# SCOPUS IN FOCUS: UNPACKING THE GEOPOLITICS OF KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION IN COVID-19 RESEARCH AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR AFRICAN SCHOLARSHIP

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## ABSTRACT

*This study undertakes a critical examination of epistemic inequalities and power imbalances in Covid-19 research publication, with a focus on the representation of African scholars and Africa-centered perspectives in Scopus-indexed journals. Through an analysis of published academic literature from 2020 to 2025, this research aims to investigate the demographics of authors from high-income countries (HIC) publishing in Scopus-indexed journals versus those from low-income countries (LIC),. The evidence will be used= to postulate the root causes and depth of these disparities, and their impact on knowledge production. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques. A comprehensive search of Scopus-indexed journals will be conducted using specific keywords and filters, including "Covid-19", "Africa", "African countries", and "global health." Author demographics, including region of origin and gender, will be extracted and analyzed using Excel. Additionally, to refine the findings, author profiles will be searched using Scopus' "Author Search" feature, which allows for searching by author name, institution and country. This will enable identification of the origins of the authors, versus the countries in which their work is published, as well as the countries or regions on which their work focus. Thematic analysis will be employed to examine the content and perspectives presented in the abstracts, in order to ascertain the focus of publications in these Scopus-indexed journals. This research is grounded in postcolonial theory, specifically decolonial theory, as well as in subaltern studies, which together provide a framework for understanding the power dynamics and epistemic inequalities that perpetuate the marginalization of African scholars and Africa-centered perspectives. The findings of this study will contribute to the ongoing discussions around decolonizing knowledge production and promoting epistemic diversity. The study highlights the need for more inclusive and Africa-centered knowledge production processes in order to promote a more equitable and representative knowledge production landscape.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the complex interplay between global health crises, knowledge production, and power dynamics (Nhengu, 2025). As the world grappled with the rapid spread of the virus, the academic community responded with a surge in research output, seeking to understand the virus, its impact, and potential solutions. However, a critical examination of the published academic literature on COVID-19 reveals a glaring imbalance in representation, with a predominance of Western perspectives and a dearth of African voices. This reality perpetuates epistemic inequalities, power dynamics, and marginalization in knowledge production, ultimately influencing policy formulation and implementation.

The dominance of Western perspectives in COVID-19 research is problematic, as it overlooks the unique challenges, experiences, and contexts of African countries. Policies based on Western experiences may not be effective or relevant in African settings, potentially exacerbating health

disparities. Furthermore, the influence of Western-dominated policies on global health governance has far-reaching consequences, shaping the response to pandemics and diseases.

Despite the significance of this issue, there is a paucity of research examining the representation of African perspectives in COVID-19 literature. This knowledge gap is concerning, as it perpetuates the marginalization of African voices and experiences. The scarcity of African perspectives in academic writing is a longstanding issue that extends beyond Covid-19 research, and has been an issue of concern for scholars across various disciplines (Kigoto, 2021; Lages, Pfajfar & Shoham, 2015; Elbadawy, 2021). Tim Glawion (2024) highlights the structural problems plaguing African studies, arguing that academic publishing and knowledge production are hindered by unresolved issues. Glawion emphasizes that knowledge production in this field is influenced not only by the authors but also by who has access to and can engage with the content. Knowledge production and dissemination as a result remains largely under Western dominance, with the work of Africa-based scholars often marginalized. This emphasises the need for academic publishing to move beyond routine tasks and instead create platforms for African voices to be heard (Glawion, 2024). This sentiment is echoed by other scholars who argue that Persistent issues in African studies pose significant obstacles to creating a more inclusive and equitable literature landscape, and that true knowledge diversity can only be achieved by incorporating African perspectives (Asubiaro, 2023; Asubiaro, Onaolapo & Mills, 2024; Céspedes, 2021). Real inclusivity thus, has to ensure that knowledge production in African studies reflects a broader range of voices, while still acknowledging contributions from the Global North.

Many years of epistemic inequalities have perpetuated a power dynamic where the West views Africa as a subject of study, rather than a contributor to knowledge production. Consequently, African perspectives are consistently excluded from the knowledge creation process(Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2020, 2023). Furthermore, Africa's knowledge production systems are subordinated to Western norms, thereby undermining the continent's intellectual autonomy. This entrenched structure creates significant power imbalances in knowledge production, posing a substantial obstacle to Africa's effective participation in the global academic community, and perpetuating a neo-colonial epistemic reality (Iroulo, 2022, Cirhuza, 2020; Serunkuma, 2024). This phenomenon is highly problematic, as it not only bars African scholars from accessing global knowledge networks, but also coerces them into conforming to Western-centred knowledge systems. Moreover, such hegemonies constrain African institutions' ability to collaborate with global counterparts in policy formulation, thereby limiting their access to vital resources. Ondari-Okemwa(2007) and Pailey (2019), also concur that African academics face significant barriers to publishing in leading Western-based academic journals, with severely restricted access and low acceptance rates, thereby hindering the development of local knowledge systems. These inequalities not only restrict African academics' participation in global knowledge networks but also prevent them from contributing more actively to knowledge production processes.

Furthermore, Cirhuza (2020) argues that the marginalization of Southern researchers' contributions has disconnected African academic work from local knowledge systems. This disconnection has resulted in fewer innovations originating from African scholars and an over-reliance on Western innovations. The dominance of foreign innovations, in turn, undermines the development of local knowledge sources. Ndlovu (2018) emphasizes that decolonization efforts must extend beyond academic discourse to implement structural changes. These changes should include the creation of institutional frameworks that facilitate the publication of high-quality academic journals on the African continent, thereby empowering African scholars to take ownership of knowledge production. Structural barriers such as inadequate funding and insufficient infrastructure have been identified in research as hindering the development of a

thriving, locally-driven academic environment, thus constraining the continent's research potential (Ibid).

In this context, the aim of this study is tocritically examine the geopolitics of knowledge production in Covid-19 research, with a specific focus on the representation of African scholars and Africa-centered perspectives in Scopus-indexed journals between 2020 and 2023. This analysis seeks to reveal the structural and epistemic imbalances and inequalities that are prominent in the Scopus-indexed journals published literature on Covid-19 in the chosen time period. The study has a significant epistemic and political aim, of uncovering the structural issues and power dynamics that perpetuate epistemic inequalities and marginalization of African scholars. This study also explores the extent to which African authors and perspectives are represented in COVID-19 literature, and to examine the implications of this representation on policy formulation and implementation. This study also examines inequality and epistemic power in knowledge production processes through a critical gender lens. This lens is applied at two levels: first, by analyzing the male-to-female ratio in COVID-19 publications in Scopus-indexed journals, and second, by comparing the representation of women from developed regions versus African women in these publications.

Research by Briggs and Weathers (2016) has shown that women authors are underrepresented in academic publications, and their work is less frequently cited. In African studies, the dominance of Western academics (predominantly white men) perpetuates power imbalances and colonial legacies. Mama (2007) has demonstrated that increasing the visibility of women researchers can lead to greater gender equality in the literature. Therefore, boosting the representation of women researchers is a crucial step towards achieving gender equality in African studies.

Pailey (2016) critiques development discourses that marginalize African women by portraying them as passive victims in need of Western intervention. She argues that these frameworks overlook African women's agency in knowledge production and community leadership by centering the white gaze and neglecting the wealth of indigenous knowledge and cultural practices that African women contribute to development. Pailey advocates for a re-imagined development paradigm that values African women's experiences and perspectives, positioning them as key knowledge producers rather than recipients of external solutions. This 'de-centering' is essential for empowering African women and creating more inclusive and contextually relevant frameworks for knowledge production and development.

Through a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques, this study will investigate the demographics of authors publishing in Scopus-indexed journals, the institutional affiliations and funding sources backing these publications, and the thematic focus and perspectives presented in the articles. By shedding light on the ways in which global North-South power dynamics shape knowledge production in Covid-19 research, this study aims to contribute to ongoing discussions around decolonizing knowledge production, promoting epistemic diversity, and amplifying Africa-centered perspectives in the global knowledge landscape. Ultimately, this research aims to promote a more equitable and effective global response to COVID-19 and future pandemics.

## 2. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study delimits its scope to a comparative analysis of Covid-19 research publications from High-Income Countries (HICs) and Low-Income countries LICs. In this paper, HICs refer to nations classified as high-income economies by the World Bank, such as countries from North America, specifically the United States of America, Canada; other countries in the Americas, Europe, Australia, Israel, as well as developed Asian countries such as Japan and South Korea.

Africa, on the other hand, encompasses countries on the African continent, which face unique development challenges stemming from historical, economic, and political factors, including wars, mismanagement of wealth, and a colonial legacy. For purposes of thisstudy, African countries shall be referred to as LICs. While acknowledging the heterogeneities within HICs, this study groups developed countries together solely for comparison purposes with Africa, in relation to publication of research works in Scopus-indexed journals. This grouping allows for an examination of the disparities in knowledge production and representation between HICs and Africa, while recognizing that individual countries within these regions may exhibit distinct characteristics and trends. A strategic on these two regions has potential to contribute to a deeper understanding of the power dynamics and epistemic inequalities that shape global health research.

This study focuses on Covid-19 research publications from 2020 to 2023, capturing the peak pandemic years (2020-2022) and the initial phasing-out period (2023). This time frame allows for an examination of the research response during the most intense period of the pandemic, as well as the initial transition towards post-pandemic research. By including 2023, this study can also explore how research priorities and trends began to shift as the pandemic's acute phase subsided. This focused time frame enables a nuanced analysis of the research landscape during a critical period in the pandemic's trajectory

## 3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is grounded in postcolonial theory, specifically decolonial theory and subaltern studies, which provide a critical lens for examining the power dynamics and epistemic inequalities perpetuated by Western-dominated knowledge production. Decolonial theory, as articulated by scholars such as Walter Mignolo, Rita Segato and Catherine E. Walsh (2024) challenges the notion of Western knowledge as universal and superior, highlighting the need to center African perspectives and epistemologies. The production and dissemination of knowledge are shaped by power dynamics that perpetuate epistemic inequalities and marginalize certain voices. This study therefore employs a postcolonial lens, specifically decolonial theory and subaltern studies, to examine the representation of African scholars and Africa-centered perspectives in Covid-19 research published in Scopus-indexed journals.

Postcolonial theory posits that knowledge production is a site of power struggle, where dominant Western epistemologies have historically marginalized non-Western perspectives (Wright, 2015). This theory highlights the need to challenge dominant knowledge systems and promote alternative epistemologies. Decolonial theory, an offshoot of postcolonial theory, specifically focuses on the decolonization of knowledge and power (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013), arguing that modernity and coloniality are intertwined, and that decolonization requires a shift-away from Western epistemologies and a recentering of non-Western perspectives.

Subaltern studies (Spivak, 1995; Spivak, 1988; Bahr, 2024), a field of research that emerged in the 1980s, focuses on the experiences and perspectives of marginalized groups, particularly in the context of colonialism and imperialism. Subaltern studies highlight the need to listen to and amplify the voices of marginalized groups, rather than speaking on their behalf (Spivak, 1988). Key concepts that guide this study include epistemic inequalities, which refer to the disparities in knowledge production and dissemination that result from power imbalances, and decolonization of knowledge, which involves challenging and dismantling dominant Western epistemologies and promoting alternative, non-Western perspectives.

This study employs a mixed-methods approach to examine the representation of African scholars and Africa-centered perspectives in Covid-19 research published in Scopus-indexed journals. The analysis is guided by a critical examination of the power dynamics and epistemic inequalities that

shape knowledge production in Covid-19 research. An application of postcolonial theory, decolonial theory, and subaltern studies, helps to highlight the epistemic inequalities and power imbalances that perpetuate the marginalization of African scholars and Africa-centered perspectives. This in turn enables the generation of recommendations for addressing these disparities to promote a more inclusive and representative knowledge production landscape.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques. The quantitative component involves a publication analysis of Covid-19 research published in Scopus-indexed journals, while the qualitative component involves a thematic analysis of the content and perspectives presented in the articles. The data for this study is sourced from Scopus-indexed journals, which are considered to be among the most prestigious and widely cited journals in the world. A comprehensive search of Scopus-indexed journals is conducted using specific keywords and filters, including "Covid-19", "Africa", "African countries", and "global health". The search is limited to articles published between 2020 and 2025, to ensure that the study captures the most recent and relevant research on Covid-19.

The data collection process involves several steps. To conduct this study, a word search using Covid 19 is performed on Scopus-indexed journals to identify relevant articles. From the search results, the first 40 pages are displayed. A stratified sampling approach is employed, where all articles in the English language are selected from page 1 (first), page 21 (middle), and page 40 (last). Each page contains 26 articles. However, due to cross-referencing between articles, the total number of unique articles collected is 92. This sampling strategy allows for a representative selection of articles across the search results. First, a comprehensive search of Scopus-indexed journals is conducted using the specified keywords and filters. Second, articles that meet the inclusion criteria, i.e., published in a Scopus-indexed journal, focus on Covid-19, and include Africa or African countries as a keyword, are be selected for analysis. Third, author demographics, including region, country, institution, and affiliation, are extracted from the selected articles using Google Sheets. Finally, author profiles are searched using Scopus' "Author Search" feature, which allows for searching by author name, institution, and country.

The data analysis involves both quantitative and qualitative components. Descriptive statistics is used to analyze the demographics of authors publishing in Scopus-indexed journals versus non-Scopus-indexed journals. Thematic analysis is employed to examine the content and perspectives presented in the articles. This involves coding and categorizing the data, and identifying patterns and themes. To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, several measures are taken. A pilot test of the data collection and analysis procedures is conducted to ensure that the methods are reliable and effective. Multiple data sources are used to triangulate the findings and ensure that they are valid and reliable. The findings are peer-reviewed to ensure that they meet the standards of academic rigor and quality.

This study is conducted in accordance with the principles of academic integrity and ethics. The data are collected and analyzed in a way that respects the rights and dignity of all individuals involved, while findings are reported in an accurate, unbiased, and respectful manner.

## 5. DATA ANALYSIS TOOL

To facilitate the analysis of Scopus-indexed journal publications and author demographics, a customized data analysis tool is developed using Google Sheets. The tool consists of a comprehensive table with predefined categories and fields, allowing for efficient data collection

and organization. The tool captures author information, publication characteristics, and funding details, enabling the examination of epistemic inequalities and power imbalances in Covid-19 research. Utilizing this toolprovides a systematic and transparent analysis of Scopus-indexed journal publications, shedding light on the representation of African scholars and Africa-centered perspectives in global health research:

Google sheet 1: Data analysis tool

| # | Authors & by Gender | | Region of publication & year | Region of publication focus | Thematic area/Abstract |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 18 | | HIC/2022 | Europe | Prevention: risk for myocarditis pericarditis after COVID-19 vaccination |
| | 12 M | 6 F | | | |
| 2 | 5 | | HIC/2020 | South Asia | COVID-19 infection: Emergence, transmission, and characteristics of human coronaviruses |
| | 5 M | | | | |
| 3 | 2 | | HIC/2020 | Europe | COVID-19 infection rates |
| | 2 M | | | | |
| 4 | 7 | | HIC/2022 | USA | Infection characteristics |
| | 4M | 3F | | | |
| 5 | 20 | | HIC/2020 | USA | Adaptive immunity to SARS-CoV-2 aids vaccine dev. |
| | 8 M | 12F | | | |
| 6 | 10 | | HIC/2025 | USA | Tracking COVID-19 vaccine administration in Immunization Information Systems. |
| | 4M | 6F | | | |
| 7 | 1 | | HIC/2025 | USA | COVID-19 vaccine may reduce heart dieseas risks. |
| | 1M | | | | |
| 8 | 34 | | HIC/AF/2021 | Africa | Side effects of AstraZeneca and Moderna in Nigeria. |
| | 20M | 14F | | | |
| 9 | 18 | | HIC/2025 | Europe | Heart health in Spanish lupus patients with COVID-19. |
| | 10M | 8F | | | |
| 10 | 22 | | HIC/2025 | Israel | Caregivers' vaccine side effects and willingness to vaccinate their kids. |
| | 18M | 4F | | | |
| 11 | 9 | | HIC/2024 | Europe | Linking COVID-19 cytokine levels to post-infection depression risk. |
| | 7M | 2F | | | |
| 12 | 7 | | HIC/2025 | Europe | Comparing COVID-19 outcomes in hospital-acquired vs. community-acquired cases. |
| | 3M | 4F | | | |
| 13 | 20 | | HIC/2025 | UK | Blood clot risks after COVID-19, pneumonia or flu hospitalization. |
| | 12M | 8F | | | |
| 14 | 21 | | HIC/2021 | Asia | Genetics affect vaccine response. |
| | 11M | 10F | | | |
| 15 | 10 | | HIC/2025 | USA | Genetic factors impact COVID-19 vaccine effectiveness. |
| | 5M | 5F | | | |
| 16 | 16 | | HIC/2024 | Europe | Impact of Italy's 2023/2024 COVID-19 vaccination campaign on preventing severe cases. |
| | 6M | 10F | | | |
| 17 | 15 | | HIC/2024 | UK | COVID-19 vaccination and impact on pregnancy outcomes. |
| | 7M | 8F | | | |
| 18 | 3 | | HIC/2024 | Europe | Enhancing COVID-19 vaccination in women of reproductive age |
| | 3M | | | | |
| 19 | 11 | | HIC/2024 | UK | No increased risk of adverse birth outcomes with pre-pregnancy COVID-19 vaccination. |
| | 5M | 6F | | | |
| 20 | 15 | | HIC/2024 | UK | COVID-19 diagnosis, vaccination during pregnancy, and adverse pregnancy outcomes |
| | 13M | 2F | | | |
| 21 | 13 | | HIC/2024 | Europe | Impact of early antiviral therapy on SARS-CoV-2 clearance time in high-risk COVID-19 subjects |
| | 5M | 8F | | | |

| # | Authors & by Gender | | Region of publication & year | Region of publication focus | Thematic area/Abstract |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 22 | 15 | | HIC/2024 | USA | Sex differences in the outcome of critically Ill patients with COVID-19 |
| | 8M | 7F | | | |
| 23 | 21 | | HIC/2024 | Europe | Impact of vaccination status on post-acute sequelae in hospitalized COVID-19 survivors |
| | 11M | 10F | | | |
| 24 | 21 | | HIC/2024 | USA | Incidence of diabetes after SARS-CoV-2 infection and the implications of COVID-19 vaccination |
| | 15M | 6F | | | |
| 25 | 16 | | HIC/2025 | Europe | The impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on hypertension phenotypes |
| | 9M | 7F | | | |
| 26 | 10 | | HIC/2025 | Europe | Patient characteristics and outcomes by PaO2/FiO2 (PAFI) and degree of inflammation |
| | 8M | 2F | | | |
| 27 | 15 | | HIC/2024 | USA | COVID-19 pneumonia requires considerable health care resources |
| | 7M | 8F | | | |
| 28 | 21 | | HIC/2024 | UK | Sodium–glucose co-transporter-2 inhibitors & Covid 19 patients |
| | 14M | 7F | | | |
| 29 | 20 | | HIC/2024 | USA | Effect of SGLT2 on organ support of COVID-19 patients. |
| | 11M | 9F | | | |
| 30 | 6 | | HIC/2024 | Europe | Analysis of interoceptive underpinnings of anxious psychopathology in COVID-19 survivors |
| | 5M | 1F | | | |
| 31 | 15 | | HIC/2024 | Europe | Evaluation of people recovering from COVID-19 receiving allied primary healthcare |
| | 7M | 8F | | | |
| 32 | 21 | | HIC/2025 | Europe | The long Pentraxin PTX3 serves as an early predictive biomarker of co-infections in COVID-19 |
| | 13M | 8F | | | |
| 33 | 1 | | HIC/2025 | Asia | Genetic links between COVID-19, heart attack, and stroke. |
| | 1F | | | | |
| 34 | 17 | | HIC/2025 | Europe | Mortality and guides care for older COVID-19 patients. |
| | 10M | 7F | | | |
| 35 | 9 | | HIC/2025 | Asia | Incidence and characteristics of SDRIFE attributed to Corona Virus |
| | 7M | 2F | | | |
| 36 | 5 | | HIC/2025 | Europe | The effects of COVID-19 on the input usage and revenue generation performance of the EU fishery sector |
| | 4M | 1F | | | |
| 37 | 3 | | HIC/2022 | Asia | Clinical protocol for traditional Chinese medicine treatment of COVID-19 among the elderly population |
| | 1M | 2F | | | |
| 38 | 2 | | HIC/2025 | Asia | COVID-19 transmission - population disbelief and fear |
| | 1M | 1F | | | |
| 39 | 4 | | HIC/2024 | Europe | Potential protective factors against negative interpersonal influence in COVID-19 vaccination |
| | 1M | 3F | | | |
| 40 | 7 | | HIC/2022 | Europe | COVID-19 severity to influenza, sepsis, and healthy controls. |
| | 7M | | | | |
| 41 | 3 | | HIC/2025 | UK | SARS-CoV-2 induces trained immunity in monocytes. |
| | 2M | 1F | | | |
| 42 | 9 | | HIC/2025 | Asia | 9. Associating COVID-19 prevalence and built environment design |
| | 6M | 3F | | | |
| 43 | 1 | | HIC.2022 | UK | Identified 10 COVID-19 phenotypes from electronic health records.. |
| | 1M | | | | |

| # | Authors & by Gender | | Region of publication & year | Region of publication focus | Thematic area/Abstract |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 44 | 2 | 2F | HIC/2025 | USA | COVID-19 onset, progression, and trajectories in pandemic mitigation efforts. |
| 45 | 4 4M | | HIC/2025 | South America | Common vocal symptoms in COVID-19 patients. |
| 46 | 9 6M | 3F | HIC/2025 | Europe | Regional lung impairment in COVID-19, and prognostic insights. |
| 47 | 6 6M | | HIC/2021 | USA | COVID-19 vaccine acceptance differences among unvaccinated foreign- and united states-born persons |
| 48 | 2 2M | | HIC/2025 | Asia | SARS-CoV-2 effects on lung vascular endothelial integrity |
| 49 | 5 5M | | HIC/2025 | USA | The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the use of social media |
| 50 | 7 3M | 4F | HIC/2025 | Asia | Trends & gaps on hydroxychloroquine and COVID-19, 2020-2023. |
| 51 | 22 16M | 4F | HIC/2022 | Europe | Maternal and neonatal outcomes of pregnancies with COVID-19 after medically assisted reproduction |
| 52 | 15 10M | 5F | HIC, AFRICA/2025 | Asia & Pacific Islands | Quality Assurance for COVID-19 rapid diagnostic tests |
| 53 | 2 2M | | HIC/2025 | Europe | Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on student outcomes in Italy |
| 54 | 11 9M | 2F | HIC/2025 | Asia | Antibody Response to Pneumococcal, Influenza&COVID-19 Vaccine in patients With Multiple Myeloma |
| 55 | 10 5M | 5F | HIC/2025 | USA | Concordance between parent-reported and documented COVID-19 vaccination status for hospitalized children |
| 56 | 10 4M | 6F | HIC/2025 | Asia | Clinical investigations for Covid-19 |
| 57 | 3 2M | 1F | HIC/2025 | USA | Enterprise risk management impact on insurers' performance during COVID-19. |
| 58 | 12 9M | 3F | HIC/2924 | Europe | Role of health information systems in COVID-19 response in Philippines and Indonesia. |
| 59 | 6 4M | 2F | HIC/2024 | Europe | Drivers of task performance in fluency tasks in COVID-19 patients |
| 60 | 11 5M | 6F | HIC/2025 | Asia | Study assesses corticosteroid efficacy in COVID-19 based on randomized controlled trials. |
| 61 | 4 2M | 2F | HIC/2025 | Asia | Study examines spillover effects across green sectors during COVID-19 and conflict. |
| 62 | 8 4M | 4F | HIC/2025 | North America | COVID-19's effects on cognition and 24-hour movement behaviours |
| 63 | 6 4M | 2F | HIC/2026 | USA | Sentiments & drug interactions during COVID-19 using social media data &natural language processing. |
| 64 | 16 6M | 19F | HIC/2025 | Europe | How pandemic dynamics impact mortality prediction accuracy in older COVID-19 patients. |
| 65 | 6 2M | 4F | HIC/2025 | Europe | Exploring forest visitation patterns during COVID-19, considering environmental, social, and health factors. |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 66 | 5 | | HIC/2025 | USA | Examining the influence of COVID-19 |
| | 4M | 1F | | | |
| 67 | 1 | | HIC/2024 | Asia | Perioperative cardiovascular risk and preventions of patients with post-COVID-19 condition |
| | 1M | | | | |
| 68 | 8 | | HIC/2025 | USA | Changes in cancer screening rates after COVID-19 onset |
| | 8M | | | | |
| 69 | 11 | | HIC/2022 | Europe | Link between high serum nitrate levels and COVID-19 mortality. |
| | 11M | | | | |
| 70 | 22 | | HIC.2022 | Africa | Examining prognostic value of biochemical parameters for severe COVID-19 patients in South African ICU. |
| | 20M | 2F | | | |
| 71 | 2 | | HIC/2024 | Asia | Examining school nurses' experiences and responses during the COVID-19 pandemic. |
| | 1M | 1F | | | |
| 72 | 5 | | HIC/2024 | Asia | Investigating QJF's COVID-19 prevention mechanism using network pharmacology and molecular docking. |
| | 2M | 3F | | | |
| 73 | 2 | | HIC/2025 | Asia | Identifying remote work challenges, applying lessons learned |
| | 1M | 1F | | | |
| 74 | 8 | | HIC/2025 | Asia | COVID-19 therapeutics and viral filtration advancements for current and future solutions. |
| | 7M | 1F | | | |
| 75 | 21 | | HIC/2021 | Asia | Clinical characteristics of COVID-19 patients |
| | 12M | 9F | | | |
| 76 | 11 | | HIC/2024 | USA | Change in Cognition pre- and post COVID-19 infection in essential workers at midlife |
| | 10M | 1F | | | |
| 77 | 6 | | HIC/2024 | Asia | Examining mogamulizumab use for mycosis fungoides and Sézary syndrome before and during COVID-19. |
| | 2M | 4F | | | |
| 78 | 8 | | HIC/2025 | Europe | Social isolation, loneliness& chronic diseases links in COVID-19, aging, & tech advancements. |
| | 6M | 2F | | | |
| 79 | 18 | | HIC/2024 | Asia | Safety oforal azvudine & nirmatrelvir ritonavir in elderly patients |
| | 8M | 10F | | | |
| 80 | 7 | | HIC/2024 | Africa | Associations between fear of COVID-19 & mental health |
| | 7M | | | | |
| 81 | 2 | | HIC/2025 | Africa | Enhanced LSTM model to forecast COVID-19 trends in Africa. |
| | 2M | | | | |
| 82 | 3 | | AFR/HIC/2025 | Africa | COVID-19 distribution, vaccine coverage& socioeconomic factors |
| | 3M | | | | |
| 83 | 5 | | HIC/AFR/2025 | Africa | Factors predictive of epidemic waves of COVID-19 in Africa |
| | 2M | 3F | | | |
| 84 | 8 | | AFR/HIC/2025 | Africa | Challenges, enablers to establish COVID-19 vaccine effectiveness |
| | 5M | 3F | | | |
| 85 | 11 | | AFR/HIC/2025 | Africa | Impact of COVID-19measures on neonatal health outcomes |
| | 9M | 2F | | | |
| 86 | 6 | | AFR/2026 | Africa | Impact of COVID-19 lock-downs on adolescent mental health |
| | 5M | 1F | | | |
| 87 | 4 | | AFR/2025 | Africa | Impacts of the pandemic on a range of household characteristics. |
| | 2M | 2F | | | |
| 88 | 3 | | AFR/HIC/2024 | Africa | Did COVID-19 drive attention to health systems strengthening? |
| | 3M | | | | |

| # | Authors & by Gender | | Region of publication & year | Region of publication focus | Thematic area/Abstract |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 89 | 2 | | HIC/2025 | Asia | COVID-19 classification using map reduce & deep learning |
| | | 2F | | | |
| 90 | 6 | | HIC/AFR/2024 | Africa | COVID-19's impact on food insufficiency in urban poor areas |
| | 6M | | | | |
| 91 | 4 | | HIC/2025 | Africa | COVID-19's impact on health services in Mali's Kati district. |
| | 4M | | | | |
| 92 | 4 | | AFR/2024 | Africa | Co-movement between equity, exchange rate& market volatility |
| | 1M | 3F | | | |
| 93 | 4 | | HIC/AFR/2024 | Africa | Intimate partner violence among adolescents during COVID-19. |
| | 2M | 2F | | | |
| 94 | 3 | | AFR/2024 | Africa | COVID-19's impact on suicidal behavior cases |
| | 2M | 1F | | | |
| 95 | 6 | | AFR/2024 | Africa | Post COVID-19 vaccination side effects and associated factors |
| | 3M | 3F | | | |
| 96 | 3 | | HIC/2024 | Africa | Educational disparities during COVID-19 |
| | 1M | 2F | | | |
| 97 | 4 | | AFR/2024 | Africa | Role of financial globalization iduring COVID-19 |
| | 4M | | | | |
| 98 | 3 | | AFR/2024` | Africa | African sovereign risk premia and international market assets |
| | 3M | | | | |
| 99 | 8 | | AFR,HIC/2024 | Africa | COVID-19 vaccine uptake among health care workers |
| | 4M | 4F | | | |
| 100 | 2 | | AFR/HIC/2024 | Africa | Covid 19 & migrant food enterprise |
| | | 2F | | | |
| 101 | 5 | | HIC/2025 | Europe | COVID-19 perceptions & shocks' impact on trust |
| | 5M | | | | |
| 102 | 4 | | HIC/2024 | Africa | Covid 19 & international air transportation in Southern Africa |
| | 3M | 1F | | | |
| 103 | 17 | | AFR/2025 | Africa | Vaccine safety surveillance in South Africa through COVID-19 |
| | 11M | 6F | | | |
| 104 | 9 | | AFR, HIC/2024 | Africa | RSV genome pre- and during COVID-19 pandemic. |
| | 2M | 7F | | | |
| 105 | 14 | | AFR,HIC/2024 | Africa | COVID-19 impact on TB drug resistance inS. Africa. |
| | 12M | 2F | | | |
| 106 | 7 | | AFR/HIC/2024 | Africa | Perceptions on sport, physical conditioning, and COVID-19 impact . |
| | 5M | 2F | | | |
| 107 | 5 | | AFR, HIC/2025 | AfricA | Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on antenatal healthcare services |
| | 4M | 1F | | | |
| 108 | 7 | | AFR/2022 | Africa | COVID-19 & hempodialysis in Sub-Sahara Africa |
| | 7M | | | | |
| 109 | 3 | | AFR/HIC/2021 | Africa | Leveraging COVID-19 disruptions to integrate trade & markets |
| | 3M | | | | |
| 110 | 6 | | AFR/2022 | Africa | Impact of COVID-19 on farming, food security, and agribusiness |
| | 6M | | | | |
| 111 | 1 | | AFR/2020 | Africa | Innovative model to forecast COVID-19 prevalence in East Africa |
| | 1F | | | | |
| 112 | 1 | | AFR/2022 | Africa | Chronickidney disease patients' increased risk of COVID-19 |
| | 1M | | | | |

| # | Authors & by Gender | | Region of publication & year | Region of publication focus | Thematic area/Abstract |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 113 | 4 | | AFR/2020 | Africa | Low reporting of COVID-19 cases in Africa |
| | 4M | | | | |
| 114 | 2 | | AFR/2021 | Africa | Understanding COVID-19 epidemiology in Africa |
| | 2M | | | | |
| 115 | 1 | | AFR/2021 | Africa | Clinical trials for COVID 19 |
| | 1M | | | | |
| 116 | 9 | | AFR/2021 | Africa | How to reduce stigma in African HIV clinics? |
| | 7M | 2F | | | |
| 117 | 11 | | AFR/2022 | Africa | COVID-19 cluster link to Rage Festival attendance. |
| | 8M | 3F | | | |
| 118 | 3 | | AFR/2021 | SA | COVID-19 in South Africa |
| | 3M | | | | |
| 119 | 2 | | AFR/2021 | Africa | Excess COVID-19 mortality among critical patients |
| | 2M | | | | |
| 120 | 9 | | HIC/2021 | Europe | Linking Europe and sub-Saharan Africa in the COVID-19 era. |
| | 7M | 2F | | | |
| 121 | 1 | | HIC/2021 | Africa | COVID-19 in Africa: |
| | 1F | | | | |
| 122 | 4 | | HIC/2021 | America | Telemedicine lung cancer screening during COVID-19. |
| | 4M | | | | |
| 123 | 4 | | HIC/2024 | USA | Racial disparities in cardiometabolic and COVID-19 outcomes |
| | 2M | 2F | | | |
| 124 | 9 | | HIC/2021 | USA | COVID-19 stress linked to worsening lung and heart health |
| | 6M | 3F | | | |
| 125 | 9 | | AFR/2021 | Africa | COVID-19 Pandemic: Is Africa Different? |
| | 7M | 2F | | | |
| 126 | 2 | | AFR/2020 | Africa | Africa's health disparities in addressing COVID-19 |
| | 2M | | | | |
| 127 | 12 | | AFR/2021 | Africa | The impact of COVID-19 on cancer treatment |
| | 8M | 4F | | | |
| 128 | 5 | | AFR/2020 | Africa | Impact of regulations on Covid 19 trauma cases |
| | 5M | | | | |
| 129 | 6 | | HIC/2023 | Africa | identifying potential inhibitors of COVID-19 protein NSP13. |
| | 4M | 2F | | | |
| 130 | 6 | | AFR/2023 | Africa | healthcare workers and COVID 19 burn out in sub-Saharan Africa |
| | 4M | 2F | | | |
| 131 | 5 | | AFR/HIC/2023 | Africa | COVID 19 and digital health care ecosystems |
| | 4M | 1F | | | |
| 132 | 2 | | AFR/2026 | Africa | Covid-19and the youths |
| | 2M | | | | |

## 6. FINDINGS

This study's analysis of Covid-19 research publications in Scopus-indexed journals reveals stark disparities in authorship and research focus, underscoring the persistent power dynamics and epistemic inequalities critiqued by decolonial theory and subaltern studies.

**Epistemic Inequalities in Authors Published by Scopus-indexed Journals**



The dominance of high-income countries in authorship is evident, with 74.3% of authors affiliated with these countries, while low-income countries account for only 24.2%. This disparity perpetuates the marginalization of non-Western perspectives, echoing Aníbal Quijano's notion of "coloniality of power" (Quijano, 2000). The under-representation of low-income country authors reinforces the notion that knowledge production is often controlled by Western institutions, limiting the visibility of diverse epistemologies.
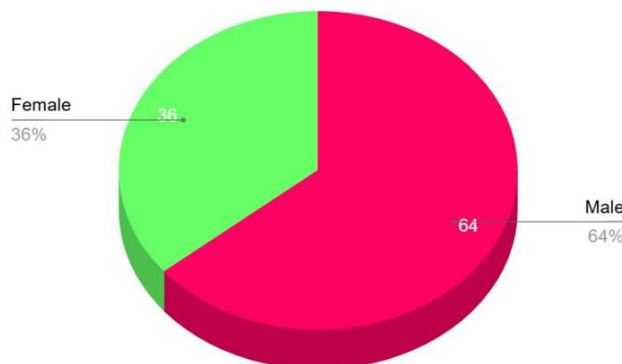


The gender distribution of authors shows that male authors outnumber female authors, with males comprising 64.1% of total authors (741 authors) and females comprising 36% (416 authors). A closer examination of gender distribution by income country reveals that high-income countries have a relatively more balanced gender representation, with males accounting for 63.1% of authors (542 authors) and females accounting for 39.4% (339 authors). In contrast, low-income countries have a more skewed gender distribution, with males accounting for 37.5% of authors (105 authors) and females accounting for only 10.4% (29 authors). This finding resonates with feminist critiques of knowledge production, which argue that the dominance of male voices perpetuates patriarchal power structures (Mama, 2007). The under representation of female authors, particularly from low-income countries, highlights the need to amplify marginalized voices and challenge dominant knowledge systems.
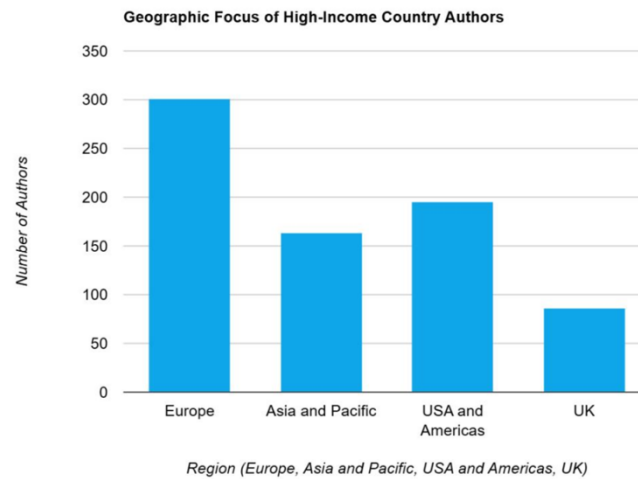
**Disparity in Women's Representation in Scopus**
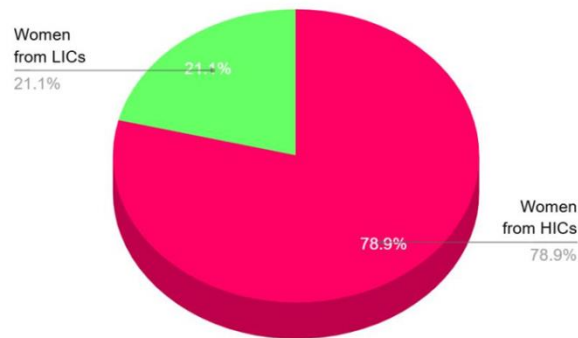


The pie chart starkly illustrates the glaring disparity in women's representation in Scopus, a leading academic database. Women from higher-income countries dominate the landscape, comprising 78.9% of the representation, while those from low-income countries are relegated to the margins with a mere 21.1%. This striking imbalance is not merely a reflection of numerical disparities but a symptom of deeper power dynamics and epistemic hegemonies. Through the lens of postcolonial theory, this disparity can be seen as a legacy of colonialism, where knowledge production and dissemination were controlled by Western powers. The dominance of women from higher-income countries in Scopus reflects the continued privileging of Western epistemologies and perspectives, while the voices and knowledge of women from low-income countries are marginalized and excluded.

Decoloniality theory further highlights how this disparity is perpetuated by the dominance of Western-centric academic structures, which prioritize knowledge produced in the Global North over that produced in the Global South. This creates a hierarchy of knowledge, where the experiences, perspectives, and research of women from low-income countries are deemed less valuable or less relevant. Subaltern theory, drawing on the work of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, suggests that the voices of women from low-income countries are not just marginalized but actively silenced. Their knowledge and experiences are not merely overlooked but are rendered unintelligible or irrelevant within the dominant Western epistemological frameworks.

The under representation of women from low-income countries in Scopus is not just a matter of numerical disparity but a reflection of the systemic inequalities and power imbalances that shape knowledge production and dissemination. It highlights the need to challenge and dismantle these epistemic hegemonies, to create spaces for diverse voices and knowledge systems, and to recognize the value and relevance of research and perspectives from the Global South. Yet centering the experiences and perspectives of women from low-income countries can contribute towards the goal of dismantling the dominant Western epistemological frameworks and create a more inclusive and equitable academic landscape. This requires a fundamental shift in how we produce, disseminate, and value knowledge, recognizing the diversity of knowledge systems and the agency of marginalized communities.

**Geographic Focus of High-Income Country Authors**



Region (Europe, Asia and Pacific, USA and Americas, UK)

The research focus of authors varies significantly depending on their income country affiliation. High-income country authors tend to focus on regions such as Europe (35% of high-income country authors, 301 authors), Asia and Pacific (19.1%, 164 authors), USA and Americas (22.8%, 196 authors), and the UK (10%, 86 authors). Notably, there is no data provided on high-income country authors focusing on Africa. The geographic focus of authors from high-income countries, predominantly on Europe, Asia, and the USA, reflects the historical and contemporary power dynamics critiqued by postcolonial theory. The absence of data on high-income country authors focusing on Africa, juxtaposed with the significant focus on Africa by low-income country authors, suggests a potential disconnect between Western knowledge production and local contexts. This finding supports the argument that Western-dominated knowledge production often overlooks the unique challenges and experiences of non-Western contexts (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020).

**Geographic focus of low-income country authors**



Region (Africa, Europe)
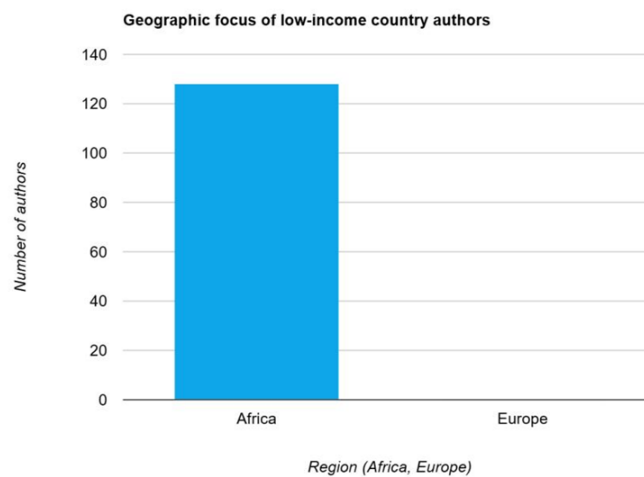
In contrast, low-income country authors are more focused on Africa, with 45.7% of low-income country authors (128 authors) concentrating on this region. None of the low-income country authors focused on Europe.

Furthermore. co-authors from both high and low-income countries predominantly focus on Africa, accounting for 74.7% of co-authors (127 authors). A smaller proportion of co-authors focus on Asia and Pacific Islands (8.8%, 15 authors), while none focus on Europe.
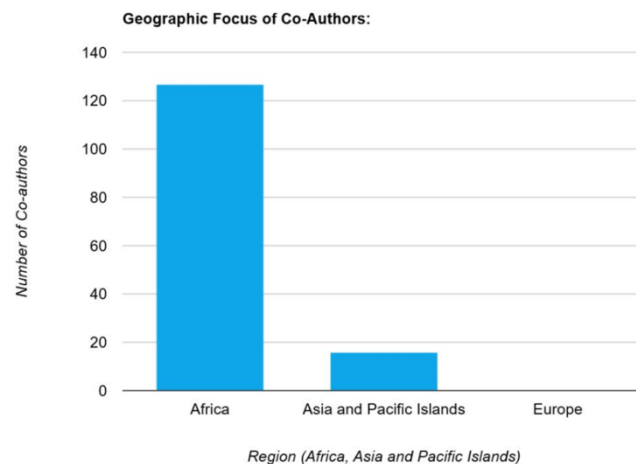
## 7. DISCUSSIONS

Building on the findings presented earlier, which highlighted the dominance of Western perspectives in authorship and research focus, this discussion further explores the complex landscape of knowledge claims, assumptions, power dynamics, and biases that shape our understanding of Covid-19 and global health.This study's examination of abstracts reveals a complex landscape of knowledge claims and assumptions, power dynamics, and biases that shape our understanding of Covid-19 and global health. At its core, the abstracts assume Covid-19 is a significant global health threat, warranting extensive research and analysis. However, this assumption is often framed through a Western lens, prioritizing Western experiences and knowledge systems over others.

The dominance of Western-centric perspectives is evident in the abstracts, reflecting historical power imbalances that have shaped the production and dissemination of knowledge. Africa, in particular, is often portrayed as a vulnerable region, with a focus on its susceptibility to Covid-19. While this emphasis on vulnerability is understandable, it overlooks the local knowledge, resilience, and agency that exists within African communities. Furthermore, the abstracts tend to frame global health through a Western construct, neglecting diverse epistemologies and perspectives from non-Western contexts. This perpetuates a colonial legacy that has long marginalized non-Western knowledge systems, reinforcing the dominance of Western perspectives and experiences. The influence of neoliberalism is also apparent in some abstracts, which prioritize economic and technological solutions over social and structural approaches. This reflects a broader trend in global health research, where the emphasis on technological fixes and market-driven solutions can overlook the complex social and economic factors that shape health outcomes.

These findings have important implications for how we produce and disseminate knowledge about Covid-19 and global health. To move towards a more inclusive and equitable understanding of these issues, it is essential to challenge Western dominance and promote diverse epistemologies and perspectives. This requires a critical examination of our own biases and assumptions, as well as a willingness to contextualize research and analysis within local contexts and experiences. Ultimately, this epistemic analysis highlights the need for a more nuanced and reflexive approach to knowledge production, one that acknowledges the complex power dynamics and biases that shape our understanding of the world. By recognizing these dynamics and working to address them, we can strive towards a more inclusive and equitable global health landscape.

However, one limitation of this study is the grouping of countries into broad categories, which may mask important differences between individual countries within these groups. This aggregation may potentially obscure unique characteristics, trends, or experiences of specific countries, and readers should be cautious when interpreting the results. Future research may benefit from more granular analyses that account for country-specific variations.

## 8. CONCLUSION

This study's examination of Covid-19 research publications in Scopus-indexed journals reveals significant disparities in authorship and research focus, underscoring the persistent power dynamics and epistemic inequalities critiqued by decolonial theory and subaltern studies. The dominance of high-income countries in authorship, the under representation of female authors, and the geographic focus of Western knowledge production all highlight the need for a more inclusive and equitable knowledge landscape.

The findings of this study have important implications for the production and dissemination of knowledge, particularly in the context of global health crises. By centering diverse perspectives and experiences, researchers can work towards a more nuanced understanding of the complex issues surrounding Covid-19 and other global health challenges. Moreover, promoting collaboration and knowledge sharing between high and low-income countries can help challenge dominant Western epistemologies and foster more inclusive knowledge production.

Ultimately, this study contributes to ongoing discussions around decolonizing knowledge production and promoting epistemic diversity. By highlighting the need for greater representation and inclusion, this research aims to inform strategies for creating a more equitable and effective global knowledge landscape, one that prioritizes diverse perspectives and experiences and promotes more inclusive solutions to global health challenges.

## 9. RECOMMENDATIONS

To address the disparities and inequalities highlighted in this study, it is essential to take a multifaceted approach. Firstly, funding agencies and journals should prioritize support for researchers from low-income countries, providing them with opportunities to participate in global health research and contribute to the development of context-specific solutions. Additionally, efforts should be made to promote gender equality in Covid-19 research, including mentorship programs and targeted funding opportunities for female researchers. This will not only enhance the representation of female authors but also bring diverse perspectives to the forefront.

Meaningful collaborations between researchers from high-income countries and those from low-income countries are also crucial. Such partnerships can facilitate knowledge sharing, co-production, and mutual learning, ultimately leading to more effective and context-specific solutions. Furthermore, researchers should prioritize contextualizing their research to address the unique challenges and experiences of diverse regions, particularly in low-income countries. This requires a nuanced understanding of local contexts and a willingness to adapt research approaches accordingly.

Finally, the global health research community should strive to decolonize knowledge production by critically examining and challenging dominant Western epistemologies. By valuing diverse perspectives and experiences, researchers can work towards creating a more inclusive knowledge landscape that promotes equitable solutions to global health challenges.

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