

The Revolution of Counseling for Early Childhood: Bibliometric Analysis of Scientific Publications

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Abstract

Early childhood development often experiences obstacles in achieving tasks and stages of development in terms of cognitive, behavioral, emotional, and social aspects. Therefore, early childhood counseling is the answer. However, the research that has existed so far does not seem to be varied. This study aims to see the trend of early childhood counseling research in the last four years (2020-2024) to determine the extent to which early childhood counseling science development has been carried out. Bibliometric analysis was chosen as a research method to obtain an overview of keyword networks, researchers, affiliations, countries to productivity, and research epicenters worldwide. The database used is scopus.com with the keyword "counseling for early childhood". The results found 89 articles from all types of publications. The United States is the most productive country, while the University of South Carolina is the institution that produces the most publications. In terms of authors, Mehta K and Richter L are the most productive authors, with two publications each. Keywords about early childhood problems such as trauma, social support, and anxiety are the most widely studied variables. Even so, the variation in counseling models is very low because there is little research on developing counseling models. Further researchers can take advantage of this opportunity to conduct scientific development in the field of counseling for early childhood so that the variation and sustainability of this field will be more substantial in the future.

Keywords: Counseling, Early Childhood, Scientific Publication, Bibliometric

Introduction

The history of early childhood counseling records essential developments in understanding and helping children deal with various emotional, behavioral, and developmental problems (Kinshell et al., 2021). Early childhood counseling is a field that focuses on providing special attention to children between the ages of 3 and 8 years. In the early 20th century, counseling for children was not yet a focus of attention in psychology. However, with increasing research highlighting the needs of children in their development, early childhood counseling began to receive greater attention (Jalongo&Guth, 2023). In the 1920s, Clara Davis, an American child psychologist, became one of the central figures in developing counseling methods for early childhood (Huang et al., 2020). She used a play and activity approach in counseling to help children in their self-expression. During this period, models of early childhood counseling also developed in other countries (Kulakci-Altintas, 2020). For example, in France, the counseling method in early childhood education was developed by psychologist Jean Piaget. He emphasized the importance of play in child development and used a play approach to help children understand their world. Piaget's method later became the basis for the development of counseling for early childhood in France (Prochaska, 2021).

Early developments in early childhood counseling can be traced to research and concepts from experts such as Jean Piaget and Erik Erikson. Piaget recognized the importance of the developmental stages experienced by children in understanding the world around them. On the other hand, Erikson emphasized the importance of healthy social interactions in forming children's identities. Then, in the 1960s, greater attention was paid to the role and relevance of counseling for children by involving parents and the family environment. The family counseling model began to be developed to help holistically solve problems experienced by early childhood children (Jentsch et al., 2023).

Over time, the role of counselors in early childhood education has become increasingly recognized and influential. In the 1960s, early childhood counseling began to be integrated into educational curricula in many countries. Academic programs also began to recognize the importance of emotional and social support for children's development. In the 1980s and 1990s, approaches to early childhood counseling became more diverse, with many different models and methods being implemented. These approaches included using stories, games, art, music, and play therapy in counseling (Howe et al., 2022). The goal was to provide positive experiences for children and help them cope with any emotional and developmental issues they may face (Kidd et al., 2024).

Over the next few decades, the emphasis on early childhood counseling has grown. Many counseling approaches and techniques have been developed to help children cope with their emotional, behavioral, and developmental problems. For example, the play approach in early childhood counseling allows children to express themselves and cope with difficulties through play activities (Li et al., 2024; Schmulian & Lind, 2020; Woodliff et al., 2024). Along with technology development and further research, early childhood counseling has become increasingly integrated into the education and childcare system. Schools and educational institutions now provide counseling services for young children as part of full attention to their holistic development. Since then, early childhood counseling has continued to develop and innovate according to the needs of children in the modern era. Parental involvement is also increasingly recognized as essential in early childhood counseling. Today, early childhood counseling is carried out in various contexts, including schools, families, and communities (Chen et al., 2023). The role of counselors in guiding and supporting young children is becoming increasingly important in creating a better future for them (Kelty & Wakabayashi, 2020).

The suitability of counseling for young children is an interesting topic to discuss in the context of education and child development. This article will examine several factors to determine whether young children are eligible for counseling services. It is essential to understand that young children have different developmental characteristics than children at older ages. Early childhood is still in a rapid developmental stage and is a sensitive period in forming their personality and social skills (Engelmann, 2022; McClain et al., 2020; Mohan et al., 2022). Therefore, counseling for young children must be adjusted to their developmental level using an appropriate approach for their age.

Counseling for young children also depends on the specific problems or needs the child faces. For example, is the child having difficulty adapting to school or has disruptive emotional or behavioral issues? If so, counseling can be the right solution to help children overcome their problems and support their healthy social and emotional development (Mwoma et al., 2020; Roman et al., 2022). In addition, the role of parents and educators is also critical in determining the appropriateness of counseling for early childhood. Collaboration between parents, educators, and counselors is vital in providing consistent and coherent support to children. Parents and educators must understand the importance of early childhood counseling and be willing to be involved in this counseling process (Evertz et al., 2020; Sethi et al., 2021). The availability of resources and counseling services in the educational environment also determines the appropriateness of counseling for early childhood. The presence of qualified and experienced counselors in working with early childhood and adequate facilities to conduct counseling sessions are essential factors to consider. Counseling for early childhood depends on several factors, such as the child's developmental level, the type of problems or needs faced, the role of parents and educators, and the availability of resources and counseling services (Norman, 2023; Rozanov, 2022). In ensuring the effectiveness of this counseling, it is crucial for the parties involved to work together to support the development and well-being of early childhood. The interest of researchers in investigating the topic of counseling for early childhood has sparked a high interest in this field among academics. This research is related to the application of counseling principles in early childhood, which aims to provide psychological and emotional assistance to early childhood to help them overcome the developmental challenges they currently face (Casey & Carter, 2023; Howell et al., 2021; Klenk, 2023; Norman, 2023). One of the reasons this research interests many researchers is because the early childhood period is considered a critical phase in the formation of personality, social, and cognitive development. Research has shown that

the experiences and interactions that children experience during this period have a long-term impact on their future growth. Therefore, appropriate counseling at an early age can help children cope with emotional, social, and developmental problems better.

This study is also of interest to researchers because the growing knowledge and understanding of neuroscience has provided new insights into how young children's brains work (Maree & Maree, 2021; Toof et al., 2020). Counselors can use this knowledge to develop counseling approaches that are effective and appropriate to early childhood brain development. By understanding how young children process information and learn, counselors can provide appropriate counseling strategies and techniques to help children overcome their various challenges (Nold et al., 2021). Counseling for young children also offers opportunities to help children develop social skills, such as communicating, resolving conflicts, and playing in groups. In an increasingly complex and globally connected society, good social skills are essential for children to interact with others effectively (Pandey et al., 2024). Therefore, this study explores the potential of counseling as an effective tool to help young children develop the social skills needed in their daily lives. To further explore this topic, researchers have used various research methods, including quantitative and qualitative research, and have involved the participation of parents, teachers, and counselors. Thus, this study also offers an opportunity for collaboration between academics, counseling practitioners, and families to improve understanding of the effectiveness of counseling for early childhood. This article will discuss the development of early childhood research and publications with bibliometric analysis to obtain a more systematic picture of the early childhood research revolution.

Method

The bibliometric analysis method is an approach used to review and analyze literature related to a topic through the use of bibliographic data. This method is used in research to identify trends, patterns, and developments in existing literature. This approach focuses on collecting and analyzing bibliographic data, such as the number of publications, citation frequency, and collaboration between authors or institutions (Aksnes, 2015; Kurniasih et al., 2020).

Bibliometric analysis methods usually begin with selecting databases such as journals, conferences, books, or scientific articles relevant to the research topic. Bibliographic data from these databases are then collected and analyzed using specific statistical tools and data processing techniques. One of the basic formulations in bibliometric analysis is using quantitative indicators to measure the scope, productivity, and impact of academic writing. Common indicators include the h-index, journal impact factor, and co-citation index. These indicators can provide information about the influence of writing, the popularity of authors, and scientific collaborations that occur in a field of research (Cui et al., 2018).

Bibliometric analysis can also involve data visualization techniques, such as graphs or scientific maps, to better clarify and communicate the analysis results (Viana, 2017). These visualizations can help identify patterns or relationships that may be difficult to understand through conventional statistical analysis. Bibliometric analysis methods have many uses in research, including summarizing the status quo of knowledge in a field, identifying emerging research trends, or measuring the impact of a paper. This method is also valuable for supporting scientific decision-making, such as determining research priorities or selecting journals for publication. Bibliometric analysis has its own limitations and risk areas. For example, this method only measures the impact of published papers and can be influenced by non-academic factors such as popularity or social aspects. In addition, bibliometric analysis can only consider literature indexed in the database used, so important information from non-indexed publications or unpublished research is not included in the analysis. This study analyzes the development of research and scientific publications in journals circulated in 2020-2024 (the last four years). The central database used is scopus.com with the keyword "counseling for early childhood". The previous four-year limit was chosen to find updates and new research results relevant to the development of the alpha generation, which is currently the primary research subject in early childhood counseling. The unique characteristics of the alpha generation are also essential reasons for choosing the range of published years studied. The biblioshiny application based on r studio was used to assist the analysis in obtaining research network

visualization. In addition, Microsoft Excel was also used as a data processing tool. The data presented will be in the form of visualization of research and publication conditions and analytical descriptions of the latest research data covering publication productivity, citations, keyword networks, and publication authorship.

Result and Discuss

Result

Number of Data

This study conducted data exploration on the Scopus database to search for publications of both research results and scientific ideas to obtain as much data as possible from the specified database. This study limited the search data to the last four years (2020-2024). The results can be explained in Table 1.

Table 1. Metadata with the keyword "counseling for early childhood."

Description	Results
Timespan	2020:2024
Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	79
Documents	89
Annual Growth Rate %	-21,03
Document Average Age	2,24
Average citations per doc	5,202
References	0
Document Contents	
Keywords Plus (ID)	479
Author's Keywords (DE)	452
Authors	
Authors	332
Authors of single-authored docs	18
Authors Collaboration	
Single-authored docs	18
Co-Authors per Doc	3,75
International co-authorships %	22,47
Document Types	
article	62
book	10
book chapter	5
editorial	1
letter	2
note	1
review	8

Based on Table 1, it is known that in the period 2020-2024, there were 89 publications on counseling for early childhood. Not all publications are in the form of research reports. In detail, there are 62 journal articles, 10 books, 5 book chapters, 1 editorial, 8 reviews, letters, and other editorial notes. This shows

that, in general, attention to the field of early childhood counseling is not yet massive. There are great opportunities and challenges for the academic and professional world to increase awareness and related research that allows early childhood counseling services to get a sufficient portion as the main theme of research so that in the future, variations in research results can be found that are sufficient to develop early childhood counseling services to be better.

Publication Productivity

After knowing the amount of data that can be involved in the research process, the next step is to analyze publication productivity personally by researchers, institutional affiliations, publication media, and the country of origin of the publication. In general, the analysis results regarding the most productive countries can be seen in Figure 1.

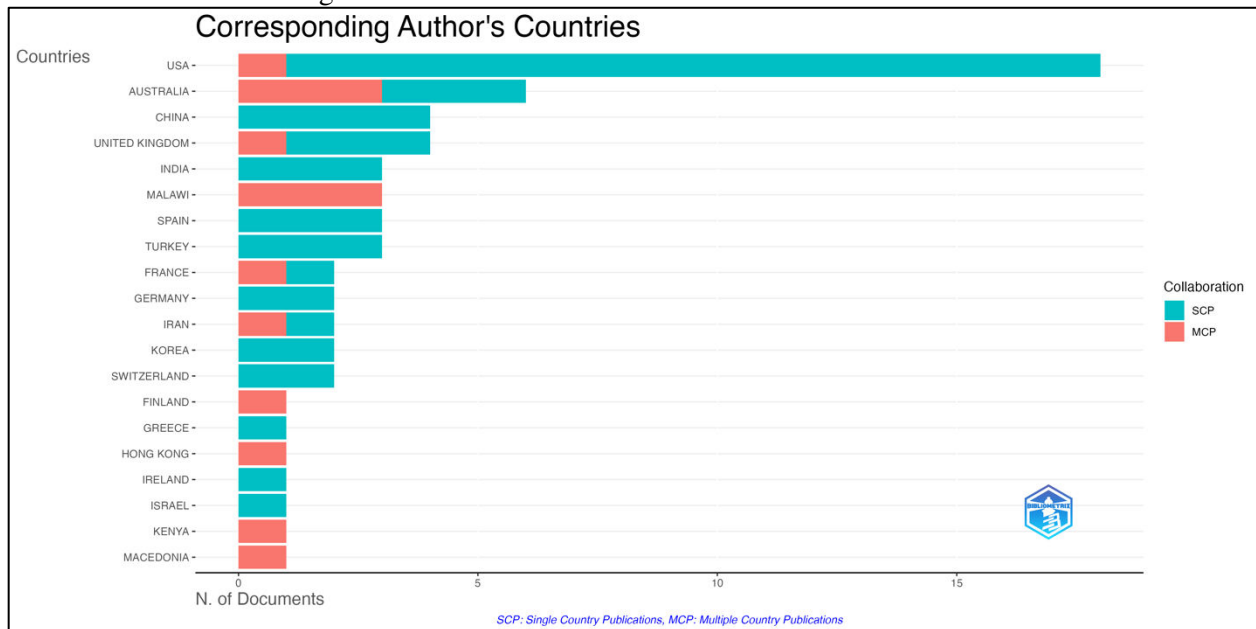


Figure 1. Most Productive Countries for Research on Counseling for Early Childhood

Figure 1 shows that the United States is the most productive country in producing publications on counseling for early childhood as a country with authors from the same country. Meanwhile, in cross-country research networks, authors from Australia and Malawi are the most productive countries in publications related to counseling for early childhood. When viewed from the institution, researcher productivity can be seen from Figure 2.

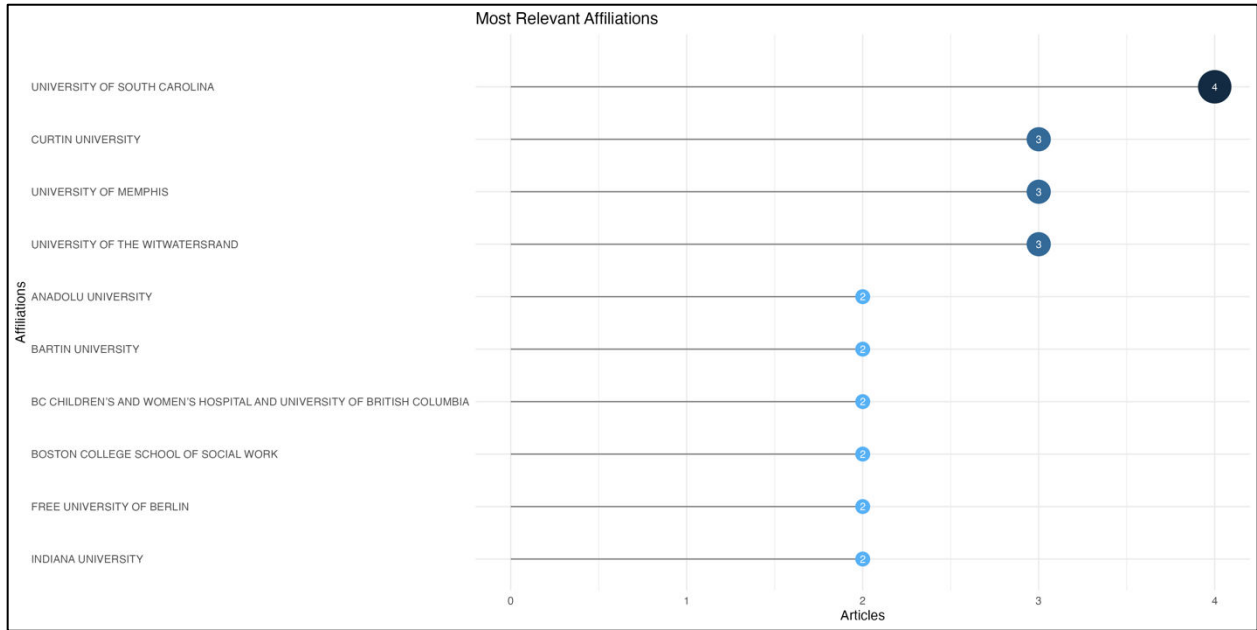


Figure 2. Most Productive Affiliations in Counseling for Early Childhood Research

Figure 2 shows that the University of South Carolina is the most productive institution in producing publications on counseling for early childhood, with 4 publications. Next, followed by Curtin University, the University of Memphis, and the University of The Witwatersrand with 3 publications each. Meanwhile, if viewed from the most productive publication media, the explanation is in Figure 3.

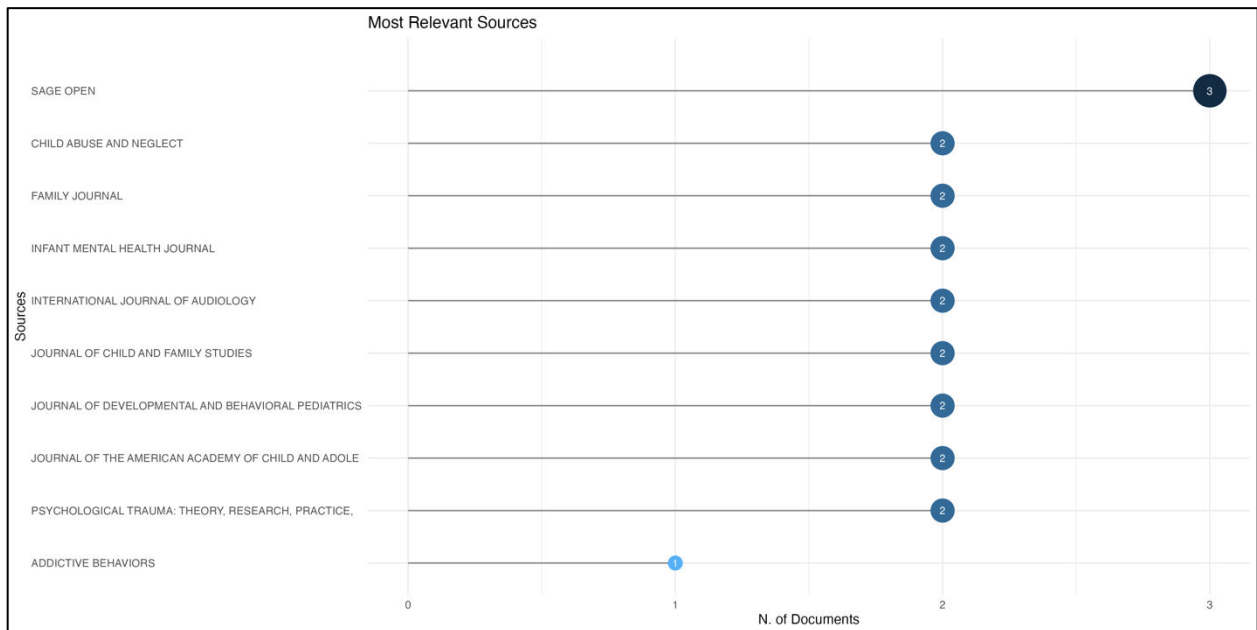


Figure 3. Most Relevant Source

Based on Figure 3, it is known that the SAGE Open Journal is the publication media that publishes the most articles on counseling for early childhood, with 3 published articles. Furthermore, the Child Abuse and Neglect Journal, Family Journal, Infant Mental Health Journal, and others (see the graph for more

details) each published 2 articles from researchers. Meanwhile, if viewed from the most productive author, the data can be seen in Figure 4.

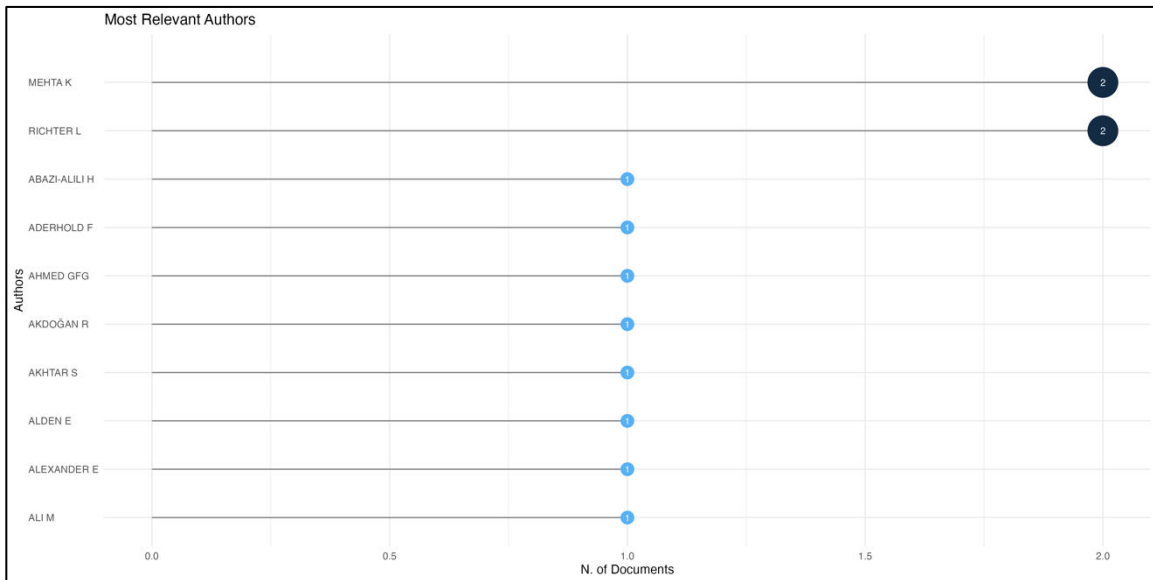


Figure 4. Most Relevant Author with counseling for early childhood Publication

Figure 4 shows that Mehta K and Richter L are the most productive researchers, each with two articles published in reputable journals. Other researchers only have one study on counseling for early childhood that has been published in a reputable journal. Based on these results, it can be concluded that not many researchers focus on or are interested in developing counseling services for early childhood. This is ironic because almost everyone believes that early childhood is the foundation for developing the nation's generation. So, it takes extraordinary treatment for all components if problems that require counseling services are found.

Keyword Network and Researchers

To see what substance concerns researchers, an analysis of keyword networks and variables was carried out that are of interest to researchers on variables or keywords related to counseling for early childhood. The results can be seen in Figure 5.

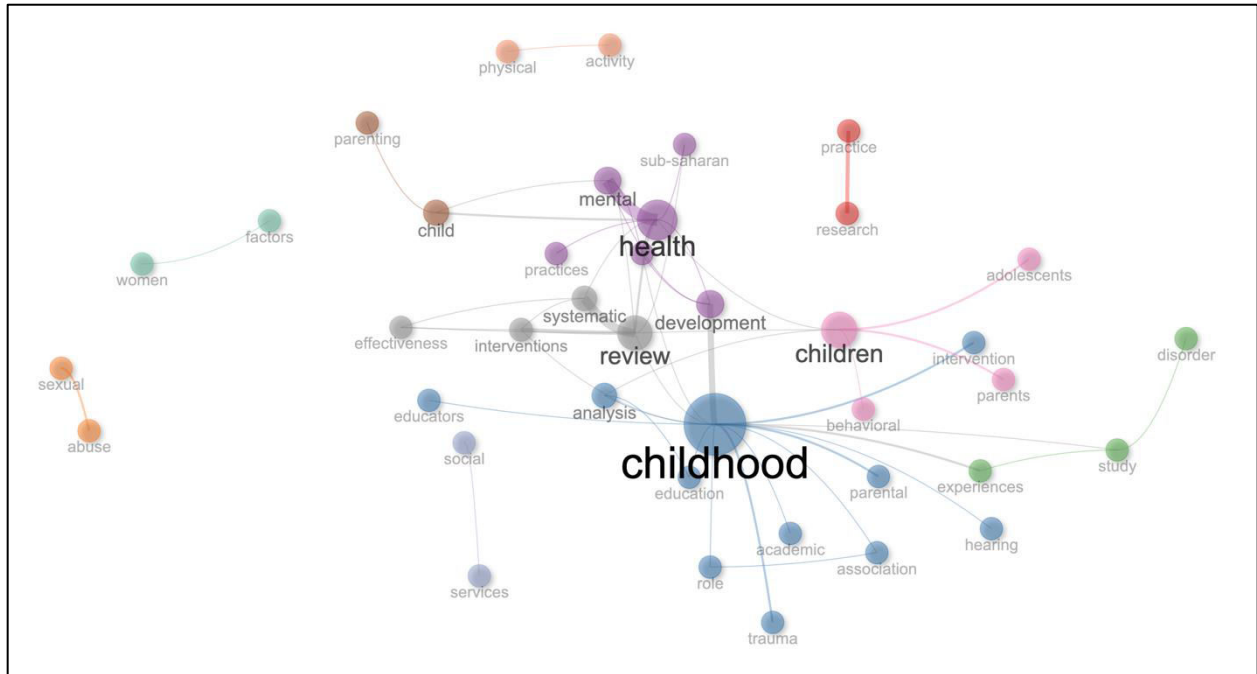


Figure 5. Keyword Network counseling for early childhood

Based on Figure 5, it is known that the diction childhood is central research that is associated with various things such as development, behavior, parenting, trauma, mental health, and early childhood education in general. This shows that many problems have been identified that are relevant to early childhood development problems. Even so, it turns out that there are not many studies on the handling that can be done on the issues in question. Furthermore, the thematic analysis of research variables can be seen in Figure 6.

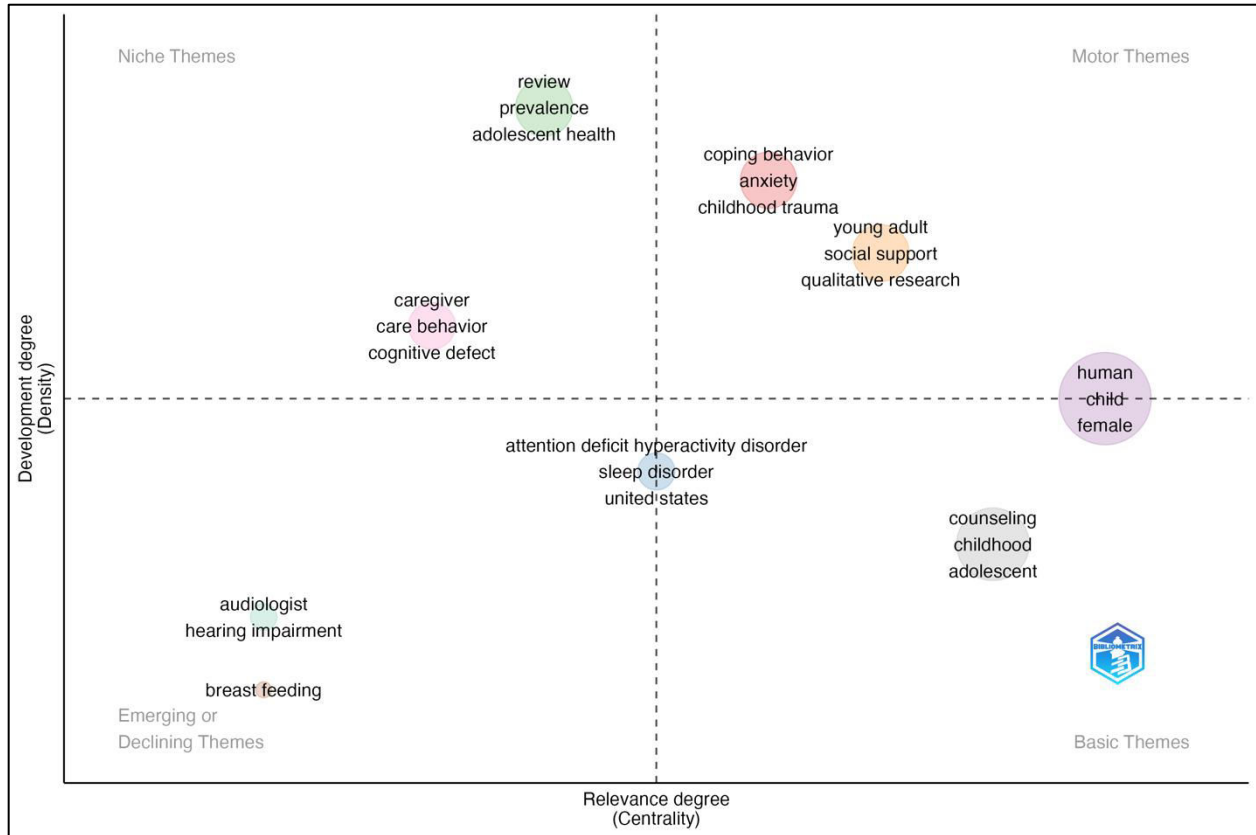


Figure 6. Thematic factor of Publication counseling for early childhood

Figure 6 shows that several research quadrants are groups of variable networks in the study. Quadrant one is about variable networks regarding caring behavior and cognitive barriers in children. The next quadrant contains problems of early childhood relationships with adults, social support, coping behavior, anxiety, and trauma in children. In another quadrant, the basic theme of counseling is separated by problems related to attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and sleep disorder, which are often the main problems in early childhood. This shows that the treatment variable does not yet have a strong and varied quadrant group in handling issues in early childhood. To see the researcher's network, see Figure 7.

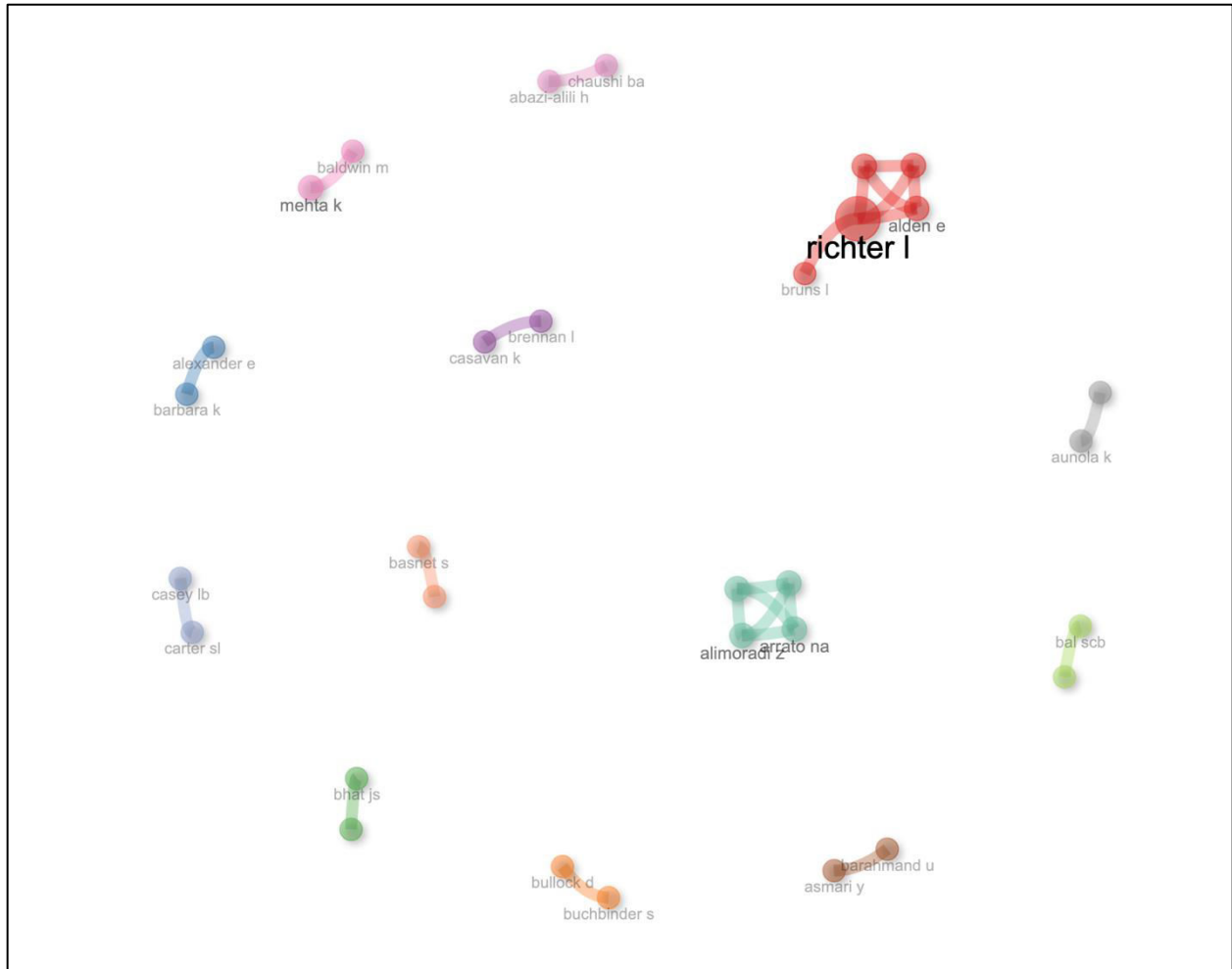


Figure 7. Author Network publication counseling for early childhood

Figure 7 shows that research on early childhood has been conducted in small groups that may be undertaken only by researchers in one country. However, research on cooperation between countries is still found to be a strength for the development of more comprehensive early childhood counseling. The network of researchers between countries can be seen in Figure 8.

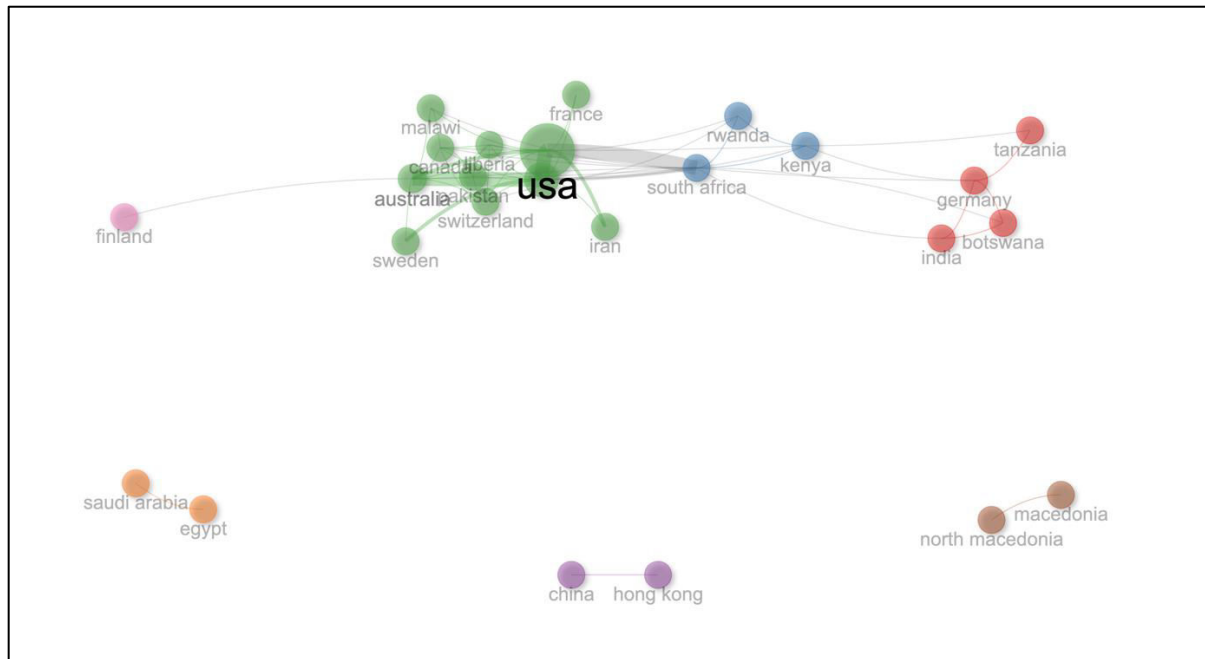


Figure 8. International Research Network on Counseling for Early Childhood

Figure 8 shows that the United States remains the central country of the inter-country research network on counseling for early childhood. Even so, there is a combination of continents, namely Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, in the study of counseling for early childhood. This finding is a hope for more comprehensive scientific findings regarding the science of counseling services for early childhood amidst the lack of publications in the last four years. Opportunities related to the development of the pandemic in children can also be an alternative theme that can be used as a focus of research-by-research networks worldwide and in Indonesia in general.

Discuss

Early childhood counseling approaches have become a focus of attention in various fields, including education, psychology, and health (Preissler, 2022). This is due to the growing understanding that early childhood has excellent potential for healthy personality formation and social development. Therefore, research on early childhood counseling is essential and urgent. One of the reasons why research on early childhood counseling is needed is because the early age phase is considered a critical period in child development. During this period, children are experiencing rapid growth and development in various aspects of their lives, including physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and psychosocial (Santrock, 2017). Multiple experiences and interactions during this period can have a long-term impact on children's development in terms of academic success, psychological well-being, and social abilities. Early childhood counseling aims to help children overcome challenges and difficulties that may arise during their development (Howe et al., 2022). Through a counseling approach based on principles and techniques appropriate to the child's developmental stage, counselors can provide appropriate support to help children develop social skills, self-control, empathy, and problem-solving (Frongillo et al., 2022; Galili, 2023). Research on the effectiveness of early childhood counseling approaches can provide scientific evidence to support the development and use of effective counseling methods for young children. In addition, research on early childhood counseling is also essential because it can help improve our understanding of the factors that influence child development and counseling interventions that can support their optimal development (Downey & Crummy, 2022; Kang, 2023). By understanding what counseling efforts are practical and what is not, we can improve and enrich the current early childhood counseling approach. In the Indonesian context, research on early childhood counseling is also essential in

dealing with the specific challenges and problems experienced by humans at certain stages of development (Utaminingsih et al., 2017). This study will provide valuable insights to develop and improve early childhood development and care in Indonesia (Zamroni, 2018). Through this study, we can better understand how appropriate counseling interventions can help early childhood children face their developmental challenges (Santoso & Zamroni, 2017). Thus, research in this area can improve early childhood quality of life and help them grow into healthy and happy individuals.

The development of needs in early childhood counseling is essential in understanding and meeting children's emotional, social, and psychological needs in the early stages of their life development (Abazi-Alili et al., 2021). Early childhood counseling is crucial in helping children overcome challenges and problems they face during their growth. Along with technology development and changes in family dynamics, the need for early childhood counseling has also changed. Several factors that influence the development of these needs are increasing awareness of parents and the community about the importance of children's mental health and the influence of the media and the surrounding environment (Huang et al., 2020).

One of the critical developments in early childhood counseling is the increasing demand for counseling that focuses on parent-child relationships (Kulakci-Altintas, 2020; Laukkanen et al., 2023; Schmulian & Lind, 2020). In this modern era, parents often have busy schedules and lack the time to spend with their children. This can cause conflict and tension in parent-child relationships (Baudino et al., 2023; Kulakci-Altintas, 2020). Therefore, early childhood counseling that focuses on understanding and improving this relationship is very much needed so children can grow and develop well in a healthy family environment. In addition, the increase in the need for early childhood counseling is also seen in efforts to overcome anxiety and stress experienced by children. The development process in early childhood is often accompanied by emotional challenges, such as fear of losing parents, fear and anxiety in new situations, and frustration when unable to understand and express their feelings (Hall, 2020). Therefore, the role of counselors in helping children develop social and emotional skills and cope with anxiety and stress becomes increasingly important.

Technological factors also influence the development of needs in early childhood counseling (Kulakci-Altintas, 2020). Today's children are exposed to more media and technology than previous generations. This significantly impacts their social, emotional, and psychological development (Laukkanen et al., 2023). Therefore, early childhood counseling must also pay attention to the needs that arise due to the influence of technology, such as healthy time management skills and responsible use of technology. Developing needs in early childhood counseling are continuously changing in response to social, technological, and family environmental developments (Abazi-Alili et al., 2021; Galili, 2023; Klenk, 2023). Early childhood counselors must identify and understand emerging needs to provide effective and relevant services to the children they assist. Good early childhood counseling will help children overcome problems and develop social, emotional, and psychological skills (Asmari et al., 2022; Brennan et al., 2022; Santoso & Zamroni, 2017).

Conclusions

Research conducted on early childhood counseling shows significant benefits in providing counseling services to this population. Future research is expected to focus on emotional support that can help early childhood children cope with stress and negative emotions experienced, such as anxiety, anger, or sadness. Next, early childhood social and communication development can improve children's social and communication skills. Recognizing and handling problems can also help children understand and overcome their issues. With the help of counselors, children can identify problems and learn strategies to overcome them to increase their self-confidence and independence. Research on family support through collaboration with parents and other family members shows that counselors can provide support and knowledge to families to support their children's development. Early childhood counseling research shows various benefits for children in coping with stress, developing social and communication skills, solving problems, improving behavior, and providing family support. Therefore, it is essential for related

parties, such as counselors, educators, and parents, to understand and implement appropriate counseling practices to support early childhood development. In subsequent research both in the world and in Indonesia, it is also possible to raise the impact of the pandemic on the development of early childhood, as well as the characteristics of the alpha generation born during the pandemic and alternative ways to handle it.

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