

Mapping Productivity in Public Administration: Trends, Structures, and Emerging Themes from a Bibliometric Perspective

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the development, structure, and trends of the scientific literature on the concept of “productivity” in public administration. Within this scope, publications indexed in the Web of Science (WoS) database were analyzed using bibliometric analysis methods.

The dataset of the study consists of 1,378 scientific publications obtained from the Web of Science database using the keywords “Public Administration” and “Productivity.” The data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel and VOSviewer software. The analysis includes the distribution of publications by years, document types, authors, institutions, countries, and keywords, as well as co-authorship and citation network analyses.

The findings indicate that academic interest in productivity in public administration has significantly increased, particularly after the 2000s, and has shown a notable concentration after 2010. The literature is primarily structured around concepts such as performance management, performance measurement, efficiency, and organizational performance. In addition, recent studies show that themes such as sustainability, digital transformation, and innovation have become increasingly prominent.

Overall, the results reveal that productivity research in public administration has evolved from a narrow, output-oriented perspective toward a broader, multidimensional, and interdisciplinary structure.

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1. Introduction

The concept of productivity in public administration has become an increasingly important topic in recent years, attracting growing attention in both academic studies and practical applications. While traditional public administration approaches primarily focused on the provision of public services, concepts such as cost, performance, and productivity remained in the background. However, especially after the Second World War, the increasing burden of welfare state practices on public administration and the transformation in management approaches since the 1970s paved the way for the development of a performance- and productivity-oriented management understanding with the influence of the New Public Management approach in the 1980s.

As a result of globalization, productivity has become a much more critical issue not only for the private sector but also for public administration. In this context, public institutions are required to consider productivity in the services they provide. The efficient use of resources, the improvement of service quality, and the enhancement of public satisfaction have made productivity a central concept in public administration.

During the 1970s, welfare state practices entered a serious crisis. The oil crisis that emerged during the same period significantly increased unemployment rates and led to a rapid rise in public budget deficits. In this process, bureaucracy became more rigid, and public services lost efficiency. As a result, an excessively hierarchical bureaucratic structure emerged, lacking public support, coordination, and adaptability (Şamdan, 2023: 927).

The welfare state approach that emerged after the Second World War began to be replaced by neoliberal policies, especially after the 1980s, leading to the adoption of the New Public Management approach. This new approach aimed to eliminate waste, inefficiency, and politicization inherent in traditional public administration and to provide more efficient and effective public services (Ayhan, 2022: 4).

The New Public Management approach is based on the idea that efficiency in the public sector can be increased through downsizing the state. It also argues that economic crises can be overcome through the adoption of market-oriented mechanisms. In this context, private sector management techniques have been adapted to public administration in order to ensure efficient, effective, and accountable public service delivery (Çıkmaz & Çiftçi, 2025: 692).

In addition, the principle of transparency has become a key factor in increasing productivity in public administration. A transparent governance approach eliminates the closed and secrecy-based structure of public institutions. In societies where trust in government is low, improving the relationship between the state and citizens is essential. Transparency enables public officials to make more rational decisions and helps prevent corruption, thereby increasing productivity (Eken, 2005: 41–42).

Another important mechanism for increasing productivity in public administration is the development of effective performance evaluation systems. The New Public Management approach emphasizes results-oriented management and supports the use of measurable criteria in managerial processes. In this context, performance evaluation systems are considered essential tools for improving service quality, ensuring efficient resource use, and supporting decision-making processes (Soydan et al., 2014: 92).

Furthermore, the level of institutionalization in public organizations plays a crucial role in increasing productivity. Establishing a strong institutional structure and creating a positive public perception of institutions are essential. There is a direct relationship between the level of institutionalization and productivity growth (Boyalı & Atmaca, 2023: 702).

2. Conceptual Framework

In this section of the study, the concept of productivity is addressed, the importance of productivity in the public sector is explained, and applications in Türkiye are evaluated within the framework of the literature.

Productivity is one of the fundamental concepts used in organizations to measure and monitor performance and to ensure sustainability, and it refers to performing tasks correctly and effectively (Yavaş, 2022: 226). As a performance indicator showing the extent to which resources are used efficiently, productivity aims to achieve maximum output with minimum input. In this context, productivity expresses the relationship between inputs used in the production process (labor, capital, raw materials, energy, etc.) and the outputs obtained (Büyükkeklik & Avşar, 2023: 128). At the same time, productivity can also be defined as achieving the highest benefit with limited resources (Eren & Yılmaz, 2018: 519).

Although there has been a convergence between public and private sectors in terms of management approaches over time, productivity in public institutions is not limited solely to employee performance. While evaluating employee performance, public institutions also consider the quality of the services provided to citizens (İnce et al., 2025: 284). This situation indicates that the concept of productivity in public administration has a multidimensional structure.

Throughout history, organizations have aimed to achieve their goals at the lowest possible cost. However, public administration has adopted different management approaches depending on changing conditions over time. In parallel with changes in economic and political dynamics, public administration must also adapt to this transformation. The extent to which this adaptation is achieved determines the increase in efficiency and productivity in public administration (Demirkıran, 2025: 547).

Technological developments play a significant role in increasing productivity in public administration. Public institutions need to closely follow technological innovations in order to respond quickly to changing needs. Studies conducted in this context show that modern management techniques, such as activity-based costing, increase both productivity and performance in public institutions (Murat & Demir, 2025: 178).

Since public administration has a broad and complex structure, it must adopt technological transformation in order to ensure efficiency in service delivery. In particular, the digitalization process has made significant contributions to the faster and more effective provision of public services. In this context, blockchain technology has become one of the innovative tools increasingly used in public institutions and has begun to be considered as part of public policies in some countries (Can & Akman, 2024: 196).

Similarly, artificial intelligence technologies also contribute to the more efficient delivery of public services. Through the use of artificial intelligence, it becomes possible to achieve more output with fewer resources in the long term (Ataer, 2025: 349–350). With the integration of digitalization into public administration, e-government applications have become widespread, and many public services have started to be delivered electronically. In this process, the effective use of management information systems has increased both the speed and quality of public services (Karadağ, 2024: 14).

E-government applications not only improve service efficiency but also strengthen the interaction between citizens and the state (Özdaş & Tüfekçi, 2023: 673). In addition, the widespread use of data analytics has strengthened data-driven decision-making processes in public administration, leading to outcomes such as reducing bureaucracy, developing innovative service models, and increasing citizen participation (Karadağ, 2024: 13).

Despite the advantages provided by digitalization, it also has some negative effects. The increasing dependency of public employees on digital tools may lead to problems such as distraction and burnout due to intensive screen use (Sesli & Köroğlu, 2025: 8). Therefore, digital transformation processes must be managed in a balanced and sustainable manner.

The widespread implementation of electronic document management systems (EDMS) in public institutions is also an important tool for increasing productivity. EDMS is a fundamental infrastructure that enables the management of official correspondence processes in a digital environment and contributes to more efficient operations by accelerating both intra- and inter-institutional communication. If this system is not widely used, disruptions in processes and productivity losses may occur (Özdaş & Tüfekçi, 2023: 673).

Strengthening the institutional structure, simplification, and employee motivation are also among the determining factors affecting productivity. With increased institutionalization, processes become more systematic, and productivity rises (Boyalı & Atmaca, 2023: 707). Similarly, high employee motivation is considered a critical factor for increasing productivity (Ersoy, 2004: 253).

Factors such as workload and job satisfaction of public employees also directly affect productivity. Excessive workload and low job satisfaction may lead employees to leave the organization and increase labor turnover, which in turn negatively affects productivity (Tozlu, 2022: 120).

In Türkiye, public administration has traditionally been based on a centralized, rigid, and hierarchical bureaucratic structure shaped by a principle of secrecy for many years. However, the transformation process that began in the 1980s accelerated especially in the 2000s, and restructuring efforts in public administration came to the forefront (Usta & Akinci, 2024: 2534).

In this process, the New Public Management approach guided public administration reforms in Türkiye, aiming to provide more efficient and effective public services, particularly through privatization policies (Canpolat, 2010: 1). In addition, with the Public Financial Management and Control Law No. 5018, which came into force in 2003, principles such as transparency, accountability, efficiency, and productivity in the use of public resources were emphasized.

In local governments, policies aimed at increasing productivity have also been implemented, particularly through scaling-up strategies. Structural arrangements have been introduced to overcome the service delivery inefficiencies of small-scale municipalities. Accordingly, it has been observed that larger-scale local governments can provide more efficient and effective services (Sarıhan, 2023: 114).

Finally, in Türkiye, technological transformation processes have accelerated in order to increase productivity in public administration, and efforts have been initiated to integrate next-generation technologies such as blockchain into the public sector. Although an institutionalized structure in this area has not yet been fully established, these technologies are expected to play a significant role in public administration in the future (Can & Akman, 2024: 199).

3. Methodology

In this section of the study, the research purpose and research questions, the scope of the study, the construction of the dataset, and the method are presented.

Research Purpose and Questions

The main objective of this study is to examine the development and trends of the scientific literature addressing the concept of “productivity” in public administration. Within this framework, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- What is the quantitative development of the scientific literature on “productivity” in public administration over the years? What is the general trend?
- What is the distribution of the scientific literature on “productivity” in public administration according to document types?
- What is the distribution of the scientific literature on “productivity” in public administration according to researcher profiles?
- What is the distribution of the scientific literature on “productivity” in public administration according to institutional affiliations?
- What is the distribution of the scientific literature on “productivity” in public administration according to publication sources (journals)?
- What is the distribution and mapping of the scientific literature on “productivity” in public administration based on keywords?
- What is the distribution of the scientific literature on “productivity” in public administration according to countries/regions?

The scope of the study consists of 1,378 scientific publications indexed in the Web of Science (WoS) database (<https://www.webofscience.com/wos/woscc/basic-search>). The data obtained from the database were analyzed according to various variables within the framework of the research questions.

Dataset Construction and Method

Researchers frequently use bibliometric analysis to examine scientific publications and the relationships among them within a specific discipline, period, and geographical context through quantitative methods (<https://cabim.ulakbim.gov.tr>, 29.03.2026). Bibliometrics enables the classification, systematic evaluation, and monitoring of scientific publications by analyzing academic communication tools such as journals using mathematical and statistical techniques (Ellegaard & Wallin, 2015; Tutar et al., 2023).

This method aims to reveal the structural characteristics of a discipline by analyzing publications in terms of variables such as authors, countries, institutions, citations, and publication years (Özbağ et al., 2019). At the same time, it provides a comprehensive retrospective perspective by examining the development process, growth trends, and academic contribution levels of the literature (Guleria & Kaur, 2021).

The findings of bibliometric studies are generally presented through tables, graphs, and mapping/visualization techniques (Beşel & Yardımcıoğlu, 2017; Donthu et al., 2021). In this context, visualization-based software tools provide effective solutions, particularly in cluster analysis, enabling the clearer identification of structural relationships within the literature (Güney & Ala, 2024).

In this study, the VOSviewer software was used to construct and analyze bibliometric maps. VOSviewer enables the visualization of scientific publications by clustering them based on citation relationships and co-occurrence analysis, thereby revealing researcher collaborations and thematic trends (Eck & Waltman, 2017; Ding, 2020; McAllister et al., 2021).

Bibliometric analysis requires a systematic and standardized dataset based on predefined criteria (Güney & Ala, 2024). Accordingly, the Web of Science (WoS), one of the most widely used international databases, was preferred in this study (<https://www.webofscience.com/wos/woscc/basic-search>).

During the dataset construction process, no additional filtering was applied apart from the “Web of Science Categories” and “Topic” fields. The records obtained from the query conducted on March 29, 2026, were included in the analysis. The search query used in the study is as follows:

“Public Administration” (Web of Science Categories) AND “Productivity” (Topic)

The access link for the query is provided below:

<https://www.webofscience.com/wos/woscc/summary/8eb5a11c-86dd-41bc-bbd4-9d4a8530c0ca-01a58f7526/relevance/1>

Following the data cleaning process, duplicate records were removed and inconsistencies in author names, institutional affiliations, and keywords were standardized. Subsequently, the dataset consisting of 1,378 publications was analyzed using Microsoft Excel and VOSviewer software.

The findings were presented through tables, graphs, and bibliometric network maps and interpreted within the framework of the research questions.

4. Findings

This section presents and discusses the findings of the analyses conducted in relation to the research questions.

Trend of Publications

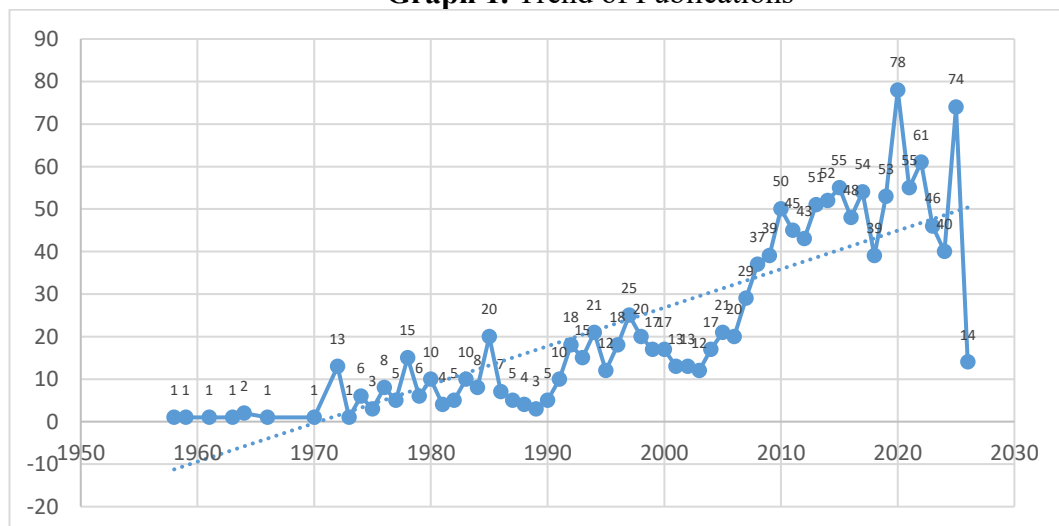
The data reveal that academic interest in the topic of “productivity” in public administration has exhibited significant fluctuations over time; however, the overall trend shows an increase, particularly after the 2000s. The very limited number of publications between 1958 and 1970 indicates that the topic had not yet established a strong position on the academic agenda during this period.

In the 1970s, a limited but relatively noticeable upward trend can be observed. In particular, the years 1972 (13 publications) and 1978 (15 publications) stand out as relatively high values for the early period.

The 1980s can be considered a transitional period in which the concept of productivity became more visible in public administration literature. Although the annual number of publications generally remained at low levels during this period, reaching 20 publications in 1985 represents a remarkable peak. However, this increase did not show continuity, and publication numbers declined again to relatively low levels in the following years. This indicates that the topic was subject to periodic increases in academic interest.

The 1990s represent a period characterized by fluctuations but with an overall upward trend. While the number of publications was relatively low at the beginning of the decade, it increased toward the mid-1990s. In particular, the years 1994 (21 publications) and 1997 (25 publications) present notable increases. Nevertheless, these increases were not stable, and significant fluctuations over the years continued to persist.

Graph 1. Trend of Publications



Source: <https://www.webofscience.com/wos/woscc/analyze-results/8275a662-c303-49de-a3eb-aba3dfd1ed56-019ee2b13a> (Access Date: 29.03.2026).

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Distribution of Publications by Document Type

When the given distribution is examined, it is observed that studies on productivity in public administration are largely concentrated in the form of journal articles. The fact that 1,122 out of a total of 1,378 publications (81.42%) are articles clearly demonstrates that peer-reviewed journal articles constitute the primary medium of scientific communication in the field. This indicates that the topic is extensively addressed in academic journals and that scientific production is largely carried out through periodical publications.

The second most common publication type is “proceeding papers,” with 180 records accounting for 13.06% of the total. This suggests that the field is also actively discussed through conferences and symposiums. The relatively high proportion of conference papers highlights their important role in the rapid dissemination of current developments and in fostering academic interaction. However, this proportion is not sufficient to challenge the dominant position of journal articles.

Book chapters rank third with 83 records (6.02%), indicating that the topic of productivity is also addressed within edited volumes and collective works. In contrast, publications in the form of books are quite limited (0.51%; 7 records). This finding suggests that the field has developed primarily through short- and medium-length academic outputs, while comprehensive monographic studies remain relatively limited.

Table 1. Publications by Document Type

Document Types	Record Count	% of 1.378
Article	1122	81.422
Book	7	0.508
Book Chapters	83	6.023
Book Review	33	2.395
Correction	1	0.073

Early Access	32	2.322
Editorial Material	32	2.322
Letter	3	0.218
Meeting Abstract	1	0.073
Note	7	0.508
Proceeding Paper	180	13.062
Reprint	1	0.073
Review Article	30	2.177

Source: <https://www.webofscience.com/wos/woscc/analyze-results/8275a662-c303-49de-a3eb-aba3dfd1ed56-019ee2b13a> (Access Date: 29.03.2026).

The share of other publication types in the total is relatively low. Book reviews account for 2.39%, review articles for 2.18%, while early access and editorial materials each represent 2.32%. These findings indicate that although the field includes elements of critical evaluation and literature synthesis, these remain limited. In particular, the low proportion of review articles suggests that there is a need for more comprehensive studies that evaluate literature in a holistic manner.

Among the publication types with the lowest shares are categories such as corrections, meeting abstracts, reprints, and letters, each accounting for well below 1% of the total. This indicates that these types of publications have a limited impact within the field and do not constitute the core of academic production.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the literature on productivity in public administration is predominantly article-based, followed to a lesser extent by conference papers and book chapters. This structure indicates that the field has a dynamic, up-to-date, and journal-oriented academic production model, with scientific knowledge being disseminated primarily through academic journals.

Researcher Profile

When the data on researcher profiles are examined, it is observed that academic production on productivity in the field of public administration exhibits a highly dispersed structure. The fact that even the most productive researcher among a total of 2,588 authors has a relatively limited number of publications indicates that the field is not dominated by a small group of scholars; rather, it is shaped by a broad academic community.

In this context, Peter Dunleavy stands out as the most productive researcher with 11 publications (0.80%), followed by Leandro Carrera with 9 publications (0.65%). Although these two scholars are among the most visible contributors in the field, it is noteworthy that their share remains below 1% of the total publications. This clearly demonstrates the low level of concentration in literature and the wide distribution of academic contributions.

Among the second group of researchers, Mary K. Feeney stands out with 6 publications, while scholars such as Philip Pardey, Willem Balk, Julian Alston, and Meghna Sabharwal each contribute with 5 publications. In addition, researchers such as Gregory B. Lewis, Matthew A. Andersen, and Aki Jaaskelainen are also

among the contributors to the literature, each with 4 publications. This group represents a core but low-concentration researcher structure within the field.

Graph 2. Distribution of Authors



Source: <https://www.webofscience.com/wos/woscc/analyze-results/8275a662-c303-49de-a3eb-aba3dfd1ed56-019ee2b13a> (Access Date: 13.02.2026).

When researchers with lower levels of contribution are examined, it is observed that there is a broad group of authors clustered within the range of 3 to 4 publications. For instance, researchers such as Gregory B. Lewis, Evan Berman, and Marc Holzer are represented with 4 publications, while scholars such as Vicente Pina, Daniel Williams, and Eric W. Welch contribute with 3 publications each. This distribution indicates that the field is not only shaped by a few leading researchers but also by a large number of mid-level contributors.

Overall, the literature on productivity in public administration can be characterized by a “long tail” structure. In this structure, a large number of researchers contribute a limited number of publications, while the number of scholars producing a high volume of work remains quite small. This suggests that the field has an interdisciplinary nature, with contributions from diverse academic communities, and that research production is not concentrated around a single central authority.

Keyword Distribution (Top 15)

Within the scope of this study, a frequency analysis of the keywords associated with the concept of productivity in the field of public administration was conducted. According to the results of the analysis, the term “productivity” stands out as the most frequently used keyword, with 86 occurrences by a considerable margin. This is followed by the concepts of “innovation” and “efficiency,” each appearing 23 times.

These findings indicate that the concept of productivity in public administration is not addressed solely within a quantitative, output-oriented framework (productivity), but is also evaluated in conjunction with process-oriented approaches (efficiency) and the dimension of innovation.

Graph 3. Keywords



Source: Created by the author using WordArt (<https://wordart.com/create>, Access Date: 29.03.2026).

“Performance,” “public administration,” and “public sector” rank third, each with 17 occurrences. These findings indicate that the concept of productivity is predominantly addressed within the context of performance management and the public sector in the discipline of public administration.

The concepts of “economic growth” and “performance management” each appear 13 times, while “performance measurement” stands out with 12 occurrences. These findings suggest that productivity is closely associated with economic development goals and, in particular, with management approaches based on performance measurement.

Table 2. Keywords

Rank	Keyword	Frequency
1	productivity	86
2	innovation	23
3	efficiency	23
4	performance	17
5	public administration	17
6	public sector	17
7	economic growth	13
8	performance management	13

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9	performance measurement	12
10	public policy	10
11	covid-19	10
12	r&d	8
13	new public management	8
14	universities	6
15	technology	5

Source: <https://www.webofscience.com/wos/woscc/analyze-results/8275a662-c303-49de-a3eb-aba3dfd1ed56-019ee2b13a> (Access Date: 29.03.2026).

In addition, the keywords “public policy” and “COVID-19” each appear 10 times, drawing attention as notable concepts in the literature. It is also observed that terms such as “R&D,” “new public management,” and “universities” have moderate frequency levels. In contrast, the keyword “technology” appears relatively less frequently, with only 5 occurrences.

Overall, the findings indicate that discussions on productivity in public administration are primarily structured around concepts such as performance management, innovation, efficiency, and economic growth. Under the influence of the New Public Management approach, productivity is predominantly addressed within a framework focused on measurability and performance orientation.

Co-Authorship Analysis

Author

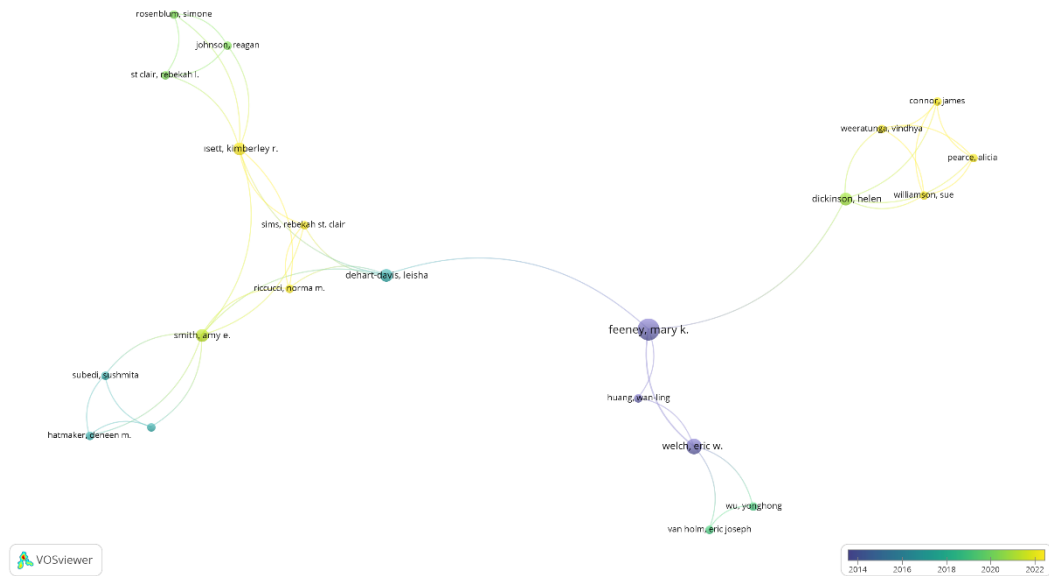
The visual represents a network map illustrating co-authorship relationships among authors in studies conducted in the field of productivity in public administration. In this map, created using VOSviewer, nodes represent authors, while the links between nodes indicate co-publication relationships. An examination of the overall structure of the network reveals that the literature is organized around specific research groups (clusters), with limited but strategically important connections between these clusters.

In particular, certain authors (e.g., Mary K. Feeney and Wan-Ling Huang) stand out as bridging actors who facilitate connections between different clusters. This indicates that interdisciplinary and institutional collaboration in productivity studies within public administration is sustained through a few key researchers.

The first cluster, located on the left side of the network, exhibits a relatively dense structure with strong internal connections. Within this cluster, authors such as Amy E. Smith, Kimberly R. Isett, Rebekah I. St. Clair, Reagan Johnson, and Simone Rosenblum demonstrate strong collaborative relationships. The density of connections within the cluster suggests a high tendency for joint production and indicates the development of a specialized and well-established line of research among these scholars.

Another smaller cluster located in the lower-left section includes authors such as Sushmita Sudebi and Deneen M. Hatmaker. This cluster appears to be connected to the main cluster through Amy E. Smith, indicating a secondary but linked collaboration structure.

Graph 4. Co-authorship Network of Authors



Source: Generated using VOSviewer.

The cluster located on the right side of the network consists of authors such as Helen Dickinson, Sue Williams, Vindhya Weerawardena, James Connor, and Alicia Pearce. It is noteworthy that this cluster exhibits a well-defined internal collaboration structure, while its connections with other clusters remain relatively limited.

The cluster positioned near the center of the network, composed of authors such as Mary K. Feeney, Wan-Ling Huang, and Eric W. Welch, plays a critical bridging role. This cluster connects research groups on both the left and right sides of the network, thereby facilitating the flow of knowledge within literature. In particular, the central position and high number of connections of Mary K. Feeney indicate that this author plays an influential and guiding role in the productivity literature within public administration. Such central actors contribute to the integration of the field by bringing together different research traditions.

An examination of the color distribution reveals that the map reflects a temporal dimension. Blue and purple tones represent earlier studies (approximately 2014–2016), green tones indicate mid-period studies (2017–2019), and yellow tones correspond to more recent studies (2020 and beyond). In this context, it is observed that Mary K. Feeney and the authors surrounding her in the central part of the network were more active in earlier periods, whereas many authors located on the left and right clusters have contributed to more recent studies. Regions where yellow tones are concentrated indicate that the topic of productivity in public administration has gained increasing attention in recent years and that new researchers have entered the literature.

In terms of color distribution, the map reflects a temporal dimension, where blue tones represent earlier studies (approximately 2014–2016), green tones indicate the mid-period (2017–2019), and yellow tones correspond to more recent studies (2020 and beyond). In this context, it can be observed that the well-established universities on the left side of the network are predominantly represented in blue and green tones, indicating that they contributed to the literature in earlier periods. In contrast, some institutions on the right side are closer to yellow tones, suggesting that they have become more actively involved in productivity research in public administration in recent years.

Furthermore, the institutions positioned at the center of the network, which serve as bridging actors, are generally concentrated in green tones. This indicates that these institutions play a continuous and connecting role in the development of literature, linking different periods and facilitating the evolution of the research field.

Country

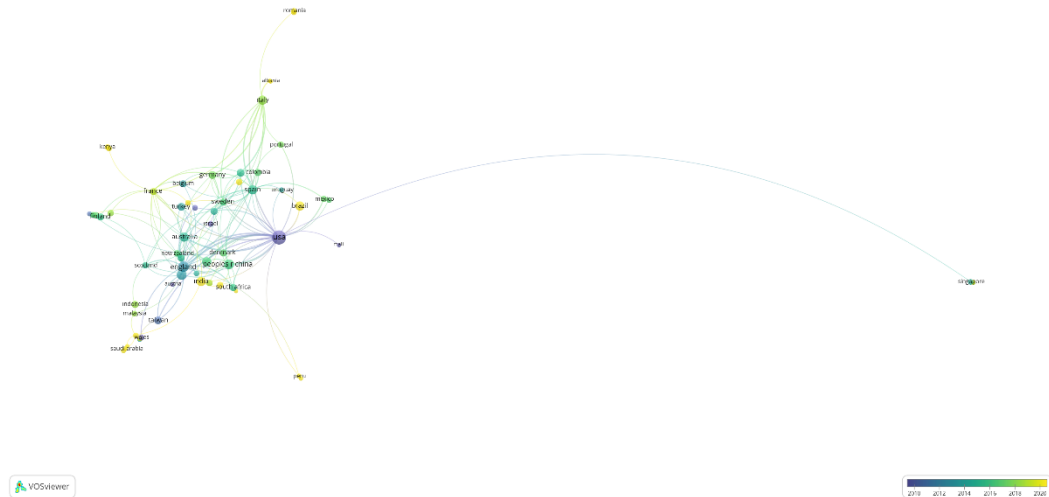
The country-level co-authorship network, constructed using VOSviewer based on bibliometric data obtained from the Web of Science (WoS) database, reveals international collaboration patterns among countries in both quantitative and visual terms. In this network, nodes represent countries, and the size of each node is directly proportional to the total number of publications or the total link strength of the respective country. The links between nodes represent co-authored publications between countries, while the thickness of the links reflects the intensity of collaboration, and the distance between nodes approximately indicates the similarity of co-authorship structures.

The large purple node located at the center of the visual represents the country with the highest total link strength and the most central position in the network. This node constitutes the core of the network and exhibits the strongest interaction with other countries in terms of both the number and intensity of connections.

The main cluster located on the left side of the network consists of a large number of countries connected through strong ties. This cluster highlights a dominant collaboration block composed of countries with well-developed research infrastructures, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, China, Singapore, India, Ireland, and Austria.

The short and thick links within this cluster reflect high-volume and long-standing international collaborations. In particular, the intensity of transatlantic, intra-European, and Asia-Pacific collaborations clearly demonstrates that scientific production is clustered around specific geographical and institutional centers.

Graph 6. Country Co-authorship Network



Source: Generated using VOSviewer.

The color scale (blue → green → yellow) reflects the temporal dimension (average publication year) in the overlay visualization mode of VOSviewer. In this context, blue tones represent earlier periods (generally the early 2010s and before), green tones indicate the mid-period, and yellow-green tones correspond to more recent years (approximately 2018–2024). Accordingly, while part of the dense cluster on the left side of the network represents more mature and well-established collaborations, the lighter-colored and relatively isolated nodes on the right side indicate that emerging or newly participating countries have joined the network in recent years.

The long and thin connection line extending distinctly on the right side of the visual, along with the small node located at its end, represents countries that have not yet been fully integrated into the global network, whose collaboration volume remains limited, or which occupy a peripheral position due to geographical or institutional constraints. These countries may be associated with certain Eastern European, Latin American, or developing Asian countries.

This structure demonstrates that international scientific collaboration follows the classical “core–periphery” model. In this context, countries such as the United States, China, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Canada, and Japan occupy central positions in the network and direct many collaborative relationships, while the contributions of other countries remain relatively limited and indirect.

Overall, the visual indicates that scientific production has attained a global character; however, collaboration patterns exhibit a hierarchical, clustered, and uneven distribution. The high total link strength values observed within the main cluster reflect strong transatlantic, intra-European, Asia-Pacific, and North

American connections, whereas more isolated positions represent future collaboration potential or research ecosystems that have not yet fully matured.

Such bibliometric analyses provide valuable insights for policymakers, research funding agencies, university administrators, and academics. They offer guidance for developing international collaboration strategies, optimizing resource allocation, monitoring the evolution of scientific networks, and facilitating the stronger integration of peripheral countries—such as emerging economies including India, Singapore, Brazil, and Türkiye—into the main clusters.

In conclusion, this visual clearly illustrates that the contemporary scientific ecosystem is both globalized and structured around core–periphery dynamics, while also offering a strategic roadmap for more inclusive and multilateral collaborations in the future.

Co-occurrence of Keywords

The keyword co-occurrence network, constructed using VOSviewer based on bibliometric data obtained from the Web of Science (WoS) database, reveals the core concepts, interrelationships among these concepts, and their evolution over time in studies focusing on productivity (efficiency/productivity) in the field of public administration. In this network, nodes represent keywords, and the size of each node is directly proportional to the total frequency of use or the total link strength of the respective keyword. More frequently used and highly connected keywords appear as larger nodes in the visualization. The links between nodes represent the frequency with which two keywords co-occur in the same publications, while the thickness of the links indicates the strength of these relationships. Through VOSviewer’s mapping technique, the distance between nodes approximately reflects the similarity in co-occurrence patterns among the concepts.

At the center of the visualization, the large purple-blue node represents the concept of “productivity,” which stands out as the most central keyword with the highest total link strength in the network. Around this core, a dense conceptual cluster is formed, where concepts such as performance, performance management, public management, governance, efficiency, public sector, labor productivity, innovation, public policy, human resource management, organizational performance, accountability, transparency, public service, service delivery, employee productivity, total factor productivity, and economic efficiency are strongly interconnected. This structure indicates that the productivity literature is predominantly shaped around the theoretical framework of performance management and public administration.

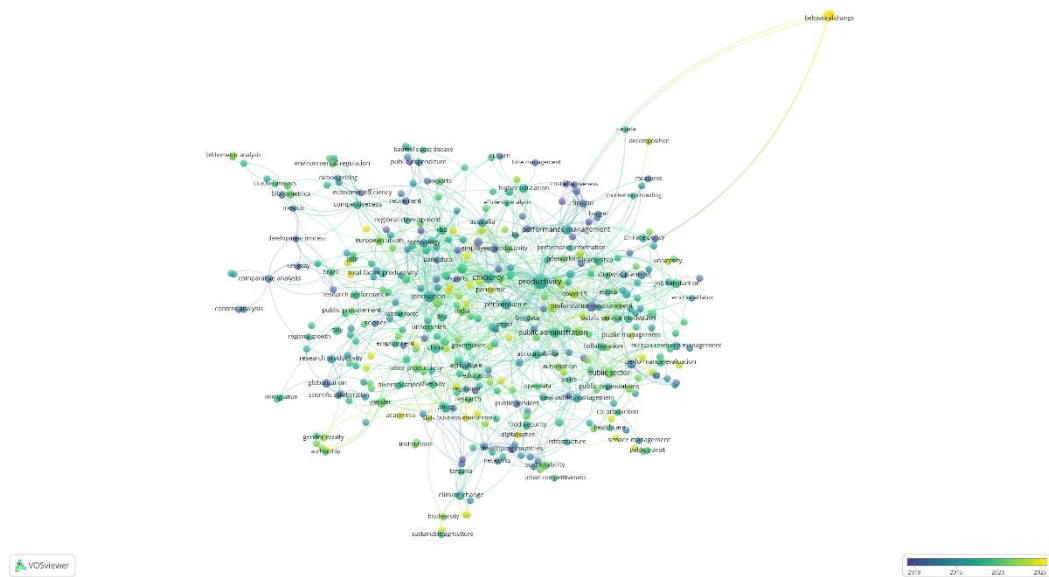
On the left side of the network, nodes predominantly represented in blue tones (corresponding to earlier periods, particularly the early 2010s and before) include more traditional and methodological concepts such as bibliometric analysis, environmental regulation, public health, competitiveness, regional development, development process, comparative analysis, content analysis, research performance, public sector performance, scientific collaboration, global value chain, and knowledge management. This region reflects that, in the earlier stages of the public administration literature, productivity was mainly addressed within

the frameworks of measurement, comparative analysis, and bibliometric approaches.

In contrast, nodes located on the right side of the network, represented in yellow-green tones (corresponding to more recent periods, particularly from 2015 onwards), clearly reflect the transformation of the field. In this region, concepts such as behavioral change, climate change, sustainability, sustainable agriculture, biodiversity, food security, urban governance, public governance, resilience, adaptation, decarbonization, nature-based solutions, ecosystem services, and circular economy stand out and are connected to the central core through relatively thinner links. In particular, the nodes “behavioral change” and “climate change,” located at the far right, demonstrate that recent discussions on productivity in public administration have expanded toward sustainability, climate crisis, and behavioral public policy perspectives.

Sector-oriented concepts located in the middle and upper parts of the networks such as logistics, infrastructure, health care, higher education, education, tourism, and agriculture—indicate that the productivity approach has extended to various public service domains. This suggests that the concept of productivity is not limited to a purely theoretical framework but has also expanded significantly in terms of its practical applications.

Graph 7. Keyword Co-occurrence Network



Source: Generated using VOSviewer.

Overall, this visual demonstrates that the concept of productivity in public administration has undergone a clear paradigm shift, evolving from the traditional triad of “performance measurement – public sector productivity – governance” (central cluster) toward themes such as sustainability, climate change, behavioral change, and environmental management, particularly since the late 2010s. The color scale (blue for 2010 → yellow for 2020) clearly reflects this temporal transformation, where blue tones represent more established and mature concepts, while yellow tones indicate emerging and interdisciplinary research areas.

The core–periphery structure of the network shows that the productivity literature remains largely concentrated around the “productivity–performance–public management” core; however, peripheral themes—such as climate change, sustainability, and behavioral change—are increasingly moving toward the center.

These findings provide important implications for academics, policymakers, and public administrators. In particular, future research on productivity should not remain limited to traditional performance management approaches but should be addressed in an integrated manner with sustainability, climate change, and behavioral public policy perspectives.

Furthermore, the visual indicates that the discipline of public administration is becoming increasingly globalized and interdisciplinary. The concept of productivity is no longer confined to economic and administrative dimensions but is increasingly integrated with environmental, social, and behavioral aspects. Such keyword co-occurrence analyses serve as an important guide for anticipating future research directions, developing new research agendas, and designing strategies aimed at improving the efficiency of public policies.

Citation Analysis

Document

The visual represents an overlay visualization of a bibliometric network constructed using VOSviewer, in which the colors of the nodes indicate the average publication years of the respective studies. According to the color scale displayed at the bottom, purple and dark blue tones represent earlier studies (1980s–1990s), green tones indicate the mid-period (2000s), and yellow tones correspond to more recent studies (post-2010, particularly the 2020s). In this context, the network clearly illustrates the temporal evolution of literature.

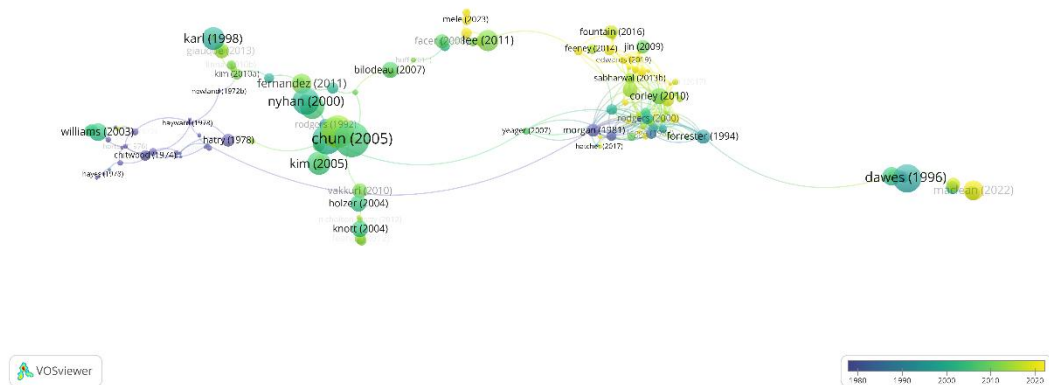
The nodes concentrated on the left side of the network, predominantly in purple and blue tones (e.g., Hatry, 1978; Boyne, 2003; Hayes, 1978; Williams, 2003; and Karl, 1998), represent early studies in the field. The fact that these studies are depicted with smaller nodes and fewer connections suggests that literature initially had a relatively narrow research network. Nevertheless, the connections extending from these early works toward the central nodes indicate that they have provided the foundation for subsequent research.

As one moves toward the center of the network, green tones become dominant. Studies such as Nyhan (2000), Chun and Rainey (2005), Kim (2005), Fernandez and Moldogaziev (2011), and Bilodeau et al. (2007) represent this transitional phase. During this period, both node sizes and connection densities increase, indicating a phase of conceptual deepening and growing academic productivity in the 2000s. The fact that works such as Chun and Rainey (2005) and Nyhan (2000) connect both earlier and later studies demonstrate their bridging role within literature.

In the upper and right sections of the network, yellow tones become more prominent. Studies such as Fountain and Newcomer (2016), Feeney et al. (2014), Edwards (2019), Jin and Guy (2009), and Mele et al. (2023) represent the more recent literature. The strong connections between these studies and the central clusters indicate that contemporary research builds upon prior theoretical foundations, reflecting continuity within literature. Moreover, the increasing

density of yellow nodes reveals a significant expansion and revitalization of the research field, particularly after 2010.

Graph 8. Citation Analysis of Documents



Source: Generated using VOSviewer.

On the other hand, the positioning of the node representing Dawes (1996) in bluish-green tones indicates that, despite being an older study, it continues to receive citations in the current literature and maintains its influence. In contrast, more recent studies represented in yellow tones and located in relatively peripheral positions suggest that newly emerging research has not yet been fully integrated into the core of the network.

Overall, the color distribution reveals that literature has developed in a layered and cumulative manner rather than in a linear trajectory from the 1980s to the present. While early studies form the foundation of the field, the 2000s represent a critical turning point in terms of theoretical consolidation and the centralization of the network. The post-2010 period, on the other hand, stands out as a phase characterized by diversification of literature, the emergence of new themes, and a noticeable increase in academic interaction.

Sources

The “Citation Analysis of Sources” network, constructed using VOSviewer based on bibliometric data obtained from the Web of Science (WoS) database, reveals citation relationships at the journal level among publications focusing on productivity (efficiency/productivity) in the field of public administration, as well as the influence of core publication outlets and their interdisciplinary connections. In this network, nodes represent scientific journals, and the size of each node is directly proportional to the total number of citations or the total link strength of the respective journal. Accordingly, journals that are more frequently cited and more influential in the literature appear as larger nodes in visualization.

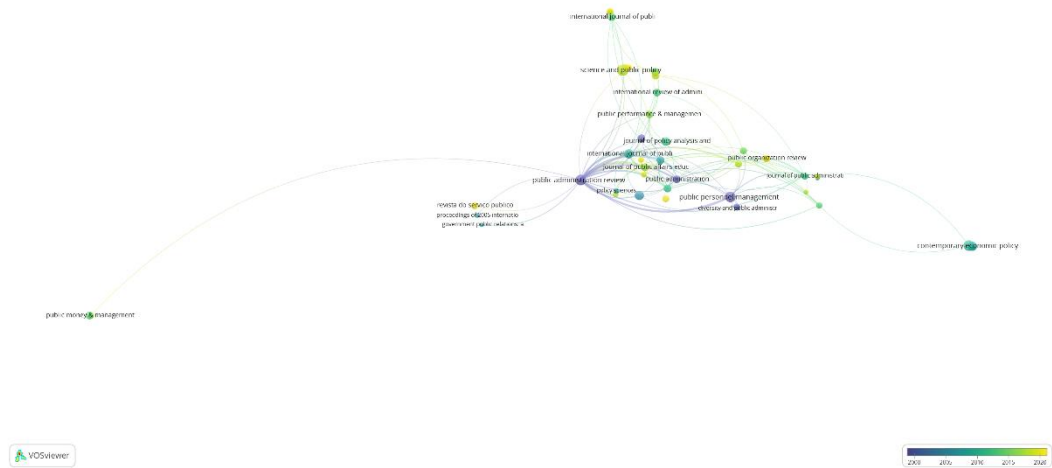
The links between nodes represent the frequency with which two journals are co-cited within the same publications, while the thickness of the links indicates the strength of this relationship. The distance between nodes, on the other hand, approximately reflects the similarity of their co-citation profiles.

At the center of the visualization, the large purple node represents the journal *Public Administration Review* (PAR), which stands out as the most central source with the highest total link strength in the network. Around this core, a dense cluster is formed, where leading journals in the field of public administration—such as *International Journal of Public Administration*, *Public Performance & Management Review*, *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, *Science and Public Policy*, *Public Personnel Management*, *Journal of Public Policy Analysis and Management*, *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, *Journal of Public Budgeting, Accounting & Financial Management*, and *Public Organization Review*—are strongly interconnected.

On the left side, the node representing *Public Money & Management*, connected to the core through a long link and displayed in green-yellow tones, emphasizes the relationship between productivity discussions and the dimensions of public finance and budgeting. On the right side, the node representing *Contemporary Economic Policy*, which is connected to the core through relatively thinner links, highlights the interdisciplinary intersection of the field with economics.

The color scale (blue for 2000 → yellow-green for 2020) reflects the average citation year of journals in VOSviewer's overlay visualization mode. Blue tones represent older and well-established sources (2000–2010), while yellow-green tones indicate more recent and emerging journals (2015–2024). In this context, a significant portion of the central cluster consists of long-established journals that have been consistently referenced over time, whereas some journals positioned in the periphery appear to have strengthened the connection between productivity and economic policy as well as sustainability in recent years.

Graph 9. Citation Analysis of Sources



Source: Generated using VOSviewer.

Overall, this “Citation Analysis of Sources” visualization clearly reveals the core–periphery structure of the productivity literature in public administration. While most of the literature is dominated by a cluster of traditional public administration journals centered around Public Administration Review, journals located in the periphery—such as Public Money & Management and Contemporary Economic Policy—contribute to the field from the perspectives of public finance, economics, and policy analysis. This structure indicates that the concept of productivity is addressed both in its traditional administrative and organizational dimensions (core cluster) and in its interdisciplinary economic and financial dimensions (periphery).

The visualization also reflects the level of scientific maturity within the field. Core journals with high citation counts continue to serve as key reference sources, while in recent years, journals focused on economics and policy have become increasingly integrated into the network, indicating a dynamic and evolving literature structure.

These findings provide important implications for academics, research funding agencies, and policymakers. Future research on productivity should not be confined solely to traditional public administration journals but should increasingly integrate with publications in economics and public finance. In conclusion, the visualization demonstrates that research on productivity in public administration has evolved into a structure that is both concentrated and increasingly interdisciplinary, offering valuable guidance for identifying new research agendas, selecting key journals for literature reviews, and developing international collaborative publication strategies.

Author

The “Citation Analysis of Authors” network, constructed using VOSviewer based on bibliometric data obtained from the Web of Science (WoS) database, reveals author-level citation relationships, identifies prominent researchers in the field, and illustrates the distribution of scientific influence in studies focusing on

productivity (efficiency/productivity) in public administration. In this network, nodes represent individual authors, and the size of each node is directly proportional to the total number of citations or the total link strength of the respective author. Authors who are more frequently cited and occupy more central positions in the literature appear as larger nodes in the visualization.

The links between nodes represent co-citation or direct citation relationships among authors. While the thickness of the links indicates the strength of these relationships, the distance between nodes approximately reflects the similarity of citation profiles.

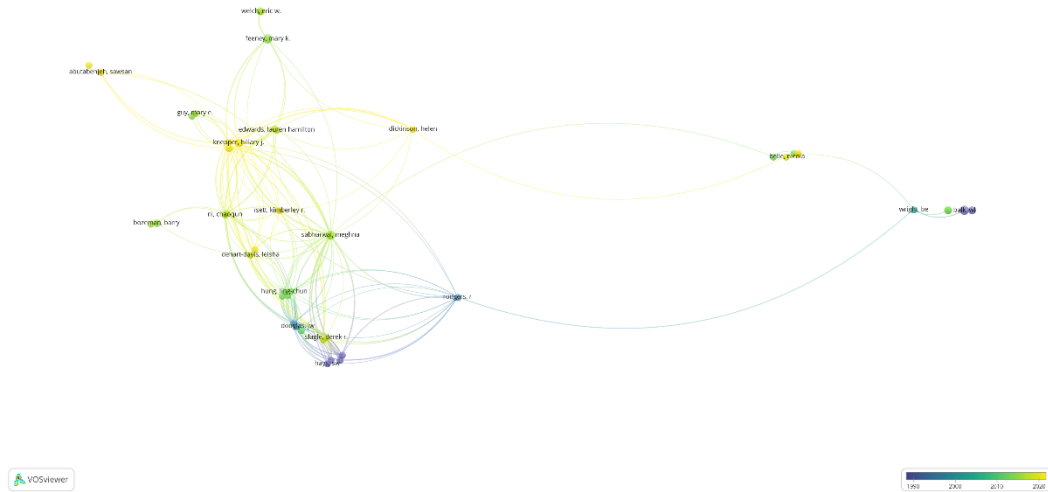
At the center of the visualization, the large purple-blue node represents the most central author with the highest total link strength in the network. Around this core, a dense cluster is formed, where authors such as George Boyne, Helen Ingram, Chongmin Ni, Leisha DeHart-Davis, Jane E. Hunt, Meghna Sabharwal, Lauren Hamilton Edwards, Timothy J. Krebs, Helen Dickinson, Mary K. Bennett, Gary E. Gow, Barry Boening, M. Sawaan Abouharb, and Barry J. Kramer are strongly interconnected.

On the left side of the network, nodes represented in yellow-green tones (indicating a more recent period, particularly between 2010 and 2020) include researchers such as M. Sawaan Abouharb, Gary E. Gow, and Mary K. Bennett, suggesting that these authors have become more integrated into the literature in recent years.

On the right side, nodes connected to the core through longer and thinner links are noteworthy. In particular, the nodes representing Patricia W. Ingraham (in yellow tones) and B. E. Wright (in bluish-purple tones) reflect the temporal evolution of literature. The color scale (blue for 1990 → yellow for 2020) in VOSviewer's overlay visualization mode indicates the average citation year of authors, where blue tones represent earlier and more established studies (1990–2005), while yellow-green tones correspond to more recent contributions.

Overall, the network structure points to a typical core–periphery model. The dense cluster at the center represents highly cited core researchers, whereas authors positioned in the periphery and connected to the core through longer links stand out as contributors offering diverse perspectives but with relatively more limited influence.

Graph 10. Citation Analysis of Authors



Source: Generated using VOSviewer.

Overall, this “Citation Analysis of Authors” visualization indicates that the productivity literature in public administration is largely concentrated around pioneering researchers such as Boyne, Ingram, and Ni. However, since the 2010s, a new generation of scholars (e.g., Abouharb, DeHart-Davis, Sabharwal) has rapidly moved toward the center of the network, suggesting that the field has matured both in terms of theoretical depth and contemporary applications.

The chronological structure of the citation network further demonstrates that early classical studies (represented by blue tones) continue to serve as key reference points, while more recent publications (represented by yellow tones) increasingly focus on emerging dimensions such as sustainability, behavioral productivity, and digital transformation.

Organization

The “Citation Analysis of Organizations” network, constructed using VOSviewer based on bibliometric data obtained from the Web of Science (WoS) database, reveals institution-level citation relationships, identifies the most influential institutions in the literature, and illustrates their geographical distribution and temporal evolution in studies focusing on productivity (efficiency/productivity) in public administration. In this network, nodes represent scientific institutions, and the size of each node is directly proportional to the total number of citations or the total link strength of the respective institutions. Institutions that are more frequently cited and occupy more central positions in literature appear as larger nodes in the visualization.

The links between nodes represent co-citation or indirect citation relationships among institutions. While the thickness of the links indicates the strength of these relationships, the distance between nodes approximately reflects the similarity of citation profiles.

The large and densely connected cluster located at the center of the visualization represents the most influential institutions in the field. This cluster includes prominent universities such as the University of Arizona, Arizona State

University, the University of Georgia, Indiana University, Florida State University, the University of North Carolina, Rutgers University–Newark, the University of Colorado, Boston University, the University of Tennessee, and units affiliated with the University of California system. This structure demonstrates that a substantial portion of the productivity literature in public administration is shaped by U.S.-based institutions. The short and thick links between nodes reflect strong and long-standing scientific interactions among these universities.

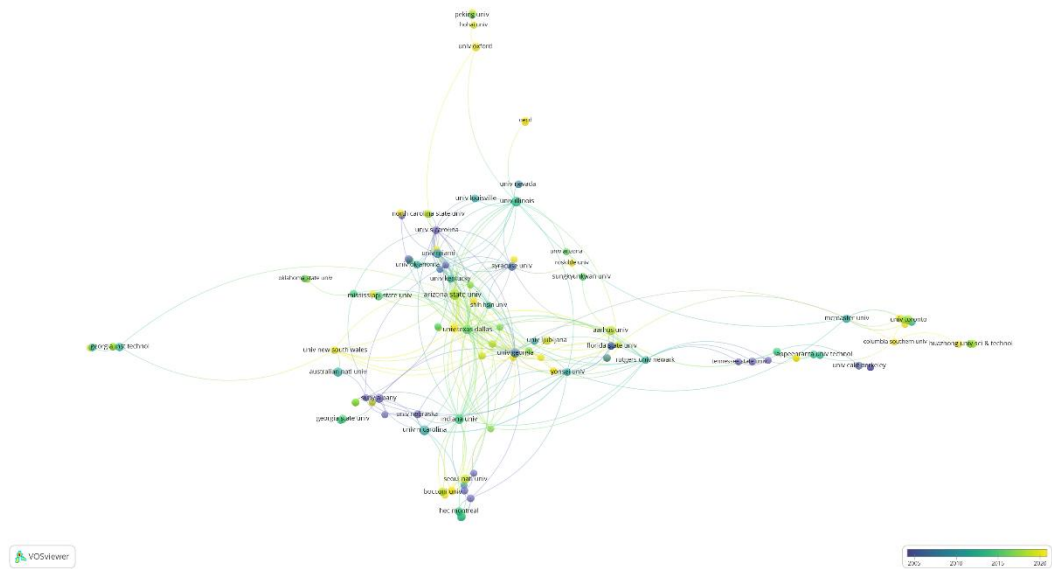
Nodes such as Peking University and the University of Oxford, located in the upper part of the network, indicate that internationally prestigious institutions are strongly integrated into the core of the network. In particular, the yellow-green tones of Peking University highlight China's increasing academic contribution in recent years.

On the left side, relatively isolated institutions such as the Georgia Institute of Technology, Oklahoma State University, the University of New South Wales, the Australian National University, and HEC Montréal indicate that research centers outside the United States contribute to the literature but have not yet achieved full integration into the central structure.

On the right side, institutions such as Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Columbia Southern University, Michigan State University, and the University of Wollongong, which are connected to the core through longer and thinner links, represent research centers from Asia and Oceania that maintain a peripheral yet increasingly strengthening presence.

The color scale (blue for 2005 → yellow for 2020) reflects the average publication or citation year of institutions in VOSviewer's overlay visualization mode. Blue tones represent earlier and more established contributions (2005–2015), while yellow-green tones indicate more recent and dynamic studies (2015–2024). In this context, while some of the U.S.-based institutions at the center reflect a more mature and established influence, the concentration of yellow tones in the upper and right regions (e.g., Peking University and Huazhong University of Science and Technology) indicates increasing international participation over the past decade.

Graph 11. Citation Analysis of Organizations



Source: Generated using VOSviewer.

Overall, this “Citation Analysis of Organizations” visualization clearly reveals the classical core–periphery structure of the productivity literature in public administration. A substantial portion of the literature is concentrated around U.S.-based universities such as the University of Arizona, the University of Georgia, Indiana University, Florida State University, and the University of North Carolina. In contrast, institutions located in the periphery—such as Peking University, the University of Oxford, the University of New South Wales, Huazhong University of Science and Technology, HEC Montréal, and the Georgia Institute of Technology—contribute to the field from international and interdisciplinary perspectives.

This structure indicates that the concept of productivity is addressed both in its traditional administrative and organizational dimensions (U.S.-centered core cluster) and in its global, sustainability-oriented, and technology-driven dimensions (periphery). The visualization also reflects the scientific maturity and geographical evolution of the field, demonstrating that despite the long-standing dominance of the United States, institutions from countries such as China, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada are increasingly moving toward the center of the network.

These findings offer important implications for academics, university administrators, research funding agencies, and policymakers. In future productivity studies, it is evident that international collaborations with U.S.-based institutions—as well as with globally influential institutions such as Peking University, the University of Oxford, and Australian universities—should be strengthened.

In conclusion, the visualization demonstrates that scientific production in the field of productivity within public administration is both highly concentrated and increasingly globalized. It provides valuable guidance for identifying new research agendas, developing international collaboration strategies, selecting key institutions for literature reviews, and optimizing the allocation of research resources.

Country

The “Citation Analysis of Countries” network, constructed using VOSviewer based on bibliometric data obtained from the Web of Science (WoS) database, reveals country-level citation relationships, highlights leading countries in the literature, and illustrates their geographical distribution and temporal evolution in studies focusing on productivity (efficiency/productivity) in public administration. In this network, nodes represent countries, and the size of each node is directly proportional to the total number of citations or the total link strength of the respective country. Countries that are more frequently cited and occupy more central positions in literature appear as larger nodes in visualization.

The links between nodes represent co-citation or indirect citation relationships among countries. While the thickness of the links indicates the strength of these relationships, the distance between nodes approximately reflects the similarity of citation profiles.

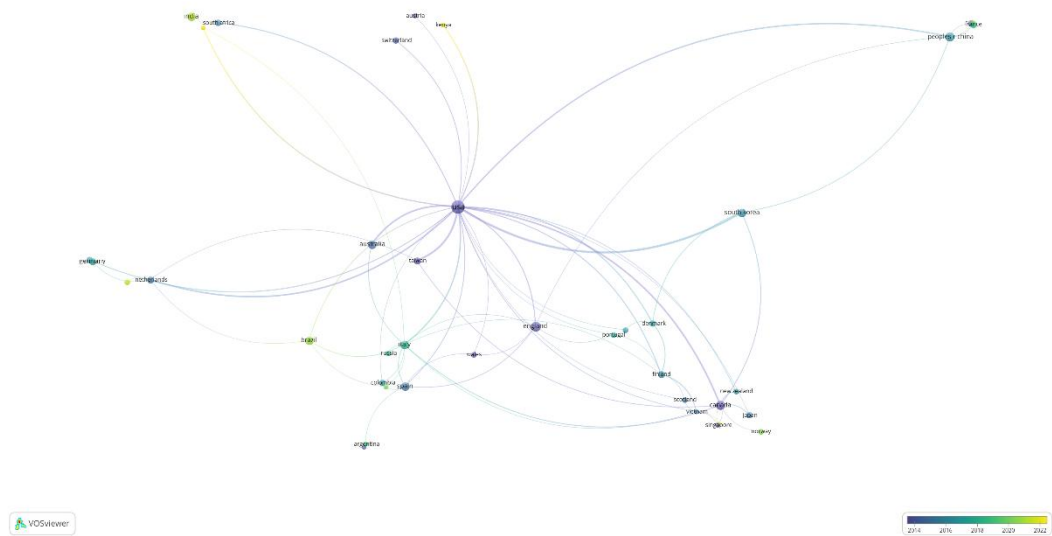
At the center of the visualization, the large purple node represents the United States, which stands out as the most central country with the highest total link strength in the network. Around this core, a dense cluster is formed, where countries such as the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, France, Norway, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Poland, Slovakia, and Türkiye are strongly interconnected. This structure indicates that the productivity literature in public administration is largely concentrated around Western European and Anglo-Saxon countries. In particular, the short and thick links between the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany reflect strong and long-standing scientific interactions.

On the left side, nodes represented in yellow-green tones and connected to the core through longer links include African countries such as South Africa, Kenya, and Zimbabwe, indicating their increasing contribution to the literature.

On the right side, the node representing the People’s Republic of China, connected to the core through more pronounced and longer links, stands out. Its representation in yellow tones highlights China’s rapid rise in recent years and its growing contribution to the literature.

The color scale (blue for 2014 → yellow for 2022) reflects the average citation year of countries in VOSviewer’s overlay visualization mode. Blue tones represent earlier and more established contributions (2014–2018), while yellow-green tones indicate more recent and dynamic studies (2018–2022). In this context, while Western countries located at the center reflect a more mature and established influence, the yellow tones in the periphery—particularly for countries such as China, South Africa, Kenya, and Türkiye—indicate recent international expansion.

Graph 12. Citation Analysis of Countries



Source: Generated using VOSviewer.

Overall, this “Citation Analysis of Countries” visualization clearly reveals the classical core–periphery structure of the productivity literature in public administration. A significant portion of the literature is concentrated around Western countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, and Switzerland. In contrast, countries located in the periphery—such as China, South Africa, Kenya, Poland, Slovakia, Singapore, Türkiye, Norway, Australia, and New Zealand—contribute to the field from global, sustainability-oriented, and emerging economy perspectives.

This structure indicates that the concept of productivity is addressed both in its traditional administrative and organizational dimensions (core cluster) and in newer dimensions shaped by the Global South and Asia (periphery). The visualization also reflects the scientific maturity and geographical evolution of the field, demonstrating that despite the long-standing dominance of the United States, China has rapidly moved toward the center in recent years, while African and Eastern European countries remain peripheral yet possess significant growth potential.

These findings provide important implications for academics, university administrators, research funding agencies, and policymakers. Future research on productivity should promote stronger international collaborations between institutions in the United States and Europe and those in emerging countries such as China, Türkiye, South Africa, and Kenya.

In conclusion, the visualization demonstrates that scientific production in the field of productivity within public administration is both concentrated and increasingly globalized and balanced. It offers valuable guidance for identifying new research agendas, developing international collaboration strategies, selecting focal countries for literature reviews, and optimizing the allocation of research resources.

5. Conclusion

A strong relationship can be observed between academic studies on productivity in public administration and the transformation of public administration paradigms. While the traditional public administration approach primarily focused on the delivery of public services, concepts such as cost, performance, and productivity remained in the background. However, particularly after World War II, the increasing burden of welfare state practices on public administration, along with the transformation in managerial approaches since the 1970s, paved the way for the emergence of a productivity- and performance-oriented management paradigm under the influence of the New Public Management approach in the 1980s.

In parallel with this transformation, academic studies on productivity in the public sector have also increased over time. A notable concentration in the literature has been observed, especially after 2010, with concepts such as performance management, performance measurement, productivity, efficiency, and organizational performance occupying a central position in research. This indicates that productivity studies in the public sector are largely shaped within a performance-oriented, output-based evaluation and efficiency analysis framework.

The findings of the bibliometric analysis reveal that literature, while concentrated around certain academic institutions and countries, has expanded on a global scale. In particular, U.S.-based academic environments play a dominant role, while strong knowledge flows and collaboration networks exist among European and Anglo-Saxon academic ecosystems. At the same time, the increasing presence of themes such as digital transformation, sustainability, innovation, and human-centered public administration indicates that the field is evolving in a dynamic and interdisciplinary manner.

From a historical perspective, the productivity literature in public administration initially focused on issues of measurement and conceptualization; over time, it expanded to include variables such as organizational performance, motivation, and governance; and in recent years, it has gained a more holistic and interdisciplinary character through the integration of new approaches such as digitalization and bibliometric analysis. In this context, productivity research has evolved beyond a narrow focus on quantitative output increases into a comprehensive field encompassing multidimensional performance perspectives, including governance, participation, motivation, and scientific productivity.

Although the existing literature has a strong theoretical foundation, it still holds significant research potential in terms of new methodological approaches and thematic expansions. Future studies that integrate the concept of productivity with digital transformation, sustainability, and behavioral public policies will contribute to a deeper and more comprehensive development of the field.

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