Mapping Islamic education curriculum research (1981–2024): A bibliometric analysis of trends, authorship, and themes

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Abstract
This study examines the development and trends in Islamic education curriculum research from 1981 to 2024. Data were extracted from Scopus on November 7, 2024, using the query TITLE-ABS-KEY (Curriculum and Islamic and Education). After excluding non-English documents and non-article publications, 418 articles were analyzed bibliometrically. The analysis employed RStudio for statistical processing, VOSviewer for network visualization (co-authorship and keyword co-occurrence), and Microsoft Excel for supplementary data management. Findings indicate that Arvisais, O., Sanjakdar, F., and Zulfikar, T. were the most prolific authors (4 publications each). Ar-Raniry State Islamic University emerged as the leading institution (11 articles), while Indonesia contributed the highest output (162 articles). The Journal of Islamic Education published the most relevant studies (17 articles). This study provides a systematic overview of the field and suggests future research explore comparative curriculum models in Muslim-majority versus minority contexts.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is the primary instrument for shaping societal character and competencies, serving as a determinant of national progress (Cikka, 2020). To remain relevant, education systems must maximize students' potential to address both local and global challenges in a rapidly changing world. Beyond knowledge transmission, education must embed moral and ethical values to prepare future generations for societal life (Maisaroh & Untari, 2024). This is particularly critical amid accelerated technological advancement and social transformation (Hasbiyallah et al., 2023). Thus, a well-designed curriculum is indispensable to guide educational processes and produce well-rounded individuals (Bahri, 2017).

A robust curriculum should not only assist teachers in delivering instruction but also foster knowledge, character, skills, and student engagement (Fahira & Ramadan, 2021). It must adapt to societal changes (Pahrudin et al., 2021) while

preserving foundational values, such as religious and moral principles, alongside interdisciplinary relevance (Brutu et al., 2023). While some studies argue that Islamic education strengthens moral resilience (Siregar et al., 2024), others highlight implementation gaps, such as disparities between taught values and student behavior (Ismail et al., 2020). Islamic education aims to integrate knowledge with Islamic values, cultivating individuals of noble character who contribute to societal advancement (Hadi et al., 2022; Manan, 2023). However, 21st-century challenges—including technological disruption (Mukhibat et al., 2024) and evolving global needs—demand systematic curriculum reevaluation (Hadi et al., 2022).

The Islamic education curriculum is pivotal in merging academic rigor with religious values (Daulay & Pulungan, 2024). Its ultimate goal is to produce generations that excel academically, adhere to moral principles, and contribute positively to society (Putri & Setiawan, 2022). Islamic teachings thus provide a framework for worldly and spiritual well-being when applied in daily life (Faizin et al., 2024). Achieving this requires a curriculum that seamlessly integrates Islamic principles with modern knowledge systems (Rohman et al., 2024).

Globalization and technological innovation have intensified challenges in developing Islamic education curricula that align with societal needs (Nasir, 2021). Contemporary learners must acquire global competence, critical thinking, and adaptability without compromising their Islamic identity (Astuti et al., 2024; Damopoli, 2015). Curriculum updates are therefore essential to maintain relevance. The integration of technology further necessitates equitable and culturally inclusive learning approaches (Ayusuhada et al., 2024). Comprehensive research is critical to identify areas for improvement and optimize curriculum implementation (Ardilla et al., 2024; Talukder et al., 2024).

Bibliometric analysis provides a quantitative method to examine patterns in academic literature (Kurdi & Kurdi, 2021). Utilizing Scopus data (Mubarrok & Rahmawati, 2020), this approach can map research trends, collaboration networks, and geographical contributions (Fikri, 2024; Nainggolan et al., 2024). Such analysis offers strategic advantages: (1) identifying prevalent research themes and gaps, (2) helping scholars contextualize their work internationally, and (3) informing policymakers to design responsive curricula (Muntashir, 2021).

Furthermore, bibliometric studies of Islamic education curricula can advance the internationalization of Islamic education (Sonia, 2024). By analyzing global trends, institutions can enhance research quality and competitiveness (Islam et al., 2022). This mapping also promotes cross-border collaboration, enabling curriculum adaptation across diverse contexts. Ultimately, bibliometrics supports the development of curricula that balance religious values with scientific and societal demands (Safina et al., 2024; Wardhana & Muafi, 2022).

Publications on Islamic education curricula have surged, particularly

between 2015 and 2020 (Yu et al., 2023), reflecting growing global interest in curriculum frameworks. This trend aligns with efforts to establish adaptable Islamic education standards (Benavot, 2002). The rise in research underscores the need for curricula that address transnational challenges while reinforcing Islamic educational principles.

This study employs bibliometric analysis to examine Scopus-indexed research on Islamic education curricula from 1981 to 2024. Using VOSviewer (İri & Ünal, 2024), we visualize networks among authors, institutions, and countries (Passas, 2024) addressing:

1. Publication trends in Islamic education curriculum research (1981–2024).
2. Leading authors, institutions, and countries in this field.
3. Emerging thematic clusters in Islamic curriculum studies.

This study aims to inform curriculum adaptability, address research gaps, and enhance Islamic education's global relevance (Saputro et al., 2023).

METHOD

This study employed bibliometric analysis to examine publications related to Islamic education curricula. Data collection was conducted on November 7, 2024, at 09:00 WIB through a Boolean search in the Scopus database, covering publications from 1981 to 2024 (Saputro et al., 2023). The analysis incorporated citation metrics, document content examination, and network analysis using Microsoft Excel, RStudio, and VOSviewer, following established bibliometric protocols (Nobanee et al., 2021). These methods have been successfully applied in diverse research domains, including tourism sustainability, manufacturing studies, and environmental science (Daruati et al., 2022).

The research process comprised several sequential stages. First, a comprehensive literature review was conducted to identify appropriate keywords that adequately encompassed the research scope. Scopus was selected as the primary database due to its superior coverage of social science and education research compared to Web of Science (Hidayatullah et al., 2024).

In the second stage, document retrieval was performed using the Boolean operator (TITLE-ABS-KEY (curriculum AND islamic AND education)), yielding an initial collection of 828 documents. Following the application of inclusion criteria (English-language journal articles) and exclusion of duplicates, 418 documents remained for final analysis.

The third stage involved systematic document evaluation using Scopus Analyzer, R, and RStudio to assess annual publication trends and distribution patterns across authors, affiliations, countries, and journals. Network analysis of documents was performed through data visualization in VOSviewer, supplemented by additional data processing in Microsoft Excel (Apriantoro & Susanto, 2024). The complete research procedure is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. *Bibliometric Steps*
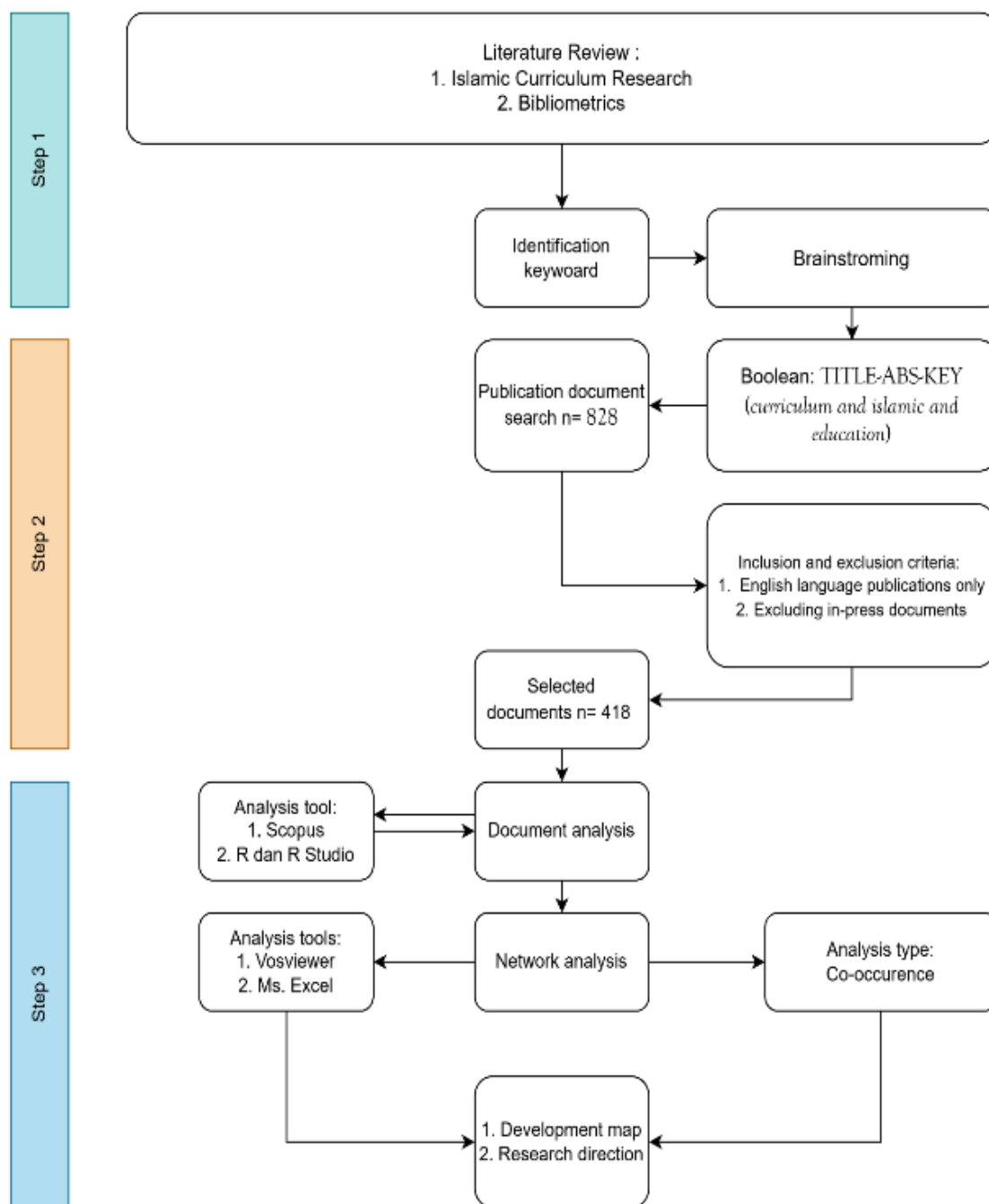
RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Document Analysis

Table 1. *Key Information About Data*

Description	Results
MAIN INFORMATION ABOUT DATA	
Timespan	1981:2024
Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	234
Documents	418
Annual Growth Rate %	9,77
Document Average Age	6,66
Average citations per doc	6,907
References	16897
DOCUMENT CONTENTS	
Keywords Plus (ID)	431
Author's Keywords (DE)	1205
AUTHORS	
Authors	936
Authors of single-authored docs	159
AUTHORS COLLABORATION	
Single-authored docs	165
Co-Authors per Doc	2,42
International co-authorships %	14,83
DOCUMENT TYPES	
article	418

Table 1 presents key bibliometric data spanning 1981 to 2024. The analysis reveals 418 documents published across 234 sources, demonstrating an annual growth rate of 9.77%. The average document age of 6.66 years indicates the relative recency and continued relevance of these publications. With an average of 6.91 citations per document and 16,897 total references, these works demonstrate substantial academic influence and engagement with diverse sources. The dataset contains 431 Keywords Plus and 1,205 Author Keywords, reflecting both specificity and breadth in research focus. Among 936 contributing authors, 159 produced single-authored works, while collaborative efforts averaged 2.42 co-authors per document. Notably, 14.83% of publications involved international collaborations, suggesting growing global engagement in this research domain.

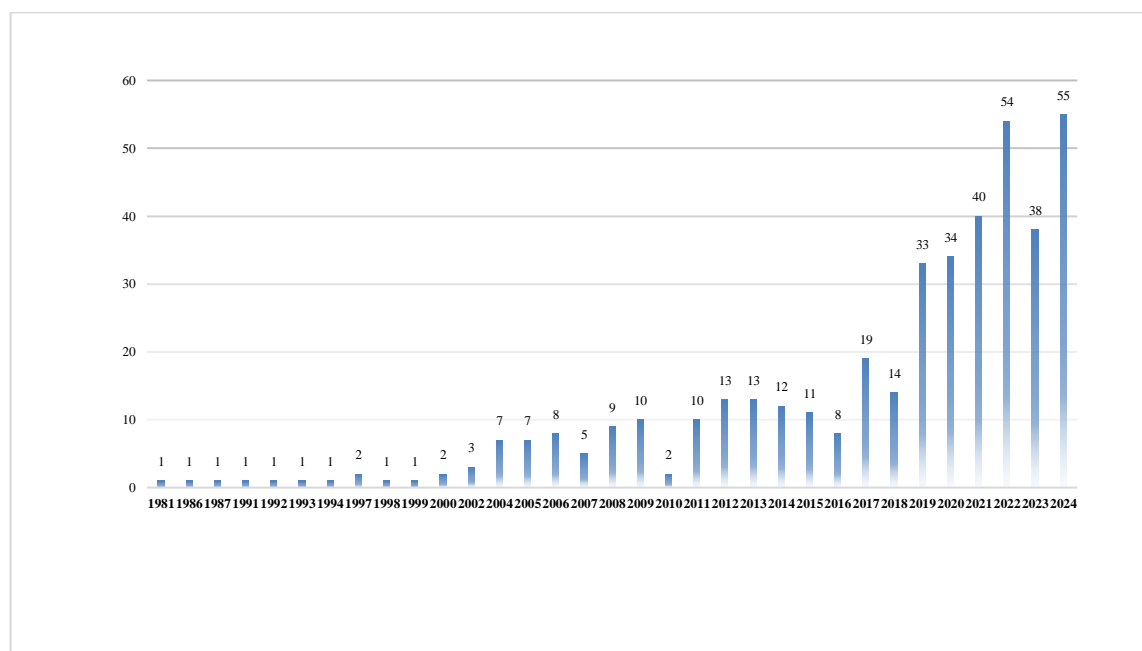**Figure 2.** *Temporal Publication Trends*

Figure 2 illustrates the temporal distribution of publications, revealing distinct developmental phases. The period from 1981 to 2000 shows limited output, characteristic of the field's nascent stage. A marked acceleration occurs post-2000, coinciding with broader digital access to academic publishing platforms. The most significant growth emerges between 2015-2020, potentially reflecting increased global attention to Islamic education amidst contemporary socio-religious discourses. While publication volume remains stable post-2020, citation rates show modest decline, possibly indicating market saturation or shifting research priorities despite ongoing topic relevance.
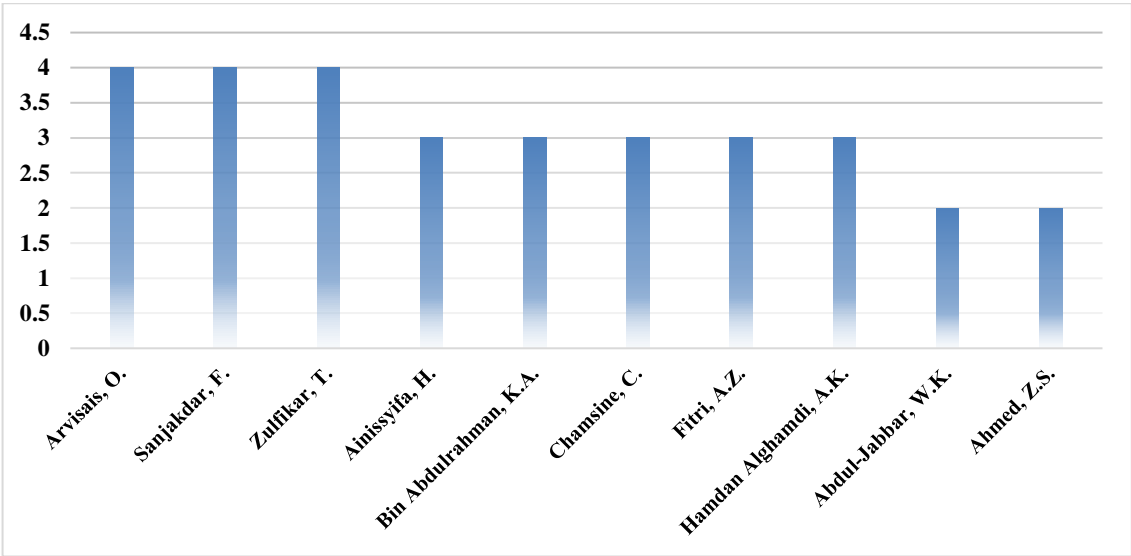
Figure 3. *Author Productivity*

Figure 3 identifies Arvisais, O., Sanjakdar, F., and Zulfikar, T. as the most prolific contributors, each with four publications. This productivity suggests their substantial influence in shaping discourse on Islamic education curricula.

Figure 4. *Institutional Contributions*

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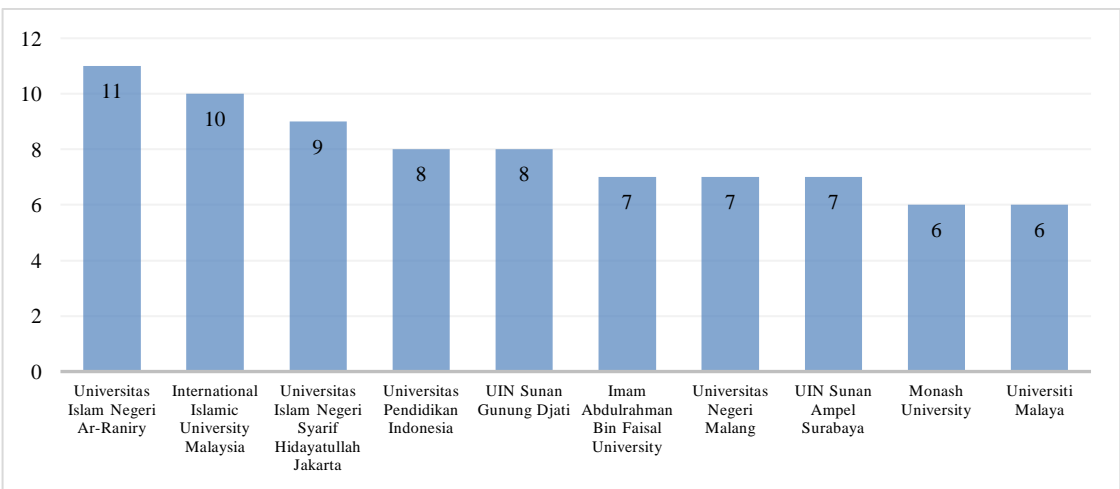Ikhsan Aryadi, Lismawati Lismawati, & Nurul Aisyah

Figure 4 highlights institutional leadership, with Ar-Raniry State Islamic University (11 publications) and International Islamic University Malaysia (10 publications) emerging as key knowledge producers. The strong showing of Indonesian institutions, including Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta and Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (8 publications each), underscores the nation's central role in this research landscape.

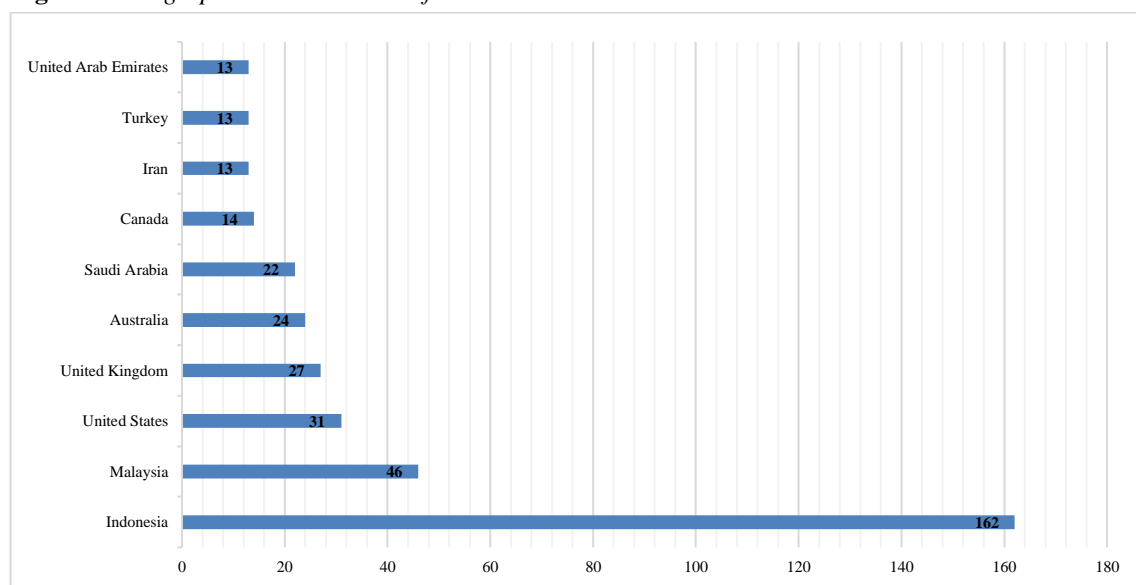**Figure 5.** *Geographical Distribution of Research*

Figure 5 confirms Indonesia's scholarly dominance with 162 publications, followed by Malaysia (46) and the United States (31). This distribution reflects Southeast Asia's intellectual leadership in Islamic education research, while contributions from Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom, and Turkey (each <20 publications) demonstrate broader global engagement. The data suggests a correlation between Muslim-majority contexts and research output, though interest extends to diverse geopolitical settings.

Figure 6. *Journal Outlets*

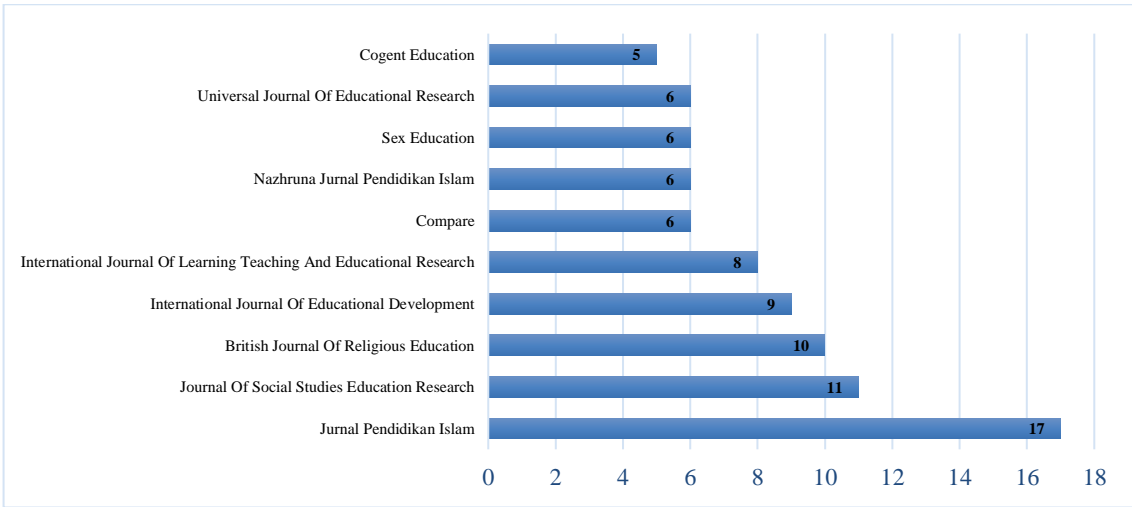Figure 6 reveals the Journal of Islamic Education as the primary publication venue (17 articles), establishing it as a key resource for scholars. The Journal of Social Studies Education Research (11 articles) and British Journal of Religious Education (9 articles) serve as important secondary outlets, demonstrating interdisciplinary interest in Islamic education themes.
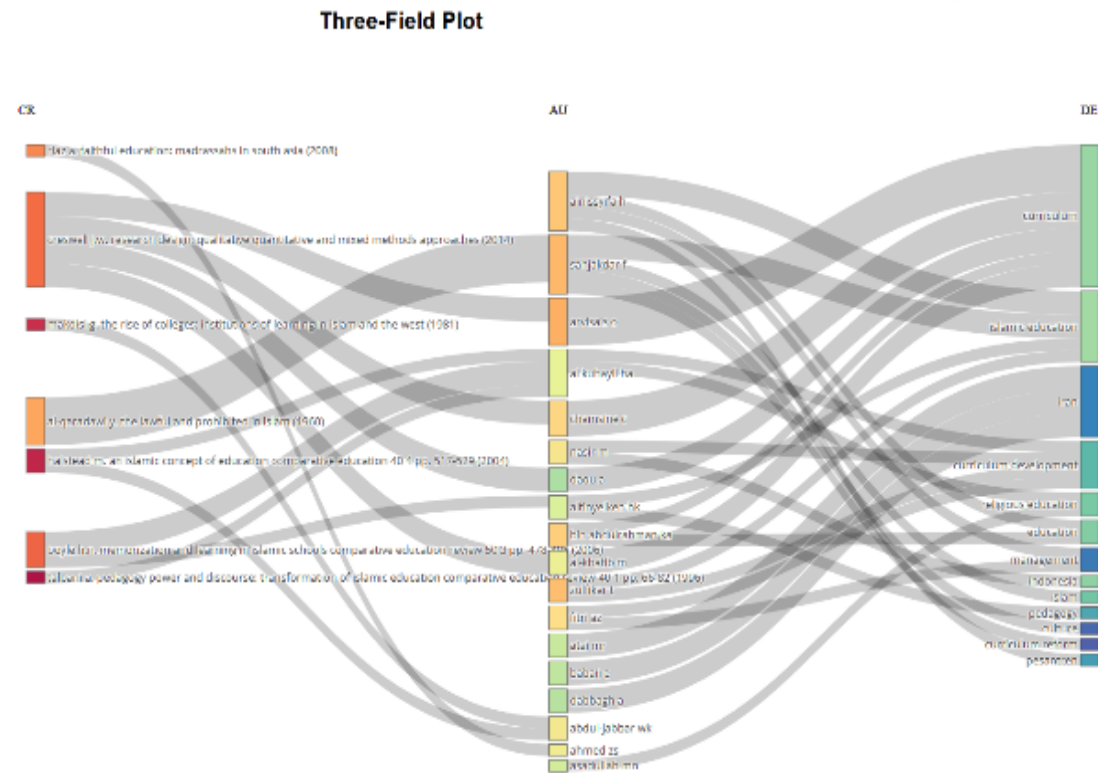
Figure 7. *Conceptual Mapping*

Figure 7's three-field plot elucidates relationships between journals, authors, and research themes. Seven journals show thematic connections, with Creswell J.W.'s works prominently linked to authors Arvisais O., Chamsine C., and Daou A. The analysis identifies three predominant keyword clusters: "Curriculum," "Islamic Education," and "Iran," suggesting these as central conceptual anchors in the literature. The visual mapping confirms Ainissyifa H. and Sanjakdar F. as frequently cited authors, while revealing thematic concentrations that may guide future research directions.

This analysis collectively demonstrates the dynamic evolution of Islamic education curriculum research, marked by increasing internationalization, sustained institutional leadership from Southeast Asia, and growing conceptual sophistication. The findings underscore the field's responsiveness to both academic trends and societal needs concerning Islamic pedagogy.

Figure 8. *Corresponding Authors' Geographic Distribution*
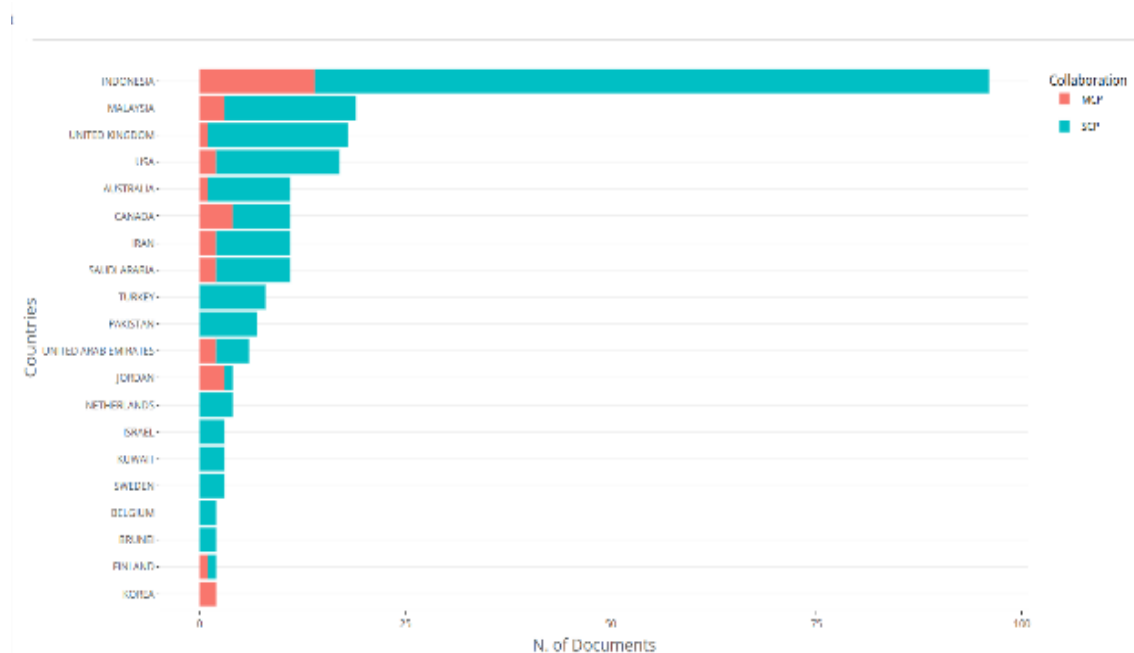
Figure 8 reveals Indonesia's predominant position in both Multiple Country Publications (MCP) and Single Country Publications (SCP), underscoring its central role in Islamic education curriculum research. Canada and Jordan follow in MCP contributions, while Malaysia and the United Kingdom emerge as significant SCP contributors. The data confirms Asia's regional dominance, particularly through Indonesia and Malaysia's scholarly output, establishing the continent as an epistemic hub for Islamic education studies. This geographic concentration likely reflects both the demographic significance of Muslim populations in these regions and institutional investments in Islamic pedagogy research.

| 187

Table 2. *Most Globally Cited Documents*

Paper	Total Citations	TC per Year
KAPLAN S, 2002, INT J MIDDLE EAST STUD	78	3,39
ZINE J, 2000, RACE ETHN EDUC	62	2,48
RICHARDSON PM, 2004, INT J EDUC DEV	59	2,81
KAGIMU M, 1998, AIDS EDUC PREV	53	1,96
NIYOZOV S, 2009, CURRIC INQ	49	3,06
TABARI KHOMEIRAN R, 2007, NURSE EDUC TODAY	48	2,67
AWAISU A, 2007, AM J PHARM EDUC	46	2,56
TÜRKMEN B, 2009, COMP STUD SOUTH ASIA AFR MIDDLE EAST	46	2,88
BENN T, 2006, EUR PHYS EDUC REV	45	2,37
BENNETT LR, 2007, SEX EDUC	39	2,17

Table 2 presents the most globally cited documents, with Kaplan's (2002) work in the International Journal of Middle East Studies demonstrating exceptional impact (78 total citations, 3.39 annual citations). The longitudinal influence of these works is evidenced by sustained citation patterns across decades, from Zine's (2000) contribution on race and education to more recent works like Niyozov's (2009) curriculum inquiry. The diversity of journals represented - spanning Middle Eastern studies, religious education, and health education - reflects the interdisciplinary nature of Islamic education research.
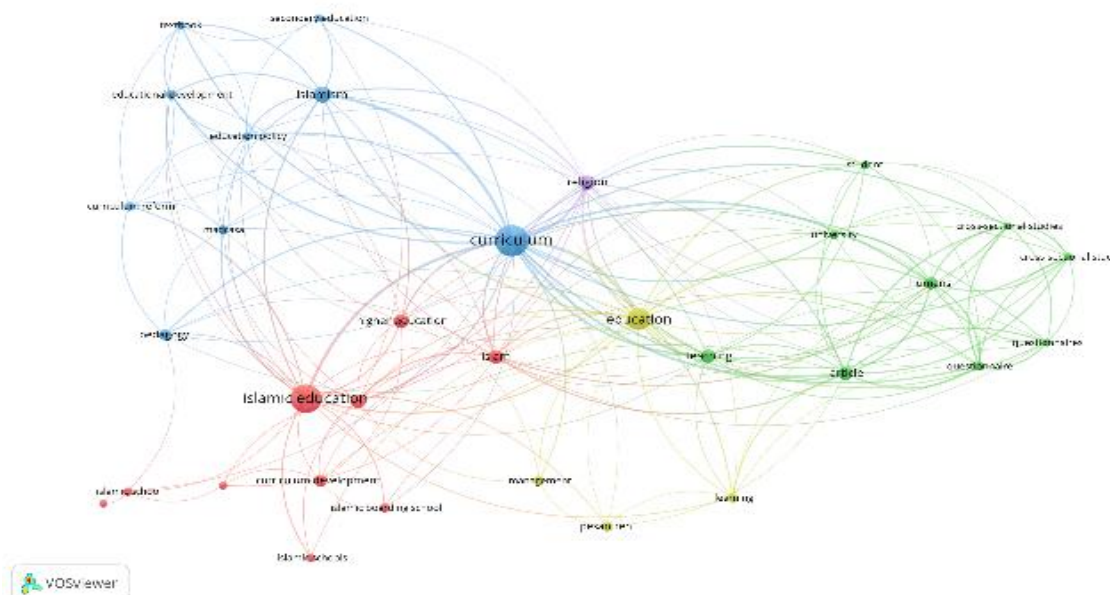
Table 3. *Local vs. Global Citation Patterns*

Document	Year	Local Citations	Global Citations	LC/GC Ratio (%)
MUHAJIR A, 2022, J SOC STUD EDUC RES	2022	4	8	50,00
ZUHDI M, 2006, INT J INCLUSIVE EDUC	2006	4	24	16,67
ARVISAIS O, 2020, J CURRIC STUD	2020	3	20	15,00
ZAINAL S, 2022, J ILM ISLAM FUTURA	2022	3	4	75,00
MULUK S, 2019, HIGH EDUC SKILLS WORK BASED LEARNING	2019	3	16	18,75
ZARKASYI HF, 2020, QUDUS INT J ISLAM STUD	2020	3	16	18,75
ASADULLAH MN, 2009, EDUC ECON	2009	3	28	10,71
AKRIM A, 2022, CYPRIOT J EDU SCI	2022	2	4	50,00
HIDAYAH SN, 2021, QUDUS INT J ISLAM STUD	2021	2	8	25,00
EFENDI N, 2022, J SOC STUD EDUC RES	2022	2	3	66,67

Table 3 highlights distinct citation dynamics, where Muhajir's (2022) work shows balanced local/global engagement (50% LC/GC ratio), contrasting with Zuhdi's (2006) internationally-oriented publication (16.67% ratio). Notably, Zainal's (2022) study demonstrates strong local relevance (75% ratio), suggesting

context-specific contributions that may not achieve proportional global visibility. These variations underscore how research impact operates through different scholarly networks, with some works gaining traction within regional academic communities while others achieve broader international recognition.

Figure 9. *Thematic Network Analysis*

Figure 9's network visualization identifies four conceptual clusters:
1. Curriculum design and development (28 items)
2. General education systems (24 items)
3. Islamic education implementation (20 items)
4. Religious dimensions of education (18 items)

This clustering reveals the field's conceptual architecture, where practical curriculum concerns intersect with broader philosophical and pedagogical considerations of Islamic education.
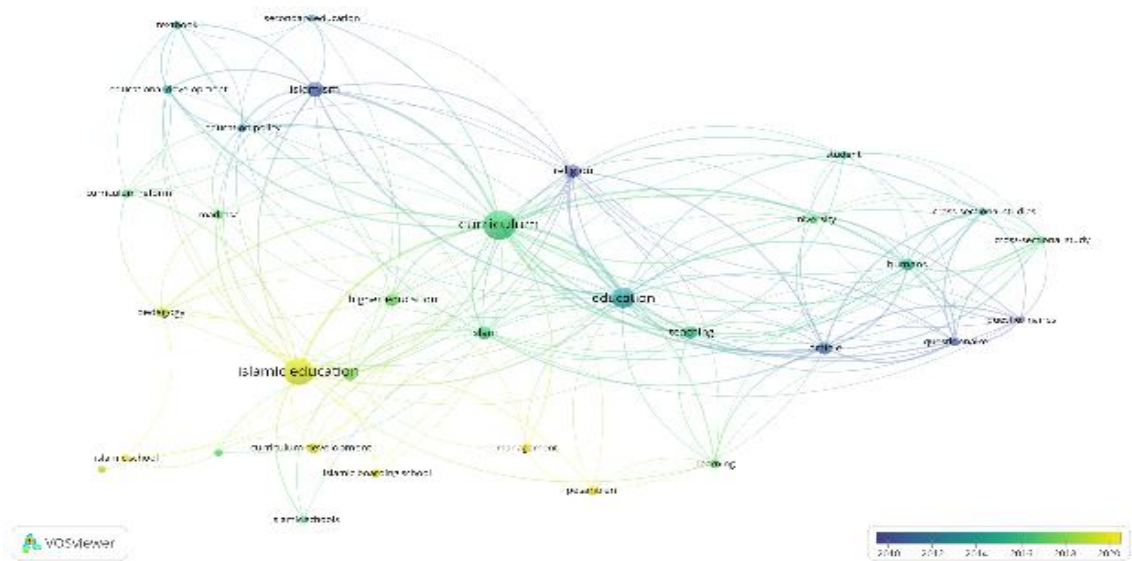
Figure 10. *Temporal Keyword Evolution*

Figure 10's overlay visualization demonstrates shifting research priorities, with "curriculum" and "Islamic education" dominating 2014-2020 discourse. The emergence of "pesantren" and "multicultural education" (2017 onward) signals growing attention to contextualized Islamic education models and pluralistic approaches. This temporal pattern suggests the field's responsiveness to both pedagogical trends and societal demands for culturally-grounded Islamic education.

Figure 11. *Conceptual Density Mapping*

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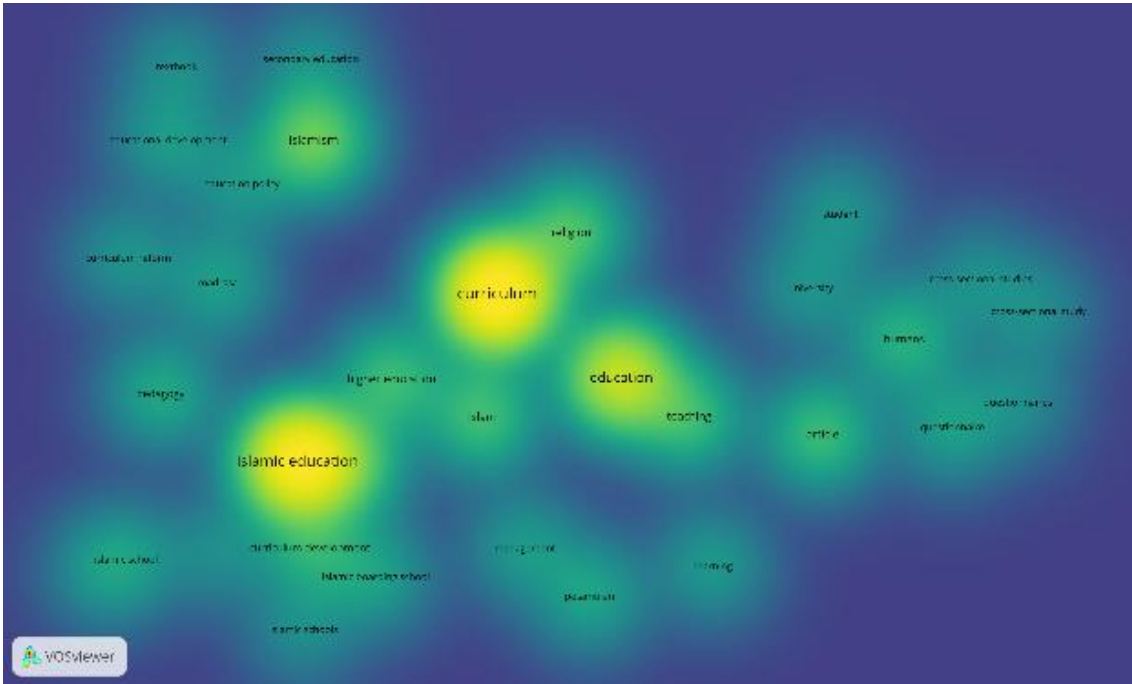Ikhsan Aryadi, Lismawati Lismawati, & Nurul Aisyah

Figure 11's density visualization confirms "curriculum," "Islam," and "education" as core research foci, while revealing underdeveloped areas like "Muslim Islamic education" and "multicultural education." This finding highlights significant research gaps, particularly regarding Islamic education in minority contexts and intercultural pedagogical approaches.

Table 4. *Cluster-Specific Keyword Analysis*

Keywords	Occurrences	Cluster
1. Curriculum Development	11	
2. Higher Education		
3. Islam	15	
4. Islamic Boarding School	16	
5. Islamic Education	8	
6. Islamic School		
7. Islamic Schools	69	1
8. Multicultural Education	6	
9. Muslim Education	5	
10. Religious Education	5	
	5	
	16	
1. Article	15	
2. Cross-Sectional Studies	5	
3. Cross-Sectional Study		
4. Humans	5	
5. Questionnaire		
6. Questionnaires	12	2
7. Student	8	
8. Teaching	5	
9. University	16	
	15	
	6	
1. Curriculum	81	
2. Curiculum Reform	6	
3. Education Policy	6	
4. Educational Devlopment	7	
5. Islamism	23	3
6. Madrasa	8	
7. Pedagogy	10	
8. Secondary Education	5	
9. Textbook	5	
1. Education	42	
2. Learning	7	
3. Management	7	4
4. Boarding school	9	
1. Religion	18	5

Table 4's cluster analysis further elucidates research concentrations:

1. Cluster 1: Curriculum development and Islamic institutions (69 occurrences for "Islamic education")
2. Cluster 2: Research methodologies and student studies (16 occurrences for "student")
3. Cluster 3: Policy and reform initiatives (81 occurrences for "curriculum")
4. Cluster 4: Educational processes and management (42 occurrences for "education")
5. Cluster 5: Foundational religious concepts (18 occurrences for "religion")

This configuration demonstrates how the field balances practical educational concerns with philosophical and theological considerations, while maintaining strong emphasis on curricular innovation and institutional development.

The findings collectively portray a dynamic, evolving field characterized by:
1. Geographic concentration in Southeast Asia with growing international engagement
2. Interdisciplinary citation patterns reflecting diverse scholarly influences
3. Conceptual maturation from basic curriculum studies to complex pedagogical models
4. Emerging attention to contextual and multicultural dimensions

These patterns suggest the field's increasing sophistication while highlighting opportunities for greater methodological diversity and cross-regional comparative studies. The persistent dominance of curriculum-focused research indicates the ongoing need for structural innovation in Islamic education systems worldwide.

CONCLUSION

This bibliometric study examined 43 years of Islamic education curriculum research through three key research questions. First, regarding publication trends (1981-2024), the analysis identified 418 documents showing an annual growth rate of 9.77%, with research output peaking in 2024. The field experienced significant acceleration post-2000, particularly between 2015-2020, coinciding with global debates about educational reform in Muslim communities. This growth trajectory reflects increasing scholarly recognition of Islamic education's role in contemporary pedagogy.

The study revealed distinct patterns of scholarly influence Arvisais, O., Sanjakdar, F., and Zulfikar, T. emerged as the most productive authors, each contributing four publications. At the institutional level, Ar-Raniry State Islamic University led with 11 publications, while geographically, Indonesia dominated the field with 162 publications - nearly triple Malaysia's output (46 publications) and five times that of the United States (31 publications). These findings demonstrate Southeast Asia's central role in shaping global discourse on Islamic curricula.

Thematic analysis identified four conceptual clusters: curriculum design (81 occurrences), Islamic education systems (69 occurrences), religious dimensions of learning (18 occurrences), and educational policy reform (23 occurrences). Network visualizations confirmed "curriculum" and "Islamic education" as persistent core themes, while revealing underdeveloped areas like multicultural education in

minority contexts. The Journal of Islamic Education served as the primary publication venue (17 articles), with Kaplan's (2002) study receiving the highest citations (78 total), indicating the field's interdisciplinary nature.

The research uncovered several noteworthy patterns, including a 14.83% international collaboration rate and distinct citation dynamics between local and global scholarship. Three-field plot analysis demonstrated strong connections between Indonesian authors, institutional affiliations, and curriculum-focused research. However, the geographic concentration of publications suggests the need for more diverse regional perspectives in future studies.

These findings collectively map the intellectual structure of Islamic education curriculum research, highlighting both its maturation and areas for growth. Future studies should particularly address the identified gaps in minority education models and comparative curriculum studies. The robust foundation in curriculum development and policy research provides a strong platform for investigating how Islamic pedagogical principles can adapt to diverse 21st-century educational contexts while maintaining their philosophical foundations.

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Mapping Islamic education curriculum research (1981–2024): A bibliometric analysis of trends, ...

Ikhsan Aryadi, Lismawati Lismawati, & Nurul Aisyah

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