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# MAPPING SOCIAL INCLUSION OF TRANSGENDER PEOPLE THROUGH A BIBLIOMETRIC LENS

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** *The study aims to map the existing body of scholarly literature on the social inclusion of transgender individuals by identifying publication trends, influential authors, key journals, and recurring themes. It seeks to uncover research gaps and evolving patterns in global academic discourse related to transgender inclusion.*

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** *This review adopts a bibliometric analysis approach. Data was collected from scopus database using a defined set of keywords related to transgender inclusion and social integration. Tools such as VOSviewer and Biblioshiny (R Studio) were used to conduct co-authorship analysis, keyword co-occurrence mapping, and trend visualization. The study covers publications from 2001 to 2024.*

**Findings:** *The results reveal a steady growth in scholarly attention toward transgender inclusion, especially post-2015. A few countries dominate the research output, with limited contributions from the Global South. Key themes include healthcare access, legal rights, social discrimination, and education. Despite increasing visibility, intersectional analyses and empirical research on non-Western contexts remain underrepresented.*

**Research Limitations:** *The analysis is limited to publications indexed in the Scopus database, which may not capture all relevant research published in non-indexed or regional journals. This could result in a bias toward well-established, English-language academic sources, potentially overlooking important contributions from underrepresented regions or local scholarship published in non-English languages. As a result, the global picture of transgender social inclusion research may be incomplete, especially in terms of culturally specific perspectives, grassroots-level insights, or policy-relevant research produced outside mainstream publishing systems.*

**Practical Implications:** *The findings provide insights for policymakers, NGOs, and academic institutions to identify knowledge gaps and prioritize underexplored areas such as transgender inclusion in employment, housing, and rural contexts. It also aids libraries and research centers in building targeted resources.*

**Social Implications:** *By highlighting underrepresented voices and themes, this study contributes to a more inclusive academic agenda. It promotes the visibility of transgender*



*issues in global scholarship and encourages informed interventions aimed at achieving gender equity and social justice.*

**Originality:** *This is one of the few studies that applies bibliometric performance analysis to transgender social inclusion literature. It offers a data-driven perspective to assess how effectively research output supports inclusion goals and guides future academic priorities.*

**Keywords:** *transgender; discrimination; gender identity; social inclusion; SDGs; bibliometric analysis.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The term transgender, which is somewhat vague to those who are unfamiliar with it, is a broad term including “those whose gender expression or identity does not conform to the societal norms based on their biological birth sex” (Coleman *et al.*, 2012). The World Professional Association for Transgender Health (2010) suggests that “the expression of gender characteristics, including identities, that are not stereotypically associated with one’s assigned sex at birth is a common and culturally diverse human phenomenon (that) should not be judged as inherently pathological or negative” (p. 168). However, transgender individuals are often considered as outsiders and treated negatively or as marginalized and socially excluded groups because they transgress the binary gender norms. This vulnerable group is more prone to various forms of societal oppression, difficulties and complexities. They continue to experience high levels of violence, social and economic hardships and discrimination, and physical and psychological distress connected to social exclusion (Heinz 2012; James *et al.* 2016). When compared with their cisgender peers, trans individuals face extensive violence and critical prejudices (Norton & Herek, 2013).

In general terms, social inclusion is concerned primarily with marginalized communities, groups, and individuals, as well as with access, participation, and integration in the rudimentary and essential functions and relations of society (*social inclusion: reference work entry*). It is a multi-faceted, complicated and often contested concept that cannot be simplified into any single dimension or meaning. Its scope and use are far-ranging, and an expansive range of local, national, and international institutions (both private and public), activist groups, policymakers and academicians have taken this as a high-risk concern. The UN’s sustainable development goals put forward an opportunity to catalyze and expand positive interventions and bring forth sustainable and equitable development. The social inclusion of transgender people is closely associated with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations. Specifically, SDG 3 “Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages,” SDG 5 on gender equality, SDG 10 “Reduce inequality within and among countries,” and SDG 16 “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.” Underpin the support for transgender persons. Achieving all the 17 SDGs is paramount to all people, especially for trans people, as it helps bring the required change and progress at scale.

Nowadays, transgender people are getting more global visibility, and various governments across the world are promoting their inclusion by rolling out new rules and laws to protect the



rights of this marginalized group. Key strides in the legislatures in the context of gender recognition started in 2012 when Argentina passed the Gender Identity and Health Comprehensive Care for Transgender People Act to support transgender people, which provided them with gender identification without judicial, psychiatric or medical evaluation and access to free and voluntary health facilities. In the later years, countries like the Republic of Ireland, Poland, Nepal, Pakistan, India, Australia, the Philippines and Japan came up with laws to protect the transgender community and to include them in society. Additionally, various social activist groups and trans community organizations introduced more localized and innovative efforts to fight stigma, violence and discrimination against trans people. These developments aimed to create a more inclusive world for the trans community.

Even though some positive changes and developments are happening in the lives of transgender communities, many of those changes are isolated and insufficient. Trans people continue to live in hostile conditions, facing human rights violations and social exclusion. Trans people around the globe continue to be victims of hate violence, including extortion, murder and physical and sexual assault, often unreported, even though the *International Bill of Gender Rights (1996)* provides the right to free expression of gender identity, the right to secure employment, and the right to competent medical and professional care among others. In most countries, data on violence against trans people are not systematically produced, and it is impossible to estimate the actual number of cases (*Amnesty International, 2018*). Trans people are often at risk of economic and social exclusion.

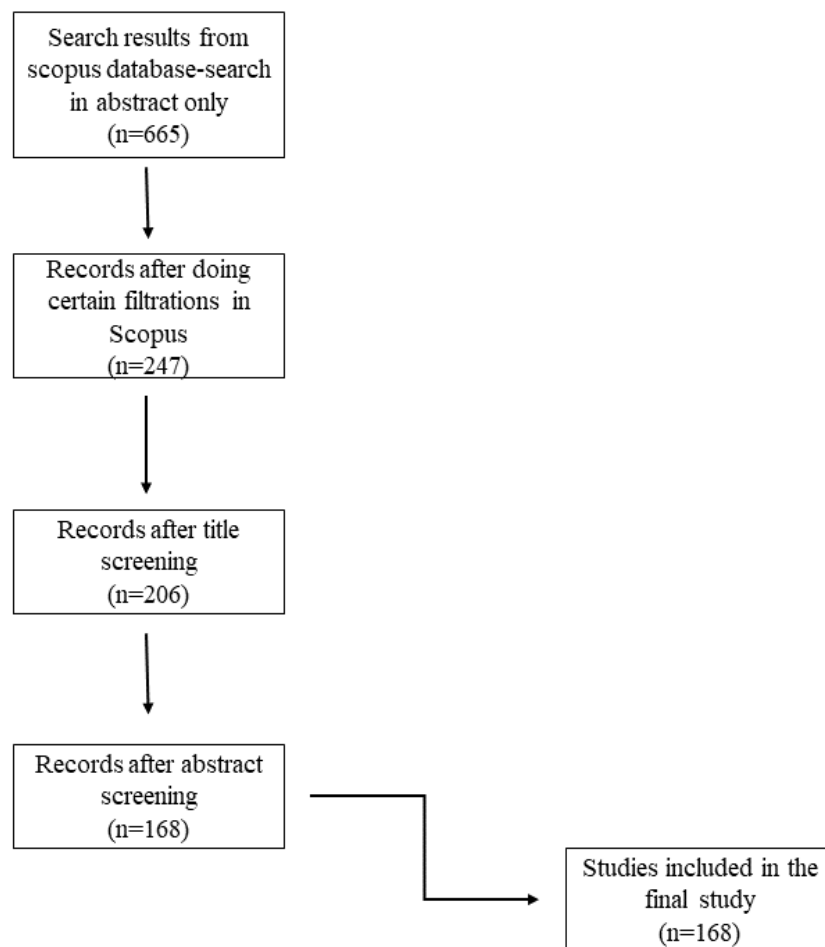
Much research is taking place to understand the complex life of transgender persons in the context of various cultures. Furthermore, it is crucial to understand the root cause of the exclusion that transgender people are facing still now, irrespective of the movements and laws that came out to support this marginalized group. An analysis of the literature relating to the social inclusion of trans people will help to identify resultant trends, if any, in improvements in trans peoples' lives from the developments that happened over the years and help to describe the current state of transgender people. This paper aims to study the current literature on the social inclusion of transgender people by considering 169 journal articles published from 2001 to 2024 in the Scopus database after particular filtering. Further, the PRISMA framework is incorporated to extract relevant literature systematically. Different inclusion/exclusion criteria were employed to filter the literature and select the most suitable articles for analysis.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

The data for this paper was extracted from Scopus, a prominent citation database with vast subject coverage, which is highly recommended for bibliometric analysis (*Gardazi et al., 2023*). A distinctive search string with keywords “transgender” OR “trans persons” OR “trans people” OR “gender nonconforming” OR “nonbinary” OR “gender diverse” AND “social inclusion” OR “social exclusion” OR “social integration” OR “social marginalization” OR “social acceptance” OR “community participation” OR “societal attitudes” was used along with proper use of Boolean operators. Data for the last 24 years (2001-2024) has been

extracted. The Scopus identified a total of 665 documents related to the given keywords. Some of the documents were removed before the screening based on the Subject area: limited to social sciences, psychology, arts and humanities, business management and accounting, multidisciplinary, economics econometrics and finance, Document type: limited to article, Language: limited to English, Source type: limited to Journal and Publication stage: limited to final. This filtration resulted in a total of 247 documents, and these documents underwent a title screening in which unrelated topics or areas were excluded from the study after reviewing the title.

**Figure 1: Selection Procedure for Journal Articles**



*Source: The authors*

Two hundred six documents related to the chosen subject area were found, and all these articles underwent an abstract screening, resulting in 168 documents. Finally, the documents considered for the study have been decided as 168. This selection procedure is shown in Figure 1. These documents were analyzed using VOS Viewer, a free and top-notch software for bibliometric analysis in social sciences (Gardazi *et al.*, 2023). VOS viewer utilizes metadata of literature from popular databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and PubMed (Kirby, 2023).

### **3. BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS**

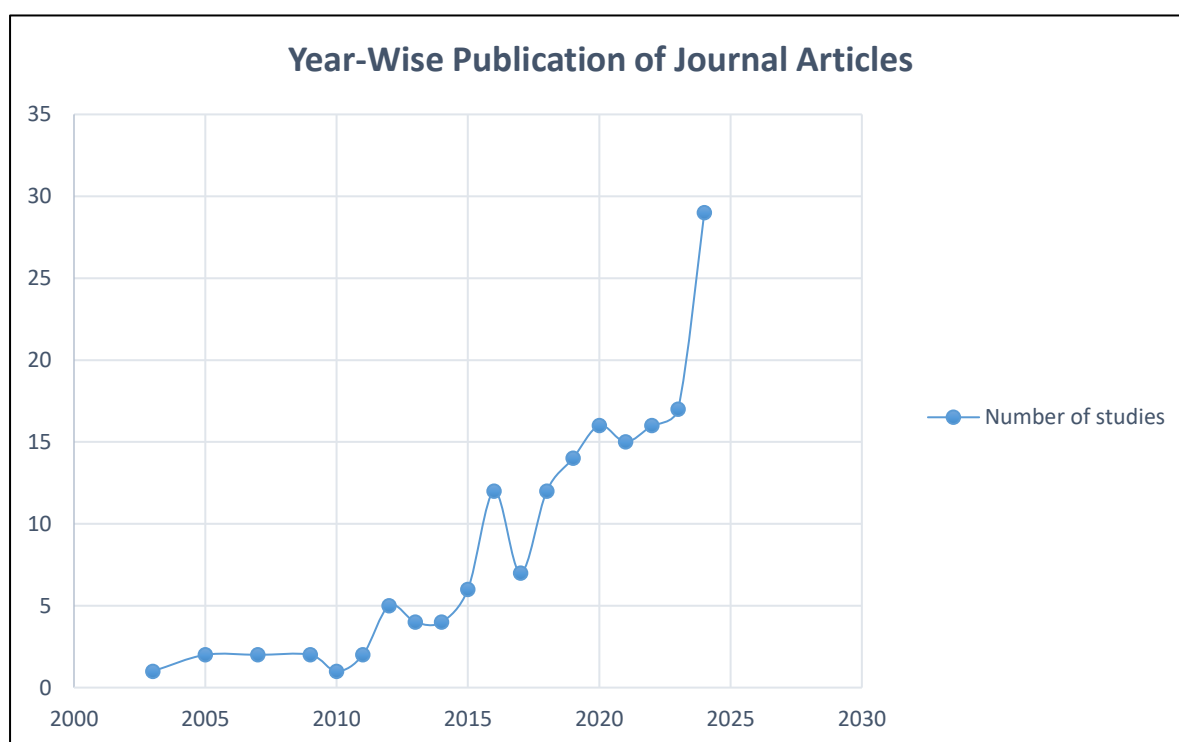
The study primarily focuses on bibliometric analysis, a statistical evaluation of published literature to assess trends in the social inclusion of transgender people. Distinct techniques like citation analysis, co-citation analysis, bibliographic coupling, and co-occurrence of keywords analysis using VOSviewer helped to map the extensive scientific literature and analyze its quality (Donthu et al., 2021; Nobanee et al., 2021).

### **4. RESULTS**

#### **4.1. Publication Trend**

This section represents the analysis of the social inclusion of transgender individuals across different parts of the globe. Publications at the start of the millennium were very low. The year 2003 marks the first publication of the millennium and the only one in the year 2003 in the Scopus database about the study area.

**Figure 2: Publication of Journals (2000-2024)**



Source: The authors.

Even though articles' publication started virtually at the dawn of the millennium, its growth was at a snail's pace till 2015. The publications on transgender inclusion started increasing suddenly after 2015, and 2015 remains a landmark year for transgender studies. In 2015, the US Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage, and in the same year, many countries started implementing policies for the protection of gender identities. India's NALSA judgement of 2014 supported the need for recognizing transgender individuals and created a third gender category for transgender individuals. As a result of these movements happening worldwide



during and after 2015, the trend in publications also showed a drastic change, with a sudden 12 publications in 2016. Even though 2017 showed a profound decrease in the number of publications (7), from the following year onwards, publications in the pertaining subject increased constantly. The year 2024 showed the highest number of publications (29) related to the subject area during the first quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### 4.2. Most published Journals

The journals that published the most articles on social inclusion/exclusion of transgender/LGB people are ‘Culture, Health and Sexuality’ and ‘PLOS ONE’, each with six publications, followed by ‘Transgender Health’ with five publications. All of these journals are Scopus-indexed. Most of these journals are from Western countries like the U.S., Canada, and Europe.

**Figure 3: Most Published Journals**

Journals	Number of articles published
Culture, Health and Sexuality	6
PLOS ONE	6
Transgender Health	5
Sexuality Research and Social Policy	4
American Journal of Orthopsychiatry	4
International Journal of Transgenderism	4
International Journal of Transgender Health	4
Social Science and Medicine	4
AIDS Care - Psychological and Socio-Medical Aspects of AIDS/HIV	3
Gender, Place and Culture	3
Journal of Homosexuality	3
Sex Roles	3

Source: The authors

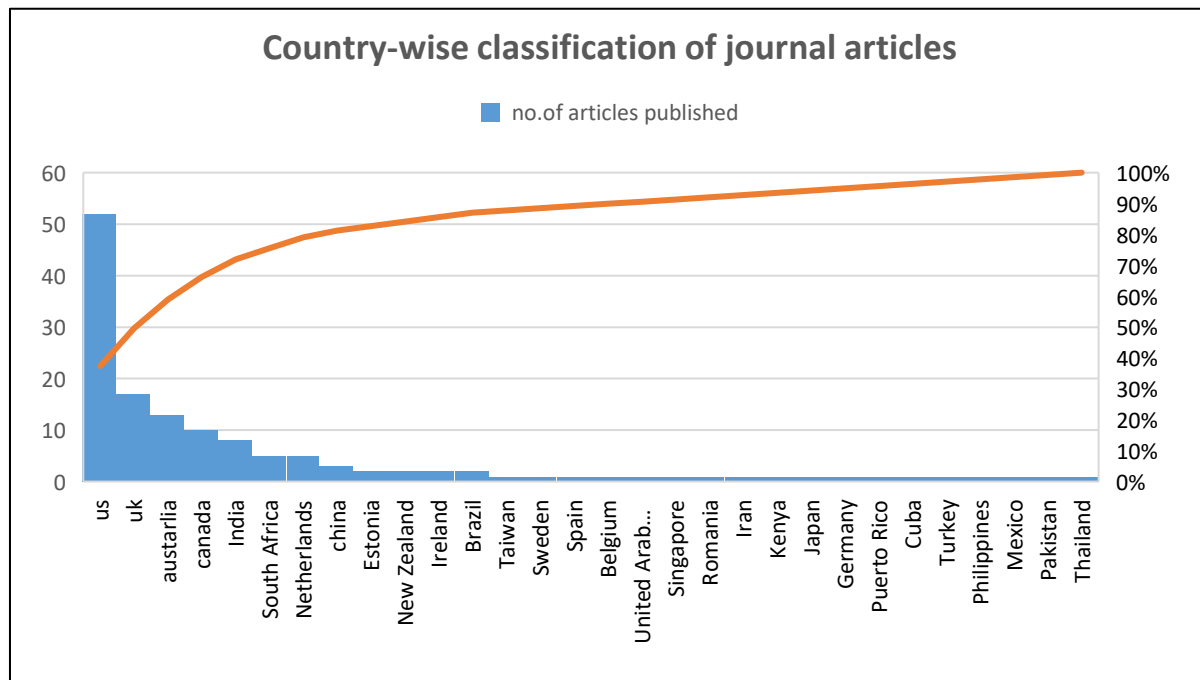
Moreover, this emphasizes the influence of global northern perspectives on transgender studies and identifies the potential gap created due to the absence of global South journals focusing on research on transgender inclusion. Here, we can classify the top twelve journals into three different groups. The first journal group is related to health and medical perspectives, including journals transgender health, aids care, Social Science and Medicine, PLoS One, and the International Journal of transgender health. The second group includes journals such as sexuality research and Social Policy, Journal of homosexuality gender, place and culture, and sex roles, indicating social and policy studies. Moreover, group 3 includes journals relating to cultural and psychological research and consists of the American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, culture, health and sexuality and the International Journal of

Transgenderism. The emergence of journals focusing on transgender health indicates the increasing medicalization and concern for health inequities of trans identities. The journals like culture, health and sexuality, sexuality research and social policy, gender, place and culture etc., are good examples of the field becoming more interdisciplinary beyond the medical or legal perspectives.

### 4.3. Country-wise classification of journal articles

Figure 3 represents the country-wise classification of journal article publication. The country with the most publications on the social inclusion of transgender people is the US, with 52 publications, followed by the UK, with 17 publications, and Australia and Canada, with 13 and 10 publications each, respectively.

**Figure 4: Journal Articles Published; Country wise**



Source: The authors.

India comes in fifth place with eight publications in the pertaining area, leaving behind developed countries like Germany, Ireland, Spain, Japan, etc., and India, South Africa, and Brazil, which have also contributed to the forefront. However, the graph shows that the western countries are at the front of the research dominating transgender research. Countries like the US, UK, Australia, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Canada are producing more research as these countries have strong legal protections. From the graph, it is understood that the countries with weaker legal protections for transgender individuals, like Pakistan, Iran, UAE, and Turkey, have fewer contributions. India and South Africa are exceptions as they are emerging as research hubs regardless of the legal and social challenges.

### 4.4. Most Cited Articles





For the citation analysis, the researchers chose articles with more than or equal to 50 citations, resulting in a total of 21 articles; from those 21 articles, only the top 10 articles with the most citations were selected for the analysis. All of these selected articles study the impact of social exclusion of LGBTQ individuals across varying domains such as health, mental health, economic development and social participation. The most cited article in the select area is “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Adolescent School Victimization: Implications for Young Adult Health and Adjustment” by authors Russell S.T., Ryan C., Toomey R.B., Diaz R.M., Sanchez J. from the United States with 418 citations published in the Journal of School Health. This article contributes to the academic discussions on school victimization and its long-term effects on LGBT youth.

The second most cited paper is “The Health Equity Promotion Model (Fredriksen-Goldsen et al.)”, with 341 citations, which discussed the conceptual framework for understanding the health disparities among LGBT people. Among the top ten authors identified, only two are from Canada, and all the remaining are from the United States. The two authors from Canada are Scheim A.I., Bauer G.R. and Ashley F, with 155 and 84 citations, respectively, and their work focused on transgender identity and representation. The American academic dominance visible here may be because of the well-funded LGBTQ+ research programs by various government agencies like NIH and NSF, institutions like Harvard and UCLA, and private grants. This academic gatekeeping by American institutions and scholars can reinforce Western hegemony in trans studies and shape the global definition of transgender inclusion based on US theories. More collaborative and regional studies can give diverse and balanced perspectives on transgender studies.

All of these most cited articles revolve around four major research themes such as health disparities and mental wellbeing, social exclusion and discrimination, economic and policy implications, and transgender identity and representation. The articles “Health Equity Promotion Model: Reconceptualization of Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Health Disparities” (Fredriksen-Goldsen et al.), “Mental Health Disparities Within the LGBT Population: A Comparison between Transgender and Non-transgender Individuals” (Su et al.), “Sex and gender diversity among transgender persons in Ontario, Canada: Results from a respondent-driven sampling survey” (Scheim & Bauer), and “Evaluation of a sexual health approach to reducing HIV/STD risk in the transgender community” (Bockting et al.), discuss mental wellbeing and health disparities among LGBT people. Russel et al., the author of the most cited article and Hargie et al., with 126 citations, shed light on social exclusion and discrimination. While Badgett et al., with 89 citations, discuss economic and policy implications, McGuire et al. and Ashley focus on transgender identity and representation. The most cited articles shed light on the discrimination prevailing in education, health care, etc., while more research is needed on its macroeconomic aspects. Future research can be done on the intersectional identities within the transgender community and on broad areas like digital inclusion, employment rights, etc. Interestingly, six articles in Table 1 received 100 or more citations.

### Figure 5: Most Cited Articles





## Most Cited Articles

Title	Authors	Journal	Cited by
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Adolescent School Victimization: Implications for Young Adult Health and Adjustment	Russell S.T.; Ryan C.; Toomey R.B.; Diaz R.M.; Sanchez J.	Journal of School Health	418
The health equity promotion model: Reconceptualization of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) health disparities	Fredriksen-Goldsen K.L.; Simoni J.M.; Kim H.-J.; Lehavot K.; Walters K.L.; Yang J.; Hoy-Ellis C.P.; Muraco A.	American Journal of Orthopsychiatry	341
Mental Health Disparities Within the LGBT Population: A Comparison between Transgender and Non transgender Individuals	Su D.; Irwin J.A.; Fisher C.; Ramos A.; Kelley M.; Mendoza D.A.R.; Coleman J.D.	Transgender Health	226
Sex and gender diversity among transgender persons in Ontario, Canada: Results from a respondent-driven sampling survey	Scheim A.L.; Bauer G.R.	Journal of Sex Research	155
Body image in transgender young people: Findings from a qualitative, community based study	McGuire J.K.; Doty J.L.; Catalpa J.M.; Ola C.	Body Image	138
'People have a knack of making you feel excluded if they catch on to your difference': Transgender experiences of exclusion in sport	Hargie O.D.W.; Mitchell D.H.; Somerville L.J.A.	International Review for the Sociology of Sport	126
Evaluation of a sexual health approach to reducing HIV/STD risk in the transgender community	Bockting W.O.; Robinson B.E.; Forberg J.; Scheltema K.	AIDS Care - Psychological and Socio-Medical Aspects of AIDS/HIV	97
The relationship between LGBT inclusion and economic development: Macro-level evidence	Badgett M.V.L.; Waaldijk K.; Rodgers Y.V.D.M.	World Development	89
A critical commentary on 'rapid-onset gender dysphoria'	Ashley F.	Sociological Review	84
Engaging the Transgender Community to Improve Medical Education and Prioritize Healthcare Initiatives	Noonan E.J.; Sawning S.; Combs R.; Weingartner L.A.; Martin L.J.; Jones V.F.; Holthouser A.	Teaching and Learning in Medicine	83

Source: The authors.

#### 4.5. Co-authorship analysis

The authors' co-authorship analysis was performed using the full counting method. The minimum number of documents of an author was selected as 3. Of the 593 authors, only 7 meet this threshold. However, as some of the seven items in the network are not connected, only four items with the largest connections are used in the analysis.

Bauer and Greta top the list with five documents and 344 citations, and the strength of his co-authorship links with others is five. They have co-authored with Scheim and Ayden I, who have 319 citations with four documents and a total link strength of four. Other authors with the greatest total link strengths are Logie, Carmen h, Perez Brumer, and Amaya, with three documents each and 58 and 48 citations, respectively. Logie and Carmen have a total link strength of three, while Perez and Amaya have a lesser link strength of two. Here, the co-authorship analysis reveals only four authors from the research field on the social inclusion of transgender individuals. This low number of co-authorships indicates that the research field is a niche and emerging one. The limited collaboration on this topic between researchers is possibly due to geographical or institutional barriers and the multidisciplinary nature of the topic. It indicates the need for building stronger networks and encouraging collaboration in the field to get diverse perspectives on the social inclusion of transgender people.

**Figure 6: Co-authorship Analysis**

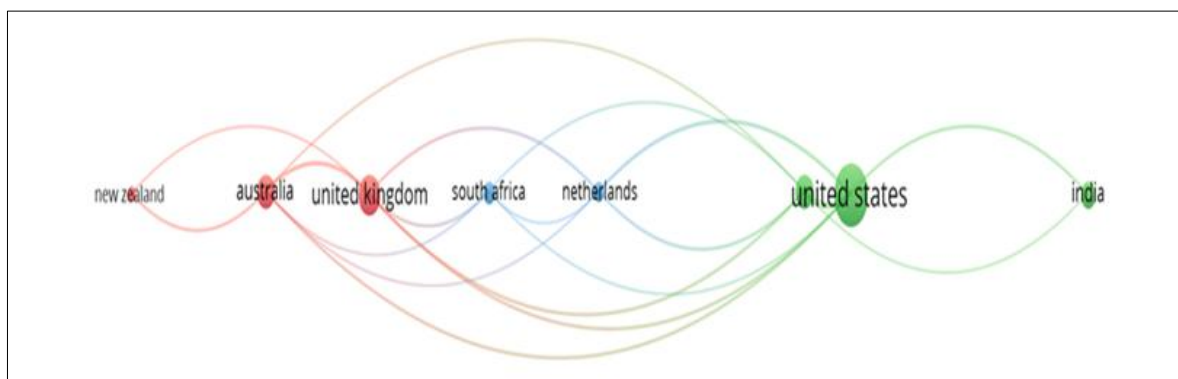


Source: Vos viewer

#### 4.6. Co-authorship (country-wise) analysis

There are 19 collaborative pairs in the network, and they have collaborated 40 times across eight countries, namely New Zealand, Australia, United Kingdom, South Africa, Netherlands, United States, Canada and India, forming 3 clusters. Cluster 1 comprises Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom; Cluster 2 consists of Canada, India, and the United States; and Cluster 3 includes the Netherlands and South Africa.

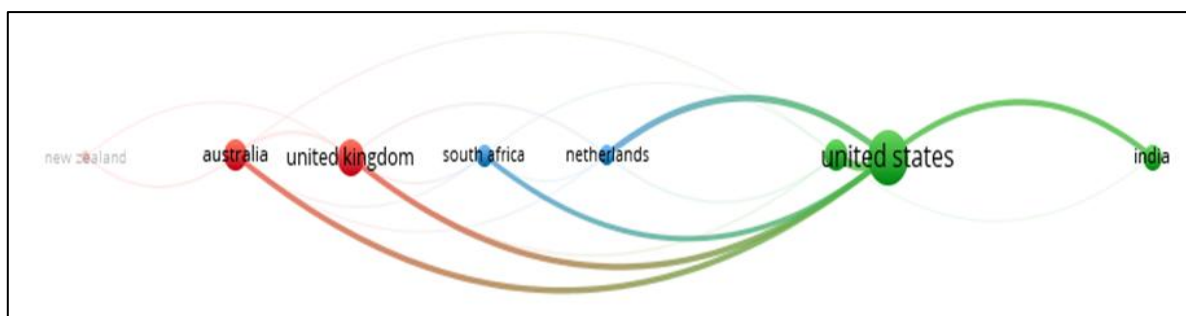
**Figure 7: Co-authorship (Country-wise) analysis**



Source: Vos Viewer

A stronger collaboration is found with the United States. There are six individual collaborative pairs in the network with the United States, with six countries except New Zealand, and they have collaborated 19 times. Along with the collaboration of the United States, the countries produced only 19 documents, while 44 documents were independent contributions. Hence, it is evident from the analysis that there is moderate collaboration within the network, and it calls for expanded partnerships for better results in this field of study.

**Figure 8: Co-authorship (United states)**

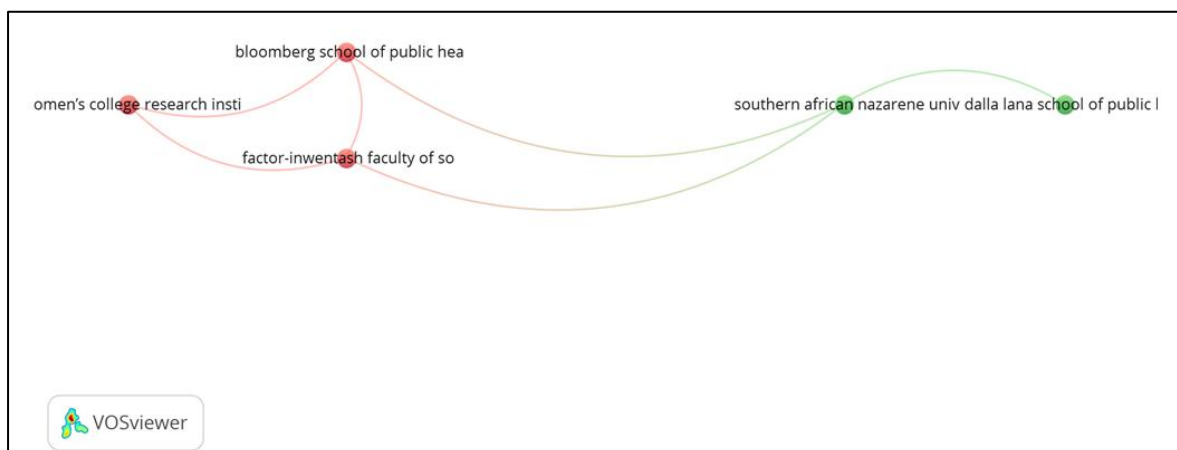


Source: Vos viewer

#### 4.7. Co-authorship (organizations)

The co-authorship analysis of organizations uses the Full counting method. Of the 454 organizations, only 14 meet the threshold of the minimum number of documents of an organization as two, and among these 14 organizations, only five are connected, forming 2 clusters. Cluster 1 comprises the Bloomberg School of Public Health, US, Factor -Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto, and Women's College Research Institute, Canada. Cluster 2 consists of the Dalla Lana School of Public Health, Canada, and Southern African Nazarene University, Swaziland.

**Figure 9: Co-authorship (Organization)**



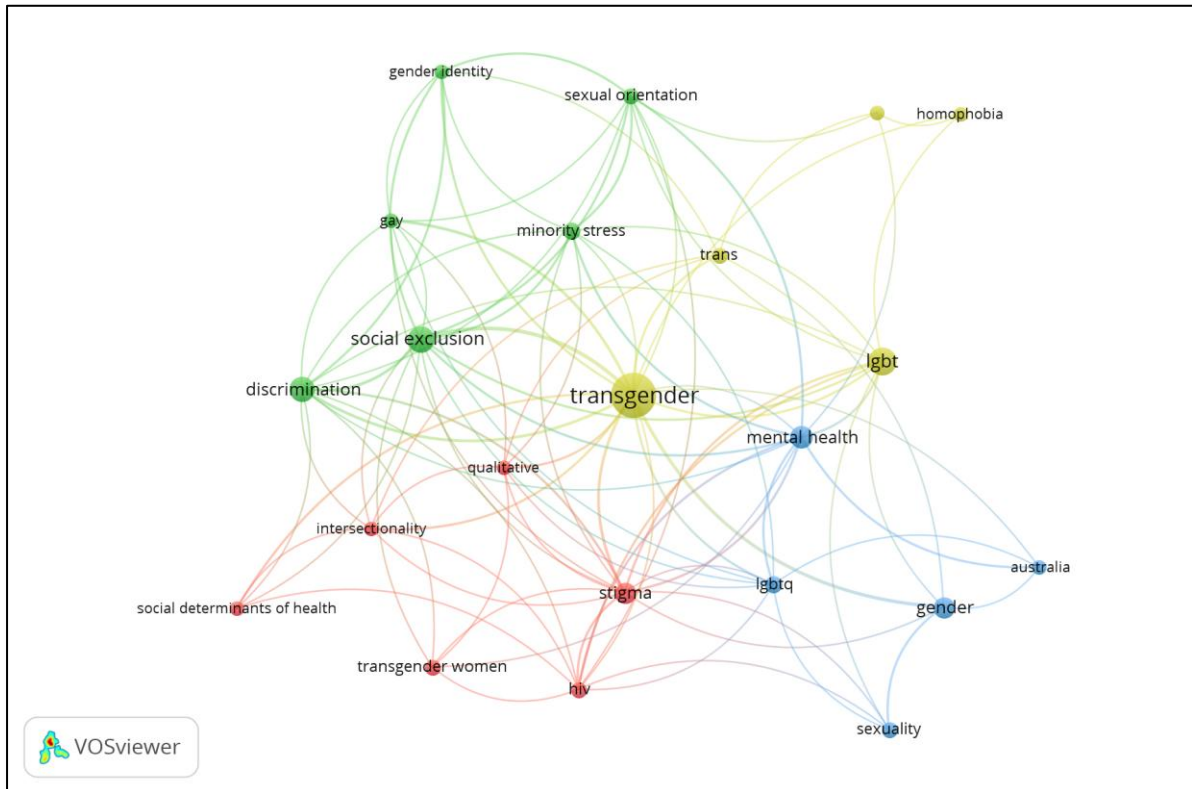
Source: Vos viewer

#### 4.8 Co-occurrence analysis

The mapping and visualization of author keywords co-occurrences gives an idea of the most researched transgender topics. The co-occurrence analysis is performed using the full counting method, which considers the author's words as the unit of analysis. The minimum number of occurrences of a keyword is set as five, and from a total of 529 keywords, only 22 met this threshold. As a result, four distinct yet interconnected clusters were found, with 96 links and 138 link strengths, highlighting LGBTQ+ issues. The distance and size of the bubble indicate the frequency of keyword occurrences and associational links (Taslim, Ahmad et al., 2022). The network visualization of keyword co-occurrences shows that the most used keyword is "transgender", with 18 links and 43 occurrences with a total link

strength of 38. Other most used keywords are social exclusion, discrimination, lgbtq, mental health, stigma and gender. A total of four clusters represented by four different colours is visualized in the figure below. They draw an overall picture of the topics discussed in the social inclusion of transgender research.

**Figure 10: Co-occurrence Analysis**



Source: Vos viewer

*Cluster 1:* This cluster includes items in yellow, which include trans, transgender, LGBT, homophobia, and social inclusion. This cluster deals with oppression and marginalization that trans and LGB people face and also tries to understand how discrimination towards trans and LGB people affects their social inclusion. It is clear from the picture that homophobia is prevalent among trans and LGB people, and it is linked to social inclusion also. It is high time that we need more discussions about homophobia, which is expressed mainly through negative attitudes, prejudices or marginalization and its effect on the social inclusion of trans people.

*Cluster 2:* This cluster is denoted with blue and includes mental health, LGBTQ, gender, sexuality, and Australia. Cluster 2 gives more focus to the mental health studies related to lgbtq people. It studies gender and sexuality, and these studies are concentrated mainly in Australia. This alarms the need for more studies across the globe on the mental health of trans and lgb people. Moreover, a new area can be explored if more research is done on the influence of gender identities on the mental health of people.



*Cluster 3:* This cluster includes items in green colour, like gay, sexual orientation, social exclusion, minority stress, gender identity, and discrimination. This cluster focuses on the ideas of sexual orientation and gender identities and sheds light on the discrimination faced by various gender identities. This cluster is mainly similar to cluster 1, and a new research direction could be developed if researchers study how homophobia contributes to social exclusion and minority stress among LGBT people.

*Cluster 4:* Items in this cluster is represented in red, including six items: HIV, qualitative, stigma, transgender women, intersectionality, and social determinants of health. This cluster is more related to the health aspects of LGBT people. It deals with health-related and structural inequities (stigma, intersectionality, social determinants of health, and HIV), leading to a new area to explore how homophobia and social exclusion manifest in public health disparities, specifically for transgender people. Cluster 4 deals only with the social determinants of health, omitting the focus on mental health. Here, the missing link between these two can be bridged by studying how the social determinants of health interact with mental health disparities among trans and LGB people globally. Another main finding from this analysis is the theorization of the risk of HIV beyond health aspects. Cluster 4 includes HIV along with stigma and social determinants of health. However, no other cluster mentions HIV, even though mental health (cluster 2), discrimination and minority stress (cluster 3) influence HIV vulnerability, meaning HIV is perceived as a medical issue rather than its structural consequences of stigma, exclusion and mental health disparities. New research can explain how the influence of economic marginalization, social exclusion and policy failures shapes the risk of HIV among LGBT people.

None of the clusters above have mentioned trans men, which in turn calls for an exploration into the discrimination, marginalization and social exclusion from a trans man perspective also. Most of the studies are concentrated either on transwomen or LGBQ people.

## **5. DISCUSSION**

The study aimed to conduct a bibliometric analysis to understand the current stance of the literature on the social inclusion of transgender persons. The Scopus database, a comprehensive database for peer-reviewed scientific literature and the one with the most extensive collection of citations and abstracts worldwide, is selected as the source for data collection. The Scopus database has 16 million author profiles and 7,000 institution profiles, as well as access to 75 million items from over 24,600 serials and 194,000 books from approximately 5000 publishers. Researchers aimed to understand the shifts and diversions of transgender studies from 2000 to 1 January 2025. The findings are discussed in four different themes aligning with the theories of social exclusion, minority stress theory, theories of intersectionality and lastly, policy implications

### **5.1. The persistent marginalization and social exclusion theory**



The bibliometric study reveals a spike in academic focus in studies related to the social exclusion of transgender's post-2015, mainly due to liberal law initiatives taken in many countries across the globe and as a result of the activities of different social activist groups. Despite this increase, the social exclusion experienced by transgender people continues to grow in many dimensions, particularly in education, healthcare and employment. The Social Exclusion Theory (Silver, 1994) explains how marginalized groups, including transgender individuals, are denied access to economic, social, and political participation. The social exclusion persistent among this vulnerable group of the society aligns well with past research reflecting the fact that institutional barriers, policy gaps, and social biases contribute to the social exclusion of transgender individuals (Fredriksen-Goldsen et al., 2014).

Furthermore, the enormous influence of global north perspectives on the discourse of transgender inclusion is visible through the geographic concentration of research in Western countries. The lack of research from countries with weaker legal protections, such as Pakistan, Iran, and the UAE, further highlights the exclusion of transgender voices from academic discussions. We need more regionally focused studies and localized policy interventions to fully capture the realities of the trans communities, especially in the global south.

## **5.2. Psychological wellbeing and minority stress theory**

It is evident from the findings of co-occurrence analysis that mental health, social exclusion and discrimination are strongly related, supporting the Minority Stress Theory (Meyer,2003), which says that individuals from marginalized groups experience chronic stressors due to societal stigma, discrimination, and prejudice. The analysis reveals that the mental health struggles of transgender people are the most researched area in the studies related to the social inclusion of transgender individuals, as keywords such as “stigma”, “discrimination”, and “mental health” are appearing frequently in the literature.

The increased research on Mental health is a positive development, but at the same time, an intersection of mental wellbeing with other areas of life, such as economic participation and digital inclusion, will give more fruitful results in transgender wellbeing research. Economic insecurity, housing instability, unemployment, lack of social support and disparities in receiving services are some of the aspects of life that need more focus like mental wellbeing. Future studies can be done to evaluate how these factors exacerbate minority stress for transgender individuals. Future researchers should focus more on resilience-building strategies and community-driven interventions beyond psychological distress in order to contribute to the research area of transgender wellbeing.

## **5.3. Intersectionality and Gaps in Representation**

The research on transgender inclusion is concentrated mainly in high-income Western countries, leading to a western-centric view of transgender experiences as explained by co-authorship and country-wise collaboration analysis. The development of diverse, context-specific frameworks that represent the real problems and needs of trans communities from





different socio-cultural settings is being hindered by this academic gatekeeping. Here comes the importance of Intersectionality Theory (Crenshaw,1989), which speaks about how multiple social identities, including individuals from different races, classes, disability and gender, intersect and reveal unique experiences of discrimination and privilege. One of the significant findings of the study is that the research on transgender inclusion focuses more on the experiences of trans women and broader LGBTQ+ issues, often neglecting non-binary individuals and trans men. This absence or limited studies on transmen's social inclusion will result in undertheorization of their experiences and reinforces the need for more inclusive and intersectional approaches in transgender research. Future research should prioritize collaborations with scholars and activists from the Global South to foster a more inclusive and globally representative discourse on transgender inclusion.

#### **5.4. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Policy Implications**

The publication trend analysis of the study reveals an increase in the research on transgender inclusion post-2015, especially after landmark policy shifts such as the NALSA judgment in India (2014) and the legalization of same-sex marriage in the US (2015). Many countries are coming up with transgender-friendly policies, but what is still lacking is an effective enforcement mechanism. This existing gap between policy advancements and real-world inclusion leaves trans individuals vulnerable to discrimination in the workplace, health care facilities and educational institutions and leads to social violence towards them. It reinforces the critical role of legal protections and policy frameworks in shaping transgender inclusion, and calls for governments to enact law recognition and rights-based advocacy to tackle transgender issues, specifically to enhance their academic engagement and public discourse. SDGs come with the aim of creating an equitable and sustainable society for everyone, and achieving these goals, specifically SDG3,5,10 and 16, will help to create a peaceful society, especially for transgender individuals.

The SDG goals that align well with the study and act for the wellbeing of transgender individuals are SDG 3, SDG5, SDG 10 and SDG 16. SDG 3(Ensure healthy lives and wellbeing) addresses transgender health inequities; SDG 5 (Gender equality) Recognizes transgender rights as part of gender justice; SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities) Advocates inclusive social and economic policies; and SDG 16 (Inclusive societies and access to justice) aims to Strengthen legal protections for trans individuals. Transgender individuals are part of society from many centuries ago.

Although our society is technologically developing and working towards an efficient and happy life for everyone, we are still missing this vulnerable group called transgender. Everyone in this world deserves to be treated equally, and it is the same for transgender individuals too. Hence, future studies evaluating how legal reforms translate into tangible improvements in the lives of transgender individuals can help to identify the challenges that restrict the effective enforcement of laws for them.

#### **6. CONCLUSION**



The research on transgender inclusion has made key advancements but also has a gap between research and real-world impact. To bridge this gap, researchers can explore diverse areas such as intersectional, interdisciplinary and regional variations in transgender inclusion. SDGs act as a call to action for trans people in different areas. More efforts from the governments in health care, employment, education and social services are needed to create a much more inclusive world with dignity, equality and wellbeing for trans people. Promoting collaborations among academia, policy makers and grassroots organizations can help integrate transgender voices into policy discussions, academic research and social movements, leading to a more equitable and inclusive society for all.

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