

## Education and Women's Economic Participation through a Gender Lens

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify research trends regarding the relationship between education and women's participation in the workforce. A qualitative method is employed, using a systematic literature review. Data are collected from the Scopus database, consisting of 114 publication documents from 2000 to 2025. Data analysis is conducted using Vosviewer and Biblioshiny software. The findings show that research on education and women's economic participation has increased, peaking in 2021, with most publications appearing as journal articles in the social sciences. Thematic mapping identifies core research themes such as gender, education, employment, and sustainable development, with notable attention to socio-cultural barriers, technological inequality, and policy interventions. Although women's educational attainment has improved globally, persistent challenges—such as social norms, limited access to formal employment, and inadequate policy support—continue to hinder their full economic participation. The study also reveals a significant gap in research on women's empowerment in certain sectors and highlights the necessity for cross-sectoral collaboration and further studies in underexplored regions. These findings are essential for strengthening the relationship between education and women's economic empowerment, supporting inclusive and sustainable economic growth in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Keywords:** Gender, Education, Women's Economic, Bibliometrics

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## INTRODUCTION

Women serve as important contributors to economic growth and development in a country (Al Faizah et al., 2022). However, in reality, gender inequality remains substantial, especially in developing countries. Women's participation in the workforce is a key indicator for assessing the progress of economic development and gender equality in a nation. One of the main factors influencing women's labor force participation is education (Iffah & Bachtiar, 2024). Education not only provides access to higher-quality and better-paying jobs, but also acts as a catalyst for women's economic empowerment and the reduction of gender disparities in the labor market (Gugan et al., 2024).

In the global context, efforts to enhance women's labor force participation and gender equality are in line with international commitments through the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 5: Gender Equality. SDG 5 targets the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women, as well as ensuring equal access to education, economic resources, and leadership roles (Hirsu et al., 2019; Razavi, 2016). Achieving this goal is essential for empowering women to contribute optimally to economic and social development. Therefore, improving women's education not only affects individuals but also serves as a fundamental foundation for creating a just, inclusive, and sustainable society in accordance with the SDG agenda (Abera, 2023).

According to World Bank data in 2024, the global female literacy rate reaches 87%, with 65% of women completing secondary education and 35% continuing to higher education. However, the global female labor force participation rate remains around 47%, which is 26 percentage points lower than that of men. The relationship between education and women's labor force participation also exhibits diverse patterns across countries. In Brazil and South Africa, higher education significantly increases women's labor force participation, particularly in urban areas (Göttingen et al., 2018; Verick, 2018; Yakubu, 2010). In contrast, in India and Indonesia, patterns show that women with both low and high levels of education are more likely to participate in the workforce compared to those with a medium level of education (Chatterjee et al., 2019; Chatterjee & Vanneman, 2021; Lusiyanti & Wicaksono Padang, 2020). Overall, education proves to enhance women's opportunities to work in the formal sector and to attain managerial positions.

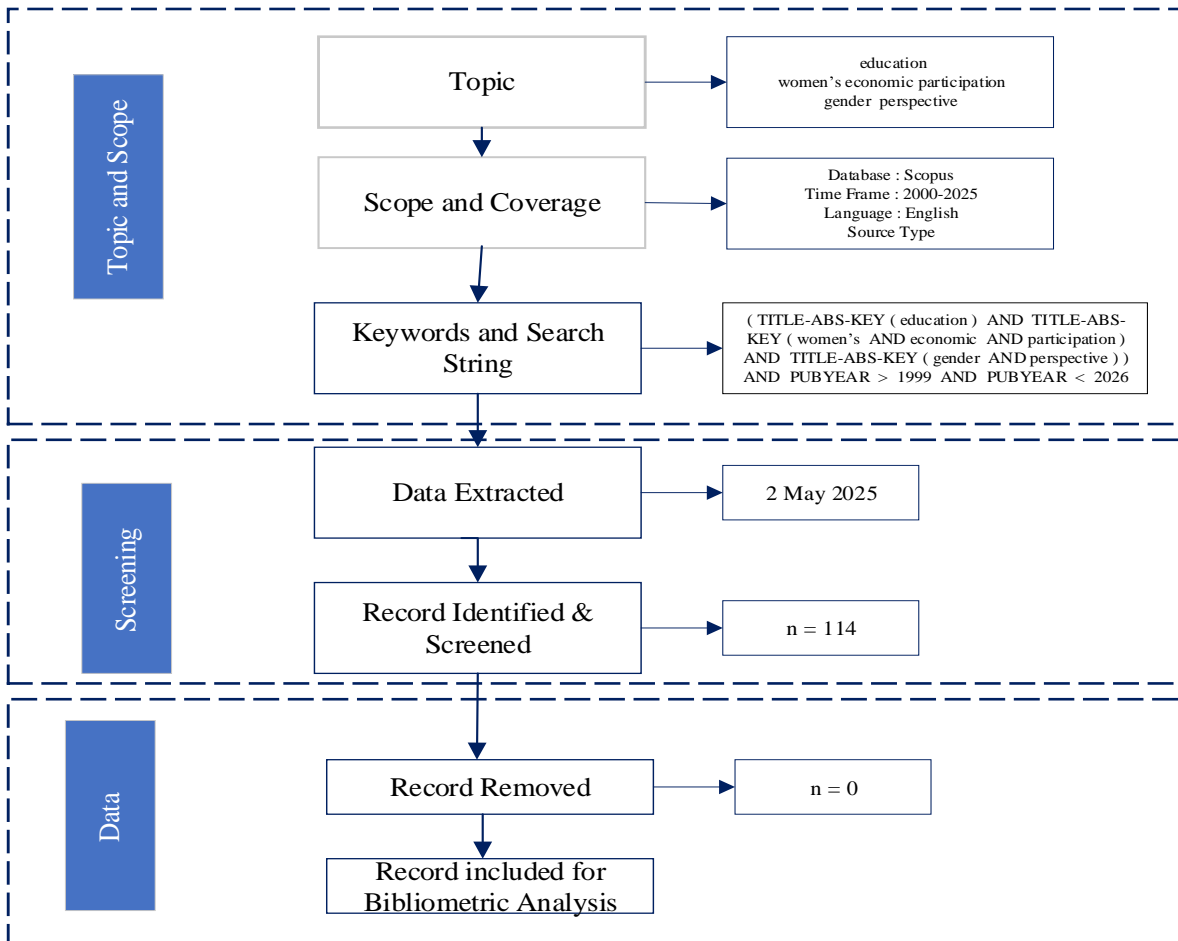
The increasing access to education for women is expected to encourage their involvement in the workforce, strengthen their bargaining position in the labor market, and contribute to more inclusive and sustainable national economic growth (Shuangshuang et al., 2023). With a higher level of education, women are able to acquire the knowledge, skills, and confidence necessary to compete in the labor market, enabling them to obtain better and higher-paying jobs (Shuangshuang et al., 2023; Shwetha Sharma, 2020). However, women's labor force participation continues to face barriers such as social norms that restrict women from working outside the home, limited access to formal employment, gender discrimination, and a lack of policy support for work-family balance (Ghaleb et al., 2025; Jayachandran, 2021).

Research shows that each additional year of education for women is positively correlated with increased labor force participation, income, and authority in household decision-making (Kien & Nguyen, 2021). With higher education, women tend to be more active in the formal sector and have greater opportunities to attain managerial or leadership positions, which in turn strengthens their contribution to national economic development (Hamid et al., 2023; Shuangshuang et al., 2023). The impact of women's education on economic growth is significant and sustained. Studies in South Asian countries, for example, demonstrate that increasing women's education has a positive effect on inclusive economic growth by narrowing gender gaps in education and employment (Hamid et al., 2023). This evidence confirms that investing in women's education not only enhances women's social and economic status, but also serves as a key driver in achieving equitable and inclusive economic growth for the entire society.

Based on the description provided, this study aims to analyze the trend of education relations in women's participation in the world of work. Bibliometric analysis is a research method that examines the literature on a specific theme to provide insights for future studies. This method was chosen to assist researchers in selecting, organizing, recording, and presenting research findings related to women's education and economic participation through a gender lens.

## METHOD

The bibliometric analysis in this study focuses on the quantitative proximity of the article's attributes (publications, keywords, contributors, and publishers) and the relationship between these elements (Tamala et al., 2022). This study uses a bibliometric approach by browsing the current scientific literature to identify knowledge gaps that still exist (Donthu et al., 2021). Data collection was carried out using the Scopus database with keywords "Education," "Women's economic participation," and "gender perspective". After converting keywords, the next step is to convert from 2000 to 2025 (the last 25 years)



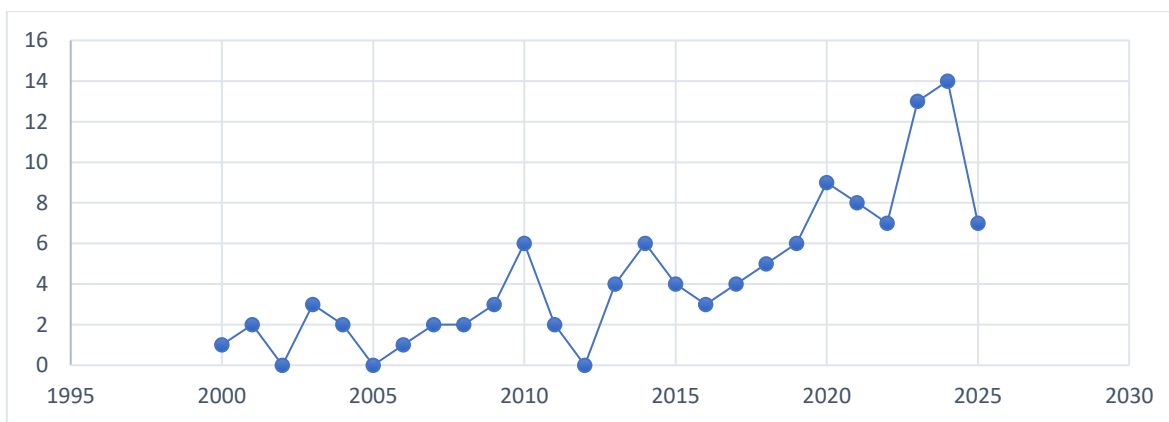
The data analysis in this study is divided into three parts: the first part is growth trends (annual trends, most productive authors, and the most contributing affiliates); the second part is co-occurrence mapping. The analysis of co-incidence and author collaboration is visualized using VOSviewer and *biblioshiny software*. Co-incident analysis includes network visualization.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### RESEARCH RESULT

#### Number of documents published

The graph showing the number of documents over the years illustrates the dynamic trend of research publications related to education and women's economic participation in Indonesia, indexed in Scopus. There was a significant surge in 2021, reaching a peak of 82 publications. Following that, a sharp and consistent decline occurred, hitting the lowest point in 2015 with only 9 documents. Interestingly, after 2015, there was a slight increase, although the numbers remained relatively low—for example, 10 documents in 2014 and 16 in 2013. Meanwhile, in the most recent years (2023–2024), the number of documents stabilized in the range of 66 to 80, reflecting renewed attention or a resurgence of research interest in this topic in the post-pandemic period. This pattern suggests that publication trends are strongly influenced by external factors such as research policy, socio-political dynamics, and global momentum that may elevate the relevance of the topic.



**Figure 1.** Number of Documents Published from 2000 to 2025

Source: Scopus database, 2025

In the study titled *"Empowerment Sustainability Perspectives for Bahraini Women as Entrepreneurs"* (Alsaad et al., 2023) In 2023, a study titled *"Empowerment Sustainability Perspectives for Bahraini Women as Entrepreneurs"* explored the factors that empower women entrepreneurs in the Kingdom of Bahrain. It investigated the drivers behind women's entrepreneurial empowerment and measured the extent to which these factors impact business development and growth. The study found that three factors—quality education, socio-cultural influences, and government policies—play a significant role in

supporting women to start businesses. In a separate study by (Akkan et al., 2023) the article highlights a strong relationship between the availability of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services and women's ability to participate in the workforce. In many countries, improved access to early childhood education facilitates women's employment. However, in Turkey, the development of ECEC has been delayed and is market-driven, meaning only those who are economically capable can afford to access these services.

An earlier study published in *Women in Management Review* by the authors Valeria Maione (2000) The article titled "*The Female Labour Market in Italy from a Historical Perspective*" discusses the development of female labor demand and supply in Italy since 1959, with a focus on the number of women employed and the number of women in the labor force. Women's access to the labor market progressed slowly and with difficulty compared to other European countries. Women were required to conform to male work patterns, meaning they had to work like men in order to be accepted in the workforce. This study also highlights the crucial role of education in increasing women's participation in the labor market. The higher the level of education attained by women, the greater their chances of employment, particularly in the service sector, which employs the highest number of women.

### **Bibliography Based on Document Type**

The number and percentage of publications related to education and women's economic participation in Indonesia, indexed in Scopus from 2000 to 2025, are presented in Table 2. The majority of publications are in the form of journal articles, totaling 69 documents, or 60.5% of the total publications. Followed by book chapters with 14 documents (12.3%) and conference papers with 13 documents (11.4%). Other types of publications, such as reviews, books, editorials, and errata, each contribute a smaller share, with proportions of 7.9%, 6.1%, 0.9%, and 0.5%, respectively. These findings indicate that journal articles remain the primary form of research dissemination in this field, reflecting the academic preference for publication channels with high visibility and scientific impact.

**Table 1. Number and percentage research Education and Women's Economic Participation Indonesia by type of document (2000 - 2025)**

No	Document Type	Number of Publications	Percentage
1	Article	69	60,5 %
2	Book Chapter	14	12,3%
3	Conference Paper	13	11,4%
4	Review	9	7,9%
5	Book	7	6,1%
6	Editorial	1	0,9%
7	Erratum	1	0,5%

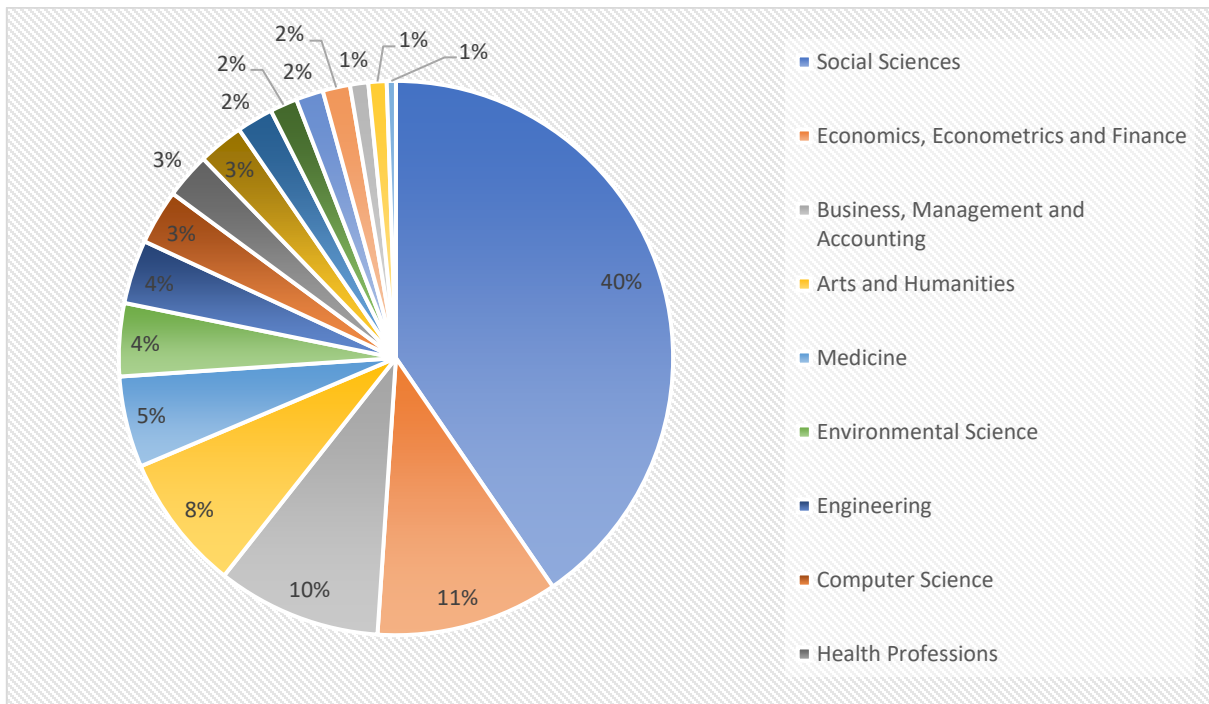
Source: Scopus database, 2025

One of the 69 articles, with the most recent publication in 2025, discusses the role of education in economic participation and is written by Alzaaqui et al (2025) titled "*Empowering Women in the Saudi Health Sector: Challenges, Opportunities, and Policy Interventions.*" The article emphasizes that achieving comprehensive gender equality requires sustained efforts through education, leadership development, and cultural change in the Saudi health sector. On the other hand, the most cited article is titled "Living conditions and life satisfaction of older Europeans living alone: a gender and cross-country analysis" written by Gaymu & Springer (2010) This article highlights the important role of education in improving the quality of life for older people, as it provides better access to health information, social opportunities, and economic independence. The findings reinforce that investment in education has long-term impacts on individual well-being, even into old age, especially for those living alone.

Meanwhile, in the book chapter written by Karuna Chanana (2011), the content discusses how higher education subject choices are still influenced by gender constructs, leading women to tend to choose fields with lower economic prospects. Despite increased access, women's participation in strategically important fields with high economic value remains limited, and the impacts of inequality in educational outcomes and long-term economic opportunities are significant.

### **Documents by Subject Area**

The "Documents by Subject Area" pie chart shows the distribution of documents based on academic fields. Of the total, the Social Sciences field dominates with the largest proportion, accounting for 40%, indicating that issues related to gender and women's economic participation are most frequently discussed in a social context. The fields of Economics, Econometrics, and Finance contribute 11%, followed by Business, Management, and Accounting at 10%. Meanwhile, other fields such as Humanities, Medicine, Environmental Science, Engineering, Computer Science, and Health Professions each contribute smaller percentages, ranging from 1–8%. This suggests that while the main focus remains within the social realm, gender issues are increasingly being addressed across various other disciplines.



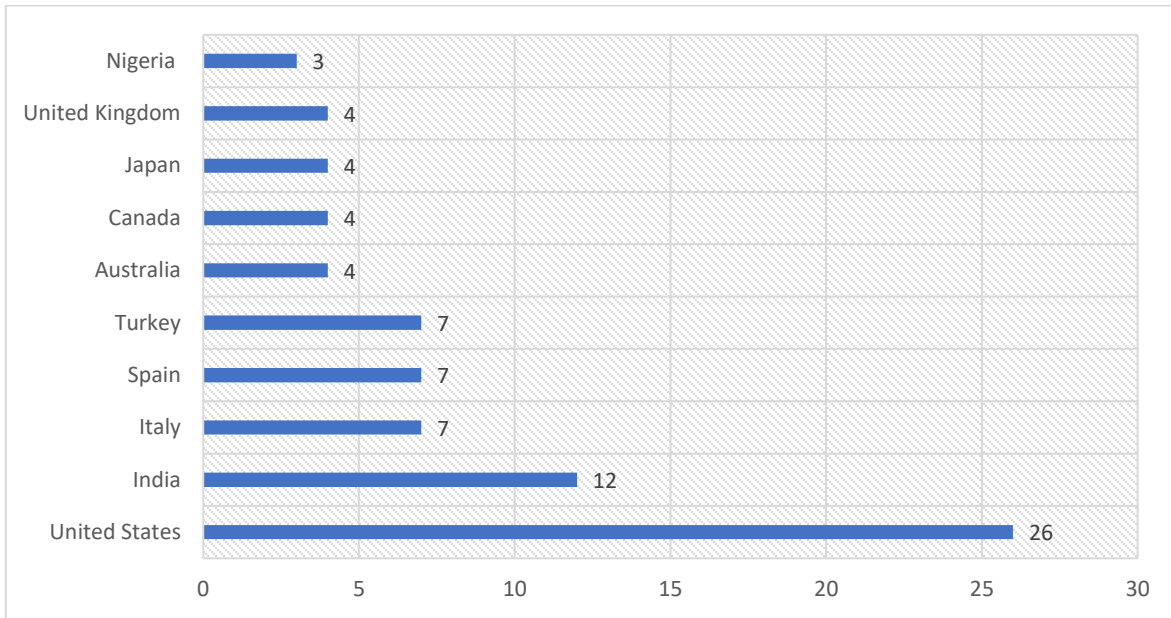
**Figure 2. Documents by Type**  
Source: Scopus database, 2025

In the Social-Science category, some of the articles include: *"Migrant Women: A Thorough View of the Educational Impact on Their Work and Social Life Trajectory"* written by Arenas Carranza et al (2025); *"Developing a Conceptual Framework: Women STEM Faculty's Participation in Entrepreneurship Education Programs"* by Menon & Shekhar (2025); *"Continuing education of academic women in STEM: perspectives on mentoring and professional roles"* by García-Silva et al (2025). In the Economics, Econometrics, and Finance category, the most cited article (49 citations) is *"Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Aquaculture Value Chain: The Role of Corporate Social Responsibility in Nigeria's Niger Delta"* by Uduji et al (2025) This article discusses how investing in women leads to intergenerational benefits, including increased levels of education, literacy, and overall family well-being. Therefore, mainstreaming gender in mining agreements is also a crucial strategy for sustainable human development.

**Documents by Country**

The "Documents by Country" chart in the figure shows the distribution of scientific documents or publications related to education and women's economic participation based on the country of origin of the authors or institutions. According to the chart, the United States contributes the largest share of studies on this topic, with a total of 26 documents. This indicates that gender issues and women's economic empowerment are significant areas of research in the country, likely supported by an academic climate that is open to interdisciplinary studies and gender equality policies. India ranks second with 12

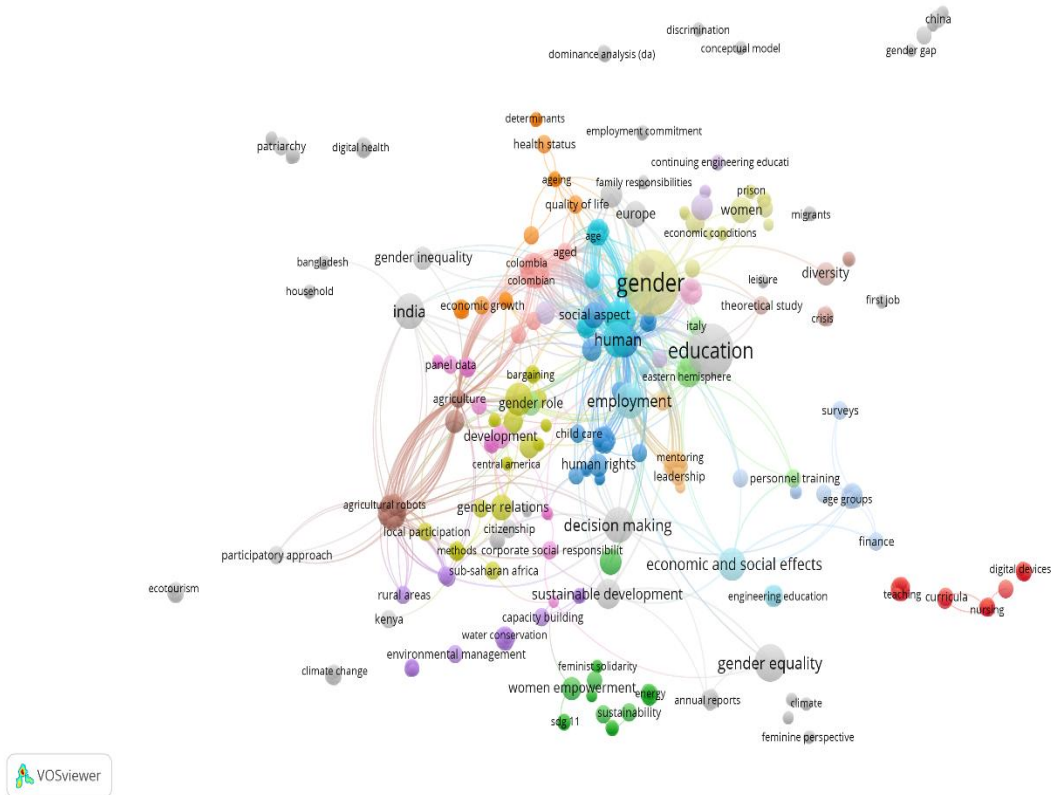
documents, reflecting the attention given by developing countries to women's participation in economic development, particularly in the context of education and poverty alleviation.



**Figure 3.** Documents Released by Country

Source: Scopus database, 2025

Countries such as Italy, Spain, and Turkey each contributed 7 documents, indicating a relatively balanced focus on this issue in Southern Europe and the Middle East. Additionally, Australia, Canada, Japan, and the United Kingdom each contributed 4 documents, while Nigeria recorded 3 documents, highlighting the involvement of countries from various regions in addressing this issue. Overall, the chart reflects that although education and women's economic participation are global concerns, there is a higher concentration of research in certain countries, particularly the United States and India. This suggests the potential for cross-country collaboration and the importance of expanding studies to regions that are still underexplored, such as developing countries in Africa and Southeast Asia.



**Figure 4.** visualizaiton of network  
 Source: VOSViewer, 2025

The figure is a bibliometric map visualization generated using the VOSviewer software, showing the relationships between topics in the literature that discuss gender issues and women's economic participation. Nodes represent keywords that frequently appear in the documents, while the connecting lines between nodes indicate the co-occurrence relationships between these keywords. The word "gender" serves as the central point in the network, highlighting its high frequency and strong connections to other topics such as "education," "employment," "decision making," and "economic and social effects." Different colors represent clusters or thematic groups that are interconnected. For example, the green cluster relates to sustainable development and women's empowerment issues, while the red cluster tends to focus on technology and digital inequality. This visualization demonstrates that studies on women and economic participation are not confined to a single discipline, but are interconnected with broader social, environmental, and technological issues.

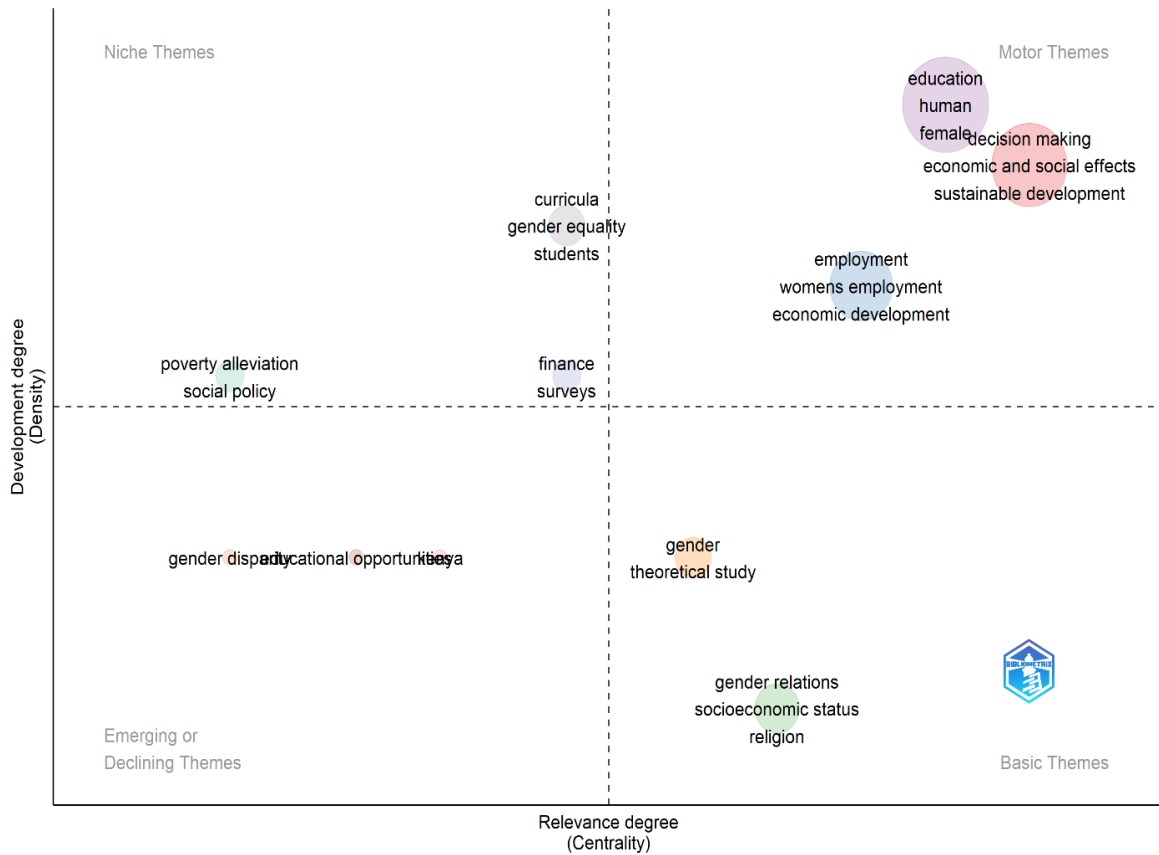
The results of the network visualization in the Figure show that there are 6 clusters with items regarding education and women empowerment, namely.

1. Blue Cluster (Central - "Gender", "Education", "Employment", "Social Aspect")  
 This cluster is the core of the network, indicating that keywords like gender, education, and employment are dominant themes and are strongly interconnected. It shows that

women's economic participation is often examined in the context of education and social aspects. Keywords such as social aspect, human, and gender role strengthen the connection between human resource development and gender roles.

2. Green Cluster (Women Empowerment and Sustainable Development)  
Composed of terms such as women's empowerment, gender equality, sustainable development, and decision making, this cluster highlights the focus on women's empowerment as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The link to participation, leadership, and community development suggests a participatory and inclusive approach to decision-making.
3. Purple Cluster (Participation and the Rural/Global South Context)  
Including terms like agriculture, rural areas, sub-Saharan Africa, and India, this cluster reflects studies focusing on women's roles in the informal economy and agriculture, particularly in developing regions. Emphasis is placed on the geographical context and local challenges to women's participation.
4. Orange Cluster (Social and Cultural Issues Affecting Gender)  
Containing keywords like health, family responsibilities, culture, and religion, this cluster highlights the socio-cultural barriers influencing women's economic participation. Health issues, family norms, and cultural values are barriers or determinants of women's success in the public sphere.
5. Red Cluster (Technology and Digital Inequality)  
Containing keywords such as digital services, ICT, and technological culture, this cluster demonstrates the focus on the technological inequality that women face. Research in this cluster generally associates digital literacy and access to technology as critical factors in the economic empowerment of women in the digital age.
6. Gray Cluster (Supporting Theories and Concepts - "Patriarchy", "Discrimination", "Conceptual Model")  
This cluster reflects theoretical approaches to gender issues, such as patriarchy, discrimination, and dominance. These terms typically appear in studies examining power structures and gender inequality conceptually.

From the results of the discussion above, research or the number of publications related to economic growth in Indonesia has experienced stagnant changes and tends to decrease every year. The highest number of documents is in the "International Journal of Energy Economics and Policy" with a total of 20 documents.



**Figure 5.** Strategic diagram

Source: Biblioshiny, 2025

This strategic diagram groups research themes related to education and women's economic participation into four quadrants:

(i) In the upper-right quadrant (**Motor Themes**), themes such as *education, human, female, decision making, economic and social effects, and sustainable development* appear as core themes that are not only central to the network but also well-developed. These themes represent a strong, relevant, and continuously evolving research stream focused on empowering women through education and decision-making in the context of sustainable development. One of the articles in this quadrant is "*Women's Empowerment and Sustainable Development Goals in the Post-COVID-19 Era*," written by Adam et al (2023). This study emphasizes the importance of integrating inclusive and responsive education that addresses economic and gender inequalities to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). (ii). In the lower right quadrant (Basic Themes), there are themes such as *gender relations, socioeconomic status, and religion*. These themes have high centrality but have not yet been deeply developed, indicating that although they are important, research on them remains basic or general and holds potential for further development. One of the articles located in this quadrant was written by Naveed et al (2024) published in the International Journal of Manpower, this article is closely related

to socioeconomic dimensions, particularly concerning the relationship between Female Labor Force Participation (FLFP) and women's inclusive rights—covering economic, social, and political rights. (iii) The upper-left quadrant (*Niche Themes*) is occupied by topics such as *poverty alleviation, social policy, curricula, gender equality, and students*. These themes reflect a high degree of specialization or depth but show limited connection to the core research network. This suggests a narrower focus, yet they offer valuable contributions within specific subtopics. Meanwhile, the lower-left quadrant (*Emerging or Declining Themes*) includes topics like *gender disparity, educational opportunities, and theory*. Their position indicates that these themes are either in the early stages of development or beginning to decline. As such, they require further scrutiny to determine whether they have the potential to be strengthened or need to be reoriented to align with more current research directions.

## DISCUSSION

The VOS viewer output results show that the discussion of gender, education, employment, gender roles, women, and economic conditions is reasonably close to each other. It means that the majority of previous studies discussed these topics interestingly in their research, such as research conducted by Gokulsing & Tandrayen-Ragoobur (2014), which analyzes the role of women in the economies of small islands with a focus on the education sector and labour market access. Joshi & Och, 2014 (2014) The article implies that educational and economic disparities create systemic barriers in women's political representation, which in turn impacts policies that may not fully reflect the needs of the majority of women. Based on the display of VOS viewer output, there is still a space for ideas or topics, types of natural hazards, and countries that have not / rarely contributed to the written contributions from the Scopus database. First, education has a relationship with human rights. This means that education is everyone's right, regardless of gender. This is in accordance with SDG 5, "gender equality," and SDG 4, "Quality Education," gender and education. This is also in line with the research conducted by Adam et al (Adam et al., 2023), Capello et al. (2021), and Preti & di Bella (2023), where education is crucial for everyone, "no one left behind".

Second, "women" are directly linked to "economic condition" and closely associated with the network of "gender". However, "women" and "economic condition" are not directly connected in the network to the keyword "education". The topic of women is often discussed in the context of economic conditions, such as labor force participation, wages, poverty, or overall well-being (Astheria et al., 2018; Chanana, 2011; Çuhadar et al., 2025; Naveed et al., 2024). Isu gender juga muncul sebagai kerangka analisis utama, seperti kesetaraan gender atau diskriminasi ekonomi. Gender issues also appear as a primary analytical framework, such as gender equality or economic discrimination. Third, in the corpus of these articles, education is not often mentioned in direct context or simultaneously with the topics of women and economic conditions (Ennaji, 2008; Lakovic, 2023; Paul & Muniyoor, 2024). Therefore, the lack of direct connection between education, women, and economic condition in the keyword network indicates that the role of

education in improving women's economic conditions may still be underexplored explicitly in the existing academic literature, creating a strategic space for future research contributions.

## CONCLUSION

This study investigates novelty ideas on the topic of women, education, and economic participation using bibliometric analysis. This study applies six bibliometric indicators: time trends, document type, subject area, geographic distribution, relevant authors and publications, and keyword co-occurrence. The bibliometric analysis presents the results using VOSviewer visualizations to identify research gaps and enhance understanding of existing literature and theoretical interconnections. Furthermore, this study explores thematic trends concerning women's roles in educational access and economic participation. Based on the VOSviewer output, dominant keywords include gender, education, employment, decision-making, and empowerment. However, the direct linkage between education, women, and economic condition remains limited in the co-occurrence network, suggesting an underexplored research area. Identified gaps that may serve as strategic directions for future research include the intersection of education with women's access to the labor market, policy impacts in developing countries, and gendered economic inequality in rural and marginalized regions. Additionally, themes such as digital literacy, cultural barriers, and political representation remain relevant to advancing gender-inclusive development strategies. This study contributes to expanding scientific knowledge at the intersection of gender studies, education policy, and economic development. It is particularly useful for researchers seeking innovative topics within gender equality and inclusive growth. This study provides strategic insights for researchers, especially in developing countries, to contribute to interdisciplinary discourse on gender equality and inclusive economic growth.

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