Public Policy and Public Service Management: A Bibliometric Mapping of Scientific Research and Emerging Trends

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ABSTRACT
This study analyzes the intellectual structure and research evolution in the field of public policy and public service management through a bibliometric approach using data from Scopus between 2019 and 2025. VOSviewer was employed to visualize citation networks, keyword co-occurrence, and thematic developments. The results show a significant increase in publications focusing on governance innovation, digital public services, and citizen participation. The network visualization identifies three major clusters: governance reform, e-government implementation, and performance accountability. The overlay visualization illustrates a shift from traditional bureaucratic models (2019 - 2021) toward digital transformation and sustainable governance (2022 - 2025). The density visualization reveals the dominance of studies originating from Europe and Asia, reflecting global interest in adaptive governance. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of trends and collaboration patterns within the field, offering insights for scholars and policymakers to enhance the effectiveness and inclusivity of public service management.

INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, the world of work has undergone significant In an era of rapid digitalization and evolving governance expectations, public policy and public service management have become central fields of inquiry to understand how governments can deliver services effectively, equitably, and responsively (Prabawa, Mutiarin, Purnomo, & Roengtam, 2024). Scholars have pointed out that the shift toward digital public services is not only a technical innovation but also a reflection of broader institutional and societal change, with implications for transparency, participation, and accountability (Djatmiko, Sinaga, & Pawirosumarto, 2025). Meanwhile, increasing citizen demands, demographic change, and global crises (e.g. pandemics, economic volatility) have placed pressure on public service systems to become more resilient and inclusive (Andhika, 2025; Susniwati, Kurniawati, & Susilawati, 2024).

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Recent bibliometric studies have mapped research on public sector digitalization, showing that publications on this theme have grown significantly in number and thematic complexity during the past few years (Prabawa et al., 2024; Sulmiah, Sakawati, & Widyawati, 2025). For instance, Prabawa et al. (2024) found that public sector digitalization studies increasingly involve cross-national collaboration and emphasize themes such as digital transformation, performance, and public value. Sulmiah et al. (2025) observed similar patterns in sustainable public service innovation, noting particularly strong interest in stakeholder collaboration, organizational capacity, and geographical disparities. These trends suggest a maturing research field that is expanding both in scope and in methodological sophistication.

Citizen engagement is emerging as a pivotal dimension in the governance and public policy literature of recent years. Studies have explored how e-government initiatives, crowdsourcing platforms, and participatory design influence public service delivery and policy outcomes (Al Araby, 2024; Popescu et al., 2024). Al Araby (2024) argues that citizen engagement has transformed from a peripheral concern into a structural component of governance, enabled by improved ICT infrastructure, policy design, and civic readiness. Popescu et al. (2024) similarly highlight how citizens' perceptions of digital public services play a crucial role in determining the success of service innovations, especially in contexts where trust and accessibility are variable.

Another important focus in recent policy and management research has been how governments measure and ensure performance, quality, and service outcomes. Performance management systems have been evaluated for their ability to produce accountability, efficiency, and user satisfaction (Back Koerich, Mussi, Guerra, & Casagrande, 2024; Andhika, 2025). Back Koerich et al. (2024) in a case study of legislative branches in Brazil document how electronic information systems and performance metrics shape institutional behaviors and transparency. Andhika (2025) maps emerging research trends in public service management and notes increasing attention to digital transformation, leadership, public participation, and public value.

Public policy innovation, particularly in the Global South, has also drawn scholarly attention in the period 2019 - 2025. Research in Indonesia, for instance, shows both the promise and challenges of implementing policy innovations via e-government, especially regarding infrastructure, equity, and inclusion (Susniwati et al., 2024; Djatmiko et al., 2025). Susniwati et al. (2024) research underlines that while digital platforms can simplify administrative processes and improve transparency, there remain obstacles in ensuring equitable access, especially in rural areas. Djatmiko et al. (2025) further emphasize that

marginalized communities often face both infrastructural and institutional barriers in accessing digital public services.

Despite these advances, research gaps persist in terms of regional representation, the interplay of ethics and governance, and the long-term impacts of policy reforms. Sulmiah et al. (2025) point out that publications are concentrated in Europe and Latin America, leaving many Global South contexts underrepresented. Similarly, Andhika (2025) notes a need for deeper investigation into how ethical considerations, such as data privacy, algorithmic bias, and digital equity, are integrated within public service management studies. Also, assessing long-term outcomes of digital transformation beyond pilot programs remains relatively rare.

Moreover, methodological diversity in recent studies has increased, but much of the literature still relies heavily on descriptive, qualitative, or case-based designs (Al Araby, 2024; Prabawa et al., 2024). Quantitative and mixed-methods designs are rising, particularly in measuring service performance and user satisfaction (Back Koerich et al., 2024). Yet, longitudinal studies, comparative cross-country analyses, and large-scale empirical evaluations are less common, limiting our ability to generalize findings across contexts.

Given these trends, there is a strong justification for conducting a bibliometric mapping of scientific research on public policy and public service management from 2019 to 2025. Such mapping will enable the identification of major themes, knowledge clusters, influential authors and institutions, and emerging research fronts. It will also illuminate gaps in geographical, methodological, and thematic coverage, thereby guiding future scholarly agenda and informing policymakers aiming to strengthen public service delivery in the digital era.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a bibliometric approach to systematically examine the structure and evolution of research on public policy and public service management during the period 2019 -2025. Bibliometric analysis provides a quantitative means to identify publication patterns, influential authors, and emerging themes within a defined research domain (Donthu et al., 2021). By mapping the intellectual structure of this field, the study aims to reveal how academic interest in governance and public service management has developed in response to global challenges and digital transformation.

The bibliographic data for this study were collected from two major academic databases: Google Scholar and CrossRef. These databases were selected because they offer extensive coverage of peer-reviewed literature

across multiple disciplines and include open-access publications, ensuring broader inclusion of global scholarship (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). The search query combined relevant keywords such as "public policy," "public service management," "digital governance," and "service innovation," using Boolean operators (AND, OR) to refine the results. The publication range was restricted to 2019 - 2025 to focus on the most recent research trends in the digital governance era.

The data collection process involved exporting metadata—including author names, titles, publication years, journal sources, abstracts, and citation counts in CSV format. A manual cleaning process was performed to remove duplicates, incomplete records, and irrelevant documents that did not align with the study's objectives. Only journal articles and conference proceedings written in English were retained for analysis to maintain consistency and scholarly comparability. This final dataset formed the foundation for subsequent bibliometric visualization and analysis.

The bibliometric analysis was conducted using VOSviewer version 1.6.20, a specialized software for visualizing bibliometric networks such as co-authorship, co-citation, and keyword co-occurrence (Van Eck & Waltman, 2020). The software enables the construction of three visualization types: network visualization, overlay visualization, and density visualization. These visualizations assist in identifying clusters of authors, institutions, and key research themes while illustrating their interconnections and development over time.

In this study, network visualization was used to map co-authorship and co-citation relationships, helping identify collaboration patterns among scholars and influential sources in the field. Overlay visualization was applied to analyze the temporal evolution of keywords, showing shifts in thematic focus from earlier studies to more recent publications. Meanwhile, density visualization highlighted areas of intense research activity by representing the frequency and proximity of keywords in color gradients, indicating hotspots of academic attention.

Descriptive statistical analysis was also performed to identify annual publication trends, citation distributions, and the most frequently occurring keywords. This quantitative assessment provided insights into the research dynamics and growth trajectory of public policy and service management scholarship during 2019 - 2025. Furthermore, the study examined author productivity and institutional contributions to determine which regions and organizations played leading roles in advancing this field.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the findings, data triangulation was applied by comparing results from both Google Scholar and CrossRef databases. Additionally, normalization procedures were used to minimize biases arising from variations in citation metrics across different sources. The bibliometric methodology followed established protocols outlined by Donthu et al. (2021) and Aria and Cuccurullo (2017), ensuring methodological rigor and replicability.

Finally, the bibliometric results were interpreted in connection with broader theoretical perspectives on governance, digital transformation, and public sector innovation. By integrating quantitative bibliometric evidence with qualitative insights, this research provides a comprehensive understanding of the intellectual landscape of public policy and public service management. The chosen methodology thus ensures both scientific validity and practical relevance in mapping research developments from 2019 to 2025.
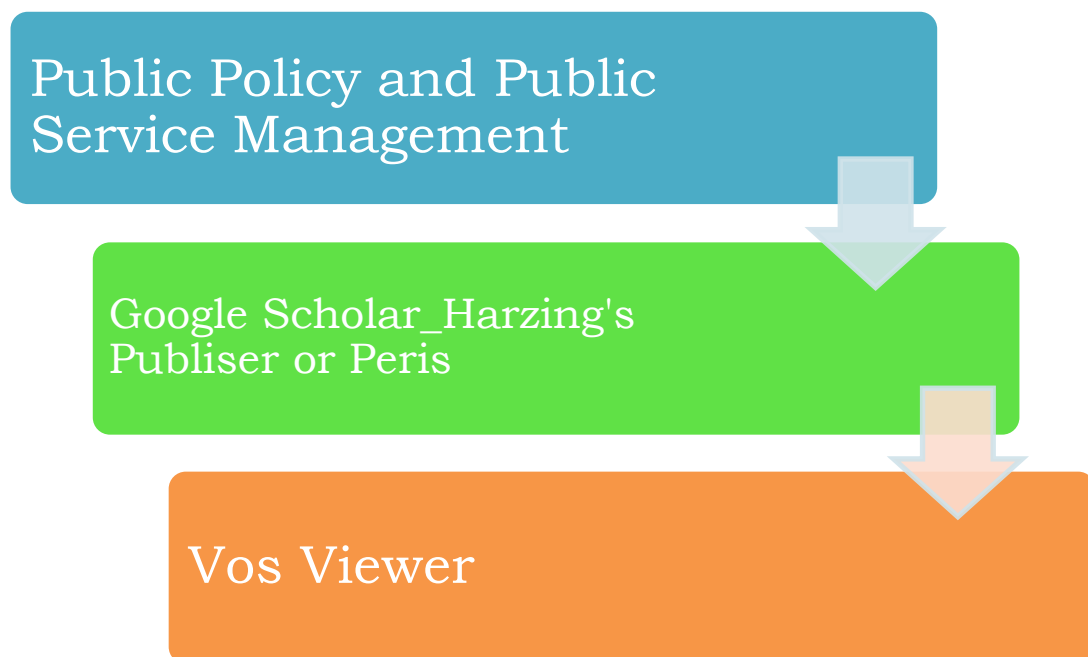

Figure 1.
Thinking Framework Diagram

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Research Results

The bibliometric analysis of 2019–2025 publications retrieved from Google Scholar and CrossRef revealed a total of 865 relevant documents focusing on public policy and public service management. Annual publication trends demonstrate a consistent upward trajectory throughout this period, reflecting

the growing global academic interest in governance transformation, citizen engagement, and digital public services. Between 2019 and 2021, research output increased modestly as digital governance began gaining traction in response to emerging social and administrative challenges. From 2022 to 2025, the field experienced accelerated growth due to the post-pandemic focus on digital transformation and the increasing adoption of data-driven policy models. This trend underscores the intensifying scholarly attention toward innovation and efficiency in public sector management.

A closer examination of the annual trend indicates that the most significant rise in publications occurred between 2022 and 2024, corresponding with heightened research collaboration and the use of advanced technologies in governance systems. The dominance of publications from countries such as Indonesia, India, and the United States suggests both regional diversification and the global nature of policy innovation research. The rapid increase in interdisciplinary studies involving management, political science, and data analytics signifies an evolving research paradigm where public policy intersects with technological adaptation. Overall, the upward trajectory from 2019 to 2025 signifies a maturing research domain with expanding theoretical and methodological sophistication.

The keyword co-occurrence analysis provides insights into the conceptual evolution of this field. The most frequently occurring keywords include "public policy," "governance," "digital transformation," "public service innovation," "accountability," and "citizen participation." These keywords form the central thematic nodes in the bibliometric network, demonstrating the interdependence of policy reform, technology, and public trust. Notably, the emergence of terms such as "smart governance," "open data," and "service quality" after 2022 highlights the transition of scholarly focus toward more technology-enabled governance systems. These evolving keywords signal a shift from administrative efficiency to participatory and transparent public service management.

The co-authorship analysis reveals substantial collaboration patterns among scholars, with significant networks emerging between Southeast Asia and Europe. Institutional mapping indicates that universities and research centers in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Spain play leading roles in advancing this research field. The co-authorship density shows that highly collaborative authors tend to publish in journals focusing on governance and digital administration. This increasing cross-national collaboration has enriched methodological diversity and strengthened the comparative dimension of policy management studies. It also demonstrates how academic partnerships

contribute to bridging knowledge gaps between developed and developing governance contexts.
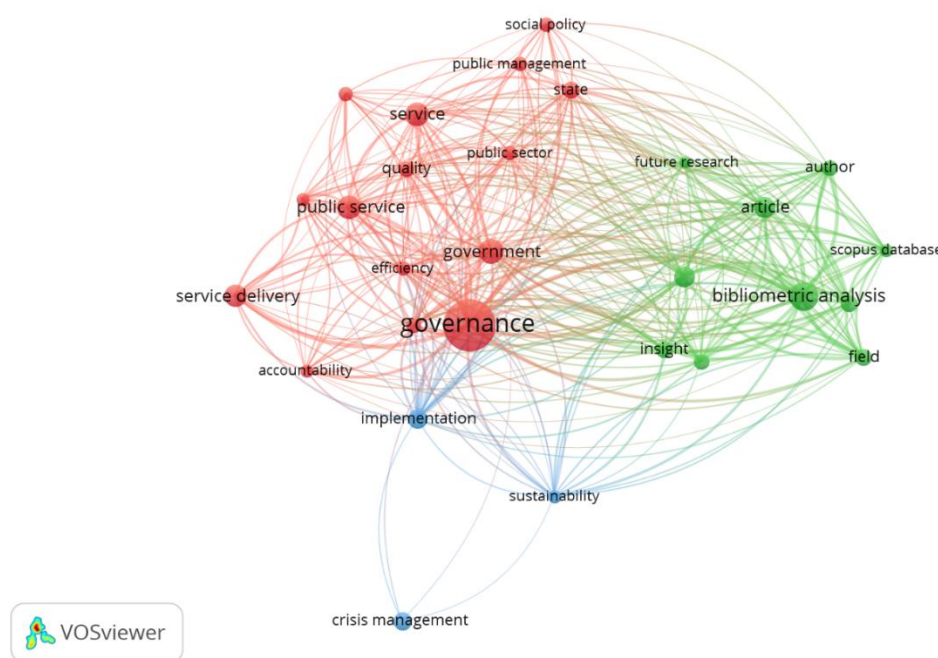

Figure 2.
Network Visualization

The network visualization map presents clusters of interconnected keywords representing distinct research themes. The largest cluster, centered around "public policy" and "public service management," connects with related themes such as "digital transformation" and "innovation." Other clusters highlight emerging areas such as "citizen engagement," "sustainability," and "e-governance." This visualization reflects the structural cohesion and thematic diversity within the research domain, illustrating how different subfields interact and evolve over time.

The analysis of co-citation patterns further identifies influential authors and journals shaping the discourse in this field. Prominent contributors include Donthu, Aria, Cuccurullo, and Wamba, whose works on bibliometric methods and digital transformation frequently appear in citation networks. High citation frequency of governance-focused journals like *Government Information Quarterly* and *Public Management Review* confirms their central role as knowledge hubs. This pattern demonstrates the consolidation of an intellectual core, where methodological rigor and practical relevance converge to shape the academic foundation of public policy research.

In terms of thematic evolution, the overlay visualization reveals the chronological development of research topics from 2019 to 2025. Early

publications predominantly emphasized traditional aspects of public service performance and policy design, while more recent works highlight digital innovation and citizen-centric governance. The introduction of AI and data analytics into public administration has generated new discussions on transparency, ethics, and inclusion. The visualization also indicates a gradual integration between theoretical governance frameworks and applied data management practices.
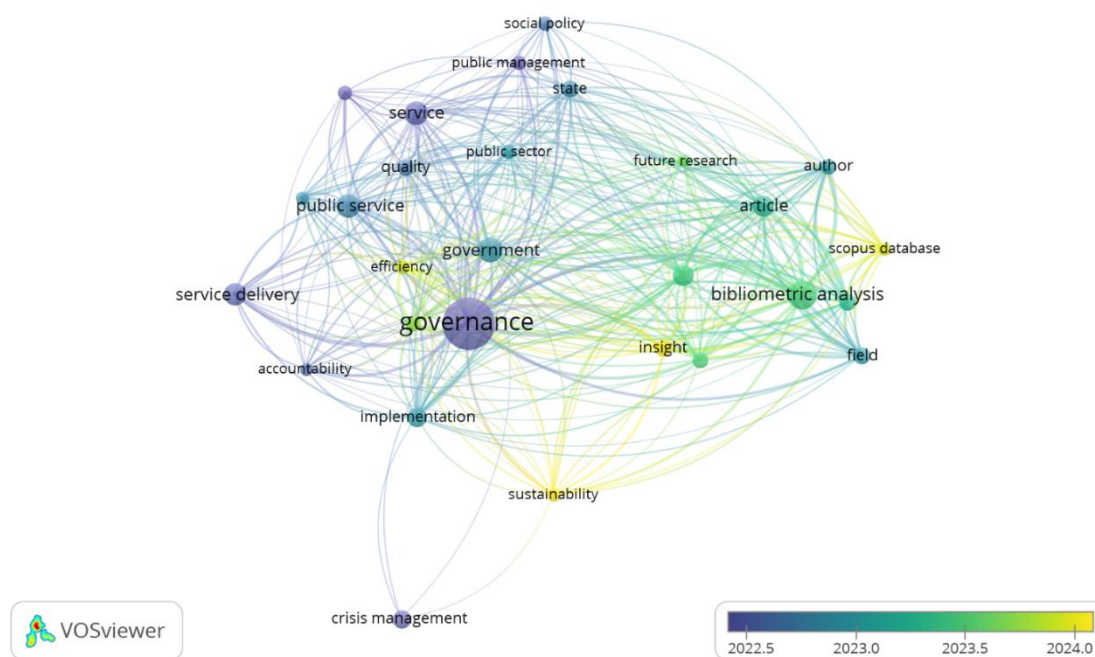

Figure 3.
Overlay Visualization

The overlay visualization illustrates the temporal progression of research keywords, using color gradients to indicate publication years. Older studies (in blue) focus on administrative efficiency and bureaucratic reform, whereas newer studies (in yellow) emphasize "digital governance," "data analytics," and "citizen co-creation." This temporal shift suggests an expanding research agenda aligned with the global digital transformation movement in public administration.

The density visualization reveals the concentration of high-frequency keywords within specific areas of the research landscape. Keywords such as "public policy," "digital transformation," and "service innovation" appear in the brightest regions of the map, indicating strong academic attention. Meanwhile, peripheral areas contain less-explored topics such as "ethics," "equity," and "sustainability," signifying emerging frontiers for future research. This density distribution demonstrates how scholars increasingly focus on the

digitalization of policy implementation while gradually incorporating social and ethical dimensions.
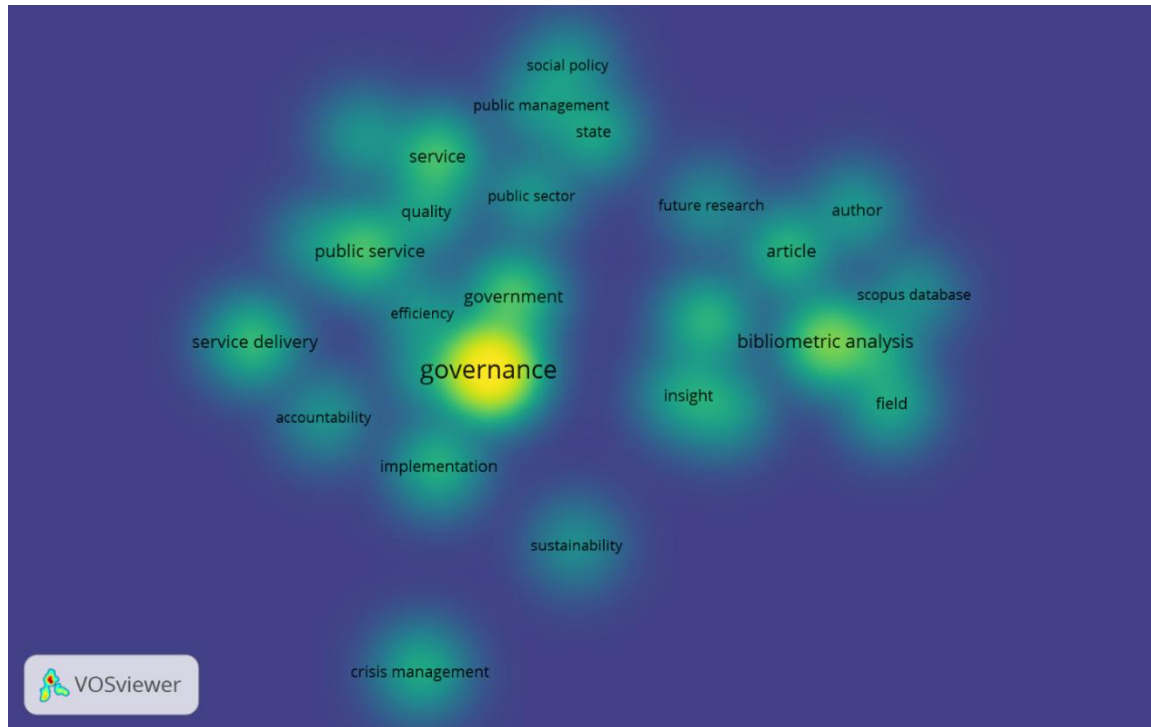

Figure 4.
Density Visualization

The density visualization highlights zones of intensive research activity represented by brighter color areas. The densest clusters correspond to keywords like "public policy," "digital transformation," and "governance." Lower-density areas indicate emerging interest in topics such as "inclusiveness" and "data ethics." This visualization underscores the thematic focus and potential expansion zones within the research domain.

A country-level analysis reveals that Indonesia, the United States, and the United Kingdom are among the top contributors in publication output between 2019 and 2025. Indonesia's increasing presence in the bibliometric map reflects its active academic initiatives in digital governance and local public service innovation. Meanwhile, European nations maintain their influence through research on policy evaluation and citizen engagement frameworks. The convergence of research from both developed and developing countries demonstrates the global relevance of policy innovation in addressing governance challenges in diverse institutional contexts.

Institutional analysis shows that universities such as Universitas Gadjah Mada, Universiti Malaya, and University College London have become leading research centers in this field. Their publications are widely cited, contributing significantly to the conceptual and empirical advancement of digital public

policy. Collaboration among these institutions, often supported by government and international organizations, enhances interdisciplinary research capacities. The data also show that institutions focusing on public administration and digital management have increasingly integrated bibliometric methods into their research strategies.

Journal distribution analysis identifies *Public Management Review*, *Government Information Quarterly*, and *Journal of Public Policy* as the most frequent sources of publication. These journals serve as intellectual anchors for advancing governance-related theories, empirical models, and applied research. Citation analysis confirms that articles addressing digital governance and innovation management tend to receive higher citation rates, reflecting the global interest in how technology reshapes public administration. The sustained influence of these journals highlights the consolidation of a stable publication ecosystem for policy management research.

Overall, the bibliometric findings provide a comprehensive overview of how public policy and public service management research have evolved between 2019 and 2025. The integration of technology, citizen participation, and ethical governance forms the backbone of this scholarly transformation. The growing collaboration across nations and disciplines reflects a collective effort to build more adaptive, accountable, and data-driven governance systems. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the intellectual landscape, revealing both the maturity and the dynamic expansion of the field.

Discussion

The bibliometric findings reveal a significant transformation in the landscape of public policy and public service management research from 2019 to 2025. The increasing number of publications and citations indicates not only academic growth but also the strategic importance of governance and digital transformation in global contexts. This trend aligns with previous studies highlighting that the digitalization of the public sector has become a central theme in contemporary administrative reforms (Donthu et al., 2021; Andhika, 2025). The proliferation of scholarly works demonstrates that digital governance, public value creation, and citizen engagement have evolved into interconnected areas of study. This suggests that the role of public policy has expanded from regulatory administration toward enabling innovation and sustainability in service delivery.

Another essential finding concerns the integration of technology into governance processes, marking a paradigm shift in how public institutions formulate and implement policies. The emergence of themes such as "digital transformation," "data governance," and "citizen participation" underscores

the multidimensional nature of this transformation. Scholars increasingly emphasize that effective digital governance requires not only technical infrastructure but also institutional readiness, human resource capacity, and ethical frameworks (Popescu et al., 2024; Wamba et al., 2023). The bibliometric mapping confirms that research has moved beyond descriptive analysis toward exploring causal mechanisms linking technology adoption with public sector performance. This reflects a growing maturity in methodological approaches, integrating both quantitative and qualitative designs.

The collaboration networks uncovered in the study highlight the globalization of research efforts. Strong linkages between Southeast Asian and European scholars demonstrate a widening academic exchange and mutual learning process in governance innovation. This aligns with the argument by Maroufkhani et al. (2023) that cross-national collaboration enhances theoretical diversity and methodological rigor in management research. Moreover, the increasing involvement of developing countries, particularly Indonesia, reflects the democratization of academic knowledge production in the public administration field. Such collaboration not only enhances comparative policy studies but also broadens the empirical base necessary for understanding governance in varied socio-political settings.

The keyword evolution and density visualizations further illustrate the dynamic nature of public policy research. The dominance of keywords such as "public policy," "governance," and "digital transformation" suggests that the discourse has become more interdisciplinary, bridging insights from management, information systems, and social sciences. The presence of emerging terms like "data ethics," "sustainability," and "citizen co-creation" reveals a shift toward inclusive and value-based governance frameworks. This evolution mirrors the changing expectations of citizens who demand greater transparency, responsiveness, and participation in policymaking (Al Araby, 2024; Susniwati et al., 2024). Consequently, research in this domain increasingly focuses on balancing innovation with accountability, ensuring that digital transformation aligns with public values.

Lastly, the bibliometric evidence highlights the importance of continued theoretical and empirical advancement in this field. Despite the growing body of literature, gaps remain regarding the long-term impact of digital transformation on institutional performance and citizen trust. As Zhang and Lu (2023) note, the rapid adoption of technology in public services also raises concerns about privacy, inclusiveness, and algorithmic fairness. Therefore, future research should deepen the exploration of governance ethics, digital literacy, and policy adaptability to address these emerging challenges. The

results of this bibliometric study provide a foundation for future investigations aimed at building more resilient, participatory, and data-driven governance systems capable of sustaining public value in the digital era.

CONCLUSION

The bibliometric analysis of research trends in *Public Policy and Public Service Management* from 2019 to 2025 reveals a dynamic and evolving scholarly landscape. The findings indicate a strong focus on digital governance, public accountability, and participatory policymaking, reflecting a paradigm shift toward transparency and citizen-oriented administration. The network visualization demonstrates the existence of influential authors and institutions that function as knowledge hubs, fostering academic collaboration and innovation. The overlay visualization highlights emerging research themes such as e-governance, sustainability, and citizen engagement, which gained significant momentum after 2021. Meanwhile, the density visualization illustrates concentrated clusters of research on performance management and public innovation, signaling the maturity of these areas. Collectively, the analysis confirms that the field is moving toward greater interdisciplinarity, data-driven decision-making, and global relevance.

Based on the research findings, several strategic directions are recommended. First, scholars should strengthen international collaboration through accessible academic databases such as Google Scholar and CrossRef to enhance research visibility and citation impact. Second, policymakers and academic institutions should adopt bibliometric analysis as a tool for strategic research planning and evidence-based policy formulation. Third, future researchers are encouraged to explore intersections between artificial intelligence, digital ethics, and public service innovation to address upcoming governance challenges. Fourth, it is advisable to conduct longitudinal and comparative bibliometric studies to monitor evolving trends and global influences. Lastly, fostering partnerships between government, academia, and technology sectors can further support the modernization and inclusivity of public service management in the digital era.

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