

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

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47175/rielsj.v5i3.960>

| Tej Bahadur Karki<sup>1</sup> | Laveena D'Mello<sup>2</sup> | Dasarath Neupane<sup>3</sup> |  
| Sajeeb Kumar Shrestha<sup>4</sup> | Dipak Mahat<sup>5,\*</sup> |

<sup>1,2</sup> Social Work Department,  
Srinivas University, Mangalore,  
Karnataka State, India

<sup>3</sup> Social Science and  
Humanities, Srinivas  
University, Mangalore,  
Karnataka State, India

<sup>4</sup> Faculty of Management,  
Tribhuvan University, Nepal

<sup>5</sup> Faculty of Management,  
Institute of Research and  
Innovation, APU, India

\*[ipakmahatdm2047@mail.com](mailto:ipakmahatdm2047@mail.com)



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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:

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

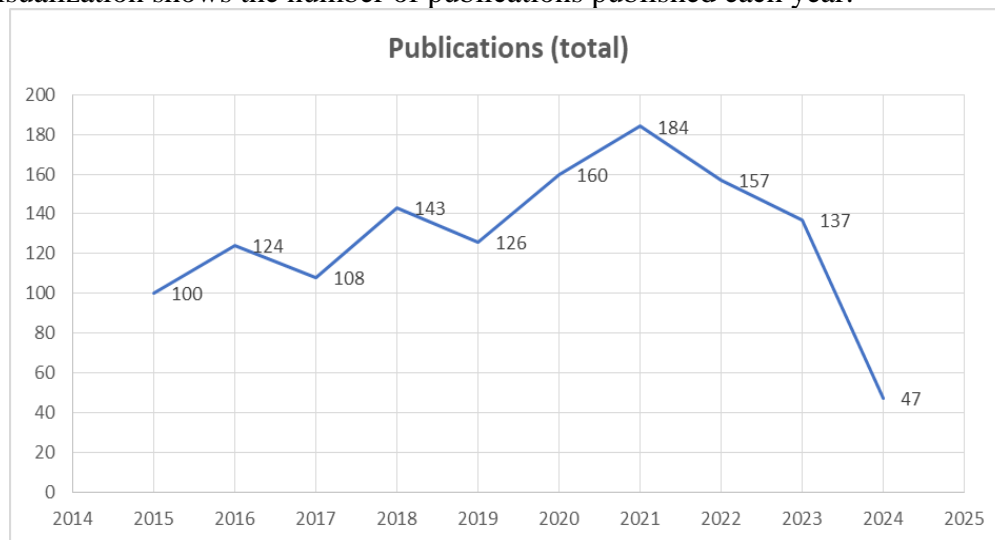
### Data analysis

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.

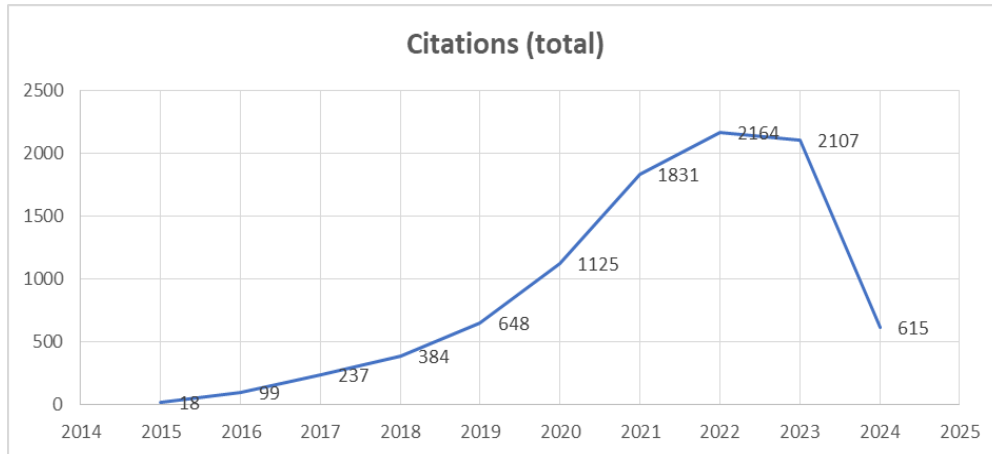


**Figure 1.** Year-wise publication

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.



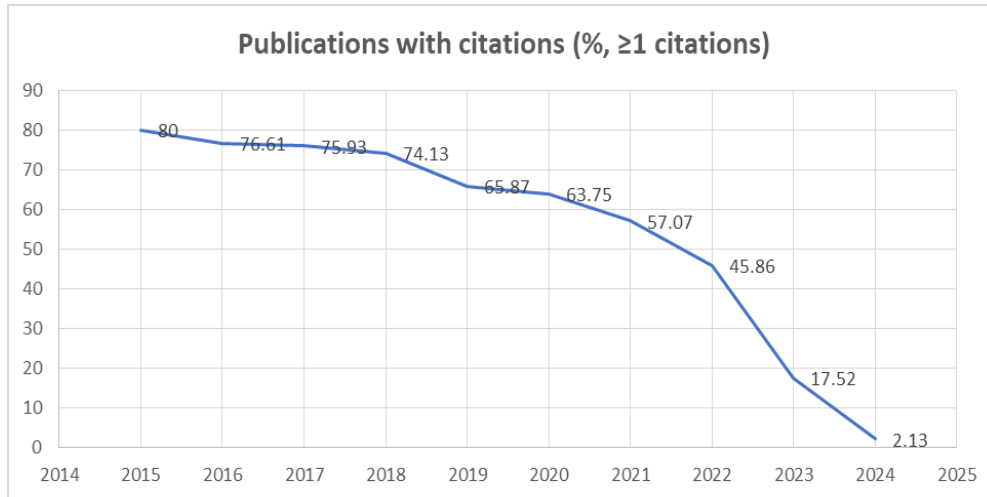
**Figure 2. Year-wise citation**

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  $\geq 1$  citation published each year.

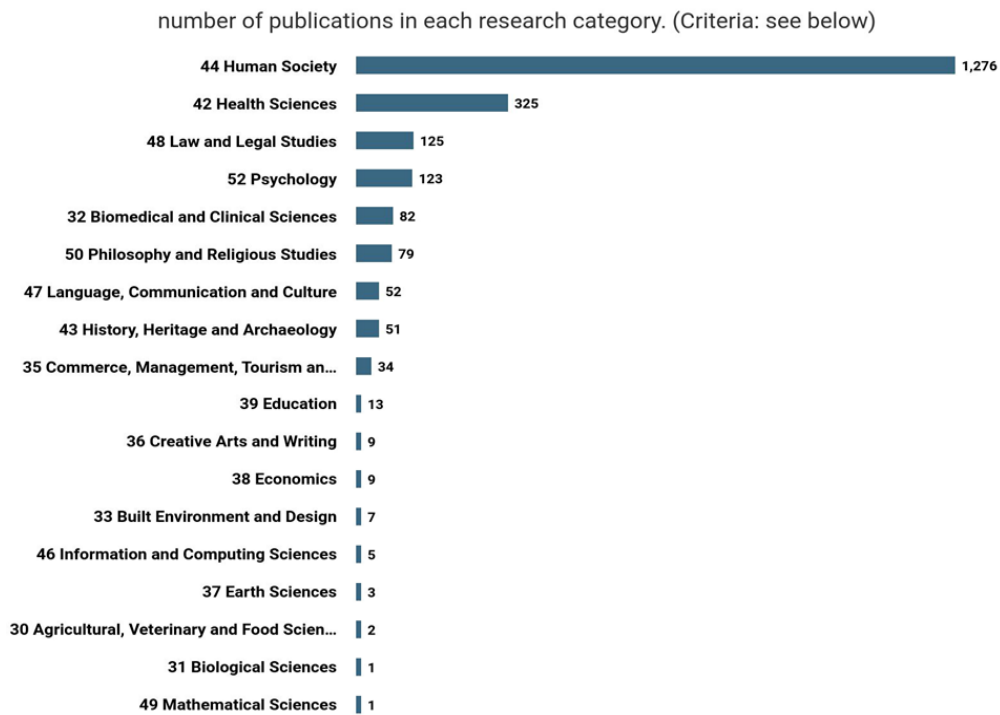
Figure 3 illustrates a declining trend in the percentage of publications with citations across the years from 2015 to 2024, reflecting potential shifts in research impact or dissemination. In 2015, a notable 80% of publications received citations, suggesting a high level of recognition and engagement 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



**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**



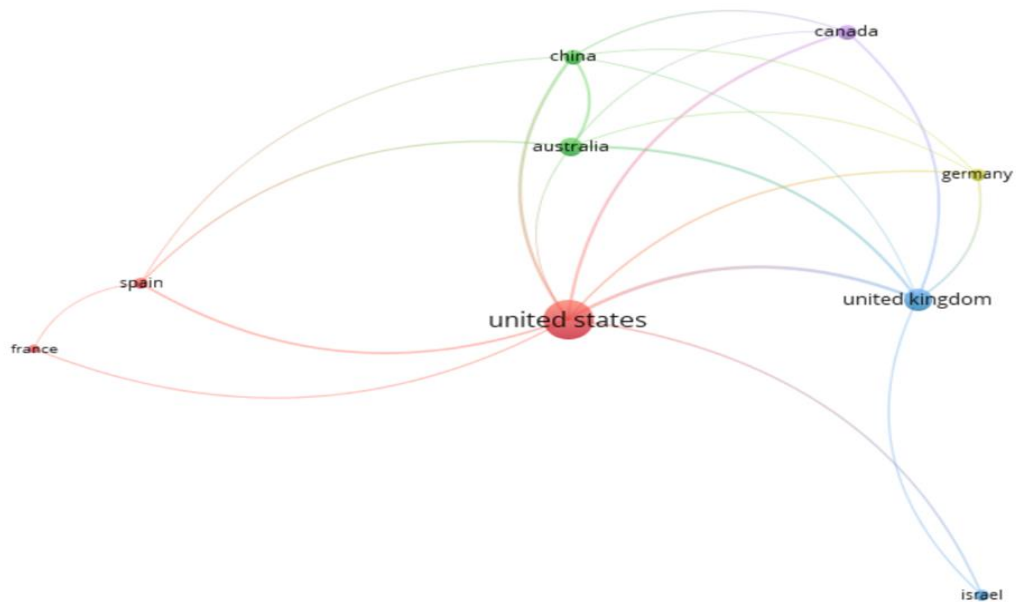
**Figure 8.** Top three organizations based on citation

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 |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>Australia</b>      | 60        | 732       |
| <b>Canada</b>         | 38        | 413       |
| <b>China</b>          | 38        | 276       |
| <b>France</b>         | 14        | 588       |
| <b>Germany</b>        | 28        | 272       |
| <b>Israel</b>         | 21        | 248       |
| <b>South Africa</b>   | 8         | 257       |
| <b>Spain</b>          | 24        | 256       |
| <b>United Kingdom</b> | 90        | 1289      |
| <b>United States</b>  | 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

| <b>id</b> | <b>Document</b> | <b>Citations</b> | <b>Total link strength</b> |
|-----------|-----------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| 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                          |



(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

In conclusion, the bibliometric analysis of previous studies related to death attitude provides valuable insights into the evolution, impact, and interdisciplinary nature of research in this area. The increasing number of publications and citations over the past decade demonstrates growing scholarly interest and recognition of the importance of understanding death attitudes. However, challenges such as declining citation uptake and fluctuating citation impact highlight the need for further investigation and efforts to enhance the visibility and dissemination of research on death attitudes. Additionally, the diverse distribution of publications across research categories underscores the interdisciplinary nature of death attitude research and the importance of addressing societal, health-related, and legal aspects of death and dying in future studies. Overall, this analysis contributes to our understanding of the current landscape of death attitude research and provides valuable insights for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers working in this field. Further investigation is needed to understand the factors contributing to fluctuations in research output, citation impact, and citation uptake. This may involve conducting qualitative studies, surveys, or interviews to explore researcher perspectives, funding trends, publication practices, and societal attitudes toward death and dying.

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