

"Global Research Trends and Collaborations on Christian Education Management: A Bibliometric Review" May Increase Its Academic Appeal

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Keywords:</p> <p>Management of Christian religious education; Collaboration; Bibliometrics</p>	<p>The purpose of the study is that bibliometrics is important to review the existing literature on educational management in Christian religious education. Through this approach, it is expected to identify trends, knowledge gaps, and potential solutions that can be proposed as new innovations in improving the effectiveness of educational management in Christian religious education. This innovative solution is expected to be the foundation for the development of Christian religious education that is more holistic and relevant to the demands of the times. This study uses a bibliometric approach to describe and analyze literature related to Christian educational management. The research population includes all literature related to the database. The research sample is focused on the last 5 years (2020-2024) and only on journal articles. The data collection process begins with the identification stage using the keyword "Christian Education Management". The analysis was carried out using VOSviewer software to identify main topics, mark relationships between topics, and find research trends. The results of the study are presented in the form of tables, graphs, and narratives, which provide an overview of the landscape of Christian educational management research. The bibliometric analysis strategy is explicitly Co-occurrence, Co-authorship, Co-itation, Bibliographic couple. The selection of Dimension AI was made because this database has a wide coverage and open access, including literature that may not be indexed in Scopus or WoS. The results showed that despite the differences in numbers, the main topics and keywords were similar, indicating that Dimension AI is quite representative for the purpose of this study. Analysis using VOSviewer and Microsoft Excel showed significant fluctuations in the number of publications on Christian religious education management from 2020 to 2024, with the highest peak occurring in 2022, reflecting a positive trend in research interest in this field.</p>
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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is the main foundation in building quality individuals and society. Christian religious education stretches from the lowest level of education to tertiary education, forming a comprehensive educational continuum (Ariawan, 2020; Lumban Tobing, 2020; Adlya et al., 2024; Iswati & Ardiwansyah, 2019). At the primary level, Christian religious education is often organized as an integral part of the formal education curriculum in primary and secondary schools (Pumfrey & Verma, 2018; Ahid, 2014; Ainissyifa et al., 2024; Aji, 2019; Bariyah, 2014; Apiati et al., 2024; Habibi, 2022). Students are introduced to Bible stories, moral values, prayers, and other religious practices that form the basis of the Christian faith (Siburian et al., 2022; Harianti et al., 2020; Arikunto, 2006; Satuh, 2023; Al Anang et al., 2020; Mawaddah & Istikomah, 2024). At the secondary level, Christian religious education focuses more on a deeper understanding of religious teachings, Christian ethics, and the application of religious values in daily life (Erricker, 2010; Watson & Thompson, 2007; Itulua-Abumere, 2013; Jackson, 2004). Students may also be involved in spiritual activities such as communal worship, catechization, and social service.

Meanwhile, in college, Christian religious education can be the object of more in-depth and focused study (Naibaho, 2022; Simatupang et al., 2022). Programs such as theology, biblical studies, and Christian religious education provide opportunities for students to deepen their understanding of Christian theology, church history, biblical hermeneutics, and the practical application of religious teachings in a variety of life contexts. Here, education management has a crucial role in effectively managing these programs, ensuring that students receive a holistic and relevant Christian religious education to the demands of the times. In this context, education management has an undeniable role as a system that regulates and manages various aspects of the educational process. Starting from planning, implementation, to evaluation, education management covers everything, including the management of human resources, finance, and educational facilities and infrastructure (Ariawan, 2018; Ainissyifa et al., 2024; Bairizki, 2020; Amin & Alinur, 2022). The goal is to achieve previously set educational targets, both in terms of improving the quality of learning, developing individual abilities, and achieving academic goals (Kristyana et al., 2021).

The importance of education management in the context of Christian education cannot be underestimated. Because, Christian education is not only about the transfer of religious knowledge, but also about the formation of character and morality in accordance with the teachings of Christ. Therefore, education management in Christian religious education must pay attention to deep religious values, as well as integrate religious elements into every aspect of the educational process. This ensures that Christian religious education becomes not only a formal lesson, but also a deep spiritual experience for learners (Ariawan et al., 2020).

The development of education management has undergone a significant evolution along with the development of the global education paradigm (Ariawan et al., 2021). From conventional approaches to more contextual and technology-based approaches, education management continues to adapt to the demands of the times. This includes the use of information and communication technology in supporting the learning process, the application of innovative teaching methods, and curriculum development that is responsive to the needs of students.

However, when we talk about the development of education management in Christian religious education, there are unique challenges that need to be considered carefully (Purniasih & Ariawan, 2022). Although the principles of educational management generally apply, the religious context requires a more sensitive and focused approach. This is related to the cultivation of spiritual, moral, and ethical values that are the core of Christian religious education.

To improve the management of Christian religious education, concrete steps can be taken. According to Pakpahan et al., (2021) It is necessary to conduct a thorough evaluation of the curriculum used in the educational process, ensuring that it reflects relevant Christian values and meets the needs of students. Continuous training and development of teachers and educators is important, so that they

have a deep understanding of education management and can apply it effectively in the context of Christian education (H.-K. Shin, 2023).

Although there have been efforts to implement and improve education management in Christian religious education, there are still shortcomings that need to be corrected. Curricula that have not been fully integrated with religious values, teaching methods that are not optimal in conveying religious teachings, and evaluations that do not pay attention to aspects of spirituality are some examples of weaknesses that still exist (Boiliu et al., 2021).

Therefore, bibliometric research is important to review existing literature on education management in Christian religious education. Through this approach, it is expected to identify trends, knowledge gaps, and potential solutions that can be proposed as new innovations in improving the effectiveness of education management in Christian education. These innovative solutions are expected to be the foundation for the development of Christian religious education that is more holistic and relevant to the demands of the times.

2. METHOD

This study uses a bibliometric approach to elaborate and analyze literature related to Christian education management. The goal is to understand the main topic, the relationship between topics, research trends, and recommendations for future research. Data was obtained from the Dimension AI database with the keyword "Christian Education Management". The study population includes all related literature in that database. The research sample focused on the last 5 years (2020-2024) and only on journal articles. The data collection process begins with the identification stage using the keyword "Christian Education Management". A total of 2393 data were found, and after filtering based on the last 5 years to maintain the fast-changing relevance of the data, the amount of data analyzed was reduced to 721. Furthermore, through the feasibility stage, only data in the form of journal articles were considered, resulting in 582 data that entered the conclusion stage for analysis. Data taken on February 25, 2024.

Analysis is performed with VOSviewer software to identify key topics, map relationships between topics, and find research trends. The results are presented in the form of tables, graphs, and narratives, providing an overview of the research landscape of Christian religious education management. The bibliometric analysis strategy is explicitly as follows;

1. Co-occurrence (co-occurrence of keywords) to identify key topics.
2. Co-authorship (co-authorship) to map a collaborative network.
3. Co-citation to see the conceptual relationships between literature.
4. Bibliographic coupling to find out the relationship of documents based on the same reference.

The selection of Dimension AI was made because this database has a wide scope and open access, including literature that may not be indexed in Scopus or WoS. However, for validation, the coverage of the topic 'Christian Education Management' was compared descriptively with initial results from similar searches in Scopus and WoS. The results showed that despite the differences in numbers, the main topics and keywords were similar, which suggests that Dimension AI was quite representative for the purposes of this study.

Some potential limitations you can mention:

1. Database limitations: Not all journals may be indexed in Dimension AI.
2. Temporal focus (2020–2024): Can rule out long-term historical trends.
3. Document type: Only journal articles are analyzed, excluding proceedings, books, dissertations.
4. The reliance on a single keyword of use only "Christian Education Management" can overlook the variation of other relevant terms.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, an analysis of 582 data in the form of articles related to the management of Christian religious education in the last 5 years, namely from 2020 to 2024. The results show that almost half or around 45.44% of the total data comes from 2022 and 2023. 2021 was the year with the highest data percentage, at 26.46%, while 2020 had the lowest data percentage with only 17.24%. This illustrates the increasing trend in the number of publications related to Christian religious education management in recent years, especially in 2022 and 2023.

Research Fluctuations

The number of publications on the topic of Christian education management has increased significantly from 2020 to 2024. In 2020, there were 10 publications, but this number increased drastically to 155 publications in 2021, which is an increase of 1450%. Although there was a slight decrease in 2023 and 2024 compared to the peak in 2022, the number of publications is still much higher compared to 2020. This can be seen in Figure 1 below.

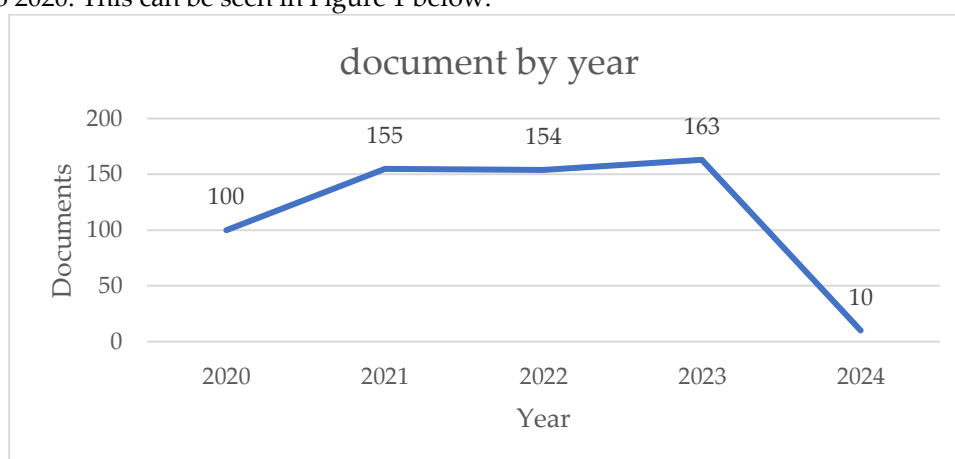


Figure 1. Research Fluctuations

This upward trend shows an increasing interest in research on education management in the context of Christian religious education. The cause may stem from the growing awareness of the importance of effective education management in providing quality Christian religious education. In addition, the increase in the number of Christian religious education programs offered in various educational institutions can also be a contributing factor. The discovery of research showing that effective education management can improve the quality of Christian religious education may also be the impetus for increased interest in this field.

Factors that led to an increase in interest in research on education management in Christian education, such as awareness of the importance of effective education management, the increasing number of Christian education programs, and the presence of research supporting the effectiveness of education management, contributed to this growth (Setran & Wilhoit, 2020; H.-H. Shin, 2023). On the contrary, factors that contribute to the effectiveness of education management in Christian religious education, such as effective leadership, careful okeyplanning, effective use of resources, and continuous evaluation, play an important role in ensuring that this growth occurs not only quantitatively, but also qualitatively (Baskoro, 2020; Lumban Tobing, 2020; Bintari et al., 2021; Palupi et al., 2022; Sartika et al., 2024; Adi & Mitasari, 2021). Therefore, while the number of publications is increasing year by year, the research that still needs to be done in the field of educational management in Christian religious education provides direction for further development to ensure the effectiveness and relevance of such educational programs.

Bibliographic Coupling Countries

Based on analysis using VOSviewer, it can be seen that collaboration between countries in the management of Christian religious education is still relatively low. Of the 17 countries that met the threshold, it can be seen that collaboration is still concentrated in several country clusters, with the highest intensity of collaboration occurring between South Africa and the United States. However, there are some countries that have not been involved in this collaboration. This can be seen in Figure 2.

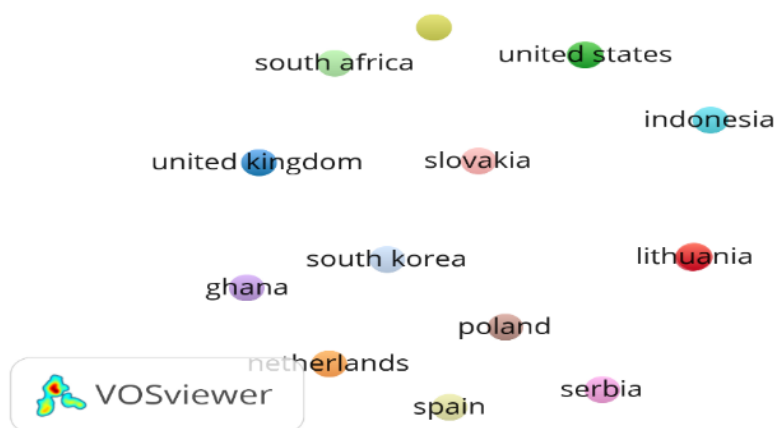


Figure 2. Bibliographic State Coupling

Factors such as a strong tradition of Christian religious education, the existence of higher education institutions that focus on this field, as well as the presence of academics and researchers active in the management of Christian religious education may be the cause of the dominance of collaboration by some countries (Ruben et al., 2020). On the other hand, countries that have not been involved may experience obstacles such as lack of Christian religious education traditions, educational institutions that are less focused on this field, and lack of academics and researchers active in Christian education management (H.-K. Shin, 2023).

To enhance collaboration between countries in the management of Christian religious education, several steps can be taken, such as holding international conferences, publishing joint scientific journals, establishing student and faculty exchange programs, and providing scholarships to academics and researchers from developing countries. It is hoped that these efforts can strengthen collaboration and improve the quality of Christian education globally.

Bibliografic Coupling Author

VOSviewer images display an interesting picture of collaboration in Christian education management. Of the 582 publication data analyzed, 84 countries were involved, but only 4 countries met the threshold set, indicating a lack of collaboration between researchers from various countries. In fact, of the 4 researchers represented each by one country, there was no collaboration between researchers from the same country. This indicates a very low level of collaboration in this field. This is shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3. Bibliographic Coupling Authors

Further analysis showed that there was only one cluster, indicating a lack of research focus in the management of Christian religious education. In conclusion, collaboration between researchers in this field is far from optimal. To improve collaboration, several suggestions were put forward. Among them are holding international conferences and seminars involving researchers from various countries, publishing joint scientific journals as a platform for sharing ideas and research, building international research networks, and providing scholarships to researchers from developing countries to conduct research in the field of Christian education management (Masinambow, 2022).

The lack of collaboration in the management of Christian religious education can be caused by several interrelated factors. First, the lack of communication and interaction between researchers can be a major obstacle. This could be due to the lack of platforms or forums that allow the exchange of ideas and information, as well as the lack of international conferences and seminars specifically addressing this topic. Limitations in international research networks can also make it difficult for researchers from different countries to connect and collaborate effectively (Choi, 2023).

Furthermore, language and cultural differences can be serious obstacles to collaboration. Ineffective communication and difficulty in understanding the writing style and format of scholarly publications from different cultures can hinder the collaboration process. Differences in research values and norms can also lead to disagreements and conflicts in collaborative efforts (Kim, 2023).

Lack of funds and resources is also an important factor. Insufficient financial support from institutions and governments for research in the management of Christian religious education, high costs to participate in international activities such as conferences, and expensive publication fees can limit researchers' ability to collaborate with colleagues from other countries.

In addition to these factors, it is also necessary to consider obstacles such as limited time and energy, lack of motivation and incentives for researchers to collaborate, and lack of trust and mutual respect between researchers.

To overcome this challenge, a concerted effort is needed. These include building online platforms and forums that facilitate the exchange of ideas, encouraging more international conferences and seminars focused on these topics, improving translations of scholarly publications, providing training on cross-cultural communication, seeking additional sources of funding, and creating incentives for researchers to collaborate. By addressing these factors, it is hoped that collaboration in the management of Christian religious education can increase, making a greater contribution to the progress of this field globally.

Related Keywords

Through analysis using VOSviewer, there are eight clusters formed from 242 keywords relevant to Christian education management. The number of words in each cluster varies, with the Red cluster having 62 words, the Green cluster with 53 words, the Blue cluster with 34 words, the Yellow cluster with 25 words, the Purple cluster with 20 words, the Light Blue cluster with 11 words, the Orange

cluster with 4 words, and the Brown cluster with 2 words. Each cluster shows a different research focus, covering various aspects in the management of Christian religious education. This analysis provides a more detailed picture of keyword distribution and research focus in this area. The picture is shown in Figure 4.

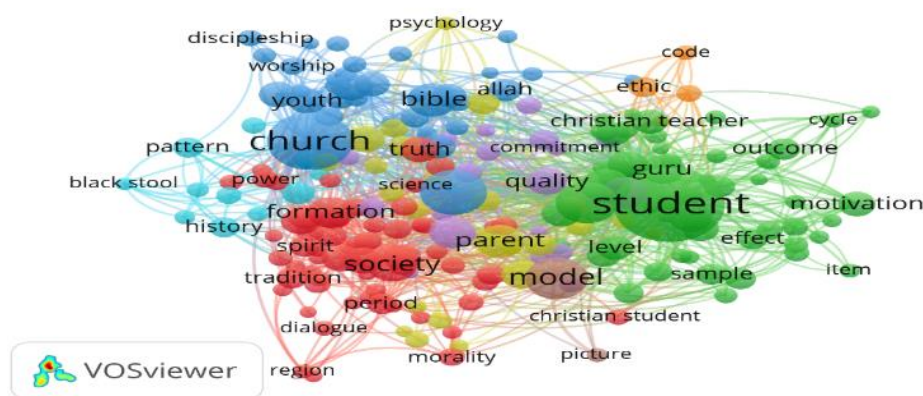


Figure 4. Keyword Research

First, the red cluster shows the focus of research on general aspects of Christian religious education, with keywords such as "religious education", "Christian", "moral", "character", and "values". Then, the green cluster highlighted the development of Christian teachers, with emphasis on keywords such as "religious teacher", "competence", "pedagogy", and "professionalism". Meanwhile, the blue cluster describes research related to the Christian religious education curriculum, with keywords such as "curriculum", "material", "learning", and "assessment".

In addition, the VOSviewer image also reveals some new keywords that have not been connected to the existing cluster. These include psychology, spirituality, character building, leadership, community, counseling, mission, and evangelization. Novelty analysis shows that this area of research offers significant potential for further exploration in the management of Christian religious education.

Thus, the conclusion of this analysis is that the VOSviewer image provides a clear picture of the current research direction in the management of Christian religious education. In addition, the emphasis on new keywords suggests an opportunity to develop understanding and practice in this field through further research.

For advanced research in the management of Christian religious education, the various keywords that appear in its clusters provide diverse directions. The study of psychology can delve deeper into the application of psychological concepts in the context of Christian education, such as the use of child development psychology or cognitive psychology in the process of religious learning. In addition, research on spirituality can explore the development of spiritual dimensions in Christian religious education, including its impact on student well-being. Character building is an interesting topic for further study, by examining effective strategies and methods to shape Christian character in students. In addition, research on leadership in the context of Christian education can provide insight into the role and quality of leadership in the management of Christian religious education. Studies on community can highlight the importance of community support in Christian religious education, while research on counseling can explore the role of counseling in supporting the spiritual and moral development of Christian students. Lastly, research on mission and evangelization can explore how Christian religious education can influence and be influenced by mission and evangelization efforts. By exploring these various aspects, advanced research is expected to make a significant contribution in enriching understanding and practice in the management of Christian religious education.

In strengthening the understanding of publication trends in Christian religious education management research, visualization is in the form of an annual graph that illustrates the fluctuation in the number of publications from 2020 to 2024. The graph shows that there was a significant increase in 2021, with a jump from just 10 publications in 2020 to 155 publications. This number has continued to

increase and peaked in 2022, before experiencing a slight decline in 2023 and 2024. However, the number of publications in the last two years is still much higher than at the beginning of the study period. This visualization illustrates a clear trend towards increasing academic attention to the field of education management in the context of Christian religious education.

In addition to annual trends, visualization using VOSviewer software is also used to map collaboration between countries through *bibliographic coupling* analysis. The results show that although there are 17 countries that meet the threshold for involvement in publications, collaboration is still focused on a specific group of countries, particularly South Africa and the United States that show the most intense relationships. Most other countries have not shown significant collaborative interaction. These findings show that although the scope of countries is quite wide, the intensity of cooperation between countries is still relatively low and tends to be fragmented. Bibliographic analysis of couplings between authors is also visualized in the form of network maps. The results showed that of the 582 publications analyzed, only four authors from four countries met the threshold, and there was not a single collaboration between researchers from the same country. In fact, the network of authors formed consisted of only one small cluster, reflecting the low level of academic collaboration in this field. This lack of interaction between authors indicates the importance of strategic efforts to build stronger and cross-border research networks, in order to strengthen knowledge exchange and shared resource utilization.

Furthermore, a visualization of the distribution of keywords was also performed to identify thematic focus in the research. Based on the analysis of 242 relevant keywords, eight main clusters were found. The red cluster is the largest and reflects the focus on Christian educational values such as character, morals, and religion. The green cluster emphasizes the development of Christian teachers, with keywords such as competence, pedagogy, and professionalism. The blue cluster describes aspects of the curriculum and learning process, while the other cluster features specific topics such as leadership, community, and educational evaluation. In addition, the analysis also revealed a number of new keywords such as "spirituality", "psychology", and "evangelism" that have not been fully connected to the main cluster. This shows that there is an open space for the exploration of new topics in the management of Christian religious education that are still not widely explored in the current literature.

The discussion of the trend of publication and collaboration in Christian religious education will be sharper when compared to the results of similar bibliometric studies in the field of general education or other religious education, such as Islamic or Catholic education. This comparison can reveal whether education management in the Christian context has uniqueness in growth trends, research focus, or level of collaboration. Thus, this research not only stands as an independent analysis, but also contributes to the global mapping of the direction and trends of religion-based education research.

This research also has the potential to be a trigger for increased global collaboration in Christian education research. By highlighting the low level of bibliographic coupling between researchers and countries, this study opens up opportunities for the formation of international research networks. Through conferences, seminars, joint journal publishing, as well as academic exchange programs, cross-border collaboration can be enhanced. The results of the analysis in this study can be the basis for identifying potential partners and bridging Christian educational institutions in various parts of the world.

On the other hand, the implications of these findings for educational management practices in Christian institutions need to be explained in a more concrete way. For example, findings regarding the importance of leadership, planning, and evaluation can be adopted in training policies for managers of Christian educational institutions. Christian education institutions can use the results of this research to strengthen their internal governance through data-driven policies, as well as develop managerial guidelines that are contextual and appropriate to local needs.

These findings can also encourage innovation in the development of Christian religious education curriculum. New emerging keywords such as spirituality, leadership, and community can be

inspiration for developing new courses or more contextual teaching approaches. In addition, the research can also encourage the formation of global networks between Christian educational institutions, allowing for the exchange of best practices, teaching materials, and managerial approaches across cultures. Thus, the results of this research are not only useful academically, but also have a real practical impact in improving the quality of Christian education globally.

4. CONCLUSION

Overall, the analysis using VOSviewer and Microsoft Excel revealed significant fluctuations in the number of publications on Christian religious education management from 2020 to 2024, with the highest peak occurring in 2022, reflecting a positive trend in research interest in this area. Despite this, collaboration between countries and researchers is still relatively low, with South Africa and the United States standing out as the most active countries in collaboration. The level of collaboration between researchers was also noted to be very low, with only one cluster showing a lack of research focus. To increase collaboration, efforts are needed such as holding international conferences, publishing joint scientific journals, and building research networks. New keywords that have the potential for further research are also found, such as psychology, spirituality, and leadership, which can enrich understanding and practice in the management of Christian religious education. Therefore, it is advisable to conduct further research on this new keyword while continuing to enhance collaboration between countries and researchers through various efforts, such as international conferences, joint scientific journals, and research networks.

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