

Bibliometric Analysis of the Dynamics of Women's Empowerment in the World of Work

Loso Judijanto¹, Hayu Lusianawati², Salwa Aulia Novitasari³

¹ IPOSS Jakarta, Indonesia

² Universitas Sahid Jakarta

³ Nusa Putra University

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ABSTRACT

This bibliometric study provides an extensive analysis of the global research trends on women's empowerment in the workforce from 1990 to the present, utilizing the Scopus database. The study identifies key themes, evaluates the evolution of research focuses over time, and maps the collaborative networks among countries engaging in this field. Initially centered on gender roles and employment, the research emphasis has progressively expanded to include intricate links with economic development, health, and human rights, reflecting an interdisciplinary approach. Our findings reveal that the United States, India, and the United Kingdom are pivotal in the scholarly network, demonstrating strong international collaborations. The study highlights the shift towards integrating women's empowerment with broader economic policies and underscores the importance of collaborative research in enhancing the understanding of gender equality issues. This work not only sheds light on the thematic and collaborative dynamics in the field but also suggests directions for future research to foster a more inclusive and comprehensive discourse on gender equality.

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Corresponding Author:

Name: Loso Judijanto

Institution: IPOSS Jakarta, Indonesia

Email: losojudijantobumn@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary global economy, the empowerment of women in the workplace has emerged as a crucial element for sustainable development and social equality. Despite numerous initiatives and sustained discussions around gender equality, women continue to face significant barriers that hinder their full participation in the workforce. The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report highlights that at

the current rate of progress, it might take nearly a century to achieve gender parity [1]. This alarming statistic underscores the importance of scrutinizing the dynamics of women's empowerment across various sectors and regions to understand the underlying trends and the efficacy of policies implemented to address these disparities.

Historically, the participation of women in the workforce has been shaped by socio-economic, cultural, and political factors that collectively contribute to the persistent

gender gaps in employment rates, wage equality, and leadership opportunities [2]. Studies have shown that empowering women not only boosts economic growth but also contributes to other positive outcomes, including poverty reduction and improvements in health and education for future generations [3]. However, the pace of improvement has been uneven across different regions and industries, suggesting a complex interplay of factors that drive or impede progress toward gender equality in the workforce.

The academic discourse around women's empowerment has been vibrant, employing various methodologies to dissect the nuances of this global issue. Among these, bibliometric analysis offers a unique lens through which to view the evolution of the topic within scholarly research. By analyzing patterns in academic publications, citations, and thematic concentrations, bibliometric studies can provide insights into the prevailing research trends, gaps in the literature, and emerging themes that could shape future policies [4].

Despite the growing body of research, there remains a critical need to integrate and synthesize the vast amounts of literature on women's empowerment in the workplace. A comprehensive bibliometric analysis could map the trajectory of research, identifying predominant themes, influential studies, and regional focuses, which are essential for understanding the global discourse on this pivotal issue. This approach not only enhances our understanding of academic trends but also assists policymakers and stakeholders in crafting targeted interventions based on evidence-backed insights.

While significant research has been conducted on women's empowerment, there remains a gap in systematically understanding how this body of knowledge has evolved over time and across different contexts. Many studies have focused on specific aspects of women's empowerment, such as economic participation or leadership roles, yet a holistic view of the academic

landscape is lacking. This gap hinders the ability of researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to fully leverage the insights from past work and to identify areas that require further investigation or urgent action. Therefore, a bibliometric analysis is necessary to consolidate and visualize the progression and focal points of research on women's empowerment in the workforce, providing a clearer understanding of the thematic and geographical distribution of the literature.

The objective of this study is to conduct a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of the literature on women's empowerment in the world of work. By mapping the research landscape, this study aims to identify major themes, trends, and gaps in the literature from the past few decades. The analysis will focus on evaluating the growth of academic interest in this area, the key contributors (both authors and countries), and the most influential publications. Ultimately, the study seeks to provide a detailed overview of the academic discourse surrounding women's empowerment in the workforce, offering valuable insights for future research directions and policy formulations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 *Economic Participation of Women*

Economic participation is a fundamental aspect of women's empowerment, encapsulating their presence in the workforce, wage equality, and employment quality. The participation of women in the labor market is often seen as an indicator of economic development and gender equality [3]. However, research indicates persistent wage gaps and a concentration of women in lower-paid and less secure employment sectors [5]. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), women globally earn

approximately 20% less than men, a figure that has shown stubborn resistance to change over time (ILO, 2020). Several studies have focused on the barriers to economic participation for women, such as educational disparities, societal norms, and discriminatory practices within workplaces [6]. The intersectionality of these barriers, including factors such as race, age, and socio-economic status, further complicates the landscape of women's economic empowerment [3], [7].

2.2 Leadership and Decision-Making

Leadership and decision-making roles are crucial for achieving gender parity and empowering women. Representation in these roles influences organizational policies and the broader socio-economic environment, impacting all levels of employment from local to global scales. Despite some progress, women remain underrepresented in leadership positions across most sectors [8]. A report by [9] indicates that women occupy less than a quarter of senior management roles globally, highlighting a significant leadership gap.

The barriers to leadership roles are multifaceted, including gender biases, lack of mentorship, and work-life balance challenges. Research has shown that gender stereotypes about leadership abilities can discourage both women and their employers from pursuing leadership opportunities for women [9]. Moreover, the "double burden" syndrome — where women are expected to

manage both professional careers and domestic responsibilities — continues to be a significant obstacle [9].

2.3 Impact of Policy Interventions

Policies aimed at promoting gender equality in the workplace are pivotal in shaping the dynamics of women's empowerment. Legislative measures such as equal pay acts, maternity and paternity leave policies, and anti-discrimination laws have been implemented in many countries with varying degrees of success. For instance, the introduction of gender quotas in corporate boards in several European countries has been a controversial yet impactful approach to enhancing women's representation in leadership positions [9], [10]. Evaluative studies on these policies provide mixed results, often showing that while legislation is necessary, it is not sufficient on its own to achieve gender parity [11]. These studies stress the importance of accompanying such policies with cultural shifts and educational efforts that address the underlying societal attitudes towards gender roles [12].

2.4 Bibliometric Analyses on Women's Empowerment

Bibliometric studies in this field have been instrumental in identifying the trends and gaps in the literature on women's empowerment. [4] discuss the value of bibliometric analysis in visualizing the development of academic fields, helping to pinpoint influential works and emerging trends. These studies often use data from large databases like Scopus or Web of Science to analyze citation

patterns, co-authorship networks, and keyword frequencies. Recent bibliometric analyses have indicated a surge in publications related to women's roles in STEM fields, entrepreneurship, and corporate governance, reflecting broader societal shifts towards diversity and inclusion.

3. METHODS

This study conducts a bibliometric analysis focused solely on the literature available in the Scopus database, renowned for its comprehensive coverage of peer-reviewed research across numerous disciplines. The analysis centers on scholarly articles related to women's empowerment in the workforce, employing specific keywords such as "women's empowerment," "gender equality in the workplace," "female economic participation," and "women in leadership" to

ensure a focused retrieval of relevant literature. The timeframe for this search spans from 1990 to the present, aiming to cover over three decades of scholarly contributions and developments within the field. The inclusion criteria are strict, selecting only peer-reviewed articles that are written in English and specifically address aspects of women's roles and empowerment in professional environments.

Analytical procedures will be executed using the bibliometric software VOSviewer, which is adept at managing large sets of bibliometric data and visualizing complex networks such as co-authorship and co-citation networks. This software will facilitate the identification of key trends, the most prolific and influential authors, the leading journals, and the core articles that have shaped research in women's empowerment in the workforce. Moreover, the software will enable the exploration of thematic clusters and the tracking of evolving trends over the selected period.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Keyword Co-Occurrence Visualization

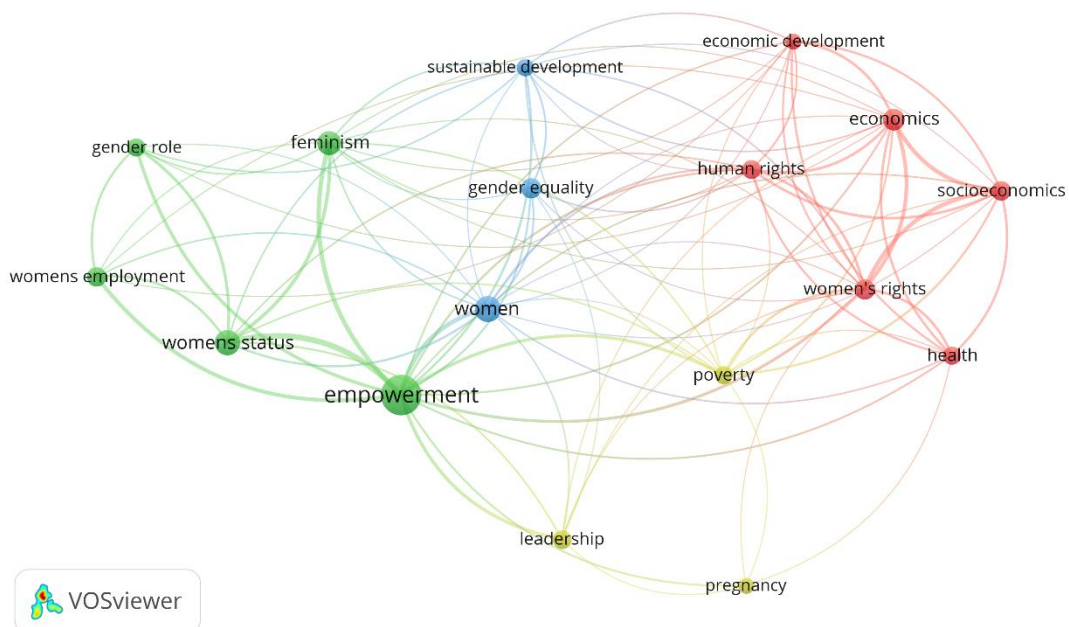


Figure 1. Network Visualization

Source: Data Analysis Result, 2025

The visualization depicts a bibliometric network analysis of keywords related to women's empowerment and associated themes. The network is segmented into three primary color-coded clusters: green, red, and blue, each representing a thematic grouping of interconnected terms. The green cluster predominantly encompasses terms like "empowerment," "women," "women's employment," "women's status," and "gender role." This cluster appears to focus on the foundational aspects of women's roles within the societal and employment contexts, highlighting the core discussions around gender roles and the status of women in society. The central node, "empowerment," suggests that this concept is a pivotal point of focus within the literature. It is strongly linked to both "women" and "gender equality," indicating that empowerment is often discussed in the context of promoting gender equality and enhancing the status and opportunities available to women. This connection underscores the broader discourse on empowering women as a pathway to achieving broader societal and economic equality.

The red cluster includes terms such as "economic development," "economics," "socioeconomics," and "health." These keywords suggest a significant focus on the

economic aspects of women's empowerment, examining how empowering women can impact economic growth, reduce poverty, and improve health outcomes. This cluster highlights the intersectionality of economic factors with gender issues, suggesting that research in this area explores the broader implications of women's empowerment on economic and social development. The blue cluster connects "women," "gender quality", and "sustainable development," indicating a strong emphasis on the rights-based approach to women's empowerment. This approach likely discusses the legal and ethical dimensions of women's rights and their implications for leadership and health (specifically maternal health). The inclusion of "pregnancy" in yellow cluster within this cluster could point to a focus on reproductive rights and healthcare as critical aspects of women's rights discussions. The visualization also shows numerous interconnections between these clusters, such as the links between "empowerment" and "economic development" or "health" and "poverty." These links illustrate the complex and multifaceted nature of women's empowerment, indicating that empowerment is not only a social or ethical issue but also deeply entwined with economic and health-related outcomes.

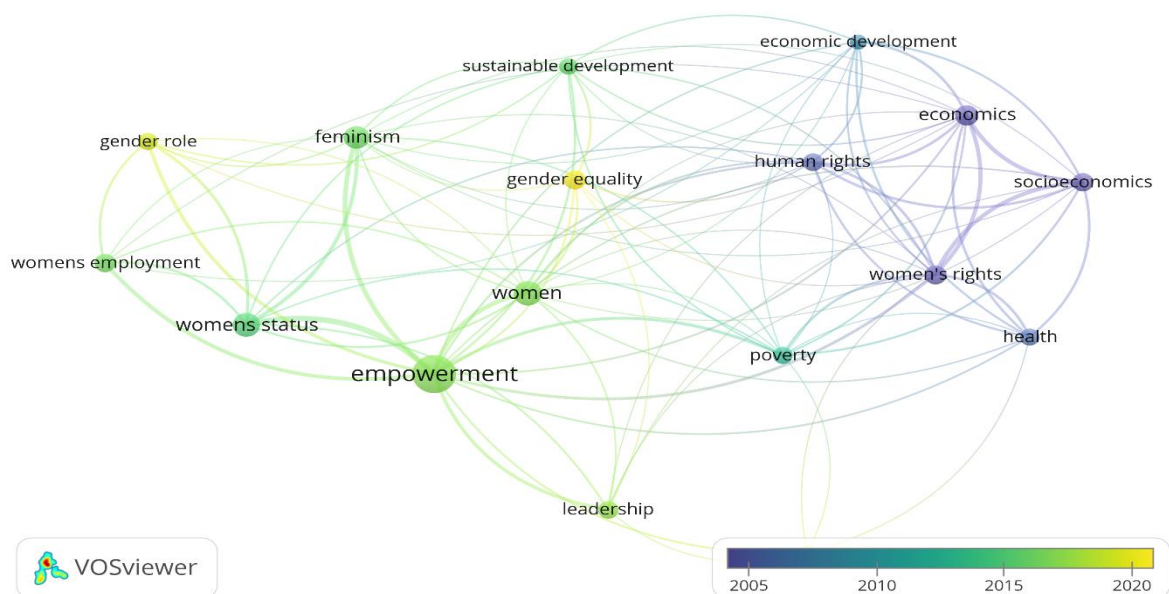


Figure 2. Overlay Visualization

Source: Data Analysis Result, 2025

The enhanced bibliometric visualization provided illustrates the evolving dynamics of research related to women's empowerment over a fifteen-year period from 2005 to 2020, highlighted by a color gradient that marks the temporal development of various themes. This visualization helps in understanding not only the thematic clusters within the literature but also the shifts in focus and emergence of new topics over time. In the earlier years, represented by lighter shades of yellow, the focus appears to be strongly centered around foundational aspects such as "gender role," "women's employment," and "women's status." These areas are connected closely with "empowerment" and "leadership," indicating that initial research heavily emphasized understanding and defining the basic parameters of women's roles and how they correlate with empowerment and leadership within the workforce. Over time, as the color shifts towards green and then blue, there's a

visible transition towards more complex and diverse themes such as "sustainable development" and "economic development," suggesting an expanding scope of research that began to integrate women's empowerment with broader socio-economic and developmental goals. By the later years, marked by darker blue tones towards 2020, there is a noticeable density in connections between "economics," "health," "poverty," and "human rights." This evolution signifies a deeper exploration into how women's rights and empowerment intersect with global issues such as economic policies, health disparities, and socio-economic development. The presence of these themes in more recent years underscores a shift in academic focus towards more integrated and intersectional approaches, reflecting a global acknowledgment of the complexity and multifaceted nature of women's empowerment as a critical component of sustainable and equitable development.

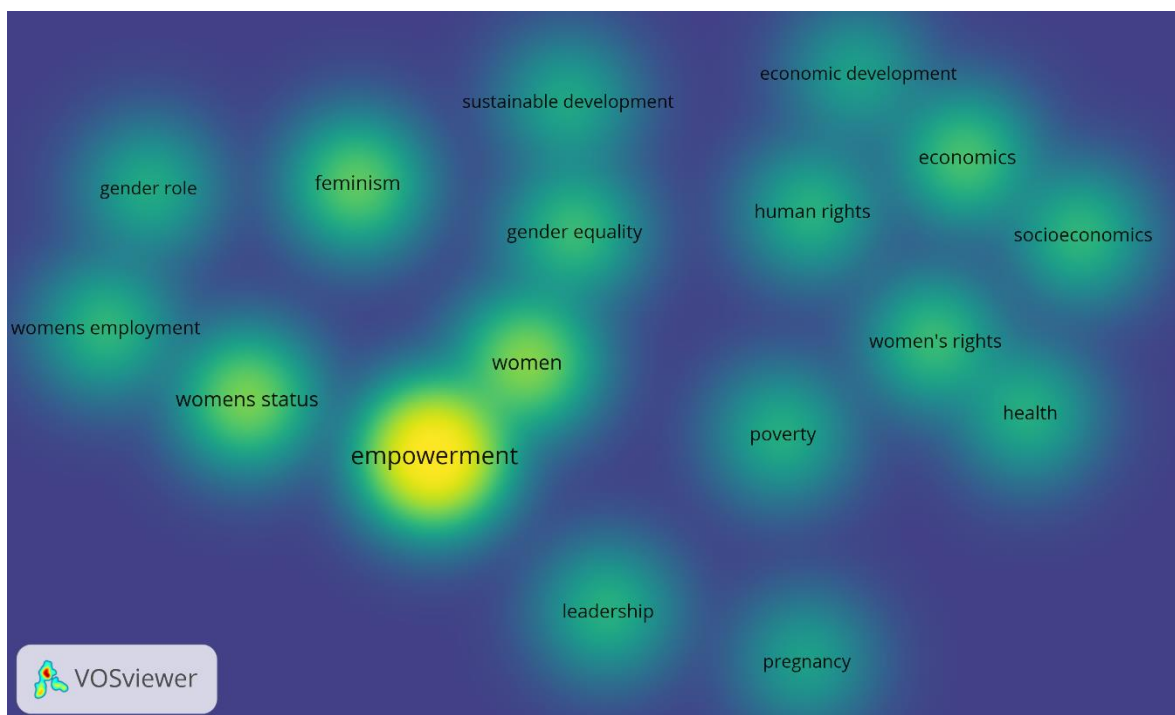


Figure 3. Density Visualization

Source: Data Analysis, 2025

The bibliometric visualization above illustrates a density map of research themes related to women's empowerment, using a color gradient to highlight areas of high concentration and activity within the field. The bright yellow and green areas signify the most discussed and pivotal themes in the literature, centered predominantly around "empowerment," "women," and "women's status." These focal points suggest that core discussions in the research are deeply rooted in exploring the fundamentals of what constitutes women's empowerment, the status of women in various spheres, and the broad concept of gender equality. This central clustering of terms underscores the ongoing

emphasis in academic research on understanding and enhancing the position of women in society and various professional domains. Around this core, other significant themes like "leadership," "health," "poverty," and "economic development" appear in cooler tones, indicating a strong but less dense concentration compared to the central topics. The presence of "sustainable development" and "human rights" in proximity to "economic development" and "socioeconomics" reflects an interdisciplinary approach in the literature, linking women's empowerment not only to social and ethical issues but also to broader economic and developmental impacts.

4.2 Co-Authorship Network

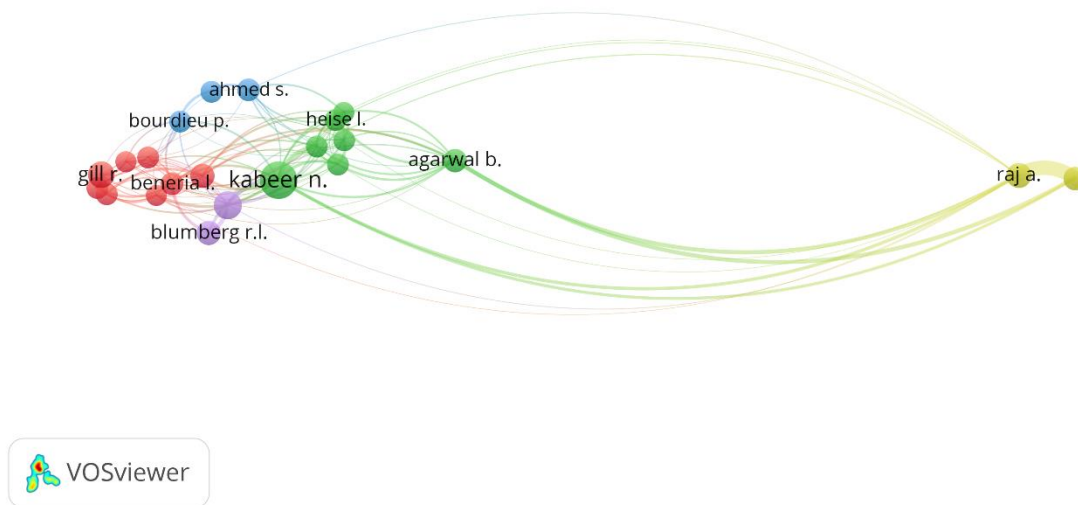


Figure 4. Author Collaboration Visualization

Source: Data Analysis, 2025

The bibliometric visualization above illustrates a co-authorship network among researchers studying women's empowerment and related fields. The nodes, represented by different scholars' names, show the connections and collaborations among these researchers. The node size typically reflects the volume of work or influence in the field, while the lines indicate collaborative

relationships. The most prominent node, "Raj A.," located farthest on the right, suggests a significant, possibly central role in recent studies or a specific subfield within women's empowerment research. Other scholars, such as "Kabeer N." and "Benaria L.," appear closely connected and are part of a denser cluster, indicating frequent collaborations or

shared research interests within a closely knit thematic area.

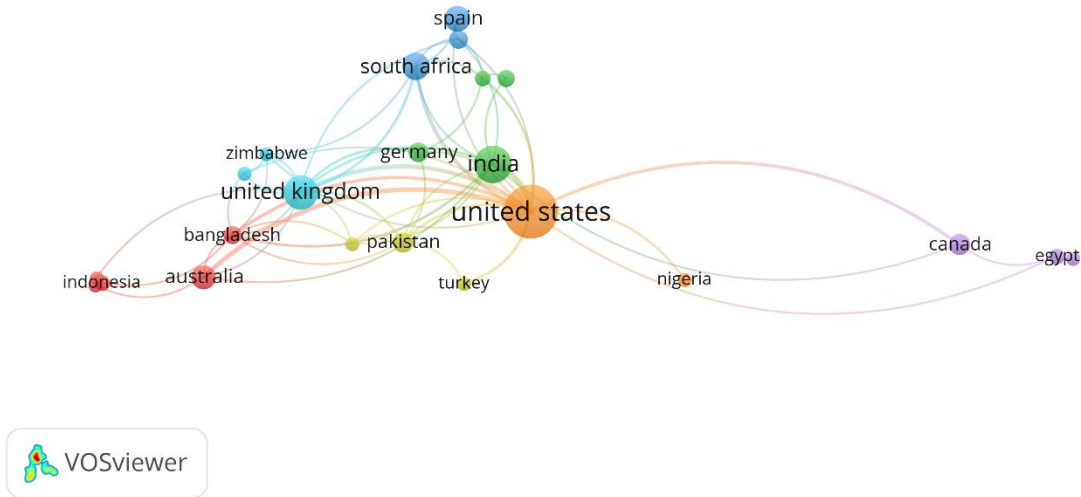


Figure 5. Country Collaboration Visualization

Source: Data Analysis, 2025

This bibliometric visualization maps the international collaboration network on women's empowerment research among various countries. Nodes represent countries, and the lines indicate the collaborative links between them, reflecting cross-national academic partnerships. The United States stands out as a central hub with extensive connections to other nations like India, the United Kingdom, and Germany, indicating a high level of international research

collaboration. Countries such as Canada and Egypt, connected by a singular line, might represent a specific bilateral research partnership. The clustering of countries like India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh suggests regional collaborations, potentially due to shared cultural and social contexts that influence their research focuses. Overall, this map highlights the global nature of women's empowerment research, showcasing a diverse array of collaborations across continents.

4.3 Citation Analysis

Table 1. Top Cited Research

Citations	Authors and year	Title
1539	[13]	What works? Interventions for maternal and child undernutrition and survival
284	[14]	Fixing women or fixing the world? 'Smart economics', efficiency approaches, and gender equality in development
267	[15]	The Bangladesh paradox: Exceptional health achievement despite economic poverty
155	[16]	What Is the Impact of the Internet on Decision-Making in Pregnancy? A Global Study

Citations	Authors and year	Title
133	[17]	The cross-cutting contribution of the end of neglected tropical diseases to the sustainable development goals
126	[18]	'Race', gender and Neoliberalism: Changing visual representations in development
122	[19]	Is there life after gender mainstreaming?
110	[20]	Firewalking and religious healing: The anastenaria of greece and the american firewalking movement
109	[21]	Feminizing leadership in Arab societies: The perspectives of Omani female leaders
103	[22]	Davos woman to the rescue of global capitalism: Postfeminist politics and competitiveness promotion at the world economic forum

Source: Publish or Perish Output, 2025

Discussion

1. Emerging Themes and Interdisciplinary Approach

The analysis underscores the multifaceted nature of women's empowerment research, which encompasses themes ranging from basic gender roles and economic participation to complex intersections with health, human rights, and sustainable development. Initially, the discourse focused primarily on understanding the barriers women face in the workplace and society. However, over time, it has evolved to address broader implications of empowerment related to economic development and global sustainability goals. This shift towards an interdisciplinary approach is indicative of a growing recognition that women's empowerment is not only a social and ethical issue but also a critical component of broader economic and developmental agendas.

The prominence of themes such as "economic development" and "socioeconomics" in recent literature highlights a significant shift towards integrating women's empowerment with economic policies. This integration suggests that the academic community and policymakers increasingly view women's empowerment as integral to achieving broader economic objectives, including poverty reduction, economic stability, and sustainable growth. The connectivity between "health" and "poverty" themes further illustrates that the health of women is

increasingly considered within the broader socio-economic contexts, emphasizing the need for policies that are cognizant of women's unique health needs and their economic implications.

2. Key Contributors and Collaborative Networks

The bibliometric maps reveal that the United States, India, and the United Kingdom are central nodes in the research network, indicating their pivotal roles in producing and disseminating knowledge on women's empowerment. The strong connections between these countries and others like Germany and Canada reflect robust international collaborations that likely foster rich cross-cultural perspectives and methodologies in the research. This global network underlines the importance of international cooperation in advancing understanding and generating diverse insights into women's empowerment issues. Notably, emerging connections between countries such as Egypt and Canada, which might represent newer or less explored collaborative relationships, suggest potential growth areas in global research partnerships. These collaborations are essential as they can introduce unique regional challenges and solutions into the global discourse, enhancing the relevance and applicability of research outcomes across different socio-economic and cultural contexts.

3. Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings from this bibliometric analysis carry significant implications for policy and practice. The evolution of themes over time suggests that policymakers and practitioners should consider an integrated approach to women's empowerment, addressing not only social and legal aspects but also economic, health, and educational factors. For instance, the linkage between economic development and women's rights in the literature highlights the potential for policies that simultaneously promote economic growth and gender equality, such as those supporting women's entrepreneurship and leadership in business sectors. Moreover, the identified key themes and contributors can guide future research agendas by pinpointing areas that require further exploration or where there is already a substantial base of knowledge. For instance, the emerging focus on health and economic outcomes related to women's empowerment could guide healthcare providers and economic planners to design integrated strategies that consider the unique needs of women in economic development programs.

4. Limitations and Future Research Directions

While the study provides valuable insights, it also has limitations that future research could address. The reliance on articles indexed in Scopus might omit relevant publications from other databases or grey literature, potentially skewing the thematic and collaborative analysis. Additionally, the focus on English-language articles may exclude significant contributions in other languages, which could be particularly relevant in non-English speaking countries. Future research should aim to include a more

diverse range of databases and languages to capture a more comprehensive global perspective on women's empowerment. Additionally, longitudinal studies could be beneficial to understand how the impacts of global crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, have influenced the themes and collaborations in women's empowerment research.

5. CONCLUSION

This bibliometric study has systematically mapped the landscape of global research on women's empowerment in the workforce, revealing a significant evolution in the themes and collaborations over the past three decades. The findings underscore the interdisciplinary nature of the field, with emerging focuses on economic development, health, and human rights illustrating the complex and multifaceted impact of women's empowerment on various aspects of global development. The central role of countries like the United States, India, and the United Kingdom, along with the dynamic collaborations observed between diverse nations, reflects a robust international discourse and a deepening understanding of the universal challenges and opportunities in empowering women. These insights not only enrich the academic field but also provide critical guidance for policymakers and practitioners aiming to craft effective and comprehensive strategies for gender equality. Future research should expand the scope to include more diverse databases and languages to capture a broader spectrum of global perspectives and continue to explore the evolving dynamics in new socio-economic contexts, ensuring that the momentum towards gender parity is both informed and inclusive.

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