



Publisher: Sapienza Grupo Editorial
R. Santa Cruz, 2187, Vila Mariana
São Paulo, Brazil
editor@sapienzaeditorial.com



International measures against trafficking in persons in Latin American countries: a bibliometric analysis in Scopus

Medidas internacionais contra o tráfico de pessoas nos países da américa latina: uma análise bibliométrica no Scopus

Medidas internacionales contra la trata de personas en países latinoamericanos: un análisis bibliométrico en Scopus

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ARTICLE HISTORY

Received: 19-03-2025
Revised Version: 11-07-2025
Accepted: 04-09-2025
Published: 30-09-2025
Copyright: © 2025 by the authors
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Manuscript type: Article

ARTICLE INFORMATION

Science-Matrix Classification (Domain):
Economic & Social Sciences
Main topic:
International human trafficking
Main practical implications:
Reveals key research trends and gaps in human trafficking studies to guide future policies, prevention strategies, and technological interventions.
Originality/value:
Provides and original bibliometric mapping of human trafficking research, highlighting underexplored topics and offering methodological insight for future interdisciplinary studies. It is highly relevant for the Global South countries.

ABSTRACT

Human trafficking is a critical global problem, with millions of victims affected annually by various forms of exploitation. This study conducts a bibliometric analysis to evaluate the current state and future trends of research on human trafficking, using scientific databases such as Scopus. An exploratory review methodology was applied, analyzing 147 documents, with the search terms: "human trafficking", "human trafficking" and "human exploitation". The results show that the United States and Brazil lead the research efforts, followed by the United Kingdom. Among the key factors addressed are socioeconomic vulnerability, forced migration and institutional weakness in the protection of human rights. Although most studies focus on sexual exploitation and forced labor, bibliometric analysis reveals underexplored areas, such as the role of emerging technologies in prevention and detection, and the use of artificial intelligence in mapping criminal networks. This article offers a comprehensive bibliometric analysis on trafficking, providing crucial information on emerging trends such as "human rights", "international cooperation" and "public policies", and their role in shaping effective strategies for prevention and comprehensive care.

Keywords: Trafficking, international cooperation, law, bibliometrics, Latin America.

RESUMO

O tráfico de seres humanos é uma questão global crítica, com milhões de vítimas afetadas anualmente por várias formas de exploração. Este estudo efectua uma análise bibliométrica para avaliar o estado atual e as tendências futuras da investigação sobre o tráfico de seres humanos, utilizando bases de dados científicas como a Scopus. Foi aplicada uma metodologia de revisão exploratória, analisando 147 documentos, com os termos de pesquisa: "trafficking in persons", "human smuggling" e "human exploitation". Os resultados mostram que os Estados Unidos e o Brasil lideram os esforços de investigação, seguidos do Reino Unido. Os principais factores abordados incluem a vulnerabilidade socioeconómica, a migração forçada e as deficiências institucionais na proteção dos direitos humanos. Embora a maioria dos estudos se centre na exploração sexual e no trabalho forçado, a análise bibliométrica revela áreas pouco exploradas, como o papel das tecnologias emergentes na prevenção e deteção e a utilização da inteligência artificial no mapeamento de redes criminosas. Este artigo oferece uma análise bibliométrica abrangente sobre o tráfico, fornecendo informações cruciais sobre tendências emergentes como os "direitos humanos", a "cooperação internacional" e as "políticas públicas", e o seu papel na definição de estratégias eficazes de prevenção e cuidados abrangentes.

Palavras-chave: Tráfico, cooperação internacional, direito, bibliometria, América Latina.

RESUMEN

La trata de personas es una problemática crítica a nivel global, con millones de víctimas afectadas anualmente por diversas formas de explotación. Este estudio realiza un análisis bibliométrico para evaluar el estado actual y las tendencias futuras de la investigación sobre la trata de personas, utilizando bases de datos científicas como Scopus. Se aplicó una metodología de revisión exploratoria, analizando 147 documentos, con los términos de búsqueda: "trata de personas", "tráfico de personas" y "explotación humana". Los resultados muestran que Estados Unidos y Brasil lideran los esfuerzos de investigación, seguidos por Reino Unido. Entre los factores clave abordados están la vulnerabilidad socioeconómica, la migración forzada y la debilidad institucional en la protección de derechos humanos. Aunque la mayoría de los estudios se centran en la explotación sexual y el trabajo forzado, el análisis bibliométrico revela áreas poco exploradas, como el papel de tecnologías emergentes en la prevención y detección, y el uso de inteligencia artificial en el mapeo de redes delictivas. Este artículo ofrece un análisis bibliométrico completo sobre la trata, proporcionando información crucial sobre tendencias emergentes como "derechos humanos", "cooperación internacional" y "políticas públicas", y su rol en la configuración de estrategias efectivas para la prevención y atención integral.

Palabras clave: Trata, cooperación internacional, derecho, bibliometría, América Latina.

INTRODUCTION

Modern slavery today is a global problem that can affect millions including women, men and boys, every year various cases are registered either for sexual purposes or labor exploitation (Mancebo, 2023). The victims of modern slavery usually face mental problems as time passes, caused by the mistreatment they suffer, when they are rescued, many have difficulty in being able to resume their lives since the traumas are deep (Bender et al, 2025). However, human trafficking, commonly called slavery today, can be reframed as human trafficking or forced exploitation of people, they violate human rights, victims who manage to survive seek medical help as they may be prone to chronic diseases, 2020 marked a decade since the Palermo protocol (Rahman et al., 2023; Rui et al., 2022; Shuranova et al., 2025). Although countries such as Argentina, Colombia, Mexico and Peru have been able to reduce, the cases have not yet disappeared completely, because of this problem, Mexico has created institutions to raise awareness about human trafficking and its impact on society (Moya, 2021; Singar et al., 2020).

Likewise, human trafficking affects all ages and genders in Peru, with the Amazon region being the most affected, especially in remote areas, it is increasingly normalized as a business that seeks emigrants, this international crime less attended to than drug trafficking, deprives people of their freedom and dignity, Victims in search of a better life encounter a sad and dangerous reality (Chavez et al., 2024; Fernandez et al., 2024). Although it has earned its place in the government agenda and laws have been created, its application requires investigation and protection, even so, the victims continue, investigations are scarce, little is said about the experiences that victims may have, which affect physical and mental health. Most of the victims are Latinas ranging in age from 14 to 30 (Islam, 2024; Sundarakumar et al., 2023; García et al., 2025).

Because those rescued, who do not receive adequate help, can become insecure and overprotective, these experiences are very shocking, human trafficking is a million-dollar industry where its frequent victims are vulnerable populations, including many men subjected to labor and sexual exploitation (Strohacker, 2023; Recknor et al., 2022). This implies coercive or deceptive recruitment and retention for exploitation means that this crime is defined by three elements: the act (recruitment, transportation), the means (deception, coercion) and the purpose (intention to exploit), actual exploitation is not necessary, three types are identified: sexual exploitation, labor exploitation and organ removal (Schroeder et al., 2022; Stammers, 2022; Twis, 2020; Visser et al., 2019).

With more than 40.3 million affected according to the International Labor Organization, traffickers hide victims in places that are difficult to detect, what was proposed was to install a lot, (Real-Time Object Locator) that works with wifi waves, to identify people through objects (Deeb et al., 2019). Human trafficking includes sexual exploitation and various forms of abuse such as labor, especially affecting vulnerable people, which leads to examining cultural stigma, poverty, sexism and racism as factors of social justice, this being a millionaire business that would last through years destroying lives (Ariail et al., 2024; Broad et al., 2022). Doctors also seek to analyze all symptoms, such as post-traumatic stress and anxiety, as well as vary according to the circumstances and the social support they encounter, the vulnerability of minors in human trafficking is accentuated by not being considered a subject of law, family support is key to their recovery (Fernandez et al., 2024; Nichols et al., 2024). The care provided to them depends on whether the victims were rescued or they managed to get out on their own, being essential a victim-centered approach that contemplates trauma and the lack of affective policies in order to achieve a just society, being crucial to apply a gender approach and coordinate strategies in assistance (Edwards et al., 2024; Leopardi et al., 2020; Querol, 2024).

Borders are the greatest danger and the fastest way to be a victim of human trafficking, increasing the vulnerability of people, evidencing the connection with global processes where in Latin America human trafficking on the borders of Peru with Ecuador and Bolivia show how these areas facilitate this illegal activity. This is a global problem linked to the inequality of human rights addressing SDGs (Awosusi et al., 2021; Bender et al., 2025; See et al., 2021). SDG 16 being key, labor exploitation being a major concern, despite the ATIPSON law there are difficulties in its application, there are some that hinder its application and the lack of a definition of forced labor complicates the fight against trafficking where the concept of "trafficking in persons" varies according to international agreements and affects migrants, Its definition is crucial for prevention (Kady, 2024; Nordin, 2019; Shimazaki, 2023). In the United States, trafficking was confused with sex work and then focused on labor exploitation, however, these measures have harmed migrants, especially children and women, due to an inadequate criminal approach, almost 495 officers see human trafficking in migrants as sex work, myths and misinformation influence their perception of the problem in communities (Gibbs, 2023; Lázaro, 2025).

In addition, the exploitation of human beings is a current manifestation of slavery involving both sexual coercion and forced labor is a human rights and social justice issue (Nulhaqim et al., 2021). Affecting vulnerable people, analyzing factors such as stigma, poverty, sexism, and racism, as well as the importance of survivor participation in prevention, researchers have explored the multiple variables that impact human trafficking, including socioeconomic, cultural, and legal factors (Coster, 2020; Gerassi, 2021; Pajón, 2020; Ricard, 2019).

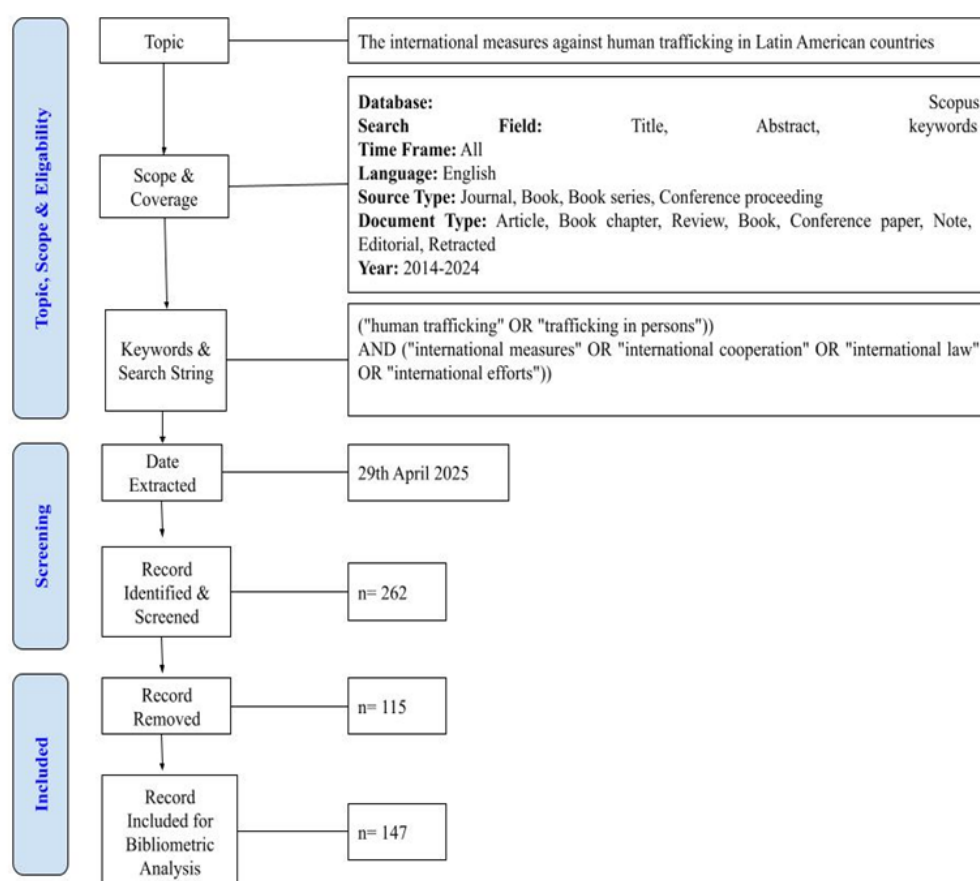
To achieve the purpose of this research, the following objectives were proposed: to analyze the scope and depth of the scientific research carried out to date on trafficking in persons; identify the main researchers and the geographical areas where this phenomenon has been investigated with greater intensity; explore the facets of human trafficking that have been addressed in the existing scientific literature; and identify emerging research topics related to human trafficking.

METHODS

Data source, data extraction and study selection

The bibliometric evaluation was performed using the Scopus database. The search strategy was designed around key terms essential to the field of study: "human trafficking" or "trafficking in persons" together with "international measures", "international cooperation", "international law" or "international efforts", and was limited exclusively to these expressions. These terms were used as filtering criteria, considering their appearance in the titles, abstracts and keywords of the documents. The methodology applied, as well as the stages of the selection process, were developed according to the guidelines of the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework (Nyulas et al., 2025), as shown in Figure 1. The database Scopus was established as main source, due to the global scientific relevance and reputation of the journal literature as in other bibliometric studies (Fraga-Graells et al., 2022).

Figure 1. PRISMA diagram



Source: author's development based on the literature evidence collected

Search strategy

The thematic delimitation of the study focused on three disciplines closely linked to the problem of human trafficking: Social Sciences, Economics, Econometrics and Finance, and Psychology. Data collection was carried out in April 2024. To optimize the identification of relevant literature, a search strategy was designed that incorporated descriptors such as "human trafficking", "trafficking in persons", "international measures", "international cooperation", "international law" and "international efforts". These terms were combined using the Boolean operators AND and OR, to broaden the scope of the search. The search formula used in the Scopus database to locate terms in titles, abstracts and keywords was: (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("human trafficking" OR "trafficking in persons")) AND (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("international measures" OR "international cooperation" OR "international law" OR "international efforts")).

Initially, 262 publications were identified, which were subjected to a thorough selection process, described in detail in the "Screening" section. This stage focused on documents published between 2014 and 2024, limiting the results to those written in English. The final dataset was composed of 147 articles. The selection procedure followed the guidelines established by the PRISMA declaration, ensuring transparency and methodological rigor in each phase of the analysis. The papers were evaluated considering their relevance to the research questions, as well as their compliance with the peer review criteria. Titles and abstracts were carefully reviewed for correspondence with the study approach. In addition, the Scoping Review methodology was applied, which made it possible to map the existing academic production, identify gaps in knowledge and offer a comprehensive vision of the research landscape in the area.

Data Analysis and visualization

The bibliometric analysis was carried out using RStudio (version 4.5.0), together with Biblioshiny and the Bibliometrix package, which allowed a detailed evaluation of the quantitative data extracted from the scientific literature. Biblioshiny, an interactive web platform, facilitated the dynamic exploration and graphical representation of the information obtained through Bibliometrix. The dataset evaluated included 147 publications from 115 different sources, with the collaboration of 222 researchers. 361 key terms defined by the authors were identified, reflecting the terminological diversity within the study. Likewise, the data revealed an annual increase of 12.02%, with an average of 8.97 citations per article, which underlines its influence on the academic community. In addition, 8569 bibliographic references were registered, consolidating the basis for future research and the continuous development of the area.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Number of publications and citations per year

Table 1 indicates between 2014 and 2024, research on human trafficking where a sustained growth in academic production and impact has been shown. In this period, the total number of publications (PT) reached 147, reflecting a constant increase in the study of this problem. Of these, 112 have been cited (NCP), which shows their relevance within the scientific community. The total number of citations (CT) amounts to 1,240, indicating the influence of this research on the development of policies and intervention strategies. The average number of citations per publication (C/P) is 8.4%, while the average number of citations per cited publication (C/CP) stands at 11.1%, highlighting the strength of the most referenced studies.

Table 1. Year of publication

Year	HCMC	NCP	TC	C/P	C/CP	h
2014	9	7	2	0	0	6
2015	6	5	1	0	0	3
2016	14	12	22	2	2	8
2017	16	15	56	4	4	10
2018	7	5	70	10	14	4
2019	26	22	112	4	5	6
2020	12	12	128	11	11	6
2021	13	10	184	14	18	3
2022	2	2	161	81	81	1
2023	14	10	213	15	21	3
2024	28	12	291	10	24	2
Total	147	112	1240	8.4	11.1	

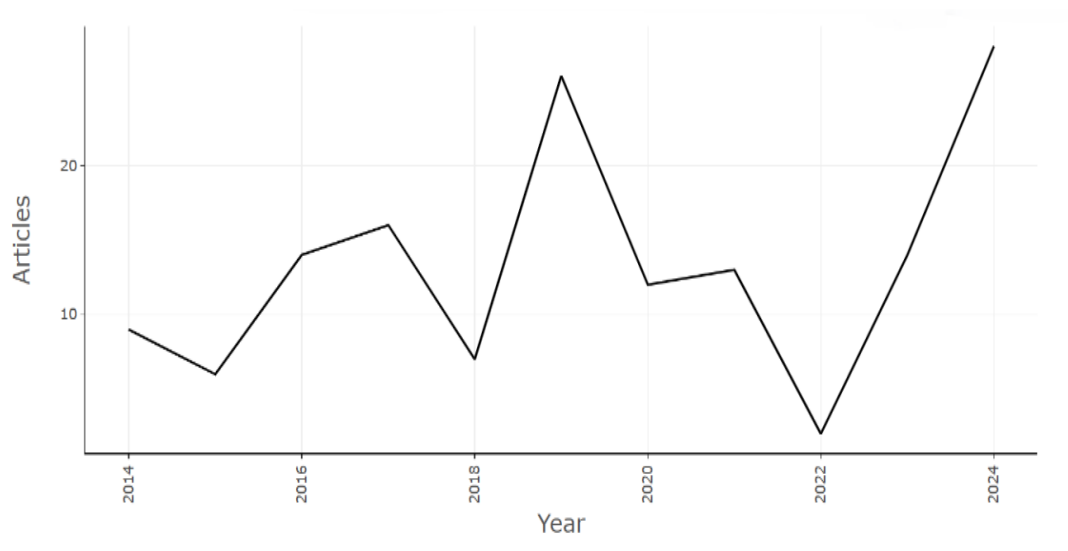
Source: Author's development based on the research data

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

Figure 2 shows an irregular evolution in scientific production related to trafficking in persons during the period analyzed. In 2014, 9 publications were identified, a figure that was reduced to 6 in 2015. From 2016 onwards, an upward trend was observed, with 14 documents that year and 16 in 2017. However, in 2018 there was a significant decrease, with only 7 publications registered.

This decrease was followed by a considerable rebound in 2019, a year in which 26 documents were reached, marking the first peak in the time series. Subsequently, a new drop was evidenced in 2020 and 2021, with 12 and 13 publications respectively, until reaching the lowest point in 2022, with only 2 documents. However, in 2023 scientific production showed signs of recovery by reaching 14 publications, culminating in 2024 with a maximum of 28 documents, which represents the highest value of the period analyzed.

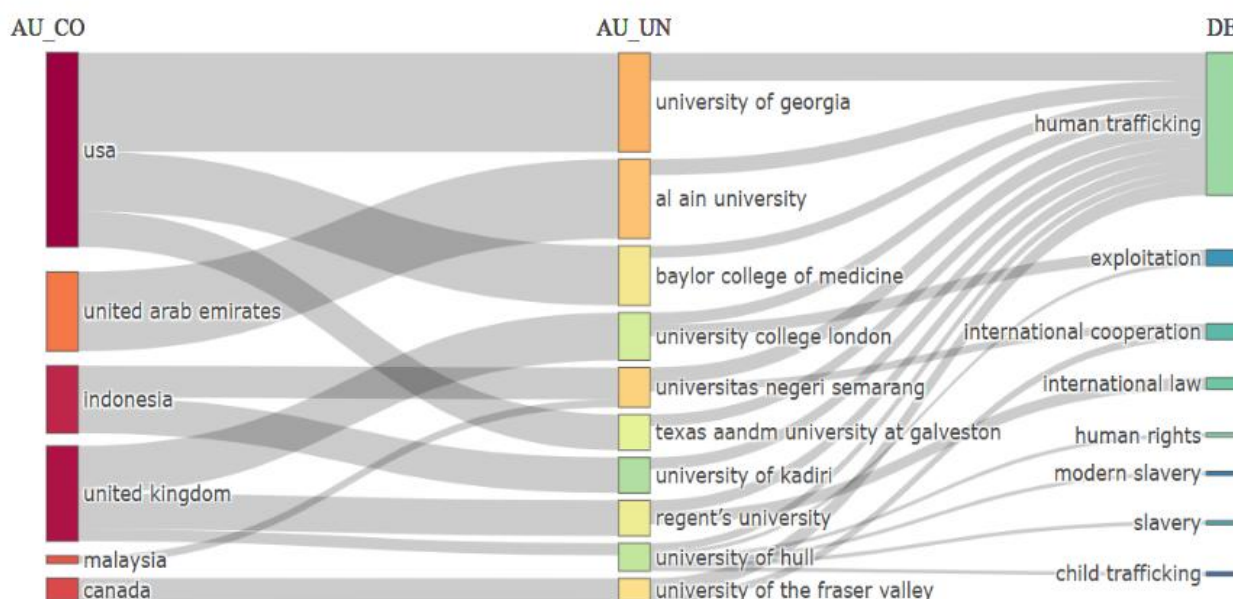
Figure 2. Annual evolution of academic production on human trafficking (2014-2024) in Scopus



Source: Author's development based on the research data

Figure 3 represents a three-field graph that establishes links between countries, affiliations, and keywords, considering a maximum of 10 elements for each field. Among the most recurrent keywords are "human trafficking", "exploitation", "international cooperation" and "international law". In terms of scientific production, the main affiliations with the highest volume of publications on this subject are the University of Georgia, Al Ain University in the United Arab Emirates, Baylor Medical School, located in the United States, and University College London in the United Kingdom, all of which stand out for their high documentary contribution in the area.

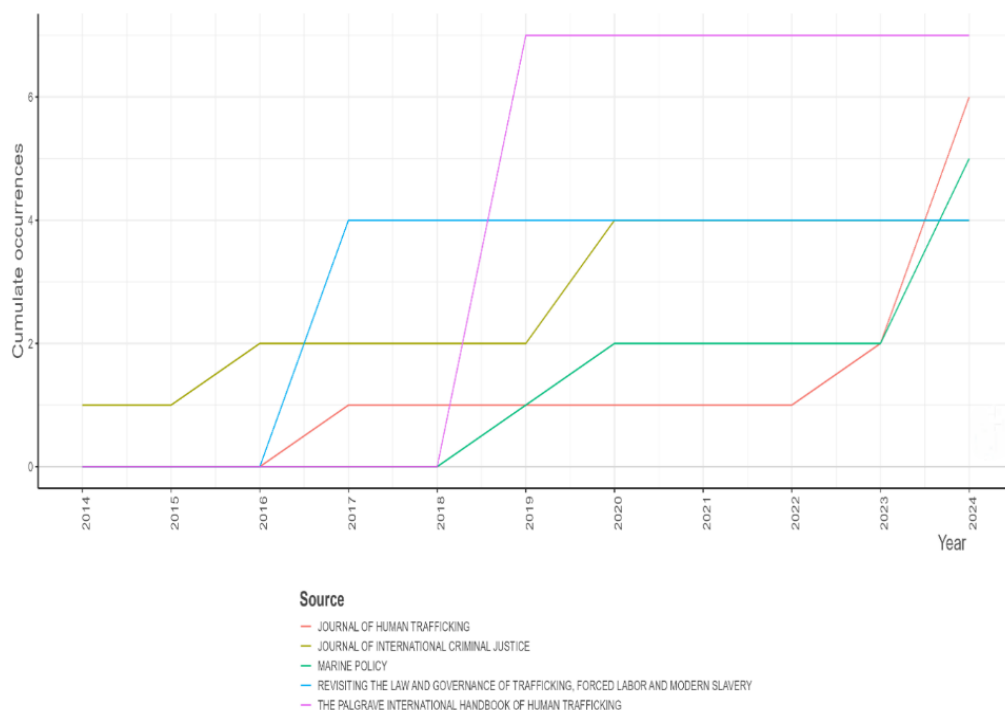
Figure 3. Three-field diagram relating countries, affiliations, and keywords in Scopus



Source: Author's development based on the research data

Figure 4 The figure shows the cumulative output of documents by source over time. The Journal of International Criminal Justice leads with 30 publications, showing a constant growth that positions it among the most contributed. It is followed by Revisiting the Law and Governance of Trafficking, Forced Labor and Modern Slavery, with 32 publications, although its production is concentrated and stabilized earlier. In third place, The Palgrave International Handbook of Human Trafficking registers 42 publications, standing out for its volume and significant growth in the final period. Finally, the Journal of Human Trafficking and Marine Policy present 14 publications each; the former with a more gradual and sustained growth, while the latter shows a slower development but a rebound towards the end of the period.

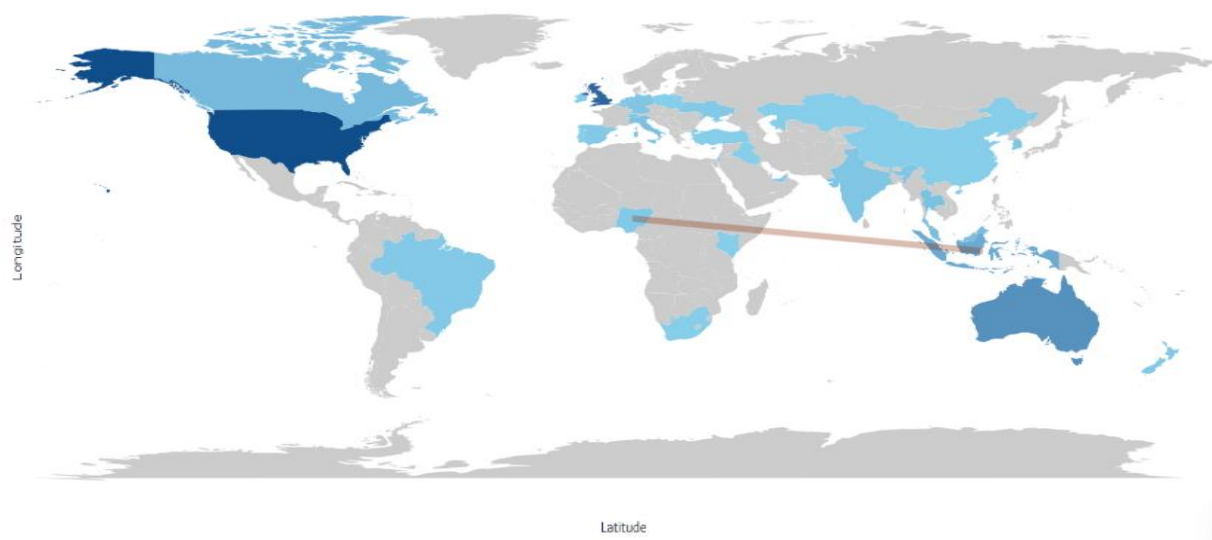
Figure 4. Main sources of publication in Scopus



Source: Author's development based on the research data

Figure 5 represents the geographical distribution of scientific production on trafficking in persons, highlighting the countries with the greatest participation in academic research related to the subject. The United States has the highest volume of publications, followed by the United Kingdom and Australia, which also register significant research activity. In addition, a growing participation in other regions of the world is recognized, especially in countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, such as India, the Philippines, Nigeria and Brazil. A relationship of academic collaboration between Nigeria and Indonesia is also highlighted.

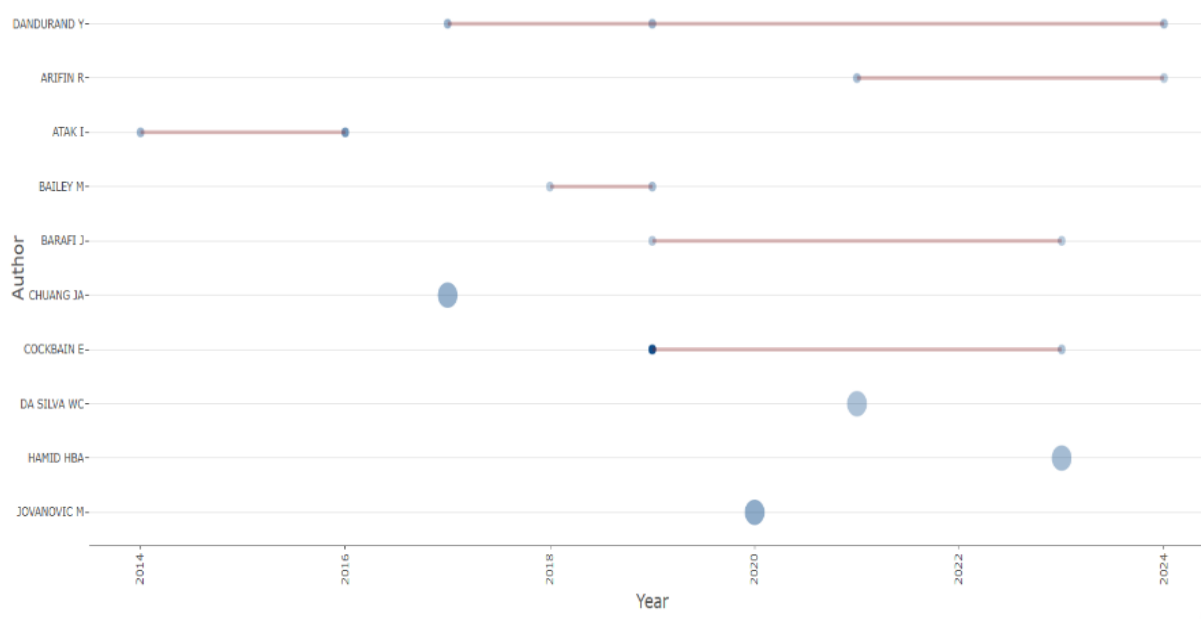
Figure 5. Geographical distribution of scientific production in Scopus



Source: Author's development based on the research data

Figure 6 shows the evolution of the academic production of the ten most influential authors in the study of human trafficking between 2014 and 2024. Each line represents your publishing journey, and the node size reflects the annual impact measured in citations. Dandurand Y. stands out for a sustained production since 2017, with an average of 4.21 citations per publication, which shows a constant influence. Arifin R., active since 2021, has a continuous trajectory, although with less impact (1.0 average citations). Cockbain E. concentrates its production in 2019, reaching a high impact with an average of 9.0 citations. On the other hand, Chuang J.A. makes a one-off contribution in 2017 with an average of 1.78 citations. Barafi J. and Bailey M. show an intermittent participation in recent years, while Atak I. concentrates its activity in 2015. Finally, Da Silva W.C., Hamid H.B.A. and Jovanovic M. have recently joined the academic discussion, bringing new perspectives to the global debate.

Figure 6. Temporal evolution of authorial production in the field of human trafficking



Source: Author's development based on the research data

Table 2 shows 10 authors with at least two publications on human trafficking in Scopus, reflecting an active and specialized academic production. Together, they accumulate a total of 1,615 citations, which shows a high impact in the scientific field. Ella Cockbain (United Kingdom) stands out with 623 citations and an H-index of 15, followed by Janie Ann Chuang (USA) with 449 citations and Idil Atak (Canada) with 188 citations. The overall average of the H-index is 4.9, indicating a solid consistency in the quality of the research. The overall average number of citations is 158.5, showing the relevance of the contributions. The publications come from various regions such as Canada, the United Kingdom, the USA, Brazil, Malaysia and Indonesia, which confirms a global perspective on the problem. Home institutions include highly regarded universities such as UCL Engineering, Toronto Metropolitan University, and American University.

Figure 7 shows four thematic groupings in human trafficking research. First, the driving forces, such as human rights, human trafficking, and international cooperation, stand out for their high centrality and density, indicating a consolidated and structural position in the field. Secondly, niche topics, such as labor supply, fishing industry and employment, have high density, but low centrality, which shows specialization with less transversal connection. Likewise, the basic topics, including trafficking, international law and crime, have high centrality and low density, that is, they are fundamental, but still underdeveloped. Finally, themes that are declining or emerging, such as hegemony and marine policy, reflect low centrality and density, suggesting less integration and thematic development.

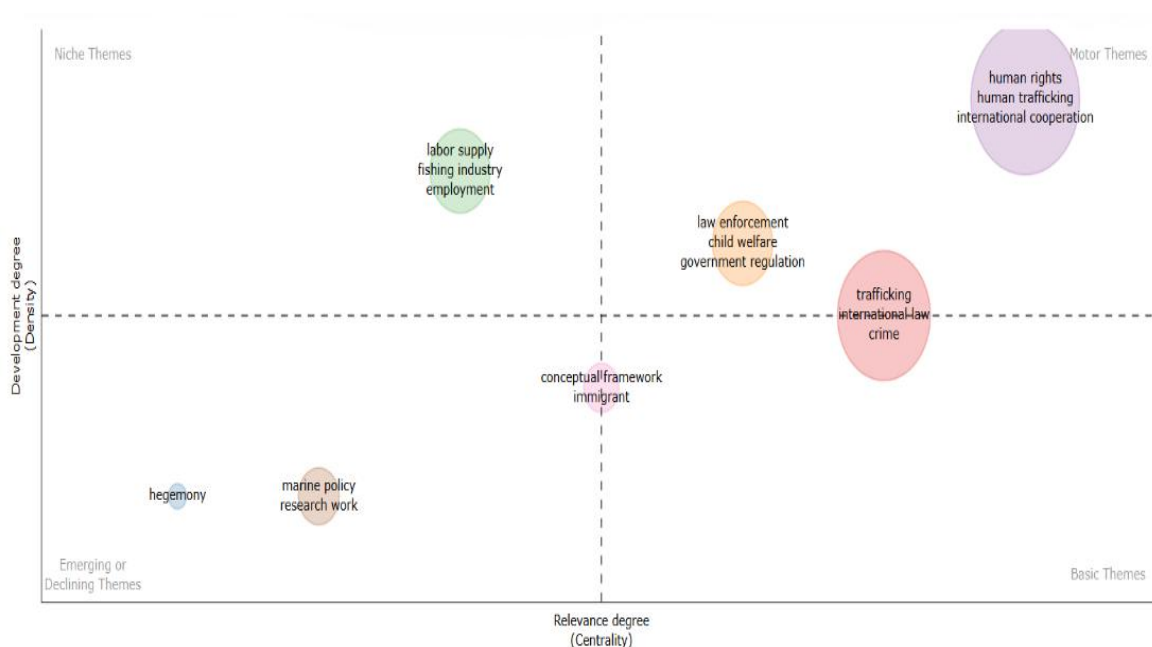
Figure 8 presents the co-occurrence network where it indicates the main research axes on human trafficking between 2014 and 2024. The central terms human rights, human trafficking and international cooperation stand out, which articulate the main discussion. They are connected to nodes such as international law and trafficking, which refer to regulatory frameworks. Keywords such as prostitution, sex work, crime victims and policy show a focus on institutional responses. Labor supply, employment and fishing industry also appear, which allude to labor dimensions. Concepts such as social work, social justice and organization and management, linked to social action, are added. Government regulation, child welfare and child sexual abuse express concerns about the protection of specific groups. The terms United States and New Zealand provide geographical references. Finally, words such as crime, slavery and internationality broaden the view of the problem.

Table 2. Most relevant authors with the highest number of publications and citations in the field of study between 2014 and 2024

Author	Institution	Country	Number of Publications on the Subject in Both Databases	Number of Publications Scopus (S)	Number of Citations Scopus (S)	H-Indices Total Scopus
Dandurand, Yvon	The International Centre for Criminal Law Reform and Criminal Justice Policy	Canada	3	19	86	6
Arifin, Ridwan	Semarang State University	Indonesia	2	63	159	6
Attack, Idil	Toronto Metropolitan University	Canada	2	28	188	8
Bailey, Madeleine	SMU Dedman School Of Law	USA	2	2	6	1
Barafi, Jamal	University of Sharjah	United Arab Emirates	2	17	48	2
Chuang, Janie Ann	American University	USA	2	8	449	5
Cockbain, Ella	UCL Engineering	United Kingdom	2	34	623	15
Corrêa Da Silva, Waldimeiry Correa	University of São Paulo	Brazil	2	8	7	2
Hamid, Haezreena Begum Abdul	Universiti Malaya	Malaysia	2	3	5	2
Jovanović, Marija	University of Essex	United Kingdom	2	3	14	2

Source: Author's development based on the research data

Figure 7. Thematic map of research in Scopus



Source: author's development based on the empirical evidence collected

Figure 8. Details of the co-occurrence keywords



Source: Author's development based on the research data

Discussion

Scope and depth of scientific research conducted to date on human trafficking.

The bibliometric analysis of scientific production on human trafficking reveals a constant growth in the last decade, especially since 2016. This increase coincides with a greater visibility of the issue on the international agenda, driven by the migration crisis, the expansion of transnational criminal networks and the strengthening of legal frameworks on human rights. However, while the volume of publications has grown, research remains focused on traditional areas such as sexual exploitation and forced labor (Pham, 2023; Tomás, 2019; Yaman, 2024). This growth reflects not only academic interest, but also the institutional and social urgency to understand the causes and consequences of this crime where peaks stand out in 2019 and 2024, and research on human trafficking has grown, focusing on international cooperation, the protection of vulnerable groups and labor dimensions, this multidimensional approach strengthens the design of more effective strategies against the phenomenon (Cunha et al., 2022; Matos et al., 2025).

Identify the top researchers and geographies that have conducted the most research on human trafficking

Geographically, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada lead production scientific on human trafficking. International measures against human trafficking in Latin American countries, the United States combats human trafficking with the TVPA (Trafficking Victims Protection Act), which criminalizes this crime and protects victims, uses agencies such as the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) and grants the T Visa to foreign victims. at the international level, it publishes the TIP Report (Report on Trafficking in Persons) and finances programs in Latin America through USAID (United States Agency for International Development), supporting governments in prevention and protection (Carbajal, 2024; Gauci, 2023).

Meanwhile, in the United Kingdom, it is being combated through the Modern Slavery Act (2015), which severely punishes trafficking and protects victims. The NCA (National Crime Agency) leads the investigations, and victims can receive support and accommodation under the NRM (National Referral Mechanism) system. In addition, the United Kingdom cooperates with countries and international organizations to prevent trafficking and dismantle criminal networks (Corthay, 2019; Niums, 2022). Finally, Canada tackles human trafficking through the National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking, which has been in place since 2019. The RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) investigates these crimes, and victims can receive support through social and legal programs. Canada also cooperates internationally and promotes prevention campaigns, especially to protect women, children and indigenous peoples (Lim et al., 2021; Varela, 2019).

Highlighting one of the most cited authors Yvon Dandurand is a prominent Canadian criminologist and one of the most cited authors in research on human trafficking, he is associated with the International Centre for Criminal Law Reform and Criminal Justice Policy, his work has been fundamental for the development of effective legal frameworks and public policies against trafficking, Dandurand has provided in-depth analysis on victim protection, enhancing international cooperation, and law enforcement challenges, influencing global investigations and strategies to combat this crime (Sernández, 2021). In addition, countries such as India and Brazil have begun to increase their scientific production, providing perspectives from the social and regional spheres, and strengthening international academic cooperation to face this global problem (See et al., 2021; Waas, 2020; Barrick et al., 2025; Bonner, 2022).

Explore the facets of human trafficking that have been studied in the existing scientific literature.

The main themes explored in the literature on human trafficking focus on human rights, international cooperation, and public policy. These areas reflect central concerns in victim protection and global coordination to combat this crime (Hultman et al., 2025; Khan et al., 2025). Numerous studies underscore the importance of international regulatory frameworks and public policies as essential pillars for an effective response, highlighting that socio-economic vulnerability and forced migration are key factors that perpetuate trafficking (Cooper et al., 2024; Watt, 2019; Volodko et al., 2020). The research highlights international cooperation and legal mechanisms to prevent trafficking and provide comprehensive care to victims, the protection of vulnerable groups, especially children and women, is a key focus, reflected in terms such as child welfare, child sexual abuse and government regulation (Ambagtsheer, 2019; Bryant et al., 2019; Tomita et al., 2020). The bibliometric analysis highlights a strong focus on normative and institutional frameworks to address human trafficking, reflected in key terms such as international law, policy and government regulation (Mouth et al., 2025; Judge, 2022; Lee et al., 2024).

In summary, although international cooperation, the protection of vulnerable groups, and labor dimensions continue to be central themes, the literature has evolved to reflect a more comprehensive approach that encompasses legal, social, and economic aspects, highlighting the need for multidisciplinary strategies to address the global complexity of human trafficking.

Identify emerging research topics related to human trafficking.

In the complex field of human trafficking, research has moved towards a broader and deeper understanding of the phenomenon. One of the central issues is international cooperation, which articulates efforts to prevent and address this

crime at a global level, the protection of vulnerable groups, especially children and women, is another priority, reflected in the attention to government regulation and the prevention of child abuse (Mouth et al., 2025; Judge, 2022; Lee et al., 2024). In addition, labour dimensions, such as exploitation in the fishing industry and forced labour, have emerged as key areas, showing the complexity of the phenomenon beyond sex trafficking, social action, through social work and social justice, also becomes relevant in the comprehensive response against trafficking (Fallo et al., 2025; Levine, 2024; Tillyer et al., 2023). Finally, the global perspective of the research, with multiple countries participating, underscores the need for collaborative, multisectoral approaches to design effective policies that respond to the magnitude and diversity of the problem (Awerbuch et al., 2020; Motseki, 2022; Saffanah et al., 2024).

Practical implications and future research

This study highlights the importance of strengthening international cooperation and applying multidisciplinary approaches to improve the prevention and care of trafficking in persons. It is recommended to optimize the exchange of information, use innovative technologies to identify victims and design policies that address both labor exploitation and the protection of vulnerable groups.

Future research should focus on key topics such as Transnational Crime: Challenges in the Regulation of Trafficking, Human Trafficking in Latin America: International Responses, and The Effectiveness of International Cooperation in the Prevention of Human Trafficking. These lines of study will contribute to generating more effective strategies adapted to local contexts.

FINAL REMARKS

This research highlights that the United States and Canada lead the scientific production on human trafficking, followed by the United Kingdom, which reflects their commitment to the development of international strategies to prevent and address this crime. The year 2024 is identified as the year with the highest academic production, evidencing a growing global interest. Among the main measures adopted are specific laws such as the Human Trafficking Victims Protection Act in the United States, the Modern Slavery Act in the United Kingdom, and the National Anti-Trafficking Strategy in Canada. These regulations are accompanied by the work of institutions such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the National Crime Agency and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, which are responsible for investigating, protecting victims and promoting prevention campaigns. Mechanisms such as the T Visa in the United States and the National Reference Mechanism in the United Kingdom are also highlighted, as well as international cooperation and legal and social support for victims.

However, the study has limitations as it is mainly based on the Scopus database, which may exclude research from emerging regions or in other languages. In addition, the bibliometric approach privileges quantitative aspects, leaving aside experiences and qualitative challenges. Therefore, it is recommended that future research expand the sources, incorporate qualitative methodologies and analyze the real impact of the policies implemented to achieve a more complete and effective understanding of the phenomenon.

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Yaman, E. (2024). Child-Centered Anti-Trafficking Approaches in Mediterranean Migration Routes: Italy and Turkey. *Social Sciences*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci13120700>

Contribution of each author to the manuscript:

Task	% of contribution of each author						
	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6*	A7*
A. theoretical and conceptual foundations and problematization:	18%	18%	18%	16%	10%	10%	10%
B. data research and statistical analysis:	18%	18%	18%	16%	10%	10%	10%
C. elaboration of figures and tables:	18%	18%	18%	16%	10%	10%	10%
D. drafting, reviewing and writing of the text:	18%	18%	18%	16%	10%	10%	10%
E. selection of bibliographical references	18%	18%	18%	16%	10%	10%	10%
F. discussion of results and modelling	18%	18%	18%	16%	10%	10%	10%

*The inclusion of two additional authors was authorized under justification approved by the Editorial Board.

Indication of conflict of interest:

There is no conflict of interest

Source of funding

There is no source of funding

Acknowledgments

There is no acknowledgment