

# YEGAH MUSICOLOGY JOURNAL

<https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/ymd>

**e-ISSN: 2792-0178**

Article Type / Makalenin Türü : Research Article / Araştırma Makalesi  
Date Received / Geliş Tarihi : 01.12.2025  
Date Accepted / Kabul Tarihi : 13.02.2026  
Date Published / Yayın Tarihi : 21.02.2026  
DOI : <https://doi.org/10.51576/ymd.1833879>  
e-ISSN : 2792-0178

This article has been reviewed by at least two referees and confirmed to include no plagiarism. / İntihal/Plagiarism:  
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## THE ACADEMIC TRACES OF A UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE: BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSES ON MUSIC EDUCATION CURRICULA

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### ABSTRACT

This study maps the development and thematic trends of music education curricula research through a bibliometric analysis of 133 articles published between 1970 and 2025. Using data from the Web of Science and VOSviewer, the analysis examined publication patterns, citation impact, collaboration networks, and conceptual orientations. Results show a surge in output since the mid-2000s, peaking after 2018. The United States and China lead in publications and citations, while Canada, Cyprus, and the United Kingdom occupy central positions in collaboration networks. Some institutions gained strong link strength from a single publication, highlighting the influence of isolated contributions. At the author level, Wai-Chung Ho and Graham McPhail emerged as the most influential, though few sustained contributors exist. Key outlets include the International Journal of Music Education, Music Education Research, and the British Journal of Music Education. Thematic analysis highlights curriculum renewal, inclusivity, and popular music, with limited exploration of policy and psychological perspectives.

**Keywords:** Bibliometric analysis, collaboration networks, music curriculum, music education, student-centred learning

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## EVRENSEL BİR DİLİN AKADEMİK İZLERİ: MÜZİK EĞİTİMİ MÜFREDATINA İLİŞKİN BIBLİYOMETRİK ANALİZLER

### ÖZ

Bu çalışma, 1970 ile 2025 yılları arasında yayınlanan 133 makalenin bibliyometrik analizi yoluyla müzik müfredatı araştırmalarının gelişimini ve tematik eğilimlerini haritalandırmaktadır. Web of Science ve VOSviewer'dan elde edilen veriler kullanılarak yapılan analizde, yayın kalıpları, atıf etkisi, iş birliği ağları ve kavramsal yönelimler incelenmiştir. Sonuçlar, 2000'li yılların ortasından itibaren yayın sayısında bir artış olduğunu ve bu artışın 2018'den sonra zirveye ulaştığını göstermektedir. Yayın ve atıf sayısında Amerika Birleşik Devletleri ve Çin ön sıralardayken, iş birliği ağlarında Kanada, Kıbrıs ve Birleşik Krallık merkezi konumlarda yer almaktadır. Bazı kurumlar, tekil yayınlarla güçlü bağlantılar kurarak, izole katkıların etkisini göstermiştir. Yazar düzeyinde, Wai-Chung Ho ve Graham McPhail en etkili yazarlar olarak öne çıkarken, sürekli katkı sağlayan yazarların sayısı azdır. Önemli yayınlar arasında International Journal of Music Education, Music Education Research ve British Journal of Music Education bulunmaktadır. Tematik analiz, müfredat yenileme, kapsayıcılık ve popüler müziği öne çıkarırken, politika ve psikolojik perspektiflerin sınırlı bir şekilde ele alındığını göstermektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Bibliyometrik analiz, iş birliği ağları, müzik eğitimi, müzik müfredatı, öğrenci merkezli öğrenme.

### INTRODUCTION

Historically, music is widely regarded as a universal language and shared expressive medium. Its communicative power transcends cultures and shapes identity, social cohesion, and intercultural interaction (McPherson & McCormick, 2006, p. 322; Su, 2024, p. 1). In education, it functions not only as an art but as a multidimensional learning domain that fosters cognitive, affective, and social development (Sun, 2022, pp. 1–3). Consequently, music education curricula cultivate individual potential and reinforce social bonds.

As a foundational component of schooling, music curricula nurture aesthetic sensitivity and transmit values of cultural diversity, social justice, and creativity (Spruce, 2024, pp. 1-3; Vodicka, 2022, pp. 1-2). Their content and implementation evolve with policy shifts, societal change, and pedagogical innovation. For example, constructivism has intensified student-centred and differentiated instruction (Fuller, 2022, p. 4; Wu et al., 2024, pp. 1-2). Likewise, contemporary curricula increasingly integrate popular music, digital technologies, and cultural sustainability (Obja-an, 2021, p. 1; Ma & Wang, 2025, pp. 2-3). Historically, policy reforms mirror broader educational shifts: many nations repeatedly revised curricula across the twentieth century. In Turkey, official curricula began in 1924 with periodic updates from the late 1920s to the 1970s; most recently, MoNE revised the program in 2024 for implementation in 2025 (Özer & Eğilmez, 2022, pp. 1182-1183; MoNE, 2025, p. 9).

Comparative research shows approaches are shaped by cultural heritage and national policy. Pardàs Feliu (2016) compared New Zealand and Catalonia, highlighting the joint influence of culture and globalisation (p. 1). Kenzhegalieva et al. (2024) documented the integration of traditional and modern methods in Kazakhstan (Kenzhegalieva et al., 2024, pp. 55-56). A China–South Korea comparison found that China prioritises cultural heritage and aesthetic experience, whereas South Korea emphasises modern technology and global arts education (He, 2024, p. 87). Similarly, Li et al. (2025) contrasted discipline-oriented China with creativity-oriented United States (Li et al.,

2025, p. 427). Moreover, Hebert (2012) and Kertz-Welzel (2018) underscore music education's dual role in national identity and cultural affiliation within a global frame (Hebert, 2012, p. 1; Kertz-Welzel, 2018, p. 1).

Recently, curricula have drawn attention not only for advancing artistic skills but also for influencing motivation, self-efficacy, and self-confidence (Xu, 2025, pp. 45-46; Zelenak, 2024, p. 1342), thereby bridging psychological development and the transmission of societal values. Research shows that music education promotes social cohesion, empathy, and cultural awareness (Barton, 2023, p. 1); in schools, it brings diverse learners together and fosters inclusion (Hess, 2017, p. 71). Integrating multiple genres and cultural forms nurtures respect for diverse traditions and reinforces social-justice principles (Özlek, 2019, pp. 1-2); thus, music education cultivates empathy and a collective consciousness that values diversity (Spruce, 2024, p. 14). Consequently, curricula should be viewed as a strategic dimension of educational policy supporting social integration.

### **Problem of the Study**

Music education curricula shape how musical knowledge, skills, and values are taught; therefore, understanding how scholarship on these curricula has evolved is important for both academic knowledge-building and evidence-informed policy. However, research on music education curricula has grown rapidly and become more dispersed across journals, countries, and themes, making it difficult to see (i) how the field has developed over time, (ii) which topics and approaches have gained or lost prominence, (iii) who and what has been most influential, and (iv) where clear research gaps remain. As a result, stakeholders lack a consolidated, data-driven overview that maps the intellectual structure and collaboration patterns of this literature.

### **Purpose of the Study**

To address this need, the present study conducts a bibliometric analysis to systematically map research on music education curricula. Bibliometric analysis quantifies publication trends and influence indicators (e.g., citation counts, h-index) and visualizes collaboration networks (co-authorship, institutional, and country-level) as well as intellectual structures (citation, co-citation, bibliographic coupling, and co-word relationships) (Donthu et al., 2021, p. 288; Župič & Čater, 2015, pp. 431–432). Using large-scale publication data, it enables an objective examination of historical development, thematic shifts, and underexplored areas in the field (Yılmaz, 2021, pp. 1458–1461; Kocaarslan & Kesgin, 2025, pp. 2–4). Accordingly, this study aims to identify influential works and sources, highlight leading journals and contributors, and reveal active and emerging collaboration networks—thereby offering direction for future research agendas and supporting international scholarly partnerships.

### **Originality of the Study**

While bibliometric methods are increasingly used in education research, there remains a limited number of comprehensive, curriculum-focused bibliometric mappings within music education. By concentrating specifically on music education curricula and combining performance indicators with network and thematic structure analyses, this study provides a field-level panorama that is difficult to obtain through traditional narrative or systematic reviews alone. In doing so, it contributes an original, data-driven baseline that can guide subsequent empirical studies, curriculum debates, and cross-national research collaboration.

## **Limitations**

For future research, the scope should be broadened and diversified. The present study included only English-language articles indexed in Web of Science, so adding Scopus, ERIC, and Google Scholar would yield a fuller profile. While bibliometric techniques are informative, they have limitations, and mixed-methods designs are therefore advisable. Combining bibliometrics with qualitative content analyses or expert evaluations would illuminate contextual dynamics behind numerical patterns. For instance, the disproportionate influence of a single, high-link-strength publication merits an in-depth qualitative inquiry.

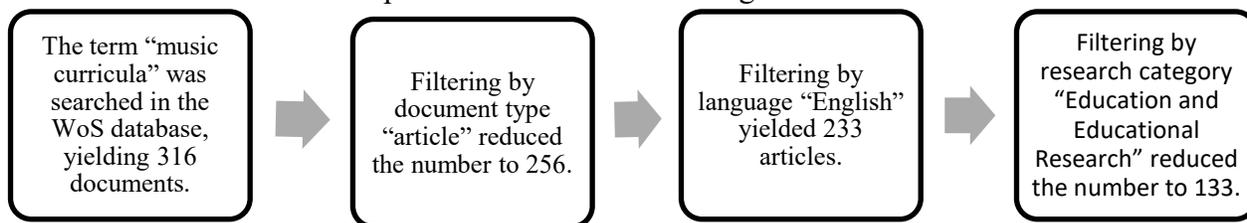
## **METHOD**

### **Research Model**

This study adopted a quantitative bibliometric analysis, a method that systematically examines elements such as authorship, research topics, publication types, source usage, and cited references (Yılmaz, 2021, pp. 1471-1472). Bibliometric indicators are widely used to evaluate the scientific impact of publications in diverse contexts. Analyses of keywords and terms in abstracts reveal research trends (Kocaarslan & Kesgin, 2025, pp. 1-2), track their evolution over time (Vogel & Masal, 2015, pp. 1165-1166), and identify both extensively studied and underexplored topics (Zan, 2012, pp. 1-2). To provide a long-term, systematic evaluation of articles published between 1970 and 2025, a bibliometric analysis was chosen. This approach allows for the objective mapping of the field's developmental trajectory, the identification of prominent themes, the exploration of citation networks and international collaborations, and the detection of research gaps, thereby clarifying the current state of research on music education curricula.

### **Data Collection Process**

The dataset for the bibliometric analysis was retrieved from the Web of Science (WoS) database. First, a search was conducted in the “topic” field using the keyword “music program,” yielding 2,642 results. To refine the scope, the keyword was re-searched in quotation marks (“music program”), yielding 316 documents. A document-type filter was then applied to include only articles, reducing the dataset to 256. This restriction was based on the rationale that peer-reviewed journal articles undergo rigorous scientific evaluation, ensuring reliability. To strengthen comparability with the international literature and avoid inconsistencies caused by linguistic diversity, only English-language articles were retained, resulting in 233 publications. Finally, the WoS category “Education and Educational Research” was applied, narrowing the dataset to 133 articles. The article selection process is summarized in Figure 1.



*Figure 1. Data collection process*

### **Data Analysis Process**

The Web of Science database was scanned to identify studies on music education curricula, as it is a widely recognised source that indexes publications from high-impact journals (Mongeon & Paul-Hus, 2016, pp. 213-214). The retrieved data were analysed using VOSviewer, a software designed

for bibliometric research. VOSviewer enables the visualization of large-scale datasets through bibliometric mapping, supporting network analysis and the identification of patterns of scientific collaboration (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010, p. 524). Beyond mapping citation and co-citation relationships, it also facilitates the detection of research trends through keyword co-occurrence analyses (Mokhtari, 2019, pp. 1-3).

By incorporating text-mining techniques, VOSviewer systematically uncovers core concepts, emerging themes, and current directions within a research field (Zhang et al., 2023, p. 2). In this study, the analysis examined publication year, country of origin, institutional affiliation, most cited works, and leading authors and journals. Frequently used keywords and terms in abstracts were also identified to construct a conceptual map of the field. This bibliometric approach enabled tracing the field's historical development, charting its international distribution, highlighting influential scholars and institutions, and identifying potential future research gaps in music education curricula.

## FINDINGS

This section presents the bibliometric analysis of articles on music education curricula published between 1970 and 2025. The analysis systematically examined the distribution of publications by year, country, university, faculty, and institute. It also identified the most-cited studies, influential authors, and leading journals, thereby clarifying the field's academic visibility and impact. In addition, keyword and abstract analyses revealed the most frequently used concepts, which were used to construct a conceptual map of research on music education curricula. Collectively, these findings illuminate the field's historical development, international distribution, influential scholars and institutions, and potential future research gaps.

### Publication Trend by Year

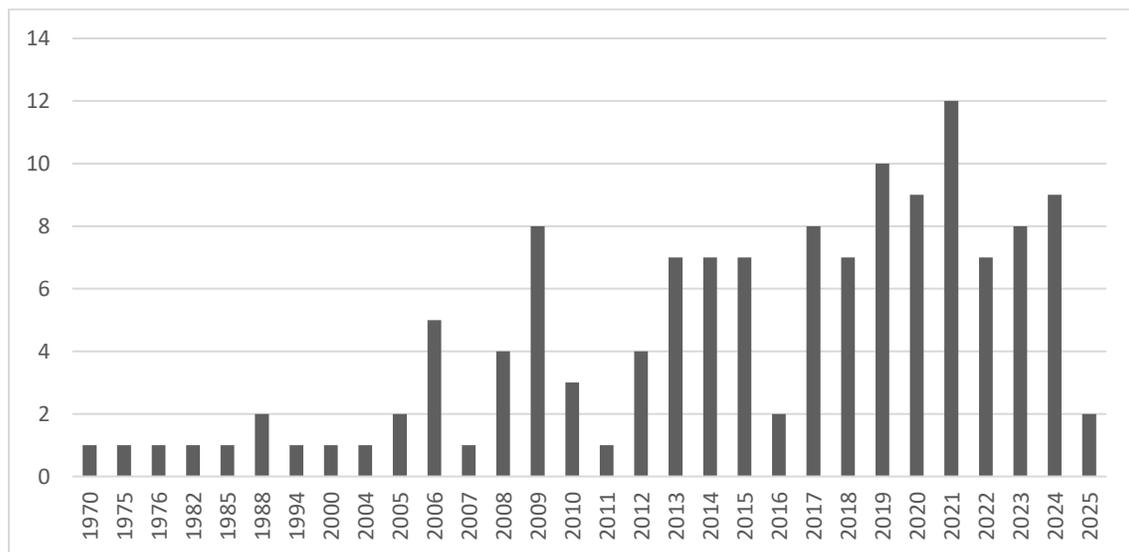


Figure 2. Distribution by year.

When the distribution of articles on *music program* in the Web of Science database is examined by year, as in Figure 2, publications between 1970 and 2000 remained very limited, typically no more than one annually. A clear upward trend began in 2005, with 2009 standing out with eight publications. Between 2013 and 2015, output stabilized at six to seven articles per year. After 2018,

the number of studies increased noticeably, reaching 10 in 2019, 9 in 2020, and peaking at 12 in 2021. Although the figures fluctuated between 2022 and 2024, production remained high, with nine publications in 2024. For 2025, only two publications have been indexed so far; however, since the year is ongoing, this number is expected to rise.

### **Distribution of Articles by Country**

The country-level distribution was analysed in VOSviewer using the “countries” option and the bibliographic coupling method. Threshold values were set as a minimum of two documents per country and no minimum citation requirement. Based on these criteria, nineteen countries were initially identified, but only seven met the inclusion threshold. This analysis revealed the interaction patterns among countries that published at least 2 articles on the theme of music programs.

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Number of articles (n)</b>	<b>Citations</b>	<b>TLS</b>
1	Canada	7	53	220
2	Cyprus	2	5	170
3	UK	7	32	149
4	China	7	94	49
5	Scotland	3	2	17
6	USA	13	131	10
7	Australia	2	18	7

*Table 1. Distribution of articles by country according to citation count and total link strength (TLS).*

When Table 1 is examined, the United States emerges as the leading contributor with 13 publications and 131 citations. Despite this output, its relatively low TLS (= 10) suggests limited international collaboration or bibliographic connectivity. In contrast, Canada (7 publications, 53 citations, TLS = 220) and Cyprus (2 publications, 5 citations, TLS = 170) stand out for their high TLS values, indicating intensive engagement with international scholarship and central roles in collaboration networks despite their smaller publication volumes. The United Kingdom (7 publications, 32 citations, TLS = 149) shows a similar pattern, enhancing the field’s collaborative intensity alongside Canada. China (7 publications, 94 citations, TLS = 49) ranks high in citations but shows weaker international link strength. Meanwhile, Scotland (3 publications, 2 citations, TLS = 17) and Australia (2 publications, 18 citations, TLS = 7) display comparatively modest contributions in both output and connectivity. Overall, the USA and China dominate in terms of publication and citation volume, whereas Canada, Cyprus, and the UK assume more central positions within the field’s collaborative networks through their bibliographic link strength.

### **Distribution by University**

The institutional distribution of articles was analysed in VOSviewer using the “organizations” option and the bibliographic coupling method. Thresholds were set at a minimum of 1 publication and no minimum citation requirement, resulting in the inclusion of all 65 institutions in the dataset. This analysis identified the universities and research centers most active in studies on *music program* and visualized the inter-institutional collaboration networks.

University	Number of articles (n)	Citations	TLS
European Univ. Cyprus.	1	4	248
Neapolis Univ. Pafos.	1	4	248
New York Univ. London.	1	4	248
Quebec Montreal Univ.	1	4	248
Univ Roehampton	1	4	248
Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat Univ	1	5	160
Chulalongkorn Univ.	1	5	160
Mahidol Univ.	1	5	160

Table 2. Number of articles, citations, and TLS by university.

When Table 2, which includes articles with a connection strength value exceeding 150, is examined, institutions such as the European University of Cyprus, Neapolis University Pafos, New York University London, Quebec Montreal University, and the University of Roehampton each appear with only one publication but display very high link strengths (TLS = 248). This suggests that despite their limited output, these institutions have established strong bibliographic relationships and occupy central positions within the literature. A similar pattern is observed at Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University, Chulalongkorn University, and Mahidol University, where single publications are associated with high link strengths (TLS = 160). These findings indicate that even limited production can generate dense international citation networks. Overall, institutions with high TLS values often publish few articles, demonstrating that an institution's impact in the field depends not only on publication volume but also on the strength of its bibliographic connections.

### Distribution by Author

The author-level distribution was analysed through bibliographic coupling in VOSviewer using the "authors" option. Thresholds were set at a minimum of two publications per author and no minimum citation requirement. Under these criteria, only 4 of the 83 authors in the dataset qualified for analysis. This enabled the identification of the network structures among the most active scholars working on *music program* and the visualization of their collaborative links.

Author Name	Number of articles (n)	Citations	TLS
Ho, Wai-chung	2	31	5
McPhail, Graham	2	9	4
Hadjikou, Chryso	2	1	4
Anderson, Anthony	2	6	3

Table 3. Number of articles, citations, and TLS by author.

When Table 3 and Figure 3 are examined, all four authors appear with two publications each; however, their citation counts and TLS values vary considerably. Ho, Wai-chung stands out as the most influential scholar with 31 citations, indicating strong visibility and frequent referencing in the literature. Ho's TLS value (5) further highlights both the citation impact and the author's integration into bibliographic networks. McPhail, Graham follows with 9 citations and a TLS of 4,

demonstrating effective connectivity despite a lower citation count. Anderson, Anthony has received 6 citations and holds a TLS of 3, reflecting comparatively limited influence. Hadjickou, Chryso presents a distinctive case: with only 1 citation but a TLS of 4, the author demonstrates strong bibliographic integration despite low citation impact. This suggests that influence within the field may be reflected not only through citation volume but also through the strength of network connections.



*Figure 3. Bibliometric links among the article authors.*

### **Distribution by Journal**

Within the scope of this study, the journal-level distribution was analysed using the bibliographic coupling technique in VOSviewer. The “sources” option was applied, with thresholds set at a minimum of 4 publications per journal and at least 1 citation. Based on these criteria, 23 journals were included in the analysis. This process visualized the network relationships among journals publishing on the theme of music program and identified the outlets that occupy a prominent position in the field.

<b>Journal Name</b>	<b>Number of articles (n)</b>	<b>Citations</b>	<b>TLS</b>
Music Education Research	7	55	55
International Journal of Music Education	11	78	48
British Journal of Music Education	7	40	47

*Table 4. Number of articles, citations, and TLS by journal.*

When Table 4 and Figure 4 are examined, the *International Journal of Music Education* emerges as the most productive and influential outlet, publishing 11 articles and receiving 78 citations. Its high link strength (TLS = 48) further demonstrates a central position in both scholarly output and bibliographic connectivity. *Music Education Research*, while publishing fewer articles (n = 7), has accumulated 55 citations and an equally strong TLS value (55), indicating substantial influence relative to its output. The *British Journal of Music Education* also contributes seven articles, with 40 citations and a TLS of 47, reflecting notable integration within the field despite lower citation counts than those of the leading journals. Overall, the *International Journal of Music Education* dominates in terms of productivity and citations. In contrast, *Music Education Research* and the *British Journal of Music Education* play central roles in collaboration and interaction networks through their strong bibliographic linkages.

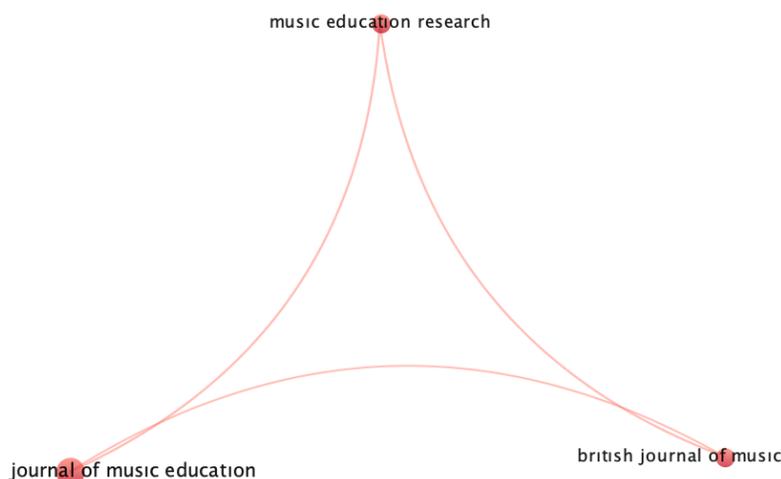


Figure 4. Bibliometric links of the articles based on journals.

### Most Cited Articles and Link Strength

The article-level distribution was analysed using the bibliographic coupling technique in VOSviewer. The “documents” option was applied with a threshold of at least one citation per article. Based on this criterion, 38 of the 133 articles met the requirement and were included in the analysis.

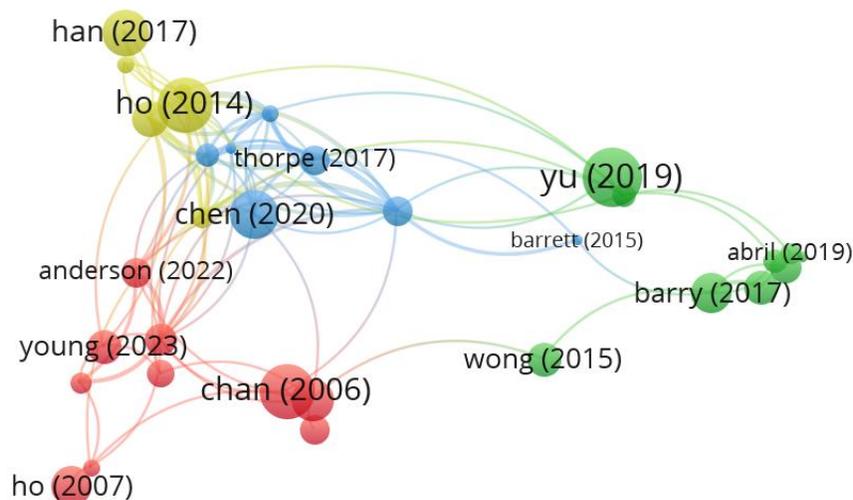
Article Name	Author(s) and Year	Citations	TLS
Music education curriculum and social change: A study of popular music in secondary schools in Beijing, China.	Ho (2014)	20	28
Curriculum reform and policy considerations: A multiple case study of the inclusion of modern band into music teacher preparation programmes.	Prendergast, J. S., & May, B. N. (2020).	6	28
Music teachers at the crossroads: Navigating the curriculum as plan and lived.	Stavrou, N. E., & O'Connell, L. (2022).	3	24
Analysis of the Hierarchy of ‘music elements and concepts’ in elementary music textbooks according to the 2015 revised music curriculum.	Kim, E. J. (2020).	2	24
The right to enhancement: Students talking about music knowledge in the secondary curriculum.	McPhail, G. J. (2014).	9	22
What Does It Mean to Decolonise the School Music Curriculum?.	Philpott, C. (2022).	7	21

Table 5. Articles ranked by citation count and link strength.

When Table 5 and Figure 5 are examined, different authors stand out in terms of both citation counts and TLS. Ho (2014), with *"Music Education Curriculum and Social Change,"* holds a strong position in the literature, with 20 citations and a high TLS value of 28. Prendergast and May (2020) similarly occupy a central place in the network, achieving the same TLS value (28) despite a lower citation count of six. Stavrou and O’Connell (2022) (*Music Teachers at the Crossroads*) and Kim (2020) (*Analysis of Hierarchy of ‘Music Elements and Concepts’*) have modest citation

counts (three and two, respectively) but display notable integration into the field through TLS values of 24. These cases demonstrate that link strength is shaped not only by citation volume but also by the degree of interconnection with other studies.

In contrast, McPhail (2014) (*The Right to Enhancement*) has received nine citations, reflecting considerable visibility, yet shows a comparatively lower TLS value of 22. Philpott (2022), with *What Does It Mean to Decolonise the School Music Curriculum?*, has accumulated seven citations and a TLS of 21, representing a meaningful but less central position in the network. Overall, Ho (2014) and Prendergast and May (2020) stand at the core of the field with high link strengths, while Stavrou and O’Connell (2022) and Kim (2020), despite fewer citations, play an important role through network integration. McPhail (2014) and Philpott (2022) differ in citation levels but show relatively weaker connectivity.



*Figure 5. Bibliometric connections among the articles.*

### Most Frequent Keywords

In the bibliometric analysis, a co-occurrence analysis was performed in VOSviewer using the “author keywords” option to identify the concepts most frequently employed in the articles. The threshold was set at a minimum of two occurrences per keyword. Under this criterion, 10 of the 128 keywords in the dataset were included in the analysis.

Keywords	Occurrences	TLS
Music education	10	15
Music curriculum	10	11
Secondary school	2	5
Differentiation	2	4
Music	2	3
Popular music	3	3
Music Teacher	2	2
Curriculum	2	1
Higher Music Education	2	1

Neoliberalism 2 1

Table 6. Most frequently used keywords in articles.

Upon examining Table 6 and Figure 6, “music education” (n = 10, TLS = 15) and “music curriculum” (n = 10, TLS = 11) emerge as the most frequently used and strongly connected keywords. These terms not only reflect the central content focus of the studies but also form the core of the conceptual network. Although less frequent, “popular music” (n = 3, TLS = 3) appears as a distinct focal point in debates on music education. Likewise, “secondary school” (n = 2, TLS = 5) and “differentiation” (n = 2, TLS = 4) display relatively high link strengths, suggesting that discussions of secondary education contexts and differentiated instruction constitute notable themes within curriculum studies.

Other terms, including “music” (n = 2, TLS = 3), “music teachers” (n = 2, TLS = 2), “curriculum” (n = 2, TLS = 1), “higher music education” (n = 2, TLS = 1), and “neoliberalism” (n = 2, TLS = 1), show weaker network connections. Their presence in the dataset indicates topical diversity, but their limited link strengths suggest more peripheral roles in shaping the field’s discourse. Overall, “music education” and “music curriculum” constitute the conceptual axis of the literature while themes such as “popular music,” “secondary school,” and “differentiation” represent emerging focal points, and keywords like “neoliberalism” and “higher music education” remain secondary areas of emphasis.

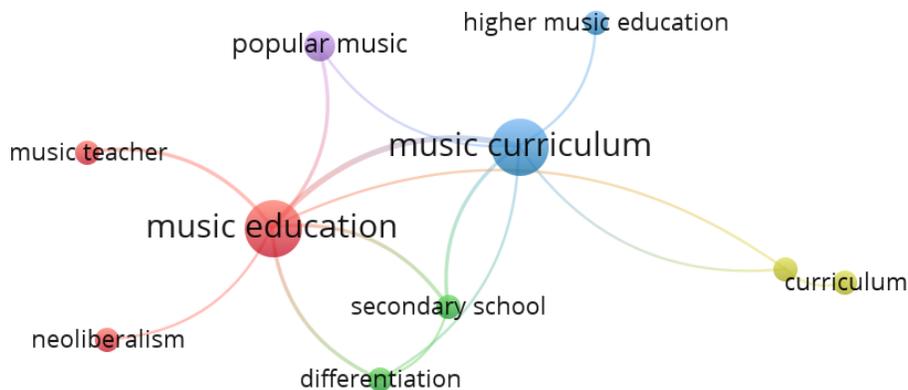


Figure 6. Bibliometric connection of the most frequently used keywords in the articles.

**Most Frequently Repeated Terms in the Abstracts**

In this study, a co-occurrence analysis was performed in VOSviewer to identify the prominent concepts within article abstracts. The “all terms” option was selected, and the “binary counting” method was applied so that each repetition was counted only once. The threshold was set at a minimum of ten occurrences per term. Under these criteria, nine terms emerged from a total of 1,073. Non-relevant terms, such as “article,” were manually excluded. As a result, the analysis identified the fundamental concepts most frequently emphasized in abstracts of studies on *music curriculum*.

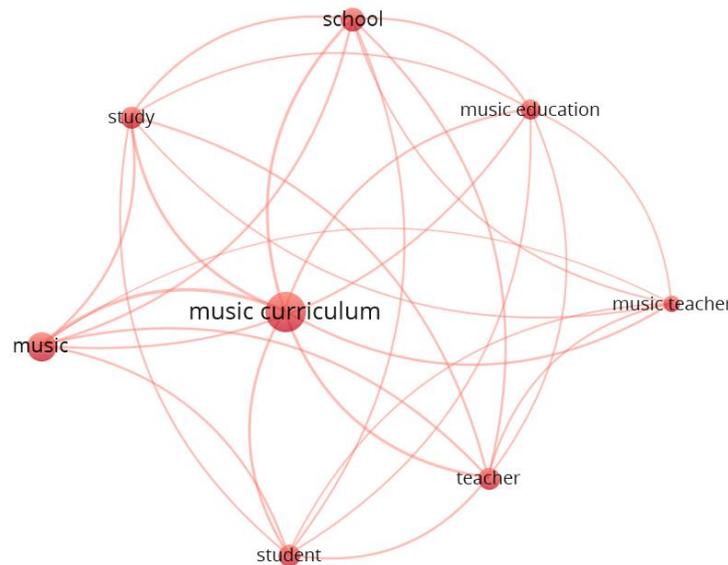
Terms	Occurrences	Relevance
Music Curriculum	31	1.59
Study	17	1.46
Music	23	1.27
Music Education	16	0.65

Music teacher	13	0.61
Teacher	18	0.47
School	19	0.40
Student	17	0.30

*Table 7. Most frequently repeated terms in the abstracts.*

Upon examining Table 7 and Figure 7, “music curriculum” emerges as the most frequently used term, appearing 31 times with a relevance value of 1.59, underscoring its centrality in the literature. It is followed by “music” (n = 23, relevance = 1.27) and “school” (n = 19, relevance = 0.40), indicating that the school setting constitutes a key contextual focus in music education research. “Study” (n = 17, relevance = 1.46) also ranks highly in importance, while “music education” (n = 16, relevance = 0.65) and “music teacher” (n = 13, relevance = 0.61), despite lower relevance scores, remain core concepts within the field.

The terms “teacher” (n = 18, relevance = 0.47) and “student” (n = 17, relevance = 0.30) highlight the centrality of the teacher–student relationship in music education studies. Overall, “music curriculum” and “music” form the conceptual backbone of the literature while terms such as “study,” “school,” “teacher,” and “student” emphasize its methodological and contextual dimensions. In contrast, concepts like “music education” and “music teacher,” with relatively lower relevance values, function more as supporting themes within the field’s discourse.



*Figure 7. Most frequently repeated terms in the article abstracts.*

## **DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In this study, 133 articles (1970–2025) on music curricula were analysed bibliometrically. Data were drawn from Web of Science, and VOSviewer generated visualizations. The analysis mapped distributions of year, country, institution, author, journal, document, and keyword to surface trends and conceptual orientations. Accordingly, the results clarify historical development, international collaboration, and thematic areas, while indicating directions for future research.

Findings show a marked upward trend. After sparse output (1970–2000), publication volume rose around 2005 and reached record levels after 2018: ten articles in 2019, nine in 2020, and a peak of

12 in 2021, with high levels thereafter. This aligns with broader growth in music-education scholarship; Li et al. (2025) report steady increases from 2014 to 2024 with a sharp rise around 2021 (Li et al., 2025, p. 427). The trajectory suggests increasing recognition of curricular concerns and a more central role for music education. Moreover, bibliometric indicators quantify growth and trace thematic evolution (Kocaarslan & Kesgin, 2025, pp. 1-2; Vogel & Masal, 2015, p. 1165; Zan, 2012, p. 2). Counts for 2025 remain provisional. Overall, the field exhibits sustained growth and signs of maturation.

Geographically, output concentrates in a limited set of countries, yet collaboration dynamics differ. The United States leads quantitatively (13 articles; 131 citations), though its Total Link Strength is low (TLS = 10), indicating peripheral integration. By contrast, Canada and Cyprus, despite fewer publications, show high TLS values (220 and 170), signalling centrality via intensive bibliographic links; for example, Canada (7 articles; 53 citations) demonstrates strong international connectivity. China holds a prominent citation impact (7 articles; 94 citations) but weaker linkages (TLS = 49). Scotland (3 articles) and Australia (2) also show low TLS, placing them at the margins. Thus, the USA and China dominate production and citation counts, whereas Canada, Cyprus, and the United Kingdom play central roles in collaboration.

This pattern places North America and English-speaking countries at the forefront, yet smaller countries exert influence through partnerships. Increasing participation would enhance geographical diversity and expand knowledge exchange. Crucially, stronger collaboration can raise output and impact while enriching conceptual and cultural perspectives. The spread across continents also reflects music's universal communicative role.

Institutionally, even a single publication can centre an institution. The European University of Cyprus, Neapolis University Pafos, New York University London, Quebec Montreal University, and the University of Roehampton, each with one article, show exceptionally high TLS (248), indicating extensive bibliographic connections. A similar pattern appears at Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University, Chulalongkorn University, and Mahidol University (one article each; TLS = 160). Hence, influence depends not only on volume but also on the strength of the links; a single high-quality study can generate wide networks and elevate visibility. This underscores the value of international collaborations and multi-institutional projects.

At the author level, continuity is limited. Of 83 authors, only four meet the threshold of at least two publications: Wai-Chung Ho, Graham McPhail, Chryso Hadjickou, and Anthony Anderson. The literature thus relies on one-time contributors and lacks a consolidated specialist core. Impacts vary: Ho has the highest citations (31) and TLS (5); her work on popular music and social change in China (2014) is among the most cited. McPhail follows (9 citations; TLS = 4). Anderson shows modest influence (6 citations; TLS = 3). Hadjickou, despite a single citation, exhibits a strong linkage (TLS = 4), suggesting an "invisible" network effect independent of direct citations. Overall, the field remains in a state of consolidation; sustained engagement from a broader pool is needed to deepen the knowledge base and crystallise a theoretical core.

Journal venues shape discussion platforms and influence. The 133 articles appear in 23 journals, indicating dispersion with concentration in specialist outlets. The International Journal of Music Education leads (11 articles; 78 citations; TLS = 48). Music Education Research, though publishing fewer articles (7), has 55 citations and the highest TLS (= 55), signalling broad influence and strong integration. The British Journal of Music Education (7 articles; 40 citations; TLS = 47) also shows substantial connectivity. Consequently, research is anchored in international music-education journals that form a cohesive, influential network. Such clustering fosters coherence, specialization, and accessibility within a clearly defined scholarly community.

Although relatively infrequent ( $n = 3$ ), popular music ( $TLS = 3$ ) forms a distinct subnetwork and has become prominent in reform (Obja-an, 2021, p. 5). Differentiation ( $n = 2$ ;  $TLS = 4$ ) reflects student-centred approaches (Obja-an, 2021, p. 6). Secondary school ( $n = 2$ ;  $TLS = 5$ ) indicates attention to middle and high school contexts. By contrast, music teachers, higher music education, and neoliberalism appear only twice each with weak links ( $TLS = 1-2$ ), suggesting underexplored areas, including teacher identity, higher education, and critical policy perspectives. In particular, the sparse use of neoliberalism shows limited policy critique. Overall, research concentrates on school-level curricula, teacher practices, and popular music, while higher education, identity, and critical perspectives remain underrepresented.

Abstract-term analysis corroborates these patterns. Among 1,000+ distinct terms, only nine occur in at least ten articles. Music curriculum dominates (31 occurrences; relevance = 1.59), reflecting its centrality. Music (23) and school (19) confirm school-based contexts. Teacher (18) and student (17) highlight the centrality of teacher–student roles, with studies examining teachers’ interpretations of guidelines (Stavrou & O’Connell, 2022, p. 8) and students’ experiences (e.g., McPhail, 2014, p. 6). Study (17; relevance = 1.46) reflects formulaic abstract phrasing and methodological diversity. Meanwhile, music education occurs 16 times with lower relevance (0.65), functioning as an overarching label. Thus, the literature centres on school-embedded curricula and teacher–student interaction, while gaps remain in policy critique and in higher education.

In conclusion, the field developed relatively late but has gained significant momentum. Before 2000, output was limited; in the 21st century, volume expanded rapidly, aided by curriculum reforms, a growing recognition of the arts, and popular culture. This upward trajectory mirrors productivity rises in educational sciences (Li et al., 2025, p. 438). Moreover, geographical and institutional analyses show multiple local hubs rather than a single core: while the United States, the United Kingdom, and China lead in volume, Canada and Cyprus occupy central network roles, demonstrating that qualitative connections can outweigh quantitative size. Furthermore, author and institution patterns indicate a consolidation phase: many one-off contributions and few sustained programs, implying that shared terminology, methods, and theories have yet to crystallize. Field maturation will likely depend on a more stable core community.

Thematically, the literature emphasizes curriculum renewal, student-centred learning, and inclusivity. It underscores integrating popular music, differentiation, and cultural diversity, balancing traditional and modern approaches (Wu et al., 2024, p. 8), developing flexible programs aligned with policy (Barton, 2023, p. 85), embedding learning theories and constructivist principles (Fuller, 2022, p. 10; Wu et al., 2024, p. 9), and integrating cultural sensitivity and social justice (Vodicka, 2022, p. 6; Spruce, 2024, p. 12; Obja-an, 2021, p. 7). However, postcolonial critiques and decolonization efforts remain marginal (Philpott, 2022, p. 14), and psychological dimensions — motivation, self-efficacy, creativity — are under-addressed, despite their importance for engagement and achievement (McPherson & McCormick, 2006, p. 332; Su, 2024, p. 6; Sun, 2022, p. 5; Xu, 2025, p. 58; Zelenak, 2024, p. 1355).

Methodologically, bibliometrics enabled a comprehensive “field map” of conceptual structure, historical development, and influence networks. As emphasized elsewhere, bibliometric analysis offers powerful, objective indicators (Kocaarslan & Kesgin, 2025, p. 14; Yilmaz, 2021, p. 1488) and can reveal trends, emphases, and gaps, thereby clarifying both current status and future directions.

## GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET GİRİŞ

Müzik, tarihsel süreç içerisinde evrensel bir dil ve ortak bir ifade aracı olarak kabul edilmiştir. Kültürleri aşan iletişimsel gücüyle kimlik inşasını, sosyal uyumu ve kültürlerarası etkileşimi şekillendirmektedir. Eğitim bağlamında ise müzik, yalnızca sanatsal bir beceri alanı değil; aynı zamanda bilişsel, duyuşsal ve sosyal gelişimi destekleyen çok boyutlu bir öğrenme disiplindir. Bu doğrultuda müzik eğitimi müfredatları, bireysel potansiyeli geliştirirken toplumsal bağları güçlendiren stratejik bir araç niteliği taşımaktadır.

Müzik müfredatlarının içeriği ve uygulanışı; politika değişiklikleri, toplumsal dönüşümler ve pedagojik yeniliklerle birlikte evrimleşmektedir. Örneğin yapılandırmacılık yaklaşımı, öğrenci merkezli ve farklılaştırılmış öğretim uygulamalarını yoğunlaştırmış; güncel müfredatlar ise popüler müzik, dijital teknolojiler ve kültürel sürdürülebilirlik gibi kavramları daha fazla entegre etmeye başlamıştır. Türkiye özelinde de 1924'ten günümüze kadar periyodik güncellemeler yapılmış, son olarak 2024 yılında revize edilen program 2025'te uygulanmak üzere hazırlanmıştır. Uluslararası literatür incelendiğinde, müzik eğitimi araştırmalarının hem sanatsal becerileri geliştirmeye hem de motivasyon, öz yeterlik ve kapsayıcılık gibi psikolojik ve sosyal boyutlara odaklandığı görülmektedir. Bu çerçevede müzik eğitimi müfredatlarına ilişkin araştırmaların gelişimsel seyrini ve güncel eğilimlerini izlemek hem akademik literatür hem de eğitim politikaları açısından önem arz etmektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, 1970-2025 yılları arasında yayınlanan makaleler üzerinden müzik eğitimi müfredatı araştırmalarının bibliyometrik bir haritasını çıkarmaktır.

## YÖNTEM

Bu çalışmada, bilimsel yayınların yazarlık, araştırma konuları, yayın türleri ve atıf ağları gibi unsurlarını sistematik olarak inceleyen nicel bir yöntem olan bibliyometrik analiz kullanılmıştır. Veriler, Web of Science (WoS) veri tabanından elde edilmiştir. Veri toplama sürecinde "music program" anahtar kelimesi kullanılarak yapılan tarama sonucunda, kapsam daraltılarak (sadece makaleler, İngilizce dili ve Eğitim kategorisi) toplam 133 makaleye ulaşılmıştır. Elde edilen veriler, bibliyometrik haritalama ve ağ analizi için VOSviewer yazılımı kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Çalışmada yayın yılları, ülke ve kurum dağılımları, en çok atıf alan çalışmalar, etkili yazarlar ve dergiler incelenmiş; ayrıca anahtar kelime ve özet metin analizleri ile alanın kavramsal yapısı ortaya konulmuştur.

## BULGULAR

Yayınlara yıllara göre dağılımı incelendiğinde, 1970-2000 yılları arasında üretimin oldukça sınırlı olduğu, 2005 yılından itibaren ise belirgin bir artış eğiliminin başladığı görülmektedir. Yayın sayısı 2018 sonrasında ivme kazanmış ve 2021 yılında zirveye (n=12) ulaşmıştır. Ülke bazlı analizlerde, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri (ABD) ve Çin hem yayın sayısı hem de atıf hacmi bakımından lider konumdadır. Ancak, Kanada, Kıbrıs ve Birleşik Krallık gibi ülkeler, daha az yayına sahip olmalarına rağmen yüksek "Toplam Bağlantı Gücü" (TLS) değerleriyle uluslararası iş birliği ağlarında daha merkezi bir rol oynamaktadır. Kurumsal düzeyde, tekil yayınlarla dahi yüksek bağlantı gücüne ulaşan kurumların varlığı, alandaki etkinin sadece nicelikle değil, bibliyografik ağlara entegrasyonla da ilgili olduğunu göstermektedir.

Yazar analizlerinde Wai-Chung Ho ve Graham McPhail, atıf ve bağlantı gücü bakımından en etkili isimler olarak öne çıkmaktadır; ancak alanda uzun soluklu ve sürekli katkı sağlayan yazar sayısının sınırlı olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Dergi incelemesinde ise *International Journal of Music Education*,

*Music Education Research* ve *British Journal of Music Education* dergilerinin hem üretkenlik hem de atıf etkisi açısından alanın ana mecraları olduğu belirlenmiştir. Kavramsal haritalamada “müzik eğitimi” ve “müzik müfredatı” temel eksenini oluştururken; “popüler müzik”, “farklılaştırma” ve “ortaöğretim” gibi temaların alt ağlar oluşturduğu, buna karşın “neoliberalizm” ve “yüksek müzik eğitimi” gibi konuların daha az çalışıldığı görülmüştür.

## TARTIŞMA VE SONUÇLAR

Çalışma sonuçları, müzik eğitimi müfredatı araştırmalarının nispeten geç geliştiğini ancak 21. yüzyılda önemli bir ivme kazandığını göstermektedir. ABD ve Çin niceliksel üstünlüğe sahip olsa da, niteliksel bağlantılar ve iş birlikleri açısından Kanada ve Kıbrıs gibi merkezlerin stratejik önemi büyüktür. Yazar ve kurum analizleri, alanın henüz tam anlamıyla kristalize olmuş, ortak terminoloji ve teorilere sahip yerleşik bir çekirdek topluluğa sahip olmadığını; daha ziyade tekil katkıların yoğun olduğu bir konsolidasyon evresinde olduğunu işaret etmektedir.

Tematik olarak literatür; müfredat yenileme, öğrenci merkezli öğrenme, kapsayıcılık ve popüler müziğin entegrasyonu üzerine yoğunlaşmaktadır ancak postkolonyal eleştiriler, dekolonizasyon çabaları ve motivasyon, öz yeterlik gibi psikolojik boyutların müfredat araştırmalarında yeterince ele alınmadığı bir boşluk olarak durmaktadır. Sonuç olarak, bibliyometrik analizler alanın kavramsal yapısını, tarihsel gelişimini ve etki ağlarını objektif göstergelerle ortaya koyarak, gelecekteki araştırmalar ve politika yapımcılar için kapsamlı bir “alan haritası” sunmaktadır. Gelecek çalışmaların, sadece WoS ile sınırlı kalmayıp farklı veri tabanlarını da kapsayacak şekilde genişletilmesi ve bibliyometrik verilerin nitel içerik analizleriyle desteklenmesi önerilmektedir.

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