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# Islamic Religious School as an Alternative Education Institution in the Global Era: A Bibliometric and Thematic Analysis

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**Abstract.** This study conducts a bibliometric and thematic analysis of research on Islamic religious schools from 1995 to 2022. The objectives were to assess the current growth and publication trends in Islamic religious school studies, including prolific contributors, highly cited documents, and emerging research themes. Data were collected from the Scopus database using keywords such as "Islamic religious school," "pesantren," "madrasa," and "Islamic schooling." After screening, 297 documents were analyzed using Biblioshiny and Microsoft Excel. Results showed that 2022 had the highest number of publications (63). The most significant contributors were the author M.S. Merry (5 publications), University of Malaya (26 publications), and Jurnal Pendidikan Islam (24 publications). The most globally cited document was "Unveiled Sentiments: Gendered Islamophobia and Experiences of Veiling among Muslim Girls in a Canadian Islamic School" by J. Zine, with 152 citations. Thematic analysis revealed four key research areas: Islamic Education and Pedagogy, Social and Cultural Perspectives, Comparative Studies and Global Perspectives, and Leadership and Governance. The study highlights gaps, including the need for comparative studies, inclusion of underrepresented regions, and exploration of pedagogical approaches, challenges, and policy implications. Addressing these gaps can enhance the understanding of Islamic religious schools and their role in providing alternative education globally.

**Keywords:** Islamic religious school; alternative education; bibliometric analysis; thematic analysis; global era

## 1. Introduction

Islamic religious schools, commonly known as *madrasa* (Hashim et al., 2011), *pesantren* (Assa'idi, 2021; Segaf et al., 2021) or *pondok* (Hashim et al., 2011; Porath, 2014), hold a significant place in the educational landscape of many Muslim-

majority countries and communities globally. These schools have been instrumental in preserving and promoting Islamic knowledge, values, and traditions for centuries. Rooted in the principles of Islam, Islamic religious schools serve as essential institutions for religious education and spiritual development, providing a unique and comprehensive approach to learning (Abd Rahman & Nurullah, 2015). In the global era, these schools have gained prominence as alternative education institutions characterized by increasing interconnectedness and cultural exchanges. Alternative education institutions are referred to as educational models that provide alternatives to mainstream educational systems (Sliwka, 2008). In addition, these institutions offer distinct approaches, curricula, and pedagogical methods, often tailored to specific cultural, religious, or philosophical values and beliefs. Accordingly, Islamic religious schools fall into this category as they provide education infused with Islamic teachings, values, and traditions (Hamid, 2018).

Within the context of the global era, where societies are influenced by rapid technological advancements and changing educational paradigms, Islamic religious schools are confronted with unique challenges and opportunities (Tolchah & Muammar, 2019). On the one hand, they must adapt to the changing educational needs and demands of Muslim communities within the globalized world. This may involve incorporating modern subjects, technology, and skills necessary for individuals to thrive in contemporary society (OECD, 2012). On the other hand, they must navigate the complexities of preserving their core religious teachings and values, ensuring that Islamic education remains an integral part of their curriculum (Aziz, 2022). Therefore, understanding the role and significance of Islamic religious schools as alternative education institutions in the global era is crucial as it allows us to explore how these schools address the evolving educational landscape, engage with emerging educational theories and practices (Sahin, 2018), and respond to the demands of Muslim communities within a globalized world.

Therefore, this research aims to conduct a bibliometric and thematic analysis of the scholarly literature on Islamic religious schools as alternative education institutions. By employing bibliometric techniques, the publication patterns, authorship trends, and collaboration networks within this field will be analysed. Additionally, a thematic analysis will be conducted to identify recurring themes, concepts, and research areas that have emerged from the scholarly discourse on this topic. Through this comprehensive analysis, the study seeks to provide insights into the evolving landscape of Islamic religious schools in the global era as well as the implications for education systems and societies.

To advance the current research on Islamic religious schools, it is crucial to acknowledge and address the existing gaps in the literature explicitly. Henceforth, a notable research gap is drawn pertaining to the absence of previous studies utilizing bibliometric analysis specifically in the context of Islamic religious schools. This gap in the literature indicates the need for comprehensive bibliometric investigations to gain insights into publication patterns, influential scholars, geographic distribution, and science mapping within this field.

To address this crucial research gap, the present study attempts to provide a comprehensive analysis of the existing literature on Islamic religious schools. By conducting this research, valuable insights can be obtained which can be utilized to inform policymakers, researchers, and industry practitioners about the distinctive characteristics, potential opportunities, and unexplored areas within the field of Islamic religious schools. Furthermore, the findings of this study will contribute to the current body of knowledge by identifying research gaps, suggesting future research directions, and presenting a comprehensive analysis of the scholarly landscape surrounding Islamic education. Consequently, the research questions guiding this study are as follows:

- RQ1: What are the current growth rate and trends of publications in Islamic religious schools?
- RQ2: Who are the leading scholars and affiliations in studies on Islamic religious schools?
- RQ3: What are the widely cited documents in the research on Islamic religious schools?
- RQ4: What are the emerging thematic research areas for future studies in the field of Islamic religious schools?

By addressing these research questions, this study aims to bridge the research gap, enhance understanding, and contribute valuable insights to the field of Islamic religious schools. The remaining sections are organized as follows: Section 2 outlines the methodology; Section 3 presents the results of the bibliometric analysis; Section 4 discusses the main Islamic religious school research themes; Section 5 outlines the research gaps and provides research directions; and Section 6 describes the limitations and offers the concluding remarks.

## 2. Methodology

The purpose of this bibliometric analysis in this study is to identify emerging research trends and the intellectual structure of the literature (Donthu et al., 2021). It uses mathematical and statistical methods to analyze the scientific literature in the specific topic (Büyükkıdık, 2022). The bibliometric analysis applies statistical tools to keyword statistics, author statistics, and journal statistics (Pinto et al., 2020). The analysis is divided into two parts as suggested by Donthu et al. (2021) in their bibliometric analysis toolkit. The first part focuses on performance analysis and the second part on the science mapping of the existing literature. In this paper, bibliometric analysis is carried out to analyse existing research on Islamic religious schools.

The results of the bibliometric analysis on Islamic religious schools are presented in the next section using the methodology proposed by Donthu et al. (2021). A total of 690 documents were retrieved from the Scopus database using the keywords "*Islamic religious school*" OR "*Islamic school*" OR "*pesantren*" OR "*madrassa*" OR "*pondok*" Or "*Islamic schooling*" on 3 July 2023 from 1928 to mid-2023. The Scopus database was used because of its low likelihood of article omissions compared to other databases (Uluyol et al., 2021). Moreover, it has a wider coverage of journals as compared to Web of Science (Singh et al., 2021).

After removing seven duplicate documents, 683 unique documents were left. To ensure the relevance of the selected articles, only peer-reviewed articles published in English were included. These articles covered various fields of studies, namely (a) social sciences, (b) art and humanities, (c) business, management, and accounting, (d) economics, econometrics, and finance and (e) psychology and were limited to the years 1995 to 2022. This resulted in a final selection of 306 articles. This time span was chosen because it provided the most accessible and available data as well as the fact that older publications might have limited data availability and accessibility. By excluding the year 2023 from the analysis, a more comprehensive and reliable dataset is ensured since data for that year might not be complete or fully available in databases such as Scopus. Subsequently, two independent researchers manually analysed each article to check its suitability with the research objectives. After a careful examination, it was found that several articles did not meet the research objectives, while some of them were missing the abstracts and keywords. Therefore, these nine articles in total were excluded, and 297 published journal articles were selected for the final analysis. This number of documents was sufficient for conducting bibliometric analysis (Rogers et al., 2020). A comprehensive overview of the researchers' selection process and criteria can be found in Figure 1: PRISMA workflow (Mundi & Kumar, 2023), which provides detailed steps undertaken to identify the final 297 studies included in this research from a pool of 690 documents.

For data visualization in this study, the Bibliometrix package of R-tool (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017) was utilized through the Biblioshiny software. Biblioshiny helps in conducting effective analysis on bibliometrics, focusing on co-citations, co-words, scientific collaboration, and coupling analysis (Biancone et al., 2020). The statistical analysis in this study enables the examination of existing research on Islamic religious schools. The results were interpreted through bibliometric analysis (key authors, journals, keywords, citations, and articles), and thematic analysis (co-occurrences, bibliographic coupling, co-citations, co-words). These findings were obtained after performing data cleaning and harmonization processes (Khusairi & Ahmi, 2021).

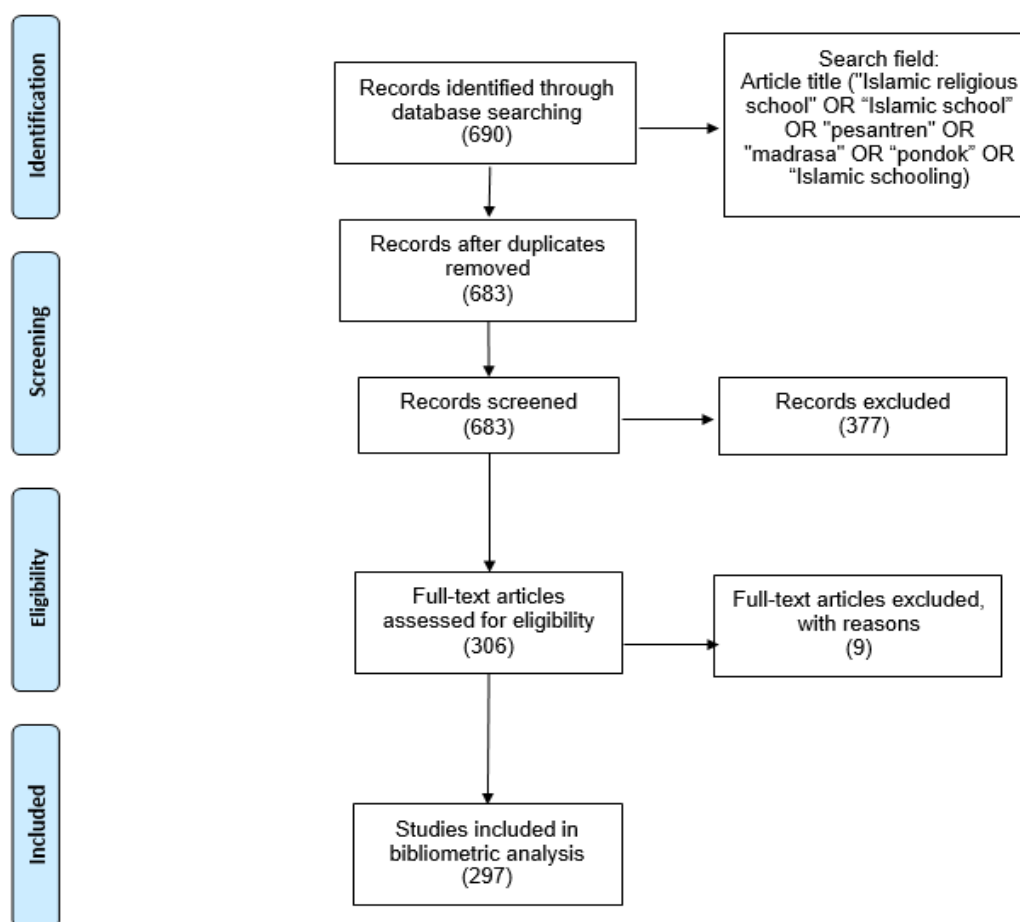


Figure 1: PRISMA Workflow

### 3. Finding

Table 1 shows the general information regarding the collection of selected articles from the bibliometrics tool in the R package (Biblioshiny) presented. The bibliometric analysis encompasses a dataset of 297 documents published between 1995 and 2022. These documents are authored by a total of 651 individuals, including 104 authors who contributed to single-authored documents and 547 authors who collaborated on multi-authored documents. The analysis reveals an annual growth rate of 16.58% in publications, indicating a growing interest in the topic over time. The average age of the documents is 5.52 years, suggesting that the majority of the research is relatively recent.

In terms of impact, each document comprised an average of 6.545 citations, indicating a moderate level of scholarly influence within the field. The total number of references cited across all documents is 13,238, highlighting the extensive range of research sources consulted. The content of the documents is characterized by 881 authors' keywords, representing a diverse range of themes and topics related to Islamic religious schools. Moreover, all 297 documents in the dataset are classified as articles. Additionally, the analysis reveals that 13.8% of the documents involved international co-authorship, highlighting collaborative research efforts across different countries. This comprehensive analysis provides insights into the research trends, authorship patterns, and international

collaboration within the field of Islamic religious schools as alternative education institutions.

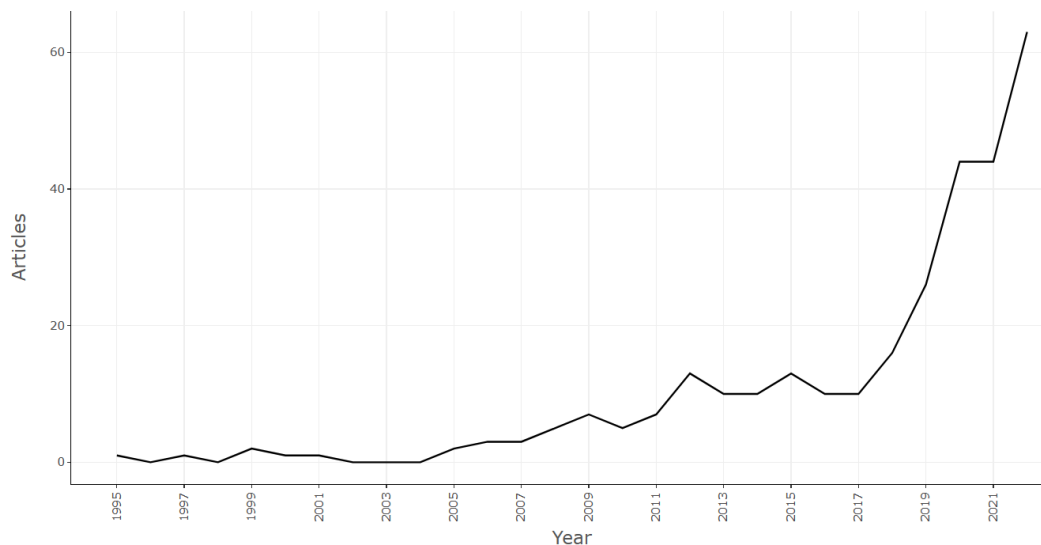
**Table 1. Basic Information**

Description	Results	Description	Results
Main Data Information		Authors & Authors' Collaboration	
Timespan	1995:2022	Authors	651
Documents	297	Authors of single-authored docs	104
Annual growth rate %	16.58	Authors of multi-authored docs	547
Document average age	5.52	Single-authored docs	116
Average citations per doc	6.545	Co-authors per doc	2.48
References	13238	International co-authorships %	13.8
Document contents		Document types	
Author's Keywords (DE)	881	Article	297

### Performance Analysis

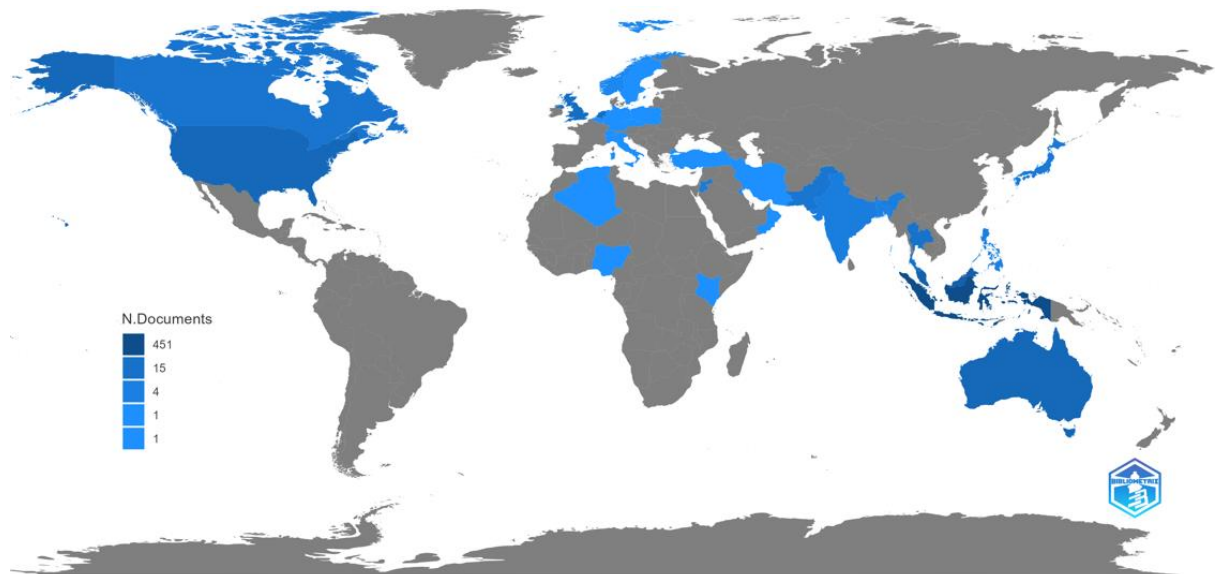
Figure 2 reveals distinct phases in the publication trends on the topic of Islamic religious schools. The initial exploration phase from 1995 to 1997 marked the beginning of scholarly interest with a limited number of articles published. This was followed by a fluctuating interest phase from 1998 to 2002, characterized by varying levels of attention to the topic. From 2003 to 2009, a steady growth phase emerged, indicating a sustained scholarly focus on Islamic religious schools as alternative education institutions. This was followed by a rapid expansion phase from 2010 to 2016, demonstrating a significant increase in publications and growing recognition of the topic's importance. Finally, there has been a significant acceleration in research activity, with a notable increase in scholarly attention and a substantial surge in the number of articles published, from 10 publications in 2017 to 63 publications in 2022.

These phases illustrate the evolving research landscape on Islamic religious schools, showing a shift from an initial phase of limited publications to steady growth. This was followed by rapid expansion marked by a significant increase in scholarly interest and publications on these institutions as alternative education providers. One of the earliest ground-breaking research projects on Islamic religious schools, commonly known as Islamic schools, was by Dwyer and Meyer (1995) who conducted a comparative analysis of how Islam was institutionalized in the Netherlands and the UK. Their study specifically examined the establishment of state-funded Islamic schools within these countries. Building on this research, Masu'di et al. (1997) further explored the topic by emphasizing the promotion and support of reproductive health rights within Indonesian pesantren. Additionally, Zaman (1999) contributed to the field by analyzing the narratives and rhetoric employed to shape educational reforms, highlighting the tensions and debates surrounding the modernization of religious education within madrasa institutions in British India and Pakistan.



**Figure 2: Annual Scientific Production on Islamic Religious Schools**

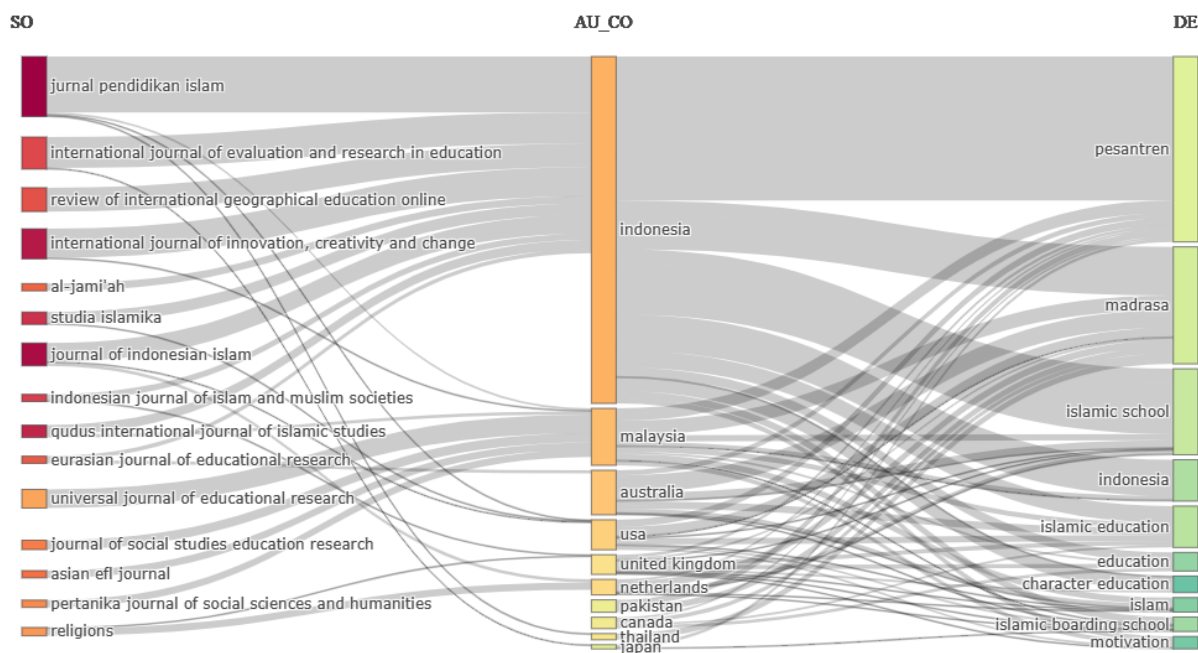
Figure 3 provides insights into the worldwide distribution of research output, with a specific focus on topics related to Islamic religious schools. Noteworthy contributors such as Indonesia and Malaysia exhibit a substantial research output, signalling an active involvement in scientific inquiry within the realm of Islamic education. This indicates a growing interest and scholarly engagement in comprehending the role of Islamic religious schools in the global era. Moreover, the notable presence of countries such as the Netherlands, the United Kingdom (UK), and Australia as contributors suggests a broader inclination towards alternative education models and approaches. This underscores the global acknowledgment of the significance and pertinence of alternative education institutions, including Islamic religious schools, in addressing educational complexities and catering to the diverse requirements of communities. Furthermore, the participation of countries such as Pakistan, Japan, Jordan, and India, among others, highlights a diverse array of perspectives and experiences in the field of alternative education and Islamic religious schools. This diversity in research output signifies a collective endeavour to explore and evaluate the role, impact, and potential of Islamic religious schools as alternative education institutions within the global context.



**Figure 3: Scientific Production per Country**

Figure 4 showcases a three-field plot that provides insights into the country, sources, and keywords associated with research on Islamic schools. The data highlights the active involvement of Indonesian researchers, who have explored diverse themes such as pesantren, madrasa, Islamic school, education, character education, and Islamic boarding school. Their research findings have predominantly been published in the *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* and the *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*. On the other hand, research originating from Malaysia has primarily focused on Islamic schools, Islam, and motivation, with publications mainly appearing in the *Universal Journal of Educational Research* and the *Journal of Social Studies Education Research*. Additionally, studies from Australia, the USA, and the UK have predominantly delved into topics of madrasa and Islamic education, with publications primarily appearing in the *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, and *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*. Overall, the dominant areas of study across all countries encompass pesantren, madrasa, Islamic school, Indonesia, education, and Islamic education within the realm of research related to Islamic religious schools.





**Figure 4: Three Field Plots**

Table 2 provides a comprehensive overview of the most relevant sources in the field of Islamic religious schools, considering their total articles, total citations, H-index, and publication year start. These sources hold valuable insights for research related to the topic. One such source is *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, which has published 24 articles since 2019, indicating a recent focus on Islamic education research. Despite its relatively low H-index of two (2), it has received 13 citations, suggesting a growing recognition of its scholarly contributions. The *Journal of Indonesian Islam* has demonstrated a strong impact in the field. It has published 15 articles and garnered 69 citations since 2008, reflecting its influence and relevance within the academic community. The journal's H-index of four (4) further indicates a substantial number of highly cited papers.

Other notable sources include the *Qodus International Journal of Islamic Studies*, which has published seven articles since 2019 and received 42 citations, and the *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, with six articles published since 2011 and 37 citations. These journals have made significant contributions to advancing research in the field of Islamic religious schools, as evidenced by their considerable citation counts. It is worth mentioning that sources such as the *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, the *Review of International Geographical Education Online*, and the *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, despite having fewer articles and citations, still contribute significantly to the field. With H-indices of two (2), these sources have published six articles each, demonstrating their commitment to publishing scholarly work related to Islamic religious schools.

In summary, these diverse sources, with varying publication years and levels of productivity and impact, collectively contribute to the body of knowledge in the field of Islamic religious schools. Researchers can rely on these sources to access

relevant and influential research studies, enabling them to stay informed and contribute to the advancement of the field.

**Table 2: Most Relevant Sources and Sources' Local Impact**

Sources	Total Articles	Total Citations	H Index	PY Start
Jurnal Pendidikan Islam	24	13	2	2019
Journal of Indonesian Islam	15	69	4	2008
International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change	7	25	3	2019
Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies	7	42	4	2019
Studia Islamika	7	15	3	1997
International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education	6	8	2	2021
Review of International Geographical Education Online	6	2	1	2021
Eurasian Journal of Educational Research	5	5	2	2021
Al-Jami'ah	4	16	2	2014
Asian EFL Journal	4	54	3	2015
Journal of Social Studies Education Research	4	32	2	2018
Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities	4	19	3	2016
Religions	4	8	2	2018
Universal Journal of Educational Research	4	5	2	2019

Table 3 provides insights into the most relevant authors in the field of research related to Islamic religious schools, considering their total articles, total citations, and H-indices. Among the notable authors, Merry from the Universiteit van Amsterdam in the Netherlands has published five articles and received 152 citations, showcasing their significant impact with an H-index of five (5). Asyhar from UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya in Indonesia has published four articles and received eight citations, indicating their contribution to the field.

Other authors who have made substantial contributions include Brooks from Monash University in Australia with four articles and 40 citations, and Driessen from Radboud University of Nijmegen in the Netherlands with four articles and 131 citations. These authors demonstrate their expertise and influence within the academic community, as reflected in their citation counts and H-indices.

Several authors from Indonesian institutions have also made noteworthy contributions. Harto from Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang, Mukminin from Universitas Jambi, and Yusuf from UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya have all published four articles each, with varying citation counts. This highlights their active involvement in researching Islamic religious schools in Indonesia.

Other authors, such as Abdalla from the University of South Australia and Asadullah from the University of Malaya in Malaysia, have also contributed significantly to the field. Although they have published fewer articles, their citation counts, and H-indices demonstrate their impact and relevance.

Overall, these authors, through their research contributions, have enriched the understanding of Islamic religious schools and their significance as the alternative education institutions. Their publications and citations reflect their influence within the scholarly community, making them valuable sources for researchers in this field.

**Table 3: Most Relevant Authors and Authors' Local Impact**

Authors	Affiliation	Country	Total Articles	Total Citations	H Index
Merry MS	Universiteit van Amsterdam, Netherlands	Netherlands	5	152	5
Asyhar AH	UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia	Indonesia	4	8	2
Brooks MC	Monash University, Clayton, Australia	Australia	4	40	4
Driessen G	Radboud University of Nijmegen, Netherlands	Netherlands	4	131	4
Harto K	Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang, Palembang, Indonesia	Indonesia	4	29	2
Mukminin A	Universitas Jambi, Jambi, Indonesia	Indonesia	4	28	2
Yusuf A	UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia	Indonesia	4	8	2
Abdalla M	University of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia	Australia	3	12	2
Asadullah MN	University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	Malaysia	3	45	3
Habibi A	Universitas Jambi, Jambi, Indonesia	Indonesia	3	27	2
Huda S	Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kediri, Indonesia	Indonesia	3	66	3
Ma'arif S	State Islamic University (UIN) Walisongo, Indonesia	Indonesia	3	32	2
Marzulina L	Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang, Palembang, Indonesia	Indonesia	3	28	2
Memon N	Razi Education, Toronto, Canada	Canada	3	41	3
Raihani	Sultan Syarif Kasim State Islamic University (UIN), Riau, Indonesia	Indonesia	3	22	2

Table 4 displays the analysis of the most relevant affiliations in the field of research related to Islamic religious schools which highlights several prominent institutions. The University of Malaya emerges as a leading affiliation, with 26 articles published, indicating its strong research presence in the field. Universitas Negeri Malang, the University of South Australia, and the International Islamic

University Malaysia also demonstrate notable contributions, with 15, nine, and nine articles published, respectively. These affiliations signify their active engagement and commitment to research in the field of Islamic religious schools.

Other relevant affiliations with significant research output include Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Monash University in Australia, and several universities from Indonesia such as Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Intan Lampung, Sultan Syarif Kasim State Islamic University, Universitas Gadjah Mada, and Universitas Islam Negeri Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu. Each of these institutions has made substantial contributions to the field, publishing a significant number of articles on Islamic religious schools.

The diverse range of affiliations represented in this analysis highlights the global participation and collaboration in research on Islamic religious schools. These affiliations serve as important hubs for scholarly activities and provide valuable resources for researchers interested in studying alternative education institutions within the context of Islam.

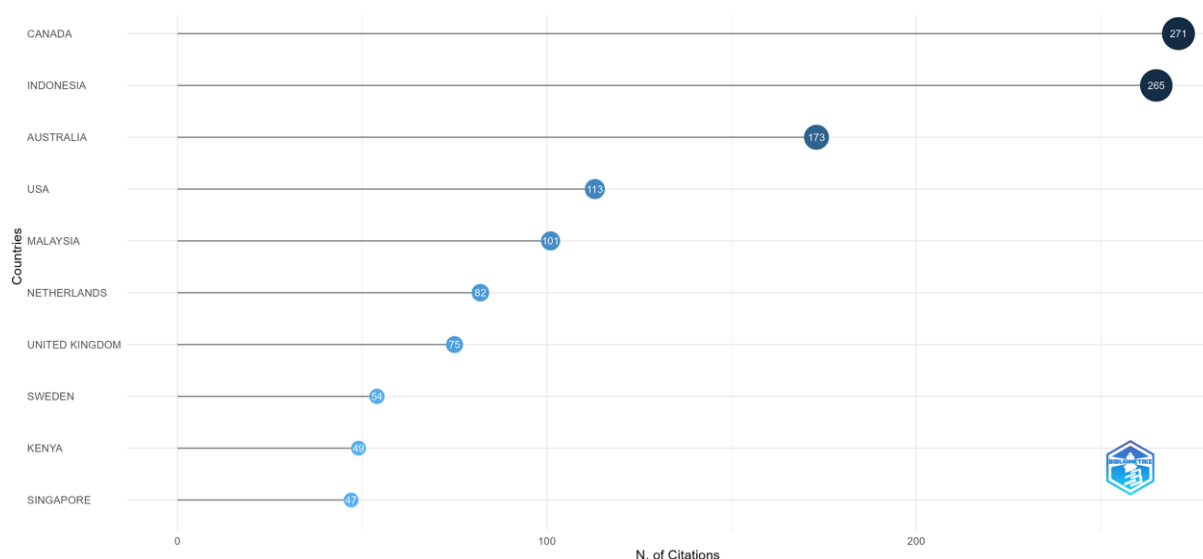
**Table 4: Most Relevant Affiliations**

<b>Affiliations</b>	<b>Articles</b>
University of Malaya	26
Universitas Negeri Malang	15
University of South Australia	9
International Islamic University Malaysia	9
Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta	9
Universiti Putra Malaysia	8
Monash University, Australia	7
Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Intan Lampung, Indonesia	7
Sultan Syarif Kasim State Islamic University	7
Universitas Gadjah Mada	7
Universiti Malaysia Kelantan	7
Universitas Islam Negeri Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu	6
Universitas Islam Riau	6
Universitas Airlangga	6
Indonesia University of Education	6

Figure 5 presents a bibliometric analysis of total citations (TC) for various countries in the context of research on Islamic religious schools. The data reveals variations in citation impact and recognition across countries, providing valuable insights into the research landscape. Among the countries examined, Canada stands out with the highest TC of 271 citations, indicating that research on Islamic religious schools as the alternative education institutions from Canada has gained significant citation recognition. This suggests a strong research focus and contribution from Canadian scholars and institutions in this field.

Furthermore, Indonesia demonstrates a substantial 265 number of citations related to the Islamic religious school field area. This suggests that research conducted in Indonesia on this topic has attracted attention and citations,

although the average impact per article may be comparatively lower. The rich Islamic educational tradition and the country's significant Muslim population might contribute to the attention received by Indonesian research. Figure 5 also highlights other countries, such as Australia, the United States and Malaysia, which show a moderate TC. This indicates that research on Islamic religious schools as alternative education institutions is being conducted and recognized on a global scale. The presence of citations suggests scholarly engagement and contribution to the academic discourse surrounding this topic in these countries.



**Figure 5: Most Cited Countries**

Table 5 reveals that the most globally cited document is *Unveiled sentiments: Gendered Islamophobia and experiences of veiling among Muslim girls in a Canadian Islamic school* by Zine (2006). Published in the *Journal Equity & Excellence in Education*, it has received a total of 152 citations and an average of 8.44 citations per year. This document explores the experiences of Muslim girls wearing veils in a Canadian Islamic school, shedding light on gendered Islamophobia. Other notable documents include *Religious education and the rhetoric of reform: The madrasa in British India and Pakistan* by Zaman (1999), with 65 citations and an average of 2.60 citations per year. It examines the madrasa system in the context of British India and Pakistan, focusing on religious education and reform.

*Evaluating the madrasa preschool program in East Africa: A quasi-experimental study* by Mwaura et al. (2008) has received 49 citations and an average of 3.06 citations per year. It presents a quasi-experimental study evaluating the effectiveness of the madrasa preschool program in East Africa. These and other documents contribute to the scholarly discourse surrounding Islamic schools, madrasas, and educational systems, exploring topics such as gendered experiences, policy, pedagogy, and equity. The citation counts provide an indication of their impact and influence within the academic community.

**Table 5: Most Globally Cited Document**

Author(s) / year	Title	Journal	Total Citations	TC per Year
Zine, J. / 2006	Unveiled sentiments: Gendered Islamophobia and experiences of veiling among Muslim girls in a Canadian Islamic school	Equity & Excellence in Education	152	8.44
Qasim Zaman, M / 1999	Religious education and the rhetoric of reform: The madrasa in British India and Pakistan	Comparative Studies in Society and History	65	2.60
Mwaura, P. A. M., Sylva, K. & Malmberg, L.-E. / 2008	Evaluating the madrasa preschool programme in East Africa: A quasi-experimental study	International Journal of Early Years Education	49	3.06
Zine, J. / 2007.	Safe havens or religious 'ghettos? Narratives of Islamic schooling in Canada	Race ethnicity and Education	49	2.88
Driessen, G., & Merry, M.S / 2006	Islamic schools in the Netherlands: Expansion or marginalization?	Interchange	49	2.72
Huda, S., Tsani, I., Syazali, M., Umam, R., & Jermittiparsert, K. / 2019	Retracted: The management of educational system using three law Auguste Comte: A case of Islamic schools	Management Science Letters	46	11.5
Merry, M. S. & Driessen, G. / 2005.	Islamic schools in three western countries: Policy and procedure	Comparative Education	44	2.32
Dwyer, C. & Meyer, A. / 1995.	The institutionalisation of Islam in the Netherlands and in the UK: The case of Islamic schools	Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies	35	1.21
Sabki, A. A. & Hardaker, G. / 2013	The madrasah concept of Islamic pedagogy	Educational Review	34	3.09
Gulson, K. N. & Webb, P. T. / 2012	Education policy racialisations: Afrocentric schools, Islamic schools, and the new enunciations of equity	Journal of Education Policy	30	2.50

### Science Mapping

#### Co-citation analysis

Figure 6 illustrates the results of co-citation analysis, which reveals six distinct clusters of co-citations. Cluster 1, denoted by red nodes, comprises leading scholars in the field of Islamic education, namely Merry and Zine. Their research encompasses various aspects of Islamic religious schools as alternative education institutions. They explore topics such as pedagogy, curriculum development, cultural identity, gender dynamics, and social issues affecting Muslim students within the school context.

Cluster 2, with blue nodes, consists of authors Driessen and Shadid, who provide localized perspectives on Islamic schooling. They focus on specific geographical

contexts or particular aspects of Islamic religious schools, such as their development and practices within certain countries or regions. Their research explores local educational policies, integration, and the relationship between Islamic schools and the broader community.

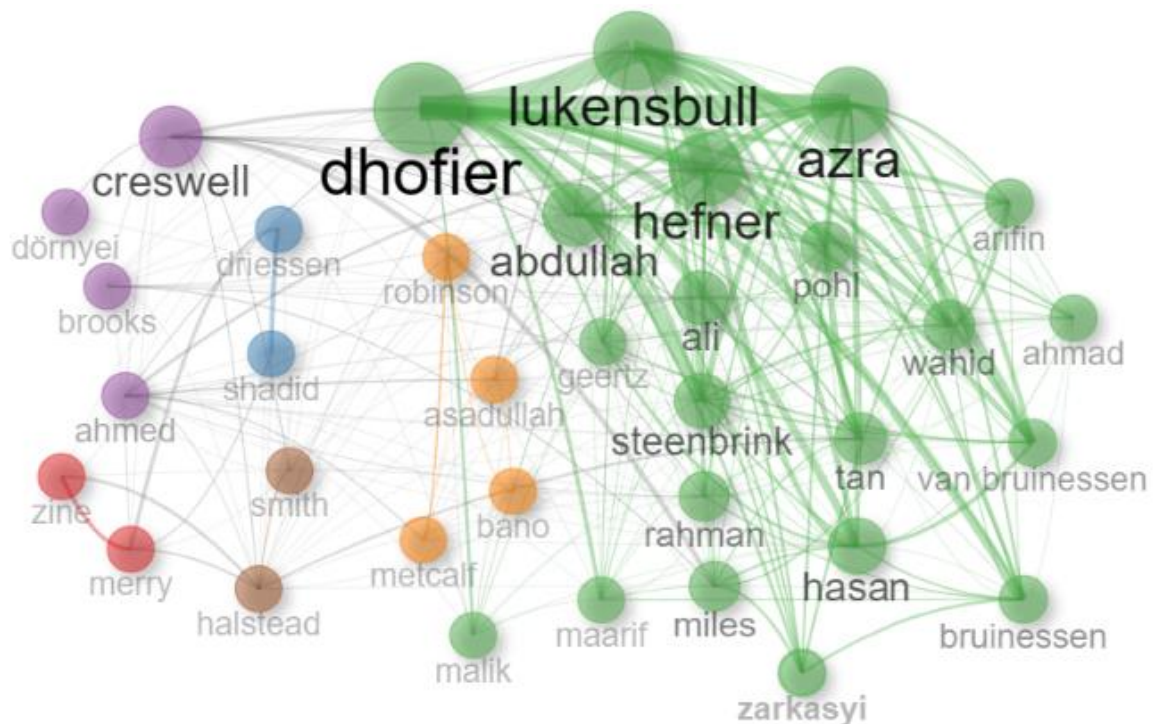
Authors within Cluster 3, represented by green nodes, cover a wide range of research topics related to Islamic religious schools. They delve into educational philosophy, conduct historical analyses, investigate educational management practices, explore religious education, and examine the social and cultural impacts of Islamic schools. Additionally, they investigate the role of Islamic schools in shaping identity and community.

Cluster 4 comprises green nodes, and is represented by Creswell, Brooks, and Ahmed, focuses on research methodology and comparative analysis in Islamic education. These authors explore various methodological approaches to studying Islamic religious schools, including qualitative and quantitative methods. They examine the impact of educational policies on these schools and conduct broader comparative analyses of Islamic education systems across different contexts.

Cluster 5, with orange nodes, comprises authors such as Asadullah, Bano, Metcalf, and Robinson, who specialize in the pedagogy of Islamic religious schools. Their research interests include investigating the socioeconomic outcomes of students attending these schools, exploring the empowering role of Islamic education for marginalized communities, examining the intersection of gender and religious education, and analysing the influence of Islamic values and teachings on educational practices.

Finally, Cluster 6, denoted by brown nodes, includes authors Smith and Halstead, who have made significant scholarly contributions to Islamic school research. Their work focuses on educational philosophy, curriculum development, pedagogical approaches, and the role of religious education in fostering holistic development and values-based learning within Islamic religious schools.

Overall, the presence of these clusters reflects a multidimensional and interdisciplinary approach to the study of Islamic religious schools, showcasing the diversity of research topics, methodologies, and perspectives within the field. The findings underscore the richness of scholarship and the ongoing efforts to enhance our understanding of Islamic education and its impact on students, communities, and society.



**Figure 6: Co-citation Network**

Figure 7 illustrates a chronological direct citation network that reveals the progression of research within the field of Islamic religious schools. Initially, Merry and Driessen (2005) conducted a comparative study on Islamic schools in three Western countries, focusing on policy and procedure. Subsequently, Shakeel (2018) addressed school choice issues and examined Islamic schooling in the Western culture. In another study, Abdalla et al. (2020) explored learner voices in Australian Islamic schools, emphasizing Islamic studies and educational reform. Similarly, Alshboul et al. (2021) investigated the role of parental beliefs and focus in improving the quality of Islamic schooling in the Western world. Expanding on this topic, Muslih (2021) examined the problem of integration in the Netherlands regarding Islamic schooling and migrant Muslims. Additionally, Selim and Abdalla (2022) explored motivation and engagement among non-Arab Muslim adolescent learners of Arabic at Australian Islamic schools.

Shifting the focus to the area of Islamic school leadership, Brooks and Ezzani (2022) proposed a framework for critical spirituality. In a different context, Isbah (2020) discussed the history and current developments of pesantren in Indonesia. Furthermore, Assa'idi (2021) examined the growth of pesantren in Indonesia and its impact on the social class status of *santri* (pesantren students). Similarly, Yusuf et al. (2021) investigated potential errors in the measurement results of madrasa admission instruments in Indonesia. Finally, Umar et al. (2022) explored the mathematics score gap between madrasa and non-madrasa students in Indonesia, examining the role of the opportunity to learn.

This chronological direct citation network highlights the evolving research landscape in the field of Islamic religious schools, encompassing various topics



such as policy, school choice, learner perspectives, parental beliefs, social integration, leadership, traditional Islamic boarding schools, measurement errors, and educational disparities. It demonstrates the expanding knowledge base within the field, incorporating both the Western and Indonesian contexts.

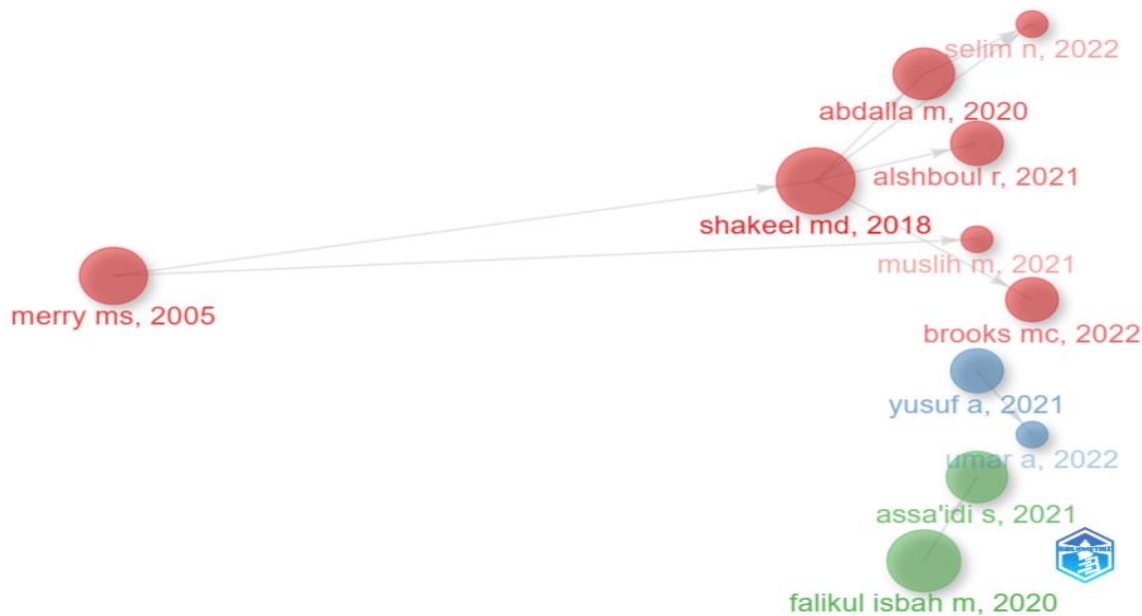
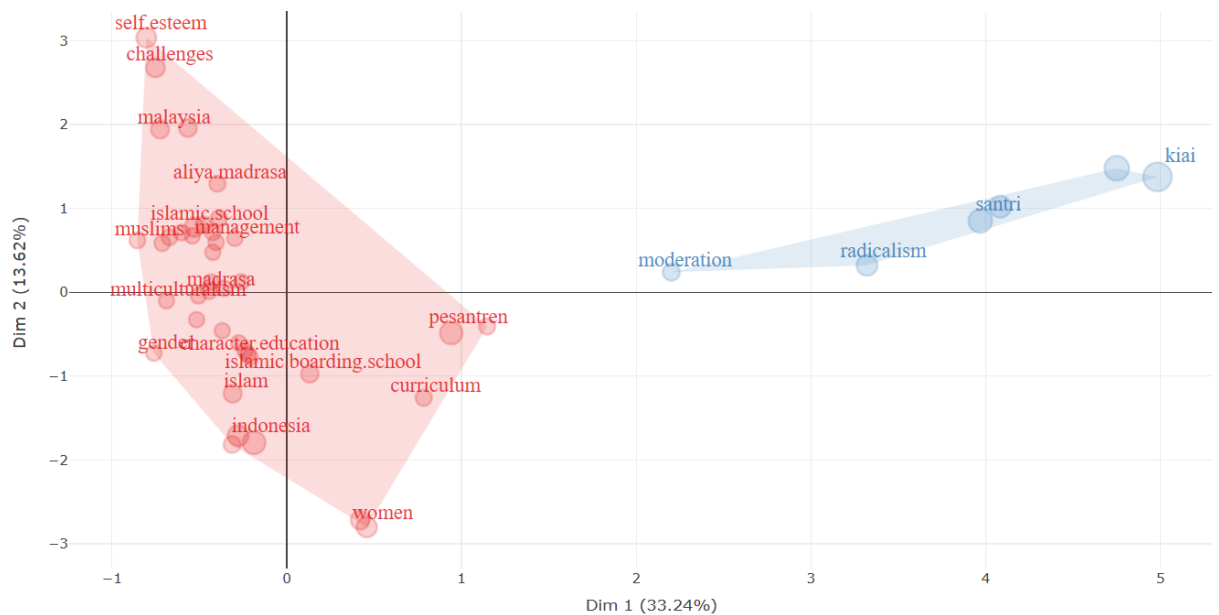


Figure 7: Direct Citation Network

### Bibliographic coupling

The term “factorial map” is presented in Figure 8, which displays terms that are clustered around categories within two distinct clusters. The first cluster is comprised of studies that focus on Islamic school, gender, women, character education, multicultural education, management, self-esteem, challenges, pesantren, madrasa, Islamic boarding school, curriculum, Muslim, aliya madrasa, Indonesia, and Malaysia. The second cluster, which is relatively smaller but up to date, includes studies that investigate moderation, radicalism, santri and *kiai* (religious leaders). Overall, Figure 8 provides a visual representation of the clustering of research variables around categories and their relative importance within both distinct clusters.

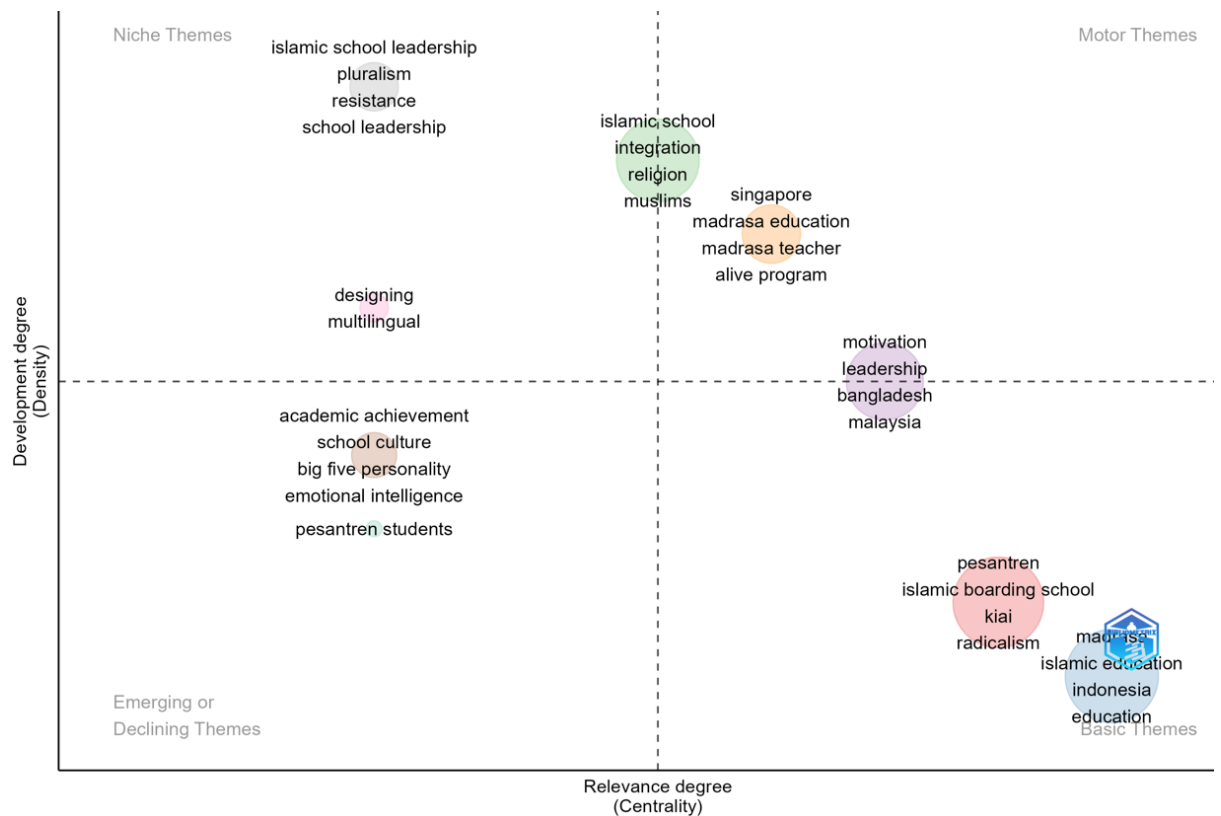


**Figure 8: Multiple Correspondence Analysis-Conceptual Structure Map**

Figure 9 presents a thematic map that highlights the primary themes in research on Islamic religious schools. The analysis reveals themes such as pesantren, Islamic boarding school, kiai, radicalism, madrasa, education, Islamic education, Indonesia, and education. It is important to note that these themes are interconnected and currently remain relatively underdeveloped within the field of study. Additionally, themes such as academic achievement, school culture, big five personality traits, emotional intelligence, and the experiences of pesantren students are considered weaker and are either emerging or declining in terms of research attention.

Thematic analysis shows that the current research on Islamic religious schools primarily focuses on themes such as Islamic school leadership, pluralism, resistance, curriculum design, and multilingual education. These areas serve as key areas of investigation within the field. Moreover, the thematic map identifies motor themes that have achieved a higher level of development and have made significant contributions to the field of Islamic religious school research. These motor themes include Singapore, madrasa education, madrasa teachers, and the ALIVE program, indicating well-established areas of inquiry with notable influence.

Figure 9 shows the primary themes in research on Islamic religious schools. There is a growing momentum and emphasis on themes such as Islamic schools, integration, religion, Muslims, motivation, leadership, Bangladesh, and Malaysia. These themes have gained prominence and serve as focal points within the research on Islamic religious schools. In summary, the thematic map indicates both the interconnectedness of these themes and their varying levels of development. It further provides insights into the current research landscape, highlighting areas of focus and emerging trends within the field.

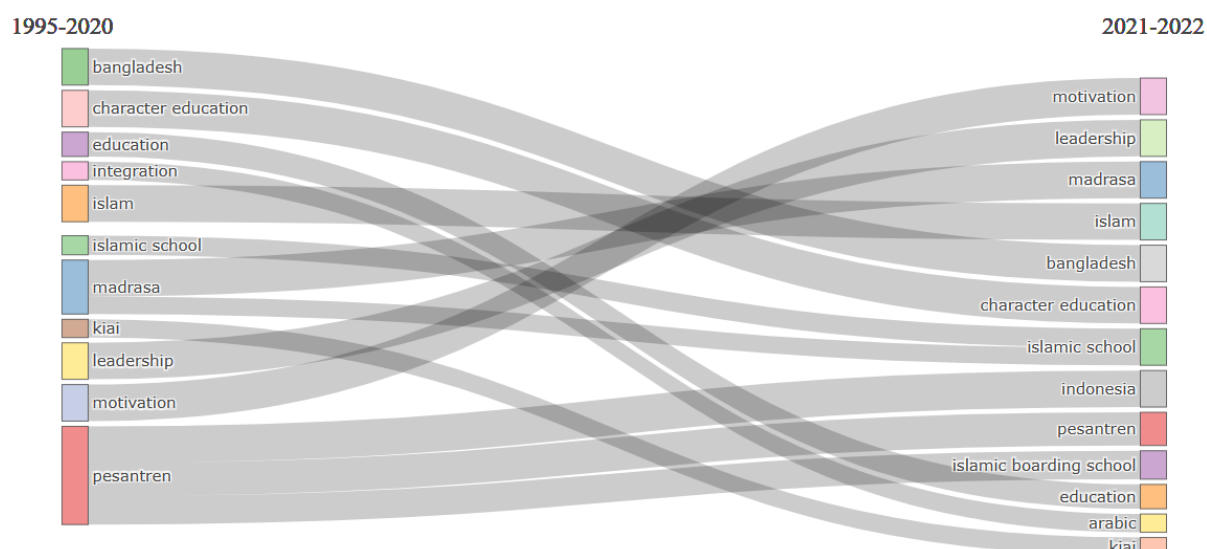


**Figure 9: Thematic Map**

Figure 10 visually represents the thematic evolution of Islamic religious school research. Phase 1, occurring prior to 2021, uncovered the foundational terms and themes that shaped this field of study. These included education, character education, leadership, Islamic education, madrasa, motivation, and pesantren. Scholars delved into various aspects within these themes, such as curriculum design, pedagogical approaches, leadership dynamics, student motivation, and the unique characteristics of Islamic religious schools as alternative educational institutions. This initial phase laid the groundwork for comprehending the essential components of Islamic religious schools and their role as alternatives to mainstream education.

Phase 2, spanning from 2021 to 2022, exhibited significant shifts and refinements in the thematic landscape of Islamic religious school research. Notable terms and themes that emerged during this phase consisted of Bangladesh, Islamic boarding schools, education, character education, leadership, Islamic education, madrasa, motivation, and pesantren. These reflected the evolving research trends and a growing focus on specific areas within the field. Scholars sought to understand the educational practices and challenges in Bangladesh, examine the distinctive aspects of Islamic boarding schools, explore the interplay between education and character development, and investigate the dynamics of leadership within Islamic religious schools. This phase demonstrated a more nuanced and contextually oriented exploration of Islamic religious schools as alternative education institutions in the global era.

Notably, Brooks and Ezzani (2022), Najah et al. (2021), Nursaid (2020) and Tanjung (2022) have specifically explored the dynamics of leadership style, models, and management in Islamic schools. These studies provide evidence that the themes related to leadership in Islamic religious schools continue to be significant areas of focus in current research. Additionally, the works by Komarudin (2021), Sari et al. (2020) and Syarnubi et al. (2021) have emphasized character education and development within Islamic schools. This further substantiates the continued importance of character education as a primary research theme in the field of Islamic religious schools. This proves that the themes of research related to leadership and character education are still among the main focuses of current Islamic religious school studies.



**Figure 10: Thematic Evolution**

### Word and co-word analysis

Figure 11 reveals the prominent terms and their frequencies within the research on Islamic religious schools. The high frequency of terms such as pesantren, madrasa, Islamic school, and Islamic education underscores their significance in the research on Islamic religious schools. These terms represent the core aspects of the educational model and practices within Islamic religious schools. The presence of terms such as character education, motivation, leadership, and integration indicates the research focus on examining key factors contributing to the effectiveness and relevance of Islamic religious schools as alternative educational institutions.



Figure 11: Word Cloud

The co-occurrence network depicted in Figure 12 illustrates the relationships among keywords organized into six distinct clusters. Cluster 1, represented by red nodes and labelled "Integration and Muslims," encompasses terms such as integration and Muslims. These terms pertain to the broader context of Islamic religious school research, underscoring the significance of comprehending integration processes and the experiences of Muslim individuals within educational settings. Cluster 2, indicated by blue nodes and named "Madrasa and Pedagogy," includes terms such as madrasa, Islamic education, pedagogy, Singapore, religious diversity, and architecture. These terms represent essential elements of Islamic educational systems, encompassing the role of madrasas, pedagogical approaches, the influence of diverse religious backgrounds, and specific geographical considerations, such as studying Islamic educational institutions in Singapore and their architectural aspects.

Cluster 3, denoted by green nodes and labelled "Islamic School and Multiculturalism," focuses on the Islamic school as a key theme. This cluster underscores the exploration of the distinctive characteristics and practices of Islamic schools as alternative education institutions, while also demonstrating an interest in examining how these schools accommodate and promote cultural diversity within their educational environments. Cluster 4, represented by purple nodes and named "Pesantren and Social Dynamics," encompasses a range of terms such as pesantren, Islamic boarding school, kiai, radicalism, santri, women, democracy, Islamism, madura, moderation, and others. These terms shed light on various dimensions within Islamic religious schools, including traditional Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), the influential role of kiai, social and political aspects such as radicalism and democracy, and the experiences of different groups within Islamic education settings.

Cluster 5, depicted by orange nodes and labelled "Indonesia and Islamic Education," consists of terms such as Indonesia, education, and Islam. This cluster

highlights the broader context of studying Islamic education in Indonesia and exploring the intersections between education and Islam within the specific geographical and cultural landscape of Indonesia. Cluster 6, represented by brown nodes and named "Madrasa Education and ALIVE Program," concentrates on terms such as madrasa education and ALIVE program. This cluster signifies a specific research focus on studying the educational programs and initiatives within madrasas, including the ALIVE program. These clusters demonstrate the diverse research areas within the realm of Islamic education, emphasizing the need for further exploration of topics such as integration, pedagogy, cultural diversity, leadership, and contextual nuances in different regions.

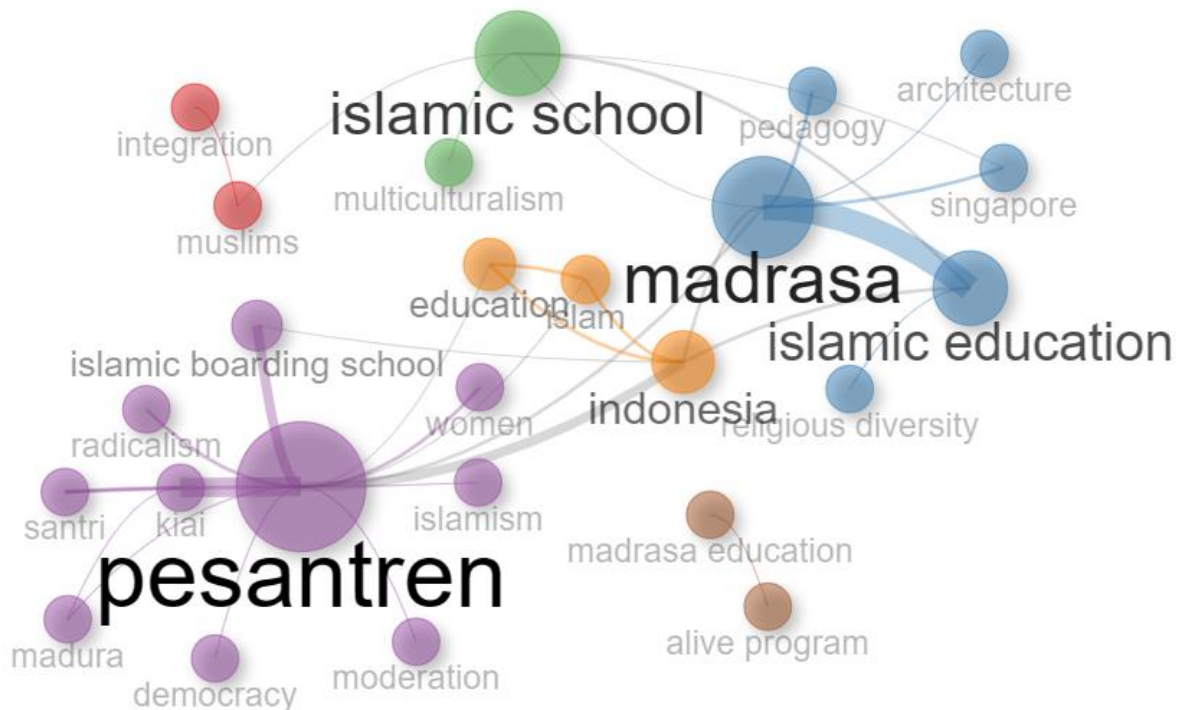


Figure 12: Co-Occurrence Network

According to Figure 13, character education, pesantren, Islamic boarding school, motivation, madrasa, and Islamic education are the trending topics in research related to Islamic religious school. Character education, despite having a relatively lower frequency compared to other terms, demonstrates a consistent presence throughout the years. This indicates an enduring interest in exploring the development of character traits and moral values within Islamic educational settings.

Pesantren and Islamic boarding schools emerge as key topics, with considerable frequencies. These terms represent traditional Islamic educational institutions that provide comprehensive religious and academic education. The sustained research focusing on pesantren and Islamic boarding schools highlights their significance as alternative educational options within the Islamic education landscape.

Motivation, although discussed less frequently, shows a notable presence in recent years. This suggests a growing interest in understanding the factors that drive and influence student motivation within Islamic educational contexts.

Madrasa and Islamic education, with relatively higher frequencies, indicate a sustained and increasing research focus. Madrasa refers to Islamic educational institutions, while Islamic education encompasses a broader understanding of educational practices within an Islamic framework. The prominence of these terms reflects the ongoing exploration of curriculum, pedagogy, and the integration of Islamic teachings within educational systems.

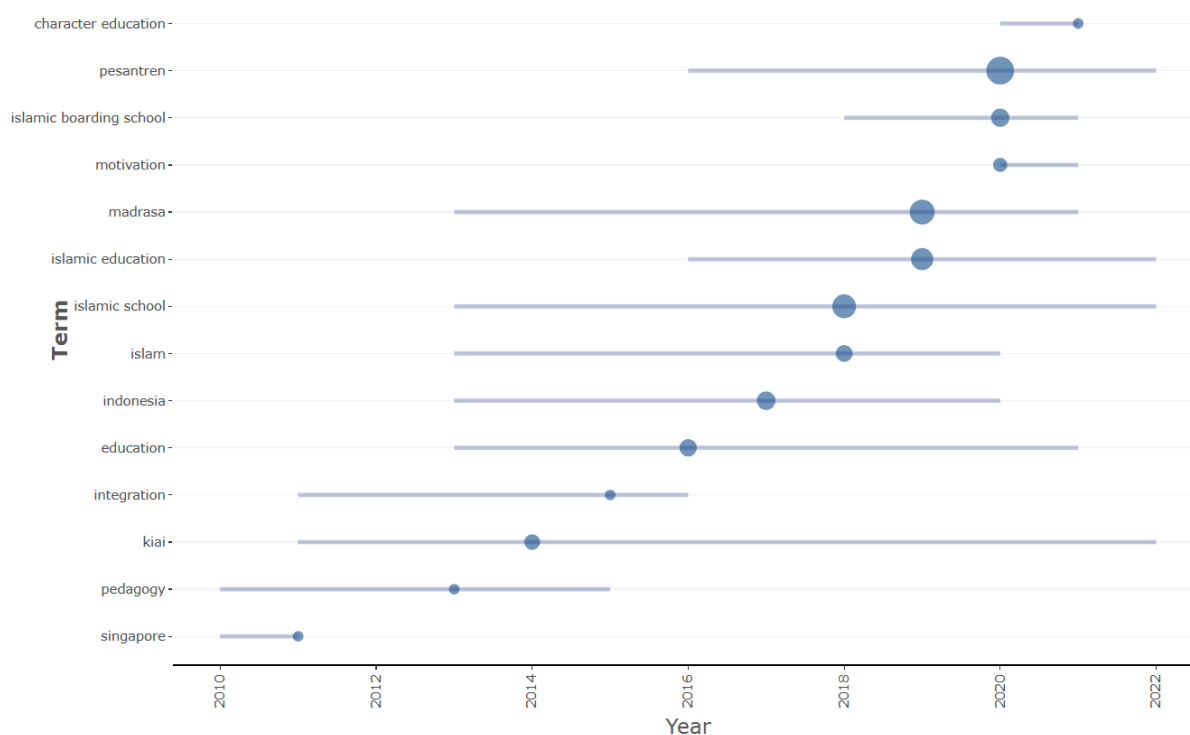


Figure 13: Trend Topics

#### 4. Thematic Analysis and Discussions

This section divides the existing studies into four major themes, namely Islamic education and pedagogy, social and cultural perspectives, comparative studies and global perspectives, and leadership and governance. Table 6 lists key elements under discussion in the themes identified from the literature on Islamic religious school. The thematic map and evolution presented in Figures 9 and 10 provided guidelines for the initial classification of existing studies, and further analysis led to the evolution of themes.

##### Islamic Education and Pedagogy

This theme covers topics such as pesantren, Islamic boarding schools, kiai, madrasa, Islamic education, and curriculum design. It focuses on exploring teaching methods, curriculum development, educational philosophy, and the integration of Islamic teachings into various subjects within Islamic religious schools (Arbain et al., 2024; Fajar et al., 2024). Researchers investigate different pedagogical approaches used in Islamic religious schools (Hardaker & Sabki,

2015; Ma'Arif, 2018) such as student-centred learning, memorization-based methods, and the blending of traditional and modern instructional strategies. Baharun et al. (2022) and Gamhra-Oui (2022) also explored curriculum design and development processes that incorporate both religious and secular knowledge. Uyuni and Adnan (2020) provided a comprehensive survey of Islamic education literature, discussing various aspects of Islamic education, including teaching methods, curriculum design, and the philosophical foundations of Islamic education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Social and Cultural Perspectives**

This theme includes topics such as radicalism, education, school culture, and experiences of pesantren students. It examines the social and cultural aspects of Islamic religious schools, including their impact on students' religious development, academic achievement, and socialization processes (Mansir, 2022; Suradi, 2022). Researchers investigated the influence of Islamic religious schools on students' beliefs, values, and behaviours, as well as the role of school culture in shaping students' experiences and identity formation (Rohman & Muhtamiroh, 2022). Sadiyah (2022) also probed the presence and implications of radical ideologies within Islamic religious schools, addressing factors that contribute to radicalization and strategies for countering radicalism.

### **Comparative Studies and Global Perspectives**

This theme encompasses topics such as Indonesia, Singapore, Bangladesh, Malaysia, and other countries. It involves comparing Islamic religious schools across different countries (Badrakhan et al., 2021) and analysing the similarities, differences, challenges, and opportunities they face in the global era (Kultsum et al., 2022). Researchers conducted comparative analyses of Islamic religious schools, examining educational policies, curriculum frameworks, teaching methods, and the broader socio-political contexts in which these schools operate. They explored how Islamic religious schools adapt and respond to the challenges and opportunities presented in different countries, addressing issues related to educational quality, religious identity, and the integration of Islamic and secular knowledge (Merry & Driessen, 2005).

### **Leadership and Governance**

This theme focuses on topics such as Islamic school leadership, pluralism, resistance, and the role of madrasa teachers. It delves into leadership practices, governance structures, and the challenges and strategies involved in leading Islamic religious schools effectively (Najah et al., 2021). Researchers examined the qualities and competencies of Islamic school leaders, their approaches to decision-making and school management, and the ways in which they navigate issues related to religious pluralism and resistance to educational reforms (Brooks & Ezzani, 2022). They also investigated the role of madrasa teachers in shaping the educational experiences and outcomes of students (Tanjung, 2022), addressing issues of teacher training, professional development, and pedagogical approaches (Kristiawan et al., 2022).



**Table 6: Present Status of Focus of Research on Islamic Religious Schools**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Elements under Discussion</b>
Islamic Education and Pedagogy	Teaching methods in Islamic religious schools, Curriculum development and design, Philosophical foundations of Islamic education, Integration of Islamic teachings in various subjects, Pedagogical approaches in pesantren and Islamic boarding schools.
Social and Cultural Perspectives	Impact of Islamic religious schools on students' religious development, Influence of Islamic education on students' academic achievement, Socialization processes within Islamic religious schools, School culture and its role in shaping students' experiences, Examination of radicalism and its manifestations within Islamic religious schools.
Comparative Studies and Global Perspectives	Comparative analysis of Islamic religious schools across different countries, Similarities and differences in educational practices and approaches, Challenges and opportunities faced by Islamic religious schools in the global era, Examination of educational policies and regulations in different contexts, Role of Islamic religious schools in shaping religious and cultural identities in different societies.
Leadership and Governance	Practices and challenges in Islamic school leadership, Governance structures and decision-making processes in Islamic religious schools, Pluralism and diversity management within Islamic religious schools, Resistance and adaptation to societal changes and educational reforms, Role and professional development of madrasa teachers.

## 5. Research Gaps and Directions for Future Research

In summary, there is ample evidence for exploring different aspects of Islamic religious school, and this review highlights possible research gaps and directions for future research on this field. Therefore, seven research gaps in the field of Islamic religious school are identified as alternative education institution in the global era.

1. Comparative analysis across diverse contexts: While the existing research includes comparative studies of Islamic religious schools (Badrakhan et al.; Merry & Driessen, 2005), there is still a need for more extensive and in-depth comparisons across diverse geographical, cultural, and socio-political contexts. Future research should explore the similarities and differences in educational practices, curriculum frameworks, teaching methods, and the adaptation of Islamic religious schools in different countries. This is to provide a broader understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by these schools in various global contexts.
2. Inclusion of underrepresented regions and countries: The current literature focuses on Islamic religious schools in countries such as Indonesia (Muafiah et al., 2022, Wulandari et al., 2022), Malaysia (Ghani et al., 2021), Bangladesh

- (Chowdhury, 2022) and Singapore (Nor et al., 2017). However, there are other regions and countries with significant Islamic educational institutions that have received limited attention in research. Future studies should also involve Islamic religious schools in underrepresented regions, such as Africa, the Middle East, Europe, and North America, to provide a more comprehensive global perspective on alternative Islamic education.
3. Examination of pedagogical approaches and educational outcomes: While the existing literature mentions pedagogical approaches (Zakharia, 2017) used in Islamic religious schools, there is a research gap in understanding the effectiveness and educational outcomes associated with these approaches. Future research should delve deeper into the examination of teaching methods, curriculum design, and their impact on student learning, academic achievement, and holistic development. This should contribute to the improvement and refinement of pedagogical practices in Islamic religious schools.
  4. Exploration of contemporary issues and challenges: The existing literature touches on various contemporary issues within Islamic religious schools, such as radicalism (Warsah, 2021), social integration (Assa'idi, 2021; Budiharso & Suharto, 2022), and leadership (Samsu et al., 2021). However, there is scope for further investigation into these topics, along with emerging issues such as digital technology integration, gender dynamics, social justice, inclusivity, and the impact of globalization on Islamic education. Research focusing on these contemporary issues can shed light on the evolving nature of Islamic religious schools in the global era.
  5. Longitudinal studies and impact assessment: Many of the existing studies provide snapshots of the current state of Islamic religious schools; however, there is a need for longitudinal studies that examine the long-term impact of these institutions on students (Annur et al., 2022), communities (Zaki et al., 2022), and society (Ma' Arif, 2019). Future research should adopt longitudinal approaches to assess the educational, social, and cultural outcomes of students who attend Islamic religious schools. This can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness and long-term implications of alternative Islamic education.
  6. Intersectionality and diversity within Islamic religious schools: Islamic religious schools are known to cater to diverse student populations with various backgrounds, including gender, socioeconomic status, cultural heritage, and linguistic diversity (Raihani, 2012). However, the existing literature does not extensively address the intersectionality and diversity within these institutions. Future research should explore the experiences and challenges faced by diverse student groups within Islamic religious schools, including gender dynamics, socioeconomic disparities, and the promotion of inclusivity and multicultural education.
  7. Policy implications and educational reform: While some studies touch on educational policies and reforms within Islamic religious schools (Gulson & Webb, 2012; Rowe, 2020), further research can examine the policy implications and recommendations for enhancing the quality, equity, and relevance of Islamic education. This can contribute to evidence-based policy-

making and educational reform efforts aimed at improving Islamic religious schools as alternative education institutions.

By addressing these research gaps and exploring the identified future directions, scholars can further enhance the understanding of Islamic religious schools as alternative education institutions in the global era and contribute to the development of effective and inclusive educational practices within these institutions.

## **6. Concluding Remarks and Limitations**

This bibliometric and thematic analysis of research on Islamic religious schools as alternative education institutions in the global era has shed light on the multidimensional and interdisciplinary nature of this field. The analysis reveals key themes, such as Islamic education and pedagogy, social and cultural perspectives, comparative studies and global perspectives, and leadership and governance. The findings demonstrate the richness and diversity of scholarship in this area, addressing topics such as curriculum design, student experiences, policy implications, and the intersection of Islamic teachings with contemporary issues. However, several research gaps and areas for future exploration have also been identified, highlighting the need for further comparative studies across diverse contexts, inclusion of underrepresented regions and countries, examination of pedagogical approaches and educational outcomes, exploration of contemporary challenges, longitudinal studies, investigation of intersectionality and diversity, and policy implications and educational reform. By addressing these gaps, researchers can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of Islamic religious schools and their role in providing alternative education in the global era.

Despite the valuable insights provided by the bibliometric and thematic analysis conducted on research related to Islamic religious schools as alternative education institutions in the global era, it is important to acknowledge several limitations. Firstly, the analysis is subjected to data selection bias as it relies on the availability and inclusion of relevant research publications, potentially overlooking valuable studies. Additionally, language bias may be present since the analysis primarily focuses on English-language publications, potentially excluding non-English literature. Methodological limitations are inherent to the bibliometric and thematic analysis approach as subjective interpretation and coding can introduce variations in the results. The temporal scope of the analysis is limited to the available literature up until the present date, thereby potentially missing new research publications. Moreover, contextual specificity needs to be considered, as the nature and practices of Islamic religious schools can vary significantly across different regions and cultural contexts. Research bias within the existing literature and the lack of generalizability to all Islamic religious schools worldwide are additional limitations to be mindful of. By acknowledging these limitations, researchers can critically evaluate and strengthen their own studies, promoting further exploration and refinement of research on Islamic religious schools in the global era.

## 7. Acknowledgement

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