

Editorial Note

The Progress of the SDGs Research

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The global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide an evidence-based policy for sustainable development planning and programming to halt poverty, gain prosperity and protect the planet by 2030 (Parmentola et al., 2022). The SDGs consist of 17 goals and 169 targets that emphasize the balance between economic, social and environmental sustainability. Since the framework launched in 2015, there have been growing international policies, practices, innovations, assessments and research activities related to such issues (Caballero, 2019).

As a part of policies and a policy itself, it is important to see the progress of the SDG from the research perspective. The importance of evidence-based policy--research utilization in policy-- is increasingly recognized (Tseng, 2012). Recent reports calling for more efforts to improve the quality of policies attract attention to desired outcomes (Hanney et al., 2003). The research provides better information and more prudence in the policy process. As stated by Fayomi et al., (2018), policymakers and practitioners use research for many reasons, including instrumental, conceptual, and political, which is applied in the context of the implementation of the SDGs. This editorial note presents a piece of initial information concerning research activities on SDGs for understanding the uses of research in SDGs policy and practices.

A wide range of research institutions supports the SDGs to ensure that knowledge is documented and spread. One leading body to provide an information research platform is the RELX SDG Resource Centre (RELX SDGS Resources Centre, 2022). The center a global strategic alignment supported by Elsevier—one of the biggest journal publishers. The public can access articles, reports, tools and activities related to the SDGs based on topic category and region. Another supporter of SDGs research is the university. With its capabilities and function, the university provides support to enhance knowledge, skill, and research to achieve SDGs. As more universities turn their attention to the SDGs, many study centers emerge to dedicate research to achieving the SDGs (Bhowmik et al., 2017).

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The JISDEP analyses the research on SDGs using bibliometric tools to reveal the progress of the SDGs from the research published. Data has been harvested by using Publish or Perish from “Google Scholar (GS)” and “Scopus” databases. Bibliographic database was processed and analyzed using VOSviewer. Keywords “SDGs AND (research OR study)” were searched from both GS and Scopus databases with the parameters of the journals published between 2015 and 2021. The GS searching resulted in 1000 (maximum allowed), and Scopus was 200 (maximum allowed). Parameters were set in VOSviewer, such as field to be extracted, “Title and abstract field”, binary counting method, the minimum number of occurrences in a term (10), and the number of terms (70). A small number of terms were excluded, including “example” and “exact”. The result of the VOSviewer

analyzed was 68 items, 6 clusters, 690 links, and total strength is about 1457.

The main theme of research on SDGs, from the most to least popular, is described in Figure 1a. The development goal is the most discussed since this term is related to SDGs. Other issues discussed in the research are review, industry, company, evidence, data, practice and economy. Other keywords in the discussion of the SDGs research are article, application, partnership, concept, Nigeria, universities, South Africa and others. The result of this study shows the topic discussed has not yet covered the 17 SDGs goals. There is no keyword such as poverty, health, gender, clean water, energy, climate change, and peace and justice.

In the context of the research phase, Figure 1b explains that current research on the SDGs issues focused on China, covid, evidence, company, economy, data, students, relationships and Indonesia. It is worth mentioning that although the SDGs started in 2015, research activities were only initiated in 2018. Other issues such as city, tourism, industry, concept, article, Nigeria, MDG and support became the attention in 2018 and 2019. This implies that there are shifting goal issues and countries related to SDGs research.

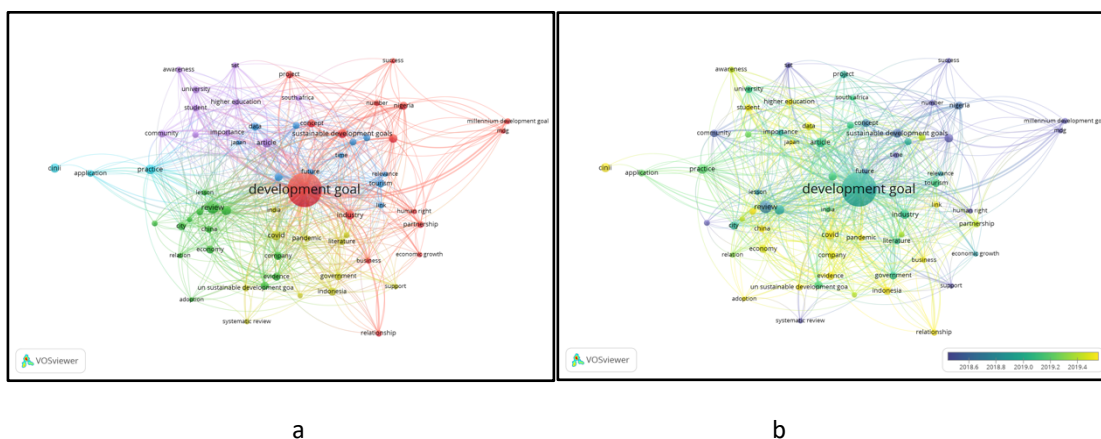


Figure 1. Visualization of Themes and Period of the Research on SDGs

This initial study using bibliometric data from GS and Scopus database shows that not all 17 issues targeted in the SDGs appeared in the research activities from 2015 to 2021. Issues such as industry, company, evidence, data, practice and economy are most commonly used in SDGs research. The topics of SDGs and countries involved in the research activities are also changing since the beginning of SDGs implementation. This initial study implies that more research covering all 17 goals and 169 targets should be mapped to ensure that all issues are considered equally important. Future research should cover the quality and applicability of the SDGs implementation. Continued assessments and evaluations are essential to achieve the SDGs in 2030—only seven years left.

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