

A Bibliometric Analysis of Scholarly Research on Single-Parent Families: Current Status And Trends (2000–2024)

Tek Ebeveynli Aileler Üzerine Akademik Çalışmaların Bibliyometrik Bir Analizi: Mevcut Durum ve Eğilimler (2000–2024)

ABSTRACT

In this study, it is aimed to analyze the academic studies on single-parent families in the Web of Science (WOS) database from a bibliometric perspective. Single-parent families have become increasingly common in line with changing social conditions. In this context, it is possible to state that the interest in single-parent family-oriented academic studies has also increased. This study aims to provide a systematic summary of previous academic studies on single-parent families with quantitative data through bibliometric analysis and to provide a perspective for researchers interested in this topic. In this direction, 4,491 studies were reached and analyzed in the 2000-2024 WOS database as a result of the search with the keywords “single parent”, “single parent families”, “single parenthood”, “single parents”, “single-parents families”, “single-parent family”. After explaining the general distribution of the studies, visualization was performed using VOSviewer software. According to the findings of the analysis, it was understood that the largest number of studies on single-parent families were published in 2022. It was determined that the majority of academic studies were in the category of “family studies” and the total number of citations received by the publications in this scope between 2000 and 2024 was 91,347. The highest number of citations was realized in 2022 with 10,173 citations. This study can be characterized as a guide for future studies by reflecting the scope and perspective of academic research on single-parent families.

Keywords: Bibliometric analysis, single-parent families, academic trends, citation networks

ÖZET

Bu çalışmada, Web of Science (WOS) veri tabanında yer alan tek ebeveynli ailelere yönelik akademik çalışmaların bibliyometrik açıdan incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Değişen toplumsal koşullara paralel olarak tek ebeveynli aileler giderek daha yaygın hale gelmiştir. Bu bağlamda, tek ebeveynli ailelere odaklanan akademik çalışmalara olan ilginin de arttığını söylemek mümkündür. Bu araştırma, bibliyometrik analiz yöntemiyle tek ebeveynli aileler üzerine yapılmış önceki akademik çalışmaları nicel verilerle sistematik biçimde özetlemeyi ve bu konuya ilgi duyan araştırmacılara bir bakış açısı sunmayı hedeflemektedir. Bu doğrultuda, “single parent”, “single parent families”, “single parenthood”, “single parents”, “single-parents families”, “single-parent family” anahtar kelimeleriyle yapılan tarama sonucunda 2000-2024 yılları arasında WOS veri tabanında toplam 4.491 çalışmaya ulaşılmış ve bunlar analiz edilmiştir. Çalışmaların genel dağılımı açıklandıktan sonra VOSviewer yazılımı kullanılarak görselleştirme yapılmıştır. Analizden elde edilen bulgulara göre, tek ebeveynli ailelere yönelik en fazla sayıda çalışmanın 2022 yılında yayınlandığı alındığı anlaşılmıştır. Akademik çalışmaların büyük çoğunluğunun “aile çalışmaları” kategorisinde yer aldığı ve 2000-2024 yılları arasında bu kapsamda yayımlanan çalışmaların toplam 91.347 atıf aldığı belirlenmiştir. En yüksek atıf sayısı ise 2022 yılında gerçekleşmiş ve 10.173 atıf olmuştur. Bu çalışma, tek ebeveynli aileler üzerine yapılan akademik araştırmaların kapsamını ve bakış açısını yansıtmaları bakımından ileride yapılacak çalışmalara yol gösterici niteliktedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Bibliyometrik analiz, tek ebeveynli aileler, akademik eğilimler, atıf ağları

INTRODUCTION

A single-parent family is a family pattern in which one of the spouses is absent from the family environment and one of the mother or father lives with the child or children. In the formation of single-parent family organization, there are reasons such as divorce, death of one of the spouses, one of the spouses being in prison, spouses not being together for a long time due to work, etc. (Gladding, 2015). Although the process is also related to the process of social change, in this type of reconstructed family organization, changes are experienced in the routines of both the single parent and the children in the household. While most of these changes involve difficulties, some of them can be said to increase well-being in the new family organization. In the single-parent family organization, where there is an increase in well-being, it is prominent that the parent who moves away from the household maltreats other family members, especially violence (Gedik, 2015).

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The increasing prevalence of the share of single-parent families in general family organization in the world and in Türkiye constitutes the main reason for the increasing academic interest in this issue. When OECD member countries are analyzed, it is stated that the rate of single-parent families is over 30% in Lithuania, and almost one in four children lives with a single parent in France, Mexico, Norway and the United States. Among OECD member countries, Türkiye is among the countries with low rates of single-parent families (OECD, 2024). In Türkiye, the rate of single-parent families, which was 7.8% in 2015 and 9.7% in 2020, gradually increased and reached 10.6% in 2023. Of these, 2.4% consist of father and children and 8.2% consist of mother and children (TÜİK, 2024). Considering the distribution of parents in single-parent households, it is seen that the structure consisting of mother and child/children is considerably higher than that consisting of father and child/children. Therefore, it is understood that the responsibility in single-parent family organizations is largely assumed by mothers.

The significant increase in the rate of single-parent families has led academic studies to address the difficulties, needs, problems, social policy needs, psychological resilience, stigmatization processes, etc. of such families (Dowd, 1999; McLanahan & Sandefur, 2009; Barajas, 2011; Bianchi, 2014; Aydın Boylu, 2014; Demirel & Buz, 2021; Deveoğlu, 2021; Boztikli, 2022; Demirel, 2022; Güngör, 2023; Pekmezci & Öztop, 2024; Demirel & Boduroğlu, 2025). When the difficulties and needs of single-parent families are analyzed, it is understood that economic, psychological, legal, social support deprivation and difficulties related to children in households come to the fore.

From an economic perspective, it is understood that single-parent individuals experience difficulties in the employment process, there is a decrease in the income obtained and livelihood-oriented problems become more visible (Afyonoğlu et al., 2021; Alpar et al., 2023). Difficulties in this context directly affect the single parent and the child or children in the household. The development of poverty and unemployment are also among the possible situations expected.

Within the framework of psychological difficulties, the psychological resilience of the single parent and the child or children in the household is negatively affected; the tendency to depression increases and the need for psychological support increases. In the event of such problems, there is a decline in stress management and coping processes as a result of weakened psychological resilience in these households (Maldonado & Nieuwenhuis, 2015).

When it comes to the difficulties in the legal framework, it can be stated that single-parent family organization develops due to divorce. In this context, problems may arise especially during and after the divorce process and in the processes of changing custody and establishing a personal relationship between the non-custodial parent and the children (Aktaş, 2011). It can be stated that the contentious development and realization of the divorce process damages the interaction of the spouses with each other and as a result of this situation, the child or children are exposed to more negative effects. In addition, the alimony dispute between the spouses and the failure to pay alimony payments on time and in the specified amount can also develop legal problems (Nuhoğlu, 2019).

Lack of social support is another prominent problem for single-parent families. In this process, it can be stated that all single-parent families become increasingly isolated and deprived of social support (Aydın & Balun, 2023). The striking point here is that the lack of social support differs according to the formation of the single-parent family organization. The development of the single parenthood process due to the death of the spouse has a structure in which social support deprivation is less common than in other groups. It is possible to say that social support deprivation has a more prominent appearance in the single-parent family organization that develops with the divorce of the spouse and the imprisonment of the spouse (Demirel & Buz, 2021). The situation is similar for both single parents and children.

It would not be wrong to say that one of the most important difficulties for children in single-parent households is parental deprivation. It is much more likely that the burden of the problems that children experience with parental deprivation increases or that they encounter new problems (Demirel, 2023). The child who directly experiences the difficulties of the parent in the household has risks in terms of social life, educational life and future life (Ayoub et al., 1999; Strohschein, 2005; Deveoğlu, 2021; Gönülaçan Özer & Öztürk, 2022; Boduroğlu Kılıç et al., 2025). It has been determined that children in single-parent households have a higher risk of regression in social environment relations, increased risk of exclusion, being dragged into crime and addiction. Children whose risk of being exposed to the stigmatization process also increases may experience a decline in academic success, inability to focus on lessons and inability to maintain healthy communication in peer relationships (Ulusoy et al., 2005; Upreti & Sharma, 2021). It can be stated that the expectations of individuals raised in single-parent families are also affected by their future marital expectations (Yılmaz & Yalçın, 2021).

The necessity of expanding customized policies and services for single-parent families is an issue highlighted in academic studies. In this context, it is emphasized that employment opportunities should be improved in order to

meet economic needs, special job programs supported by İŞKUR should be developed, and the quota of free nursery quotas should be increased in order for children to benefit from free nursery services (Demirel, 2022). In order to address psychological needs, the Family Social Support Program (ASDEP), which is based on effective and systematic follow-up, should be improved and the Ministry of Health, where mental health professionals are widely employed, should also share responsibility. In order to make psychosocial support services more accessible to children, it is considered important to implement "school social work practices". Combating the socially judgmental perspective at the macro level can create a restorative effect for exclusion, stigmatization and lack of social support. Legal difficulties come to the forefront due to the disputes experienced by divorced spouses. As emphasized in the family and divorce process counseling process, especially in the allocation of custody, it can be evaluated in relation to the understanding of the separation of the role of spouse and the role of parent.

In this context, it is observed that the increasing number of single-parent families has increased academic interest in the subject and studies in this direction have increased. For this reason, the articles published between 2000 and 2024 in the WOS database were scanned and evaluated by bibliometric analysis technique. The fact that there are no academic studies on single-parent families using the bibliometric analysis technique is an important reason for the emergence of this study.

Within the framework of psychological difficulties, it is observed that both the single-parent individual and the children in the household experience a decline in psychological resilience, an increased tendency toward depression, and a greater need for psychological support. When such problems arise, the weakened psychological resilience in these households leads to deteriorations in stress management and coping mechanisms (Maldonado & Nieuwenhuis, 2015).

From a legal perspective, single-parent family structures often emerge due to divorce. In this context, challenges may arise during and after the divorce process, particularly concerning custody transfers and establishing personal relationships between the non-custodial parent and the children (Aktaş, 2011). A contentious divorce process can damage the interaction between former spouses, further exacerbating the negative effects on the children. Additionally, disputes over alimony, including delayed or insufficient payments, may compound legal issues (Nuhoglu, 2019).

Social support deprivation is another prominent problem for single-parent families. Research indicates that single-parent families increasingly face social isolation and a lack of support (Aydın & Balun, 2023). Notably, the extent of social support deprivation varies depending on how the single-parent family structure was formed. Families that become single-parent due to the death of a spouse experience comparatively less social support deprivation than those formed through divorce or incarceration of a parent (Demirel & Buz, 2021). This trend holds true for both the single parent and the children.

One of the most significant challenges for children in single-parent households is parental absence. Parental deprivation increases the likelihood of existing problems intensifying or new issues emerging (Demirel, 2023). Children who directly experience their parent's struggles are at greater risk in terms of social life, educational attainment, and future prospects (Ayoub et al., 1999; Strohschein, 2005; Deveoglu, 2021; Gönulağan Özer & Öztürk, 2022). Studies have found that children in single-parent households face social withdrawal, higher risks of exclusion, delinquency, and substance abuse. They are also more susceptible to stigmatization, academic decline, difficulty concentrating, and impaired peer relationships (Ulusoy et al., 2005; Upreti & Sharma, 2021). Furthermore, individuals raised in single-parent families may develop altered expectations regarding future marriages (Yılmaz & Yalçın, 2021).

Academic studies emphasize the need for specialized policies and services tailored to single-parent families. Key recommendations include improving employment opportunities to alleviate financial strain, developing targeted job programs through the Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR), and expanding free childcare quotas to ensure access to preschool education (Demirel, 2022). To address psychological needs, systematic follow-up under the Family Social Support Program (ASDEP) should be enhanced, with greater involvement from mental health professionals and the Ministry of Health. Additionally, implementing "school social work practices" would improve accessibility to psychosocial support for children. Combating societal stigmatization at the macro level could mitigate exclusion, labeling, and social support deprivation. Legal challenges, particularly disputes between divorced spouses, remain a critical issue. As emphasized in family and divorce counseling, distinguishing between spousal and parental roles is essential for conflict resolution.

The increasing prevalence of single-parent families has spurred academic interest, leading to a rise in related studies. To analyze this trend, a bibliometric analysis was conducted using articles indexed in the Web of Science

(WOS) database between 2000 and 2024. The absence of prior bibliometric studies focusing specifically on single-parent families further justifies this research.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a bibliometric approach to systematically examine academic publications on single-parent families indexed in the Web of Science (WoS) database between 2000 and 2024, aiming to comprehensively reveal the evolution and trends of scholarly interest in this field. Bibliometric analysis is a quantitative and qualitative research method used to evaluate academic publications based on various metrics, including topic, authorship, publication data, cited references, and citation patterns (Rehn et al., 2014). Bibliometrics involves the statistical examination and quantitative assessment of academic documents, enabling the mapping of research trends, influential works, and thematic developments within a given discipline (Yılmaz, 2021).

The study is designed to analyze the growth of academic literature on single-parent families, identify key themes, and assess the scope of scholarly impact in this domain. The Web of Science (WoS) database was selected as the primary data source due to its status as one of the world's leading academic indexing platforms, offering extensive interdisciplinary coverage. Operated by Clarivate Analytics, WoS encompasses the *Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI)*, *Science Citation Index Expanded (SCIE)*, and *Arts & Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI)* (Testa, 2016). This study is confined to publications available in the WoS database.

The data collection process was conducted using the following search terms: "single parent," "single parent families," "single parenthood," "single parents," "single-parent families," and "single-parent family." The search was limited to studies published between 2000 and 2024.

The data collection was carried out in two stages:

Initial Screening: The specified keywords and subject headings were used to identify the total number of relevant publications.

In-Depth Analysis: A detailed examination was performed based on publication categories, citation counts, countries, institutions, and authors.

The data retrieved from the Web of Science (WoS) database were visualized using VOSviewer software. To analyze collaboration networks among the selected academic works, co-authorship network analysis was employed, with VOSviewer (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010) serving as the most suitable tool for this purpose.

FINDINGS

The Web of Science database was queried for publications in the social work category between 2000 and 2024 using the keywords "single parent," "single parent families," "single parent family," "single parenthood," "single parents," "single-parent families," and "single-parent family." A total of 4,491 studies were retrieved and analyzed to produce the following outputs:

- ✓ Annual publication trends
- ✓ Publication counts by author
- ✓ Citation counts by year
- ✓ Distribution of publications across indices
- ✓ Institutional distribution of publications
- ✓ Country-level distribution of publications
- ✓ Frequency analysis of the top ten most used keywords

These data were presented in graphical and tabular formats. Additionally, the following network visualizations were generated using VOSviewer software:

- ✓ Author co-authorship network
- ✓ Author citation network
- ✓ Institutional collaboration network
- ✓ Country collaboration network
- ✓ Keyword co-occurrence network and density visualization

Table 1 presents the disciplinary distribution of the 4,491 publications retrieved from the Web of Science database (2000-2024) using the specified search terms. The analysis reveals that "Family Studies" represents the most prevalent category with 556 publications (12.60% of total). This is followed by "Public, Environmental & Occupational Health" with 527 publications (11.73%), and "Psychology, Developmental" with 362 publications (8.06%). Other significant contributing disciplines include: "Pediatrics" (338 publications, 7.52%), "Psychiatry" (333 publications, 7.41%), "Sociology" (313 publications, 6.96%), "Social Work" (300 publications, 6.68%). Less represented categories include: "Social Sciences, Interdisciplinary" (4.96%), "Economics" (4.00%) and "Psychology, Multidisciplinary" (3.83%). This distribution demonstrates the interdisciplinary nature of single-parent family research, with particular concentration in family studies, public health, and developmental psychology domains. The substantial representation of social work publications (6.68%) indicates the field's significant contribution to understanding single-parent family dynamics.

Table 1: Distribution of Publications by Subject Category

Category	N	(%)
Family Studies	556	12.60
Public Environmental Occupational Health	527	11.73
Psychology Developmental	362	8.06
Pediatrics	338	7.52
Psychiatry	333	7.41
Sociology	313	6.96
Social Work	300	6.68
Social Sciences Interdisciplinary	223	4.96
Economics	180	4.00
Psychology Multidisciplinary	172	3.83

Table 2 presents the yearly distribution of the 4,491 publications retrieved from the Web of Science database (2000-2024) using the search terms "single parent," "single parent families," "single parent family," "single parenthood," "single parents," "single-parent families," and "single-parent family." The annual publication counts are as follows; 2000: 88, 2001: 88, 2002: 95, 2003: 97, 2004: 106, 2005: 109, 2006: 113, 2007: 130, 2008: 141, 2009: 147, 2010: 162, 2011: 167, 2012: 169, 2013: 221, 2014: 165, 2015: 202, 2016: 208, 2017: 221, 2018: 226, 2019: 223, 2020: 260, 2021: 273, 2022: 304, 2023: 284 and 2024: 292. While fluctuations in publication numbers are evident between 2000 and 2024, the data reveal a clear upward trend over time. The particularly notable increase in publications post-2020 demonstrates growing academic interest in and recognition of the significance of single-parent family research. This trend suggests that the topic has gained substantial attention within scholarly circles in recent years.

Table 2: Distribution of Publications by Year

Year	Volume of publications	Year	Volume of publications	Year	Volume of publications
2024	292	2015	202	2006	113
2023	284	2014	165	2005	109
2022	304	2013	221	2004	106
2021	273	2012	169	2003	97
2020	260	2011	167	2002	95
2019	223	2010	162	2001	88
2018	226	2009	147	2000	88
2017	221	2008	141		
2016	208	2007	130		

The analysis of the most published authors in single-parent family research reveals that Brody GH and Meyer DR lead with 18 publications each. They are followed by Hjern A (16 publications), Padilla-Walker LM (13), Dufur MJ (12), and Park H (11). Other notable contributors include Cancian M and Murry VM (10 publications each), while Cairney J and Martikainen P complete the list with 9 publications each.

Citation analysis demonstrates that Brody GH dominates with 2,574 citations, ranking first in impact. Simon RL follows with 1,561 citations (second position), and Amato PR ranks third with 1,442 citations. Collaborative works by Chetty R, Hendren N, and Katz L collectively received 1,133 citations, while studies by Dodge K, Gatzke-Kopp I, Liu JH, Raine A, Reynolds C, and Stouthamer-Loeber M garnered 1,125 citations. Other significant contributors include Murry VM (1,076 citations), Cherlin AJ (992), and Evans GW (946).

Brody GH emerges as the field's most influential scholar, leading in both publication volume (18) and citation impact (2,574). Authors like Simon RL and Amato PR demonstrate that scholarly influence is not solely determined by publication quantity, as their fewer but highly cited works show substantial academic impact. Collaborative research teams (e.g., Chetty R et al.) achieve notable citation influence through joint publications. The data suggest a non-linear relationship between publication count and citations, indicating that: Research quality

and field-specific contributions significantly affect impact. Both metrics (productivity and citations) provide complementary measures of academic influence. The presence of interdisciplinary teams highlights the growing importance of collaborative research models in this field.

This analysis underscores that while publication quantity reflects research productivity, citation metrics better capture scholarly influence and the conceptual significance of academic work. The findings align with broader bibliometric principles where high-impact research often combines methodological rigor with theoretical innovation.

Table 3: Distribution of Publication Counts and Citation Numbers by Author

Author	Volume of publications	Top 10 Most Frequently Cited Authors	Volume Of Citation
Brody GH	18	Brody GH.	2574
Meyer DR	18	Simon RL.	1561
Hjern A	16	Amato PR.	1442
Padilla-walker LM	13	Loeber R.	1282
Dufur MJ	12	Chetty R., Hendren N., Katz L.	1133
Park H	11	Dodge K., Gatzke-Kopp I., Liu JH. Raine A., Reynolds C. Stouthamer-Loeber M.	1125
Cancian M	10	Murry VM.	1076
Murry VM	10	Conger RD., Mcloyd VC., Sun YM., Wallece, LE.	996
Cairney J	9	Cherlin, AJ.	992
Martikainen P	9	Evans, GW.	946

Chart 1 presents the citation distribution of publications on single-parent families. Between 2000 and 2024, the total number of citations for publications on single-parent families is 91,347. Excluding self-citations, this number is 89,540. Analyzing the citation counts, we see that in 2000 there were 23 citations, which increased to 117 in 2001 and 263 in 2002. In 2005, the citation count reached 1,080 and showed a steady increase, rising to 3,270 in 2010, 5,346 in 2015, and 9,002 in 2020. In 2021, the number of citations climbed to 9,950, peaking at 10,173 in 2022. However, in 2023, it declined to 9,305 and slightly increased to 9,317 in 2024. These data indicate a consistent upward trend in citations until 2022, followed by a plateau and a slight decline thereafter. The increase in citation counts reflects growing recognition and impact of the studies in this field, while the decrease in the past two years may suggest a shift in research trends within the relevant academic disciplines.

Chart 1: Distribution of Citation Counts by Year

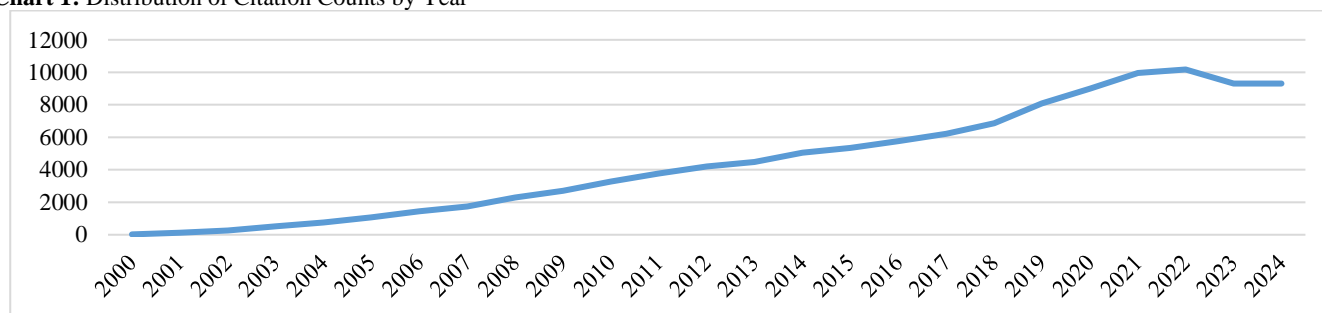


Chart 1 presents the co-authorship network based on link strength calculations among 1,585 authors. The analysis includes 963 authors who have at least one publication and five citations. For each author, the total strength of co-authorship links (below a threshold of 1000) with other authors was computed and visualized.

In the author citation network, 1,146 authors with at least two publications and five citations were initially selected. Of these, 1,000 were included in the visualization process. Authors with no citation links to others were excluded, resulting in a final visualization of the largest connected component, consisting of 771 authors.

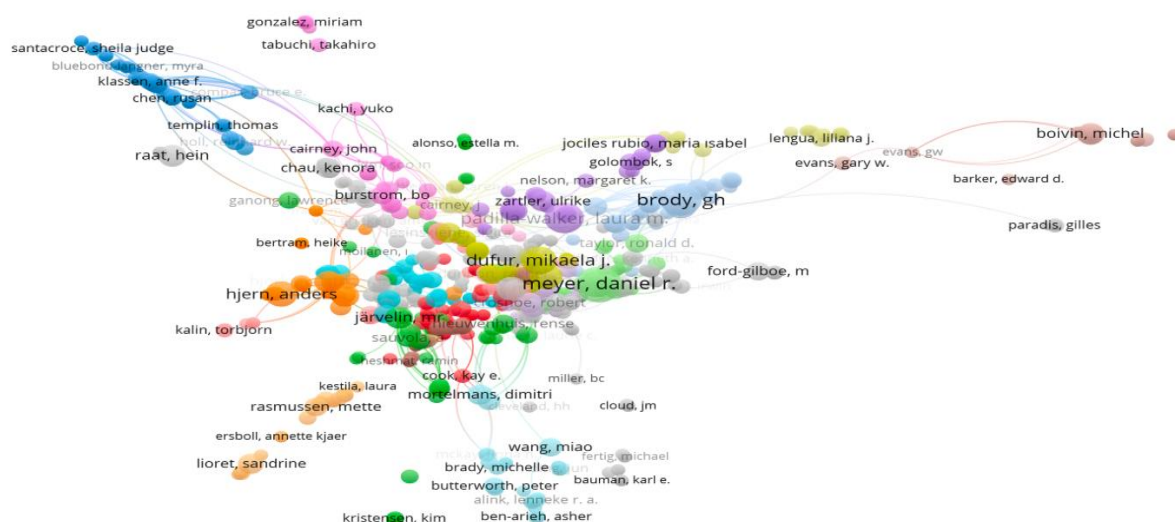


Fig. 1: Co-authorship Citation Network

Based on data retrieved from the Web of Science database between 2000 and 2024 using the keywords “single parent,” “single parent families,” “single parent family,” “single parenthood,” “single parents,” “single-parents families,” and “single-parent family,” the five most cited publications related to the topic are as follows:

Amato, P.R. (2000) – “The Consequences of Divorce for Adults and Children” (1,443 citations): This study examines the effects of divorce on adults and children, emphasizing that while divorce can be a significant disruption in individuals’ lives, its effects vary widely. For some, it may be beneficial; for others, it may lead to temporary declines in well-being, and for others still, it may result in a long-term cycle of negative outcomes.

Chetty et al. (2016) – “The Effects of Exposure to Better Neighborhoods on Children: New Evidence from the Moving to Opportunity Experiment” (1,134 citations): This study finds that children who move from high-poverty to lower-poverty neighborhoods at an early age (before age 13) tend to have higher educational attainment, income, and lower rates of single parenthood. However, those who move during adolescence may experience negative effects. The findings highlight that the duration of environmental exposure plays a critical role in determining children's long-term outcomes.

Raine et al. (2006) – “The Reactive–Proactive Aggression Questionnaire: Differential Correlates of Reactive and Proactive Aggression in Adolescent Boys” (1,226 citations): This work differentiates between two types of aggression in adolescents. Proactive aggression is associated with being raised in single-parent families, antisocial behavior, low school motivation, and psychopathic traits, while reactive aggression is linked to impulsivity, hostility, social anxiety, and a lack of close friendships.

Conger et al. (2022) – “Economic Pressure in African American Families: A Replication and Extension of the Family Stress Model” (997 citations): This study demonstrates that economic hardship increases financial pressure within families, contributing to emotional distress among caregivers and relational conflicts. These dynamics lead to impaired parenting practices, lower child adjustment, and greater psychological problems, supporting the applicability of the Family Stress Model across diverse populations.

Bumpass & Lu (2000) – “Trends in Cohabitation and Implications for Children's Family Contexts in the United States” (700 citations): This publication emphasizes that increasing rates of cohabitation in the United States have led to greater instability and family disruption in children’s lives. It highlights a growing trend in which more children are being raised in cohabiting families.

Table 4 and Figure 2 present the data on the “Institutional Distribution of Publications and Citations” related to single-parent families. In terms of the number of publications, the University of California System leads with 149 publications, indicating a highly active role in research on single-parent families. The Pennsylvania Commonwealth System of Higher Education (PCSHE) ranks second with 118 publications, followed by the University of London with 102 publications. Other institutions with high publication output include the University System of Ohio (88 publications) and Harvard University (82 publications). Additionally, the University of Wisconsin System (74 publications), University of North Carolina (67 publications), University of Wisconsin–Madison (63 publications), Pennsylvania State University (62 publications), and the State University System of Florida (60 publications) are among the prominent contributors in this field.

In terms of citation counts, Pennsylvania State University ranks highest with 4,142 citations, demonstrating not only a high volume of publications but also a leading scholarly impact. Harvard University follows with 3,715 citations, and University of Wisconsin–Madison is third with 3,462 citations. These are followed by the University System of Georgia (3,311 citations) and the University of Michigan (3,020 citations). Other notable institutions include Cornell University (2,696 citations), Johns Hopkins University (2,611 citations), University of North Carolina (2,571 citations), University of California, Los Angeles (2,451 citations), and University of Pittsburgh (2,442 citations).

Overall, the Pennsylvania State University and the University of California System stand out as key institutions in both publication volume and citation impact, underscoring their influence in the field. Harvard University, although ranked lower in publication count, holds the second position in citations, highlighting its substantial academic impact. This data demonstrates that research on single-parent families is predominantly led by major universities in the United States and that such work has resonated broadly within the academic community.

Table 4: Distribution of Publications and Citations by Authors' Affiliations

Affiliation	Publication	Affiliation	Citation
University Of California System	149	Pennsylvania State University	4142
Pennsylvania Commonwealth System of Higher Education Pcshe	118	Harvard University	3715
University Of London	102	University Of Wisconsin Madison	3462
University System Of Ohio	88	University System Of Georgia	3311
Harvard University	82	University Of Michigan	3020
University Of Wisconsin System	74	Cornell University	2696
University Of North Carolina	67	Johns Hopkins University	2611
University Of Wisconsin Madison	63	University Of North Carolina	2571
Pennsylvania State University	62	University Of California Los Angeles	2451
State University System Of Florida	60	University Of Pittsburgh	2442

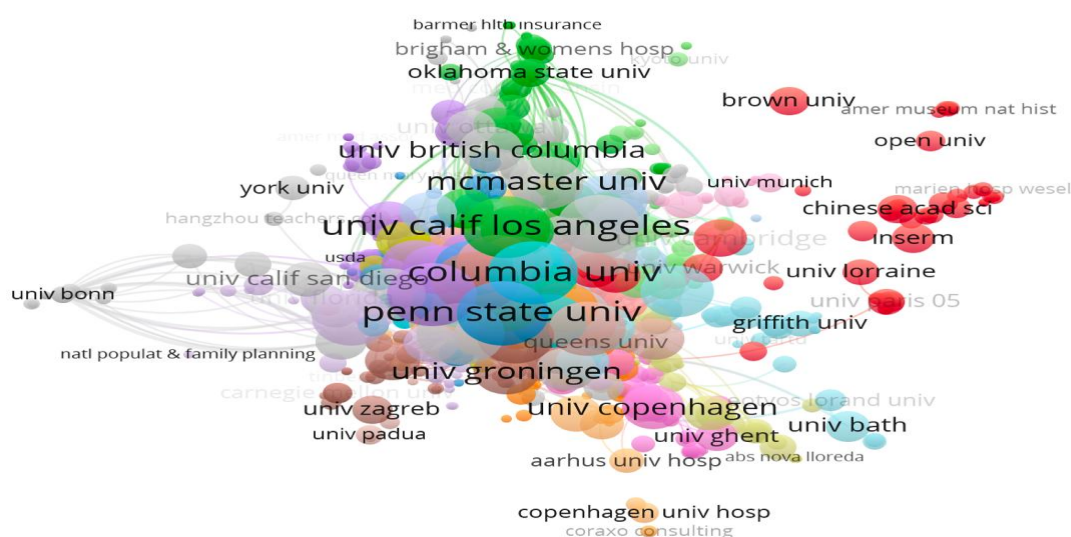


Fig. 2: Publication Network by Institution

Table 5 and Figure 3 present the distribution of publications and citation counts by country related to single-parent families. In terms of publication counts, the United States leads with 1,776 publications, followed by the United Kingdom with 368 publications and Canada with 308 publications. Germany ranks fourth with 307 publications, and China is fifth with 273 publications. Other countries in the top 10 include Australia (209), Spain (168), Sweden (149), the Netherlands (139), and France (129). Türkiye ranks 29th with 34 publications.

Regarding citation counts, the United States also ranks first with 68,128 citations. The United Kingdom follows in second place with 10,528 citations, and Canada ranks third with 9,646 citations. Other countries in the top 10 include Germany (5,230), Australia (4,434), the Netherlands (3,993), China (3,921), Sweden (3,210), France (2,754), and Spain (1,965). Türkiye ranks 25th with 574 citations.

The data clearly show that the United States is the dominant leader in both publication and citation counts, with 1,776 publications and 68,128 citations. The United Kingdom and Canada also demonstrate significant academic contributions, ranking in the top three for both publications and citations. Countries like Germany, China, and Australia stand out with high publication and citation counts, while nations such as the Netherlands, Sweden, and

France have created a notable impact with relatively fewer publications. Türkiye, with 34 publications and 574 citations, ranks lower on the list, suggesting the need for increased international academic contributions from the country. Overall, the distribution of publications and citations highlights the academic productivity and influence of different countries, with the United States maintaining a clear dominance in this field.

Table 5: Distribution of Publications by Country

	Country	Volume of publications		Country	Citation
1	United States	1776	1	United States	68128
2	England	368	2	England	10528
3	Canada	308	3	Canada	9646
4	Germany	307	4	Germany	5230
5	China	273	5	Australia	4434
6	Australia	209	6	Holland	3993
7	Spain	168	7	China	3921
8	Sweden	149	8	Sweden	3210
9	Holland	139	9	France	2754
10	France	129	10	Spain	1965
29	Türkiye	34	25	Türkiye	574

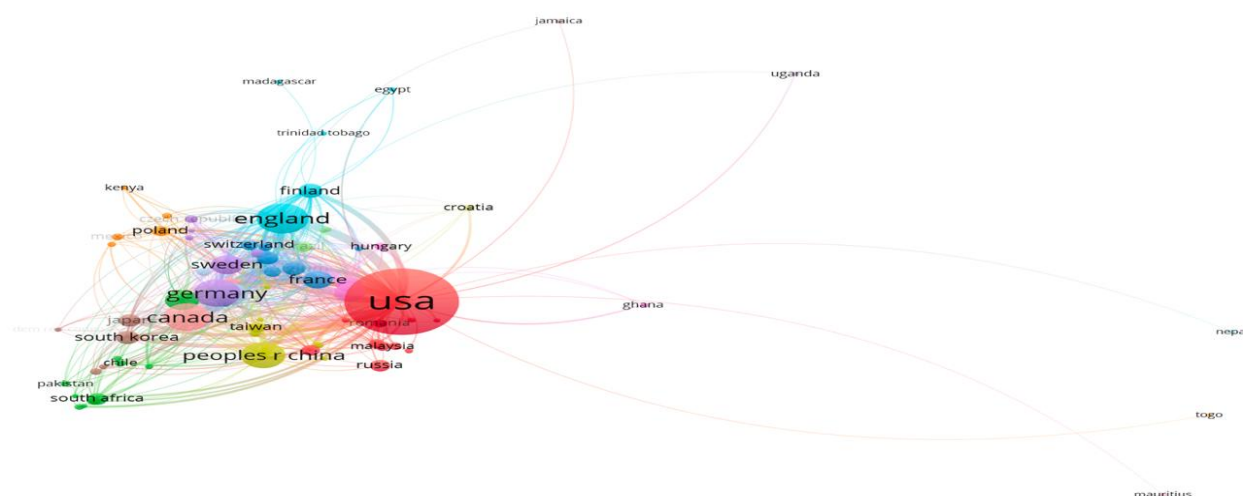


Fig. 3: Citation Network by Country

When examining the distribution of publications on single-parent families, the *Journal of Marriage and Family* stands out as the clear leader in both publication and citation counts, with 78 publications and 5,683 citations. This journal appears to be one of the most influential platforms for research in this field, both in terms of quantity and quality. The second-highest number of publications is found in the *Children and Youth Services Review*, with 64 publications, although its relatively lower citation count suggests that the articles published in this journal may have had a more limited impact. In third place is the *Journal of Family Issues* with 58 publications.

Other prominent journals in terms of publication count include *BMC Public Health* (43 publications), *Journal of Child and Family Studies* (39 publications), *PLOS One* (39 publications), *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* (32 publications), *Pediatrics* (30 publications), *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology* (29 publications), and *Journal of Family Psychology* (28 publications).

In terms of citation counts, *Developmental Psychology* (3,055 citations) and *Pediatrics* (2,902 citations) stand out. While the publication counts of these journals are not very high, their impact in terms of citation levels is considerable. Similarly, journals like *Child Development* (2,057 citations), *Demography* (1,583 citations), *American Sociological Review* (1,417 citations), and *Journal of Family Issues* (1,400 citations) have made significant contributions and rank highly in citation counts.

Other journals contributing significantly to the field include *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology* (1,377 citations), *Social Science & Medicine* (1,309 citations), and *Journal of Family Psychology* (1,291 citations).

Overall, the distribution of publications on single-parent families shows that research in this area has been published across a wide range of disciplines, including both social sciences and health sciences. The distribution of citation counts suggests that these studies not only resonate widely in the academic world but are also frequently utilized by policymakers and practitioners. In particular, the *Journal of Marriage and Family* emerges as a key center for research on this topic.

Table 6: Distribution of Publications and Citations by Journals

Journal	Volume of Publicatin	Journal	Citation
Journal Of Marriage And Family	78	Journal Of Marriage And Family	5683
Children And Youth Services Review	64	Developmental Psychology	3055
Journal Of Family Issues	58	Pediatrics	2902
Bmc Public Health	43	Child Development	2057
Journal Of Child And Family Studies	39	Demography	1583
Plos One	39	American Sociological Review	1417
International Journal Of Environmental Research And Public Health	32	Journal of Family Issues	1400
Pediatrics	30	Social Psychiatry And Psychiatric Epidemiology	1377
Social Psychiatry And Psychiatric Epidemiology	29	Social Science & Medicine	1309
Journal Of Family Psychology	28	Journal Of Family Psychology	1291

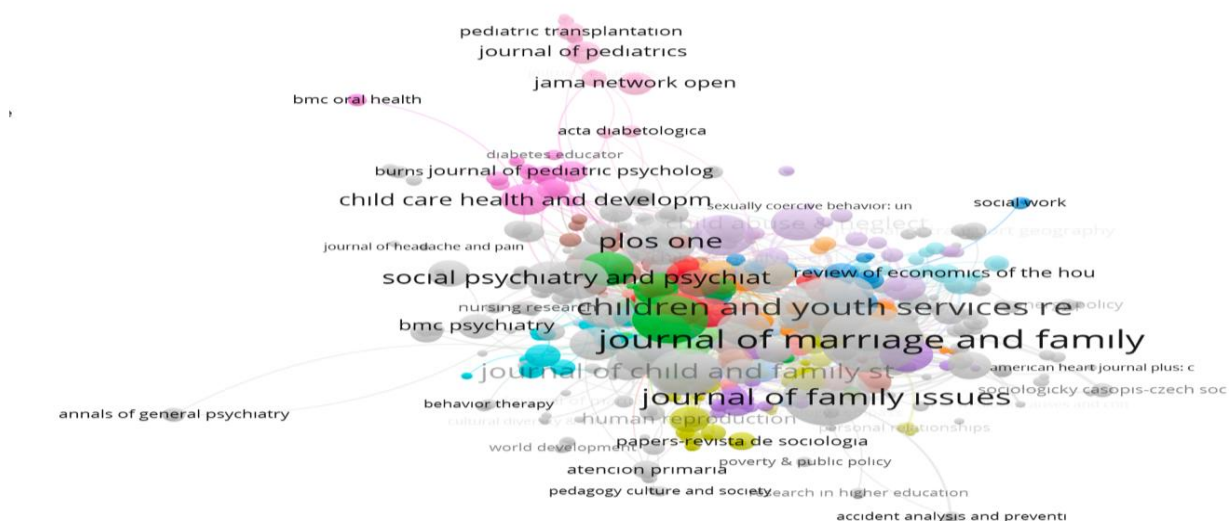


Fig. 4: Citation Network by Journals

Table 7 presents the frequency of the keywords "single parent," "single parent families," "single parent family," "single parenthood," "single parents," "single-parents families," and "single-parent family" in the Web of Science database from 2000 to 2024. Among the 4491 studies extracted from the Web of Science database, a total of 485 keywords, which appeared at least five times, were visualized using the VOSviewer program and analyzed. According to the keyword network provided in Figure 5, a short distance between keywords indicates a strong relationship, while a greater distance reflects a weaker relationship.

According to the data presented under the heading Table 7. Keyword Frequency, when examining the keywords and their frequencies in studies on single-parent families, it is observed that the most frequently used keyword is "Family Structure," which appears 225 times. This indicates that family structure is generally the focal point of these studies. The second most frequent keyword is "Children," with 189 occurrences, suggesting that the research focuses on children. In third place is the term "Single Parents," appearing 155 times, highlighting the central theme of single parents in the studies. This theme is followed by "Adolescents" and "Poverty," each appearing 133 times, indicating that the conditions of adolescents and poverty are frequently addressed in the context of single-parent family discussions. Other frequently used keywords include "Gender" (105 occurrences), "Single-parents Families" (95 occurrences), "Parenting" (90 occurrences), "Divorce" (85 occurrences), and "Mental Health" (83 occurrences). These keywords demonstrate that studies on single-parent families often focus on issues such as gender, parenting roles, divorce, and mental health.

Overall, this table reveals that the literature on single-parent families extensively covers issues related to children and parents, family structure, poverty, and gender-based approaches. Moreover, topics such as mental health and divorce are also significant components of these studies. This indicates that the research tends to offer a multidimensional analysis, addressing both individual and societal impacts.

Table 7: Keyword Frequency Counts

	Keyword	Frequency
1	Family Structure	225
2	Children	189

3	Single Parents	155
4	Adolescents	133
5	Poverty	133
6	Gender	105
7	Single-parents Families	95
8	Parenting	90
9	Divorce	85
	Adolescent	
10	Mental Health	83

Figure 5 visualizes 485 keywords used at least 5 times in studies on single-parent families, revealing that these keywords are grouped into 15 different clusters. The top 3 most frequently used keywords within each keyword cluster are presented as follows:

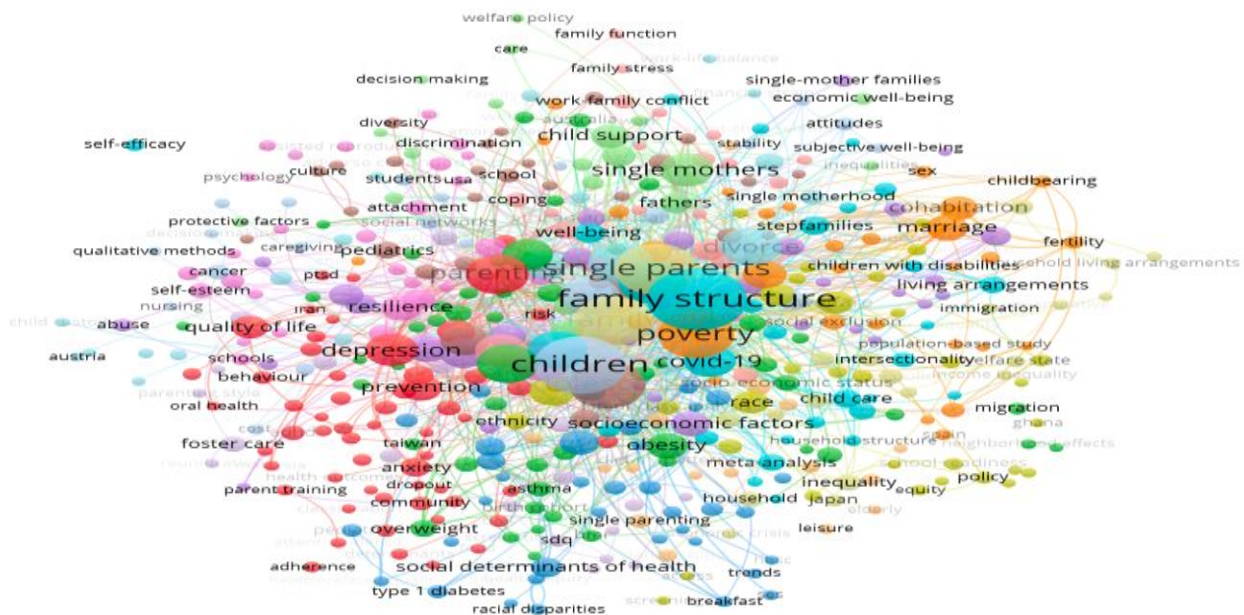


Fig. 5: Keyword Usage Network

In studies on single-parent families, the keywords used tend to concentrate around specific themes, which are analyzed by linking them to concept clusters. In the first cluster, Parenting (90 occurrences, 198 connection strength), Adolescence (73 occurrences, 157 connection strength), and Depression (63 occurrences, 178 connection strength) stand out. This indicates that challenges faced by children during adolescence and the psychological impacts of parenting roles are often addressed together. Mental health-related studies are highlighted in the second cluster. Here, Mental Health (83 occurrences, 220 connection strength), Risk Factors (55 occurrences, 102 connection strength), and Obesity (39 occurrences, 90 connection strength) emerge prominently. The focus of research has been on the factors affecting mental health and physical health issues in single-parent families. In contrast, the third cluster, which includes Poverty (133 occurrences, 276 connection strength), Single Parenthood (46 occurrences, 92 connection strength), and Marriage (40 occurrences, 120 connection strength), sheds light on the relationship between economic hardships and family structure. In the fourth cluster, which examines family relationships with adolescents, Family (144 occurrences, 313 connection strength), Adolescents (133 occurrences, 273 connection strength), and Single Fathers (14 occurrences, 33 connection strength) are prominent. However, research on single fathers appears to be more limited. The fifth cluster focuses on Adolescence (85 occurrences, 273 connection strength), Food Insecurity (37 occurrences, 65 connection strength), and Socioeconomic Factors (35 occurrences, 74 connection strength), illustrating how adolescents' economic situations relate to food access and other factors. In the sixth cluster, Children (51 occurrences, 128 connection strength), Prevalence (41 occurrences, 81 connection strength), and Resilience (38 occurrences, 94 connection strength) are highlighted, while in the seventh cluster, Family Structure (225 occurrences, 473 connection strength), Divorce (85 occurrences, 223 connection strength), and Social Support (46 occurrences, 105 connection strength) stand out. The transformation of family structure and the impact of social support on this process have been frequently emphasized in the studies. In the eighth cluster, the focus is on Single-parent Families (95 occurrences, 173 connection strength), Socioeconomic Status (47 occurrences, 97 connection strength), and Child Development (29 occurrences, 59 connection strength). In the ninth cluster, Parents (63 occurrences, 146 connection strength), Family Functioning (26 occurrences, 46 connection strength), and Health (25 occurrences, 66 connection strength)

are present, demonstrating the connection between family dynamics and individuals' health. In the tenth cluster, Single Parents (155 occurrences, 300 connection strength), Welfare (30 occurrences, 67 connection strength), and Family Policy (22 occurrences, 56 connection strength) are prominent. The eleventh cluster highlights Single Mothers (67 occurrences, 144 connection strength), Child Support (32 occurrences, 66 connection strength), and Welfare Reform (26 occurrences, 47 connection strength). In the twelfth cluster, Education (46 occurrences, 112 connection strength), Stress (32 occurrences, 80 connection strength), and Pediatrics (17 occurrences, 29 connection strength) are emphasized, while the thirteenth cluster includes Single-parent Family (57 occurrences, 105 connection strength), Well-being (24 occurrences, 65 connection strength), and Child Health (20 occurrences, 49 connection strength). The fourteenth cluster is based on Gender (105 occurrences, 242 connection strength), Quality of Life (31 occurrences, 62 connection strength), and Low-income Families (15 occurrences, 30 connection strength), while the fifteenth cluster includes Children (189 occurrences, 462 connection strength), Covid-19 (61 occurrences, 146 connection strength), and Life Satisfaction (18 occurrences, 38 connection strength). These findings reflect the impact of the pandemic on family structures and children's life satisfaction. Overall, these keywords and connection strengths comprehensively reveal the various challenges faced by single-parent families and the significance of these issues in academic research. Themes such as Parenting, Mental Health, Socioeconomic Factors, and Gender demonstrate the broad range of issues addressed in this field.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to comprehensively analyze academic publications on single-parent families from the Web of Science (WOS) database, covering the period from 2000 to 2024, from a bibliometric perspective, in order to reveal the development and trends of academic interest in this field. The findings from the analysis show that academic interest in this topic has increased over time, with a tendency to delve deeper into specific thematic areas.

The study includes an examination of a total of 4,491 publications, the majority of which are concentrated in the "Family Studies" category. This category ranks first with 556 publications, accounting for 12.60% of the total. It is followed by the "Public Environmental Occupational Health" category with 527 publications (11.73%), the "Psychology Developmental" category with 362 publications (8.06%), "Pediatrics" with 338 publications (7.52%), and "Psychiatry" with 333 publications (7.41%). When examining the distribution of publications by year, 88 publications were found in 2000, while this number peaked in 2022 with 304 publications. A significant increase in publication numbers after 2020 is noteworthy, and it is speculated that the pandemic period might have contributed to the rise in academic interest in studies on single-parent families. By 2024, the publication count had reached 292.

Regarding citation counts, the number of citations in 2000 was 23, which soared to 10,173 in 2022. In total, publications in this field received 91,347 citations from 2000 to 2024, with 89,540 citations after excluding self-citations. These data indicate that studies on single-parent families have gained more recognition and their impact has increased over time. The University of California System is the institution with the highest number of publications, with 149 publications, followed by the Pennsylvania Commonwealth System of Higher Education (118 publications) and the University of London (102 publications). In terms of citation counts, Pennsylvania State University ranks first with 4,142 citations, and Harvard University ranks second with 3,715 citations.

When examined by country, the United States leads by a wide margin with 1,776 publications and 68,128 citations. The United Kingdom ranks second with 368 publications and 10,528 citations, followed by Canada with 308 publications and 9,646 citations. Türkiye, with 34 publications and 574 citations, ranks lower, highlighting the need to increase academic contributions in this field.

In the keyword analysis, the most frequently used terms, such as "Family Structure" (225 occurrences) and "Children" (189 occurrences), indicate that these are central themes in studies on single-parent families. Additionally, terms like "Single Parents" (155 occurrences) and "Poverty" (133 occurrences) also emerge as key topics. This analysis shows that the economic and social challenges faced by single-parent families are heavily emphasized in the literature.

The research findings highlight that single-parent families face various challenges in economic, psychological, and social dimensions. Economic hardships reduce the quality of life for these families, adversely affecting children's education, health, and social life. From a psychosocial perspective, single parents are more likely to experience issues such as depression, stress, and social isolation, while children also show a decline in psychological resilience due to parental absence. The lack of social support systems exacerbates the challenges faced by both parents and children. In this context, the results suggest the need for the development of social policies targeted at single-parent families. Increasing financial support, improving employment opportunities, and expanding childcare services are among the steps that can enhance the living conditions of these families. Additionally, expanding psychosocial support services and implementing school social work practices are critical measures to improve children's well-

being. Public campaigns to raise social awareness and reduce stigmatization could also play an important role in this process.

Furthermore, the study presents important guidelines for future academic research. Topics such as the experiences and challenges faced by single fathers, the impact of the pandemic on single-parent families, and the issues encountered by single-parent families in different cultures stand out as new areas that could contribute to the literature. Additionally, increasing applied research that evaluates the effectiveness of social policies and services could be a crucial step in addressing the knowledge gaps in this field.

In conclusion, this study provides a comprehensive overview of the literature on single-parent families and outlines the directions of academic research in this area. The research serves as an important resource for future studies and social policies and contributes to addressing the knowledge gaps in this field.

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