

Most Influential Author in Indonesian Social Work Practice Research

Sari Dewi Poerwanti¹, Kusuma Wulandari¹, Franciscus Adi Prasetyo¹

¹University of Jember, Indonesia

e-mail: saridewi.fisip@unej.ac.id

Abstract

The ratification of Law number 14 of 2019 concerning Social Workers is proof of a major step in the historical development of social work practices in Indonesia. Along with the complexity of the social issues faced, a deep understanding of the development of social work practice research is very important. However, since the practice of social work grew from 1945 until five years after the passage of the law related to the profession of social work, there has not been a roadmap for conference research in the field of social work practice in Indonesia. This study seeks to analyze the development of research in the field of social work practice in Indonesia in the last ten years and analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the field of social work practice in Indonesia. It is hoped that the results of this study will be able to provide an overview of the dynamics of the research, so it is very important as a consideration for policy input in the development of social work/social welfare science curriculum, designing intervention programs, and identifying strengths and knowledge gaps so that social workers in Indonesia have competitiveness in the international arena. Several concepts will be used in this study, including the concept of social work practice and the concept of social welfare. The bibliometric method approach will be used in this study, by analyzing the numerical trend of the number of publications in the last 10 years, the quantitative distribution of publication years, the characteristics of authors, and the relevance of subtopics. The search for research articles will use Herzing's Publish or Perish and Google Scholar applications as data retrieval databases, then analyzed in depth including research productivity, regional distribution, the most influential researchers, mapping research themes, as well as analysis of research strengths and weaknesses in the field and visualized using VOSViewer and several other applications.

Keywords: *social work practices; bibliometric; social workers; research publications*

INTRODUCTION

The social work profession in Indonesia has not gained the same level of recognition as other professions within the social sector. Social workers have long struggled to establish a clear professional identity [1]. A key challenge is the general public's misconception of social work as a voluntary or informal form of assistance, rather than recognizing it as a specialized profession with defined competencies. In many developed countries, social work is formally acknowledged as a profession with established educational criteria, ethical guidelines, and licensing systems. In contrast, the presence of social workers within formal institutional structures in Indonesia remains limited, and individuals in the social sector often claim the title of social worker without formal qualifications in the field. This underscores the urgent need for enhanced regulation and the creation of institutions that can provide a formal and systematic framework for the profession.

Social work education in Indonesia faces numerous obstacles that affect the quality of graduates and the alignment of educational programs with societal needs. Among these challenges are curricula that do not fully reflect the local context, insufficient infrastructure for field-based

learning, and a shortage of relevant literature and research in Indonesian that aligns with the socio-cultural realities of the country. Furthermore, a lack of qualified educators and a shortage of graduates from social work education programs exacerbate these problems. The curriculum in many educational institutions fails to adequately address the diverse and multicultural needs of society, or to prepare students for the rapidly evolving social challenges [2], [3]. There is an urgent need to revise the curriculum so that it can be more responsive to societal changes and equip graduates with global competencies while maintaining sensitivity to local Indonesian contexts.

Moreover, the infrastructure supporting social work education—such as practice centers, social work laboratories, and collaborations with social service institutions—remains underdeveloped. Field practice is a critical component of social work education, as it provides students with the opportunity to acquire practical, hands-on skills. The lack of such infrastructure impedes the overall quality of education and leaves graduates less prepared for the challenges of the workforce. Additionally, much of the literature used in Indonesian social work education is derived from international sources that may not fully resonate with the specific social conditions in Indonesia. As such, there is a clear need to foster more research and academic publications that are rooted in the local context.

Despite these hurdles, some significant strides have been made in the development of the social worker profession, particularly with the passage of Law No. 11 of 2009 on Social Welfare and Law No. 14 of 2019 on Social Workers. These laws represent a crucial milestone in the professionalization of social work in Indonesia. The enactment of these laws signals governmental acknowledgment of social work as a key profession in social development. For example, Law No. 14 of 2019 establishes guidelines for the competencies, certification, and ethical standards of social workers, all of which aim to improve professionalism and the quality of social work services.

Nonetheless, even with supportive legislation, there are still issues related to the implementation and oversight of these policies. For instance, the certification of social workers as outlined by the law has not been fully realized. A significant number of social workers still do not possess certification, making it difficult to ensure they meet the competency standards set forth. Additionally, there is a need for greater supervision of social service institutions that employ social workers to ensure that services provided are aligned with professional standards.

As social issues in Indonesia grow more complex, the need for robust research in social work practice becomes even more pressing. Structured, evidence-based research is crucial for developing effective interventions that are appropriate for local contexts. Unfortunately, since the inception of social work practice in Indonesia in 1945 and the introduction of regulations related to this profession, there has been no clear research roadmap in the field of social work practice. The lack of such a roadmap has led to gaps in knowledge development and evidence-based interventions, hindering the progress of the social work profession in Indonesia compared to other countries.

This research, therefore, aims to assess the trends and developments in social work practice research over the past decade and to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of this body of work. It is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the research landscape in social work, including common themes, prevalent research topics, and the impact of research on the development of the social work profession in Indonesia. Additionally, the findings are anticipated to offer strategic recommendations for policymakers to improve social welfare curricula, design more targeted interventions, and identify gaps in existing knowledge.

Strengthening research in social work is also essential to enhancing the global competitiveness of the profession. In today's globalized world, social workers must be adaptable to rapidly changing social conditions. Therefore, alongside research enhancement, efforts must also focus on building collaborative networks with international educational and social institutions. Such partnerships can offer Indonesian social workers opportunities to learn from global best practices, while also promoting locally adapted approaches unique to Indonesia.

Overall, despite the challenges faced by the social work profession in Indonesia, there are

ample opportunities to advance the profession through improved education, more effective regulation, and more focused research. With the right strategic initiatives, the social work profession in Indonesia can expand more rapidly and contribute significantly to improving the social welfare of the population. The outcomes of this research are expected to serve as a foundational step in establishing a research agenda for social work practice and encouraging the growth of the social worker profession in Indonesia, so that it is more recognized, respected, and valued both nationally and internationally.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), social work is a profession focused on driving social change, addressing issues in human interaction, and empowering and liberating communities to enhance their well-being. States that social work uses theories of human behavior and social systems to guide interventions in areas where individuals interact with their environment. The core principles of social work include human rights and social justice [4].

As the profession has evolved, IFSW recognizes social work as crucial in responding to dynamic global changes [5]. Its goals are to promote social change based on human rights, social justice, collective responsibility, and respect for diversity [6]. Emphasize that professional idealism, along with a commitment to applying evidence-based knowledge to address social issues, strengthens the international position of social work.

Social work's motto, "help the community to help themselves," reflects the direct interaction social workers have with clients, who may include individuals, groups, or communities. Highlight that social work aims to assist individuals and groups in overcoming challenges through interpersonal techniques. This broadens the scope of service recipients in social work, which spans individuals, families, groups, and communities [2].

The practice of social work has long been a subject of discussion among practitioners, making it important to study its history to establish its professional status. Over time, the demand for social work has increased, and discussions around the field remain relevant. Some view social work as a science, while others regard it as an art or a combination of both. Social work is a practice-based discipline and profession, supported by theories from social work science, social science, and other related fields. This reinforces the idea that social work, as an applied social science, must be practiced to be recognized as a profession [7].

The main mandate of social workers is to provide social services both to individuals, families, groups, and communities who need them in accordance with the values, knowledge and professional skills of social work. The main focus of social work is to improve social *functioning* through purposeful or meaningful interventions. Social functioning is an important conception of social work. The objectives of social work practice, according to the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) [7], are as follows:

1. Connecting individuals to systems that provide resources and open opportunities for them.
2. Strengthening individuals' abilities to solve problems, cope with difficult situations, and grow.
3. Formulating and refining social policies.
4. Enhancing human well-being and reducing inequalities, poverty, and various forms of social injustice.
5. Improving the effectiveness and ensuring the humane functioning of systems that provide resources and services.
6. Adapting and implementing practices within diverse cultural contexts.
7. Developing and utilizing research, knowledge, and skills to strengthen social work practice.
8. Advocating for policies, services, and resources through social and political action to achieve social and economic justice.

Social work is a professional activity aimed at helping individuals, groups, and communities enhance or improve their ability to function socially, while also fostering conditions that enable them to achieve their goals [8]. According to Law Number 14 of 2019, a social worker is someone with the knowledge, skills, and values required for social work practice, and who holds a certificate of competence. Unlike many other professions that are confined to specific spaces, social workers have the flexibility to work and practice in a wide range of settings depending on the tasks they are handling. Some of the key practice areas within social work include generalist, corrective, medical, industrial, clinical, community, school, elderly, child and family, mental health, disaster relief, and many more. Given the broad scope of the field, there is an increasing need for research into new methods and the dynamics of client management.

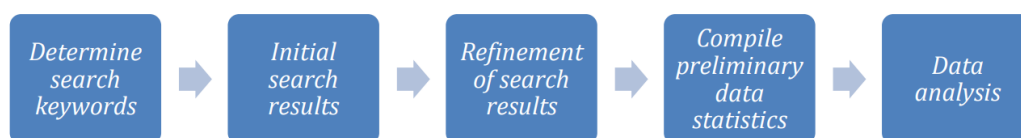
METHOD

The type of research is quantitative descriptive with a bibliometric analysis. Bibliometric analysis is known as a literature study to analyze journals or articles based on mathematical and statistical methods. [9] "*The bibliometric method involves using statistical techniques to measure literature, which includes the use of quantitative analysis*". This statement means that the bibliometric method involves the use of statistical techniques to measure the literature, so bibliometrics are included in the type of quantitative research. bibliometrics refers to a set of quantitative techniques used to evaluate, monitor, and study scientific literature in print format [10]. Therefore, it can be concluded that bibliometrics are a number of quantitative methods applied with the aim of measuring, tracking and analyzing printed scientific literature. Bibliometric analysis, which is part of the research evaluation methodology, is also known as "scientometrics". By referring to various literature that has been published, bibliometric analysis can be carried out with its own approach [11]. This research focuses on articles that have criteria that are related to social work practices in Indonesia.

The data source used in this study is the results of research in the form of scientific articles published in the period from 2014 to 2024 online indexed by Google Scholar. The consideration of using Google Scholar as a database because it is currently the largest database and Publish or Perish was chosen because it has proven to be the most effective way to search for articles in GS [12]. Publish or Perish is a software that utilizes publications from several databases such as Google Scholar to access data and obtain information about citations which are then converted into a number of statistics. To get a database through Publish or Perish, researchers need keywords. Keywords are phrases or words that stand out in a text and can be used as a search criterion to find all information that contains these keywords [13]. On the other hand, explains keywords as terms used to characterize the content of documents and play an important role in document searches. The keyword used in this study is "social worker OR social work"

This research method adopts five stages [15],[16] as in Chart 1.

Chart 1. Research Flow



1. Selection of Search Keywords: A literature search was conducted in March 2024 using the terms 'social work' and 'social worker', utilizing the Publish or Perish tool.
2. Search Parameters: The search was confined to journal articles, applying a filter for 'title word' and selecting publications from 2014 to 2024. The resulting articles were

- then compiled into a Research Information System (RIS) file, capturing key details such as article title, author names and affiliations, abstract, keywords, and references.
3. Refining Search Outcomes: Articles indexed in Google Scholar were filtered, with necessary adjustments made. The file was subsequently saved in RIS format and imported into Mendeley for bibliographic management. This RIS file was then used for further analysis.
 4. Initial Data Compilation: The collected data was organized in RIS format. The components of each journal article were reviewed thoroughly in the first phase, and any missing information was added. The data was analyzed and categorized by publication year, source, and publisher.
 5. Data Analysis: Bibliometric analysis was performed using PoP software [12],[17]. osviewer software was used for the visualization and analysis of the bibliometric networks. Vosviewer was chosen due to its effectiveness in managing large datasets and its ability to produce detailed visualizations and insights. It also facilitates the mapping of publications, authors, or journals based on citation networks or the creation of keyword maps from these networks.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Using VOSviewer software, the metadata results from the POP software can be calculated by researchers who are most active in producing publications related to social service practices in Indonesia. Table 1 shows the results of VOSviewer analysis using the full counting method with the criteria of a maximum of 25 researchers in one publication and a minimum of 5 publications in each researcher to produce the ten most productive researchers related to social work practices

Table 1. Most Productive Researchers

No	Name	Number of publications	Affiliate
1	Santoso Tri Raharjo	30	Padjadjaran University
2	Nurliana Cipta Apsari	26	Padjadjaran University
3	Soni Akhmad Nulhaqim	26	Padjadjaran University
4	Rudi Saprudin Darwis	24	Padjadjaran University
5	R. Nunung Nurwati	23	Padjadjaran University
6	Meilanny Budiarti Santoso	21	Padjadjaran University
7	Maulana Irfan	15	Padjadjaran University
8	Fajar Utama Ritonga	15	Universitas Sumatera Utara
9	Nandang Mulyana	14	Padjadjaran University
10	Muhammad Fedryansyah	13	Padjadjaran University

Table 1 displays the results of bibliometric analysis using VOSviewer software on metadata data obtained from POP software. This analysis was carried out using a full calculation method using a maximum of 25 researchers in one publication and a minimum of five publications per researcher. Based on these criteria, ten of the most productive researchers were produced in research related to social work practices in Indonesia.

The results of the analysis show that Santoso Tri Raharjo from Padjadjaran University ranks first with 30 publications, making him the most prolific researcher in this field. In addition, five other researchers from Padjadjaran University also occupy the top positions, namely Nurliana

Cipta Apsari and Sony Akhmad Nullhakim with 26 publications each, followed by Rudi Saprudin Darwis with 24 publications, and R. Nunung Nurwati and Meilanny Budiarti Santoso who have 23 and 21 publications, respectively. The existence of these names shows that Padjadjaran University has a dominant contribution in research related to social work practices in Indonesia.

Although most of the researchers are from Padjadjaran University, there is one researcher from the University of North Sumatra, namely Fajar Utama Ritonga, who is also included in the list with 15 publications. This shows the contribution of other universities outside Java in the development of research related to social work practices. Other researchers such as Mulyana Siap and Muhammad Fedryansyah, who have 14 and 13 publications, respectively, complete the list of the ten most prolific researchers based on the results of the VOSviewer analysis.

Overall, these results provide a clear picture of researchers who are actively publishing scientific papers in the field of social work practice in Indonesia. The dominance of researchers from Padjadjaran University also indicates that this institution has a strong program or research center in this field, so that it is able to encourage the research productivity of its lecturers. This analysis can be used as a reference to strengthen the network of collaboration between researchers across institutions in an effort to increase the quantity and quality of research related to social work practices in the future.

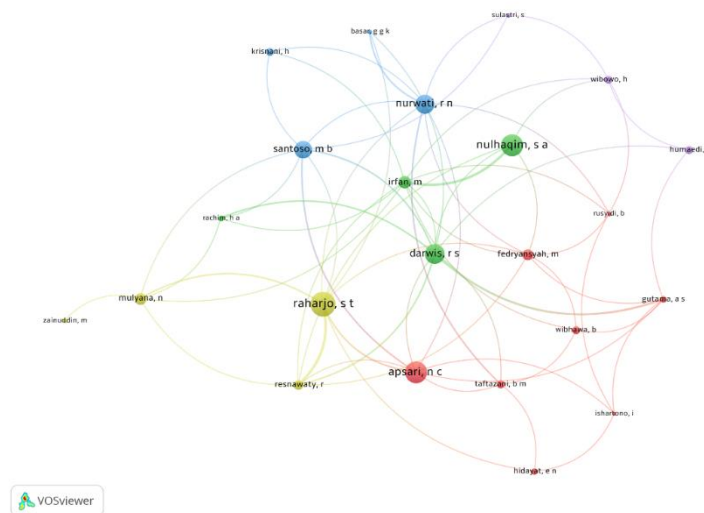


Figure 1. Influential research clusters

Based on Figure 1 above, VOSviewer's analysis shows that there are five large clusters of authors who are the most influential publications on the theme of social work practices in Indonesia. These clusters are differentiated based on color which represents a group of collaborations between researchers. The main authors in each cluster are as follows: Nurliana Cipta Apsari leads cluster 1 which is marked in red, Rudi Saprudin Darwis is in cluster 2 in green, R. Nunung Nurwati is in cluster 3 in blue, Santoso Tri Raharjo occupies cluster 4 in yellow, and Hery Wibowo leads cluster 5 in purple.

This cluster shows a pattern of collaborative relationships between researchers in social work practice. Each cluster reflects a network of writers who are interconnected through joint works, both within the same institution and between universities. For example, the cluster led by Nurliana Cipta Apsari and Santoso Tri Raharjo, both from Padjadjaran University, shows the high intensity of internal collaboration at the university. Meanwhile, clusters involving researchers such as Hery Wibowo show cross-institutional collaboration that also enriches research networks in this field.

With the existence of these five large clusters, it can be identified the main research focus and the potential for cross-cluster collaboration that has not yet been established. More integrated research between these clusters has the potential to increase the academic influence and scope of research in social work practice, both at the national and international levels. In addition, this analysis provides insight into how author groupings and relationships between researchers play a role in building a more solid scientific community.

CONCLUSION

This research focuses on identifying author clusters that have a great influence on the development of social work practices. Based on the data obtained, it was found that there are five clusters of authors, each of which plays an important role in this field. These clusters are not only formed based on geographical areas or themes, but are also influenced by diverse methodological approaches and focuses taken by each author. This shows the complexity and intellectual property in the study of social work in Indonesia. The authors who are members of these clusters make significant contributions in developing theories and practices related to social work.

Furthermore, the ten authors identified in this study are the main figures who have had a great impact on research development and policy in the field of social work. Santoso Tri Raharjo, Nurliana Cipta Apsari, and Soni Akhmad Nulhaqim are some of the authors who are active in developing social intervention models based on community empowerment. Rudi Saprudin Darwis and R. Nunung Nurwati focused on the analysis of relationship between education and social work, with findings that encourage policy changes that are more inclusive and in favor of communities in need. Meilanny Budiarti Santoso, Maulana Irfan, Fajar Utama Ritonga, Nandang Mulyana, and Muhammad Fedryansyah also made valuable contributions to the study of human rights, public policy, and social work ethics, which further enriched perspective in the management of social practices.

Although this research is still in the completion stage, the provisional results show that the contribution of these authors is very crucial in shaping the theoretical and policy foundations in social work practice in Indonesia. The next research process will further explore the influence of each author and this cluster in directing more positive social change. This research is expected to provide a clearer picture of the relationship between theory and practice, as well as provide guidance for the implementation of more effective social policies based on the results of research that has been developed by experts in this field.

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