Bridging Traditions and Knowledge: A Bibliometric Review on Cultural Sustainability in Education

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Abstract
Cultural sustainability in education is crucial for preserving cultural heritage and fostering societal resilience and inclusivity. Despite being recognised by institutions like UNESCO as a cornerstone of sustainable development, its integration into education remains fragmented. Current practices often focus on isolated cultural elements rather than adopting a systemic approach. They limit the potential of education to address the evolving dynamics of cultural traditions. A significant gap exists in developing holistic frameworks for embedding cultural sustainability into education. Existing methods frequently fail to adapt to the dynamic nature of cultural traditions. It reduces their relevance and practical application in modern education. This study employed a bibliometric analysis to evaluate the research landscape of cultural sustainability in education. By analysing publications from 2015 onward, it identified leading authors, universities, countries, documents, subject areas, journals and number of publications. The findings revealed a growing academic interest in cultural sustainability, with notable contributions from Nordic institutions and researchers. Publications frequently highlighted interdisciplinary intersections across social sciences, environmental studies and digital technologies. However, research gaps persist in underrepresented regions and in translating theoretical insights into actionable frameworks for education. The integration of cultural sustainability into education can safeguard cultural heritage while supporting global sustainable development goals, such as quality education (SDG 4) and sustainable communities (SDG 11). To achieve this, collaboration between academia, policymakers and local communities is essential to adapt educational practices to evolving cultural and technological contexts. Future research should prioritise underrepresented regions and emphasise interdisciplinary approaches that leverage emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and virtual reality. Longitudinal studies and international collaborations are necessary to develop frameworks linking cultural preservation with sustainable educational practices globally. By addressing these gaps, education can become a transformative tool for cultural sustainability and global development.

Keywords: Cultural Sustainability, Education, Bibliometric Review

Introduction

Cultural sustainability in education has garnered increasing recognition as a vital mechanism for safeguarding cultural heritage while promoting societal resilience and inclusivity. Cultural heritage encompasses both tangible and intangible assets. It reflects historical traditions, collective identities and social values as defined by diverse global stakeholders (Mazzocchi, 2022). UNESCO shows the multidimensional significance of cultural heritage. It is framed as a cornerstone of sustainable development due to its symbolic, economic and environmental roles (UNESCO, 2009). However, despite this recognition, efforts to integrate cultural sustainability into education remain sporadic, fragmented and inconsistent. It highlights the broader neglect of its potential to operate as a systemic and transformative framework.

Current literature indicates that cultural sustainability in education is often limited to isolated initiatives, such as the preservation of artefacts or the promotion of cultural tourism, rather than an integration of cultural values across educational structures (Lin et al., 2023). While some noteworthy examples exist, such as Indonesia's Wayang Wong Bocah dance training and the incorporation of ritual dances in Chinese universities, these approaches tend to focus on individual cultural elements without addressing the holistic and evolving nature of cultural heritage (Hartono et al., 2022). Furthermore, rigid and prescriptive pedagogical frameworks have drawn criticism for their inability to accommodate the adaptive qualities of cultural practices. For instance, research on Malaysia's Makyung dance highlights how inflexible instructional methods fail to preserve the spontaneity and dynamic contexts that are intrinsic to such traditions (Gonzales, 2021).

These shortcomings point to an urgent need for more integrative and adaptable approaches to embedding cultural sustainability within education. This necessitates a research to explore the interplay between traditional cultural practices and modern educational strategies. By leveraging bibliometric analysis and synthesising existing theoretical frameworks, this study aimed to propose actionable solutions for bridging cultural traditions and contemporary knowledge systems in education. Such strategies would contribute not only to the preservation of cultural heritage but also to the advancement of global sustainable development goals, particularly those related to quality education (SDG 4) and sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11).

This study aimed to investigate the state of research on cultural sustainability in education by addressing the following key questions:

(1) Who are the leading authors contributing to the study of cultural sustainability in education?
(2) What are the top affiliations actively involved in this research field?
(3) Which countries are most engaged in cultural sustainability research within education?
(4) What types of documents are most frequently published in this area?
(5) Which subject areas are commonly explored in studies of cultural sustainability in education?
(6) What are the top journals publishing relevant research?
(7) How has the number of publications in this field evolved over the years?

By addressing these research questions, this study aimed to contribute a nuanced understanding of cultural sustainability in education to pave the way for integrative and impactful strategies to protect cultural heritage while advancing global sustainability initiatives.

The motivation behind this study stems from the pressing need to bridge the gap between traditional cultural knowledge and modern education. By illuminating the transformative potential of cultural sustainability in fostering inclusivity, resilience and sustainable development, this study contributes to addressing critical global challenges. Its significance lies in offering actionable insights that can guide educational policymakers, practitioners and researchers in designing culturally adaptive and impactful frameworks. Thereby, it reinforces the vital role of education as a vehicle for cultural preservation and societal progress.

Literature Review
The concept of cultural heritage has evolved significantly over time. It is shaped by the interactions and dialectics of various stakeholders. One of the earliest definitions of cultural heritage is found in the *Venice Charter* (1964). It is described as a living testimony of ancient traditions (Mazzocchi, 2022). Over the years, this understanding has broadened. For example, cultural heritage is now often defined as an intangible cultural asset that reflects events, ways of life and societal beliefs (Perez-Guilarte et al., 2023). The *Oxford Learner's Dictionary* offers a more generalised definition. It is refered to the history, traditions, beliefs, art, buildings and objects that have long been part of a society's identity. It is considered essential to its character and historical continuity (Oxford University Press, n.d.). Academics take a further nuanced view. They conceptualise cultural heritage as traditions, knowledge and practices passed down through generations. It fosters a sense of identity and societal recognition (Perez-Guilarte et al., 2023). The UNESCO definition encapsulates both tangible and intangible heritage, including artefacts, monuments and sites. It recognises their symbolic, artistic, historical, ethnological and social significance (UNESCO, 2009).

Next, cultural heritage holds immense value for local, national and global communities. UNESCO and ICOMOS have identified cultural sustainability. They include heritage preservation as one of the four pillars of sustainable development (Kapelari et al., 2020). On a national scale, cultural heritage serves as a key driver for sectors such as tourism. It is less sensitive to climate risks compared to others (Fatoric & Egberts, 2020). Fatoric and Egberts (2020) articulated five major dimensions of cultural heritage's relevance to climate action, namely informational, social, economic, aesthetic and environmental. Informational benefits relate to knowledge derived from historical land use patterns and architectural techniques. They offer insights into resilience. Social benefits include fostering a sense of place, cultural identity and shared memory. On the other hand, economic advantages stem from adaptive reuse in heritage conservation and the development of cultural tourism. Aesthetic contributions shape the design of urban and rural environments, enhancing their appeal and spatial quality. Finally, environmental benefits are realised through practices such as retrofitting historical structures. They could reduce carbon footprints.

In addition, the integration of cultural heritage into education is vital for ensuring its sustainability. Education and training serve as key mechanisms for safeguarding cultural

heritage and are aligned with the targets of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It aims to strengthen efforts to protect and preserve cultural and natural heritage. Additionally, heritage preservation education intersects with SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SGD 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by providing skills-based training that can generate new employment opportunities (Achille & Fiorillo, 2022). Beyond the preservation of artefacts, education plays a critical role in transmitting traditional knowledge and skills to future generations (Lin et al., 2023).

Numerous studies highlighted the role of education in preserving cultural heritage. Hartono et al. (2022) investigated the preservation of Javanese culture through the Wayang Wong Bocah dance. It was conducted by the Tjipta Boedaja Dance Studio. The study demonstrated how regular training for children volunteers has enabled the institution to protect and maintain cultural traditions. Hence, it prevents their extinction. Similarly, Zhuoma and Hae (2024) explored the intersection of visual art and dance education to preserve Korean cultural heritage. The integration of visual resources improved students' dance skills. It transformed their aesthetic perceptions and enhanced the efficiency of learning processes.

Following that, the preservation of Malaysia's *Makyung* dance, an intangible cultural heritage recognised by UNESCO since 2005, has also been studied extensively. Gonzales (2021) identified the collective efforts of educational institutions, grassroots organisations and non-profits as critical to safeguarding the *Makyung* amidst modernisation and urbanisation pressures. However, the researcher criticised rigid pedagogical approaches in universities. It focused excessively on aesthetic precision and synchronisation. Thereby, it could diminish the spontaneity inherent in the tradition.

Moreover, the preservation of Mexico's dance heritage through children's ballet *folklorico* offers another compelling example. Johnson et al. (2021) examined how this tradition strengthens individual identity while fostering collective pride within the cultural community. Their ethnographic study identified three key dimensions of the practice: *herencia* (heritage), *familia* (family) and *orgullo* (pride). It highlighted the significance of dance as both an individual and communal cultural expression.

In China, Ma (2023) investigated the use of information technology in preserving the ritual dances of West Hunan culture within university dance programmes. The study found that photo and video resources were the most utilised tools (68.4%) for preserving this intangible heritage. These materials have enabled educators to modernise traditional dance curricula, develop online resources such as webinars and enhance the teaching of both Chinese and global cultural traditions.

In conclusion, these studies collectively demonstrate the indispensable role of education in cultural heritage preservation. They also underline the importance of integrating cultural sustainability into education through innovative and inclusive strategies. By leveraging education as a medium for transmitting traditional knowledge, fostering social cohesion and adapting cultural practices to contemporary contexts, the preservation of cultural heritage can be both a local and global endeavour aligned with sustainable development goals.

Methodology

To conduct a bibliometric review, a substantial number of relevant articles were required. The initial keyword search—"education" and "cultural sustainability"—on Google Scholar, limited to publications from 2015 onwards. It yielded approximately 15,900 results. However, this volume was unmanageable for analysis due to the inclusion of various publication types and the lack of filtering tools. Consequently, the search was refined and conducted on the Scopus database. It offers a more structured approach to bibliometric analysis. The refined search query used was:TITLE-ABS-KEY ("education" AND "cultural sustainability") AND PUBYEAR > 2014 AND PUBYEAR < 2026. This query retrieved 124 publications within the specified timeframe. These articles were then subjected to bibliometric analysis. A flowchart illustrating the search and selection process is provided below.
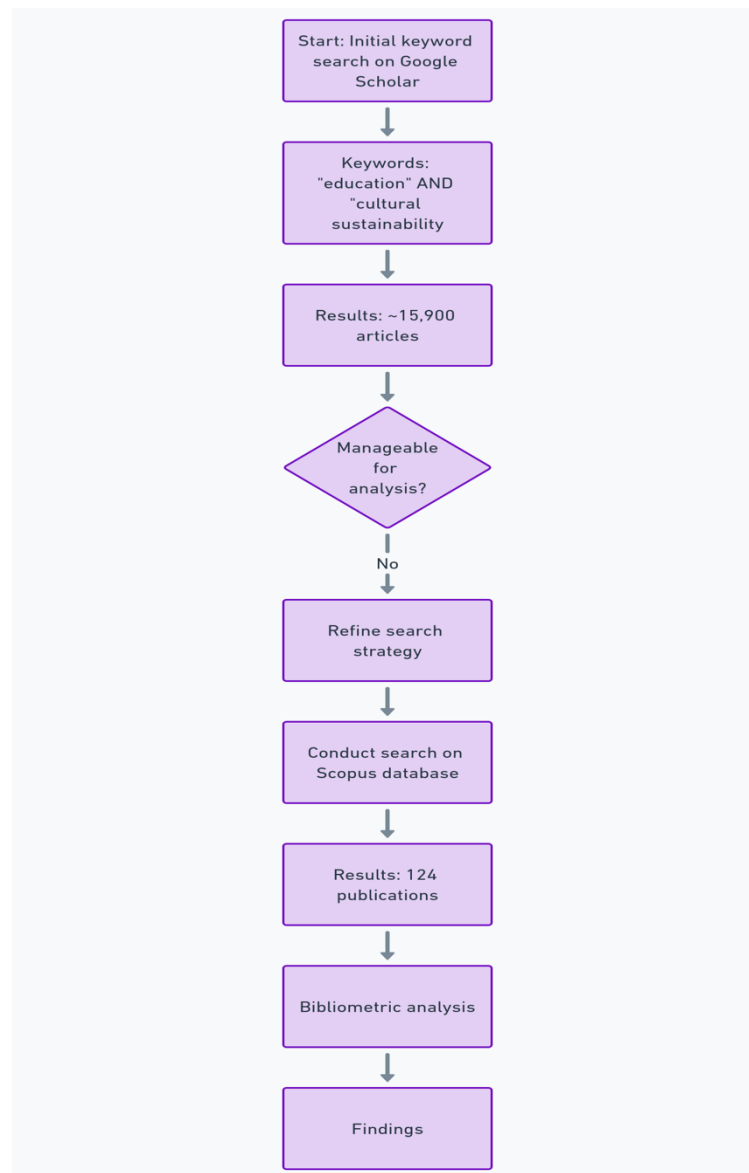

Figure 1 Methodology Flowchart

Results

The findings are presented in alignment with each research question.

Who are the leading authors contributing to the study of cultural sustainability in education?

Based on Figure 2, the leading authors contributing have been identified and ranked by the number of documents they have published. First of all, Jokela emerges as the most prolific author (4 publications). It demonstrates a strong and consistent focus on cultural sustainability in education. It positions Jokela as a central figure in advancing theoretical frameworks and practical insights within this domain. Grindheim and Huhmarniemi share the second position (3 publications). Their substantial output suggests their importance as influential researchers. They are likely to addresse distinct aspects of cultural sustainability and expanding the discourse through their focused contributions.

Additionally, several other authors, including Birkeland, Bohm, Brinia, Handayani, Heuman, Härkönen and Rahman have each contributed 2 publications. This group represents a diverse set of researchers whose work likely addresses various dimensions of cultural sustainability in education, spanning local, national and global contexts. The variation in the number of publications among these authors reflects the multidisciplinary and collaborative nature of cultural sustainability research. Jokela with higher publication counts is likely to serve as foundational contributors. He could provide comprehensive studies or theoretical frameworks that influence the work of others. In contrast, authors with fewer publications may focus on niche or emerging subtopics, offering specialised perspectives that complement the broader discourse.
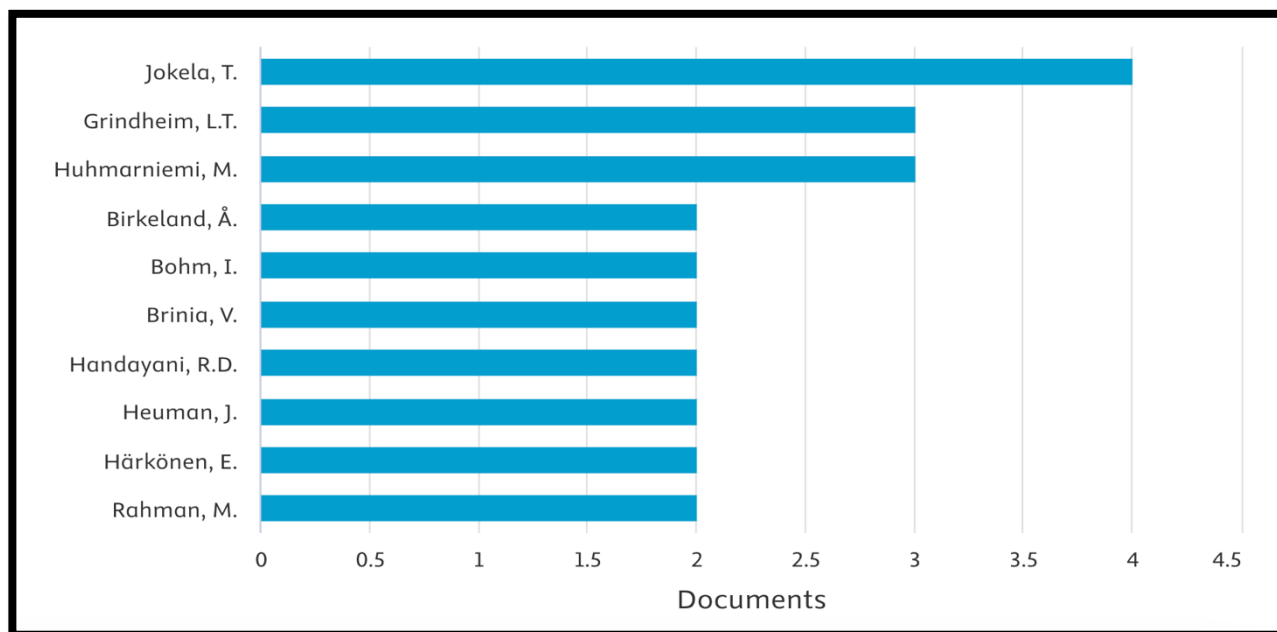

Figure 2 Leading Authors

What are the top affiliations actively involved in this research field?

Referring to Figure 3, the top affiliations actively contributing to research in cultural sustainability within education are ranked by the number of documents they have published. Lapin Yliopisto (University of Lapland) and the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences lead the field (5 publications). Lapin Yliopisto's focus likely reflects its geographical positioning in the Arctic region and its emphasis on northern cultural studies. Thus, it becomes a key

institution for exploring the intersections of education, sustainability and regional traditions. Similarly, the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences highlights a Scandinavian perspective. It emphasises sustainable educational practices rooted in local cultural traditions and values. Next, Helsingin Yliopisto (University of Helsinki) follows closely (4 publications). Its research likely spans diverse cultural and education. Also, it focuses on the integration of sustainability and inclusivity into education.

Jönköping University and The University of Auckland have each contributed three pubilications. It reflects their growing involvement in the field. Jönköping University's work may centre on interdisciplinary approaches to integrating education with cultural preservation efforts, while The University of Auckland likely focuses on indigenous knowledge systems and the role of education in preserving cultural heritage across the Pacific region. Other institutions, including the Slovak University of Technology, Turun Yliopisto (University of Turku), Indian Institute of Technology, National Yunlin University of Science and Technology, and Åbo Akademi University, have each contributed two publications. These institutions represent the global engagement with cultural sustainability research. Their works reflect localised or niche studies that complement the broader discourse in the field.
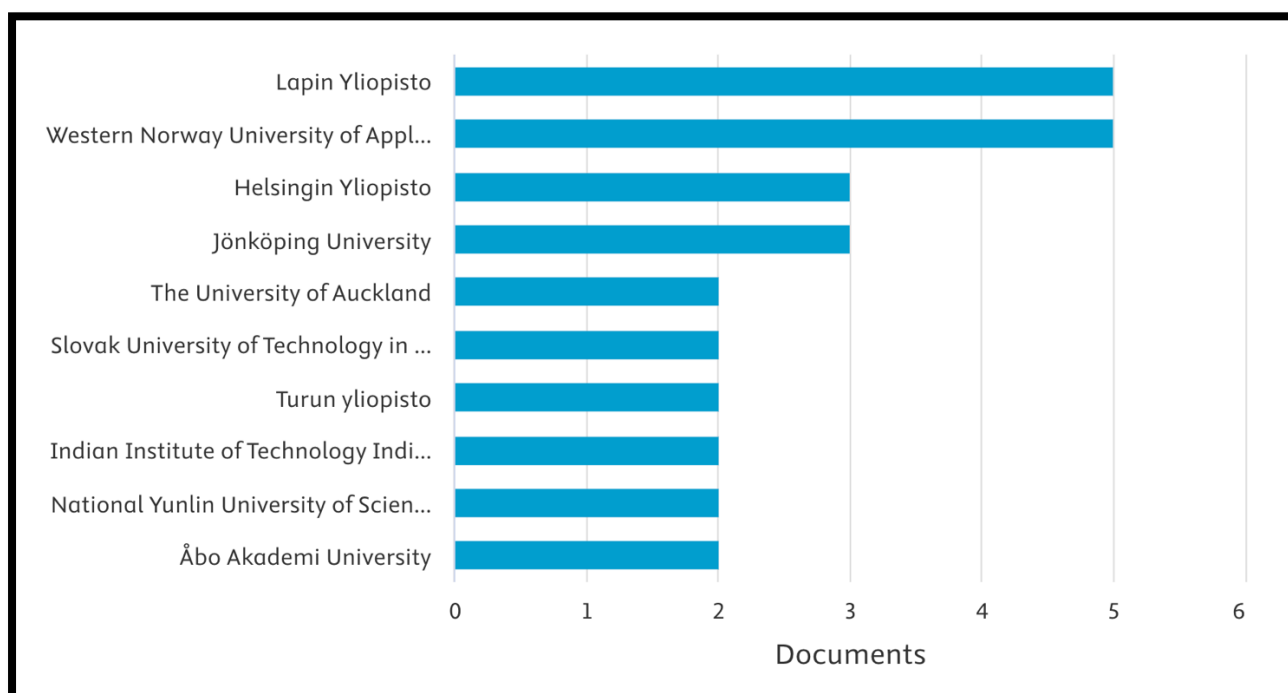

Figure 3 Top Affiliations

Which countries are most engaged in cultural sustainability research within education?
With reference to Figure 4, the countries most actively engaged in cultural sustainability research in education are ranked by the number of publications. The United States leads with the highest number of publications (18 publications). It reflects its significant engagement in the field. This dominance is likely attributed to its expansive academic infrastructure, diverse cultural contexts and focus on embedding sustainable development goals within education. Research in the U.S. likely centres on multicultural education, indigenous knowledge systems and strategies to integrate cultural sustainability across its diverse educational settings. Finland follows closely (14 publications). It highlights its

reputation for a progressive education system. Finland's contributions likely focus on integrating cultural heritage and sustainability into policies and practices. It emphasises the preservation of cultural identity while fostering innovation and sustainability within education.

Next, China (12 publications) emerges as another major contributor. Given its extensive cultural heritage and emphasis on preserving intangible cultural practices, research in China likely explores how traditional practices can be adapted to modern education while promoting cultural preservation on a national scale. Norway (10 publications) demonstrates a strong commitment to sustainability. It leverages its cultural and environmental preservation frameworks. Norwegian research likely focuses on indigenous knowledge, particularly the integration of Sámi culture into education.

Other countries also show notable contributions to the field. Australia, Spain, and Turkey each contribute 7 publications. It reflects moderate engagement. Research in these countries may focus on themes such as multicultural education, indigenous knowledge preservation and regional efforts to align cultural sustainability with education. Indonesia and Sweden follow closely (6 publications). Indonesia's research likely centres on preserving local traditions, while Sweden's work likely examines sustainability and education from a Nordic perspective. Canada (5 publications) appears to prioritise multicultural and indigenous education in reconciliation and heritage preservation. The distribution of publications reveals a global interest in cultural sustainability within education, with developed countries leading the field due to their robust academic networks, strong policy frameworks and established commitments to sustainable development.
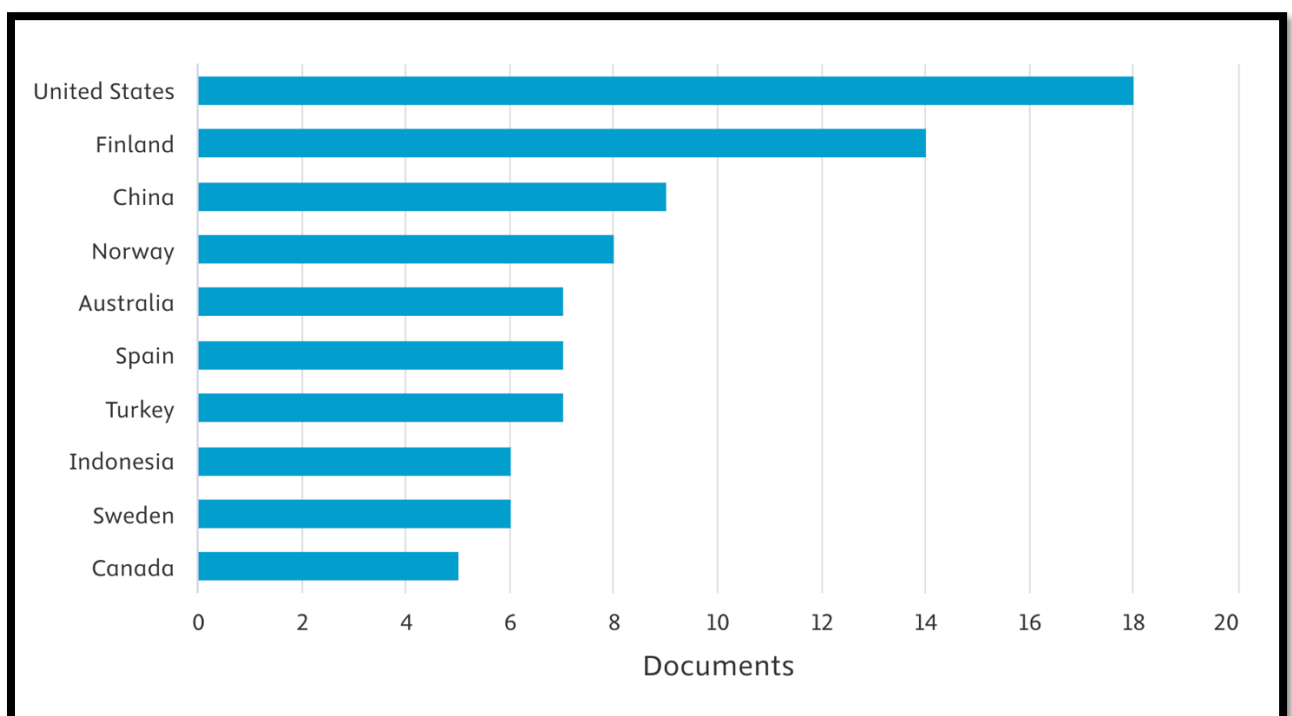

Figure 4 Top Countries

What types of documents are most frequently published in this area?

Based on Figure 5, the types of documents most frequently published in the area of cultural sustainability in education are distributed across several categories. Articles represent the majority. It accounts for 74.2% of the total output. This dominance demonstrates the reliance on peer-reviewed journal articles as the primary medium for disseminating research findings. These publications likely encompass a wide range of content, including empirical studies, theoretical frameworks and case studies that explore various dimensions of cultural sustainability in education. Book chapters make up 13.7%. They are another significant category. They allow researchers to provide in-depth discussions on specific themes within edited volumes. Also, they often facilitate interdisciplinary and comprehensive analyses of the topic.

Next, conference papers constitute 4.8% of the total. They reflecting the active discussion of cultural sustainability in education within academic conferences. These venues serve as platforms for presenting emerging research and fostering collaboration among scholars. Meanwhile, books account for 2.4% of the publications. They offer comprehensive treatments of the subject. Books often serve as foundational texts for educators, researchers, and policymakers. They provide theoretical insights and practical applications. Review papers, which represent 1.6%, synthesise existing literature, identify research gaps and propose future directions for the field.

Other document types, including editorials, data papers, notes, and conference reviews account for 0.8% of the total output. Although limited in number, these contributions often address specialised or contextual topics and may focus on methodological or conceptual issues. The distribution of document types reflects the academic preference for journal articles to establish and advance knowledge in the field. The substantial presence of book chapters and conference papers highlights the interdisciplinary and collaborative nature of cultural sustainability research. However, the relatively smaller proportion of books and review papers suggests an opportunity for more comprehensive theoretical syntheses and broader foundational works to guide the field.
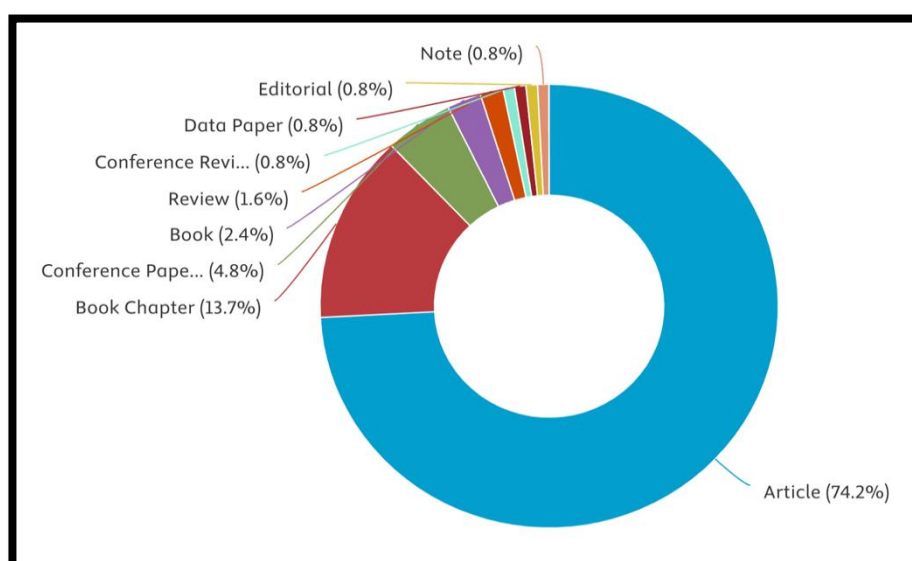

Figure 5 Types of Documents

Which subject areas are commonly explored in studies of cultural sustainability in education?

Based on Figure 6, the subject areas most commonly explored in studies of cultural sustainability in education are distributed across a range of disciplines. The social sciences dominate the field. It accounts for 36.1% of the research. It highlights the focus on human behaviour, societal structures and cultural interactions. They are central to understanding and promoting cultural sustainability in education. Topics such as sociology, anthropology and education policy are likely prevalent within this category. Environmental sciences constitute 13.0% of the research. It reflects the interdisciplinary nature of the field. Studies in this area likely examine the relationship between cultural heritage, sustainable development and ecological preservation, with an emphasis on the environmental dimensions of education. Computer science accounts for 10.8% of the research. It signals the growing role of digital tools and technologies in cultural sustainability. This includes the digitisation of cultural artefacts, the development of virtual education platforms and the integration of technology into culturally relevant teaching practices. Similarly, energy-related studies has 10.4%. It explores sustainability aspects of educational infrastructure, such as energy-efficient school buildings, the use of renewable energy in educational institutions and the alignment of cultural traditions with sustainable energy practices.

The arts and humanities contributes 7.1%. It emphasises the role of cultural expression—such as literature, visual arts, and performing arts—in preserving and transmitting cultural heritage through creative and artistic mediums. Engineering research, at 5.6%, likely addresses sustainable infrastructure development, culturally sensitive design practices and innovative educational tools that align with cultural preservation goals. Business, management, and accounting make up 5.2% of the research. They focus on the economic implications of cultural sustainability in education, such as funding models, resource management and integrating cultural heritage into sustainable business practices. Psychology, at 4.1%, explores the cognitive and emotional impacts of culturally relevant education, including its role in identity formation, resilience, and the psychological benefits of preserving cultural heritage. Smaller contributions come from agricultural and biological sciences (1.5%) and earth and planetary sciences (1.1%). They examine the intersection of cultural traditions with natural systems, such as the role of agriculture and ecological knowledge in education. Additionally, other disciplines account for 5.2%, reflecting the diverse and interdisciplinary nature of cultural sustainability research.

The distribution of subject areas accentuates the inherently multidisciplinary nature of cultural sustainability in education. Social sciences lead the field. It reflects their foundational role in understanding cultural systems and their connection to educational practices. At the same time, substantial contributions from environmental sciences, computer science and energy highlight the integration of sustainability and technology into cultural education. This diversity of disciplines demonstrates the complexity of embedding cultural heritage into sustainable educational practices.
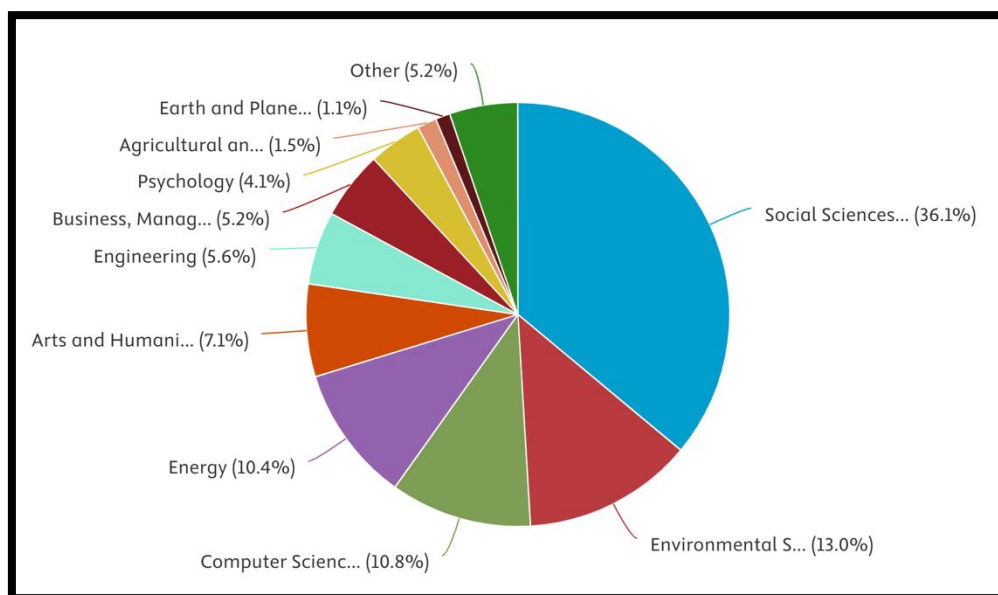
Figure 6 *Common Subject Areas*

What are the top journals publishing relevant research?

Referring to Figure 7, the top journals publishing research on cultural sustainability in education have been identified. To initiate, *Sustainability (Switzerland)* emerges as the leading journal. With a peak of six publications in 2020, it is followed by a slight decline while maintaining consistent output over subsequent years. This journal's focus on interdisciplinary sustainability research, including cultural dimensions in education. It shows its role as a major platform for addressing the intersection of cultural heritage and sustainable development. *Education Sciences* follows. It maintains a steady publication rate over the years. This journal focuses on advancements in education, including pedagogical strategies and policy integration related to cultural sustainability. It is a consistent contributor to the field.

In addition, *Environmental Education Research* also demonstrates a steady publication pattern. It reflects its emphasis on the environmental aspects of education and the alignment of cultural sustainability with ecological education. Its contributions highlight the importance of integrating cultural and environmental sustainability within educational research. *ECNU Review of Education* publishes less frequently. Yet, it provides a specialised focus on education in East Asia. This journal likely offers insights into how cultural traditions and educational policies intersect in specific regional contexts. Lastly, *Advances in Intelligent Systems and Computing* contributes fewer publications but plays an important role in showcasing the technological dimension of cultural sustainability in education. Its focus likely includes studies on digital tools, artificial intelligence and computing systems that support the preservation of cultural heritage through education.
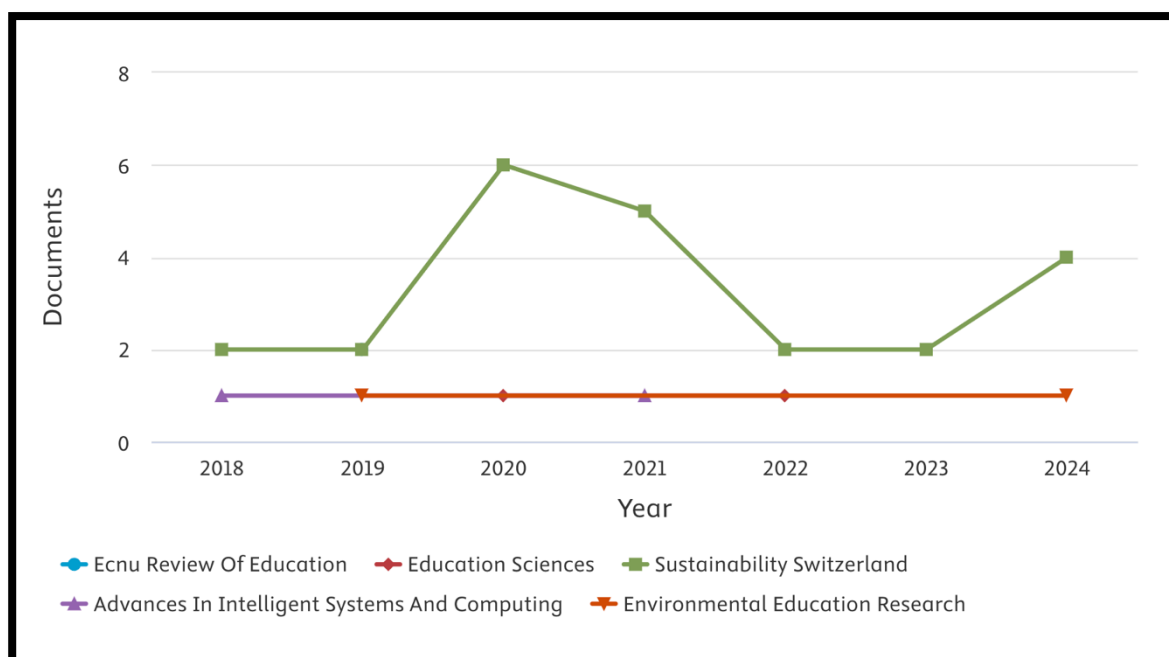
Figure 7 Top Journals

How has the number of publications in this field evolved over the years?

Figure 8 illustrates the evolution of the number of publications in the field of cultural sustainability in education over the years. From 2015 to 2019, there was a clear pattern of steady growth. The number of publications gradually increased. Starting with fewer than five publications in 2015, the consistent rise during this period reflected a growing academic interest in cultural sustainability as part of broader discourses on sustainability and education. This gradual expansion suggests increasing awareness of the importance of integrating cultural dimensions into educational frameworks.

A significant peak is observed in 2020. The number of publications reached approximately 20. This sharp rise could be attributed to heightened global interest in sustainability initiatives during this time, including education reforms and the preservation of cultural heritage as a response to societal and environmental challenges. Following this surge, a decline was observed from 2021 to 2023. Publication numbers stabilised at a lower but consistent level. This plateau indicates that while the initial surge in interest subsided, the field retained relevance. It maintained steady research output during this period.

Another notable peak is observed in 2024. The number of publications once again rivaled the high seen in 2020. This resurgence suggests renewed attention to cultural sustainability in education. It is potentially driven by global sustainability initiatives or the integration of new technologies and innovative frameworks into the field. However, a sharp drop is evident in 2025. This decline may be the result of incomplete data for the year or a temporary reduction in research output. As such, it may not represent the complete trajectory of the field as 2025 progresses. The observed trends reflect the increasing recognition of cultural sustainability as a critical component of education during periods of intensified global focus on sustainability, such as in 2020 and 2024. These fluctuations are likely influenced by shifts in global priorities, the availability of funding and evolving academic trends.
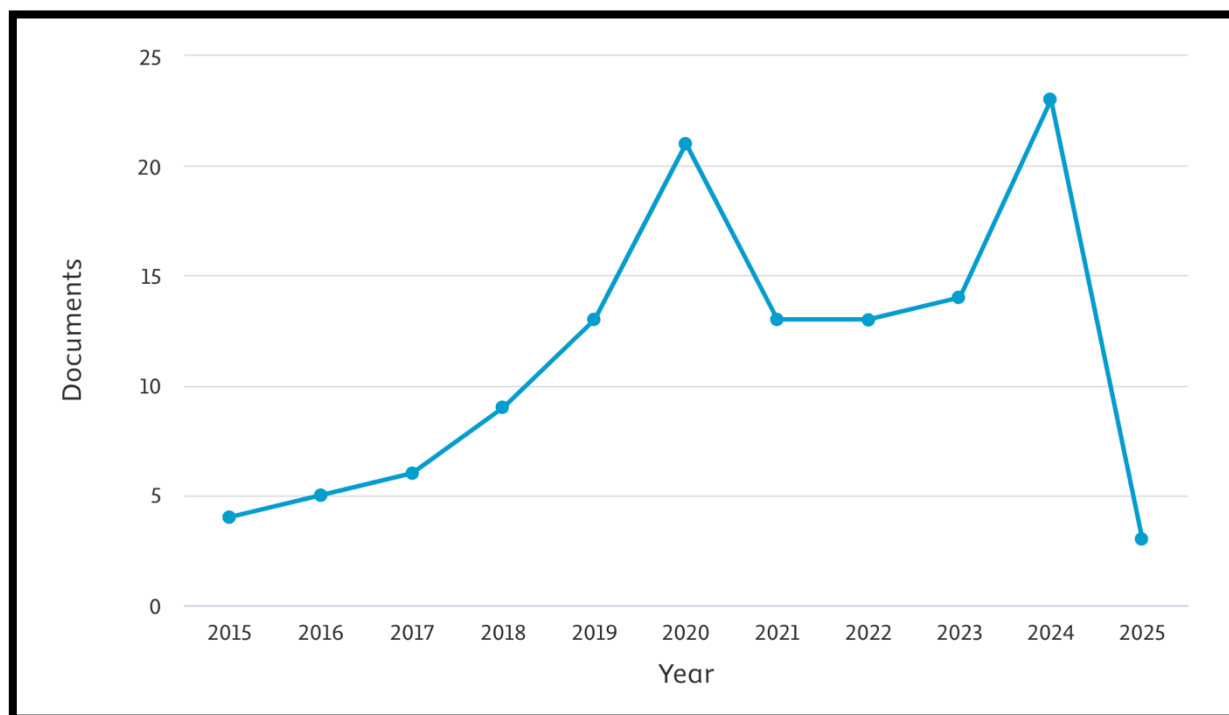
Figure 8 Number of Publications

Discussion

The discussions are presented in alignment with each research question.

Research Question (1)

The prominence of Jokela as the most prolific contributor with 4 publications demonstrates his pivotal role in shaping both theoretical and practical understandings of cultural sustainability in education. Jokela's extensive research output likely serves as a foundational resource to offer comprehensive frameworks and methodologies that have influenced subsequent studies. This pattern aligns with broader trends in academia, where a small number of prolific authors often drive key theoretical advancements and heavily influence citation networks (Haghighat & Hayatdavoudi, 2020). His contributions may also reflect a focused institutional or regional emphasis on cultural sustainability. It could warrant further exploration to understand its broader impact.

The comparative contributions of Grindheim and Huhmarniemi with three publications each highlight the diversity of voices in the field. It suggests that cultural sustainability in education is not dominated by a single scholar. These authors likely address complementary or distinct dimensions of the topic. Thereby, it could enrich the depth and breadth of the field. For instance, their work may explore niche areas such as indigenous education in art-based practices, or region-specific policy implementations. The group of authors contributing two publications each, including Birkeland, Bohm, Brinia, Handayani, Heuman, Härkönen and Rahman represents a vibrant and diverse scholarly community. While their publication numbers are relatively modest, their contributions likely provide critical insights into emerging subfields or region-specific contexts. Such contributions align with the concept of "peripheral authorship" in academic networks, where researchers with fewer publications often introduce novel or underexplored perspectives that challenge or complement dominant narratives (Plakhotnik, 2022). Their work may also reflect regionally

specific concerns or innovative approaches that extend the reach of cultural sustainability research into new areas.

One critical observation is the absence of explicit mention of collaborative networks or citation dynamics among these authors. Given the inherently interdisciplinary nature of cultural sustainability in education, future research would benefit from network analysis to map collaborative linkages, thematic clusters and citation flows. Such an approach could provide insights into how these authors influence one another and collectively shape the discourse on cultural sustainability. For instance, a network analysis might reveal whether authors like Jokela act as central hubs of knowledge dissemination or whether smaller groups of researchers collaborate around specific themes or contexts. Furthermore, the prominence of certain authors, such as Jokela, raises questions about the potential centralisation of knowledge production within the field. While central figures can provide cohesion and foundational frameworks, an overreliance on a few voices may limit the diversity and innovation of approaches.

Research Question (2)
The leadership of Lapin Yliopisto (University of Lapland) and the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, each with five publications show a strong Nordic focus on the integration of cultural heritage, sustainability and education. The regional positioning and cultural priorities of these institutions likely influence their research agendas. Lapin Yliopisto's emphasis on Arctic cultural studies aligns with its geographical context. It prioritises the preservation of northern traditions and their incorporation into educational practices. Similarly, the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences is likely rooted in exploring how Scandinavian values and local cultural practices inform sustainable education frameworks. These findings support research indicating that regional contexts often shape institutional research priorities in sustainability-focused fields (Ordonez-Ponce., 2021).

The contributions of Helsingin Yliopisto (University of Helsinki) with four publications further highlight Finland's strong academic engagement with cultural sustainability. Finland's globally recognised education model. It prioritises equity, interdisciplinarity and ecological awareness to provide a foundation for this research (Hardy et al., 2021). Helsingin Yliopisto's work likely builds on these principles to explore how inclusivity and sustainability can be embedded into education while maintaining a balance between local traditions and global pedagogical standards. This model may offer valuable lessons for other regions aiming to reconcile cultural preservation with modern educational imperatives.

Jönköping University and The University of Auckland, each contributing three publications bring complementary perspectives to the field. Jönköping University's interdisciplinary research likely bridges cultural preservation with innovations in education to address how cultural sustainability can be operationalised within contemporary education. Meanwhile, The University of Auckland's contributions are likely centred on indigenous knowledge systems such as those of the Māori and Pacific Islander communities. This focus aligns with broader global efforts to integrate indigenous epistemologies into sustainability and education discourses (Druker-Ibáñez & Cáceres-Jensen, 2022). It highlights the importance of culturally sensitive and context-specific approaches to education.

The contributions from institutions such as the Slovak University of Technology, Turun Yliopisto (University of Turku), Indian Institute of Technology, National Yunlin University of Science and Technology, and Åbo Akademi University, each with two publications reflect the global engagement with cultural sustainability research. Although these institutions produce fewer publications, their work likely focuses on localised or niche studies to provide unique insights into how education, culture and sustainability intersect. For example, the Indian Institute of Technology's involvement may reflect efforts to incorporate traditional Indian knowledge systems into modern STEM education, a critical area given India's diverse cultural heritage and rapid technological advancements.

The prominence of Nordic institutions, including Lapin Yliopisto, the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Helsingin Yliopisto, and Turun Yliopisto shows the strong policy frameworks in the region that support cultural preservation and sustainability in education. Scandinavian societies have historically prioritised sustainable development by integrating sustainability principles into national education policies (Kjøde et al., 2021). This institutional focus has created fertile ground for pioneering research in cultural sustainability and its application in education. However, the participation of institutions from regions such as New Zealand, Taiwan, India and Slovakia highlights the global relevance of this field. This diversity points to the value of cross-regional dialogue in sharing best practices and adapting strategies to different cultural and education.

Despite the significant contributions of leading institutions, there is a noticeable gap in cross-institutional and international collaborations. While Nordic universities dominate the discourse, stronger partnerships between institutions in the Global North and South could enrich the field by fostering a more inclusive understanding of cultural sustainability. For instance, collaborations between Scandinavian universities and institutions in Asia or the Pacific could explore intersections between indigenous knowledge systems, technological innovations and educational sustainability. Such partnerships could also address the challenges of balancing regional cultural priorities with global sustainability goals.

Research Question (3)
The United States leads with approximately 18 publications. It reflects its significant academic infrastructure and commitment to integrating sustainability within its diverse and multicultural education. U.S. emphasises themes such as multicultural education and indigenous knowledge systems. They align with its diverse sociocultural landscape and longstanding efforts to address equity and inclusion in education (Luo & Gao, 2024). Additionally, the integration of cultural sustainability into sustainable development goals (SDGs) in the U.S. reflects a broader emphasis on fostering inclusive and contextually relevant educational practices (Tao & Tao, 2024). Finland, with 14 publications, reinforces its global reputation as an educational innovator. Finnish focuses on synthesising cultural heritage with contemporary sustainability paradigms. It reflects the country's emphasis on equity, innovation and identity preservation within its education system. Finland's integration of cultural sustainability into national policy—such as initiatives supporting Sámi languages and traditions—demonstrates its commitment to inclusivity and cultural preservation (Valoma, 2024). This policy-driven approach positions Finland as a model for linking cultural sustainability within education to broader societal objectives.

With 12 publications, China also emerges as a significant contributor. Given its rich cultural heritage and the government's prioritisation of intangible cultural preservation, Chinese explores how traditional practices can be adapted within modern educational frameworks. China's focus on using education to promote cultural identity and sustainability aligns with its broader strategies for balancing modernisation with tradition in the face of rapid globalisation (Ullah et al., 2021). This dual emphasis situates China as a key player in advancing cultural sustainability within education globally. Countries such as Norway (10 publications), Australia, Spain and Turkey (8 publications each) offer complementary perspectives. Norway's contributions demonstrate a commitment to indigenous knowledge systems, particularly the integration of Sámi culture into educational frameworks. It reflects a broader Nordic approach to merging sustainability and cultural preservation (Somby & Olsen, 2022). Australia's research, on the other hand, focuses on multicultural and indigenous education in reconciliation and the preservation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures (Weuffen et al., 2023). Spain and Turkey, though differing in cultural and education, likely explore themes of regional cultural preservation and the alignment of educational practices with sustainable development goals.

The contributions from Indonesia and Sweden (7 publications each) and Canada (6 publications) highlight diverse yet context-specific approaches. Indonesia focuses on preserving local traditions in a culturally and linguistically diverse nation. It addresses the challenges and opportunities of promoting cultural sustainability in such a context. Sweden, consistent with other Nordic countries, emphasises sustainability education linked to both regional and global cultural heritage preservation efforts. Meanwhile, Canada's contributions focus on multicultural and indigenous education in reconciliation and preserving First Nations, Métis, and Inuit traditions (Petryshyn, 2024). The dominance of developed countries, such as the United States, Finland, Norway, and Sweden, demonstrates the influence of robust academic infrastructures, well-funded research ecosystems and strong policy frameworks in advancing cultural sustainability research. However, the growing contributions from emerging economies, including Indonesia and Turkey, highlight an increasing recognition of the importance of preserving cultural heritage through education in regions under pressure from globalisation and cultural homogenisation. This trend signals a global shift toward valuing diverse cultural perspectives within the framework of sustainable development.

Research Question (4)
The predominance of journal articles (74.2%) shows their central role in advancing discourse. Peer-reviewed articles remain a cornerstone of academic communication. They offer a platform for rigorous evaluation and broad dissemination of findings. This aligns with broader academic trends where journal articles are prioritised due to their accessibility, credibility and contribution to citation metrics. They often influence recognition, funding and academic standing. The content of these articles likely reflects a range of methodologies and focuses, including empirical studies that explore practical applications of cultural sustainability in education, theoretical investigations into the intersection of cultural identity, sustainability, and education and case studies that provide localised and context-sensitive insights. This diversity in journal content is critical for addressing the multifaceted challenges associated with cultural sustainability in education and reflects the interdisciplinary nature of the field. The notable presence of book chapters (13.7%) highlights the importance of edited volumes as a medium for thematic exploration. Book chapters allow researchers to engage in

more detailed and interdisciplinary discussions of specific aspects of cultural sustainability. They bridge diverse fields and perspectives. Edited collections enable the flexibility to tackle niche topics that may not fit within the constraints of journal articles to provide a platform for richer analyses and cross-disciplinary dialogue.

Conference papers (4.8%) demonstrate the active role of academic and professional gatherings in shaping cultural sustainability research. Conferences provide researchers with opportunities to present preliminary findings, exchange ideas and receive feedback. It is valuable in a rapidly evolving and interdisciplinary field. Conference papers are likely instrumental in addressing emerging challenges to introduce innovative approaches and bridging the gap between theory and practice. However, the relatively modest proportion of conference papers in the field suggests that while conferences facilitate knowledge exchange and collaboration, they may not yet serve as major publication outlets in this area. The smaller proportion of books (2.4%) points to a potential gap in the availability of comprehensive resources. Books, particularly monographs, often serve as foundational texts, synthesising research to articulate theoretical frameworks and offer practical guidance to educators and policymakers. The limited number of books suggests an opportunity to produce more holistic treatments of cultural sustainability in education. They could establish clearer conceptual foundations, consolidate fragmented research and provide deeper insights for both academic and practical audiences.

The low representation of review papers (1.6%) highlights another critical gap. Reviews are essential for consolidating existing knowledge, identifying research trends and highlighting gaps in the literature. Their scarcity suggests that the field may lack consolidated overviews of its development, which are crucial for fostering coherence and guiding future research. Increasing the production of review papers could help map the field's trajectory, synthesise diverse strands of inquiry, and prioritise emerging areas of study. Other document types (0.8%), including editorials, data papers, notes, and conference reviews play a smaller but important role in addressing specialised topics, methodological issues or emerging debates. Although limited in quantity, these contributions provide unique perspectives and can address critiques or innovative methods that are essential for advancing the field.

The dominance of journal articles reflects the maturity and rigor of cultural sustainability research within education to ensure the field remains at the forefront of academic discourse. However, the smaller proportions of books and review papers highlight clear opportunities to strengthen the theoretical and foundational dimensions of the field. Producing more books could establish essential resources for educators, researchers and policymakers, while reviews could consolidate fragmented knowledge and provide a roadmap for future inquiry. The significant contributions from book chapters and conference papers also highlight the collaborative and interdisciplinary nature of this research area. Encouraging the continued production of these forms of scholarly output could enrich the discourse further, particularly as cultural sustainability intersects with diverse disciplines such as anthropology, environmental science and education. Greater support for interdisciplinary and collaborative efforts would allow for the integration of diverse methodologies and perspectives to enhance the relevance and practical applications of cultural sustainability in education.

Research Question (5)

The dominance of the social sciences (36.1%) shows their foundational role in examining the human, societal and cultural dimensions of education. This prominence aligns with the need to understand how cultural heritage intersects with societal structures, behaviors and the policies shaping educational frameworks. Research within sociology, anthropology and education policy explores issues such as cultural identity, social inclusion and the transmission of traditional knowledge through education (Malhotra, 2024). This focus reflects the centrality of social sciences in addressing the challenges of embedding cultural heritage in diverse and evolving education. The notable contribution of the environmental sciences (13.0%) highlights the interdisciplinary nature of cultural sustainability research, particularly its linkage with sustainable development goals (SDGs). Environmental studies likely explore the connections between ecological preservation and cultural sustainability to emphasise the role of education in fostering environmental stewardship while honoring cultural traditions (Komatsu et al., 2023). For instance, incorporating indigenous ecological knowledge into school curricula aligns with sustainability objectives to offer contextually relevant pathways for students to engage with environmental challenges. Similarly, the contribution of computer science (10.8%) reflects the growing role of digital technologies in preserving and transmitting cultural heritage. This includes initiatives such as digitising cultural artefacts, creating virtual learning environments and developing culturally responsive educational tools. The rise of digital storytelling platforms and augmented reality applications exemplifies how technology can bridge traditional knowledge and modern pedagogy. It makes cultural sustainability more accessible to younger generations (Nair & Yunus, 2021). However, this reliance on digital tools also raises questions about equitable access to technology and the potential risks of cultural homogenisation.

Energy-related research (10.4%) introduces another unique perspective. It focuses on sustainable infrastructure for educational institutions. Studies in this area may explore the integration of renewable energy into schools, energy-efficient architectural designs that honor cultural aesthetics and the role of education in promoting sustainable energy practices. These contributions illustrate how cultural traditions can inform modern sustainability practices, such as aligning indigenous energy practices with renewable energy systems. In addition, the contributions of the arts and humanities (7.1%) emphasise the importance of cultural expression in preserving heritage and fostering identity through education. Literature, performing arts and visual arts play a critical role in teaching cultural narratives to enhance students' understanding of their heritage and promote creative engagement with cultural sustainability. For example, integrating traditional storytelling or folk art into curricula demonstrates how creative mediums can sustain cultural practices across generations (Nash & Brady, 2022). Smaller contributions from psychology (4.1%) and business, management and accounting (5.2%) reflect emerging interest in the cognitive, emotional and economic dimensions of cultural sustainability. Psychological research highlights the benefits of culturally relevant education in fostering identity, resilience and emotional well-being among learners. Meanwhile, studies in business and management may examine funding mechanisms, resource allocation and partnerships that support the integration of cultural sustainability into education. These areas are crucial for understanding the practical and operational aspects of implementing sustainable cultural practices in education. The relatively limited contributions from agricultural and biological sciences (1.5%) and earth and planetary sciences (1.1%) suggest niche but valuable research intersections. For instance,

studies in these areas may focus on the role of traditional agricultural knowledge or ecological stewardship in fostering sustainability. They demonstrate the interplay between cultural traditions and natural systems within education.

The diverse distribution of subject areas demonstrates that cultural sustainability in education is inherently interdisciplinary. The predominance of the social sciences reflects their essential role in framing the cultural and societal dimensions of the field. However, the significant contributions from environmental sciences, computer science and energy highlight the growing integration of sustainability and technological innovation into educational practices. This shows the importance of fostering collaboration across disciplines to address the complexities of embedding cultural heritage within sustainable education. Despite the field's progress, there are opportunities for growth in underrepresented areas. For example, the relatively low contributions from psychology and the arts suggest a need for deeper exploration of how cultural education impacts individual learners' cognitive and emotional development, as well as the role of creative expression in sustaining cultural identity. Similarly, expanding research in niche areas such as agricultural sciences could provide valuable insights into integrating ecological and cultural sustainability in rural or indigenous education. Overall, the distribution of subject areas highlights the field's inherently interdisciplinary nature, with social sciences, environmental sciences and computer science leading the way.

Research Question (6)

The prominence of *Sustainability (Switzerland)* reflects the field's broad interdisciplinarity but also raises concerns about the centralisation of research dissemination within a single journal. While its leadership provides cohesion to the field, overreliance on one venue may limit the diversity of perspectives and voices. Expanding publication efforts across other journals with complementary focuses, such as environmental or technological sustainability could encourage a more inclusive and varied discourse. The steady contributions from *Education Sciences and Environmental Education Research* display the integration of sustainability themes into educational research but also point to potential gaps. For example, these journals could expand their coverage of the intersections between cultural sustainability and issues such as social equity, globalisation and digital transformation in education. The inclusion of technology-focused journals like *Advances in Intelligent Systems and Computing* demonstrates the growing importance of digital tools in this field, but their application remains underexplored in traditional educational and sustainability journals. Encouraging interdisciplinary submissions that bridge technology, education, and cultural sustainability could deepen understanding of how digital innovations can be ethically and effectively applied.

The regional focus of journals such as *ECNU Review of Education* highlights the importance of non-Western perspectives in the field. Regional journals play a critical role in addressing localised challenges and solutions, particularly in areas with rich cultural heritage and unique sustainability issues. Increasing collaborations between regional and international journals could foster cross-cultural dialogue and ensure a more global perspective on cultural sustainability in education. These collaborations could help bridge gaps between Western and non-Western approaches, providing insights into how cultural sustainability is conceptualized and implemented across diverse contexts.

In conclusion, the analysis identifies *Sustainability (Switzerland), Education Sciences,* and *Environmental Education Research* as leading journals in cultural sustainability research within education, with contributions from specialised venues like *ECNU Review of Education* and *Advances in Intelligent Systems and Computing.* These journals collectively reflect the field's interdisciplinary character, encompassing sustainability, education policy and technological innovation. However, opportunities exist to diversify the discourse by increasing regional representation, fostering interdisciplinary submissions and addressing underexplored themes such as the ethical implications of technology in cultural sustainability. Strengthening collaboration across journals and disciplines will enhance the global relevance and impact of research in this vital area.

Research Question (7)

The observed trends highlight the dynamic nature of cultural sustainability research within education, with peaks and plateaus shaped by global events, funding patterns, and technological advancements. The surges in 2020 and 2024 illustrate the field's ability to respond to societal challenges and innovations, demonstrating its relevance and adaptability. To sustain growth and momentum in this area, future research could benefit from several strategies. Longitudinal studies examining the long-term impacts of integrating cultural sustainability into education could provide deeper insights into its effectiveness and scalability. Interdisciplinary collaborations that bring together educators, environmental scientists, technologists, and policymakers could address the complex, multifaceted challenges of embedding cultural sustainability into educational frameworks. Policy-focused research could explore how academic findings are translated into actionable strategies for schools and communities, ensuring practical applications of theoretical advancements. Additionally, technology-driven investigations, particularly into the use of AI and digital tools for cultural preservation and education, could open new pathways for innovation and accessibility in this field. The fluctuations observed in publication trends also suggest a need for continued advocacy and investment in cultural sustainability research to maintain its relevance and impact. Funding agencies and academic institutions have a critical role to play in prioritizing cultural sustainability as part of their broader sustainability and education agendas. Such support could help ensure consistent research output, attract diverse scholarly perspectives, and facilitate the development of innovative methodologies and applications.

The trends in publication output reflect the growing prominence of cultural sustainability within education, marked by notable peaks in 2020 and 2024 and a steady overall increase since 2015. While the decline in 2025 merits further examination, the broader trajectory suggests that this field remains significant and responsive to global challenges and innovations. Future research should focus on fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, expanding the scope of cultural sustainability research, and ensuring its continued relevance in advancing sustainable development through education. By addressing these opportunities, cultural sustainability can continue to serve as a vital pillar in the broader movement toward a more inclusive and sustainable global education system.

Conclusion

The findings of this study provide a nuanced understanding of the research landscape surrounding cultural sustainability in education. The evolution of this field reflects a growing recognition of the critical role education plays in preserving cultural heritage while promoting

inclusivity and sustainability. However, challenges remain in addressing research gaps, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and translating academic insights into practical applications. This study has several implications for policy, practice and academia. For policymakers, the findings highlight the importance of integrating cultural sustainability into national education strategies. Aligning these efforts with global frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), can increase the relevance and impact of these initiatives. Practically, educational institutions must adopt adaptable and inclusive frameworks that support the transmission of cultural heritage through curricula, teacher training, and community engagement. For academia, the dominance of certain regions and journals points to the need for greater diversity in research perspectives and methodologies. Promoting cross-regional collaboration and interdisciplinary studies can enrich this field and ensure that research outcomes address both global challenges and local contexts effectively.

While this study provides valuable insights, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the bibliometric analysis relied primarily on data from the Scopus database, which may not comprehensively cover all relevant research, particularly from non-English or region-specific journals. This may lead to an underrepresentation of contributions from emerging economies or indigenous perspectives. Second, the categorization of research outputs, such as journal articles and book chapters, may oversimplify the complexity and depth of these contributions. Lastly, the analysis of publication trends in 2025 was constrained by incomplete data, limiting the ability to draw definitive conclusions about recent developments in the field. The gaps and limitations identified in this study highlight several areas for future research. More comprehensive bibliometric studies that incorporate additional databases and non-traditional sources, such as indigenous and community-driven publications, are needed to capture a wider diversity of voices in the field. Additionally, interdisciplinary collaborations that bridge technology, environmental sciences, and social sciences should be encouraged to develop innovative strategies for embedding cultural sustainability into education. Longitudinal studies are essential to assess the long-term impact of integrating cultural sustainability into education, particularly in terms of preserving cultural heritage and fostering global citizenship.

Future research should also explore the role of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, augmented reality, and virtual reality, in enhancing the accessibility and preservation of cultural heritage through education. Expanding the scope of research to include underrepresented regions, such as Africa, Southeast Asia, and South America, could provide valuable insights into the global applicability of cultural sustainability frameworks. Furthermore, policy-focused research that evaluates how academic findings are translated into actionable strategies can help bridge the gap between theory and practice, ensuring that cultural sustainability remains a core pillar of global education reforms. In conclusion, while significant progress has been made in the field of cultural sustainability in education, continued efforts are needed to address existing gaps and foster a more inclusive, interdisciplinary, and practical approach. By advancing research, practice, and policy, cultural sustainability can serve as a transformative framework for preserving cultural heritage, fostering societal resilience, and promoting sustainable development on a global scale.

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