

A Bibliometric Analysis On Gender Equality And Unpaid Work From 1991 To 2023

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Abstract: Studying gender equality and unpaid work is important because it exposes the systemic undervaluation of women's contributions to the economy and society. Unpaid work, such as caregiving, housework, and subsistence activities, is primarily done by women and is largely considered worthless and unaccounted for in other traditional measures such as GDP. The intention of this article is to provide an overview and summary of the research on the concept and practices of gender equality and unpaid work. To do so, this study uses bibliometric analysis to examine the trends and characteristics of scholarly publications from 1991 to 2023 across a dataset comprising 2,489 journal articles sourced from 911 academic outlets. The article reports on the publication and its citation structure, key trends, and its growing push toward co-authoring. This study also visualises the most prominent topics and authors in the form of a network, using VOSviewer's bibliometric analysis. The study reveals a robust annual growth rate of 18.2%, indicating a rising interest in the research domain. The entire dataset consists of peer-reviewed journal articles, reflecting the academic rigour and dissemination of the research field. This analysis offers valuable insights into scholarly communication's evolution, collaboration patterns, and impact over the three-decade period.

Keywords: Gender Equality, Unpaid work, Bibliometric Analysis, VOSviewer

Introduction:

Work plays a major role in how our society which organised and creates a system where some people receive more recognition and rewards than others (Hirsch, 2016). This recognition of work creates “a hierarchical order of classes, professions and genders” (Hirsch, 2016). The way work is organised in our society has a big impact on women's lives, especially when you consider the difference between jobs that pay money and work that doesn't get paid for.

Much of this unpaid care work occurs as no one thinks twice about how important it is in relation to society's future. Cooking, cleaning, and caring for children, the elderly and the sick at home by family members, commonly known as unpaid care and domestic work. However, herein lies the problem; women often find themselves with most of these tasks, whether they actually want to do it or not. The time women are performing unpaid work often isn't free choice, it is sometimes due to cultural expectations that say “that's women's work,” or because of a deficit of public services like childcare or inadequate family leave policies (Sharma et al., 2024). In summary, unpaid work is absolutely important and sometimes offered as free choice, but too often it becomes an unfair burden that is disproportionally placed on women when there are social pressures to do so and it originates from the absence of support systems. Even though this work takes up huge chunks of our time, it doesn't show up in official economic measures like GDP (Alonso et al., 2019).

Reducing and sharing unpaid work more fairly is a big-picture issue that affects the whole economy. When women are held back from joining the workforce because they're carrying most of the burden at home, it leads to a waste of talent and potential. If women stay out of paid jobs to focus on household tasks—which usually don't match their full abilities—it can slow down economic growth (Leach, 2016). Furthermore, a labour force with fewer women misses significant benefits that arise when the skills of both men and women are combined (Ostry et al., 2019). Even when women engage in paid work, they are often restricted to low skill and/or part-

time work so that they can better manage both paid work and caregiving. This limits their growth and potential in the labour market (Connolly & Gregory, 2007).

One significant move towards recognising unpaid labour was made by the United Nations. In September 2015, the world's leaders committed to a simple but formidable promise: to "transform our world." Not merely to imagine a better future (that would have been good); not simply to hope for a better future (that would have been fine, too); but to take universal, concerted, decisive action to build a better future for everyone on a healthier, safer planet. This vision translated to 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets in the 2030 Agenda. These objectives mirror the worldwide aspiration to create a more equitable, peaceful and sustainable society. Central to this agenda is the notion that real progress involves improvement of human and radical ecosystem well-being (Leal Filho et al., 2022). Goal 5 is Gender Equality – one of the sub-targets of this goal is to "recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work." This has become an increasingly important issue in academic research, which has revealed the close relationship between unpaid work and gender equality (Hirway, I.2023).

While there are many valuable studies and case reports on *unpaid work and gender equality*, most of them are stand-alone pieces based on fieldwork and data collection, using either qualitative or quantitative methods. However, there hasn't been much research that brings all these findings together in a systematic way (Sulistyaningsih et al., 2021). This study takes a different approach by conducting a **systematic review using bibliometric analysis**—a method similar to meta-analysis—to assess the overall trends and patterns in scientific publications on this topic. We aim to provide a more comprehensive view of how this issue has been examined in the academic literature through the visual devices of bibliometric maps.

Bibliometrics is a field of library and information science emerged in the middle to late twentieth century. A quantitative method of research, bibliometrics uses numerical methods to analyse such things as books, articles, and other published works to bibliographic units (Broadus, 1987). Today, with access to massive online academic data servers, researchers can track and analyse trends, citations, co-citations, and more over wide ranges of subjects including economics. These databases come with built-in tools and metrics that help us see how topics are connected and how knowledge in a field has evolved.

Therefore, we advance the relevance of establishing future lines of research that deal with the unpaid work issue in contexts of gender equality. This would imply the relevance of attending to the role of women in the family context and in scenarios of gender equality, so that works are proposed in which the participation of women, the scope of their activity, and the relationship established between women is reinterpreted, and unpaid tasks (linked to the reproductive and care sphere) and formal economies linked to the market. Therefore, in order to analyse these questions, we studied scholarly publications from 1991 to 2023 across a dataset comprising 2,489 journal articles sourced from 911 academic outlets. The sample was obtained from the Dimension database, in which the final versions of articles, books, and book chapters whose themes were related to the unpaid work and gender equality were studied.

Dimensions is the newest of the three major academic databases, launched in 2018. It offers a unified platform where users can access a wide range of research-related information. According to its official description, it brings together data on things like research grants, clinical trials, patents, policy documents, and altmetric data, along with traditional publication and citation records (Herzog et al., 2020).

Unlike other databases, Dimensions takes a unique approach to gathering information. Its core data comes from sources like Crossref and PubMed, and this foundation is then enriched with additional details—such as author affiliations and citation counts, using a bottom-up method (Singh et al., 2021b). This enhancement process pulls in extra data from sources like the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), Open Citations, I4OC, clinical trial databases, public policy records, and partner companies like Altmetric and IFI Claims. Because it collects information from such a wide range of sources, Dimensions offers detailed and comprehensive data, including identifiers for institutions, research grants, and more (Singh et al., 2021).

Objective

1. To quantify and visualise trends in publications.
2. To identify key authors, institutions, and countries contributing to this field
3. To identify the most influential authors and their contributions.

4. To examine the leading institutions and their research impact.

Methodology:

This study uses a mapping approach called bibliometric analysis, which focuses on examining bibliographic data from a collection of documents within a specific field (Garrigos-Simon et al., 2018). This method helps make sense of large amounts of scientific literature by identifying patterns, trends, and connections (González-Torres et al., 2020). By using clear and structured techniques, bibliometric analysis ensures that the information gathered is reliable and that the results are meaningful and accurate (Fahimnia et al., 2015; Keathley-Herring et al., 2016). Researchers explored the Dimensions database to find journals and articles related to “Unpaid work and Gender Equality”. The bibliographic archive has a record of 2,489 journal articles with a time span of 1991-2023. The keyword “Unpaid work and gender equality” is then limited by several kinds of filters, namely: selection of time range (1991-2023), Sources (Journals, Books), type of document (journal article), derived keywords (Unpaid and gender equality), and English. Furthermore, this data is then processed using VOSviewer software with keyword specifications to create a mapping.

The data analysis in this study was carried out by first exploring the Dimensions database and then processing the data using **VOSviewer** software. In the initial stage, key bibliographic details—such as author names, publication titles, years, sources, author affiliations, keywords, and citation counts—were filtered (Hallinger & Suriyankietkaew, 2018) and exported in CSV and RIS formats for further analysis in VOSviewer. Then a statistical summary of the metadata was constructed through “analyse search results” function of Dimensions. This step also contributed to the analysis of publication trend by year, top authors, leading journals, institution, country and most cited paper.

In stage two, bibliographic data were visualised using VOSviewer, a software program for constructing and viewing bibliometric maps. These maps help visualise the interrelations in academic research and make understanding complex data easier for readers. VOSviewer is software that supports the construction and analysis of networks (Montalván-Burbano et al., 2020). Creating a bibliometric map helps in building, visualising, and analysing networks within academic research. It uses techniques like tracking how often authors cite each other, identifying collaborations between authors, and spotting how frequently certain keywords appear together (Nobanee et al., 2021).

To understand how the field has evolved over time, we looked at various productivity metrics, including publication patterns, annual publication output, document type distribution, and source diversity. We also carried out a citation analysis to identify citation counts, averages, and velocity to identify high-impact contributions and assess knowledge diffusion patterns, revealing an average document age of 5.34 years and an average of 27.52 citations per document, which served to measure temporal relevance and scholarly influence.

We explored authorship patterns to better understand who is contributing to the field and how they collaborate. Our dataset encompasses 6390 contributing authors and an average of 3.07 co-authors per study. Institutional analysis evaluated organisational contributions by assessing affiliate productivity, measuring citation impact, and analysing inter-institutional collaboration. Finally, we conducted journal impact and co-citation network analysis to examine publication sources, assessing their citation influence, thematic specialisation, and interconnectedness within the broader literature through comprehensive journal impact and co-citation network mapping.

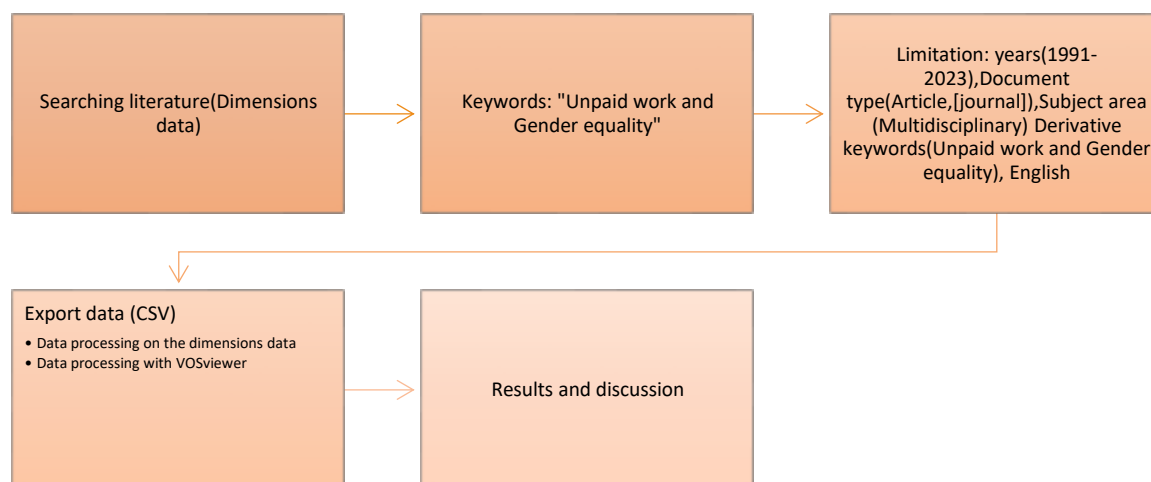


Figure 1. Analytical framework for “Unpaid work and gender equality”

Descriptive:

This comprehensive bibliometric analysis encompasses a substantial body of literature spanning over three decades, from 1991 to 2023, and includes 2,489 documents sourced from 911 different journals and publications. The field demonstrates remarkable growth momentum with an annual growth rate of 18.2%, indicating rapidly expanding scholarly interest and research activity. The average document age of 5.34 years suggests a relatively contemporary focus, while the substantial average of 27.52 citations per document reflects significant academic impact and knowledge dissemination within the research community. The extensive reference base of 61,095 citations underscores the interconnected nature of this scholarly discourse.

The authorship landscape reveals a collaborative research environment, with 6,390 contributing authors across the dataset, though 614 authors have published single-authored works, resulting in 665 single-authored documents. The average of 3.07 co-authors per document indicates moderate collaboration levels, while the 24.79% rate of international co-authorships demonstrates meaningful cross-border research partnerships. The document corpus consists entirely of peer-reviewed articles, totalling 2,489 publications, which reinforces the academic rigour and scholarly credibility of the research base. This analysis reveals a dynamic, internationally collaborative, and rapidly growing field of study with substantial scholarly impact and contemporary relevance.

This growing body of work reflects a rising awareness of the persistent recognition of Unpaid work and gender gaps in leadership and the pressing need for more inclusive policies. While there has been meaningful progress, significant challenges still exist. This reinforces the need for ongoing research, stronger policy initiatives, and sustained institutional support to ensure real and lasting progress toward the burden of unpaid work gender equality around the world.

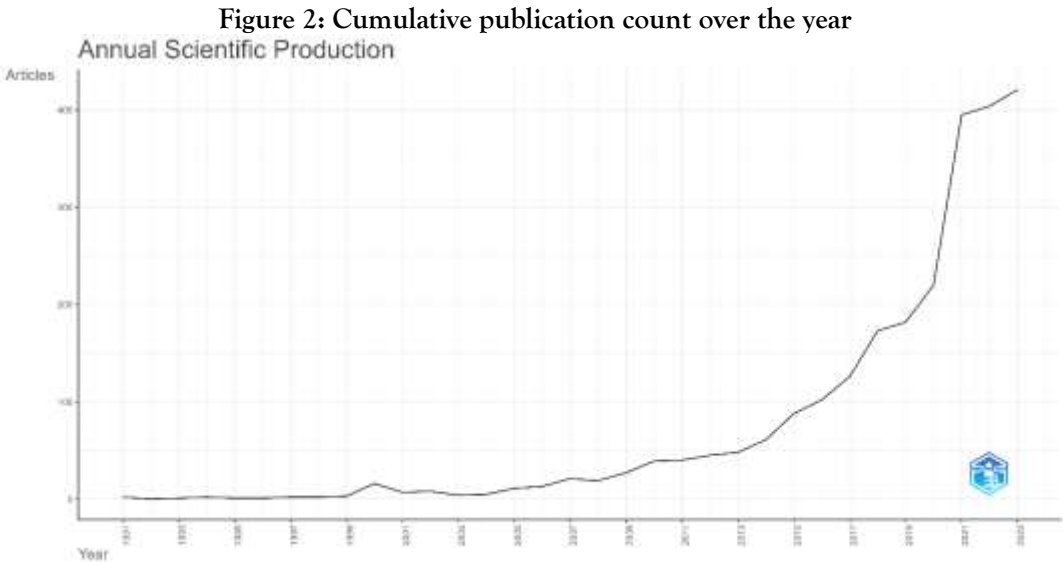
Table 1: Descriptive statistics analysis of documents

Description	Results
MAIN INFORMATION ABOUT DATA	
Timespan	1991:2023
Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	911
Documents	2489
Annual Growth Rate %	18.2
Document Average Age	5.34
Average citations per doc	27.52

References	61095
DOCUMENT CONTENTS	
Keywords Plus (ID)	1
Author's Keywords (DE)	1
AUTHORS	
Authors	6390
Authors of single-authored docs	614
AUTHORS COLLABOURATION	
Single-authored docs	665
Co-Authors per Doc	3.07
International co-authorships %	24.79
DOCUMENT TYPES	
article	2489

Publication Trends

Over the years, interest in this research area has grown remarkably, which is shown by the "Annual Scientific Production" graph in Figure 1. In the early 1990s through to about 2010, there were only a handful of publications each year, suggesting that not many researchers were exploring this topic at the time. But things began to change around 2011, when the number of studies slowly started to rise. Then, from 2016 onwards, there was a noticeable surge in research activity. More and more scholars began contributing to the field, and by 2021, over 400 articles were being published in a single year. This steady increase continued through 2023, showing that the topic has not only gained momentum but has become an area of sustained academic interest. This trend highlights the evolving significance of the research area and its emergence as an important field of study in recent years.

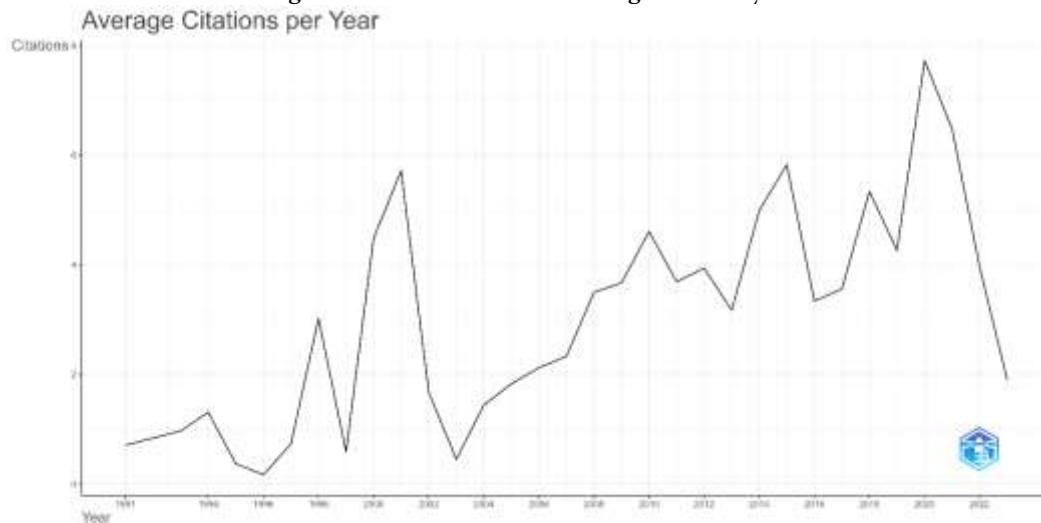


Citation Metrics from 1991 to 2023: The graph in Figure 2 depicts the average citations per year for research on unpaid work and gender equality from 1991 to 2023, revealing distinct patterns in the scholarly impact and knowledge diffusion within this field. The citation trajectory shows considerable fluctuation throughout the timespan, with several notable peaks and valleys that reflect the evolving academic attention and influence of this research area. During the early 1990s, citation rates remained relatively low, hovering around 1-1.5 citations per year, consistent with the limited research activity in this emerging field. The graph shows periodic spikes in citation impact, with notable peaks occurring around 1998, 2001, and 2015-2016, suggesting these periods produced particularly influential or groundbreaking research that significantly shaped subsequent scholarship. The highest citation

peak occurs around 2021-2022, reaching approximately 7-8 citations per year, which likely reflects the heightened academic and policy interest in unpaid work issues during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, when care work burdens and their gendered impacts became more visible and urgent.

The volatility in citation patterns, characterized by sharp rises followed by declines, indicates that this field has experienced waves of scholarly attention rather than steady, continuous growth. This pattern is typical of interdisciplinary research areas where breakthrough studies or major social events can suddenly elevate the field's visibility and impact. The recent decline from the 2021-2022 peak may reflect the natural lag time in citation accumulation for very recent publications, as newer articles typically require time to be discovered, read, and cited by other researchers.

Figure 3: Citation count throughout the year



Disciplinary Distribution of Gender Equality and Unpaid Work Research Publications (1991–2023)

The data shows how the different academic disciplines have contributed to understanding the relationship between unpaid work and gender equality. Figure 3 below depicts the inter-scholarly distribution of research pertaining to gender issues and unpaid work within different academic disciplines, highlighting the cross-field nature of research and differing degrees of scholarly attention toward these phenomena.

The striking research gap is in the region of Human Society, which has 1,755 publications. Given the nature of sociological inquiry, the issues of gender equality, especially in relation to unpaid work, tend to have a social dimension, explaining the high average volume within this area. This significant number suggests that there is a predominant sociological, anthropological, and social policy focus within the body of literature. Commerce, Management, Tourism and Transport come a distant second with 313 publications, which illustrates the professional and economic aspects of gender equality in business and the economics of unpaid care work.

Health Sciences follows with 266 publications, reflecting increased acknowledgement of the impact that unpaid care work and gender inequalities have on physical and mental health. Economics adds 209 articles, demonstrating an interest in the incentive, productivity and value of unpaid work, as well as the relationship to the wage-wage gender gaps and career outcomes. Biomedical and Clinical Sciences (130 papers) and Psychology (91 publications) highlight the health and behavioural aspects of this problem.

Important policy and institutional perspectives are from Law (76 publications) and Education (50 publications) while smaller contributions come from Philosophy and Religious Studies (42 publications), Environmental Sciences (27 publications), and Engineering (22 publications) indicate the broad relevance of gender equality and unpaid work concerns across diverse academic domains. The minimal representation in fields like Physical Sciences (4 publications) and Mathematical Sciences (9 publications) suggests these topics are primarily addressed through social science and humanities frameworks rather than quantitative or technical approaches.

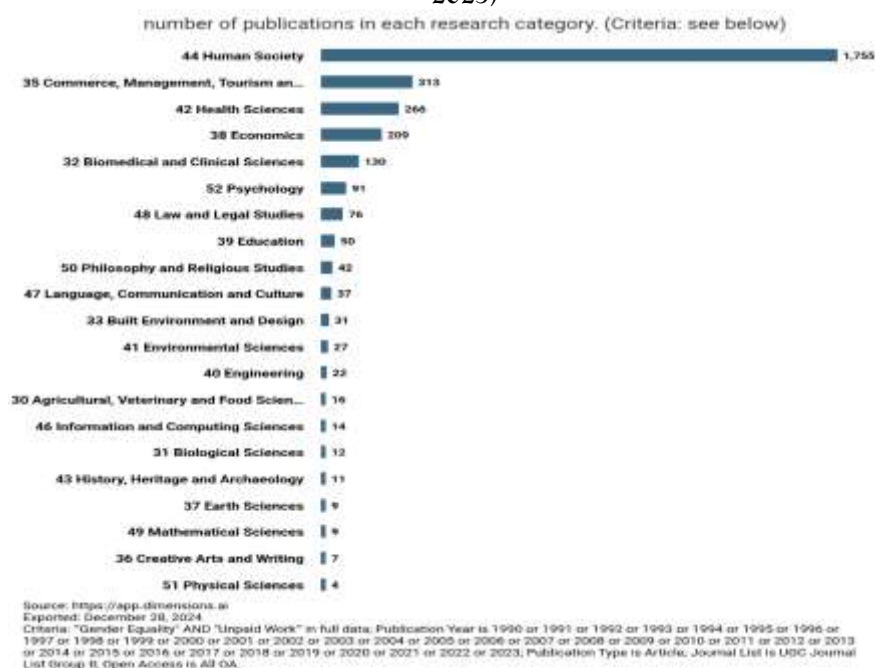
Figure 4: Distribution of Publications by Research Category on Gender Equality and Unpaid Work (1990–2023)

Table 2 reveals that Heejung Chung leads the field with 10 documents generating 903 total citations, achieving an average of 90.30 citations per document, indicating consistent production of influential research. This productivity-based approach to impact is mirrored by Van Der Lippe, Tanja, who ranks tenth with 9 documents and 757 total citations, averaging 84.11 citations per work. Both authors demonstrate sustained engagement with the field and have built their influence through multiple significant contributions over time.

In contrast, several authors have achieved remarkable impact through single, exceptionally influential publications. Kate Power stands out with just one document that has garnered 866 citations, representing the highest per-document impact in the ranking. Similarly, a cluster of authors, including Wert G. De, McDonald, Peter, Mills, Melinda, Rindfuss, Ronald R., and Velde, Egbert Te, each contributed one highly cited work with exactly 765 citations, suggesting these may be co-authors on a landmark collaborative study that significantly shaped the field.

The middle-tier authors like Robinson, John P. (2 documents, 424 average citations) and Sayer, Liana C. (3 documents, 271.33 average citations) represent a balanced approach between productivity and impact. This ranking structure reflects the field's development, where both foundational breakthrough studies and sustained research programs have contributed to advancing understanding of unpaid work and gender equality issues, with citation patterns indicating both the field's collaborative nature and the enduring influence of seminal contributions.

Table 2: List of Top 10 Authors

Rank	Author	Documents	Citations	Average Citations
1	Chung, Heejung	10	903	90.30
2	Power, Kate	1	866	866.00
3	Robinson, John P.	2	848	424.00
4	Sayer, Liana C.	3	814	271.33
5	Wert G. De	1	765	765.00
6	Mcdonald, Peter	1	765	765.00
7	Mills, Melinda	1	765	765.00
8	Rindfuss, Ronald R.	1	765	765.00
9	Velde, Egbert Te	1	765	765.00
10	Van Der Lippe, Tanja	9	757	84.11

The co-authorship **network map 1** reveals a distinct central cluster, representing the core research community in the field of gender equality and unpaid work. This dense grouping consists of closely connected scholars, potentially including figures such as Lyon, Budlender, and Folbre, who frequently collaborate within and across institutions. Their research is mainly about critical topics in relation to gender and care work, feminist economics, and unpaid domestic work. The tight interconnections of the authors suggest a well-developed and connected scholarly field that has played an important role in forming and sustaining academic discussion in this area consistently over 30 years.

To the right of this network is a smaller disconnected cluster of researchers, such as Huntington, Theobald, and Müller. The authors within this disconnected network operate independently from the main core, which could indicate a developing niche or discursively emergent sub-field within the larger topic. Their work may entail a regional or case-based approach and crosscut with other disciplines, such as public policy, migration, health, or education. The lack of connection with the central group indicates that while their contributions are valuable, they have yet to integrate fully into the mainstream body of literature on unpaid work and gender equality.

In contrast, the far left of the network shows completely disconnected individual authors such as Banks, Munck, and Gray. These scholars seem to be isolated from any collaborative networks, possibly due to their past connections to a limited involvement with the subject, or, even worse, the fact they may come from the disciplines of sociology, or labour studies, which have never been part of the paid work region of unpaid work research and thus have avoided collaborative engagement. This fragmentation signals a more serious and potentially systemic problem for the field, namely, a need for greater collaborative engagement across discipline boundaries. In bridging these arrays of separation, the field can potentially produce a more synergetic coherence and a more inclusive overall conceptualisation of unpaid work and unpaid work considering the gendered divisions of labour.



Network Map 1: Visualisation of the network of writers who collaborated to produce journal articles about “Unpaid work and Gender Equality” (Processed by the author using VOSviewer software)

An analysis of the top contributing organisations in the field reveals notable variations in both productivity and impact, as shown in **Table 3**. The information shows how different universities have had varying approaches to research productivity and citation impact. The University of Oxford is the leader with the greatest total output of 58 documents that generated 3,004 citations, averaging 51.79 citations per document, which suggests an institutional investment in this area of scholarship through effective and enduring research. Utrecht University follows closely with 38 documents and 1,877 citations, achieving a slightly lower but comparable average of 49.39 citations per work, suggesting both institutions have developed robust research programs with steady scholarly impact.

Several universities demonstrate exceptional efficiency in producing high-impact research with smaller document counts. The University of Southern California stands out with only 7 documents but a remarkable average of 183.86 citations per work, indicating their research in this field has been exceptionally influential. Similarly, The Ohio State University achieves the second-highest per-document impact with 161.30 average citations across 10 publications, while the University of Pennsylvania maintains strong influence with 75.32 average citations per document across 19 publications.

The geographic distribution reflects strong representation from both European and North American institutions, with Oxford, Utrecht, University College London, and University of Kent representing European leadership, while American institutions include Ohio State, University of Pennsylvania, University of Southern California, and Johns Hopkins University. The University of Melbourne represents significant contributions from Australia, indicating the global nature of this research field.

Table 3: List of Top 10 Organisations by Citation Metrics

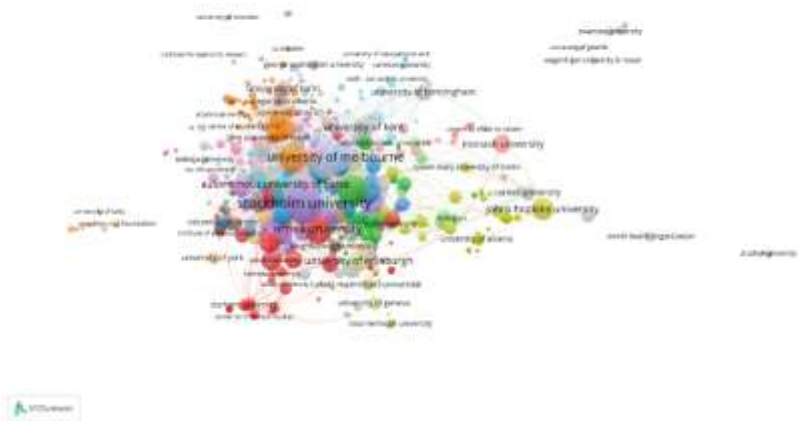
Rank	Organization	Document	Citations	Average Citations
1	University of Oxford	58	3004	51.79
2	Utrecht University	38	1877	49.39
3	The Ohio State University	10	1613	161.30
4	University College London	36	1514	42.06
5	University Of Melbourne	40	1457	36.43
6	University Of Pennsylvania	19	1431	75.32
7	Pompeu Fabra University	24	1418	59.08
8	University Of Kent	20	1344	67.20
9	University Of Southern California	7	1287	183.86
10	Johns Hopkins University	22	1236	56.18

Network Map 2 shows that unpaid work and gender equality come from a core group of highly connected universities in Europe, North America, and Australia. These institutions not only produce significant research but also collaborate extensively, helping to shape global academic conversations around gender, labour, and care work. For example:

Stockholm University and Umea University are central to feminist research from a Nordic perspective, where gender equality policies are strong.

The University of Melbourne and Monash University are leaders in gender and public policy research in Australia.

Johns Hopkins University and Cornell University contribute heavily to gender and health-related research, which often overlaps with unpaid care work studies.



Network Map 2: Visualisation of the network of organisations that collaborated to produce journal articles about “Unpaid Work and Gender Equality” (Processed by the author using VOSviewer software).

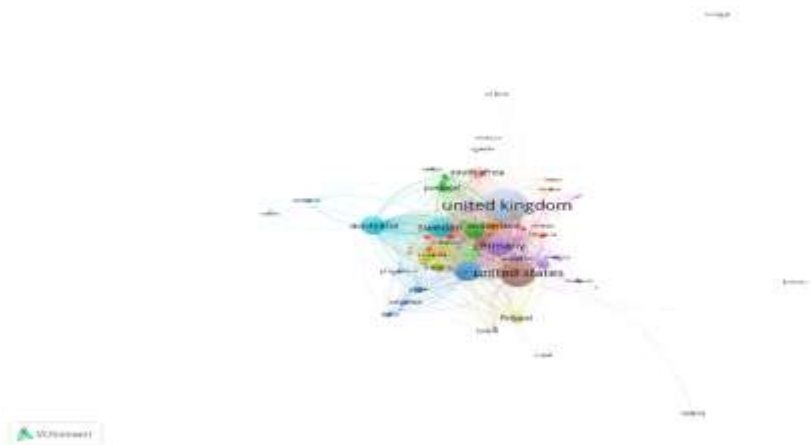
Table 4 reveals that the United Kingdom leads in research output with 554 documents, followed by the United States with 345 documents. However, the U.S. shows the highest impact, averaging 53.57 citations per document. Australia and Switzerland also demonstrate strong citation averages, indicating high-quality research despite fewer

publications. Other countries like Germany, Spain, and the Netherlands contribute significantly, with moderate document counts and citation rates. Overall, while the UK dominates in quantity, the U.S. and a few smaller contributors excel in research influence.

Table 4: Top 10 countries ranked by the number of research documents, along with their citation metrics

Rank	Country	Documents	Citations	Average Citations
1	United Kingdom	554	19478	35.16
2	United States	345	18481	53.57
3	Australia	162	7298	45.05
4	Germany	194	6185	31.88
5	Spain	181	5510	30.44
6	Netherlands	126	4773	37.88
7	Sweden	185	4764	25.75
8	Canada	123	4341	35.29
9	Italy	100	3487	34.87
10	Switzerland	59	2852	48.34

Country-level bibliometric network map generated by VOSviewer, showing international research collaboration or co-authorship. Network map 3 reveals that the major research contributions on unpaid work and gender equality come from high-income, Western nations, particularly the UK, the US, Germany, and Scandinavian countries. These nations not only publish extensively but also collaborate closely, reflecting well-established academic networks, better research infrastructure, and active policy engagement with gender equality issues. Countries from the Global South, including India, South Africa, and some Middle Eastern and Asian countries, are present but relatively less central, suggesting fewer collaborations or lower representation in high-impact international journals. However, their inclusion indicates growing global interest in gender equality and unpaid care work, especially as it relates to development studies, labour economics, and feminist research.

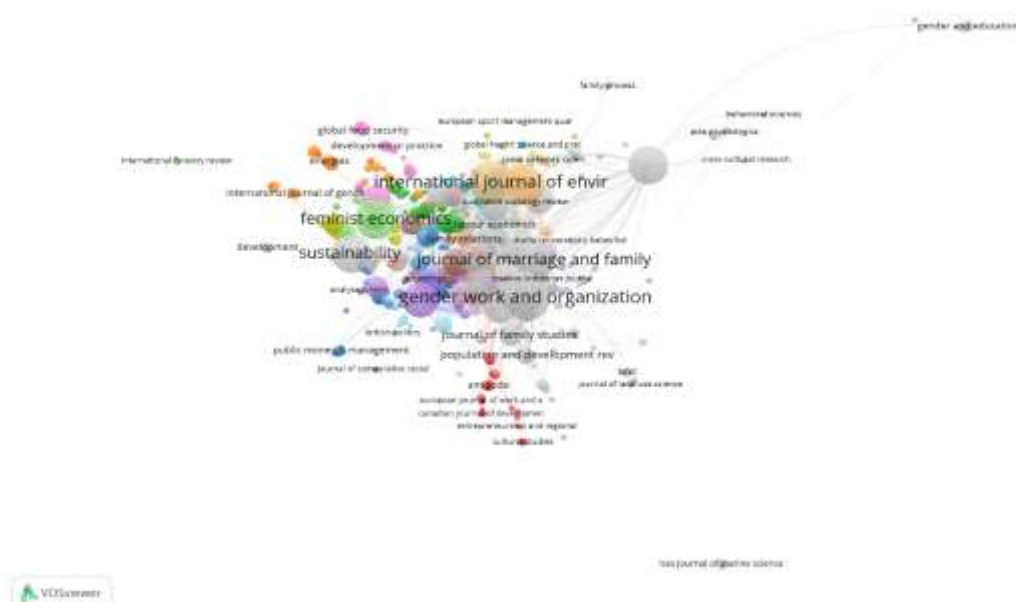


Network Map 3: Network Visualisation (countries) that collaborate to produce journal articles about “Unpaid work and Gender Equality” (Processed by the author using VOSviewer software)

Table 5. The journal ranking reveals the interdisciplinary nature and varying impact patterns of unpaid work and gender equality research across academic publications. The Lancet demonstrates exceptional influence despite limited volume, with only 11 documents generating 3,071 citations for an outstanding average of 279.18 citations per article, indicating that health-focused perspectives on gender equality issues achieve remarkable scholarly impact. Specialised gender studies journals show strong, consistent output, with Gender, Work and Organisation leading in volume with 56 documents and 2,477 total citations (44.23 average), while Social Politics International Studies in Gender State & Society maintains solid impact with 46.27 average citations across 33 publications. Family

Several journals achieve high per-document impact with selective publishing strategies: *Review of Economics of the Household* averages 102.73 citations across 11 documents, while *World Development* reaches 51.65 average citations with 20 publications. Economics-focused outlets like *Feminist Economics* (45 documents, 30.87 average) and sociology journals including *European Sociological Review* (25 documents, 41.76 average) and *Work Employment and Society* (33 documents, 40.33 average) demonstrate the field's broad disciplinary appeal. The journal distribution reflects how unpaid work and gender equality research spans health sciences, economics, sociology, gender studies, and demographic research, with medical journals achieving the highest impact rates, specialised gender journals providing consistent platforms for scholarship, and interdisciplinary outlets facilitating cross-field knowledge exchange.

Rank	Journal	Documents	Citations	Average Citations
1	The Lancet	11	3071	279.18
2	Gender, Work And Organization	56	2477	44.23
3	Journal Of Marriage And Family	40	1797	44.93
4	Social Politics International Studies In Gender State & Society	33	1527	46.27
5	Demographic Research	51	1478	28.98
6	Feminist Economics	45	1389	30.87
7	Work Employment And Society	33	1331	40.33
8	Review Of Economics Of The Household	11	1130	102.73
9	European Sociological Review	25	1044	41.76
10	World Development	20	1033	51.65



Network map 4 shows the journal co-citation network visualization generated using VOSviewer, based on bibliometric data. The network maps show how frequently journals are cited together in the same publications, revealing the intellectual foundation of the field. The analysis of the journal network reveals a well-integrated scholarly domain centred on issues of gender equality and unpaid work, with a strong intellectual backbone formed by key journals such as *Feminist Economics*, *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *Gender, Work & Organization*,

Journal of Family Studies, and *Sustainability*. These core publications are frequently co-cited and serve as central nodes, highlighting the convergence of feminist economics and family studies in addressing unpaid care work, household labour, gender policy, and feminist theory. Thematic groupings add more subtle distinctions: the purple cluster emphasizes sociological and gender studies perspectives on the social construction of gender roles and caregiving; the green cluster, anchored by *Feminist Economics*, underscores an economic and policy-oriented approach to unpaid labour; the red cluster incorporates development-focused and interdisciplinary journals, reflecting structural, global, and postcolonial dimensions; and the orange cluster links unpaid work to sustainability, aligning with Sustainable Development Goal 5.4 on valuing unpaid care work. Meanwhile, journals situated on the periphery—such as *Gender and Education*, *Behavioural Sciences*, and *ICES Journal of Marine Science*—suggest occasional, less integrated intersections with the central discourse, often emerging in interdisciplinary contexts like education, behavioural science, or environmental resource management. Their peripheral location indicates weaker ties to the main body of literature, but also potential areas for future scholarly expansion and integration.

Conclusion

Gender equality and unpaid work have attracted scholarly attention and growth over the last thirty years because of emerging societal challenges, as detailed in the bibliometric study. Concerns encompass different domains, which include health sciences, sociology, gender studies, and other relevant fields. The work deviates from the conventional economic scope, which measures productivity as the value generated through women's unpaid labour, accentuating the underpayment women face and the invisibility of gender discrimination.

In 2011, there seemed to be increased publications, collaboration, and impact, which saw a tremendous increase during the 2021-2022 period. This increase was likely the result of multi-angle concerns that arose during COVID-19. The Lancet and many gender-oriented journals have been pivotal in steering research towards extensive and multidisciplinary concerns. While the analysis does indicate growing attention, it also highlights gaps in recognition, measurement, policy responses to unpaid work and gender inequality, and policies that cripple the effectiveness of current policies. Such mapping provides an extensive bibliometric analysis that serves as a guide to future researchers proposing innovative solutions for effective interdisciplinary collaboration towards gender equity and recognising the contributions of unpaid work at global scales.

Limitations

The study identifies a number of shortcomings regarding its bibliometric approach. There is also the problem of focusing solely on articles published in peer-reviewed journals listed in the Dimensions database. Other scholarly works, like books, reports, and gray literature, are not included. This limitation does not provide a complete overview of the existing scholarship on gender relations and unpaid labour.

Moreover, analysis of non-English publications may overlook relevant works, thus affecting the completeness of the results, as all publications included must be in English. The bibliometric approach is particularly focused on quantitative measures such as publication and citation counts, collaboration metrics, and other similar factors, which are devoid of insights regarding the quality of research, content, or the more profound answers it provides. Lastly, the date range may include extensive social research topics—1991 to 2023 is a domain range, but may exclude fundamental studies conducted prior to this period or emerging trends just past the dataset's most recent updates. Given the rapid development of social research topics, these gaps are most likely exploitable. These gaps outline how useful bibliometric analysis is regarding overarching social phenomena at a temporal glance, suggesting other qualitative or mixed-method techniques would be necessary to capture the more intricate dimensions of understanding.

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