




A bibliometric and scientometric: analysis towards global pattern and trends related to aerosol and precipitation studies from 2002 to 2022

Roshini Praveen Kumar¹ · Brema J.¹ · Cyril Samuel¹ · Sneha Gautam¹ 

Received: 22 September 2022 / Accepted: 23 November 2022 / Published online: 30 November 2022
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Abstract

The recent heavy downpours in specific regions have initiated several studies on the relationship between aerosol and precipitation. The increase in pollution/population and the recent outbreak of diseases and environmental deterioration have been preceded by an increase in aerosol concentration, which would be directly related to precipitation. Considering this background, several studies are being conducted to define a clear relationship between aerosol concentration and precipitation. With the current need to understand aerosol and its characteristics to reduce pollution, research in this domain has significantly increased followed by the demand for control measures and impacts on human health and the environment. A systematic literature review is followed to aid future researchers in mapping the studies and themes related to aerosol and precipitation. Some studies have shown the direct effect of aerosols on the reduction in land surface temperature, by reflection and indirectly enhancing the cloud reflectivity. Even though the research studies conducted in the past have not achieved the perfect correlation of airborne particles and their influence on precipitation around the globe. Our study attempts to show the bibliometric literature review of aerosol and precipitation studies. The mapping stated four conceptual structures of different theme domains: Sampling and retrieval methods, Characterization and effects, Assessment studies, Health and environmental impacts, and Modeling and measures. Lastly, the mapping identified the limitations of the research review, and the scope of future studies to be carried out.

Keywords Aerosols · Precipitation · Air pollution · Bibliometric · Scientometric

Introduction

Aerosols are minute solid particles or liquid droplets scattered in the atmosphere mostly by massive fires, volcanic eruptions, dust storms, and active chemical strains seen in water droplets (Acker et al. 2014; Bisht et al. 2022; Naqvi et al. 2022). Aerosols have become a crucial topic as emerging apprehension on the deterioration of air quality due to pollution concerning climate change as they have been evidently influencing the climate and health (IPCC 2013; Huang 2018; Sweileh et al. 2018; Sun et al. 2020; Han et al. 2021). Aerosols tend to scatter and absorb light, causing a direct effect and a radiative balance; indirect effects

influence precipitation during cloud formation (IPCC 2013; Musthaq et al. 2022). Estimating the significance and proportion of radiative forces and effects is a tedious task. Aerosols have been affecting the hydrological cycle, during the condensation process of the clouds, they are also influential during the cloud albedo process, and the potential emitting property of the aerosols which brightens the clouds either for short or long-wave radiation (Graedel et al. 1993; Masih et al. 2019; Nepolian et al. 2021). There may be changes in evaporation when solar radiation and temperature affect the aerosols and impact the hydrological cycle (Ramanathan et al. 2007; Gautam et al. 2021). Aerosol and its interaction with monsoons, convey the natural aerosols as intrinsic elements that derive global climate change and change in land use by external forcing (Li et al. 2016). Cao et al. (2012) found that particulate matter caused during the combustion of fossil fuel which has a detectable impact on health. The optimal yield of rice and wheat is affected by 45% and 75% due to an increase in regional haze pollution in China (Tie

✉ Sneha Gautam
gautamsneha@gmail.com

¹ Department of Civil Engineering, Karunya Institute of Technology and Sciences, Coimbatore 641117, India

et al. 2016). Many such examples are spiraling global challenges around aerosol which is one of the prominent reasons that affects human health and global warming. The increase in mortality rates and cardiopulmonary disease is the result of deteriorating air quality due to aerosols (Krewski et al. 2009, Lepeule et al. 2012, Burnett et al. 2014; Gautam et al. 2020; Kumar et al. 2022). Lelieveld et al. (2015) postulated that by the year 2050, the premature mortality deaths caused by the outdoor PM_{2.5} would be around 6.2 million annually with an estimated present-day death of 3.15 million deaths annually. Human activities increase the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere by 30%, because of the radiative forces (Santer et al. 1995). Even research by Liu and Rodriguez, 2005 stated that the average global temperature was found to be increased by 2.15–3.4 °C due to the increased concentration of carbon dioxide. As a result of the anthropogenic influences, the poles at the Arctic are affected severely (Gillett et al. 2008). The effect of aerosols and greenhouse gases are also quite contrary to each other. The water vapors, methane, etc., block infrared radiation beyond the atmospheric layer, because of the initial involvement of greenhouse gases, which causes an increase in the surface temperature of the planet (Ehhalt et al. 2001). There are several emerging research to tackle the growing problems in regional and spatial scales, hence understanding aerosol in the area of the Earth system, especially with precipitation can provide sustainable development for our planet (Cao 2017). Few researchers (Trenberth (2020); Aryasree et al. 2020), reported that studies emphasized the importance of the atmospheric aerosols, precipitation, and clouds for the earth's climate including energy and water cycles. The property of aerosol is to form an effective ice nuclei during the formation of convective clouds (Maheskumar et al. 2018). The ice particles are the main cause of warm rain with the cold-rain process during extreme rainfall events (Kumar et al. 2014; Maheskumar et al. 2018). Few updates observed by researchers (Khain et al. 2008; Lee et al. 2008; 2012) highlighted that the precipitation rate is one of the prime factors that influence the climate conditions based on aerosol loading. Li et al. (2011) also recorded that if the concentration of the aerosols is increased, it increases the precipitation content (higher water content) in the clouds with the development of thick and darker clouds. Stevens and Feingold (2009) reported the inadequacy of current tools, which equally contribute to the leading uncertainties in detecting the effects of aerosols on the environment. The studies also state that, the high-water content clouds leading to heavy precipitation in polluted locations are prone to floods in moist areas and droughts in dry areas, through which aerosols are indirectly linked with socioeconomic conditions. Hence, the following review attempts to assemble the different categories, research domains, and hotspots in the field of aerosol in the context of precipitation by

using bibliometric software, which provides a pathway for researchers to investigate and solve the growing pollution caused by the emissions of aerosols (primary or secondary aerosols), with new upgradation for the traditional research studies, which are solely the backbone for future methodologies developed by researchers working in this domain.

Research design and methodology

Bibliometric and text mining pools are systematic processes adapted by researchers to solve research queries (Ranjbari et al. 2022a, b, c, d; Ranjbari et al. 2022a; Ranjbari et al. 2022b; Ranjbari et al. 2022c; Ranjbari et al. 2022d; Ranjbari et al. 2021). In order to analyze the research-based out-turn by the researchers, stakeholders, and policymakers, bibliometric strategies are adopted (Ellegaard and Johan 2015). Considering this, the evaluation and the mapping of the overall potential for the research work carried out in the field integrated with aerosols and precipitation inculcate the answer to the first research question. The research focuses on the publication year, citations, keywords, co-authors, references, and organization of the papers. Bibliographic coupling is carried out where similar bibliographies are clustered based on their references which have been cited; this aggregation is one of the significant parts of the bibliometric analysis. The following procedure was carried out with our datasets for a sample of articles.

On the contrary, in our datasets, there are several occurrences of noun phrases. Therefore, the title and abstracts are text mined to extract these nouns and the phrases used by the authors to identify the main research fields. This was achieved when the data were analyzed (Waltman et al. 2010) based on the links generated during the co-occurrence analysis. The bibliometric and the text mining analyses provide the main research themes, emphasizing the potential research gaps and the future aspects that can be addressed in the coming years. This summarizes that the methodology answers the related research questions. The research framework design is shown in Fig. 1.

Sampling of the data

Systematic reviews channel the importance of well-structured scientific papers, including the publication years, citations, references, and keywords used by the authors, co-authors, countries, and organizations involved in structuring the literature. (Chowdhury et al. 2021, Zahedi et al. 2016). Based on this ideology, aerosol and precipitation were identified as the two concepts for creating the structure for the review. Secondary keywords like the combination of aerosol with respect to aerosol optical depth (AOD), humidity, temperature, and precipitation were used to extract more

Fig. 1 The framework of research



relevant articles from the Web of Science databases. The research seeks to cover all the streams related to aerosols, hence the search was not limited, the articles covered all the areas that have ever been on the Web of Science. The search string with keywords was extracted by title and abstracts of the articles in the Web of Science database. The download articles were 23,546 including all reviews and articles published during 2002 to 2022, non-English materials were not

included. Table 1 summarizes the collection process of the data.

Analysing the sampled data

Scientific mapping is an extensive area of study where statistical tools evaluate performance broadly, and bibliometric analysis is one of the statistically prominent tools.

Table 1 Process of data sampling for VOSviewer

Search string	“Aerosol” OR “Precipitation” OR “AOD” “Aerosol and Precipitation”
Secondary keywords	OR “Aerosol and Relative Humidity” OR “Aerosol and precipitation” OR
Used for data extraction	“Relative Humidity and Precipitation” OR “Aerosol and AOD” OR “AOD and Aerosol” OR “AOD and precipitation” OR “AOD and temperature” OR “AOD and relative humidity”, “Aeronet”
Fields mined	Documents, Author keywords, and keyword plus, Organization, Countries
Database	Web of Science
Search date	February 22, 2022
Language	Only in English materials
Inclusion Criteria	Peer-reviewed journal articles, limited to 2002–2022
Final samples	23,546 articles

Potential and effective scrutiny of links based on the journals, keywords, citations, and co-citations networks (Feng et al. 2017), provides insight to the scientists and researchers to come across current trends and future aspects of research. The software used for this research is VOSviewer. VOSviewer is a software tool to analyze and visualize bibliometric data in order to understand the trends, domains, hotspots, and themes of a particular study; VOS means ‘visualization of similarities’ (Van Eck and Waltman 2010). VOSviewer inherits the smart local moving algorithm introduced by Waltman and Van Eck (2013). The limitation of VOSviewer observed in our datasets is the complex functionality that is restricted to manage large datasets and is less interactive.

Results and discussion

The section below gives the results from the text mining and the bibliometric analysis. This fills the first and second research questions.

Bibliometric indicators

Spatial and geographical distribution of the articles

The distribution of articles is based on the activities of the published articles that are geographically situated across the countries. These spatial distributions of the articles are in the research context, including aerosol and precipitation from 2002 to 2022. Our analysis accounts for 144 countries that

have researched in the following field of aerosol and precipitation and 100 countries which are in a collective network for co-authorships. Figure 2 provides a pictorial representation of the co-authorship network based on the research that includes aerosol and precipitation. The nodes and the size of nodes signify the number of articles, a country publishes. The thickness of the link illustrates the potential co-authorship between each country. Table 2 lists the top 10 countries with the number of articles published. The number of links indicates the collaborating countries and the total link strength indicates the entire number of the co-authored with the citations of their articles.

Table 2 has categorized values of the collaborations, co-authorships, citations, and published documents from the top 10 countries working in aerosols in the context of precipitation. The USA ranks first in all four categories with 8486 articles, 323,157 citations, 94 collaborating links with other countries, and 7714 co-authorships. China has been marked second in the categories with published articles with 6087, total citations of 130,378, and 6087 co-authorships. England has secured second place with 85 co-author countries. Germany ranks third in all four categories with 2342 articles, 85,291 citations with 4180 co-authorships, and 82 co-author collaboration links. India, France, Canada, Japan, South Korea, Italy, and Switzerland also appear in the top countries contributing to the following field. These link strengths interpret the collaborations among each country. Figure 2 displays that the USA has the most collaborations with 94 co-authorship countries, it has the most collaboration with China (1447 co-authorship), Germany (691 co-authorship), and

Fig. 2 The co-authorship network is based on countries for research related to aerosol and precipitation

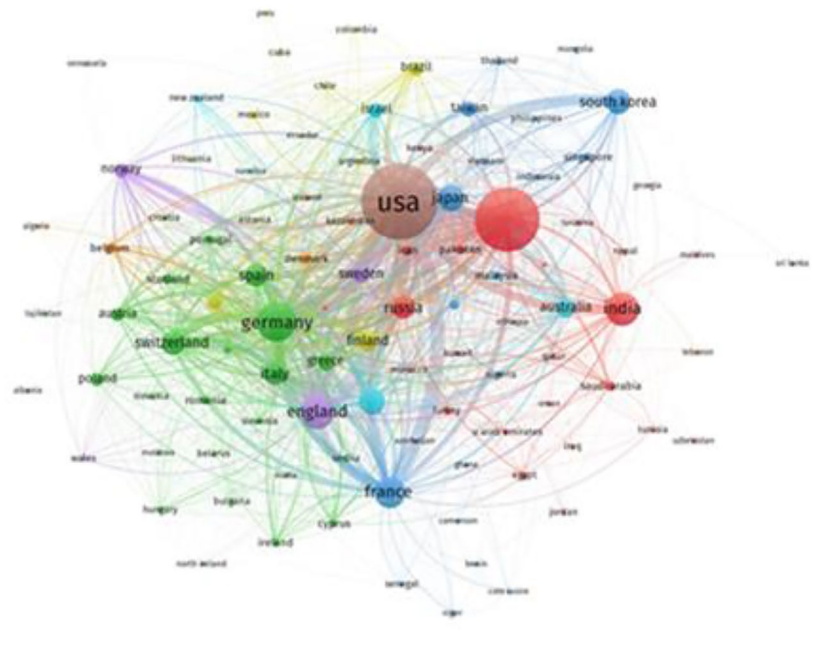


Table 2 The top 10 countries with number of co-authorships, co-author countries and the total number of citations of their research articles

Rank	Published articles (total documents)	Total no of citations	Co-author countries	Co-authorships
1	USA 8486	USA 323,157	USA 94	USA 7714
2	China 6087	China 130,378	England 85	China 6087
3	Germany 2342	Germany 85,291	Germany 82	Germany 4180
4	England 1874	England 69,828	France 77	England 3452
5	India 1727	France 50,220	China 75	France 2933
6	France 1514	Canada 42,676	Switzerland 71	Switzerland 2000
7	Canada 1084	Switzerland 35,447	Canada 67	Canada 1678
8	Japan 1062	India 32,453	Japan 65	Japan 1468
9	South Korea 961	Japan 28,434	India 64	India 1009
10	Switzerland 885	Italy 26,366	South Korea 51	South Korea 750

Table 3 Top 10 highly productive authors contributed in the domain of aerosols and precipitation

Authors	Documents	Co-authors	Total co-authors
Li, Zhanqing	117	126	386
Che, Huizhen	103	114	556
Zang, Xiaoye	94	103	555
Gua, Jianping	85	91	311
Wang, Yuesi	81	98	216
Wang, Jun	79	93	358
Sun, Yele	75	142	487
Xue, Yong	75	29	328
Gong, Wei	74	49	267
Reid, Jonathanas	74	21	81

Table 4 Top 10 highly influential authors in the domain of aerosol and precipitation

Authors	Citations	Co-authors	Total co-authors
Li, Zhanqing	5604	126	386
Rosenfeld, David	4303	74	150
Poeschl, Ulrich	3980	79	216
Zhang, Qiang	3787	33	51
Hsu, N.C	3552	19	58
Liu, Yang	3453	37	78
Zhang, Qiang	3263	33	81
Guo, Jianping	3170	98	311
Remer, I. A	3162	22	36
Feingold, Graham	3137	34	56

England (620 co-authorship). These countries also have the strongest links in the networks among themselves and other countries.

The most productive and influential authors

Researchers, especially in the academic field, have a prior role in development (Guo et al. 2021). The author with the highest number of articles is identified as the most productive author by the software, similarly, the author who has the most citations in our dataset is termed the most influential author. From our dataset, there are 638,887 contributing authors to the field of aerosol and precipitations, among them 4954 authors have contributed at least 5 articles. Table 3 and Table 4 list the authors with the most articles and citations respectively, doing so we interpret the author's productivity and influence with the total number of co-authors and co-authorship. According to our data, Zhanqing Li is the most productive and influential author with 117 articles and 5604 citations.

The influential and productive core journal

Two thousand six hundred fifty-four articles have been published in 570 journals related to aerosols and precipitation. To scrutinize our dataset, we have considered only those journals that had at least 5 articles published. Figure 3 and Fig. 4 represent the top journals based on the number of articles published and citations to their articles. From these figures, the *Journal of Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics* ranks first with the most published articles, i.e., 2415, and the most cited articles with 93,689 citations. The *Journal of Geophysical Research* (1633 published articles, 73,242 citations) and the atmospheric environment (1633 published articles, and 47,224 citations), hold the second and third productive and influential journals. There is a significant gap between the remaining journals based on their published articles and citations. Based on the retrieved data from 2002 to 2022, it is evident that these are considered to be the most influential and productive journals, as they contributed to publishing research related to aerosols and precipitations.

Fig. 3 The top 10 most productive journals in reference to the articles published

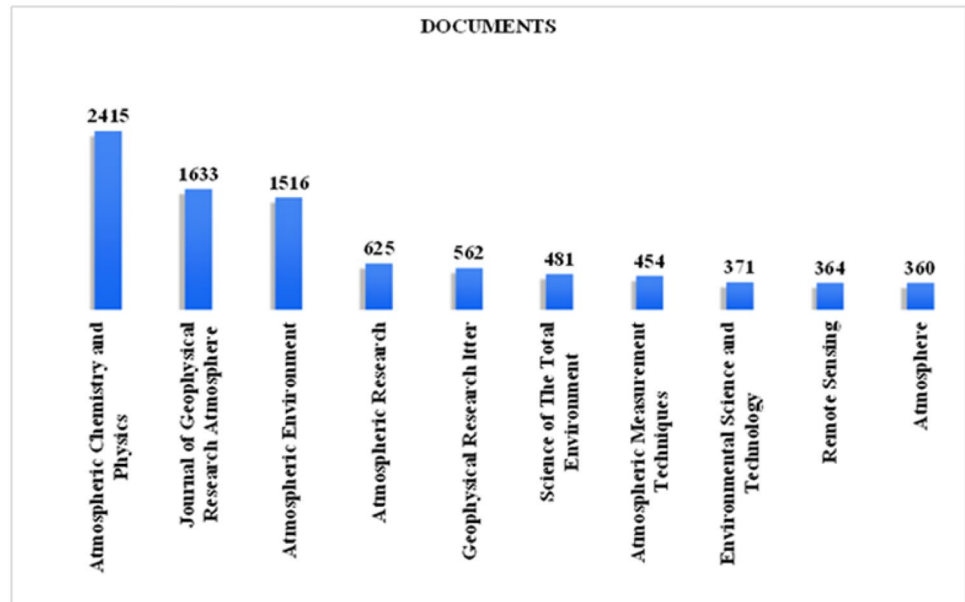
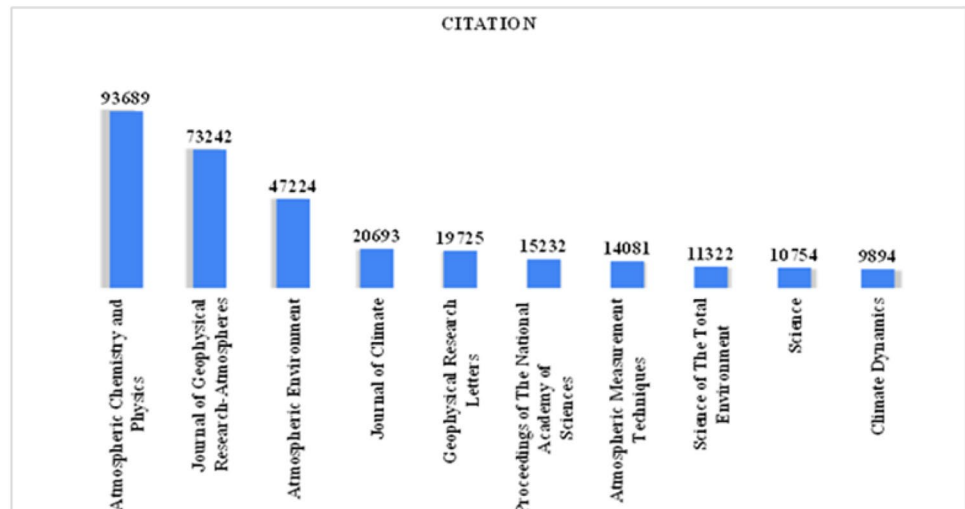


Fig. 4 The top 10 most influential journals in reference to the articles cited



Articles

This section delivers two main analyses. Based on article citations and their bibliographic coupling.

Influential articles in the research area of aerosol and precipitation Among various approaches, evaluating the numerous times an article has been cited related to a particular domain of research would result in interpreting the influence of an article (Merigó et al. 2015). Likewise, Table 5 lists the top 10 most cited articles on the research of aerosol and precipitation. The most influential article in our dataset is with citation of 2160, research conducted by Ramanathan and Carmichael (2008) that has focused on the regional distribution based on the high absorption combination aligned with the solar irradiance and the intermixing of the aerosols with

the emitted black carbons article causing the melting of glaciers and snowpacks which can eventually affect the hydrological cycle. Similarly, the second most influential article with 1372 citations is based on the importance of aerosol interference in public health, climate, and the biosphere. The research mostly studies the quantification and the identification of biological particles and carbonaceous compounds by fine particles in the ambient air, and how these airborne solid and liquid particles would affect the hydrological cycle and atmospheric circulation Pöschl (2005). These articles mainly focus on how the climate and health would be affected when these aerosols interact with pollutants, especially fine particulate matter. The third article with 1109 citations by Levy et al. (2013), was based on introducing the algorithm that would use MODIS-observed Spectral reflectance to retrieve aerosol optical depth and aerosol size parameters, reduction

Table 5 The top 10 highly cited research in the domain of aerosol and precipitation

Rank	Author	Year	Title	Journal	Citation
1	Ramanathan, V	2008	Global and regional climate changes due to black carbon	Natural Geo Science	2160
2	Poschl, U	2005	Atmospheric aerosol: composition, transformation, climate and health effects	Angewandte Chemie-International Edition	1372
3	Levy, R.C	2013	The collection 6 Modis aerosol products over land and ocean	Atmospheric Measurement Techniques	109
4	Hansen, J	2005	Efficacy of climate forcings	Journal Of Geophysical Research-Atmospheres	864
5	Levy, R.C	2010	Global evaluation of the collection 5 Modis dark-target aerosol products over land	Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics	801
6	Ervens	2011	Secondary organic aerosol formation in cloud droplets and aqueous particles(aqsoa): a review of laboratory, field and model studies	Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics	726
7	Donner, Leo J	2011	The dynamical core, physical parameterizations, and basic simulation characteristics of the atmospheric component am3 of the gfdl global coupled model cm3	Journal of Climate	696
8	Despres, Viviane R	2012	Primary biological aerosol particles in the atmosphere: a review	Tellus Series B-Chemical and Physical Meteorology	674
9	Stevens	2009	Untangling aerosol effects on clouds and precipitation in a buffered system	Nature	673
10	Stier	2005	The aerosol-climate model echam5-ham	Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics	652

of the gap coverage, and location-specific (Land and Sea) for better visualizations. The retrieval methods would enhance the studies that require information regarding clouds and aerosols at 3 km resolution. The studies comparing climate-forcing agents responsible for climate change use a global climate model to analyze the effectiveness. Hansen et al. (2005) research provides insights on anthropogenic tropospheric O₃ and Black Carbon (BC) snow albedo effect cause instant warming and sea ice loss in the Arctic, the study also evidences the interference of the greenhouse that could increase the Hadley circulation in the models that could cause increase rainfalls in the intertropical convergence zones and Easter parts of the continents, and other model simulations are discussed in this research article. Other articles that secure a fifth (801 citations), sixth (726 citations), seventh (696 citations), and tenth rank (652 citations) contribute to retrievals (levy et al. 2010), modeling studies based on simulation (Ervens et al. 2011), and parameterizations of aerosols-cloud properties based on their characteristics like the global coupled model (Donner et al. 2011). Introducing aerosol-climate modeling system ECHAM5-HAM, for malleable microphysical approach for wide studies related to climate regimes (Stier et al. 2005). The research related to understanding the effects of aerosols on clouds and atmospheres and health impacts made the articles by Després et al. (2012) and Stevens and Feingold (2009) rank the eighth and ninth most influential articles with 674 and 673 citations in our datasets. The *Journal of Atmospheric Chemistry and*

Physics has three articles that appear influential in arena of precipitation and aerosols.

Additionally, the *Journal Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics* is considered a pre-eminent journal with three of its articles in the top 10 spots securing its status as the most productive and most influential journal.

Bibliographic coupling of articles The bibliographic coupling is exercised to categorize relevant themes under aerosol and precipitations based on their shared references. To understand the entire research from our data set we set at least one common reference from 23,546 articles (research and reviews) which gave us 20,469 published articles to scrutinize the themes. Figure 5 gives the pictorial representation of the articles clubbed in 4 specific clusters. The clusters are differentiated by the colors that symbolize different themes. Each cluster has similar references which makes one know a similar type of research is found in that particular cluster. The size of each bubble interprets as the total number of citations of the corresponding articles, and the links between each bubble define the article's co-occurrences. The top 10 most cited articles of each category are listed in Tables 6, 7, 8, 9.

The articles under red clusters majorly focus on the retrieval of aerosol optical depth (AOD) using sensors (Moderate-resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer), based on spectral reflectance over different surface types for better visualization and to provide advanced information on clouds and

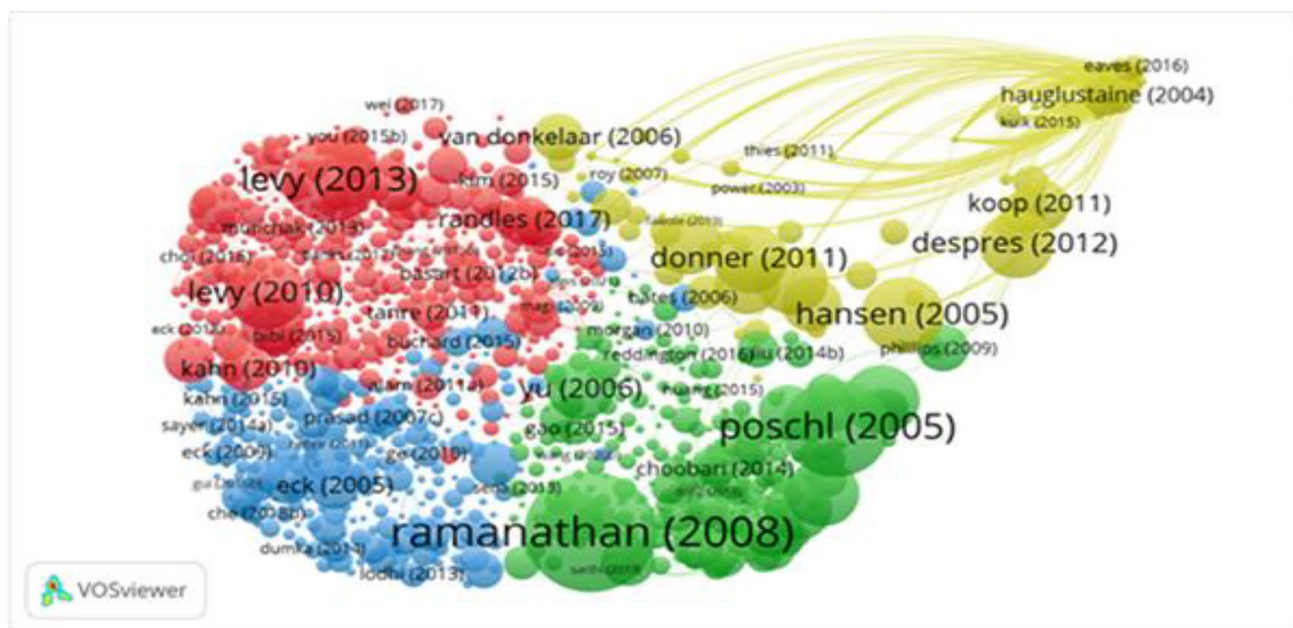


Fig. 5 Distribution of the group of clusters based on their category

Table 6 Highly cited articles from the Red clusters

Retrieval, sampling, and analyses (remote sensing and sensors) (RED)

Reference	Article citation	Title
Levy et al. (2013)	1092	The collection 6 MODIS aerosol products over land and ocean
Levy et al. (2010)	801	Global evaluation of the collection 5 MODIS dark-target aerosol products over land
Remer et al. (2008)	515	Global aerosol climatology from the MODIS satellite sensors
Randles et al. (2017)	374	The MERRA-2 aerosol Reanalysis, 1980 Onward. Part 1: System Description and Data Assimilation evaluation
Sayer et al. (2014)	369	MODIS collection 6 aerosol products: Comparison between aqua's Deep blue target and merged data sets and usage recommendations

Table 7 Highly cited articles from the BLUE clusters

Physical–chemical characteristics and transportation of aerosol particles in the atmosphere (BLUE)

Reference	Article citation	Title
Eck et al. (2005)	333	Columnar aerosol optical properties at AERONET sites in central eastern Asia and aerosol transport to the tropical mid-pacific
Singh et al. (2004)	301	Variability of aerosol parameters over Kanpur, northern India
Ramanathan et al. (2007)	301	Atmospheric brown clouds: Hemispherical and regional variations in long range transport, absorption and radioactive forcing
Dey et al. (2004)	282	Influence of dust storms on the aerosol optical properties over the Indo-Gangetic basin
Che et al. (2014)	210	Column aerosol optical properties and aerosol radiative forcing during a serious haze-fog month over north China plain in 2013 based on ground-based sun photometer

the interactions with the aerosols (Levy et al. 2013; Remer et al. 2008). Further research in this category is based on advancements in comparative studies, categorical analysis

using Modern-Era Retrospective Analysis for Research and Application-version 2, Goddard Earth Observing System-version 5, Aerosol Robotic Network, etc., to assimilate the

Table 8 Highly cited articles from the green cluster

Impacts of aerosols on climate and health (GREEN)		
Reference	Article citation	Title
Ramanathan and Carmichael (2008)	2160	Global and regional climate changes due to black carbon
Pöschl (2005)	1372	Atmospheric aerosol: composition, Transformation, climate and health effects
Yu et al. (2006)	555	A review of measurement- based assessments of the aerosol direct radiative effect and forcing
Stevens and Feingold (2009)	673	Untangling aerosol effects on clouds and precipitation in a buffered system
Ervens et al. (2011)	726	Secondary organic aerosol formation in cloud droplets and aqueous particles(aqSOA): a review of laboratory, field and model studies

Table 9 Highly cited articles from the yellow clusters

Stimulation models, predictive models and climate models (YELLOW)		
Reference	Article citation	Title
Hansen et al. (2005)	864	Efficacy of climate forcings
Stier et al. (2005)	652	The aerosol-Climate model ECHAM5-HAM
Donner et al. (2011)	696	The dynamical core, physical Parameterizations, and basic simulation characteristics of the atmospheric component AM3 of the GFDL Global Coupled Model CM3
Després et al. (2012)	674	Primary biological aerosol particles in the atmosphere: a review
Hunees et al. (2011)	573	Global dust model intercomparison in AeroCom phase I

AOD from location-specific platforms like the ground or remote sensing for initial evaluation of the AOD fields, study the aerosol emissions (Levy et al. 2010, Sayer et al. 2014, Randles et al. 2017). Table 6 listed the highly cited article from the red clusters.

The blue category has been categorized as the studies related to aerosol characteristics, based on physical and chemical characteristics, reactivity, and mobility analysis for various climatological parameters and regional conditions (Eck et al. 2005; Singh et al. 2004; Ramanathan et al. 2007; Dey et al. 2004; Che et al. 2014). Green clusters have a combination of impacts and analysis studies, which involve depositions of black carbons, anthropogenic pollutants, and particulate matters that would affect the hydrological cycle, the interference of solar radiance involving absorption, and cause heating at high elevations. The contribution of the biogenic, greenhouse and reactive trace gases would cause environmental and health effects when they are exposed to aerosols of a particular size, structure, concentrations, and chemical compositions (Pöschl 2005, Ramanathan and Carmichael 2008, Yu et al. 2006, Stevens and Feingold 2009, Ervens et al. 2011). The fourth category is the group of yellow clusters; their main focus is on the effectiveness of the climate models when exposed to biomass burnings, particulate organic matter, mineral dust, and other global aerosol compounds (Stier et al. 2005). General circulation models (CM3), ECHAM5-HAM (aerosol-climate modeling system),

atmospheric models and other such models are developed to understand the aerosols (types of aerosols, i.e., biological aerosol particles etc.) clouds interaction and climate variabilities caused by emerging issues of pollutions and global warming (Després et al. 2012, Donner et al. 2011, Hunees et al. 2011) are some related and highly cited works from this category.

Keyword analysis to derive hotspots from the research domain

A keyword analysis is considered to understand research domains, i.e., research tendencies and the most active hotspots from the collected data. The initial analysis extracted 46,012 keywords; of which 28,212 keywords were scrutinized after data cleaning. The relevant keywords, i.e., 6107 have been retrieved by selecting keywords with at least 5 occurrences, and visualized in the heat map, as seen in Fig. 6. The following area is where the current focus draws aerosol as the most frequently used keyword with 2059 frequencies. Particulate matter and Aerosol Optical Depth are ranked as the second and the third most occurred keywords, whereas precipitation keywords ranked fifth on the list with 382 frequencies. In order to ease the identification of the most occurred author keyword with 230 occurrences, they are listed in Tables 10 and 11.

Table 12 The most frequent pairs from the author's keywords excluding Aerosol

Keyword 1	Keyword 2	Frequency
Aerosol Optical Depth	MODIS	410
Aerosol Optical Depth	Particulate matter	280
AERONET	Aerosol Optical Depth	194
AERONET	MODIS	132
MODIS	Particulate matter	115
Air pollution	Particulate matter	106
Air quality	Particulate matter	60
Aerosol Optical Depth	Air pollution	58
Aerosol Optical Depth	Remote sensing	56
MODIS	Remote sensing	45

Text mining analyses: sectoral conceptualization

Text mining analyses are done only with abstracts and the title of the articles, Fig. 7 is extracted without cleaning the repetition and pronouns whereas, Fig. 8 clearly clusters the major themes. The first cluster represents the retrieval of

aerosols considering the Aerosol Optical Depth using remote sensing, the following cluster also reflects the mechanism, sampling studies, and spectroscopy absorption and reflectance studies related to aerosols. The major studies contributing to this cluster is the use of Moderate-resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) sensors. The Collection 6 (C6) algorithm is introduced to retrieve the aerosol size parameters and aerosol optical depth over various surface types. Based on this characterization studies on the residual biases that are observed like geometry, surface properties, and comparative studies related to the validation of approaches either by assumptions or certainty (Levy et al. 2010, Levy et al. 2013). This research theme also has reviews and research articles under comparison studies on several reanalysis systems based on their upgradation, i.e., Modern-Era Retrospective Analysis for Research and Applications, version 2 (MERRA-2), Goddard Earth Observing System, version 5 (GEOS-5), Integrated Earth System Analysis (IESA), prognostic model coupled to GOCART aerosol module. With the above references and observations, we understand that there is a need for precise evaluation, validation and simulation to understand the assimilation of

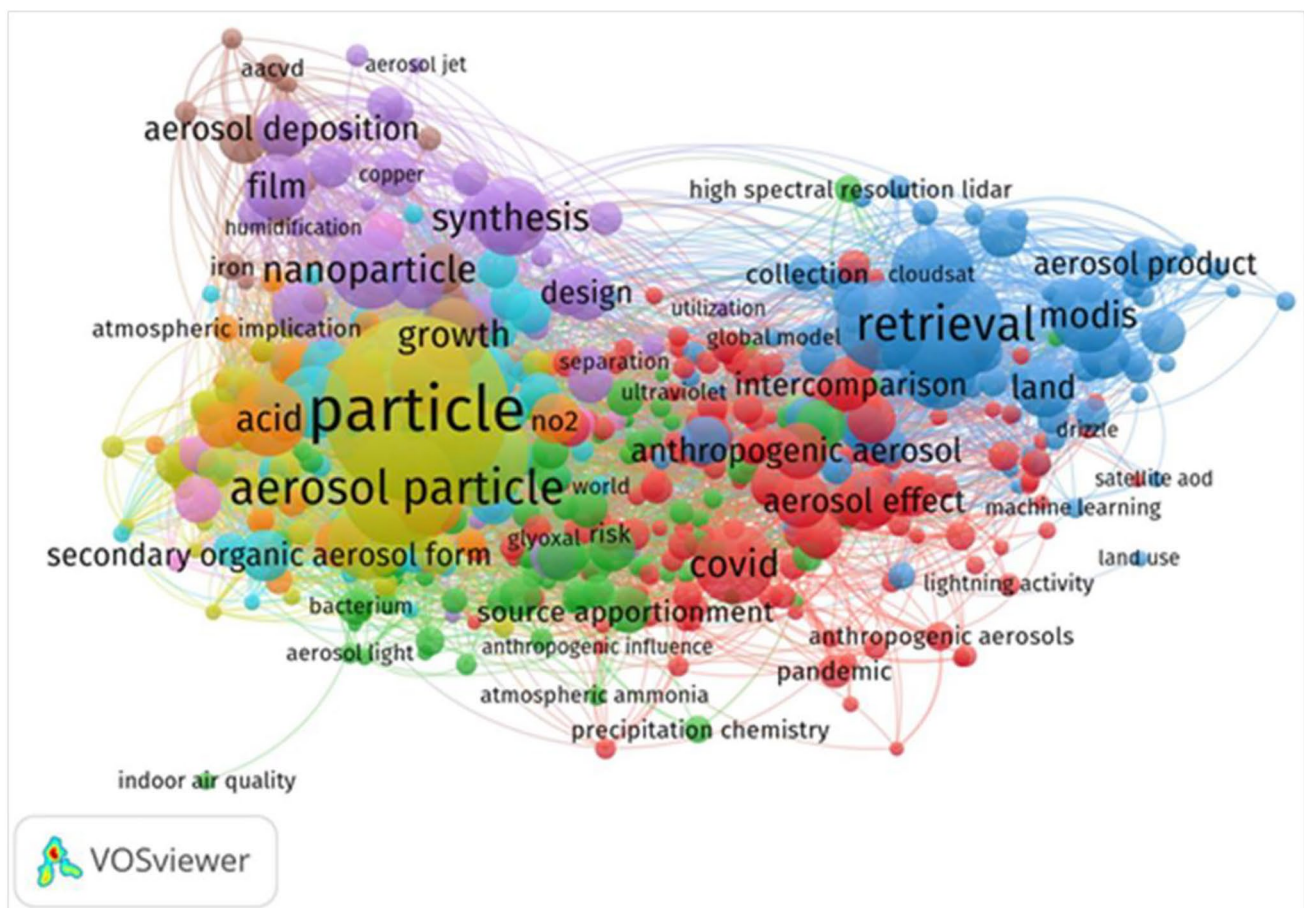


Fig. 7 Major research themes before data cleaning

on health effects and environmental degradation caused by the composition of atmospheric aerosols; and anthropogenic sources that emit black carbon. Additionally, Li et al. (2008) and Shiraiwa et al. (2017) have experimented based on the absorption of the aerosols and secondary organic aerosols and their scattering ability, transportation, and impacts on the medium of contact causing oxidation, biodegradation, etc. These are merely some examples from the research theme in cluster 3 related to aerosol and precipitation.

Cluster 4 documents the research area that involves the modeling and comparison studies based on global climate models, Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory models, General circulation models, and many more, that are modeled for atmosphere, ocean, sea ice, etc. Modeling aspects of these research are mainly focused recently as they primarily work on the basic simulation of these models that address the aerosol and the cloud interactions either based on chemical or physical interactions present in the stratosphere and troposphere. These studies also highlight the climate conditions and the predictive future of the global climate and consequences. Studies by Donner et al. (2011) and Hansen et al. (2005) have been the most cited and followed research in this domain. According to the thematic structure as mentioned in previous sections through bibliometric and text mining evaluations, the research questions were addressed.

Research gap and future direction

The outcome was to identify the research gaps for future direction in the research area of aerosol and precipitation. As highlighted by Yu et al. (2006), precise characterization and aerosol absorption remain a challenging task, and only a few articles address this kind of research, making this domain lesser addressed. Research strategies have to be well developed in terms of integration and measuring satellite observations, as this is an emerging domain for retrieval. There is a need to find verifications for a direct relationship between aerosol and precipitation since research in this hot-spot is based on probabilities and scenarios. Several studies on exposure due to aerosol leading to adverse health and climate conditions are available, but all the findings remain anticipated. Lastly, aerosol and precipitation are challenging research areas that involve high-level scientific cooperation and upgraded knowledge of machine learning and remote sensing techniques.

Hence, the need to have a proper characterization for the type of aerosol since preventive measures can be taken prior to the exposure of these air pollutants. Also, the involvement of control and management studies especially for less developed countries on exposure to anthropogenic aerosols either due to municipal waste, air pollution, water pollution,

and soil pollution, on human health deserves investigation in future research.

Conclusion

The study attempted to provide a comprehensive outline of aerosol in the context of precipitation by performing bibliometric and text mining analyses of 23,546 peer-reviewed journal articles from the Web of Science citation database. The outcome of the conducted analysis has led to the quantum of scientific production from the field of aerosol in the context of precipitation. The analysis has been carried out based on various indicators that mark the performance like geographical distribution of the articles, the most productive and influential authors, the most contributing journals and publications, with author keyword-based evaluation which has unravelled the research hotspots. The bibliometric coupling is performed in order to provide the 4 main clusters of research in the field of aerosol in context to precipitation which are identified as (a) Retrieval, Sample Analyses (Remote sensing and sensors), (b) Physical–Chemical Characteristics and Transportation of aerosol particles in the atmosphere, (c) Impacts of aerosols on climate and health, and (d) Simulation models, predictive models and climate models. Followed by the research domains namely, 1. Sampling and Retrieval methods, 2. Characterization and Effects 3. Assessment studies, health and environmental impacts, and 4. Modeling and Measures based on text mining on titles and abstracts of the target literature.

The insights obtained by our research would support future research to understand the research domains better and present a more precise visualization and direction for their further contribution in this field. Though there is much literature on the latest approaches, still there is a need for better bifurcation and characterization of the aerosols, their precise retrieval methods for obtaining an intelligible relationship between the aerosol and precipitation.

There are some drawbacks to this research:

1. We have taken the sample data from the Web of Science database, the incorporation of other databases like Scopus would have extended more reliable information on the present and future findings.
2. We have included only those documents in English; this would have caused some potentially specific studies involving aerosol and precipitation to be missing at the micro-level.
3. Our search only considered the articles published from 2002 to February 2022; there would be more extensive research articles and authors prior to 2002 and after February 2022.

Acknowledgements SG is thankful to Karunya Institute of Technology and Sciences Coimbatore for providing the required funding and support.

Data availability On request.

Declarations

Competing interests The authors declare no competing interests.

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