Inclusive Education and Covid-19: A Bibliometric Analysis

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Abstract

This paper aims at presenting the bibliometric characteristics of papers on inclusive education published since the breakout of the Covid-19 pandemic. This study has considered only Scopus indexed sources. Using inclusive education and Covid-19 provided 115 documents spread across 89 sources. Spain and the United States are the countries which contributed the greatest number of documents. Frontiers in Education and European Journal of Special Needs Education and Sustainability. The emerging themes include inclusion, teacher attitude, emergency remote teaching and ICT.

Keywords: Inclusive Education and Covid-19, bibliometric analysis, Biblioshiny

Introduction

For a long period of time, children with special needs were taught in schools meant to cater to their specific needs. It was believed that special need children like children with vision impairment, children with hearing impairment and children with speech impairment etc. have their own specific needs and hence should be taught separately. While this separation appears logical on the surface, it led to many problems. After completing the education, the students have to live in the mainstream society and owing to their upbringing in special schools these students face many difficulties to function in the mainstream society. Various skills of differently-abled students especially social skills do not develop well as a result of separation. Then, the concept of inclusive education was put forward wherein all children with or without special needs study together. Inclusive education is also ratified in

Salamanca statement of UNESCO in 1994.Inclusive education is seen as a means of social justice and equality.

The Covid-19 pandemic which started from China and later spread all over the globe affected every walk of life and education is not an exception. Education was severely affected due to lockdowns and restrictions on movement. Giving reference of a UNESCO report, Jia and Santi (2021) state that more than 1 billion children were affected worldwide due to lockdown. In this backdrop, the special need children which were studying in inclusive schools were even more affected. Many studies have been conducted which explored the effects of Covid-19 pandemic on inclusive education. For example,de Klerk and Palmer (2021) and Kamga (2020)examined the status of inclusive education in South Africa during the pandemic. Many other studies have been conducted across the globe to examine the effect of Covid-19 on inclusive education (Kast et al., 2021; Khanna & Kareem, 2021; Koskela et al., 2020; Letzel et al., 2020; Letzel-Alt et al., 2022; Lindner et al., 2021; Mahmood & Dean, 2017; Page et al., 2021; Pittman et al., 2020; Portillo et al., 2020; Shaw & Shaw, 2021).

Wu and Lin (2020) present a bibliometric analysis of papers published in SSCI (social science citation index) and SCI (science citation index) of web of sciences from 1992 till July 2020. They used "inclusive education" as the keyword and found 1,786 articles spread across 345 journals. They report that US, UK and Australia were the leading countries in terms of number of papers published. They further find that "teacher attitude", "teacher self-efficacy" and "the effects of inclusive education" were the core themes. Methlagl (2022) conduct a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of papers published during 1980 and 2022. The author analyses a total of 8398 papers. They report that international collaboration is rapidly increasing in field of inclusive education. The core themes reported by the author include "disability issues, teacher professionalisation, teacher practices, attitudes towards inclusive education, social processes, support, curricular issues, student perspective, parent perspective, intercultural education, policy, etc. The author further report that stigmatization and technology related issues are under represented and needs to be examined.

The present study extends the work of Wu and Lin (2020) by analysing the bibliometric characteristics of articles published in Scopus indexed journals during covid-19.

Methods

The present paper attempts to present a bibliometric analysis of documents on inclusive education published in journals index in Scopus database. We used "inclusive education" and "covid-19" as the main keywords. A total 115 articles and book chapters were found published in 89 sources.

Results and Discussion

Main Information

Description	Results
Main information about data	
Timespan	2020:2022
Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	89
Documents	115
Annual Growth Rate %	144.95
Document Average Age	0.565
Average citations per doc	3.87
References	5080
Document contents	
Keywords Plus (ID)	406
Author's Keywords (DE)	395
Authors	
Authors	363
Authors of single-authored docs	14
Authors collaboration	
Single-authored docs	17
Co-Authors per Doc	3.34
International co-authorships %	23.48
Document types	
article	93
book	1
book chapter	3
conference paper	8
conference review	2
editorial	2
note	2
review	4

Most Relevant Authors

Out of the total 363 authors, the top 10 authors have been highlighted in figure 1. It is evident from the figure that Letzel V, Lindner Kt, Pozas M, Schneider C, and Schwab S

are the most relevant authors in this field. They have authored 3 papers each in this domain.
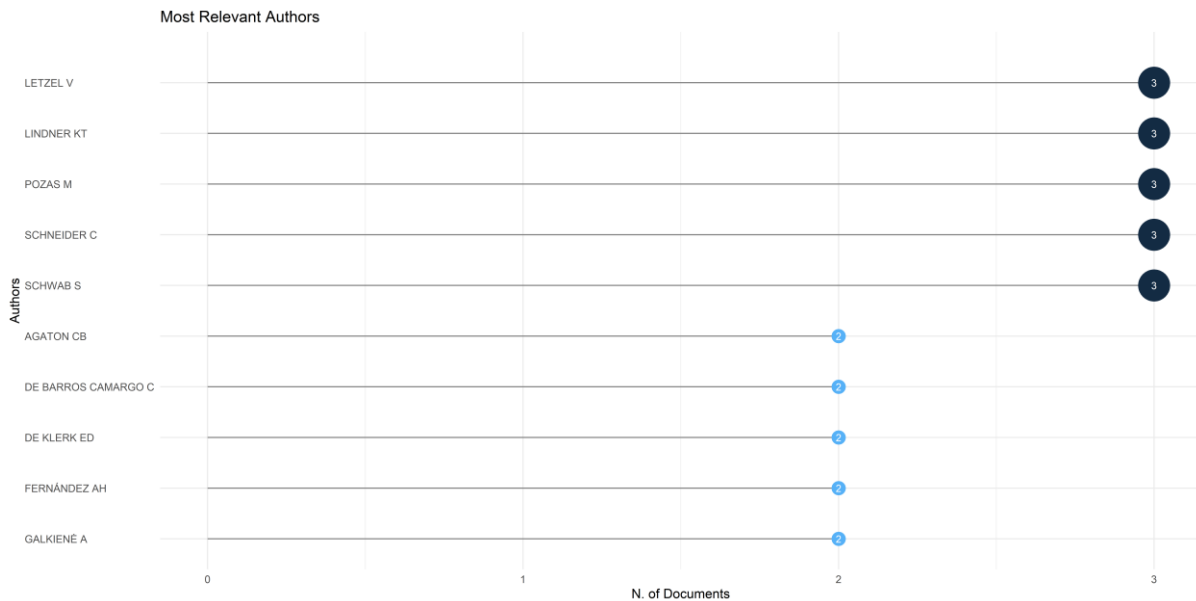

Figure 1: Most Relevant Authors

Most Relevant Sources

Figure 2 shows the top 10 sources for studies related to inclusive education in Covid era. *Frontiers in Education* is the most relevant journal in this domain. It has published the highest number of articles (17.24%) in this research area. It is followed by *European Journal of Special Needs Education* and *Sustainability (Switzerland)*with 13.79% of the total articles published.
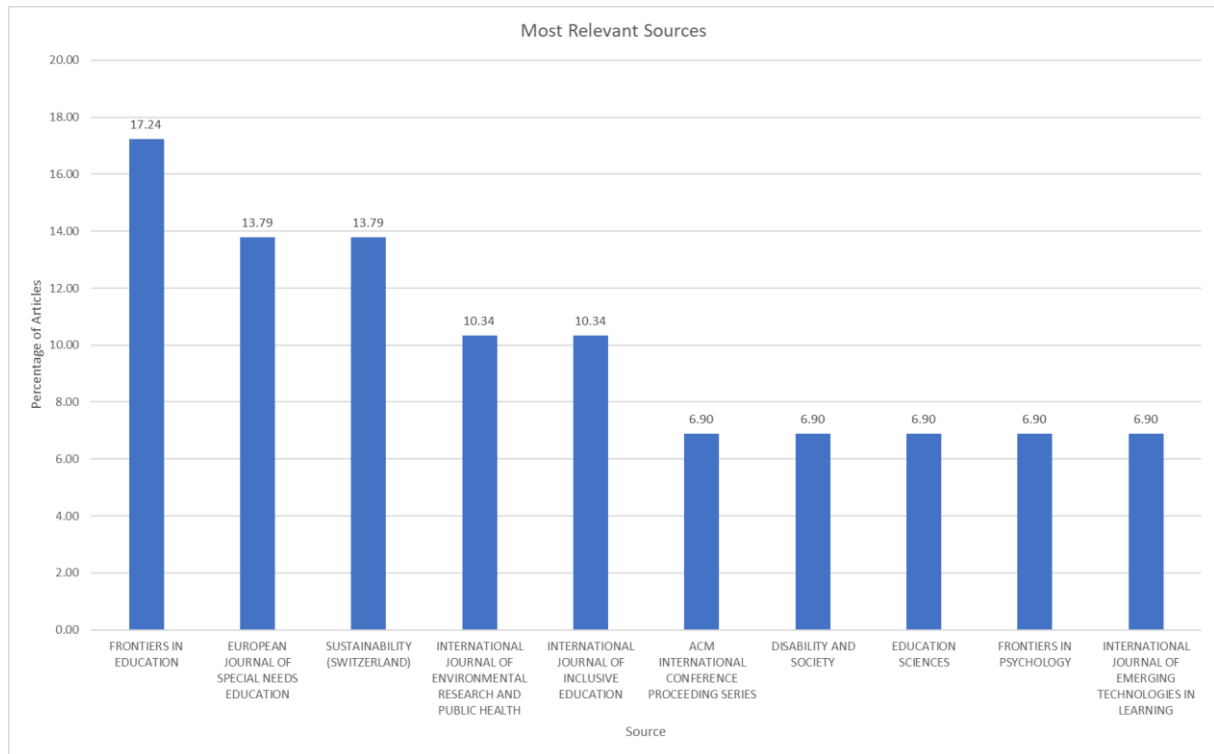
Figure 2: Most Relevant Sources

Countries of Publication

Spain is the leading country in publishing articles in this domain. 11 articles belong to the country, out of which 9 are single country publications and 2 are multiple country publications. USA has published the second highest number of articles (10) where 8 are single country and the only 2 are multiple country publications. The top 20 countries in terms of publishing studies regarding inclusive education in Covid have been showcased in figure 3. It can be observed that majority of the countries have single country publications.
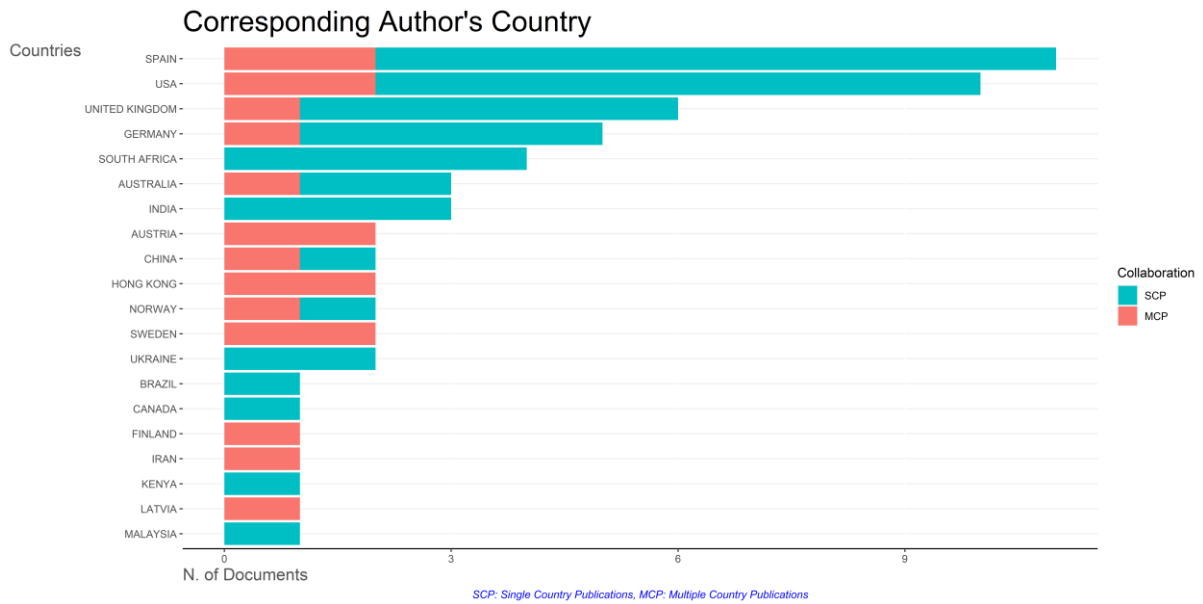
Figure 3: Countries of Publication

Most Relevant Words

The most relevant keywords used by authors are presented in figure 4. Inclusive education and covid-19 are the top 2 keywords used. It is an obvious result as this paper is focusing on inclusive education in the covid-19 period. Online learning, special education, pandemic, disability, and ICT are also relevant keywords. Researchers can use these keywords for further studies in this domain.
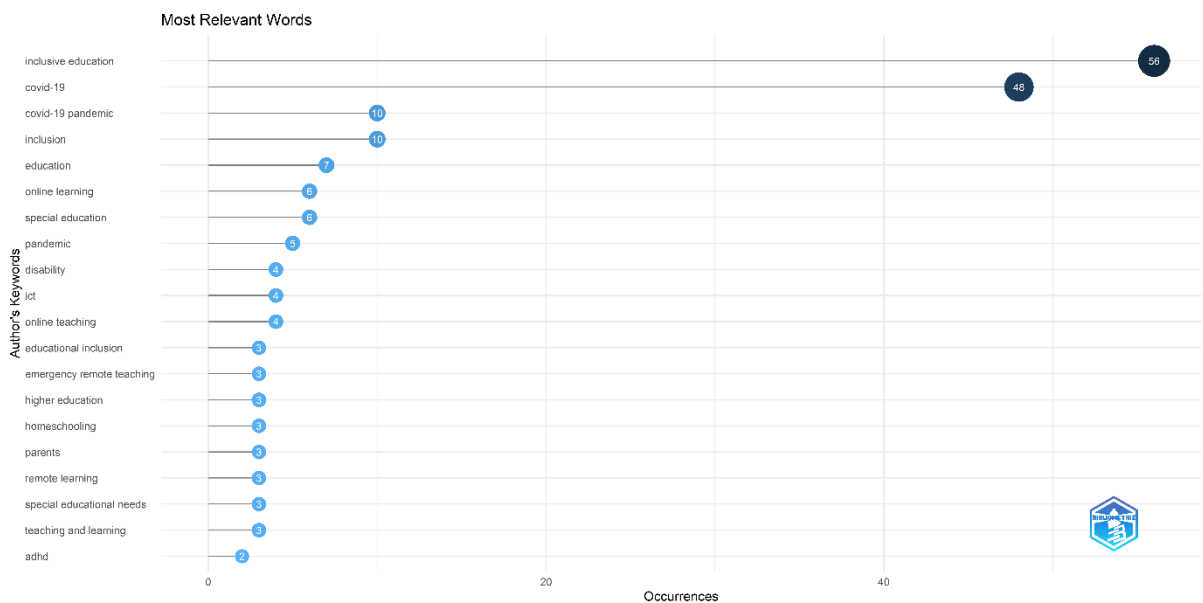
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Figure 4: Most Relevant Words

Core themes

A thematic map has been presented in figure 5 below. The thematic map categorises the keywords used by authors into the 4 segments- the niche, motor, basic and emerging or declining themes. The segments have been created on the basis of relevance degree and development degree. Basic themes are highly relevant,but the scope of development is low. Motor themes are highly relevant with good scope of development, these are the themes popular among researchers. Niche themes are relatively less worked upon but there are chances of growth and development. Declining themes are those which have been studied a lot already and they have low relevance and little or no scope of development.

Keywords like *special education, pandemic, and basic education* liein the basic theme sector. The motor themes *include covid-19 pandemic, education, home schooling, inclusive education, covid-19, and online-learning. Education inclusion, higher education, adolescents* lie in the motor theme sector, but these are close to the centre line indicating it is close to being a niche theme. *Remote learning, health education, and teacher education* lie on the line at the midst of niche theme and emerging theme. The emerging theme segment includes the keywords- *inclusion, emergency remote teaching, attitude, disability and* *ICT*.
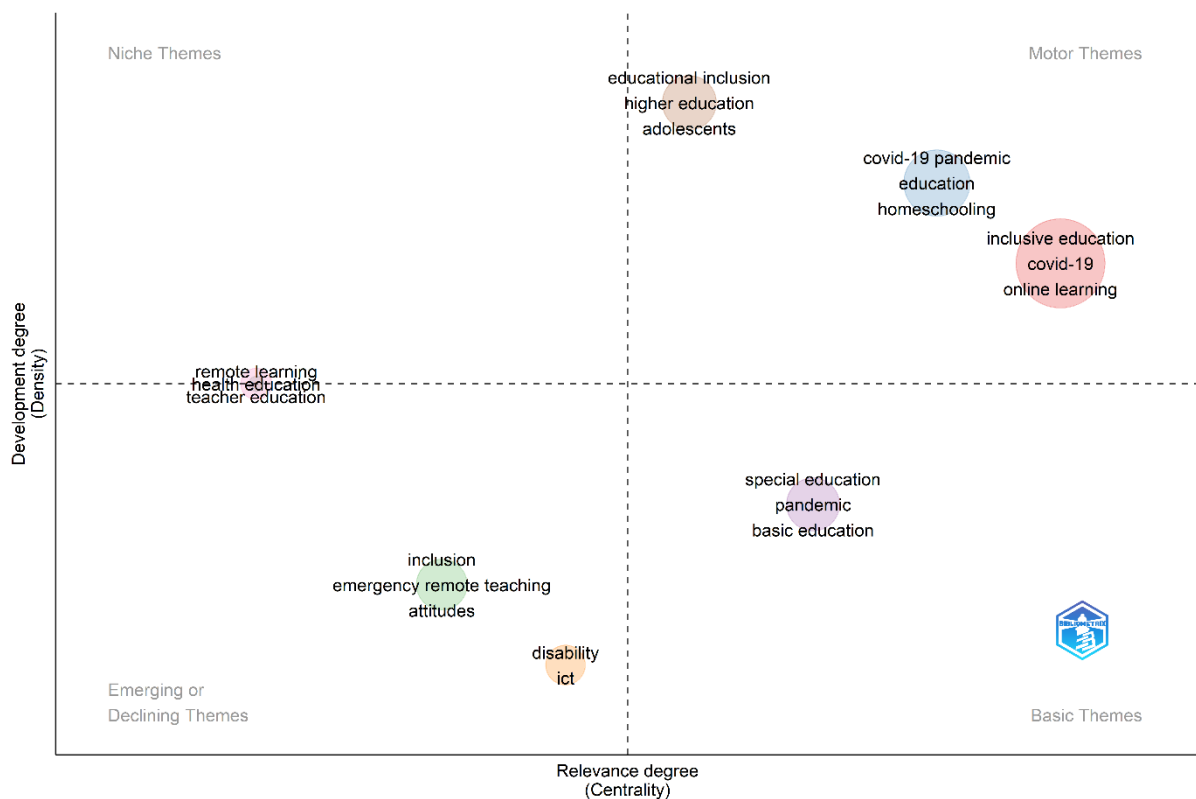

Figure 5: Thematic map of core themes

Conclusion

The main aim of the present study is to present the bibliometric characteristics of articles published on inclusive education and covid-19. This study has considered only Scopus indexed sources. Using inclusive education and Covid-19 provided 115 documents spread across 89 sources. Spain and the United States are the countries which contributed the greatest number of documents. The two journals which contributed highest number of articles are—Frontiers in Education and European Journal of Special Needs Education and Sustainability. The emerging themes include inclusion, teacher attitude, emergency remote teaching and ICT. One of the limitations of the present study is that only Scopus database has been considered. In future, studies can be conducted by considering other databases such as Web of Sciences etc.

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