

POLICY AND DISTANCE HIGHER EDUCATION: RESEARCH TRENDS FROM 1977 TO 2022

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Abstract

Distance higher education has proven to be a solution during a pandemic and has become an educational trend at all levels of education and has become an opportunity as an educational strategy in the future so that policies that regulate the implementation of distance higher education are needed. However, from the many publications, there are still few researchers who discuss research trends that raise policy research trends and distance higher education. This study uses data from the Scopus indexed journal with a total of 339 articles in English which are processed in excel and the VOSViewer 1.6.18 application.

The research results show that publications in the Scopus journal on policy and distance higher education are still few from 1977 to its peak in 2021 as many as 49 publications, then the policy keyword only appears 9 times compared to the keywords higher education and distance or e learning so that this becomes a good opportunity for researchers to examine more deeply about policies around higher and distance education.

Keywords: Policy, Distance, Higher Education, Trend Research

1 INTRODUCTION

Distance higher education is an important solution for education during the Covid-19 pandemic engulfing the world (Gomez, 2022; Imtiaz, Khan, & Hossain, 2022). Discourse higher education that has been started from the early 19th century moves forward frequently with technology advancements and the internet network changing society's paradigm about education (Keegan, 2005, p. 1) In the future, the potential of distance education to be an option must be combined with policies that regulate the implementation of their implementation in a country. Some research on distance education has been done by many researchers from various countries as Darmayanti, Setiani, Oetojo (2007) which discusses e learning in distance education, Then Vaz, Peres, Souse Dan Reis (2020) that discussed about implementation of e learning with full proposal model for small universities.

The role of distance higher education which is quite significant in various countries is regulated through policies such as education laws such as in Indonesia which is regulated in the Higher Education Law number 12 of 2012 which is contained in article 31 concerning Distance Education (PJJ). Policies are also needed in the process of implementing and evaluating a program from the government, including in regulating distance education policies so that policies are closely related to the field of education, including distance education. This close relationship is interesting to study more deeply, especially in the publications that have been published by Scopus indexed journals from 1977 to 2023 which publish articles in English. Although it has been published in

large numbers, no one has discussed the development of issues related to policy and distance education, so this paper will explore research trends from around the world in the form of a literature review.

2 METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted using data from articles published by international journals indexed by Scopus, the data was retrieved on November 7, 2022 with 3 keywords used, namely policy, distance and higher education. (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("policy") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Distance") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Higher education")). Scopus publication data on distance higher education policy amounted to 602 documents which were then selected to be 339 articles. The data after being collected were analysed via excel and used the VOSViewer 1.6.18 application and then discussed based on the number of publications each year, the trend of keywords that are often used by researchers, the contributions of researchers, affiliations and countries and the most cited articles. The steps for data collection are described as follows:

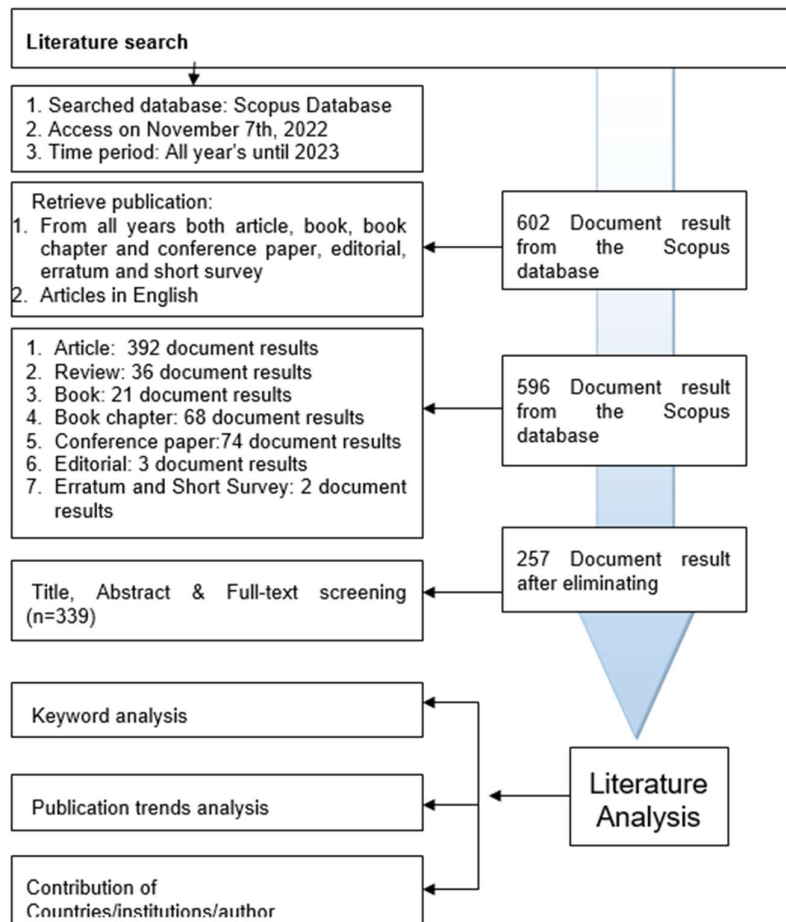


Figure 1. Research Procedure

3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After the publication data on policy and distance higher education were downloaded, then the researchers carried out an analysis starting from the development of publications, keywords that often appeared, researchers, country of origin and institutions from the publication of 339 English-language articles published in Scopus indexed journals which are presented as follows :

3.1 Research Development Every Year

Publications on policy and distance higher education began in 1977 and continued for several years until now in 2022. However, the number of publications from 1977 to 1988 was still small and continued to increase from 2004 to 2020. The most publications were published in 2021, there are 49 articles published to date.

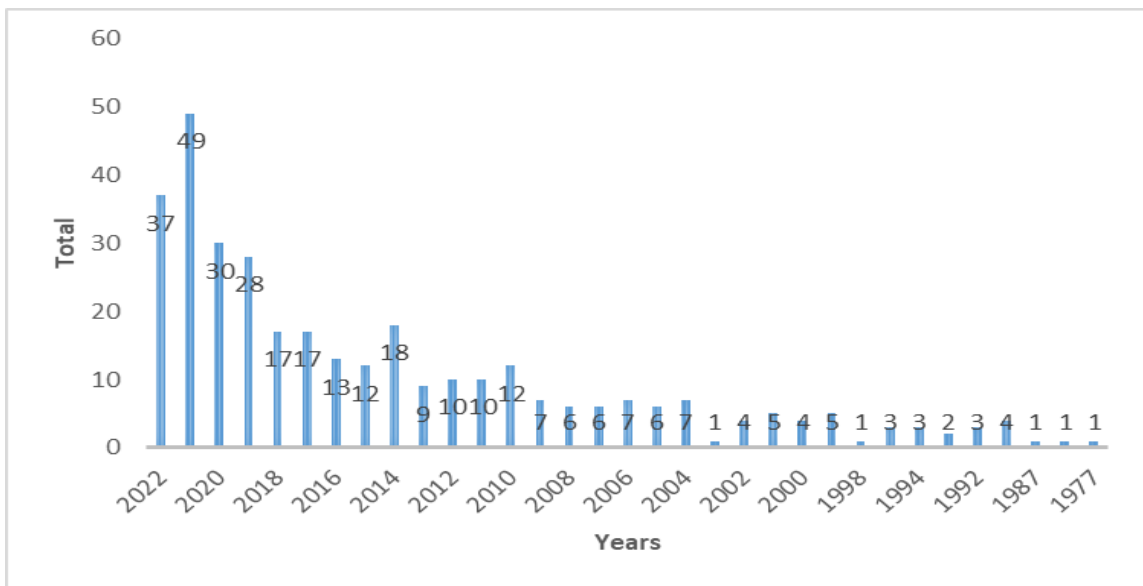


Figure 1. Publication of Policy and Distance Higher Education from 1977-2022

3.2 Frequently Appearing Keywords

Researchers who raise the theme of policy and distance higher education use many keywords in their publications. The data shows that publications on policy and distance higher education are dominated by the keyword Higher education as much as $n = 117$ with the largest green nude symbol. The keywords that appear to dominate are distance education with $n=65$, e-learning and distance learning with $n=40$, education keywords with $n=36$ and human as many as $n=34$. However, from the picture below, it turns out that the word policy does not appear to dominate, it is proven that the word policy only appears $n = 9$ times. This is an opportunity for researchers to examine more policy linkages with distance higher education.

In addition, since the first publication in 1977, keywords that often appear are indicated by blue/navy nodes with keywords such as access and equity, open learning, flexibility, education program, curriculum, community health nursing, and technological innovation. However, issues and keywords are increasingly shifting, such as regarding Covid-19, pandemics, digital transformation and blended learning.

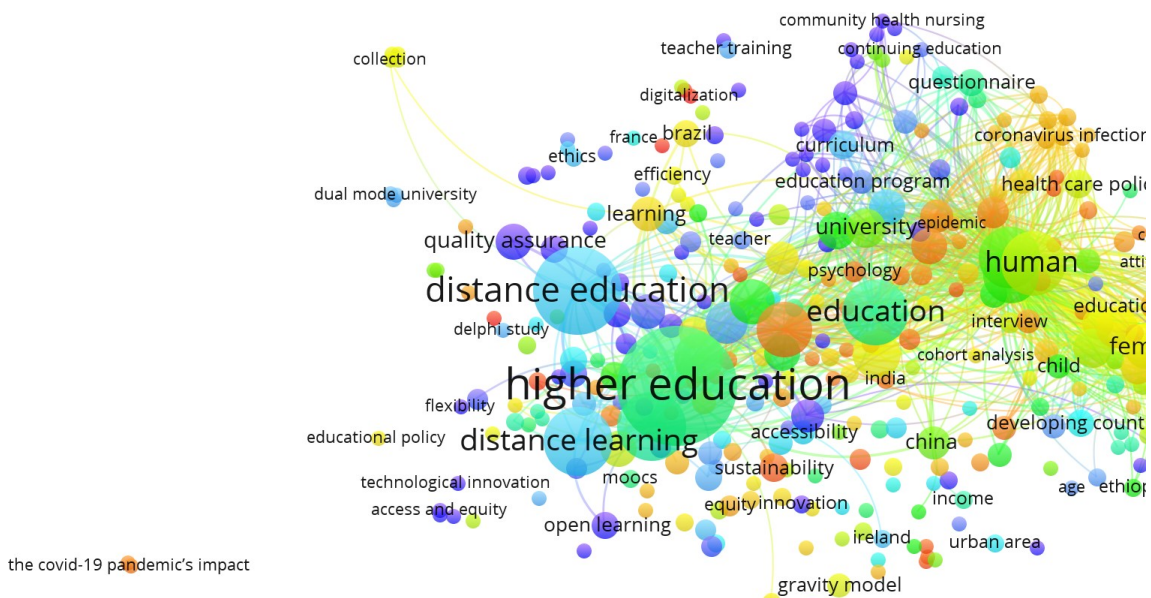


Figure 2. Keywords that often appear

3.3 Country of origin of the author of policy research and distance higher education

Several countries of origin for researchers on policy and distance higher education emerged from developed countries such as from America as many as $n = 53$, followed by writers from England as many as $n = 52$, then Australia as many as $n = 35$, China as many as $n = 19$, South Africa as many as $n=18$. Writers from countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Japan still discuss a little about policy and distance higher education. This is a note that the issue of distance education and policy has been studied longer by countries such as America and Britain. This can be seen from the image below

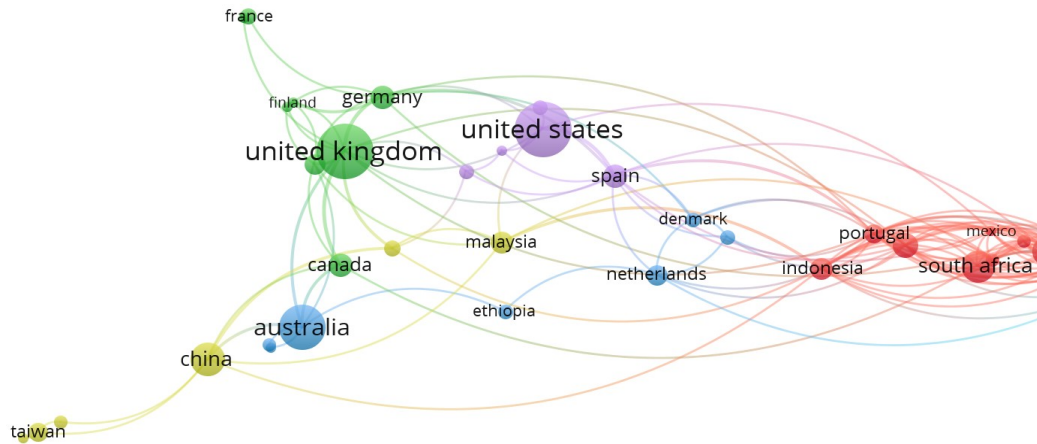


Figure 3. Researcher's Country of Origin

3.4 Authors who publish a lot of articles

The author who publishes a lot on policy and distance education themes is Capano with $n=4$, followed by Vidovich and Cullinan with $n=3$, and followed by Marginson and Brown with 2 publications. The authors have collaborated with each other to produce quality research, as shown in the image below:

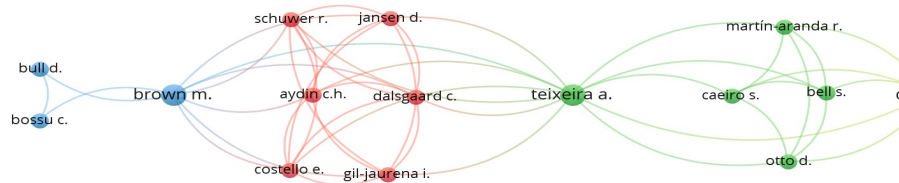


Figure 4. Policy Writers and Distance Higher Education

3.5 Institution of Origin Policy Writer and Distance Higher Education

Authors who publish many articles on policy and distance higher education come from agencies and collaborate with each other the most from the United States, there are still few who collaborate on co-writing from developing countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia. The author's origin institution is:

- a. Baruch college, the City University of New York, New York, United States,
- b. Business management department, Brigham Young University–Hawaii, United States
- c. Department of applied business studies in the Robbins college of business and entrepreneurship, Fort Hays State University, United States
- d. Department of English studies, Universitat Jaume I, Spain
- e. Dyson school of applied economics and management, Cornell University, Ithaca, United States
- f. English department, University of Dayton, Dayton, United States

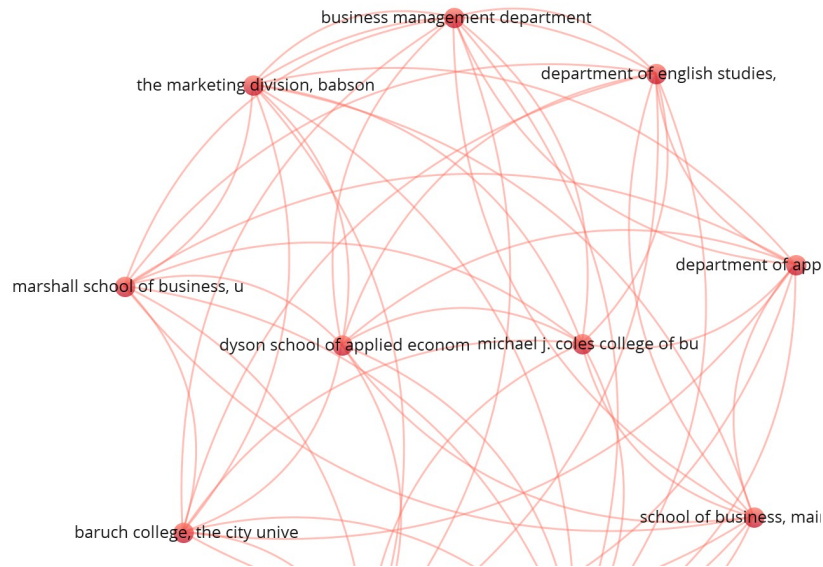


Figure 5, Author's Institution of Origin

4 CONCLUSION

Publication on distance higher education policy is still very likely to be an important theme and issue for researchers in the future, this can be seen from the lack of publications on distance higher education policy. Although the issue of distance higher education policy has been raised for 45 years, the authors and countries that dominate publications are mostly from developed countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom compared to developing countries. The potential issues raised related to distance higher education policies are currently still around pandemics, blended learning and the transformation of higher education. This shows that distance education has the opportunity to become a promising educational strategy and model in the future.

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