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The First Four Years of AJAFE: Advancing Research in Agriculture and Food Engineering from a Bibliometric Perspective and support for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

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ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of research in agriculture and food engineering has increased the need for credible academic platforms to disseminate scientific findings. Since its establishment in 2022, the ASEAN Journal of Agriculture and Food Engineering (AJAFE) has contributed to this growing scholarly landscape by publishing studies addressing agricultural systems, food processing, nutrition, sustainability, and related educational aspects. This article aims to provide a reflective overview of AJAFE's first four years of publication from a bibliometric perspective. Bibliometric data were obtained from Scopus-indexed publications up to 2024 to contextualize global research growth, while a descriptive analysis was conducted on all articles published in AJAFE from 2022 to 2024. The results show that AJAFE has demonstrated consistent publication activity and thematic diversity, aligning with global research trends in agriculture and food engineering. This study highlights AJAFE's emerging role as a multidisciplinary platform supporting knowledge exchange within the ASEAN region and beyond. The findings provide insights for editors, authors, and stakeholders in strengthening the journal's future development and scholarly impact. This study supports sustainable development goals (SDGs).

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1. INTRODUCTION

The field of agriculture and food engineering has experienced substantial growth over the past several decades, driven by increasing global demands for food security, sustainable production systems, technological innovation, and improved nutritional outcomes (see https://www.fao.org and https://www.oecd.org). Advances in food processing, post-harvest technology, agricultural mechanization, and nutrition science have positioned agriculture and food engineering as a multidisciplinary domain that integrates engineering principles with biological, environmental, and social sciences (Zhang *et al*., 2020). This rapid expansion of research activity has resulted in a growing volume of scientific publications, highlighting the importance of academic journals as platforms for disseminating validated knowledge and fostering scholarly communication within the global research community (see https://www.elsevier.com/solutions/scopus).

Academic journals play a critical role in shaping research directions, consolidating emerging themes, and connecting researchers across regions (Bornmann & Leydesdorff, 2014). In the context of agriculture and food engineering, journals not only document technological and scientific progress but also respond to contemporary challenges such as climate change, sustainable resource management, food safety, public health, and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (see https://www.fao.org and https://sdgs.un.org). As research output continues to rise, particularly in developing and emerging regions, regionally grounded journals have become increasingly important in providing inclusive publication opportunities while maintaining academic rigor and contextual relevance (Tijssen, 2018).

The ASEAN Journal of Agriculture and Food Engineering (AJAFE) was established in 2022 to support the dissemination of research findings in agriculture and food engineering, with particular attention to issues relevant to the ASEAN region and comparable contexts. Since its inception, AJAFE has published studies covering a wide range of topics, including agricultural production systems, food processing and product development, nutrition and dietetics, sustainability-oriented food systems, and educational and socio-economic aspects related to agriculture and food. This thematic diversity reflects the interdisciplinary nature of the field and demonstrates AJAFE's commitment to accommodating both technical and applied research perspectives (see https://unesdoc.unesco.org).

After four years of publication activity, it is timely to conduct a reflective assessment of AJAFE's scholarly contributions. Newly established journals often face challenges related to visibility, scope definition, and alignment with broader research trends (Mingers & Leydesdorff, 2015). A bibliometric perspective offers a systematic and objective approach to evaluating publication patterns, thematic coverage, and developmental trajectories of academic journals (Donthu *et al*., 2021). Such analyses are increasingly used to assess journal performance, identify research gaps, and inform editorial strategies, particularly during the early stages of a journal's lifecycle (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017).

Despite the growing adoption of bibliometric approaches in journal evaluation, limited attention has been given to reflective analyses of emerging journals in agriculture and food engineering, especially those originating from the ASEAN region. Understanding how AJAFE's publication profile aligns with global research developments can provide valuable insights into its role within the broader scholarly ecosystem. Moreover, documenting the journal's early publication characteristics contributes to transparency and supports evidence-based planning for future growth.

Therefore, this article aims to present a bibliometric reflection on the first four years of AJAFE's publication history. By examining global research trends in agriculture and food engineering alongside the descriptive characteristics of AJAFE's published articles, this study seeks to highlight the journal's contribution, thematic orientation, and emerging position within the academic landscape. The findings are expected to inform editors, authors, and stakeholders in strengthening AJAFE's role as a sustainable and impactful platform for agricultural and food engineering research (Donthu *et al*., 2021).

2. METHODS

This study employed a descriptive bibliometric approach to analyze research trends and publication characteristics related to agriculture and food engineering (Donthu *et al*., 2021). Bibliometric data representing global research output were obtained from the Scopus database, covering publications indexed up to the year 2024 using relevant keywords associated with agriculture, food, and engineering. Scopus was selected due to its comprehensive coverage of peer-reviewed journals and its frequent use in bibliometric research across scientific disciplines (see https://www.elsevier.com/solutions/scopus). In addition, all articles published in the AJAFE from 2022 to 2024 were compiled and analyzed. The dataset included article titles, authors, publication years, volumes, issues, and research themes. The analysis focused on publication frequency, thematic distribution, and the overall scope of research topics. Descriptive statistics were applied to summarize the findings, which were then interpreted to reflect AJAFE's development and contribution within the broader agriculture and food engineering research landscape (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Figure 1 illustrates the global publication trends in agriculture and food engineering from 1944 to 2024, showing a clear long-term growth in research output. The figure indicates that publication activity remained relatively modest for several decades before experiencing a gradual increase after the early 2000s, followed by a pronounced surge in the last decade. The most significant growth is observed after 2020, reflecting intensified global attention to food security, sustainable agricultural systems, food safety, and resilience of agri-food supply chains. This sharp rise highlights the strategic importance of agriculture and food engineering in addressing complex global challenges, including climate change, population growth, and public health crises. From a bibliometric perspective, the rapid expansion of publications confirms that the field has evolved into a highly active and interdisciplinary research domain that demands robust and accessible scholarly communication channels.

The accelerating global research output also underscores the increasing need for academic journals that can accommodate diverse research themes while ensuring scientific quality. As agriculture and food engineering research becomes more interdisciplinary, integrating engineering, nutrition, environmental science, and socio-economic perspectives, journals play a crucial role in organizing and disseminating this growing body of knowledge. In this context, the emergence of the AJAFE aligns closely with global publication dynamics. The trend shown in **Figure 1** provides a strong bibliometric rationale for the establishment and continued development of AJAFE, particularly as a platform that supports research dissemination from the ASEAN region and other developing contexts that may be underrepresented in long-established international journals.

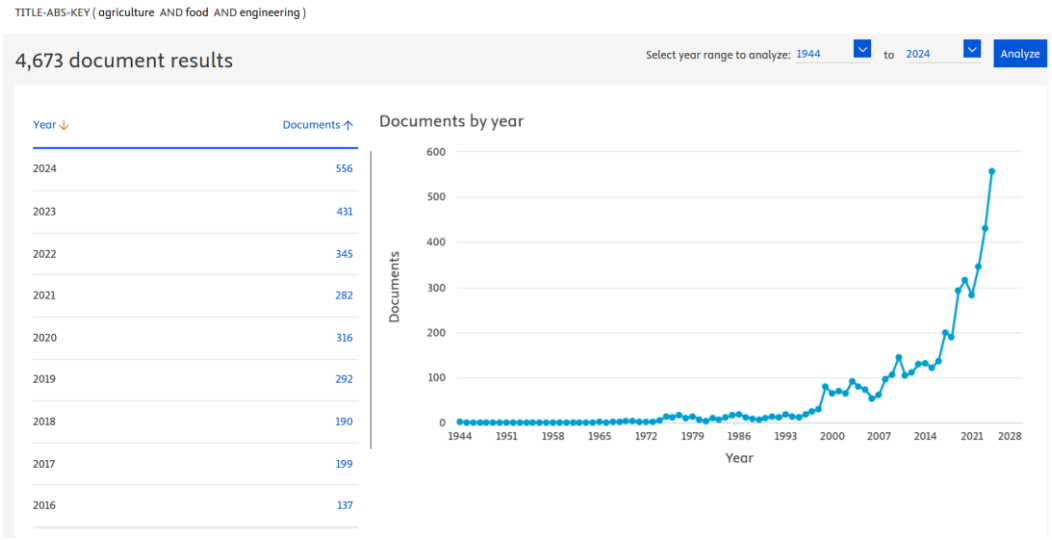

Figure 1. Global publication trends in agriculture and food engineering (1944–2024).

Table 1 presents a comprehensive overview of all articles published in AJAFE from 2022 to 2024. During its first four years of publication, AJAFE has demonstrated consistent and sustainable publication activity across multiple volumes and issues. The journal's output reflects a steady accumulation of articles rather than sporadic publication, indicating editorial stability and growing engagement from the research community. From a bibliometric standpoint, this consistency is a critical indicator of a journal's early-stage viability and its ability to function as a reliable outlet for scholarly work.

An examination of the publication data reveals that AJAFE covers a broad spectrum of topics within agriculture and food engineering. The published articles encompass agricultural production and farming systems, food processing and product development, nutrition and dietetics, post-harvest technology, sustainability-oriented food systems, and food-related education and socio-economic studies. Several contributions explicitly engage with issues related to the Sustainable Development Goals, such as zero hunger, good health and well-being, responsible consumption and production, and climate resilience. This thematic diversity reflects the interdisciplinary nature of agriculture and food engineering and demonstrates AJAFE's responsiveness to both global research priorities and region-specific challenges.

Beyond technical and experimental studies, AJAFE has also published research addressing human, educational, and behavioral dimensions of the agri-food system. Studies focusing on farmer behavior, agricultural education, consumer awareness, and the application of information and communication technologies indicate that the journal adopts a systems-oriented perspective rather than a narrowly technical approach. Such inclusiveness enhances the relevance of AJAFE's publications, particularly in contexts where agricultural and food engineering challenges are closely intertwined with social and educational factors.

Another noteworthy aspect of AJAFE's publication profile is the inclusion of review and bibliometric studies among its articles. The presence of bibliometric analyses within a relatively young journal suggests an emerging level of scholarly maturity, as such studies typically reflect reflective and evaluative research practices. From a bibliometric viewpoint, this indicates that AJAFE is not only facilitating the dissemination of original research but is also beginning to contribute to meta-level discussions on research trends and knowledge development within agriculture and food engineering.

Table 1. List of AJAFE publication from 2022 to 2024.

No.	Year	Volume(Issue)	Title	Reference
1	2022	1(1)	Farmers' coping mechanism during the pandemic	(Nilong *et al.*, 2022)
2	2022	1(1)	Presence of intestinal parasites in cabbage (*Brassica oleracea* var. *capitata*) sold at public market	(Bedua *et al.*, 2022)
3	2022	1(1)	Kerson fruit (*Muntingia calabura* Linn) and golden apple snail (*Pomacea canaliculata*) as food pellet additives for chicken broiler growth	(Silverio & Ramoran, 2022)
4	2022	1(1)	*Citrullus lanatus* (watermelon) as biofertilizer for eggplants	Falsario *et al.* (2022)
5	2022	1(1)	Acceptability of *Theobroma cacao* as an alternative tea	(Corton *et al.*, 2022)
6	2022	1(1)	Farmers' buying behavior toward fertilizers	(Patil & Gaikwad, 2022)
7	2022	1(1)	Nutrition and dietetics concerning diabetes mellitus: Type 1 diabetes mellitus	(Ahsan, 2022)
8	2023	2(1)	Association between the digestive system and liver injury in COVID-19 patients	(Muhmmed *et al.*, 2023)
9	2023	2(1)	Gender differentials in agricultural specialization in higher education	(Fagbemi, 2023)
10	2023	2(1)	Anti-inflammatory activity of *Kalanchoe pinnata* stem extract on mice	(Lolos *et al.*, 2022)
11	2023	2(1)	Development and evaluation of chicken feedstuff using banana peel	(Peñaflor *et al.*, 2022)
12	2023	2(1)	Education of dietary habit and drinking water quality to increase body immunity	(Satria & Nandiyanto, 2022)
13	2023	2(1)	Citronella and peppermint oil extracts as ant-repelling spray	(Lao *et al.*, 2022)
14	2023	2(1)	Nutrition and dietetics concerning diabetes mellitus: Type 2 diabetes mellitus	(Ahsan, 2023a)
15	2023	2(2)	Nutrition and dietetics concerning diabetes mellitus: Gestational diabetes mellitus	(Ahsan, 2023b)
16	2023	2(2)	Effect of antioxidant compounds on nitrites as inhibitors of N-nitrosamine formation	(Dewi, 2023)
17	2023	2(2)	Influence of ICT availability and utilization on agriculture students' academic performance	(Makinde *et al.*, 2023)
18	2023	2(2)	Students' knowledge on the impact of ice cream consumption on blood sugar	(Kusuma et al., 2023)
19	2023	2(2)	Financial performance analysis of poultry farming business entities	(Najimovich, 2023)
20	2023	2(2)	Factors behind soaring tomato prices	(Ali *et al.*, 2023)
21	2023	2(2)	Mediterranean diet patterns and sustainability to support SDGs	(Nurnabila *et al.*, 2023)

Table 1 (continue). List of AJAFE publication from 2022 to 2024.

No.	Year	Volume(Issue)	Title	Reference
22	2023	2(2)	Education on food diversification using infographics to support SDGs	(Awalussillmi *et al.*, 2023)

23	2023	2(2)	Influence of grower agents on *Amaranthus sp.* growth in hydroponic systems	(Salsabila *et al.*, 2023)
24	2024	3(1)	Optimizing psychomotor skills through project-based learning in seaweed dodol processing	(Wahyuningsih *et al.*, 2024)
25	2024	3(1)	Impact of India's rice export restrictions on domestic and international markets	(Ali *et al.*, 2024)
26	2024	3(1)	Health-related problems among women garri producers	(Alimi & Animashaun, 2023)
27	2024	3(1)	Enhancement of sensory qualities of papaya leaf extract gummy candy	(Acob et al., 2024)
28	2024	3(1)	Bibliometric analysis of seed priming research	(Nurrahma *et al.*, 2024)
29	2024	3(1)	Safe food treatment technology to support SDGs	(Rahmah *et al.*, 2024)
30	2024	3(1)	Students' awareness of sustainable diets to reduce carbon footprint	(Keisyafa *et al.*, 2024)
31	2024	3(1)	Effect of post-harvest storage temperature on Cavendish banana quality	(Mabrukah *et al.*, 2024)
32	2024	3(1)	Effect of electronic word of mouth on brand trust and buying interest	(Rosmayanti & Ratnasari, 2024)
33	2024	3(2)	Impact of flooding on dairy cattle farms	(Abulude & Fadiyimu, 2024)
34	2024	3(2)	Phytoremediation using *Cucumis sativus*: A bibliometric study	(de la Cruz *et al.*, 2024)
35	2024	3(2)	Biodiversity mapping in schools based on plant and animal species	(Kamraju *et al.*, 2024)
36	2024	3(2)	Assessment tools for culinary competence and nutritional knowledge	(Alordiah *et al.*, 2024)

When AJAFE's publication characteristics are interpreted alongside global research trends, the journal can be seen as strategically positioned within a rapidly expanding scientific field. Although still in its early stages, AJAFE demonstrates alignment with global thematic directions while maintaining a strong emphasis on applied, context-sensitive research. This balance enables the journal to contribute meaningfully to the broader scholarly ecosystem by bridging global research agendas with local and regional realities. From a bibliometric perspective, AJAFE occupies an important niche by providing visibility to diverse research contributions and supporting inclusive knowledge production. The findings presented in this section provide evidence that AJAFE has established a solid foundation during its first four years and possesses significant potential for continued growth and increased scholarly impact.

From a sustainability perspective, AJAFE has consistently supported research aligned with the SDGs during its first four years of publication. A substantial proportion of the published articles address themes directly related to SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) through studies on food production systems, nutrition, dietetics, food safety, and public health. In addition, several contributions explicitly engage with SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and SDG 13 (Climate Action) by examining sustainable diets, post-harvest management, environmental impacts, and resilience of agricultural systems. The presence of education- and technology-oriented studies further reflects alignment with SDG 4 (Quality Education), highlighting the role of knowledge dissemination and capacity building in advancing sustainable agri-food systems. From a bibliometric standpoint, this thematic

orientation indicates that AJAFE has not only followed global research trends but has also actively positioned itself as a scholarly platform that promotes sustainability-oriented research. Consequently, this article itself contributes to the SDGs by providing evidence-based reflection that supports informed editorial strategies and strengthens the role of academic journals in advancing sustainable development through agriculture and food engineering research.

4. CONCLUSION

This study has presented a bibliometric reflection on the first four years of publication of the AJAFE within the broader context of global research development in agriculture and food engineering. The global publication trends indicate a rapid and sustained growth of research output, particularly in the last decade, underscoring the increasing strategic importance of this field in addressing food security, sustainability, and public health challenges. Against this backdrop, AJAFE has emerged as a timely and relevant academic platform that supports the dissemination of interdisciplinary research aligned with contemporary global and regional priorities. The analysis of AJAFE's publication data from 2022 to 2024 demonstrates that the journal has achieved consistent publication activity and thematic diversity during its early development stage. The breadth of topics covered, ranging from agricultural systems and food processing to nutrition, sustainability, and educational aspects, reflects the journal's inclusive scope and responsiveness to complex agri-food challenges. The presence of review and bibliometric studies further indicates an emerging level of scholarly maturity. The findings suggest that AJAFE has established a solid foundation as a multidisciplinary journal in agriculture and food engineering. This bibliometric reflection provides valuable insights for editors, authors, and stakeholders in guiding the journal's future development, enhancing its visibility, and strengthening its contribution to the global scholarly ecosystem. This study supports SDGs.

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6. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. Authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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