

A DECADE OF IDENTITY STUDIES: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF GLOBAL TRENDS AND SCHOLARLY IMPACT

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ABSTRACT:

Introduction:

Identity studies, as an interdisciplinary field, have evolved rapidly over the past decade, addressing a broad range of social, political, and cultural issues related to the construction and negotiation of identity. This article provides a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of research output in the field of identity studies from 2010 to 2020. The analysis explores global trends, major themes, and the scholarly impact of publications, offering insights into how the field has developed and identifying key areas of focus within academic research.

Methods:

A bibliometric methodology was employed to analyze over 3,000 academic publications related to identity studies, retrieved from databases such as Web of Science, Scopus, and Google Scholar. The data were processed using bibliometric tools to examine publication trends, citation patterns, and the geographical distribution of research output. Additionally, keyword analysis and co-citation mapping were used to identify the central themes, influential authors, and emerging research directions within identity studies.

Results:

The results indicate significant growth in the volume of publications on identity studies over the past decade, with notable peaks in research output occurring in response to global social movements and political changes. The United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia were identified as the leading countries in terms of research productivity. Major themes emerging in the field include intersectionality, gender and sexual identities, postcolonial identity, racial and ethnic identity, and digital identities. A significant increase in interdisciplinary research involving psychology, sociology, political science, and cultural studies was also observed.

Discussion:

The analysis highlights the increasing relevance of identity studies in contemporary academic discourse, driven by global political events such as the rise of populism, movements for racial justice, and debates surrounding migration and multiculturalism. The interdisciplinary nature of

the field has led to a more complex understanding of identity, with scholars increasingly engaging with new technologies, digital platforms, and social media in the study of selfhood and collective belonging. However, the results also reveal gaps in research, particularly in non-Western perspectives and non-academic contributions to the discourse. Future research directions include the need for more inclusive frameworks that integrate diverse cultural, geographical, and political viewpoints.

Conclusion:

This bibliometric analysis demonstrates the robust growth and evolving nature of identity studies over the past decade. By mapping global trends and scholarly impact, it offers a clearer understanding of the current state of the field and the trajectories that academic research in identity studies may follow in the future. The findings underscore the importance of continuing to expand the scope of identity research to incorporate diverse global perspectives and address emerging issues in the study of identity.

KEYWORDS: Identity studies, bibliometric analysis, global trends, scholarly impact, research trends, academic influence, citation analysis, identity theory, interdisciplinary studies, knowledge mapping, research evaluation, publication trends, academic discourse, citation networks, scholarly publishing, global research landscape, identity research, bibliometrics, scientific impact, evolution of identity studies.

INTRODUCTION

Identity studies, a field with roots in sociology, psychology, anthropology, and cultural studies, has gained significant academic traction over the past decade. As a multifaceted subject, identity studies seeks to understand how individuals and groups define themselves, negotiate social belonging, and navigate the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, and other markers of identity. This field has expanded alongside global movements advocating for racial equality, gender rights, LGBTQ+ inclusion, and the recognition of postcolonial histories.

Despite the growing body of research, the development of identity studies as a scholarly discipline remains underexplored in terms of its academic output, trends, and overall impact. This article seeks to fill this gap by providing a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of identity studies over the past decade. It examines the quantitative trends in publication activity, the most cited works, key contributors to the field, and the changing dynamics of identity-related research. The study aims to present a clear picture of how identity studies have evolved in both theoretical and methodological terms, and to identify which issues have dominated the discourse.

METHODS

A bibliometric approach was chosen to analyze the trajectory of research within identity studies. The data for this study were gathered from three leading academic databases: Web of Science, Scopus, and Google Scholar. The search terms used included “identity studies,” “social identity,”

“cultural identity,” “gender identity,” “ethnic identity,” and related keywords. Over 3,000 articles published between 2010 and 2020 were retrieved.

Data analysis was conducted using bibliometric software such as VOSviewer and Bibliometrix to analyze publication trends, citation patterns, and the geographical distribution of research. The following dimensions were specifically examined:

- Publication trends: Number of publications per year, growth rate, and citation counts.
- Keywords analysis: Most frequent keywords, keyword clustering, and evolving themes within identity studies.
- Co-citation analysis: Identification of frequently cited authors and the relationships between key scholars and works.
- Geographical analysis: Distribution of research output by country and institution.

The results were used to identify central themes in the field, influential scholars, and gaps in research.

RESULTS

1. Publication Trends and Growth

The number of publications in identity studies has increased dramatically over the past decade, with a particularly sharp rise in publications between 2015 and 2020. The total number of papers grew by more than 45%, reflecting the field’s increasing prominence in academic discourse. The highest volume of publications came from journals in the fields of sociology, cultural studies, and psychology, with interdisciplinary research becoming more common.

The United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia led the world in research output, followed by Canada, Germany, and Brazil. Notably, countries in the Global South, such as India and South Africa, showed increased interest in identity-related topics, but their research volume remained comparatively low.

2. Key Themes in Identity Studies

The keyword analysis revealed several key themes dominating the field of identity studies over the decade. These themes included:

- Intersectionality: The study of how multiple aspects of identity (e.g., race, gender, sexuality) intersect and interact to shape lived experiences.
- Gender and Sexual Identity: Increasing attention to non-binary, queer, and transgender identities, particularly in the context of social justice movements.
- Postcolonial Identity: Research focusing on the impact of colonial histories and contemporary postcolonial identities.
- Racial and Ethnic Identity: Studies on the racialization of identity, including whiteness studies, critical race theory, and the experiences of racial minorities.
- Digital Identities: Exploration of how social media and digital platforms have transformed self-perception and the construction of identities.

3. Citations and Scholarly Impact

The analysis identified key scholars who have significantly contributed to shaping the field. Authors such as Judith Butler, Stuart Hall, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and bell hooks appeared frequently in the bibliographic references, with their works on gender, race, and intersectionality being

central to academic discourse on identity. Citation analysis revealed a growing interest in empirical studies, though theoretical frameworks continued to dominate early research in the decade.

The most cited publications were those that integrated identity theory with social movements, focusing on real-world applications such as gender equality, racial justice, and LGBTQ+ rights.

4. Geographical Distribution of Research

The research output in identity studies was highly concentrated in Western countries, with the U.S., U.K., and Australia making up over 60% of the total publications. However, the analysis also showed an increasing number of collaborations between scholars from the Global South, reflecting a growing recognition of the importance of non-Western perspectives in the study of identity. There was, however, an underrepresentation of research from African, Middle Eastern, and South Asian scholars on topics like religion, diaspora, and indigenous identity.

DISCUSSION

The findings highlight the rapid development of identity studies as a global academic field. The decade of growth in research output correlates with significant social and political events, such as the Black Lives Matter movement, the rise of populism, and increasing LGBTQ+ rights advocacy. These movements, along with the growing prominence of social media, have sparked widespread academic interest in understanding how identities are constructed, contested, and negotiated in public life.

The field's interdisciplinary nature has been one of its greatest strengths, but it also presents challenges in terms of integration. The complex interaction between psychological, sociological, and cultural theories of identity calls for more collaborative research across disciplines. Additionally, there is a notable gap in the representation of non-Western perspectives, which limits the universality of current theories and findings.

As the field continues to evolve, future research should seek to address these gaps by incorporating a wider range of cultural, political, and regional perspectives. Furthermore, emerging topics like digital and virtual identities, as well as the increasing role of artificial intelligence in identity formation, will likely drive the next wave of research.

CONCLUSION

This bibliometric analysis underscores the growth, diversity, and interdisciplinary nature of identity studies over the past decade. While the field has gained global significance, there remain key challenges, including the underrepresentation of non-Western viewpoints and the need for greater integration across academic disciplines. Moving forward, researchers must engage more deeply with these global perspectives and emerging issues in technology to continue advancing the field and its relevance to contemporary social and political challenges.

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