


Bibliometric Mapping of Islamic Law Research: Global Perspectives and Scholarly Networks (2000-2025)

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<p>Article history:</p> <p>Received July, 2025 Revised July, 2025 Accepted July, 2025</p> <hr/> <p>Keywords:</p> <p>Islamic law; Sharia; Bibliometric analysis; VOSviewer</p>	<p>This study presents a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of Islamic law research published globally between 2000 and 2025, using VOSviewer as the primary analytical tool. Drawing on data from the Scopus database, the study examines 25 years of scholarly output to identify leading authors, institutional collaborations, thematic trends, and geographic distributions. The co-authorship network reveals several dominant scholarly clusters, notably those led by Wael B. Hallaq and Mohammad Hashim Kamali, indicating vibrant discourse across traditional, reformist, and applied legal thought. Country collaboration analysis highlights Indonesia's central role in global Islamic law research, signaling a shift toward Southeast Asian academic leadership. Keyword co-occurrence and temporal mapping show a thematic transition from classical jurisprudential subjects such as fiqh and sharia toward more contemporary issues like human rights, Islamic finance, family law, and maqasid al-shariah. The density visualization further reveals underexplored topics with potential for future research. This study contributes to the meta-knowledge of Islamic legal scholarship by offering a structured overview of its evolution, fragmentation, and global reach, while identifying emerging directions for interdisciplinary engagement.</p> <p><i>This is an open access article under the CC BY-SA license.</i></p> <div></div>

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1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic law, or Shariah, represents one of the oldest and most comprehensive legal traditions in the world, deeply rooted in the sacred texts of Islam, namely the Qur'an and the Hadith. Over centuries, Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) has expanded and evolved, forming diverse schools of thought and legal interpretations across various Muslim societies. Its application ranges from personal and family law to commercial

transactions and criminal justice. As Muslim-majority countries and minority communities seek to negotiate between tradition and modernity, the relevance and dynamism of Islamic law continue to provoke scholarly interest on a global scale [1], [2]. Consequently, Islamic law has become a vibrant area of interdisciplinary research encompassing legal studies, religious studies, sociology, political science, and international relations [3].

The global research landscape on Islamic law reflects a complex interplay between historical development, legal reform, human rights discourse, and geopolitical realities. In recent decades, especially after the events of 9/11, Islamic law has garnered increased academic attention in both the West and the Muslim world. Topics such as hudud punishments, women's rights, Islamic finance, constitutionalism in Islamic states, and comparative legal systems have been critically examined in thousands of publications [4], [5]. Simultaneously, the emergence of Islamic legal scholarship in digital and open-access formats has allowed for broader dissemination and engagement beyond traditional academic circles. However, this expansion has created a rich yet fragmented body of knowledge that requires a more structured understanding [6].

Bibliometric analysis offers a powerful methodological tool to map the development, trends, and scholarly networks within Islamic law research. As a quantitative approach to literature review, bibliometrics enables the visualization of key research clusters, citation patterns, authorship networks, and country collaborations [7]. By applying bibliometric mapping to the domain of Islamic law, scholars can identify influential authors, highly cited works, emerging themes, and regional research strengths. Moreover, this method offers a macroscopic view that complements traditional qualitative and doctrinal approaches, revealing structural dynamics that are often overlooked in narrative reviews [8].

Recent years have witnessed a growing number of bibliometric studies across various fields of Islamic studies, such as Islamic finance [9], [10], halal tourism [11], and Islamic education [12]. These studies have provided valuable insights into the evolution of research fields and helped researchers navigate the expanding literature. However, Islamic law as a distinct and foundational branch of Islamic studies remains underexplored through bibliometric lenses. Given its centrality to Islamic civilization and

its relevance to contemporary socio-legal debates, mapping Islamic law scholarship can serve as a strategic reference for academics, policymakers, and institutions seeking to understand its global development.

Furthermore, the 21st century has seen increasing collaboration among scholars from diverse geographies, ranging from Middle Eastern countries, Southeast Asia, Africa, South Asia, to Western academic institutions. Such transnational scholarly networks have facilitated intellectual exchange and fostered comparative and reform-oriented approaches to Islamic law [13]. Understanding these collaborative patterns through bibliometric mapping can illuminate how Islamic law is researched differently across cultural and political contexts, and how research flows reflect broader academic geopolitics. This study aims to conduct a bibliometric mapping of global Islamic law research published between 2000 and 2025.

2. METHODS

This study employs a bibliometric analysis approach to systematically map the scholarly output and intellectual structure of Islamic law research from 2000 to 2025. Bibliometric analysis is a quantitative research method that uses statistical and visualization techniques to evaluate patterns of publication, authorship, institutional collaboration, and thematic development within a defined body of literature [7]. This approach is particularly suited for assessing the evolution and global reach of Islamic law research, allowing for identification of core contributors, emerging themes, and inter-regional scholarly networks. The study adopts a descriptive-exploratory design using performance analysis and science mapping to achieve its objectives.

The bibliographic data were extracted from the Scopus database due to its comprehensive coverage of peer-reviewed journals and multidisciplinary indexing. The search string used to retrieve the data included keywords such as "Islamic law" OR "Shariah law" OR "Fiqh" OR "Islamic

jurisprudence" in the title, abstract, or keywords. The time span was limited to publications between January 1, 2000 and December 31, 2025. Only articles, reviews, conference papers, and book chapters written in English were included to ensure consistency and accessibility in data interpretation. The retrieved dataset was exported in RIS and CSV formats for further analysis. After manual cleaning and deduplication, a total of 972 documents were retained for bibliometric processing. The cleaned bibliographic dataset was analyzed using VOSviewer, a specialized software tool for constructing and visualizing bibliometric maps [14]. VOSviewer was used to generate co-authorship networks, citation analyses, and keyword co-occurrence maps. Parameters such as minimum citation thresholds, keyword frequency limits, and relevance scores were adjusted to optimize visualization clarity and analytical depth.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Keyword Co-Occurrence Network Analysis

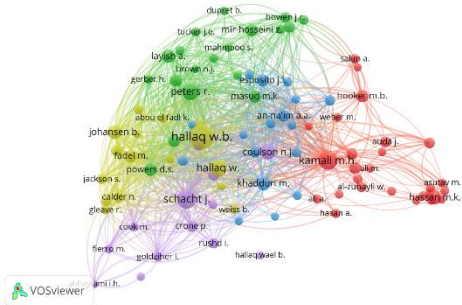


Figure 1. Author Visualization
Source: Data Analysis

Figure 1 above presents a co-authorship network in Islamic law research from 2000 to 2025, highlighting distinct clusters of scholarly collaboration. The map reveals five prominent clusters represented by different colors, each indicating a closely connected group of authors. The yellow cluster, with Wael B. Hallaq at its center, denotes a dominant intellectual hub in historical and critical Islamic legal thought. The red cluster features Mohammad Hashim Kamali, Jasser Auda, and M.K. Hassan, *Citation Analysis*

pointing to strong engagement in contemporary reformist, financial, and maqasid-oriented discourses. The green cluster, including John R. Bowen and Ziba Mir-Hosseini, reflects a socio-anthropological and gender-focused exploration of Islamic legal practices. The purple cluster, centered around Joseph Schacht, indicates a foundational academic base rooted in classical Orientalist legal historiography. Meanwhile, the blue cluster, containing Esposito, An-Na'im, and Masud bridges Western Islamic studies and global reform debate

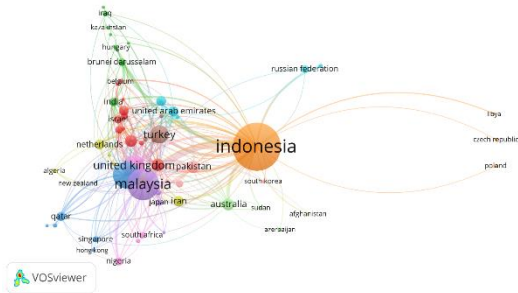


Figure 2. Country Visualization
Source: Data Analysis

Figure 2 illustrates international collaboration in Islamic law research based on country affiliations from 2000 to 2025. The most prominent node, Indonesia, occupies a central position with the largest circle, signifying its dominant contribution and extensive co-authorship links with numerous countries. Indonesia's strong research ties with Malaysia, the United Kingdom, Australia, Turkey, and Pakistan reflect its strategic academic partnerships, particularly within Southeast Asia, the Muslim world, and the Global North. Malaysia also emerges as a key regional hub, with tight linkages to Qatar, Singapore, and South Africa, suggesting vibrant South-South collaboration. The United Kingdom and Netherlands represent major Western academic partners, bridging research between Islamic and non-Islamic countries. Notably, Russia, Poland, Libya, and Czech Republic are connected only to Indonesia, indicating unidirectional or emerging partnerships.

Table 1. Top Cited Literature

Citation	Author	Title
603	[15]	What Is Islam?: The Importance of Being Islamic
571	[1]	A History of Islamic Law
549	[16]	Shari'a: Theory, practice, transformations
331	[17]	The long divergence: How Islamic law held back the Middle East
309	[18]	Social reporting by islamic banks
302	[19]	The ulama in contemporary islam: Custodians of change
300	[20]	Radical Reform: Islamic Ethics and Liberation
281	[21]	Women, family, and gender in Islamic law
270	[22]	On Trans-Saharan trails: Islamic law, trade networks, and cross-cultural exchange in nineteenth-century Western Africa
245	[19]	The ulama in contemporary Islam: Custodians of change

Source: Scopus Database, 2025

Co-Authorship Analysis

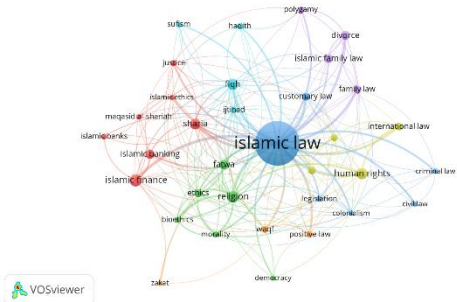


Figure 3. Network Visualization
Source: Data Analysis

Figure 3 above presents a keyword co-occurrence map of Islamic law research from 2000 to 2025, revealing the conceptual structure of the field. The central node, “Islamic law”, appears as the most dominant and interconnected term, reflecting its role as the core thematic anchor around which various subtopics revolve. The proximity and link strength of other keywords suggest the frequency with which they co-appear in the literature, providing insight into thematic groupings and research priorities. The map is divided into multiple clusters, each representing distinct yet interconnected research themes within Islamic law scholarship. The red cluster, located to the left of the map, centers on Islamic finance, Islamic banking, Islamic ethics, maqasid al-shariah, and justice. This cluster highlights the growing interest in the intersection between Islamic legal principles and modern financial systems. The prominence of terms such as Islamic finance and maqasid al-shariah reflects the trend toward value-based, ethical financial practices grounded in Shariah

objectives. This cluster underscores how economic applications of Islamic law, such as zakat, Islamic banks, and fatwas, are being critically explored in contemporary scholarship, especially in countries with dual legal systems or strong Islamic finance sectors.

To the top of the map, the blue cluster features keywords such as fiqh, ijihad, hadith, and sufism, which are foundational to classical Islamic jurisprudence. This group signifies research focused on the theological and interpretive roots of Islamic law. The emphasis on ijihad (independent reasoning) and fiqh (jurisprudence) suggests ongoing scholarly engagement with legal methodologies, interpretive evolution, and the historical development of Islamic legal schools. This cluster is more traditional in orientation, yet it maintains connectivity with reformist and applied discourses, indicating that contemporary debates remain anchored in classical principles. On the right side, the purple and yellow clusters relate to Islamic family law, divorce, polygamy, human rights, international law, and criminal law. These clusters reflect the increasing attention given to Islamic law’s interface with universal rights frameworks, legal pluralism, and gender justice. The keywords human rights, international law, and civil law show that scholars are actively interrogating how Islamic law operates in pluralistic societies and global legal systems. Meanwhile, Islamic family law, divorce, and polygamy suggest strong research attention on women’s issues, legal reform, and the tensions between

traditional norms and modern legal standards.

The green cluster at the bottom left revolves around terms like ethics, religion, morality, bioethics, waqf, and legislation. This area represents a more normative and interdisciplinary approach, connecting Islamic law with bioethical debates, religious ethics, and moral philosophy. The presence of keywords like democracy and positive law further implies interest in how Islamic law aligns or conflicts with modern political and legislative systems. This area is indicative of scholars exploring the role of Islamic law in shaping civic life, healthcare policies, and governance in both Muslim-majority and minority contexts. This co-occurrence map reveals that Islamic law research is thematically rich and multidimensional. It spans from classical jurisprudence and theology to modern applications in finance, ethics, family law, and human rights. The strong interconnectivity across clusters suggests that Islamic law is not studied in isolation but in conversation with contemporary global challenges and discourses.

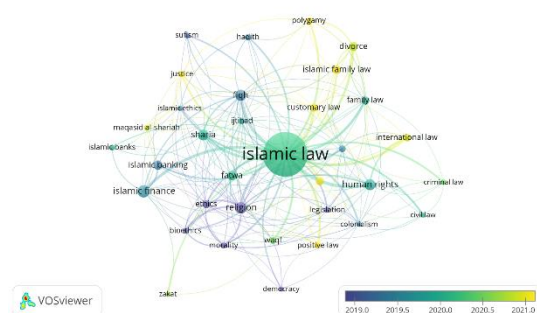


Figure 4. Overlay Visualization

Source: Data Analysis

Figure 4 illustrates the temporal evolution of research themes in Islamic law from approximately 2019 to 2021 based on keyword co-occurrence. The color gradient, ranging from purple (older) to yellow (newer), reflects the average publication year associated with each keyword. At the center, “Islamic law” remains the most prominent and widely connected term, indicating its continuing centrality throughout the research period. Surrounding it are established themes like *fiqh*, *sharia*, *fatwa*, and religion, mostly

appearing in green-blue hues, suggesting that these topics have remained consistently explored in the recent past. Emerging research themes are seen in yellow-colored keywords, such as human rights, divorce, polygamy, Islamic family law, and maqasid al-shariah. These indicate a contemporary shift toward sociopolitical and ethical dimensions of Islamic law, including gender issues and compatibility with international legal standards. The increasing attention to human rights and family law highlights an ongoing academic focus on reconciling traditional Islamic jurisprudence with modern legal and moral frameworks, particularly in multicultural and transnational contexts. These topics appear to be gaining momentum in the post-2020 scholarly landscape. Conversely, keywords shaded in dark blue to purple, such as Islamic finance, Islamic banking, bioethics, and democracy, suggest that although these were actively discussed before 2019, their relative prominence may be plateauing or declining in newer publications.

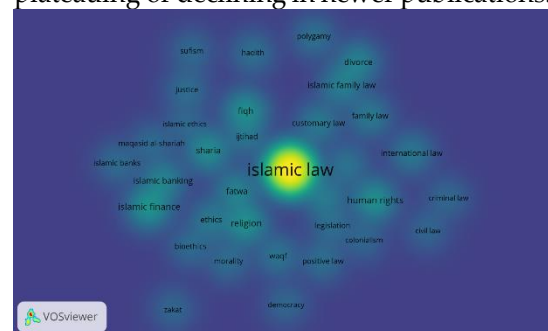


Figure 5. Density Visualization

Source: Data Analysis

Figure 5 provides insight into the frequency and intensity of keyword usage in Islamic law research from 2000 to 2025. The central term “Islamic law” appears in the brightest yellow, indicating the highest frequency of occurrence and confirming its role as the focal point of the research domain. Surrounding terms like sharia, fiqh, fatwa, religion, Islamic finance, and human rights are represented in shades of green, suggesting these are frequently co-mentioned and occupy significant positions in the scholarly discourse. This pattern indicates a strong concentration of research around core legal doctrines, interpretive tools, and the

application of Islamic law in ethical, financial, and sociopolitical contexts. In contrast, peripheral keywords such as zakat, democracy, waqf, bioethics, and colonialism are visualized in darker blue areas, reflecting lower levels of occurrence or narrower thematic exploration. Although these topics contribute to the diversity of Islamic law research, they appear less frequently or are more specialized.

DISCUSSION

The bibliometric mapping of Islamic law research from 2000 to 2025 offers rich insights into the structure, evolution, and global networks that shape this academic field. Through co-authorship analysis, country collaboration mapping, keyword co-occurrence, and temporal/density visualizations, the study reveals how Islamic law scholarship is thematically diverse, regionally concentrated, and increasingly interdisciplinary. These findings illustrate the vibrancy of the field while also pointing to areas for further exploration and scholarly collaboration.

The co-authorship network map clearly shows a fragmented yet interlinked scholarly landscape, with five primary clusters led by notable scholars. Wael B. Hallaq occupies the central node in the yellow cluster, indicating his dominant intellectual influence, particularly in historical, philosophical, and deconstructionist critiques of Islamic legal tradition. His works, deeply engaged with questions of authenticity, modernity, and colonial legacies, have attracted significant academic interaction. Other leading figures include Mohammad Hashim Kamali, Jasser Auda, and M.K. Hassan in the red cluster, reflecting research in contemporary Islamic legal reform, maqasid al-shariah, and Islamic finance. Meanwhile, scholars like Joseph Schacht and John Esposito anchor foundational and institutional approaches. The tight connections between these clusters suggest that Islamic law research is shaped by both classical scholarship and modern reformist discourse, with bridges forming across paradigms.

The country collaboration map further reinforces the global character of Islamic law studies while highlighting geographical asymmetries. Indonesia emerges as the most prolific and connected country, suggesting its leading role in Islamic law publications over the past two decades. This is a notable shift from the traditionally dominant Middle Eastern and Western centers, highlighting Southeast Asia's growing academic footprint in Islamic legal studies. Indonesia maintains strong research ties with Malaysia, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and Australia, pointing to vibrant interregional and South-South collaboration. Interestingly, countries such as Libya, Poland, and Czech Republic show one-directional links primarily through Indonesia, indicating either nascent partnerships or reliance on Indonesian co-authors for research outputs. This map reveals not only the centers of academic production but also potential gaps in North African, Central Asian, and Latin American Islamic law research visibility.

In terms of thematic structure, the keyword co-occurrence map illustrates how Islamic law research is conceptually organized into distinct yet interconnected clusters. The red cluster, centered on Islamic finance, Islamic banking, and maqasid al-shariah, underscores the importance of Shariah-compliant financial systems as a major research frontier. The growth of Islamic financial institutions globally has created a demand for scholarship that interprets classical jurisprudence within the logic of modern banking, ethics, and regulatory frameworks. Closely linked are keywords such as justice, Islamic ethics, and fatwa, signaling the ethical dimensions embedded in legal-commercial reasoning.

The blue and green clusters represent more foundational discussions, with terms such as fiqh, ijtiḥad, sharia, and religion. These keywords reflect the doctrinal and epistemological basis of Islamic law, exploring the interpretive tools used by jurists to derive rulings. The presence of ḥadīth and sufism also points to the spiritual and textual sources informing legal reasoning.

Meanwhile, the purple cluster on the right-hand side represents growing attention to family law, divorce, polygamy, and human rights. This area of research reflects pressing contemporary debates around gender justice, legal pluralism, and compatibility between Islamic and international law standards. The inclusion of international law, civil law, and criminal law suggests that Islamic law is increasingly studied in relation to other legal systems, revealing a rising trend of comparative jurisprudence.

The overlay visualization offers temporal insights, showing the chronological emergence of key themes. Older, foundational topics such as Islamic finance, *fiqh*, and *ijtihad* appear in darker colors (purple/blue), indicating earlier prominence in the research corpus. Conversely, terms like human rights, Islamic family law, divorce, polygamy, and *maqasid al-shariah* are shaded yellow, highlighting their emergence as current and trending areas in the field post-2020. This suggests a thematic transition from classical jurisprudence and financial applications toward socio-legal reform, family justice, and the intersection with universal rights frameworks. The increasing appearance of customary law, international law, and positive law also reflects scholarly efforts to contextualize Islamic legal norms within broader legal systems and to address the realities of modern nation-states.

Complementing this, the density visualization reveals research intensity across topics. The brightest area ("Islamic law") is expectedly the most concentrated, affirming its centrality in all co-occurrence clusters. Surrounding this are moderately dense regions including *sharia*, *fiqh*, *fatwa*, Islamic finance, and human rights, indicating sustained scholarly engagement. However, darker, peripheral areas, such as *zakat*, democracy, *waqf*, and bioethics, are relatively underrepresented, despite their importance in Islamic legal traditions. This signals opportunities for future research to further explore these lesser-covered yet significant subdomains, particularly in fields like Islamic philanthropy, constitutional theory, and

biomedical ethics. The findings of this study affirm that Islamic law research has not remained static or monolithic. Instead, it has expanded along multiple epistemological trajectories, balancing between traditional sources and contemporary demands. While early 2000s scholarship emphasized classical jurisprudence and institutional frameworks (e.g., *fiqh*, Islamic finance), more recent research demonstrates an increasing concern with reformist discourse, ethical integration, and human rights. This is reflective of broader socio-political transformations, including democratization in Muslim-majority countries, legal modernization efforts, and global advocacy for gender justice.

Moreover, the global scope of Islamic law research suggests a reorientation of academic leadership. While Western scholars and institutions continue to contribute significantly, the center of gravity is shifting toward the Global South, particularly Southeast Asia. Indonesia and Malaysia are not only producing more scholarship but are also fostering networks that engage with global academic partners. This trend offers hope for greater epistemic plurality and context-sensitive scholarship that reflects diverse lived realities of Muslim communities. Nonetheless, the study also highlights challenges. First, there is an imbalance in international collaboration, where certain regions (e.g., Sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia) are underrepresented. Second, thematic gaps persist in areas like environmental law, digital Islamic legal ethics, and postcolonial jurisprudence, topics increasingly relevant in the 21st century. Lastly, while VOSviewer enables robust visual mapping, bibliometric methods cannot capture the qualitative richness and normative debates central to Islamic legal thought. Therefore, future studies may benefit from hybrid approaches that combine bibliometrics with content analysis or discourse-based methods.

4. CONCLUSION

This study provides a comprehensive bibliometric mapping of Islamic law research

from 2000 to 2025, revealing its dynamic evolution, thematic richness, and global scholarly networks. Through co-authorship, keyword co-occurrence, and country collaboration analyses using VOSviewer, the study highlights the centrality of classical jurisprudential themes such as fiqh, sharia, and fatwa, alongside the growing prominence of contemporary issues like Islamic finance, human rights, and family law. Indonesia emerges as a key contributor to global discourse, reflecting a geographical shift in research production toward Southeast Asia. The temporal and density visualizations

further underscore the field's transition from doctrinal foundations to reform-oriented and rights-based narratives. While the findings demonstrate a vibrant and interconnected scholarly ecosystem, they also point to underexplored areas such as Islamic environmental law, waqf governance, and bioethics. As Islamic law continues to interact with global legal systems and ethical challenges, sustained interdisciplinary inquiry and inclusive collaboration will be essential for advancing both its academic and practical contributions.

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