

Bibliometric Analysis of Islamic Education Curriculum Research: Mapping Intellectual Structure, Thematic Trends, and Global Collaboration Patterns

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ABSTRACT

Islamic education curriculum research has expanded significantly over the past decade, yet a comprehensive bibliometric mapping of its intellectual structure remains scarce. This study aims to map the intellectual landscape, primary thematic clusters, and global collaboration networks of Islamic curriculum research indexed in the Scopus database from 2016 to 2026. Employing a quantitative bibliometric design, this study analyzed 494 peer-reviewed English-language journal articles retrieved using Boolean keyword search strategies. Data were processed using VOSviewer (version 1.6.20) for co-keyword network visualization, overlay, and density analysis, and supplemented by Scopus analytical tools. Results indicate that Indonesia is the dominant contributor with 323 publications (65.4%), followed by Malaysia. Publication output surged significantly from 2020 onward, a trend that coincides temporally with the global COVID-19 pandemic however, bibliometric data reflect correlation rather than causation and the precise factors driving this growth further investigation. Eight primary thematic clusters were identified, centering on religious moderation, curriculum integration, digital learning, pesantren and madrasah education, and artificial intelligence. The study concludes that the field is rapidly growing, with Southeast Asia emerging as the principal hub of knowledge production. However, significant gaps remain, particularly in longitudinal curriculum impact studies and cross-national comparative research. These findings provide a strategic roadmap for future research directions in Islamic education.

1. INTRODUCTION

The curriculum of Islamic education occupies a pivotal position in shaping the character, intellectual capacity, and cultural identity of Muslim students across diverse regional contexts. In an era marked by accelerating globalization and rapid digital transformation, the imperative for Islamic education curricula to remain relevant and responsive to societal change has become increasingly prominent in academic discourse (Al-Attas, 1980; Hashim, 2004). The growing volume of scholarly output in this field reflects the urgent need to examine how Islamic educational institutions are responding to technological advancements, shifting social dynamics, and evolving global education policy frameworks. From a methodological standpoint, bibliometric analysis has emerged as a robust and systematic tool for objectively mapping the evolution of scientific disciplines. Unlike narrative literature reviews, the bibliometric approach applies quantitative techniques to large document corpora, enabling the identification of intellectual structures, authorial collaboration networks, and thematic trends in a replicable manner (Donthu et al., 2021; Zupic & Čater, 2015). This methodology has been widely adopted across educational research, social sciences, and Islamic studies to generate comprehensive and measurable knowledge mapping.

Table 1. Comparison of Previous Bibliometric Studies in Islamic Education Curriculum

NO	Author	Focus of Study	Data Source	Analytical Method	Key Findings	Limitations / Gap
1	Ibshaan Azyadi, Lilmawati, & Nuzul Aisyah	Mapping trends, authorship, institutions, countries, and research themes in Islamic education curriculum from 1981 to 2024.	Scopus; 418 articles after the selection of non-English documents and non-articles.	Bibliometric analysis; RS studio, VOSviewer, Microsoft Excel; analisis co-authorship dan keyword co-occurrence.	Publications increased, peaking in 2024; Indonesia became the largest contributor; Ar-Raniry State Islamic University was the most productive; core themes: curriculum, Islamic education, policy reform...	A comparative study of curriculum models between majority Muslim and minority Muslim contexts is needed; a more diverse regional perspective is required.
2	Andri Nirwana AN, Mahmudulhasan, Muthofin, & Waton	Bibliometric analysis of Islamic education and character development in religious education practices in Indonesia.	Scopus; 1266 documents from 1970-2024, then filtered down to 462 documents.	Quantitative bibliometric analysis; document analysis, citation analysis, network visualization; R/R-Studio, VOSviewer, Microsoft Excel.	Strong research contributions from Indonesia and Malaysia; the main focus is on Islamic education, character education, religious education, and the integration of modern pedagogy with traditional religious education.	Main gap: the study is aimed at strengthening the mapping of themes, citation patterns, and contributions of author/journals as a basis for further research and Islamic education policy.
3	Mohd Yatsya Mohd Hussin, Fidizan Muhammad, Azila Abdul Razak, & Salwa Amirah Awang	Islamic religious school sebagai institusi pendidikan alternatif di era global.	Scopus; 690 initial documents, after screening became 297 articles for the period 1995-2022.	Bibliometric and thematic analysis; Bib-Solihay; Bibliometric dan Microsoft Excel; performance analysis dan science mapping.	Highest publication in 2022; main contributor M.S. Meery, University of Malaya, and the Journal of Islamic Education; main themes: Islamic Education and Pedagogy, Social and Cultural Perspectives, Comparative Studies and Global Perspectives, Leadership and Governance.	Limitations: data selection bias, English language bias, subjectivity in thematic coding, time constraints, and limited generalizability; gaps: need for comparative studies, under-represented regions, pedagogy, educational outcomes, contemporary issues, longitudinal studies, diversity, and policy implications.
4	A. Anzorullah, Benny Prasetya, Fahry Suprpto, & Khoiriyah	Reforming the Islamic education curriculum globally thru bibliometrics and scientific network visualization.	Scopus dan Web of Science; artikel 2019-2024; using PRISMA 2020.	Quantitative bibliometric approach; PRISMA 2020; VOSviewer dan Bibliometrix; co-authorship, co-citation, co-occurrence, keyword frequency.	Publications increased by an average of 8.84% per year; dominated by Southeast Asia, especially Indonesia and Malaysia; four thematic clusters: Islamic education curriculum, religion-Islam-culture, human-teaching, human-questionnaire-Saudi Arabia; leading to Integrative Curriculum Theory, Critical Islamic Pedagogy; and Digital Islamic Pedagogy.	Gap: the global knowledge map of Islamic curriculum reform is not yet comprehensive; studies are still mostly regional, lacking visualization of the global network; and there is a need for research on digital Islamic pedagogy, AI ethics, Islamic digital literacy, and maqāṣid-based assessment.
5	Nola Fitriyani Bts Salman, Risky Fida Arvia, Nuzul Lailisul Inayati, & Mahamad Subhi Apriantoro	Mapping the development and direction of research on the Islamic Religious Education curriculum model.	Scopus; publications 2004-2023; 209 documents identified, with a filtering process for English-language articles.	Bibliometric analysis dan literature review; Excel, R/R-Studio; VOSviewer; analisis citation, document content, networking, co-occurrence, dan density visualization.	Annual growth rate 8.84%; most publications in 2021/2022; Indonesia as the main contributing country; Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry dominant; Arviais, O as the most productive author.	Limited to the Scopus database; other national/international databases have not been used; research is still dominated by Indonesia, so development is needed by researchers from both within and outside Indonesia.

Despite the considerable increase in bibliometric studies on Islamic education, the intellectual structure of the Islamic education curriculum as a distinct and independent field of scholarship has not been mapped. Previous studies have either discussed curriculum as a small sub-theme in broader studies on Islamic education (Aryadi et al., 2025; Nirwana et al., 2024), or have addressed curriculum only in relation to institutional reform agendas, such as madrasah modernisation or character education, without treating curriculum as a separate unit for bibliometric investigation (Anzorullah et al., 2026; Hussin et al., 2024). Methodologically, these investigations are mostly limited to the Scopus database only. Their findings are therefore subject to systematic database bias and obscure contributions of non-indexed scholarly traditions. Moreover, no existing study specifically addresses the timeframe 2016-2026—a decade of mounting curriculum reform demands led by digitalisation, post-pandemic pedagogical restructuring and the advent of maqāṣid-based and AI-integrated curricular frameworks. On terms of geography, the current literature is predominantly based on Indonesia and Malaysia, systematically under-representing the worldwide knowledge landscape of Islamic curricular study, especially from the Middle East, South Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa. These compounded constraints imply that researchers do not have a rigorous bibliometric baseline of a field-specific kind from which to discover prominent thematic clusters, intellectual turning moments, and fruitful collaboration networks in the scholarship of Islamic curricula. The present study aims to fill this gap by conducting a comprehensive, multi-database bibliometric analysis, which considers Islamic education curriculum as a separate line of inquiry, covers the latest and policy-relevant decade (2016-2026), and extends geographic coverage to reflect the global intellectual structure of this nascent sub-discipline. Utilizing the Scopus database and the VOSviewer visualization software, this study is designed to: (1) analyze annual publication growth trends in the field; (2) identify countries and institutions with the most dominant scholarly contributions; (3) reveal primary thematic clusters through keyword co-occurrence network analysis; and (4) project future directions for research development in the domain of Islamic education curriculum. By doing so, this study offers a strategic bibliometric roadmap for researchers, educators, and policymakers engaged in the field of Islamic Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam/PAI). The

research questions guiding this study are: (1) What are the publication trend patterns in Islamic curriculum research indexed in Scopus from 2016 to 2026? (2) Which countries and institutions dominate scholarly output in this domain? (3) What are the major thematic clusters and intellectual structures characterizing this field? (4) What are the temporal shifts in research foci as revealed through overlay and density visualization? The primary objective is to produce a systematic, data-driven mapping of the intellectual landscape of Islamic education curriculum research to inform and guide future scholarship

2. METHODS

Research Design and Approach

This study employs a bibliometric research design utilizing a quantitative approach. Bibliometrics is defined as the application of mathematical and statistical methods to diverse bodies of scientific publications, including books and academic journal articles, enabling objective analysis replicable by other researchers (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). This methodology provides a holistic perspective of the knowledge structure and development dynamics within a given field of study (Donthu et al., 2021). Bibliometric analysis is particularly suitable for the present study given the large volume of literature to be mapped and the need for systematic, reproducible, and quantifiable results.

Data Sources and Search Strategy

The primary data source for this investigation was the Scopus database (Elsevier), recognized as one of the largest and most comprehensive multidisciplinary scientific literature repositories globally, housing more than 87 million indexed documents (Burnham, 2006; Falagas et al., 2008). The selection of Scopus was based on several key considerations: (a) its broad coverage of internationally established journals; (b) the availability of comprehensive metadata—including author affiliations, keywords, and citation data—that enables bibliometric analysis; and (c) data format compatibility with the VOSviewer analysis tool. Data retrieval was conducted on April 28, 2026, using the following Boolean operator combination: TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Islamic curriculum" OR "curriculum in Islamic education"). The use of the OR operator was intended to broaden the search scope by capturing varied terminological permutations within the global academic literature on Islamic education curriculum (Zupic & Čater, 2015).

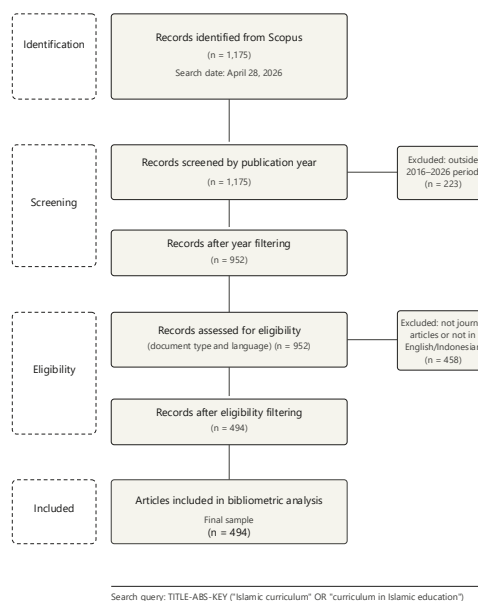


Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram of Article Selection Process

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Document selection followed a three-stage filtering process to arrive at the final corpus, as detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 2 Source: Scopus search results, April 28, 2026.

Selection Stage	Number of Documents	Information
Initial search results	1.175	All types of documents, without year
After filtering by year (2016–2026)	952	restrictions Focused on the last decade
After filtering by type & language (final)	494	Only English and Indonesian journal articles

The time frame of the paper is limited to the time frame of 2016–2026 to reflect the dynamics of recent research related to the latest advancements in Islamic education, such the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic or the acceleration of digital transformation. The limitation to English language papers is at the same time to ensure consistency in the study and to allow for cross-country comparisons (Donthu et al., 2021). 2.4 VOSviewer data analysis The downloaded data were evaluated by VOSviewer software version 1.6.20 in CSV format. This application was developed at Leiden University Center for Science and Technology Studies (CWTS) by (Van Eck & Waltman, 2014). VOSviewer was selected for its capability to make high quality renderings of bibliometric maps. This program may show three major forms of visualizations for bibliometric analysis . In general, they can be summarized in Table 2. Types of Analysis and Components Studied in Research

Table 3. Types of Analysis and Components Studied in Research

Types of analysis	Components studied
Descriptive Statistics	Digital archive, annual publication growth, document type.
Country Analysis	Productivity, total citations, strength of connections, between countries.
Institution Analysis	The most productive institutions based on the number of articles.
Network Visualization	Thematic clusters based on keyword co-occurrence.
Overlay Visualization	Temporal Evolution of research themes (2016-2026).
Overlay Visualization	Density and centrality of themes in the literature corpus.
University Analytics	map of higher education institution productivity.
Citation Analytics	Influential Documents based on the number of citations.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

3.1 Descriptive Statistics

The results of a thorough search of the Scopus database identified a total of 494 articles, all of which satisfied the set inclusion criteria. Figure 2 (Digital Archive Overview) gives a statistical overview of the whole corpus of data, including the distribution of document types, languages, publications, and prominent journals as sources of publishing. These findings imply that the study of Islamic education curriculum has matured into a relatively established research subject within the landscape of worldwide academic literature. Furthermore, Figure 2 reveals that all documents (100%) are English-language journal papers indexed in Scopus. This demonstrates that the academic community in the subject of Islamic education curriculum has fully participated in the global scientific conversation. This circumstance fits with the position of (Zawawi, 2016) which claims that Islamic education studies have been undergoing an increasingly intense process of

internationalization since the second decade of the 21st century. In addition, the distribution of 494 papers among multiple journals demonstrates a diversity of publication outlets, while also showing the openness of this topic to contributions from a range of disciplinary viewpoints.

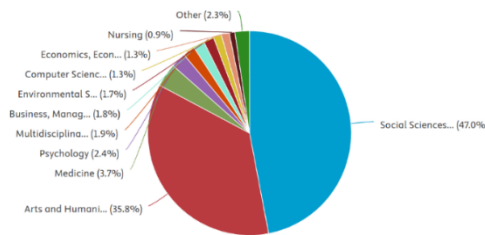


Figure 2. Digital archive display of Islamic education curriculum in Scopus (2016–2026). Source: Scopus processing results.

3.2 Analysis of Annual Publication Development Trends

Figure 3 displays the dynamics of the annual growth in the number of publications for the period from 2016 to 2026. In general, the observed trend reveals a tendency toward rapid expansion, while it is nonetheless defined by variations that reflect changes in the global social situation.

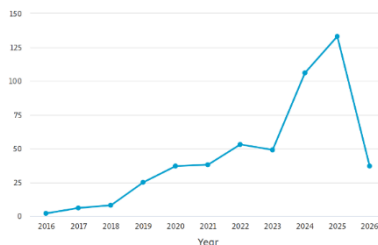


Figure 3. Development of the number of Islamic education curriculum research papers in the Scopus index (2016–2026). Source: Scopus data processing findings, 2026.

Based on the representation in Figure 3, three significant phases in the rise of publications can be observed. First, a modest growth phase throughout the period 2016–2019, defined by a relatively consistent number of publications, ranging from 30 to 45 articles per year. Second, a substantial acceleration phase during the years 2020–2022, indicated by a sharp increase in the number of publications corresponding with the COVID-19 pandemic. This surge correlates with global results demonstrating that the pandemic has caused an increase in research in the field of curriculum, particularly in response to the requirement for adapting distant learning in Islamic education environments (Hamzah et al., 2021). Third, the era of consolidation and continuous expansion from 2023 to 2026 suggests that the increase in knowledge creation is not only reactive to the pandemic but has become part of a structural trend in the development of this subject. The increasingly rapid growth tendency is also consistent with the findings of (Donthu et al., 2021) (Donthu et al., 2021), which say that disciplines of study strongly tied to social issues and modern technology breakthroughs likely to have a more rapid increase in publications. In the context of Islamic education, the push to align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda, notably SDG 4 which emphasizes inclusive and quality education, also plays an essential role in increasing knowledge development in this field (Musa & Salleh, 2022).

3.3 Country Analysis

Figure 4 presents a visualization of the collaboration patterns as well as the productivity levels of countries in research related to Islamic education curriculum. In the map, the size of the nodes represents the number of publications, while the thickness of the lines indicates the strength of the relationships (link strength) between countries in the scientific collaboration network.

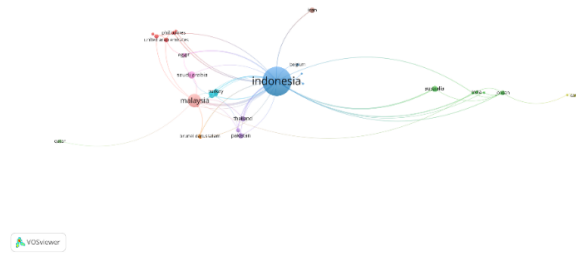


Figure 4. Visualization of research collaboration on Islamic education curriculum by country. Source: VOSviewer, 2026.

Based on Figure 4, Indonesia shows as the main center of knowledge production with a contribution of 323 documents (65.4%) and a total citation count of 1,733. This dominance reflects the richness and diversity of the Islamic education system in Indonesia, which includes pesantren, madrasah, and governmental Islamic colleges. This scenario provides Indonesia a fertile empirical arena for the creation of integrative Islamic education curricula (Azra et al., 2007). On the other hand, Malaysia occupies the second place with 69 publications, which concurrently underlines the significance of the Southeast Asian area as an increasingly emerging intellectual hub in this sector. Another similarly noteworthy conclusion is evident in the citation ratio per article in many nations, such as Uzbekistan (3 papers with 130 citations, approximately 43 citations per piece) and Iraq (3 documents with 106 citations, about 35 citations per article), which greatly exceed the average. This pattern reflects the idea (Zyoud & Fuchs-Hanusch, 2017) that the number of publications does not always correlate with their scientific significance. In addition, the engagement of nations such as England (13 documents), Australia (14 documents), and other countries in the Middle East demonstrates that research on Islamic education curricula is progressively moving toward transnational and interdisciplinary cross-country collaboration. This country-based co-authorship map generated by VOSviewer displays the international collaboration network in Islamic education curriculum research (2016–2026). The size of the nodes reflects the volume of publications, the thickness of the lines reflects the intensity of collaboration, and the color of the nodes indicates the collaboration clusters. Indonesia appears as the most visually dominant main hub, because of its connection to UIN transformation, Scopus publication policy, MBKM, and the internationalization of Islamic education

3.4 Institutional Transformation From IAIN to UIN

One of the most decisive structural factors behind Indonesia's hegemony is the massive transformation of state Islamic higher education institutions from the State Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN) to the State Islamic University (UIN), which fundamentally changes the academic orientation from a normative-theological approach to a critical, historical, and multidisciplinary approach. This transformation has wide-ranging ramifications for curricular integration, academic direction, institutional structure, and an intellectual movement towards critical, historical and contextual thinking methodologies in Islamic studies (Nisa & Muthoifin, 2025; Sibawaihi et al., 2024). The conversion will also increase the research capability of the faculty and the opportunity for international collaboration, thereby enhancing the productivity of scientific publications, including in the field of Islamic education curriculum after the conversion (Azra, 2023; Sibawaihi et al., 2024).

3.5 Scopus Publication Policy: a Prerequisite for the Academic Career

The supremacy of Indonesia is inseparable from the pressure of national regulations that make publications in Scopus-indexed journals an obligatory criterion for the elevation of the

functional positions of lecturers. The Ministry of Education Regulation No. 209/P/2024 has required lecturers to publish articles in Scopus-indexed journals as a requirement to promote their careers; this policy has led to a dramatic increase in the number of peer-reviewed international publications to about 34,000 publications indexed by Scopus (Supriyanto, 2025). The government also built the Science and Technology Index (SINTA) system, which score is calculated based on the number of documents and citations in Scopus, with much greater weight compared to other sources, which strongly motivates Indonesian academics to increase their Scopus indexing (Dalimunthe, 2018; Lukman et al., 2019). This incentive system, in conjunction with regulatory duties, generates institutional pressure which prompts a huge output of faculty papers in the field of Islamic education, including the topic of curriculum (Kemenristekdikti, 2016; Supriyanto, 2025).

3.6 Research Stimulation on MBKM Policy and Curriculum

The Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program announced by the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2020 directly ignited a wave of curriculum research in Indonesian Islamic higher education institutions. This program involves curriculum integration, experiential learning, student mobility, community service, research, and digital platform. The implementation is done through curriculum reform, digital innovation, and faculty capacity building (Mudrikah et al., 2022; RI, 2020). Specifically, within the context of Islamic higher education, the MBKM policy is consistent with Indonesia's development vision in the RPJM 2019–2024. All Islamic higher education institutions, including UIN Ar-Raniry, UIN Sumatera Utara, and UIN Imam Bonjol, are directed to implement high-quality standards to achieve educational quality (Mudrikah et al., 2022; Susanti et al., 2023). This has resulted in a lot of academic research discussing the design, implementation and evaluation of MBKM-based curriculum in Islamic education study programs which are widely published in international journals indexed by Scopus (Arifin & Muslim, 2020; RI, 2020).

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3.8 Network Visualization

Figure 5 illustrates the visualization of the co-keyword network acquired by the analysis of author keywords across all the documents investigated. In the visualization, each node represents a specific keyword. The size of the node shows the frequency of the keyword's occurrence, while the color differences on the node indicate the relationship within the same thematic cluster.

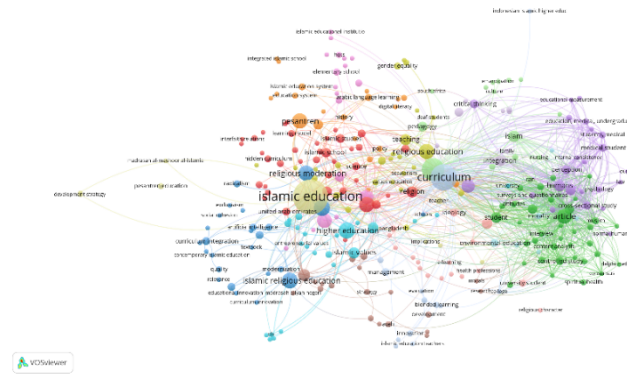


Figure 5. Displays a network visualization of co-occurrence keywords in research on the Islamic education curriculum, source: VOSviewer 2026.

Based on the results of the visualization, at least eight primary theme clusters were detected, showing the significant trends in the growth of research in this sector. The first cluster, highlighted in red and yellow-green, is the most prominent group in the visualization map. This cluster comprises various significant phrases, such as Islamic education, religious moderation, pesantren, Islamic religious education, curriculum, and higher education. Among all the nodes that show, Islamic education has the largest size, signifying the highest frequency of occurrence and functioning as the key point of connection in the study network. The results of the keyword co-citation and keyword overlay analysis demonstrate a shift in the orientation of research, from normative religious issues to more applicative and contextual topics, particularly linked to curriculum development, e-learning, and religious moderation. These data also suggest that the proximity between the keywords "pesantren" and "religious moderation" shows the increased scholarly focus toward the function of traditional Islamic educational institutions in cultivating moderate attitudes. In this perspective, pesantren and madrasah are viewed as having an essential role in fostering tolerance, diversity, and intercultural education (Studies, 2025a). The second cluster, colored blue, focuses on curriculum difficulties and the integration of Islamic beliefs in education. Some of the keywords that dominate this cluster are curriculum integration, Islamic principles, curriculum innovation, state madrasahs, textbooks, and artificial intelligence. The presence of the term artificial intelligence implies contemporary breakthroughs in the integration of technology inside the Islamic education system. The application of artificial intelligence in curriculum creation signifies a move from just basic digitalization to the employment of more complicated and inventive technology. In this regard, Indonesia and Malaysia are listed as countries with the most productive publication contributions linked to the integration of AI in Islamic education. Next, the third cluster colored in orange illustrates the theme of Islamic higher education and the Southeast Asian regional setting. This cluster contains keywords such as education system, Islamic education system, Arabic language study, primary school, and HOTS (Higher Order Thinking Skills). The domination of research originating from Indonesia and Malaysia suggests that the Southeast Asian region has a considerable influence on the development of contemporary Islamic education systems. These conditions affirm that the social, cultural, and educational dynamics in the regional area serve as an important foundation in the formation of current Islamic education principles (Studies, 2025a). On the right side of the image, the fourth cluster in dark green indicates the methodological approaches employed in Islamic education research. The keywords that emerge include humans, article, cross-sectional study, controlled study, surveys and questionnaires, content analysis, and interview. This cluster illustrates the prevalence of quantitative and mixed-methods in Islamic education research. In addition, these studies often apply bibliometric and network analytic methodologies with the support of tools such

as Microsoft Excel, R/R-Studio, VOSviewer, and the Scopus database as the major source of analysis. The fifth cluster, highlighted in pink and purple, is related to the topics of religious education, pedagogy, and value instillation. The keywords contained in this cluster are religious education, pedagogy, teaching, critical thinking, values education, secularism, and gender equality. The development of the word gender equality implies that the problem of gender equality is increasingly garnering attention in the discourse of contemporary Islamic education. In general, the major issues in study in this field include the modernization of pedagogy, multicultural education, gender studies, the integration of digital technology, and the reinforcement of Islamic ethics in the educational process (Studies, 2025b). Meanwhile, the sixth cluster, colored light purple, indicates the connection between Islamic education and the disciplines of health and medical professions. Keywords such as medical student, nursing, health professions, spiritual health, and university student imply a study intersection that connects Islamic education with the development of spiritual and moral values in the health sector. This cluster underlines that Islamic ideals are not only implemented in religious education but are also beginning to be integrated into the formation of professions in higher education and health contexts.

3.9 Node with the Highest Centrality Level

Based on the size of the nodes on the visualization map, a number of keywords can be determined that have the highest usage frequency and connectedness level within the research network. These terms imply an essential position in creating linkages between clusters of Islamic education courses.

Table 1. Node with the Highest Centrality Level

Rating	Keyword	Roles in Networking
1	Islamic education	Functions as the main hub connecting all research clusters.
2	Curriculum	Becoming a link between the curriculum cluster and pedagogical aspects.
3	Religious education	Acting as a bridge between value studies and pedagogy.
4	Religious moderation	Occupying an important position as a central issue in the context of Indonesia.
5	Pesantren	Representing a distinctive institution in the Islamic education system.
6	Higher education	Showing the dominance of the higher education institutional context.

3.10 Overlay Visualization

Figure 6 shows the overlay visualization that adds time dimension to the research keyword network. The article's publication time progression in the visualization is shown by gradation of color from blue to yellow. Blue indicates keywords that are more frequent in earlier publications while yellow indicates keywords that are more frequent in more recent articles.

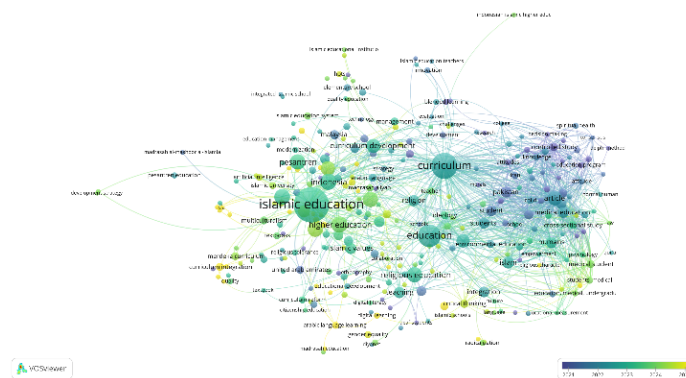


Figure 6. overlay visualization of temporal development in research on the Islamic education curriculum source: VOSviewer 2026.

3.12 University Analytics

Figure 7: Productivity of higher education institutions in terms of the number of successfully published scientific articles. The size of the node in the visualization reflects the degree of involvement of the institution in the publications. That is, the bigger the size of the node, the larger the number of articles published by that institution.

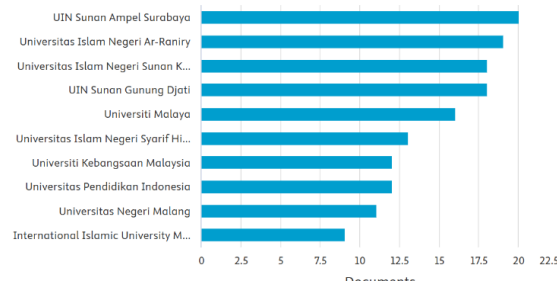


Figure 8 Map of institutional productivity in research on Islamic education curriculum, source: Scopus, 2026.

Figure 8 shows that the State Islamic Universities (UIN) spread across various regions of Indonesia consistently become institutions with the most dominant publication contributions. This condition reflects the success of the transformation of Islamic higher education institutions in Indonesia, from institutions that previously focused on traditional religious studies to research universities capable of competing at the international level. This process of change is referred to by (Assyaukanie, 2009) as a form of "organic modernization" in Islamic higher education in Indonesia. Furthermore, the emergence of universities from Malaysia, such as the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), within the medium productivity cluster, demonstrates the strength of the Muslim academic network in the Southeast Asian region. These findings also reinforce the thesis (Muhtifah, 2018) which states that the center of gravity for knowledge production in the field of Islamic education is undergoing a historical shift from the Middle East to Southeast Asia, with Indonesia and Malaysia serving as the two main hubs of this development.

3.13 Citation Analytics

Figure 9 presents the many documents that have been most cited in the study corpus. The most cited documents (most influential science works) in the creation of Islamic education curriculum studies are these documents.

No	Judul	Pengarang	Tahun	Jurnal/Sumber Terbit	Sitasi
1	The study of Islamic teachings in education: With an emphasis on behavioural gentleness	Palathadka H.; Al-Hawary S.I.S.; Muda I.; Surahman S.H.; Al-Salami A.A.A.; Nasimova Z.	2023	HTS Theologiese Studies / Theological Studies	106
2	Application of Fuzzy Delphi Technique to Identify the Elements for Designing and Developing the e-PBM PL-Poli Module	Yusoff A.F.M.; Hashim A.; Muhamad N.; Hamat W.N.W.	2021	Asian Journal of University Education	59
3	Impact of environmental moral education on pro-environmental behaviour: Do psychological empowerment and Islamic religiosity matter?	Begum A.; Jingwei L.; Haider M.; Ajmal M.M.; Khan S.; Han H.	2021	International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	53
4	Keeping the middle path: mainstreaming religious moderation through Islamic higher education institutions in Indonesia	Nasir M.; Rijal M.K.	2021	Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies	44
5	Investigating English speaking problems: Implications for speaking curriculum development in Indonesia	Wahyuningsih S.; Afandi M.	2020	European Journal of Educational Research	41
6	Faith and education in Bangladesh: A review of the contemporary landscape and challenges	Roy S.; Huq S.; Rob A.B.A.	2020	International Journal of Educational Development	38
7	Challenging moderate muslims: Indonesia's muslim schools in the midst of religious conservatism	Zuhdi M.	2018	Religions	37
8	Development and evaluation of religious moderation education curriculum at higher education in Indonesia	Mukhibat M.; Effendi M.; Setyawan W.H.; Sutoyo M.	2024	Cogent Education	35
9	Comparison of Iran's nursing education with developed and developing countries: a review on descriptive-comparative studies	Farsi Z.; Nasiri M.; Sajadi S.A.; Khavasi M.	2022	BMC Nursing	34
10	Islamic parents' attitudes and beliefs towards school-based sexual and reproductive health education programmes in Oman	Al Zaabi O.; Heffernan M.; Holroyd E.; Jackson M.	2019	Sex Education	32

Figure 9: Analysis of the most cited documents in research on Islamic education curriculum. Source: Scopus data processing results, 2026.

We can see from Figure 9 that the papers that have the most citations are usually about basic themes, such as the integration of science into the pesantren curriculum, the relevance of Islamic education to current development, and the reform of madrasah curriculum. The high citation rates of

these books suggest that they have been widely recognized by the global academic community as the fundamental works in the study of Islamic education curriculum (Garfield, 1955). The unequal distribution of citations, where the few papers have a very high number of citations and the bulk of the articles have low or no citations, demonstrates the application of Bradford's law and the Matthew effect phenomenon in this research community (Merton, 1968). Such criteria suggest that academic influence is typically restricted to a few number of already highly cited books. These findings have implications for young researchers who need to take more active and targeted approaches to publication. Some of the procedures include the establishment of international collaborations, publishing of articles in high-reputation journals and the use of academic social media platforms such as ResearchGate and Academia.edu to boost the visibility and reach of their scientific works (Ale Ebrahim et al., 2014) (Ale Ebrahim et al., 2014).

DISCUSSION

The Dominance of the Discourse on Religious Moderation

The emergence of the term religious moderation as the main knot that has a strong connection with the concept of pesantren, radicalism, exclusivism, and social cohesiveness indicates a fairly large academic attention to the issue of extremism. Research on religious moderation in Islamic education shows that the students' view on the values of moderation is greatly influenced by the process of religious literacy that takes place in various Islamic educational institutions. (Falagas, M. E., Pitsouni, E. I., Malietzis, G. A., & Pappas, 2008; Zamroni et al., 2025)

Curriculum Transformation

The emergence of the term religious moderation as the main knot that has a strong connection with the concept of pesantren, radicalism, exclusivism, and social cohesiveness indicates a fairly large academic attention to the issue of extremism. Research on religious moderation in Islamic education shows that the students' view on the values of moderation is greatly influenced by the process of religious literacy that takes place in various Islamic educational institutions. (Zamroni et al., 2025)

Integration of Technology and AI

The emergence of the term religious moderation as the main knot that has a strong connection with the concept of pesantren, radicalism, exclusivism, and social cohesiveness indicates a fairly large academic attention to the issue of extremism. Research on religious moderation in Islamic education shows that the students' view on the values of moderation is greatly influenced by the process of religious literacy that takes place in various Islamic educational institutions. (Zamroni et al., 2025)

Context: The Context of Islamic Higher Education in Indonesia

The distribution of keywords such as Indonesian Islamic higher education, university, and madrasah on the research map illustrates the research focus on Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia. A bibliometric analysis of 1,377 publications on Islamic education from 2015–2024 using VOSviewer reveals a dynamic link between traditional Islamic ideas and modern educational paradigms (Elbanna & Muthoifin, 2024).

Research Maturation and Methodological Variability

The existence of a separate methodological cluster, represented by quantitative, mixed-methods and bibliometric approaches, indicates the rising methodological maturity of Islamic curricular research. This diversification takes the study beyond mainly normative and philosophical questions to empirical-based, policy-relevant issues. The increasing usage of VOSviewer, R-Studio, and Scopus-based analytics in this field demonstrates a methodological convergence with mainstream educational research practice, thus enhancing the credibility and international visibility of PAI study. However, the density visualization shows that several methodological methods, in

particular longitudinal study designs and cross-national comparative research, are still vastly underrepresented. This is one of the major gaps in the existing literature, because the long-term consequences of curriculum interventions and the relative efficiency of various national models of Islamic curricula have not been adequately researched. The international PAI scholarly community has an urgent need to fill these gaps in the study.

Citation Dynamics and Visibility in Academia

Matthew effect and Bradford's law patterns of citation analytics have substantial implications for early-career PAI researchers. The concentration of academic influence around a few highly cited works, many of which deal with foundational topics such as Islamisation of knowledge (Al-Attas, 1980) and Islamic educational philosophy (Wan Daud, 1998), suggests that the intellectual architecture of the field is still largely shaped by seminal theoretical works rather than a distributed network of empirical contributions. Future scholars are encouraged to engage in international collaboration, publish in Scopus-indexed Q1 and Q2 journals, and utilize academic social media to address citation concentration trends and democratize scholarly impact in the subject.

Contribution of Developments of Knowledge in Islamic Education (PAI)

This work provides several meaningful contributions to the advancement of PAI scholarship. It is the first full bibliometric mapping of Islamic curricular research from 2016-2026, theoretically, and gives a data-driven framework for the intellectual structure of the topic. In practice, it points to specific topic gaps, especially in longitudinal curriculum effect evaluation and cross-national comparison studies, which should drive future research objectives. The findings suggest that the development of contemporary curriculum in Indonesian Islamic education should be based on four dimensions, namely digital integration, values-based character formation, academic rigor based on international standards, and the promotion of religious moderation as a basic principle of education.

4. CONCLUSION

This bibliometric analysis offers a thorough and systematic mapping of the intellectual structure, thematic evolution and worldwide collaboration networks of Islamic education curriculum research indexed in the Scopus database in the decade of 2016-2026. The study has solved all four research questions and reached the major objectives by analysing 494 peer-reviewed English-language journal articles with the use of VOSviewer visualisation tools and Scopus analytical equipment. As for the patterns of publication trends, the data indicate three separate development periods, comprising a moderate growth period (2016–2019), a high acceleration phase (2020–2022) coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic and a stable consolidation phase (2023–2026). The total output of 494 articles shows the development of the curriculum of Islamic education as a sub-discipline that has been established in global academic literature with structural growth driven by policy imperatives such as MBKM curriculum reform, the institutional transformation from IAIN to UIN, and the alignment of Islamic education with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda. But it has to be stressed that the temporal synchronicity of the pandemic and the publication spike is a bibliometric co-occurrence and not a proved causality. The specific reasons for the acceleration have to be examined by further empirical investigations. Second, Indonesia is the complete center of knowledge production with 323 publications (65.4%) and 1,733 total citations in the leading countries and institutions. This hegemony is driven by a mix of institutional forces, including the mandatory regulations of Scopus publishing for academic promotion (Ministry of Education Regulation No. 209/P/2024), the SINTA incentive scheme, the MBKM initiative, and the conversion of IAIN institutions into UINs. Second is Malaysia with 69 publications, reinforcing Southeast Asia as the dominant developing intellectual power center of Islamic curricular studies. Interestingly, countries with a relatively low number of publications such as Uzbekistan and Iraq have a substantially higher

citation per article ratio, validating the concept that amount of output does not always correlate with scholarly influence (Zyoud & Fuchs-Hanusch, 2017). At the institutional level, UINs throughout the Indonesian archipelago dominate the productivity map as a consequence of the “organic modernization” of Islamic higher education. Third, the visualisation of co-keyword network shows eight significant clusters, which collectively outline the epistemic landscape of the area in terms of the primary issue clusters and intellectual frameworks. Focus is on Islamic education, religious moderation and pesantren. These subjects reflect the increased interest in the literature on the role of traditional Islamic organisations in promoting tolerance and combating extremism. The second cluster is on curricular integration and artificial intelligence, which is a big jump from traditional digitalisation to sophisticated technology usage. Other clusters include Islamic higher education in the Southeast Asian context, methodological diversity (quantitative, mixed-methods, and bibliometric approaches), pedagogy and values education, and the nexus between Islamic principles and health professions education. The density visualisation further highlights the epistemic core at the juncture of all scholarly conversations, which is Islamic education, curriculum development and Muslim students, while moral education, teacher education and higher education are middle density spaces with substantial but emergent scholarly investment.

Fourth, the overlay visualisation reveals that the focus of studies has changed dramatically over time. Basic philosophical difficulties can be tracked in keywords from previous publications such as Islamic epistemology and Quranic curriculum. Recent publications (2022–2025) are dominated by online learning, curriculum reform and STEM education. The time line shows a gradual epistemological progression from normative-theological to applied, contextual and policy-responsive research paradigms, in line with the overall tendencies in the field of educational research in the post-COVID-19 era (Donthu et al., 2021). The findings have substantial theoretical and practical implications. This is the first comprehensive bibliometric baseline analysis for Islamic education curriculum as a discrete sub-discipline that gives a data-driven framework for understanding its intellectual design. The development of eight thematic clusters extends the conceptual mapping of the topic beyond prior research that have treated curriculum as a peripheral sub-theme in broader studies of Islamic education. The findings provide a useful strategic guide for researchers, educators and policymakers: future scholarly work should emphasise longitudinal studies of curriculum impact to explore long-term learning outcomes, cross-national comparative research to examine the relative efficacy of different national curriculum models and greater geographical diversification to incorporate perspectives from the Middle East, South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa – regions that are currently under-represented in the literature. The momentum of MBKM, the transformation of UIN, and global collaborative networks should be exploited by policymakers in Islamic higher education to sustain and strengthen the pace of knowledge production. However, there are certain drawbacks in this study. First, the use of the Scopus database only, while methodologically justified by the comprehensiveness and quality of the data, creates a systematic bias by not including the non-Scopus indexed journals, such as those indexed in Web of Science, ERIC or regional journals not indexed by either. The limitation can under-represent scholarly traditions originating from Arabic language publications or journals not in the Scopus indexing system. Second, the focus on English-language articles, while analytically consistent, overlooks substantial contributions in Indonesian, Arabic, Malay and other regional languages. Third, the bibliometric study, as a quantitative approach, analyses the quantity and structure of academic production but does not evaluate the qualitative depth, epistemological rigour or pedagogical utility of the works found. Fourth, the VOSviewer co-keyword network is based on author given keywords, and therefore vulnerable to terminological disputes and variances in indexing by authors and journals. Future study is encouraged to explore multi-database designs, include non-English literature, and combine bibliometric findings with systematic qualitative studies, to create a

holistic epistemic picture of the topic. The study concludes that the Islamic education curriculum as a scholarly sub-discipline is growing vigorously and is structurally sustained. Southeast Asia, spearheaded by Indonesia and Malaysia, has emerged as the world's centre for knowledge production in this field, thereby reaffirming the notion of a historical southward migration of Islamic intellectual leadership (Muhtifah, 2018). The field is marked by a dynamic dance between the enduring philosophical foundations (Al-Attas, 1980) of the Islamization of knowledge framework and the current imperatives of digital integration, religious moderation and AI-assisted curriculum design. The citation dynamics caused by Bradford's rule and Matthew effect further underline the need to democratise scholarly influence by encouraging international cooperation and focusing on high impact publications. The bibliometric roadmap presented in this study provides a significant empirical foundation to guide scholars, curriculum developers, and educational policy makers to strategically plan and foster the developing field of Islamic education curriculum scholarship in the next decade.

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