

Bibliometric analysis of religious education articles affiliated with Türkiye indexed in Web of Science

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Abstract: This study conducts a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of religious education research affiliated with Türkiye and published in journals indexed in the Web of Science (WoS) databases (SSCI, AHCI, ESCI). The dataset consists of 302 articles identified through a systematic search using the keyword “religious education” in May 2025. After screening for relevance and data integrity, publications were examined in terms of annual distribution, author productivity, institutional contributions, journal sources, keyword patterns, and citation structures. Descriptive statistics, co-authorship networks, institutional collaboration maps, co-citation analyses, and keyword co-occurrence patterns were generated using VOSviewer. Findings reveal a remarkable increase in publication volume, particularly after 2016, coinciding with the inclusion of numerous Türkiye-based theology journals in the ESCI. Most articles were published in Türkiye-based journals, with Cumhuriyet Theology Journal, Hitit Theology Journal, and Journal of Academic Researches in Religious Sciences emerging as the most productive sources. Sakarya University, Erciyes University, and Ankara University were the leading institutions in terms of publication output and citation influence. Co-authorship analysis shows that research in this field remains predominantly single-authored, though a limited group of scholars form central nodes in collaboration networks. Keyword analysis highlights “religious education,” “higher religious education,” and “values education” as dominant thematic clusters. Co-citation findings indicate that foundational works in religious education, national curricula, thesis literature, and methodological sources constitute the backbone of the field. Overall, the study demonstrates that WoS-indexed religious education publications from Türkiye exhibit growing international visibility, shaped by institutional developments and increased emphasis on indexed publishing. Future studies may further investigate thematic evolutions, methodological trends, and cross-national collaborations in the discipline.

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Introduction

In contemporary usage, religious education is employed predominantly in two different contexts. The first refers to educational activities in which religion constitutes the primary subject matter. The second denotes an academic discipline in which religious education practices and their related topics and dimensions are examined within the framework of scientific criteria. In this respect, religious education is situated as a sub-department within faculties of theology. The process through which religious education became an academic subfield is grounded in structural changes that began with the establishment of the Faculty of Theology at Ankara University in 1949. At the time of its establishment, no course specifically devoted to religious education was included in the curriculum. In 1953, the course “Pedagogy” was added, and by the

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1955–56 academic year, the course titled “Methods of Education and Instruction” had also been introduced. From the 1973–74 academic year onwards, elective teacher-training formation courses such as Introduction to Education, History of Turkish Education, Turkish National Education System, Comparative Education, Educational Psychology, Educational Sociology, General Instructional Knowledge, and Teaching Practice began to be offered. Considering the process as a whole, it is noteworthy that no independent course or institutional structure specific to religious education existed; rather, the curriculum consisted primarily of general educational sciences courses. Nonetheless, the fact that these courses were affiliated with specific chairs within the faculty played a significant role in the formation of religious education as an academic discipline (Tosun, 2019).

The Pedagogy course, which entered the curriculum in 1953, was initially affiliated with the Chair of Psychology of Religion due to the lack of academic staff specialized in this field, and thus the name of the chair was changed to “Chair of Psychology of Religion and Pedagogy.” Following a restructuring in 1962, the course was transferred to the Chair of Systematic Philosophy, but in 1974 it was reassigned to the Chair of Psychology of Religion. Such structural changes were typically carried out depending on the availability of faculty members capable of conducting academic work in the relevant field. Indeed, when qualified academic personnel were absent, the continuation of the chair became impossible. Therefore, the presence of experts in the field emerges as a decisive factor in the institutionalization of an academic discipline. In this context, it is noteworthy that Beyza Düşüngen (Bilgin), who began working as a Pedagogy assistant in 1965, later became the first professor in the field of religious education and assumed the foundational role in establishing the Department of Religious Education in Türkiye. Bilgin’s research focused on religious education under the Chairs of Psychology and Philosophy, making significant contributions to the academic institutionalization of the field (Tosun, 2019).

After Beyza Bilgin received the title of associate professor in 1979, the Faculty of Theology prepared a report requesting the establishment of a Chair of Religious Education and submitted it to the university senate. The report emphasized that graduates of the faculty were employed in various positions within both the Ministry of National Education and the Presidency of Religious Affairs, and that teacher-training courses were already being offered to students, thereby underscoring the need for such a structure. As a result of this application, the senate approved the establishment of the Chair of Religious Education on 13 May 1980 by decision no. 5203. Thus, prior to the founding of the Council of Higher Education in 1982 and the transition from the chair system to the department system, the last chair established at the Ankara University Faculty of Theology was the Chair of Religious Education (Tosun, 2019).

The institutionalization of religious education within the academic structure of the faculty developed simultaneously with the process through which Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge (RCMK) courses became compulsory, and these two processes mutually reinforced each other. In subsequent years, new faculties of theology were established, particularly after 2010, when their number increased substantially. The employment of numerous faculty members in these institutions, the expansion of graduate programs, the proliferation of master’s and doctoral theses, publications produced for academic promotion, and ongoing political debates on religious education all contributed to the annual increase in academic studies in the field. Additionally, scholars from various disciplines have conducted research related to religious education, and such works are also included within the broader religious education literature.

Alongside numerous developments specific to the field of religious education, significant changes have taken place within the Turkish higher education system. One of these is the process of writing and publishing academic articles, which constitutes a major component of university activity. In recent years, regulations aimed at increasing both the quantity and quality of scientific articles have been introduced. Among these is the emphasis on publishing in journals indexed in widely recognized international databases that apply specific academic criteria. Such publications affect the position of a country within the global scientific community and enable the dissemination of produced knowledge internationally. As a result, both scholars and their universities gain visibility at the international level. One of the widely used indexing

systems in this regard is the Web of Science (WoS). However, it should be noted that criticisms have been made concerning the reliability of such indices, as they are operated by private companies and may not always meet all methodological expectations.

The reason for choosing the WoS index in this study is that it is a widely accepted database and one that is regarded by universities in Türkiye as an indicator of academic quality. In a sense, the academic agenda of the international scientific community is shaped by the articles published in journals indexed in such databases. In recent years, many journals, particularly those in the field of theology, have sought to be indexed in WoS. Compared with many other social science fields, theology journals are indexed in WoS at a relatively high rate. Although the inclusion of Türkiye-based journals in WoS has increased the number of Türkiye-affiliated articles indexed in the database, numerous Türkiye-affiliated religious education articles are also published in journals based in other countries.

In this study, a bibliometric analysis of Türkiye-affiliated articles published in journals indexed in WoS—an important platform for international academic visibility—is conducted in order to present both an overview of religious education research in Türkiye and a comprehensive bibliometric profile of Türkiye-affiliated publications within these indexed journals.

Bibliometrics is an analytical approach that enables the simultaneous examination of a large number of articles. Frequently used to analyze research trends in theses across various fields, this method has become more functional and practical with technological advancements. Accordingly, bibliometric analyses have been conducted on articles in numerous fields, including religious education. The first such study in this field was conducted by Kaymakcan and Unsal, who examined articles on religious education published in the journals of faculties of theology. Their study, aimed at facilitating easier access to scientific research in the field, analyzed 17 different theology faculty journals published between 1952 and 2003 and identified a total of 213 articles on religious education. Lists of articles, authors, and keywords were also provided (Kaymakcan & Unsal, 2004).

Other studies on the topic were conducted by Güneş, who examined religious education articles published in Türkiye across three separate studies. In one study, Güneş analyzed articles published in theology journals between 1925 and 2017 (Güneş, 2018a), while another examined articles published in non-theology journals (Güneş, 2018b). A further study analyzed religious education articles published in academic journals between 1925 and 2020 (Güneş, 2021). All three studies cover a comprehensive and extensive historical period. Güneş examined various dimensions of the articles, including the journals in which they were published, author information, subject areas, and research methods used. Another bibliometric study focused specifically on Türkiye-based theology journals indexed in WoS, analyzing all articles in these journals from multiple perspectives (Balıkçı et al., 2024).

In the present study, the aim is to identify various network structures through bibliometric analysis using the VOSviewer program. Accordingly, the research questions are as follows:

- Which authors collaborate, and how are co-authorship relationships distributed?
- What key concepts emerge in the bibliometric analysis, and how do these concepts reflect developmental trends in the field?
- Who are the most productive and most cited authors, and what forms of interaction and collaboration exist among them?
- Which institutional affiliations receive the highest number of citations, and what forms of cooperation and interaction are observed at the institutional level?

1. Method

This research was conducted based on a bibliometric analysis approach. Bibliometric analysis is a method that enables the evaluation of scientific output within a specific field through quantitative indicators and allows for the systematic examination of relationships among publications (Lee et al., 2020). It is well established that bibliometric analysis is widely used to investigate the developmental trajectory of scientific fields, levels of productivity, and academic impact (Donthu et al., 2021; Zupic & Čater, 2015). In this regard, the present study constitutes a descriptive research design grounded in bibliometric analysis. The population of the study consists of articles thematically related to “religious education,” published in journals indexed in the Web of Science (WoS) databases (SSCI, AHCI, ESCI) and having at least one author affiliation indicating “Türkiye.” A search was conducted in the Web of Science database in May 2025 using the keyword “religious education” in the Topic (TS) field, which yielded 340 articles. After removing irrelevant, duplicate, or incomplete records, a total of 302 articles were included in the analysis.

The data were classified according to authors, institutions, countries, journals, citation counts, and keywords; subsequently, the distribution of publications by year, citation performance, and collaboration networks were examined. In addition to descriptive statistics, author collaboration, institutional collaboration, co-citation analyses, and keyword co-occurrence analyses were conducted. VOSviewer software was used for network-based visualizations (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010).

2. Findings

2.1. Descriptive Statistics for Articles and Authors

A total of 302 articles were identified as a result of the search conducted within the scope of the determined criteria in the Web of Science database.

Table 1. *Distribution of Publications by Year*

Publication Years	Count
2025	7
2024	43
2023	34
2022	33
2021	32
2020	32
2019	29
2018	15
2017	14
2016	7
2015	5
2014	8
2013	10
2012	8
2011	4
2010	5
2009	5

2008	1
2007	6
2006	1
2005	1
2004	1
1999	1

When the numbers of articles published by year are examined, an overall increase is observed. In particular, a notable rise is visible after 2016, when Türkiye-based journals began to be indexed in the Web of Science ESCI database. This trend is also reflected in the indexes in which the articles appear. Among the 302 studies included in the analysis, 265 are indexed in ESCI, 30 in AHCI, 18 in SSCI, 2 in the Book Citation Index (BKCI), and 1 in SCI-E (the number exceeds 302 because some journals are indexed in more than one category).

Regarding the publication languages of the articles, 177 are in Turkish, 123 in English, and 2 in German. Since only Türkiye-based journals publish articles in Turkish, this indicates that more than half of the articles were published in journals based in Türkiye.

Table 2. *Researchers with the Most Publications on Religious Education and their Publication Numbers*

Researcher Profiles	Count
Zengin, Mahmut	10
Hendek, Abdurrahman	9
Genç, Muhammet Fatih	9
Osmanoğlu, Cemil	8
Koç, Ahmet	7
Oruç, Cemil	6
Meydan, Hasan	6
Öz, Ayhan	6
Ay, Mustafa Fatih	5
Çakmak, Ahmet	5
Kurttekin, Fatma	5
Kaymakcan, Recep	5
Akyürek, Süleyman	4
Selçuk, Mualla	4
Tosun, Cemal	4
Çinemre, Semra	4
Karasu, Teceli	4

The most prolific researcher in the dataset is Mahmut Zengin, with 10 articles, followed by Abdurrahman Hendek and Muhammet Fatih Genç with 9 articles each, Cemil Osmanoğlu with 8 articles, and Ahmet Koç with 7 articles. Cemil Oruç, Hasan Meydan, and Ayhan Öz each have 6 articles. Mustafa Fatih Ay, Ahmet Çakmak, Fatma Kurttekin, and Recep Kaymakcan have 5 publications each. Additionally, Süleyman Akyürek, Mualla Selçuk, Cemal Tosun, Semra Çinemre, and Teceli Karasu appear in the list with four articles each. The prevalence of WoS-indexed journals as a primary publication target is a recent phenomenon. Therefore, researchers with pioneering work predating this shift may exhibit relatively low WoS publication

metrics. The list, therefore, does not reflect the most productive or influential scholars in religious education overall, but solely the number of publications indexed in WoS. Moreover, as the search criterion was “religious education,” the list does not cover all publications authored by these researchers.

Table 3. *Number of Articles by Affiliation*

Affiliations	Count
Sakarya University	31
Erciyes University	18
Ankara University	17
Cumhuriyet University	17
Necmettin Erbakan University	13
Ministry of National Education Türkiye	11
Akdeniz University	10
İstanbul University	10
Muş Alparslan University	10
Ataturk University	9
Hitit University	8
Marmara University	8
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan University	8
Trabzon University	7
Zonguldak Bülent Ecevit University	7
Ondokuz Mayıs University	6
Selçuk University	6
Şırnak University	6

The table presents the institutional distribution of Web of Science-indexed publications in the field of religious education. Sakarya University makes the largest contribution with 31 articles, playing a leading role in publication activity in this area. It is followed by Erciyes University (18), Ankara University (17), and Cumhuriyet University (17). Necmettin Erbakan University (13), the Ministry of National Education (11), as well as Akdeniz University, İstanbul University, and Muş Alparslan University (each with 10 articles) are also noteworthy. This distribution indicates that academic production in the field of religious education is spread across various universities, although some institutions pursue a more intensive and systematic publication policy. It should be noted that factors such as the number of faculty members and their academic career stage may influence publication output.

Table 4. *Number of Articles Published by Journal*

Publication Titles	Count
Cumhuriyet Theology Journal / Cumhuriyet İlahiyat Dergisi	51
Hitit Theology Journal / Hitit İlahiyat Dergisi	40
Journal of Academic Research in Religious Sciences / Dinbilimleri Akademik Araştırma Dergisi	36
Bilimname	32
Eskiyeni	21
Journal of İlahiyat Researches / İlahiyat Tetkikleri Dergisi	18

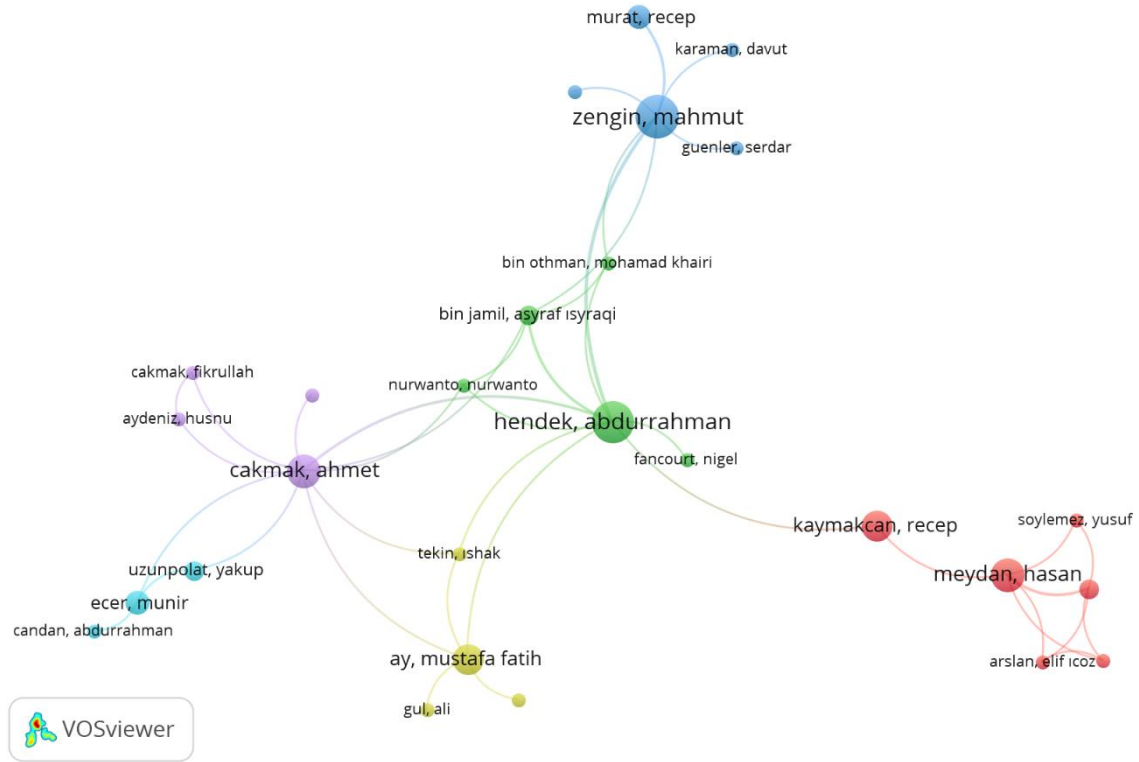
Journal of Sakarya University Faculty of Theology / Sakarya Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi	17
Journal of Şırnak University Faculty of Theology / Şırnak Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi	13
Kocatepe İslami İlimler Dergisi / Journal of Kocatepe Islamic Sciences	10
British Journal of Religious Education	7
Religions	7
Religious Education	6
Journal of Beliefs Values	5
İlahiyat Studies	4
Religion Education	3
Kuram ve Uygulamada Eğitim Bilimleri / Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice	2
Österreichisches Religionspädagogisches Forum	2
Pegem Eğitim ve Öğretim Dergisi / Pegem Journal of Education and Instruction	2

This table presents the distribution of Web of Science-indexed publications in religious education by journals. The highest number of publications appears in Cumhuriyet Theology Journal with 51 articles. It is followed by Hitit Theology Journal (40 articles), Journal of Academic Research in Religious Sciences (36), Bilimname (32), and Eskiye (21). The predominance of Türkiye-based theology faculty journals indicates that the majority of academic output in the field is concentrated in national journals.

On the other hand, there is also a noteworthy number of publications in international journals such as the British Journal of Religious Education (7), Religions (7), Religious Education (6), and the Journal of Beliefs & Values (5). Publications in these journals highlight the increasing visibility of Turkish scholars in international academic platforms. Overall, the table reveals that while most publications are clustered in local academic journals, there is a growing presence in international outlets.

2.2.Co-Authorship Analysis

The analysis shows that there are 296 authors in the dataset, of whom 27 are connected to each other through co-authorship networks.

Figure 1. Co-Authorship Analysis

Based on the co-authorship analysis, it is observed that most studies in the field of religious education are single-authored, with only a small number of academics collaborating on publications. Mahmut Zengin and Abdurrahman Hendek, who stand out as the two most prolific authors within the WoS scope in the field of religious education, also appear prominently in terms of co-authorship.

2.3. Distribution of Publications by Country

Although all studies included in the research contain at least one Türkiye-affiliated author, contributions from authors in other countries are also present. When the distribution of authors by country is examined, it is seen that researchers from eight different countries outside Türkiye have contributed. These countries and their respective article counts are as follows: United Kingdom (3), Malaysia (2), Indonesia (2), Canada (1), France (1), Kyrgyzstan (1), the Netherlands (1), and Ireland (1).

2.4. Keyword Analysis

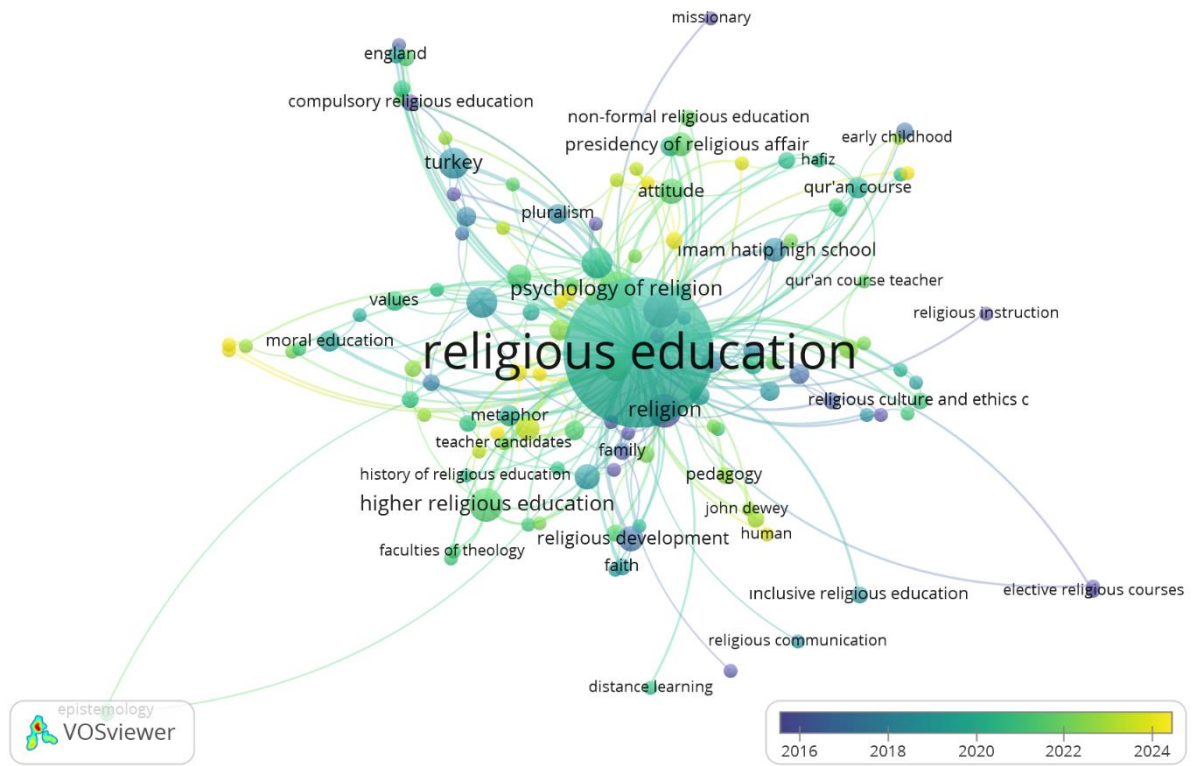
A total of 906 keywords were used across the publications included in the study, of which 128 were used at least twice. Among these, 126 keywords were found to be interconnected. The most frequently used keyword is “religious education,” appearing in 231 studies. Although this is expected given that the study focuses on religious education publications, it is also evident that the editorial practices of many journals in Türkiye—specifically the requirement that authors select a primary keyword directly aligned with the journal’s main field—significantly influence this outcome. While this practice increases consistency, it does not always accurately reflect the specific topic classification of the study. This situation is also related to the fact that Türkiye has not yet developed more specialized, narrowly focused academic journals.

Other frequently used keywords include: higher religious education, psychology of religion, religion, education, Islam, values education, Turkey (Türkiye), attitude, imam hatip high school, metaphor, Qur'an course, scale, theology, curriculum, faculty of theology, Germany, Presidency of Religious Affairs, Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge, religious development. A noteworthy point here is the use of keywords such as scale, attitude, and metaphor. None of these terms directly correspond to a specific topic within religious education. Because these terms do not represent a field-specific concept, their use as keywords is not always appropriate. The frequency of keyword usage by year is presented in the figure.

Table 5. *Keyword Analysis*

Keyword	Occurrences	Total Link Strength
religious education	231	327
higher religious education	12	25
psychology of religion	14	24
religion	12	24
education	13	22
Islam	10	22
values education	10	20
Turkey (Türkiye)	10	19
attitude	7	17
imam hatip high school	6	13
metaphor	5	12
Qur'an course	5	12
scale	6	12
theology	7	12
curriculum	5	11
faculty of theology	4	11
Germany	6	11
Presidency of Religious Affairs	6	11
Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge	6	11
religious development	7	11

The concept of "religious education" is centrally positioned, forming the main theme of the entire body of literature. The structure of the figure and the node placements illustrate how the scholarly focus has shifted over time: Core concepts located centrally and represented by larger nodes, such as Religious Education, Psychology of Religion, Pluralism, Turkey, and Moral Education, represent the foundational topics heavily addressed in the early stages of the study period. In contrast, concepts positioned further from the center and represented by relatively smaller nodes, such as Distance Learning, Inclusive Religious Education, Elective Religious Courses, and Early Childhood, indicate current trends that have been introduced or gained importance in the literature in recent years. This shift clearly demonstrates that religious education research has expanded from its initial focus on theoretical foundations and country-specific contexts to encompass contemporary pedagogical applications centered on technology utilization, curriculum flexibility, and diverse student groups in recent years.

Figure 2. *Bibliometric Network of most used Keyword Analysis*

2.5. Author Citation Analysis

A total of 296 different researchers appeared as authors in the 302 studies included in the analysis. Based on the criterion of at least one publication and one citation, 146 authors met these conditions, of whom 63 were found to be interconnected.

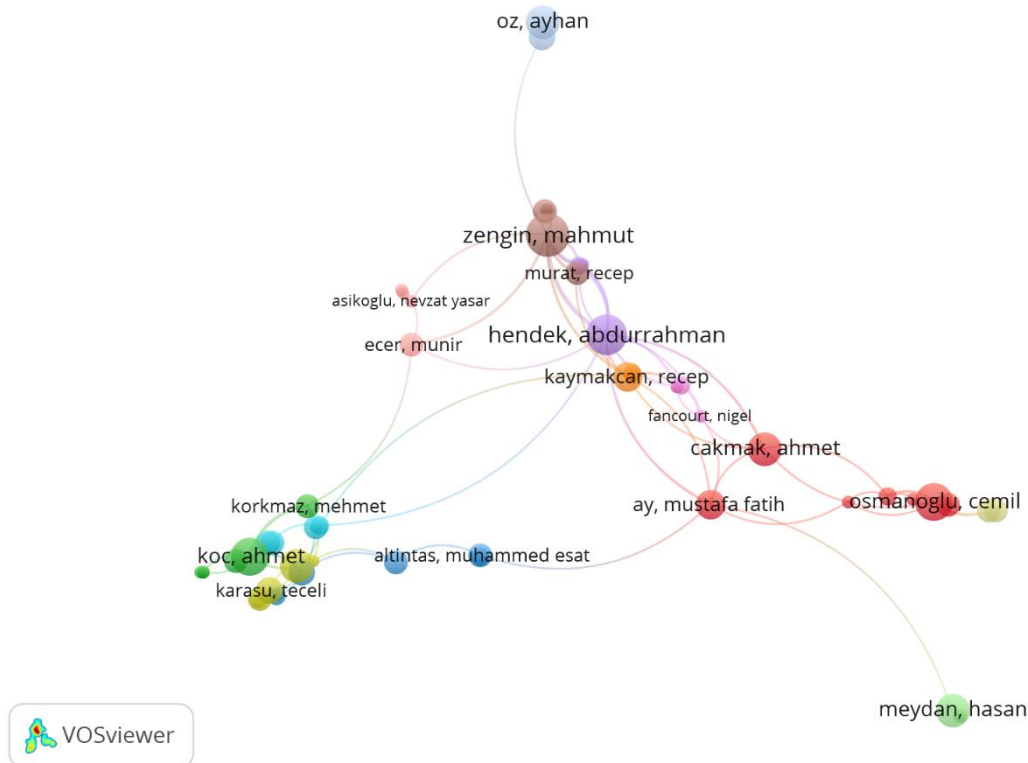
Table 6. *Author Citation Analysis*

Author	Documents	Cites	Total Link Strength
Hendek, Abdurrahman	9	16	24
Zengin, Mahmut	10	25	23
Kaymakcan, Recep	5	12	14
Koç, Ahmet	8	14	11
Osmanoğlu, Cemil	8	14	11
Ay, Mustafa Fatih	5	4	8
Çakmak, Ahmet	6	1	7
Meydan, Hasan	6	6	7
Tosun, Cemal	4	8	7
Algur, Hüseyin	2	1	6
Çapcıoğlu, Fatma	1	7	6
Furat, Ayşe Zişan	2	2	6
Karasu, Teceli	4	6	6
Korkmaz, Mehmet	3	1	6
Akbulut, Olgun	1	16	5

Ecer, Münir	3	1	5
Fancourt, Nigel	1	4	5
Uşal, Zeynep Oya	1	16	5
Bin Othman, Mohamad Khairi	1	3	4
Genç, M. Fatih	6	4	4

An examination of the author citation network reveals that the central nodes with the highest link strength are Abdurrahman Hendek and Mahmut Zengin. These two scholars constitute the primary reference points of the field, forming the most intensive citation relationships with other researchers. They are followed by Recep Kaymakcan, Ahmet Koç, and Cemil Osmanoğlu, who establish strong connections with the core and thus occupy the second tier of the network. Researchers such as Mustafa Fatih Ay, Ahmet Çakmak, Hasan Meydan, and Cemal Tosun are positioned in the third tier with more limited link strengths, functioning as nodes that reinforce the influence of the core but do not independently shape the overall network structure.

Figure 3. *Bibliometric Network of Author Citation Analysis*



2.6. Institutional Citation and Collaboration Network Analysis

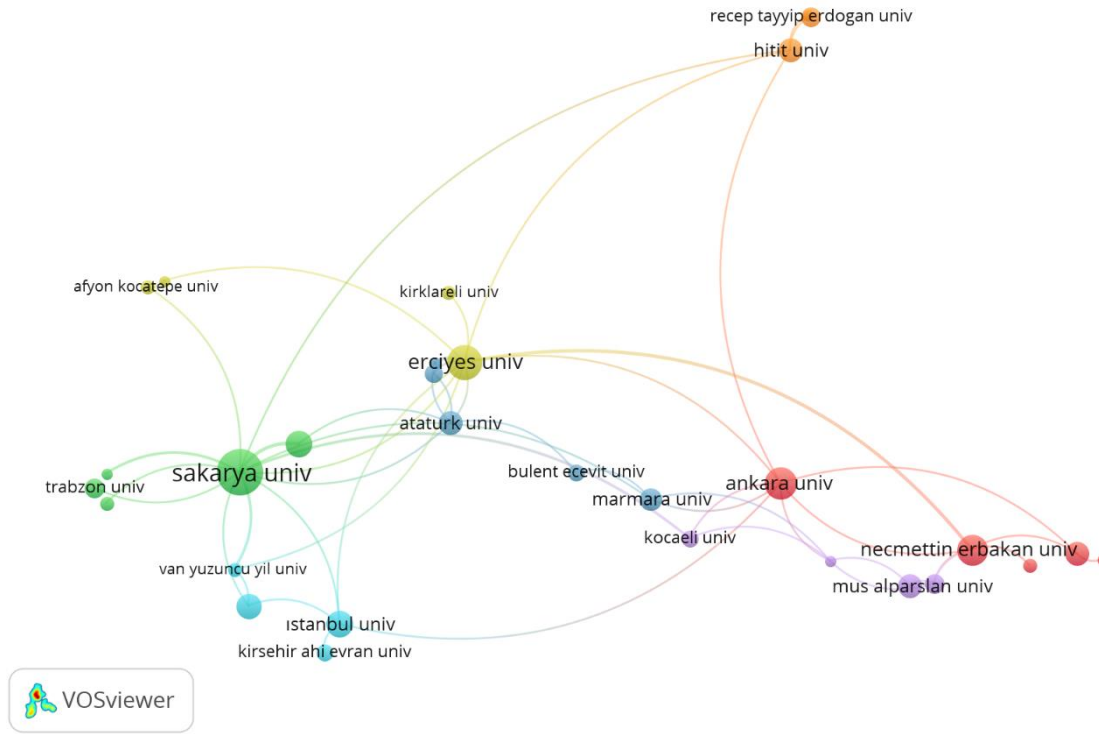
It was identified that the articles included in the study were affiliated with 146 different institutions. When the criteria of at least two publications and one citation were applied, 47 institutions met these conditions, and 30 of these demonstrated institutional citation connections. An examination of the institutional citation network shows that the most productive institution is Sakarya University, with 30 publications; it also occupies a central position in the network with 48 citations and a total link strength of 18. Sakarya is followed by Erciyes University, which, despite having 18 publications and a relatively lower citation count, holds a strong position in the collaboration network with a link strength of 15.

Table 8. *Institutional Citation Analysis*

Affiliations	Documents	Cites	Total Link Strength
Sakarya University	30	48	18
Erciyes University	18	17	15
Ankara University	15	46	8
Necmettin Erbakan University	13	9	8
Muş Alparslan University	10	12	7
Cumhuriyet University	17	25	6
Atatürk University	8	2	6
Giresun University	2	1	5
Hitit University	8	5	5
İstanbul University	10	2	5
Akdeniz University	10	5	4
Kocaeli University	4	9	4
Marmara University	7	16	4
Selçuk University	6	13	4
Van Yüzüncü Yıl University	3	2	4
Presidency of Religious Affairs	5	1	3
Afyon Kocatepe University	3	1	2
Bülent Ecevit University	4	2	2

Ankara University ranks third in productivity with 15 publications and has a notably high citation count of 46. However, its total link strength of 8 suggests that it is more prominently represented by single-authored works rather than collaborative outputs. Institutions such as Necmettin Erbakan University, Atatürk University, and Hitit University form the second tier with comparatively fewer citations and moderate link strengths. Universities such as Giresun University and Muş Alparslan University, though producing a smaller number of publications, maintain visibility on the periphery of the network with a link strength of 5.

İstanbul University, Akdeniz University, Kocaeli University, Marmara University, and Selçuk University serve as supportive elements in the network with moderate levels of productivity and citation counts. Cumhuriyet University similarly demonstrates a medium-level impact, whereas institutional actors such as the Presidency of Religious Affairs play a more limited role due to lower citation and connection levels.

Figure 4. *Institutional Citation and Collaboration Network Analysis*

Overall, the network displays a clear core-periphery structure in which Sakarya University and Erciyes University occupy the central positions, Ankara University stands out with high citation impact but lower connectivity, and the peripheral universities contribute in a limited yet diversifying manner.

2.7. Co-Cited References Analysis

A total of 11,227 references were identified as sources cited by the articles included in the study. It should be noted that this number is not absolutely precise due to issues arising from citation formatting inconsistencies. As citation systems become more standardized in future years, such figures will be determined more accurately. When the references are examined based on the criterion that a source must have received at least four citations, 104 publications meet this requirement, and 103 of them are interconnected.

Table 9. *Co-Cited References Analysis*

References	Cites	Total Link Strength
[anonymous], thesis	62	155
[anonymous], Tebliğler Dergisi	9	63
Zengin, M. (2013). Öğrencilerin Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi Dersine Yönelik Tutumlarının Çeşitli Değişkenler Açısından İncelenmesi. <i>Değerler Eğitimi Dergisi</i> , 11(25), 271-301	6	49

Kaya, M. (2001) İlköğretim ve Ortaöğretim Öğrencilerinin Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi Dersine Karşı Tutumları. Ondokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi, 12/12-13 (Nisan 2001), 43-78.	5	46
[anonymous], İlköğretim Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi	4	41
Karasar, N. (2012). <i>Bilimsel Araştırma Yöntemi: Kavramlar, İlkeler, Teknikler</i> . Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık.	8	40
Altaş, N. Türkiye’de Zorunlu Din Eğitimi Yapılandırma Süreci, Hedefler ve Yeni Yöntem Anlayışları 1980-2001. Dini Araştırmalar 4/12 (2002).	6	38
Arıcı, İ. Öğrencilerin İlköğretim Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi Dersi Öğretmenine Yönelik Tutumları. Fırat Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi 13/1 (2008).	4	38
Aydın, M. Ş. (2017). Din eğitimi bilimi. Kayseri: Kimlik Yayınları	11	37
Yıldırım, A., & Şimşek, H. (2008). Sosyal Bilimlerde Nitel Araştırma Yöntemleri. Ankara: Seçkin Yayıncılık.	16	36
Tabachnick, B. G. & Fidell, L. S. (2007). Using Multivariate Statistics (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.	8	35
Yaşlıoğlu, M. M. (2017). Sosyal Bilimlerde Faktör Analizi ve Geçerlilik: Keşfedici ve Doğrulamalı Faktör Analizlerinin Kullanılması. İstanbul Üniversitesi İşletme Fakültesi Dergisi, 46, 74-85.	6	35
[anonymous], 2011, thesis	5	34
Peker, H. (2003). Din Psikolojisi. Çamlıca Yayınları.	4	34
Çokluk, Ö., Şekercioğlu, G., & Büyüköztürk, Ş. (2021). <i>Sosyal Bilimler İçin Çok Değişkenli İstatistiksel Analiz Teknikleri: STATA, SPSS ve R Uygulamaları</i> . Ankara: Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık.	4	33
Yapıcı, A. (2020). <i>Şüphe ve İnanç Kısacasında Gençlerin Din ve Dindarlık Algıları</i> . İlahiyat Akademi Dergisi, 12, 1-44.	4	33
[anonymous], Değerler Eğitimi Dergisi	8	31
Büyüköztürk, Ş., Çokluk, Ö. & Köklü, N. (2020). Sosyal Bilimler için İstatistik (24. baskı). Ankara: Pegem Akademi.	5	31
Tosun, Cemal (2005). Din Eğitimi Bilimine Giriş. Ankara: Pegem Akademi.	8	31
Büyüköztürk, Ş., Kılıç Çakmak, E., Akgün, Ö. E., Karadeniz, Ş. ve Demirel, F. (2020). <i>Eğitimde Bilimsel Araştırma Yöntemleri</i> (27. Baskı). Ankara: Pegem Akademi Yayıncılık.	4	30

In terms of cited sources, the reference with the highest impact is “[anonymous], thesis,” which received 62 citations and a total link strength of 155, indicating that theses constitute a foundational body of work frequently utilized in the field. This is followed by “[anonymous], Tebliğler Dergisi,” with 9 citations and 63 link strength, suggesting the widespread use of sources grounded in educational regulations and official instructional guidelines. An important point here is that the lack of standardization in citation styles makes it difficult to distinguish between theses and citations to Tebliğler Dergisi. Therefore, this data is best interpreted not as individual references but as evidence that theses and educational regulatory documents collectively receive a substantial number of citations.

Among individual authored works, Zengin’s 2013 article in Değerler Eğitimi Dergisi (6 citations, 49 link strength) and Kaya’s 2001 publication (5 citations, 46 link strength) stand out, illustrating their frequent use within the local literature on values education and religious education. Methodological sources such as Karasar’s Bilimsel Araştırma Yöntemleri (8 citations, 40 link strength), Yıldırım and Şimşek’s Sosyal Bilimlerde Nitel Araştırma Yöntemleri (16 citations, 36 link strength), Tabachnick and Fidell’s Using Multivariate Statistics (8 citations, 35 link strength), and Büyüköztürk’s methodology books highlight the predominance of methodological foundations in the referenced works. Additionally, foundational field

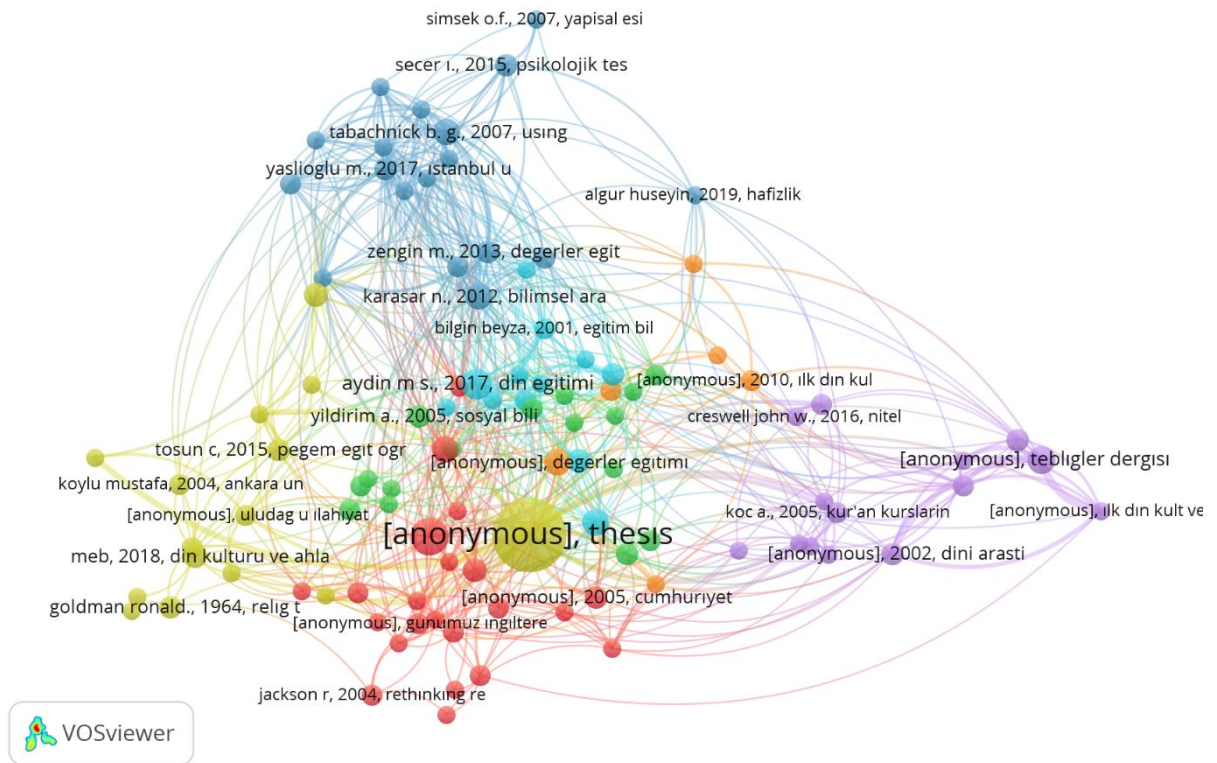
sources such as Aydın's *Din Eğitimi Bilimi* (11 citations, 37 link strength), Tosun's *Din Eğitimi Bilimine Giriş* (8 citations, 31 link strength), and Peker's *Din Psikolojisi* (4 citations, 34 link strength) are also frequently cited.

Overall, the citation network points to three main clusters:

- (1) original local works such as theses and journal articles,
- (2) methodological literature including Karasar, Yıldırım & Şimşek, and Büyüköztürk,
- (3) core religious education and religious psychology sources including Aydın, Tosun, and Peker.

This structure indicates that the studies draw simultaneously on both local literature and methodological frameworks.

Figure 5. *Co-Cited References Network Analysis*



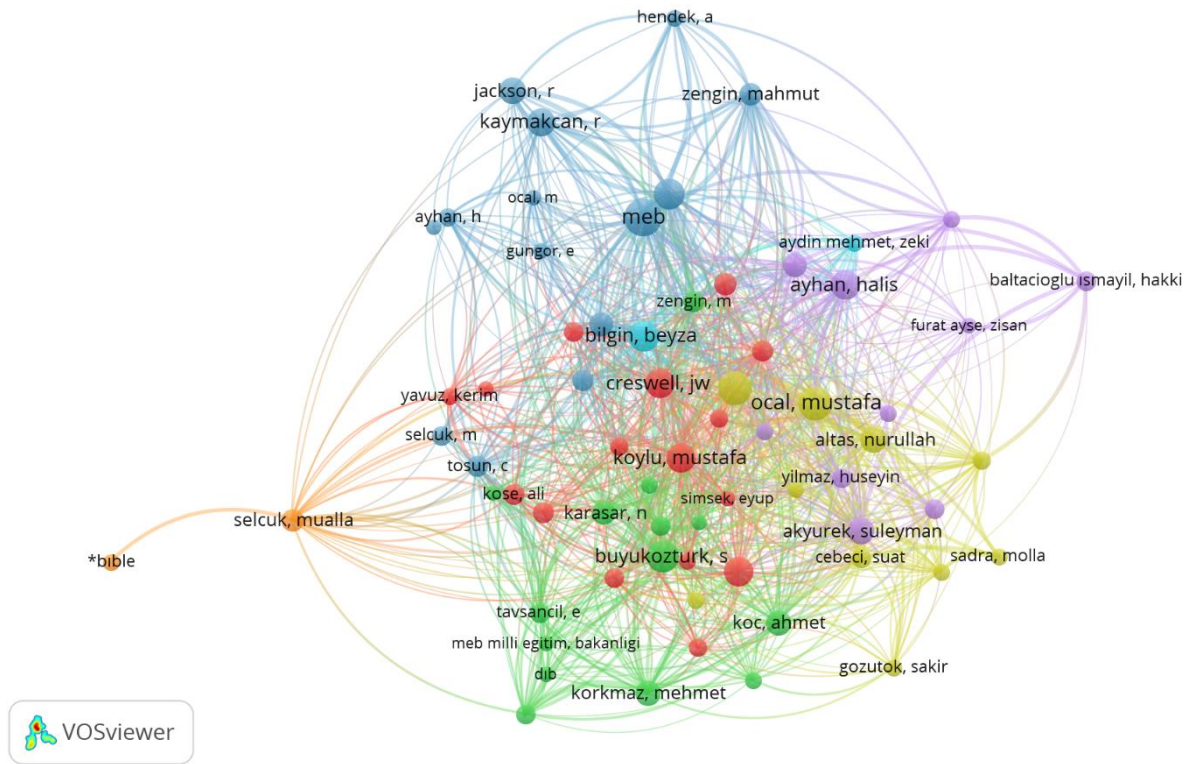
2.8. Co-Cited Authors

When the authors of the publications cited by the articles included in the study are examined, a total of 7,495 authors were identified. Based on the criterion that an author must be cited in at least 10 different articles, 69 authors met this requirement, and 68 of them were found to be connected to one another.

Table 9. *Co-Cited Authors*

Author	Cites	Total Link Strength
Zengin, Mahmut	38	335
Bilgin, Beyza	38	333
Öcal, Mustafa	45	327
Ministry of National Education	56	315
Tosun, Cemal	45	296
Kaymakcan, Recep	69	438
Ayhan, Halis	34	254
Büyüköztürk, Şener	42	236
Korkmaz, Mehmet	26	210
Köylü, Mustafa	36	199
Akyürek, Süleyman	28	197
Altaş, Nurullah	29	194
Creswell, J.W.	33	174
Koç, Ahmet	26	169
Zengin, Zeki Salih	22	154
Presidency of Religious Affairs	15	150
Karasar, Niyazi	23	147
Selçuk, Mualla	20	132

An examination of the co-cited authors reveals that the central nodes with the highest link strength in the network are Mahmut Zengin (38 citations, 338 link strength), Beyza Bilgin (38 citations, 333 link strength), and Mustafa Öcal (45 citations, 327 link strength). In addition to these, the Ministry of National Education (56 citations, 315 link strength) and Cemal Tosun (45 citations, 296 link strength) also stand out. This indicates that these authors and institutions constitute the most frequently co-referenced sources in the research, forming the core structure of the literature. Recep Kaymakcan (69 citations, 438 link strength), Halis Ayhan (34 citations, 254 link strength), Şener Büyüköztürk (42 citations, 236 link strength), and Mehmet Korkmaz (26 citations, 210 link strength) occupy the second tier of the network, demonstrating strong visibility through their methodological and theoretical contributions. Mustafa Köylü (36 citations, 199 link strength) and Süleyman Akyürek (28 citations, 197 link strength) are likewise frequently co-cited researchers.

Figure 6. *Co-Cited Authors Network Analysis*

At the more peripheral level are names such as Nurullah Altaş (29 citations, 194 link strength), J.W. Creswell (33 citations, 174 link strength), and Ahmet Koç (26 citations, 169 link strength). Although their link strength is relatively lower, they nonetheless make influential contributions to the field. The presence of Niyazi Karasar (23 citations, 147 link strength) and Creswell further demonstrates that methodological sources constitute an important common point of reference within the literature. Overall, the network exhibits a distinct core–periphery structure in which Bilgin, Öcal, the Ministry of National Education, and Tosun are situated at the center, surrounded by a second tier including Kaymakcan, Ayhan, and Büyüköztürk, while figures such as Zengin, Koç, and Karasar serve supportive roles in the peripheral layer.

Conclusion

This article presents a bibliometric analysis of religious education-related studies published in journals indexed in the Web of Science (WoS). The analysis includes a total of 302 articles, most of which were authored by faculty members working in departments of religious education. It should be noted that the study does not encompass all publications produced by scholars in the field of religious education; rather, it covers only those articles that fall specifically under the category of religious education.

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of religious education articles published in WoS-indexed journals. While this development indicates that Turkish scholars in the field of religious education have begun to publish more frequently at the international level, it is also necessary to acknowledge that the inclusion of many theology journals in Türkiye in the ESCI has contributed substantially to this increase. Several findings support this conclusion. One such finding is that the journals with the highest number of publications are theology journals based in Türkiye. Another supporting indicator is that the most productive universities in the dataset are those whose faculty journals are indexed within the ESCI.

It may be asserted that the majority of religious education articles published in WoS journals are authored by a new generation of religious education scholars. The increasing emphasis on indexed publication, coupled with institutional encouragement in recent years, has led academics to intentionally target WoS-indexed journals. However, when citation patterns are examined, it is evident that foundational works and pioneering scholars in the field of religious education continue to be frequently referenced.

In conclusion, the incentives encouraging publication in WoS-indexed journals appear to have initiated a new transformation in the field. Future research would benefit from examining the details of this transformation. In particular, more detailed analyses focusing on the topics studied, methods employed, and samples or participant groups used in field research are recommended.

Declarations

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