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50 years of The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education: A bibliometric retrospective

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This comprehensive bibliometric analysis of *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education* (AJIE) traces its development and scholarly influence from 1973 to 2023, highlighting its evolution from a focus on Aboriginal education to a broader scope encompassing Indigenous education across Australia and Oceania. Leveraging data from Scopus and Web of Science, this analysis examines AJIE's publication and citation trends, influential articles, leading authors and institutions, and thematic progressions within the journal. The findings demonstrate AJIE's significant national influence, supported by substantial contributions from Australian institutions, along with a meaningful, albeit smaller, presence of international research, particularly from New Zealand, Canada and the United States. The shift to open access and inclusion in prominent academic indexes has furthered AJIE's accessibility and citation reach, solidifying its status as a primary publication in Indigenous education scholarship.

Keywords: Indigenous education, bibliometrics, Scopus, Web of Science

Introduction

The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education (AJIE), published by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit at The University of Queensland, is an open-access, peer-reviewed journal dedicated to advancing scholarship on the theory, practice and methodology of Indigenous education. Established in 1973 as *The Aboriginal Child at School*, AJIE originated as a response to the need for a dedicated platform where educators could share insights, challenges and achievements in Aboriginal education. Initially funded by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, the journal provided essential resources and support for culturally responsive teaching approaches, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in primary education. In 1996, reflecting an expanded focus that incorporated global perspectives, the journal was renamed *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, while maintaining a core emphasis on Indigenous education in Australia and Oceania.

In 2003, AJIE transitioned to a peer-reviewed research journal format to meet the growing demand for rigorous, high-quality scholarship. From 2012 to 2021, it was published by Cambridge University Press,

after which it fully transitioned to open access in 2022, enhancing accessibility and reach. Today, AJIE publishes biannually, featuring qualitative and quantitative studies, theoretical discussions and practical insights aimed at advancing Indigenous education worldwide.

The journal is widely indexed in prominent databases, including Google Scholar, ERIC, EBSCO, Informit, Web of Science (WoS), Scopus, and ProQuest, as well as in specialised regional databases such as the Australian Education Index (AEI) and the European Reference Index for the Humanities and Social Sciences (ERIH PLUS). AJIE's commitment to open-access excellence is reflected by its inclusion in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) and its receipt of the DOAJ Seal, an accolade that highlights AJIE's adherence to high standards in accessibility, transparency and research integrity. As of 2025, AJIE holds an *h*-index of 34, a SCImago Journal Rank (SJR) of 0.508, and an Impact Score of 1.25, placing it in the top quartile (Q1) for Anthropology and the second quartile (Q2) for Education, highlighting its influence and relevance in both fields.

Through its open-access model, AJIE aims to foster inclusive, meaningful dialogue among researchers, policymakers and community groups. By supporting impactful research and sharing best practices, AJIE strives to contribute to Indigenous educational success in Australia, advancing the visibility and impact of quality research in Indigenous education across the globe.

In 2023, AJIE marked its 50th anniversary, inspiring the current study, which aims to provide a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of the journal's major trends over this period. This analysis examines the publication and citation patterns within AJIE, identifying key citing articles and the most frequently cited papers, as well as prominent authors, institutions and countries contributing to the journal.

The structure of this paper is organised as follows. Section 2 outlines the bibliometric methods and evaluation metrics employed in this study. Section 3 details the results, examining the publication trends and citation patterns, identifying the most cited papers, and highlighting the contributions of prominent authors, institutions and countries. Lastly, Section 4 concludes the paper with a summary of the main findings.

Bibliometric methods and evaluation metrics

Bibliometric methods, such as citation analysis, bibliographic coupling, or co-citation analysis, are quantitative tools for assessing the impact of scholarly literature (Broadus, 1987; Pritchard, 1969). These techniques are widely used in library and information sciences to evaluate research performance, identify scientific trends and map academic fields (Ding et al., 2014; Donthu et al., 2021b; Hicks et al., 2015). Bibliometric studies are widely applied in fields such as learning technologies (Wilson, 2022; Zurita et al., 2022), educational administration (Hallinger, 2023), engineering education (Pawley et al., 2016), and marketing education (Donthu et al., 2021a). For example, Chen, Zou and Xie (2020) analysed 50 years of research in the *British Journal of Educational Technology* (BJET), identifying major trends in educational technology, and Reutzel and Mohr (2014) examined *Reading Research Quarterly*'s 50 years of research in the field of literacy. Similarly, Corrin, Lodge and Thompson (2022) examined publishing patterns in the *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology* (AJET), and Akturk (2022) conducted a 35-year review of the *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning* (JCAL). These studies highlight the value of bibliometric analysis in revealing research trends and assessing the impact of various academic disciplines, illustrating its effectiveness in mapping the evolution and influence of scholarly fields (Figuerola-Wischke et al., 2024).

This study employs a range of established indicators to assess productivity, influence and performance, including total publications (TP), total citations (TC), citation thresholds, the top 50 (T50) most cited papers, citations per paper (C/P), and citations per year (C/Y). Additionally, it considers the *h*-index (Alonso et al., 2009; Hirsch, 2005; Martínez et al., 2014), Impact Factor (IF), and CiteScore (CS), following frameworks outlined by Gaviria-Marín et al. (2018), Milfont et al. (2019) and Waltman (2016).

- "TP" represents the overall count of papers published.
- "TC" refers to the cumulative number of citations these publications have received.
- "Citation thresholds" are specific citation count ranges used to categorise the impact of publications, such as counts of 500, 100, 50, 20 or more citations.
- The "T50" metric captures the number of papers that rank among the 50 most frequently cited, offering insight into the journal's most impactful contributions.
- "C/P" measures the average number of citations per publication.
- "C/Y" tracks the annual average citations received, reflecting the journal's sustained influence over time.
- The "*h*-index", an author-level metric, combines productivity and citation impact by measuring the number of publications *h* that have received at least *h* citations each.
- "IF" indicates the yearly average number of citations to recent articles, based on the Web of Science Core Collection.
- "CS" provides a comprehensive, transparent overview of a journal's citation impact using Scopus data.
- "Temporal distribution of publications (D1 to D5)" divides research output into defined time intervals, allowing for the examination of trends and shifts in publication volume, impact and thematic focus over time.

Together, these indicators offer a comprehensive view of AJIE's productivity and influence, highlighting both the quantitative output and qualitative impact of its publications in the field. In particular, AJIE has played a central role in shaping discourse on Indigenous education by providing a platform for Indigenous voices and advancing critical themes such as self-determination, decolonising pedagogy and the recognition of Indigenous knowledge systems. The analysis primarily relies on data from the Scopus database. Notably, publications from 1975 and 1990 are missing in Scopus, while data for 1999, 2001 and 2004 are incomplete. To address these gaps, we utilised the "view secondary documents" feature to identify and retrieve publications with at least one citation that were not accessible through the standard search. For publications that appeared without recorded citations in the Scopus database, manual searches were conducted via the journal's website (ajie.atsis.uq.edu.au/ajie), where all volumes and issues are accessible. We acknowledge that citation coverage in indexing databases such as Scopus may change over time, and that other sources (e.g., Web of Science or Google Scholar) may capture additional citations not reflected here. The results have been manually added to Figures 1 and 2 and in Table 2. Data regarding authors, institutions and countries, as presented in Tables 3 to 5, are exclusively derived from the direct Scopus database search, excluding publications from the aforementioned periods.

The search terms "Australian Journal of Indigenous Education" or "Aboriginal Child at School" were used in the "source title" option, and the search process was carried out from August 2024 to October 2024, excluding 2024 publications. The initial search yielded 1,278 documents. Filtering for "article" and "review" yielded 1,107 documents from 1973 to 2023. The final number increases to 1,169 documents when adding the articles and reviews from 1975, 1990, 1999, 2001 and 2004 through the "secondary documents" option of Scopus and the journal's website. A similar process in the WoS Core Collection database search with the term "Australian Journal of Indigenous Education" retrieved 489 documents and, after excluding 2024 and filtering for "article and review article", yielded 396 AJIE documents from 2005 to 2023. In any case, all the tables presented in this paper are developed with the Scopus database.

Finally, note that this work follows the scientific procedures and rationales for systematic literature reviews (SPAR-4-SLR) protocol (Donthu et al., 2021b; Paul et al., 2021). This approach is explained in detail in the second article generated from this study, also published in this issue (Arif et al., 2025).

Acknowledging limitations of impact measures

While bibliometric indicators such as citation counts, *h*-index and impact factors are widely accepted proxies for scholarly influence, they have notable limitations (Figuerola-Wischke et al., 2024). These institutional measures tend to favour mainstream academic visibility and may not adequately reflect contributions that challenge dominant paradigms, support Indigenous communities, or promote equity and social change. As such, there remains a critical need to develop and adopt evaluative frameworks that better capture the transformative potential of research. This includes its relevance to the communities it seeks to serve, its influence on educational outcomes for Indigenous students and its capacity to shift current scholarship. Without such measures, there is a risk of undervaluing work that may be impactful in ways not immediately visible through conventional metrics.

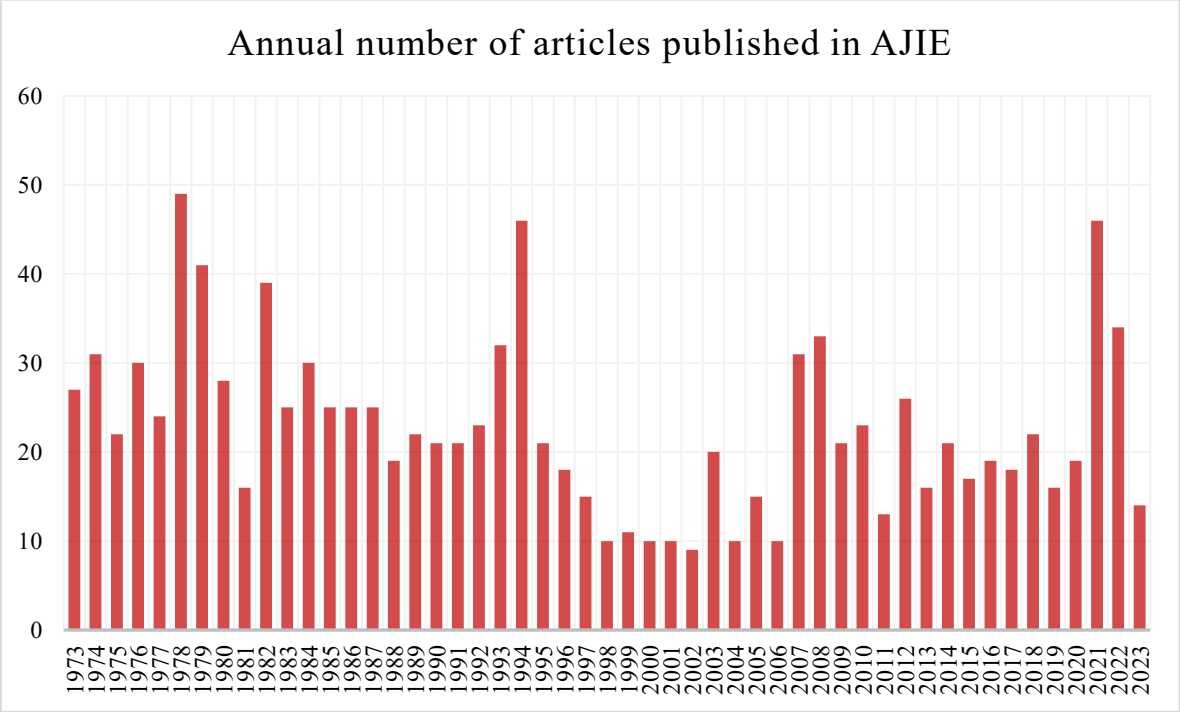
Results

This section presents the findings of the paper. From 1973 to 31 December 2023, AJIE published 1,278 documents, including 1,081 articles and 26 reviews. Note that the journal has also published editorials (158), letters (9) and erratum (4). However, the study focuses only on articles and reviews available in the Scopus database. As of 15 August 2024, the journal has accrued 3,828 total citations (and 3,314 without self-citations), averaging 9.67 citations per paper. The *h*-index of AJIE is 34. This metric indicates that 34 articles published in the journal have been cited at least 34 times each. This study analyses the publication and citation structure of AJIE, identifying influential papers and the leading authors, institutions and countries.

Publication trends and citation structure of AJIE

AJIE began publishing articles in 1973. Over the past five decades, the journal's publication volume has fluctuated rather than showing linear growth, with high output in the late 1970s, a notable decline during the 1980s and 1990s, and a resurgence from the mid-2000s onward. Figure 1 illustrates these phases, including a peak in 2021, which may be linked to AJIE's transition to open access and its expanded reach through its partnership with Cambridge University Press.

Figure 1. Annual number of papers published in AJIE



The data reveal an initially high publication volume in the 1970s and early 1980s, indicating robust early engagement. From the mid-1980s to the early 2000s, a decline in publication volume is observed, possibly reflecting changes in funding or editorial direction. A gradual increase begins in the mid-2000s, with a notable peak in 2021. This recent growth may be attributed to AJIE's transition to open access and its expanded reach, particularly during its partnership with Cambridge University Press.

In addition to structural and institutional factors, this increase also likely reflects a broader shift in the academic landscape. Growing recognition of the limitations and biases in Western representations of Indigenous peoples, increased Indigenous participation in higher education, and the rise of Indigenous-led critiques of dominant educational paradigms have contributed to a more vibrant and critical body of scholarship. These developments, together with expanded funding opportunities in Indigenous education research, have likely encouraged greater contributions to AJIE and amplified the journal's role in shaping discourse on Indigenous education. Publication trends should also be understood in relation to shifts in Indigenous affairs policy, particularly national initiatives such as Closing the Gap and related frameworks (e.g., the National Aboriginal Education Policy, Bringing Them Home report, the Uluru Statement and state curriculum reforms), which have placed sustained attention on educational outcomes for Indigenous students. While these contexts are important, our dataset does not allow us to identify AJIE articles that explicitly respond to them. Future research could systematically map such engagements, providing deeper insight into the journal's influence on education policy and practice.

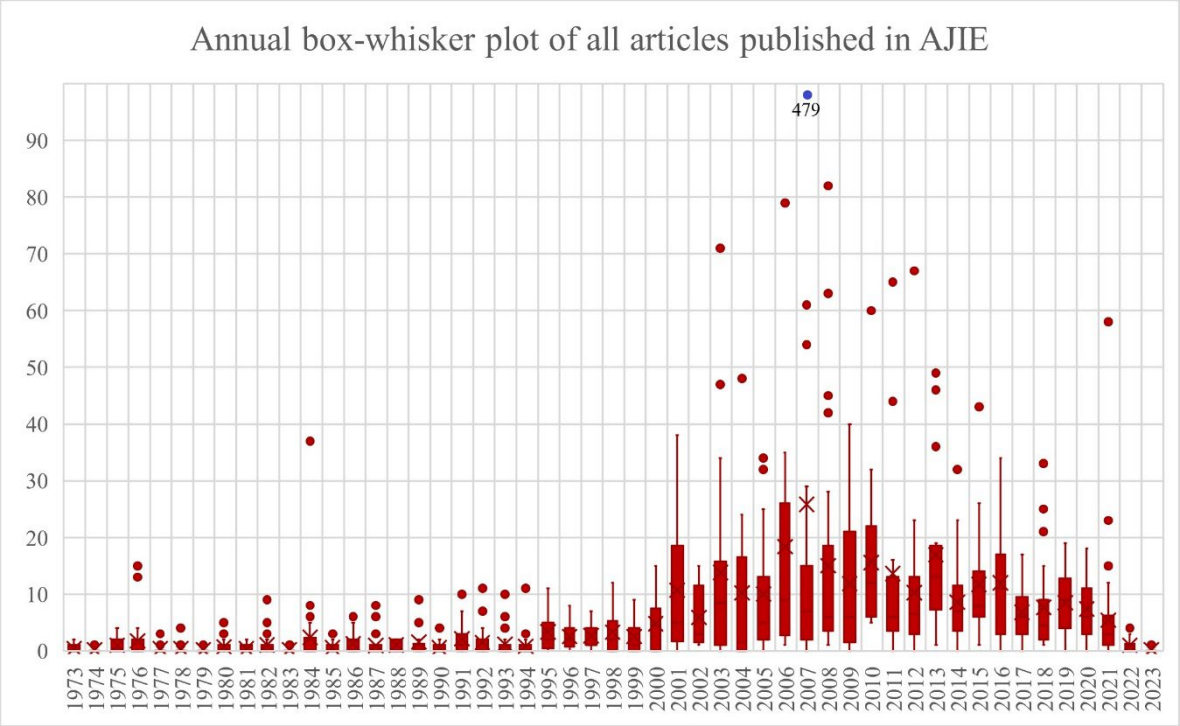
Figure 2 illustrates the annual citation distribution for articles published in AJIE from 1973 to 2023, based on Scopus data, using box-whisker plots (Tukey, 1977), which illustrate the distribution and variability of citations for all AJIE articles over this period. The plots effectively display the spread of citation counts, highlighting notable trends and outliers across the years.

The plot displays the median, interquartile range and variability of citation counts for each publication year, with individual outliers shown above the main data points. Analysis of this plot reveals key trends in AJIE's citation impact over time. From 1973 to the 1990s, citation counts were relatively low and stable,

with limited variation and few outliers, suggesting a modest initial influence. This pattern is not unusual for journals of this vintage, as access was initially restricted to print circulation and readership was constrained. AJIE's visibility increased significantly after it moved online in 2010 through its partnership with Cambridge University Press, which expanded discoverability and global access. Broader systemic factors also shaped citation trajectories: over time, the imperative for academics to publish has intensified; institutions have placed increasing emphasis on publishing in high-ranked (Q1) journals; and online access has expanded reach and discoverability. In addition, citation curves typically peak many years after publication, meaning that articles published in the last decade appear under-cited relative to their eventual impact.

From the early 2000s onward, both the median citation count and the range of citations increased significantly, with notable outliers emerging. In 2007, one article, Nakata's "The Cultural Interface", received an exceptionally high citation count of 479, standing out as a particularly influential piece of research. This period of expanded citation variability likely reflects AJIE's growing readership, aided by its shift to a peer-reviewed format and its later partnership with Cambridge University Press, but also broader external influences. These include the wider availability of online publishing, increasing pressure on academics to publish, institutional incentives to target high-ranked journals, and national policy agendas such as Closing the Gap, which have heightened scholarly attention to Indigenous education.

Figure 2. Annual citation distribution (box-whisker plot) of AJIE papers



The wider citation ranges from the mid-2000s to the 2010s suggest increasing engagement with AJIE articles, likely influenced by rising global interest in Indigenous issues and education. Multiple years during this period show prominent outliers and higher median citation levels, indicating that influential articles were being published regularly. Citation trajectories are also shaped by article type: seminal theoretical or philosophical contributions tend to attract sustained attention over time, while empirical studies may peak more quickly and then decline as new evidence emerges. In addition, this period coincides with a significant increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academic scholarship, which

has enriched the journal's contributions and amplified its visibility within and beyond the field. This broader citation spread highlights AJIE's evolving role as an important platform for Indigenous education research.

In recent years, citation counts have slightly decreased, with fewer outliers and a narrower citation spread, particularly in the 2020s. The most plausible explanation is the typical delay between publication and citation accumulation, as more recent articles have simply had less time to reach their citation peak. It may also indicate changing readership patterns or shifts in citation practices, though further data is needed to confirm these trends.

In addition, we analyse the publication and citation performances of AJIE compared with other major academic journals in the education field. Table 1 provides a comparative overview of publication metrics for leading journals in educational research and related fields, with AJIE positioned prominently among them. AJIE has published 1,107 total papers, accumulating 5,808 citations, resulting in an average of 5.25 C/P and an *h*-index of 32. In comparison, top-performing journals such as *Review of Educational Research* and *American Educational Research Journal* demonstrate much higher metrics. *Review of Educational Research*, with a total of 3,081 publications and an exceptional 231,760 citations, boasts an average of 75.22 citations per paper and an *h*-index of 241. This indicates a far-reaching influence, underlined by its 108 papers with over 500 citations and a high IF of 8.3 and CS of 24.1, signifying its role as a cornerstone in educational research.

By contrast, AJIE's metrics reflect its specialised focus within Indigenous education, a field with a smaller, though deeply important, academic and community base. Its modest IF of 0.9 and CS of 2.8 illustrate its more localised citation profile. However, this numerical comparison risks overlooking critical contextual and epistemological dimensions. Unlike generalist international education journals, whose broader scope can result in dispersed and less locally relevant contributions, AJIE's focused attention on Australia and Oceania positions it as a vital forum for Indigenous scholarship and practice in the region. In this sense, its influence may be more profound than the raw citation counts suggest, as the journal provides sustained engagement with the educational challenges, priorities and aspirations of Indigenous peoples. At the same time, the relative saturation of research framed around cultural difference, combined with limited uptake of rights-based educational discourse, may have tempered broader engagement with the field. Further, there has been insufficient critical reflection on the intellectual trajectory of Indigenous education scholarship, particularly in light of persistent educational disparities and the slow progress in schooling outcomes for Indigenous students.

As the field matures, a key challenge lies in fostering the kind of academic leadership and discourse that not only critiques colonial frameworks but also develops rigorous, rights-based and contextually grounded theoretical contributions. Important foundations have already been laid by Indigenous scholars (e.g., Fredericks et al., 2014; Fredericks et al., 2019; Moreton-Robinson, 2023; Moreton-Robinson et al., 2011), whose work has significantly advanced theoretical debates in this space. At the same time, structural barriers to academic participation and the underrepresentation of Indigenous scholars in senior research positions continue to limit the breadth and visibility of such contributions. Strengthening opportunities for deep scholarly inquiry, alongside advocacy, will be vital for preparing future Indigenous academics and ensuring that AJIE maintains and expands its relevance in the next generation of research and practice.

The data show that AJIE publications are predominantly authored within education and social science disciplines, with comparatively limited representation from fields such as health, law or policy studies,

and relatively low levels of international co-authorship. This suggests that AJIE could potentially enhance its impact by fostering stronger interdisciplinary and international connections. Such collaborations would broaden the journal's readership, diversify methodological and theoretical approaches, and link Indigenous education scholarship more directly to global debates on social justice, decolonisation and educational policy. These strategies could increase both the visibility of AJIE articles and their uptake in policy and practice contexts, thereby amplifying the journal's influence beyond traditional academic metrics. This does not imply abandoning its core commitments, but rather amplifying them by contributing to broader global conversations where Indigenous perspectives are increasingly relevant and needed. Finally, note that Table 1 includes five journals highly cited in AJIE, which have published articles on Indigenous and educational research for many years, that currently are not currently indexed in Scopus: *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples* started in 2005, *Australian Journal of Music Education* started in 1967, *Canadian Journal of Native Education* started in 1980, *Journal of American Indian Education* started in 1961 and *Journal of Australian Indigenous Issues* started in 1998. Their absence in bibliometric platforms highlights the limitations of conventional metrics in capturing the full intellectual and cultural impact of Indigenous-focused scholarship.

Table 1. Publication record of leading journals in educational research and other related fields

Journal name	TP	TC	C/P	H	≥100	≥10	IF	CS
AJIE	1,107	5,808	5.25	32	1	161	0.9	2.8
Review of Educational Research	3,081	231,760	75.22	241	514	1,090	8.3	24.1
Teaching and Teacher Education	4,085	189,241	46.33	171	431	2,966	4	6.5
Studies in Higher Education	2,686	110,811	41.26	140	245	1,844	3.7	10.2
American Educational Research J	1,022	94,661	92.62	149	262	891	3.5	8.7
Higher Educ Res & Development	1,788	54,542	30.5	101	101	1,130	0.9	7.3
Harvard Educational Review	483	42,470	87.93	99	99	337	2.6	–
Race Ethnicity and Education	878	29,563	33.67	69	37	558	2.4	6.4
Australian Psychologist	1,850	26,216	14.17	65	25	720	2	3.7
Adult Education Quarterly	1,537	26,112	16.99	71	44	483	1.5	3.2
Australian J Teacher Education	1,221	17,037	13.95	48	11	542	0.9	1.8
Australian Educational Researcher	938	11,895	12.68	45	7	360	2	4.6
Critical Studies in Education	425	11,650	27.41	51	21	250	4	10.1
Asia-Pacific J Teacher Educ	496	10,797	21.77	50	13	282	1.4	4.4
Australian J Education	579	9,695	16.74	44	9	308	1.5	3.2
Australian J Anthropology	622	5,873	9.44	33	1	210	0.5	1.5
Int Indigenous Policy J	317	3,504	11.05	27	3	106	0.8	1.9
J Australian Studies	899	3,249	3.61	21	0	94	0.4	0.9
Australasian J Early Childhood	369	3,154	8.55	24	0	124	1.6	3.1
New Zealand J Educ Studies	471	2,973	6.31	24	0	91	1	2
Australian Rev Applied Linguistics	242	2,288	9.45	24	7	69	0.9	2.7
Diaspora Indigenous Minority Educ	265	1,501	5.66	18	0	64	–	1.9
Australian Aboriginal Studies	150	1,216	8.11	18	0	36	0.54	–
Australian and Int J Rural Educ	119	357	3	8	0	6	–	1.2
Int J Critical Indigenous Studies	21	53	2.52	5	0	1	–	1.1
AlterNative Int J Indigenous Peoples	https://journals.sagepub.com/home/aln							–
Australian J Music Education	https://search.informit.org/journal/ausjoumusedu							–
Canadian J Native Education	https://ojs.library.ubc.ca/index.php/CJNE/index							–
J American Indian Education	https://muse.jhu.edu/journal/801							–
J Australian Indigenous Issues	https://search.informit.org/journal/jaiis							–

Abbreviations (data generated with Scopus): TP: total publications; TC: total citations; C/P: cites per paper; H: *h*-index; ≥100 and ≥10: number of articles with equal or more than 100 and 10 citations; IF: Impact Factor (Web of Science); CS: CiteScore (Scopus). The numbers provided in the table only consider "articles" and "reviews" up to 31 December 2023.

Influential papers in AJIE

Table 2 of the 50 most cited documents in AJIE provides valuable insights into the journal's impact and influence within Indigenous education research. A critical analysis reveals several notable trends regarding the themes, authors and periods that have received the most academic attention.

Firstly, the highest-cited paper, "The Cultural Interface" by Nakata (2007), with 479 citations, stands out significantly from the rest, suggesting that this work has had a profound and enduring influence in the field. Its high citation rate of 28.18 citations per year highlights its importance, likely due to its foundational exploration of the intersections between Indigenous knowledge and Western academic frameworks. Other highly cited works, such as Dei's (2008) study on anti-colonial education (TC = 82, C/Y = 5.13) and Christie's (2006) work on transdisciplinary research (TC = 79, C/Y = 4.39), reflect the academic community's strong interest in topics surrounding Indigenous knowledge systems, anti-colonial education and culturally safe pedagogies.

The authorship patterns indicate that scholars, including Nakata, Guenther and Christie, appear multiple times in the top-cited list, suggesting that these individuals are key contributors to the field's development. Nakata's work addresses diverse aspects of Indigenous education and has been pivotal in shaping the theoretical and practical discourse around Indigenous knowledge integration and higher education pathways.

In terms of themes, the most cited articles focus primarily on integrating Indigenous perspectives into education, culturally responsive teaching methods and Indigenous students' experiences in higher education. For instance, highly cited papers discuss topics such as culturally safe school environments, the role of universities in Indigenous higher education and methodologies for Indigenising curricula. These themes indicate that AJIE has significantly contributed to the discourse on creating inclusive, equitable and culturally affirming educational environments for Indigenous students.

The data also show a concentration of high-impact articles published from the mid-2000s to early 2010s, a period that corresponds with AJIE's shift towards a peer-reviewed, research-focused format. This period likely benefited from increased visibility and academic engagement, as AJIE expanded its reach within the scholarly community. The consistent citation rates of articles from this era suggest that the journal's transformation enhanced its role in promoting influential research within Indigenous education.

Table 2. The 50 most cited documents of AJIE

R	TC	Title	Author/s	Year	C/Y
1	479	The Cultural Interface	Nakata, M.	2007	28.18
2	82	Indigenous Knowledge Studies and the Next Generation: Pedagogical Possibilities for Anti-Colonial Education	Dei, G.J.S.	2008	5.13
3	79	Transdisciplinary Research and Aboriginal Knowledge	Christie, M.	2006	4.39
4	71	Cultural Safety: Let's Name It!	Bin-Sallik, M.	2003	3.38
5	67	"So, What is Wrong with Indigenous Education?" Perspective, Position and Power Beyond a Deficit Discourse	Vass, G.	2012	5.58
6	65	Pathways for Indigenous Education in the Australian Curriculum Framework	Nakata, M.	2011	5.00
7	63	Indigenous Higher Education: The Role of Universities in Releasing the Potential	Andersen, C.; Bunda, T.; Walter, M.	2008	3.94

8	61	Creating Culturally Safe Schools for Māori Students	Macfarlane, A.; Glynn, T.; Cavanagh, T.; Bateman, S.	2007	3.59
9	60	The Cultural Interface of Islander and Scientific Knowledge	Nakata, M.	2010	4.29
10	58	Extending the Yarning Yarn: Collaborative Yarning Methodology for Ethical Indigenist Education Research	Shay, M.	2021	19.33
11	54	Indigenising the Curriculum or Negotiating the Tensions at the Cultural Interface? Embedding Indigenous Perspectives and Pedagogies in a University Curriculum	Williamson, J.; Dalal, P.	2007	3.18
12	49	Are we Making Education Count in Remote Australian Communities or Just Counting Education?	Guenther, J.	2013	4.45
13	48	Approaches to the Academic Preparation and Support of Australian Indigenous Students for Tertiary Studies	Nakata, M.; Nakata, V.; Chin, M.	2004	2.40
14	47	Education, Indigenous Survival and Well-Being: Emerging Ideas and Programs	Malin, M.; Maidment, D.	2003	2.24
15	46	Red Dirt Thinking on Aspiration and Success	Osborne, S.; Guenther, J.	2013	4.18
16	45	Beneath the Teaching Iceberg: Exposing the Hidden Support Dimensions of Indigenous Academic Work	Page, S.; Asmar, C.	2008	2.81
17	44	Indigenous Australian Students' Participation Rates in Higher Education: Exploring the Role of Universities	Pechenkina, E.; Kowal, E.; Paradies, Y.	2011	3.38
18	43	Building on "Red Dirt" Perspectives: What Counts as Important for Remote Education?	Guenther, J.; Disbray, S.; Osborne, S.	2015	4.78
19	42	Indigenous Pedagogy as a Force for Change	Biermann, S.; Townsend-Cross, M.	2008	2.63
20	40	Build It and They Will Come: Building the Capacity of Indigenous Units in Universities to Provide Better Support for Indigenous Australian Postgraduate Students	Trudgett, M.	2009	2.67
21	38	Waves of Knowing: Polymorphism and Co-Substantive Essences in Yolngu Sea Cosmology	Magowen, F.	2001	1.65
22	37	Aboriginal Learning Styles and Formal Schooling	Harris, S.	1984	0.93
23	36	Red Dirt Thinking on Educational Disadvantage	Guenther, J.; Bat, M.; Osborne, S.	2013	3.27
24	35	Indigenous Higher Education Student Equity: Focusing on What Works	Devlin, M.	2009	2.33
25	35	A Motivational Psychology for the Education of Indigenous Australian Students	Martin, A.J.	2006	1.94
26	34	Teachers' Attitudes to Including Indigenous Knowledges in the Australian Science Curriculum	Baynes, R.	2016	4.25
27	34	The Place of Indigenous Knowledge in Tertiary Science Education: A Case Study of Canadian Practices in Indigenising the Curriculum	Hauser, V.; Howlett, C.; Matthews, C.	2009	2.27
28	34	Aboriginal Knowledge Traditions in Digital Environments	Christie, M.	2005	1.79
29	34	Some Thoughts on Literacy Issues in Indigenous Contexts	Nakata, M.	2003	1.62
30	33	A Global De-Colonial Praxis of Sustainability – Undoing Epistemic Violences between Indigenous Peoples and Those No Longer Indigenous to Place	Williams, L.; Bunda, T.; Claxton, N.; Mackinnon, I.	2018	5.50
31	32	Meeting Country and Self to Initiate an Embodiment of Knowledge: Embedding a Process for Aboriginal Perspectives	McKnight, A.	2016	4.00
32	32	Addressing Uncomfortable Issues: Reflexivity as a Tool for Culturally Safe Practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health	Wilson, A.	2014	3.20
33	32	Cyber-Indigeneity: Urban Indigenous Identity on Facebook	Lumby, B.	2010	2.29

34	32	Considering the Work of Martin Nakata's "Cultural Interface": A Reflection on Theory and Practice by a Non-Indigenous Academic	McGloin, C.	2009	2.13
35	32	Nēhîthâwâk of Reindeer Lake, Canada: Worldview, Epistemology and Relationships with the Natural World	Michell, H.	2005	1.68
36	32	Scaffolding Academic Reading and Writing at the Koori Centre	Rose, D.; Chivizhe, L.L.; Mcknight, A.; Smith, A.	2003	1.52
37	29	Indigenous Autoethnography: Formulating Our Knowledge, Our Way	Houston, J.	2007	1.71
38	28	Both-Ways: Learning from Yesterday, Celebrating Today, Strengthening Tomorrow	Ober, R.	2009	1.87
39	28	Bridging the Gap: Identifying Needs and Aspirations of Indigenous Students to Facilitate their Entry into University	Hossain, D.; Gorman, D.; Williams-Mozely, J.; Garvey, D.	2008	1.75
40	26	"If I Wanted to Have More Opportunities and Go to a Better School, I Just Had to Get Used to It": Aboriginal Students' Perceptions of Going to Boarding School in Western Australia	Mander, D.J.; Cohen, L.; Pooley, J.A.	2015	2.89
41	26	A Torres Strait Islander Perspective on the Concept of Indigenous Knowledge	Whap, G.	2001	1.13
42	25	Indigenous Education and Literacy Policy in Australia: Bringing Learning Back to the Debate	Fogarty, W.; Riddle, S.; Lovell, M.; Wilson, B.	2018	4.17
43	25	Indigenous Student Perspectives on Support and Impediments at University	Oliver, R.; Grote, E.; Rochecouste, J.; Dann, T.	2016	3.13
44	25	Thinking Place: Animating the Indigenous Humanities in Education	Battiste, M.; Bell, L.; Findlay, I.M.; Findlay, L.; Henderson, J.Y.	2005	1.32
45	24	Applying Indigenist Research Methodologies in Health Research: Experiences in the Borderlands	Saunders, V.; West, R.; Usher, K.	2010	1.71
46	24	To Free the Spirit? Motivation and Engagement of Indigenous Students	Munns, G.; Martin, A.; Craven, R.	2008	1.50
47	24	Sound-field Amplification: Enhancing the Classroom Listening Environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children	Massie, R.; Theodoros, D.; McPherson, B.; Smaldino, J.	2004	1.20
48	23	Indigenous Higher Education Sector: The evolution of Recognised Indigenous Leaders within Australian Universities	Coates, S.K.; Trudgett, M.; Page, S.	2021	7.67
49	23	Four Scholars Speak to Navigating the Complexities of Naming in Indigenous Studies	Carlson, B.; Berglund, J.; Harris, M.; Poata-Smith, E.T.A.	2014	2.30
50	23	The Invisible Hand of Pedagogy in Australian Indigenous Studies and Indigenous Education	Ma Rhea, Z.; Russell, L.	2012	1.92

Abbreviations: R: rank; TC: total citations; C/Y: citations per year

Finally, the citation per year metric highlights newer articles that are quickly gaining influence, such as Shay's (2021) work on collaborative yarning methodology, ranked 10th, with an impressive annual citation rate of 19.33 (TC = 58). This suggests a strong and emerging interest in methodological approaches that prioritise Indigenous voices and ethical research practices. Such high citation per year values for recent publications indicate that AJIE continues to publish research that resonates strongly within academic and educational communities.

Leading authors, institutions and countries

This section describes the journal's most prominent authors, institutions and countries based on their total publications, as reported in the Scopus database. Table 3 presents the most productive authors in

AJIE, with ranking determined by the total number of publications (TP, column 5). In cases where authors have the same number of publications, the ranking is further differentiated by the total number of citations in AJIE (TC, column 6). The table shows that Christie from Charles Darwin University is the most prolific author, with 19 publications, followed by Guenther (Batchelor Institute of Tertiary Education) with 18, and Osborne (University of South Australia) with 14. This indicates that these scholars have made substantial contributions to the field of Indigenous education through their publications in AJIE, and their ongoing research activity reflects a sustained commitment to advancing knowledge in this area. Guenther performs very well in total citations (270) and has a high citation-per-paper ratio (15.00), suggesting that his work is not only extensive but also impactful.

Authors such as Nakata (James Cook University), Page (Western Sydney University) and Andersen (University of Tasmania) exhibit high citation-per-paper values, with 70.91, 18.57 and 18.40 respectively. These C/P metrics indicate that their contributions are particularly influential within the field, resonating strongly with readers and researchers. Nakata's *h*-index of 9 further supports his influence, demonstrating that a significant portion of his work has received substantial citations. This aligns with Nakata's role as a leading voice in Indigenous education, particularly with his foundational contributions to Indigenous knowledge systems and the cultural interface.

A notable observation is the concentration of authors from Australian institutions, highlighting the journal's primary focus on Indigenous education in Australia. Institutions such as Charles Darwin University, Central Queensland University and James Cook University are well represented among the leading authors, reflecting these universities' focus on Indigenous research and education. This distribution aligns with the geographic and thematic scope of AJIE, as it primarily addresses Indigenous issues relevant to Australia and Oceania.

Some authors, while having fewer publications, show high impact through their *h*-index and citation counts. For instance, Andersen (University of Tasmania) has only five publications but an impressive 92 total citations and a C/P of 18.40, reflecting the strong resonance of his work. Similarly, Trudgett (Western Sydney University), with a C/P of 15.57 from seven publications, demonstrates that, even with a lower publication count, her work has a significant influence. This suggests that certain AJIE authors have published fewer high-impact articles that contribute meaningfully to the field's development.

The affiliations of many authors indicate a range of disciplinary backgrounds and institutional roles, from universities with strong Indigenous programs to applied research centres such as the Queensland Museum and professional services branches. This diversity in affiliations reflects AJIE's interdisciplinary appeal, drawing contributions not only from traditional academic environments but also from organisations engaged in applied Indigenous research and community work. For example, authors such as Shnukal from Queensland Museum and Bucknall from Strelley Community School highlight the practical, community-centred research often featured in AJIE.

While Table 3 provides insights into the most productive and influential authors, it also reveals some limitations. The dominance of Australian authors suggests a strong local focus but may also indicate limited international engagement. The presence of only one author from New Zealand, Manning from the University of Canterbury, underlines this point, suggesting opportunities for AJIE to expand its international reach, particularly in regions with significant Indigenous populations. Additionally, the high concentration of authors from certain universities could indicate a reliance on specific institutional networks, potentially limiting the diversity of perspectives represented in the journal.

Table 3. The most productive authors in AJIE

R	Author name	Institution	Country	TP	TC	H	C/P
1	Christie, M.	Charles Darwin U	AUS	19	164	6	8.63
2	Guenther, J.	Batchelor Inst Indig Tertiary Educ	AUS	18	270	9	15.00
3	Osborne, S.	U South Australia	AUS	14	260	9	18.57
4	Nakata, M.	James Cook U	AUS	11	780	9	70.91
5	Harris, S.	Charles Darwin U	AUS	8	59	4	7.38
6	Page, S.	Western Sydney U	AUS	7	130	5	18.57
7	Trudgett, M.	Western Sydney U	AUS	7	109	4	15.57
8	Mackinlay, E.	Southern Cross U	AUS	7	39	4	5.57
9	Shnukal, A.	Queensland Museum	AUS	7	28	4	4.00
10	Graham, B.	Professional Services Branch	AUS	7	21	2	3.00
11	Watts, B.H.	The U Queensland	AUS	6	19	2	3.17
12	Andersen, C.	U Tasmania	AUS	5	92	4	18.40
13	Harrison, N.	Macquarie U	AUS	5	61	4	12.20
14	Benveniste, T.	Central Queensland U	AUS	5	35	3	7.00
15	Ewing, B.	Queensland U Technology	AUS	5	25	3	5.00
16	Barney, K.	The U of Queensland	AUS	5	22	2	4.40
17	Bucknall, J.R.	Strelley Community School	AUS	5	9	2	1.80
18	Nakata, V.	James Cook U	AUS	4	85	4	21.25
19	Matthews, C.	Griffith U	AUS	4	70	4	17.50
20	Fredericks, B.	The U Queensland	AUS	4	54	3	13.50
21	Whatman, S.	Griffith U	AUS	4	32	3	8.00
22	Foley, D.	Federation U Australia	AUS	4	31	3	7.75
23	Hearn, S.	The U Adelaide	AUS	4	21	3	5.25
24	Manning, R.F.	U Canterbury	NZ	4	20	3	5.00
25	Hill, B.	Edith Cowan U	AUS	4	18	2	4.50
26	Osborne, B.	James Cook U	AUS	4	15	2	3.75
27	Eckermann, A.K.	U New England	AUS	4	14	3	3.50
28	McGarvie, N.	Coordinator of RATEP	AUS	4	6	2	1.50
29	Spalding, I.	–	AUS	4	4	1	1.00
30	McDonald, H.	U Melbourne	AUS	4	1	1	0.25
31	Cook, T.E.	U New England	AUS	4	1	1	0.25
–	36 authors	–	–	3	–	–	–

Abbreviations: R: rank; TP: total publications; TC: total citations; H: *h*-index; C/P: cites per paper available in Scopus

Table 4 highlights the most productive and influential institutions contributing to AJIE from 1973 to 2023, showing variations in publication volume, impact and productivity across institutions. The University of Queensland (UQ) (69 publications) leads in total publications. This prominence likely reflects not only sustained engagement with Indigenous education research but also the fact that AJIE is hosted at UQ, which may have facilitated greater contributions from its staff and affiliates over time. James Cook University and Charles Darwin University rank closely behind, with high citation counts (224 and 451 respectively), drawing attention to their influential roles within this field. Notably, Charles Darwin University exhibits the highest citations per paper (14.55), suggesting a strong impact per publication, while University of Technology Sydney displays exceptional influence with 35.61 citations per paper, indicating its significant role in advancing discussions within the field despite a comparatively lower number of total publications.

The temporal distribution (D1 to D5) reveals distinct publication trends across institutions. For instance, James Cook University shows consistent output, particularly during D2 and D3, while more recent engagement from institutions such as University of Technology Sydney and Griffith University is evident, with increased output in D4 and D5. This shift suggests a growing institutional focus on Indigenous education in the last two decades, possibly influenced by the journal's expanded reach and the increasing importance of Indigenous issues in education policy and research.

While most institutions represented are based in Australia, reflecting AJIE's national focus, New Zealand institutions, e.g., University of Auckland and Victoria University of Wellington, also show strong engagement. However, these institutions exhibit lower citation-per-paper ratios compared to their Australian counterparts, potentially indicating a regional concentration in AJIE's readership and influence.

Table 4. The most productive and influential institutions in AJIE

R	Institution	Country	TP	TC	H	C/P	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5
1	U Queensland	AUS	69	416	11	6.03	9	7	24	7	22
2	James Cook U	AUS	41	224	9	5.46	2	12	8	7	12
3	Charles Darwin U	AUS	31	451	10	14.55	1	6	6	9	9
4	Queensland U Technology	AUS	31	299	10	9.65	4	1	3	13	10
5	Monash U	AUS	25	225	11	9.00	3	2	1	13	6
6	U South Australia	AUS	24	247	9	10.29	0	3	3	7	11
7	U Technology Sydney	AUS	23	819	9	35.61	0	0	1	13	9
8	Flinders U	AUS	23	398	12	17.30	3	1	2	9	8
9	U Sydney	AUS	21	226	10	10.76	1	3	1	5	11
10	U New England Australia	AUS	21	69	6	3.29	6	1	6	5	3
11	Macquarie U	AUS	17	218	9	12.82	3	1	0	6	7
12	Griffith U	AUS	16	145	8	9.06	0	2	1	3	10
13	Curtin U	AUS	14	133	7	9.50	0	2	0	3	9
14	Batch Inst Indig Tert Educ	AUS	14	92	6	6.57	0	0	0	1	13
15	Australian Catholic U	AUS	14	69	5	4.93	0	2	3	5	4
16	Western Sydney U	AUS	13	167	9	12.85	0	2	0	5	6
17	UNSW Sydney	AUS	13	139	6	10.69	3	0	0	5	5
18	CQ U Australia	AUS	13	77	6	5.92	0	4	2	1	6
19	U Auckland	NZ	13	61	5	4.69	0	0	0	1	12
20	U Tasmania	AUS	11	135	5	12.27	0	0	0	5	6
21	Edith Cowan U	AUS	11	76	5	6.91	0	0	1	1	10
22	Deakin U	AUS	11	75	4	6.82	0	1	0	2	8
23	U Southern Queensland	AUS	10	159	6	15.90	0	0	1	3	6
24	U Western Australia	AUS	10	117	6	11.70	2	0	0	3	5
25	U Wollongong	AUS	10	112	5	11.20	0	1	1	3	5
26	U Canterbury	NZ	10	64	5	6.40	0	0	0	3	7
27	Victoria U Wellington	NZ	10	55	4	5.50	0	0	0	3	7
28	U Newcastle	AUS	10	36	4	3.60	0	1	0	4	5
29	Charles Sturt U	AUS	9	64	6	7.11	0	1	0	4	4
30	Murdoch U	AUS	9	44	5	4.89	0	1	1	2	5
31	CRC-REP	AUS	8	201	8	25.13	0	0	0	8	0

32	U Waikato	NZ	8	109	4	13.63	0	0	0	2	6
33	U Melbourne	AUS	8	87	4	10.88	0	0	0	2	6
34	Federation U Australia	AUS	8	49	5	6.13	0	0	2	4	2
35	U Adelaide	AUS	8	33	4	4.13	2	0	0	0	6
–	4 institutions	–	7	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
–	3 institutions	–	5	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
–	12 institutions	–	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
–	13 institutions	–	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
–	33 institutions	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

Abbreviations: R: rank; TP: total publications; TC: total citations; H: *h*-index available in Scopus; C/P: cites per paper; D1 = 1973-1983; D2 = 1984-1993; D3 = 1994-2003; D4 = 2004-2013; D5 = 2014-2023

Table 5 illustrates the most productive and influential countries contributing to AJIE. This analysis highlights the central role of Australia in Indigenous education research and reveals patterns of international engagement with AJIE across various regions.

Table 5. The most productive and influential countries in AJIE

R	Country	TP	TC	H	C/P	≥50	≥10	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5
1	Australia	829	5,056	32	6.09	9	143	247	142	102	158	180
2	USA	42	158	9	3.76	0	6	4	18	13	2	5
3	New Zealand	39	261	8	6.69	1	6	0	0	0	10	29
4	Canada	33	371	9	11.24	2	9	1	1	0	21	10
5	UK	16	44	2	2.75	0	1	6	7	0	0	3
6	Norway	4	30	3	7.50	0	1	0	0	0	1	3
7	Fiji	3	20	3	6.66	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
8	Finland	3	12	3	4.00	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
9	Chile	3	1	1	0.33	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
10	7 countries	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
11	9 countries	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
12	Undefined	143	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

Abbreviations: R: rank; TP: total publications; TC: total citations; H: *h*-index available in Scopus; C/P: cites per paper; ≥50 and ≥10: number of articles with equal or more than 50 and 10 citations; D1 = 1973-1983; D2 = 1984-1993; D3 = 1994-2003; D4 = 2004-2013; D5 = 2014-2023

Australia is the leading contributor, with 829 publications, 5,056 citations and an *h*-index of 32 reflecting the journal's foundational mission to serve Indigenous education in the Australian context. This national concentration is expected given AJIE's history and focus, but it also highlights the relatively smaller contributions from other countries. Australia's citation-per-paper value of 6.09 indicates that the country's contributions are not only frequent but also impactful. Furthermore, Australia leads with nine articles cited 50 or more times and 143 articles with 10 or more citations, underscoring the significance of Australian research within the journal. The temporal distribution of publications (D1 to D5) shows consistent and increasing contributions over the decades, with a peak of 180 publications in the most recent decade (D5 = 2014 to 2023). At the same time, this concentration highlights an opportunity for AJIE to broaden its international reach. While maintaining its central focus on Indigenous Australians, the journal could benefit from more comparative and collaborative scholarship across Oceania and globally, thereby strengthening its international visibility and contributing to cross-contextual understandings of Indigenous education.

The USA ranks second in total publications (42) and total citations (158), with a C/P of 3.76, although its influence is less pronounced than Australia's. The USA has produced six articles with 10 or more citations, showing that, while its overall engagement is limited, there are impactful contributions in specific areas of Indigenous education. This interest from the USA may be due to growing academic recognition of Indigenous perspectives and educational models in North American research, where Native American and Indigenous communities face similar challenges. New Zealand ranks third with 39 publications and a relatively high C/P of 6.69, which reflects the strong engagement of New Zealand researchers in Indigenous education, likely due to shared cultural and educational interests around Māori communities. Notably, New Zealand has seen increased publication numbers in recent years (D5), with 29 publications in the most recent decade, suggesting a rising trend in Indigenous-focused research that is aligned with AJIE's themes. Canada follows closely with 33 publications, 371 citations and a C/P of 11.24, the highest among the top contributors. This high C/P ratio indicates that, although Canadian contributions are fewer, they are highly impactful. This could be attributed to the alignment of Canadian research interests with Indigenous issues, particularly as Canada has a well-established field of Indigenous studies focused on First Nations, Métis and Inuit education.

The United Kingdom, Norway, Chile, Fiji and Finland make up the remainder of the top contributors, though their output is relatively limited. The UK has 16 publications, but a low C/P of 2.75, suggesting that, while there is some interest in Indigenous education, these contributions are less impactful compared to other countries. Norway, with only four publications, shows a high C/P of 7.50, indicating that these limited contributions have garnered significant attention, likely due to Norway's engagement with Sámi Indigenous issues. Fiji's contribution (three publications) reflects a small but regionally relevant engagement with Indigenous education, especially as it shares cultural and educational concerns similar to those in Australia and New Zealand.

A notable pattern in the data is the concentration of research output within a small number of countries, with Australia contributing 88% of the total publications. This reflects AJIE's primarily localised influence within Australia, consistent with its mission to advance Indigenous education in this context. At the same time, contributions from countries such as the USA, New Zealand and Canada demonstrate the journal's wider resonance within global Indigenous studies. Building on this base, there is scope to encourage more submissions from these areas, which would not only increase geographic diversity but also foster comparative and cross-regional scholarship, highlighting shared challenges and generating insights relevant to Indigenous education worldwide.

The data also reveal that certain countries, e.g., Canada and New Zealand, achieve high citation impact (C/P), suggesting that when non-Australian research is published in AJIE, it is often highly influential. This finding could inform editorial strategies to attract more international authors, particularly those who can contribute to high-impact research.

Conclusion

Over its 50-year history, AJIE has become an important forum for Indigenous education scholarship. This bibliometric analysis shows how the journal has evolved from a national publication focused on Aboriginal education to a wider platform addressing Indigenous education across Oceania and beyond. Increased accessibility through open access and indexing in major academic databases has enhanced visibility, although citation-based measures cannot fully capture the journal's influence in practice, community engagement or policy impact.

At the same time, the findings reveal clear limitations. AJIE's reach remains largely regional, with Australia accounting for the overwhelming majority of publications and citations. This reflects both the journal's origins and focus but also highlights the limited contributions from scholars in other countries with significant Indigenous populations. The reliance on bibliometric indicators such as citation counts, *h*-indices and impact factors also presents challenges, since these measures privilege certain forms of academic visibility while undervaluing work that is community-based, practice-oriented or critical of dominant paradigms. Publication trends should also be understood in relation to Indigenous policy contexts (e.g., Closing the Gap), but our dataset does not capture whether AJIE articles explicitly respond to them—a limitation and a direction for future research.

Moving forward, AJIE's growth will depend not only on expanding interdisciplinary and international collaborations but also on fostering evaluative approaches that recognise impact in more inclusive terms. Emphasising scholarship that is both rigorous and responsive to Indigenous communities will be essential if the journal is to continue shaping the intellectual and practical landscape of Indigenous education.

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