

A Bibliometric Analysis of Research on AI Readiness

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Abstract

The adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is accelerating globally, driven by its potential to enhance organizational efficiency and enable smarter decision-making. However, the resulting literature on AI readiness is fragmented, creating a need to synthesize findings and identify critical research gaps. This study provides a bibliometric analysis of the field, analysing 225 Scopus documents from 2016 to 2025 using Biblioshiny to examine publication trends, key contributors, and thematic structures. Findings reveal an exponential growth in research, with over 93% of publications appearing since 2020. The analysis highlights a fundamental divergence between the field's technology-centric foundations and its expanding focus on socio-technical factors, alongside a democratization of research evidenced by rising contributions from emerging economies like India, Indonesia, and Malaysia. By identifying the field's core research themes and specific gaps, such as the need for integrated models and studies in under-explored sectors like public procurement, finance, and security, this study offers a foundational overview and a clear trajectory for future inquiry.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI), Readiness, Bibliometric, Biblioshiny, Rstudio

Introduction

The readiness for Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a burgeoning area of research, driven by the increasing interest among governments and organisations worldwide in integrating AI technologies across various sectors (Oxford Insights, 2023). AI readiness refers to the preparedness of organizations, systems, and societies to adopt and effectively utilize AI technologies (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Holmström, 2022; Oxford Insights, 2023; Tehrani et al., 2024; World Bank, 2020). Broadly, AI adoption is associated with significant improvements in efficiency and productivity through advanced generative and automation capabilities, as well as enhanced decision-making, service customization, and stakeholder engagement through its analytical and communication functions (Oxford Insights, 2023; World Bank, 2020).

Despite this growing interest, the literature on AI readiness remains fragmented, with studies often siloed within specific contexts or focused on narrow aspects of implementation. While narrative reviews exist, they may not fully capture the quantitative trends, intellectual

structure, and thematic evolution of this rapidly expanding field. Therefore, a clear research gap exists for a holistic, quantitative overview that can map the landscape of AI readiness research. This study addresses this gap by employing a bibliometric analysis. This approach is particularly timely and necessary to synthesize the rapidly growing literature, identify the most influential research, uncover emerging thematic clusters, and provide a clear, data-driven roadmap for future inquiry.

Literature Review

The Benefits and Challenges in Adopting AI From Organizational Context

The literature presents a clear dichotomy between the substantial benefits of AI adoption and the complex socio-technical challenges that hinder its realization. On one hand, AI is widely recognized for its potential to enhance operational efficiency, enable smarter decision-making, and improve overall organizational performance (Jöhnk et al., 2021; Oxford Insights, 2023; World Bank, 2020). To capitalize on these benefits, the literature stresses that aligning business objectives with AI strategies is imperative for securing the necessary resources and organizational support (Holmström, 2022; Jöhnk et al., 2021). Furthermore, successful AI integration can foster a data-driven culture and a collaborative environment, both of which are critical for stimulating innovation (Jöhnk et al., 2021).

However, achieving these outcomes requires organizations to navigate challenges that are distinct from those of previous information systems. Unlike traditional IT, the nature of opaque AI systems (often referred to as 'black boxes') creates a fundamental hurdle (Guidotti et al., 2018; Ntoutsis et al., 2020). This opacity complicates the goals of achieving 'smarter decision-making' and transparency, hindering effective implementation, particularly in developing contexts (Oxford Insights, 2023; World Bank, 2020). These unique technical issues are frequently compounded by social and organizational drawbacks; skill shortages, rigid processes, and weak ethical governance are not just implementation barriers but critical threats that can constrain institutional capacity and erode public trust (Uren & Edwards, 2023).

The literature therefore argues that AI adoption is not merely a technical upgrade but a deep cultural and structural transformation that reconfigures organizational boundaries, goals, and activities (Holmström, 2022). This distinction necessitates a holistic, human-centred approach to align AI innovation with its cultural context and ensure ethical outcomes, a consideration that is more critical for AI than for past technologies (M Dora, 2022). In essence, the existing body of literature underscores that the gap between AI's promise and its practical implementation is defined by these unique socio-technical complexities, which an organization must address to achieve a state of readiness conducive to successful AI adoption.

AI Readiness

AI readiness is a rapidly evolving field exploring the multifaceted factors that influence AI adoption. Several studies adopt the Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) framework as a guiding lens, capturing the socio-technical dimensions that shape AI integration (Chen et al., 2023; M Dora, 2022; Tehrani et al., 2024). Within this framework, a clear synthesis of the literature shows an interdependent relationship between technological, organizational, and environmental factors.

Technological readiness forms the foundational layer for AI adoption. A consensus in the literature points to the necessity of high-quality data, robust data management systems, and seamless IT infrastructure as essential prerequisites (Delina & Macik, 2023; Denicolai et al., 2021; Mahroof, 2019). However, the discussion extends beyond physical infrastructure. Flavián et al. (2022), for instance, highlight that user-centric factors are equally critical, demonstrating a dynamic where technological optimism can foster adoption while user insecurity can significantly impede it. This suggests that technological readiness is a dual challenge of not only building technical capacity but also nurturing user confidence and trust (Flavián et al., 2022).

Building on this technological base, organizational readiness is presented as the critical factor that activates AI's potential. The literature emphasizes that without strategic alignment, leadership commitment, and a data-driven culture, even the most advanced technology may fail (Weinert et al., 2022). This point is sharpened by studies highlighting that a lack of digital maturity and analytical competencies can prevent organizations from effectively harnessing AI (Burger et al., 2023; Guida et al., 2023). Cui et al. (2022) introduce further nuance with the concept of organizational "smartness," arguing that AI systems must be complemented by the human ability to pre-train and refine outputs to avoid misguided automation. This positions organizational readiness as a collective responsibility that bridges technology with human and strategic capabilities (Cui et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the environmental context envelops both technological and organizational efforts. On one hand, external factors like market competition, partnerships, and government support can create a fertile ground for AI adoption (Denicolai et al., 2021; Jais & Ngah, 2024). On the other, a significant barrier identified across multiple studies is the lack of clear ethical and governance frameworks, which introduces risks of bias and erodes public trust (Nagitta et al., 2022; Siciliani et al., 2023). This is particularly critical in public services, where proactive regulatory development is essential for ensuring transparent and fair AI deployment (Delina & Macik, 2023).

In summary, the literature establishes that AI readiness is a complex, multi-dimensional construct requiring a strategic alignment of these interdependent socio-technical capacities. However, the research is dispersed, and a 'bird's-eye view' of the field's structure, key contributors, and thematic evolution is currently missing. This fragmentation makes it difficult for researchers and practitioners to grasp the current research landscape and identify the most pressing gaps. This study, therefore, complements existing literatures by providing a quantitative, bibliometric map of the AI readiness landscape, aiming to bring structure to this diverse and rapidly growing domain.

Research Methodology

This study employs a bibliometric analysis using Biblioshiny, an R-based application that runs the Bibliometrix package through an interactive web interface, thereby enabling a user-friendly yet comprehensive exploration of bibliometric and scientometric data (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). The dataset for this analysis was extracted from Scopus, selected for its comprehensive coverage of high-quality, peer-reviewed literature across a wide range of disciplines, its robust citation data, and its direct compatibility with the Bibliometrix R-package, making it a standard and reliable source for bibliometric studies. The search utilized

a combination of phrase searching techniques and Boolean Operators to filter for documents containing the keywords ("artificial intelligence" OR "AI") AND "readiness") and was limited to articles and conference papers published in English. The full Scopus dataset, generated on 28th April 2025, spans all publications from 2016 to 2025 and initially consisted of 242 documents.

Subsequently, to ensure the relevance and reliability of the dataset, a manual review of the abstract and author's keywords for each document was conducted. This screening removed all publications where the content was not related to research on AI readiness, a process which resulted in the exclusion of 17 documents. Following this screening, the remaining data was cleaned and harmonized through BiblioMagika (version 2.10.0) and OpenRefine (version 3.9.3) applications (Ahmi, 2023; Verborgh & De Wilde, 2013). The use of BiblioMagika is essential for identifying and updating missing information related to authors and affiliations. Concurrently, OpenRefine plays a crucial role in harmonizing similar author names, keywords, and references by leveraging its text-facet features in combination with manual editing to eliminate redundancy.

Upon completion of the data harmonization and cleaning processes, the final, refined dataset was imported into the Biblioshiny application, executed through the RStudio console, to perform the comprehensive bibliometric analyses presented in this paper. The Biblioshiny application facilitates various bibliometric analyses, including publication and citation trends, authorship and country collaboration patterns, and keyword co-occurrence networks. The process of information extraction, screening, cleaning, harmonization, and analysis can be illustrated concisely as in Figure 1.

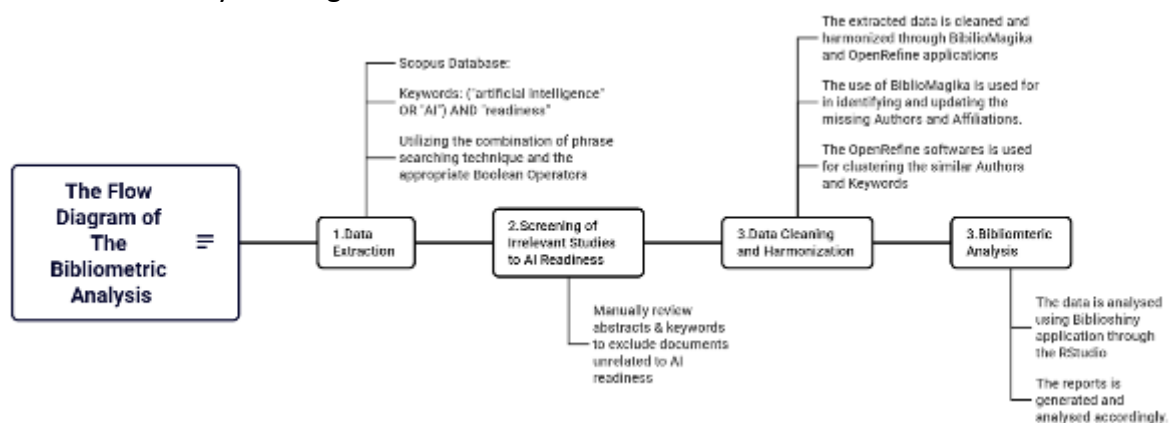


Figure 1. The Flow Diagram of The Bibliometric Analysis

Analysis And Results

Main Information

The main information from the bibliometric dataset, presented in Table 1, indicates a robust annual growth rate of 38.29%, comprising 225 documents from 184 sources published between 2016 and 2025. The dataset includes contributions from 767 authors, with an average of 3.57 co-authors per document, underscoring the collaborative nature of the field. The average citation rate of 21.15 per document highlights increasing scholarly engagement and heightened research activity.

Table 1

Main Information About the Bibliometric Dataset on AI Readiness

Description	Results
MAIN INFORMATION ABOUT DATA	
Timespan	2016:2025
Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	184
Documents	225
Annual Growth Rate %	38.29
Document Average Age	2.07
Average citations per doc	21.15
References	11642
DOCUMENT CONTENTS	
Keywords Plus (ID)	1255
Author's Keywords (DE)	738
AUTHORS	
Authors	767
Authors of single-authored docs	31
AUTHORS COLLABORATION	
Single-authored docs	31
Co-Authors per Doc	3.57
International co-authorships %	28.89
DOCUMENT TYPES	
article	153
conference paper	72

The annual publication trends (Table 2) demonstrate a significant and rapid increase in scholarly interest, particularly from 2020 onwards. This surge is stark, as over 93% of all articles in the dataset were published since the beginning of 2020, with output peaking at 77 articles in 2024. This exponential growth is not arbitrary, instead it directly reflects the global acceleration of digitalization, and the increased strategic importance placed on AI by governments and industries worldwide (Oxford Insights, 2023). This trend confirms that AI readiness has rapidly shifted from a niche academic interest to a mainstream practical imperative, reinforcing the timeliness of a bibliometric study to map the expanding literature.

Table 2

Annual Publication Trends on AI Readiness

Year	Mean Total Citation per Article	N	Mean Total Citation per Year	Citable Years
2016	5.00	2	0.50	10
2018	52.00	5	6.50	8
2019	37.43	7	5.35	7
2020	30.20	10	5.03	6
2021	65.13	23	13.03	5
2022	46.61	23	11.65	4
2023	22.73	41	7.58	3
2024	5.32	77	2.66	2
2025	0.32	37	0.32	1

Authorship and Collaboration

As indicated in the Table 1, the average number of co-authors per document is 3.57, highlighting the collaborative nature of research in AI readiness. Based on the database, the most relevant authors in the field of AI readiness are presented in Table 3, with the top four predominantly affiliated with The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong SAR, China.

Table 3

The Most Relevant Authors in Term of AI Readiness

Authors	Articles	Articles Fractionalized
CHAI, CHING SING	3	0.5333333333333333
DAI, YUN	3	0.5333333333333333
JONG, MORRIS SIU-YUNG	3	0.5333333333333333
LIN, PEI-YI	3	0.5333333333333333
CHIU, THOMAS	2	0.3666666666666667

Most Cited Papers

The most cited papers offer critical insights into the evolving scholarly discourse on AI readiness. As summarized in Table 4, the five most influential works in this domain highlight a clear shift from a predominantly technological and firm-level orientation toward a more socio-technical, human-centric, and context-sensitive perspective. These high-impact studies emphasize the importance of organizational culture and sector-specific readiness, particularly within SMEs, the service industry, and higher education institutions. This thematic evolution reflects a growing recognition that successful AI adoption extends beyond technical infrastructure, instead it requires attention to human factors, institutional preparedness, and strategic purpose.

Table 4

Most Cited Papers in Term of AI Readiness

No.	Author(s)	Title	Total Citation	Total Citation per Year
1	Denicolai S.; Zucchella A.; Magnani G. (2021)	Internationalization, digitalization, and sustainability: Are SMEs ready? A survey on synergies and substituting effects among growth paths	312	62.40
2	Jöhnk J.; Weißert M.; Wyrski K. (2021)	Ready or Not, AI Comes— An Interview Study of Organizational AI Readiness Factors	278	55.60
3	Flavián C.; Pérez-Rueda A.; Belanche D.; Casaló L.V. (2022)	Intention to use analytical artificial intelligence (AI) in services – the effect of technology readiness and awareness	226	56.50
4	Southworth J.; Migliaccio K.; Glover J.; Glover J.N.; Reed D.;	Developing a model for AI Across the curriculum: Transforming the higher	198	66.00

No.	Author(s)	Title	Total Citation	Total Citation per Year
5	McCarty C.; Brendemuhl J.; Thomas A. (2023)	education landscape via innovation in AI literacy	169	42.25
	Holmström J. (2022)	From AI to digital transformation: The AI readiness framework		

Most Productive Countries

The data presented in Figure 2 highlights China's dominant role in AI readiness research, significantly outpacing all other countries with a cumulative total of 80 related articles, including traditionally strong contributors such as the United States. More importantly, the broader trend reveals a shifting research landscape in which emerging and developing economies such as India, Indonesia, and Malaysia are gaining momentum. This reflects a growing democratization of AI research, where nations once seen as followers are now actively shaping the discourse on readiness and digital transformation. The rising contributions from the Global South emphasize that AI readiness is no longer the exclusive domain of advanced economies, but a shared global pursuit shaped by localized innovation, national ambition, and inclusive development priorities.

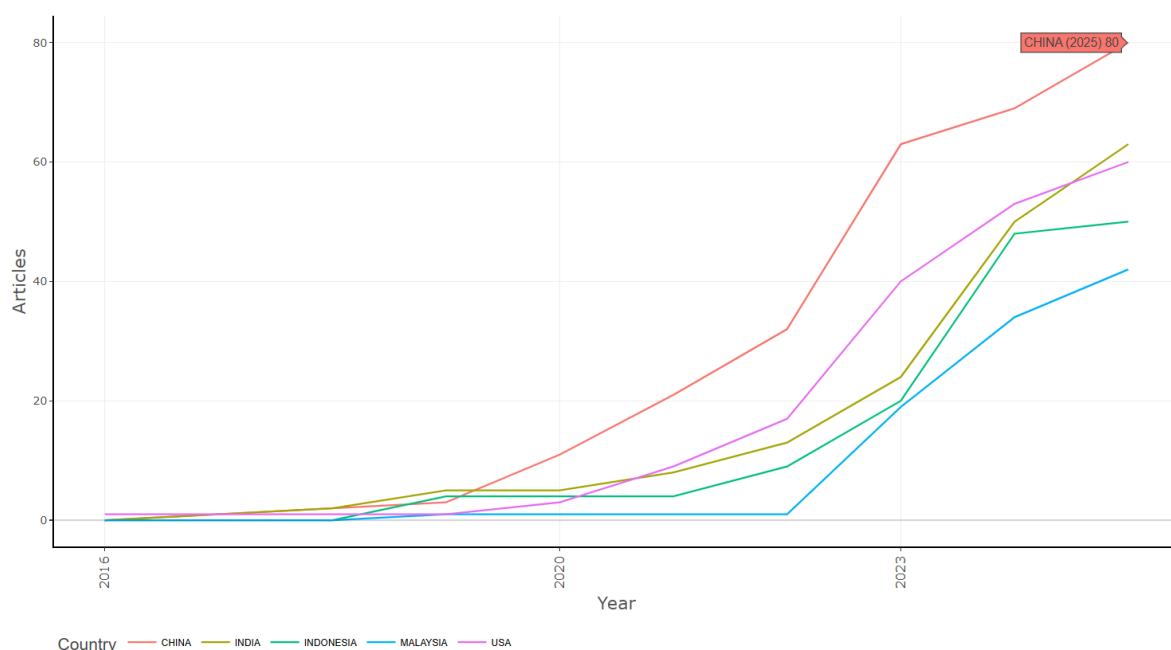


Figure 2. Countries' Article Production Over Time in Terms of AI Readiness

Most Frequent Author Keywords

The analysis of author keywords (Figure 3) reveals the thematic core of AI readiness research. The dominance of 'technology readiness level (trl)' (38 occurrences) over 'organizational readiness' (10 occurrences) is highly significant. It suggests that the field's intellectual centre of gravity has historically been anchored in technological assessment. However, the strong presence of a cluster of terms like 'adoption,' 'digital transformation,' and 'smes' (all with 8 occurrences) signals a critical and ongoing shift. This thematic imbalance indicates the field is actively working to bridge the gap between evaluating technology and understanding the

practical, human, and organizational challenges of its implementation. The Tree Map (Figure 4) further illustrates this multidimensionality, showing the penetration of readiness studies into specific sectors like industry, higher education, and health, reinforcing that the field is concerned with both technological advancement and strategic sector preparedness.

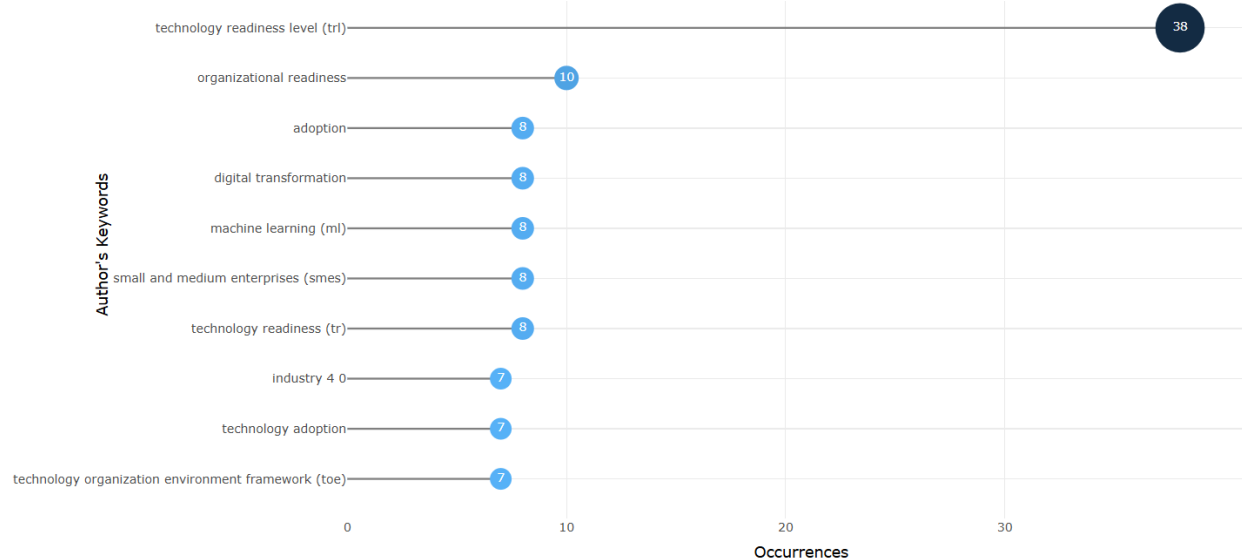


Figure 3. The Most Relevant Keywords in Terms of AI Readiness Research

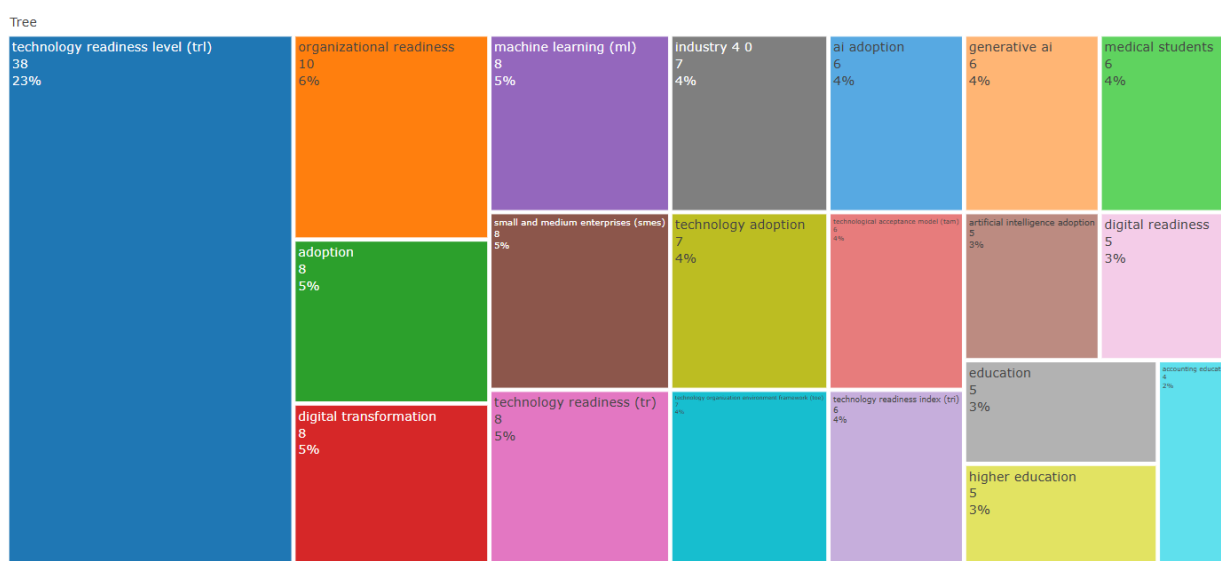


Figure 4. Tree Map of The Most Relevant Keywords in Terms of AI Readiness Research

Co-word Analysis

The co-word analysis presented in Figure 5 delineates the structural relationships among key terms in AI readiness research, highlighting their interconnectedness and thematic clustering. Overall, the findings indicate that the field remains primarily rooted in a technological context, with a notable emphasis on concepts such as Technology Readiness Level (TRL). However, the existing study in terms of AI readiness is apparently expanding to also consider organizational and individual readiness, as well as sector-specific considerations in domains such as education, healthcare, and Industry 4.0, alongside broader agendas like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The presence of theoretical frameworks such as the Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

further reinforces this multidimensionality. These theoretical frameworks and model provide critical perspectives on the internal and external socio-technical dimensions that influence AI adoption, while also underscoring the importance of understanding individual perceptions and behavioural intent, particularly within context-sensitive environments in the AI adoption.

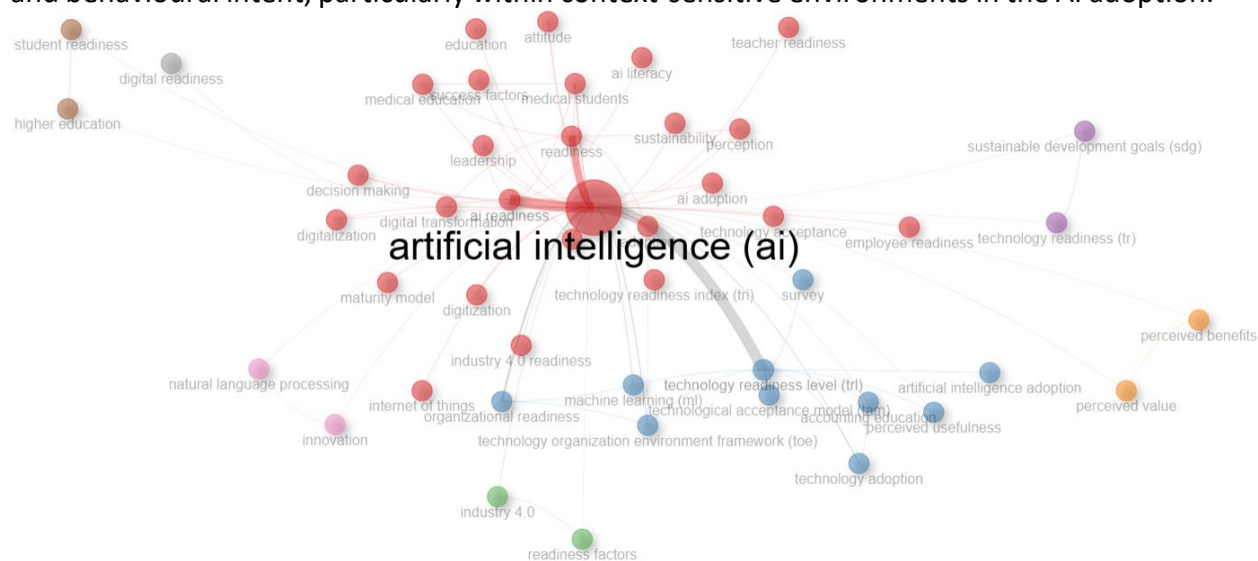


Figure 5. Co-Word Network analysis of AI Readiness

Discussion

The analysis of the bibliometric data reveals a rapidly growing and thematically diverse landscape for AI readiness research. The increasing volume of publications and citations since 2020 confirms that AI readiness has evolved from a niche academic topic into a mainstream practical imperative. However, this exponential growth has also led to a fragmented body of knowledge, making it difficult for researchers and practitioners to identify the field's intellectual core and most pressing frontiers. This discussion synthesizes the findings to highlight the key debates and divergences within the literature and identify critical gaps that can serve as a foundation for future research.

A key divergence within the literature is reconciling the field's strong technological focus with its broader socio-technical goals. The analysis of author keywords shows a clear dominance of technology-centric concepts like "Technology Readiness Level (TRL)," suggesting the field's intellectual core remains anchored in technological assessment. While the literature is progressively expanding to encompass organizational factors and human-centric concerns, our analysis points to a critical gap between acknowledging the socio-technical nature of AI readiness and developing truly integrated models. For instance, the co-word analysis reveals that concepts like TRL are rarely linked with terms related to ethical governance, highlighting a need to integrate social and ethical readiness assessments directly into technological maturity models.

Furthermore, the thematic evolution of the research indicates a maturation of the field, which in turn reveals gaps in specific contexts. The focus of highly cited works has shifted from a generic, firm-level orientation to more context-sensitive domains like SMEs, education, and healthcare. This progress, however, also illuminates which critical sectors are being overlooked. Our analysis shows a notable lack of research focused on AI readiness in key areas such as public procurement, finance, and security, which warrant further

investigation. The presence of theoretical frameworks like TOE and TAM provides a solid foundation, but these now need to be adapted and applied to these under-explored domains.

Finally, the democratization of AI readiness research presents new opportunities and challenges. The high rate of international co-authorship (28.89%) and the rising contributions from emerging economies like India, Indonesia, and Malaysia signify that AI readiness is no longer a conversation dominated by developed nations but a shared global pursuit. This geographical shift creates a compelling need for more cross-national comparative research. Future studies should move beyond single-country case studies to compare how different economic and cultural contexts shape AI readiness strategies, policies, and outcomes, fostering a more inclusive and globally relevant body of knowledge.

Conclusion

This bibliometric analysis provides a structured, data-driven overview of the evolving AI readiness research landscape, charting its journey from a niche technical concern to a mainstream socio-technical field. Our findings map the field's intellectual structure and key contributors, bringing clarity to a rapidly growing and fragmented domain. While this study offers a valuable foundation, its reliance on the Scopus database means it is best viewed as a complement to in-depth qualitative reviews, opening avenues for future multi-database and mixed-method investigations.

The gaps identified in our analysis point to a clear trajectory for future research that moves beyond general explorations. We propose that scholars focus on specific, actionable questions: 1) Given the observed divergence between technological and socio-technical factors, how can researchers develop readiness models that better integrate ethical and social considerations with traditional technological assessments? 2) How can such existing AI readiness frameworks be adapted into sector-specific models for under-represented domains like public procurement, finance, and security? and 3) What can a comparative analysis of government support in different economic contexts reveal about AI readiness in key sectors, particularly SMEs and education? Ultimately, this analysis underlines that AI readiness is a critical, multi-dimensional phenomenon. The urgent task for the next wave of research is to build these integrated, context-sensitive frameworks to shape an ethical and inclusive AI future, ensuring its adoption is not only effective but also equitable and aligned with broader societal goals.

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