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REVIEW

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Towards a "Newer Normal"? A Bibliometric Analysis Examining Organizational Culture in the Post-COVID-19 Higher Education Landscape in the United Kingdom

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Abstract: Concern continues to grow over the changing nature of work that initially formed a "new normal" within higher education institutions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. This situation is now being further impacted by subsequent economic and political challenges in the sector, which in turn shifts the workplace towards an even "newer normal". The purpose of this article is to (1) methodically and logically review the extant literature and research linking the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic to the organizational culture of higher education institutions in the United Kingdom (UK), and (2) based on a bibliometric analysis, to offer a road map for further empirical research in the future. Researchers have found that changing workplace norms, such as remote and hybrid working and other forms of flexibility in approaches to learning and the availability of delivery modes, have become increasingly common, which has changed the nature of working practices and underpinning aspects of organizational culture. Therefore, it now appears opportune to update existing knowledge on organizational culture theory within the UK higher education context to support policy development and enhance workplace practices in the post-COVID-19 period. From a theoretical perspective, this article contributes to organizational culture literature by assimilating a dataset of nascent studies generated through keyword search on Clarivate Analytics Web of Science that have examined the impact of COVID-19 on organizational culture in UK higher education institutions. This emergent dataset was analyzed using VOS Viewer, with the results of subsequent quantitative bibliometric analysis identifying the main existing research fronts as well as potential research directions for the empirical development of organizational culture. Based on this bibliometric analysis, the main suggested future research agendas that need to be addressed linked to organizational culture in the UK higher education sector in the post-COVID period are as follows: (a) to further examine changing cultural norms and expectations; (b) hybrid approaches to working; (c) academic identity; and (d) organizational culture and the changing psychological contract. Such research is important as the UK higher education sector now progresses towards an even "newer normal".

Keywords: COVID-19, higher education institution, university, organizational culture, pandemic, systematic literature review

1. Introduction

Anxiety continues to rise globally over the shifting character of work as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic [1]. This article reviews and assimilates a body of extant literature relating to the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on the organizational culture of higher education institutions in the United Kingdom (UK) and to provide a road map for further empirical research. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development emphasizes COVID-19 as a fundamental disrupter to the workplace and has become a crucial accelerator in anticipated changes to workforce perceptions and intentions related to how work is viewed and conducted in the coming decades [2]. Various authors contend that shifting work environment norms have had the result of increasing levels of uncertainty and job insecurity among the workforce, higher job intensification, increases in the use of technologies, plus the accompanying requirements for further development of skills and the alteration and perhaps blending of the boundary between home and work [3, 4]. Within the perspective of academic institutions, research by Dean and Campbell [5] further contends that HEIs have now transitioned to a situation where remote and hybrid working practices and alternative models of flexibility in learning and delivery have transformed into more of the norm and may be seen as common practice. Subsequently, Cornelius-Bell and Bell [6] contend that this has resulted in an academic working environment which is precarious as academic staff are deprived of stability and job security and can be required to attain qualifications beyond that of previous expectations within the labor market. In addition, they further contend, that an increasingly profit-orientated focus has lead to the "zombification" of the University where each academic

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competes for high-ranking publication ratings and highly rated teaching evaluation scores. Watermeyer et al. [7] suggest that the pandemic has aggravated existing inequalities in academia and have recommended further research investigating the "university pulse" as a means to developing understanding and awareness of the changing landscape of the HEI working environment during exigent and trying times. In this post-COVID-19 context, it therefore appears timely to update existing awareness and understanding of organizational cultures in UK higher education institutions to aid policy development related to higher education and augment, enrich, and improve working conditions and practices.

As a starting point, it can be argued that it is possible to discover more from a methodical and logical review of a full complement of publications outlining the current state of emergent research linking organizational culture within UK HEIs and COVID-19 in the post-pandemic period. The article therefore addresses two topical researches:

1) RQ1: What research has emerged deliberating the influence of COVID-19 on organizational culture in the context of UK HEIs in the post-pandemic period?
2) RQ2: What future opportunities for the development of empirical post-COVID-19 research within organizational culture scholarship in the context of UK higher education institutions?

From a theoretical perspective, the findings of the above research questions contribute to organizational culture literature by assimilating a dataset of nascent studies that have examined the impact of COVID-19 on organizational culture in UK HEIs and based on the subsequent bibliometric analysis offer a road map for further empirical research opportunities. The structure of the article is as follows: after the introduction, a narrative literature review is presented, with a subsequent methodology outlined and adopted for the complementary quantitative systematic review and creation of the dataset for analysis. The findings and discussion of the bibliometric analysis are then presented followed by the future research directions. Finally, the conclusions and limitations of the study are presented.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Organizational culture

Organizational culture is a fundamental feature of all organizations and may be considered a critical resource in the achievement of organizational success [8]. All organizations have a culture, an ambience, a way of doing things, and, as a result, a form of organizational behavior. This behavior distinguishes between and gives separate identities to companies, which may be very similar and competing in the same environment but have very different modus operandi. While definitions provide a useful focus, it is acknowledged that all such conceptual definitions contribute to the development of an accepted generic list of elements that need to be considered in any understanding of culture, including artifacts, language, norms of behavior and beliefs, values, and attitudes [9]. A selection of definitions of organizational culture is presented in Table 1.

2.1.1. Models of organizational culture

Johnson's [12] cultural web acknowledges that underpinning the behavior and actions of everyday life is a set of basic assumptions and beliefs, which give drive to people's behaviors and actions, which lend to subsequent application to organization and analysis. Similar foundations had been used by Schein [15] to develop a theory of organizational culture based on artifacts, espoused values, and underlying assumptions. Articles, values, and artifacts are important as observable aspects of culture, pointing analysis towards more abstract aspects of an organization's culture. Brown [9] states that values and beliefs are part of the sub-culture of broader organizational culture. The distinction between values and beliefs can be blurred, as people's beliefs are set against the background of their values. Attitudes can be seen as an individual's disposition to a particular thing or idea, can involve emotions, are developed over time, and are often the results of prejudices and stereotypes. Because they develop slowly, attitudes are likely to be de-rooted and have a more lasting impact on an individual's actions. Schein's [15] third level of culture is the basic assumptions of where the core of an organization's culture lies. Brown [9] points out that these basic assumptions are often mutually reinforcing and cannot be considered on a stand-alone basis. Any analysis of organizational cultures is further complicated by the fact that cultures are not static but are continually evolving over time.

Arguably, a more suitable and recognizable model for the establishment and analysis of culture in an education environment is that proposed by Hooijberg and Petrock [16], which suggests that the four types of culture termed clean, hierarchy, adhocracy, and market culture, fit together, with varying degrees of difference in individual universities, and are dictated by a range of internal

Table 1
A timeline summary of definitions of organizational culture in the literature

Author(s)	Definition
Morgan [10]	Defined elements of culture as "guiding action".
Meek [11]	"Culture should be regarded as something an organisation 'is', not something it 'has': it is not an independent variable nor can it be created, discoloured or destroyed by the whims of management".
Johnson [12]	A cultural paradigm "in so far as it is the deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organisation, that operate unconsciously and define in a basic 'taken for granted' fashion an organisation's view of itself and its environment".
Schein [13]	The culture of a group can be defined as a "pattern of basic assumptions which a given group has invented, discovered or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which have worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems".
Brown [9]	"Organisational culture refers to the pattern of beliefs, values and learned ways of coping with experience . . . and in the behaviours of its members".
Akanji et al. [14]	Organisational culture is "analogous to an organisation's personality".

and external contextual factors. Such internal factors reflect those found by considering the findings of a cultural web analysis [12, 17]. In an alternative model of universities as organizations, McNay [18] conceptualizes four organizational types termed collegium, bureaucracy, corporation, and enterprise. Collegium is recognized as freedom within this model, sharing principles of the Humboldtian model of education. Bureaucracy refers to regulation, recognizable today as quality standards and assurance, and associated processes. Corporation is considered as power, comprised of layers of directive management, led by a commander, the role of vice-chancellor, and demanding loyalty. The label of enterprise identifies students as customers or clients, placing them as central to decision-making and accountability. McNay [18] considers enterprise culture as an "emergent" shift in the balance between the four organizational types and observed that this may not prove to be an easily achieved balance, given the differences between the preferences and desires of staff and the aims and ambition of the organization. While the focus and acceptance of the four areas of McNay's [18] work may have experienced a significant shift, it is recognized that the key principle of achieving a level of balance of the four organizational types is arguably still relevant to higher education academics today, as supported by Nauffal and Nader [19].

2.2. The evolution of higher education culture in the UK

The evolution of culture in higher education institutions has appeared to be manifested around themes including academic citizenship and collegiality, the "publish-or-perish " culture, academic workload, employment contracts, and "managerialism". Weick [20] considers the structures and processes within the higher education system to be a "loosely coupled system" noting a lack of coordination, regulation, control, and communications. Some may remember "the good old days" when academics were given autonomy and freedom enabling them to "get on with it" as described by Weick, while others will recall, and welcome, that the 1970s represented a significant change for the higher education system, with further significant change also ahead [18]. Access to education was reframed, influenced by a mix of political forces and financial restraints, and alongside the multitude of changes came a rise in administration and administrative duties. McNay [18] reports the "decline of the professor and the rise of the registrar" representing a significant shift in culture within the UK higher education system, which views the university as a corporate enterprise. Following the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, the higher education sector became more of a single entity as former polytechnics and colleges of higher education increasingly became recognized as post-92 universities, bringing all higher education institutions under a single umbrella. Further movement has since taken place, with the introduction of private providers and private universities [21], which has perhaps created some disparities in the sector, beyond those of the traditional research-teaching divide [22], which continues to exist within the established sector.

A central feature of culture within institutions is their individual identity or the identity which they wish to portray. Becher [23] suggests that an organizational culture within a university is hard to explain or classify, because distinctive department cultures (or subsystems) are prevalent, with individual departments espousing different cultures, reflecting their disciplinary nature in the sciences or humanities. Mampaey [17] considers the university to be operating in an "institutionalized environment" in which people and departments aim to conform to values that are recognized and sanctioned at institutional level. With this, he suggests that people and departments are tied to symbols and images which, in their interpretation, depict the university or what they would like it to be. Fundamental to this, is what the institution is seeking to achieve, which may be driven primarily by a focus on teaching or research [24]. Dean and Forray [25] note a decline of academic citizenship and collegiality since the turn of the century, although evidence suggests that this is a longstanding problem within academia [26]. Similarly, Fagan and Teasdale [27] suggest that the meritocratic nature of academic promotions has resulted in a publish-or-perish culture in academia. They use the metaphor of a "game" where academics are required to play the game by demonstrating a strong track record of publications or perish. The publish-and-perish culture of academia is further emphasized by Bello et al. [28], who report that not playing the game can result in academics being "punished" by increased teaching loads. As such, the publish-and-perish culture has become a key driver in academic behavior. Reisz [29] records that 55.6% of academics felt under pressure to publish, which in turn negatively impacted on personal well-being. Such findings are akin to the concepts of "reward and research" as the prevalent feature of the successful academic career [25]. Frei and Grund [30] discuss the increasing workload of academics, which has led to increased workload pressures. A key feature of such trends has been the increased marketization of higher education resulting in increasing numbers of students and the failure of many higher education institutions to invest in appropriate staffing levels [31]. This has resulted in many academics having to work beyond contractual hours, daily, to keep on top of the extra and increasing demands of working in such environments [32]. In recent years, there has also been a growth of teaching-only contracts [33] and the use of part-time associate or hourly paid staff on casual contracts, but arguably the greatest significant manifestation of culture within higher education has been the rise in managerialism [34]. Deem [35] links managerialism with improving student experience and raising the quality of research outputs, from a management and/or organizational perspective – often termed "New Public Management" – but recognizes that individual academics often associate the same factors with reductions in both academic freedom and the ability to innovate. This, in turn, is seen to negatively impact on learning and teaching, students, and research.

2.2.1. Higher education culture and the impact of COVID-19

COVID-19 has had an unprecedented impact on the higher education sector. The disruption caused by the pandemic forced higher education institutions to adapt quickly, challenged existing models of teaching, researching, and learning, and forced many institutions to move courses online, which created tensions between what were considered "reasonable" or "unrealistic" models for teaching [4, 36]. While studies contend that HEIs have subsequently shifted after the "panic-gogy" period that existed during the pandemic and are at the stage of transformation whereby remote and hybrid working and other flexibility methods related to teaching and learning and service delivery has developed into the norm [5], little is known about higher education institutions and culture in the period following the COVID-19 pandemic. There remains scope, therefore, for more to be discovered from undertaking a corresponding methodical review. The literature base of recent studies [37–39], linking organizational culture to UK HEIs, has tended to focus on experiences during the COVID-19 period and subsequent return towards normality, rather than considering the changes to workplace culture in what we may term now as the "newer normal" in this new post-COVID period.

3. Methodology

3.1. Systematic approach

Bibliometric reviews, meta-analyses, and systematic reviews are increasingly being adopted in business and management literature [40]. Such approaches offer a complementary approach to the more traditional interpretive and qualitative approaches to undertaking a literature review [41]. Through identifying citation patterns, these systematic literature reviews provide greater levels of objectivity regarding the classifications of publications within particular research fields [42]. The research methods adopted in this article are rooted in bibliometrics [43], which comprise a set of methods which are arranged to analyze and evaluate research through quantitative analysis of bibliographic data, ordinarily focusing on citation analysis of research outputs.

3.2. Dataset

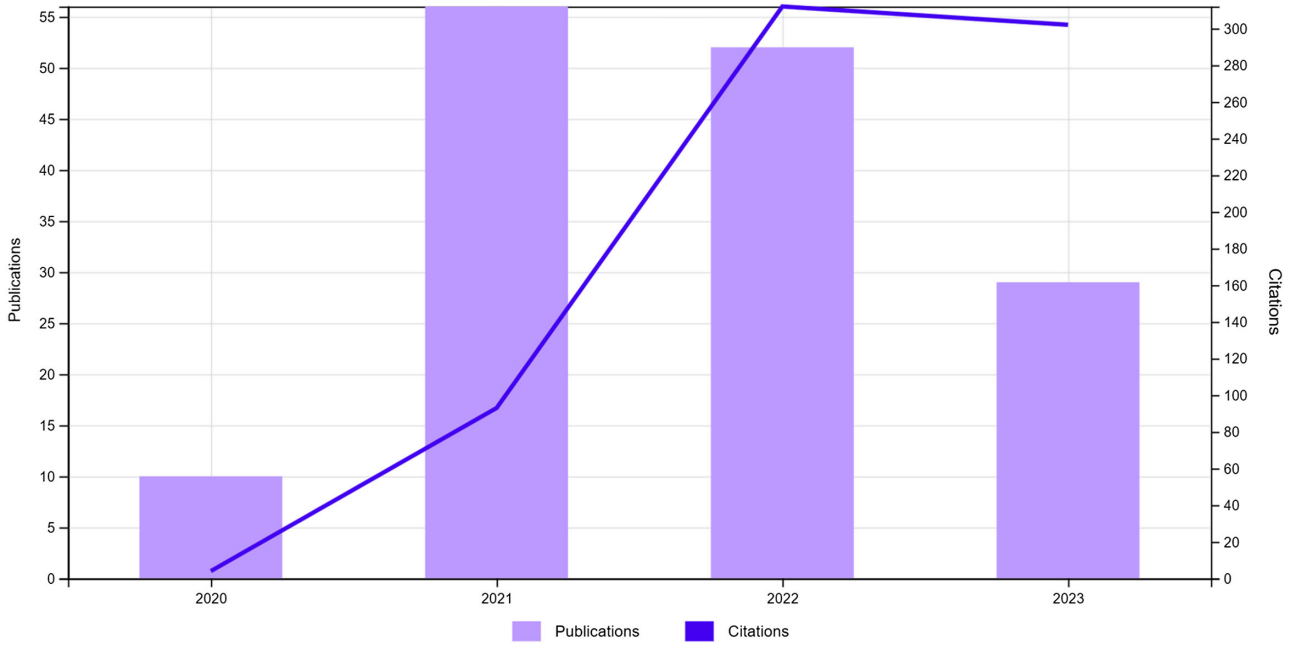
To undertake our analysis, the three-stage 3-Rs Protocol of Retrieve, Review, and Report was adopted to provide rigor to the enquiry [44]. Stage one of the 3-R's Protocol is designated Retrieve. This was achieved by undertaking a literature search using the Clarivate Analytics Web of Science (WoS) academic database, for the period of time between 2020 and 2023. This allowed us to make use of the data from across all 3 years published up until the end of 2023. A series of experiments with search terms and search strings resulted in the use of "culture*" AND "universit*" OR "higher education*" AND "COVID-19" OR "Covid-19" in the TOPIC of the publication. The use of TOPIC allows WoS to conduct the searches within the publication title, the abstract, and the keywords, within documents registered within the database. The search generated 147 journal articles from within the WoS under the independent classifications of Business, Business Finance, Education: Educational Research, Education: Scientific Disciplines, Education: Special, and Management, published in 108 academic journals between 2020 and 2023. These 147 journal articles formed the dataset for this study. Stage two of the 3-Rs Protocol is designated Review. Having manually screened the dataset, Table 2 presents the top twenty journals which have published the 147 articles in this dataset.

The journal Education Sciences clearly leads the table with seven articles representing 4.8% of the dataset. This is closely followed by Frontiers in Education with six articles representing 4.1% of the dataset. The top 20 journals accounted for 38.6% (57 articles) of the publications within the dataset, with the remaining 61.4% (90 articles) spread across 88 journals. The journals BMC Medical Education, Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education, Higher Education Research & Development, International Review of Education, Journal of Information Technology Education-Research, and South African Journal of Higher Education also feature strongly. However, it is interesting to note that no journals classed as Human Resource Management and Employment Studies by the Chartered Association of Business Schools Academic Journal Guide 2021 feature in the top twenty journals in the table. The only such journal that features in the dataset is Personnel Review at number 88. Instead, most of the top twenty journals appear to be related to various areas of education studies. This initial analysis, therefore, suggests there appears to be a significant lacuna and hence a significant opportunity for further research into the influence of the pandemic on organizational culture in the context of UK HEIs. Figure 1 presents a bar-line chart illustrating the number of articles and associated citations from publications between 2020 and 2023. Because the COVID-19 pandemic only emerged in late 2019/early 2020, the formative nature of the research topic is perhaps

Table 2
Top twenty journals publishing articles in the dataset between 2020 and 2023

Rank	Journal title	No. of articles	Weight (%)
1	Education Sciences	7	4.8
2	Frontiers in Education	6	4.1
3	BMC Medical Education	4	2.7
4	Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education	4	2.7
5	Higher Education Research & Development	3	2.0
6	International Review of Education	3	2.0
7	Journal of Information Technology Education-Research	3	2.0
8	South African Journal of Higher Education	3	2.0
9	Education and Information Technologies	2	1.4
10	Gender Work and Organization	2	1.4
11	Higher Education	2	1.4
12	Human Systems Management	2	1.4
13	Journal For Multicultural Education	2	1.4
14	Journal of American College Health	2	1.4
15	Journal of Chemical Education	2	1.4
16	Journal of Research on Technology in Education	2	1.4
17	Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice	2	1.4
18	Medical Education Online	2	1.4
19	Polish Journal of Management Studies	2	1.4
20	Revita Internacional de Educacion para la Justicia Social	2	1.4
21–108	Other	90	61.4
	TOTAL	147	100

Figure 1
Number of articles and associated citations published between 2020 and 2023



unsurprising. However, the strong growth in citations from these published works appears to evidence a growing interest in COVID-19-related research by the academic community. Further analysis to focus on the UK and Ireland identifies the availability of six key papers (see Table 3) that will be examined in more detail in the sections to follow. The following findings and discussion sections will outline the current state of knowledge within this discipline area, moving from a review of the entire dataset to outline the state of existing research specifically in relation to issues of organizational culture within the UK higher education context in the post-COVID-19 period.

The third and final stage of the 3-Rs Protocol is termed Report and is presented next in the findings and discussion section.

4. Findings and Discussion

From the dataset, initial findings were identified which suggest the foundational characteristics of output examining the influence of the pandemic on organizational culture within HEIs. Next, to address the first research question for this study, Figure 2 presents an illustration showing the results of a co-occurrence analysis making use of all the keywords within articles, within the search parameters. A bibliometric network consists of nodes, labels, and edges. In this visualization, the keywords are represented by their label (name) and by a node (circle). The weight (importance) of the item is dictated by the size of the circle and associated label. As such, the larger the label and the circle of the item, the higher the weight or importance of an item. Circles and labels are then clustered together using linkages. The color of an item is related to the cluster to which the item belongs. Links between circles are known as edges (lines), and the distance between keywords indicates (approximately) the relatedness of the keywords in terms of co-citation links. In general, the stronger the relatedness between two circles or labels the closer the two keywords are located to each other.

The co-occurrence of keywords map examines the links between keywords in the literature by focusing on using the knowledge components and knowledge structure of the field. The volume of occasions that a pair of keywords co-occurs within two documents constitutes the strength of the linkage connecting these two keywords. Subsequently, an item with a stronger weight is regarded as more important than an item with a lower weight and is shown more prominently on the map [45]. In Figure 2, four clusters were extracted. In Cluster 1, colored in red, the highest total link strength within the identified keywords were identified as higher education, management, impact, equity, diversity, performance, and perceptions. Cluster 2, colored in green, identified higher education, university, knowledge, digital transformation, e-learning, and technology, while Cluster 3, colored in blue, identified education, teachers, students, satisfaction, and culture as well as COVID-19 pandemic. In the final cluster, Cluster 4, colored in yellow, identified e-learning, pandemic, and COVID-19. Out of the four clusters identified within this dataset, Cluster 3 appears to be most closely aligned to examining issues of organizational culture within higher education. While there is therefore evidence of some emerging research clusters in these areas, there remains scope to expand and develop further research, moving forward, into the impact of organizational culture upon different stakeholders within the higher education environment.

Next, Figure 3 presents an illustration of a bibliographic coupling map of the studies (articles) in the dataset published between 2020 and 2023. Bibliographic coupling is a measure to establish a similarity relationship between articles. In other words, it is about the overlap in the reference lists of publications. Two articles are bibliographically coupled if they both cite one or more articles in common. The volume they share is deemed an indication of topic similarity. The “coupling strength” (also called “coupling frequency”) is the number of cited articles that the two articles share. The larger this coupling strength the greater they are deemed similar [45], and hence, the smaller the coupling strength, the more dissimilar they are deemed. A benefit of using bibliographic coupling analysis is that scholars can uncover a

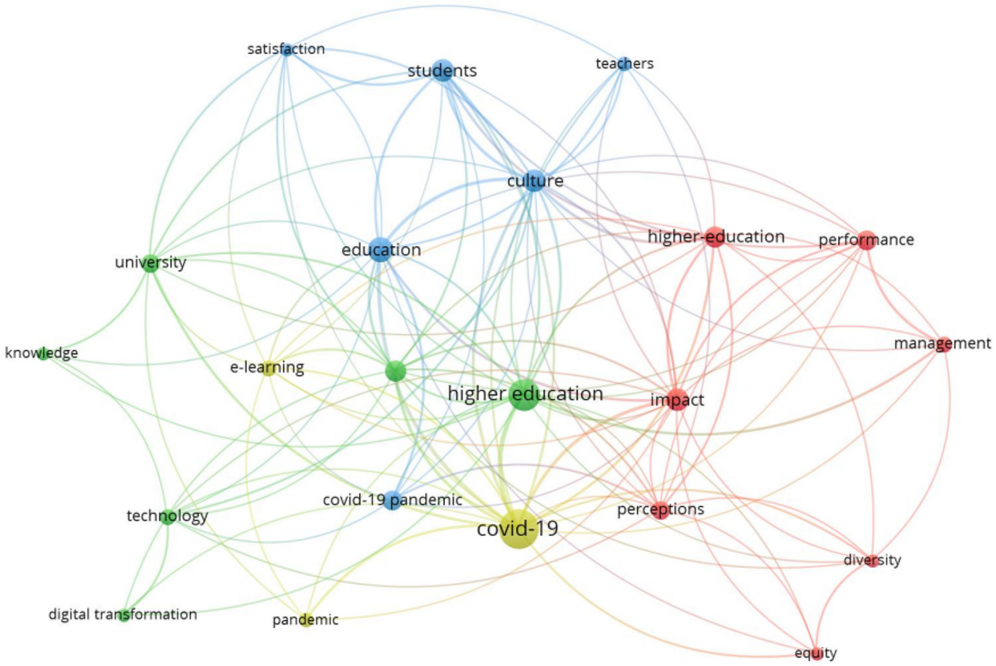
Table 3
Summary of articles publishing research in the context of the United Kingdom or the Republic of Ireland

Author(s)	Publication year	Article title	Journal	Research Foci
Blell, M; Liu, SJS; Verma, A	2023	Working in unprecedented times: Intersectionality and women of color in UK higher education in and beyond the pandemic.	Gender Work and Organization	COVID-19; higher education; intersectionality; race; United Kingdom
Yang, H	2022	Team-based learning to improve diversity and inclusion of environmental engineering students: A mixed methods case study.	International Journal of Engineering Education	Team-based learning; environmental engineering education; diversity; inclusion; China; UK
Watermeyer, R; Shankar, K; Crick, T; Knight, C; McGaughey, F; Hardman, J; Suri, VR; Chung, R; Phelan, D	2021	"Pandemia": a reckoning of UK universities' corporate response to COVID-19 and its academic fallout.	British Journal of Sociology of Education	COVID-19; pandemia; disaster capitalism; remote working; work intensification; university leadership
Shankar, K; Phelan, D; Suri, VR; Watermeyer, R; Knight, C; Crick, T	2021	"The COVID-19 crisis is not the core problem": experiences, challenges, and concerns of Irish academia during the pandemic.	Irish Educational Studies	COVID-19; Ireland; online learning; higher education; managerialism
Watermeyer, R., Crick, T., Knight, C. Goodall, J.	2021	COVID-19 and digital disruption in UK universities: Afflictions and affordances of emergency online migration.	Higher Education	COVID-19; UK higher education; online learning; teaching and assessment; digitalization of universities; academic profession
Kotera, Y; Green, P; Rhodes, C; Williams, A; Chircop, J; Spink, R; Rawson, R; Okere, U	2020	Dealing with isolation using online morning huddles for university lecturers during physical distancing by COVID-19: Field notes.	International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning	Isolation; well-being; team cohesion; COVID-19; crisis management

broad range of themes, and the analysis can therefore provide a representation of a research field's latest developments [40] or "research front" [46].

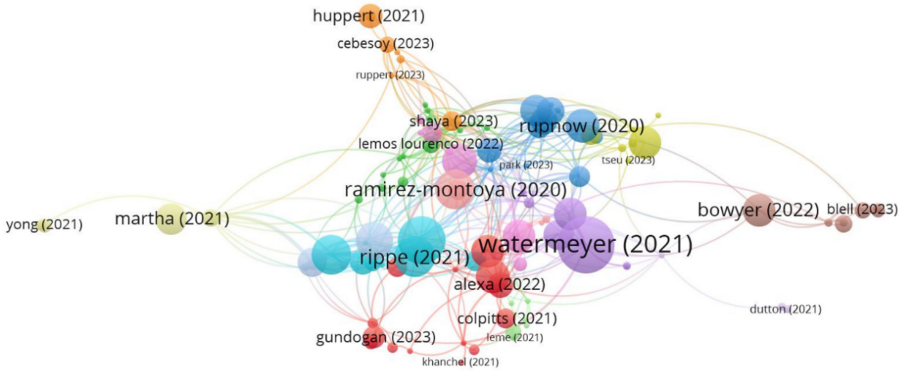
In this analysis, 14 clusters have been identified. In Cluster 1 colored in red, the work of Egielewa et al. [47] with a study entitled "COVID-19 and digitized education: Analysis of online learning in Nigerian higher education" features the most strongly. The other works that feature strongly are by Khan et al. [48], Gundogan [49], and Colpitts et al. [50]. In Cluster 2 colored in green, the work of Lemos Lourenço et al. [51] with a study entitled "University social responsibility and empathy in organizations during COVID-19 pandemic in Brazil" features the highest coupling strength. The work of Bautista-Vallejo et al. [52] also features strongly. In Cluster 3 colored in blue, the work of Rupnow et al. [38] with a study entitled "A perturbed system: How tenured faculty responded to the COVID-19 shift to remote instruction" as well as the work of Kotera et al. [36] with a study entitled "Dealing with isolation using online morning huddles for university lecturers during physical distancing by COVID-19: Field notes" features prominently in this area. In Cluster 4 colored in yellow, the work of Malet Calvo et al. [53] with a study entitled "There was no freedom to leave": Global South international students in Portugal during the COVID-19 Pandemic features the significance. In Cluster 5 colored in purple, the work of Watermeyer et al. [7] with a study entitled *"Pandemia": a reckoning of UK universities' corporate response to COVID-19 and its academic fallout* features the most strongly in this area. The work of Shankar et al. [54] also features strongly. In Cluster 6 colored in cyan, the work of Charoensukmongkol and Puyod [55] with a study entitled *Influence of transformational leadership on role ambiguity and work–life balance of Filipino University employees during COVID-19: does employee involvement matter?* features strongly. The other work that features strongly is by Khalid et al. [56] and Rippé et al. [57]. In Cluster 7 colored in orange, the work of Huppert et al. [58] with a study entitled *A single center evaluation of applicant experiences in virtual interviews across eight internal medicine subspecialty fellowship programs* features the highest-ranking coupling strength. The other work that features strongly is by Betul Cebesoy and Chang Rundgren [59] as well as Shaya et al. [60]. In Cluster 8 colored in brown, the work of Bowyer et al. [61] with a study entitled *Academic mothers, professional identity and COVID-19: Feminist reflections on career cycles, progression and practice* features the most prominent coupling. In Cluster 9 colored in magenta, the work of Haider et al. [62] with a study entitled *The impact of responsible leadership on knowledge sharing behaviour through the mediating role of person-organisation fit and moderating role of higher educational institute culture* features a significant level of coupling. In Cluster 10 colored in pink, the work of Ramírez-Montoya [63] with a study entitled *Digital transformation and educational innovation in Latin America within the framework of COVID-19* features the most strongly. In Cluster 11 colored in

Figure 2
Co-occurrence of all keyword analysis between 2020 and 2023



Note: The size of the circles represents the frequency of the keywords. The line between the two points represents that both keywords occurred in one article.

Figure 3
Bibliographic coupling map of studies published between 2020 and 2023

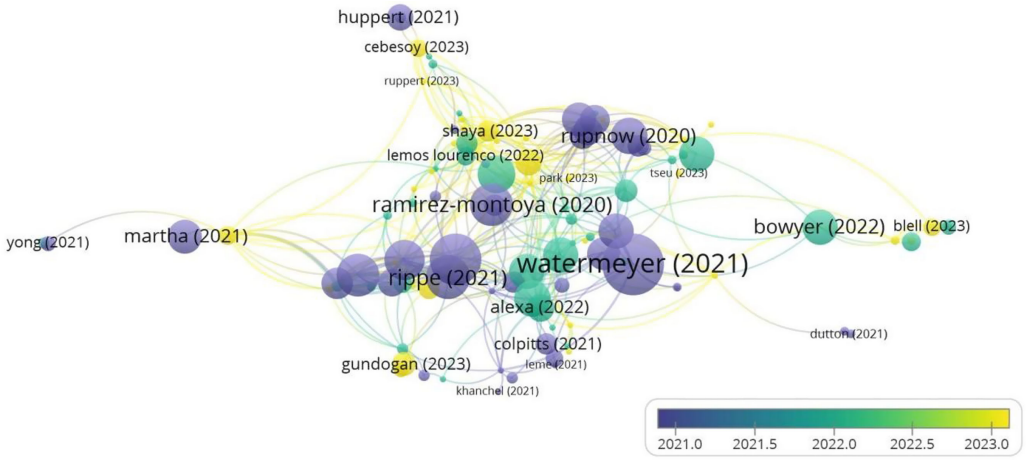


Note: The size of the circles represents the number of citations received by an article. The line between the two points represents the articles that both cite one or more articles in common.

light green, the work of Mielkov et al. [64] with a study entitled *Higher education strategies for the 21st century: Philosophical foundations and the humanist approach* features the highest coupling strength. In Cluster 12 colored in light blue, the work of Akram et al. [65] with a study entitled *The challenges of online teaching in COVID-19 pandemic: A case study of public universities in Karachi, Pakistan* features a predominant coupling strength. The work of Alshammari [66] also features strongly. In Cluster 13 colored in dark yellow, the work of Martha et al. [67] with a study entitled *Assessing undergraduate students' e-learning competencies: A case study of higher education context in Indonesia* features the most strongly. Finally, in Cluster 14 colored in light purple, the work of Dutton, and Maistry [68, 69] all displayed similar results.

Within the 14 clusters outlined above, various emergent research areas, topics, and groupings are examined, some of which link to a greater-or-lesser extent to aspects of organizational culture. However, it would seem that research within Cluster 5 surrounding the work of Watermeyer et al. [7] relates most directly to examining the situation within the UK higher education context. As such, there

Figure 4
Bibliographic coupling map of studies published over time between 2020 and 2023



Note: The size of the circles represents the number of citations received by an article. The line between the two points represents the articles that both cite one or more articles in common.

remains scope for further research to focus more directly on aspects and processes of cultural impact, particularly in the post-COVID-19 period. Likewise, there remains scope for researchers examining issues of organizational culture in higher education to further expand existing analyses and further develop understandings within the post-pandemic UK context. Figure 4 presents an alternative illustration of the bibliographic coupling map presented in Figure 3, but this time shows the evolution of the studies in the dataset over time. Again, because of the recent nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, this illustration also unsurprisingly shows both the formative nature of, as well as the evolution of, research in the dataset, which only commenced from 2020 onwards and hence affords significant opportunities for further research.

Next, from deepening the analysis further and conducting a further manual screening of the dataset, linked to the findings from the preceding coupling maps (Figures 3 and 4 above), it is evident that only six articles presented research in the context of the UK and Republic of Ireland [4, 7, 36, 37, 39, 54]. These articles are summarized in Table 3. Due to the formative nature of this research topic area focusing on issues of organizational culture in UK higher education institutions specifically in the post-COVID-19 period, the focus of these articles is varied, including topics on isolation, online migration, online learning, and work intensification. As evident in the data of these six publications, many of these research projects report primarily on data within UK higher education institutions collected during the pandemic period. The fact that there appears at present to be such a relative dearth of research conducted on issues of organizational culture in UK higher education institutions in the post-COVID period is a key emergent finding from this systematic review. There appears therefore to be a significant lacuna and hence significant opportunities for further research into the subsequent influence of COVID-19 on organizational culture in the context of UK HEIs in the post-pandemic period.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic reshaped the social world and how people interact within it. The higher education sector moved online, and physical spaces were repurposed, but clearly the pandemic also forced people to rethink how they engage with others as personal, social, and professional relationships became confined largely to the digital domain. Some of the key themes that emerged within the preceding analysis of the dataset above included the following: (a) a relative lack of outputs examining the influence of the pandemic on organizational culture within HEIs, particularly in business-related disciplines; (b) some evidence of initial growing interest within this emergent area of study within the post-pandemic period; and (c) some examples of emergent research clusters and bibliographic coupling of key authors that are in relatively early formative stages of investigating aspects of post-COVID-19 organizational culture within the higher education context. There also remains a relative lack at present of peer-review research examining such issues specifically within a UK higher education context, with many underpinning research clusters in this emergent research area examining primarily a broader range of online teaching and learning-related matters linked to COVID-19 that impacted upon key stakeholders within such areas around the time of the pandemic. To address the second research question within this article, based on our analysis, next we outline five broad thematic areas for further potential empirical research.

4.1. Changing cultural norms and expectations within UK higher education institutions

Given the relative lack of research currently examining issues of organizational culture in the post-pandemic period, there is both scope and necessity to investigate changing cultural norms and expectations within higher education institutions in post-COVID-19 contexts. To what extent has there been a long-term shift in behavior patterns and the emergence of a "new normal" within academic institutions in the post-pandemic period in the UK, built on changing staff and student expectations following the impact of the pandemic? Potential future research directions in such areas might require development in the concept of managerialism while examining the processes through which senior leaders manage and control organizations, particularly in relation to the use of digital-based modes of monitoring and the expectations that come with such techniques.

4.2. Hybrid approaches to working in higher education in the UK

Linked to the previous point on changing cultural norms and expectations, the emergence of an increasingly hybrid approach to work during the pandemic and in post-COVID-19 workplaces is another under-researched area of potential change in organizational culture. Do such developments imply diminishing attachment to the home institution for academics? The concept of organizational attachment has always been an area of discussion, particularly given that the question of whether academics feel more attached to their host institution, school/department, specialist area, or profession can have potential implications for human resource development. While academics have always had relative freedom to work from home, with broader trends under the "new deal" towards hybrid working, blended teaching and learning, and a relative reduction in presenteeism within higher education institutions, there remains scope to further research and investigate issues of attachment within the workplace in the current post-COVID-19 period in the UK.

4.3. Academic identity in post-COVID-19 higher education institutions in the UK

Changing workplace cultures in the post-COVID-19 period also have potential implications for issues of workplace identity and the processes through which academic identities are constructed and maintained. Given trends towards hybrid forms of working within higher education, many academics are perhaps less constrained by traditional norms, cultures, and working practices, and less space-bound than has typically been the case in the past. With the current lack of research investigating the post-COVID-19 period in the UK, there remains scope for researchers to investigate concepts of academic identity formation and construction, particularly given concomitant trends towards vague work boundaries and changing underpinning work-related cultures. Research into how in-person and virtual workspaces might potentially be used to stimulate cultural change towards collaboration, community spaces, and sharing cultures would likewise contribute to such discussions. Similarly, there is scope to further investigate the processes through which academics negotiate the types of organizational and social pressures that such developments might also bring to their working lives, cultures, and interrelated academic identities.

4.4. Organizational culture and the changing psychological contract in UK higher education

Finally, there remains scope for future research to also focus on the changing dynamics of the psychological contract within academia. There is little empirical research on the interrelated nature of staff and institutional perceptions of what may be expected of the other party in the post-COVID-19 higher education environment in the UK. Future research needs to examine and inform whether the "new deal" that emerged in higher education in-and-around the COVID-19 period will potentially require the emergence of a "newer deal" as expectations and obligations continue to shift for academics and institutions alike, moving forward.

4.5. The importance of moving towards a research agenda

Given the relative lacuna of current research investigating issues of organizational culture within higher education in the post-pandemic period in the UK, there is an important need to move towards a research agenda – linked as a starting point to those areas outlined and discussed above – as a means of updating the current state of disciplinary knowledge in this area, particularly following the inherent trials and tribulations that emerged within the sector as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Moving forward, it is important for researchers, managers, academic staff members, practitioners, and those involved in the development of internal and external workplace policies and procedures to develop aspects of future practice on up-to-date empirical research that places issues of organizational culture within a modern context. It is only through research-informed practice and policy development that ongoing challenges of organizational culture might be managed and mitigated within the sector, with the aim and/or intention to facilitate a working environment that places the needs and expectations of all key stakeholders – universities, management, academics, support staff and students – at the center of day-to-day operations in the post-COVID-19 period.

5. Conclusions and Limitations

The purpose of this article was to firstly methodically and logically review the extant literature and research linking the COVID-19 pandemic to changes in organizational culture of HEIs in the UK and secondly based on a bibliometric analysis offering a road map for further empirical research in the future. From a theoretical perspective, these findings contribute to organizational culture literature by assimilating a dataset of nascent studies that have examined issues of organizational culture in UK HEIs in the post-pandemic period and present the results of a bibliometric analysis that identifies the main existing research fronts as well as the potential future research directions for ongoing future empirical development of organizational culture literature in this topic area. Based on the bibliometric analysis that has been conducted, it has become apparent that there is a relative lack of research currently undertaken on issues of organizational culture in UK higher education institutions specifically in the post-COVID-19 period. Those studies that have taken place have examined a range of research foci predominantly during the pandemic period, given their publication dates. As such, there remains significant scope, need, and potential for researchers to examine in greater detail issues of organizational culture in UK higher education institutions in the post-pandemic period.

The outcomes of this review have limitations owing to the constraints drawn from the methodological approach taken and that have resulted from the research design, and from the dataset. As a database, WoS is a fluent system that is under constant updating drawing its information from the publication of new and additional literature. As such, data collated for this article can only represent a "snapshot" of published articles available at the time of the data collection process, and within the search parameters. Further publications, such as conference papers and books, have not been considered within the scope of this article. The formulation of the search strings, therefore provides a fundamental constraint within the article. As such selecting alternative search terms and search strings as part of the formulation of the search would potentially and most likely alter the results. It can be argued, however, that the journal articles analyzed through this dataset embody the principal research outputs, particularly from key peer-review publications within this topic area. Secondly, the bibliometric analysis of the dataset using citation analysis is by nature retrospective and therefore research within the field and for that note any discipline only appear after a period of time has elapsed. The findings within this article, however, are nonetheless

useful for researchers and academics who have an interest in acquiring knowledge of and an insight into organizational culture literature in the post-pandemic UK higher education context.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest to this work.

Data Availability Statement

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analyzed in this study.

Author Contribution Statement

Ruby Mathew: Conceptualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing, Project administration. **Philip Coombes:** Methodology, Validation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Visualization. **Steven Cock:** Methodology, Formal analysis, Writing – review & editing, Visualization. **Alan Johnston:** Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Writing – original draft, Visualization. **Susan Walsh:** Writing – original draft. **Lynsey Walker-Smith:** Writing – original draft.

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