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Scientometric Mapping of Library and Information Science Research among SAARC Countries during 2012-2021

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ABSTRACT:

Introduction: Literature regarding Library and Information Science studies has rapidly increased in recent years, yet there have been few studies on LIS research in SAARC countries. To understand the research pattern in the LIS field among SAARC countries through the lens of the Scopus database, a scientometric analysis was conducted where 3610 articles were published between 2012-2021 in all sources.

Objectives: The primary objectives of this study are to analyze the LIS research of SAARC countries and examined quantitative aspects of publications and citations, document-wise publications, prolific authors, top source titles, international research collaboration, authors and reference co-citations, and keyword co-occurrence.

Methodology: The data for the study was collected from the Scopus database between 2012 and 2021 and retrieved 3610 publications. The retrieved data was recorded, processed and analyzed using MS-Excel, VOSviewer and RStudio..

Findings: The study reveals that India is leading followed by Pakistan in LIS research publications and citations while Pakistan is leading in individual research performance; Library Philosophy and Practice is the top source item for research publication; Saudi Arabia and the USA are the top research collaborating countries for Pakistan and India, respectively; India, Bibliometrics, and Scientometrics are the top three most occurred keywords found in the study.

KEYWORDS :

Library and Information Science-Research; Research-SAARC; Scientometrics

Introduction

The field of library and information science (LIS) imparts techniques for the preservation and conservation of information in tangible forms. After bibliometric and scientometric approaches were developed, the recorded information present in tangible forms has been researched for various reasons. Amudhavalli (1977) argued that the LIS field should use bibliometric and scientometric methods to measure the records of human communication. Scientometric techniques are employed to assess a specific field's present state and potential future directions. To determine the structural pattern of the topics through time, the research output of an individual, an institution, or a nation is measured and mapped. This makes it easier to understand where a nation, organization, or person stands within their respective category. The research output determines the quality and quantity of the growth of scholarly communications and scientific literature in a given field of study. Currently, scientific and technical research performance reflects the nation's scientific policy while also serving as a significant criterion for gauging a country's overall success and development.

Asia is the world's largest continent in terms of area and population. Regarding ethnic groups, cultures, ecosystems, economies, historical links, and political structures, Asia exhibits wide variation throughout and within its regions. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is one of the strong regional organizations in the South Asian region. Afghanistan, Bhutan, Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka are the eight developing countries that make up the SAARC. Scopus is the largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature. With 22,800 volumes from over 5,000 international publishers, Scopus provides the most comprehensive perspective of the world's research output in science, technology, medicine, social science, arts & humanities.

Literature Review

It is easier to understand a field to some extent when there is written literature about it, but it is more difficult to understand a field when there is no

published literature fully. On the other hand, a dearth of literature on a particular subject tends to open the door to further investigation and identifying knowledge gaps and fresh angles on the subject. The current study examined the published literature that addressed different aspects of its aims because there was a dearth of core material on the subject. Patra & Chand (2009) examined Library and Information Science Research in SAARC and ASEAN countries as reflected through LISA. They studied the pattern of literature growth, core journals, authorship pattern and research trends and found that SAARC countries are ahead of ASEAN members. India is leading in LIS research among SAARC countries and Singapore among ASEAN countries. Herald of Library Science and Kekal Abadi are the top core journals of SAARC and ASEAN countries respectively. Uddin & Singh (2014) examined the research output of South Asian countries over 50 years and discovered that the region only contributed 2.86% of global research output, with India being the most significant contributor. Physical Sciences and Life Sciences contributions were higher than those of other categories in the research output results bring down by category. Despite the USA being the top research partner with South Asian nations, citations were not rising in line with research production. Kalantari et al. (2017) analyzed big data research trends by examining 6572 publications retrieved from the Web of Science and found that 28 papers were cited highly; English was the dominant language; the USA, China and Germany were the most productive countries in the world. Sadik Batcha (2018) investigated Cardiovascular Diseases research published by SAARC countries and revealed that India is the leading country among SAARC nations followed by Pakistan. The USA, United Kingdom and Australia were the top collaborative countries for SAARC nations.

Moreover, the study observed that India is competing with other developed countries and shows higher activity within the context of their productivity. Singh (2018) assessed the Biotechnology research pattern in four SAARC countries from 2007 to 2016 and found that researchers in Biotechnology move towards team research rather than solo research. The study found that the average Activity Index of four SAARC

countries for ten years is the highest for India and the lowest for Sri Lanka. Concerning international collaboration, the United States has taken the top position for India and Sri Lanka. Tanget al. (2018) studied ten years of Sustainability research from 2009 to 2018 and revealed that publications on Sustainability increased in the last few years. China, the USA and South Korea were the most productive countries in Sustainability publications; reference work by Fornell and Larcker was the most highly cited reference. The keywords "sustainability", "management", and "China" were the most frequently observed keywords in Sustainability publications. Similar studies conducted by Shukla & Maurya (2018), Naheem et al. (2017), Majumder et al. (2012) and Gupta et al. (2004) also found that India is leading among SAARC countries and BRIC countries (Elango et al., 2013) not only in LIS research but also in some other aspects.

Objectives of the study

The primary objective of the present study is to analyze the LIS research of SAARC countries based on the following aspects:

- a) Quantitative evaluation of publications and citations
- b) Prolific forms of research productivity
- c) Leading source titles in LIS research
- d) A prolific contributor to LIS research
- e) Authors' co-citations network analysis
- f) Reference co-citations network analysis
- g) International research collaboration
- h) Keyword co-occurrence analysis

Methodology

The data for the study was collected from the Scopus database using the following search string :
 SUBJAREA(SOCI) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY-AUTH(Library AND Information AND Science) AND (LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY,"India") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY,"Pakistan") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY,"Bangladesh") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY,"Sri Lanka") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY,"Nepal") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY,"Afghanistan") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY,"Maldives") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY,"Bhutan")) AND (LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR,2021) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR,2020) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR,2019) OR LIMIT-TO

(PUBYEAR,2018) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR,2017) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR,2016) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR,2015) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR,2014) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR,2013) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR,2012) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE,"English")).

The result was restricted by "All Document types". It resulted in 3610 publications. The retrieved data was recorded, processed and analyzed using MS-Excel, VOSviewer and Rstudio. Data Analysis & Interpretation

Data Analysis & Interpretation

a) Quantitative Analysis of Publications and Citations

The first parameter was to find the total number of publications and their citations of SAARC countries (Table 1). During the study period, 3610 publications were retrieved from the Scopus database for SAARC countries. Among the eight SAARC countries, India has contributed the highest number of publications (2738 publications) which shares 75.84% of SAARC contributions followed by Pakistan (695, 19.25%), Bangladesh (119, 3.29%) and Sri Lanka (50, 1.38%). Afghanistan, Bhutan, Maldives and Nepal each have published two publications (0.06%). India and Pakistan share more than 95% of publications while the rest of the SAARC countries have less than 5% of publication share. During the study period, 14152 citations were found for 3610 publications with an average of 3.92 citations per publication. Out of total citations, India topped with Pakistan (28.43%) and Bangladesh (5.02%). The citations share of Sri Lanka is 1.63%

Country	Publications	% Publications	Citations	% Citations
India	2738	75.84	9144	64.61
Pakistan	695	19.25	4023	28.43
Bangladesh	119	3.29	711	5.02
Sri Lanka	50	1.38	231	1.63
Afghanistan	2	0.06	10	0.07
Bhutan	2	0.06	16	0.11
Maldives	2	0.06	4	0.03
Nepal	2	0.06	13	0.09
Total	3610	100	14152	100

64.61% citation share followed by
 Table 1: Publications and Citations of SAARC countries

while Afghanistan has 0.07% citations share. India and Pakistan share more than 93% of citations, while other SAARC countries have less than 7% of citations.

b) Prolific Forms of Research Productivity

Table 2 displays the document-wiseresearch productivity of SAARC countries. The total number of publications is categorized into ten document types as recorded in the Scopus database. More than 87.89% of publications belong to the "Article" category, followed by "Conference Paper" (4.59%). The "Book Chapter" publication is 3.77% while "Review" is 3.1%. Other document types Editorial (0.25%), Book (0.14%), Note (0.14%), Letter (0.6%), Short Survey (0.03%) and Erratum (0.03%) are also seen in the research. The study result shows that most researchers are interested in publishing

Document Type	No. of Documents	% of Documents
Article	3173	87.89
Conference Paper	166	4.59
Book Chapter	136	3.77
Review	112	3.1
Editorial	9	0.25
Book	5	0.14
Note	5	0.14
Letter	2	0.06
Short Survey	1	0.03
Erratum	1	0.03
Total	3610	100

Table 2: Document-wise Research Productivity

c) Leading Source Titles in LIS Research

The publications retrieved from the Scopus database on SAARC countries are published in 647 source titles. Table 3 lists the top 10 source titles in which 60.97% of LIS publications are covered. From the observation of Table 3, it is found that the top 10 source titles belong to journal publications only. "Library Philosophy and Practice" is the most preferred source title, which has published 1445 publications and shares 40% of publications, followed by "DESIDOC Journal of Library and Information Science" with 249 publications and 6.9% of publications share. The journal "Annals of Library and Information Studies" has published 4.21% of publications, while the reputed journal

"Electronic Library" published 1.72% of publications during the period. The top 10 list covers 11 journals having 2201 publications, while the rest of the 39.03% publications (1409) are published in 636 source titles.

Source Title	No. of Publications	% of Total Publications
Library Philosophy and Practice	1445	40.03
DESIDOC Journal of Library and Information Technology	249	6.90
Annals of Library and Information Studies	152	4.21
Electronic Library	62	1.72
Library Hi Tech News	54	1.50
Global Knowledge, Memory and Communication	51	1.41
Scientometrics	48	1.33
International Information and Library Reviews	47	1.30
Library Review	39	1.08
Journal of Scientometric Reearch	27	0.75
Pakistan Journal of Information Management and Libraries	27	0.75
Total	2201	60.97%

Table 3: Leading Source Titles

d) Prolific Contributors in LIS Research

Table 4 shows the top ten productive authors. A total of 8819 authors are found for 3610 publications. The result shows that the top productive authors belong to Pakistan (6 authors), followed by India (3 authors). One author Rehman, S. U. belongs to Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia is not part of the SAARC countries but due to collaboration in LIS research, the author's name comes under the top 10 productive authors. Except for Pakistan and India, no other SAARC countries' authors are listed in the top 10 productive authors list. At the individual level, the majority of publications are published by Ameen, K from the University of the Punjab, Pakistan (72 publications, 466 citations) followed by Mahmood, K from the University of Punjab, Pakistan (61 publications, 551 citations), and Bhatti, R from the Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan (47 publications, 417 citations). Gul, S from the University of Kashmir, India is at the top among Indian authors with 44 papers and 195 citations followed by Thanuskodi, S from Alagappa University with 40 publications and 99 citations.

Author Name	Total Pub.	Total Citations	Affiliation
Ameen K.	72	466	University of the Punjab, Pakistan
Mahmood K.	61	551	University of the Punjab, Pakistan
Bhatti R.	47	417	Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan
Gul S.	44	195	University of Kashmir, India
Khan A.	41	312	University of Peshawar, Pakistan
Thanuskodi S.	40	99	Alagappa University, India
Rehman S.U.	30	151	Imam Abdulrehman Bin Faisal University, Saudi Arabia
Naveed M.A.	29	167	University of Sargodha, Pakistan
Ashiq M.	28	115	Islamabad Model College for Boys, Pakistan
Jeys Shankar R.	28	69	Alagappa University, India

Table 4: Top 10 Prolific Contributors

e) Authors' Co-citation Network

A total of 8819 authors are found in 3610 publications. VOSviewer is used to draw the authors' co-citation network. For drawing the authors' co-citation network, the threshold was set at 100 and found that 59 authors were divided into 5 clusters. In figure 1, the co-citation network of authors is illustrated in different colors and represents five different clusters. Each node represents an author, and nodes are grouped according to similarity. The link of the nodes indicates the strength; the greater thickness, the higher the strength. The Red cluster has the highest number of 24 authors, Green with 15 authors, Blue with 8 authors, Yellow with 7 authors and Violet with 5 authors. In terms of total link strength, Mahmood K (from the Green cluster) has the highest total link strength (9608) followed by Ameen, K (5720), Gupta, BM (1917), Bhatti, R (1805), Thewall, M (1094) and Thanuskodi, S (848).

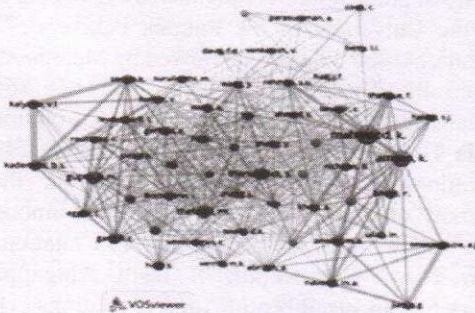


Table 1: Authors Co-Citation Network

f) Reference Co-citation Network

In figure 2, the reference co-citation network of publications is displayed. The node represents a document; the node's size indicates the document's frequency. The nodes which have a bigger size represent a higher frequency. The link between the two nodes represents the strength of reference co-citation of the cited papers. The nodes with the same colour belong to the same cluster and are grouped accordingly. The VOSviewer software identified four clusters. In the 3610 publications, there are a total of 104143 cited references. For the drawing network graph, we set the threshold at 8 and 63 references meet this requirement. The Red cluster has the highest number of 14 items, the Green cluster with 13 items, the Blue cluster with 13 items, the Yellow cluster with 10 items, the Purple cluster with 9 items and the Sky Blue Cluster with 4 items. As shown in figure 2, research work by Fornell, C&Larcker, DF is cited most followed by Subramanyam, K, Ameen, K and Pritchard A.

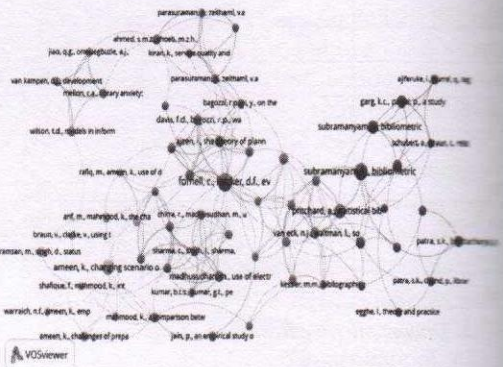


Table 2: Reference Co-citation Network

g) International Research Collaboration

The country collaboration map for LIS research among SAARC countries is shown in figure 3. Table 5 lists the top 15 international research collaborations of SAARC countries. From the analysis of Table 5, it is found that Pakistan has international research collaborations with Saudi Arabia (78), China (45), Malaysia (28), the USA (20), and Australia (14). Similarly, Bangladesh has international research collaborations with Malaysia (11) and Japan (10). India has international research collaboration with more countries compared to

Pakistan like the USA (40), China (30), Malaysia (19), Saudi Arabia (17), United Kingdom (15), South Africa (13), Nigeria (10) and Iran (10). Saudi Arabia (95) stands at the top among all the nations collaborating with the SAARC countries.

Country Collaboration Map

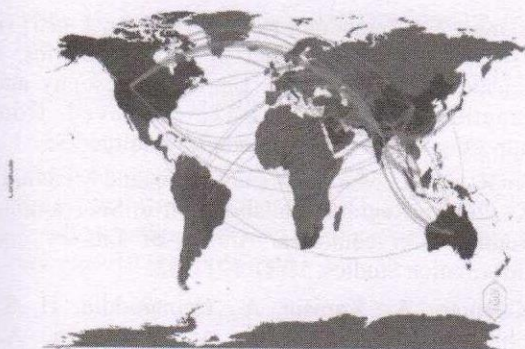


Table 3: International Research Collaboration

International research collaboration between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia (78 publications) is stronger than in India to Saudi Arabia (17 publications). China ranked second as the top collaborating country with Pakistan and India. The USA and Malaysia are in third and fourth place in collaborating with SAARC countries. From figure 3, it is also seen that SAARC countries collaborated with Asian, American, European, Middle East and South African countries. The rest of the SAARC countries, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Maldives and Nepal have not been reported under the top 15 international research collaborating countries.

From Country	To Country	Frequency
Pakistan	Saudi Arabia	78
Pakistan	China	45
India	USA	40
India	China	30
Pakistan	Malaysia	28
Pakistan	USA	20
India	Malaysia	19
India	Saudi Arabia	17
India	United Kingdom	15
Pakistan	Australia	14
India	South Africa	13
Bangladesh	Malaysia	11
Bangladesh	Japan	10
India	Nigeria	10
India	Iran	10

Table 5: International Research Collaboration

h) Keyword Co-occurrence

By using the VOSviewer software, the keywords co-occurrence graph is prepared. Keywords analysis reflects the focus of the authors and their publications, providing an overview of research trends. From the downloaded publications data from Scopus, 10902 keywords are found. The size of nodes represents the number of publications. The colour represents the cluster in which the keywords are included. For keyword co-occurrence, the top 290 keywords were selected. These 290 keywords are divided into 7 clusters with total link strength of 14810. From figure 4, the keyword "India" occurred with maximum frequency (282), followed by "Bibliometrics" and "Scientometrics". Other top keywords are Pakistan, Authorship Pattern, Citation Analysis, Human, Libraries, Open Access, Knowledge Management, etc.

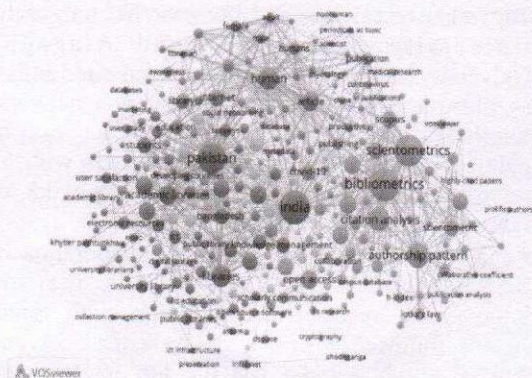


Table 4: Keyword Co-occurrence

Conclusions

The study assessed the LIS research performance of SAARC countries using various scientometric indicators. During the ten years study period, a total of 3610 research publications have been found in the Scopus database. India emerged as the leading nation in LIS research among SAARC countries, followed by Pakistan. Afghanistan, Bhutan, Maldives and Nepal have a negligible contribution. Concerning citations, India shared 64% of citations, followed by Pakistan (28.43%). Journal Articles are the most prevalent types of document observed from the study, while Conference Papers and Book Chapters are also found to be significant. The study found top 10

source titles cover more than 60% of LIS research. Research productivity on LIS research is seen in various forms of documents but the top 10 source titles belong to the Journal category only. "Library Philosophy and Practice" is the most preferred source title amongst all sources covering 40% of research publications. Other journals like "DESIDOC Journal of Library and Information Science", "Annals of Library and Information Studies", and "Electronic Library" have also published significant research publications. The study found that the top productive authors belong to Pakistan, followed by India. A researcher, "Ameen K" is the most productive author in Pakistan, having 72 publications during the period. The top three most productive authors belong to Pakistan in LIS research. Despite leading in publications and citations, India lags in individual-level research performance compared to Pakistan. Top Indian researchers on LIS research belong to the University of Kashmir and Alagappa University. Mahmood K is the highly co-cited author as illustrated in the authors' co-citation network. Similarly, the reference co-citation network of publications is displayed in four clusters with 63 references and found that the research work of Fornell, C & Lareker, DF is highly co-cited. Regarding international research collaboration of SAARC countries, Pakistan has the top international research collaboration with Saudi Arabia, followed by China, Malaysia, the USA, and Australia, while India has the top international research collaboration with the USA. China ranked second as the top collaborating country with Pakistan and India in LIS research. The keywords analysis reflects the trends of research in the particular field. From the study, it is found that "India" is a highly occurring keyword, followed by "Bibliometrics" and "Scientometrics". Other keywords like Pakistan, Authorship Pattern, Citation Analysis, Human, Libraries, Open Access, and Knowledge Management also occurred significantly in LIS research. The study has its limitations for ten years and the study's conclusions are limited to data retrieved from the Scopus database and English language publications only. Thus, inferences drawn from the study for making generalisations should be addressed carefully. Further, the study gives directions for future research for ASEAN, BRICS, QUAD and Middle-East countries.

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Dr. R. K. Ngurtinkhuma, B. A. (Hons), MA, MLIS, PhD, PGDDE, PGJMC is presently a Professor of Library & Information Science and Dean, School of Economics, Management & Information Science, Mizoram University, Aizawl. A former Head of the Department has 38 years of experience in library profession in teaching and non-teaching capacity. He is an author of 3 books and published more than 40 research articles. 11 MPhil scholars and 6 PhD scholars were awarded degree under his guidance. He attended many international and national seminars, conferences and presented papers. He organised and invited as Resource Person in various Workshop and Training programmes. He also completed one Major Research Project under ICSSR. He is life member in ILA, IASLIC, IATLIS and founder member of Mizoram Library Association.

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