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BUSINESS DIPLOMACY: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS AND PATHWAYS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Summary

Business diplomacy acts as a strategic instrument for corporations navigating the intricacies of the global business landscape. This involves establishing, maintaining, and navigating relationships with external organizations and internal stakeholders to achieve business goals and positively influence the business environment. This article presents a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of the field of business diplomacy, aiming to unravel its structure, dynamics, and trends. Three research questions guide the exploration: RQ1. What is the structure of research on business diplomacy? RQ2. What are the dynamics and significant activities within business diplomacy? RQ3. What are the prospective research directions? The bibliometric analysis covered 74 publications extracted from the Scopus database. Employing a two-stage analysis with Microsoft Excel and VOSviewer, the study identifies key contributing countries, authors, sources, and critical themes within the field. Furthermore, a thorough examination of 10 publications, chosen through bibliographic coupling analysis, enhanced the results, identifying key research trends and insights, and contributing to an enriched understanding of the research area. The study concludes by proposing future research paths to guide practitioners and researchers contributing to the evolving landscape of business diplomacy.

Keywords: Business Diplomacy, Economic Diplomacy, Corporate Diplomacy, Bibliometric Analysis, Scientific Mapping, Research Agenda.

JEL Codes: F23, F50

DYPLOMACJA BIZNESOWA: ANALIZA BIBLIOMETRYCZNA I PRZYSZŁE KIERUNKI BADAŃ

Streszczenie

Dyplomacja biznesowa to strategiczne narzędzie firm operujących w zmiennym krajo-brazie globalnego środowiska biznesowego. Obejmuje ona nawiązywanie, utrzymywanie i kierowanie relacjami z zewnętrznymi i wewnętrznymi interesariuszami. W artykule przeprowadzono analizę bibliometryczną obszaru dyplomacji biznesowej, która miała na celu zrozumienie jego struktury, dynamiki i trendów. Artykuł odpowiada na 3 pytania badawcze: 1. Jaka jest struktura badań nad dyplomacją biznesową? 2. Jaka jest dynamika badań nad dyplomacją biznesową? 3. Jakie są potencjalne kierunki dalszych badań w obszarze dyplomacji biznesowej? Analiza bibliometryczna obejmowała 74 publikacje z bazy Scopus. Przy użyciu dwuetapowego podejścia oraz korzystając z programów Microsoft Excel i VOSviewer, w pierwszym kroku zidentyfikowano kluczowe kraje, autorów, źródła i główne tematy w badanym obszarze. Następnie analizie poddano 10 publikacji zidentyfikowanych na podstawie analizy powiązań bibliograficznych. Na zakończenie przedstawiono propozycje przyszłych kierunków badań, które przyczynią się do rozwoju tego nowego obszaru badawczego.

Słowa kluczowe: dyplomacja biznesowa, dyplomacja ekonomiczna, dyplomacja korporacyjna, analiza bibliometryczna, mapowanie naukowe, agenda badawcza.

Kody JEL: F23, F50

Introduction

Diplomacy has long been recognized as a critical component of statecraft, serving as a strategic tool for nations to establish their global influence and pursue their political, economic, strategic, and cultural objectives (Hart, Siniver 2020; Barston 2019). In its traditional form, diplomacy involves official communication and interaction between states, conducted through diplomatic missions that represent the external face of a country, playing a pivotal role in safeguarding the rights and interests of states and their citizens abroad (Leguey-Feilleux 2009). This official activity encompasses a spectrum of diplomatic

types, ranging from preventive and public diplomacy to business diplomacy, the latter of which has gained prominence in recent times (Sharp 2019).

The globalization of world politics has brought about significant changes, broadening the scope of diplomatic engagement beyond government entities. International organizations, non-governmental organizations, regional governments, and transnational corporations are now active stakeholders on the global stage, reshaping the landscape of diplomacy (Saner et al. 2000). In this evolving paradigm, the concept of “business diplomacy” has gained prominence, marking a departure from the traditional focus on state-centric diplomatic activities. Alongside economic diplomacy, terms such as business diplomacy, corporate diplomacy, economic diplomacy, and trade diplomacy have entered the lexicon, reflecting the multifaceted nature of diplomatic engagement in contemporary international relations.

In the contemporary geopolitical landscape, business diplomacy has emerged as a pivotal instrument for many nations in advancing their foreign policy objectives (Sharp 2019). With rapid global changes, this type of diplomacy has proven highly effective in promoting the interests of domestic companies and enterprises on the international stage through both unilateral and multilateral channels. This approach involves the active participation of foreign affairs ministries and missions, offering critical support for domestic businesses operating in foreign markets. Additionally, economic diplomacy fosters business collaboration, facilitates technical and scientific research, and provides valuable insights into the host country, all contributing to mutual benefit and understanding.

While the term “business diplomacy” is relatively understudied in the existing research literature, scholars such as Alammar and Pauleen (2016) recognize its significance within the realm of international business management. Business diplomacy involves the establishment, maintenance, and engagement of long-term relationships with external organizations and internal stakeholders, with the overarching aim of achieving business goals and positively shaping the business environment (Alammar, Pauleen 2016). The key components of business diplomacy include a dedicated focus on foreign governments and non-governmental stakeholders, a strong emphasis on cultivating and sustaining positive long-term relationships, and the overarching goal of establishing legitimacy in foreign business environments (Ruël, Wolters 2016).

This paper undertakes a bibliometric analysis of the business diplomacy research field to shed light on its evolution, trends, and key contributors. By examining the existing scholarly landscape, authors aim to contribute to

a deeper understanding of the significance and potential avenues for further exploration within the dynamic intersection of business and diplomacy. Three research questions (RQs) guide this investigation:

- RQ1. What is the structure of research on business diplomacy?
- RQ2. What are the dynamics of research and the significant activities within the realm of business diplomacy?
- RQ3. What are the prospective research directions concerning business diplomacy?

The article follows this structure: Section 2 outlines the methodology. Section 3 presents the findings of the bibliographic analysis. Section 4 deliberates on the empirical results and recommends future research directions. The Conclusions section presents the key results and implications of this paper.

Methods

To achieve the stated in the Introduction section objectives and address the research questions, a two-stage research process was employed in the analysis of the business diplomacy field:

1. The first stage involved a comprehensive examination of the research structure and dynamics within the business diplomacy field. This analysis was conducted through bibliometric performance analysis combined with science mapping techniques. The aim was to unveil the evolving trends and patterns in the research landscape.
2. The second stage focused on delving into the current research problems and emerging trends within the business diplomacy domain. Publications for this stage were selected through bibliographic coupling of documents, ensuring a targeted and in-depth analysis of the most relevant literature.

The research utilized the SCOPUS database, chosen for its suitability in bibliometric analysis (Quintero-Quintero et al. 2021). SCOPUS was preferred due to its robust data export capabilities and the extensive range of available publications (Cobo et al. 2011). The search query focused on the defined keywords: “business diplomacy”. The search identified 74 documents encompassing the entirety of the research field’s development. Then, a database containing the selected dataset, including full bibliographic information, was downloaded in

both CSV and TXT formats. This step ensured accessibility and compatibility for further reference and sharing of the analyzed data set.

To conduct a robust analysis of the data set, the authors employed a two-step approach, utilizing Microsoft Excel for the initial descriptive analysis and VOSviewer version 1.6.18 for subsequent in-depth analysis and visualization of the results. The first step involved an initial descriptive analysis using Microsoft Excel which facilitated the systematic organization and preliminary exploration of the data set, allowing for the identification of primary patterns and themes. This stage laid the groundwork for more advanced analyses in the subsequent step.

For a more sophisticated analysis and visualization of the results, VOSviewer version 1.6.18 was employed. VOSviewer is acknowledged for its effectiveness in collating literature, establishing similarities between selected publications based on predefined parameters, and identifying significant topics among publications (Nobanee et al. 2021; Orduña-Malea and Costas 2021). VOSviewer allowed the authors to delve deeper into the intricacies of the data set, uncovering latent patterns, and visualizing connections between various elements. This step not only provided a visual representation of relationships but also offered a more nuanced understanding of the interconnections within the business diplomacy research field.

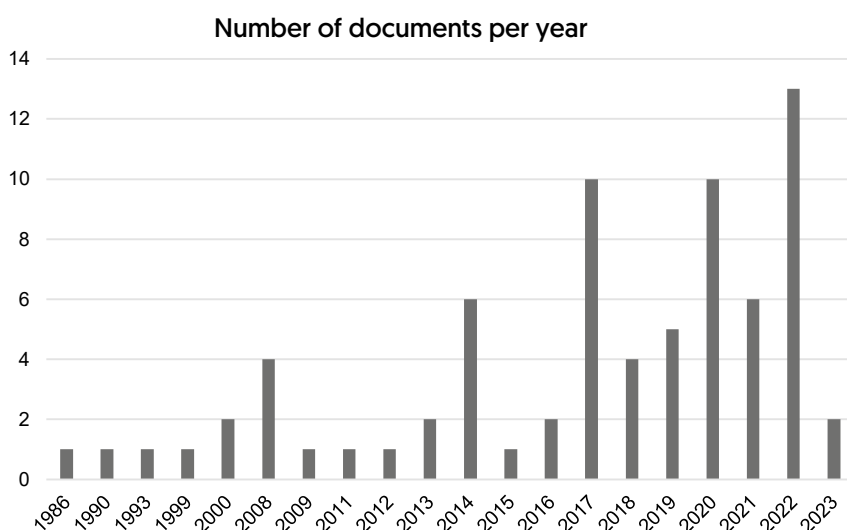
Results

The data analysis in this study comprised two essential methods of bibliometric analysis during the initial stage: performance analysis and scientific mapping. These methodologies aimed to evaluate productivity, impact, and the dynamic structural features of the selected research area, providing a comprehensive understanding of the field of business diplomacy. The fundamental bibliographic analysis technique employed to gauge the degree and dynamics of researchers' interest in the field of business diplomacy involves assessing the number of publications over time (Udomsap, Hallinger 2020). This technique serves as a key metric for tracking the evolution and scholarly engagement within the specified research domain.

Figure 1 illustrates the temporal distribution of publications in the field of business diplomacy, totaling 74 publications. The analysis begins with the first article published in 1986 (Ruben 1986), which has garnered only 2 citations. The

dynamics of the publications are rather low and irregular. Over the last two decades, the annual number of publications has varied from 0 to 13. The most prolific years in terms of publications were observed in 2017 (10 publications), 2020 (10 publications), and 2022 (13 publications). These peaks in productivity suggest heightened scholarly attention and activity during these specific years, potentially indicative of pivotal developments, emerging trends, or increased recognition of the importance of business diplomacy.

Figure 1. Temporal Distribution of Business Diplomacy Publications

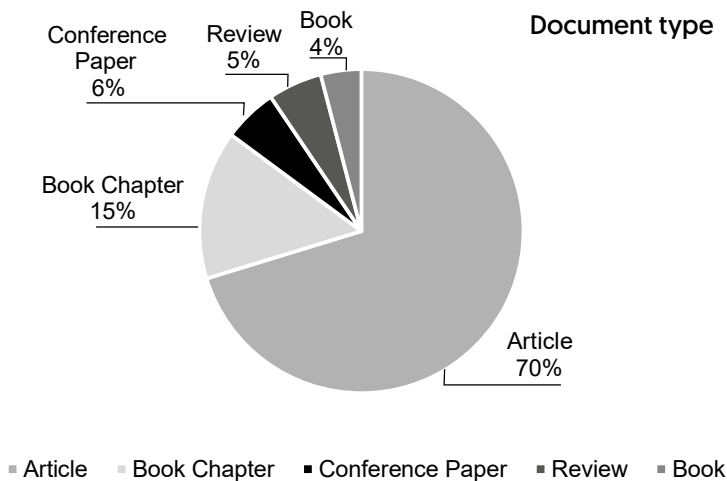


Source: own elaboration.

The analysis of business diplomacy publications, categorized by document type (Figure 2), reveals valuable insights into the diverse formats through which scholarly contributions are disseminated. The majority of business diplomacy publications, constituting 52%, are in the form of articles. This suggests a predominant focus on disseminating research findings through peer-reviewed journal articles. The prevalence of articles underscores the scholarly rigour and peer validation associated with this document type. Researchers in the field of business diplomacy prioritize contributing to academic journals, enhancing the credibility and impact of their work. A notable 11% of business diplomacy publications take the form of book chapters. Authors contributing book chapters often explore comprehensive and in-depth perspectives on

business diplomacy, contributing to the synthesis of knowledge, in longer-form scholarly works. The book format represents 3% of business diplomacy publications, suggesting a commitment to producing more extensive, standalone works. Conference papers represent only 4% of business diplomacy publications, indicating a presence in academic conferences and forums. Similarly, reviews contribute to 4% of business diplomacy publications, indicating a focus on synthesizing and critically assessing existing literature. The diverse distribution of document types reflects the multifaceted nature of business diplomacy research. While articles dominate the landscape, the presence of book chapters, conference papers, reviews, and books indicates a rich and varied scholarly output within the field.

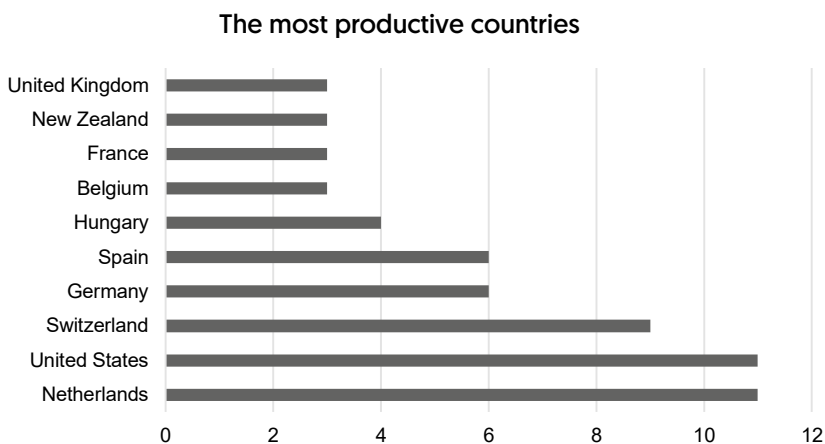
Figure 2. Distribution of Document Types in Business Diplomacy Publications



Source: own elaboration.

In bibliometric analysis, a crucial aspect involves scrutinizing the countries that significantly contribute to the field and comprehending their academic networks. Figure 3 showcases countries with a minimum of 3 publications. The top contributors in terms of productivity include the United States and the Netherlands (11 publications per country), Switzerland (9 publications), and Germany and Spain (6 publications per country).

Figure 3. Most Productive Countries in Business Diplomacy Publications



Source: own elaboration.

An important component of analyzing the structure within the research area involves conducting both quantitative and qualitative assessments of the key sources where researchers publish. Table 1 outlines the highly impactful sources in the field of business diplomacy.

Table 1. Most Impactful Sources in Business Diplomacy Field

Source	Documents	Citations	Editor	IF'22	CS-hp22
International Journal of Diplomacy and Economy	11	28	Inderscience publisher	0	35
Advanced series in management	8	31	Emerald Insight book series		
The Hague Journal of Diplomacy	7	83	Brill	1,4	79
Diplomatica	5	21	Brill	0,8	1

Source	Documents	Citations	Editor	IF'22	CS-hp22
Business History Review	2	5	Cambridge University Press	1,2	90
European Journal of International Management	2	3	Inderscience Publisher	1,8	55
Studies in Diplomacy and International Relations	2	10	Springer Link book series		

Source: own elaboration.

In examining key sources within the field, a nuanced analysis of several publications provides valuable insights. The International Journal of Diplomacy and Economy, published by Inderscience Publisher, showcases 11 documents with a notable citation count of 28. Despite not having a reported Impact Factor for 2022, its citation score of 35 implies reasonable scholarly influence. The Business History Review, published by Cambridge University Press, stands out with 2 documents, an Impact Factor of 1.2, and a high citation score of 90. This source appears to be a valuable and impactful publication in the business diplomacy field.

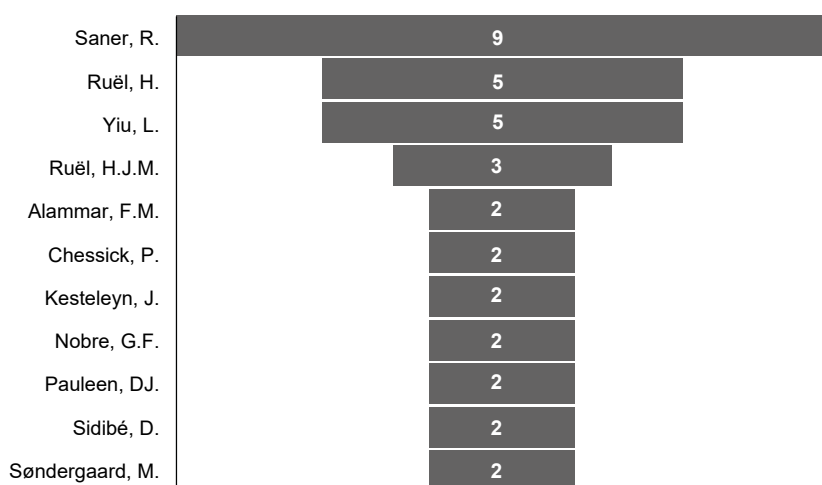
The The Hague Journal of Diplomacy, edited by Brill, emerges as a prominent source with 7 documents, an Impact Factor of 1.4, and an impressive citation count of 83. This journal stands out for its substantial influence within the academic community. Diplomatica, also under the editorial guidance of Brill, presents 5 documents with a respectable citation count of 21. Despite a relatively lower Impact Factor of 0.8, its noteworthy citations signify its relevance in scholarly discussions. The European Journal of International Management, affiliated with Inderscience Publisher, contributes 2 documents with a higher Impact Factor of 1.8 and a citation score of 55, striking a balance between quality and citation influence.

The analysis of these key sources reveals a diverse landscape within the business diplomacy field. Journals such as The Hague Journal of Diplomacy, Diplomatica, and Business History Review stand out for their influential contributions, considering both impact factors and citation counts. Researchers

may consider these factors when selecting sources aligned with their specific research focus.

To assess the structure of the research filed it is of high importance to identify the most productive authors who usually drive and give direction to the research area. Figure 4 displays the top 11 authors with the highest productivity, assessed by the number of articles published on the filed of business diplomacy. The authors featured in this list have each contributed a minimum of 2 publications, and most productive of them boast a significant citation count: Saner R (147 citations), Roel H. (53 citations), Yiu L. (139 cittaions).

Figure 4. Most productive authors



Source: own elaboration.

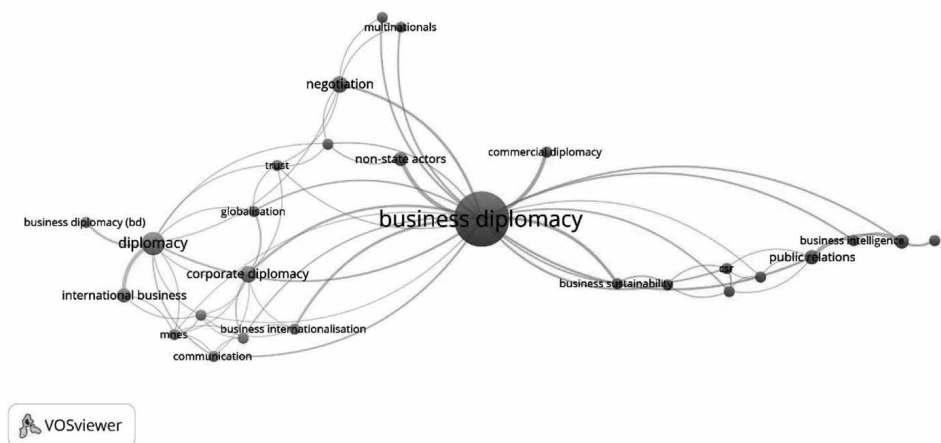
In the second stage, authors utilized scientific mapping techniques to create a catalogue of information found in the literature. This allowed for a clear presentation of the dynamic and structural features present in the scientific works, as well as the connections among them and their development. The following mapping techniques were applied:

- Keyword co-occurrence analysis – to explore existing and potential relationships among topics in the research field by focusing on the written content of the publications themselves.

- Bibliographic coupling analysis of documents – to examine similarity relationships between sample documents.

In Figure 5, a co-occurrence map of authors' keywords is depicted. Clusters of keywords that frequently co-occur are connected and differentiated by colours. The size of each circle represents the frequency of a keyword, and the thickness of the connecting lines indicates the strength of the association. To be included in the analysis, a minimum threshold of 2 occurrences for a keyword was set. Out of a total of 234 keywords, only 27 met this threshold.

Figure 5. The co-occurrence map of authors' keywords



Source: own elaboration.

The red cluster encompasses 11 significant keywords related to business diplomacy (*business diplomacy, business intelligence, business sustainability, commercial diplomacy, corporate social responsibility/CSR, international business diplomacy, leadership, public relations, stakeholder management, and sustainable development goals*). The central concepts are business diplomacy, business intelligence, and commercial diplomacy. The inclusion of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainable development goals (SDGs) signifies a holistic approach that integrates ethical and sustainability considerations into diplomatic business practices. Leadership emerges as a critical component, emphasizing the role of leadership in effectively implementing business diplomacy strategies. Public relations and stakeholder management are crucial elements, emphasizing the importance of communication and

relationship-building in the context of business diplomacy. The co-occurrence of keywords in this cluster indicates a convergence of ideas around a comprehensive framework for business diplomacy that goes beyond traditional economic considerations to incorporate social responsibility and sustainable development goals.

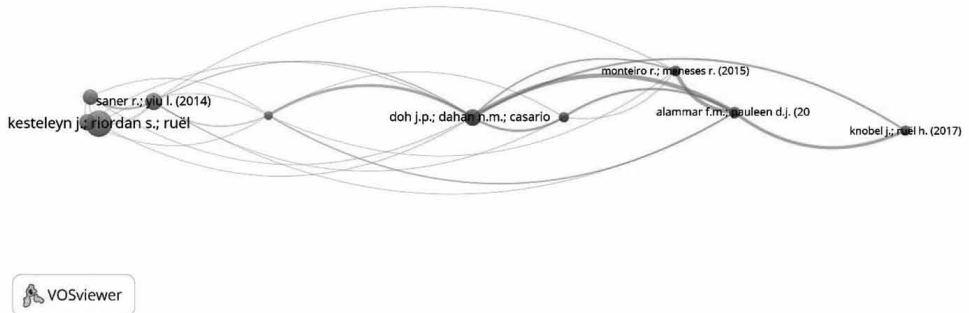
The green cluster focuses on 9 keywords (*business diplomacy (BD), business internationalization, communication, corporate diplomacy, diplomacy, international business, mnes, stakeholder theory, and sustainability*), with business diplomacy (BD) at the core. This cluster highlights the interconnectedness of business diplomacy with communication, corporate diplomacy, and stakeholder theory. The inclusion of business internationalization and international business emphasizes the global perspective in which business diplomacy operates. MNEs (Multinational Enterprises) and sustainability underscore the significance of diplomatic strategies in the context of global business expansion and the integration of sustainable practices. The co-occurrence of these keywords suggests an emphasis on the role of communication, stakeholder engagement, and corporate diplomacy in the internationalization process, emphasizing a strategic and diplomatic approach to global business operations.

The blue cluster, consisting of 7 keywords (*globalization, multinationals, negotiation, non-state actors, states, strategic alliances, trust*), centers around broader geopolitical and strategic considerations. Keywords such as globalization, multinationals, and states highlight the overarching context in which business diplomacy operates. The presence of negotiation, strategic alliances, and trust underscores the importance of diplomatic skills and relationship-building in the global business environment. Non-state actors introduce the idea of diverse entities playing significant roles in the diplomatic landscape. The co-occurrence of these keywords indicates a recognition of the complex, interconnected, and strategic nature of business diplomacy in a globalized context, where negotiations, alliances, and trust play pivotal roles.

Next, a comprehensive examination of 10 publications selected through bibliographic coupling of documents was carried out. Only the documents with a minimum of 5 citations were taken under consideration. From 74 documents 18 met the threshold, however only 10 were selected as the only ones within the network (connected). This approach involves identifying instances where two documents cite the same source. This method is particularly insightful as it highlights the strength of a specific publication about a set of other publications, offering a glimpse into the intellectual structure of the research field. Figure 5 visually represents the bibliographic coupling of documents, providing

a means to observe and quantify the intensity of connections between them. The resulting map unveils two distinct clusters, each delineating a specific thematic concentration within the research field.

Figure 6. The bibliographic coupling of documents



Source: own elaboration.

The documents in the red cluster (5 items) highlight the strategic importance of business diplomacy for MNCs, offering insights into instruments, practices, and contextual factors influencing effectiveness. This interdisciplinary approach bridges international business, political economy, and global non-market strategy, suggesting the need for further research to deepen our understanding of this complex and crucial aspect of contemporary international business. Knobel and Ruël (2017), delves into the dynamic and volatile international business environment. It underscores the importance of business diplomacy for Multinational Corporations (MNCs) beyond stakeholder management. The study explores the instruments used by experienced MNCs to establish and maintain long-term relationships within the foreign economic and institutional environment. Alammar and Pauleen (2016), focus on constructing a deeper understanding of business diplomacy through literature synthesis and analysis. The key findings include an integrative definition of business diplomacy, a conceptual framework, and a descriptive theory. The authors improve the comprehension of business diplomacy for both managers and academics, solidifying its status as a serious field of research. In a study by Monteiro and Meneses (2015), the impact of globalization on international business and the rising demands on MNCs are explored. The research assesses the usefulness of business/corporate diplomacy as a strategic management

mindset for firms operating abroad. The study employs a theoretical sampling of eight international Portuguese firms, confirming theoretical assumptions and introducing a new category, „moderators,” which influence the scope of business diplomacy based on firm-specific settings and their impact on the foreign environment. Ruël (2020) contributes to the understanding of business diplomacy’s role for MNCs. The publication addresses crucial questions regarding business diplomacy, such as its definition, differentiation from lobbying, types, and instruments used by MNCs. It emphasizes the necessity for MNCs to establish positive relationships with foreign government representatives and non-governmental stakeholders to build and sustain legitimacy in foreign business environments. Lastly, Doh et al. (2022) apply „practice theory” to position International Business Diplomacy (IBD) within the global non-market strategy (NMS) of Multinational Enterprises (MNEs). The study argues that IBD constitutes a set of practices in the implementation of global NMS. The most appropriate practices are contingent on key dimensions of the global institutional governance regime faced by MNEs, namely the governance level and the degree of rule formality.

The documents gathered in the green cluster (5 items) contribute to the broader understanding of business diplomacy in various contexts, including stakeholder management, risk mitigation in foreign markets, and the implementation of sustainable development goals. They underscore the interdisciplinary nature of business diplomacy and advocate for its integration into both academic studies and practical business strategies. The distinct yet interconnected roles of public relations and business diplomacy, along with the multifaceted functions of business diplomats, emerge as recurring themes across these diverse perspectives. The study conducted by Falcão, Ramalho, and Nobre (2021) centers on the evolution of stakeholder relations, proposing business diplomacy as a renewal strategy. To assess the value addition of business diplomacy to stakeholder management, a survey involving 104 companies was conducted. The findings reveal that public relations and business diplomacy activities share identity but remain distinct in nature. The study identifies three overarching functions—communication, influence, and intelligence—suggesting that stakeholder management benefits from the integration of both public relations and business diplomacy. This research emphasizes the necessity of incorporating both disciplines into advanced stakeholder management studies and sheds light on the dimensions of communication, influence, and intelligence underlying their role. Kesteleyn, Riordan, and Ruël (2014) explore the role of business diplomacy in managing geopolitical and non-commercial risks for firms operating abroad. Framed as

an approach rooted in diplomatic practices and mindset, business diplomacy is investigated to determine its existence as a separate area of activity and its ability to address challenges in foreign markets. Søndergaard (2014) highlights the interdisciplinary nature of corporate business diplomacy by drawing examples from economics and political science. The article suggests that corporate business diplomacy complements business theories such as stakeholder theory and agency theory. It explores the broader management of external stakeholders and the narrower focus on internal stakeholders. Saner and Yiu (2014) address the challenges faced by multinational enterprises (MNEs) in implementing commitments to codes of conduct. Focused on codes developed by entities like the UN Global Compact and OECD Guidelines, the article proposes the appointment of business diplomats to navigate these complexities. Business diplomats, deemed best qualified, are seen as key to fostering a business culture aligning with diverse objectives and obligations, often in opposition. The article underscores the importance of business diplomats in steering MNEs towards a sustained business approach based on publicly agreed criteria of good conduct. Yiu and Saner (2017) also focus on the role of business diplomats in contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The article proposes competencies needed for business diplomacy at organizational and managerial levels in the context of SDGs. It emphasizes the transformative journey required for SDG implementation and positions business diplomats as central figures in ensuring effective partnerships and contributions to the SDGs. This work stands out as the first to discuss the role and contribution of business diplomats in the specific context of SDG implementation.

Discussion

Based on the keyword co-occurrence and bibliographic coupling results we can state that till today the leading studied issues in the field are:

1. Strategic importance of business diplomacy for Multinational Corporations (MNCs) beyond stakeholder management. Research focuses on the exploration of instruments, practices, and contextual factors influencing effectiveness in the dynamic international business environment (Knobel, Ruël 2017; Ruël 2020).
2. Integration of public relations and business diplomacy in stakeholder management, concentrating on the assessment of the shared identity and

distinct functions of these disciplines, emphasizing communication, influence, and intelligence (Falcão, Ramalho, Nobre 2021; Kesteleyn, Riordan, Ruël 2014).

3. Role of business diplomats in contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) defining competencies needed for business diplomacy in the context of SDGs and the transformative journey required for effective partnerships (You, Saner 2017; Alammar, Pauleen 2016).
4. Role of business diplomacy in managing geopolitical and non-commercial risks for firms operating abroad, exploring the impact of globalization on international business and the demands on MNCs (Kesteleyn, Riordan, Ruël, 2014; Monteiro, Meneses 2015).

In future research, the first imperative is to explore the evolving landscape of business diplomacy within the context of emerging technologies. Investigating the impact of artificial intelligence, blockchain, and other technological advancements on diplomatic strategies and their effectiveness in the international business arena is essential. Understanding how these technologies shape communication, stakeholder engagement, and the overall dynamics of business diplomacy will be crucial for practitioners and policymakers. A second area of focus should be the examination of the ethical dimensions of business diplomacy. Future research should unravel the ethical challenges and dilemmas faced by businesses engaged in diplomatic activities. This includes an exploration of ethical considerations in stakeholder management, sustainability practices, and the integration of corporate social responsibility into diplomatic strategies. Unpacking these ethical dimensions is fundamental for fostering responsible and sustainable diplomatic practices. The third vital research direction involves a deeper investigation into the role of non-state actors in business diplomacy. Understanding the influence and impact of non-governmental entities, advocacy groups, and other non-state actors in shaping diplomatic relationships is paramount. Research should explore the complexities and opportunities presented by the involvement of these diverse entities in the global business environment and how businesses can effectively navigate these interactions. A fourth critical area for future research is the development of a comprehensive framework for evaluating the effectiveness of business diplomacy strategies. Creating standardized metrics and assessment tools will enable businesses to measure the success of their diplomatic efforts. This research should also consider the dynamic nature of success criteria across

different industries, regions, and cultural contexts, providing adaptable frameworks that suit diverse business environments. Lastly, there is a pressing need to explore the interplay between geopolitical events and business diplomacy. Future research should investigate how businesses can navigate and respond to geopolitical shifts, conflicts, and uncertainties. Understanding the role of business diplomacy in mitigating geopolitical risks and capitalizing on geopolitical opportunities will be essential for organizations operating on a global scale. This research will contribute valuable insights into adaptive diplomatic strategies that align with the geopolitical realities of the contemporary business world.

Conclusions

In conclusion, this research employed a two-stage process to comprehensively analyze the field of business diplomacy. The initial stage involved bibliometric performance analysis, revealing evolving trends, key contributors, and the network of relationships within the field. The second stage delved into current research problems and emerging trends within business diplomacy through scientific mapping, namely, authors' keywords co-occurrence and bibliographic coupling of documents. The results highlighted the temporal distribution of publications, diverse document types, prolific authors, influential sources, and the productivity of countries. Additionally, scientific mapping techniques unveiled keyword and bibliometric coupling clusters, offering insights into thematic concentrations and intellectual structures within the research field.

The findings emphasise strategic issues studied by multiple researchers. These include the strategic importance of business diplomacy for MNCs, the integration of public relations and business diplomacy in stakeholder management, the role of business diplomats in contributing to the implementation of SDGs, and the management of geopolitical and non-commercial risks. Lastly, the study proposed crucial future research directions, including exploring the impact of emerging technologies on business diplomacy, unravelling ethical dimensions, investigating non-state actors' roles, developing a comprehensive framework for evaluating diplomacy effectiveness, and understanding the interplay between geopolitical events and business diplomacy. These future research areas aim to advance understanding, guide practitioners, and

contribute to the evolving landscape of business diplomacy in the context of global dynamics and challenges.

The research presented in this paper has limitations, notably its reliance on a single SCOPUS database. While this choice aligns with the article's methods and tools, future research could benefit from exploring resources in databases such as Web of Science or ProQuest. Additionally, the analysis focused solely on English-language publications due to language constraints. However, the authors acknowledge the potential value in publications in other languages, suggesting that future research, facilitated by an international team with linguistic competencies, could encompass analyses in the world's most widely spoken languages.

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