

**Trends of Research Visualization of Gender Based Violence (GBV) from 1971-2020: A  
Bibliometric Analysis**

**Muhammad Shoaib**

Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Gujrat, Gujrat, Pakistan  
(Corresponding Author) [shoaibsoc@uog.edu.pk](mailto:shoaibsoc@uog.edu.pk)

**Muhammad Adnan Zaman**

MD, Conemaugh Memorial Medical Ctr, Internal Medicine, Conemaugh Health System,  
Johnstown, PA, 15905, United States  
[mzaman@conemaugh.org](mailto:mzaman@conemaugh.org)

**Zaheer Abbas**

Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Gujrat, Gujrat, Pakistan  
[dr.zaheer@uog.edu.pk](mailto:dr.zaheer@uog.edu.pk)

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**Abstract**

*This paper aims to inspect gender violence, sexual harassment, violence against women, and gender-based violence using bibliometric analysis from 1971 to 2020. Gender violence and sexual harassment are widespread, affecting millions of individuals globally. Women and girls are disproportionately impacted, although men and boys, as well as non-binary individuals, are also victims. This study has been based purely on a systematic review of literature or bibliometric analysis on the keywords including gender violence, sexual harassment, violence against women, and gender-based violence. The data was extracted on August 14, 2021, from the Web of Science database. The software Biblioshiny, VOSviewer, ScientoPy, and MS Excel have been used to analyze the published documents. A total number of 7812 published documents have been retrieved and a final of 6603 research documents have been examined after the screening process. The study findings reveal that major types of published documents are reported as articles and a major proportion has been published after 2010. The top institution with the country name of the published document has been named as Dept-Psychol., The United States is the top country as the United States. The study findings also assert that the top publication source is Violence Against Women and the top author's name is Fitzgerald LF. However, the top research area has been found as psychology and the top co-occurrences of keywords as sexual harassment.*

**Keywords:** Gender Violence, Sexual Harassment, Violence against Women, Gender-Based Violence, Bibliometric Analysis

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**1. Introduction**

Gender violence and sexual harassment are pervasive issues that affect individuals across different cultures, socio-economic statuses, and geographical locations (Phorano, Nthomang, & Ntseane, 2005; Strebel et al., 2006; Watson & Silkstone, 2006). These forms of violence often stem from deeply rooted gender inequalities and power imbalances, leading to severe physical, emotional, and psychological consequences for victims. Despite various international efforts to address these issues, gender violence and sexual harassment remain significant challenges in both public and

private spheres in the Global South and Global North (Benagiano, Carrara, & Filippi, 2010; Scully, 2010). Gender violence and sexual harassment are widespread, affecting millions of individuals globally. Women and girls are disproportionately impacted, although men and boys, as well as non-binary individuals, can also be victims. The impact of these acts includes not only immediate physical harm but also long-term psychological trauma, decreased economic opportunities, and social stigmatization (Green, Basu Ray, Mortimer, & Stone, 2013; Swart, 2012). Many countries lack comprehensive legal frameworks to adequately address and prevent gender violence and sexual harassment (Hoang, Quach, & Tran, 2013; Naidoo & Nadvi, 2013). Even where laws exist, enforcement is often weak, and victims may face barriers to accessing justice (Chikwiri & Lemmer, 2014; Ramisetty & Muriu, 2013). Institutions such as workplaces, schools, and public spaces often fail to implement effective policies and procedures to prevent and respond to incidents of harassment and violence.

Cultural and societal norms that perpetuate gender stereotypes and normalize violence contribute to the persistence of gender violence and sexual harassment (Venganai, 2015). Victims are often blamed or stigmatized, which discourages them from reporting incidents (Michelis, 2024). These norms also influence the behavior of perpetrators, who may not recognize the harm they cause or fear legal or social repercussions. Intersectionality plays a critical role in understanding how different forms of discrimination and social identities (such as race, class, sexual orientation, and disability) intersect, resulting in compounded vulnerabilities to gender violence and sexual harassment (John, Roy, Mwangi, Raval, & McGovern, 2021; Pikramenou, 2020; Van der Heijden, Harries, & Abrahams, 2020). Gender violence and sexual harassment are complex and deeply entrenched problems that require urgent attention from governments, institutions, and civil society (Michelis, 2024; Siraw, Zewude, & Habtegiorgis, 2023). Hence, this paper aims to inspect gender violence, sexual harassment, violence against women, and gender-based violence using bibliometric analysis from 1971 to 2020.

### ***1.1 Study Context***

Violence and harassment against women have been pervasive issues throughout history, rooted in patriarchal structures and gender inequalities that have existed for centuries (Adebayo et al., 2024; Akudolu et al., 2023; Phipps, 2023). The forms of violence and harassment have evolved, but the underlying causes of imbalances, discrimination, and societal norms remain persistent. This history reflects both the oppression women have faced and the resilience and resistance they have shown in fighting for their rights. In many ancient civilizations, such as Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, and Rome, women were considered the property of their fathers or husbands (Lerner, 1983). Their roles were often limited to domestic duties, and they had little legal protection against violence. Rape and sexual slavery were common, especially during wars. Women were often taken as spoils of war, a practice documented in texts like the Bible and ancient Greek literature.

The concept of honor, particularly in Mediterranean and Middle Eastern societies, has long been linked to the control of women's sexuality (Alsaba & Kapilashrami, 2016; Gagliardi, 2018). Women who were perceived as violating societal norms whether through premarital sex, adultery, or other behaviors faced severe punishment, including death (Buchbinder & Shoukair-Khoury, 2023). During the medieval period, particularly in Europe between the 15th and 18th centuries, thousands of women were accused of witchcraft and executed, often after being subjected to torture and harassment. These witch hunts were driven by fear, superstition, and misogyny, targeting women who defied traditional roles or were seen as threatening. In the 19th century, Victorian ideals emphasized the submissive and domestic role of women. Domestic violence was often tolerated as a private matter, with legal systems providing little recourse for women who were

abused by their husbands. The era of colonialism saw widespread sexual violence against indigenous women by European colonizers. This violence was often justified through racist and misogynistic ideologies that dehumanized colonized peoples. Both World War I and World War II were marked by widespread sexual violence against women (Teo, 1996). The mass rapes of women by soldiers, particularly during the Rape of Nanking and the Soviet occupation of Germany, highlighted the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war (Matkowska, 2024). The 1960s and 1970s saw the rise of the feminist movement, which brought issues of violence and harassment against women into the public eye (Gebremichael, 2022). Feminists challenged societal norms, advocated for legal reforms, and established shelters and support services for survivors of domestic violence and rape (Brunot & Wainwright, 2024). In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, globalization contributed to the rise of human trafficking, with women and girls being trafficked for sexual exploitation (Han, Jia, Jiang, & Chen, 2024). This modern form of slavery affects millions worldwide and is driven by poverty, conflict, and demand for cheap labor and sex (Machura et al., 2019).

## 2. Review of Literature

Early research on gender violence and sexual harassment was largely descriptive, focusing on the prevalence of these issues and their impact on women (Davies & True, 2017; de Lange, Mitchell, & Bhana, 2012; Gangoli, Bates, & Hester, 2020). These studies laid the groundwork for understanding the widespread nature of violence against women and helped to frame it as a significant social problem. The feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s played a crucial role in highlighting gender violence and sexual harassment as forms of systemic oppression (Michelis, 2024). Feminist scholars argued that these acts were not isolated incidents but rather part of a broader pattern of patriarchal control over women (Jones, 2014; Shoaib, 2024a). A significant body of literature examines domestic violence, focusing on its causes, consequences, and the effectiveness of various interventions (Abdullah, Usmani, & Shoaib, 2023; Chikwiri & Lemmer, 2014; Izumi, 2007). Research has shown that domestic violence is often rooted in power imbalances and is exacerbated by factors such as economic dependency, cultural norms, and lack of legal protections (Shoaib, Latif, & Usmani, 2013). Studies on sexual harassment have explored its prevalence in workplaces, educational institutions, and public spaces (Shoaib, 2024b). Key themes include the psychological and career-related impacts of harassment, the role of organizational culture in perpetuating harassment, and the effectiveness of legal frameworks and policies in addressing it (Allwood, 2016; Anwar, Shoaib, & Javed, 2013; Cherry & Hategekimana, 2013; Dunckel Graglia, 2016).

Intersectional research has demonstrated that women's experiences of violence and harassment are shaped by multiple, intersecting identities, including race, class, sexual orientation, and disability (Kubai & Ahlberg, 2013; Miedema, Yount, Chirwa, Dunkle, & Fulu, 2017; Shoaib, Khan, & Ashraf, 2011; Watson & Silkstone, 2006). Similarly, women of color and women in poverty often face higher levels of violence and encounter additional barriers to seeking help (Han et al., 2024). Literature also highlights differences in the experience and perception of gender violence and harassment across cultures (Buchbinder & Shoukair-Khoury, 2023; Venganai, 2015). Honor-based violence has been more prevalent in some regions, while issues like workplace harassment were also more prominent in others (Davies, True, & Tanyag, 2016; Miedema et al., 2017; Shoaib, Shaukat, Khan, & Saeed, 2013). Research has evaluated the effectiveness of laws designed to prevent and respond to gender violence and sexual harassment (Chinkin, 2014). This includes analysis of international conventions such as CEDAW, as well as national laws on domestic violence, sexual harassment, and rape (Mullins, 2018; Sabri & Young, 2022). Studies have also

examined the role of public policies, organizational practices, and educational programs in preventing gender violence (Och, 2018). Effective interventions often involve multi-sectoral approaches that include legal reforms, public awareness campaigns, and support services for survivors (Orta, 2023).

The psychological literature extensively documents the mental health impacts of gender violence and harassment, depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation (Casebolt & Hardiman, 2024; Kubai & Ahlberg, 2013; Matoy et al., 2024; Shoaib, Khan, & Abid, 2011). The societal impacts, such as the perpetuation of gender inequality and the economic costs of violence, are also significant areas of research. There is growing research on the motivations and behaviors of perpetrators, with studies focusing on factors such as socialization, attitudes toward gender roles, and the influence of peer groups and media (Breton, 2023; Phipps, 2023). Recent literature has begun to address the rise of online harassment, particularly through social media (Kavanagh & Brown, 2020; Phipps, 2023). This includes cyberstalking, revenge porn, and other forms of digital abuse, which have unique characteristics and require different approaches to prevention and intervention. The impact of the #MeToo movement on public awareness and policy change has been a subject of recent research (Murphy, 2019). Scholars have analyzed the movement's effectiveness in challenging the normalization of sexual harassment and in creating spaces for survivors to speak out (G. Han, 2021; Min, Lee, Lema, Agrusa, & Linnes, 2023). The literature on gender violence and sexual harassment is vast and multidisciplinary, encompassing sociology, psychology, law, and public policy (Freedman, 2016; Matkowska, 2024; Petersen, 2016; Phipps, 2023). While significant progress has been made in understanding and addressing these issues, ongoing research is needed to address emerging challenges, such as digital harassment, and to continue advocating for systemic change. Hence, this paper aims to inspect gender violence, sexual harassment, violence against women, and gender-based violence using bibliometric analysis from 1971 to 2020.

### 3. Data and Methods

This study has been based purely on a systematic review of literature or bibliometric analysis on the keywords including gender violence, sexual harassment, violence against women, and gender-based violence. The search *Query*: TI=("Gender violence") OR TI=("Sexual harassment") OR TI=("Violence against women") OR TI=("Gender-based violence") has been used and data has been extracted on August 14, 2021, from Web of Science database. The software Biblioshiny, VOSviewer, ScientoPy, and MS Excel have been used to analyze the published documents. A total number of 7812 published documents have been retrieved and a final of 6603 research documents have been examined after the screening process.

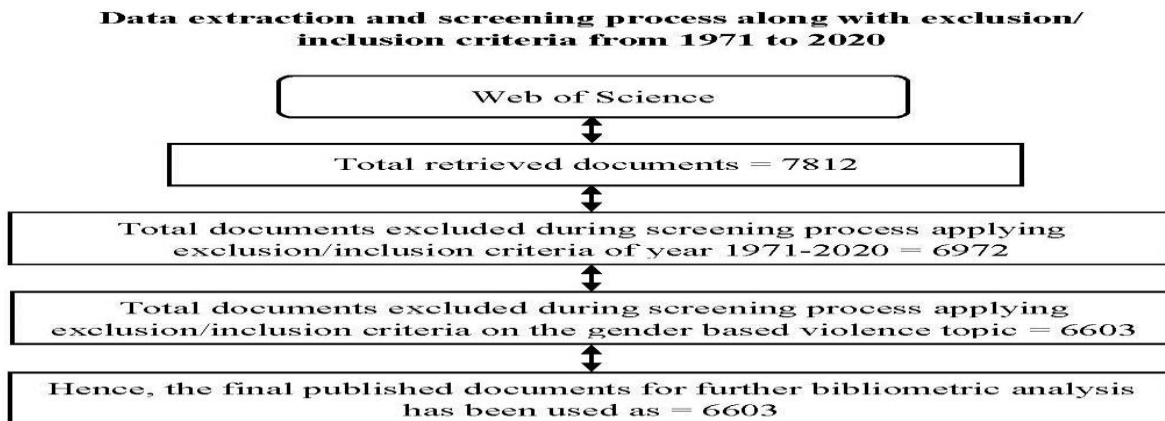


Figure 1: Data Extraction and Screening Process

#### 4. Data Analysis and Results

This section has been based on the data presentation and its interpretations. The data presented in Table 1 outlined that a major proportion of the published documents reported as article and book reviews. Further, only a smaller proportion had also been reported in the type of published documents including editorial material, meeting abstracts, proceedings papers, reviews, letters, news items, notes, correction, fiction, poetry, prose, biographical-item, discussion, and reprint. However, a major proportion of the research documents had been published after the year 2011. Before 2011, only a smaller proportion had been published in each five years of the interval starting from 1971.

Table 1

##### *Types of Published Documents and Publication Year*

a. Types of Published Documents					
Document Type	<i>f</i>	%	Document Type	<i>f</i>	%
Article	4431	67.11	News Item	76	1.15
Book Review	619	9.37	Note	29	0.44
Editorial Material	453	6.85	Correction	25	0.38
Meeting Abstract	334	5.06	Fiction, Poetry, Prose	6	0.09
Proceedings Paper	245	3.71	Biographical-Item	3	0.05
Review	189	2.86	Discussion	3	0.05
Letter	188	2.85	Reprint	2	0.03
b. Publication Year					
Years	<i>f</i>	%	Years	<i>f</i>	%
2016-2020	2436	36.89	1991-1995	548	08.30
2011-2015	1267	19.19	1986-1990	142	02.15
2006-2010	879	13.31	1981-1985	125	01.89
2001-2005	547	08.28	1976-1980	31	00.47
1996-2000	627	09.50	1971-1975	01	00.02

Table 2 points out the top organization and top countries of the published documents. The top organizations had been mentioned in the table including Dept. Psychol., United States, Univ. Valencia, Spain, London Sch. Hyg. & Trop Med, United Kingdom, Columbia Univ., United States Univ. Sao Paulo, Brazil, Univ. Barcelona, Spain, Univ. Michigan, United States, Univ. Granada, Spain, Univ. Illinois, United States, and Sch. Law, United States. However, the top country of the published document had been named as the United States. Further, several top countries had also been mentioned in the table including Spain, United Kingdom, Brazil, Canada, Australia, South Africa, Sweden, India, and Mexico. It is worth mentioning here that there were 3702 total organizations and 135 countries of the total published documents.

Table 2

##### *Top Organizations and Countries*

a. Top Organizations					
Institution with country	TP*	AGR*	ADY*	PDLY*	h-index
Dept. Psychol., United States	99	0	0	0	40
Univ. Valencia, Spain	46	0.5	7.5	32.6	14
London Sch. Hyg. & Trop Med, United Kingdom	43	0.5	5	23.3	19
Columbia Univ., United States	37	-0.5	4.5	24.3	12

Univ. Sao Paulo, Brazil	37	-0.5	2	10.8	16
Univ. Barcelona, Spain	36	2.5	5	27.8	12
Univ. Michigan, United States	34	0.5	5.5	32.4	12
Univ. Granada, Spain	33	2	5.5	33.3	7
Univ. Illinois, United States	33	-0.5	2	12.1	15
Sch. Law, United States	31	0	0	0	9
<b>b. Top Countries</b>					
Country	TP*	AGR*	ADY*	PDLY*	h-index
United States	1456	21	131	18	87
Spain	522	6.5	69.5	26.6	29
United Kingdom	310	12	35	22.6	38
Brazil	246	7	28.5	23.2	25
Canada	206	0.5	21.5	20.9	33
Australia	205	4	27.5	26.8	29
South Africa	163	2	16	19.6	21
Sweden	89	4	10.5	23.6	24
India	84	3	13.5	32.1	16
Mexico	79	3	10.5	26.6	11
TP* = Total Publication, AGR* = Average Growth Rate, ADY* = Average Documents per Year, PDLY* = Percentage of Documents in Last Years					

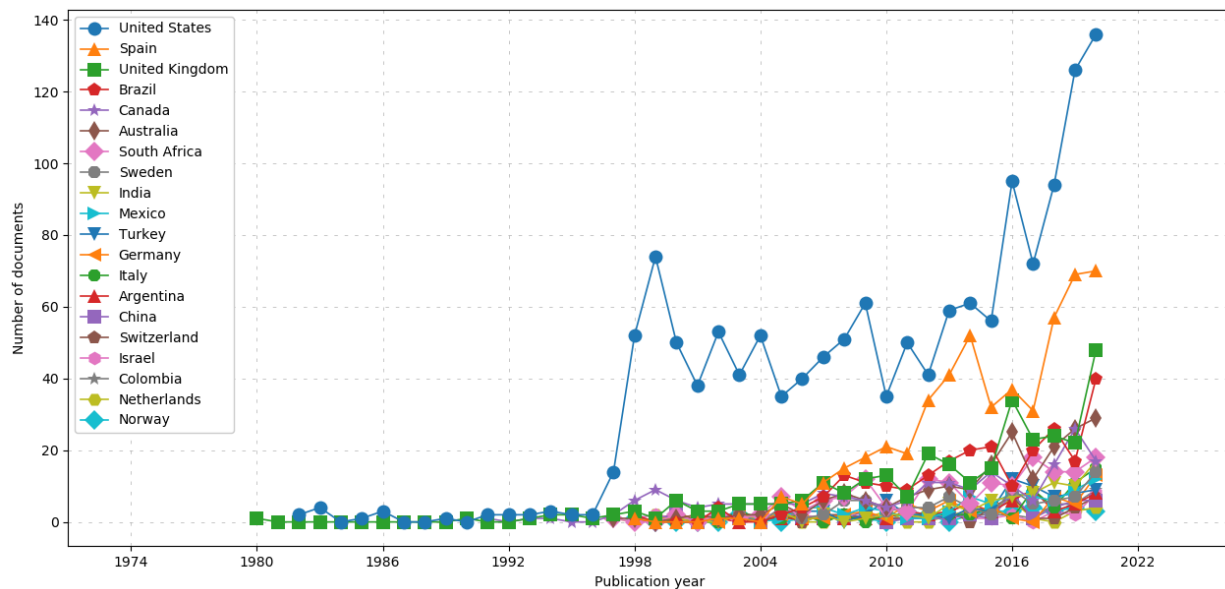


Figure 2. Distribution of Top Productive Countries

Table 3 indicates the top published sources and productive authors of the research documents. The top source had been named as violence against women. However, other sources included sex roles, journal of Interpersonal Violence, lancet, psychology of women quarterly, womens studies international forum, agenda-empowering women for gender equity, journal of family violence, international journal of psychology, and injury prevention. Similarly, the top authors' names were as follows; Fitzgerald LF, Watts C, Gracia E, Garcia-Moreno C, Jewkes R, Lila M, Vives-Cases C, Schraiber LB, Drasgow F, and Cortina LM.

Table 3: Top Publication Sources and Productive Authors

a. Publication Sources						
Source	<i>f</i>	Citation	h-index	g-index	m-index	PY-start
Violence Against Women	174	2750	29	45	---	2001
Sex Roles	124	4159	37	59	0.90	1981
Journal of Interpersonal Violence	105	2298	29	45	---	1995
Lancet	56	3199	16	56	0.55	1993
Psychology of Women Quarterly	49	1333	21	36	0.65	1990
Womens Studies International Forum	46	735	17	26	0.48	1987
Agenda-Empowering Women For Gender Equity	42	115	05	08	0.29	2005
Journal of Family Violence	42	1061	14	32	---	1992
International Journal of Psychology	38	1	01	01	0.03	1992
Injury Prevention	36	29	01	05	0.08	2010
b. Top Productive Author						
Author	<i>f</i>	Citation	h-index	g-index	m-index	PY-start
Fitzgerald LF	40	4005	27	40	0.79	1988
Watts C	34	2587	20	34	---	1998
Gracia E	30	887	16	29	0.88	2004
Garcia-Moreno C	27	2211	14	27	0.58	1998
Jewkes R	27	824	12	27	---	2000
Lila M	23	407	12	20	0.85	2008
Vives-Cases C	23	290	11	16	0.68	2006
Schraiber LB	22	1055	15	22	0.62	1998
Drasgow F	19	2082	16	19	0.59	1995
Cortina LM	17	1138	14	17	0.58	1998

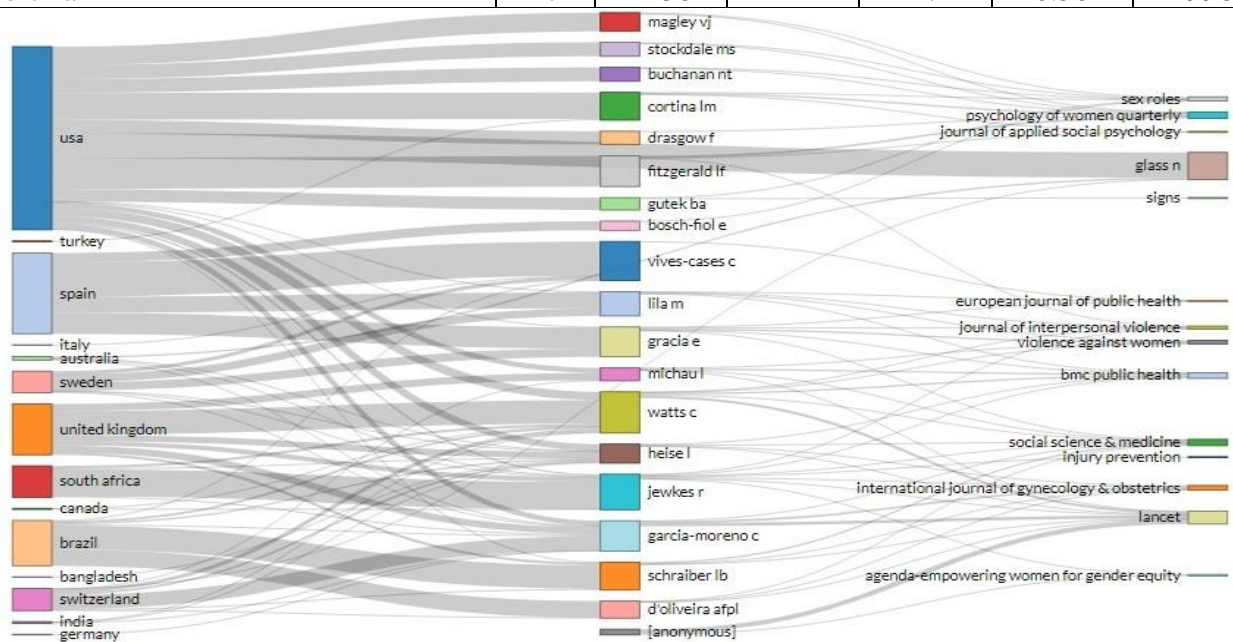


Figure 3. Three Field Plot of Countries, Author, and Publication Sources

Table 4 depicts the top research area and co-occurrences of keywords. The secondary data indicated that the main and top research area had been found as psychology. However, other areas were also added to the table including women's studies, government law, public environmental occupational, health, business economics, social sciences other topics, criminology penology, general internal medicine, education educational research, sociology, research areas, family studies, psychiatry, social work, social issues, communication, health care sciences services, nursing, obstetrics gynecology, arts humanities other topics, and area studies. Similarly, the top keywords were sexual harassment, violence against women, gender-based violence, and gender violence. Further, there were also other related keywords on the subject were also mentioned in the table including prevention, sexual assault, feminism, human rights, rape, mental health, sexism, adolescents, women's health, discrimination, violence, gender, domestic violence, women, intimate partner violence, and sexual violence.

Table 4: Top Research Area and Co-occurrences of Keywords

a. Research Area					
Research Areas	<i>f</i>	% of 6603	Research Areas	<i>f</i>	% of 6603
Psychology	1267	19.188	Family Studies	289	4.377
Women S Studies	906	13.721	Psychiatry	197	2.983
Government Law	884	13.388	Social Work	179	2.711
Public Environmental Occupational Health	749	11.343	Social Issues	173	2.62
Business Economics	454	6.876	Communication	169	2.559
Social Sciences Other Topics	392	5.937	Health Care Sciences Services	141	2.135
Criminology Penology	371	5.619	Nursing	127	1.923
General Internal Medicine	344	5.21	Obstetrics Gynecology	108	1.636
Education Educational Research	313	4.74	Arts Humanities Other Topics	104	1.575
Sociology	313	4.74	Area Studies	97	1.469
b. Co-occurrences of Keywords					
Keyword	<i>f</i>	*TLS	Keyword	<i>f</i>	*TLS
Sexual Harassment	695	762	Prevention	90	199
Violence Against Women	458	687	Sexual Assault	59	122
Gender-Based Violence	356	515	Feminism	54	114
Gender Violence	325	355	Human Rights	54	117
Violence	322	638	Rape	49	108
Gender	316	666	Mental Health	42	99
Domestic Violence	314	560	Sexism	40	86
Women	233	506	Adolescents	39	76
Intimate Partner Violence	216	407	Women's Health	39	85
Sexual Violence	129	257	Discrimination	38	82
*Total Link Strength					



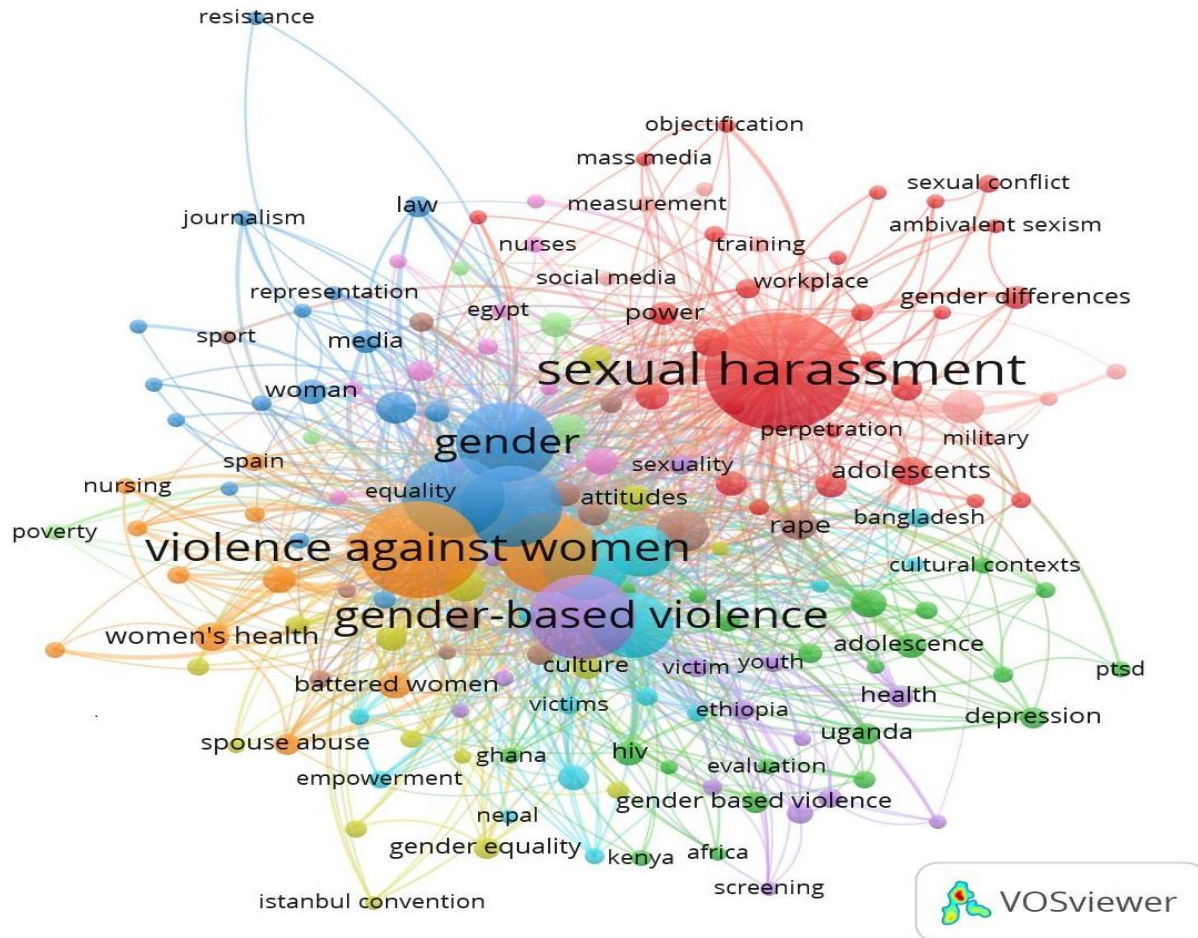


Figure 4. Co-occurrences of Keywords

## 5. Conclusion

Gender-based violence (GBV) has been a pervasive issue that affects individuals based on their gender, with women and girls being disproportionately affected. The conclusion on this topic typically involved recognizing the complexity and the far-reaching impact of GBV on society, health, and economic development. The study concluded that a major type of published documents was reported as articles and a major proportion had been published after 2010. The top institution with the country name of the published document had been named as Dept. Psychol., United States and the top country as the United States. The study findings also asserted that the top publication source was violence against women and the top author's name was Fitzgerald LF. However, the top research area was found as psychology, and the top co-occurrence of keywords was sexual harassment. The study overall concluded that GBV remains a widespread issue, present in various forms such as domestic violence, sexual harassment, and human trafficking. Despite efforts to combat it, the rates of GBV have not significantly decreased in many regions. Many countries including developing specifically still lack effective legal frameworks or enforcement mechanisms to adequately protect individuals from GBV. Even where laws exist, cultural and social norms often prevent victims from accessing justice.

## Recommendations

1. Addressing GBV requires coordinated efforts across health services, law enforcement, education, and community-based organizations.

2. Education and awareness campaigns are essential for changing societal attitudes that normalize violence.
3. Empowering women through education and economic independence is seen as a critical step in reducing vulnerability to GBV.
4. Encouraging gender equality and engaging men in the conversation is also vital to shifting cultural attitudes.
5. Emphasis is placed on the need for more funding and resources to support survivors and prevent violence through education and community outreach programs.

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