), 2 Conference Proceedings Articles (orange), 1 Dissertation (dark green), 1 document classified as Other (purple), and 1 Unknown type (green). This highlights the prominence of journal articles as the primary medium for disseminating research in this domain.

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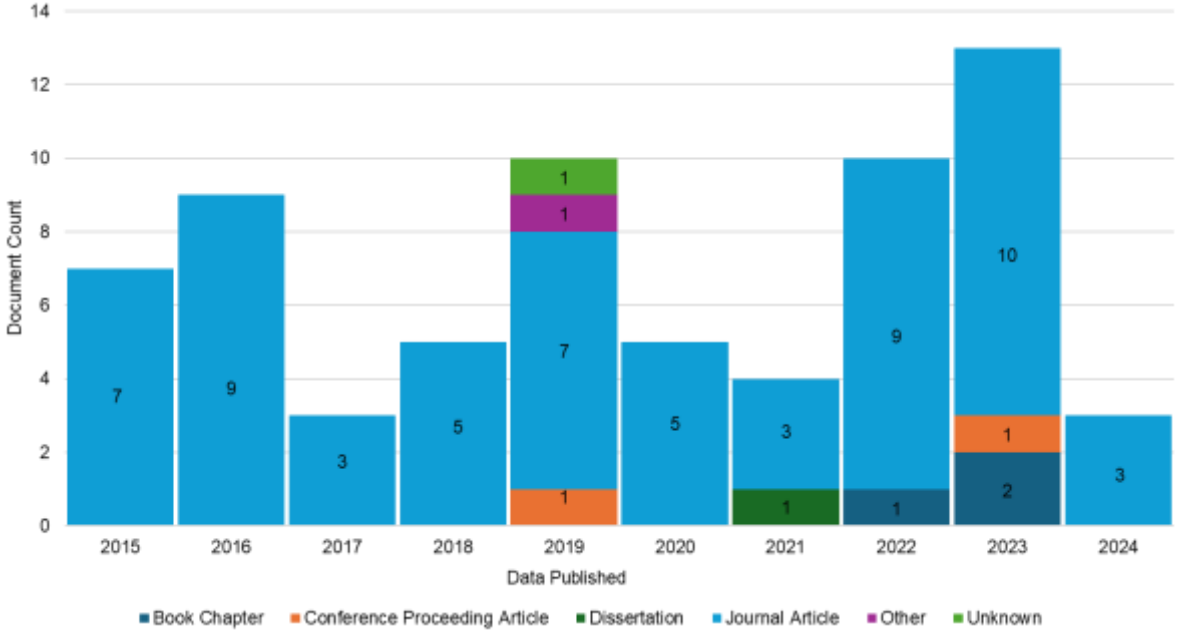

Figure 5. Annual Scientific Production in the Business Continuity Management in Oman

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The heat map analysis of research publication trends across various disciplines, as shown in Figure 6, provides valuable insights into recent academic and scientific priorities. The data suggested that the fields of Medicine, Computer Science, Political science and Business have been the most active, with significantly higher publication counts than other areas. This indicated a strong focus on medical research and a growing emphasis on business-related studies and technological advancements. In contrast, some domains like Abdominal Surgery, Accounting, and Alternative Medicine appear to have relatively lower research output, potentially signaling opportunities for further exploration and investment in these areas. The diversity of the represented fields, ranging from natural sciences to social sciences and engineering, underscores the breadth of the research landscape. This analysis can help inform strategic decisions regarding resource allocation, collaborative initiatives, and identifying emerging or underrepresented research topics that warrant greater attention from the academic community.

Figure 6. Heat Map Analysis of Research Publication in the Business Continuity Management in Oman

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Citation Analysis

The citation of research papers on BCM over the past 10 years has been represented in Figure 7. The graph represented a steady increase in citations, indicating that other scholars are beginning to recognize and observe the concepts in the subject matter. The accumulated citations not only demonstrate the influence of these publications but also indicate their significance. The graph also represented references to these papers by other researchers, revealing that the reports have made important findings and contributions that other researchers can attribute to and agree with. This justification and the study's special significance in the BCM scope were highlighted. The educational papers presented in the graph were published in well-reputed academic journals with many citations, demonstrating the relevance of BCM research. The high number of citations also emphasizes the importance of individuals as the foundation of success and the persistence in research implemented by other scholars and researchers.

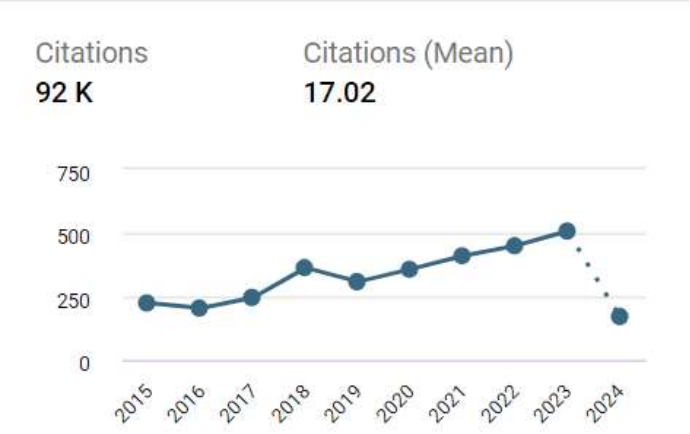

Figure 7. Citation of research papers on Business Continuity Management over the past 10 years

Q2) What is the global trend of BCM publications compared to Oman and other Middle Eastern countries?

While the global leaders in research output are undoubtedly the United States, the United Kingdom, and China, Oman's presence in the publication landscape should not be overlooked. The data, as shown in Figures 8 and 9, along with Table 5, reveals that Oman is among the Middle Eastern countries represented, indicating it maintains an active, although relatively lower, contribution to research and publications across various disciplines. Notably, Oman's document count exceeds several other Gulf nations, such as Kuwait, Bahrain, and Egypt, suggesting it has established a foothold in the regional research ecosystem. However, to capitalize on its potential, Oman must strive to narrow the gap with the more prolific publishers in the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia (Al Marzooqi, 2017). Identifying strategic focus areas, fostering collaborative networks, and investing in research infrastructure and talent development could be critical steps for Oman to enhance its academic and scientific impact within the Middle East and on the global stage. By strengthening its research capabilities and increasing its publication output, Oman can position itself as an emerging hub of knowledge, innovation, and thought leadership, contributing meaningfully to advancing various disciplines, including the critical field of BCM (Albulushi et al., 2020).

Table 5. Most Active Countries and Nations in Business Continuity Management Research

Institution Country/Region	Document Count
China	6
Australia	4
United Kingdom	3
Oman	3
United States	3

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Germany	2
India	2
Kenya	2
United Arab Emirates	1
Canada	1
Denmark	1
Spain	1
Indonesia	1
Iran	1
Italy	1
Jordan	1
Korea, Republic of	1
Malaysia	1
Norway	1
Pakistan	1
Taiwan	1
Zambia	1

Figure 8: Maps Distribution of The Corresponding Author's Country (Table 5)

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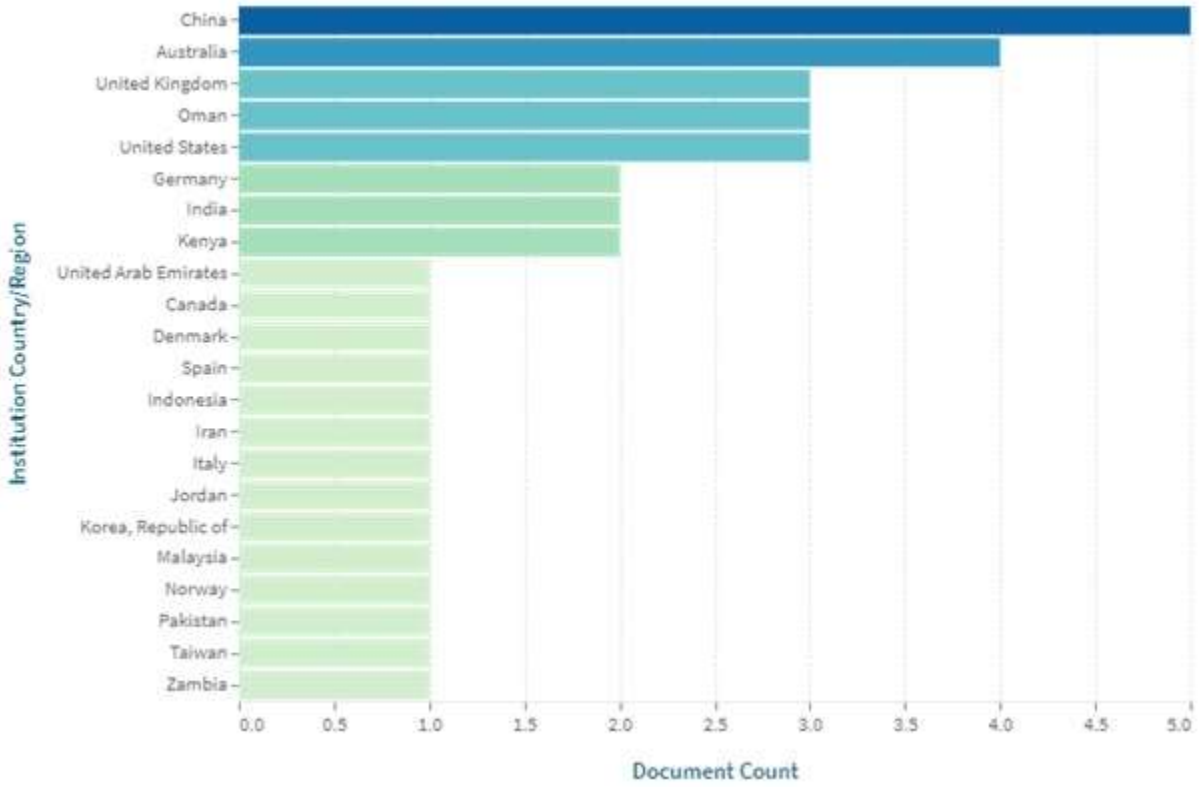

Figure 9. Global Trend Graphical Representation of Business Continuity Management Research

Q3) What are the trends in collaboration and contributions in the area of BCM?

The co-authorship network visualization, created using VOSviewer, as shown in Figure 10, offers valuable insights into the collaborative patterns of researchers studying BCM in Oman. The network, divided into 22 clusters, shows 35 authors involved in BCM-related research. The largest cluster, represented by red nodes, includes four authors as a prominent figure. This suggests a core research team or collaboration hub driving much of the BCM research in Oman. Other clusters include green and yellow groups, showcasing additional collaborations and potential sub-specializations. The varying sizes of nodes indicate the influence and productivity of individual researchers, providing insights into leading experts and research groups in the Omani BCM landscape. This visualization can help foster stronger research partnerships, identify potential areas for interdisciplinary collaboration, and recognize key contributors in advancing the field of BCM in Oman (Dauletova, 2016; Matriano, 2019).

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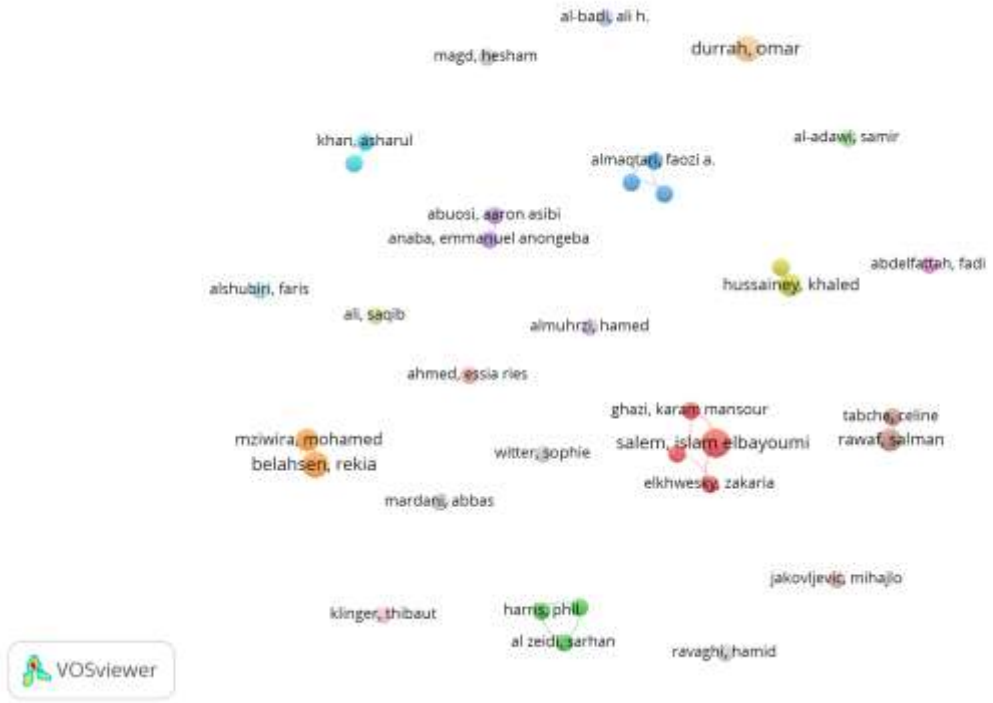

Figure 10. Co-Authorship Network Visualization by VOS Viewer

Q4) What keywords emerge and dominate themes in the literature related to BCM?

From the study of the literature and words related to the field of study, the following are some of the most common themes that are noticeable, especially in Middle Eastern countries, specifically Oman. Figure 11 indicated that Medicine was one of the most popular fields of specialization, and some of the subfields are Internal Medicine and Intensive Care Medicine, Surgery, and psychiatry. This indicates that medical innovation and practice have been raised and are key regional interests. Moreover, the keywords such as Business, Economics, and Political Science also suggested much concern on the interaction between health economics and policy. In addition, the offered fields, such as Engineering, Environmental Science, and Computer Science indicate that a multidisciplinary approach and technology implementation in health care was also considered. Altogether, the variability of the keywords indicates the complexity of the discussed field of study and stresses its primary focuses, including medical professions, socio-economic factors of healthcare management, and Information technologies in the Middle Eastern context.

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Figure 11: Fields of Studies in Business Continuity Management in Oman

Thematic Analysis of Business Continuity Management (BCM) in Gulf Countries

- *Business Continuity Planning*

Business continuity planning is a strategic priority in Gulf countries, ensuring that essential operations can continue during and after disruptions (Corrales-Estrada et al., 2021). This approach helps organizations maintain service levels and minimize financial losses amidst geopolitical tensions and economic fluctuations. Gulf businesses invest heavily in structured planning to prepare for various contingencies, ensuring operational resilience (Al-Balushi & Durugbo, 2020).

- *Risk Management*

Comprehensive risk management is integral to BCM in the Gulf, focusing on identifying, assessing, and mitigating potential threats. This includes addressing market volatility, supply chain disruptions, and geopolitical risks. By implementing robust risk management frameworks, Gulf businesses can navigate the dynamic risk landscape and ensure long-term sustainability and stability (Albasteki, 2021).

- *Critical Infrastructure*

Protecting critical infrastructure is a central concern in Gulf countries (Al Hamed & Alenezi, 2016), where sectors like energy, transportation, and finance are crucial for economic security. Ensuring the resilience of these infrastructures supports national development goals and public safety. Businesses and governments should collaborate to safeguard these assets from various challenges, ensuring they remain operational during crises.

- *Emergency Management*

Effective emergency management strategies are essential for BCM in the Gulf, facilitating coordinated and efficient responses to crises. This theme highlights the need for robust systems to handle natural disasters, industrial accidents, and other emergencies. By developing comprehensive emergency management plans,

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Gulf businesses can minimize the impact of such events on their operations (Al Hamed & Alenezi, 2016; Castillo, 2018).

The Need for BCM in Oman

Integrating comprehensive BCM practices in Oman is critical to addressing the diverse risks that can disrupt business operations. The thematic analysis highlights the importance of business continuity planning, risk management, protection of critical infrastructure, and effective emergency management. These elements ensure economic stability and resilience to natural disasters, economic shifts, and other threats. By adopting these BCM strategies, Omani businesses can enhance their operational resilience, safeguard their critical infrastructure, and effectively respond to emergencies. This approach can protect Oman's business landscape and support its long-term economic growth and regional competitive advantage.

Discussion

The analysis aimed to systematically examine the development and evident trends in BCM research in Oman from 2015 to 2024. Therefore, using advanced bibliometric analysis methods, this study aimed to discover the intellectual structure and progress of BCM research within Oman. By analyzing the trends in journal publications, citation connections, author collaborations, and thematic changes, the research emphasizes the trends in the development of the BCM priority, key institutions and researchers, and thematic trends that have emerged in the last decade. Such an analysis has been significant in determining the BCM practice's evolution and direction in Oman, guiding researchers, practitioners, and policymakers on the sectors of importance, partnerships, and potential developments that can strengthen the business and organizational BCM performance in the Sultanate. Thus, the study's results enrich the knowledge about the BCM research and its relevance for the practical context of the GCC nations specifically Oman.

Q1) What is the trend of publication growth in the area of BCM?

The bibliometric analysis of BCM research in Oman from 2015 to 2024 revealed a growing interest and focus on BCM within the Omani context. The number of published articles on BCM-related topics generally showed an upward path, with a slight dip observed in 2017, as shown in Table 4. The average number of citations per article has also exhibited a variable pattern over time, indicating the dynamic nature of knowledge dissemination and impact within the field. Thematic analysis of the research landscape reveals the emergence of specific themes, such as "business continuity planning" and "risk management." More central and prevalent themes, such as "critical infrastructure" and "emergency management," reflect broader priorities and concerns surrounding BCM in Oman. The dominance of foundational themes like "business continuity," "organizational resilience," and "operational risk," as well as the increasing prominence of topics related to "crisis management" and "disaster recovery," may suggest future BCM research in Oman that can address the core theoretical and practical aspects and also aligns with the country's efforts to enhance business and organizational resilience.

Q2) What is the global trend of BCM publications compared to Oman and other Middle Eastern countries?

As shown in Table 6, Oman's affiliation data reveals a growing focus on BCM implementation, with Muscat College being the leading institution with two documents on the topic. Middle East College contributed to the research with one document. Other notable institutions include Princess Sumaya University for Technology in Jordan and Yarmouk University in Jordan. The data also included universities from the United Arab Emirates, such as the University of Dubai and the University of Wollongong in Dubai. These institutions contributed to the scholarly discourse on BCM, highlighting the interdisciplinary nature of research in fields like engineering, technology, and business. This data provided valuable insights into the academic landscape of BCM implementation in Oman and the Middle East, offering a comprehensive understanding of key players, emerging trends, and potential areas for future exploration.

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Table 6. Affiliation Data of Middle East Countries

Country	University/College	Scholar Works
Oman	Muscat College	2
Oman	Middle East College	1
Jordan	Princess Sumaya University for Technology	1
Jordan	Yarmouk University	1
UAE	University of Dubai	1
UAE	University of Wollongong in Dubai	1

Q3) What are the trends in collaboration and contributions in the area of BCM?

The co-authorship network analysis in Figure 10 revealed weak collaborative dynamics within the field of BCM research in Oman. The study reveals the least number of co-authorships, indicating the unique identity and importance of this area of study. The presence of large, central nodes in the network signifies the influential role of certain researchers who have played a pivotal role in fostering collaboration and acting as pioneers in the field. The red cluster in the network demonstrated collaborative efforts among a few groups of authors who have contributed to BCM research. The similar-sized nodes within this cluster suggested an established but weak collaborative work. These insights demonstrated the need for a collaborative nature of BCM research in Oman and influential researchers and research clusters that can significantly shape the understanding and advancement of BCM practices in the country.

Q4) What keywords emerge and dominate themes in the literature related to BCM?

BCM Research in the Oman Region of the Middle East is characterized by various fields, including medicine, computer science, political science, and business, as shown in Figure 6 and Figure 11. These interdisciplinary fields, including healthcare, technology, governance, and organizational management, ensure business continuity and resilience. The research highlighted the critical role of BCM in safeguarding essential healthcare services and infrastructure during disruptions and emergencies. The integration of technology and data-driven solutions is also emphasized, with the inclusion of "political science," "law," "economics," and "public relations" reflecting broader organizational and governance considerations. The evolving nature of BCM-related research in the region offers valuable interdisciplinary perspectives and recommendations to help organizations and governments navigate the complex landscape of ensuring business continuity and resilience.

The findings of this research on the implementation and biometric analysis of BCM in Oman contribute significantly toward developing this burgeoning area of study. It underlines the need to incorporate modern business management interventions for organizational effectiveness and continuity. These insights can inform decision-making and improve the application of BCM best practices in Oman by catering to emerging business continuity issues.

Conclusion

This bibliometric analysis of Business Continuity Management (BCM) research in Oman over the last decade demonstrated an increasing focus on BCM practices due to the concerns of resilience in organizations with diversification in economies and volatility in the global market. The growing research outputs and research cooperation of academics demonstrated the importance of BCM in Oman. Several major trends in various fields were highlighted in the analysis, which indicated the opportunities for researchers to contribute to understanding and preserving Oman's business management. Therefore, these results emphasized the need to pursue further research and the efficient application of BCM to strengthen Oman's preparedness and management of different crises to support the nation's economic resilience and development.

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