Transformation of cultural values through classical literature in education

Transformasi nilai budaya melalui sastra klasik dalam pendidikan

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Abstract
This research aims to investigate and identify research trends related to classical literature to preserve Islamic cultural heritage through education, especially in the context of religious education. The primary focus of this research is to examine the contribution of classical literature in the learning process and teaching of Islamic cultural and spiritual values. This study uses a bibliometric approach by analyzing 441 scientific documents from the Scopus database from 2004 to 2024. The data studied includes titles, keywords, and abstracts, with the help of VOSviewer software for visual mapping of keywords and research topic networks. The study has three main findings. First, the productivity of scholarly publications related to classical literature is still low, suggesting that this topic has not been extensively explored academically and has excellent opportunities for future development. Second, the keyword analysis uncovers several essential terms that can be the basis for developing new topics, particularly in the context of preserving Islamic culture through education. Third, there is great potential in making classical literature a vehicle for forming character and cultural values in the religious education system. Thus, studying classical literature as part of the Islamic cultural heritage requires a more systematic and interdisciplinary approach. This study recommends increasing academic attention to classical literature in education to strengthen cultural values and Islamic identity amid globalization challenges.

Abstrak
Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki dan mengidentifikasi tren penelitian terkait sastra klasik sebagai sarana pelestarian warisan budaya Islam melalui pendidikan, khususnya dalam konteks pendidikan agama. Fokus utama penelitian ini adalah menelaah kontribusi sastra klasik dalam proses pembelajaran dan pengajaran nilai-nilai budaya serta agama Islam. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan bibliometrik dengan menganalisis 441 dokumen ilmiah dari database Scopus dalam rentang waktu 2004–2024. Data yang dikaji mencakup judul, kata kunci, dan abstrak, dengan bantuan perangkat lunak VOSviewer untuk pemetaan visual kata kunci dan jaringan topik penelitian. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan tiga temuan utama. Pertama, produktivitas publikasi ilmiah terkait sastra klasik masih rendah, menunjukkan bahwa topik ini belum banyak dieksplorasi secara akademik dan memiliki peluang besar untuk pengembangan ke depan. Kedua, analisis kata kunci mengungkap sejumlah istilah penting yang dapat menjadi dasar untuk pengembangan topik-topik baru, khususnya dalam konteks pelestarian budaya Islam melalui pendidikan. Ketiga, terdapat potensi besar dalam menjadikan sastra klasik sebagai wahana pembentukan karakter dan nilai budaya dalam sistem pendidikan agama. Dengan demikian, kajian terhadap sastra klasik sebagai bagian dari warisan budaya Islam memerlukan pendekatan yang lebih sistematis dan interdisipliner. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan peningkatan perhatian akademik terhadap sastra klasik dalam ranah pendidikan guna memperkuat nilai-nilai budaya dan identitas keislaman di tengah tantangan globalisasi.

A. Introduction

Islamic religious education, as the earliest form of Islamic educational institution in Indonesia, represents a unique model of Islamic schooling that blends Islamic learning with the cultural, social, and educational patterns of Indonesian society. Majid in Qomar (2002) referred to it as an *indigenous* form of education, original to Indonesia. As an education system rooted in the local context, Islamic religious education possesses distinctive and unique characteristics. One notable feature is the translation of original texts (Arabic Pegon script) into the Javanese language. This unique practice is rarely found in other educational institutions that rely on direct teaching through Arabic texts. Therefore, it is not surprising that discussions of Islamic religious education are often closely associated with literature, particularly Arabic literature in the form of poetry and prose. In practice, works of classical literature have become an essential part of the learning tradition within Islamic religious education. These literary texts serve not only as tools for language instruction but also as effective means for instilling cultural and spiritual values deeply embedded in Indonesian society.

Islamic religious educational literature, as a literary concept, possesses its own aesthetic value, rooted in the fact that Islamic religious education constitutes a long-standing subculture that has evolved into a distinct habitus. In relation to this concept, Hidayatullah (2010) argued that the aesthetic construction of Islamic religious educational literature contains a transcendent spiritual power. As part of Islamic literature, this genre is particularly compelling because it aligns with the role and function of Islamic religious education as a cultural substructure within Indonesian society. However, despite its richness and potential, Islamic religious education—as the cultural institution that gives rise to such literary works—has not received sufficient attention from literary critics, scholars, or cultural observers. This lack of academic engagement persists even though a number of literary works emerging from this tradition have significantly contributed to the preservation and development of local culture.

In addition, the presence of literature within Islamic religious education is highly distinctive. A literary atmosphere often coexists naturally with the religious learning process, particularly through forms of classical literature that are taught and recited collectively by students. One such form is poetry traditionally known as *shiir*, which represents a genre of Islamic religious educational literature written in *Pegon* script. According to Steenbrink (1988), *shiir* is derived from Malay poetic traditions. Furthermore, Kusuma Yuda (2024) noted that while the structure of *shiir* often follows the pattern of Malay poetry, its tone and form are generally more relaxed. As Islam became a dominant force in Javanese civilization, the Arabic script—originally reserved for Arabic-language texts—was adapted by adding diacritical marks to enable the writing of Javanese texts (Tohe, 2021). This adaptation gave rise to what is now known as *Pegon*, a Javanese manuscript system written in Arabic script. The term *Pegon* itself refers to something perceived as "deviant" or "unusual." Pegon texts are categorized into two types: *Pegon gundhul* (without diacritical marks) and *Pegon* with full harakat or vowel markings (Pigeaud, 1967).

According to Misbahuddin & Espinosa III (2022), the classical literature that has developed within the context of Islamic religious education encompasses a wide range of themes. These include traditional themes such as divine love, esoteric religious values, Sufi experiences, transcendental expressions and impressions, as well as the beauty of the universe. At the same time, more contemporary themes have emerged, often carrying popular or even subversive nuances. However, these newer themes are not entirely separate from the earlier ones; rather, they represent an extension or transformation of the traditional thematic core. In this way, Islamic religious educational literature serves multiple functions—it is recreative, didactic, aesthetic, moral, and deeply religious in nature.

However, classical literature, as a valuable component of Javanese literary heritage, has yet to be fully recognized as a "biological child" by its cultural origin. In other words, its existence is treated as equivalent to nonexistence—a sentiment encapsulated by the phrase from Islamic religious education circles: *wujuduhu(m) ka adamihi(m)* (its existence is like its absence).

Appreciation for classical literature remains minimal, due in part to the lack of attention from the Islamic religious education community that originally nurtured it, the dominance of the mainstream Javanese literary establishment, and the general neglect by literary scholars and critics.

Classical literature holds functional value that contributes to the development of civilization. According to Muzakka (2006), there are at least three primary functions of classical literature: educational, spiritual, and entertainment. The entertainment function emerges through the presence of performers who recite or sing these literary treasures, sometimes accompanied by musical instruments, and sometimes performed without accompaniment. The educational function is evident in the didactic expressions conveyed by the performer, often involving the transmission of Islamic moral teachings and complex religious knowledge. In many cases, classical literature is also utilized as instructional material and a medium of learning among students within the community. The spiritual function, meanwhile, is reflected in the fact that many of these literary compositions are created and performed as acts of devotion to God, aimed at strengthening one's faith and sense of piety. These three functions—education, spirituality, and entertainment—are interrelated and inseparable. Supported by its practitioners, classical literature provides a meaningful and enjoyable means of imparting knowledge, cultivating worship, and fostering religious and cultural values.

Given the many functions of classical literature in life, it becomes essential to study, research, and explore its contents. As Nasr (1994) argued, old literary works often contain valuable insights into past cultures and value systems. In this context, efforts to recognize and understand the worldview embedded in the works of *kiai* who authored such classical literature can serve as a foundation for shaping national culture—one that is deeply rooted in local traditions and cultural heritage.

Current research topics related to classical literature as cultural heritage should be viewed as emerging patterns and trends within scientific literature. This study employs a bibliometric analysis approach to identify research contributions focused on traditional Islamic poetry and its role in preserving Islamic culture. The analysis includes mapping collaboration networks among researchers as well as identifying recurring keywords such as *religion*, *literature*, *culture*, *human*, and *communication*. Through this method, the study aims to reveal the positioning of classical literature within academic discourse and its significance in cultural preservation efforts.

In light of the current body of publications, patterns of researcher collaboration, the most frequently appearing keywords, and the journals most actively publishing in this field, the objective of this study is to construct an in-depth perspective on the direction and development of research related to classical literature as a medium for preserving Islamic cultural heritage through the field of education and teaching in Islamic religious education. To guide the study, the following research questions have been formulated.

RQ1 : What is the productivity of research publications on classical literature?
RQ2 : What is the productivity of research publications on Islamic classical literature as an expression of cultural and religious identity within Islamic religious education, based on the keywords: *religion*, *literature*, *culture*, *human*, and *communication*?
RQ3 : What is the novelty of the topic of classical literature as a vehicle for preserving Islamic cultural heritage through the field of education and teaching in Islamic religious education?

This study aims to analyze research trends related to classical literature as a vehicle for preserving Islamic cultural heritage through education and teaching within the context of Islamic religious education. Specifically, the objective is to provide a comprehensive bibliometric analysis that maps the development of research on classical literature from 2004 to 2024, based on Scopus-indexed publications. The study also seeks to visualize emerging topics and key themes through keyword mapping, thereby identifying research gaps and potential directions for future inquiry.

Furthermore, it aims to highlight the novelty of classical literature in educational contexts, particularly in terms of its pedagogical applications and cultural functions within Islamic religious education. By doing so, this research aspires to deepen scholarly understanding and offer a structured foundation for future interdisciplinary studies in the areas of Islamic literature, education, and cultural preservation.

B. Method

This bibliometric analysis adopts the four-step procedure outlined by Donthu et al. (2021), which includes defining the research scope, selecting analysis techniques, collecting data, and presenting results. Scopus was chosen as the data source due to its comprehensive coverage of peer-reviewed literature (Falagas et al., 2008), while VOSviewer was utilized for mapping co-occurrence and citation networks (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010). A total of 441 documents published between 2004 and 2024 were analyzed. Some keywords involved in this study include *classical literature, religion, literature, culture, human, and communication*, and it involves titles, keywords, and abstract sections. Scopus was chosen to collect the research data, and VOSviewer was used to select the data. Data on 441 publications were obtained and analyzed from Scopus.

This study uses a bibliometric analysis with a four-step procedure recommended by (Donthu et al., 2021). The steps include determining the objective and scope of the research, selecting the analysis technique, collecting the data for analysis, analyzing the data, and presenting the research reports.

Step 1 : Determining the objective and scope of the research. This step aims to elaborate on the bibliometric and intellectual structure of the literature related to classical literature.

Step 2 : Selecting the analysis refers to the use of bibliometric and content analysis techniques to map the development of literature related to *religion, literature, culture, human, and communication*.

Step 3 : Collecting data for analysis refers to the extensive elaboration in the Data Collection section, as described previously, to identify articles linked to bibliometric and bibliographic data.

Step 4 : Performing bibliometric content analysis and reporting findings from the study.

This study follows the steps mentioned above with several adaptations. First, we observe how classical literature and Islamic cultural heritage are elaborated and evaluated. Second, the literature analysis focuses on articles discussing classical literature, Islamic cultural heritage, and cultural education within the scope of Islamic religious education. The study explores prominent and current research patterns in classical literature as a medium for preserving Islamic artistic heritage through educational and teaching practices in Islamic religious education. This comprehensive overview aims to map research development in the field. Finally, the analysis concludes by offering multiple directions for future research. Figure 1 illustrates the overall research process.
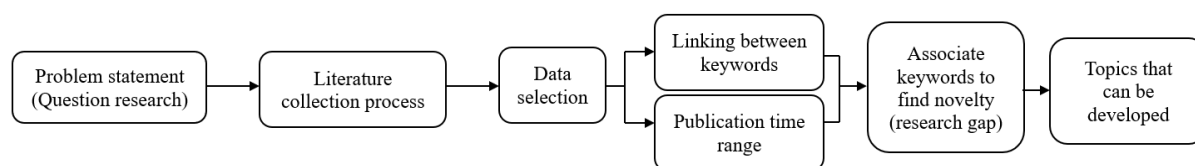

Figure 1. The research process is carried out in this study

C. Result and Discussion

1. Productivity of Research Publications on "Classical Literature"

To solve the problem concerning the productivity of research articles on "classical literature," the publications are assessed based on when the journals are published or the publication year. The number of publications published on a subject over time can indicate changes in the study. Figure 2 depicts the volume of annual publications on "classical literature" between 2004 and 2024. The number of published publications, as seen from the title, abstract, and keywords, is only one study. Overall, publications about "classical literature" are not popular. Therefore, keywords were expanded to "*Islamic*" and "*poetry*" so that two studies were obtained. Hence, it can be concluded that the topic of publishing on "classical literature" is still low in production, and the possibility for publication on related themes is high. Figure 2 depicts the productivity of publications on "classical literature."

Table 1. High-frequency keywords represent clusters of "classical literature" topics

Keyword	Occurrences	Total link strength
Human	1175	14807
Poetry	4577	12570
Article	941	11971
Literature	1206	10865
Humans	797	10819
Islam	2451	8853
Female	423	6784
Religion	947	6367
Male	373	5874
Islamism	951	4963
History	527	4845
Adult	236	4002
Poetry as topic	258	3536
Psychology	216	2689
Art	388	2527
Psychological aspect	143	2315
Education	361	2157
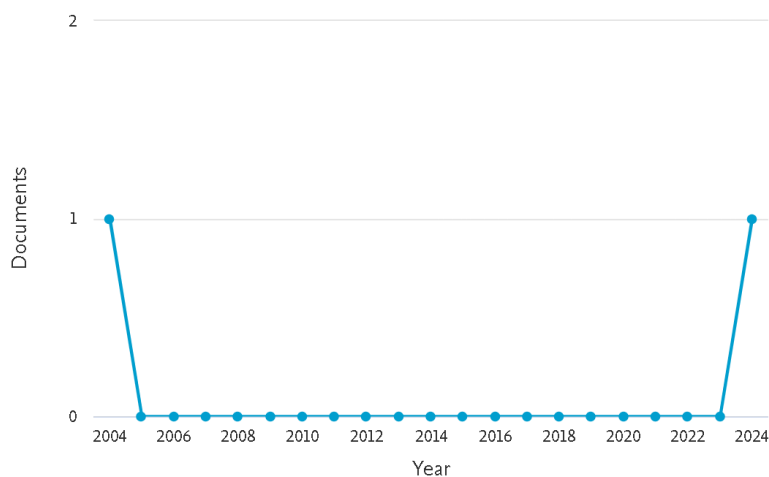
Figure 2. Graph of the number of publications on "classical literature"

Figure 3. Research network diagram related to "classical literature,
"Islamic," and "poetry"
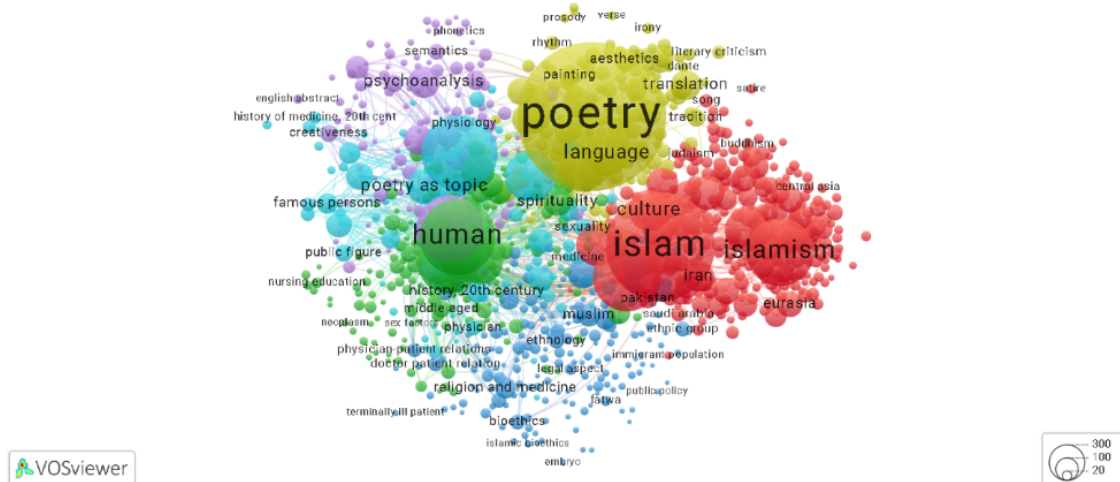
Meanwhile, the findings on keyword co-occurrence analysis show that the themes and the topics on "classical literature" were discovered by searching the keywords "*poetry*" and "*Islamic*" in article publications with the range of 2004 to 2024. According to scientific articles, the keyword frequency function in the VOS Viewer software generates a keyword map with a network for each keyword. The following table shows the frequencies representing the topic of "classical literature."

Based on the results, it is possible to determine that the keywords "*Islamic*" and "*poetry*" in 2004-2024 have been used before. The keyword co-occurrence data revealed 18 popular keywords related to "Islamic" and "poetry." VOSviewer's analysis of the keyword clusters shows that the study topics are connected to the terms. According to the diagram of the findings of data processing using VOSviewer, the prominent keywords appearing in the research are related to the topics of "*classical literature*," "*Islamic*," and "*poetry*," as shown in Figure 3.

2. Productivity of Research Publications on Islamic Poetry as a Form of Culture in Islamic Religious Education

The second problem is the productivity of research publications related to Islamic religious education as one of the cultural aids in Islamic religious education institutions. According to the results of a publication analysis from 2004 to 2024, or over the past 20 years, 106 publication documents were found using the keywords: "religion, literature, culture, human, and communication." Figure 4 presents the volume of publications from 2004 to 2024. The number of publications has increased over the last two decades. The highest number of publications related to the theme of classical Islamic literature as one of the cultural aids in Islamic religious education fluctuated, with the peak occurring in 2023, totaling 11 documents. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that publications or research related to classical Islamic literature as a cultural instrument in Islamic religious education still need further development. The following Figure 4 provides an overview of publication fluctuations in general.
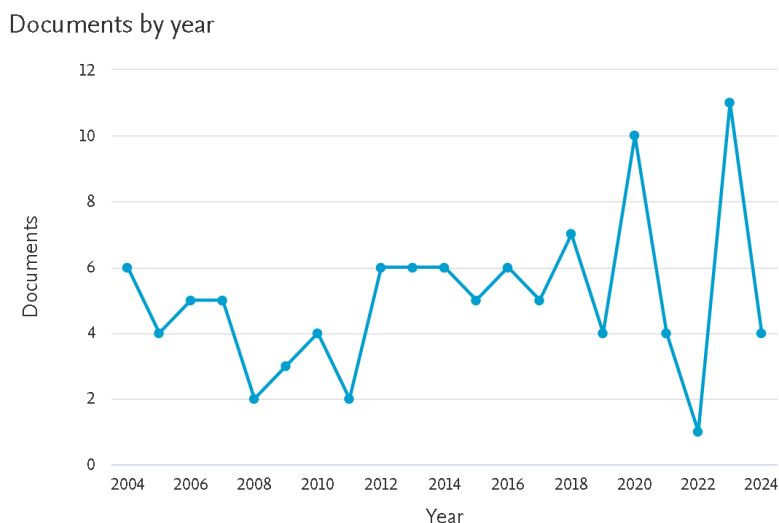
Documents by year

Figure 4. Graph of the number of publications with the keywords "*religion, literature, culture, human,* and *communication*"
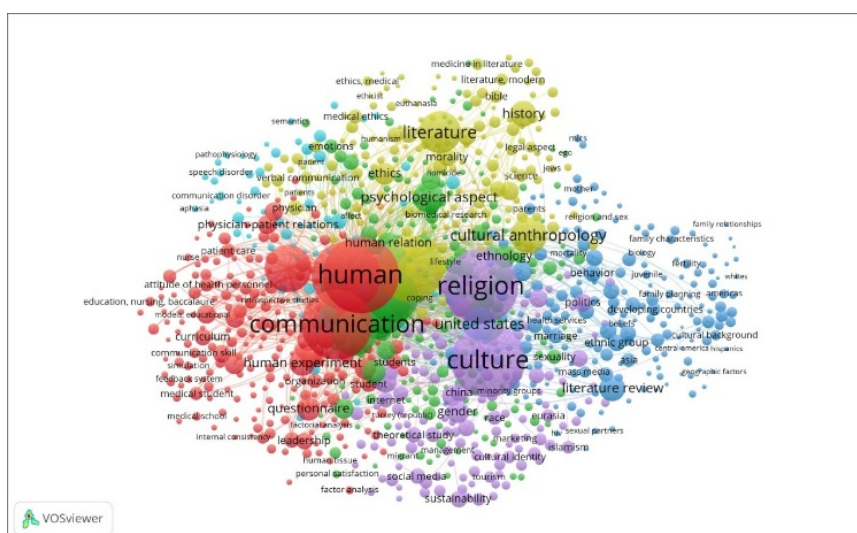

Figure 5. The research network diagram is related to the keywords "*religion, literature, culture, human,* and *communication*"

Meanwhile, according to the analysis of keyword co-occurrence in research connected to classical Islamic literature as one of the cultural aids in Islamic religious education, five important keywords are found. They can be utilized as a reference to conduct more studies on the originality of the topic. Cluster analysis with VOSviewer also shows a close relationship with many related studies from the last twenty years. The relationship can be seen in Figure 5.

Islamic classical literature, as a form of culture in religious education, describes how aspects of religion, literature, culture, humanity, and communication are closely related. In the context of religion, Islamic classical literature contains deep religious values and functions as a means of spiritual education for students. In terms of literature, this classical literature is a beautiful literary work with a distinctive structure and language style. The culture of religious education is enriched by the tradition of classical literature, which is an integral part of students' daily lives. The human

aspect is reflected in the emotional and intellectual experiences experienced by students when listening to or chanting classical literature, building closeness between them, and in religious teachings. Finally, Islamic classical literature functions as an effective communication platform that conveys moral and spiritual messages orally and in writing, strengthens the bonds of the religious education community, and maintains Islamic traditions.

3. The Novelty of the Classical Literature Topic as a Vehicle for the Preservation of Islamic Cultural Heritage Through the Field of Education and Teaching in Religious Education

This section presents the answer to the formulation of the third problem regarding the novelty of classical literature as a vehicle for the preservation of Islamic cultural heritage through the field of education and teaching in religious education. In bibliometric analysis, there is a visual representation of an overlay that shows light-colored circles to indicate that a topic is still inadequately researched or has not been thoroughly examined. Dark-colored circles, on the other hand, show that the topic has been thoroughly investigated. It is viewable and mapped using the following five keywords.

The first keyword chosen to generate interest in this topic is "religion." In the context of classical literature as a vehicle for preserving Islamic cultural heritage through education and teaching in religious education, the relationship between "religion" and classical literature is very close and significant. Classical literature acts as a medium to convey the teachings of Islam (religion) in a way that students can easily understand and remember. Through classical literature, religious values such as monotheism, morals, fiqh, and Islamic history can be conveyed effectively and attractively (Fitri et al., 2023; Loka & Ichsan, 2022; Siregar et al., 2023). The use of beautiful and rhythmic language in classical literature helps to internalize these teachings in the hearts and minds of the students, thereby strengthening their faith and understanding of religion. In addition, classical literature also serves as a tool to maintain and preserve oral traditions that are rich in Islamic values, ensuring that Islamic cultural heritage continues to live and develop in the religious education environment (Besari, 2022; Hidayat & Hidayat, 2023; Ibnu et al., 2022; Sương, 2022). A visual representation of the overlay regarding the keyword "religion" can be seen in Figure 6.

The second keyword is "literature." In the context of classical literature as a vehicle for preserving Islamic cultural heritage through education and teaching in Islamic religious education, the relationship between the keywords: "literature" and "classical literature" is very significant. Classical literature is a form of literary expression rich in aesthetic and moral values, used as a medium to convey the messages of Islam effectively and attractively (Abboud, 2023; Moreh, 1974). As a literary work, classical literature includes elements such as rhythm, rhyme, and a beautiful linguistic style, making it a powerful tool for teaching and educating students within Islamic religious education settings. Through classical literature, oral traditions rich in Islamic content can be preserved while also introducing students to the beauty and richness of Islamic culture (Arifin, 2022; Humairoh & Agustin, 2022; Sahril & Nurelide, 2024). The use of classical literature in religious education not only serves as a means of religious instruction but also enriches students' literary literacy, develops language skills, and fosters appreciation for the valuable Islamic literary heritage (Ainusyamsi, 2021; Jallow, 2023; Zuhri & Syamsi, 2023). A visual representation of the overlay regarding the keyword "literature" is shown in Figure 7.
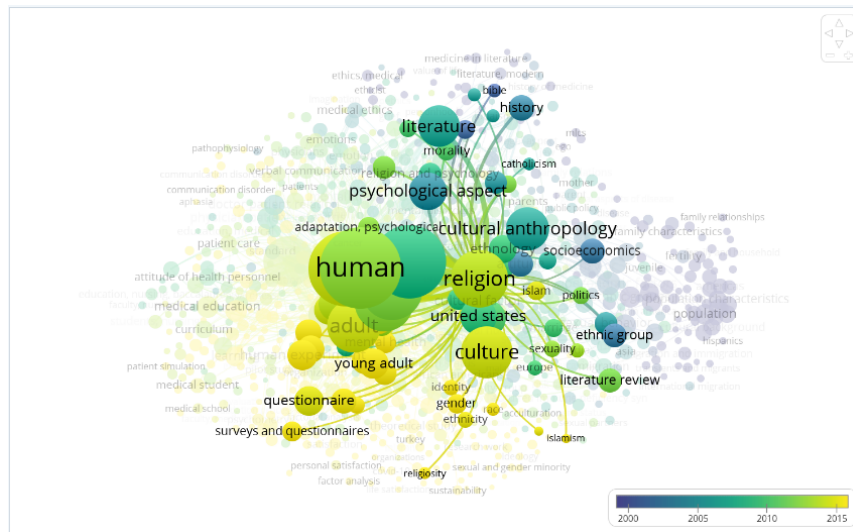
Figure 6. Overlay diagram of classical literature as part of religious education culture within the 'religion' cluster
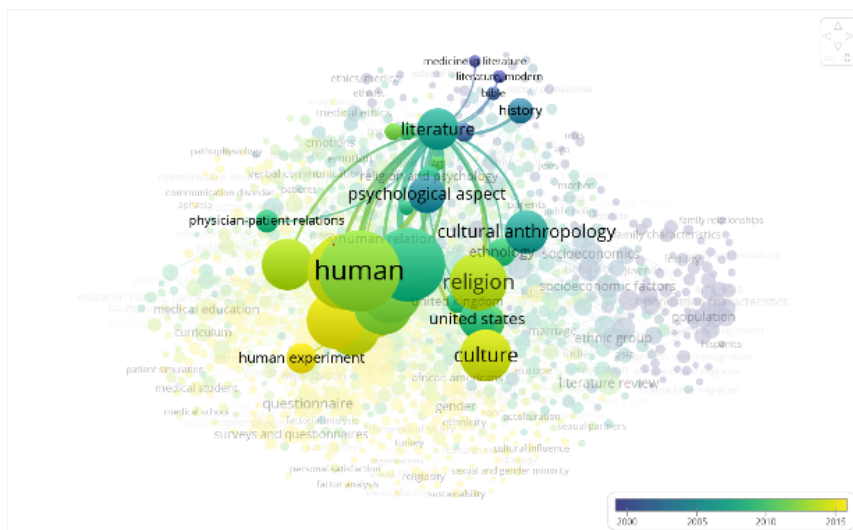

Figure 7. Diagram overlay of classical literature as part of religious education culture through the 'literature' cluster

The third keyword is "culture." In the context of classical literature as a vehicle for preserving Islamic cultural heritage through education and teaching in Islamic religious education, the relationship between the keywords: "culture" and "classical literature" is very close and integral. Classical literature is a cultural manifestation that contains distinctive Islamic values, traditions, and identities. Within Islamic religious education, classical literature is part of daily life and represents a tradition passed down from generation to generation. Through classical literature, Islamic cultural values such as obedience, piety, and wisdom are conveyed and internalized by students (Ainusyamsi, 2021; Al-Kadery, 2024; Anwar et al., 2020; Misbahuddin & Espinosa III, 2022). Classical literature also reflects the richness of local culture assimilated with Islamic teachings, thereby enriching the cultural heritage of Islamic religious education (Jallow, 2023; Saiddaeni, 2023). By engaging with classical literature, students not only learn about religious
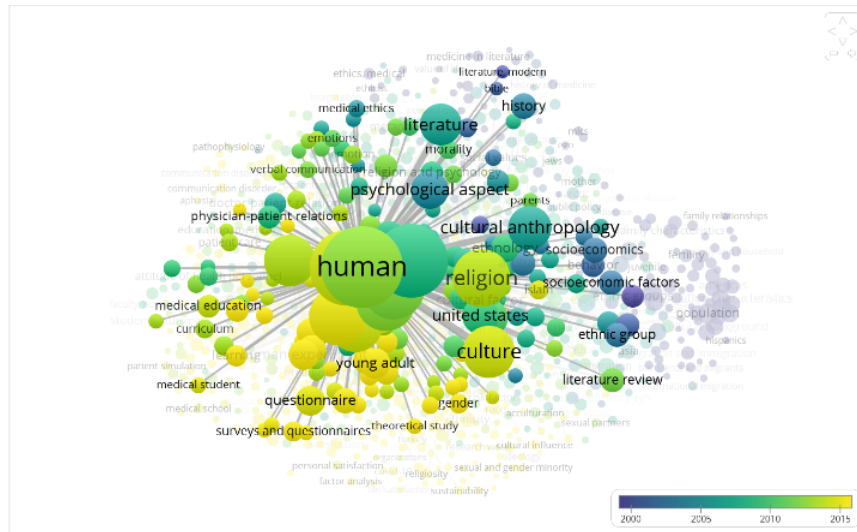
teachings but also experience and embody the rich and diverse Islamic cultural heritage. In this context, classical literature serves as a bridge connecting the past with the present, preserving the continuity of Islamic cultural traditions in the sphere of Islamic religious education. The visual representation of the overlay regarding the keyword "culture" is shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Overlay diagram of classical literature as a culture of Islamic religious education through the "culture" cluster

The fourth keyword that can be used as a basis for further research is "human." In the context of classical literature as a vehicle for preserving Islamic cultural heritage through education and teaching in Islamic religious education, the relationship between the keywords "human" and "classical literature" is significant. Classical literature, as an expression of art and literature, reflects human experiences and emotions in a beautiful and meaningful form. Through classical literature, students are invited to reflect on aspects of humanity such as love, gratitude, piety, and life struggles, all imbued with Islamic values (Alfarraji, 2022; Wachid B.S. et al., 2018; Werdiningsih et al., 2023). Classical literature allows students to experience and internalize religious teachings in a more personal and emotional way, making religious learning not only a cognitive process but also an experience that touches the heart and soul (Saiddaeni, 2023; Stange & Taylor, 2008; Wlodarczyk et al., 2023). In this way, classical literature helps shape the character and personality of students, instilling important moral and ethical values in daily life. In addition, classical literature, as a form of oral communication, also teaches students to appreciate and care for the rich Islamic cultural heritage, strengthening their identity and solidarity as a people who share the same spiritual and artistic heritage (Al-Kadery, 2024; Lai & Bai, 2021). A visual representation of the overlay regarding the keyword "*human*" is shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9. Overlay diagram of Shiir as an Islamic religious education culture through the "*human*" cluster
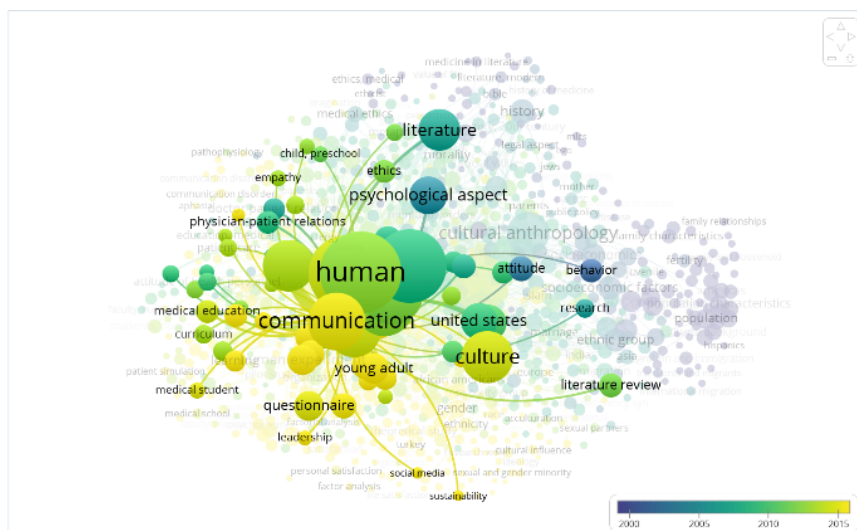

Figure 10. Overlay diagram of Shiir as an Islamic religious education culture through the "*communication*" cluster

Moreover, the fifth keyword that can be used as the basis for research related to Shiir is "communication." In the context of classical literature as a vehicle for preserving Islamic cultural heritage through education and teaching in Islamic boarding schools, the relationship between "communication" and "classical literature" is very significant. Classical literature effectively communicates religious teachings, moral values, and Islamic wisdom to students (Gulzar, 2023; Nurhayani et al., 2024). Through classical literature, messages that contain deep meaning can be conveyed interestingly and memorably, using beautiful and rhythmic language. Communication through classical literature allows religious and cultural messages to be communicated verbally and emotionally, making it easier for students to permeate (Rustan & Fitriani, 2020; Tohe, 2021). Classical literature also serves as a medium to maintain oral traditions, allowing Islamic cultural and religious values to be transmitted from generation to generation (Sanni, 2014; Vajda, 2017). In

Islamic religious education, classical literature is part of educational practices that strengthen the bond between teachers, students, and fellow students, building a solid and sustainable community in maintaining and preserving Islamic cultural heritage (Ma'ruf et al., 2024; Rumainur et al., 2022). Thus, classical literature is essential in holistic and meaningful educational communication in the Islamic religious education environment. A visual representation of the overlay of the keyword "*communication*" is shown in Figure 10.

D. Conclusion

Three study findings were derived from the formula used in the prepared problem. First, the results indicate that the number of publications on classical literature remains relatively low, with only two Scopus-indexed studies from 2004 to 2024, whereas topics such as Islamic poetry have 150 publications and pesantren literature have 70 publications in the same period. This gap highlights substantial opportunities for future studies on classical literature. Second, according to the analysis of keyword co-occurrence in research related to Islamic classical literature as one of the cultural aids in Islamic religious education, important keywords were discovered and can be utilized as references in framing original research issues. Third, various promising topics were found through the use of the term classical literature as a vehicle for the preservation of Islamic cultural heritage through the field of education and teaching in Islamic religious education, namely "religion," "literature," "culture," "human," and "communication." These themes remain underexplored and therefore offer potential for further development and integration to enhance the distinctiveness of future studies.

This study not only maps the current state of research on classical literature within Islamic religious education but also positions classical literature as a cultural expression and educational tool, highlighting its role in preserving Islamic cultural heritage. The findings enrich scholarly discourse by revealing research gaps and emerging themes that have not been widely explored, such as the intersection between classical literature, identity, and pedagogy. Methodologically, this study demonstrates the relevance of bibliometric analysis for research in Islamic literature, offering a systematic approach to visualize research trends and collaboration networks. By integrating keyword mapping and co-occurrence analysis, this study provides a replicable model that can guide future inquiries into traditional Islamic literature through both quantitative and qualitative lenses.

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