Mapping the Research Landscape of Organic Food: A Bibliometric Analysis

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ABSTRACT:

This research paper examines the evolution of organic food and the increasing involvement of individuals, customers, and organizations in this area. By conducting a bibliometric analysis of 82 articles retrieved from the Web of Science and Scopus databases, encompassing the period from 2017 to 2023, this study uncovers a vibrant field characterized by significant growth in publications and an enhanced level of collaboration among authors. Using performance analysis and science mapping techniques, the study provides insights into the historical development, citation patterns, influential authors, and publication trends in organic food research. The findings enrich existing knowledge, shape future research, and offer valuable insights for entrepreneurs, investors, and financial providers, enhancing our understanding of the field's dynamics and trends.

Keywords: Organic food, Organic food consumption, Behavior, Consumer behavior, Bibliometric analysis.

INTRODUCTION

There has been a major trend in recent years in the direction of organic and environmentally friendly food options for consumers. Sustainable alternatives that promote healthier earth and personal well-being are in high demand as people become more conscious of the environmental, social, and health effects of conventional food production (Guiné et al., 2022). In light of these shifts, there has been an uptick in studies examining how people feel about and act on sustainable organic food (Rashid et al., 2022). Sustainability as a concept involves the wise use of resources, the preservation of ecosystems, and the sustainability of human endeavours.

Sustainability in the context of food production focuses on minimising the detrimental effects of agriculture on the environment and society, such as soil erosion, water pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, and labour exploitation (Pedretti et al., 2021). The goal of sustainable food systems is to achieve a balance between providing for the current population's dietary demands and ensuring that future generations will be able to do the same (Brennan & Browne, 2021). On the other side, organic food is defined as agricultural goods grown without the use of synthetic inputs like pesticides, fertilisers, or genetically modified organisms in order to maintain ecological balance (Nguyen et al., 2019). To preserve soil fertility, safeguard biodiversity, and lessen the presence of chemical residues in food, organic farmers rely on techniques including crop rotation, biological pest control, and composting (Khoiri et al., 2021). The use of antibiotics and growth hormones in livestock is prohibited in organic farming, which places a premium on the well-being of the animals involved (Tang et al., 2017). It is inevitable that there will be a connection between organic food and sustainability. By enhancing soil health, minimising chemical inputs, and protecting ecosystems, organic farming practises are consistent with sustainability principles (Murtić et al., 2022). Customers can promote green practises and add to the overall sustainability of the food chain by purchasing organic goods. Additionally, organic food is frequently regarded as being healthier, more nutrient-dense and environmentally friendly which increases its appeal to consumers who are health and environment conscious (Dangi et al., 2020). So, understanding consumer perceptions and behaviors towards sustainable organic food in context of sustainability is of paramount importance for multiple stakeholders. Researchers, for instance, may uncover important things about what drives, interests, and guides consumer purchases, which in turn helps them devise efficient methods of encouraging healthy, environmentally-friendly diets (Dominicis et al., 2020). This information is useful for policymakers because it can be used to formulate regulations and legislation that promote sustainable farming and increase community access to organic foods. Stakeholders in the food sector can better address the rising demand for sustainably produced organic food if they have a thorough awareness of customer preferences (Türk & Erciş, 2017, Chaturvedi, 2022). Also, in order to build a stronger and more sustainable food system, it is crucial to conduct a thorough analysis of how consumers view and act towards organic, sustainably produced food. Researchers can help pave the way towards a more sustainable and healthy food future by shedding light on the factors that influence consumer choices and behaviours, thus contributing to the development of sustainable food policies and supporting environmentally friendly agricultural practises (Mvodo et al., 2018).

There is no doubt that research on buyer behavior towards organic food is of the utmost importance. Despite the growing body of research on the topic, few studies have presented bibliometric analysis (Anand et al., 2022; Sanchez & Flores, 2021; Bravo et al., 2022; Nagy et al.,2022; Öğretmenoğlu et al., 2022; Kristia et al., 2023; Vergura et al., 2023) and very few studies have attempted to summarize the current landscape, verify the trends over the years that require further research. Since new environmental issues occur on a daily basis and people all over the world are becoming more aware of the degradation of the environment, the discussion of organic food consumption is particularly pertinent. With this background, the study aims to map the research landscape of consumer perception and behaviors towards sustainable organic food using bibliometric review. In order to assess the quality of scientific studies, bibliometric analysis is a useful tool.

The goal of this technique is to determine the direction and pace of research in a given field by the use of a quantitative evaluation of output, which entails monitoring and analysing patterns in published data. Bibliographic analysis is a method for determining the most influential people and institutions in a given field by compiling and analysing information from scholarly publication databases. (Yang et al., 2022).

The primary goals of this study are to assess the current state of research, identify areas that require further attention, and emphasize the importance of bibliometrics in assisting emerging researchers. The research extensively investigates the publishing and citation trends, authorship tendencies, and key topics within the realm of organic food research in recent years. By employing science mapping and performance analysis methods, the study examines the development, influence, and central subjects of organic food research. The results of this investigation provide valuable knowledge for researchers, policymakers, and professionals involved in the organic food field.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research utilized a systematic search strategy to identify relevant articles from renowned academic databases, Scopus and Web of Science. The search terms were carefully selected to encompass various aspects of consumer perception and behaviors towards organic food. The databases and keywords utilized to collect information of organic food is shown in table 1.

Table 1

Search Query and Database used

Databases	Search Query
Web of Science & Scopus	"Health consciousness" AND "Purchase Intention" OR "Health consciousness" AND "Organic food" OR "Environmental concern" AND "Purchase intention" OR "Environmental concern" AND "Organic food" OR "Food safety" AND "Purchase intention" OR "Food safety" AND "Organic food" OR "Organic food knowledge" AND "Purchase intention" OR "Organic food knowledge" AND "Organic food" OR "Attitude" AND "Purchase Intention" OR "Attitude" AND "Organic food" OR "Subjective Norms" AND "Purchase intention" OR "Subjective norms" AND "Organic food" OR "Perceived behavioral control" AND "Purchase intention" OR "Perceived behavioral control" AND "Organic food" OR "Self identity" AND "Purchase intention" OR "Self identity" AND "Organic food" OR "Social identity" AND "Purchase intention" OR "Social identity" AND "Organic food" OR "Purchase intention" AND "Purchase behavior"

The selected articles underwent a rigorous screening process based on predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure the inclusion of high-quality and relevant studies. Data extraction involved collecting information on article characteristics, such as publication year, authorship, affiliations, keywords, and citation counts. The selection process is a critical component of a systematic literature review, ensuring the inclusion of relevant studies. A total of 526 records were identified from Scopus and 2167 records from Web of Science, resulting in a combined pool of 2693 records from 2017-2023(April). By focusing on the years 2017-2023, the analysis captures the most recent and relevant studies in the field of organic food. This ensures that the analysis reflects the latest advancements, trends, and developments in research related to organic food. Exclusion criteria was applied to refine the initial pool of records. A total of 1755 records were

excluded based on the following criteria: records published before 2017, non-English language articles, non-academic peer-reviewed records, records unrelated to organic food, and records not open access resulting in retaining 938 records. Among the remaining records, 80 duplicates were identified and subsequently removed, resulting in 858 unique records. A thorough review of titles and abstracts was conducted based on their relevance to organic food. This process led to the removal of 739 records, leaving 119 articles for further evaluation. The 119 full-text articles underwent in-depth evaluation based on the predefined eligibility criteria. After careful examination, 37 articles were excluded, leaving 82 studies for inclusion in the final review. These studies provide valuable insights into various aspects of organic food and contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the research landscape in this domain. Rigorous application of inclusion and exclusion criteria at each stage ensured the validity and reliability of the final included studies. Figure 1 depicts the Prisma framework for the current study.
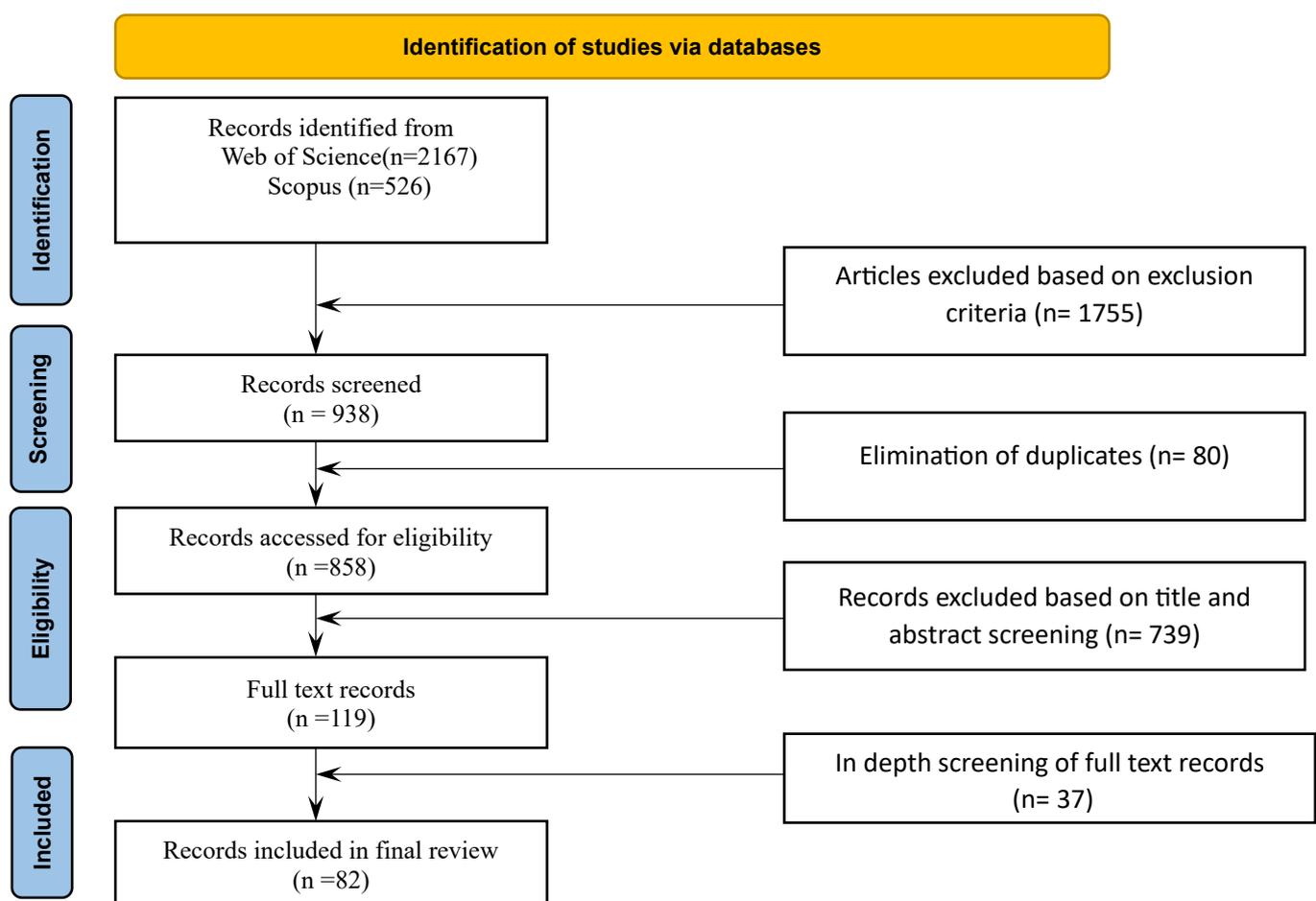

Figure 1 Prisma Framework

Performance Analysis

Performance analysis is a commonly used method for assessing the collective impact of different research elements in a specific field. It involves gathering data from various research parameters such as authors, organizations, countries, and journals. This technique is widely utilized in reviews, even in those that do not specifically employ scientific mapping techniques (Donthu et al., 2021). Table 2 presents key details regarding publications in organic food research. A total of 82 documents were collected, including 77 articles, 4 reviews, and 1 early access publication. These documents were sourced from 40 various outlets, such as journals and

books, covering the timeframe from 2017 to 2023. The field experienced a substantial annual growth rate of 46.78%. The documents involved 253 authors, with 5 papers being single-authored and the remaining 248 papers having multiple authors. On average, each document had 3.39 co-authors.

Table 2

Main information about the publications

Description	Results
MAIN INFORMATION ABOUT DATA	
Timespan	2017:2023
Sources (Journals, Books, etc.)	40
Documents	82
Annual Growth Rate %	46.78
Document Average Age	2.37
Average citations per doc	21.66
References	2266
DOCUMENT CONTENTS	
Keywords Plus (ID)	323
Author's Keywords (DE)	293
AUTHORS	
Authors	253
Authors of single-authored docs	5
AUTHORS COLLABORATION	
Single-authored docs	5
Co-Authors per Doc	3.39
International co-authorships %	19.51
DOCUMENT TYPES	
Article	77
article; early access	1
Review	4

Annual scientific Production

A dataset comprising 82 records sourced from the WoS and Scopus databases, spanning the period from 2017 to 2023, provides comprehensive coverage of research on organic food. The study of organic food has gained significant attention over time. Figure 2, a bar graph, displays the yearly production of articles during this period, revealing the impact of published documents. Initially, in 2017, only one publication existed, but as time progressed, the number of papers steadily increased having an exponential trend. This growth can be attributed to the expanding research focus in the field, which includes a focus on sustainable development goals. Notably, in 2021, there was a substantial surge, with 21 publications, indicating a higher volume compared to previous years. This upward trend is expected to continue, contributing to further advancements in research on organic food consumption.
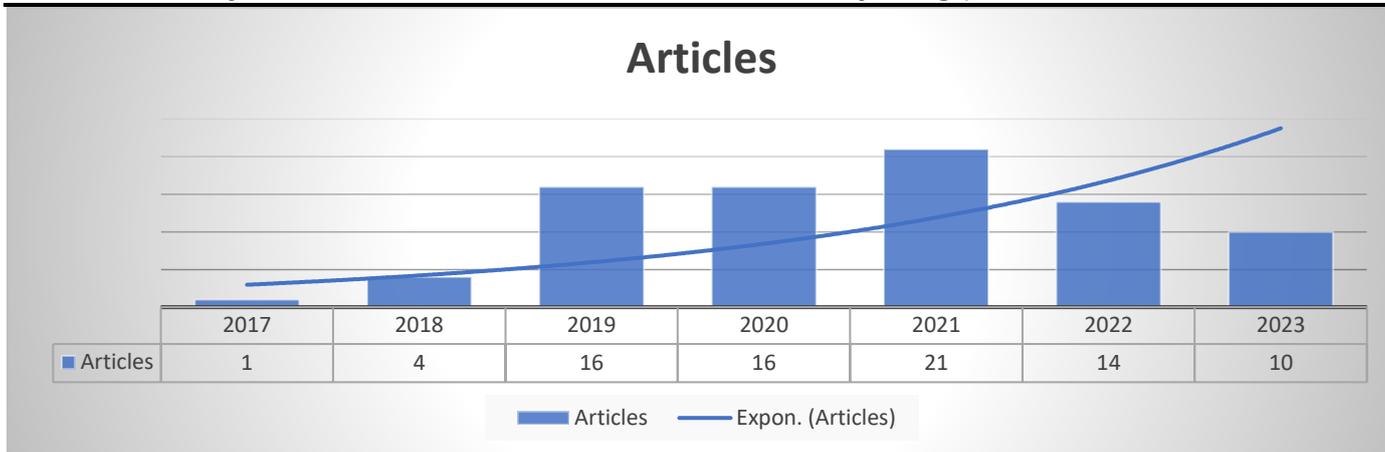
Articles

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
■ Articles	1	4	16	16	21	14	10

■ Articles   — Expon. (Articles)

Figure 2 Annual Scientific Production

Distribution of titles based on Bradford's law.

Bradford's law is a tool employed to illustrate how papers are distributed across journals within a particular subject. It helps identify the essential journals in a field when seeking references in other journals. Desai et al (2018) emphasize that Bradford's Law categorizes journals into different zones based on the number of articles they contain. Figure 3 provides an illustration of this law and highlights notable journals in organic food research, such as the Journal of Sustainability, Journal of Sustainability (Switzerland), and Foods. These journals have made substantial contributions by publishing a significant number of papers pertaining to organic foods.
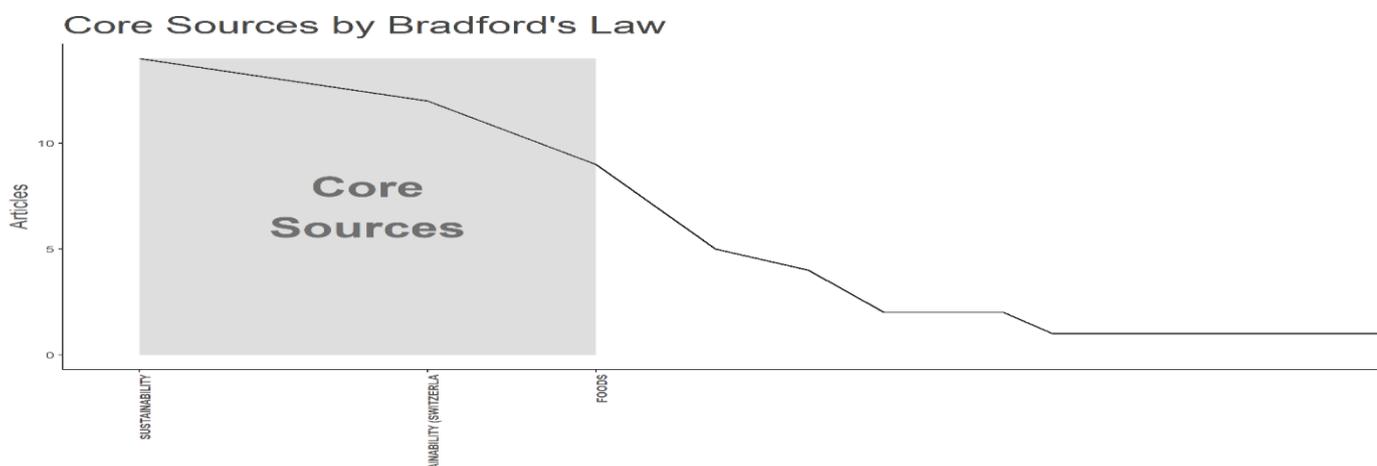

Figure 3 Bradford's Law

Analysis of production (Scientific actors)

The study's findings, as depicted in Table 3, underscores the research output of different entities in the field of organic food research. It offers a comprehensive overview of the contributors involved in this field. China leads the pack with 35 publications, followed by Hungary with 14 publications, positioning itself prominently among emerging nations. Austria and Denmark rank ninth and tenth, respectively, further highlighting China's substantial influence in this area. The table also highlights the top ten institutions, with Szent Istvan University and Thuongmai University having the highest number of affiliated universities globally (12 and 6, respectively). Notably, authors Dhir A and Fogarassy C distinguish themselves through their significant

contributions, publishing 4 or 3 papers in the realm of organic food research, thus exerting a noteworthy impact in this field.

Table 3
Analysis of Production

Authors	Frequency	Affiliation	Frequency	Region	Frequency
DHIR A	4	SZENT ISTVAN UNIV	12	CHINA	35
FOGARASSY C	3	THUONGMAI UNIV	6	HUNGARY	14
KUSHWAH S	3	CHENG SHIU UNIVERSITY	4	MALAYSIA	14
TANDON A	3	NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY	4	ITALY	12
ALI S	2	INSTITUTO POLITÉCNICO DE VIANA DO CASTELO (IPVC)	3	VIETNAM	12
BARBOSA B	2	IPB UNIV	3	INDIA	10
FEKETE-FARKAS M	2	JIANGNAN UNIV	3	INDONESIA	7
GUNDALA RR	2	JILIN UNIVERSITY	3	PAKISTAN	7
JAHARUDDIN NS	2	MULTIMEDIA UNIV	3	AUSTRALIA	6
KAUR P	2	SOUTHWEST UNIV	3	DENMARK	6

Lotka's law

In this study, Lokta's law is utilized to analyze the publishing patterns of authors in organic food research. Lotka's Law, named after Alfred J. Lotka, describes the frequency with which authors publish in a specific field (Lotka, 1926). The results indicate that 0.921% of authors contribute one article, 0.063% of authors contribute two articles, 0.012% of authors publish three documents, and 0.004% of authors contribute four documents, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4
Lotka's Law

Documents written	No. of Authors	Proportion of Authors
1	233	0.921
2	16	0.063
3	3	0.012
4	1	0.004

Most Globally Cited Documents.

Table 5 presents noteworthy research findings that highlight significant articles and authors who have made substantial contributions to the field of organic food research. The study conducted by Hansen T, focusing on the interplay between consumer motivations and values influencing organic food identity and behavior, has received considerable attention with a high citation count of 130. Similarly, the research by Kushwah S, exploring consumer resistance to organic food consumption, has also gained widespread recognition. The works of Tandon A, Vohora, Wang X, and Laureti T offer valuable insights into various aspects of the field,

such as consumer behavior, purchasing decisions, and the benefits associated with organic food. These studies collectively contribute to our understanding of why consumers opt for organic food, the underlying factors that influence their choices, and consumption patterns. Notably, author Tandon A has made notable contributions to this field, as evidenced by their highly cited work.

Table 5
Most Globally Cited Documents

Author	Year	Source	Title	Total Citation	Total Citation Per Year
HANSEN T	2018	FOOD POLICY	HOW THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN CONSUMER MOTIVATIONS AND VALUES INFLUENCES ORGANIC FOOD IDENTITY AND BEHAVIOR	130	21.67
KUSHWAH S	2019	FOOD QUALITY AND PREFERENCE	UNDERSTANDING CONSUMER RESISTANCE TO THE CONSUMPTION OF ORGANIC FOOD. A STUDY OF ETHICAL CONSUMPTION, PURCHASING, AND CHOICE BEHAVIOUR	117	23.4
TANDON A	2020	JOURNAL OF RETAILING AND CONSUMER SERVICES	WHY DO PEOPLE BUY ORGANIC FOOD? THE MODERATING ROLE OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS AND TRUST	117	29.25
HOANG VIET NGUYEN HVN,	2019	INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH AND PUBLIC HEALTH	ORGANIC FOOD PURCHASES IN AN EMERGING MARKET	99	19.8
TANDON A	2021	FOOD QUALITY AND PREFERENCE	FACILITATORS AND INHIBITORS OF ORGANIC FOOD BUYING BEHAVIOR	97	32.33
WANG X	2019	SUSTAINABILITY	FACTORS INFLUENCING ORGANIC FOOD PURCHASE INTENTION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND THE MODERATING ROLE OF KNOWLEDGE	93	18.6
TANDON A	2020	APPETITE	BEHAVIORAL REASONING PERSPECTIVES ON ORGANIC FOOD PURCHASE	85	21.25
LAURETI T	2018	JOURNAL OF CLEANER PRODUCTION	EXPLORING PRO-ENVIRONMENTAL FOOD PURCHASING BEHAVIOUR: AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF ITALIAN CONSUMERS	76	12.67
BAI L	2019	SUSTAINABILITY (SWITZERLAND)	UNDERSTANDING THE ANTECEDENTS OF ORGANIC FOOD PURCHASES:	68	13.6
QASIM H,	2019	INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH AND PUBLIC HEALTH	THE DEFINING ROLE OF ENVIRONMENTAL SELF-IDENTITY AMONG CONSUMPTION VALUES AND BEHAVIORAL INTENTION TO CONSUME ORGANIC FOOD	58	11.6

Science Mapping.

Bibliometric maps are employed in science mapping to visually represent the organization of disciplines, scientific areas, or research domains in terms of concepts, ideas, and social connections (Cobo et al., 2011). Scientific mapping involves data retrieval, pre-processing, network extraction, normalization, mapping, analysis, and visualization. Co-citations and keyword concordance are frequently used techniques (Gaviria-Marin et al., 2019).

A technique called "keyword cloud layer" or "keyword rendering" is utilized to visually highlight frequently occurring keywords in web texts. This approach assists web browsers in gaining a general understanding of the main concept of the text by filtering out excessive information (Heimerl et al., 2014). Figure 4 presents a word cloud diagram generated by biblioshiny, using authors' keywords as input. This diagram offers valuable insights into important subjects and research trends. The analysis includes 50 words, with the term "organic food" prominently displayed at the center, occupying the largest area. Additionally, significant words such as "purchase intention," "theory of planned behavior," "health consciousness," and "consumer behavior" stand out. These keywords reflect crucial areas of research in organic food, while other relevant terms such as "subjective norms," "environmental concern," and "trust" are also depicted.

Figure 4 Word cloud

Intellectual structure

Thematic evolution and thematic mapping of organic food research

This part of the study looks at the thematic development and thematic mapping of literature on organic food research over time. The number of articles produced for each topic area is displayed on a two-dimensional thematic evolution graph, and the thematic areas are represented by vertical divisions. These lines have come together conceptually or thematically throughout time due to several common characteristics. The figure explains how several themes arose from 2017 to 2021 to 2022 to 2023. The term "attitude" is significant since

it is connected to practically every action. Stage one (2017-2021) and two (2022-2023) are closely related since they share more keywords, as shown in Figure 5.
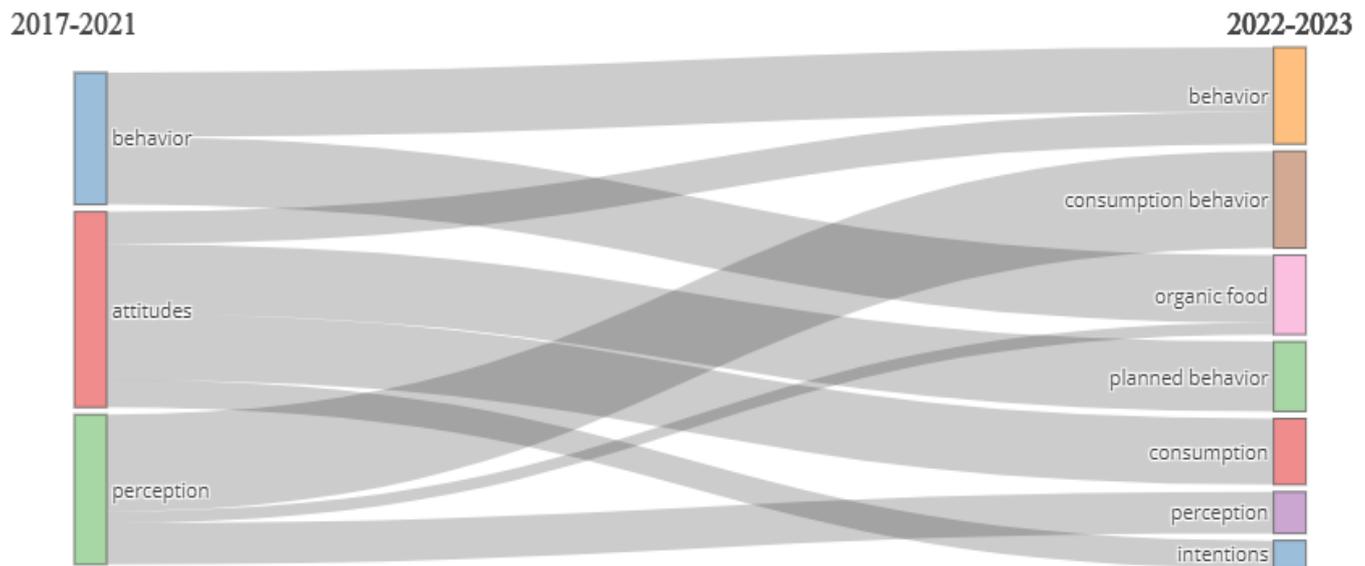

Figure 5 Thematic evolution

Thematic keyword mapping is a technique used to identify significant study themes, key terms, and their relationships. Themes positioned in the upper right quadrant exhibit high centrality and density, indicating their crucial role in the field. These themes represent important research areas that have emerged and are relevant within a specific domain (Akter et al., 2021). Thematic mapping categorizes themes into quadrants: upper-right for motor themes, lower-right for basic themes, lower-left for emerging/disappearing themes, and upper-left for specialized/niche themes. In the context of organic food, "behavior," "perception," and "organic food" are motor themes with high density and relevance, while "attitudes," "consumption," and "planned behavior" are niche themes with high density but lower relevance. Basic themes, although important, are not extensively explored (Martínez et al., 2015). Themes like "consumption behavior," "public attitude," and "organic farming" have high relevance but low density. On the other hand, the term "agriculture" falls under the category of emerging or declining themes with low density and centrality in organic food research as shown in figure 6.
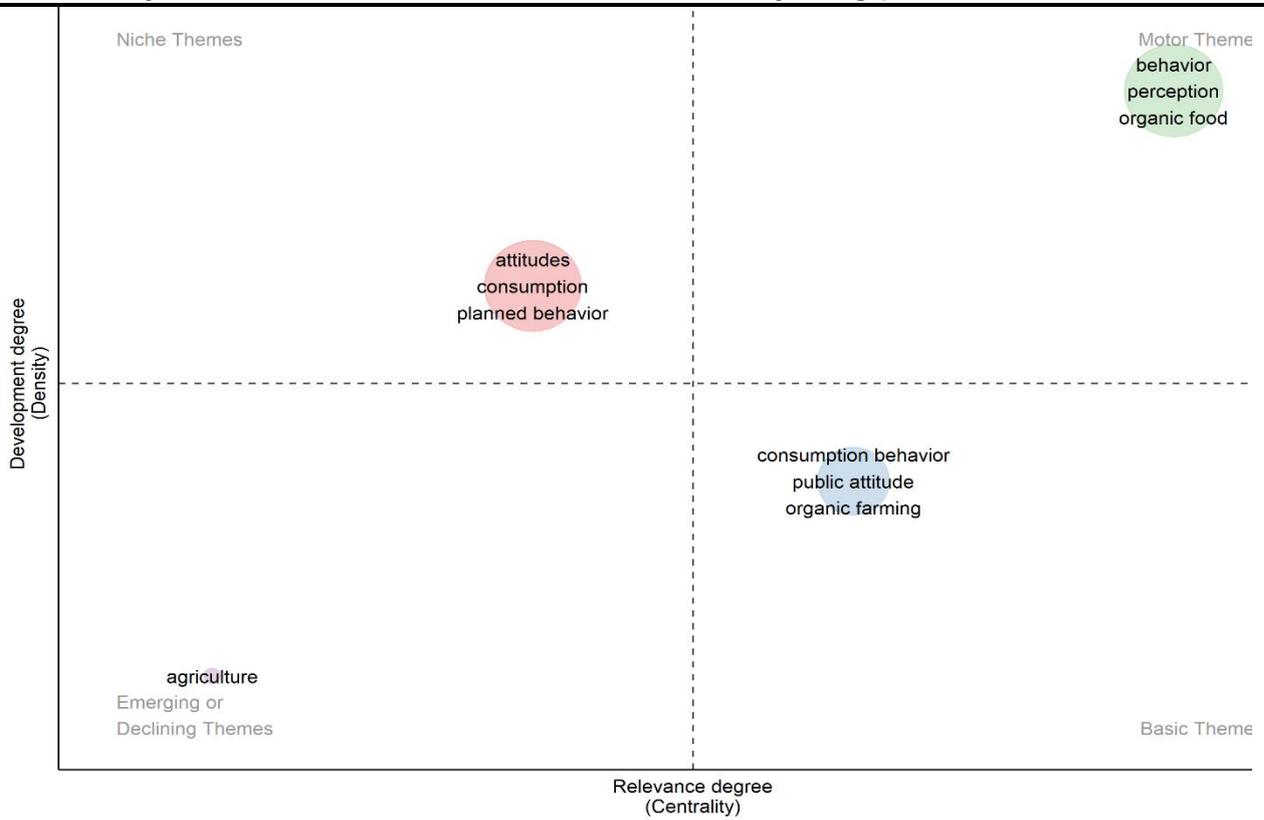
Figure 6 Thematic Map

Country collaboration map

Figure 7 shows global collaboration in organic food research, with blue indicating country-specific publications and gray representing no publications. The intensity of blue reflects a country's productivity level, while red lines denote collaborative relationships between producing countries (Akter et al., 2021). Based on the collaboration map, the lines between countries signify active collaborative efforts. In the domain of organic food research, China and Pakistan exhibit the strongest collaboration, followed by Malaysia and Indonesia. China demonstrates extensive collaboration with various countries, including Pakistan, the UK, Hungary, and Indonesia.
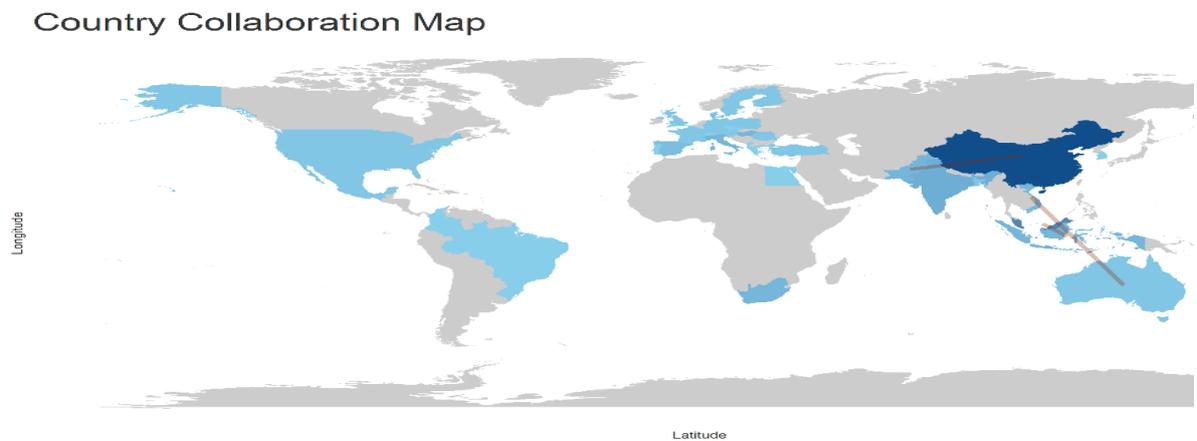

Figure 7 Country Collaboration Map

Findings and Conclusion

The field of organic food research is expanding and full of exciting possibilities for advancement. This research paper employs bibliometric analysis to gather valuable insights into the scientific landscape and primary research areas within organic food research. The study emphasizes the influential role of renowned journals such as the Journal of Sustainability and Journal of Sustainability (Switzerland).

The analysis reveals a clear upward trend in publications, with a notable surge beginning in 2019 and a subsequent increase in publications emerging in 2021. This trend signifies a growing interest and engagement in the field of organic food research. Collaborative efforts among various countries, including China, Pakistan, Malaysia, Indonesia, and others, have played a critical role in driving research forward in this domain.

The contributions of notable authors like Dhir A. and Tandon A. have significantly enriched the field, adding depth and insight. Promising avenues for further exploration are found in emerging themes, particularly in the context of "agriculture," as well as the significant themes of "behavior," "perception," and "organic food," which have received substantial attention and contribute significantly to the field. Overall, these findings deepen our understanding of organic food research and establish a strong foundation for future studies in this dynamic discipline.

Research Limitations and Future Directions

This study on organic food research has two key limitations. Firstly, the continuous addition of articles to databases like Scopus and Web of Science can result in variations in bibliometric analyses over time. Secondly, the analysis focused solely on empirical studies, excluding gray literature such as reviews, books, and conference papers. Future research should incorporate these sources for a more comprehensive analysis. Consideration of impact factor and social science citation index is also crucial for bibliometric analysis in this field. The study's findings benefit researchers, academics, and marketing professionals seeking a better understanding of organic food research and its implications for consumer behavior.

Conflict of Interest

There are no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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