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Community Economic Empowerment through MSMEs: A Bibliometric Analysis of Global Research Trends (2022–2026)

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ABSTRACT

Community economic empowerment through Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) plays an important role in promoting inclusive economic growth and sustainable development. However, a comprehensive understanding of global research trends, dominant themes, and emerging research gaps in this field remains essential. This study aimed to map global research trends in community economic empowerment through SMEs using bibliometric analysis. Data were collected from the Scopus database and comprised 102 unique articles published between 2022 and 2026. The analysis examined annual publication trends, the most-cited documents, country-level research productivity, dominant research themes, and frequently occurring keywords. The results revealed a substantial increase in publications during 2025–2026, indicating growing scholarly attention to this field. The dominant research themes included women's economic empowerment, SME digitalization, sustainability, and financial inclusion. India and China were the most productive countries, contributing 28 and 22 articles, respectively. These findings provide an overview of the global research landscape and highlight key areas shaping scholarly discussions on community economic empowerment through SMEs. This study contributes to the literature by identifying prominent research themes and providing a foundation for researchers to explore underexamined topics and formulate future research agenda

1. Introduction

Community economic empowerment through Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) has become an important priority in economic development, particularly in developing countries. MSMEs play a strategic role in promoting inclusive economic growth, generating employment, reducing poverty, and improving community welfare (Beck et al., 2005; Lukacs, 2005). Globally, the MSME sector employs more than 60% of the workforce and contributes substantially to gross domestic product in many countries. These contributions demonstrate the importance of MSMEs as instruments of economic development and as a means of strengthening community participation in economic activities.

Despite their significant economic role, research on community economic empowerment through MSMEs continues to evolve in response to emerging challenges and development opportunities. The growth of the digital economy, the expansion of financial technology (fintech), and increasing attention to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have broadened the scope of research in this field. Previous studies have highlighted the importance of financial inclusion, women's empowerment, and digitalization in supporting SME development and sustainability (Muritala et al., 2012; Ndiaye et al., 2018). These developments indicate that MSME-based economic empowerment is an increasingly multidimensional research area that encompasses economic participation, technological adoption, social inclusion, and sustainable development.

Although previous studies have examined the economic contributions of MSMEs and the factors associated with their development, a systematic understanding of the global research landscape remains necessary. In particular, the distribution of publications across years and countries, the productivity of research-producing countries and institutions, the influence of published articles, and

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the evolution of dominant research themes require comprehensive examination. Without a systematic mapping of these dimensions, it is difficult to identify how scholarly attention has developed, which themes have received the greatest attention, and which areas warrant further investigation. Bibliometric analysis offers a suitable approach to addressing this need by systematically examining publication patterns, research productivity, citation influence, and keyword relationships within a defined body of scientific literature (Donthu et al., 2021; Zupic & Čater, 2015).

The specific research problem addressed in this study is the need to establish a comprehensive overview of global scholarly publications on community economic empowerment through MSMEs during the 2022–2026 period. The study focuses on identifying publication trends, determining the contributions of countries and institutions, examining dominant research themes and frequently occurring keywords, and identifying influential articles. These dimensions provide a structured basis for understanding the development of the field and identifying potential directions for future research. To address this problem, the study uses bibliometric analysis of publications retrieved from the Scopus database.

Accordingly, this study addresses four research questions: (1) What are the global publication trends in research on MSME-based community economic empowerment during 2022–2026? (2) Which countries and institutions are the most productive in this field? (3) What are the dominant research themes and most frequently occurring keywords? (4) Which articles have received the greatest scholarly attention, as indicated by citation counts? In line with these questions, the study aims to map global publication trends, identify country and institutional contributions, describe dominant research themes and keyword patterns, identify influential articles, and formulate recommendations for a future research agenda.

This study contributes to the literature by providing a systematic bibliometric overview of global research on community economic empowerment through MSMEs. By integrating publication trends, research productivity, citation analysis, and keyword-based thematic mapping, it offers a consolidated perspective on the development and structure of this research field. Practically, the findings can help researchers identify underexplored topics and formulate more focused research agendas, while also providing policymakers and other stakeholders with an overview of the research areas relevant to MSME empowerment. The study's novelty lies in bringing these dimensions together within a defined 2022–2026 publication period, thereby establishing a foundation for identifying emerging themes and potential research gaps.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual and Theoretical Foundations

Economic empowerment refers to a process through which individuals and community groups gain the ability to access and control economic resources independently (Sen, 1999). In the context of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), economic empowerment encompasses improved access to capital, markets, technology, and business knowledge. MSMEs are generally classified as micro, small, or medium enterprises according to their operational scale and the asset and turnover thresholds established by individual countries. These enterprises provide an important context for examining how communities participate in economic activities and strengthen their economic capacity.

The economic significance of MSMEs is reflected in their contributions to economic growth, poverty reduction, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Beck et al. (2005) found that countries with stronger MSME sectors tended to experience higher economic growth rates and lower poverty levels. Similarly, Acs and Audretsch (1990) highlighted the role of small firms in fostering innovation and entrepreneurship. These perspectives establish the economic and developmental relevance of MSMEs as a subject of scholarly investigation.

The relationship between MSMEs and sustainable development has also become an important area of research. Ndiaye et al. (2018) examined MSME performance in emerging and developing economies, providing a relevant foundation for understanding the challenges and opportunities associated with enterprise development in these contexts. Research on MSMEs has increasingly intersected with sustainability frameworks, including the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This broader perspective positions community economic

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empowerment as a research field encompassing enterprise development, social welfare, and sustainable economic progress.

2.2. Review of Empirical Studies

Previous studies have examined MSMEs from several complementary perspectives. Beck et al. (2005) investigated the relationship between small and medium-sized enterprises, economic growth, and poverty across countries. Their findings highlighted the relevance of MSME development to broader economic outcomes. Acs and Audretsch (1990) focused on the contribution of small firms to innovation, emphasizing the role of smaller enterprises in entrepreneurial and economic activities. Meanwhile, Ndiaye et al. (2018) examined MSME performance in emerging and developing economies, extending the discussion to the specific conditions affecting enterprise development in these contexts.

Although these studies provide important insights into the economic contributions and development of MSMEs, their primary focus differs from the objective of the present study. Rather than examining a specific economic relationship or enterprise performance outcome, this research investigates the structure and development of scholarly publications on community economic empowerment through MSMEs. Accordingly, the previous studies provide a substantive foundation for the research topic, while bibliometric analysis offers a means of examining the broader patterns of knowledge production in this field.

2.3. Identification of the Research Gap

The existing literature establishes the importance of MSMEs for economic development, innovation, and poverty reduction (Acs & Audretsch, 1990; Beck et al., 2005). Research on MSME performance in emerging and developing economies further demonstrates the relevance of examining enterprise development across different economic contexts (Ndiaye et al., 2018). However, these substantive research perspectives do not, by themselves, provide a comprehensive map of how scholarly attention to community economic empowerment through MSMEs has developed over time.

The research gap addressed by this study concerns the need for a systematic overview of publication trends, research productivity across countries and institutions, influential articles, and dominant research themes. Addressing this gap requires an approach that examines scientific publications collectively rather than focusing exclusively on individual research findings. This study therefore applies bibliometric analysis to publications indexed in Scopus during the 2022–2026 period to map the development of the field and identify areas that may warrant further investigation.

2.4. Development of the Conceptual Framework

Bibliometric analysis provides the analytical foundation for examining the development and structure of a research field through quantitative analysis of scholarly publications. Pritchard (1969) introduced the concept of bibliometrics, which subsequently developed into an approach for systematically examining patterns in scientific literature. In economics and business research, bibliometric methods can be used to identify publication trends, assess the productivity of researchers and institutions, and examine patterns of scholarly collaboration (Donthu et al., 2021).

The analytical approach in this study encompasses five interconnected dimensions: annual publication trends, country and institutional productivity, citation analysis, keyword co-occurrence, and the identification of dominant research themes. Descriptive analysis is used to examine publication patterns and research contributions, while citation analysis identifies influential articles. Keyword co-occurrence analysis helps reveal recurring topics and thematic relationships within the selected literature. These analytical dimensions collectively support the study's objective of mapping global research trends in community economic empowerment through MSMEs.

Conceptual framework: This study does not employ a conventional conceptual framework consisting of independent, dependent, mediating, or moderating variables. Instead, it uses a bibliometric analytical framework organized around publication characteristics, research productivity, citation influence, and thematic patterns. Consequently, a variable-based conceptual framework figure is not applicable to this study.

2.5. Hypotheses or Research Propositions

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This study does not formulate statistical hypotheses because its primary purpose is to describe and map the development of scholarly publications rather than test causal relationships or associations between variables. The analysis is guided by research questions concerning publication trends during 2022–2026, country and institutional productivity, dominant research themes and frequently occurring keywords, and the most influential articles.

Accordingly, hypotheses or qualitative research propositions are not developed. Instead, the research questions guide the bibliometric procedures and interpretation of the results. This approach maintains consistency between the study's descriptive and mapping objectives, its analytical framework, and the findings reported in the subsequent sections.

3. Research Methods

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative bibliometric approach to systematically map global research trends in community economic empowerment through Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Bibliometric analysis was selected because it enables the systematic examination of scientific publications using measurable and verifiable bibliographic data (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). The research design consisted of three main stages: data collection, data processing and analysis, and interpretation and visualization. This approach was appropriate for addressing the research questions concerning publication trends, country and institutional productivity, influential articles, and dominant research themes during the 2022–2026 period.

3.2. Research Context and Setting

The study focused on global scholarly publications concerning community economic empowerment through MSMEs. Rather than examining a specific organization or geographical location, the research covered publications indexed in the Scopus database. The selected period extended from 2022 to 2026, enabling the study to examine recent developments in the field. Scopus was used as the research setting because it provided the bibliographic records required to analyze publication distributions, country contributions, citation patterns, and keyword occurrences.

3.3 Population and Sample / Research Participants

The population comprised scholarly publications relevant to community economic empowerment through MSMEs. The study used a document-based selection process rather than sampling human participants. Publications were identified through a systematic search of the Scopus database using predefined keywords and eligibility filters. The selection criteria included English-language publications published between 2022 and 2026, with document types specified as articles, book chapters, conference papers, and reviews. Following the removal of duplicate records, the final dataset consisted of 102 unique documents. The study did not involve survey respondents or interview participants.

3.4. Data Sources and Data Collection

This study used secondary data obtained from the Scopus database in May 2026. Data collection was conducted through a systematic search using the following keywords: "economic empowerment," "community economic empowerment," "SMEs," "MSME," and "small medium enterprise." The search was restricted to English-language publications from 2022 to 2026 and applied the specified document-type filters covering articles, book chapters, conference papers, and reviews. The retrieved records were screened for duplicate entries, resulting in 102 unique documents. The bibliographic data were subsequently exported in comma-separated values (CSV) format for further processing and quantitative analysis using Python.

3.5. Measurement of Variables and Research Instruments

Because this study employed bibliometric analysis, it did not use conventional research variables measured through questionnaires, interviews, or psychometric scales. Instead, the analysis relied on bibliographic indicators extracted from the Scopus records. These indicators included publication year, document type, publication source, country and institutional affiliations, citation counts, and author keywords. The indicators were used to describe publication trends, assess research productivity, identify influential articles, and examine the thematic structure of the literature. The Scopus

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database served as the primary source of bibliographic information, while Python was used to process the exported data. No questionnaire or other primary-data collection instrument was employed.

3.6. Data Analysis Techniques

The data were analyzed using a sequence of bibliometric procedures. First, descriptive analysis was conducted to examine publication distributions by year, document type, publication source, and country. Second, author and institutional productivity were examined to identify contributors to the research field. Third, citation analysis was performed to identify influential articles based on their citation counts. Fourth, keyword co-occurrence analysis was used to identify frequently occurring keywords, dominant research themes, and thematic clusters. Python was used to process the CSV dataset and support the quantitative analysis. The results of these procedures were interpreted to characterize the development of global research on community economic empowerment through MSMEs and identify potential directions for future research.

3.7. Validity, Reliability, and Trustworthiness

The quality of the analysis was supported by the use of bibliographic records obtained from a consistent database and the removal of duplicate entries before analysis. The use of predefined search keywords, publication-period restrictions, language filters, and document-type criteria provided a structured basis for identifying the documents included in the dataset. The use of quantitative bibliographic indicators also enabled the systematic examination of publication patterns and citation information. However, the original methodological description did not report a separate validation procedure, an inter-coder reliability assessment, or a sensitivity analysis. Therefore, no additional validation results are claimed in this study.

3.8. Ethical Considerations

This study relied exclusively on secondary bibliographic data retrieved from the Scopus database and did not involve direct interaction with human participants. Accordingly, procedures such as informed consent and participant confidentiality were not applicable to the document-based research design. The analysis focused on bibliographic information for scholarly publications. The original methodological description did not specify whether formal ethical approval was obtained; therefore, no claim regarding institutional ethics approval is made.

3.9. Research Procedure

The research was conducted through three main stages: data collection, data processing and analysis, and interpretation and visualization. During the data collection stage, publications were retrieved from Scopus in May 2026 using the specified keywords and eligibility filters. During the data processing stage, the retrieved records were exported in CSV format, duplicate entries were removed, and the resulting dataset of 102 unique documents was processed using Python. The analysis then proceeded through descriptive analysis, author and institutional productivity analysis, citation analysis, and keyword co-occurrence analysis. Finally, the findings were interpreted to identify publication trends, country contributions, influential articles, dominant research themes, and potential research gaps.

3.10. Methodological Limitations

This study has methodological limitations associated with its data source, search strategy, and publication period. First, the analysis relied exclusively on the Scopus database; consequently, relevant publications indexed in other databases may not have been included. Second, the results depended on the selected keywords and eligibility criteria, meaning that relevant studies using different terminology may have been excluded from the dataset. Third, the study covered publications from 2022 to 2026, with data collected in May 2026. Therefore, the 2026 records represented publications available at the time of data collection rather than the complete annual publication output. Finally, citation counts may not fully reflect the long-term influence of recent publications because these documents have had relatively limited time to accumulate citations. These limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings and formulating recommendations for future research.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Research Results

4.1.1. Sample Description and Descriptive Statistics

The Scopus database search yielded 102 unique documents on community economic empowerment through Micro, Small, and Medium

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Enterprises (MSMEs) published during the 2022–2026 period. The dataset comprised several publication types, reflecting the range of academic outlets contributing to this research field. As presented in Table 1, book chapters represented the largest category, accounting for 38 documents (37.3%), followed by journal articles with 37 documents (36.3%) and conference papers with 17 documents (16.7%). Books accounted for 7 documents (6.9%), while reviews represented 3 documents (2.9%).

Table 1. Overview of Research Documents

Category	Count	Percentage (%)
Total Unique Documents	102	100%
Book Chapter	38	37.3%
Article (Journal)	37	36.3%
Conference Paper	17	16.7%
Book	7	6.9%
Review	3	2.9%

Source: Author processed

The distribution of publications by year is presented in Table 2. The dataset recorded 1 publication in 2022, 43 publications in 2025, and 58 publications in 2026. The 2026 figures represent records available up to May 2026. The reported percentages were 1.0%, 42.2%, and 56.9%, respectively, with a total of 102 publications.

Table 2. Annual Publication Distribution

Year	Number of Publications	Percentage (%)	Growth
2022	1	1.0%	–
2025	43	42.2%	+4,200%
2026*	58	56.9%	+34.9%
Total	102	100%	–

Source: Data as of May 2026.

The distribution of publications by country, based on author affiliations, is presented in Table 3. India ranked first with 28 articles (27.5%), followed by China with 22 articles (21.6%). The United States and Australia each contributed 7 articles (6.9%), while South Africa contributed 6 articles (5.9%). Brazil accounted for 5 articles (4.9%). Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Turkey each contributed 3 articles (2.9%).

Table 3. Top 10 Countries by Number of Publications

Rank	Country	Articles	Percentage (%)
1	India	28	27.5%
2	China	22	21.6%
3	United States	7	6.9%
4	Australia	7	6.9%
5	South Africa	6	5.9%
6	Brazil	5	4.9%
7	Bangladesh	3	2.9%
8	Malaysia	3	2.9%
9	Indonesia	3	2.9%
10	Turkey	3	2.9%

Source: Author processed

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4.1.2. Data Quality and Preliminary Analysis

The preliminary data-processing procedure involved retrieving bibliographic records from Scopus, exporting the records in CSV format, and removing duplicate entries. Following deduplication, the dataset contained 102 unique documents. The analysis subsequently examined publication characteristics, country contributions, citation counts, and keyword occurrences.

The original research did not report separate statistical tests of normality, multicollinearity, reliability, or model fit. These tests were not treated as requirements for the descriptive bibliometric design. The reported findings were instead derived from the bibliographic indicators available in the selected dataset.

4.1.3. Main Analytical Results

a. Dominant research themes

The analysis of keywords and article titles identified several major research themes. Table 4 presents the distribution of articles across the thematic categories. Sustainability and sustainable development accounted for 29 articles (28.4%), followed by women's empowerment with 26 articles (25.5%) and digitalization, information and communication technology (ICT), and e-commerce with 23 articles (22.5%). Community empowerment accounted for 17 articles (16.7%), while sustainable tourism represented 12 articles (11.8%). The remaining categories were MSMEs, with 6 articles (5.9%), and microfinance and crowdfunding, with 2 articles (2.0%).

Table 4. Distribution of Research Themes

Research Theme	Article	Percentage (%)	Trend
Sustainability & Sustainable Development	29	28.4%	Increasing
Women's Empowerment	26	25.5%	Increasing
Digital & ICT / E-Commerce	23	22.5%	Increasing
Community Empowerment	17	16.7%	Stable
Sustainable Tourism	12	11.8%	Increasing
MSMEs	6	5.9%	Stable
Microfinance & Crowdfunding	2	2.0%	Stable

Source: Author processed

b. Dominant keyword analysis

Keyword co-occurrence analysis identified recurring terms and thematic relationships within the selected literature. As reported in Table 5, the keyword "empowerment" appeared most frequently, with 7 occurrences, followed by "community empowerment" with 6 occurrences. "Economic empowerment" and "sustainability" each appeared 5 times. Other frequently occurring terms included "women empowerment" and "circular economy," with 4 occurrences each.

The keyword distribution also revealed terms associated with sustainable development, social impact, tourism, digital transformation, innovation, resilience, and financial inclusion. Table 5 presents all 20 keywords, their frequencies, and their assigned thematic clusters.

Table 5. Top 20 Most Dominant Keywords

Rank	Keyword	Frequency	Thematic Cluster
1	empowerment	7	Empowerment
2	community empowerment	6	Empowerment
3	economic empowerment	5	Empowerment
4	sustainability	5	Sustainability
5	women empowerment	4	Gender
6	circular economy	4	Sustainability
7	sustainable development	3	Sustainability
8	social impact	3	Social

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9	sustainable tourism	3	Tourism
10	social transformation	3	Social
11	digital economy	3	Digital
12	innovation	3	Innovation
13	digital literacy	2	Digital
14	resilience	2	Resilience
15	sustainable development goals	2	SDGs
16	financial inclusion	2	Finance
17	financial literacy	2	Finance
18	e-financial strategies	2	Finance
19	women's empowerment	2	Gender
20	gastronomy tourism	2	Tourism

Source: Author processed

c. Citation analysis and influential articles

Citation analysis identified the articles that had received the greatest number of citations within the dataset. As shown in Table 6, two articles published in 2025—one concerning consumers' affinity for the circular economy and another examining digital empowerment and economic equity—each received 5 citations. Two other articles concerning organizational culture and stakeholder engagement each received 4 citations. The remaining articles received between 1 and 3 citations.

Table 6. Top 10 Most Cited Articles

No.	Title (abbreviated)	Year	Citations
1	Consumers' affinity to the circular economy: Empirical evidence...	2025	5
2	Digital empowerment and economic equity: Exploring the impact...	2025	5
3	How does organisational culture affect agile projects?...	2025	4
4	Integrating technical assessment and stakeholder engagement...	2025	4
5	Can digital collaboration curb corporate greenwashing?...	2025	4
6	Policy gaps, actor dynamics, and implementation challenges...	2025	3
7	Enhancing Sustainability with Macroalgae: Driving Economic Growth...	2025	3
8	Leading the innovation: role of employee engagement as mediator...	2026	2
9	Crowdfunding dilemmas: understanding the roadblocks in Bangladesh...	2025	1
10	Sustainability of wall construction techniques for self-built rural...	2025	1

Source: Author processed

4.1.4. Key Findings in Relation to the Research Questions

The findings address the four research questions formulated in this study. First, publication trends showed a marked increase in the number of records during the later part of the observation period, with 43 publications in 2025 and 58 publications available by May 2026. These results describe the publication distribution recorded in the dataset. Second, India and China were the leading contributors based on the country distribution of author affiliations, with 28 and 22 articles, respectively. The United States and Australia each contributed 7 articles, whereas Indonesia, Malaysia, and Bangladesh each contributed 3 articles. Third, the thematic analysis identified sustainability and sustainable development, women's empowerment, and digitalization and ICT/e-commerce as the three largest thematic categories. The keyword analysis further identified empowerment, community empowerment, economic empowerment, and sustainability as the most frequently occurring terms. Fourth, citation analysis identified two articles with 5 citations each as the most-cited publications in the dataset. These were followed by articles with 4 citations and other publications with lower citation counts, as reported in Table 6.

Because this research used a descriptive

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bibliometric design, the findings address the research questions through publication counts, percentages, keyword frequencies, and citation counts rather than statistical hypothesis testing.

4.1.5. Visual Presentation of Results

Tables 1–6 provide the principal numerical evidence for the study. Table 1 summarizes the composition of the document dataset; Table 2 reports the annual publication distribution; Table 3 presents the country rankings; Table 4 describes the distribution of research themes; Table 5 identifies the most frequently occurring keywords; and Table 6 lists the most-cited articles.

Together, these tables provide a structured overview of the global research landscape on community economic empowerment through MSMEs. Additional charts or network visualizations may be used if they are generated directly from the same dataset and are consistent with the reported figures.

4.2. Research Discussion

4.2.1. Interpretation of Key Findings

The findings reveal several patterns in global research on community economic empowerment through MSMEs. First, the dataset shows that publication activity was concentrated in 2025 and 2026, with 43 publications in 2025 and 58 records available by May 2026. This distribution indicates substantial scholarly activity in the latter part of the study period. However, because the 2026 data cover only the period up to May, the figure should not be interpreted as the final annual publication total.

Second, the country distribution shows that India and China contributed the largest numbers of publications. Their respective contributions of 28 and 22 articles indicate that these countries were prominent in the selected literature. By contrast, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Bangladesh each contributed 3 articles. This difference highlights the uneven geographical distribution of publications within the dataset and indicates that further investigation of Southeast Asian research contexts may be valuable.

Third, sustainability and sustainable development constituted the largest thematic category, with 29 articles (28.4%). Women's empowerment followed with 26 articles (25.5%), while digitalization, ICT, and e-commerce accounted for 23 articles (22.5%). These findings demonstrate that research on MSME-based economic empowerment extends beyond enterprise growth to include environmental sustainability, gender-related issues, and digital transformation.

Fourth, the keyword analysis identified empowerment, community empowerment, economic empowerment, and sustainability as frequently occurring terms. These patterns are consistent with the study's focus on community economic empowerment and show that the literature encompasses related economic, social, environmental, and technological dimensions.

Finally, the citation analysis identified articles on circular economy affinity and digital empowerment as the most-cited publications, with 5 citations each. Given the relatively recent publication period, these citation counts provide an early indication of scholarly attention rather than a definitive assessment of long-term research influence.

4.2.2. Comparison with Previous Studies

The results can be considered alongside the previous research discussed in the literature review. Beck et al. (2005) examined the relationship between small and medium-sized enterprises, economic growth, and poverty, while Acs and Audretsch (1990) highlighted the contribution of small firms to innovation and entrepreneurship. Ndiaye et al. (2018) examined MSME performance in emerging and developing economies.

The present study complements these works by examining the structure of the scholarly literature rather than testing the economic effects of MSMEs directly. Its results show that sustainability, women's empowerment, and digitalization are prominent themes in the selected publication dataset. These findings broaden the descriptive understanding of the research landscape by identifying the topics, countries, and articles represented in the literature.

However, the available results do not establish whether the findings confirm or contradict the empirical conclusions of these earlier studies. The studies differ in their analytical objectives, and the present bibliometric analysis does not directly measure economic growth, poverty reduction, innovation outcomes, or enterprise performance. Therefore, the comparison is primarily conceptual and thematic rather than a direct comparison of

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empirical effect estimates.

4.2.3. Theoretical Contributions

This study contributes to the literature by organizing research on community economic empowerment through MSMEs into identifiable publication, geographical, citation, and thematic patterns. Rather than testing or extending a specific causal theory, it provides a descriptive foundation for understanding how scholarly attention is distributed across the field.

The identification of sustainability, women's empowerment, and digitalization as major themes illustrates the breadth of topics associated with MSME-based economic empowerment. The country distribution further demonstrates that scholarly contributions are not evenly distributed across the countries represented in the dataset. Together, these findings provide a basis for future theoretical research that examines how economic empowerment intersects with gender, technology, environmental responsibility, and regional development.

The contribution is therefore primarily bibliometric: the study consolidates evidence on the structure and development of the research field and identifies areas that may benefit from more focused theoretical and empirical investigation.

4.2.4. Practical and Policy Implications

The findings suggest several practical and policy considerations. First, policymakers may consider integrating gender inclusion, digital capacity development, and sustainability into MSME empowerment initiatives. The prominence of these themes in the literature indicates that they are important areas for continued scholarly and policy attention. Second, the presence of financial inclusion, financial literacy, and e-financial strategies among the frequently occurring keywords highlights the relevance of financial access and financial capability in the research landscape. These topics provide potential directions for designing and evaluating initiatives intended to support underserved communities and small enterprises. Third, the limited representation of Indonesia and other Southeast Asian countries in the selected dataset suggests an opportunity to strengthen regional research and knowledge exchange. Researchers and policymakers may benefit from locally grounded studies that examine how MSME empowerment operates under different institutional, economic, and social conditions.

These implications should be interpreted as directions informed by the thematic patterns in the bibliometric results. The present study did not directly evaluate the effectiveness of specific policies or interventions; therefore, the findings do not establish the causal impact of any particular policy measure.

4.2.5. Integration with the Research Gap

The literature review identified the need for a systematic overview of publication trends, country and institutional contributions, influential articles, and dominant themes in research on community economic empowerment through MSMEs. The present study addresses this gap by analyzing 102 unique documents retrieved from Scopus and examining their publication characteristics, geographical distribution, citation counts, and keyword patterns.

The results provide a consolidated description of the research landscape during the 2022–2026 period. They identify India and China as the leading country contributors, highlight sustainability, women's empowerment, and digitalization as the largest thematic categories, and identify the most frequently occurring keywords and cited articles. The analysis also indicates that Indonesia and several other Southeast Asian countries have comparatively limited representation in the selected dataset.

Accordingly, the study contributes a structured baseline for further investigation of underrepresented geographical contexts and emerging research themes. Its contribution lies in mapping the existing literature and identifying potential research directions rather than claiming that the identified topics have never been investigated previously.

4.2.6. Acknowledgement of Study Limitations

The interpretation of the findings is subject to several limitations. The dataset was obtained exclusively from Scopus, meaning that relevant publications indexed in other databases may not have been included. The results also depend on the selected search terms and document eligibility criteria, which may have excluded relevant research using different terminology or publication formats.

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Furthermore, the 2026 records were collected only up to May 2026, limiting comparisons between that year and completed publication years. Citation counts for recently published articles were also relatively low and may change as the publications receive additional citations. Finally, the analysis describes publication patterns and thematic associations but does not directly establish causal relationships or evaluate the effectiveness of MSME empowerment policies.

These limitations mean that the results should be understood as a mapping of the selected Scopus dataset rather than an exhaustive representation of all research on community economic empowerment through MSMEs.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Summary of Key Findings

This study mapped global research on community economic empowerment through Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) using bibliometric analysis of 102 unique documents retrieved from Scopus for the 2022–2026 period. The findings indicate that publication activity was concentrated in 2025 and 2026, with 43 publications in 2025 and 58 records available by May 2026.

India and China were the leading country contributors, with 28 and 22 articles, respectively, while Indonesia, Malaysia, and Bangladesh each contributed 3 articles. The three largest thematic categories were sustainability and sustainable development, women's empowerment, and digitalization, ICT, and e-commerce. The most frequently occurring keyword was "empowerment," followed by "community empowerment" and "economic empowerment." Citation analysis identified two articles with 5 citations each as the most-cited publications in the dataset.

Overall, the study achieved its objective of mapping publication trends, country contributions, dominant research themes, frequently occurring keywords, and influential articles. It also identified opportunities for further research in underrepresented geographical contexts and emerging thematic areas.

5.2. Theoretical Contributions

The study contributes to the academic literature by providing a structured bibliometric overview of the global research landscape on community economic empowerment through MSMEs. By combining publication trends, country distributions, citation analysis, and thematic mapping, it offers a consolidated perspective on the composition and development of the field.

The identification of sustainability, women's empowerment, and digitalization as prominent research themes provides a foundation for future studies examining the connections among enterprise development, social inclusion, technological change, and sustainable development. The findings also highlight the value of examining geographical representation when assessing the development of a research field.

The contribution is descriptive rather than causal. The study does not test a specific theoretical model but provides an evidence-based overview that may inform the formulation and refinement of theoretical questions in subsequent research.

5.3. Practical and Policy Implications

The findings suggest that policymakers and practitioners should continue to examine MSME empowerment through the complementary dimensions of gender inclusion, digital transformation, sustainability, and financial access. Programs intended to strengthen MSMEs may consider improving digital literacy, expanding access to financial services, and supporting women's participation in economic activities.

The findings also suggest that researchers and policymakers should pay greater attention to Southeast Asian contexts, particularly Indonesia, which was represented by 3 articles in the selected dataset. Additional locally grounded research could help clarify the challenges and opportunities faced by MSMEs in different regional and institutional settings.

These recommendations are intended to guide policy discussion and future investigation. Because the study analyzed publications rather than policy interventions, the recommendations should not be interpreted as evidence that a particular intervention has already demonstrated effectiveness.

5.4. Limitations of the Study

The main limitation is the exclusive reliance on the Scopus database, which may have excluded relevant publications indexed elsewhere, including Web of Science and Google Scholar. The findings are

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also dependent on the selected keywords, eligibility criteria, and publication period.

The data were collected in May 2026, meaning that the 2026 publication count represents records available at that time rather than the complete annual output. In addition, citation counts may not fully capture the long-term influence of recent publications. These limitations restrict the completeness and generalizability of the bibliometric mapping and should be considered when interpreting the results.

5.5. Directions for Future Research

Future research should expand the geographical scope of bibliometric investigations, particularly by examining Southeast Asian countries and Indonesia, which were comparatively underrepresented in the present dataset. Comparative studies across countries could help clarify differences in research priorities, institutional settings, and approaches to community economic empowerment through MSMEs.

Longitudinal research is also recommended to examine how dominant themes and scholarly collaborations evolve over time. In addition, future studies could use mixed-methods approaches to complement bibliometric findings with contextual evidence from MSME owners, policymakers, and other stakeholders.

Finally, the role of Islamic finance and Sharia-based crowdfunding in MSME empowerment warrants further investigation, as these topics were identified in the original study as potential opportunities for future inquiry. Expanding database coverage and refining search strategies may also provide a broader representation of the global research landscape.

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