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TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS FOR THE PURPOSE OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF YOUNG WOMEN AND ADOLESCENTS: A BIBLIOMETRIC STUDY 2015-2025

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ABSTRACT

Human trafficking is an increasingly complex issue due to its increasing severity, the number of cases, and the use of sophisticated methods and tricks to subject the victim to different types of exploitation, including sexual exploitation. The objective of this research was to explore human trafficking for the sexual exploitation of young women and adolescents through the analysis of scientific production according to different bibliometric indicators. The methodology was approached from the bibliometric analysis method, which allowed for the quantitative examination of the contribution and growth of research associated with the topic in question. The quantitative approach, with a descriptive scope, allowed for the collection of statistical data and, subsequently, a detailed synthesis and interpretation of the results. The search was carried out in the Scopus database, using topics. In addition, inclusion criteria defined by year of publication (2015-2025) were considered. type of document (article) and language (English and Spanish). A search string was ultimately obtained using Boolean operators AND and OR; Bibliometrix (RStudio) was used to process the output and create the graphs for the trend graphs, and VOSviewer was used for the cluster networks. A total of 172 scientific articles published in 87 sources, with affiliations and geographically located in the United States, were analyzed. An annual growth rate of -5.88% was observed, with peaks and valleys indicating a decline in output over the period. The main subject areas were Medicine, Psychology, and Social Sciences. Co-occurrence identified 1,392 keywords, and only 107 met the threshold, forming four groups of nodes (clusters). The number of co-authors was 572, with only eight linked to at least two collaborative studies with a minimum of five citations. The most influential author was Farrell Amy. Using thematic mapping, the Relevance and Progress of Key Themes identified strengths and weaknesses, translating them into opportunities for advancing knowledge about human trafficking for sexual exploitation.

KEYWORDS: Human Trafficking, Sexual Exploitation, Women, Adolescents, Traffickers, Bibliometric Study.

1. INTRODUCTION

On a global scale, threats to human security such as regional crises, inter-state hostilities, nuclear proliferation and civil war have transcended conventional boundaries. Authors such as São Paulo mention human trafficking as one of the illegal activities that violate universally known human rights, causing significant and irreversible damage. For their part, they point out that it is one of the most important emerging criminal phenomena in a globalized world where the gap between industrialized countries and those of the third and fourth world is increasingly visible. As indicated by the , it is one of the most profitable businesses, which ranks second only to drug trafficking and above the sale of weapons. (Dolhan et al., 2021) Cockbain et al. (2024) Fernández and García (2020) United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC] (2023)

For human trafficking, it is an increasingly complex problem, due to its increasing severity, the number of cases and the use of sophisticated methods and tricks. In addition, it is known to be a modern form of slavery. On the part of the Constitution Thung (2025) (Vigano, 2024) UNODC (2023) , it is established that this crime consists of the following process: (1) the act, the trafficker recruits, transports, transfers, harbors or receives people, (2) means, uses methods such as fraud or deception with offers of employment and education, either in the country of origin or abroad, also uses threat or force once the victim is deceived, since, it resorts to physical and sexual aggression, blackmail, emotional manipulation and, in other cases, if it is in a foreign country, they retain official documents to control them, and finally (3) purpose, the victims are coerced and exploited in different modalities for profit.

The intricate networks of traffickers operate even with modern technology to recruit, mobilize, and exploit their victims seamlessly across borders between countries. In this sense, this act is carried out due to gaps such as the lack of coordination of the authorities between the different nations for control and supervision, in addition to possible gaps in the legal frameworks and regularizations of border mobilization at the land, sea and air levels. These situations make it difficult to track criminal networks that operate internationally and more easily for human exploitation. (Sakinah y Ahmad, 2025)

According to the Global Report on Trafficking in Persons in Chapter 1 entitled "Global Overview", the indicates that a total of 74,785 victims have been detected worldwide in 2022 with an increase of 25% compared to the pre-pandemic period of 2019, that is, the problem UNODC (2024) of human trafficking

has worsened in recent years after the health emergency. Among the profiles, they determine that 38% are minors (22% girls and 16% boys) and 62% are adults (39% women and 23% men). The victims come from 162 nationalities: 31% Africa, 24% South and East Asia, 24% from Europe and Central Asia, and 16% from the Americas. In addition, this percentage of people are transferred to 128 different countries.

International organizations such as the Interpol (2019) Autonomous Community of São Paulo (ILO) hold organized crime groups responsible, since they take advantage of disadvantaged sectors to achieve lucrative ends through various exploitative practices. In the words of Thung (2025) , in the past this crime was mainly characterized for the purpose of labor exploitation, however, currently, traffickers have various objectives, including sexual exploitation. The victims of this type of exploitation are selected from a specific population, in general, those of the female gender are more vulnerable, including adult women, young people and girls (UNODC, 2022) .

Vigano (2024) It states that sexual exploitation is the phenomenon based on the transformation of the human body, especially of women and girls, as a commodity of a sexual object put up for sale and purchase. That is, the victims are products destined to satisfy and cover the prostitution market, where they are objectified and dehumanized. While, from the perspective of , although sexual exploitation involves the use of methods and conditions, such as coercion, deception and abuse, in other cases it can be complicated by consensual aspects. In other words, the victim participates voluntarily initially, but when he repents he is trapped without the option of negotiating separation with the trafficking network. Despite the alleged consent of the victim, this is still classified as a serious crime of trafficking in persons for sexual purposes. Constantinou (2025)

Based on this problem contextualized from the framework of background and conceptual, the objective of this research was to explore human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation in young women and adolescents through the analysis of scientific production according to different bibliometric indicators. The issue of trafficking in persons for the purpose of sexual exploitation is relevant given that it is a crime with a high level of seriousness that has affected millions of victims. Therefore, mapping the state of scientific production will allow us to evidence research advances, visualize a general overview and identify knowledge gaps that require a better approach and development.

2. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study, which was to explore

human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation in young women and adolescents through scientific production according to different bibliometric indicators, used the method of bibliometric analysis which, according to Oxford English Dictionary, the term bibliometrics focuses on employing the mathematical and statistical analysis of bibliographies of documents such as books, articles and other types of publications. In this sense, it allowed to provide and examine in a quantitative way the contribution and growth of research associated with the topic in question: Trafficking in persons for the purpose of sexual exploitation. (Panday et al., 2025)

Given the nature of the bibliometric study, the quantitative approach was considered with a descriptive scope. On the one hand, the approach facilitated the collection of statistical data on the production and evolution of the field through a matrix generated from the SCOPUS database. explains that the use of quantitative methods makes it possible to identify research trends, points of interest and researchers with the greatest impact, based on large numbers of publications that are beyond the scope of traditional review methods. On the other hand, the scope allowed the results of the bibliometric indexes to be synthesized and interpreted in detail. Xie and Jia (2025)

An exhaustive search was carried out in the Scopus database, recognized for its wide coverage of high-quality and reliable journals, to compile research related to human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation in young women and adolescents published between 2015 and 2025. The data acquisition process was carried out with the Scopus search function, using topics or terms such as "Human trafficking" and "Sexual exploitation". In addition, in order to improve the accuracy of the bibliometric analysis, inclusion criteria were considered delimited in the year of publication (2015-2025), type of document (article) and language (English and Spanish). Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria were those that did not comply with the request, including publications before 2015, types of documents such as conference papers, book and book chapters, and languages such as Portuguese, French, German, Chinese, among others.

In the end, the following search string was obtained: ("Sexual Exploitation" AND "Human Trafficking") AND PUBYEAR > 2015 AND PUBYEAR < 2025 AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE,"English") OR LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "Spanish")) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "ar")). The chain is evidenced by the

following Boolean operators: "AND" acted as an intersection operator, while "OR" acted as a logical sum to expand the search options indistinctly.

The initial search yielded a total of 250 scientific records. After filtering the publications with the inclusion criteria, 224 were retained for the established period, 173 original articles by type of documents and 172 by language. In this sense, to process the production of the 172 articles and create the graphs, the Bibliometrix online tool (version 4.3.1) incorporated with the RStudio package was used, which allowed the import of Scopus bibliographic data in CSV format to generate global distribution maps, topic trends and thematic maps, as well as: VOSviewer (version 1.6.19) was used to import the information in bibtex format, which generated bibliometric networks based on citation, cocitation, bibliographic coupling and co-authorship relationships.

As it was a bibliometric study, it was not necessary to issue a letter of informed consent or request permissions, since, for data collection, it was not intended to experiment or make a direct approach to the research phenomenon: Trafficking in persons for the purpose of sexual exploitation in young women and adolescents.

3. RESULTS

The results of this bibliometric study cover various aspects of trafficking in persons for the purpose of sexual exploitation of young women and adolescents. The analysis is framed in graphs of trends and networks generated in Bibliometrix (RStudio) and VOSviewer, including: (1) Main information on scientific production, (2) Production trend by country, (3) Annual production trend, (4) Main affiliations, (5) Main sources, (6) Main thematic areas, (7) Co-occurrence of terms, (8) Co-authorship of authors, (9) Relevance and progress of key topics.

3.1. Main Information

Figure 1 presents the main information of the scientific production on trafficking in persons for the purpose of sexual exploitation of young women and adolescents. Each of the indicators is detailed below: the time interval is from 2015 to 2025, with a total of 172 scientific articles published in 87 sources. However, it is evident that the annual growth rate is -5.88%, that is, the negative sign indicates that production is decreasing throughout the period analyzed.

On the one hand, the number of authors is 572 in total, which shows a significantly large scientific community. Of these, only 21 authors published their papers as sole authors. Therefore, the low proportion

of articles by a single author emphasizes that collaboration between researchers is a characteristic that predominates with 3.89 (Co-Authors per Doc), probably due to the complexity of the topic in question and the need to combine different approaches and expertise to develop and publish. An international collaboration of 15.7% is also highlighted, that is, an openness and connection has been established between different countries or institutions. Despite this result, it is important to increase efforts to expand collaboration networks at a global level for the enrichment of scientific production.

On the other hand, a total of 410 keywords established by the authors in the articles have been identified. This wide range of topics can be useful in finding the main trends and approaches that predominate in the scientific community. In relation to references, there are a total of 6,363, which indicates the extent of the review of previous literature

considered by the authors to support their scientific works.

Meanwhile, the average age of the documents is 4.98 years, which reveals that the articles are almost five years old, that is, it is recent and updated in the field of research. In addition, the average citations per document is 19.77, indicating impact, visibility and significant acceptance in the scientific community, since the appropriation of ideas from these works by other authors is reflected in the number of citations received.

In summary, the indicators of the main information processed in Bibliometrix frame a solid bibliographic production, with a broad base of references, multiple keywords, recently published documents and a significant impact reflected in the citations of scientific articles that developed the theme of trafficking in persons for the purpose of sexual exploitation of young women and adolescents.

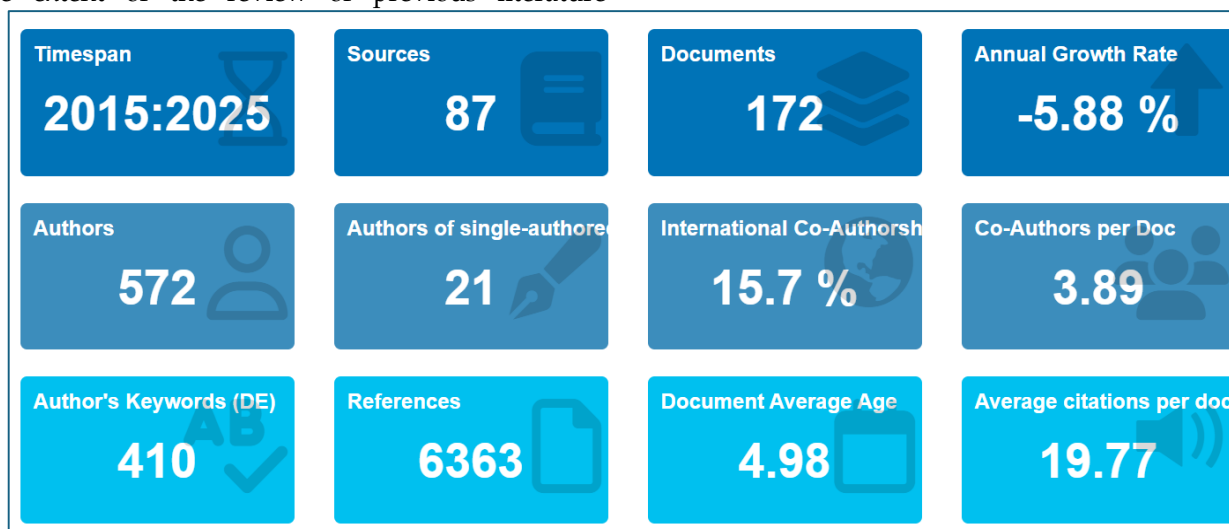


Chart 1: Main information on scientific production

Note: The graph shows the general distribution of the main bibliometric information of scientific articles that address human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation in young women and adolescents. This includes indicators such as time interval, sources, documents, annual growth rate, authors, unique author authors, international co-authorship, co-authorship per document, author keywords, references, average age of the document, and average citation per document.

Source: Prepared with Bibliometrix.

3.2. Production by country

Figure 2 shows the geographical distribution of scientific production worldwide. In the first instance, blue countries such as the United States (USA) with 446, the United Kingdom (UK) with 46, India with 25, and Spain with 25, demonstrate a higher frequency of publication of articles on human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation of young women and adolescents. Meanwhile, countries shaded in light blue such as Canada with 19, the Netherlands (Holland) with 16, Australia with 10, Georgia with 9,

Jordan with 8, show moderate production. On the other hand, the nations marked with gray are those with the least activity in production, among them are Colombia with 5, Sweden with 4, Brazil, Cambodia and Lesotho with 3 each, Chile, Iceland and South Africa with 2 each, China, Cyprus, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Mexico, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and South Korea with 1 each.

These representative data emphasize that scientific activity is mainly concentrated in developed western territories, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and some European countries.

However, despite the fact that there are some countries that have lower productivity, there is evidence of geographical diversity and interest in the subject in question.

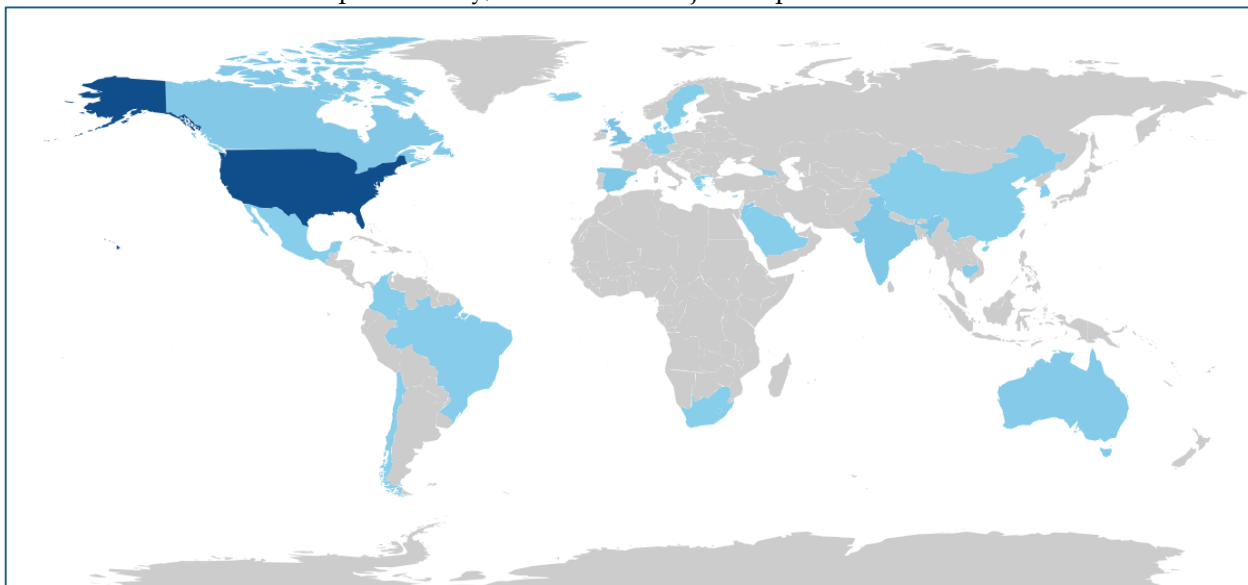


Chart 2: Scientific production by country, period 2015-2025

Note. The graph shows the general distribution of scientific production available to countries worldwide. The colors show the level of activity: dark blue indicates countries with higher production, light blue represents moderate or intermediate activity, and gray indicates lower or less intense productions.

Source: Prepared with Bibliometrix.

3.3. Annual production

Graph 3 provides the general growth trend in scientific production from 2015 to 2025, with evident peaks and valleys as a result. On the one hand, a very pronounced peak is observed during 2018 with a reach of 18 articles published. Followed by an abrupt drop in 2019 and then a significant increase in 2020, surpassing the number of publications in 2018 with 32 productions. However, in subsequent years this high

activity was not maintained, since between 13 and 14 articles were registered from 2021 to 2023. On the other hand, in 2024 the last high peak is marked with 23 publications, since, so far in 2025, only 2 have been registered.

In general, the analysis of the graph details that the dynamic trajectory of scientific production over time shows a pattern that reflects significant peaks, followed by falls and subsequent recoveries.

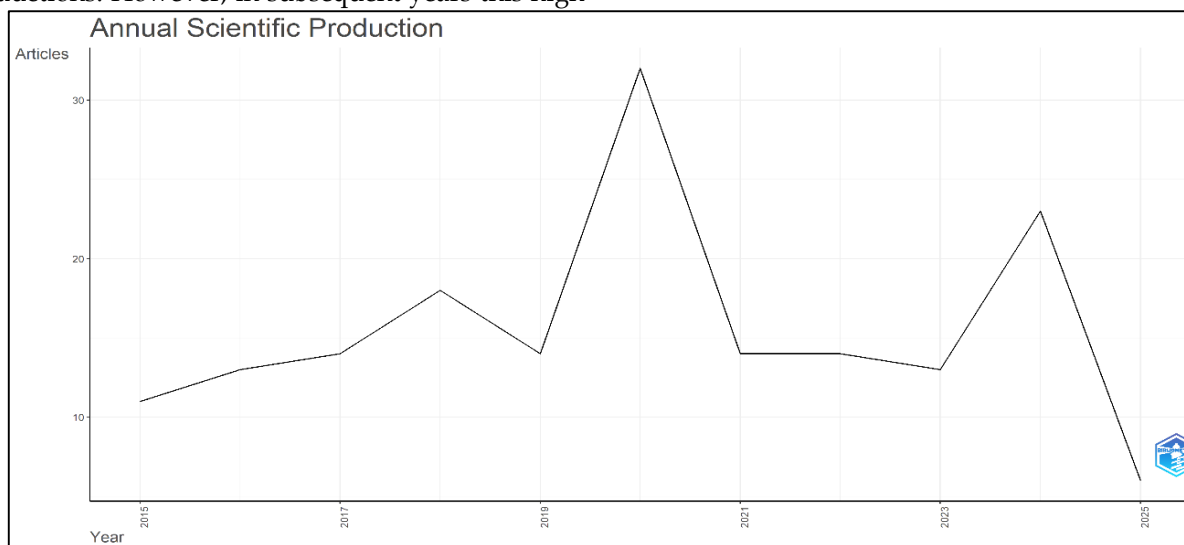


Chart 3: Annual scientific production between 2015-2025

Note. The graph represents the general upward trend in annual scientific production in terms of articles published between the period 2015-2025.

Source: Prepared with Bibliometrix.

3.4. Main affiliations

The bibliometric analysis of the main affiliations provides a clear view of the dynamics of scientific production in institutions, highlighting key leaders and contributors. As can be seen in Graph 4, the University of California leads with 19 published scientific articles, positioning itself as one of the institutions with the highest productivity in this dataset, which reflects a strong research capacity and contribution to the generation of knowledge in the field of study on human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

Next is Georgia Satate University, London School

Of Hygiene and Tropil Medicine, Northeastern University and University of Almeria with 9 publications. Then Texas Christian University, University of Nebraska-Lincoln and University of Nottingham have 8 and Baylor College of Medicine and Florida International University with 7. In summary, the difference in the number of publications indicates that the University of California has a competitive advantage in terms of scientific production. However, although the output of these institutions is lower than that mentioned above, their research activity is remarkable and remains relevant in the context of research.

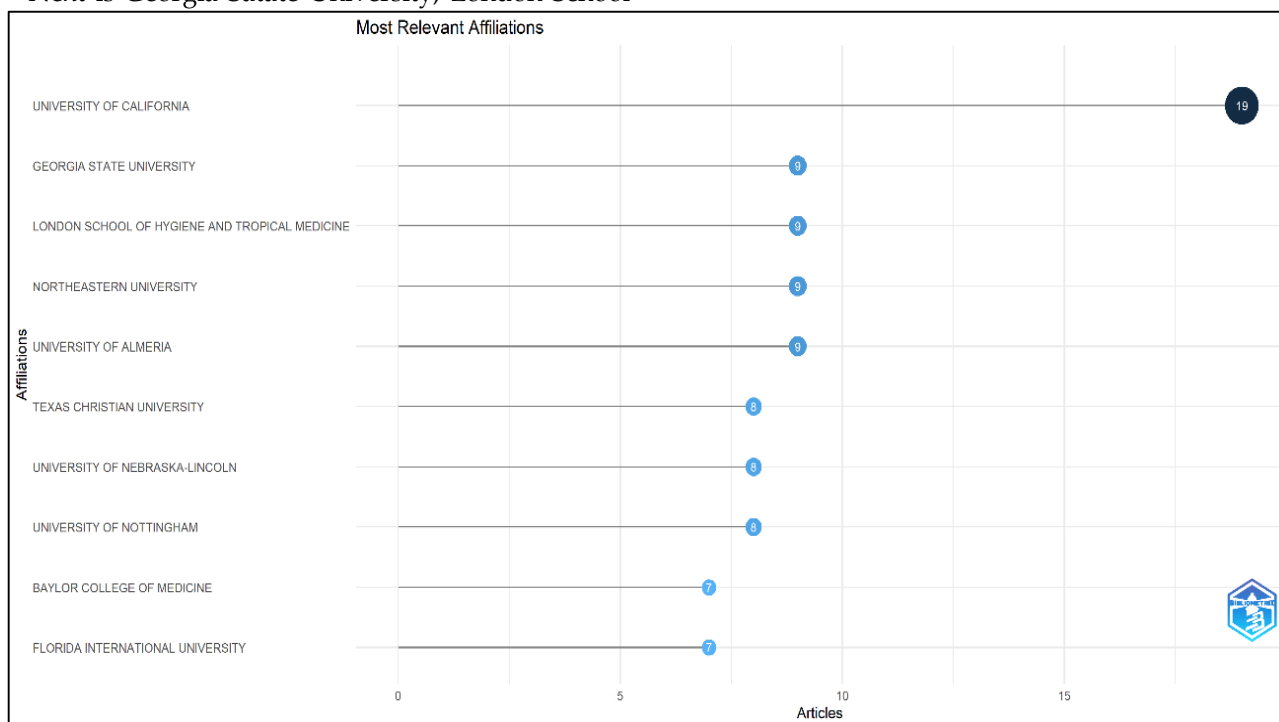


Chart 4: Most relevant affiliations for the publication of scientific production

Note. The graph shows the institutions that contribute with the highest number of scientific production.

Source: Prepared with Bibliometrix.

3.5. Main sources

The top 10 journals, as detailed in Figure 6, contribute a significant share of the total publications on trafficking in persons for sexual exploitation. Child Abuse and Neglect leads with 32 scientific articles, indicating a strong and sustained focus on studies related to abuse and exploitation, making this source a key reference in the literature.

Followed, but with fewer publications compared to the previous one, is the Journal Of Interpersonal Violence with 11, International Journal of Environmental Research and Plos One with 6, Journal

Of Child Sexual Abuse and Violence and Victims with 5, Journal of Human Trafficking with 4 and Behavioral Medicine, Child Maltreatment and Children and Youth Services Reviews with 3.

The results indicate that the predominance of Child Abuse and Neglect is a journal that focuses a large part of the research on human trafficking, facilitating the search for information and access to relevant studies on the subject in question. However, the difference in the number of publications between journals points to areas where there is less research, projecting opportunities for researchers to explore and publish in the diversity of sources.

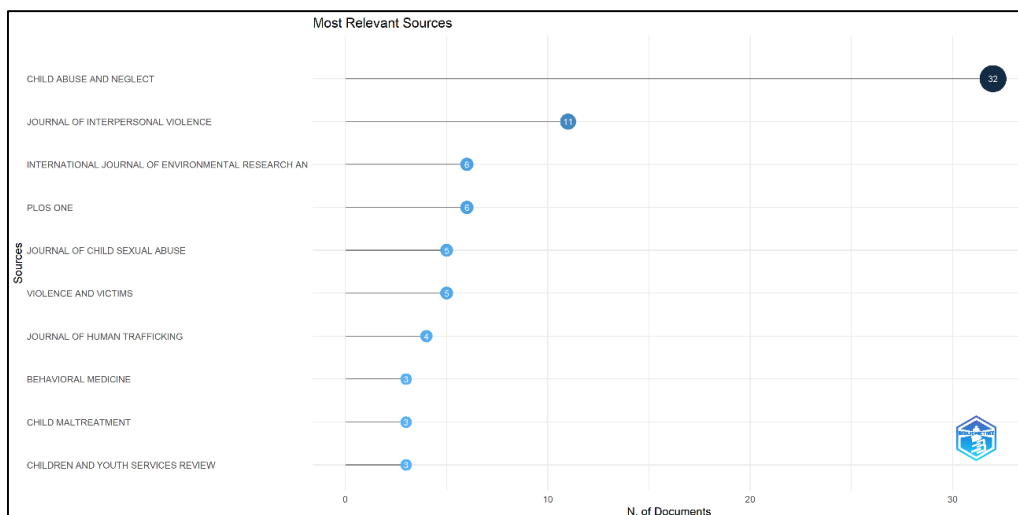


Chart 5: Most relevant sources for scientific production

Note. The graph shows the most relevant sources (name of the journals) that contribute with publications of scientific articles.

Source: Prepared with Bibliometrix.

3.6. Main thematic areas

Graph 5 identifies the main thematic areas in the bibliometric analysis, which allow us to classify and better understand the distribution of knowledge of the subject in question. Medicine is positioned as the leading area with 42.1%, followed by Psychology with 25% and Social Sciences with 18.8%. On the one hand, the predominance of medicine highlights that most studies are associated with health, medical care and clinical interventions. Meanwhile, the area of psychology represents a quarter of the production, which highlights the relevance of the possible psychological effects on victims of trafficking and

therapeutic approach. In relation to the social sciences, it emphasizes the interest in addressing the social, cultural and economic dynamics of this problem.

On the other hand, the other areas with percentages below 5%, although relevant, represent a low productivity of trafficking in persons for the purpose of sexual exploitation. That is, there is less inclination to be explored and prioritized compared to the main ones: Medicine, Psychology and Social Sciences. However, although they are underrepresented, it does not mean that these fields are irrelevant, therefore, they need to be developed to contribute to a more complete understanding from different angles.

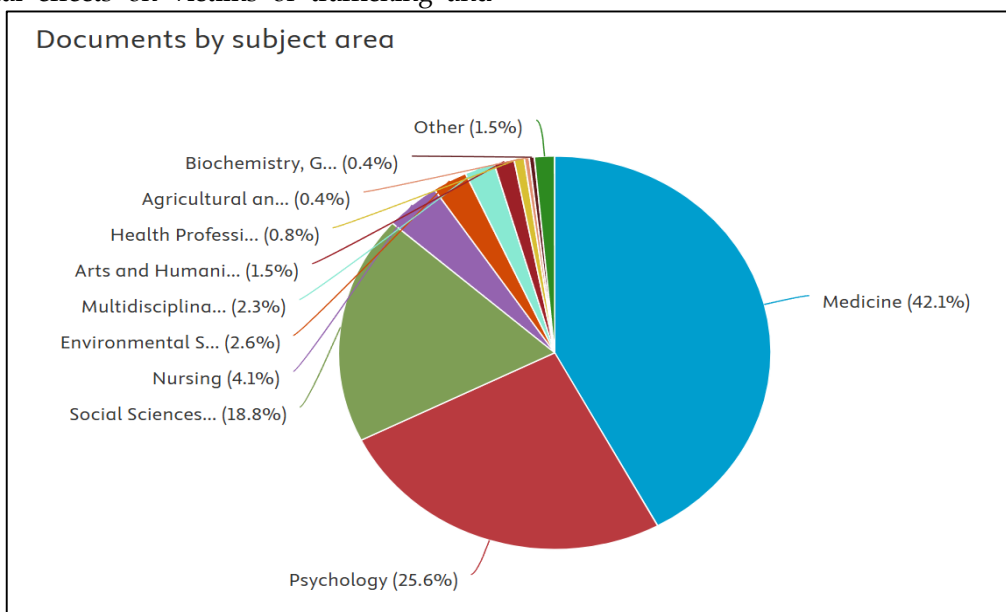


Chart 6: Thematic areas in academic production

Note. This graph provides the percentage of scientific articles published in the various areas.

Source: Extracted from Scopus.

3.7. Co-occurrence of terms

For the generation of Graph 7, in Vosviewer "co-occurrence" was selected as the type of analysis and "Keywords" as the unit, in addition, the minimum threshold of occurrence was established at 8, in which of the 1392 keywords identified only 107 met the threshold, forming 4 groups of nodes (cluster).

In this sense, the following four clusters are identified as planetary terms or groupings: "human trafficking", "adolescent", "psychology" and "controlled study". These terms co-occurred with the satellite terms, identified by the same colors, establishing a relationship that is represented by clusters of co-occurrence.

In the first blue grouping, terms such as "human trafficking" are evident, emerging as the predominant keyword in scientific production with a frequency of 155. It has been associated with satellite terms, that is, from its own cluster, among them are identified: "adult", "qualitative research", "content analysis", "slavery", "interview", "human experiment", "vulnerable population" and "offender". This association points out areas of study that are the complement to the understanding of human trafficking, including qualitative aspects and vulnerable populations.

The second red cluster shows "adolescent" with a frequency of 105 and is related to the following terms: "sexual abuse", "commercial sexual exploitation", "epidemiology", "sex trafficking", "emergency service, hospital", "risk factor", "cross-sectional studies", "retrospective study" and "child welfare". The association of these highlights adolescent populations in the context of studies on sexual abuse and exploitation.

The third green grouping indicates "psychology" with a frequency of 60 and is associated with terms such as "survivors", "mental health service", "sex work", "psychotrauma" and "awareness". The connection of "psychology" to these satellite terms emphasizes the growing attention of researchers in scientific productions to specifically address the psychological needs of survivors of human trafficking, as well as the importance of awareness of exploitative-related trauma.

Meanwhile, the fourth yellow cluster shows "controlled study" with a frequency of 33 and associated with terms such as "drug dependence". This reflects the methodological approach of research in the context of victims of human trafficking, specifically those with drug dependence.

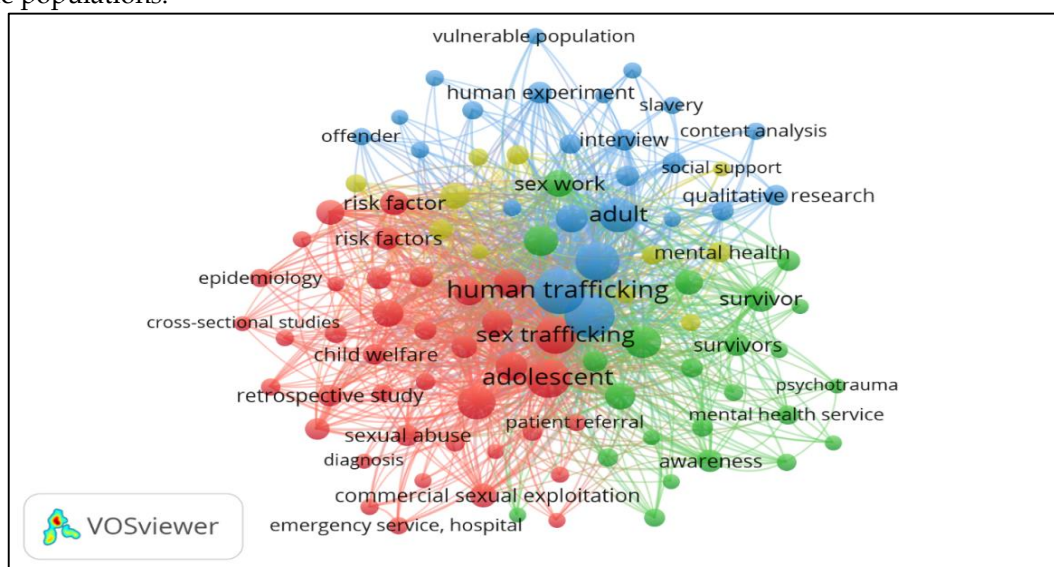


Chart 7: Analysis of the co-occurrence of terms

Note. The graph evidences the co-occurrence analysis, which reveals the relationships and trends within the field, examining the frequency and connections between terms.

Source: Made with Vosviewer.exe

3.8. Co-authorship of authors

Graph 8 presents the analysis of co-authorship relationships between authors that allows us to understand the dynamics of collaboration between studies that address the subject. In Vosviewer, "Co-authorship" was selected as the type of analysis and

"Authors" as the unit. The total number of authors was 572, and only 8 were connected through at least two collaborative studies with a minimum of five citations.

From this type of analysis, the graph identified two different groups of authors, where the most influential author was Farrell Amy, since he has collaborated with all the authors who are visualized

in the graph. On the one hand, the red group highlights authors such as Bouchard Elizabeth, Goldfarb Susa, Kafafian Matthew and De Vries Ieke, who have participated collaboratively with each

other. Meanwhile, the green group identifies authors such as Bright Katherine, Paruk Jennifer and Emily Rothman, who have also established a collaboration.

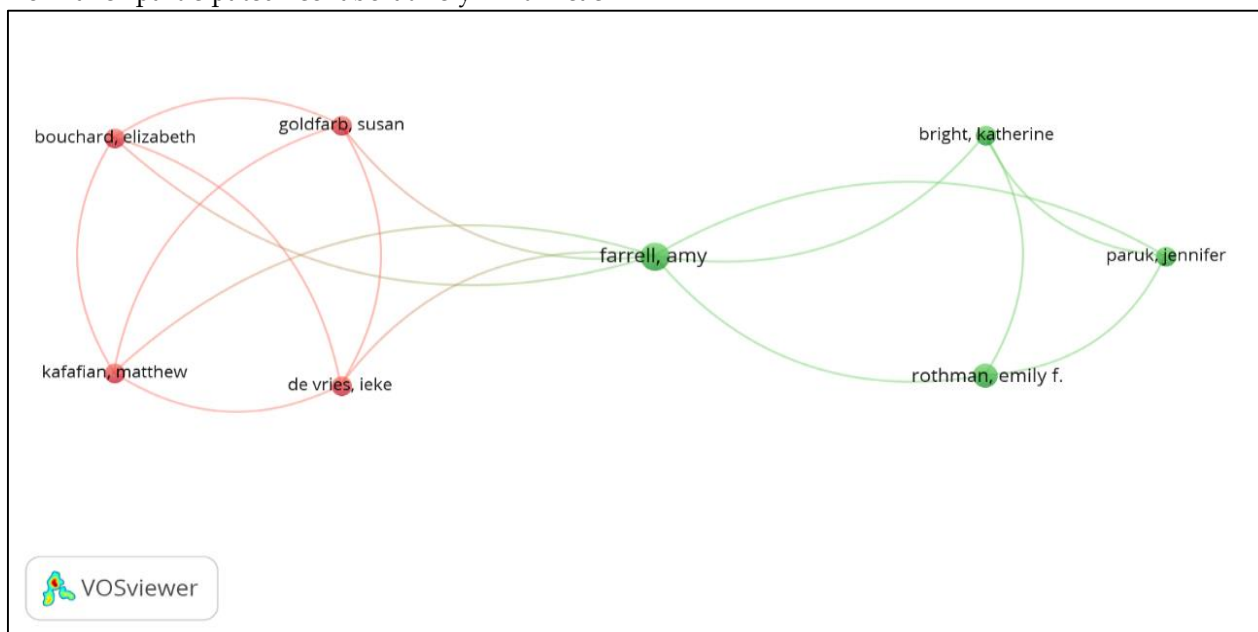


Chart 8: Analysis of the Co-authorship of authors

Note. The graph highlights the co-authorship relationships between authors that allows us to understand the dynamics of collaboration within the context of the study.

Source: Made with Vosviewer.exe

3.9. Relevance and progress of key topics in production

Figure 8 presents the classification of knowledge that is related to the themes of scientific productions that, in general, allows us to identify the strengths, possible weaknesses and, consequently, opportunities in the advancement of knowledge on trafficking in persons for the purpose of sexual exploitation, guiding future lines of research and the prioritization of topics that more effectively address this complex phenomenon.

The Motor Themes quadrant places "prevention and control" and "survivors" themes. On the one hand, the first emphasizes that it is one of the most developed and relevant topics in scientific production on human trafficking. In other words, there are efforts to address part of the prevention and control of the phenomenon as an important focus in the scientific literature. Meanwhile, the presence of the second theme shows that researchers have focused on understanding and caring for victim-survivors of trafficking.

In the quadrant of Niche Themes there are topics that, although very well developed, the relevance is relatively minor compared to the Motor Themes.

Therefore, "health care Access", "sexually transmitted disease" and "priority journal" are identified, as well as "interview", "human experiment" and "qualitative research" as topics that have received less attention in the production on trafficking in persons for sexual purposes.

The quadrant of Emerging or declining issues places topics such as "Retrospective study", "retrospective studies" and "epidemiology" that, although they were used in studies on human trafficking, their relevance and development are decreasing, that is, their production has not increased significantly in recent years.

The quadrant of Basic Themes identifies fundamental topics, but which have not been developed exhaustively, among them "Substance-related disorders", "drug dependence" and "prevalence", as well as "human", "female" and "human trafficking". This quadrant projects issues that require greater attention, therefore, it provides the opportunity to delve into key aspects related to the characteristics associated with victims and the phenomenon of trafficking itself, with the purpose of generating a more comprehensive and solid knowledge about the problem in question.

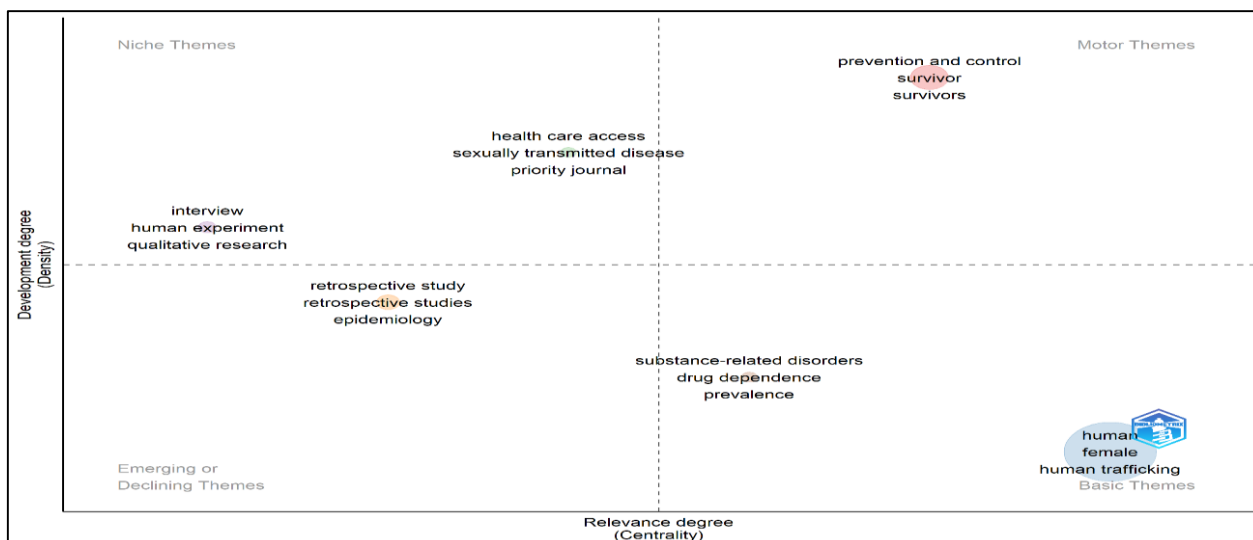


Chart 9: Thematic Map

Note. The graph details the four quadrants of the Thematic Map. The horizontal axis represents mediating centrality, i.e., the relevance of the topic to the field, while the vertical axis is associated with density. Quadrant 1 of the motor themes (upper right) indicates the most important and fully developed themes. Quadrant 2 of niche topics (upper left) points to those that are well-developed, but less relevant to the current domain. Quadrant 3 of emerging or declining topics (lower left) are underdeveloped and may be gaining or losing relevance. Quadrant 4 of the basic topics (lower right) emphasizes that they are important for the field, but are not yet well developed.

Source: Prepared with Bibliometrix.

4. DISCUSSION

The bibliometric study on human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation in young women and adolescents presents several significant contributions from scientific production. Therefore, a synthesis is presented that provides a comprehensive vision, highlighting the achievements and areas that require greater attention for the evolution of the topic in the research field

In the first place, with a total of 172 articles published and indexed in Scopus in a time interval of 2015-2025, scientific production is indicated under a sustained interest and commitment on the part of the scientific community, despite the fact that the negative annual growth rate indicates the decrease in the research focus on this problem.

On the other hand, although most of the scientific production comes from developed countries, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, this type of concentration can emphasize the lack of representation from other countries, in which the problem may be even more prevalent, thus limiting the global perspective on human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Meanwhile, the annual production trend indicates a decrease of -5.88%, that is, the number of published research is decreasing.

Among the main affiliations in the production are

universities and research centers, mostly in countries such as the United States. Therefore, it is inferred that the affiliations with more resources lead the investigation of the phenomenon. In relation to the trends of sources, journals that publish more on this topic are important for the dissemination of knowledge. In this sense, identifying these sources allows interested researchers and professionals to access the most relevant and up-to-date literature on the subject in question. On the other hand, the predominant areas such as Medicine, Psychology and Social Sciences emphasize that human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation has a multidisciplinary approach because it is a complex phenomenon that requires a comprehensive understanding of various perspectives.

The analysis of co-occurrence of terms reveals the connections between the 107 different concepts and topics related to human trafficking, helping to identify patterns of research and areas that require further attention, and the development of new lines of study. Meanwhile, in the identification of co-authorships there is a significant number of studies as a result of collaborations between multiple authors. This finding evidences a collaborative approach of 572 authors that allow enriching the findings and addressing the quality of the research from the perspective of various experts.

In terms of the relevance and progress of key topics,

the thematic map identified strengths and weaknesses in scientific output. However, niche topics that show relevant but less priority topics, such as "health care access" and "qualitative research", are mainly highlighted. Likewise, emerging topics such as "retrospective studies", which have a decrease in relevance. And basic topics such as "drug dependence" and "human trafficking", which are areas that must be addressed with greater attention to generate a more comprehensive knowledge of the phenomenon under study.

The study also has several limitations in the methodological section. In the first instance, mainly essential scientific literature was selected from the Scopus database. This choice may lead to the omission of relevant production from other databases, and affect the conclusions of the research to some extent. In addition, only scientific articles were considered, and other types of publications such as books, book chapters, among others, were excluded. Finally, it focused exclusively on articles in Spanish and English, without considering scientific production in other languages that could be valuable in the field of study.

5. CONCLUSIONS

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5.1. The bibliometric analysis leads to the following conclusions:

This bibliometric study exhaustively analyzed the scientific production on human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation in young women and adolescents between 2015-2025. Through the analysis, it was possible to expand the fragmented literature by mapping trends and possible critical gaps in the research.

Based on the findings that offered clear guidelines for future lines of research, a holistic and multidisciplinary approach is suggested that combines efforts in prevention, victim care, and the study of underlying factors related to human trafficking. In this sense, it is expected that the Basic Issues will be taken into consideration, which need greater attention and exploration, to generate knowledge about the characteristics and needs of the victims.

Finally, it is suggested that researchers interested in bibliometric studies use other databases such as Web of Science and expand the inclusion criteria such as the type of document and the language for a more complete bibliometric collection of information on human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

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