



RECONSTRUCTION OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION PSYCHOLOGY IN UNDERSTANDING THE LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Tammam Sholahudin¹, Mahasri Shobahiya²

^{1,2} Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta

e-mail: o100250059@student.ums.ac.id

Diterima: 25/05/2026; Direvisi: 02/06/2026; Diterbitkan: 14/06/2026

ABSTRACT

This study examines the reconstruction of Islamic educational psychology in understanding the learning and development of children with special needs. The background of this research lies in the dominance of Western psychological paradigms, particularly the medical model of disability, which often overlooks spiritual and holistic dimensions. The objective of this study is to identify research trends, thematic structures, and opportunities for integrating Islamic psychological concepts into inclusive education. Methodologically, this study employs a quantitative bibliometric approach using data from academic publications analyzed through VOSviewer, including network, overlay, and density visualizations. The results indicate that Islamic education remains the dominant foundational theme, while emerging topics such as inclusive education, parental involvement, self-efficacy, and learning disabilities reflect a shift toward more practical and psychological approaches. However, a gap persists between theoretical Islamic concepts and their implementation in inclusive practices. In conclusion, the field is evolving as an emerging domain but lacks conceptual integration. The study implies the need for developing applied models, strengthening international collaboration, and integrating Islamic values with modern educational and technological approaches.

Keywords: Islamic education, inclusive education, children with special needs, educational psychology, bibliometric analysis

INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that around 1.3 billion people, or 16% of the global population, live with significant forms of disability and continue to experience inequities that contribute to higher mortality, morbidity, and functional limitations compared to the general population (World Health Organization, 2022). Among them are nearly 240 million children with disabilities worldwide, representing approximately one in ten children and encompassing a wide range of conditions, including genetic disorders, developmental delays, learning difficulties, sensory impairments, and psychosocial challenges (United Nations Children's Fund, 2021b). These children face substantial multidimensional disadvantages, including a higher risk of never attending school (49%), lower literacy and numeracy achievement (42%), reduced access to early stimulation (24%), increased vulnerability to wasting (25%) and stunting (34%), as well as psychosocial challenges such as unhappiness (51%) and discrimination (41%), all of which significantly hinder their educational participation and overall development (United Nations Children's Fund, 2021a).

The quantitative evidence above indicates that educational and parenting systems worldwide, including Special Schools (SLB) and inclusive education settings, have not yet fully achieved equitable learning environments for children with disabilities. Ideally, these



institutions should function as safe and supportive spaces that enable every child to reach their full potential. In this regard, educational psychology plays a pivotal role by providing theoretical foundations for understanding learning processes, cognitive and affective development, and the design of pedagogical interventions tailored to individual needs. For children with special needs, psychological insights are especially important in developing effective Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) that address specific functional barriers and learning challenges (Cramerotti & Ianes, 2016; Mueller et al., 2019; Rakap, 2024).

However, the field of special education psychology continues to face a significant epistemological challenge due to its long-standing reliance on Western psychological paradigms (Kalyanpur, 1999). Much of the prevailing theory and assessment instruments have been developed based on WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic) populations, raising concerns about their cultural applicability in non-Western contexts, including Muslim-majority societies (English & Szabó, 2026; Muthukrishna et al., 2020; White & Muthukrishna, 2026). Consequently, the uncritical adoption of these frameworks may perpetuate cultural biases and limit the effectiveness of psychological interventions for diverse populations (Shou et al., 2022).

The main limitation of Western psychology in the context of special education is its over-reliance on the medical model of disability. This model tends to view children with special needs through the lens of pathology, where disability is constructed as a deficit, biological damage, or deviation from the standard of "normality" that must be immediately rehabilitated or "corrected" (Kalyanpur, 1999). In addition, Western approaches are often trapped in a materialistic and secular paradigm that reduces human existence only to the bio-psycho-social dimension, completely ignoring the spiritual dimension (Skinner, 2019). For families and educators in Muslim society, this secularistic approach often clashes with their fundamental belief system, in which the understanding of man is inseparable from his relationship with the Creator (Rothman et al., 2024). (Shaikh, 2026)

Although the foundation of Islamic educational psychology offers a very humanistic and dignified framework for people with disabilities, the reality is that concepts such as *fitrah* and *nafs* have not been widely explored and applied systematically in the context of special and inclusive education praxis (Farhan & Shobahiya, 2024). There is a striking *research gap* between the theoretical discourse of Islamic psychology and its pedagogical implementation in SLB classrooms and inclusive madrasas (Inayati et al., 2025; Machali & Suhendro, 2022). A search of data on the Scopus academic database confirms this phenomenon. There are 306 documents that record the intersection between Islamic education, psychology, and the education of children with special needs.

Responding to the reductionism of Western psychology, Islam actually has a very rich and comprehensive conceptual treasury of human psychology. Islamic educational psychology views the individual holistically through the integration of physical, intellectual, and spiritual dimensions (Khofifah et al., 2025; Rothman & Coyle, 2018). There are two main ontological conceptions in Islamic psychology that are very relevant for reconstructing the view of children with special needs, namely the concept of *fitrah* and the concept of *nafs*. *Fitrah* refers to the divine blueprint, which is the natural and holy tendency that exists in every human being from birth to recognize God, love goodness, and seek the truth (Samsuri, 2020). In the eyes of Islam, the physical, cognitive, and emotional limitations experienced by ABK do not damage or distort their nature at all (Samsuri, 2020). On the other hand, the concept of *nafs* or soul provides a framework for understanding the internal dynamics of human beings, which fluctuate between



basic impulses (*nafs al-ammara*), moral awareness (*nafs al-lawwama*), to the achievement of inner peace (*nafs al-mutma'inna*). (Ghani, Hafiz & Ahmad, 2024; Hanna-E-kalbi & Basharat, 2020; Reda, 2019)

Considering the urgency of fulfilling the educational rights of children with disabilities globally and the limitations of the hegemony of Western psychology, paradigm reconstruction is a necessity. Therefore, this study aims to: (1) identify the scientific structure and research landscape of Islamic educational psychology related to the learning and development of Children with Special Needs (ABK) through bibliometric analysis; (2) analyze publication trends, collaboration patterns, influential themes, and thematic developments as reflected in bibliometric visualizations; and (3) identify research gaps and opportunities for reconstructing Islamic educational psychology as an alternative paradigm for special and inclusive education, while formulating future theoretical and practical directions for the field.

METHOD

The study uses bibliometric design to map and analyze the development of scientific publications related to Islamic psychology and education in the context of children with special needs (Sholahudin et al., 2025). Bibliometric analysis is a quantitative method used to evaluate the scientific literature through publication patterns, citation structures, theme development, and intellectual networks within a field (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Donthu et al., 2021a; Zupic & Čater, 2015). This method allows the identification of research trends, influential authors, as well as key themes that develop (Apriantoro et al., 2022).

First Stage

In the initial stage, a literature study is conducted to ensure the relevance of the topic and develop the right search strategy. This process includes the identification of the main concepts of the research, namely Islamic psychology, Islamic education, and children with special needs, as well as learning and developmental aspects as the focus of the analysis.

Second stage

Furthermore, data collection was carried out through the Scopus database using Boolean-based search techniques. The search strings used are as follows: TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Islamic psychology" OR "Islamic education") AND ("special education" OR "children with special needs") AND ("learning" OR "development").

To maintain the quality and consistency of the data, this study limited the dataset to journal *articles* because it has gone through a peer-review process so that it has a more reliable validity and metadata structure for bibliometric analysis. In addition, only English-language publications are used to ensure uniformity of terms and minimize analysis bias, considering that English is the main language in international scientific publications. The research time span is set at 2009–2025, with 2009 as the beginning of the availability of relevant data in the database, and 2025 as the deadline to avoid incomplete data in the current year (2026) that has the potential to cause bias. Based on these criteria, a total of 306 documents were obtained that were considered representative for further analysis. Before the analysis is carried out, all of the raw data is exported from the Scopus database and *through a data cleaning* process using Microsoft Excel. This data cleaning process is carried out systematically to improve the quality of the dataset, including: (1) the removal of duplicate documents that have the potential to arise due to double indexation; (2) standardization of author name inconsistencies, for example, uniting different spelling variations or initials in the database so that they represent the same author entity; and (3) correcting inconsistencies in the name of institutions or affiliates so that

data fragmentation does not occur in network analysis. Through this stage, the dataset used becomes cleaner, consistent, and reliable, so that the results of the *science mapping* analysis produced have a higher level of accuracy and trust.

Final Stage

The data that has been obtained is then analyzed by Scopus and uses the VOSviewer software to visualize and explore the intellectual structure in the field of study. The analysis process is carried out through several approaches, namely *co-occurrence analysis* to identify the relationship between keywords, *co-authorship analysis* to see the pattern of collaboration between authors or countries, and *bibliographic coupling* and *co-citation* to map the relationship between documents. The results of the analysis were visualized in the form of *network visualization*, *density visualization*, and *overlay visualization* which were used to identify research clusters, development trends, and dominant themes. In addition, this study also utilizes R-based software, namely Biblioshiny, to support advanced bibliometric analysis, as well as Microsoft Excel in the process of processing and presenting data systematically.

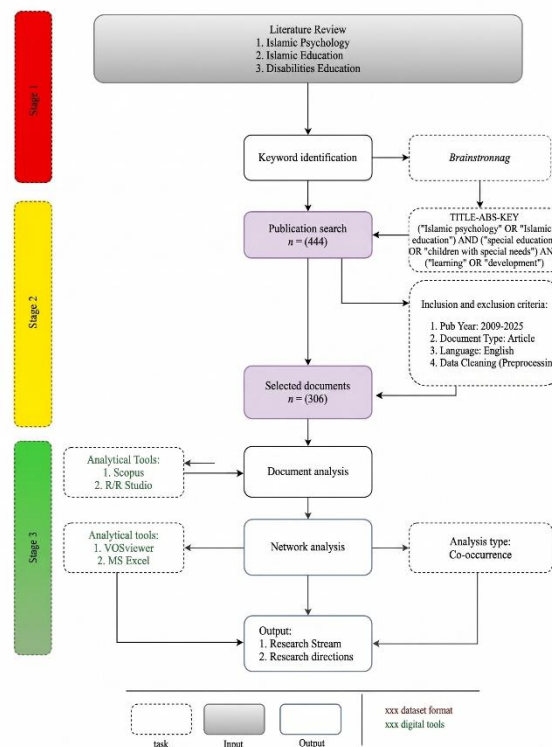


Figure 1. Research Flow

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Document Analysis

The bibliometric data in Table 2 shows that research on Islamic psychology and education in the context of children with special needs was analyzed in the period from 2009 to 2025, which indicates that this study began to develop since 2009 and continues to increase until the latest period for which the data is complete. During this period, there were 306 documents published in 176 different sources, such as scientific journals. This means that research on this topic does not only appear in one or two journals, but is widely spread in many journals, thus showing that the field of study is quite broad and interdisciplinary.

Table 2. Main Information About Data

Description	Results
Timespan	2009:2025
Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	176
Documents	306
Annual Growth Rate %	30,87
Document Average Age	3,41
Average citations per doc	5,114
References	16790
DOCUMENT CONTENTS	
Keywords Plus (ID)	184
Author's Keywords (DE)	1095
AUTHORS	
Authors	1017
Authors of single-authored docs	36
AUTHORS COLLABORATION	
Single-authored docs	36
Co-Authors by Doc	3,57
International co-authorships %	17,97
DOCUMENT TYPES	
article	306

In terms of development, this field of research has an annual growth rate of 30.87%, which shows a fairly rapid increase from year to year. The average document age of 3.41 years also shows that most of the research is still relatively new, so this topic can be said to be a growing field of study. Meanwhile, the average citation of 5.114 per document shows that articles in this field are starting to get attention from other researchers, although the level of influence is still in the medium category.

In terms of document content, there are 1,095 *author's keywords* and 184 additional keywords (*keywords plus*). Author's keywords are terms that are directly chosen by the researcher to describe the main focus of their research, thus indicating the core topics studied. Meanwhile, additional keywords are keywords that are automatically generated by the system based on the content of the article, so that they can help uncover other themes that may not be directly mentioned by the author. This large number of keywords shows that the research topic has a wide and diverse scope.

In terms of authorship, there were 1,017 authors involved in the publication. However, only 36 papers were written by a single author, so it can be concluded that most of the research was conducted collaboratively. This is reinforced by an average of 3.57 authors per document, which indicates that each study generally involves three to four researchers. In addition, the international collaboration rate of 17.97% indicates that some studies have involved cooperation between countries, although not yet very dominant.

In terms of document content, there are 1,095 *author's keywords* and 184 additional keywords (*keywords plus*). Author's keywords are terms that are directly chosen by the researcher to describe the main focus of their research, thus indicating the core topics studied. Meanwhile, additional keywords are keywords that are automatically generated by the system based on the content of the article, so that they can help uncover other themes that may not be directly mentioned by the author. This large number of keywords shows that the research topic has a wide and diverse scope.

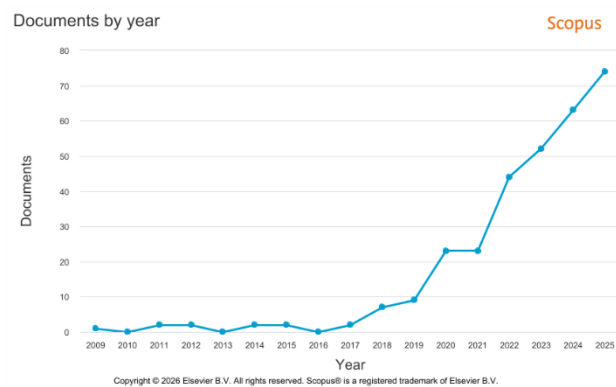


Figure 2. Document by Year

The graph of *documents by year* shows the publication trend from 2009 to 2025 demonstrates the growing academic interest in Islamic psychology and education for children with special needs. During the period 2009–2017, the number of publications remained low and fluctuating, indicating that this topic was still in its formative stage and had not yet attracted substantial scholarly attention. However, beginning around 2017, publication output increased steadily and experienced a marked acceleration after 2020. This growth reflects the maturation of research in special and inclusive education, where studies have increasingly focused on practical and complex educational challenges rather than exploratory inquiries (Liu & Potmesil, 2025). The rising trend has also been driven by global commitments to inclusive education and equal learning opportunities for children with special needs, which have encouraged researchers to explore the field from diverse perspectives, including psychological and religious approaches (Affendi, 2025).

Furthermore, advancements in educational technology, such as assistive technologies, e-learning platforms, and digital learning tools, have expanded educational accessibility and stimulated further scholarly interest in the area (Kathy Cheng et al., 2025; Syifaa et al., 2025). Additional contributing factors include the expansion of scientific journals, improved access to research databases, and stronger international research collaborations, all of which have facilitated knowledge production in special education (İNCİ & KÖSE, 2024). Consequently, the consistent rise in publications between 2020 and 2025, culminating in the highest output in 2025, indicates that Islamic psychology and education in the context of children with special needs has emerged as a rapidly developing and increasingly significant field of study.

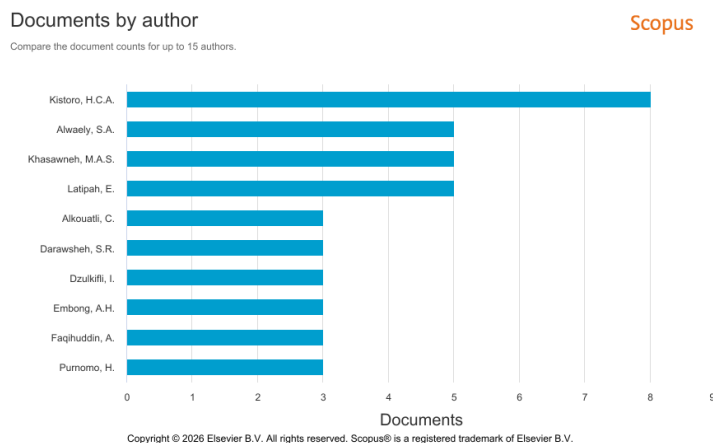


Figure 3. Document by Author

Based on the frequency of publications, the productivity of authors can be classified into three main stratifications. First, the core group (*core/primary author*) represented by Kistoro, H.C.A. with 8 documents. This quantitative dominance places Kistoro (Kistoro et al., n.d.) as a central figure or *principal investigator* who is most likely to be the driving force or catalyst in this research cluster. Second, the moderate *contributors group* is filled by Alwaely, S.A. (Kistoro et al., n.d.), Khasawneh, M.A.S. (Alkhalwaldeh et al., 2023), and Latipah, E (Latipah et al., 2020). The three recorded identical frequencies, namely 5 documents. Third, a group of *supporting authors* consisting of six researchers, namely: Alkoutli, C. (Alkoutli & Vadeboncoeur, 2018), Darawsheh, S.R. (Darawsheh et al., 2023), Dzulkipli, I. (Darawsheh et al., 2023), Embong, A.H. (Abdullah et al., 2024), Faqihuddin, A. (Suresman et al., 2025), and Purnomo, H. (Purnomo et al., 2022), with each producing 3 documents.

The similarity in the number of publications in the middle and supporting stratifications provides a strong indication of an intensive pattern of collaboration (*co-authorship*). Authors with an identical number of papers are more likely to be members of the same research group or often publish papers together. Overall, this data structure shows a research model centered on one dominant figure supported by a network of other researchers around him.

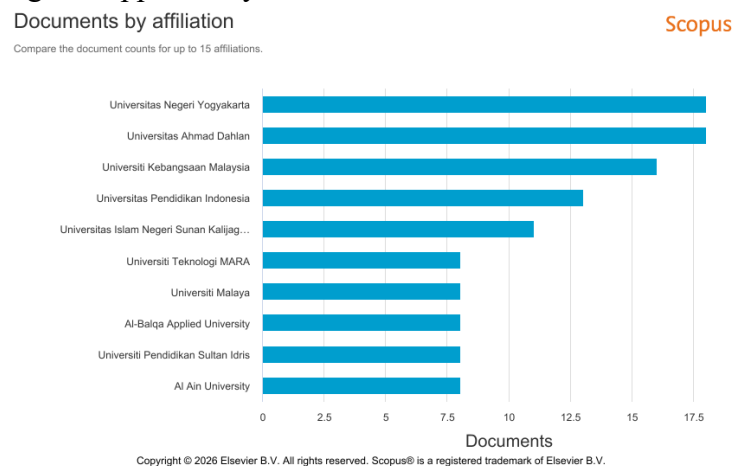


Figure 4. Document by Affiliation

The institutional distribution of publications (Figure 4) reveals that research on Islamic psychology and education for children with special needs is primarily driven by universities in Indonesia and Malaysia, with Yogyakarta State University and Ahmad Dahlan University leading the field (18 documents each), followed by Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (16 documents) and several other institutions from Southeast Asia and the Middle East. This pattern indicates that knowledge production in this area is centered in developing countries rather than Western nations, reflecting the strong relevance of Islamic education, socio-religious studies, and inclusive education within these regions. Previous bibliometric studies have shown that while developed countries continue to play a major role in special and inclusive education research, contributions from developing countries are increasing significantly, highlighting opportunities for broader global participation in the field. The prominence of Indonesian and Malaysian institutions is closely linked to their large Muslim populations and expanding Islamic educational systems, which make the integration of psychology, Islamic values, and special needs education a particularly important area of inquiry. Moreover, the relatively balanced distribution of publications across numerous universities suggests that this remains a distributed research field rather than one dominated by a small number of elite institutions. The

absence of a single institution with a substantially larger publication output, combined with the relatively modest maximum of 18 documents per institution, indicates that the field is still in an emerging and developing stage. This observation is consistent with studies showing that special education research continues to expand through diverse themes such as inclusion, educational technology, and student well-being, while remaining dispersed across multiple institutions and research networks.

In addition, the high contribution of various universities indicates that research in this field is distributed research field, not concentrated in one elite institution alone. Studies in journals explain that special education research is produced by researchers from different countries and institutions, as well as spread across many journals, which indicates that this field has a wide academic network but is not always strongly connected between research groups. This explains why many universities emerge with relatively similar contributions (none of which are very dominant).

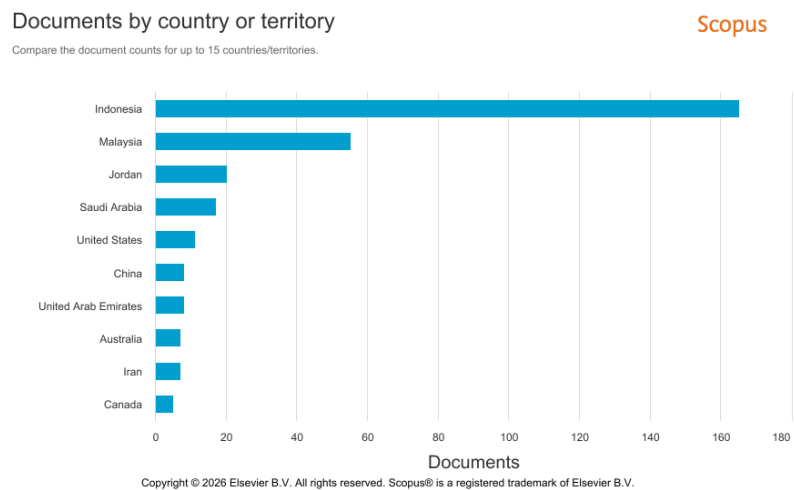


Figure 5. Document by Country or Territory

The documents-by-country analysis provides a broader perspective than affiliation analysis by showing the geopolitical distribution of scientific production. The data indicate that Indonesia dominates the field with 165 publications, followed by Malaysia (55 documents) and several Middle Eastern countries such as Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. This dominance reflects the strong relevance of integrating Islamic education, psychology, and special needs education within countries that have large Muslim populations and extensive Islamic educational systems. Previous studies suggest that the growth of inclusive education research is closely related to local educational needs and national policies promoting educational equity (Cretu & Morandau, 2020; Schouteden et al., 2016). The prominence of Indonesia and Malaysia also highlights the increasing contribution of Global South countries to knowledge production, demonstrating that research development is becoming more context-driven rather than solely centered on Western academic traditions (Dignath et al., 2022). Although Western countries contribute fewer publications in this dataset, they continue to play an important role in providing theoretical and methodological foundations for inclusive education research worldwide (Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2020; Jurado-delos-santos et al., 2021). Furthermore, the documents-by-source indicator examines publication distribution across journals and publishers, helping identify the main channels through which knowledge in this field is disseminated (Passas, 2024).

Documents per year by source

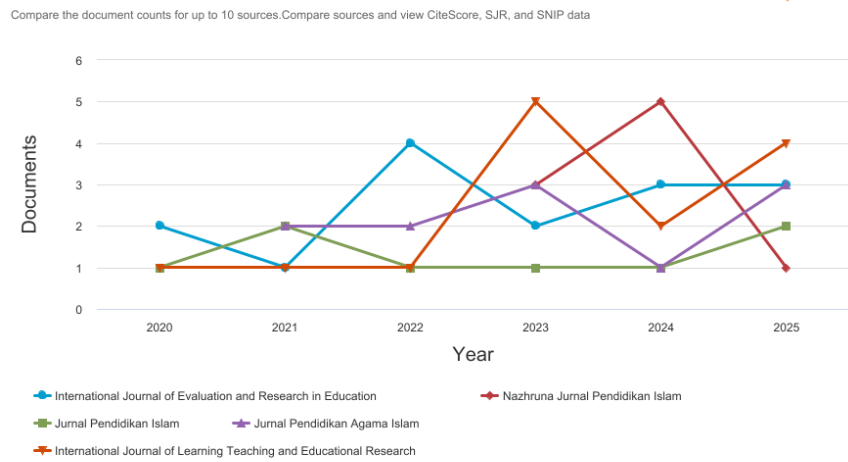


Figure 6. Document by per year Source

The documents-by-source analysis (Figure 6) shows that publications are distributed across a variety of journals, with the *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education* (15 documents) and the *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research* (14 documents) leading the field, followed by several Islamic education journals such as the *Journal of Islamic Religious Education* (11 documents), *Nazhruna Journal of Islamic Education* (9 documents), and the *Journal of Islamic Education* (8 documents). This pattern indicates that research on Islamic psychology and education for children with special needs is disseminated through both international education journals and specialized Islamic education journals. Such distribution reflects an emerging and relatively unconsolidated field, where knowledge production is spread across multiple publication outlets rather than concentrated in a small number of dominant journals (Öztürk et al., 2024). The increasing number of publications in international journals since 2020 is consistent with the broader global growth of research on education and inclusive education (Donthu et al., 2021b). Meanwhile, the continued presence of Islamic education journals demonstrates the sustained importance of religious and cultural perspectives within this area of study. The absence of a single overwhelmingly dominant journal further suggests that the field remains in a developmental stage and has not yet established a clear mainstream publication center.

Documents by funding sponsor

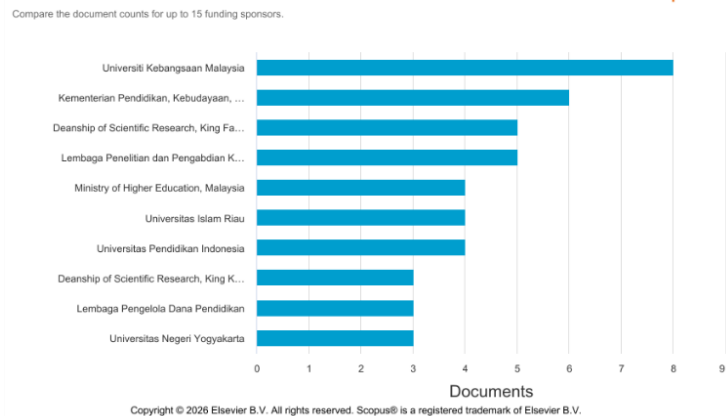


Figure 7. Document by Funding Sponsor

The sponsorship analysis (Figure 7) reveals that research funding in this field is dominated by higher education institutions rather than government agencies. Of the 45 funded publications identified, approximately 71% (32 documents) were supported by universities and their internal units, while 29% (13 documents) received funding from government institutions such as the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, and LPDP. This pattern is consistent with previous findings on country and affiliation distributions, where Indonesia and Malaysia emerged as the leading contributors to research output. The predominance of university-based funding suggests that knowledge production in Islamic psychology and education for children with special needs is largely academically driven rather than state-driven. Universities function not only as centers of research production but also as key financial supporters of scholarly activities. This finding indicates a relatively independent research ecosystem in Southeast Asia, particularly in Indonesia and Malaysia, where institutions actively sustain research through internal funding schemes. Although government agencies continue to play an important role by providing policy support and research legitimacy, their contribution appears complementary rather than dominant. Overall, these results reinforce the view that research development in this field is primarily shaped by institutional capacity and local educational needs rather than by direct government intervention.

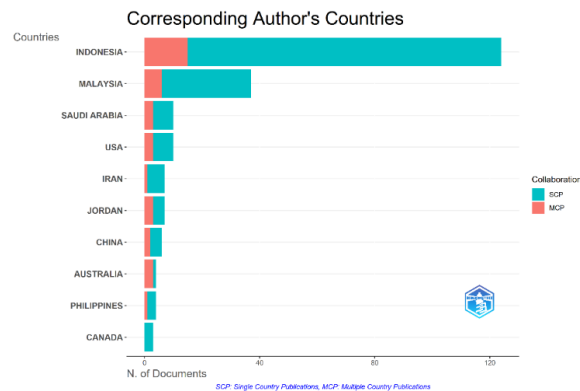


Figure 8. Corresponding Author's Countries

The SCP (Single Country Publications) and MCP (Multiple Country Publications) analysis provides insight into the level of international research collaboration. The data (Figure 8) show that Indonesia dominates publication output with 124 articles, but most are SCPs (109 articles), while only 15 involve international collaboration, resulting in a relatively low MCP rate of 12.09%. This indicates that Indonesia possesses strong domestic research capacity and institutional independence, but its integration into global research networks remains limited. In contrast, Malaysia demonstrates a more balanced pattern, with 31 SCPs and 6 MCPs out of 37 publications, reflecting a higher level of international collaboration (16.21%). Countries such as Saudi Arabia, the United States, China, Jordan, and especially Australia exhibit even stronger collaborative tendencies, with a larger proportion of MCP publications, suggesting greater integration into global scientific networks. These findings complement previous analyses of country, affiliation, and funding patterns, which showed that Southeast Asian countries, particularly Indonesia, rely heavily on domestic institutions and internal funding to sustain research activities. While this has contributed to strong publication productivity, the relatively low level of international collaboration suggests opportunities to enhance the global visibility, impact, and influence of research on Islamic psychology and education for children with special needs.

Table 3. Most Globally Cited Documents

No	Title	TC	TC/Year
1	How Technology Can Change Educational Research? Definition, Factors for Improving Quality of Education and Computational Bibliometric Analysis	88	29,3
2	Culturally Relevant Leadership: Advancing Critical Consciousness in American Muslim Students	47	5,9
3	Pedagogies in becoming muslim: Contemporary insights from islamic traditions on teaching, learning, and developing	46	5,1
4	Inclusive education in Malaysia: Policy and practice	45	3,5
5	The dynamics of Islamic education policies in Indonesia	36	9

The analysis of the most globally cited documents indicates that technological transformation has become a dominant theme in contemporary educational research. The article *How Technology Can Change Educational Research?* received the highest number of citations (88), highlighting the growing shift toward technology-driven and data-based educational approaches. Likewise, highly cited studies on academic stress during the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrate how global crises have reshaped learning systems and generated new educational challenges. Alongside these trends, Islamic education remains a significant area of scholarly attention. Influential studies on culturally relevant leadership, Islamic political mobilization, and Islamic education policies illustrate the importance of Islam not only as an educational framework but also as a social and political force. Furthermore, highly cited works on Muslim pedagogies, character education, inclusive education, and institutional reform emphasize the increasing focus on values, inclusivity, and character development within educational systems. Collectively, these findings suggest that contemporary education is evolving toward an integrative model that combines technological innovation, value-based learning, inclusivity, and institutional transformation in response to global challenges.

Table 4. Most Locally Cited Documents

No	Title	LC	GC
1	The Effects of Positive Parenting toward Intolerance in Pre-School Children	8	11
2	Implementation Of Religious Learning for Students with Special Education Needs Through Online Applications During The Covid-19 Pandemic	4	5
3	Teacher communication in teaching al-Quran to special needs pupils with hearing disabilities	4	6
4	Exploring Online Preschool Programs in children's academic preparation for elementary school: a case study in Indonesia	3	8
5	The Role of The Counseling Teacher In Developing The Social Dimensions of Children With Special Needs	2	7

The Most Locally Cited Documents analysis reveals that this research cluster is primarily centered on early childhood education, inclusive education, and Islamic educational practices for children with special needs. The most influential local reference is *The Effects of Positive Parenting toward Intolerance in Pre-School Children* (LC = 8; GC = 11), highlighting the importance of parenting in shaping children's social attitudes. Other highly cited local studies focus on religious learning for students with special educational needs and communication strategies in teaching the Qur'an to children with hearing impairments, indicating strong scholarly attention to inclusive Islamic education. In addition, studies on educational leadership, inclusive curriculum development, and technology-assisted learning demonstrate an emerging effort to integrate managerial, pedagogical, and technological

dimensions in supporting inclusive education. The presence of research linking Islamic values with contemporary challenges, such as preventing gadget addiction among children, further suggests that this field seeks to combine religious perspectives with practical educational solutions.

Analisa Co-Occurrences

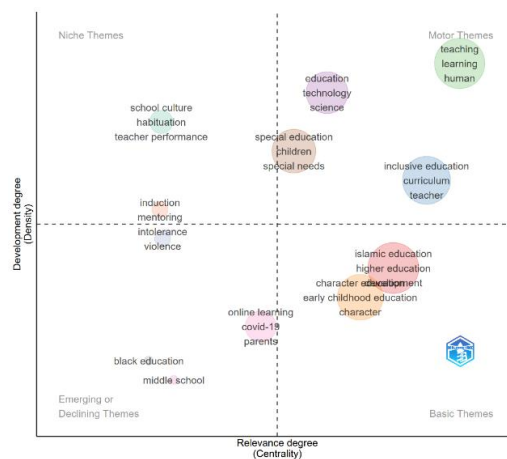


Figure 9. Thematic Map

The thematic map (Figure 9) indicates that the research landscape is primarily driven by the motor themes of *teaching–learning–human* and *education–technology–science*, which exhibit high levels of both relevance and development. This suggests that contemporary educational research is strongly focused on learning processes, human development, and technological innovation. In contrast, themes such as *inclusive education–curriculum–teacher*, *special education–children–special needs*, and *Islamic education–higher education* are positioned within the basic themes quadrant, indicating that they are widely connected to other topics but remain insufficiently developed conceptually. Meanwhile, *school culture–habituation–teacher performance* appears as a niche theme, reflecting a specialized but less interconnected area of study. Themes related to *online learning–COVID-19–parents* and *intolerance–violence* fall within the emerging or declining quadrant, suggesting temporary or unstable research interest. Overall, the thematic structure highlights a gap between mainstream educational research and studies on Islamic education and special needs education, revealing opportunities for greater integration so that these topics can evolve into more influential and well-developed areas of scholarship.

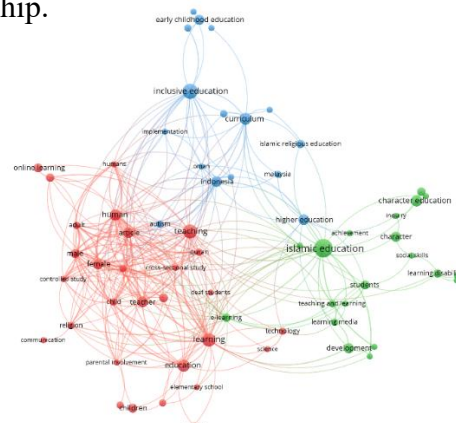


Figure 10. Network Visualization

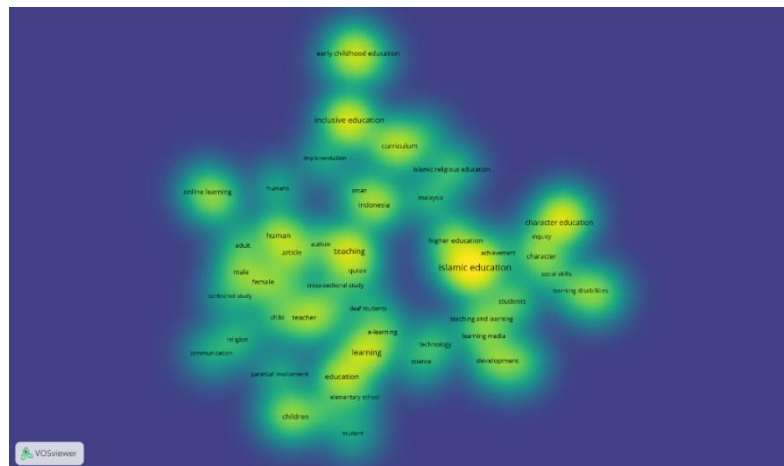


Figure 12. Density Visualization

The density visualization indicates that the highest-density areas are concentrated around keywords such as *Islamic education*, *teaching*, *learning*, and *education*, suggesting that these themes represent mature and well-established domains with extensive scholarly attention and strong interconnections. Medium-density themes, including *human*, *students*, *development*, *curriculum*, and *inclusive education*, also demonstrate substantial research activity, although they remain open to further conceptual integration and development. In contrast, low-density areas such as *learning disabilities*, *parental involvement*, *early childhood education*, *character education*, *social skills*, *pesantren*, and *deaf students* indicate topics that have received relatively limited attention within the research network. This pattern highlights an imbalance between highly developed core themes and less explored peripheral topics. Consequently, significant opportunities remain for future studies, particularly those integrating Islamic educational psychology with contemporary issues related to children with special needs, family involvement, and student developmental dynamics.

Table 5. Distribution of Keyword

Cluster	Keyword	Occurrence
1 Islamic Education	Islamic Education	24
	Character Education	9
	Development	7
	Pesantren	5
	Teaching	14
2 Learning Process	Learning	13
	Education	12
	Human	9
3 Inclusive Education	Inclusive Education	16
	Curriculum	10
	Early Childhood Education	7
	Autism	4

The keyword distribution analysis reveals three major thematic clusters that represent distinct but interconnected areas of research. The first cluster is centered on *Islamic Education*, the most frequently occurring keyword, and is closely associated with themes such as *Character Education*, *Development*, and *Islamic Boarding School*. This cluster highlights the importance of values, character formation, and Islamic educational institutions as foundational elements of



the field. The second cluster, consisting of *Teaching, Learning, Education, and Human*, emphasizes pedagogical processes and educational practices, with *Teaching* serving as a key connecting theme across the network. The third cluster focuses on *Inclusive Education, Curriculum, Early Childhood Education, and Autism*, reflecting growing scholarly attention to inclusion and the educational needs of children with disabilities.

Based on the findings, this study confirms that the reconstruction of Islamic educational psychology for understanding the learning and development of children with special needs is currently in a promising yet still developing phase. Islamic education remains the dominant thematic foundation, indicating that Islamic values continue to serve as the primary framework for scholarly discourse. At the same time, strong connections among themes related to teaching, learning, and inclusive education demonstrate a growing effort to address the needs of children with disabilities within educational settings. The increasing prominence of topics such as parental involvement, self-efficacy, character education, autism, and deaf students further suggests a gradual shift from broad normative discussions toward more practical and psychological approaches. This trend reflects the emergence of an alternative paradigm that seeks to move beyond the dominance of Western medical models of disability by incorporating holistic Islamic concepts, including *fitrah* and *nafs*, into educational practice.

Despite this progress, the field continues to face significant challenges. Thematic and density analyses reveal that Islamic educational psychology remains insufficiently integrated with mainstream global research, which is increasingly driven by technological innovation and data-based approaches. Moreover, important topics such as learning disabilities, social skills, parental involvement, autism, and deaf education remain underexplored, highlighting substantial opportunities for future research. To strengthen the field, scholars should expand international collaboration, develop more contextual psychological models, and translate theoretical concepts into practical interventions, such as *fitrah*-based Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) supported by developmental psychology and assistive technologies. Greater engagement with international special education and inclusive education journals is also needed to enhance global visibility. Nevertheless, the findings should be interpreted with caution, as this study relies on bibliometric data from selected databases and emphasizes quantitative trends rather than in-depth qualitative analysis.

CONCLUSION

Based on the bibliometric analysis of 306 Scopus-indexed documents published between 2009 and 2025, this study demonstrates that Islamic educational psychology in the context of children with special needs is an emerging research field with a strong annual growth rate of 30.87%. Knowledge production is largely concentrated in Indonesia and Malaysia, while the dominant thematic clusters consist of *Islamic Education, Teaching and Learning, and Inclusive Education*. These findings indicate that Islamic education remains the primary foundation of discourse, although its psychological application to special needs education is still developing.

The analysis also reveals a gradual shift in research focus from broad normative discussions toward more specific psychological and educational concerns. Early themes such as religion, Islamic education, and e-learning have evolved into topics related to parental involvement, self-efficacy, Islamic religious education, and *pesantren*. However, international collaboration remains relatively limited, particularly in Indonesia, suggesting that stronger



global research networks are needed to increase the visibility and impact of scholarship in this field.

Furthermore, the study identifies significant opportunities for future research. Themes such as learning disabilities, social skills, parental involvement, autism, and deaf education remain underexplored, while the integration of Islamic educational psychology with mainstream educational and technological research is still limited. Therefore, future studies should focus on developing practical models based on Islamic psychological concepts such as *fitrah* and *nafs*, including *fitrah*-based Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), while integrating developmental psychology and assistive technologies to support more holistic and inclusive educational practices for children with special needs.

REFERENCES

- Abdullah, A., Embong, A. H., Azmi, R., Mokhtar, W. K. A. W., Alias, N. D. F., Chua, N. A., Ismail, F. A., Latif, A. M. N. H., Muhamad, F. H., & Hamid, A. D. S. (2024). Integration of Tahfiz and academic education. *Global Journal Al-Thaqafah*, 20(Special Issue), 60–72. <https://doi.org/10.7187/GJATSI122024-5>
- Affendi, S. (2025). Global research trends in special education: A bibliometric analysis. *International Journal of Modern Education*, 7, 204–221. <https://doi.org/10.35631/IJMOE.726014>
- Alkhalaf, M. A., Alwaely, S. A., Al Sabi, Y. N., Abueita, S. D., Alomari, N., Al Taqatqa, F. A. S., Khasawneh, M. A. S., Darawsheh, S. R., & Al-Shaar, A. S. (2023). Parents' role in gifted students' educational issues and development. *Information Sciences Letters*, 12(3), 1215–1221. <https://doi.org/10.18576/isl/120312>
- Alkouatli, C., & Vadeboncoeur, J. A. (2018). Potential reproduction and renewal in a weekend mosque school in Canada: Educators' perspectives of learning and development. *Learning, Culture and Social Interaction*, 19, 29–39. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lcsi.2018.04.012>
- Apriantoro, M. S., Mellinia, R., Maheswari, S. G., & Hudaifah, H. (2022). Islamic financial research directions during pandemic: A bibliometric analysis. *At-Taradhi: Jurnal Studi Ekonomi*, 13(5).
- Aria, M., & Cucurullo, C. (2017). bibliometrix: An R-tool for comprehensive science mapping analysis. *Journal of Informetrics*, 11(4), 959–975. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joi.2017.08.007>
- Cramerotti, S., & Ianes, D. (2016). An ontology-based system for building individualized education plans for students with special educational needs. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 217, 192–200. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.02.062>
- Cretu, D. M., & Morandau, F. (2020). Initial teacher education for inclusive education: A bibliometric analysis of educational research. *Sustainability*, 12(12), 4923. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12124923>
- Darawsheh, S. R., Halim, M., Rezk, W., Baniawwad, A., Hassan, K. A., Alomari, N., Helali, M., Alharbi, M., Alkhateeb, A. I., Al-Shaar, A., Alwaely, S. A., Alkhalaf, M. A., & Khasawneh, M. A. S. (2023). Mutual relationships: Saudi universities and the private sector for economic development. *Information Sciences Letters*, 12(8), 2643–2652. <https://doi.org/10.18576/isl/120818>
- Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2020). *The sustainable development goals report 2020*. United Nations Publications.



- Dignath, C., Rimm-Kaufman, S., van Ewijk, R., & Kunter, M. (2022). Teachers' beliefs about inclusive education and insights on what contributes to those beliefs: A meta-analytical study. *Educational Psychology Review*, 34(4), 2609–2660. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-022-09695-0>
- Donthu, N., Kumar, S., Mukherjee, D., Pandey, N., & Lim, W. M. (2021). How to conduct a bibliometric analysis: An overview and guidelines. *Journal of Business Research*, 133, 285–296. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.04.070>
- English, A. S., & Szabó, Á. (2026). Understanding cultural identity processes and pathways to psychological adaptation for foreign residents in China. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 113. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2026.102416>
- Farhan, M., & Shobahiya, M. (2024). Factor analysis and psychological spiritual development strategy. *Al-Fikru: Jurnal Ilmiah*, 18(2), 192–205.
- Ghani, H. A., & Ahmad, S. (2024). The dynamics of nafs: The interplay of self-purification and success in Islamic teachings. *NUQTAH Journal of Theological Studies*, 4(1), 1–20.
- Hanna-E-Kalbi, & Basharat, T. (2020). A comparative study of the personality traits of Ghazali and Freud. *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization*, 10(2), 223–242. <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.102.13>
- Inayati, N. L., Mubarak, F. U. Al, Rohmani, A. F., Yuzarni, S., & Musyaffa, Z. H. (2025). Mapping the intellectual landscape of inclusive Islamic religious education: A bibliometric analysis. *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 14(2), 293–310. <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpi.2025.142.293-310>
- İNCİ, G., & KÖSE, H. (2024). The landscape of technology research in special education: A bibliometric analysis. *Journal of Special Education Technology*, 39(1), 94–107. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01626434231180582>
- Jurado-de-los-Santos, P., Colmenero-Ruiz, M. J., Valle-Flórez, R. E., Castellary-López, M., & Figueredo-Canosa, V. (2021). The teacher's perspective on inclusion in education: An analysis of curriculum design. *Sustainability*, 13(9), 4766. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13094766>
- Kalyanpur, M. (1999). Special education epistemology as a product of western culture: Implications for non-western families of children with disabilities. *International Journal of Rehabilitation Research*, 22(2), 111–118. <https://doi.org/10.1097/00004356-199906000-00005>
- Kathy Cheng, H. Y., Chen, Y. C., Yu, Y. C., & Ju, Y. Y. (2025). Policy drivers and barriers to inclusive EdTech adoption in special education: A logistic regression study. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2025.2528107>
- Khofifah, I. U., Khanifah, R. N., & Romadhon, R. I. (2025). A critical study of misinterpretations of prophetic traditions. *Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 14(1), 399–416. <https://doi.org/10.30868/ei.v14i001.9558>
- Kistoro, H. C. A., Zamroni, Istiyono, E., Latipah, E., & Burhan, N. M. (n.d.). Islamic character education: Mapping and networking data using bibliometric analysis. *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 20(2), 195–214. <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpai.v20i2.8027>
- Latipah, E., Kistoro, H. C. A., & Putranta, H. (2020). The effects of positive parenting toward intolerance in pre-school children. *International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education*, 12(2), 137–146. <https://doi.org/10.9756/INT-JECSE/V12I2.201065>



- Liu, X., & Potmesil, M. (2025). A review of research on the development of inclusive education in children with special educational needs over the past 10 years: A visual analysis based on CiteSpace. *Frontiers in Education*, 9. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2024.1475876>
- Machali, I., & Suhendro, E. (2022). A bibliometric analysis of quality research papers in Islamic education: Evidence from Scopus. *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 11, 11–25. <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpi.2022.111.11-25>
- Mueller, T. G., Massafra, A., Robinson, J., & Peterson, L. (2019). Simulated individualized education program meetings: Valuable pedagogy within a preservice special educator program. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 42(3), 209–226. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0888406418788920>
- Muthukrishna, M., Bell, A. V., Henrich, J., Curtin, C. M., Gedranovich, A., McInerney, J., & Thue, B. (2020). Beyond Western, educated, industrial, rich, and democratic (WEIRD) psychology: Measuring and mapping scales of cultural and psychological distance. *Psychological Science*, 31(6), 678–701. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797620916782>
- Öztürk, O., Kocaman, R., & Kanbach, D. K. (2024). How to design bibliometric research: An overview and a framework proposal. *Review of Managerial Science*, 18(11), 3333–3361. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11846-024-00738-0>
- Passas, I. (2024). Bibliometric analysis: The main steps. *Encyclopedia*, 4(2). <https://doi.org/10.3390/encyclopedia4020065>
- Purnomo, H., Karim, A., Mansir, F., & Valero-Matas, J. A. (2022). Covid-19 pandemic: Project-based learning as interprofessional learning model to improve student with special needs' self-efficacy. *Sociologia y Tecnociencia*, 12(2), 284–306. <https://doi.org/10.24197/st.2.2022.284-306>
- Rakap, S. (2024). Chatting with GPT: Enhancing individualized education program goal development for novice special education teachers. *Journal of Special Education Technology*, 39(3), 339–348. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01626434231211295>
- Reda, N. (2019). What is the Qur'an? A spiritually integrative perspective. *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 30(2), 127–148. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09596410.2019.1605104>
- Rothman, A., & Coyle, A. (2018). Toward a framework for Islamic psychology and psychotherapy: An Islamic model of the soul. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 57(5), 1731–1744. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-018-0651-x>
- Rothman, A., Betül Yücesoy, Z., & Yalçın, E. (2024). Early Muslim scholars' conceptions of character development and contemporary applications in mental health and well-being. *Journal of Muslim Mental Health*, 18(1), 62–74. <https://doi.org/10.3998/jmmh.6027>
- Samsuri, S. (2020). Hakikat fitrah manusia dalam Islam. *Al-Ishlah: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 85–100.
- Schouteden, W., Verburch, A., & Elen, J. (2016). Teachers' general and contextualised research conceptions. *Studies in Higher Education*, 41(1), 79–94. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2014.914915>
- Shaikh, M. (2026). Psychology from the Islamic perspective: A review. *Australian Journal of Islamic Studies*, 11(1), e100. <https://doi.org/10.55831/ajis.v11i1.1013>
- Sholahudin, T., Alifah, D. N., Nasrin, N., & Apriantoro, M. S. (2025). Reconfiguring Islamic education in the age of artificial intelligence: A bibliometric mapping for future research directions. *Proceeding ISETH (International Summit on Science, Technology, and Humanity)*, 1534–1549.



- Shou, Y., Chen, H. F., Takemura, K., Wu, J., Yang, C. T., & Wang, M. C. (2022). Editorial: From West to East: Recent advances in psychometrics and psychological instruments in Asia. *Frontiers in Psychology, 13*, 1–3. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.875536>
- Skinner, R. (2019). Traditions, paradigms and basic concepts in Islamic psychology. *Journal of Religion and Health, 58*(4), 1087–1094. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-018-0595-1>
- Suresman, E., Faqihuddin, A., & Abdullah, M. (2025). From sorogan to digital learning: A systematic literature network analysis of pesantren learning models. *Cogent Education, 12*(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2025.2580776>
- Syifaa, N., Nawu, M., Hamzah, M., & Rokeman, M. I. (2025). Research trends in instructional technology for special educational needs: A global bibliometric perspective. *International Journal of Education, Psychology and Counseling, 10*(61), 37–53. <https://doi.org/10.35631/IJEPC.1061004>
- United Nations Children’s Fund. (2021a). *Executive summary: Seen, counted, included: Using data to shed light on the well-being of children with disabilities*.
- United Nations Children’s Fund. (2021b). *Seen, counted, included: Using data to shed light on the well-being of children with disabilities*.
- White, C. J. M., & Muthukrishna, M. (2026). Higher education predicts global cultural similarity to WEIRD countries. *Nature Communications, 17*(1). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-026-70404-4>
- World Health Organization. (2022). *Global report on health equity for persons with disabilities*.
- Zupic, I., & Čater, T. (2015). Bibliometric methods in management and organization. *Organizational Research Methods, 18*(3), 429–472. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428114562629>