



A Bibliometric Analysis on the Concept of Union Effectiveness

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Abstract

Aim: The main aim of this research is to examine the concept of 'union effectiveness' through the scientific mapping technique.

Method: Keyword, citation, and bibliometric matching analysis was applied to 546 publications obtained from the Scopus database between 1979 and 2023. In the data search, the word 'union effectiveness' was searched with the 'all fields' option. Only English texts were considered during the search. Scientific mapping visualizations were presented through Vosviewer software.

Results: It was determined that the journal with the highest number of publications is the British Journal of Industrial Relations. The USA is the country with the most publications. University of Haifa ranks first among the top 10 universities with the most publications. There is an intense interaction between the USA-China-Israel-South Korea-Ireland in the cluster of the most cited countries in the co-authorship network. The most prominent keywords in the studies are emotional commitment-employee turnover tendency-job satisfaction-organizational citizenship behavior-organizational commitment-performance-trust. It is seen that the most directly cited author is Cohen A. In the co-citation analysis of the document references, it was found that Boxall P and Haynes P (1997) were highly cited.

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Conclusion: It is aimed that the data presented by this research will be a guide within its own limitations to academics who will address the issue of union effectiveness in their research.

Keywords: Trade union, Trade union effectiveness, Bibliometric analysis, Vosviewer, Scopus

INTRODUCTION

Unlike systematic literature review, bibliometric analysis is a quantitative analysis method that aims to reveal which authors have contributed to the literature on a particular subject and how the subject has developed over time. This method can also provide clues about the cooperation and communication among regions, institutions, academic disciplines, and researchers within the framework of the concept under study (Yılmaz, 2021).

Using exceptionally large databases such as Web of Science or Scopus in bibliometric analysis is quite common among researchers (Gök, 2021; Öztürk and Kurutkan, 2020; Salmerón-Manzano and Manzano-Agugliaro, 2017; Kazak and Kazak, 2023; Kavurmacı, 2022). In this study, Scopus, which has a huge database bringing together more than 87 million documents, nearly 2 billion cited references, more than 17 million authors, more than 335 thousand books and more than 7 thousand publishers, was preferred (<https://www.elsevier.com/solutions/scopus/how-scopus-works/content>, Retrieved: 16 May 2023).

It is emphasised in recent review studies that trade unions have a significant impact on both employees and business outputs within labour relations systems that differ from each other for certain reasons such as the internal dynamics of countries (Leigh and Chakalov, 2021).

Although the union phenomenon and the concept of union effectiveness have received significant attention in the industrial relations literature, these concepts have not been carried to other research areas in the same parallel. Based on this observation, the point at which the accumulation of literature on the concept of 'trade union effectiveness' has reached is tried to be presented within the limitations of this research. However, when Web of Science, Scopus and Google Scholar databases are searched in English and Turkish, it is seen that no bibliometric study on 'union effectiveness' has been published yet. Finally, it is hoped that this research will create an awareness for academicians who conduct their research on management science and guide the studies that investigate the attitudes/behaviours and work outcomes of employees.

Background

The concept of trade union effectiveness has been discussed in the literature for a long time as a continuation of the organisational effectiveness literature. It is known that employee unions, which are accepted as a non-profit civil society organisation, have developed organisation models with different motives (Stanford, 2021; Keyes et al., 2022; Tokol, 2017).

From the past to the present, trade unions have been regarded as an important building block of labour relations systems in terms of protecting the rights and interests of employees. However, with the human resource management approach taking root in the public and private sectors, they have not lost their importance and this time, as a party to the tripartite dialogue mechanism (employer, employee, and state), they are important for employees with functions such as 'collective strength', 'power balancer', 'social support provider', 'economic leverage' and 'collective voice'. Therefore, this reality observed in working life also finds its place among academic disciplines. Recent examples of this can be seen in the US, where human resource management and industrial relations disciplines are considered together (Budd, 2018).

It is stated by some researchers in the literature that there is a limited number of studies on union effectiveness (Gall and Fiorito, 2016; Pyman and Hanley, 2002).

Although the concept of organisational effectiveness is explained with different approaches in the literature, it is defined as "the level of achieving the end that the organisation aims to reach" (Ergeneli, 1995). The organisational effectiveness discussions that were put forward in the literature are shaped within the framework of "competing values" approach with the components of "human relations model", "open system model", "internal process model" and "rational goal model". Accordingly, the methods and goals of organisations differ from one another, and these differences are observed to move along three axes such as organisational focus, organisational structure, and means-ends (Quinn and Rohrbaugh, 1983).

In the literature, the concept of union effectiveness is defined as the ability to increase the wages of employees, to protect employees against possible unfair practices by the employer, to promote equitable opportunities in the workplace, to ensure decent working conditions and to cooperate with the employer to improve work-related problems (Bryson, 2003).

According to Fiorito et al. (2001), it does not seem possible to construct a universally valid union effectiveness scale. In another study, it is known that a measurement tool called the

"National Union Effectiveness Scale" was developed in the USA from this point of view (Fiorito et al., 1993).

Frege (2002) stated that union density is not a universal measure of union effectiveness and that various levels of membership density in different countries are insufficient to explain changes in relative wages. In addition, this researcher also states that the 'goal model' of organisational effectiveness is insufficient to measure union effectiveness.

Mellor et al. (1999), on the other hand, stated that they created the Perceived Union Effectiveness Scale with the theme of "organisations that promote fairness in work-related matters" by combining fourteen items selected from the studies on 'union performance', 'union instrumentality' and 'union power' in the literature. Furthermore, the authors emphasised the distinction between the intertwined definitions of union effectiveness / instrumentality in the literature by including the following statements in their study.

"...In the perceived union instrumentality/effectiveness literature, the constructs of union instrumentality and union effectiveness are often used interchangeably. To the extent that both constructs refer to the degree to which members perceive their union as successful in bringing about valuable procedures or delivery, we agree that the two concepts can be used interchangeably. However, because we are looking for members' perceptions of union success rather than the likelihood of success, we refer to perceptions of union effectiveness..." (Mellor et al., 1999).

Other studies explained the structural framework of the concept of union effectiveness as summarised in Table-1. In these studies, like Mellor et al. (1999), there is an emphasis on the function of union effectiveness in 'promoting work-related organisational justice' (Bryson, 2003; Gall and Fiorito, 2016; Alexander et al., 1995).

Table 1. Studies Providing Conceptual Frameworks on Trade Union Effectiveness

Author, Publication Year	Explanation
1- (Bryson, 2003)	Dimension One (ORGEFF): The ability of unions to communicate and share information, the functions that unions undertake in terms of providing counselling services to their members, their transparency towards their members, their sensitivity to members' complaints, the extent to which management takes the union seriously, the employer's view of the union, the strength of the union. Second dimension (DELIVER): Obtaining a salary increase, resisting unfair treatment, providing equal opportunities for employees, making work attractive and enjoyable, working with management to improve performance, sensitising employees to managerial issues, making the workplace a better place to work.

2- (Gall and Fiorito, 2016)	Dimensions: Bargaining, organisation, recruitment, self-sufficiency, political action, loyalty of members, ability to raise funds. Indicators: Impact on wages, impact on fringe benefits, impact on achieving justice in the workplace, success in political elections, ability to create a sense of justice in society, membership growth, ability to create active members, financial sustainability.
3- (Burchielli, 2004)	Effectiveness in Representation: Sensitivity towards members, recruitment of new members, ability to achieve the main objectives of the union. Effectiveness in Trade Union Management: Structure and strategies, adaptation to innovative practices, clarity of objectives, leadership, transparency towards members. Effectiveness in Ideology: Adherence to social values, creating a culture of solidarity, ability to create active members, loyalty of members to the union, intervening in the political environment to enact favourable laws and monitoring their enforcement.
4- (Fiorito et al., 2001)	It is emphasised that it is difficult to obtain a universal scale of union effectiveness. The study only discusses union effectiveness in terms of their adaptation to innovative practices (such as establishing WEB-based communication networks, organising training activities to provide professional skills to their members to adapt to the competition in the labour market).
5- (Boxall and Haynes, 1997)	The strategic choices that unions make according to the environment in which they exist determine their organisational effectiveness and they prefer organisational structures accordingly. In New Zealand, organising models are classified as 1-classic unionism, 2-paper tiger unionism, 3-partnership unionism, and 4-consultancy unionism.
6- (Frege, 2002)	"...Although union density is an objective measure of effectiveness in terms of its effect on wage growth, the relative wage may be higher in one country than in another when union density is low. In addition, starting from the success of achieving any union-specific targets would not be correct, considering that these targets may also change according to changing conditions..." (p.58-59). The researcher emphasises that instead of these criteria, the possibility and ability of unions to influence the workplace management in work-related decisions are taken as a basis.
7- (Pyman and Hanley, 2002)	The determinants of trade union effectiveness vary depending on the business and external environment of the organisation. However, the dimensions of trade union effectiveness consist of 1-improving employment conditions, 2-growth, 3-organisational democracy, 4-organisational stability, 5-activism, and 6-social movement unionism.
8- (Alexander et al., 1995)	"...One of the general functions of trade unions is to protect employees against arbitrary behaviour by workplace management (Gordon and Fryxell, 1993) ...Trade unions reduce arbitrary practices by (a) defining the limits of managerial authority (b) determining the collective bargaining process and (c) preventing management negligence in breaching the labour contract (Sheppard et al., 1992) ..."

1. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The literature review was conducted on 16 May 2023 using the Scopus database. In the data search, the word 'union effectiveness' was searched with the 'all fields' option. Only English texts were taken into consideration during the search. Only research articles, review articles, book chapters and conference proceedings were included in the search. 'Business, Management and Accounting', 'Social Sciences', 'Economics, Econometrics and Finance' and 'Psychology' were selected as 'subject area'. Subject areas such as 'Medicine', 'Computer Science' and 'Arts and Humanities' were excluded. No other text search constraint was used. A total of 546 results were included.

The English literature obtained because of the search was analysed with VOSviewer bibliometric data analysis software. “VOSviewer was released in 2010 by Nees Jan van Eck and Ludo Waltman (Leiden University)” (Arruda et al., 2022; Xie et al., 2020). “The program allows researchers to map the literature by performing measurement and analysis in units of analysis such as author, institution, country, document, key concept, abstract, sources within the framework of co-authorship, co-citation, bibliographic matching and concept association analysis based on network, bibliographic and textual data of the studies carried out in a specific field” (Arslan, 2022). VOSviewer software can create a literature map on a specific theme and facilitate analysis with the help of visuals. Furthermore, Table-2 presents the analysis units of this software.

Table 2: VOSviewer Analysis Types and Units

Analysis Types	Analysis Units
Co-authorship	Authors
	Organizations
	Countries
Co-occurrence	Authors keywords
Citation	Documents
	Sources
	Authors
	Organizations
	Countries
Bibliographic coupling	Documents
	Sources
	Authors
	Organizations
	Countries
Co-citation	Cited references
	Cited sources
	Cited authors

Source: VOSviewer version 1.6.19

2. FINDINGS

As a result of the research, it was found out that 546 works in the literature were published between 1979-2023. Of these studies published in English, 401 were research articles, 62 were book chapters, 39 were reviews, 38 were books and 6 were conference proceedings.

Table-3 shows the number of publications according to the country of origin. Accordingly, among the top ten countries with the highest number of publications on the subject, the USA ranked first with 151 publications, while the Netherlands ranked 10th with twelve publications.

Table 3. Number of Publications by Countries (Top ten)

Rank	Country	Number of Publication	Rank	Country	Number of Publication
1	USA	151	6	Israel	25
2	UK	124	7	New Zealand	17
3	Australia	54	8	Italy	13
4	Canada	49	9	China	13
5	Germany	27	10	Netherlands	12

Source: Scopus, Retrieved: 16 May 2023

Table-4 shows the number of publications according to journals. Accordingly, among the top 10 journals with the highest number of publications on the subject, 'British Journal of Industrial Relations' ranked the first with 20 publications, while 'Transfer European Review of Labour and Research' ranked the 10th with 7 publications.

Table 4. Number of Publications by Journals (Top ten)

Rank	Journal	Number of Publication	Rank	Journal	Number of Publication
1	British Journal of Industrial Relations	20	6	European Journal of Industrial Relations	13
2	Economic and Industrial Democracy	19	7	Employee Relations	12
3	Journal of Labor Research	18	8	International Journal of Human Resource Management	11
4	Journal of Industrial Relations	17	9	Industrial Relation	9
5	Labor Studies Journal	15	10	Transfer European Review of Labor and Research	7

Source: Scopus, Retrieved: 16 May 2023

As seen in Table-5, among the 10 universities with the highest number of publications on the subject, 'University of Haifa' ranked first with 20 publications, while 'University of Manitoba' and 'Cardiff University' ranked the 10th with 9 publications.

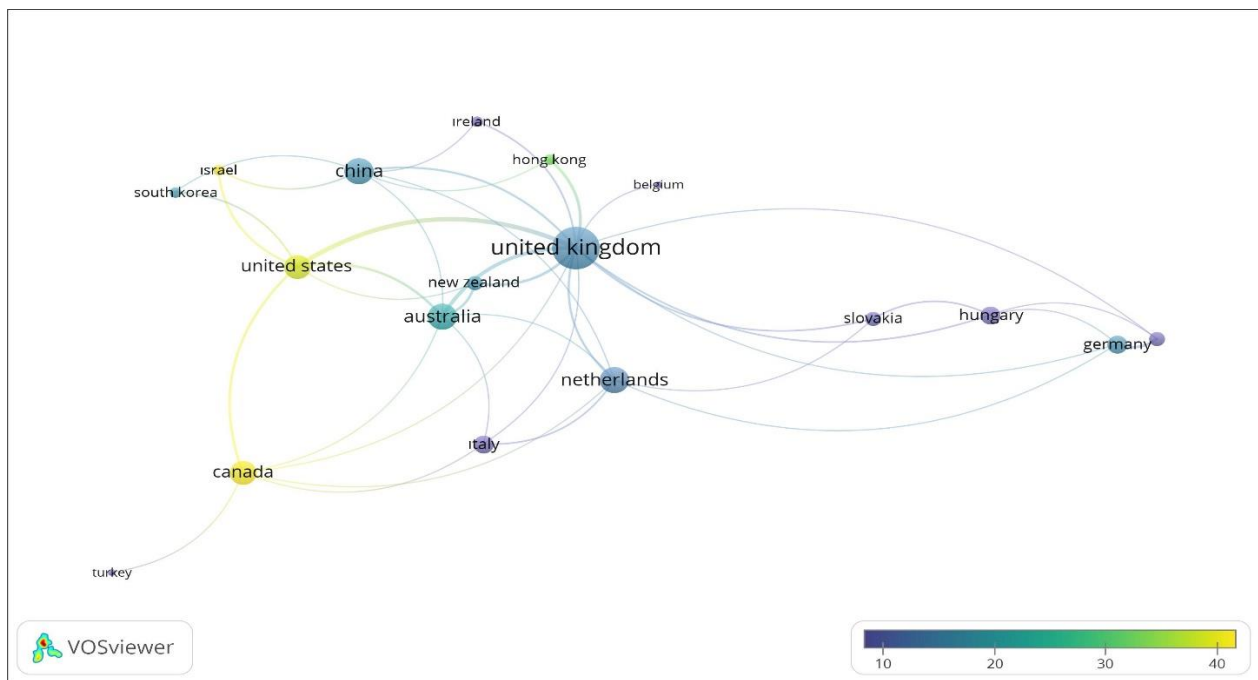
Table 5. Number of Publications by Universities (Top ten)

Rank	University	Number of Publication	Rank	University	Number of Publication
1	University of Haifa (Israel)	20	6	Monash University (Australia)	11
2	Florida State University (USA)	18	7	Universiteit van Amsterdam (Netherlands)	10
3	Cornell University (USA)	12	8	Griffith University (Australia)	10
4	University of Hertfordshire (UK)	12	9	University of Manitoba (Canada)	9
5	London School of Economics and Political Sciences (UK)	11	10	Cardiff University (Wales)	9

Source: Scopus, Retrieved: 16 May 2023

2.1. Co-Authorship Analysis (Country)

The co-authorship analysis in terms of cross-country collaboration is shown in Figure-1 and Figure-1.1. It was detected that 20 out of 70 countries in the dataset fulfilled the criterion of at least 5 publications from any country and having zero or more citations. VOSviewer states that the data for 18 countries gives more consisted results.

**Figure 1.** Co-authorship Analysis (Country)

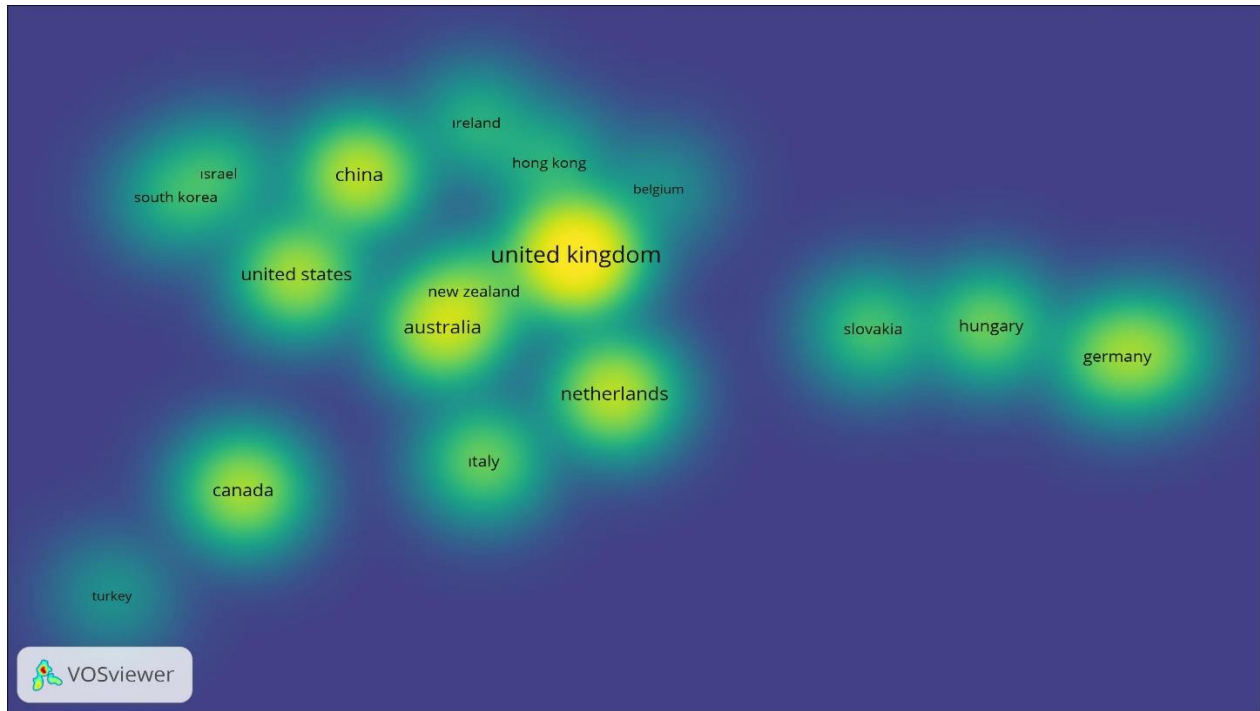


Figure 1.1. Co-authorship Analysis (Country-Density)

Accordingly, the first cluster was between Australia-Canada-New Zealand-United Kingdom-USA; the second cluster was between Germany-Poland; the third cluster was between Hungary-Slovakia; the fourth cluster was between Italy-Netherlands; and the fifth cluster was between China-Israel. Although Belgium, Hong Kong, South Korea, Turkey, and Ireland constituted the remaining 5 clusters, they did not have a prominent place in the context of the analysis due to their weak connections with other countries and their relatively low average number of citations.

2.2. Author Citation Analysis

The researchers who have dealt with the issue of 'union effectiveness' in the literature and whose works have been cited the most are shown in Figure-2 and Figure-2.1. When it is taken into consideration that any author has at least 1 publication and has been cited at least 100 times, it was seen that 21 out of 471 authors fulfilled this criterion.

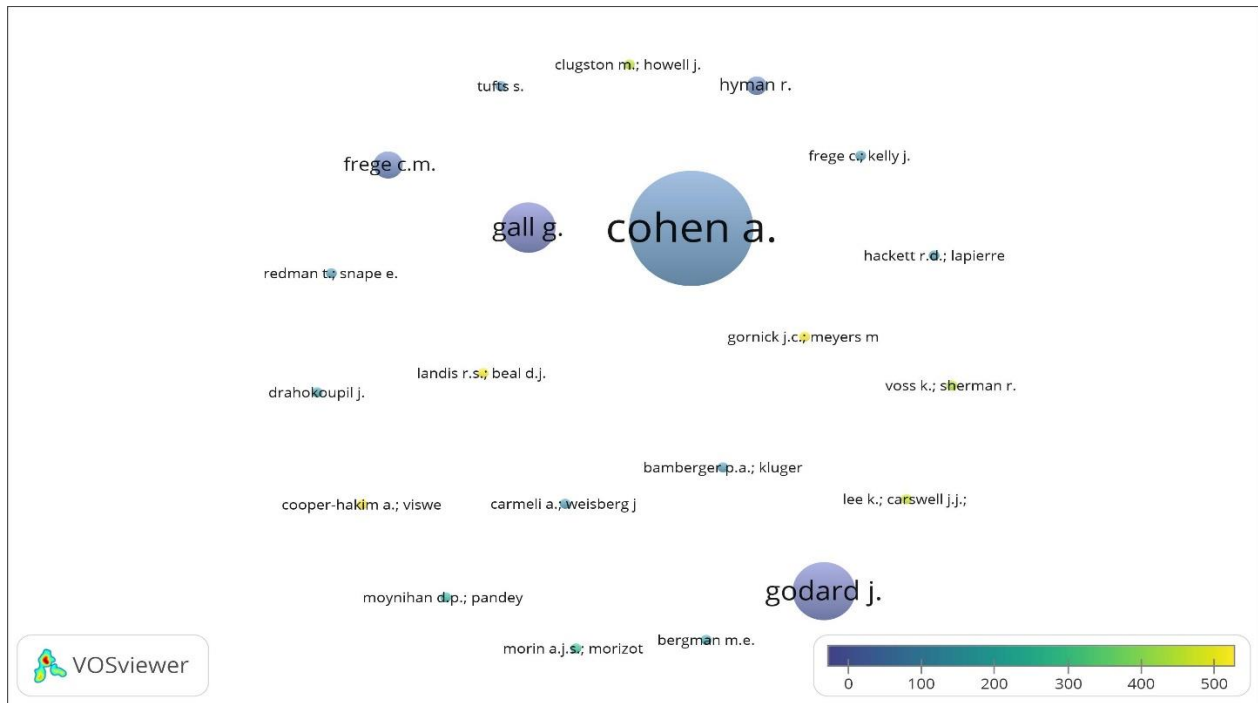


Figure 2. Author Citation Analysis

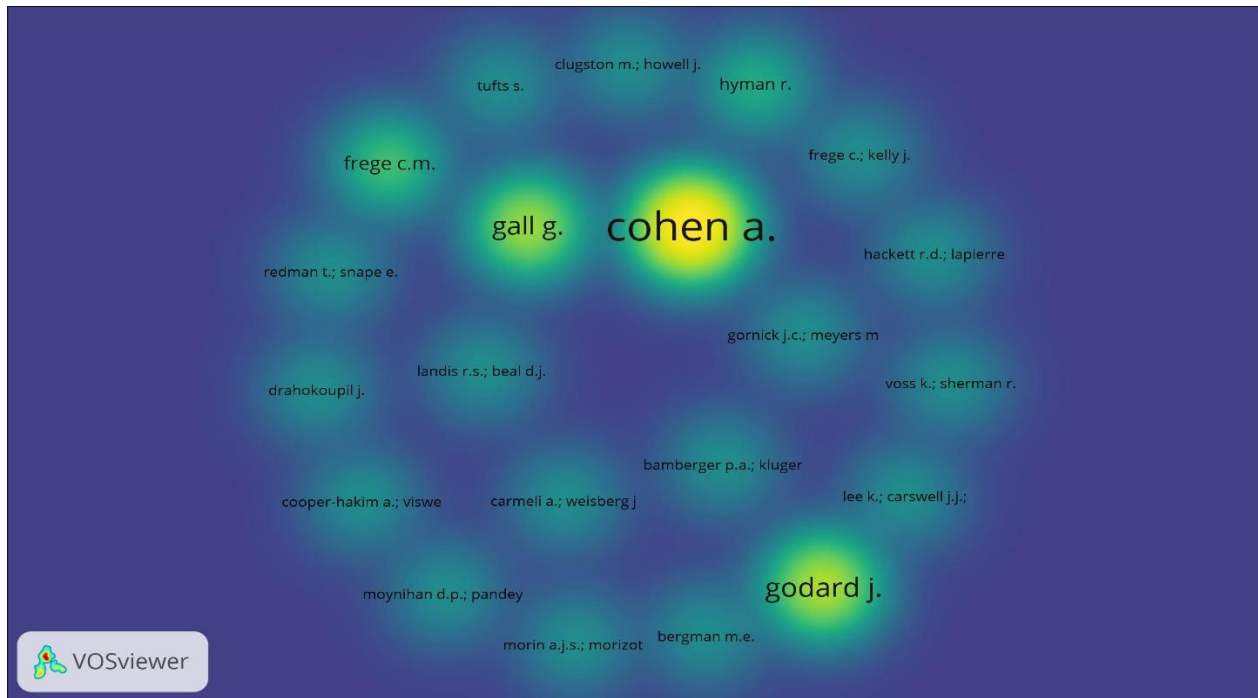


Figure 2.1. Author Citation Analysis (Density)

Although there was a criterion of at least 1 publication in the analysis criterion, it was observed that there were researchers with 2 or more publications (between 2 and 15 articles) with a significant difference. Accordingly, it was determined that the first 5 researchers with the most

publications were Cohen A; Godard J; Frege CM; Gall G and Hyman R. These researchers received a total of 1071; 151; 130; 122 and 104 citations, more frequently between 2002-2008, respectively.

2.3. Keyword Analysis

The keywords used in 546 analysed works are shown in Figure-3 and Figure-3.1. Considering that a word should be used at least 5 times in any work, it was found that 33 of the total 903 keywords met this criterion.

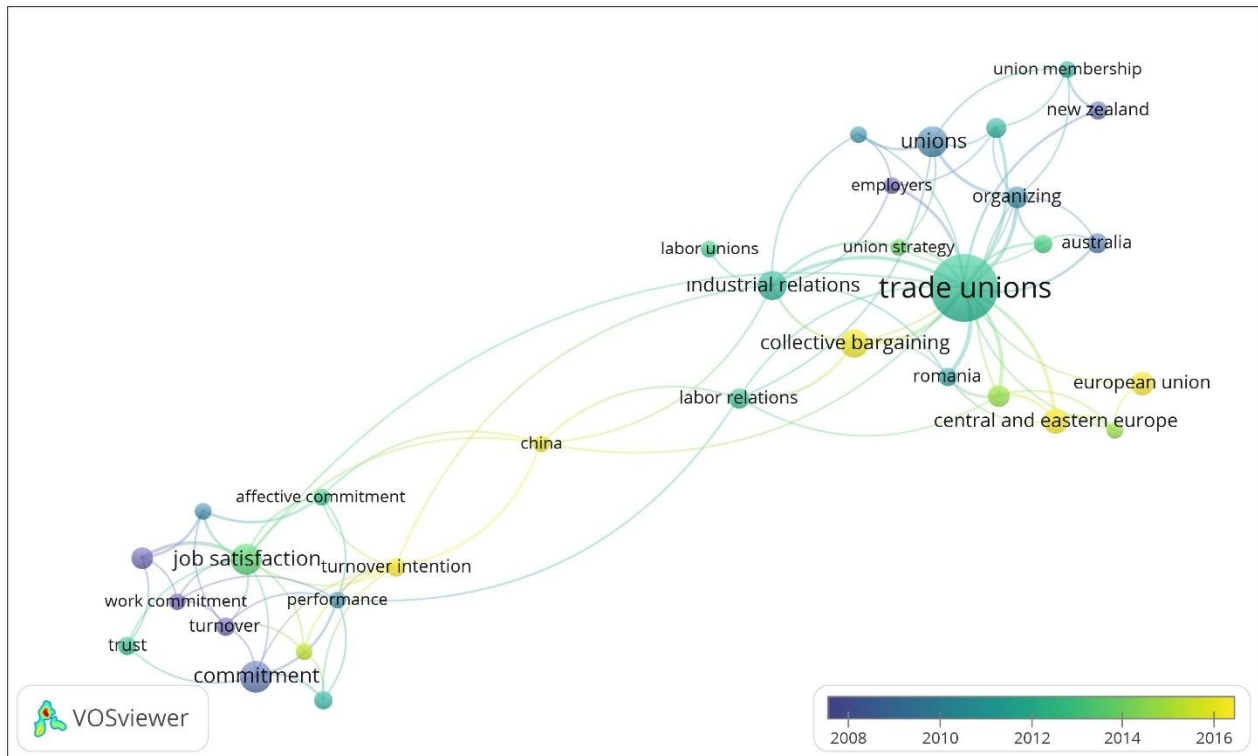


Figure 3. Keyword Analysis

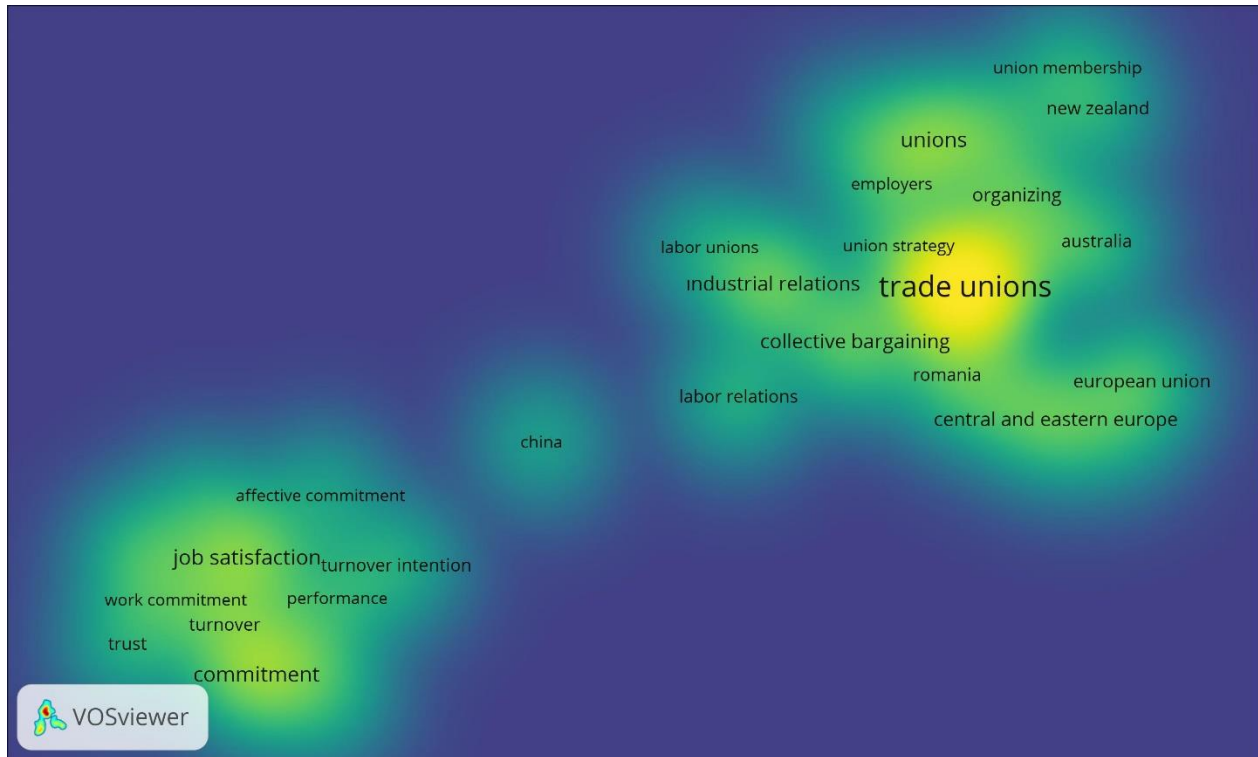


Figure 3.1. Keyword Analysis (Density)

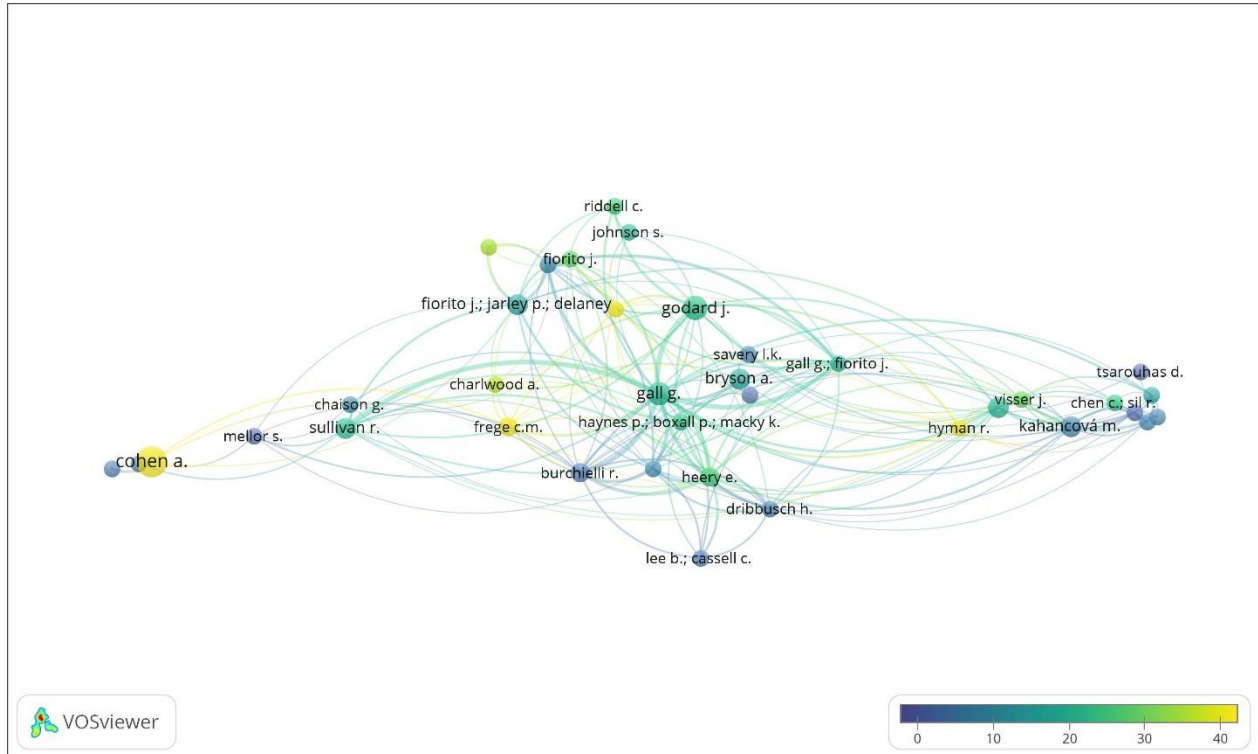
Accordingly, in the first cluster, the words emotional commitment-employee turnover tendency-job satisfaction-organisational citizenship behaviour-organisational commitment-emotional commitment-performance-trust; in the second cluster, the words corporatism-European Union-Poland-Romania-unionism; employers-New Zealand-social movements-union membership-union organisation in the third cluster; China-collective bargaining-industrial relations-employee unions in the fourth cluster; and Australia-organisation-union renewal-union strategy in the fifth and final cluster.

According to the VOSviewer analysis, the top 5 most frequently used keywords were trade unions, commitment, job satisfaction, unions, and industrial relations, respectively. The frequency with which these keywords were used according to the years of publication is shown in Figure-3. Accordingly, the word 'trade unions', 'commitment', 'job satisfaction', 'unions' and 'industrial relations' was used more frequently in 2012, 2008, 2013, 2009 and 2011, respectively.

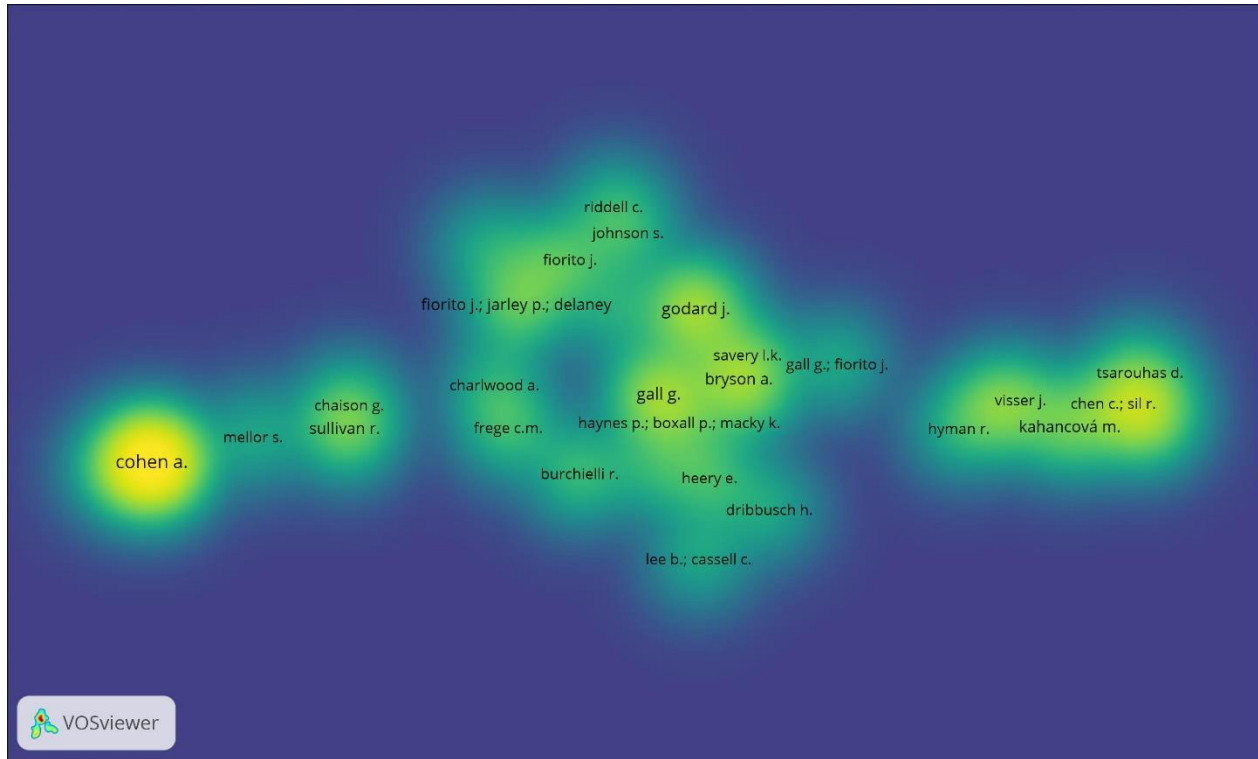
2.4. Bibliometric Coupling Analysis of Authors

"Documents that are found to refer to one or more common sources in the reference lists are described as bibliographically coupling documents" (Zan, 2019).

By applying bibliometric coupling analysis to the studies in the database according to authors (Figure-4), it was taken into consideration that any author had at least 2 works and that the authors had been cited at least 1 time. Accordingly, it was detected that 39 out of 471 authors fulfilled these criteria. VOSviewer recommends visualising 37 authors to ensure the link agreement between the data.



Cohen A; Godard J; Frege CM; Gall G; Hyman R were the first 5 authors who were cited the most in the reference lists of the publications. Accordingly, it was detected that Cohen A has a dominant weight in the density map (Figure 4.1) among the 37 researchers listed with at least 2 studies and at least 1 citation.

Figure 4. Bibliometric Coupling Analysis of Authors**Figure 4.1. Bibliometric Coupling Analysis of Authors (Density)**

2.5. Bibliometric Coupling Analysis of Sources

When bibliometric coupling analysis was performed in the database according to journals, 18 of the total 287 sources met the criteria that a source has at least 5 documents and that the source has been cited at least once.

As shown in Figure-5 and 5.1, British Journal of Industrial Relations, Journal of Vocational Behaviour, Journal of Organisational Behaviour, Human Relations, Journal of Labor Research were the top 5 journals with the highest number of citations (between 232 and 848). In terms of the strength of the link between the sources, the top 5 journals were as follows: British Journal of Industrial Relations, The Sage Handbook of Industrial Relations, Economic and Industrial Democracy, Journal of Industrial Relations, Employee Relations.

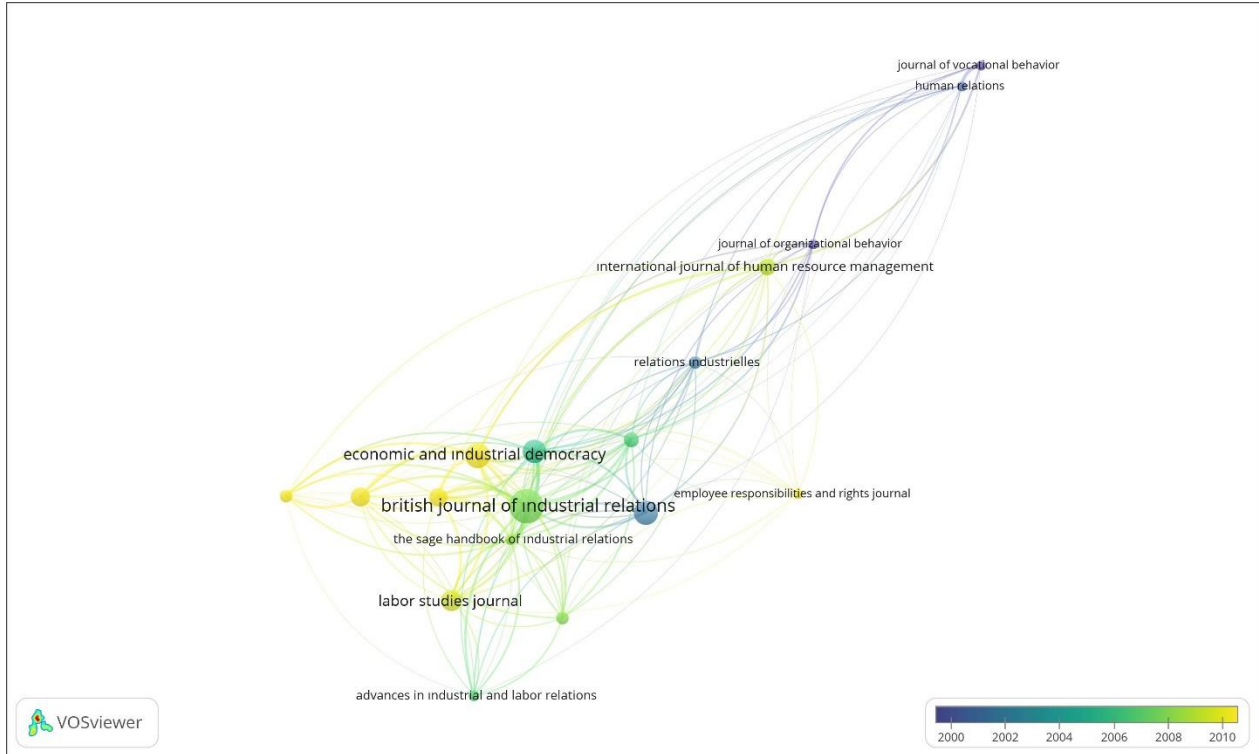


Figure 5. Bibliometric Coupling Analysis of Sources

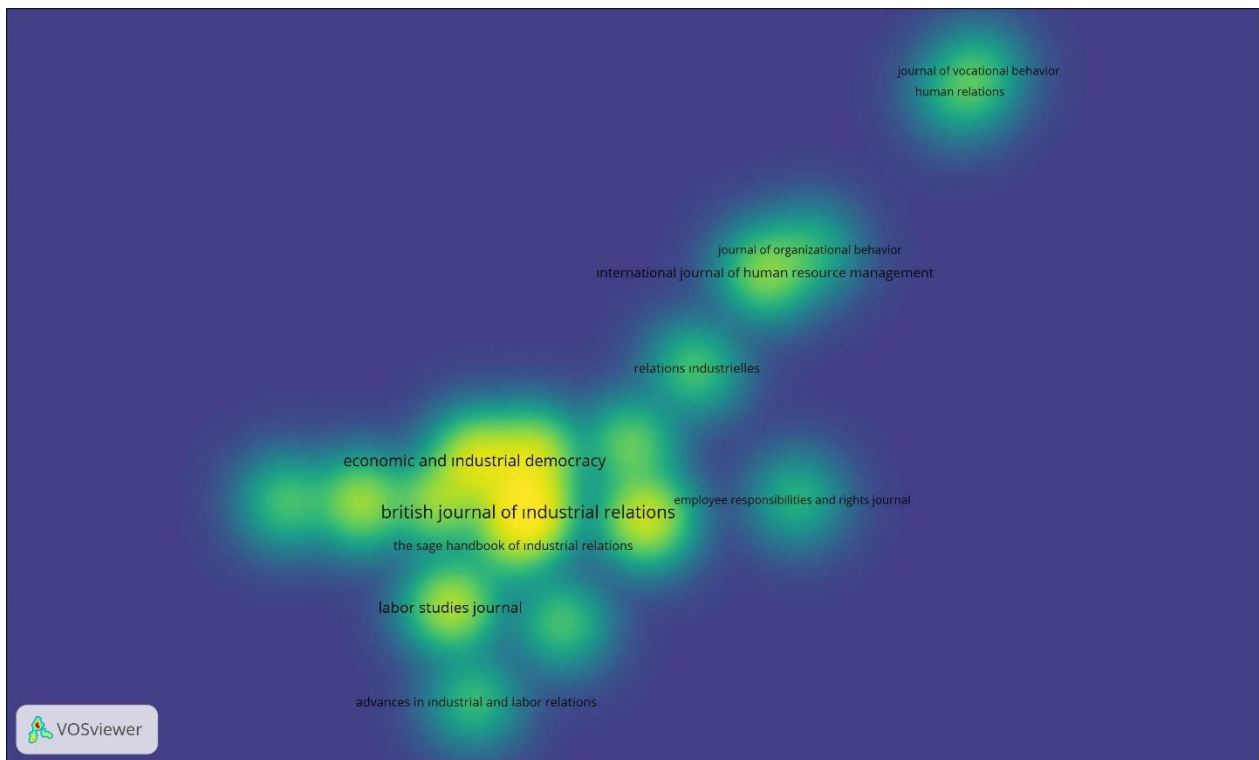


Figure 5.1. Bibliometric Coupling Analysis of Sources (Density)

2.6. Co-Citation Analysis of the Cited Reference

If two documents are cited by another document, a co-citation relationship emerges between these three documents (Zan, 2019).

According to the findings obtained from the database, as long as the minimum number of citations of the cited sources was determined as 15, it was observed that 18 of the total 36713 works in the reference list of 546 studies subjected to analysis met this criterion. VOSviewer recommends that this number should be reduced to 11 to perform this analysis on more compatible data.

As seen in Figure-6 and 6.1, visuals were grouped in 3 clusters. The first cluster included Boxall and Haynes, Freeman RB and Medoff J, Freeman RB and Rogers J, Heery E, Peetz D. The second cluster included Avdagic S, Crouch C, Freeman RB and Medoff J, Kelly J. The third and the last cluster included Clawson D, Fantasia R and Voss K. The publication title, the author of the publication and the number of citations of the publications are shown in Table-6.

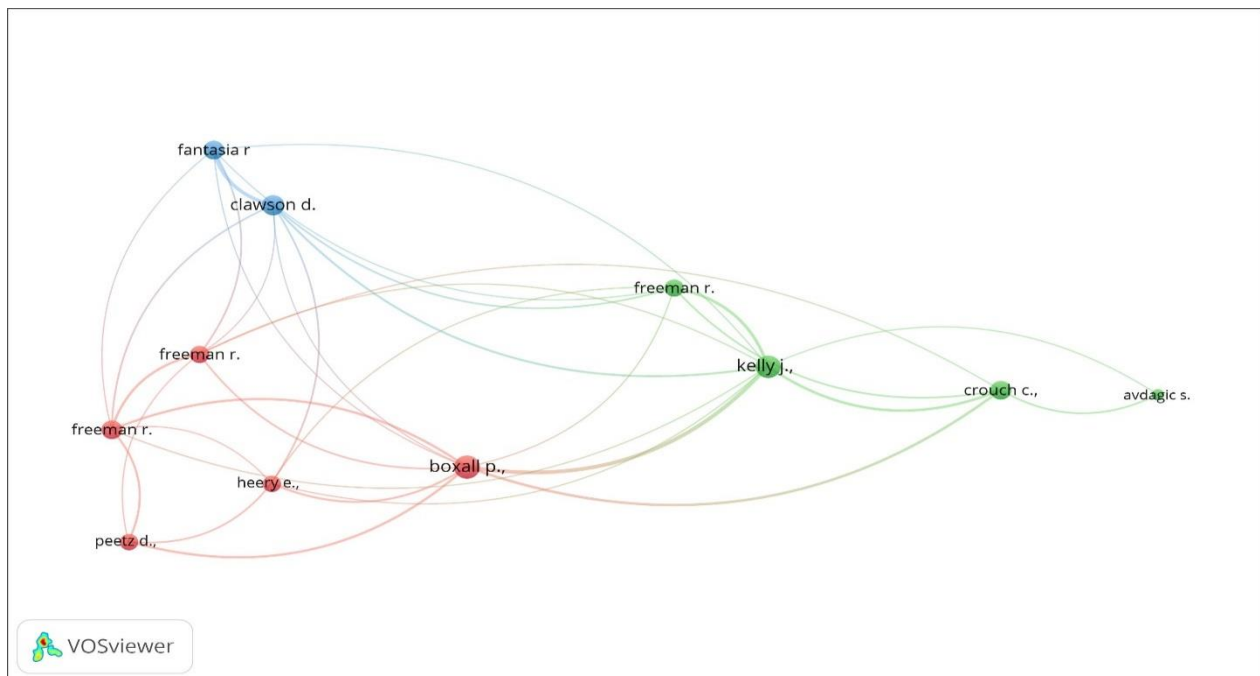
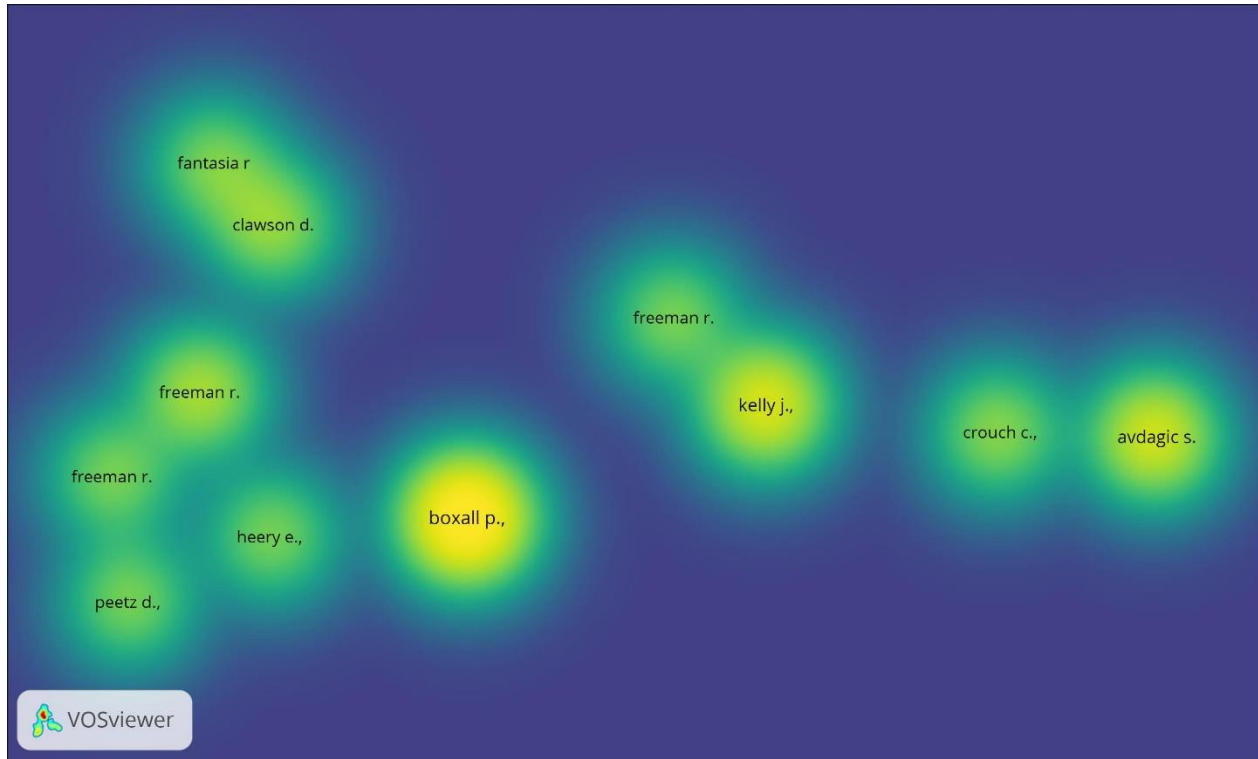


Figure 6. Co-citation analysis of the cited reference**Figure 6.1. Co-citation analysis of the cited reference (Density)****Table 6. Top 10 Co-citation and Number of Citations**

Rank	Publication Title and Author	Number of Citation
1	Strategy and trade union effectiveness in a neo-liberal environment (Boxall P. and Haynes P., 1997)	49
2	What do unions do? (Freeman R.B. and Medoff J., 1984)	30
3	Rethinking industrial relations: mobilization, collectivism, and long waves (Kelly J.E., 1998)	30
4	State-Labour Relations in East Central Europe: explaining variations in union effectiveness (Avdagic S., 2005)	28
5	The next upsurge: labor and the new social movements (Clawson D., 2003)	18
6	Industrial relations and European state traditions (Crouch C., 1993)	17
7	What workers want? (Freeman R.B. and Rogers J., 1999)	15
8	Hard work: remaking the American labor movement (Fantasia R. and Voss K., 2004)	15
9	Partnership versus organising: alternative futures for British trade unionism (Heery E., 2002)	15
10	Unions in a contrary world: the future of the Australian trade union movement (Peetz D., 1998)	15

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this study, countries, journals, universities, and authors contributing to the literature on 'trade union effectiveness' were analysed. As of 16 May 2023, a total of 546 works published in English between 1979-2023 were reached through Scopus. Since only Scopus database was used in this study, detailed analyses on indexes such as SCI, SCI-Expanded and SSCI could not be made.

It has been concluded that the concept of union effectiveness, which has been discussed for the last 50 years and has maintained its importance both in labour relations and in the field of scientific studies, is more widely addressed in the industrial relations literature. In this context, the British Journal of Industrial Relations is the journal with the highest number of publications. It has been determined that journals that publish in the field of human resource management show a relatively lower interest in the issue. This is also reflected in the bibliometric matching analysis of the references provided by the researchers. However, the USA is the country with the highest number of publications. On the other hand, the University of Haifa ranks the first among the top 10 universities with the highest publication. There is an intense interaction between the USA-China-Israel-South Korea-Ireland in the cluster of the most cited countries in the co-authorship network. It was determined that the most prominent keywords in the studies were clustered in the words emotional commitment-employee turnover tendency-job satisfaction-organisational citizenship behaviour-organisational commitment-performance-trust. It has been found that the most directly cited author is Cohen A. On the other hand, in terms of the co-citation analysis of the references, it was determined that the most co-cited authors were Boxall P and Haynes P with 'strategy and trade union effectiveness in a neo-liberal environment' as the title of the study.

In order for the concept of union effectiveness to spread from the industrial relations literature to wider research areas and to receive the necessary attention in the human resource management literature, it is thought that our study may be an incentive for the representatives of both schools to come together.

Recalling Gall and Fioriti's (2016) criticism of the scarcity of studies on the concept of union effectiveness, it can be said that a similar criticism applies to health management academics today. Figure 3 also shows that the concept of job satisfaction among employees is associated with unions in the literature. Considering the decreasing intensity of this issue in the

industrial relations literature in recent years, it is presented for the information of health management academics who continue their research in the field of organizational behaviour.

Conflict of Interest: The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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