

# Thematic Pathways in Islamic Philosophy Research (2000–2025): From Foundational Texts to Contemporary Debates

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## ABSTRACT

The paper focuses on studying thematic pathways in research on Islamic philosophy over the period between 2000 and 2025 using bibliometric and network visualization techniques. Data were sourced from Elsevier's Scopus and processed using VOSviewer to visualize authorship networks, citation networks and co-occurring keywords. The analysis revealed that there are dominant themes in Islamic philosophy research, which revolve around Islam and philosophy. Authorship network analysis demonstrates that there are clusters and links among scholarly communities with the number of international connections increasing. Citation analysis shows that classical philosophies and interdisciplinary research papers have had a profound impact on Islamic philosophy research. Moreover, the analysis of co-occurring keywords and the overlay analysis illustrate that a thematic shift takes place from foundational and historical questions to applied topics in Islamic economics, law, education and ethics. Indeed, density visualization shows that, although Islamic philosophy remains a dominant theme, emerging themes reflect its diversity and development. Thus, research on Islamic philosophy transforms into an interdisciplinary and internationally-oriented subject that combines classical ideas and modern issues. The study makes contributions to the literature in that it identifies trends and directions in research on Islamic philosophy.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The study of Islamic philosophy entails a broad and rich intellectual tradition that has been shaped for hundreds of years through various methodologies of exploring metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and politics. Traditionally, Islamic philosophy has developed as a result of a combination of the divine and rational elements, especially during the classical era, when Islamic

philosophers combined their knowledge of Greek philosophy with unique systems based on Islamic religious concepts. Apart from influencing the development of sciences in the Islamic world, Islamic philosophy has also made significant contributions to the development of philosophy on an international level [1], [2].

In recent times, specifically from 2000 to 2025, there have been changes witnessed in relation to the discipline of Islamic

philosophy. Increased production in terms of publications along with interdisciplinary studies and international cooperation among researchers have been seen. From bibliometric analysis, it can be seen that there has been consistent growth in the number of works produced in relation to the subject, which indicates that scholars have regained interest not only in traditional themes but also in new ones. New thematic trajectories in the discipline include revisiting fundamental thinkers, philosophy and the social sciences, globalization, and technology [3], [4].

In the process, the importance of reexamining the fundamental texts of Islamic philosophy has also gained recognition. Researchers have begun to explore ancient writings not just for their historical value but as dynamic sources of thought that can solve current problems. The focus on this aspect underlines the timeless significance of important philosophical ideas like the connection between divine revelation and human reason, the understanding of knowledge itself, and the moral implications of the human condition. For example, the philosophy of Islamic epistemology still stresses the interrelatedness of revelation, reasoning, and experience [5], [6].

Even with these developments, however, research in Islamic philosophy continues to encounter many difficulties. The most prominent problem lies in the ambivalence in the direction of Islamic philosophy today, in which researchers try to balance between their adherence to tradition and their desire to innovate and remain relevant. As noted in some studies, Islamic philosophy might end up irrelevant in practical affairs due to being too theoretical. In contrast, efforts at modernizing the discipline have led to a lack of coherence in research methodologies or loss of philosophical depth.

Moreover, Islamic philosophy in the modern era tends to be more focused on issues that cross disciplines as well as practical areas like education, politics, and social transformation. The field is usually regarded as an important means through which modern issues such as secularism,

scientific ethics, and problems facing the modern global world can be solved. Despite the fact that philosophical concepts can be applied to these fields, the way this is done tends to face a lot of debate, especially in terms of the methodology employed in doing so.

Although much has been written about Islamic philosophy from 2000 to 2025, there is no comprehensive study that provides a thorough examination of the thematic development of Islamic philosophy from ancient times up to the present day. Most of the existing literature revolves around the study of classical philosophical schools or individual issues pertaining to modern Islamic philosophy but fails to provide an insight into how the themes develop from ancient to modern times. Consequently, the development of the field of Islamic philosophy research and future possibilities have been neglected.

The objective of this paper is to trace the theme-based pathways in the study of Islamic philosophy from 2000 to 2025. The focus of the research will be on tracing the transition from the classics of philosophy to current discussions in the field. This paper will seek to uncover themes, trends, and methodologies that shape the subject of Islamic philosophy in addition to showing the connection between traditional philosophical thought and contemporary issues facing philosophers today.

## 2. METHODS

In this paper, a bibliometric analysis is conducted to examine the evolution of research on Islamic philosophy from 2000 to 2025. For that purpose, information is obtained from the Elsevier Scopus database that ensures wide access to articles published in reputable journals. The keywords associated with the topic of interest have been used to carry out the search, and the results have been filtered according to certain inclusion criteria, including the type of article, language, and date range. The selected set of information has been further analyzed via VOSviewer software, allowing for the

creation of bibliometric networks, such as co-authorship, citation, and keyword cocitation.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Co-Authorship Analysis

This study of co-authorship has been carried out in order to analyze the patterns of collaboration in the field of Islamic philosophy from the year 2000 to 2025. This process will help identify the network structure of academic collaborations in the field, establish who the main players are, and understand the level of collaboration that exists among them. The importance of such an analysis lies in understanding how

knowledge is generated and distributed in Islamic philosophy research.

#### 1. Author-level Visualization

The visualization of the authorship collaboration network reflects the pattern of collaboration among scholars in the area of Islamic philosophy, showing how scholar collaborations are divided into separate clusters. The figure is a representation of authors as nodes connected by lines, indicating collaboration between them, thereby reflecting information about scholar groups, the strength of collaboration, and some authors that bridge various groups of scholars.

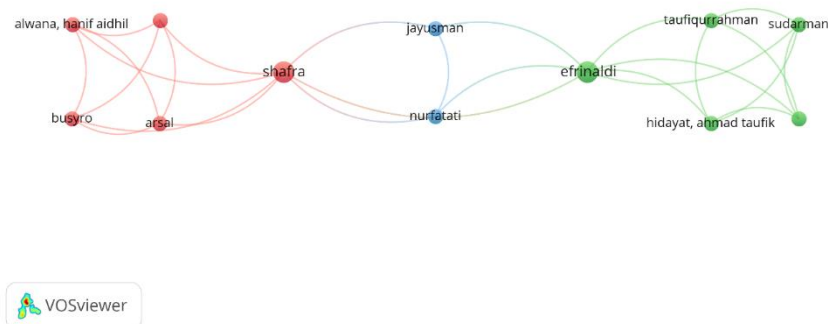


Figure 1. Author-level Visualization

Source: Data Analysis

This illustration shows that there are three main collaboration groups, distinguished by different colors. The first cluster of authors presented in red color is the most densely interconnected one, meaning that there is a high level of collaboration within this cluster. It is possible to assume that researchers from this cluster collaborate quite actively and that they probably have common interests or belong to the same institutions. On the contrary, the second cluster of authors presented in green color has a higher density of interconnections as well, although it is slightly less densely interconnected than the first one. Finally, the third cluster, shown in blue color, can be considered the least densely

interconnected one. One characteristic that is noteworthy in this network is the inclusion of bridging authors who serve as links between the clusters, especially between the red and green clusters via the central blue cluster. The implication of such bridging nodes is that there are scholars who are playing an essential role in promoting interaction in the transfer of knowledge between scholars from different communities of inquiry.

#### 2. Institution-level Visualization

The visual representation of institutional collaboration shows how universities and other institutes involved in the study of Islamic philosophy collaborate in

their research efforts. With nodes representing the various institutes while collaboration links are shown as edges, the

diagram provides a glimpse of the nature of the worldwide network that exists.

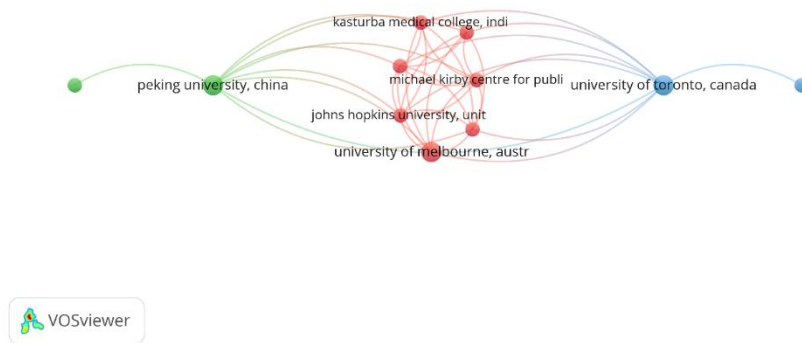


Figure 2. Institution-level Visualization

Source: Data Analysis

The figure shows how collaboration is centralized here, with one prominent cluster of institutions occupying the center of the map. Institutions like the University of Melbourne, Johns Hopkins University, and the Michael Kirby Centre for Public Health can be seen here acting as the prominent players involved in driving the process of collaboration within the area of research. In addition to these prominent institutions, it should be noted that Kasturba Medical College also acts as part of the central cluster, thereby showing how the entire area of research is driven by the central cluster of institutions. Other than the core, the network also consists of organizations such as the University of Toronto and Peking University, which are on the periphery but still connected to the core. This means that there is

cooperation across regions, where organizations from Asia and North America are connected to the core organization for Islamic philosophy research. While these organizations have fewer links, their existence shows the growth of the research field globally.

### 3. Country-level Visualization

Visualization of the Co-Authorship Network at the Country Level reveals the collaboration network of Islamic philosophy studies worldwide by visualizing the relationships between the countries that contribute to the field. In this network, each country is represented by nodes, and links represent collaborative connections in their research.

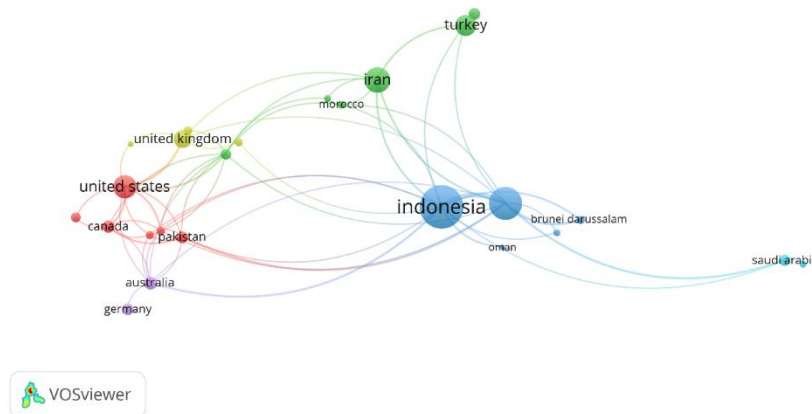


Figure 3. Country-level Visualization

Source: Data Analysis

Indonesia emerges as the most prominent and important node in the network, which implies its dominance in the study of Islamic philosophy. The fact that the node is larger and has several links means that there have been many publications and collaboration with different nations. Indonesia collaborates with Brunei Darussalam, Oman, and Saudi Arabia, among others, making up a cluster of collaboration in the region, implying that collaboration is determined by both geographical proximity and intellectual affinity in the Muslim world. Apart from the connections between different regions, there are also international connections between countries like the USA, UK, Australia, and Germany, forming connected groups that reach up to Indonesia, indicating an exchange of information across cultures between Western and non-Western academia. Countries such as Iran and Turkey can be seen as key nodes connecting the Middle Eastern region to international networks of researchers.

### 3.2 Citation Analysis

Citation analysis is employed to evaluate the intellectual influence and impact of scholarly works within the field of Islamic philosophy.

Table 1. The Most Impactful Literatures

Citations	Authors and year	Title
700	[7]	What Is Islam?: The Importance of Being Islamic
443	[8]	Exploring the ethical identity of Islamic Banks via communication in annual reports
399	[9]	Al-Ghazali's Philosophical Theology
226	[10]	An Islamic concept of education
217	[11]	Avicenna
210	[12]	The subject of liberty: Toward a feminist theory of freedom
197	[13]	Factors affecting Halal purchase intention – evidence from Pakistan’s Halal food sector
195	[14]	Psychology from Islamic perspective: Contributions of early Muslim scholars and challenges to contemporary Muslim psychologists
192	[15]	Maimonides in his world: Portrait of a Mediterranean thinker
168	[16]	Islamic marketing – a challenger to the classical marketing canon?

Source: Scopus, 2026



several clusters of themes emerge from the network, which help to widen the horizon of Islamic philosophy. One of the clusters includes keywords like "ethics," "morality," and "leadership." This implies that Islamic philosophy finds its applications in the field of ethics and moral reasoning, especially in terms of leadership and decision-making processes.

The other major node set is connected to socio-economic applications, which includes such words as "Islamic economics," "Islamic law," and "economics." It shows that the ideas of Islamic philosophy have become increasingly relevant in modern economic systems and legislation. The relationships among these words and key nodes show how the core ideas of philosophy can be applied to practical areas, particularly to the development of economic systems based on Islamic ideals. In addition to this, the network also reveals the educational and historical nature of the discourse, which is evidenced from terms such as "Islamic education," "religious education," "teaching," and "history." The term implies that a great deal of work done so far deals with the propagation of Islamic philosophy within educational institutions and its historical evolution. Its

connection to "philosophical aspects" points toward integration of classic philosophies into modern teaching methods.

The use of the terms like "Sufism," "spirituality," "culture," and "Islamism" is an indication that the interpretations of the different dimensions of Islamic philosophy research are diverse. It suggests that the research may cover aspects like spiritual exercises, culture, ideologies, among others. The entire framework used in constructing the network is one that has several dimensions since the classical foundation of Islamic philosophy research is linked with ethics, economics, education, and spirituality.

## 2. Overlay Visualization

The overlay visual representation of keyword association gives a timeline for the development of themes in Islamic philosophy, dating back to the period between 2000 and 2025. The assignment of colors to keywords depending on their mean publication year allows for the understanding of how the discussion theme has changed over time. Thus, it is possible to detect both early and contemporary topics that have been discussed in the field.

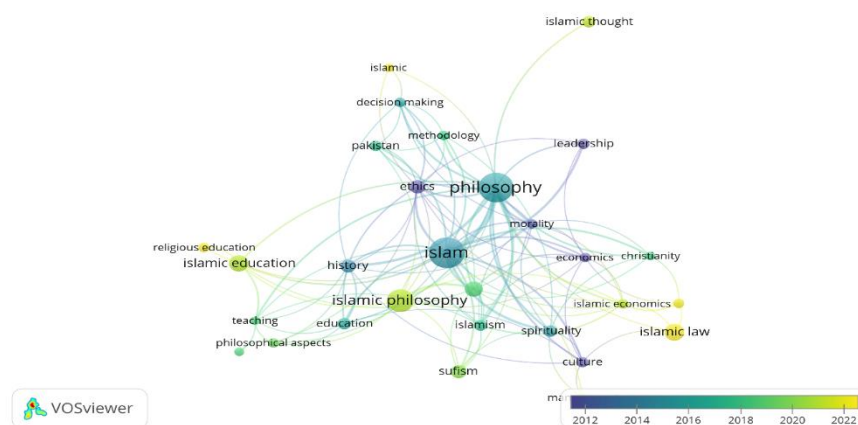


Figure 5. Overlay Visualization

Source: Data Analysis

This figure indicates that previous literature, marked by dark shades of blue, is mostly clustered around topics like "philosophy," "Islam," "ethics," and "history." These topics pertain to the foundational period of this discipline wherein the scholarly

focus was mostly limited to exploring classical philosophical questions and the history of Islamic philosophy. The close associations between the above mentioned keywords imply that early research was based on developing theoretical concepts in relation to

traditional philosophical discourse. In the process of development, there is an indication of a shift towards topics that are more practical and interdisciplinary in nature, as depicted by green-colored nodes. Terms like "Islamic philosophy," "education," "methodology," and "decision-making" highlight the increasing focus on applying philosophical concepts in practice, such as education and research methodology. This stage shows the expansion of the field, whereby Islamic philosophy starts overlapping with social science fields. The newer trends, emphasized with yellow highlighting, indicate a move towards topics with a more contemporary and practical approach, which include "Islamic law,"

"Islamic economy," "culture," and "religious education." These trends illustrate that the focus of present research is more on how Islamic philosophy can be applied to solve today's societal problems.

### 3. Density Visualization

The density map of keyword co-occurrences is a heat map showing the most extensively explored themes in the domain of Islamic philosophy. In this heat map, the sections that appear in lighter color tones (yellow) are where frequently occurring keywords are highly concentrated, while those appearing in darker shades (from green to blue) represent the emerging themes.

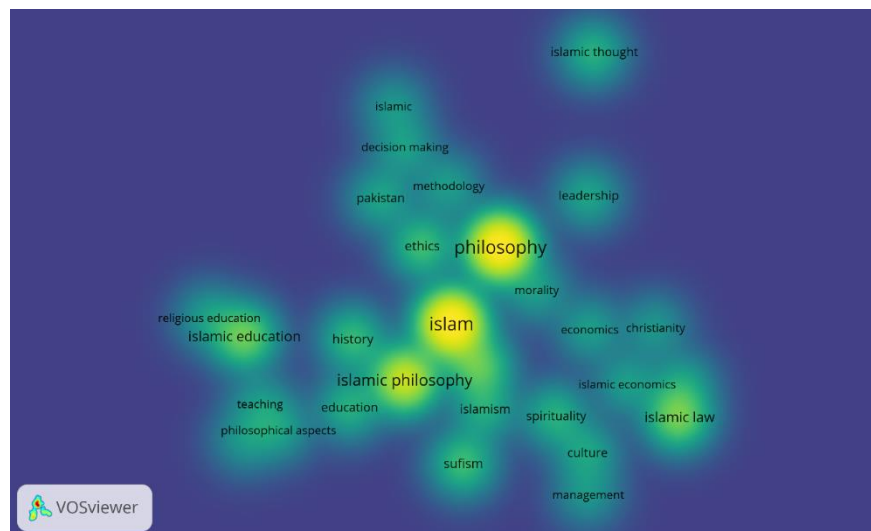


Figure 6. Density Visualization

Source: Data Analysis

It is evident from the figure that the keywords "Islam" and "philosophy" are the two major and most densely packed keywords represented by the lightest areas in the middle of the map. This implies that the bulk of the studies conducted on the subject matter mainly focus on the two key terms, indicating the importance of the two main foundations of knowledge generation. The next keywords, which include "Islamic philosophy," "ethics," and "morality," are positioned close to the central keywords. This means that the bulk of the literature revolves around ethical and philosophical deliberations. In addition to the core focus

area, the density begins to decline as we move towards more specific fields like "Islamic law," "Islamic economics," "education," "Sufism," and "culture." While not as dense as the core field, the visibility of these topics shows that there is considerable diversification in the subject matter being studied. These fields, which are outside but related to the core, show the influence of Islamic philosophy on other disciplines.

### Discussion

The results of the study show that the structure of research on Islamic philosophy comprises a well-defined intellectual core that

ties together traditional ideas with current scholarly discussions. The prevalence of certain keywords such as “Islam,” “philosophy,” and “Islamic philosophy” in numerous visualization graphs means that the subject matter is firmly based on its fundamental theoretical questions. In other words, current scholarship draws extensively on the ideas of early Muslim philosophers, adapting their ideas to modern times. Thus, it can be concluded that the subject matter retains its vitality as an ongoing tradition of philosophical thought.

Nevertheless, the findings on co-authorship and institutional cooperation reveal that scientific knowledge creation in this area is also affected by local and global academic social networks. The existence of densely interconnected clusters of authors implies that the research process occurs in particular academic communities, probably because of institutional relations or common research interests. Nevertheless, the existence of bridging agents and cross-national cooperation reveals an increasing degree of internationalization. Nations like Indonesia prove to be central actors in the scientific discourse, indicating the rising importance of non-Western countries in setting the course of Islamic philosophy studies.

Additionally, the development of themes based on the analysis of co-occurrences and overlay visualization reveals a definite move from fundamental and historical aspects to a more practical approach involving various interdisciplinary topics. Earlier literature revolved around topics related to metaphysics, ethics, and the analysis of ancient texts, while the later literature focuses on topical issues including Islamic economics, law, education, and leadership. Thus, there seems to be a trend that Islamic philosophy is currently being used as a tool to cope with contemporary social problems, increasing the relevance of Islamic philosophy in other disciplines.

This is also supported by the density plot, which demonstrates that while the core philosophical concepts have continued to be

prevalent, there is also an expansion towards peripheral but increasingly important issues. For example, Sufism, spirituality, culture, and management are some of the themes that are now being explored in Islamic philosophy, highlighting the diversity in research topics. Such diversity is essential for sustaining the development of the discipline, as it ensures the incorporation of different ideas and facilitates interdisciplinary collaboration.

This research shows that Islamic philosophy studies are witnessing an active period of transition that features the principles of knowledge continuity, broadening of themes, and growing international cooperation. It appears that the field of research is currently being restructured in accordance with the demands of modern society. Not only does this improve the significance of Islamic philosophy in contemporary debates, but also creates opportunities for future work, especially in relation to the potential application of Islamic philosophy to solving pressing global problems.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Islamic philosophy research from 2000 to 2025 is characterized by a dynamic interplay between enduring classical foundations and expanding contemporary applications. The findings reveal that while core themes such as Islam and philosophy remain central to the field, there has been a clear shift toward interdisciplinary and practice-oriented topics, including economics, law, education, and ethics. At the same time, the structure of collaboration indicates increasing global engagement, with emerging contributions from diverse regions strengthening the field’s intellectual diversity. Overall, Islamic philosophy continues to evolve as a relevant and adaptive body of knowledge, bridging traditional thought with modern challenges and offering significant potential for future scholarly development.

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