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Bibliometric Analysis of Cooperatives Studies

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Abstract

Cooperatives are autonomous organisations of people who voluntarily join together to meet economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprises. It is based on a unique model that promotes social development and provides a basis for commercial enterprises. They also create added value for products and services that are difficult for individuals, especially people with limited means, to obtain on their own. This is possible through effective joint utilisation of the resources of the members. Cooperatives are a participatory, sustainable business model that strengthens local economies, improves living conditions and gives people responsibility. This study aims to reveal the state of the "economics" research dimension of the cooperative literature by focusing on the studies searched in the "economics" category in the WoS database with Cooperatives in the author keyword. For this purpose, 667 open-access studies were analysed. As a result of the search in the WoS database, a data set was created. To examine the subject area holistically, a bibliometric analysis of studies on Cooperatives was conducted. The data were analysed using VOSviewer software. Firstly, the course of research on Cooperatives over the years and the distribution of research types were analysed. Within the scope of bibliometric analysis, firstly, citation analysis was conducted. Citation analysis revealed the most cited articles, authors, journals, institutions and countries in the field of Cooperatives. Citation analysis was also used to identify the authors, journals, institutions and countries that published the most research on Cooperatives. A co-author analysis was carried out, which identified the most collaborative organisations in the field of Cooperatives. A co-citation analysis was conducted, which analysed the most frequently co-cited authors on the subject of Cooperatives. Co-word analysis was used to identify the most commonly used author keywords in studies on Cooperatives. It is thought that the results of the study can be a guide for researchers who want to conduct studies on Cooperatives.

Keywords: Cooperative, bibliometric analysis, science mapping, Wos (Web of Science).

Jel codes: P41



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1. Introduction

With the economic revolution, people broke away from an economic community, i.e. the family economy, to achieve an independent economic life and developed an understanding of cooperation among themselves and monopoly authorities in the markets lost power. With the 19th century's modern capitalism, the industrial revolution emerged as a result of rapid material development. As a result, the shortcomings of the individualist society emerged and many problems arose in economic and labour life. For human beings to continue their individual development, they need to be in solidarity and cooperation, and they need an environment of friendship and trust (Gülpak, 1997).

The cooperative was founded in 1834 by four Parisian workers. This cooperative operated until 1837 and was recorded as the first production cooperative in history (Lasserre, 1988, pp. 363, 364, 366, 367). The principles that laid the foundations of cooperative thinking and shaped it as an action are based on the Rochdale pioneers. The pioneers of Rochdale have created a formation in the form of a consumption cooperative. After the creation of this consumption cooperative, it was accepted by the whole world as a social cooperation model and became a model supported by many states as a social policy model due to its self-help mechanisms in the social redistribution of income (Güloğlu and Korkmaz, 2011, p. 812).

The beginning of Cooperatives in Turkey is considered to be in 1861 when Mithat Pasha established country chests in the Danube province. The closest formation to Cooperatives in today's sense is the "Aydın Fig Producers Credit and Sales Cooperative" established in 1924 (Öksüz, 1982, p. 331; Yalçın and Çetin, 2021; Kılıç and Aydoğan, 2022; Alagöz and Paksoy, 2023; Demircan Yıldırım, 2023; Topaloğlu Özer and Sönmez, 2023).

Cooperatives are human-centred enterprises owned, controlled and managed by their members, realising the common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations of their members. In another definition, cooperative means to unite, to act together, to help oneself, and to support and protect the interests of the members. Cooperatives exist in almost every field and every country (Everest and Yercan, 2016, p. 67; Seguí-Mas, Bolla-Araya and Asensi Peiró, 2016; International Cooperative Alliance, 2018; Meira, Bandeira and Ávida, 2018; Çetin, 2019).

Since the main purpose of rural producer organisations, cooperatives, is to increase the level and quality of life of farmers, their main tasks include increasing production efficiency and strengthening their position in the market (Özdemir, Keskin and Özüdoğru, 2011, p.109).

Cooperatives bring people together in a democratic and equal way. Members have equal voting rights regardless of how much capital they contribute to the enterprise. As an enterprise driven not only by profit but also by values, the cooperative shares internationally recognised principles and acts together to create a better world through cooperation. Cooperatives around the world put equality and social justice at the heart of what they do, enabling people to work together to create sustainable enterprises that create long-term employment and prosperity. Cooperatives allow people to take control of their economic future, and because they are not owned by shareholders, the economic and social benefits of cooperative activities remain in the communities where the Cooperatives are located. Profits are either reinvested in the company or returned to members. The cooperative movement is by no means an extreme phenomenon. At least 12% of humanity is a member of one of the 3 million Cooperatives in the world (ICA, 2018).

2. Method

2.1. Research Design

In this study, the studies on the concept of Cooperatives in the field of "economics" in the Web of Science (WoS) database were examined by the bibliometric analysis method. When the literature is examined, it is seen that bibliometric analysis is defined as aiming to reveal the characteristics of studies in a certain field (such as a subject area, a branch of science or a certain journal) based on statistical and mathematical methods (Pritchard, 1969) or as a holistic examination of studies and findings specific to a certain field (Zupic and Čater, 2015). In this context, in the present study, a holistic perspective was created through bibliometric analysis based on the studies on this subject by using the keywords "cooperatives" and this information was visualised and presented with modern bibliometric techniques.

2.2. Data Set of the Research

Before the data set of the study was created, screening criteria for the research were determined. The purpose of determining the criteria at this stage is to ensure the reproducibility of the research, to reveal the difference between the research from other research, in other words, to reveal the gap in previous research and to close this gap with the current research. As the first criterion, the keywords to be searched were determined. As a result of the related literature review, it was decided that the keyword "cooperative" would be sufficient for the research.

The second criterion was formed by deciding in which search area in the WoS database the identified keywords would be searched.

When the literature is analysed, it is seen that the bibliometric studies conducted for the studies in the WoS database are generally searched by selecting the "topic" (article title, abstract, keywords) field. This situation sometimes leads to the inclusion of many irrelevant studies in the analysis. Because in this search field, the title, keywords and abstract of the study are scanned. The fact that the abstract section is also scanned causes unrelated studies to be included in the research, although they are not related to the field of search and are not included in the keywords. In this context, as the first criterion in the current study, the researchers first searched in the "author keywords" search field and 45,118 studies were reached.

In the present study, the second criterion was established by selecting the studies in the "economics" research category of the WoS database. The purpose of determining this category is that the researches conducted by the researchers in the field of economics are listed in the economics category. After determining this criterion, the total number of publications obtained with the search was 2,063. Another criterion in the research was formed by determining the type of publication. After determining the type of publication as an article, 1,691 articles were reached through the search. The last criterion determined in the study was to determine the publication year range. In this context, no restriction was made in the publication start year in the research, but since the year 2024 was not over, the studies conducted in this year were excluded. On the other hand, no restriction was made on the language and point of publication of the publications scanned for the research, but the publications with open access were included in the analysis, and thus the data were analysed over the final data set number of 728 publications.

2.3. Data Analysis

Firstly, the distribution of studies on the concepts of Cooperatives over the years was examined. After this analysis, the bibliometric analysis of the study was started. In this context, firstly, citation analysis was conducted. Through citation analysis, the most cited articles, authors, journals, institutions and countries were identified. After this determination, the citation analysis continued with the authors, journals, institutions and countries that produced the most research on Cooperatives.

The co-author analysis was then used to identify the institutions with the highest number of collaborations on Cooperatives. Subsequently, a co-citation analysis was conducted to identify the most frequently cited co-authors in the field of Cooperatives. Finally, co-word analysis was used to identify the most commonly used author keywords in studies on Cooperatives. After these determinations, the bibliometric data obtained from 728 studies were analysed using VOSviewer software.

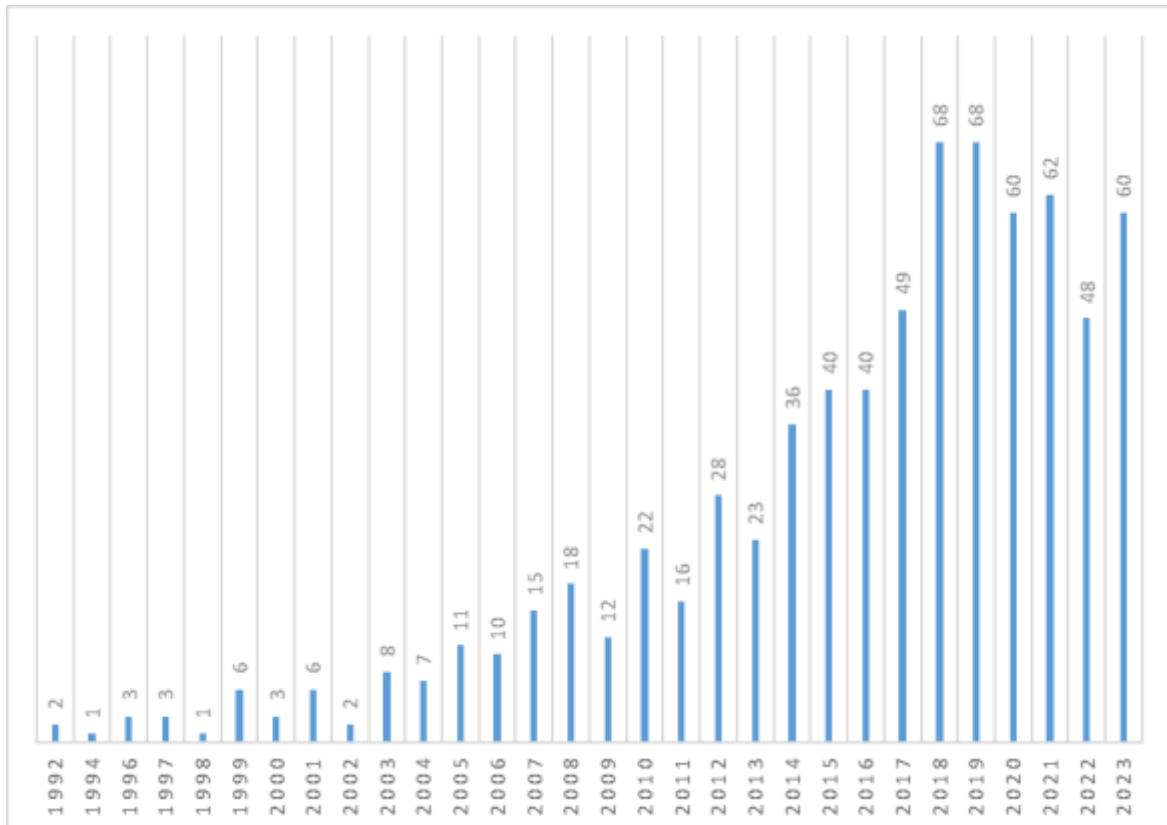
It is known in the literature that VOSviewer software creates networks and maps based on bibliometric data and visualises them. It is known that these visualisations enable bibliometric data to be handled and examined in a more detailed and comprehensive manner (van Eck and Waltman, 2019; Rosmayati and Maulana, 2023).

3. Findings

In this study, a bibliometric analysis of the studies on Cooperatives in the category of economics research in the indexes in the Web of Science (WoS) database was conducted. The findings of the research are presented below.

3.1. Distribution of publications by years

According to the information obtained from the WoS database, the distribution of studies on Cooperatives in the economics category according to years is presented in Graph 1.



Graph 1. Distribution of publications by years

Chart 1 shows that the first publication in the indexes and categories related to Cooperatives was published in 1992.

The increase in the number of publications follows a stagnant course from this year until 2005. As of 2003, the number of publications has entered a significant upward trend. Although there are small fluctuations or stagnation from time to time, it has been above a certain level after 2015. In general, research on Cooperatives in the field of education shows an increasing trend.

3.2. *The most cited research on Cooperatives*

According to the information obtained from the WoS database, information on the 10 most cited studies on Cooperatives in the economics category is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Most cited researches

	Article	Author	Year	Name of Journal	Citation
1	Extending Health Insurance To The Rural Population: An Impact Evaluation Of China's New Cooperative Medical Scheme	Wagstaff, A.; Lindelow, M.; Gao, J.; Xu, L.; Qian, J., C.	2009	Journal Of Health Economics	445
2	Linking Smallholders to Markets: Determinants and Impacts of Farmer Collective Action in Kenya	Fischer, E.; Qaim, M.	2012	World Development	387
3	The Economics Of Lending With Joint Liability: Theory And Practice	Ghatak, M.; Guinnane, TW	1999	Journal of Development Economics	353
4	Cooperative Traffic Control Of A Mixed Network With Two Urban Regions And A Freeway	Haddad, J.; Ramezani, M.; Geroliminis, N.	2013	Transportation Research Part B-Methodological	195
5	Do Farmers Benefit From Participating in Specialty Markets And Cooperatives? The Case of Coffee Marketing in Costa Rica	Wollni, M.; Zeller, M.	2007	Agricultural Economics	156
6	Agroindustrialization Through Institutional Innovation - Transaction Costs, Cooperatives And Milk-Market Development in The East-African Highlands	Holloway, G.; Nicholson, C.; Delgado, C.; Staal, S.; Ehui, S.	2000	Agricultural Economics	147
7	Agricultural Cooperatives and Investment in Organic Soil Amendments and Chemical Fertilizer in China	Ma, WL ; Abdulai, A.; Goetz, R.	2018	American Journal Of Agricultural Economics	147
8	The Impact of Personality On Behavior in Five Prisoner's Dilemma Games	Boone, C. ; De Brabander, B.; van Witteloostuijn, A.	1999	Journal Of Economic Psychology	132
9	Can Agricultural Cooperatives Reduce Poverty? Heterogeneous Impact of Cooperative Membership on Farmers' Welfare in Rwanda	Verhofstadt, E. ; Maertens, M.	2015	Applied Economic Perspectives And Policy	128
10	Enhanced Cooperative Car-Following Traffic Model With The Combination Of V2v And V2i Communication	Jia, DY; Ngoduy, D.	2016	Transportation Research Part B-Methodological	127

When Table 1 is analysed, the most cited study is "Extending Health Insurance To The Rural Population: An Impact Evaluation Of China's New Cooperative Medical Scheme" by Wagstaff, A., Lindelow, M., Gao, J., Xu,

L., Qian, J., C. (2009) with 445 citations. In this study, research was conducted on the effects of the voluntary health insurance launched by China in 2003, using data collected from programme managers, health facilities and households. According to the results of the study, it is stated that despite its relatively short life and limited financing, it is concluded that this model has significant effects.

3.3. Researchers with the highest number of publications and citations in the field of cooperatives

According to the information obtained from the WoS database, the density map of the x researchers who have published the most on Cooperatives in the economics category is presented in Figure 1.

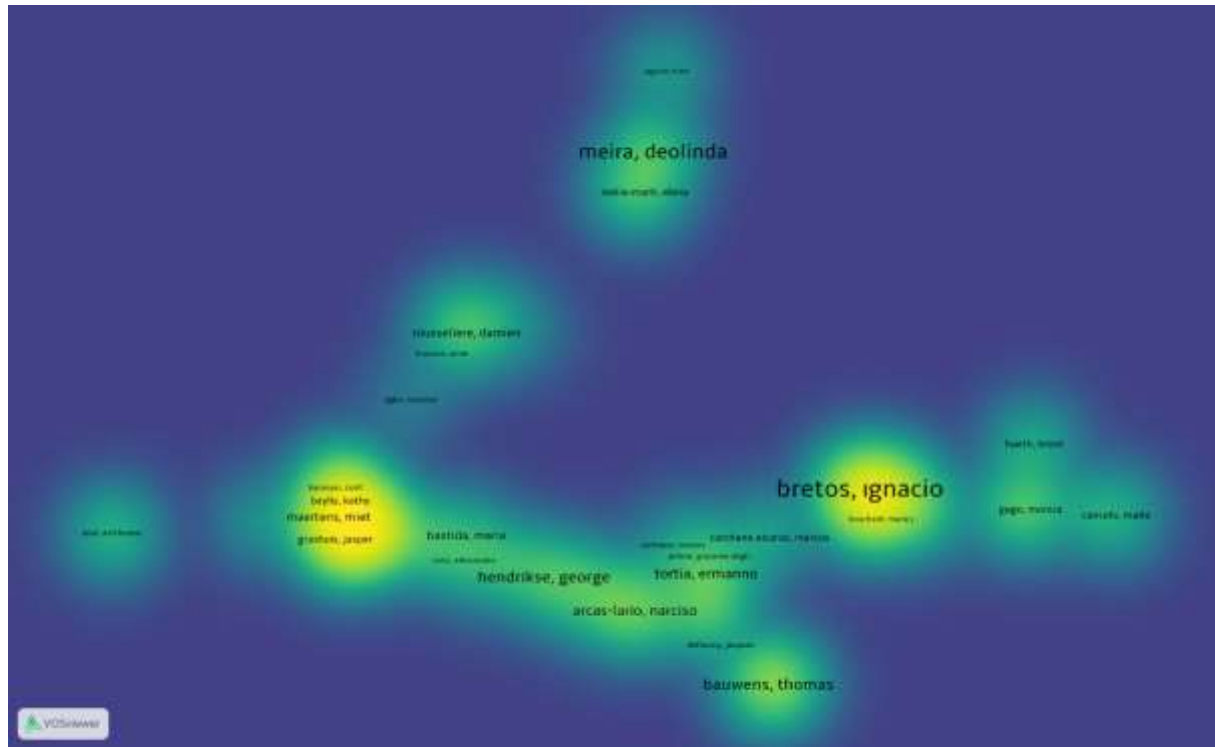


Figure 1. Researchers with the most publications

Figure 1 shows that in the category of economics research, the most productive researchers are "Bretos, Ignacio" (n: 9), "Meira, Deolinda" (n:7), "Marcuello, Carmen" (n:6), "Van Den Brink, Rene" (n:6), "Errasti, Anjel" (n:5), "Hendrikse, George" (n:5), "Bauwens, Thomas" (n:5), "Rafels, Carles" (n:5).

According to the information obtained from the WoS database, information on the 10 most cited researchers in the economics category on Cooperatives is presented in Table 2.

According to Figure 2, "Revesco-Revista de Estudios Cooperativos" is the journal with the highest number of publications on Cooperatives with 148 publications. Apart from these journals, "Ciriec-Espana Revista de Economia Publica Social Y Cooperativa" (n:51), "International Journal of Game Theory" (n:43), "Annals of Public and Cooperatives Economics" (n:38), "Games and Economic Behavior" (n:24) are the other journals with the highest number of publications.

According to the information obtained from the WoS database, information on the 10 most cited journals on Cooperatives in the economics category is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Most cited journals

	Name of Journal	Number of Citation	Number of Publications	Citation Average
1	Games and Economic Behavior	559	24	23,29
2	World Development	516	7	73,71
3	Journal of Health Economics	445	1	445
4	Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics	444	38	11,68
5	International Journal of Game Theory	428	43	9,95
6	Transportation Research Part B-Methodological	428	7	61,14
7	Agricultural Economics	389	6	64,83
8	Revesco-Revista de Estudios Cooperativos	370	148	2,5
9	Journal of Development Economics	367	4	91,75
10	American Journal of Agricultural Economics	351	8	43,87

When Table 3 is analysed, "Games and Economic Behavior" stands out as the most cited journal among 148 journals on Cooperatives. "World Development", "Journal of Health Economics", "Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics", "International Journal of Game Theory", and "Transportation Research Part B-Methodological" are the most influential journals with over 400 citations. "Journal of Health Economics" is the journal with the highest citation average. Apart from this journal, "Journal of Development Economics", "World Development", "Agricultural Economics" and "Transportation Research Part B-Methodological" are among the most productive journals (Figure 2).

3.5. Institutions with the highest number of publications and citations in the field of Cooperatives

According to the information obtained from the WoS database, 785 institutions and organisations with publications on Cooperatives were found in the economics category. The density map of these organisations is presented in Figure 3.



Figure 3. Institutions with the most publications

Figure 3 shows that "Univ Valencia", "Tilburg Univ", "Erasmus Univ", "Vrije Univ, Amsterdam", "Univ Almeria", "Univ Basque Country", "Univ Politecn Valencia", "Univ Jaen" and "Univ Deusto" are the most productive institutions with 10 or more publications.

According to the information obtained from the WoS database, the top 10 most cited institutions in the economics category of Cooperatives are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Most cited institutions

No	Institution Name	Number of Citation	Number of Publications
1	Univ Gottingen	543	3
2	Minist Hlth	445	1
3	World Bank	445	1
4	Yale Univ	361	2
5	Univ Chicago	353	1
6	Katholieke Univ Leuven	271	7
7	Tilburg Univ	248	19
8	Erasmus Univ	223	14
9	Univ Antwerp	204	5
10	Ecole Polytech Fed Lausanne	195	1

According to Table 4, "Univ Gottingen" is the most influential institution in the field of Cooperatives with 543 citations among 785 institutions. Other institutions with the highest number of citations are "Minist Health", "World Bank", and "Yale Univ".

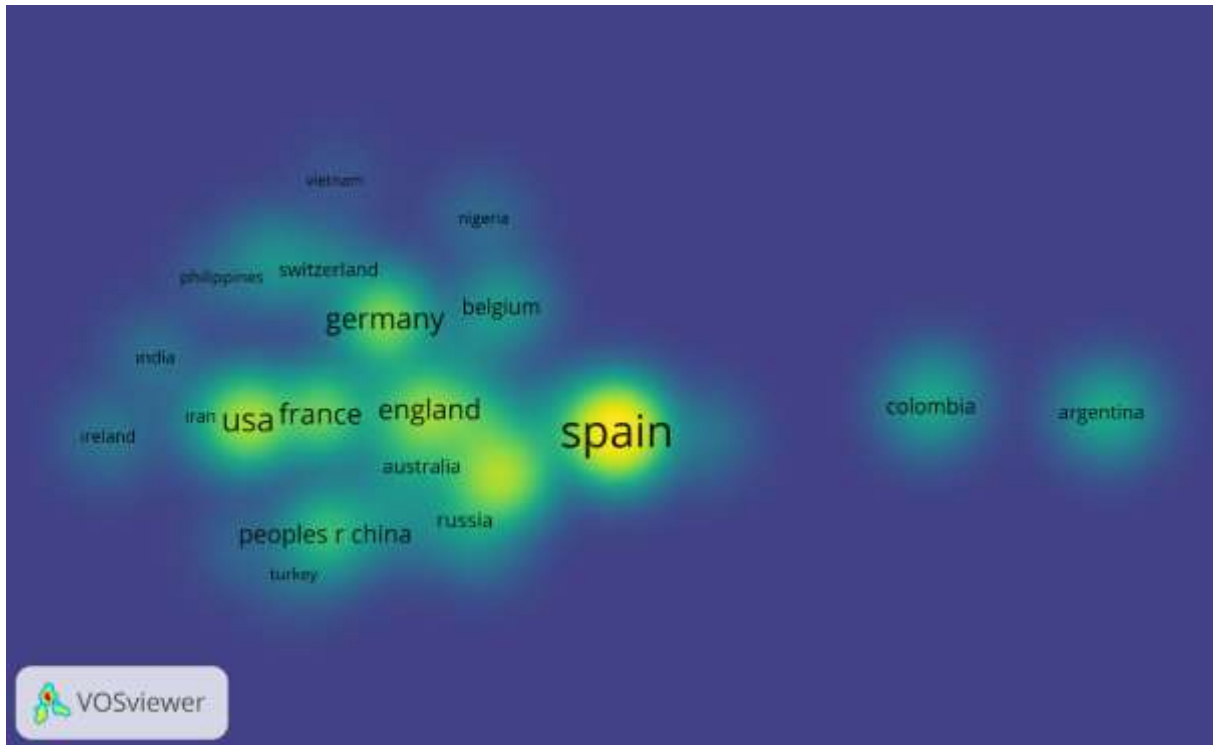


Figure 5. Countries with the most publications

According to Figure 5, Spain (n:215) stands out as the country with the highest number of publications. Other countries with the highest number of publications are the USA (n:93), Netherlands (n:82) and Germany (n:66).

According to the information obtained from the WoS database, information on the 10 most cited countries in the economics category of Cooperatives is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Most cited countries

No	Country	Number of Citation	Number of Publication	Citation Average	No	Country	Number of Citation	Number of Publication	Citation Average
1	USA	2261	93	24,31	6	Peoples R China	769	37	20,78
2	Germany	1428	66	21,63	7	Belgium	707	19	37,21
3	Netherlands	1215	82	14,81	8	France	646	59	10,94
4	Spain	1137	215	5,28	9	Italy	480	38	12,63
5	England	1027	54	19,01	10	Japan	330	20	16,5

According to Table 5, the USA is the country with the highest number of citations on Cooperatives among 77 countries with 2261 citations. This country stands out as the most influential country in terms of the number of citations. There is a dramatic difference between this country and the other countries that follow it in terms of citation performance. Germany (1428), Netherlands (n:1215), Spain (n:1137) and England (n:1027) are the other countries with the highest number of citations. Belgium has the highest citation average performance with 707 citations and a citation average of 37.21, having hosted 19 studies on the concept of Cooperatives. The USA is the most influential country and has the second-highest citation average with 24.31 citations.

3.8. Author keyword analysis related to Cooperatives

According to WoS data, a total of 2354 different keywords used in the publications included in the study were reached. The use of these keywords at least 10 times was determined as a criterion. As a result of this process, 20 different keywords emerged. One of these words was not included in Figure 6 because it was not related to other words. The keyword network created for the common keyword analysis on cooperatives is presented below in Figure 6.

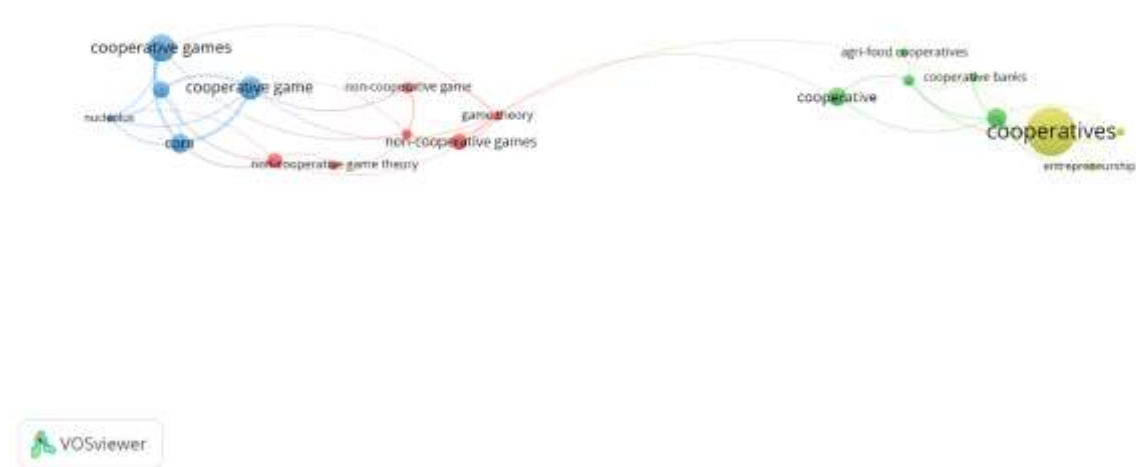


Figure 6. Common keyword network

According to Figure 6, which shows the word network for the most frequently used keywords by authors related to Cooperatives, there are 4 different clusters and 40 links between the keywords in these clusters. The most frequently used author common keywords were "cooperatives" (n:150), "cooperative games" (n:62), "cooperative game" (n:48), "core" (n:37), and "social economy" (n:36).

3.9. Author Co-Citation Analysis

According to the information obtained from the WoS database, 1480 co-cited authors or sources (articles by official institutions or NGOs) were found in the publications on Cooperatives in the economics category. Then, 277 authors were reached by selecting those with more than 20 citations as citation criteria. Then, since it was seen that there was no cooperation among the 277 authors, the author co-citation network was determined by including 7 authors who were in cooperation.

Figure 7 below shows a visual of the author's co-citation network.

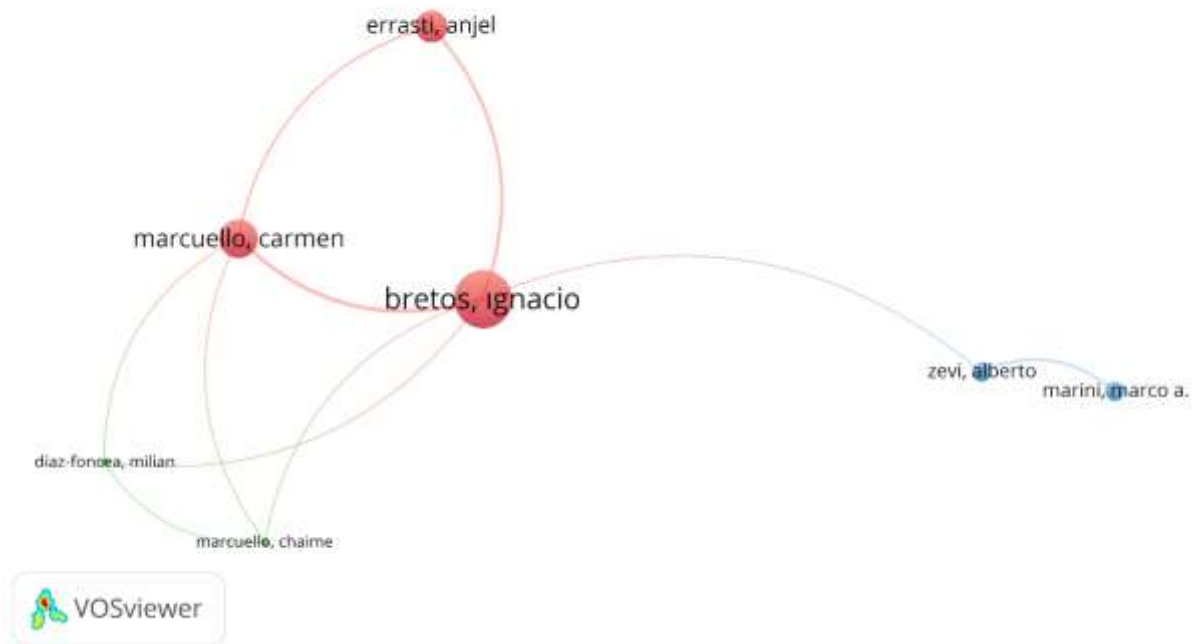


Figure 7. Authors' co-citation network

In Figure 7, there are three coloured clusters of co-cited authors. The most cited authors or sources are located in the same cluster and closer to each other in the network map. There are 7 authors in the co-citation network cluster for the concept of Cooperatives.

4. Conclusion

The first result of the research is related to the course of publications on Cooperatives over the years. According to the WoS database, the first publication on Cooperatives in the economics research category was published in 1992.

The increase in the number of publications follows a stagnant course from this year until 2005. As of 2003, the number of publications has entered a significant upward trend. Although there are small fluctuations or stagnation from time to time, it has been above a certain level after 2015. In general, research on Cooperatives in the field of education shows an increasing trend.

The most cited study in the second result of the research is "Extending Health Insurance To The Rural Population: An Impact Evaluation Of China's New Cooperative Medical Scheme" by Wagstaff, A., Lindelow, M., Gao, J., Xu, L., Qian, J., C. (2009) with 445 citations.

The third result of the study shows that in the category of economics research, the most productive researchers are "Bretos, Ignacio" (n: 9), "Meira, Deolinda" (n:7), "Marcuello, Carmen" (n:6), "Van Den Brink, Rene" (n:6), "Errasti, Anjel" (n:5), "Hendrikse, George" (n:5), "Bauwens, Thomas" (n:5), "Rafels, Carles" (n:5).

The fourth result of the study shows that "Wagstaff, A.; Lindelow, M.; Gao, J.; Xu, L.; Qian, J., C." is the most cited researcher on Cooperatives with 445 citations. The other most cited researchers are "Matin Qaim" (n: 414), "Elisabeth Fischer" (n: 387) and "Ghatak, M.; Guinnane, TW." (n: 353).

The fifth result of the study shows that "Revesco-Revista de Estudios Cooperatives" is the journal with the highest number of publications on Cooperatives with 148 publications. Apart from these journals, "Ciriec-Espana Revista de Economia Publica Social Y Cooperativa" (n:51), "International Journal of Game Theory" (n:43), "Annals of Public and Cooperatives Economics" (n:38), "Games and Economic Behavior" (n:24) are the other journals with the highest number of publications.

In the sixth result of the research, "Games and Economic Behavior" stands out as the most cited journal among 148 journals on Cooperatives. "World Development", "Journal of Health Economics", "Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics", "International Journal of Game Theory", and "Transportation Research Part B-Methodological" are the most influential journals with over 400 citations. "Journal of Health Economics" is the journal with the highest citation average. Apart from this journal, "Journal of Development Economics", "World

Development", "Agricultural Economics" and "Transportation Research Part B-Methodological" are among the most productive journals.

In the seventh result of the search, 785 institutions and organisations that have published on Cooperatives were found in the economics category. "Univ Valencia", "Tilburg Univ", "Erasmus Univ", "Vrije Univ, Amsterdam", "Univ Almeria", "Univ Basque Country", "Univ Politecn Valencia", "Univ Jaen" and "Univ Deusto" are the most productive institutions with 10 publications or more.

In the eighth result of the research, according to the information obtained from the WoS database, "Univ Gottingen" ranks first as the most influential institution with 543 citations in terms of the number of citations among the 785 institutions with the highest number of citations on the subject of cooperatives in the economics category. Other institutions with the highest number of citations are "Minist Health", "World Bank", and "Yale Univ".

The ninth result of the study shows that there are 30 clusters in the WoS database in the economics category in Figure 4, which shows 785 inter-institutional collaborations that have been published on Cooperatives. There were no links between the remaining 259 organisations. Therefore, it is noteworthy that the institutions in Figure 4 are the institutions with strong collaborations in studies on the concept of Cooperatives.

In the tenth stage of the research, according to the information obtained from the WoS database, 77 countries with publications on Cooperatives in the economics category were found. The country with the highest number of publications is Spain (n:215). Other countries with the highest number of publications are the USA (n:93), Netherlands (n:82) and Germany (n:66).

In the eleventh stage of the research, the USA was the country with the highest number of citations in the field of Cooperatives among 77 countries with 2261 citations. This country draws attention as the most influential country in terms of the number of citations. There is a dramatic difference between this country and the other countries that follow it in terms of citation performance. Germany (1428), Netherlands (n:1215), Spain (n:1137) and England (n:1027) are the other countries with the highest number of citations. Belgium has the highest average citation performance with 707 citations and a citation average of 37.21, having hosted 19 studies on the concept of Cooperatives.

According to the twelfth WoS data of the research, a total of 2354 different keywords used in the publications included in the research were reached. According to Figure 6, which shows the word network for the most frequently used keywords by authors related to Cooperatives, there are 4 different clusters and 40 links between the keywords in these clusters. The most frequently used author common keywords were "cooperatives" (n:150), "cooperative games" (n:62), "cooperative game" (n:48), "core" (n:37), and "social economy" (n:36).

In the thirteenth stage of the research, according to the information obtained from the WoS database, 1480 authors or sources (articles belonging to official institutions or NGOs) were found in the economics category in the publications related to Cooperatives. As a citation criterion, 277 authors were reached by selecting those with more than 20 citations. Then, since it was seen that there was no cooperation among the 277 authors, the author co-citation network was determined by including 7 authors who were in cooperation. There are three clusters of co-cited authors.

As a limitation of the research, this study was conducted by using the keyword Cooperatives. Other studies can be conducted by deriving cooperative concepts suitable for different fields of study or by using words that have similar or the same meaning. In addition, as another limitation of the study, only studies with "cooperative" in the author keywords were included in the study. In other studies, research titles and abstracts of the studies can also be included in the search. This study is limited to the studies in the WoS database. Studies in other databases can also be analysed by using the criteria in the section explaining the data collection process of the study.

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