Thirty years of research on retirement community: A scientometric analysis of research overview and research frontiers

Bing Huang[1, 2] and Vanvipha Suneta[1]
[1] Silpakorn University, Thailand; [2] Hanshan Normal University, China
Corresponding Author, Email: huangb2401@gmail.com

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Abstracts

In the context of global aging, more and more scholars have begun to study retirement communities. However, there is a lack of scientometrics to explore this field's research overview and frontiers. This research aimed to use scientometrics to reveal the overview and frontiers of research on retirement communities.In this paper, we used a scientometric approach, using the Web of Science Core Collection (WoSCC) as the database, and obtained a research overview by systematically organizing the data from WoSCC; we used CiteSpace to analyze the co-cited references and discovered the research frontiers.

The results of the research showed that between 1992 and 2022, WoSCC published 914 related papers, and as of July 18, 2023, these papers have been cited a total of 28,701 times, with an average of 31.4 citations per paper and an H-index of 83. Highly productive authors were Ayalon, L., Resnick, B., Bennett, D.A., Paganini-Hill, A., Royall, D.R. Highly productive institutions were the University of California System, the University System of Maryland, and the Us Department of Veterans Affairs. Highly productive countries (regions) were the USA, Canada, China, Israel, and Australia. Major research areas contained Geriatrics Gerontology, Public Environmental Occupational Health, Nursing, Psychiatry, and Psychology. 2018-2022 co-cited reference network presented five high-quality clusters (Q=0.8239; S=0.9537).The conclusions of this research are twofold. 1 Research overview: The retirement community field is becoming increasingly active, with an overall high quality of papers. However, there is a clear imbalance in research, mainly in terms of prolific authors, institutions, countries (regions), and research areas. 2 There are three main research frontiers: (1) adult day care center (ADCC); (2) scoping review; (3) naturally occurring retirement community (NORC).

Keywords: Retirement community, Research overview, Research frontiers, Scientometrics

Introduction

Population aging is a global trend(United Nations, 2022:1). As the population ages, many retirement communities have been built worldwide. At the same time, many communities naturally form retirement communities as residents age(Hunt, M. E. & Gunter-Hunt, G., 1986a: 3-22.).

In the past 30 years, research on retirement communities has received more and more attention from scholars. Hou, S.-I. and Cao, X. (2021:9) proposed that community-based retirement is the best way to aging and summarized the four most promising retirement models in the United States: naturally occurring retirement community (NORC), cohousing, village and university-based retirement community (UBRC). Woods, T. et al. (2022:25) studied social networks in retirement and assisted living communities. They showed that social networks in retirement and assisted living communities were highly correlated with older adults' health and

quality of life, with three key factors: social connections within the assisted living community, connections between older adults and their adult children, and the physical structure of the building. Parniak, S. et al. (2022:4) examined the literature on NORC and found that most of the literature investigating NORC came from North America. Meanwhile, the researchers also found that different scholars defined the proportion of older adults in NORC differently. Jiaxuan, E. et al. (2022:519) conducted a review of the literature related to NORC, and the findings indicated that the "social environment" was the most discussed theme, which provided older adults with the necessary moral support and material incentives, while NORC played an active role in protecting public resources and promoting personal health.

Considering the rapid increase in literature in the retirement community field in recent years, there is a need for new methods to analyze the literature to obtain a research overview and research frontiers in this field. Bibliometrics has been widely used in academia since its introduction in 1965 (Price, D. J. D. S., 1965: 510-515.). Scientometrics is the application of bibliometrics to scientific research, presenting the state and trends of scientific knowledge by analyzing large amounts of literature data (Cortese, S. et al., 2022:140). The researchers reviewed the Web of Science Core Collection (WoSCC) database, and no scholars have published papers on scientometrics to objectively present the research overview and research frontiers in the retirement community field. Therefore, there is a great need to adopt scientometrics to study retirement communities.

It is necessary to clarify the research overview and research frontiers in the field of retirement community. This research should provide an essential reference for scholars, organizations, and governments.

Research Objectives

1. Presenting a research overview in the retirement community field over the past three decades. The research profile includes a publication profile and a citation profile. The publication profile includes prolific authors, prolific institutions, prolific countries (regions), and major research areas; the citation profile includes overall citations, citations per article, and H-index.

2. Clarifying the research frontiers in the retirement community field in the last thirty years.

Research Scope

The scope of this research was limited to the retirement community field. The scope of the literature data was WoSCC.The time frame of the research literature was from January 1, 1992, to December 31, 2022. The language scope of the literature was limited to English.

Research Methodology

1. Research framework

Donthu, N. et al. proposed a research framework for scientometrics: step 1, define the goal and scope of the bibliometric study; step 2, select the technique for the bibliometric analysis; step 3, collect the data to be used for the bibliometric analysis; and step 4, run the bibliometric analysis and report the results (Donthu, N. et al., 2021: 285-296). This research was based on this research framework and optimized accordingly (Figure 1).

Step 1, determine the scope of the research and research objectives.

Step 2, select databases, set search criteria, collect literature data, perform data cleaning, and finally get valid literature data.

Step 3, performed data analysis, analyzed the publication and citation of literature with WoSCC, and performed Co-citation analysis with CiteSpace.

Step 4, presented the research results. On the one hand, the number of publications and citations in the last three decades (1992-2022) of retirement communities was summarized to present an overview of the research in this field. On the other hand, the research frontiers in this field were presented by analyzing the clustering and timeline of significant Co-citations.

Step 5, Discussion. Reviewed the research questions, presented and discussed the key findings, and uncovered the significance and limitations of the research.

Step 6, Conclusions and Recommendations. Responded to the research objectives, summarized the research overview and frontiers in retirement communities over the past three decades, and provided recommendations for future research.
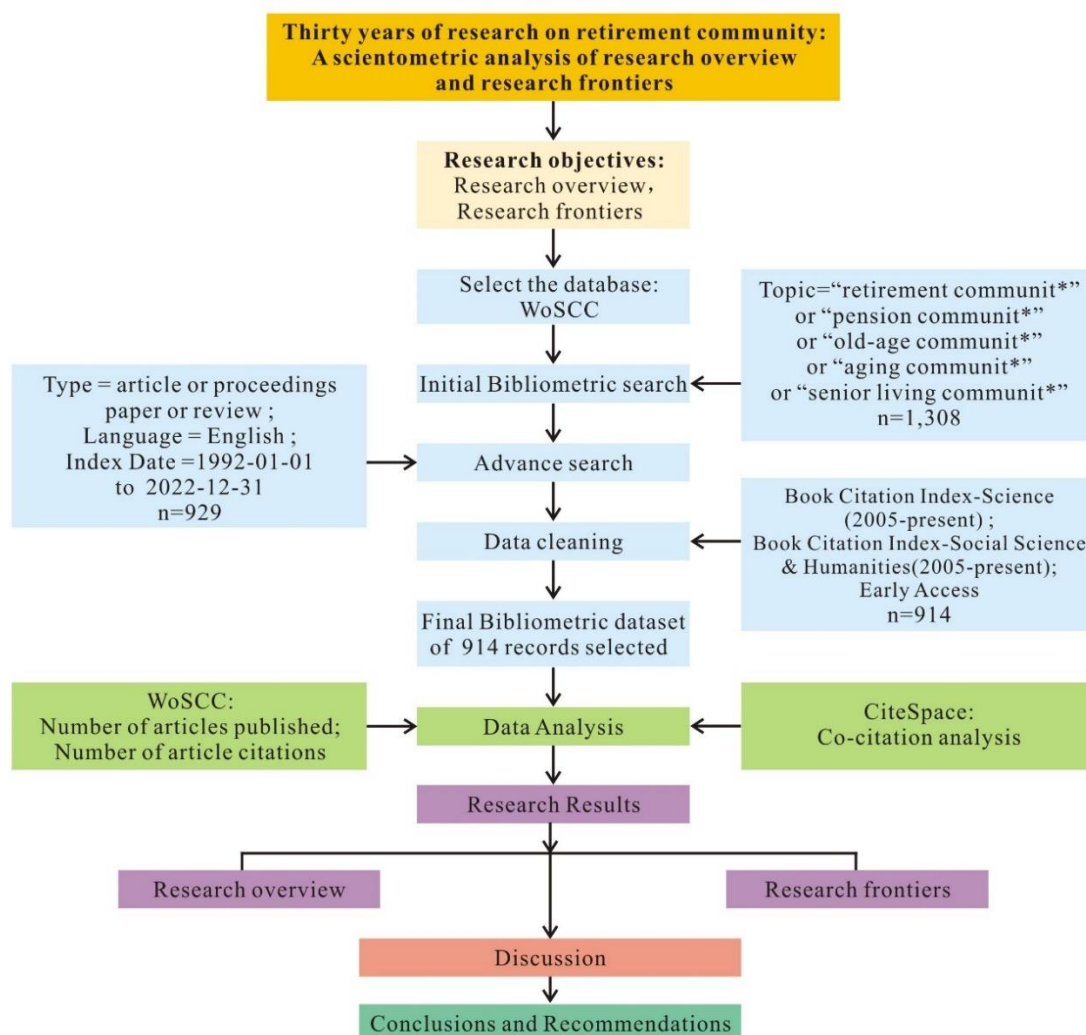

Figure 1. Research framework
Source: By the author, 2023

2.Research materials

The research material of this paper was used in the WoSCC database. The Web of Science database is the world's most representative academic literature database and one of the largest bibliometric databases of peer-reviewed research worldwide (Mongeon, P. & Paul-Hus, A., 2016: 213-228; Park, E. J. & Lee, S., 2022: 828). In addition, WoSCC has complete data information. In addition to information such as author, title, abstract, and keywords, it also contains references. Furthermore, references are necessary to perform co-citation analysis.

3. Research methods

This paper adopted the research method of scientometrics. The research methods can be divided into two parts: search methods and analytical methods.

3.1 Search methods

Table 1 shows the key steps involved in the search: (1) selecting the database; (2) selecting keywords; (3) selecting the type of literature; (4) selecting the language of the literature; and (5) selecting the time frame of the literature. The search type is "Topic,"commonly used in scientometrics. In determining the keywords, in addition to "retirement community*," related keywords were also included: "pension community*," "old-age community*," "aging community*,"and "senior living community*." The reason for using the suffix "*" was to take into account the singular and plural of the name. Three types of literature were retrieved for this study: papers, proceedings papers, and reviews, which are often used in scientometrics. The language of literature was chosen as English. The time of the literature was chosen to be the last 30 years, as this area of research has a large and representative amount of literature in the previous 30 years. Finally, Book Citation Index-Science(2005-present), Book Citation Index-Social Science & Humanities(2005-present), and Early Access were removed from the search results, leaving 914 Literature.

Table 1. Search methods

Database	Advanced Search Code	Number of Documents
WoSCC	Topic="retirement communit*"or "pension communit*" or "old-age communit*" or "aging communit*" or "senior living communit*"	1,308
	And Document Type = article or proceedings paper or review	1,023
	And Language = English	1,016
	Index Date =1992-01-01 to 2022-12-31	929
	Data Cleaning	914

Note. Search date: July 18, 2023.

3.2 Analytical methods

CiteSpace is a bibliometric and visualization analysis tool developed by Professor Chen, C.M. in Java (Chen, C., 2006: 359-377). CiteSpace was chosen as the analysis software for this research with version 6.1.R6 Advanced. Table 2 shows two types of analyses used in this research:(1) The researcher used WoSCC to analyze the research profile. First, the researcher obtained 914 valid documents by setting specific search criteria. Secondly, the researcher used the WoS website analysis tool to get the following data: prolific authors, prolific institutions, prolific countries (regions), research areas, overall citations, citations per

article, and H-index. Lastly, the researcher then integrated these data to create a table to present the research profile of retirement communities. (2) The researcher obtained the research frontiers of the retirement community through CiteSpace analysis Document Co-Citation Analysis. Document Co-Citation Analysis is a web-based method used to research scientific literature (Chen, C., 2020:43). In CiteSpace, cluster naming of the knowledge base is determined by extracting noun terms from citing literature, and the names of these clusters can be understood as research frontiers (Li, J. & Chen, C., 2022:1). The researcher analyzed the main Cluster and Timeline of relevant literature for the last five years (2018-2022) through CiteSpace to get the research frontiers in the field of retirement communities.

Table 2. Analysis methods

Objectives	Tools	Technique	Contents
Research overview	WoSCC	Number of articles published	Prolific Author, Institution, Country (Region), Research Areas
	WoSCC	Number of article citations	Times Cited, Average per item, H-index
Research frontiers	CiteSpace	Co-citation analysis	Reference: Cluster, Timeline

Research Results

1. Research overview

The research overview was divided into two main areas: publications and citations.

1.1 Publications

From 1992 to 2022, 914 papers were published in the WoSCC database on "retirement community." Figure 2 shows that in the past 30 years, the number of articles published in the WoSCC database on the topic of "retirement community" has increased significantly: from 15 papers in 1992 to 63 papers in 2022, an increase of 48 pieces; the number of articles published in 2022 is 4.2 times that of 1992.
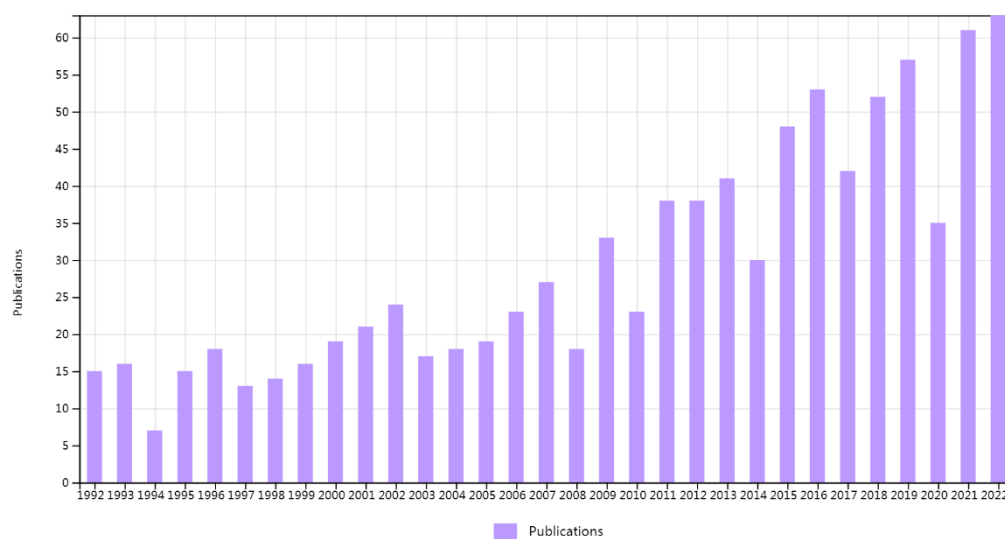

Figure 2. Number of retirement community articles published in WoSCC (1992-2022)
Source: By the author, 2023

Table 3 shows the most productive authors, institutions, countries (regions), and research areas for articles related to the "retirement community." The USA leads the list with 692 publications. The significant differences in the number of articles published in different countries (regions) indicate a very high research concentration in this area.

Table 3. Prolific author, institution, country (region), research area on retirement community

Type	Contents	Number of Documents
Author	Ayalon, L.	22
	Resnick, B.	20
	Bennett, D.A.	15
	Paganini-Hill, A.	14
	Royall, D.R.	14
Institution	University of California System	71
	University System of Maryland	46
	Us Department of Veterans Affairs	39
	Veterans Health Administration	38
	University of Southern California	35
Country (Region)	United States of America	692
	Canada	50
	China	42
	Israel	34
	Australia	33
Research Areas	Geriatrics Gerontology	377
	Public Environmental Occupational Health	72
	Nursing	63
	Psychiatry	57
	Psychology	55

Note. Search date: July 18, 2023.

1.2 Citations

Figure 3 shows that in the WoSCC database, the citations of papers related to the "retirement community" showed a rapid increase from 1992 to 2022, from only 1 citation in 1992 to 2702 citations in 2021 and 2603 citations in 2022, with a decrease. From 1992 to 2022, the 914 papers on the "retirement community" were cited 28,701 times, with an average of 31.4 citations per article (July 18, 2023). The H-index (Hirsch, J. E., 2005) is 83, indicating that 83 articles in this field were cited 83 times.
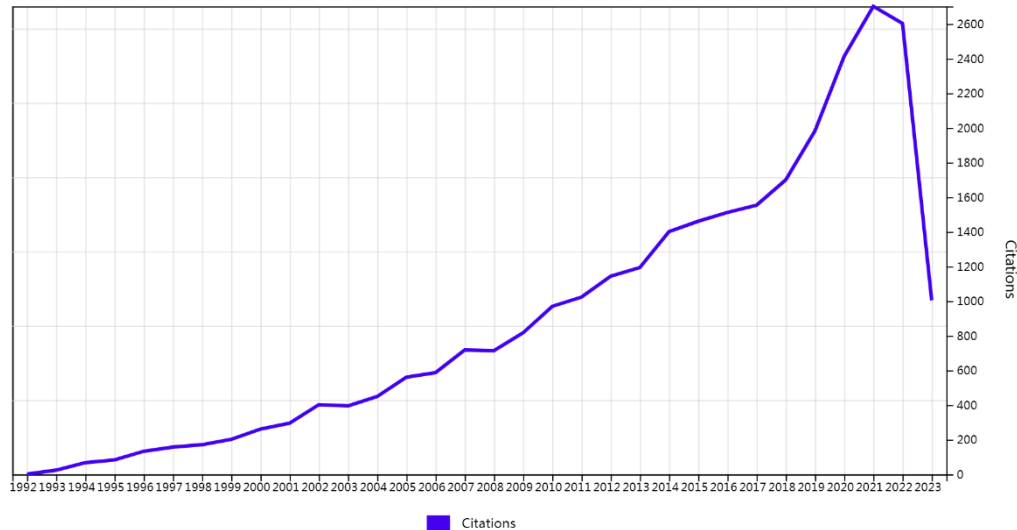
Figure 3. Citations of retirement community articles published in WoSCC (1992-2022)
Source: By the author, 2023

2. Research frontiers

In order to accurately understand the latest research frontiers, we analyzed the literature on the theme of "retirement community" for the last five years. The main parameters of CiteSpace were set as follows.LRF=3.0,L/N=10,LBY=5,e=1.0.Time Slicing: From 2018 JAN To 2022 DEC, #Years Per Slice:1; Text Processing: Term Source Title, Abstract, Author Keywords, Keywords Plus. Node Types. Reference. Selection Criteria: g-index, k=35.

The results showed that Merged network: Nodes=246, Links=452. After the visualization was done, click All in One, select Title words (T) and log-likelihood ratio (LLR), and generate the clustering graph. Five clusters were calculated by CiteSpace, adjusting the font size and color to get the clustering diagram (Figure 4). The results showed that Q=0.8239, the clustering effect was good; S=0.9537, the confidence level was very high. Clicked on the timeline to generate a timeline graph (Figure 5).
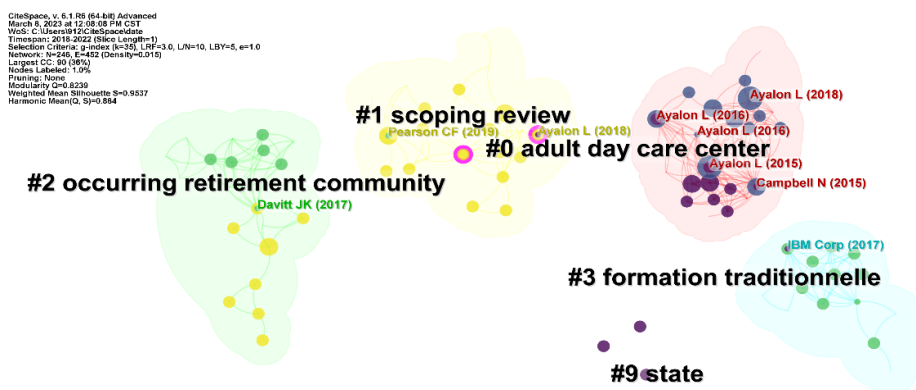

Figure 4. The top 5 clusters of retirement community reference (2018-2022)
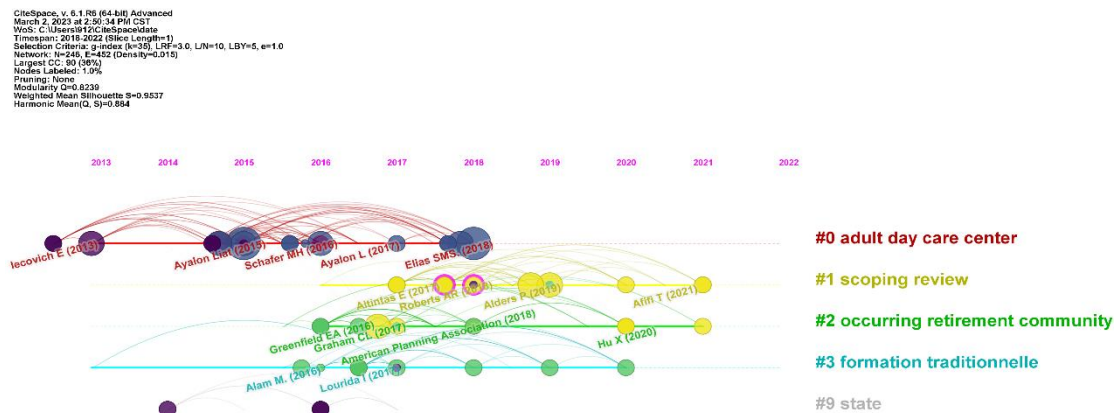**Source:** By the author, 2023

Figure 5. The top 5 clusters timeline of retirement community reference (2018-2022)
Source: By the author, 2023

Cluster #0 label is adult day care center (ADCC), the largest cluster with 28 documents, Silhouette= 0.903, Average Year 2015. The major citing article of the cluster was *Loneliness and Anxiety about Aging in adult day care centers and continuing care retirement communities.* The paper examined the effects of two settings, ADCCs and Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRCs), on Loneliness and anxiety in aging, and the results showed that older adults in ADCCs had higher levels of Loneliness than those in CCRCs (Ayalon, L., 2018: 437-447.).

Cluster #1 is labeled scoping review and has 23 publications, Silhouette= 0.953, Average Year 2018. The major citing article of the cluster was *Leisure's relation to older adults adapting to new homes: a scoping review.* The results showed that the new home's physical, institutional, and social environments were critical factors in older adults' participation in leisure activities (Prentice, K. et al., 2022: 615-642).

Cluster #2 is labeled Occurring Retirement Community and has 20 documents with Silhouette= 0.989, Average Year 2018. Reading the representative articles for this cluster reveals that the theme of this cluster is the Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC). The major citing article of the cluster was *Contextualizing innovative housing models and services within the age-friendly communities framework.* Incorporating the age-friendly communities framework, the article analyzed the characteristics of three senior housing models, and the study found that the key factors were (1) services, supports, and information; (2) respect, inclusion, and diversity; (3) social and civic engagement; and (4) affordability (Mahmood, A. et al., 2021: 66-74).

Cluster #3 label is information traditionnelle with 14 documents, Silhouette= 0.989, Average Year 2016. The major citing article of the cluster was *Outcomes of Team-Centered, Occupational Adaptation-Based Versus Traditional Dementia Workforce Training.* The research found that training based on occupational adaptation improved the dementia care team's collaborative mastery of real-world challenges (McKay, M. H. et al., 2021: 384-394).

Cluster #9 label is state, only five documents, Silhouette=1, Average Year 2015. The major citing article of the cluster was *Leisure's relation to older adults adapting to new homes: a scoping review*(Rikard, R. et al., 2018: 188-200). The literature on this clustering was sparse and understudied.

Discussion

The research questions for this paper are twofold: 1 What is the research overview in retirement communities over the past three decades? 2 What are research frontiers in retirement communities over the past three decades?

Based on the literature from the WoSCC database, the researcher analyzed the literature on retirement communities for the last 30 years through scientometric methods and came up with the following key research results (Table 4).

Table 4. Key research results

Objectives	Tools	Technique	Contents
Research overview	WoSCC	Number of articles published	Prolific Authors : Ayalon, L., Resnick, B., Bennett, D.A., Paganini-Hill, A.,Royall, D.R.
			Prolific Institutions: University of California System, University System of Maryland, Us Department of Veterans Affairs
			Prolific countries (regions): USA, Canada, China, Israel, Australia
			The main research areas: Geriatrics Gerontology, Public Environmental Occupational Health, Nursing, Psychiatry, Psychology.
	WoSCC	Number of article citations	914 papers cited 28,701 times, Average citations per article 31.4, H-index=83 (July 18, 2023)
Research frontiers	CiteSpace	Co-citation analysis	adult day care center (ADCC); scoping review; naturally occurring retirement community (NORC).

1. Research overview

The research overview contains publications and citations of articles. Prolific authors were Ayalon, L., Resnick, B., Bennett, D.A., Paganini-Hill, A. Royall, D.R.; Prolific institutions were the University of California System, the University System of Maryland, and the Us Department of Veterans Affairs. Prolific countries (regions) were the USA, Canada, China, Israel, and Australia. Of these, the United States was a distant second. Surprisingly, Israel was the most productive country. When the researchers explored why, they found that Ayalon, L., the top-producing author in retirement community research, was an Israeli scholar. The main research areas in the retirement community included Geriatrics Gerontology, Public Environmental Occupational Health, Nursing, Psychiatry, and Psychology.

The research found that, as of July 18, 2023, 914 papers related to the retirement community have been cited 28,701 times, with an average of 31.4 citations per paper and an H-index of 83. The results showed that the quality of articles in the retirement community field was generally high, and research in this field was active.

2. Research frontiers

Interpreting Figure 4 and Figure 5 and reading the critical literature reveals three major research frontiers.

The first research frontier was the adult day care center (ADCC). This research frontier focused on social networks in ADCC, and Ayalon, L. was the core scholar of this research frontier. Ayalon, L. (2018: 437-447.) examined the effects of two environments, ADCC and CCRC, on loneliness and anxiety in aging, and the results showed that older adults in ADCC had higher loneliness than those in CCRC. Ayalon, L. et al. (2018: 437-447.) examined the social networks of older adults in ADCC and CCRC and found that CCRC may build more inclusive and positive social relationships. Ayalon, L. (2020: 437-447.) investigated the contribution of social networks to a person's sense of belonging to a community in two different long-term care environments, and the results of the study indicated that constraints in social networks were detrimental to residents in CCRC, but ADCC residents were not harmful.

The second research frontier was scoping review. This research frontier examined the literature related to the retirement community. The researcher explored the size and scope of the corresponding studies through an initial assessment to determine the nature and extent of the research evidence. Prentice, K. et al. (2022: 615-642) examined the relationship between leisure and adjustment to a new home for older adults and showed that peace was associated with adjustment to a new home by providing a sense of continuity, belonging, and connectedness. Additionally, a new home's physical, institutional, and social environments could facilitate or hinder leisure participation. Chaulagain, S. et al. (2022:87) studied resident satisfaction in CCRCs and found that the most influential factors in resident satisfaction were psychosocial factors, followed by cost and value, healthcare, availability of activities, food service, design, rooms, management and staff, location and spiritual environment. Chum, K. et al. (2022: e178-e192) described and synthesized how community-based housing models related to aging in place for older adults and identified strengths and gaps in the literature. Findings showed four themes related to aging in place in the housing model: social relationships, health, and well-being, self-awareness and autonomy, and activity participation. Parniak, Simone et al. (2022:2) conducted a scoping review of NORC, summarizing the current state of research on related NORC.

The third research frontier was the naturally occurring retirement community (NORC). The research on NORC could be divided into three research directions: First, to research the concept and basic theory of NORC. In 1986, Hunt, M. E. and Gunter-Hunt, G. first proposed the NORC concept (Hunt, M. E. & Gunter-Hunt, G., 1986b: 3-22.). Jiaxuan, E. et al. (2022:519) provided an overview of NORC and found that the social environment provided the necessary spiritual support and material motivation for older adults to live actively in NORC. Xia, B. et al. (2022: 519)provided an overview of NORC and, after a comprehensive review of previous studies, found that the "social environment" was the most discussed theme, providing the necessary spiritual support and material motivation for older adults to live actively in NORC and that NORC played an active role in protecting public resources and promoting individual health. Secondly, research on NORC Supportive Service Programs (NORC-SSP). Greenfield, E. A. and Mauldin, R. L. (2017: 1987-2011) argued that one of the core components of the

NORC-SSP was to provide community-based activities to facilitate older adults' connections with others. The study identified three key factors encompassing older adults' participation in community activities: individuals' desire for socialization and health status, relationships with staff and the attractiveness of the activities, and community context. Thirdly, the case related to NORC was studied. Park, J.-A. and Choi, B. (2021:828) studied the willingness of Korean residents to live in their current home and community and analyzed the factors related to the desire to age in place. The findings showed that physical environment-oriented housing services were vital in aging societies.

3. Innovation and significance

The research innovation of this paper is reflected in two aspects: to the best of our knowledge, this is the most complete and up-to-date data in the retirement community field. Using a more rational search method, we retrieved 914 valid documents with search dates through July 18, 2023, in the WoSCC database. Second, the research results are presented more comprehensively and intuitively. In analyzing the co-cited networks, we used CiteSpace as the analysis software, and the results were presented in cluster and timeline graphs.

4. Limitations of the research

WoSCC was used as the database for this research, and no other databases were searched, resulting in a limited number of publications retrieved. The Scopus database is also globally recognized as a quality literature database. Due to the significant formatting differences between the WoSCC and Scopus databases, at this time, CiteSpace could not be merged for analysis.

Conclusions

Based on the literature from the WoSCC database, the researcher analyzed the literature on retirement communities for the last 30 years through scientometric methods and came up with the following conclusions.

1. Research overview

The field of retirement community research has shown rapid growth in the last three decades, and the research in this field has become more active, and the overall quality of the papers is high. However, retirement community research shows an obvious imbalance: the countries were mainly concentrated in developed countries such as the USA, Canada, Israel, and Australia. Institutions in the United States mainly focus on Geriatrics Gerontology, Public Environmental Occupational Health, and Nursing. The recent progress of China's research in this field is noteworthy.

2. Research frontiers

There are three major research frontiers in retirement communities: (1) adult day care center (ADCC); (2) scoping review; (3) naturally occurring retirement community (NORC).

Recommendations

This research only searched the WoSCC database, which has some limitations. Subsequent research needs to expand the database, for example, by using the Scopus database for the study. In addition, this research only used CiteSpace as the analysis software. Future research can use other scientometrics software like HistCite, Loet Tools, and VOSviewer.

Acknowledgments

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