

A Bibliometric Analysis of Economic Inclusiveness in Developing Countries

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ABSTRACT

This study presents a bibliometric analysis aimed at mapping the academic landscape of economic inclusiveness in developing countries from 2000 to 2024. Through a comprehensive review of the literature, this analysis identifies core themes including governance, sustainability, financial inclusion, and education, emphasizing their roles in fostering equitable economic growth. Using data sourced from Scopus, the study employs VOSviewer software for visualization of co-authorship and co-citation networks, revealing prominent authors, pivotal publications, and thematic clusters. The results highlight an interdisciplinary approach in the research with significant contributions from various global regions, showcasing the complexity of implementing economic inclusiveness across different socio-economic and environmental contexts. The findings underline the necessity of integrating sustainable practices and robust governance to ensure inclusiveness and suggest directions for future research to fill the existing gaps in empirical data and cultural considerations.

Keywords: Economic Inclusiveness, Developing Countries, Sustainability, Financial Inclusion, Bibliometric Analysis

1. INTRODUCTION

Economic inclusiveness has emerged as a fundamental goal in the development strategy of nations worldwide, particularly in developing countries. The concept of economic inclusiveness extends beyond mere economic growth; it encompasses the equitable distribution of the benefits of economic growth to all segments of society, including the most marginalized and disadvantaged groups [1]. This broadening of economic opportunities is crucial for fostering social stability, reducing poverty rates, and enhancing the overall quality of life within these nations.

The importance of economic inclusiveness is underscored by its inclusion in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically Goal 10, which aims to reduce inequality within and among countries [2]. This goal highlights the need for policies that empower and promote the economic inclusion of all, irrespective of sex, race, or ethnicity. Developing countries, with their diverse socio-economic landscapes, face unique challenges in this regard, as they contend with structural inequalities and limited resources that can hinder inclusive growth.

Research indicates that economic inclusiveness can be driven by several factors, including but not limited to, inclusive financial systems, effective governance, accessible education, and labor market reforms [3]. These elements contribute to creating an environment where economic opportunities are accessible to a broader segment of the population, thereby promoting economic justice and sustainability. However, the implementation of these inclusive policies varies significantly from one country to another, influenced by political, cultural, and economic contexts.

Despite the recognized importance of economic inclusiveness, empirical studies exploring its trends, challenges, and outcomes in developing countries are sporadic and fragmented. A comprehensive review of literature and methodologies employed across various studies is essential

to synthesize knowledge, identify gaps, and guide future research directions. Such an analysis is crucial for policymakers, researchers, and international development organizations striving to design and implement more effective inclusiveness policies.

While there is a general consensus on the benefits of economic inclusiveness, developing countries continue to struggle with its implementation. The existing literature is vast yet disparate, with studies employing diverse methodologies and focusing on various aspects of inclusiveness. This makes it difficult to draw comprehensive conclusions or formulate standard policy recommendations applicable across different settings. There is a need for a systematic examination of the existing research to consolidate findings, assess the impact of different strategies, and highlight successful models of economic inclusiveness.

The objective of this study is to conduct a bibliometric analysis of the existing literature on economic inclusiveness in developing countries. This analysis will map out the evolution of the research landscape, identify the most influential studies, authors, and journals, and uncover the main themes and gaps in the literature. The findings will provide a structured understanding of how economic inclusiveness has been addressed in academic research, offering insights into prevailing trends, methodologies, and areas requiring further investigation. This comprehensive overview aims to support the formulation of more effective policies and practices that can drive economic inclusiveness in developing countries.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 *Defining Economic Inclusiveness*

Economic inclusiveness is broadly defined as the ability of individuals, regardless of their background or socio-economic status, to participate in and benefit from economic growth [4]. [5] emphasized that inclusiveness should not only address income disparities but also encompass access to essential services like education, healthcare, and employment opportunities. This holistic approach is critical in developing countries where economic disparities are often compounded by inadequate social infrastructure.

2.2 *Factors Influencing Economic Inclusiveness*

Several key factors have been identified as critical to promoting economic inclusiveness in developing countries. A consistent theme across the literature is the role of inclusive financial systems. According to [6], access to financial services enables individuals and firms to invest in education, health, and entrepreneurial activities, thereby fostering economic mobility. Furthermore, government policies play a pivotal role in shaping economic inclusiveness. [7] report on global development highlighted that policies aimed at improving tax systems, social safety nets, and labor laws are crucial in redistributing income and promoting equity. Education and labor market reforms are also frequently discussed in the literature. Studies by [8], [9] have shown that improving access to education for marginalized groups, particularly women and ethnic minorities, directly correlates with higher economic participation rates and improved economic outcomes. Similarly, labor market reforms that encourage diversity and combat discrimination are vital for promoting inclusiveness.

2.3 Challenges to Achieving Economic Inclusiveness

Despite the acknowledged benefits of economic inclusiveness, several challenges hinder its implementation in developing countries. A major obstacle is political instability, which can disrupt the economic environment and affect the continuity of inclusive policies [10]. Corruption and poor governance also undermine efforts to distribute economic gains equitably, as they often result in policies that favor elite interests over the general population [11]. Cultural factors can also impede economic inclusiveness. In many societies, deep-seated norms and values can limit opportunities for certain groups, particularly women and ethnic minorities. These cultural barriers often manifest in discriminatory practices that restrict access to education, capital, and labor markets.

2.4 Outcomes of Economic Inclusiveness

The outcomes of economic inclusiveness are extensively documented, particularly its impact on poverty reduction and social stability. Reports by the [12] have found a strong link between inclusiveness in economic policies and lower levels of poverty and inequality. Furthermore, economic inclusiveness has been associated with enhanced social cohesion, which is critical for political and social stability in developing countries [13]. The literature also explores the economic benefits of inclusiveness. Studies have demonstrated that more inclusive economies tend to exhibit higher and more sustainable growth rates. This is because inclusiveness enhances the productivity potential of a larger segment of the population, leading to more robust economic performance [14].

3. METHODS

This study employs a bibliometric analysis to examine the breadth of research concerning economic inclusiveness in developing countries. We will utilize Scopus database to retrieve relevant academic articles published between 2000 and 2024. Keywords such as "economic inclusiveness," "economic equality," and "developing countries" will guide the search process. Upon compiling the articles, VOSviewer software will be used for data analysis, enabling the identification of the most cited works, prominent authors, and prevalent themes within the dataset. This software facilitates the creation of co-citation and co-authorship networks, allowing for the visualization of the relationships and patterns among the various works. Additionally, the analysis will include a temporal mapping of publications to observe trends over time.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

Documents by year

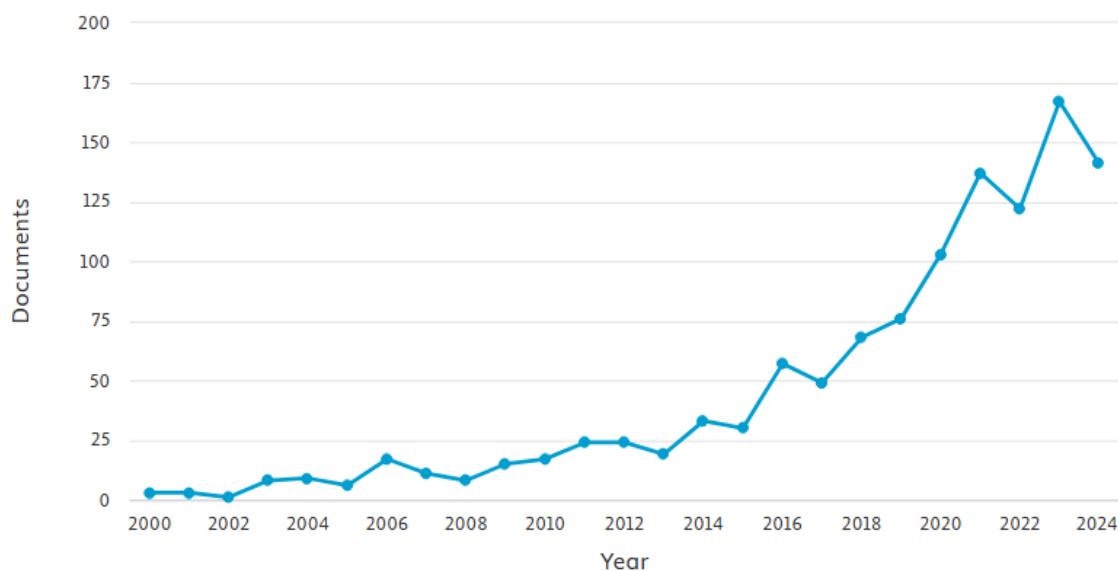


Figure 1. Documents by Year

Source: Scopus, 2024

The graph illustrates the number of academic documents published on the topic of economic inclusiveness from the year 2000 to 2024. It exhibits a clear upward trend in the number of publications over this period. From 2000 to around 2010, the increase is gradual, maintaining a relatively flat trajectory with only a modest growth in documents. However, post-2010, there is a noticeable acceleration in the volume of publications, with a steep incline continuing through to 2022. The graph reaches its peak in 2023, indicating a significant surge in interest and research output, before experiencing a slight decline in 2024. This trend may reflect growing global recognition of the importance of economic inclusiveness, particularly in the context of developing nations, and possibly an increased focus on this area within academic and policy-making circles during the latter part of the observed period.

Documents by affiliation

Compare the document counts for up to 15 affiliations.

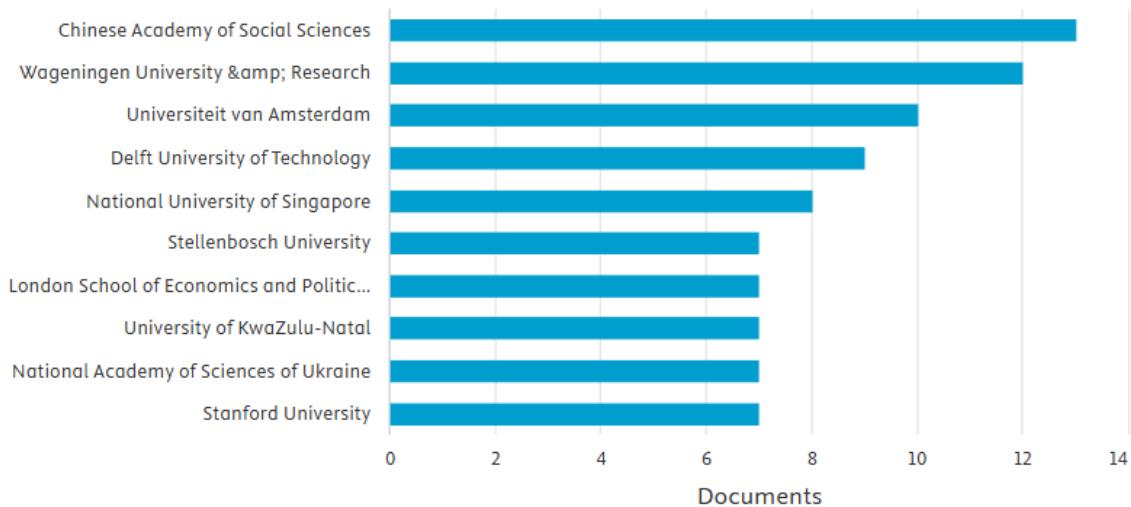


Figure 2. Documents by Affiliations

Source: Scopus, 2024

The bar graph represents the number of academic documents related to economic inclusiveness published by various prestigious institutions. The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences leads the chart with the highest number of publications, followed closely by Wageningen University & Research. Both institutions have significantly contributed to research in this field, suggesting a strong focus on economic inclusiveness within their research agendas. Other notable institutions include the Universiteit van Amsterdam, Delft University of Technology, and the National University of Singapore, each contributing a moderate number of publications. The graph also shows contributions from institutions like Stellenbosch University, London School of Economics and Political Science, University of KwaZulu-Natal, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, and Stanford University, although these have fewer publications in comparison. This distribution indicates a diverse global interest in economic inclusiveness, spanning from Europe to Asia and Africa, and including both developed and developing country perspectives.

Documents by subject area

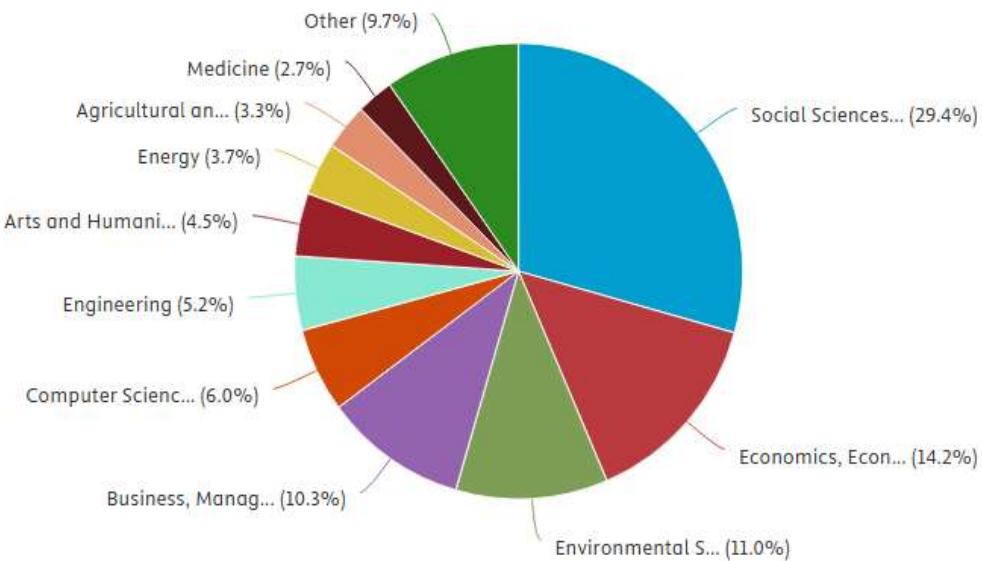


Figure 3. Documents by Subject

Source: Scopus, 2024

The pie chart displays the distribution of academic documents on economic inclusiveness across various disciplines. Social Sciences dominate the chart, accounting for 29.4% of the publications, emphasizing the field's importance in understanding societal structures and impacts. Economics and Environmental Sciences follow, representing 14.2% and 11.0% respectively, highlighting their roles in analyzing the economic frameworks and sustainable practices relevant to inclusiveness. Business and Management also contribute significantly, with 10.3%, reflecting the practical implications of inclusiveness in corporate strategies and operations. Other notable disciplines include Computer Science (6.0%), Engineering (5.2%), and Arts and Humanities (4.5%), showing the interdisciplinary nature of the research in economic inclusiveness. Smaller segments like Medicine, Agricultural and Biological Sciences, and Energy, demonstrate the broad impact and interest of economic inclusiveness, spanning areas from healthcare to renewable resources. This diverse academic interest underlines the multifaceted approach needed to tackle the challenges and solutions associated with economic inclusiveness in society.

4.2 Keyword CoNetwork Visualization

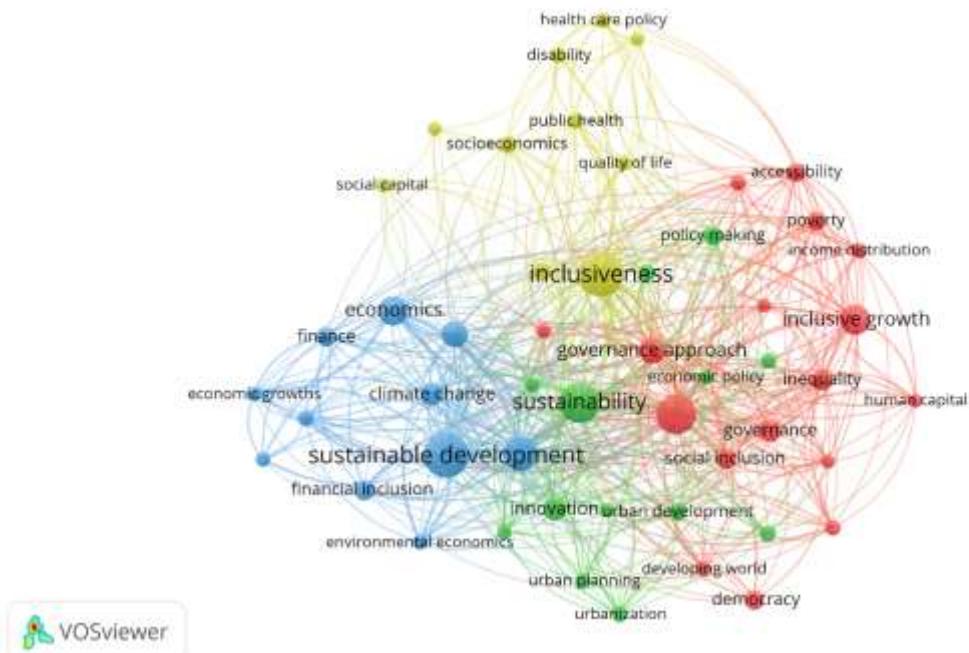


Figure 4. Network Visualization

Source: Data Analysis Result, 2024

The VOSviewer visualization provides a clustered network of keywords extracted from the literature on economic inclusiveness and its intersecting domains. The visual map is segmented into different clusters, each represented by a unique color, highlighting the interconnected themes within the research landscape. The most prominent cluster, marked in red, features keywords such as "inclusiveness," "inclusive growth," "inequality," and "governance." This cluster underscores a strong focus on the policies and practices that promote equitable growth and the mechanisms that govern them, indicating a core area of research in the field. The blue cluster emphasizes "sustainable development," "economic growth," "climate change," and "financial inclusion," linking environmental and economic factors with inclusivity. This reflects an understanding within the literature that sustainable economic practices are crucial for long-term inclusiveness, where economic activities are aligned with environmental stewardship and broad-based financial empowerment. Such integration suggests a holistic approach to understanding economic inclusiveness, one that incorporates resilience against environmental impacts and promotes sustainability. Another significant cluster, shown in yellow, focuses on the societal impacts and broader social contexts, with keywords like "public health," "disability," "socioeconomics," and "quality of life." This indicates research that transcends pure economic measures of inclusiveness to consider broader quality-of-life factors and social well-being. It highlights the multidisciplinary nature of research in economic inclusiveness, demonstrating that the health and social sectors are deeply intertwined with economic policies. The interconnections among these clusters, demonstrated by the numerous lines crossing between them, signify the interdisciplinary nature of research in economic inclusiveness. It shows that effective strategies likely require cross-sectoral collaboration, blending insights from governance, sustainability, public health, and economic policy to address the complex challenges of inclusiveness. Such a visual map not only aids in identifying key focus areas within the existing literature but also points out potential gaps and new directions for future research, such as deeper explorations into the links between climate policies and inclusiveness or the impact of digital technologies on social equity.

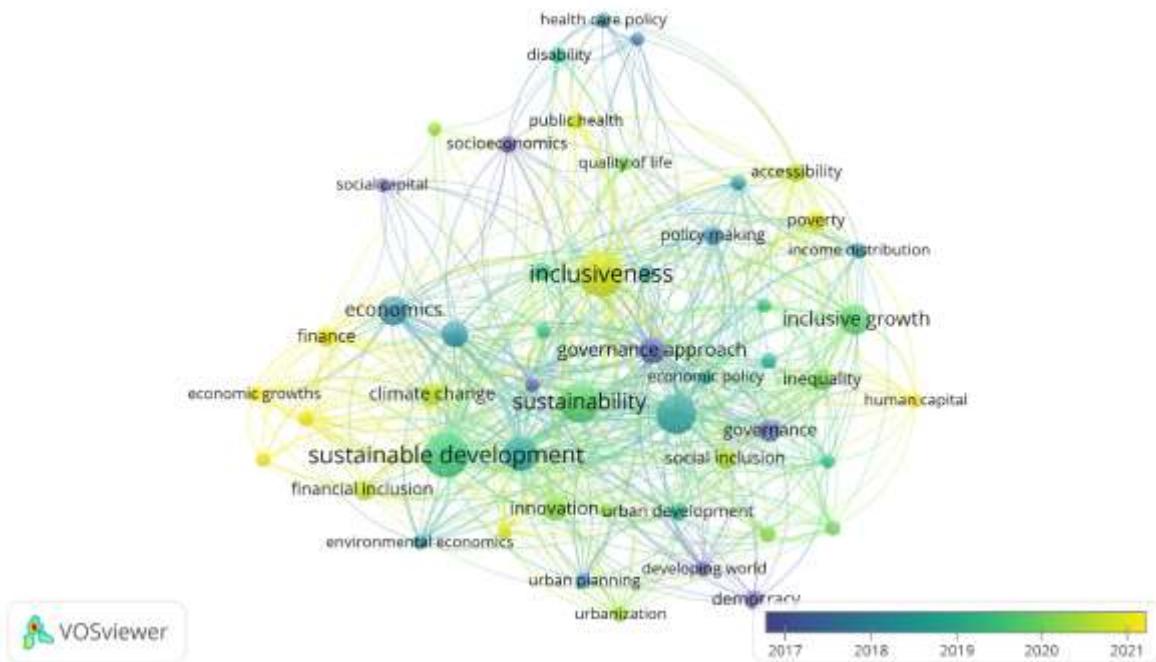


Figure 5. Overlay Visualization

Source: Data Analysis Result, 2024

The VOSviewer visualization with a timeline overlay from 2017 to 2021 provides an insightful representation of the evolving focus areas within the research on economic inclusiveness. The nodes, representing different keywords, are colored based on the year, showing the progression and shifting emphasis in research topics over these years. This visual tool helps in tracing how certain themes have gained or waned in prominence within the academic dialogue concerning economic inclusiveness and its related sectors. From 2017 to 2018, the visualization indicates a robust emphasis on "sustainable development," "financial inclusion," and "climate change," highlighted by the yellow nodes. These topics likely reflect a growing acknowledgment of the interdependencies between economic growth, environmental sustainability, and inclusive finance. The linkage of these nodes with "economic growth" and "innovation" suggests that during this period, there was a significant focus on how innovative practices could contribute to sustainable development models and the broader inclusion agenda within economic frameworks. As the timeline progresses towards 2019 and beyond, there is a notable shift with an increased concentration on "governance," "social inclusion," and "urban development," represented by the green nodes. This shift indicates a pivot towards exploring how governance structures and urban development policies can be leveraged to foster greater inclusiveness and reduce inequalities. The dense connections between these nodes and "policy making," "accessibility," and "poverty" underline a multidimensional approach to studying economic inclusiveness, where social and urban planning perspectives are integrated into the economic inclusiveness discourse to address systemic barriers in diverse contexts.

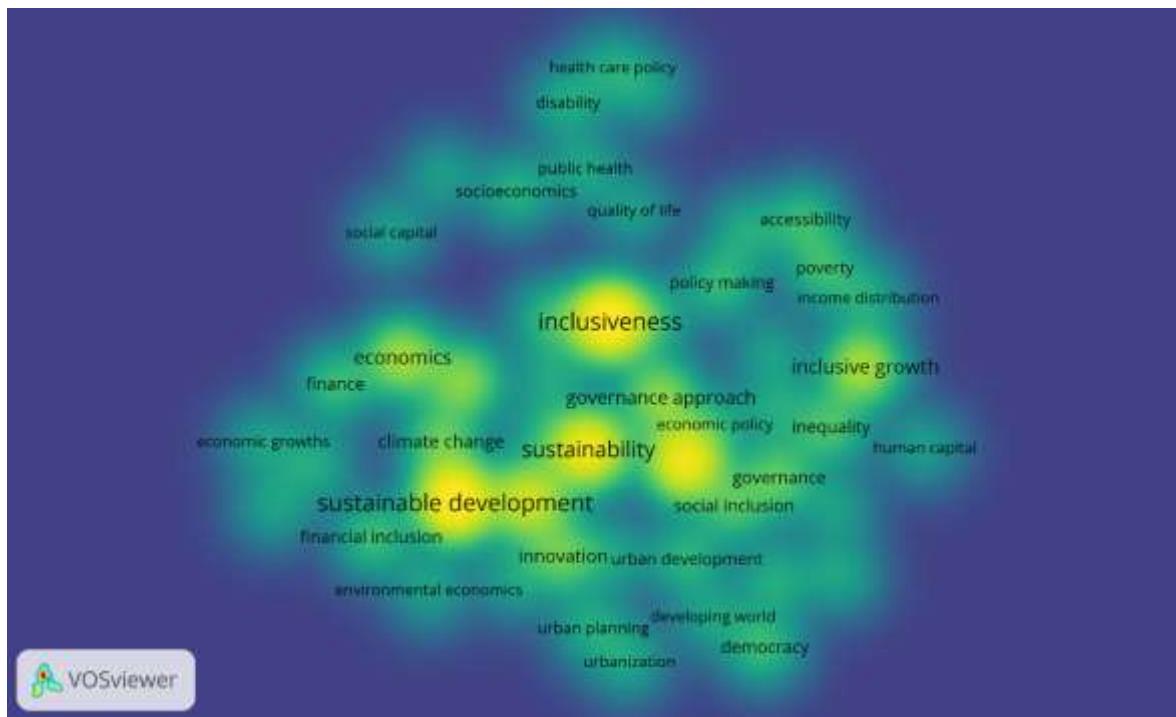


Figure 6. Density Visualization

Source: Data Analysis Result, 2024

The VOSviewer visualization here uses a heat map style overlay to highlight areas of high density and activity within the research field of economic inclusiveness. Central to the visualization, the terms "inclusiveness," "sustainability," and "governance" glow most intensely, indicating these as core areas of focus and activity within the current literature. This intensity suggests a robust amount of research and discussion concentrated around how governance and sustainability can be leveraged or improved to foster greater inclusiveness within economic systems. The close proximity of these terms to "economic policy" and "social inclusion" further emphasizes a strong interdisciplinary approach that links policy development directly with socioeconomic outcomes.

Surrounding these central terms, less intense but still significant areas such as "climate change," "financial inclusion," and "urban development" connect these themes to broader global challenges. The visualization suggests that these areas are increasingly being recognized as integral to discussions on economic inclusiveness. For instance, "financial inclusion" intersects with "sustainable development" reflecting the recognition of financial access as a key component of sustainable economic strategies. Similarly, the link between "climate change" and economic factors underlines the growing acknowledgment of environmental conditions as a critical element of economic stability and inclusivity.

4.3 Citation Analysis

Table 2. The Most Impactful Literatures

Citations	Authors and year	Title
473	[15]	Assessment on the urbanization strategy in China: Achievements, challenges and reflections
473	[16]	Sustainable development goals and inclusive development
385	[17]	Pigmentocracies: Ethnicity, Race, and Color in Latin America
254	[18]	Framework for assessing governance of the health system in developing countries: Gateway to good governance

Citations	Authors and year	Title
246	[19]	Regulatory issues in blockchain technology
233	[20]	Social capital and communities of place
218	[21]	Stakeholder Relationships, Engagement, and Sustainability Reporting
208	[22]	Low-wage work in the wealthy world
178	[23]	Conducting Management Research in Latin America: Why and What's in It for You?
172	[24]	History of economic analysis

Source: Publish or Perish Output, 2024

4.4 Co-Authorship Network

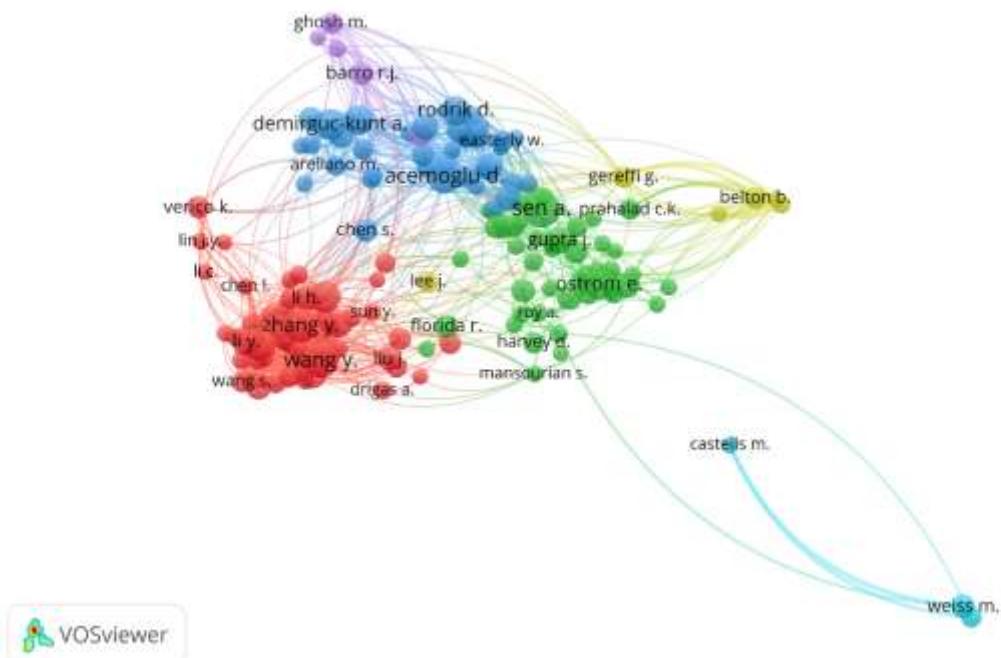


Figure 7. Authorship Visualization

Source: Data Analysis Result, 2024

The VOSviewer visualization showcases a network of influential authors in the field of economic inclusiveness, with their interconnections based on co-authorship or co-citation. The clusters in different colors represent authors grouped by specific research themes or methodologies within the broader topic. In the blue cluster, we see prominent names such as Acemoglu D. and Rodrik D., suggesting a focus on economic growth theories and their implications for inclusiveness. The green cluster includes names like Ostrom E. and Sen A., indicating research related to governance, human rights, and developmental economics. The light blue node, far apart with the name Weiss M., might represent a unique or specialized area of study within the field that has fewer direct connections to the central clusters but still contributes significantly to the discourse on economic inclusiveness.

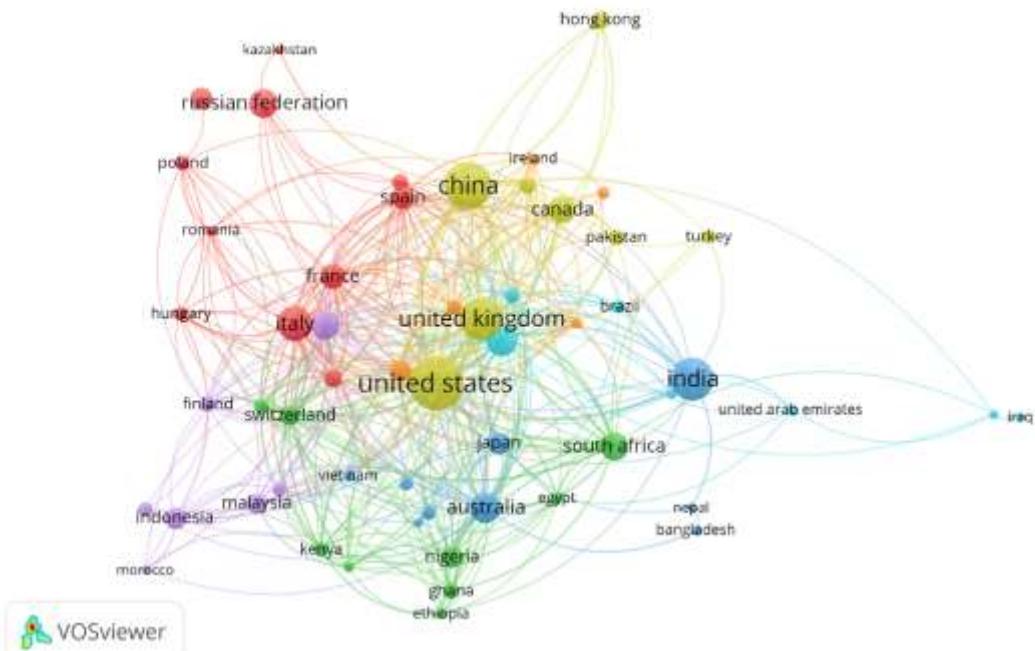


Figure 8. Country Visualization

Source: Data Analysis Result, 2024

The VOSviewer map displays a network visualization of countries contributing to the academic discourse on economic inclusiveness. This visualization categorizes countries into clusters indicated by different colors, representing geographical or thematic alignments in their research outputs. Central nodes like the United States, United Kingdom, and China are prominently positioned, indicating their significant contributions to the literature. These countries, along with others like Germany and France, form dense interconnections suggesting robust collaborations and influences in global research discussions. Additionally, the map shows India as a distinct node with extensive linkages, highlighting its pivotal role in contributing to the discourse from a developing country perspective, possibly focusing on specific regional challenges and policy implications. The diverse network spread across continents reflects the global importance and interdisciplinary nature of economic inclusiveness research, encompassing a wide array of economic, social, and policy-related studies.

Discussion

This bibliometric analysis has provided a comprehensive overview of the academic landscape surrounding economic inclusiveness in developing countries. The literature predominantly focuses on the themes of governance, sustainability, and social inclusion, reflecting a broad consensus on the multidimensional nature of economic inclusiveness. Studies have extensively discussed the roles of equitable policy-making, accessible financial systems, and inclusive education and labor reforms as pivotal mechanisms for promoting economic inclusiveness.

1. Governance and Policy Making

Governance emerges as a critical theme, with significant emphasis on how transparent, accountable, and inclusive governance structures can lead to better economic and social outcomes. The importance of robust legal and institutional frameworks cannot be overstated, as they provide the foundation for policies that ensure fair distribution of economic gains. Studies have highlighted that without strong governance, efforts to improve inclusiveness are likely to falter due to the

persistence of corruption and mismanagement that disproportionately affects the most vulnerable populations.

2. Sustainability and Economic Growth

Sustainability is closely linked to economic inclusiveness, with an increasing number of publications exploring how sustainable economic practices can lead to more inclusive growth. This relationship underscores the significance of integrating environmental considerations into economic planning and development strategies. The literature suggests that sustainable development is not only beneficial for the environment but also crucial for creating long-term economic opportunities for all societal segments, particularly in developing countries where resources might be scarce and environmental degradation can have severe socio-economic consequences.

3. Financial Inclusion

Financial inclusion is identified as another significant factor contributing to economic inclusiveness. Access to financial services enables individuals and businesses in developing countries to invest in health, education, and entrepreneurial activities, which are essential for breaking the cycle of poverty and fostering economic empowerment. However, the challenge remains in ensuring that such financial systems are accessible to all, including marginalized communities who are often excluded from traditional banking systems.

4. Education and Labor Market Reforms

Education is universally acknowledged in the literature as a key driver of inclusiveness. Enhancing access to quality education can equip individuals with the skills needed to participate effectively in the economy. Furthermore, labor market reforms that promote fair employment practices and protect workers' rights are critical for achieving economic inclusiveness. Such reforms not only help in reducing income inequality but also in ensuring that economic growth translates into improved living standards for all.

5. Interdisciplinary Approaches and New Technologies

The network visualizations indicate a growing trend towards interdisciplinary approaches involving economics, public health, and urban planning, among others. This reflects a deeper understanding that economic inclusiveness cannot be achieved in isolation from other social determinants such as health, living conditions, and urban infrastructure. Additionally, there is an emerging focus on how new technologies, particularly digital platforms, can enhance access to services and opportunities, thereby promoting inclusiveness.

6. Global and Regional Insights

The geographic distribution of the studies shows a global interest in the topic, with significant contributions from both developed and developing countries. This global perspective is crucial as it facilitates the exchange of ideas and best practices across different economic and cultural contexts. Notably, countries like India and China are not only subjects of study but also significant contributors to the research, suggesting a shift towards more localized knowledge production that addresses specific regional challenges.

7. Limitations and Future Research

While this analysis has provided valuable insights, it also highlights several gaps in the literature. There is a need for more empirical research that quantitatively measures the outcomes of specific inclusive policies. Additionally, the role of cultural factors in economic inclusiveness remains underexplored. Future studies should also consider the impacts of global economic shifts and geopolitical changes on economic inclusiveness.

CONCLUSION

This bibliometric analysis has successfully mapped the expansive terrain of research surrounding economic inclusiveness in developing countries, revealing the pivotal roles of governance, financial inclusion, sustainability, and education in promoting equitable economic growth. The study underscores the importance of interdisciplinary approaches and the integration of environmental sustainability into economic policies as crucial for fostering long-term inclusive growth. It also highlights significant contributions from both developed and developing regions, suggesting a rich exchange of global perspectives and localized strategies to address the multifaceted challenges of inclusiveness. As the discourse continues to evolve, it is evident that fostering economic inclusiveness requires persistent efforts in policy innovation, robust governance, and the leveraging of new technologies to ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities. This analysis not only synthesizes the current state of research but also points towards areas needing further exploration, thereby setting a foundation for future academic inquiries and policy-making initiatives aimed at achieving sustainable economic inclusiveness.

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