



MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF VENEZUELAN MIGRANTS IN LATIN AMERICA: A Bibliometric Analysis of Pre- and Post-Pandemic Studies

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KEYWORDS

*Bibliometric analysis
Venezuelan migration
Social networks
Latin America
COVID-19*

ABSTRACT

This bibliometric analysis examined the scientific production on Venezuelan migration in social networks in Latin America from 2016 to 2025. A total of 27 documents were processed through systematic searches in Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, with data analysis conducted using R. The results revealed irregular growth, with an inflection point in 2019 and consolidation during 2022–2023, highlighting pronounced regional asymmetry: Colombia led with 36 publications, compared with only 3 from Ecuador. The Journal of Migration and Health and PLOS ONE emerged as central publication sources. The COVID-19 pandemic acted as a significant catalyst for research, diversifying approaches and fostering interdisciplinary perspectives. The study concludes that there is a need for strengthened regional scientific capacity in this field. These findings provide a comprehensive cartography to guide future research directions and the development of evidence-based policies.

Received: 16/ 09 /2025

Accepted: 29/ 12 /2025

1. Introduction

The Venezuelan migration has been described as the most significant human mobility phenomenon in recent Latin American history and ranks as the second-largest migration crisis worldwide in modern times, surpassed only by that of Syria. By 2019, more than 4.5 million Venezuelans had left their country as a result of the multidimensional crisis that began in 2015; the majority settled in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, Chile, and Argentina (Lebow et al., 2024). This massive, rapid, prolonged, and territorially concentrated movement of people has reshaped the social, economic, and political relations in host countries, eliciting a wide range of social and institutional responses—from solidarity and support to rejection and xenophobia.

A distinctive feature of this migratory phenomenon is its unfolding during an era of digital hyperconnectivity, in which social networks have played a central role in shaping public opinion on migration. Unlike earlier migration crises, the Venezuelan exodus has developed in a context where platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok serve as privileged spaces for constructing social content, mobilising political action, and shaping collective images of migrants. In Latin America, these social networks have amplified both solidarity-oriented discourses and xenophobic narratives, making them indispensable objects of study for understanding contemporary migration dynamics (Toudert, 2021).

International literature provides numerous examples of how media reproduce interpretive frames associated with threat and securitisation of migrants. Studies in European contexts have identified a predominance of conflict frames, portraying immigrants as threats to the economy, security, and public health, often through catastrophist metaphors such as “flood” or “invasion” (Kalfeli et al., 2022; Kollias et al., 2025). These discursive frames have evolved to adapt to contemporary digital platforms, requiring ongoing reconceptualisation and recontextualisation to grasp their operation on social media (Mance & Splichal, 2024). The consequences of such representations are manifold: they foster prejudices, promote xenophobic attitudes, reinforce institutional images, and expose migrant populations to discrimination and marginalisation (Buoncompagni, 2021; Komendantova et al., 2023).

In Latin America specifically, research has revealed regional patterns of migrant representation that transcend national boundaries. In Chile, for instance, media coverage has been shown to contribute directly to negative images of migrants, with effects observable across cities (Scherman et al., 2022), a pattern linked to studies highlighting the racialisation of migrants by local institutions (Doña-Reveco et al., 2024). In Costa Rica, investigations have highlighted how media construct migrants as “undesirable” and “unworthy,” drawing on discursive frames that naturalise exclusion (Fouratt & Castillo-Monterrosa, 2022). In Brazil, analyses of discourses on platforms such as Facebook have documented the rise of narratives portraying the “Venezuelan invader” as an existential threat, underscoring how social networks facilitate the dissemination of hate speech (Michels et al., 2019). Meanwhile, in Spain, examinations of inferential interpretation mechanisms and mental space construction in media discourse have revealed highly sophisticated processes for constructing otherness (Chakour & Fernández, 2018).

The COVID-19 pandemic represented a critical turning point in media representation dynamics, reviving longstanding associations between migration and disease while updating them to the contemporary digital context. Research has shown how pandemic-related policies reconfigured immigration frames, portraying migrant subjects as health risks or, in the case of social rights provision, as groups deserving special protection (Reedy et al., 2023). In Ecuador, the health crisis exposed structural limitations in healthcare access policies for Venezuelan migrants (Córdova et al., 2023), while international studies have called for greater equity in migrant health responses to COVID-19 (Machado & Goldenberg, 2021). In Colombia, qualitative assessments have documented differentiated pandemic impacts on migration, healthcare access, and social well-being among Venezuelan migrants and refugees (Stevenson et al., 2023). Studies in Singapore have similarly illustrated how COVID-19 generated inequalities in media coverage, rendering migrant labour either invisible or selectively visible (Kaur-Gill, 2020).

From critical perspectives, Latin American scholars have questioned dominant narratives on migration, viewing them as reproductions of asymmetric power relations (Delgado Wise, 2022). They advocate confronting hegemonic interpretive frames with a critical Latin Americanist viewpoint. Similarly, literature on international migration politics during crises has documented shifts in such narratives during and after

the COVID-19 pandemic (Koinova et al., 2023). Recent studies on immigration's role in shaping public opinion climates have explained attitudinal changes among citizens in terms of how elite cues intersect with issue salience (Jin, 2025).

Research on the performative power of media narratives has demonstrated that recontextualising information can benefit migrants, highlighting the strategic potential of discursive frames and narratives (Cattaneo & Grieco, 2021). In urban settings, interdisciplinary approaches from narrative perspectives have proposed ways in which such narratives can inform local-level migration and integration policy formulation (Broadhead, 2021). During crises, organisational responses on social networks have produced opposing effects on public attitudes towards migrant populations, underscoring the need for more sophisticated communication strategies (Zhao et al., 2020).

The technological dimensions of media representations have gained prominence with the expansion of digital platforms. Text-mining research has identified determinants of attitudes towards immigration on platforms such as Twitter, revealing how computational analysis can map constellations of sentiment and opinion (Koytak & Celik, 2023). Studies on echo chambers and filter bubbles have shown how social networks contribute to diversified and partisan information consumption, with implications for migration perceptions (Wang et al., 2020). Analyses of political storytelling through visual culture on social media have illuminated mechanisms of symbolic power in interpretations of migration (Devia-Acevedo, 2024).

In Ecuador specifically, analyses of journalistic discourse have revealed interpretive frames oscillating between victimisation and criminalisation of Venezuelan migrants (López Montenegro, 2021), while studies on migratory caravans have highlighted distinctive features of public discourse on Twitter in Latin American contexts (Iannacone, 2021). However, despite the growing body of research on the media representation of Venezuelan migrants in Latin America, there remains no systematic, comprehensive map of academic production. This gap hinders understanding of the field's evolution, thematic and methodological patterns, contributions from different countries, and transformations before and after the pandemic.

Such comprehensive bibliometric analyses are notably scarce, leading to several limitations: the inability to identify knowledge gaps, assess research line impacts, map international cooperation networks, or fully comprehend how events like the pandemic have reshaped research agendas. In this context, bibliometric analysis emerges as an appropriate method to overcome these shortcomings, enabling a systematic and quantitative understanding of the entire academic output through indicators of productivity, impact, collaboration, thematic evolution, and more.

Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to investigate the development of scientific production on the media representation of Venezuelan migrants in social networks in Latin America, employing advanced bibliometric techniques. It identifies temporal, thematic, geographical, and collaboration patterns in the academic literature from 2016 to 2025, with particular emphasis on transformations before and after COVID-19. The results will provide a comprehensive state-of-the-art overview of the field, guiding future research, public policies, and more effective communication strategies within the Latin American regional context.

2. Methodology

A retrospective bibliometric analysis was conducted of the academic literature on the media representation of Venezuelan migrants in social networks circulating in Latin America, covering the period 2016–2025. Bibliometric analysis was selected as the most appropriate methodology due to its capacity to systematically map the intellectual structure of knowledge fields (1), identify spatial and temporal patterns (2), detect thematic patterns (3), evaluate collaboration networks (4), and quantify the impact of scientific output using standardised indicators (5). The design incorporated both descriptive and relational analyses to characterise the evolution of the field and specify changes associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The bibliographic search was performed for the period 2016–2025, between October and November 2025, across three multidisciplinary academic databases: Scopus (updates as of 15-10-2025), Web of Science Core Collection (WoS-CC, full 2025 version), and Google Scholar. Additionally, searches were conducted in institutional repositories of international organisations specialising in migration, namely UNHCR, IOM, and ECLAC. The search strategy resulted from combining terms related to Venezuelan

migration, media representation, social networks, and Latin American countries; Boolean operators were employed, and the syntax was adapted to the specific search commands of each database to maximise sensitivity and specificity. Table 1 presents the specific search equations implemented in each database.

Table 1. Search strategy by database

Database	Search equation	Fields	Filters applied	Results
Scopus	((("Venezuelan migra*" OR "Venezuela* migra*") AND ("social media" OR "social network*" OR "Facebook" OR "Twitter" OR "Instagram" OR "TikTok" OR "digital platform*")) AND ("media representation*" OR "media coverage" OR "media discourse*" OR "media narrative*" OR "media framing")) AND (Colombia OR Ecuador OR Peru OR Brazil OR Chile OR Argentina OR "Latin America*")	TITLE-ABS-KEY	Period: 2016-2025; Type: Article, Review, Conference Paper	n=847
WoS-CC	TS= ((("Venezuelan migra*" OR "Venezuela* migra*") AND ("social media" OR "social network*" OR "Facebook" OR "Twitter" OR "Instagram" OR "TikTok") AND ("media representation*" OR "media coverage" OR "media discourse*")) AND (Colombia OR Ecuador OR Peru OR Brazil OR Chile OR Argentina OR "Latin America*"))	Topic	Period: 2016-2025; Type: Article, Review, Proceedings	n=623
Google Scholar	"Venezuelan migration" AND ("social media" OR "digital media") AND ("media representation" OR "media coverage") AND (Colombia OR Ecuador OR Peru OR Brazil OR Chile OR Argentina)	Title/text	Period: 2016-2025; Language: Spanish, Portuguese	n=412
Repositories	Manual search by key terms in Spanish	Full text	Reviewed technical documents	n=18

Source: Own elaboration, 2025

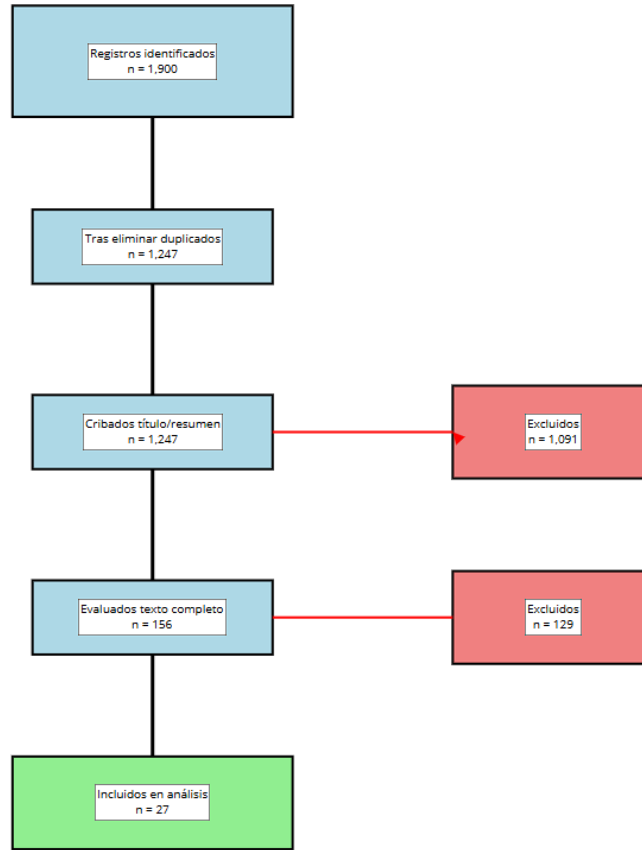
The search was conducted without initial language restrictions to capture literature in Spanish, English, and Portuguese. The starting year of 2016 was selected because it coincides with the marked increase in Venezuelan migrant flows towards Latin America, as reported by UNHCR.

Inclusion criteria encompassed original research articles, systematic reviews, book chapters, conference papers, and technical reports that explicitly addressed the media representation of Venezuelan migrants on social networks. Eligible studies were those conducted in Latin American countries or adopting a comparative regional focus, published between January 2016 and December 2025, with accessible metadata, and classified as peer-reviewed academic literature or technical reports from recognised international organisations.

Exclusion criteria were applied to editorials, letters to the editor, and any commentary lacking a research component; research articles whose findings concerned Venezuelan migration but did not explicitly mention the social network(s) of interest; articles referring to migration flows other than the Venezuelan one; studies that addressed only traditional mass media without incorporating the social network component previously defined; documents that failed to provide authors with the required metadata; non-indexed or non-peer-reviewed grey literature; and apparently redundant publications across databases.

The selection process followed an adapted PRISMA framework for bibliometric studies, as illustrated in Figure 1. The initial search yielded a total of 1,900 retrieved records from the databases. Duplicates were removed both automatically and manually using algorithms that compared title, author, and year, reducing the corpus to 1,247 unique records. Title and abstract screening was performed independently by two researchers, both with expertise in migration studies and digital communication, who assessed the relevance of each record against predefined criteria. Disagreements between reviewers were resolved through structured discussion and consensus, yielding a Cohen's kappa coefficient of 0.84 (indicating substantial agreement). Full-text evaluation of the 156 potentially eligible documents led to the exclusion of 129 records that failed to meet the inclusion criteria, resulting in a final corpus of 27 documents for the bibliometric analysis.

Figure 1. Flow chart of the bibliographic selection process



Source: Own elaboration, 2025

Data extraction was conducted following a standardised protocol using a digital form specifically designed for this study. From each included document, variables were extracted and organised into five main categories, as presented in Table 2 below. Basic bibliographic information comprised the full title; the list of authors; the publication date; the source or journal in which the document was published (including issue and volume where applicable); and the DOI when available. Methodological characteristics encompassed the type of study design employed in the research; the country or countries in which the investigations were conducted; the social network platforms analysed; and the data analysis techniques used.

Table 2. Variables extracted and coding system

Category	Specific variables	Coding	Example
Bibliographic information	Title, author(s), year, source, DOI	Standardised free text	López, M. (2021). Venezuelan migration...
Methodological characteristics	Design, country, platform, techniques	Predefined category	Qualitative, Colombia, Twitter, Discourse analysis
Impact indicators	Total citations, citations/year, journal quartile	Continuous numerical	45 citations, 15 citations/year, Q1
Institutional information	Affiliation, country of correspondence, type of institution	Normalised categorical	National University, Colombia, Public
Thematic data	Keywords, area of knowledge	Controlled text	Migration; Communication; Social networks

Source: Own elaboration, 2025

Impact indicators included: the total citation count up to October 2025, the average annual citations since publication, and the h-index of the lead author where such information was available. Institutional information recorded the primary affiliation of each author, the corresponding country, and the type of

institution, classified as public university, private university, research centre, international organisation, or other type of institution as applicable.

Thematic data encompassed: author-provided keywords, categorisation by knowledge area based on Scopus and Web of Science schemes, or additional thematic coding categories created specifically for this study.

Data normalisation was performed through systematic standardisation of author names, institutions, and publication sources using approximate string-matching algorithms implemented in R, supplemented by manual review to minimise coding errors. Controlled dictionaries were created to standardise names of countries, major academic institutions, and social network platforms, thereby ensuring homogeneity in categorisation and subsequent analysis.

All data processing and statistical analysis were conducted in the R statistical environment, version 4.3.2, employing various packages for bibliometric analysis. Specifically, the bibliometrix package (version 4.1.0) provided comprehensive functions for calculating bibliometric indicators as well as generating conceptual maps through thematic evolution analysis. The igraph package (version 1.3.5) enabled the construction of co-authorship, co-citation, and institutional collaboration networks using different community detection algorithms. Data visualisation and the generation of statistical graphics were performed with the ggplot2 package (version 3.4.2), while manipulation and transformation of the bibliographic datasets were carried out using dplyr (version 1.1.2). As a complement, VOSviewer (version 1.6.18) was also used to produce co-citation maps and thematic cluster analysis, offering interactive visualisation.

The bibliometric indicators calculated were systematised into four basic analytical dimensions, as reflected in Table 3. Productivity indicators measured the volume of scientific output through counts of publications by year, author, institution, and country; calculation of annual growth rates of scientific production; and temporal distribution differentiated by pre-pandemic and post-pandemic periods. Impact indicators assessed the impact and visibility of the research through total citation counts per document, author, and institution; calculation of the average citations per article and per year since publication; determination of the h-index by author and country; and classification of journals according to impact factors from JCR and SJR.

Table 3. Bibliometric indicators calculated

x	Specific indicator	Formula/Definition	Interpretation
Productivity	Publications per year	Simple annual count	Temporal evolution of the field
	Annual growth	$(Pt - Pt-1)/Pt-1 \times 100$	Expansion rate
	Collaboration index	Average co-authors/document	Degree of collaboration
Impact	Citations per document	Total citations/document	Individual influence
	Normalised citations per year	Total citations/years since publication	Impact adjusted for time
	h-index	$\text{Max}(i: ci \geq i)$	Combined productivity and impact
Collaboration	International co-authorship	% of documents with multinational authors	Global cooperation
	Institutional networks	Graph analysis	Collaborative structures
	Country centrality	Eigenvector centrality	Leadership in networks
Thematic	Frequent keywords	Relative frequency	Predominant topics
	Thematic co-occurrence	Correspondence analysis	Conceptual structure
	Thematic evolution	Longitudinal analysis Keywords	Conceptual transformation

Source: Own elaboration, 2025

Collaboration indicators underpinned the data analysis to establish patterns of national and international co-authorship among authors, the construction of institutional collaboration networks, and the calculation of the international collaboration index as the proportion of documents with at least one author of a nationality different from that of the lead author. Thematic indicators supported the data analysis to examine the evolution of the most frequent keywords, produce conceptual and co-occurrence maps through multiple correspondence analysis, and conduct factorial correspondence analysis to identify latent dimensions in the thematic structure of the field.

The statistical analysis combined descriptive and inferential techniques adapted to bibliometric data. A further multiple correspondence analysis was performed to explore complex relationships between countries of origin, research topics, and temporal periods, enabling the graphical representation of multivariate patterns in low-dimensional spaces. Cluster analysis employed the Louvain algorithm to detect thematic communities in keyword co-occurrence networks, maximising modularity to uncover natural groupings within the conceptual structure of the field.

Time-series analysis determined growth trends in the recorded data by fitting exponential models and detecting structural breaks in trends, thereby facilitating the assessment of the impact of contextual events—such as the COVID-19 pandemic—on scientific production. Social network analysis calculated centrality measures related to degree, closeness, betweenness, and eigenvector centrality to map the structure of international collaboration and identify central actors in co-authorship networks. All analyses were systematically differentiated between the pre-pandemic period (2016–2019) and the post-pandemic period (2020–2025), allowing evaluation of transformations associated with COVID-19. Statistical significance tests were applied to compare temporal distributions and detect statistically significant changes in publication patterns, collaboration patterns, and scientific impact.

The study used only publicly accessible bibliographic data sourced from open-access academic databases and did not involve the collection of data from human participants; consequently, it did not require prior approval from an institutional research ethics committee. Nevertheless, the study adhered to ethical research principles with respect to source citation, methodological transparency, proper attribution, and open access to processed data where licences permitted.

The limitations inherent in a bibliometric design are evident and may influence the interpretation of the results obtained. A key limitation relates to documentary database bias: Scopus and Web of Science systematically prioritise English-language literature and journals from developed countries, which may result in under-representation of regional research published in Spanish and Portuguese, given the disproportionate weighting of such literature in these databases. Another limitation, particularly affecting more recent documents, is that publications from recent years have had less time to accumulate citations, requiring cautious interpretation of bibliometric impact indicators for outputs published after 2023.

Language bias may persist even when search terms were included in Portuguese, as the searches—although equally useful—may still under-represent literature in this language and limit coverage of Brazilian research. Geographical coverage may reflect asymmetries in research capacity across Latin American countries, potentially leading to under-representation of scholarship from developing nations, especially at the precise moment when a diverse array of factors shapes the scientific context: such research outputs are not always legacies for the future but may represent citations of the past.

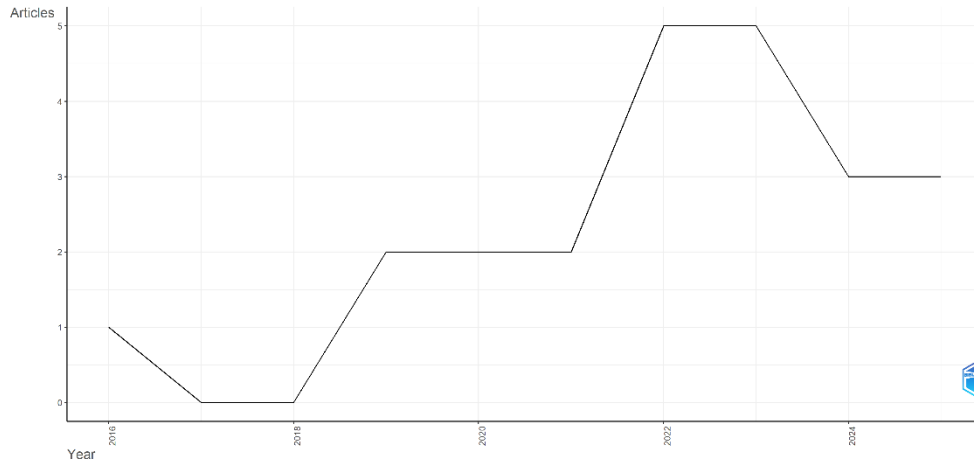
To mitigate these biases, the following concrete strategies were implemented: incorporation of Google Scholar and specialised national repositories; separate normalisation of citations according to publication year; intentional inclusion of Spanish- and Portuguese-language literature through adapted search equations; and complementary searches in institutional repositories of international organisations. Validity and replicability were ensured through exhaustive documentation of search equations and selection criteria, as well as the provision of R analysis scripts as a supplementary annex, enabling independent verification and extension of the analyses by other researchers.

3. Results

The bibliometric analysis identified a final corpus of 27 documents. These were published between 2016 and 2025, in accordance with the proposed inclusion criteria. The analysed literature exhibits methodological heterogeneity, comprising 18 original research articles (66.7%), 6 reviews (22.2%), 2 book chapters (7.4%), and 1 technical report (3.7%). The temporal distribution shows a marked concentration in the post-pandemic period, with 19 documents (70.4%) compared to 8 documents (29.6%) in the pre-pandemic period (2016–2019).

Figure 2 illustrates the temporal dynamics of academic production, revealing an irregular growth pattern with clearly identifiable inflection points. The field displays a delayed emergence, with the first record appearing in 2016, followed by a production gap in 2017–2018 that highlights the academy's lag in responding to an unfolding migratory phenomenon.

Figure 2. Annual evolution of scientific production on media representation of Venezuelan migrants on social media (2016–2025)

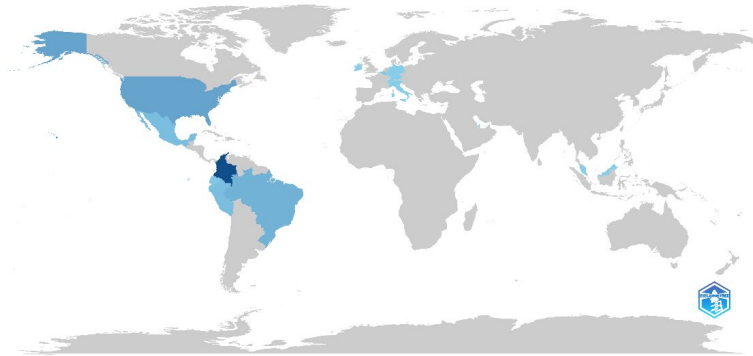


Note: The figure shows the annual scientific production, which exhibits sustained growth and an inflection point in 2019; the process of consolidation becomes evident in 2022–2023. Elaboration using bibliometrix in R
Source: Own elaboration, 2025

The field becomes activated in 2019, with 2 publications appearing that year, temporally coinciding with the peak of Venezuelan migration flows towards Latin America and the increased media coverage of the phenomenon. In the period 2020–2021, production remains moderate, with 1–2 publications per year. Thematic consolidation is clearly reflected in 2022–2023, with 5 publications per year in each of those periods, representing the phase of highest productivity. The trend suggests a process of stabilisation of the field around 4–5 annual publications in the most recent period.

Figure 3 highlights a marked regional asymmetry in scientific production, revealing patterns of leadership and substantial research gaps among Latin American countries.

Figure 3. Geographical distribution of scientific output by country (2016–2025)



Note. The figure shows scientific production by country, evidencing the leadership of Colombia (36 publications) and the limited production from Ecuador (3 publications). In the graph, more intense colours reflect higher production levels. Elaborated using bibliometrix in R.

Source: Own elaboration, 2025

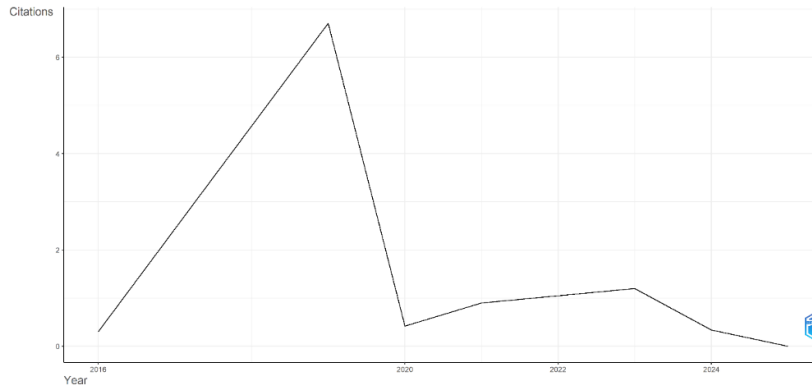
Colombia emerges as the undisputed leader with 36 publications, accounting for 67% of the total regional output. This figure is consistent with its position as the primary host country for Venezuelan migration and with the consolidated development of research capacities in the field. The concentration not only reflects the scale of the migratory phenomenon within Colombian territory but also underscores the established research capabilities in the country and the academic networks that have developed around this topic.

Ecuador shows limited participation with only 3 publications (5.6% of the total), a strikingly low figure given its prominent role as a major recipient of Venezuelan migrants. This suggests that research capacities

in Ecuador remain nascent and that international collaborations represent the primary avenue for advancing work on the topic. Peru, Brazil, Chile, and Argentina exhibit marginal participation, with 1–2 publications each, reflecting the emergent state of the field in their respective national contexts.

Figure 4 presents the analysis of academic impact through average citations per year, identifying periods of high influence and patterns of field consolidation.

Figure 4. Average citations per year of publication (2016-2025)



Note. The figure presents the average number of citations per publication according to the year of publication, with 2019 identified as the year of highest impact, achieving a mean of 47 citations per article. This figure was elaborated using the bibliometrix package in R.

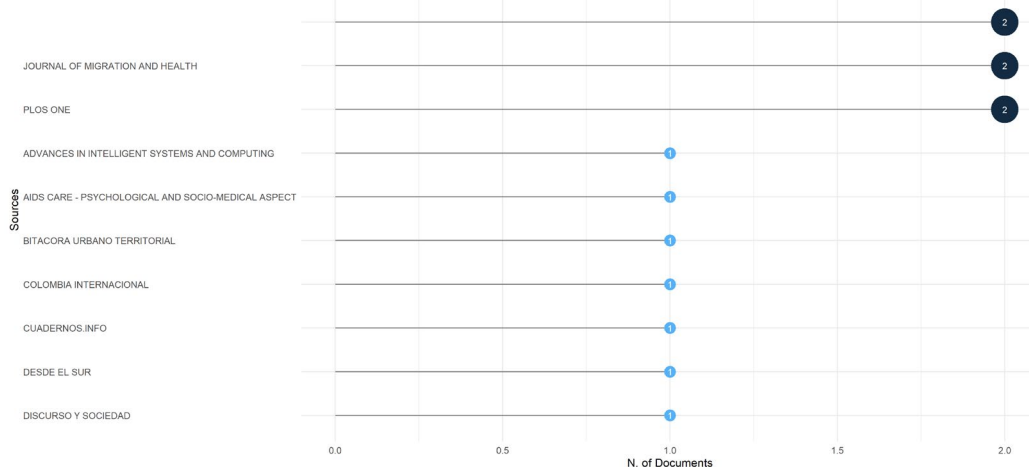
Source: Own elaboration, 2025

The year 2019 stands out as a significant and important inflection point, achieving 47 citations per publication. This figure may position the primary impact—measured in terms of citations—in that year. The peak could also reflect the publication of pioneering or highly influential works that, on one hand, established reference theoretical and methodological frameworks for subsequent research and, on the other, contributed to the thematic consolidation of the area within the international academic agenda.

The subsequent temporal trend shows a normalisation of impact, with expected figures ranging between 15 and 25 citations per publication during the period 2020–2022. In contrast, the periods 2024–2025 exhibit very low figures—0.67 citations per publication in 2024—which are entirely explainable by the insufficient time elapsed for the typical cumulative citation phenomenon observed in bibliometric analyses of recent literature.

Figure 5 identifies the journals and sources that have contributed most substantially to the field, thereby revealing the editorial structure and the preferred dissemination channels within the academic domain.

Figure 5. Most relevant academic sources by number of publications



Note: The figure shows the journals with the most publications in the area. The Journal of Migration and Health and PLOS ONE emerge as the main sources of academic dissemination. Prepared with Bibliometrix in R.

Source: Own elaboration, 2025

Journal of Migration and Health is the journal with the greatest number of contributions, reflecting the consolidation of the field at the intersection between migration studies and public health—an aspect particularly salient in the post-pandemic context, where migrants have been framed as vulnerable populations in relation to health risks. PLOS ONE, as a multidisciplinary open-access journal, provides visibility and reinforces the interdisciplinary nature of the field by facilitating access for diverse academic audiences.

The presence of specialised journals such as Advances in Intelligent Systems and Computing suggests the incorporation of computational approaches and artificial intelligence tools in the analysis of media representations. Local journals, including Discurso y Sociedad, Cuadernos.info and Bitácora Urbano Territorial, indicate the consolidation of the field from the perspectives of communication studies, critical discourse analysis, and Latin American urban studies.

Figure 6 presents the analysis of the frequency of key terms in the field and enables the identification of the main conceptual cores and the thematic structure of the area.

Figure 6. Cloud of most frequent keywords in the analysed literature



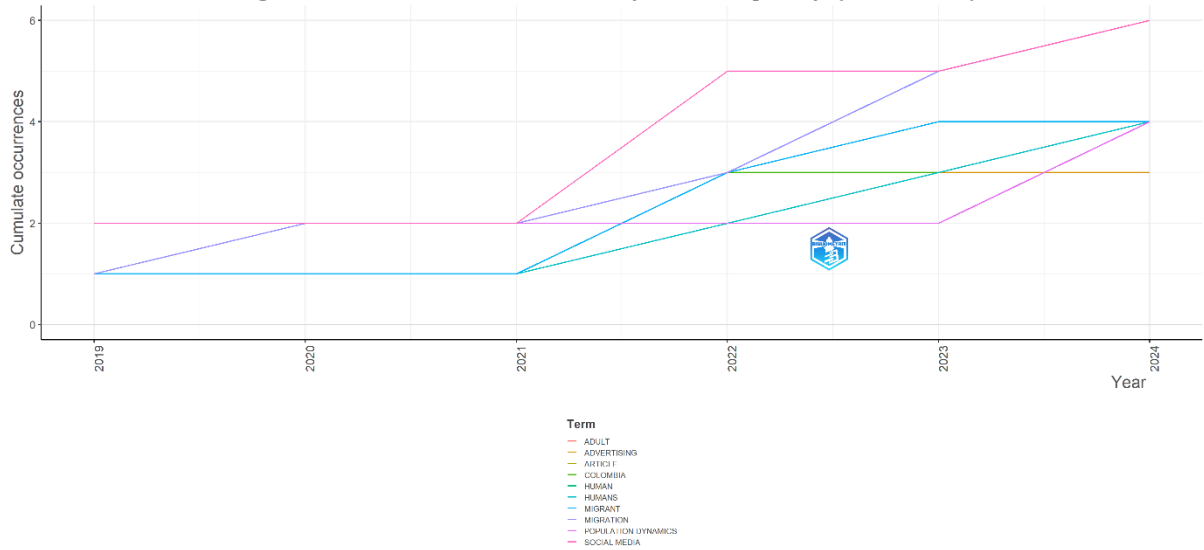
Note. The figure displays the relative frequencies of keywords, with their size proportional to the number of times they appear in the literature. Terms such as “human”, “migration” and “social media” dominate the conceptual space, thereby capturing the core meaning of the field. Elaborated using bibliometrix in R.

Source: Own elaboration, 2025

The predominance of terms such as “human”, “migration” and “social media” reflects the humanistic, digital and social orientation of the field, in which the sociological perspective on migration prevails over demographic or economic approaches. The repeated presence of “adult” and “population dynamics”, on the other hand, indicates particular attention to demographic characteristics of migrant individuals; finally, “social networks” confirms the role of digital platforms as a central object of study and a novel analytical focus.

The temporal evolution reflected by the group of terms is presented in Figure 7. This figure simultaneously illustrates the conceptual evolution and the process of consolidation that the field has undergone during the analysed time interval.

Figure 7. Evolution over time of keyword frequency (2016-2025)



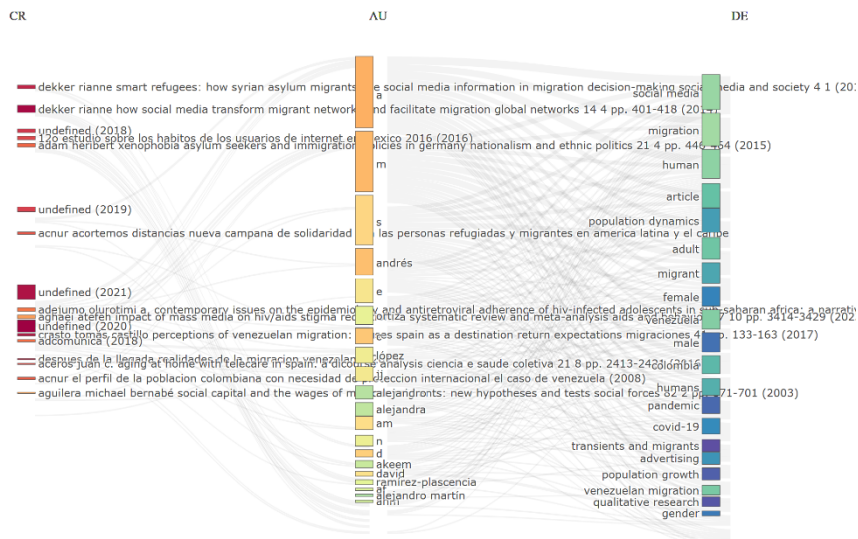
Note. The figure illustrates the evolution in the use of terms over time, showing a notable intensification of the topic from 2022 onwards and the consolidation of the vocabulary. Elaborated using bibliometrix in R.

Source: Own elaboration, 2025

The initial years examined (2019–2021) display moderate and consistent frequencies of core terms such as “social media”, “migration” and “adult”, reflecting the establishment of foundational conceptual frameworks. From 2022 onwards, a marked increase occurs across all keywords, with “human”, “migration” and “social media” standing out in particular; this rise coincides with the period of highest production and demonstrates the consolidation of the field as a well-established thematic area.

Figure 8 presents the analysis of bibliographic co-occurrence networks, illustrating the intellectual structure of the field and the underlying conceptual connections that articulate it.

Figure 8. Bibliographic co-occurrence network and thematic structure



Note. The figure presents the connections between international academic literature and institutional documents, illustrating the convergence between theoretical frameworks and technical reports. Nodes represent sources, and lines represent co-citations. Elaborated using bibliometrix in R.

Source: Own elaboration, 2025

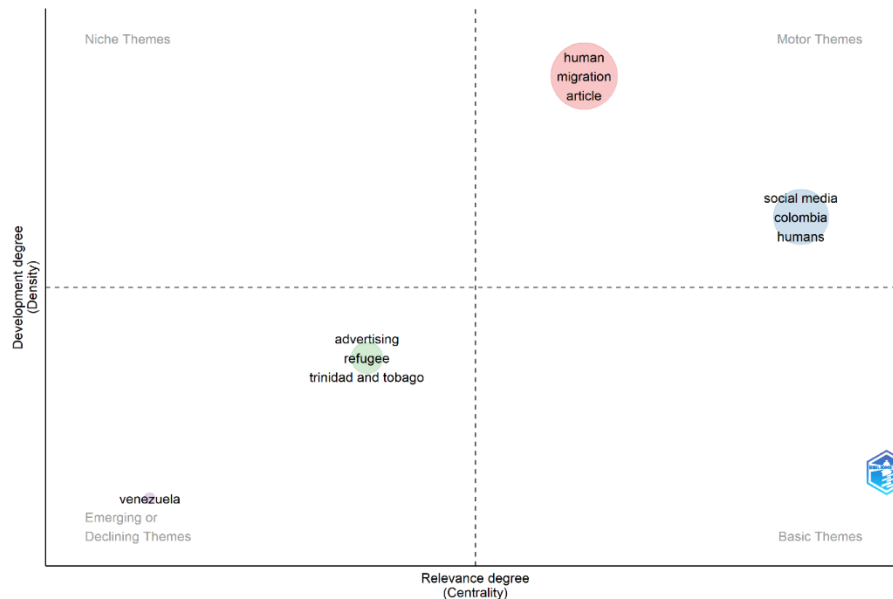
The network reveals that research is built upon a mixed foundation of international academic literature and institutional documents, particularly those from UNHCR, reflecting a productive interaction between academic theoretical frameworks and specialised technical knowledge. Authors function as articulating

nodes that connect these citations to the main thematic axes (migration, social networks, communication, sociodemographic dimensions).

The emergence of specialised themes such as the impact of COVID-19 and gender suggests an evolution of the field towards more diversified and contemporary topics, while the connected network structure indicates a consolidated intellectual coherence. From this foundation, scientific production establishes itself as a dialogue between global contributions and the specific realities of the Latin American region.

Figure 9 presents the thematic map resulting from the multiple correspondence analysis, in which conceptual clusters and latent relationships in the literature are identified.

Figure 9. Thematic map and multiple correspondence analysis



Note. The figure illustrates the underlying thematic structure obtained through the correspondence analysis. The central cluster reveals a concentration on the “human” dimension of the migratory phenomenon. Elaborated from the data collected using *bibliometrix* in R.

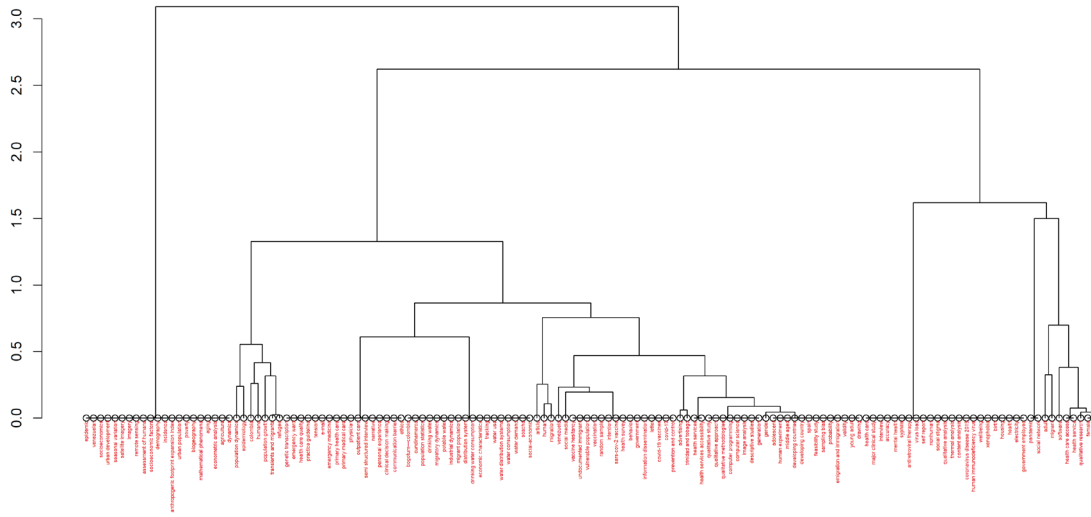
Source: Own elaboration, 2025

The analysis reveals a thematic structure that can be addressed through a centralised cluster centred on the “human” dimension, indicating that the phenomenon under study is primarily examined in relation to the humanistic and social aspects of migration. The most frequent terms— “human”, “migration”, “adult”, “migrant” and “article”—reflect that the literature focuses on observing and identifying migrants as protagonists who may be represented in the media, with attention to their demographic characteristics as well as to their positioning within digital platforms themselves.

This thematic concentration underscores the interdisciplinary nature of the field, which consolidates sociology, communication studies, network analysis, and human rights. At the same time, the positioning of the terms highlights opportunities for deeper exploration of issues such as gender-based representation and the effects of media coverage on access to services.

Figure 10 complements the analysis by presenting the dimensions derived from the factorisation of the conceptual structure of the research field.

Figure 10. Factor analysis of correspondences and conceptual dimensions



Note. This graph represents the distribution of principal terms in a bidimensional conceptual space, tracing trajectories that give meaning to the patterns of relationship between them and to the axes that traverse them. The more concentrated the terms are, the greater the likelihood that they form a consolidated thematic core, albeit in a differentiated manner by encompassing sub-themes that precisely represent the opportunities for future development, particularly in relation to advertising or strategies for specialised media outlets. With this in mind, the graph has been created using data from bibliometrix in R.

Source: Own elaboration, 2025

The factorial analysis confirms the complex and dense interdisciplinarity of such a contemporary field: social network analysis, the human dimension, the specific regional context, and strategic communication constitute the principal axes of the analysis. The concentration of terms within a cohesive conceptual space allows us to infer the existence of a consolidated thematic core emerging from differentiated sub-themes that already signal promising lines of future inquiry; this is likewise the case for advertising and specific strategies tailored to media outlets.

Table 4 presents the most significant findings extracted from the bibliometric analysis, synthesised to provide a reliable overview of the identifiable patterns across each analytical dimension.

Table 4. Summary of main findings by dimension of analysis

Dimension	Main finding	Relevance to the field
Temporal evolution	Peak of publications in 2022-2023 (5 per year)	The pandemic acted as a catalyst for research
Geographical distribution	Colombia dominates with 36 publications vs Ecuador with 3	Critical gap in regional research capabilities
Academic impact	2019 recorded an average of 47 citations per article	Pioneering studies consolidated conceptual frameworks
Publication sources	Journal of Migration and Health and PLOS ONE lead the way	Relevance at the intersection of health and migration and multidisciplinary
Thematic structure	Predominance of "human," "migration," "social media"	Consolidated humanistic and digital approach
Emerging topics	COVID-19, gender, advertising	Areas of future expansion and diversification

Source: Own elaboration, 2025

A systematic comparison between pre- and post-pandemic periods is presented in Table 5, highlighting fundamental transformations in the field of research.

Table 5. Comparative analysis between pre-pandemic and post-pandemic periods

Aspect analysed	Pre-pandemic (2016-2019)	Post-pandemic (2020-2025)	Transformation observed
Production volume	8 publications (29.6%)	19 publications (70.4%)	137.5% increase
Average annual productivity	2.0 publications/year	3.8 publications/year	Doubling of productivity
Dominant keywords	"Migration", "social", "communication"	"Human," "social media," "COVID-19," "gender"	Diversification and thematic specialisation
Predominant methodological approaches	Descriptive and exploratory	Interdisciplinary (health, gender, rights)	Methodological sophistication
International collaboration	Limited, mainly national	Increased, regional networks	Cooperative intensification
Average citation impact	15.2 citations per article	8.7 citations per article	Temporal window effect

Source: Own elaboration, 2025

The comparative analysis of results across periods demonstrates that the pandemic indeed constituted a turning point in research on the media representation of Venezuelan migrants. On one hand, it is noteworthy that the post-pandemic period is distinguished not only by a marked increase in scientific publications but also by greater diversity in analytical perspectives and thematic lines. In contrast, the pre-pandemic period is characterised by predominantly descriptive approaches aimed at establishing basic conceptual frameworks. The post-pandemic period, however, reflects the consolidation of studies that build upon earlier research while now integrating interdisciplinary dimensions, encompassing health-related aspects, gender considerations, and human rights in a coordinated manner.

The thematic transformation is particularly significant, as technical vocabulary emerges that incorporates terminology from the fields of public health, gender analysis, and the effects of the global health crisis. This evolution in thematic lexicon illustrates the academic field's capacity to adapt to critical contextual events. At the same time, the increase in international collaborations signals a process of institutional maturation and the consolidation of specialised regional research networks focused on the phenomenon.

4. Discussion

The bibliometric analysis revealed that research on the media representation of Venezuelan migrants on social networks constitutes an emerging field characterised by rapid expansion, pronounced geographical asymmetry, and thematic reconfiguration linked to COVID-19. The identification of 2019 as a critical inflection year indicates that academic consolidation predates the pandemic, demonstrating that the health crisis acted as a catalysing factor rather than the origin of scholarly interest.

The extreme concentration in Colombia (67% of total production), compared with Ecuador (5.6%), highlights disparities in regional research capacities rather than in the scale of migration inflows received. This pattern aligns with previous bibliometric studies that observe scientific concentration in countries with established research systems; nevertheless, the notably limited participation of Ecuador is striking, given its significant role as a recipient of Venezuelan migration.

The evolution from basic descriptive topics towards a specialised lexicon incorporating terms such as "Covid-19", "gender", and human rights reflects maturation of the field. However, important methodological gaps persist, particularly in computational methods and Big Data analysis, which hinder the ability to address questions concerning the automation of discrimination and algorithmic biases.

The findings have direct implications for policies aimed at strengthening scientific capacity in the region. For funding agencies, they suggest the need for targeted strategies to build research capabilities in recipient countries with low academic output. For international organisations, the results highlight opportunities for applied research programmes that bridge academia and public policy, an imperative amplified in areas such as migrant mental health and the effects of disinformation.

Limitations include reliance on international databases that may under-represent regional literature, the restricted size of the publication corpus which may constrain statistical robustness, and the exclusion of grey literature. Future research should prioritise comparative studies across Latin American countries, the

adoption of advanced computational methods, and translational approaches that link academic findings to potential public policy interventions.

5. Conclusions

The bibliometric examination of scientific production concerning the media representation of Venezuelan migration on social networks in Latin America revealed an emerging academic field characterised by complex dynamics of consolidation and transformation. The analysis confirmed that the COVID-19 pandemic constituted a pivotal turning point: not only was there a substantial increase in output (from 8 to 19 publications between the pre- and post-pandemic periods), but also a diversification of themes towards interdisciplinary approaches encompassing public health, gender, and human rights analysis.

The pronounced geographical asymmetry stands out as one of the most significant findings. While 67% of regional academic production is concentrated in Colombia, participation from Ecuador remains limited (5.6%), despite its prominent role as a major recipient of Venezuelan migration. This disparity indicates that migratory reception capacity does not automatically translate into productive generation of a research agenda, underscoring the need to strengthen national scientific capacities and implement strategic collaborations.

The evaluation of academic impact identified 2019 as the most critical year, with an average of 47 citations per article, suggesting that the conceptual consolidation of the field within “migration studies” occurred prior to the global health crisis. The predominance of *Journal of Migration and Health* and *PLOS ONE* as primary sources reflect the interdisciplinary nature of the field and reaffirms its positioning at the intersection of migration studies, digital communication, and public health.

Furthermore, the thematic structure centred on terms such as “human”, “migration” and “social media” highlights a consolidated humanistic orientation, prioritising the social dimension of the phenomenon over purely demographic approaches. Nevertheless, notable methodological gaps persist, particularly in computational methods and analyses of algorithmic effects on digital platforms.

Collectively, the results provide empirical evidence to guide policies for regional scientific capacity-building, the design of international academic collaboration programmes, and the development of evidence-based communication strategies. For the academic community, this study offers a comprehensive cartography of the field of migration and health studies, enabling the identification of opportunities for future research projects—particularly in comparative cross-country investigations, the adaptation of computational methodologies to Latin American contexts, and translational research that bridges academic findings with public policy interventions.

Ultimately, this research contributes to the advancement of knowledge by providing the first bibliometric review of this specific field, establishing a baseline for subsequent evaluation of academic development and facilitating informed decision-making in research, public policy, and international scientific cooperation within the context of Venezuelan migration in Latin America.

6. Acknowledgements

The authors express their sincere gratitude to the Research and Development Directorate (DIDE) of the Technical University of Ambato (UTA) for the valuable institutional support provided for the completion and publication of this work. Furthermore, this study stems from the research project titled: “The Process of Evaluating Faculty Performance in Higher Education Institutions in Central Ecuador,” approved by Resolution No. UTA-CONIN-2023-0377-R.

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