






# Strategic Leadership for Small Medium Enterprise Businesses: A Bibliometric Analysis

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**Abstract.** Strategic leadership is important in managing Small and Medium Enterprise (SMEs). With leaders with strategic leadership capabilities, SMEs can face complex challenges, expand markets, improve competitiveness, and achieve sustainable growth. This study provides a bibliometric review of quality literature on Strategic Leadership for Small and Medium Enterprise Businesses. This study utilised bibliometric analysis to examine the research topic with the assistance of various software tools like Publish or Perish (PoP) and VOSviewer. A total of 186 articles obtained from the Google Scholar database, spanning the period from 2013 to 2023, were included in the analysis. From data processing, articles and journals with the highest number of citations are published by reputable publishers such as Elsevier, Springer, Taylor & Francis, and Emerald. Research in Strategic Leadership for SME's Business is expected to continue its upward trend, particularly regarding Strategic Leadership Practices in improving Business Performance and Strategic Flexibility.

**Keywords:** Strategic Leadership, Small Medium Enterprise, Bibliometric.

## 1 Introduction

Indonesia's small and medium-sized enterprises play a crucial role in the country's economy. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are fundamental pillars of the Indonesian economy. The Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs reports that the number of SMEs currently stands at 64.2 million, with a GDP contribution of 61.07%, equivalent to IDR 8,573.89 trillion. The contribution of SMEs to the Indonesian economy is not limited to their capacity to absorb the majority of the existing labour force, reaching 97% and garnering up to 60.4% of total investment<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, these types of businesses are capable of facing exposure to storms of crisis and have the ability to recover more quickly than a larger business<sup>2</sup>. However, the high prevalence of SMEs in Indonesia has its challenges. The challenge includes limited access to financing, poor infrastructure, lack of business plan and know-how, and competition barriers. To overcome these challenges, SMEs in Indonesia need strategic leadership that can help them develop insights-driven launches for new products and services, access new marketing channels, and manage their finances effectively.

Strategic leadership stands as a critical determinant of the triumph of business. Strategic leadership is pivotal in moulding business objectives, tactics, and resolutions in SMEs<sup>3</sup>. To effectively execute this task, an SME's manager must possess robust leadership competencies, adequate knowledge and skill set, attitudes, and traits to lead not only oneself but also the team and the entire organisation competently<sup>3</sup>. The execution of strategic leadership represents one of the primary endeavours to sustain competitive advantage and enhance the performance of small and medium businesses<sup>2</sup>. According to Hughes et al., the task of strategic leadership is to move and direct the organisation to develop in the long term so that the focus of strategic leadership is to build a sustainable competitive advantage to produce lasting organisational success<sup>4</sup>. The scope of strategic leadership goes beyond the organisation, acting and reacting to trends and environmental issues. This broad scope requires leaders to be able to see the organisation as an interdependent and interconnected system of many parts, where decisions in one area trigger actions in other areas. In addition to the broad scope, what distinguishes strategic leadership from other leadership concepts is that strategic leadership must produce significant organisational change and progressively build on other changes<sup>4</sup>. Several previous studies have shown the importance of the concept of strategic leadership to improve organisational performance<sup>5</sup> as well as the business performance of SMEs<sup>6-8</sup>.

Bibliometric analysis is a research method that involves the quantitative analysis of scientific publications, such as articles, books, and conference proceedings. Bibliometric analysis aims to identify patterns and trends in research, including the most influential authors, institutions, and publications in a particular field. Bibliometric analysis can also be used to identify research gaps and emerging research areas and suggest directions for future research. Bibliometric analyses yield valuable data pertaining to the individuals and organisations involved in conducting research and the locales in which such research is disseminated. This information is of particular importance as it aids in the identification of those individuals capable of providing top-tier concepts and methodological contributions<sup>9</sup>.

## 2 Methods

The study employed a bibliometric analysis to conduct research. Some literature sources indicated that bibliometric analysis involves five steps: Defining Search Keywords, Initial Search Results, Refinement of The Search Results, Compiling The Initial Data Statistics, and Data Analysis<sup>10,11</sup>.

The first step was carried out using the Publish or Perish software with a search on the Google Scholar database, which was chosen because of its high quantity of literature. The literature search was conducted in May 2023 using the title search "Strategic Leadership" and keywords search "SMEs, business" to capture all relevant articles. The initial search generated 368 articles published in the last ten years (2013-2023). These articles are then compiled in the form of a research information system (RIS) format based on the Google Scholar database. The RIS format includes important details, including citation information, bibliographic information, as well as abstracts and

keywords. Researchers can filter articles that meet the requirements through the information in the collected RIS data.

To obtain relevant articles, two inclusion criteria were set. Firstly, the articles had to be written in English, as English is a widely understood international language. Secondly, the articles used had to be journal or conference papers, as these types of articles often contain empirical studies.

Table 1 presents a comparison between the initial search and the refined search.

**Table 1.** Comparison Initial Search and Refinement Search.

Metrics	Initial search	Refinement search
Title Search	Strategic Leadership	Strategic Leadership
Keywords Search	SME's, business	SME's, business
Database	Google Scholar	Google Scholar
Languages	All language	English
Document types	All types	Journal Conference paper
Publication years	10 years: (2013–2023)	10 years: (2013–2023)
Number of articles	368	186
Citations	3,779	3,034
h-Index	31	29
g-Index	56	52

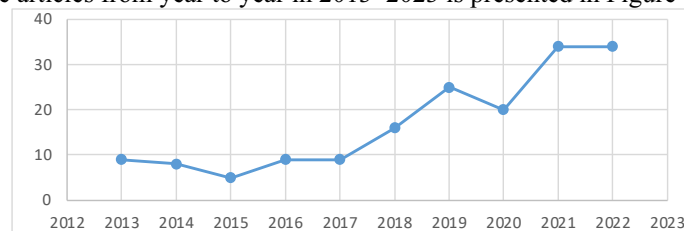
Source: Data processed by the authors

This research used performance analysis and science mapping for data analysis. According to Donthu et al., performance analysis focuses on evaluating the contributions of research elements in a specific field, while science mapping analysis explores the relationships among these elements<sup>12</sup>. The PoP software and VOSViewer software were employed for data analysis.

### 3 Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Performances Analysis

At the outset, 186 articles were selected for analysis in this study. The trend of publication of the articles from year to year in 2013–2023 is presented in Figure 1.



**Fig. 1.** The Number of Publications 2013-2022

Source: Data processed by the authors

The graph shows the trend of research on Strategic Leadership in business and SMEs published in Google Scholar-indexed journals. From year to year, the number of publications has fluctuated. The most dramatic state of fluctuation occurred in the 2019–2021 period. The number of publications in 2019 experienced a significant increase

compared to the previous year by 56%. There was a decrease in the number of publication articles in 2020 by 20%, which may have occurred due to the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic. Then, in 2021, the trend returned to show an increase of 70%, the highest increase over the past ten years. Based on this data, research on strategic leadership in SME business still shows a positive trend and is still favoured by researchers.

Table 2 presents the analysis by publisher. Elsevier emerged as the most trusted publisher in the number of citations, with 797 citations. This indicates a very high publication quality in Elsevier, so other researchers are willing to cite articles published in Elsevier. The most productive publisher in terms of the number of publications is researchgate.net, with 20 articles. The productivity of researchgate.net is high because of its open access and self-publishing feature, making it easier for researchers to publish their articles to be recognised by Google Scholar.

**Table 2.** Top Publisher Based on Citation and Contribution.

Publisher	Total Citation	Total Publication	TC/TP
Elsevier	797	13	61.3
Springer	453	11	41.2
Taylor & Francis	298	4	74.5
emerald.com	256	10	25.6
Wiley Online Library	212	4	53.0
researchgate.net	181	20	9.1

Source: Data processed by the authors

Citation analysis provides valuable insight into influential publications on Strategic Leadership for SME businesses. Table 3 shows the top articles based on the highest number of citations.

**Table 3.** Top Articles by Citations (Above 100 Citations).

Rank	Citation	Author	Title	Year	Journal	Publisher
1	297	W Li, K Liu, M Belitski, A Ghobadian	e-Leadership through strategic alignment: An empirical study of small and medium-sized enterprises in the digital age	2016	Journal of Information Technology	Springer
2	263	JR Latham	A framework for leading the transformation to performance excellence part I: CEO perspectives on forces, facilitators, and strategic leadership systems	2013	Quality Management Journal	Taylor & Francis
3	196	F Özer, C Tinaztepe	Effect of strategic leadership styles on firm performance: A study in a Turkish SME's	2014	Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences	Elsevier

Source: Data processed by the authors

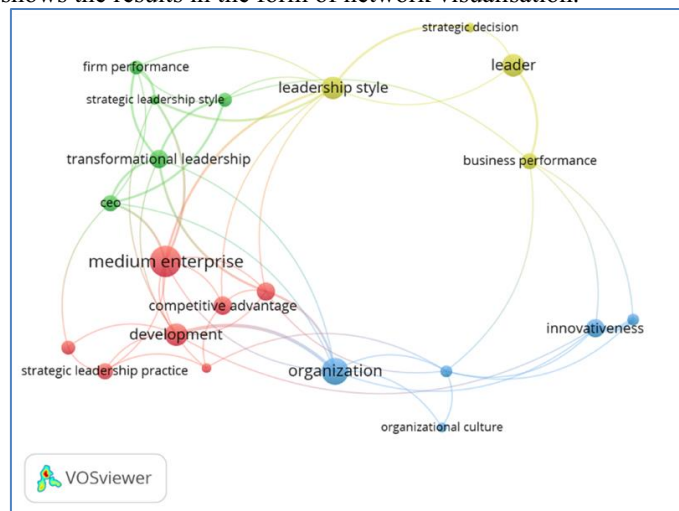
The article with the highest number of citations is "e-Leadership through Strategic Alignment: An Empirical Study of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in the Digital Age". This paper pertains to the domain of strategic leadership, as it concerns the construction of an e-leadership framework that can facilitate SMEs' effective exercise of e-leadership. This is accomplished by creating productive alignment between business

strategy and digital technology, enhancing longevity and growth<sup>13</sup>. Other articles discuss strategic leadership and its relation to business performance<sup>8,14</sup> and achieving competitive advantage<sup>15</sup>. However, most articles relate strategic leadership to specific leadership styles such as transactional and transformational leadership<sup>8,14,16,17</sup>, servant leadership and spiritual leadership<sup>14</sup>.

### 3.2 Science Mapping and Network Analysis

In the network visualisation, terms related to Strategic Leadership for SME businesses are collected based on their clusters, with different colours in each cluster. The largest labels and circles (nodes) indicate that the term has a larger item weight. In other words, it has the most accurate and substantial link strength. From the size of these nodes it can be a basis for selecting potential collaborators, focusing on future research, or exploring emerging research trends. The lines in the network visualisation show the relationship between terms. The closer the two articles are located to each other, the stronger their relatedness.

Figure 2 shows the results in the form of network visualisation.

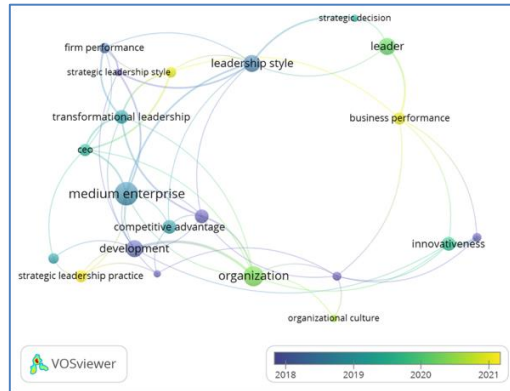


**Fig. 2.** Network Visualisation by VOSViewer

Source: Data processed by the authors

In Figure 4, cluster 1 (red) is more closely related. Meanwhile, the relatedness of cluster 4 (yellow) is the most distant compared to the other clusters. Future research can identify gaps or areas that have not been widely explored (in cluster 4) so that the research results will be able to contribute to the understanding and existing literature.

The illustration denoted as Figure 3 overlay Visualisation presents the current research trend on Strategic Leadership for SME businesses.



**Fig. 3.** Overlay Visualisation. By VOSviewer

A colour bar is situated in the visualisation's lower right portion, showing the prevalent terms utilised throughout the years. Furthermore, this colour bar illustrates how the scores are associated with colours determining the impact factors of articles. Blue signifies that the impact factor of articles is below 1, green indicates an impact factor close to 2, and yellow signifies an impact factor of 3 or higher. The Overlay Visualisation results reveal that there are three terms, namely "Strategic Leadership Practice," "Business Performance," and "Strategic Flexibility," which are colour-coded yellow. This implies that using these terms in future research would significantly contribute to the existing literature.

## 4 Conclusions

A review of research trends on Strategic Leadership for SME business using bibliometric analysis provides information that the number of publications about this topic increased slightly from 2019 to 2021 and will continue. Trending research is about strategic leadership practices in medium-sized enterprises that aim to develop competitive advantage. The results of bibliometric analysis direct researchers in the field of human resource management and organisational behaviour to develop the theme of strategic leadership practice in terms of improving business performance and maintaining sustainable competitive advantage, so it is hoped that future research can strengthen the concept of strategic leadership, especially for SME's organisations.

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