DOI Link: https://doi.org/10.82044/SGO2B
Vol.412, Issue.4, Part.1, Apr 2026, PP.135-158
Received December 2025 Accepted March 2026 Published April 2026

Decolonizing Education: A Bibliometric Analysis of Integrating Indigenous Knowledge Systems into Basic Education from 2010 to 2024.

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Abstract

Decolonizing education is a critical global imperative, yet research specifically targeting the integration of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) into basic education remains fragmented. This study addresses the gap by mapping the scholarly landscape of decolonial efforts within primary and secondary schooling contexts. Utilizing a quantitative bibliometric approach, the study analyzed 1,235 peer-reviewed articles indexed in the Web of Science (WoS) published between 2010 and 2024. Data were processed using the Biblioshiny package in RStudio to evaluate annual production, prominent sources, institutional affiliations, and international collaboration patterns. Findings reveal a significant growth trajectory, with annual scientific production peaking at 244 articles in 2024. South Africa emerges as the epicenter of this research, led by the University of South Africa (102 articles) and journals such as HTS Teologiese Studies. While South Africa, the UK, and Australia dominate the field (accounting for 61% of total output), South Africa's research is largely locally driven with a low international collaboration rate (7.3% MCP). Conversely, the UK serves as a major global connector with an MCP of 20.2%. The study confirms that while the field has achieved academic maturity and legitimacy, it remains geographically concentrated within Anglophone and Commonwealth traditions. Increasing cross-regional partnerships is essential to diversifying the epistemological decolonization of basic education globally.

Keywords: Decolonization, Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Basic Education, Bibliometric Analysis, South Africa

1. Introduction

Decolonizing education in Africa has sparked a broader conversation among researchers and other critical stakeholders (Kadam & Frempong, 2025; Du Plessis, 2021; Muraina, 2022; Nyamnjoh, 2019; Olawumi & Mavuso, 2026). The need to challenge the dominance of Western scientific theories and indigenous practices over the African indigenous system has been

advocated. This may have contributed to the relegation of African Indigenous systems and practices, which have been in existence for a very long time and form the way of life and values of African belief and culture. During the colonial era, Western and Eurocentric cultural practices were imposed on African education and way of life (Abraham, 2020). In contrast, the indigenous system and practices suffered neglect due to poor attention and development, because of a lack of or inadequate research and development of the indigenous African system, so that it can compete with the Western counterparts (Melash et al.,2023; Dhakal et al., 2022).

While integrating the Indigenous knowledge system into basic education to decolonize education has attracted growing attention, few efforts have been documented (da Silva et al., 2024; Cindi, 2021; Mkosi et al.,2023). Development has been uneven, and there is a lack of a unified framework. Studies have shown that much work is concentrated on higher education, teacher education programs, specific pedagogy, and curriculum adaptation (Lin et al., 2021; Cindi, 2021). Although much work has been done on the need to integrate Indigenous knowledge systems into education, little work has been done to integrate Indigenous knowledge into basic education. Basic education in this context refers to the primary and secondary education system, which forms the foundation of education globally. However, few studies have used bibliometric or cluster analysis to determine the extent of decolonizing efforts globally (Okeke and Ramaila, 2025) thereby creating a gap in global efforts to decolonize basic education and in understanding its interrelatedness (Olawumi & Mavuso, 2026). It is therefore important to address these gaps through bibliometric analysis to promote research toward the realization of objective, inclusive research and the epistemological decolonization of the Indigenous knowledge system through the integration of the Indigenous knowledge system into basic education in South Africa.

Furthermore, this study addresses these identified gaps by conducting a bibliometric analysis of peer-reviewed and scholarly articles on decolonizing basic education through the integration of the indigenous knowledge system into the curriculum in South Africa. The study investigates the pattern of research on decolonizing basic education through the integration of the indigenous knowledge systems into the curriculum in South Africa through a substantial research-related documentation produced between 2010 to 2025. The study was specifically designed to answer the following research questions:

- What is the current trend in the annual distribution of decolonisation of basic education through indigenous knowledge systems globally between 2010 and 2024?
- What is the current state of the distribution of academic research on decolonisation of basic education through indigenous knowledge systems globally between 2010 and 2024?
- Which country and institution have the highest affiliation with decolonisation of basic education and indigenous knowledge systems research between 2010 and 2024?

- By analysing highly cited literature on decolonisation of basic education and indigenous knowledge systems, which country and author has the highest citation that can be identified between 2010 and 2024?

2. Materials and Methods

According to Kumar et al. (2023), Donthu et al. (2021), and Donthu et al. (2020), bibliometric analysis is a quantitative method that uses tools to analyze and characterize published papers for scientific review. This approach identifies connections and correlations between words by mining previous publications, enabling the examination of the geographical and chronological distribution of publications across many academic domains. This systematic review approach reduces the possibility of errors that come with manual and qualitative assessments when working with huge datasets by providing thorough, dependable, and replicable procedures (Klarin, 2024). This method also helps to establish research goals, determine research coverage, and spot irregularities that need more study. Research trends are visualized through the use of graphic analysis, which incorporates data including article titles, author information, publishing locations, and keywords. The authors analyze publication patterns, productive nations, contributing institutions, and nations on decolonization of basic education and integration of indigenous knowledge into the curriculum using a scientific methodological approach. Using the biblioshiny function, a part of the bibliometrix package in RStudio, a program for text mining analysis, we conducted citation analysis, co-citation analysis, and cooperation analysis.

Eligibility criteria

I examine the many concepts and methodologies that illustrate the decolonization of basic education through the integration of the indigenous knowledge system into the curriculum in this bibliometric review. I incorporate peer-reviewed research articles from 2010 to 2024 that focus on decolonization of education through the integration of the indigenous knowledge system into basic education. Conference abstracts, books from databases other than WoS, book chapters, and editorials are excluded from the selection. We also consider articles published in the English language only; articles published in languages other than English were rejected. The choice also includes articles from the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI), Arts and Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI), Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI), and Science Citation Index Expanded (SCI-E).

Data Collection

The data was extracted from the WoS database on 24/10/25. We adopted the WoS database for data collection because of its wide coverage and reliability, and because high-quality journals are indexed in WoS database. We consider only WoS papers; Scopus-published articles were not considered for selection because they are also indexed in WoS. The analysis was done using Biblioshiny in R version 4.5.1

Validation/Reliability

To confirm the research and its relevance, the authors subjected the data collection, analysis, and interpretation to expert review.

Table 1: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	**Exclusion Criteria**
Peer-reviewed articles were selected for the study.	Conference abstracts, editorials, and book reviews were excluded from the selection.
Only articles published between 2010 and 2024 were selected for review	Articles published before 2010 were excluded from the study.
Articles published in the English language were considered for inclusion	Articles published in languages other than English were excluded from the study.
The authors also considered only articles. that focus on the Indigenous knowledge system, Basic education, and the indigenous knowledge system.	Articles that focused on areas unrelated to the topic were excluded from the study.

Search results and data description.

We conducted an investigation of research papers on decolonizing education through the integration of the indigenous knowledge system into basic education, using the WoS database. The WoS comprises over 100 million documents because it focuses on high-quality articles. I also conducted a search within the WoS database for items related to "Decolonisation OR Decoloniality AND Indigenous Knowledge AND Basic Education," resulting in the identification of 5,504 articles. I narrowed the search to articles published between 2010 and 2024, and the number of identified articles reduced to 4,615. I further narrowed the search to peer-reviewed/original articles, and the number of identified articles was reduced to 3,762. I limited the search to English-language articles, and 3,662 articles were found. The search also included the SSCI, A&HCI, ESCI, and SCI-E Web of Science indices, and I selected 3,329 articles. To further filter the search and select articles from the WoS categories, including educational research, social science interdisciplinary, religion, humanities interdisciplinary, public environmental occupational health, cultural studies, and philosophy, 1,235 articles were identified.

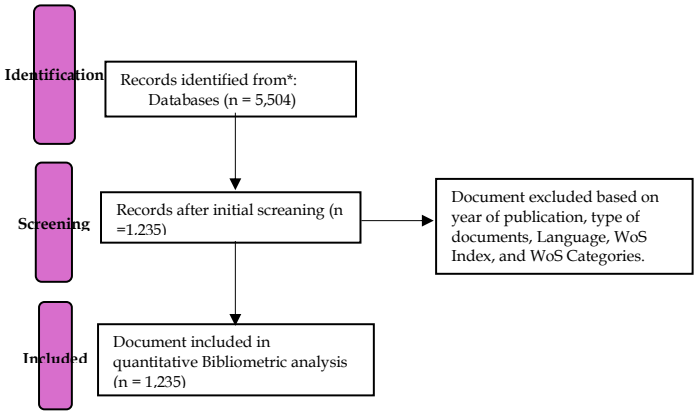

Figure 1. PRISMA flow diagram of the data selection process from the WoS database

3. Results and Discussions of Findings

This section contains the presentation of findings within the framework of the purpose of the research. The following findings were obtained from the articles reviewed on decolonization of education and integration of indigenous knowledge systems into the curriculum, as presented in tables and figures.

Table 2: Annual Scientific Production

YEAR	ARTICLES
2010	10
2011	15
2012	16
2013	11
2014	14
2015	15
2016	23
2017	37
2018	48
2019	53
2020	132
2021	187
2022	189
2023	182
2024	244

Table 2 presents the production trends of articles on decolonization and indigenous knowledge systems from 2010 to 2024. The trend shows a progressive increase in output during this period. This is further explained with the graph in Figure 2, which shows the direction of the increase in output and the years.

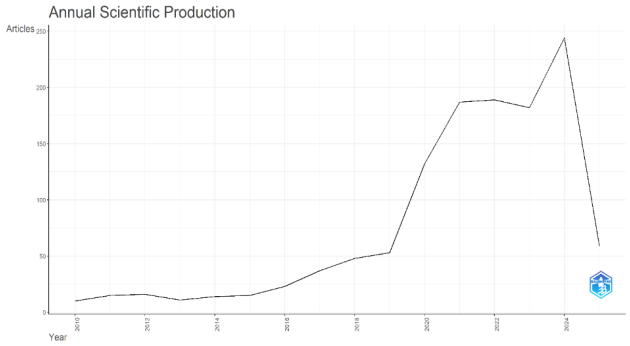

Figure 2. Annual Scientific Production of Decolonization and IKS from 2010 to 2024

The analysis of the trends in publication of articles from 2010 to 2024 (Figure 2) depicts a progressive increase over time in scholarly articles on decolonization and the integration of indigenous knowledge into basic education. The increase shows a steady increase from 10 articles in 2010 to the peak of 189 articles in 2022. Production experienced a drop from 189 articles in 2022 to 182 articles in 2023, but in 2024 it increased to 244 articles. The increase from 2023 to 2024 shows a renewed focus globally on indigenous knowledge systems and decolonization of education, despite a slight decrease of 7 articles from 2022 to 2023. It is therefore logical to say that the trends in the production of articles on decolonizing education and integrating indigenous knowledge systems have witnessed an increase in production from 2010 to 2024. Table 3 showcases the 10 most productive journals on decolonization and indigenous knowledge systems from 2010 to 2024.

Table 3: Most Relevant Source

SOURCES	COUNTRY	ARTICLES
HTS TEOLOGIESE STUDIES-THEOLOGICAL STUDIES	SOUTH AFRICA	48
SOUTH AFRICAN JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION	SOUTH AFRICA	37
EDUCATION AS CHANGE	SOUTH AFRICA	26
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HERITAGE STUDIES	UK	23
TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION	UK	22
CRITICAL ARTS-SOUTH-NORTH CULTURAL AND MEDIA STUDIES	SOUTH AFRICA	19
SOUTH AFRICAN JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY	SOUTH AFRICA	17
HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT	UK	16
RELIGIONS	SWITZWELAND	16
GLOBALISATION SOCIETIES AND EDUCATION	UK	15

The data on Table 3 shows a strong concentration of journal publications on decolonization and indigenous knowledge systems in Africa, with South African journals having the highest number of research articles. HTS Teologiese Studies-Theological Studies (48articles), South African Journal of Higher Education (37 articles), and Education as Change (26 articles). The dominance of these journals as the most relevant source is an indication of an increased awareness of scholarship and improved literature on decolonization and indigenous knowledge systems in Africa.

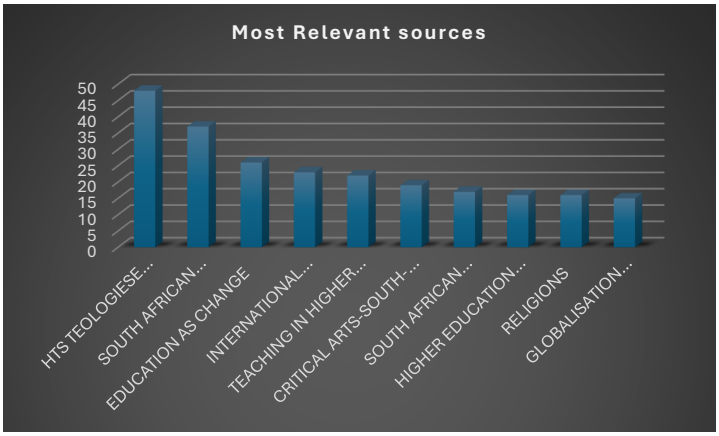

Figure 3: Most relevant Source

According to the data in Figure 3, the research area has a strong foundation in South African and Global South academia and is closely related to critical social inquiry, education, and religion. A research agenda focused on transformation, contextual relevance, and socio-cultural perspectives rather than strictly technical or discipline-isolated methods is reflected in the predominance of

journals about change, higher education, and social challenges. This enhances the research's scholarly legitimacy and contextual applicability, especially in discussions about social change, education, and values.

Table 4: Local Impacted by H Index

Source	h-index	g-index	m-index	TC	NP	PY-Start
TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION	11	19	1.1	383	22	2016
HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT	9	15	0.643	236	16	2012
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SOCIAL RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	9	10	0.6	286	10	2011
SOUTH AFRICAN JOURNAL OF EDUCATION	8	11	1	176	11	2018
AUSTRALIAN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCHER	7	9	1.4	112	9	2021
COMPARATIVE EDUCATION	7	8	0.778	99	8	2017
EDUCATION AS CHANGE	7	13	0.636	194	26	2015
EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND THEORY	7	13	0.5	310	13	2012
LONDON REVIEW OF EDUCATION	7	11	1.4	137	15	2021
COMPARE-A JOURNAL OF COMPARATIVE AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION	6	8	0.429	79	11	2012

Table 4 presents a bibliometric analysis of the ten most impactful journals on decolonization and the indigenous knowledge system. Indicators such as the h-index, g-index, m-index, total citations, number of citations, and publication year (2010–2024) were used to assess the extent of their influence on scholarship. The ten journals listed demonstrate high impact, as reflected in h-indices ranging from 6 to 11, indicating that they have significantly contributed to research on decolonization and the indigenous knowledge system. Teaching in higher education is the most cited, with a total of 383 citations, an h-index of 11, and a g-index of 19. This is closely followed by Higher education research & development and international journal of social research methodology, with h-indices of 9, g-indices of 15 and 10, and total citations of 236 and 286, respectively. These statistics reveal the strong impact of these most cited journals, even though their focus is not the same. They address pressing higher education and pedagogical issues relevant to local and global contemporary issues.

Table 5: Production Over Time

Year	HTS Technological Studies	South African Journal of Higher Education	Education As Change	International Journal of Heritage Studies	Teaching in Higher Education	Total
2010	0	0	0	0	0	0
2011	0	0	0	0	0	0
2012	0	0	0	0	0	0
2013	0	0	0	1	0	1
2014	0	0	0	1	0	1
2015	0	0	1	1	0	2
2016	0	0	1	2	1	4
2017	10	0	6	2	2	20
2018	12	0	10	2	3	27
2019	21	0	11	2	6	40
2020	27	6	18	4	8	63
2021	32	18	22	11	16	99
2022	37	23	24	12	19	115
2023	42	32	25	13	19	131
2024	48	37	26	20	20	151
	229	116	144	71	94	654

The dataset in Table 5 presents the five most productive journals on decolonization and indigenous knowledge systems from 2010 to 2024, with a cumulative total output of 654 articles. Between 2010 and 2012 represents the initial period characterized by no publication. That period represents the time when research on decolonization and indigenous knowledge systems started to emerge as a research field. This is closely followed by the take-off stage, which is characterized by limited and low interest in research on decolonization and indigenous knowledge systems. This is a period between 2013 and 2016, with only 4 research outputs from the five most productive journals. From 2017 and 2019, there was increasing increase in output as the total production increased from 20 outputs in 2017 to 40 outputs in 2019. This increase signifies a growing academic research and recognition around decolonization and indigenous knowledge systems. The total publications from 2020 to 2022 increased from 63 in 2020 to 115 in 2023, representing the period of improved expansion phase. Overall, there is a sustained increase in research output on decolonization and indigenous knowledge systems from 2010 to 2024, especially within the Southern African and the Global South-oriented journals

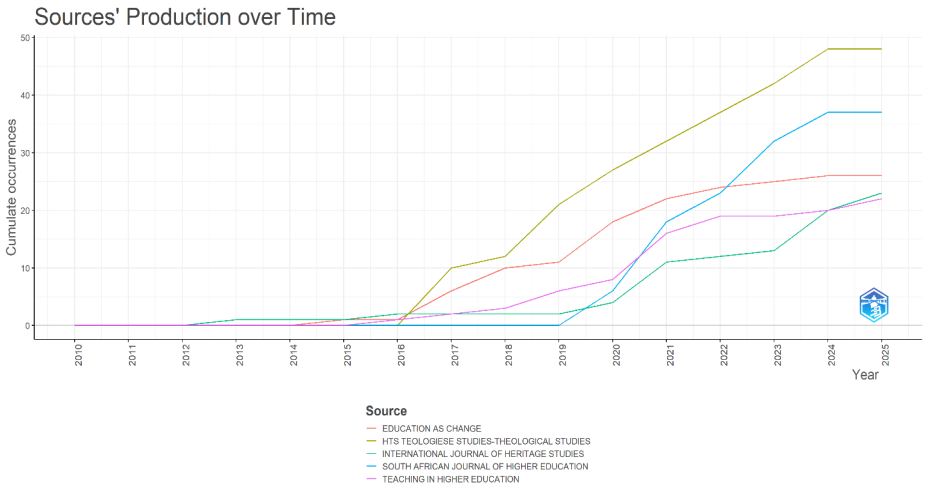

Figure 5: Production overtime

Figure 5 also shows the production of the five most productive journals on decolonization of education and the indigenous knowledge system from 2010 to 2024. The graph shows that production of articles in this research area was very low from 2010 to 2016. The output began to increase from 2016 up to 2024, where there was the highest production. This increase could be attributed to increased interest in the research area by authors and the need to address important issues related to decolonization and IKS.

Table 6: Most Relevant Authors

Authors	Articles
Zembylas M	8
Fricker A	6
Lowe K	6
Resane KT	6
Weuffen S	6
Bishop M	5
Burgess C	4
Cooms S	4
Hall R	4
Ivers R	4

Table 6 presents the ten most relevant authors based on their number of contributions to the production of research articles on decolonization and indigenous knowledge systems. The distribution of frequency of production is categorized into individual research articles, leadership, and influence to shape the research field. The leading contributors include Zembylas M (8 articles), Fricker A (6 articles), and Lowe K, Resane KY, and Weuffen S (6 articles) each. These

authors represent the highly active authors with consistent scholarly contributions in the advancement of empirical research within the field of research on decolonization and indigenous knowledge systems. There is a high concentration of a small group of highly productive researchers who contribute significantly to the research field. This sustained output is characterized by sustainable collaborations and leading intellectuals with diversified areas of interest in the field of decolonization and the indigenous knowledge systems.

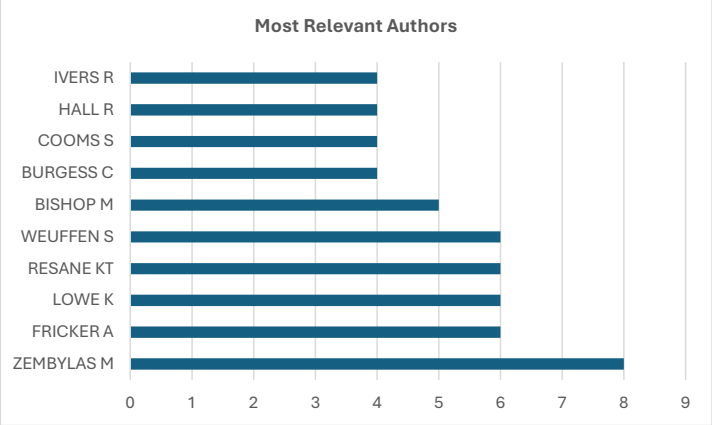

Fig 6: Top Contributing Authors to Decolonization and Indigenous Knowledge Systems

The dataset in Figure 6 presents the ten most relevant authors and their outputs from 2010 to 2024. The findings listed Zembylas M as the most relevant author in terms of the number of research outputs, with 8 articles, closely followed by the other three prominent authors, each with 6 outputs. These findings show consistency among the leading researchers in the research area in maintaining their positions as leading authors.

Most Relevant Affiliation

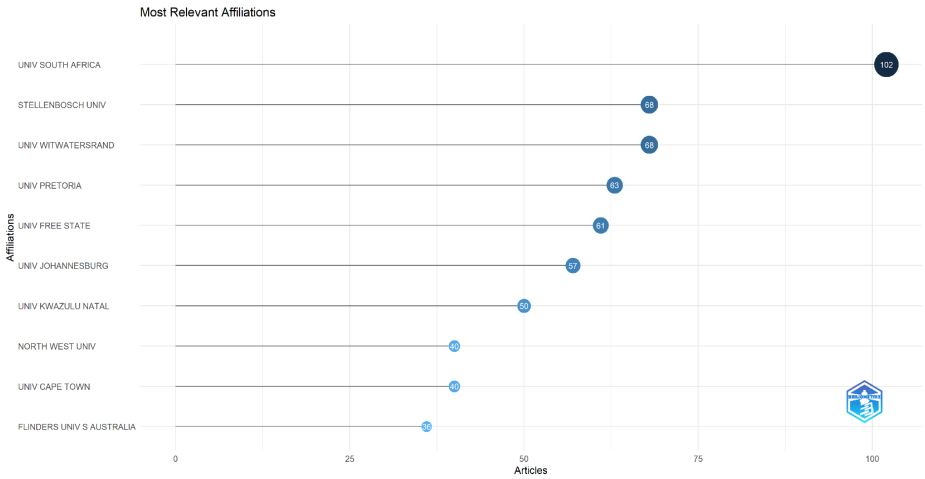

Figure 8: Most Relevant Affiliation

Table 7: 20 Most Relevant Affiliation

Affiliation	Articles
UNIV SOUTH AFRICA	102
STELLENBOSCH UNIV	68
UNIV WITWATERSRAND	68
UNIV PRETORIA	63
UNIV FREE STATE	61
UNIV JOHANNESBURG	57
UNIV KWAZULU NATAL	50
NORTHWEST UNIV	40
UNIV CAPE TOWN	40
FLINDERS UNIV S AUSTRALIA	36
UNIV AUCKLAND	35
UNIV CAMBRIDGE	35
DEAKIN UNIV	34
UNIV OXFORD	32
UNIV SYDNEY	31
UNIV WESTERN CAPE	31
UNIV DURHAM	30
UNIV MELBOURNE	30
UNIV QUEENSLAND	30
UNIV NOTTINGHAM	29

Table 7 presents the 20 most relevant affiliations of institutions' contribution to research on decolonization and indigenous knowledge systems. These affiliations reveal important patterns such as geographical, institutional, and international collaborations. The data indicate a strong dominance of South African universities in the field of decolonization and indigenous knowledge systems, with the University of South Africa (102 articles) as the leading research institution in this field of study. This is closely followed by Stellenbosch University (68 articles), University of the Witwatersrand (68 articles), University of Pretoria (63 articles), University of the Free State (61 articles), and the University of Johannesburg (57 articles). These findings point out the dominant leadership role of South Africa and the extent to which research on decolonization and indigenous knowledge systems is deeply rooted in the Southern African context. The findings also reveal a strong international participation in research, with participation of journals from countries such as Australia and the UK. This is represented by institutions like Flinders University, Deakin University, University of Sydney, University of Melbourne, and University of Queensland. This finding is an indication that Australia is an international partner. University of Cambridge, University of Oxford, Durham University, and University of Nottingham also contributed to the research field. These research universities are highly rated globally, thus their indicates that the research field has gained prominent acceptance and legitimacy in the field of decolonization and indigenous knowledge systems. Cooperation between South African Universities and their counterparts in Australia and the United Kingdom in the field of decolonization and indigenous knowledge systems enhances comparative connections in the research area.

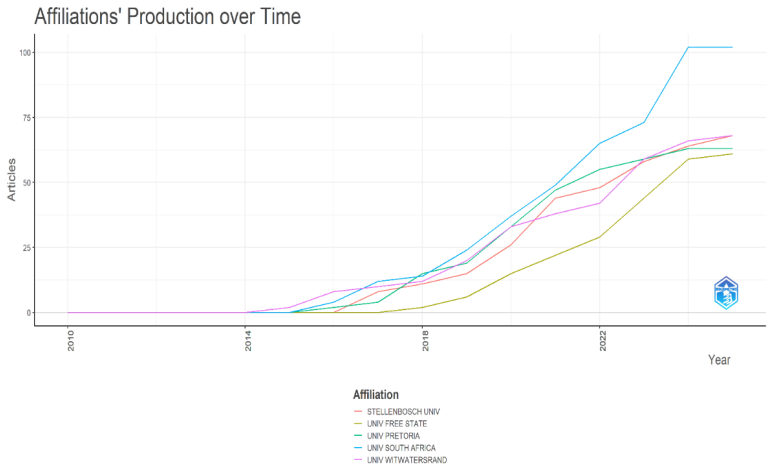

Figure 9: Affiliations' Production Over Time

Table 8: Corresponding Authors' Countries

Country	Articles	Articles %	SCP	MCP	MCP %
SOUTH AFRICA	301	24.4	279	22	7.3
UNITED KINGDOM	272	22	217	55	20.2
AUSTRALIA	189	15.3	172	17	9
USA	65	5.3	55	10	15.4
CANADA	59	4.8	49	10	16.9
NEW ZEALAND	48	3.9	38	10	20.8
GERMANY	22	1.8	18	4	18.2
SWEDEN	14	1.1	10	4	28.6
IRELAND	13	1.1	13	0	0
CHINA	11	0.9	10	1	9.1
INDIA	11	0.9	9	2	18.2
SPAIN	11	0.9	7	4	36.4
GHANA	10	0.8	8	2	20
NIGERIA	10	0.8	8	2	20
FRANCE	9	0.7	8	1	11.1
BELGIUM	8	0.6	3	5	62.5
FINLAND	8	0.6	6	2	25
KOREA	8	0.6	5	3	37.5
NORWAY	8	0.6	5	3	37.5
CYPRUS	7	0.6	2	5	71.4

In terms of leadership in the production of research on decolonization and indigenous knowledge systems, South Africa demonstrated leadership, followed by the United Kingdom and Australia, with 24.4%, 22% and 15.3% respectively as the most relevant corresponding countries. These three leading countries accounted for 61% of the entire output, with South Africa maintaining a strong leadership. This finding also reveals that South Africa with a high frequency of research output of 301 articles, 279 of which are single-country publications, indicating a low multiple collaboration production rate of 7.3%. This finding is an indication that South Africa's collaboration is locally driven and less reliant on international co-authorship. On the other hand, the United Kingdom, with a total output of 272 articles, demonstrates a much higher multiple country publication of 20.2% which is higher than South Africa. with a total output of 55 multiple-country publications, the United Kingdom demonstrates collaboration with scholars from other regions and partners with authors across the globe. On the other hand, Australia, with a total output of 189 articles with 9% MCP, indicates a strong national and lower international collaboration. In contrast, New Zealand, with a lower output, demonstrates a higher multiple collaboration publication of 20.8% higher than Australia. These findings suggest that New Zealand research

engagement is outward-focused. The United States and Canada, with a lower production of articles on decolonization and indigenous knowledge systems, demonstrate improved multiple collaboration production rates of 15.4% and 16.9%, respectively. This finding is an indication that these North American countries always partner with researchers from across the globe rather than collaborating with local authors. The analysis reveals South African leadership in terms of total output, however. While productivity is high in some countries, international collaboration is low. While in some countries, the productivity is low, international collaborations are very high.

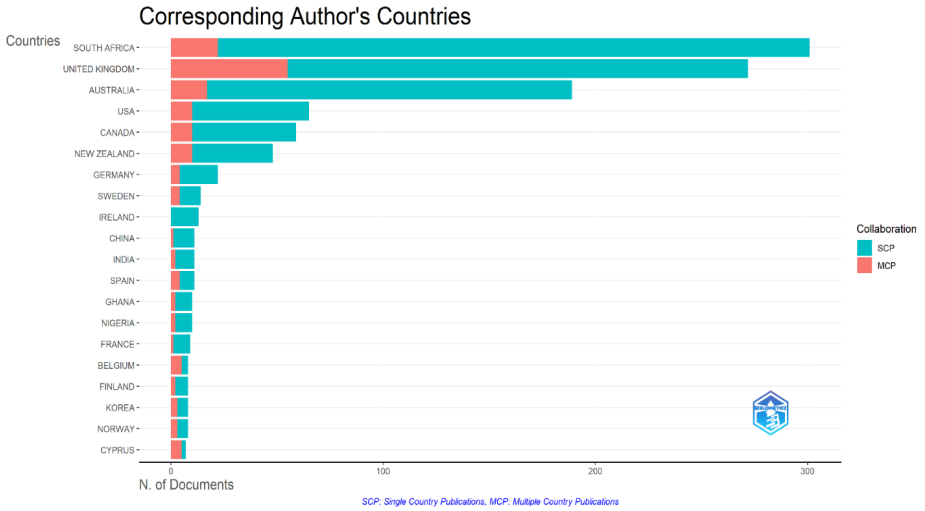

Figure 10: Corresponding Authors' Countries

Figure 10 presents the corresponding countries in a graphical form, indicating countries with the highest rate of collaboration with other countries. It showcases the single corresponding production and the multiple collaboration production. Single collaboration production in this context represents internal collaboration, while multiple collaboration production represents collaboration with authors from other countries.

Country Scientific Production

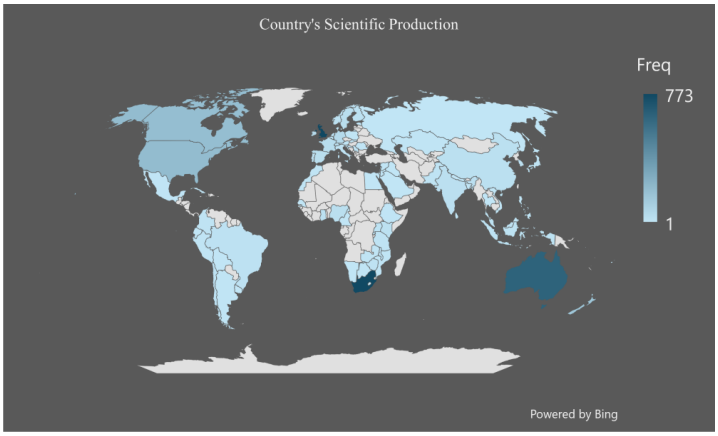

Figure 11: Country Scientific Production

Figure 11 displays the country's scientific production map of 89 countries across the globe, with the United Kingdom (773), South Africa (767), and Australia (640) appearing as the most productive countries in that order.

Table 9: Country Scientific production

Country	Frequency
UK	773
SOUTH AFRICA	767
AUSTRALIA	640
USA	202
CANADA	192
NEW ZEALAND	150
GERMANY	54
IRELAND	53
FRANCE	41
SPAIN	36
SWEDEN	35
NETHERLANDS	33
NIGERIA	31
INDIA	28
BELGIUM	27
CHINA	27
SOUTH KOREA	23
GHANA	22
FINLAND	21
KENYA	21

Table 9 shows the names of countries and the production frequency of articles on decolonization and indigenous knowledge systems. Findings reveal the categorization of countries' production into the leadership comprises of UK (773 articles), South Africa (767 articles), and Australia (640 articles), followed by the USA (202 articles), Canada (192 articles), and New Zealand (150 articles), with a substantial engagement. Germany, Ireland, France, Spain, Sweden, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Finland, with moderate engagement ranging from 21 to 54 articles produced. The emerging countries, including Nigeria (31 articles), India (28 articles, and Kenya (21 articles with a relatively lower output compared to the highly concentrated and leadership countries with a high output on decolonization and indigenous knowledge systems. Also followed are countries with limited contributions, including China (27 articles) and South Korea at the bottom of the table. These countries are limited due to language barriers that prevent widespread readability and endorsement by researchers globally. These findings reveal an uneven distribution of research outputs on decolonization and indigenous knowledge systems across the globe

Country Production Over Time

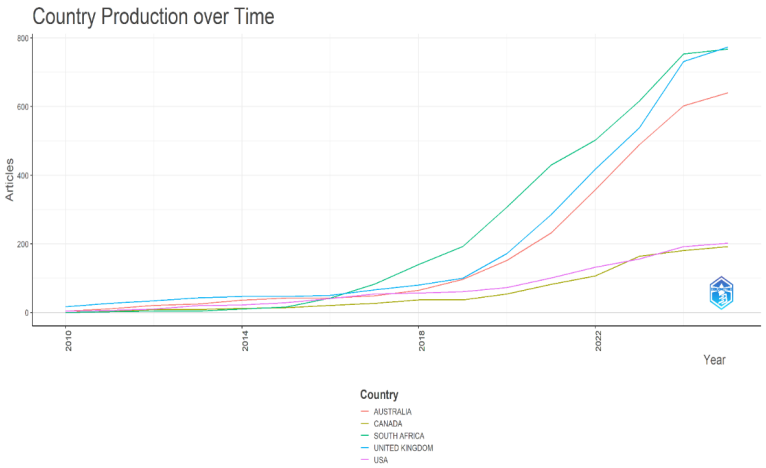

Figure 12: Country Production overtime

ISSN: 0034-8082

Table 10: 20 Most Cited Countries

Country	TC	Average Article Citations
UNITED KINGDOM	2460	9.00
AUSTRALIA	2115	11.20
SOUTH AFRICA	1709	5.70
USA	532	8.20
NEW ZEALAND	506	10.50
CANADA	502	8.50
GERMANY	134	6.10
NORWAY	118	14.80
SWITZERLAND	101	14.40
BOTSWANA	98	49.00
CYPRUS	93	13.30
KOREA	88	11.00
SWEDEN	86	6.10
BELGIUM	74	9.20
FINLAND	66	8.20
IRELAND	61	4.70
SPAIN	58	5.30
GHANA	57	5.70
CHINA	55	5.00
NETHERLANDS	52	7.40

Table 10 shows the twenty most cited countries of articles on decolonization and indigenous knowledge systems. Of these countries, the UK, Australia, and South Africa, with 2460 articles, 2115 articles, and 1709 articles emerge as the top three countries with the highest citation on articles in the field. The twenty most cited countries as listed on Table 10 are an indication that while the knowledge field is more situated in the African Indigenous system, most of the research in this field is produced by researchers from countries outside Africa. Also, these countries are predominantly developed countries that colonized most of the African countries, and others, for example UK, Germany, and the Netherlands.

Figure 13: Ten Most Cited Countries

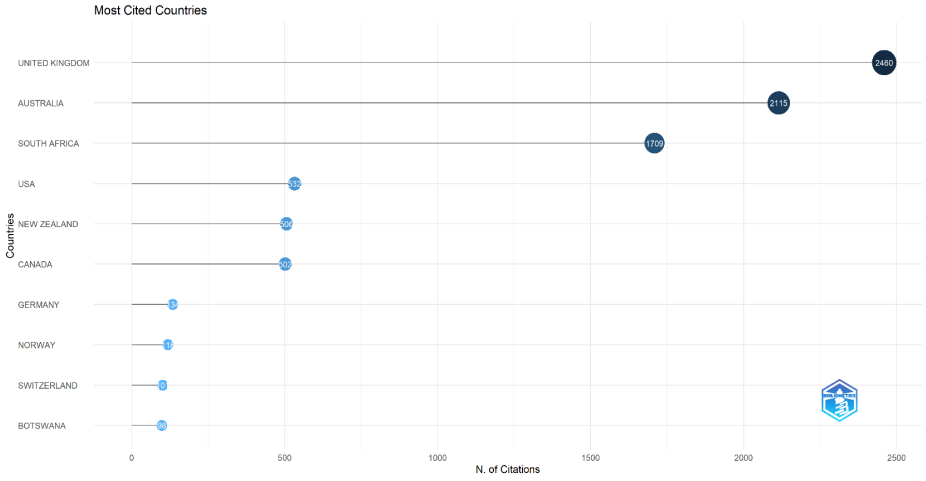

Figure 14: Most Global Cited Documents

Figure 14 reveals the thirteen most cited countries in the field of decolonization and indigenous knowledge systems. As indicated in Table 11, these countries are the front-line countries in terms of output in this research area. The South African context shows dominance partly because of the experience during the apartheid era and the need to correct some of the colonized and Westernized practices that had been imposed on the people before the abolition of the apartheid regime in 1984. Coming from this context, South Africa has consistently maintained a leadership position in this area of research.

Keywords

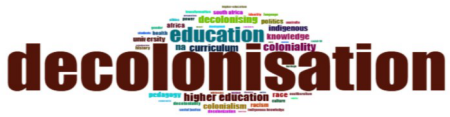

Figure 15 Keyword Dominance

The dominant keyword is the decolonization paradigm. The data reveals the dominance of keywords like decolonization, coloniality, colonialism, and decolonization. This is an indication that the research originates from the South African apartheid and the legacy of imperial rule. The research places more emphasis on academic research, with keywords such as higher education, curriculum, university, and pedagogy dominating the selected and analyzed articles for this study. This transformation is an indication of the preparedness for the movement from the Eurocentric knowledge models towards more inclusive African indigenous value and indigenous knowledge system epistemologies.

4. Discussion of Findings

This paper specifically examines the trends of production of articles on decolonization and the integration of indigenous knowledge systems into the curriculum. Contributing to the debate on decolonization of education, we conducted a bibliometric analysis on decolonization of education and the integration of indigenous knowledge into the curriculum. Data for the study were collected from the WoS database to determine the extent of production of research on decolonization and indigenous knowledge systems. The collected data were also used to determine the most relevant sources and authors, the most pertinent affiliations and countries, the citation indices of authors and journals, and the patterns of collaboration among authors across geographical boundaries and institutions.

The findings reveal expansion of research output from 2010 to 2025. Although in the initial period, when the field was struggling for relevance and recognition, there was zero output between 2010 and 2012. The output improves consistently, signifying the acceptance of the research area as an academic priority among researchers. The findings also reveal that South Africa appears as one of the most relevant countries with institutional and leadership impact in the field of decolonisation and indigenous knowledge systems. In terms of institutional and journal leadership, the South African journal Teaching in Higher Education emerges as the most influential source with an h-index of 11 and total citations of 383. This revelation shows the dominance of South African journals as the most important source of publication in the field. Another South African journal, HTS Teologiese studies, also provides the highest output of articles on decolonisation and indigenous knowledge systems, with a total output of 229 articles. South Africans in this context have demonstrated a leadership position in this field of research. On institutional dominance, institutions like the University of South Africa (UNISA), Stellenbosch University, and the University of Witwatersrand have a total output of 102, 68, and 68 articles, respectively. Out of the twenty most relevant institutions, South African institutions emerge as the nine most relevant institutions in this area of research.

However, despite the leadership position of the South Africa as the most productive country, in term of collaboration, the data reveals that South Africa with a total output of articles but experienced low multiple country publication (MPC) rate of 7.3% indicating that collaboration in this field of study is limited to the national context contrary to countries like the UK with a lower output and a higher MCP of 20.2%, New Zealand 20.8%. With these findings, the South Africa output reflects a national collaboration, while countries like the UK and New Zealand have a cross-border collaboration. African countries must extend their collaboration across the cross-border for the benefit of sharing information and attracting the attention of the world to issues related to decolonisation and indigenous knowledge systems in the African context. The study findings also reveal the participation of emerging countries from the global south in this field of research. These countries have lower outputs but have successfully given their voices and contributions to the debate. These countries are Nigeria, Ghana, and India, with lower MCP and article production.

Additionally, some notable authors have demonstrated high levels of research productivity. Notable among these authors is Zembylas M, with a total of 8 publications between 2010 and 2024. This author has maintained a leadership position in this area of research and is closely followed by authors such as Fricker A, Lowe K, and Resane KT, each with a total of 6 outputs. These few authors have maintained dominance in this field and have contributed immensely to its growth from 2010 to 2024. The study also concludes that the most dominant keyword is the decolonization paradigm (decolonization and coloniality), exposing the long-standing effects of colonial power structures on African indigenous practices, especially as they affect South Africa and the abolished apartheid regime. The institutional transformation (higher education, curriculum, university, and pedagogy) depicts a paradigm shift from Eurocentric and Westernized educational practices toward more inclusive African epistemologies. Also, the geographical and identity

context (South Africa, Africa, indigenous, race) points to the South African historical apartheid regime that shaped South African identity for a long time before independence.

5. Conclusions

The purpose of this study is to examine the bibliometric analysis of decolonising education and integrating indigenous knowledge systems into the curriculum. The bibliometric analysis reveals that South Africa appears as one of the prominent countries in the production of output on decolonization of education and integration of the Indigenous knowledge system into the curriculum. The study also concludes that though South Africa maintains a leadership role in the production of output in this field but has a lower MPC compared to other countries like UK and New Zealand that have a lower output but has a higher MPC compared to South Africa. The study also concludes that South African institution occupies a leadership position among the most productive institutions and maintain the first nine positions among the twenty most productive institutions. The study also concludes that the most dominant keyword includes the decolonization paradigm (decolonization and coloniality), institutional transformation (higher education, curriculum, university and pedagogy), and geographical and identity context (South Africa, Africa, indigenous, race).

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