Evolution of Islamic Education Research Through a Comprehensive Bibliometric Review 2000–2024

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Article Info

ABSTRACT

This study presents a comprehensive bibliometric review of research on Islamic education published between 2000 and 2024, aiming to map its intellectual structure, thematic evolution, and collaboration patterns over time. Using bibliometric techniques, data were extracted from the Scopus database and analyzed through performance indicators and science-mapping methods, including keyword co-occurrence, co-authorship, institutional affiliation, and country collaboration analyses. The results reveal that Islamic education research has been historically grounded, with strong emphasis on longitudinal and historical perspectives that form the core intellectual foundation of the field. Over time, the thematic focus has gradually shifted toward more interdisciplinary and applied concerns, particularly cultural contexts and contemporary educational practices. Collaboration analyses further show a dense but uneven global research network, dominated by Western institutions and countries, with emerging connections to Asia mediated through key bridging nations. The findings demonstrate that Islamic education research has evolved into a dynamic and diversified field, offering significant opportunities for future studies that emphasize cross-cultural perspectives, educational innovation, and broader global participation.
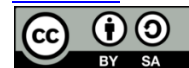
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1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past quarter century, Islamic education has increasingly become a subject of scholarly interest across various disciplines, from theology and pedagogy to sociology and comparative education. As globalization accelerates cross-cultural exchange, Muslim populations around the world have sought to critically engage with both tradition and modernity, reshaping Islamic educational thought and practice [1]. Early research in Islamic education predominantly focused on curricular reform and the integration of religious knowledge with secular sciences, reflecting broader educational reforms in Muslim-majority countries [2]. However, with the proliferation of digital scholarship and interdisciplinary frameworks, the field has diversified, producing a wide range of empirical and theoretical contributions that defy conventional categorization. These developments illustrate not only the vibrancy of the field but also the need for systematic analysis of its evolution [3].

Islamic education research is distinctive in its dual commitment to faith-based epistemologies and universal educational principles. Scholars have long debated how best to balance doctrinal fidelity with pedagogical innovation [4]. For instance, studies on

madrasah education during the early 2000s largely concentrated on normative questions of religious instruction and identity formation [5]. Later, research began to incorporate more critical lenses, examining issues related to gender, globalization, and modern educational technologies [6]. This shift mirrors broader trends in educational scholarship, where faith-informed research intersects with contemporary themes like equity, inclusion, and digital literacies. Such dynamism underscores the importance of understanding trajectories and patterns within Islamic education research.

Bibliometric analysis, a quantitative approach to mapping scientific literature, offers powerful tools for charting the contours of research fields over time [7]. By analyzing publication outputs, citation networks, co-authorship patterns, and keyword evolution, bibliometric methods reveal structural growth, intellectual influences, and emerging frontiers within disciplinary landscapes. In fields like information science and medicine, these methods have been instrumental in identifying research trends and forecasting future directions [8]. Despite these successes, Islamic education has yet to benefit from a comprehensive bibliometric review that systematically examines research trends over an extended period, particularly one spanning the transition into the digital age.

The period between 2000 and 2024 has been marked by profound educational, technological, and sociopolitical changes that have shaped not only Muslim communities but also the global academy. The rise of digital repositories, open-access publishing, and international research collaborations has democratized scholarly knowledge, allowing researchers from diverse regions to contribute to global debates [9]. Meanwhile, contemporary challenges such as radicalization, intercultural tensions, and educational inequalities have animated scholarly agendas, raising critical questions about the role of Islamic education in fostering pluralism and social cohesion [10]. In this context, Islamic education research has

expanded beyond traditional pedagogical concerns to engage with issues of global urgency.

Despite this expansion, the field remains fragmented, with research clusters emerging around isolated thematic concerns such as Qur'anic pedagogy, teacher education, or comparative religious education yet lacking a unified vista of the field's overall structure and evolution [11]. Without a systematic bibliometric mapping, it is difficult to discern which topics have dominated scholarly attention, which regions or institutions have led research production, and how intellectual networks have evolved across time. Such insights are essential for academics, practitioners, and policymakers who wish to understand where the field has been and where it might be headed.

Although Islamic education research has proliferated over the past two decades, there is a conspicuous lack of comprehensive bibliometric studies that evaluate its evolution systematically from 2000 to 2024. Many existing reviews focus on isolated topics or narrow subfields (e.g., madrasah curriculum reform or technology in religious instruction) but do not capture the broader intellectual structure, publication trends, and collaborative networks that define the field as a whole (Karim & Fatima, 2022). This gap hampers researchers' ability to contextualize new contributions within the larger discourse, obscures patterns of knowledge production, and limits strategic planning for future scholarship. The objective of this study is to conduct a comprehensive bibliometric review of Islamic education research published from 2000 to 2024, with the aim of identifying publication growth patterns, thematic clusters, influential authors and institutions, and emerging research frontiers.

2. METHOD

This study employed a bibliometric research design to systematically analyze the evolution of Islamic education research published between 2000 and 2024. Bibliometric

analysis was chosen because it enables the quantitative examination of large bodies of scholarly literature, allowing researchers to identify publication trends, citation structures, and intellectual patterns within a research field [7]. The dataset consisted of peer-reviewed journal articles, review papers, and conference proceedings that explicitly addressed Islamic education or closely related themes. Inclusion criteria were based on relevance to Islamic education, publication within the specified time frame, and availability of bibliographic metadata such as author information, keywords, abstracts, and references. Non-scholarly materials, editorials, and publications with incomplete metadata were excluded to ensure analytical consistency and reliability.

Data collection involved systematic retrieval of bibliographic records using carefully designed search strings that combined key terms such as Islamic education, madrasah, Islamic pedagogy, and religious education in Islam. The retrieved records were screened and refined to eliminate duplicates and irrelevant entries through a multi-stage filtering process. Bibliographic information including publication year, authorship, institutional affiliation, country of origin, keywords, and citation counts was extracted and organized into a structured dataset. To explore the intellectual structure and thematic evolution of Islamic education research, advanced bibliometric techniques were applied, including co-authorship analysis, co-citation analysis, and keyword co-occurrence analysis. These techniques enabled the identification of influential authors, research networks, and dominant as well as emerging themes within the field. Visualization tools were employed to map relationships among authors, institutions, and research topics, facilitating interpretation of complex bibliometric patterns.
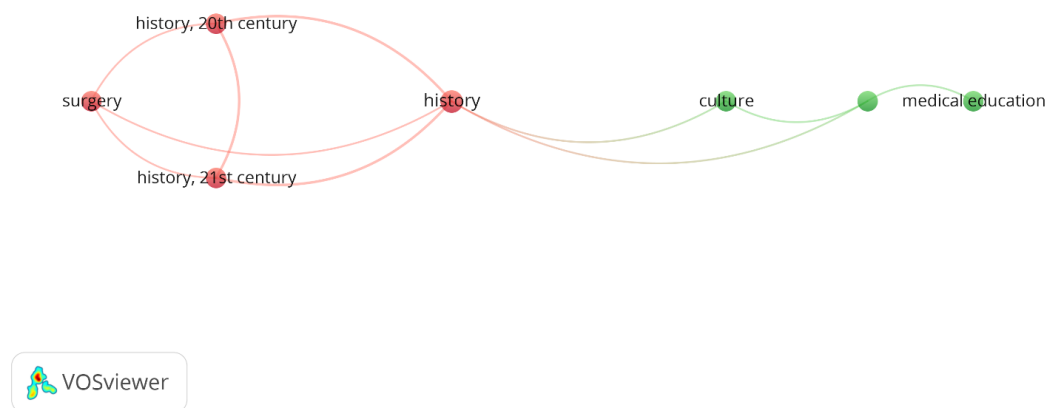
3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Figure 1. Network Visualization
Source: Data Analysis

Figure 1 shows a strong concentration of keywords around "history", closely linked with "history, 20th century" and "history, 21st century." This indicates that a substantial portion of the literature in this dataset is historically grounded, emphasizing longitudinal analysis across different time periods. The prominence and central

positioning of these nodes suggest that historical inquiry functions as the intellectual backbone of the field, providing continuity and context for later thematic developments. The close association between "history" and "surgery" highlights a specific subdomain where historical analysis intersects with medical or technical practices. This relationship implies that scholars frequently examine the evolution of surgical knowledge, practices, or institutions through a historical lens. The repeated ties between surgery and both the 20th and 21st centuries further suggest an interest in tracing professional, technological, and epistemological transformations over time rather than treating medical history as a static or purely archival subject.

The node "culture" appears as an intermediary connector between the historical cluster and more practice-oriented themes. Its position indicates that cultural perspectives play a mediating role, translating historical insights into broader social and educational contexts. This suggests a shift in the literature from descriptive historical narratives toward interpretive frameworks that consider values, norms, and sociocultural influences shaping knowledge transmission and institutional development. The linkage between "culture" and "medical education" reflects a more recent or applied research orientation, where historical and cultural understandings inform contemporary educational practices. This trajectory implies an evolution in the field from documenting past developments to leveraging historical-cultural insights for curriculum design, pedagogy, and professional training.
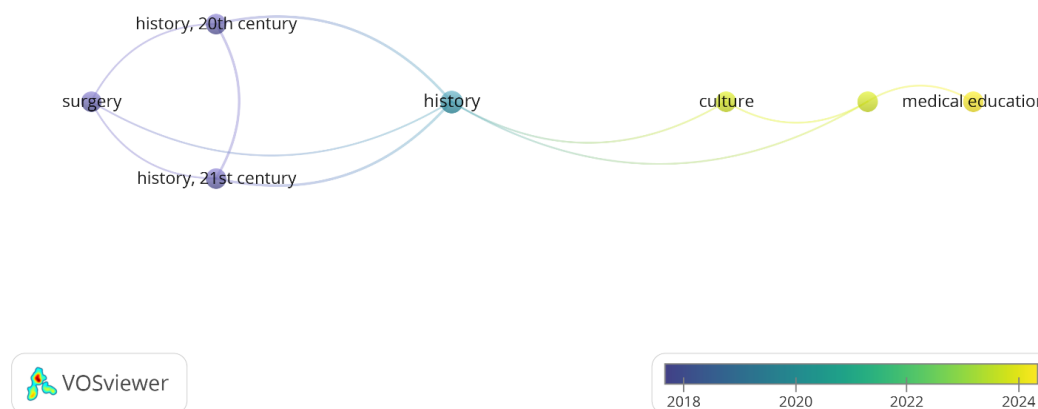

Figure 2. Overlay Visualization
Source: Data Analysis

Figure 2 indicates that earlier research in this field, represented by cooler colors (blue–purple), is strongly concentrated around "history," "history, 20th century," "history, 21st century," and "surgery." This pattern suggests that foundational scholarship primarily focused on historical and clinically oriented analyses, particularly examining the development of surgical practices and medical knowledge across different historical periods. These themes form the core intellectual base of the literature and dominated research outputs in the earlier phase of the timeline. The node "history" appears in a more central and intermediate color, reflecting its continued relevance while also acting as a conceptual bridge between older

and newer research directions. Its connections extend from historically grounded and clinical topics toward more socially oriented themes, indicating that historical perspectives remain essential but are increasingly used to contextualize broader discussions beyond purely medical or technical narratives. This shift reflects a gradual reorientation of research toward interpretive and interdisciplinary approaches. In contrast, warmer-colored nodes such as "culture" and "medical education" represent more recent research trends (around 2022–2024). Their positioning at the periphery of the network but with direct links to historical themes suggests an emerging emphasis on applying historical and cultural insights to contemporary educational contexts.
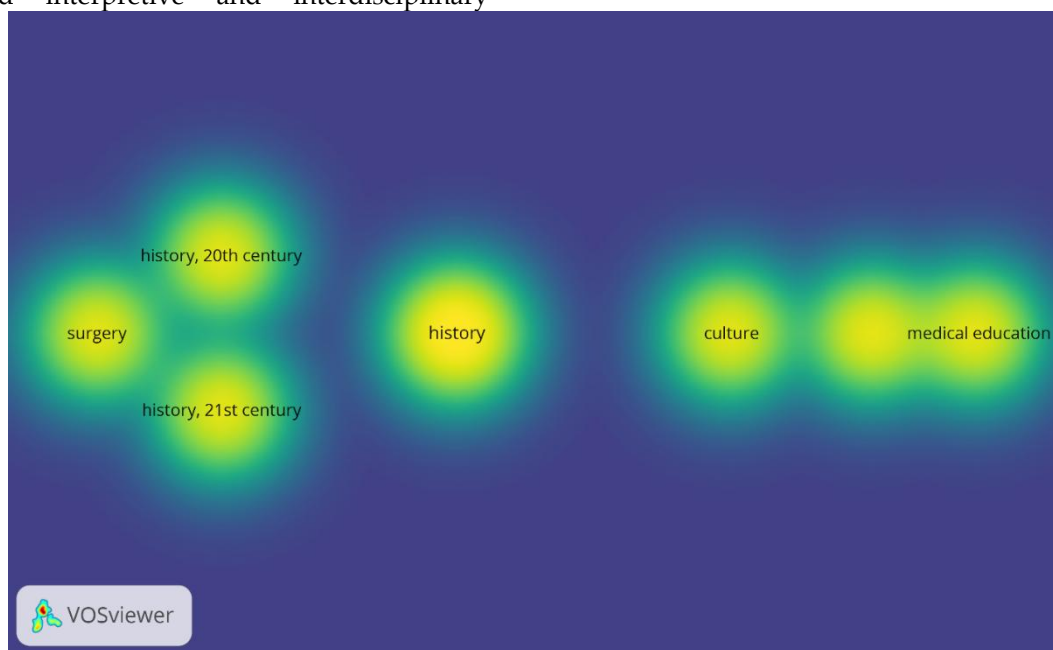

Figure 3. Density Visualization
Source: Data Analysis

Figure 3 highlights "history" as the most intense hotspot, confirming it as the dominant and most frequently discussed theme within the literature. Surrounding this core are closely related high-density areas such as "history, 20th century," "history, 21st century," and "surgery," indicating a strong and sustained scholarly focus on historical analyses of medical practices across time periods. This pattern suggests that research in this domain has been heavily anchored in examining the historical development and transformation of surgical and medical knowledge. In addition to the historical core, notable density clusters appear around "culture" and "medical education," signaling growing attention to socio-cultural and pedagogical dimensions. Although these themes are slightly less dense than the central historical cluster, their prominence indicates a meaningful expansion of the research landscape toward applied and interdisciplinary concerns. This shift reflects a maturation of the field, where historical insights increasingly inform discussions on cultural context and contemporary medical education practices.
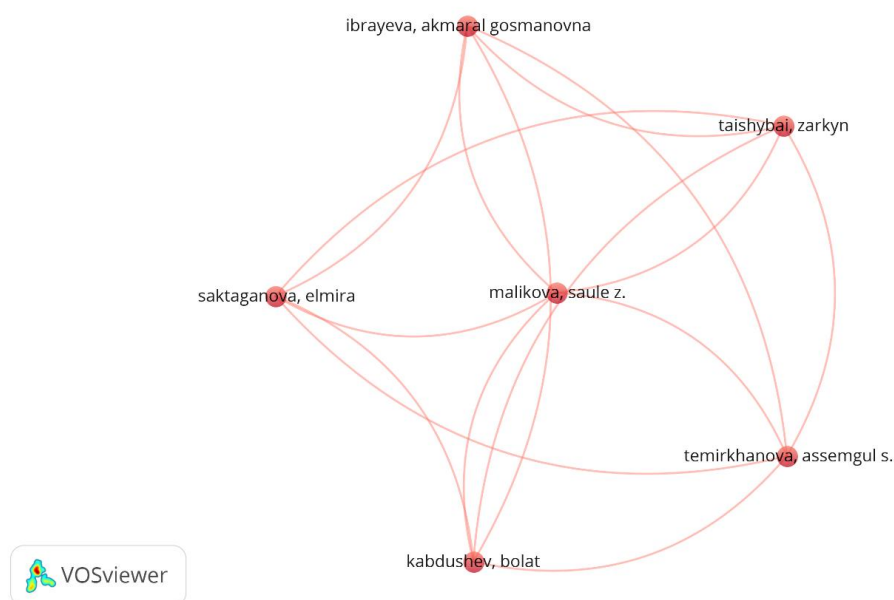
Figure 4. Author Visualization
Source: Data Analysis

Figure 4 reveals a closely connected research group dominated by a small number of recurring authors, indicating a highly collaborative but relatively concentrated scholarly community. Malikova, Saule Z. appears as the central hub, with strong collaborative ties linking nearly all other authors, suggesting a coordinating or leading role in joint publications. Surrounding authors such as Ibrayeva, Akmaral Gosmanovna, Taishybay, Zarkyn, Temirkhanova, Assemgul S., Saktaganova, Elmira, and Kabdushyev, Bolat form a dense collaboration structure with multiple reciprocal links, reflecting stable research partnerships rather than sporadic co-authorship.
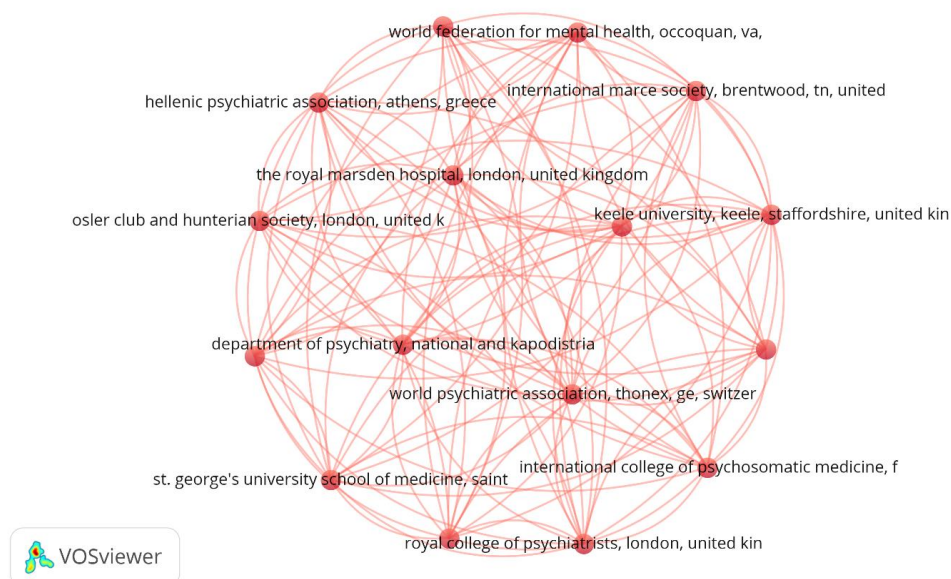

Figure 5. Institution Affiliation

Figure 5 demonstrates a highly interconnected and internationally oriented research structure, dominated by prominent professional associations, universities, and medical institutions. Organizations such as the World Psychiatric Association, World Federation for Mental Health, Royal College of Psychiatrists, Keele University, and major teaching hospitals in the United Kingdom, Greece, Switzerland, and the United States occupy central positions with dense interlinkages, indicating frequent co-authorship and institutional cooperation. The absence of isolated nodes and the near-complete connectivity suggest that research in this domain is driven by established global networks, where knowledge production relies heavily on cross-institutional partnerships rather than localized or fragmented efforts. This pattern reflects a mature research field characterized by strong professional coordination, international knowledge exchange, and institutional legitimacy.
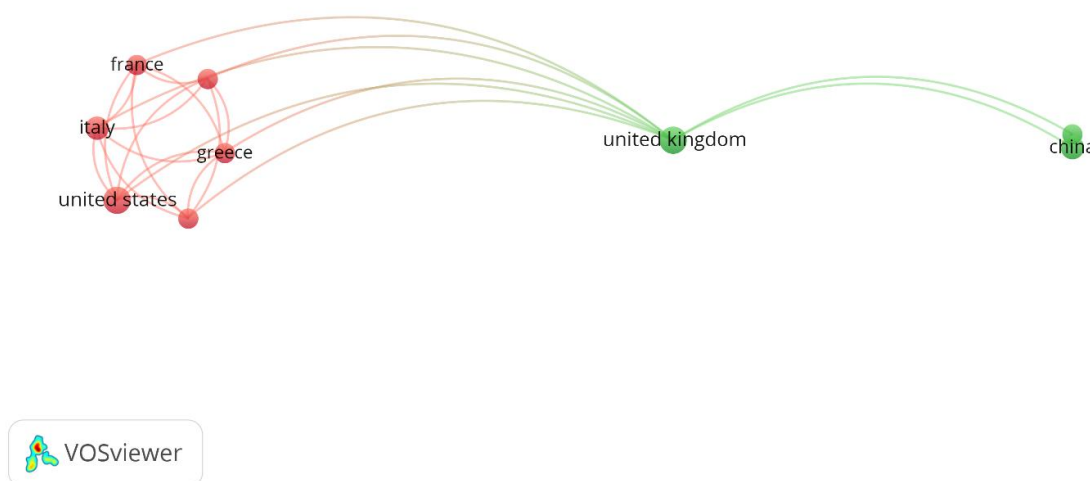

Figure 6. Country Visualization

Figure 6 reveals a core–bridge–periphery structure in international research cooperation. The United States, France, Italy, and Greece form a tightly connected core cluster, indicating strong intra-European and transatlantic collaboration within this research field. The United Kingdom occupies a strategic bridging position, linking the Western research core to China, which appears more peripheral yet directly connected through the UK rather than through multiple independent ties. This pattern suggests that while the field is historically dominated by Western countries, recent globalization efforts (particularly mediated by the United Kingdom) are expanding collaborative pathways toward East Asia, reflecting an emerging but still asymmetrical international research integration.

Table 1. Top Cited Literature

Citations	Authors and year	Title
75	[12]	*Halal clusters*
60	[13]	*Financial inclusion, mobile banking, informal finance and financial exclusion: micro-level evidence from Morocco*
27	[14]	*Contributions of Ibn Zuhr (Avenzoar) to the progress of surgery. A study and translations from his book Al-Taisir*
21	[15]	*History matters: The origins of biophilic design of innovative learning spaces in traditional architecture*
20	[16]	*An exploratory examination of Islamic values in science education: Islamization of science teaching and learning via constructivism*
16	[17]	*Exploring the intersection of Islam and digital technology: A bibliometric analysis*
14	[18]	*Transforming Islamic education through Merdeka curriculum in pesantren*
12	[19]	*The Evolution of Islamic Educational Institutions in North Sumatra Indonesia*
12	[20]	*Towards Islamic Accounting Anthropology: How secular anthropology reshaped accounting in Indonesia*
11	[21]	*Educational Policy Analysis: Examining Pesantren Policies and Their Implications on the Independence of Kyai and Pesantren in the Contemporary Era*

Source: Scopus Database, 2026

Discussion

The bibliometric findings demonstrate that the intellectual structure of the field is strongly anchored in historical scholarship, with "history," "history, 20th century," and "history, 21st century" forming the densest and most central thematic core. This indicates that the field has developed primarily through retrospective and longitudinal analyses, where understanding past developments has been essential for legitimizing knowledge and framing contemporary debates. The strong linkage between history and surgery further suggests that early research was closely tied to clinically grounded narratives, emphasizing the evolution of professional practices, institutions, and medical knowledge. Such a foundation reflects a mature scholarly tradition in which historical inquiry serves not merely as background but as a central methodological and conceptual approach.

Overlay and density visualizations reveal a clear thematic shift over time, moving from historically and clinically oriented topics toward more cultural and educational perspectives. The emergence of "culture" as a bridging concept indicates an increasing recognition of sociocultural contexts in shaping knowledge transmission and professional practice. More recent attention to "medical education" reflects a transition from documenting historical developments to applying historical and cultural insights in contemporary pedagogical settings. This evolution suggests that the field is expanding its scope, integrating interdisciplinary approaches that connect past experiences with present-day educational challenges, curriculum design, and professional training.

The collaboration analyses highlight a research landscape characterized by dense institutional and author-level networks, largely concentrated within established Western institutions and professional associations. At the country level, a core cluster led by the United States and European countries dominates scholarly output, while the United Kingdom plays a critical bridging role linking this core to emerging contributors such as China. This core–periphery structure suggests that while the field benefits from strong international collaboration, knowledge

production remains unevenly distributed. Nevertheless, the presence of bridging countries and institutions indicates growing globalization and potential for broader inclusion, pointing to future opportunities for more diversified geographic participation and cross-cultural research perspectives.

4. CONCLUSION

This bibliometric review demonstrates that the field has evolved from a historically and clinically grounded research tradition toward a more interdisciplinary and application-oriented domain. Early scholarship was dominated by historical analyses that established the intellectual foundation of the field, particularly through examinations of medical and professional developments across the 20th and 21st centuries. Over time, the thematic focus has expanded to incorporate cultural perspectives and contemporary educational concerns, reflecting a shift toward understanding how historical knowledge informs present-day practices and pedagogical innovation. Collaboration patterns further reveal a mature but unevenly globalized research landscape, where strong Western networks coexist with emerging international linkages.

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