

# MAPPING THE GLOBAL RESEARCH LANDSCAPE OF MORAL EDUCATION AND PEDAGOGY: A SCOPUS-BASED BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS (2019–2026)

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## Article history

**Received date** : 15-8-2026

**Revised date** : 16-8-2026

**Accepted date** : 15-10-2026

**Published date** : 20-10-2026

## To cite this document:

Chandra Shegaram @ Anitha, P., & Santhasaran, B. (2026). Mapping the global research landscape of moral education and pedagogy: A Scopus-based bibliometric analysis (2019–2026). *Journal of Islamic, Social, Economics and Development (JISED)*, 11 (87), 112-127.

**Abstract:** *Moral education and pedagogy play a crucial role in fostering ethical reasoning, character development, social responsibility, and values-based learning across diverse educational contexts. This study aims to examine global research trends, scholarly productivity, and disciplinary developments in moral education and pedagogy through a quantitative bibliometric analysis of 279 Scopus-indexed publications from 2019 to 2026. Bibliographic data were analysed using descriptive indicators, including annual publication trends, leading authors, prominent journals, geographical distribution, subject-area classifications, and funding sponsorship. The findings reveal a substantial increase in publication output during 2025 (n = 54) and 2026 (n = 93), indicating heightened scholarly activity within the retrieved literature. Brunsdon and Zembylas emerged as the most productive authors, while the Journal of Moral Education and Science and Engineering Ethics were identified as the leading publication sources. Social Sciences (n = 242) and Arts and Humanities (n = 114) dominated the subject-area classifications, highlighting the strong educational, philosophical, and ethical foundations of the field. Geographically, the United States recorded the highest publication output (n = 67), followed by Indonesia (n = 26), China (n = 20), and the United Kingdom (n = 19), while Malaysia contributed 11 publications. The findings demonstrate the multidisciplinary nature and uneven geographical distribution of research associated with moral education and pedagogy. This study contributes to understanding global scholarly development and highlights opportunities for strengthening international collaboration, interdisciplinary research, and evidence-based pedagogical innovation. Future investigations should incorporate advanced bibliometric mapping techniques to identify emerging research themes and intellectual structures.*

**Keywords:** *Moral Education; Pedagogy; Bibliometric Analysis; Scopus; Research Trends.*

## Introduction

The development of people's moral awareness, moral reasoning, social responsibility, and ability to make wise judgments in increasingly complicated societies is largely dependent on moral education. Modern moral education emphasizes critical thinking, ethical judgment, empathy, and the application of moral principles in real-world contexts in addition to imparting moral values. Cognitive and developmental approaches to moral education, especially Kohlberg's theory of moral development, which explains how people gradually create increasingly complex forms of moral judgment, have long been linked to the development of moral reasoning (Kohlberg, 1981). In a similar vein, Rest et al. (1999) emphasized the interrelated roles of moral sensitivity, moral judgment, moral motivation, and moral character, highlighting the multifaceted structure of moral functioning. These theoretical stances have offered crucial underpinnings for investigating how instructional strategies can encourage students' ethical comprehension and responsible behavior. Because effective moral learning necessitates more than traditional knowledge transmission, the pedagogical aspects of moral education have drawn scholarly attention. Moral dilemma approaches, classroom discussions, character education, reflective learning, and hands-on activities give students the chance to consider ethical issues from a variety of angles. While Narvaez and Lapsley (2008) investigated the connection between moral character development and educational psychology, Lickona (1991) emphasized the significance of including moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral behavior within educational processes. Together, these viewpoints imply that in order to promote significant moral development, moral education pedagogy needs to address the cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects of learning.

Additionally, professional ethics, interdisciplinary learning, and the connection between moral judgment and social circumstances have all been included in recent literature that has expanded debates of moral education beyond standard classroom training. In order to provide a more comprehensive framework for comprehending moral judgment, Rest et al. (2000) developed a neo-Kohlbergian method that combines moral psychology, cognitive science, and ethical reasoning. Because they show how moral growth can be examined across educational and professional contexts, such interdisciplinary perspectives are pertinent to the analysis of moral education research. However, it is difficult to determine the general evolution and dissemination of academic knowledge in moral education and pedagogy due to the variety of research environments, theoretical stances, and disciplinary orientations. A methodical quantitative method for analyzing scientific publications, spotting research trends, and assessing the advancement of academic disciplines is bibliometric analysis. According to Donthu et al. (2021), bibliometric methodologies allow researchers to analyze bibliographic data to examine publishing performance, academic contributions, intellectual structures, and developing research orientations. In a similar vein, Zupic and Čater (2015) recognized bibliographic coupling, co-authorship analysis, co-word analysis, citation analysis, and co-citation analysis as crucial methods for mapping scientific knowledge. Using bibliographic databases like Scopus, these methodological approaches offer a basis for examining the composition and development of moral education research.

Even though academic publications about moral education and pedagogical practices are readily available, a comprehensive understanding of their global publication patterns, disciplinary distribution, geographical contributions, and research funding is still crucial for determining the field's evolution. This study's preliminary Scopus dataset includes 279 publications from 2019 to 2026. The United States, Indonesia, China, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and Malaysia are among the nations whose donations are listed in the

records. The biggest subject-area classifications are found in the social sciences and arts and humanities, and publications are dispersed throughout journals that focus on interdisciplinary educational research, moral education, educational philosophy, and ethics. These features emphasize the importance of conducting a thorough bibliometric analysis to determine the distribution of intellectual activity among publishing years, authors, sources, nations, topic areas, and funding agencies. Thus, using a Scopus-based bibliometric analysis spanning the years 2019 to 2026, this study seeks to investigate global research trends and scholarly dynamics in moral education and pedagogy. The study specifically looks into funding patterns, subject-area distributions, top contributing authors, notable publication sources, annual publication trends, and geographical contributions. The study aims to present an evidence-based assessment of the research landscape, establish patterns of academic output, and suggest areas that need more research by methodically looking at various variables. It is anticipated that the results will add to a more comprehensive understanding of moral education scholarship and offer valuable perspectives for scholars, educators, and policymakers who wish to enhance moral education research and pedagogical growth globally.

### Literature Review

Due to its crucial role in fostering moral thinking, ethical decision-making, character development, and social responsibility, moral education has drawn more and more scholarly attention. By combining critical thinking, ethical reflection, and experiential learning, modern moral education goes beyond merely imparting moral values. While Rest et al. (1999) presented a multifaceted viewpoint involving moral sensitivity, moral judgment, moral motivation, and moral character, Kohlberg (1981) emphasized the growth of moral reasoning through progressive phases of ethical judgment. In a similar vein, Lickona (1991) emphasized the integration of moral behavior, moral feeling, and moral knowledge as crucial elements of successful character education. These theoretical underpinnings have impacted the creation of instructional strategies that motivate students to assess moral quandaries, take into account other viewpoints, and apply ethical concepts in practical contexts.

Effective instructional techniques are crucial for enhancing moral education, as research has further shown. Berkowitz and Bier (2007) highlighted a number of practices linked to character development, including as opportunities for ethical decision-making, supportive classroom environments, teacher professional development, and explicit moral education. The connection between moral identity, cognitive processes, and ethical behavior was highlighted by Narvaez and Lapsley (2008), who proposed that moral education incorporate social and psychological aspects of learning. Additionally, Berkowitz (2011) emphasized the significance of evidence-based strategies in values education, especially those that incorporate meaningful learning experiences, strong interpersonal interactions, and teacher modeling. When taken as a whole, these research show that moral education pedagogy necessitates an integrated strategy that addresses the social, behavioral, affective, and cognitive facets of moral growth.

The expansion of moral education in educational, philosophical, psychological, and professional contexts can be attributed to its multidisciplinary nature. This diversity is reflected in the preliminary Scopus dataset analyzed in this work, which has 242 subject-area classifications in the Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities ( $n = 114$ ), Medicine ( $n = 27$ ), Psychology ( $n = 27$ ), and Business, Management, and Accounting ( $n = 19$ ). The geographic distribution also shows the participation of international scholars, with the United States supplying 67 documents, followed by Indonesia ( $n = 26$ ), China ( $n = 20$ ), and the United Kingdom ( $n = 19$ ). These results imply that ethical study and moral education have evolved in

a variety of academic and geographical contexts. However, variations in educational systems, cultural values, pedagogical approaches, and research agendas may have an impact on how moral education research develops globally.

A methodical way to look at research trends, scholarly output, and the intellectual advancement of academic fields is through bibliometric analysis. According to Donthu et al. (2021), bibliometric techniques allow academics to use quantitative analysis of bibliographic data to discover significant authors, publication patterns, research collaborations, and emerging scholarly directions. In a similar vein, Zupic and Čater (2015) emphasized the value of bibliometric techniques in mapping scientific knowledge and determining connections between publications, authors, and research issues. Building on these methodological viewpoints, the current study looks at 279 Scopus-indexed documents produced between 2019 and 2026 to look at financing patterns, subject-area distributions, notable authors, prestigious journals, worldwide publication trends, and regional contributions. The goal of this analysis is to give a thorough picture of the state of the field, point out any deficiencies, and suggest future paths for moral education and pedagogy.

This study aims to examine global research trends, scholarly contributions, and research dynamics in moral education and pedagogy through a bibliometric analysis of Scopus-indexed publications from 2019 to 2026. The following research questions guide the study:

- RQ1: What are the annual publication trends in moral education and pedagogy research between 2019 and 2026?
- RQ2: Which journals and publication sources contribute most significantly to moral education and pedagogy research?
- RQ3: Who are the most productive and influential authors contributing to moral education and pedagogy research?
- RQ4: Which countries are the leading contributors to global research on moral education and pedagogy?
- RQ5: What are the major subject areas associated with moral education and pedagogy research?
- RQ6: Which funding organisations have contributed to the development of moral education and pedagogy research?
- RQ7: What are the most frequently occurring keywords, emerging research themes, and potential research gaps in moral education and pedagogy?

## Methodology

In order to investigate global research trends and scholarly contributions in moral education and pedagogy between 2019 and 2026, this study used a quantitative bibliometric approach. Through bibliographic variables such as publication productivity, authorship patterns, journal contributions, geographic distribution, and disciplinary classifications, bibliometric analysis offers a methodical way to assess scientific publications (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). Donthu et al. (2021) claim that bibliometric techniques make it easier to identify research advancements, significant contributors, and knowledge structures in academic fields. In a similar vein, Zupic and Čater (2015) emphasized the use of quantitative bibliometric methods in comprehending academic output and the intellectual advancement of study domains.

The Scopus database, which offers comprehensive coverage of peer-reviewed scholarly publications across numerous academic areas, was used to obtain bibliographic data. Because of its organized bibliographic records and analytical tools for analyzing publication features

and research performance, Scopus was chosen (Mongeon & Paul-Hus, 2016). The initial collection included 279 publications related to moral education and pedagogy that were released between 2019 and 2026. Annual publication patterns, top authors, well-known publication sources, regional contributions, subject-area distributions, and funding sponsors were the main topics of the investigation. The distribution of publications and trends of scholarly engagement across various nations and disciplines were examined using descriptive bibliometric indicators.

Established bibliometric techniques, specifically the performance analysis and science-mapping approaches outlined by Donthu et al. (2021), served as the basis for the methodological framework. While scientific mapping looks at connections between authors, publications, and research themes, performance analysis uses publication counts and related bibliographic indicators to assess research productivity. Established methods for doing co-authorship, citation, and keyword co-occurrence analyzes are provided by VOSviewer (van Eck and Waltman, 2010) and Bibliometrix (Aria and Cuccurullo, 2017). These methods could facilitate research partnerships, new themes in moral education and pedagogy, and more analysis of intellectual structures. The current descriptive analysis offers a basis for determining discipline advancements, worldwide publication trends, and prospective avenues for further investigation.

### Data Search Strategy

TITLE-ABS-KEY ( moral AND education AND pedagogy ) AND PUBYEAR > 2018 AND PUBYEAR < 2027 AND ( LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Pedagogy" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Education" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Moral Education" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Human" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Higher Education" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Morality" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Curriculum" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Critical Pedagogy" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Character Education" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Teaching" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Ethics" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Pedagogics" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Social Justice" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Student" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Teacher Education" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Moral Development" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Morals" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Male" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Female" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Students" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Moral" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Moral Reasoning" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Character Development" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Assessment" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Values" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Teacher Identity" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Moral Formation" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Emotion" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Humanism" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Curriculum Studies" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Moral Pedagogy" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Ethical Reasoning" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Ethical Dilemma" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( DOCTYPE , "ar" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "SOCI" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "ARTS" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "PSYC" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( LANGUAGE , "English" ) )

### Bibliometric Data Collection and Analysis

The Scopus database was used to obtain bibliometric information for 279 publications on moral education and pedagogy that were released between 2019 and 2026. Publication year, document title, authors, source title, subject area, country or territory, and funding sponsor were all included in the bibliographic data. Because of its broad coverage of diverse scholarly publications and its capacity to analyze research productivity and publication patterns, Scopus was chosen (Mongeon & Paul-Hus, 2016). To find worldwide research trends, intellectual

contributions, and disciplinary advancements in moral education and pedagogy, the collected records were analyzed using descriptive bibliometric indicators. Six key factors were the focus of the bibliometric analysis: funding sponsorship, geographic distribution, author productivity, notable publication sources, annual publication trends, and subject-area classifications. These metrics were employed to assess the growth and dissemination of academic research within the chosen time frame. According to Donthu et al. (2021), bibliometric performance analysis offers a methodical way to find important researchers, publication trends, and the evolution of scientific fields. In a similar vein, Zupic and Čater (2015) emphasized the significance of bibliometric methods for analyzing research output and comprehending the organization of scholarly information. VOSviewer can be used to use bibliometric mapping techniques such as keyword co-occurrence, citation analysis, and co-citation analysis to further explore the intellectual structure and new research paths in moral education and pedagogy. VOSviewer, created by van Eck and Waltman (2010), builds and displays bibliometric networks using the visualization of similarity (VOS) approach, allowing researchers to find connections between keywords, authors, and publications. While citation and co-citation analyses can uncover important publications and the intellectual underpinnings of the subject, keyword co-occurrence analysis can highlight prevalent research themes and new areas of academic interest. When combined, these methods offer a methodological basis for analyzing the development, state of the field, and possible future paths of moral education and pedagogy on a worldwide scale.

**RQ1: What are the annual publication trends in moral education and pedagogy research between 2019 and 2026?**

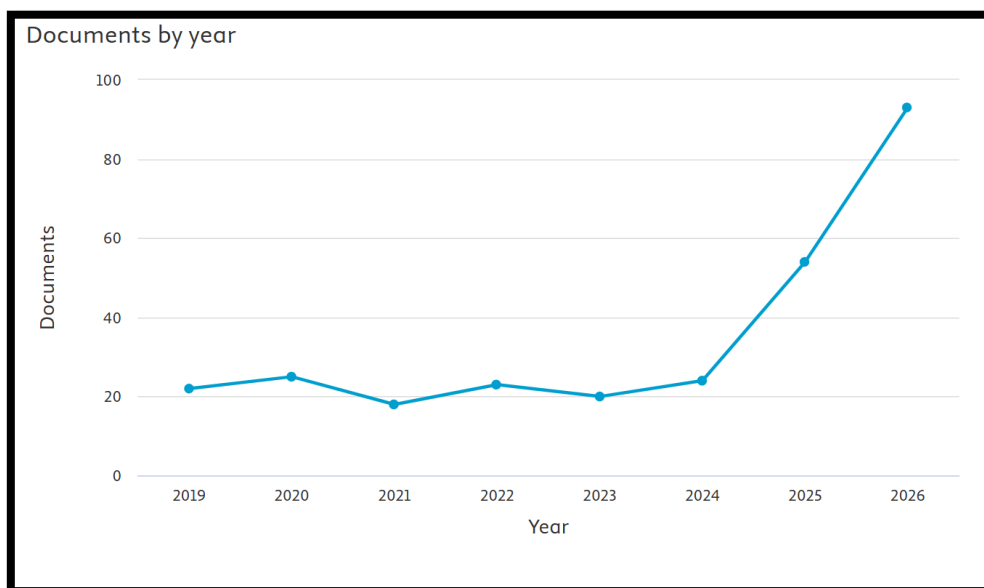


**Figure 1. Annual Publication Trends in Moral Education and Pedagogy Research (2019–2026)**

**Table 1. Annual Distribution of Publications (2019–2026)**

| Year  | Number of Documents |
|-------|---------------------|
| 2026  | 93                  |
| 2025  | 54                  |
| 2024  | 24                  |
| 2023  | 20                  |
| 2022  | 23                  |
| 2021  | 18                  |
| 2020  | 25                  |
| 2019  | 22                  |
| Total | 279                 |

The annual distribution of 279 Scopus-indexed publications on moral education and pedagogy between 2019 and 2026 is shown in Figure 1 and Table 1. The results show that research production fluctuated in the early years, but starting in 2025, publication output significantly increased. Annual publications, which ranged from 18 to 25 documents, were comparatively consistent between 2019 and 2024. 2020 had the most output during this initial period ( $n = 25$ ), while 2021 had the lowest publication count ( $n = 18$ ). Although there was no discernible upward trend during the first six years, these variations show that scholarly contributions persisted throughout the time.

The output of publications increased significantly in 2025, reaching 54 documents, a 125% increase over 2024 ( $n = 24$ ). The 2026 records, which included 93 documents—the highest annual count in the dataset—continued this growing trend. Over half of the retrieved papers were concentrated in the two most recent years, with publications from 2025 and 2026 accounting for roughly 52.7% of the total research output. This pattern points to an increase in scholarly effort related to moral education and pedagogy, which may reflect a greater focus on ethical reasoning, character development, values-based education, and modern pedagogical approaches. However, more research using topic and keyword analyzes is necessary to fully understand these possible explanations.

Overall, the results show that the number of retrieved publications increased significantly in the later years of the study period. A foundation for analyzing the changing research landscape and identifying significant authors, publication sources, and new fields of scholarly interest is provided by the growing production of publications. However, since 2026 is still a publication year, its numbers should be regarded as tentative and susceptible to modifications in database coverage and indexing. Therefore, rather than necessarily signifying a completed annual publication trend, the observed rise represents the Scopus data that were available at the time of retrieval.

**RQ2: Which journals and publication sources contribute most significantly to moral education and pedagogy research?**

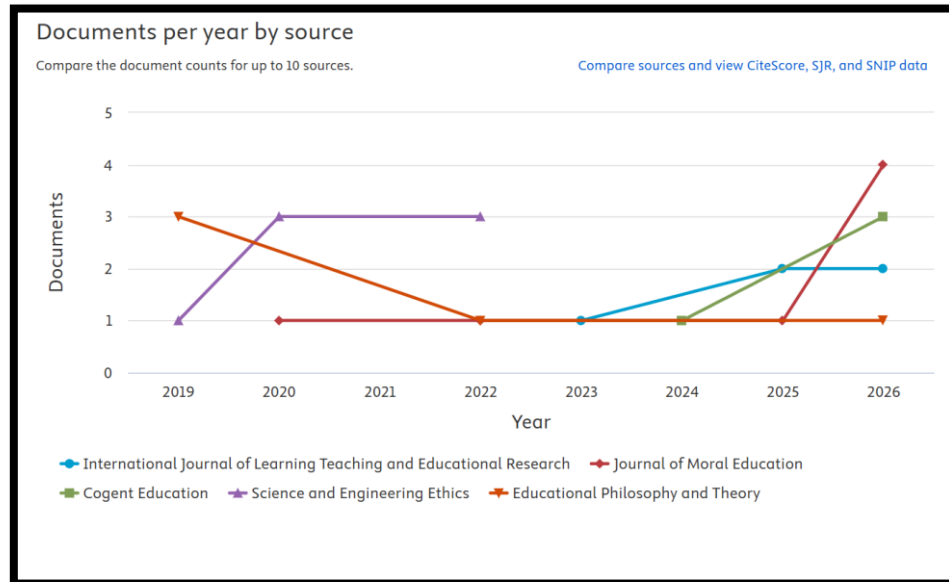


**Figure 2. Annual Publication Trends by Leading Source Titles (2019–2026)**

**Table 3. Distribution of Publications by Source Title**

| No.   | Journal / Source Title                                               | Number of Documents |
|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1     | Journal of Moral Education                                           | 7                   |
| 2     | Science and Engineering Ethics                                       | 7                   |
| 3     | Educational Philosophy and Theory                                    | 5                   |
| 4     | International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research | 5                   |
| 5     | Cogent Education                                                     | 4                   |
| 6     | Pedagogy, Culture and Society                                        | 4                   |
| 7     | Religions                                                            | 4                   |
| 8     | Sport, Education and Society                                         | 4                   |
| 9     | British Journal of Religious Education                               | 3                   |
| Total |                                                                      | 43                  |

Figure 2 and Table 3 show the distribution of Scopus-indexed publications in top academic journals on moral education and pedagogy from 2019 to 2026. The results showed that the Journal of Moral Education and Science and Engineering Ethics published the most, with seven documents each. Educational Philosophy and Theory and the International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research were next, with five documents each. Meanwhile, Cogent Education, Pedagogy, Culture and Society, Religions and Sport, Education and Society provided four documents each while the British Journal of Religious Education recorded three publications. This distribution reflects the multidisciplinary nature of the collected literature, showing that moral education and pedagogy are analyzed in educational, philosophical, ethical, religious, and social contexts.

The annual publication trends shown in figure 2 also show differences in the academic contributions of various journals. In particular, the Journal of Moral Education has four publications in 2026, while Cogent Education has three documents in 2026. The results show an increase in recent publication activity in selected journals, especially those concerned with moral education and more general educational research. The existence of scientific papers in specialized journals and between disciplines proves that research on moral education does not belong to a certain academic field. This variability is in line with the multidisciplinary nature of moral education drawing on educational philosophy, moral psychology, ethics, and character formation (Berkowitz, 2011; Rest et al., 1999).

Overall, the results indicate that the scholarly literature on moral education and pedagogy is disseminated throughout a range of academic sources, reflecting the broad conceptual roots of the topic. The concentration of publications in the Journal of Moral Education and Science and Engineering Ethics points to these journals as important publication sources in the retrieved dataset, but, publication counts cannot be used to determine their citation effect or scholarly impact. The distribution also reveals possible avenues for future interdisciplinary study connecting moral education with professional ethics, educational innovation, and modern pedagogical practices. The analysis of published sources is a significant part of bibliometric performance analysis as it allows to discover established scholarly venues and patterns of research distribution (Donthu et al., 2021).

### RQ3: Who are the most productive and influential authors contributing to moral education and pedagogy research?

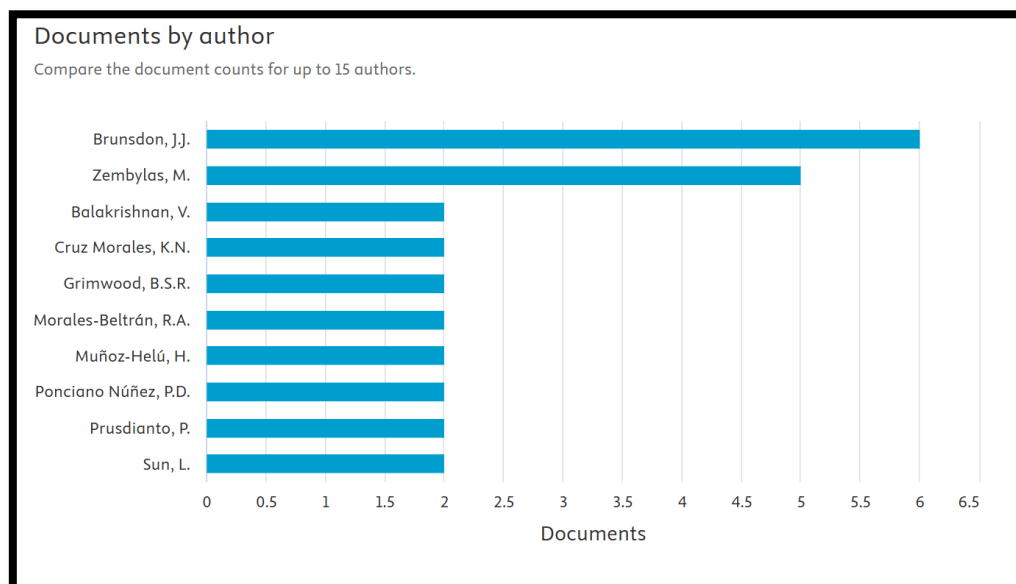


**Figure 3. Top 10 Most Productive Authors in Moral Education and Pedagogy Research (2019–2026)**

**Table 2. Distribution of Publications by Author**

| No.   | Author                | Number of Documents |
|-------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1     | Brunsdon, J.J.        | 6                   |
| 2     | Zembylas, M.          | 5                   |
| 3     | Balakrishnan, V.      | 2                   |
| 4     | Cruz Morales, K.N.    | 2                   |
| 5     | Grimwood, B.S.R.      | 2                   |
| 6     | Morales-Beltrán, R.A. | 2                   |
| 7     | Muñoz-Helú, H.        | 2                   |
| 8     | Ponciano Núñez, P.D.  | 2                   |
| 9     | Prusdianto, P.        | 2                   |
| Total |                       | 25                  |

Figure 3 and Table 2 show the distribution of publications among the top authors in moral education and pedagogy research indexed in Scopus from 2019 to 2026. The results show that the most productive author was Brunsdon, J.J., with six publications, and the second was Zamehblas, M., with five publications. Balakrishnan, V., Cruz Morales, K.N., Grimwood, B.S.R., Morales-Beltrán, R.A., Muñoz-Helú, H., Ponciano Núñez, P.D., and Prusdianto, P. each had two publications. In the picture, Sun, L. is also shown as an author with two publications. The difference in publication output of the majority of contributors is not very high, indicating a dispersed authorship pattern rather than a large concentration of a few researchers. Although Brunsdon and Zembylas show somewhat better research production, the presence of various authors reflects different scholarly contributions to the development of moral education and pedagogy. This trend is consistent with the relevance of author productivity analysis in identifying research contributors and understanding the distribution of scientific output (Donthu et al., 2021). However, the mere number of publications is not enough to determine scholarly influence; citation counts, citation effect, and collaboration networks are also needed to assess the larger academic contributions of writers. In general, the results show a fragmented research ecosystem with different degrees of author output and worldwide scholarly engagement.

#### **RQ4: Which countries are the leading contributors to global research on moral education and pedagogy?**

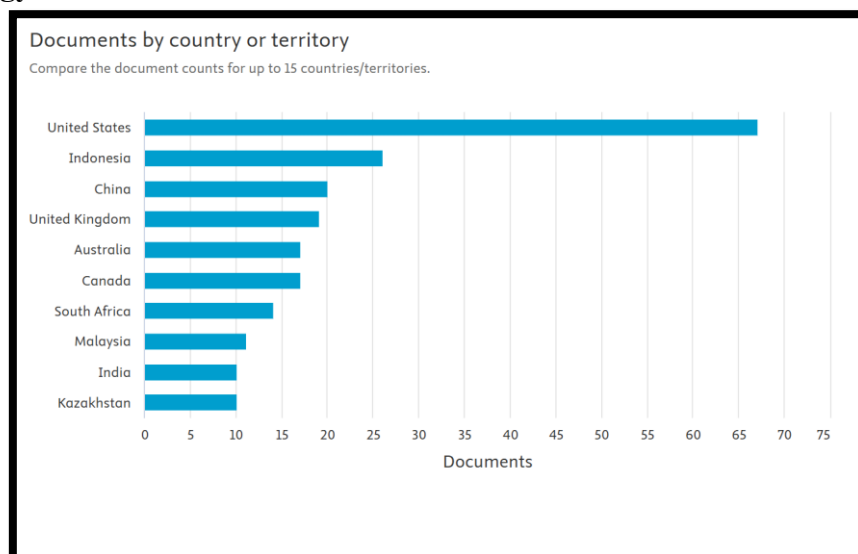


**Figure 4. Geographical Distribution of Publications by Country/Territory (2019–2026)**

**Table 4. Distribution of Publications by Country/Territory**

| No.   | Country/Territory | Number of Documents |
|-------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1     | United States     | 67                  |
| 2     | Indonesia         | 26                  |
| 3     | China             | 20                  |
| 4     | United Kingdom    | 19                  |
| 5     | Australia         | 17                  |
| 6     | Canada            | 17                  |
| 7     | South Africa      | 14                  |
| 8     | Malaysia          | 11                  |
| 9     | India             | 10                  |
| 10    | Kazakhstan        | 10                  |
| Total |                   | 211                 |

Figure 4 and Table 5 present the geographical distribution of articles indexed by Scopus in the area of moral education and pedagogy in 2019–2026. The top ten countries are highlighted. The results showed that the most productive country was the United States with 67 publications, followed by Indonesia ( $n = 26$ ), China ( $n = 20$ ), and the United Kingdom ( $n = 19$ ). Australia and Canada each supplied 17 articles and South Africa produced 14 documents. Malaysia was ninth with 11 publications, ahead of India and Kazakhstan with ten documents. In total, the 10 nations accounted for the 211 country-level publication counts, representing the international distribution of scholarly contributions in the retrieved dataset. The large contribution from the United States reflects its major role in research on moral education and pedagogy. The presence of Indonesia, China, and Malaysia points to research activities in Asian educational milieus. The geographical variety of publications shows that moral education and pedagogy are of scientific interest in nations with various educational systems, cultural traditions, and ethical views. However, the relatively small volume of Malaysian publications implies the potential for further awareness and worldwide scholarly collaboration in the area of moral education. In general, the results show that research output is unevenly distributed geographically, with a few major countries accounting for the bulk of the contributions. Publications with international co-authorship may be assigned to more than one country, the geographical counts are to be seen as contributions at the country level, rather than mutually exclusive publications.

**RQ5: What are the major subject areas associated with moral education and pedagogy research?**

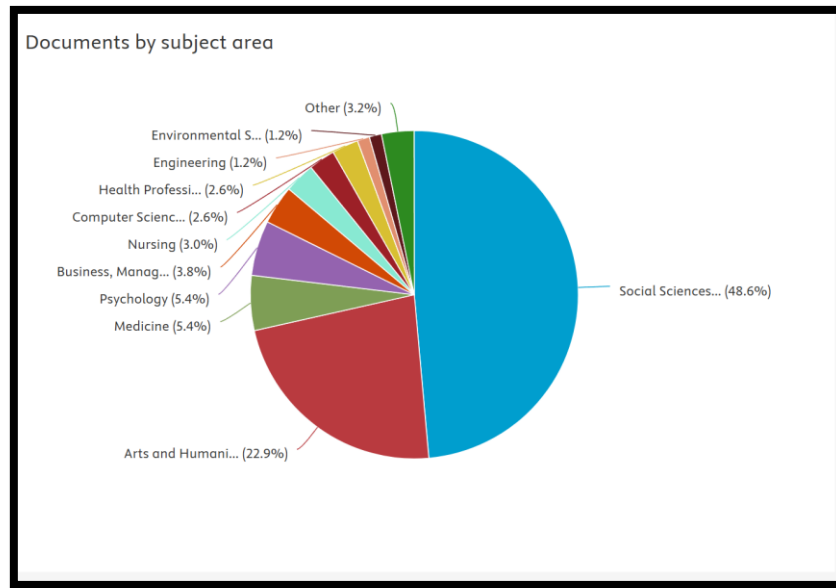


**Figure 5. Distribution of Publications by Subject Area (2019–2026)**

**Table 5. Distribution of Publications by Subject Area**

| No.   | Subject Area                               | Number of Documents |
|-------|--------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1     | Social Sciences                            | 242                 |
| 2     | Arts and Humanities                        | 114                 |
| 3     | Medicine                                   | 27                  |
| 4     | Psychology                                 | 27                  |
| 5     | Business, Management and Accounting        | 19                  |
| 6     | Nursing                                    | 15                  |
| 7     | Computer Science                           | 13                  |
| 8     | Health Professions                         | 13                  |
| 9     | Engineering                                | 6                   |
| 10    | Environmental Science                      | 6                   |
| 11    | Decision Sciences                          | 4                   |
| 12    | Agricultural and Biological Sciences       | 3                   |
| 13    | Economics, Econometrics and Finance        | 3                   |
| 14    | Energy                                     | 3                   |
| 15    | Earth and Planetary Sciences               | 1                   |
| 16    | Neuroscience                               | 1                   |
| 17    | Pharmacology, Toxicology and Pharmaceutics | 1                   |
| Total |                                            | 498                 |

Figure 4 and Table 4 show the distribution of Scopus-indexed articles on moral education and pedagogy by discipline from 2019 to 2026. It includes 498 subject-area classifications of 17 disciplines. Results show that Social Sciences dominated the research landscape with 242 categories (48.6%), followed by Arts and Humanities with 114 (22.9%). In total, these two disciplines comprised an estimated 71.5% of all subject area classifications, indicating the substantial pedagogical, philosophical and social underpinnings of moral education research. The most common categories were Medicine and Psychology with 27 classifications (5.4%), Business, Management and Accounting with 19 (3.8%), Nursing with 15 (3.0%) and Computer Science and Health Professions with 13 each (2.6%). Engineering and Environmental Science

recorded smaller numbers, as did each of these areas ( $n = 6$ ), Decision Sciences ( $n = 4$ ), Agricultural and Biological Sciences, Economics, Econometrics and Finance, and Energy ( $n = 3$  each), and one classification each for Earth and Planetary Sciences, Neuroscience, and Pharmacology, Toxicology and Pharmaceutics. The distribution is a testimony to the multidisciplinary nature of research related to moral education and pedagogy and goes beyond familiar educational fields, traveling into healthcare, professional ethics, technology, and applied sciences. The multidisciplinary nature of this pattern implies chances for integrating moral reasoning, ethical decision-making and values-based learning in a range of educational and professional settings. However, the results should be evaluated considering that Scopus employs a multiple subject-area classification approach in which individual publications may be classified into various disciplines. Overall, the results show the dominance of Social Sciences and Arts and Humanities, but also the wider disciplinary reach of moral education and allied ethical studies.

#### RQ6: Which funding organisations have contributed to the development of moral education and pedagogy research?

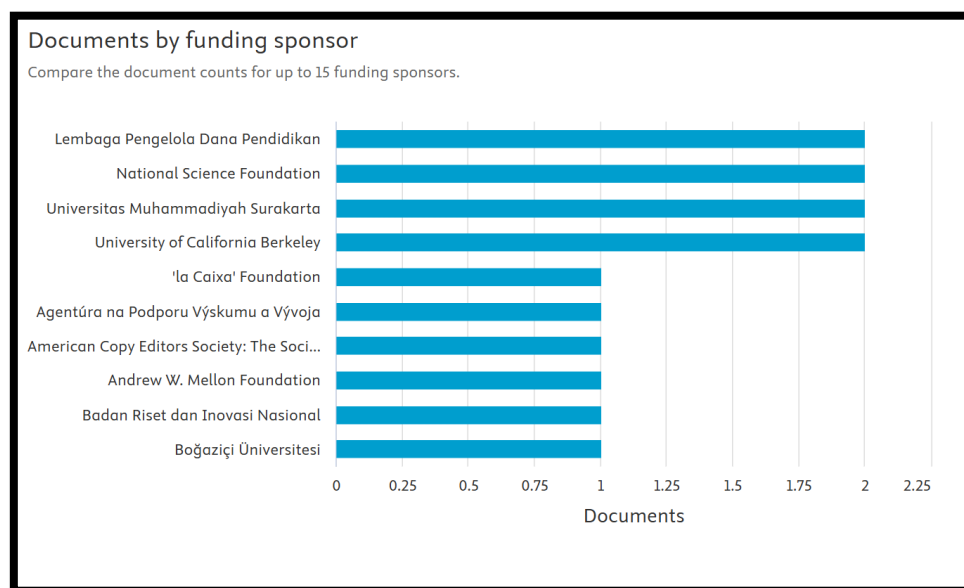


Figure 6. Distribution of Publications by Funding Sponsor (2019–2026)

Table 6. Distribution of Publications by Funding Sponsor

| No.   | Funding Sponsor                                        | Number of Documents |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1     | Lembaga Pengelola Dana Pendidikan                      | 2                   |
| 2     | National Science Foundation                            | 2                   |
| 3     | Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta                     | 2                   |
| 4     | University of California Berkeley                      | 2                   |
| 5     | 'la Caixa' Foundation                                  | 1                   |
| 6     | Agentúra na Podporu Výskumu a Vývoja                   | 1                   |
| 7     | American Copy Editors Society: The Society for Editing | 1                   |
| 8     | Andrew W. Mellon Foundation                            | 1                   |
| 9     | Badan Riset dan Inovasi Nasional                       | 1                   |
| 10    | Boğaziçi Üniversitesi                                  | 1                   |
| Total |                                                        | 14                  |

Figure 6 and Table 6 present the distribution of funding sponsors associated with Scopus-indexed publications on moral education and pedagogy between 2019 and 2026, highlighting the contributions of ten funding organisations. The findings reveal that Lembaga Pengelola Dana Pendidikan, the National Science Foundation, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, and the University of California Berkeley recorded the highest number of publications, with two documents each. Meanwhile, 'la Caixa' Foundation, Agentúra na Podporu Výskumu a Vývoja, American Copy Editors Society: The Society for Editing, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Badan Riset dan Inovasi Nasional, and Boğaziçi Üniversitesi were each associated with one publication. Collectively, these organisations accounted for 14 funding-sponsor document counts, demonstrating the involvement of governmental agencies, universities, research institutions, and philanthropic foundations in supporting research related to moral education and pedagogy. The geographical diversity of funding organisations, particularly those associated with Indonesia, the United States, and Europe, reflects the international nature of research support within the retrieved literature. Furthermore, the relatively even distribution of funding acknowledgements suggests that research support among the listed organisations is dispersed rather than concentrated within a single institution. Nevertheless, these findings should be interpreted cautiously because individual publications may acknowledge multiple funding sponsors, and some Scopus records may contain incomplete funding information. Overall, the results highlight the diversity of institutional support for moral education and pedagogy research and suggest opportunities for strengthening international research funding partnerships and collaborative scholarly initiatives.

## Discussion

The findings of this bibliometric analysis shed light on the evolution of the research on moral education and pedagogy around the globe from 2019 to 2026. The analysis of 279 papers indexed in Scopus shows an important increase in the scientific production in the last years, especially in 2025 and 2026. The growth is a sign of increasing academic interest in the research on moral education and pedagogical progress. The work of writers such as Brunsdon and Zameylas, and the presence of articles in specialist and multidisciplinary journals, show that the subject draws academics from a variety of backgrounds. The high visibility of the Journal of Moral Education and Science and Engineering Ethics reflects the intimate connection between moral education, ethical inquiry and the broader area of educational research. The distribution by discipline indicates the prominence of the Social Sciences and Arts and Humanities, which together accounted for around 71.5% of the subject-area classifications. Nevertheless, the contributions of Medicine, Psychology, Business, Computer Science and other disciplines demonstrate the greater interdisciplinary relevance of moral and ethical education. Geographically, the United States was the biggest contributor followed by Indonesia, China and United Kingdom but Malaysia had relatively low publication production. These differences may provide opportunities for increased research participation and international academic collaboration. Furthermore, the variety of funding sponsors shows that academic research is funded by a broad spectrum of governmental, institutional and philanthropic groups. But, in the absence of statistics on funding, broader generalizations concerning financial investment are limited.

## Recommendations

Based on a bibliometric analysis of 279 papers indexed in Scopus on moral education and pedagogy from 2019 to 2026, a number of recommendations are presented to improve future research and pedagogical development. First, more efforts should be made to develop moral education research in the nations with relatively low publication output, like Malaysia, through

international research collaboration, institutional partnership and interdisciplinary scholarly initiatives. Second, scholars should explore new pedagogical strategies that integrate digital technology, interactive moral dilemmas, experiential learning, and values-based education to solve modern educational problems. Third, the strong presence of Social Sciences and Arts and Humanities suggests opportunities to foster interdisciplinary collaboration with Psychology, Computer Science, Healthcare, and Professional Ethics to develop more comprehensive approaches to moral reasoning and ethical decision-making. Universities, research institutions and funding agencies should also concentrate on joint research initiatives, longitudinal studies and evidence-based evaluations of moral teaching approaches in different cultural and educational contexts. Future bibliometric studies are also urged to use keyword co-occurrence analysis, citation mapping and co-authorship network analysis to discover new research subjects, prominent academic contributions and international collaboration trends. Overall, this collection of proposals offers avenues for furthering scholarship of moral education, enhancing pedagogical innovation, and allowing sustained research development at the worldwide level.

### Conclusion

The present study is a bibliometric analysis of the global research trends and scholarly dynamics in the area of moral education and pedagogy based on 279 Scopus-indexed publications between 2019 and 2026. The results show a significant growth in the number of publications in 2025 and 2026, showing an increasing intellectual engagement in the field. The most productive authors are Brunsdon and Zembylas while the most productive sources of publication are the Journal of Moral Education and Science and Engineering Ethics. Social Sciences and Arts and Humanities were the dominant disciplines, demonstrating the strong educational, philosophical and ethical basis of the research environment. In terms of geography, the United States had the highest publishing output, followed by Indonesia, China and the United Kingdom with Malaysia having relatively minor research contributions. Findings also highlighted different institutional and international funding support. Overall, this analysis reveals the transdisciplinary and geographically uneven evolution of research on moral education and pedagogy. Future studies should promote international collaboration, evaluate novel and tech-enhanced teaching approaches and apply sophisticated bibliometric methodologies to investigate research networks and emerging topics. These findings have important implications for academics, educators and policy-makers aiming to advance the scholarship of moral education, promote evidence-based pedagogical practices and encourage sustained research development in varied educational environments.

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