

## TRENDS IN INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING SERVICES: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS FROM 1938-2025

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### Abstract

Individual counseling has experienced significant growth in recent years. However, there is limited research on its research trends globally. This research employs a bibliometric analytic methodology utilizing the PRISMA framework for identification, sorting, filtering, and describes the identification process of articles published in Scopus-indexed journals from 1938 to 2025. The researcher analyzed the data using Openrefine-3.9.3, Biblioshiny R 127.0.0.1:6905, and VOSviewer 1.6.20. Individual counseling, personal counseling, one-on-one counseling, face-to-face counseling, and counseling service were the keywords that were employed. The results show that individual therapy has been steadily increasing, peaking between 2012 and 2024. The largest donation comes from the United States, which Australia and the United Kingdom follow. Ohio State University is the affiliation that produces the most publications, and Iowa State University has the highest number of citations. The findings also show that the dominant themes in the publications are "Individual Counseling," "Counseling," "Mental Health," and "Counselor Education." The results of this study provide vital knowledge regarding the development, collaboration, and dynamics in individual counseling. In addition, it serves as a foundation for practitioners and researchers in developing future research strategies.

**Keywords:** individual counseling, bibliometrics, publication trends

### Introduction

Individual counseling is a component of guidance and counseling services (Faizin, 2024). Individual counseling has experienced rapid development in recent years. Various fields of science use individual counseling to solve specific problems. In the field of education, individual counseling is a treatment that has proven effective in overcoming several issues, such as truant behavior (Fauziyah & Muhid, 2021; Indari, 2023; Masturoh et al., 2025; Putra, 2019; Putri, 2022), low self-efficacy (Dewi & Mugiarto, 2020), and increased self-confidence (Parida et al., 2024; Sinaga et al., 2023; Soreh et al., 2023). In the social field, individual counseling is a practical mentoring strategy for prisoners (Firdaus et al., 2023) and has proven effective in drug abuse rehabilitation (Isnaeni et al., 2020).

Currently, individual counseling research focuses mainly on the various approaches (Habsy et al., 2024; Surbakti & Harahap, 2024) and the number of counseling sessions conducted (Ally et al., 2025; Chen et al., 2025). Although these studies offer helpful information, they fall short of fully comprehending the worldwide dynamics and trends of individual counseling services. Thus, understanding how individual therapy can change and adapt is crucial. Bibliometric analysis can overcome this situation by presenting trends that can understand the direction of research progress in a particular field (Fiandari, 2022).

Bibliometric analysis is one of the research approaches that can answer the publication trend (Bota-Avram, 2023), one of which is individual counseling. An explanation and description of publication trends can be the basis for determining future research policies, establishing research collaborations, and opportunities to find novelty in research (Nuryana et al., 2023). Bibliometrics can describe methodological developments, the most discussed topics, and the contributions of researchers from various institutions in a particular field (Gao et al., 2021). The background of this paper is the unavailability of specific research in identifying trends in individual counseling publications.

The main goal of bibliometric analysis is to pinpoint the key developments in individual counseling during the previous few decades. The nations and organizations that have made significant contributions and the themes that commonly surface are all examined in this study. Thus, this study will help academics and practitioners create more effective methods and strategies to deal with upcoming issues and offer insights into the state of individual counseling today.

## Method

Bibliometric analysis was used in this study to analyze data in the form of articles published in scientific journals. This study describes trends, patterns, and metadata of scientific publications on individual counseling. The PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Meta-analyses and Systematic Reviews) model was used in this study (Page et al., 2021) to identify, sort, filter, and describe the identification process of articles published in scientific journals. The analysis used software such as Openrefine-3.9.3, Biblioshiny R 127.0.0.1:6905, and VOSviewer 1.6.20.

This study contains several procedures that have been carried out. First, articles in Scopus-indexed journals were identified on April 18, 2025, with the theme of individual counseling from 1938 to 2024. Scopus can present metadata displays, such as network mapping and co-citation analyses, to author, institution, and country-level analysis. In addition, Scopus was chosen because it has high article quality and is one of the leading journal indexations with international recognition. Carefully defined keywords were retrieved using a Boolean search query, resulting in 9,268 articles.

After obtaining the initial results, all articles are eligible by searching using Boolean queries again. Specific sources, such as book chapters, newspapers, and others, are excluded to obtain the highest quality scientific articles. In addition to only articles, this research also focuses on articles that use English to set limits to facilitate the data collection process. The resulting data of 7,094 articles were then saved as CSV files.

The next step was screening with the help of OpenRefine-3.9.3 to filter out irrelevant articles. Openrefine-3.9.3 performs text-based filtering on the abstract column by assigning terms to regular expressions. Articles containing specific terms will be considered irrelevant and removed from the dataset. The invert feature in the Openrefine-3.9.3 facet was set to display articles without these terms in the final output. The data was once more saved as a CSV file to display the results visually.

The PRISMA diagram utilized in this investigation is displayed in Figure 1. In the filtering, the relevant articles that were successfully obtained reached 505 articles. Post-screening data following the previous stage is saved back in the form of a CSV file. The total received in the screening is the article that passes the final selection and is included in the article to be analyzed in VOSviewer 1.6.20. Before being analyzed using VOSviewer 1.6.20, the final articles were again reviewed for completeness of title, abstract, and authorship in Biblioshiny R 127.0.0.1:6905 software. Metadata that was declared complete was safe to be analyzed in VOSviewer 1.6.20.

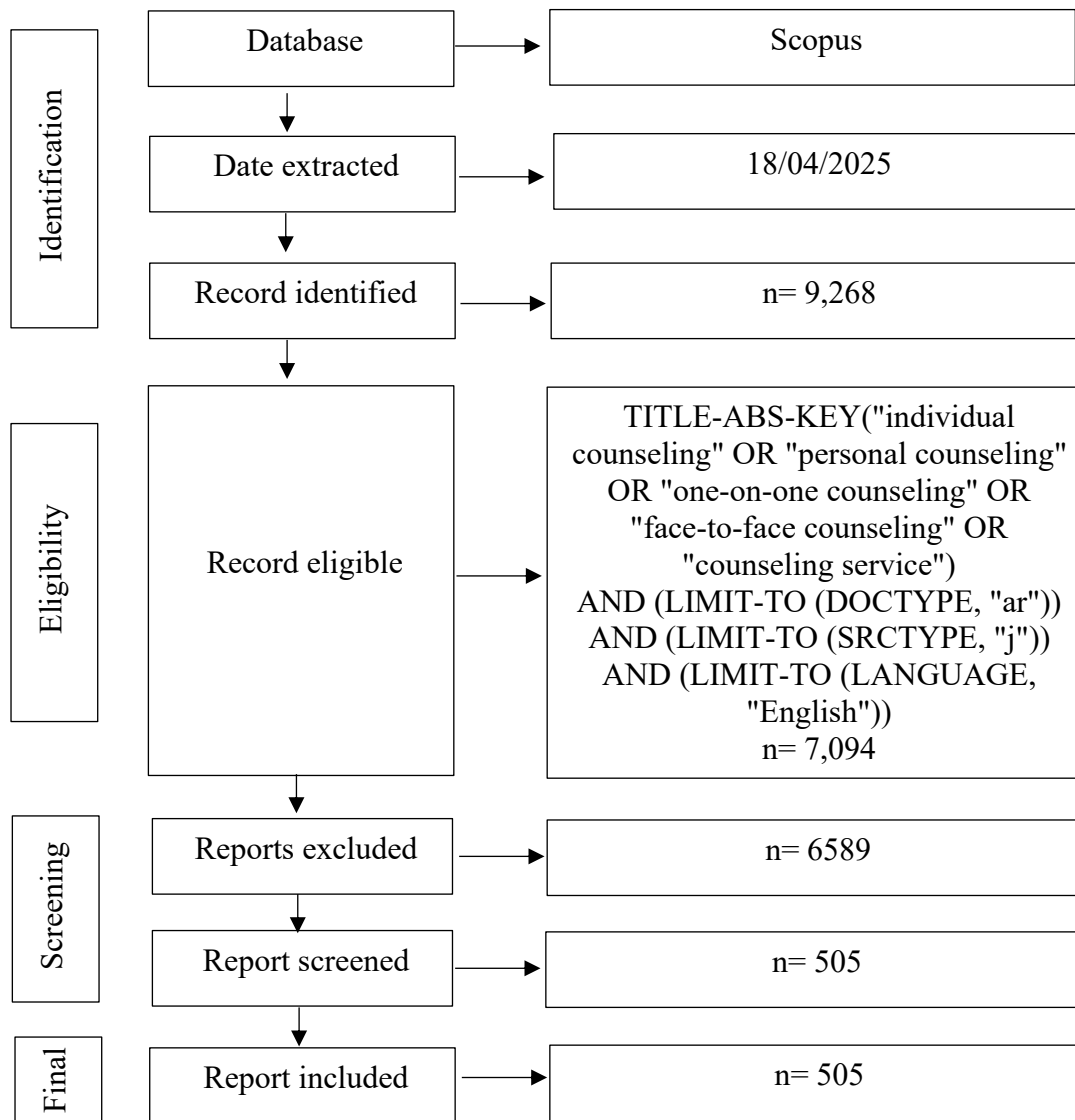


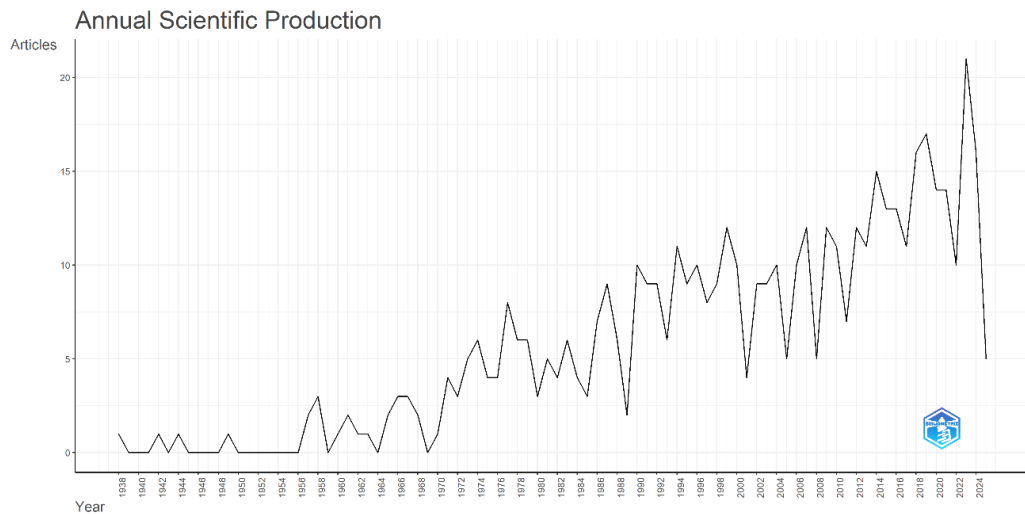
Figure 1. PRISMA Diagram

Data analysis in VOSviewer 1.6.20 was used to determine the progress and trends of individual counseling. In the analysis process, the researcher sought more standardized and harmonized results. Therefore, a thesaurus was applied to this analysis process. The thesaurus helps to harmonize keywords so that they have the same meaning across articles and can be referred to in a single phrase. The analysis results from this application can present interpretations in the form of images or graphs of bibliometric maps.

## Result and Discussion

Individual counseling is one option for helping solve one's problems in social, educational, and other institutions. Public interest in individual counseling is increasing, along with the number of publications on this theme, which hint at the importance of individual counseling in social and educational contexts. Figure 2, obtained from Biblioshiny R, explains the number of individual counseling publications yearly. From 1938 to 2024, the number of published articles increased, especially in the last 10 years. Although there are minor fluctuations between years, the overall trend shows a clear growth. The trend illustrates a significant increase, so the peak occurred in 2012 and 2024, with the number of publications reaching 11-21 articles per year. This number indicates

that individual counseling is a relevant research focus in several other themes and receives considerable attention from researchers and practitioners.



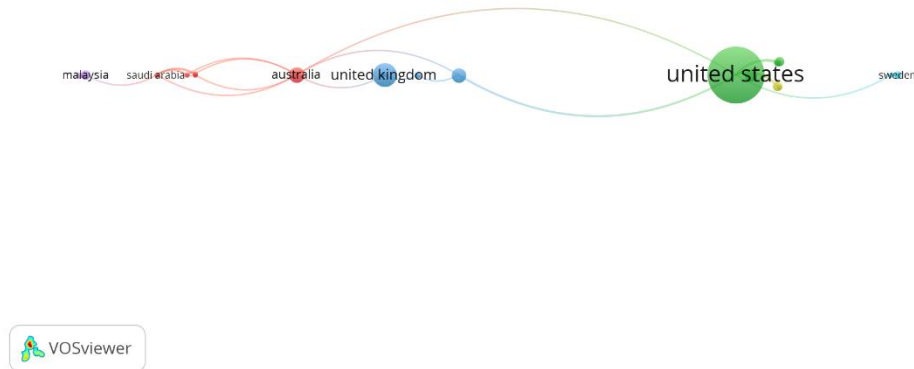
**Figure 2.** Data on articles published from 1938-2024

Many countries have contributed significantly to the increasing number of individual counseling publications. These publications cover various aspects of individual counseling, including counseling techniques, initial theories, treatments, and implementation of individual counseling practices. Table 1 displays the top ten countries with the most significant contributions to this theme. It shows how active each country is in advancing the theme of individual counseling through its publications.

**Table 1.** Top Ten Countries in Individual Counseling Publications and Citations

| <i>Country</i> | <i>Documents</i> | <i>Citations</i> |
|----------------|------------------|------------------|
| United States  | 254              | 4612             |
| United Kingdom | 45               | 443              |
| Australia      | 20               | 495              |
| Canada         | 17               | 165              |
| South Korea    | 13               | 94               |
| Indonesia      | 10               | 12               |
| Germany        | 8                | 183              |
| Hong Kong      | 8                | 111              |
| Malaysia       | 8                | 94               |
| South Africa   | 7                | 63               |

Table 1 presents a data display showing that the United States of America is the country with the most significant contribution of individual counseling publications, with 254 publications. On the other hand, the United States of America also has the most influence on the development of science in individual counseling, as seen from the high number of citations achieved, namely 4612 citations. Next below the United States of America are the United Kingdom and Australia, which have considerable contributions, with 45 and 20 published articles and 443 and 495 citations, respectively. Figure 3 below shows a visualization of the collaboration map in publications on individual counseling.



**Figure 3:** Co-authorship Network of Highest Contributing Countries

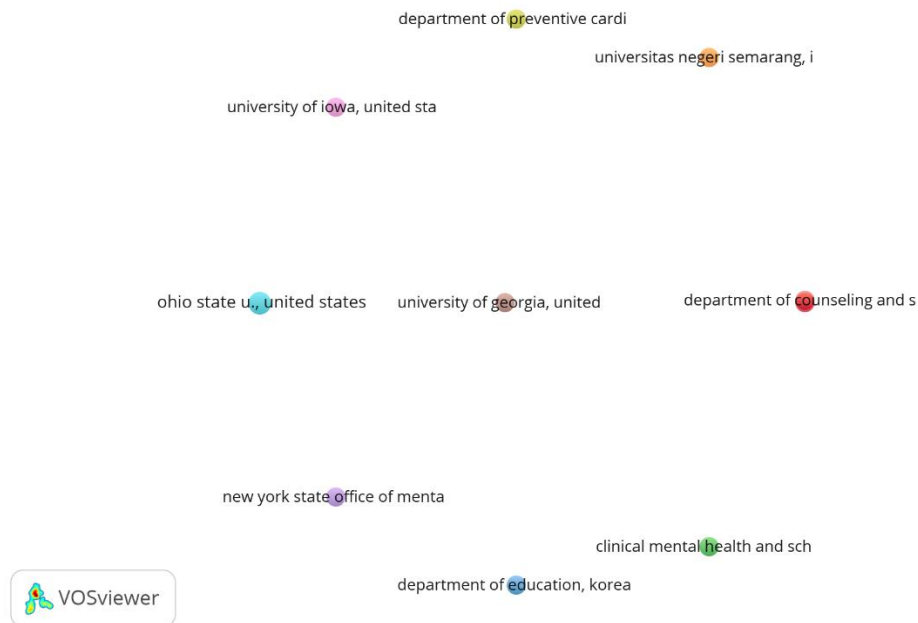
The analysis of Figure 3 shows six clusters, two of which are the centers of individual counseling publications, namely the United States and the United Kingdom. Countries collaborating with the United States on this theme include South Korea, Hong Kong, and China. On the other hand, the United Kingdom shows a strong publication network with New Zealand, Nepal, and Canada. These networks significantly impact the global market and are important research centers in individual counseling.

The following section presents data on affiliations that have contributed significantly to individual counseling. The top ten affiliates contributing to this publication are identified and mentioned in Table 2. The top affiliations in individual counseling publications are one of the references for cooperation, especially in developing knowledge on this theme.

**Table 2. Top Ten Affiliations that Contribute to Individual Counseling**

| <i>Affiliation</i>                                                                                   | <i>Documents</i> | <i>Citations</i> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Ohio State University, United States                                                                 | 3                | 20               |
| Iowa State University, United States                                                                 | 2                | 79               |
| Department of Counseling and School Psychology,<br>University of Massachusetts Boston, United States | 2                | 46               |
| Department of Student Development, University of<br>Massachusetts Amherst, United States             | 2                | 46               |
| University of Iowa, United States                                                                    | 2                | 45               |
| Department of Preventive Cardiology, National<br>Cardiovascular Center, Osaka, Japan                 | 2                | 18               |
| Department of Education, Korea University, Anam-<br>Dong, Seongbuk-Gu, Seoul, South Korea            | 2                | 8                |
| Clinical Mental Health and School Counseling Programs,<br>Bowling Green State University             | 2                | 7                |
| University of Georgia, United States                                                                 | 2                | 6                |
| Semarang State University, Indonesia                                                                 | 2                | 3                |

Table 2 shows that the affiliation that produces the most publications on individual counseling is Ohio State University, which has a total of 3 documents and 20 citations. Despite having the most documents, Iowa State University achieved the most citations, totaling 79. With the highest number of citations, Iowa State University is the most influential affiliation in this theme. Figure 4 shows a visualization of the correlation or cooperation between affiliates at the international level regarding individual counseling.

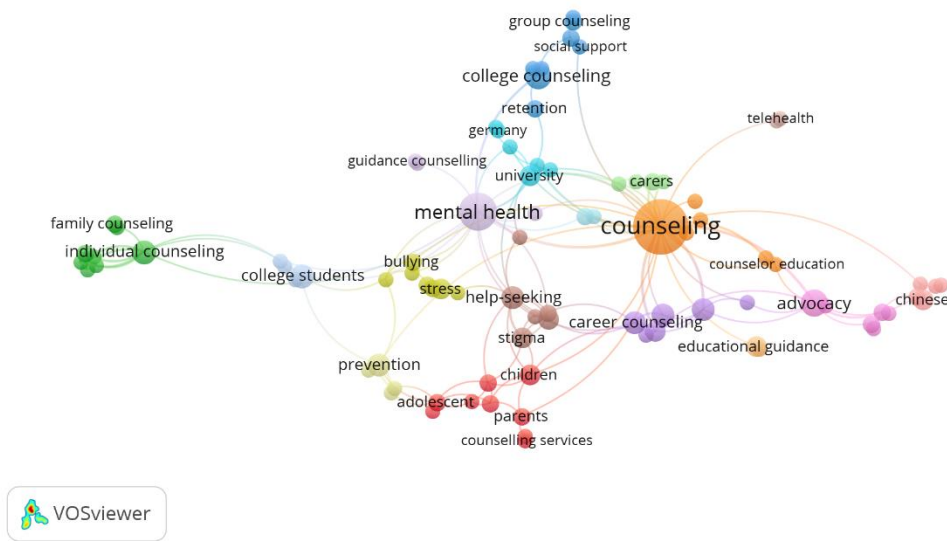


**Figure 4. Shared Authorship Network of the Most Contributing Organization**

Figure 4 refers to the total number of organizations using co-authorship with at least five occurrences out of 734 organizations and 13 thresholds. In detail, the total link strength is only found in two affiliations with a limited number, namely two total link strengths, each from Ohio State University and Iowa State University. Both are from the same country, the United States. In this case, the total link strength shows that both are often used in the same publication, so they have a strong relationship with this theme.

However, the results of bibliometric analysis using VOSviewer on co-authorship unit affiliation show that some entities, such as Canada or the United States, appear as dominant nodes with the highest number of documents. However, since these entities are country names, not specific academic or research institutions, they were not included in the final visualization of the affiliation network. After filtering, there were only 13 affiliations that met the threshold of over two documents per organization. This shows the limited institutional spread in the field of individual counseling. The low number of documents per affiliation also illustrates the cross-cutting nature of the topic and that it is widely spread across institutions with small but diverse contributions. This finding is particularly interesting for further discussion on the concentration and collaboration of research in this area.

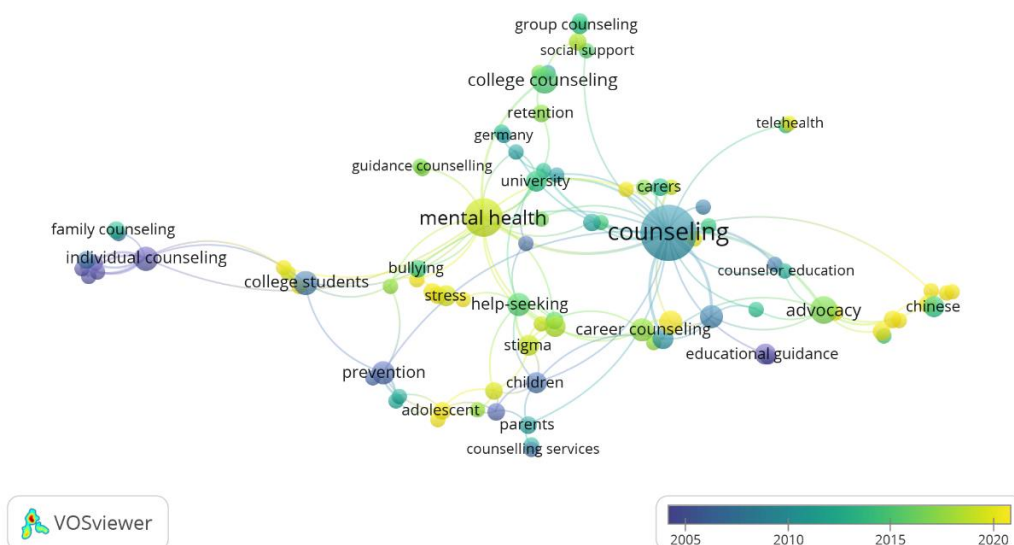
Trends in individual counseling publications can be seen from some of the keywords found. The identified keywords display the subthemes of research on individual counseling. Figure 5 shows the visualization of keywords related to this theme.



**Figure 5.** Co-occurrence Network of Research Themes Based on Author Keywords

The analysis results in Figure 5 were carried out by setting the co-occurrence analysis technique using all the keywords provided by the author. In this analysis process, only keywords that appear at least 2 times from 954 occurrences are entered, resulting in 101 that can meet the criteria. From this visualization, it seems that the most dominant keywords in the field of individual counseling are "Individual Counseling," "Counseling," "Mental Health," and "Counselor Education."

An overview of the present status and possible continuity of ongoing and upcoming individual counseling research is also provided in Figure 6. Aspects of novelty and relevance that show the path of the field's research development are included in this analysis. In this sense, the picture aids in identifying the opportunities and difficulties researchers face. It also sheds light on emerging patterns and topics that need more research. As a result, researchers can carefully and successfully plan their studies to produce essential advances in individual counseling.



**Figure 6.** Individual Counseling Research Themes, 1938–2025

The visualization in Figure 6 presents a snapshot of individual counseling trends within a given year. Dark blue is the theme for publications published in 2005, light blue in 2010, green in 2015, and yellow in 2020. Figure 7 shows that publications on individual counseling are still an interesting trend until now. So, researchers still have the opportunity to conduct research and publications by optimizing innovations regarding individual counseling.

### **Significantly Contributing Countries and Institutions**

Individual counseling is one of the areas that is interesting to research. Several studies have informed the effectiveness of individual counseling in achieving specific goals (Haghighi et al., 2022). The country that contributes to and influences individual counseling publications the most is the United States. Given the detrimental effects of anxiety and stress on students' academic performance, employment, and interpersonal relationships, a recent study conducted in the United States emphasizes the significance of comprehending the factors related to students' intention to seek personal counseling services (Miles & Naumann, 2024). Research in the United States also revealed the development of a change-based paradigm for individual counseling by addressing needs assessment and empowering agentic actions to support the counseling process (Blustein et al., 2019).

In addition to countries, this research also identified the most contributing organizations, Ohio State University and Iowa State University, as the most influential organizations in this theme. The two most contributing and influential organizations are universities, with Ohio State University highlighting the growing need for individual counseling as the challenges of dealing with mental health issues in schools increase (Bates et al., 2024). Iowa State University observes the importance of developing the capacity of professionals to utilize technology in delivering individual counseling (Ward et al., 2022). These data can be a reference for researchers or practitioners to collaborate in developing insights, especially regarding individual counseling.

### **Individual Counseling Research Topic**

Research on individual counseling interests many researchers in different parts of the world. This phenomenon shows a strong desire to understand how individual counseling practices can solve personal, family, or community problems (Aroche & Coello, 2022). Researchers focus on various issues, such as individual counseling, counseling, mental health, and counselor education. Each issue has different methods and end goals, but they all use one strategy, namely, individual counseling as a facility for healing, learning, and improving mental well-being.

For instance, life transition research uses individual counseling to help people adapt and develop their sense of self throughout difficult life transitions (Young et al., 2023). On the other hand, counseling is frequently employed as a tool to boost personal capacity, manage stress, and boost counselees' self-efficacy in various settings, including community-based health interventions (Kim et al., 2023). Mental health in the community setting uses individual counseling as a substance use risk reduction strategy while considering ethical, political, and geographical dimensions in its implementation practice (Aires & and Chamusca, 2024). Students' development of individual counseling abilities can be aided by counselor education emphasizing the value of systematic, reflective, and interpersonally supportive supervision approaches (Aladağ & and Kemer, 2023).

These techniques show that individual counseling can be used in social and community contexts in addition to clinical settings and traditional psychiatric therapies. The growing trend of individual counseling research demonstrates the theme's importance

for future development and increased international collaborations. The potential of individual treatment could be expanded by future studies that examine relevant print and online periodicals.

## Conclusion

The conclusion This study presents an analysis of publication trends in the field of individual counseling in recent decades using bibliometric analysis. The analysis showed a significant increase, with the United States being the country with the most significant contribution and Ohio State University being the most contributing affiliation. At the same time, Iowa State University is the least influential affiliation. This research is limited to the Scopus database in the form of articles and English, so book chapters, newspapers, or others are not included. This analysis only uses quantitative data without exploring the content or quality of each publication studied. In addition, the lack of uniformity in the names of affiliations or institutions is an inherent limitation of the data used and beyond the researcher's control. Therefore, the interpretation in this study was carried out by considering the context of these data limitations. Future research of this kind can enhance the quality of affiliation metadata by making the most of manual verification or other data sources. Additionally, these results can provide valuable insights into the dynamics and development of individual counseling research, helping researchers uncover more comprehensive and relevant study opportunities by assessing trends, establishing collaborations, and developing future research plans.

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## Author Contributions Statement

The following are the contributions of each author: IHMA Research idea, data collection and data analysis, DPU Research idea development, and research quality check

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