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The Impact of Immigration on Education: An Evaluation in the Light of Academic Studies

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Abstract

This study systematically examines the academic literature on the impact of migration on education systems through a bibliometric analysis based on the Web of Science Core Collection. A total of 112 publications between 1998 and April 2025 were analyzed. The findings reveal a significant increase in academic interest in migration and education since 2016, indicating the growing global relevance of the theme.

Using the VOSviewer software, the co-occurrence analysis highlights "migration," "higher education," "globalization," and "student mobility" as the most frequently used keywords. The conceptual map consisting of 20 thematic clusters confirms the interdisciplinary and multidimensional structure of the literature.

Bibliographic coupling analysis demonstrates that certain publications (especially Zullo, 2023; Voetgle, 2022; Busse, 2022) exhibit high levels of citation overlap, indicating their foundational role in the field. The study reveals the structural patterns of scientific production on migration and education and contributes to the literature by mapping its thematic orientations.



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Introduction

Today's increasing global mobility is not limited to the relocation of individuals across geographical borders; It also transforms social, cultural and structural institutions. One of the areas most affected by this transformation is education systems.

Both forced migrations (war, disaster, political pressures, etc.) and voluntary migrations (migrations for reasons such as work, education, quality of life) have significant effects on the educational policies, institutions and practices of the country of immigration. In this context, the relationship between migration and education has become a multidimensional, dynamic and interdisciplinary field of study.

The interaction of immigrant individuals with the education system is one of the fundamental factors that determine both their individual success and their integration with society. Immigrant students' school success, sense of belonging, access to education, and likelihood of facing social exclusion directly depend on the quality of the social context in which they are located. Educational institutions are increasingly faced with student groups with more diverse socio-cultural structures, and this requires rethinking pedagogical approaches, teaching methods and teacher roles.

On the other hand, education systems are not only student-based in the face of immigration; It is also undergoing transformation at the structural and political levels. Increasing international student mobility, especially at the higher education level, redefines academic institutionalization forms, program contents and intercultural interaction. In the literature, structural obstacles, forms of discrimination and linguistic/cultural barriers faced by immigrant students are mentioned; The capacity of education to produce social equality and the inclusiveness of policies are also important topics of discussion.

This study examines academic publications published between 1998 and 2025 in the Web of Science Core Collection database with bibliometric methods in order to understand the effects of migration on education systems. Thematic densities, research trends and literary patterns in this field were revealed through co-occurrence, bibliographic linking and collaboration analyzes carried out using VOSviewer software. In this context, the study aims to systematically map the current scientific evolution of the relationship between migration and education and to create a basis that will guide future research in the field.

The Phenomenon of Migration

The phenomenon of migration not only expresses the spatial mobility of individuals and communities, but also has profound effects on the social institutions in the countries of migration. In this context, the education system is one of the structures most affected by migration (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2011). Education appears both as a tool that facilitates the integration of immigrant individuals into society and as an area where social inequalities are reproduced (Crul & Schneider, 2010).

Studies on the educational outcomes of immigrant students show that this group is often at a disadvantage. Factors such as language deficiency, cultural adaptation problems, economic inequalities and discrimination negatively affect the success levels of immigrant students (OECD, 2018). At the same time, the quality of the interactions immigrant families have with educational institutions is an important element that shapes children's educational experience (Koehler & Schneider, 2019).

In the context of higher education, migration is discussed around concepts such as international student mobility and brain drain. International students' contributions to host countries are not

only economic; It is also evaluated in terms of cultural diversity, academic productivity and diplomatic relations (Altbach & Knight, 2007). On the other hand, for some countries, the integration of immigrant students into the education system has brought about the need for restructuring in education policies (Schleicher, 2016).

In the literature, the relationship between migration and education is discussed by different disciplines; educational sciences, sociology, economics and political science stand out as the main contributing fields in this field (Arnot, 2009). For example, while the sociological perspective focuses on issues such as immigrant students' sense of belonging, identity development and social exclusion; Economic approaches mostly analyze the integration of immigrant individuals into the labor market through education (Dustmann et al., 2012).

Studies conducted especially in the last decade reveal that the effects of migration on the education system need to be addressed in a multidimensional way. In the literature, not only the adaptation of immigrants; At the same time, the attitudes of host societies towards the changing demographic structure, educators' strategies for coping with multicultural classes, and the capacity of policies to respond to this transformation are also investigated (Banks, 2008).

Bibliometric analyzes make important contributions to understanding how the migration and education literature is shaped thematically, which concepts stand out and the structural patterns of the literature. Keyword co-occurrences show that concepts such as globalization, equality, social capital, family, student mobility are discussed together with education in the context of migration. In addition, it is observed in the literature that basic concepts of education such as "equity", "access" and "achievement" are redefined with migration.

As a result, it is understood that the relationship between migration and education is an area that needs to be addressed in a dynamic, interdisciplinary and global context. This relationship is not only related to individual success or failure levels; It is also directly linked to structural transformations of education systems, cultural adaptation processes and social inclusion policies.

METHOD

This research used bibliometric analysis method to analyze the scientific literature on the relationship between migration and education. The data was obtained as a result of scanning the Web of Science Core Collection database with the keywords "migration" and "education". A total of 112 publications covering the period 1998–April 2025 were included in the analysis. VOSviewer 1.6.19 software was used during the data analysis process. Three basic analysis methods were applied:

Co-occurrence analysis: The frequency of use of keywords together was examined and conceptual clusters were created.

Bibliographic coupling: Theoretical and methodological similarities in the literature were identified by analyzing the common source use between publications.

Author collaboration analysis: By analyzing co-authorship relationships, effective research networks in the field were identified.

Cleaning the data and combining equivalent concepts (e.g. "student mobility" vs. "mobility") was performed manually. A minimum limit of 2 common keywords was applied as the clustering threshold value. The analysis results were interpreted through graphical maps and the thematic densities and structural relationships in the literature were revealed.

FINDINGS

In the Web of Science Core Collection database, a total of 112 publications were found in the search conducted in the field of educational sciences between 1998 and April 2025.

Table 1 shows the distribution of studies published in the Web of Science Core Collection database on the effects of immigration on the education system between 1998-2025/April by years.

Table 1. 112 results from Web of Science Core Collection

Year	Document	Year	Document	Year	Document
2025	3	2018	10	2011	1
2024	11	2017	12	2010	2
2023	12	2016	4	2009	3
2022	11	2015	6	2008	1
2021	10	2014	4	2006	2
2020	6	2013	4	2005	1
2019	4	2012	4	1998	1

According to Table 1, the number of publications has increased over time. A significant increase is observed especially in the years after 2016. There is a significant increase in publications after 2016. Between 2016 and 2020, an average of 6 publications were made each year. In the 2021–2024 period, this number increased to 10–12 publications annually. The fact that there were 3 publications in just the first four months of 2025 shows that this trend continues. This increase shows that academic interest in the effects of migration on education is increasing and current debates are the subject of more studies.

There is a relatively low publication density between 1998 and 2015. During this period, the number of annual publications generally varied between 1 and 4. A partial increase is noticeable only in 2009 (3 publications) and 2010 (2 publications). This situation suggests that the relationship between migration and education has not yet found a sufficient place in the scientific agenda or that the issue is mostly addressed in other disciplines. 2023 (12 publications) and 2017 (12 publications) were the most productive years. 2024 (11 publications) and 2022 (11 publications) are other noteworthy years. This data set reveals that the issue of migration and education is increasingly studied in academia and has become a strategic research area, especially in the last 10 years. This rise is directly related to both the impact of global migration movements and the bringing of structural changes in education to the scientific agenda.



Figure 1. 112 publications selected from Web of Science Core Collection

Figure 1 shows the disciplinary distribution of publications on the effects of migration on the education system in the Web of Science Core Collection. The size of each box represents the number of articles published in the relevant discipline. Education Educational Research (70 publications) is the most dominant field, accounting for 62.5% of the total 112 publications. This shows that studies on the relationship between migration and education are largely handled within the framework of educational research. Social Sciences Interdisciplinary (34 publications) Approximately 30% of the publications belong to this field. This category reveals that the issue of migration is analyzed not only in pedagogical but also in social context. Education Scientific Disciplines (10 publications) This field reflects the methodological diversity in the field of Education. Although the majority of studies focus on education, the interdisciplinary nature is remarkable. This shows that the phenomenon of migration has become a central issue in educational sciences and has also resonated in fields such as sociology, economics and politics. The need and tendency for interdisciplinary research is clearly seen with this map.

Table 2. Distribution by Document Types

Document type	N
Article	91
Proceeding Paper	21
Early Access	4
Book Chapters	3
Editorial Material	1

In terms of publication types, 91 of 112 publications (81.3%) were published in the format of peer-reviewed research articles. This reveals that the subject has been examined in depth, data-based and systematically. 21 conference papers (18.75%) show that the theme of migration and education is frequently presented at scientific meetings and is the subject of academic discussions. Additionally, 4 "early access" publications reflect the current interest and continuity of the subject.

Although book chapters (3 publications) and editorial materials (1 publication) are included in a more limited manner, they show that the issue of migration has begun to be addressed in academic compilations and intellectual writings.

Table 3. Index Information

Web of Science Index	N
Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI)	48
Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI)	37
Conference Proceedings Citation Index – Social Science & Humanities (CPCI-SSH)	20
Science Citation Index Expanded (SCI-EXPANDED)	8
Arts & Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI)	4
Book Citation Index – Social Sciences & Humanities (BKCI-SSH)	2
Book Citation Index – Science (BKCI-S)	1
Conference Proceedings Citation Index – Science (CPCI-S)	1

As a result of the scanning carried out in the Web of Science Core Collection database between 1998 and April 2025, a total of 112 academic publications focusing on the effects of migration on the education system were reached. When the databases in which these publications are indexed are examined, it is seen that the largest number of publications are included in the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) (48 publications). This shows that the subject of the study is published in journals with high impact factors in the social sciences literature and that the academic visibility and scientific quality of the field is high. 37 publications included in the Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI) indicate that the subject is still among the developing new research areas and that the diversity of research is increasing.

Additionally, the fact that there are 20 publications within the scope of the Conference Proceedings Citation Index – Social Science & Humanities (CPCI-SSH) reveals that the issue of migration and education is discussed and shared not only in academic journals but also in international congresses. This shows that the issue is dynamic, current and creates a basis for discussion with a high social impact. 8 publications in the Science Citation Index Expanded (SCI-EXPANDED) index and 4 publications in the Arts & Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI) index show that the theme of migration and education is not only limited to the social sciences, but has also become a multidisciplinary research topic between science and humanities. In addition, the book chapters included in the Book Citation Index - Social Sciences & Humanities (2 publications) and Book Citation Index - Science (1 publication) and the Conference Proceedings Citation Index - Science (1 publication) record show that the diversity of literature in this field is not limited to journal articles only; It reveals that books and scientific meeting proceedings also contribute.

Table 4. Affiliations Information

Affiliations	N
LEIBNIZ ASSOCIATION	4
FRIEDRICH SCHILLER UNIVERSITY OF JENA	3
STANFORD UNIVERSITY	3
CITY UNIVERSITY OF MACAU	2
FHNW UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES ARTS	2
GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY	2

GERMAN CTR HIGHER EDUC RES SCI STUDIES DZHW	2
GHENT UNIVERSITY	2
HUNAN NORMAL UNIVERSITY	2
OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY	2
OTTO FRIEDRICH UNIVERSITY BAMBERG	2
PEOPLES FRIENDSHIP UNIVERSITY OF RUSSIA	2

In the institutional analysis of 112 publications addressing the effects of migration on the education system, it is seen that the institution with the most publications is LEIBNIZ ASSOCIATION. This institution stands out as the main research institution contributing to the field with a total of 4 publications. The high number of publications of this Germany-based institution shows that migration and education issues are addressed at the structural and political level in the European context and that it encourages research production in this field in parallel with the multicultural structure of Germany.

In second place are FRIEDRICH SCHILLER UNIVERSITY OF JENA (Germany) and STANFORD UNIVERSITY (USA), each with 3 publications. Stanford University's inclusion in this list shows that the issue of immigration and education is studied scientifically not only in Europe but also in the context of North America, allowing comparative analyzes of different cultural models. At the same time, the presence of Friedrich Schiller University in Germany emphasizes the remarkable influence of German universities with high research capacity in this field.

Notable among other institutions with dual publication numbers are the following:

- CITY UNIVERSITY OF MACAU, FHNW University of Applied Sciences and Arts (Switzerland),
- GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY, GERMAN CENTER FOR HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH AND SCIENCE STUDIES (DZHW),
- GHENT UNIVERSITY (Belgium), HUNAN NORMAL UNIVERSITY (China),
- OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY, OTTO FRIEDRICH UNIVERSITY BAMBERG and
- PEOPLES' FRIENDSHIP UNIVERSITY OF RUSSIA.

Each of these institutions was included in the list with 2 publications. When evaluated in terms of geographical diversity, it is understood that publications are produced by institutions in Europe, Asia and North America, in this context the subject attracts global academic attention and is studied in different socio-political contexts. Particularly contributions from countries such as China, Russia and Macau show that the issue of migration is addressed not only as a Western-centered issue but also as a global education policy and social cohesion issue.

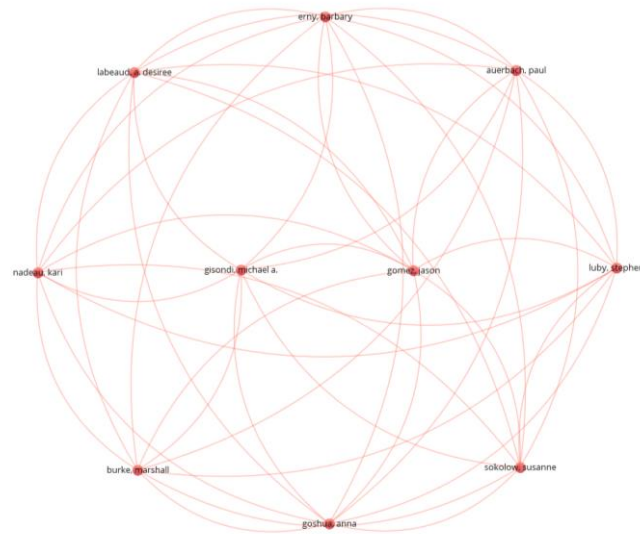


Figure 2. Co-authorship network map

Figure 2 shows the authors who published together in studies on the effects of immigration on the education system and the collaboration relationships between them.

There are a total of 10 authors on the map and there are 45 connections between them. All authors are grouped into a single cluster (cluster 1); This indicates that this group of authors has direct or indirect publishing collaborations with each other.

gisondi, chantal a., gomolla, mechtild, luby, stephen and burke, marshall are located in a relatively more central position on the map and have more connections. This indicates that these authors are both more active in collaborative work and play key roles in research networks.

Names such as erry, clairy, aurebach, paul, nadeem, kazi, sokolow, susanne, gorska, anca, labeaune, desiree are located in the outer parts of the network, but still appear to be connected to each other.

When we look at the network, it is seen that a versatile and intense collaboration network has been established among these authors. In other words, it seems that the works are produced largely on a team basis, rather than individually.

Table 5. Keyword Co-Occurrence Analysis

Keyword	Occurrences	Total link strength
migration	14	68
higher education	6	31
china	5	23
globalization	4	20
student mobility	3	18
family	3	17
mobility	3	14
test scores	2	13
tuition fees	2	13
employment	2	12
education	2	11

stem	2	11
vocational education and training	2	11
aboriginal	2	10
achievement	2	10
equity	2	10

Table 5 shows the most frequently used keywords and the total link strength of these words in the literature. The most frequently used words are: migration (14 times, link strength: 64), higher education (6 times, 31), globalization (6 times, 23), student mobility (5 times, 20). "Migration" has by far the highest connection strength and number of repetitions and is the concept at the center of the study. Concepts such as higher education, globalization and student mobility are other important axes that are most closely matched and thematically related to migration.

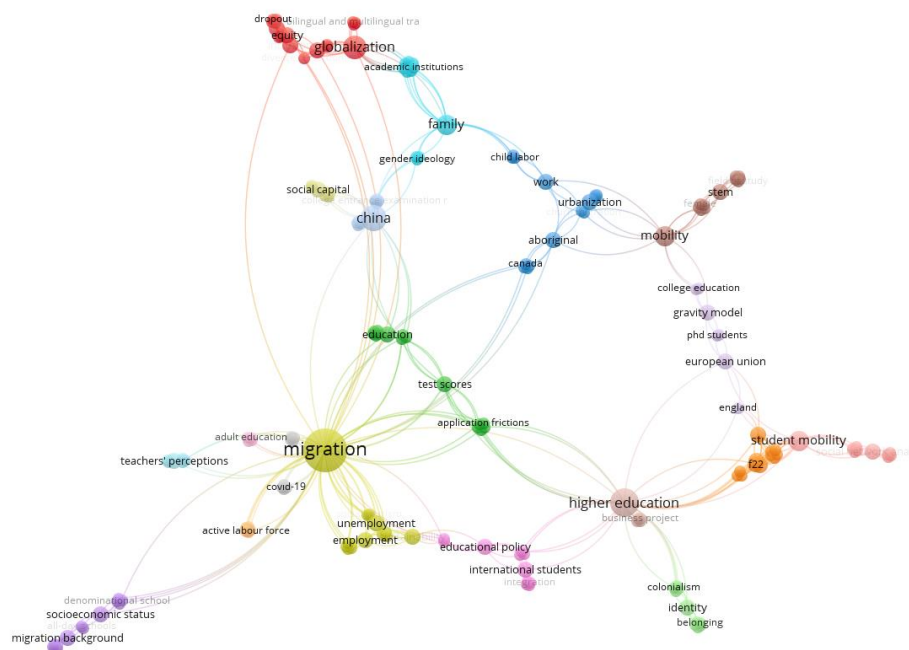


Figure 3. Keyword Network and Clustering Map

Figure 3 visualizes the division of keywords frequently used together in the literature into 20 different clusters and their thematic links.

Keyword co-occurrence analysis performed via VOSviewer reveals that the relationship between migration and education is discussed with multidimensional and interdisciplinary approaches in the literature. The clusters obtained in the analysis show which subheadings this theme concentrates on. The yellow colored group focused on "Migration", which is the most central cluster; It is shaped around the keywords migration, employment, unemployment, education, test scores, teachers' perceptions and COVID-19. This situation shows that the phenomenon of migration is directly evaluated together with educational outcomes, labor market and teacher perspectives; It especially shows that the pandemic has added a new dimension to the literature in this context.

The second cluster, colored orange-green, represents the studies carried out within the framework of the themes of "Higher Education" and "Student Mobility" in the literature. Keywords

such as higher education, student mobility, international students, university and educational policy form the basis of this group; It focuses on the relationship between migration, especially international student mobility, the accessibility of universities for immigrant students, and higher education policies.

The third cluster, the blue group, examines the relationship between migration and family structure and social capital. Concepts such as family, China, social capital, children and parental involvement show through the literature how cultural integration processes, children's educational experiences and parental involvement are shaped in the context of migration. This cluster also indicates the existence of studies conducted especially on Chinese samples.

The fourth cluster in red is discussed under the heading "Globalization". Keywords such as globalization, bilingual transition, transnationalism, diversity and school reflect that, under the influence of globalization, education systems are being reshaped with concepts such as multiculturalism, linguistic transition processes and transnational mobility. In this context, migration and education literature is not limited to local contexts only, but also includes structures that transform on a global scale.

Finally, concepts such as socioeconomic status, migration background and discrimination in the purple cluster indicate the existence of a literature focusing on the social inequalities, barriers to access opportunities and discrimination experiences that immigrant individuals face in education systems. This group brings together studies that analyze the educational reflections of disadvantaged positions.

Table 6. Bibliographic Coupling Document

Document	Year	Total Connection Power
zullo (2023)	2023	25
voetgle (2022)	2022	24
voetgle (2024)	2024	23
busse (2022)	2022	21
li (2020)	2020	16
michaelis (2021)	2021	16

In this analysis, it is examined which other publications a publication cites similar sources and the total link strength is calculated accordingly. Studies with high cohesiveness sit on similar theoretical or methodological grounds in the literature and remain close to the knowledge infrastructure of the field. Zullo (2023) stands out as the document with the highest total link strength. This publication is the study most commonly linked to other studies in the field and may become an important theoretical/empirical center in the literature. Likewise, two works of the author Voetgle, dated 2022 and 2024, are among the top three, which shows that this author makes strong and systematic contributions to the migration and education literature. Busse (2022) and Li (2020) can also be considered as integrative publications in the field by being strongly connected to other studies.

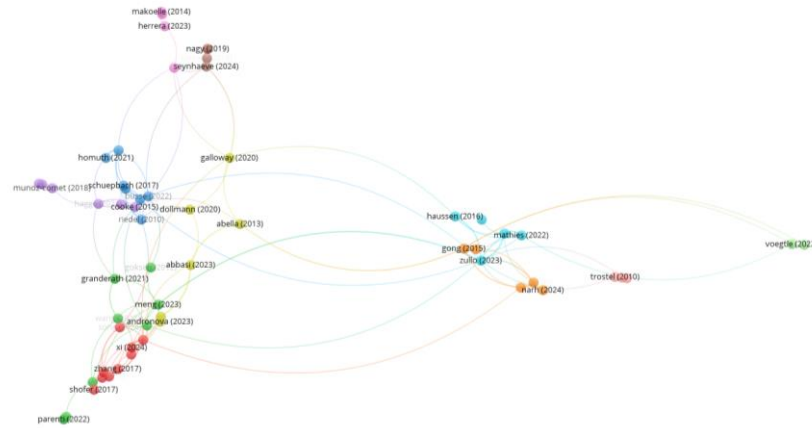


Figure 4. Citation Relationships Between Citations and Documents

This analysis reveals which studies are influential in the literature, which publications cite each other, and how they are clustered, based on the citations to studies and the citation relationships between documents.

In the figure, a total of 91 documents are represented in 11 clusters. There are 123 links and the total link strength is calculated as 205. Visualization was made according to the "Citations" criterion; that is, document sizes and lines are weighted by the number of citations made. Documents such as Zullo (2023), Hausen (2018), Pontes (2019) and Busse (2022) are at the center of the network and link to many other documents. These documents can be considered among publications with high scientific impact potential by both being cited and by establishing a two-way relationship with other studies. The Voetgle (2022) study, located in the upper right part of the map, represents a distinctly singular cluster in the network and stands partially isolated from other documents. Mundt et al. (2018), Grande (2023), Shoho (2017) and Pierre (2021) have a very dense network of relationships. Small clusters of documents at the top, such as Makoe (2014) and Herrera (2023), have relatively independent thematic focuses.

Result

As a result of the scanning in the Web of Science Core Collection database covering the period between 1998 and April 2025, a total of 112 academic publications on the effects of immigration on the education system were reached. When the distribution of publications by years is examined, a remarkable increase in the number of publications is observed, especially since 2016. The highest number of publications in 2017 and 2023 (12 publications each) can be explained by the fact that migration became more visible in both a global and regional context during this period. Double-digit publication numbers in 2021, 2022 and 2024 show that the academic interest of the subject is increasing sustainably. On the other hand, the very limited number of publications between 1998 and 2015 (1-4 publications in most years) shows that the relationship between migration and education has not yet found a wide place on the academic agenda in this period or has been addressed with limited disciplinary approaches. When evaluated in terms of disciplinary distribution, most of the studies (62.5%) are concentrated in the field of "Education Educational Research". This is followed by the "Social Sciences Interdisciplinary" category with a 30% share. This situation reveals that migration has a central place in the educational sciences literature and is also studied in interaction with different sub-disciplines of social sciences. In addition, publications in various fields such as "Education Scientific Disciplines" (10 publications),

"Humanities Multidisciplinary" (6 publications), "Economics" and "Sociology" (5 publications each), "Social Issues" (3 publications), "Anthropology", "Political Science" and "Health Care Sciences Services" (2 publications each) reveal the multidimensional nature of the immigration issue and its structure that requires interdisciplinary analysis. In this context, it is understood that the transformation of education systems against migration is not only limited to the pedagogical dimension, but is also examined from sociological, economic, cultural and health-based perspectives.

In terms of publication types, 91 of 112 publications (81.3%) were published in the format of peer-reviewed research articles. This reveals that the subject has been examined in depth, data-based and systematically. 21 conference papers (18.75%) show that the theme of migration and education is frequently presented at scientific meetings and is the subject of academic discussions. Additionally, 4 "early access" publications reflect the current interest and continuity of the subject. Although book chapters (3 publications) and editorial materials (1 publication) are included in a more limited manner, they show that the issue of migration has begun to be addressed in academic compilations and intellectual writings. When all these data are brought together, it can be seen that academic interest in the relationship between migration and education has gained momentum, especially in the last decade, interdisciplinary approaches have diversified and research production has intensified. This trend reflects not only academic awareness but also the increasing sensitivity of education policies to migration dynamics.

It is observed that scientific production on the effects of migration on the education system is increasingly diversifying in terms of publication type, disciplinary scope and index quality, and that there has been a significant increase in interdisciplinary and international academic interest in this theme, especially in the last decade. These findings indicate that an original and developing literature is emerging on both the structural transformations of education tested by migration and the new learning environments created by global mobility. Research analysis shows that studies on the relationship between migration and education have a multi-centered academic production structure; It reveals that universities in Germany, the USA, China and other countries make meaningful contributions to this field. This institutional diversity also points to the existence of unique approaches in the literature that develop within the framework of different immigration policies, education systems and cultural contexts. The co-author map reveals that production based on close academic collaboration is at the forefront on the theme of migration and education, some authors establish network connections as central figures, and collective work in the field is strengthened. It can be expected that in the coming years, this network will expand and be divided into more clusters, international collaborations will increase, and scientific production in the field will gain a more widespread structure. Co-occurrence analysis shows that the most used concepts in the migration and education literature are concentrated around "migration", "higher education", "globalization" and "student mobility". The analysis also includes not only the structural effects of migration within the education system; It also reveals that it is considered together with multifaceted components such as socioeconomic status, cultural identity, family structure and education policies. The structure of 20 clusters strongly supports that this literature is multidimensional, interdisciplinary and international in scale. According to bibliographic coupling analysis, some documents in the literature on migration and education show a high level of common source use with other studies. In this context, the Zullo (2023) study stands out as the publication that establishes the strongest relationship in the literature with a total bond strength of 25 units. This publication is followed by Voetgle (2022) [24], Voetgle (2024) [23] and Busse (2022) [21], respectively. The fact that these documents have a high level of co-citation relationships with other publications indicates that they represent common theoretical or methodological grounds in the literature.

Another notable publication, the studies of Li (2020) and Michaelis (2021), each has a binding strength of 16 units. This shows that these publications constitute important reference points within the field and establish strong thematic connections with other research. The fact that some of the publications included in the analysis have a high bibliographic linking power, even though they have not yet been cited, shows that these studies have a potentially central position in the literature and may create more academic impact in the future. These findings reveal that scientific production in the field of migration and education is structured not only in terms of content but also in terms of citation dynamics and literature integrity. In addition, it appears that certain authors and studies are the main references that guide the field and constitute a focal point for knowledge sharing and theoretical interaction within the research community.

The fact that documents such as Zullo (2023), Busse (2022) and Hausen (2018) stand out in terms of both citation level and number of connections reveals that these studies play decisive roles in shaping the field. On the other hand, documents with limited connection to the literature but evolving into a singular cluster, such as Voetgle (2022), point to academic contributions with high originality but still developing.

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