

# A Visual Analysis of Organizational Identity Research Based on Mapping Knowledge Domains

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**Abstract:** Organizational identity plays a pivotal role in understanding the behaviors and attitudes of organizational members, as well as the overall operation and development of organizations. Chinese scholars have conducted some applied research on organizational identity in the field of business management and achieved certain results. However, there is still a lack of systematic review and summarization of research on organizational identity in Chinese enterprises, particularly studies that combine bibliometric analysis with qualitative content analysis for summarization and exploration. Therefore, this paper employs CiteSpace software to conduct a visual analysis of the knowledge map based on 53 sample literature pieces from core journals in the CNKI database. Combined with qualitative content analysis of specific literature, it clarifies the current status of research output time, publication journals, core authors, and geographical distribution regarding corporate organizational identity. It also summarizes four major hot topics in this research field and constructs an integrated framework for the study of corporate organizational identity in the Chinese context. The findings of this paper reveal that as for research topics, the relationships between organizational identity and organizational identification, the construction mechanisms of organizational identity, the transformation mechanisms of organizational identity, and the impact of organizational identity on corporate strategic behaviors have received widespread attention and exploration. Based on these findings, an integrated framework for current research on organizational identity in China has been constructed.

**Keywords:** Mapping Knowledge Domains; Citespace; Organizational Identity; Visual Analysis

## 1. Introduction

Organizational identity answers the question of "who are we as an organization", reflects the fundamental reason for the existence of the enterprise, and reveals the mission and purpose of the enterprise. Some scholars have defined organizational identity as a consensus about what an organization does and its overall image perceived by its members, which is formed by the history of an enterprise and related to the projection of external impressions[1-2]. A clear organizational identity is not only conducive to the scientific establishment of self cognition, but also conducive to the formulation of strategic decisions that are more in line with their own reality[3].

In recent years, scholars have carried out a lot of exploration around the issue of organizational identity. In particular, research on its application in cross-border mergers and acquisitions of enterprises has emerged in an endless stream, forming some useful theoretical results. However, few studies have systematically combed the literature on the topic of organizational identity, and visual analysis on this topic is still lacking. In view of this, this paper will use citespace software to conduct a visual analysis of the subject literature, with a view to contributing to the research on the subject of organizational identity, and provide theoretical guidance for the practice of corporate organizational identity recognition.

## 2. Research Methods and Data Sources

### 2.1 Research Methods and Tools

Mapping Knowledge Domains is an image that shows the relationship between the development process and structure of scientific knowledge based on the knowledge domain, and is often used to interpret the research progress and hot frontiers in a certain field [4]. CiteSpace software based on Java platform developed by

Professor Chen Chaomei has become a widely used tool in bibliometrics by using information visualization technology. This paper will use citespace 6.1. R3 software to process and analyze data.

## 2.2 Data Source and Processing

In this paper, CNKI database is taken as the search object, and the "organizational identity" field is used to search the title, abstract and key words. The source of journals is limited to core journals and CSSCI journals, and 91 articles are obtained. After the author reviews each article, articles with low relevance to the subject and reviews are excluded, and 53 target papers are finally determined.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1 Bibliometric Analysis

#### 3.1.1 Output time

It can be seen from the statistics that since the first appearance of organizational identity literature in 2008, the cumulative number of literature issued has been 53 (Figure 1). This figure shows not only the cumulative number of literature issued each year, but also the number of literature issued each year. In general, the cumulative number of literature issued continued to grow, and the number of literature issued in the current year fluctuated slightly. In other words, the time distribution of the output of organizational identity theme papers was uneven. We calculate the annual average AVE of the output literature:

$$AVE = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n x_i}{n} \quad (1)$$

AVE is the ratio of the total number of sample literature to the total number of sample literature production years. It reflects the average level of the number of published documents in this field. Here, the value of n is 15, and the AVE is about 4, indicating that the number of literature on organizational identity topics is generally small and the research is not active enough.

Similarly, we calculate the variance value VAR of the produced literature:

$$VAR = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - AVE)^2}{n} \quad (2)$$

VAR is the average of the square value of the difference between the number of literature produced in the current year and AVE, reflecting the degree of deviation between the number of papers produced in the current year and the

average value. As previously known, AVE is 4, n is 15, and the VAR is 11, indicating that there is little fluctuation in the issuance of the literature.

Annual Distribution Table of Sample Literature

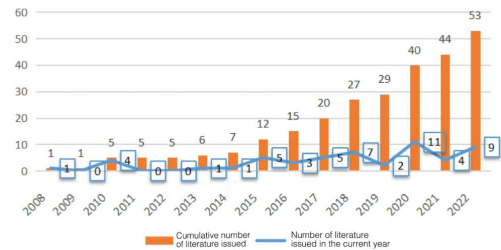


Figure 1. Time Distribution of Literature Output

#### 3.1.2 Distribution of published journals

The published journals of organizational identity literature are basically concentrated in three categories: management journals, economics journals, and comprehensive social science journals dominated by college journals, including top journals such as Management World, Nankai Business Review and China Industrial Economics (Table1). To some extent, it reflects that Chinese scholars have made high-quality achievements in the exploration of this subject.

Table 1. Journals with 2 or More Articles

Published journals	Number of articles
Economic Management	6
Nankai Business Review	5
Management World	4
Chinese Journal of Management	4
China Industrial Economics	4
Journal of Management Case Studies	3
technical economy	2
Research on Economics and Management	2
Scientific progress and countermeasures	2
Leadership Science	2
Modern Management Science	2
R&D Management	2
Journal of Central University of Finance & Economics	2

#### 3.1.3 Core authors

Based on the collation of the number of articles sent by each author, Yang Bo of Tianjin University of Finance and Economics has become the most prolific scholar in the field of organizational identity, with 6 articles, and has become the most widely cooperated scholar with 5 articles. It can be seen that Yang Bo has made

great contributions to the study of organizational identity in China. Then we make statistics on the core authors. According to the formula deduced by Reips based on Lotka's law, the minimum number of articles issued by the core authors, M is:

$$M = 0.749 \times \sqrt{N_{\max}} \quad (3)$$

(M represents the number of papers, and N<sub>max</sub> represents the number of papers of the most productive authors)

After calculation, the M value is taken as an integer of 2, that is to say, the scholars with 2 or

more articles are the core authors in this field, with a total of 16 people. A specific display is made in Table 2, in which Yang Bo, Wang Chengcheng, Ye Guangyu and Yin Jianfeng all have more than three articles. The total number of literature of the 16 people is 40, accounting for 75% of the total number of sample literature, which exceeds the requirement that the core author's number of papers should be more than 50% as required by Reips' Law, indicating that the research in this field is still consistent and sustainable.

**Table 2. Core Authors**

Author	Institution	Number of literature issued
Yang Bo	Tianjin University of Finance and Economics	6
Wang Chengcheng	Anhui University	4
Ye Guangyu	South China University of Technology	3
Yin Jianfeng	Guizhou Minzu University	3
Du Xiaojun	Northeastern University	2
Liu Hong	Changzhou University	2
Sun Min	Guangdong Polytechnic Normal University	2
Hu Kai	Tongji University	2
Huang Sheng	Guangdong University of Foreign Studies	2
Chen Lizhe	Zhejiang Sci-Tech University	2
Yang Yang	Zhejiang Gongshang University	2
Li Jin	Nanjing Normal University	2
Li Chunqing	Northwest University	2
Yan Shimei	Zhejiang University	2
Wang Xiaoli	Northwest University	2
Wei Jiang	Zhejiang University	2

### 3.1.4 Regional distribution of literature

Referring to the formula deduced by Reips based on Lotka's law, we can calculate that the minimum number of articles issued by the core organization M is:

$$M = 0.749 \times \sqrt{N_{\max}} \quad (4)$$

(M represents the number of papers, and N<sub>max</sub> represents the number of papers of the most productive organization)

The M value is calculated as an integer of 2, that is, the institutions with two or more papers are the core institutions in this field. This data is a direct representation of the academic level of the institutions, representing their academic influence and authority. Moreover, the number of papers issued by these institutions accounts for 75% of the total number of papers issued in the whole field, which indicates that these core institutions have undertaken the heavy task of research in this field. Further, this paper combs the cities and regions where the core institutions are located, so as to clarify the regional distribution of literature output (Table 3). It is

not difficult to see that organizational identity research institutions are all over China, showing a good trend of "blooming everywhere".

**Table 3. Regional Distribution of Literature Output**

City	Area	Total number of literature issued
Hangzhou	East China	15
Nanjing		
Shanghai		
Guangzhou	South China	7
Tianjin	North China	8
Beijing		
Wuhan	Central China	4
Hefei		
Shenyang	Northeast China	2
Xian	Northwest China	2
Chengdu	Southwest China	2

## 3.2 Literature Content Analysis

### 3.2.1 Keywords analysis

By analyzing the time of literature production,

we found that the two key time nodes for the development of organizational identity research were in 2015 and 2020, which can be seen as the turning points of different stages of the research. Therefore, the author of this paper divides the research process on this topic into three stages, namely, the starting stage (2008-2014), the exploration stage (2015-2019) and the development stage (2020 present). At the same time, the author sorts out the key words of hot research topics in each stage through citespace software.

From the first appearance of organizational identity research in 2008 to 2014, only a few researchers paid attention to this topic and tried to explore it. At this stage, the number of annual output literature basically stayed at about one, specifically focusing on issues such as organizational identity, organizational culture, and corporate competitive behavior. It is worth mentioning that, in addition to the basic theoretical construction, some scholars conducted qualitative analysis on organizational identity at this time. In general, this is the initial stage of organizational identity research, which has not yet formed a basic logic and paradigm system.

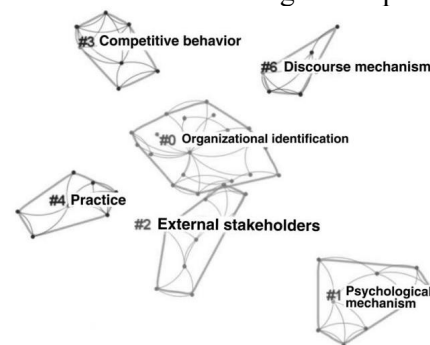
The number of articles issued in 2015 has significantly increased, and the output of 4 articles per year has been maintained in the following years. It can be seen that the theme has begun to attract more and more scholars' attention in this period. Issues such as the identification of organizational identity and the impact of organizational identity on enterprise capability building and business model have been preliminarily explained. In general, this is the exploration stage of organizational identity research, and research methods have been enriched.

Since 2020, that is, in the past three years, organizational identity research has been very active. Up to now, 24 papers have been produced, accounting for nearly half of the sample literature. Scholars have paid special attention to the change of organizational identity in the process of enterprise internationalization, and the theoretical perspectives of research have become richer and diversified, such as the theory of meaning construction, institution theory, resource arrangement theory, etc. The research methods have achieved multi-dimensional breakthroughs. On the basis of case studies and narrow empirical studies, fsQCA and meta

analysis have been applied. This period can be called the development stage of organizational identity research, keeping at a high level.

### 3.2.2 Cluster analysis

This paper use CiteSpace to analyze the key words and name the clustering categories with LLR method (Figure 2). According to the network structure and the clarity of clustering, we can see two indicators: Modularity Q and Weighted Mean Silhouette S, which serve as a basis for us to judge the effect of mapping. The Modularity Q of this cluster is 0.7868, which is greater than 0.3, indicating that the cluster is closely connected; The Weighted Mean Silhouette S is 0.9753, exceeding 0.5, which shows that the clustering result is reasonable. Through the clustering atlas and the author's study of the literature, the current topics of organizational identity research can be summarized into the following four aspects.



**Figure 2. Keyword Clustering Map Based on LLR**

First, the study of the relationship between organizational identity and organizational identification. Many scholars have paid attention to the differences and connections between the two concepts and carried out some exploration. Yang and Liu [5] defined the different connotations of organizational identity and organizational identification through qualitative analysis, pointing out that organizational identification emphasizes the comparison, adjustment and unification between individuals and organizations, focusing on the relationship between individuals and organizations, while organizational identity emphasizes the core, unique and mutually stable characteristics of organizations. Feng and Ge [6] opened the "black box" of the symbolic process of organizational culture, and made it clear that organizational members' cognition of organizational identity is an important basis for their organizational identification. Yang et al. [7] believed that the organizational identity gap,

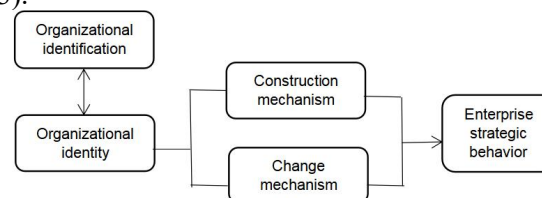
from the individual level, would reduce employees' organizational identification. It can be seen that, in a sense, organizational identification is the representation of organizational identity at the individual level of employees.

Second, the research on the construction mechanism of organizational identity. First, some scholars explained the psychological mechanism of organizational identity construction. For example, Xi Jing et al. [8] pointed out that the experience and expertise of enterprise decision-makers are the basis of their identity construction content and enterprise core competitiveness, making the enterprise's value creation behavior consistent with the core competitiveness building, thus forming embedded CSR decision-making and behavior. Secondly, some scholars have explored the construction path mechanism of organizational identity as an intermediate variable. For example, Su et al. [9] based on the perspective of system patchwork, believe that one of the paths for international start-ups to overcome the dual disadvantages of new entrants and outsiders is "discourse patchwork -organizational identity-outsiders' disadvantages - cognitive legitimacy", so as to better realize international entrepreneurship. Finally, some scholars paid attention to the identity building mechanism of enterprises for different types of stakeholders. Li et al. [10] believed that the enterprise identity was based on the core identity proposition and formed in the gradual superposition and mutual collaboration of new identity propositions for different stakeholders.

Third, research on the mechanism of organizational identity change, trying to open the "black box" of the identity change process of enterprises in different behaviors. Wu et al. [11] analyzed the "pressure response generation" logic mechanism model of the organizational identity change of the surviving enterprises. Yang and Liu [12] constructed an integrated theoretical framework for organizational identity change and strategic change, and analyzed their differences and internal logical relationship.

Fourth, research on the impact of organizational identity on corporate strategic behavior, including but not limited to financial resource acquisition, organizational learning, cross-border M&A integration, institutional change, business model, capability building, etc. Chen et al. [13] took digital platform enterprises as research

objects, adopted the fsQCA method, and explored their organizational identity path to obtain higher financial resources by virtue of the linkage of domain dimensions and role dimensions. Chen et al. [14] explained the organizational identity management of enterprises in emerging economies in the reverse cross-border M&A integration model. Wu et al. [15] explained the evolutionary matching between the organizational identity and business model of incumbent enterprises, and summarized three mechanisms: grafting matching, remodeling matching and expanding matching. Finally, this paper constructs an integrated framework for the current organizational identity research in China (Figure 3).



**Figure 3. Integrated Framework for Organizational Identity Research in China**

#### 4. Conclusion and Discussion

This paper makes a visual analysis of the knowledge map structure of current Chinese organizational identity research by using Citespace. On the one hand, it is a bibliometric analysis of the literature. First, it defines the production time of the literature, and accordingly divides the research process of the subject into three periods. Secondly, it combs the periodical distribution of the literature, and establishes the type of published journals of the subject literature. Then, according to the formula deduced by Reips based on Lotka's law, the core authors of organizational identity research is identified. Finally, the regional distribution of literature output is clarified, and it is found that the research has formed a good pattern of multi regional distribution.

On the other hand, the content of the literature is analyzed. First, according to the research stages divided by the author, the hot keywords in each period are clarified with the help of Citespace software, and the research methods and perspectives are analyzed. Secondly, based on the keyword clustering atlas of LLR algorithm, combined with literature research, four hot topics of organizational identity research are summarized, and thus an integrated framework

of current organizational identity research in China is constructed.

Although the research on organizational identity has made some achievements, there is still room for improvement in the depth and breadth of the research. In the future, more research with guiding value can be carried out based on the practice of Chinese enterprises.

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