

## Music education, racism, and the invisibility of minorities. An international bibliometric analysis and critical-pedagogical reflections

### L'educazione musicale tra razzismo e invisibilizzazione delle minoranze. Analisi bibliometrica internazionale e riflessioni critico-pedagogiche

**Antonella Coppi**

IUL Online University, Florence (Italy)

**Sabrina Lucilla Barone**

Pegaso Telematic University, Naples (Italy)



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#### Abstract

This study examines the relationship between music, education, and racism through a bibliometric analysis of 77 documents indexed in Scopus, published between 1995 and 2025, retrieved using the search string “music AND education AND racism” in titles, abstracts, and keywords. Using VOSviewer, citation, co-citation, co-authorship, and keyword co-occurrence networks were analysed to map the main trends in the international scholarly debate. The findings show a strong concentration of publications in English-speaking countries and the recurring centrality of themes such as music education, racism, anti-racism, critical race theory, social justice, and inclusion. These results make it possible to problematise persistent epistemic asymmetries in research on music education, without treating bibliometric evidence as direct proof of curricular structures or classroom practices. The main methodological limitation of the study is its reliance on Scopus as the sole database, which may exclude relevant contributions indexed elsewhere or published in national scholarly traditions. The analysis suggests the need to strengthen music education practices that pay greater attention to plural repertoires, the historical contextualisation of canons, and the critical education of teachers.

**Keywords:** music education, educational inclusion, critical pedagogy, social justice.

#### Riassunto

Lo studio esamina il rapporto tra musica, educazione e razzismo attraverso un'analisi bibliometrica di 77 documenti indicizzati in Scopus, pubblicati tra il 1995 e il 2025 e individuati mediante la stringa di ricerca music AND education AND racism nei campi titolo, abstract e parole chiave. Con il supporto di VOSviewer, vengono analizzate reti di citazione, co-citazione, co-authorship e co-occorrenza delle parole chiave, al fine di ricostruire le principali tendenze del dibattito scientifico internazionale. I risultati evidenziano una forte concentrazione della produzione nei Paesi anglofoni e una centralità ricorrente di temi quali music education, racism, anti-racism, critical race theory, social justice e inclusion. Tali evidenze consentono di problematizzare la persistenza di asimmetrie epistemiche nella ricerca sull'educazione musicale, senza tuttavia assumere i dati bibliometrici come prova diretta dell'assetto dei curricula scolastici o delle pratiche didattiche. Il principale limite dello studio è rappresentato dall'uso di un'unica banca dati, Scopus, che può escludere contributi rilevanti presenti in altri archivi scientifici o in letterature nazionali non indicizzate. L'analisi suggerisce l'opportunità di rafforzare pratiche educative musicali più attente alla pluralità dei repertori, alla contestualizzazione storica dei canoni e alla formazione critica degli insegnanti.

**Parole chiave:** educazione musicale, inclusione educativa, pedagogia critica, giustizia sociale.

#### Credit author statement

This article is the result of the joint work of the two authors. However, the “Introduction” and “Conclusions” sections can be attributed to Antonella Coppi, as she provided the fundamental research directions and developed the final reflections. Sabrina Lucilla Barone, on the other hand, outlined the methodology and conducted the bibliometric and bibliographic research. The other sections are therefore to be attributed to her.

## 1. Introduction

Music is a cultural practice through which identities, memories and belongings are transmitted, negotiated and transformed. The pedagogical-musical literature has shown how it can assume a dual function: on the one hand, to contribute to the reproduction of symbolic hierarchies and criteria of cultural legitimation; on the other hand, to open spaces for expression, recognition and participation for historically marginalised subjects and communities (Bradley, 2006; Hess, 2019). Music education cannot be considered a neutral field, since repertoires, methods, canons and evaluation criteria reflect specific cultural genealogies and precise historical conditions of knowledge production.

A significant part of the international debate has highlighted the persistence of educational canons centred on the cultured Western musical tradition, on notation and on formalised learning models, with the risk of making oral, improvisational, community and non-Western practices less visible (Koza, 2008; Schippers & Campbell, 2012). These observations do not imply the devaluation of the Western tradition, but call for its historical recontextualisation, capable of placing it in dialogue with other sound experiences and with different modes of musical transmission. The theme of Eurocentrism is thus taken not as an all-encompassing judgment on curricula, but as a critical question regarding the visibility, selection, and legitimisation of musical knowledge.

Racism in music pedagogy is intertwined with other forms of oppression, such as sexism and socioeconomic inequalities (Crenshaw, 1989; Gould, 2011), and calls for a review of curricular contents, teaching models and criteria for access to music education (Comploi & Coppi, 2014). Building truly inclusive environments means recognising cultural diversity as a resource and ensuring that every student has the opportunity to express their musical identity without conforming to imposed standards (Bradley, 2015; Coppi, 2018b).

Beyond the academic dimension, community musical practices offer spaces for resistance and cultural affirmation (Coppi, 2018a). Non-formal music education, often rooted in racialised communities, promotes collaborative learning modalities that value oral transmission and shared experiences (Benedict et al., 2015). In these contexts, music becomes a means of empowerment and a language to counter the invisibility of minorities, strengthening their cultural representation (Sullivan, 2017).

Considering these premises, the present study is located at the intersection of music education, critical pedagogy and bibliometric analysis. The literature reviewed shows how the relationship among music, racism, and the invisibility of minorities has been addressed through theoretical, historical, and pedagogical contributions. However, it is still necessary to understand how this debate has been structured over time, which authors and sources have taken on greater centrality, which networks of collaboration support it and which keywords reveal its emerging trajectories. The pedagogical issue concerns not only the presence of different repertoires in educational paths, but also the way international research has named, organised, and made visible the relationships between music, power, inclusion, and social justice.

Starting from this knowledge gap, the study proposes a bibliometric mapping of the scientific production indexed in Scopus on the relationship between music, education and racism, integrated by a critical-pedagogical reading of the main nuclei that emerged. The intent is twofold: on the one hand, to describe the quantitative configuration of the field through publications, citations, authors, sources, collaborations and keywords; on the other hand, to discuss the formative implications that such evidence suggests for a musical pedagogy more aware of its cultural genealogies and its inclusive responsibilities.

The following research questions guide the study:

- RQ1. What are the main trends, connections and emerging areas in international scientific production on the relationship between music, education and racism, as they result from the bibliometric analysis of the publications indexed in Scopus?
- RQ2. How does the analysis of the most and least recurring keywords allow us to identify consolidated thematic lines and emerging areas in the academic debate on music, education and racism?
- RQ3. What critical-pedagogical implications can be drawn, with due interpretative caution, from the bibliometric structure of the field and from the centrality of concepts such as music *education*, *racism*, *anti-racism*, *social justice*, *inclusion* and *critical race theory*?

## 2. Methodology

The study adopts a quantitative bibliometric design, integrated by a critical-pedagogical reading of the results, aimed at mapping the evolution of the international academic debate on the relationship between music, education and racism. The search was conducted in the Scopus database on January 20, 2025. The string used was music AND education AND racism, applied to the title, abstract, and keyword fields. No preliminary filters have been applied regarding the subject area, document type, language, or year of publication. The period 1995-2025 is therefore not the result of a time filter imposed a priori, but corresponds to the chronological span of the documents returned by the database at the time of the query.

The query returned 77 documents, all of which were included in the final corpus because they were consistent with the thematic combination defined by the search string. Since the search was conducted on a single database, there was no need for cross-database deduplication. Records were not excluded after export, nor was a minimum citation threshold applied for inclusion, as the goal of the study was to reconstruct both the most established contributions and the emerging trajectories of the field. The final corpus is therefore composed of 77 documents indexed in Scopus, subsequently exported and analysed using VOSviewer. The selection flow can be summarised as follows: records identified in Scopus: 77; records excluded after export: 0; documents included in the final corpus: 77.

The study is not configured as a systematic review of the literature according to the PRISMA protocol, but as a descriptive bibliometric analysis based on a transparent procedure for the identification, export and analysis of records. The choice of Scopus as the sole source was motivated by its extensive international coverage, the quality of its bibliographic metadata, and its compatibility with VOSviewer for the analysis of bibliometric networks. At the same time, this choice constitutes a limitation of the study, as it can reduce the visibility of contributions in other databases, such as Web of Science, ERIC, or RILM, and of national, professional, or non-English-speaking publications not indexed in Scopus. For this reason, the results are interpreted as a mapping of the scientific debate indexed in Scopus, rather than an exhaustive representation of the international production on antiracist and decolonial music education.

The analysis focuses on a descriptive and quantitative examination of the characteristics of scientific production, integrated by a subsequent critical-pedagogical discussion, in line with the three research questions formulated in the introduction. In particular, it considers the temporal, geographical, and disciplinary distribution of publications, the types of documents, citation impact, co-citation and co-authorship networks, the most recurrent sources, and lexical co-occurrences.

Bibliometric analysis, as a quantitative method, allows for a structured exploration of academic research trends by examining parameters such as publication volume, citation impact, and collaboration networks among authors, institutions, and countries (Guo et al., 2021; Donthu et al., 2021). This approach provides a macroscopic, objective view of large sets of bibliographic data, allowing the documentation of the historical development and disciplinary configuration of a given field of study (Jia et al., 2014).

The VOSviewer software (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010) was used for data processing, which made it possible to construct and visualise:

- the networks of co-citation and direct quotation between authors;
- collaborations between authors, institutions and countries;
- keyword co-occurrence networks, distinguishing between established thematic areas and emerging research lines.

In the generated maps, node sizes are proportional to the number of citations, and the colour scales represent the temporal evolution of publications. The analysis of the keywords, closely related to the second search question, includes both the most frequent terms (*music education*, *racism*, *anti-racism*), and the less recurring but conceptually relevant ones (*inclusion*, *health equity*, *community*), whose low occurrence rate suggests the presence of emerging areas of research and the need for further investigation in future studies.

The bibliometric analysis constitutes the empirical-descriptive basis of the study, while the subsequent critical-pedagogical discussion develops the theoretical and formative implications of the results, keeping the reading of the data distinct from the formulation of possible educational perspectives. The conclusions

are therefore not taken as direct evidence of school curricula, teaching practices, or educational policies, but rather as critical interpretations based on the structure of the scientific debate indexed in Scopus.

### 3 Results of the scopus survey

#### 3.1 The evolution of scientific production

Figure 1 illustrates the evolution of publications from 1995 to 2025, showing steady growth.

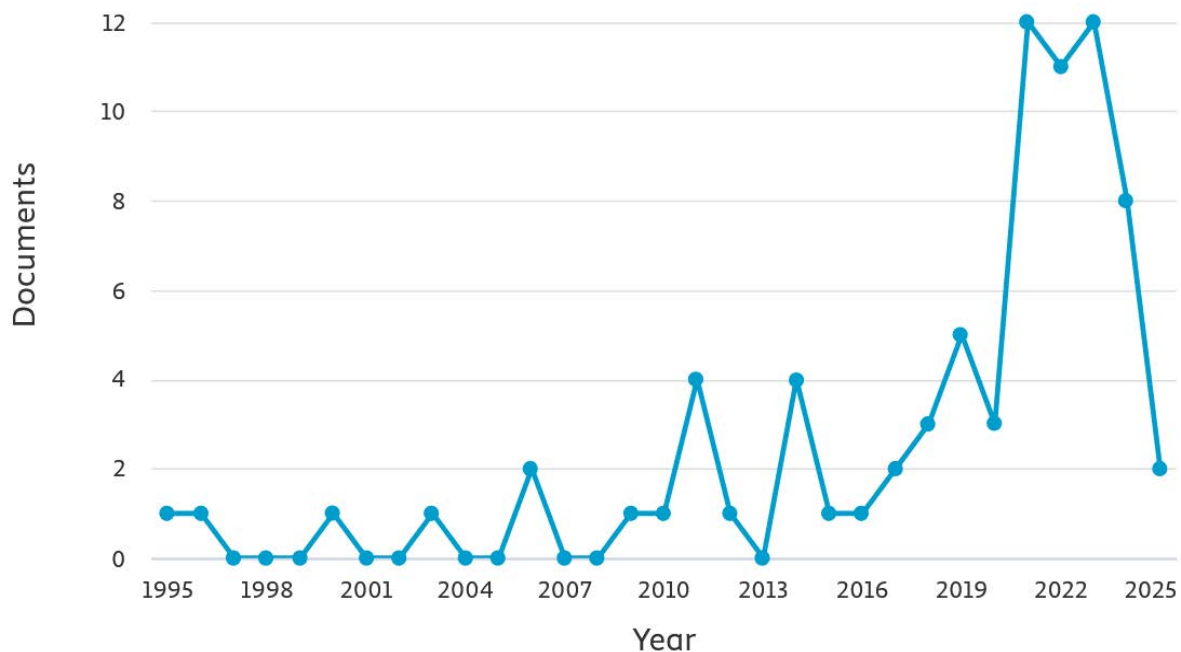


Fig. 1: Evolution of scientific production. *Source:* Scopus

Until 2010, the number of studies was limited, consistent with the debate still being in an early phase. The increase observed in the two years 2020-2022 can be read in relation to the broader context marked by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement, which intensified the international debate on racial justice (Ewell, 2020). From 2010 onwards, the increase has been almost continuous, with a growing interest in issues such as the decolonisation of music education and the enhancement of popular musical traditions (Benedict et al., 2015; DeLorenzo, 2016).

#### 3.2 Geography of Scientific Research

The geographical distribution of publications shows a significant concentration in English-speaking countries, particularly the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada. This fact, on its own, does not allow us to affirm the existence of Eurocentric dominance in musical educational practices, but it signals a significant asymmetry in international scientific visibility. The centrality of academic English, as indexed by publishing circuits and research institutions in the global North, can affect the field's representation, making contributions from other linguistic, cultural, and geographical areas less visible (Figure 2).

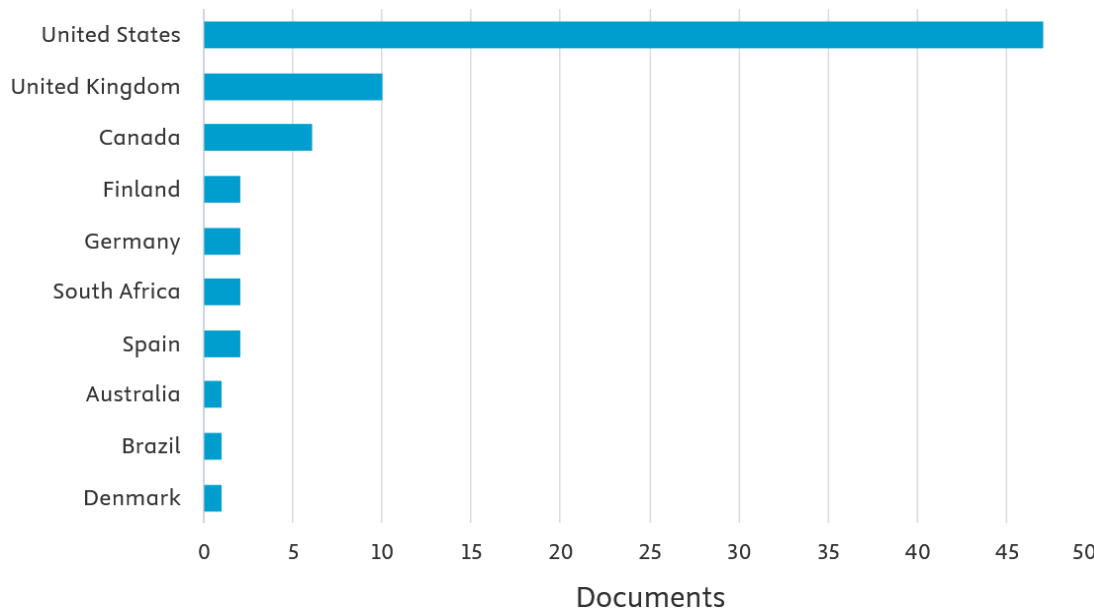


Fig. 2: Documents by country or territory. *Source*: Scopus

In Europe, countries such as Finland, Germany, Spain and Denmark are associated with themes such as migration and inclusion, while South Africa and Brazil more clearly recall the relationship between music, resistance and cultural memory. The lower presence of other regions must be interpreted with caution: it may reflect both a real underrepresentation in indexed production and the database's coverage criteria. Therefore, the predominance of English-speaking countries is not taken as conclusive proof of an epistemic domain, but as a bibliometric clue to a hierarchy of visibility that deserves further comparative investigation.

### 3.3 Types of scientific contributions

The typology of documents (Figure 3) shows the preferences in the dissemination of knowledge.

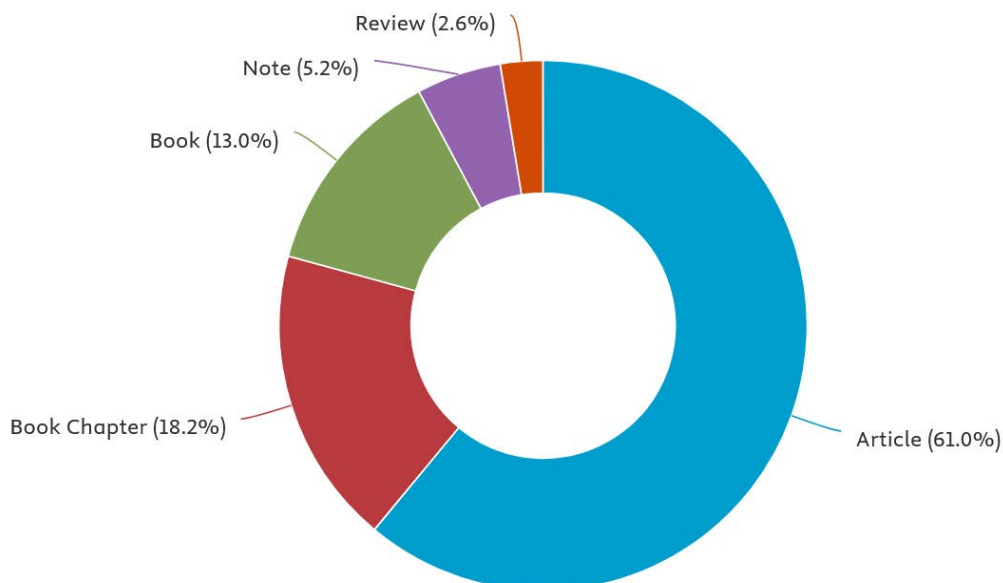


Fig. 3: Documents by type. *Source*: Scopus

Research articles are the prevailing typology, confirming the centrality of periodical scientific production. The presence of book chapters and monographs, however, indicates the still-relevant role of theoretical, historical, and interdisciplinary contributions. The smaller share of reviews and academic notes suggests a field in a phase of progressive consolidation, in which the need for critical syntheses capable of connecting the different lines of research remains open.

### 3.4 Subject Areas and Academic Contributions

The analysis of publications by subject area (Figure 4) traces the multiple angles from which the theme is investigated, highlighting its interdisciplinary nature and the added value of each sector of knowledge.

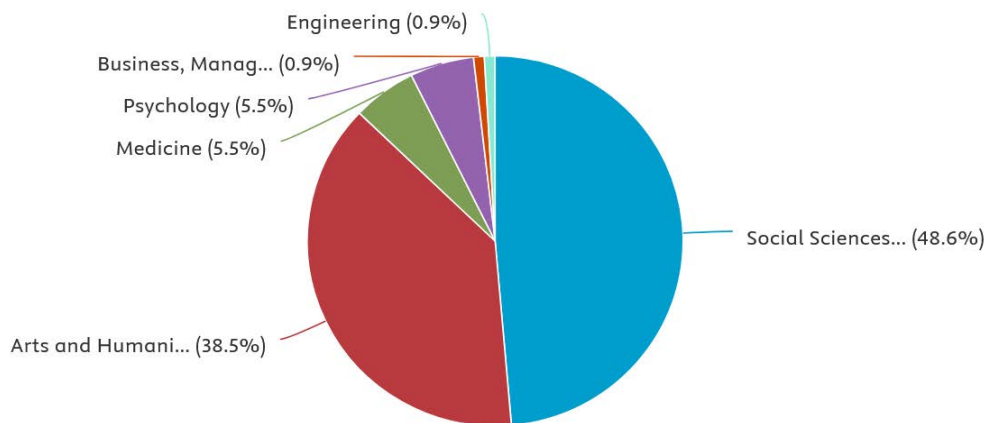


Fig. 4: Documents by subject area. *Source:* Scopus

The distribution by subject area shows a prevalence of the social sciences and humanities, which constitute the main nucleus of indexed production. The lesser presence of psychology, medicine, economics, management, and engineering indicates that the field is still predominantly oriented towards pedagogical, cultural, and social reflection. In relation to the research questions, this distribution confirms the interdisciplinary nature of the topic but also shows limited integration with areas interested in the organisational, technological, psychosocial, and applicative dimensions of music education.

## 4 Bibliometric mappings

### 4.1 The most cited documents

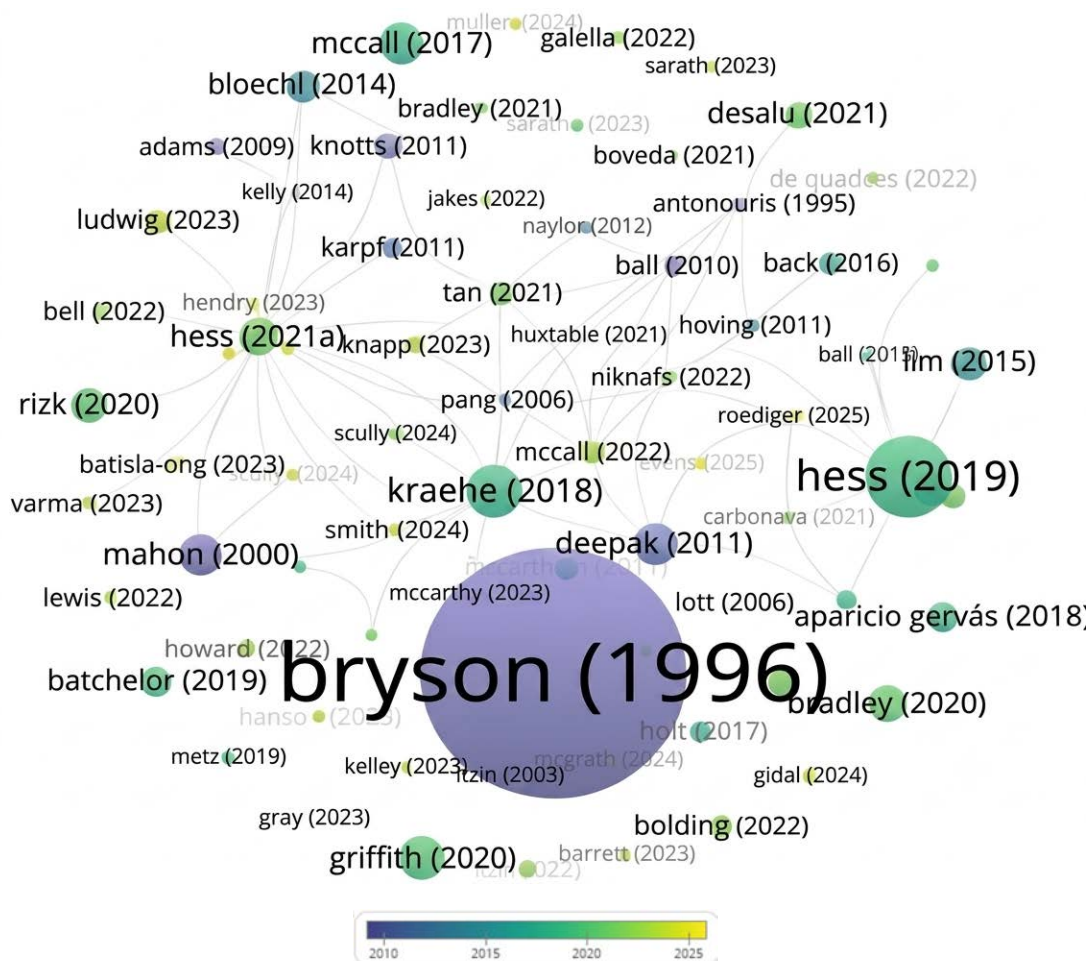
Table 1 presents the 20 most cited documents among the 77 included in the Scopus corpus. This figure allows us to identify the contributions that have exerted the greatest influence on the debate on music, education, and racism.

Id	Document	Citations	Id	Document	Citations
1	Bryson (1996)	758	11	Rizk (2020)	15
2	Hess (2019)	79	12	Bloechl (2014)	13
3	Kraehe (2018)	34	13	Lim (2015)	12
4	Griffith (2020)	22	14	Batchelor (2019)	11
5	Mccall (2017)	21	15	Aparicio Gervás (2018)	11
6	Deepak (2011)	21	16	Benedict (2021)	11
7	Mahon (2000)	20	17	Desalu (2021)	9
8	Hess (2021a)	17	18	Knotts (2011)	8
9	Hess (2014)	17	19	Tan (2021)	7
10	Bradley (2020)	16	20	Ludwig (2023)	7

Tab. 1: The most cited documents. *Source:* our own elaboration

The table gives an early representation of the academic debate, with Bryson (1996) at the top in terms of citations. Alongside this contribution, studies by Hess (2019), Kraehe et al. (2018), Griffith and Semlow (2020) and Bradley (2020) confirm the centrality of critical, antiracist and decolonial perspectives. In relation to RQ1, the citation data shows a field built around some high-impact references, which are flanked by more recent contributions still in the consolidation phase.

Figure 5 visualises the temporal distribution and connections among the most cited documents using an Overlay Visualisation.

Fig. 5: Map of the most cited documents. *Source:* VOSviewer-Overlay Visualisation processing

The map shows an articulated network in which some documents serve as references, while others occupy more peripheral or emerging positions. The main issue concerns the absence of a single, compact nucleus: the debate appears to be distributed across several areas of influence. Compared to RQ1, this configuration suggests a growing field, but not yet fully integrated in terms of bibliographic connections.

#### 4.2 Most cited authors and co-authorship networks

Table 2 presents the authors in order of the number of citations.

	Author	Documents	Citations	Total Link Strength
1	Bryson, Bethany	1	758	0
2	Hess, Juliet	4	120	5
3	Gaztambide-Fernández, Rubén	1	34	0
4	Kraehe, Amelia M.	1	34	0
5	Stephen Carpenter, B.	1	34	0
6	Mccall, Joyce M.	2	26	0
7	Griffith, Derek M.	1	22	0
8	Semlow, Andrea R.	1	22	0
9	Biggs, Mary Jo Garcia	1	21	0
10	Deepak, Anne C.	1	21	0

Tab. 2: Authors in order of citation. *Source:* our own elaboration.

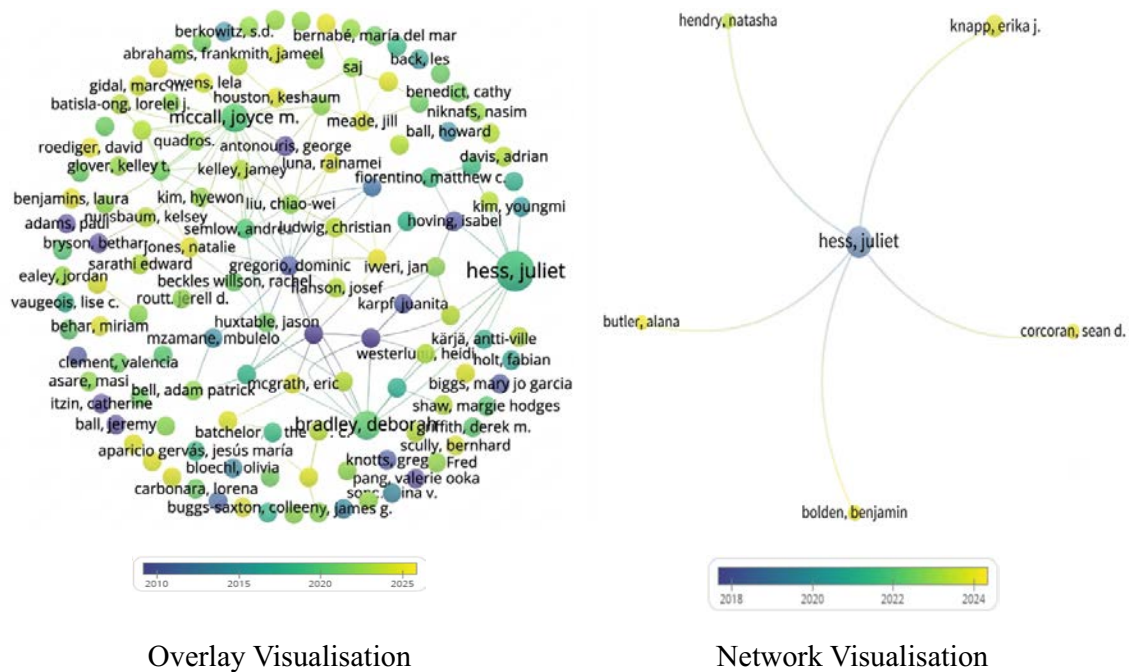
Table 3 considers authors with Total Link Strength (TLS) greater than zero. The comparison between citations and TLS allows us to distinguish individual impact from relational centrality in bibliometric networks.

Author	Documents	Citations	Total Link Strength
Hess, Juliet	4	120	5
Knapp, Erika J.	2	3	1
Bolden, Benjamin	1	0	1
Butler, Alana	1	0	1
Corcoran, Sean D.	1	0	1
Hendry, Natasha	1	0	1

Tab. 3: Authors with TLS greater than zero. *Source:* our own elaboration

The tables show a gap between authors with high citation impact and authors who are more connected in the networks. Bryson (1996) and Hess (2019) are central in terms of citations, while other scholars show greater relational relevance through collaborations or co-citations. Compared to RQ1, the data indicate that the field is not structured solely around the most cited authors but also through less visible connections, which are useful for understanding the circulation of critical perspectives.

Figure 6 integrates Overlay Visualisation and Network Visualisation, showing the temporal evolution and the structure of the connections between authors.

Fig. 6: Network of the most cited authors. *Source*: VOSviewer processing

The visualisation confirms the centrality of Juliet Hess (2019), alongside other relevant authors such as Joyce McCall (2017) and Deborah Bradley (2006). The main data concerns the still partially radial configuration of the network: some authors act as reference nodes, while the secondary connections are less dense. In relation to RQ1, this suggests a dynamic scientific debate, but characterised by a collaboration that is not yet fully distributed.

Table 4 further compares citation impact and centrality in collaborative networks, distinguishing authors sorted by citations from those sorted by TLS.

Id	Author	Documents	Citations	TLS	Author	Documents	Citations	TLS
1	Bryson, Bethany	1	758	0	Behar, Miriam	1	0	13
2	Hess, Juliet	4	120	0	Benjamins, Laura			
3	Gaztambide-Fernández, Rubén	1	34	2	Buggs-Saxton, Colleen			
4	Kraehe, Amelia M.				Cockern, Nikki			
5	Carpenter, S.B.				Dwaihy, Meghan			
6	Mccall, Joyce M.	2	26	3	Houston, Keshaum			
7	Griffith, Derek M.	1	22	1	Marshall, Sharon			
8	Semlow, Andrea R.				Mcgrath, Eric			
9	Biggs, Mary Jo Garcia	1	21	1	Meade, Jill			
10	Deepak, Anne C.				Secord, Elizabeth			

Tab. 4: Authors in order of citation and TLS. *Source*: our own elaboration

The comparison confirms the existence of two forms of relevance: one based on citation impact and the other on network position. This distinction allows us to avoid a reductive reading of scientific influence, showing how the field's construction depends on both high-visibility theoretical contributions and more widespread collaborative relationships.

Figure 7 shows the co-authorship network in Overlay Visualisation, while Figure 8 shows collaborations between authors in Network Visualisation.

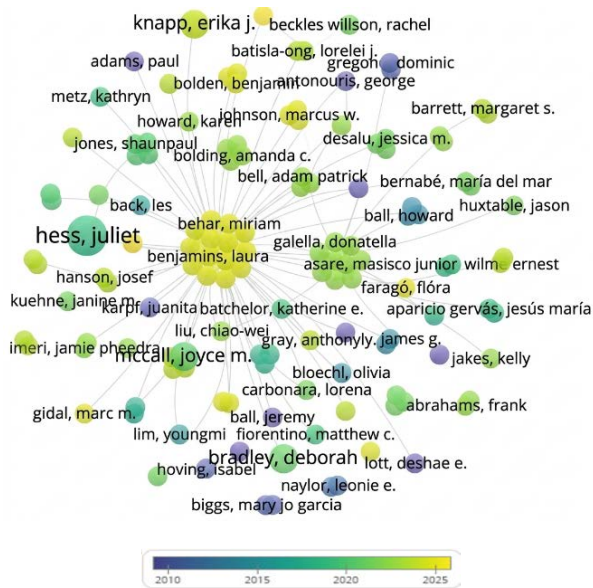


Fig. 7: Map of Co-authorships

Source: VOSviewer-Overlay Visualisation elaboration

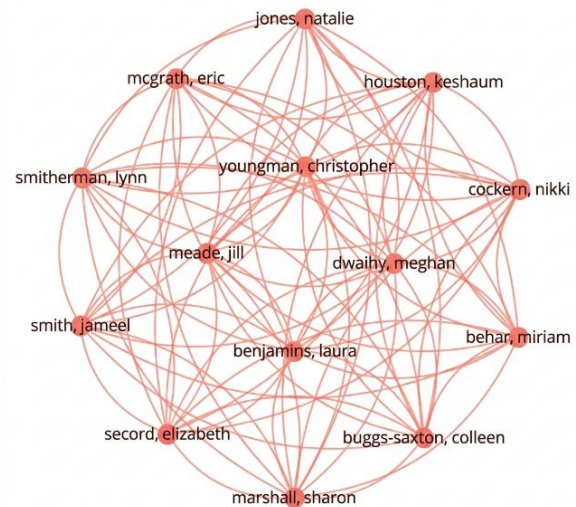


Fig. 8: Collaborations between authors.

Source: VOSviewer-Network Visualisation elaboration

The two views indicate a collaborative network composed of relatively autonomous constellations. Some authors, such as Jones, Houston, Cockern, Behar and Benjamins (McGrath et al., 2024), emerge as significant nodes in the dynamics of co-authorship, while others, although central on a theoretical or citational level, are less involved in direct collaborations. Compared to RQ1, the figure confirms a plural scientific structure, in which theoretical impact and collaborative participation do not necessarily coincide.

#### 4.3 The most cited sources

An analysis of the sources reveals which editorial offices have contributed most to shaping the debate. Of the 63 identified, Table 5 presents the 10 with the greatest impact.

Id	Source	Documents	Citations	TLS
1	American Sociological Review	1	758	0
2	Music Education for Social Change: Constructing an Activist Music Education	1	79	1
3	The Palgrave Handbook of Race and the Arts in Education	2	38	0
4	Music Education Research	4	28	1
5	Ethnicity and Disease	1	22	0
6	Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Diversity in Social Work	1	21	0
7	Marginalized Voices in Music Education	1	21	0
8	American Ethnologist	1	20	0
9	Music Educators Journal	3	18	3
10	Philosophy of Music Education Review	1	16	0

Tabl. 5: The most cited sources. Source: our own elaboration

The main finding concerns the variety of journals involved, including music education, ethnomusicology, critical pedagogy, psychology, and educational leadership. However, the often low or zero value of the TLS signals a weak integration between sources, suggesting a still fragmented circulation of knowledge. In relation to RQ1, this element confirms the field's interdisciplinary nature and the need to strengthen dialogue between publishing venues and research traditions.

Figure 9 represents the network of the most cited sources and their links.

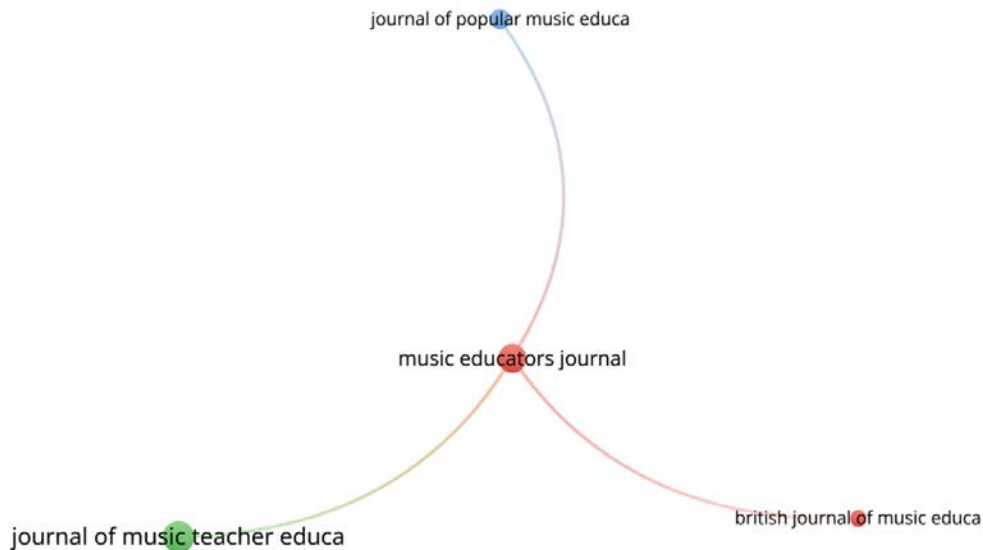


Fig. 9. Most cited sources and links. Source: VOSviewer - Network Visualisation

The map confirms the role of the *Music Educators Journal* as a central node, linked to sources such as *the Journal of Music Teacher Education*, *the Journal of Popular Music Education* and *the British Journal of Music Education*. The main fact is the presence of a recognisable editorial nucleus, but not yet densely integrated. Compared to RQ1, this suggests that the debate on music, education and racism develops through significant specialist forums, but is not yet fully connected.

#### 4.4 Keywords

The analysis of the keywords, ordered by frequency and TLS (Table 6), allows us to identify the most visible themes and emerging concepts in the corpus.

Id	Keyword	Occurrences	TLS	Keyword	Occurrences	TLS
1	Music Education	19	115	Racism	16	214
2	Racism	16	214	Music	13	212
3	Music	13	212	Human	6	200
4	Anti-Racism	10	92	Article	4	149
5	Critical Race Theory	6	41	Humans	4	148
6	Human	6	200	Music Education	19	115
7	Diversity	5	49	Alcoholism	2	102
8	Social Justice	5	23	Community	2	101
9	Article	4	149	Emotion	2	98
10	Humans	4	148	Psychology	2	98

Tab. 6: Keywords in order of frequency and TLS. Source: our own elaboration



pedagogical level, this fact suggests the need to question not only the content of the research but also the conditions under which some musical knowledge, educational traditions, and cultural perspectives become more visible than others.

The centrality of keywords such as music *education*, *racism*, *anti-racism*, *critical race theory*, *social justice* and *inclusion* shows that the literature indexed in Scopus tends to place music education within a critical framework, in which repertoires, canons, evaluation practices and training models are not considered neutral elements. Racism appears, in this perspective, not only as an individual attitude, but as a historical, institutional and cultural phenomenon that can affect the forms of selection, legitimisation and transmission of musical knowledge (Bradley, 2015; Hess, 2019). The presence of concepts such as *social justice*, *inclusion* and *accessibility* further expands the picture, indicating that the pedagogical problem concerns not only access to music but also the recognition of different sound genealogies, plural ways of learning, and the conditions under which students can recognise themselves in training courses.

The question of repertoires thus assumes decisive importance. The literature referred to in the corpus highlights how the cultured Western musical tradition, notation and formalised models of learning have played a central role in the history of music education, but also shows the risk that this centrality produces marginalisation of oral, improvisational, popular, diasporic and community practices (Koza, 2008; Schippers & Campbell, 2012). The critical-pedagogical perspective does not require the removal of canonical repertoires, but their historical recontextualisation: the canon can retain formative value if it is placed in relation to the social, cultural and political conditions that have supported its legitimacy. In this sense, music education can become a place to understand how artistic knowledge is constructed, transmitted, selected, and, at times, hierarchical.

Reading the less frequent but conceptually relevant keywords also allows us to identify emerging directions in the debate. Terms such as *community*, *health equity*, *accessibility*, *professional development*, and inclusive education suggest a broadening of attention to the community and the formative and psychosocial dimensions of music education. Inclusion, in particular, cannot be reduced to a superficial expansion of the repertoires. As the most recent decolonial and antiracist studies indicate, there is a risk of “aesthetic inclusion”, in which culturally diverse content is included in educational paths without changing value criteria, methodologies, educational relationships and forms of evaluation (Batisla-ong & Waller-Pace, 2023). The bibliometric data, while not directly demonstrating curricular transformations, therefore points out an essential pedagogical knot: the plurality of repertoires produces formative effects only when a critical review of teaching practices accompanies it.

Teacher training, therefore, represents a central junction. A musical education oriented towards cultural justice requires teachers capable of reading the repertoire not only as an aesthetic object but also as a historical document, a social practice, and a form of memory. This implies developing skills in contextualisation, critical listening, professional reflexivity and intercultural planning. Decolonial practices have been translated into concrete educational contexts, as documented in the literature. On the curricular side, Hess (2021) describes teacher-training courses in which the Western repertoire is placed in dialogue with oral, diasporic, and community traditions, starting with a critical analysis of the historical conditions that have produced its centrality. Mullen and Luna (2024) document a university teacher training program oriented towards the critical pedagogy of popular music, in which future teachers develop skills in cultural contextualisation and the design of antiracist teaching units. On the evaluation side, Batisla-ong and Waller-Pace (2023) show how the expansion of evaluation criteria, including critical listening, improvisation and personal reflection, is a necessary condition for inclusion not to remain aesthetic. In terms of in-service teacher training, Hendry (2023) documents the effects of its absence: students from cultural minorities perceive the school music curriculum as a space of exclusion rather than recognition. These studies converge in indicating that decolonisation does not coincide with the substitution of one canon for another, but with the construction of educational environments in which repertoires, evaluation criteria and educational relationships are questioned in their historical and cultural genealogies.

In light of RQ3, the critical pedagogical implications of the results can be traced back to three main directions. The first concerns the need to read bibliometric data as indicators of scientific visibility and not as immediate proof of school practices. The second concerns the possibility of using emerging keywords to guide new research on teacher training, curricular design and music evaluation in an inclusive key. The third concerns the need to build a closer dialogue between bibliometric analysis and empirical research,

so that the trends identified in the scientific debate can be verified in concrete educational contexts. The contribution of the study, therefore, lies in making visible the structure of a growing field and in identifying some pedagogical nuclei that require further theoretical, comparative, and empirical insights.

## 6. Conclusions

The present study provides a bibliometric mapping of the international debate on the relationship between music education and racism, integrating it with a critical-pedagogical reading of the main nuclei that have emerged. The survey answered the three research questions by identifying, on the one hand, the main trends, connections and emerging areas of the scientific production indexed in Scopus; on the other hand, the consolidated thematic lines and emerging concepts detected through the analysis of keywords; finally, the pedagogical implications that such evidence suggests in relation to teacher training, the contextualisation of repertoires and the construction of musical practices more aware of the dynamics of inclusion, visibility and cultural justice.

The results outline a field of research that is expanding but remains characterised by fragmentation in co-citation and co-authorship networks, with disciplinary clusters rarely interacting with one another. The distribution of keywords confirms the centrality of consolidated concepts (*music education, racism, anti-racism*) and signals the progressive emergence of themes such as *inclusion, health equity*, and community, which hold generative potential for new theoretical and didactic orientations.

The evidence, of a descriptive and problematising nature, does not allow prescriptive conclusions to be drawn about curricula or musical repertoires, but indicates a clear tendency towards the historical and cultural contextualisation of the contents and evaluation criteria. The growing attention to concepts such as *inclusion* and *social justice* does not imply an immediate reform of curricula, but the need to adopt more comparative and historicised approaches, capable of critically reading the genealogies of musical knowledge. In this perspective, Western tonal music is neither denied nor recognised as an object of critical study, alongside other legitimate musical traditions, to foster a broader understanding of the cultural processes and power dynamics that have shaped them.

The results obtained are consistent with international directives on education and inclusion, in particular with Goal 4 of the 2030 Agenda (quality, equity and inclusion) (United Nations, 2015) and with the Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (Council of the European Union, 2018), which promote training oriented towards cultural awareness and active citizenship. The study suggests the importance of developing teacher training paths centred on critical reflection on the links between music, society and evaluation, avoiding aesthetic reductions in inclusion and simplifications of educational inequalities.

The study has some methodological limitations that circumscribe the scope of the results. The analysis refers to the period 1995-2025 and is based exclusively on Scopus; it therefore does not include documents that may be present in the Web of Science, ERIC, RILM, or in national and professional archives not indexed in the database used. In addition, the corpus has been built through a targeted search string, music AND education AND racism, which privileges contributions in which the relationship between music, education and racism is explicitly mentioned, potentially leaving out related studies that use different lexicons, such as coloniality, whiteness, intercultural music education, migration or cultural diversity. The analysis does not examine national school curricula, educational policies or empirically observed teaching practices. The proposed inferences, therefore, remain limited to the bibliometric and critical-interpretative level and require further comparative, qualitative and empirical investigations to verify how these orientations are translated into training contexts.

Future research directions could develop along three complementary trajectories. A first line concerns the comparative analysis of national curricula and European regulatory references to understand how musical repertoires are selected, organised and enhanced across different educational systems. A second direction concerns the historical-conceptual study of less frequent but pedagogically significant keywords, such as inclusion, accessibility and social justice, to clarify their semantic evolution in different cultural and disciplinary contexts. A third perspective requires empirical and mixed-method investigations of teacher training processes, evaluation practices, and the impact of repertoire choices on student participa-

tion. In this way, bibliometric mapping can be integrated with research that observes how trends in scientific debate translate into educational practices and institutional contexts.

Without proposing to redefine educational practices, this work has contributed to bringing out the evolutionary dynamics of the debate on music education, highlighting the transformative potential of critical and decolonial perspectives. The contribution of the study, therefore, lies in making visible the bibliometric configuration of a growing field and in indicating, with interpretative caution, some pedagogical knots that require further theoretical, comparative, and empirical insights.

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