



Bibliometric Analysis on Public Policy Implementation publications in Chinese and Foreign: Basic Characteristics, Focuses, and Prospects

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Abstract. Since the end of the last century, both Chinese and foreign scholars have begun to pay attention to the study of public policy implementation (PPI), and a large number of publications have been formed. This paper utilized the bibliometrics method to analyze the basic characteristics and focuses of Chinese and foreign public policy implementation research, and put forward feasible suggestions for future academic research. The results indicated: the number of annual publications on the PPI in China and foreign countries has shown a fluctuating growth trend, and the pattern of publications is closely related to the timeline of National Congress of the Communist Party of China. Moreover, there are not many cooperative research made by Chinese scholars, while foreign scholars have many and close cooperative networks. In addition, Chinese studies focus on theoretical learning and policy agendas setting, while foreign scholars focus on policy formulation in specific fields, and pay attention to the influence of the environment and the media on policy agenda. The methods of government governance and the implementation of public policies may become the trend of research in China in the future. According to the analysis of burst terms, the methods of government governance and implementation of public policies may become the trend of Chinese research in the future, and the fields of public health policy will become the main research interests of foreign scholars in the future.

Keywords: public policy, policy implementation, bibliometrics method, Chinese-Foreign comparison

1 Introduction

In the 1970s, there was an upsurge in the study of policy implementation in western public policy research, which was marked by T. L Pressman and A. Wildavsky's monograph "How great expectations in Washington are dashed in Oakland "[1] published in 1973. Since then, western scholars have made a large number of models and theoretical works on policy implementation research, especially since the 1990s, positivism for policy learning, policy design, and policy implementation has gradually become the focus of scholars 'attention [2].

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On the other hands, at the end of the 1990s, Chinese scholars started to focus on PPI, and gradually formed a local style of expression. In China, research on the implementation of public policies is usually based on policy texts. It analyzes the aspects of inter-government relations [3] and interest gambling [4], and reflects obstacles in PPI [5] such as vague goals. In fact, most of the relevant review literature was published before 2010, and there is a lack of tracking of the latest publications of public policy implementation in recent years, forecasting future research trends, and comparing research differences between China and foreign countries.

So aim at the above shortcomings, this paper takes the public policy implementation documentations published in major Chinese and foreign academic journals from 1998 to 2023 as the object of study, and uses the bibliometrics analysis [6] to review the overall situation of Chinese and foreign PPI research in the past 20 years, and compares the similarities and differences of Chinese and foreign public policy implementation research in terms of basic characteristics, focuses, and prospects.

2 Data Sources

The Chinese publications analyzed in this article are selected from the CSSCI journal papers in the CNKI database, and the keywords “policy implementation” and “Public policy” are used for retrieval. The first Chinese documentation about the implementation of public policies study was published in 1998, so 1998 is set as the beginning year, and 2023 as the end. After searching on November 30, 2023, a total of 756 documents were obtained. After manual reading and screening, some literature related to book reviews, conference reports, etc. that are irrelevant with the research were eliminated. Finally, a total of 748 CSSCI journal articles were obtained.

The English publications are selected from the Web of Science Core Collection Database and searched with the keywords “Policy Implementation” and “Public Policy”. In order to more accurately compare the research pattern of PPI in China and foreign countries, the search period was also set from 1998 to 2023, and after searching on November 30, 2023, a total of 630 documents were obtained. After screening, some conference reports that are of low quality, low citations, and are uncorrelated with the research of this article were eliminated. In the end, a total of 408 documents were obtained.

3 The Basic Characteristics of Chinese vs. Foreign Public Policy Implementation Publications

3.1 Number of Publications

The number of published articles is one of the most direct indicators to assess the development of certain research. Figure 1 shows that in the past two decades, the number of publications on PPI in China has generally shown a fluctuating growth trend, with several significant fluctuations. More specifically, the peaks were mainly distributed in 2003, 2008, 2012, and 2017. Compared with the number of papers published in Chinese

PPI research, the growth rate of foreign public policy implementation research is slower, and the peak distribution years of foreign publications are similar to the peak of China's publications, mostly also around 2009, 2013, 2017, 2019, etc.

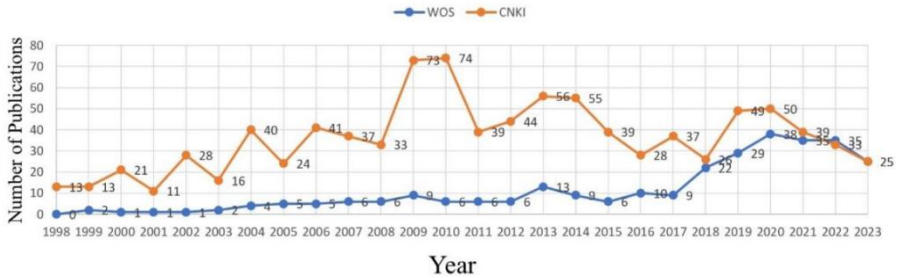


Fig. 1. Comparison of the number of publications in public policy implementation research between China and foreign countries

The volume of publications in PPI studies is often closely linked to the political cycle of the time. The four time nodes when the number of Chinese and foreign research papers is at its peak are highly consistent with the time of the take place of the National Congress of the Communist Party of China, which to a certain extent reflects the great influence of China's public policy practice on the international academic field.

3.2 Journals with a High Number of Publications

Table 1. CNKI journals of publications on public policy implementation

Journal Name	Number of Publications
Chinese Public Administration	66
Theoretical Investigation	22
Journal of Public Management	16
Hubei Social Sciences	13
The Journal of Yunnan Administration College	13
CASS Journal of Political Science	12
Administrative Forum	12
Journal of Beijing Administrative College	11
Journal of Public Administration	10
Theory and Reform	9

Table 1 lists the top 10 Chinese journals that publish research on PPI. The results show that the journals that publish PPI research mainly include public management, administration, and theoretical discussion. The top three published journals are Chinese Public Administration, Theoretical Investigation and Journal of Public Management. Among them, the number of articles published by the Chinese Public Administration is as high as 66, which is significantly different from the rest of the journals.

Table 2. WOS journals of publications on public policy implementation

Journal Name	Number of Publications
Social And Territorial Public Policies Theoretical Reflections and Case Studies	10
European Journal of Public Health	8
Annals of Behavioral Medicine	6
Ciencia Saude Coletiva	6
Sustainability	6
Journal of School Health	5
Revista De Administracao Publica	5

Table 2 collects the Top 7 foreign journals that publish research on PPI. It can be found that the journals that publish PPI research are mainly divided into public health, medical and social categories. Among them, the journal with the largest number of articles published is Social and Territorial Public Policies Theoretical Reflections and Case Studies. Most of the remaining journals publish less than 10 articles.

3.3 Author Cooperation Network

Chinese scholars who study the implementation of public policies tend to focus on individual independent research rather than cooperating with other scholars. However, there are only several strong cooperation networks among certain scholars. For example, Kong Fanbin and He Donghang, Zhou Jianguo and Liao Fengjiang. Kong Fanbin, Zhou Jianguo, Liao Fengjiang, etc. are all researchers at Nanjing University, and He Donghang is a professor at Fudan University. Interestingly, the above-mentioned cooperative scholars are all in the Yangtze River Delta region.

Foreign PPI research scholars have a closer cooperative network. A cooperative network composed by Bader, Rasha K, Shihab, Rawan Awni (the left half words marked in green color). The scholars included in this cooperative network belong to the King Hussein Cancer Center organization. Furthermore, in the cooperative network composed of Cullen, Karen Weber Fithian, Ashley R, Fithian, Asshley R and other scholars, all members have graduated from Baylor College of Medicine, and most of the scholars work in the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the United States.

4 Analysis of Focuses and Prospects in Chinese and Foreign Public Policy Implementation Publications

4.1 Focuses Analysis: Keyword Co-Occurrence Graph

Figure 2 shows the network of keyword co-occurrence of all Chinese PPI studies from 1998 to 2023. According to the above figure, the keywords of public policy implementation research can be roughly divided into three categories: policy, information and data, and living conditions. The core keywords in the policy category are public policy, and the extra nodes that are extended from the core are public management, citizen

attention to the two types of research on policy implementation and planning implementation, but for the detailed studies of these two keywords, the overall research conclusions are different.

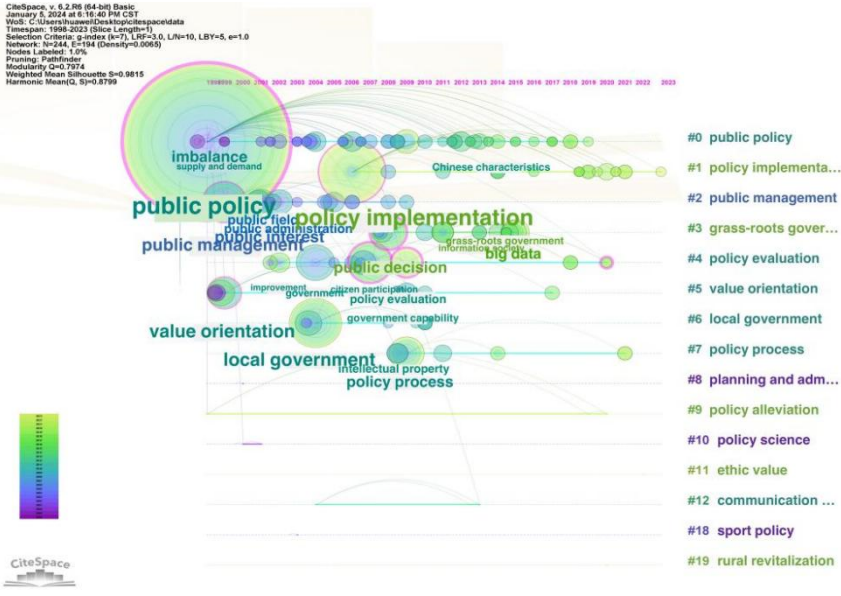


Fig. 3. Timeline graph of public policy implementation research in CNKI

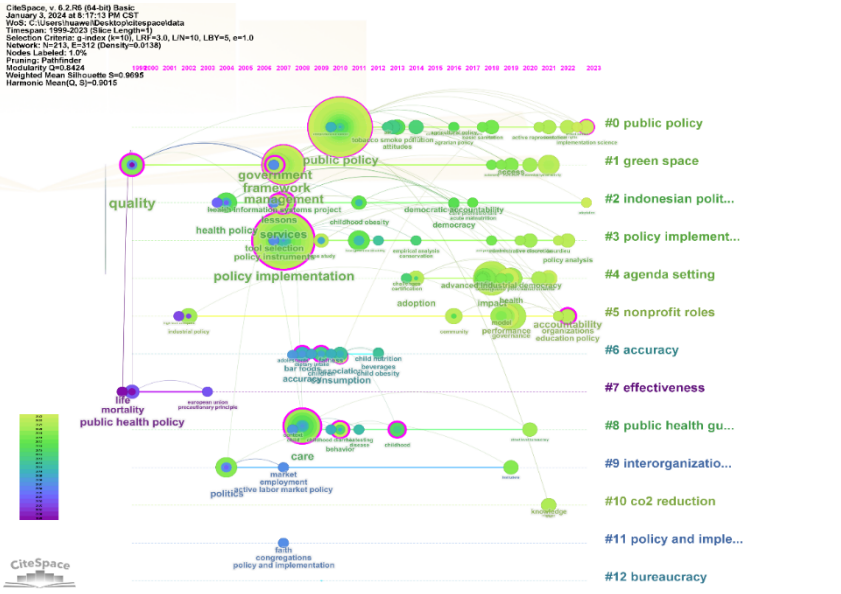


Fig. 4. Timeline graph of public policy implementation research in WOS

First, for policy implementation, Chinese research emphasizes the accuracy of policy implementation²⁷, and suggests that there will be obstacles and problems such as fake implementation [28]. On the other hand, some foreign scholars point out that a policy environment full of supportive and encouraging mechanisms can effectively improve the efficiency and accuracy of policy implementation [29]. Others create specific model hypotheses for the qualitative improvement of policies.[30]

Furthermore, for policy implementation, Chinese scholars summarize the six modes of agenda setting [31] in which different modes reflect different levels of citizen participation, and propose that policy agenda setting is the most realistic way to demonstrate the country's political rights and governance. Also, it has to meet the preferences of the country's governance goals [32]. While most of the foreign research stand at the perspective of the media, and believe that the mass media determines the agenda planning of each political campaign, and at the same time affects the salience of attitudes towards political issues [33].

4.3 Prospects Analysis: Burst Term Analysis

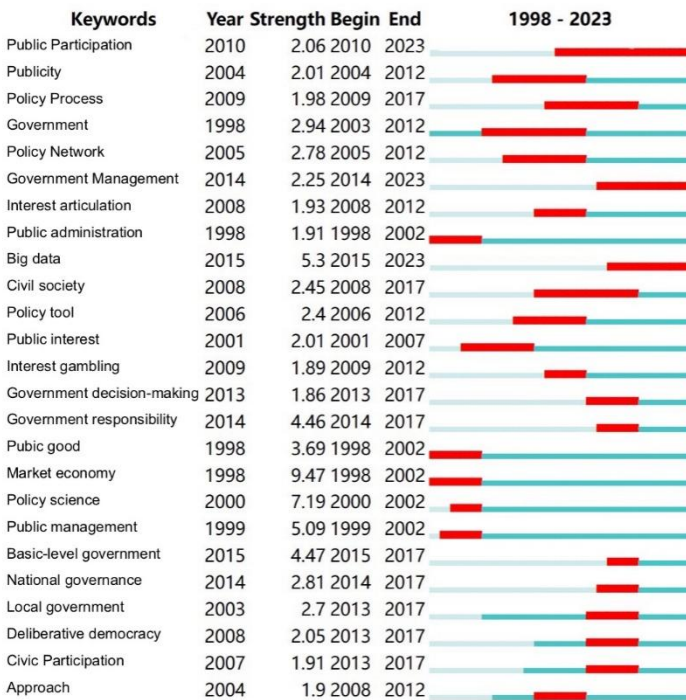


Fig. 5 Chart of burst terms in CNKI public policy implementation research

Burst term analysis can demonstrate the trend of public policy implementation research in both China and foreign countries. If there is a dramatic surge of a term in a short period of time, it can suggest that the topic may have formed a research hotspot in the

field during that period. Figure 5 lists the top 25 burst terms on Chinese public policy implementation research, among which the burst terms public policy implementation and policy evaluation continue to emerge until 2023, indicating that Chinese PPI research has focused on government governance methods and the implementation of public policies in the past decade, and has continued to improve and supervise policies, which may also become an evolving research trend in the future.

Figure 6 shows the graph of burst terms from 1998 to 2023, with the red part representing the start and end time of the burst word. The results show that physical activity, management, impact and barriers have always been the research hotspots in the field of public policy research in foreign countries, and continue to appear until 2023. The burst terms that appear for the longest period of time are local government, public health policy and European union, all of which have become hot topics in foreign PPI research at different times. In addition, most of the 23 emergent words listed in Figure 6 are related to public health. Consequently, it can be found that foreign scholars have been paying attention to public health policy study in previous research, and it may become the main research trend in the field of public policy research in the future.

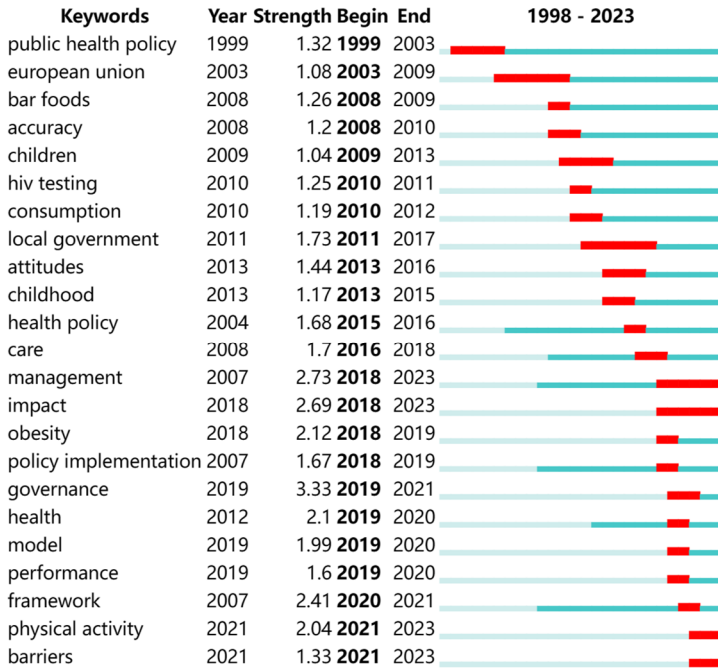


Fig. 6. Burst terms from WOS public policy implementation research

5 Conclusions

This article uses Citespace software to systematically review the academic journals of Chinese and foreign public policy implementation research from 1998 to 2023. And the results show that:

(1) The number of Chinese academic journals published on PPI research has exceeded the PPI research literature published in foreign journals.

(2) The focuses of domestic PPI research focus more on theoretical learning and policy setting or planning, while foreign research on public policy focuses on public health policy making and the influence of the media on the policy agenda.

(3) In the field of Chinese public policy research, there is not much cooperation between scholars. Most of them produce academic output and research individually, and some of the collaboration networks of scholars are mostly about 2 people. On the contrary, there are many and very close cooperative networks in the field of public policy implementation research abroad, and the cooperative networks often contain more than 4 scholars.

This article has important significance for the study of China's PPI. First of all, this paper systematically sorts out and compares the overall situation of Chinese and foreign PPI research through knowledge diagrams, bibliometrics and other methods, providing a new perspective for understanding the logic of Chinese and foreign policy implementation research and development. Secondly, this article summarizes the future research focuses and prospects on PPI, specifically on government governance methods, public policy implementation, policy improvement, and public health. Finally, China's PPI research should be continued based on the context of the times with Chinese characteristics, and adopt and learn from the focuses and prospects in foreign research fields, in order to deepen the Chinese public policy implementation and discipline construction, and further enhance the international academic influence of Chinese PPI disciplines.

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