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MAPPING THE LANDSCAPE OF RESEARCH ON THE REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP: BASED ON CITESPACE AND THE TCCM FRAMEWORK

MAPEANDO EL PANORAMA DE LA INVESTIGACIÓN SOBRE LA ASOCIACIÓN ECONÓMICA INTEGRAL REGIONAL: BASADO EN CITESPACE Y EL MARCO TCCM

Lijun Li
Guizhou University of Commerce, China
chichili1218@gmail.com
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0924-0871

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study examines the focus areas and patterns in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) in the Web of Science database. CiteSpace was used to analyze the focal points of RCEP research in Web of Science. The researcher then employed the theory-context-characteristics-methodology (TCCM) framework to investigate potential avenues for future RCEP research. **Methodology:** This study uses a scientific information map based on journal articles and the topic "The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership" or "RCEP." According to Web of Science, between 2013 and June 18, 2023, 126 articles were published with journal article categories (including early access). **Results and Discussion:** The study uses CiteSpace to finalize the analysis of the focal points. Theresearcheremploysthetheory-context-characteristics-methodology (TCCM) framework to examine future trends in RCEP research. Seven findings are identified. **Conclusions:** The findings of this study include: 1. the identification of RCEP hotspots using co-author, co - institutions and keyword co-occurrence; 2. future trends identified by the TCCM framework for the study of RCEP. **Contribution**: This study identifies a bibliometric measure of current topics in RCEP using CiteSpace and the TCCM framework. These findings can offer research centers, libraries, and librarians recommendations and guidance for the management and classification of future RCEP studies.
KEY WORDS: Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership; RCEP; CiteSpace; Theory-Context-Characteristics-Methodology framework; economic development, world economy, Asia and the Pacific

RESUMEN

Objetivo: este estudio examina las áreas de enfoque y los patrones en la Asociación Económica Integral Regional, RCEP en la base de datos de Web of Science. Se utilizó CiteSpace para analizar los puntos focales del estudio RCEP en Web of Science. Posteriormente, emplearon el marco de teoría-contexto-características-metodología (TCCM) para investigar las posibles vías para futuros estudios sobre RCEP. **Metodología:** Este estudio utiliza un mapa de información científica basado en artículos de revistas científicas y el tema "La Asociación Económica Integral Regional" o "RCEP". Según Web of Science, entre 2013 y el 18 de junio de 2023, se publicaron 126 artículos con categorías de artículos de revistas científicas (incluido el acceso anticipado). **Resultados y Discusión:** El estudio utiliza CiteSpace para finalizar el análisis de los puntos focales. La investigación emplea el marco de teoría-contexto-características-metodología (TCCM) para examinar las tendencias futuras en la investigación sobre RCEP. Se identifican siete hallazgos. **Conclusiones:** Los hallazgos de este estudio incluyen: 1. la identificación de puntos críticos de RCEP mediante coautores, coinstituciones y coocurrencia de palabras clave; 2. tendencias futuras identificadas por el marco TCCM para el estudio de RCEP. **Contribución:** Este estudio identifica una medida bibliométrica de los temas actuales en RCEP utilizando CiteSpace y el marco TCCM. Estos hallazgos pueden ofrecer a los centros de investigación, bibliotecas y bibliotecarios recomendaciones y orientación para la gestión y clasificación de futuros estudios sobre RCEP.
PALABRAS CLAVE: Asociación Económica Integral Regional; RCEP; CiteSpace; marco de Teoría-Contexto-Características-Metodología; desarrollo económico, economía mundial, Asia y el Pacifico

INTRODUCTION

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), signed by 15 member states, greatly influenced the global economic landscape (Li, 2023c; Zreik, 2022). In other words, this innovative economic alliance in the Asia-Pacific region holds great promise for influencing the global economy. Currently, the RCEP facilitates economic (Al-Qudah et al., 2022; Qian, 2017), educational (Li, 2023a), industrial (Qiu & Gong, 2021), tourism industry (Koh et al., 2023), and agricultural (Li, 2023c), promoting development among its member countries (Zreik, 2022). The research has increased scholarly interest in the future due to the elevated status of RCEP (Li, 2023b).

The main goal of this study is to examine the areas of focus and patterns in RCEP study within the Web of Science database. The researchers used CiteSpace to analyse the focal points in the RCEP study in the Web of Science. Afterwards, they utilised the theory-context-characteristics-methodology (TCCM) framework to investigate the potential avenues for future RCEP study.

The structure of the remaining research is outlined as follows. Section 2 provides an overview of the research methodology and data sources. In Section 3, the results of the visualisation analysis are presented. Section 4 delves into the discussion regarding the future of TCCM framework analysis. Finally, Section 5 addresses the critical issues of the study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA SOURCES

Methodology

With the advancement of big data and graphical com (Chen & Song, 2019; Li et al., 2022; Liao et al., 2023; Nigro et al., 2022) reputation, numerous scholars have embarked on exploring research hotspots through bibliometric evaluations. The graphical analysis tool's bibliometric examination of data reveals the correlation between fundamental knowledge (Chen et al., 2014; Chen & Leydesdorff, 2014; Hou et al., 2018). CiteSpace is a user-friendly visualisation and analysis software that allows scholars to analyse a wide range of data quickly and notably provides transparent information about burstiness (Sabe et al., 2022). Due to its simplicity of operation and ability to handle diverse datasets, many scholars have favoured CiteSpace for their research needs (Ohlan & Ohlan, 2023; Shao & Ye, 2020; Ye, 2019). CiteSpace can be utilised to capture the evolutionary processes and emerging trends within the scientific domain (Ye, 2019).

The TCCM framework, developed by Paul and Rosado-Serrano (2019), is a comprehensive analytical approach of significant importance in various academic disciplines. This multifaceted framework is valuable for researchers and scholars aiming to understand complex phenomena and effectively study their interconnections.

By designed to guide researchers through conducting in-depth analyses and investigations, the TCCM framework incorporates four essential components: theory, context, characteristics, and methodology. Each member plays a crucial role in shaping the research process and its outcomes (Agarwal et al., 2023; Paul & Rosado-Serrano, 2019).

In innovative research, with the more general compound use of multiple research methods, numerous scholars have combined visualisation with the TCCM framework to analyse research hotspots and outlooks in the field. For instance, Agarwal et al. (2023) employ visualisation in conjunction with the TCCM framework in their study on workplace incivility. Additionally, the researchers provided 12 specific recommendations for future research on workplace incivility (Agarwal et al., 2023). Hence, the integration of visualisation with the TCCM framework was deemed essential to accomplish the objectives of this study.

Data sources

Researchers utilise the Web of Science as a data source for this study. Specifically, they focused on selecting data that met the following criteria: the topic must be "The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership" or "RCEP." According to the Web of Science database, 126 articles falling under the document category of journal articles (including early access) were published from 2013 to June 18, 2023. The 126 articles spanned 82 publications, 251 authors, 228 institutions, and 47 countries. Figure 1 illustrates the visualisation of RCEP publication years. Notably, there was a significant increase in the publication of RCEP studies in 2021 compared to the previous year. However, in 2022, there was a slight decrease in the number of RCEP studies published. As of June 18, 2023, 14 RCEP study articles have been published, and it is expected that the total number of papers published for 2023 will at least reach the level seen in 2021.

Figure 1. RCEP publication years

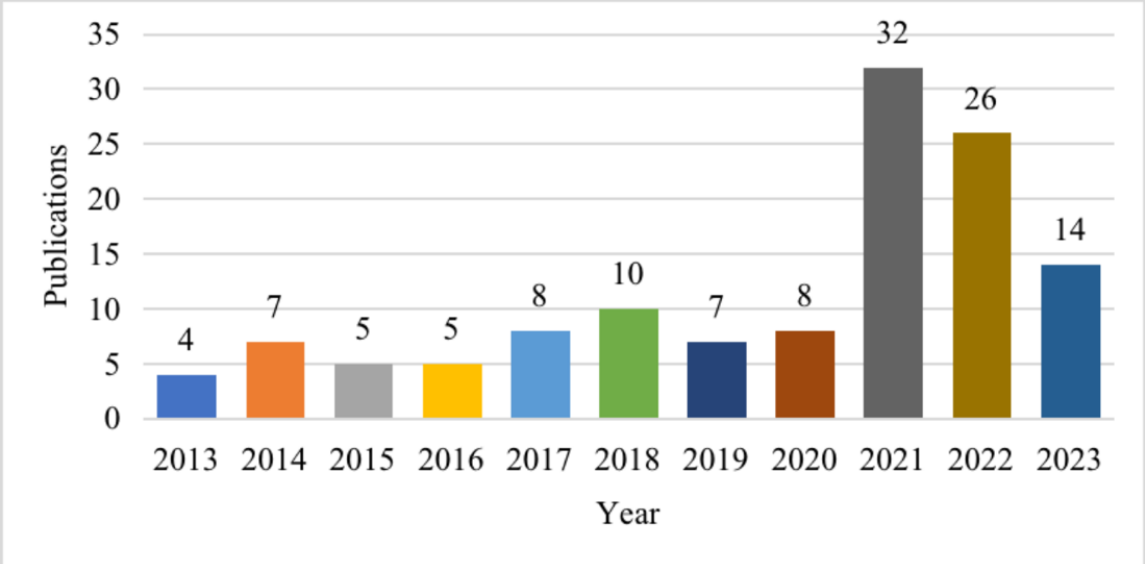


Table 1. Top 10 categories of the RCEP study.

Web of Science Categories	Record Count	% of 126
Economics	51	40.48
International Relations	32	25.40
Law	25	19.84
Environmental Sciences	14	11.11

Green Sustainable Science Technology	11	8.73
Area Studies	10	7.94
Environmental Studies	7	5.56
Business	4	3.18
Business Finance	4	3.18
Political Science	4	3.18

Table 1 presents the Top 10 categories of the RCEP study. Notably, Economics emerges as the most prominent category, comprising over 40% of the 126 articles in the dataset. The following is the category of international relations, accounting for nearly 26% of the total articles. The third significant category is Law, which constitutes less than 20% of the 126 pieces. Among the top 10 categories of RCEP study, the primary focus lies within the humanities and social sciences domain, encompassing economics, international relations, law, and area studies. Additionally, some RCEP studies delve into science-related topics, including Environmental Sciences, Green Sustainable Science Technology, and Environmental Studies. The RCEP study comprises 126 articles published across 82 different journals.

Table 2 displays the top 10 journals contributing to the RCEP study. These top 10 journals collectively account for 36 articles, representing only 28.57% of the 126 articles. The journal "Sustainability" leads the list, publishing seven articles on RCEP study-related topics. The following is the "Journal of World Trade", with six published articles, while "China and WTO Review" holds the third position, with three published articles. Journals ranked fourth to ninth have each published three articles. Finally, the 10th-ranked journal has published two articles. These findings indicate that the study of RCEP has garnered attention from various journals, as evidenced by the diverse array of journals contributing to its publication.

Table 2. Top 10 journals of RCEP study.

Publication Titles	**Record Count**	**%126**
Sustainability	7	5.56
Journal of World Trade	6	4.76
China and WTO Review	3	2.38
Economic Modelling	3	2.38
Emerging Markets Finance and Trade	3	2.38
Journal Of International Economic Law	3	2.38
Singapore Economic Review	3	2.38
Vestnik Mezhdunarodnykh Organizatsii-International Organisations Research Journal	3	2.38
World Economy	3	2.38
Applied Economics	2	1.59
Total	36	28.57

RESULTS OF THE VISUALISATION ANALYSIS

In this study, the researchers utilised CiteSpace Advanced for visualisation analysis. The main objective of the visualisation analysis was to analyse and identify the hotspots in the RCEP study. The first segment evaluated the co-author analysis inside the RCEP study. The second segment examined the analysis of the co-institutions inside the RCEP study. In the ensuing part, keyword co-occurrence analysis trends in the RCEP study were analysed. Co-author and Co-institutions analyses examine the social structure and collaborative networks by analysing authors and their institutions (Wang et al., 2018). Keywords co-occurrence analysis examines the conceptual design of an area of study using the documents' keywords (Wang et al., 2018).

Co-author analysis

With the RCEP study's Co-author analysis, prominent scholars' productivity levels and contributions in this field can be identified (Deniz & Ozceylan, 2023; Wang et al., 2018). With the co-author analysis, Figure 2 shows the author's contribution to the RECP study. Furthermore, it is reflected in a decentralisation trend within the co-author network. Therefore, no academic has an unequivocal advantage in publishing the outcomes of the RCEP study.

Figure 2. Co-author network

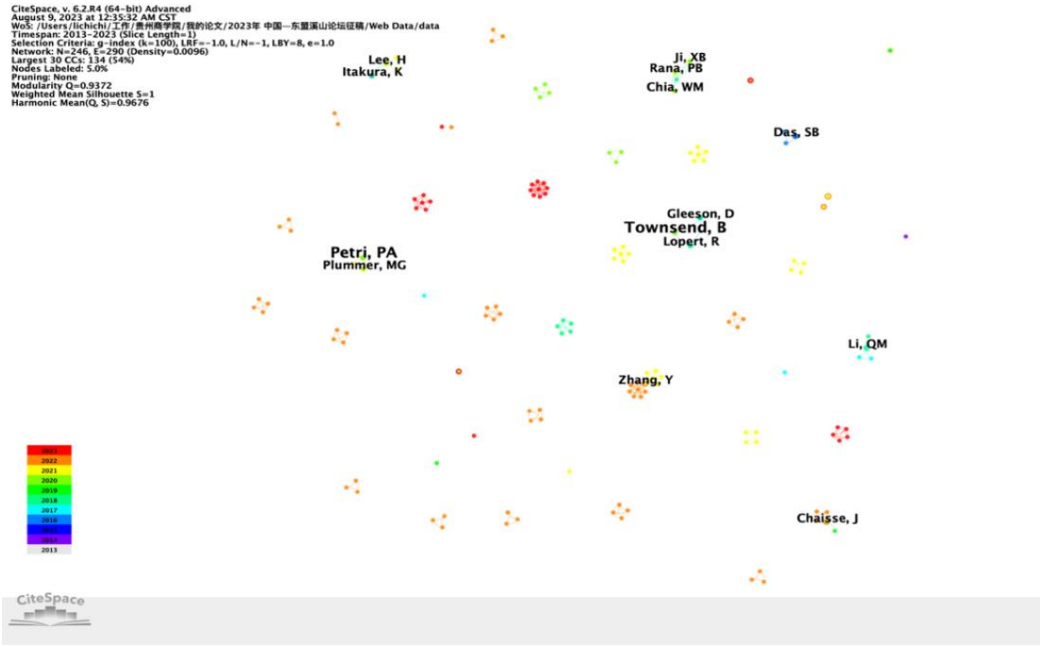


Figure 3 depicts the cluster of co-authors. A total of 32 separate clusters of co-authors appear separately. Figure 3 shows the top 9 of 32 clusters. Table 3 shows the top 9 clusters, labelled with log-likelihood ratio (LLR) and selected from the subject category. Each cluster label demonstrates significant uniqueness and coverage. Each cluster has no relationship. Table 3 reveals that the silhouette value for the top 9 clusters exceeds 0.7 in every case. This suggests that the clustering analysis produces sensible and high-quality results.

Figure 3. Co-author cluster

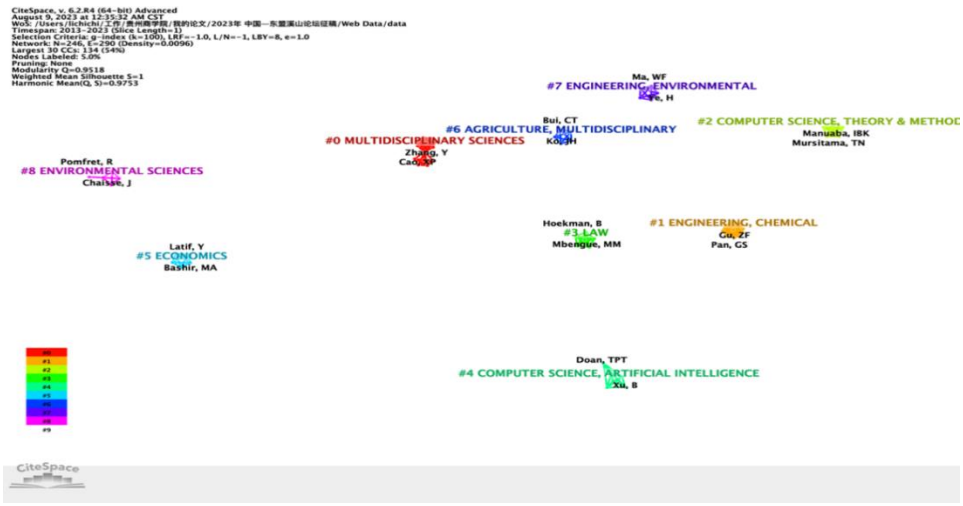


Table 3. Top 9 co-author clusters of the RCEP study.

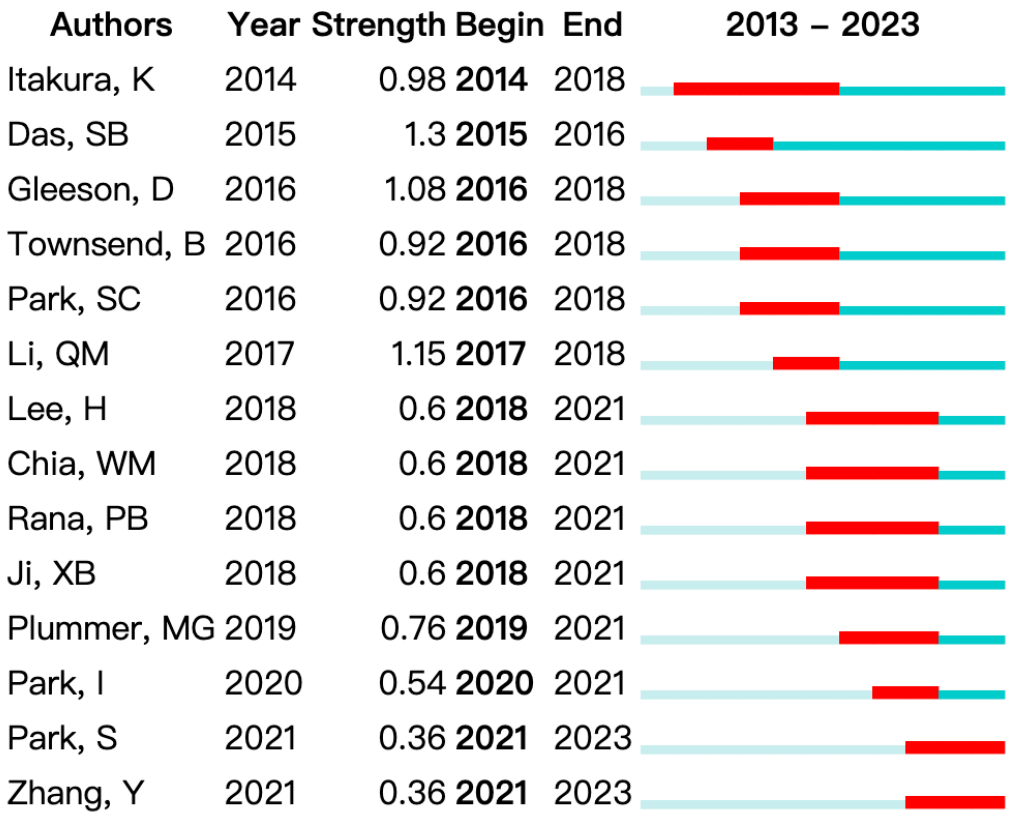
Cluster Label	Size	Silhouette	Mean	Top Term (with LLR Algorithm)
0# Multidisciplinary Sciences	13	1	2021	Multidisciplinary Sciences (9.92, 0.005); Economics (0.47, 0.5); Environmental Sciences (0.33, 1.0); Green & Sustainable Science & Technology (0.24, 1.0); International Relations (0.24, 1.0)
1# Engineering, Chemical	9	1	2023	Engineering, Chemical (5.42, 0.05); Energy & Fuels (5.42, 0.05); Chemistry, Multidisciplinary (5.42, 0.05); Economics (1.94, 0.5); Green & Sustainable Science & Technology (1, 0.5)
2# Computer Science, Theory & Methods	6	1	2023	Computer Science, Theory & Methods (9.92, 0.005); Economics (0.47, 0.5); Environmental Sciences (0.33, 1.0); Green & Sustainable Science & Technology (0.24, 1.0); International Relations (0.24, 1.0)
3# Law	6	1	2021	Law (2.44, 0.5); International Relations (1.11, 0.5); Environmental Sciences (1.01, 0.5); Green & Sustainable Science & Technology (0.74, 0.5); Business, Finance (0.36, 1.0)
4# Computer Science, Artificial Intelligence	6	1	2021	Computer Science, Artificial Intelligence (9.92, 0.005); Economics (0.47, 0.5); Environmental Sciences (0.33, 1.0); Green & Sustainable Science & Technology (0.24, 1.0); International Relations (0.24, 1.0)
5# Economics	5	1	2023	Economics (3.22, 0.1); Environmental Sciences (0.33, 1.0); Green & Sustainable Science & Technology (0.24, 1.0); International Relations (0.24, 1.0); Business, Finance (0.12, 1.0)
6# Agriculture, Multidisciplinary	5	1	2018	Agriculture, Multidisciplinary (9.92, 0.005); Economics (0.47, 0.5); Environmental Sciences (0.33, 1.0); Green & Sustainable Science & Technology (0.24, 1.0); International Relations (0.24, 1.0)
7# Engineering, Environmental	5	1	2022	Engineering, Environmental (3.41, 0.1); Economics (1.44, 0.5); Green & Sustainable Science & Technology (1.11, 0.5); International Relations (0.74, 0.5); Environmental Sciences (0.66, 0.5)
8# Environmental Sciences	5	1	2020	Law (6.1, 0.05); Economics (0.47, 0.5); Environmental Sciences (0.33, 1.0); Green & Sustainable Science & Technology (0.24, 1.0); International Relations (0.24, 1.0)

Table 4. The publication of burstiness authors between 2013-202.

Country	Author	Burst Begin	Burst End	Tital	Source
China	Zhang, Yun	2021	2023	Is there reciprocity between India and RCEP member countries' goods trade?	Zhao et al. (2021)
South Korea	Park, Soonchan	2021	2023	Socio-political determinants of interdependent regional trade agreements: An empirical application	Park and Park (2021)
South Korea	Park, Innwon	2020	2021	Regional trade agreements in East Asia: Past and future	Park (2020)
Italy	Plummer, Michael G.	2019	2021	Mega-regional agreements and their impact on Australia	Petri and Plummer (2019)
Japan	Lee, Hiro	2018	2021	The welfare and sectoral adjustment effects of mega-regional trade agreements on ASEAN countries	Lee and Itakura (2018)
Singapore	Rana, Pradumna B.	2018	2021	Post-TPP trade policy options for ASEAN and its dialogue partners: "Preference ordering" using CGE analysis	Ji et al. (2018)
Singapore	Ji, Xianbai	2018	2021		
Singapore	Chia, Wai-Mun	2018	2021		
China	Li, Qiaomin	2017	2018	AAnalysingthe effects of the regional comprehensive economic partnership on FDI in a CGE framework with firm heterogeneity	Li et al. (2017)
Australia	Townsend, Belinda	2016	2018	The regional comprehensive economic partnership, intellectual property protection, and access to medicines	Townsend et al. (2016)
Australia	Gleeson, Deborah	2016	2018		
South Korea	Park, Sang Chul	2016	2018	Korea's trade strategies for mega free trade agreements in regional and global economic integration	Park (2016)
Singapore	Das, Sanchita Basu	2015	2016	The regional comprehensive economic partnership: New paradigm or old wine in a new bottle?	Das (2015)
Japan	Itakura, Ken	2014	2018	Impact of lliberalisationand improved connectivity and facilitation in ASEAN	Itakura (2014)

Recent authors who have made significant contributions are also identified based on burstiness, as shown in the co-author analysis of Figure 4. Table 4 shows the publication of burstiness authors between 2013 and 2023. The authors of recent burstiness are Park Soonchan (from South Korea) and Zhang Yun (from China). In the RCEP study, the original contributing author was Itakura, Ken from Japan. The authors from Singapore were the best performers. South Korea follows them. Australia, China and Japan have the same performance. The only non-Asian author is Plummer Michael G. from Italy.

Figure 4. Top 14 Authors with the strongest citation bursts



Co-institutions analysis

The essential institutions in the RECP study are visible through co-institution analysis (Zang et al., 2022). Figure 5 shows the co-institution network in the RECP study. Figure 5 contains 163 nodes and 125 connections. Moreover, it indicates a decentralisation trend inside the network of co-institutions. Australia National University's research in the RCEP project has some influence.

Figure 5. Co-institutions network

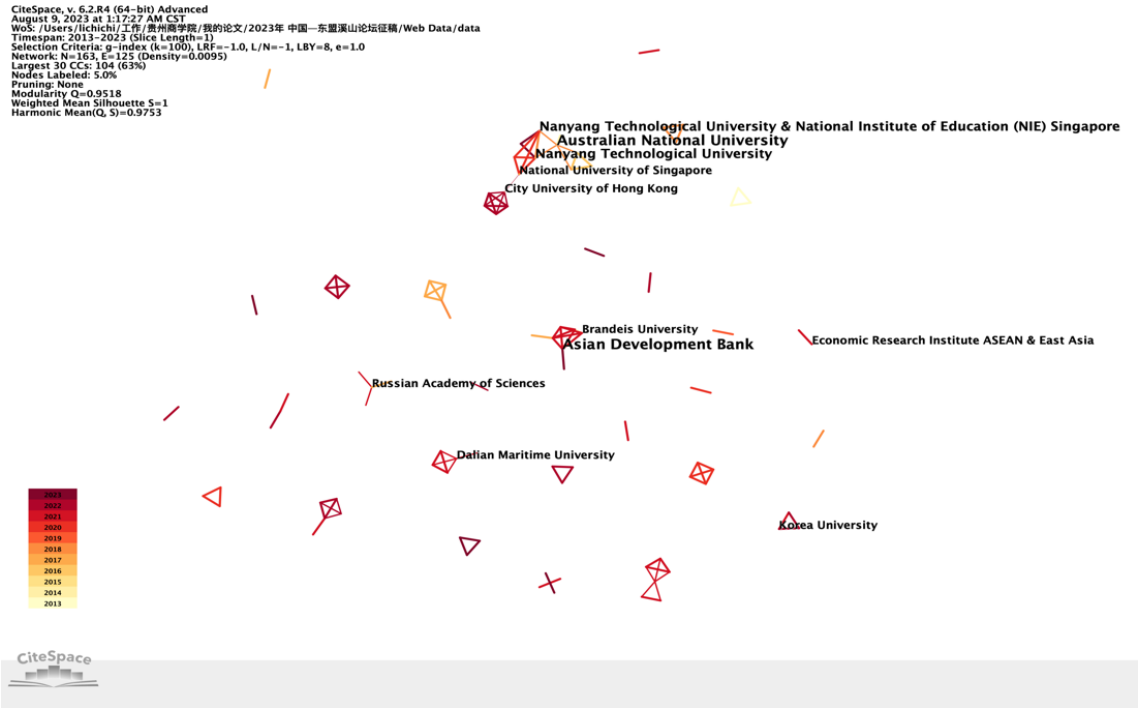


Figure 6. Co-institutions cluster

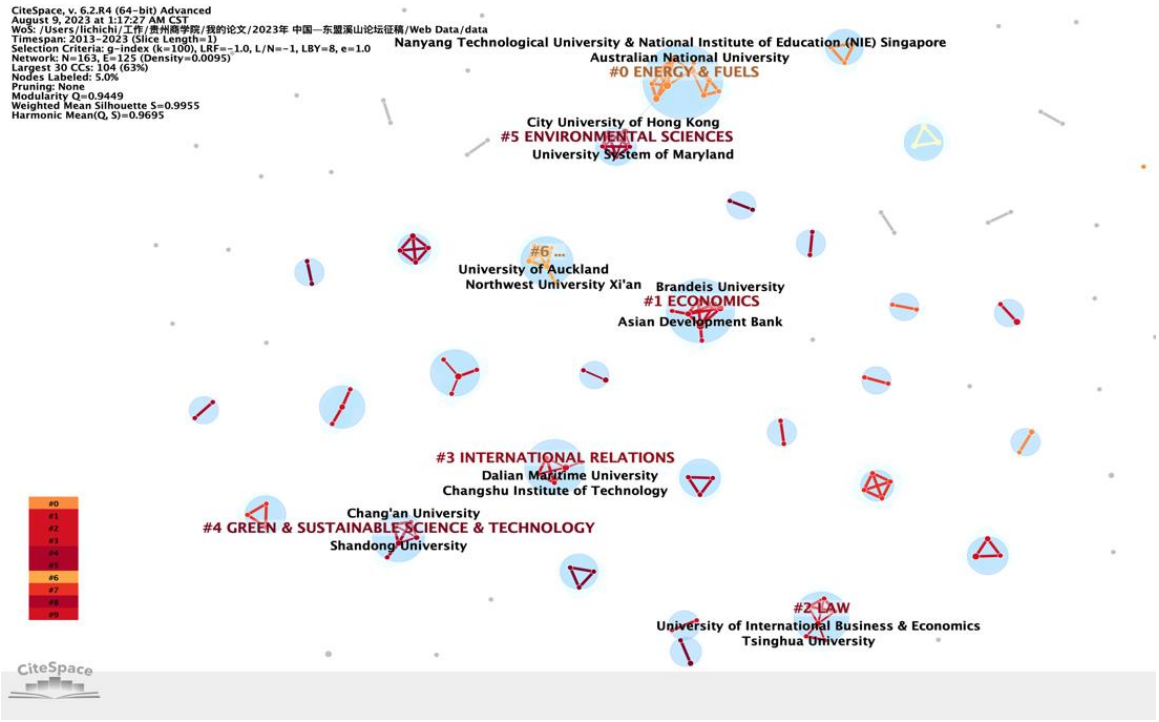


Figure 6 shows 9 clusters. The number one massive cluster (#0) comprises ten individuals and a silhouette value 0.953. Gopalan et al. (2020) of Nanyang Technological University in Singapore authored the cluster's most-cited publication. The second primary cluster (#1) consists of 7 individuals and has a silhouette value of 1. The cluster's most-cited publication is authored by Park et al. (2021) of the Asian Development Bank in the Philippines. The third primary cluster (#2) consists of six individuals and has a silhouette value of 1. The cluster's

most-cited publication of German Institution Development Policy DIE in Germany is authored by Berger et al. (2021).

Based on the burstiness, we noticed in the co-institutions analysis in Figure 7. Between 2013 and 2021, 5 universities (Dankook University, Kongju National University, Shangdong University, Dalian Maritime University, and Korea University) had significant achievements. All these universities live in Asia, three from South Korea and two from China.

Figure 7. Top 16 institutions with the strongest citation bursts

Keywords co-occurrence analysis

The keyword co-occurrence analysis uses the actual content within a paper, making the conceptual framework of a field or subject highly valuable when constructing a semantic map (Caputo et al., 2019). The connection between study topics is explored through keyword co-occurrence analysis, which calculates the frequency of two keywords appearing together within the same document (Zang et al., 2022). Figure 8 displays the keyword co-occurrence network in the RECP study. Table 5 displays the top 12 keywords co-occurrence with a high frequency. The top three keywords are trade, China, and impact. Thus, the RCEP has a significant impact on global trade.

Figure 8. Keywords co-occurrence network

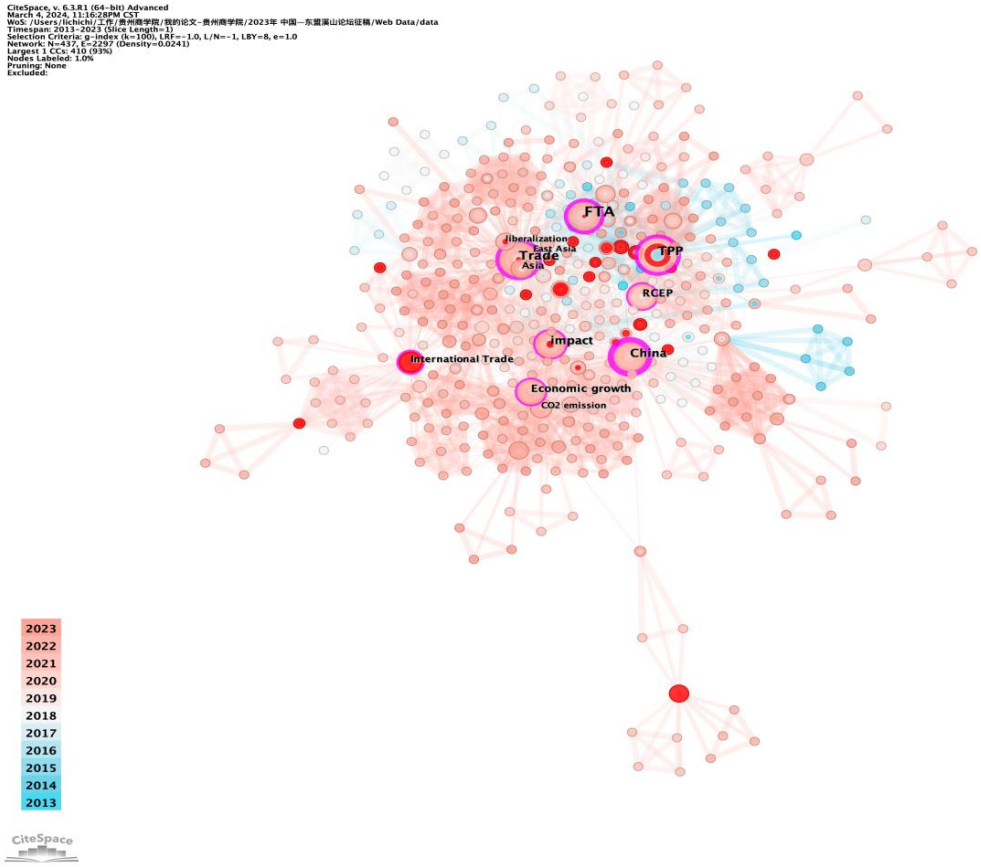


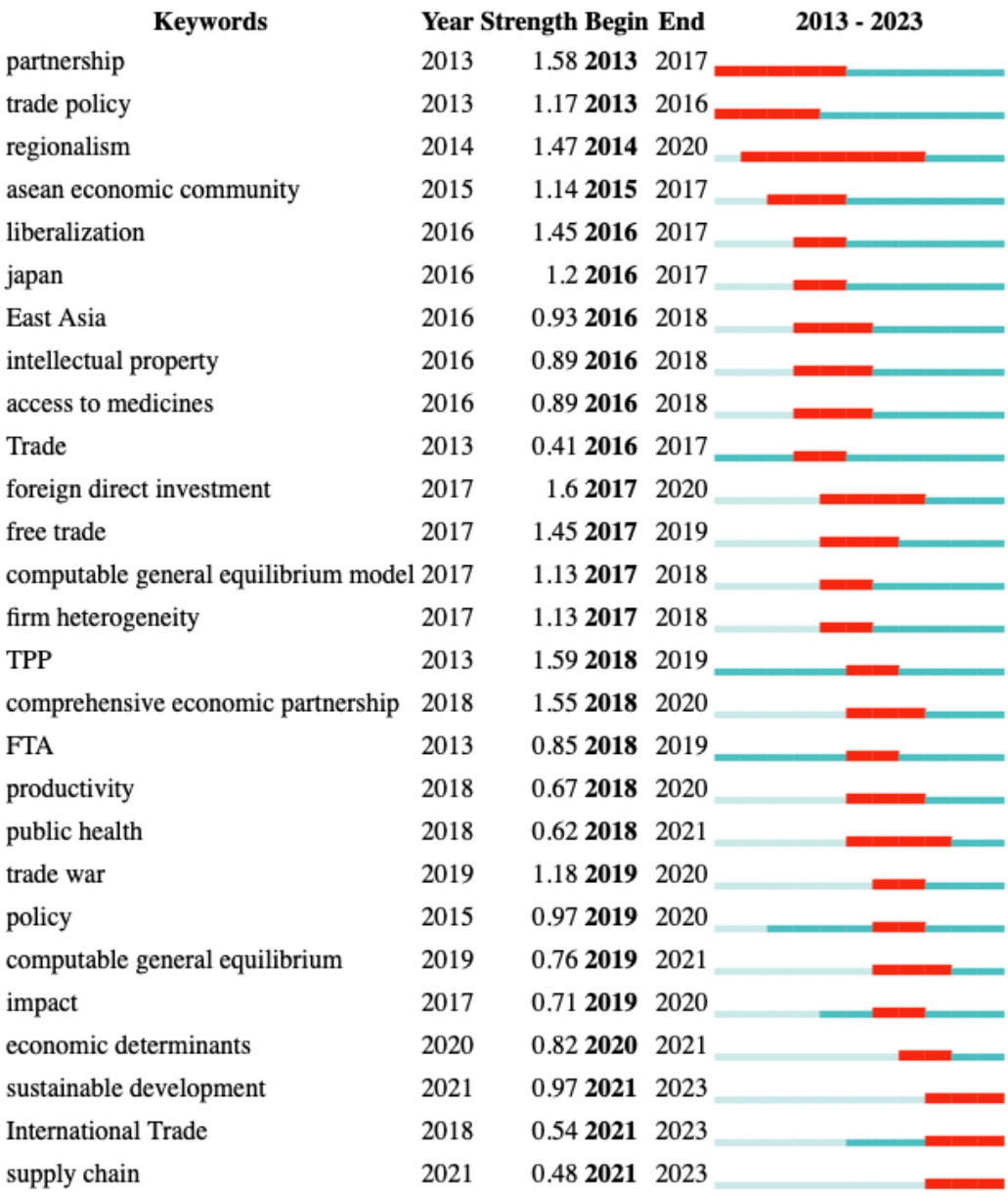
Table 5. Top 12 keywords co-occurrence of the RCEP study.

No.	Freq.	Year	Keyword
1	26	2013	FTA
2	19	2013	TPP
3	18	2013	Trade
4	15	2013	China
5	13	2017	Impact
6	12	2015	RCEP
7	10	2018	Economic growth
8	8	2014	Asia
9	8	2018	International trade
10	7	2016	East Asia
11	7	2021	CO2 emission
12	7	2016	Liberalization

Figure 9 depicts the history of the RECP study as depicted by the keyword citation explosion. In Figure 9, the blue line reflects the whole time frame (2013–2023), while the red line indicates the burst length of a keyword (Zang et al., 2022). The original RCEP study revolves around the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TTP), partnership, trade policy, trade, and Free Trade Agreement (FTA). The significant and prolonged period of the RCEP study was based on regionalism.

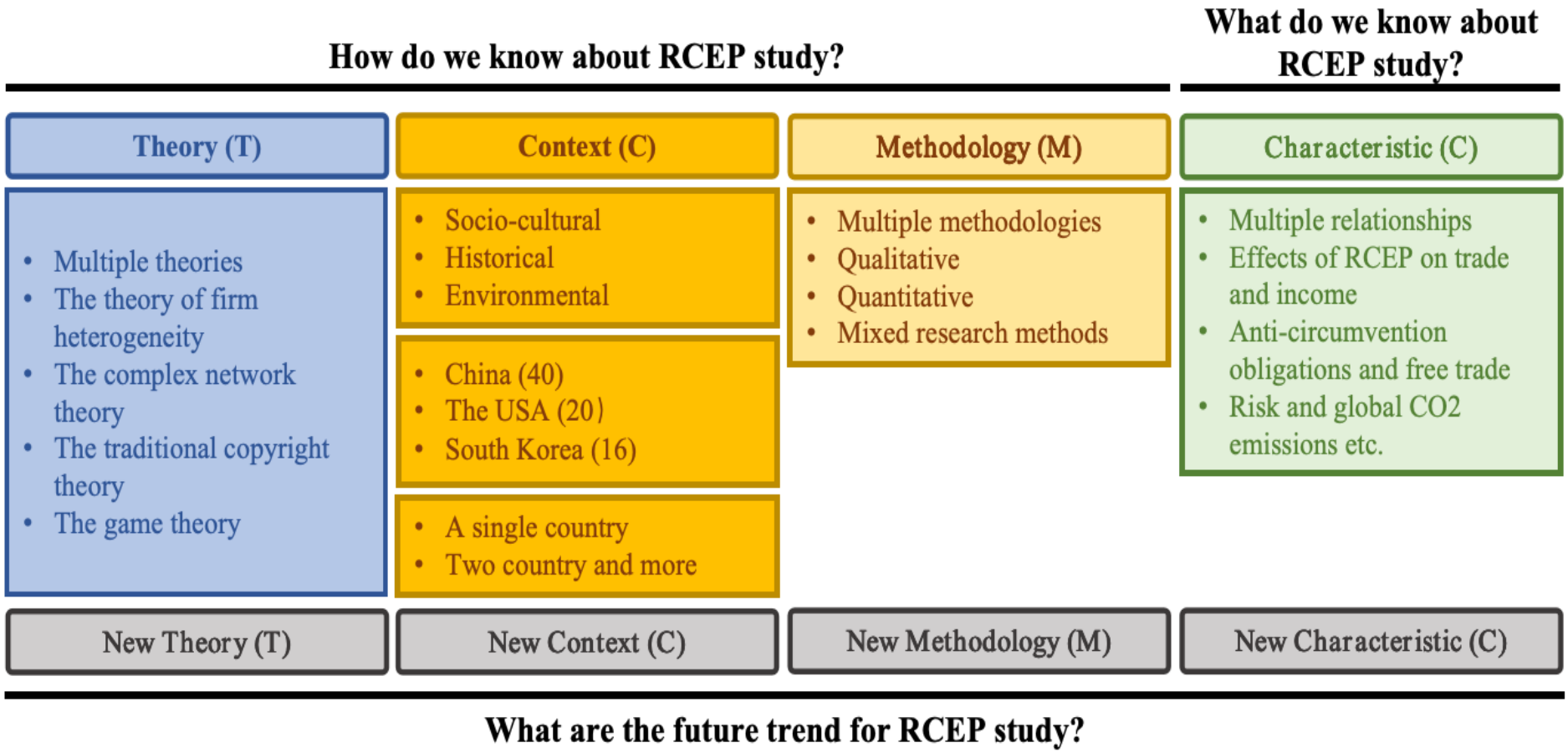
After 2021, RECP studies progress to cover more fields (sustainable development, international trade, and supply chain).

Figure 9. Top 16 keywords with the strongest citation bursts



FUTURE OF TCCM FRAMEWORK ANALYSIS

Figure 10. TCCM framework of the RCEP study



A comprehensive evaluation of prior RCEP studies has been performed using visualisations. Using TCCM analysis, the theory, context, characteristics, and methodology of the present RECP research will be discussed (Agarwal et al., 2023). To identify crucial concerns and topics that will impact the future of RECP studies. Figure 10 depicts the TCCM framework of the RCEP study.

Theory

The "theory" component involves selecting and integrating relevant theoretical perspectives and concepts that form the study's foundation. The framework establishes a robust theoretical basis for inquiry by grounding the research in established theories. In current RCEP studies, multiple theories have been adopted by researchers, such as the theory of firm heterogeneity (Li & Moon, 2018), complex network theory (Zhu & Huang, 2023), traditional copyright theory (Guan, 2018), and game theory (Long & Wang, 2023). As a result, a dominant research theory has not yet emerged. Therefore, future theory-based research assessing the current study should determine the most prominent theories.

Context

The "context" aspect explores the broader sociocultural, historical, and environmental factors surrounding the research topic. Understanding the contextual elements provides valuable insights into the influences that shape the phenomenon under investigation, helping researchers discern patterns and trends within a broader societal context. At present, RCEP studies in only 47 countries have been actively published. The top is China's 40 articles published. The second is the 20 articles published in the USA. The third is South Korea's 16 articles published.

Some studies have focused on a single country (Li et al., 2017; Park, 2016; Petri, 2013; Shujiro, 2021; Wang, Chen, et al., 2022). Others have looked at two countries (Bhattacharyay & Mukhopadhyay, 2015; Na, 2015; Zhu & Huang, 2023). Nevertheless, other studies cover more than one RCEP member country (Bi, 2015; Long & Wang, 2023; Madhur, 2013; Park, 2017; Raghavan et al., 2023). Another group of studies focuses on the impact of the RCEP on nonmember countries (Ding et al., 2022; Heo, 2020; Khanmohammadi & Sun, 2022; Men & Jiang, 2020; Schubert & Savkin, 2016). Based on the analysis in the context of the current RCEP study, future RCEP studies might draw scientists from a more excellent range of countries.

Characteristics

The "characteristics" component of the TCCM framework focuses on identifying and defining the key attributes, variables, and dimensions relevant to the research topic. Through systematically examining these characteristics, researchers can gain a comprehensive view of the subject matter and discern its inherent complexities. Multiple relationships have been investigated in RCEP studies. For example, a study quantitatively assessed the potential effects of the RCEP on trade and income (Li & Moon, 2018). Another study is the impact of anti-circumvention obligations from the Intellectual Property Organisation on free trade (Guan, 2018). In addition, there are more relationships, such as trend liberalisation and direct investment (Uttama, 2021), trend liberalisation and connectivity (Itakura, 2014), direct investment and economic growth (Karahan & Colak, 2022), risk and benefits (Knobel & Sedalishchev, 2017), risk and technological cooperation, and risk and global CO2 emissions (Zhao et al., 2021). Thus, future RCEP studies can widen the relationships of researchers' recommendations to encompass science and technology, education and service, agriculture and trade, and tourism and services among RCEP member nations.

Methodology

The "methodology" component guides researchers in selecting appropriate research methods, data collection techniques, and analytical tools. By employing suitable methodologies, researchers can effectively gather and analyse data, facilitating the rigorous and systematic exploration of research questions. Multiple research methods are used in the present RCEP studies, such as qualitative (Park, 2020; Townsend, 2021), quantitative (Ahmed et al., 2020; Izotov, 2021; Li & Moon, 2018;

Park & Park, 2021), and mixed research methods (Park, 2020). Therefore, future RCEP studies can be carried out in-depth using one of the research methods.

Future RCEP studies have the potential to make substantial progress if the findings from the TCCM framework study are considered. By focusing on theory consolidation, broadening the geographical reach, digging into new dimensions, and diversifying research approaches, the RCEP study environment can be broadened, significantly advancing our understanding of this crucial regional endeavour.

DISCUSSIONS

This study identifies a bibliometric measure of the hot topics in RCEP with CiteSpace and the TCCM framework. Seven findings are identified in this study. These findings can offer libraries and librarians recommendations and guidance for the management and classification of future RCEP studies.

1. At present, the leading scholars have never been explored in the RCEP studies. Some scholars from Asia might lead the RCEP studies in the future.
2. At present, the leading institutions have never been explored in the RCEP studies. Some institutions living in East Asia might lead the RCEP studies in the future.
3. At present, the broader topics have been explored in the RCEP studies. Sustainable development, international trade, and supply chain are the hot topics in the RCEP studies after 2021.
4. At present, a dominant research theory has not yet emerged. The future leading theory might be from some theories like the theory of firm heterogeneity, complex network theory, traditional copyright theory, and game theory.
5. At present, scholars from over 40 countries are involved in RCEP studies. The RCEP study might draw scientists from a more excellent range of countries in the future.
6. At present, additional relationship evaluations beyond trade are now included in RCEP studies. The future RCEP study might encompass the science and technology, education and service, agriculture and trade, and tourism and services of RCEP members.
7. At present, qualitative, quantitative, and mixed research methods are utilised in RCEP studies. The future RCEP study might be in-depth, using research methods like qualitative, quantitative, and mixed research.

CONCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS

More than 250 authors, 80 publications, 220 institutions, and 45 countries have performed RCEP studies since 2013. Nevertheless, in the present RCEP study, no authors or institutions have an unequivocal advantage in publishing outcomes. In addition, the initial constraint of the RCEP study on TTP has been expanded to cover sustainable development (Chi, 2022; Jung, 2021; Wang, Jin, et al., 2022), international trade (Ajibo et al., 2019; Hailes, 2022; Hassan et al., 2022; Rana et al., 2021; Yan et al., 2022), and supply chain (Hailes, 2022; Lu, 2019).

With the future of RCEP studies, first, more appropriate research theories are bound to stand out. Second, more scholars and institutions from RCEP members and nonmembers will gradually join the RCEP study community. Third, a broad scope of RCEP study recommendations in the future encompasses science and technology, education and service, agriculture and trade, and tourism and services among RCEP member nations. Last, future RCEP studies cannot be separated from in-depth qualitative, quantitative and mixed research.

This study's comprehensive collection of 126 publications was sourced from the Web of Science, ensuring a robust scientific foundation. However, it is imperative to acknowledge that depending solely on a single database could introduce considerable bias into the outcomes. In order to

overcome the constraint of relying solely on a single database, future research endeavours ought to incorporate a broader range of sources and diverse datasets, with the aim of conducting a more comprehensive and multifaceted investigation.

In addition, only a limited part of the analysis methodology is used in this study. Three methods of visualisation analysis, co-authors, co-institutions, and keywords co-occurrence analysis, together with the TCCM framework, are applied in this study. Only one visualisation tool (CiteSpace) is used in this study. More analytical tools and methods will be utilised to address the limitation of a single analytical tool and a small number of analytical methods in future RCEP investigations.

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