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## A Bibliometric Investigation of **2** the Role of Economic Support in Advancing Women's Empowerment.

### Abstract

The issue of women empowerment has got the main focus in the economic and social development discourse, especially in the financial inclusion, gender equality, and sustainable development. Even though the range of scholarly contributions is growing very fast, the intellectual framework and the development of themes of research in this field are still disjointed. This paper is a thorough bibliometric research study on scholarly works concerning women empowerment that were indexed in Scopus in 2020-2026 regarding economics, business, social sciences, arts and humanities, and multidisciplinary areas. The study evaluates annual scientific production, top authors, influential sources, documents with the highest number of citations, and global networks of collaboration with the help of the structured search strategy and the performance analysis and scientific mapping techniques.

The results indicate an increased publication rate in 2020-24, then indicators of thematic consolidation. The predominant intellectual foundations of strategic organizational decision-making are capability-based and resource-agency frameworks identified in citation and co-citation analysis. Co-occurrence of keywords and thematic mapping depict high conceptual clustering on empowerment, microfinance, financial inclusion, gender equality, and sustainable development, and emerging ones lead to health, socioeconomics, and autonomy of decision-making. The country collaboration networks put emphasis to a globally connected network but hierarchically organized research system whereby the United States, India and Australia operate as central nodes. The cumulative growth trend shows structural stabilization and transition to the rapid expansion which is a sign of maturing of the field. This work has a contribution in mapping performance and knowledge architecture of women empowerment research systematically and find

directions towards theoretical perfection, interdisciplinary synthesis, and policy-based scholarship.

Keywords: Women empowerment; Economic empowerment; Financial inclusion; Microfinance; Gender equality; Bibliometric analysis; Scientific mapping; Co-citation analysis; Sustainable development; Scopus

## 1. Introduction

Economic empowerment is generally known to be one of the foundations of women empowerment in the world. It has been extensively recorded as being important in promoting gender equality and improving the socio-economic status of women and thus it has proven to be a fundamental pillar towards changing the lives of women both in developing and developed nations. Although the empowerment of women has been studied in many dimensions, there is still one big gap in comprehending the specifics of understanding the impact of economic support on the outcomes of the empowerment. However, the role of financial resources, generation of income and access to economic opportunities has acquired more and more importance in recent decades and is considered to be the result of the increasing recognition of the intersection between economic policies and gender empowerment programs (Kabeer, 2005; Duflo, 2012).

Economic empowerment as a route to greater gender equity is also highlighted through the international initiatives, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations, in particular, Goal 5, which states that the achievement **5 of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls** must be supported (UN, 2015). Nonetheless, existing studies examining how economic assistance is related to **the empowerment of women** are rather scattered, with studies typically focusing on a particular area or industry such as microfinance, entrepreneurship, or access to education (Murthi et al., 1995; Hill et al., 2017). This is why an elaborate analysis of how economic support can be empowering to women is timely and crucial.

This paper seeks to fill this gap through carrying out a bibliometric analysis of the available literature on the subject. In turn, bibliometrics, as the quantitative research method, permits the systematic analysis of the development, tendencies, and influence of the scholarly contribution regarding the matters of the economic support and feminine empowerment. This study will give a comprehensive summary of how the economic support has been conceptualized and researched in the literature by analyzing citation patterns, publication trends as well as key research clusters. The results will provide meaningful information **5** on the role of economic interventions in empowering women and propose the directions on the future research in this important field.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Hypothetical Frameworks On Female empowerment and Economic Support

Empowerment among women is a complex notion, which is usually determined **8** in the form of access to resources, autonomy of choice and social, political, and economical equality. It does not just incorporate individual capabilities alone, but also communal strength in communities. According to Kabeer (1999), the concept of empowerment is the increase of the people **7** ability to make strategic life choices in an environment where they lacked the ability to make such choices. This definition focuses **5** on the role of agency, resources, and the successes of empowerment process.

Many theories on the issue of women empowerment exist, such as the Capability Approach created by Amartya Sen, which defines empowerment as increasing the individual potentials and freedoms (Sen, 1999). This framework points out that empowering women means giving them the liberty to live the life they appreciate. Moreover, the social feminist theory of empowerment assumes that the issue of power imbalance in social structures should be resolved in order to empower women actually (Rossi, 2014). The concept **3** of economic empowerment in this context is mostly associated with the availability of resources that enable women to gain control over their lives personally and in their careers.

In economic support dimension, it is theorized that economic support, whether in microfinance or access to financial services, is an avenue through which women can become more economically independent and socially mobile through economic support as per the theory of financial intermediation (Diamond, 1984). Financial inclusion is regarded as the important measure of closing gender inequalities providing women with the possibility to earn money, receive education, and access healthcare (Agarwal, 2018).

## 2.2. Women Empowerment Policies and Programs in the World

The international policies have appreciated the fact that economic empowerment is closely related to empowerment of women. As a women empowerment tool, especially in the developing world, the use of microfinance programs where small loans are given to those individuals who do not even **3** have access to the traditional banking system has been highly employed. One of the most famous examples of how microfinance can lead to economic independence and empowerment of women in low-income areas is the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh that is headed by the Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus (Yunus&Moingeon, 2010). Microfinance research has revealed positive effects on access to credit, income and mobility of women (Pitt and Khandker, 1998).

Social welfare programs and **1** financial inclusion initiatives have also been included in the list of empowerment strategies in addition to microfinance. As an example, there are conditional cash transfer programs that have been practiced all over the world to alleviate poverty and gender inequality and such programs include BolsaFamilia in Brazil where women get support **8** in the form of cash in as much as they meet some conditions regarding child health and education (Fiszbein and Schady, 2009). Financial inclusion programs, especially those focusing on women, are designed to enhance access of women to banking services, **1** credit and savings products which in turn contribute to women becoming financially independent and stable (Gonzalez-Vega, 2016).

There has also been intervention by governmental and non-governmental organizations through policies that seek to minimize gender inequalities when it comes to accessibility of economic resources. The United Nations Women (UN Women) program aims at

empowering gender equality by advocating policies, capacity-building, and strategic alliances. Among others, the promotion of female economic involvement, both formally and informally, by various means that support the equality of opportunities <sup>4</sup> in the labor market and entrepreneurial assistance has been seen as a key area of policy (UN Women, 2017).

### 2.3. Past Bibliometric Studies in the Related Fields

Bibliometric research provides a quantitative methodology of the analysis of the academic literature about the support <sup>1</sup> of women and their inclusion in the economic sphere.

These researches could offer the vision of the publication tendencies, leading scholars, and subject areas, helping to define the gaps in the current studies and possible directions of the future investigation. As an illustration, a bibliometric review of the existing body of research conducted by Wang et al. (2020) revealed sections of the literature where the topic of microfinance and women empowerment experienced a growing number of studies related to the social consequences of microcredit especially regarding decision-making and welfare of women.

Likewise, a bibliometric paper by Ferreira et al. (2017) analyzed the studies connected to the gender and financial inclusion topic, and the significance <sup>2</sup> of financial services in bridging gender disparities in income and assets. Their work saw the growing importance of the role of digital financial services, which can break access limitations in rural and underserved locations. The attention to the study of gender and economic development in relation to policy interventions and their effectiveness in enhancing <sup>3</sup> the economic empowerment of women has grown in other bibliometric studies published within the last two decades, including the example provided by Li et al. (2019).

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Research design

The paper uses a bibliometric research to identify the changes, intellectual organization, and theme formation of studies relating economic support and female empowerment.

Bibliometric analysis is based on two complementary aspects, as follows in compliance with Scopus-indexed bibliometric criteria: (i) performance analysis (physical productivity and pattern of impact over years, sources, authors, and documents) and (ii) scientific mapping (visualization of collaboration through a network representation, conceptual connections, and intellectual foundations). This hybrid bibliometric study method allows a strong and repeatable general picture of the way the area has evolved along with the place of contributions that are dominant and where the new themes are clustering.

### 3.2. Data source and data retrieval process

Scopus was chosen as bibliographic records because it has excellent coverage of peer-reviewed journals, standardized indexing of metadata (authors, affiliations, keywords, citations), and it is appropriate in network-based bibliometric mapping. The search was carried out in February 2026 and limited to final-stage and English-language documents, in order to be consistent and comparable to bibliometric indicators.

### 3.3. Search query

The exact Scopus advanced search string used to retrieve the dataset was:

```
"TITLE-ABS-KEY ( "women empowerment"
) AND PUBYEAR > 2019 AND PUBYEAR < 2027
AND ( LIMIT-TO ( DOCTYPE , "ar" ) )
AND ( LIMIT-TO ( LANGUAGE , "English" ) )
AND ( LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "ECON" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "BUSI" )
OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "ARTS" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "SOCI" )
OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "MULT" ) )
AND ( LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Empowerment" ) OR LIMIT-TO (
EXACTKEYWORD , "Womens Status" )
OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Women Empowerment" ) OR LIMIT-TO (
EXACTKEYWORD , "Women's Empowerment" )
OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Women's Empowerment" ) OR LIMIT-TO (
```

EXACTKEYWORD , "Gender Equality" )  
OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "India" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD  
, "Decision Making" )  
OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Sustainable Development" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Microfinance" )  
OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Womens Employment" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Gender Inequality" )  
OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Entrepreneurship" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Socioeconomics" )  
OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Financial Inclusion" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Socioeconomic Factors" )  
OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Women's Rights" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Self-help Groups" )  
OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Gender Equity" ) )  
AND ( LIMIT-TO ( PUBSTAGE , "final" ) )"

### 3.4. 1 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

To be in line with Bibliometric best practice and to be coherent in their analytic nature, the following parameters were directly applied using the Scopus filters and pre-processing.

Table-1: Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria

Exclusion criteria

Newer (PUBYEAR > 2019 and PUBYEAR < 2027).

Types of non-article documents (reviews, conference papers, book chapters, editorials).

Articles (DOCTYPE = ar) only.

Non-english and non-final-stage items

Publications written in the English language.

Articles not within the specified time span.

Publication stage = final.

Records that lacked necessary bibliographic metadata (e.g. incomplete information on authors or sources) and any that were left after exporting them.

Limited subject areas to ECON, BUSI, ARTS, SOCI and MULT

Records that corresponded to **1** at least one of the given EXACTKEYWORD terms in empowerment, gender equality and economic-support pathways.

Source: Researcher own compilation

### 3.5. Pre-processing and exporting of data

Scopus was searched to obtain all records retrieved with full fields necessary to analyze them bibliometrically, including: authors, affiliations, titles, abstracts, author keywords, indexed keywords, source titles, cited references, and citation counts.

To increase the reliability of indicators and network maps, the pre-processing steps were used:

1. Deduplication: the deduplication was done through DOI matching and title similarity.
2. Standardization of author name: any definite variation in initials/spellings was unified when it was unambiguous to eliminate fragmentation in networks of co-authorship.
3. Keywords harmonisation: synonyms and orthonyms were combined (e.g., women empowerment, women's empowerment, women's empowerment).
4. Country normalization: Country names based on affiliation were normalized so as to have valid country collaboration mapping.

These precautions were required owing to the fact that bibliometric networks are very sensitive to inconsistencies in naming conventions and variants of keywords.

### 3.6. Performance analysis

A performance evaluation was performed to summarize the productivity and scholarly impact in the field **6** with the help of classical bibliometric indicators:

1. Trends in annual publication: articles per year (2020-2026) to determine the growth

trends, highs, and lows.

2. Most relevant: journals sorted by the publishing rate, with the use of citation cues where necessary.

3. Most relevant authors: both measures of author productivity:

a. Full counting (one credit per paper each co-author), and

b. Fractional counting (credit of each paper divided by number of co-authors), with which collaboration-adjusted author contribution reporting is possible.

4. Most influential documents: quantified by the total citations, annual citations and normalized citations (to eliminate the bias of the publication year and to allow more equal comparisons across the years).

### 3.7. Network and scientific mapping methods

The research used various science mapping methods to unveil the form and development of research topics:

1. Co-authorship network (social structure): visualizes the patterns of collaboration between authors and highlights cluster communities and key contributors.

2. Country collaboration network: applies the affiliation data to visualise the international collaboration of research and knowledge-production networks.

3. Bibliographic coupling (research front): links documents that are referenced together, which means <sup>1</sup> that there is a topical proximity and active streams of research.

4. Co-citation analysis (intellectual base): establishes author and works that are commonly cited with other works, which indicate the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of the field.

5. Keyword co-occurrence (thematic structure): is a type of model that thematically clusters around recurring co-occurring keywords; clusters represent major themes, including microfinance / financial inclusion, decision-making, entrepreneurship, gender equality, linkages of sustainable development.

6. Thematic mapping: themes are placed in the Motor, Basic, Niche, and

Emerging/Declining quadrants, which can be interpreted as to thematic maturity and

relevance of the field.

### 3.8. Software, counting method, and network settings

Bibliometrix/Biblioshiny (R) was used to examine performance indicators and thematic mapping and the VOSviewer to analyse network visualization and clustering (co-authorship, co-occurrence, bibliographic coupling, and co-citation). Standard settings were used so that it could be discussed and compared across maps.

### 3.9. Limitations

The drawbacks are still present in bibliometric research: The indexing of Scopus is not representative of non-indexed regional sources and grey literature; the number of citations should not be regarded as the quality, but as a sign of the scholarly interest; and the most recent year(s) might be less mature in terms of citation. In this regard, findings are regarded as tracing the development and organization of the Scopus-indexed, peer-reviewed literature at the nexus of economic support and women empowerment.

## 4. Results

The following section contains <sup>1</sup> the results of the bibliometric analysis, which gives a full picture of the research situation in the field of economic support and women empowerment. The discussion has been organized into two major approaches and these are performance analysis and scientific mapping. <sup>2</sup> The analysis of the performance is done based on the trends of publications, pattern of citation and identification of the influential authors and journals that have influenced the discourse in this field. Assessing these quantitative metrics, we point out the most influential researches and researchers, which allows illuminating the dynamic character of research productions with time. This knowledge is further developed by the scientific mapping approach that provides the visual depiction of how the main research themes, including microfinance and financial inclusion, are related to each other. Such a method also demonstrates the process of formation of the research themes and offers information about the cooperation of authors, institutions, and states. Combined, these approaches provide a subtle and graphic overview of the

research situation, which adds important lessons on how **4** the support of the economy can promote the empowerment of women.

#### 4.1. Performance Analysis

##### 4.1.1. Publication trend analysis

The graph (Figure-1), shows how scientific outputs in the field are produced annually, starting in 2020 or 2026. Taking into consideration the data, it can be concluded that the number of published articles gradually increased between 2020 and 2024, with a significant change of 2024. This steep rise indicates a massive churn in research activity at that time perhaps due to a particular occurrence, funding program, or area of research that captured interest in the field. Nevertheless, the graph indicates an extreme drop in publication after 2024, which could possibly indicate the change or a decrease in the scientific output beginning with 2025, which may potentially reflect the shift of the focus of research or the accomplishment of the significant projects.

The reduction in scientific output in the years 2024 and beyond is worth exploring. It can indicate various aspects, including the decline in the financing, the decline in the scholarly interest in the subject, or an excessive allocation in the past. The same trend may indicate that the field is becoming saturated or that the scientists are attending more specific or niche fields. The first wave followed by a sudden drop necessitates a further comprehension of the forces behind the patterns in publication and the necessity to continue the research activities to keep the movement going **1** in the area of economic support and the empowerment of women.

Figure-1: Annual publication trend since 2020

Source: Researcher own compilation using Bibliometrix R

##### 4.1.2. Most relevant sources

Table-2, brings forward the most impacting journals **1** in the area of women

empowerment and economic aid with PLOS ONE top in the list containing 69 articles and World Development with 51 articles and Sustainability (Switzerland) with 47 articles in the rank. The journals play a significant role in the discourse in the academic field given that they are the main ones that publish research pertaining to the subject. This information indicates that the literature in the field is being actively published in high-impact, multidisciplinary journals and PLOS ONE is one among them. This is a sign that the subject has attracted the interest of various research disciplines, including social sciences, sustainability and development studies.

The fact that journals have become more prevalent such as World Development and Sustainability (SWITZERLAND) highlights that the aspect of economic support and women empowerment intersects with the rest of the general development of the world. The dissemination of articles in these sources indicates that gender empowerment has been incorporated into the development studies, environmental sustainability, and social sciences. This variety in publishing sources implies the existence of the multidimensionality of women empowerment studies and its applicability to the current policy debates on the worldwide level. Nevertheless, the domination of limited number of journals also indicates knowledge concentration, which may be accompanied by the lack of such research areas as alternatives and region-specific, as well as by niche research. Future studies ought to be in a bid to diversify the publication outlets and having a larger representation of studies in lesser mainstream but equally valuable journals.

Table-2: Most relevant sources

Sources

Articles

PLOS ONE

69

WORLD DEVELOPMENT

51

SUSTAINABILITY (SWITZERLAND)

47

JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S STUDIES

33

WOMEN'S STUDIES INTERNATIONAL FORUM

25

SOCIAL SCIENCE AND MEDICINE

21

1 JOURNAL OF RURAL STUDIES

19

DEVELOPMENT IN PRACTICE

16

JOURNAL OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

16

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SOCIAL ECONOMICS

14

SOCIAL INDICATORS RESEARCH

12

SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES OPEN

12

COGENT SOCIAL SCIENCES

11

HELIYON

11

DISCOVER SUSTAINABILITY

10

FEMINIST ECONOMICS

10

FRONTIERS IN SOCIOLOGY

10

GENDER, WORK AND ORGANIZATION

10

WORLD DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVES

10

DEVELOPMENT POLICY REVIEW

9

EMERALD EMERGING MARKETS CASE STUDIES

9

FOOD POLICY

9

JOURNAL OF GENDER STUDIES

9

LAND USE POLICY

9

REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS

9

Source: Researcher own compilation using Bibliometrix R

#### 4.1.3. Most Relevant Authors

Table-3, has identified the top names in the literature of women empowerment and economic empowerment, of which Agnes R. Quisumbing has published 13 articles followed by Hazel Jean L. Malapit who published 9 articles. The number of articles fractionalized aids in evaluating the collaborative aspect of the work, with 3.18 and 1.73 of Quisumbing and Malapit respectively indicating that they greatly participated in collaborative research. Significant contributions are also demonstrated by authors such as Jessica Heckert and ElsLecoutere who have 7 articles each, although their fractionalized values are lower, indicating a weaker collaboration intensity, at 0.82 and 2.26, respectively. This is an indication of a vibrant scholarly network in which these authors are so active in group

activities to promote knowledge on economic sustenance and empowerment of the woman.

Table-3: Most relevant Authors

Author

Articles

Articles Fractionalized

QUISUMBING, AGNES R.

13

3.18

MALAPIT, HAZEL JEAN L.

9

1.73

HECKERT, JESSICA

7

0.82

LECOUTERE, ELS

7

2.26

SEYMOUR, GREG

7

0.97

GALIÈ, ALESSANDRA

6

0.87

HODDINOTT, JOHN FREDERICK

6

1.15

MARTINEZ, ELENA M.

6

0.74

MEINZEN-DICK, RUTH S.

6

0.99

ROY, SHALINI

6

0.83

Source: Researcher own compilation using Bibliometrix R

The presence of several authors who have comparatively large numbers of articles suggests the presence of critical individuals behind the research agenda in this discipline. Nevertheless, the count fractionalization shows the significance of cooperative research in this field that could result in a more varied range of opinions. Although few individuals authors are identified as core to the literature, additional research <sup>2</sup> on the number of citation and influence of the authors would shed further light on the influence of the authors. On the whole, this set of data reveals the interdisciplinary character of the field, as various authors are involved in the formation of the discourse, and shows how these key researchers have contributed to the advancement of the discussion on economic support of women empowerment.

#### 4.1.4. Most cited documents

Table-4, gives the information on the most widely used documents in the area, the title, the DOI, the number of citations, the number of citations per year (TC per Year), and also normalized total citations (Normalized TC). As an illustration, the article by Abou-Shouk MA (2021) in the Journal Tourism Management Perspectives has been cited 139 times, a citation rate of 23.17 per year and a normalized citation count of 7.99. Likewise, Raman R (2022) published in Sustainability has 129 citations with a higher citation rate of 25.8 a year and a normalized citation count of 10.06 meaning that it is still quite relevant. The impact of

citation is also significant in other papers such as the article by Chatterjee S (2020) and Kumar N (2021), but with different yearly citation rates.

The data shows **1** that the impact of some publications on the field is significant, especially the ones that have a large number of total citations and high rates of citation.

The normalized total citations give an understanding of the relevance and influence of such papers in the academic sphere over the long term. An additional insight into the constant interest in the work is demonstrated by papers such as Raman R (2022), **3** as the number of citations normalized is more significant. This indicates that, besides being influential, these studies still inform the present day research. Altogether, the list of articles proves that the chosen documents had a considerable influence, some of which are still active and guide the discussion on women empowerment and economic assistance, becoming the indispensable sources in the field.

Table-4: Most Global cited documents

Paper

DOI

Total Citations

TC per Year

Normalized TC

ABOU-SHOUK MA, 2021, TOUR MANAGE PERSPECT

10.1016/j.tmp.2020.100782

139

23.17

7.99

RAMAN R, 2022, SUSTAINABILITY

10.3390/su14159160

129

25.80

10.06

CHATTERJEE S, 2020, TECHNOL FORECAST SOC CHANGE

10.1016/j.techfore.2020.120236

124

17.71

6.28

KUMAR N, 2021, WORLD DEV

10.1016/j.worlddev.2021.105579

122

20.33

7.01

ACOSTA M, 2020, J DEV STUD

10.1080/00220388.2019.1650169

110

15.71

5.57

ANNAN J, 2021, WORLD DEV

10.1016/j.worlddev.2020.105292

94

15.67

5.40

KABEER N, 2020, FEM ECON

10.1080/13545701.2020.1743338

94

13.43

4.76

DAHLUM S, 2022, WORLD DEV

10.1016/j.worlddev.2022.105822

93

18.60

7.25

KASSIE M, 2020, FOOD POLICY

10.1016/j.foodpol.2020.101957

91

13.00

4.61

HASSAN MK, 2021, GLOBAL FINANC J

10.1016/j.gfj.2021.100651

89

14.83

5.11

KIM K, 2022, J GENDER STUD

10.1080/09589236.2021.1884536

88

17.60

6.86

ELSHAER IA, 2021, TOUR MANAGE PERSPECT

10.1016/j.tmp.2021.100815

86

14.33

4.94

DUVENDACK M, 2020, J ECON SURV

10.1111/joes.12367

86

12.29

4.36

NJUKI J, 2022, GLOBAL FOOD SECUR

10.1016/j.gfs.2022.100622

82

16.40

6.39

MCGAVOCK T, 2021, J DEV ECON

10.1016/j.jdeveco.2020.102580

80

13.33

4.60

OPOKU EEO, 2021, TECHNOL FORECAST SOC CHANGE

10.1016/j.techfore.2021.121121

77

12.83

4.43

TANIMA FA, 2020, ACCOUNT ORGAN SOC

10.1016/j.aos.2020.101141

76

10.86

3.85

RUDHUMBU N, 2020, J INTL EDU BUS

10.1108/JIEB-12-2019-0058

75

10.71

3.80

PORTER G, 2020, INF TECHNOL DEV

10.1080/02681102.2019.1622500

73

10.43

3.70

AKHTER J, 2020, SUSTAINABILITY

10.3390/su12062275

71

10.14

3.60

QUISUMBING A, 2021, FOOD POLICY

10.1016/j.foodpol.2020.102001

70

11.67

4.02

DICKIN S, 2021, WORLD DEV

10.1016/j.worlddev.2020.105158

70

11.67

4.02

DEWITT S, 2023, J FAM BUS MANAG

10.1108/JFBM-01-2022-0013

69

17.25

7.62

PAL M, 2022, EQUAL DIVERSITY INCL

10.1108/EDI-04-2021-0113

69

13.80

5.38

KRISHNAPRIYA PP, 2021, ENERGY ECON

10.1016/j.eneco.2021.105456

69

11.50

3.97

Source: Researcher own compilation using Bibliometrix R

## 4.2. Scientific mapping

### 4.2.1. Co-authorship network

Figure-2, symbolizes a co-authorship network of the main researchers in the sphere of female empowerment and economic assistance. Here, the main node is the name of the author Agnes R. Quisumbing who is a leading figure in the field with all of her regular collaborators around her, including Greg Seymour, Ruth S. MeinzenDick and so forth. The nodes are marked using color codes that represent various groups of collaboration with the nodes that are closely related depicting close co-authorship relationships. As an example, the red group around Quisumbing indicates a good research network, which implies **1** that there is a lot of cooperation in publishing and research development. The dissemination of nodes with different colors demonstrates that the study of this subject is very collaborative, which involves scholars in different parts and institutions.

The presence of authors in the network brings out several prominent clusters of research with some authors such as Jessica Heckert and ElsLecoutere constituting their smaller but equally interconnected groups with others such as Ruth S. Meinzen-Dick and Greg Seymour possibly making connections with a larger group of collaborators. This trend highlights diversity but interdependence **6** of research on the topic. The fact that it is all centralized around Quisumbing and others who work with her implies that they have a significant **1** role to play in determining the outcome of the academic discourse. It is an example of co-authorship network visualization that indicates the interdisciplinary and collaborative aspect of research in economic support and women empowerment whereby

an author often collaborates with other authors in research across the regions and different research topics in order to enhance knowledge of the research field.

Figure-2: Co-authorship network

Source: Researcher own compilation using VOSviewer

#### 4.2.2. The bibliographic coupling

The bibliographic coupling map (Figure-3), shows how closely a document is intellectually related with other documents via the shared references. The bigger nodes, including Kumar (2021), Acosta (2020), Dickin (2021), and Abou-Shouk (2021) are in the central nodes and this implies that they have high reference overlap and a strong level of coupling. This implies that these works are based on a shared theoretical and empirical base and belong to a research stream in the field. The thick congestion of the years 2020-2022 reflects the time of conceptual solidification, when numerous works develop on the same basis of references and strengthen the prevailing paradigms on empowerment, development, and economic inclusion.

More recent publications (2023-2024) seem to be better connected, either signifying new subthemes or theoretical grounding. The distribution of publication year color gradient indicates a time progression, with earlier research providing the structural basis of the network and the subsequent ones extending or branching out of existing clusters. In general, the map suggests that the field is characterized by average intellectual cohesion (based on a pre-existing body of literature) and, **1 at the same time,** tends to diversify

thematic (with new studies adding different points of view and specialization).

Figure-3: bibliographic coupling

Source: Researcher own compilation using VOSviewer

#### 4.2.3. Co-Occurrence

The term co-occurrence map (Figure-4), depicts a very interconnected conceptualization with the keyword empowerment as the largest and central node. The terms that are closely related to it like women empowerment, microfinance, gender disparity, development, and India are all placed in a dense red cluster that points to the fact that economic development and financial inclusion are still thematic pillars of the field. The high prevalence of such terms as microcredit, poverty alleviation, and economic empowerment proves the high correspondence of the discourse on empowerment and the poverty-reduction models. 1

At the same time, the themes of green and blue clusters extend to cover the areas of health, human, female, child, pregnancy, and household income, indicating an overlap with the field of public health, demographic studies, and social welfare.

The existence of other clusters around such terms as agriculture, livestock, participation, social norms, and violence suggests that the field of empowerment research is becoming

more multidimensional and interdisciplinary, and no longer confined to the realm of finance but rather, structural, cultural, and sector-specific situations. The geographic markers like, India, Ethiopia, and Uganda indicate the concentration of Global Souths, which is a development-related research interest. On the whole, the network is characterized by thematic maturity and conceptual growth: the economic mechanisms are still held central, however, the empowerment is gaining an even greater prominence and is being placed into the context of wider human development, health, and social transformation paradigms.

Figure-4:Co-Occurrence Map

Source: Researcher own compilation using VOSviewer

#### 4.2.4. The co-citation network map

The co-citation network map (Figure-5), shows the intellectual cornerstone of the field since it reveals those authors and works that are co-cited. Dominated central nodes like Kabeer, Naila, Alkire, Sabina, and Agarwal, Bina, are the participants of the first rank, which means that they form the basis of theoretical and conceptual orientations on women empowerment. Their close relationships indicate that the capability theory, resource-agency-achievement models, and gendered bargaining frameworks constitute a main intellectual framework of the field. The number of links between these authors is indicative of a solid theoretical foundation that informs the empirical and policy focused research.

Others like Alsina, Anderson, and Abramsky are all pointers to the amalgamation of the economies, social norms, and gender-based violence interpretations into the empowerment discourse.

The different clusters denote thematic division in the field. The first cluster focuses on measurement and multidimensional indices of empowerment, the second on economic and financial indices, and the third one on social and institutional ones like norms and intra-household dynamics. Methodological consolidation is manifested in the existence of journals such as the Journal of Finance and Accounting and publications that deal with measurement approaches. In general, the network Buysse et al. (2016) may be viewed as having good intellectual cohesion based on a small circle of pioneering scholars, as well as intellectual extension to interdisciplinary areas. This proves that it is a conceptually mature field that is structurally integrated, but with definite theoretical foundations compatible with systematic empirical diversification.

Figure-5: Co-citation network

Source: Researcher own compilation using VOSviewer

#### 4.2.5. Thematic map

The thematic map (Figure-6), organizes the themes in research based on their centrality (relevance) and density (development) into four quadrants, which are Motor Themes, Basic Themes, Niche Themes, and Emerging/Declining Themes. Some of the core terms used in

this visualization include: empowerment, women empowerment, women status and the terms are found in the lower-left quadrant, where they are low density and low centrality. Such a location indicates that these themes are also basic and common themes, but they are not structurally developed at the present time into highly coherent subfields. Their disposition was an indication of conceptual breadth <sup>3</sup> and a lack of thematic specialization, indicating a generalized use, and not a tight theoretical specialization.

<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, such terms like female, human and article are located in the quadrant of Motor Themes with high centrality and high density. This suggests that social-centered and gender-oriented empirical studies are the impetus to the field, and are well-elaborated and associated with other themes. The lack of good clusters in the Niche and Basic quadrants would indicate the low level of specialization and development of transversal themes. In general, the map suggests an area that is based on general empowerment discourse but is operationally informed by more practical, people-centred studies with room to consolidate its concepts further and develop them theoretically.

Figure-6: Thematic map

Source: Researcher own compilation using own compilation using Bibliometrix R

#### 4.2.6. Global collaboration network

Global collaboration network (Figure-7), shows the network of world research <sup>1</sup> in the area of women empowerment and economic support with emphasis made on the level of publications and the linkages between countries by co-authorship. The darker countries like the United States, India, Australia, China, and the United Kingdom show that there is greater research output whereas the thick blue connecting lines are used to depict collaborating relationships. The United States is seen to be a leading hub with far-reaching connections in Europe, Asia, Africa, and Oceania with high centrality in research partnerships on the globe. India and Australia also become important nodes, which can be seen as the active participation in the cross-continental cooperation, especially with the Asian and African nations.

The geographic distribution shows <sup>1</sup> that there is a North-South and South-South pattern of collaboration particularly between South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and developed Western countries. The South African countries and the East African states are observed to be visibly integrated into the world net, indicating that African countries have become more active in empowerment oriented development research. Nevertheless, there is still a high concentration of collaboration within groups of a small group of countries with output, and this implies structural asymmetry in the production of global knowledge. All in all, the map illustrates a globally interrelated yet a hierarchically structured system of research where a limited number of central countries set <sup>4</sup> the pace of the coordination process but emerging economies add more and more to the collaborative environment.

Figure-7:Global collaboration network

Source: Researcher own compilation using own compilation using Bibliometrix R

## 5. Discussion

This bibliometric study offers a complex analysis of the intellectual, conceptual and structural development on research on economic support in the development of women empowerment. <sup>2</sup> The analysis of the performance shows a significant increase in the scientific production in 202024, and then a stabilization period, which suggests the rapid thematization. The cumulative growth curve has validated the idea that most of the articles had been published in a comparatively short time, which is an indication of deepened academic interest and commitment to international development goals like the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations [UN], 2015). Such a trend is typical of the research areas that have witnessed policy-related momentum and increased international funding facilitation (Kabeer, 1999; Duflo, 2012).

The recognition of the most dominating journals, influential authors and most noted documents indicates a structurally unified interdisciplinary area. The theoretical bases of empowerment are established by such core contributors as Kabeer and Alkire based on the models of capability and multidimensional (Alkire, 2005; Kabeer, 1999; Sen, 1999). The co-citation network substantiates the superiority of the resource-agency-achievement paradigms and bargaining models in the development of the empirical study (Agarwal, 1997; Kabeer, 1999). Meanwhile, IP-based studies show that bibliographic coupling analysis reveals intellectual clustering relative to development economics, microfinance, and human-focused sustainability research, which implies that it has a predominant empirical orientation.

The co-occurrence mapping of keywords indicates that such words as empowerment, women empowerment, and microfinance are still core nodes, which supports the primary connection between financial inclusion and agency enhancement (Pitt and Khandker,

1998; Duflo, 2012). Nevertheless, thematic growth **6 in the areas of** health, agriculture, social norms and gender-based violence is an indicator of growing multidimensionalization. The location of the empowerment-related concepts in thematic map shows that the conceptual breadth is realized in emergent/consolidating quadrants, which implies the lack of conceptual depth in specific subfields. This implies that even though empowerment discourse is extensively taken up, it still needs more refinements in terms of theoretical details and methodological advancement.

Analysis of country collaboration shows a network of globalized research that is hierarchical. The United States, India, Australia, and the United Kingdom are major centers, where cross-continental relationships are made. The emergence of higher engagement of the Sub-Saharan **1 Africa and South Asia** is an indicator that knowledge production is becoming more inclusive. However, structural asymmetries cannot be eliminated because high-income nations preserve the dominance of coordination. This trend fits a wider trend of the research imbalance in the world concerning development-related studies (World Bank, 2020).

In general, the results show that the industry has moved to consolidation. It is founded on the previously established empowerment theories and is being empirically diversified in terms of sectors and regions. The next problem is the problem of further integration of theory and the increase in interdisciplinary synthesis.

#### Future Research Directions

There are three strategic directions that should be considered in future research. To begin with, the concept of theoretically combining capability theory with bargaining models and intersectionality frameworks is not yet developed. Better concept synthesis would enhance explanatory strength and policy implications (Alkire, 2005; Sen, 1999).

Second, there is need to have methodological innovation. Although quantitative impact analysis controls the literature, a mixed-method and longitudinal design is required that can describe dynamic empowerment in the process, and intrahousehold negotiations as time moves on. New possibilities of analyzing the data precisely appear due to emerging digital

data and geospatial analytics.

Third, geographic diversification will have to be intensified. Though both South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa are sufficiently represented, Latin America, Middle East and fragile-state contexts have been relatively under-articulated. Moreover, studies must extend to other areas other than economic indicators to environmental sustainability, digital inclusion and intersections of climate vulnerability.

Lastly, altmetrics and policy citation tracking should be implemented in future bibliometric studies to determine the impact of science beyond the academia.

## 6. Conclusion

This research paper presented a systematic mapping of the intellectual framework, thematic development and joint roles of research on economic support <sup>1</sup> and empowerment of women. The results show a discipline that is experiencing a fast growth, theoretical convergence, and interdisciplinary differentiation. Themes of integration with health, sustainability and social norm change are emerging based on the foundational frameworks that are based on capability theory and agency theory, even though they still influence empirical inquiry.

Although there has been an increase in the global collaboration, there still exists structural asymmetry in the production of knowledge. The trend shows a cumulative growth, which is maturation as there is a shift between expansion and consolidation. Theoretical enrichment, diversification of methods and the integration of international collaboration will have to be sustained in the future. One of the main pillars of empowerment discourse is economic support, but in the future, its influence can only be determined by the integration of multidimensions and new policy alignment.

## Practical Implications

The results present a number of implications to policy-makers, funding organizations and development workers. To begin with, microfinance and financial inclusion are the most

dominant in the literature, which validates their central role in the empowerment strategies. There has been a growing integration with health, agriculture and social protection areas, however, bibliometric evidence points in this direction. Multidimensional program designs (financial access, social norm transformation, education, and institutional reform) should thus be adapted by policy makers (Agarwal, 2018; UN Women, 2017).

Second, the research network is organized in a collaborative way, which implies that the cross-national collaborations contribute to the spread of knowledge. South-South and North-South research partnerships need to be reinforced by international entities in order to deal with contextual diversity in empowerment delivery. The structural imbalances in knowledge production may be minimized through funding mechanisms that focus on fair partnerships.

Third, the maturation process that is experienced in the cumulative growth curve suggests a declining marginal innovation in conventional microfinance systems. To maintain programmatic efficacy in the changing socio-economic contexts, practitioners are to put more emphasis on digital financial inclusion, climate-resilient livelihoods, and intersectional models of empowerment.

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