

Trends of Research Visualization of Gender Inequality, Equality, and Equity: A Bibliometric Analysis from 1981 to 2020

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Abstract

This paper presents a bibliometric analysis of the evolving concepts of gender inequality, gender equality, and gender equity from a scholarly perspective. The study tracks research trends, key contributors, and the geographical distribution of gender studies across various disciplines using data from academic publications spanning from 1981 to 2020. This study maps out the key trends in gender-related research, identifying influential scholars, journals, and regions where gender studies are most actively pursued. It also illustrates how the academic discourse has shifted from addressing gender inequality towards a more nuanced understanding of equity-based solutions. The findings indicate that while progress has been made in policy development and gender equality research, significant gaps remain in achieving true equity, especially for marginalized gender groups in the Global South. This bibliometric analysis underscores the importance of integrating gender equity into future research and policy frameworks to ensure that gender justice is fully realized. As scholarly interest continues to grow, particularly in intersectional approaches to gender studies, there is a critical need for continued focus on equity to create fairer, more inclusive societies.

Keywords: *Gender, Gender Inequality, Gender Equality, Gender Equity, Bibliometric Analysis*

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1. Introduction

In the context of gender studies and bibliometric analysis, it's important to clarify the differences between gender inequality, gender equality, and gender equity, while examining how these concepts are reflected in academic literature over time (Dang, 2024; Nicolás-Martínez, López-Martínez, & Riquelme-Perea, 2024). Gender inequality refers to the unequal treatment or perceptions of individuals based on their gender (Shoaib, 2024a). It often manifests in disparities in access to resources, rights, and opportunities across various sectors, including education, health, politics, and employment (Shoaib, 2024b). The study on gender inequality focus on documenting instances and effects of discrimination, often looking at wage gaps, disparities in leadership roles, and access to education and healthcare (Shoaib, Latif, & Usmani, 2013). Bibliometric analyses

would track the growth of literature on this topic, identifying key authors, regions, and periods of heightened interest, such as the rise of feminist movements. Gender equality is the goal of providing men and women with equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities (Anwar, Shoaib, & Javed, 2013). It involves removing barriers to participation and ensuring fair treatment across all genders (Shoaib, Saeed, & Cheema, 2012). Gender equality research tends to focus on policy changes, societal shifts, and global movements aimed at achieving parity between genders (Carter, Rogers, & Turner, 2023; Castonguay, 2024). A bibliometric analysis would reveal how research has evolved in this area, highlighting significant milestones such as international agreements (e.g., the Beijing Platform for Action) and how certain themes, like education and political participation, dominate this field.

Gender equity goes beyond equality by addressing the historical and structural gender inequalities (Banaszak, Liu, & Tamer, 2023; Zhu, Cooke, Chen, & Sun, 2022). It aims to provide fair treatment by allocating resources and opportunities according to need, ensuring that disadvantaged groups are supported in ways that help them overcome systemic barriers. Bibliometric analyses of gender inequality, equality, and equity reveal that these topics have been increasingly studied, especially with the global focus on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 5, which is dedicated to gender equality. The transition from gender inequality towards discussions on equity reveals a maturation of academic and policy conversations, recognizing the need to address not just equal treatment but also fair treatment according to specific needs.

1.1. Study Context

Gender-based disparities continue to persist across various sectors of society, creating significant barriers to achieving social justice and sustainable development (Iranzo-Cabrera & Gozálvarez Pérez, 2022; Johnson, 2022). Despite global efforts to promote **gender equality**, the presence of **gender inequality** remains evident in many areas, including access to education, employment, healthcare, and political representation (Gas-Aixendri, 2022; Heikkilä & Laukkanen, 2022). These inequalities are compounded by deep-seated cultural norms, structural biases, and discriminatory practices that disproportionately affect women, girls, and marginalized gender groups (Crimmins, 2022; Dashper, Turner, & Wengel, 2022). There is a growing recognition that **gender equity** is necessary to address the unique challenges faced by disadvantaged groups. Equity involves providing resources and opportunities based on the specific needs of individuals, and acknowledging that historical and structural disadvantages must be corrected to achieve true fairness and inclusivity (Smidt, Pétursdóttir, & Einarsdóttir, 2021; UNICEF, 2021). Women and gender minorities continue to face wage gaps, limited access to leadership roles, underrepresentation in politics, and unequal access to healthcare and education. Social norms and patriarchal systems perpetuate this imbalance, hindering efforts to eliminate inequality (Pennington & Wenlock, 2021). While many countries have introduced laws and policies to promote gender equality, their implementation is often slow, inconsistent, or undermined by cultural resistance (Norman, Donnelly, & Kidd, 2021). As a result, equal rights on paper do not always translate into real-life changes.

Achieving gender equality alone is insufficient to overcome the deeply entrenched structural barriers that different genders face (Larsson, 2021; Nash, Grant, Lee, Martinez-Marrades, & Winzenberg, 2021). There is a need for gender equity-focused interventions that address specific disparities by providing tailored support to vulnerable groups, ensuring that everyone participate equally in society. The challenge of eliminating **gender inequality** and promoting **gender equality** and **gender equity** requires comprehensive and multi-sectoral approaches (Acosta, van Wessel, van Bommel, & Feindt, 2021; Miró-Pérez, 2020). Despite global initiatives and national

efforts, gender-based disparities continue to manifest in unequal access to resources, limited participation in decision-making processes, and differential outcomes in education, health, and economic empowerment (Aggestam & True, 2020; Bekana, 2020). Therefore, a critical need exists for policy frameworks that not only promote gender equality but also ensure gender equity by addressing the historical, social, and structural barriers that hinder the progress of disadvantaged groups (Kyoore & Sulemana, 2019; Vlassoff & St. John, 2018). Addressing these disparities is crucial for achieving long-term societal transformation and sustainable development.

1.2. Main Objective

This paper presents a bibliometric analysis of the evolving concepts of gender inequality, gender equality, and gender equity from a scholarly perspective.

2. Literature Review

Research on gender inequality, gender equality, and gender equity has evolved significantly over the past decades, shaped by socio-political movements, international policies, and scholarly debates (Blankenship & Kubicek, 2018; Esquivel, 2017). Below is a review of the literature that captures the development of these concepts across various disciplines. Gender inequality refers to the unequal treatment of individuals based on their gender, manifesting in power imbalances, access to resources, and representation (Blau & Kahn, 2017). Historically, patriarchal systems have perpetuated these inequalities, leading to disparities in health, education, employment, and political participation (Razavi & Turquet, 2016). Early literature, especially from the 1960s and 1970s, primarily focused on liberal feminist perspectives, advocating for equal legal rights and the elimination of institutional barriers to gender parity (Friedan, 1997; Millett, 2016). More recent study, influenced by scholars like Crenshaw (2010), have emphasized intersectionality, which argues that gender inequality cannot be understood in isolation but is interwoven with race, class, ethnicity, and other identity markers. Extensive research has documented persistent wage gaps between men and women across various sectors, despite progress in educational attainment. The study of Blau and Kahn (2017) indicate that even in highly industrialized nations, the gender pay gap remains a significant issue.

Gender inequality in education has also been a critical area of focus. UNESCO (2019) reports show that while access to education has improved globally, in some regions, particularly in developing countries, girls still face substantial barriers to education due to socio-cultural norms (UNICEF, 2021). Study of Inglehart, Norris, and Welzel (2003) has consistently shown that women are underrepresented in political and leadership positions, although strides have been made due to affirmative action policies and quota systems in some nations. Gender equality refers to the state in which individuals, regardless of their gender, have equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities. The concept gained momentum in the 20th century, particularly through global efforts such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Declaration, 1995). The bulk of the literature on gender equality has explored how international agreements and national policies have contributed to formal legal rights for women. The study of Aggestam and True (2020) has shown that while legal frameworks have improved, implementation remains a critical challenge. Research indicates that achieving gender equality has positive implications for national development. The study by the World Economic Forum show that countries with higher levels of gender equality have better economic growth, improved health outcomes, and higher levels of education (Miró-Pérez, 2020). This index, developed by the WEF, has been widely cited in gender studies, providing annual reports that track progress toward gender parity in areas such as economic participation, education, health, and political empowerment. Scholars such as Ridgeway

and Kricheli-Katz (2013) argue that cultural attitudes and deeply ingrained gender norms remain key obstacles to achieving full gender equality, even in regions where formal legal equality has been attained.

Gender equity has emerged as a distinct concept, addressing the limitations of gender equality by focusing on fairness and justice (Månsdotter & Deogan, 2016; Millett, 2016). Unlike gender equality, which emphasizes equal treatment, gender equity recognizes that different groups may require different resources and opportunities to overcome structural disadvantages. Sen (1999) and Nussbaum (2001) have been influential in the development of gender equity literature. Their capabilities approach argues for the need to create conditions that allow individuals, particularly women, to flourish by addressing social, economic, and cultural barriers. Authors like Fraser (1994) have discussed gender equity within the broader framework of social justice, focusing on how institutional systems restructured to provide equitable opportunities and outcomes. Research on gender equity in healthcare emphasizes the importance of addressing women's unique health needs, such as maternal health and reproductive rights Sen and Östlin (2008). It is noted that a focus on equity improve health outcomes by targeting interventions based on the needs of specific groups. Literature in the field of education has highlighted the shift from achieving gender parity in enrollment numbers to addressing gender equity, which involves creating safe, supportive environments that cater to the distinct needs of boys and girls (Shoab, 2021; Shoab, Ali, & Abbas, 2024; Shoab, Shehadi, & Abbas, 2024; Unterhalter, 2005). Several studies asserted that while many organizations are striving for gender equality, a gender-equity approach is necessary to ensure that women, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, have the support they need to succeed in leadership roles (Koehler, 2016; Kostenko, Kuzmichev, & Ponarin, 2016; Simmonds, 2014).

Agencies like the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UN Women have increasingly adopted gender-equity frameworks in their policy recommendations, recognizing that achieving equality of outcomes requires more than just equality of opportunity. SDG 5 focuses on gender equality, but many scholars argue that achieving this goal will require the adoption of equity-focused interventions, particularly in areas like education, healthcare, and economic empowerment (Razavi & Turquet, 2016). While intersectionality has gained traction in recent years, more research is needed to fully integrate it into gender equity frameworks. Studies focusing on the intersection of race, class, and gender are essential to develop comprehensive approaches to equity (MacPherson, Richards, Namakhoma, & Theobald, 2014; Reid & Miller, 2014; Ridgeway & Kricheli-Katz, 2013). Many studies focus on short-term outcomes and longitudinal research is needed to assess the long-term impact of gender equity policies on social and economic development (Espino, 2013; O'Connell, 2011). The literature on gender inequality, gender equality, and gender equity demonstrates a growing understanding of the complexity of gender dynamics in society (Crenshaw, 2010; Crespi, 2009; Elson, 2009). While significant progress has been made in promoting gender equality, achieving gender equity remains a critical challenge. The shift towards equity-based frameworks in both policy and academic research reports that addressing historical and structural inequalities requires more than just providing equal opportunities (Meier & Lombardo, 2008; Permanyer, 2008; Sen & Östlin, 2008). It involves recognizing and addressing the unique barriers faced by different groups to create a more just and inclusive society.

3. Data and Methods

This paper presents a bibliometric analysis of the evolving concepts of gender inequality, gender equality, and gender equity from a scholarly perspective. Therefore, the search inquiry has been

constructed as [TI=(“Gender inequality”) OR TI=(“Gender equality”) OR TI=(“Gender equity”)] and published documents have been extracted from the Web of Science starting from 1981 to 2020. The data have been extracted on August 15, 2021. A total number of 3993 published documents have been extracted on the subject and analysis has been made. Further, different software including Biblioshiny, VOSviewer, ScientoPy, and MS Excel has been used to draw tables and figures to present the data. The data has been presented including types of published documents and publication year, top organization and countries, top publication sources and productive authors, top research area and co-occurrences of keywords, and distribution of publication by their languages.

4. The Results

This section of the article provides the results of published documents. Table 1 presents the types of published documents and publication year. The data show that article and book reviews have been the top type of published document. However, only a few research documents are published in the form of editorial material, proceedings papers, meeting abstracts, letters, reviews, corrections, news items, notes, biographical-item, discussion, poetry, and reprints. Similarly, more than half of the research documents are published after 2005 and the highest years of publication are from 2016 to 2020. It is worth mentioning here that a total of 3993 research documents were published in 40 years.

Table 1

Types of Published Documents and Publication Year

a. Types of Published Documents					
Document Type	Publication	Percentage	Document Type	Publication	Percentage
Article	2607	65.29	Correction	37	0.93
Book Review	455	11.39	News Item	20	0.5
Editorial Material	315	7.89	Note	5	0.13
Proceedings Paper	249	6.23	Biographical-Item	4	0.1
Meeting Abstract	111	2.78	Discussion	2	0.05
Letter	94	2.35	Poetry	1	0.03
Review	92	2.3	Reprint	1	0.03
b. Publication Year					
Years	Publication	Percentage	Years	Publication	Percentage
2016-2020	1786	44.73	1996-2000	218	5.46
2011-2015	954	23.89	1991-1995	122	3.05
2006-2010	591	14.8	1986-1990	38	0.95
2001-2005	271	6.79	1981-1985	13	0.33

Table 2 presents the top organizations and countries. The secondary data outline that Dept. Socio., United States is the top organization of the published documents. However, several published research documents have also top organizations mentioned in the table. The top country of the published document has been mentioned as the United States. Further, other top countries are the United Kingdom, Spain, Australia, Sweden, Canada, Germany, Netherlands, South Africa, and China. It is worth stating that a total of 2740 organizations have been involved from 135 countries for the published research documents on the subject of gender inequality, equality, and equity.

Table 2

Top Organizations and Countries

a. Top Organizations					
Institution with country	TP*	AGR*	ADY*	PDLY*	h-index

Dept. Socio., United States	31	0	0	0	17
Umea Univ., Sweden	28	0	2	14.3	10
Radboud Univ. Nijmegen, Netherlands	25	3	6	48	10
Univ. Complutense Madrid, Spain	23	0	2	17.4	9
Stockholm Univ., Sweden	21	-0.5	2	19	11
Stanford Univ., United States	20	1	4.5	45	10
Univ. Gothenburg, Sweden	18	-2.5	0.5	5.6	8
Univ. Oxford, United Kingdom	17	1.5	4	47.1	8
Univ. Melbourne, Australia	16	0.5	2.5	31.2	6
Univ. N Carolina, United States	16	1	2.5	31.2	9
b. Top Countries					
Country	TP*	AGR*	ADY*	PDLY*	h-index
United States	769	10	88	22.9	58
United Kingdom	325	8	38	23.4	41
Spain	214	5	26.5	24.8	24
Australia	152	2.5	18.5	24.3	24
Sweden	141	-3.5	10	14.2	26
Canada	118	7	13.5	22.9	23
Germany	108	5	16.5	30.6	21
Netherlands	79	3.5	14.5	36.7	23
South Africa	79	1.5	7.5	19	17
China	59	2.5	9	30.5	12
TP* = Total Publication, AGR* = Average Growth Rate, ADY* = Average Documents per Year, PDLY* = Percentage of Documents in Last Years					

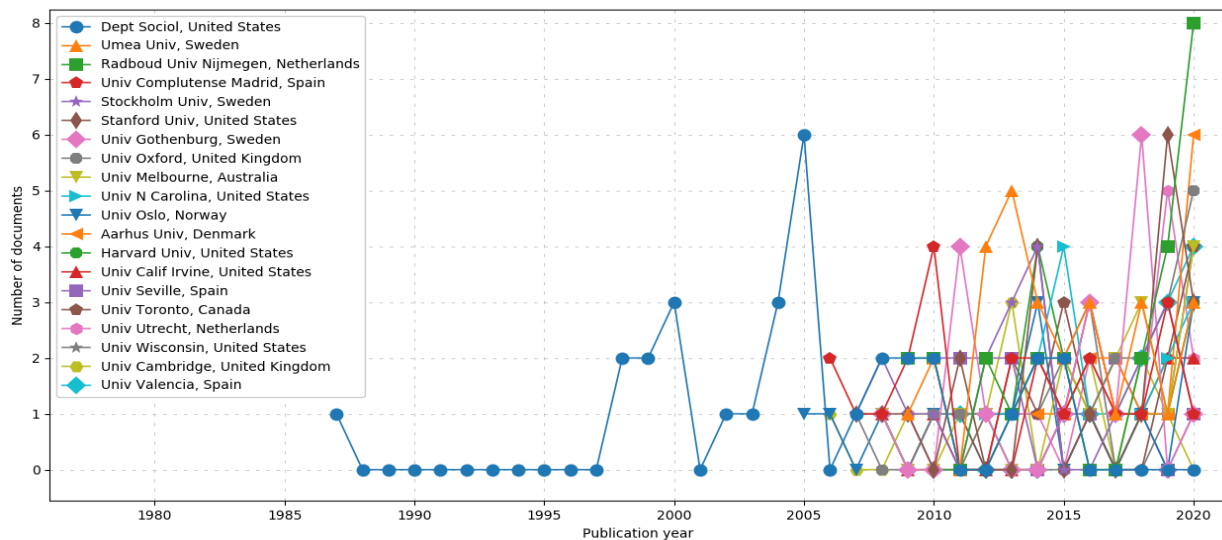


Figure 1. Distribution of Top Productive Organizations

Table 3 depicts the top publication sources and productive authors. The data highlight that social forces are the top organization with the publication of 21 research documents. However, other

publication sources include Social Politics, American Sociological Review, feminist economics, American Psychology, gender & society, population and Development Review, social science & medicine, World Development, and gender work and Organization. Similarly, Raj A has been mentioned as the top author with 13 published documents. Other authors are Lombardo E, Klasen S, Schmidt EK, Ovseiko PV, Jagsi R, Lewis J, Heymann J, Amin A, and Darmstadt GL. It is important to indicate here that a total number of 1882 sources have been reported with 7333 authors for the published documents.

Table 3

Top Publication Sources and Productive Authors

a. Publication Sources						
Source	Publication	Citation	h_index	g_index	m_index	PY_start
Social Forces	21	1253	10	21	0.26	1983
Social Politics	30	1193	17	30	0.77	2000
American Sociological Review	12	1191	9	12	0.29	1991
Feminist Economics	40	1142	14	33		1999
American Psychologist	1	899	1	1	0.05	2001
Gender & Society	36	875	14	29	0.40	1987
Population and Development Review	11	832	8	11	0.30	1995
Social Science & Medicine	18	830	12	18	0.48	1997
World Development	23	760	13	23	0.42	1991
Gender Work and Organization	34	751	14	27	0.74	2003
b. Top Productive Author						
Author	Publication	Citation	h_index	g_index	m_index	PY_start
Raj A	13	333	9	13	0.82	2011
Lombardo E	12	195	8	12		2006
Klasen S	10	615	7	10	0.35	2002
Schmidt EK	10	61	4	7	0.8	2017
Ovseiko PV	9	109	4	9	0.67	2016
Jagsi R	8	141	5	8	0.83	2016
Lewis J	8	617	7	8	0.39	2004
Heymann J	7	234	5	7	0.63	2014
Amin A	7	50	4	7	0.67	2016
Darmstadt GL	7	112	4	7	1.33	2019

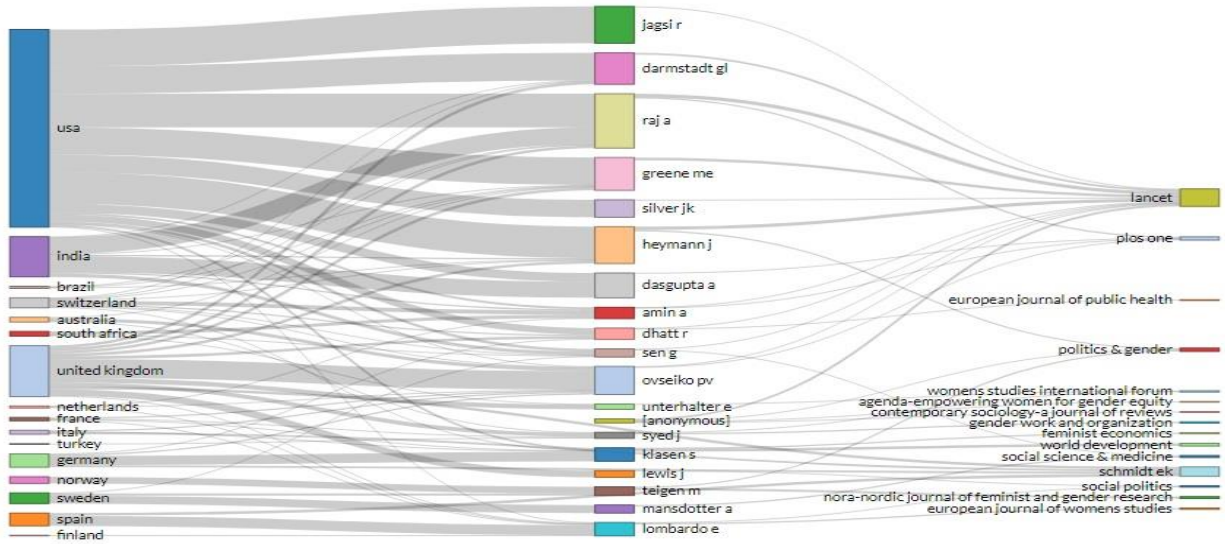


Figure 2. Three field plots of Countries, Author, and Publication Sources

Table 4 asserts the top research area and co-occurrences of keywords. The top research area has been mentioned as business economics and other research areas are women's studies, government law, sociology, education educational research, social sciences other topics, public environmental occupational health, psychology, social issues, development studies, general internal medicine, area studies, science technology other topics, public administration, family studies, demography, international relations, environmental sciences ecology, social work, and health care sciences services. Similarly, the top keywords mentioned in the table as gender equality and gender. There are also other keywords mentioned in the table as gender inequality, gender equity, women, equality, education, inequality, equity, feminism, higher education, diversity, gender mainstreaming, development, discrimination, employment, policy, gender gap, empowerment, and masculinity. The study reveals that there have been 126 research areas and 4978 author keywords of the published documents on the subject of gender inequality, equality, and equity.

Table 4

Top Research Area and Co-occurrences of Keywords

a. Research Area					
Research Areas	TP*	%*	Research Areas	TP*	%*
Business Economics	562	14.075	General Internal Medicine	137	3.431
Women S Studies	548	13.724	Area Studies	104	2.605
Government Law	467	11.695	Science Technology Other Topics	103	2.58
Sociology	466	11.67	Public Administration	102	2.554
Education Educational Research	407	10.193	Family Studies	74	1.853
Social Sciences Other Topics	300	7.513	Demography	73	1.828
Public Environmental Occupational Health	239	5.985	International Relations	72	1.803
Psychology	216	5.409	Environmental Sciences Ecology	69	1.728
Social Issues	163	4.082	Social Work	65	1.628
Development Studies	141	3.531	Health Care Sciences Services	63	1.578
b. Co-Occurrences Of Author Keywords					
Keyword	OC*	TLS*	Keyword	OC*	TLS*
Gender Equality	620	797	Higher Education	40	87

Gender	480	790	Diversity	32	63
Gender Inequality	238	253	Gender Mainstreaming	31	48
Gender Equity	138	161	Development	30	75
Women	103	228	Discrimination	30	65
Equality	87	182	Employment	30	69
Education	69	158	Policy	29	81
Inequality	65	128	Gender Gap	25	31
Equity	61	135	Empowerment	24	53
Feminism	51	110	Masculinity	24	53

TP* = Total Publication, %* = Percentage of 3993, OC* = Occurrences, TLS* = Total Link Strength

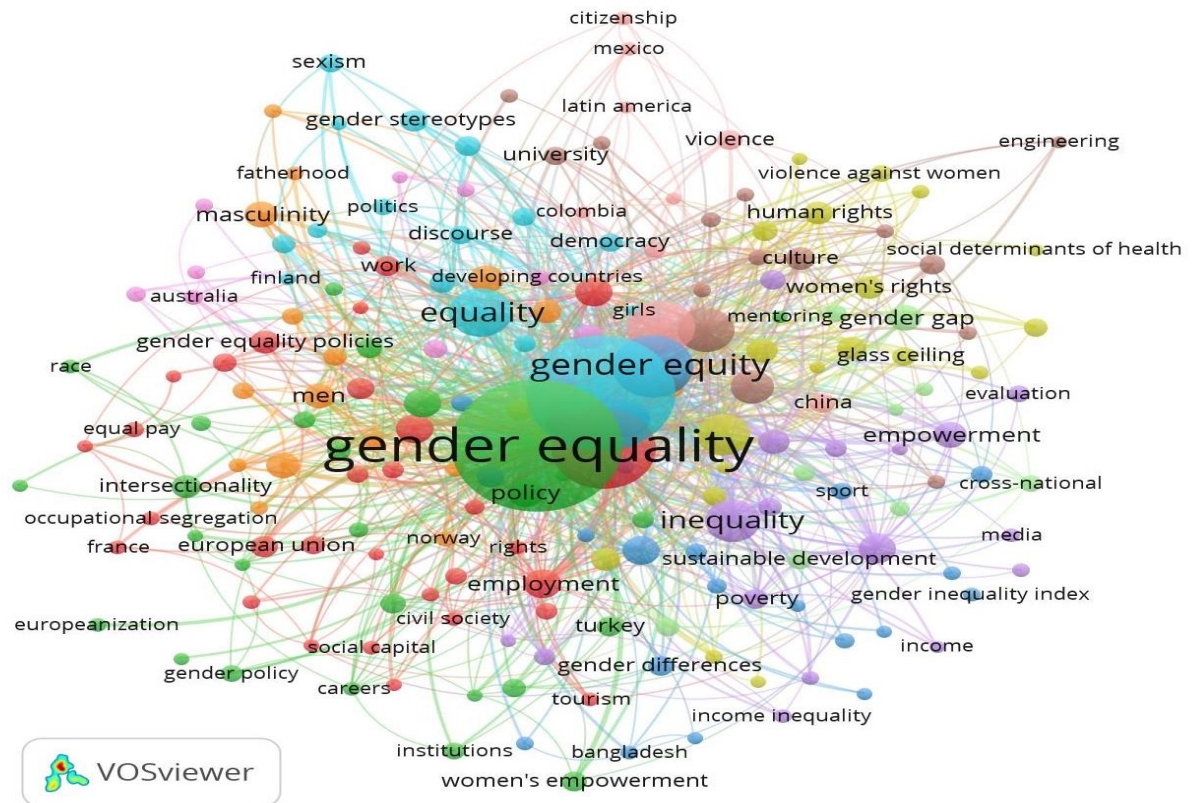


Figure 3. Co-occurrences of Author Keywords

Table 5 points out the distribution of publications by language. The top language of the published document has been reported as English. However, fewer published documents are written in the language of Spanish, French, German, Portuguese, Croatian, Russian, Czech, Italian, Norwegian, Slovak, Turkish, Swedish, Icelandic, Slovenian, Unspecified, Afrikaans, Catalan, Chinese, Dutch, Estonian, Hebrew, Hungarian, Japanese, Korean, Lithuanian, Malay, and Serbian. The study asserts that there are 28 languages of the published documents on the subject of gender inequality, equality, and equity.

Table 5
Distribution of Publication by their Languages

Languages	Publication	% of 3993	Languages	Publication	% of 3993
English	3628	90.859	Slovenian	2	0.05
Spanish	189	4.733	Unspecified	2	0.05

French	34	0.851	Afrikaans	1	0.025
German	31	0.776	Catalan	1	0.025
Portuguese	30	0.751	Chinese	1	0.025
Croatian	13	0.326	Dutch	1	0.025
Russian	13	0.326	Estonian	1	0.025
Czech	8	0.2	Hebrew	1	0.025
Italian	8	0.2	Hungarian	1	0.025
Norwegian	6	0.15	Japanese	1	0.025
Slovak	6	0.15	Korean	1	0.025
Turkish	6	0.15	Lithuanian	1	0.025
Swedish	3	0.075	Malay	1	0.025
Icelandic	2	0.05	Serbian	1	0.025

5. Discussions

The bibliometric analysis of research on gender inequality, gender equality, and gender equity reveals significant insights into the evolution and focus of scholarly work in these areas (Shoaib, Abdullah, & Ali, 2021; Shoaib, Ahmad, Ali, & Abdullah, 2021; Shoaib, Ali, et al., 2021; Shoaib, Usmani, & Ali, 2022). The following discussion synthesizes key findings from the literature, highlights trends, and points to critical gaps that must be addressed for more comprehensive understanding and policy-making. Research on gender inequality has a long history, particularly rooted in early feminist scholarship, which identified and analyzed structural and cultural barriers that perpetuate unequal power dynamics between men and women. The initial surge in publications traced back to the feminist movements of the 1960s and 1970s, as well as key milestones such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1979.

Bibliometric analysis indicates that much of the research focused on themes such as gender inequality, gender equity, women, equality, education, inequality, equity, feminism, higher education, diversity, gender mainstreaming, development, discrimination, employment, policy, gender gap, empowerment, and masculinity. For example, Crenshaw (2010) work on intersectionality has become a cornerstone of contemporary gender studies, influencing later research. Research on gender inequality tends to be concentrated in regions with established feminist movements, particularly in North America and Western Europe. However, bibliometric trends show increasing scholarly attention to gender inequality in the Global South, where unique cultural and socio-economic challenges shape the experience of inequality differently. The rise of gender equality as a key focus in international and national policy frameworks has been well documented. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the inclusion of gender equality as Goal 5 in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have contributed to the substantial growth of literature in this area. Bibliometric data shows a marked increase in publications after these international milestones, reflecting the importance of policy advocacy and implementation.

A significant body of research has been dedicated to legal reforms, workplace policies, and educational advancements aimed at promoting gender equality (Dijkstra, 2006; Jütting, Morrisson, Dayton-Johnson, & Drechsler*, 2008; Unterhalter, 2005). The bibliometric analysis reveals, however, that much of this research is focused on formal or de jure equality-equal rights and opportunities under the law-while discussions of de facto or substantive equality (i.e., equality in outcomes) are less prevalent. This gap highlights the need for further exploration into how laws and policies translate into real-world improvements for marginalized gender groups. Despite the

focus on equality in scholarly literature, challenges persist in translating policy into practice. Cultural norms, institutional inertia, and patriarchal systems continue to prevent the realization of true equality, particularly in regions where gender roles are deeply entrenched (Inglehart et al., 2003). Studies revealed that while gender equality in education has improved globally, the gains have not been equally shared across all societal groups (Friedan, 1997; Nussbaum, 2001; A. Sen, 1999). In recent years, the concept of gender equity has gained more attention, as scholars and policymakers acknowledge that equal treatment alone is insufficient to address historical and structural disadvantages. Equity, as opposed to equality, focuses on providing individuals with the resources they need based on their unique circumstances to overcome barriers and thrive. The bibliometric analysis shows an increase in publications focused on gender equity, particularly in fields like healthcare, education, and social policy. Influenced by thinkers such as Sen (1999) and Nussbaum (2001), the equity discourse integrates the capabilities approach, which argues that true equity is achieved when individuals have the actual freedom to pursue the lives they value. This approach has been instrumental in shifting the conversation from merely providing equal opportunities to focusing on ensuring equitable outcomes.

Equity-based research in healthcare, for example, has focused on addressing gender-specific needs, such as reproductive health and maternal mortality rates, which disproportionately affect women in low-income regions (Declaration, 1995; Fraser, 1994). In education, equity-focused study emphasizes the importance of creating supportive environments tailored to the needs of girls and gender minorities, particularly in contexts where access to education remains a challenge (Acosta et al., 2021; Miró-Pérez, 2020; Pennington & Wenlock, 2021). Research on workplace equity highlights the importance of removing structural barriers for women and marginalized groups by providing mentorship, flexible work environments, and addressing biases in hiring and promotion (CEDAW, 1979). Bibliometric trends show increasing attention to this topic, particularly in sectors like technology, where gender imbalances remain pronounced. The bibliometric analysis demonstrates that a significant portion of gender research is concentrated in Western countries, where feminist movements and gender equality policies have historically been more prominent. This geographic concentration has led to a body of research that may not fully capture the unique challenges and contexts of the Global South, where gender inequality, equality, and equity play out in distinct cultural, economic, and political landscapes.

Recent years have seen an increased focus on intersectionality in gender research, with scholars exploring how gender interacts with other forms of identity such as race, class, and sexuality (Abdullah, Usmani, & Shoaib, 2023; Shoaib, Anwar, & Rasool, 2022; Shoaib, Mustafa, & Hussain, 2022; Shoaib, Zaman, & Abbas, 2024). However, the bibliometric analysis asserts that there is still a need for more inclusive research that addresses the experiences of marginalized groups and women of color. The growing acknowledgment of the importance of gender equity signals a shift in scholarly focus. However, more work is needed to translate the theoretical discussions of equity into actionable policy recommendations and measurable outcomes, particularly in regions with significant gender-based disparities. Many studies in the field have been cross-sectional, focusing on short-term outcomes or limited geographic regions (Aggestam & True, 2020; Banaszak et al., 2023; Dashper et al., 2022). There is a need for more longitudinal studies that examine the long-term impact of gender equality and equity policies, as well as comparative studies that assess the effectiveness of these policies across different cultural and socio-economic contexts. International initiatives including the SDGs focus on gender equality, future frameworks need to incorporate gender equity as a central pillar, recognizing that equality cannot be fully achieved without addressing the unique needs of disadvantaged groups.

Bibliometric analysis asserted that future research should focus on creating data-driven, equity-centered policies adapted to diverse regional contexts.

The bibliometric analysis of gender inequality, gender equality, and gender equity literature highlights the progression of thought and research in these areas. The significant strides have been made in advancing gender equality, the focus on equity is a relatively newer development that addresses the deeper, systemic issues that prevent true gender parity (Dashper et al., 2022; Johnson, 2022). As research continues to evolve, there is a critical need to prioritize gender equity in both scholarship and policy-making to ensure that gender justice is not only about equal rights but also about fair opportunities and outcomes for all. The analysis also underscores the importance of intersectional approaches that take into account the diverse experiences of individuals across different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds.

6. Conclusion

The concepts of **gender inequality**, **gender equality**, and **gender equity** represent different stages in the global struggle for gender justice and fair treatment. Over the decades, numerous social movements, policy initiatives, and research efforts have contributed to reducing gender-based disparities, but significant challenges remain. **Gender Inequality** persists as a structural issue, deeply embedded in social, cultural, and institutional frameworks. While progress has been made in reducing overt forms of discrimination, inequalities continue to manifest in economic, educational, and political spheres. These inequalities disproportionately affect women, girls, and gender minorities, perpetuating cycles of poverty, violence, and marginalization. **Gender Equality** represents the aspiration to provide all individuals, regardless of gender, with equal opportunities and rights. Legal reforms, advocacy campaigns, and international agreements have advanced gender equality, particularly in areas such as education and employment. However, the literature reveals that legal equality alone does not ensure substantive change, as social and cultural barriers still hinder true equality in practice. **Gender Equity** recognizes that equal treatment alone is not sufficient to overcome the entrenched disadvantages faced by certain groups. It calls for fairness by considering the specific needs of disadvantaged groups and providing targeted support. Equity ensures that policies and interventions are designed to correct historical imbalances and systemic barriers. Recent scholarly and policy discussions highlight the growing importance of equity-focused frameworks to achieve meaningful and sustainable change.

7. Recommendations

Achieving **gender equality** and **gender equity** will require continued efforts at both global and local levels. These efforts must address the root causes of inequality, including cultural norms, legal barriers, and economic structures while ensuring that policies are inclusive and equity-driven. Sustainable progress will depend on collaboration across government, academia, civil society, and international organizations and a commitment to reshaping societal attitudes toward gender roles and expectations. However, gender inequality remains a global issue, and the path toward achieving gender equality and gender equity offers hope for a more just, fair, and inclusive society. Empowering all individuals, regardless of gender, through targeted and equitable policies is crucial for advancing social justice and fostering sustainable development.

8. References

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