



Bibliometric Research on the Teaching of Political Topics

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Graphical Abstract



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Abstract

This study aims to systematically and bibliometrically analyze the scholarly literature on the teaching of political issues within the scope of citizenship and social studies education. The research examines 426 journal articles indexed in the Web of Science Core Collection database, with no publication date restrictions. The analysis employs VOSviewer software to identify thematic trends, conceptual frameworks, influential authors, and international collaboration networks in the field. The findings demonstrate a significant rise in academic interest in political and citizenship education, particularly between 2013 and 2024, with a notable concentration on studies in the

post-2020 period. Emerging themes such as digital citizenship, political efficacy, youth participation, and the integration of technology into civic education reflect a dynamic shift in the field, driven by evolving democratic needs and global challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, the results highlight key contributors, leading journals, and institutions which shape the research landscape. The study also uncovers gaps in literature, especially regarding comparative studies and the use of interactive digital tools in political education. Based on these insights, the research offers recommendations for future studies, including the diversification of data sources, enhanced international collaboration, and the use of advanced bibliometric tools. Ultimately, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how political education within citizenship education can support democratic engagement and foster civic responsibility in contemporary societies.

Key words: Citizenship education, political education, social studies education, bibliometric analysis

Introduction

Political education is crucial for individuals to comprehend democratic systems, cultivate critical thinking skills, and engage effectively in societal activities. In contemporary societies, the significance of political education is paramount in ensuring the sustainability of democratic values and promoting a sense of social responsibility among individuals. It is well-established that effective political education can enhance both individual and collective decision-making processes (Easton & Dennis, 1969; Galston, 2001; Goldman, 1999). Political education is instrumental in instilling democratic values, assessing diverse perspectives, and strengthening individuals' resilience against political manipulation (Crick & Heater, 1977; Freire, 2018).

Furthermore, effective political education promotes the development of critical thinking skills, which enables individuals to understand the functioning of democratic systems. In addition to enhancing individuals' understanding of political processes, political education plays a crucial role in fostering civic awareness and developing the skills necessary for active participation in democratic practices (Anderson & Mendes, 2006; Finkel, 2002). Additionally, political education is acknowledged for its contribution to strengthening social cohesion by assisting individuals to understand and respect diverse perspectives (Glasford, 2013; Mills & Waite, 2018; Singh & Mukeredzi, 2024).

Political education serves as a fundamental element of civic education, significantly contributing to the cultivation of individuals' sense of social responsibility and encouraging

their active engagement in democratic processes (Shen, 2024). The internalization of democratic rights and responsibilities is more effectively facilitated through the enhancement of civic awareness, which is strengthened by political education. In this context, citizenship education is acknowledged in various studies (Finkel, 2002b; Finkel & Ernst, 2005; Kuran, 2014; Thelma, 2024) as a crucial element which facilitates individuals' comprehension of democratic values and fosters the skills required for active and meaningful participation in democratic processes.

Citizenship education serves as a fundamental process for the sustainability of democracy by facilitating individuals' understanding of their rights, responsibilities, and democratic values (Leung & Ng, 2014; Levinson, 2003). This educational approach promotes democratic participation and fosters solidarity and social cohesion among individuals. It empowers learners to comprehend their democratic rights and responsibilities while enhancing their awareness of social issues. As a result, citizenship education is essential for the continuity of a democratic society. Ersoy (2016) emphasized that this form of education not only conveys theoretical knowledge but also equips individuals with the skills necessary to effectively apply this knowledge within democratic processes. In this context, various studies have been conducted both globally and nationally, offering valuable insights into different aspects of civic education. For instance, Zulkifli (2021) performed a bibliometric analysis to explore global research trends in political literacy. Similarly, Yeşiltaş and Çinpolat (2022) focused on studies related to digital citizenship education from a bibliometric perspective. Pedraja-Rejas et al. (2023) examined the development of global citizenship education in the context of sustainable development, mapping emerging trends within literature. Karaca and Akbaba (2021) conducted a bibliometric analysis of citizenship education research from 1980 to 2020, providing a comprehensive overview of developments in the field.

In addition to these content-focused studies, it is also important to consider how the method of bibliometric analysis itself is understood and utilized across disciplines. In this regard, İri and Ünal (2024) evaluated the concept of bibliometric analysis itself by conducting a comprehensive descriptive analysis based on 18,432 scientific publications from 1980 to 2023. Their findings have revealed the interdisciplinary nature of bibliometric analysis across fields such as communication, education, technology, and politics. Notably, they emphasize the

absence of a common conceptual or keyword association surrounding bibliometric analysis, suggesting a fragmented yet evolving landscape in the scholarly discourse.

Significance of Study

Research investigating political issues within the context of civic education is significant, as it enhances individuals' awareness and competencies. Furthermore, a systematic review of these studies is essential for advancing our understanding of the current scientific landscape in this field and for providing a more comprehensive perspective on the existing literature. By examining thematic trends, theoretical frameworks, and methodological approaches within this body of work, we can achieve a more effective evaluation of research in civic education. In this regard, bibliometric analysis serves as a valuable tool for gaining a thorough understanding of literature on civic education and for identifying potential directions for future research. For instance, studies in this area have been conducted both globally and locally, offering insights into various aspects of civic education.

Aim of the Study

This study aims examining the existing research on the teaching of political issues within the framework of civic education through the application of bibliometric methods. This approach will facilitate the identification of current trends, key topics, and theoretical frameworks present in literature. The bibliometric analysis will not only yield insights into the current state of the field but will also play a pivotal role in informing future research endeavors related to civic education and the promotion of democratic awareness. By providing new perspectives on the interplay between civic education and political education, this research aims to serve as a valuable resource that supports the sustainability of democratic societies.

Methods

Research Design

This study employs a bibliometric methodology to investigate academic research related to the teaching of political issues within the fields of social studies and civic education. Bibliometric analysis is a research technique which analyses and assesses the significance of scholarly publications by identifying significant research outputs, including publications, authors, and journals (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Cobo et al., 2011). Through bibliometric analysis,

researchers can identify prevailing trends, discern gaps, and uncover future research opportunities within a given domain (Ulu & Akdağ, 2015; Uksul, 2016). Furthermore, this methodology is instrumental in visualizing interdisciplinary collaborations and assessing the outcomes of such partnerships (J. Zhang & Lin, 2023). By mapping the intellectual landscape of research areas, bibliometric analysis offers researchers a comprehensive framework for guidance. Ultimately, bibliometric methods do not aim to replace traditional literature review practices; instead, they complement them by providing a macro-level perspective based on empirical data. By identifying research concentrations, underexplored areas, and patterns of scholarly collaboration, bibliometric analysis significantly contributes to the strategic development of knowledge and academic planning (Kozan, 2020).

The data derived from this analysis were employed to generate graphical representations using Microsoft Excel. Additionally, VOSviewer software (Version 1.6.9), (Van Eck & Waltman, 2009) was used for conducting keyword analysis, source co-citation network analysis, author co-citation network analysis, and collaboration network analysis, with the aim of identifying patterns of international collaboration.

Data for the study was extracted from the WoS using the following query within the Abstract, Title, and Keywords fields on November 1 in 2024.

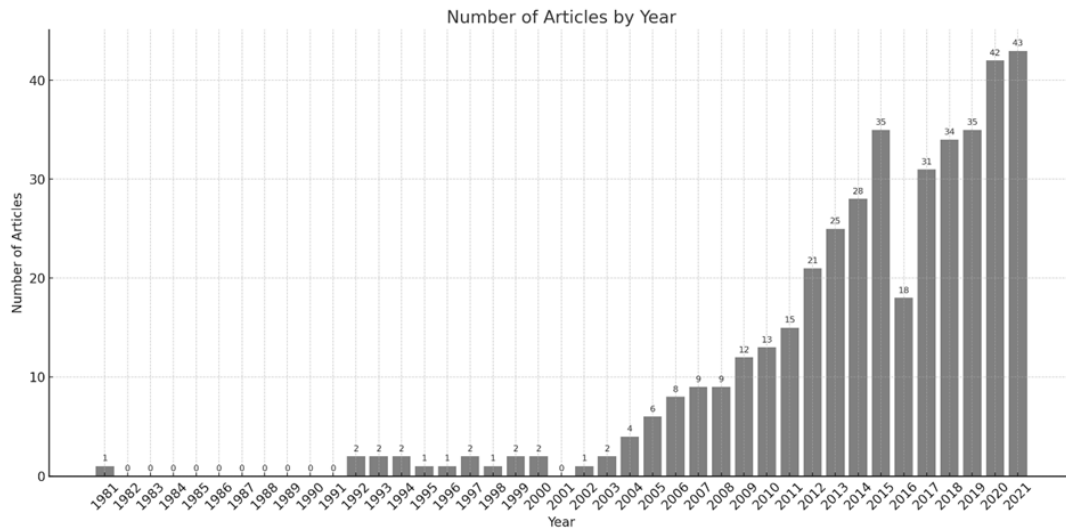
"civic education" OR "citizenship education" or "social studies education" or "social studies" or "active citizenship" or "political Education" AND "political literacy" or "political issues" or "political engagement" or "political knowledge" or "political efficacy" or "controversial issues"

The query was meticulously crafted to identify research articles that focus on political education within the framework of Citizenship and Social Studies Education. The search parameters were confined to journal articles, with no limitations imposed on the publication date. Consequently, a total of 426 articles were identified as a result of this query.

Findings

This section delineates the findings and interpretations derived from the analysis of data pertaining to studies within the subject area, as sourced from the Web of Science database, in accordance with the research objectives. The bibliometric analysis conducted in this domain identified a total of 426 articles. The annual distribution of the published articles is illustrated in Graph 1.

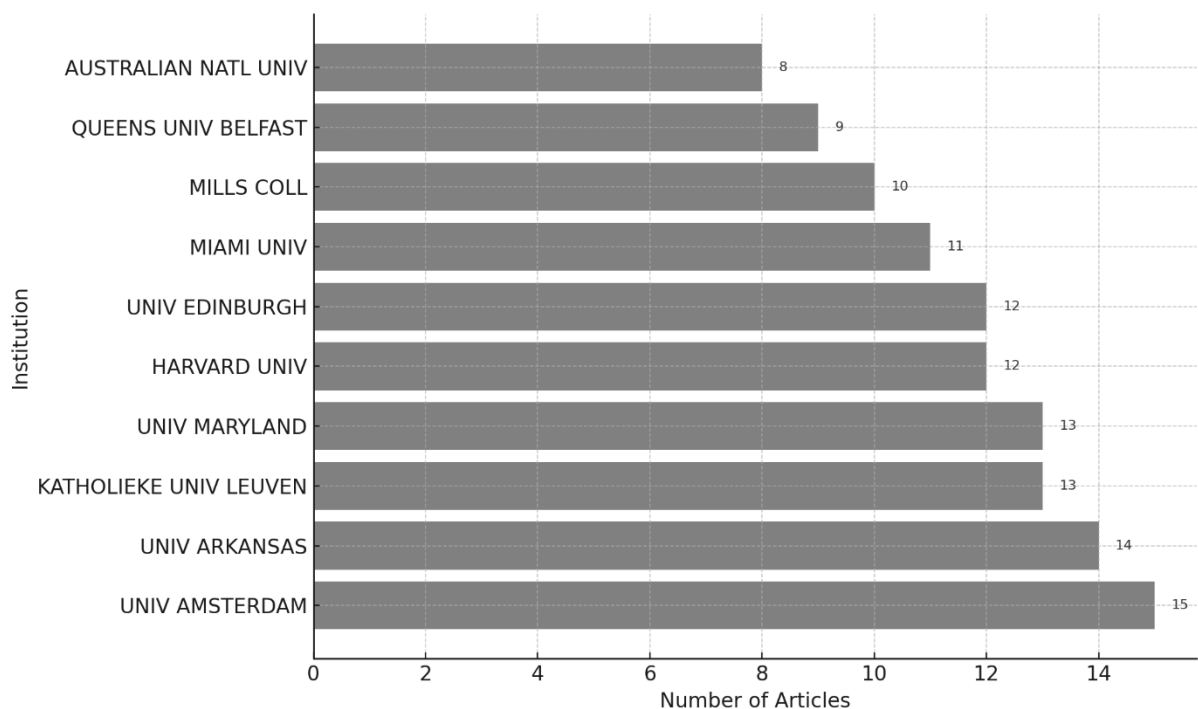
Graph 1. Number of Articles by Year



Graph 1 shows the distribution of academic studies in the subject area over the years. Research began in 1981, with little growth until the 2000s. Since 2013, there has been a significant rise in published articles, peaking at 43 in 2024. This trend reflects a growing academic interest and greater engagement from the scientific community.

Research in this field has been conducted at 479 institutions, with the top ten publication counts displayed in Graph 2.

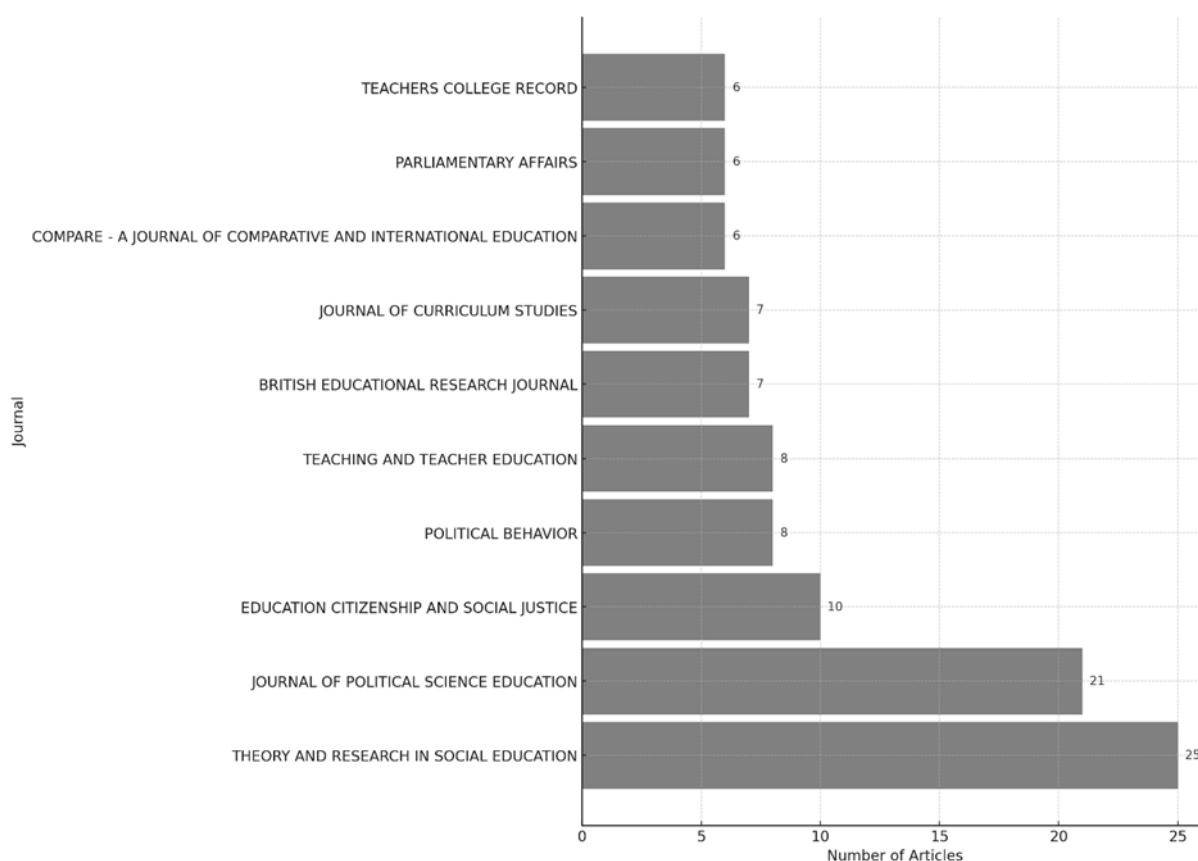
Graph 2. Distribution of Subject Area Studies by Institutions



Graph 2 shows the distribution of studies across institutions, highlighting the top contributors. The University of Amsterdam leads with 15 articles, followed by the University of Arkansas with 14. Katholieke University Leuven and the University of Maryland each contributed 13 articles, while Harvard University and the University of Edinburgh published 12 each. Miami University, Mills College, Queen's University Belfast, and the Australian National University contributed 11, 10, 9, and 8 articles, respectively. These findings emphasize the significant contributions of these institutions to the field.

Research in this field is published in 240 journals. The top ten journals by publication volume are displayed in Graph 3.

Graph 3. Distribution of Subject Area Studies According to Academic Journals

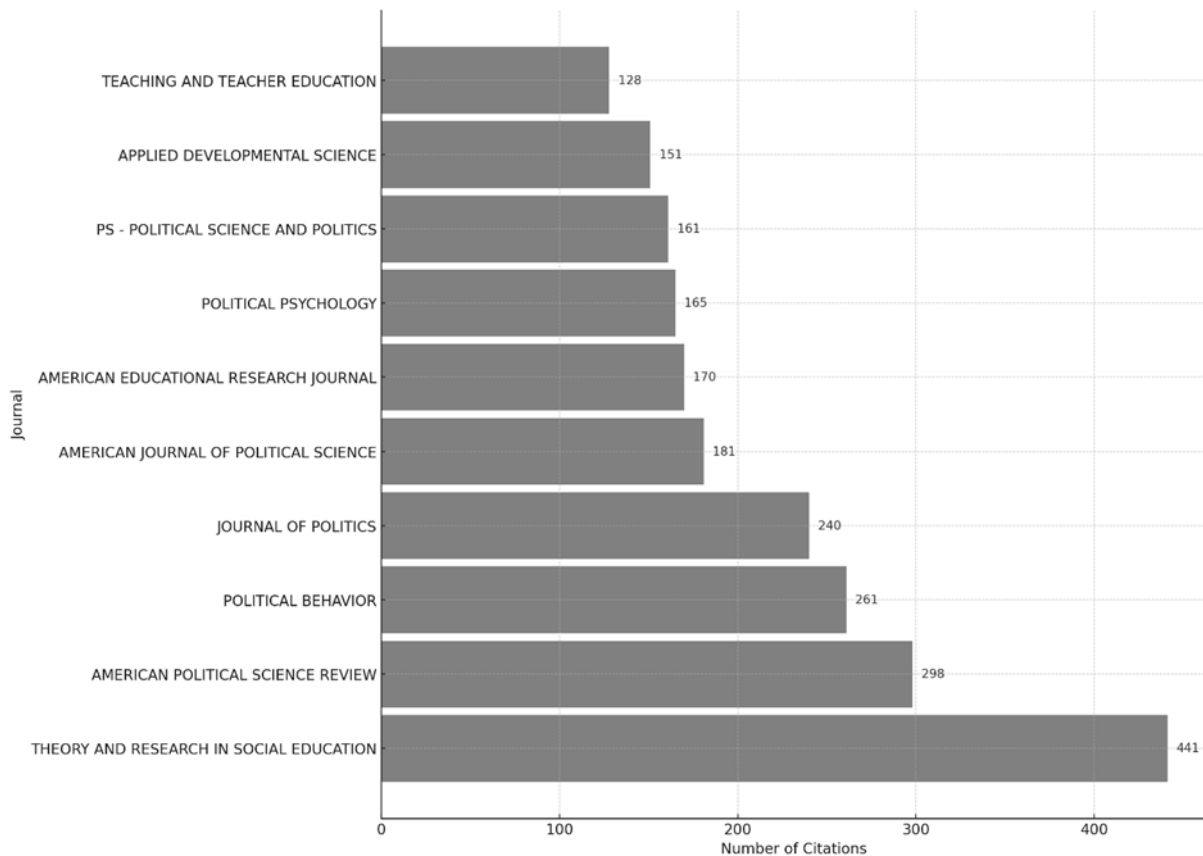


Graph 3 illustrates that publications pertaining to the subject area are disseminated across a broad spectrum of journals, thereby reflecting the diverse scope of research within this discipline. The journal with the highest volume of publications is "Theory and Research in Social Education" (25 articles), followed by the "Journal of Political Science Education" (21 articles)

and "Education Citizenship and Social Justice" (10 articles). This distribution underscores the interdisciplinary character of the field and emphasizes that research is notably concentrated in these three journals.

Graph 4 illustrates the ten academic journals with the highest citation scores within the specified subject area, whereas Figure 1 depicts the citation collaboration network among these journals.

Graph 4. Top-Cited Academic Journals in the Subject Area and Their Citation Counts



Graph 4 illustrates the journals that have received the highest number of citations within the specified subject area, along with their respective total citation counts. The journal that leads in citation frequency is "Theory and Research in Social Education", with 441 citations. It is followed by "American Political Science Review" with 298 citations, and "Political Behavior" with 261 citations. Journal of Politics ranks fourth with 240 citations, while "American Journal of Political Science" stands out with 181 citations. Furthermore, the list includes "American

Educational Research Journal" (170 citations), "Political Psychology" (165 citations), "PS-Political Science and Politics" (161 citations), "Applied Developmental Science" (151 citations), and "Teaching and Teacher Education" (128 citations).

The data presented are indicative of the academic impact of the most-cited journals within the subject area. The citation network among these journals is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Citation Collaboration Network of the Most Cited Academic Journals in the Subject Area

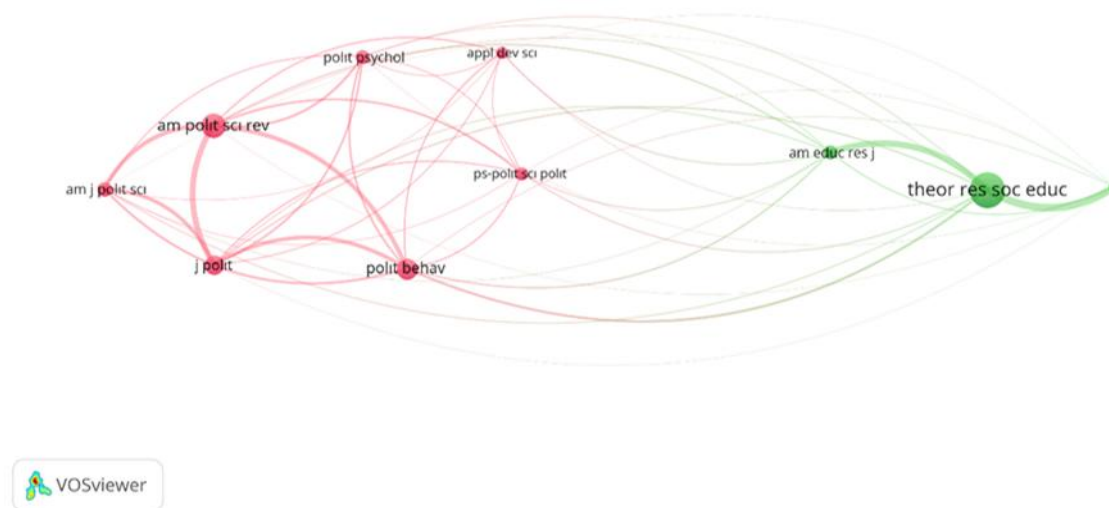
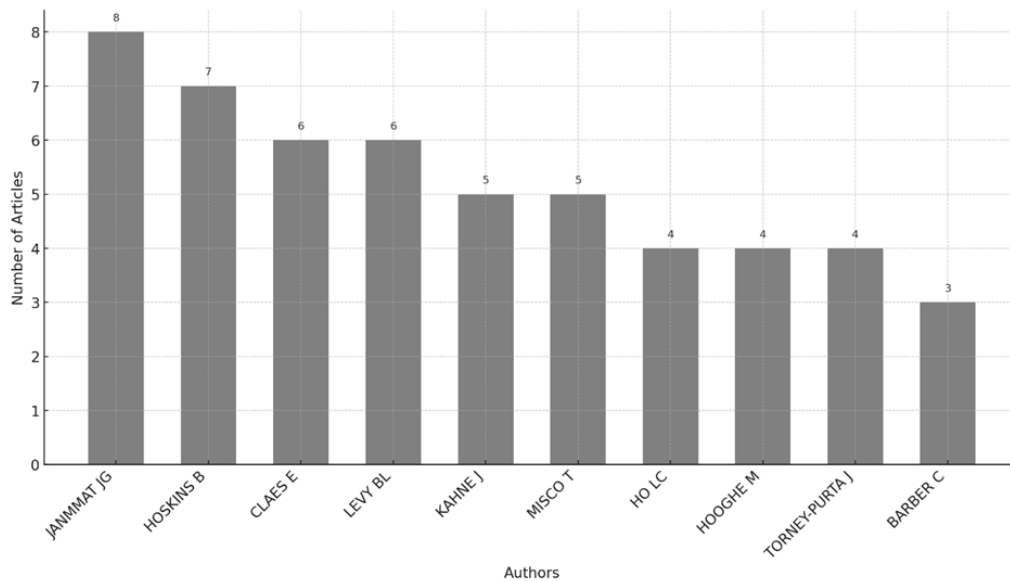


Figure 1 depicts the collaborative relationships among sources within the subject area. An analysis of Figure 1 reveals that "Theory and Research in Social Education" and "American Political Science Review" hold a significant position among the most-cited sources in this field, exhibiting a robust network of interconnections.

A total of 784 authors have contributed publications pertinent to this subject area. Graph 5 illustrates the top 10 authors with the highest publication counts, while Figure 2 depicts the co-authorship collaboration network among these authors.

Graph 5. Authors with the Most Publications in the Subject Area and Their Publication Counts



Graph 5 illustrates the leading authors within the specified subject area, ranked according to the volume of articles they have published. The data indicate that Janmaat JG is the most prolific author, having published a total of 8 articles. Following closely is Hoskins B, with 7 publications. Both Claes E and Levy BLM have made significant contributions, each author having published 6 articles. Furthermore, Kahne J and Misco T have each contributed 5 articles to the field. Additionally, Ho LC, Hooghe M, and Torney-Purta J have each published 4 articles, while Barber C is noted for having published 3 articles. These findings underscore the contributions of the most prolific authors in the subject area and their influence on the advancement of the field.

Figure 2. Co-Author Collaboration Network

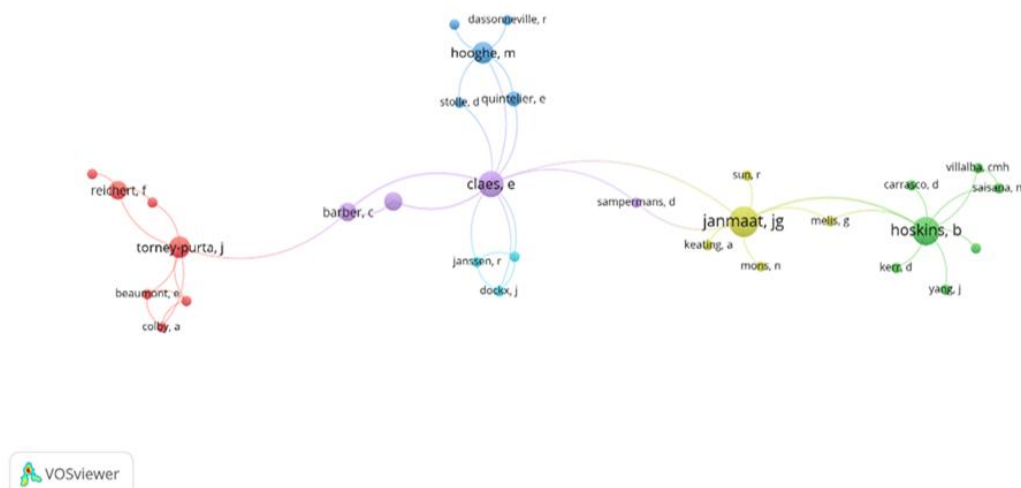


Figure 2 illustrates the collaboration network among authors within the specified subject area. Each node in the network represents an individual author, while the connections between nodes denote the existence of co-authored publications. The varying colors indicate distinct thematic groups or clusters within the collaboration network. Notably, authors such as Claes E, Janmaat JG, Hoskins B, and Torney-Purta J, occupy central positions, functioning as intermediaries between different groups. This analysis provides a significant framework for comprehending the interactions among authors and the structural dynamics of research groups.

Table 1 presents data regarding the h-index, total citation counts, and the years in which authors commenced their publication activities within the subject area. These metrics provide valuable insights into the contributions and academic impact of authors engaged in this field.

Table 1. Authors' h-Index and Total Citation Information Related to the Subject Area

Author	h-index	Total Citations	Number of Articles	Year of First Publication
Claes, E.	5	72	6	2009
Janmaat, J. G.	5	128	8	2016
Kahne, J.	5	477	5	2013
Ho, L. C	4	111	4	2012
Hooghe, M.	4	112	4	2009
Levy, B. L. M.	4	54	6	2016
Torney-Purta, J.	4	145	4	2001
Barber, C.	3	49	3	2009
Bee, C.	3	32	3	2014
Campell, D. E.	3	400	3	2007

Table 1 presents an overview of authors' h-index values, total citation counts, published articles, and their years of publication in the subject area, serving as a resource for evaluating academic impact and continuity.

Claes E and Levy BLM each authored six articles, but Claes E has a greater impact with 72 citations and an h-index of 5. Janmaat JG leads with eight publications, totaling 128 citations and an h-index of 5. Ho LC and Hooghe M each published four articles, with 111 and 112 citations, respectively, and both have an h-index of 4, indicating their academic influence.

Kahne, J. has published five articles, achieving the highest citation count of 477 and an h-index of 5, indicating a significant research impact. In contrast, Torney-Purta, J. has published three articles, with 145 citations and an h-index of 4, reflecting commendable academic performance.

Other authors, including Barber C, Bee C, and Campbell DE, have lower h-index values (3). However, Campbell DE has a notable citation count of 400, reflecting significant academic influence despite fewer publications.

This data evaluates the impact and lasting influence of authors' publications in the academic community. The h-index and total citation counts are key metrics reflecting the quality and contribution of an author's work.

Table 2 lists the ten most-cited articles in the subject area with their citation counts. Figure 3 visually represents the citation collaboration network among these articles, using color clusters to highlight their connections and emphasizing key works in academic discourse.

Table 2 presents a comprehensive overview of the authors, article titles, journals of publication, years of publication, and citation counts for the articles that have garnered the highest number of citations within their respective subject areas. This table serves as a valuable resource for assessing the academic impact of research studies within the field and for evaluating the contributions made to the subject area.

The article that has received the highest number of citations is "Political Knowledge, Political Engagement, and Civic Education" by Galston, W. A., and published in 2001 in the *Annual Review of Political Science*, which has garnered a total of 65 citations. In this work, the author explores the significance of political knowledge, engagement, and civic education in fostering democratic citizenship, as well as the function of such education within the political socialization process (Galston, 2001).

The second most frequently cited work is "Voice in the Classroom: How an Open Classroom Climate Fosters Political Engagement Among Adolescents", by Campbell DE. Published in 2008 in the journal *Political Behavior*, this article has garnered 64 citations. The study is particularly noteworthy for its examination of the influence of an open classroom climate on the political engagement of socioeconomically disadvantaged youth (Campbell, 2008).

Table 2. Articles by Number of Citations Within Their Subject Area

Author	Article Title	Journal of Publication	Year	Subject Area Citation	Color Scheme
Galston, W. A	Political Knowledge, Political Engagement, and Civic Education	Annual Review of Political Science	2001	65	Red
Campbell, D. E	Voice in the Classroom: How an Open Classroom Climate Fosters Political Engagement Among Adolescents	Political Behavior	2008	64	Red
Neundorf, A	The Compensation Effect of Civic Education on Political Engagement: How Civics Classes Make Up for Missing Parental Socialization	Political Behavior	2016	33	Green
Pasek, J	Schools as Incubators of Democratic Participation: Building Long-Term Political Efficacy with Civic Education	Applied Developmental Science	2008	24	Red
Kahne, J	Different Pedagogy, Different Politics: High School Learning Opportunities and Youth Political Engagement	Political Psychology	2013	24	Red
Feldman, L	Identifying Best Practices in Civic Education: Lessons from the Student Voices Program	American Journal of Education	2007	23	Red
Kahne, J	Developing Citizens: The Impact of Civic Learning Opportunities on Students' Commitment to Civic Participation	American Educational Research Journal	2008	22	Red
Hillygus, D. S	The MISSING LINK: Exploring the Relationship Between Higher Education and Political Engagement	Political Behavior	2005	16	Green
Campbell, D. E	Sticking Together: Classroom Diversity and Civic Education	American Politics Research	2007	15	Green
Campbell, D. E	Testing Civics: State-Level Civic Education Requirements and Political Knowledge	American Political Science Review	2016	14	Red

Neundorf et al. (2016) conducted a study titled "The Compensation Effect of Civic Education on Political Engagement: How Civics Classes Make Up for Missing Parental Socialization", has received 33 citations, indicating its significant impact within the field. This research explores the relationship between civic education and political engagement, specifically examining how civic education can serve as a compensatory mechanism for the absence of political socialization provided by parents.

The research conducted by Pasek et al. (2008) which has garnered 24 citations, is significant for its examination of the educational influences on youth democratic participation and political efficacy.

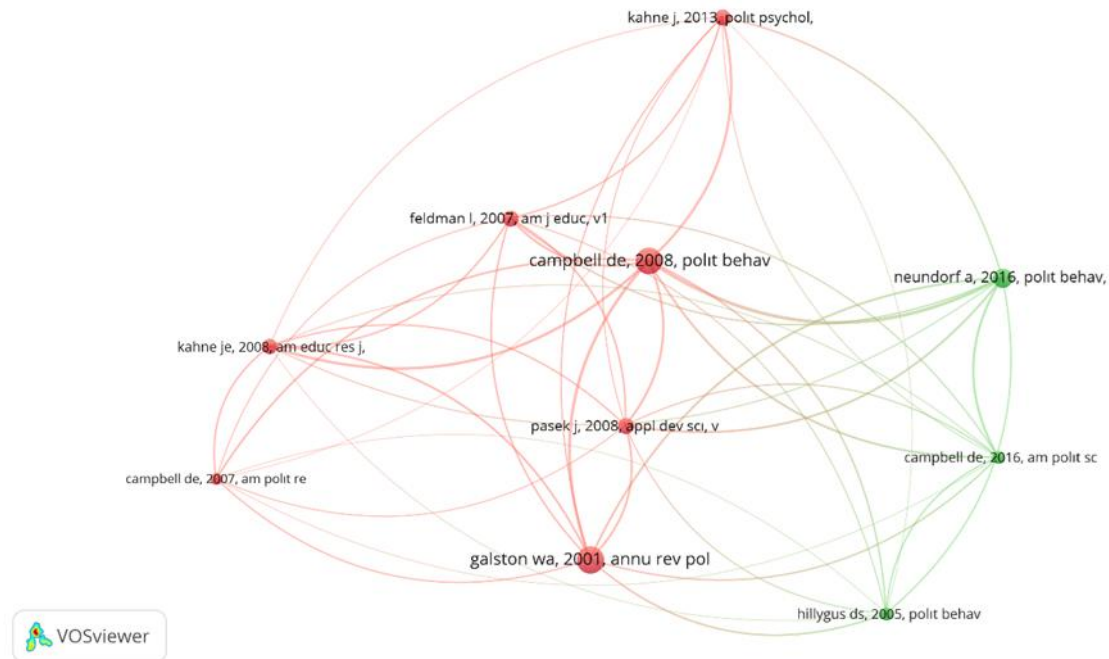
Among the studies that exhibit lower citation counts but nonetheless make significant academic contributions are Feldman et al. (2007), which has received 23 citations, Hillygus (2005) work titled "The MISSING LINK: Exploring the Relationship Between Higher Education and Political Engagement", which has garnered 16 citations. Both studies examine the relationship between education and political engagement.

The table further illustrates that Campbell DE is referenced multiple times (2007; 2016), indicating the sustained nature of their contributions to the field. The citation counts for Campbell's articles vary from 14 to 64, underscoring their considerable impact on the subject area.

This table demonstrates that publications within this subject area have facilitated significant theoretical and practical discussions, with certain works occupying a pivotal position in the academic landscape. The discrepancies in citation counts indicate the originality and enduring impact of these publications.

Figure 3 provides an analysis of significant studies within the subject area, utilizing citation counts and thematic connections to visualize prevailing trends and theoretical frameworks in the field. The influence of these studies in the existing literature is effectively illustrated through citation intensity and the formation of thematic clusters.

Figure 3. Citation Collaboration Network Within the Subject Area



The red cluster encompasses research which concentrates on conventional methodologies for civic education and the advancement of democratic values. This cluster examines the improvement of political knowledge, the promotion of democratic participation, and the impact of open classroom environments on the learning process. The studies underscore the significance of school-based civic education in cultivating individuals' political knowledge and participatory skills. Notably, open classroom environments are identified as conducive to fostering democratic thought and civic engagement. The research within this cluster articulates the beneficial effects of civic education on individual socialization and its capacity to partially alleviate socioeconomic disadvantages.

The green cluster encompasses research which investigates contemporary methodologies in civic education, the challenges posed by the digital era, and the significance of media literacy. These studies extend beyond conventional approaches to analyze the impact of educational diversity on the cultivation of democratic values and the ways in which the digital landscape shapes the political knowledge and engagement of youth. Furthermore, they emphasize that educational interventions can mitigate the deficiencies in parental socialization and underscore the essential role of media literacy in the acquisition and assessment of accurate information.

This cluster provides valuable insights into the potential reconfiguration of civic education within a modern framework.

Table 3 displays the ten most-cited articles worldwide within the specified subject area, along with their respective citation counts. Figure 4 illustrates the collaborative citation patterns and thematic networks associated with these articles.

Table 3. Globally Most-Cited Articles in the Subject Area

Author	Article Title	Journal of Publication	Year	Global Citation	Color Scheme
Galston, W.A	Political Knowledge, Political Engagement, and Civic Education	Annual Review of Political Science	2001	702	Blue
Hillygus, D. S	The MISSING LINK: Exploring the Relationship Between Higher Education and Political Engagement	Political Behavior	2005	302	Blue
Campbell, D. E	Voice in the Classroom: How an Open Classroom Climate Fosters Political Engagement Among Adolescents	Political Behavior	2008	281	Red
Kahne, J	Developing Citizens: The Impact of Civic Learning Opportunities on Students' Commitment to Civic Participation	American Educational Research Journal	2008	277	Red
Harris, A	Beyond apathetic or activist youth: 'Ordinary' young people and contemporary forms of participation	YOUNG	2010	242	Green
Kahne, J	Educating for Democracy in a Partisan Age: Confronting the Challenges of Motivated Reasoning and Misinformation	American Educational Research Journal	2017	241	Green
Davies, L	Global citizenship: abstraction or framework for action?	Educational Review	2006	198	Yellow
Jasanoff, S	Beyond Epistemology: Relativism and Engagement in the Politics of Science Deliberation, Democratic	Social Studies of Science	1996	194	Green
Morrell, M. E	Decision-Making and Internal Political Efficacy	Political Behavior	2005	153	Blue
Oulton, C	"Controversial issues - teachers' attitudes and practices in the context of citizenship education"	Oxford Review of Education	2004	137	Blue

Table 3 presents the most-cited studies worldwide within the relevant subject area. As indicated in the table, the article by Galston, W. A., titled "Political Knowledge, Political Engagement, and Civic Education" occupies the top position with a total of 702 citations. This article is regarded as a seminal resource in the field, owing to its comprehensive analysis of civic knowledge and political engagement (Galston, 2001).

In second place, with 302 citations, is the work of Hillygus, D. S., titled "The Missing Link: Exploring the Relationship Between Higher Education and Political Engagement". This study offers a substantial contribution to existing literature by examining the relationship between higher education and political participation (Hillygus, 2005).

The third most-cited article, with 281 citations, is Campbell DE's "Voice in the Classroom: How an Open Classroom Climate Fosters Political Engagement Among Adolescents". This study examines the relationship between an open classroom environment and the promotion of political engagement among adolescents (Campbell, 2008)

Kahne & Sporte (2008) "Developing Citizens: The Impact of Civic Learning Opportunities on Students' Commitment to Civic Participation" ranks fourth with 277 citations. This study investigates the correlation between students' civic learning opportunities and their commitment to civic engagement.

In fifth place, with 242 citations, is Harris A.'s article titled "Beyond Apathetic or Activist Youth: "Ordinary Young People and Contemporary Forms of Participation". This work contributes a novel perspective to the existing literature by examining the participation patterns of young individuals (Harris et al., 2010).

A more recent study, (Kahne & Bowyer, 2017) ranked sixth with 241 citations, is titled "Educating for Democracy in a Partisan Age: Confronting the Challenges of Motivated Reasoning and Misinformation". This article examines the role of digital media and media literacy, as well as the processes through which young individuals develop judgments, particularly within the context of the digital age.

Further along the list, the works of Davies (2006), Jasanoff (1996), Morrell (2005), and Oulton et al. (2004) have garnered 198, 194, 153, and 137 citations, respectively. These studies address themes including civic education, global citizenship, and political participation, thereby highlighting their significance within the field.

The table illustrates the global influence of research within this subject area. Notably, authors such as Kahne, J.E. and Campbell, D.E., are frequently cited, underscoring their enduring contributions to the field. These findings suggest that civic education and political participation hold a prominent place in academic literature, reflecting a growing interest in these topics in the context of the digital age.

Figure 4. Global Citation Collaboration Network in the Subject Area

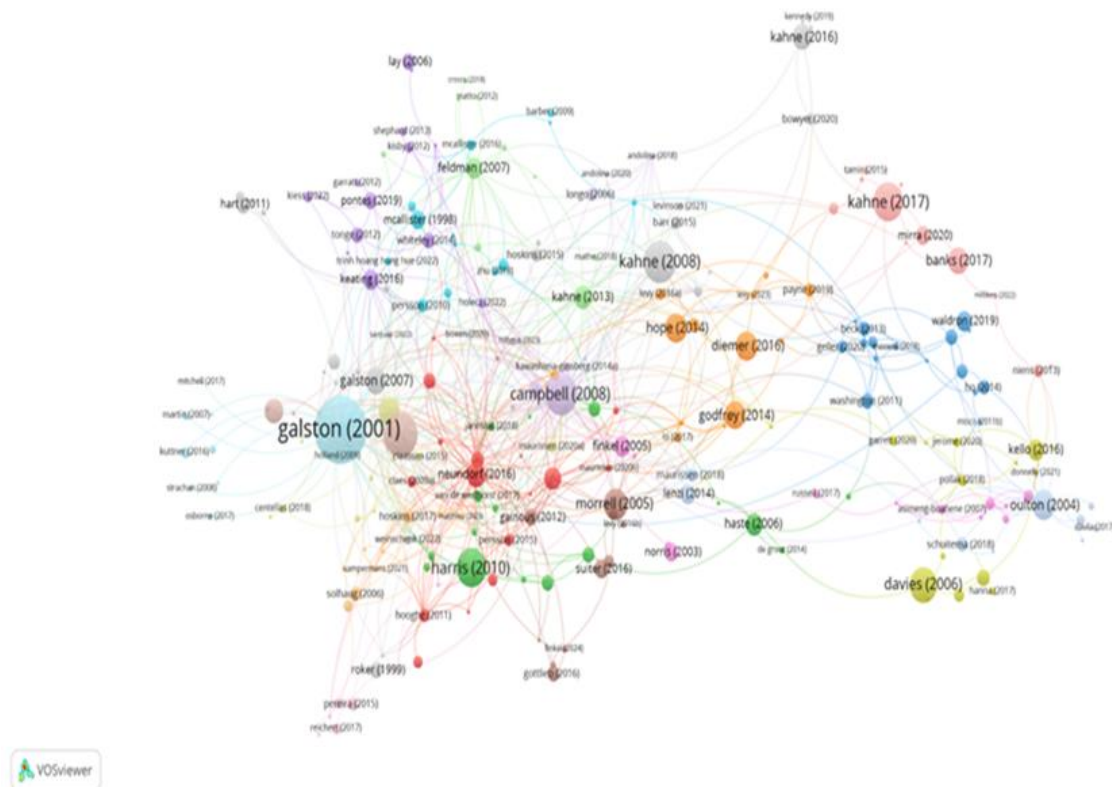


Figure 4 provides an analysis of significant studies within the subject area, utilizing global citation counts and thematic connections to visualize trends and theoretical frameworks pertinent to the field. The influence of these studies on the existing literature is effectively illustrated through citation density and thematic clusters.

The red cluster emphasizes civic education and the promotion of democratic values. The blue cluster underscores studies that investigate the relationship between democratic participation and education. The green cluster presents research on media literacy and the skills necessary for information verification in the digital age. The yellow cluster highlights global citizenship education and the theme of social justice.

The studies presented demonstrate the thematic diversity inherent in the literature on civic education and political participation, as well as the interconnections among various research domains. These seminal works provide a valuable framework for researchers, offering guidance both theoretically and practically.

Table 4 delineates the countries of the corresponding authors, the number of articles published by each country, and the proportion of collaborations with other nations. Figure 5 illustrates the network of international collaborations.

Table 4. Corresponding Authors' Countries, Number of Articles, and SCP-MCP Ratios

Countries	Number of Articles	SCP Single Country Publication	MCP Multiple Country Collaboration Publications	MCP % Multiple Country Collaboration Ratio
USA	164	156	8	4.9
United Kingdom	59	45	14	23.7
China	22	17	5	22.7
Belgium	17	13	4	23.5
Australia	14	13	1	7.1
Germany	13	13	0	0.0
Netherlands	12	9	3	25.0
Sweeden	11	9	2	18.2
Türkiye	10	9	1	10.0
Irland	9	8	1	11.1

The data presented in Table 4 offers a comprehensive analysis of the scientific productivity levels across various countries, as well as their tendencies toward international collaboration. The findings indicate that the United States (US) ranks highest in scientific output, with a total of 164 published articles. Notably, 95.1% of these articles, amounting to 156, were authored exclusively by researchers based in the US. Furthermore, the US demonstrates a relatively low Multiple Country Collaboration (MCP) ratio of 4.9%, signifying that only 8 articles resulted from international collaborative efforts. This trend suggests a pronounced national focus within the scientific research activities conducted in the US.

In contrast, countries such as the United Kingdom (23.7%), China (22.7%), Belgium (23.5%), and the Netherlands (25%) exhibit high ratios of multiple-country publications (MCP). These elevated percentages indicate that these nations cultivate a research ecosystem that is significantly dependent on international collaboration and actively encourages cross-border

partnerships. Notably, despite having a comparatively low total number of publications, the Netherlands distinguishes itself with the highest MCP ratio, highlighting its dedication to international collaboration in scientific research.

The collaborative approach adopted by European countries and China underscores the global advancement and distribution of scientific innovations. Furthermore, nations such as Sweden (18.2%) and Ireland (11.1%), despite having a lower total output of scholarly articles, exhibit relatively high multi-country publication (MCP) ratios. This suggests that a considerable proportion of their constrained scientific output is associated with international research initiatives.

Figure 5. International Collaboration Network Among Countries

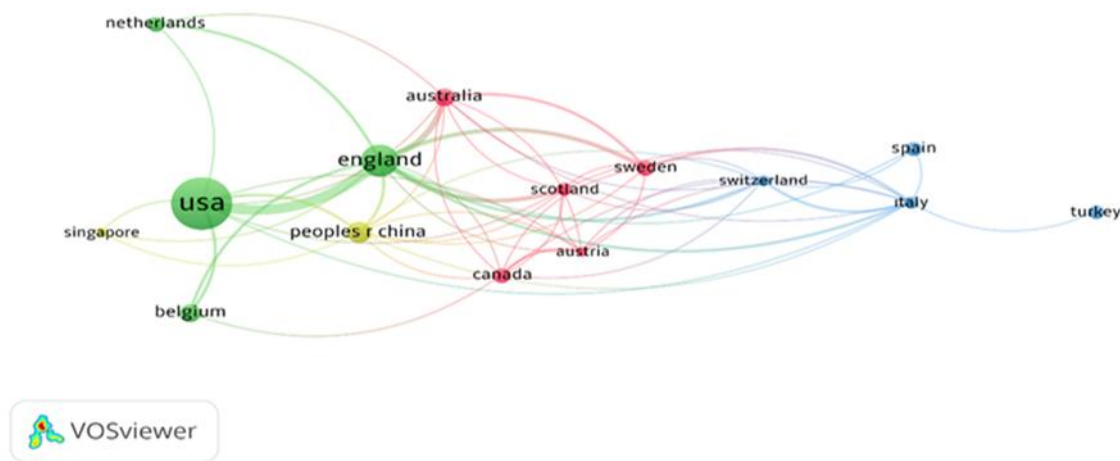


Figure 5 illustrates the scientific collaboration network among various countries. The dimensions of the nodes correspond to the volume of scientific output, whereas the connections signify the collaborative relationships established between nations. The United States, depicted by the largest node, is at the forefront of scientific output; however, it exhibits a relatively restricted number of international collaborations. This observation underscores the tendency of the United States to prioritize research activities that are predominantly nationally focused.

In contrast, countries such as the United Kingdom, Belgium, the Netherlands, and China are positioned in a manner that underscores their receptiveness to various international collaborations. These nations maintain robust connections both within Europe and with other continents. Notably, the close cooperation among European countries, along with the pivotal

roles played by the Netherlands and Belgium, highlights their importance in international research initiatives.

The figure provides a visual representation of the ratios of Single-Country Publications (SCP) and Multiple-Country Publications (MCP) as discussed in the accompanying table. It highlights the influence of international collaboration on scientific research.

Figure 6 depicts the temporal trends of significant terms within the subject area.

Figure 6. Network Visualization of Keywords

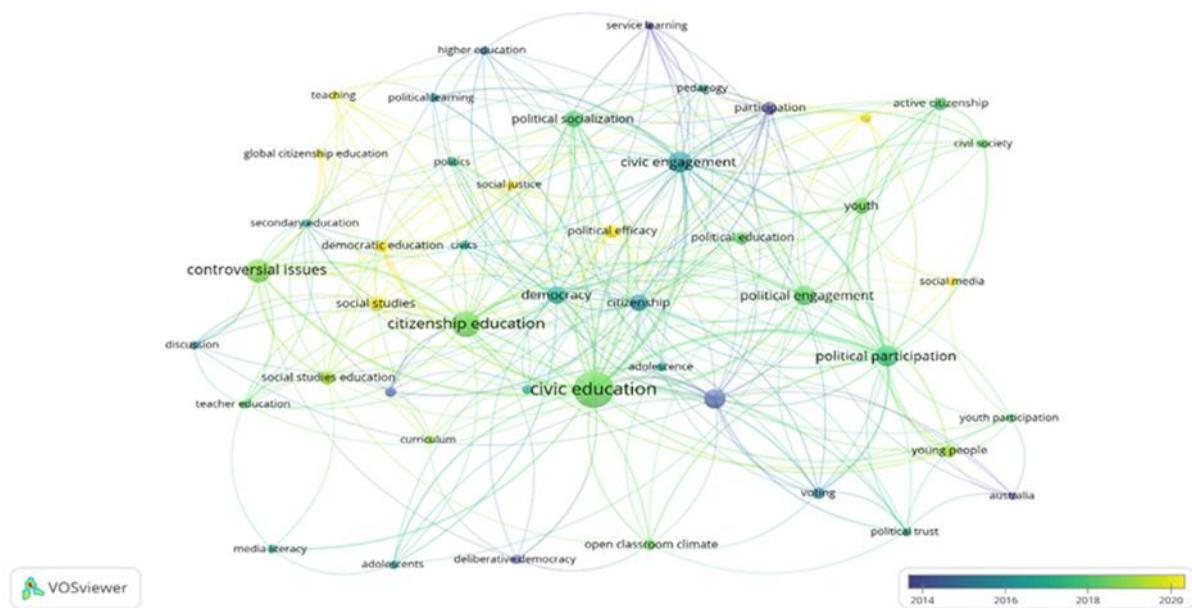


Figure 6 shows that the most common keywords in the articles are civic education, citizenship education, political participation, and political engagement. From 2014 to 2016, civic education and citizenship education were predominant, while from 2018 to 2020, keywords like youth, social media, and active citizenship became more significant.

This observation indicates a thematic shift in research. While early studies in the 2010s focused on education-related concepts, recent trends emphasize contemporary themes like youth, digital media, and active citizenship. This evolution shows that researchers are broadening the field's philosophical scope by engaging with relevant social and political contexts.

Conclusion, Discussion and Recommendations

This study examines international publications on active citizenship, citizenship education, social studies education, and political education by analyzing data from the Web of Science (WoS) database. The analysis focuses on key concepts such as political literacy, political issues, political participation, political knowledge, political efficacy, and controversial issues. A total of 426 articles were identified without limitations regarding article type or publication date and

were analyzed using bibliometric methods through VOSviewer software. Similarly, Karaca and Akbaba (2021) analyzed citizenship education research in the WoS database for the period from 1980 to 2020, emphasizing emerging themes such as digital citizenship, critical citizenship, identity, and justice. These findings closely align with the key concepts addressed in the present study.

Most of the concepts selected within this scope are directly related to citizens' capacities for critical thinking and informed participation in the public sphere. In this regard, Paulo Freire's (2018) critical pedagogy aligns with the conceptual framework of the study, as it advocates for the development of individuals not merely as recipients of knowledge but as agents capable of questioning and transforming society. Similarly, the bibliometric analysis conducted by Yeşiltaş and Gez Çinpolat (2022) on digital citizenship highlights a significant increase in the literature after 2014, drawing attention to the growing prominence of concepts such as digital literacy, digital competence, and technology. This finding underscores that citizenship education is shaped not only by traditional dimensions but also increasingly by its digital components.

The study analyzed the temporal distribution of articles, the most prolific journals, leading authors, authors' h-index scores, country-level productivity, frequently cited sources, and current research topics. The findings reveal a growing academic interest in citizenship and political education, underscoring their crucial role in promoting democratic values, fostering social responsibility, and encouraging political participation. The identified thematic networks also highlight existing research gaps and potential directions for future studies. In this context, the bibliometric analysis conducted by Pedraja-Rejas et al. (2023) from a sustainable development perspective in education demonstrates the increasing relevance of themes such as global citizenship, migration, and sustainability within the field of citizenship education. Consequently, the thematic structures and emerging research gaps identified in this study should be considered not only at a national level but also in a global context.

According to data from the Web of Science (WoS), 85% of studies on political and citizenship education have been published between 2013 and 2024, with over 40% of these appearing between 2020 and 2024. This increase reflects the growing recognition of the role of citizenship education in promoting civic engagement and the corresponding rise in scholarly interest in the field. C. Zhang and Fagan (2016) emphasized that ideological and political education in mainland China aims to cultivate active citizens, highlighting the importance of educational frameworks that encourage civic participation. This trend underscores the expanding role of educational institutions in fostering engaged citizens and illustrates how this development is influencing research and publication activity. In this context, Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) model of the "participatory citizen" appears to be gaining prominence in contemporary citizenship education. However, the relatively limited representation of their "justice-oriented citizen" model indicates a need to further develop the critical and social justice dimensions of citizenship education.

The Web of Science (WoS) database encompasses 240 journals focused on political and citizenship education. Among the leading journals in this field are *Theory and Research in Social Education*, *Journal of Political Science Education*, and *Citizenship and Social Justice*. Similarly,

Karaca and Akbaba (2021) identified Theory and Research in Social Education and Education, Citizenship and Social Justice as the most prolific journals in this domain. The most productive researchers in the field are Janmaat, J.G. (8 publications), Hoskins, B. (7 publications), and Claes, E. (6 publications), who are affiliated with the University of London, the University of Roehampton, and KU Leuven, respectively. These scholars also exhibit the highest levels of research collaboration. The most active institutions include the University of Amsterdam, the University of Arkansas, and KU Leuven.

Janmaat, J.G., leads the field with eight publications, 128 citations, and an h-index of five, while Kahne, J., has the highest citation count, with five publications, 477 citations, and an h-index of five. Claes, E. has published six articles, received 72 citations, and also holds an h-index of five. Other notable researchers include Ho, L.C. (four publications, 111 citations, h-index of four), Hooghe, M. (four publications, 112 citations, h-index of four), Torney-Purta, J. (three publications, 145 citations, h-index of four), and Campbell, D.E. (three publications, 400 citations, h-index of three). These data underscore the significant influence of these scholars within the academic community.

The most cited study in the field is "Political Knowledge, Political Engagement, and Civic Education" by W.A. Galston. This article has garnered 65 citations within the field and 702 in broader academic contexts. It is renowned for its influential analysis of democratic participation and civic awareness. Galston's (2001) work is particularly pertinent to the concepts of internal political efficacy and political literacy, both of which are essential for empowering citizens to take active roles in democratic societies.

An examination of Figures 3 and 4 reveals that the most highly cited articles are interconnected, forming clusters represented by distinct color groupings. These connections underscore the importance of integrating traditional educational approaches with contemporary demands. Consequently, it can be argued that citizenship education practices, adapted to the dynamics of the digital age while remaining grounded in traditional pedagogies, are likely to yield more effective outcomes. Key themes such as diversity, bridging gaps in socialization, and media literacy emerge as significant points of intersection between the two clusters, thereby broadening the scope of citizenship education. These findings resonate with both Freire's (2018) critical pedagogy and Habermas's (1989) theory of the public sphere. In particular, the potential of digital citizenship environments to foster democratic engagement suggests a transformative capacity for these spaces to evolve into digital public spheres—idealized arenas for rational discourse and civic participation.

While the United States is among the leading countries in terms of scientific productivity, the majority of its research is conducted at the national level. In contrast, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Belgium, and China are distinguished by their high rates of multi-country collaboration (MCP). Notably, although the Netherlands produces a relatively smaller number of publications, its high MCP ratio indicates robust international collaborations, thereby contributing to the global dissemination of scientific innovation.

These findings underscore the critical importance of promoting international collaboration to enhance both the scope and impact of scientific advancement. Chinchilla-Rodríguez et al.

(2018) emphasize that fostering interest in such collaborations is essential for building research capacity. Collaboration networks play a pivotal role in advancing scientific productivity and innovation. Consequently, these findings underscore the strategic importance of international partnerships in enhancing researcher mobility and collaboration while also offering clear guidance on selecting suitable institutions and collaborators.

Among the most frequently used keywords in the field are civic education, citizenship education, political participation, and political engagement. From 2014 to 2016, themes related to civic and citizenship education were predominant, while the period from 2018 to 2020 witnessed a shift toward youth, social media, and active citizenship. This transition reflects a growing focus within the field on contemporary social and political contexts. The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated the development of innovative approaches to citizenship education. Hidayah et al. (2022) emphasized that interactive learning tools played a crucial role in promoting civic values among students during challenging times. This technological integration may encourage researchers to explore effective pedagogical strategies suitable for the digital age.

Levy et al. (2015) provided early empirical evidence supporting the impact of digital tools on promoting political participation. Their study examined the role of political blogging within a high school curriculum, finding that students who engaged in structured online discussions exhibited increased political interest, enhanced internal political efficacy, and greater confidence in political writing. These findings underscore the significance of interactive learning tools in fostering civic awareness and participation within digital learning environments. However, Levy et al. (2015) also identified challenges in facilitating peer-to-peer deliberation, which is essential for meaningful online political engagement.

Given the expanding role of technology in citizenship education, future research should concentrate on developing interactive and participatory digital models that enhance political literacy and promote meaningful civic engagement. These insights align with Mihailidis and Thevenin's (2013) conceptualization of media literacy as a fundamental civic competency. In this context, digital citizenship extends beyond mere technological proficiency to include critical thinking, responsible content creation, and active participation in the digital public sphere.

This research recommends the following:

This study used only the Web of Science (WoS) database. Future research should examine citizenship education literature in political education using other databases like Scopus, ERIC, and ProQuest for a broader perspective.

Future bibliometric analyses should incorporate various document types, including master's theses, doctoral dissertations, books, and conference proceedings, to enrich citizenship and political education research.

Including publications in national indices like the TR Index could improve our understanding of citizenship education research's national impact and support the field's growth.

"It is recommended that researchers in citizenship and political education consider forming international partnerships based on the study's findings, including insights on influential authors, collaboration networks, and productive universities and countries.

This study utilized VOSviewer, but future research could apply tools like R Studio, CiteSpace, and Bibliometrix for more comprehensive analyses of existing findings.

This study identifies research gaps in citizenship education. Future research should focus on themes like youth, social media, and digital citizenship.

Researchers in citizenship education should focus on high-impact journals such as "Theory and Research in Social Education," "Journal of Political Science Education," and "Education, Citizenship and Social Justice" which publish the most articles in this area.

The findings show high international collaboration in the Netherlands, China, and the United Kingdom. Future research could compare citizenship education practices across countries.

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Summary of Contribution Rate Declaration of Researchers

The authors declare that they have contributed equally to the article.

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