

Bibliometric Analysis of Islamic Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

Islamic higher education has become an increasingly important research area due to its role in integrating religious values, academic development, technological advancement, and social transformation. This study aims to explore the global research development, intellectual structure, collaboration patterns, and emerging themes in Islamic higher education through a bibliometric analysis approach. Data were retrieved from the Scopus database using relevant keywords related to Islamic higher education, and the collected publications were analyzed using bibliometric techniques with VOSviewer. The analysis covers publication trends, influential authors, institutional and country collaborations, citation performance, keyword co-occurrence, and thematic evolution. The findings reveal that research on Islamic higher education has expanded significantly, with Indonesia emerging as the most productive and influential contributor, followed by Malaysia and other countries with active scholarly engagement. Citation analysis indicates that major contributions focus on educational technology, Islamic educational philosophy, leadership, curriculum development, and the relationship between Islamic traditions and modern educational practices. Keyword analysis demonstrates a transition from conventional themes related to Islamic studies and religious education toward contemporary issues such as artificial intelligence, digital learning systems, religious moderation, and educational innovation. This study highlights that Islamic higher education has evolved into a multidisciplinary research field that connects religious knowledge with broader educational, technological, and societal challenges. The findings provide valuable insights for researchers, policymakers, and educational institutions in identifying future research directions and strengthening the global development of Islamic higher education.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Islam higher education has taken root as an important pillar in socio-cultural and intellectual development in Muslim countries. While traditional higher education has continued its existence as before, Islam higher

education embraces religious values and principles besides the modern education system to develop scholars that will thrive in both spiritual and secular areas [1], [2]. In the last decades, there has been considerable growth in the number of universities, colleges,

and research centers that are committed to teaching about Islam [3]. The increase is part of the growing global tendency to incorporate a faith-based perspective into the education system to ensure that professionals developed by this system are grounded on the basis of Islamic knowledge [4].

Islamic higher education has been influenced by a combination of various historical, cultural, and geopolitical elements over time [5]. Conventional madrasahs and pesantrens provided the initial framework for Islamic learning which was centered around religious literacy and law (fiqh). With the establishment of nation-states and the emergence of a new world order, there has been a shift in the nature of learning in Islamic institutions where management, information technology, and social sciences are taught alongside religious subjects using modern pedagogy [6], [7]. Therefore, there has been a diversification of the academic research that is being carried out at Islamic universities. It now covers various issues including theology and philosophy in addition to science and innovation.

Moreover, the importance of research in the field of Islamic higher education has grown in policy making and institutional performance. The output of research not only indicates academic performance but also contributes to the country's development goals, international collaboration, and reputation of the universities globally [8]. Scholarly publication studies through bibliometrics offer a systematic method for understanding such contributions by providing information on trends in research, collaboration patterns, citations, and themes. Through such analysis, knowledge production in the field of Islamic higher education may be systematically identified.

Even with the development of Islamic universities, the difficulties in quantifying the effects of their research outputs continue to exist. There is evidence that the research productivity of individual scholars, institutions, countries, and subjects may differ considerably [9], [10]. Such variables as financial resources, support from institutions,

international collaborations, and incorporation of technology in the research process affect the productivity of researchers. Additionally, even though international bibliometric databases like Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar have information about publications in scientific literature, they do not account for publications in local languages or regional publications. It highlights the need for conducting bibliometric studies systematically and taking into account both quantitative and qualitative aspects of scholarly output.

Moreover, the comprehension of trends in collaboration, themes, and research influence is vital in determining the directions that future research should take. It has been found that collaborations among Islamic universities and other higher learning institutions, both local and foreign, lead to increased knowledge transfer and citation influence [11]. Through thematic analysis, new research themes, gaps, and intersections between Islamic teachings and current societal issues, including environmental sustainability, ethical leadership, and innovations, may be identified. Bibliometric studies not only serve the purpose of evaluation but are also vital in the creation of policy and curricula.

Despite the increasing prominence of Islamic higher education, there remains limited empirical understanding of its research output, collaboration patterns, and thematic evolution. Current literature often lacks comprehensive bibliometric analyses that map scholarly production across institutions, countries, and disciplines, resulting in fragmented insights. Without such systematic evaluation, policymakers, educators, and researchers are constrained in their ability to identify gaps, prioritize research funding, and foster strategic collaborations that enhance both academic and societal impact [12]. This study aims to conduct a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of Islamic higher education to elucidate research productivity, collaboration networks, and thematic trends.

2. METHODS

For this study, a bibliometric methodology was applied to examine the research on Islamic higher education. Bibliometrics allows for the application of a systematic way of measuring publications and assessing different aspects of academic work, such as the quantity and impact of research and collaboration between researchers [13]. In particular, the study relied on peer-reviewed publications in the Scopus database because it has a reliable and comprehensive index of journals from all over the world and tracks citations. The selection of the Scopus database was due to the ability to assess publications on the topic of Islamic higher education using an established tool. The following keywords were used in the search strategy: "Islamic higher education," "Islamic universities," etc., in the title and abstract of the article for the period from 2000 to 2025.

Data extraction in Scopus included the retrieval of bibliographic data such as author names, affiliations, publication year, journal name, and citation metrics. Cleaning of data was done through elimination of

duplication, articles not related to the subject under study, and non-scholarly articles to ensure that the analysis is only based on scholarly literature. Main bibliometric metrics were determined, including number of publications per year, citations, key authors, key institutions, and contributions by countries. The cleaned data was saved in a format readable by VOSviewer software.

The specific bibliometric visualization software tool called VOSviewer was used for data analysis and presentation purposes. Co-authorship analysis was done using VOSviewer for the identification of patterns in authorship collaboration. Meanwhile, co-citation and bibliographic coupling analysis helped to identify influential documents and research clusters. The use of keyword co-occurrence mapping allowed gaining insight into the topic structure in the field under investigation. Visualization maps generated by VOSviewer aided in the understanding of the intellectual structure of the Islamic higher education research field.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Co-Author Analysis

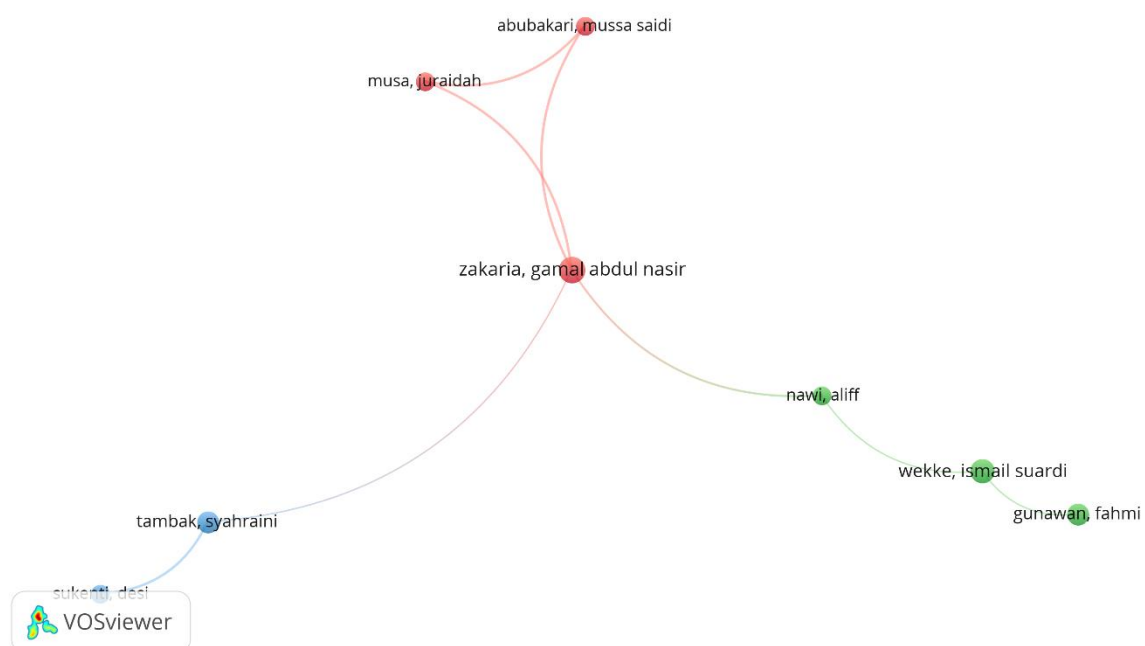


Figure 1. Author-level Visualization

Source: Data Analysis

Figure 1 presents the pattern of relationships between the researchers who contribute to the body of knowledge concerning Islamic higher education. It is possible to state that the network presented includes several isolated clusters, which means that the collaboration of the authors is fragmented, not unified into a globally cohesive academic community. The central node of Zakaria, Gamal Abdul Nasir means that the author acts as a mediator in the linkages between different collaboration groups, especially those with Abubakari,

Mussa Saidi and Musa, Jumaidah, as well as the one with the cluster including Nawli, Aliff, Wekke, Ismail Suardi, and Gunawan, Fahmi. Green cluster is the one representing an independent group of researchers who study Islamic education. Blue cluster, including Tambak, Syahraini and Sukenti, Desi, shows another independent collaboration within the research topic. The small amount of nodes and links allows us to conclude that the research area of Islamic higher education still relies on certain groups of authors.



Figure 2. Institution-level Visualization

Source: Data Analysis

The network of the universities and research institutions taking part in Islamic higher education research is presented in Figure 2 below. From the network analysis, it can be seen that there is an interdependent structure that is somewhat limited. This means that institutional collaborations for research in this field are still limited to a few universities. One of these universities with central position and connected to others is Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry. This means that Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-

Raniry is playing a significant role in the development and dissemination of research in Islamic higher education. Collaboration between Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, and Universitas Negeri Malang shows collaborations within different research environments especially between Islamic universities and other higher education universities.

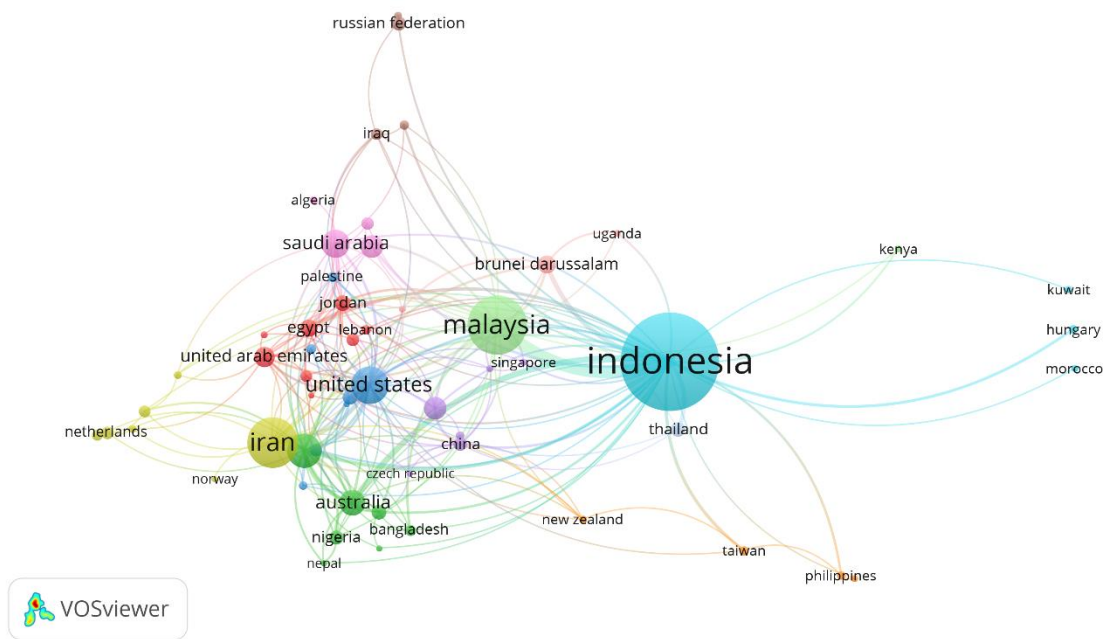


Figure 3. Country-level Visualization

Source: Data Analysis

The research landscape of Islamic higher education on a global scale is presented in Figure 3 below with the focus on research collaboration partnerships across the world. Indonesia appears to be the most influential country, with the biggest node size and number of collaborations, proving its importance in the creation and cooperation in researching Islamic higher education. Another country demonstrating great research influence in the region is Malaysia, whose significance in Islamic higher education is associated with the common

history, culture, and education systems in Indonesia and Malaysia. Other countries participating in Islamic higher education research include Iran, the USA, Australia, China, Saudi Arabia, and UK networks; thus, it becomes clear that research in this field goes beyond Muslim countries. Nevertheless, there are still some countries with limited participation in the process, such as Kuwait, Hungary, Morocco, and Kenya.

3.2 Citation Analysis

Table 1. The Most Impactful Literatures

Citations	Authors and year	Title
222	[14]	Effects of traditional, blended and e-learning on students' achievement in higher education
209	[15]	Evidence about the link between education, poverty and terrorism among Palestinians
172	[16]	Critical issues in islamic education studies: Rethinking islamic and western liberal secular values of education
163	[17]	Javanese women and the veil in post-soeharto Indonesia
154	[18]	Mental health survey of the iranian adult population in 2015
131	[19]	Educational leadership: An Islamic perspective
108	[20]	Two sides of the same coin: Modernity and tradition in Islamic education in Indonesia

Citations	Authors and year	Title
107	[21]	Localizing women's experiences in academia: multilevel factors at play in the Arab Middle East and North Africa
96	[22]	Combining the previous measure of evidence to educational entrance examination
94	[23]	A History of African Higher Education from Antiquity to the Present: A CRITICAL SYNTHESIS

Source: Scopus, 2026

Table 1 presents the most impactful literature in the field of Islamic higher education based on citation frequency, highlighting the key scholarly contributions that have shaped the development of this research area. The most cited article by [14], with 222 citations, focuses on the comparative effects of traditional, blended, and e-learning approaches on student achievement in higher education, indicating the growing importance of educational technology and digital learning transformation. The high citation impact of [15] and [16] demonstrates significant scholarly attention toward the relationship between education, social issues, Islamic

educational philosophy, and the interaction between Islamic and Western educational values. Several influential studies also emphasize socio-cultural dimensions of Islamic education, including [17] on women's identity and religious practices in Indonesia and [20] on the relationship between modernity and tradition in Indonesian Islamic education. Furthermore, studies addressing leadership, gender, mental health, and educational assessment, such as those by [19], [21], and [22], indicate that Islamic higher education research has expanded into multidisciplinary areas beyond religious instruction.

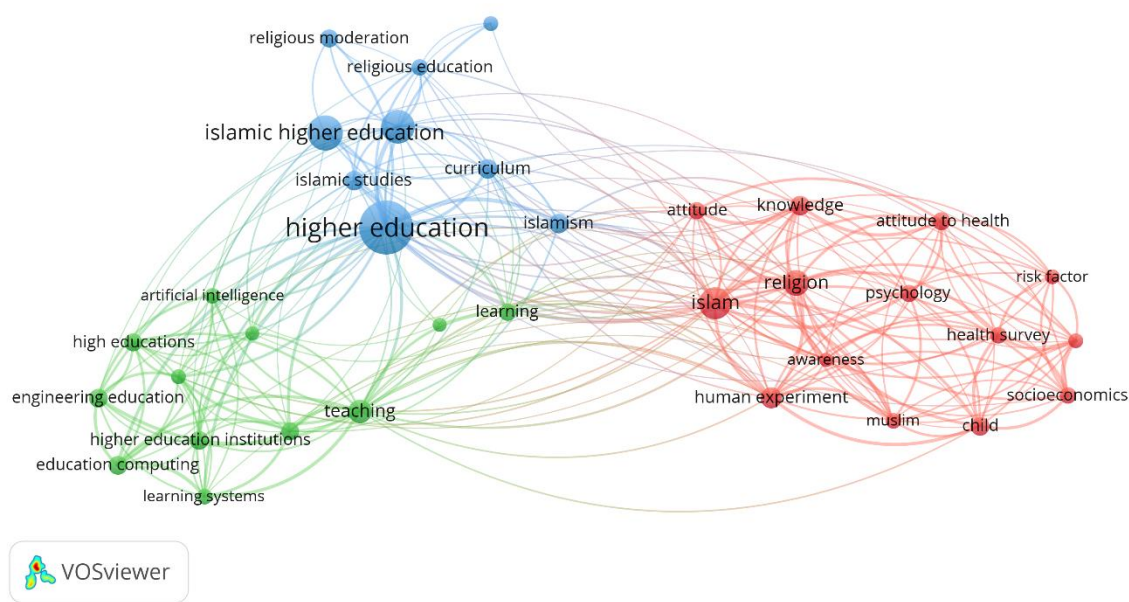


Figure 4. Network Visualization
Source: Data Analysis

As illustrated in Figure 4 below, there is a conceptual framework for the major research themes of Islamic higher education.

There are several groups within the network, each indicating a different aspect of the research but related to one another. The size

of the node is an indicator of the frequency of the keywords, while the line connecting the nodes is indicative of the relationship strength between the keywords. The figure shows that Islamic higher education research has gone beyond the study of religion alone to become multidisciplinary.

The cluster colored in blue is the main theme that reflects Islamic higher education and educational foundations. Such keywords as "higher education," "Islamic higher education," "Islamic studies," "curriculum," "religious education," and "religious moderation" have been used in the cluster as main themes. The use of these key themes reflects the fact that many scholarly articles deal with the issue of development of curriculum in the context of Islamic higher education institutions. In addition, the theme of religious moderation indicates growing interest of scholars in the issue of tolerance promoted by Islamic universities.

In terms of the green cluster, there is the connection made between Islamic higher education and innovations in education, especially concerning technology and education transformation. The use of keywords like "artificial intelligence,"

"teaching," "learning systems," "education computing," "higher education institutions," and "engineering education" proves the growing number of research studies that investigate the topic of digital transformation and technological integration in higher education. The green cluster shows how the Islamic educational institutions adjust to new learning environments where technologies, innovative approaches to teaching, and digital competencies become more and more relevant.

The red cluster shows the wider aspect of society, psychology, and religion related to research on Islamic higher education. Key terms like "Islam," "religion," "psychology," "knowledge," "attitude," "awareness," "health survey," "socioeconomics," and "human experiment" imply that research into Islamic higher education is also linked with human behavior and societal well-being. The cluster implies that research on Islamic higher education increasingly considers the effect of Islamic values on individual attitudes, moral viewpoints, psychological well-being, and societal impact outside the educational framework.

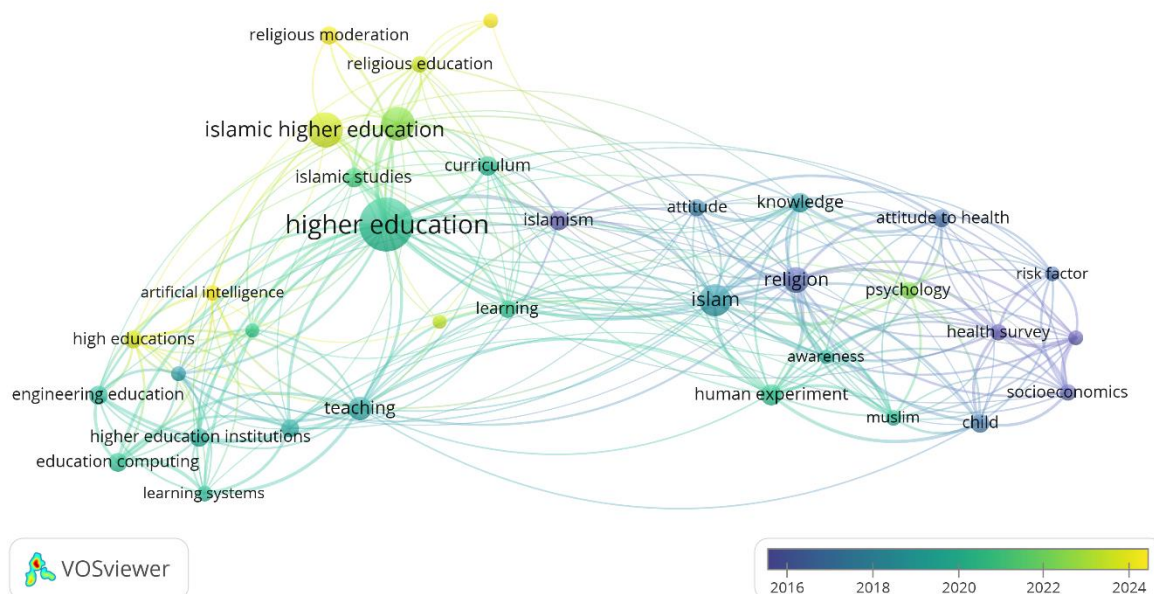


Figure 5. Overlay Visualization

Source: Data Analysis

Figure 5 depicts the timeline of the evolution of research themes in Islamic higher education in terms of the patterns of keyword appearances from 2016 to 2024. The colors used in the timeline show the mean publication years of keywords, whereby blue signifies old research themes, and green and yellow signify new emerging themes. From the figure, it is evident that the main themes that include "higher education," "Islam," "religion," and "Islamic studies" have been constant over the research period.

The early research areas seem to be centered on topics like "higher education," "religion," "psychology," "health survey," and "socioeconomics" denoted by darker shades of blue color. The topics mentioned above suggest that earlier researchers used to concentrate on social, psychological, and

religious aspects of Islamic education. In the course of time, research has started shifting to more contemporary topics such as "artificial intelligence," "religious moderation," "religious education," and "Islamic higher education" that are denoted by green and yellow shades of keywords.

The timeline reveals that there has been a shift from conventional areas such as Islam, religion, and education to areas that may have a future implication for researchers. Current studies seem to focus on the use of technology, curriculum design, and making Islamic higher education relevant in the current setting. The increased interest in areas such as artificial intelligence, learning systems, and moderation within religions indicates that future research could look at the following aspects:

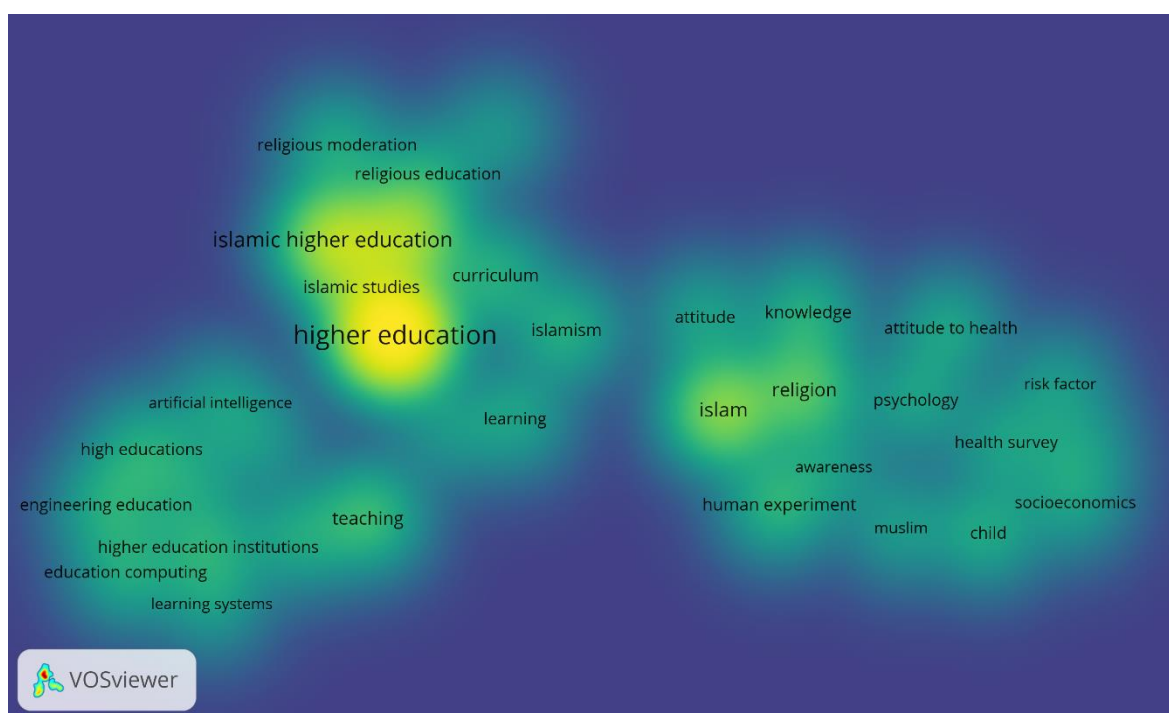


Figure 6. Density Visualization

Source: Data Analysis

Figure 6 demonstrates the prevalence of research topics in the area of Islamic higher education. The degree of brightness of colors corresponds to the frequency and relevance of certain keywords, where more brightly colored areas signify research topics that are more prevalent in the literature. The most prevalent areas can be found near the

keywords "higher education," "Islamic higher education," and "Islam," implying that these research topics signify the main research areas in the literature. The high concentration near the keyword "higher education" indicates that there is a great number of studies concerning institutionalization, educational systems, curricula, and Islamic

universities as a modern form of higher education. Another area of concentration includes such topics as “religion,” “religious education,” and “Islamic studies.”

From the figure above, there are a number of interrelated areas of study that have emerged and have moderate density, which include “artificial intelligence,” “learning systems,” “teaching,” “curriculum,” and “religious moderation.” The above trends suggest an approach to addressing issues concerning the impact of technological revolution, innovation in pedagogical practice, and the modernization of Islamic higher education. However, terms like “psychology,” “health survey,” “socioeconomics,” and “human experiment” are seen to be emerging areas of study that are peripheral but interlinked with the above themes.

4. CONCLUSION

In this bibliometric analysis, the growth, intellectual structure, and recent trends in the Islamic higher education research can be assessed. As can be seen, this discipline has shown considerable growth, and Indonesia appears to be the main contributor to the literature, followed by such countries as Malaysia, Iran, and the USA. According to the results of collaboration analysis, there is a concentration of research network in particular institutions and researchers. Through citation analysis, one may conclude that key publications deal with educational transformation, digital learning, Islamic educational philosophy, leadership, social development, and tradition-modernity connection. Also, keyword analysis allows one to state that the research in this discipline has changed from the traditional discussion about Islamic studies and religious education to more broad topics, such as artificial intelligence, learning systems, curriculum innovation, religious moderation, and institution transformation.

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