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Study of the World Scientific Output Trends in the Field of Social Services of Public Libraries in Scopus Database with Scientometrics Approach

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to analyze the research indexed in the Scopus database, related to the field of social services of public libraries from 1939 to 2020.

Methodology: This research is an applied study that has been done by the library and Scientometrics methods. The research community consists of 1465 articles in English. Excel software, descriptive statistics (frequency distribution) were used to analyze the data, and VOS-Viewer, Pajek, Ucinet and Net Draw were used to draw the maps.

Findings: The highest growth trend of scientific productions was recorded in 1979-1983 with 3%, and the lowest growth trend was recorded in the period 2019-2020 with 0.61%. The University of Maryland is the most active organization with 28 degrees. In scientific production, the United States alone is at the top with 37%. According to the most frequent words, the main concepts were classified into five clusters.

Conclusion: The 81-year period showed that the scientific production of social services in public libraries has been increasing. Among domestic universities, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences is in a better position than other domestic universities. "The role of the public library", "Citizens' social participation", "Media literacy and information literacy", "Social capital" and "Scientific communication" are the thematic clusters of research in this field.

Value: This is the first research with a quantitative approach that seeks to investigate research in the field of public library social services that can be useful for policymakers in the area of public library social services.

Keywords: Social Services; Public Libraries, Scopus;

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

Libraries, as a democratic institution, are commissioned to provide the necessary information and also free and full access to the library for all citizens. Some libraries have devised some programs for doing the social services for people that these programs are not unrelated to the values, librarianship goals, and promoting of social justice (Hines, 2015). Looking at the library as a place to gather and build small local communities is regarded as playing a social role of public libraries (Aabø, 2005; Scott, 2011). The Library, as the third place, after home and school, is a space to meet people, to get to know each other, to chitchat and logical discussions or informal gatherings (Aabø, 2005; Audunson, & Vårheim, 2010). On the other hand, to adapt and advance public libraries with new technologies, new needs of users, and new public policies, the term "smart library" was coined to identify resources by the database (Schöpfel, 2018; Gupta & et al., 2020).

Purpose

The main goal of this study is to analyze the research indexed in the Scopus Database, related to the field of social services of public libraries, from 1939 to 2020. Sub-objectives include examining the growth rate of scientific productions, identifying the top organizations and countries, co-authors network of authors, recognizing the most important words of each cluster of the research topic and structural relationship between them, and identifying the most important thematic clusters of scientific outputs in the field of social services of public libraries

Methodology

This research is an applied study that has been done by using of documentary method and scientometrics techniques. The research community of all scientific products indexed in the field of social services of the public library from 1939 to 2020 has been recorded in Scopus Database. In this research, the bibliometric method has been used to collect data. First, the relevant keywords were identified, and the search was performed using Boolean operators and shortening phrases. Finally, on August 9, 2021, 1465 scientific productions were retrieved and entered into Excel software. To make the matrix of practical cooperation of countries and authors, the matrix of their scientific cooperation was created using pajek software. Using Bibexcel software, the organization names and keywords were extracted. In this study, Pajek UciNet, VOSviewer, and Net Draw softwares were used to draw the co-authorship map of the authors and organizations, and also the co-occurrence of words and UciNet software was used in calculating the information related to macro and micro indicators of the network, and Excel software was used to calculate the growth rate of scientific products and to estimate the share of each country in scientific products

Findings

According to the findings related to the trend of the scientific production in the field of social services of public libraries, the process of public libraries, it was determined that the process of scientific output of this field during 1968 - 1968 was fragile and only four documents have been produced. Since then, scientific production has been had a positive trend and has consistently been increased, and the most scientific production has been released during 2014 - 2018. Also, the average growth rate in each five years has been equal to 0.73%. Universities in the world and Iran have performed very poorly in terms



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of scientific cooperation in the field of public libraries services, and there is little motivation to cooperate with organizations at the national and international levels. Figure 2 shows the network of scientific cooperation between countries. The United States is at the center of the map, and with 17 links (collaboration) and 40 link strengths, it is the top country in the network and has the most international participation and the highest network centrality.

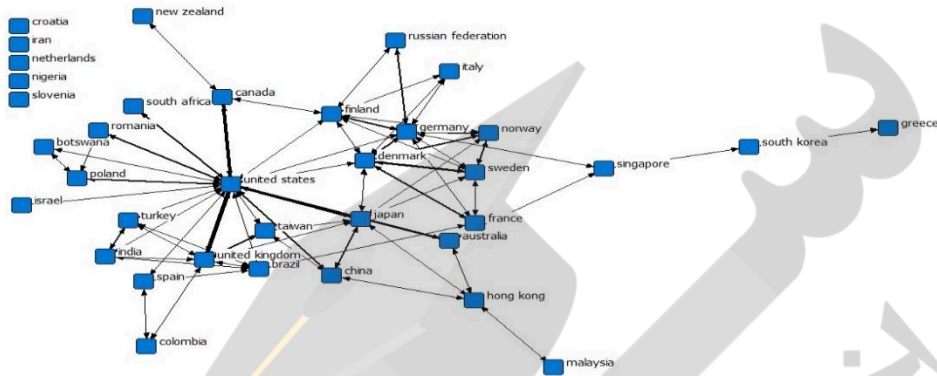


Figure 1: Map of scientific cooperation of countries in the field of social services of the public library

Also, in the co-authorship network, Bertot with 22, Jaeger with 18, and McClure with 12 documents are among the most influential researchers in the field of public libraries services, still, the ranking index in the co-authorship network shows the very low tendency of authors in co-authorship with other people. Also, a co-occurrence network of words consists of 5 clusters, 135 nodes, 16906 the overall link strength, and 3127 links. In Figure 2, locating the node of the "Social Network" and "Space" node near the node indicates the importance of the two terms and their relationship, and the location of the "Health" node means its distant link with the Public Library concept.



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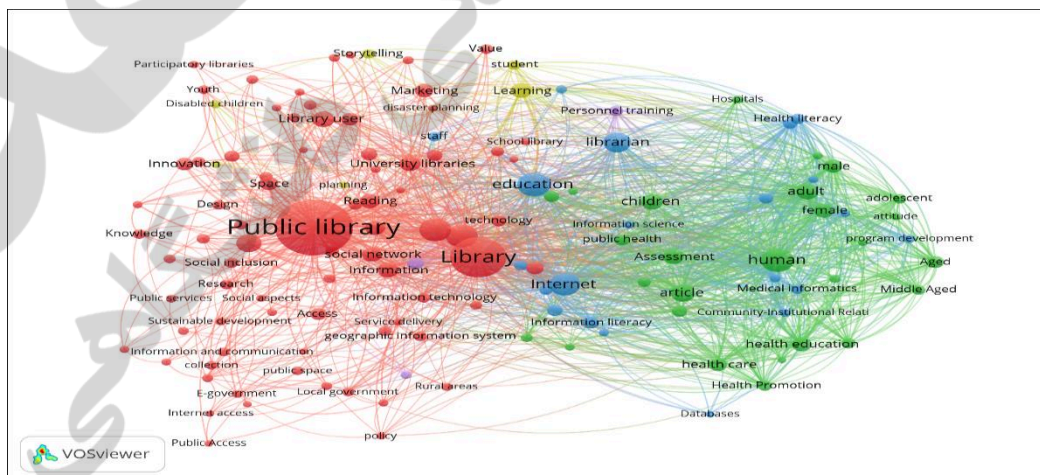


Figure 2: word co-occurrence map in the field of social services of public libraries

According to the majority of frequently used words, the main concepts of clusters were examined under the titles of "role of the public library", "citizens' social participation", "media literacy and information literacy", "social capital", and "scientific communication".

Conclusion

The main goal of the public library in social participation is to reach a developed and transcendent society, and accordingly, its role is to raise public awareness and promote culture. The position of information literacy skills as one of the apparent requirements of today's information society should be studied in the documents of the public libraries institution in the country. Emphasis and attention to information literacy skills in public libraries will be the basis for realizing one of the essential values and goals, which is to participate in literacy and lifelong learning and facilitate the knowledge cycle. Public library librarians can achieve the highest level of creativity and organizational efficiency by promoting social capital, because strengthening the spirit of creativity and innovation among librarians can pave the way for providing new and valuable services to libraries clients that will lead to high user satisfaction. Librarians of public libraries should also take on another role according to their relationship with a wide range of people, in addition to their main role, which is to meet the information needs of clients and provide appropriate information resources based on their needs.

Value

This research aims to help improve the understanding of prevailing intellectual tendencies and discourses in this field. Utilizing various scientometric indicators, this effort reveals multiple aspects of scientific and research performance in public libraries social services, identifies strengths and weaknesses, and paves the precise way for policymaking and decision making. This method can be effective in facilitating the recognition of the social services field in public libraries and identifying types of services. Therefore, the present study analyzes the scientific outputs of researchers in the area of social services of public libraries through scientometric research.

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