

Global Research Landscape of Family Therapy – A Bibliometric Analysis (1958 to 2025)

Yatheesh Bharadwaj

yatheesh428@gmail.com

National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9957-0833>

Rakshita Poojari

JSS Medical College and Hospital <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-0024-9567>

Sivaranjini M

State Health Systems Resource Centre-Kerala <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-1408-9015>

Sateesh R Koujalgi

Dharwad Institute of Mental health and neurosciences

Rakesh N S

National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-7355-9368>

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Abstract

Family therapy has emerged as one of the most influential therapies in the recent times. Though it has 6 decades of wide history, there is a limited studies which comprehensively map the trends of the family therapy. Hence, the current study aims at exploring the trends of family therapy in the lens of Bibliometric analysis. The study adopted quantitative, retrospective, bibliometric analysis using publications spanning from 1958 to 2025, with a total of 9,847 published across 1,787 publishing sources. These publishing includes journals, books and conference papers. This shows the width of the research landscape in the field of family therapy. The current study found out that the annual growth rate of publications related to family therapy is 7.97%. The findings demonstrate a steady growth of research output over six decades, reflecting continued academic interest among scholars. An average document age of 24.1 years further indicates that the field has reached a level of intellectual maturity.

1. Introduction

Family therapy has emerged as one of the most influential therapies in the recent days, which emphasizes the role of the family systems, interpersonal communications, and contextual factors in the development and maintenance of the psychological distress. Early family therapies challenged the traditional psychoanalytical approaches and shifted its focus on the family rather than the individual pathologies (Bateson et al., 1956; Bowen, 1978). Over the past six decades, family therapy has been shaped by the emergence of multiple theoretical schools of thought.

Its formal emergence in the mid-20th century contributed changes in the psychotherapy and psychiatry. Original theoretical and conceptual contributions came in the form of structural family therapy, strategic family therapy, and transgenerational family systems theory; the aforementioned modalities outlined the conceptual basis for conceptions of family organization, communication patterns, and intergenerational processes. These models not only influenced clinical practice but also stimulated sustained scholarly interest that has led to the establishment of specialized journals, professional associations, and training programs worldwide. Thereby, family therapy evolved as a major multidisciplinary field that bridges psychology, psychiatry, social work, counseling, and public health.

Over the past few decades, family therapy research has continued to expand its purview and focus on adolescent mental health, attachment processes, family functioning, and culturally responsive interventions. The volume and diversity of the literature reflect not only the adaptability of family therapy models but also their relevance to current psychosocial concerns. However, the rapid growth of the literature has also made it increasingly difficult to understand the field's overall intellectual structure, key contributors, and trends of evolving research.

1.1 *Bibliometric Analysis*

Bibliometric analysis is a scientific, systematic and quantitative way of mapping the evolution of a research field by analyzing publication patterns, citation patterns, authorship patterns and thematic

evolution in a given field (Donthu et al., 2021). This is one of the library science methods used to understand the the global trends of a research topic. Unlike systematic or narrative reviews, bibliometric analysis allows the examination of a large body of literature over a long period of time, enabling the identification of growth patterns, key publications, and new developments in a field.

1.2 Need for the current study

Despite the large body of literature on family therapy, there are few bibliometric analyses of its long-term evolution. To fill this research gap, the current study undertakes a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of family therapy research published between 1958 and 2025, using data extracted from the Lens database. Through the analysis of publication trends over time, citation effects, author productivity, collaboration networks, and the development of themes according to keywords, the current study hopes to offer a systematic and data-driven perspective on the field of family therapy research. This is crucial for understanding the development of family therapy research over time, key contributors to the field, and the future direction of research in this important area.

1.3 Aim

The current study aims to map, quantify, explore and interpret the scientific growth, intellectual structure, authorship patterns and thematic evolution of family therapy research from 1958 to 2025 using a systematic bibliometric analysis based on data retrieved from the Lens.org database.

1.4 Research Questions

1. To determine the research publication productivity in the field of family therapy. The following research question was posed: RQ 1- How has family therapy research evolved in terms of annual and decade-wise publication output from 1958 to 2025?. The research question helped to determine what is the annual number of production & decade wise distribution of publications and its growth rate. This helps to assess the current trends of literature and also helps to estimate the year of Publications for future. 2. To assess the number of citations gained from 1958 to 2025, the following research question was posed: RQ 2- RQ2: What are the citation patterns and scholarly impact trends within family therapy literature over time?
3. To identify the most influential authors, and publications in family therapy research using bibliometric indicators such as total citations, h-index, g-index, and m-index, thereby highlighting intellectual leadership and foundational contributions, as identified as per the “Lens.org” database, the following research question was posed RQ3 – Who are the most influential authors and publications shaping the intellectual foundations and contemporary developments of family therapy?
4. To analyze authorship productivity patterns and collaboration structures in family therapy research and to empirically test the applicability of Lotka’s Law in explaining author productivity distribution within the field. The following research question was craved: RQ4: To what extent does author productivity in family therapy research conform to Lotka’s Law? Is there any difference between the theoretical construct of Lotka’s law and the current study?
5. To understand the current research trends in family therapy research, the following research question

was posed: RQ 5- What are the dominant and emerging thematic trends in family therapy research across different time periods as available in the Lens.org database?

2. Methods and Materials

2.1 Research Design: The study used quantitative, retrospective, bibliometric analysis using secondary data. These secondary data comprised of publications related family therapies on various journals through bibliometric analysis. It is a powerful approach to mapping the research landscape through scientific method. Bibliometric analysis has its origins in library and information science. In the recent years, the use of bibliometric analysis is increasing in almost every field. It helps to provide more scientific and reliable evidence in the literature (Donthu et al, 2021). Realizing its importance, the current study also utilized this approach in mapping the research production in the field of family therapy.

2.2 Data Source: The study used the Lens (lens.org) as the data source to locate the articles related to family therapy up to 2025. It is a free, open source and community supported online database platform that integrates the scholarly knowledge, which helps to search, analyze and maintains the scholarly productions. In addition to scholarly publications, the database includes patent-related records.

2.3. Data Acquisition: The study used the term “Family Therapy” as the keyword to locate the publications in the lens.org database. The researchers searched all the studies which mainly focused on family therapy. To retrieve relevant studies and exclude non-related records, the search was restricted to the “Title” field, ensuring greater specificity of the retrieved literature.

2.4 Eligibility Criteria: The publications were selected based upon the following inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria mainly consisted of all the publications between 1950s and 2025. No language restrictions were applied, and studies published in any language related to family therapy were eligible.

2.5 Data Extraction: The Data Extraction was done on 21.12.2025. The final metadata was exported from the Lens database to the CSV file format. The export field consisted of Title, Date Published, Publication Year, Publication Type, Source Title, ISSNs, Publisher, Source Country, Authors, Abstract, Volume, Issue Number, start page, End page, Fields of Study, MeSH Terms, Funding, PMID, DOI, citing patent count, Citing work count, references, Open access or Not. Four authors (YB, RNS, RVK, RP) involved in the conceptualization, discussion and conducting data acquisition and extraction process.

2.6 Data Analysis:

The Metadata was exported in CSV file format. The Exported metadata underwent data missing process using R Studio’s Biblioshiny software. he R Studio run the java scripts through the specifically designed code to run Biblioshiny software. These Missing data was graded in a matrix ranging from excellent to poor. Identification and Data Cleaning process was done using R software. Then, the Data was analyzed using a set of Bibliometric parameters.

3. Result

3.1 An Overview

Table 1 Main Information about the current analysis	
Description	Results
MAIN INFORMATION ABOUT DATA	
Timespan	1958:2025
Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	1787
Documents	9747
Annual Growth Rate %	7.97
Document Average Age	24.1
Average citations per doc	12.7
References	59760
DOCUMENT CONTENTS	
Keywords Plus (ID)	2112
Author's Keywords (DE)	2112
AUTHORS	
Authors	9849
Authors of single-authored documents	3124
AUTHORS COLLABORATION	
Single-authored docs	5120
Co-Authors per Doc	1.92
International co-authorships %	0

Table 1 depicts the main information about the current analysis. The current research conducted a bibliometric analysis of publications spanning from 1958 to 2025, with a total of 9,847 published across 1,787 publishing sources. These publishing includes journals, books and conference papers. This shows the width of the research landscape in the field of family therapy. The current study found out that the annual growth rate of publications related to family therapy is 7.97%. The findings demonstrate a steady growth of research output over six decades, reflecting continued academic interest among scholars. An average document age of 24.1 years further indicates that the field has reached a level of intellectual maturity.

The average of 12.7 citations per document shows that there is a consistent citation impact of the field on the scholars. The total of references (59,760) demonstrates the importance of the research on family therapy as available in the lens.org database. The current study also found out that there are 2,112 authors keywords from 9847 documents. The authorship patterns reveal that there is a highly inclusive scholarly community which encompasses all the schools of thought of family therapy, with 9849 authors writing 9847 documents. Such a huge number of authors signifies that the field of family therapy has diffuse around the world. Notably, 3,124 authors have produced single documents, which highlights a strong tradition of individual scholarship and theoretical or reflective writing. Interestingly, the current study found out from len.org database that though there are thousands of authors, there is a very minimum international collaborations happened in writing the articles.

3.2 Scientific Publication Growth

The Fig. 2 depicts the annual scientific production (number of articles) over a long time span from 1958 to 2025. Overall, the trend reflects a progressive maturation of the research field, marked by distinct growth phases, periods of stabilization, and a recent surge followed by correction. In the early phase (late 1950s to early 1970s), scientific output remains very low and increases gradually. This period reflects the emergence and conceptual grounding of the field, with limited scholarly attention and fewer publication outlets. The slow but steady rise indicates initial academic interest and foundational work. From the mid-1970s to late 1980s, there is a clear acceleration in publication output, with articles increasing sharply and reaching a first notable peak around the late 1980s. This phase suggests expansion and consolidation, likely driven by theoretical development, methodological advances, and broader recognition of the topic within the scientific community. The 1990s to late 2000s show a relative decline followed by stabilization, with moderate fluctuations but no dramatic growth. This plateau may indicate a period of theoretical saturation, where research continued but without major paradigm shifts or large-scale funding boosts. A renewed growth phase begins around 2010, culminating in a sharp and unprecedented peak between 2017 and 2019, where annual publications rise steeply to their highest level. This surge likely reflects renewed global interest, interdisciplinary integration, increased research funding, policy relevance, or external drivers such as technological advances or societal challenges that revitalized the field. Following this peak, there is a decline after 2019, stabilizing at a lower yet still higher-than-historical baseline. This drop may be due to the effects of global disruptions (e.g., COVID-19), or stricter publication standards. Importantly, despite the decline, production does not return to pre-2010 levels, indicating that the field has achieved sustained academic relevance.

Table 2
Decadal growth of Publications related to family therapy

Decade	Years	Frequency	Percentage
1950s	1958–1959	1	0.01
1960s	1960–1969	218	2.21
1970s	1970–1979	663	6.73
1980s	1980–1989	1,851	18.80
1990s	1990–1999	1,476	14.99
2000s	2000–2009	1,459	14.82
2010s	2010–2019	3,001	30.48
2020s	2020–2025	1,178	11.96

The Table 2 represents the decade-wise distribution of publications. It shows a clear temporal evolution of the field, with minimal scholarly output before the 1960s and a steady expansion thereafter. Research activity was almost negligible in the 1950s (0.01%), followed by a modest emergence during the 1960s (2.21%) and a gradual increase in the 1970s (6.73%), indicating the formative phase of the discipline. A substantial surge occurred in the 1980s, which accounted for 18.80% of the total publications, reflecting growing academic recognition and consolidation of theoretical and empirical foundations. Although there was a slight decline in the 1990s (14.99%) and early 2000s (14.82%), the overall output remained consistently high, suggesting sustained research interest and diversification of themes. The most prolific period was the 2010s, contributing nearly one-third of all publications (30.48%), highlighting a phase of rapid expansion, methodological sophistication, and global engagement. Despite the shorter time span, the 2020s (up to 2025) already account for 11.96% of the literature, indicating continued momentum and the likelihood of further growth, thereby underscoring the field's enduring relevance and increasing scholarly attention over time.

3.3 Citation analysis

The Fig. 3 depicts the year wise citations analysis related to family therapy. The current study found out that there is a distinct temporal patterns in the research influence that are reflected by the total number of citations. It is a fact that the early publications get more number of citations than the later one (Aksnes, Langfeldt & Wouters, 2019). The early publications between 1950s and 1970s show highly variable man total citations per article. This was largely driven by a small number of influential publications. This is most evident in 1974, which records an exceptionally high mean total citation per article (186.53) and mean citation per year (3.52). During the 1990s and early 2000s, the field demonstrated a balance between productivity and impact, with relatively high mean citations per article and steadily increasing mean citations per year, peaking around 1999–2005, suggesting strong theoretical refinement and methodological maturation.

3.4 Authors Productivity and testing of Lotka’s Law

Table 3
Authors productivity

Number of Documents	Number of Authors	Observed Proportion	Theoretical Proportion
1.00	6854	0.70	0.62
2.00	1478	0.15	0.15
3.00	493	0.05	0.07
4.00	320	0.03	0.04
5.00	147	0.02	0.03
6.00	101	0.01	0.02
≥ 7	456	0.04	0.08
Total	9849	1.00	1.00

The authors productivity patterns as shown in Table 3 & Fig. 4, found that there is a large of authors contributing only a single publication. This was confirmed through the application of Lotka’s Law (Lotka, 1926). The current study found that single-publication authors accounted for 70.2% of the total, exceeding the theoretical expectation of 61.6%, indicating a higher prevalence of occasional contributors within the field. Authors producing two documents (15.1%) closely matched the theoretical proportion (15.4%), which suggest a strong empirical alignment at lower productivity levels. From three documents onward, a systematic decline in author frequency was observed, with empirical proportions consistently falling below theoretical values. This divergent became more evident among highly productive authors (≥ 7 documents), where the observed proportion (3.8%) was substantially lower than the theoretical expectation (8.2%).

3.5 Author Analysis

Table 4
Top 20 Influential Authors in the field of family therapy research

Author	h_index	g_index	m_index	TC	NP	PY_start
Salvador Minuchin	15	37	0.246	12102	37	1965
Howard A. Liddle	37	67	0.74	4582	69	1976
Ivan Eisler	24	61	0.6	3836	63	1986
Guy Diamond	20	54	NA	3047	54	NA
José Szapocznik	23	50	NA	2610	50	NA
Gary M Diamond	20	49	NA	2557	49	NA
Murray Bowen	3	3	0.063	2473	3	1978
Gayle A. Dakof	17	20	0.548	2443	20	1995
Monica McGoldrick	9	14	0.196	2396	14	1980
H. Charles Fishman	6	13	0.133	2395	13	1981
Christopher Dare	11	18	0.216	2163	18	1975
Douglas H Sprenkle.	21	39	0.42	2147	39	1976
Craig E Henderson	21	30	0.955	1941	30	2004
Michael S. Robbins	19	43	0.432	1918	47	1982
G F Russell	5	5	0.128	1873	5	1987
James F. Alexander	18	43	0.36	1859	46	1976
Alan Carr	18	42	0.486	1779	69	1989
Myrna L Friedlander	22	41	NA	1718	67	NA
Patricia Minuchin	3	3	0.073	1513	3	1985
Aaron Hogue	15	27	0.5	1459	27	1996

Overall 9849 Authors have written 9847 Publications related to Family therapy as identified in Lens.org Database. The Table 4 gives the top 20 authors and their productivity in the field of family therapy. The unit of analysis is total citation counts. It was found that Salvador Minuchin, who is propounder of structural family therapy, stands first in terms of total citation count (12,102), with 37 publications. Howard A liddle has 4582 citations related to family therapy. There is a huge gap in the citations counts between first and the second most prominent author. Salvador Minuchin has more than the double counts of the later one in terms of total citations. Thus, from this, it is evident that Salvador Minuchin stands as the most prominent and most cited figure in the field of family therapy. His early start in 1965 and sustained citation pattern establish the crucial function played by this author in defining structural

family therapy. The third most prominent researcher is Ivan Eisler (63 publications; 3836 total citations). Interestingly, Murray Bowen has only 3 publications, yet he has 2,473 citations.

3.6 Keyword analysis and Thematic evolution

Table 5
Represents Thematic evolution based on scientific keyword analysis

Term	Frequency	Year (Q1)	Year (Median)	Year (Q3)
Family	29	1964	1964	2014
Psychotherapy Group	14	1964	1964	1965
Schizophrenia	16	1964	2005	2016
Adolescent Substance Abuse	9	2009	2010	2011
Medical Family Therapy	8	2010	2012	2015
Evidence-Based Practice	7	2011	2012	2016
Adolescent Drug Abuse	5	2010	2012	2014
Multidimensional Family Therapy	17	2009	2014	2018
Therapeutic Alliance	11	2008	2014	2020
Collaboration	5	2012	2014	2022
Adolescence	15	2006	2015	2018
Treatment	9	2014	2015	2021
Family Intervention	7	2015	2015	2020
Terapia Familiar	18	2014	2016	2018
Research	12	2014	2016	2021
“家庭治疗(Family Therapy) - Chinese	12	2014	2016	2016
Family Therapy	238	2013	2017	2021
Psychotherapy	19	1964	2017	2022
Children	13	2012	2017	2020
Eating Disorders	19	2015	2018	2022
Couple Therapy	8	2014	2018	2022
Self-Harm	7	2018	2018	2020
Adolescents	54	2015	2019	2023
Functional Family Therapy	15	2016	2019	2020
Qualitative Research	13	2014	2019	2021
Depression	20	2014	2020	2021
Systemic Family Therapy	18	2017	2020	2022

Term	Frequency	Year (Q1)	Year (Median)	Year (Q3)
Attachment-Based Family Therapy	14	2018	2020	2023
Anorexia Nervosa	33	2017	2021	2024
Adolescent	18	2017	2021	2023
Attachment	13	2019	2021	2023
Systematic Review	9	2022	2022	2023
Trauma	8	2017	2022	2022
Effectiveness	7	2019	2022	2024
Family Functioning	7	2020	2023	2024
Suicidal Ideation	7	2021	2023	2024
Maudsley Family Therapy	10	2022	2024	2024
Family Based Treatment	7	2022	2024	2024
Qualitative	7	2022	2024	2024

The Table 5 presents that the scientific keyword analysis and thematic evolution which clearly demonstrates that there is a shift in the themes of the family therapy research, from the foundational to the disorder specific, evidence based publications. Early-emerging terms such as Family, Group Psychotherapy, and Schizophrenia (Q1: 1964) reflects that the origins of this field within systemic conceptualization and severe mental illness. Through to themes such as Adolescent Substance Abuse, Medical Family Therapy, and Evidence-Based Practice, Q1: 2009–2011 reflects a shift toward applied clinical contexts and healthcare integration. More recent themes cluster around Adolescents, Attachment-Based Family Therapy, Anorexia Nervosa, Systematic Review, and Effectiveness (Median: 2019–2022), suggesting a maturation of the field toward empirically validated, diagnosis-specific, and evaluative research. This also reflects the global diffusion and contextual adaptation of family therapy in the emergence of multilingual terms, for example, Terapia Familiar, Chinese-language family therapy.

4. Discussion

The current study was a bibliometric analysis related to Family therapy related publications spanning from 1958 to 2025 using Lens.org database (<https://about.lens.org>). The lens is a free, open source and community supported online database platform that integrates the scholarly knowledge, which helps to search, analyze and maintains the scholarly productions. In addition, this database also helps to locate the patents as well. It is a flag project of Cambia, an independent non-profit social enterprise which aims to create newer technologies, tool and paradigms for promoting change and enable innovation across the globe. (<https://cambia.org>).

The reason for choosing this database is that it is an emerging database which has the data partnership with Microsoft Academic, Crossref, ORCID, Pubmed, OpenAlex, ROR, CORE, IP Australia, European patent office, United states patent and trademark office and World Intellectual property organization. Hence, this shows that this database is not only provides scholarly journals but also provides details about the patents. Recently, scholars across various fields are choosing this database in exploring the global trends using Bibliometric Analysis on various fields of research. The following are few examples using Lens.org database Bibliometric studies: Indian Knowledge System (Kalita et al 2025), Global Research conditions of Teacher education (Legesse, legesse & Demisse, 2025), Library Anxiety (Bharti et al, 2025), Global Perspectives on Retracted papers in AI (Nag, Roy & Sudhier, 2025), Covid 19 & Artificial Intelligence (Sidiya & Aljizawi, 2025), Nanolearning & Microlearning (Astano, 2025) and Mapping evolution of AI in Education (Pal & Pal, 2025).

The current study found out that in lens.org database, the first publication being “Chapter X: Casework As Family Therapy” penned by Irene Spackman (Spackman, 1958) and recent publication being a book titled “Queer-Contextualized Family Therapy” edited by Rica E. Hartwell; Lindsay L. Edwards published in the end of November, 2025 (Hartwell, & Edwards, 2025).

The reason for taking up the bibliometric indicators in the present study is to explore the wide range of publications, trending topics, growth of publications focused on family therapy research along with authors productivity using Lotka’s law give an understanding about the literary progress related to the field which thereby helps to map the intellectual structure related to the field.

The existing literatures on family therapy and bibliometric analysis, though very much important in understanding the trends, have confined either to specific regions, for example Davis & Lipson (1996) specifically work on history of family therapy in Australia and New Zealand or Specific to certain journals or Specific Index such as Social science citation index (Lou & Lin, 2012). Even some scholars have used the bibliometric analysis on family therapeutic interventions on health aspect (Gulbilge, Demir & Akyol, 2025), Autism Spectrum Disorder (Meng et al, 2025), even on specific therapeutic modality (eg. Solution focused brief therapy) (Fernandez & Fernandez, 2025). There was a need to bring a wide range of publications related to family therapy in a single platform by including maximum number of publications and to comprehensively conduct literature analysis. Hence, the present study was conducted to fill the gap in the existing literature.

The current study found out that the average annual growth rate of family therapy related publications was 7.97%, which signifies a steady expansion of the scholarly research in the field across 6 decades and showing still an academic interest. Based upon the publication growth available in lens.org database, our research team would like to classify evolution of family therapy publications into four major phases: “*Emergence Phase*” (1958–1969), where the publications were started to emerging. This phase focused largely on psychoanalytical and systems models. Conjoint family therapy (33 publications) and Intensive family therapy (17 publications) related publications are dominant, this is confirmed through our study. Interestingly, these therapies along with other various experiments such as

communal therapy and vector therapy helped move psychotherapy from individual pathology towards family systems thinking. Studies explored innovative frameworks (e.g., learning theory, psychoanalytic, triadic-based, vector, and theatrical models), therapy processes (resistance, side-taking, emotional expression, laughter, sexuality), and applications to severe conditions such as family neurosis and schizophrenia. Considerable attention was also given to therapy formats and professional roles, including intensive and short-term approaches, single versus multiple therapists, and the involvement of nurses, caseworkers, and physicians, reflecting the field's early interdisciplinary and experimental nature.

The second phase, we would like to call it as "*Growth phase*" (1970–1989) where the literature focuses on family interaction patterns communication processes, feedback loops, resistance, alliances, multiple-family dynamics, and conjoint sessions, were highly studied (see supplement 1). Literature calls this phase as the "classical era" of family therapy, during which the field came up with core theories such as Systematic, structural, strategic family therapies, expanded aggressively across clinical populations, and secured its place within mental health services.

The third phase is the "*Expansion phase*" (1990–2009) where the literature focuses on theoretical refinement. In this phase, family therapy repositioned itself from a revolutionary systems movement to a flexible, evidence-informed, and socially responsive clinical discipline. The dominant orientation is no longer purely structural or systemic, but integrative–systemic, combining relational, psychodynamic, cognitive-behavioural, feminist, and narrative elements to address real-world complexity.

The fourth stage is the "*Maturation phase*" in terms of Publications. Randomized controlled trials, systematic reviews and meta-analyses have been started to carried out which reflects that the field has reached its maturation stage. (Sexton et al., 2014; Carr, 2019). The current study also found that there is an expansion of research on marginalized families, migration, disability, neurodevelopmental conditions, and digital family interventions demonstrates responsiveness to global crises and service accessibility challenges (Lebow, 2014; Walsh, 2016). Similarly, Rasheed & others (2011) in their book "family therapy: models and techniques" have classified the evolution of family therapy based on the generations. The first generation of family therapy was dominated by the systems theory either by structural/functional or by communicative/interactive models (Rasheed et al, 2011). The second generation therapies or postmodern therapies such as Narrative therapy and solution focused therapy, the major difference of first and second generation therapies are of its power dynamics, where in the former therapist was taking an expert role, whereas in the later, the client does.

The current study also found out that there is a pronounced citation gap between Salvador Minuchin and subsequent authors which shows that the foundational nature of early systemic theories, suggests that paradigm-defining theories generate long-term citation longevity, often exceeding the influence of later empirical contributors. This pattern is characteristic of fields where conceptual frameworks precede methodological consolidation. Importantly, the case of Murray Bowen demonstrates that theoretical depth can outweigh publication volume in determining long-term scholarly influence. His sustained

citation impact reinforces the centrality of systems thinking and intergenerational perspectives within family therapy, even as the field has diversified methodologically and conceptually.

The current study through our thematic evolution analysis found out that during its formative years, core topics such as Family, Group Psychotherapy, and Schizophrenia contributed to the initial momentum of the discipline and corresponded with a publication growth trend. Its origins imply a period of intense exploration driven by broad conceptual ideas coupled with clinical investigations designed to reimagine psychopathology as a relational issue. Founding scholars reacted against single-person models of the discipline by locating distress within family relational systems, particularly with regard to more serious forms of psychopathology such as schizophrenia (Iddles et al, 1978; Haley, 1975; Minuchin, 1974).

Methodologically, the rise of Systematic Reviews, studies of Effectiveness, and Qualitative Research are all characteristics of a maturing field. More randomized trials, meta-analyses, and evidence syntheses signal that family therapy turns both evidence-producing and evidence-integrating (Carr, 2019). Importantly, the continuing presence of qualitative work preserves depth of meaning-hence rigor, while keeping sight of context and relationship.

Implications for Future Research

The findings suggest several directions for future inquiry. First, the limited number of clinical trials highlights the need for more randomized and longitudinal studies to strengthen causal inference. Second, expanding international and interdisciplinary collaboration may enhance cultural sensitivity and external validity. Finally, the growing focus on trauma, adolescent psychopathology, and family functioning positions family therapy as a critical component of integrative and preventive mental health care.

5. Conclusion

The current study provides a fundamental understanding about the type of research happening related to family therapy since the inception. This will help for research, practice, training and policy in family therapy. The study shows that the field has transited into a mature stage. The major finding from the study is the concern that single authors are dominating the field over the multiple authors. In addition, the study also found that there is a limited international collaboration of research related to family therapy. Hence, this study helps to understand these problems and lays the foundation to work collaboratively across the nations in producing publications related to family therapy.

Declarations

Ethical Considerations

No ethical approval was required to conduct this study as it is a bibliometric analysis.

Acknowledgement

Nil

Declaration of Artificial Intelligence

The authors declare that AI software like Quilbot was used for the grammar check.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of Interest

Declaration of Funding

The authors declare no funding was involved in carrying out this study.

Data Available Statement

The authors state that the metadata in CSV file will be available on request to the corresponding author.

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Figures

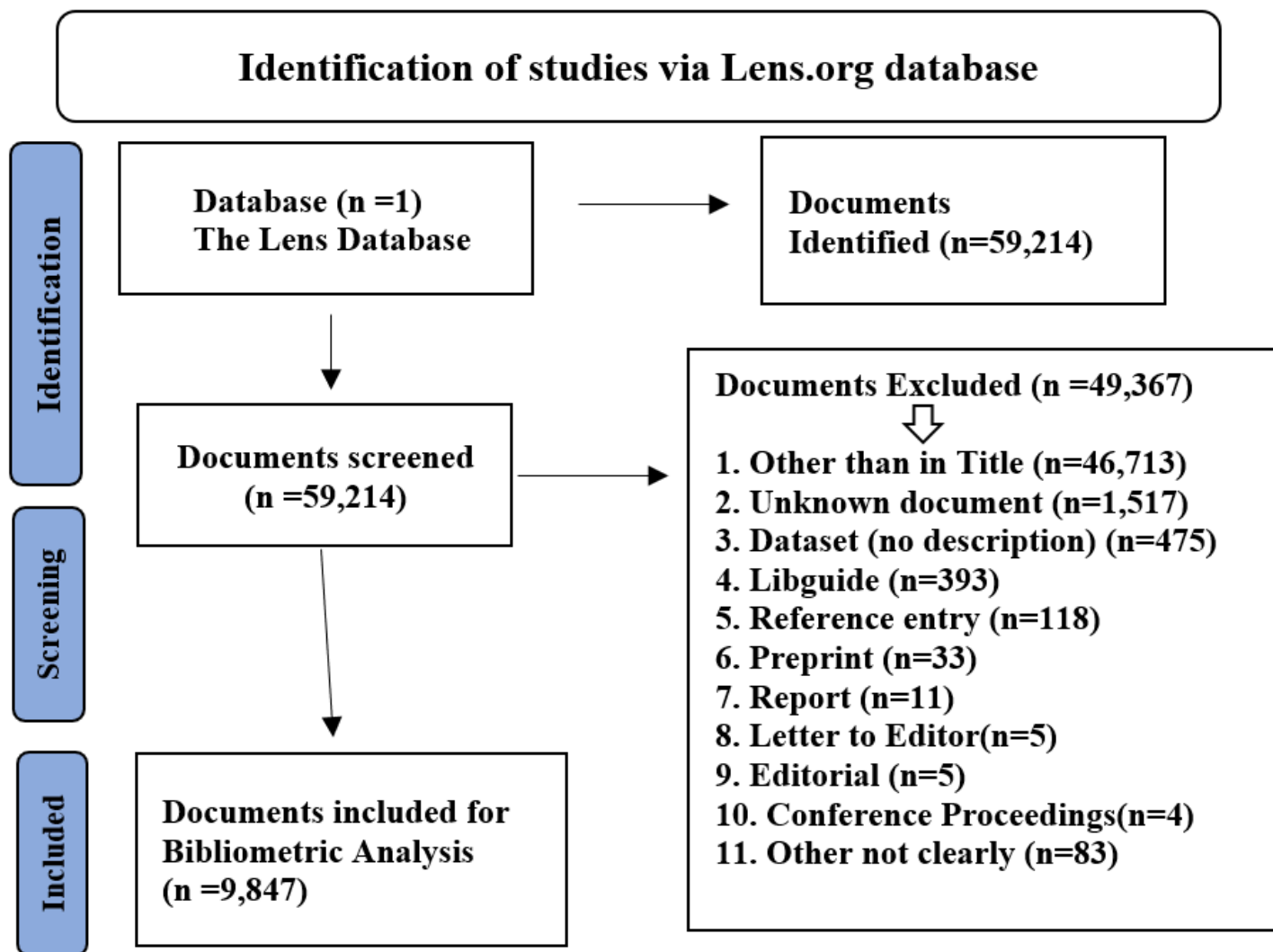


Figure 1

PRISMA flow chart of the search strategy

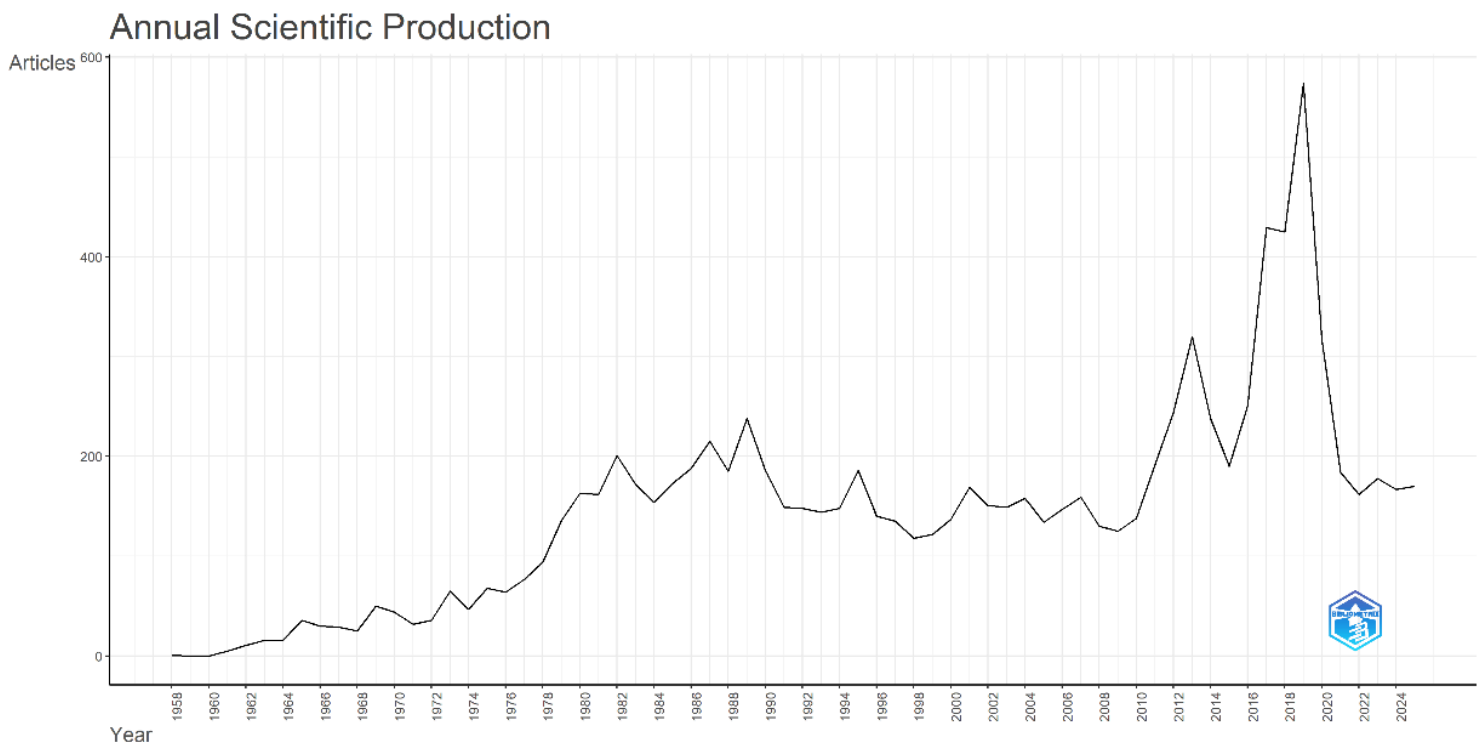


Figure 2

Annual scientific Production

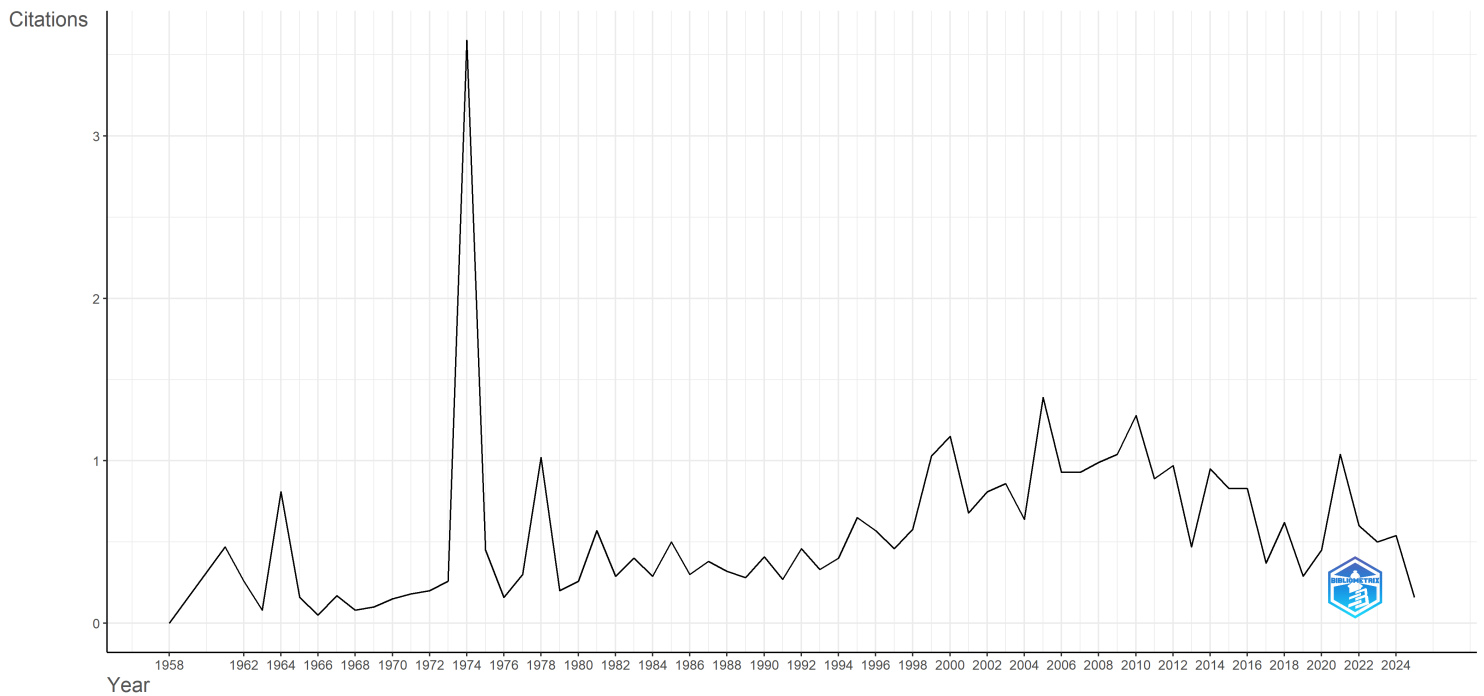


Figure 3

Year wise Citation analysis related to family therapy

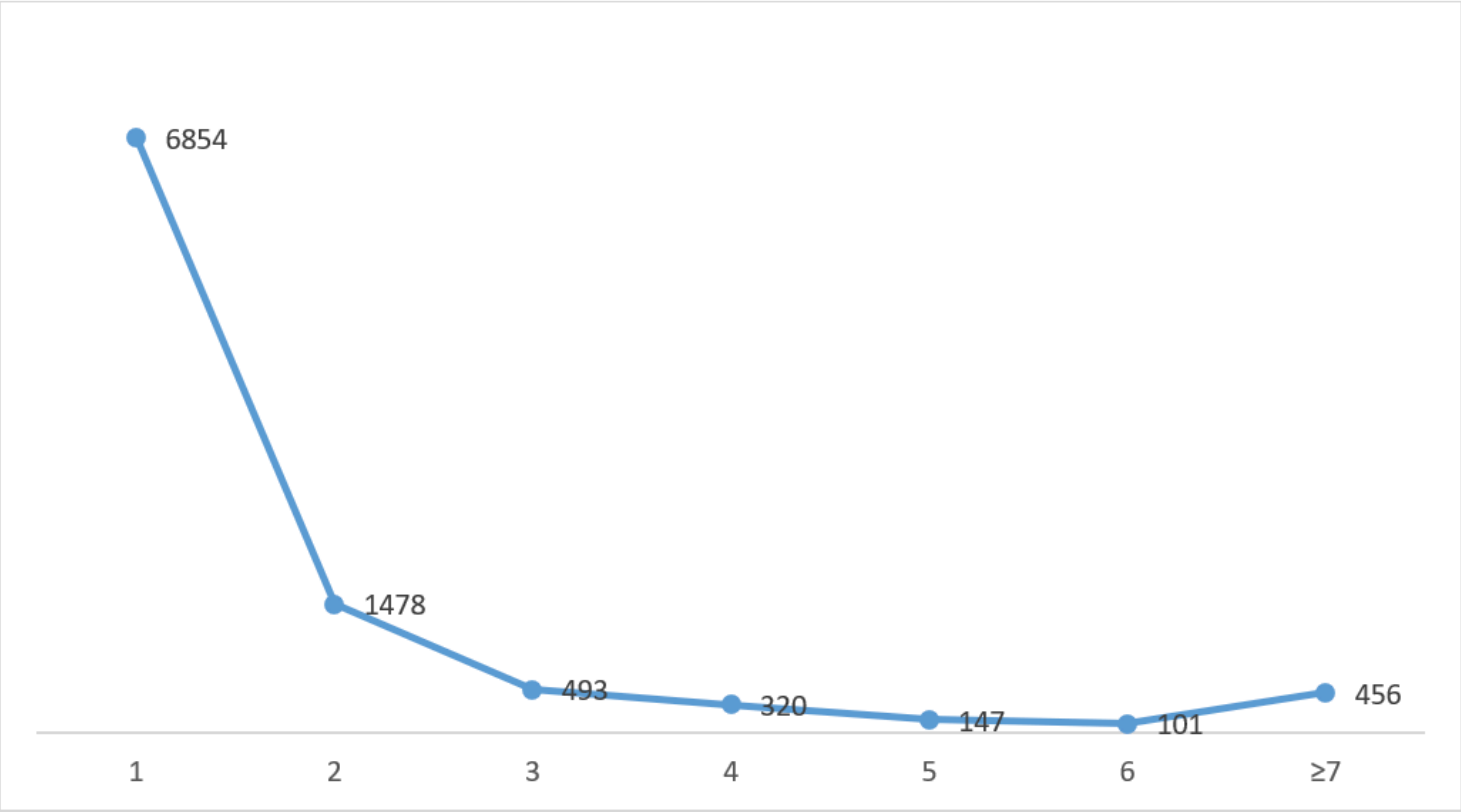


Figure 4

Authors Productivity Analysis