

Research Trends on Promoting Mental Health and Resilience Literacy through Children's Literature

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ABSTRACT This study examines research trends on promoting mental health literacy in children's literature through bibliometric analysis. With growing recognition of children's mental health as a critical issue, literature has emerged as a valuable tool to foster emotional resilience and well-being. This study aims to identify emerging themes and shifts in focus, ensuring future studies address the most pressing mental health concerns in children's literature. Additionally, mapping these trends highlights under-researched areas, guiding targeted investigations to strengthen evidence-based interventions and support for children. This study employed data from Scopus and found seven eligible publications between 2015 and 2024. To comprehensively analyze the collected data, VOSviewer is applied to capture co-authorship networks, keyword co-occurrences, and thematic clusters. The results highlight a rise in publications during the COVID-19 pandemic, reflecting increased global attention to mental health. The United States leads research output, followed by China and the United Kingdom, though cross-institutional collaborations remain limited. Prominent themes include resilience, emotional intelligence, and the impact of bullying, with emerging topics like digital interventions and bibliotherapy. However, areas such as the experiences of foster children and those facing cyberbullying are underexplored. The study underscores the need for interdisciplinary approaches and international partnerships to address these gaps. Fragmented research themes highlight the importance of broader integration. By promoting emotional literacy and resilience, children's literature holds significant potential to support mental health initiatives, offering valuable insights for future research and practical applications.

KEYWORDS *Bibliometric; Children's literature; Mental health; Research trends.*

INTRODUCTION

Children's literature is a special literary category created for children, which includes children from preschool to secondary school age (Ding, 2019; Hunt, 2005). This type of literature often serves dual purposes. It is used as an educational tool, particularly in elementary schools where it constitutes a significant portion of teaching materials. It also aims to enhance children's aesthetic appreciation and creativity through beautiful language and engaging stories (Xinxin, 2021). In addition, nowadays, children literature

raises mental health themes, reflecting a growing concern in society for its readers' emotional well-being and resilience (Waterhouse & Smith, 2023). Such stories become powerful means of identification and empathy, whereby children find themselves in the characters facing similar difficulties. The sense of isolation decreases while understanding of others increases.

Through stories addressing issues like anxiety and bullying, children are introduced to concepts designed to foster resilience



and emotional intelligence, equipping them with essential coping mechanisms to navigate their challenges (Ramamurthy et al., 2024). Addressing mental health concerns in curricular literacy makes improvements not only for children's traditional but also their emotional literacy regarding dealing with stressful circumstances. Not only does literature comfort and provide strategies for the present, but it is also a prevention that equips children with strategies to fight off emotional turmoil well before such feelings might have mounted insurmountable (Waterhouse, 2019).

In Indonesia, according to the report by UNICEF (2025), children and adolescents face a significant and rising mental health crisis, with 34.9% (15.5 million) of adolescents reporting mental health issues and 1 in 20 (2.45 million) affected by diagnosed mental disorders in 2022. Specific concerns include anxiety, affecting over one in five adolescents, and depression, impacting 61% of youth aged 15-24, with 2% having considered suicide. These challenges are worsened by a complex interplay of factors, including socioeconomic conditions, the psychological aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, and environmental stressors like natural disasters and climate change. Furthermore, social pressures such as family conflicts, bullying, academic demands, and social media influence contribute significantly. Despite the high prevalence, access to mental healthcare remains critically low, with only 2.6% of adolescents with concerns seeking support, largely due to a severe shortage of mental health professionals (e.g., less than one psychologist per 100,000 people), significant

geographical disparities, high out-of-pocket costs, and pervasive societal stigma that often attributes mental illness to mystical causes and deters help-seeking.

Research on the themes of mental health in children's literature underlines the interdisciplinary importance of research as it holds significant social relevance (O'Neill & Moore, 2016). Studies in education and psychology confirm that introducing mental health themes into school curricula forms emotional awareness and well-being in children, who contextualize their emotions and develop resilience through storytelling (Coubet et al., 2022). Works like the Harry Potter series and Beverley Naidoo's *The Other Side of Truth*, from a literary perspective, apply trauma narratives to depict mental health problems with psychological depth and allow empathy, thus enabling healing (Szmigiero, 2019). Children's literature has a supportive and preventive role in the development of emotional awareness and regulation, considering that 15-22% of children all over the world have some mental health problems (Matson et al., 2009). These research findings published in reputable journals indicate how literature can combine academic insight into workable strategies for the betterment of both scholarly understanding and societal well-being.

To know the development of the related research, bibliometric analysis shows trends in studies on mental health as represented in children's literature. On this topic, there is a significant quantity of increased research output, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, which brought into sharp focus the global mental

health challenges (Grover et al., 2021; Lange, 2021). The leading countries in this research contribution include the United States, China, and the United Kingdom, reflecting their academic influence and collaborative effort in this field. The most discussed issues are depression, anxiety, stress, and bullying, while currently, a newly emerging trend includes the use of digital technology in mental health interventions (T. Chen et al., 2024). The most evident collaboration in the research team structure includes the interdisciplinary collaboration of psychology, education, and social sciences. Lockdowns, online learning, and social isolation caused by the pandemic spurred a wave of research studies, with COVID-19 becoming one of the most frequently used keywords in 2020 and afterward (Guo et al., 2023).

Current key focuses are the dynamics of mental health within an educational setting, digital interventions, and family and caregiving roles. Most researchers conducted school-based studies focusing on stress and test anxiety experienced by students to improve children's mental health (Troy et al., 2022). Digital tools, such as mobile apps and telemedicine, promise to improve children's mental health and are accessible (T. Chen et al., 2024). Another study has also underlined the psychological burden on parents of disabled children, suggesting that the far-reaching mental health consequences of caregiving demands are there. While there are steps forward in these areas, significant gaps persist, especially in responding to the needs of populations that are particularly vulnerable, such as children in foster care and those affected by cyberbullying (Rakap

& Vural-Batik, 2024). These health disparities require increased collaboration at the global level, especially with low- and middle-income countries. Focused studies are essential for improving understanding of mental health inequities and developing practical solutions (Fiskin et al., 2018; Gureje et al., 2019).

Since Scopus has been chosen for the literature review for this paper because it has been proved to have comprehensive coverage, was considered very dependable or sound, and enjoys excellent capabilities related to good-quality biometric analysis; being one of the major citation databases, Scopus gives substantial access to leading, peer-reviewed journals, books, and conference proceedings which offer outstanding multi-disciplinary coverages (Baas et al., 2020). It has since gained international coverage, with research from a number of countries, hence offering a good standing on child and adolescent mental health trends. Advanced analytical tools in Scopus and VOSviewer enable complex bibliometric studies, such as keyword co-occurrence and co-authorship studies, which are important for identifying research trends and knowledge gaps. Through the use of psychological theories, educational studies, and even some viewpoints from more literary frameworks, Scopus enables inter- and intra-disciplinary collaborations that considerably raise the depth and breadth of such findings. It has become an indispensable way to trace development within this emerging domain of children's literature dealing with mental health issues (Díaz Llobet et al., 2024).

This paper analyzes recent trends in research from 2015 to 2024 on mental health issues in children's literature, as represented

by the co-authors' relationships and keyword co-occurrence profiles based on information from Scopus. Bibliometrics charts the growth in engagement with these issues in light of the literary field through emerging themes taken from interdisciplinary fields (Sofik et al., 2021). Findings further reveal what this kind of a study currently contributes to against literary criticism growing across mental health promotion beyond what foundational impacts reach in relevant and practical directions. Therefore, this study is significant since it seeks to examine the evolving scholarly discourse on mental health portrayals in children's literature through bibliometric methods. By mapping publication patterns and intellectual networks, it aims to reveal how this field has developed over time and which aspects have received predominant attention. Furthermore, the analysis intends to uncover less explored dimensions that could benefit from future research, thereby contributing to more comprehensive understandings of mental health narratives for young audiences. Ultimately, these findings may inform researchers, educators, and mental health professionals about current knowledge trends and potential directions for interdisciplinary collaboration.

Method

This study applies bibliometric analysis to identify research trends utilizing data from the Scopus database. It serves not only to map research trends quantitatively but also to reveal latent intellectual structures, enabling theoretical reflections by identifying knowledge gaps, emerging paradigms, and unconventional connections across

literature. While it doesn't involve direct fieldwork, its strength lies in synthesizing large-scale scholarly patterns, which can inspire novel conceptual frameworks or challenge existing theories (Marvi & Foroudi, 2023). It starts with identifying targeted keywords to guide the searches, followed by the critical review of the retrieved documents to ensure that their contents align with the purpose of the study (Mukherjee et al., 2022). Documents are refined in relevance, quality, and publication date, as proposed by methodologies such as those by Donthu et al. (2021). These steps form a comprehensive base for performance evaluation and science mapping.

To analyze the data, this study utilizes VOSviewer as a tool to provide important insights into the collaboration patterns and the research gaps (J. Li & Wei, 2022). The bibliometric search was conducted using TITLE-ABS-KEY (mental health AND children literature) on January 7, 2025. Initially, it resulted 30 documents, down to 20 after filtering the publication years between 2015 and 2024. Additional filtering for subject areas like Social Sciences and Arts and Humanities further reduced this to 10 documents. The final dataset, restricted to the type of primary research output of journal article, resulted in 7 eligible documents. Bibliometric data were exported into .csv file and visualized in VOSviewer for co-authorship and keyword co-occurrence maps. In order to bring about transparency in the reproducibility of steps followed in the conduction of this research, the PRISMA diagram shows this process (Page et al., 2021).

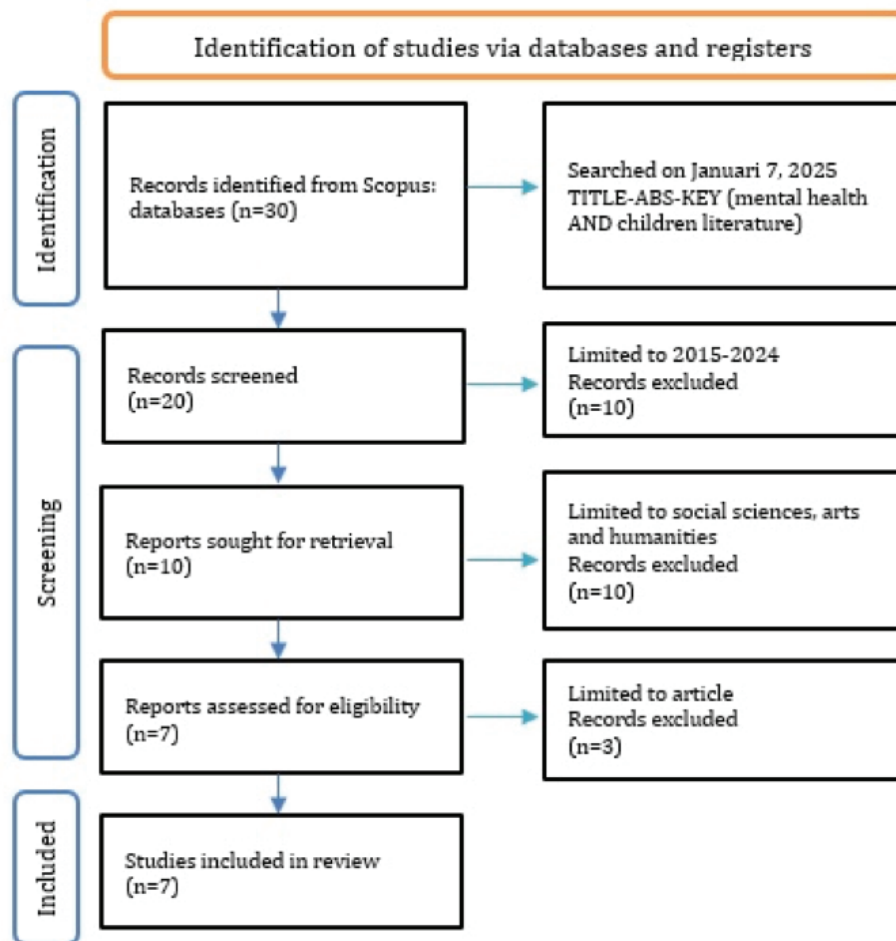


Figure 1. PRISMA Visualization

In practice, VOSviewer is employed to visualize bibliometric networks of country, institution, author, and keyword co-authorship links in analyzing the data collected. This powerful tool maps a graphically appealing structure showing the pattern of collaboration, hot topics, and emerging trends (van Eck & Waltman, 2010). The bibliometric data processed from the selected publications illustrate relationships where nodes represent entities, and the connection shows the strength of association between these entities (Jing et al., 2024). Although VOSviewer is helpful in the identification of major contributors and the monitoring of thematic trends, a bibliometric study will be further enriched by methods such as content analysis or interpretive

reviews. The interpretation addresses gaps and underexplored areas, tracing the historical development of intellectual trends. This integrative methodology according to Lim & Kumar (2024) deepens the understanding of the research landscape, opens up new avenues for inquiry, and fosters a more interconnected, holistic body of knowledge.

DISCUSSION

Publication Trends

Publication trends of mental health issues in children's literature, recorded via Scopus from 2015 to 2024, show infrequent output of research activity throughout these years, reaching a record high in 2017,

with two publications. This erratic trend underlines the fragmented nature of research in this area, which calls for persistence and engagement. Continuous contributions may

provide a more substantial understanding of how children's literature addresses mental health issues.

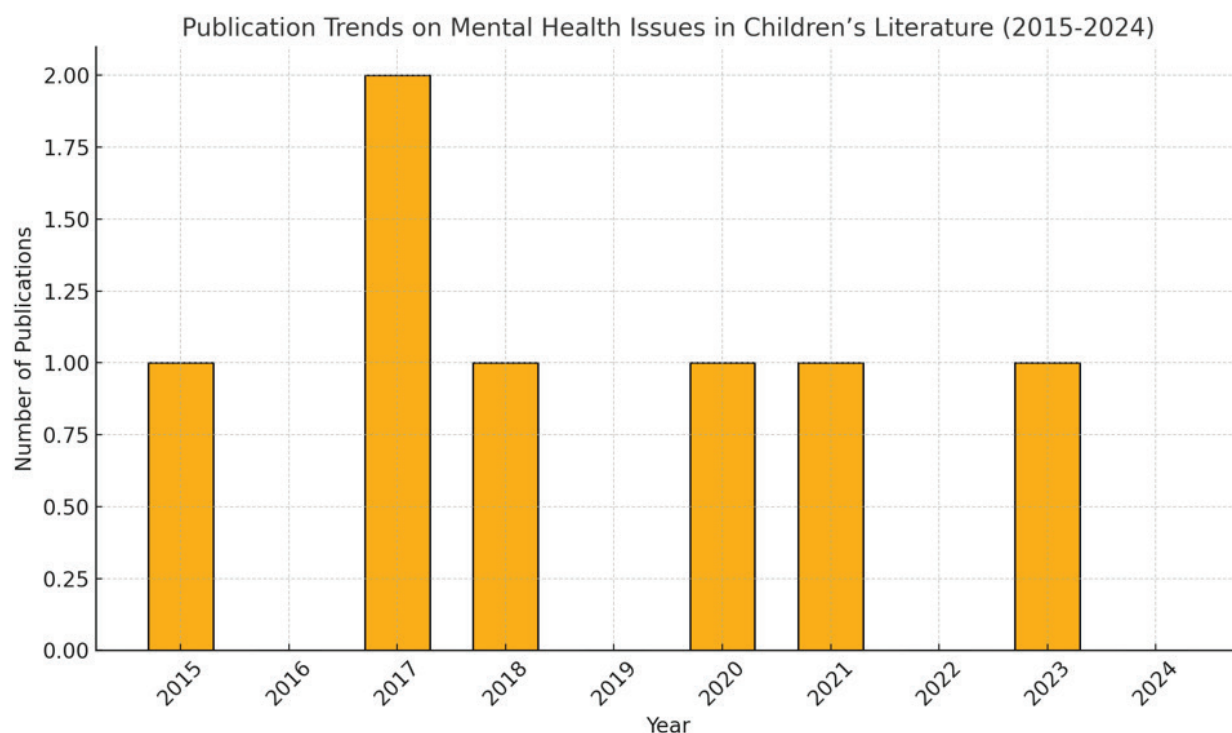


Figure 2. Documents published by year in the Scopus database

Above illustrates that between 2015 and 2024, the Scopus database recorded seven documents on mental health issues in children's literature. The output was highest in 2017, with two documents. In contrast, one publication each occurred in 2015, 2018, 2019, 2022, and 2023. No publications were in the field in 2016, 2020, 2021, and 2024. The overall output is scattered over the decade, with gaps in some years. The small number of publications within a decade indicates that the theme of mental health in children's literature is still an underexplored area of study despite the growing global concern about the mental health of children.

The seven articles, while diverse, collectively illustrate the indirect engagement

of children's literature with mental health issues between 2015 and 2024. While some articles like *"The Impact of Perceived Discrimination on Mental Health Among Chinese Migrant and Left-Behind Children: A Meta-analysis"* and *"Bad kids and bad feelings: What children's literature teaches about ADHD, creativity, and openness"* directly address mental health, many others like *"The Bullying Literature Project: Promoting Bystander Behavior Using Children's Literature,"* *"Using Children's Literature to Strengthen Social and Emotional Learning"* or broader social issues like diversity such as *"Analysis of Latino award-winning children's literature"* focus on related social-emotional learning.

The pattern suggests that while children’s literature is increasingly recognized for its role in fostering empathy and addressing social complexities, direct and in-depth explorations of clinical mental health conditions remain less prevalent. The inclusion of articles on the development of children’s literature studies like “I Write to Frighten Myself”: Catherine Storr and the Development of Children’s Literature Studies in Britain” or using literature for physical activity like “Booking It: Using Children’s Literature to Get Students Moving” further highlights a fragmented academic landscape where mental health is often approached indirectly or as part of broader well-being initiatives rather than as a distinct, deeply elaborated theme within literary analysis. This aligns with the broader contextual challenges of socio-cultural stigma,

political priorities leaning towards clinical intervention, and economic disincentives that deter explicit engagement with mental illness in commercially viable children’s narratives.

Publication distribution of countries

The publication distribution of countries in the field of mental health issues in children’s literature reflects varying levels of research contribution across regions. Due to the limited number of documents available, the minimum threshold for the number of documents contributed by a country is set at one. According to the Scopus database, the United States leads in research output, followed by China and the United Kingdom. Below is the graph illustrating the number of documents published by each country.

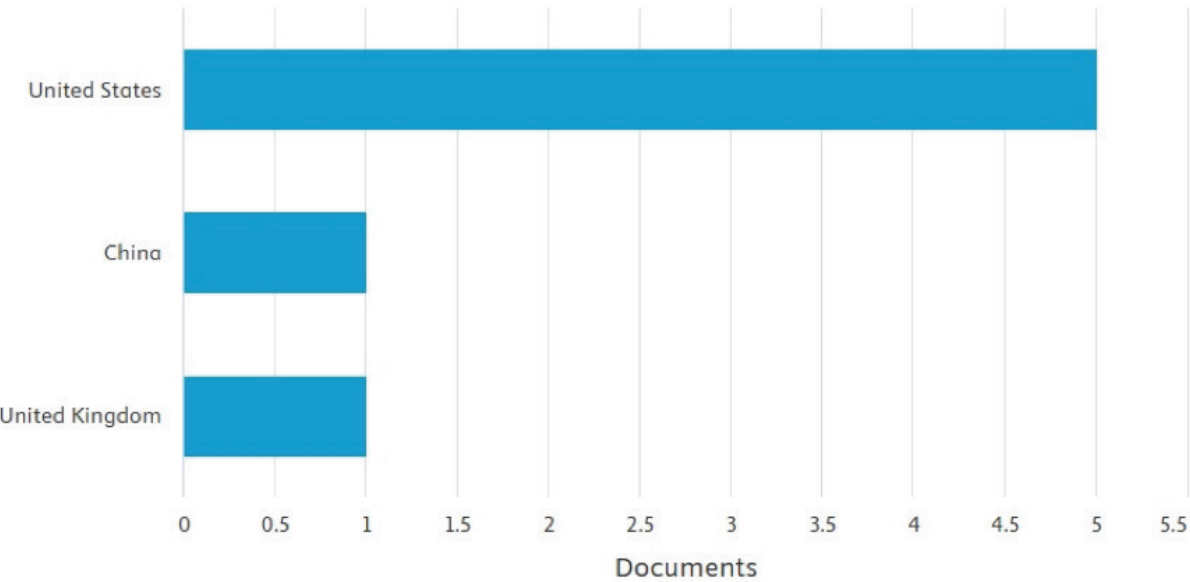


Figure 3. Documents published by country in the Scopus database

Between 2015 and 2024, three countries contributed to publications on mental health issues in children’s literature, as recorded in the Scopus database. The United States

emerged as the leading contributor with five documents, showcasing its strong research capacity and focus on mental health-related themes. China and the United Kingdom each

published one document, reflecting their more limited but notable engagement with the topic. The dominance of the United States in this field may be attributed to its advanced academic infrastructure and prioritization of mental health in interdisciplinary research. Meanwhile, the low output from China and the United Kingdom suggests opportunities for expanding research in these regions. Overall, the uneven distribution underscores the need for a more balanced global effort to address mental health issues through children's literature.

The United States' higher publication volume likely reflects its strong research infrastructure and established public discourse on child mental health, supported by national studies and policy recognition of a crisis (Lachaab, 2024; Triplett et al., 2022; Zablotsky & Terlizzi, 2020). In contrast, the United Kingdom's lower output stems from significant cuts to children's mental health services and public health funding since 2010, leading to underinvestment that impedes research (Brown et al., 2024; Cummins, 2018). China, despite national policy prioritization of youth mental health and ambitious school-based initiatives, faces challenges in

inter-organizational cooperation and policy responsiveness, potentially slowing research translation (T.-J. Chen et al., 2024; Florentim et al., 2025; Y. Li & Ma, 2021). These disparities highlight how political commitment and resource allocation influence academic output, mirroring Indonesia's struggles with insufficient mental health literacy, pervasive stigma, and limited funding for child mental health support (Brooks et al., 2019, 2022; Yani et al., 2025).

While the publication distribution highlights the independent contributions of countries, analyzing co-authorship networks provides insights into their collaborative dynamics. The VOSviewer analysis visualizes the relationships between countries through co-authorship links, indicating whether researchers from different regions have collaborated on publications. Interestingly, the network analysis reveals no collaborative ties exist among the United States, China, and the United Kingdom in this research area. Each country operates independently, producing research in isolation rather than engaging in international partnerships. Below is the graph illustrating the network visualization of country co-authorship.



Figure 4. Network visualization of country co-authorship

The visualization of the co-authorship network underlines the lack of international collaboration between the three contributing countries. Indeed, the VOSviewer diagram shows the presence of unconnected nodes for the United States, China, and the United Kingdom, thus confirming the lack of co-authorship links. This indicates that researchers in this field have not yet established cross-border partnerships crucial for knowledge and resource sharing. The absence of such collaboration limits the scope and depth of research perspectives, as studies occur within the methodologies and frameworks dominant in individual countries. Greater international cooperation could enhance this field by fostering interdisciplinary approaches and leveraging regional expertise. Strengthened networks of co-authors could boost research quality and broaden the global impact of studies on mental health issues in children's literature (Kaku et al., 2022; Karaliuniene et al., 2022).

Institution Affiliation

The institutional affiliations analyzed within the context of mental health issues in children's literature show a limited number of participating organizations, most of which have published no more than one document in the last ten years. This reflects a relatively low level of institutional engagement in this area of research. The minimal output per institution suggests a lack of dedicated focus or resources for studying mental health in children's literature.

Developing a more dynamic and effective research ecosystem could be encouraged by stimulating greater institutional involvement through collaboration, funding, and targeted research initiatives. Given the limited documents, the threshold for the number of publications by an organization is set at one. Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, United States, stands out as the only institution with more than one publication in the Scopus database, contributing two documents. The following table summarizes the documents published by various institutions in this research domain.

Table 1. Documents published by institutions in the Scopus database

Cluster	Institution	Document
1	Southwestern University of Finance and Economics, Chengdu, China; Shenzhen University, Shenzhen, China	1
2	Brigham, Young University, Provo, UT, United States	2
3	University of Maryland, United States	1
4	Valdosta State University, Valdosta, GA, United States	1
5	Newcastle University, Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom	1
6	University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH, United States	1

The data above reflects extremely low institutional productivity, as only Brigham Young University contributed more than one publication. This record highlights significant inequality in research activity within this domain. In contrast, institutions such as the University of Maryland, Newcastle University, and the University of New Hampshire contributed only one document each, underscoring minimal involvement in this field.

However, inter-institutional collaboration is crucial for addressing the growing child mental health crisis. It frequently happens because of lacking access to care due to fragmentation and stigma. By fostering partnerships between schools, healthcare providers, social services, and community organizations, a comprehensive support system emerges. This collaboration enables early identification through integrated screening in educational settings, facilitates seamless referrals to specialized mental health services, and shares vital resources to overcome scarcity (Monson et al., 2021). For instance, school-based programs like on-site therapy reduce access barriers, while shared data and joint training enhance understanding and care coordination. This unified approach reduces stigma by normalizing mental health discussions across various institutions, ensuring children receive timely, holistic, and consistent support.

The lack of broad participation suggests that researching mental health concerns in children's literature has yet to be recognized as a priority by most academic institutions. The uneven distribution underscores the need for greater participation and

investment across more universities and research centers. Such efforts would foster diverse perspectives, expand the body of knowledge, and address critical gaps in the current literature. It could also lead to a more inclusive approach to using literature as a tool for addressing children's mental health challenges.

The institutional co-authorship network analysis reveals a pronounced imbalance in collaboration patterns. Cluster 1 showcases the most active partnerships between the Southwestern University of Finance and Economics in Chengdu and Shenzhen University in Shenzhen, China. These two institutions demonstrate a strong collaborative relationship that could serve as a model for building future co-authorship networks. In contrast, other institutions, including Brigham Young University and Newcastle University, operate independently, with no significant co-authorship ties. The lack of cross-institutional collaboration among most institutions limits the potential for interdisciplinary approaches and knowledge-sharing. Promoting inclusive research networks that connect multiple institutions would enhance scientific productivity and broaden the academic and practical impact of studies in this domain. Interdisciplinary research has been shown to thrive when collaborative networks are fostered, enabling diverse perspectives and innovative solutions to emerge (Pidgeon, 2009).

Authors and Citations

Scopus author and citation analysis indicate the differences in productivity and impact regarding mental health issues

in children’s literature. Among the seven identified documents, a total of 15 authors contributed, with variations observed in both the number of documents authored and the citations each received. The following table depicts the distribution of documents and citations among the authors.

Table 2. Authors with the number of documents and citations

No	Author	Documents	Citations
1	Heat, Melissa Allen	2	51
2	Smith, Kathryn	1	44
3	Young, Ellie I.	1	44
4	Hu, Jingwen	1	14
5	Hu, Yu	1	14
6	Zhu, Yi	1	14
7	Gomm, Jeff	1	7
8	Mora, Pat	1	7
9	Cheong, Yeram	1	3
10	Scott, Arianna	1	3
11	Wang, Cixin	1	3
12	Stearns, Clio	1	3
13	Marciano, Deb I.	1	2
14	Sanderson, Sonya I.	1	2
15	Reynolds, Kimberley	1	1

The table 2 above displays 15 authors who have contributed to mental health issues in children’s literature. Only one, Melissa Allen Heat, has been able to contribute to more than one publication, and thus, she is the most contributing author from that perspective. This mirrors the large clumps in the plot and

indicates an uneven distribution of research activity. This disparity suggests that while a few key contributors have been pivotal, broader participation and collaboration are needed to diversify perspectives and strengthen collective contributions to this area.

Citations further show the impact of these contributions, with six authors receiving notable recognition: Melissa Allen Heat leads with 51 citations, followed by Kathryn Smith and Ellie I. Young, each with 44 citations. Jingwen Hu, Yu Hu, and Yi Zhu have gained 14 citations each, showing a moderate impact. On the other hand, the remaining eight authors received less than seven citations, reflecting serious gaps in scholarly influence. While Heat’s leading position is prominent, such a difference points to developing strategies to increase the visibility and involvement of the rest of the contributors to achieve a more balanced scholarly presence.

Among the seven publications, two emerge as particularly impactful, distinguishing themselves through their contributions to the field. “*Using Children’s Literature to Strengthen Social and Emotional Learning*” by Heath et al. (2017) is a 44-citation review of bibliotherapy in helping meet children’s social and emotional needs within schools. It positions literature as a resource for prevention and intervention, from which educators and mental health professionals can benefit by accessing tools such as bibliotherapy lesson plans and CASEL’s foundational competencies. This approach underlines the potential of literature to supplement deficiencies in traditional mental health services. Given the scarcity

of mental health professionals worldwide, including literature in supplementing the services becomes particularly important. The second is the paper by Hu et al. (2022), titled “*The Impact of Perceived Discrimination on Mental Health Among Chinese Migrant and Left-Behind Children: A Meta-Analysis*,” with 14 citations. This study examines perceived discrimination and its effects on the mental health of left-behind migrant children in China. The findings indicate that migrant children are more strongly affected by discrimination, with moderating factors such as gender and age providing valuable insights into the unique challenges these populations face.

In addition, the VOSviewer visualization of the co-authorship analysis offers insights

into the dynamics of collaboration among these 15 authors, who are divided into six clusters with varying levels of connectivity. The red cluster is the largest, containing five authors. Melissa Allen Heat is part of the most intense co-authorship relations since she is connected with four other contributors. This network highlights existing collaboration while indicating some areas of interest for expanding interdisciplinary and international collaboration. Such reinforcement of the co-authorship ties and the broadening of participation could contribute to a better position and a more significant effect of this line of work in meeting mental health challenges through children’s literature.



Figure 5. Network visualization of co-authorship of authors

The VOSviewer analysis underlines the red cluster as the most crucial in collaborative interactions within the field, with the connections of Melissa Allen Heat forming the backbone of substantial co-authorship activity. This cluster represents the most substantial linkages that drive the development of research networks. The green and blue clusters have three authors each and present a more moderate collaboration with individual authors linked to two others. While these clusters do have some level of connectivity, their collaboration is not as robust as that of the red cluster.

The remaining three clusters show minimum link strength, meaning their research efforts are in isolation, with limited integration into the wider network. This fragmented distribution points to the strengths and weaknesses of the current collaborative landscape. While the red cluster is at the center in driving research forward, the sparsity of connections among other clusters signals opportunities for further development in co-author networks. Improvement in interdisciplinary collaboration and making research networks more inclusive may raise productivity and innovation notably. In doing so, collaboration across clusters and embracing diverse perspectives may lead to increased cohesion and impact of the growing body of work

while furthering understanding in relation to mental health issues in children’s literature (Leahey & Barringer, 2020).

Keywords Co-occurrences

The keyword co-occurrence analysis of the seven publications retrieved from the Scopus database showed that no keyword was repeated in the dataset. In this respect, 32 keywords were identified and then divided into six clusters. The largest cluster was Cluster 1, with seven keywords, which means this cluster is comparatively thematically consistent. However, there are no links between clusters, which presupposes that the research publications have no thematic coincidence or integration.

This fragmentation underlines how research effort is atomized, with little shared terminology and collaboration across disciplines. Fragmentation in some of these clusters may denote breaks in thematic flow that could, therefore, be bridged to enable more connected and interdisciplinary work. By addressing this fragmentation, researchers can bring together many perspectives to facilitate a deeper understanding of how mental health issues are identified in children’s literature. The table below presents the keyword clusters and provides further insight into their distribution.

Table 3. Cluster of keywords co-occurrences

Cluster	Keywords
1 (7 items)	Americas book award, children’s literature, horn book guide, latino immigrant children, pura Belpre award, social emotional challenge, tomas rivera award
2 (6 items)	Catherine storr, child mental health, children’s literature in education, d.w. Winnicott, gothic, Marianne dreams
3 (6 items)	Culture and literacy, curriculum studies, language, pedagogical orientation, socio-political condition, student and teacher experience

Cluster	Keywords
4 (5 items)	Bibliotherapy, children's mental health, classroom intervention, social emotional learning, social skills.
5 (4 items)	Bullying, bystander behavior, developmental bibliotherapy, elementary school student
6 (4 items)	Discrimination perception, left-behind children, mental health, migrant children.

The analysis of the 32 identified keywords has an uneven distribution in six clusters, with cluster 1 being the most preponderant, with seven keywords. This cluster discusses such topics as awards, challenges, and representation in children's literature, showing its rich theme. Cluster 5 includes bullying, bystander behavior, and developmental bibliotherapy. Therefore, growth in addressing social and psychological challenges within educational settings can be realized. In contrast, cluster 6 has a critical undertaking in highlighting issues like discrimination perception and migrant children, pointing out the particular experiences of marginalized groups.

The absence of links between these clusters indicates how fragmented the nature of research stands, with all clusters representing separated attentions. This lack of collaboration means that multidisciplinary

engagements should be urgently pursued in connecting such thematic discontinuities toward a cohesive understanding of how children's literature could help bridge these mental illness concerns.

The overlay visualization by VOSviewer depicts temporal trends in the usage of keywords, especially the emergence of new research themes. Cluster 5 is exciting, where terms such as bullying, elementary school students, bystander behavior, and developmental bibliotherapy emerged from 2022 to 2024. This shift reflects the rising importance given to current challenges faced by child development, education, and social interactions. These keywords are central to the current academic and practical discussion, highlighting their growing importance. The graph showing the overlay visualization of these keywords would give more details regarding their distribution and trends.



Figure 6. Network visualization of keywords

The overlay visualization in VOSviewer above represents the new emergence of keywords, mainly brought about by cluster 5. The usage of certain keywords such as bullying, school children, standing, and bibliotherapy of development has gone upward since 2022. Such a development manifests that studies in those arenas have developed and become modern. The developments of such trends follow a movement dealing with the pressing problems of child development, social interaction, and education; it was a sign of evolving priorities in the nexus between children's literature and mental health research.

CONCLUSION

This bibliometric analysis has presented a fragmented but dynamic research landscape in the study of mental health issues in children's literature. The low publication volume is coupled with the unequal distribution of research output across countries and institutions, requiring a more concerted effort to extend this field. Whereas the United States leads when considering research output, insufficient collaboration across these nations and institutions misses the important and great opportunities the interdisciplinary and global partnership approaches can present to them. Bringing these gaps into closer view and understanding enables them to let the literature be well-positioned to continue to meet these complex needs without further ado in children's mental health challenges.

These, through keyword co-occurrence analysis and overlay visualization, depict the trends of critical emergent themes:

for example, bullying, developmental bibliotherapy, and socio-emotional learning. These themes highlighted a growing recognition of the therapeutic potential of literature for developing resilience and dealing with central issues in child development and education. However, the modest overlap between thematic clusters minimizes duplication. It enables work in an interdisciplinary manner, embedding the imperative to move on toward a more effective, coherent, and relevant research base. Future research that cuts across themes can target more extensive social needs and amplify the relevance of its findings.

The review of the two most cited articles underlines the strong impact of targeted research on shaping the field. The first article brings to the fore the use of bibliotherapy in developing social-emotional learning in schools, offering hands-on tools for prevention and intervention. The second article covers the mental health problems of the marginalized, such as migrant and left-behind children, providing culturally relevant insights. These papers highlight the imperative to address not only universal but also contextual burdens in the mental health of children. In the future, greater collaboration among researchers, integration of currently fragmented thematic clusters, and exploration of underrepresented areas of study will be important. This study proposes the concept of "Contextual Narrative-Based Mental Health Literacy" as a novel theoretical framework. This concept emphasizes how narratives in children's literature can be intentionally designed and analyzed to promote understanding, empathy, and

culturally and situationally relevant coping strategies for children. Such can let the area of how children's literature addresses mental health issues become even more prosperous and more holistic, with research findings translating into tangible societal benefits.

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