

Examining the Impact of Social Assistance on Poverty: A Bibliometric Analysis

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ABSTRACT

*Does social assistance offer the kind of benefits required to break free from poverty? Our review of the literature turned up numerous studies that looked for solutions to this query. Thus, the purpose of this study is to look into the recurring topic in articles on how social aid affects poverty. This study employs bibliometric analysis with the Scopus database and RStudio software. Using RStudio software, the data was processed to create visualizations and examine research trends and topic developments about the relationship between social assistance and poverty.. The most cited articles in 2021 had an annual average citation of 1.9, which shows that the articles in that year were extraordinary. The International Journal of Social Welfare has produced 11 articles and is the most productive source. Since the beginning of 2013, the International Journal of Social Welfare has published more than any other source. In this theme, the United States has the most citations; next, China and Canada are the second and third most cited countries, respectively. China and Canada received 280 and 303 citations respectively, while the United States received the most, 378. With an H-index of 6, Barrientos is the most contributing author, followed by Walker and Gao, who have H-indices of 5 and 4, respectively. The discovery that Word cloud Poverty (12%) is the most common keyword length, though, is what really interests me. Just 2% of social aid was announced. Subsequent research on the correlation between poverty and social aid ought to remain highly intriguing. **Keyword: Social Assistance; Poverty; Bibliometric Analysis.***

INTRODUCTION

Programs for social assistance are designed to protect families from poverty. Programs for social assistance usually have the characteristics of being supplemental and a last resort. (Lavinias, 2015). Social assistance, as a last-resort benefit, is not an island; rather, its function and significance are influenced by the state, the economy, and other protective measures (Behrendt, 2018; Hölsch, 2004; Kraus et al., 2003). But how precisely is social aid to be defined? We must embrace a meaning of social assistance that works for us because there isn't a consensus definition of the term internationally (Eardley et al., 1996a). Three categories of social assistance are proposed by Eardley et al. (1996a): (1) general assistance, which offers cash benefits to all or nearly all individuals earning less than a certain amount; (2) categorized aid, which provides monetary advantages for specified groups, such community organizations, for things like unemployment; and (3) tied help, which provides monetary or in-kind benefits for particular items or services, like housing allowance.

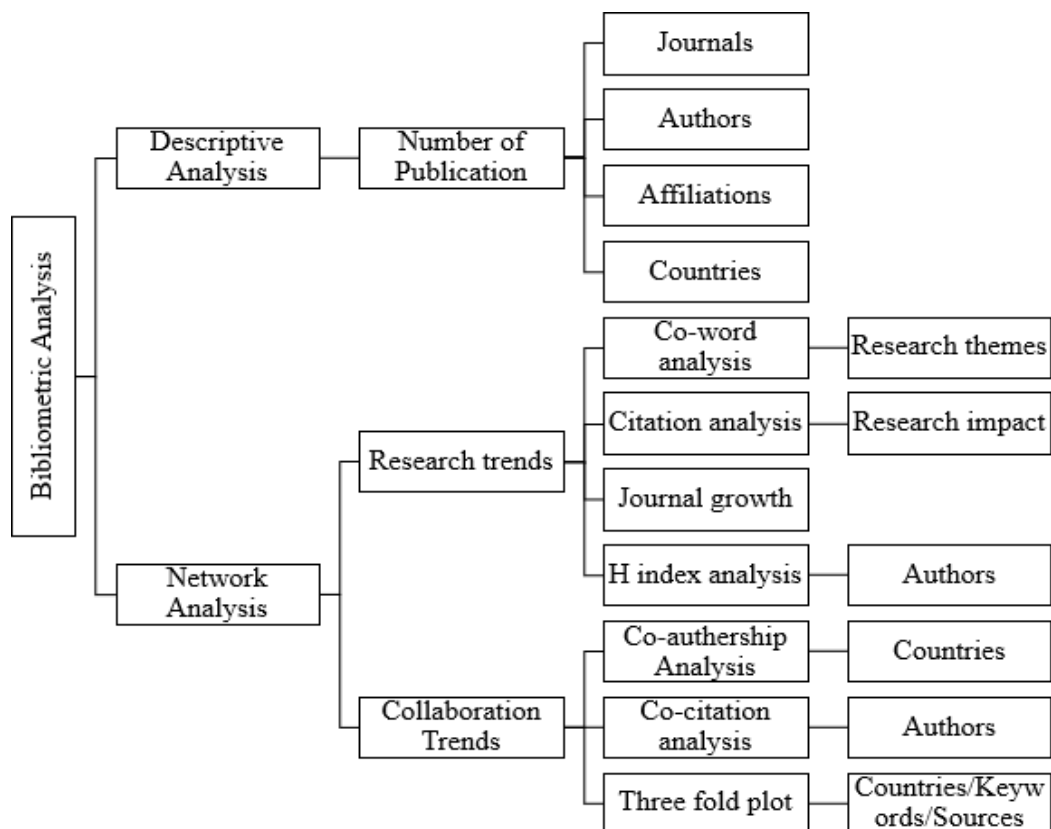
Social assistance is a safety net for poor people or those who have the potential to become poor. According to Midgley (2019) and Fuchs et al. (2020), safety net benefits are means-tested payments meant for families and people who are inadequate and earn less than the minimum wage. Another name for benefits is social assistance. These advantages all have the trait of being intended to shield society from poverty (Kuivalainen, 2015).

Research on social assistance programs is expanding, and both the number of recipients and the significance of benefits are rising (Barrientos, 2013; Cuesta et al., 2021; Li & Walker, 2017, 2021; Gao, 2017, 2013; Devereux, 2017; Devereux et al., 2018) and several other similar studies as explained in the results and discussion section. Although researchers have previously

examined the impact of social assistance on poverty, further understanding of how social assistance research impacts poverty is still needed. Thus, the primary goal of this bibliometric analysis is to demonstrate intellectual growth based on publication count by examining research trends, knowledge structures, and authorship collaborations. The network topology of the bibliometric investigation and the expected outcomes are shown in the model in Figure 1. In searching the literature, many studies were found showing that social assistance has an influence and impact on the economy of poor communities (Putra et al., 2015; Pramanik, 2020; Roni et al., 2021)

In order to produce a thorough understanding of these studies and investigate the development of hotspots in the study field, the article employs bibliometric analysis of the relationship between social assistance and poverty. In order to accomplish the research goals, the Biblioshiny software package in RStudio was used to examine trends and understand patterns of evidence using the Scopus database. This enables the understanding and interpretation of networks and patterns as well as the identification of crucial points in the development of poverty and social assistance. The remainder of the essay is summarized as follows: We will first go over the specifics of the software utilized and the data obtained in the Methodology section. Following that, statistical information will be provided for network analyses involving co-authors and co-countries. We conclude by summarizing the key findings and then talk about and suggest more research.

Figure 1. Topologies for bibliometric analysis



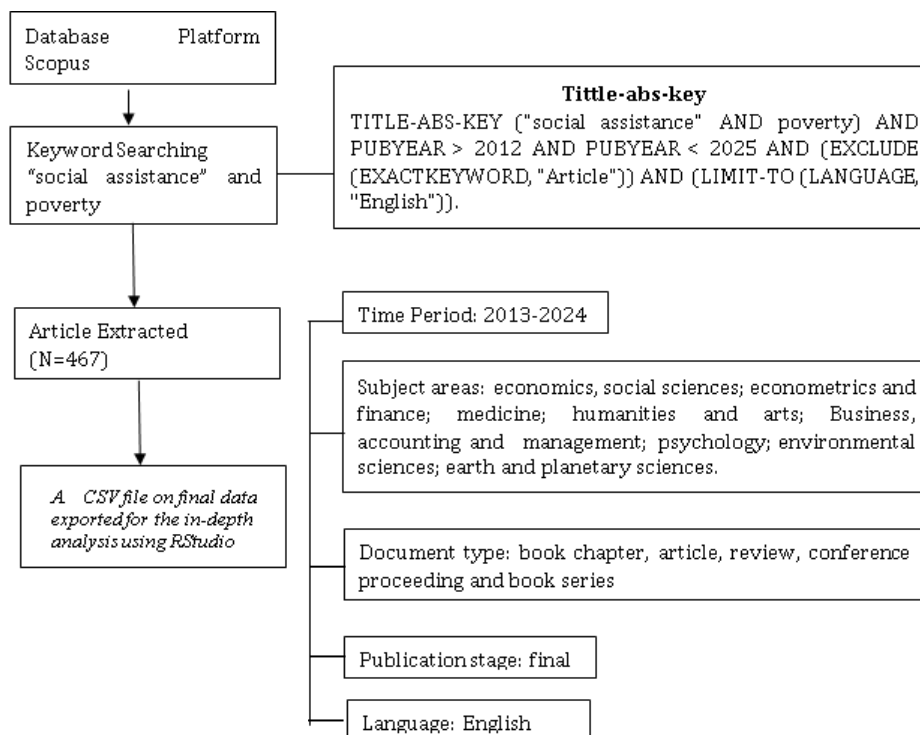
METHOD

This research extracts data from the Scopus database with the terms TITLE-ABS-KEY ("social assistance" AND poverty) AND PUBYEAR > 2012 AND PUBYEAR < 2025 AND (EXCLUDE (EXACTKEYWORD, "Article")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE," English")). We found 467 documents with the keywords ("social assistance" AND poverty) from 2013 to 2024. The following is a data collection of 467 documents for the 2013-2024 period collected for research (20 March 2024), as shown in Figure 2. Of the 467 documents, 358 journals, 73 books, 20 conference proceedings, and 16 book series.

We consider the Scopus database to be important for the following reasons: According to certain scholars (Feng et al., 2017; Nawaz et al., 2020; Aksnes & Sivertsen, 2019; Farhan & Iqbal, 2021) the Scopus database provides more coverage and is more appropriate for bibliometric study. The Scopus database is a superior choice for data exporting than the Web of Science, claim Wawz et al. (2020). The Scopus database is an indexed, well-structured database that may export published data and metadata for a variety of research areas, according to Cobo et al. (2011). The Scopus database also contains all of the bibliographic information about authors, works, citations, and other data used in the study. The specifics of the database selection are displayed in Figure 2.

Biblioshiny tools and RStudio software were used for data analysis. For this investigation, the free program utilized in RStudio is called Biblioshiny. According Gao, et al (2021). RStudio has the capability to visually exhibit extant literature and provide graphs that illustrate hotspots, research networks, and emerging trends. When compared to comparable open-access software, such VOS Viewer, the focus is on information viewing and more precisely and robustly presenting the results statistically (Shoeb et al., 2022). A flow diagram for database selection is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Database Sorting Flow Diagram



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

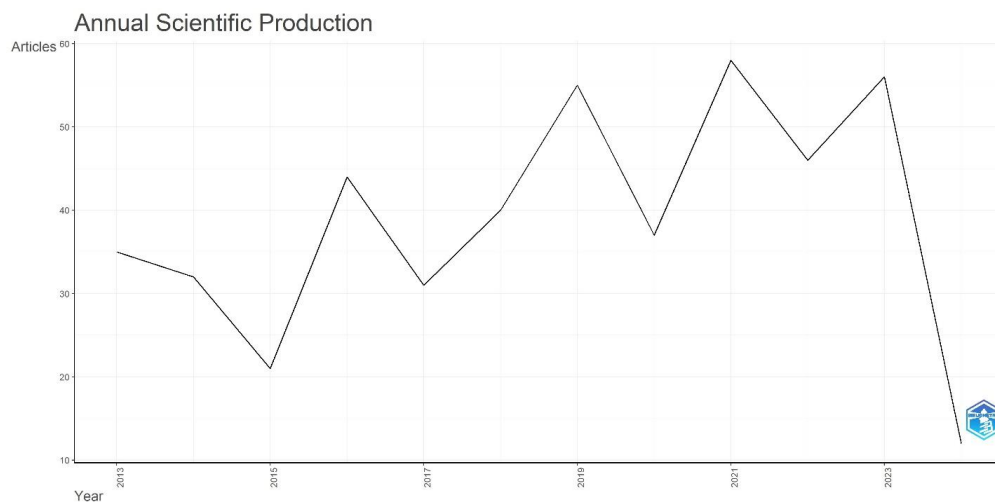
Publication Trends

Table 1 shows the publishing history of the number of papers published annually between 2013 and 2024. This table displays the average number of citations per article and the overall amount for the entire year. Trends in publications and citations can be understood by looking at the quantity of publications and the average annual total number of citations. The highest average of 11.88 citations per item was recorded in 2014. An overview and analysis of the trajectory of "social assistance and poverty" are shown in Figure 3 and Table 1, which are based on several publications released throughout the years. The year 2021 had the most articles published between 2012 and 2024—64. On March 20, 2024, there were no publications about poverty and social assistance, nevertheless.

Table 1. Detail about the publication and citation trends

Year	N	Mean TC Per Article	Mean TC Per Year
2012	35	17.73	1.34
2013	36	17.25	1.44
2014	40	11.88	1.08
2015	22	9.23	0.92
2016	49	8.51	0.95
2017	34	8.94	1.12
2018	47	5.51	0.79
2019	63	6.9	1.15
2020	40	4.82	0.96
2021	64	6.84	1.71
2022	50	1.52	0.51
2023	62	0.61	0.3
2024	12	0	0

Figure 3. Publication Over Years



Citation Trends

The amount of citations annually for the subjects of poverty and social aid from 2013 to 2024 is displayed in Figure 4. Table 2 illustrates how frequently cited articles about poverty and social aid in 2021 were, with an average yearly citation count of 1.9. This indicates that the articles were deemed extremely outstanding. But after 2021, the average number of citations annually dropped since the caliber of research findings generated in this sector each year could have been higher. A Sankey diagram showing the relationships between authors, keywords, and countries is shown in Figure 5. The nations of the plot are on the right, the central row has its keywords, and the left side contains its sources. Prominent terms like poverty, social aid, bating poverty, social protection, social policy, etc. are highlighted in each of the twenty-one samples, along with the name and nation of the author. The author notes that there is a uniform distribution of publications on poverty and social assistance across national boundaries in the International Journal of Social Welfare and the Journal of Poverty.

Figure 4. Number of Average Citation per Year

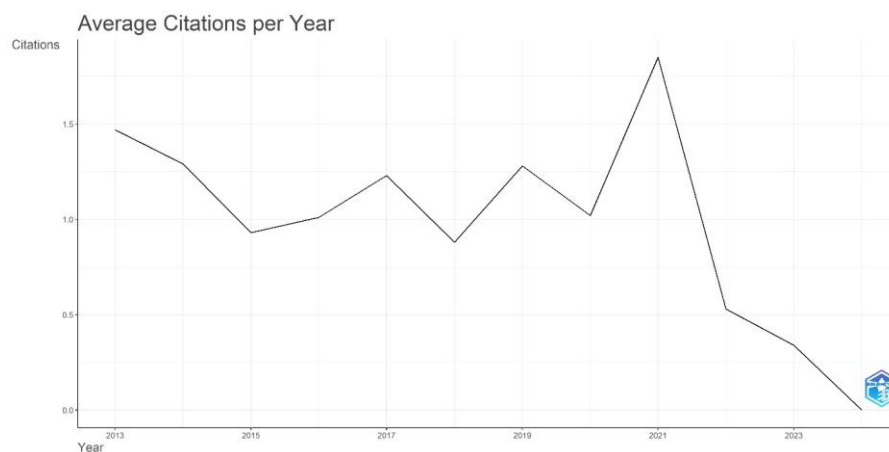


Figure 5. Three-Field Plot



Source of Publication

The top 20 journals that publish articles on poverty and social assistance are shown in Table 2, along with an explanation of how the most prominent journals are distributed. Based on these numbers, the journal with the highest productivity is the "International Journal of Social Welfare," ranking first with 11 articles. With a combined score of seven articles, the Journal of Poverty and Social Policy and Administration comes in second, followed by the Journal of Asian Public Policy and World Development in third place with a combined score of six articles. Assistance Benefits in Brazil: Changes and Challenges to the Exercise of a Constitutional Right, BMC Public Health, Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies, Journal of Poverty and Social Justice, Asian Social Work and Policy Review, which is regarded as one of the critical sources of publications on social assistance policy and poverty, are most of the journals that published five, four, and three articles, respectively, that are represented in this table.

Tabel 2. Most Relevant Source Based on the Theme

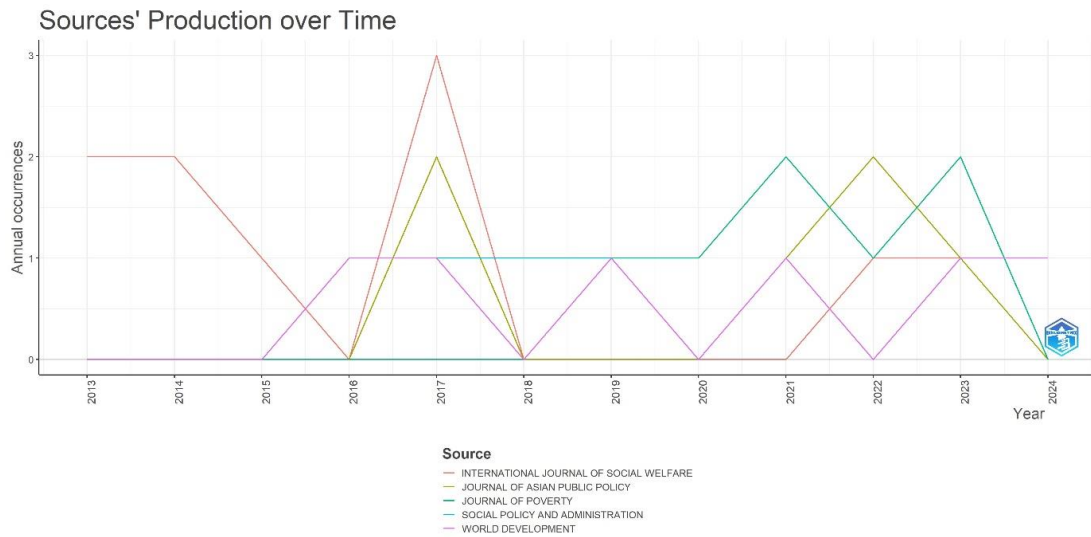
Sources	Articles
International Journal of Social Welfare	11
Journal of Poverty	7
Social Policy and Administration	7
Journal of Asian Public Policy	6
World Development	6
Assistance Benefits in Brazil: Changes and Challenges to The Exercise of a Constitutional Right	5
BMC Public Health	5
Handbook on Social Protection Systems	5
International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy	5
Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies	4
Development Southern Africa	4
E3s Web of Conferences	4
Economic Studies in Inequality, Social Exclusion and Well-Being	4
Journal of Poverty and Social Justice	4
Journal of Social Policy	4
Poverty and Social Assistance in Transition Countries	4
The Global Rise of Social Cash Transfers: How States and International Organizations Constructed a New Instrument for Combating Poverty	4
Asian Social Work and Policy Review	3
China Journal of Social Work	3
China Quarterly	3

Source Growth

Use the regression analysis method known as Locally Estimated Scatterplot Smoothing (LOESS), which creates smooth lines via a scatterplot, to demonstrate changes in publications over time. Figure 6 illustrates this point by showing the rise of the top six journals as determined by analysis. The International Journal of Social Welfare published more articles in 2017 than it did in any previous year, as this data illustrates. The Journal of Poverty and the Journal of Asian Public Policy both saw a sharp rise in publishing starting in 2016. Apart from that, Social Policy and Administration and World Development were one and six respectively in the current year.

The author can conclude that the field of economics and public policy is the journal that publishes the most research on poverty and social assistance.

Figure 6. Growth of the Sources



Affiliation, Productions, and Author’s Country Analysis

The top twenty author associations in poverty and social aid that are relevant to universities are displayed in Figure 7. With fifteen pieces, the University of Toronto made the most contribution. Ten publications were supplied by Beijing Normal University, nine by Fudan University, and nine by McGill University. The country analysis in this domain is shown in Figure 8. The most fruitful and productive areas are indicated by the darkest areas, and the least productive parts are indicated by the lightest areas. With a frequency score of 115, Canada leads the United States and Indonesia, which have frequency ratings of 110 and 98, respectively, in terms of the quantity and value of research conducted there. Figure 9 shows how countries collaborate; as a nation's proportions define its trends, the percentage of a nation's publications that represent collaboration between nations is how it is defined. According to Aminullah et al. (2023), Single Country Publications is represented by SCP, and Multiple Country Publications is represented by MCP. While both the US and Canada scored 23 for intra-country collaboration, Figure 9 shows that the US received 14 for inter-country collaboration and Canada only obtained 4. China and the United Kingdom ranked second and third in terms of international cooperation, with a total of 12 and 5 admissions, respectively. China and Brazil ranked second and third, respectively, in terms of intra-country collaboration, with admissions of 20 and 16.

Figure 7. Relevant Affiliation

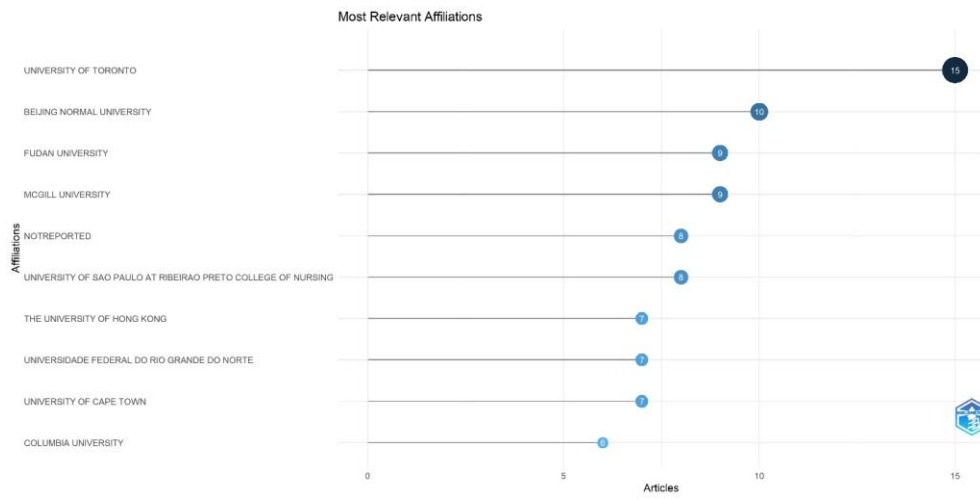


Figure 8. Country Scientific Production

Country Scientific Production

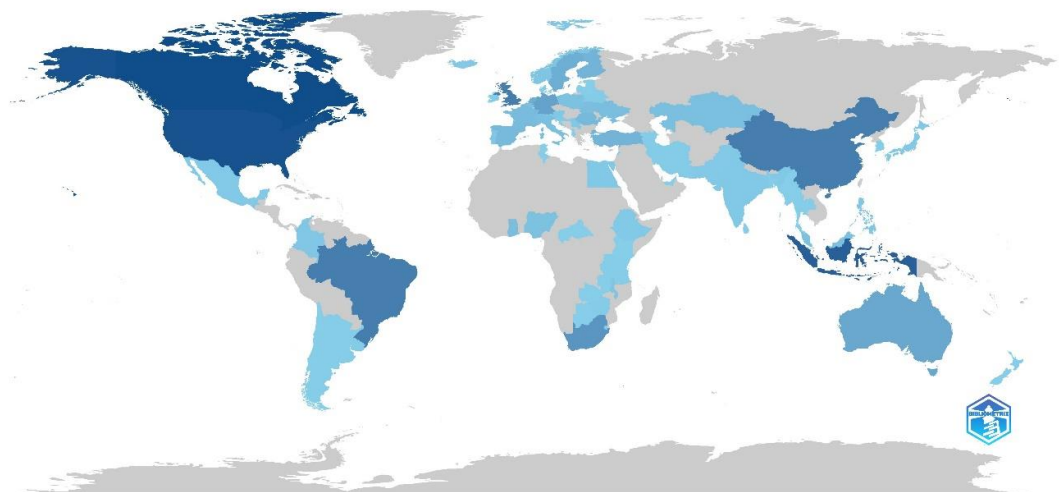
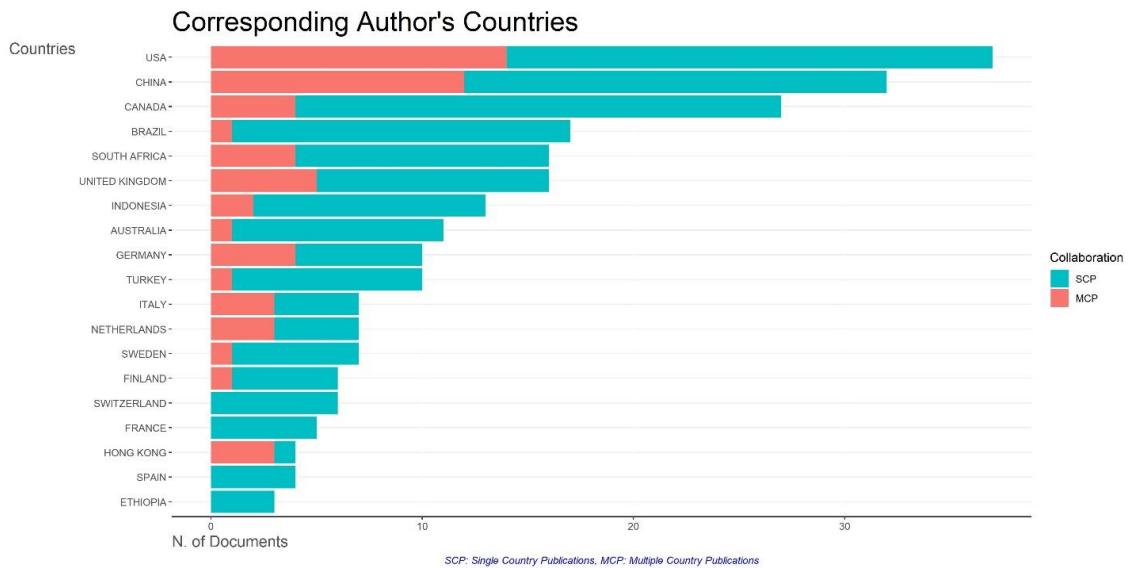


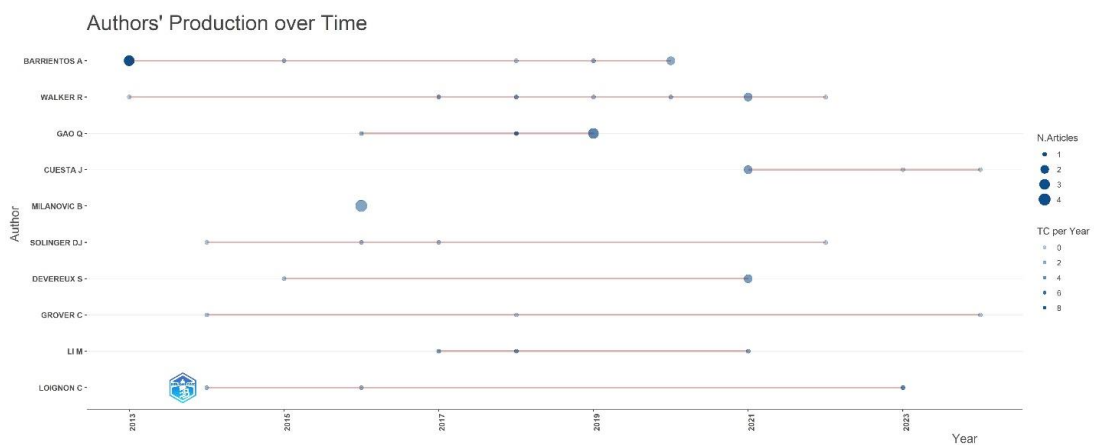
Figure 9. Visual Representation of Countries and Collaboration Index



Author Contribution

Figure 10 lists the top 10 writers in poverty and social aid based on the H-index. A journal's quality is indicated by its H-index, which takes into account its performance and citation impact. The greatest value, such as a certain author or journal that publishes papers that have been cited at least h times, is clearly defined by the H index. The H-index is a better indicator of the quantity and quality of outstanding journals (Shoeb et al., 2022). With an H-index of 6, Barrientos is the most contributing author. Walker and Gao are next with H-indexes of 5 and 4, respectively. It displays the top author's recent articles on this theme over the years. Most journals only have an H-index of three. Leading authors' publications over the years are shown in Figure 11, which also shows the number of articles published and citations obtained annually on the subject. Top writers of publications on poverty and social aid with a high citation count are Barrientos, Walker, Gao, Cuesta, and Milanovic.

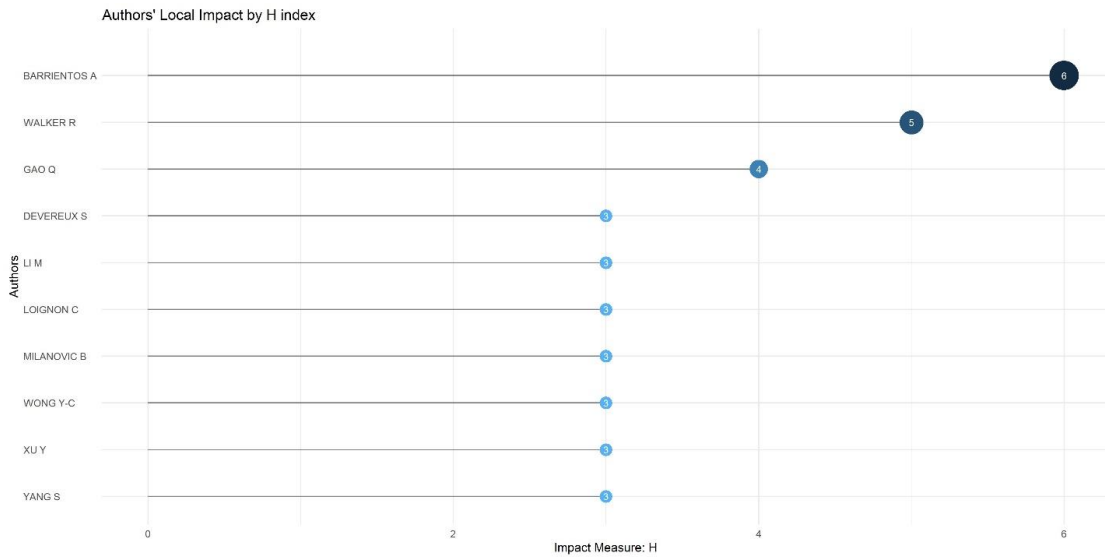
Figure 10. Most Contributing Author
 Figure 11. Top Author's Production over time



Citation Analysis

The most referenced publications on poverty and social assistance are published in the United States, as Figure 12 demonstrates. China and Canada are the next two most cited nations, respectively. China and Canada received 280 and 303 citations respectively, while the United States received the most, 378. In addition, four other nations obtained above 100 citations, whereas the remaining nations obtained under 100 citations.

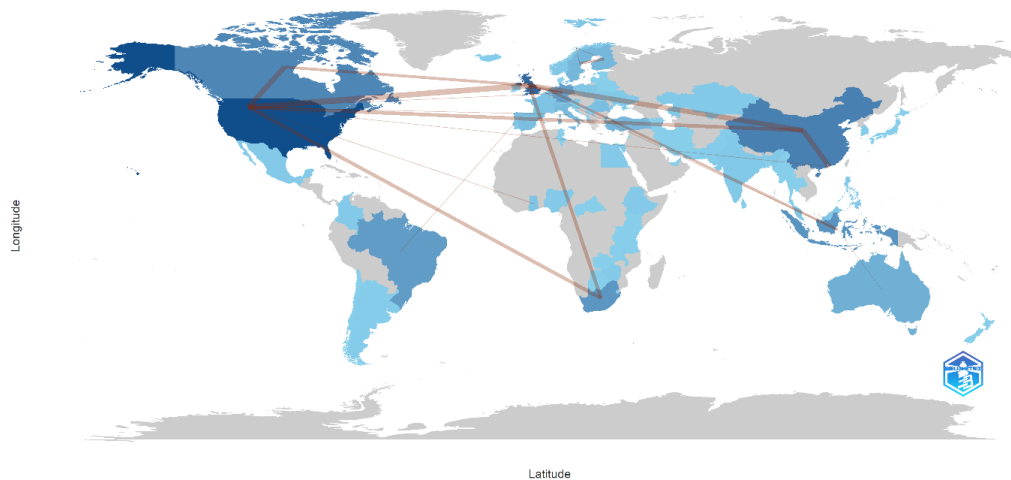
Figure 12. Most Cited Countries



Country Specific Collaboration

Figure 13 shows that the United States is the country that collaborates most with other countries, such as the United Kingdom, Canada, and South Africa. Indonesia is also a collaborative country, collaborating with the Netherlands and Malaysia. Additionally, other countries need to be more collaborative. Regarding social assistance and poverty, collaboration between countries still needs to be improved, apart from America.

Figure 13. Country Specific Collaboration
 Country Collaboration Map

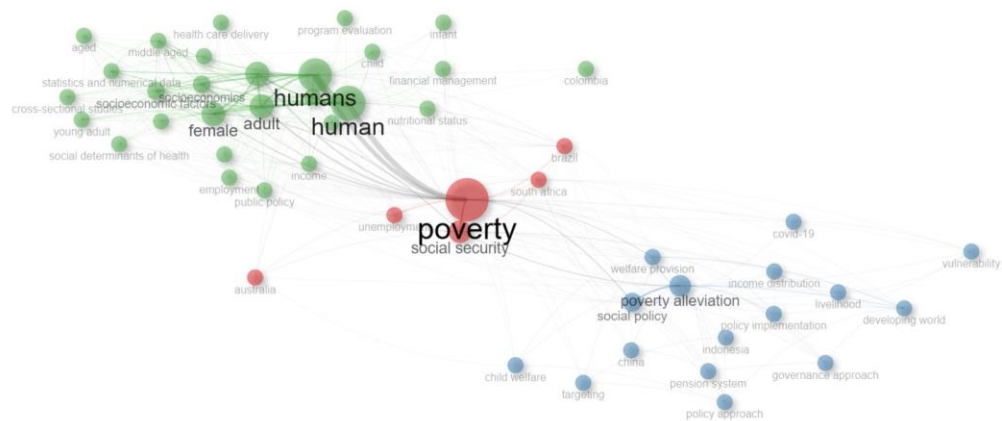


Authors Keywords Co-occurrence Network

The co-occurrence of the authors' keywords was examined in order to pinpoint any research gaps or potential avenues for further study in the area of poverty and social assistance. An academic research article's most conceptual introduction is found in its keywords. By examining co-occurrence networks, scholars can promptly identify research topics and potential avenues for further investigation within academic domains (Gao et al., 2021). Figure 14 in this article displays the term co-occurrence network; the data shows three groups, denoted by red, blue, and green.

These colors stand for various groups; their separation signifies connectivity; words stand for nodes; nodes' sizes correspond to how frequently they occur. Poverty and social security are shown by the red cluster. The blue cluster is dominated by themes related to social policy, policy implementation, and poverty reduction. The adults, men, females, and humans are highlighted in the green cluster. In a scientific subject, keyword co-occurrence analysis creates a network of themes and their connections.

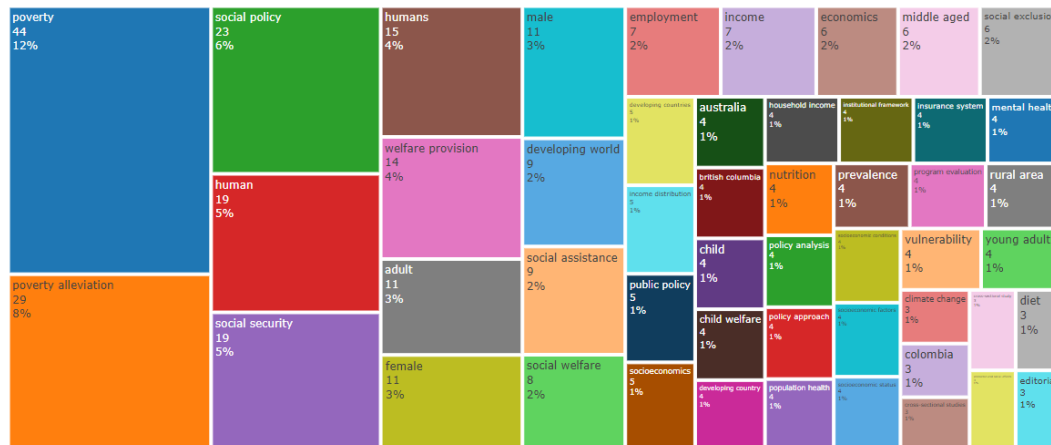
Figure 14. Co-occurrence Network



Thematic Evolution

Word cloud shows that poverty (12%) and poverty alleviation (8%) are the most highlighted themes. Social policy (6%), human (5%), and social security (5%) are the keywords highlighted below. Meanwhile, Social assistance (2%) is a small keyword. Research on the impact of social assistance on poverty is still an exciting topic.

Figure 15. Word Cloud Social Assistance and Poverty



CONCLUSION

Utilizing Biblioshiny in the RStudio software package to extract data from the Scopus database for the theme of social assistance and poverty, bibliometric analysis was performed on 467 publications between 2013 and 2024. Using a yearly average citation of 1.9, we came to the conclusion that the most cited publications in 2021 were exceptional. The most fruitful source is the International Journal of Social Welfare, which has generated 11 articles. Since the start of 2013, the International Journal of Social Welfare has published more articles than any other source. China and Canada are the next most referenced countries in this theme, behind the United States, which has the most citations overall. China and Canada received 280 and 303 citations respectively, while the United States received the most, 378. With an H-index of 6, Barrientos is the most contributing author, ahead of Walker and Gao, who have H-indices of 5 and 4, respectively. The result that most interests me, though, is that social assistance is only emphasized by 2% of the word cloud, with poverty being the highest highlighted keyword at 13%. Thus, we draw the conclusion that further research on the relationship between social assistance and poverty would be worthwhile. In summary, through the visualization of growing trends and the presentation of specific themes, this bibliometric analysis accurately captures the state of poverty and social aid development. It also aids in defining the body of knowledge and pointing the way for upcoming studies in this field.

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