TOP MOST CITED ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN THE JOURNAL '*SOCIOLOGY*': A SCIENTOMETRIC ANALYSIS

Dr. SUNIL KUMAR P.
Chief librarian (UGC)
Loyola College of Social Sciences
Thiruvananthapuram-695017
Kerala, India
librarian@loyolacollegekerala.edu.in
sunilloyola@gmail.com

Dr. RENJITH V. R.
Librarian
Dept. of History
University of Kerala
Thiruvananthapuram-695581
renjithlib@keralauniversity.ac.in

Dr. ANTONY PALACKAL
Professor
Dept. of Sociology
University of Kerala
Thiruvananthapuram-695581
antonypalackal@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to scientometrically analyse the top most cited articles published in the journal 'Sociology'- the journal of the British Sociological Association. The most cited papers were identified by a search in the database of Clarivate Analytics Web of Science (WoS), using the search term "SO =Sociology, the Journal of the British Sociological Association". The search was conducted in WoS Core Collections on 16th September 2021. The top-cited 101 papers were identified based on their citation counts. For every selected article, extracted the full record with cited references. Shapiro-Wilk test was employed to test the normality of distribution. Spearman's rho correlation was applied to find correlations of citation density with the age of publications and citation counts. The present study employed VOS viewer software, bibliometric software for visual analysis, for visualization of bibliometric maps. The study identified the highly prolific authors of top-cited papers, the organizations contributing top-cited papers, the most cited sources in the top-cited papers, the countries contributing top-cited papers, the most cited authors in the top-cited papers,and found the co-occurrence of keywords of top-cited papers and analysed the overall trend and direction of research of the subject of sociology.

Keywords: Scientometrics, Bibliometrics, Sociology, Citation Analysis, Co-citation, Citation Density, Age of Publication, Citation count, Most Cited Articles, Most Cited Authors, Prolific Authors, Keyword Analysis, Co-occurrence- Keywords, British Sociological Association.

1. Introduction

Scientometrics involves measuring and analysing scholarly literature, usually by applying statistical and mathematical techniques. It has become popular, both as a field of study and a set of methods. Scientometric studies are carried out at varying levels, from micro to macro. Institutions of higher learning and governments adopt scientometric measures to make informed decisions, ranking, planning, and funding. Institutions, countries, and scholars can be evaluated using reliable scientometric indicators that are also meaningful instruments in studying disciplines. Thus, it serves to determine the future of academic disciplines as well. However, it has not been applied much to the study of the social sciences, especially sociology, as it has been used in science disciplines. This article tries to understand developments in sociology using the tools and methodology of scientometrics. Journals are the source of original studies. Therefore, this article statistically analyses the studies in sociology using the journal of the British Association of Sociology. The citation data of the journal viz. '*Sociology*' was collected from the Web of Science and analysed at the article and author levels. The study focuses on highly cited articles, the association of citation density with publication age, and citation count. It also looks into the highly prolific authors of top-cited papers and identifies the organizations and the countries contributing top-cited papers. The article examines the co-

occurrence of keywords of top-cited papers to analyze the overall trend and direction of research of the subject of sociology. It also identifies the most cited sources and the most cited authors in the top-cited papers.

2. British Sociological Association (BSA)

BSA, the sociological association of the UK, was instituted in 1951. It aims at promoting sociology and is the largest sociological network in the UK, acting as the public face of sociology in Britain. Its membership is given to anybody having a genuine involvement in studying society by applying the methodology and processes of sociology and viewing social realities through a sociologist's lens. One of the critical activities of the association is the publication, especially academic journals, which helped a lot to shape the discipline.

2.1. 'Sociology'

The journal 'Sociology' is a flagship publication of the association, published bi-monthly. It is one of the leading journals in sociology, co-published by Sage Publications. For the last fifty years, the journal has achieved an international reputation. The publication of nascent research sparked debates, which helped shape the discipline of Sociology. The journal publishes book reviews, review symposia, interviews, and theoretical and empirical research articles.

3. Review of Literature

There are plenty of bibliometrics studies seen in literature dealing with journals of various types in the field of Science, Applied Science, Arts, Humanities etc. Since present study focuses on analysing the journal 'Sociology' scientometrically and an analysis of the characteristics of the field of Sociology in detail, this review of literature gives importance to scientometric studies of the discipline of sociology and related fields only.

There were very few studies dealing with the scientometric analysis of the discipline of sociology. One of such studies by Sooryamoorthy, aimed at revealing the importance of scientometrics to the study of

the discipline, applied qualitative research techniques such as coding, categorizing, and thematic analysis to scientometrically examine sociology. It is done by reviewing some key scientometrics studies of the discipline. (Sooryamoorthy, 2020). Overview of featured collection on a bibliometric analysis of environmental and resources sociology has been done by Prokopy and Hovardes (2020). The study by Ali et al. (2020) investigates how the top journals of sociology have been treating the issue of environment since 1990s. This research paper by Hassan et al. (2021) presents an overview of the *Journal of International Womens Studies* in which prolific writers and frequently cited papers are highlighted.

Journal rankings in Sociology using h-index with google scholar has been studied by Jacobs (2016).

A bibliometric study of the contribution to Indian Sociology has been studied by Kumar et al. (2012)

Thanuskodi (2010) did a bibliometric study of the *Journal of Social Sciences*. Another study of an Indian journal in the field of sociology has been done by Ghuman (2019) who did a bibliometric study of *Guru Nanak Journal of Sociology*. In another attempt, Aaltojärvi et al. (2008), in their article Scientific productivity, web visibility, and citation patterns in sixteen Nordic sociology departments, used Google Scholar (GS) data to address certain research questions.

The study on the productivity and impact of the publications of the sociology faculty in 16 departments in five Nordic countries (Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark, and Iceland)by Bjarnason and Sigfusdottir aimed to present the productivity of and citations to publications produced by the faculty to find the connection between the citations to publications, academic rank and the productivity of authors, and to examine the effects of productivity and citations on the individuals and departments (Bjarnason and Sigfusdottir, 2002). Phelan (2000) did a bibliometric study of *Australian Sociology.*

76

One of the applications of scientometrics is to analyse co-authorship patterns and hence to get an intuition about the networks existing among the authors. De Haan (1997) conducted analysis in this direction. The study looked at authorship patterns in Dutch sociology. Scientometric techniques can also be used to analyse the citation pattern of different dimensions of a discipline. Peritz(1983) tried to find out whether methodological papers published in core sociological journals are more frequently cited than theoretical or empirical (substantive) papers.

The review of literature reveals that there is not many comprehensive quantitative scientometric studies in the field of Sociology to deal with both the bibliographic aspects and the disciplinary aspects. Addressing this, the present study was conducted with the following objectives.

4. Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To trace out the top ten most cited papers published in the journal 'Sociology'in Web of Science (WoS)

2. To determine the association of citation count with age of publication and citation density of top cited papers

3. To identify the highly prolific authors of top cited papers

4. To determine the organizations contributing top cited papers

5. To find out the countries contributing top cited papers.

6. To identify the most cited sources in the top cited papers

7. To find out the most cited authors in the top cited papers

8. To identify the co-occurrence of keywords of top cited papers to analyze the overall trend and direction of research of the subject of sociology

5. Methodology

The most cited papers in the journal 'Sociology' were identified by a search in the database of Clarivate Analytics Web of Science (WoS), using the search term "SO = Sociology, the Journal of the British Sociological Association". The search was conducted in WoS Core Collections on 16th September 2021. The top cited 101 papers were identified based on their citation counts. For every selected paper, full record with cited references was extracted as .csv file and imported into Excel datasheet for further analysis. The statistical package SPSS version 22.0 was used for analysis. The Shapiro-Wilk test was employed to test normality of distribution. The Spearman's rho correlation was used to determine correlations of citation density with age of publications and citation count. Furthermore, the downloaded data were analyzed by using VOS viewer software, bibliometric software for visual analysis. The VOS viewer software supports the WoS files (Van Eck &Waltman, 2010) for constructing and visualization of bibliometric maps.

6. Analysis of Data

6.1. Highly Cited Papers in 'Sociology'

The top 101 most cited articles of the journal 'Sociology" received a total of 22873 citations with a citation range of 115-720 (minimum 115 and maximum 720) in Web of Science (WoS). The average citation per paper is 226.47. Table 1 lists the top most cited 10 articles of the journal 'Sociology' in WoS. The first ranked most cited paper with 720 citations (citation density 60) in WoS was "Implementing, Embedding, and Integrating Practices: An Outline of Normalization Process Theory" authored by May and Finch in 2009. The second ranked most cited article with 696 citations (citation density 34.80) was "Technologies, texts and affordances" by Hutch by in 2001. The third ranked most cited paper with 521 citations (citation density 27.42) was "Mobility and proximity" by Urry in 2002.

77

The three top ranked most cited articles are published after the year 2000, showing an increased access of articles of the journal *Sociology* in the beginning of 21st century. More over these articles are not written by the most prolific authors identified in the study. So, the articles are getting citations based on the thought content, its relevance and contribution to the knowledge base. The first ranked article proposes a theory-Normalization Process Theory, introducing new concepts. It is obvious that such an article with an innovative content fetched the greatest number of citations. The second most cited article by Hutchby "offers a conceptual handle for understanding the 'technological shaping of sociality' and the constraining materiality of artefacts." (Rappert,2003), ignited many discussions and criticisms, leading to attract citations. The third most cited article by Urry discusses the reasons for travel in the changed world with a high degree of integration of communication technologies. The author also deals with the relation of travel with the social networks. As the article analyses communication technologies and social networks in a sociological perspective, it generates intellectual curiosity, resulting in more citations.

Table 1
Top Ten Most Cited Papers

Sl. No.	Article details	Citation Count	Age of Publication (years)	Citation Density
1.	May, C. &Finch, T (2009). Implementing, Embedding, and Integrating Practices: An Outline of Normalization Process Theory. Sociology, 43 (1). 535-554.	720	12	60
2.	Hutchby, I. (2001). Technologies, texts and affordances. Sociology, 35 (2). 441-456.	696	20	34.80
3.	Urry, J. (2002). Mobility and proximity. Sociology, 36 (2). 255-274.	521	19	27.42
4.	Savage, M., Devine, F., Cunningham, N., Taylor, M., Li, Y.J., Hjellbrekke, J., Le Roux, B., Friedman, S., & Miles, A. (2013). A New Model of Social Class ? Findings from the BBC's Great British Class Survey Experiment. Sociology, 47 (2). 219-250.	519	8	64.88
5.	Savage, M., & Burrows, R. (2007). The coming crisis of empirical sociology. Sociology, 41 (5). 885-899.	507	14	36.21
6.	Mauthner, N.S., & Doucet, A. (2003). Reflexive accounts and accounts of reflexivity in qualitative data analysis. Sociology, 37 (3), 413-437.	460	18	25.56
7.	Bennett, A. (1999). Subcultures or neo-tribes? Rethinking the relationship between youth, style and musical taste. Sociology, 33 (3), 597-606.	456	22	20.73
8	Armstrong, D., Gosling, A., Weinman, J., & Marteau, T. (1997). The place of inter-rater reliability in qualitative research: An empirical study. Sociology, 31 (3), 597-606.	454	24	18.92
9	Skeggs, B. (2005). The making of class and gender through visualizing moral subject formation. Sociology, 39 (5), 965-982.	425	16	26.56
10	Finch, J. (2007). Displaying families. Sociology, 41 (1), 65-81.	402	14	28.71

6.2. Citation Count Vs. Age of Publication of Top Cited Papers

The citation count and the age of publication are not normally distributed (Shapiro-Wilk test; $p < 0.01$). The Spearman's rho (non-parametric correlation) test shows that there is no statistically significant correlation between citation count and age of publication (correlation coefficient = -.062, p =.538) (Table 2 and Figure 1).

This means that the publication age does not act as an influencing factor for articles to get cited. Instead, authors cite articles mainly on consideration of 'relevance' to their study. Therefore, articles reporting innovative, path-breaking studies will get citations irrespective of publication age. Such studies usually give scope for further research in new contexts, unexplored dimensions, and the application of new methodologies.

Table 2

Association of Citation Count with Age of Publication of Top Cited Papers

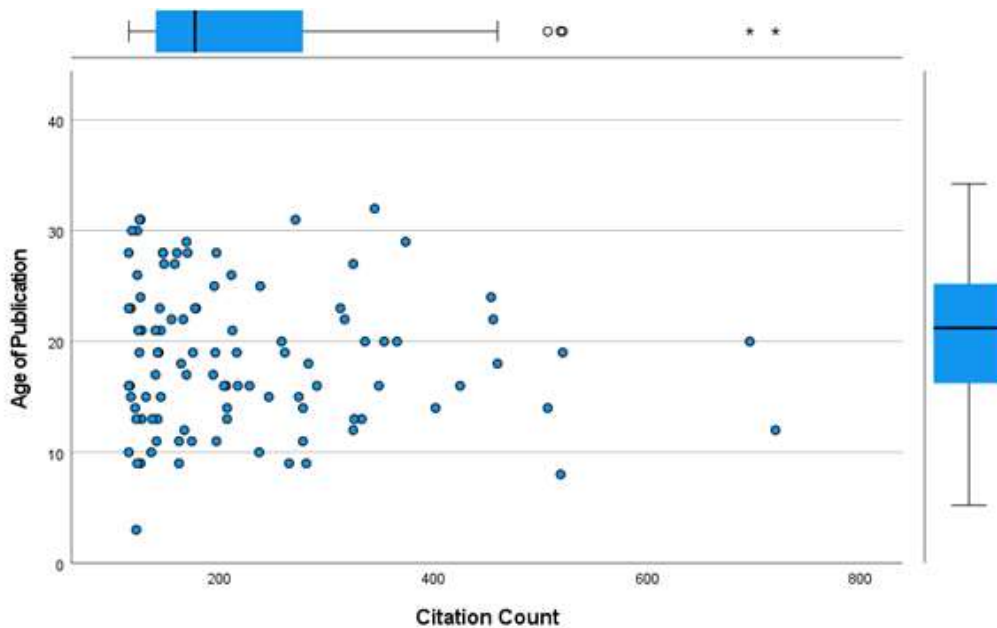| Correlations				Citation Count	Age of Publication
Spearman's rho	Citation Count	Correlation Coefficient		1.000	-.062
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.	.538
		N		101	101
	Age of Publication	Correlation Coefficient		-.062	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.538	.	
		N		101	101

Fig. 1. Scatterplot Examining the Relationship between Citation Count and Age of Publication

79

6.3. Citation Count Vs. Citation Density of Top Cited Papers

The citation count and the citation density are not normally distributed (Shapiro-Wilk test; $p < 0.01$). The Spearman's rho (non-parametric correlation test) shows that there is a statistically significant strong positive correlation between citation density (correlation coefficient = 0.738, $p < 0.001$) with citation count (Table 3 and Figure 2).

Table 3

Association of Citation Count with Citation Density of Top Cited Papers

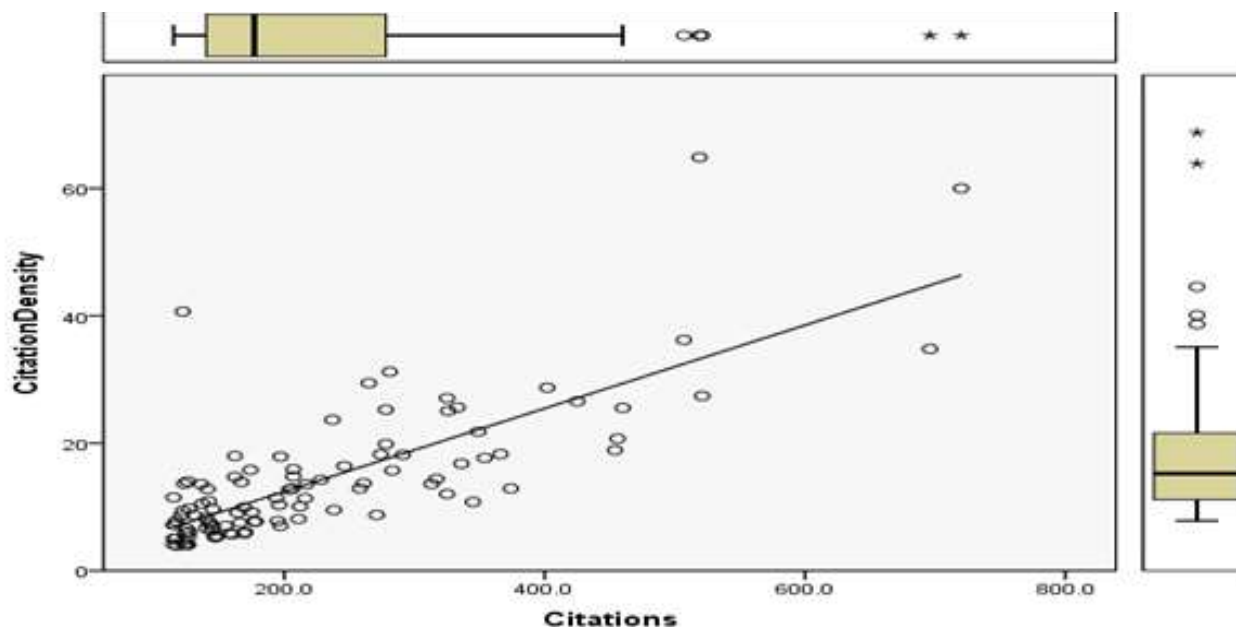| Correlations				
			Citation Count	Citation Density
Spearman's rho	**Citation Count**	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.738**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	-	.000
		N	101	101
	Citation Density	Correlation Coefficient	.738**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	-
		N	101	101
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

Fig. 2. Scatterplot Examining the Relationship between Citations and Citation Density

6.4. Highly Prolific Authors of Top Cited Papers

The number of authors contributing to the top most cited articles in the journal 'Sociology' in WoS is 178. Table 4 displays the prolific authors of the top cited papers of the journal. Of the 178 authors, authors with minimum of two papers. Thus 14 highly prolific authors are listed. Reay D and Savage M are the top contributors with 5 and 3 distinguished papers respectively. The remaining 12 authors contribute two papers each.

The h index is a tool for assessing the cumulative impact of an author's work and impact in performance in terms of citations. It also reflects quantity with quality by comparing publications to citations. The h-index of the highly prolific authors varied from 43 to 3. The author Reay, D, first in the list of highly prolific authors, holds first position in h-index too (h-index of 43). This shows the authenticity of articles and their acceptance among the scholarly community.

Knights, D with 2 papers hold the second position with regard to *h*-index (*h*-index 40). Savage M with 3 papers, the second highly prolific author, is recognized with an *h*-index of 36 and holds the third position as far as *h*-index is concerned. Two of the most prolific authors (Knights, D and Urry, J.) are affiliated with Lancaster University.

Table 4

Highly Prolific Authors of Top Cited Papers

Sl. No.	Author	No. of Papers	Affiliation	Citations	Average Citations	H Index (WoS)
1.	Reay, D.	5	Heriot Watt University	1413	282.6	43
2.	Savage, M.	3	London School Economics & Political Science	1148	382.67	36
3.	Bennett, A.	2	Griffith University, Australia	573	286.5	16
4.	Crozier, Gill	2	University of London	532	266	16
5.	Knights, D.	2	Lancaster University	469	234.5	40
6.	Le Roux, Brigitte	2	Universite de Paris, France	641	320.5	8
7.	Mauthner, N.S.	2	Newcastle University - UK	577	288.5	15
8.	Mckie, L.	2	University of Edinburgh, Scotland	240	120	10
9.	Sewell, G.	2	De Montfort University	570	285	18
10.	Shilling, C.	2	University of Kent, England	283	141.5	24
11.	Turner, B. S.	2	Australian Catholic University	441	220.5	25
12.	Urry, J.	2	Lancaster University	646	323	33
13.	Warde, A.	2	University of Manchester, England	324	162	24
14.	Williams, M.	2	University of Plymouth, England	349	174.5	3

6.5. Institutions Contributing Top Cited Papers

The productivity of the authors based on the collaborative institutions is revealed in the table 5. There are a total of 75 institutions with which the corresponding authors of the top most cited papers in the journal *Sociology* were affiliated with. Table 5 depicts the ten most prolific institutions among them with minimum three papers in the journal

'Sociology'. University of Manachester topped with nine papers followed by University of Lancaster (6) and University of Keele (4). Remaining seven institutions contribute 3 papers each. We can observe that the citations obtained by the publications also shows a similar trend among the institutions contributing top cited papers. University of Manchester with 2459 citations, University of Lancaster with 1656 citations, and University of Keele with 1035 citations.

Table 5

Institutions Contributing Top Cited Papers

Sl. No.	Institution	No. of Papers	Citations
1.	University of Manchester	9	2459
2.	University of Lancaster	6	1656
3.	University of Keele	4	1035
4.	City University of London	3	1206
5.	University of Aberdeen	3	706
6.	University of Edinburgh	3	559
7.	Cardiff University	3	429
8.	University of Cambridge	3	881
9.	University of London	3	714
10.	University of Sheffield	3	483

6.6. Countries Contributing Top Cited Papers

The top most cited papers of the journal *Sociology* originated from 12 countries. Five of the countries with a minimum of 4 publications is listed in table 6, showing the number of papers and the total citations obtained. With respect to the number of publications, England holds first position with 62 papers followed by Scotland (7)

and Australia (5). Canada and Wales contribute 4 each top most cited papers in the journal. Highest number of citations (15569) was received by papers contributed by the country England followed by Scotland (1370) and Australia (913). As the journal *Sociology* is the flagship publication of British Association of Sociology, it is obvious that the most number of top cited papers belonged to Great Britain.

82

Table 6

Countries Contributing Top Cited Papers

Sl.No.	Country	No. of Papers	Citations
1.	England	62	15569
2.	Scotland	7	1370
3.	Australia	5	913
4.	Canada	4	883
5.	Wales	4	803

6.7. Cited Sources in Most Cited Papers

Survey of references of top most cited papers published in the journal *Sociology* indicated that a total of 3335 sources were cited in these papers. Table 7 shows the most cited 7 sources. Figure 3 shows the co-citation map of 104 sources with a minimum citation of 5. As shown in the map. "*Sociology*" with 206 citations was in the first rank. "*British Journal of Sociology*" and "*Sociological Review*" were in the second and third ranks, respectively.

Among the top eight most cited sources, with respect to Impact Factor (IF), *American Sociological Review* comes first (9.654) followed by *Work. Employment and Society* (5.116), and the source journal *Sociology*. As the authors generally refer the journal they wish to publish, there may be a chance to cite papers of that journal. More over *Sociology* is a journal of repute with an IF of 4.816. Hence *Sociology* becomes the most referred cited source by the authors of the most cited papers.

Table 7

Cited Sources in Most Cited Articles

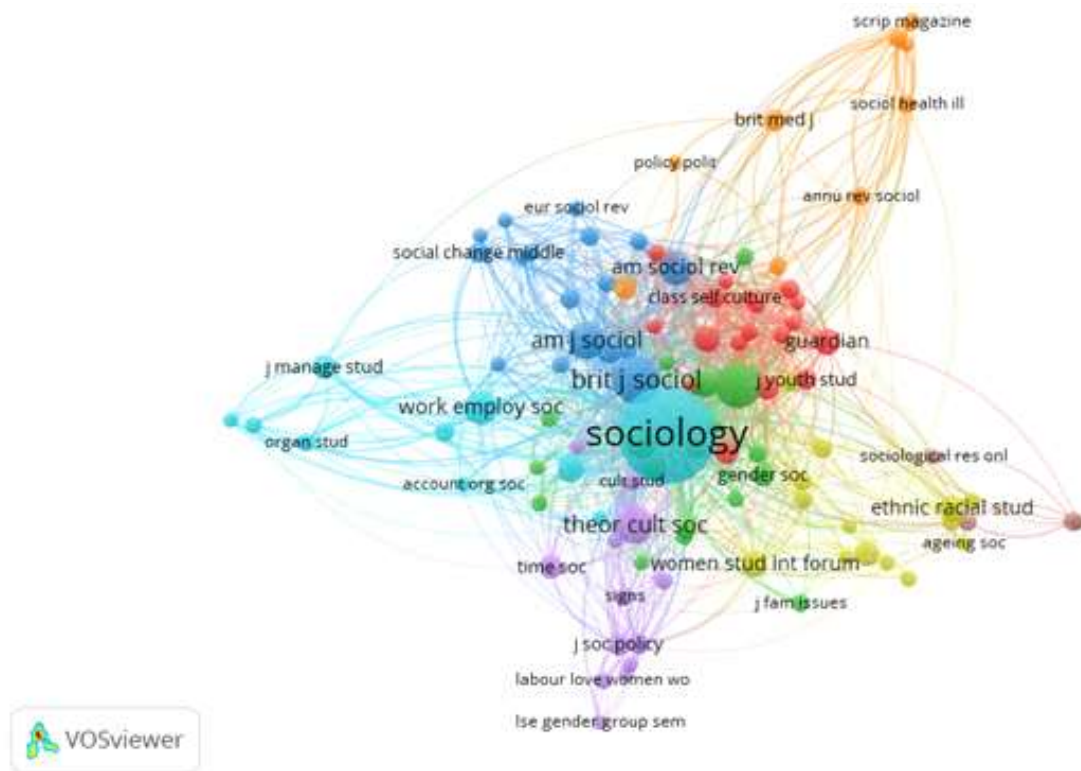| Sl. No.	Source	Citations	IF (2020)	Cite Score (2020)
1.	*Sociology*	206	4.816	5.70
2.	*British Journal of Sociology*	52	2.563	-
3.	*Sociological Review*	46	4.258	4.1
4.	*American Journal of Sociology*	30	4.688	6.9
5.	*Theory, Culture and Society*	30	3.532	4.80
6.	*American Sociological Review*	25	9.654	11.80
7.	*Work. Employment and Society*	24	5.116	5.40

Fig. 3. Co-citation Map of 104 Sources Cited in the Most Cited Articles

6.8. Cited Authors in Most Cited Papers

Overall, 3077 authors have been cited in the top most cited papers of the journal *Sociology*. The co-citation of 102 authors is shown in figure 4. Bourdieu, P. was the most highly-cited author in the references of most cited papers of the journal *Sociology* with 75 citations. Giddens, A. and Beck, U. with 63 and 49 citations were ranked second and third respectively.

The highly cited author, Bourdieu, made significant contributions to the sociology of education, sociological theory, and sociology of aesthetics (Pierre Bourdieu, 2022). Anthony Giddens, one of the most prominent modern sociologists, the second highly cited author of most cited papers put forwarded the theory of structuration and is proponent of holistic view of modern societies (Anthony Giddens, 2022). Ulrich Beck , the third highly cited author of most cited papers was a well-known German sociologist. He contributed on questions of uncontrollability, ignorance and uncertainty in the modern age, and coined the terms "risk society" and "second modernity" or "reflexive modernization" (Beck, 2022) Hence the top cited authors in most cited papers identified by the study are prominent sociologists, contributed significantly to the growth and development of the discipline.
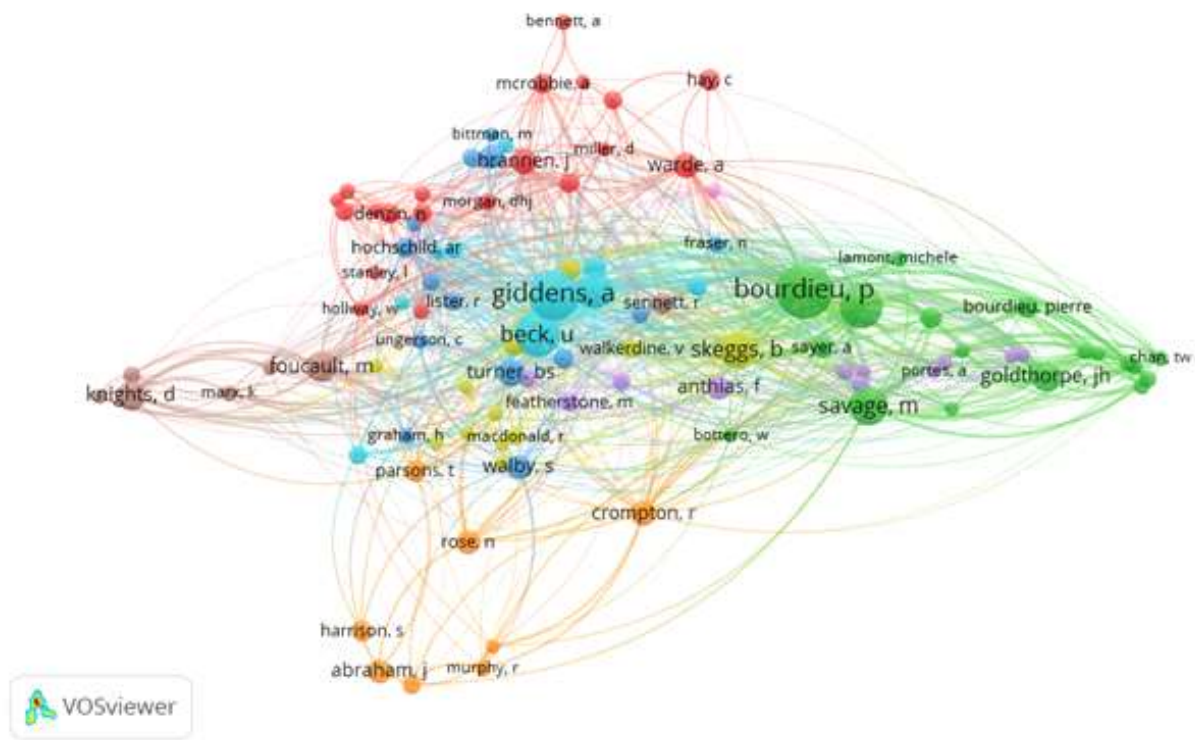
Fig.4. Co-citation Map of 102 Authors Cited in Top Most Cited Papers

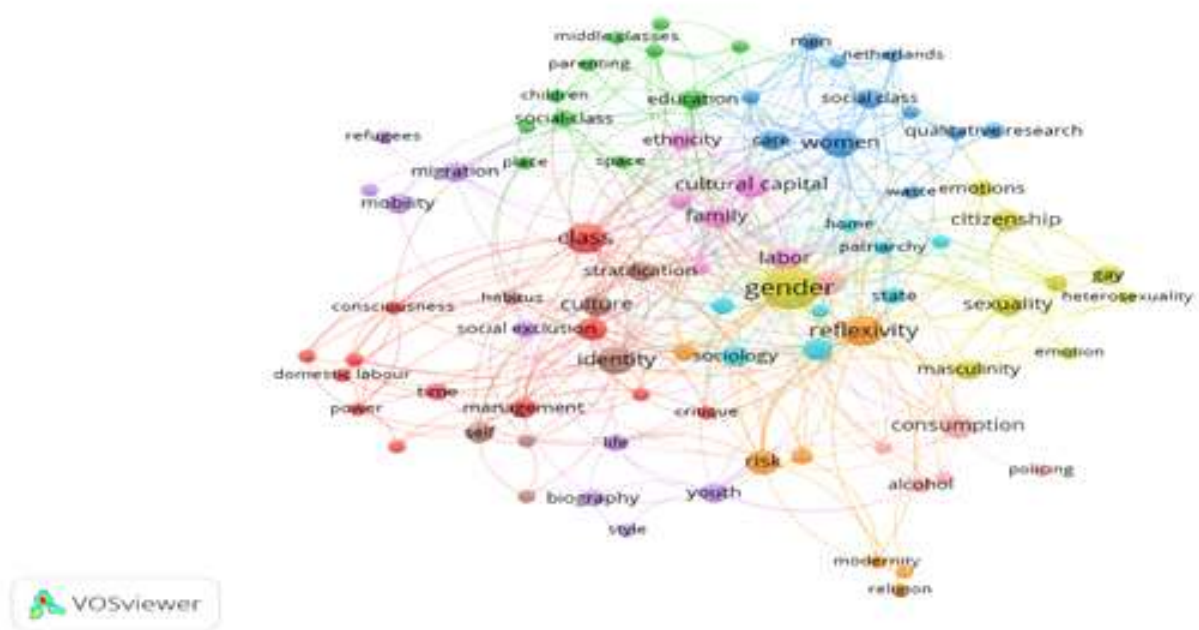## 6.9. Keywords Clustering of Top Cited Papers

Co-occurrence is a technique for identifying the significant and highly frequent terms and keywords used in a document (Laengle et al., 2018). The total numbers of keywords identified in the top most cited articles of the journal *Sociology* are 490. Figure 5 displays the network of co-occurrence of keywords. Here 86 keywords occurring at least 2 times are selected for visualization. The top nine subject keywords that seem to occur most in the top cited articles of the journal *Sociology* are given in Table 8. The most frequent keywords are "Gender" (18), "Class" and "Reflexivity" (9 each), "Women" and "Identity" (8 each), "Cultural Capital" (7) "Consumption", and "Risk" (6 each).

Table 8

Subject Analysis Based on Keywords

Sl. No.	Keyword	No. of Occurrences
1.	Gender	18
2.	Class	9
3.	Reflexivity	9
4.	Women	8
5.	Identity	8
6.	Cultural Capital	7
7.	Consumption	6
8.	Risk	6

85

Fig.5. Network Analysis of Keywords of Top Cited Papers

(The size of the nodes represents the frequency of the keywords, with larger nodes indicating higher frequency. The thickness of the edges is related to the closeness of the interactions between two nodes. Note that the colors of the nodes of the keywords indicate the cluster to which keywords belong).

The clusters to which the keywords belong are identified and listed below.

Cluster 1: Class, Consciousness, Critique, Domestic Labour, Governmentality, Management of labor, Power, Restistance, Time, Time-use and Work.

Cluster 2: Children, Education, Internet, Middle Classes, Multiculturalism, Parenting, Place, Race, Social-class, Space and Whiteness.

Cluster 3: Care, Concepts, Epistemology, Feminism, Men, Netherlands, Quantitative Research, Reproduction, Social class, Waste and Women.

Cluster 4: Citizenship, emotion, emotions, Gay, Gender, Heterosexuality, Intimacy, Masculanity and Sexuality.

Cluster 5: Biography, Globalization, Life, Migration, Mobility, refugees, Social Exclusion, Style and Youth.

Cluster 6: Division, Employment, Home, Medicine, Patriarchy, Politics, Sociology and State.

Cluster 7: Modernity, Reflexivity, Religion, Risk, Self-identity, Social theory and Trust.

Cluster 8: Culture, Habitus, Identity, Knowledge, Self and Social Change and Stratification.

Cluster 9: Bourdieu, Cultural Capital, Ethnicity, Family, Intersectionality and Labor.

Cluster 10: Alcohol, Britain, Consumption, Narrative, Policing and Students.

The oft-repeated key words of the articles that are published in the journal in fact point to the cardinal themes and concerns that seem to set the overall trends and directions of the researches and discourses in contemporary sociology. The key words in general focus on the substantive areas of continuity and change that Sociology delves on as they pertain to the existential predicaments of social life in the present day world. In other words, these key words dwell on the dominant categories

defining culture, politics and identity of the people across the globe, that succinctly captures the manner in which social forces of history and the subsequent changes, affected the conceptual, theoretical and substantive concerns of sociology and elucidates on the nature and magnitude of knowledge production in the sociological domain.

Further, these key words bring to surface the fact that as themes and concerns in sociology of the present day world get more and more diversified and differentiated, it becomes highly interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary. As a result, it is possible that there could be a lot of overlapping and crisscrossing of themes and categories in the articles that might inhibit the editor/s of the journal to set, 'boundary conditions' in the choice of the articles as they tend to crisscross, repeat and trespass into multiple disciplinary terrains. This is more than warranted as the categories demand interdisciplinary treatment by their very nature. Therefore, it is important to reckon with the fact that the key words embedded in the articles perhaps have been generated on the basis of the researches and studies in various other social science disciplines such as history, political science, economics, women studies, semiotics as well, that are essentially sociological in nature.

More specifically, take the case of the most repeated key word, gender that hit eighteen times which is to be juxtaposed with the key word women that has nine occurrences. Characteristically, gender and women, the two themes that go together, invariably cut across and spread over most of the other key words such as class, identity, consumption and so on. Studies on gender, culture and society uncover the different ways in which the issues of masculinity, femininity, womanhood, class, identity, and consumption are all intertwined with the issue of sustaining and perpetuating the stereotypical practices of gender relations and the questions of power between the genders. At this juncture, it is important to consider that the studies on gender and women in the present day world are also likely to engage with the issues of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities.

Similarly the discourses on class, reflexivity, identity, cultural capital and consumption, the other key words that received higher hits are all interconnected and intertwined in contemporary sociological terrain in the context of the emerging discursive fields. These include global-local market interface that substantively define the consumption practices, the rise of subaltern consciousness of the indigenous communities across the globe along with the labour movements, among others (Giddens 1990, Jameson 1992, Bourdieu 1992). As a result, newer questions on reflexivity, identity, cultural capital and consumption have emerged in the sociological parlance, especially with the rise of the middle class whose consumption practices tend to define their reframed identity. Moreover, in the age of globalization, driven by the post capitalist production and marketing forces, countries around the world, have been flooded with disasters, both natural and man-made, and hence, the contemporary society is characterized as 'Risk Society' (Giddens 1990, Beck 1992, Bauman 1998). It is in this context, it is quite natural that 'risk' appears as one of the hit key words in the journal.

7. Findings

The major findings of the study are:

- The first ranked most cited paper in WoS was "Implementing, Embedding, and Integrating Practices: An Outline of Normalization Process Theory", followed by the paper titled "Technologies, texts and affordances" and the paper titled "Mobility and proximity". These articles propose new theories, concepts, ideas, and explanations in the field of Sociology.

- It is found that top ranked articles are not written by most prolific authors, which shows that articles

are getting citations based on the thought content and contribution to knowledge base.

- In the journal *Sociology* among the top most cited articles, the publication age does not act as an influencing factor for articles to get cited. There is no statistically significant correlation between citation count and age of publication (Correlation coefficient = -.062, p =.538).

- There is a statistically significant strong positive correlation between citation density and citation count (Spearman's rho correlation coefficient = 0.738, p < 0.001).

- Reay D and Savage M are the top contributors of the top cited papers of the *Sociology* with 5 and 3 distinguished papers respectively.

- The productivity of the authors based on the collaborative institutions revealed that among the institutions contributing top cited papers, University of Manchester topped with nine papers followed by University of Lancaster six papers and University of Keele four papers.

- With respect to the most prolific countries contributing top cited papers, England holds first position with 62 papers followed by Scotland with seven, and Australia with five. The journal 'sociology' is published from England and thus the top contributing country is England.

- Survey of references of top most cited papers published in the journal *Sociology* indicated that a total of 3335 sources were cited in these papers. The journal *Sociology* topped with 206 citations, followed by "*British Journal of Sociology*" (52) and "*Sociological Review*(46)".

- A total of 3077 authors have been cited in the top most cited papers of the journal *Sociology*. Bourdieu, P. was the most cited author in the references of most cited papers of the journal *Sociology* with 75 citations. Giddens, A. and Beck, U. with 63 and 49 citations were ranked second and third respectively.

- Co-occurrence for identifying the significant and highly frequent keywords in the top most cited articles of the journal *Sociology* resulted in 490 subject terms. The top nine subject keywords that seem to occur most in the top cited articles are "Gender" (18), "Class" and "Reflexivity" (9 each), "Women" and "Identity" (8 each), "Cultural Capital" (7) "Consumption", and "Risk" (6 each). These keywords belong to ten clusters point to the cardinal themes and concerns of sociology.

8. Conclusion

Citation count is a common bibliometric tool used to determine the long-term impact and performance of journal articles. In general, the number of citations is an indicator of the quality of the article, and the higher the number of citations, the greater the chance for the thought content of the article to become innovative and creative, contributing to the knowledge base. The present study helps in getting conversant with the highly cited articles, most influential researchers, productive countries, and frequently used keywords in *Sociology* Journal. The most occurred keywords give an understanding of the subject dispersion that is covered in the most-cited papers. The key words in general focus on the substantive areas of continuity and change that sociology delves on as they pertain to the existential predicaments of social life in the present-day world. Further, these key words bring to surface the fact that as themes and concerns in sociology get more

and more diversified and differentiated, it becomes highly interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary.

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