

EXPLORING WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT: BIBLIOMETRIC ON TRENDS AND INNOVATIONS IN GENDER EQUALITY

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ABSTRACT:

Women's empowerment has become an issue of social interest worldwide, becoming an essential element for the achievement of inclusive and sustainable development; In recent years, this issue has been addressed by several researchers, who have emphasized its importance and the urgent need to work on gender equality, with the aim of eliminating discrimination, restriction of rights, and violence in all its senses.

In this study, a bibliometric analysis is carried out detailing the emerging trends regarding female empowerment and gender equality; The research is based on publications between 1900 and 2023, with the aim of knowing the behavior of the variables over time and the connections between the various studies and topics addressed; The database considered 947 publications that have been subject to analysis which belong to studies focused on social, political, business and economic issues.

KEYWORDS: Women's Empowerment, Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment, Gender Equity.

1) INTRODUCTION:

In the last decade, women have achieved significant growth and attention at the economic and social level (Castiblanco-Moreno et al., 2022) [12]; however, despite representing half of the world's population (World Bank, 2022) [5], they continue to be victims of gender-based violence and inequality (UN Women, 2023) [53], which leads to discrimination, precariousness and lack of opportunities, which is why it is necessary and urgent to turn our critical gaze and legitimate interest towards the achievement of gender equality. In this sense, within the framework of the fulfillment of the Sustainable Development Agenda and in response to Sustainable Development Goal No. 5 [Gender equality], the central focus is on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls (UN, 2022) [52].

Likewise, the International Labor Organization (ILO, 2023) [51] promotes, in coordination with other international institutions, equal opportunities for women to have access to decent jobs that are not only well paid but also productive, with conditions of equity, security, freedom and above all respect for human dignity (Aker et al., 2017) [1].

It is not news that women have been stripped of their rights, throughout history, which is significantly related to the condition of poverty in which they live, "It is estimated that 70% of the population that subsists below the extreme poverty line (less than 1.25 USD per day) are women" (Manos Unidas, 2023) [40].

This gender inequality causes rights to be repressed, hence the importance of achieving women's economic and social empowerment (Daniels et al., 2022) [17], in response there are different modalities and provisions to mainstream gender equality in different central areas (Torres-Torres et al., 2019 [69]; Chen & Henry, 2012 [14]; Kerimova, 2021) [33], including in trade negotiations, which is one of the greatest challenges in trade policies for equality (ECLAC, 2020) [13].

In contrast to the above, Barrachina et al. (2021) [6], Finke et al. (2021) [23] and Pando et al. (2022) [54] state that women have shown great courage and have left an unparalleled mark throughout history. Likewise, many studies have focused on the skills and abilities that characterize and differentiate them, among them the capacities of leadership, innovation, creativity, empathy, great skills to identify opportunities and social awareness, manifested in the increase of business initiative and participation, which contributes significantly not only to their homes and economies but also to their territory and to global sustainable development (Merma-Molina et al., 2022 [43]; Fatemeh et al., 2022 [22]; Bhat et al., 2022 [8] and Kovaleva et al., 2022 [37]).

In this sense, female empowerment has become a priority and important issue in our current society (Grabe, 2022 [26]; Ekbrand & Halleröd, 2018 [20]; Júnior et al., 2017 [30]; Ragsdale et al., 2018 [55]), and despite the constant and growing advances in gender equality (Carnegie et al., 2019; Ruiz-Cantisani et al., 2021 [58]; Tse et al., 2021 [68]; Maurana et al., 2021 [41]; Shannon et al., 2013 [61]; Najafizada et al., 2018 [47]; Sims & Rodriguez-Corcho, 2022 [63]; Gunawardena et al., 2006 [28]), there are still barriers and limitations that prevent women from reaching their full potential and in response to this problem of inequality, the promotion and development of female empowerment seeks to provide power and security to women (Ruiz Cantisani et al., 2021), providing them with the capacity to make decisions and control their lives (Jones, 2011) [31], transforms women (MacInnis et al., 2022) [39] in a personal and professional sense (Karakioulaki et al., 2022) [34]. When a society has empowered women, it contributes to improving economic, social, and political conditions (Nguyen et al., 2020 [49]; Greaves & Tungohan, 2007 [27]; Rola-Rubzen et al., 2020 [57]), which positively impacts their communities and the economy in general (Dhatt et al., 2017 [20]; Jain et al., 2021 [32]).

The struggle for female empowerment and gender equality has been a constant throughout history and even today, despite significant progress and changes towards improving our coexistence and society, we continue to have injustice gaps (Ambrosetti et al., 2021[2]; Coburn, 2019 [16]) that become obstacles to true sustained and egalitarian growth (Devkota et al., 2022 [19]; Ford, 2016 [24]), where the real danger is the justification, normalization, and acceptance of some facts (Wanner & Wadham, 2014) [72] such as discrimination in the workplace, lack of access to resources and education, and gender-based violence. These challenges are even more accentuated in developing countries, where women have less support, opportunities, and resources (Bain et al., 2020 [4]; Galiè et al., 2017 [25]).

The road to female empowerment is not easy (McDonald, 2015) [42], and requires a constant effort on the part of authorities, leaders, companies, and society as a whole (Mwiine, 2019 [45]; Serra et al., 2022 [60]), where the challenge is the constant search for respect for women (Closson et al., 2022 [15]; Bulte & Lensink, 2020; Hardee et al., 2014) [29], through incentivizing inclusive policies and practices (Lyon et al., 2018) [38], including equitable education (Khurshid, 2016) [36] and gender equality in all spheres of life (Deutsch et al., 2022) [18].

The world's population must be able to exercise their rights fully and equally, both in law and in practice (United Nations, 2022) [46]. Female empowerment is crucial for the transformation into a just and egalitarian society. Consequently, there is a lot of research and a wide range of academic literature that analyzes various issues concerning women, with the focus on female empowerment and gender equality; and the objective of this study is to carry out a bibliometric review that aims to analyze and evaluate the different research topics related to the variables, as well as to know the emerging research trends.

2) METHODS AND METHODOLOGY:

This study includes a bibliometric analysis on the variables female empowerment and gender equality, considering the years of study from 1994 to 2023. The fundamental objective of the research focuses on the description and analysis of the organization and articulation of the variables in terms of publications, journals, institutions, authors and citations. In the research, a scientific mapping of the variables has also been carried out using techniques and tools of bibliographic grouping and analysis of co-occurrence of authors and keywords. In this sense, the analysis carried out also allows us to identify the main research topics related to the variables of female empowerment and gender equality.

With respect to the criteria parameters to classify the thematic groupings, the identification and counting of publications and citation scores are used, as well as the Impact Factor indicator of the respective journals (H-Index).

In this same sense, the systematic analysis presented, seeks to contribute to the expansion of data, diagnosis and contextualization of the current situation of studies related to women's empowerment and gender equality, favoring the existing information in response to the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as having accurate results of the trends and research gaps of the variables studied. that serve as an input for future research that allows us to land objective responses to issues of global interest.

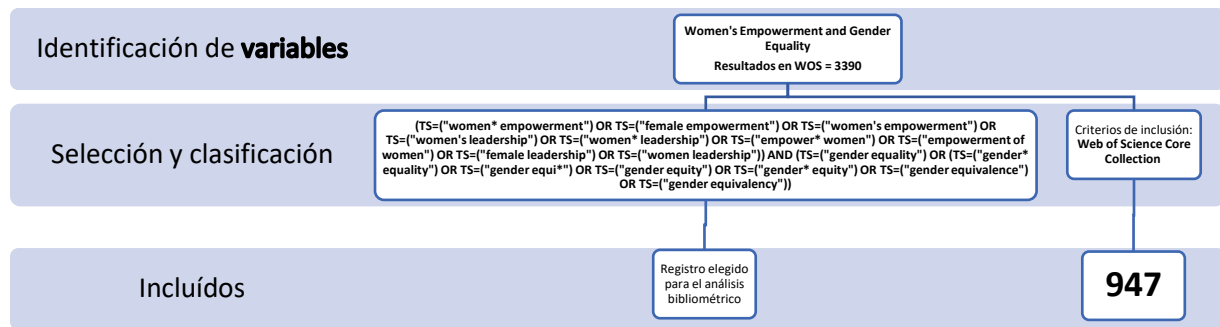
In this research, the bibliometric review method is used; Bode et al., (2019) [8] indicate that this type of study is part of systematic analyses with a large amount of data and sources. Likewise, Kessler, M.M. (1963) [34] and Valtakoski (2020) [71] state that the use of this method allows the researcher to make an in-depth analysis of the existing literature review on the chosen topic and the technique is perfected over time.

For the analysis and results of the study, the software "Visualisation of Similarities (VoS) Viewer" is used, which allows us to structure bibliographic and co-occurrence mappings, this tool also allows us to simplify the general structure of a database, as well as abstract, quantify and understand the different components that are interrelated in scientific research (Nandiyanto, 2021 [48].; Al Husaeni, 2021; Rosvall M & Bergstrom CT, 2010 [56]; Thelwall et al. 2018 [67]).

In this same sense, using VosViewer software, alluvial and flow diagrams were generated to show the changes, compositions and relationships of the data network, which allows revealing the history of the data concentrated in a network, as well as the connection of sequences, structures and functions.

The protocol that was considered for the processing of the data is presented below:

Figure 1 Database Identification and Selection



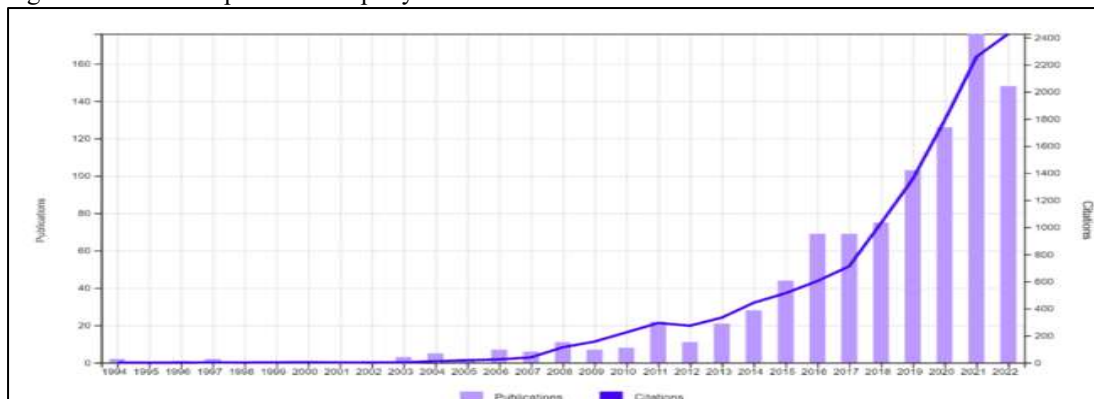
Note: Information selected from Web of science, 2023

Having selected the bibliographic elements, results and analyses were generated using VOSviewer.

3) RESULTS

Figure 2 shows that the number of publications on women's empowerment and gender equality grew slowly in the first two decades, however, from 2011 onwards growth began and gradually increased, with a more notable evolution from 2015 and the last few years, more than doubling the number of publications. which denotes that the topic generated greater research interest becoming a trend.

Figure 2 Number of publications per year

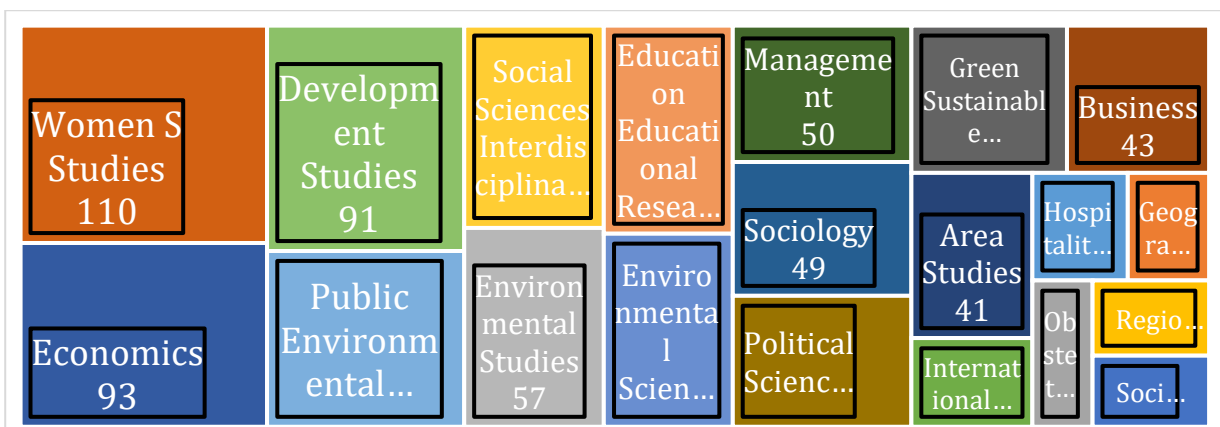


Source: Web of Science/ Times Cited and Publications Over Time

Main areas

Figure 3 shows the fields of study of the web of science categories according to the number of publications, considers the top 20 areas where women's empowerment and gender equality are written, and details the number of papers that have been written in each corresponding field of study. It is observed that the field that maintains the most publications is about women's studies, followed by the economic, development and health policy areas.

Figure 3 Main areas of study

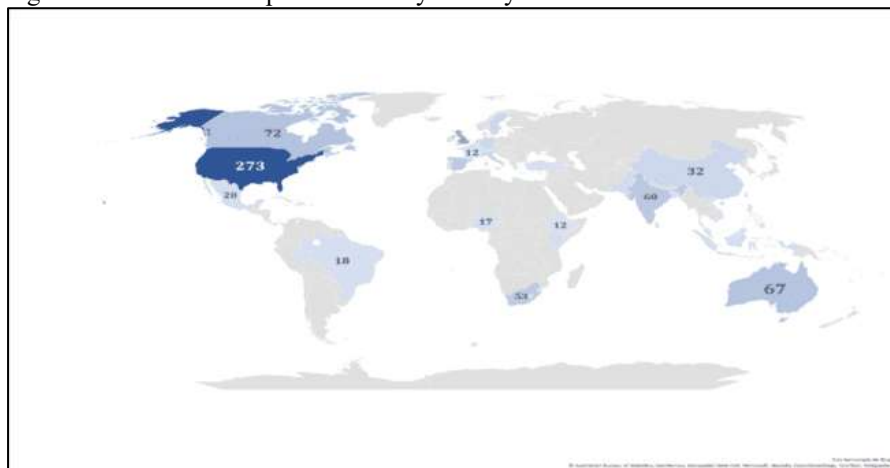


Source: Web of Science

Publications by country

Figure 4 shows that the largest number of investigations is led by the United States with 273 publications, followed by the United Kingdom with 126, Canada with 72 publications, Australia with 67, India with 60, Spain with 55, South Africa with 53, China with 32, and countries such as Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Pakistan and Mexico with less than 31 publications.

Figure 4 Distribution of publications by country

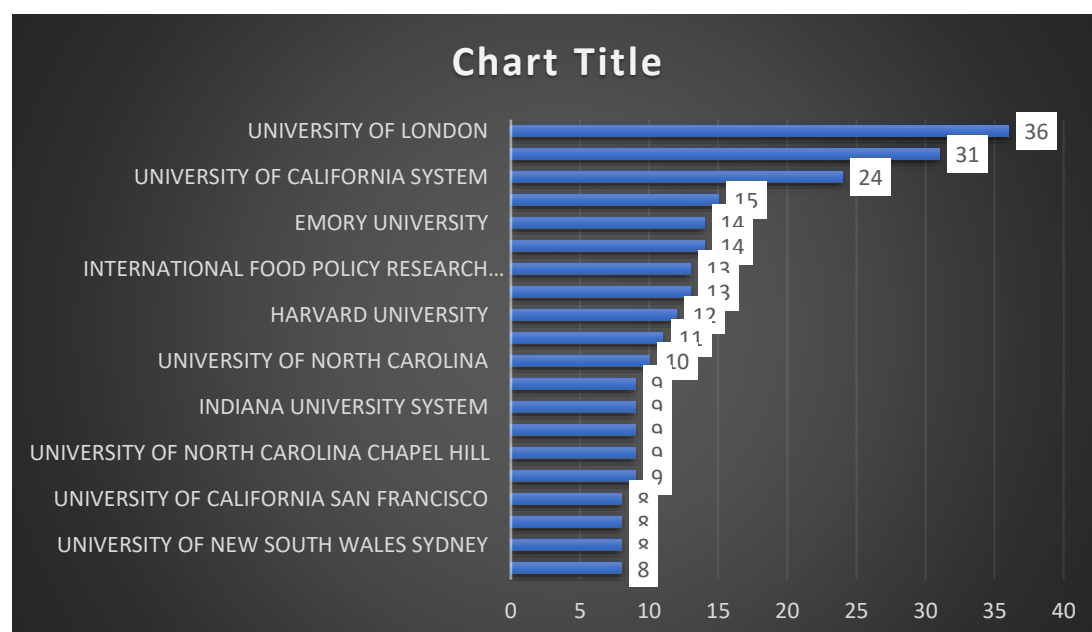


Source: Web of Science

Affiliations with the most publications

Figure 5 shows the main universities that research on women's empowerment and gender equality. It is observed that the University of London leads with 36 publications on this topic, followed by CGIAR with 31 publications and the University of California with 24 publications.

Figure 5 Main Institutions

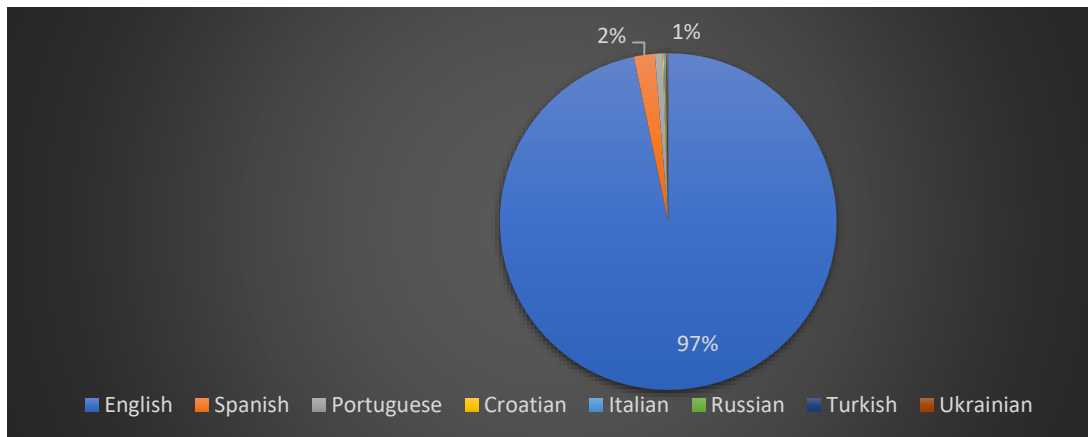


Source: Web of Science, 2023

Languages in which people write the most

Figure 6 shows that the language in which most research on women's empowerment and gender equality is published is in English, addressing 97% of publications and only 2% of publications in this thematic area are published in Spanish.

Figure 6 Languages in which people write the most

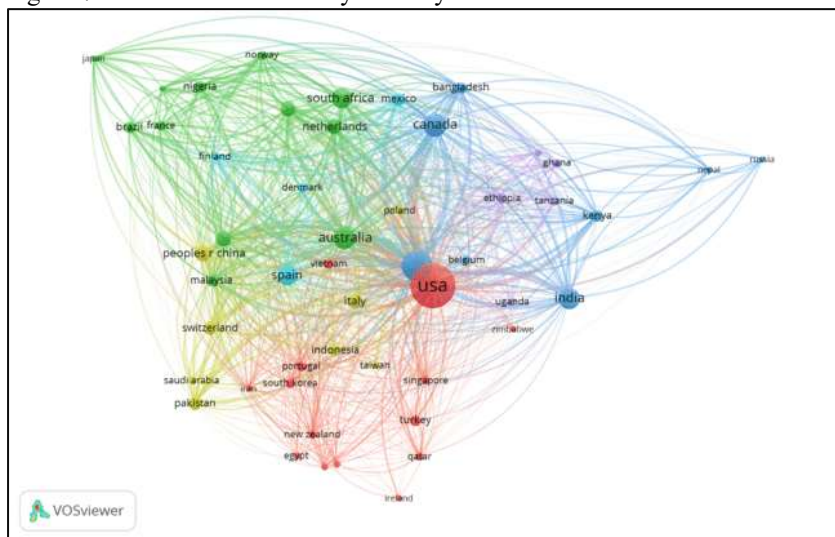


Citations by country

Figure 7 shows the main networks of work and citations according to countries, the graph reflects the strength of co-authorship between countries, the colors indicate the formation of clusters of countries that are related to each other in the different investigations.

Also, the distribution of citations between countries is shown, as well as their relationship and connection with other countries, the leadership in research on female empowerment and gender equality is taken by the United States, followed by the United Kingdom and Canada.

Figure 7 Number of Citations by Country

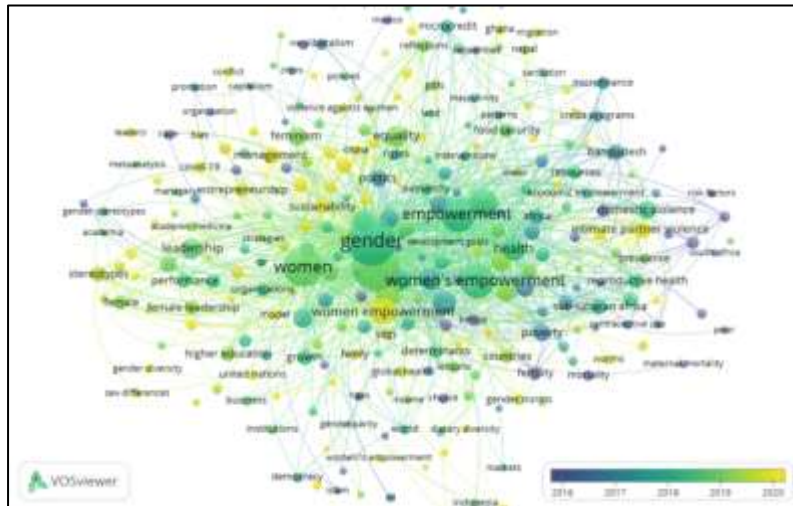


Note: Wos Database, Processed in VOSviewer

Keyword analysis

Figure 8 presents the co-occurrence of the main keywords and themes that are addressed around female empowerment and gender equality, the results obtained through the processing of the VOSviewer software show that the themes with the greatest frequency and strength linked to the study variables are power, gender equity, gender equality domestic violence, poverty, governance, leadership, women's rights, education, employment, feminism, sustainability, justice, access, among others.

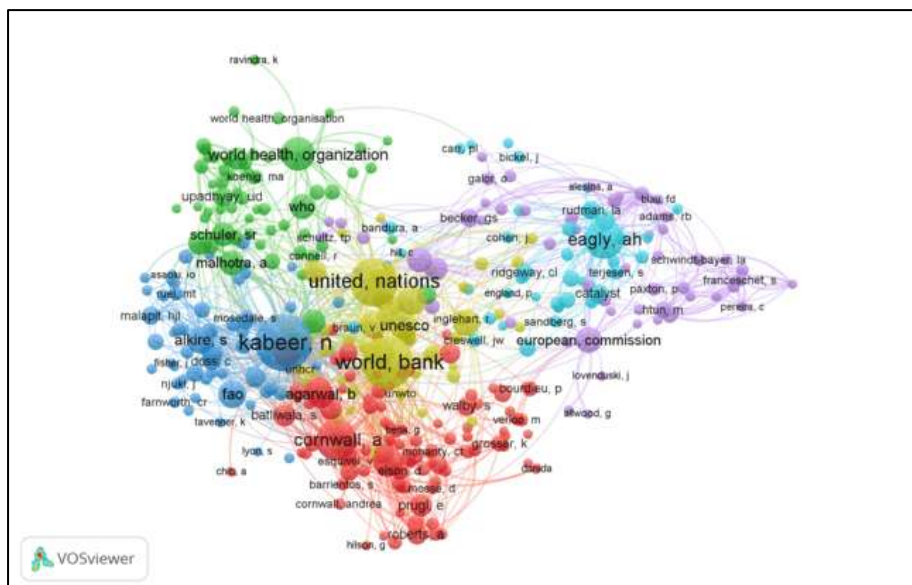
Figure 8 Analysis of co-occurrence of the themes



Note: Wos Database, Processed in VOSViewer

Figure 9 also shows the co-occurrence between the main citations, which reflects that institutions such as the World Bank [5] and the United Nations [46] are frequently cited on issues of female empowerment and gender equality.

Figure 9 Co-occurrence analysis of major citations



Note: Wos Database, Processed in VOSViewer

Analysis of the most cited articles - Top ten

Table 1 analyzes the most cited articles, which address the issue of female empowerment and gender equality, as well as the main focus of the research developed by each author.

Table 1 Top ten most cited articles

Author	Title	Dating	Study Focus
Apatinga et al. (2022) [3]	A conceptual framework for gender and climate mainstreaming to mitigate water inaccessibility in rural sub-Saharan Africa	257	The authors address the problem of gender inequality linked to the inaccessibility of resources in rural areas of Africa, as well as relate access to basic rights with the empowerment of women.
Singh et al. (2022) [64]	Impact of Sustainable Development Goals on Economic Growth in Saudi Arabia: Role of Education and Training	186	The research addresses the relationship of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with economic growth rates, considering education, gender equality and female empowerment as the main point.

Shellock et al. (2022) [62]	Breaking down barriers: The identification of actions to promote gender equality in interdisciplinary marine research institutions	174	The study aims to explore the main obstacles and factors that enhance female leadership in an academic context of interdisciplinary research.
Njuki et al. (2022) [50]	A review of evidence on gender equality, women's empowerment, and food systems	167	The aim was to assess the association between gender equality, women's empowerment and food systems, the study suggests key areas of investment in search of a fairer, more resilient and sustainable system for all.
Baumann (2017) [7]	Stories of women at the top: narratives and counternarratives of women's (non-)representation in executive leadership	165	Critical review of female representation in high-level executive leadership positions and how gender inequality influences the role of women in business management.
Samier and Elkaleh (2021) [58]	Towards a Model of Muslim Women's Management Empowerment: Philosophical and Historical Evidence and Critical Approaches	156	A cultural model of female empowerment is presented, focused on the training of Muslim women who are managers and leaders, where quality education, gender equality and the reduction of cultural differences are contemplated.
Smith and Sinkford (2022) [65]	Gender equality in the 21st century: Overcoming barriers to women's leadership in global health	146	The article seeks to recognize the important role that women play in the provision of health care services in the world, and considers gender equality as the main key to social progress.
Tusalem (2022) [70]	Does gendered representation in national legislatures promote substantive representation and human development? Evidence from the developing world	145	The study determined that the increase in women's legislative representation is significantly associated with the generation of policies for gender equality, human development and social inclusion, and that the presence of women in politics positively affects the results of policies that improve the human condition in general.
Menz (2016) [44].	Statelessness and Child Marriage as Intersectional Phenomena: Instability, Inequality, and the Role of the International Community	144	The research suggests policy reforms that seek the recognition of women's rights, focused on gender equality, under a regulatory framework that helps reduce the practice of child marriage.
Testoni et al. (2019) [66]	Prisoners' ambivalent sexism and domestic violence: a narrative study	139	The study considers sexism and gender inequality as the main causes of domestic violence, where the blaming of women as mothers leads to a serious fallacy in our society.

Note. Most cited articles in the Web of Science database, related to female empowerment and gender equality. It was considered as a range of years from 1994 to 2023.

4) DISCUSSION

The research carried out shows the growing and solid acceptance of publications related to women's empowerment and the gender equality approach.

Consequently, it identifies main research topics, based on the networks of co-occurrence of keywords presented in the study, such as domestic violence, governance, employment, opportunities.

It was also observed that most of the publications are led by countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada.

Bhat et al., (2022) [8] mentions that one of the most powerful tools we can give women is to promote gender equality through female leadership, which is equivalent to other studies such as Finke et al. (2021) [23] which indicates that creating the right environment to generate entrepreneurship promotes female empowerment and generates poverty reduction, likewise, Fatemehet al., (2022) [22] states that entrepreneurship and value creation generate female empowerment and reduce discrimination gaps.

5) CONCLUSION

The present study developed a bibliometric analysis, considering a systematized and orderly approach; where Was historical publications were considered, from 1994 to 2023, which were analyzed through the use of VOSviewer, which allowed us to know their evolution, their distribution, co-occurrences, and recognize the main themes present in the studies of female empowerment and gender equality.

In previous years, research in these thematic areas was very scarce, however, for a decade publications related to empowerment and gender equality have skyrocketed.

The studies identified highlight the importance of continuing with research related to gender empowerment and equality, which allows us to further expand current studies, relating them to other variables and promoting information that allows action plans that generate actions and significant changes in our society.

For future studies, analyses and methodologies such as TCM (theories, contexts, and methods) or ADO (antecedents-decisions-outcomes) can be considered, which allows linking bibliometric content with new results.

6) Acknowledgement: No Acknowledgements

7) Funding Statement: No financing

8) Data Availability: No new data were created or analyzed in this study. Data sharing is not applicable to this article.

9) Conflict of interest: Declare potential conflicts of interest; otherwise declare "None" or "The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest".

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