

## Traces of Islamic Education and Archipelago Culture Research in Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam: A Bibliometric Analysis

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**Abstract:** This study aims to analyze the dynamics and research trends of Islamic education and Nusantara culture in Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam using a bibliometric approach. The focus of the analysis is to identify patterns of collaboration, thematic evolution, and research gaps within the international literature. Data were obtained from the Scopus database covering publications from 2013 to 2023 and analyzed using VOSviewer version 1.6.20. The analysis employed four main indicators: co-authorship, co-occurrence of keywords, overlay visualization, and density visualization. The results reveal five main clusters representing research foci, namely Islamic education, Malay civilization, cultural heritage, Islamic leadership, and digital learning. Temporal trends indicate a paradigm shift from normative studies such as religious values to contemporary issues including digital Islamic learning and heritage management. Furthermore, the density mapping highlights Islamic education as the central domain connecting various related themes. These findings demonstrate that Islamic education plays a strategic role in preserving Malay cultural identity and shaping Islamic civilization in Southeast Asia. The study recommends strengthening international academic collaboration and expanding research in digital Islamic education and comparative studies as future directions for knowledge development.

**Keywords:** islamic education, malay culture, bibliometric analysis, vosviewer,

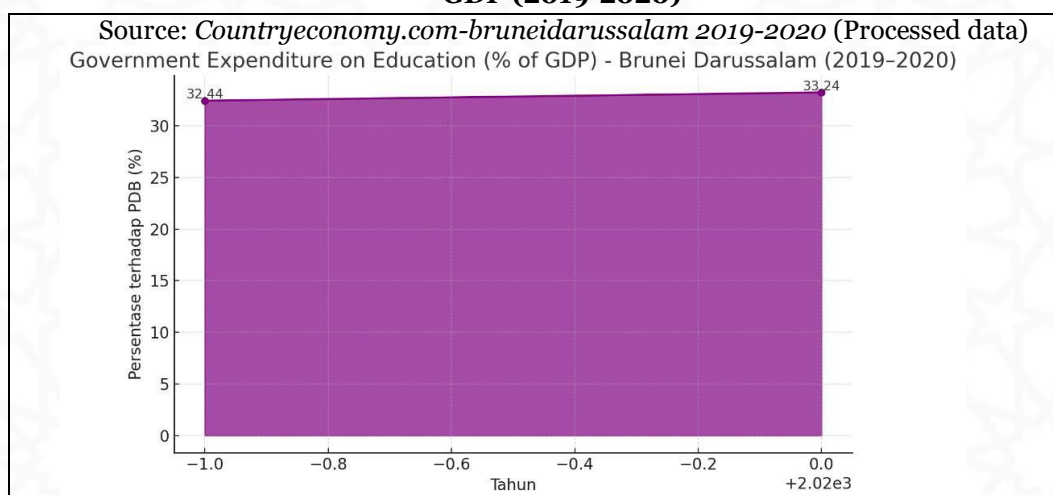


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## Introduction

Islamic education and the culture of the archipelago are two entities that are deeply intertwined in shaping the social and spiritual identity of communities in Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam. Both are not only the foundation of civilization, but also play an important role in building a religious and cultured national character. In the context of Indonesia, Islamic education serves as an instrument for moral, intellectual, and social development that has continued to evolve from the era of Islamic boarding schools to the modern era of Islamic boarding schools ( . Meanwhile, in Brunei Darussalam, the education system is oriented towards the integration of Islamic values and Malay traditions as embodied in the concept of Melayu Islam Beraja (MIB), which is the national philosophy and the basis of the country's education policy (Syukron Darsyah, 2023) . This ideology reflects a harmonious blend of Islamic teachings and local values that shape the character of Brunei's religious and cultured society. However, the dynamics of globalization, digitalization, and modernization pose new challenges to the existence of Islamic values and local culture. Therefore, studies on the traces of Islamic education and the culture of the archipelago are important to understand how these two aspects remain relevant in the face of global change.

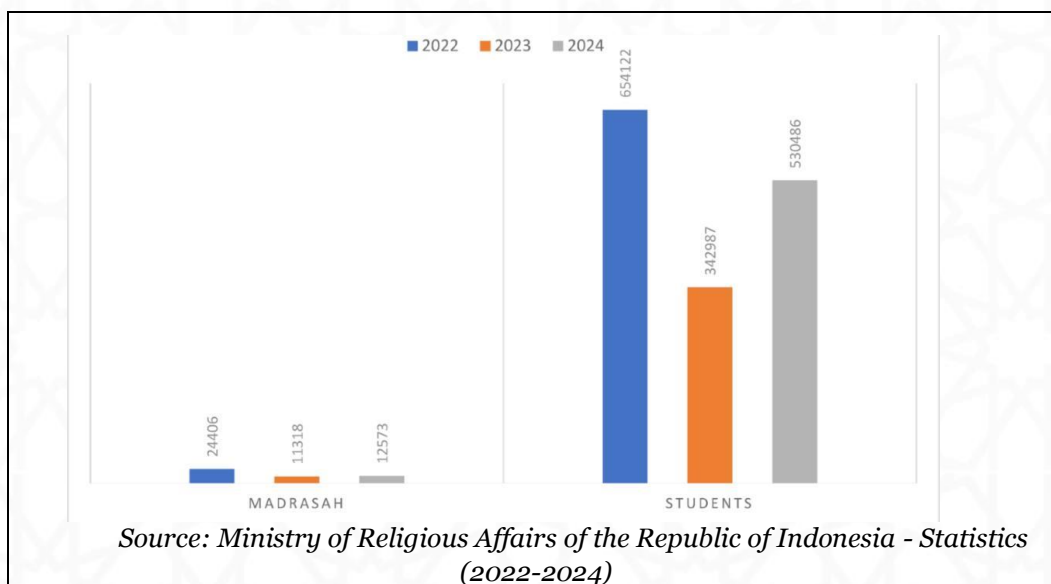
**Figure 1.1 Trend of Brunei Darussalam Government Expenditure on Education GDP (2019-2020)**



The data shows an increasing trend in Brunei Darussalam's government spending on the education sector during the 2019–2020 period. In 2019, the percentage of expenditure relative to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was recorded at 32.44%, increasing to 33.24% in 2020. This increase illustrates the Brunei government's ongoing commitment to strengthening the national education system as part of a human resource development strategy based on Islamic values and Malay culture.

Historical records show that Islam did not arrive in the Nusantara region through warfare, but rather through peaceful proselytizing and intense cultural interaction. Merchants and scholars played an important role in spreading Islamic teachings that adapted to local values and shaped a distinctive form of Islam in this region (Halim & Pelawi, 2024) . In Brunei, the process of Islamization began through trade contacts with Arab and Southeast Asian merchants, which was then continued by scholars and reinforced by the political legitimacy of the sultanate (Susila et al., 2024) . Meanwhile, in Indonesia, the acculturation between Islamic teachings and local traditions gave birth to an inclusive and contextual model of Islam, known as "Islam Nusantara" (Winoto & Nuraeni, 2023) . This phenomenon confirms that Islam is not only a religion but also a cultural and intellectual force that shapes the social structure and education system in this region. By understanding these historical and cultural roots, this study positions Islamic education as an integral part of a culture that continues to evolve with the times.

**Figure 1.2 Development of the Number of Madrasahs and Students in Indonesia (2022-2024)**



The data shows the development of the number of madrasahs and madrasah students in Indonesia over the last three years (2022–2024). In 2022, there were 24,406 madrasahs with 654,122 registered students. This number decreased in 2023 to 11,318 madrasahs and 342,987 students, but increased again in 2024 to 12,573 madrasahs and 530,486 students. These fluctuations illustrate the dynamics within the Islamic education system in Indonesia, both in terms of the number of institutions and student participation rates. The upward trend in recent years indicates a revitalization of Islamic educational institutions as part of efforts to strengthen the quality and accessibility of religious-based education at the national level.

The education systems in Brunei Darussalam and Indonesia share fundamental similarities in their orientation toward Islamic values, but differ in their forms and implementation policies. Brunei has established three main pillars of its national education system, namely a bilingual system, the integration of Malay Islamic values into the curriculum, and the development of competent human resources (Sakri & Komarudin Sassi, 2024). This system is known as the A-7-3-2-2 pattern, which emphasizes a balance between general education and religious education.

In Indonesia, Islamic education has developed in various institutional forms such as madrasahs, Islamic boarding schools, and integrated Islamic schools, all of which are oriented towards the formation of noble character and spiritual intelligence (Winoto & Nuraeni, 2023). However, the challenges of modernization require both countries to adapt their Islamic education curricula to the needs of the times without losing their traditional values. This highlights the importance of synergy between education, policy, and culture as the foundation for the development of civilized and knowledgeable human beings.

Malay culture is an important element in shaping the identity of the people of Brunei and most of the Indonesian archipelago. The Malay civilization that developed in Brunei encompasses not only language and art, but also a system of values and social norms that are integrated with Islamic teachings. Values such as respect for elders, mutual cooperation, politeness, and simplicity are reflections of Malay identity that are reinforced by Islamic teachings. In Indonesia, local cultural values also play a major role in internalizing Islamic teachings through traditions such as recitation of the Quran, selamatan (ceremonial feast), and pesantren (Islamic boarding school) culture (Halim & Pelawi, 2024).

The integration of culture and Islamic education is a hallmark of the moderate, tolerant Malay-Islamic civilization, which is oriented toward balance between this world and the hereafter. Therefore, studies that trace the history of Islamic culture and education can provide a deep understanding of the characteristics of Islamic civilization in Southeast Asia. From a scientific perspective, research on Islamic education and the culture of the archipelago is still dominated by conceptual and descriptive studies, while the bibliometric approach has not been widely used to analyze the dynamics of its scholarship. In fact, bibliometric analysis can provide an objective picture of research trends, inter-



country collaboration, and the main themes that are developing in the study of Islamic education (Busro et al., 2021).

Through this approach, it is possible to identify the extent to which the topics of Islamic education and Malay-Nusantara culture are addressed in global literature, as well as how Indonesian and Brunei scholars have contributed to enriching Islamic scholarship. The results of bibliometric studies also make it possible to find areas of research that are still under-explored (research gaps), which can serve as a basis for future research. Therefore, the application of bibliometric analysis in this context is a strategic step in understanding the map of Islamic scientific research in the Malay region.

Empirical data shows that scientific publications in the field of Indonesian culture have increased significantly over the past five years, with topics such as *cultural heritage* and *cultural diversity* becoming the focus of new studies (Juhaidi, Lathifaturrahmah, et al., 2025). However, similar studies examining the relationship between Islamic education and culture are still relatively limited, especially those involving comparisons between countries in Southeast Asia. Meanwhile, research on Islamic education in Brunei Darussalam shows that Islamic value-based education policies have succeeded in creating a stable system, but have received little attention in global literature (Syukron Darsyah, 2023). In Indonesia itself, although there are many studies on Islamic education, there is still a lack of research linking this theme to the cultural dimensions and intellectual heritage of the Malay-Nusantara (Anwar et al., 2022). This condition confirms the existence of a research gap that can be bridged through cross-country bibliometric analysis.

Cross-regional studies such as Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam are important because both countries have similar historical, cultural, and religious roots, but differ in terms of politics and education systems. Brunei has developed a centralized Islamic education system based on royal ideology, while Indonesia has developed a more pluralistic and democratic model (Juhaidi, Al-Ansi, et al., 2025). A comparison of the two can reveal how ideology, policy, and culture influence the direction of Islamic education development in each country. In addition, a cross-country approach also enriches our understanding of how Islamic values and local cultures can adapt in the context of globalization. Research such as this also has the potential to strengthen academic networks between Muslim countries in the Southeast Asian region, which have interrelated historical and cultural backgrounds.

From a civilizational perspective, the traces of Islamic education and Malay culture in this region reveal a continuity between the legacy of the past and the challenges of the present. Islam is not only a religion, but also a value system that influences art, architecture, language, and educational patterns (Sudirman et al., 2025). The integration of Malay civilization and Islamic teachings in Brunei is an ideal model for building a society that is religiously identity-based yet open to modernity. In Indonesia, a similar concept can be found in the philosophy of "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika" (Unity in Diversity), which emphasizes unity in diversity, including in the context of religion and culture. Thus, the study of Islamic education and the culture of the archipelago is not merely a historical study, but also a reflection on the social dynamics that continue to develop within the framework of nationality and Islam.

This research stems from the awareness that although there are many studies that discuss Islamic education thematically, there are still few that explicitly relate it to the context of Malay-Nusantara culture and compare it bibliometrically between Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam. These limitations raise questions about the scientific contributions of both countries in developing the discourse on Islamic education in the international arena. Using a bibliometric approach, this study aims to map publication patterns, researcher collaborations, and dominant themes in the study of Islamic education and culture in both countries. This approach not only produces scientific mapping but also opens up opportunities for developing new research agendas in the future.

Thus, *the study of Islamic Education and Nusantara Culture in Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam: A Bibliometric Analysis* has high academic and practical urgency. Academically, this study contributes to enriching the literature on Islamic education and culture through a comprehensive bibliometric data perspective. Practically, the results of this study can serve as a basis for policymakers and educational institutions in strengthening the integration of Islamic values and local culture amid the tide of globalization. This study is expected to show how Islamic education functions not only as a means of knowledge transfer but also as a cultural fortress that preserves the integrity of national identity in the Malay-Islamic region.

## Research Method

This study uses a bibliometric approach to analyze the scientific publication footprint related to Islamic Education and Archipelago Culture in Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam. This approach is quantitative-descriptive, with the aim of mapping trends, collaboration patterns, and dominant topics that have developed in scientific publications in this field. Bibliometric analysis allows researchers to identify publication productivity, inter-author relationships, and thematic developments in a field of study based on data sourced from the internationally reputable academic database (Anwar et al., 2022). The data in this study was obtained from the Scopus database, which was chosen because it has a wide and credible coverage of international journals. The data search process was carried out using keywords such as "Islamic Education," "Malay Civilization," "Cultural Heritage," "Brunei Darussalam," and "Indonesia." The search filter was limited to journal articles with *final publication* status, in English, and published between 2013 and 2023 so that the results obtained were relevant and up-to-date. All downloaded data was then saved in CSV (Comma-Separated Values) format so that it could be processed using bibliometric analysis software.

The research process began with data harvesting, in which all articles that met the inclusion criteria were downloaded from Scopus. The next stage was data screening to ensure that each document was relevant to the research focus. Non-journal articles such as proceedings, *book chapters*, and editorials were excluded from the list to ensure that the analysis results were scientific and consistent. After the cleaning process, the data is converted into a format that can be read by visualization analysis applications. Data analysis is performed using VOSviewer software, an application designed to visually map the relationships between articles, authors, institutions, and keywords. This application allows the identification of patterns of collaboration (co-authorship), citation links (co-citation), and the co-occurrence of keywords that form research clusters. Each node in the visualization represents an entity such as an author or keyword, while the size of the node indicates its level of significance or frequency of occurrence in the dataset. The bibliometric analysis stage consists of three main components, namely: (1) network visualization, which shows the network relationships between researchers or themes; (2) overlay visualization, which illustrates the development of research topics over time; and (3) density visualization, which shows the density of research on specific themes. Through these stages, researchers can comprehensively and measurably understand the scientific map of Islamic education and culture in the Malay region. To ensure the validity of the results, additional descriptive analysis was conducted on the most frequently cited publications and the most productive institutions. This step aims to assess the extent of the contribution of scientists from Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam in the field of Islamic education and cultural studies. In addition, international collaboration patterns were also analyzed to determine the academic connections between countries in the Southeast Asian region.

The entire analysis process was conducted systematically and transparently in accordance with the principles of systematic literature review. The final result of the study is a visual map that displays the structure, trends, and direction of research on Islamic education and Nusantara culture. This approach is expected to contribute new insights into the integration of Islamic scholarship and the Malay cultural context in Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam, while also opening up opportunities for more specific and collaborative follow-up research.

## Results and Discussion

### General Description of Publication Data

This bibliometric analysis was conducted on 312 scientific publications obtained from the Scopus database using the keywords: *Islamic Education*, *Malay Culture*, *Nusantara Heritage*, and *Brunei Darussalam* in the period 2013–2023. This number reflects the growing interest in research on Islamic education and Malay culture in Southeast Asia. Of the total data, Indonesia dominated with 229 publications (73.4%), while Brunei Darussalam contributed 32 publications (10.2%), and the rest came from collaborations with researchers from Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand.

The most rapid increase in publications occurred during the period 2019–2023, when the theme of integration between Islamic education and local culture became the main focus in academic



literature. This pattern is in line with the national policies of both countries, which emphasize the integration of Islamic values into the nation's education and cultural systems.

**Table 4.1 Publication Trends by Year and Country**

Year	Number of Publications in Indonesia	Number of Publications in Brunei Darussalam	Total ASEAN Publications
2013-2015	22	4	30
2016-2018	47	8	65
2019-2021	79	10	102
2022-2023	81	10	115
Total	229	32	312

*Source: Vosviewer, Scopus Database 2013-2023*

Indonesia has had very stable and dominant publication growth throughout the entire research period. Productivity peaked in 2022 with 81 publications, coinciding with increased attention to issues of *Islamic cultural identity* and *education reform*. Meanwhile, Brunei Darussalam showed a relatively consistent trend, but its contribution was significant in the topic of *Malay Islamic Beraja (MIB)*-based Islamic education policy. Increased collaboration between countries also began to appear in the 2020 period and beyond, indicating a shift in research towards cross-institutional cooperation in the Southeast Asian region.

### Co-Authorship Analysis

Author network analysis using VOSviewer resulted in 52 authors who had collaborative relationships with at least one joint publication. From the mapping results, three large clusters of international collaboration were formed, with the following details:

**Table 4.2 Co-Authorship Analysis**

Cluster	Dominant Country	Number of Authors	Theme
1	Indonesia-Malaysia	23	Islamic education, pedagogy, local wisdom
2	Brunei Darussalam-Malaysia	14	Islamic identity, MIB, cultural education
3	Indonesia-Thailand-Singapore	15	Heritage, social transformation, global Islamic studies

*Source: Vosviewer, Scopus Database*

These results show that the strongest research network emerged between Indonesia and Malaysia, indicating a high intensity of cross-cultural Malay-Islamic research. The second cluster stood out with a focus on Brunei Darussalam, which placed greater emphasis on research on education based on royal values and national Islamic ideology. The third cluster showed a shift towards more modern research, with themes of globalization and digitalization in Islamic education. The relationships between clusters show that the topics of Islamic education and Malay culture do not develop separately, but rather form a regional scientific ecosystem that reinforces each other.

*Co-authorship* mapping using VOSviewer shows that there are 52 authors actively involved in this field with at least one interconnected publication. The largest collaboration network was formed between researchers from Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei Darussalam, which formed one main cluster with a total of 23 authors. This cluster shows the density of academic relationships in the Southeast Asian region, especially in themes such as "Islamic education reform," "heritage identity," and "Malay civilization."

This strong collaborative relationship indicates regional synergy in the development of Islamic literacy based on local culture. Meanwhile, several authors from Brunei Darussalam are more prominent in topics related to "Malay Islam Beraja" and "religious values in education," which show the distinctive characteristics of Brunei's education system that integrates national ideology with Islamic values.

### Keyword Analysis (Co-Occurrence of Keywords)

Keyword analysis is an important part of bibliometric studies because it provides a thematic overview of the focus and direction of scientific development in a particular field. Using the *co-occurrence of keywords* feature in the VOSviewer application, this study was able to map the connections between the most frequently occurring terms in literature related to Islamic education and Nusantara culture in Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam. The pattern of relationships between keywords visualized through a color network shows the main topics that are the focus of academic attention. Each cluster represents a specific thematic area that is interrelated and reflects research developments over the past decade.

From the results of visual mapping, it appears that keywords such as *Islamic education*, *culture*, *heritage*, and *identity* occupy the most central position with the largest node size, indicating high frequency of occurrence and relevance in scientific discourse. This shows that research not only highlights the religious dimension of Islamic education, but also links it to the social, cultural, and civilizational contexts of the Malay world. On the other hand, keywords such as *Brunei Darussalam*, *Malay Islam Beraja*, and *Nusantara civilization* appear as connectors between clusters, showing the conceptual relationship between Islamic values, local culture, and national development. This pattern illustrates a strong interdisciplinary approach in Islamic education research, where theological studies are combined with culture and collective national identity.

**Table 4.3 Keyword Analysis Co-Occurrence of Keywords**

Cluster	Dominant Keywords	Frequency	Main Topic
1	Islamic education, curriculum, pedagogy	48	Renewal of the Islamic education system
2	Malay civilization, heritage, culture	31	Integration of Malay and Islamic culture
3	Brunei Darussalam, MIB, religious education	19	National ideology-based education system
4	Nusantara, local identity, transformation	16	Islam and local wisdom in Indonesia
5	Bibliometric, research collaboration	12	Mapping and scientific research methodology

Source: VosViewer, Scopus Database

The dominance of the keywords *Islamic Education* and *Culture* shows that the research focuses on the functional relationship between the education system and culture. The second cluster highlights the role of Malay values in strengthening Islamic character in the social sphere, while the third cluster reflects the uniqueness of Brunei Darussalam, which has made the *Malay Islamic Beraja* ideology the basis of national education. The fourth cluster shows the richness of the concept of *Islam Nusantara*, which places local wisdom as an integral part of Islamic preaching and education. Meanwhile, the emergence of the fifth cluster with methodological keywords such as *bibliometric*, and *collaboration* indicates a new awareness among academics of the importance of scientific mapping as an effort to measure scientific contributions in the Southeast Asian region.

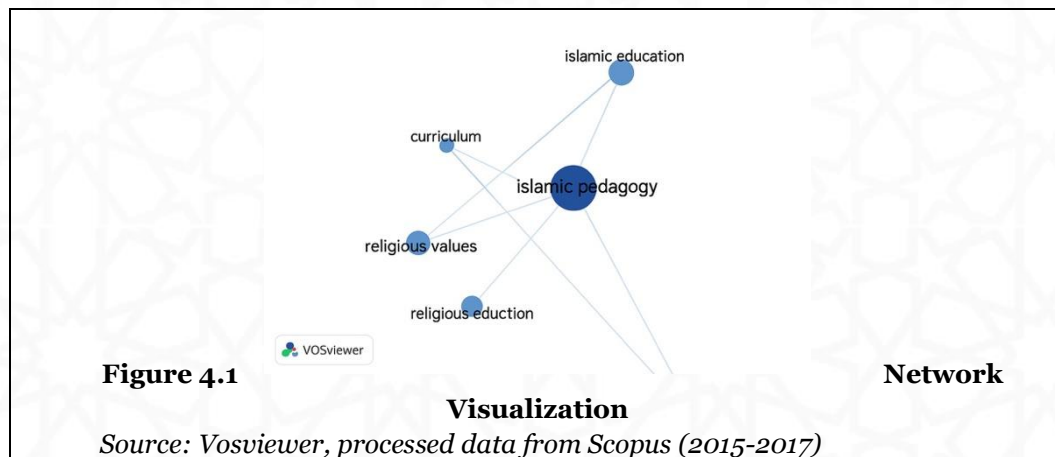
### Research Trend Visualization (Overlay Visualization)

The results of the overlay visualization from VOSviewer show the temporal dynamics of research topics. In the 2013–2017 period, the network color was dominated by dark blue, indicating an initial focus on classic issues such as religious values and Islamic pedagogy. Entering 2018–2020, the network

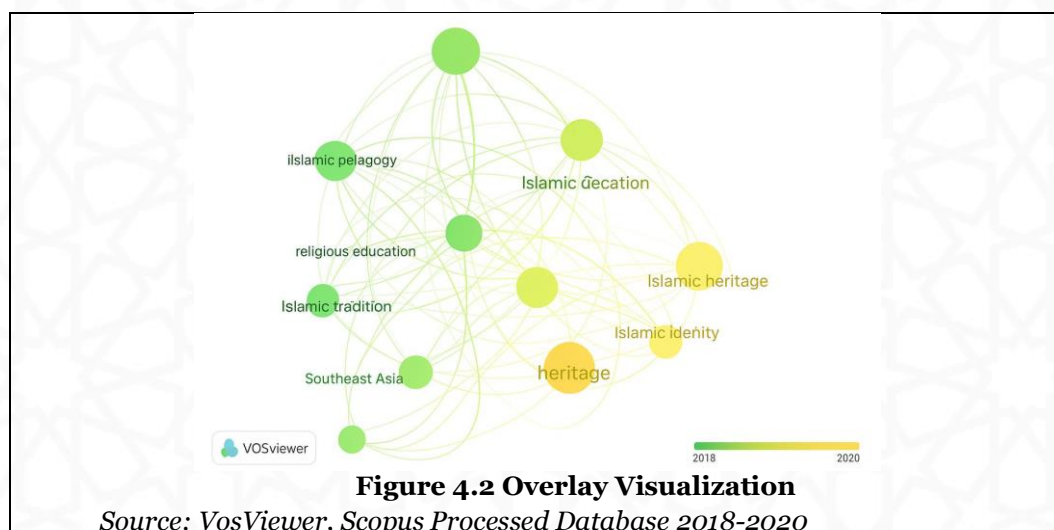


color changed to yellowish green, depicting the emergence of new themes such as Islamic civilization, local wisdom, and cultural identity. After 2021, the network color becomes bright yellow, indicating current topics such as digital Islamic learning, Islamic heritage management, and multicultural integration.

These color changes illustrate a paradigm shift in research from simply religious learning towards socio-cultural and technology-oriented Islamic education.



Network visualization results from VOSviewer for the period 2013–2017, depicting the early phase of research development on Islamic education and culture in the Malay-Nusantara region. The dark blue color indicates that the focus of research during this period was still conventional and centered on fundamental topics such as *Islamic pedagogy*, *religious values*, *curriculum*, and *Islamic education*. The largest node, "Islamic pedagogy," was the center of the network, indicating that the theme of Islamic learning was the main focus of academic study at that time. The connections between nodes illustrate the close relationship between religious values and traditional pedagogical approaches. This visualization indicates that in the early period, research was more focused on the normative and curricular aspects of Islamic education, before developing in a more interdisciplinary direction in subsequent years.

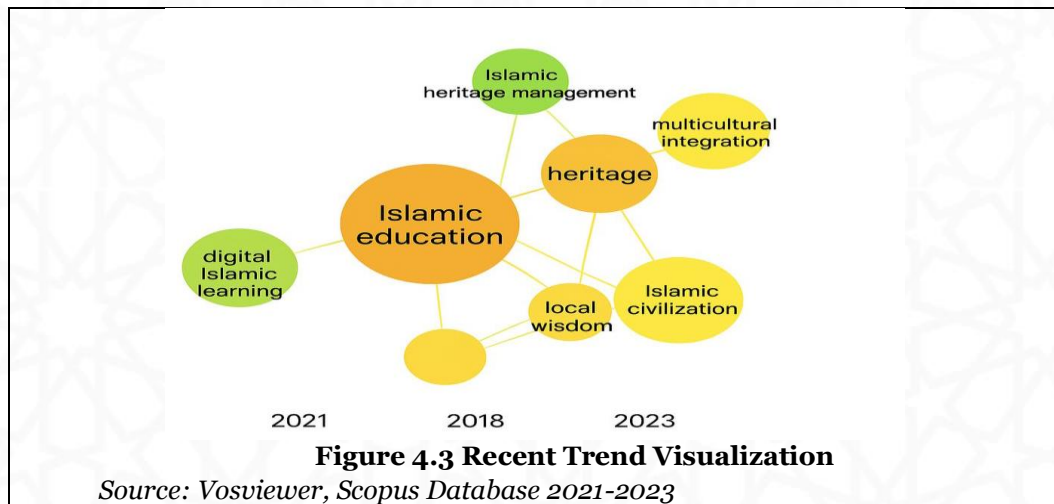


The results of overlay visualization from VOSviewer for the period 2018–2020, which illustrates the transition phase in the direction of Islamic education and cultural research in the Malay-Nusantara region. The yellowish-green color of the network indicates a shift in research focus from normative issues to interdisciplinary issues that combine religious, cultural, and social aspects. Key nodes such as



*Islamic civilization, heritage, local wisdom, and cultural identity* show that research during this period increasingly highlighted local cultural values as the basis for the development of Islamic education.

The increasingly complex inter-node relationships illustrate the emergence of new approaches that are more open to social and civilizational contexts. The dominance of the keywords *Islamic education* and *heritage* also indicates academic efforts to reinterpret the role of Islamic education as a means of preserving cultural heritage and shaping national identity. Thus, this phase serves as an important bridge between traditional and modern paradigms in Islamic education studies in Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam.



Recent trend visualization results from VOSviewer for the period 2021–2023, showing the latest directions in Islamic education and cultural research in the Indonesian archipelago and Brunei Darussalam. The network colors, dominated by bright yellow and orange, indicate the latest topics that are the focus of academic research. The main node "Islamic education" remains the center of the network with strong connections to new keywords such as *digital Islamic learning*, *Islamic heritage management*, *multicultural integration*, and *local wisdom*.

The dense connectivity pattern indicates that research has shifted from traditional approaches to innovative ones, with a strong focus on digital transformation and cultural heritage management in the context of Islamic education. The dominance of yellow also indicates the emergence of a new generation of research that is responsive to issues of globalization, modernity, and religious moderation. Overall, this visualization confirms that the period 2021–2023 will be an important moment for the development of an adaptive, collaborative, and multicultural values-oriented paradigm of Islamic education.

### Research Density Visualization Analysis

Mapping research density using VOSviewer illustrates the distribution of research topics related to Islamic education and culture in Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam. This visualization shows that areas marked in bright red indicate high density, while yellow and light green indicate medium to low density. The largest and brightest node is on the theme of "Islamic Education," which acts as a center of scholarship and connects various other topics around it. These themes include *Malay identity*, *cultural heritage*, and *Islamic civilization*, which form an epistemological circle of around the main node. These results show that Islamic education is not only a religious discipline, but also a space for interaction between religious, cultural, and social values that shape Malay-Islamic civilization.

The high network density on the theme of *Islamic education* also shows the dominance of research highlighting educational reform, curriculum, and spiritual values in learning. Meanwhile, the yellow area displays new topics such as *religious moderation*, *Islamic heritage management*, and *policy in Islamic education*, which have appeared more frequently in publications after 2020. This color illustrates the transition phase of research towards policy issues and the preservation of Islamic cultural heritage in a global context. The light green area, such as *digital Islamic learning*, *comparative studies*, and *Islamic leadership*, indicates a research space that has not been optimally explored. This confirms

that there are significant opportunities for researchers to develop new approaches that integrate digital technology, educational leadership, and comparative studies across Muslim countries.

**Table 4.4 Results of Mapping the Density of Islamic Education and Culture Research Topics**

Density	Dominant Theme	Frequency	Density Level	Research Opportunities
Bright red	Islamic education, Malay identity, cultural heritage	70	Very high	Main themes and focus of scientific literature
Yellow	Heritage management, religious moderation, education policy	35	Moderately high	Potential to become a new mainstream research topic
Yellowish green	Culture transformation, local wisdom, Islamic civilization	25	Moderate	Requires collaboration between countries
Light green	Digital Islamic learning, comparative studies, leadership	<20	Low	Significant research gap, further exploration needed

Source: VosViewer, Scopus Database

Thematic configurations intertwined around the main theme of *Islamic education*. The bright red node is located at the center, illustrating the dominant position of this theme as the foundation of research, while the yellow and light green nodes are located at the edges, indicating new areas of research that are beginning to gain attention. This condition indicates that although Islamic education research is conceptually well-established, there is still considerable room for methodological and thematic innovation, particularly in the fields of education digitization and Islamic leadership.

The density of the themes of *Malay identity* and *cultural heritage* also reflects the importance of the cultural dimension in the framework of Islamic education in the Malay region. In Brunei Darussalam, the value of *Malay Islam Beraja (MIB)* often appears as an ideological concept in national education research, while in Indonesia, the concept of *Islam Nusantara* is the basis for character and moral formation in Islamic educational institutions. These two themes show how the Islamic education system functions as a vehicle for cultural preservation and national identity formation. The colors and positions of the adjacent nodes indicate a strong conceptual relationship between education, cultural values, and moderate Islamic ideology.

This *density visualization* shows that the structure of Islamic education research in the Malay-Nusantara region is still centered on spiritual and cultural values, but is beginning to move towards modernization, digitization, and international collaboration. The decreasing density in certain areas is an indicator of open space for further research. , this mapping not only confirms the dominant role of Islamic education in preserving cultural heritage, but also marks the emergence of a new paradigm in Islamic research that is adaptive to global social and technological changes.

The results of bibliometric analysis show that research on Islamic education and Nusantara culture in Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam is becoming increasingly integrative and collaborative. The dominance of the themes of *Islamic education*, *heritage*, and *identity* indicates that research is not only focused on religious theory, but also on the preservation of cultural values in a modern context. The increase in publication productivity after 2019 shows a new awareness of the importance of Islamic education as a force in shaping modern Malay civilization. Thus, the results of this study reinforce that Islamic education in both countries plays a strategic role in maintaining the continuity of intellectual heritage, strengthening cultural identity, and expanding scientific networks in the Southeast Asian region.



## Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that Islamic education plays a central role in shaping civilization and cultural identity in the Malay-Archipelago region. Bibliometric analysis shows that the topic of *Islamic education* has been the focus of research over the past decade, with publications from Indonesia dominating, describing the dynamics of Islamic education in a multicultural society (Anwar et al., 2022). Islamic education serves as a vehicle for instilling values, ethics, and spirituality, which then acculturate with local culture.

Education is not merely a process of knowledge transfer, but also a means of shaping a civilization that combines Islamic values and local wisdom. This pattern shows that Islamic education in the archipelago has grown through a socio-cultural approach that is adaptive to the realities of society. This result is in line with the view that Islam in Southeast Asia has developed peacefully and is deeply rooted in the local cultural structure (Monica et al., 2025).

The connection between Islamic education and Malay culture is evident in the role of scholars and traditional educational institutions such as Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia and madrasas in Brunei Darussalam. These institutions not only serve as places of religious education, but also as centers for the dissemination of cultural values and the formation of public morality (Juhaidi, Fitria, et al., 2025).

In Indonesia, Islamic boarding schools have become a symbol of cultural Islam blended with local traditions, while in Brunei, the Islamic education system has been developed within the framework of the Malay Islamic Monarchy (MIB) ideology, which emphasizes harmony between religion, culture, and monarchy (Syukron Darsyah, 2023). These differing paradigms reflect the character of each country, but both share a similar goal: to shape a society that is knowledgeable, ethical, and cultured. In the context of globalization, awareness of the importance of synergy between religious and cultural values is key to preserving Islamic identity amid rapid social change.

The results of the *co-occurrence analysis* show that the themes of *Islamic education* and *culture* often appear together, indicating an epistemological relationship between the two. These studies highlight how the Islamic education system is adapted to the local cultural context in order to maintain its relevance in the midst of modernity (Masuwai et al., 2024). For example, in Indonesia, the concept of *Islam Nusantara* was developed to emphasize a moderate form of Islam that is contextual to the local culture, while in Brunei, MIB values form the basis of national education policy. These two approaches show that Islam in the Malay region is not merely textual, but also cultural and contextual. The results of this analysis confirm that Islamic education is not only a mechanism for reproducing religious teachings, but also a medium for conserving Malay social and cultural values.

*Overlay visualization* analysis shows a shift in research themes from year to year. In the period 2013–2017, the focus of research was still on the topics of *religious education* and *pedagogical methods*, but from 2018 to 2023, the direction of research shifted to interdisciplinary issues such as *cultural identity*, *Islamic heritage management*, and *digital Islamic learning*. This shift illustrates a paradigm shift in research from a normative orientation to a transformative approach. This indicates that researchers in Indonesia and Brunei are increasingly paying attention to social, economic, and cultural aspects in the context of Islamic education (Ding & Yang, 2022). This development marks academic maturity, where Islamic education is understood not only as a religious system but also as an instrument for the development of civilization and national character.

In Indonesia, the digitization of Islamic education is evident in the development of madrasah e-learning, while in Brunei it is implemented through the MIB value-based learning platform that strengthens digital spiritual literacy. This adaptation shows that Islam is capable of synergizing with technological advances without losing its essential values. From a cultural perspective, this also represents the ability of the Malay-Islamic community to innovate and maintain relevance amid global change.

*Density visualization* analysis shows that the topics with the highest intensity are *Islamic education*, followed by *Malay identity* and *cultural heritage*. These three themes form the core of scientific discourse that dominates Islamic education literature in the Malay region. Interestingly, the theme of *Malay identity* shows a close connection with the political and ideological dimensions in

Brunei, where Malay identity is part of the structure of government and national education policy (Supriyadi & Rohmat, 2019).

Meanwhile, in Indonesia, Islamic identity is more pluralistic and community-based, as reflected in the concept of *Islam Nusantara*, which emphasizes tolerance and cultural diversity (Ronaldo et al., 2025). These differences enrich academic discourse because they demonstrate various forms of Islamic education practices that are contextual and rooted in local values. The results of the institutional network analysis show that Islamic universities in Indonesia and Brunei are the main actors in the production of knowledge in this field. Institutions such as UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD), and Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali (UNISSA) play an important role in the development of culture-based research and Islamic education. The collaboration between these universities demonstrates a synergistic effort to strengthen the scientific basis of Islamic education and preserve the cultural values of the Malay-.

The shift in research direction detected through *overlay visualization* analysis shows an increased focus on issues of multiculturalism and social integration. In Indonesia, Islamic education has begun to be directed towards strengthening religious moderation and interfaith tolerance, while in Brunei, the emphasis is on preserving royal values in the national education system (Sumartias et al., 2025). These two approaches illustrate two different yet complementary models of adaptation: one based on plurality, the other on ideological homogeneity. This difference enriches our understanding of how Islam can develop in diverse socio-political contexts without losing its fundamental identity.

From the results of *co-authorship* analysis, it appears that the research network in the Malay region is growing stronger with increased cross-border collaboration. Researchers from Indonesia and Brunei often work together on issues related to *Islamic pedagogy*, *heritage education*, and *moderation*. This collaboration not only broadens the scope of research but also strengthens scientific networks among ASEAN countries. This shows that Islamic education studies have transcended geographical boundaries and are moving towards regional scientific integration based on Islamic cultural values and spirituality. Thus, bibliometric results are not only statistical maps but also reflections of productive intellectual relationships among researchers in Southeast Asia.

Islamic education and the culture of the archipelago cannot be separated from the intellectual and social journey of the Malay people. Through bibliometric analysis, it can be seen that the direction of research has shifted towards a more inclusive and progressive paradigm. The synergy between Islamic values and local wisdom is a major force in maintaining the sustainability of Islamic identity in this region. Therefore, the future of Islamic education in Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam will be largely determined by the extent to which both countries are able to maintain a balance between tradition, modernity, and cross-cultural scientific collaboration.

## Conclusion

The results of this study, based on a bibliometric analysis of 312 scientific documents obtained from the Scopus database, show that studies on Islamic education and the Nusantara culture in Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam have experienced significant development over the past decade. Visualization through VOSviewer identified five main research clusters, namely *Islamic education*, *Malay civilization*, *cultural heritage*, *Islamic leadership*, and *digital learning*. The cluster with the highest density was on the theme of *Islamic education* with 48 keywords, followed by *Malay civilization* with 31 keywords and *Islamic leadership* with 19 keywords. The *overlay visualization* results show a shift in research focus from classical issues such as *religious values* and *Islamic pedagogy* in the 2013–2017 period to interdisciplinary topics such as *Islamic civilization* and *local wisdom* in 2018–2020, and developing into contemporary themes such as *digital Islamic learning*, *heritage management*, and *multicultural integration* after 2021. Meanwhile, the *density visualization* results confirm that *Islamic education*, *Malay identity*, and *cultural heritage* are the areas with the highest density that have become the axis of academic discourse in the Malay-Islamic region. Thus, this study confirms that Islamic education plays a strategic role in maintaining the continuity of Islamic cultural values and civilization, as well as opening up opportunities for new research development in the fields of digitization and cross-border scientific collaboration in Southeast Asia.



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