

A Bibliometric Study of Chinese Official Document Writing (2005-2024)

Xiaoying Zhou, Wenjun Xiao, Jiansong Wei*

School of Literature and History, Nanchang Normal University, Nanchang, Jiangxi, CHINA.

ABSTRACT

A systematic review of the literature on official document writing helps clarify the overall research landscape and provides a reference for future studies. Using bibliometric methods, this study analyzes 2,074 valid publications on "official document writing" and related topics indexed in CNKI from 2005 to 2024. CiteSpace was employed for knowledge mapping and visualization to examine the knowledge structure, evolutionary trajectory, and collaboration patterns of Chinese official document writing research, thereby addressing the limitations of traditional qualitative reviews in quantitative analysis and temporal trend identification. The findings show that the annual publication volume followed a three-stage pattern of growth, plateau, and decline, reaching its peak in 2012 before gradually decreasing. The author collaboration network had a density of only 0.0005, with no collaborative links among the top ten most prolific authors and only 13 authors publishing more than 10 papers, indicating a predominance of individual research and a lack of stable collaborative groups. Similarly, the institutional collaboration network showed a low density of 0.0003, with only 11 links among 272 nodes, suggesting that universities are the main contributors but inter-institutional and cross-sector cooperation remains weak. Keyword co-occurrence and clustering analyses ($Q=0.8283$, $S=0.9905$) identified four major themes: the standardization of administrative official documents, official document language, writing competence cultivation, and the contemporary value of ancient official documents. Burst keyword analysis further shows that intelligent themes such as "official document communication" have become increasingly prominent since 2015. The main contribution of this study is its quantitative confirmation of the "high output but low collaboration" structure of Chinese official document writing research. It also suggests that future studies are likely to move toward large language model-assisted writing, human-machine collaboration, and semantic intelligence, providing empirical evidence for research evaluation, interdisciplinary development, and policy guidance in this field.

Keywords: Applied Linguistics, Bibliometric Visualization Analysis, CiteSpace, CNKI, Official Document Writing.

Correspondence:

Jiansong Wei

Nanchang Normal University, Nanchang, Jiangxi, CHINA.

Email: jason_24@foxmail.com

Received: 11-02-2026;

Revised: 09-04-2026;

Accepted: 26-06-2026.

INTRODUCTION

Official documents generally refer to various formal texts issued by Party and government organs or other official organizations, serving primarily to communicate the decisions and intentions of state authorities (Yang, 2020). Fundamentally, as the statutory medium for public governance and organizational management, the quality of official document drafting directly influences the precision of policy implementation and the efficiency of administrative enforcement. In 2012, the General Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council jointly promulgated the *Regulations*

on the Handling of Official Documents of Party and Government Organs, which significantly enhanced the standardization and overall quality of official document management (Fan, 2017).

Official document writing generally refers to the drafting and revision of official documents. Although it belongs to the category of practical writing, it differs from other types of writing in that it must strictly conform to prescribed formats, structures, and stylistic norms. Because official documents convey the intentions and stances of the issuing authorities, their language must be precise, unambiguous, and logically coherent. Any vague or inappropriate expression may cause misinterpretation among recipients, thereby diminishing the effectiveness of document implementation or even leading to policy failure (Zhang, 2016).

Although authorities and departments at all levels emphasize the importance of official documents, many writers continue to encounter various challenges in practice. Research on official document writing, particularly on its scientific writing methods and common issues plays a crucial role in enhancing the overall



DOI: 10.5530/jscires.20260381

Copyright Information :

Copyright Author (s) 2026 Distributed under
Creative Commons CC-BY 4.0

Publishing Partner : Manuscript Technomedia, [www.mstechnomedia.com]

effectiveness and precision of official communication. In recent years, with the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence and the significant increase in computational power, large AI writing models such as *Spark Official Document Writing Assistant* and *Xinhua Miaobi* have emerged as powerful tools supporting official document creation. Behind these large language models lie not only extensive high-quality datasets but also the incorporation of expert knowledge specific to the domain of official documentation. Consequently, the enhancement of official document writing effectiveness driven by digital intelligence technologies is inseparable from continuous scholarly research in this field.

In summary, official document writing is not only an important component of governmental affairs in Party and government organs, but also a key branch of applied writing characterized by strong policy orientation and normative requirements. Although research activities in the field of official document writing in China are currently showing a vigorous development trend, systematic analyses of existing research achievements in this field remain relatively insufficient. By employing bibliometric methods to conduct a systematic analysis of studies on official document writing, this paper not only traces the evolution of the knowledge structure and developmental trajectory of the field, but also helps identify research hotspots and clarify future research directions. Meanwhile, by examining multiple knowledge maps, including author collaboration networks, institutional collaboration networks, keyword co-occurrence, and clustering in the field of Chinese official document writing, this study provides a multidimensional and comprehensive analysis of relevant research achievements, thereby offering empirical evidence and reference materials for researchers in this field.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies on Bibliometric Analysis

Bibliometric analysis is a research method that relies on mathematical, statistical, and logical approaches to quantitatively examine the numerical characteristics, distribution patterns, and internal relationships of literature. Its core purpose is to reveal the developmental trajectory, research hotspots, frontier trends, and academic connections of a research field through data mining. It has been widely applied to literature reviews and trend forecasting across various disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. In recent years, the application of visualization tools such as CiteSpace and VOS viewer has further promoted the methodological development of bibliometric analysis. As a widely recognized tool for scientific knowledge mapping, CiteSpace plays an important role in bibliometric analysis (Chen, 2006). It has also been proposed that bibliometrics is shifting from surface-level analysis based on bibliographic metadata toward semantic content analysis based on full-text data (Hu and Zhang, 2021).

Studies on Official Document Writing

Since the 1980s, official document writing has emerged as an independent academic discipline. Scholarly research on official document writing has continued to deepen. A review of studies conducted in China on official document writing over recent decades, together with literature collected and organized by the author from CNKI, Wanfang Data, Web of Science, and other sources, indicates that overseas research on official document writing remains relatively limited. This scarcity is mainly attributable to differences between Chinese and foreign administrative systems, official document systems, and traditions of law-based administrative writing. In China, academic research on official document writing began relatively early and has mainly focused on such dimensions as official document types, writing instruction, official document language, and ancient official documents.

First, studies on official document types have mainly examined the classification, functions, and proper selection of different document categories. Non-statutory official documents occupy a secondary and subordinate position within the overall official document system; because they lack legally prescribed formats and independent qualifications for issuance, they usually rely on statutory document types as carriers for indirect issuance in practical administrative work (Zheng, 2009). In this sense, non-statutory official documents function as auxiliary official documents frequently used by Party and government organs and public institutions (Zheng, 2009). In addition, official documents are not limited to a single administrative function but often possess multiple functions, which are reflected in both document types and document content (Fu, 2011). Research has also focused on specific categories of official documents. For example, reward-and-punishment official documents have been examined in terms of their connotation, document types, writing characteristics, and general writing patterns, with particular attention paid to the problems of misuse and mixed use among related document types (Zhang, 2015).

In terms of writing instruction, existing studies have mainly focused on teaching objectives, pedagogical approaches, and the cultivation of students' practical writing competence. Official documents can be understood as a harmonious unity of internal content beauty and external formal beauty; therefore, official document writing instruction should not only emphasize format and norms, but also cultivate students' aesthetic awareness and expressive competence (Tan and Yang, 2006). Specifically, students' aesthetic competence in official documents can be developed through three dimensions: discovering beauty, appreciating beauty, and creating beauty, which may help improve both the quality of official document writing and the effectiveness of classroom instruction (Tan and Yang, 2006). More recent studies have further examined the reform of official document writing instruction from the perspective of the New

Liberal Arts. In this context, teaching reform has gradually shifted from knowledge transmission to competency cultivation, with blended online-and-offline teaching models being used to reconstruct course objectives, instructional design, assessment, and evaluation mechanisms (Tan, 2023). Such reforms can enhance students' official document writing ability and classroom participation, while also providing a useful reference for official document writing instruction in application-oriented universities (Tan, 2023).

In terms of official document language, existing studies have mainly examined the necessity of vague language, the linguistic requirements of official document writing, and the historical features of official document language. The use of vague language in official document writing has been regarded as necessary from the perspectives of individual cognition and practical application, as certain administrative expressions require appropriate flexibility and contextual adaptability (Pan, 1992). At the same time, official document writing has distinctive linguistic requirements, and writers of official documents should accurately and proficiently master the characteristics and rules of language use in order to ensure clarity, precision, and appropriateness in expression (Hao and Li, 2006). Some studies have also investigated official document language from a historical perspective. By examining official documents produced between 1949 and 1966, researchers have analyzed the period-specific features reflected in word choice, sentence patterns, and rhetorical characteristics, and further explored the causes of these historical linguistic features (Chen and Wang, 2013).

In terms of ancient official documents, existing studies have mainly explored their literary characteristics, historical evolution, and contemporary relevance. As products of ancient society, ancient official documents possess distinctive literary features, and examining the causes of these features helps reveal the historical development of official document writing (Liu, 1999). A comparison between ancient and modern official documents also makes it possible to more clearly identify the writing characteristics of modern official documents (Liu, 1999). From a historical perspective, the development of official document writing shows a gradual transformation from an emphasis on both form and content to a content-oriented approach, which reflects an inevitable trend in the evolution of official document theory and practice (He, 2002).

From the existing literature, bibliometric methods have provided effective knowledge-mapping tools for various fields in the humanities and social sciences. However, their application to systematic quantitative research on Chinese official document writing remains insufficient. Although substantial achievements have been accumulated in the study of official document writing, most existing studies are qualitative reviews focusing on dimensions such as document types, teaching, language, or ancient official documents. There is still a lack of scientific

measurement and visualized presentation of the overall research landscape over the past two decades, making it difficult to clearly reveal the knowledge structure, hotspot evolution, and frontier trends of this field from 2005 to 2024.

METHODOLOGY

Data Sources

The research object of this study is scholarship on official document writing in China. A review of relevant literature indexed in databases such as CNKI and Web of Science shows that, apart from CNKI, other databases contain relatively few research papers related to official document writing in China. Therefore, the data sample for the subsequent analysis was drawn from the CNKI database. Using "official document writing," "administrative official documents," and "official document drafting" as subject terms, and setting the publication period from January 1, 2005, to December 31, 2024, a total of 3,296 documents were successfully retrieved. To ensure data accuracy, relevance, and representativeness, all retrieved documents were manually screened and chronologically organized. Non-academic materials, including editorials, invitations, book reviews, conference announcements, and newspaper articles, as well as irrelevant content, were excluded. After this filtering process, a total of 2,074 valid documents were retained for analysis. The overall search and screening procedure is illustrated in Figure 1. Finally, the selected records were exported in RefWorks format, containing bibliographic information such as authors, titles, affiliated institutions, keywords, and abstracts.

Analysis Methods

Bibliometric analysis is a research method that comprehensively applies mathematics, statistics, bibliographic science, and related approaches to conduct quantitative or qualitative analyses of literature and its associated attributes (Donthu *et al.*, 2021). When conducting bibliometric analysis, data are usually downloaded from academic databases such as Web of Science or CNKI. At present, CiteSpace is one of the mainstream tools used by scholars for visualization analysis in the field of bibliometrics. This tool excels in temporal dynamic analysis and frontier detection, making it highly suitable for analyzing research trends and hotspots. Moreover, it can directly process bibliographic data exported from databases such as CNKI, provides more analytical parameters, including betweenness centrality, and offers more comprehensive visual representations. It also supports time-series analysis (Zhang *et al.*, 2011), making it appropriate for the in-depth analysis of complex academic networks.

Based on these advantages, this study employs the CNKI database and utilizes *CiteSpace* software to conduct a bibliometric analysis of publications on official document writing from 2005 to 2024. The analysis focuses on the number and annual trend of publications, author productivity and collaboration, institutional

distribution and partnerships, and keyword co-occurrence and hotspots. Through the visualization of co-occurrence, clustering, burst detection, and timeline mapping, this study systematically identifies the core author groups and institutional collaborations, reveals the research hotspots and developmental trajectories, and provides a comprehensive overview of the evolution of official document writing research in China.

RESULTS

Analysis of Annual Publication Volume

Excel was employed to analyze the 2,074 collected articles, and the annual publication trend of official document writing research is illustrated in Figure 2.

As shown in Figure 2, research on official document writing from 2005 to 2024 exhibited a pattern of initial wave-like growth followed by a continuous decline. Between 2005 and 2012, scholarly interest in official document writing demonstrated an overall upward trajectory, indicating a gradual deepening and

expansion of academic inquiry in this domain. The year 2012 marked the peak in publication output, largely driven by the release of the Regulations on the Handling of Official Documents of Party and Government Organs by the General Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council. This policy event triggered a surge of studies focusing on document formatting, classification, and processing procedures stipulated in the regulations.

Following the implementation of these regulations, research on official document writing in China entered a plateau phase (2013-2017). Although annual publication volumes fluctuated slightly, they remained relatively high and stable overall. This stability reflected the consolidation of earlier standardization efforts and the continued refinement of studies concerning writing techniques, pedagogical practices, and related areas, all of which collectively sustained robust scholarly output. A modest increase in publication volume in 2016 likely resulted from the official issuance of electronic document standards for Party and government organs.

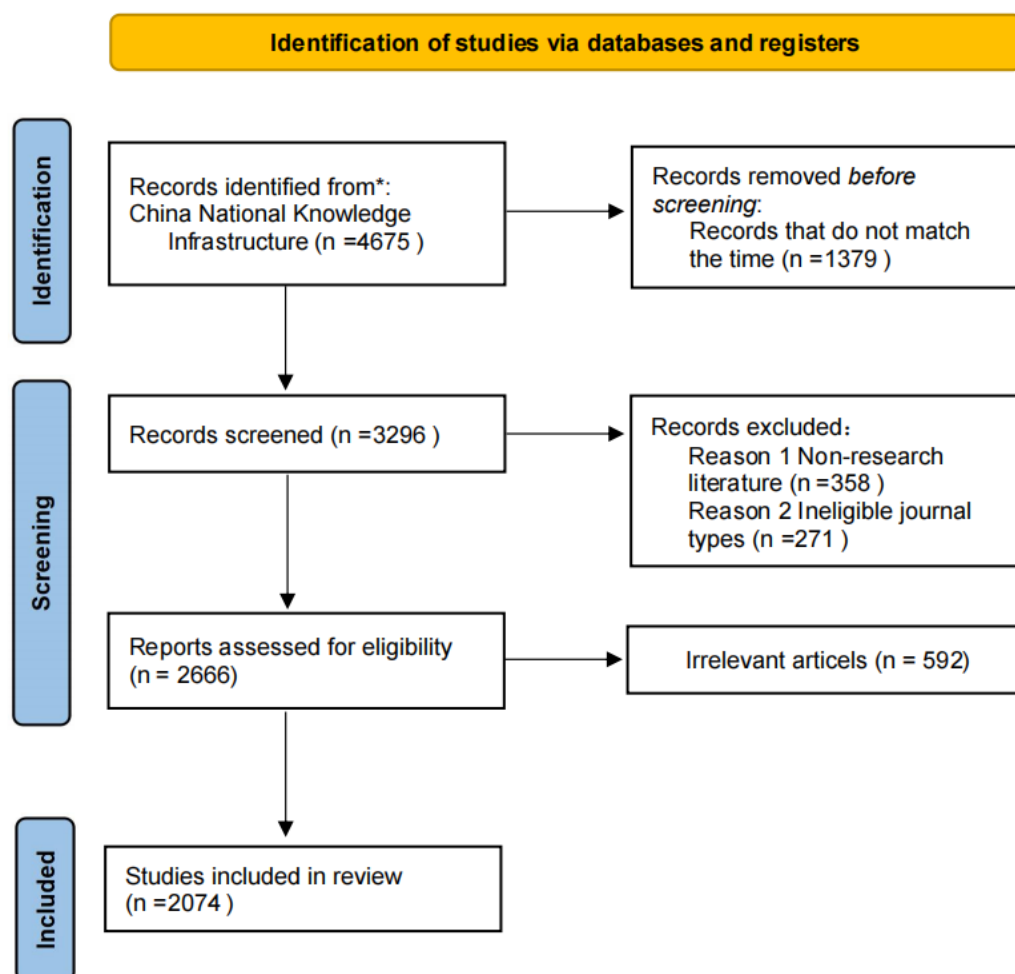


Figure 1: Flow chart of the document retrieval and screening procedure.

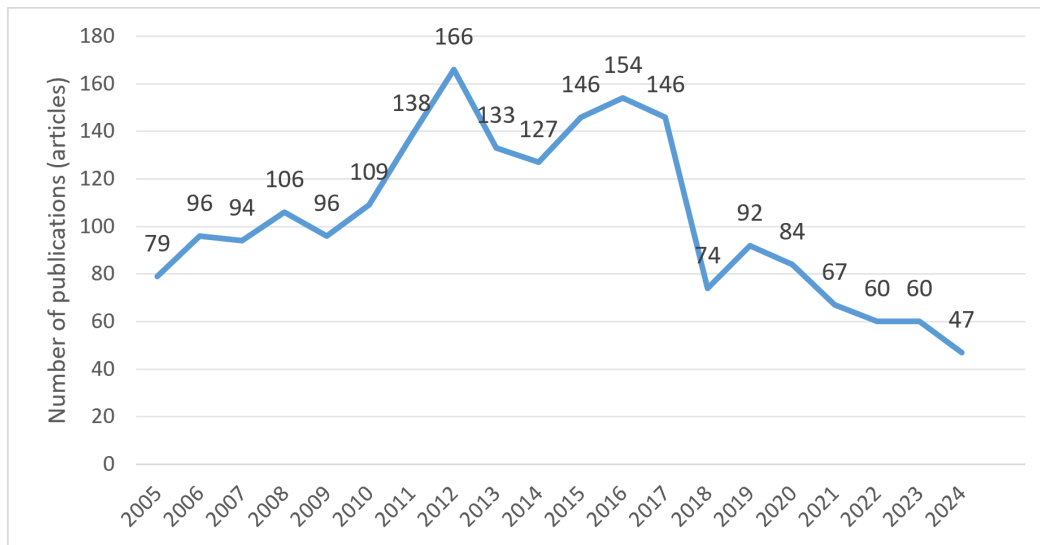


Figure 2: Annual publication volume of official document writing research.

From 2018 onward, however, the number of publications began a steady downward trend, signaling a gradual contraction in research activity in this field up to 2024. This decline may reflect topic saturation, a shift of scholarly attention toward emerging areas such as intelligent document processing, or the integration of document writing studies into broader disciplines of administrative communication and digital governance.

Co-Authorship Network Analysis

Analyzing the co-authorship knowledge graph helps uncover the collaborative relationships among researchers, the distribution of academic influence, and the structural characteristics of research networks within the field of official document writing in China. Figure 3, generated using *CiteSpace* 6.3 *R*¹ based on author mapping, consists of 256 nodes, 17 links, and a network density of 0.0005. In this co-authorship network, each node represents an author; the larger the node, the greater the number of publications by that author. The thickness of the connecting lines reflects the strength of collaboration between co-authors. Consequently, this visualization provides an intuitive overview of author productivity and collaboration patterns in the field of official document writing.

As shown in the graph, there are no visible connections among the top 10 most-productive authors, indicating that these scholars have not engaged in co-authored research. This weak network connectivity suggests that prominent researchers tend to work independently, with limited interdisciplinary or institutional collaboration. Overall, only a small number of scholars have established cooperative relationships, and the number of jointly authored publications remains low. In summary, although a substantial number of researchers have contributed to studies on official document writing in China, the sparse author connections and extremely low network density indicate that the overall intensity of academic collaboration in this field remains limited.

At the core author level, Zhaojun Luan ranks first with 33 publications, followed by Daming Sui (26 publications) and Lizhou Fang (20 publications). These scholars represent the leading contributors to the research on official document writing in China. Among all identified authors, only 13 have published more than 10 articles, indicating that the group of scholars capable of maintaining sustained academic output in this field remains relatively small. In contrast, the majority of researchers have published three or fewer papers, suggesting that research efforts in the domain of official document writing are relatively fragmented and lack long-term, systematic engagement (Table 1).

Analysis of Publishing Institutions

By examining the distribution of authors' affiliations and their publication outputs, it is possible to determine the geographical spread of research institutions engaged in official document writing studies and to identify the core entities and key contributors in this field (Zhu and Zhang, 2022). Using *CiteSpace* to generate a co-occurrence network map of publishing institutions, Figure 4 was obtained. The visualization contains 272 nodes, 11 links, and a network density of 0.0003. In practical terms, although 272 institutions have published on the topic, only 11 institutional pairs exhibit close collaborative relationships. The extremely low network density indicates that inter-institutional cooperation in this research area remains limited.

Notably, several high-output institutions such as the College of Liberal Arts at Nanjing Normal University, the Jiangxi Provincial Grain Bureau, and the Graduate Management Brigade of the Air Force Command College conduct research independently without forming collaborative partnerships, suggesting a strong tendency toward institutional autonomy. However, a few institutions, including the Chinese Institute of Official Document Studies, the China Association for Official Document Writing Research, and the Chinese Writing Academy, maintain relatively

frequent cooperation and have produced a number of joint publications. This pattern indicates that while collaboration exists, it remains fragmented and lacks a clear trend toward broader inter-institutional integration.

As illustrated by the node sizes in Figure 4, universities account for the majority of high-output institutions, underscoring the role of higher education institutions as the backbone of official document writing research. This dominance can be attributed to universities' favorable research environments and abundant talent resources. Military academies and public sector institutions also contribute substantially, implying that attention to official document writing is closely associated with the relevance of this topic to professional practices within those organizations.

Analysis of Keyword Co-occurrence and Clustering Mapping

Keyword co-occurrence mapping can reveal the hotspot themes of a specific research field and provide a rapid understanding of the current research status of that field (Lou and Qiu, 2014). *CiteSpace* was used to analyze the literature on official document writing. The G-index method was adopted, and after several rounds of parameter adjustment, the value of k was set to 9. The pruning method selected was Pathfinder, with both “Pruning the merged network” and “Pruning sliced networks” enabled. All other options were kept at their default settings, generating Figure 5.

In *CiteSpace*, the G-index belongs to the category of selection criteria. Nodes can be included or excluded by manually adjusting the scale factor k . The larger the k value, the more nodes appear in the knowledge map; conversely, the smaller the k value, the fewer nodes are displayed (Fan, 2024). Therefore, this

study set the k value to 9 in order to exclude unnecessary nodes. At the same time, the dual pruning modes of “Pruning sliced networks” and “Pruning the merged network” were enabled to perform hierarchical pruning on each time-sliced network and the integrated global network, respectively, thereby removing weak associations, redundant links, and loose cross-period relationships.

To enhance the transparency and reproducibility of the analysis, this study reports the key *CiteSpace* parameters, including the G-index selection criterion, pruning methods, and threshold settings. These settings were determined after repeated parameter adjustment and were used to balance network readability with analytical comprehensiveness. Based on these settings, a total of 300 keywords, 275 links, and a network density of 0.0061 were obtained.

In this network, each node represents a keyword. The size of each node is positively correlated with its frequency of occurrence; larger nodes denote higher frequencies, while smaller nodes indicate lower frequencies. Links between nodes represent co-occurrence relationships between different keywords. As shown in Figure 5, the largest keyword node is “Official document writing”, indicating it as the core topic of the field. Other high-frequency keywords include “Official documents” (公文), “Writing” (写作), “Administrative official documents,” “Teaching” (教学), “Problems” (问题), “Language” (语言), and “Ancient official documents” (古代公文), all of which constitute the major research hotspots in China's official document writing studies.

In visual network analysis, betweenness centrality measures the extent to which a node functions as a “bridge” or intermediary

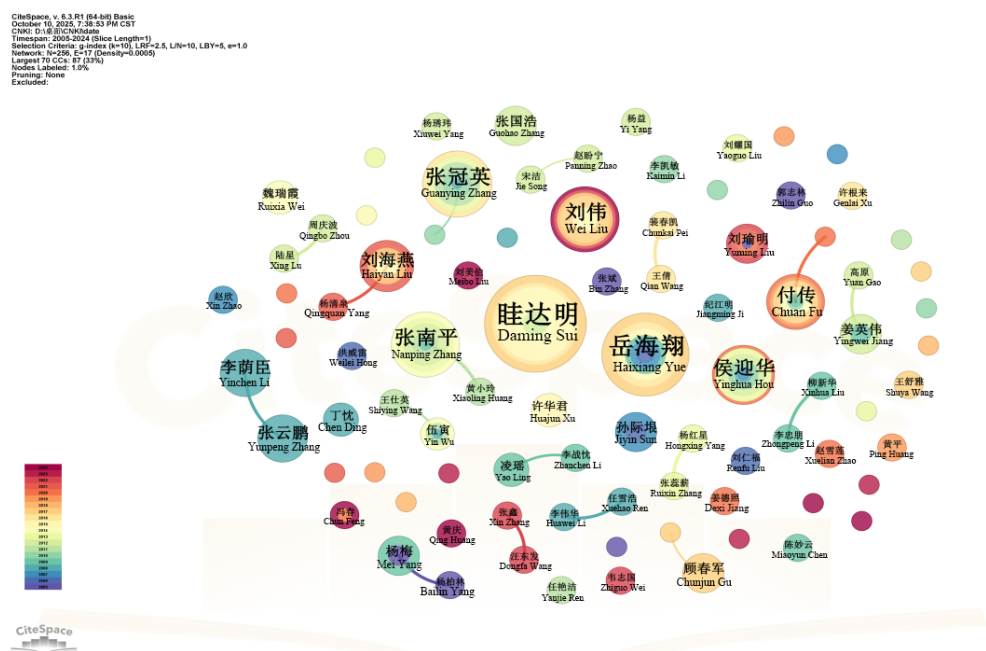


Figure 3: Co-authorship network analysis of authors in official document writing research.

Table 1: Top 20 Most Prolific Authors.

Rank	Author	Earliest Publication Year	Publications	Rank	Author	Earliest Publication Year	Publications
1	Zhaojun Luan	2008	33	11	Lixin Zheng	2010	10
2	Daming Sui	2011	26	12	Jinye Zhang	2016	10
3	Lizhou Fang	2016	20	13	Xuesong Han	2008	10
4	Haixiang Yue	2006	19	14	Chuan Fu	2008	9
5	Guanying Zhang	2008	12	15	Ting Hua	2015	8
6	Daofeng Wang	2020	12	16	Haiyan Liu	2015	7
7	Renjun Pei	2006	11	17	Jiangyun Yang	2005	7
8	Wei Liu	2015	11	18	Xinyuan Wu	2012	7
9	Nanping Zhang	2009	11	19	Yinchen Li	2008	6
10	Yinghua Hou	2007	10	20	Jinze Li	2008	6

connecting other nodes (Feng *et al.*, 2022). A higher centrality value indicates a greater role in linking disparate research themes. In the keyword co-occurrence network generated by *CiteSpace*, nodes with a betweenness centrality greater than 0.1 are considered pivotal. The top keywords with both high frequency and centrality (≥ 0.1) are: *Official document writing* (0.69), *Official document* (0.57), *Writing* (0.62), *Teaching* (0.12), *Problem* (0.63), *Language* (0.40), *Ancient official documents* (0.23), and *Writing competency* (0.11). These keywords form the core conceptual framework of research in this field, reflecting both traditional focuses and emerging interdisciplinary directions.

In addition, keyword clustering mapping helps reveal the clustering relationships, research themes, and internal structures of keywords within a specific research domain (Chen, 2006). As shown in Figure 6, based on the keyword co-occurrence network, the Log-Likelihood Ratio (LLR) algorithm was applied in *CiteSpace* to perform clustering analysis on all keywords, resulting in 10 distinct clusters. From 2005 to 2024, the clustering labels of Chinese research on official document writing were identified as follows:

#0 official document writing, #1 official document, #2 writing, #3 research, #4 language, #5 writing competency, #6 vague language, #7 Wen Xin Diao Long, #8 administrative official documents, and #9 textual body.

In the clustering visualization, modularity *Q* and average silhouette *S* serve as key indices for evaluating the quality of clustering. Generally, a modularity *Q* value greater than 0.3 indicates a significant cluster structure; an average silhouette *S* value greater than 0.5 suggests reasonable clustering; and a value above 0.7

represents highly convincing clustering results. As shown in Figure 6, the clustering knowledge map for China's research on official document writing yields a *Q* (Modularity)=0.8283 and an *S* (Silhouette)=0.9905, indicating that the clustering structure is distinct, stable, and highly reliable. These results confirm that the keyword clusters accurately reflect the actual thematic relationships within the field, with interlocking clusters and relatively concentrated research themes that effectively depict the developmental structure of official document writing research from 2005 to 2024.

Through the collation and synthesis of the above keyword co-occurrence and clustering analyses, it can be concluded that the major research hotspots in studies on official document writing in China are concentrated in the following areas.

Foundational Concepts and Textual Specification of Official Document Writing

The first research hotspot centers on keywords such as “official document”, “text”, “writing”, and “administrative official documents”, focusing on the exploration of the fundamental concepts, core elements, and textual specifications of official document writing. Official documents of any country directly or indirectly reflect the nature of its political power and the fundamental interests of its ruling class (Tang, 2011). The formats and categories of official documents are subject to strict national regulations. With the Party and government authorities' growing emphasis on standardization in document formatting, such requirements have increasingly reflected the broader trajectory of political modernization and social progress (Zhang, 2018).

Since the beginning of the 21st century, China's rapid social development and the emergence of electronic official documents have significantly reshaped the evolution of document systems. However, the *Measures for the Handling of Official Documents of State Administrative Organs* (formulated in 1987 and revised in 1993) contained no provisions for electronic documents. The promulgation of the *Regulations on the Handling of Official Documents of Party and Government Organs* in 2012, by contrast, clarified the legal validity of electronic official documents, standardizing their processing, circulation, and archiving, thereby advancing the transformation toward digital governance and paperless administration.

Official documents are characterized by standardization, formality, and authority. Any document that conforms to established format requirements bearing a red header and a red seal possesses legal force and serves as an official credential for administrative action. Therefore, official document writing must stand the test of time and scrutiny, ensuring precision in every word, rigor in every sentence, and authenticity in every matter, leaving "admiration rather than regret" for future generations (Zhao, 2017).

As the essential vehicle of administrative communication and governance, the basic concepts and core elements of official documents constitute the cornerstone of official document writing. The textual specification of the main body directly

determines the clarity of administrative directives and the authority of policy transmission. Consequently, clarifying document type selection under various administrative scenarios and adhering to standardized textual paradigms are fundamental to ensuring the orderliness and effectiveness of governmental communication.

Language Style and the Use of Vague Language in Official Document Writing

The second research hotspot revolves around keywords such as "language" and "vague language", focusing on the formation of linguistic style in official documents as well as the appropriate use and boundary control of vagueness in administrative writing. The distinct political character, authoritative decision-making, procedural rigor, and practical orientation of official documents have fostered a unique written language that distinguishes them from other genres. This specialized linguistic style not only demands accuracy and precision but also calls for a measured tone and stylistic appropriateness tailored to different administrative contexts (Li, 2018).

With the progressive advancement of China's institutional reforms, government agencies have successively issued new guidelines on the linguistic features and stylistic requirements of official documents. These emphasize that documents should avoid artificial or overly ornate language while maintaining

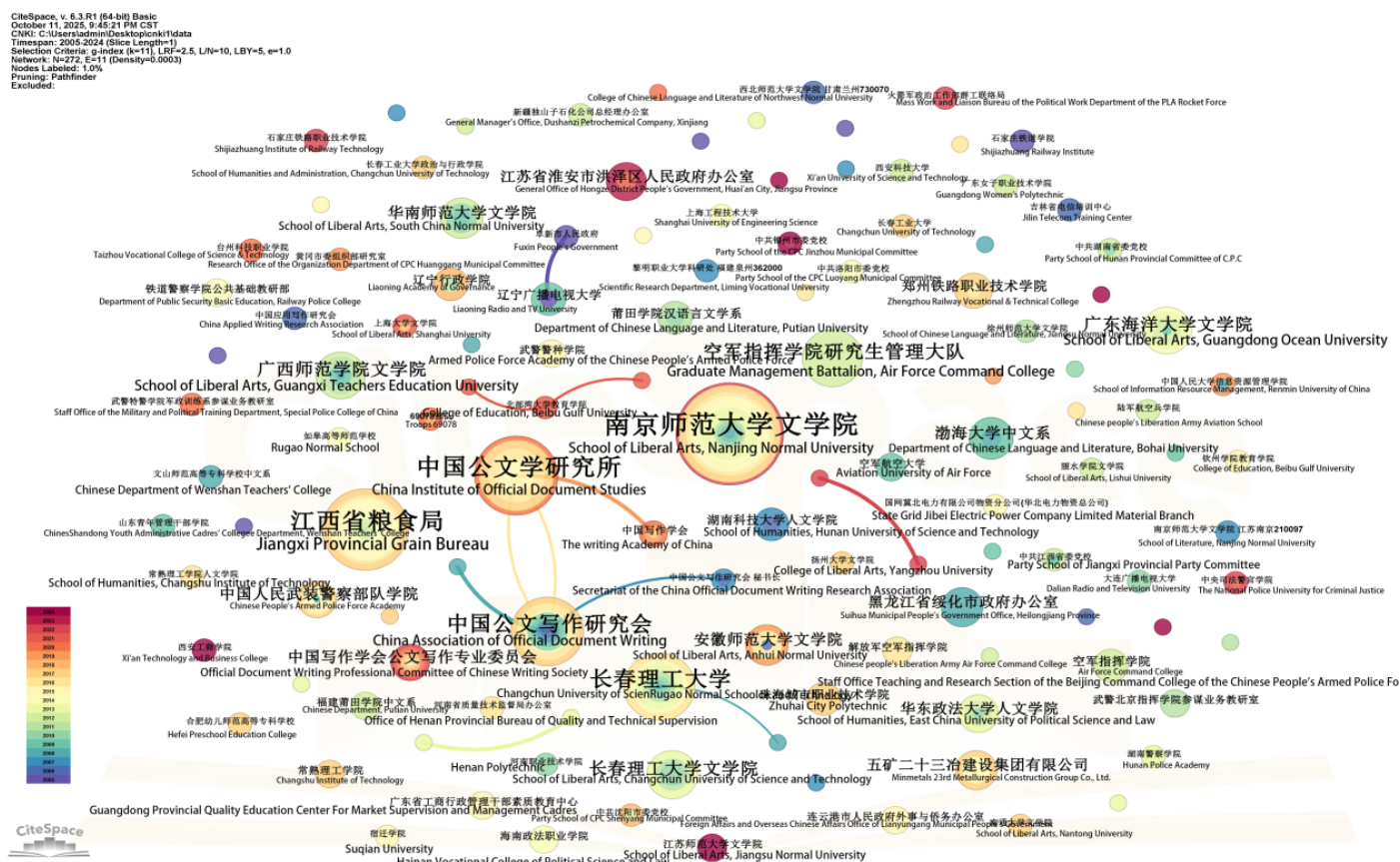


Figure 4: Institutional cooperation network in research on official document writing.

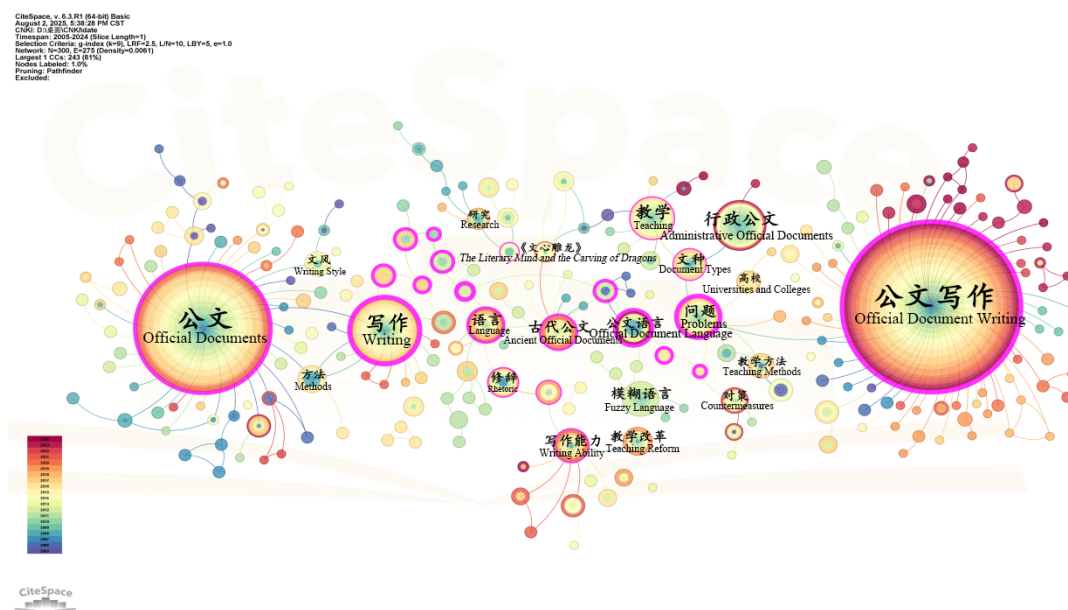


Figure 5: Keyword co-occurrence network in official document writing research.

conciseness and accuracy, thereby ensuring that expressions remain *precise, succinct, dignified, and appropriate* (Li, 2016). As standardized documents carrying legal force, official documents serve as fundamental tools for administrative bodies in executing management duties and official communication (Zhang, 2014). Because the clarity and precision of language directly affect how administrative intentions are conveyed, studies on “language” and “vague language” are of particular importance.

When language is used as a communicative medium to represent objective phenomena, it must balance precision and flexibility: precise language delineates clearly defined phenomena “either this or that” whereas vague language accommodates overlapping or indeterminate phenomena “both this and that” (Men, 2012). In official document writing, it is often necessary to employ flexible expressions to denote quantities, ranges, or temporal scopes that cannot be strictly specified. Among these linguistic studies, the focus on *vague language* predominates, as it plays a crucial role in shaping the linguistic style of official documents. By systematically examining the use of vagueness, these studies ensure that official documents accurately and appropriately convey the intentions of the issuing authorities while preserving the solemnity and precision essential to administrative discourse.

Writing Ability and Pedagogical Research on Official Document Writing

The third research hotspot focuses on the keyword “*writing ability*” and conducts in-depth analyses of the competencies required

of official document writers. A well-crafted official document not only facilitates efficient information dissemination within organizations but also shapes the organization’s public image and administrative professionalism. The *writing ability* of official documents is inherently multi-dimensional, encompassing logical reasoning, written expression, and information communication. As a practical activity combining subjective initiative and objective requirements, official document writing fundamentally depends on the competence of the writer as the *writing subject* (Sun, 2018).

Accordingly, producing high-quality official documents requires writers to possess diverse professional capabilities and exhibit a high level of comprehensive literacy. Based on this understanding, scholars have concentrated their studies on specific groups of writers, such as leaders, secretarial staff, and Party and government officials to examine the challenges faced by these groups in document writing and to explore feasible pathways and targeted strategies for improving their writing competencies.

Furthermore, research on enhancing official document writing ability not only investigates ways to strengthen practitioners’ skills but also extends to the teaching dimension, analyzing pedagogical approaches for cultivating writing ability among college students. This includes the design and development of official document writing courses, which aim to systematize training, integrate theory with practice, and foster the professional writing competence essential for administrative communication and public service contexts.

Studies on Ancient Official Documents and Their Contemporary Value

The fourth research hotspot emphasizes the exploration of *ancient official documents* to extract their historical essence and provide insights for modern official document writing. Key research areas concerning ancient official documents include their writing styles, linguistic characteristics, evolution of document types, format transformations, and modern relevance (Zhu and Zhang, 2022). With a history of more than 3,500 years, the development of Chinese official documents has accumulated a vast corpus of works and practices (Ma, 2023). While many scholars traditionally focus on the literary aspects and the historical evolution of document genres, an increasing number of studies have begun to highlight the practical significance of ancient official document writing for contemporary applications.

The writing expertise demonstrated by ancient authors remains a valuable source of inspiration for modern writers of official documents. For example, the discussions on stylistic forms, documental nature, and writing techniques presented in the chapter “Zhaoce” of *Wenxin Diaolong* (*The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*) have exerted a positive influence on the theoretical construction and stylistic refinement of modern official document writing (Yang, 2013). As China’s earliest systematic treatise on literary theory and writing theory, *Wenxin Diaolong* contains profound and structured reflections on ancient official documents across multiple chapters. These reflections have provided important intellectual foundations for subsequent studies and the modernization of official document writing.

In the keyword clustering analysis, *Wenxin Diaolong* appears as a distinct core cluster, illustrating its lasting significance in this research field. Building upon this foundation, numerous scholars

have sought to reinterpret ancient wisdom and integrate it with modern administrative writing practices, thereby creating a meaningful bridge between classical theory and contemporary practice. This integration has infused Chinese official document writing with a profound sense of cultural inheritance and theoretical depth, reflecting the enduring vitality of traditional scholarship in shaping modern communication paradigms (He, 2014).

Analysis of Keyword Burst Graph

A keyword burst graph visualizes the dynamic rise and decline of keyword frequencies over specific time periods. Burst keywords reflect the current hotspots, focal areas, and emerging trends in official document writing research, while the burst strength indicates the intensity of scholarly attention during a keyword’s peak period and its potential to evolve into a research frontier (Dong et al., 2014). Figure 7 presents the top 25 burst keywords identified in Chinese official document writing studies over the past two decades, along with their corresponding research foci, burst strengths, and timeframes. In the visualization, the red bars represent the duration of each keyword’s burst period. A higher number of burst terms in a given period suggests more active academic engagement, indicating a relatively vibrant research field.

The earliest burst terms mainly included “practical writing,” “official document writing,” “rhetoric,” “methodology,” “research,” “applied writing,” “administrative official documents,” “vague language,” “issues,” “teaching,” “models,” “military official documents,” and “reports.” These topics represent the foundational phase of the field, when researchers were primarily concerned with the practical and pedagogical aspects of official document writing.

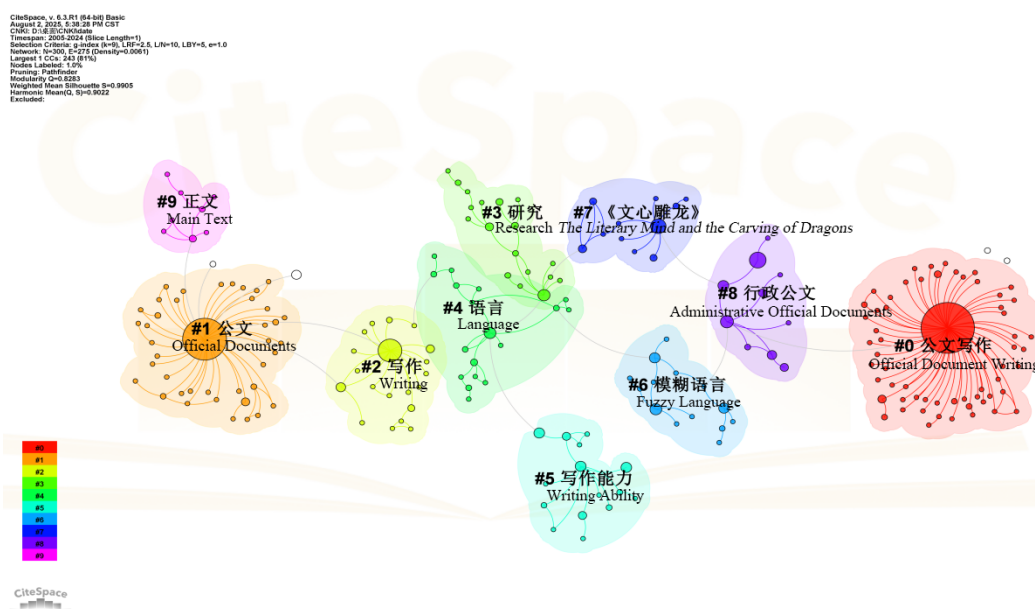


Figure 6: Keyword clustering map of official document writing research.

Top 25 Keywords with the Strongest Citation Bursts

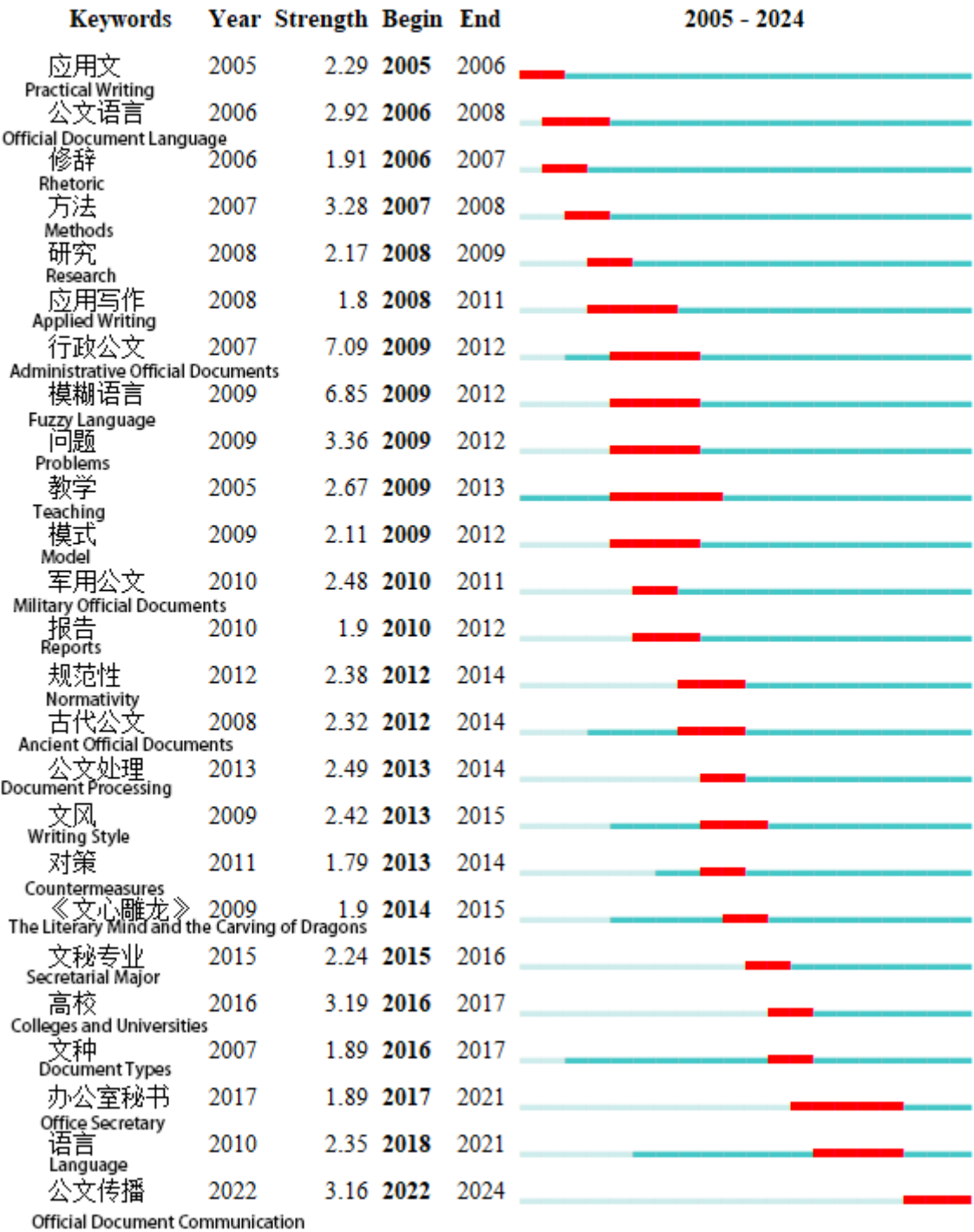


Figure 7: Top 25 keyword bursts in official document writing research.

In the middle stage, several terms with strong burst intensities such as “standardization,” “ancient official documents,” “official document processing,” and “writing style” indicate turning points in research focus. This shift can largely be attributed to the 2012 promulgation of the *Regulations on the Handling of Official*

Documents of Party and Government Organs, which redefined formatting standards and reinforced the normative framework of official document writing across administrative systems.

From 2015 to 2024, the emerging burst keywords primarily include “secretarial studies,” “universities,” “document types,” “office

secretaries,” “language,” and “official document communication.” Among these, “administrative official documents” exhibited the highest burst intensity (7.09), reflecting the growing practical demand and institutional reforms in this domain. The longest-lasting burst terms “教学 (teaching)” and “办公室秘书 (office secretary)” persisted for four years, highlighting the sustained scholarly focus on *official document writing education*, which spans multiple disciplines and continues to evolve in response to contemporary needs.

The most recent emerging keyword, “公文传播 (official document communication),” reflects the influence of the intelligent era, which has transcended the temporal and spatial constraints of traditional communication methods. The proliferation of big data and artificial intelligence technologies has profoundly reshaped modern society, simultaneously driving transformational changes in the ways official documents are created, disseminated, and managed. Within the context of smart social governance, these developments have given rise to new *intelligent modalities of official document communication* (Zhu and Park, 2025). As artificial intelligence continues to advance, *official document communication* is expected to remain a key research frontier, with future studies likely focusing on how to achieve more efficient, adaptive, and intelligent development in administrative communication systems.

DISCUSSION

A CiteSpace-based quantitative analysis of official document writing research over the past two decades reveals a gradual shift in scholarly focus from traditional concerns with formatting standards and linguistic styles to emerging frontiers such as intelligent writing, human-machine collaboration, and semantic understanding. Synthesizing the results of thematic evolution and keyword burst detection, four prominent directions of research development can be identified: talent cultivation through interdisciplinary integration, integration of ancient and modern official document traditions, professionalization and standardization, and technological integration with intelligent advancement.

Talent Cultivation and Interdisciplinary Integration

An analysis of thematic development and hotspot evolution from 2005 to 2024 shows that academic collaboration in official document writing research is shifting from a liberal-arts-dominated model toward an interdisciplinary framework that integrates the humanities, computer science, management, and public policy. Collaborations among computer scientists, language scholars, management experts, and policy researchers are becoming increasingly necessary. Relying solely on a single discipline is insufficient to address the complex challenges of government information release and administrative communication. Scholars thus advocate for breaking disciplinary

boundaries and establishing a “*grand liberal arts*” research paradigm grounded in official document writing and supported by the integration of interdisciplinary knowledge (An and Wang, 2019).

With the rapid adoption of Large Language Models (LLMs) in official document writing, new demands have emerged for professionals’ knowledge structures and digital literacy. Universities have correspondingly begun to place greater emphasis on cultivating students’ official document thinking abilities, combining writing instruction with data-driven reasoning and AI-assisted composition.

Integration of Ancient and Modern Official Document Writing

Keyword co-occurrence analyses over the past two decades reveal that ancient official document works such as *Wen Xin Diao Long*, *Gong Duo Xue Shi*, *Qiu Mao Cai Yi Deng Zhao*, and *Gong Duo Tong Lun* appear with high frequency. These classical sources provide enduring insights into writing style, linguistic characteristics, document typology, and formatting evolution (He, 2002). Ancient official documents emphasize clarity of purpose, structural rigor, conciseness, and timeliness—qualities that are consistent with the functional and goal-oriented nature of modern administrative writing.

As times evolve, it remains essential not to discard the intellectual heritage embedded in ancient official documents, as they embody cultural traditions that continue to inform and refine contemporary practices. Integrating these classical principles into modern official document writing enriches both theoretical frameworks and stylistic standards, ensuring continuity between tradition and innovation.

Professionalization and Standardization Development

Since the founding of the People’s Republic of China, the reform of official document writing has undergone multiple stages of transformation. The 1950 Interim Measures for Document Handling marked the first unified regulation governing document types and formats. Following the reform and opening-up period, rapid economic and social development necessitated deeper administrative restructuring and higher demands for efficiency and accuracy. In response, Party and government departments issued a series of regulatory documents addressing document management, progressively standardizing drafting, handling, and archiving procedures. These efforts significantly improved the practical operability and consistency of document norms (Wei, 2022).

A major milestone came in 2012, when the General Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council jointly issued the *Regulations on the Handling of Official Documents of Party and Government*

Organs. This was the first intra-Party regulation to formalize document-handling procedures nationwide. Since then, writing regulations and formatting standards have continued to evolve in alignment with modernization needs. Official document writing within Party and government organs is thus steadily advancing toward greater specialization and standardization. Accordingly, research on standardization should continue to deepen, refining both theoretical and operational frameworks to sustain the professionalization of this field (Liu, 2011).

Technological Integration and Intelligent Development

Over the past two decades, the integration of official document writing with artificial intelligence has expanded rapidly, as reflected in the increasing frequency of keywords such as *AI writing* and *natural language processing*. This signifies that technological convergence has become a defining trend, with AI being applied throughout the entire document production process from drafting and editing to review and dissemination, thereby driving intelligent transformation within the field (Ma and Dong, 2021).

In China, AI models and writing systems such as ERNIE Bot, ChatGLM, iFlytek Spark, Tongyi Qianwen, and Xinhua Miaobi represent an emerging frontier for official document writing. However, intelligent tools should be applied appropriately and prudently. As official documents serve as authoritative instruments of Party and government agencies, enterprises, and public institutions, they demand exceptional precision and are built upon cumulative human expertise that machines alone cannot replicate. Moreover, AI-generated content poses compliance and reliability risks, as large models may produce plausible but inaccurate information (“hallucinations”) and cannot assume responsibility for the legal or factual accuracy of their output (Mahboubi et al., 2024).

Therefore, while AI and intelligent systems can serve as valuable assistive technologies, the essence of official document writing must remain human-centered. Delegating writing entirely to machines would undermine the nuanced judgment, ethical responsibility, and contextual understanding that define the human element of official communication.

CONCLUSION

In summary, this study employs bibliometric methods in conjunction with CiteSpace visualization tools to conduct a comprehensive quantitative and qualitative analysis of Chinese research on official document writing over the past two decades. The results reveal that, although the total number of publications in this field remains substantial, research on AI-assisted official document writing—particularly studies leveraging Large Language

Models (LLMs) has gradually emerged as a new frontier in response to recent advances in artificial intelligence (Liang et al., 2025).

First, from 2005 to 2024, Chinese scholarship on official document writing has encompassed a broad range of perspectives, including language usage, formatting norms, teaching methodologies, document processing procedures, and ancient official document studies. Despite significant depth in these individual areas, the field still lacks an integrated and holistic research framework that systematically links theoretical exploration, pedagogical innovation, and practical application.

Second, the evolution of research foci in official document writing has closely aligned with national political and administrative developments. Following the release of the *Regulations on the Handling of Official Documents of Party and Government Organs* in 2012, terms such as “standardization” and “normative writing” began to emerge as central keywords, reflecting institutional emphasis on procedural rigor. Meanwhile, the growing national attention to official document writing education has contributed to the increasing prominence of keywords such as “teaching,” “colleges and universities,” and “secretarial studies.” Moreover, the topic of *official document communication* has become an emerging research direction, deserving of more systematic and forward-looking investigation.

Nevertheless, this study has certain limitations. In terms of data scope, it relies exclusively on literature indexed in the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) and does not incorporate foreign-language publications, which may restrict international comparative analysis. In terms of research perspective, it focuses primarily on the theme of *official document writing*, without fully integrating cross-disciplinary viewpoints from communication studies, linguistics, information science, or artificial intelligence. Future research should therefore expand its data sources, methodological approaches, and interdisciplinary scope to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the evolution and modernization of official document writing in the era of digital intelligence.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This work was supported by the Nanchang Normal University Scientific Research Project (Grant No. 24XJZX30).

ABBREVIATIONS

AI: Artificial Intelligence; **LLM:** Large Language Model; **NLP:** Natural Language Processing.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

- An, F., & Wang, M. (2019). The nature, status, and system of the construction of new liberal arts. *Academic Exchange*, (11), 5-14 (in Chinese). <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1000-8284.2019.11.001>
- Chen, C. M. (2006). CiteSpace II: Detecting and visualizing emerging trends and transient patterns in scientific literature. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 57(3), 359-377. <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.20317>
- Chen, Z. J., & Wang, F. (2013). On the period-specific features of official document language during the "Seventeen Years": A case study of official documents in Historical Materials on Publishing in the People's Republic of China (October 1949-April 1966). *Archives Science Bulletin*, (3), 45-48 (in Chinese).
- Dong, G., Li, R., Yang, W., Wang, W., Gong, L., Shen, G., Yu, M., & Lv, J. (2014). Microblog burst keywords detection based on social trust and dynamics model. *Chinese Journal of Electronics*, 23(4), 695-700. <https://doi.org/10.23919/CJE.2014.10851989>
- Donthu, N., Kumar, S., Mukherjee, D., Pandey, N., & Lim, W. M. (2021). How to conduct a bibliometric analysis: An overview and guidelines. *Journal of Business Research*, 133, 285-296. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.04.070>
- Fan, L. (2024). A review of research on mental health of older adults based on CiteSpace. *Aging Research*, 11(4), 1124-1131 (in Chinese). <https://doi.org/10.12677/ar.2024.114154>
- Fan, Z. (2017). An analysis on the format standardization of "attachment notation" in party and government organs' official documents. *Archives Management*, (1), 78-79 (in Chinese). <https://doi.org/10.15950/j.cnki.1005-9458.2017.01.029>
- Feng, Y., Wang, H., Chang, C., & Lu, H. (2022). Intrinsic correlation with betweenness centrality and distribution of shortest paths. *Mathematics*, 10(14), 2521. <https://doi.org/10.3390/math10142521>
- Fu, Y. (2011). On the multifunctional nature of official documents. *Archives Science Bulletin*, (4), 45-48 (in Chinese).
- Hao, Q. M., & Li, X. P. (2006). Strengthening linguistic knowledge in official document writing. *Archives Science Bulletin*, (6), 44-47 (in Chinese).
- He, Y. (2014). A glimpse into the modern value of ancient official document writing. *Journal of Xichang University (Social Sciences Edition)*, 26(3), 68-70, 75 (in Chinese). <https://doi.org/10.16104/j.issn.1673-1883.2014.03.019>
- He, Z. (2002). From equal emphasis on form and content to content orientation: On the evolution of ancient official document theory. *Archives Science Bulletin*, (5), 50-54 (in Chinese). <https://doi.org/10.16113/j.cnki.daxtx.2002.05.015>
- Hu, Z. G., & Zhang, C. Z. (2021). Full-text bibliometric analysis: An emerging research approach. *Library Tribune*, 41(3), 1-11 (in Chinese). <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1002-1167.2021.03.001>
- Li, B. (2018). On the importance of language norms for official documents. *Journal of Liaoning Administration College*, (5), 68-71 (in Chinese). <https://doi.org/10.13945/j.cnki.jlac.2018.05.015>
- Li, Y. (2016). Official document language should also emphasize literary elegance. *Archives Management*, (2), 74-75 (in Chinese). <https://doi.org/10.15950/j.cnki.1005-9458.2016.02.028>
- Liang, R., Cai, Z., & Fang, H. (2025). Official document generation method based on instruction fine-tuning of large models. *Journal of Chinese Information Processing*, 39(5), 164-176 (in Chinese).
- Liu, L. Z. (1999). An exploration of the literary characteristics of ancient official documents. *Academic Forum*, (3), 74-76 (in Chinese).
- Liu, Y. (2011). A brief discussion on the standardization of official document language. *Journal of Fuzhou University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, 25(2), 5-7 (in Chinese). <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1002-3321.2011.02.015>
- Lou, W., & Qiu, J. (2014). Semantic information retrieval research based on co-occurrence analysis. *Online Information Review*, 38(1), 4-23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/OIR-11-2012-0203>
- Ma, J., & Dong, Z. (2021). A brief analysis of the positive impact of intelligent tools on official document writing: Taking WPS Intelligent Writing as an example. *Secretary's Friend*, (10), 28-31 (in Chinese). <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1004-3071.2021.10.012>
- Ma, Y. (2023). The expression of local social will in official document administration in the Ming Dynasty. *Frontiers of History in China*, 18(4), 496-533. <https://doi.org/10.3868/s020-012-023-0029-9>
- Mahboubi, R., Dinkla, K., Weiss, A., Acierto, A., Staar, P., & Robinson, J. (2024). Sciscribe: Automating and contextualizing literature reviews in cardiac surgery. *The Journal of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jtcvs.2024.09.014>
- Men, G. (2012). An additional analysis on the construction and use of ambiguous language in official documents. *Science & Technology Information*, (17), 238 (in Chinese). <https://doi.org/10.16661/j.cnki.1672-3791.2012.17.185>
- Pan, L. G. (1992). On the application of vague language in official document writing. *Zhejiang Archives*, (10), 44-46 (in Chinese).
- Sun, G. (2018). The "tripod" structure of the main subjects in official document writing. *Archives Science Bulletin*, (1), 48-52 (in Chinese). <https://doi.org/10.16113/j.cnki.daxtx.2018.01.010>
- Tan, A. P. (2023). Application of blended teaching mode in official document writing instruction under the concept of New Liberal Arts. *Journal of Higher Education*, 9(8), 97-101 (in Chinese). <https://doi.org/10.19980/j.CN23-1593/G4.2023.08.024>
- Tan, B. H., & Yang, Y. H. (2006). On cultivating students' aesthetic competence in official document writing instruction. *Education and Vocation*, (27), 114-115 (in Chinese). <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1004-3985.2006.27.059>
- Tang, Z. (2011). On the application of language in Taiwan-related official documents. *Secretary's Companion*, (1), 32-34 (in Chinese). <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1004-3071.2011.01.016>
- Wei, L. (2022). Review on the study of regulations on the handling of official documents of party and government organs (2012-2022). *Writing*, (6), 63-69 (in Chinese). <https://doi.org/10.19867/j.cnki.writing.2022.06.010>
- Yang, Q. (2013). The theory and value of official document writing in Wenxin Diaolong. *Archives Science Bulletin*, (3), 38-40 (in Chinese). <https://doi.org/10.16113/j.cnki.daxtx.2013.03.001>
- Yang, X. (2020). On the establishment of official document types in China's party and government organizations. *Archives Science Study*, (2), 69-72 (in Chinese). <https://doi.org/10.16065/j.cnki.issn1002-1620.2020.02.011>
- Zhang, G. (2014). Rethinking the functionality of official documents. *Writing*, (9), 14-16 (in Chinese). <https://doi.org/10.19867/j.cnki.writing.2014.09.005>
- Zhang, H. (2016). The use of vague terms in administrative documents. *Journal of Cangzhou Normal University*, 32(2), 21-24 (in Chinese). <https://doi.org/10.13834/j.cnki.czsfxyxb.2016.02.007>
- Zhang, L., Zhao, X., & Ye, Y. (2011). A comparative study on the application of information visualization software CiteSpace and VOSviewer. *Journal of Information Resources Management*, 1(1), 95-98 (in Chinese). <https://doi.org/10.13365/j.jirm.2011.01.017>
- Zhang, N. P. (2015). On the characteristics, writing patterns, and type differentiation of reward-and-punishment official documents. *Archives Science Bulletin*, (3), 43-48 (in Chinese).
- Zhang, S. (2018). The identification and value of normative documents in the "Regulations on the Handling of Official Documents of Party and Government Agencies". *Archives Science Bulletin*, (1), 53-56 (in Chinese). <https://doi.org/10.16113/j.cnki.daxtx.2018.01.011>
- Zhao, D. (2017). Analysis of non-standard phenomena and countermeasures in official document writing. *Science & Technology Information*, 15(21), 238, 240 (in Chinese). <https://doi.org/10.16661/j.cnki.1672-3791.2017.21.238>
- Zheng, L. (2009). A brief discussion on the format and issuance of non-statutory official documents. *Lantai World*, (11), 25 (in Chinese).
- Zhu, X., & Zhang, Z. (2022). A review of scientific exploration in official document writing over the past two decades (2000-2020): Visualized quantitative analysis based on the CNKI database. *Writing*, 42(5), 114-124 (in Chinese). <https://doi.org/10.19867/j.cnki.writing.2022.05.014>
- Zhu, Y. P., & Park, H. W. (2025). Publication, collaboration, citation performance, and triple helix innovation gene of artificial intelligence research in the communication field: Comparing Asia to the rest of the world. *Journal of the Knowledge Economy*, 16(2), 10308-10328. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13132-024-02280-6>

Cite this article: Zhou X, Xiao W, Wei J. A Bibliometric Study of Chinese Official Document Writing (2005-2024). *J Scientometric Res*. 2026;15(2):754-67.