



Islamic Education Curriculum Reform: Global Insights from a Bibliometric Study

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Abstract

Islamic education curriculum reform has become a global strategic issue in response to the need for an educational system that is adaptive to globalization, digitalization, and the plurality of values. This study aims to map global trends in Islamic education curriculum reform through a bibliometric approach and scientific network visualization based on Scopus and Web of Science data (2019–2024), using the PRISMA 2020 framework. The results indicate a significant increase in publications (an average of 8.84% per year), predominantly from Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia and Malaysia. The thematic analysis reveals four main clusters: Islamic education curriculum (a foundational theme), religion–Islam–culture (a driving theme), human–teaching (a humanistic pedagogical foundation), and human–questionnaire–Saudi Arabia (a cross-cultural empirical theme). Theoretically, these findings confirm a paradigm shift towards Integrative Curriculum Theory, which combines spiritual values (Maqāṣid Al-sharī‘ah), 21st-century competencies, and digital innovation. This research also reinforces the relevance of Critical Islamic Pedagogy and Digital Islamic Pedagogy in developing value-based, technology-enhanced, and human-centered curricula. These findings provide a scientific basis for adaptive, evidence-based Islamic education policies and contribute to SDG 4 on Quality Education, as well as to the development of globally competitive human resources with strong character.

Keywords: *Islamic Education Curriculum Reform, Bibliometric, Scientific Network Visualisation, Integrative Curriculum Theory*

1. Introduction

The reform of the Islamic education curriculum has become a strategic issue over the past decade, in line with the growing need for an educational system capable of responding to the challenges of globalisation, digitalisation, and the diversity of values. Recent studies indicate that the orientation of Islamic education is shifting from traditional approaches towards competency- and technology-based approaches. For example, research by (Khan et al. 2025) emphasises that curriculum reform must ensure



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alignment between learning objectives, assessment based on Bloom's taxonomy, and Islamic values. Quantitatively, global bibliometric analysis shows a significant annual increase of 8.84% in publications related to the Islamic Education Curriculum, peaking in 2021, with major contributions originating from Southeast Asia. These findings indicate that the reform of the Islamic curriculum has now become a global discourse that connects spiritual values with modern, competency-based educational standards (Malla, Sapsuha, and Lobud 2020).

The reform of the Islamic education curriculum has had a significant impact on the development of human resources (HR) based on science, technology, and moral values. This is in line with Point 4 of Asta Cita, which emphasises the strengthening of human resources, science, technology, and education. On the other hand, the relevance of this reform also supports Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on Quality Education, and aligns with the priorities of the National Research Master Plan (RIRN) in the field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), particularly in the areas of educational digitalisation and learning efficiency. A study by (Zulkifli et al. 2025) emphasises that Islamic education in multicultural classrooms requires a curriculum that is adaptive to diversity values and digital technology. Meanwhile, (Otaya et al. 2025) highlight the importance of teachers' ability to develop curricula based on Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) to ensure Islamic education remains relevant to the demands of the 21st century. Thus, the reform of the Islamic curriculum not only supports the achievement of quality education, but also strengthens the role of Islamic education in national and global development.

Various studies show that the direction of Islamic education curriculum reform is moving towards collaborative, participatory, and contextual approaches. A study by (Sumarsono et al. 2025) found that collaboration between schools, teachers, and parents is a key factor in improving the quality of Islamic education. On the other hand, (Azizi et al. 2025) revealed how Sharia values can be transformed through the Guree learning approach, a community-based learning method oriented towards the local context of Aceh. These research findings indicate a global trend towards the integration of Islamic values with modern learning strategies and the enhancement of 21st-century skills.

In addition, bibliometric data shows an increase in international research collaboration, which is beginning to shift its focus from theory to practical application within the curriculum. Nevertheless, many studies remain limited to regional contexts and have yet to develop network visualisation-based analyses to comprehensively understand global collaboration patterns. This highlights the need for a new approach capable of mapping the dynamics of Islamic education research in a quantitative and interdisciplinary manner in order to produce more comprehensive reform recommendations (Sumadisastro et al. 2025).

Despite the increase in research in the field of Islamic education, there are still few studies that utilise bibliometric methods and network visualisation to understand publication patterns, scientific collaboration networks, and the distribution of research



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themes (Mustafa, al-Muhsin, and Osman 2024). Previous studies have tended to adopt qualitative or descriptive approaches without quantitative analysis based on bibliographic data. As a result, the mapping of global research directions in the field of Islamic education curriculum reform has not been fully illustrated. This lack of analysis has led to a limited amount of empirical evidence that can be used as a basis for educational policymaking and the global development of the Islamic curriculum (Rushami Zien, Abu Bakar, and Saad 2024).

The main problem in this study is the absence of a comprehensive global knowledge map regarding the dynamics and direction of research on Islamic education curriculum reform. This condition has resulted in a lack of integration between scientific research findings and evidence-based education reform policies.

If this gap is not addressed, (Aseery and Alfaifi 2024) curriculum reform may proceed in an inefficient and fragmented manner. As a result, Islamic education could fall behind in the wave of global digitalisation and fail to meet the demands of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, as well as national objectives for strengthening high-quality human resources and technological literacy.

This study aims to comprehensively map and analyse global trends in research on Islamic education curriculum reform through a bibliometric approach and scientific network visualisation. Substantively, this research seeks to trace the development dynamics of scholarly publications on Islamic Education Curriculum Reform by examining the number of publications per year, contributing fields of study, as well as patterns of collaboration and contributions between countries in this area. In addition, the study aims to identify influential academic actors, including authors, journals, and articles with the highest citation rates and scholarly productivity, thereby providing an overview of the dominant knowledge hubs in the discourse on Islamic education curriculum reform (Parveen 2011).

Through bibliometric (Heidari et al. 2024) with network visualisation techniques, this research also intends to map the key emerging topics and explain the distribution and thematic interconnections across disciplines that shape the global research landscape in this domain. Furthermore, the findings are expected to identify existing research gaps and offer strategic direction for the future development of studies related to Islamic education curriculum reform, from both theoretical and practical perspectives. This study makes a scholarly contribution by providing a comprehensive mapping of the direction, collaboration, and research focus in the field of Islamic education curriculum reform. Through a bibliometric approach, this research is able to identify trends and patterns of collaboration between authors, as well as emerging research themes, thereby enriching the literature on modern Islamic education.

Practically, the findings of this study are expected to serve as a basis for policymakers and Islamic educational institutions in designing adaptive, evidence-based curriculum policies that are aligned with global developments. The results also support Point 4 of the Asta Cita agenda the strengthening of high-quality human resources based on science,



technology, and spiritual values and contribute to the achievement of SDG 4: Quality Education at the international level.

2. Research Method

This study employs a quantitative bibliometric approach to Analyse Global trends in the reform of the Islamic education curriculum. This approach was chosen due to its effectiveness in identifying publication patterns, key authors, dominant institutions, and collaborative relationships between countries within the studied topic (Sukirman and Linse 2024). The study was conducted by following the updated PRISMA 2020 framework, to ensure transparency, accountability, and replicability of the research findings (Ozgen and El Shishtawy Hassan 2021). The four main PRISMA stages used include: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. This approach facilitates a systematic and comprehensive mapping of the literature, while also strengthening the methodological validity of the bibliometric analysis results.

The identification stage began with a literature search using reputable academic databases, namely Scopus and Web of Science, in November 2025. The search strategy was formulated using Boolean logic: (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Islamic Education") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Curriculum")) AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA, "SOC1")) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, "Curriculum") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, "Islamic Education") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, "Education")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "English")).

This strategy aimed to retrieve peer-reviewed scholarly articles in the field of social sciences that are relevant to the research topic. The inclusion criteria were: (1) original articles, (2) published within the last five years (2019–2024), (3) written in English, and (4) explicitly addressing topics related to Islamic education and curriculum. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria included: non-scholarly articles, conference proceedings, and documents written in languages other than English (Mariyono 2024).

The screening stage was conducted manually by reviewing the titles and abstracts of the initial search results. Duplicates across databases were also removed (Rashed 2015). This stage resulted in a more focused and relevant set of articles pertaining to the topic of Islamic education curriculum reform. The eligibility stage involved a full-text reading of the articles that passed the screening phase. Evaluation was conducted to ensure the articles' relevance to the study's objectives and focus, particularly in discussing reform or changes in the approach, structure, or content of the Islamic education curriculum (Riaz 2011).

The final stage was inclusion, in which articles meeting all criteria were analysed using the bibliometric software VOSviewer and Bibliometrix (R-based). The analysis included keyword frequency, co-authorship, co-citation, and co-occurrence mapping, allowing for the visualisation of conceptual and collaborative networks between researchers and institutions. The output of this process presents comprehensive insights



into the dynamics and global direction of curriculum reform in Islamic education. Thus, this study not only constructs a map of the existing literature but also identifies research gaps and future trends within this domain (Ozgen and El Shishtawy Hassan 2021).

3. RESULTS

3.1 Global Publication Trends and International Collaboration in Islamic Education Curriculum Reform

The analysis of global publication trends provides an overview of the development and dynamics of research related to Islamic education curriculum reform over time. In addition, patterns of international collaboration indicate the extent to which this issue has gained cross-border academic attention and reflect the scientific networks that have formed within the field.

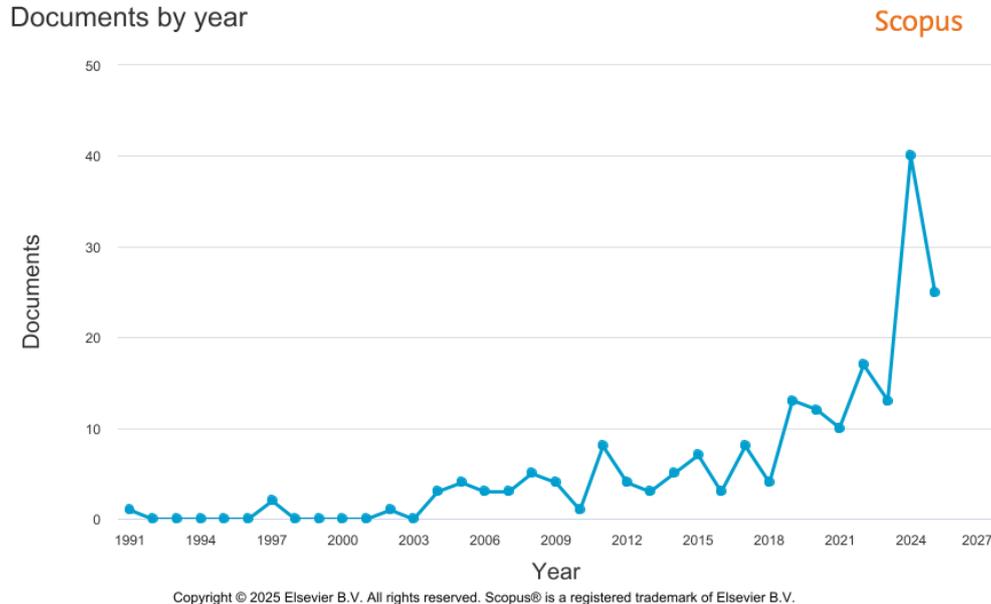


Figure 1: Documents by Year. Source: Scopus database.

Based on publication data indexed in the Scopus database, it is evident that research related to Islamic education curriculum reform has experienced significant growth over the past three decades. In the early period (1991–2010), the number of publications remained relatively stagnant, averaging fewer than ten documents per year, indicating that this theme had not yet become a major focus in global academic discourse. However,

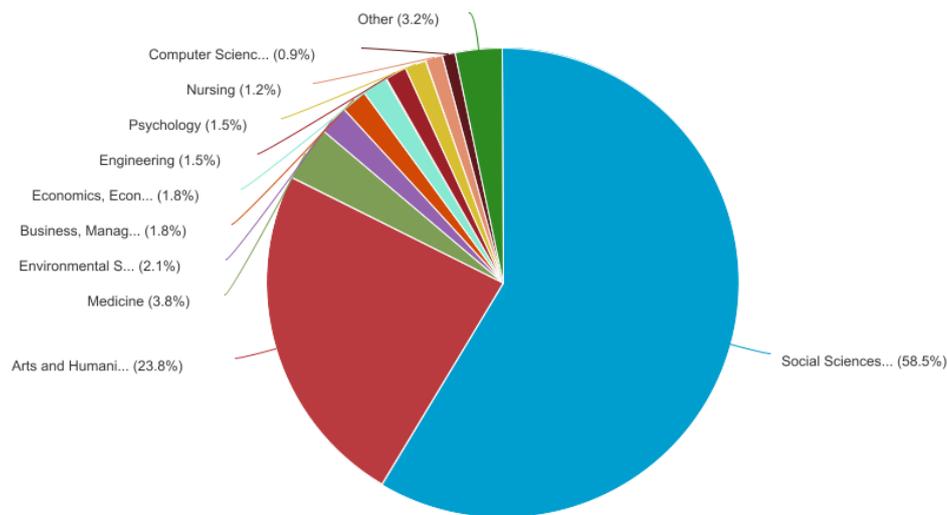


since 2015, the trend has shown a consistent increase, reflecting growing interest and urgency around the renewal of the Islamic education paradigm across various national contexts.

The peak in publications occurred in 2024, with more than forty documents, marking a remarkable surge compared to previous years. This increase may be interpreted as a response to global dynamics in Islamic education, including the integration of modern values, technology, and the need for a curriculum reform that is more adaptive to contemporary developments. Although a slight decline was observed in 2025, the overall long-term trend indicates a stable and promising rise in academic interest in this topic within international scholarly discourse.

Documents by subject area

Scopus



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Figure 2: Documents by subject area. Source: Scopus database.

Based on the distribution of publications indexed in Scopus, research on Islamic education curriculum reform is dominated by the field of Social Sciences, accounting for 58.5% of all documents. This dominance indicates that the issue of Islamic education curriculum reform is primarily examined through social, educational, and public policy approaches, which emphasise the transformation of educational systems and practices within the socio-cultural context of Muslim communities.

The Arts and Humanities field ranks second with 23.8%, reflecting the close relationship between curriculum reform and Islamic studies, educational philosophy, as well as the cultural and religious values that underpin it. Meanwhile, contributions from



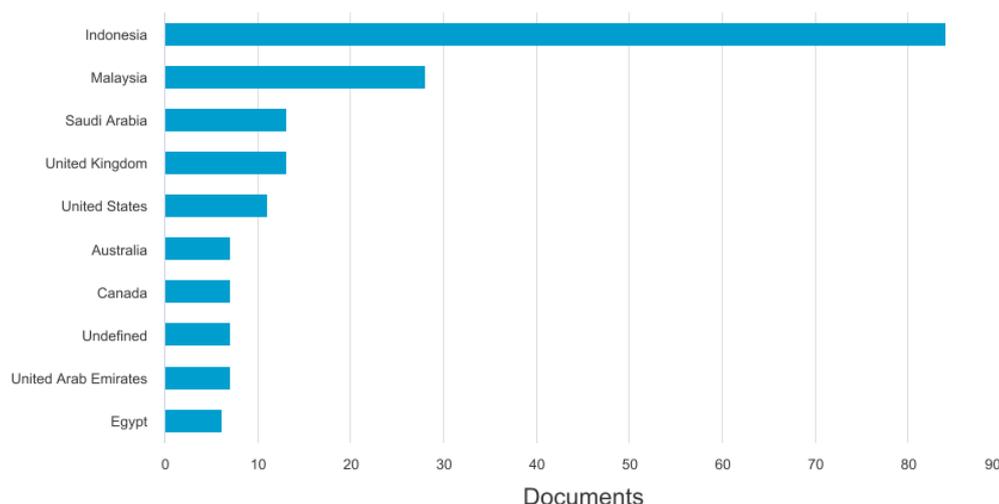
other fields such as Medicine (3.8%), Environmental Science (2.1%), Business and Management (1.8%), and Economics (1.8%) indicate that this topic is also beginning to be integrated with cross-disciplinary issues such as public health, sustainability, and education governance.

Smaller proportions from fields such as Engineering, Psychology, Nursing, and Computer Science (each contributing less than 2%) suggest that the exploration of technological and psychopedagogical approaches in the context of Islamic education curriculum reform remains limited. Overall, this distribution reflects that research in this area is still largely centred on the social sciences and humanities, but shows significant potential for interdisciplinary development in the future.

Documents by country or territory

Compare the document counts for up to 15 countries/territories.

Scopus



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Figure 3: Documents by Country. Source: Scopus database

Based on the distribution of publications indexed in Scopus, it is evident that Indonesia ranks first as the main contributor to research on Islamic education curriculum reform, with a number of publications far exceeding other countries, reaching approximately 85 documents. Indonesia's dominance highlights its central role in the development of discourse and practice surrounding Islamic education reform, in line with the social, cultural, and institutional context in which the Islamic education system plays a strategic role in national development.

Malaysia holds the second position, with around 30 publications, reinforcing its status as one of the key centres for Islamic education studies in the Southeast Asian

region. Meanwhile, countries in the Middle East, such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, show relatively lower levels of contribution, despite their historically significant roles in Islamic scholarly traditions. On the other hand, Western countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, and Canada have also participated, albeit with a limited number of publications. This reflects a growing cross-regional academic interest in the issue, from both comparative and global perspectives.

Overall, this pattern of distribution indicates that research on Islamic education curriculum reform is dominated by countries with large Muslim populations and well-established Islamic education systems. However, the involvement of non-Muslim majority countries points to the expansion of academic engagement into a transnational dimension, reflecting the increasing openness of Islamic education discourse to global and interdisciplinary contexts.

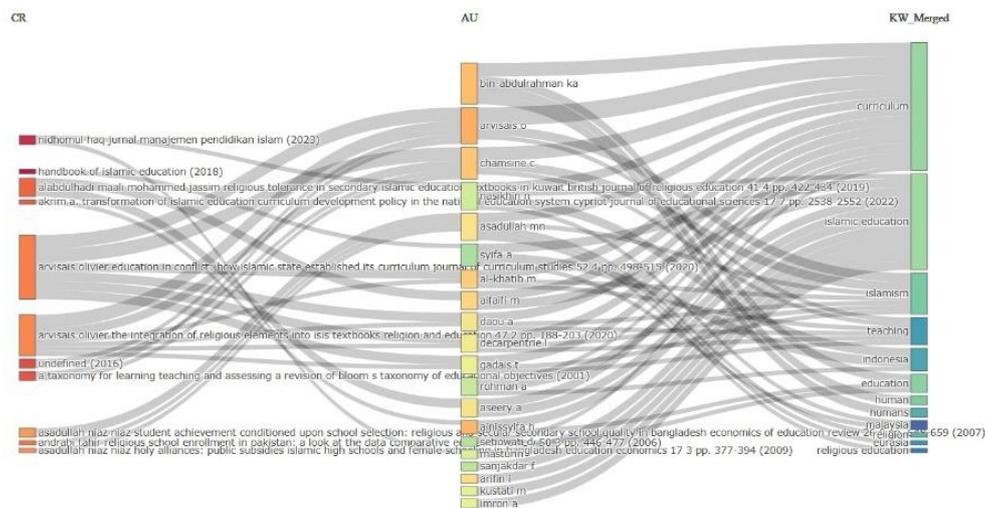


Figure 4: Collaboration Source: Scopus database.

The bibliometric visualisation above illustrates the interconnection between core references (CR), authors (AU), and indexed keywords (KW_Merged) within the research landscape of Islamic education curriculum reform. This network pattern reveals an integrated knowledge structure linking key authors, influential reference literature, and the dominant conceptual themes in global academic discourse.

In general, research in this field centres around keywords such as “curriculum”, “Islamic education”, and “teaching”, indicating a primary focus on pedagogical transformation and curriculum development grounded in Islamic values. Supporting themes such as “Islamism”, “religious education”, and “human” also appear prominently,



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emphasising the research orientation towards integrating religious, humanistic, and modern educational practices.

Several works and authors occupy strategic positions within this network. For instance, Arvisais, Olivier, through his publications *Education in Conflict: How Islamic State Established Its Curriculum* (2019) and *The Integration of Religious Elements into ISIS Textbooks* (2020), is frequently cited in the context of curriculum studies within conflict situations and the ideological use of education. In addition, the contributions of Asadullah, Niaz Niaz, with his research on the quality of Islamic education and the performance of religious schools in Bangladesh and Pakistan, add an empirical dimension to the debate on the effectiveness of Islamic education systems in varying socio-economic contexts.

Other works, such as the *Handbook of Islamic Education* (2018) and *Transformation of Islamic Education Curriculum Development Policy in the National Context* (Akrim, 2023), play an important role in broadening the discourse towards curriculum reform that is more adaptive and contextual in response to social change and globalisation challenges. This indicates a paradigm shift from a normative approach to an evidence-based reform model, in which pedagogy, education management, and public policy interact to shape a new direction for Islamic education.

Thus, this visualisation confirms that research on Islamic education curriculum reform is not only growing conceptually but is also forming cross-national and cross-disciplinary scholarly networks that highlight the importance of dialogue between Islamic intellectual traditions and contemporary educational dynamics. The dense and multilayered network structure reflects a progressive consolidation of knowledge, indicating that this field is moving towards a more systematic and global stage of academic maturity.

3.2 Most Influential Authors, Journals, and Articles in the Field of Islamic Education Curriculum Reform

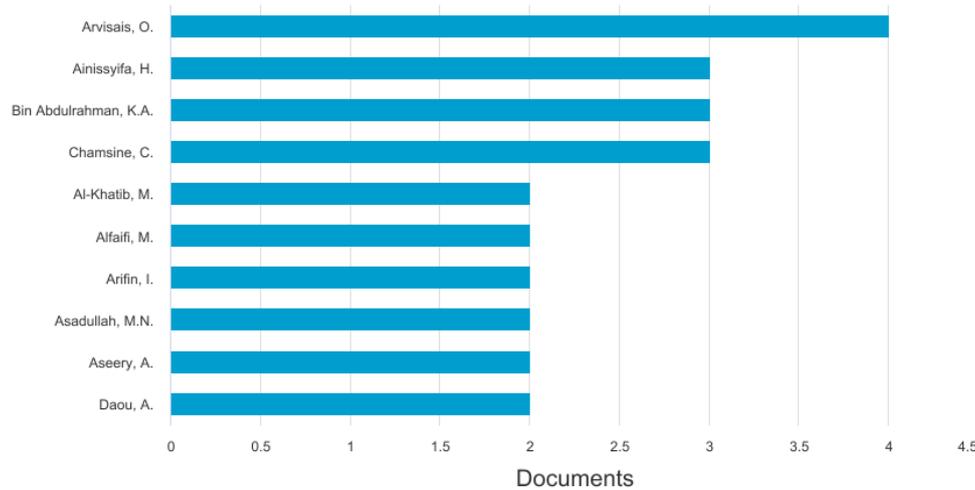
The reform of the Islamic education curriculum has become an important focus in the development of a modern education system that is grounded in Islamic values while remaining adaptive to contemporary demands. Based on the results of the bibliometric analysis, a number of the most influential authors, journals, and articles can be identified as having shaped the direction and paradigm of Islamic education curriculum reform at a global level.



Documents by author

Scopus

Compare the document counts for up to 15 authors.



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Figure 5: Most Relevant Author Source: Scopus database

Based on the results of the bibliometric analysis displayed in the Documents by Author graph, it can be observed that academic contributions in the field of Islamic education curriculum reform show significant variation among researchers. The author Arvisais, O. occupies the top position with four publications, reflecting his intellectual dominance in shaping the academic discourse on Islamic education curriculum reform. Meanwhile, authors such as Ainissyifa, H., Bin Abdulrahman, K.A., and Chamsine, C. each have three scholarly works, demonstrating their active involvement in the development of an integrative and contextual Islamic education paradigm.

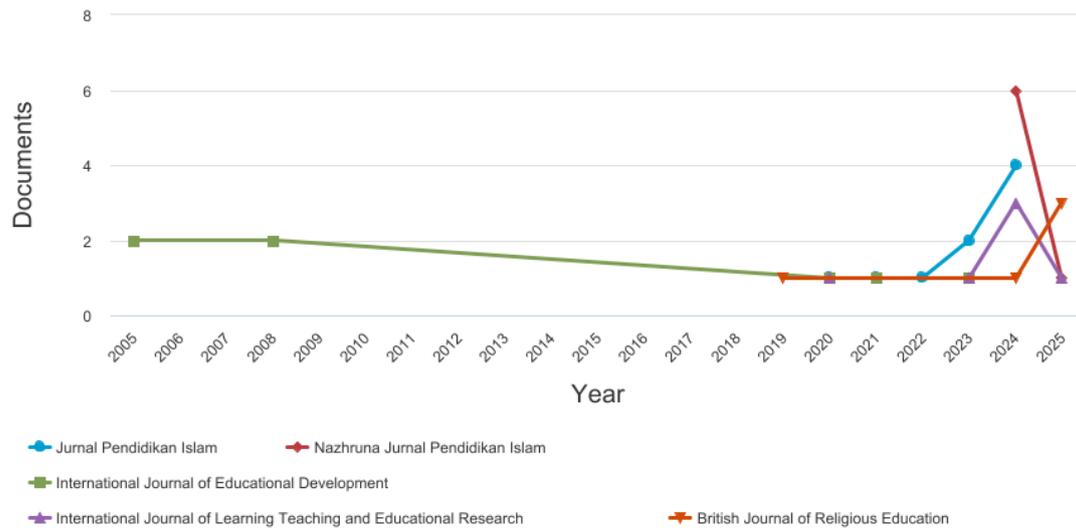
Furthermore, authors like Al-Khatib, M., Alfaifi, M., and Arifin, I., with two publications each, show a stable contribution to enriching the academic literature in this field. Overall, this distribution pattern indicates a fairly balanced collaboration and dissemination of scholarly discourse, while also signalling the emergence of new centres of expertise in research on Islamic education curriculum reform at the global level.



Documents per year by source

Scopus

Compare the document counts for up to 10 sources. Compare sources and view CiteScore, SJR, and SNIP data



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Figure 6: Documents per Year by Source: Scopus database

Based on the data visualisation in the Documents per Year by Source graph, there is a clear indication of significant dynamics in scholarly publications related to Islamic education curriculum reform over the past two decades. In the early period (2005–2015), publication activity remained relatively stable but with low intensity, dominated by the *International Journal of Educational Development*, which consistently published two articles every few years, signalling an initial interest in Islamic education reform within a global context.

However, from 2020 to 2025, there has been a sharp and progressive increase in the number of publications, particularly in Islamic-based journals such as *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* and *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, both of which show a significant surge, peaking in 2024. This phenomenon reflects the growing academic attention to the issues of modernisation and recontextualisation of the Islamic education curriculum in response to the demands of the digital age and globalisation.

In addition, the involvement of international journals such as the *British Journal of Religious Education* and the *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research* in recent years shows that the discourse on Islamic curriculum reform has gained recognition in global interdisciplinary academic conversations. Overall, this trend suggests a paradigm shift towards integration between Islamic values and contemporary pedagogical approaches grounded in scientific research and modern educational technology.

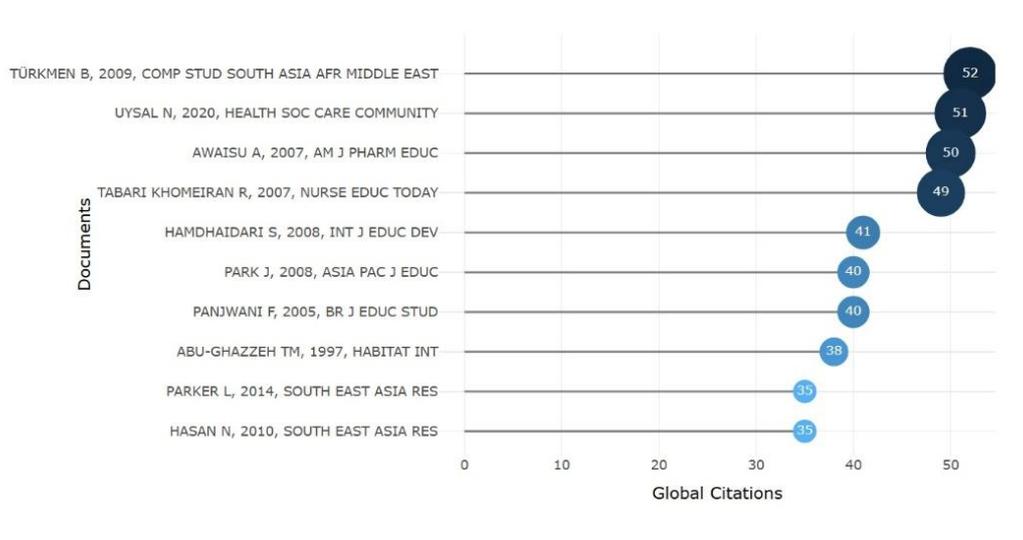


Figure 7: Most Global Cited Documents by Source: Scopus database

The graph above displays the global citation distribution for the ten most influential scholarly publications related to Islamic education curriculum reform and relevant socio-religious studies. According to the data, the publication by Türkmen, B. (2009) in *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* ranks first with 52 citations, followed by Uysal, N. (2020) in *Health & Social Care in the Community* (51 citations) and Awaisu, A. (2007) in the *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education* (50 citations). These three publications stand out for their significant contributions in integrating social, cultural, and professional approaches within the context of education and human development.

Furthermore, the work of (Tabari Khomeiran and Deans 2007) which received 49 citations, highlights the strong relevance between educational theory and professional practice, particularly in the context of developing competencies and ethics in education. Other publications, such as those by (Hamdhaidari, Agahi, and Papzan 2008) and (Park and Niyozov 2008) with 41 and 40 citations respectively, reinforce the interdisciplinary discourse linking education, moral values, and social development.

Overall, this graph illustrates that highly cited articles are not only focused on the pedagogical dimensions of Islamic education but also connect them with global issues such as health, professional ethics, and social development. This underscores that research on Islamic education curriculum reform has evolved into a broad, interdisciplinary field, oriented towards social relevance and the universal betterment of humanity.



3.3 Mapping of Key Topics and Thematic Interconnections in Global Research

The mapping of key topics and thematic interconnections in global research provides a comprehensive overview of the direction of scholarly development and the dominant areas of focus within the academic discourse on Islamic education curriculum reform. Through bibliometric visual analysis, the relationships between themes and key concepts can be identified to understand how issues such as the integration of Islamic values, pedagogical innovation, and adaptation to global challenges interact within the international research landscape.

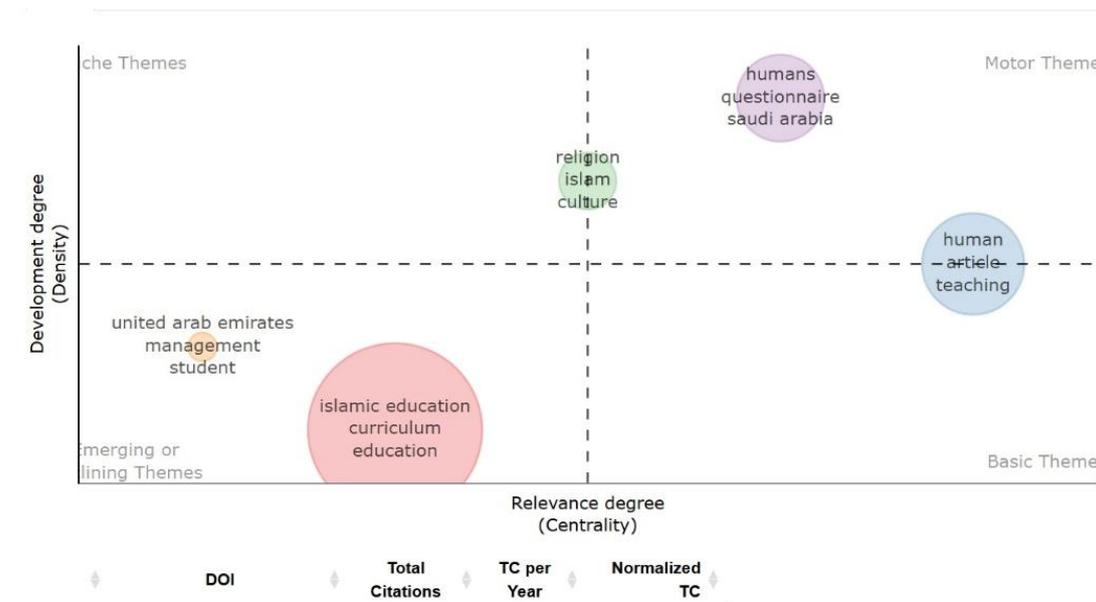


Figure 8. Mapping of Main Topics. Source: Scopus database

The graph above represents the results of global thematic mapping in research on Islamic education curriculum reform, based on levels of relevance (centrality) and development (density). This analysis reveals four main clusters, indicating the relative positions of research themes within the international academic landscape.

The cluster “Islamic education curriculum education”, located in the emerging or declining themes quadrant, shows that although this theme holds strong relevance, its level of development remains limited. This suggests the need for further exploration to strengthen both the theoretical and applied foundations in a global context. On the other hand, the theme “religion Islam culture” occupies a central position, with a balance between relevance and analytical depth, making it a conceptual core in the discourse on Islamic education.



The theme “human teaching article” appears as a basic theme, indicating that issues related to pedagogical and humanistic approaches form a primary foundation in the development of a modern Islamic education curriculum. Meanwhile, the cluster “humans questionnaire Saudi Arabia”, located in the motor themes quadrant, reflects a highly dynamic and rapidly developing research area, particularly in the empirical and sociological contexts of Islamic education.

Thus, this thematic map provides a comprehensive overview, showing that the discourse on Islamic education curriculum reform is moving towards an interdisciplinary direction, with an increasing emphasis on humanistic, cultural, and methodological dimensions.

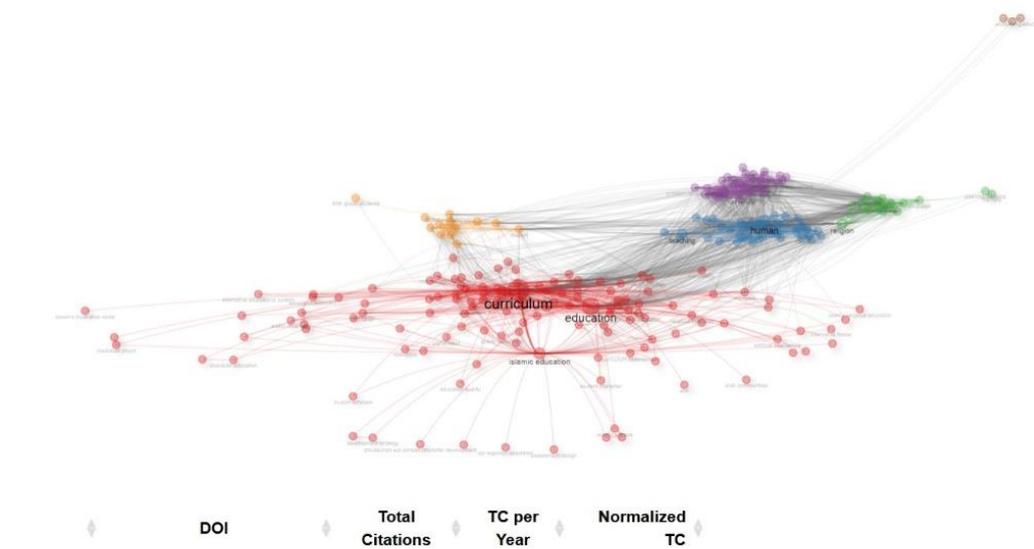


Figure 9. Interrelationship between topics. Source: Scopus database.

The image above displays a thematic network visualisation, illustrating the conceptual interconnections between global research topics in the field of Islamic education curriculum reform. This map reveals several interrelated thematic clusters, where each colour represents a different area of focus that remains integrated within the broader discourse of contemporary Islamic education.

The red cluster, centred on the terms *curriculum*, *education*, and *Islamic education*, emerges as the core axis of research, indicating that the issue of curriculum reform forms the conceptual foundation for scholarly development in Islamic education. The blue cluster, focused on the themes of *human* and *teaching*, emphasises the pedagogical and humanistic dimensions as key elements in the reform process. Meanwhile, the green



cluster, containing the keywords *religion* and *Islam*, highlights the strong connection between theological aspects and moral values in the design of an Islamic curriculum.

In addition, the purple cluster reflects the link between empirical approaches and the social measurement of Islamic education phenomena, while the orange cluster points to the involvement of institutional and managerial contexts in the implementation of curriculum reform.

Overall, this visualisation affirms that global research in Islamic education is moving towards an interdisciplinary approach, connecting theoretical, spiritual, and practical dimensions in an effort to create an Islamic education system that is relevant, adaptive, and highly transformative on a global scale.

3.4 Future Research Directions and Opportunities in Islamic Education Curriculum Reform

Both visualisations comprehensively represent the direction of evolution and future research prospects in the field of Islamic education curriculum reform through thematic network analysis and global conceptual mapping approaches. The global thematic network visualisation in the first image reveals the complex conceptual interconnections between various areas of study that form the research ecosystem of Islamic education curriculum (Malekzadeh 2012). The main red cluster, centred on the terms *curriculum*, *education*, and *Islamic education*, indicates the dominance of curriculum reform discourse as a central issue in contemporary academic discussions. The close interrelation of this cluster with the blue cluster (*human* and *teaching* themes) and the green cluster (*religion* and *Islam* themes) reflects the growing epistemological integration between pedagogical, humanistic, and theological dimensions within the context of Islamic education reform. Meanwhile, the emergence of the purple and orange clusters signals a shift in research towards empirical and managerial domains, underlining the significance of interdisciplinary approaches involving social, psychological, and institutional aspects in the development of curricula that are more adaptive and responsive to contemporary challenges (Malekzadeh 2012).

The strategic diagram in the second image reinforces this interpretation by mapping research topics based on relevance (centrality) and degree of development (density). The theme "*Islamic education curriculum education*", positioned in the emerging or declining themes quadrant, highlights its high relevance while also indicating the need to strengthen its methodological and theoretical foundations to achieve more comprehensive academic maturity. The "*human teaching*" theme, located in the basic themes quadrant, affirms its role as a conceptual foundation supporting the entire body of pedagogical research in Islamic education. Meanwhile, the "*religion – Islam – culture*" theme, positioned in the central area of the map, reflects a balance between conceptual depth and global relevance, opening space for epistemological dialogue across



knowledge traditions. The “*humans – questionnaire – Saudi Arabia*” theme, found in the motor themes quadrant, marks rapid growth in empirical research, particularly in specific social and cultural contexts that can serve as models for future cross-national and cross-cultural studies (Ritonga et al. 2020).

Overall, these two maps confirm that the future development of research on Islamic education curriculum reform will focus on three main strategic orientations: first, the epistemological integration of Islamic values, modern pedagogical approaches, and digital learning technologies; second, empirical deepening and global contextualisation through cross-national and cross-cultural studies that examine how Islamic curricula adapt to social transformation and technological advancement; and third, the theoretical and practical reconstruction of the curriculum that prioritises a balance between spirituality, humanity, and 21st-century competencies as core principles. In this way, Islamic education curriculum reform holds great potential to serve as a strategic field of study that bridges the classical Islamic intellectual tradition with global educational innovation, and as a catalyst for the emergence of a transformative, inclusive, and globally competitive paradigm of Islamic education in the context of modern civilisation (Astari et al. 2025).

4. Discussion

4.1 Global Publication Trends and International Collaboration in Islamic Education Curriculum Reform

Based on the synthesis of bibliometric findings and Scopus data (2025), the dynamics of research on Islamic education curriculum reform can be comprehensively understood through the framework of the Grand Theory: Integrative Curriculum Theory (IC Theory) a theory that emphasises the importance of unifying spiritual, cognitive, social, and technological dimensions in shaping a curriculum system that is contextual and adaptive (Astari et al. 2025).

As illustrated in the Integrative Model of Islamic Education Curriculum Reform, this theory serves as a foundation for explaining the relationship between four main components that shape the direction and opportunities for future Islamic curriculum development: (1) Islamic Values and Maqasid al-Shari’ah, (2) Digital Innovation, (3) Socio-Cultural Context, and (4) Curriculum Evaluation (Shaleh and Umiarso 2024).

The first component, Islamic Values and Maqasid al-Shari’ah, forms the conceptual core that ensures curriculum innovation and reform remain rooted in the principles of *tawhid* and the objectives of *shari’ah* (*maqasid*). This aligns with the perspective of (Mahmud et al. 2023), who emphasise the importance of positioning Islamic spirituality as the foundation for curriculum digitalisation. The second component, Digital Innovation, reflects the accelerating trend of educational technologies such as AI, learning analytics, and digital platforms, which enhance the curriculum’s adaptive capacity and



efficiency. Studies by (Rifai et al. 2025) and (Haddade et al. 2024) support this by highlighting that technological integration not only improves learning effectiveness but also strengthens competency-based assessment.

Meanwhile, the Socio-Cultural Context serves as a space for articulating Islamic values into local and global realities. According to (Abu-Ghazzeah 1997), the relevance of the Islamic education curriculum depends on its ability to respond to contemporary social, economic, and cultural challenges. The fourth component, Curriculum Evaluation, functions as a reflective link that measures alignment between learning objectives, assessment, and learner needs. (Khan et al. 2025) found that improving curriculum quality is highly dependent on an evaluation system grounded in validity and relevance to the goals of Islamic education.

From the interaction of these four elements emerges a systemic output in the form of an “Adaptive and Globally Integrative Islamic Curriculum” an educational model that balances *maqasid al-shari’ah* with the dynamics of globalisation and technological advancement. This model is consistent with recent research directions that stress the importance of a curriculum based on transformative spirituality and 21st-century skills (Shaleh and Umiarso 2024).

Overall, Islamic education curriculum reform can no longer be viewed as a local and linear process, but rather as a multidimensional epistemological transformation that integrates faith, knowledge, and technology within an integrative framework. This model opens new pathways for empirical research, particularly in the development of measurement tools for Islamic digital literacy, *maqasid*-based assessment, and the integration of AI ethics with Islamic values education forming the future trajectory of research in Islamic curriculum reform (Rifai et al. 2025).

Model Integratif Reformasi Kurikulum Pendidikan Islam

Grand Theory: Integrative Curriculum Theory (IC Theory)

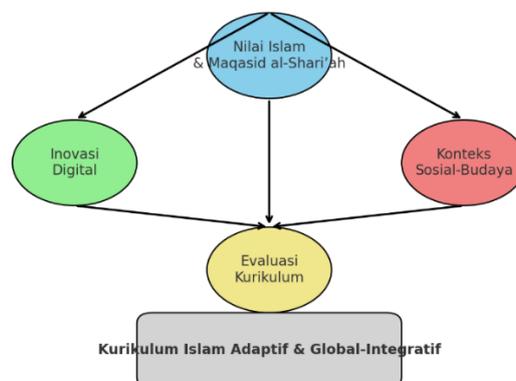


Figure 10. Integratif curriculum reform Islamic Education



4.2 Most Influential Authors, Journals, and Articles in the Field of Islamic Education Curriculum Reform

Based on the three Scopus visualisations provided (1) author productivity, (2) documents per year by source, and (3) global citation count a detailed discussion can be constructed by linking these findings to recent bibliometric research and grand theories related to scholarly productivity and the diffusion of knowledge.

The trend of author productivity in academic publishing shows a concentration among a small number of prolific authors, as seen in the first graph, where only one author has four documents, while the others range between two and three. This pattern is consistent with Lotka's Law, which states that a small number of authors produce the majority of scientific publications, while most authors contribute to only a few. Similar findings appear in recent bibliometric studies, such as the research by (Abdul Rahim, Yatiban, and Mohd Farihal 2018), which demonstrates that productivity in science education follows an uneven distribution and is strongly influenced by international collaboration and institutional affiliation. Additionally, research by (Loffi 2014) reinforces the notion that factors such as academic position, geographic location, and area of expertise significantly impact productivity and citation impact directly linked to Human Capital Theory, which suggests that increases in individual intellectual capacity enhance scholarly value and productivity.

Furthermore, the "Documents per year by source" graph shows a significant surge in publications after 2022, particularly in the journals *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* and *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*. This phenomenon aligns with the global trend of increased educational publishing in the era post Covid 19, as identified in bibliometric studies by (Priatna, Gustini, and Mulyani 2023). They note that the pandemic triggered an increase in cross-border collaboration and the digitalisation of research, which accelerated the diffusion of knowledge in the field of education. According to Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory, this publication growth can be interpreted as mass adoption of digital research innovations and open-access models, whereby educational institutions are adapting to a new paradigm of scholarly publishing that is more inclusive and globally connected.

Meanwhile, the third graph, "Global Citations", highlights a clear disparity in citation impact, with only a small number of documents (Pasha-Zaidi et al. 2015) achieving more than 50 citations. This phenomenon reflects the Matthew Effect (Hampton et al. 2015) where researchers or works that have already gained recognition tend to receive even more citations in the future. Research by (Mariyono 2024) supports this, showing that countries or institutions with historically high productivity also experience exponential growth in citation impact. In addition, a study by (Malekzadeh 2012) confirms that increased digital competence among academics contributes to the global visibility and influence of their publications.



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From the integration of all these findings, the main novelty that can be concluded is that current bibliometric trends reflect a shift from individual productivity towards multidisciplinary collaboration and greater digitalisation of publications. Whereas productivity was once measured by the number of publications, today the quality and reach of citations have become the new standard for assessing scientific impact. This indicates a paradigm shift in modern science towards a more open, connected knowledge ecosystem, oriented towards social impact rather than mere academic output volume, as also highlighted by (Malekzadeh 2012) in the context of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

4.3 Mapping of Key Topics and Thematic Connections in Global Research

Based on the two visualisations above namely the thematic map and the co-occurrence network, it can be concluded that research on Islamic education, curriculum, culture, and religion in Saudi Arabia focuses on the interconnection between religious values (Islam), the local cultural context, and national educational practices. The theme “Islamic education curriculum education” occupies the position of a basic theme, with high relevance but a moderate level of development, indicating a well-established research area that still requires further conceptual and methodological exploration. Meanwhile, the theme “religion Islam culture” emerges as a motor theme with strong cross-disciplinary connectivity, highlighting the importance of integrating religion and culture in the design and implementation of education (Al-Khatib and Kalichman 2019).

Recent studies highlight how Islam functions as the foundational basis for curriculum development in Saudi Arabia, where education is seen as a vehicle for instilling moral values and religious identity. A study by (BinTaleb 2024) affirms that the Saudi education system is shaped by the strong interaction between Wahhabi values, social norms, and state policies, resulting in a curriculum that is heavily oriented towards the teachings of the Qur’an and Hadith (Sözeri and K Altinyelken 2019). In this context, gender segregation and content control reflect the state’s efforts to ensure alignment between religious teachings and the formal education system. This research aligns with the findings of (Alshahrani and Mostafa 2025), who observed that early childhood education in Saudi Arabia explicitly instils religious values and gender roles through faith-based teaching practices, where teachers serve as agents of cultural and spiritual socialisation (Rajab and Wright 2018).

From a grand theory perspective, the relationship between religion and education in the Saudi context can be analysed through the lens of Bourdieu’s theory of cultural reproduction and Al-Attas’s Islamic educational philosophy. Bourdieu emphasises that educational institutions reproduce dominant social values—in this case, Islamic values—that reinforce national cultural identity. On the other hand, (Rajab and Wright 2018) argues that Islamic education aims to cultivate the *insan adabi*—an educated and ethical human being, in accordance with revealed values. (Alhosani 2022) supports this view,



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showing that religion is not merely a component of the curriculum but the core of teachers' professional identity in Saudi Arabia. Muslim teachers do not merely transmit knowledge but also uphold spiritual values and moral responsibility towards their students, demonstrating the religious internalisation within the pedagogical process.

In addition, recent research highlights Saudi Arabia's efforts to transform education in line with Vision 2030, which emphasises modernising the education system while retaining Islamic values. A study shows that Saudi Arabia utilises education as a form of cultural diplomacy to promote a moderate image of Islam and expand its global cultural influence. Meanwhile, (Aldossari 2021) stresses the need to reform Islamic studies curricula to systematically incorporate children's rights and universal humanitarian values. This transformation reflects an effort to balance traditional Islamic values with a humanistic and global approach to education (Sowell 2017).

The novelty of this research lies in the integration of culture and religion within the contemporary Islamic education curriculum in Saudi Arabia as a model of value-based curriculum transformation. While previous studies have largely focused on the normative aspects of Islamic education, a new paradigm is emerging that views Islamic education as a mechanism for shaping social identity and cultural diplomacy. Future research should aim to strengthen the relationship between spiritual values, 21st-century skills, and a national development vision rooted in a moderate and globally adaptive form of Islam (Chotimah, Qudsy, and Yusuf 2025).

4.4 Future Directions and Research Opportunities in Islamic Education Curriculum Reform

The thematic map presented illustrates a dynamic intellectual configuration between themes such as Islamic education curriculum education as a basic theme, and religionIslam culture as a driving force in research. This indicates that contemporary Islamic education is shifting from a dogmatic paradigm towards a more reflective and contextual approach, where the curriculum serves not only as a vehicle for the transmission of religious knowledge, but also as an instrument for social and cultural reconstruction. Islamic education is now understood as a value system living within a dialectic between tradition and modernity, reflecting the complex interaction between religious norms, social dynamics, and global change. This transformation is particularly evident in countries such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, where Islamic education serves as a space for negotiating between religious visions and national modernisation projects, as outlined in Vision 2030 (Shahin, Patka, and Smail 2025).

From a theoretical perspective, this phenomenon can be interpreted through the frameworks of Critical Pedagogy (Paulo Freire) and Islamic Educational Philosophy (Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas). Freire conceptualised education as a process of liberation (education as liberation), which fosters critical consciousness (*conscientização*) of social realities, while Al-Attas emphasised education as a process of *ta'dīb*, the formation of a



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civilised human being in harmony with knowledge, faith, and ethics. The integration of these two frameworks produces the paradigm of Critical Islamic Pedagogy, an educational model that rejects the dichotomy between worldly and spiritual knowledge. This paradigm is particularly relevant to the Saudi context, where the previously reproductive nature of Islamic curriculum is now being redirected to promote moral reflection, intercultural dialogue, and value-based pedagogical innovation. Thus, Islamic education is no longer merely a means of reproducing hegemonic values, but a space for spiritual and social emancipation (Eltaybani, Igarashi, and Yamamoto-Mitani 2021).

Moreover, the motor theme “religion–Islam–culture” signifies that the integration of religious values with local cultural contexts is becoming a central orientation in Islamic education reform. Recent research shows that teachers and educational institutions play a strategic role as agents of spiritual enculturation in the face of modernity. Through a phenomenological approach, it was found that teachers in Islamic educational institutions do not only teach religious knowledge, but also instil values of identity, gender, and morality that align with the ethos of their communities. Hence, the Islamic education system functions as a space of cultural hybridisation—a site where traditional values are reinterpreted to address the challenges of globalisation. Within the framework of Cultural Hybridisation Theory (Pieterse), Islamic education can be viewed as a transcultural practice, involving dialogue between tradition and innovation, as well as between Islam and modernity (Ushama et al. 2023).

Practically, the network visualisation results reveal emerging research opportunities on the transformation of Islamic curriculum and pedagogy in digital contexts. The rise of the Education 5.0 agenda calls for the integration of Islamic values into curriculum designs based on technology and artificial intelligence. This opens a pathway for the development of new theories, such as Digital Islamic Pedagogy, which merges Islamic ethics—such as hikmah (wisdom), amanah (trust), and tawazun (balance)—into technology-based learning practices. Future research could explore how Islamic epistemological values may be articulated within online learning, virtual reality, and AI-driven education, using the Actor-Network Theory (Latour) to map the interaction between humans, machines, and spiritual values within the digital Islamic education ecosystem. In this way, Islamic education could function not only as a moral value system, but also as a global ethical model for the governance of knowledge and technology (Ushama et al. 2023).

Finally, a promising future direction is the recontextualisation of Islamic education as a value-based paradigm for global society. The theme “human teaching” in the bibliometric visualisation signals the urgency for a pedagogical approach that is humanistic and spiritual, focusing not only on cognition but also on the affective and ethical dimensions of human development. Through the lens of Humanistic Education Theory (Maslow & Rogers), integrated with maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah, Islamic education can be reformulated as a system for shaping the complete human being (*insān kāmil*), aligned with universal human goals, justice, balance, and sustainability. Thus, future research in



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Islamic education will not only concentrate on religious content, but also on curriculum designs that foster reflective spirituality, social empathy, and global consciousness. This direction positions Islamic education not merely as a niche academic system, but as a civilisational project for shaping ethical human beings amid the disruptions of modernity (Dallal 2017).

5. Conclusion

The results of the thematic and conceptual analysis of the Islamic education research landscape indicate that the scholarly direction of this field is moving towards a more integrative, reflective, and transformative phase. Islamic education is no longer positioned merely as a means of reproducing traditional religious values, but has evolved into a space of dialectic between spirituality, culture, technology, and humanity. New paradigms such as Critical Islamic Pedagogy and the Digital Islamic Curriculum offer theoretical foundations for developing an Islamic education system that is adaptive to modernity without losing its epistemological roots. By combining the values of ta'dib, critical consciousness, and 21st-century skills, Islamic education has the potential to become an alternative global education model that balances rationality, morality, and spirituality.

Therefore, future research needs to focus on the development of interdisciplinary approaches capable of connecting classical Islamic educational theory with contemporary global challenges such as value globalisation, digital disruption, and the human ethical crisis. The focus of future studies should not only be on curriculum reform or teaching methods, but also on the reconstruction of the Islamic education paradigm as a civilisational project aimed at universal well-being. In this context, the future of Islamic education must serve as a bridge between tradition and innovation developing individuals who are both knowledgeable and virtuous, and ensuring that Islamic values remain relevant in shaping a world order that is more just, ethical, and sustainable.

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