

## Mapping Trends on Good Governance: A Bibliometric Analysis

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### ABSTRACT

*This study conducts a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of 1,278 publications on good governance in the public sector indexed in Scopus between 2018 and 2023. The volume of research increased from 132 documents in 2018 to 275 in 2023, reflecting a compound annual growth rate of approximately 16.4%, indicating growing academic and policy interest in governance-related issues. Journal articles comprised the majority (88.97%), followed by book chapters (5.01%) and reviews (3.60%). The leading subject area was Business, Management, and Accounting (41.47%), followed by Social Sciences (8.84%) and Economics (2.97%). Sustainability (Switzerland) emerged as the top journal with 91 publications and 1,422 citations, while the most cited paper garnered 615 citations, indicating high scholarly influence. Key contributing authors included B. Cuadrado-Ballesteros and G. Grossi, with Universiti Teknologi Mara and the University of Granada identified as the most productive institutions. The United Kingdom, United States, and Australia were the leading contributing countries. Overall, the dataset received 14,939 citations, with an h-index of 50 and g-index of 80, reflecting a strong academic footprint. The most prominent research themes were accountability (28.89%), transparency (19.87%), public sector (17.39%), good governance (12.45%), and governance (6.48%), followed by corruption (4.73%), local government (2.91%), sustainability (2.69%), public administration (2.40%), and e-government (2.18%). These findings highlight a concentrated focus on institutional performance, transparency, and integrity, offering theoretical contributions to governance frameworks and practical insights for policymakers aiming to improve public sector effectiveness and reduce systemic inefficiencies.*

*Keywords: Bibliometric analysis; good governance; Hazing's Publish or Perish public sector; Scopus; VOSviewer*

### INTRODUCTION

Good governance has gained attention in public administration for enhancing legitimacy and effectiveness. Good governance is characterized by a set of principles and practices, including transparency, accountability, and responsible decision-making (Singh 2023; Karunia et al. 2023). Research based on empirical evidence has shown that the successful implementation of good governance principles significantly improves the performance of government organizations (Zahran et al. 2023). It's important to note that the emphasis on good governance is not merely theoretical; there are real-world examples where the application of these principles has led to tangible improvements in organizational outcomes and increased public satisfaction.

In recent years, the importance of good governance in the public sector has gained momentum, driven by global developments. The economic crises of the late 2000s and the COVID-19 pandemic have underscored the need for transparent and accountable public institutions (Nabatchi & Amsler 2014; Pourezzat et al. 2018). The pandemic, in particular, revealed both strengths and vulnerabilities in governance systems worldwide, highlighting the importance of resilience, adaptability, and strong leadership in managing crises effectively (Hu & Kee 2023). The rise of New Public Management (NPM) reforms has also reshaped governance practices. Drawing on private-sector principles, NPM has emphasized efficiency, performance, and accountability (Hood 1991; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011). As public services become increasingly decentralized and collaborative, robust governance frameworks have become essential for ensuring transparency and integrity (Osborne 2006).

In the digital era, the public now expects governments to operate with greater openness, ethical standards, and responsiveness (OECD 2022; Moreno & Castro 2023; Thomas 2023). Enhanced access to information has empowered citizens to demand participatory and corruption-free governance (Tsymbal & Shachkovska 2022). This shift has also been reflected in academic research, where bibliometric techniques help map the evolution of digital governance discussions over time. The widespread adoption of digital technologies has indeed empowered citizens to scrutinize government actions more closely and demand higher standards of governance.

The literature spans a wide range of areas, including the role of leadership and organizational culture (Heres & Lasthuizen 2012; Van Wart 2013), the use of performance measurement to enhance accountability (Van Dooren et al. 2015), and the significance of stakeholder participation in decision-making processes (Emerson et al. 2012; Skelcher & Torfing 2010). These contributions provide practical insights that enable public institutions to refine governance mechanisms in response to complex societal needs. The importance of skilled human resources in supporting governance goals has also been emphasized, reinforcing the value of strategic human capital development (Alamsyah et al. 2023). Despite the inherent challenges in applying governance principles across diverse contexts, the literature shows that effective implementation can promote social equity and institutional responsiveness (Singh, 2023). For instance, studies in public

healthcare demonstrate how corporate governance practices like transparency and accountability can strengthen service delivery (Wijayanti & Setyorini 2023).

Bibliometric analysis provides a systematic approach to tracking digital governance research trends by quantitatively mapping scholarly outputs, identifying influential authors and institutions, and uncovering thematic developments. Recent studies have employed tools like VOSviewer and CiteSpace to visualize co-authorship networks, keyword co-occurrences, and thematic clusters, revealing key areas such as e-government adoption, digital trust, and collaborative governance. For instance, Zhao and Yaakop (2024) conducted a bibliometric study using Web of Science data, identifying leading contributors from the United States, China, and the United Kingdom, with prominent themes including usability, quality assurance, and public value perceptions in digital governance systems. Similarly, Younus et al. (2024) analyzed Scopus-indexed publications to map the landscape of digital government transformation, highlighting the evolution of research topics and the network of influential researchers over the past two decades. These analyses not only chart the growth and evolution of digital governance research but also provide insights into emerging trends and collaborative networks within the field.

This study aims to examine scholarly publication trends related to good governance in the public sector from 2018 to 2023. It investigates patterns in publication frequency, thematic focus, and geographic distribution. While previous research has explored governance from qualitative and policy-oriented perspectives, few studies have systematically mapped its scholarly development using bibliometric techniques. This study addresses that gap by offering a quantitative overview of governance research trends, identifying dominant themes and suggesting directions for future inquiry. While governance research has been examined from qualitative and policy perspectives, limited studies have systematically mapped its evolution through bibliometric techniques. This study addresses this gap by analyzing governance research trends from 2018 to 2023. To better understand the growth and focus of governance research, this study explores the following research questions:

1. How has publication output on good governance evolved over time?
2. Who are the most influential authors, institutions, and journals?
3. What are the dominant research themes and their interconnections?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

At the conceptual level, the notion of good governance is frequently treated as a normative ideal grounded in principles such as accountability, transparency, rule of law, and citizen participation (Meuleman 2018). While often assumed to be universally relevant, these principles are subject to varying interpretations across socio-political environments, creating discrepancies in how they are operationalized and assessed. Meuleman (2018) emphasizes the interdependence of these principles, yet their translation into actionable policy remains particularly challenging in contexts with fragmented institutions, such as in the Global South. The literature rarely interrogates how different regimes define or prioritize these principles, resulting in conceptual vagueness and incommensurability in cross-national analyses.

Further, the methodological designs employed in governance research frequently lack rigor and contextual sensitivity. For instance, studies that promote digital governance platforms often rely on short-term or single-country evaluations. Hameed et al. (2020) find that e-government tools can reduce corruption and increase information access. Yet these findings often ignore digital exclusion, infrastructure deficits, and limited administrative capacities in low-income nations factors that are essential to assessing the sustainability and replicability of such reforms. This suggests a methodological gap in longitudinal, multi-context studies that account for systemic constraints.

In the same vein, tools of social accountability, such as citizen report cards, are often celebrated for improving service delivery. Sarker et al. (2022), for example, document success in Bangladesh. However, the literature underexplores the conditional variables such as institutional responsiveness, media freedom, and political will that determine whether such tools produce meaningful change. These limitations signal a lack of comparative and design-sensitive methodologies capable of isolating causal mechanisms.

Conceptual confusion also clouds key governance constructs. Bovens (2010) differentiates accountability from transparency, introducing elements of answerability and sanctioning. Yet empirical research frequently conflates these terms, equating access to information with enforceability, thus diluting the meaning and impact of accountability. Grimmelikhuijsen et al. (2013) challenge this reductionist view, showing that the relationship between transparency and trust is non-linear and context-dependent, particularly where media constraints and low civic literacy prevail. These contradictions suggest an urgent need for theoretically grounded, context-sensitive operational definitions in governance research.

Empirical inconsistencies are also evident in studies of participatory governance. Bergh et al. (2019) report that participatory budgeting promotes equity and citizen satisfaction in Sweden's high-capacity municipalities. Conversely, in environments plagued by elite capture or civic apathy, such mechanisms often result in symbolic inclusion rather than genuine empowerment. Joshi (2017) and Bryson et al. (2013) underscore the potential of participatory frameworks but stop short of identifying the conditions that foster systemic transformation. The literature thus lacks diagnostic models that assess the quality, depth, and institutional enablers of participation.

Another critical area involves the use of macro-level governance indicators. Kaufmann et al. (2010) link governance scores to developmental outcomes, yet their reliance on perception-based metrics introduces subjectivity and cultural bias, particularly in fragile states. These aggregated indices tend to obscure micro-political realities, informal practices, and hybrid legal systems, which play a decisive role in governance performance. Masanga and Mwenge (2020) highlight a correlation between legal quality and FDI in Sub-Saharan Africa but fail to account for underlying political settlements, weakening the explanatory power of such studies.

The debate on decentralization further illustrates methodological and empirical gaps. While Awortwi (2011) contends that decentralization improves outcomes through local empowerment, this relationship is heavily mediated by local political dynamics, fiscal capacity, and bureaucratic professionalism. Theoretical models such as Fung's (2015) participatory governance framework offer promising procedural tools for deliberative democracy but often remain inapplicable in rigid administrative cultures. Similarly, Brinkerhoff and Wetterberg (2016) advocate for adaptive governance strategies, yet fall short of operationalizing these strategies in institutionally weak or post-conflict settings, leaving practitioners with little guidance for reform adaptation.

The scholarly discourse on public sector governance has expanded significantly over the past two decades, reflecting a growing concern with how institutional arrangements affect accountability, transparency, citizen engagement, and rule of law. While these themes dominate the field, a bibliometric examination reveals both a clustering of consensus and persistent fragmentation in conceptualization, measurement, and application. This review synthesizes existing research and critically examines theoretical foundations, methodological approaches, and empirical contradictions that shape the governance landscape. To systematically assess the evolution, structure, and intellectual patterns within this body of work, this study employs bibliometric analysis as a method to quantify scholarly output, identify research gaps, and map emerging trends in public sector governance literature.

#### PRIOR BIBLIOMETRIC STUDIES ON GOVERNANCE: A BRIEF REVIEW

Given the growing body of governance research, it is essential to systematically assess its evolution to better understand the field's current state and future directions. This study employs bibliometric analysis as a methodological framework to map governance research trends and identify key contributors. Bibliometrics is a valuable and widely utilized analytical method in scientific research. It involves the application of statistical tools to evaluate publication trends, authorship patterns, and the development of academic literature (Saputro et al. 2023b; Lazarides et al. 2023; Paglia 2022; Mulet-Forteza et al. 2022; Mănescu et al. 2022). Through this systematic approach, scholars can examine critical elements such as publication frequency, citation impact, author affiliations, and institutional contributions thereby identifying influential works and major academic entities across diverse disciplines.

Furthermore, bibliometric analysis extends beyond basic statistical evaluation by incorporating network analysis techniques to uncover collaboration structures and thematic linkages within a research domain. As noted by Aria and Cuccurullo (2017) and Fahimnia et al. (2015), this method enables researchers to visualize intellectual connections, track conceptual developments, and highlight emerging areas of interest. By analyzing co-authorship networks, co-citation relationships, and keyword co-occurrences, bibliometrics not only reveals the field's intellectual architecture but also offers strategic insights for scholars, research institutions, policymakers, and journal editors. It serves as a robust evidence-based tool for evaluating scholarly influence and guiding future research efforts.

The utility of bibliometric methods in governance research is exemplified by multiple recent studies. For example, Meseguer-Sánchez et al. (2021) conducted a bibliometric analysis investigating the intersection between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability. Their findings emphasized a growing convergence between these two domains, underscoring the relevance of integrated approaches within corporate governance frameworks. Similarly, in the domain of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) research, Siao et al. (2022) performed a comprehensive bibliometric review of ESG management literature from 2002 to 2021. Their study documented a significant rise in academic output focusing on governance mechanisms and sustainable practices, reflecting the increasing salience of ESG considerations in both research and policy discourse. Additionally, Judijanto et al. (2023) applied bibliometric techniques to examine the government's role in sustainability and environmental management. Their analysis identified prominent themes such as environmental governance, waste management, and supply chain sustainability, highlighting the complex and interdisciplinary nature of governance research in environmental contexts. These examples collectively demonstrate the growing application of bibliometric tools in examining governance from multiple perspectives ranging from corporate responsibility to environmental policy.

Despite these contributions, there remains a notable gap in bibliometric studies that focus specifically on the comprehensive concept of good governance in the public sector. While prior analyses have explored governance through lenses such as CSR, ESG, and environmental management, fewer studies have systematically mapped the evolution of scholarly work on public sector governance dimensions such as transparency, accountability, rule of law, and anti-corruption. Addressing this gap, the present study aims to conduct a detailed bibliometric analysis of good governance literature from 2018 to 2023. It seeks to identify prevailing research themes, influential authors, institutions, and collaborative networks, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of the academic landscape and informing future research on good governance practices.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

To enhance bibliometric analysis in governance, the incorporation of a well-rounded conceptual framework or theoretical underpinning is essential. Such a framework should integrate various governance dimensions alongside bibliometric techniques to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of governance research. By weaving together relevant theoretical perspectives, this framework can effectively guide the identification of research trends, highlight existing gaps, and suggest promising future directions. Drawing on insights from recent studies, several components emerge as critical in shaping this approach.

Incorporating organizational and strategic perspectives proves valuable for understanding governance mechanisms in depth. For example, research in blockchain governance demonstrates how these perspectives can categorize governance mechanisms into distinct clusters such as legitimacy, ethics, incentives, and control. This classification allows for a more structured and systematic bibliometric analysis, enabling clearer insights into the multifaceted nature of governance (Hsiao & Liu 2024). Moreover, adapting established frameworks like the Governance Analytical Framework which includes dimensions such as problems, social norms, actors, nodal points, and processes further strengthens bibliometric analysis by providing operational definitions and a robust means to assess governance from multiple angles (Oliveira et al. 2022).

Key bibliometric techniques form the methodological backbone of this framework. Co-citation and co-occurrence analyses, including authors' citation patterns, papers' co-citation networks, and keyword co-occurrence mapping, are instrumental in uncovering major clusters and thematic trends within governance research. These methods have been effectively employed in environmental, social, and governance (ESG) and corporate governance studies to reveal the intellectual structure and evolution of the field (Abbas et al. 2023; Effah et al. 2022). Visualization tools such as VOSviewer and Microsoft Excel complement these techniques by enabling clear graphical representations of data, facilitating the identification of influential authors, countries, and journals. These tools have been widely used in studies focusing on good governance and corporate governance, illustrating their critical role in bibliometric investigations (Fauzan & Jahja 2021; Effah et al. 2022).

The practical implications of a conceptual framework for bibliometric analysis extend to guiding research directions and highlighting gaps in governance scholarship. For instance, the notable increase in ESG-related citations and the predominance of corporate governance literature in recent years suggest specific areas that warrant further investigation (Abbas et al. 2023; Effah et al. 2022). While this structured approach provides clarity and rigor, it is important to recognize the dynamic nature of governance research. Emerging governance mechanisms, especially those shaped by rapid technological advances such as blockchain, require that the framework be continuously refined and adapted to stay relevant and comprehensive in capturing new developments (Hsiao & Liu 2024).

## METHOD AND ANALYSIS

In their research, Saputro et al. (2023) employ the technique of science mapping, which involves a comprehensive bibliometric analysis, to delve into the current landscape of lean manufacturing. This method facilitates a thorough exploration of scholarly literature by illuminating the evolution of scientific concepts over time (Boța-Avram 2023). Through science mapping, researchers gain valuable insights into the interconnections among various components within the field, such as keywords, authors, publications, journals, institutions, and countries (Boța-Avram 2023b). The process of science mapping encompasses several stages, including data collection, pre-processing, network extraction, normalization, mapping, analysis, and visualization, as outlined by Seker and Balcin (2022).

The research conducted an in-depth analysis using the Scopus database to examine a comprehensive collection of scientific papers published from 2018 to 2023, specifically focusing on the topic of good governance in the public sector. The analysis was particularly concentrated on the title, abstract, and keywords of English-language papers. The decision to utilize the Scopus database over the Web of Science (WoS) was based on its extensive coverage, as highlighted by Antwi et al. (2023). The exclusive reliance on Scopus for this bibliometric analysis is justified by its comprehensive coverage, robust citation tools, and superior suitability for large-scale quantitative research in governance and related interdisciplinary fields. Scopus indexes over 25,000 peer-reviewed journals, covering a broader range of sources than Web of Science (WoS), particularly in the social sciences and public administration domains (Mongeon & Paul-Hus 2016). Unlike WoS, which tends to focus on high-impact journals predominantly from North America and Western Europe, Scopus offers better representation of journals from Asia, Africa, and Latin America regions where governance issues are often most pressing (Falagas et al. 2008). This broader geographical and disciplinary coverage is essential for capturing diverse perspectives and global trends in governance research.

Moreover, Scopus integrates well with bibliometric tools such as VOSviewer, Biblioshiny (Bibliometrix), and Excel, facilitating advanced co-citation, co-authorship, and keyword analysis. The platform also includes more conference papers, book chapters, and open-access sources compared to WoS, making it ideal for identifying emerging and interdisciplinary research themes (Harzing & Alakangas 2016). Several comparative studies have also shown that Scopus provides more comprehensive citation data than WoS across most disciplines, enhancing the accuracy and reliability of bibliometric mapping (Archambault et al. 2009; Gavel & Iselid 2008). While the potential exclusion of specific journals not indexed by Scopus is acknowledged, the platform's balance between breadth and analytical functionality makes it the most suitable

choice for a focused bibliometric investigation of governance. Scopus's coverage aligns well with the aims of this study to explore global trends, map intellectual structures, and identify influential research outputs in the field of governance.

The primary objective of the study was to conduct a bibliometric analysis to investigate the evolution, structure, and significance of research related to governance in the public sector. This involved an exploration of data patterns, collaborative authorship, citation networks, and keyword associations. The ultimate aim of the study was to contribute to a deeper understanding of the prevailing trends and anticipated future developments within the realm of good governance in the public sector. As part of the methodological process, a total of 1,920 records were initially retrieved from Scopus based on the defined keywords. The inclusion criteria consisted of publications written in English, published between 2018 and 2023, and classified under the document types of articles, book chapters, conference papers, or reviews. Furthermore, only documents within the relevant subject areas Social Sciences, Business, Management, Public Administration, Law, and Economics were considered. The exclusion criteria involved the removal of non-English documents, irrelevant subject areas, editorials, notes, and other non-peer-reviewed formats, as well as duplicate or incomplete records. After applying these filters, 462 records were excluded, resulting in a final dataset of 1,278 documents that were retained for the bibliometric analysis. While tools such as Biblioshiny and Gephi are available for bibliometric analysis, VOSviewer was chosen due to its user-friendly interface and strong network visualization capabilities. Figure 1 the research strategy, outlining the key steps in data collection, processing, and analysis.

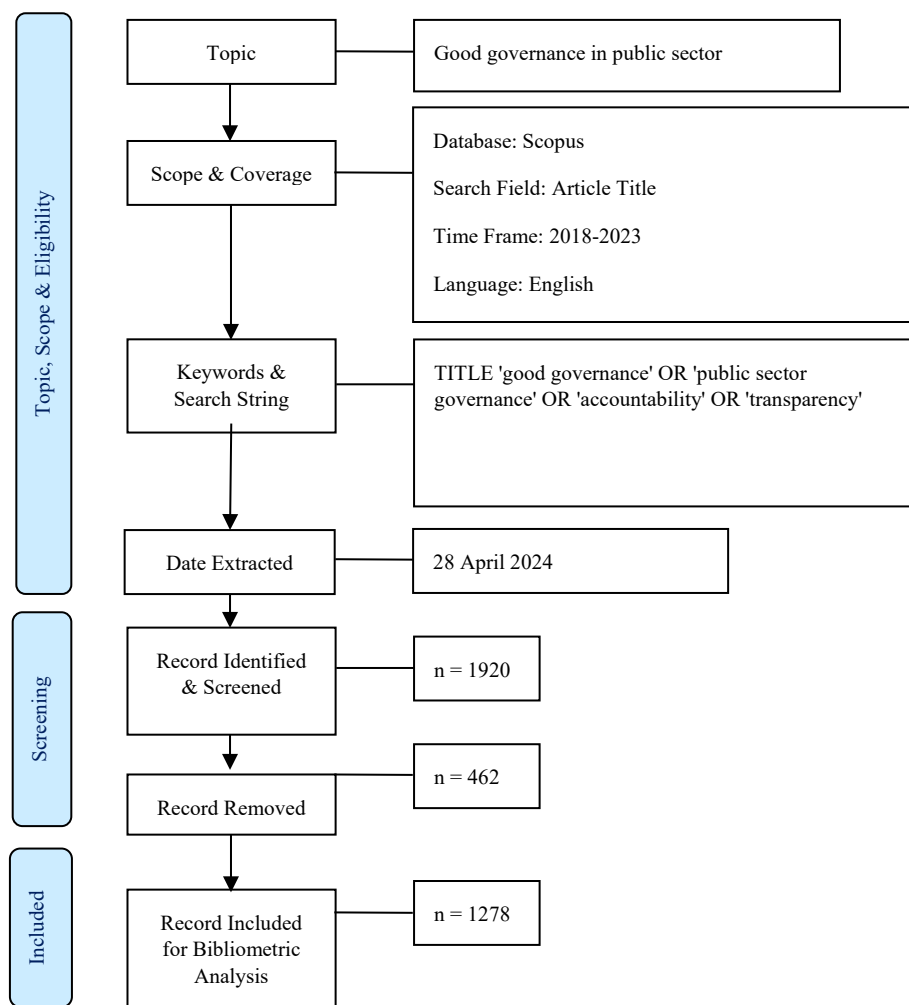


FIGURE 1. Flow diagram of research strategy

## RESULTS

### DOCUMENTS PROFILES

It was discovered through an extensive analysis of a diverse range of academics that the overwhelming majority (88.97%) were derived from amalgamating existing articles. Additionally, it was observed that book chapters and literature reviews

constituted 5.01% and 3.6% of the papers, respectively, while conference papers accounted for a mere 2.43 % of the analyzed documents. This insight underscores the significance of drawing from previous studies and articles in academic papers, with only a small fraction referencing book chapters, books, notes, and editorials. These findings underscore the reliance on journal articles as primary sources of governance research and highlight the relatively lower contribution of conference papers and book chapters. Refer to Table 1 for a visual representation of the document types.

TABLE 1. Document by type

Document Type	Total No. of Publications (TP)	Percentage (%)
Article	1137	88.97
Book chapter	64	5.01
Conference paper	31	2.43
Review	46	3.60
Total	1278	100.00

The subject area with the highest number of publications is Business, Management, and Accounting, comprising 41.47% of the total publications, indicating significant focus and research activity in this field. Social Sciences represent the second-largest category with 113 publications, accounting for 8.84% of the total, reflecting substantial research interest and output in social sciences topics. Other notable subject areas include Economics, Econometrics and Finance (2.97%), Environmental Science (1.41%), and Engineering (1.33%), which, while not as dominant as Business and Social Sciences, still contribute meaningfully to the overall research output. Subject areas such as Health Professions, Computer Science, Medicine, and Agricultural and Biological Sciences each account for less than 1% of the total publications, potentially representing specialized fields with focused research communities. Arts and Humanities, Psychology, and Energy have the lowest number of publications, with each area contributing less than 0.5% to the total, suggesting either emerging fields of research or areas with limited research activity within the dataset. The dominance of Business, Management, and Accounting reflects the growing emphasis on corporate governance, financial accountability, and ethical decision-making within organizations as shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2. Document by subject area

Subject Area	Total No. of Publications (TP)	Percentage (%)
Business, Management and Accounting	530	41.47
Social Sciences	113	8.84
Economics, Econometrics and Finance	38	2.97
Environmental Science	18	1.41
Engineering	17	1.33
Health Professions	11	0.86
Computer Science	8	0.63
Medicine	8	0.63
Agricultural and Biological Sciences	4	0.31
Arts and Humanities	3	0.23
Psychology	2	0.16
Energy	1	0.08
Total	1278	100.00

## PUBLICATION TRENDS

Over the period from 2018 to 2023, Table 3 and Figure 2 illustrates the evolution of publications focusing on good governance in the public sector. Upon scrutiny of Figure 2, it becomes apparent that there has been a marked surge in the volume of articles centered on good governance in the public sector since 2018, over the last six years. The data reveals 169 publications in 2018, which then increased to 178 in 2019, and rose to 218 in 2020. However, it is worth noting that there was a slight dip in publications in both 2021 and 2022, with a total of 216 and 218 publications annually. Nevertheless, there was a noteworthy upturn in the number of publications in 2023, reaching 275. These findings underscore the continual significance and relevance of research in the domain of effective governance in the public sector. The observed fluctuations in publication trends may be influenced by global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which heightened discussions on public governance, crisis management, and institutional resilience

TABLE 3. Year of publication

Year	TP	NCP	TC	C/P	C/CP	h	g
2023	278	165	636	2.29	2.88	11	15
2022	207	166	670	6.47	2.92	17	27
2021	218	191	2729	12.52	2.68	24	42
2020	221	205	3460	15.66	2.63	29	48
2019	177	173	3262	18.43	2.66	29	50
2018	169	162	3486	20.63	2.56	30	49

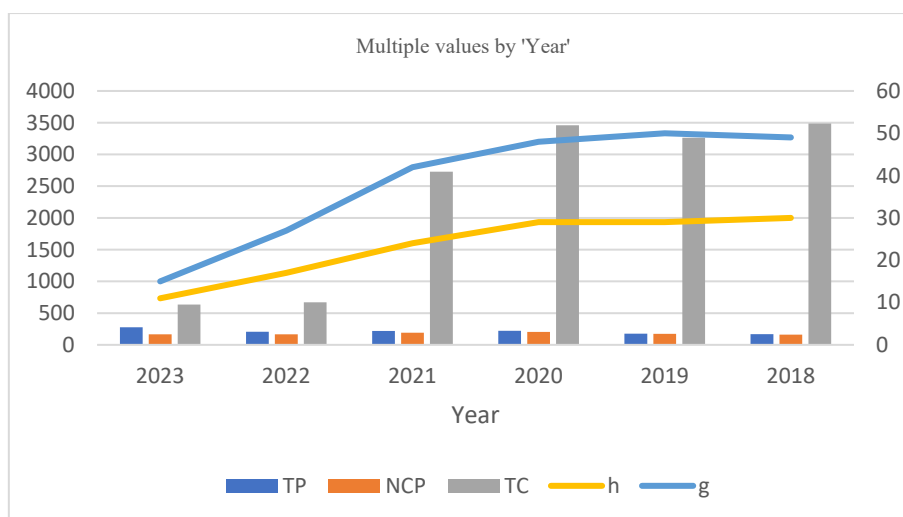


FIGURE 2. Publication year

### PUBLICATION BY AUTHORS

The results presented in Table 5 stem from an extensive and ground-breaking study on good governance within the public sector. This influential research was conducted by Grossi et al. in 2022 and Cuadrado-Ballesteros et al. in 2023, both highly respected authorities in this field. Their collective contribution comprises twelve articles, each offering valuable perspectives on the critical subject of good governance within the public sector. The information derived from their work provides invaluable insights into the intricacies of promoting and maintaining effective governance within public institutions. The contributions of Cuadrado-Ballesteros and Grossi emphasize research on financial governance, performance measurement, and accountability in public sector organizations.

TABLE 5. Top most active authors

Author	Total Documents	Affiliation	Country
B. Cuadrado-Ballesteros	6	University of Granada	Spain
G. Grossi	6	Stockholm University	Sweden
C. Furneaux	5	University of Queensland	Australia
J. Said	5	University of Malta	Malta
A. Sancino	4	Open University	United Kingdom
M. Beck	4	University of Zurich	Switzerland
M.M. Alam	4	University of Dhaka	Bangladesh
M. Bisogno	4	University of Salerno	Italy
B. Luke	4	University of Southampton	United Kingdom
S.S. Mishra	4	Indian Institute of Technology	India

TABLE 6. Number of contributing authors

Author per paper	Total document	Number of contributing authors
1	246	246
2	371	742
3	348	1044
4	203	812
5	61	305
6	23	138
7	11	77
8	6	48
9	1	9
10	5	50
11	1	11
16	1	16
17	1	17
Grand Total	1278	3515

### PUBLICATION BY INSTITUTIONS

The analysis displayed in Table 7 provides a comprehensive bibliometric overview of the top institutional contributors to the scholarly literature on good governance in the public sector. The Table 7 offers a detailed ranking of the top 10 institutions based on a minimum of 9 published articles in the sample. At the forefront of this ranking is Universiti Teknologi Mara, which has demonstrated the highest level of productivity by publishing 25 articles in this domain. This institution has established itself as a prominent contributor to the knowledge base in this area of study. Closely behind are the University of South Africa and Universiteit Utrecht, with 14 and 13 published articles, respectively. Goteborgs Universitet also stands out in the top 10, matching the publication count of Universiteit Utrecht with 13 articles.

Additionally, the analysis reveals Universiti Sains Malaysia, Universiti Utara Malaysia, and the University of Sussex as significant institutional players, each contributing 10 articles to the corpus. The top 10 is rounded out by the University of Johannesburg, the University of Essex, and The University of Sheffield, each with 9 published works. The prominence of Malaysian institutions such as Universiti Teknologi Mara reflects a regional focus on governance reforms and policy studies in emerging economies.

TABLE 7. Most active institutions

Affiliation	Articles	Country
Universiti Teknologi MARA	26	Malaysia
University of Granada	19	Spain
Universiti Sains Malaysia	17	Malaysia
University of Gothenburg	17	Sweden
Rmit University	16	Australia
University of Ljubljana	15	Slovenia
Utrecht University	15	Netherlands
Tampere University	14	Finland
University of Jaén	14	Spain
Curtin University	13	Australia

#### PUBLICATIONS BY COUNTRIES

The analysis of country contributions (Table 8) shows that the United Kingdom leads with the highest number of publications (138) on good governance in the public sector, followed by the United States (110) and Australia (69). Other notable contributors include Spain (65), Italy (60), and Malaysia (52), reflecting active research engagement across Europe and Asia. Indonesia (46) and South Africa (43) also demonstrate growing scholarly interest from developing regions. Meanwhile, the Netherlands (39) and Sweden (35) contribute a modest number of publications, indicating a diverse global interest in the topic. The dominance of the UK and the US in governance research may be attributed to strong institutional frameworks, well-funded research initiatives, and global policy influence.

TABLE 8. Top countries contributed publications

Country	TP	NCP	TC	C/P	C/CP	h	g
United Kingdom	138	127	2898	21.000000	22.818898	28	49
United States	110	103	1539	13.990909	14.941748	20	34
Australia	69	60	769	11.144928	12.816667	14	25
Spain	65	57	616	9.476923	10.807018	13	22
Italy	60	55	685	11.416667	12.454545	14	23
Malaysia	52	40	297	5.711538	7.425000	11	15
Indonesia	46	27	185	4.021739	6.851852	7	12
South Africa	43	33	360	8.372093	10.909091	9	17
Netherlands	39	34	695	17.820513	20.441176	13	26
Sweden	35	29	543	15.514286	18.724138	13	22

Notes: TP=total number of publications; NCP=number of cited publications; TC=total citations; C/P=average citations per publication; C/CP=average citations per cited publication; h=h-index; and g=g-index.

#### PUBLICATION BY SOURCE TITLE

In a comparative analysis of academic journals, Table 9 illustrates the publications and citations for several leading journals in various fields. Sustainability Switzerland emerges as the frontrunner with the highest number of publications (93) and citations (1422), establishing its prominence in the field of sustainability studies. The International Review of Administrative Sciences follows closely with 24 publications and an impressive 229 citations. The International Journal of Public Administration has 22 publications with 452 citations, while the Accounting Auditing and Accountability Journal boasts 19 publications and 443 citations. The Financial Accountability and Management journal records 15 publications and 227 citations. The Public Administration Journal demonstrates its impact with 12 publications and 343 citations, while the Voluntas Journal presents 12 publications and 89 citations. Despite a smaller number of publications, the Government Information Quarterly garners attention with 11 publications and a substantial 446 citations. The Administrative Sciences journal stands out with 10 publications and 48 citations, and the International Journal of Public Sector Management also showcases its influence with 10 publications and 124 citations, reaffirming its significance in the field.



TABLE 9. Top 10 most active sources of publication

Source Title	TP	TC	Publisher
Sustainability (Switzerland)	91	1422	MDPI
International Review of Administrative Sciences	24	229	SAGE Publications
International Journal of Public Administration	22	452	Taylor & Francis
Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal	19	443	Emerald Group Publishing Ltd.
Financial Accountability and Management	15	227	Wiley-Blackwell
Public Administration	12	343	Wiley-Blackwell
Voluntas	12	89	Springer Nature
Government Information Quarterly	11	446	Elsevier
Public Administration and Development	10	55	Wiley-Blackwell
Journal of Public Budgeting, Accounting and Financial Management	10	104	Emerald Group Publishing Ltd.

Notes: TP=total number of publications; TC=total citations

## CITATION METRICS

The assessment of academic influence using Harzing's Publish or Perish program and the Scopus database, which involved analyzing the research information system (.ris) for the years 2018-2023, reveals a remarkable portrayal of scholarly impact. A comprehensive analysis of 1278 papers show that these papers have received a total of 14939 citations, indicating an average of 2489.83 citations annually and 11.69 citations per paper. This showcases the remarkable academic impact of literature on public sector governance. Furthermore, the research features an impressive h-index of 50 and a g-index of 80, which are widely acknowledged as strong measures of the field's impact and significance among scholars. These measurements indicate that many of the publications have received significant citations, demonstrating this research's intellectual impact and visibility within the academic community. Digging deeper into the data, it is revealed that, on average, each author has written 2.74 papers, with an average of 617.51 authors collaborating per paper and 7028.71 citations received per author. These statistics highlight the research's collaborative nature and its substantial impact on the scholarly community. For a more detailed breakdown of the citation metrics of the articles, refer to Table 10 below.

TABLE 10. Citation metrics

Metrics	Value
Citation years	6 (2018-2023)
Papers	1278
Citations	14939
Cites/year	2489.83
Cites/paper	11.69
Cites/author	7028.71
Papers/author	617.51
Authors/paper	2.74
h-index	50
g-index	80

Referring to Table 11, the high citation count of studies on blockchain and artificial intelligence (AI) in governance such as the influential work by Dubey et al. (2020) highlights the growing intersection between emerging technologies and public sector management. This reflects a broader academic and policy interest in leveraging digital tools to enhance transparency, accountability, and efficiency within governance frameworks. The prominence of this study suggests that scholars and practitioners alike recognize the transformative potential of technologies like blockchain for combating corruption, improving public service delivery, and ensuring traceable decision-making processes.

TABLE 11. Highly cited documents

No	Author	Title	Source	TC	C/P
1	Dubey et al. (2020)	Blockchain technology for enhancing swift-trust, collaboration, and resilience within a humanitarian supply chain setting	International Journal of Production Research	346	86.50
2	Wirtz et al. (2019)	Artificial Intelligence and the Public Sector—Applications and Challenges	International Journal of Public Administration	329	65.80
3	Cui et al. (2018)	Review of studies on the public-private partnership (PPP) for infrastructure projects: Towards a research agenda	International Journal of Project Management	324	54.00
4	Christensen et al. (2021)	Mandatory CSR and sustainability reporting: economic analysis and literature review	Review of Accounting Studies	245	81.67
5	Zuiderwijk et al. (2021)	Implications of the use of artificial intelligence in public governance: A systematic literature review and a research agenda	Government Information Quarterly	169	56.33
6	Shucksmith, M. (2018)	Re-imagining the rural: From rural idyll to Good Countryside	Journal of Rural Studies	164	27.33
7	Toufaily et al. (2021)	A framework of blockchain technology adoption: An investigation of challenges and opportunities	Information and Management	148	49.33
8	Mansoor, M. (2021)	Citizens' trust in government as a function of good governance and government agency functioning during COVID-19	Government Information Quarterly	145	48.33
9	Fraser et al. (2018)	Narratives of Promise, Narratives of Caution: A Review of the Literature on Social Impact Bonds	Social Policy and Administration	144	24.00
10	Wiseman et al. (2018)	Farmers and their data: An examination of farmers' reluctance to share their data through the lens of the laws impacting smart farming	NJAS - Wageningen Journal of Life Sciences	143	28.60

### NETWORK MAP CITATION BY DOCUMENT

Figure 3 presents a network visualization map of document citations generated using VOSviewer, illustrating the structure and relationships among influential works in the field. The map reveals distinct color-coded clusters, each representing groups of closely connected documents based on citation links. Key nodes such as Matheus and Brusca emerge as central and influential works, with Matheus serving as a bridge between different thematic areas, indicating its integrative role across clusters. The yellow cluster, including Nerantzidis and Beerli, and the green cluster, featuring Brusca, Krahl, and De Graaf, suggest dense intra-cluster citation activity. Other contributions, such as Chen and Cifuentes-Faura in the blue and orange clusters, point to emerging research directions. The size of each node reflects the citation impact, highlighting the dominance of certain documents in shaping scholarly discourse. Overall, the map demonstrates a moderately fragmented citation landscape with limited inter-cluster connections, indicating multiple specialized yet loosely connected research streams.

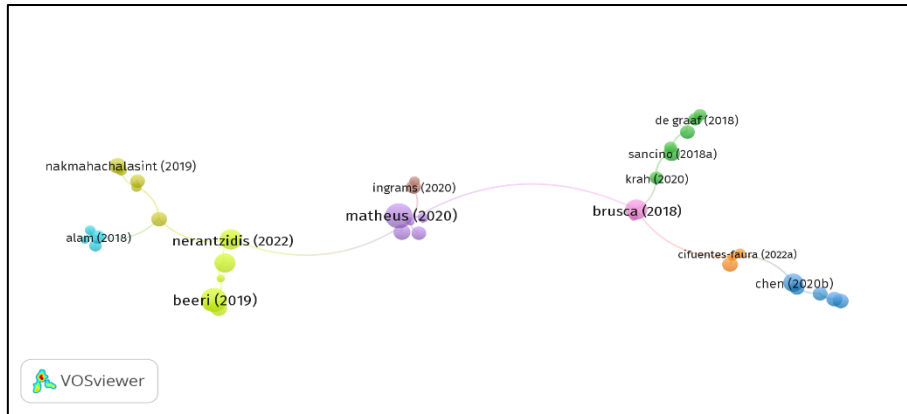


FIGURE 3. Network visualization map citation by document

Figure 4 presents a network visualization of citations by country, highlighting the global distribution and collaboration patterns in scholarly research. The United Kingdom emerges as the most central and influential node, indicating its dominant role in academic citations and international research collaboration. Closely connected countries such as Belgium, Switzerland, Spain, and Denmark form part of a cohesive cluster, suggesting strong interlinkages in research output. Other prominent clusters include Germany, Poland, and New Zealand, as well as Southeast Asian nations like Indonesia, Malaysia, China, and Thailand, reflecting regional hubs of scholarly activity. The size of each node reflects the volume of citations, while the thickness of the connecting lines indicates the strength of collaborative ties. Notably, countries such as Egypt, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uganda appear on the periphery, indicating relatively limited engagement in international citation networks. Overall, the visualization reveals that Western countries, particularly in Europe, remain central to global academic discourse, while emerging economies in Asia are increasingly contributing to and engaging with international research communities. This underscores the expanding global reach and interconnectedness of scholarly work in the field under study.

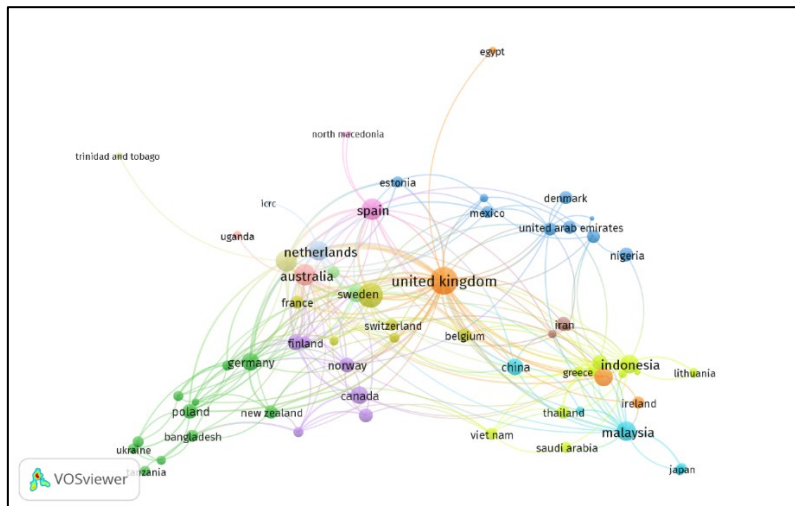


FIGURE 4. Network visualization citation by country

## KEYWORDS ANALYSIS

The keyword frequency analysis reveals that "Accountability" (28.89%) and "Transparency" (19.87%) dominate scholarly discourse, reflecting a strong focus on promoting responsible and open governance. Their prominence highlights growing concerns over public sector performance and the need for mechanisms that ensure answerability and deter corruption. The frequent mentions of "Public Sector" (17.39%) and "Good Governance" (12.45%) further emphasize institutional quality, with the lower emphasis on the latter suggesting a shift toward its practical components. Although "Corruption" (4.73%) remains a key theme, its lower frequency suggests a research shift from problem diagnosis to solution-oriented approaches, such as digital tools and institutional reforms. Less frequent terms like local government, sustainability, public administration, and e-government point to rising interest in decentralized, future-oriented, and tech-driven governance. Collectively, the data indicate a growing academic emphasis on actionable reforms grounded in transparency, accountability, and innovation. The most occurring keywords accountability, transparency, public sector, and good governance frequently appear because they represent the foundational pillars of effective governance, particularly in addressing challenges within public institutions. Their high frequency reflects a growing scholarly and policy interest in improving how governments function, especially in the face of rising public demands for integrity, efficiency, and responsiveness. The (Table 12) presents keyword analysis.

TABLE 12. Top keyword

Term	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Accountability	397	28.89
Transparency	273	19.87
Public Sector	239	17.39
Good Governance	171	12.45
Governance	89	6.48
Corruption	65	4.73
Local Government	40	2.91
Sustainability	37	2.69
Public Administration	33	2.40
E-Government	30	2.18

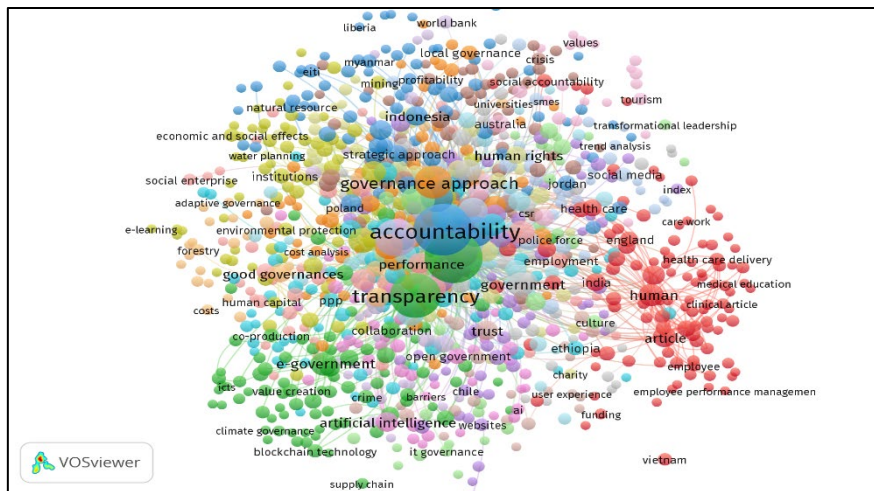


FIGURE 5. Network visualization of author keywords

### THEMATIC MAP

The thematic map presented in the Figure 6 is a strategic diagram plotting themes based on their density (development degree) and centrality (relevance degree). It is divided into four quadrants: motor themes, niche themes, emerging or declining themes, and basic themes. Motor themes, located in the upper right quadrant, are both highly developed and central, indicating their well-established and critical nature within the field. Examples of motor themes include the private sector, accounting, corporate governance, performance management, sustainability reporting, corporate social responsibility, public administration, new public management, and sustainable development. Niche themes, found in the upper left quadrant, are well-developed but not central, representing specialized topics with focused influence, such as blockchain, traceability, and control. Emerging or declining themes, in the lower left quadrant, are neither well-developed nor central, indicating new or declining areas of research, exemplified by "auditing neoliberalism. Basic themes, in the lower right quadrant, are central but not well-developed, fundamental to the field, and requiring further development. Examples include accountability, transparency, good governance, public sector, sustainability, and corporate governance.

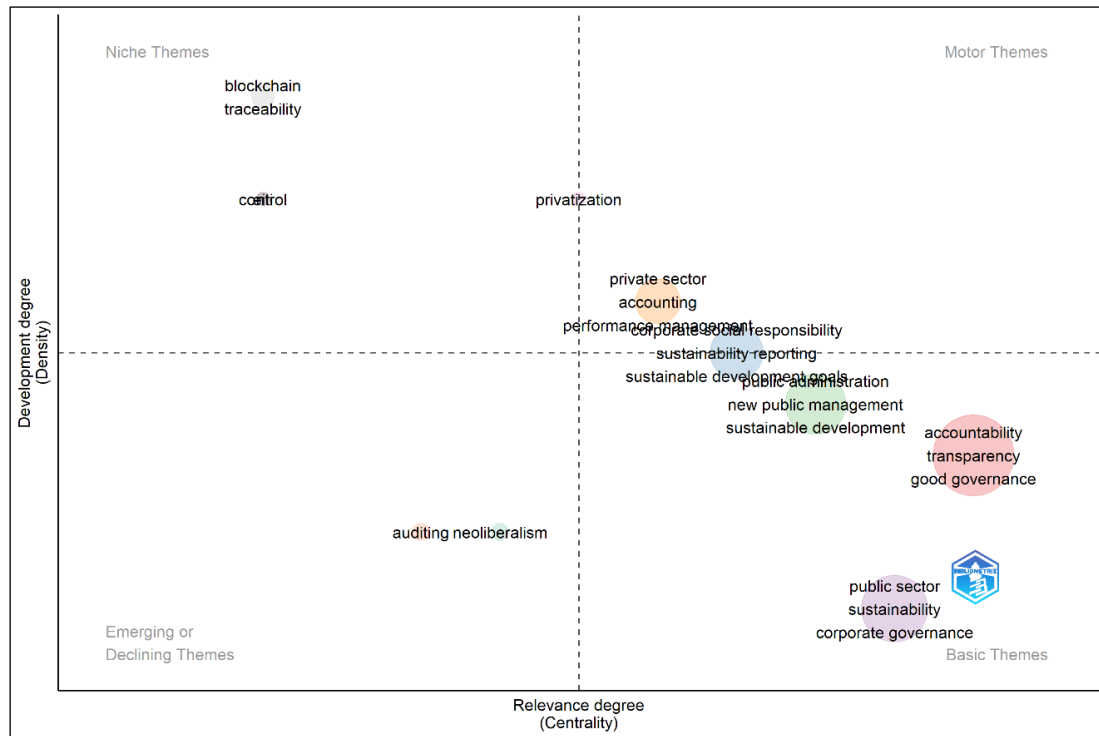


FIGURE 6. Thematic map of cluster-based density and centrality

#### FACTORS DRIVING GOVERNANCE RESEARCH TRENDS

The bibliometric analysis highlights several important patterns in governance research, particularly concerning the public sector. While the documented trends reflect the quantitative growth and distribution of research, interpreting why these patterns emerge offers critical insights into the evolution of the field and its future directions. The steady increase in governance-related publications, peaking notably in 2023, can be attributed to several converging factors. Globally, there has been heightened awareness of governance challenges in the public sector, amplified by crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which exposed vulnerabilities in institutional resilience and crisis management worldwide. This spurred urgent calls for stronger, more transparent, and accountable governance structures, driving scholarly attention and policy debates (Marie et al. 2024).

Moreover, the evolving complexity of governance, including digital transformation and sustainability imperatives, has expanded research horizons. The integration of emerging technologies, such as blockchain and artificial intelligence, reflects academia's response to contemporary governance challenges, emphasizing transparency, efficiency, and anti-corruption measures. Studies have highlighted the potential of blockchain to enhance transparency, security, and efficiency in public services, while AI offers advanced data analytics and decision-making capabilities (Akther et al. 2025). Thus, the research surge is both a reflection of pressing real-world governance demands and advancements in interdisciplinary approaches.

The United Kingdom, United States, and Australia lead in publication volume due to well-established academic infrastructures, substantial research funding, and strong policy engagement traditions. These countries typically host prominent universities and think tanks focused on public administration and governance, facilitating prolific output. In addition, the prominence of Malaysian institutions among the top contributors underscores regional priorities in governance reforms and capacity building in emerging economies. Developing countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, and South Africa demonstrate increasing research engagement driven by ongoing governance challenges and reform agendas, which require localized empirical study and knowledge production. The geographical diversity also highlights how governance concerns transcend borders, motivating a global scholarly community (Abeykoon & Sirisena 2023).

The concentration of publications in journals such as *Sustainability*, *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, and *International Journal of Public Administration* reveals the central platforms shaping governance discourse. These journals' editorial policies emphasize interdisciplinary, policy-relevant research, attracting contributions that explore governance within broader contexts of sustainability, accountability, and public administration (Abeykoon & Sirisena 2023).

## DISCUSSION

The extensive analysis of academic publications focusing on good governance in the public sector has provided significant insights into the types of documents, their subject areas, publication trends, contributions by authors and institutions, geographic distribution, publication sources, citation metrics, and thematic trends. This discussion will delve into these aspects in detail, highlighting the key findings and their implications for the field of public sector governance.

The overwhelming majority (88.97%) of the analyzed documents are articles, underscoring the reliance on journal articles for disseminating research findings in this field. This dominance of articles suggests that peer-reviewed journals are the primary platform for scholars to share their research, ensuring rigorous review and validation of their findings. The presence of book chapters (5.01%), literature reviews (3.6%), and conference papers (2.43%) further highlights the diversity of sources, though these are significantly fewer in number. The limited representation of conference papers indicates that, while conferences are valuable for initial dissemination and discussion, the consolidation of research findings into journal articles is crucial for academic recognition and impact. The reliance on journal articles suggests that governance research is largely empirical, requiring rigorous peer-reviewed validation and theoretical discussions to advance the field.

The subject area distribution reveals that Business, Management, and Accounting are the most prolific fields, comprising 41.47% of the total publications. This indicates a significant focus on organizational practices, corporate governance, and management strategies within the public sector. The substantial representation of Social Sciences (8.84%) reflects an interest in the societal and cultural dimensions of governance. The notable presence of Economics, Econometrics, and Finance (2.97%), Environmental Science (1.41%), and Engineering (1.33%) suggests that these areas contribute meaningfully to the overall research output, though they are less dominant.

Subject areas such as Health Professions, Computer Science, Medicine, and Agricultural and Biological Sciences, each accounting for less than 1% of the total publications, potentially represent specialized fields with focused research communities. The minimal contributions from Arts and Humanities, Psychology, and Energy, each below 0.5%, suggest either emerging fields of research or areas with limited research activity within the dataset. These findings indicate that while Business, Management, Accounting, and Social Sciences are the most prolific fields in terms of article generation, there is a breadth of interdisciplinary research contributing to the field of public sector governance.

The publication trends from 2018 to 2023 show a steady increase in research output, reflecting the growing importance of good governance in the public sector. The number of publications rose from 169 in 2018 to 275 in 2023. Despite slight dips in 2021 and 2022, the overall trend indicates sustained and increasing interest in this field. This rise in publications could be attributed to the increasing recognition of the importance of governance in achieving sustainable development goals, improving public sector efficiency, and enhancing citizen trust in government institutions. The decline in publications during 2021 and 2022 may be attributed to delays in research and publication processes due to the global pandemic and shifting research priorities.

The publication metrics reveal varying levels of citations per year, with a noticeable peak in 2020 and a significant rise in 2023, highlighting the evolving nature of research impact over time. The h-index of 50 and g-index of 80 further attest to the high academic influence and visibility of this body of literature. These metrics indicate that the publications are not only numerous but also impactful, with many articles receiving significant citations. The high citation counts for studies on blockchain and AI governance suggest a growing interest in technological applications in governance, reflecting the increasing digitalization of public administration.

Leading authors such as B. Cuadrado-Ballesteros and G. Grossi, each with six publications, demonstrate significant contributions to the discourse on public sector governance. Other notable authors include C. Furneaux and J. Said, each with five publications. The analysis of author contributions shows a collaborative nature of research, with a considerable number of documents authored by multiple contributors. This reflects the interdisciplinary and multifaceted nature of governance studies, which often require collaboration across different fields and expertise. Leading authors such as Cuadrado-Ballesteros and Grossi focus on governance accountability, financial management, and performance measurement in the public sector.

Institutions play a crucial role in advancing research on public sector governance. Universiti Teknologi Mara leads with 26 publications, followed by the University of Granada with 19, and Universiti Sains Malaysia with 17. This institutional analysis highlights the geographic diversity of research, with significant contributions from universities in Malaysia, Spain, Sweden, and Australia, among others. The high publication count from these institutions underscores their commitment to exploring and enhancing governance practices. The prominence of Malaysian institutions in this field may also reflect regional priorities and the impact of national research funding and policy initiatives aimed at improving governance. The prominence of Malaysian institutions highlights a regional emphasis on governance reforms, while European and North American institutions lead in research on corporate governance and digital governance innovations.

The geographic analysis reveals that the United Kingdom and the United States are the leading countries in terms of publication output, with 138 and 110 publications, respectively. These countries are followed by Australia, Spain, and Italy, each contributing significantly to the body of research. Malaysia also emerges as a key player, with 52 publications, indicating a robust research interest in governance within the Malaysian context. The UK and US lead governance research due to their strong research funding, established policy think tanks, and governance reforms that influence global policies.

The substantial contributions from countries like Indonesia, South Africa, and the Netherlands further emphasize the global nature of governance research and its relevance across diverse political and economic contexts. The high output from developed countries like the UK and the US can be attributed to their advanced research infrastructure and funding opportunities. In contrast, the significant contributions from countries like Malaysia and Indonesia highlight the growing importance of governance research in developing and emerging economies, where effective governance is crucial for sustainable development and social progress. While developing countries contribute significantly to governance research, challenges such as limited research funding, access to high-impact journals, and political constraints may affect their academic output.

The analysis of publication sources identifies key journals that serve as prominent platforms for disseminating research on public sector governance. "Sustainability (Switzerland)" leads with 93 publications, followed by the "International Review of Administrative Sciences" and the "International Journal of Public Administration," with 24 and 22 publications, respectively. The high number of publications in sustainability and administrative science journals reflects the increasing intersection of governance with environmental policies, ethical administration, and public management reforms. These journals not only provide a venue for publishing but also significantly influence the field through high citation counts.

The "Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal" and "Financial Accountability and Management" also stand out for their substantial contributions, indicating the critical intersection of governance with financial and accounting practices. The high citation counts of these journals underscore their influence and the relevance of their published research in shaping the discourse on public sector governance.

The citation metrics reveal a high level of academic influence, with a total of 14,939 citations for 1,278 papers, averaging 11.69 citations per paper. This robust citation count underscores the field's significant intellectual impact and the relevance of governance research in academic and policy-making circles. The h-index of 50 and g-index of 80 further highlight the prominence of these publications.

Notably, highly cited documents, such as Dubey et al.'s (2020) work on blockchain technology in humanitarian supply chains and Wirtz et al.'s (2019) study on artificial intelligence in the public sector, exemplify the innovative and interdisciplinary nature of governance research. These highly cited works highlight emerging trends and the adoption of new technologies in public sector governance, showcasing the field's responsiveness to global challenges and technological advancements.

The keyword analysis identifies Accountability, Transparency, Public Sector, Good Governance, and Governance as the most frequently occurring terms, reflecting the core themes of research in this area. The thematic map categorizes these keywords into motor themes, niche themes, emerging or declining themes, and basic themes. Motor themes, such as private sector, corporate governance, and performance management, are well-developed and central to the field. In contrast, basic themes like "accountability" and "transparency" are central but require further development, indicating areas for future research focus.

The thematic analysis reveals that accountability, transparency, and good governance are fundamental and central but need further development, highlighting their importance to governance and public administration. Similarly, public sector, sustainability, and corporate governance are crucial and central to governance discussions, underscoring their foundational role. In contrast, themes like the private sector, corporate social responsibility, and performance management are well-developed and central, indicating they are key drivers in governance research. Specialized topics such as "blockchain" and "traceability" are well-developed but not broadly influential, while auditing neoliberalism represents an emerging or declining theme needing further investigation. Emerging themes such as blockchain governance, AI-driven policy decision-making, and traceability in public administration indicate the future trajectory of governance research.

## CONCLUSION

To sum up, this bibliometric study offers crucial perspectives on the present status of academic research on "effective governance in the public sector" during the specified six-year timeframe from 2018 to 2023. The study covers a large collection of 1278 articles, providing an in-depth view of the intellectual terrain in this field. The noticeable publishing patterns show a substantial rise in academic works discussing good governance in the public sector. This rise indicates the increasing significance and relevance of this field of research in both academic and practical aspects. The examination has revealed the most productive writers, Grossi, G. and Cuadrado-Ballesteros, B., who have both authored six articles, bringing to light different aspects of good governance. Most of these articles rely on previous studies, underlining the significance of expanding on existing knowledge.

Furthermore, Business, Management and Accounting and Social Sciences stand out with the highest number of articles in terms of subject areas, showcasing the interdisciplinary aspect of effective governance. Institutions that have the most impact in this field are located worldwide, with Universiti Teknologi Mara being the top performer with 25 published works. The United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, and Australia are the primary nations making significant contributions to this field of research. The remarkable impact of the study is underscored by its impressive citation metrics, including 14939 citations from 1278 papers, an h-index of 50, and a g-index of 80. This highlights the extensive consequences and impact

of research on effective governance in the public sector. Future studies would improve by broadening the range of the bibliometric analysis by utilizing various databases in addition to Scopus, which was used in the present research.

#### IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

Public institutions face complex challenges ranging from corruption to inefficiency, and insights from bibliometric analyses can guide the development of targeted strategies. For instance, identifying emerging themes such as digital governance or anti-corruption mechanisms allows policymakers to prioritize reforms and allocate resources more effectively. By bridging the gap between academic research and policy application, the study can serve as a valuable resource for decision-makers aiming to enhance transparency, accountability, and public trust.

From an academic standpoint, the findings offer a roadmap for shaping future governance research. The study's identification of research trends and knowledge gaps should encourage scholars to focus on underrepresented areas, such as governance in developing countries or the impact of technological innovation on public administration. Incorporating interdisciplinary perspectives for example, combining political science with data science or ethics can deepen analyses and foster novel theoretical developments. Moreover, the evolving landscape of governance challenges demands methodological innovation, urging researchers to move beyond traditional bibliometric techniques and embrace mixed methods that integrate qualitative insights.

Methodologically, the study underscores the importance of adopting best practices in bibliometric research to enhance reliability and validity. Transparent reporting of data sources, search strategies, and inclusion/exclusion criteria is essential to ensure replicability and minimize bias. Complementing bibliometric data with qualitative analyses, such as content or thematic reviews, can enrich interpretations and contextualize quantitative trends. These methodological refinements not only improve the quality of governance research but also help translate findings into actionable knowledge. Encouraging adherence to such rigorous standards across future studies will ultimately strengthen the field and contribute to more evidence-based governance reforms.

#### LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study offers a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of scholarly literature on good governance in the public sector from 2018 through August 2023. However, several limitations should be acknowledged, and they highlight important opportunities for future research.

Firstly, the study's temporal scope, while recent, is limited to publications up to mid-2023. Given the rapidly evolving nature of governance challenges and academic inquiry especially considering ongoing global crises and technological advances—future research should periodically update these findings to capture emerging trends and shifts in focus.

Secondly, the current analysis predominantly emphasizes quantitative bibliometric indicators such as publication counts, citation metrics, authorship patterns, and institutional productivity. Although these metrics offer useful insights into research activity and influence, they do not fully capture the depth and richness of governance scholarship. Future research would benefit from integrating qualitative thematic analysis to better understand how governance concepts, frameworks, and empirical findings evolve over time. Such an approach could reveal nuanced patterns in theoretical development, methodological innovations, and substantive insights that quantitative data alone cannot provide.

Another key limitation stems from the exclusive reliance on the Scopus database. While Scopus is widely regarded as one of the most comprehensive and authoritative citation databases, it may omit relevant publications indexed elsewhere, especially in specialized journals or non-English language outlets. To mitigate this, future studies should consider comparing and integrating data from other major databases such as Web of Science (WoS) and Google Scholar. This would allow a more exhaustive coverage of governance research and improve the robustness of bibliometric findings. Furthermore, incorporating non-English publications could broaden the geographic and cultural representation of governance scholarship, thereby offering a truly global perspective.

Finally, the complexity and interdisciplinary nature of governance research call for mixed-method approaches that combine bibliometric analysis with systematic literature reviews, content analysis, and case studies. These methodologies can provide deeper contextualization of the patterns observed in quantitative data and link them to practical governance challenges and policy implications.

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