

Unexplored potential in accounting research

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to find new ideas within the trends of accounting research. Using a literature review approach, this study maps the composition of accredited accounting research publications at SINTA 2 from 2020 to 2022 and specifically focuses on topics, methods, journals, authors and universities. The results of this study show that there is an increase in the number of published accounting articles, but it is not commensurate with the number of citations used, indicating that there is a decline in the quality of publication. Research topics are dominated by financial aspects, with the least attention given to AIS (Accounting Information Systems). The majority of research methods employ archival approaches, with experimental methods being the least utilized. This study notes that accounting research trends continue to be centralized on the island of Java, indicating the inequality in the distribution of resources and educational infrastructure across Indonesia. In addition, the results also show that undergraduate students still dominate research authors. This analysis provides an overview of the urgency of educational development in Indonesia.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan ide-ide baru dalam tren penelitian akuntansi. Dengan menerapkan metode penelitian tinjauan literatur, studi ini memetakan komposisi publikasi penelitian akuntansi terakreditasi di SINTA 2 dari tahun 2020 hingga 2022, secara spesifik berfokus pada topik, metode, jurnal, penulis, dan universitas. Hasilnya menunjukkan peningkatan dalam penelitian akuntansi, tetapi tidak sebanding dengan jumlah sitasi, yang menunjukkan terjadinya penurunan kualitas publikasi. Topik penelitian umumnya didominasi oleh aspek keuangan, sedangkan topik sistem informasi akuntansi (SIA) paling sedikit diminati. Mayoritas metode penelitian menggunakan pendekatan arsip (archival) dan metode eksperimental paling sedikit digunakan. Studi ini mencatat bahwa tren penelitian akuntansi terus terpusat di pulau Jawa, menunjukkan adanya ketimpangan dalam distribusi sumber daya dan infrastruktur pendidikan di seluruh Indonesia. Selain itu, hasil penelitian juga menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa S1 masih mendominasi penulis penelitian. Analisis ini memberikan gambaran tentang urgensi pengembangan pendidikan di Indonesia.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the last few decades, research publications in academic journals and others have experienced a significant increase (Kraus et al., 2023), including research in the field of accounting (Paul and Criado, 2020). Accounting plays a crucial role in supporting financial, economic and decision-making functions in various sectors. Dynamic changes in the business environment and advances in technology have caused accounting research to continue to develop to overcome emerging challenges and understand their impact on business practices and policies. Gordon and Porter (2009) note that all academic accounting research explores how accounting influences the world around us and how the world influences accounting.

Research trends in accounting in recent decades reflect major changes in the way organizations manage financial information and involve accounting in strategic decision making. Every scientific research should be able to provide added value that is measured not only in financial metrics but also in social impact (Zhurakovska et al., 2022). Research studies published outside accounting journals focus on more specific topics and new methodologies that enable the identification of trends in accounting and non-accounting journals, thereby benefiting from a broader exchange of ideas (Marrone et al., 2020). In conducting a structured review of accounting research, it is impossible to investigate all accounting research, because the framework and methodological traditions used have their own uniqueness and informal rules (Massaro, Dumay and Guthrie, 2016). Researchers may find it challenging to always keep up with the developments in their fields of interest and recognize which relevant and interesting research questions still need to be answered (Petticrew and Roberts, 2008).

Current accounting research covers various themes reflecting the complexity of the global business. One of the most striking trends is the impact of information and communication technology on accounting practices, given the rapid development of digitization. Accounting research topics are divided into six categories: accounting information systems, audit, finance, managerial, taxation, and others (Zhurakovska et al., 2022). There is a paradigm shift from a focus on financial accountability towards an emphasis on sustainability, corporate social responsibility, and environmental impact. Recent focuses in accounting journals include

the relationship between environmental accounting and CSR, stakeholder theory, and relationships with society and government (Marrone et al., 2020). Therefore, current accounting trends include a new topic known as sustainable accounting. Companies are advised to incorporate sustainable accounting to be considered legitimate in their operations within the ecosystem and benefit from improved financial performance (Thottoli et al., 2022). The use of these topics aligns with the development of recent policies such as the implementation of the SDGs established by the UN General Assembly in 2015 based on the 2030 agenda (Griggs et al., 2013), and the Paris Climate Agreement, which came into force in November 2016 (Marrone et al., 2020).

From the perspective of topics, discussions in accounting and non-accounting journals are focused on more specific issues. Researchers tend to explore specific aspects of each topic, creating space for a deeper and more applicable understanding. For example, research on managerial accounting will specifically address management control systems, organizational performance assessment, compensation and incentive systems, organizational governance, value-based management, budgeting, balance scorecard, individual performance evaluation, and risk management. Through this more specific approach, contemporary accounting research enriches understanding of various important aspects in the evolving realm of accounting.

The development of accounting research extends not only in topics but also in the variety of research methods employed. The diversity of accounting research models corresponds to the diversity of research methods used. This study classifies research methods based on categorization, which divides accounting research methods into archival, analytical, experimental, and others. Through these four research methods, other branches of methods have emerged, both with qualitative and quantitative approaches. Qualitative accounting research yields broader findings because extensive descriptions in qualitative accounting research pose the challenge that some elements or aspects of findings may be extracted and included in the literature review of this journal. Examples of specific domains in accounting addressing qualitative research include the role of emotions, gender, technology, trust, reviews of specific accounting practices and principles, the role

of accountants, accounting research in specific regions, industries, and types of organizations, as well as the application of specific research methods, as the chosen methodology often makes the research more intriguing in this journal. This differs from quantitative accounting research because the measurement of phenomena is done rigorously in connection with theoretically derived hypotheses (Smith, 2019).

The system of scientific research indexing in Indonesia is managed by the Ministry of Research and Technology/National Research and Innovation Agency through SINTA (Science and Technology Index). SINTA is designed to record, index, and evaluate the performance of scientific research conducted by researchers in Indonesia, including journals, conferences, and other research outcomes. By indexing these scientific works, SINTA provides a comprehensive overview of the development of scientific research in various disciplines, especially in the field of accounting. This opens up opportunities to capture emerging issues and guide research focus in areas that may have significant future impact. In this literature review study, the researchers further explore trends in accounting research and identify interesting research directions in response to the continuously changing business dynamics. This study maps topics and methods that are trending in the field of accounting. Data is gathered from the SINTA platform, with a focus on journals indexed in SINTA 2 during the period from 2020 to 2022. This mapping analysis is divided into three main sub-sections: universities, authors, and journals.

The research findings discuss accounting research trends in Indonesia over the past three years. Despite an increase in the number of published articles, the results indicate a decrease in the number of citations and H-Index, suggesting that the quality of published articles may be insufficient. This indicates potential challenges in ensuring that research produced has a positive impact and strong relevance in both academic and industrial settings. Furthermore, the findings reveal that the trends in accounting research are still unevenly distributed, with university participation predominantly concentrated in Java, indicating inequality in the distribution of resources and research opportunities across Indonesia. The research also uncovers that undergraduate graduates still dominate as

research authors due to their larger numbers compared to master's and doctoral graduates, and some regulations requiring undergraduate graduates to publish.

The discovery that research topics mostly focus on financial accounting and are limited to AIS provides an insight that research tends to be centralized on specific aspects of accounting. This is because conducting research in AIS requires the integration of two disciplines, which can pose a challenge. Regarding research methods, it is found that archival methods are more commonly used, possibly due to their accessibility and stronger relevance to the field of accounting. On the other hand, experimental methods are less accessed, indicating a need for increased diversification of research methods.

To enhance the quality of accounting research in Indonesia, collaborative efforts between universities, government, and industry are needed to level research opportunities, improve the competence of researchers at the master's and doctoral levels and encourage the development of research on limited topics. This study provides valuable data for researchers, regulators, and practitioners, with the hope that it will guide further literature reviews. The insight into accounting research trends creates opportunities for researchers to explore areas that have not been extensively studied. For practitioners and regulators, it can offer new insights for developing education in Indonesia, particularly in the field of research.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study aims to identify dominant trends in accounting research, highlight methodological developments, and explore research topics. To achieve these objectives, this study employs a literature review method following the approach outlined by Massaro et al. (2016), which involves four major steps: identifying topics, searching and selecting relevant literature, analyzing relevant literature, and reporting review findings. Data collection is carried out by collecting accounting research articles through the website www.iarranking.id to assess their characteristics.

The Indonesia Accounting Research Ranking (IARR) is a website that ranks accounting research based on methods and topics. This website serves as a rich information source for researchers to find high-quality research in the field of accounting because it only presents accounting research articles with the index for accounting research SINTA 2.

IARR helps gain deep insights into the quality and relevance of research. The data used in this study covers the period from 2020 to 2022. IARR classifies all accounting research articles indexed by SINTA 2. From the accumulation results, there are 42 journals consisting of 2,505 articles. The classification process involves the characteristics of accounting publication articles to determine the topics and research methods. These characteristics include universities and authors involved to understand the distribution of accounting research development in Indonesia, while abstracts and keywords are used to determine the topics and methods employed. IARR summarizes these analysis results into three categories: universities, authors, and journals. The university analysis identifies the development of universities in Indonesia involved in accounting research. Author identification focuses on the composition of the most productive and influential authors in accounting research. Journal analysis identifies the development of accounting journals registered with SINTA 2 accreditation.

3. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Research trends in Indonesia continue to evolve, particularly in the field of accounting. There was an increase in the number of research articles on accounting from 2020 to 2022. This increase occurred in the number of articles successfully published, the number of authors, and the number of universities. Based on observations on the SINTA journal platform, accounting research articles are in the highest index, namely SINTA 2. In 2020, 264 universities were recorded as having published journals that were successfully indexed by SINTA 2, and this number increased to 274 universities in 2021. A significant increase occurred in 2022 to 316 universities. This indicates the advancing education in Indonesia. However, the distribution is still uneven. The majority of universities contributing to research and indexed by SINTA 2 are located on the island of Java. One of the identifiable factors is the lack of infrastructure distribution in Indonesia, which is still centralized on the island of Java. Several aspects that could be further developed in this context include the impact of infrastructure distribution on research and development across various regions of Indonesia. Some universities that are heavily involved in accounting research are

also reputable universities according to the QS World Ranking.

Table 1
Distribution of Universities Publishing in SINTA 2

	2020	2021	2022
Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam	13	9	7
North Sumatra	7	6	13
West Sumatra	8	9	8
Riau	2	5	3
Riau Islands	1	6	2
Jambi	2	4	3
South Sumatra	4	7	4
Bengkulu	1	1	1
Lampung	8	3	10
Bangka Belitung	2	0	1
Jakarta	30	35	42
West Java	34	33	32
Banten	12	14	15
Central Java	29	30	34
Yogyakarta	16	17	13
East Java	50	43	50
Bali	8	7	9
West Nusa Tenggara	5	8	2
East Nusa Tenggara	2	2	3
West Kalimantan	5	3	2
Central Kalimantan	0	0	2
South Kalimantan	2	4	3
East Kalimantan	2	1	6
North Kalimantan	0	1	1
North Sulawesi	2	0	3
Gorontalo	0	2	2
Central Sulawesi	5	2	3
South Sulawesi	9	15	29
West Sulawesi	1	0	2
Southeast Sulawesi	1	2	5
Maluku	1	1	1
North Maluku	0	2	2
Papua	2	2	3
Total	264	274	316

Source: Processed Data

In Table 1, it can be seen that in terms of author coverage, from 2020 to 2022, the number of authors publishing in SINTA 2 continued to increase. In 2020, the number of authors successfully publishing in SINTA 2 was 965, which then rose to 1062 in 2021. Meanwhile, in 2022, there was a significant increase to 1,236. The characteristics of authors publishing accounting research come from diverse backgrounds and departments. The authors not only originate from accounting departments but also from management, economics, Islamic economics, banking, business administration, law, digital business, information systems, digital technology, education, engineering, sciences, and many more. Additionally, from the department or educational level perspective, authors include those with diploma, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees, as well as professionals. However, the majority of publications are still dominated by academics with a bachelor's degree background. This is likely because the number of students in undergraduate departments is generally much higher than in other departments. Moreover, several universities have regulations that allow students to be exempted from final exams if they publish articles in SINTA-indexed journals.

In Figure 1, it can be seen that there is an increase in the number of research publications. The increase is certainly good news for the education sector. The graph depicting the

development of article publications in the field of accounting has shown an upward trend, but conversely, the citation graph tends to decline. The imbalance between the number of publications and the impact of journals measured by the number of citations will affect the H-Index of a journal. The H-Index reflects the overall impact of articles published in a journal, measured by the ratio of the number of published articles to the number of citations. Accounting journal publication trends from 2020 to 2023 show an increase in productivity. However, this is in contrast to the continuous decline in the number of citations, thereby lowering the H-Index.

In 2020, the average H-Index of SINTA 2 accounting journals was 1.7328. This figure decreased to 1.5457 in 2021 and sharply declined to 0.7879 in 2022. The decreasing H-Index indicates that an increase in the quantity of publications may lead to a decrease in the quality of the journal. One factor contributing to this is that articles published in SINTA use references that are not from the SINTA index. SINTA Score reflects the academic performance and research productivity of researchers or research institutions. It provides a comprehensive overview of the performance of researchers or research institutions within the Indonesian research ecosystem. These rankings and SINTA Scores can be used as tools for evaluation and comparison among researchers or research institutions to support research and innovation development in

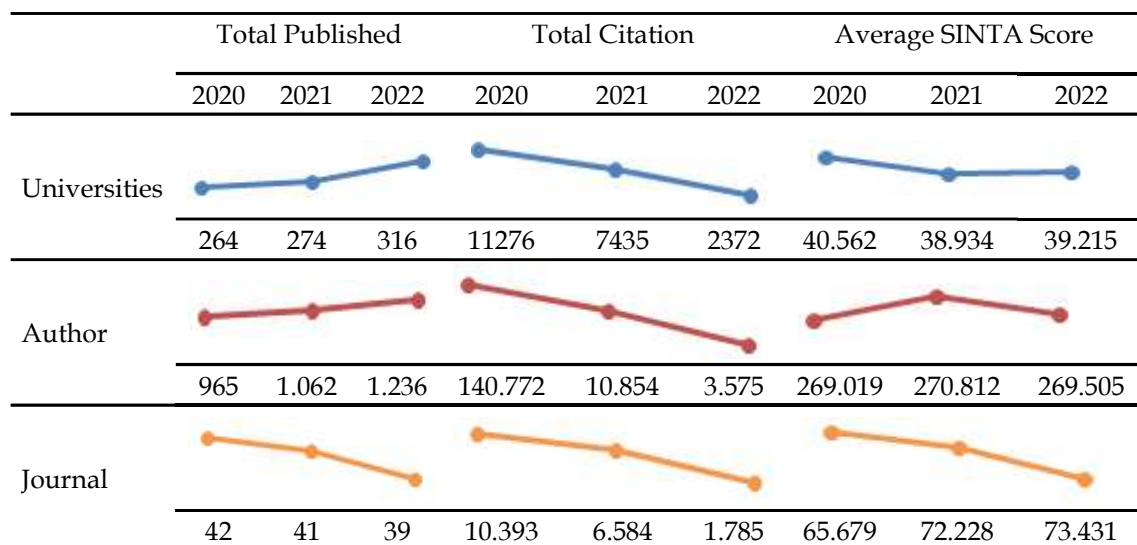


Figure 1
Overview of Publications and Scores

Source: Processed Data

Indonesia. The score is calculated based on various factors, including the quantity and quality of scientific publications, the number of citations, h-index, and several other indicators reflecting the impact and contribution of research.

The average SINTA Score for accounting research from 2020 to 2022 at the university, author, and publication levels experienced varying fluctuations. Only the author level showed a slight increase in SINTA Score. At the university and journal levels in 2022, there was a decrease in SINTA Score compared to 2020. The relationship between published articles, total citations, average SINTA Score, and H-Index reflects the influence and impact of research in scientific publications. The development of this relationship depicts the evolution of a researcher's career or specific influence in a research field. Therefore, it serves as a separate assessment for authors and journals regarding their publication records but does not affect the accreditation of journal articles in SINTA. The highest accreditation standard in SINTA for accounting journals is SINTA 2. This accreditation is based on various individual assessment indicators and is fluctuating, influenced by the development of articles that impact the rise or fall of journal accreditation. This is caused by a decrease in journal quality or the presence of other journals with better quality. The development of SINTA 2-accredited accounting journals is dynamic: 42 journals in 2020, 41 journals in 2021, and a decline to 39 journals in 2022.

Publication of accounting journal articles is categorized based on several accounting topics. Accounting is divided into seven topics in its application, both in practice and academia. These accounting topics include financial, managerial, audit, sustainability, tax, AIS (Accounting Information System), and another topic classified as "others." Financial discusses financial accounting, financial markets, and decision-making based on financial accounting information. Managerial covers budgeting, compensation, decision-making in a company, incentives, and resource allocation within a company. Audit is a highly varied topic covering audit environments (external and internal), auditor decision-making, auditor independence, the impact of audit on financial reporting processes, and auditor costs. Sustainability, a relatively new topic in accounting, examines issues related to sustainability, such as ESG

(Environmental, Social, and Governance), CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility), and SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals). Taxation relates to taxpayer decision-making, tax allocation, tax calculations, accounting transaction arrangements to meet tax goals, tax incentives, and market reactions to tax disclosures. Accounting Information System (AIS) is related to the use of systems that collect, store, and generate accounting information, including the implementation of system-related disciplines such as design flow, ontological investigation, expert systems, decision support systems, support systems, processing assurance, security, system utility, and system performance. Finally, the "others" topic covers various other topics, including law, psychology, history, accounting profession, work environment, etc.

In appendix 1, it can be seen that the increasing trend in accounting article publications over the past three years is dominated by topics related to financial accounting. The depiction of accounting that includes economics and business makes it synonymous with finance, making this topic the most frequently discussed in the field of accounting. The same is true for managerial topics, which also attract great attention after financial topics. Other topics related to accounting are widely discussed and quite varied, involving various fields such as public accounting, law, psychology, engineering, education, and many more. Tax and audit topics tend to have fewer enthusiasts in research due to their highly technical nature and stringent standards, limiting research resources. As times change, the evolution of accounting introduces new topics, such as sustainability and AIS. Sustainability in accounting aims to build and implement sustainable corporate performance. This topic has gained popularity, addressing issues such as CSR, SDGs, climate change, etc. On the other hand, AIS combines accounting with information systems, requiring accounting researchers to delve deeper into information systems, making this topic less popular.

In the scope of research methods, there are several research methods used in accounting articles, such as archival, analytical, experimental, and other methods. Archival analyzes and draws conclusions based on objective data collected from repositories and research data with objective quantities such as net income, sales, costs, etc. Analytical

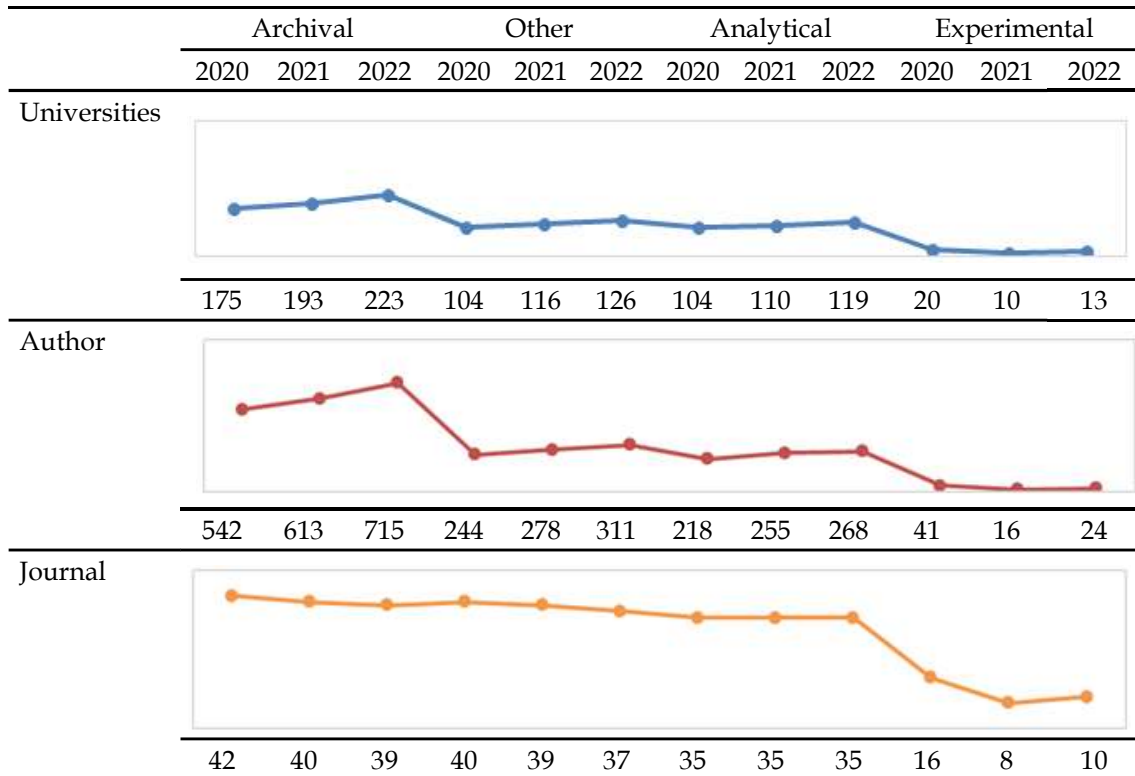


Figure 2
Overview of Publications based on Research Methods

Source: Processed Data

analyzes and draws conclusions by formally modeling theoretical actions or proving ideas in mathematical terms using analytical tools to predict, explain, or substantiate theories. Experimental is a study in which analysis and conclusions are based on data collected by researchers by providing treatment to subjects, usually using random assignment or selecting different populations in an effort to “manipulate” a variable (for example, participants with different levels of experience are selected to participate). Other methods are highly varied and include things like surveys, case studies, field studies, simulations, persuasive arguments, and so on.

The majority of research in the field of accounting tends to rely on archival methods, where researchers analyze documented historical data such as financial reports to provide a broader overview of events in the real world. This makes research related to data availability, relevant and valid data, and a large scale between organizations and industries more representative, efficient, and economical. Meanwhile, the use of experimental methods in accounting research is still limited and is one of the less frequently used approaches. Factors

underlying this include the historical nature of accounting data, which records events that occurred in business activities. Experimental methods typically involve controlling variables and manipulating conditions, which may be challenging to apply in the accounting research context. Additionally, research findings are often found in specific experimental conditions, posing a challenge to generalize these results to real business contexts.

5. CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION, SUGGESTION AND LIMITATION

This study maps accounting research accredited by SINTA 2 from 2020 to 2022 with the aim of uncovering previously unexplored accounting research trends. The findings indicate an increase in the number of published articles. However, the research also shows a decrease in the number of citations and the H-Index, reflecting a potential decline in the quality of published articles. This highlights the challenge of ensuring that research is not only abundant but also has a positive impact and strong relevance in both the academic and industrial realms. Additionally, this study notes that accounting research trends

continue to be centralized on the island of Java, with dominant university participation. This underscores the inequality in the distribution of resources and educational infrastructure across Indonesia, illustrating the need for efforts to equalize research opportunities in various regions.

In terms of authors, the findings show that undergraduate students still dominate research authors, partly because the number of undergraduate program students is greater than that of master's or doctoral program students. In addition, regulations require undergraduate students to carry out research as a graduation requirement. Other findings indicate that the main research topics are still focused on financial accounting, while research in the field of Accounting Information System (AIS) is limited. This indicates that research related to AIS is still considered challenging because it requires integrating two scientific disciplines. Regarding research methods, the use of archival methods dominates due to the higher availability and relevance of resources used in the context of accounting. Meanwhile, experimental methods are less utilized, indicating the need for a diversification of research methods in accounting to broaden understanding and research contributions.

This research provides new insights into the direction and focus of accounting research in Indonesia, inspiring the production of higher quality research to enhance the quality of accounting journals in Indonesia, especially on topics and methods that are less developed. This will have an effect on the quality of education in Indonesia and increase relevance of accounting research in the practical world. Furthermore, this study encourages regulators in the government, universities, and industry to collaborate and contribute to the equal distribution of education and infrastructure in Indonesia, especially outside Java, to further advance research in the field of accounting in Indonesia. The dominance of undergraduate students conducting research shows that research among master's and doctoral students needs to be developed further.

The limitation of this study is that it only maps research from SINTA 2 and only over a three-year period. Moreover, it

discusses accounting topics in general without specifying each accounting research topic. Future research could map with a broader data scope and specify each topic to further develop accounting research.

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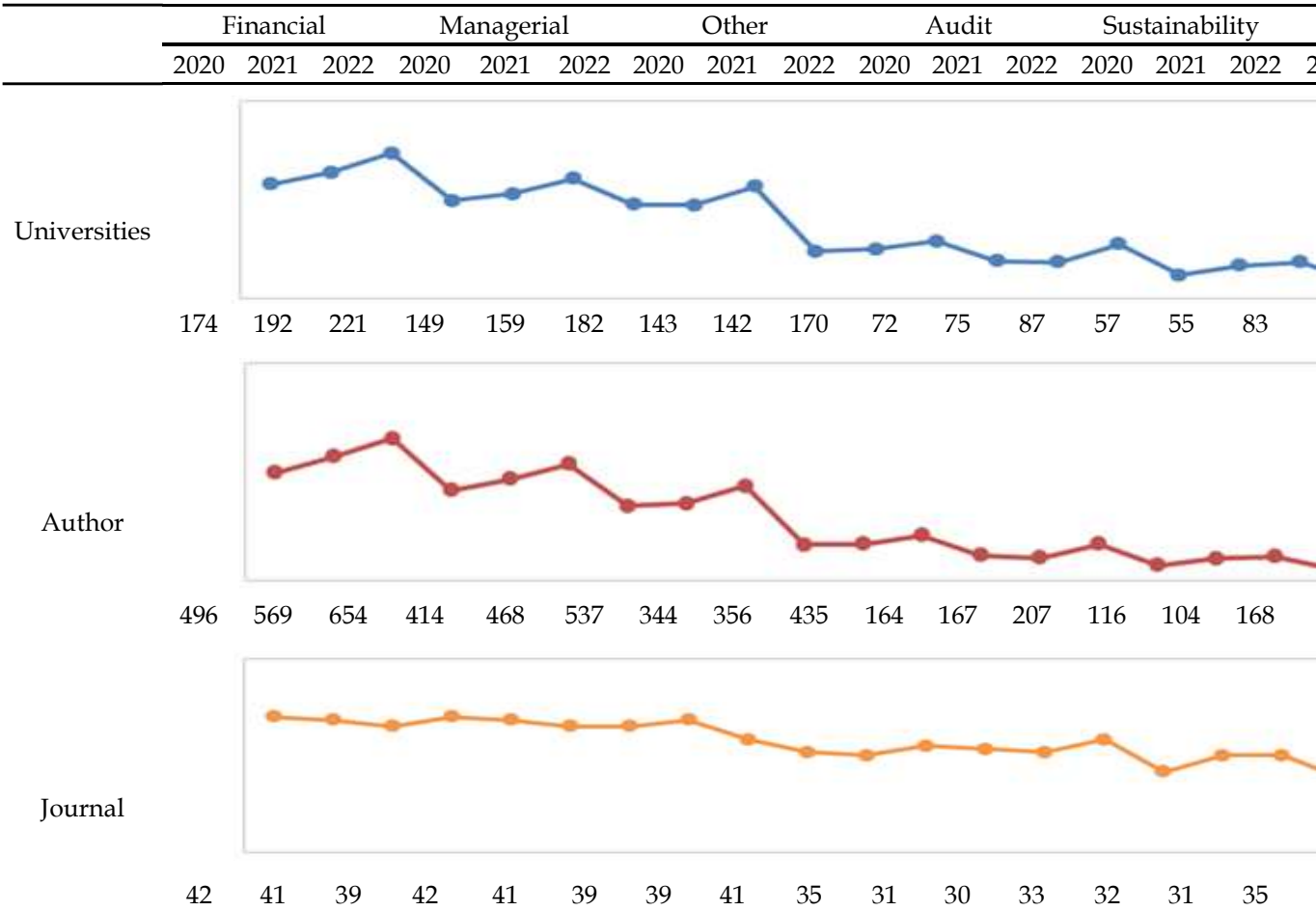
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Appendix 1. Overview of Publications based on Research Topics



Source: Processed Data