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MAPPING RESEARCH TRENDS IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Objective*: Quality assurance represents a critical mechanism for Christian education institutions striving to harmonize spiritual mission with academic vigor. This study explores the intellectual structure, thematic themes, and research trajectories of quality assurance in Christian education between 2013 and 2024.* ***Methods****: Utilizing bibliometric analysis and science mapping via VosViewer, the study evaluates publication trends, citation networks, co-citations, and author-keyword co-occurances.* ***Results****: Scholarly output fluctuated with peaks in 2014–2015 and 2020, followed by a recent downward trajectory. Authors from 18 nations contributed to the literature, led prominently by the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Netherlands. The thematic overlay reveals an intellectual progression from macro-governance and policy toward operational frameworks, total quality management, and learning repositories.* ***Novelty****: This research presents the first comprehensive longitudinal science mapping of quality assurance specifically contextualized within faith-based education. It identifies critical underexplored areas – namely empirical investigations and corporate environmental management – providing institutional leaders and scholars with a quantitative baseline to align global quality standards with Christian institutional mission. The study propose further studies on quality assurance in Christian education.*

ABSTRAK

Objektif: *Penjaminan mutu merupakan mekanisme krusial bagi lembaga pendidikan Kristen yang berupaya menyelaraskan misi spiritual dengan keunggulan akademik. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi struktur intelektual, tema-tema tematik, dan lintasan riset penjaminan mutu dalam pendidikan Kristen antara tahun 2013 dan 2024.* ***Metode****: Dengan memanfaatkan analisis bibliometrik dan pemetaan sains melalui VOSviewer, studi ini mengevaluasi tren publikasi, jaringan sitasi, ko-sitasi, serta kemunculan bersama kata kunci penulis.* ***Hasil****: Produktivitas publikasi ilmiah berfluktuasi dengan puncak capaian pada kurun waktu 2014–2015 dan tahun 2020, diikuti oleh tren penurunan baru-baru ini. Para penulis dari 18 negara berkontribusi pada literatur ini, yang didominasi oleh Inggris, Amerika Serikat, dan Belanda. Thematic overlay mengungkap adanya perkembangan intelektual dari tata kelola makro dan kebijakan menuju kerangka kerja operasional, manajemen mutu terpadu, serta repositori pembelajaran.* ***Kebaruan****: Penelitian ini menyajikan pemetaan sains longitudinal komprehensif pertama mengenai penjaminan mutu yang secara spesifik dikontekstualisasikan dalam pendidikan berbasis iman. Studi ini mengidentifikasi area-area penting yang masih kurang dieksplorasi – terutama kajian empiris dan manajemen lingkungan perusahaan – sehingga menyediakan garis dasar kuantitatif bagi para pimpinan lembaga dan akademisi untuk menyelaraskan standar mutu global dengan misi institusi Kristen. Penelitian ini menyarankan penelitian lebih lanjut terkait Penjaminan mutu dalam Pendidikan Kristen.*

Kata kunci: *Penjaminan mutu, Pendidikan Kristen, Analisa bibliometrik, pemetaan, tren*

INTRODUCTION

Quality assurance in Christian education involves ensuring that the educational programs, teachings, and practices within a Christian educational institution align with its mission, values, and beliefs (Messakh & Messakh, 2023). Christian education institutions prioritize teaching in accordance with their doctrinal beliefs (Macaulay, 2021). Quality assurance involves ensuring that all teachings, whether in theology, ethics, or other subjects, are consistent with the institution's statement of faith (Archer, 2024). Just like any other educational institution, Christian schools strive for academic excellence (Kitching, 2019). Quality assurance in this context would involve maintaining high standards in curriculum development, instructional methods, assessment practices, and teacher qualifications (Mensah & Obiri, 2023). A key aspect of Christian education is the holistic development of students, including their spiritual growth (Tarigan, 2021; Setran & Wilhoit, 2020; Chandler, 2015). Quality assurance in this area involves implementing programs and activities that nurture students' faith, character, and values (Rabon, 2024). Christian education often emphasizes community involvement and service. Quality assurance ensures that the institution fosters a supportive and inclusive community, encouraged to serve others and engage in meaningful relationships in face of diversity (Herdt, 2023; Hutabarat, 2023).

Table 1. Research Urgency

Basis Theory	Empiral Evidence or Theory	Relevance
Continuous improvement theory	Continuous improvement emphasize ongoing evaluation and systematic effort to enhance organizational quality	Provides a theoretical foundation for mapping developments in quality assurance in Christian education
Learning organization theory	Peter Senge's learning organization framework emphasizes organizational learning, shared vision, and continuous development	Helps explain how Christian higher education institutions can develop a quality culture consistent with their institutional mission
Previous studies on Christian education	Simanjutak et al (2023) examined the application of Senge's model of learning organiztaion to improve quality of Christian higher education	Demonstrates relevance of quality improvement and organizational learning
International bibliometric	A 2023 study analyzed 321 article on quality assurance in higehr education from 1993-2022 period using Scopus bibliometric analysis (Khuram et al, 2023)	Provides a comparative benchmark for identifying the distinctive contribution of research focused specifically on Christian education
Global research trends	A 2025 study examined 675 publications on quality assurance in higher education using Scopus and Vosviewer (Cam Ai Tran et al, 2025)	Indicates that bibliometric research on higher education quality assurance has developed substantially and offers a methodological comparison for the present study

Bibliometric research on higher education quality assurance has developed substantially, global research trends shows it, and as the table 1 shows it offers a methodological comparison for the present study. This is important for the continous improvement of Christian education (Cam Ai Tran et al, 2025).

Christian education promotes ethical behavior and integrity (Kretzchmar, 2002). Like any educational institution, Christian schools should be committed to continuous improvement (Hawley, 2007). Quality assurance processes involve regularly evaluating and reflecting on

practices, seeking feedback from stakeholders, and implementing changes to enhance the overall quality of education provided (Lucander & Christersson, 2020). Many Christian schools should seek accreditation from relevant accrediting bodies to ensure they meet recognized standards of quality and excellence. Quality assurance involves complying with accreditation requirements and participating in periodic reviews to maintain accreditation status (Natarajan, 2000). Overall, quality assurance in Christian education is about ensuring that the educational experience provided aligns with the institution's Christian mission and values while also meeting high standards of academic excellence and ethical conduct (Kretzchmar, 2002).

Quality Assurance in Christian Education ensures alignment with faith-based values (Poncini, 2023), maintains academic excellence (Gregory & Jones, 2009), fosters spiritual growth (Barrett, 2016), and upholds ethical standards, ultimately nurturing holistic development within a supportive community (Kitching, 2019). In recent years, the trend of quality assurance in Christian education has seen a significant emphasis on aligning academic excellence with the values and beliefs of the Christian faith (Eaton, 2021; Richardson, 2019; Esqueda, 2014). Institutions are increasingly recognizing the importance of maintaining doctrinal integrity while upholding high standards of education (Mattar, 2022). This trend involves rigorous curriculum development processes that integrate faith-based perspectives into various subjects, ensuring that students receive a holistic education that nurtures both their intellectual and spiritual growth (Nyamai, 2018). Additionally, there is a growing focus on accountability and transparency, with institutions seeking accreditation from recognized bodies to demonstrate their commitment to quality and continuous improvement (Acevedo-De-los-Rios & Rondinel-Oviedo, 2023; Nguyen et al, 2021). Quality assurance in Christian education is evolving to encompass not only academic rigor but also the cultivation of a supportive community where students can thrive spiritually, intellectually, and ethically (Suresh Kumar, 2017; Ramirez et al, 2020; Vasenda & Cadil, 2024).

This objective of this study is to analyze and assess recent developments in quality assurance research in Christian education. This study is a literature review, which uses bibliometric analysis to investigate research trends in quality assurance in Christian education over the last twelve years.

For this investigation, the database was filtered by Google Scholar publication sources 2013-2024. A review of the literature on the topic of quality assurance in Christian education. Google Scholar is a literature and reference search engine of scientific publication in books, journals, and conference proceedings. The initial search generated 100 journals, which were reduced to 48 after excluding those that did not have complete article information. After the screening process, 48 documents were left. In this study, data were also collected from scientific articles published in credible and high-quality journals.

METHODS

This study employed a bibliometric analysis to examine research trends in quality assurance in Christian education over the period 2013-2024. Google Scholar was identified as the primary source of bibliographic records, covering scholarly publications related to quality assurance in Christian education. The initial search identified 100 records, which were screened based on the availability and completeness of bibliographic information. Following the screening process, 48 documents were retained for analysis. The study focuses on annual publication trends, author contributions, geographical distribution, and thematic patterns in the literature. The final manuscript should clarify the exact search terms, search date, and inclusion and

exclusion criteria to ensure transparency and reproducibility.

Descriptive bibliometric analysis was conducted to examine publication output by year, author contributions, and geographical distribution. VOSviewer was used to visualize bibliometric relationship and identify thematic patterns in the selected literature. Network, overlay, and density visualizations were employed to explore relationships among research topics and their distribution over time. The specific mapping techniques, units of analysis, and software settings should be reported according to the procedures actually performed. The original databases used should be clarified to maintain consistency in the methodological description.

The findings were interpreted descriptively to identify publication patterns, geographical contributions, and potential research directions in quality assurance in Christian education. Bibliometric visualizations were used to identify prominent themes and areas requiring further investigation. However, the findings should be interpreted light of the dataset's scope, database coverage, and the completeness of the available metadata. AS the analysis was based on 48 selected documents, the results represent the publication retained through the study's selection process rather than the entire body of literature on the topic. Accordingly, this study provides an overview of research developments during 2013-2024 and a basis for identifying opportunities for future research. Figurre 1 shows the steps in this research from article seearch from Scopus until data analysis with VosViewer and the results.

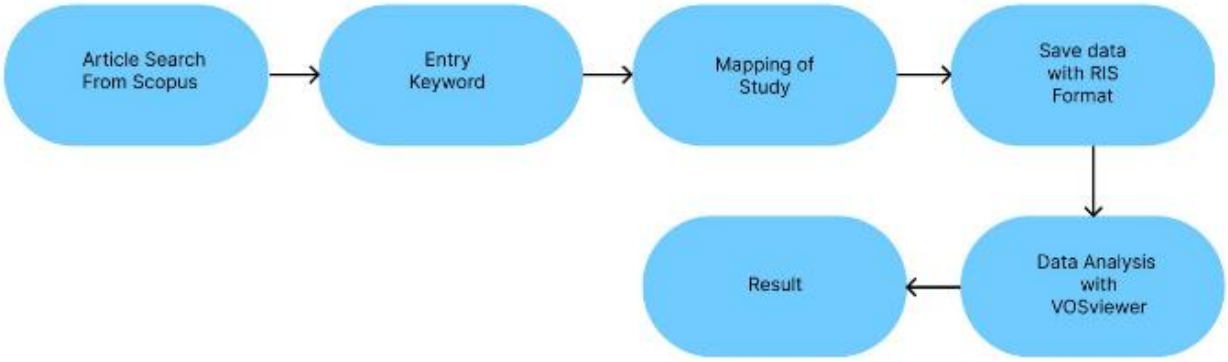


Figure 1. Research steps using VosViewer

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Trends in Annual Publication Output

The annual publication trends on quality assurance in Christian education were analyzed using VosViewer program, as depicted in Figure 2. The results indicate fluctuations in publication output. The trend average shows a fluctuation in publications in 2013 - 2024. In the first four years 2013 and 2016, there are only 3 documents for year 2013 and 2016, while 2014 and 2015 has the highest with 7 documents per year were published. Then in 2017 – 2019, the number of scientific publications fluctuates again with documents less than 7 documents. And in the last four years, the number of documents increased at 2020 with 7 documents and decreased again with only less dan 4 documents each year. Overall, these findings suggest that research on quality assurance in Christian education experienced an inconsistent publication trend as shows in the following Figure 2 for the period examined.

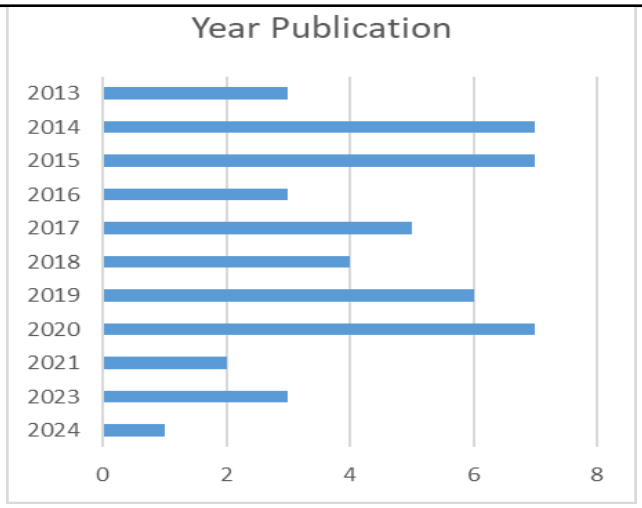


Fig. 2. A sample graph using line which contrast year of author publication

Author Citations

Author citations analysis provides insight into researchers' and scholarly engagement in particular field. In this study, it identified Bendixon C. with 2 articles and Jacobsen J. C. with 2 articles, as authors with the highest publication output. The analysis also describes that there are 107 authors who had published at least 1 document, making a greater contribution to the knowledge development of research in this area. The following figure presents the distribution of authors and the number of publications attributed to each author.



Figure 3. A sample graph using line which contrast number of author publication

Geographic Distribution

The geographic distribution of publication described in Figure 4, illustrates the international reach of research on quality assurance in Christian education. The analysis identified contributions from 18 countries, that vary across regions. The United Kingdom led with 15 documents, United States were the next, with 5 documents, followed by Netherland with 4 documents. Canada and Indonesia, with 3 documents, respectively. Germany, Turkiye, Pakistan, Nigeria and India contributed with 2 documents each. In addition, Greece, Hongkong, China, Philippines, Switzerland, South Africa, Bostwana, Malta, and Kenya contributed 1 document each. Figure 4 presents the geographical distributions of publications

and highlights the international scope of scholarly contributions to this field.

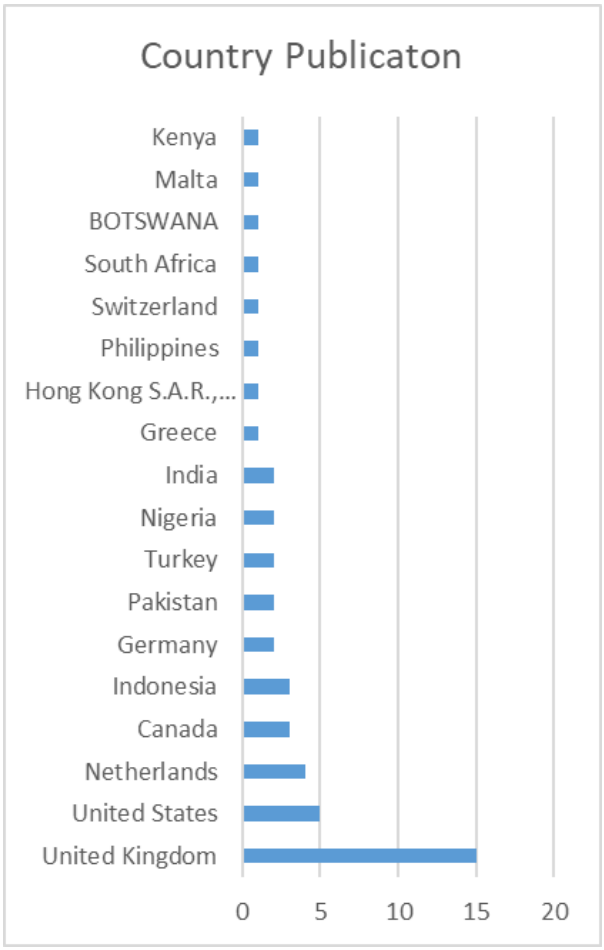


Figure 4. A sample graph using line which contrast number of geographic distribution of authors

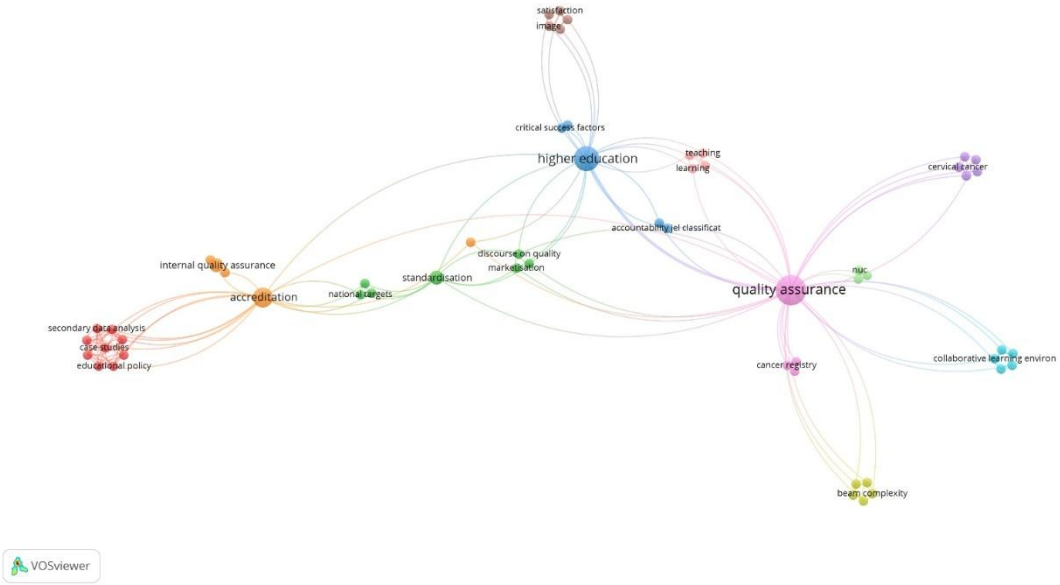


Figure 5. Network Visualization

Bibliometric Network Visualization

The image explains quality assurance in Christian education in visualization. The VOSviewer analysis identified nine conceptual clusters, as illustrated in Figure 5. Each cluster is represented by a different color, helping distinguish related concept and identify patterns within the research field. The density visualization also highlights areas where particular concepts appear more frequently in the analyzed literature. By examining these clusters, researchers can identify themes that have received considerable scholarly attention, explore relationships among key concepts, and recognize potential directions for future research. Figure 5 presents distributions of research themes through color-coded clusters, providing a overview of conceptual landscape of quality assurance in Christian education.

Thematic Clusterin of Quality Assurance in Christian Education

Table 1 presents several visualizations relating to the theme of this study that elucidate quality assurance in Christian education. Then VosViewer display, presented in the figure 5, reveals eleven clusters. The demonstrated concept is based on the cluster density view. And each color code is used to view the list of concepts that stand out from each cluster. The goal is to identify as many themes as possible that have been frequently discussed in prior research and used in later research. As shown in Figure 5, the cluster density of each cluster is distinguished by different colors.

Table 2. Theme Clustering

Cluster	Items	%
Cluster 1 (9 items)	Case studies, certification/ licensure,content analysis,correlational analysis,educational policy,mathematics education,policy analysis,secondary data analysis,teacher education/development	16%
Cluster 2 (7 items)	discourse on quality, governance, governance, national targets, public goods, quality in higher education and research, standardisation,	12%
Cluster 3 (5 items)	accountability jel classification: c53, critical success factors, higher education, i23, total quality management	9%
Cluster 4 (5 Items)	beam complexity, electronic portal imaging, intensity-modulated radiotherapy, radiotherapy, volumetric-modulated arc therapy	9%
Cluster 5 (5 Items)	cervical cancer, dry run, dummy run, embrace trial, image guided brachytherapy,	9%
Cluster 6 (5 Items)	collaborative learning environments, computer supported collaborative learning, learning object repositories, literature review, open educational resources,	9%
Cluster 7 (5 Items)	accreditation, philippines, implementation, internal quality assurance, private higher education institutions,	9%
Cluster 8 (5 Items)	image, loyalty, perceived value, satisfaction, service quality	9%
Cluster 9 (4 Items)	cancer registry, data quality, education, education,	7%
Cluster 10 (4 Items)	learning, science mapping, teaching, university,	7%
Cluster 11 (3 Items)	nuc, transformation, university education	5%

Overlay Visualization of the Quality Assurance in Christian Education

Metadata was analyzed and processed via VosViewer to create an overlay visualization. The nodes are color-coded according to publication year, illustrating the evolution and trends of research on quality assurance in Christian education over time. Figure 6 highlights prominent as well as underexplored themes from 2013 through early 2024, including empirical studies and corporate environmental management. The thematic landscape within the domain of quality assurance in Christian education reveals notable shifts overtime. During the 2013-2016 timeframe, scholarship centered largely on higher education institutions, university structures, educational policy, and governance. Research between 2017 and 2019 expanded into total quality management, collaborative leraning environments, transformation, institutional mapping, and practical implementation. More recently, from 2020 through 2024, prominent topics continued to evolve, incorporating dimensions such as accreditation standards, general education, learning repositories, service quality and literature reviews. Consequently, this overlay mapping enables researchers to systematically track chronological shifts and thematic progression, as shown in the subse

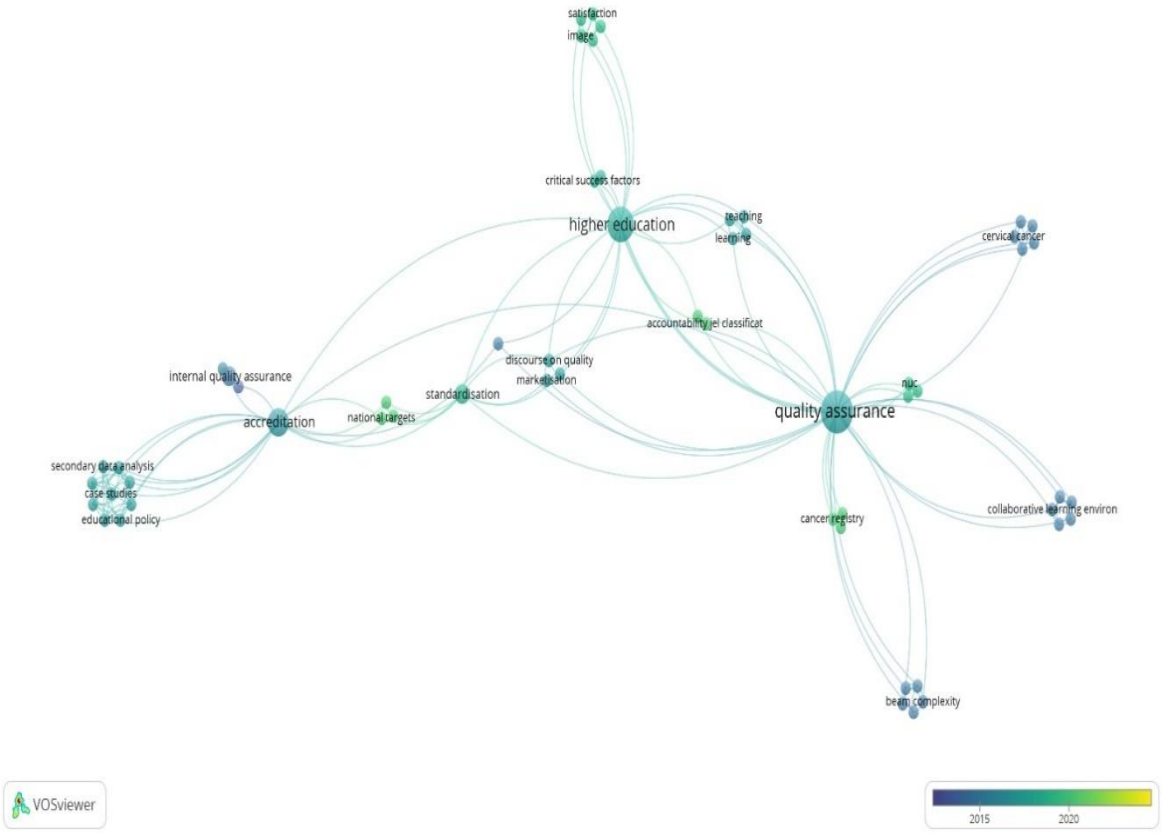


Figure 6. Overlay Visualization

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Findings: This bibliometric study (2013–2024) reveals a fluctuating publication pattern peaking in 2014–2015 and 2020, followed by an overall decline from 20

documents (2013–2016) to 15 (2017–2019) and 13 (2020–2024). Contributors spanned 18 nations, dominated by the UK (15), the US (5), and the Netherlands (4). Thematic analysis indicates a shift from macro-level governance and policy toward operational frameworks, total quality management, and digital learning repositories.

Implications: Theoretically, these findings chart the intellectual evolution of the discipline, illustrating how global quality standards intersect with faith-based educational values. Managerially, the results offer actionable benchmarks for institutional leaders, accreditation bodies, and academic journals to align governance, curriculum design, and service quality with contemporary educational dynamics.

Limitation: This study is primarily constrained by its reliance on a single indexing database, English-only publication criteria, and the inherent nature of bibliometric indicators, which evaluate publication trends and citation impact rather than the qualitative and pedagogical depth of quality assurance practices in faith-based institutions.

Future Findings: Subsequent scholarship should explore underexamined geographic contexts to capture diverse institutional settings. Furthermore, integrating contemporary issues—such as digital transformation, sustainability, and AI ethics will deepen the empirical understanding of quality assurance impacts.

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