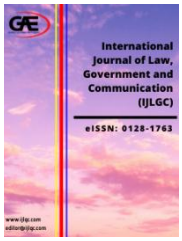
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A DECADE OF PUBLICATION ON TRUST AND THE LAW: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

Mazita Mohamed[1*], 'Ain Husna Mohd Arshad[2]

[1] School of Law, Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), Malaysia
Email: mazita@uum.edu.my
[2] School of Law, Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), Malaysia
Email: ainhusna@uum.edu.my
[*] Corresponding Author

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Abstract:

This article presents a bibliometric analysis of trust and the law to understand how research in this area has expanded and changed during the past ten years. Data were collected through Scopus advanced search, resulting in a final dataset of 1,744 documents. These records were analysed using Scopus Analyzer for statistical trends, while OpenRefine was used to clean and harmonize key information. Visualisation of networks, including co-authorship, keyword co-occurrence and citation links, was produced through VOSviewer. The results show a steady growth of interest in trust and the law, marked by increasing attention to governance, transparency, digital technologies and institutional confidence. The analysis displays a rising trend in publications, dominance by jurisdictions such as the United States, the United Kingdom and China. Highly cited publications highlight concerns relating to artificial intelligence, ethical practices and the role of trust in public decision-making. Keyword mapping shows that trust has become strongly interdisciplinary, linking legal studies with policy analysis, ethics and emerging technological issues. The study offers a clear overview of existing knowledge and supports future work on the structure, application and challenges of trust within contemporary legal systems.

Keywords:

Trust, Law, Legal

Introduction

Trust is a fundamental component of both ancient and modern societies. It plays a crucial role in the functioning of social, economic and legal systems. The relationship between trust and the law is multifaceted, encompassing trust in the law, trust through the operation of law and trust as defined by the law (Mulbert & Sajnovits, 2017). This study aims to explore these

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dimensions particularly in the context of the increasing regulatory landscape and its implications for trust in legal frameworks. The need to carry out this study arises from the evolving nature of legal systems and the critical role trust plays in ensuring their effectiveness and legitimacy.

The problem statement for this study revolves around the complex and often ambivalent relationship between trust and the law. Trust in legal institutions is essential for social cohesion and the effective functioning of legal systems. However, the increasing complexity and volume of regulations particularly in areas such as financial markets, raise questions about whether these regulations enhance or undermine trust (Mulbert & Sajnovits, 2017). Additionally, the interplay between trust and legal principles in various contexts such as family law, healthcare and international law further complicates this relationship (Cricerca, 2021; Paz-Ares, 2023; Struelens, 2024). Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing legal frameworks that foster trust and ensure compliance.

The need to carry out this study is underscored by the significant impact of trust on legal and social outcomes. Trust in legal institutions and processes is vital for ensuring compliance with laws, protecting rights and promoting social and economic well-being (Karayiannis & Hatzis, 2012; Krasoń & Krasoń, 2024). Moreover, trust is not static; it can be influenced by various factors including the behaviour of legal actors, the design of legal institutions and broader social norms (Karayiannis & Hatzis, 2012; Krasoń & Krasoń, 2024). By examining the relationship between trust and the law, this study seeks to identify ways to enhance trust in legal systems thereby improving their effectiveness and legitimacy.

The literature on trust and the law highlights several key concepts and themes. One important aspect is the role of trust in the operation of legal systems. Trust can serve as a procedural mechanism that facilitates cooperation and compliance, even in the absence of explicit moral consensus (Struelens, 2024). For example, in the context of international child abduction, trust enables judges to cooperate across borders and consider foreign laws and cultures (Struelens, 2024). Similarly, in healthcare, trust between patients and practitioners is essential for ensuring informed consent and effective treatment (Bending, 2015; Cricerca, 2021). These examples illustrate how trust operates at both institutional and interactional levels thus influencing legal outcomes and the behaviour of legal actors.

Another key theme in the literature is the impact of regulatory frameworks on trust. The "tsunami of regulation" in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, particularly in EU financial market law, exemplifies the challenges of maintaining trust in highly regulated environments (Mulbert & Sajnovits, 2017). While regulations are intended to enhance trust by providing clear rules and protections; they can also create complexity and uncertainty hence potentially undermining trust (Mulbert & Sajnovits, 2017). This tension is evident in various legal contexts including family law, where different approaches to trust in commercial and social policy contexts can lead to confusion and conflict (Kelly, 2023). Understanding how regulatory frameworks influence trust is crucial for designing effective legal systems.

Finally, the literature emphasizes the importance of social norms and informal institutions in fostering trust. Legal systems do not operate in isolation; they are embedded in broader social and cultural contexts that shape trust and compliance (Karayiannis & Hatzis, 2012). For instance, in Ancient Athens, a sophisticated legal framework for property rights and contract

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enforcement was underpinned by social norms such as reciprocity and reputation (Karayiannis & Hatzis, 2012). These norms played a critical role in reducing transaction costs and ensuring the effectiveness of the legal system. Similarly, in contemporary settings, self-regulation mechanisms such as codes of conduct in e-commerce can complement formal legal frameworks and enhance consumer trust (Jiménez et al., 2025). These examples highlight the interplay enhancing trust in legal systems, thereby improving their effectiveness and legitimacy. The findings will have important implications for policymakers, legal practitioners and scholars interested in the intersection of trust and the law.

Accordingly, the relationship between trust and the law is complex and multifaceted. It encompasses various dimensions and contexts. This study aims to explore these dynamics through focusing on the impact of regulatory frameworks, the role of social norms and the behaviour of legal actors in fostering trust. By examining these factors, the study seeks to identify ways to enhance trust in legal system thereby improving their effectiveness and legitimacy.

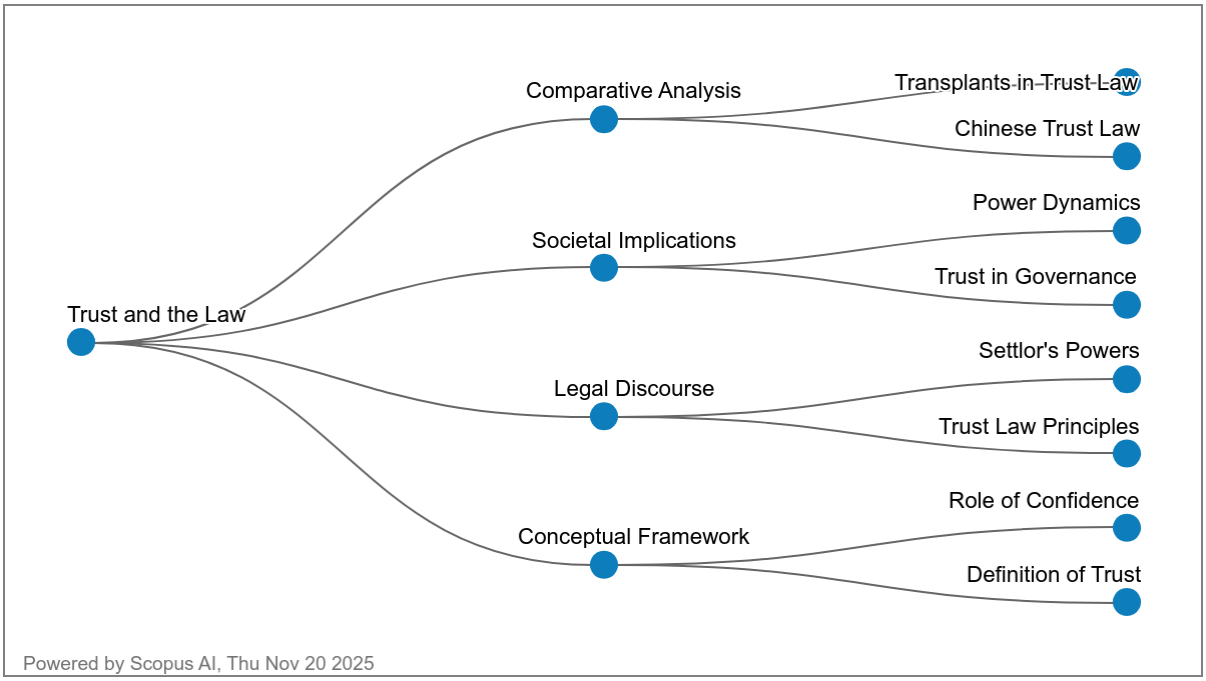


Figure 1. Key Concepts Generated On Trust And The Law

The concept map at Figure 1 for "Trust and the Law" presents a structured progression of four major conceptual branches. These branches expand into eight more specific sub-themes, illustrating how legal, social and comparative dimensions of trust interact. Beginning from the central concept on the left, the map first divides into Comparative Analysis, Societal Implications, Legal Discourse and Conceptual Framework. Consequentially, the map shows a deductive movement from broad thematic categories to detailed legal and socio-legal issues. The Comparative Analysis branch leads to topics such as *transplants in trust law* and *Chinese trust law*, highlighting how trust operates across jurisdictions. Societal Implications then narrows into *power dynamics* and *trust in governance*, emphasizing trust's role in public institutions. Legal Discourse focuses on doctrinal matters, branching into *settlor's powers* and *trust law principles*. Finally, the Conceptual Framework concludes the map with foundational

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ideas such as the *role of confidence* and the *definition of trust*. Taken together, the map shows how the study of trust moves from theoretical definitions to institutional applications and demonstrating the multi-layered nature of trust within contemporary legal systems**.**

Research Questions

This study investigates the following five research questions:

RQ1: What are the research trends of trust and the law according to the year of publication?
RQ2: What are the top 10 cited articles of trust and the law?
RQ3: Which are the top 10 countries on trust and the law based on number of publication?
RQ4: What are the popular keywords related to trust and the law?
RQ5: What are co-authorship by countries' collaboration of trust and the law?

Methodology

Bibliometric entails the systematic collection, organization and analysis of bibliographic data derived from scientific publications (Alves et al., 2021; Assyakur & Rosa, 2022; Verbeek et al., 2002). Beyond generating descriptive statistics such as identifying core journals, publication trajectories and prolific authors (Wu & Wu, 2017), bibliometric inquiry incorporates advanced analytical procedures including document co-citation analysis. Producing a rigorous literature review requires an iterative and methodical process of keyword selection, literature retrieval and in-depth analytical synthesis; thereby ensuring the construction of a comprehensive bibliography and the attainment of robust findings (Fahimnia et al., 2015). Guided by these principles, the present study prioritized high-impact publications as they offer substantive insights into the theoretical foundations shaping the field. In order to uphold data accuracy, SCOPUS was employed as the primary data source (Al-Khoury et al., 2022; di Stefano et al., 2010; Khiste & Paithankar, 2017). Moreover, to maintain scholarly rigor, only peer-reviewed journal articles were included; with books and lecture notes intentionally excluded (Gu et al., 2019). Using Elsevier's Scopus which is recognized for its extensive coverage, relevant publications from 2015 to 2025 were retrieved for subsequent analysis.

Data Search Strategy

The search strategy for this study was developed using Scopus Advanced Search in order to ensure precision, reproducibility and comprehensive coverage of peer-reviewed work on trust within legal and regulatory contexts. The search string applied was TITLE (" trust " AND (law OR rule OR ruling OR polic* OR legal OR regulat* OR governance OR princip* OR convention OR ethic*)) AND PUBYEAR > 2014 AND PUBYEAR < 2026 AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English")), which was intentionally designed to restrict retrieval to titles containing the substantive term 'trust' coupled with at least one legal or governance-related concept. This formulation enabled the dataset to focus specifically on studies where trust is directly linked to law, policy, regulation, governance principles, ethics or formal rules rather than broader psychosocial or educational discussions that do not engage with legal analysis. The publication year filter spanning 2015 to 2025, ensured that the review captured ten years of scholarship corresponding to the maturing of trust legislation and policy discourse globally. The time span includes shifts from early descriptive studies towards more normative and regulatory analyses in later decades. The language filter was set to English only in order to maintain methodological consistency and avoid interpretive bias that may arise from multilingual corpora, especially given the

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complexity of legal terminology. The search was conducted in November 2025, which establishes a clear temporal boundary for reproducibility and ensures that the dataset reflects the latest available publications up to that date.

Initial retrieval produced 2056 records, representing all documents that met the search string parameters before manual screening. Screening was conducted based on two explicit criteria. First, the inclusion criterion required that all documents be written in English and published between 2015 and 2025. Second, the exclusion criterion removed non-English publications and materials published before 2015. The distinction between these criteria enabled a systematic and transparent filtration process. The exclusion of materials predating 2015 was justified on the basis that legal and policy discussions on trust were relatively limited before that. Those publications tended to focus on behavioural psychology rather than regulatory structures. Applying these criteria reduced the dataset from 2056 to a final set of 1744 documents. This reduction of three hundred and twelve demonstrates that the initial search string was largely effective in capturing only those documents directly relevant to the legal dimensions of trust, with minimal intervention from unrelated studies. The final corpus of 1744 documents therefore represents a robust, targeted and methodologically sound dataset suitable for bibliometric evaluation. It reflects the breadth of legal scholarship in this area, encompassing studies on trust legislation, workplace policies, school governance frameworks, ethical duties of institutions and regulatory mechanisms across various jurisdictions. The refined dataset also provides a solid foundation for mapping conceptual developments, citation networks, thematic clusters and temporal trends in trust and the law. In this context, the search and screening strategy ensured a dataset that is both comprehensive and analytically coherent. The data set further enables the subsequent bibliometric analysis to reliably illuminate how legal scholarship on trust has evolved over one decade.

Table 1. The Search String

Source	Search string
Scopus	TITLE (" trust " AND (law OR rule OR ruling OR polic* OR legal OR regulat* OR governance OR princip* OR convention OR ethic*)) AND PUBYEAR > 2014 AND PUBYEAR < 2026 AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English")) Access date: November 2025

Table 2. The Selection Criterion Of Searching

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Language	English	Non-English
Time line	2015 – 2025	< 2015 > 2025
Document type	Article	Non-article

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Data Analysis

VOSviewer, developed by Nees Jan van Eck and Ludo Waltman at Leiden University, the Netherlands (van Eck & Waltman, 2010a, 2017), is a widely recognised bibliometric software environment designed for the visualisation and analysis of scientific literature. Renowned for its intuitive and interactive interface, it qualifies the construction of sophisticated network visualisations, clustering analyses and density maps. Further, the interface allows scholars to identify structural patterns and intellectual linkages across complex research landscapes. Its versatility encompasses the mapping of co-authorship, co-citation and keyword co-occurrence networks. Additionally, this provides a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of scholarly communication. Ongoing methodological enhancements further strengthen its analytical robustness, ensuring that both novice and expert researchers can effectively engage with large-scale bibliometric datasets. The software's capacity includes computing diverse metrics, customise visual representations and integrate seamlessly with multiple bibliometric data sources. The capacity thus, consolidates VOSviewer's status as an indispensable tool for advancing knowledge mapping and research evaluation.

A key strength of VOSviewer lies in its ability to translate intricate bibliometric datasets into visually interpretable maps and charts that reveal keyword co-occurrence patterns, thematic clusters and citation linkages. Distinct from traditional bibliometric tools, VOSviewer combines methodological rigour with accessibility. VOSviewer broadens its applicability across disciplinary and methodological boundaries. Its emphasis on network visualisation and density mapping ensures that research domains are depicted with analytical precision and conceptual clarity. The sustained development of VOSviewer has cemented its position at the forefront of bibliometric science. Moreover, this advance offers customisable functionalities that equip scholars with both depth and flexibility in exploring emerging research frontiers.

For the present study, bibliometric datasets including publication year, title, author name, journal, citation count and keywords were retrieved in PlainText format from the Scopus database for the period spanning 2015 to October 2025. These datasets were processed using VOSviewer version 1.6.20, applying clustering and mapping techniques to generate comprehensive knowledge maps. Methodologically, VOSviewer offers an alternative to the Multidimensional Scaling (MDS) approach by positioning items within a low-dimensional space such that their spatial proximity reflects degrees of relatedness and similarity (van Eck & Waltman, 2010b). While conceptually akin to MDS (Appio et al., 2014), VOSviewer diverges by employing a more refined normalisation technique for co-occurrence frequencies, the association strength (ASij), defined as (van Eck & Waltman, 2007):

$$AS_{ij} = \frac{C_{ij}}{w_i w_j}$$

where *Cij* denotes the observed co-occurrence of items *i* and *j* and *wi* and *wj* represent their respective occurrence frequencies. This metric corresponds to the ratio between observed and expected co-occurrences under the assumption of statistical independence (van Eck & Waltman, 2007). Through this methodological innovation, VOSviewer enhances the precision and interpretive power of bibliometric mapping, rendering it a superior tool for uncovering the latent structures that underpin scholarly domains.

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Limitations

Despite these data search strategy and analysis, some limitations should be acknowledged. The dataset was restricted to one database (SCOPUS), a specific time frame (2015-2025) and English-language publications which may not fully capture contributions from other regions or languages. Furthermore, bibliometric indicators highlight patterns but do not assess the depth or quality of individual studies. Therefore, future research may expand the dataset, include additional sources, conduct qualitative content reviews, or explore emerging subthemes. For example, subthemes such as principles of trust, issues on confidence and governance in trust are related. These directions can help address remaining gaps and support a more comprehensive understanding of trust and the law.

Findings And Discussion

This section deliberates on each of the five research questions of the study.

Research Question 1: What Are The Research Trends Of Trust And The Law Between 2015 To 2025?

The publication trend on "trust and the law" between 2015 and 2025 demonstrates a gradual but fluctuating growth in scholarly attention as shown in Figure 2.

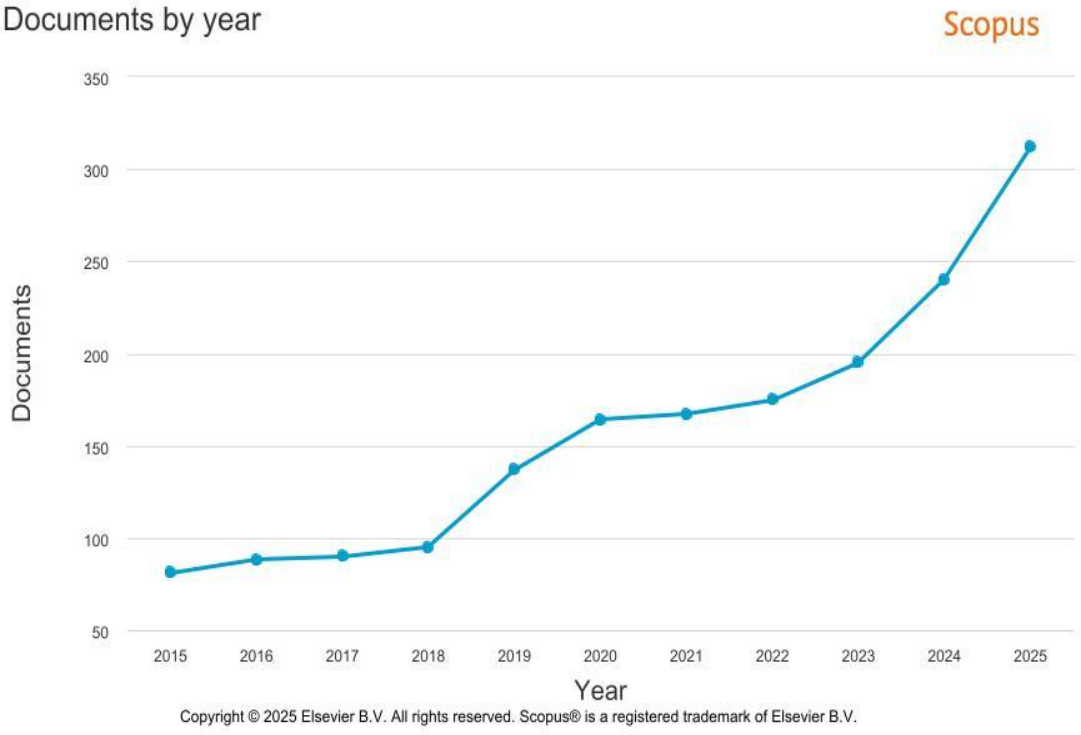


Figure 2. Publication Trend By Year Of Publication

The publication trend on "trust and the law" from 2015 to 2025 shows a steady and increasingly accelerated rise in scholarly attention. Beginning with 81 publications in 2015, the numbers grow gradually through 2018, after which the pace of increase becomes more pronounced, rising from 137 in 2019 to 167 in 2021. This upward trajectory suggests expanding interdisciplinary interest, with trust becoming a central theme in legal theory, governance studies and socio-legal research. The sharp jump from 175 publications in 2022 to 312 in 2025 highlights not just continuity but a significant surge in academic engagement with the topic.

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Several contextual factors likely explain this intensifying output. The COVID-19 pandemic (2020–2022) placed global emphasis on institutional trust, regulatory compliance and governmental legitimacy. This circumstance further prompts legal scholars to scrutinize trust-based frameworks more closely. Meanwhile, the rapid digitalization of transactions, the rise of AI governance and increased cross-border legal interactions have generated new questions about fiduciary duties, data trust structures and public trust in regulatory systems. Consequently, this development drives post-2022 publication spikes. The especially large increase in 2024–2025 may reflect the maturation of these debates and the proliferation of new legal challenges tied to technological adoption and geopolitical uncertainty. Hence this increase makes "trust and the law" a critical research frontier.

Research Question 2: What Are The Top 10 Cited Articles Of Trust And The Law?

Produced below in Table 3 is the list of top 10 cited articles on the topic of trust and the law.

Table 3: Top 10 Cited Articles

Authors	Title	Year	Source title	Citation count
Bargain, O.; Aminjonov, U.	Trust and compliance to public health policies in times of COVID-19	2020	Journal of Public Economics	546
Ryan, M.	In AI We Trust: Ethics, Artificial Intelligence and Reliability	2020	Science and Engineering Ethics	389
Durán, J.M.; Jongsma, K.R.	Who is afraid of black box algorithms? On the epistemological and ethical basis of trust in medical AI	2021	Journal of Medical Ethics	354
Winfield, A.F.T.; Jirotka, M.	Ethical governance is essential to building trust in robotics and artificial intelligence systems	2018	Philosophical transactions. Series A, Mathematical, physical and engineering sciences	317
de Filippi, P.; Mannan, M.; Reijers, W.	Blockchain as a confidence machine: The problem of trust & challenges of governance	2020	Technology in Society	310
Felzmann, H.; Fosch-Villaronga, E.F.; Lutz, C.; Tamò-Larrieux, A.	Transparency you can trust: Transparency requirements for artificial intelligence between legal norms and contextual concerns	2019	Big Data and Society	282

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Mansoor, M.	Citizens' trust in government as a function of good governance and government agency's provision of quality information on social media during COVID-19	2021	Government Information Quarterly	265
Chughtai, A.; Byrne, M.; Flood, B.	Linking Ethical Leadership to Employee Well-Being: The Role of Trust in Supervisor	2015	Journal of Business Ethics	260
Park, E.; Kim, K.J.; Kwon, S.J.	Corporate social responsibility as a determinant of consumer loyalty: An examination of ethical standard, satisfaction and trust	2017	Journal of Business Research	253
Robinson, S.C.	Trust, transparency and openness: How inclusion of cultural values shapes Nordic national public policy strategies for artificial intelligence (AI)	2020	Technology in Society	230

The citation pattern across the ten most influential papers on *trust-related legal and ethical issues* reveals a strong concentration of scholarship at the intersection of governance, technology and public policy. The most cited works such as Bargain and Aminjonov's (2020) analysis of trust and compliance during COVID-19 (546 citations) and Ryan's (2020) exploration of ethical reliability in AI (389 citations) indicate that crises and technological transformation significantly heighten academic attention. Papers focusing on medical AI, algorithmic opacity and ethical governance (e.g., Durán & Jongsma, 2021; Winfield & Jirotka, 2018) also attract substantial citations. These works show concerns about safety, accountability and epistemic trust that drive scholarly engagement. Collectively, these works demonstrate that trust becomes an urgent research theme when public welfare, risk and institutional legitimacy are at stake.

The high citation counts can be attributed to two main factors namely global relevance and cross-disciplinary applicability. COVID-19–related papers (Bargain & Aminjonov, 2020; Mansoor, 2021) gained rapid traction because they addressed immediate worldwide governance challenges. Meanwhile, AI-focused studies (Ryan, 2020; Felzmann et al., 2019; Robinson, 2020) resonate across law, computer science, ethics and policy thus increasing their visibility and citation potential. Works examining leadership, trust and organizational ethics (Chughtai et al., 2015; Park et al., 2017) maintain long-term relevance whilst explaining their

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sustained citation performance. Altogether, the results reflect how societal disruptions and emerging technologies amplify the need for legal and ethical frameworks grounded in trust.

Research Question 3: Which Are The Top 10 Countries On Trust And The Law Based On Number Of Publication?

The following Figure 3 reveals the top 10 countries based on number of publication in the area of trust and the law.

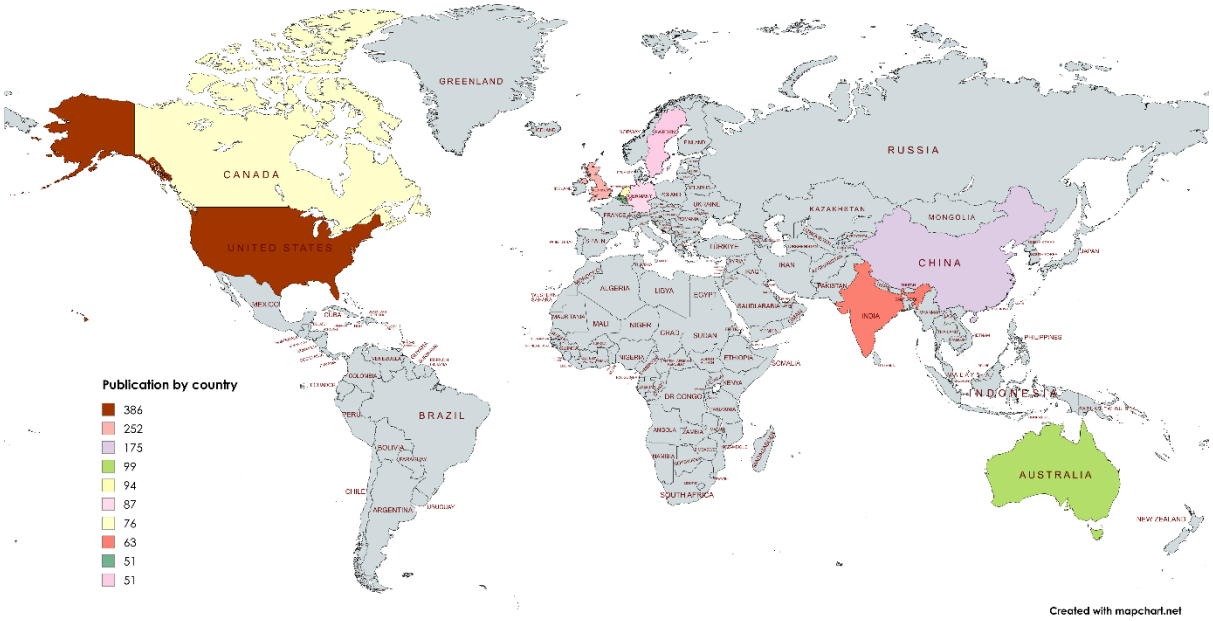


Figure 3. Top 10 Countries Based On Number Of Publications

The distribution of publications across the top ten countries researching trust and the law reflects both the maturity of their legal scholarship and the societal relevance of trust-related issues within their governance and technological systems. The United States leads with 386 publications, which is expected given its extensive academic infrastructure, strong focus on constitutional trust, institutional accountability and the rapid evolution of technology law. The United Kingdom follows with 252 publications, supported by its longstanding legal tradition and ongoing debates around data protection, AI governance and public-sector trust. China, ranking third with 175 publications demonstrates growing engagement with trust-related legal research amid rapid digital transformation, social governance reforms and the expansion of platform-based regulatory frameworks. Countries such as Australia, the Netherlands and Germany also appear prominently, each having robust legal systems and active research communities exploring public trust, regulatory legitimacy and technology ethics.

The remaining countries namely Canada, India, Belgium and Sweden show strong but more targeted contributions to the field. Canada's focus often centres on indigenous governance, digital trust and public sector accountability. On the other hand, India's expanding interest stems from legal reforms, increasing digitalization and challenges in institutional trust. For Belgium and Sweden, despite their smaller populations, maintain high publication visibility. This is due to active EU-level legal research, comparative governance studies and the countries' roles in shaping European AI and data ethics policies. Accordingly, the prominence of these countries can be justified by their advanced academic ecosystems, active public

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debates on trust and governance and regulatory engagement with emerging technologies. Consequentially, those factors contribute to make trust an essential topic of legal scholarship.

Research Question 4: What Are The Popular Keywords Related To Trust And The Law?

The following Figure 4 highlights the main keywords used by the authors related to the study of trust and the law.

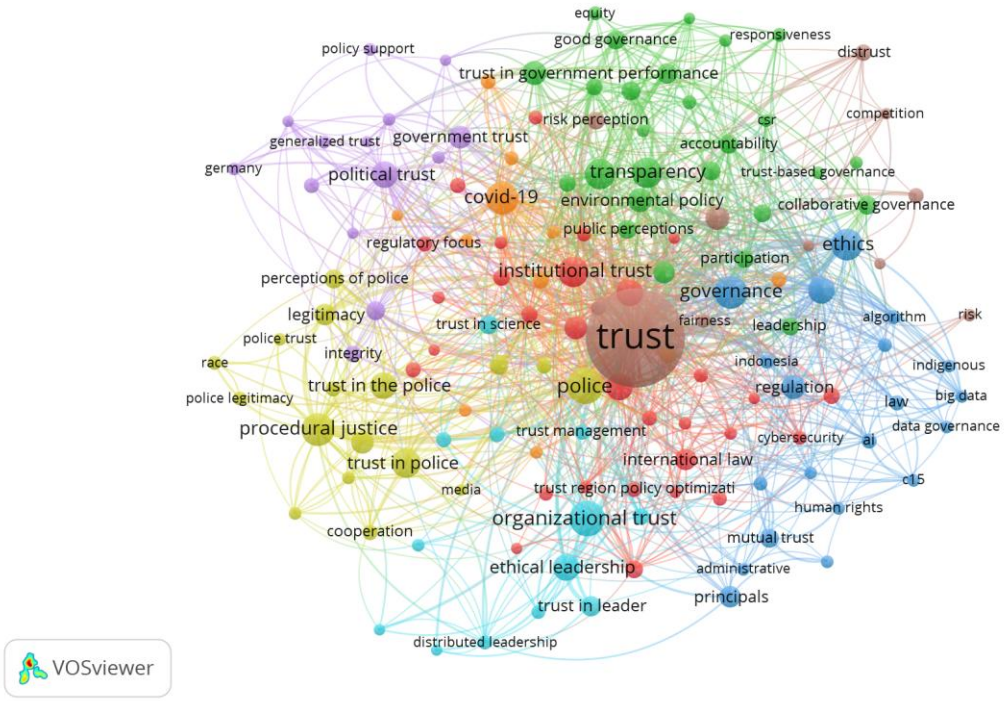


Figure 4: Network Visualisation Map Of Keywords' Co-Occurrence

Co-occurrence analysis of author keywords in VOSviewer identifies how often specific keywords appear together across the same set of publications through revealing conceptual relationships and thematic structures within the research domain. By examining these co-occurrences, VOSviewer positions keywords in a network map where closer distances and stronger link strengths indicate tighter conceptual associations. In this analysis, the map was generated using the full counting method, which counts every keyword occurrence equally, with a minimum occurrence threshold of eight. From 3,111 total keywords, 142 met this threshold and resulted in nine clusters. These clusters represent distinct thematic areas such as trust, governance, ethics, policing, public perception, technology (AI, cybersecurity, blockchain) and policy issues (health, environment, climate). Each area further builds on strong co-occurrence patterns such as "trust," "governance," "covid-19," "artificial intelligence," "police," and "transparency". These patterns hence, appear as central nodes with high link strengths.

The findings contribute to the body of knowledge by mapping the intellectual landscape of research related to governance, trust, ethics, public policy and emerging technologies. The dominance of keywords such as "trust" (515 occurrences), "covid-19" (61), "governance" (61), "procedural justice" (61), "transparency" (50) and "organizational trust" (67) shows that trust-oriented themes form the core of scholarly attention, linking across diverse subfields such as policing, public administration, ethics and digital governance. The presence of clusters

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involving AI, cybersecurity, data protection and platform governance indicates a growing intersection between governance studies and technological advancements. Meanwhile, clusters involving environmental policy, human rights, participation and legitimacy reflect enduring concerns in public policy and social sciences. Together, these patterns reveal how contemporary scholarship integrates traditional governance and trust issues with emerging challenges. Moreover, these patterns assist researchers in understanding dominant themes, identifying research gaps and recognizing evolving interdisciplinary trends.

Research Question 5: What Are Co-Authorship By Countries' Collaboration Of Trust And The Law?

Produced below is Figure 5, depicting the network visualisation mapping of the authors' co-authorship collaboration by country.

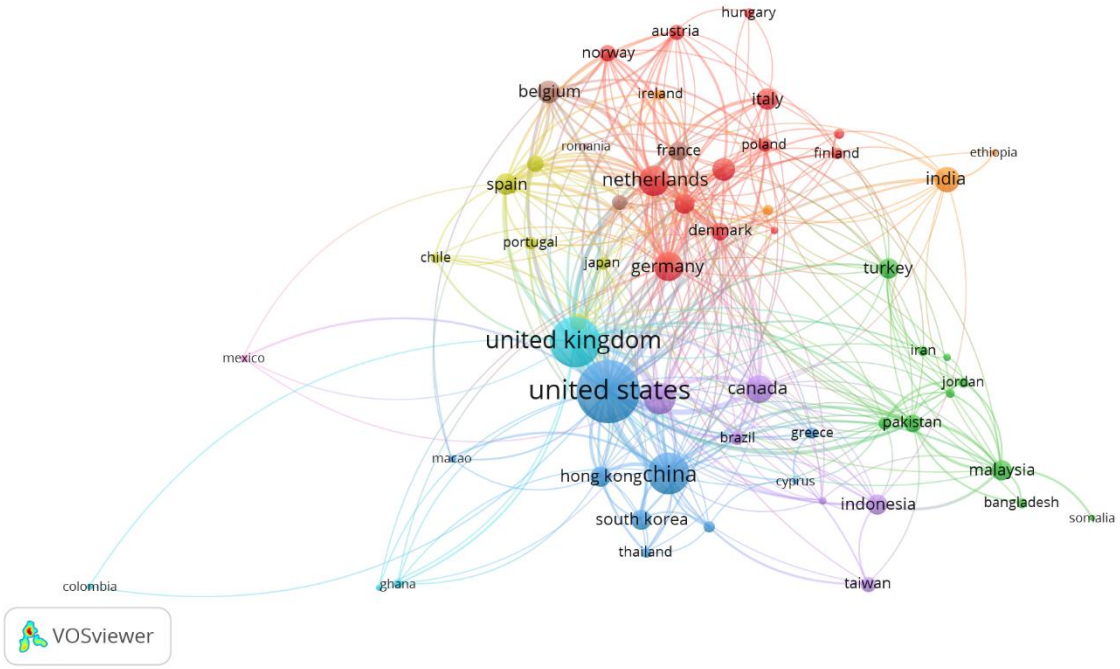


Figure 5. Network Visualisation Map Of Authors' Collaboration By Country

Co-authorship by country collaboration analysis in VOSviewer identifies how researchers from different countries work together, revealing international research networks and the geographical structure of scientific collaboration. Using bibliographic data, VOSviewer visualizes countries as nodes linked by co-authored publications. Further, stronger links indicate more frequent collaboration. In this map, the full counting method was applied, whereby every international co-authorship was counted equally. A minimum threshold of five documents was set from 108 total countries, resulting in 59 countries meeting the criterion. With a minimum cluster size of five, the software generated nine clusters representing groups of countries that frequently collaborate with one another. These clusters therefore reflect interconnected research communities across regions.

The findings enrich the body of knowledge by demonstrating how global research production and collaboration patterns are distributed. For instance, countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, China, Germany and Australia emerge as central hubs due to their high

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document counts and strong link strengths. The United States leads with 392 documents and a link strength of 204, indicating extensive global partnerships. Additionally, other influential countries like the United Kingdom (171), the Netherlands (96) and China (92) also play major bridging roles. The presence of diverse clusters shows research networks form around geographic and thematic connections; thus highlighting both well-established and emerging scientific communities. These insights contribute to understanding global research capacity and collaboration inequalities. Additionaly, this contribution creates the platforms through which scientific knowledge flows internationally whilst supporting policymakers, institutions and scholars. Hence, identifying strategic partners and strengthening international research ecosystems could be initiated therefrom.

Implications

The implications of these findings extend to practical contexts. Better awareness of dominant research areas can support the formation of policies and regulatory strategies addressing issues on family law, healthcare, financial regulation and international law. The identified themes and collaborative structures also point to areas where policymakers, practitioners and institutions may focus efforts to improve governance frameworks and strengthen public confidence. The vigorous developments on artificial intelligence may also affect the issues on trust and law, thus invoking matters on digital security.

This study shows how bibliometric analysis can illuminate the evolution of research on trust and law. This analysis offers valuable insights into the direction, structure and maturity of the field. By presenting an integrated overview of publication dynamics, conceptual clusters and collaborative trends, the analysis underscores the importance of continued scholarly attention. Moreover, this scholarly address is important particularly where the social system become more complex. The findings also highlight the need for ongoing research efforts that can support effective governance, strengthen the legal framework of trust and anticipate new challenges in different aspects of law. Such efforts may be further directed to the thematic areas like trust, governance, ethics, policing, public perception, technology (AI, cybersecurity, blockchain) and policy issues (health, environment, climate).

Conclusion

The main purpose of this study was to examine the development of research related to trust and law that has developed within one decade using bibliometric techniques. It had been carried out specifically by analysing publication growth, influential and highly cited works, thematic directions, 10 most contributing countries and international collaboration patterns. Through a bibliometric approach, the analysis aimed to clarify how academic interest in this area has evolved. The analysis also identifies the main structures shaping the field. The research questions focused on publication trends, citation performance, keyword distribution, global contributions and co-authorship networks.

The findings demonstrate a clear upward trend in publications, especially from 2021 till 2025. The rising trend indicates concern of issues on trust relating to governance, technology and public policy. The analysis highlights several dominant patterns with strong attention to public governance, artificial intelligence, institutional confidence and policy responses during periods of societal pressure. Citation data show that studies addressing digital governance, artificial intelligence, institutional trust and public compliance attract high academic engagement. This disclosure moreover reflects the relevance of these themes during periods of rapid

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technological change and societal disruption. The distribution of publications further shows active involvement from countries with advanced legal and digital infrastructures. Additionally, keyword clustering reveals an increasingly interdisciplinary research landscape connecting law, technology, ethics and policy. Co-authorship mapping indicates that research in this field relies heavily on international collaboration thus forming clusters that reflect shared technological and regulatory interests.

These results contribute to the field by providing a structured overview of how scholarship on trust and law has grown and diversified. The thematic networks offer insight into the intellectual foundations of the field, while the collaborative patterns reveal how knowledge flows across regions and disciplines. By presenting these patterns in a single coherent map, the study strengthens the understanding of how legal and governance research responds to challenges emerging from the social environments.

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