

Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Strategic Decision-Making: A Bibliometric Analysis of Conceptual Landscape and Future Research Agenda

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Abstract—This study provides a comprehensive bibliometric analysis to map the intellectual structure, thematic evolution, and social configuration of the literature at the intersection of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Strategic Decision-Making (SDM). Driven by the recognition of AI's disruptive strategic potential, the field demonstrates an explosive growth rate of 32.98% in scientific production. Utilizing a dataset of 623 documents extracted from the Scopus database (2005–2024), we employed advanced scientometric techniques including Thematic Map and Collaboration Network analysis. The results reveal a critical mechanistic gap: while strategic outcomes such as "Competitive Advantage" and "Decision Making" are established Motor Themes, the foundational technological tools like "Machine Learning" and "Corporate Strategy" remain in the Emerging Themes quadrant. The thematic evolution confirms a shift toward technological specificity (e.g., Deep Learning) and expansion into functional areas (e.g., Supply Chain, HRM). Furthermore, the social structure is highly fragmented with limited author collaboration, although the analysis identifies Europe as a crucial global collaboration hub connecting the US and China. This paper confirms the literature's rapid but structurally unintegrated growth. It contributes by providing an objective, data-driven framework and proposes a Future Research Agenda to bridge the mechanistic gap. We recommend research focusing on testing specific Machine Learning algorithms on core strategic processes, developing formal AI Governance frameworks, integrating classic strategic theories, and conducting cross-cultural studies in emerging markets to achieve theoretical consolidation.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; Strategic Decision-Making; Bibliometric Analysis; Mechanistic Gap; Machine Learning; Future Research Agenda

1. INTRODUCTION

The modern business landscape is characterized by unprecedented levels of uncertainty, complexity, and volatility (Syamsir et al., 2025). In this dynamic environment, an organization's capability to make timely and data-driven strategic decisions has become a fundamental source of differential advantage. Strategy, traditionally shaped by managerial intuition and experience, is now under pressure to adopt more analytical and predictive approaches to maintain relevance and effectiveness. The digital transformation, largely driven by the pervasive availability of Big Data and advanced cloud computing infrastructure, has introduced a new wave of technologies. Recent studies highlight that Big Data enables organizations to extract strategic value from large-scale, high-velocity, and heterogeneous data sources, thereby improving decision quality, responsiveness, and organizational foresight (Adewusi et al., 2024). In business, Big Data enables organizations to refine strategic decision-making, improve marketing effectiveness, strengthen competitive advantage, and enhance overall organizational performance (Kgakatsi et al., 2024). Cloud-based Big Data infrastructures further democratize access to advanced analytics by reducing scalability constraints and enabling real-time data processing across organizational boundaries (Rai, 2025). Importantly, Big Data serves as a critical foundation for AI systems, as data availability and quality directly influence the learning capacity, accuracy, and strategic relevance of Machine Learning and Deep Learning models in business contexts (Dwivedi et al., 2023).

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its key sub-fields, such as Machine Learning (ML) and Deep Learning (DL), are considered the most significant game-changers in managerial functions, particularly in the realm of strategy formulation (Jackson et al., 2024; Roy et al., 2025). AI offers immense potential to enhance the quality of strategic decision-making. These technologies facilitate the analysis of complex patterns, the identification of subtle market anomalies, and market forecasting with an accuracy that often surpasses human capabilities (Bao et al., 2025; Ferdousi, 2025). Thus, AI is no longer merely an operational tool but has evolved into a cognitive partner that fundamentally reshapes how organizations think about their future direction and resource allocation. From a business perspective, the strategic deployment of AI increasingly shapes how firms design competitive strategies, allocate resources, and achieve superior performance. AI-enabled business analytics support critical managerial activities such as customer insight generation, demand forecasting, pricing optimization, and risk assessment, enabling firms to respond more effectively to environmental uncertainty and competitive pressures (Verhoef et al., 2021). Beyond operational efficiency, AI has emerged as a catalyst for business model innovation, allowing organizations to reconfigure value creation and capture mechanisms through automation, personalization, and data-driven services (Zhang et al., 2025). As a result, AI is increasingly recognized in the business strategy literature as a strategic resource that enhances firm agility, supports dynamic capability development, and contributes to sustained competitive advantage rather than merely serving as a supporting technology. At the academic level, the intersection between AI and Strategic Management has garnered substantial attention from researchers globally. This area has rapidly transitioned from a peripheral topic to a central research agenda in leading management and

technology journals. Empirical Evidence of Academic Urgency: Our study empirically confirms the urgency of this topic. An analysis of 623 Scopus-indexed documents reveals that the literature concerning AI in Strategic Decision-Making is experiencing explosive growth in scientific production. The average annual growth rate (Annual Growth Rate) of this field stands at a remarkable 32.98% (Referencing the Main Information data). This figure significantly exceeds the typical growth rates of well-established scientific disciplines, highlighting that the topic is an Explosive Research Field that urgently requires structured mapping and synthesis. This surge in publications is largely fueled by the recognition that leveraging AI is no longer optional but is a requisite for sustaining competitive advantage (Arunraju Chinnaraju, 2025; Cardillo & Basso, 2025). Leading scholarly journals across various disciplines, ranging from Sustainability to the Strategic Management Journal, are now actively publishing research in this domain.

Despite the high volume of publications, preliminary literature reviews suggest that the field remains characterized by significant theoretical and conceptual fragmentation (Gusenbauer & Gauster, 2025; Macca et al., 2025). Key concepts are often loosely defined, and robust frameworks explicitly linking specific AI technologies to verifiable strategic outcomes remain scarce. One strong indicator of this fragmentation is the field's extreme interdisciplinary nature. The most dominant journals in the literature come from the fields of Sustainability (e.g., Sustainability) and Technological Forecasting (e.g., Technological Forecasting and Social Change), suggesting that AI's impact is often studied in a broad socio-environmental context rather than a narrow managerial scope (Jiao et al., 2025; Riandhi et al., 2025). Our Thematic Map analysis reveals a critical conceptual gap. The mature cluster of themes (Motor Theme) is dominated by outcome concepts, specifically "Decision Making," "Competition," and "Competitive Advantage" (Referencing the Thematic Map data). These themes are stable and well-integrated. Conversely, the cluster containing core technology concepts such as "Artificial Intelligence," "Machine Learning," and "Corporate Strategy" is unexpectedly positioned in the Emerging Themes quadrant (Referencing the Thematic Map data). This placement is highly contradictory and academically significant. This finding points to a profound mechanistic gap: While researchers agree on the importance of competitive advantage (the outcome), they have not yet fully established and tested solid, structured frameworks detailing how specific Machine Learning applications are governed and implemented to achieve strategic outcomes at the Corporate Strategy level (Sjödin et al., 2021). The literature is strong on the "what" but underdeveloped on the "how" (Eriksen et al., 2021). Furthermore, the analysis of Thematic Evolution highlights dramatic shifts in research focus over time (Referencing the Thematic Evolution data). Historical themes concerning generic Information Technology have been largely superseded, with attention now turning to highly specific technologies such as Deep Learning and Predictive Analytics. This evolution also includes a significant expansion into functional application domains. AI, once primarily discussed in the context of the C-suite, now permeates functions such as Supply Chain and Human Resource Management (HRM) as key strategic drivers, indicating that AI integration is becoming increasingly end-to-end (Yang et al., 2024). Beyond conceptual and evolutionary gaps, the social structure of the field also exhibits fragmentation. Our Collaboration Network map identifies numerous small, isolated author clusters, confirming the absence of a central bridge author connecting the entire research community (Referencing the Collaboration Network data). While there is significant international collaboration, the Countries' Collaboration World Map shows that research is heavily dominated by hubs in the United States, China, and Western Europe, with collaboration networks remaining relatively limited in emerging markets such as Latin America and Southeast Asia, including Indonesia (Referencing the Countries' Collaboration World Map data). These combined gaps conceptual fragmentation, rapid technological shifts, and isolated social networks make it challenging for new researchers and practitioners alike to synthesize the current state of knowledge, distinguish between established and obsolete trends, and formulate promising research directions (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

To address these critical gaps, this study employs a Bibliometric Analysis to provide an objective, data-driven, and structured mapping of the intellectual structure of the field. The primary contributions of this research are: (1) Offering a detailed scientometric overview of the literature's explosive growth and key performance indicators; (2) Identifying the mechanistic gap between specific AI technologies and strategic outcomes through Motor and Emerging Themes mapping; and (3) Providing a data-driven Future Research Agenda to guide subsequent research efforts towards theoretical integration and functional specificity. Specifically, the objectives of this research are: (1) To map the intellectual structure and theoretical foundations AI-in-Strategy literature; (2) To identify the thematic evolution (shift in focus) from 2005 to 2024; and (3) To formulate a Future Research Agenda based on identified conceptual, evolutionary, and structural gaps.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a systematic and replicable methodology based on bibliometric analysis and a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach. Bibliometric analysis provides an objective, quantitative tool to map the structure, evolution, and social networks within a specific field of study, thereby mitigating potential subjectivity associated with traditional qualitative reviews (Lim et al., 2024). The methodology is structured across four main phases: database selection, search strategy formulation, document screening, and data analysis.

2.1 Research Design

The research design is fundamentally descriptive and analytical. We adopt a scientometric approach to characterize the intellectual and social structure of the literature at the intersection of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Strategic Decision-Making (SDM). This methodology enables the identification of:

- a. Performance Analysis: Key contributors (authors, sources, and countries) and the quantitative growth trend over time.
- b. Intellectual Structure: The relationships between key themes and concepts (conceptual clustering).
- c. Social Structure: Collaboration patterns among authors and countries.

2.2 Data Source and Search Strategy

2.2.1 Database Selection

The Scopus database was selected as the primary data source. Scopus is globally recognized as the largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature, offering comprehensive coverage of business, management, technology, and social science journals, making it ideal for interdisciplinary research (You et al., 2024).

2.2.2 Search String Formulation

To ensure maximum coverage and high specificity, a structured search string using Boolean operators was developed based on the core conceptual domain: AI technology and Strategic Outcomes. The final search query applied to the TITLE, ABSTRACT, and KEYWORDS fields was: TITLE-ABS-KEY (("Artificial Intelligence" OR "Machine Learning" OR "Deep Learning" OR "Predictive Analytics" OR "AI-powered") AND ("Strategic Decision Making" OR "Strategy Formulation" OR "Strategic Management" OR "Corporate Strategy" OR "Competitive Advantage" OR "Organizational Strategy"))

2.3 Document Screening and Data Collection

2.3.1 Filtering Criteria

The search was conducted in February 2024. To refine the dataset and ensure high academic relevance, the following filters were applied:

- a. Timeframe: Publications between the years 2005 and 2024 (Year-to-Date).
- b. Document Type: Limited to "Article" (ar) and "Review" (re) to focus on primary research findings and major conceptual syntheses.
- c. Language: Restricted to "English" to ensure consistency in language processing.
- d. Subject Area: Limited to four major areas relevant to the study: Business, Management and Accounting (BUSI); Decision Sciences (DECI); Economics, Econometrics and Finance (ECON); and Social Sciences (SOCI).

2.3.2 Final Dataset

The initial search yielded 2248 documents. After applying the exclusion criteria, the final, cleaned dataset comprised 623 documents (articles and reviews), which serve as the basis for all subsequent bibliometric analyses. The complete metadata (authors, titles, abstracts, references, affiliations, etc.) was exported in the BibTeX format.

2.4 Bibliometric Analysis Techniques

The data analysis was performed using the R-Package bibliometrix and its web-interface tool, Biblioshiny. The following analytical techniques were utilized to address the research objectives:

- a. Performance Analysis: To identify core journals and assess interdisciplinarity.
- b. Source/Journal Analysis: To map the intellectual themes and their relationships.
- c. Author Collaboration: To map the social network structure of the research community.
- d. Countries Collaboration: To map geographical collaboration hubs and networks.
- e. Conceptual Structure: To map the intellectual themes and their relationships.
- f. Thematic Evolution: To track the shift in research focus over time (Time Slicing).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of the bibliometric analysis, structured into three main components: (1) Performance Analysis, (2) Intellectual Structure Analysis, and (3) Social and Geographical Structure Analysis. These findings address the research objectives of mapping the field's growth, conceptual configuration, and collaboration networks.

3.1 Performance Analysis and Key Contributors

3.1.1 Annual Scientific Production

The analysis of yearly publication counts reveals that the literature on AI in Strategic Decision-Making (SDM) is an explosive growth field. As detailed in the Introduction, the dataset of 623 documents accumulated over the period 2005–2024 (YTD) shows an average annual growth rate of 32.98%. The growth trajectory can be segmented into two distinct phases:

- a. Stagnation Phase (2005–2017): Characterized by low, stable output, averaging less than 10 documents per year, suggesting the topic was niche or primarily conceptual.

- b. Explosive Growth Phase (2018–2024): Marked by a sharp, nearly exponential increase, surpassing 50 documents in 2019 and peaking at approximately 200+ documents in 2024. This surge correlates with the maturation of Machine Learning and Big Data technologies.

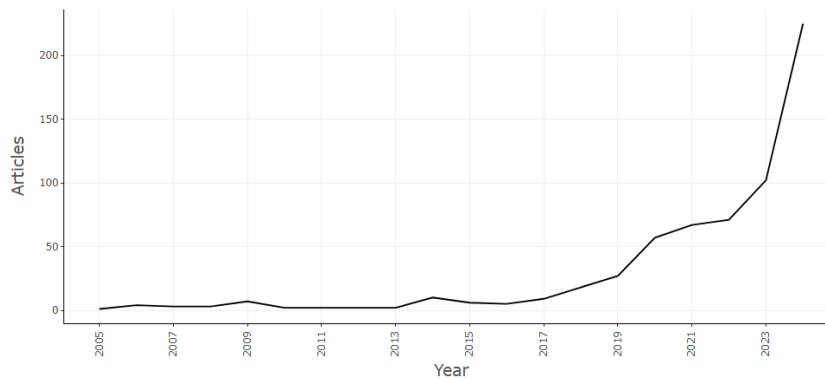


Figure 1. Annual Scientific Production

3.1.2 Most Relevant Sources (Journals)

The analysis of sources confirms the high interdisciplinarity of the field, with the top-contributing journals spanning Management, Technology, and Sustainability (See Table 1).

Table 1. Most Relevant Sources (Journals)

| Journals | Number of Documents | Key Discipline Implications |
|--|---------------------|---|
| SUSTAINABILITY (SWITZERLAND) | 35 | Sustainability, ESG, Interdisciplinary Research |
| TECHNOLOGICAL FORECASTING AND SOCIAL CHANGE | 20 | Innovation, Future Studies, Technology Management |
| BUSINESS STRATEGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT | 10 | Sustainable Business, Environmental Management |
| INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF PRODUCTION RESEARCH | 8 | Operations Management, Supply Chain |
| DECISION SUPPORT SYSTEMS | 7 | Information Systems, Decision Sciences |
| STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT JOURNAL | 7 | Core Strategic Management |

The dominance of Sustainability (Switzerland) and Technological Forecasting and Social Change indicates a strong research trend linking AI-driven strategies with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and long-term technological impacts, rather than being confined solely to core strategy outlets. The presence of Strategic Management Journal validates the topic's formal recognition within mainstream strategy academia.

3.1.3 Most Relevant Authors

LICHTENTHALER ULRICH is identified as the most productive author in the dataset, contributing 6 documents. Other significant contributors include RANA NRIPENDRA P. (4 documents) and various authors contributing 3 documents. This structure suggests a field where a single author has taken a leadership role, but the overall landscape is characterized by numerous small contributors, consistent with the fragmented nature of an emerging, interdisciplinary domain.

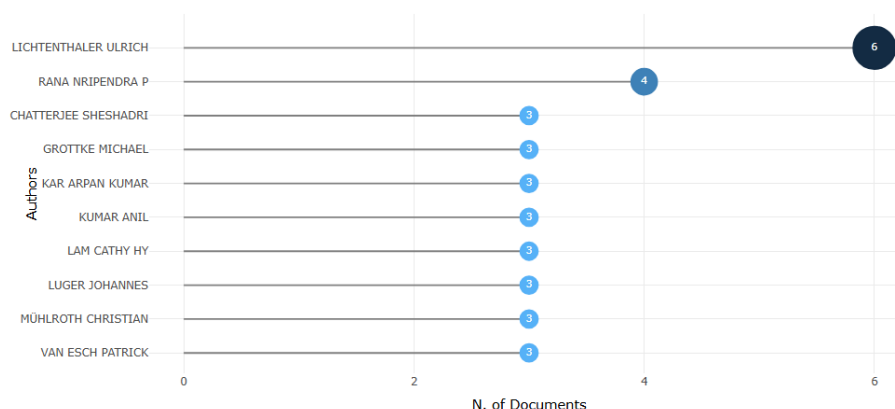


Figure 2. Most Relevant Authors

3.2 Intellectual Structure Analysis

3.2.1 Thematic Map Analysis (Conceptual Structure)

The Thematic Map, derived from Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) and clustering of co-occurring keywords, visualizes the intellectual structure of the literature based on theme maturity (Density) and relevance (Centrality).

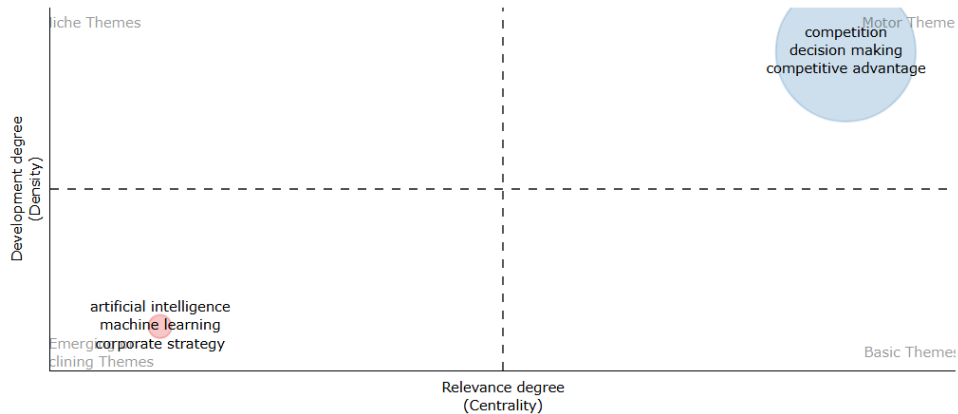


Figure 3. Thematic Map

The analysis identifies four key quadrants:

- Motor Themes (Upper-Right):** This quadrant, characterized by high Density (maturity) and high Centrality (relevance), includes "Decision Making," "Competition," and "Competitive Advantage." These themes represent the most established and well-integrated areas of research, suggesting a consensus on the desired strategic outcomes of AI adoption.
- Emerging/Niche Themes (Lower-Left):** This critical quadrant contains "Artificial Intelligence," "Machine Learning," and "Corporate Strategy." Their low Centrality and low Density indicate that while these are the foundational technologies and high-level strategy concepts, they have not yet been fully integrated into mature theoretical frameworks. This finding confirms the mechanistic gap proposed in the Introduction: the link between specific AI tools and strategic outcomes remains underdeveloped.

3.2.2 Thematic Evolution (Shifting Focus)

The Thematic Evolution analysis tracks the longitudinal changes in research focus, segmented into historical time slices.

- Historical Focus (Pre-2018):** Research was broadly centered on generic "Information Technology" and general "Decision Support Systems."
- Contemporary Shift (Post-2018):** A significant thematic shift occurs toward specific, powerful AI tools. The focus narrows to Machine Learning and Deep Learning.
- Functional Expansion:** This period also witnesses the expansion of strategic applications into functional domains previously less associated with C-suite strategy, such as Supply Chain and Human Resource Management (HRM). This evolution demonstrates that the field is moving towards higher technological specificity and broader organizational impact.

3.3 Social and Geographical Structure Analysis

3.3.1 Author Collaboration Network

The co-authorship network reveals the social structure of the field. The network is characterized by high fragmentation, exhibiting multiple small, disconnected clusters (e.g., [seethamraju ravi cm & hecimovic angela], [al-mawali hamzah hussein & about alhaythamad turki]).



Figure 4. Author Collaboration Network

- This fragmented structure supports the interdisciplinarity finding and suggests that research teams are primarily:
- Local: Confined to single institutions or small, pre-existing research groups.
 - Lacking Bridges: There is no single, central author who acts as a "bridge" to link the various conceptual clusters, contributing to the field's structural isolation.

3.3.2 Countries' Collaboration and Productivity

The geographical analysis highlights the major global contributors and the patterns of international collaboration.

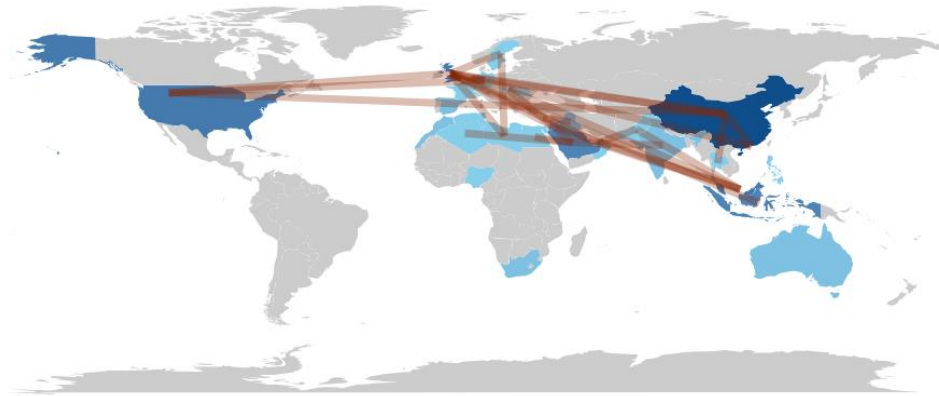


Figure 5. Countries Collaboration Network

- Top Producers: The most productive countries (darkest shading) are the United States (US), China, and key Western European countries (notably Germany and the UK).
- Collaboration Hubs: Strong collaboration links (thick lines) primarily connect:
 - Europe and China
 - Europe and United States
 - Europe and India

This indicates that while the US and China lead in publication volume, Europe (Germany in particular) serves as a crucial collaboration hub, facilitating knowledge transfer between major global research powers. Conversely, there are clear geographical gaps in contribution from regions such as Latin America and most of Africa.

3.5 Discussion

This section integrates the findings presented in Section result, discusses their implications for the field of Strategic Management, and concludes by outlining a robust agenda for future research based on the conceptual and structural gaps identified.

3.5.1 The Paradox of Growth and Mechanistic Fragmentation

The analysis confirms the rapid emergence of the AI-in-SDM field, evidenced by the explosive annual growth rate of 32.98%. This surge aligns with the predictions made by earlier conceptual works regarding the transformative impact of AI (Roy et al., 2025). However, our Thematic Map Analysis reveals a critical paradox: while "Competitive Advantage" and "Decision Making" reside in the mature Motor Theme quadrant, the foundational technological concepts, namely "Artificial Intelligence" and "Machine Learning," are relegated to the Emerging Themes quadrant.

This finding suggests a "mechanistic gap" in the literature: researchers agree on the desired outcomes (Motor Themes) of AI, but the literature still lacks mature, agreed-upon theoretical frameworks detailing the specific mechanisms (Machine Learning implementation, governance, and integration at the Corporate Strategy level) needed to reliably translate AI capability into strategic results. This fragmentation corroborates earlier concerns about the loose application of AI terminology in management research (Herrmann, 2023). The field urgently needs to move beyond rhetorical endorsement of AI toward empirical testing of specific ML algorithms and their effect on strategic processes (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

3.5.2 Interdisciplinary Expansion and Thematic Specificity

The thematic evolution confirms that the field is maturing toward specificity. The shift from generic "Information Technology" to granular tools like Deep Learning and the expansion into functional areas like Supply Chain and HRM (Zheng et al., 2025) indicates that AI is no longer a centralized IT concern but a decentralized strategic capability.

The high relevance of journals like Sustainability further solidifies the interdisciplinary nature of the field. This suggests that AI-driven strategy is often implicitly framed within the context of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) criteria, demonstrating that AI is increasingly viewed as a tool for creating shared value rather than solely maximizing shareholder returns (Elhady & Shohieb, 2025).

3.5.3 Structural Isolation and Global Hubs

The high fragmentation observed in the Author Collaboration Network (multiple small, disconnected clusters) is typical of new, highly interdisciplinary fields where researchers from different disciplines (e.g., Information Systems, Strategy, Operations Research) converge without having a shared history of co-authorship. This lack of structural unity reinforces the need for theoretical consolidation.

Geographically, the results highlight the dominance of the United States and China in publication volume, which is expected given their technological and research capacity. Crucially, the analysis identifies Europe (particularly Germany) as a vital collaboration hub (Rüland et al., 2025). The strong links between Europe-China and Europe-US suggest that European institutions play a pivotal role in facilitating global knowledge flow, potentially driven by multinational projects or regulatory initiatives (such as the EU AI Act). This collaboration structure contrasts sharply with the low contributions from regions like Latin America and Africa, highlighting a geographical equity gap in global AI-in-SDM research.

4. CONCLUSION

This bibliometric analysis confirms that the field of AI in Strategic Decision-Making is highly dynamic, undergoing explosive growth and rapid thematic evolution toward technological specificity. We conclude that despite this growth, the literature suffers from a mechanistic gap and structural fragmentation. By mapping the field's performance, conceptual configuration, and social network, this study provides a foundation for future research to develop theoretically integrated and practically relevant mechanisms that securely embed specific AI technologies within core strategic decision processes. This study contributes significantly to the body of knowledge on Strategic Management and AI by: Providing empirical, scientometric evidence of the explosive growth (32.98%) in the literature, positioning the topic as a critical priority. Objectively mapping the field's conceptual landscape, confirming the existence of a mechanistic gap between established strategic outcomes (Motor Themes) and emerging technology tools (Emerging Themes). Identifying the high degree of fragmentation in the Author Collaboration Network and highlighting the global role of European countries as crucial collaboration hubs. This study, while comprehensive, is subject to limitations typical of bibliometric analysis. First, the data is confined to the Scopus database and documents published in English, potentially excluding relevant literature from regional databases or non-English journals. Second, bibliometric analysis relies on keyword co-occurrence and citation counts, which map the structure of the field but cannot capture the qualitative depth of individual research contributions. Based on the identified gaps, we propose the following research directions to guide future scholarship: Future studies should move away from generic "AI" and focus on testing the effects of specific Machine Learning algorithms (e.g., deep reinforcement learning, causal ML) on concrete strategic processes (e.g., resource reallocation, strategic sensing, market entry decision). This will bridge the gap between technology and outcome themes. Given the maturity of "Decision Making" and the need for Corporate Strategy integration, future research must address the development of formal AI Governance frameworks and the ethical accountability of algorithm-driven strategic decisions. Research should anchor AI implementation within classic strategic frameworks, such as the Dynamic Capabilities View or the Resource-Based View, to build robust theoretical foundations for the Emerging Themes. To address the geographical gap, comparative studies are needed to analyze how organizational culture and national regulations influence the adoption and strategic effectiveness of AI in Emerging Markets (e.g., Southeast Asia and Latin America), contrasting these findings with those from the dominant US-China-Europe hub.

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