

Leadership in Islamic Education: A Bibliometric Analysis of Scopus-Indexed Research 2016-2025

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to map the development of research on leadership in Islamic education in Scopus-indexed publications from 2016 to 2025. Specifically, it sought to identify publication trends, examine methodological approaches, analyze the contributions and citation impact of countries, institutions, and authors, investigate international co-authorship patterns, and identify the major thematic clusters and emerging research directions in the field. A bibliometric approach was employed to analyze 229 articles retrieved from the Scopus database using a TITLE-ABS-KEY search and predefined filters for publication period, document type, source type, and language. The analysis combined descriptive statistics with VOSviewer to examine publication patterns, citation performance, collaboration networks, and keyword co-occurrence. The findings indicate that publications peaked in 2025, with 49 articles. Qualitative research constituted the largest methodological category, accounting for 38% of the publications. Indonesia contributed the highest number of publications (171 articles) and accumulated 989 citations, whereas China recorded the highest average citations per article among the ten leading countries, at 17.8. Pelita Harapan University and Monash University ranked highest in institutional productivity, with six publications each, while Purwanto A. was the most productive author, also with six publications. Keyword co-occurrence analysis revealed six thematic clusters concerning leadership, school management, Islamic educational contexts, higher education, pesantren, and education systems. These findings provide a comprehensive descriptive overview of the intellectual and thematic development of leadership research in Islamic education over the past decade. The study also identifies opportunities to expand international research collaboration, improve geographical representation, and investigate underexplored themes to strengthen the global visibility and development of the field

1. INTRODUCTION

Leadership shapes how Islamic schools, including pesantren and madrasah, organize teaching, manage institutional change, and sustain religious identity. Studies in this area illustrate these concerns: charismatic kiai leadership and quality improvement in pesantren (Hariadi & Sumardjoko, 2024; Syafiq Humaisi et al., 2019), the Islamic crash course (*nyantri*) program as a principal's strategy for strengthening school organizational culture (Arifin & Taufiq, 2018), and leadership responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesian pesantren (Hanafi. et al., 2021). The literature is also conceptually plural. Theory-building work has proposed frameworks grounded in Islamic contexts, including a conceptual framework of Islamic school leadership (Brooks & Mutohar, 2018), critical spirituality (M.C. & M.D., 2022), and an Islamic-oriented educational leadership model derived from the views of international experts (Alazmi & Bush, 2024). Other studies apply established constructs, such as transformational and transactional leadership (Supriadi et al., 2020) and instructional leadership (R. A. et al., 2024). Further studies examine spiritual leadership in pesantren (Karim. A. et al., 2025), prophetic leadership as developed through pesantren traditions (Sirojuddin. & Abidin., 2024), and women's leadership shaped by spirituality and local social norms (Fatmawati et al., 2024; Lahmar, 2024). Because these strands appear in different journals, countries,

and methodological traditions, an overview of how the field is distributed cannot be obtained from individual studies alone. Existing syntheses cover only parts of this field. Ezzani et al. (2023) reviewed international research on Islamic school leadership and social justice through a literature review rather than a quantitative mapping of publication patterns. Hussin et al. (2024) conducted a bibliometric and thematic analysis of Islamic religious schools in Scopus for 1995–2022, but their scope was Islamic schooling in general rather than leadership. Hallinger and Kovacevic (2019) mapped educational administration research from 1960 to 2018 without focusing on Islamic education. Two recent bibliometric studies come closer to the present topic: Affani et al. (2024) mapped research on leadership in Islam in Scopus for 1987–2023 without restricting the corpus to educational institutions, and Sukardi and Lismawati (2026) analyzed 280 Scopus-indexed papers on Islamic education leadership published in 2010–2025, focusing on publication trends, topic clusters, and collaboration networks in relation to educational innovation and religious moderation. Based on their abstracts, neither study examines annual output, research approaches, country contributions and citations, institutions, international co-authorship, and keyword structure together for leadership in Islamic education, and to the authors' knowledge no other study does so. Bibliometric methods are suited to such an overview because they quantify publication patterns and map relationships among authors, countries, and concepts (Donthu, 2021; Mukherjee, D., Lim, W. M., Kumar, S., & Donthu, 2022; Zupic & Cater, 2015), and VOSviewer supports the visualization of co-authorship and keyword networks (van Eck & Waltman, 2010).

The dataset of this study ($n = 229$) shows a marked increase in output. Annual output rose from 3 articles in 2016 to 49 in 2025, a compound annual growth rate of about 29% between 2022 and 2025 (Table 1); the 21 articles for 2026 were recorded up to May 2026 and are not comparable with full years. The increase was concentrated in Indonesian-affiliated articles: of the 26 additional articles between 2022 and 2025, 25 involved at least one Indonesian affiliation (from 16 to 41 articles), whereas articles without an Indonesian affiliation remained at 7–9 per year (Table R1). Output was also concentrated in a few outlets: three Indonesian journals (Munaddhomah, Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam, and Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun) accounted for 23 of the 92 articles published in 2024–2025 (25%), and Munaddhomah alone for 15 (16%). In addition, the share of records that mention pesantren, boarding school, or kiai/kyai in their titles, abstracts, or author keywords rose from about 16% in 2016–2018 to about 40% in 2019–2023 and 56% in 2024–2026 (Table R2). These patterns describe where the increase occurred, not why it occurred. At the national level, Fu et al. (Fu et al., 2023) report a marked increase in Indonesian Scopus-indexed publications after 2014 and relate it to higher education policies introduced in 2014 and 2017, the latter tying financial and promotional incentives to scientific publication. In the Indonesian regulatory context, this 2017 policy is commonly associated with Minister of Research, Technology and Higher Education Regulation No. 20 of 2017 (Permenristekdikti No. 20/2017), which links professional and honorary allowances to publication by senior lecturers (*Lektor Kepala*) and professors. This offers a plausible background but does not establish causation for the field studied here, for three reasons. First, the regulation targets specific academic ranks and does not designate Scopus as the sole acceptable index, so its effect on Scopus-indexed output specifically cannot be inferred from its provisions. Second, expanded Scopus coverage of Indonesian journals could also raise recorded output, but testing this requires journal-level coverage start dates from the Scopus Sources list; the year a journal first appears in our dataset is not its indexing date. Third, author-level incentives and institutional compliance are not observable in bibliographic records. The present study therefore treats the increase as a descriptive pattern and examines its composition across the seven dimensions listed below, without attributing it to a single cause.

This study addresses the following research question: What are the publication trends and thematic characteristics of Scopus-indexed research on leadership in Islamic education from 2016 to

2026 in terms of annual output, research approaches, country contributions and citations, institutional productivity, author productivity, international co-authorship, and keyword co-occurrence? The study aims to provide a structured overview of the literature, identify prominent themes and collaboration patterns, and indicate areas that may warrant further investigation. It is descriptive: it maps patterns in the retrieved records and does not test explanations for them. The findings are interpreted within the scope of the selected database, search criteria, and period of analysis.

2. METHOD

Research Design and Approach

This study employs a descriptive bibliometric design (descriptive bibliometric analysis) using a quantitative method. This design was chosen for its ability to provide a systematic and unbiased review of scientific publication trends within a specific field, such as temporal patterns, author/institutional output, collaboration networks, or thematic developments (Zupic & Cater, 2015). Thus, the bibliometric approach is widely accepted as a systematic and reliable methodology for conducting literature reviews when the set of documents to be examined exceeds what can be easily handled manually (Donthu, 2021)

Data Sources and Search Strategy

The Scopus database was selected as the primary data source because it provides bibliographic metadata suitable for analyzing scholarly publications, including publication output, author affiliations, citations, and research relationships (Mukherjee, D., Lim, W. M., Kumar, S., & Donthu, 2022). Data were retrieved in 2025 using the following search query, which was designed to identify publications relevant to leadership in Islamic education.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The search was limited by four main criteria: (1) both the keywords "leadership" and "Islamic school" had to appear in the title, abstract, or keywords of the articles; (2) the document type was restricted to research articles only (excluding editorials, letters, and reviews); (3) the language of publication was limited to Indonesian and English to ensure the accessibility of the analysis and to focus on sources from the intended domain; (4) only articles published in scientific journals were included, excluding conference proceedings and books, to maintain a structured and recognized source base. As a result, 229 articles met these inclusion criteria.

Data Analysis Procedure

The bibliometric analysis followed the methodological guidelines proposed by Zupic and Čater (Zupic & Cater, 2015) and Donthu et al. (2021). Scopus records were exported in CSV format and processed to examine publication output, research approaches, country contributions, institutional and author productivity, international co-authorship, and keyword co-occurrence. The analysis was conducted through the following procedures. First, annual publication output was calculated by counting the number of articles published in each year to describe the temporal distribution of research on leadership in Islamic education. Second, research approaches were classified using keyword-based text analysis in Python, with the pandas library used to process the records and summarize the results. Methodological terms were identified from article abstracts and author keywords, and the records were categorized into six groups: qualitative, quantitative, mixed-methods, research and development (R&D), literature review or bibliometric analysis, and other or unidentified methods. Records without sufficient methodological indicators were assigned to the other or unidentified category. Third, country contributions were analyzed using authors' affiliation metadata. The number of publications and total citations were calculated for each country, and average citations per article were obtained by dividing the total citation count by the number of publications. Fourth, institutional productivity was assessed by counting the publications associated

with each institution. Fifth, author productivity was determined by counting the number of publications attributed to each author in the dataset. Sixth, international co-authorship was analyzed using VOSviewer, with countries as the unit of analysis and a minimum threshold of two documents per country. The resulting network visualization was used to examine the distribution of participating countries and their co-authorship links. Seventh, keyword co-occurrence was analyzed in VOSviewer using a minimum occurrence threshold of two for each keyword. The resulting network was examined to identify frequently occurring keywords and thematic clusters. Bibliometric network visualizations were generated using VOSviewer version 1.6.20. The mapping procedure employed association-strength normalization and the VOS layout, with attraction and repulsion parameters set to 2 and 1, respectively (van Eck & Waltman, 2010). The results were interpreted descriptively in relation to the retrieved dataset and the selected bibliometric indicators. Accordingly, the analysis describes publication patterns and network structures rather than establishing causal explanations for changes in publication output.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Temporal distribution analysis of the 229 articles reveals a significant growth trend in research on Islamic educational leadership during the 2016–2026 period. The complete data are presented in Table 1 and Figure 1.

Table 1. Distribution of Articles by Year of Publication

Year	Number of Articles	Percentage (%)	Cumulative
2016	3	1,3	3
2017	5	2,2	8
2018	11	4,8	19
2019	20	8,7	39
2020	16	7,0	55
2021	14	6,1	69
2022	23	10,0	92
2023	24	10,5	116
2024	43	18,8	159
2025	49	21,4	208
2026	21	9,2	229
Total	229	100	-



Figure 1. Annual Publication Trend Graph (2016–2026)

Table R1. Composition of annual output (n = 229)

Year	Articles	With Indonesian affiliation	Without Indonesian affiliation	Distinct source titles	Munaddhomah
2016	3	2	1	3	0

Year	Articles	With Indonesian affiliation	Without Indonesian affiliation	Distinct source titles	Munaddhomah
2017	5	2	3	5	0
2018	11	5	6	8	0
2019	20	12	8	18	0
2020	16	14	2	11	0
2021	14	12	2	14	0
2022	23	16	7	22	1
2023	24	17	7	18	1
2024	43	34	9	32	6
2025	49	41	8	28	9
2026*	21	16	5	18	3

**Partial year (data retrieved May 2026). Computed from the exported Scopus records; country assignment is based on the country named in each affiliation string, so an article with authors from several countries is counted in each. In 2020, six articles appeared in Systematic Reviews in Pharmacy; excluding them, 2020 output is 10 articles.*

Table R2. Characteristics of the dataset by period

Period	Articles	Indonesian-affiliated (%)	Internationally co-authored (%)	Pesantren/boardin g/kiai terms (%)	Mean citations per article
2016–2018	19	47.4	21.1	15.8	14.7
2019–2021	50	76.0	14.0	40.0	12.5
2022–2023	47	70.2	21.3	40.4	5.5
2024–2026*	113	80.5	19.5	55.8	3.3

**2026 is a partial year. “Internationally co-authored” means affiliations in more than one country. The term share is the proportion of records whose title, abstract, or author keywords contain “pesantren”, “boarding”, “kiai”, or “kyai”. Citation means reflect Scopus counts at export and favor older articles, which have had longer to accumulate citations; they should not be read as a decline in quality.*

Table 1 shows that annual output rose from 3 articles in 2016 to 49 in 2025, and 21 articles were recorded for 2026 up to May 2026. Because 2026 is a partial year, it is not directly comparable with complete years, and the count cannot be projected to a full-year total. Growth was uneven: output reached 20 articles in 2019, fell to 16 in 2020 and 14 in 2021, and then increased from 23 in 2022 to 24 in 2023, 43 in 2024, and 49 in 2025. The compound annual growth rate was about 16% between 2019 and 2025 and about 29% between 2022 and 2025. The 2019 level is not clearly attributable to a single factor. The 20 articles of that year were spread across 18 source titles, none contributing more than two, and 8 of the 20 had no Indonesian affiliation (Table R1). The data therefore do not support attributing the 2019 level to Indonesian promotion policies alone. The decline in 2020–2021 coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic, but the dataset does not permit a causal reading: only five of the 229 records mention COVID-19 in their titles, abstracts, or author keywords, and the 2020 total includes six articles from one source, Systematic Reviews in Pharmacy, without which 2020 output would have been 10 articles. From 2022 to 2025, the increase was concentrated in articles with Indonesian affiliations (16 to 41), while articles without such affiliations remained at 7–9 per year (Table R1). The three most frequent Indonesian outlets accounted for 25%

of 2024–2025 output, and the proportion of articles addressing pesantren or Islamic boarding schools rose to 56% in 2024–2026 (Table R2). Several explanations are possible, including expanded Scopus coverage of Indonesian Islamic education journals, institutional incentives for publication, and growing attention to pesantren as a research setting. These are hypotheses that this study does not test; the first two require external evidence (Fu et al., 2023, describe the national context). The share of internationally co-authored articles stayed between 14% and 21% across periods (Table R2), which suggests that the growth in output was not accompanied by a proportional growth in international co-authorship.

Research Type Analysis

Table 2 lists the categories that emerged from classifying the 229 articles according to their methodological approaches. The categorization was conducted using Python-based text mining techniques on the abstracts and keywords, by developing a systematic keyword dictionary based on commonly used terminology in educational research methodology.

Table 2. Distribution of Articles by Research Type

Types of Research	Quantity	Percentage (%)	Dominant Method
Qualitative	87	38,0	Case studies, phenomenology, in-depth interviews
Quantitative	47	21,0	Survey, SEM, regresi, korelasi, path analysis
Mixed Methods	38	17,0	Sequential & concurrent triangulation
R&D / Development	22	9,6	Development of modules, instruments, curriculum
Literature Review / Bibliometrik	15	6,6	Systematic review, meta-analisis, bibliometrik
Other / Unidentified	20	8,8	Conceptual, descriptive, policy studies
Total	229	100	-

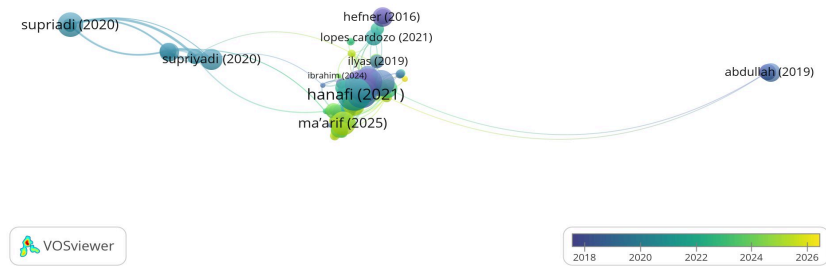


Figure 2. Distribution of Articles by Research Type

The ratio of qualitative approaches (38%) indicates a trend in Islamic educational leadership research characterized by epistemological foundations rooted in normative values, local cultural phenomena, and relational dynamics that are difficult to quantify. In fact, pesantren are also distinct in having their own leadership traditions, which rely heavily on the kiai as a charismatic and religious authority figure an aspect that can only be fully understood through interpretive approaches such as case studies, phenomenology, and in-depth interviews (Baharun, H., & Awwaliyah, 2017). Also included in this qualitative cluster are ethnography, grounded theory, and narrative analysis. The development of quantitative studies (21%) and mixed-methods approaches (17%) demonstrates a promising movement toward robust methodological triangulation. More recent studies have increasingly utilized SEM and path analysis methods to explore the relationships between principal leadership styles and teacher perform (Sanjaya & Tirtana, 2025), job satisfaction, and teacher organizational commitment The emergence of the R&D category (9.6%) suggests that researchers view these studies as practical efforts to develop

leadership models, instruments, and guidelines ready for use by practitioners in Islamic educational institutions. The growth of bibliometric studies (6.6%) also reflects an increasing awareness within the academic community of the importance of systematically mapping the literature, which in turn will help to mature the field of study.

Analysis of the Country of Origin of the Most Cited Research

The geographic origins of scientific contributions are characterized through author affiliations and citation data, resulting in a distribution map by country (as compared in Table 3) and visualized using the method shown in Figure 1 above. This analysis presents two complementary aspects: output (the number of articles) and impact quality, measured by total citations and average citations per article.

Table 3. Country of Origin of Research Based on Number of Articles and Total Citations

Peringkat	Country	Number of Articles	Total Citations	Average Citations/Articles
1	Indonesia	171	989	5,8
2	Malaysia	20	67	3,4
3	Amerika Serikat	13	212	16,3
4	Australia	12	196	16,3
5	Inggris	7	41	5,9
6	Arab Saudi	5	22	4,4
7	China	4	71	17,8
8	Belanda	4	32	8,0
9	Uni Emirat Arab	3	27	9,0
10	Kuwait	3	20	6,7

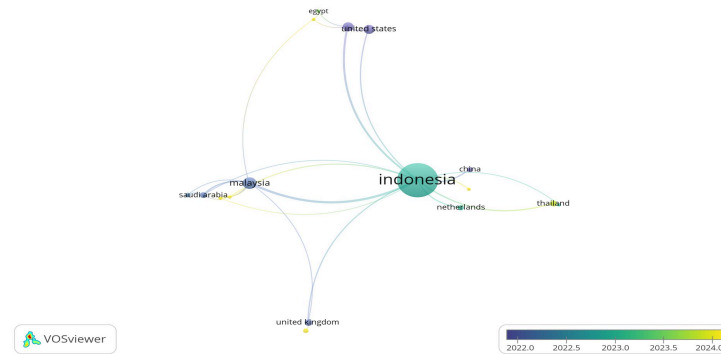


Figure 3. Graph of the Most Cited Countries

Table 3 highlights an interesting distinction between productivity, which measures quantity, and impact or quality. In terms of sheer numbers, Indonesia accounts for 171 articles (74.7% of the total), indicating that, in terms of research output in Islamic education, the volume is high due to the size of this academic community and the strong motivation among researchers to publish in Scopus-indexed journals. On the other hand, Indonesia's average citations per article (5.8) are lower compared to countries such as China (17.8), the US and Australia (each 16.3), followed by the Netherlands (8.0) and the United Arab Emirates (9.0). The higher average citation counts for the US, Australia, and China suggest that researchers from various parts of the world are referencing articles published in these countries. Several factors may explain this: (a) articles from Western countries often focus on so-called universal issues that are applicable across different contexts; (b) the methods used are sometimes, at least conceptually, innovative enough to serve as methodological benchmarks; and (c) broader access to international academic networks facilitates wider dissemination of these works beyond their home region/country, compared to the reach of many Asian studies (Hallinger, P., & Kovacevic, 2019). Although Malaysia is also the second largest Muslim-majority country in Southeast Asia and has produced 20 articles, it ranks first and second overall in terms of total citations (average citations = 3.4), compared to Indonesia itself. This indicates a gap, with neighboring countries' national averages surpassing Indonesia's output, and with overall averages exceeding 10 citations per article. The presence of countries such as the Netherlands, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, and China in this list demonstrates that research on Islamic educational leadership has gained exposure within a geographically diverse academic community beyond Southeast Asia. This is a positive sign reflecting the internationalization of the discipline. However, for Indonesian researchers to achieve higher or comparable average citation rates in international journals, as desired, they need to focus on improving methodological quality and connecting theoretical contributions with strong writing skills (Ma'arif et al., 2024); (Mukherjee et al., 2022)

Analysis of the Ten Most Productive Institutions

Identification of the institutions contributing most to research on Islamic educational leadership provides insight into the academic centers of excellence in this field. Table 4 presents the 10 most productive institutions, based on the number of articles published by researchers affiliated with those institutions.

Table 4. Ten Most Productive Institutions

Ranking	Institution	Country	Number of Articles
1	Pelita Harapan University	Indonesia	6
2	Monash University	Australia	6
3	Universitas Negeri Malang	Indonesia	5

4	Universitas Airlangga	Indonesia	4
5	Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta	Indonesia	4
6	UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh	Indonesia	4
7	Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia	Indonesia	4
8	UIN KH. Achmad Siddiq Jember	Indonesia	4
9	Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta	Indonesia	4
10	Universitas Muhammadiyah Cirebon	Indonesia	3

As shown in Table 4, eight out of the top ten institutions are from Indonesia, highlighting the dominance of Indonesian contributors in this field. Universitas Pelita Harapan (UPH), which shares the top ranking with Monash University, may be somewhat unexpected, as it is a Christian university. However, this can be explained by the fact that UPH has a Faculty of Education and researchers dedicated to studying leadership issues in various church-based educational institutions in Indonesia especially through comparative studies with Islamic schools and pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) and by its commitment to educational pluralism. Monash University in Australia tells a similar story: their research focuses on the Southeast Asian Islamic education system as part of the School for Asian Studies, which is a key area within their broader research agenda. Universitas Negeri Malang (UM) ranks third, indicating that this leading teacher training institution in Indonesia fosters a strong and productive educational research environment (Arifin et al., 2023). Although Universitas Airlangga is not an Islamic university, it is actively engaged in interdisciplinary and empirical research on the organization and management of Islamic educational institutions. The implications of these findings point to the need for a structured approach to enhancing collaboration among teacher training institutes (LPTKs), UINs, and international universities to boost both the productivity and quality contributions of future studies on Islamic educational leadership.

Analysis of the Ten Most Productive Writers

Identifying the most productive authors is crucial for understanding the key voices who inform and lead the academic dialogue in Islamic educational leadership. This highly active group of researchers also emerges as a driving force in developing new ideas, shaping research networks, and mentoring the next generation of young scholars. Table 5 presents the top 10 authors based on the number of articles in the dataset.

Table 5. Top Ten Most Productive Writers

Rangking	Author	Number of Articles	Major Affiliates
1	Purwanto A.	6	Perguruan Tinggi Islam, Indonesia
2	Mufid A.	5	Perguruan Tinggi Islam, Indonesia
3	Brooks M.C.	4	Universitas Internasional
4	Karim A.	3	Perguruan Tinggi Islam, Indonesia
5	Alazmi A.A.	3	Kuwait University, Kuwait
6	Baharun H.	3	Perguruan Tinggi Islam, Indonesia
7	Wajdi M.B.N.	3	Perguruan Tinggi Islam, Indonesia
8	Ezzani M.D.	3	Universitas Internasional
9	Fahlevi M.	3	Perguruan Tinggi Indonesia
10	Nuryana Z.	3	Perguruan Tinggi Islam, Indonesia

Co-authorship Negara (VOSviewer)

Anis Satus Solekah et.al (Leadership In Islamic Education...)

Figure 4 presents a hub-and-spoke network map, clearly showing that Indonesia occupies the central hub within this structure. The Indonesia node, more than twice the size of any other country node, visually stands out and marks Indonesia as the dominant actor in this research network. It is situated among Malaysia, the US, the UK, and Saudi Arabia, as well as in proximity to neighboring countries such as the Netherlands (due to historical ties to Islam), Thailand, China, and Egypt all of which have sizable Muslim populations and significant academic interest in Islamic or Southeast Asian studies. However, the strength of connections between Indonesia and its partner countries remains relatively weak, as indicated by the light-shaded lines in the diagram. This suggests that collaboration between authors from different countries is still largely incidental, and that systematic, sustained research partnerships have yet to form. The overlay visualization (Figure 5) adds a temporal dimension: yellow-green colors indicate the most recent publications, particularly for Indonesia–Asia connections clustered in the recommended timeframe of 2024–2025, while darker blue-purple shades are mostly found at earlier publication dates, especially on the periphery of connections from the US and UK. This points to a shift in collaboration direction from the West towards regional Asia in recent years (Hallinger, P., & Kovacevic, 2019). In other words, joint grant proposals or researcher exchanges are just the tip of the iceberg for building stronger and more enduring international research networks, a more proactive strategy is required.

Co-occurrence Keyword (VOSviewer)

The argument for the analysis of keyword co-occurrence is that it serves as a key element of this bibliometric study, as it produces a more holistic thematic map of how concepts in Islamic educational leadership are interconnected. A total of 40 keywords with a minimum co-occurrence frequency threshold of 2 were identified from the titles and abstracts of all included articles (n = 229), and visualized using VOSviewer. Table 6 presents the 10 most frequently occurring keywords.

Table 6. Frequency of Occurrence of the Top 10 Keywords

Ranking	Keyword	Frequency	Cluster
1	leadership	23	Green Cluster (Leadership Core)
2	islamic education	22	Purple Cluster (Islamic Context)
3	islamic boarding school	15	Green Cluster (Leadership Core)
4	islamic schools	12	Purple Cluster (Islamic Context)
5	pesantren	10	Brown Cluster (Pesantren)
6	educational leadership	8	Blue Cluster (School Management)
7	indonesia	8	Kluster Cyan (Education System)
8	islamic leadership	7	Green Cluster (Leadership Core)
9	islamic boarding schools	7	Red Cluster (Higher Ed)
10	boarding school	6	Brown Cluster (Pesantren)

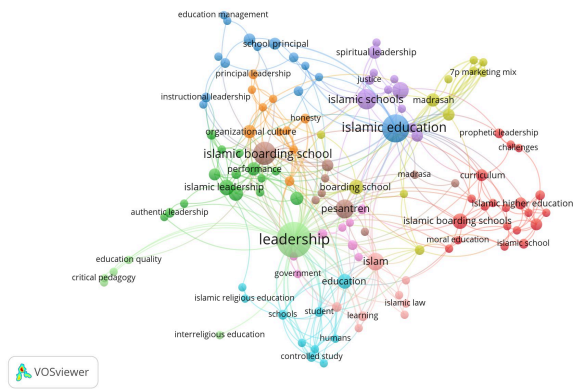


Figure 6. Network Visualization Co-occurrence Kata Kunci (VOSviewer)

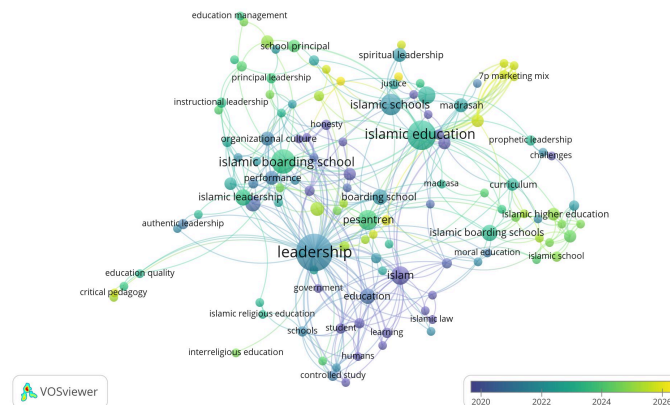


Figure 7. Overlay Visualization Co-occurrence Kata Kunci Berdasarkan Tahun (VOSviewer)

The network visualization reveals six main thematic clusters (Figure 6):

Cluster 1: Green / Core Leadership

This largest cluster centers on leadership, pesantren, Islamic leadership, performance, and organizational culture. It represents the core of leadership studies: how leadership is practiced and measured, and how it interconnects with organizational culture and institutional performance in educational settings under Islamic guidance. Its size underscores the extent to which leadership practice and its impact are widely researched across the literature.

Cluster 2: Blue / School Management

This cluster focuses on school principals and principal leadership in the context of governance, including instructional leadership and education management. It highlights the managerial and technical aspects of principals or madrasah heads in managing learning processes, supervising teachers, and administering education.

Cluster 3: Purple / Islamic Context

Consisting of terms related to education, Islamic schools, spiritual leadership, and madrasah, this cluster emphasizes the strong challenges and deep roots of spiritual leadership in Islamic education. It distinguishes the spiritual dimension as a defining feature, setting Islamic educational leadership apart from general leadership in society or state contexts.

Cluster 4: Red / Higher Education

Rapid scholarly attention to issues in Islamic higher education such as efforts to develop value-based curricula and address inequalities appears in this cluster. It includes topics like Islamic higher education, curriculum morality, educational functions and goals, research methods and training, as well as public/private partnerships and boards.

Cluster 5: Brown / Pesantren

This cluster is centered on pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) and related Islamic schools, representing leadership studies within the context of classic Islamic education in Indonesia and its governing boards.

Cluster 6: Cyan / Education System

Encompassing education, students, learning, government, and interfaith education, this cluster relates to broader public policy dimensions. It highlights correlations among relevant thematic topics, including issues of pluralism and comparative religious education. The overlay visualization (Figure 7) adds an important temporal dimension. Academics should pay attention to the bright

yellow keywords (2024–2026), such as madrasah, curriculum, 7P marketing mix, prophetic leadership, and challenges indicating emerging topics with significant academic momentum that should be prioritized in future research agendas. In contrast, blue-purple keywords (2019–2021), such as Islam, Islamic law, controlled studies, and governance, represent more established topics. Leadership and Islamic education keywords act as bridge nodes, connecting nearly all clusters and confirming the centrality of these constructs; these have the highest epistemological gravity, especially when mapped using advanced academic search tools (van Eck & Waltman, 2010). The lack of distinct, isolated clusters within this field suggests it is cohesive, with a high degree of interconnectedness among its subfields.

4. CONCLUSION

This study examined Scopus-indexed research on leadership in Islamic education through seven bibliometric dimensions. The findings show that publication output increased substantially in 2024 and 2025, reaching its highest annual count in 2025 with 49 articles. Qualitative research was the most common methodological category (38%), followed by quantitative (21%) and mixed-methods studies (17%). Indonesia contributed the largest number of publications, with 171 articles and 989 citations. However, average citation counts varied across countries, indicating differences in citation patterns within the dataset. Pelita Harapan University and Monash University were among the most productive institutions, while Purwanto A. was the most productive author, with six publications.

The co-authorship analysis showed that Indonesia occupied a central position in the mapped country network, while the keyword analysis identified six thematic clusters covering leadership, school management, Islamic educational contexts, higher education, pesantren, and the education system. Keywords appearing more recently included madrasah, curriculum, 7P marketing mix, and prophetic leadership. These findings indicate that the indexed literature encompasses several institutional contexts and thematic directions, although publication output remains concentrated in Indonesia. The findings suggest three areas for further research. First, future studies could broaden the methodological approaches used to investigate leadership in Islamic education, particularly by examining questions that require quantitative, mixed-methods, or development-oriented designs. Second, comparative studies across countries and institutional contexts could help assess whether findings from Indonesian settings also apply elsewhere. Third, researchers could explore opportunities for international co-authorship to broaden the geographic representation of the literature. These suggestions follow from the methodological distribution, geographic concentration, and collaboration patterns identified in this study; they should be understood as directions for further inquiry rather than interventions whose effectiveness has been demonstrated by bibliometric analysis. This study is limited to publications indexed in Scopus that met the specified search criteria and language restrictions. Its findings therefore represent the retrieved dataset rather than the entire body of research on leadership in Islamic education. In addition, publication and citation counts describe research output and citation patterns but do not directly measure research quality or establish the causes of publication fluctuations. Further studies using broader databases, complementary review methods, and verified search records could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the field.

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