

Exploring the Dynamics of Death Attitude Research: A Bibliometric Analysis of Scientific Papers in Dimension (2015-2024)

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ABSTRACT

Death is not viewed as the absolute end, but rather as a gateway to a continued spiritual existence or rebirth. The main objective of this study is to find out the publication trend of death attitude-related articles from 2015 to 2024. The study used the bibliometric analysis method to analyze the data published in Dimensions. Analysis of death attitude publications over the past decade reveals increasing interest, with a peak in 2021 but a decline in 2022 and 2023. Citation analysis shows a steady rise in citations until 2022, followed by a slight decline. The percentage of publications with citations has decreased over the years. Metrics like FCR and RCR indicate fluctuating citation impact. Interdisciplinary research is evident, with dominant categories including "Human Society," "Health Sciences," and "Law and Legal Studies." Leading countries in death attitude research include the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. Challenges such as declining citation uptake underscore the need for enhanced dissemination efforts. Death attitude research has seen increasing interest and impact, significant challenges in citation uptake and fluctuating impact highlight the need for strategic improvements in research dissemination and visibility. Addressing these issues is essential to maintain and enhance the field's scholarly influence.

KEYWORDS

Bibliometric analysis; Buddhism; death attitude; Eastern philosophy; Hinduism; Nepal

INTRODUCTION

According to Eastern philosophy and religion, death is often viewed as a non-dimensional, cyclical, and potentially repeatable phenomenon, rather than a finite and absolute end (Habermas, 1997). Eastern philosophies and religions, like those found in Hinduism and Buddhism, often explore ideas of the afterlife, reincarnation, and the immortality of the soul (Habermas, 1997; Rosenzweig & HALLO, 1985). Death is not viewed as the absolute end, but rather as a gateway to a continued spiritual existence or rebirth. Eastern philosophy and religion, death is often viewed as a non-dimensional, cyclical, and potentially repeatable phenomenon, rather than a finite and absolute end (Chu & Jang, 2021).

In Hinduism, the concept of death is deeply intertwined with the belief in the eternal nature of the soul and the transformative nature of death for the body. Hindu culture values the idea of death as a transition rather than an absolute end, emphasizing the cyclical nature of life, death, and rebirth known as reincarnation. The soul, believed to be immortal, undergoes a continuous cycle of birth, death, and rebirth (samsara) until it achieves

liberation (moksha) from this cycle (Murali, 2021). Additionally, the search results mention that Eastern philosophies and religions, like those found in Hinduism and Buddhism, often explore ideas of the afterlife, reincarnation, and the immortality of the soul (Rosenzweig & HALLO, 1985). The review of previous studies results suggests that Eastern traditions, such as Islamic mysticism, see death as part of a "path of returning to the original source" through inner cognition and spiritual craving (Yun et al., 2022). This aligns with the Eastern concept of the cyclicity and repeatability of the universe, where death is not seen as the final end but rather a transition or transformation (Chu & Jang, 2021).

Western philosophy has explored a range of perspectives on death, including existentialist, Epicurean, dialectical, and religious, highlighting the diverse and complex nature of this fundamental human experience. According to the Existentialist View, Death gives meaning to life by highlighting its finite nature (MOMEYER, 1982). Similarly, Epicurean Views that death is the end of consciousness and should not be feared. The Epicurean perspective holds that death is not something to be concerned about, as it marks the cessation of sensation and experience (MOMEYER, 1982). From the Dialectical Perspective, Death can be viewed as the "possibility of impossibility" (Hegel, Heidegger) or the "impossibility of possibility" (Levinas, Blanchot) (Kaushal, 2022). Additionally, the Religious and Spiritual Perspective states that Western philosophical thought often grapples with questions of the afterlife and the nature of the soul (MOMEYER, 1982). Philosophical and religious perspectives on death can be in dialogue, exploring ethical implications and the meaning of mortality (Davidson, 2015).

Death attitude is a crucial concept in understanding how individuals cope with the inevitability of death and how these attitudes influence their decision-making, behaviors, and overall well-being (Maiden, 2005). The concept of death attitude encompasses individuals' feelings and beliefs regarding death, including fear, anxiety, acceptance, avoidance, or denial. Wong's model and other scales categorize death attitudes into components like Fear of Death and Neutral Acceptance. Understanding one's death attitude is crucial in psychology and healthcare, influencing mental well-being, coping strategies, and end-of-life decision-making (He & Li, 2022). Death attitude involves individuals' emotional responses and beliefs about death, affecting how they cope and provide care at the end of life. It involves a multidimensional framework reflecting stable psychological tendencies towards death, categorized into positive and negative attitudes. Positive attitudes include neutral acceptance, approach acceptance, and escape acceptance, while negative attitudes encompass fear of death and death avoidance (Han et al., 2023). Factors influencing death attitudes encompass a range of personal, cultural, and situational aspects. Gender differences, religious beliefs, personal experiences, family attitudes, education, occupational factors, cultural background, and psychological traits all play a role in shaping individuals' attitudes toward death. These factors interact intricately to influence how individuals perceive and cope with mortality. Understanding these influences is crucial for providing tailored support and interventions for individuals grappling with death anxiety or related concerns (He & Li, 2022).

The research on death attitudes demonstrates an impressive internationality, indicating a global interest and contribution to the study of bereavement, death attitudes, and suicide (Neimeyer & Vallerga, 2015). Recent research explores historical perspectives on death, particularly in the Age of Enlightenment, tracing themes related to medicalization, de-Christianization, sentimentality, and changes in attitudes toward death. This trend reflects a continued interest in understanding cultural and historical influences on death attitudes (Freedman, 2024). A growing trend in neuroscience research focuses on necroptosis, a

regulated form of cell death related to various diseases. This specialized research area demonstrates the diversification and expansion of death studies into interdisciplinary fields (Yan et al., 2021).

There are 1,550,321 death attitude-related publications (article + proceeding) found in Dimensions in total which shows the global interest of researchers in the study of death attitude. So it encourages the bibliometric analysis of scientific papers on the death attitude. It will support understanding the trend of publication on death attitude and also support finding out the research gap in the particular context of a country like Nepal.

RESEARCH METHODS

Respondents

This study was based on a systematic review, which involved a comprehensive and structured approach to identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing all relevant studies on a particular topic. This process included defining specific criteria for selecting studies, conducting a thorough search of multiple databases, assessing the quality and validity of the included studies, and using rigorous methods to analyze and interpret the collected data.

Search Strategy and Data Sources

The data used for the bibliometric analysis was collected from the 'Dimensions AI' database. The published death attitude-related articles and proceedings were collected by using some filtration conditions.

Table 1. Data filtration process: the study used the following filtration process:

Data source	Dimensions
Keywords	Death attitude
Keywords Search in	Title and abstract
Total articles	40437
Publication Year	2015 to 2024 (10 years)
Total articles	14893
Research Categories	3902-Education Policy, Sociology, and Philosophy 44 – Human Society
Total Articles	1722
Publication types	Article and Proceeding
Total Articles	1286
Data collection date	24 April 2024

Eligibility Criteria

Inclusion Criteria

Only peer-reviewed journal articles and conference papers were considered. The subject areas covered included Education Policy, Sociology, Philosophy, and Human Society. Articles needed to be relevant to these fields to ensure a focused and comprehensive analysis within the specified academic domains.

Exclusion Criteria

The exclusion criteria for this study included books, monographs, and unpublished documents. These sources were excluded to ensure that the analysis was based solely on peer-reviewed articles and conference papers, which are typically subject to rigorous academic scrutiny and quality control.

Data analysis

This study was conducted using VOSviewer, a software tool for constructing and visualizing bibliometric networks. It facilitated the mapping of co-authorship, citation, and keyword co-occurrence networks to identify patterns and relationships within the data. The visualizations generated by VOSviewer provided insights into the structure and dynamics of the research field under investigation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Year-wise publication

The visualization shows the number of publications published each year.

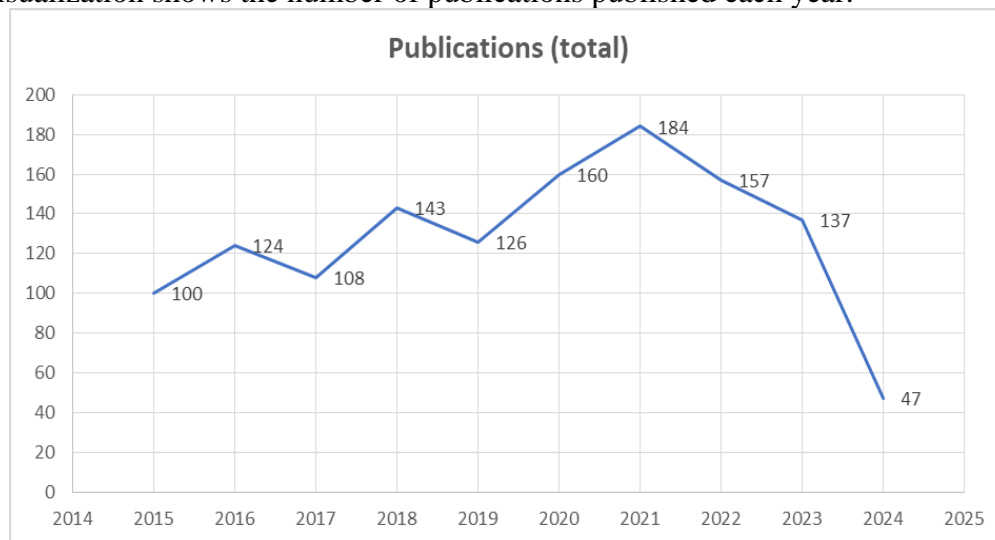


Figure 1. Year-wise publication

Figure 1 delineates the year-wise distribution of publications related to Death Attitude from 2015 to 2024, providing insights into the evolution of research output in this domain over the past decade. The number of publications exhibits fluctuations over the years, with a general increasing trend observed from 2015 to 2021. In 2015, there were 100 publications, which gradually increased to a peak of 184 publications in 2021, indicating a heightened scholarly interest and engagement with the topic of Death Attitude. However, starting in 2022, there is a noticeable decline in the number of publications, dropping to 47 in 2024. This decrease suggests potential shifts in research focus, publication dynamics, or changes in scholarly priorities. Nevertheless, despite the fluctuations, the total number of publications over the entire period amounts to 1286, underscoring the sustained attention and ongoing scholarly discourse surrounding Death Attitude within the academic community.

Year-wise citation

Publication citations are the number of times that publications have been cited by other publications in the database. The visualization shows the number of citations received each year.

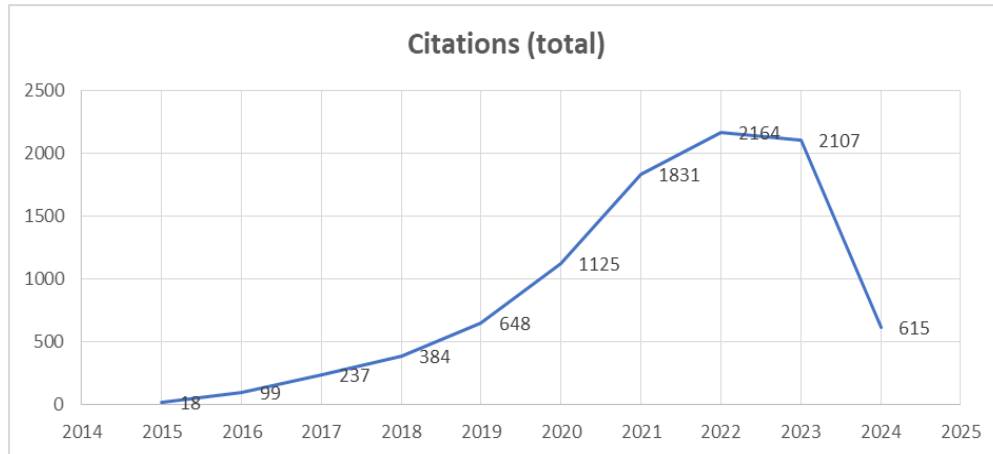


Figure 2. Year-wise citation

Figure 2 presents the citation count of articles related to Death Attitude, calculated annually from 2015 to 2024, along with the percentage distribution of citations over the total count. The citation count shows a consistent upward trend over the years, reflecting the increasing recognition and impact of research in this area. In 2015, there were 18 citations, which gradually rose to a peak of 2164 citations in 2022, indicating a substantial acknowledgment and engagement with the scholarly work on Death Attitude. However, there is a slight decline in citations in 2023 and 2024, with 2107 and 615 citations respectively. Despite this decline, the total number of citations over the entire period amounts to 9228, highlighting the significant influence and ongoing scholarly interest in understanding Death Attitude. The percentage distribution demonstrates the increasing prominence of this field within the academic landscape, with citations accounting for 6.66% in 2024, compared to 0.20% in 2015, emphasizing the growing impact and relevance of research in this domain.

Year-wise publication with citation

Publication citations are the number of times that publications have been cited by other publications in the database. The visualization shows the percentage of publications with ≥ 1 citation published each year.

Figure 3 illustrates a declining trend in the percentage of publications with citations across the years from 2015 to 2024, reflecting potential shifts in research impact or dissemination. In 2015, a notable 80% of publications received citations, suggesting a high level of recognition and engagement with research outputs. However, this percentage gradually decreases over the subsequent years, with 2024 marking a significant decline to just 2.13%. This downward trajectory indicates a diminishing level of citation uptake or acknowledgment of scholarly work within the academic community over time. Such a trend may signify various factors, including changes in research practices, shifts in publication dynamics, or alterations in citation behaviors. Understanding and addressing the reasons behind this decline could be crucial for maintaining the visibility and impact of scholarly research in the coming years.

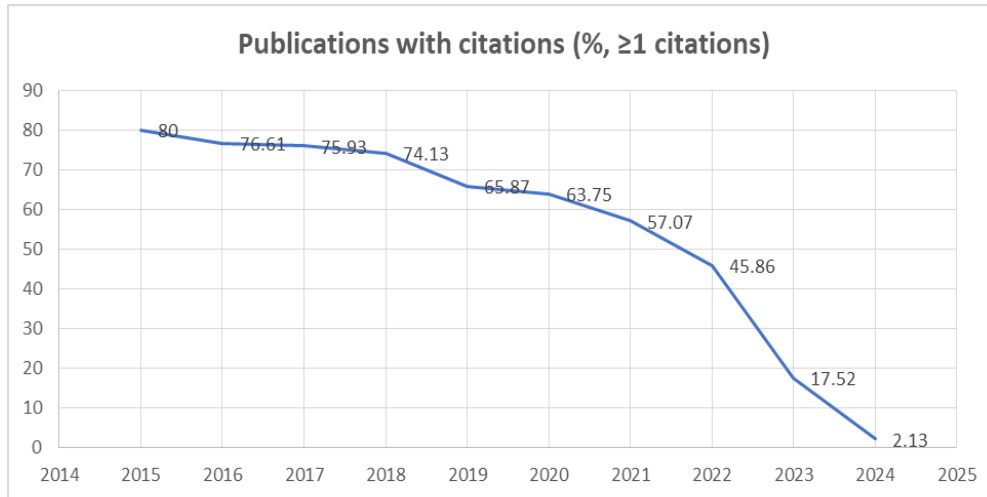


Figure 3. Year-wise publication with citation

Number of publications in each research category

Publication citations are the number of times that publications have been cited by other publications.

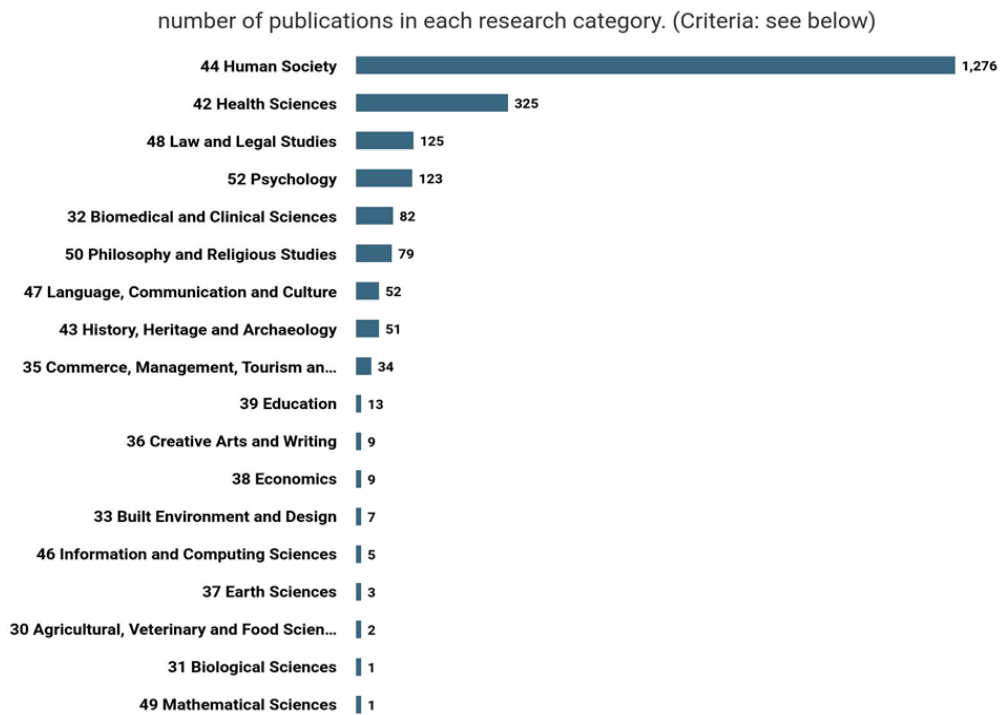


Figure 4. Number of publications in each research category

Figure 4 provides a detailed breakdown of the number of publications related to death attitudes within various research categories, offering insights into the distribution of scholarly work across different fields. "Human Society" emerges as the dominant research category with a substantial number of publications, totaling 1276, indicating a significant focus on societal issues and human behavior. Following closely behind, "Health Sciences" and "Law and Legal Studies" demonstrate considerable research activity, with 325 and 125 publications respectively, highlighting the importance of these fields in addressing healthcare and legal challenges. "Psychology" and "Biomedical and Clinical Sciences" also

feature prominently, with 123 and 82 publications respectively, reflecting ongoing research efforts in understanding human behavior and medical advancements. Additionally, "Philosophy and Religious Studies" and "Language, Communication, and Culture" contribute significantly to scholarly discourse, with 79 and 52 publications respectively, showcasing diverse perspectives on philosophical and cultural phenomena. Other research categories such as "History, Heritage, and Archaeology," "Commerce, Management, Tourism, and Services," and "Education" also make notable contributions, albeit with fewer publications. The distribution of publications across these diverse research categories underscores the interdisciplinary nature of academic inquiry and the multifaceted approaches employed in addressing complex societal challenges and advancing knowledge across various domains.

Use of keywords in selected articles



Figure 5. Keywords

The bibliometric analysis of scientific literature related to death attitude shows that the majority of the literature has used the word ‘death’ in the title followed by the attitude, dying, grief, and anxiety. The use of keywords is presented in below Figure 5 where larger size stands as high use in the title of the research article.

Word net visualization

Below figure 6 presents the connection of words. The word ‘death’ is the main word used in the reviewed articles. The word is connected with the dying, demise, expiry, die, decease, destruction, end, last and other related synonyms word

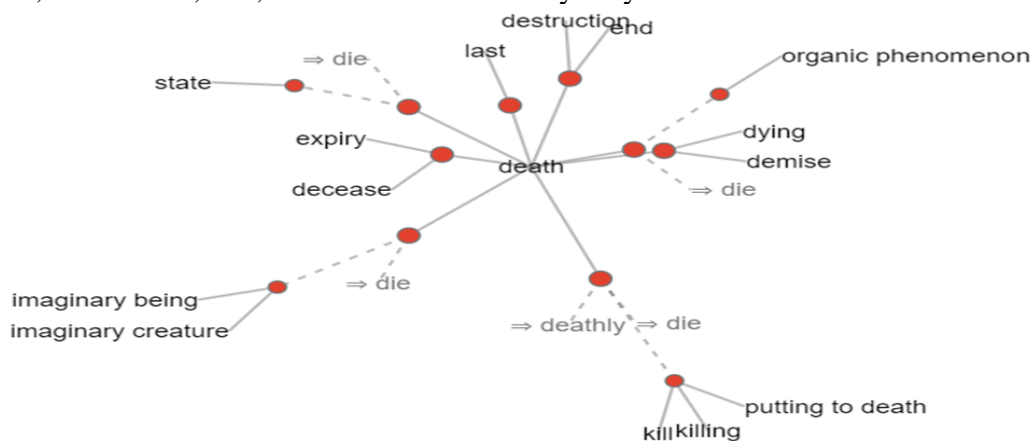


Figure 6. Word net visualization

Top Sources of scientific papers on Death attitude

Table 2. Top Sources of scientific papers on Death attitude

Source	Documents	Citations	Document-wise citation ratio
Anthropology And Medicine	6	39	6.5
Criminal Justice Studies	5	47	9.4
Death Studies	148	1655	11.2
Experimental And Clinical Transplantation	7	73	10.4
Health & Social Care In The Community	10	137	13.7
Health Affairs	6	87	14.5
Indian Journal Of Medical Ethics	6	36	6.0
Institut Für Demographie - Vid	5	3	0.6
International Journal For Equity In Health	5	52	10.4
International Journal Of Disaster Risk Reduction	5	26	5.2
International Journal Of Drug Policy	7	132	18.9
International Journal Of Environ-mental Research And Public Health	11	99	9.0
International Journal Of Offender Therapy And Comparative Criminology	7	38	5.4
Journal Of Social Work In End-Of-Life & Palliative Care	34	409	12.0
Medical Anthropology	6	55	9.2
Plos One	35	1261	36.0
Procedia - Social And Behavioral Sciences	5	29	5.8
Qualitative Health Research	8	121	15.1
Social Science & Medicine	23	824	35.8
Social Sciences	6	28	4.7



Figure 7. Top Sources of scientific papers on Death attitude

The Table 2 and figure 7 provide insights into the sources contributing to the discourse on death attitudes, showcasing both the quantity of documents produced and their citation impact. Topping the list is "Death Studies" with a substantial publication output of 148 documents, accompanied by a notable citation count of 1655, highlighting its significant influence in the field. "Journal of Social Work in End-of-Life & Palliative Care" follows closely, with 34 documents and 409 citations, indicating its considerable contribution to the literature on this topic. Other noteworthy sources include "PLOS ONE" with 35 documents and a remarkable 1261 citations, as well as "Social Science & Medicine" with 23 documents and 824 citations, reflecting their significant presence and impact in the academic community. Additionally, while some sources exhibit lower publication numbers, such as "Institut Für Demographie - VID" with 5 documents, their citation impact varies, indicating diverse levels of influence within the scholarly discourse on death attitudes.

Top three organizations based on citation



Figure 8. Top three organizations based on citation

Among the organizations listed, the top three cited institutions based on the number of citations received are Syracuse University, University of California, Irvine, and Cornell University. Syracuse University stands out with three documents garnering a total of 583 citations, indicating significant recognition and impact of its research contributions. Following closely, the University of California, Irvine, has four documents cited a total of 534 times, highlighting its substantial influence in the academic sphere. Cornell University, with three documents cited 432 times, also demonstrates a strong presence in scholarly discourse. These organizations' notable citation counts suggest their contributions to advancing knowledge and research across various fields, reflecting their status as leading institutions in academic research and innovation.

Top ten Countries based on documents and citations about Death Attitude

Table 3. Top 10 Countries based on documents and citations about Death Attitude

Country	Documents	Citations
Australia	60	732
Canada	38	413
China	38	276
France	14	588
Germany	28	272
Israel	21	248
South Africa	8	257
Spain	24	256
United Kingdom	90	1289
United States	273	4047

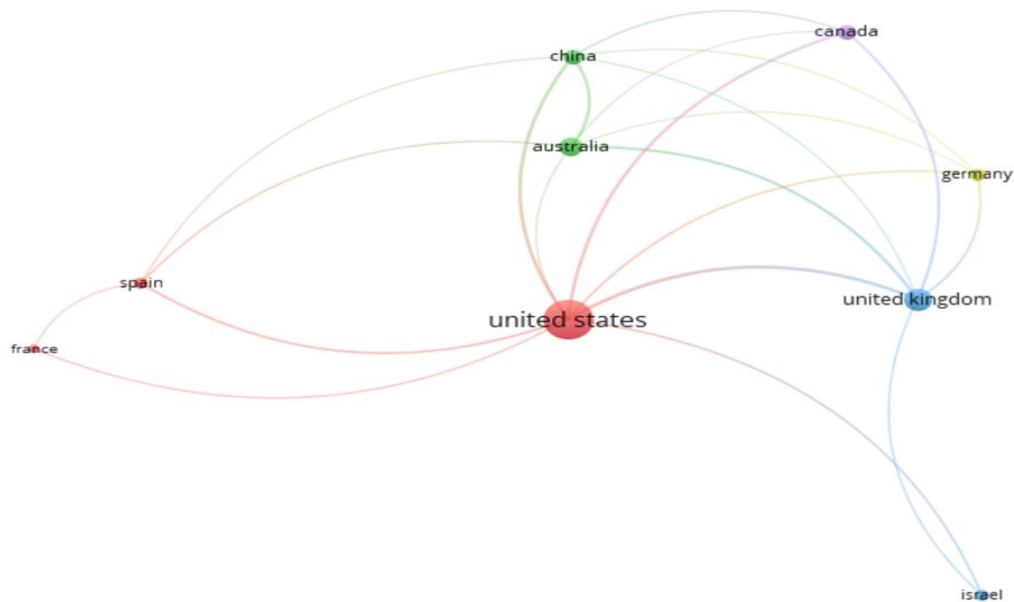


Figure 9. Top ten Countries based on documents and citation about Death Attitude

The table presents a comparative analysis of the top ten countries based on their research output and impact, measured by the number of documents published and the citations received. Among these countries, the United States stands out with the highest number of documents published, totaling 273, and an impressive citation count of 4047, indicating its significant contribution and influence in the global research landscape. Following closely behind, the United Kingdom demonstrates a strong research presence, publishing 90 documents with 1289 citations. Australia, Canada, and China also exhibit notable research activity, with Australia publishing 60 documents and receiving 732 citations, while Canada and China each contribute 38 documents with 413 and 276 citations, respectively. France, Germany, Israel, South Africa, and Spain complete the list with varying degrees of research output and impact, reflecting the diverse contributions of countries worldwide to the advancement of knowledge in various fields.

Bibliographic coupling with death attitude-related documents

Table 4. Bibliographic coupling with death attitude-related documents

id	Document	Citations	Total link strength
77	Fleming (2016)	98	0
195	Neimeyer (2019)	135	3
214	Mason (2020)	116	3
240	Gadarian (2021)	423	0
241	Ward (2020)	312	0
285	Hager (2020)	148	0
381	Aassve (2021)	108	0
451	Howe (2019)	92	0
832	Dukes (2017)	108	0
1100	Chadwick (2016)	148	0

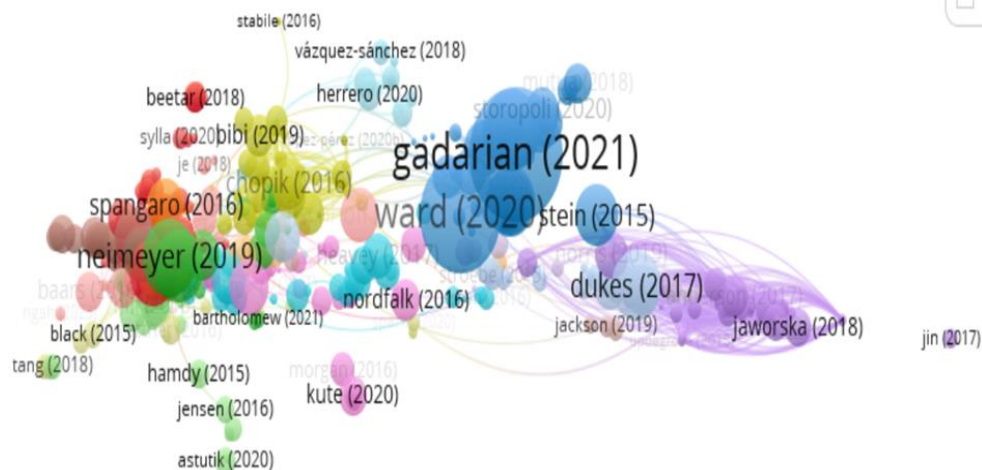


Figure 10. Bibliographic coupling with death attitude-related documents

The table presents a bibliographic coupling analysis with death attitude-related documents, revealing the interconnectedness and strength of links between various scholarly works. Among the documents examined, Neimeyer (2019) and Mason (2020) stand out with a total link strength of 3, indicating strong bibliographic connections with other documents in the dataset. These documents likely serve as key references or central pieces within the scholarly discourse on the death attitude. In contrast, other documents such as Gadarian (2021), and Ward (2020) show a high citation (423, and 312 respectively) but its total link strength is 0, suggesting limited or no direct bibliographic connections with other documents in the dataset. This analysis provides insights into the interrelatedness of research works within the field of death attitude and highlights influential pieces that play pivotal roles in shaping scholarly discussions and understanding in this area.

Discussion

The analysis of publications related to death attitudes over the past decade reveals several significant trends and patterns. Firstly, there has been a notable increase in publications from 2015 to 2021, with a peak of 184 publications in 2021. This suggests a growing scholarly interest and engagement with the topic of death attitude. However, there is a concerning decline in the number of publications in 2022 and 2023, which may indicate shifting research priorities or other factors impacting research output in this area. Despite these fluctuations, the total number of publications remains substantial, indicating sustained attention to the topic within the academic community.

Moreover, the citation analysis demonstrates a consistent upward trend in the number of citations received by death attitude-related articles. The total number of citations rose from 18 in 2015 to 2164 in 2022, underscoring the increasing recognition and impact of research in this field. However, there is a slight decline in citations in 2023 and 2024, which warrants further investigation into potential factors contributing to this trend.

Additionally, the analysis of the percentage of publications with citations reveals a concerning decline over the years, with only 2.13% of publications receiving citations in 2024 compared to 80% in 2015. This decline in citation uptake suggests potential challenges in disseminating and recognizing scholarly work within the academic community, which may have implications for the visibility and impact of research on death attitudes.

Furthermore, the analysis of the Field Citation Ratio (FCR) and Relative Citation Ratio

(RCR) provides insights into the citation impact of death attitude-related publications. While the FCR remained relatively stable from 2015 to 2018, there was a significant decline starting in 2019, with the FCR reaching zero in 2023 and 2024. Similarly, the RCR exhibited fluctuations over the years, with a notable decline in 2022 and subsequent years. These findings highlight potential challenges in maintaining the visibility and influence of scholarly work on death attitude and underscore the importance of addressing factors impacting citation impact and research dissemination.

In terms of research categories, the analysis reveals a diverse distribution of publications across various fields, with "Human Society," "Health Sciences," and "Law and Legal Studies" emerging as dominant research categories. This interdisciplinary approach reflects the multifaceted nature of death attitude research and the importance of addressing societal, health-related, and legal aspects of death and dying.

Considering the top ten countries based on the number of documents published and the citations received. Among these countries, the United States stands out with the highest number of documents published, totaling 273, and an impressive citation count of 4047, followed by the United Kingdom publishing 90 documents with 1289 citations, Australia publishing 60 documents and receiving 732 citations, while Canada and China each contribute 38 documents with 413 and 276 citations, respectively.

CONCLUSION

Listening competence serves as an essential measure for evaluating a foreign language learner's overall linguistic knowledge and communicative abilities. In the context of the TOEFL test, the listening comprehension section is particularly emphasized by educators, largely due to consistently low scores observed among students in this domain. This section of the test often integrates a significant number of pragmatic items that challenge students to not only understand spoken English at a literal level but also to infer implicit meanings a skill that is essential for effective real-world communication. Recognizing the difficulty that students face in dealing with these pragmatic challenges, there is a clear necessity to focus more intently on enhancing students' abilities to comprehend implicature as delineated by Grice's theories.

The importance of teaching these skills is underscored by the insights provided by Grice's theories, which elucidate how native speakers intuit the implicit meanings conveyed by their interlocutors through the cooperative principle. This principle is foundational in helping listeners infer meanings that are not explicitly stated but are implied by the speaker, relying on the shared understanding of conversational contexts and norms. Effective training in this area involves direct application of these theories in the classroom, equipping students with the tools to navigate complex pragmatic cues within the TOEFL listening tasks. By enabling students to proficiently handle utterances that involve implicature, educators can significantly boost their students' chances of success on the test. Therefore, it is imperative that lecturers not only impart knowledge of English vocabulary and grammar but also focus on developing students' pragmatic comprehension skills, which are crucial for achieving a high level of understanding in listening comprehension sections of language proficiency exams.

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