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Global Trends and Insights in School Mental Health Research: A Decadal Bibliometric Analysis (2015–2025)

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ABSTRACT

School Mental Health has been increasingly apparent worldwide, particularly due to the escalating difficulties related to Adolescent Mental Health. This study focuses on a decadal Bibliometric analysis of School Mental Health published from 2015 to 2025. The keywords "Mental health" and "School well-being" were retrieved from the Scopus database and subsequently analysed using R Studio's Biblioshiny interface and VosViewer software. The analysis encompassed articles (N=709), conference papers (N=9), and review papers (N=35), resulting in a total of 753 items. USA emerged as the most prolific nation (N=177 publications), with Furlong M J as the leading contributor of papers. Prevalent themes comprised Mental health (N=214), Well-being (N=122), Teenagers (N=87), COVID-19 (N=62), Adolescence (N=41), and Anxiety (N=41). This study delineates the conceptual framework and progression of school mental health research, providing a guide for forthcoming studies and policy considerations.

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Introduction

About 20% of Adolescents aged 10–19 years of age are affected by a mental disorder, representing 45% of the global disease burden in this demographic of school mental health. Depression, Anxiety, and

Behavioural disorders are significant contributors to illness and disability in adolescents. Suicide is considered the third leading cause of death for individuals aged group of 15–29 years (WHO, 2024).

The COVID-19 pandemic has intensified these challenges. A meta-analysis indicated that Social isolation and Loneliness during the pandemic markedly elevated the risk of Depression and Anxiety in school going students (Loades et al. 2020). The disruption of routines, school closures, and restricted accessibility to mental health services have exacerbated the psychological effects on young individuals (Lee, 2020).

Educational environments are very important in the early identification and intervening of mental health concerns. School mental health programs are acknowledged for their efficacy in enhancing Psychological well-being and Academic achievement (Fazel et al., 2014). These programs provide accessible support, mitigate stigma, and cultivate an environment that promotes Mental health (Weare & Nind, 2011).

With increasing acknowledgment of the significance of School Mental Health, the need of systematic analysis of the current research to discern trends, gaps, and potential areas for further inquiry was required. Bibliometric analysis is an effective method for quantitatively evaluating the progression of academic literature, collaboration trends, and thematic changes within a particular discipline (Donthu et al., 2021).

Prior bibliometric analyses have examined multiple facets of mental health research. Study reveals a rise in interdisciplinary collaboration and a predominance of research output from Western countries (Chen et al., 2024). A bibliometric analysis of School Mental Health research from the past decade is limited.

This study addresses the research gap through a bibliometric analysis of School Mental Health research published from 2015 to 2025. This analysis provides the global landscape of School mental health through examination of publication trends, influential authors, collaborative networks, and thematic developments. These findings will provide insights for researchers, policymakers, and educators seeking in order to improve mental health support in educational environments.

Materials and Methods

Study Design

This study employed Bibliographic analysis to uncover research trends, and data visual representation. In Figure 1, The PRISMA model gives an idea in step-by-step procedure to search and identify & filter sources in database.

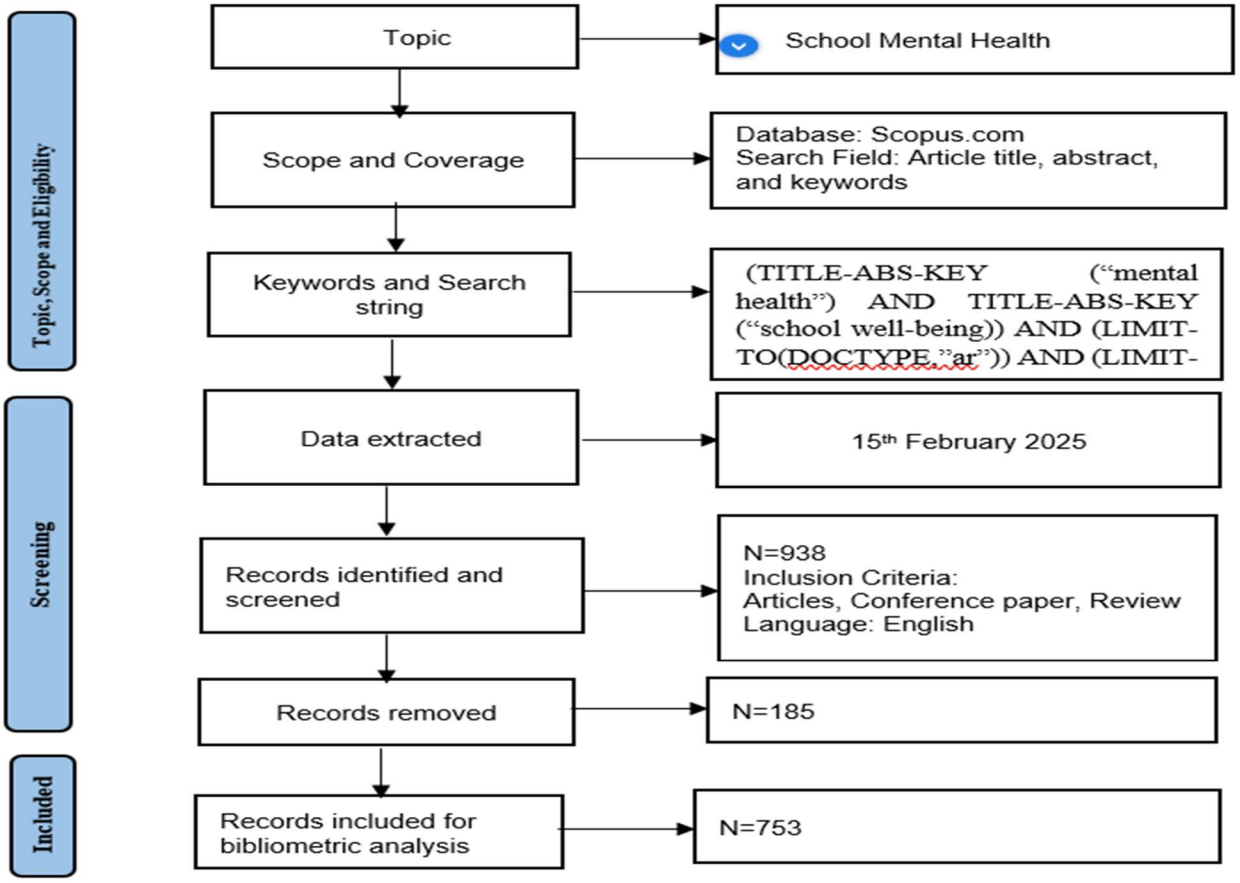

Figure 1. PRISMA diagram

Data Search Strategy

This study utilized the data sourced from the Scopus database, accessed on February 15, 2025. Data set includes articles, conference papers, and reviews published between 2015 and 2025. The Scopus dataset comprises numerous internationally recognized journals that uphold high article quality standards. This data set of the study is valid for representing publication quality. The terms "Mental health" and "School well-being" were utilized to find relevant articles, conference papers, and reviews based on the objectives of this study. Therefore, keywords are the limitations for this study.

Data Selection

Articles pertinent keywords of this study were located in the Scopus database. Articles, conference papers, and reviews were incorporated, whilst letters, editorials, book series, and book chapters were excluded from the analysis. The authors identified 753 publications to investigate the links and research trends of

the School Mental Health field. Bibliometric analysis is a technique for examining pertinent material using mathematical and statistical methods. This analysis is utilized throughout various study domains, including Mental health. This study employed VOS Viewer and the Biblioshiny R Package for bibliometric analysis. These applications focus specifically on the graphical depiction of bibliometric maps. Consequently, publication metadata, including bibliographic compliance, co-authorships, and co-citations, were illustrated through the graphical depiction of bibliometric maps.

Results

Studies on School Mental Health are proliferating. Figure 2 illustrates that between 2015 and 2025, 753 papers were published in open-access journals, with an average publication year of 3.19, an average of 14.23 citations per document, an average of 387 citations per year per document, and a total of 41,135 references utilized. The papers contain authors' keywords (N=1977) and a substantial number of authors (N=2862). The peak number of papers reached 184 in 2024, followed by 2023 and 2021, predominantly focusing on mental health studies in educational environments associated with COVID-19.

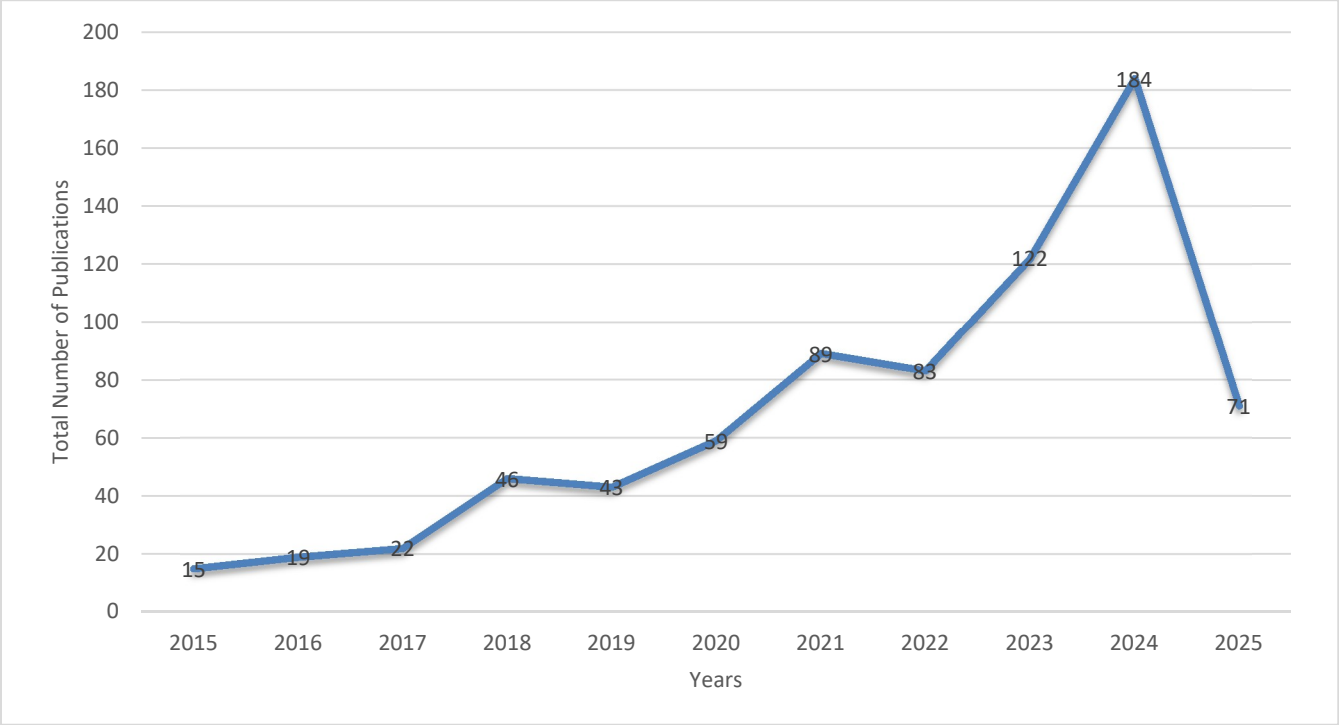

Figure 2. The trend in studies pertaining to School Mental Health Research

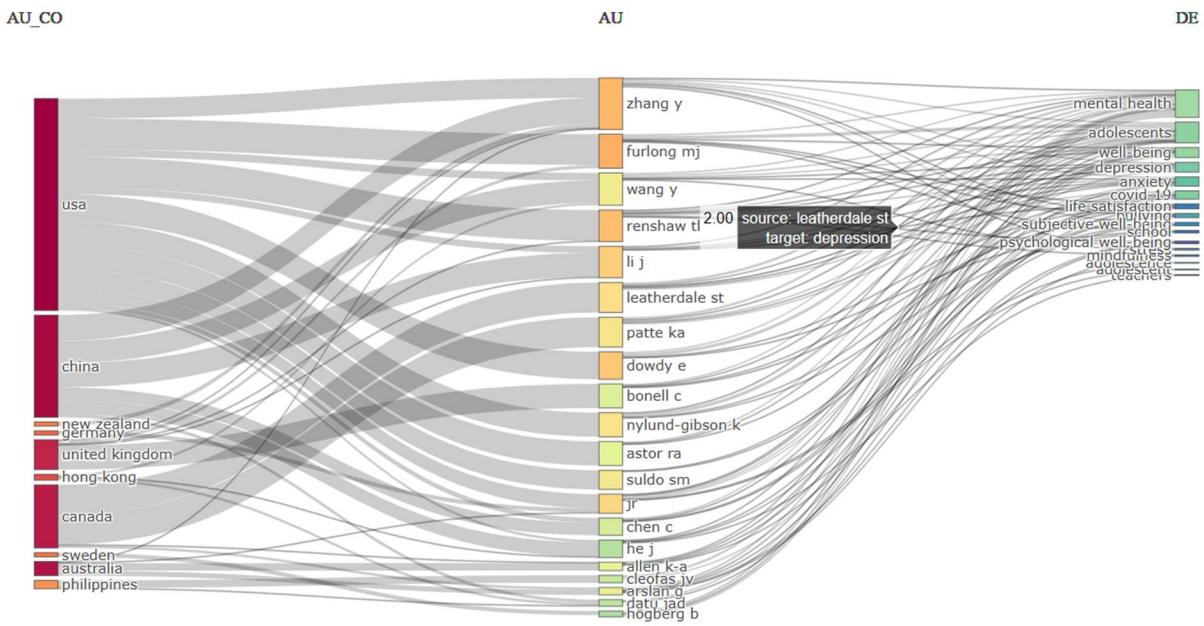

Figure 3. Authors' keywords, authors' country, and three-field plot analysis

In addition to research trends, an intriguing finding emerged from three plot analyses: Authors (AU), Authors' country (AU_CO), and Authors' keywords (DE). Figure 3 illustrates the correlation between three units: Authors (AU), Authors' country (AU-CO), and Authors' keywords (DE), to three fields of plot analysis. The authors utilized a total of 20 items, encompassing 20 authors, 20 countries of the authors, and 20 keywords associated with the authors. The three elements plotted in grey illustrate the correlation among the authors' country, authors, and keywords/research themes. The dimensions of each rectangle corresponded to the quantity of articles linked to each element within the respective lists. The authors' country (AU_CO) is centrally positioned in the figure, emphasizing a three-field plot.

Figure 3 illustrates that the USA emerged as the leading country in publications (N=177 articles), followed by China (N=53 articles), Australia (N=49 articles), Canada (N=43 articles), and the United Kingdom (N=42 articles).

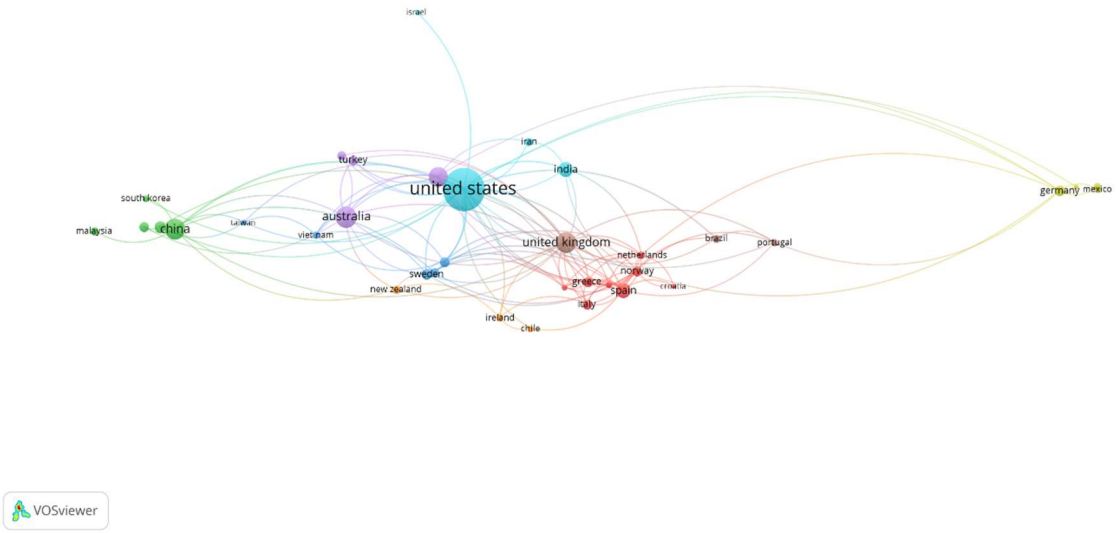

Figure 4. Substantial contributions of Countries to School Mental Health Research

Figure 4 illustrates the countries with substantial contributions to School Mental Health Research. The co-authorship analysis of countries as the unit of analysis and setting a minimum document threshold of two per country, identified 98 countries, of which 37 met the established criteria. Figure 5 illustrates two clusters of countries based on co-authorship, bibliographic coupling of authors was applied in Figure 5.

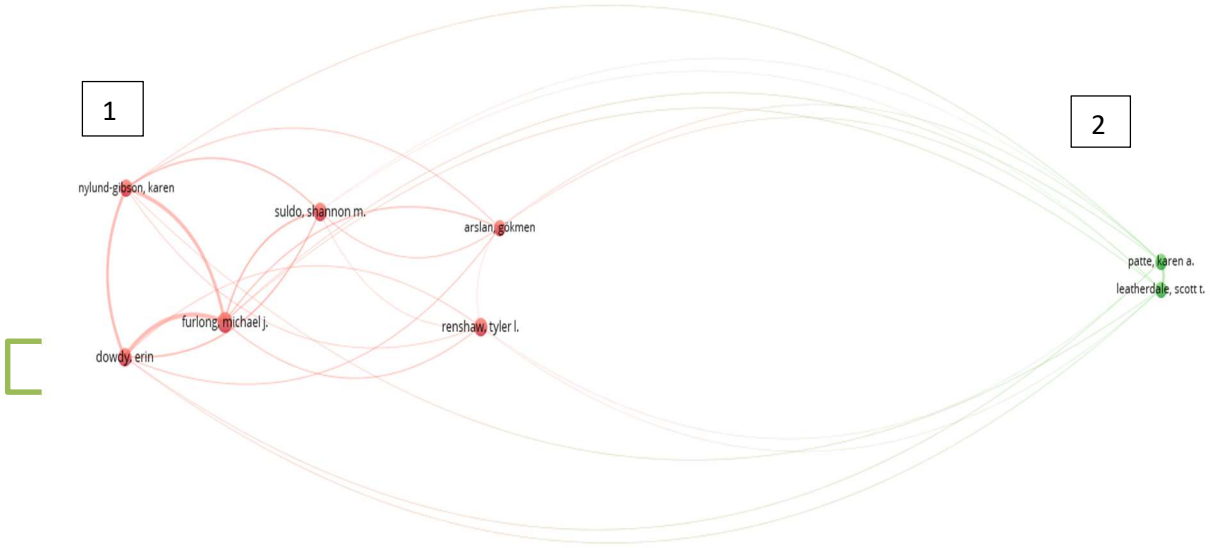

Figure 5. Contributions of Authors in School Mental Health Field

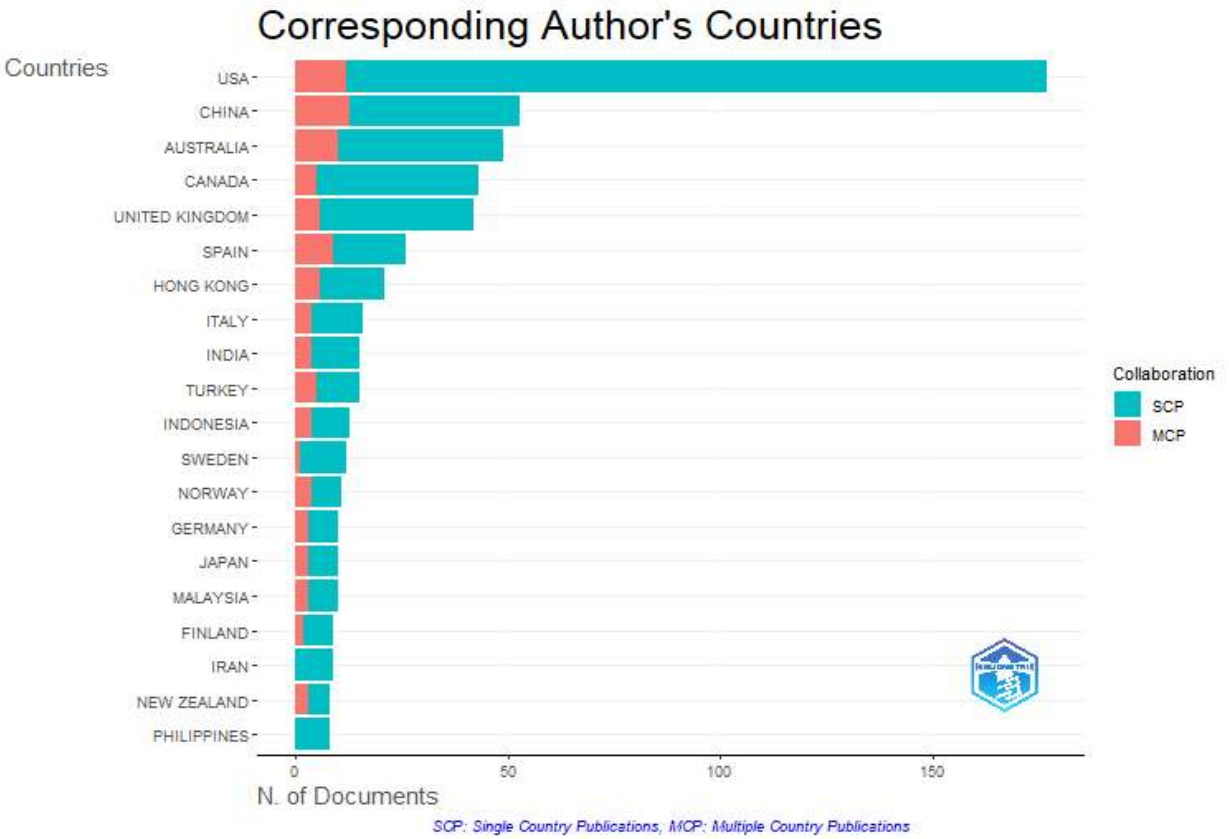

Figure 6. Countries of the corresponding author with MCP and SCP

Figure 6 illustrates the distribution of 20 nations with SCP alongside those with MCP. The United States of America leads in both SCP (N=165) and MCP (N=12), followed by China with SCP=40 and MCP=13. Australia ranks next with SCP=39 and MCP=10, while Canada follows closely with SCP=38 and MCP=5. The United Kingdom has SCP=36 and MCP=6, and Spain presents SCP=17 and MCP=9. Hong Kong records SCP=15 and MCP=6, with Italy at SCP=12 and MCP=4. India shows SCP=11 and MCP=4, while Turkey has SCP=10 and MCP=5. Indonesia reports SCP=9 and MCP=4, and Sweden has SCP=11 and MCP=1. Norway, Germany, Japan, and Malaysia each have SCP=7, with varying MCP values of 4, 3, 3, and 3, respectively. Finland presents SCP=7 and MCP=2, while Iran has SCP=9 and MCP=0. New Zealand shows SCP=5 and MCP=3, and the Philippines records SCP=8 and MCP=0.

Discussion

This bibliometric analysis offers profound insights into the dynamic research landscape of School Mental Health Research (SMHR) over the past decade. The analysis of 753 documents from 2015 to 2025 reveals a significant rise in academic production, especially in the period surrounding and following the COVID-19 pandemic. This increase probably indicates a growing global consciousness regarding the mental health difficulties faced by adolescents, which have been intensified by extended school closures, social isolation, and the disruption of support networks (Loades et al., 2020; Lee, 2020).

The pre-eminence of the United States in both single-country publications (SCP = 165) and total publications (N = 177) underscores its substantial institutional commitment and robust research framework in the field of SMH. Earlier research indicated that Western nations played a primary role in the advancement of school mental health (Chen et al., 2024). Nonetheless, the comparatively modest numbers for publications involving multiple countries (e.g., China's MCP = 13, Australia's MCP = 10) indicate a constrained level of international collaboration. This disparity highlights the imperative for enhanced cross-cultural and global dialogue, particularly in light of the social and cultural differences in the perception and management of school mental health (Barry et al., 2019).

Cluster 1 includes Croatia, Denmark, France, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, and Spain. Cluster 2 comprises China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, the Philippines, and South Korea. Cluster 3 includes Finland, Japan, Sweden, Taiwan, and Vietnam. Cluster 4 includes Germany, Ghana, Mexico, and South Africa. Cluster 5 comprises Australia, Canada, Indonesia, and Turkey. Cluster 6 includes India, Iran, Israel, and the United States. Cluster 6 includes Chile, Ireland, and New Zealand. Brazil, Portugal, and the United Kingdom were categorized within cluster 7.

Figure 5 illustrates the presence of two distinct author clusters involved in research of School mental health. The initial cluster is directed by Michael J. Furlong, exhibiting significant co-authorship connections with Erin Dowdy, Karen Nylund-Gibson, Shannon M. Suldo, Gökmen Arslan, and Tyler L. Renshaw. This group constitutes a collaborative core of researchers based in North America, with Furlong acting as a central connector. Authors within this cluster exhibit substantial publication counts and total citations, exemplified by Suldo's 208 citations from 8 papers and Renshaw's 134 citations from 8 papers, reflecting their considerable impact in the field. The second cluster includes Karen A. Patte and Scott T. Leatherdale, who demonstrate significant collaboration, especially in recent years. Both authors have an equal number of publications (NP = 6) and total citations (TC = 103), indicating a collaborative and productive partnership, potentially stemming from a common research initiative or institution. Their collaboration appears disconnected from the red cluster, suggesting that although both groups are productive, there is minimal interaction between them. A core group of researchers collaborates closely, yet the broader author base exhibits fragmentation and limited collaboration. Facilitating connections among these clusters and extending beyond them may enhance knowledge exchange and foster innovation in global school mental health research. Table I presents ten authors with significant impact as determined by citation counts. Table I indicates total citations (TC), number of publications (NP), and the starting year of publication (PY_Start).

Table 1- The ten authors with the greatest number of citations

Author	h_index	g_index	m_index	TC	NP	PY_start
SULDO SM	7	8	0.636	208	8	2015
RENSHAW TL	6	8	0.75	134	8	2018
ARSLAN G	5	5	1	187	5	2021
ALLEN K-A	4	4	0.5	128	4	2018
BONELL C	4	4	0.8	43	4	2021
DOWDY E	4	8	0.4	97	8	2016
FURLONG MJ	4	10	0.4	136	10	2016
JR	4	6	0.364	87	6	2015
LEATHERDALE ST	4	6	0.8	103	6	2021
PATTE KA	4	6	0.8	103	6	2021

The least quantity of documents attributed to an author was 8, derived from a total of 3139 authors; 8 satisfied the established criteria. This analysis highlights a selected group of authors who have demonstrated significant productivity and its impact on school mental health from 2015 to 2025. This indicates a focused group of primary contributors, whereas the wider author base is scattered, exhibiting

lower rates of publication or restricted collaboration patterns in the journal indexed by Scopus, leading to the formation of two distinct clusters. Cluster 1 is comprised of six authors, while Cluster 2 includes two authors.

A noteworthy observation in the investigation of Mental health within educational settings is emerging, yet collaboration among researchers from various nations remains constrained in numerous instances. The United States generated the largest volume of publications; however, a significant proportion of these works were authored by individuals from within the same nation (Single Country Publications or SCP). This indicates that while the U.S. excels in production, it does not engage in global collaboration to the extent that it potentially could. China, Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom exhibited a greater equilibrium between domestic and international collaborations, as evidenced by their Multiple Country Publications (MCP). This indicates a greater willingness to collaborate with researchers from various nations, facilitating the flow of ideas and fostering the development of more effective global initiatives. It is noteworthy that certain smaller nations, such as Sweden, Norway, Malaysia, and New Zealand, produced a lesser volume of publications overall, yet exhibited a greater proportion of international collaborations. This indicates that they are leveraging collaborations to enhance their research, reflecting a commendable spirit of cooperation and transparency. Nevertheless, nations such as Iran and the Philippines exhibited a singular focus on their own researchers' publications, lacking any form of international collaboration. This illustrates a deficiency in worldwide research linkages and underscores the necessity to assist these nations in integrating into global research networks. The analysis of co-authorship revealed that among 3,139 authors, merely 8 achieved the criteria for robust collaborative connections, indicating that the majority of authors operated within smaller or more isolated groups. This indicates that additional endeavours are required to establish more robust, international collaborations on the School mental health research.

Table 2- Identification of journals with the highest volume of publications of School mental health

Journals	h_index	g_index	m_index	TC	NP	PY_start	Country
SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH	11	22	1	503	25	2015	United States
FRONTIERS IN PSYCHOLOGY	10	19	1.42857143	422	34	2019	Switzerland
PSYCHOLOGY IN THE SCHOOLS	8	11	0.72727273	126	17	2015	United States
ASIAN JOURNAL OF PSYCHIATRY	6	7	0.66666667	89	7	2017	India
CHILD INDICATORS RESEARCH	6	12	0.66666667	151	15	2017	United States
ACADEMIC MEDICINE	5	5	0.71428571	124	5	2019	United States
BMC PSYCHOLOGY	5	8	0.5	93	8	2016	United Kingdom

Journals	h_index	g_index	m_index	TC	NP	PY_start	Country
BRITISH JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY	5	5	0.71428571	74	5	2019	United Kingdom
CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES REVIEW	5	9	0.71428571	115	9	2019	United States
JOURNAL OF ADOLESCENCE	5	8	0.625	238	8	2018	United States
JOURNAL OF AFFECTIVE DISORDERS	5	6	0.5	116	6	2016	United States
JOURNAL OF SCHOOL HEALTH	5	8	1	69	10	2021	United States
SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY REVIEW	5	6	0.5	343	6	2016	United States
BMC MEDICAL EDUCATION	4	4	0.57142857	93	4	2019	United Kingdom
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ADOLESCENCE AND YOUTH	4	5	0.44444444	703	5	2017	United Kingdom
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SCHOOL AND EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY	4	8	0.66666667	93	8	2020	United Kingdom
JOURNAL OF EDUCATION AND HEALTH PROMOTION	4	6	0.66666667	41	6	2020	United States
JOURNAL OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY	4	6	0.36363636	175	6	2015	United States
JOURNAL OF YOUTH AND ADOLESCENCE	4	5	0.44444444	324	5	2017	United States
MINDFULNESS	4	4	0.5	318	4	2018	United States

Table 2 presents a compilation of journals that disseminate research articles focused on Mental health within educational settings. Publications like School Mental Health, Psychology in the Schools, and Journal of School Health play an important role in sharing insights within the domain of Mental health in educational settings. The United States continues to be a pivotal centre for research in Educational psychology and Mental health, as demonstrated by the substantial volume of published articles and notable citation metrics, exemplified by the School Mental Health journal, which boasts an h-index of 11 and a g-index of 22, accumulating a total of 503 citations. Conversely, the United Kingdom maintains a significant influence in this domain, featuring publications like BMC Psychology, British Journal of Educational Psychology, and International Journal of School and Educational Psychology. These journals illustrate a multifaceted exploration of the convergence between Education and Mental health, addressing not only psychological interventions but also wider educational policies and practices. The journals based in the UK, including BMC Psychology, demonstrate a reduced h-index while still holding significant influence within particular areas, highlighting the specialized contributions of the journal. Furthermore, publications from nations such as India and Switzerland, including the Asian Journal of Psychiatry and Frontiers in Psychology, reflect the increasing global engagement in research pertaining to Mental health in educational settings.

India's Asian Journal of Psychiatry may have a more modest citation record, yet it serves as a vital resource for mental health professionals in the region, emphasizing research that is culturally pertinent. In the interim, Frontiers in Psychology—a journal based in Switzerland—boasts a remarkable citation record, indicative of its extensive global influence and interdisciplinary methodology in the realm of

psychological research. It has been shown that the significant number of the journals examined commenced their publication in the past ten years, with several initiating their release in 2015 or thereafter. This trend highlights the heightened focus on mental health research in educational settings, as new platforms arise to meet the escalating need for evidence-based practices in schools.

Journal of School Psychology and the Journal of Youth and Adolescence, both from the United States, are starting to establish themselves and make meaningful contributions to the discipline. The variation in citation impact, as indicated by the h-index, g-index, and m-index, illustrates the different levels of influence these journals exert on the worldwide research community. International Journal of Adolescence and Youth exhibit a substantial total citation count (703), underscoring their influential status within the discipline. In contrast, the Journal of School Health, with an m-index of 1, indicates noteworthy, albeit more focused, contributions to the realm of school health research. The School mental health research is primarily influenced by publications from the United States and the United Kingdom, while also witnessing an increasing input from nations like Switzerland and India. The consistent rise in new journal publications and the variety of citation impacts underscore the dynamic character of this discipline and its growing importance on a global scale. Future investigations ought to persist in examining the diverse methodologies and effects of these journals, especially in areas where new school mental health initiatives are developing.

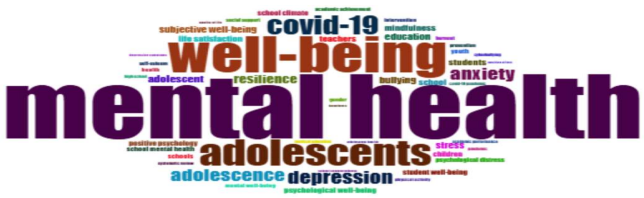

Figure 7- Keywords associated with School mental health

Figure 7 illustrates important trends and themes regarding School mental health, highlighting that the examination of contemporary research trends reveals a notable transition towards a more holistic comprehension of student well-being. The frequency of terms like "Mental health" (214 occurrences) and "Well-being" (122 occurrences) underscores an increasing acknowledgment of the significance of attending to the psychological and emotional needs of students. This transition corresponds with the growing focus on comprehensive methods in education that regard mental well-being as essential to both academic achievement and individual growth. The repeated mention of "Adolescents" (87 occurrences) underscores the pivotal developmental phase where mental health interventions can yield the most profound effects. The phase of Adolescence is characterized by swift transformations in physical, emotional, and social dimensions, rendering individuals especially susceptible to mental health issues (Sawyer et al., 2018). Studies suggest that recognizing and addressing concerns at this stage can avert the development of more serious mental health challenges in later life (Durlak et al., 2017). The terms "Depression" (43 occurrences) and "Anxiety" (41 occurrences) highlight the significant presence of these conditions among school-going students, especially in the wake of the pandemic. Research indicates that the pandemic has intensified Mental health challenges in adolescents, resulting in heightened occurrences of Depression, Anxiety, and Stress (Loades et al., 2020). This underscores the pressing necessity for educational institutions to adopt comprehensive mental health initiatives and strategies that tackle these issues. The frequent mention of "resilience" (29 occurrences) and "stress" (21 occurrences) underscores the necessity of providing students with effective coping strategies to manage life's adversities. Initiatives that foster resilience have demonstrated an improvement in students' capacity to cope with stress and lower the likelihood of mental health disorders (Llistosella et al., 2023).

Furthermore, tackling stress via mindfulness and social-emotional learning initiatives can enhance students' emotional regulation and overall well-being (CDC, 2024). The presence of terms such as "Bullying" (21 occurrences) and "School climate" (16 occurrences) underscores the profound influence of the educational environment on the mental well-being of students. The phenomenon of bullying has been persistently associated with adverse mental health disorders, such as Depression, Anxiety, and Suicidal thoughts (Hinduja & Patchin, 2018). Establishing a supportive educational environment that encourages inclusivity and safety is essential for enhancing the Mental well-being of school going students (Thapa et al., 2013). The significance of "Teachers" (19 occurrences) in fostering student mental health is also apparent. Educators frequently serve as the initial observers of indicators related to mental health challenges and can significantly contribute to timely intervention (Durlak et al., 2017). Equipping

educators with knowledge in Mental health literacy can significantly improve their capacity to address the needs of their students with greater efficacy. This underscored the complex dimensions of research in School mental health, stressing the necessity for holistic strategies that encompass the Psychological, Emotional, and Social facets of student well-being. Future investigations ought to persist in examining efficacious interventions and methodologies that enhance Mental well-being within educational environments, especially considering the challenges that have arisen after the pandemic.

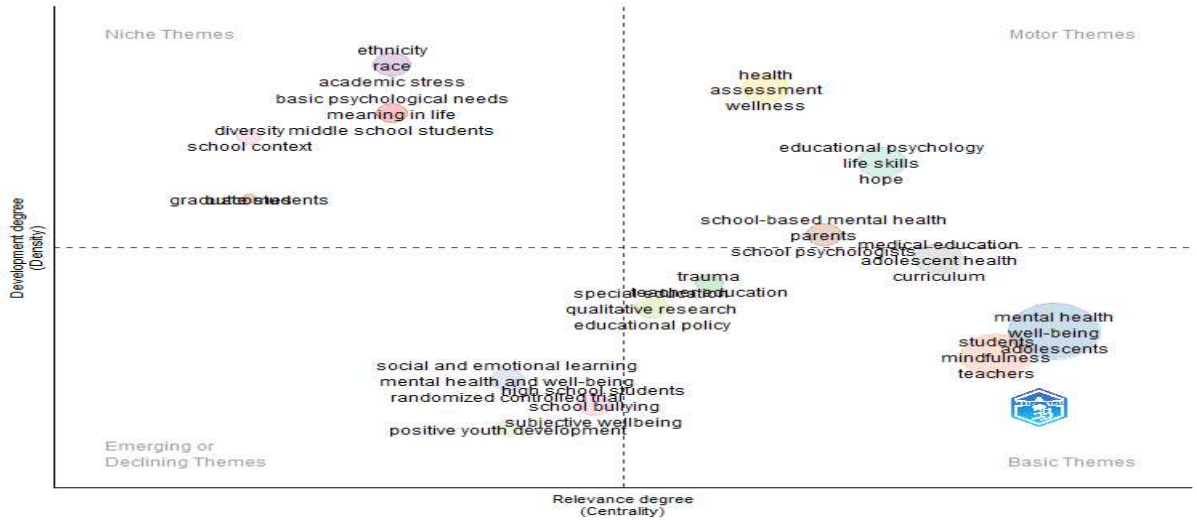

Figure 8.- An analysis of thematic map on School Mental health research

The analysis of the author's keywords paves the way for additional research into School mental health. Figure 8 illustrates the fundamental themes through five distinct circles representing keywords that may be applicable in the trends of forthcoming research endeavours. The themes may be further elaborated by integrating fundamental themes with specific terms in motor themes and niche themes.

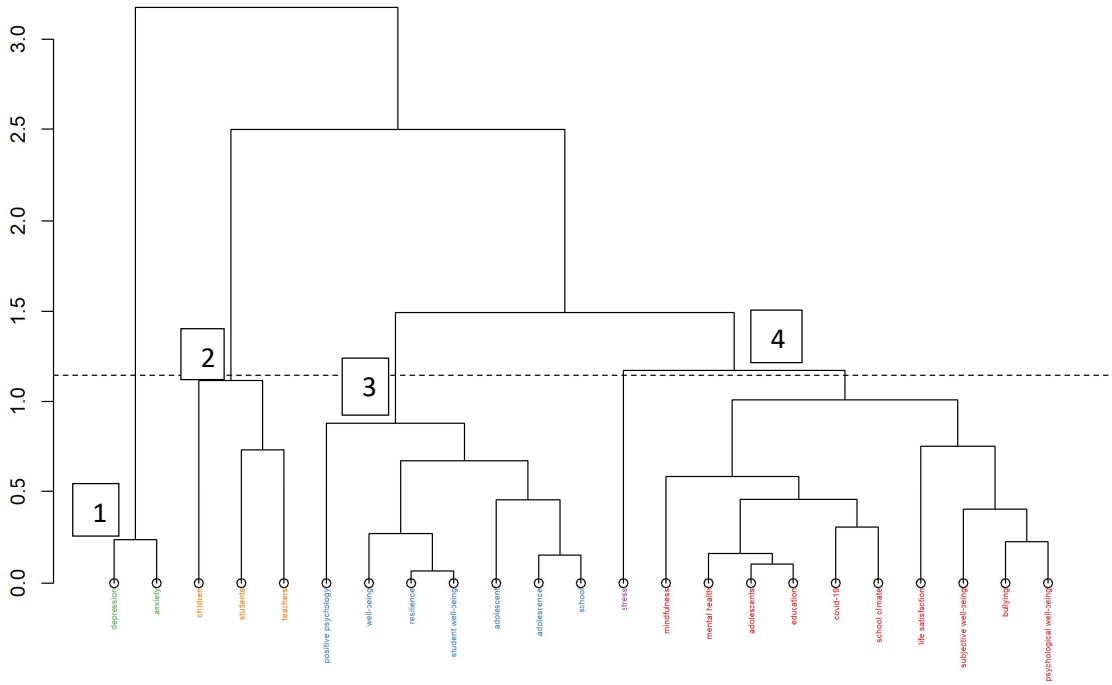

Figure 9- Dendogram topic for Factorial Analysis

The dendrogram effectively illustrates the cluster members and aids in identifying the number of formed clusters. Figure 9 illustrates four clusters formed using 23 keywords. Cluster 1 pertains to Depression and Anxiety; cluster 2 relates to Children and Teachers; cluster 3 is associated with Positive psychology in schools; cluster 4 addresses Stress; and cluster 5 focuses on Mindfulness and Psychological well-being.

This study offers a valuable research roadmap for future investigations into School mental health. The uniqueness of themes in School mental health publications is demonstrated through the visual representation of the correlation between the Topic and the Publication time. Figure 10 presents the results of the analysis using authors' keywords, with a minimum threshold of four occurrences for keywords. A total of 17,554 authors' keywords were analyzed, resulting in 552 that met the threshold, organized into 8 clusters, and comprising 54 distinct keywords. The net lines illustrate the correlation among the items, while the colour displayed in the online version indicates the publication year. Figure 10 illustrates the concept of Adolescence as keyword.

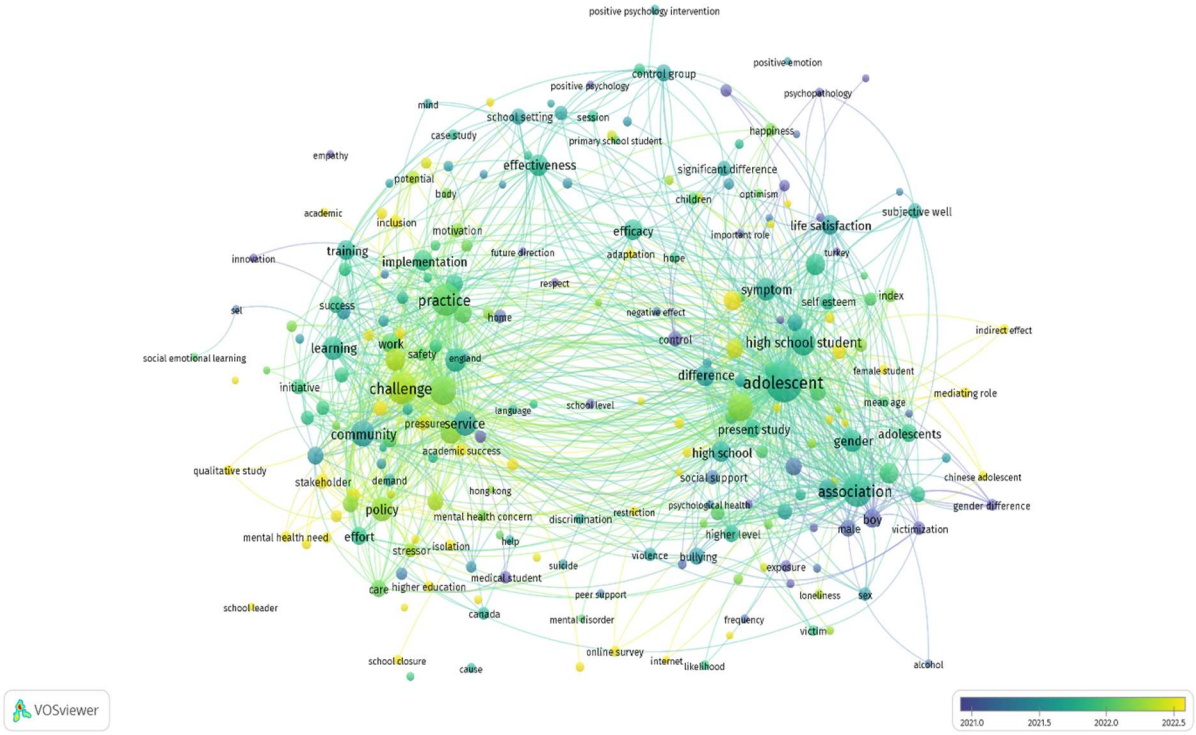

Figure 10- Overly Visualization on School Mental Health

The overlay visualization indicates a significant thematic evolution in School mental health research over the past decade, shifting from individual-level psychological constructs to more extensive systemic and policy-oriented issues. Early publications from 2015 to 2020, indicated by blue and purple nodes, primarily concentrated on constructs including Self-esteem, Life satisfaction, Positive psychology, and Subjective well-being. This suggests a focus on Controlled interventions and Psychological outcomes (e.g., Renshaw & Bolognino, 2016; Suldo et al., 2013). These themes were frequently examined using experimental and quasi-experimental designs to assess efficacy in particular school populations. Recent publications from 2021 to 2025, indicated by yellow and green nodes, demonstrate a heightened emphasis on contextual, intersectional, and policy-oriented methodologies. Terms including Policy, School closure, Mental health concern, Service pressure, Online survey, and Gender difference have become increasingly significant, likely as a reaction to global educational disruptions resulting from the pandemic (Loades et al., 2020; Widiana & Nuryana, 2024). This transition corresponds with widespread advocacy for comprehensive mental health frameworks within schools that incorporate structural factors influencing student well-being and enhance equitable access to mental health resources (Barry et al., 2017; Ash et al., 2022). The consistent prominence of terms like Adolescent, High school student, Practice, and

Community throughout the map indicates ongoing scholarly focus on Adolescence as a vital developmental phase, while also highlighting the significance of implementation and stakeholder involvement in school-based mental health initiatives (Teague et al., 2012). This trend aligns with the global movement advocating for integrated Mental health promotion in schools, where educational institutions are recognized as intervention sites and policy actors. The visualization functions as a guide for future research, directing attention to underexplored yet emerging areas, including Stakeholder engagement, Digital assessment tools, Qualitative exploration, and the influence of Institutional leadership on Mental health integration.

Conclusion

The significance of School mental health has become increasingly apparent on a global scale, particularly in the context of the increasing challenges faced by Adolescents with Mental health. This study offers a thorough bibliometric analysis of School Mental Health research that was published between 2015 and 2025. Utilizing the keywords "Mental health" and "School well-being," data were downloaded from the Scopus database and analyzed using the Biblioshiny interface in R Studio and the VosViewer software. The total number of documents analyzed was 753, which consisted of publications (N=709), conference papers (N=9), and review papers (N=35). Furlong M J contributed the most papers, while the United States of America emerged as the most productive country (N=177 publications). Mental health (N=214) was the most prevalent theme, followed by Well-being (N=122), Adolescents (N=87), COVID-19 (N=62), Adolescence (N=41), and Anxiety (N=41). The United States of America (N=165) dominated Single Country Production (SCP), while China (N=13) dominated Multiple Country Production (MCP). This review delineates the thematic structure and evolution of School mental health research, providing a guide for future research and policy implications.

Acknowledgements

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