

Beyond the numbers: Unveiling trends in homeownership research



Mulyadi Mulyadi^a   | Nur Zaimah Ubaidillah^b 

^aUniversitas Sebelas Maret, Faculty of Economics and Business, Surakarta, Indonesia.

^bUniversiti Malaysia Sarawak, Faculty of Economics and Business, Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia.

Abstract Homeownership has served as a pivotal tool in poverty alleviation research for an extended period. Its scope of observation has broadened, encompassing various dimensions such as social welfare, subjective well-being, and persisting inequality concerns, which continue to be of significant interest today. In this study, we conducted a bibliometric analysis focusing on the impact of homeownership as a means of household wealth accumulation, examining articles spanning from 2000 to 2021. While bibliometric reviews have been prevalent for over four decades, their application in the context of homeownership studies has been notably absent. Leveraging VOSviewer V.1.6.16, we analyzed 116 articles sourced from the Scopus database. Through cooccurrence analysis, we identified emerging areas of interest that can be concurrently explored alongside homeownership, including intergenerational transfers, borrowing constraints, capital gains, cultural economics, and wealth inequality. Additionally, our findings indicate a relative dearth of homeownership studies focused on developing countries, prompting inquiry into the suitability of employing homeownership as a poverty reduction strategy in such contexts.

Keywords: bibliometric analysis, poverty alleviation, wealth accumulation, research streams

1. Introduction

Homeownership has long been a focal point of research in poverty alleviation. The earliest Scopus-indexed article on homeownership, penned by Branson (1923), delves into the interplay between homeownership, farmland, and national stability in Germany. Fast forward seven decades and a paradigm emerged advocating asset ownership, including housing, as a solution to poverty. Sherraden and Johnson's (1992) groundbreaking work introduced the Asset-based Welfare theory, advocating for low-income and minority households to pursue homeownership as a means to break free from poverty, rather than relying solely on government-provided income subsidies. This period marked the inception of a burgeoning field of homeownership studies.

Today, the scope of observation surrounding homeownership has become broader and more diverse. In some studies, homeownership is positioned as a causal factor, while in others, it is examined as an effect. For instance, it is explored as a causal factor in wealth distribution, wealth accumulation, unemployment, and financial behavior (Green-Pimentel & Meikle, 2014; Lersch & Dewilde, 2018; Percoco, 2015), as well as economic hardship (Zhang & Lerman, 2019), among other facets. Conversely, research by Maroto and Severson (2020) investigates homeownership preferences among younger generations, while Adawiyah (2015) and Syahrial and Nazara (2006) focus on the sociodemographic factors influencing homeownership.

Furthermore, homeownership has been examined from various angles, including social welfare, subjective well-being, and inequality, all of which continue to be pertinent areas of interest today. From a social welfare standpoint, homeownership has been scrutinized in relation to key indicators such as the labor market and unemployment (Akpanjar, 2014; Borg & Brandén, 2018; Broulíková et al., 2020; Brunet & Havet, 2019; Caliendo et al., 2015; Chevalier & Lardeux, 2017; Guler & Taskin, 2018; Munch et al., 2011; Sinanovic, 2018; Taşkın & Yaman, 2016), wealth accumulation (Boehm & Schlottmann, 2008; Kaas et al., 2019; Kamal, 2014; Killewald & Bryan, 2016; Liao & Zhang, 2021; Rossi & Sierminska, 2018; Shlay, 2006; Turner & Luea, 2009; Wainer & Zabel, 2019), economic inequality and spatial welfare (Arundel & Ronald, 2021; Choi et al., 2019; Jacob & Munasib, 2020; Wang et al., 2020). It is well-established that homeownership yields a positive and substantial impact on social welfare, notably through increased savings (Jayathirtha & Fox, 1996; Lersch, 2014; Lersch & Dewilde, 2018; Sodini et al., 2016), capital gains (Mostafa & Jones, 2019), and a reduction in wealth disparities among property owners (Kuebler, 2013; Ren, 2020).

Given the abundance of research on homeownership, there arises a need for a study that maps out this field. This study addresses the need for a comprehensive assessment of homeownership research, aiming to delineate well-explored areas and areas warranting further investigation. A literature review study is crucial in this regard. Regrettably, despite



extensive author searches, we have yet to come across a study that provides detailed recommendations for contemporary and popular homeownership research topics. This study may, therefore, be one of a few to present a comprehensive review of the impact of homeownership on household wealth, offering an additional perspective on poverty, achieved through the application of bibliometric analysis.

We posit that the exploration of homeownership holds significance across various dimensions of human existence. This belief underpins the observed variations in literature review studies pertaining to homeownership. The scope of literature reviews on homeownership is notably wide-ranging. Therefore, identifying the literature, particularly those examining the impact of homeownership on family wealth as the approach to poverty alleviation, proves to be a considerable challenge. Our research endeavors to bridge this gap focus on 3 objectives:

1. Mapping of dominant institutions, countries, publishers, and authors.
2. Providing and mapping useful research streams for future investigations.
3. Identifying location gaps to ensure that the next phase of homeownership research supports broader prosperity attainment.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Data, Sources, and Data Collection

The primary data utilized in this study encompass all homeownership research conducted between 2000 and 2021. The selection of articles within this timeframe takes into account the factor of literature obsolescence. Glänzel and Schoepflin (1999) expound that the average lifespan of a reference in the field of economics and business falls between 10 and 11.5 years. Another technique for assessing a reference's eligibility involves calculating its half-life. This method, as outlined by Neerhof (2006), yields varying mean reference ages. Consequently, to encompass a broad spectrum of potentially relevant homeownership studies that may still be cited today, the study period is determined based on the mean reference ages stipulated by Glänzel and Schoepflin (1999), plus an additional ten years.

All data references cited in this study originate from reputable sources. For this specific case, Scopus was chosen as the data source due to its citation data structure, which can be readily processed by VOSviewer for subsequent bibliometric analysis. Although VOSviewer is also compatible with citation data from Web of Science, Dimensions, and PubMed, these four database sources employ distinct data structures. Combining all four sources for a single run of bibliometric analysis in VOSviewer tends to be intricate (Visser et al., 2021). Furthermore, Scopus offers a broader scope than The Centre for Science and Technology Studies (CWTS) Web of Science, particularly in terms of references and citations (Visser et al., 2021).

Conversely, translating data from Scopus to Dimensions and PubMed proves challenging due to the ambiguous nature of various article types in Dimensions. Therefore, this study exclusively selected articles available on Scopus. The articles were gathered in adherence to The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) protocol, which provides a rigorous procedure. The search for the compilation of homeownership articles in the Scopus database was conducted utilizing the advanced search feature, employing keywords specified for title, abstract, and keywords fields, as follows (Figure 1):

Figure 1 Keyword Search Articles in Scopus Database.

```
(( TITLE-ABS-KEY ( HOMEOWNERSHIP )) OR ( TITLE-ABS-KEY ( "HOME OWNERSHIP" )) OR ( TITLE-ABS-KEY ( HOME AND OWNERSHIP )) OR ( TITLE-ABS-KEY ( "HOUSING TENURE" ))) AND (( TITLE-ABS-KEY ( POVERTY )) OR ( TITLE-ABS-KEY ( WEALTH )) OR ( TITLE-ABS-KEY ( "HOUSEHOLD WEALTH" )) OR ( TITLE-ABS-KEY ( "WEALTH INEQUALITY" ))) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2021 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2020 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2019 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2018 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2017 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2016 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2015 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2014 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2013 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2012 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2011 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2010 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2009 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2008 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2007 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2006 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2005 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2004 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2003 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2002 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2001 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2000 )) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( PUBSTAGE , "FINAL" )) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( DOCTYPE , "AR" )) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( LANGUAGE , "ENGLISH" )) AND ( EXCLUDE ( LANGUAGE , "FRENCH" )) OR EXCLUDE ( LANGUAGE , "GERMAN" )) OR EXCLUDE ( LANGUAGE , "SPANISH" )) AND ( EXCLUDE ( SRCTYPE , "K" ) OR EXCLUDE ( SRCTYPE , "D" )) AND ( EXCLUDE ( SUBJAREA , "SOCI" ) OR EXCLUDE ( SUBJAREA , "MEDI" ) OR EXCLUDE ( SUBJAREA , "ENVI" ) OR EXCLUDE ( SUBJAREA , "ARTS" ) OR EXCLUDE ( SUBJAREA , "PSYC" ) OR EXCLUDE ( SUBJAREA , "NURS" ) OR EXCLUDE ( SUBJAREA , "IMMU" ) OR EXCLUDE ( SUBJAREA , "AGRI" ) OR EXCLUDE ( SUBJAREA , "ENGI" ) OR EXCLUDE ( SUBJAREA , "MULT" ) OR EXCLUDE ( SUBJAREA , "BIOC" ) OR EXCLUDE ( SUBJAREA , "EART" ) OR EXCLUDE ( SUBJAREA , "ENER" ) OR EXCLUDE ( SUBJAREA , "NEUR" ) OR EXCLUDE ( SUBJAREA , "COMP" ) OR EXCLUDE ( SUBJAREA , "DENT" ) OR EXCLUDE ( SUBJAREA , "MATH" ) OR EXCLUDE ( SUBJAREA , "PHAR" ) OR EXCLUDE ( SUBJAREA , "HEAL" ) OR EXCLUDE ( SUBJAREA , "PHYS" ))
```

Source: Author's search query in Scopus Database.

To ensure that the selection of articles aligned with the chosen research theme, specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied. The initial inclusion criterion pertains to the publication timeframe, limited to the period from 2000 to

