

Review of the Belt and Road Initiative within the First Decade and Future Research Suggestions

Yang Mei¹, Hamizah Abd Hamid², Lai JingTing³

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Selangor, MY^{1,2,3}

Article Info

Article history:

Received : 12 May 2025

Revised : 11 July 2025

Accepted : 09 December 2025

Available online : 23 January 2026

Keywords:

The Belt and Road Initiative, Regional Cooperation, OFDI, Infrastructure Development, PRISMA.

ABSTRACT

This study categorizes the themes and sub-themes of the articles discussing the Belt and Road Initiative (B&R) through international business perspective, to explore the research trends of B&R in the international business field. Using Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) to review the literature on the topic published from 2013-2023, clustered the research content using VOSviewer to identify the topics and keywords of existing research in this field. 104 articles were reviewed and analyzed, revealing three main themes which are regional cooperation, OFDI, and infrastructure development. This study also provides suggestions for future research. The article provides suggestions for researchers investigating topics relating to B&R, by clarifying the main themes for the topic and providing suggestions for future research. For practitioners, this study can assist in making decisions and improve by case comparison, theoretical analysis, and model reference.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

Corresponding Author:

Yang Mei

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Selangor, MY

Email: p119831@siswa.ukm.edu.my

INTRODUCTION

With the economic recession of the European Union (EU) and USA, the initial growth mechanism in East Asia basing on industrial chains and trade, is facing transition and needs to establish a new growth mechanism (Ado, 2020). To this end, China is trying to find a new model for maintain the high economic growth rate, and the answer is the Belt and Road Initiative (B&R), which include the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road (Zou et al., 2022). B&R is a cross-border economic belt initiated in 2013 and led by the Chinese government. The geographical scope and connection mode in B&R show that China not only building a new link to the Eurasian by infrastructure, but also promoting the economic development in involving regions with six economic corridors (Atkins et al., 2023). The successful implementation of B&R will help deepen regional economic integration and facilitate cross-border trade and financial flows (Ma, 2022).

B&R's goal is to connect Asia, Europe, and Africa through multiple routes of land and sea transportation (Shen, 2018). B&R has a strong long-term impact on the regions involved, which accounts for 29% of global GDP, 63% of the global population, and 75% of known energy reserves, all rich in resources and

development potential. Over the past 10 years, more than 3,000 B&R cooperation projects have been formed, and 420,000 jobs have been created for the countries involved ([Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang' speech, 2023](#)). According to the ([World Bank, 2019](#)), by 2030, with the increased efficiency in logistics and infrastructure, the B&R is expected to reduce poverty for 40 million people through increasing trade and business activities and provide employment and entrepreneurial opportunities.

B&R holds several theoretical implications for various fields, including International Business, Management, Policy, Economics and Logistics Management. For example, the development in port infrastructure connectivity can improve logistics performance and economic growth (Liang and Liu, 2020) which can be explained using salient paradox theory (Yii et al., 2018), complex network theory ((Zhang et al., 2020), hub and spoke theory (Wei et al., 2018). Before 2013, these countries (for example Pakistan, Poland, Oman) were not the main destinations for Chinese investment, but with B&R, investments to these unconventional destinations (due to government barriers, cultural barriers, bureaucratic issues and security reasons) will be made possible because the government strategy and financial encouragement ([Chang and Cheong, 2020](#)). This is observed using institutional economics ([Quer and Andreu, 2023](#)), social network theory ([Pan and Chong, 2023](#)), comparative institutionalism ([Fan et al., 2023](#)). In addition, the cooperation focus of the large project also includes policy communication, economic integration and cultural inclusion, and its impact has been widely discussed ([Ado, 2020](#); [Ma, 2022](#); [Munjal et al., 2022](#)), using methods such as gravity model ([Du et al., 2021](#); [Jiang et al., 2025](#); [Manzoor and Mir, 2022](#)), game model ([Atif, 2021](#); [Zhao et al., 2022b-05-01](#)), logit model ([Cai, 2022](#); [Zhang and De Beule, 2024](#)), and case study ([Ahmad et al., 2020](#); [Gholizadeh et al., 2020](#)). In summary, projects such as B&R hold important implications for various fields through the dimensions involved and the unit of analysis.

Despite extensive research on B&R, there is still a lack of systematic review in this topic, due to the complexity and the size of the project, as it takes 30-35 years in plan, now only passed the first decade, which is less than 1/3 of the schedule. Since the project is still ongoing, the focus of the project is promoting B&R involving regions and ensuring the implement effect, thus there is a lack of stage review. In response to this limitation, we review the relative studies to explore potential future research and sub-topics. Due to the large size and wide scope of B&R, this systematic review will focus on the field of international business, with the research question of "What are the key research areas for the B&R in international business field?". The main objective of this study is to explore the topics that have received the most attention and to identify the main discussion themes over the past 10 years, to recognize the research trends, by concentrating on following research questions (RQ):
RQ1: What are the main focuses of existing B&R research in international business?
RQ2: What are the research trends in B&R in the field of international business?
To answer these RQs, this systematic review uses Preferred Reporting Items for

Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) as a method.

This paper is structured as follows. After introducing the B&R in this section, Section 2 will describe the processes involved in PRISMA. Next, this article discusses the findings and results of articles classified as clusters. The final section provides conclusions and future research directions.

METHODS

PRISMA

This article uses PRISMA by [Moher et al. \(2009\)](#) to analyze article data obtained from the Web of Science (WOS) and Scopus databases from 2013 to 2023. PRISMA is an evidence-based reporting standard that is effective for critical appraisal and can help researchers strengthen systematic review and meta-analysis ([Bakar et al., 2022](#); [Hizam-Hanafiah et al., 2020](#)). As a systematic review method, PRISMA allows the researcher to collect as many applicable details as possible from each literature, as the purpose of the review is to include a summary of the field and a comprehensive overview of the completed work ([Page et al., 2021](#)). Additionally, PRISMA provides a standard peer-accepted approach that uses a guideline checklist to facilitate the quality assurance of the revision process and its replicability ([Abelha et al., 2020](#)).

Source of database and search strategy

The literature search for this systematic review relied on two main journal databases: WOS and Scopus, which are the most influential and commonly used online archives in bibliometric research ([Pranckute, 2021](#)). WOS is the first wide-area international bibliographic database, the most influential bibliographic data source, traditionally used for journal selection, research evaluation, bibliometric analysis, and other tasks ([Li et al., 2018](#)). Scopus database on the other hand, is the world's largest database of abstracts and collectables, providing the world's most comprehensive overview of research output ([Zhu and Liu, 2020](#)). Table 1. **Search boundaries and keywords** lists the keywords for the first step of this study, which is article selection:

Table 1. Search boundaries and keywords

Search Boundaries	Scopus, WOS
Keywords Search	one belt one road, b&r initiative, the belt and road initiative

The terms "one belt one road", "b&r initiative", and "the belt and road initiative" as the article title, abstract, keywords in Scopus and as keywords in WOS to search, to prevent confusion in content.

Article selection

The search screened through the inclusion and exclusion criteria are shown in Table 2, which resulted in 312 articles. There are five criteria for inclusion and exclusion: literature type, language, field, and timeline. The main researcher reviewed the titles and abstracts of the articles, and carefully screened the articles, to identify duplicate

articles (85 articles) which were excluded from the sample. The scope of the selected articles is from 2013 to 2023 (B&R was proposed in 2013), which resulted in 227 articles.

Table 2. Inclusion And Exclusion Criteria

	Inclusion	Exclusion
Literature type	Articles	Magazine articles Book Conference proceeding
Language	English	Non-English
Field	Business (WOS) Business, management and accounting (Scopus)	Others
Timeline	From 2013 to 2023	Before 2013

Eligibility criteria

Next, the main researcher examined the full text of the articles to conduct to exclude literature reviews and articles unrelated to B&R and international business; 117 articles were excluded in this step. The filtering process based on the review criteria screened a total of 104 articles for this analysis, which is shown in Figure 1. Data extraction from the screened literature is collected by the main researcher and documented in a matrix of findings.

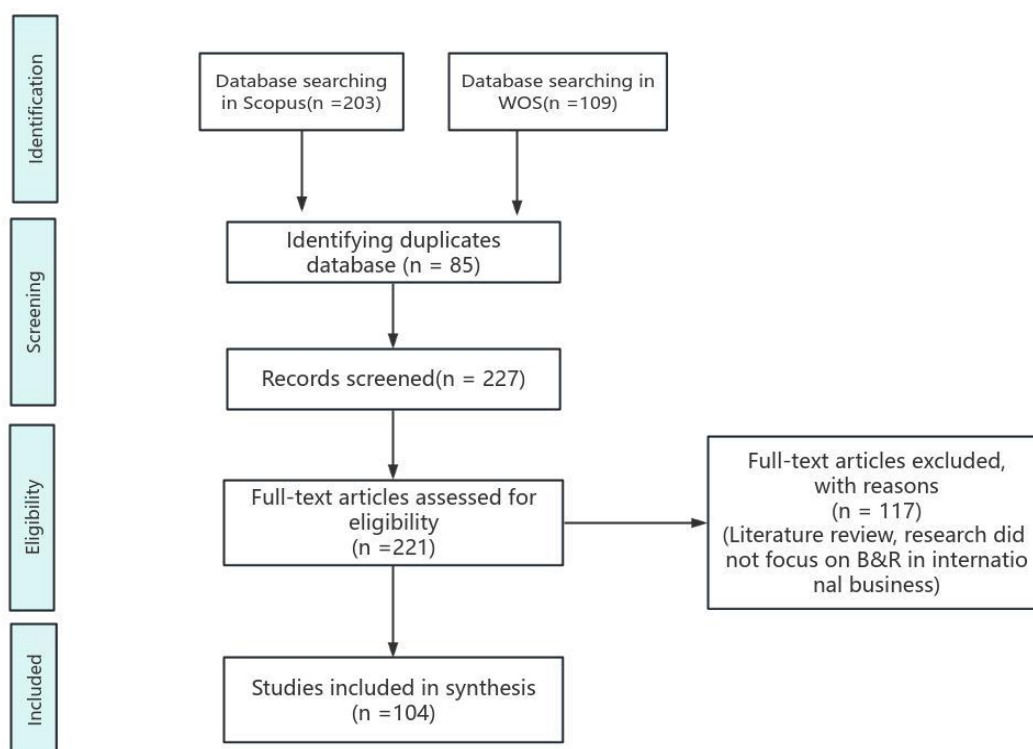


Figure 1. PRISMA Flowchart

Characteristics of the articles

Figure 2 shows the publication per year on the topic. From 2013 to 2015, there was no relevant literature that meets the criteria published, until 2016 (three articles). The number of publications began to increase year after year, reaching its peak in 2019. 2019 was the only year with more than 20 articles, with a total of 25 articles. The number of publications began to decline in 2020, falling to 13. 14 articles were published in 2021 to maintain the number and increased to 17 in 2022. The enthusiasm of this topic's discussion is mainly concentrated in 2018-2022.

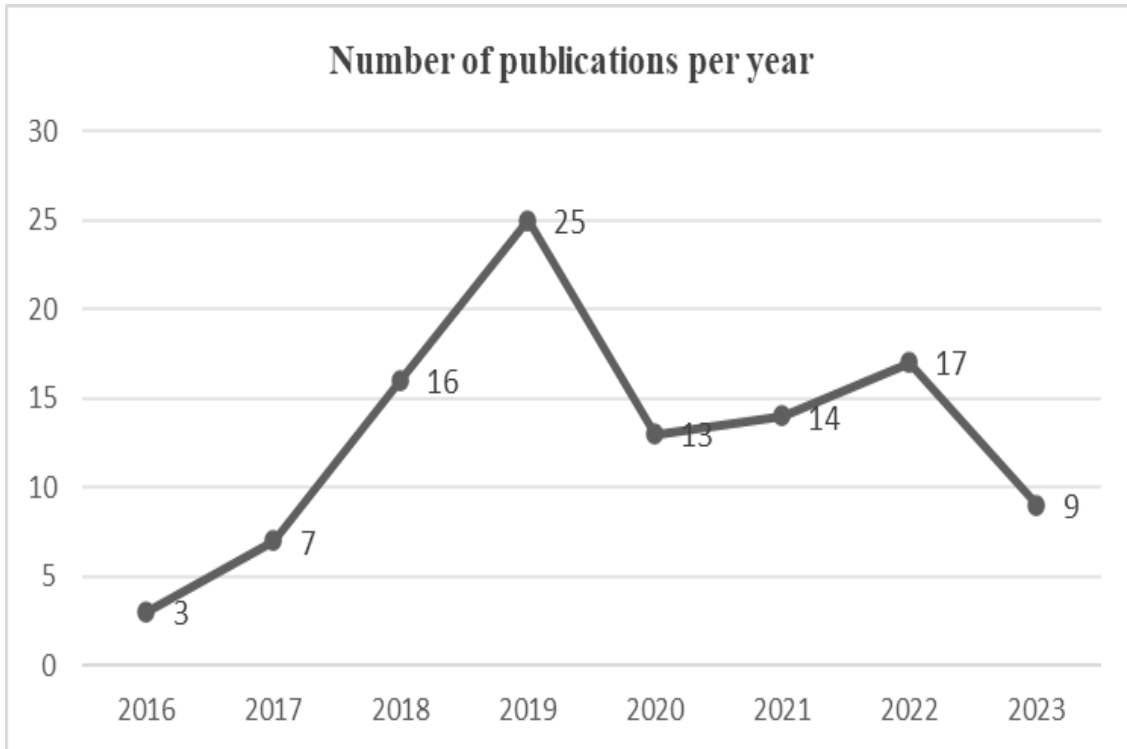


Figure 2. Frequency of Publication Per Year

Citations are seen as indicators of success in research and, within the framework of research, represent the effectiveness or consistency of research analysis (Aksnes et al., 2019). For this topic, it is shown in Error! Reference source not found.. The most cited article is by Notteboom and Yang in (2017), which discussed port governance changes in China. 2018 is the year with the highest number of highly cited articles, which reached 50% of the total.

Table 3. Number of Article's Citations

Title	Author/Year	Numbers of Citations	Source Database
Port governance in China since 2004: Institutional layering and the growing impact of broader policies	Notteboom and Yang (2017)	100	Scopus /WOS
Analysis of the logistics service supply chain for the One Belt and One Road initiative of China	Liu et al. (2018)	95	Scopus /WOS
Forecasting time-varying logistics distribution flows in the One Belt-One Road strategic context	Sheu and Kundu (2018)	83	Scopus /WOS

Environmental risks and opportunities for countries along the Belt and Road: Location choice of China's investment	Huang (2019)	78	Scopus /WOS
A study of the petroleum trade network of countries along "The Belt and Road Initiative"	Zhang <i>et al.</i> (2019)	64	Scopus /WOS
Evaluation of large-scale transnational high-speed railway construction priority in the belt and road region	Shao <i>et al.</i> (2018)	63	Scopus /WOS
The Determinants of Chinese Outward OFDI in Countries Along "One Belt One Road"	Liu <i>et al.</i> (2017)	60	WOS
Impact of the Carat Canal on the evolution of hub ports under China's Belt and Road initiative	Zeng <i>et al.</i> (2018)	50	Scopus /WOS
Does China's direct investment in "Belt and Road Initiative" countries decrease their carbon dioxide emissions?	Su <i>et al.</i> (2020)	47	Scopus /WOS
The economic growth and development effects of China's One Belt, One Road Initiative	Enderwick (2018)	43	Scopus /WOS

Journal Outlets

Regarding the journals published, the analytical articles for the topic were published separately in 73 different journals, revealing the breadth of coverage of the topic in the knowledge area. Figure 3 shows a journal with more than one paper dedicated to the topic.



Figure 3. Number of Publications Per Journal

The journal publishing majority of this systematic review's articles is Journal of Cleaner Production, with eight articles. This is followed by Transportation Research Part E: Logistics and Transportation Review, with seven articles published in this journal. five and four articles were published in the International Journal of Shipping and Transport Logistics and Emerging markets Finance and Trade respectively. The classification of the journals with a high frequency of publication on the subject is distributed in the fields of environment, transportation, and international relations, which shows the relevance of B&R in sustainability, logistics and geoeconomics.

Theory

A total of 50 theories were found in 104 reviewed articles, with some of these did not explicitly mention the theories used, and some articles referred to multiple theories. The theory that is used in more than one article as shown in Figure 4, with nine main theories referred to in total. The use of theory is relatively balanced, and the most used theory of the reviewed articles are Game Theory and Institutional Theory.

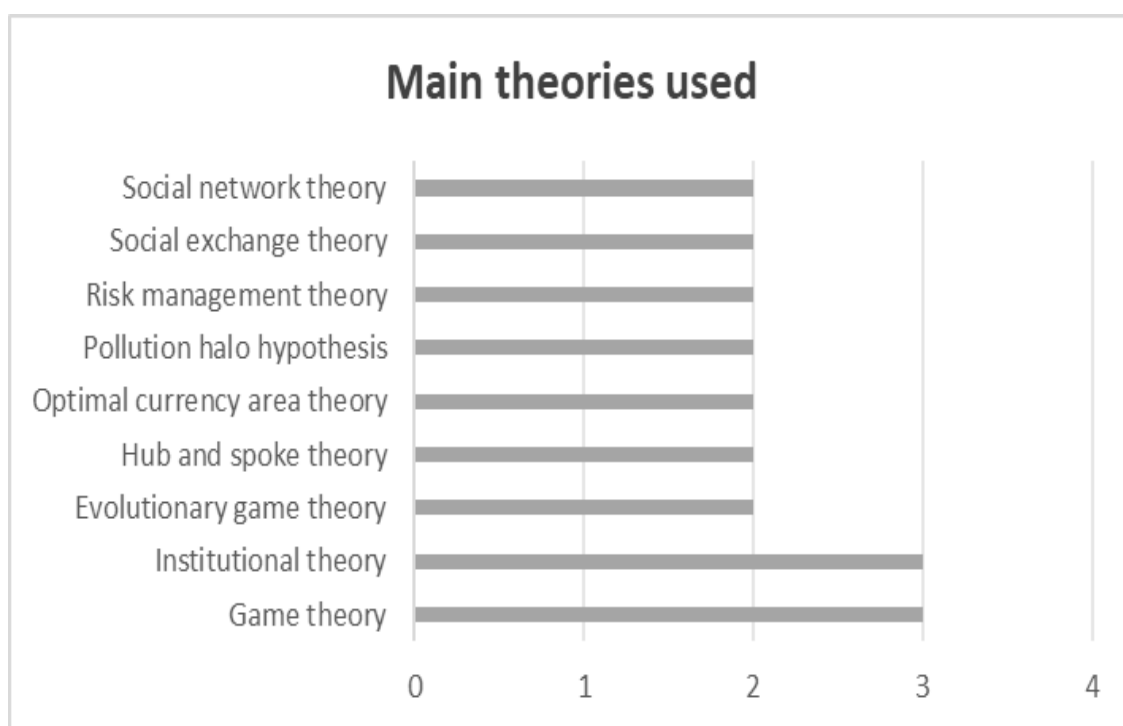


Figure 4. Number of theories used in the articles

Method used in the articles

Regarding the type of study on the topic, 40% of the analyzed articles were quantitative research, 38% were qualitative research, and 22% were mixed-method research. Figure 5 shows the proportion of research methods for this topic analysis. The number of qualitative and quantitative studies on the subject study are almost similar.

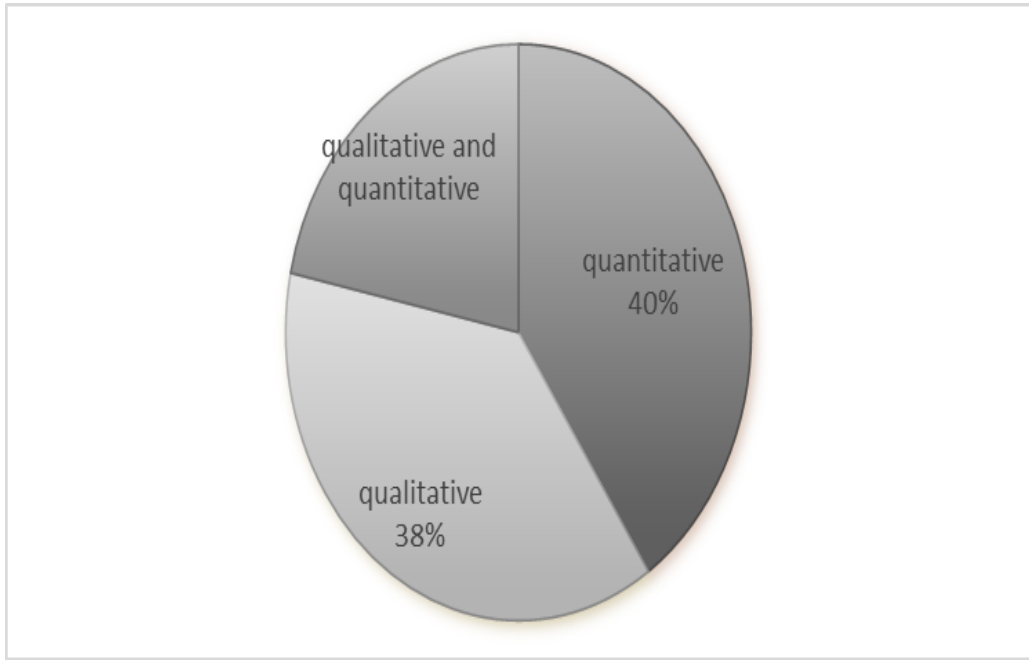


Figure 5. Percentage for Qualitative And Quantitative

Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis used in the articles were examined, shown in Figure 6, which included country, province, port-city, enterprise, project, and individual levels.

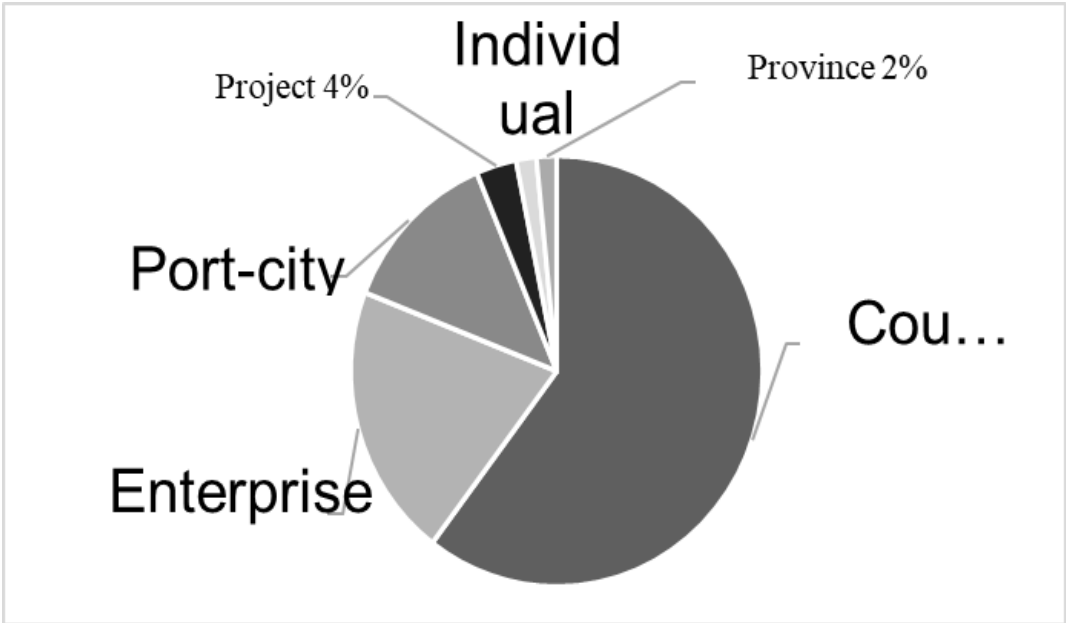


Figure 6. Number of sample level

Country unit of analysis accounted for the majority of research, with 38 out of 65 articles, accounting for 60% of the total articles. The second most popular unit is the enterprise level, with a total of 13 articles, accounting for 21%. This explains that B&R encourages enterprises and individuals to invest and active involve in programs. As the focus of the 21st Century

Maritime Silk Road is to use China's coastal ports to connect B&R regions by sea transportation, port-city level is the third main unit in analysis, with a total of eight articles, accounting for 13%.

Geographical Concentration of The Authorship

The main researcher observed the articles' first author's main institution country (see Table 4); there are 62 studies led by China, accounting for 59.6%, more than half of the articles examined as China is the initiator of B&R, and China-led research accounts for the majority of the research. To understand the interest of the authors' institution countries, the main researcher checked whether these countries have formally agreed to be part of the B&R, the results are shown in Table 4. Of the 104 articles, 82 from Asia, 12 from Europe, six from Oceania. There were 94 articles from countries that have formally agreed to be part of the B&R, accounting for 90.3% of the total articles. Notably, countries that did not participate in B&R contributed ten studies. These show that countries that have not formally participated in B&R are closely observing the initiative

Table 4. Number of Study Settings Based On Lead Country

Lead country	Continents	Join B&R	Total
China	Asia	Yes	62
Malaysia	Asia	Yes	7
Poland	Europe	Yes	5
Australia	Oceania	No	4
Thailand	Asia	Yes	3
New Zealand	Oceania	Yes	2
Pakistan	Asia	Yes	2
Singapore	Asia	Yes	2
South Korea	Asia	Yes	2
Ukraine	Europe	Yes	2
USA	North America	No	2
Ethiopia	Africa	Yes	1
France	Europe	No	1
India	Asia	No	1
Iran	Asia	Yes	1
Latvia	Europe	Yes	1
The Netherlands	Europe	No	1
Oman	Asia	Yes	1
Russia	Europe	Yes	1
South Africa	Africa	Yes	1
Switzerland	Europe	No	1
Turkey	Asia	Yes	1

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To understand the articles' directions of the B&R subtopics, the main researcher imported the articles' titles and abstracts using the VOSviewer (VOS) software for text frequency statistics, clustering, and visualization of associations. VOS is software designed to visualize bibliometric maps, reveals the intensity of terms and their interrelationships through the color,

size, and clustering results of nodes, the distance of terms reflects the relevance (Zuo and Xiao, 2015). A closer distance shows a stronger relationship, and more frequent discussion together. Terms, through nodes, in the same color are grouped in the same cluster, the size of nodes is determined by the frequency. The higher the text frequency, the larger the nodes. The map will visually demonstrate the most important terms in the B&R subtopics and the co-occurrence relations.

The researcher excluded cases where a term was only present in the same literature but was repeated excessively. The result proposed six clusters (see Error! Reference source not found.): Pakistan, Asia, strategy and company, direct investment, OFDI and infrastructure. The six clusters contain highly similar terms that are distinguished by color (see Error! Reference source not found.). CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor) and direct investment are the most highly discussed subtopics, followed by Asia, strategy and company, OFDI and infrastructure

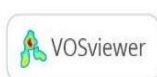
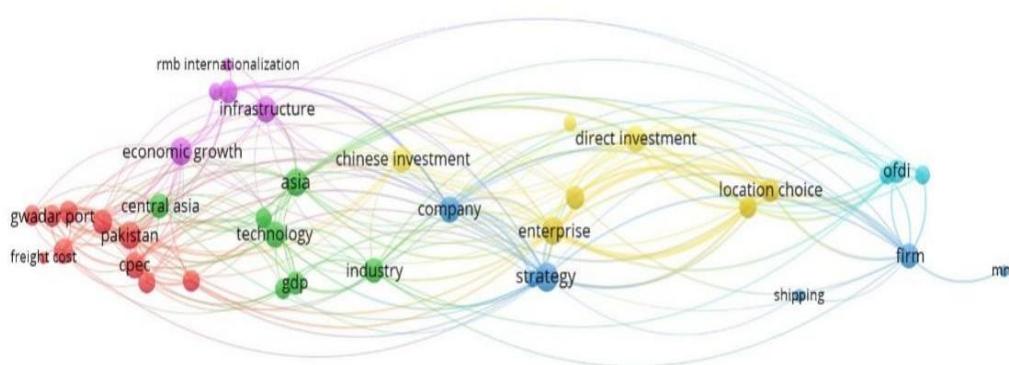


Figure 7. Research Cluster Of Samples (Color Online)

According to Error! Reference source not found., there is a high relevance between Pakistan cluster, Asia cluster, and infrastructure cluster. For term co-occurrence, (1) the term Pakistan is closest to the CPEC and Gwadar port, (2) direct investment is closest to location choice, (3) location choice has the thickest connection to enterprise and OFDI (outward foreign direct investment), and (4) infrastructure has the thickest connection to Asia and economic growth.

Table 5. Visual clustering results of VOS

Cluster	Color	Terms
Pakistan	Red	Pakistan, CPEC, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, freight cost, Gwadar port, international relation,

		sustainable development.
Asia	Green	Asia, industry, technology, central Asia, CO2 emission, international trade, GDP.
Strategy and company	Dark blue	strategy, company, firm, MNF, shipping.
Direct investment	Yellow	direct investment, OFDI, location choice, Chinese multinational enterprise, Chinese investment.
Infrastructure	Purple	infrastructure, economic growth, governance, RMB internationalization, environmental infrastructure.
OFDI	Blue	OFDI, Chinese firm.

The visual result of VOS is used as a reference for cluster division, whereby the main researcher reviewed the full text of the articles, and finally re-organized the six cluster, which was divided into the following three themes: regional cooperation, OFDI, and infrastructure development. This process shows that (1) articles under the Pakistan cluster mainly discuss the impact of the CPEC cooperation, and articles under the Asia cluster focuses on trade cooperation in Asia; thus, the Pakistan cluster and Asia cluster are classified as regional cooperation theme, (2) articles under direct investment are mainly discussed with Chinese multinational enterprise (MNEs) and OFDI location choice, and classified as OFDI theme, (4) articles under strategy and company cluster mainly discuss investment and logistic policies, so these terms are divided into the theme of infrastructure development and OFDI.

Discussion

Regional cooperation

The discussion on this theme is mainly divided into CPEC, other parts of Asia and other regional cooperation. As can be seen from Error! Reference source not found., the discussions of this theme are closely related to infrastructure construction and OFDI. 48 articles in total under the theme.

CPEC

There are ten articles on CPEC, eight from a qualitative point of view, which discuss the sustainability of CPEC and the impact of CPEC. Gwadar Port, in Pakistan is the focal point of CPEC as it is the most important shipping route in the region. The geographic position of CPEC has significant economic and strategic importance to the region and nearby regions, because this CPEC is the only corridor connecting Pakistan to China, indirectly helping landlocked countries to enter the ocean for transportation purposes. It can improve regional infrastructure and ultimately strengthen links between Asia and Eastern Europe ([Rehman et al., 2023](#)). For Pakistan, it is a strategic and economic game-changer ([Malik, 2018](#)) because it connects Pakistan with western regions such as Europe and Africa. CPEC is also a booster for China to become the world's largest economy, by providing China with a safer and shorter route compared to Strait of Malacca, this will increase and accelerate China's trade and investment activities around the world ([Majeed et al., 2023](#)).

Cooperation with the Rest of Asia

There are 20 articles about Asia, seven articles about what Asia could expect from B&R, four articles on infrastructure development in Asia, and three articles about investment in Asia. Seven of these articles focus on Southeast Asia, verifying the positive attention gained by ASEAN as China's largest trading partner.

There are many emerging market countries in the Asian region, providing a large potential consumer market along the B&R. China understands that its development is linked to Asia and responds to its neighbors' huge infrastructure needs through B&R. Cooperation between emerging Asian countries and China relies mainly on B&R, for logistics, tourism, energy and transportation purposes, this help to provide infrastructure development will boost economic growth in the region.

Cooperation with other Regions

There are 18 articles discussing how other regions cooperate with B&R; six articles focus on the possible positions of the region in B&R, four articles on cooperative characteristics. Among these articles, ten articles focus on European countries and three articles on African nations. Since some regions are not deeply involved in B&R and would like to attract more investments from B&R, the articles in this sub-theme discuss the assessment and careful consideration of opportunities and risks which shapes their sentiment towards B&R. Articles under this sub-theme mainly originate from Europe and discuss on the possibility of B&R cooperation with the region. This is noted by [Garlick \(2020\)](#), because B&R is set up to target the European market, through focusing on Central Asia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Central and Eastern Europe; yet cooperations with European countries are surprisingly still in the early stages.

B&R and Regional Cooperation

The systematic review shows that the research on regional cooperation mainly involves three sub-themes: CPEC, cooperation with the rest of Asia and cooperation with other regions. These sub-themes generally discuss the potential benefit of joining B&R, and how to participate.

According to the articles, B&R promote positive effects on participating countries' bilateral trade, economic growth, poverty eradication, trade cost reduction, security, and energy crisis relief. B&R has lowered trade barriers to a certain extent and indirectly encourages bilateral trade ([Dang and Pang, 2020](#)), help achieve regional integration ([Kong, 2019](#)), and increase their standards of living ([Chin et al., 2019](#)). B&R is gradually accepted by more countries. As an example, [Wang \(2021\)](#) propose that B&R provides an opportunity for EU to overcome the economic gap between countries, to weaken the side effects of US trade sanctions, and to ease the EU's relationship with Russia.

OFDI

There are 34 articles under this theme, with eight articles on how B&R promotes China's OFDI, five articles on the location choice of China's OFDI, four articles on the impact of China's OFDI, three articles on investment security, two articles on the lagged effects of OFDI. The articles of this theme involve two sub-themes: the influencing factors of OFDI and the impact of FDI.

Influencing Factors of OFDI

The articles in this sub-theme discuss how B&R moderates the influencing factors of Chinese companies' investment. [Liu et al. \(2017\)](#) examine the impact of country openness, market potential, host country's infrastructure and exchange rates on Chinese OFDI. This is supported by a paper by [Yao et al. \(2019\)](#), who propose a site selection model for OFDI in the B&R regions with three main factors: industrial development (geographical distance, labor,

infrastructure, economic freedom), socio-political situation (social stability, political stability, corruption control, urbanization, economic openness), and ecological environment (regulations, natural disasters). [Bashir et al. \(2021\)](#) research on investment from emerging economies supports the negative correlation of economic freedom, arguing that political risk is a moderating factor between resource endowment and OFDI. The effect of geographical distance factor has been supported and expanded with cultural distance and institutional distance factor ([Bashir et al., 2021](#); [Wu et al., 2023](#)). It is also important to note that B&R is comparatively more influential to the south Africa ([Della Posta, 2023](#)).

The Impact of FDI

The impact of B&R-led Chinese OFDI are discussed in two directions, positive and negative. There are articles that explain how B&R-led Chinese OFDI has a positive impact on the receiving countries through higher trade profit margins, reduced carbon emissions and economic growth. A paper by [Lu et al. \(2018\)](#) argues that FDI has a complementary effect rather than a trade substitution effect on the host country's total export volume. For the environment, articles by [Su et al. \(2022\)](#) and [Li et al. \(2021\)](#) show that China's OFDI encourage in reduction of CO2 emissions in all B&R countries, and the impact on high-income countries is slightly greater than that of low-income countries. Studies by [Zhang et al. \(2020\)](#) and ([Della Posta, 2023](#)) found that B&R-led Chinese OFDI boosts economic growth in developing countries but delayed few years. However, some articles discussing about the negative impacts of B&R-led Chinese OFDI to the host countries, such as leading to border securities, debt crisis and a decrease in FDI utilization ([Ahmad et al., 2020](#); [Shah, 2018](#)).

B&R-led OFDI and Their Impacts

Articles in this category mainly discuss the impact of B&R on Chinese firms and the host countries, including investment decisions, the determinants of B&R-led Chinese OFDI, investment risks, and the impact of B&R-led Chinese OFDI on the host country and surrounding regions. According to the article, B&R facilitates FDI flow through nationally coordinated investment partnerships, providing security of funds, rationally resolving trade disputes, and reducing costs, mainly from China's OFDI. Additionally, B&R-led Chinese OFDI is mainly influenced by the level of infrastructure, political stability, market openness, market size, and institutional distance of the host country. B&R-led Chinese OFDI can contribute to improving the environment and income level of residents in host countries, but it may adversely affect the stability of several regions through selective investment.

Infrastructure development

Among the reviewed articles, seven articles discussed port facilities, and six articles discussed railway transportation. In terms of land transportation, scholars mainly focused on multimodal construction of transportation hubs and their operation mode decisions ([Bhatti and Hanjra, 2019](#); [Jun et al., 2023](#); [Sun et al., 2019](#)). In addition to the hard infrastructure, articles also suggested the soft infrastructures provide optimization for hard infrastructure, including efficiency improvement measures ([Li, 2018](#); [Mustafa et al., 2021](#); [Sun et al., 2019](#)), and evaluation system ([Manzoor and Mir, 2022](#); [Wang et al., 2021](#)).

B&R has broken the bottleneck of connectivity through infrastructure. Its goal is to carry out large-scale infrastructure development plans, expand intra-regional and inter regional connections, and develop multilateral partnerships with Central Asian countries in the fields of trade, energy, and transportation routes ([Asian Development Bank, 2023](#); [Iqbal et al.,](#)

[2019](#)), through increasing investment in airports, highways, railways, ports, energy pipelines, and fiber optic lines. The articles under infrastructure theme involve three sub-themes: the impact of infrastructure development to the host country, infrastructure efficiency and infrastructure assessment.

The Impact of Infrastructure Development To The Host Country

Infrastructure construction projects in general are beneficial to the host country, as it can improve regional connectivity, reduce transportation time and costs, increase employment opportunities, change existing freight networks, and achieve sustainable development. For example, the Łódź-Chengdu railway case by [Bartosiewicz and Szterlik \(2019\)](#) shows that the terminal will provide employment and economic development opportunities, helping the local areas (Łódź, Poland and Chengdu, China) as a regional logistics distribution center. An article by [Zeng et al. \(2018\)](#) indicated that the construction of the Kra Canal (The east-west canal through Thailand) will shorten the voyage, and change the volume of traffic in the strait of Malacca. In addition, studies done by Notteboom and Yang (2017) and Ghanem et al. (2021) illustrated that B&R encourage the utilization of multimodal transportation networks, as port operations can combine corridors seaports and dry ports to strengthen connections between domestic and cross-border markets. Infrastructure development also help to reduce poverty and meet the needs to reduce costs and trade uncertainty ([Della Posta, 2023](#)).

Infrastructure Efficiency

Articles on this sub-theme mainly discuss the way to improve infrastructure efficiency in B&R countries. An article by [Ramasamy and Yeung \(2019\)](#) states that both soft and hard infrastructure promote exports, through the enhanced effectiveness of hard infrastructure.

Soft infrastructure refers to the system and management of trade logistics, which can be achieved through optimization of space and resource management. As the logistics systems usually begin with procurement, an article by [Sun et al. \(2019\)](#) focused on the procurement of multimodal transport services and proposed three effective dual auction mechanisms that consider transaction costs. An article by [Li \(2018\)](#) proposed a 'sub-block clustering' approach to improve the flexibility of yard storage space allocation to containers, thereby improving the utilization of port space.

Hard infrastructure refers to the physical construction of the logistical infrastructure, which is complex when it is involving multiple countries, which is the implication of B&R. However, only one article is discussed in-depth. [Jun et al. \(2023\)](#) establishes a tripartite evolutionary game model with local railway companies, operating cities and international freight enterprises as the main body, in improving the operational efficiency of China-Europe railway express.

Infrastructure Assessment

Due to the complexity of B&R-led infrastructure projects, decision makers are required to plan, design, and select the construction of specific projects, which are mainly discussed by articles in this sub-theme. To determine the priority of infrastructure projects, [Shao et al. \(2018\)](#) proposed an evaluation method for the construction of large-scale multinational high-speed railways in the B&R region. This is followed by an article by [Bhatti and Hanjra \(2019\)](#), which predicted the efficiency and location of competing or complementing ports, determining which port to develop first after logistics disruptions. Articles discuss ways to assess whether port development projects should be implemented. As examples, [Mustafa et](#)

al. (2021) established a port efficiency evaluation method and Wang et al. (2021) constructed a model to assess the sustainability of ports. In summary, there were 72 articles on regional cooperation, OFDI, and infrastructure development, or 69.2 per cent. There are also 32 articles in the bilateral distance, RMB internationalization, human resources, supply chain, cross-border e-commerce, supply chain, and so on. However, while there is a certain amount of research accumulating in these topics, there are still major gaps that need to be filled.

Future directions

According to the articles reviewed in this study, the research content on B&R is relatively focused on regional cooperation, OFDI, and infrastructure development. These core discussions account for around 70% of the B&R discussions. However, there are also open research gaps in these core research topics (see **Table 6. Research gap of main themes**), which are expected to be addressed in future studies.

Table 6. Research gap of main themes

Themes	Directions	Gap	Examples of Research Questions
Regional cooperation	Prospects	The impact of B&R on the management of MNEs	How do B&R impact the governance of Chinese MNEs in the host country?
	Potential benefits	Dynamic causal identification.	Is the local employment in B&R projects continuously increasing? Has B&R promoted bilateral trade growth by improving trade facilitation and transportation infrastructure?
	How to participate	Dynamic analysis of the mode changes.	Does sub-regional cooperation model continuously benefit economic growth and employment in the region?
OFDI	Influencing factors of OFDI	Explore situational boundaries.	Does investment experience play a moderating role between economic factors and OFDI? Does B&R affect the impact of resource endowment on investment decisions with different ownership?
	The impact of OFDI	small and medium-sized enterprises.	How does the OFDI of SMEs affect the development of digital development in the host country?
Infrastructure development	The impact of infrastructure	Multimodal transport; specific trade goods groups.	What are the bottlenecks in multimodal transportation? Does specific trade commodity groups affect the selection of infrastructure construction?
	Efficiency improvement	The effect of non-price factors on operations.	What is the effect of non-price factors on multimodal transport operations?
	Project assessment	Dynamic analysis.	Does the trade volume of node infrastructure change over time and policies?

In regional cooperation research, due to the regional differences, diversity, and complexity, more targeted dynamic tracking and observation are needed to obtain more practical solutions (Dang and Pang, 2020; Hassan et al., 2022; Mukhtar et al., 2022). Examples of potential research topics shown in Table 6. **Research gap of main themes.**

In the OFDI theme, accurate location choice is influenced by various factors, including institutional environment, enterprise status, and local endowment advantages (Bakar et al., 2022; Nielsen et al., 2018). Existing research overly emphasizes the direct driving force of factors, often neglecting the exploration of boundary conditions (Arikan and Shenkar, 2022). As the difference of investment motivations and scales may lead to difference decision-making. Therefore, future research could further discuss the boundary conditions that affect BRI investment decisions (Bashir et al., 2021; Quer, 2023). In the infrastructure development theme, future research can discuss the integration of soft and hard infrastructure, and dynamic evaluation and (Manzoor and Mir, 2022; Zheng et al., 2020). It is also recommended to conduct in-depth investigations into the relationship between local demand and infrastructure. The other topics that receive less attention include RMB internationalization, green sustainability, and digital development. We suggest that future research can further improve the research map of BRI on the above topics. This is summarized in **Figure 8**:

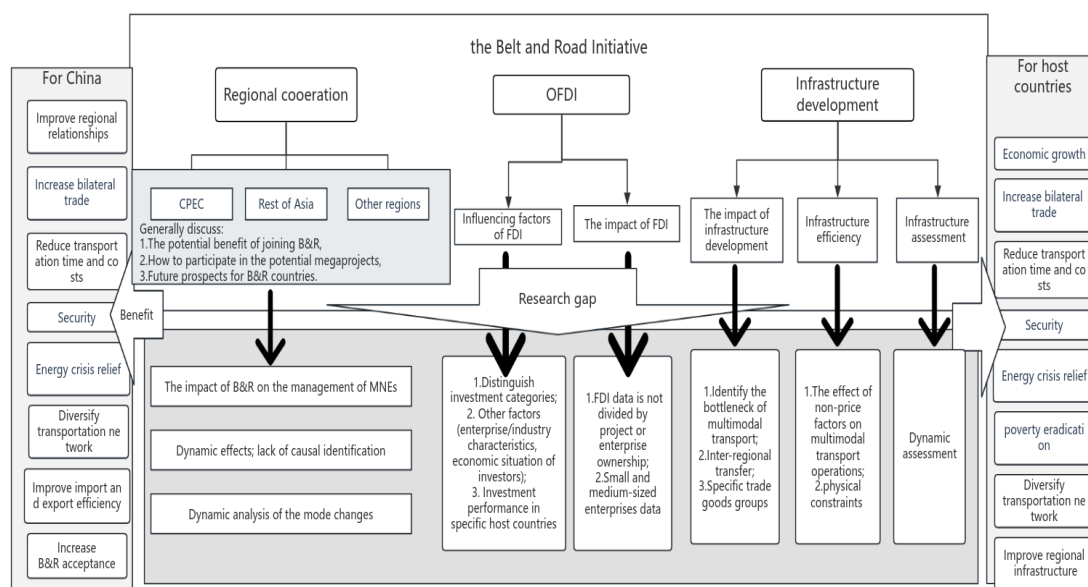


Figure 8. Research Gap of B&R

CONCLUSION

B&R is a big-scale supranational framework with multiple fields, regions, and high investment. The interdisciplinary diversity and complexity of the B&R topic have brought a wealth of discussions but also challenges the long-term in-depth and depiction of complete contours of the research. In response, this study categorizes the themes under this topic in the international business field, aiming to provide a snapshot of the research map rather than mining specific problems. This study examined the existing study under the topic of B&R

with PRISMA and further analyzed using VOSviewer to categorize the themes. Based on the analysis, B&R's research in the international business field focuses on three main themes which are regional cooperation, OFDI, and infrastructure development. The regional cooperation theme discussed the impact of B&R's cooperation in various fields on participating countries. The theme of OFDI mainly explores the location choice of Chinese investment bring by B&R, as well as the potential contributions and hidden dangers for recipient countries. The infrastructure development theme mainly involves the influencing factors of infrastructure projects, evaluation, and efficiency improvement methods. Based on the analysis and discussion in this article, future research can be extended in the following directions: (1) dynamic track the impact of regional cooperation, (2) identify the boundary conditions for OFDI decision-making, (3) efficient integration of soft and hard infrastructure; to provide researchers with further knowledge, and managers with theoretical support for decision-making.

REFERENCES

- Abelha, M., Fernandes, S., Mesquita, D., Seabra, F., and Ferreira-Oliveira, A. T. (2020). Graduate employability and competence development in higher education – A systematic literature review using PRISMA. *Sustainability*, 12(15), 5900. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12155900>
- Ado, A. (2020). Africa Cooperation: FDI, Informal Institutions, BRI, and Guanxi. *African Studies Quarterly*, 19(3 & 4), Article 3 & 4.
- Ahmad, R., Mi, H., and Fernald, L. W. (2020). Revisiting the potential security threats linked with the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). *Journal of the International Council for Small Business*, 1(1), 64–80. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1080/26437015.2020.1724735>
- Aksnes, D. W., Langfeldt, L., and Wouters, P. (2019). Citations, citation indicators, and research quality: An overview of basic concepts and theories. *Sage Open*, 9(1). Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019829575>
- Arikan, I., and Shenkar, O. (2022). Neglected elements: What we should cover more of in international business research. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 53(7), 1484–1507. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41267-021-00472-9>
- Asian Development Bank. (2023). *Asian Economic Integration Report 2023: Advancing Digital Services Trade in Asia and the Pacific* (Report TCS230031-2; 0 ed., p. 306). Asian Development Bank. <https://doi.org/10.22617/TCS230031-2>
- Atif, M. (2021). The belt and road initiative (BRI) vs. quadrilateral security dialogue (the Quad): A perspective of a game theory. *Journal of Development and Social Sciences*, 2(IV), 63–75. [https://doi.org/10.47205/jdss.2021\(2-IV\)06](https://doi.org/10.47205/jdss.2021(2-IV)06)
- Atkins, E., Fravel, M. T., Wang, R., Ackert, N., and Huang, S. (2023). Two paths: Why states join or avoid China's belt and road initiative. *Global Studies Quarterly*, 3, 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1093/isagsq/ksad049>
- Bakar, A., Sinnappan, P., Anor Salim, F. A., and Teo, P.-C. (2022). Factors influencing foreign direct investment (FDI) location selection: A review of the literature. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 12, 1271–1291. <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v12-i7/14103>
- Bartosiewicz, A., and Szterlik, P. (2019). Łódź's benefits from the One Belt One Road Initiative. *International Journal of Logistics Research and Applications*, 22(1), 47–63. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13675567.2018.1526261>

- Bashir, M. F., Ma, B., Shahzad, L., Liu, B., and Ruan, Q. (2021). China's quest for economic dominance and energy consumption: Can Asian economies provide natural resources for the success of One Belt One Road? *Managerial and Decision Economics*, 42(3), 570–587. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mde.3255>
- Bhatti, O. K., and Hanjra, A. R. (2019). Development prioritization through analytical hierarchy process (AHP)–Decision making for port selection on the One Belt One Road. *Journal of Chinese Economic and Foreign Trade Studies*, 12(3), 121–150. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JCEFTS-04-2019-0020>
- Cai, W. (2022). Determinants of the Renminbi anchor effect: From the perspective of the Belt and Road Initiative. *International Journal of Finance and Economics*, 27(3), 3421–3433. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ijfe.2328>
- Chang, L., and Cheong, K.-C. (2020). Chinese outward foreign direct investment in Belt and Road countries: Trends, characteristics and policies. *Contemporary Chinese Political Economy and Strategic Relations*, 6(1), 321–370. <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-2862571/v1>
- Chin, M. Y., Ong, S. L., and Kon, Y. Q. (2019). One Belt One Road: A new aspect on income convergence. *International Journal of Trade and Global Markets*, 12(3–4), 241–249. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJTGM.2019.101544>
- Dang, J., and Pang, Y. (2020). Border effect of agricultural trade between China and the Belt and Road countries: A computable general equilibrium model analysis. *International Food and Agribusiness Management Review*, 23(3), 369–389. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.22434/IFAMR2019.0115>
- Della Posta, P. (2023). The Belt and Road Initiative: Inclusive globalization and poverty reduction. *Global Journal of Emerging Market Economies*, 15(2), 273–288. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09749101231167448>
- Du, Q., Deng, D., and Wood, J. (2021). Differences in distance and spatial effects on cross-border e-commerce and international trade: An empirical analysis of China and one-belt one-road countries. *Journal of Global Information Management*, 30(2), 1–24. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.4018/JGIM.20220301.oa6>
- Fan, D., Zhang, Y., Huang, X., and Su, Y. (2023). Varieties of institutional systems, the belt-road initiative, and the patterned investment flows. *International Business Review*, 32(4). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ibusrev.2023.102123>
- Garlick, J. (2020). The regional impacts of China's belt and road initiative. *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*, 49(1), 3–13. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1868102620968848>
- Ghanem, O., Xuemei, L., Alam, K. M., and Baig, S. (2021). The effectiveness of freight costs on trade potentials between China and European Union, Middle East, North African countries under China-Pakistan Corridor. *International Journal of Shipping and Transport Logistics*, 13(3–4), 327–359. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJSTL.2021.113988>
- Gholizadeh, A., Madani, S., and Saneinia, S. (2020). A geoeconomic and geopolitical review of Gwadar Port on belt and road initiative. *Maritime Business Review*, 5(4), 335–349. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MABR-11-2019-0051>
- Hassan, M., Mahmood, Z., Janjua, S., and Asif, N. (2022). Evaluating megaprojects from a sustainability perspective: A case of China-Pakistan economic corridor (CPEC). *Journal of Chinese Economic and Foreign Trade Studies*, 15(2), 150–170. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JCEFTS-10-2021-0063>
- Hizam-Hanafiah, M., Soomro, M. A., and Abdullah, N. L. (2020). Industry 4.0 readiness

- models: A systematic literature review of model dimensions. *Information (Switzerland)*, 11(7), 1–13. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.3390/info11070364>
- Iqbal, B. A., Rahman, M. N., and Sami, S. (2019). Impact of Belt and Road Initiative on Asian economies. *Global Journal of Emerging Market Economies*, 11(3), 260–277. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0974910119887059>
- Jiang, Q., Li, Y., and Peng, Y. (2025). The welfare effects of the Belt and Road Initiative: An assessment via staggered difference-in-differences. *Journal of the Asia Pacific Economy*, 0(0), 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13547860.2025.2489951>
- Jun, Z., Lu, Z., Yan, G., Peng, H., and Jianpeng, C. (2023). A tripartite evolutionary game analysis of the market-oriented operation decision of China-Europe railway express. *Journal of Industrial Engineering and Engineering Management*, 37(2), 197–208. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.13587/j.cnki.jjeem.2023.02.019>
- Kong, T. Y. (2019). The Belt and Road initiative in Southeast Asia and responses from ASEAN countries. *China: An International Journal*, 17(4), 24–33. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1353/chn.2019.0039>
- Li, K., Rollins, J., and Yan, E. (2018a). Web of Science use in published research and review papers 1997-2017: A selective, dynamic, cross-domain, content-based analysis. *Scientometrics*, 115(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-017-2622-5>
- Li, M. K. (2018). Yard storage planning for river terminals on One Belt One Road. *International Journal of Shipping and Transport Logistics*, 10(3), 299–315. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJSTL.2018.091675>
- Li, S., Su, J., Liu, Y., Lepech, M., and Wang, J. (2021). How “Belt and Road” initiative implementation has influenced R&D outcomes of Chinese enterprises: Asset-exploitation or knowledge transfer? *R&D Management*, 51(3), 273–292. <https://doi.org/10.1111/radm.12445>
- Liang, R., and Liu, Z. (2020). Port infrastructure connectivity, logistics performance and seaborne trade on economic growth: An empirical analysis on “21st-century maritime silk road.” *Journal of Coastal Research*, 106(SI), 319–324. <https://doi.org/10.2112/SI106-074.1>
- Liu, H. Y., Tang, Y. K., Chen, X. L., and Poznanska, J. (2017). The determinants of Chinese outward FDI in countries along “One Belt One Road.” *Emerging Markets Finance and Trade*, 53(6), 1374–1387. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1540496X.2017.1295843>
- Lu, Y., Lu, Y., Zeng, K., and Li, Y. (2018). China’s outward foreign direct investment and the margins of trade: Empirical evidence from “one belt, one road” countries. *China: An International Journal*, 16(1), 129–151. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1353/chn.2018.0006>
- Ma, S. (2022). Growth effects of economic integration: New evidence from the Belt and Road Initiative. *Economic Analysis and Policy*, 73, 753–767. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eap.2022.01.004>
- Majeed, T., Anwar, Z., and Bashir, F. (2023). CPEC: Pakistan and China’s joint step towards a shared destiny. *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics*, 8(2), 547–557. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20578911231156102>
- Malik, A. R. (2018). The China–Pakistan economic corridor (CPEC): A game changer for Pakistan’s economy. In B. R. Deepak (Ed.), *China’s Global Rebalancing and the New Silk Road* (pp. 69–83). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-5972-8_7
- Manzoor, H., and Mir, P. (2022). General equilibrium trade policy analysis among one belt one road nations using structural gravity framework. *Foreign Trade Review*, 58(4), 484–503. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00157325221120712>

- Moher, D., Liberati, A., Tetzlaff, J., and Altman, D. G. (2009). Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses: The PRISMA statement. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*, 62(10), 1006–1012. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclinepi.2009.06.005>
- Mukhtar, A., Zhu, Y., Lee, Y., Bambacas, M., and Cavusgil, S. (2022). Challenges confronting the “One Belt One Road” initiative: Social networks and cross-cultural adjustment in CPEC projects. *International Business Review*, 31(1). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ibusrev.2021.101902>
- Munjal, S., Varma, S., and Bhatnagar, A. (2022). A comparative analysis of Indian and Chinese FDI into Africa: The role of governance and alliances. *Journal of Business Research*, 149, 1018–1033. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2022.05.087>
- Mustafa, F. S., Khan, R. U., and Mustafa, T. (2021). Technical efficiency comparison of container ports in Asian and Middle East region using DEA. *Asian Journal of Shipping and Logistics*, 37(1), 12–19. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajsl.2020.04.004>
- Nielsen, B., Asmussen, C., and Goerzen, A. (2018). Toward a synthesis of micro and macro factors that influence foreign direct investment location choice. In *The Routledge Companion to the Geography of International Business* (1st ed., p. 23). Routledge.
- Notteboom, T., and Yang, Z. (2017). Port governance in China since 2004: Institutional layering and the growing impact of broader policies. *Research in Transportation Business and Management*, 22, 184–200. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rtbm.2016.09.002>
- Page, M. J., McKenzie, J. E., Bossuyt, P. M., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, T. C., Mulrow, C. D., Shamseer, L., Tetzlaff, J. M., Akl, E. A., Brennan, S. E., Chou, R., Glanville, J., Grimshaw, J. M., Hróbjartsson, A., Lalu, M. M., Li, T., Loder, E. W., Mayo-Wilson, E., McDonald, S., ... Moher, D. (2021). The PRISMA 2020 statement: An updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ*, 372. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n71>
- Pan, S., and Chong, Z. (2023). Effects of FDI on trade among countries along the belt and road: A network perspective. *The Journal of International Trade & Economic Development*, 32(1), 84–103. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09638199.2022.2078865>
- Pranckutė, R. (2021). Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus: The titans of bibliographic information in today’s academic world. *Publications*, 9(1), 12. Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute. <https://doi.org/10.3390/publications9010012>
- Qin, G. (2023). *Chinese modernization, new opportunities in the world* [Speech]. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China. http://switzerlandemb.fmprc.gov.cn/web/wjzbz_673089/zyjh_673099/202304/t20230421_11062840.shtml
- Quer, D. (2023). The establishment mode of Chinese MNEs abroad and the Belt and Road Initiative: Insights from a strategy tripod perspective. *Cross Cultural & Strategic Management*, 30(3), 441–466. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ccsm-07-2022-0129>
- Quer, D., and Andreu, R. (2023). International strategies of Chinese tourism MNEs: The impact of the Belt and Road Initiative and state ownership. *International Journal of Emerging Markets*, 18(9), 2934–2953. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijoem-09-2020-1096>
- Ramasamy, B., and Yeung, M. C. H. (2019). China’s one belt one road initiative: The impact of trade facilitation versus physical infrastructure on exports. *The World Economy*, 42(6), 1673–1694. <https://doi.org/10.1111/twec.12808>
- Rehman, Q. U., Waseem, M., Ahmed, W., Islam, I., Janjuhah, H. T., and Kontakiotis, G.

- (2023). Ground motion hazard of the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) routes in Pakistan. *Progress in Earth and Planetary Science*, 10(1). Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40645-023-00559-x>
- Shah, A. R. (2018). How does China–Pakistan economic corridor show the limitations of China’s ‘One Belt One Road’ model. *Asia and the Pacific Policy Studies*, 5(2), 378–385. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1002/app5.224>
- Shao, Z. Z., Ma, Z. J., Sheu, J. B., and Gao, H. O. (2018). Evaluation of large-scale transnational high-speed railway construction priority in the belt and road region. *Transportation Research Part E: Logistics and Transportation Review*, 117, 40–57. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tre.2017.07.007>
- Shen, H. (2018). Building a digital silk road? Situating the internet in China’s Belt and Road Initiative. *International Journal of Communication*, 12(0), Article 0.
- Su, X., Li, Y., Fang, K., and Long, Y. (2022). Does China’s direct investment in “Belt and Road Initiative” countries decrease their carbon dioxide emissions? *Research in International Business and Finance*, 339, 130543. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2022.130543>
- Sun, J., Li, G., Xu, S. X., and Dai, W. (2019). Intermodal transportation service procurement with transaction costs under Belt and Road Initiative. *Transportation Research Part E: Logistics and Transportation Review*, 127, 31–48. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tre.2019.04.013>
- Wang, C., Haralambides, H., and Zhang, L. (2021). Sustainable port development: The role of Chinese seaports in the 21st century Maritime Silk Road. *International Journal of Shipping and Transport Logistics*, 13(1–2), 205–232. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJSTL.2021.112924>
- Wang, H. (2021). The belt and road initiative agreements: Characteristics, rationale, and challenges. *World Trade Review*, 20(3), 282–305. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474745620000452>
- Wei, H., Sheng, Z., and Lee, P. T. W. (2018). The role of dry port in hub-and-spoke network under Belt and Road Initiative. *Maritime Policy & Management*, 45(3), 370–387. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03088839.2017.1396505>
- World Bank. (2019). *Belt and Road Economics: Opportunities and Risks of Transport Corridors* (p. 158). World Bank. <https://hdl.handle.net/10986/31878>
- Wu, X. J., Ma, M. T., and Wang, X. Q. (2023). Institutional difference direction, social network and OFDI location choice. *Journal of Industrial Engineering and Engineering Management*, 37(1), 31–46. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.13587/j.cnki.jieem.2023.01.003>
- Yang, X., Lewis, D., Roddy, S., and Moise, D. (2018). One belt, one road, one world: Where is US business connectivity? In W. Zhang, I. Alon, and C. Lattemann (Eds.), *China’s Belt and Road Initiative: Changing the Rules of Globalization* (WOS:000457292000005; pp. 55–72). Palgrave Macmillan Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-75435-2_4
- Yao, R., Bai, H., and Xu, H. (2019). Where should China’s thermal power industry prioritize its B&R investment? A study based on an environmental site selection analysis. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 215, 669–679. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2019.01.011>
- Yii, K. J., Bee, K. Y., Cheam, W. Y., Chong, Y. L., and Lee, C. M. (2018). Is transportation infrastructure important to the one belt one road (OBOR) initiative? Empirical evidence from the selected Asian countries. *Sustainability*, 10(11), 4131. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su10114131>

- Zeng, Q., Wang, G. W. Y., Qu, C., and Li, K. X. (2018). Impact of the Carat canal on the evolution of hub ports under China's Belt and Road Initiative. *Transportation Research Part E: Logistics and Transportation Review*, 117, 96–107. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tre.2017.05.009>
- Zhang, H. Y., and De Beule, F. (2024). The impact of contextual distance on the investment locations of Chinese multinationals in countries along the Belt and Road Initiative. *Asia Pacific Business Review*, 30(2), 220–250. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602381.2022.2093524>
- Zhang, X., Zhang, W., and Lee, P. T.-W. (2020). Importance rankings of nodes in the China railway express network under the Belt and Road Initiative. *Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice*, 139, 134–147. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tra.2020.07.003>
- Zhao, Y., Shuai, J., Shi, Y., Lu, Y., and Zhang, Z. (2022b-05-01). Exploring the co-opetition mechanism of renewable energy trade between China and the “Belt and Road” countries: A dynamic game approach. *Renewable Energy*, 191, 998–1008. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.renene.2022.04.022>
- Zheng, W., Xu, X., and Wang, H. (2020). Regional logistics efficiency and performance in China along the Belt and Road Initiative: The analysis of integrated DEA and hierarchical regression with carbon constraint. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 276, 123649. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2020.123649>
- Zhu, J., and Liu, W. (2020). A tale of two databases: The use of Web of Science and Scopus in academic papers. *Scientometrics*, 123(1), 321–335. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-020-03387-8>
- Zou, L., Shen, J. H., Zhang, J., and Lee, C.-C. (2022). What is the rationale behind China's infrastructure investment under the Belt and Road Initiative. *Journal of Economic Surveys*, 36(3), 605–633. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joes.12427>
- Zuo, L. H., and Xiao, X. T. (2015). Comparative study of knowledge graph visualization tools VOSViewer and NWB tool. *Information Science*, 33(2), 95–99. <https://doi.org/10.13833/j.cnki.is.2015.02.020>