

Tipurić, Darko; Radić, Mislav; Cindrić, Lana

Conference Paper

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Provided in Cooperation with:

Governance Research and Development Centre (CIRU), Zagreb

Suggested Citation: Tipurić, Darko; Radić, Mislav; Cindrić, Lana (2019) : Organizational Identification: A Bibliometric Analysis and Mapping the Field, In: Tipurić, Darko Hruška, Domagoj (Ed.): 7th International OFEL Conference on Governance, Management and Entrepreneurship: Embracing Diversity in Organisations. April 5th - 6th, 2019, Dubrovnik, Croatia, Governance Research and Development Centre (CIRU), Zagreb, pp. 442-452

This Version is available at:

<https://hdl.handle.net/10419/196102>

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Organizational identification: A Bibliometric Analysis and Mapping the Field

Darko Tipurić, Mislav Radić and Lana Cindrić

Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia

dtipuric@efzg.hr

mradic@efzg.hr

lcindric@efzg.hr

Abstract

This paper reviews the literature on organizational identification. In order to organize the vast theoretical and empirical findings of the topic, we have conducted a cross-disciplinary bibliometric analysis and systematic literature review based on 470 journal articles from the Web of Science Core Collection. The primary aim of the study was to provide structure and clarity to a scattered and extensive body of literature on organizational identification. Also, it was to map the intellectual terrain and find common threads and intellectual twists within the selected sample of articles. Based on a large set of keywords, we carried out a multiple correspondence analysis which provided us with a two-dimensional model illustrating the keywords based on their importance and proximity. The resulting four quadrants were analyzed in terms of their overlaps and distinctions.

Keywords: *Organisational identification; Identity; Bibliometrics; Multiple Correspondence Analysis, Systematic Literature Review*

Track: *Management and Leadership*

Word count: 2.557

1. Introduction

Organizational identification has become a widely used concept in the field of organization and management studies and across numerous other related disciplines. The reason for this lies in the fact that organizational identification is considered to be one of the key concepts having the potential to explain behaviors and attitudes of organizational members.

The purpose of our study is to explore the evolution of the organizational identification literature based on bibliometric analysis. In this paper, we applied bibliometric methods to detect most influential authors and main topics in the field. The primary aim of the study was to provide structure and clarity to a scattered and extensive body of literature on organizational identification. Also, it was to map the intellectual terrain and find common threads and intellectual twists within the selected collection of articles. We identified keywords with the highest frequency of occurrence and carried out a multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) which provided us with a two-dimensional model illustrating the keywords based on their importance and proximity.

2. Literature review

The concept of organizational identification was first introduced by Mael and Ashforth in 1989 with reference to the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner 1985). Social Identity Theory is one of the most dominant approaches to the study of organizational identification, represented among some of the most influential studies in the field (Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail, 1994; Mael and Ashforth, 1992; van Knippenberg and Van Siche, 2000). According to Social Identity Theory, individuals tend to classify themselves and others in a variety of social groups based on the characteristics they observe and which they consider to be inherent in a particular group.

Organizational identification is considered to be a process of cognitive linking between the definition of the organization and the definition of the self (Dutton et al., 1994). Organizational identification thus represents the degree to which a member of a certain organization defines itself with the same attributes he believes that define his organization (Mael and Ashforth 1992). Accordingly, the more an individual identifies with his organization, his attitudes and behavior are more influenced by the organization's actions (van Knippenberg and van Schie 2000).

Past research recognizes organizational identification as an important factor in shaping the behavior of employees in the workplace (Lee 1971). Chaney (1983) highlights four important reasons for studying organizational identification: (1) possibility to link organizational identification with numerous work behaviours and attitudes such as motivation and satisfaction, (2) organizational identification has the ability to explain how different organizational activities effect organization members, (3) there is a possibility that organizational identification can be helpful to understanding foundations of referent power in organizations and (4) studying organizational identification could provide us with answers that explain how membership in modern organizations influences members individuality.

Great interest in this concept stems from the fact that numerous studies propose a positive link between organizational identification and certain desirable member behaviors. Organizational identification is considered to be able to explain why we can find the cooperative behavior of employees in some organizations, while that kind of behavior lacks in others (Dukerich et al., 2002). The more employees identify with the organization, the more likely will they behave in accordance with organization's interests (Dutton et al., 1994). Furthermore, the positive relationship between organizational identification and employee performance has been confirmed in several studies (van Knippenberg and van Schie 2000; Lee, 1971.)

In addition to that, scholars have been increasingly interested in antecedents of organizational identification in various organizational settings. Antecedents of organizational identification were examined in different types of profit organizations (Ahearne, Bhattacharya and Gruen, 2005), higher education institutions (Mael and Ashforth, 1992) sports organizations (Fisher and Wakefield, 1997) and other types of NPOs (Boezeman and Ellemers, 2014).

3. Study

Unlike some other bibliometric studies, this article is not limited to a particular journal, it is rather focused on the selection of articles referring to a certain topic. Our intention was to obtain a sample of journal articles that are dealing with the topic of organizational identification in order to study the evolution of organizational identification literature from its

beggings to the present day. Therefore, the bibliometric study was conducted to analyze the content of the articles from that sample.

3.1. Sample and method

Bibliometric research was carried out by using the Web of Science Core Collection database. Included indexes were: SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED. The extracted papers are referring to the term „organizational identification“, whether using that word in (1) the titles, (2) the abstracts or as a (3) keyword. Word „organizational identification“ was used in the searching process and the quarry was defined as: TS=(organizational identification). The searching process was refined by selecting „Business Economics“ research area. A total of 470 journal articles were selected in the Web of Science Core Collection on 5th of May 2018.

Figure 1 shows the dynamics of the number of papers per year related to the topic of organizational identification from 1969 to 2017.

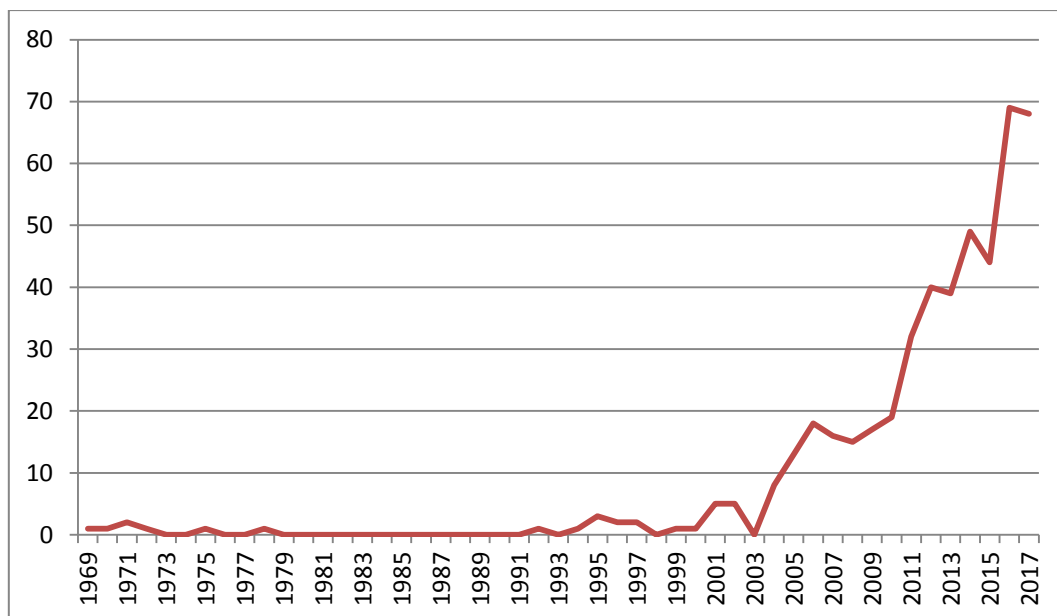


Figure 1: Number of published articles per year

Over a timespan of 48 years, in 20 observed years, there were zero articles published. The number of published articles in the last ten years was greater than 10 articles per year, and the largest number of published articles was in 2016 (67 articles) and 2017 (65 articles).

Table 1 shows journals that published more than 10 articles from our sample. Most of the articles were published in the following four journals: *Academy of Management Journal*, *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *Journal of Applied Psychology* and *Journal of Organizational Behavior*. Respectively, 20.0% of all analyzed articles were published in those four journals.

Table 1: Journals with the highest number of articles in the sample

<i>Journal</i>	<i>Number of articles</i>	<i>Journal impact factor (2016)</i>	<i>5 Year impact factor</i>
ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT JOURNAL	26	7.417	2.061
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	24	1.650	11.901
JOURNAL OF APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY	23	4.130	6.890
JOURNAL OF ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR	21	3.607	5.196
JOURNAL OF OCCUPATIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY	17	3.139	3.815
HUMAN RELATIONS	16	2.622	4.027
BRITISH JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT	15	2.982	3.754
LEADERSHIP QUARTERLY	15	3.094	4.269
JOURNAL OF MANAGERIAL PSYCHOLOGY	14	1.195	1.844
PERSONNEL REVIEW	13	1.427	1.853
ORGANIZATION SCIENCE	12	2.691	6.145
LEADERSHIP & ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT JOURNAL	11	0.864	1.260
ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR AND HUMAN DECISION PROCESSES	10	2.454	3.955
HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	10	0.729	1.378
EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF WORK AND ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY	10	2.300	3.159

Furthermore, Table 2 shows a list of 20 most cited articles from our sample that differ significantly considering their purpose and research methods.

Table 2: Most cited papers (TOP 20)

<i>Authors</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Journal</i>	<i>TC*</i>	<i>YP</i>
Dutton, JE; Dukerich, JM; Harquail, CV	Organizational Images and Member Identification	ADMINISTRATIVE SCIENCE QUARTERLY	1576	1994
Mael, F; Ashforth, BE	Alumni and Their Alma-Mater - A Partial Test of The Reformulated Model of Organizational Identification	JOURNAL OF ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR	1521	1992
Cable, DM; DeRue, DS	The convergent and discriminant validity of subjective fit perceptions	JOURNAL OF APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY	443	2002
Dukerich, JM; Golden, BR; Shortell, SM	Beauty is in the eye of the beholder: The impact of organizational identification identity and	ADMINISTRATIVE SCIENCE QUARTERLY	343	2002

<i>Authors</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Journal</i>	<i>TC*</i>	<i>YP</i>
	image on the cooperative behaviors of physicians			
Ahearne, M; Bhattacharya, CB; Gruen, T	Antecedents and consequences of customer-company identification: Expanding the role of relationship marketing	JOURNAL OF APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY	341	2005
van Knippenberg, D; van Schie, ECM	Foci and correlates of organizational identification	JOURNAL OF OCCUPATIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY	338	2000
Ashforth, BE; Saks, AM	Socialization tactics: Longitudinal effects on newcomer adjustment	ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT JOURNAL	334	1996
Smidts, A; Pruyn, ATH; van Riel, CBM	The impact of employee communication and perceived external prestige on organizational identification	ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT JOURNAL	288	2001
Mael, FA; Ashforth, Be	Loyal From Day one - Biodata, Organizational Identification, And Turnover Among Newcomers	PERSONNEL PSYCHOLOGY	281	1995
Kreiner, GE; Ashforth, BE	Evidence toward an expanded model of organizational identification	JOURNAL OF ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR	264	2004
Saks, AM; Ashforth, BE	A longitudinal investigation of the relationships between job information sources, applicant perceptions of fit, and work outcomes	PERSONNEL PSYCHOLOGY	244	1997
Kreiner, GE; Hollensbe, EC; Sheep, ML	Where is the "me" among the "we". Identity work and the search for optimal balance	ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT JOURNAL	233	2006
Hall, DT; Schneider, B; Nygren, HT	Personal Factors in Organizational Identification	ADMINISTRATIVE SCIENCE QUARTERLY	223	1970
Foreman, P; Whetten, DA	Members' identification with multiple-identity organizations	ORGANIZATION SCIENCE	208	2002
Meyer, JP; Becker, TE; Van Dick, R	Social identities and commitments at work: toward an integrative model	JOURNAL OF ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR	203	2006

<i>Authors</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Journal</i>	<i>TC*</i>	<i>YP</i>
Bartel, CA	Social comparisons in boundary-spanning work: Effects of community outreach on members' organizational identity and identification	ADMINISTRATIVE SCIENCE QUARTERLY	200	2001
van Dick, R; Wagner, U; Stellmacher, J; Christ, O	The utility of a broader conceptualization of organizational identification: Which aspects really matter?	JOURNAL OF OCCUPATIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY	194	2004
van Knippenberg, D; Sleenbos, E	Organizational identification versus organizational commitment: Self-definition, social exchange, and job attitudes	JOURNAL OF ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR	183	2006
Van Dick, R; Christ, O; Stellmacher, J; Wagner, U; Ahlsweide, O; Grubba, C; Hauptmeier, M; Hohfeld, C; Moltzen, K; Tissington, PA	Should I stay or should I go? Explaining turnover intentions with organizational identification and job satisfaction	BRITISH JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT	180	2004

* Web of Science Core Collection Times Cited Count

The most cited article, written by Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail in 1994 proposes a model explaining how images of one's organization shape the strength of his identification with the organization. According to authors, a person's attachments to an organization are connected to the images of what the organization means to him, and what he thinks it means to the others. In the second most cited article, using self-report data from alumni of an all-male religious college, Mael and Ashforth (1992) illustrate that antecedents of organizational identification can be found both at the organizational and individual level.

A total of 1.313 authors, including first author and co-authors, were identified in the selected articles, and 164 of them have published more than one article referring to organizational identification. The highest number of papers were published by van Dick, R (22), Ashforth, BE (9) and van Knippenberg, D (9). Shown in the following table is the list of the most cited authors within our sample.

Table 3: Authors per highest number of citations

<i>Author</i>	<i>TC*</i>	<i>Number of author's articles</i>
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<i>Author</i>	<i>TC*</i>	<i>Number of author's articles</i>
Ashforth, BE	2745	9
Dukerich, JM	1919	2
Dutton, JE	1683	2
Harquail, CV	1608	2
Mael, F	1521	2
van Dick, R	1381	22
van Knippenberg, D	852	9
Christ, O	585	5
Saks, AM	578	2
Kreiner, GE	497	2
Wagner, U	447	4
Stellmacher, J	447	4
Cable, DM	443	1
DeRue, DS	443	1
Hall, DT	384	3
Carmeli, A	382	5
Ahearne, M	375	3
Gruen, T	364	2
Golden, BR	343	1
Shortell, SM	343	1
Bhattacharya, CB	341	1
Van Schie, ECM	338	1
Becker, TE	336	2
Walumbwa, FO	315	2
Van Riel, CBM	302	2

*Web of Science Core Collection Times Cited Count

Six most cited authors from our list all together published 36 different papers which represent 7,66% of all papers from the sample. Further, those authors represent 10.857 citations or over 64% of the total number of citations from the sample (16.933).

3.2. Content analysis

3.2.1. Keywords

In our analysis, keywords from two different sources were used. First of all, we collected keywords provided by the authors themselves which was followed by the collecting of "keywords plus" provided by the Web of Science. There were 6.017 occurrences of keywords in the selected articles, thereof 2.133 unique keywords were identified, and 1.461 of them (24,28%) were used only once. Considering that such a number of keywords is too big to be analyzed, we found ourselves faced with a challenging task of producing a list of major keywords that we can use in further analysis. Therefore, we identified keywords that have the highest frequency of appearance in the selected articles, more precisely we selected keywords that occur in more than 5 percent of articles from our sample. There were altogether 21 of them and they are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Keywords with the highest frequency of appearance in the selected papers

	<i>Keyword</i>	<i>f</i>
1	SOCIAL IDENTITY	164
2	PERFORMANCE	136
3	COMMITMENT	96
4	WORK	94
5	IDENTITY	70
6	JOB-SATISFACTION	61
7	SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY	53
8	BEHAVIOR	47
9	PROCEDURAL JUSTICE	46
10	TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP	42
11	CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR	40
12	SELF	36
13	LEADERSHIP	32
14	JOB-PERFORMANCE	29
15	COMMUNICATION	28
16	MANAGEMENT	28
17	PERCEPTIONS	27
18	SELF-ESTEEM	26
19	SATISFACTION	26
20	IMAGE	25
21	CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP	24

Social identity is the most frequent among selected (164), followed by *performance* (136), *commitment* (96) and *work* (94). Four most frequently used keywords represent 8,14% of all occurrences, while all keywords listed in the table above represent 18,78% of all identified keywords.

3.2.2. Multiple correspondence analysis(MCA)

In order to identify potential connections among selected keywords, MCA was conducted. MCA is an exploratory data analysis technique used for graphical representation of contingency tables as well as multivariate categorical data (Hoffman and Franke 1986). Use of the MCA in bibliometric research has been previously confirmed in several studies (Furrer, Thomas & Goussevskaia, 2008; Saggese, Sarto & Cuccurullo 2016; Dabic, González-Loureiro, Furrer, 2014). MCA presented in this study was conducted using the Homals procedure in SPSS. MCA provided us with two-dimensional space described by the axes illustrating selected keywords' proximity and importance (Figure 1).

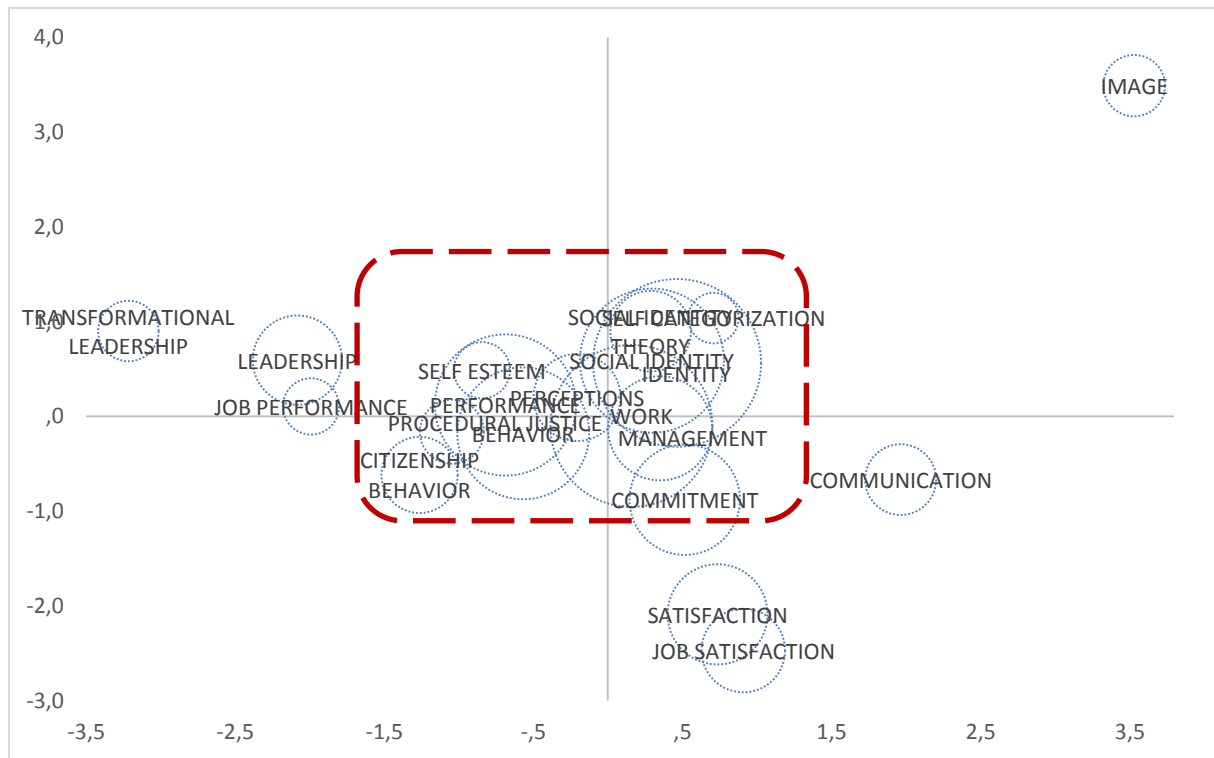


Figure 1: The intellectual structure of the selected research area

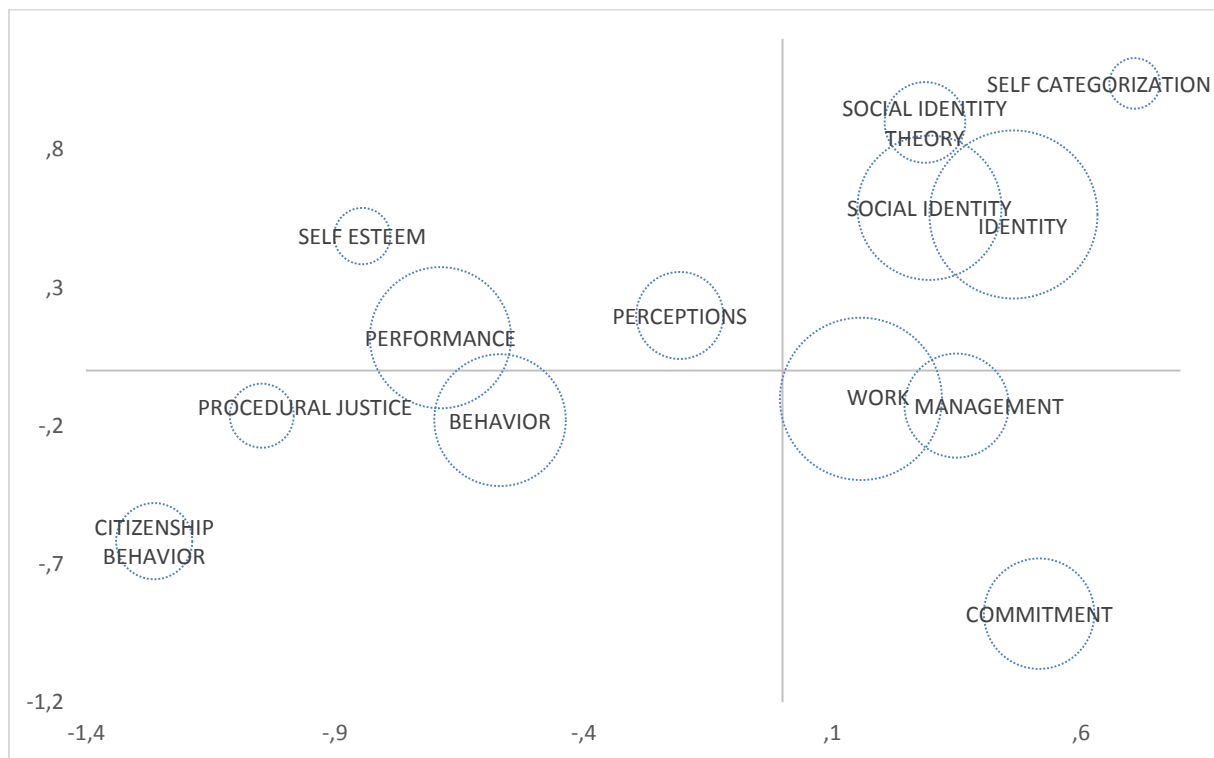


Figure 2: The intellectual structure of the selected research area (red square)

Proximity is the result of mutual appearances of the keywords in articles from our sample meaning that if two keywords are close to each other, a larger proportion of the articles is discussing them jointly. Accordingly, if two keywords are distant from each other, the proportion of articles discussing them together is smaller. The size of the displayed circles is proportional to the absolute contribution of each of the 21 keywords.

Based on position of the keywords on the map, it can be concluded that the vertical axis illustrates the area of *constructs that have been associated with organizational identification* on the left (e.g. procedural justice, citizenship behavior, and self-esteem) and *disciplines and theoretical frameworks within organizational identification is studied* on the right side (e.g. management, social identity theory, and identity theory).

The horizontal axis, on the other side, splits keywords that are concerned with *antecedents of organizational identification* (e.g. image, leadership, and self-categorization) from the those dealing with *potential outcomes of organizational identification* (e.g. job satisfaction, commitment, and citizenship behavior).

4. Concluding remarks

The purpose of this study was to explore the evolution of organizational identification literature. In order to organize the vast theoretical and empirical findings of the topic, a cross-disciplinary bibliometric analysis was conducted based on 470 journal articles from the Web of Science Core Collection. A total of 2.133 unique keywords were recognized and identified those with the highest occurrence frequency. Based on the identified keywords, MCA analysis was performed that projected selected keywords on the two-dimensional space described by the axes and enabled us to determine keywords' importance and proximity. Although the findings of bibliometric research cannot replace those obtained by in-depth content analysis, we consider that such research provides a solid basis for further investigation of the topic.

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