Bibliometric Analysis of Studies on Refugee/Immigrant/Asylum Seeker Students

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Abstract

The aim of the study was to examine the studies published on the concept of refugee/immigrant/refugee student in terms of their bibliometric characteristics. The research was carried out in the descriptive survey model. In the study, the bibliometric method was used to examine the publication outputs and the basic structure of the field. As a result of the data from the Web of Science (WoS) database on refugee/immigrant/refugee student, 497 studies were analyzed. Within the scope of the research, descriptive statistics for the descriptive structure of the refugee/immigrant/refugee student concept, analyzes showing the distribution of publications by country, descriptive statistics of influential authors, articles and journals, co-author analyzes to reveal the social structure of the literature on the concept of refugee/immigrant/refugee student. In order to reveal the conceptual structure, trend topic analyzes, strategic diagram and word cloud analyzes were used. As a result of the research, while not much research was done between 1980 and 2008, it was determined that there was a rapid increase in the number of studies as of 2009. As a result of the research, it was concluded that the United States of America is the country that publishes the most on refugee/immigrant/asylum-seeking students. It has been concluded that the research conducted by Refugee/immigrant/asylum-seeking students in schools has the most references.

Keywords

Refugee, immigrant, asylum seeker, student, bibliometrics

INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, people have been forced to leave their homes for various reasons. The frequency of such displacements has varied over time. The different types of migration, including exile, deportation, forced labor, and refugee movements, reached their peak during the Second World War (Castles, 2004; FitzGerald & Arar, 2018; Hayter, 2000; Nash, Wong and Trlin, 2006). The International Organization for Migration reported in 2022 that the global immigrant population exceeded 280 million and 37 million of whom were children. Immigrants make up approximately 3.6% of the world's population. The United States, Germany, and Saudi Arabia are among the leading countries that attract international immigrants, while India, Mexico, and Russia are the countries of origin for the largest number of immigrants (IOM, 2022). While the terms asylum seeker, immigrant, and refugee are often used interchangeably in everyday language, a refugee is someone who voluntarily leaves their country in search of better living conditions or due to fear of discrimination in their home country (Deaux, 2006; Loue, 1998; Shacknove, 2017). An asylum seeker refers to those whose application for asylum has not yet been processed. The increasing number of immigrants in recent times has presented political, economic, and educational challenges for countries (Trost et al., 2018; Wickramasekera, 2002). Education plays a pivotal role in tackling these challenges and facilitating the assimilation of immigrants into their host societies. The education of 37 million migrant and refugee children holds paramount significance in fostering social cohesion and securing a promising future for them. A number of studies have been conducted on the education of immigrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking children and have revealed their distinctive needs and encounters (Barrett & Berger, 2021; Ferfolja and Vickers, 2010; Ferreira, Kendrick, and Early, 2022; Hogue, 2018; Martin et al., 2022; Morales, 2022; Rose, 2019; Salem, 2022; Sobitan, 2022; Vigren, Alisaari, Heikkola, Acquah & Commins, 2022; Wrench et al., 2018). The growing increase in studies on this domain presents a challenging task for researchers to synthesize in-depth inferences and follow cutting-edge trends. Thus, it becomes imperative to undertake a quantitative evaluation of the existing literature in order to distinguish prevailing patterns and describe future research trajectories. Although bibliometric analyses have been conducted pertaining to immigrants and refugees (Anuar et al., 2021; Maretti, Tontodimamma & Biermann, 2019; Milán-Garcia et al., 2021; Nasrin, Haider & Ahsan, 2022; Sweileh et al., 2018), no study has focused specifically on refugee, immigrant, and asylum-seeking students in the literature. This study aims to bridge this gap and serve as a guide for researchers interested in refugee, immigrant, and asylum-seeking students. Through the implementation of a thorough and all-encompassing examination of published research on these subjects, the primary objective of this study was to provide researchers and individuals in this field with invaluable insights and empirical data.

In this sense, the present study aims to investigate the extensive body of international literature on refugee, immigrant, and asylum-seeking students by seeking answers to the following research questions:

1. What is the descriptive structure of the literature on refugee, immigrant, and asylum-seeking students?

2. Which authors, journals, and articles have the most significant impact in the literature?

3. What is the social structure revealed in the literature on refugee, immigrant, and asylum-seeking students?

4. What are the key conceptual themes and structures present in the literature on refugee, immigrant, and asylum-seeking students?

METHOD

This study aimed to investigate the bibliometric characteristics of studies published on the topic of refugee, immigrant, and asylum seeker students. Accordingly, a systematic review methodology was employed. The systematic review approach involves a laborious screening process of relevant studies in the field, applying predetermined criteria for inclusion or exclusion, and synthesizing the findings to address research questions while minimizing bias (Hanley & Cutts, 2013). Following the recommended steps for systematic reviews outlined by Millar (2004), this study clearly defined its purpose, selected articles based on predetermined criteria, identified key characteristics of the selected articles, and drew inferences from the information gathered. By adhering to these guidelines, the study structure ensured a systematic and reliable approach to analyzing the existing literature on refugee, immigrant, and asylum seeker students.

Data Collection

To conduct a comprehensive literature review on refugee, immigrant, and asylum seeker students, a wide range of sources, more than 171 million articles, papers, and abstracts, were examined (Birkle, Pendlebury, Schnell, and Adams, 2020). The selection of the Web of Science (WoS) database was based on its reputation as one of the oldest and most extensively used databases globally. Known for its regular updates and frequent use in bibliometric studies, the WoS database was considered appropriate for this study (Hu et al., 2020). In order to ensure methodical execution, the search methodology adhered to the recommendations outlined in the "Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses" (Moher et al., 2009). Prior to commencing searches within the WoS database, terms such as "migrant student," "refugee student," and "asylum-seeking student" were determined through an initial inspection of related studies in the database. Then, these keywords were used to create the most suitable search string in the WoS database. The search filters applied in the database included active filtering by title, selection of "article" as the document type, and restriction to the fields of education and educational research in the WoS category. The indexes selected were "SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, ESCI," and the publication language was limited to English. On December 15, 2022, a total of 513 relevant research papers were retrieved from the database. Following the initial screening, the researchers precisely reviewed the titles and abstracts of the retrieved studies. As a result, 16 studies were identified as not relevant to the research topic and were excluded. The remaining 497 studies were downloaded as plain text documents from the WoS database and subsequently imported into a bibliometric analysis software package for further analysis.

Data Analysis

The bibliometric examination of studies on the topic of refugee, immigrant, and asylum seeker student was conducted using the R bibliometric package program, an open-source tool developed by Aria and Cuccurullo (2017). Additionally, the Biblioshiny application, a user-friendly interface for visualizing bibliometric analysis data, was utilized. As part of the research, the article data obtained from the WoS database were downloaded and imported into the bibliometric program. The research encompassed various analyses to explore the descriptive structure of the refugee, immigrant, and asylum seeker student concept, including descriptive statistics on publication distribution by country, influential

authors, articles, and journals, as well as co-authorship to unveil the social structure of the literature. To uncover the conceptual structure, trend topic analyses, strategic diagrams, and word cloud analyses were employed. Citation analysis, which relies on the referencing of authors' ideas by other researchers (Osca, Velasco, López, & Haba, 2009), is distinct from co-citation analysis, which involves citing two different publications from a single source (Rehn, Kronman, Gornitzki, Larsson, & Wadskog, 2008). Bibliometric matching refers to identifying identical publications from different sources, while bibliometric mapping investigates the authors and institutions contributing to publications and the distribution of content. The prominent laws utilized in bibliometric analyses include Bradford Law, Lotka Law, Pareto Law, Zipf Law, and Price Law (Cobo, López-Herrera, Herrera-Viedma & Herrera 2011; Zupic & Čater, 2015).

FINDINGS

Table 1 presents the general information about the concept of refugee, immigrant, and asylum seeker students based on the bibliometric analysis conducted between 1980 and 2022.

Table 1

General Information on the Concept of Refugee/Immigrant/Asylum-seeking Student

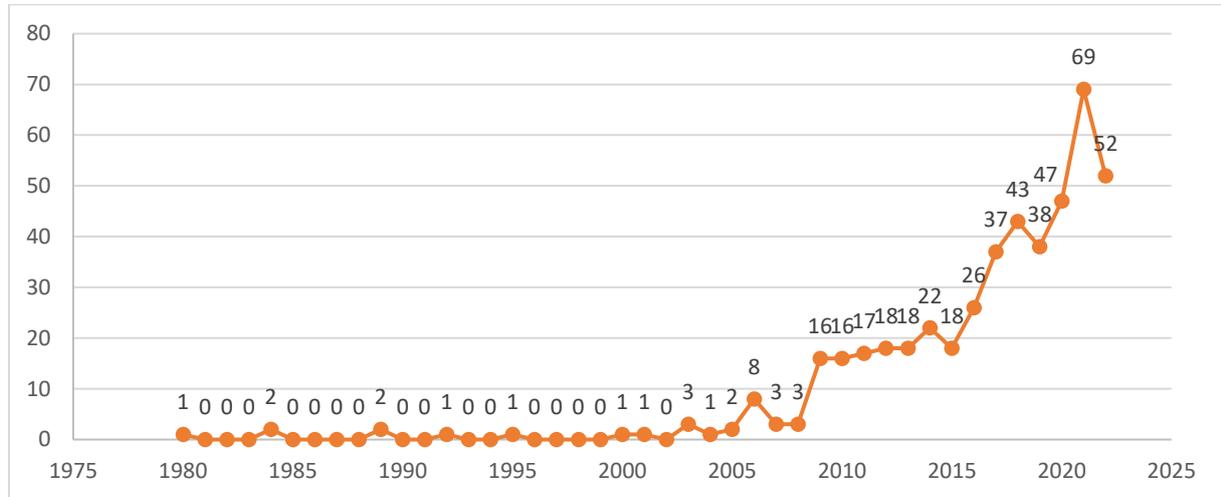| Time Range	1980: 2022
Total number of articles	497
Annual percent increase rate	9,86
Total number of authors	1017
Number of single-author studies	171
Average number of citations per article	8,95
Total number of references	18150

According to Table 1, a total of 497 articles on the concept of refugee, immigrant, and asylum-seeking students were published between 1980 and 2022. The annual increase rate of publications in this area is 9.86%. The research involved contributions from 1,017 different authors, and 171 studies were conducted by single authors. On average, each article received 8.95 citations. The total number of references across these articles amounted to 18,150.

Descriptive Structure of Refugee/Immigrant/Asylum-seeking Student Concept

The distribution of studies conducted between 1980 and 2022, relating to the descriptive structure of the refugee, immigrant, and asylum-seeking student concept, is visually presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Distribution of Publications by Years

The examination of the distribution of 497 articles published from 1980 to 2022 regarding the concept of refugee, immigrant, and asylum seeker student showed that there was minimal growth in the number of publications between 1980 and 2008. However, a substantial surge in publications has been evident since 2009.

Figure 2 shows the geographical distribution and citation counts of 497 articles concerning the concept of refugee, immigrant, and asylum seeker student from 1980 to 2022.

Figure 2
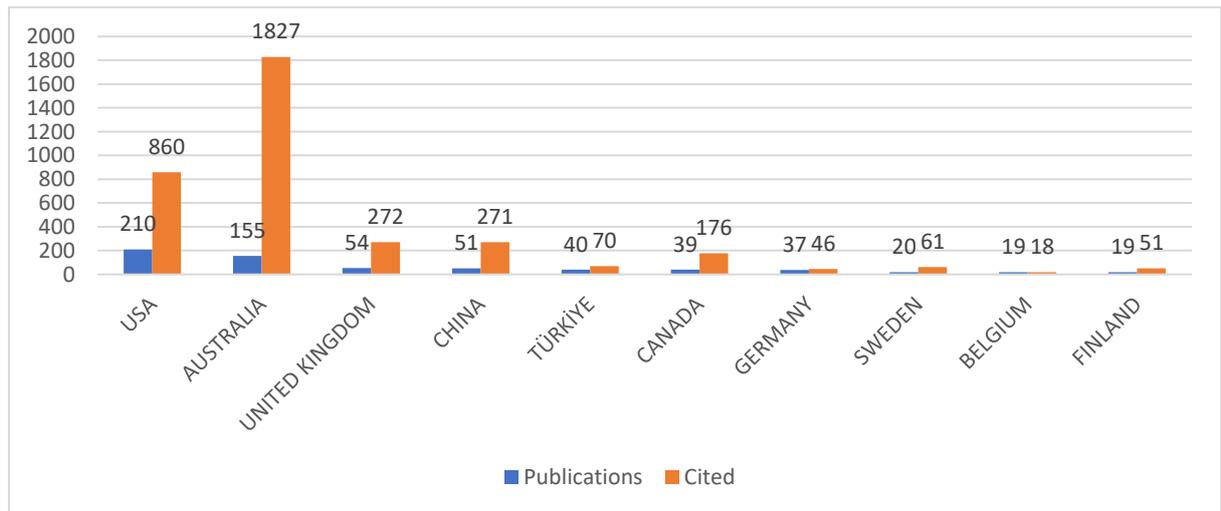
Scientific Production of Countries

Figure 2 indicated that the United States of America, Australia, the United Kingdom, China, Türkiye, Canada, Germany, Sweden, Belgium, and Finland were the countries with the highest number of publications on the concept of refugee, immigrant, and asylum seeker student. In addition, Australia stood out as the country with the highest number of citations.

Influential Authors, Articles and Journals

Based on WoS data, a bibliometric analysis was conducted on articles published from 1980 to 2022 regarding the concept of refugee, immigrant, and asylum seeker student in order to examine the number of authors, publications, and citations. Table 1 presents the most productive and influential authors based on the number of citations related to the concept of refugee, immigrant, and asylum seeker student.

Table 2

Ranking of Publications and Citations

Based on the number of publications		Based on the number of local citations	
Writer	Article (N)	Writer	Local Citation (N)
Baker, S.	8	De Mori, G.	36
Miller, E.	6	Earnest, J.	36
Baak, M.	5	Joyce, A.	36
Irwin, E.	5	Silvagni, G.	36
Naidoo, L.	5	Baker, S.	32
Robertson, S.	5	Sidhu, R. K.	30
De Anstiss, H.	4	Taylor, S.	30
Emery, L.	4	Irwin, E.	22
Karam, F. J.	4	Ramsay, G.	21
Maury, O.	4	Vickers, M.	20

It was found in Table 2 that the top three productive authors in the field of refugee, immigrant, and asylum seeker students from 1980 to 2022 were Baker, S., Miller, E., and Baak, M., respectively. Examining their areas of study, Baker, S. primarily focused on the transition experiences of refugee, immigrant, and asylum seeker students in higher education, while Miller, E. concentrated on lesson planning for these students, and Baak, M. explored the integration of refugee, immigrant, and asylum seeker students and offered insights into education policies that should be implemented. Considering the number of citations, the most influential authors were De Mori, G., Earnest, J., Joyce, A., and Silvagni, G., respectively.

Table 3 presents the authors with the highest impact factors among those whose research on the concept of refugee, immigrant, and asylum seeker students was published between 1980 and 2022.

Tablo 3

The Most Influential Authors by Number of Publications on the Concept of Refugee/Immigrant/Asylum-Seeking Student Between 1980-2022

Writers	h index	g index	Total Paper
Baker, S.	6	8	8
Irwin, E.	5	5	5
Naidoo, L.	4	5	5
Robertson, S.	4	5	5
Baak, M.	3	3	5
De Anstiss, H.	3	4	4
Maury, O.	3	4	4
Miller, E.	3	5	6
Miller, J.	3	3	3
Nunez, A. M.	3	4	4

The g-index is a metric that quantifies the value and influence of scientists or their knowledge in a particular field, by considering the number of highly cited publications. Unlike the h-index, the g-index takes into account the impact level of these highly cited publications, requiring a minimum of g^2 or more citations. Table 3 reveals that Baker, S. holds the top position in both the h-index and g-index rankings.

Lotka's Law (Lotka, 1923) characterizes the distribution of authors' contributions to a specific literature during a given period. Figure 3 illustrates the productivity distribution of authors who published research on the concept of refugee, immigrant, and asylum seeker students between 1980 and 2022, following Lotka's Law.

Figure 3

The Distribution of Authors, who Published Research on the Concept of Refugee/immigrant/asylum Seeker between 1980 and 2022 Based on Lotka's Law
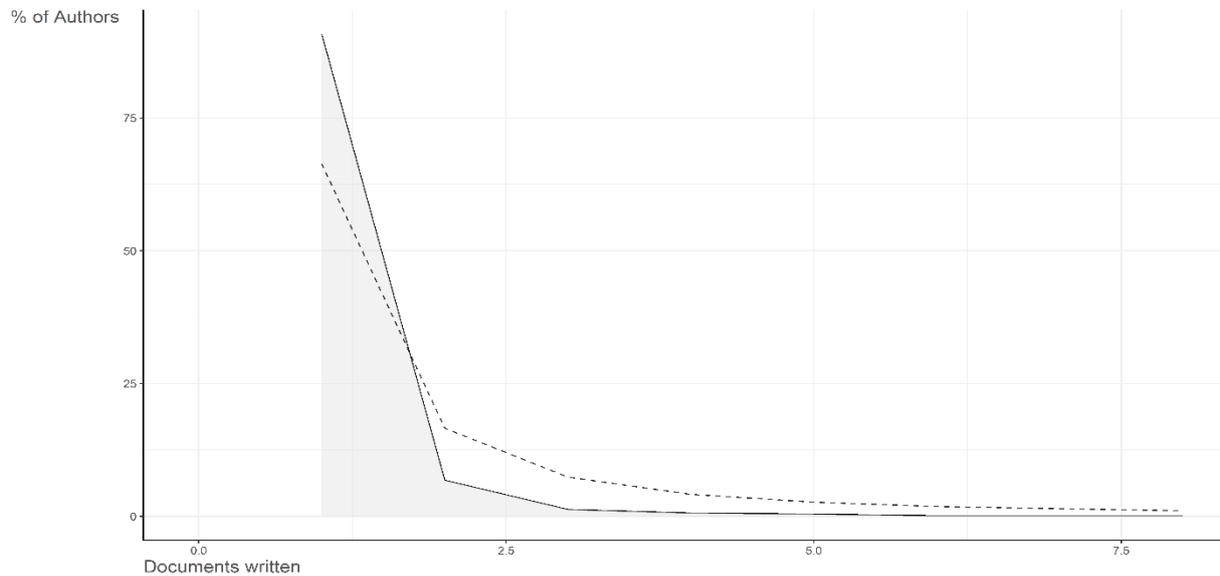

Figure 3 demonstrates the distribution of authors based on their publication count on the concept of refugee, immigrant, and asylum seeker students between 1980 and 2022. The data reveals that authors with eight publications constitute 0.1% of the total, while authors with six publications also account for 0.1%. Additionally, authors with five, four, and three publications represent 0.4%, 0.6%, and 0.1% respectively. Notably, authors with one publication make up 1.3%, those with two publications comprise 6.8%, and authors with only one publication contribute to the majority with 90.8%.

In bibliometric analyses, the citation style that considers only the citations in the studies included in the research is referred to as local citation, while the analysis type that includes all citations, regardless of the subject, is known as global citation (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). Table 4 presents the top ten most influential articles on the concept of refugee, immigrant, and asylum seeker students between 1980 and 2022, ranked by local citation.

Table 4

Most Locally Cited Articles

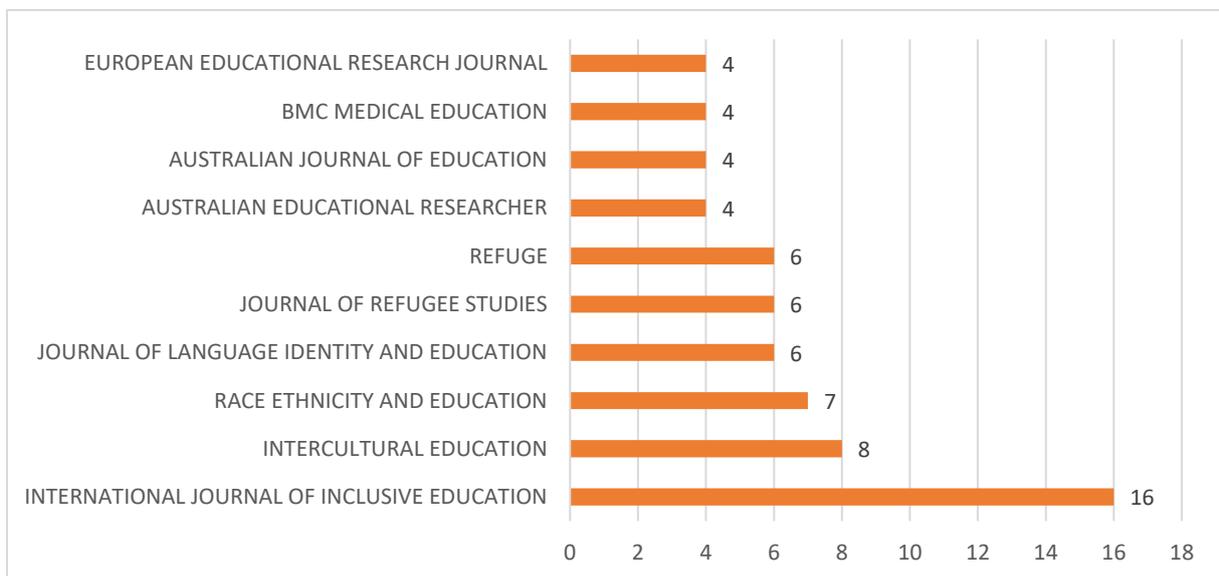|	Article	Local Cited	Global Cited
1	Taylor, S. ve Sidhu, R. K. (2012). Supporting refugee students in schools: What constitutes inclusive education?. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *16*(1), 39-56. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603110903560085	30	176

2	Joyce, A., Earnest, J., De Mori, G. ve Silvagni, G. (2010). The experiences of students from refugee backgrounds at universities in Australia: Reflections on the social, emotional and practical challenges. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, *23*(1), 82-97. https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/feq001	22	56
3	Block, K., Cross, S., Riggs, E. ve Gibbs, L. (2014). Supporting schools to create an inclusive environment for refugee students. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *18*(12), 1337-1355. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2014.899636	16	89
4	Earnest, J., Joyce, A., De Mori, G. ve Silvagni, G. (2010). Are universities responding to the needs of students from refugee backgrounds?. *Australian Journal of Education*, *54*(2), 155-174. https://doi.org/10.1177/000494411005400204	14	51
5	Ferfolja, T. ve Vickers, M. (2010). Supporting refugee students in school education in Greater Western Sydney. *Critical Studies in Education*, *51*(2), 149-162. https://doi.org/10.1080/17508481003731034	13	37
6	Harvey, A. ve Russell-Mundine G. (2019). Decolonising the curriculum: Using graduate qualities to embed ındigenous knowledges at the academic cultural ınterface. *Teaching in Higher Education, 24* (6), 789-808. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2018.1508131	13	30
7	Pugh, K., Every, D. ve Hattam, R. (2012). Inclusive education for students with refugee experience: Whole school reform in a South Australian primary school. *The Australian Educational Researcher*, *39*(2), 125-141. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-011-0048-2	11	44
8	Keddie, A. (2012). Pursuing justice for refugee students: Addressing issues of cultural (mis) recognition. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *16*(12), 1295-1310. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2011.560687	10	41
9	Naidoo, L. (2015). Educating refugee-background students in Australian schools and universities. *Intercultural Education*, *26*(3), 210-217. https://doi.org/10.1080/14675986.2015.1048079	9	24
10	Mangan, D. ve Winter, L. A. (2017). (In) validation and (mis) recognition in higher education: The experiences of students from refugee backgrounds. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, *36*(4), 486-502. https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370.2017.1287131	9	30

Table 4 revealed that the study conducted by Taylor and Sidhu (2012) on supporting refugee students in schools was the most locally and globally cited. Following closely, the research by Joyce, Earnest, De Mori, and Silvagni (2010) exploring the experiences of refugee students at Australian universities was the second most locally cited study. Furthermore, Block et al. (2014) conducted a research on schools fostering an inclusive environment for refugee students, which ranked as the third most locally cited study.

Figure 4 presents the top ten most relevant journals on the concept of refugee, immigrant, and asylum seeker students between 1980 and 2022, as identified within the research scope.

Figure 4

Most Relevant Journals

The journals focused on refugee, immigrant, and asylum-seeking students were also examined and the top 10 most relevant journals were identified. Figure 4 shows the journals with the highest number of publications on the subject. Remarkably, the three journals with the most publications were "International Journal of Inclusive Education," "Intercultural Education," and "Race Ethnicity and Education," respectively.

Social Structure of Refugee/Immigrant/Asylum-seeking Student Concept Between 1980-2022

To analyze the social structure of the publications on refugee, immigrant, and asylum seeker students between 1980 and 2022, co-authorship was chosen as the unit of analysis. Figure 5 presents the cooperative relationships between countries based on the co-authorship analysis.
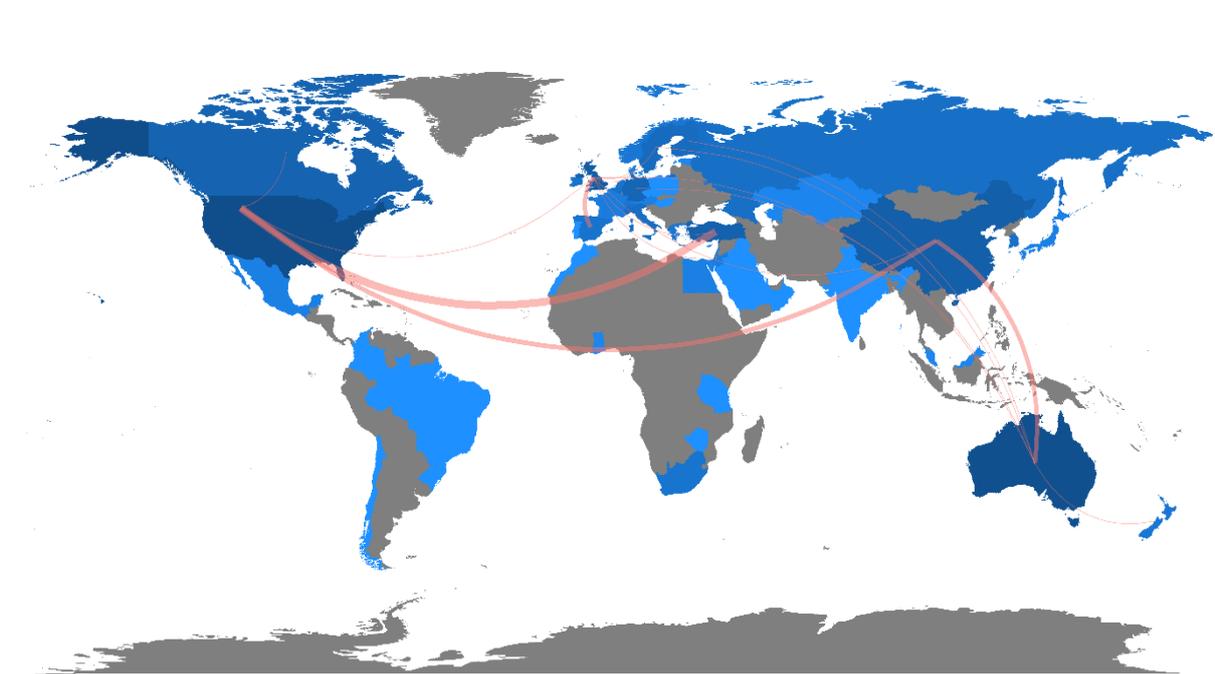
Figure 5

Co-Author Analysis (Cross-Country)

Figure 5 displays a map that provides information on the cooperation between countries and the level of research output, represented by different colors. The color scale ranges from gray, indicating the lowest production, to the darkest blue, representing the highest production. The connections between countries show their collaborative efforts, with thicker lines indicating a higher level of cooperation. It was found that the United States of America holds a central role in the publications on refugee, immigrant, and asylum seeker students between 1980 and 2022. It established a network of cooperation with numerous other countries. Moreover, countries such as the United Kingdom, Australia, China, and Türkiye emerged importantly compared to other nations in terms of both the number of publications and their level of cooperation.

The Conceptual Structure of the Refugee/Immigrant/Asylum-seeking Student Concept between 1980-2022

In bibliometric analysis, a strategic diagram can be created based on keyword trends to examine the conceptual structure. The diagram is divided into four quadrants based on centrality and density. The x-axis represents centrality and the y-axis represents density The upper right quadrant represents motor themes, which are important and well-developed in structuring the research field. The upper left quadrant represents isolated themes, the lower left quadrant represents disappearing themes, and the lower right quadrant represents the main themes in the field (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). Figure 6 shows the thematic mapping of the studies published between 1980 and 2022 on the concept of refugee, immigrant, and asylum-seeking students.

Figure 6

Thematic Map of Studies Published Between 1980-2022 on the Concept of Refugee/Immigrant/Asylum Seeker Student
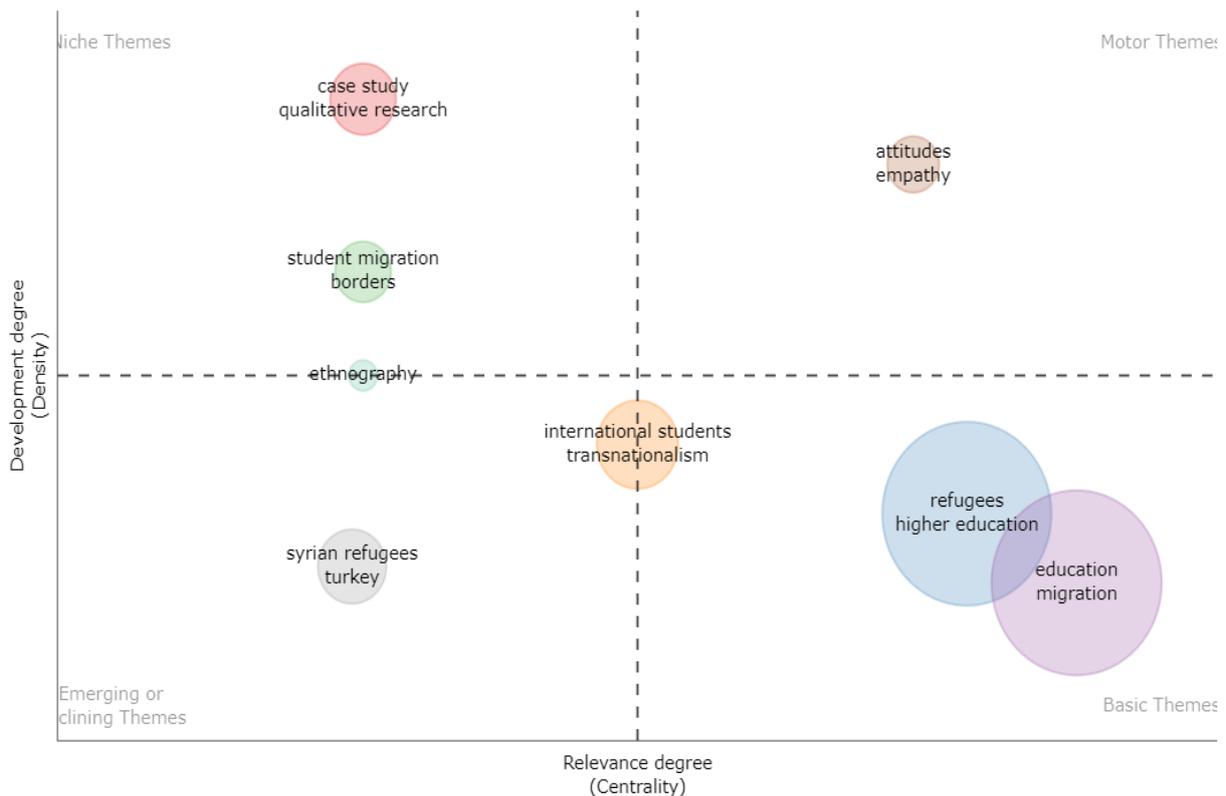

Figure 6 indicates that the lower right quadrant represents refugee education, specifically focusing on keywords related to refugee higher education. This theme is critical and has been extensively studied. In the upper right quadrant, the themes of attitude and empathy are prominent. These themes are well-established and play a vital role in the research domain. The upper left quadrant signifies themes that deviate from the existing literature and branch into different fields, including keywords such as student migration and borders. The lower left quadrant of the figure indicates themes that have experienced a decline in interest and a decrease in the number of studies conducted. Notably, the theme of Syrian refugees stands out within this quadrant.

Figure 7 presents a word cloud visualization of the most frequently used keywords by authors in research publications on the concept of refugee, immigrant, and asylum seeker students between 1980 and 2022. The word cloud provides a visual representation of the prominence and frequency of these keywords in the studies.

Figure 7

Word Cloud of the Most Frequently Used Keywords in Studies Published on the Concept of Refugee/Immigrant/Asylum Seeker Student Between 1980-2022

Figure revealed that the most frequently used keywords were education (f= 78), children (f= 74), immigration (f= 46), youth (f= 28), experience (f= 24), difficulty (f= 20), health (f= 20) and mental health (f= 19), respectively.

RESULTS, DISCUSSIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS

A bibliometric analysis was conducted on the Web of Science database to explore the research conducted in the field of refugee, immigrant, and asylum seeker students. The analysis covered publications between 1980 and 2022. The findings of the bibliometric analysis revealed significant understandings into the topic of refugee/immigrant/asylum-seeking students. Particularly, it was found that the number of studies in this area was relatively low between 1980 and 2008. However, starting from 2009, there was a remarkable increase in the quantity of research undertaken. The significant increase in research on refugee, immigrant, and asylum-seeking students can be attributed to diverse factors. The initial reason for such an increase can be attributed to the prioritization of refugee, immigrant, and asylum-seeking students' immediate needs, such as health and accommodation (Bronstein & Montgomery, 2011; Cole, 1998; Fabio, 2014; Fazel, 2015; Fazel & Betancourt, 2018; Hopkins & Hill, 2010). However, as years passed, there was a growing focus on the need for education, which was encouraged by globalization, advancements in technology and communication. These requirements lead researchers to conduct studies on refugee, immigrant, and asylum-seeking students (Florian, 2019; Kanno & Varghese, 2010; Kuzhabekova & Nardon, 2021; Molla, 2021; Rose, 2019). This transition was influenced by the rising trends of globalization,

technology, and communication, which offered researchers greater opportunities and incentives to explore the subject of refugee, immigrant, and asylum-seeking students. The findings revealed that, following the United States, Australia had the highest number of publications on refugee/immigrant/asylum-seeking students. This finding can be attributed to a number of factors such as economic, sociological, and political challenges encountered by countries like Australia, China, the United Kingdom, and Türkiye, which made significant contributions to the body of research in this field. This trend indicates an increasing interest in the education of refugee, immigrant, and asylum-seeking students. It was found in this study that Australia conducted a considerable amount of research on refugee/immigrant/asylum-seeking students and became the second-leading country in terms of publications after the United States This can be attributed to Australia's attractiveness as a destination for immigrants due to factors such as favorable opportunities provided by the government for immigrants and its cultural diversity (Boucher, 2014). Furthermore, the research findings revealed a significant lack of studies conducted in underdeveloped countries. It was observed that the increase in the number of studies over the years indirectly correlated with an increase in citations. Especially, Joyce et al. (2010), who examined the experiences of students with refugee backgrounds at Australian universities, emerged as the second most locally cited research. Block et al. (2014), who focused on research regarding schools fostering an inclusive environment for refugee students, ranked third in terms of local citations. The top three journals with the highest number of publications on refugee, immigrant, and asylum seeker students were identified as the "International Journal of Inclusive Education," "Intercultural Education," and "Race Ethnicity and Education," respectively. These three journals primarily focus on the inclusive education of all students, highlighting the importance of equal educational opportunities. The findings further unveiled that the most extensively explored subject concerning refugee/immigrant/asylum-seeking students was refugee education and training. Moreover, the areas of attitude and empathy emerged as pivotal and well-developed aspects within this field. On the other hand, the theme of student migration and borders diverged from the existing literature and evolved into a distinct area of research. Notably, the theme of Syrian refugees experienced a marked decline in both interest and the number of conducted studies, which held particular significance. The research on refugee/immigrant/asylum-seeking students identified key keywords, including education, children, migration, youth, experience, hardship, health, and mental health. These keywords indicated that in addition to addressing the educational needs of these students, there was substantial emphasis on comprehending and supporting their mental well-being. The findings of this study offer valuable insights for researchers interested in exploring the experiences of refugee/immigrant/asylum-seeking students.

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Author Contributions

First author and second author planned and modeled the study. Second author was involved in the collection of data and co-authored the study with first author and second author. Second author analyzed the data and contributed to the interpretation of the results. First author contributed to the literature review and discussion section.

Conflict of Interest

No potential conflict of interest was declared by the author.

Supporting Individuals or Organizations

No grants were received from any public, private or non-profit organizations for this research.

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Availability of Data and Materials

Not applicable.

Acknowledgements

No acknowledgements.