

ORIGINAL

The Social Media of Migrant Workers: A Bibliometric Analysis

Los medios sociales de los trabajadores migrantes: Un análisis bibliométrico

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: social media significantly influences the socio-economic and cultural experiences of migrant workers worldwide. It serves as a tool for communication, labor advocacy, identity negotiation, and social support among migrant communities.

Objective: this study aims to explore the scholarly research landscape on the relationship between social media and migration from 2015 to 2025. It seeks to identify publication trends, thematic focuses, collaboration networks, and key contributors in this field to understand how research has evolved and where it is headed.

Method: a bibliometric and thematic analysis was conducted using data from the Scopus database, focusing on publications from 2015 to 2025. The analysis employed the Bibliometrix R package and VOSviewer to map out publication trends, author networks, institutional collaboration, and research themes.

Results: the analysis reveals a steady growth in publications related to social media and migrant workers. China and India emerged as the leading contributors to this field. Notable institutions include the Stockholm International Water Institute and the University of Toronto. The top 10 authors each contributed two publications on relevant themes. Thematic analysis highlighted recurring focuses on migrant communication, advocacy, identity, and support. Research collaboration networks show increasing international cooperation, although gaps in interdisciplinary approaches remain.

Conclusions: the study highlights both the opportunities and challenges that social media presents for migrant workers and calls for more interdisciplinary research and inclusive digital policies to support migrant populations effectively. Given current trends, the topic is expected to remain highly relevant in the coming years.

Keywords: Bibliometric Analysis; Digital Communication; Migrant Workers; Social Media; VOSviewer.

RESUMEN

Introducción: los medios sociales influyen significativamente en las experiencias socioeconómicas y culturales de los trabajadores migrantes de todo el mundo. Sirven como herramienta de comunicación, defensa laboral, negociación de la identidad y apoyo social entre las comunidades migrantes.

Objetivo: este estudio tiene como objetivo explorar el entorno de investigación teórica sobre la relación entre las redes sociales y la migración de 2015 a 2025. Pretende identificar las tendencias de publicación, los enfoques temáticos, las redes de colaboración y los colaboradores clave en este campo para comprender cómo ha evolucionado la investigación y hacia dónde se dirige.

Método: se realizó un análisis bibliométrico y temático utilizando datos de la base de datos Scopus, centrándose en las publicaciones de 2015 a 2025. El análisis empleó el paquete Bibliometrix R y VOSviewer para trazar las tendencias de publicación, las redes de autores, la colaboración institucional y los temas de investigación.

Resultados: el análisis revela un crecimiento constante de las publicaciones relacionadas con los medios sociales y los trabajadores migrantes. China e India aparecen como los principales contribuyentes a este campo. Entre las instituciones más destacadas se encuentran el Instituto Internacional del Agua de Estocolmo y la Universidad de Toronto. Cada uno de los 10 autores principales contribuyó con dos publicaciones sobre temas relevantes. El análisis temático puso de relieve la recurrencia de la comunicación, la defensa, la identidad y el apoyo a los inmigrantes. Las redes de colaboración en investigación muestran una creciente cooperación internacional, aunque sigue habiendo lagunas en los enfoques interdisciplinarios.

Conclusiones: el estudio pone de relieve tanto las oportunidades como los retos que presentan los medios sociales para los trabajadores migrantes y reclama más investigación interdisciplinaria y políticas digitales inclusivas para apoyar eficazmente a las poblaciones migrantes. Dadas las tendencias actuales, se espera que el tema siga siendo muy relevante en los próximos años.

Palabras clave: Análisis Bibliométrico; Comunicación Digital; Trabajadores Migrantes; Medios Sociales; VOSviewer.

INTRODUCTION

The study of social media in migrant workers is an interesting research topic, especially the social media patterns carried out by migrant workers. Migrant workers gaining knowledge about COVID-19 sourced from social media have a large proportion.⁽¹⁾ Social media has contributed to polarization due to the selective exposure to information during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁽²⁾ Digital mourning has become a global phenomenon, especially among migrant workers who use Facebook to express their grief.⁽³⁾ People use coping strategies that include interacting with social media, viewing films and humorous content, communicating with relatives, participating in mobile gaming, pursuing entrepreneurship, and turning to prayer.⁽⁴⁾ Social media facilitates expanding social networks and forming professional communities among Chinese seafarers, granting them resources to advocate for their rights and interests.⁽⁵⁾ Migrant workers utilized Android phones and affordable Internet to manage resources during the pandemic.⁽⁶⁾

As assessed through Facebook penetration, social media enhances African remittances.⁽⁷⁾ Migrant workers, identified as a vulnerable demographic with significant needs, may possess complex trust and expectation dynamics regarding chatbots.⁽⁸⁾ Social network characteristics are analyzed using established theories of social identity and framing, focusing on the unique challenges faced by migrant workers in China.⁽⁹⁾ Social media's ability to raise public awareness about food safety and hygienic standards for migrant labourers is emphasized.⁽¹⁰⁾ The influence of representation on social media reveals the use of linguistic deception—silence, prejudice, accommodation, exclusion, dog whistles, and poverty—to oppress and marginalize Muslims and migrant workers.⁽¹¹⁾ Supportive networks comprised of co-ethnic migrant workers play a crucial role in facilitating both financial and social assistance through their close personal connections and organized relationships, utilizing socialization and digital platforms.⁽¹²⁾

Social media exemplifies a dynamic interplay between structural forces and user agency.⁽¹³⁾ Highlighting migrant workers' perspectives is essential for assessing guestworker programs, and social media is an effective platform for this.⁽¹⁴⁾ The discourse on social media encompasses one-dimensional narratives and performative morality.⁽¹⁵⁾ The 'cottagecore' aesthetic has expanded, presenting individualistic remedies to the crisis via nostalgic pastoral imagery.⁽¹⁶⁾ Thailand's migrant labour law restricts access to education and media among Shan women migrants from Myanmar (both legal and illegal).⁽¹⁷⁾ In the initial half of 2020, government institutions' social media content encompassed two predominant themes: the illegal migrant worker issue and the child trafficking and sexual exploitation issue.⁽¹⁸⁾ Social media significantly impacts transnational migrants, and diasporic online communities serve as a critical space for examining the intricate identity transformations experienced by these migrants.⁽¹⁹⁾ Social media platforms and alliances are integral to network collectivism for mobilizing temporary migrant workers.⁽²⁰⁾ Formerly nominally religious female migrant workers are reportedly embracing radicalized religious ideologies and resorting to violence as a consequence of exposure to extremist social media content.⁽²¹⁾ Previous studies have not adequately linked "social media" with "migrant worker," nor

have they thoroughly analysed the latter's social media presence. Keyword analysis via Vosviewer indicates a predominance of unrelated terms over "migrant workers." In investigating terms pertinent to 'social media,' the expression 'social media' stands out as the most commonly encountered. As a result, this investigation intends to remedy these gaps through an in-depth bibliometric examination centered on the social media behaviours of migrant workers.

Bibliometric methods significantly enhance the comprehension of social media's impact on migrant workers. By employing knowledge network analyses, bibliometrics elucidates the interconnections among authors, publications, and institutions contributing to research progression. This facilitates the detection of collaboration dynamics and influential factors often overlooked in conventional qualitative assessments. Bibliometric evaluations can pinpoint key trends and evolving keywords, offering a more precise representation of research development in social media concerning migrant workers. The research questions in this study are as follows:

1. What crucial information can be gathered about migrant workers' use of social media?
2. Which countries, affiliations, authors, and journals are most prominent in this field?
3. Which paper has received the highest number of citations?
4. What are the thematic developments, visual representations, and their evolution?
5. What trends can be observed in keywords and their network visualizations?

This study also aims to uncover how methodological approaches in research on social media and migration have evolved over the past decade. Special attention will be given to how issues such as diaspora identity, integration, and digital mobility are discussed in academic literature. The study will employ bibliometric analysis to identify trends in keywords, publication frequencies, and citation patterns. By mapping collaboration networks among authors and institutions, it will highlight key factors contributing to the development of this scholarly discourse. Data comes from major academic databases from Scopus. The research findings are expected to provide insights into how the intersection of migration and social media has become an increasingly important area of scientific interest. Through a systematic approach, this research contributes to cross-disciplinary understanding between media studies, migration studies, and digital technology. The findings are expected to inform the development of more responsive policies regarding digital migration in the era of globalization.

METHOD

This research utilized a bibliometric approach, drawing on data from Scopus. This method provides readers with insight into the latest research trends and advancements.^(22,23) Additionally, bibliometric analysis allows for the detection and visualization of emerging trends within a specific discipline. The patterns seen provide information on the increasing focus of research on migrant workers using social media. Bibliometric research is a tool that analyses the evolution, organization, flow of information, and impact of journals and citations in scientific disciplines to provide an understanding of the academic landscape.^(24,25,26)

Exploring scope

In May of 2025, a bibliometric evaluation was carried out leveraging the Scopus database to delve into the ties between social media and individuals working as migrants. The selection of this database adheres to⁽²⁷⁾ assertion that Scopus is a premier database. The study's temporal framework extends from 2015 to 2025, focusing on notable advancements and trends in the social media of migrant workers and understanding. The screening criteria and syntax employed in this research are detailed, The following search code was used to search the database: (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Social Media") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Migrant Workers")).

Data processing and cleaning in preparing data for analysis

The selection process began by identifying and filtering articles published between 2015-2025. The article document type is preferred due to its prominence in scientific publication, allowing efficient assessment via bibliometric methods. The focus on English-language articles is predicated on its status as the primary international scientific language. This choice enhances access to pertinent global literature and improves communication among international scholars. 75 articles were exported in CSV, RIS, also BibTeX formats for bibliometric analysis, compatible with the data visualization software. Figure 1 illustrates the selection process, adhering to PRISMA guidelines.⁽²⁸⁾

Data analysis

Bibliometric analysis is enhanced through various software applications. The Biblioshiny program requires coding in R Studio for utilization. Based on the bibliometric package by⁽²⁹⁾, the R application enhances data visualization through bibliometric analysis. Biblioshiny serves as a web interface for the Bibliometrix package,

allowing for interactive bibliometric analysis using R application commands.⁽³⁰⁾ The import data edit from basic data BibTeX formats for network, thematic, and trend analyses, along with visualizations and reports. VosViewer, compatible with the Scopus database in RIS formats, is another analysis tool. The data, consisting of 75 bibliographic records, serves as the foundation for bibliometric analyses.

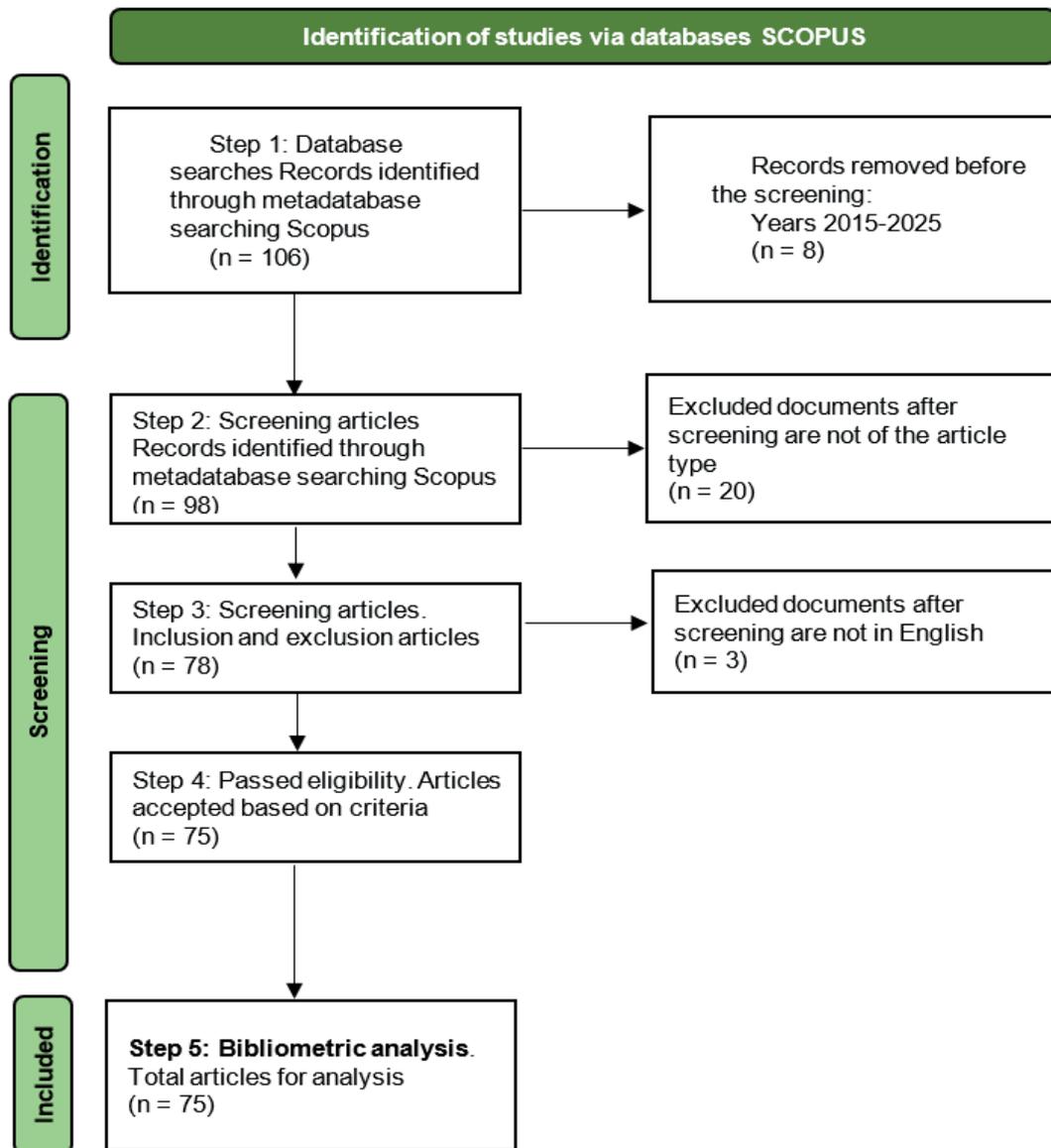


Figure 1. The process of article selection

RESULTS

Main information

The literature on social media has significantly expanded, as indicated by Scopus data. This field demonstrates substantial impact, this is indicated by the average number of citations per document. Research in this field is increasing annually and benefits from strong collaboration among authors, as evidenced by co-authorship rates.⁽³¹⁾ Furthermore, the high co-authorship percentages indicate a robust collaboration index. Investigations into social media among migrant workers are expanding and are characterized by diverse keywords and interdisciplinary themes. Key information is illustrated in figure 2.

Figure 3 demonstrates 2015-2025, emphasizing both the research output. During years (2015-2017), there was a consistent publication of only one document each year. However, in 2018, the number of publications increased significantly to eight documents. This was followed by a decrease to five documents in 2019 and a further decline to three documents in 2020. In 2021, there was a notable increase to 14 documents. This trend did not continue, as the number of publications dropped again to eight documents in 2022. In 2023, a significant surge occurred as the published 17 documents.

Description	Results
MAIN INFORMATION ABOUT DATA	
Timespan	2015:2025
Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	67
Documents	75
Annual Growth Rate %	17.46
Document Average Age	3.39
Average citations per doc	8.267
References	0
DOCUMENT CONTENTS	
Keywords Plus (ID)	527
Author's Keywords (DE)	264
AUTHORS	
Authors	267
Authors of single-authored docs	21
AUTHORS COLLABORATION	
Single-authored docs	21
Co-Authors per Doc	3.76
International co-authorships %	32
DOCUMENT TYPES	
article	75

Figure 2. Main information for publications

Documents by year

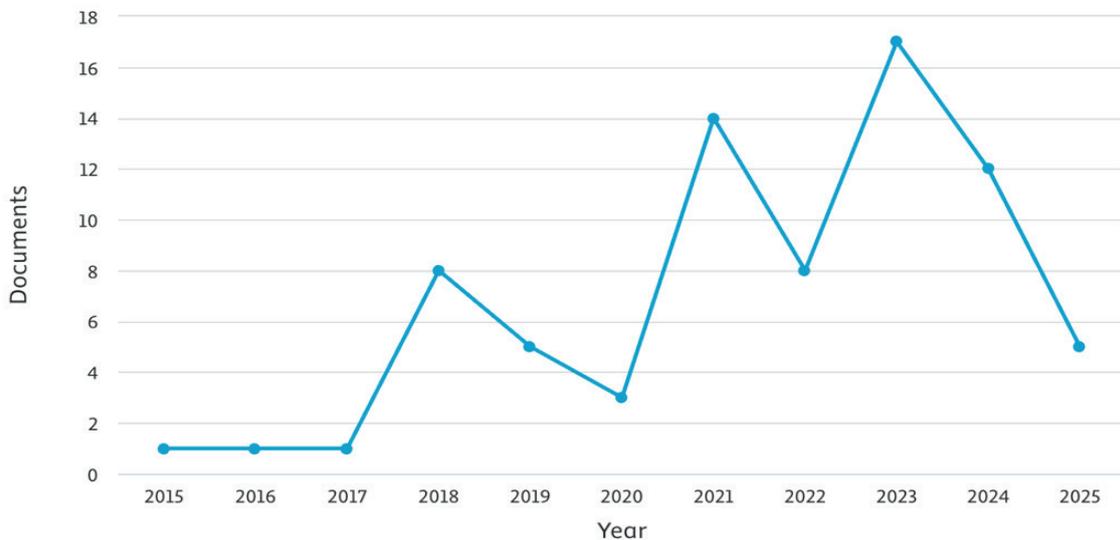


Figure 3. Annual productions

This trend may indicate a rise in scholarly activities or heightened interest during that year. Following this peak, there was another decrease to 12 documents in 2024. As for 2025, with only four documents published so far, there is potential for growth as the year progresses. Additionally, examining migrant workers' use of social media platforms is imperative for elucidating the communication practices adopted by individual migrant workers in the digital environment. Examining social media utilized by migrant workers is imperative

for elucidating their communicative behaviours in the online environment. Social media functions as an indispensable instrument for self-articulation,⁽³²⁾ social connectivity,⁽³³⁾ and activism among migrant workers,⁽³⁴⁾ thereby shaping their lived experiences and assimilation into host societies. This inquiry elucidates the complex and varied functions that social media occupies in the existence of these individuals.

The top 10 countries by production output

Figure 4 displays the number of scholarly outputs from various countries, with document counts in parentheses. According to figure 4, China leads significantly in research outputs with 38 documents. Following China are India with 24 documents, the USA with 18 documents, and the UK with 17 documents. Other contributing countries include Italy with 15 documents, Australia with 14 documents, Thailand with 13 documents, Malaysia with 12 documents, and Germany with 10 documents. Many other regions also contribute, reflecting a global and collaborative effort in this field.

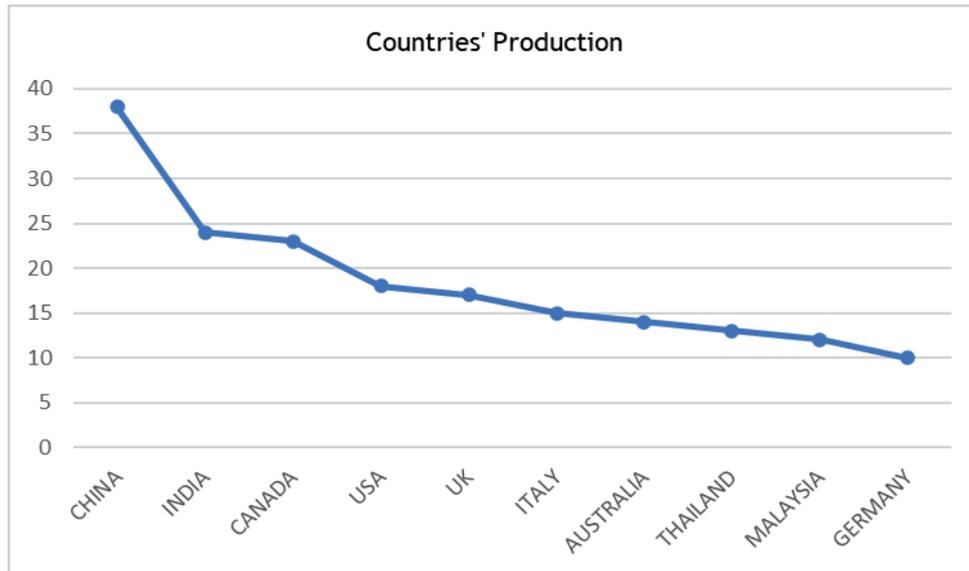


Figure 4. Countries Production

The most productive publication (affiliations)

Table 1 elucidates the allocation of scholarly articles across diverse academic institutions, revealing that the Stockholm International Water Institute and the University of Toronto are the primary contributors with 10 articles each, thereby underscoring their significant influence and robust research emphasis within this domain. From Banaras Hindu University and the Chinese University of Hong Kong rank with seven articles each, accentuating their noteworthy contributions and demonstrating an established scholarly presence. Several institutions, including Chulalongkorn University, Sun Yat-sen University, and the University of Macau, each produced six articles, demonstrating their significant research efforts and expertise in the relevant subject matter. Additionally, other universities, notably Bournemouth University and Guangzhou University, contributed five articles each.

Affiliation	Articles
Stockholm International Water Institute	10
University of Toronto	10
Banaras Hindu University	7
The Chinese University of Hong Kong	7
Chulalongkorn University	6
Sun Yat-Sen University	6
University of Macau	6
Bournemouth University	5
China	5
Guangzhou University	5

This distribution of research output highlights the involvement of a diverse range of contributors, reflecting broad academic engagement and participation among institutions worldwide.

Most Productive Authors (2015-2025)

Figure 5, generated through bibliometric analysis using Biblioshiny, visually depicts the contributions of authors to the social media of migrant workers from 2015 to 2025, categorized by the number of published documents. This illustration reveals that a total of 15 authors have each contributed two documents. Figure 6, created with VOSviewer, shows the collaborative dynamics, highlighting who influence idea sharing and research progress in this field.

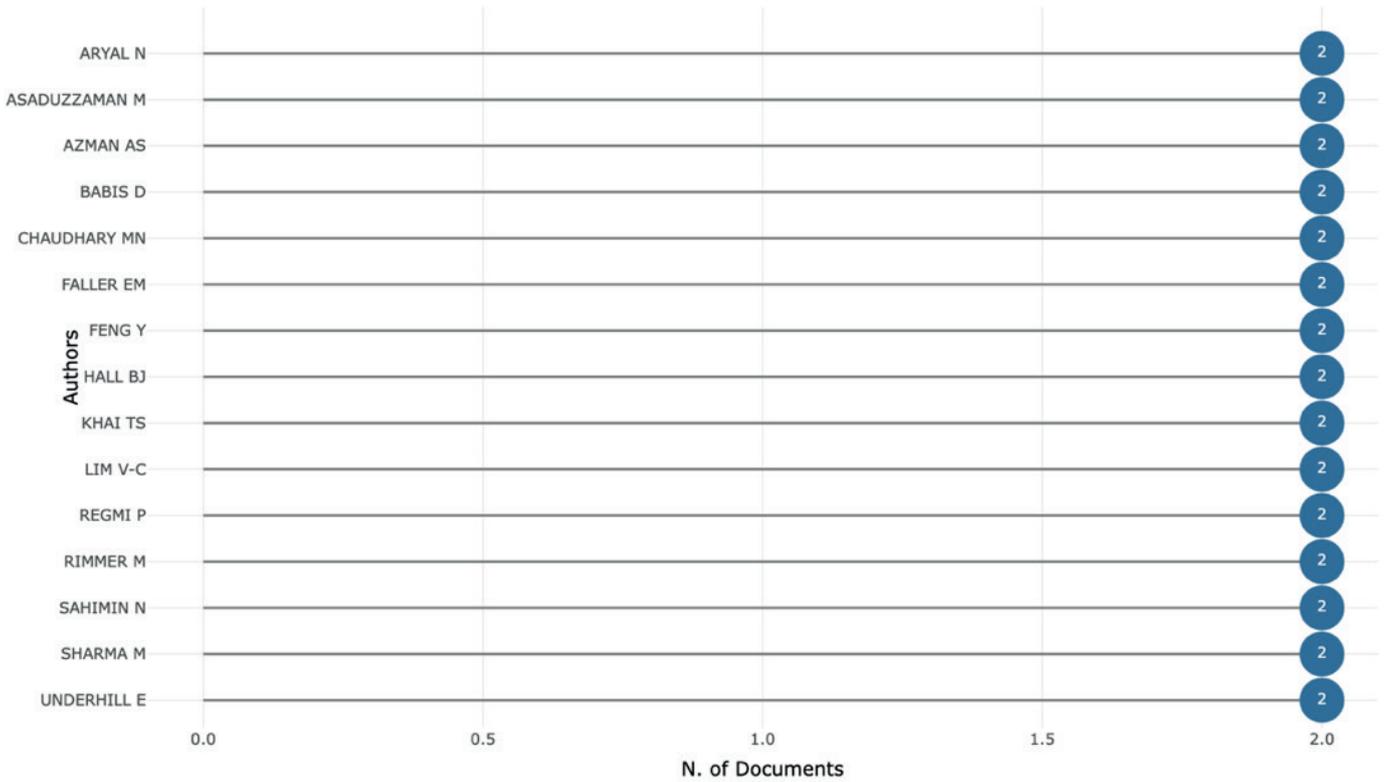


Figure 5. Top author

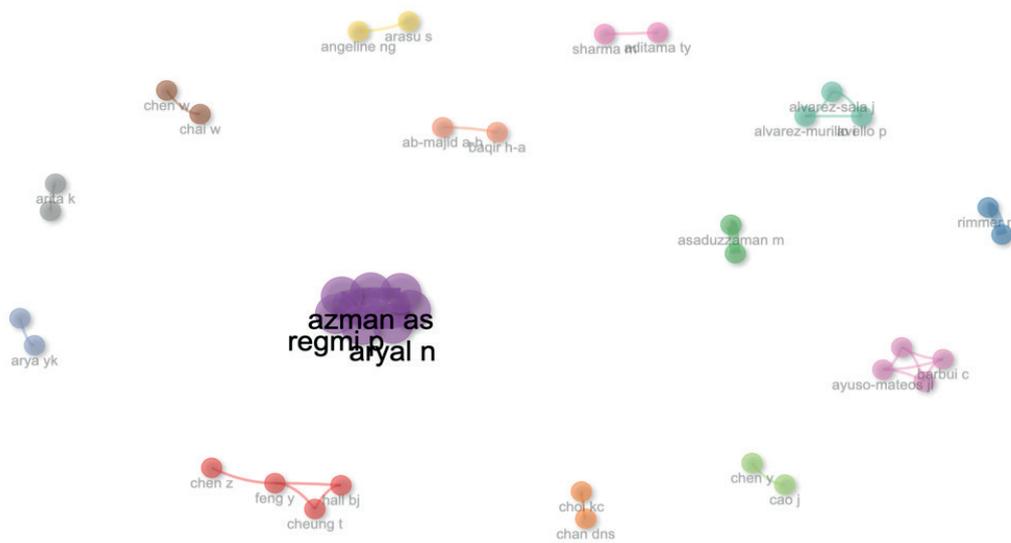


Figure 6. Collaboration Network

The 10 journals with the highest number of publications

The top 10 most published journals in the research domains of social media and migrant workers are presented in figure 7. The journal “PLOS ONE” published the highest number of articles with a total of 4 documents. This is followed by the “International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health” and the “Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies,” each with 3 documents. The “Asian and Pacific Migration Journal” published 2 documents. Additionally, the following journals each published 1 document: “African Development Review,” “AI and Society,” “Asia Pacific Viewpoint,” “Asian Ethnicity,” “Asian Journal of Women’s Studies,” and “Austral: Brazilian Journal of Strategy and International Relations.”

A journal having a high impact factor implies greatly, not only on its scholarly reputation, but also on the likelihood of your research getting cited.⁽³⁵⁾ Unsurprisingly, indexed journals within prestigious databases like Scopus or Web of Science are preferred due to their higher visibility and scholarly trust.⁽³⁶⁾ Peer reviewers offer their feedback on manuscripts. Their assessment concerning the value and relevance of the peer reviews is crucial in improving the manuscript’s overall quality.⁽³⁷⁾ The standing of a journal may have a considerable influence how favorable or adverse the evaluation of your research is in regards to his academic career.⁽³⁸⁾ In addition, the online availability and visibility of your research may increase the impact factor and citation rate of your work.⁽³⁹⁾ It is required that the journal selected does not put credibility in doubt by not observing ethical reputation standards to avoid issues concerning margin of error and authorship attribution.⁽⁴⁰⁾

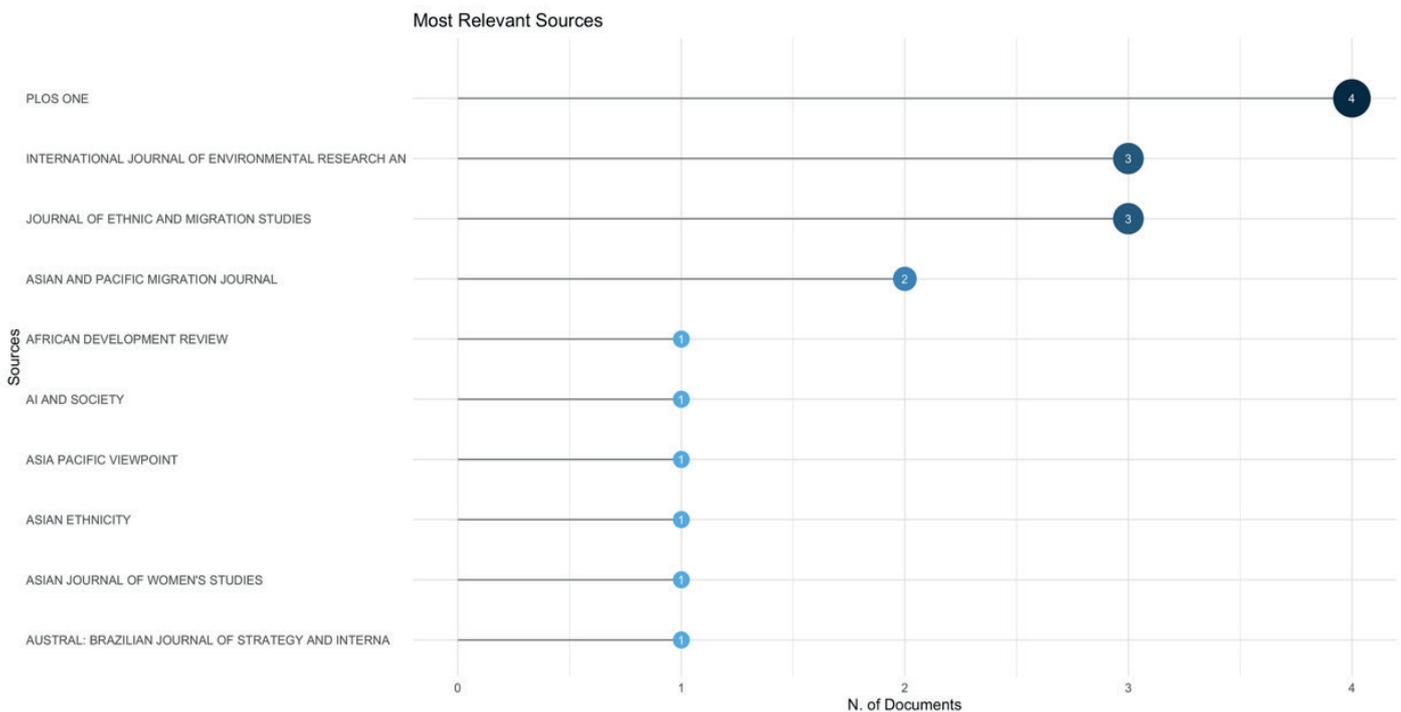


Figure 7. The top journals on the social media of migrant workers

The Top 10 Most Influential Papers: Cited Research

Table 2 contains the results as per the timeframe allocated in the analysis. The table shows the articles with the greatest number of citations and describes their titles. This was directed towards articles that focused on social media and migrant workers spanning across various locations. The articles show different figures of citations, their respective annual pathways of citation, and normalized indices of citation which show that there is different influence and significance of each research project within the academic world. Altenried⁽⁴¹⁾ researched on mobile workers, flexible employment, migration, the gig-economy, and evolving dynamics of work. Of all the studies, this one had the greatest citation impact after it was cited 77 times, achieving a total citation score (TC) of 10,04. He points out social media’s value, like other digital technologies to migrant workers, due to social media’s role in facilitating employment, improving communication, and supporting community development among the migrants. At the same time, he cautions against algorithmic governance of work and potential exploitation in the gig-economy. The ten articles with the highest citation counts are recent contributions with the potential to undergo deeper analytical scrutiny in future research.

Table 2. Top 10 most cited papers

Rank	Authors	Title	Journal	Total Citations	TC per Year	Normalized TC
1	Altenried (2024)	Mobile workers, contingent labor: Migration, the gig economy and the multiplication of labor	Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space	77	38,50	10,04
2	Nuraniyah (2018)	Not Just Brainwashed: Understanding the Radicalization of Indonesian Female Supporters of the Islamic State	Terrorism and Political Violence	50	6,25	3,64
3	Giné-Garriga et al. (2021)	COVID-19 water, sanitation, and hygiene response: Review of measures and initiatives adopted by governments, regulators, utilities, and other stakeholders in 84 countries	Science of The Total Environment	38	7,60	2,89
4	Liem et al. (2021)	Knowledge and awareness of COVID-19 among Indonesian migrant workers in the Greater China Region	Public Health	29	5,80	2,21
5	Gupta et al. (2023)	Polarised social media discourse during the COVID-19 pandemic: evidence from YouTube	Behavior & Information Technology	28	9,33	5,95
6	Srivastava et al. (2021)	Major Stressors and Coping Strategies of Internal Migrant Workers During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Qualitative Exploration	Frontiers in Psychology	21	4,20	1,60
7	M. Sharma et al. (2021)	Control of sexually transmitted infections and global elimination targets, South-East Asia Region	Bull World Health Organ	20	4,00	1,52
8	Babis (2021)	Digital mourning on Facebook: the case of Filipino migrant worker live-in caregivers in Israel	Media, Culture & Society	20	4,00	1,52
9	McDonald (2019)	"Social" Money and Working-class Subjectivities: Digital Money and Migrant Labour in Shenzhen, China	The China Quarterly	20	2,86	3,03
10	Liu et al. (2020)	Migrant workers in China need emergency psychological interventions during the COVID-19 outbreak	Globalization and Health	18	3,00	1,50

Most impact journal

Table 3. Top impactful journals

No	Source	H-index	G-index	M-index	TC
1	Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies	3	3	0,600	26
2	International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	2	3	0,250	16
3	PLoS ONE	2	3	0,222	15
4	AI and Society	1	1	0,333	3
5	Asia Pacific Viewpoint	1	1	0,200	8
6	Asian and Pacific Migration Journal	1	1	0,200	3
7	Asian Ethnicity	1	1	0,091	5
8	Asian Journal of Women's Studies	1	1	0,100	9
9	Behavior and Information Technology	1	1	0,333	28
10	BMC Public Health	1	1	0,125	18

Note: TC = Total citations

In table 3, a comparative analysis of social sciences journals is conducted using the H, G, M indices, and total citations (TC) as benchmarks of evaluation. Particularly, the “Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies” stands out having a G-index of 3, M-index of 0,600 and an aggregate citation total of 26. These figures serve as a testament to its remarkable influence and prestigious position in the academic community. On the other hand, “International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health” who has an H-index of 2 and G-index of 3, seems to possess a lower citation impact having only 16 total citations. This comparison suggests that the “Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies” has a dominating impact through the volume of publication it issues that have received high citation counts.

Behaviour and Information Technology ranks is the most cited in the analyzed journals at 28. Although they have a G and H index of 1, this shows that their influence within academia is minimal. This suggests that their most-used articles boast substantial academic value, thus showing that the journal’s popularity has risen gradually. Other journals in this review exhibit lower values for the H-index, G-index, M-index, or total citation counts (TC). Despite these lower metrics, these journals remain important in their respective fields. Contain key articles that significantly enhance their overall citation metrics (high TC).

Thematic development

Figure 8 presents a Sankey diagram illustrating the thematic progression and information flow within scientific inquiry.⁽⁴²⁾ This diagram includes elements such as country, author, and keywords to highlight the leading researchers in the field. The keywords represent key concepts and themes that are widely discussed in scholarly debates regarding the social media of migrant workers. These keywords are derived from previously published research and have been systematically categorized by a designated researcher. The diagram also reveals the extent to which quantitative with flows correspond with the main topics. The network visualization displays the interconnections among various countries and thematic areas. Countries like Australia, Malaysia, the United Kingdom, and Thailand are depicted on the left side, while the right side showcases educational concepts such as “male,” “female,” “adult,” “migrant worker,” and “social media.” which may enhance our understanding of global trends in the social media landscape of migrant workers.

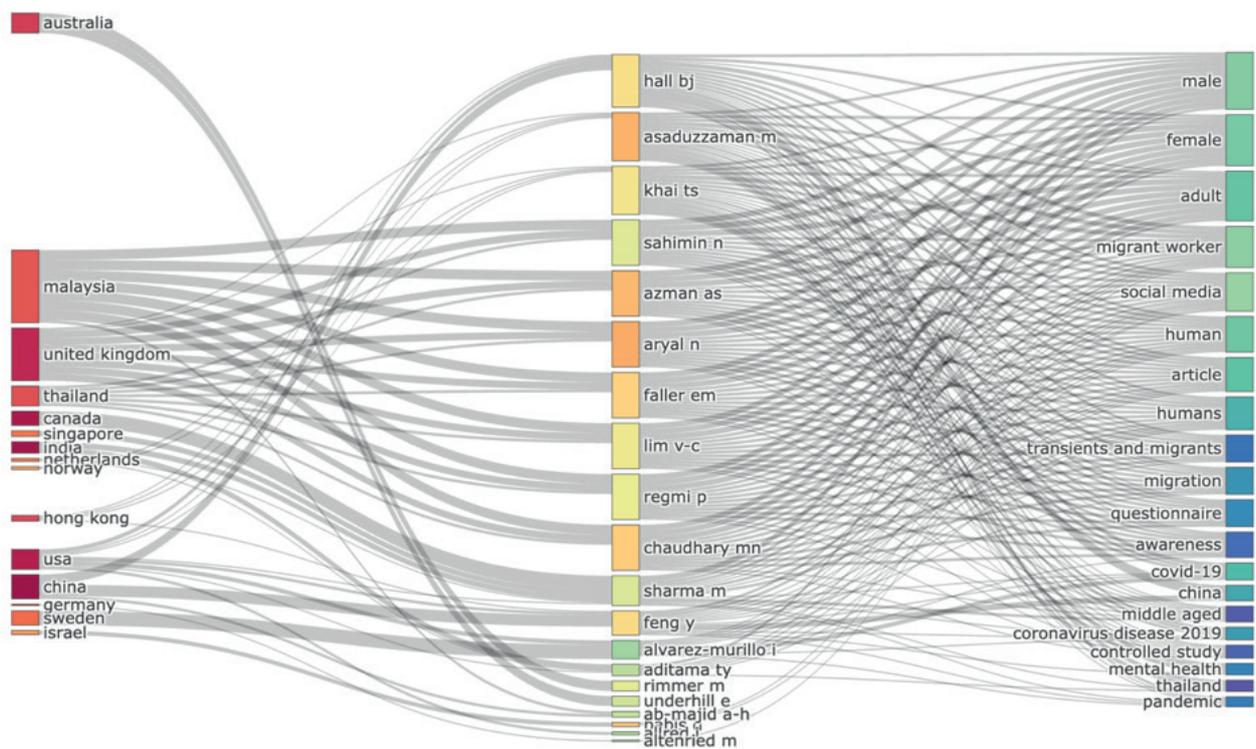


Figure 8. illustrates the thematic development using a Sankey diagram

Thematic evolution

Thematic evolution in social media of migrant worker from 2015 to 2025 highlights key themes like ‘social media’ and ‘migrant workers.’ Over this period, these themes have undergone transformation and interrelation. For instance, social media serves a pivotal function in facilitating communication. The subsequent discussion also revolves around the immigrant population. Moreover, the onset of the term ‘COVID-19’ in 2022-2023

suggests that the narrative concerning the application of social media for communication among migrant workers has secured a notable level of prominence. The grey lines that interconnect these themes serve as a visual representation of the development and interdependence of these constructs, thereby underscoring the dynamic character of social media. This thematic analysis yields critical insights for policymakers, equipping them with the knowledge to comprehend historical trends and forecast prospective trajectories in research and practice.

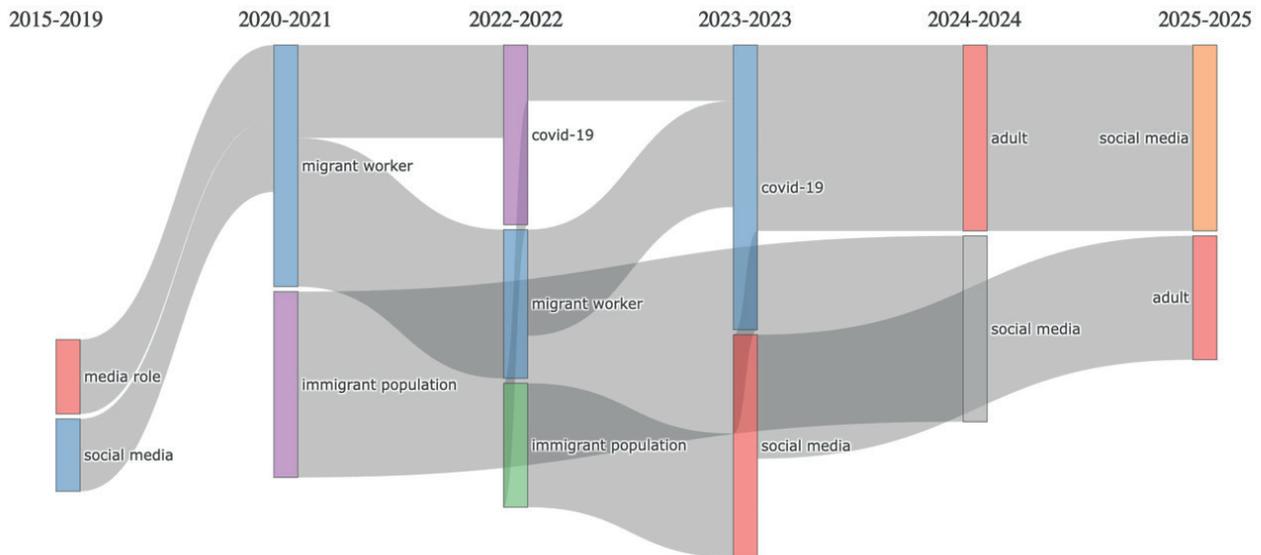


Figure 9. Thematic evolutions

Thematic map

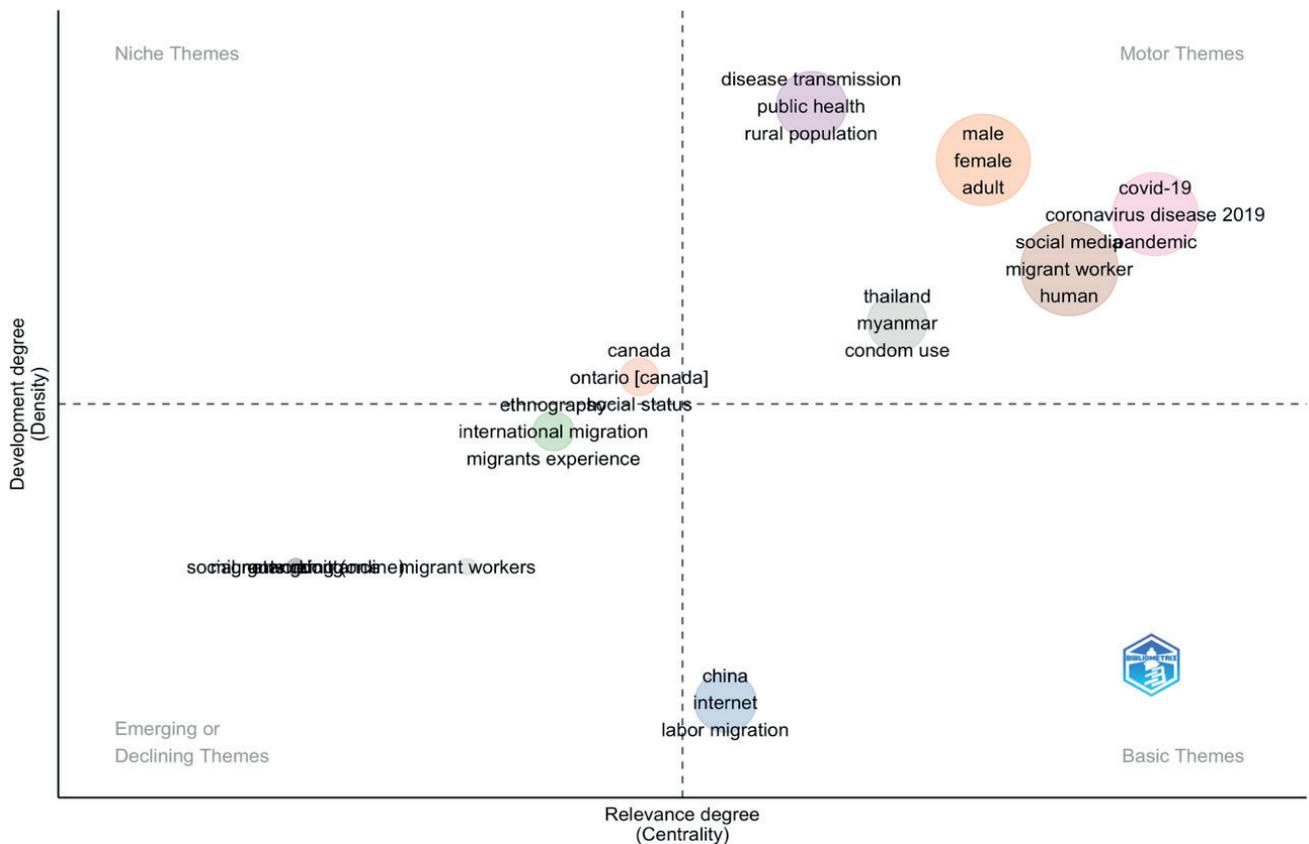


Figure 10. Thematic map

Figure 10 illustrates a variety of educational themes organized according to their developmental phases and corresponding levels of significance. One observes terminologies such as “disease transmission,” “public health,” “rural population,” “male,” “female,” “adult,” “covid-19,” “coronavirus disease 2019,” “pandemic,” “social media,” “migrant worker,” “Thailand,” “human,” “Myanmar,” and “condom use.” In the left quadrant (niche themes), one can observe the representation of “Canada,” “Ontario,” and “social status.” This underscores a pronounced emphasis on these domains, implying their significance to the discourse surrounding social media and migrant labor.

Conversely, the lower left quadrant, which encapsulates themes that are either in a state of emergence or decline and possess diminished relevance, encompasses terminologies such as “ethnography,” “international migration,” and “migrants’ experience.” While these themes may be regarded as foundational, it is imperative to accentuate their importance within the context of migrant workers’ research. The designation “labor migration” within these quadrants denotes an intermediary theme that connects foundational topics with those of greater sophistication. Furthermore, “China” and “internet” near the graph’s center signify a harmonious relevance and progression, underscoring their escalating significance in the context of migrant labor. This graphical representation offers profound insights regarding the term, facilitating a comprehension of which domains are experiencing growth and which may necessitate increased focus or innovation.

Trends in keywords and the visualization of networks



Figure 11. Keyword trends

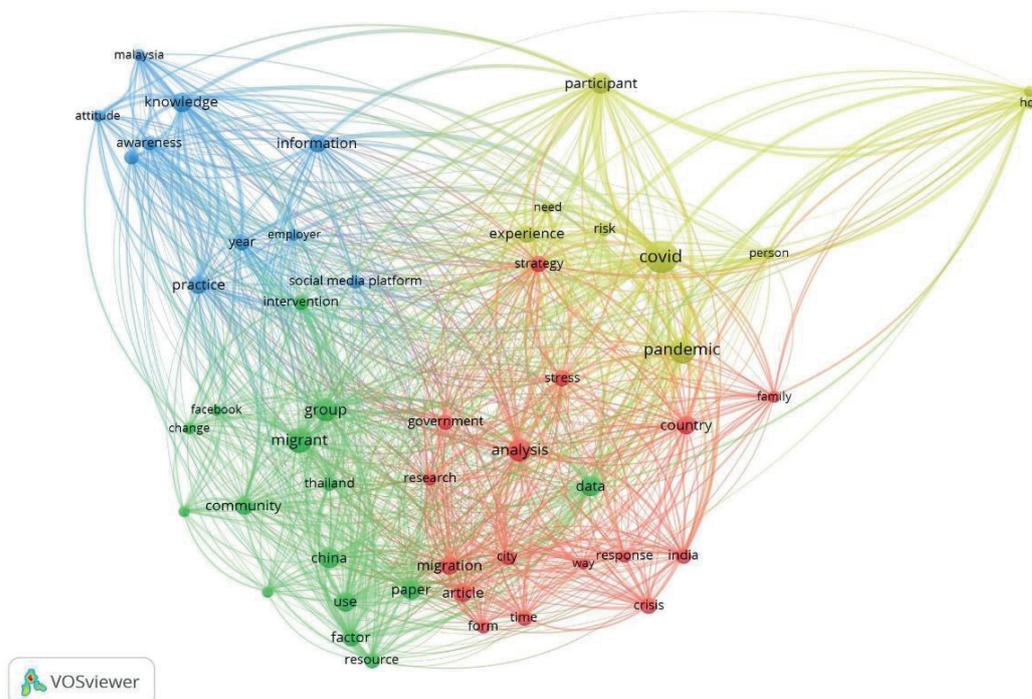


Figure 12. Network visualization

Figure 11 highlights the key themes and keywords pertinent to the scholarly social media investigation among migrant workers. The most pivotal and central terminologies, including “social media,” “migrant worker,” and “adult,” underscore the primary emphasis of the research on the dynamics of interaction among migrant workers. Additional notable terms, such as “COVID-19,” “male,” “female,” and “human,” elucidate the implications of this condition in the context of social media connectivity. Figure 12 elucidates the network visualization you provided, which was generated utilizing VOSviewer and exhibits trends in keywords pertinent to COVID-19 research. The keywords are represented as nodes, with nodes of larger dimensions signifying a higher frequency of utilization. The connections between nodes, depicted as edges, illustrate the co-occurrence of these keywords. The visualization employs color coding to distinguish between various clusters or thematic areas within the research. For example, blue nodes correspond to terms associated with information, green nodes represent terms related to community and migration, red nodes denote terms linked to analysis and data, and yellow nodes emphasize terms concerning participants and hope. The key terms include “COVID,” “pandemic,” “participant,” “analysis,” and “information.” Helping them understand the relationships and trends within COVID-19 research. It facilitates the identification of critical areas of focus and potential opportunities for collaboration.

DISCUSSION

This section highlights key elements from the articles analysed by researchers. The discussions are important as they clarify main topics, identify areas for improvement in future research, and suggest strategies to enhance insights from the bibliometric analysis. The systematic review emphasizes the multifaceted nature of operational excellence, which encompasses technological integration, sustainability, human factors, and sector-specific applications.^(43,44)

Social media significantly influences the number of publications related to migrant workers, as well as the countries and affiliations represented in this research. Notably, China has the highest number of social media publications concerning migrant workers, total the 13 documents, while the leading institution is the University of Toronto, with 10 documents. The theory surrounding social media in the context of migrant workers highlights the transformative role of digital communication platforms throughout the migration process, social integration, and community building. Social media is essential for migrant workers as it helps them navigate the unique challenges they face and establish connections before and during their migration journeys. One primary function of social media is to aid potential migrants in their decision-making process. Ihejirika *et al.*⁽⁴⁵⁾ explain how migrants use social media throughout various phases of migration. In particular, during the transitional phase, social media can assist individuals in deciding to move, alleviating anxieties and supporting informed decision-making in the new country.

Collaboration among international researchers is on the rise, enhancing both the scope and quality of research. Cross-border collaboration enriches theories and applications surrounding migrant workers’ use of social media. For instance, discussions often focus on gender differences, specifically between males and females, as well as broader human aspects. Other topics include social media, migrant workers, and employment, along with empowerment related to social networking. An article titled “Contingent Labour: Migration, the Gig Economy, and the Multiplication of Labour”,⁽⁴⁶⁾ frequently cited in this context. It is essential for the topic of social media and its impact on migrant workers to gain more attention in the future. This focus will lead to breakthroughs and the production of high-quality articles.

The top articles published in journals indexed by Scopus undergo rigorous evaluation processes to ensure their quality and relevance.⁽⁴⁷⁾ Figure 7 illustrates the ten leading journals that publish the most research on social media related to migrant workers, with “PLoS ONE” being highlighted, as it is indexed as Scopus-Q1. However, journals that produce the highest number of publications often only have a few top-cited articles. Baas *et al.*⁽⁴⁶⁾ has the highest number of citations from 2015 to 2025, totaling 77. This article appears in “Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space,” a journal recognized in the Scopus-Q1 category. A prominent journal within the domain of migrant workers is the “Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies,” which possesses an H-index of 3. Recent changes and metrics like the Enhanced Research Quality Index (ERQI) aim to provide a more comprehensive measure of impact by including the overall citation count, the number of co-authors, and co-authorship citation tendencies.⁽⁴⁸⁾ The H-index enhances the visibility of international scholarly work through its twofold measure of research output and the impact of citational references.

Bibliometric analysis considers both the books and scholarly articles alongside other publications.⁽⁴⁹⁾ Figure 8 features The Sankey Diagram, which is brilliant in highlighting the most impactful authors in specific scientific disciplines and their significant works.⁽⁵⁰⁾ They are particularly useful for demonstrating the flow of materials, energy, and resources within a system.⁽⁵¹⁾ Besides identifying major topics, they show what the most important authors have contributed to the discipline. With the aid of Sankey Diagrams, we can show how relationships among the researchers flow using complex data systems. Its purpose is to display complex interrelations and flows in huge volumes of data. This is very helpful in revealing unproductive research collaborations. There

is a growing importance of contemporary Sankey diagram tools that reduce clutter and enhance dynamics in overcoming problems of information visualization.⁽⁵²⁾ An emerging pattern is indicated with a prominent focus of 2015 to 2025 thematic horizons (figure 9). Literature indicates that academic disciplines undergo considerable evolution over time and some themes emerge and recur with repeated intervals. Analyzing how themes shift over time is particularly helpful when trying to understand existing or predict future research focuses. Furthermore, centrality maps highlight the most active and influential nodes in any given research network. In parallel, density metrics measure the intensity of collaboration, which is crucial for driving innovation and assessing the development of research lines.⁽⁵³⁾

The choice of keywords has great significance in the consideration of relevance regarding thematic development. This is apparent for “social media”, “migrant worker”, and “adult.” These keywords exemplify social media not only form a part of society, but also are within the mundane of academic discourse. However, their application is not uniform across all scholarly articles.⁽⁵⁴⁾ The studies conducted on the keywords, a widely employed method for discerning research trends across disparate fields, incorporate the collecting and analysing of the keywords from published works to illustrate the evolution of particular research, emerging patterns, and forecast future developments within crystallized spaces.^(54,55,56,57,58) This involves analyzing social media about characteristics that document the lives of social media users, such as migrant workers, their developmental contribution, or the discourse of disaster management information directed to migrants. There is also space for research regarding the role social media could play in alleviating the migrant workers’ homesickness. Studies conducted on social media interactions amongst migrant workers show that such activities greatly enhance the work experience of well social-media-literate individuals. One of the powerful tools in this regard is VOSviewer which enhances the software’s analytic capabilities by allowing users to construct and visualize bibliometric networks, including those showing the co-occurrence of pertinent keywords in the research field of interest. With VOSviewer, users can describe relations and clusters of keywords with a greater degree of ease as well as reveal new and familiar concepts in any given domain.

CONCLUSIONS

Social media in the context of migrant workers has been extensively studied, particularly regarding its social, cultural, and economic impacts. This study highlights the significance of social media as a vital source of communication, support, and guidance, highlighting the need for comprehensive social policies and interdisciplinary approaches to serve migrant communities better. Bibliometric analysis using the Scopus database (covering 2015 to May 2025) provided measurable insights through citation and publication trends, it also revealed limitations in capturing the full impact and scope of research, particularly due to the narrow focus on keywords like “social media” and “migrant worker.” This focus may overlook broader thematic evolutions and existing gaps. Reliance on quantitative indicators can obscure qualitative contributions and the lived realities of migrants. Future research should expand to include diverse data sources, qualitative methodologies, and attention to underrepresented regions in order to more accurately reflect the complexities of migrant experiences and the long-term effects of social media engagement.

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