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Bibliometric Analysis on the Role of Government and Policy in Promoting Workplace Gender Equality

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Abstract
Workplace gender equality remains a critical global challenge despite decades of legislative and policy interventions. This study employs a comprehensive bibliometric analysis to explore the evolving landscape of research on the role of government and policy in promoting gender equality in the workplace. Drawing on a dataset of 261 documents using Scopus publications from 1990 to 2024, the analysis reveals key trends, influential works, and thematic developments that have shaped the field. The findings underscore the central role of government policies, including public policy frameworks, socioeconomic considerations, and corporate governance reforms, in advancing gender parity. Notably, the study identifies emerging areas of interest, such as the intersection of gender equality with environmental sustainability and socioeconomic factors that signals new directions for future research. Despite significant progress, the persistence of gender disparities in various sectors highlights the need for continued scholarly and policy efforts. This study provides a robust foundation for understanding the impact of government interventions on workplace gender equality and offers critical insights for shaping future research and policy agendas.

Introduction

Workplace gender equality remains a critical challenge despite advancements in legislation and societal attitudes (Cavero-Rubio et al., 2019). Persistent disparities in employment, wages, and leadership positions necessitate robust government intervention (Elhoushy et al., 2024). Through strategic policies, governments can foster environments where gender equality is both mandated and normalized (Sharma, 2016).

Globally, governments have implemented various policies to promote workplace gender equality through various policies including anti-discrimination laws, equal pay legislation, and parental leave provisions (Winchester & Browning, 2015). Countries like Norway and Sweden exemplify this with gender quotas for corporate boards, resulting in increased female leadership (Huse & Grethe Solberg, 2006). Public awareness campaigns and educational initiatives complement these efforts by dismantling harmful gender stereotypes (Wolfram et al., 2020).

However, policy effectiveness varies across regions and sectors. Poor

implementation, organizational resistance, and concerns about meritocracy can hinder progress (Flood et al., 2021). Thus, a comprehensive understanding of government policies' impact on workplace gender equality is crucial for informing future interventions (Coe et al., 2019).

This research employs a quantitative bibliometric analysis to map the landscape of research on government policies and workplace gender equality. By utilizing the biblioshiny package in R, the study will examine citation patterns, authorship trends, and thematic developments to identify key contributions, research gaps, and promising avenues for future investigation (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). This quantitative approach will provide a systematic and data-driven overview of the field, informing the development of effective and sustainable policies to close gender gaps.

While recognizing the complexity of measuring gender equality, this study focuses on quantitative indicators as a starting point. By analyzing large datasets of scholarly literature, the research aims to identify patterns, trends, and emerging themes related to government policies and their impact on workplace gender equality. This quantitative foundation will provide a robust basis for further exploration of qualitative factors, such as workplace culture and societal norms, in future research (Andersen, 2021; Devkota et al., 2023). The following are the research questions this bibliometric analysis will answer:

Core Research Topics: What are the primary research themes within the domain of government policy and workplace gender equality?

Key Influencers: Who are the leading scholars and researchers making significant contributions to the field of government policy and workplace gender equality?

Highly Cited Works: What are the most influential and frequently cited studies within the body of research on government policy and workplace gender equality?

Leading Publication Outlets: Which academic journals are primarily responsible for disseminating research on government policy and workplace gender equality?

Research Gaps: What are the under-explored areas within the field of government policy and workplace gender equality that warrant further investigation?

Materials and Methods

This study employs a bibliometric analysis to systematically review the literature on the role of government and policy in promoting workplace gender equality. Bibliometric analysis is a widely recognized method for measuring, analyzing, and visualizing the bibliometric data of large sets of publications through quantitative approaches (Daim et al., 2006; Karki & Khadka, 2024). This approach proves particularly useful for evaluating the development of a specific research area, providing valuable insights for academics, practitioners, and policymakers (Flood et al., 2021).

A comprehensive literature search is conducted using the Scopus database, known for its extensive coverage of peer-reviewed literature across various disciplines (Priyashantha et al., 2022). The search strategy follows PRISMA guidelines to ensure systematic and unbiased data collection, screening, and reporting (Rethlefsen et al., 2021).

Search terms encompassing government policies related to workplace gender equality, are combined using Boolean operators for comprehensive coverage (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010).The search is limited to articles published from 1990 to 2024 to focus on recent and relevant literature (Priyashantha et al., 2022).

The initial search yields 776 records. Applying filters for journal articles and English language reduces the dataset to 551 records (Priyashantha et al., 2022). Further screening based on titles, abstracts, and keywords identifies 261 suitable articles for the final analysis (Priyashantha et al., 2022). The PRISMA flow diagram (Figure 1) outlines this process.

Data extracted from the selected articles undergo analysis using Biblioshiny, an R programming environment tool for bibliometric analysis. This tool facilitates the visualization of bibliometric networks, enabling the mapping of trends, collaborations, and thematic developments within the research area (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). The results will provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of knowledge and identify potential areas for

future research.
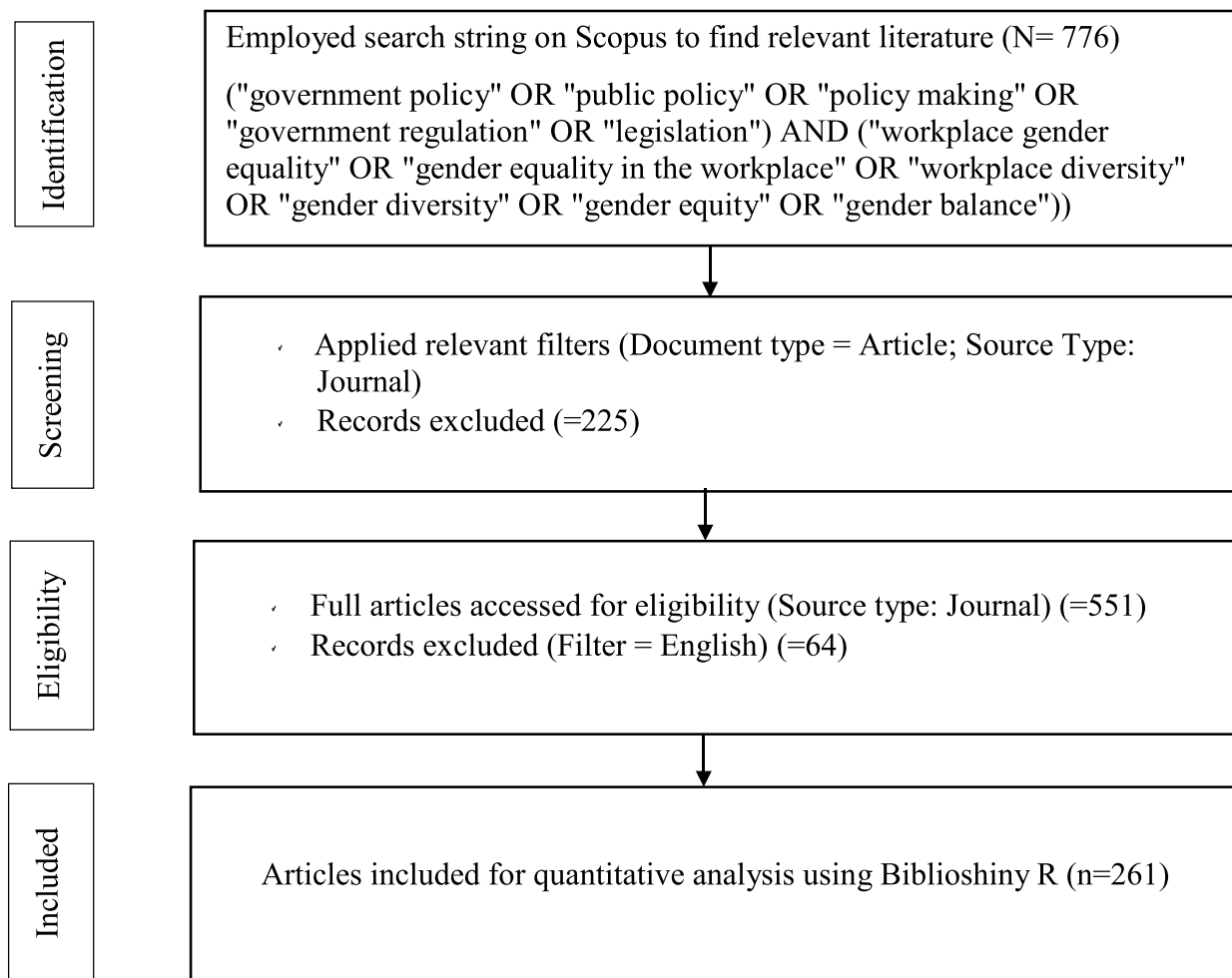
Figure 1: *PRISMA flow diagram for article selection and search strategy*
Source: Author's construction as per PRISMA guidelines

Results
Descriptive Analysis

Table 1: *General Overview of Government Policy and Workplace Gender Equality Research*

Description	Results
MAIN INFORMATION ABOUT DATA	
Timespan	1990:2024
Sources (Journals, Books, etc.)	198
Documents	261
Annual Growth Rate %	10.73
Document Average Age	6.59
Average citations per doc	26.72
References	0
DOCUMENT CONTENTS	
Keywords Plus (ID)	869
Author's Keywords (DE)	776
AUTHORS	

|	
Authors	723
Authors of single-authored docs	63
AUTHORS COLLABORATION	
Single-authored docs	63
Co-Authors per Doc	2.89
International co-authorships %	0
DOCUMENT TYPES	
Article	261

Source: Author's construction based on bibliometric data

The descriptive analysis provides a summary of the dataset on workplace gender equality. Covering the period from 1990 to 2024, the analysis encompasses 261 documents sourced from 198 diverse outlets, primarily journals and books. A robust annual growth rate of 10.73% indicates a rising research interest in the field. The relatively young average document age of 6.59 years suggests a preponderance of recent studies.

With an average of 26.72 citations per document, the research demonstrates significant academic impact. While the total author count reaches 723, including 63 single-authored works, collaboration is evident with an average of 2.89 co-authors per document. However, the absence of international co-authorships indicates a predominantly domestic research landscape. The exclusive focus on articles underscores the scholarly nature of the included publications. This analysis offers a clear overview of research trends in workplace gender equality.

Performance Analysis
Annual Scientific Production
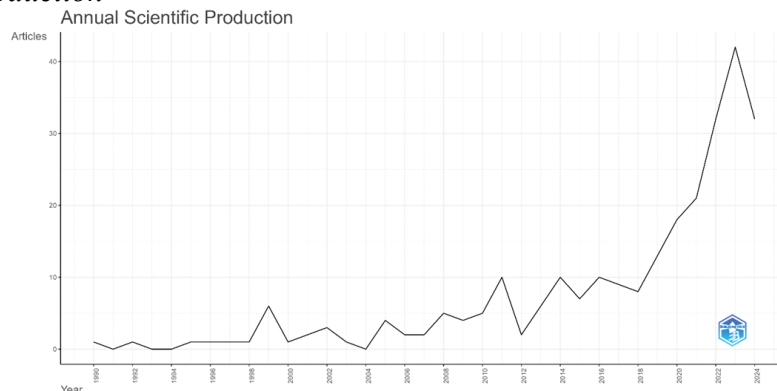
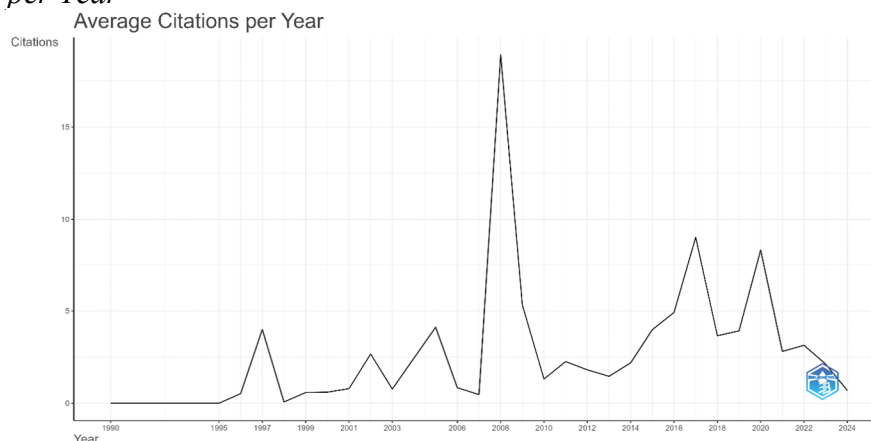**Figure 2:** *Year-wise Government Policy and Workplace Gender Equality Research production trend*
Source: Author's construction

The graph illustrates the annual scientific output on workplace gender equality from 1990 to 2024. The vertical axis represents the number of articles published each year, while the horizontal axis displays the corresponding years. The graph commences with minimal publications in the early 1990s, indicative of limited research during this period. Between 1990 and approximately 2008, output remains relatively low and stable, with minor fluctuations.

A noticeable increase begins around 2009, with the number of articles gradually rising. The most significant growth occurs after 2016, where the number of publications sharply increases, peaking in 2023 with over 40 articles. This rise reflects growing interest and research activity in the field of workplace gender equality in recent years (Xu et al., 2024).

The slight decline in 2024 suggests that the data for that year might not be fully captured yet, or it could indicate a leveling off in research activity. Overall, the trend shows a clear upward trajectory by emphasizing the increasing importance and focus on gender equality in the workplace over the last three decades.

Annual Citations per Year

Figure 3: *Year-wise Government Policy and Workplace Gender Equality Research production trend*
Source: Author's construction

The graph shows the average citations per year for articles on workplace gender equality from 1990 to 2024. In the early years, the average citations are low that indicates limited recognition of research during that period. A significant spike occurs around 2008, with the average citations rising sharply above 15. This peak could be due to the publication of highly influential research or increased interest in specific studies at that time (Xu et al., 2024). After 2008, the average citations decline, followed by fluctuations with smaller peaks around 2018 and 2021 that reflects varying levels of academic attention to this field over the years.

The trend suggests that while certain studies have gained significant attention in specific years, the overall citation averages have varied without a clear long-term trend toward increasing citations. This indicates that the impact of research on workplace gender equality has been uneven, with some periods attracting more scholarly interest than others.

Top Journals and Yearly Publication

**Table 2:** *Top Journals and Yearly Publication*

Sources	Articles
Business Strategy and the Environment	8
Journal of Business Ethics	6
Sustainability (Switzerland)	6
International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	5
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	4
Corporate Governance: An International Review	3
Gender and Development	3
Gender in Management	3
Men and Masculinities	3
NORA - Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research	3

Source: Author's Construction

The table lists the top journals and their yearly publication counts on topics related to workplace gender equality. "Business Strategy and the Environment" leads with 8 articles, indicating strong interest in the intersection of gender equality and environmental strategy. The "Journal of Business Ethics" and "Sustainability (Switzerland)" each have 6 articles, reflecting a focus on ethical considerations and sustainability in gender issues (Huse & Grethe Solberg, 2006). The "International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health" follows with 5 articles, showing an emphasis on the public health implications of gender equality.

Other journals like "Equality, Diversity and Inclusion," "Corporate Governance: An International Review," "Gender and Development," "Gender in Management," "Men and Masculinities," and "NORA - Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research" each contribute 3 to 4 articles. These journals cover a range of topics from corporate governance to feminist and gender studies, illustrating the diverse academic interest in gender equality across various disciplines (Ryan, 2023). The distribution of articles among these journals highlights the multi-faceted nature of gender equality research, spanning ethics, management, public health, and social sciences.

Sources' Local Impact by H-index
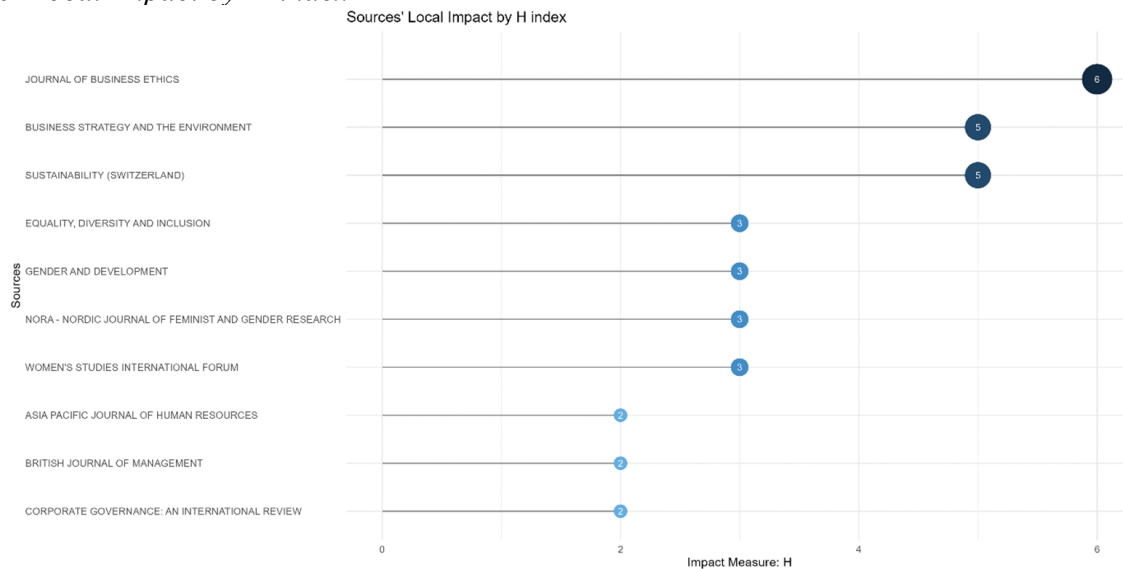
Figure 4: *Sources' Local Impact by H-index*
Source: Author's construction

The graph showcases the most globally cited documents on workplace gender equality. Leading the list is (Campbell & Mínguez-Vera, 2008) paper in the Journal of Business Ethics, with an impressive 1,278 citations, making it the most influential work in this field. This document has significantly shaped discussions and further research on gender equality in the workplace (Silander et al., 2024).

Next in line is Terry, (2009) paper in Gender and Development, which has 242 citations, followed by Reguera-Alvarado et al. (2017) article in the Journal of Business Ethics with 211 citations. Both have made substantial contributions to the academic conversation. Bratton KA.'s (2005) work in Politics Gender is also noteworthy, with 205 citations, highlighting its importance in studies related to gender and politics.

Other important documents include Nadeem M.'s papers, published in 2017 and 2020, in the Journal of Cleaner Production and Business Strategy and the Environment, with 102 and 77 citations, respectively. These works emphasize the link between gender equality and environmental sustainability.

Further contributions come from Burnet JE.'s (2008) paper in African Affairs with 85 citations, Velte P.'s (2016) paper in Journal of Global Responsibility with 81 citations, and Saraceno C.'s 2011 paper in Demographic Research with 64 citations. Xie L.'s 2020 paper in Research Policy also stands out with 61 citations which indicates its ongoing relevance.
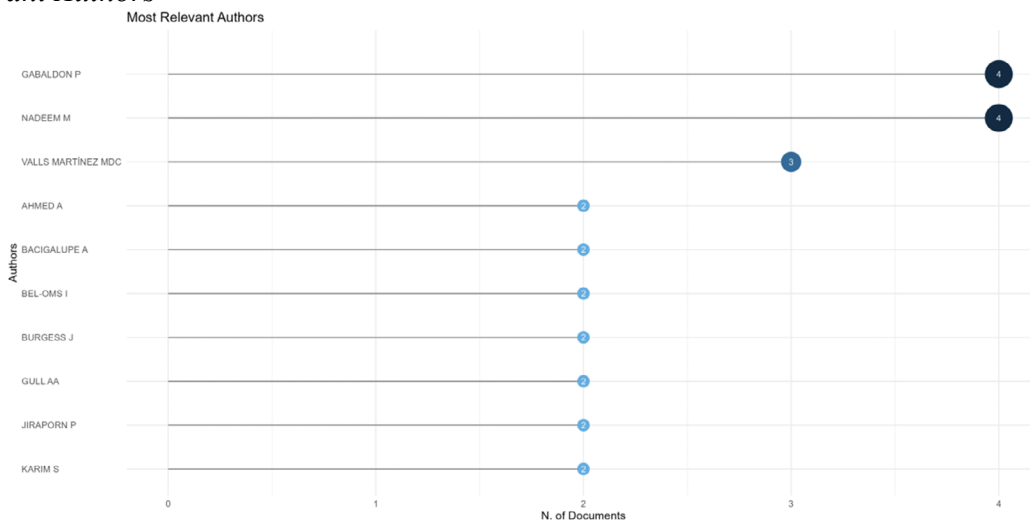
Most Global Cited Documents
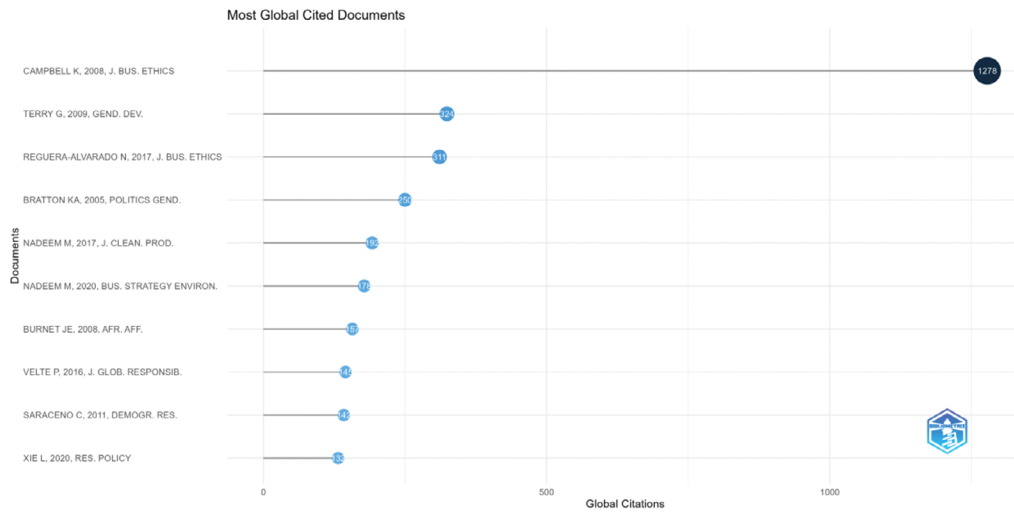
Figure 5: *Most Global Cited Documents*
Source: Author's construction

The graph highlights the most globally cited documents related to workplace gender equality. The document by (Campbell and Mínguez-Vera (2008) published in the Journal of Business Ethics leads with an impressive 1,278 global citations which makes it the most influential work in this area. This document has had a significant impact on the field which facilitates shaping discussions and further research on gender equality in the workplace.

Following Campbell's work, Terry G. (2009) in Gender and Development has 242 citations, and Reguera-Alvarado N. (2017) in the Journal of Business Ethics has 211 citations, both contributing substantially to the academic discourse. Bratton KA. (2005) in Politics Gender also has a notable 205 citations, reflecting its importance in gender-related political studies.

Additional contributions include Burnet JE. (2008) in African Affairs with 85 citations, Velte P. (2016) in Journal of Global Responsibility with 81 citations, and Saraceno C. (2011) in Demographic Research with 64 citations. Xie L. (2020) in Research Policy also has a notable 61 citations, indicating ongoing relevance. Overall, this graph demonstrates the wide-ranging impact of these key documents in shaping global research and policy discussions on workplace gender equality.

Most Relevant Authors

Figure 6: *Most Relevant Authors*
Source: Author's construction

The graph shows the most relevant authors in the field of workplace gender equality based on the number of documents they have published. Gabaldon P. and Nadeem M. lead with 4 documents each, making them key contributors in this area of research. Valls Martínez follows with 3 documents. Several other authors, including Ahmed A., Bacigalupe A., and Burgess J., have each contributed 2 documents. This indicates that while a few authors have produced multiple significant works, there is also a broader base of contributors with valuable input in this field.

Thematic Analysis
KeyWord Analysis

Table 3: *KeyWord Analysis*

Words	Occurrences
female	88
male	62
human	49
article	44
humans	42
gender equity	32
policy making	32
public policy	30
adult	28
womens status	24

Source: Author's construction

The keyword analysis reveals the most frequently occurring terms in the study of workplace gender equality. The word "female" appears 88 times, making it the most common keyword, followed by "male" with 62 occurrences. This emphasis on gender-specific terms reflects the focus on understanding the roles and statuses of different genders in workplace settings. The term "human" appears 49 times, which, along with "humans" (42 occurrences), suggests a broader consideration of gender issues in the context of human rights and societal norms.

The keywords "gender equity," "policy making," and "public policy" each occur around 30 times that highlights the significant role of governmental and organizational policies in addressing gender disparities. The presence of terms like "adult" (28 occurrences) and "womens status" (24 occurrences) further indicates a focus on the status and roles of adults, particularly women, in the workforce.

WordCloud

Figure 7: *WordCloud*
Source: Author's construction

This visualization demonstrates how research on workplace gender equality spans multiple interconnected themes. The emphasis on "corporate governance" and "board gender diversity" suggests that much of the literature focuses on the influence of gender diversity in leadership roles within organizations (Perna et al., 2019). The recurring appearance of "gender equity," "gender equality," and "public policy" underscores the critical role of governmental and organizational policies in shaping gender dynamics in the workplace (Hervías Parejo & Radulović, 2023a).

Keywords such as "women," "female directors," and "discrimination" highlight the specific challenges faced by women in professional settings, particularly in achieving representation and equity in leadership positions. The inclusion of terms like "sustainable development" and "corporate social responsibility" points to the growing recognition of gender equality as an essential component of broader corporate and societal goals.

Treemap

Figure 8: *Treemap*
Source: Author's construction

The Treemap visualization highlights the most common keywords in research on workplace gender equality. The largest box, "gender," represents 22% of the total keywords, showing that it is a central theme in the literature. "Gender diversity" (12%) and "corporate governance" (10%) are also prominent which indicates significant interest in how gender diversity influences corporate structures (Darmawan, 2024).

Other important keywords like "gender equity," "gender equality," and "board gender diversity" each make up about 5-6%, reflecting a focus on fairness and representation in leadership roles. Smaller keywords such as "public policy," "female directors," and "discrimination" (2-4%) point to specific challenges and policy issues related to gender in the workplace.
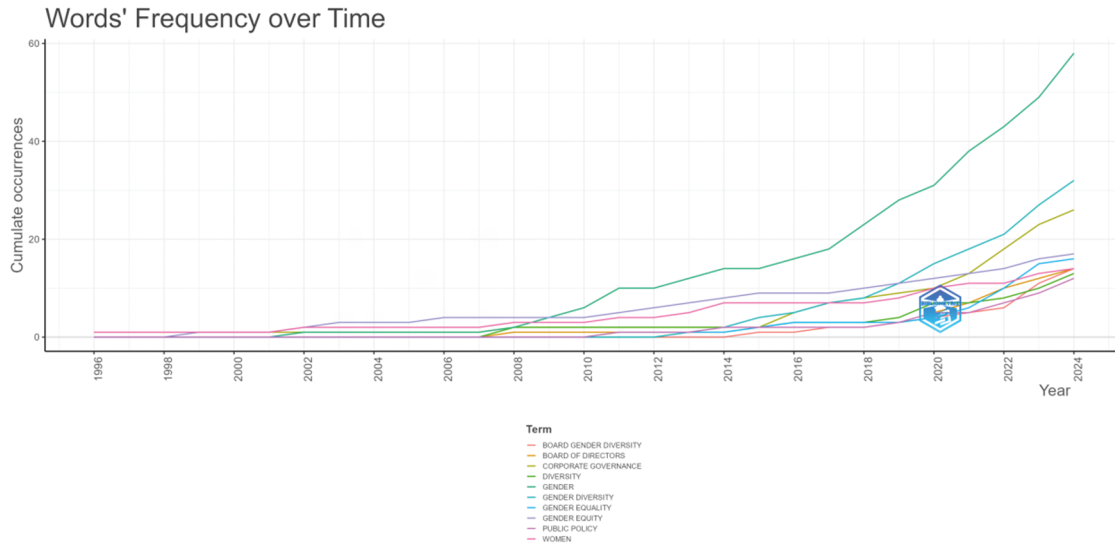
Word's Frequency over Time

The graph illustrates the cumulative frequency of specific keywords in research on workplace gender equality over time, from 1995 to 2024. The keyword "gender" shows the highest increase, particularly after 2010 that reflects growing attention to this topic in the academic literature.

Keywords such as "gender diversity," "corporate governance," and "gender equity" also display significant upward trends, especially in the last decade that shows increased scholarly interest in how gender issues intersect

with corporate structures and governance. Other terms like "board gender diversity," "public policy," and "women" have more moderate but steady growth that demonstrates consistent research interest.

This graph highlights how certain topics within the broader field of workplace gender equality have gained prominence over time by emphasizing the evolving focus of research in response to societal and organizational changes.

Figure 9: *Word's Frequency over Time*
Source: Author's construction

Network Approach
Co-occurrence Network
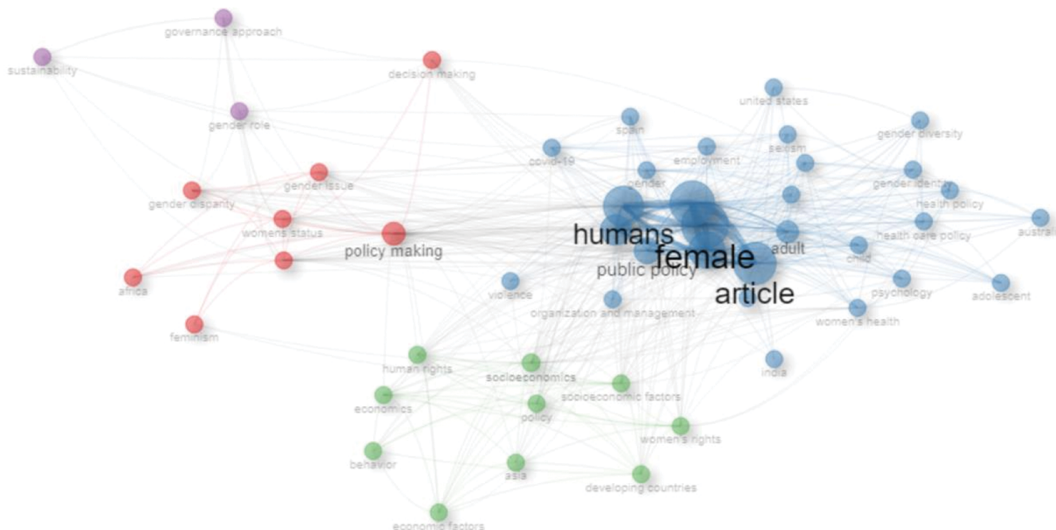
Figure 10: *Co-occurrence Network*
Source: Author's construction

The co-occurrence network visualizes the relationships between key terms in research on workplace gender equality. Central terms like "female," "article," and "humans" indicate their frequent use and importance in the literature. The network shows distinct clusters, with one focused on "public policy," "employment," and "gender

diversity," that highlights the role of policy in shaping gender outcomes in the workplace (Hervías Parejo & Radulović, 2023b). Another cluster connects "policy making," "gender issue," and "women's status," emphasizing the link between gender disparities and decision-making processes. Smaller clusters explore the intersection of gender with socioeconomic factors, human rights, and sustainability, demonstrating the multidisciplinary nature of gender equality research.

Thematic Map
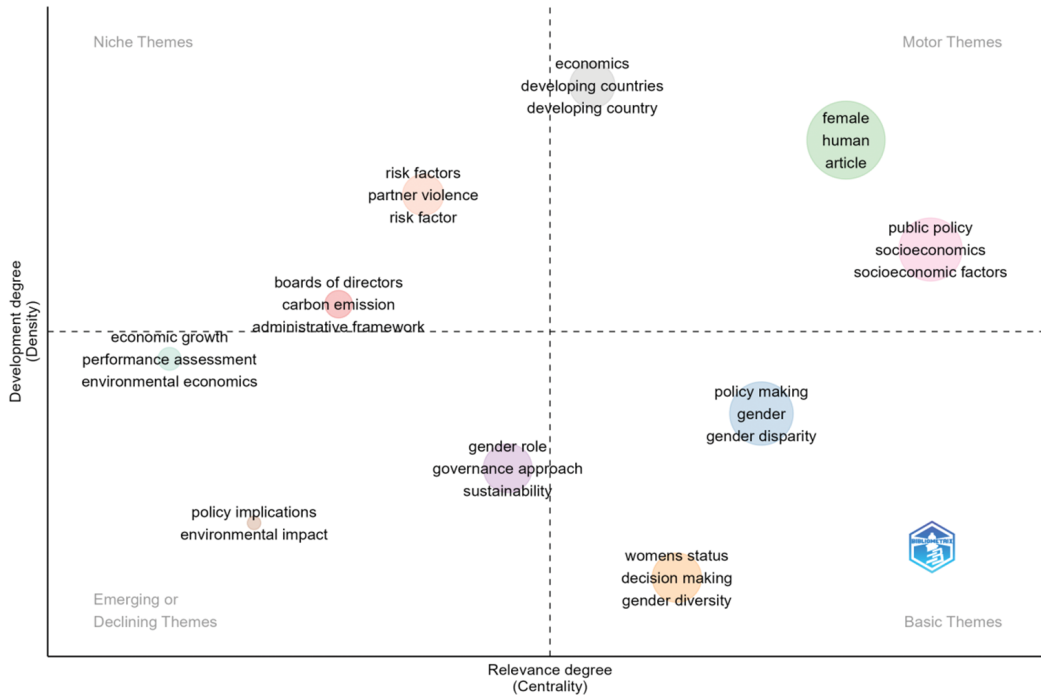
Figure 11: *Thematic Map*
Source: Author's construction

The thematic map provides an overview of key research themes in workplace gender equality, categorized by their development and relevance. Motor Themes like "female," "public policy," and "socioeconomic factors" are both well-developed and central which indicates their significance in driving the research. Basic Themes such as "gender," "policy making," and "gender disparity" are crucial but less explored, suggesting foundational yet underdeveloped areas. Niche Themes like "risk factors" and "boards of directors" are specialized, contributing valuable insights with a narrower focus. Emerging or Declining Themes like "environmental economics" and "economic growth" may represent new or fading areas of interest, highlighting potential future research directions.

Findings and Discussion

The findings of this bibliometric analysis provide valuable insights into the role of government policies in promoting workplace gender equality. The analysis highlights several key trends and areas of focus within the research literature by revealing both the progress made and the challenges that remain in achieving gender parity in the workplace.

One of the most striking observations is the steady increase in research output on workplace gender equality since 1990, with a particularly sharp rise after 2016. This trend reflects a growing global awareness of gender issues in the workplace and an increased emphasis on policy-driven solutions (Paxton et al., 2007). The significant uptick in publications during this period suggests that both academics and policymakers are placing a higher priority on understanding and addressing gender disparities.

The citation analysis further underscores the impact of foundational works in the field. Campbell's (2008) study in the Journal of Business Ethics, with over 1,278 citations, stands out as the most influential, shaping much of the subsequent discourse on gender equality. This document, along with other highly cited works such as Terry's (2009) research in Gender and Development and Reguera-Alvarado's (2017) study, highlights the pivotal role of ethical considerations and policy frameworks in advancing gender equality in professional settings (Williams & Mavin, 2021).

In terms of thematic development, the analysis identifies "gender," "public policy," and "socioeconomic factors" as Motor Themes—central and well-developed areas of research that drive the field forward (Smith, 2020). These themes illustrate the critical intersections between gender equality and broader social, economic, and policy-related issues. Conversely, the identification of Basic Themes such as "gender disparity" and "policy making" points to areas that, while central, may require further exploration and development to fully understand their implications and potential solutions (Williams & Mavin, 2021).

The presence of Niche Themes, such as "boards of directors" and "risk factors," indicates specialized areas where gender issues intersect with corporate governance and risk management. These findings suggest that while these topics are well-studied within specific contexts, they may not be as widely connected to the broader discourse on workplace gender equality. Meanwhile, Emerging or Declining Themes like "environmental economics" and "economic growth" suggest new areas of interest or ones that may be fading, indicating shifting priorities or the emergence of new challenges in the field.

Overall, this analysis provides a comprehensive overview of the current state of research on government policies and workplace gender equality. It highlights the significant progress made in understanding and addressing gender disparities but also points to areas where further research is needed. The findings suggest that while government policies have played a crucial role in promoting gender equality, ongoing efforts are required to address the persistent gaps and challenges that remain. Future research should focus on deepening our understanding of the underlying factors that contribute to gender inequality in the workplace and exploring innovative policy solutions that can drive meaningful and sustainable change.

Conclusion

This bibliometric analysis provides a comprehensive overview of the research landscape surrounding the role of government policies in promoting workplace gender equality. The study reveals a clear and growing emphasis on this critical issue, particularly in recent years, as reflected by the increasing number of publications and the substantial impact of key works in the field. The analysis highlights the central themes that have shaped the discourse, including the influence of public policy, socioeconomic factors, and ethical considerations on gender equality in the workplace.

The findings indicate that government policies have played a pivotal role in advancing gender equality particularly through legislative measures and policy frameworks aimed at reducing gender disparities. However, the study also identifies areas that require further exploration, such as the effectiveness of these policies in different contexts and their impact on various sectors. The presence of niche and emerging themes suggests that the field is continuously evolving, with new challenges and opportunities arising that warrant further investigation.

While significant progress has been made, this analysis underscores the need for ongoing research and policy development to address the persistent gaps in workplace gender equality. Future research should focus on deepening our understanding of the complex factors that contribute to gender inequality and exploring innovative policy solutions that can drive meaningful and sustainable change.

Overall, this study provides valuable insights for academics, policymakers, and practitioners, offering a robust foundation for future research and policy initiatives aimed at achieving workplace gender equality. The findings emphasize the importance of continued efforts to create inclusive workplaces where gender equality is not only encouraged but firmly established as a norm.

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