

Parental Responsibility for Children's Sexuality Education: A Bibliometric Analysis

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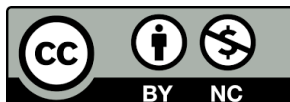
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ABSTRACT

Background: Sexuality education has become a crucial aspect of upbringing in this modern era. It is important for parents to recognize the vulnerability of their children to poor sexual health outcomes and to educate them early in life about sexual literacy. It is crucial to address this problem by highlighting the sexuality education from an Islamic perspective and to emphasize on sexuality education in hadith literature as a guidance for the parents. Rather than engaging in normative Islamic jurisprudential analysis, this bibliometric methods was used to systematically map the intellectual structure, and scholarly influence of Islamically framed research on parental responsibility in sexuality education. **Methods:** This bibliometric analysis aims to determine the research trends, collaborative networks and to assess evidence on parents' practices regarding delivering sexuality information to adolescents. The electronic database Scopus was searched using "sexuality information," "parent-child," and "communication," to find the articles, relevant books or book chapters published between 2010 and 2025.

Results: Out of 195 retrieved articles, 83 met the minimum citation threshold. The most cited study is Usonwu and Mullis published in 2021 receiving 51 & 36 citations respectively. The United States leads in publications, with medicine (57.9%) as the dominant field. Emerging themes in sexual education research include awareness, abortion, and parental support, indicating shifting academic priorities and growing interest in these areas. **Conclusion:** This review highlights current trends, influential articles, and key authorship in the field of sexual education, while also identifying future research directions.

Keywords: Sexuality; Health education; Parent-child relations; Communication; Islam

INTRODUCTION

Parents often missed or delayed guiding their children's development towards healthy sexuality. Some parents could not accept sexuality as a natural and normal experience within the life cycle of their children. Parents are a primary source of socialization and have a great influence on many aspects of psychological and social function on their children's behaviors (1). Previous research reported that many parents did not discuss any sexuality matter with their children due to sensitivity, limited knowledge, lack of confidence and to concern about encouraging sexual experimentation. There is still a lack of guidance on how parents can effectively deal with their adolescents' sexual health issues.

Problem Statement

Parental involvement plays a crucial role in shaping adolescents' understanding of healthy sexuality. However, many parents tend to delay or completely avoid discussing sexuality-related matters with their children due to various barriers, such as discomfort, limited knowledge, lack of confidence, and concerns about promoting early sexual experimentation. Some parents also struggle to accept sexuality as a natural and normal part of their child's development. Given that parents are primary agents of socialization and significantly influence their children's psychological and social well-being, their lack of engagement in sexuality education presents a critical gap. Despite the growing recognition of parental influence in this domain, there is still insufficient guidance on how parents can effectively support their adolescents' sexual health. To better understand the existing knowledge landscape, a bibliometric analysis is needed to map research trends, influential works, and future directions in the field of parental involvement in sexuality education.

METHODS

Materials and Methods

This bibliometric analysis starts with literature search strategy, data collection and extraction and analysis based on the objective, bibliometric analysis and lastly synthesis and interpretation (2). This bibliometric analysis aims to identify and retrieve current and reliable research on parental responsibilities

in delivering sexuality education towards their children.

We chose Scopus as our data source because it is recognized as the largest curated abstract and citation database, providing extensive global and regional coverage of scientific journals (3). For bibliometric analysis, we utilised VOSviewer, a powerful tool for visualising bibliometric networks such as co-authorship, co-citation and keyword co-occurrence network (4). This enables researchers to identify research hotspot and track growth trends within the field. The visual representation provided by VOSviewer helps researchers understand the evolution of key themes and focus areas on sexuality education among parents. Additionally, we also employed Bibliometric R studio package to enhance the analysis, leveraging its flexible and robust platform for conducting comprehensive bibliometric assessment efficiently.

Literature Search Strategy

The multiple keywords used in this analysis include "Sexuality Education" AND "Sexual Reproductive Health" AND ("Information" OR "communication") AND ("Parents" OR "Mother" OR "Father" OR "Guardian"). We also applied Boolean operator OR to broaden the scope of the literature coverage, focusing on studies from 2010 and 2025. The period from 2010 to 2025 was chosen to capture the maturation of interdisciplinary research integrating Islamic perspectives with public health, education, and social sciences, reflecting shifts in discourse driven by global policy agendas and contemporary Muslim societal contexts. A bibliometric analysis requires examining citation patterns and author impact. Older publications may be foundational, but recent studies provide insight into emerging directions and scholarly influence.

Inclusion Criteria

This study included articles that met specific eligibility criteria to ensure relevance and quality. Only peer-reviewed journal articles published in English between 2010 and 2025 were considered. The selected studies had to focus on topics directly related to the research area, particularly those addressing parental or guardian involvement in adolescent sexual and reproductive health. Research that did not meet these criteria was excluded to maintain

the study's focus on high-quality, relevant literature.

Exclusion Criteria

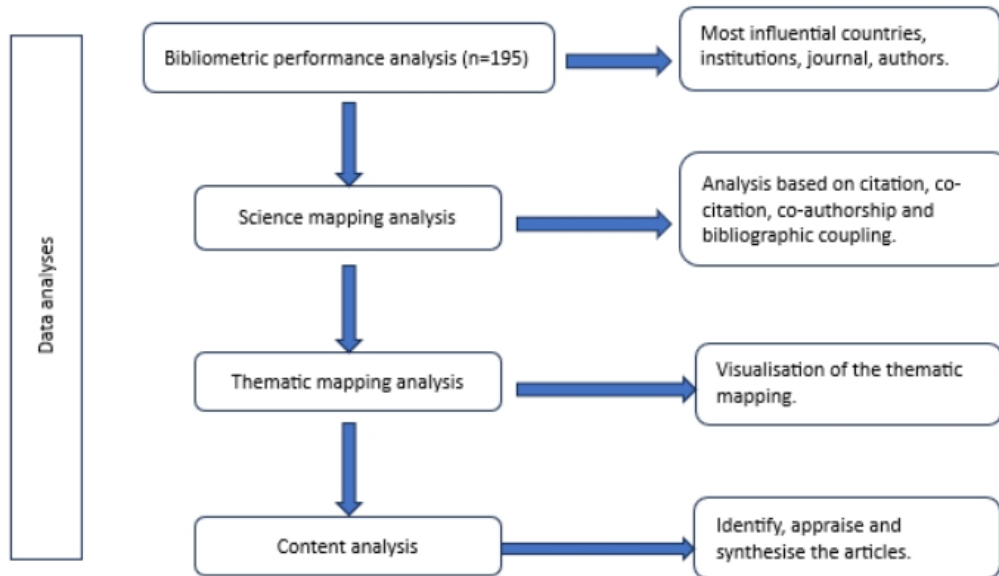
Research that is indirectly related to parental responsibilities or communication with adolescents in the context of sexual and reproductive health were excluded from this

study. For example, studies focusing solely on school-based sexuality education, peer influence, or healthcare provider interventions were not considered.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process is presented in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Flow Chart of the Bibliometric Analysis



Bibliometric Analysis

A Bibliometric Performance Analysis (BPA) was conducted to identify key research components including top-contributing countries, institutions, journals, authors and articles. This analysis was performed using an Excel sheet (RIF format) containing the Scopus dataset and the Bibliometric R-package for enhance data processing.

Additionally, a Bibliometric Network Analysis (BNA) was carried out to examine the intellectual (co-citation analysis), social and conceptual structures. The intellectual structure was assessed through co-citation analysis, the social structure through co-authorship analysis, and the conceptual structure through thematic mapping of key research themes related to parental responsibility of delivering sexuality education.

RESULTS

Bibliometric Performance Analysis (BPA)

By using citation analysis, the researchers can gain insights into the intellectual dynamics of the field by identifying the most influential publication and analysing the citation rate of the articles (**Figure 2**). The results indicate that, out of the 195 retrieved articles, 83 met the threshold of a minimum citation of 20. A minimum citation threshold of 20 was used to balance inclusivity with analytical clarity, allowing the identification of core literature without over-representation of recent or peripheral works.

The Most Cited Article

The findings indicate that the most cited article among the retrieved studies is a review by Usonwu et al., entitled "Parent-adolescent communication on adolescent sexual and reproductive health in sub-Saharan Africa: a qualitative review and thematic synthesis (Reproductive Health)", with a total of 51 citations (5) (**Table 1**). The qualitative review on parent-adolescent communication (PAC) on SRH in sub-Saharan Africa highlights key findings on the initiation of discussions,

influencing factors, and alternative information sources. Conversations are often triggered by observable social or physiological changes, such as puberty or romantic involvement. Additionally, PAC research often excludes discussions on sexual orientation and gender identity, necessitating more inclusive studies. Fathers remain largely absent in SRH communication, and further exploration of strategies to increase their involvement is needed. Addressing these research gaps will help develop culturally sensitive interventions that improve adolescent SRH outcomes in sub-Saharan Africa.

The Most Impactful Author

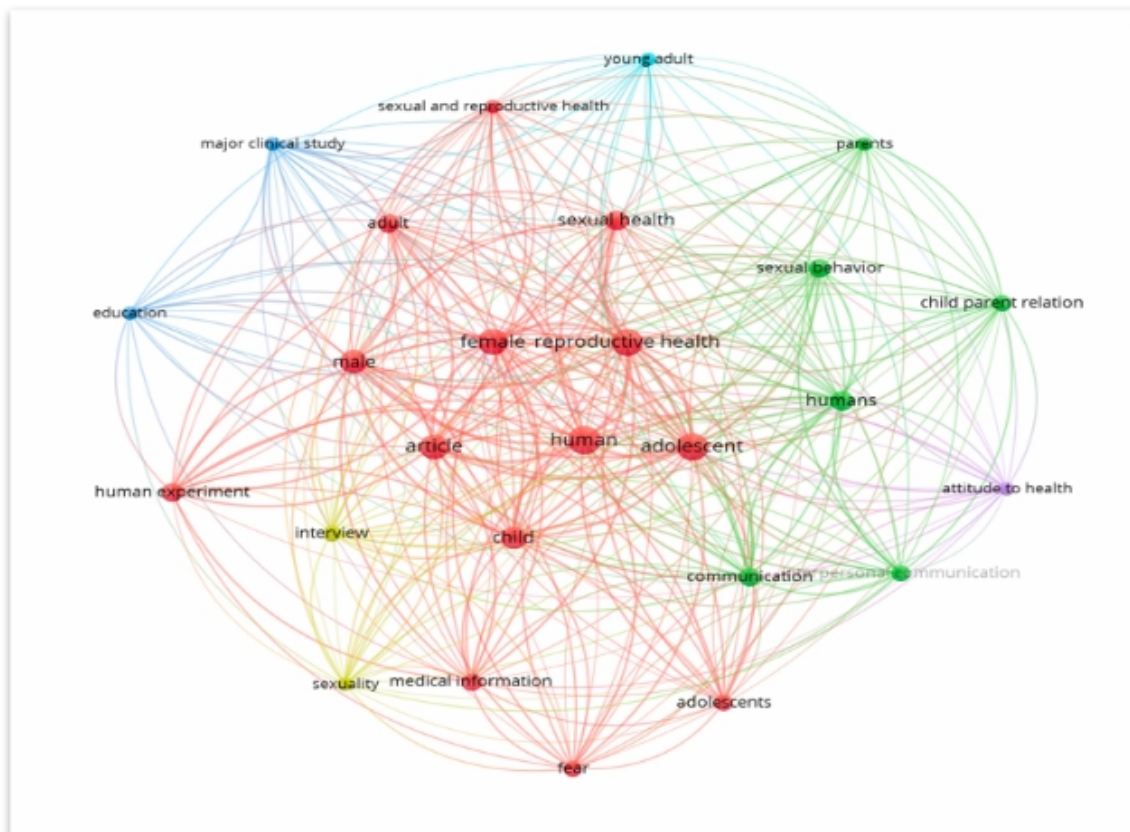
Figure 3 highlights the most impactful author based on their publication citation count. The most cited document is Mullis MD (2021, Sex Educ.), with 36 citations (6), followed by Rubinsky V (2021, Am. J. Sex. Educ.) with 19 citations (7). Other notable works with 11 citations, and multiple papers ranging from 8 to 1 citation. The concentration of citations in

2021 and 2022 suggests that recent research is still gaining academic influence, with newer papers from 2023 such as article published by Holmes in Perspective Sexual Reproductive Health starting to accumulate citations.

The Top 10 Contributing Countries

The bar chart (Figure 4) illustrates the bibliometric record distribution by the top 10 countries based on publication count in the field of parent-adolescent sexual health communication. The United States leads with the highest number of publications, significantly surpassing other countries. Ethiopia follows as the second-highest contributor, indicating a strong research focus on sexual health communication in the African context. South Africa, Nigeria, and Indonesia also contribute a notable number of publications, reflecting active research in these regions. The United Kingdom, Canada, Ghana, Tanzania, and Uganda round out the top 10, suggesting global interest but with varying levels of research intensity.

Figure 2: Citation analysis

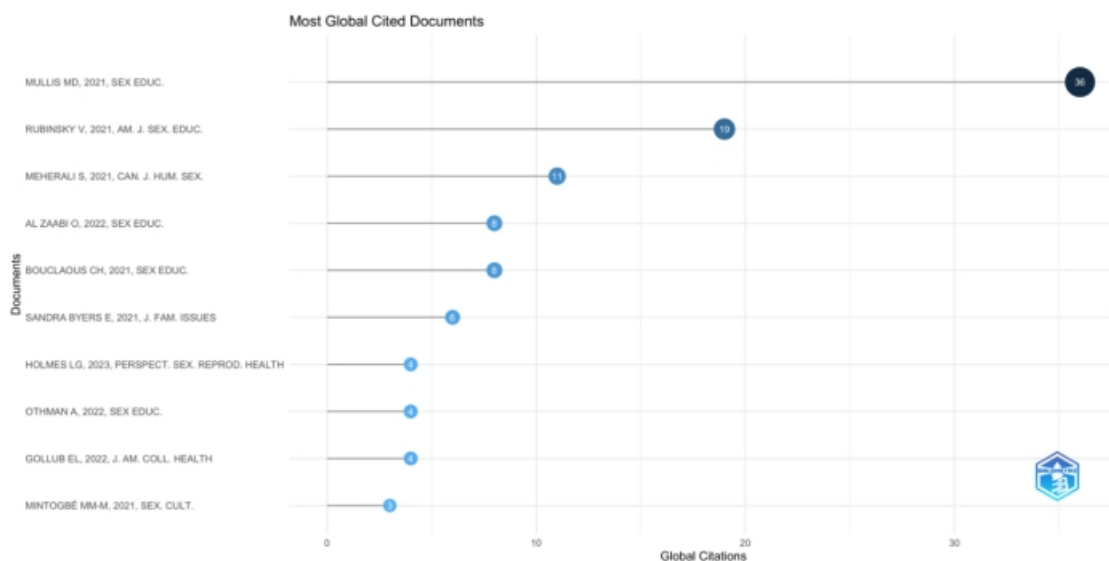


Sources: VOSviewer

Table 1: The Most Influence Publications

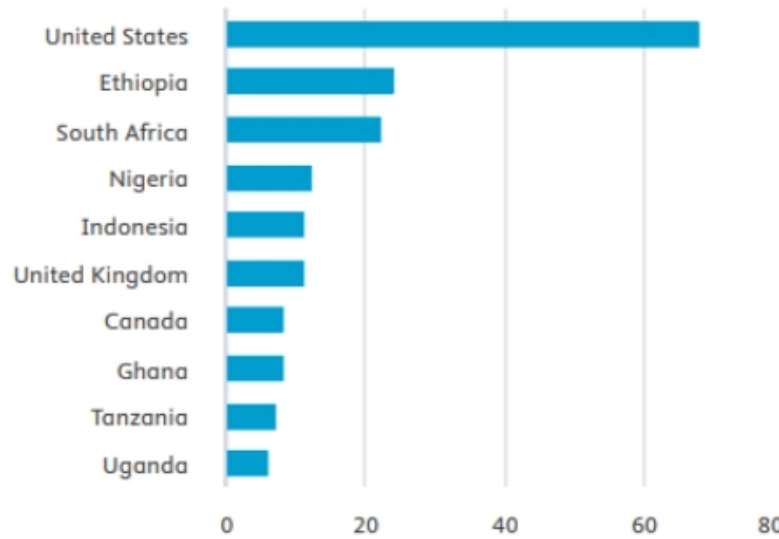
No	Author (s), Year	Title (Journal)	Citation
1.	Usonwu, Ijeoma,Ahmad, Raheelah; Curtis-Tyler, Katherine, 2021 (5)	Parent–adolescent communication on adolescent sexual and reproductive health in sub-Saharan Africa: a qualitative review and thematic synthesis (Reproductive Health)	51
2.	Mullis, Michaela D.,Kastrinos, Amanda; Wollney, Easton,Taylor, Greenberry; Bylund, Carma L., 2021 (6)	International barriers to parent-child communication about sexual and reproductive health topics: a qualitative systematic review (Sex Education)	36
3.	Rubinsky, Valerie; Cooke-Jackson, Angela, 2021 (7)	“It Would Be Nice to Know I’m Allowed to Exist:” Designing Ideal Familial Adolescent Messages for LGBTQ Women’s Sexual Health (Journal of Primary Care and Community Health)	19
4.	Mcharo, Ruby Doryn; Mayaud, Philippe; Msuya, Sia E., 2021 (8)	Where and how do young people like to get their sexual and reproductive health (SRH) information? Experiences from students in higher learning institutions in Mbeya, Tanzania: a cross-sectional study (BMC Public Health)	16
5.	Ndugga, Patricia; Kwagala, Betty; Wandera, Stephen Ojiambo; Kisaakye, Peter; Mbonye, Martin K.; Ngabirano, Fred, 2023 (9)	“If your mother does not teach you, the world will...”: a qualitative study of parent-adolescent communication on sexual and reproductive health issues in Border districts of eastern Uganda (BMC Public Health)	14
6.	Valens; Conco, Daphney Nozizwe; Goldstein, Susan, 2022 (10)	“Such conversations are not had in the families”: a qualitative study of the determinants of young adolescents’ access to sexual and reproductive health and rights information in Rwanda (BMC Public Health)	13
7.	Hailemariam, Shewangizaw Gutema, Lidiya; Agegnehu, Wubetu; Derese, Msganaw, 2021 (11)	Challenges Faced by Female Out-of-School Adolescents in Accessing and Utilizing Sexual and Reproductive Health Service: A Qualitative Exploratory Study in Southwest, Ethiopia (Journal of Primary Care and Community Health)	12

Figure 3: Most Impactful Authors and Publications Based on Citation Count



Sources: VOSviewer

Figure 4: Bibliometric Record Distribution By The Top 10 Countries Based on Publication Count



Sources: VOSviewer

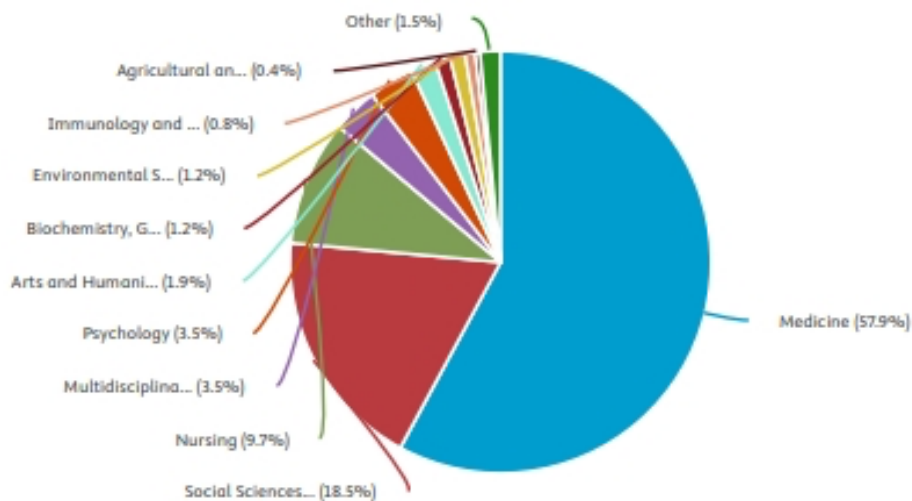
Disciplinary Distribution of Research

The pie chart (Figure 5) represents the distribution of research publications across various disciplines in the field of parent-adolescent SRH communication based on bibliometric analysis. The majority of publications (57.9%) are from the medicine field, highlighting the dominance of medical and public health perspectives in this area of research. The social sciences discipline contributes 18.5% of the studies, reflecting the importance of sociocultural and behavioral aspects. Other significant contributions come from nursing (9.7%), multidisciplinary studies (3.5%), and psychology (3.5%), suggesting an interdisciplinary approach.

Minor contributions are seen in biochemistry/genetics (1.2%), environmental science (1.2%), immunology (0.8%), agriculture (0.4%), and arts and humanities (1.9%), with the remaining 1.5% categorized as "Other."

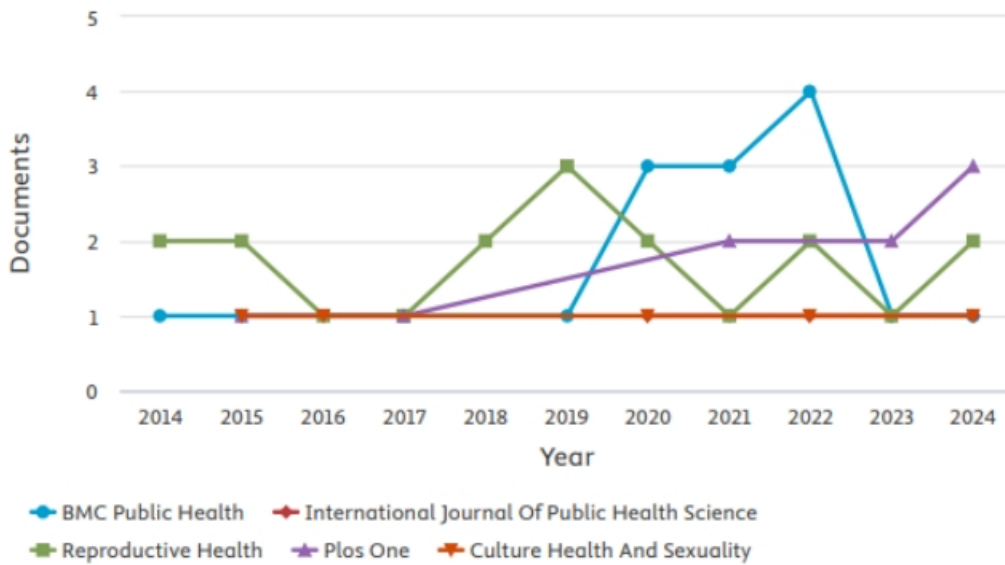
Overall, the retrieved documents were published across 93 different journals with each of the top ten journals contributing more than ten articles (Figure 6). Among them, BMC in Public Health and Reproductive Health emerged as the leading publishers in this field, followed by PLOS One. This distribution aligns with Bradford’s Law, as illustrated in Figure 7, which highlights the concentration of key publications within a limited number of core journals.

Figure 5: Documents by Subject Area



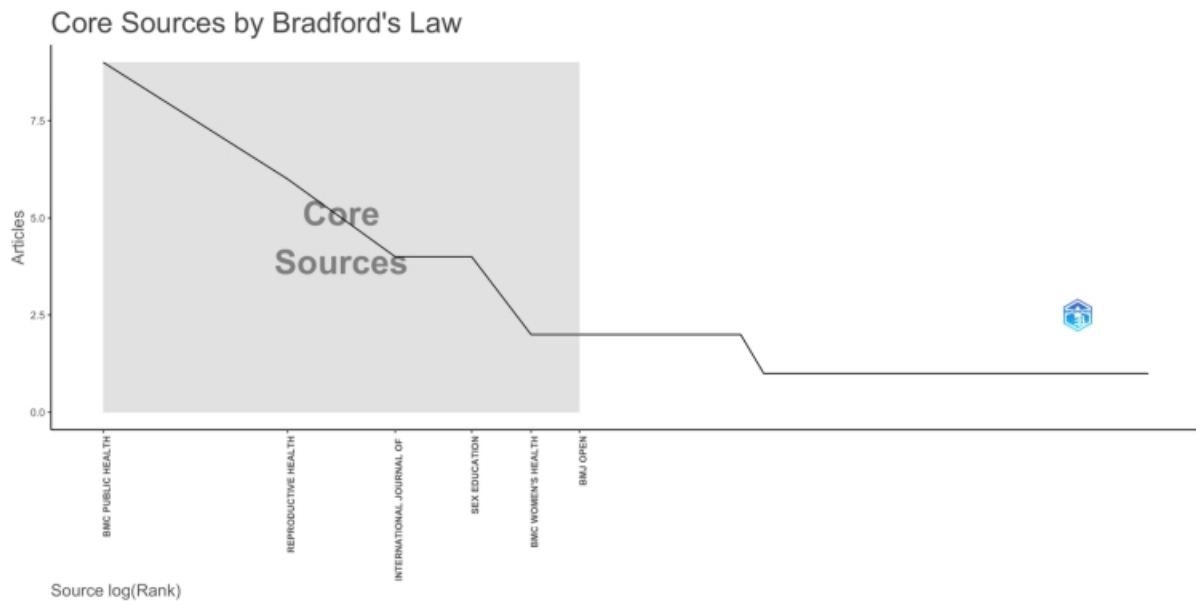
Sources: VOSviewer

Figure 6: Publication Frequency Across Journals on Parent-Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Communication (2014–2024)



Sources: VOSviewer

Figure 7: Bradford Law



Sources: VOSviewer

Co-Citation Analysis of Journals

In co-citation analysis, representative journals as the analytical unit, with the primary objective of examining interconnections among journals by evaluating citations relationships between all specified pairs. This method helps identify the most co-cited journals and their associations. The guiding principle is that the closer two journals appear in the network,

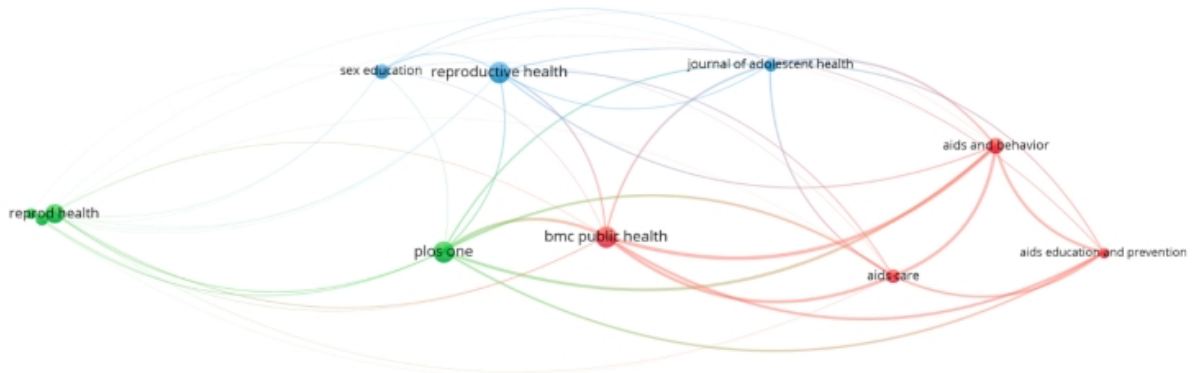
the stronger their co-citation linkages, reflecting their intellectual relatedness.

Additionally, connections between journals provide a valuable metric for assessing the strength and robustness of co-citation relationships. The results show that, out of 195 sources, only seven journals met the threshold, BMC Public Health, PLOS One, Reproductive Health, Sex Education, AIDS

Care, AIDS and Behaviour and AIDS Education and Prevention, with a minimum citation count of 20 (default value). The analysis further reveals three distinct journal clusters, where journals tend to cite common

references, leading to relatively co-citation linkages, namely BMC Public Health, Reproductive Health and PLOS One (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Co-citation of The Sources



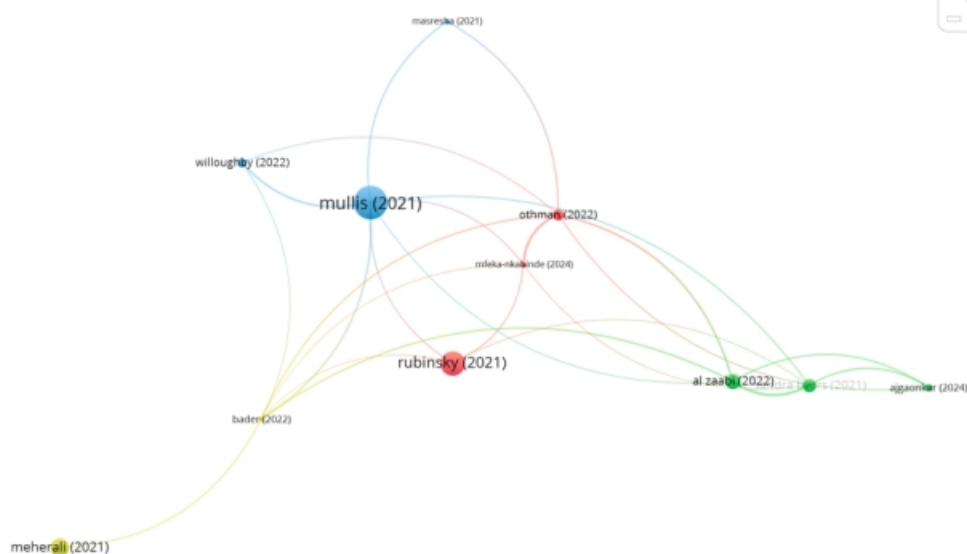
Sources: VOSviewer

Publication Connections Through Shared References

Bibliometric Coupling (BC) measures the relatedness of publications based on the number of shared references (12). This method helps identify publications that likely explore similar topic. In this review, documents were used as the unit of analysis, with fractional counting as the selected analytical method. The minimum citation threshold for inclusion was set at two,

resulting in 122 out of 195 documents meeting the criteria. Notably, as illustrated in Figure 9, author (6) and (7) appear as central nodes, suggesting that these studies play a significant role in shaping the field. In contrast, publications are positioned at the periphery, indicating fewer shared references with the main body of research. The inclusion of more recent works suggests an evolving research landscape where newer studies are building upon past literature.

Figure 9: Bibliographic coupling network



Sources: VOSviewer

Key Research Themes in Sexuality Education

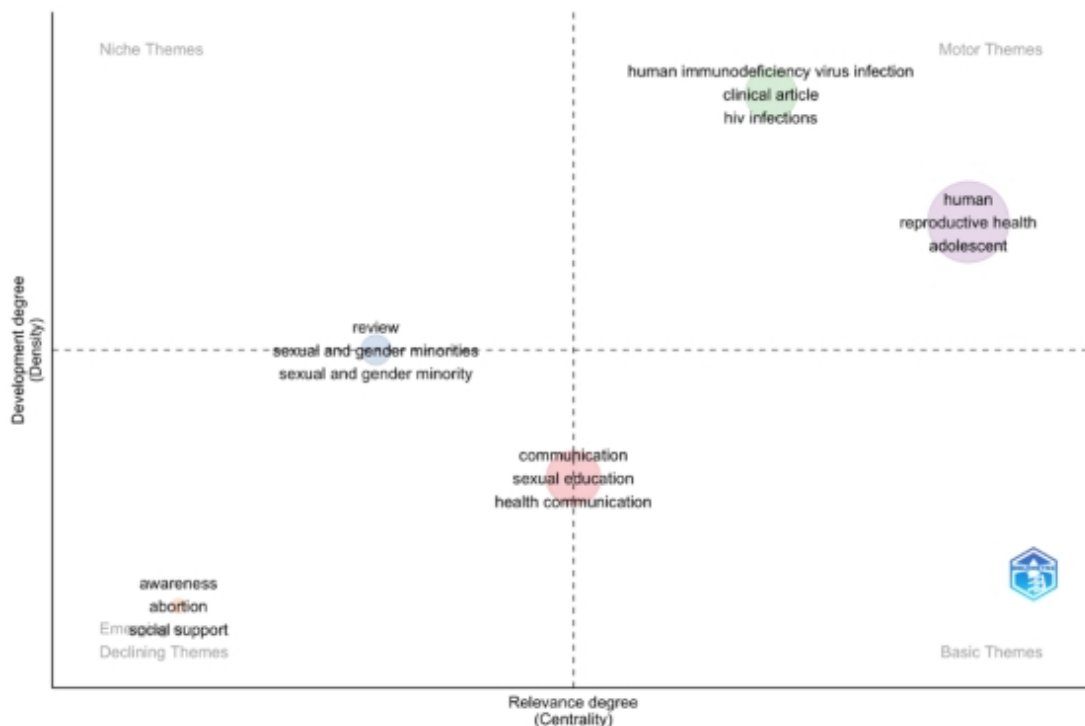
The thematic map categorises the literature according to centrality and density levels, dividing research topics into five distinct typologies, as depicted in **Figure 10**. Notably, the keyword “reproductive health”, “adolescent health” and “HIV infection” stand out as significant theme on the map and are also highlighted in the list of keyword occurrences, represented by purple and green colour. “HIV”, “clinical articles”, “HIV infection”, “human”, and “reproductive health in adolescents” are dominant topics, possibly due to the strong connection between adolescent sexuality education and HIV prevention efforts. These themes likely form the backbone of sexuality education research, particularly in clinical and public health contexts.

“Awareness”, “abortion”, and “support” might represent newer areas gaining traction in sexuality education research, particularly regarding parental involvement. Alternatively,

if past research was extensive but is now declining, these themes may be losing academic focus. Since no basic themes are present, this suggests that most key topics in this bibliometric analysis are already well-developed, leaving little room for foundational but underexplored research areas.

The themes positioned between emerging and basic themes, namely “communication”, “sexual education”, and “health communication” demonstrate moderate centrality within the research field but still require further development. Communication and health communication are essential components of sexuality education, yet the literature may need more refinement in terms of how these aspects influence parental involvement and adolescent sexual health outcomes (13). Additionally, sexual education serves as a broad, overarching concept that connects numerous studies; however, there may still be gaps in addressing its depth, particularly in the context of parental engagement and guidance in adolescent sexuality education.

Figure 10: Thematic Map Analysis of Parent Providing Sexuality Education



Sources: VOSviewer

DISCUSSION

The bibliometric analysis reveals key insights into the most influential publications, leading research contributors, and evolving themes in

the field of sexual and reproductive health communication. The most cited article in this analysis is (6) with 36 citations, followed closely by (7). These studies serve as central references, shaping discourse in sexuality

education research. Their high citation count suggests that they provide foundational insights or methodological frameworks widely referenced by subsequent studies.

Substantial publications originate from the medicine field, emphasising the dominance of medical and public health perspectives in sexual health research. This suggests that much of the literature focuses on clinical, epidemiological, and intervention-based studies rather than sociocultural or psychological aspects. Key academic journals shaping this field include *BMC Public Health* and *Reproductive Health*, followed by *PLOS One*, which reflects the interdisciplinary nature of the topic, integrating public health, education, and social science perspectives.

The thematic map provides a structured visualization of key research themes in sexuality education and health communication (14,15). Integrating the identified challenges; missed or delayed guidance, inability to accept sexuality, avoidance of sexuality discussions, and lack of parental guidance, into this bibliometric analysis offers valuable insights into the central and emerging research areas. Themes such as "communication," "sexual education," and "health communication" appear as basic themes, indicating their foundational role in the field. Missed or delayed guidance aligns with this category, as the lack of structured communication leads to delays in discussing sexuality with adolescents. Similarly, the lack of parental guidance reinforces the need for structured frameworks to support parent-child communication on sexual health.

The motor themes, particularly "human reproductive health adolescent," "HIV infections," and "clinical articles," indicate well-developed research areas that drive advancements in the field. However, despite the presence of extensive literature on adolescent reproductive health, the inability to accept sexuality remains a significant barrier that prevents adolescents from accessing comprehensive sexual health information. Much of the research in this quadrant focuses on disease prevention rather than addressing the broader psychosocial or cultural challenges parents face in discussing sexuality (16). In the niche themes, research on "sexual and gender minorities" appears specialized and less connected to mainstream sexual health communication studies. This suggests that parental avoidance of sexuality

discussions may be more pronounced in cultures where discussing diverse sexual identities is highly sensitive or stigmatized (17). While research in this area exists, it may not be effectively translated into practical guidance for parents.

Lastly, in the declining or emerging themes, concepts such as "awareness," "abortion," and "social support" appear to be losing prominence or undergoing shifts in focus. This decline may indicate gaps in equipping parents with the necessary knowledge and resources to handle sensitive sexual health topics. If social support is diminishing as a research focus, it suggests a lack of emphasis on providing parents with external support systems to facilitate open discussions. The evolution of emerging themes such as abortion, consent, and mental health in sexual health communication suggests a need for longitudinal studies that track shifts in parental attitudes and adolescent knowledge over time. These studies could assess whether recent policy changes, advocacy efforts, or societal transformations influence sexual health education at the household level. Additionally, research should address the gaps in male adolescent sexual health education, as much of the existing literature focuses on female reproductive health (18).

CONCLUSION

This research sought to offer a comprehensive overview of all documents related Islamic perspective of parental responsibilities of sexuality education. Through multiple search and screening iterations, utilising 10 refined search terms, and a 15-year period from 2010 to 2025, the findings highlighted information pertinent to sexuality education. This analysis illustrated research trends of sexuality education emphasizing on parent roles.

This bibliometric analysis highlights the structural and intellectual landscape of sexual health communication research, revealing influential works, dominant research contributors, and evolving themes (19). The findings underscore the significance of well-established studies that shape the field, as well as the emergence of new research directions.

The evolving thematic trends suggest shifts in academic priorities, with some topics gaining prominence while others may be declining (20). The interconnectedness of research

highlights the multidisciplinary nature of sexual health communication, emphasizing the need for continued exploration across various fields. By identifying these patterns, this analysis offers valuable insights into the current state of sexual health communication research and lays the foundation for future scholarly contributions.

Research gaps and thematic underrepresentation were identified through a combination of keyword co-occurrence analysis, thematic clustering, and temporal trend mapping. Themes with low publication frequency, weak co-occurrence strength, or declining attention over time were interpreted as underrepresented areas within the literature. In addition, discrepancies between dominant themes and normative Islamic constructs (e.g., *Maqasid al-Shariah* dimensions such as *hifz al-nasl* and *hifz al-'ird*) were examined to highlight conceptual gaps. Emerging themes with limited citation impact but increasing recent publications were also flagged as potential future research directions.

Limitations

This study has a few limitations. First, this study relies solely on one database, Scopus although it is able to offer a wide variety of publications for the analysis. Thus, future research could benefit from incorporating or merging data with other databases, such as the World of Science, to further explore potential papers. Second, the study omits documents published in languages other than English, which could lead to overlooking relevant information from various countries. To enhance the literature, future studies may consider broadening the search scope to include relevant documents in different languages.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

SHAH: Drafted the manuscript and conducted bibliometric analysis and interpretation.

MRE: Conducted bibliometric analysis and reviewed the manuscript.

LSP & HY: Retrieved and reviewed the manuscript.

NAP & SAMS: Reviewed the article.

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