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GENDER EQUALITY ISSUES AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT POLICIES FROM 2000 TO 2022: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

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Abstract. This research is focused on reviewing the literature on the issue of gender equality and women's empowerment policies to reveal relationships, publication trends, hot topics or themes that have always been the object of research – especially on the issue of gender equality and women's empowerment. In this study, the data used for analysis was consisted of 877 documents obtained from the Scopus database. Then, the data was analyzed using VOSviewer. VOSviewer is used for creating, visualizing, and exploring bibliometric maps of science. The results showed a significant increase in the number of publications on gender equality issues over time. However, these results do not necessarily become a primary indicator of the occurrence of gender parity. On the contrary, the results of this study can be used as a reference to understand gender mainstreaming better, as well as to outline the benefits of gender equality and women's empowerment – namely, creating prosperity and peace for the entire community.

Keywords: bibliometric analysis, gender equality, gender mainstreaming, women's empowerment, policy.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: bibliometrinė analizė, lyčių lygybė, lyčių aspekto integravimas, moterų įgalinimas, politika.

Introduction

Gender equality has perhaps been one of the most important conversations we have had as a society over the last century (Montecinos and Anguita 2015; Latimer et al. 2019). As long as humans involve themselves in rules of a social, cultural, educational and belief-based nature, the issue of gender equality will always be debated. This is because

each individual carries out many different duties and responsibilities. Therefore, it is not wrong to assume that gender equality is a contested notion (Verloo and Lombardo 2007). Gender equality is synonymous with social balance, a balance which determines that roles, rights, and responsibilities must be equal between men and women (Widanti and Putra 2021).

In a literal sense, gender is not the same as sex. Sex is a biology-based trait of male and female identity, while gender refers to men's and women's socially and culturally determined identities (C¹⁸èrè et al. 2018; Hodgetts and Hausmann 2021). Gender relates to a society's duties, responsibilities, access, and opportunities for men and women, boys and girls. In the context of gender, the terms *equity* and *equality* are frequently used interchangeably. Gender equity is the process of treating women and men fairly and justly (i.e., the collection of behaviors, attitudes, and assumptions that give opportunities and generate expectations about people) in order to achieve gender equality (Brugere 2014, 87). Thus, it is fundamental to strive for gender equality, because equality between women and men is a fundamental value of any country's development and is vital to its economic and social growth (European Institute for Gender Equality 2013). In other words, gender equality is a yardstick for measuring the progress of social civilization and an important goal that must be met in order for humankind to achieve sustainable development.

Despite the explanation above, the question of whether gender equality policy has been applied well may be asked. We cannot ignore data that suggests that some countries have applied gender equality policy very well – for instance, Iceland, the most gender-equal country in the world for the 12th time, Finland, Norway, New Zealand, and Sweden (World Economic Forum 2021). On the contrary, there are still many people in various countries who experience gender inequality in the fields of education, participation in politics, decision-making, health, employment and so on (Gelgel and Apriani 2019). Table 1 outlines the differences in the representation of men and women in different skills clusters.

Table 1. Share of men and women by skills cluster

No.	Skill Cluster	Men	Women
1	Technology, Disruptive	71	29
2	Business	61	39
3	All	61	39
4	Technology	60	40
5	Specialized Industry	59	41
6	Soft	58	42

Source: World Economic Forum (2020).

Table 1 outlines points out the fact that the gender equality issue mostly refers to women's empowerment. This is caused by the gender gaps felt by women, who tend to be discriminated against. Therefore, it is as if women are limited regarding aspects of their

expertise, intelligence, and talent, and women are continuously marginalized while men are not limited at all. Unfortunately, women are often considered weak, while being a man is perceived as a superpower (see Dewi et al. 2022). As a result of these stark differences, the issue of gender equality is always related to women. In fact, countries with the lowest levels of women's inclusion, justice, and security frequently have the worst records relating to maternal and infant mortality (Klugman et al. 2019). Similarly, Zhang et al. (2021) stated that the importance of women in the global governance of climate change is self-evident.

Examining the role of women profoundly and critically, it is clear that their role is crucial, for example, in: the household and child affairs (Hamidi et al. 2021); the environment (see Fiantis et al. 2022); health (Porth et al. 2021); education and technology (see Marinova et al. 2021); organizations (see Smirles et al. 2020); economics (see Chuan-chuan and Jingwen 2021); and in various other responsibilities to which women have always contributed. Thus, the role of women in national development cannot be underestimated, and women have contributed to almost all aspects of human activity (Goldin 2006). Development in any country lies on the shoulders of how productive and creative the female population is (John et al. 2019). Likewise, women play critical roles as effective advocates for peace, community leaders, and champions of civil and human rights (USAID 2020). Therefore, it should be highlighted that these synergies and the centrality of addressing gender inequality and women's empowerment are part of the sustainable development agenda.

In addition, the issue of gender equality and women's empowerment policies is interesting to study, both socially and bibliographically. Many studies on gender equality and women's empowerment policies have been published (see Figure 1). In addition, the issue of gender equality is widely studied by various disciplines such as social science, arts and humanities, business and management, economics, law, health and so on. Based on the explanation above, this research is focused on analyzing literature from 2000 to 2022 and using a bibliometric analysis approach with the VOSviewer tool (Donthu et al. 2021). The author wants to examine publication trends, the theme of the gender issue, and the influence of different authors and issues on gender equality and women's empowerment policies. To achieve the objectives of this research, the researcher formulated several research questions as follows:

1. What are the publication's trends and its relationship with gender equality issues and women's empowerment policies?
2. Which themes are most often analyzed in gender equality issues and women's empowerment policies?
3. What are the most influential documents in gender equality issues and women's empowerment policies?
4. What is the most influential country in the publication of gender equality issues and women's empowerment policies?

Methods and Data Analysis

Method

The first step in conducting a bibliometric literature analysis is to determine the scope of the research study. This is essential because it is closely related to the content and amount of data to be analyzed (Waltman and van Eck 2012). The data used to analyze gender equality was taken from the Scopus database – a source-neutral abstract and citation database curated by independent subject matter experts. As a result, Scopus provides the most comprehensive overview of global research output in science, technology, health, social science, and the arts and humanities (Elsevier 2020).

There are 877 documents used in this analysis, consisting of various types. Data collection from Scopus was carried out on May 11, 2022, with the following keywords: gender equality; and women's policy. The data search produced 877 documents that were divided into several research subject areas and document types as follows: article – 560; book chapter – 120; book – 114; review – 61; conference paper – 15; editorial – 5; and note – 2. The types of data used in this study are presented in Figure 1.

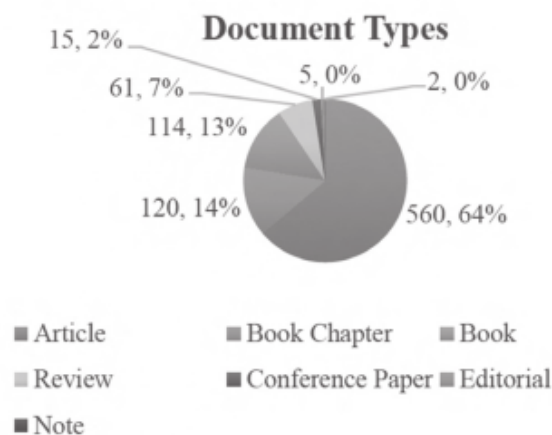


Figure 1. Analysis of all documents on gender equality issues and women's empowerment policies

Source: Author

Data Analysis

The database containing 877 documents was then converted to .csv format and analyzed using VOSviewer version 1.6.18 (van Eck and Waltman 2015). VOSviewer is a software tool for creating maps based on network data and for visualizing and exploring these maps (van Eck and Waltman 2011). VOSviewer is applied not only for data visualization but also to determine several types of analysis, such as the relationship between co-authorship and organization, the co-occurrence relationship with the author, the cita-

tion relationship with the author's country, and so on (Hassan et al. 2022). In addition, Tableau Public version 2021.4, an intelligence software, was also used for data visualization. Together, these two bibliometric literature analysis tools were used to obtain detailed analysis while presenting the data with an attractive appearance.

Results and Discussion

Trends in Publications on the Gender Equality Issue and Women's Empowerment Policies

In this section, the results of the analysis are focused on disclosing the number of documents, citations and sources of publication related to gender equality and women's empowerment policies on a yearly basis. Then, the results of this analysis are interpreted based on the database obtained from the VOSviewer analysis tool, as shown below.

a. The annual number of publications.

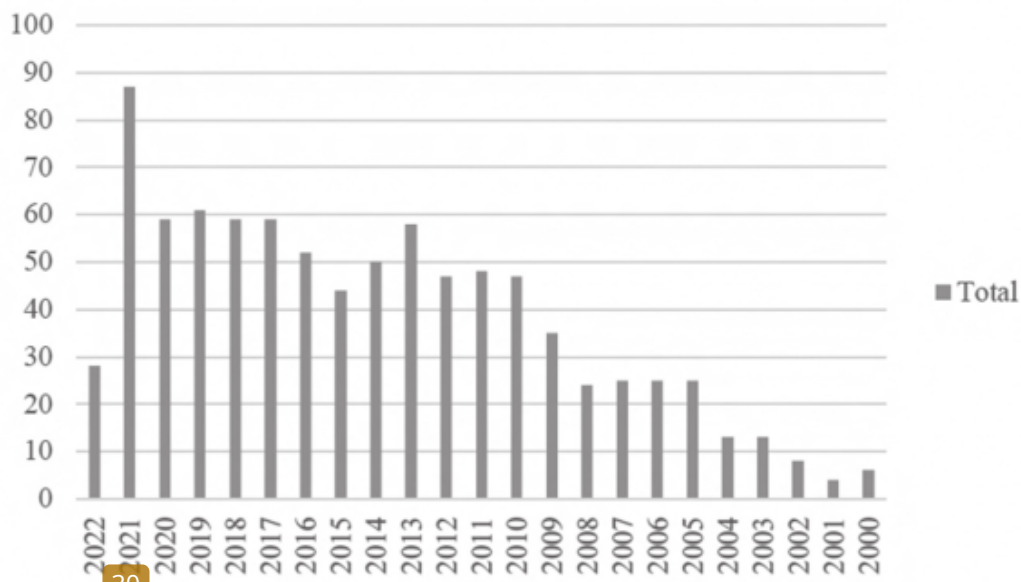


Figure 2. Annual number of publications on gender equality issues and women's empowerment policies

Source: Author

Figure 2 is clear evidence that interest in the issue of gender inequality or women's empowerment has increased rapidly, especially in the field of research publications. Of course, these results prove that the issue of gender equality is increasingly being elucidated. There is no doubt that the phenomenon of gender inequality that occurs in society, government and in various other communities is receiving greater attention in the fields of work (see International Labour Organization 2020, 67), organizations (see

Ghellab and Vaughan-Whitehead 2021, 16), education (see also Yao and You 2018), and politics. Despite this, women are still underrepresented in politics (Gonzalez-Eiras and 21 z 2021), health and other fields. The most recent report from UN Women stated that women living with children were more likely to lose their jobs than men living with children (UN Women 2021). Based on the data above, from 2000 to 2022 the number of publications on gender equality issues and women's empowerment policies experienced ups and downs. For example, in 2000–2001, the number of publications was only 10; however, 11 years later (2012–2013), this number had grown significantly to 58. Furthermore, 2014–2016 experienced a slight decrease in this number to 50, while 2017–2020 was stable at 60. From its peak in 2021, this number looks as if it will continue to increase until it surpasses 90.

b. Citation-based source analysis

Table 2. *The top 5 sources of gender equality issues and women's empowerment policies*

NO	SOURCES	DOCUMENTS	CITATION	TOTAL LINK STRENGTH
1	<i>Social Politics</i>	28	1,397	160
2	<i>NORA – Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research</i>	20	212	41
3	<i>Politics and Gender</i>	19	277	61
4	<i>International Feminist Journal of Politics</i>	13	410	72
5	<i>Gender, Work and Organization</i>	12	91	24

Source: Research results by researchers, 2022.

31 Table 2 shows the number of publications per year as the main indicator in selecting the top 20 sources on the issue of gender equality issues and women's empowerment policies. *Social Politics*, one of the sources with the highest number of publications on gender equality and political policies, produced 28 documents and 1,397 citations per year. This was followed by: *NORA – the Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research*, with 20 documents and 212 citations; *Politics and Gender*, with 19 documents and 277 citations; the *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, with 13 documents; and *Gender, Work and Organization*, with 12 documents.

c. Average number of publications per year

22 The average number of publications published per year published by each journal is provided in Table 2, and is visualized in Figure 3 below.

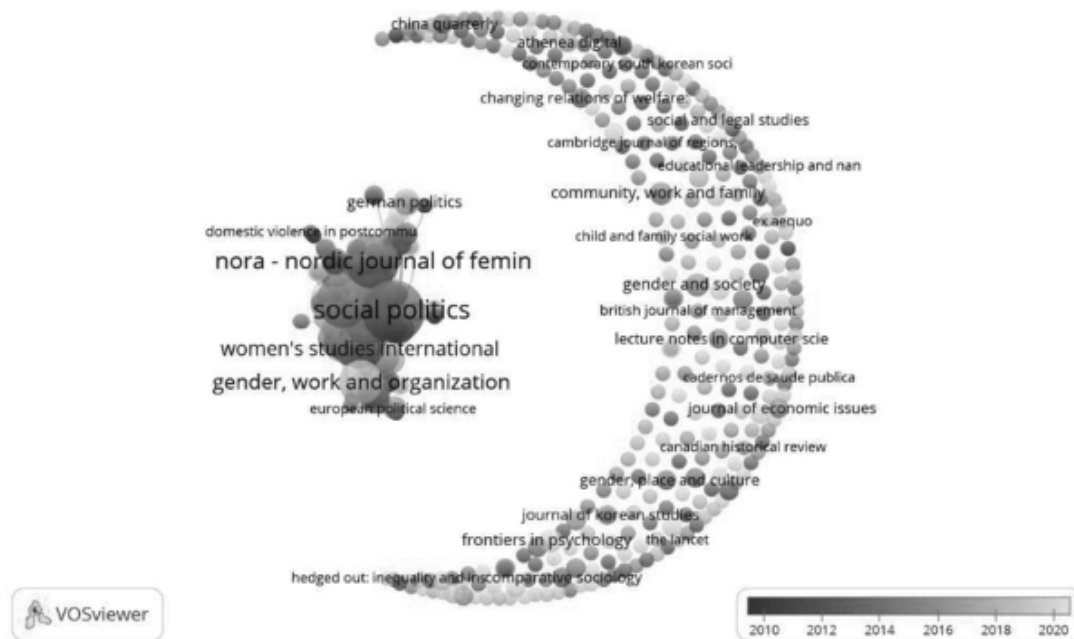


Figure 3. A visualization of publications on gender equality issues and women's empowerment policies and their connection with other sources

Source: Author

Figure 3 shows that most publications on gender equality issues and women's empowerment policies were published by *Social Politics* in 2010. In 2012, *Mainstreaming Politics: Gendering Practices and Feminist Theory, Policy and Politics* and *NORA – Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research* led the way. *Politics and Gender, International Feminist Journal of Politics, European Journal of Women's Studies, and the Women's Studies International Forum* were the most prolific publishers in 2014, while the *Journal of Women, Politics and Policy* led in 2016. Finally, *Gender, Work and Organization* published the most papers in 2018, and the *European Journal of Politics and Gender* and *Public Administration* in 2020. Apart from the productivity of each journal in publishing on the issue of gender equality and women's policy, the most exciting aspect of this analysis is that *Gender, Work and Organization* is such a prominent source, as these are gender equality issues to which women remain vulnerable today. For example, the International Labour Organization (2020) reported that 327 million wage earners were paid at or below the applicable hourly minimum wage in 2020. In addition, in Pakistan, women face economic and social vulnerability and need cash transfer programs to reduce poverty and inequality and increase their empowerment (Sarfraz et al. 2022). Likewise, Moughalian and Täuber (2020) observed that when organizations are more concerned with their reputation than with changing existing inequality regimes, gender equality initiatives create the illusion of an institutional commitment to diversity and inclusion that masks persistent abuses of power.

The larger the circle of nodes, the greater the influence – both in terms of the number of research documents and the strength of the links between research issues or topics. Interestingly, several countries and regions appear in the co-occurrence analysis on gender equality, such as Sweden, Canada, the EU, the UK, Europe, Eurasia, Asia, Korea, Spain, and Finland. These are countries and regions that care about issues of gender equality and women's empowerment, both nationally and internationally (World Economic Forum 2021).

The Most Influential Papers on Gender Equality Issues and Women's Empowerment Policies

As a result, many studies on issues of gender equality and women's empowerment policies have previously been carried out. Evidently, from the results of a database analysis of 877 documents from 2000 to 2022, the names of several researchers repeatedly producing influential documents have emerged, as shown in Table 3 and Figure 5.

Table 3. *The top 10 authors in gender equality and women's policy*

NO.	DOCUMENT	CITATIONS	LINKS
1	True, J. (2001)	461	44
2	Walby, S. (2005c)	428	25
3	May, V. M. (2015)	252	5
4	Squires, J. (2005)	231	41
5	Stratigaki, M. (2004)	215	28
6	Coffe, H. (2010)	204	2
7	Hegewisch, A. (2011)	201	2
8	Verloo, M. (2007)	163	4
9	Waylen, G. (2007)	159	3
10	Johnson, H. (2008)	159	0

Source: *Research results by researchers, 2022.*

The 50 most influential documents were ranked based on their number of citations and links, the top 10 of which are displayed in Table 3. First position was occupied by a document by J. True (2001), entitled "Transnational Networks and Policy Diffusion: The Case of Gender Mainstreaming", with 461 citations and 44 links. Second was S. Walby (2005), with "Gender Mainstreaming" – 428 citations and 25 links. Third, V. M. May (2015), with 252 citations and 5 links, and then J. Squires (2005), with 231 citations and 41 links. Fourth was M. Stratigaki (2004), with 215 citations and 28 links. Fifth was H. Coffe (2010), with 204 citations and 2 links. A. Hegewisch (2011) had 201 citations and 2 links; M. Verloo (2007) 163 citations and 4 links; and G. Waylen (2007) 159 citations and 3 links. Finally, the work of H. Johnson (2008) was in 10th place, with 159 citations and no links.

The Most Influential Country in The Publication of Gender Equality Issues and Women's Empowerment Policies

In this section, the analysis focuses on the countries that have contributed the most to the publication of gender equality issues and women's empowerment policies – particularly from 2000 to 2022.

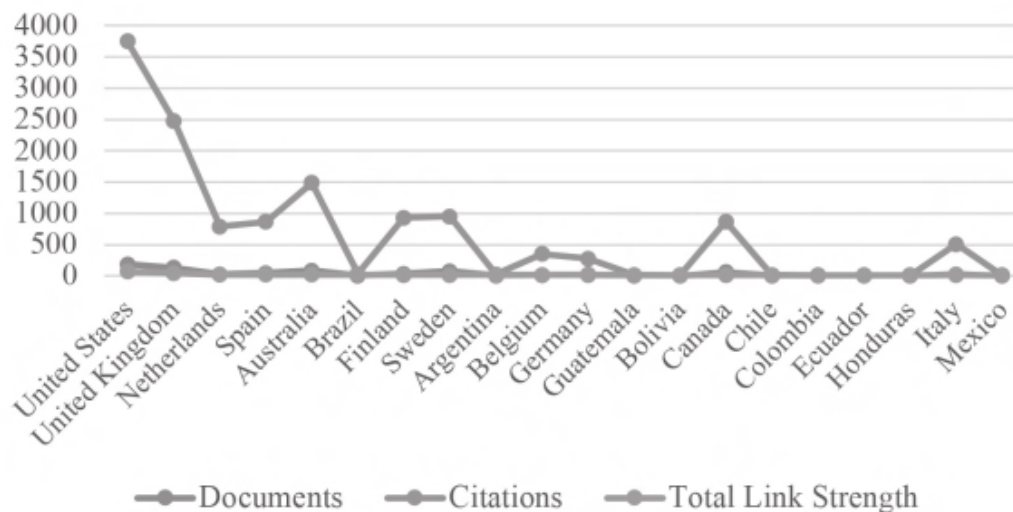


Figure 5. The top 20 countries in the publication of gender equality and women's empowerment policies

Source: Author

It can be seen in Figure 5 that several countries are very dominant in the publication of gender equality issues and women's empowerment policies. This can be observed from the number of citations. First, the United States has 3,751 citations and 188 documents, followed by the United Kingdom with 2,477 citations and 130 documents. In third position is Australia, which has 1,489 citations and 85 documents, followed by Sweden, with 950 citations and 77 documents. Fifth is Finland, with 930 citations and 35 documents. Then, the following two countries have almost the same number of citations: Canada with 872, and Spain with 864. In eighth position is the Netherlands, which is then closely followed by Italy. In last place are Belgium and Germany, with 355 and 276 citations, respectively. In connection with the above results, the fact is that the increase in the number of research publications on the issue of equality does not necessarily mean the respective country has implemented their recommendations, or that it has a high level of gender equality. On the contrary, the issue of gender inequality is still relevant because achieving a level of balance requires hard work and the cooperation of all elements (see World Economic Forum 2021; International Labor Organization 2020).

Conclusion

1. Even though the number of publications and research on the issue of gender equality and women's empowerment has increased, this does not necessarily guarantee that gender parity will occur. On the other hand, these results can indicate a significant gender gap. Therefore, based on the results of this study, the researcher emphasizes that gender issues and women's empowerment policies still represent a significant challenge in every country. They must continue to be fought for because gender equality and women's empowerment are the main driving forces in the sustainability and development of a nation. This result also supports the vision of USAID (2020), which is to create a world that is prosperous and peaceful for all parties – both women and men alike – and in which opportunities and rights are afforded in all aspects of life, including the education, political, economic, social, and cultural spheres. Moreover, it has been proven that women's political empowerment is positively related to subsequent economic growth (see Dahlum et al. 2022). In other words, the higher the gender equality index, the more prosperous society is (see European Institute for Gender Equality 2013). Therefore, it can be concluded from the results of this analysis that specific policies or regulations are needed to enforce gender equality, and that gender mainstreaming and gender-sensitive budgets must be applied to all levels of social, cultural, educational, economic, and political life (Bacchi and Eveline 2010). Of course, achieving this level of balance is not the sole duty of the government by issuing policies through laws and regulations. Instead, all sectors of the community, including teaching staff, experts/practitioners, academics, and office holders in private companies must unite to create gender parity and women's empowerment. This is because improving female empowerment is a critical human right, and is a development aim that requires closer attention (Rettig et al. 2020).

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