

## Exploring Global Trends in Waqf Law: Insights from a Bibliometric Study

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study aims to map the development of waqf and legal studies indexed in the Scopus database in the period 2016-2025 with a bibliometric approach. The analysis was carried out to identify the main trends, patterns of collaboration between authors, distribution of publications based on institutional and country affiliations, and characteristics of journal sources that became publication media. The bibliometric method was applied by utilizing VOSviewer software for co-occurrence network visualization and Microsoft Excel for quantitative data processing and analysis. The results show that Indonesia (43.5%) and Malaysia (23.1%) are the countries with the highest research productivity in this field, with significant contributions from the United States (11.6%). The International Islamic University was recorded as the academic institution with the highest number of publications (15.4%), followed by University Kebangsaan Malaysia and Universitas Padjajaran (13.5% each). From an individual perspective, publication patterns show a relatively even distribution, with 40% of researchers producing three publications and 60% of researchers producing two publications. Analysis of journal sources revealed that the three main journals served as publication platforms for 13.9% of the total articles analyzed. Temporal trends show a significant increase in research productivity, with the highest spike in 2024 (22 publications) and the most notable acceleration of research occurring in the period 2018-2021. These findings indicate significant developments in waqf studies, particularly in countries with predominantly Muslim populations, and point to a growing research ecosystem with a wider diversification of publication platform.*

**Keywords:** *Waqf; Bibliometric Analysis; Research Productivity; Publication Trends; Islamic Studies*

### **ABSTRAK**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memetakan perkembangan wakaf dan studi hukum yang terindeks dalam *database* Scopus pada periode 2016-2025 dengan pendekatan bibliometrik. Analisis dilakukan untuk mengidentifikasi tren utama, pola kolaborasi antar penulis, distribusi publikasi berdasarkan afiliasi kelembagaan dan negara, serta karakteristik sumber jurnal yang menjadi media publikasi. Metode bibliometrik diterapkan dengan memanfaatkan perangkat lunak VOSviewer untuk visualisasi jaringan *co-occurrence* dan Microsoft Excel untuk pengolahan dan analisis data kuantitatif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Indonesia (43,5%) dan Malaysia (23,1%) adalah negara dengan produktivitas riset tertinggi di bidang ini, dengan kontribusi signifikan dari Amerika Serikat (11,6%). International Islamic University tercatat sebagai institusi akademik dengan jumlah publikasi tertinggi (15,4%), disusul oleh University Kebangsaan Malaysia dan Universitas Padjajaran (masing-masing 13,5%). Dari perspektif individu, pola publikasi menunjukkan distribusi yang relatif merata, dengan 40% peneliti menghasilkan tiga publikasi dan 60% peneliti menghasilkan dua publikasi. Analisis sumber jurnal mengungkapkan bahwa tiga jurnal utama tersebut berfungsi sebagai platform publikasi untuk 13,9% dari total artikel yang dianalisis.

Tren temporal menunjukkan peningkatan produktivitas penelitian yang signifikan, dengan lonjakan tertinggi pada tahun 2024 (22 publikasi) dan percepatan penelitian yang paling menonjol terjadi pada periode 2018-2021. Temuan ini menunjukkan perkembangan signifikan dalam studi wakaf, terutama di negara-negara dengan populasi mayoritas Muslim, dan menunjukkan ekosistem penelitian yang berkembang dengan diversifikasi platform publikasi yang lebih luas.

**Kata kunci:** Wakaf; Analisis Bibliometrik; Produktivitas Penelitian; Tren Publikasi; Studi Islam

## INTRODUCTION

Waqf, an enduring institution within the Islamic tradition, serves as a voluntary endowment supporting various public interests such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure. Historically rooted in Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), waqf has played a significant role in wealth distribution and social welfare across the Muslim world (Almansoori, Alnaief, and Al-Enezy 2024; Alnaief et al. 2024). In contemporary times, waqf is increasingly recognized as not only a spiritual act but also a socio-economic tool within Islamic finance, contributing to sustainable development and financial inclusion (Iskandar et al. 2021; Komilov 2023; Hendrawati et al. 2022).

Nevertheless, in regions such as Indonesia, challenges persist in the economic utilization of waqf assets, particularly due to unproductive land and the limited professional capacity of nazhir or waqf managers (Choiri and Ardyansyah 2024). Historically, the Ottoman Empire relied on a sophisticated land regime that balanced administrative, fiscal, and legal concerns, including waqf property rights under the concept of serbestiyet, yet this aspect remains underexplored (Çimen 2025).

While academic interest in waqf has grown over the past two decades covering legal innovation, governance, and policy implications the existing literature remains fragmented (Almansoori, Alnaief, and Al-Enezy 2024; Syibly et al. 2022; Guelida, el Aydouni, and Ziani 2022). However, the existing body of literature remains fragmented, with limited effort to systematically map the evolution and global landscape of waqf-related legal research (Wira et al. 2023; Hakimah et al. 2022). Consequently, key questions remain unanswered: Which regions and institutions are most active in this area of study? What are the dominant themes and emerging trends? Who are the core contributors and what collaborative networks existing?

This study aims to address that gap by conducting a bibliometric analysis of waqf-and-law publications indexed in Scopus from 2016 to 2025, mapping research trends, key contributors, collaborative networks, and thematic developments (Zaenurrosyid and Sholihah 2024).

Ultimately, this paper contributes to the ongoing development of waqf studies by providing empirical insights that inform future academic inquiries and policymaking. It also underscores the importance of waqf as a multidimensional subject legally, economically, and socially within both national and global contexts.

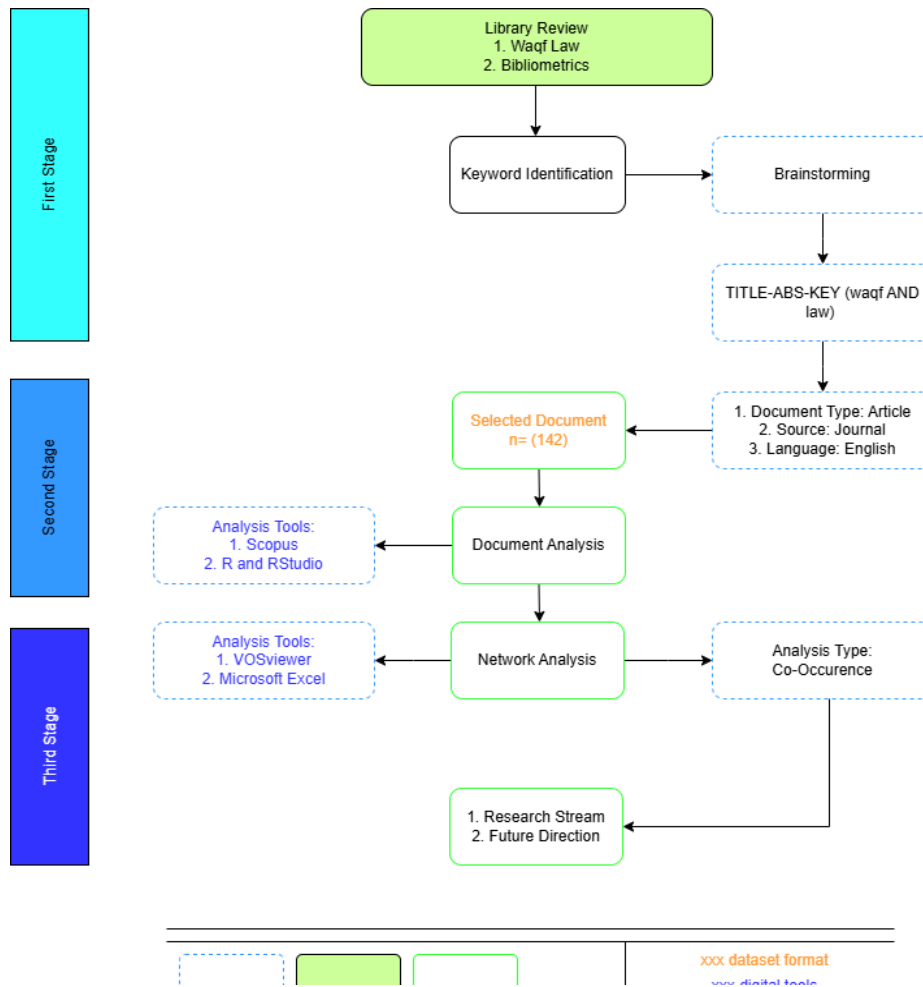
## METHODS

The bibliometric method presented in the diagram adopts a structured, three-stage approach to systematically analyze research related to *waqf law*. The process begins with a preliminary stage that involves a comprehensive library review, focusing on two main areas: *waqf law* and *bibliometric methods*. This foundational review is followed by a brainstorming session aimed at generating relevant keywords, which are then refined into a search string using Boolean logic: TITLE- ABS-KEY (*waqf AND law*). The search is further limited to journal articles written in English, resulting in a curated dataset of 142 documents. This ensures the relevance and quality of the sources selected for analysis.

The second stage involves document analysis using quantitative techniques. In this phase, Scopus is utilized for data retrieval, citation tracking, and extraction of bibliometric metadata. The data is then processed and analyzed using R and RStudio, allowing for the calculation of bibliometric indicators such as publication trends, citation frequency, and author productivity. This stage enables a detailed exploration of the intellectual structure of the field.

In the third and final stage, network analysis is conducted to examine the relationships between keywords and other bibliometric entities. The analysis is focused on co-occurrence patterns, which help identify dominant themes and emerging trends within the field. VOSviewer is employed for network visualization, while Microsoft Excel supports data cleaning and preprocessing. The output of this stage includes the identification of key research streams and potential future research

directions (Subhi, Nurul, and Putra 2024).



**Figure 1. Research Stages and Detailed Procedures for Dataset Preparation**

Overall, this bibliometric method demonstrates a rigorous, transparent, and reproducible approach, combining qualitative groundwork with quantitative analysis. The integration of advanced tools and clearly defined procedures makes it a robust framework for mapping the intellectual landscape of waqf law research and guiding future scholarly exploration.

## RESULTS

The analysis of publication trends in Figure 2 shows a steady growth in waqf and law-related publications indexed in Scopus from 2016 to 2025. The number of publications remained low between 2016 and 2017, with only four documents annually. A gradual increase occurred starting in 2018 and peaked in 2024 with 22 publications, marking the highest productivity within the studied period. The decline in 2025 to three publications is likely due to the partial indexing of data for that year.

In terms of geographical distribution in Figure 3, Indonesia contributed the largest share of publications with 64 documents, followed by Malaysia (34), the

United States (17), and the United Kingdom (9). Other notable contributors include Pakistan, Germany, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Japan, and the United Arab Emirates, each with fewer than six publications. These figures indicate the dominant role of Southeast Asian countries in waqf-related scholarship. This data indicates that Indonesia and Malaysia collectively account for about 66.6% of the total publications analyzed. This dominance shows the strategic role of the two countries in the development of waqf law studies, both in terms of quantity and policy focus. It also reflects the institutional commitment in Southeast Asia to strengthening the locality-based but global Islamic research ecosystem.

Figure 4 highlights institutional contributions, with the International Islamic University Malaysia (8 publications) leading, followed by Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and Universitas Padjadjaran (7 publications each). Other key institutions include Universiti Teknologi MARA, Universiti Malaya, and the Islamic University of Indonesia, each contributing five publications.

Author productivity data in Figure 5 shows that four scholars Ahyani, H., Hussin, R., Islamiyati, and Kuran, T. each produced three publications, indicating consistent scholarly engagement. A second tier of contributors authored two publications each, reflecting a diverse but focused author base.

Figure 6 identifies the most relevant journals in this field, with *Al-Istinbath*, *Islamic Law and Society*, and the *UUM Journal of Legal Studies* publishing the most (5 articles each). Other notable platforms include *ISRA International Journal of Islamic Finance* and *Ahkam: Journal of Sharia Science*.

The keyword co-occurrence network in Figure 7 revealed four main clusters. The red cluster focused on institutional and geographic dimensions of waqf (e.g., “governance,” “cash,” “land waqf”); the green cluster emphasized Islamic law and civil society; the yellow cluster highlighted historical and economic contexts; and the blue cluster dealt with education, legislation, and citizenship. These clusters provide a thematic overview of dominant topics.

The overlay visualization in Figure 8 shows a shift in research focus—from classical discussions on “inheritance,” “Islam,” and “capitalism” to recent interest in “cash waqf,” “waqf management,” and “governance.” Finally, Figure 9 illustrates the density of keyword usage, confirming “waqf” as the most frequent and central term, alongside closely associated themes such as “Islamic law,” “positive law,” and “trust.”

## Figures and Tables

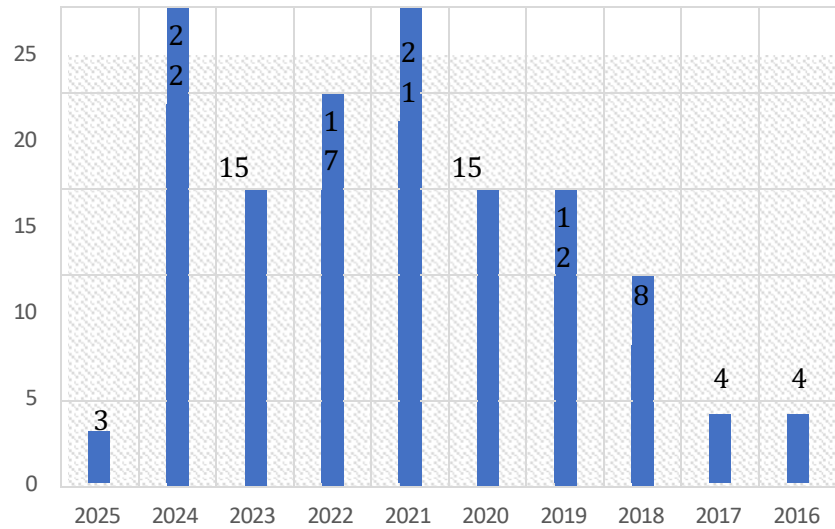


Figure 2. Graphical Representation of Publications from 2016 to August 2025

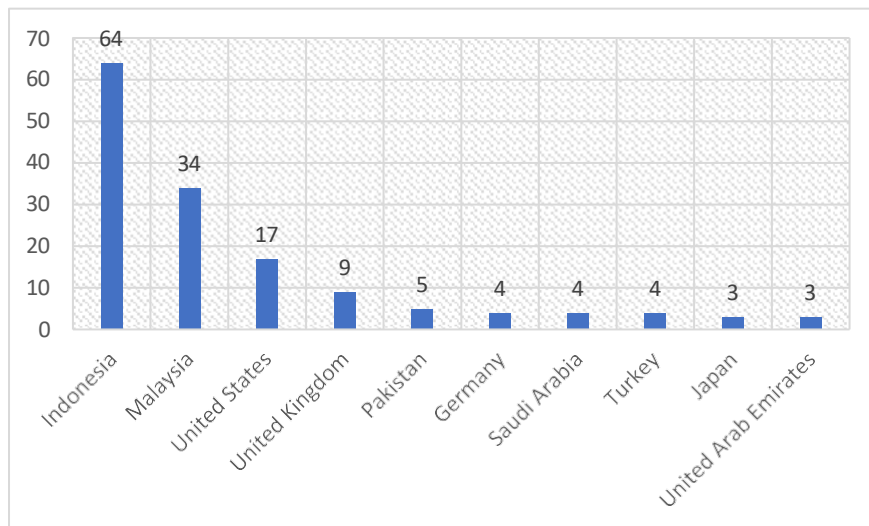
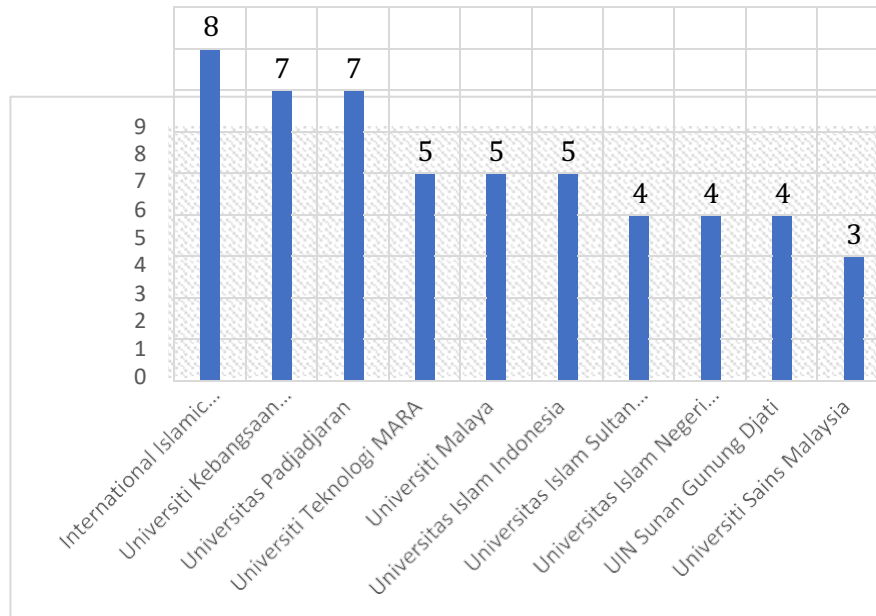
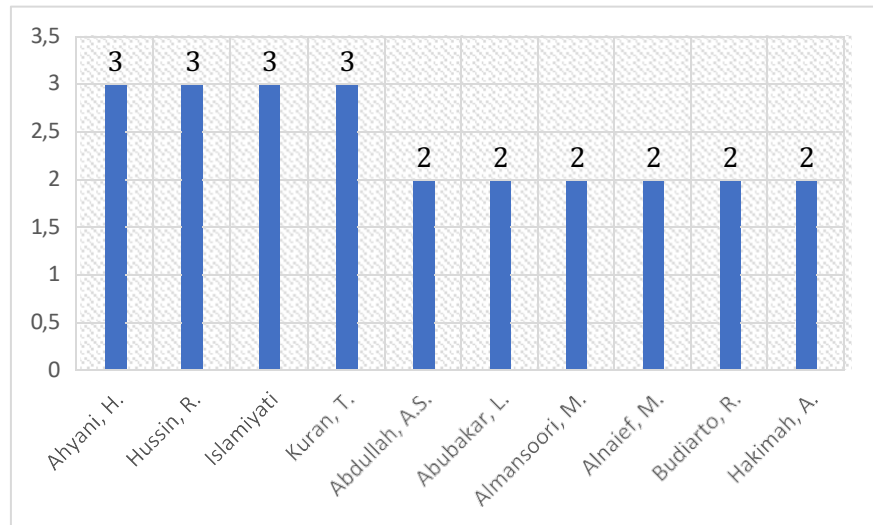


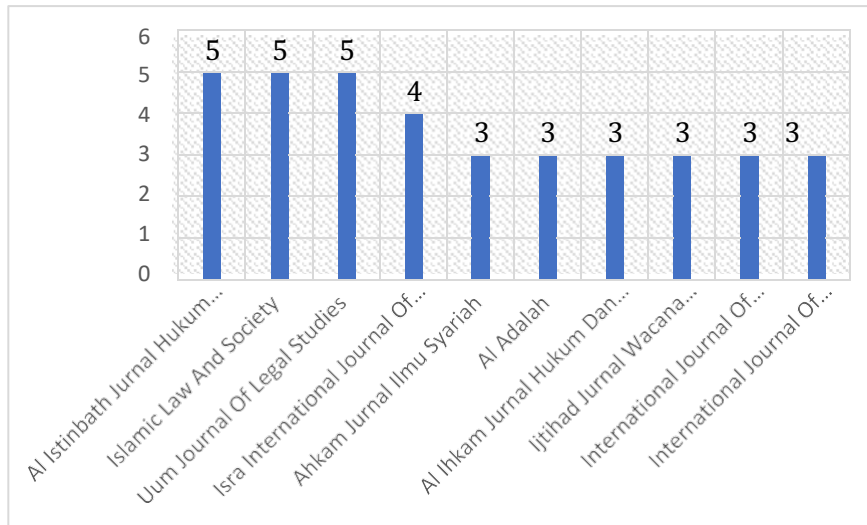
Figure 3. Publications Contributed by Several Countries



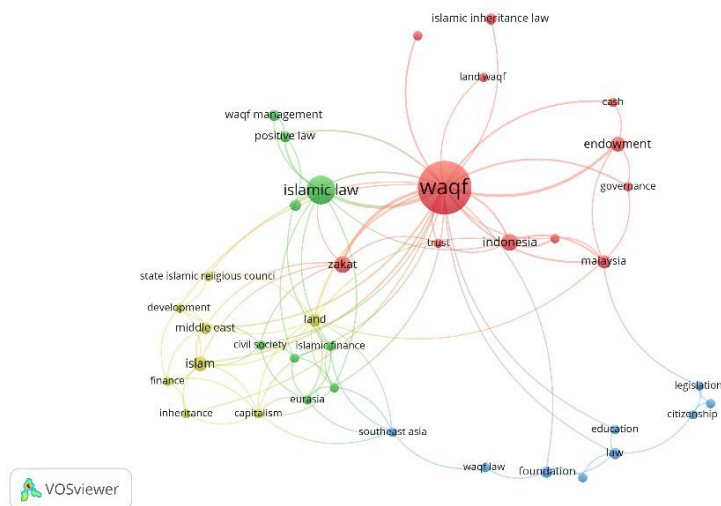
**Figure 4. The Authors of the Universities Involved in Waqf Law**



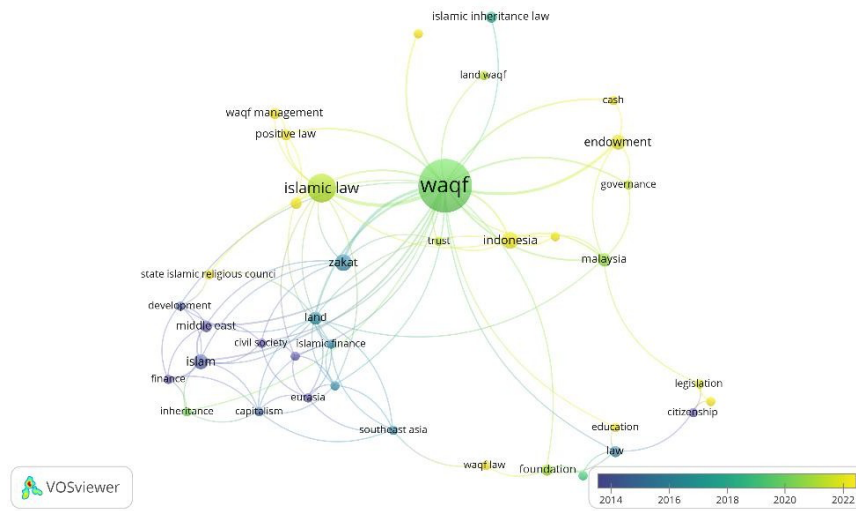
**Figure 5. Most Relevant Authors in ISF literature**



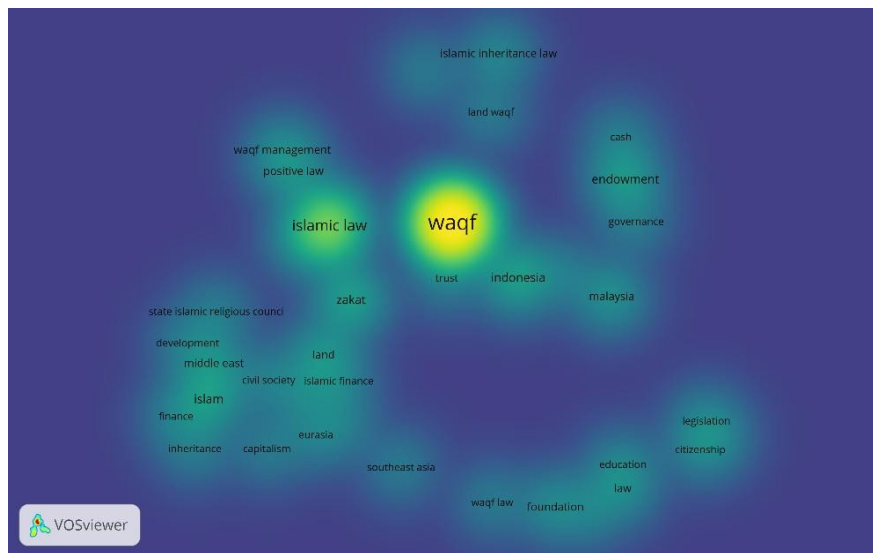
**Figure 6. Analysis by Source**



**Figure 7. Visualization of Networks by Occurrence**



**Figure 8. Overlay Visualization**



**Figure 9. Density visualization**

**Tabel 1. Keywords of Network Analysis**

Keywords	Occurence	Cluster
Waqf	64	Cluster 1
Zakat	6	
Endowment	5	
Islamic Inheritance Law	3	
Land Waqf	2	

Islamic Law	18	Cluster 2
Positive Law	3	
Waqf Management	3	
Fiqh	3	
Islamic Finance	2	
Law	3	Cluster 3
Foundation	3	
Waqf Law	2	
Legislation	2	
Citizenship	2	
Land	4	Cluster 4
Middle East	3	
State Islamic Religious Council	2	
Development	2	
Capitalism	2	

## Discussion

Figure 2 presented illustrates the trends of scientific publications from 2016 to 2025. In the early period, namely 2016 and 2017, the number of publications recorded was still low and stable as many as four documents. However, starting in 2018 there was an increase to eight publications, and this trend continued until 2021. The year 2021 is one of the important points in this graph because the number of publications has increased significantly compared to the previous year, from 15 to 21 documents. After briefly declining back to 17 publications in 2022, the graph again shows an increase towards its peak in 2024, with the highest number of publications being 22 documents. This marked the year with the highest scientific productivity over the past decade in the data analyzed. However, 2025 shows a very sharp decline, namely there are only three publications. The decline from 22 to 3 of these documents is data for 2025 most likely not fully accumulated or indexed because the data was collected at the beginning of the year.

Overall, this publication trend shows a positive development in scientific productivity during the period 2016 to 2024. The gradual increase that has led to a significant surge in recent years reflects the success of research capacity building efforts, both in terms of national policies, institutional encouragement, and individual researchers' awareness of the importance of scientific contributions at the global level. However, the fluctuations that occur are also an indication of the need for continuous monitoring to ensure that this positive trend can be maintained and not experience a structural decline in the future.

Figure 3 on the graph can be observed that Indonesia occupies the highest position by contributing as many as 64 publications. This achievement indicates a significant increase in research capacity and productivity. In second place shows that Malaysia has published 34 publications, which shows the dynamics of research that are also quite strong in the Southeast Asian region. Furthermore, countries from the

western region such as the United States and the United Kingdom also showed significant contributions, amounting to 17 and 9 publications, respectively. Smaller contributions appear to have come from countries such as Pakistan (5 publications), Germany, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey (4 publications each), as well as Japan and the United Arab Emirates which recorded 3 publications each.

Overall, these data show that the Asian region, particularly Southeast Asia, plays a central role in the production of scientific knowledge on the topics studied. This not only reflects an increase in research capacity, but also signals a geopolitical shift in the global scientific landscape, where developing countries are beginning to show a significant presence in scientific contributions at the international level.

That the most contributions of scientific publications came from the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) with a total of 8 documents. Following him are Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) and Padjadjaran University (UNPAD), each with 7 publications. Furthermore, there are three institutions that each produce 5 publications, namely Universiti Teknologi MARA, Universiti Malaya, and the Islamic University of Indonesia. Meanwhile, Sultan Syarif Kasim Islamic University, Sunan Gunung Djati State Islamic University (UIN), and Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta, each contributed 4 documents. Lastly, Universiti Sains Malaysia was recorded as contributing 3 publications.

This distribution of affiliations shows that scientific contributions in the field under study are dominated by universities from two main countries, namely Malaysia and Indonesia. The strong institutional representation of these two countries reinforces previous findings that the Southeast Asian region, especially in the context of Muslim-majority countries, has a high level of concern for the development of science through scientific publications. In addition, the dominance of Islamic institutions in this list also indicates a focus of research that may be related to Islamic, social, or educational issues based on Islamic values. Thus, it can be concluded that the research ecosystem in these institutions is developing dynamically and making an important contribution to the international academic literature scene.

Based on the graph of figure 5, it is known that there are four authors with the highest publication contributions in the field of waqf and law, each with three scientific documents, namely Ahyani, H., Hussin, R., Islamiyati, and Kuran, T. The consistency of the number of publications of these four authors shows a higher level of productivity than other authors, indicating their central role in the development of scientific discourse in this field. Their strong presence in the literature may reflect involvement in long-term research projects, cross-institutional academic collaborations, or specialized expertise that continues to develop. Meanwhile, there are also several authors who have produced two publications each, namely Abdullah, A.S., Abubakar, L., Almansoori, M., Alnaief, M., Budiarto, R., and Hakimah, A. Although their contributions are quantitatively lower than that of the first group, the existence of these authors is still important in enriching the diversity of perspectives and approaches in the study of waqf and law.

The spread of this contribution also reflects the existence of a wider network of collaboration among various institutions and scientific backgrounds. Overall, the

contribution pattern depicted in this graph shows the existence of the phenomenon of core authorship, in which a small group of core authors dominate scientific production, as described in the principles of Lotka's Law in bibliometrics. These findings demonstrate a proportionate collaborative structure in an emerging field of study, with a combination of high individual productivity and broad involvement of the larger academic community.

Based on the graph in figure 6, it can be seen that scientific publications in the field of waqf and law are spread across various academic journals, with a dominance in journals that focus on the study of Islamic law and general law. The three most prolific journals, each with five publications, are *Al-Istinbath: Journal of Islamic Law*, *Islamic Law and Society*, and *UUM Journal of Legal Studies*. These three journals are the main centers for the dissemination of research results, reflecting the suitability of the topics of waqf and law with the editorial focus of these journals, and showing the high confidence of academics to submit their scientific papers in the media. In addition, the *ISRA International Journal of Islamic Finance* also showed significant contributions with four publications, indicating a close relationship between the issue of waqf and the aspect of Islamic finance in the context of the analyzed research. It is followed by several other journals that each contain three documents, such as *Ahkam: Journal of Sharia Science*, *Al-Adalah*, *Al-Ihkam: Journal of Islamic Law and Social Institutions*, *Ijtihad: Journal of Islamic Law and Humanitarian Law*, and two other international journals that are not listed in full in the graph

This distribution pattern shows that the study of waqf and law is not concentrated in just one or two national and international journals, but is widespread. This phenomenon reflects the dynamics of an inclusive and evolving academic ecosystem, where researchers can tailor their publications to the diverse focus and characteristics of journals. From a bibliometric point of view, this diversity is an important indicator of the maturity of the scientific field and the high growth and differentiation of scientific discourse related to Islamic law and contemporary law.

Based on the visualization of the keyword network using VOSviewer in figure 7, four main clusters can be identified that represent the focus of research in the field of waqf and law. The red cluster contains keywords such as waqf, endowment, Indonesia, governance, trust, land waqf, and cash, which shows the focus of the study on waqf as an institutional and geographical phenomenon. In this cluster, there is also an emphasis on the role of the state, the management of waqf assets, and governance dynamics related to contemporary forms of waqf. Furthermore, the green cluster includes keywords such as Islamic law, waqf management, positive law, state Islamic religious council, zakat, and civil society. This cluster indicates attention to the aspects of Islamic law in the management of waqf, the role of official religious institutions, and the involvement of civil society in the practice and regulation of waqf. In the yellow cluster, the keywords that appear include Islam, inheritance, capitalism, Eurasia, Middle East, development, and finance. The focus of this cluster is more on the historical and geographical context of Islam, as well as the linkage between the concept of waqf and the economic system, both in the classical tradition and in the development of modern economics in the Eurasian and Middle Eastern regions.

Finally, the blue cluster shows keywords such as waqf law, foundation, education, law, legislation, and citizenship. This cluster highlights the role of waqf in the field of education and social development, as well as its relationship with aspects of legal regulation and citizenship rights. Overall, the results of this analysis show that research on waqf and law develops in a multidimensional manner, covering institutional, legal, economic, historical, and social dimensions. This pattern of keyword interconnectedness also indicates the integration of normative, contextual, and applicative approaches in waqf studies in various regions.

Based on the visualization of the overlay in figure 8, it can be seen that there is a shift in the focus of research in the field of waqf and law from time to time. Keywords such as Islam, inheritance, capitalism, finance, and the Middle East dominated the literature in the early period, which suggests that previous research has largely discussed waqf in the context of Islamic history, economics, and society, with a primary geographic focus on the Middle East and Southeast Asia. These topics reflect the historical roots of the waqf as a socio-economic instrument that plays an important role in the development of Islamic civilization. Over time, there has been an increase in the use of keywords such as waqf, Islamic law, zakat, waqf management, and positive law in newer literature. This shift signals a shift in research focus towards the legal and governance aspects of waqf, with a special emphasis on case studies in Indonesia. This phenomenon also shows the expansion of the dimension of study from a mere historical-economic analysis to a more contemporary legal- administrative approach. In the most recent period, keywords such as endowment, governance, cash, land waqf, and Islamic inheritance law began to dominate. The popularity of this keyword reflects the latest research trends that are more focused on waqf management innovations, new forms of waqf such as cash waqf, as well as the integration of waqf in the Islamic inheritance legal framework. Overall, this analysis shows the dynamics of scientific development in waqf studies, which are increasingly complex and adaptive to the needs of the times. Based on the overlay visualization, there is a thematic shift from classical focuses such as "inheritance", "Islam", and "capitalism" to contemporary issues such as "cash waqf", "waqf management", dan "governance". Based on the overlay visualization, there is a thematic shift from classic focuses such as "inheritance", "Islam", and "capitalism" to contemporary issues such as "cash waqf", "waqf management", and "governance". This reflects the scientific evolution from historical and normative studies to a more applicable and policy approach. The popularity of these themes shows that researchers are increasingly paying attention to the relevance of waqf in modern governance and economic development based on Islamic values. Thus, the direction of development of waqf studies shows an adaptive tendency to the needs and challenges of the times.

Based on the results of the density visualization in figure 9, it can be seen that the waqf keyword appears with a bright yellow color and the largest size, indicating a very high frequency of occurrence and relevance compared to other keywords. This confirms that waqf is a core topic in the overall analysis of this research. Around it, keywords such as Islamic law, waqf law, positive law, legislation, governance, foundation, and trust show the close relationship between the concept of waqf and

aspects of Islamic law and the formal legal system, strengthening the role of waqf as a structured legal entity. In addition, geographical keywords such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Southeast Asia, Eurasia, and Middle East indicate that studies on waqf are widely studied in these regions, reflecting the geographical concentration in the development of waqf and law literature. On the other hand, keywords such as Islamic finance, endowment, zakat, cash, and capitalism indicate a strong tendency to analyze waqf in the context of Islamic economics and modern social finance. Topics related to waqf management also stood out, marked by the emergence of the keywords waqf management, governance, and civil society, which underlined the importance of structural aspects and the role of social actors in managing waqf assets in a sustainable manner. The keywords education and citizenship add a further social dimension, by showing the involvement of waqf in supporting education and community development. Finally, the keywords Islamic inheritance law, inheritance, and land waqf describe the close relationship between the practice of waqf and the issue of inheritance and land ownership in Islamic society. Overall, this density analysis shows the complexity and breadth of the scope of waqf topics in the literature, as well as showing the integration between legal, economic, social, and geographical aspects in the study of waqf and law.

## CONCLUSION

This study has provided a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of global research trends in waqf and law from 2016 to 2025, offering empirical insights into the structure and evolution of this increasingly significant area within Islamic legal and social finance studies. The findings reveal a notable growth in scholarly output over the past decade, with a sharp increase in publication volume occurring between 2018 and 2024. This suggests a heightened academic interest in waqf-related legal issues, particularly in response to contemporary challenges in governance, finance, and socio-economic development.

The results further indicate that research on waqf and law is geographically concentrated in Southeast Asia, with Indonesia and Malaysia emerging as the most prolific contributors. This reflects not only the demographic realities of Muslim-majority populations but also the strategic prioritization of waqf as a policy instrument in these countries. The role of leading academic institutions, such as the International Islamic University Malaysia and Universitas Padjadjaran, underscores the institutional support for research in this field, while the relatively even distribution of author productivity points to a collaborative and diversifying scholarly ecosystem.

The keyword co-occurrence and clustering analysis demonstrated that waqf law is a multidisciplinary domain, intersecting with Islamic inheritance, endowment governance, education, and civil society. The evolution of keyword usage over time—from foundational legal concepts to applied governance issues—indicates a dynamic intellectual shift toward practical implementation and modernization of waqf practices. This transition also suggests that contemporary researchers are increasingly engaged in addressing real-world implications of waqf within modern

legal and economic systems.

The dominance of contributions from Indonesia (43.5%) and Malaysia (23.1%) in publications shows that both countries play a central role in the global discourse on waqf law. Apart from the large Muslim population, this is also driven by policy initiatives, the active role of higher education institutions, and the collaborative spirit between researchers in the region. This fact is important to be a reference in developing comparative studies or policy-based research in the future.

Importantly, this study contributes to the literature not by offering normative prescriptions, but by revealing the contours of academic inquiry in this area. The application of bibliometric methods has allowed for a systematic mapping of knowledge production, identifying both the strengths of existing research and the gaps that remain. These include the underrepresentation of comparative legal analyses, the limited focus on waqf in non-Muslim majority contexts, and the need for deeper exploration of cross-border waqf governance and digital waqf platforms.

As waqf continues to gain relevance in addressing socio-economic inequalities and promoting sustainable development in the Islamic world, there is a pressing need for coordinated research efforts across disciplines and geographies. The insights from this study serve as a strategic foundation for future academic collaboration, policy formulation, and innovation in waqf governance. By bridging the gap between legal theory and practical implementation, future studies can expand the transformative potential of waqf as a tool for inclusive development and legal empowerment in Muslim societies and beyond.

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