



## Trust in Education: A Bibliometric Analysis

*Eğitimde Güven: Bir Bibliyometrik Analiz*

### ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the development of scientific publications on trust in education over time, collaboration networks, and prominent research themes through bibliometric analysis. The bibliometric data of publications indexed in the Web of Science database were used as the unit of analysis. The keywords "trust in education," "teacher trust," "public trust in education," "institutional trust," and "trust in schools" were employed. The search was limited to publications in the education category issued between 2000 and 2025, including only research articles and review articles. A total of 167 publications meeting these criteria were identified, and VOSviewer software was used to visualize the data and construct network maps. According to the findings, 162 of the publications were research articles and five were review articles. Examining the annual distribution, the highest number of publications was recorded in 2022 and 2025, with 17 publications each, representing 10.18% of the total. In the co-authorship network, 10 authors meeting the minimum threshold of two publications were identified. The keyword analysis identified 10 interconnected keywords appearing at least twice. Country-level productivity analysis showed that the United States produced the highest number of publications, accumulating a total of 1,314 citations. This study maps the current state, developmental trends, and research themes of academic output on trust in education through bibliometric indicators. The findings are expected to contribute to the charting of the knowledge base in education.

**Keywords:** Trust in education, Public trust, Teacher trust, Bibliometric analysis.

### ÖZET

Bu çalışma, eğitimde güven konusundaki bilimsel yayınların zaman içerisindeki gelişimini, iş birliği ağlarını ve öne çıkan araştırma temalarını bibliyometrik analiz yoluyla incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Analiz birimi olarak Web of Science veri tabanında indekslenen yayınların bibliyometrik verileri kullanılmıştır. Tarama sürecinde "trust in education", "teacher trust", "public trust in education", "institutional trust" ve "trust in schools" anahtar kelimelerinden yararlanılmıştır. Araştırma, eğitim kategorisinde yer alan ve 2000–2025 yılları arasında yayımlanan araştırma ve derleme makaleleri ile sınırlanmıştır. Bu ölçütleri karşılayan toplam 167 yayın belirlenmiş ve verilerin görselleştirilmesi ile ağ haritalarının oluşturulmasında VOSviewer yazılımı kullanılmıştır. Bulgulara göre yayınların 162'si araştırma makalesi, 5'i ise derleme makalesidir. Yıllara göre dağılım incelendiğinde, en yüksek yayın sayısının 2022 ve 2025 yıllarında gerçekleştiği görülmüş; her iki yılda da 17 yayın üretilmiş ve bu sayı toplam yayınların %10,18'ini oluşturmuştur. Ortak yazarlık ağında, en az iki yayına sahip olma ölçütünü karşılayan 10 yazar belirlenmiştir. Anahtar kelime analizi sonucunda, en az iki kez kullanılan ve birbiriyle bağlantılı 10 anahtar kelime tespit edilmiştir. Ülkeler düzeyindeki üretkenlik analizinde ise Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nin en yüksek yayın sayısına sahip olduğu ve toplam 1.314 atf aldığı belirlenmiştir. Bu çalışma, bibliyometrik göstergeler aracılığıyla eğitimde güven alanındaki akademik üretimin mevcut durumunu, gelişim eğilimlerini ve araştırma temalarını ortaya koymaktadır. Bulguların, eğitim alanındaki bilgi birikiminin haritalandırılmasına katkı sağlaması beklenmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Eğitimde güven, Toplumsal güven, Öğretmen güveni, Bibliyometrik analiz.

### INTRODUCTION

Trust is a fundamental condition for the functioning of social life. Without trust between individuals, institutions, and systems, social order becomes difficult to sustain, and collective action loses its basis (Fukuyama, 1996; Putnam, 2000). In this regard, trust is not simply a desirable quality in human relationships; it is a structural requirement that underlies the legitimacy and continuity of social institutions. The education system is one of the domains in which this requirement is most directly felt. Schools depend on trust to function: trust between teachers and students, between families and schools, between educators and policymakers, and between citizens and the educational institutions that serve them. When any of these trust relationships are weakened, the consequences tend to be visible — in declining participation, resistance to reform, and reduced confidence in the value of education as a public good (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 2000; Bakioğlu & Aladak, 2024).

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Research on trust in education has grown across a number of disciplines and levels of analysis. Some studies have examined interpersonal trust between teachers and students in classroom settings (Holzer & Daumiller, 2025; Cranston, 2011), while others have focused on organisational trust within schools (Bryk & Schneider, 2003), trust between schools and families (Santiago et al., 2016), or trust in educational governance and policy systems (Niedlich et al., 2021; Bulgrin & Semedeton, 2024). Researchers have also approached the concept from different theoretical traditions, variously treating trust as a relational resource, a social capital asset, or a psychological response to institutional behaviour (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 2000; Yeager et al., 2017). As a result, the literature on trust in education is spread across disciplines and journals, and the connections between its different strands have not been systematically examined.

Despite the breadth of this research interest, the overall volume of output on trust in education remains modest. A search of the Web of Science database using relevant keywords returns only 167 publications in the education category over the twenty-five-year period from 2000 to 2025. Compared with broader education topics, the number of publications specifically addressing trust in education appears relatively limited. This suggests that trust in education, while recognised as important, has not yet received the level of systematic scholarly attention its significance warrants. Beyond the question of volume, little is known about how the field is structured: which countries and authors have been most productive, how researchers have collaborated, which concepts have received the most attention, and how the focus of the literature has shifted over time.

Existing studies on trust in education tend to address specific relationships or contexts rather than the field as a whole. Narrative reviews and theoretical papers have offered valuable conceptual contributions, but they do not provide a systematic account of the literature's scope, structure, or development. Bibliometric analysis offers a method for doing so. By examining publication patterns, citation networks, collaboration structures, and keyword co-occurrence across a defined body of literature, bibliometric analysis can reveal the intellectual shape of a field in ways that individual studies or selective reviews cannot.

This study applies bibliometric analysis to the trust in education literature indexed in Web of Science between 2000 and 2025. It aims to document publication trends, map co-authorship and citation networks, identify the most influential works and authors, and examine the thematic clusters that have emerged across the literature. The study is guided by five research questions:

- (1) How have publications on trust in education been distributed across years, document types, and countries?
- (2) What are the co-authorship patterns among researchers in this field?
- (3) Which publications have had the greatest citation impact?
- (4) What are the dominant keywords and thematic clusters in the literature?
- (5) What do these patterns indicate about the current state of the field and priorities for future research?

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Trust in educational contexts is a multidimensional construct that has been examined across a range of disciplinary traditions. One of the most widely cited definitions comes from Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000), who describe trust as one party's willingness to be vulnerable to another, based on the confidence that the other party is benevolent, reliable, competent, honest, and open. This five-component framework, developed through a synthesis of four decades of trust research across organizational behavior, social psychology, and educational administration, has been widely used to operationalize and measure trust in school settings (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). The relative weight of each component tends to vary depending on the nature of the relationship and the degree of interdependence involved; in school settings, all five dimensions appear to carry meaningful significance (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000).

At the school level, Bryk and Schneider (2003) developed the concept of relational trust to describe the form of trust that is built through the daily social exchanges among teachers, principals, students, and parents. Relational trust rests on four criteria: respect, personal regard for others, competence in core responsibilities, and integrity — the alignment between what people say and what they do (Bryk & Schneider, 2003). In their longitudinal study of Chicago elementary schools, they found that schools with higher levels of relational trust were more likely to show gains in student achievement, while schools with weaker trust relations showed little improvement over time. This work established relational trust not as a background condition but as an active organisational resource that shapes the capacity of schools to improve. Building on this, Goddard, Salloum, and Berebitsky (2009) found that trust mediates the relationship between school disadvantage — measured through poverty and racial composition — and academic achievement, suggesting that trust has particular relevance in understanding educational inequality.

Yeager et al. (2017) further showed that the loss of institutional trust among minority adolescents, arising from perceptions of unfair treatment, was associated with lower academic engagement and poorer long-term outcomes, extending the trust-achievement relationship into the domain of race and procedural justice.

Research has also examined trust in relation to teacher professionalism and school leadership. Cranston (2011) found that relational trust among teachers and between teachers and principals functions as a precondition for the development of professional learning communities, enabling the kind of collaborative risk-taking that supports professional growth. More recently, Karacabey, Bellibas, and Adams (2022) and Bektas, Kilinc, and Gumus (2022) demonstrated that teacher trust mediates the relationship between principal leadership and teacher professional learning in Turkish school contexts, indicating that the effects of leadership on teaching practice are partly conditional on the level of trust that teachers hold in their school environment. At the interpersonal level, Holzer and Daumiller (2025) found that students and teachers associate trust with openness, honesty, reliability, and respect, and that higher levels of student-teacher trust are linked to greater well-being and engagement in the classroom.

Beyond the school level, Niedlich et al. (2021) proposed a comprehensive model of trust in education that incorporates four interrelated elements: generalised trust in society, educational governance, educational settings, and educational attainment. This model situates school-level trust within a broader institutional and societal context, and draws attention to the ways in which macro-level conditions — such as public confidence in educational institutions and the perceived fairness of governance arrangements — shape the conditions under which trust at the classroom and school level develops. This broader perspective connects with the social capital tradition articulated by Coleman (1988) and Putnam (2000), who argue that trust between individuals and institutions is a resource that facilitates cooperation, enables collective action, and contributes to the reproduction of social cohesion. In this sense, trust in education is not only relevant to the internal workings of schools; it is also an expression of the relationship between citizens and the public institutions that serve them.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employed bibliometric analysis to examine scientific publications on trust in education. Bibliometric analysis is a quantitative method that enables researchers to identify publication trends, collaboration patterns, influential authors, frequently used keywords, and country-level research productivity within a specific field (Donthu et al., 2021).

The data were obtained from the Web of Science database. The dataset was retrieved in October 2025. Therefore, publication counts for 2025 reflect only the publications indexed up to the date of data retrieval. The search strategy was based on five keywords: "trust in education," "teacher trust," "public trust in education," "institutional trust," and "trust in schools." The search was limited to publications between 2000 and 2025. To ensure relevance, results were filtered by the Education category, and only research articles and review articles were included.

The rationale for selecting 2000 as the starting year rests on several grounds. First, the early twenty-first century corresponds to a period of intensifying accountability debates in education, during which trust began to be examined more systematically in educational research (Ball, 2010). Second, Bryk and Schneider's (2003) foundational work on relational trust in schools belongs to this period, marking the moment when the concept gained clear traction in the research agenda. The selection of 2025 as the end year reflects the aim of capturing the most current output in the field.

As a result of this screening process, a total of 167 publications met the inclusion criteria. The bibliometric dataset was analyzed according to document type, annual publication distribution, co-authorship patterns, frequently used keywords, and country-level research productivity. VOSviewer software was used to visualize bibliometric networks and generate co-authorship and keyword co-occurrence maps.

## FINDINGS

The Web of Science database was queried for publications in the education category between 2000 and 2025 using the keywords "trust in education," "teacher trust," "public trust in education," "institutional trust," and "trust in schools." A total of 167 studies were retrieved and analyzed to produce the following outputs:

- Annual publication trends
- Co-authorship patterns
- Most productive authors

- Keyword frequency and co-occurrence
- Country-level research productivity
- Most cited publications and their thematic focus

These data were presented in graphical and tabular formats. Additionally, the following network visualizations were generated using VOSviewer software:

- Author co-authorship network
- Keyword co-occurrence network
- Country-level productivity visualization

### Annual Distribution of Publications

The annual distribution of publications on trust in education between 2000 and 2025 is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Annual Distribution of Publications

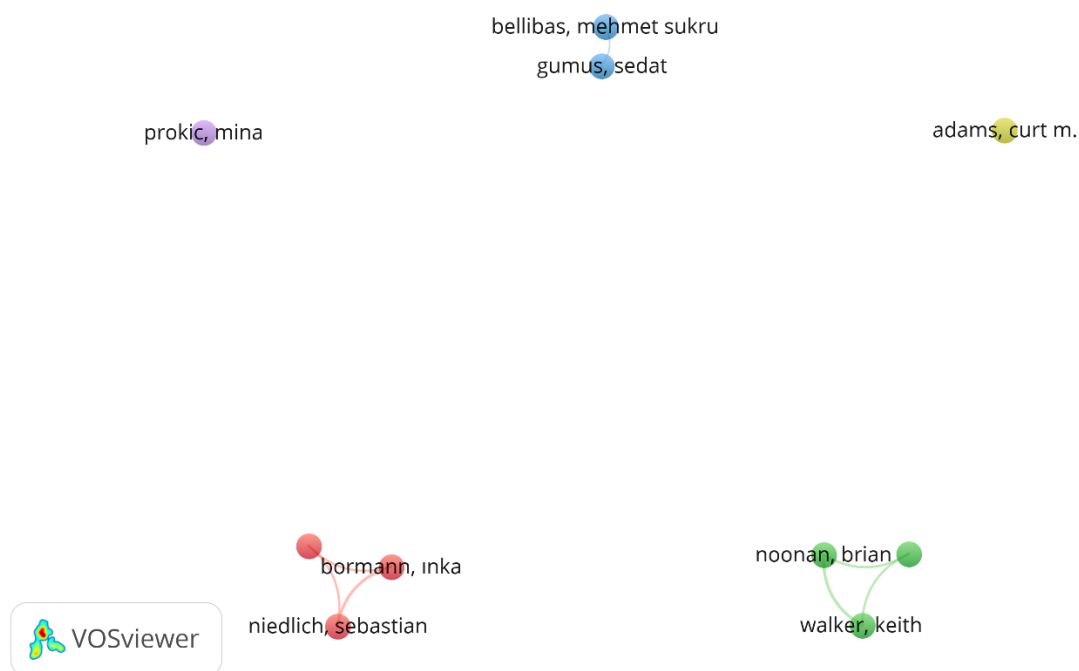
Year	f	%	Year	f	%	Year	f	%
2025	17	10.18	2016	8	4.79	2007	3	1.80
2024	10	5.99	2015	3	1.80	2006	4	2.40
2023	16	9.58	2014	3	1.80	2005	1	0.60
2022	17	10.18	2013	5	2.99	2004	0	0.00
2021	16	9.58	2012	6	3.59	2003	1	0.60
2020	11	6.59	2011	4	2.40	2002	0	0.00
2019	13	7.78	2010	4	2.40	2001	2	1.20
2018	5	2.99	2009	5	2.99	2000	2	1.20
2017	6	3.59	2008	5	2.99			

Examining the annual distribution of publications, the highest number was observed in 2022 and 2025, with 17 publications in each year, corresponding to 10.18% of the total. These years were followed by 2021 and 2023, with 16 publications each, representing 9.58% of the total. In 2020, 11 publications were produced (6.59%), while 2019 saw 13 publications (7.78%). Publications in the earlier years of the period examined were considerably limited.

The findings suggest that research on trust in education has gained greater visibility, particularly after 2019. This pattern indicates that trust in education has become a more prominent research topic in recent years, likely accelerated by global disruptions to educational systems and intensified debates around institutional legitimacy and accountability.

### Co-authorship Analysis

Co-authorship analysis was conducted to identify collaboration patterns among researchers working on trust in education. A minimum threshold of two publications per author was set, and 10 authors meeting this threshold were included in the network map.



**Figure 1:** Co-authorship Network of Authors

The co-authorship network suggests that studies on trust in education have generally been conducted either individually or within relatively small research groups. Although some authors occupy more central positions in the network, the overall structure points to a limited but identifiable pattern of scholarly collaboration.

**Table 2:** Most Productive Authors in the Field

Author	Documents	Citations	Total Link Strength
Niedlich, Sebastian	4	67	5
Bellibas, Mehmet Sukru	3	131	1
Bormann, Inka	3	65	5
Noonan, Brian	3	42	5
Walker, Keith	3	42	5
Adams, Curt M.	2	46	0
Gumus, Sedat	2	101	1
Kutsyuruba, Benjamin	2	37	4
Prokic, Mina	2	0	0
Wurbel, Iris	2	7	4

In terms of publication count, Sebastian Niedlich emerges as the most productive author in the field with four publications, followed by Mehmet Sukru Bellibas, Inka Bormann, Brian Noonan, and Keith Walker, each with three publications. Curt M. Adams, Sedat Gumus, Benjamin Kutsyuruba, Mina Prokic, and Iris Wurbel each contributed two publications. Examining Total Link Strength (TLS) values, Bormann, Niedlich, Noonan, and Walker each recorded the highest score of 5, indicating their central positions within the co-authorship network. Kutsyuruba also demonstrated a notable TLS value of 4, suggesting meaningful levels of collaboration. That said, some productive authors recorded low or zero link strength values, confirming that publication output and collaboration intensity do not always align.

### Keyword Analysis

Keyword analysis was conducted to identify the main thematic orientations of research on trust in education. Keywords appearing at least twice and connected to at least one other keyword were included. A total of 10 interconnected keywords met this threshold.

**Table 3:** Keyword Frequency Counts

Keyword	Occurrence
Trust	11
Teacher trust	6
Teacher professional learning	3
Teacher agency	2
Education	2
Public opinion	2

Intercultural relations	2
Organisational trust	2
Teacher commitment	2
Transformational leadership	2

The keyword analysis indicates that publications between 2000 and 2025 primarily focused on trust, teacher trust, and teacher professional learning. The prominence of "trust" and "teacher trust" suggests the literature has largely concentrated on trust relations within schools, particularly those involving teachers. Keywords such as teacher agency, organisational trust, teacher commitment, and transformational leadership further indicate that trust in education is closely associated with school leadership, teacher professionalism, and organizational dynamics.

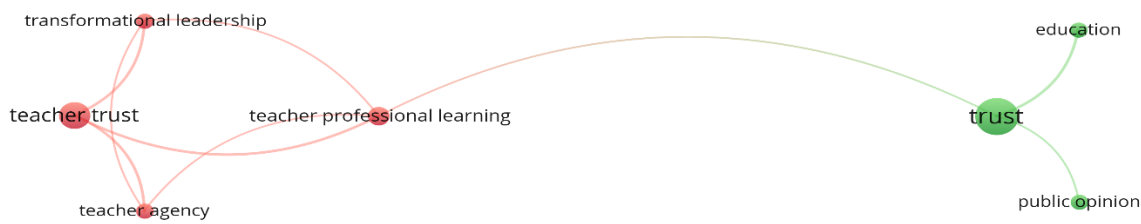


Figure 2: Top Keyword Usage Network

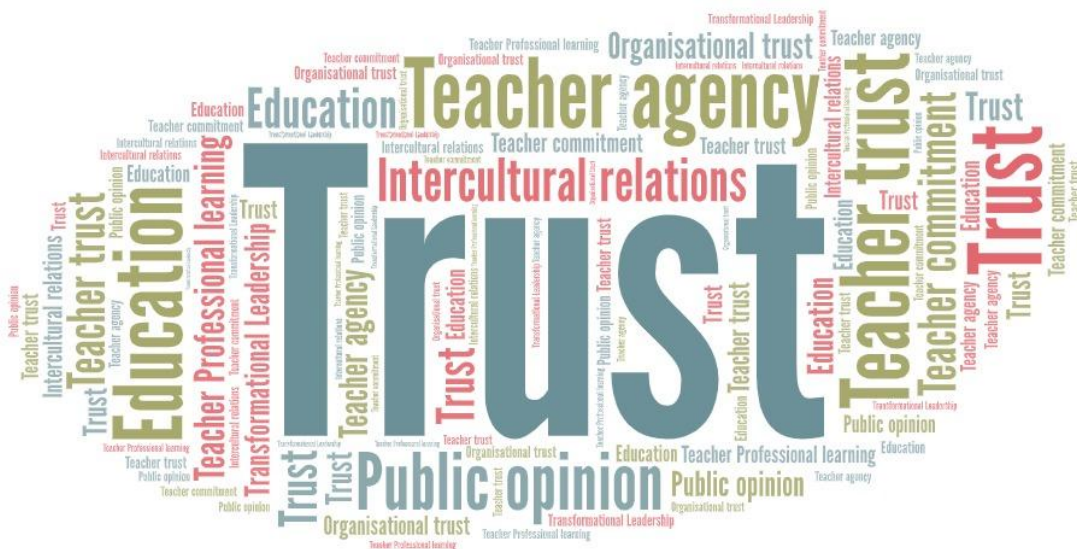
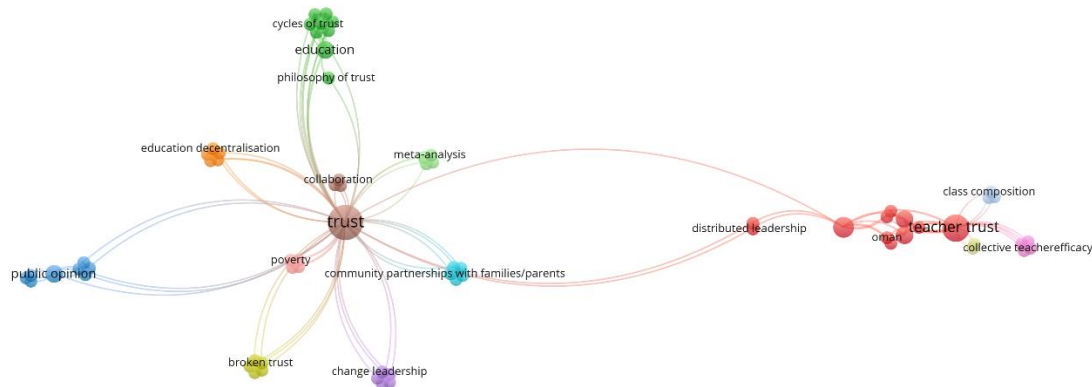


Figure 3: Tag Cloud

In the broader keyword analysis, 130 observation units were identified. Of these, 69 interconnected keywords were visualized in the network map.



**Figure 4:** Network of Interconnected Keywords

The interconnected keyword network demonstrates that trust in education spans multiple conceptual domains rather than clustering around a single theme. Teacher-related processes, organisational trust, public opinion, leadership, and professional learning all appear as constituent themes of this network, reinforcing the view that trust in education is a multidimensional field shaped by both individual and institutional factors.

### Most Cited Publications in the Field

Citation analysis was conducted to identify the most cited publications in the trust in education literature. Table 4 presents the ten most cited works retrieved from the dataset, ranked by citation count.

**Table 4:** Most Cited Publications on Trust in Education

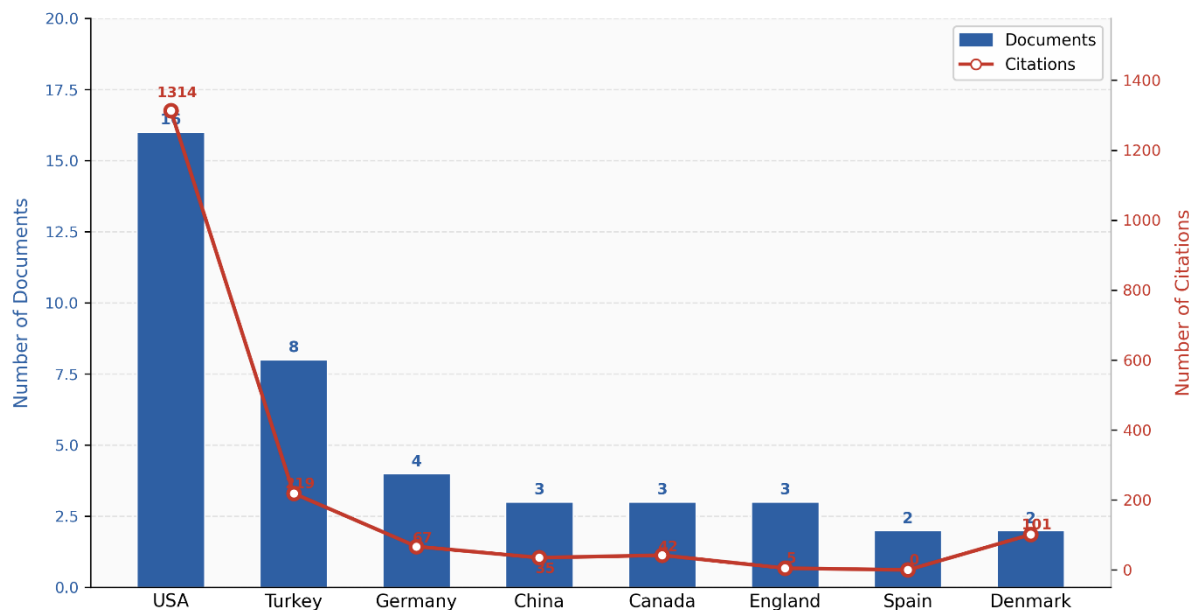
Author(s)	Journal	Year	Citations	Focus
Tschannen-Moran & Hoy	Review of Educational Research	2000	439	Nature, meaning, and measurement of trust
Bryk & Schneider	Educational Leadership	2003	439	Relational trust as a core resource for school reform
Goddard, Salloum & Berebitsky	Educational Administration Quarterly	2009	110	Trust as mediator between poverty, race, and academic achievement
Yeager et al.	Child Development	2017	92	Loss of institutional trust among minority adolescents
Karacabey, Bellibas & Adams	Educational Studies	2022	91	Principal leadership, teacher trust, and professional learning
Bektas, Kilinc & Gumus	Educational Studies	2022	71	Distributed leadership, teacher trust, and professional learning
Santiago et al.	Psychology in the Schools	2016	66	Parent-teacher trust in elementary school
Niedlich et al.	Review of Education	2021	58	Comprehensive model of trust in education
Angell, Stoner & Shelden	Remedial and Special Education	2009	41	Trust in education professionals: mothers of children with disabilities
Bellibas & Gumus	Professional Development in Education	2023	30	Learning-centred leadership, teacher trust, and professional learning

The citation analysis reveals a highly concentrated pattern of scholarly influence. The two most cited publications — Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000) and Bryk and Schneider (2003), each with 439 citations — appear to function as major conceptual anchors in the field. Beyond these foundational texts, citation impact drops considerably: Goddard, Salloum, and Berebitsky (2009) follow with 110 citations for linking trust to academic achievement in disadvantaged schools, while Yeager et al. (2017) extended trust scholarship into the domain of racial equity and adolescent development. Notably, more recent publications are already accumulating meaningful citations — Karacabey et al. (2022) and Bektas et al. (2022) with over 70 citations each, and Niedlich et al. (2021) with 58 — suggesting the emergence of newer highly cited contributions is beginning to emerge around school leadership, teacher trust, and professional learning. The thematic breadth of the top ten, spanning trust

measurement, school reform, equity, leadership, and parent-teacher relations, is consistent with the multidimensional keyword structure identified in the co-occurrence analysis.

### Research Productivity by Country

Country-level productivity analysis was conducted to examine the geographical distribution of publications on trust in education.



**Figure 5:** Research Productivity by Country

The United States produced the highest number of publications in the field, with 16 publications accumulating a total of 1,314 citations. Turkey ranked second with 8 publications and 219 citations, followed by Germany with 4 publications and 67 citations. England, China, and Canada each contributed 3 publications, while Denmark and Spain each produced 2 publications.

These findings indicate that research on trust in education is concentrated in a limited number of countries. The United States stands out as the leading country in both publication volume and citation impact. Turkey's position as the second most productive country suggests that trust in education has attracted growing scholarly attention in the Turkish educational research context. The relatively small number of publications from most other countries signals that the field remains open to broader international participation.

### DISCUSSION

This study examined scientific publications on trust in education through bibliometric analysis. The findings map the field's development between 2000 and 2025 by addressing publication trends, co-authorship networks, keyword patterns, and country-level research productivity. Taken together, the results indicate that trust in education has become an increasingly visible research topic in recent years, particularly in relation to teachers, schools, organizational processes, and public perceptions of educational institutions.

One of the notable findings is the increased visibility of publications after 2019. The concentration of output in 2022 and 2025, followed closely by 2021 and 2023, suggests that scholarly attention to trust in education has intensified substantially over the past decade. Although this study does not directly examine the causes of this growth, recent global educational disruptions, institutional legitimacy debates, and heightened scrutiny of school effectiveness may well have elevated trust as a research priority. Trust now appears to function not merely as a descriptor of interpersonal school relationships, but as a lens for examining broader questions about the reliability, responsiveness, and accountability of educational institutions.

The dominance of research articles over review articles is telling. Of the 167 publications in the dataset, only 5 were reviews. While this confirms the empirical richness of the field, it also indicates a need for integrative work: systematic reviews, meta-syntheses, and conceptual papers that consolidate existing findings, compare theoretical frameworks, and sharpen the conceptual boundaries of trust in education.

The co-authorship analysis revealed that collaboration among researchers is relatively limited and tends to occur within small groups. Sebastian Niedlich, Inka Bormann, Brian Noonan, and Keith Walker emerged as the most

central figures based on Total Link Strength. Yet the overall network structure has not achieved the density or international integration one might expect from a field with such broad relevance. Because trust in education is deeply embedded in cultural, institutional, and policy contexts, stronger international and interdisciplinary collaboration could contribute to a richer, more comparative understanding of how trust operates across different educational systems.

The keyword analysis confirms that the literature has organized itself primarily around trust, teacher trust, and teacher professional learning. The co-occurrence of organisational trust, teacher agency, teacher commitment, and transformational leadership suggests that the field treats trust as a relational and institutional phenomenon embedded in school culture and educational governance, rather than as a purely individual disposition. This is theoretically coherent and aligns with Bryk and Schneider's (2003) foundational argument that relational trust is a structural resource for school improvement.

The citation analysis reinforces these structural observations and adds an important temporal dimension to them. The two most cited works in the entire dataset — Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000) and Bryk and Schneider (2003), each with 439 citations — appear to function as major conceptual reference points in the field for over two decades. Beyond these two texts, citation impact drops considerably: Goddard, Salloum, and Berebitsky (2009) follow with 110 citations for their work linking trust to academic achievement in disadvantaged schools, while Yeager et al. (2017), with 92 citations, brought institutional trust into conversation with racial equity and adolescent development — a thematic direction that remains underrepresented in the broader literature. Notably, several more recent publications are already accumulating meaningful citations. Karacabey, Bellibas, and Adams (2022) and Bektas, Kilinc, and Gumus (2022), both with over 70 citations, suggest that a second generation of high-impact work is beginning to emerge, particularly around the intersection of school leadership, teacher trust, and professional learning. The citation structure thus mirrors the keyword and co-authorship findings: a field with a solid but narrow core, showing signs of gradual expansion across new themes and contexts.

Country-level findings reveal a sharp geographical concentration. The United States has the highest publication and citation counts, while Turkey's second-place ranking indicates that trust in education has gained meaningful traction in Turkish educational research. Germany, England, China, Canada, Denmark, and Spain all contribute to the field, but the limited representation of many regions suggests that broader geographical diversity is still needed. Broader geographical diversity would make it possible to understand how trust in education is constructed, negotiated, and eroded across different national and cultural contexts.

Viewed together, these findings portray trust in education as a growing yet still developing research area. The field has gained momentum, but it remains shaped by a relatively narrow set of thematic clusters, a small number of highly productive authors, and a geographically concentrated publication base. Broader issues — public trust in national education systems, parental and student trust, trust in assessment and accountability mechanisms, and the relationship between trust and educational equity — remain underexplored and represent important directions for future inquiry.

### Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the data were drawn exclusively from the Web of Science database. Although Web of Science is one of the most widely used and reliable resources for bibliometric research, it does not index all publications on trust in education. Studies available in Scopus, ERIC, Google Scholar, or national databases were therefore not included. Second, the study was limited to publications issued between 2000 and 2025. Studies published before 2000 were excluded. While this timeframe offers a contemporary perspective, earlier foundational works on trust, school trust, and institutional trust may not be fully represented in the dataset. Third, the search strategy was anchored to five specific keywords. Publications addressing trust in education through different terminology — for instance, studies focusing on trust in education systems, school climate, relational trust, or educational legitimacy — may have fallen outside the scope of the search. Fourth, the analysis was restricted to research articles and review articles. Book chapters, conference proceedings, editorials, and reports were excluded. This decision improved dataset consistency but narrowed the overall scope of the literature covered. Fifth, bibliometric analysis provides a quantitative overview of publication structures, collaboration networks, and keyword patterns; it does not offer an in-depth qualitative evaluation of the content of individual studies. The findings should therefore be read as a structural map of the field rather than a comprehensive content analysis. Finally, citation counts and Total Link Strength values may change over time. Since the analysis reflects a dataset retrieved at a specific point in time, future updates — particularly for recently published work — may yield different results.

### Implications



The general increase in publications in recent years signals that trust in education is becoming a more strategically important area of inquiry. Future studies could build on this momentum by extending the scope of trust research beyond the school level to include system-level analyses. Public trust in education systems, trust in educational policies, and trust in assessment and accountability mechanisms in particular merit further scholarly attention. The dominance of teacher-related keywords confirms that teachers occupy a central position in the trust in education literature. Research on the interplay between teacher trust, teacher agency, professional learning, and school leadership should continue. At the same time, the field needs to expand its analytical lens to include students, parents, communities, policymakers, and broader publics as subjects and agents of trust. The scarcity of review articles highlights a pressing need for systematic literature reviews, meta-syntheses, and conceptual studies. Such work could clarify how trust in education is defined, operationalized, and interpreted across different theoretical traditions and institutional contexts, and could help consolidate an often fragmented body of empirical evidence. The co-authorship findings suggest that the field stands to gain substantially from stronger research partnerships. Because trust in education is shaped by cultural, social, political, and institutional contexts, international comparative studies would generate particularly valuable insights into how trust is built, sustained, or eroded across diverse education systems. Country-level productivity data reveal that research is concentrated in a handful of nations. Expanding the geographical scope of the field is important. More studies from underrepresented regions would allow for a richer, more pluralistic understanding of trust in education and would guard against the overgeneralization of findings derived from a narrow range of national contexts. For educational policymakers and practitioners, the findings carry a clear message: trust should not be treated as a soft or secondary concern. It is a structural condition that shapes school climate, teacher collaboration, parental engagement, the implementation of educational policies, and public trust in education. Educational reforms are far more likely to be accepted and sustained when they are supported by transparent decision-making, consistent policy frameworks, fair institutional practices, and robust relationships among all stakeholders.

## CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the development, collaboration networks, and research foci of scientific publications on trust in education through bibliometric analysis. A total of 167 publications indexed in the Web of Science database between 2000 and 2025 were analyzed. The findings confirm that research articles constitute the overwhelming majority of output, while review articles represent a marginal share of the dataset. The annual distribution of publications indicates that scholarly interest in trust in education has grown considerably, particularly in recent years. The highest numbers of publications were recorded in 2022 and 2025, pointing to the topic's increasing visibility in contemporary educational research. The co-authorship analysis revealed that collaboration in the field exists but remains limited, with certain authors holding central positions in the network. The keyword analysis showed that the literature is primarily organized around trust, teacher trust, teacher professional learning, organisational trust, teacher agency, teacher commitment, and transformational leadership, confirming that research has largely approached trust in connection with teacher professionalism, school leadership, and institutional dynamics. Country-level findings indicate that the United States leads in both publication output and citation impact, followed by Turkey and a small number of other countries. This distribution underscores the geographical concentration of the field. In conclusion, this study offers a bibliometric map of the trust in education literature, providing a structured overview of the field's development, key themes, influential authors, and national contributions. The findings confirm that trust in education is a growing research area with strong conceptual ties to teacher professionalism, school leadership, and organizational trust. At the same time, the field would benefit considerably from more systematic reviews, comparative and cross-national studies, and expanded international collaboration.

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