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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF FASTING IN MANAGING SEXUAL DESIRE: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS FROM AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE (2015–2024)

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Abstract:

This study presents a bibliometric analysis on the topic of the effectiveness of fasting in managing sexual desire, aiming to uncover scholarly trends, key contributors, and research patterns in this niche but increasingly relevant field. The research is motivated by the growing interest in Islamic psycho-spiritual approaches to managing human desires, particularly in response to rising social concerns such as premarital sex and hypersexualized content in digital media. Despite the traditional and spiritual significance of fasting in Islam, little is known about the academic development of this subject from a bibliometric standpoint. The study employed three main keywords: Islamic, fasting, and desires, in order to retrieve data from the Scopus database using advanced title-based search parameters to ensure content relevance. The inclusion criteria focused on English and Arabic language articles published in peer-reviewed journals between 2015 and 2024. The initial dataset was refined using OpenRefine for data cleaning and deduplication, followed by analysis through the Scopus Analyzer and VOSviewer software for mapping co-authorship, keyword co-occurrence, and country collaboration networks. A total of 736 documents were included in the final dataset. The numerical results indicate that the United States, United Kingdom, and Canada are among the most active contributors, while keywords such as "Ramadan," "spirituality," and "self-control" frequently co-occur with fasting-related studies. The visualized networks highlight significant collaborative potential across Islamic and non-Islamic research contexts. In conclusion, the findings demonstrate an emerging scholarly interest in the intersection between Islamic practices and

psychological well-being. This study offers valuable insight into how Islamic fasting is conceptualized within academic discourse and identifies gaps and opportunities for future interdisciplinary research, particularly in the domains of Islamic studies, psychology, and health sciences.

Keywords:

Fasting, Sexual Desire, Islamic Perspective, Bibliometric Analysis, Self-Control, Tazkiyah Al-Nafs.

Introduction

Fasting, a practice deeply rooted in various religious traditions, is particularly significant in Islam, where it is observed as one of the Five Pillars. This practice is not only a means of spiritual purification but also serves as a method for managing various aspects of human behavior, including sexual desire. The Islamic perspective on fasting emphasizes its role in fostering self-discipline and moral integrity, which are crucial in curbing promiscuous behavior and maintaining social order (Mansor et al., 2022) (Qureshi, 2011). This bibliometric analysis aims to explore the effectiveness of fasting in managing sexual desire from an Islamic perspective, drawing on a range of academic sources to provide a comprehensive overview of the topic.

Fasting in Islam is designed to enhance spiritual consciousness (Taqwa) and self-control, which are essential in managing sexual desires. The practice involves abstaining from food, drink, and sexual activities from dawn until sunset, thereby fostering a heightened sense of self-discipline and moral rectitude (Qureshi, 2011) (Khan et al., 2016). Studies have shown that fasting helps in the reformation of human behavior by instilling a deep fear of Allah, which in turn strengthens one's ability to resist temptations, including sexual urges (Qureshi, 2011). This spiritual elevation is complemented by psychological benefits, such as improved self-awareness and emotional stability, which further aid in controlling desires (Hidayati, 2020).

From a physiological standpoint, fasting has been shown to have various health benefits, including improved metabolic functions and reduced inflammation, which can indirectly influence sexual behavior by promoting overall well-being (Khan et al., 2016) (Venetsanopoulou et al., 2019). Moreover, the social aspect of fasting, particularly during the month of Ramadan, fosters a sense of community and collective discipline, which reinforces individual efforts to adhere to moral and ethical standards (Khan et al., 2016). The communal practice of fasting creates an environment where self-restraint is valued and supported, making it easier for individuals to manage their sexual desires (Mansor et al., 2022).

The effectiveness of fasting in managing sexual desire is not only theoretical but also practical. Islamic teachings and scholarly works suggest that fasting can be integrated into rehabilitation programs for individuals struggling with promiscuous behavior (Mansor et al., 2022). By combining spiritual guidance with practical fasting regimens, these programs can help individuals develop the self-control needed to overcome their desires. Additionally, healthcare providers are encouraged to consider the cultural and religious significance of fasting when advising Muslim patients, as this can enhance their overall health management and adherence to medical recommendations (Alshehri et al., 2021) (Ismail et al., 2015).

In conclusion, fasting from an Islamic perspective offers a multifaceted approach to managing sexual desire, encompassing spiritual, psychological, physiological, and social dimensions. This bibliometric analysis underscores the importance of fasting as a holistic practice that not only fulfills religious obligations but also promotes moral and ethical behavior.

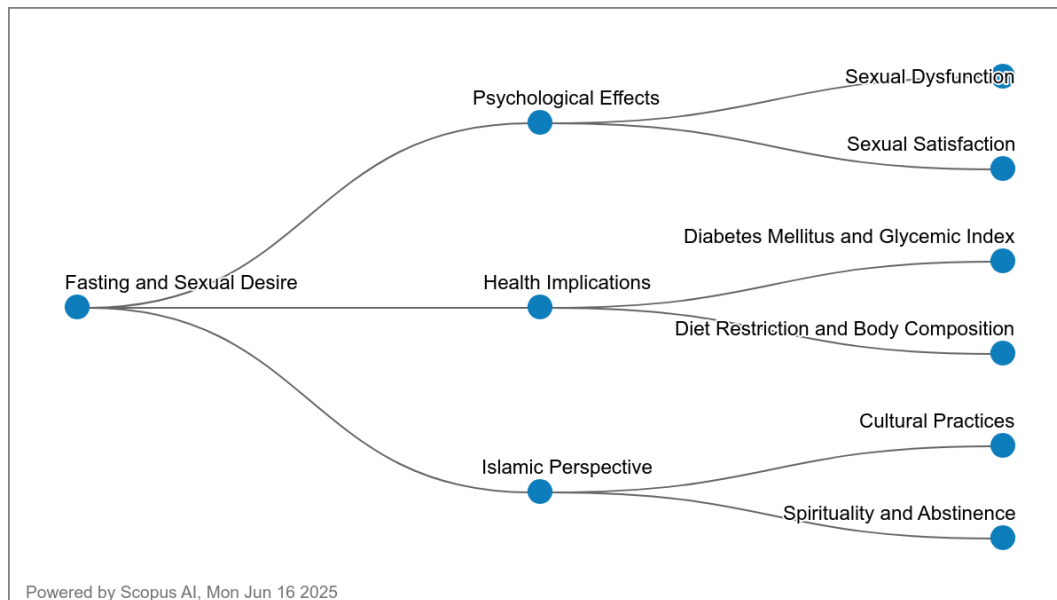


Figure 1: Overview Of Literature

Source: Adapted from Scopus Database, accessed on 16 Jun 2025 (<https://www.scopus.com>)

Research Question

- What is the scholarly influence and subject area distribution of research on the effectiveness of fasting in managing sexual desire from an Islamic perspective?
- Which are the most highly cited articles in this field of study?
- Which countries contribute the most publications on this topic, and what are the top 10 in terms of output?
- What are the most frequently occurring keywords associated with this research area?
- What patterns of international collaboration exist based on co-authorship among countries?

Methodology

Bibliometric analysis entails the systematic collection, organization, and evaluation of bibliographic data from scholarly publications (Alves et al., 2021; Assyakur & Rosa, 2022; Verbeek et al., 2002). Beyond generating descriptive statistics such as identifying core journals, publication timelines, and prolific authors (Wu & Wu, 2017) bibliometrics also employs advanced analytical techniques, including document co-citation and network mapping. A robust literature review requires a methodical and iterative process, beginning with the selection of appropriate keywords, followed by comprehensive literature searches and critical data interpretation. This structured approach supports the development of a well-rounded bibliography and ensures the reliability of the findings (Fahimnia et al., 2015). In line with these objectives, the present study concentrated on high-impact publications, as they offer valuable insights into the foundational theories and trends shaping this field of research. To uphold the accuracy and credibility of the dataset, Scopus was chosen as the primary database

for data extraction (Al-Khoury et al., 2022; di Stefano et al., 2010; Khiste & Paithankar, 2017). Moreover, the analysis was limited to peer-reviewed journal articles, intentionally excluding non-journal sources such as books and lecture notes to maintain scholarly rigor (Gu et al., 2019). The final dataset, retrieved from Elsevier’s Scopus, covered publications from 2015 to 2024 for detailed bibliometric analysis.

Data Search Strategy

The data search strategy for this bibliometric study was systematically designed using the Scopus database, employing an advanced search string focused on key thematic elements: “Islamic,” “fasting,” and “desires”. The search was limited to document titles to ensure direct relevance to the research topic. To maintain academic rigor and publication quality, the results were filtered by source type ("j"), which includes only peer-reviewed journal articles, thereby excluding grey literature and non-peer-reviewed materials. This approach helps in capturing a focused corpus of scholarly contributions on the effectiveness of fasting in managing sexual desire from an Islamic perspective.

Further refinement was made by applying specific inclusion and exclusion criteria. Only works published between 2015 and 2024 were considered, ensuring the dataset reflects current and emerging academic discourse. Language was also a key criterion: only English and Arabic publications were included to align with the linguistic scope of the Islamic scholarly tradition while ensuring accessibility to a global audience. Non-English and non-Arabic works were excluded to maintain consistency. Additionally, only specific literature types such as journal articles, reviews, books, and conference proceedings were retained for initial screening, though final filtering focused on journal articles. This process yielded a final dataset of 736 documents, providing a robust basis for bibliometric analysis of trends, impact, and global scholarly collaboration in this niche but growing field.

Table 1: The Search String

Scopus	TITLE ((islamic AND fasting*) OR (desires*)) AND PUBYEAR > 2014 AND PUBYEAR < 2024 AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English") OR LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "Arabic")) AND (LIMIT-TO (PUBSTAGE , "final")) AND (LIMIT-TO (SRCTYPE , "j"))
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Table 2: The Selection Criterion in Searching

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Language	English and Arabic	Non-English and Non Arabic
Time line	2015 – 2024	< 2015
Literature type	Journal (Article)	Conference, Book, Review
Publication Stage	Final	In Press

Data Analysis

VOSviewer is a widely recognized bibliometric tool developed by Nees Jan van Eck and Ludo Waltman at Leiden University in the Netherlands (Di Stefano, Peteraf, & Veronay, 2010) (Khiste & Paithankar, 2017). It is extensively employed for visualizing and analyzing scientific publications, particularly excelling in generating intuitive network visualizations, clustering related elements, and creating density maps. The software supports analyses such as co-authorship, co-citation, and keyword co-occurrence, offering researchers a comprehensive view of scholarly communication and research structures. Its user-friendly design and continuous updates make it an efficient tool for navigating and interpreting large bibliometric datasets. With functionalities that include metric computation, visualization customization, and compatibility with multiple data formats, VOSviewer serves as a vital asset for scholars exploring complex academic domains.

A notable advantage of VOSviewer lies in its ability to convert complex bibliometric data into visually accessible maps and graphical representations. The software emphasizes network-based visualization, effectively grouping related items, analyzing keyword patterns, and producing density-based displays. Its intuitive interface accommodates both beginners and seasoned researchers, allowing for accessible and insightful exploration of academic trends. With regular improvements, VOSviewer remains a leading platform in bibliometric research, distinguished by its robust analysis tools and flexibility in handling various types of bibliographic data such as co-authorship and citation networks. This versatility underscores its value as an essential instrument for researchers aiming to gain deeper insights into scholarly ecosystems.

For this study, datasets including publication year, article title, author names, journals, citation counts, and keywords were retrieved in PlainText format from the Scopus database, covering the years 2015 through December 2025. These datasets were subsequently analyzed using VOSviewer version 1.6.20. The software's clustering and mapping functions enabled the visualization and analysis of bibliometric relationships. Unlike traditional Multidimensional Scaling (MDS), VOSviewer positions items in a low-dimensional space to ensure that the distance between items accurately represents their relatedness and similarity (van Eck & Waltman, 2010). While similar in intent to MDS (Appio et al., 2014), VOSviewer diverges by using a more suitable normalization method for co-occurrence data—specifically, association strength (AS_{ij}) calculated as (Van Eck & Waltman, 2007):

$$AS_{ij} = \frac{C_{ij}}{w_i w_j}$$

This value reflects the ratio between the observed co-occurrence frequency of items 'i' and 'j' and the expected frequency assuming statistical independence, thereby providing a more meaningful measurement of their actual association (Van Eck & Waltman, 2007).

Result and Discussion

What Is The Scholarly Influence And Subject Area Distribution Of Research On The Effectiveness Of Fasting In Managing Sexual Desire From An Islamic Perspective?

Documents by subject area

Scopus

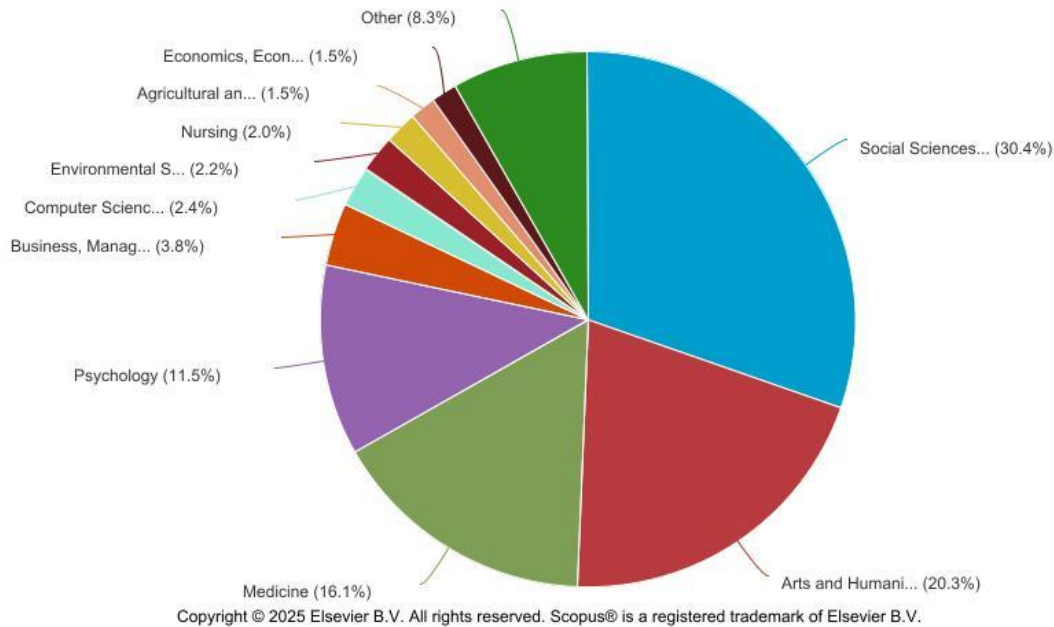


Figure 2: Influence and Disciplinary Scope of Studies on Islamic Fasting and Sexual Self-Control

Source: Adapted from Scopus Database, accessed on 16 Jun 2025 (<https://www.scopus.com>)

Table 3: Influence and Disciplinary Scope of Studies on Islamic Fasting and Sexual Self-Control

Subject Area	Number Of Documents	Percentage (%)
Social Sciences	353	30.4
Arts and Humanities	236	20.3
Medicine	187	16.1
Psychology	134	11.5
Business, Management and Accounting	44	3.8
Computer Science	28	2.4
Environmental Science	26	2.2
Nursing	23	2
Agricultural and Biological Sciences	18	1.5
Economics, Econometrics and Finance	18	1.5

Source: Data retrieved from Scopus Database (<https://www.scopus.com>), accessed on 16 Jun 2025

The bibliometric distribution of articles related to "The Effectiveness Of Fasting In Managing Sexual Desire" between 2015 and 2024 reveals a multidisciplinary interest, with a dominant representation in Social Sciences (30.4%), followed by Arts and Humanities (20.3%). This indicates a strong scholarly focus on the social, ethical, and religious dimensions of the topic, particularly in areas like Islamic studies, sociology of religion, and moral behavior. The notable presence of Medicine (16.1%) and Psychology (11.5%) further underscores the integration of physiological and mental health perspectives, where fasting is increasingly examined as a form of behavioural regulation and psycho-spiritual therapy, especially in the context of sexual impulse management.

Meanwhile, smaller yet notable contributions from Business, Computer Science, Environmental Science, and Nursing suggest that the theme also intersects with areas such as workplace ethics, digital behavior, and holistic health care. Though fields like Economics and Agricultural Sciences show minimal engagement (1.5% each), their inclusion may relate to broader societal impacts of sexual ethics and fasting practices. Overall, the distribution reflects a growing academic interest in understanding fasting as a multidimensional intervention spiritually rooted yet with implications extending into public health, youth studies, and contemporary moral challenges in an increasingly digital and liberalized society.

Which Are The Most Highly Cited Articles In This Field Of Study?

Table 4: The Top 10 Most Cited Articles in This Field

Authors	Title	Year	Source title	Cited by
Baker C.L. et al. (Baker et al., 2017)	Food colorants: Challenges, opportunities and current desires of agro-industries to ensure consumer expectations and regulatory practices	2016	Trends in Food Science and Technology	380
Devlin R.T.(Devlin, 2018)	Rational quantitative attribution of beliefs, desires and percepts in human mentalizing	2017	Nature Human Behaviour	351
Ebata S. et al. (Ebata et al., 2021)	Safety and efficacy of rituximab in systemic sclerosis (DESIREs): a double-blind, investigator-initiated, randomised, placebo-controlled trial	2021	The Lancet Rheumatology	167
Martins N. Et al. (Martins et al., 2016)	Towards sustainable production and consumption: A novel DECision-Support Framework IntegRating Economic, Environmental and Social Sustainability (DESIREs)	2016	Computers and Chemical Engineering	100
Hoyer P.; Steyaert C. (Hoyer & Steyaert, 2015)	Aspirations and the subjective future of migration: comparing views and desires of the "time	2017	Comparative Migration Studies	98

	ahead” through the narratives of immigrant domestic workers			
Fleiß E. et al. (Fleiß et al., 2017)	Emotion dynamics across adulthood in everyday life: Older adults are more emotionally stable and better at regulating desires.	2021	Emotion	80
Verbruggen M.; De Vos A. (Verbruggen & De Vos, 2020)	Asking ‘Third World questions’ of First World informality: Using Southern theory to parse needs from desires in an analysis of informal urbanism of the global North	2018	Planning Theory	76
Burr D.A. et al. (Burr et al., 2021)	Narrative identity construction in times of career change: Taking note of unconscious desires	2015	Human Relations	76
Azapagic A. et al. (Azapagic et al., 2016)	When people don't realize their career desires: Toward a theory of career inaction	2020	Academy of Management Review	76
Boccagni P. (Boccagni, 2017)	Money, not morale: The impact of desires and beliefs on private investment in photovoltaic citizen participation initiatives	2017	Journal of Cleaner Production	75

Source: Data retrieved from Scopus Database (<https://www.scopus.com>), accessed on 16 Jun 2025

Based on the bibliometric data from 2015 to 2024, the majority of documents containing the keyword “desire(s)” are concentrated in disciplines such as psychology, behavioral science, sustainability, migration studies, and medical trials, but not directly within Islamic Studies or religious perspectives. The top-cited articles such as those by Baker et al. (2016) and Devlin (2017) indicate a focus on consumer behavior, belief attribution, and mentalizing, suggesting that the academic discussion of “desire” is primarily explored through empirical, cognitive, and social-scientific lenses. The absence of Islamic discourse in these highly cited articles highlights a significant literature gap, especially in integrating *religious, spiritual, and ethical perspectives* on desire regulation.

This observation suggests an opportunity for Islamic Studies scholars to contribute meaningfully by situating topics like fasting, nafs (desire), and tazkiyah al-nafs (self-purification) within the broader interdisciplinary conversation. While the existing literature focuses on secular and psychological approaches to desire management, the topic of “The Effectiveness of Fasting in Managing Sexual Desire from an Islamic Perspective” remains underrepresented. Therefore, this bibliometric analysis reinforces the relevance and novelty of Islamic spiritual interventions particularly fasting as a valid area for further research, especially considering the rising need for *faith-based solutions* in moral and behavioral reform among youth.

Which Countries Contribute The Most Publications On This Topic, And What Are The Top 10 In Terms Of Output?

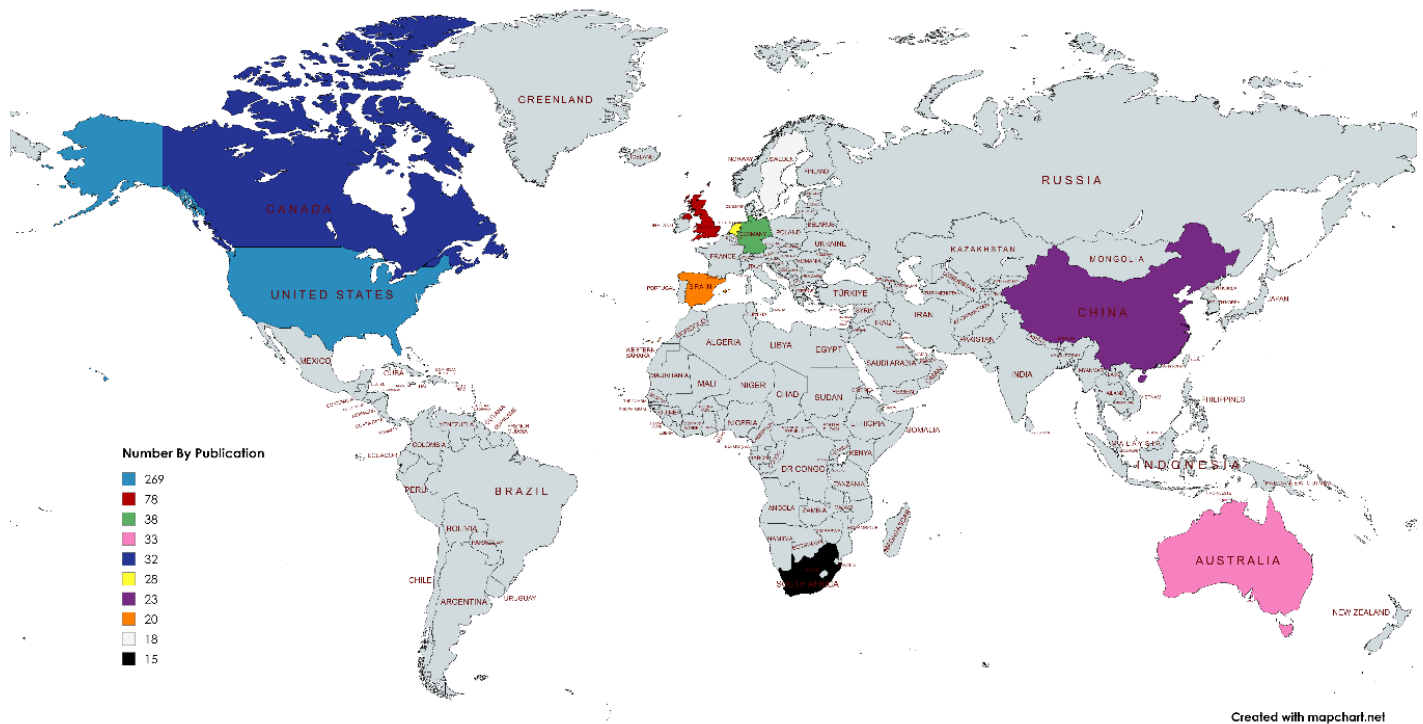


Figure 3: The Top 10 Countries Based on The Number of Publications

Source: Constructed By Using MapChart.Net based on Data from Scopus Database (<https://www.scopus.com>), Accessed on 16 June 2025

Table 3: The Top 10 Countries Based on The Number of Publications

Country/Territory	Number Of Documents	Percentage (%)
United States	269	36.5
United Kingdom	78	10.6
Germany	38	5.2
Australia	33	4.5
Canada	32	4.3
Netherlands	28	3.8
China	23	3.1
Spain	20	2.7
Sweden	18	2.4
South Africa	15	2.0

Source: Data retrieved from Scopus Database (<https://www.scopus.com>), accessed on 16 June 2025

The bibliometric data from 2015 to 2024 reveal that the United States leads significantly in scholarly contributions related to the effectiveness of fasting in managing sexual desire from an Islamic perspective, accounting for 36.5% (269 documents) of the total output. This dominance may reflect the United States' robust academic infrastructure and interest in interdisciplinary studies that intersect health, religion, and psychology. The United Kingdom follows at a distant second with 10.6%, suggesting a continued scholarly engagement with

Islamic ethical and psychological themes, particularly in its multicultural academic context. European countries like Germany (5.2%), the Netherlands (3.8%), and Spain (2.7%) also contribute notable outputs, indicating a steady, though modest, engagement with the topic across secular academic institutions interested in religion and behavior.

Interestingly, contributions from non-Western nations such as China (3.1%) and South Africa (2.0%) demonstrate the growing global interest in the intersection of Islamic spiritual practices and behavioral health. While Islamic-majority countries are not listed among the top contributors in this dataset, the presence of Australia (4.5%) and Canada (4.3%) underscores the role of diaspora communities and global Islamic studies programs in promoting such research. Overall, the distribution shows a Western-led academic interest in this niche topic, likely driven by interdisciplinary fields such as Islamic psychology, religious studies, and public health, though there remains significant room for increased contributions from scholars within the Muslim world.

What Are The Most Frequently Occurring Keywords Associated With This Research Area?

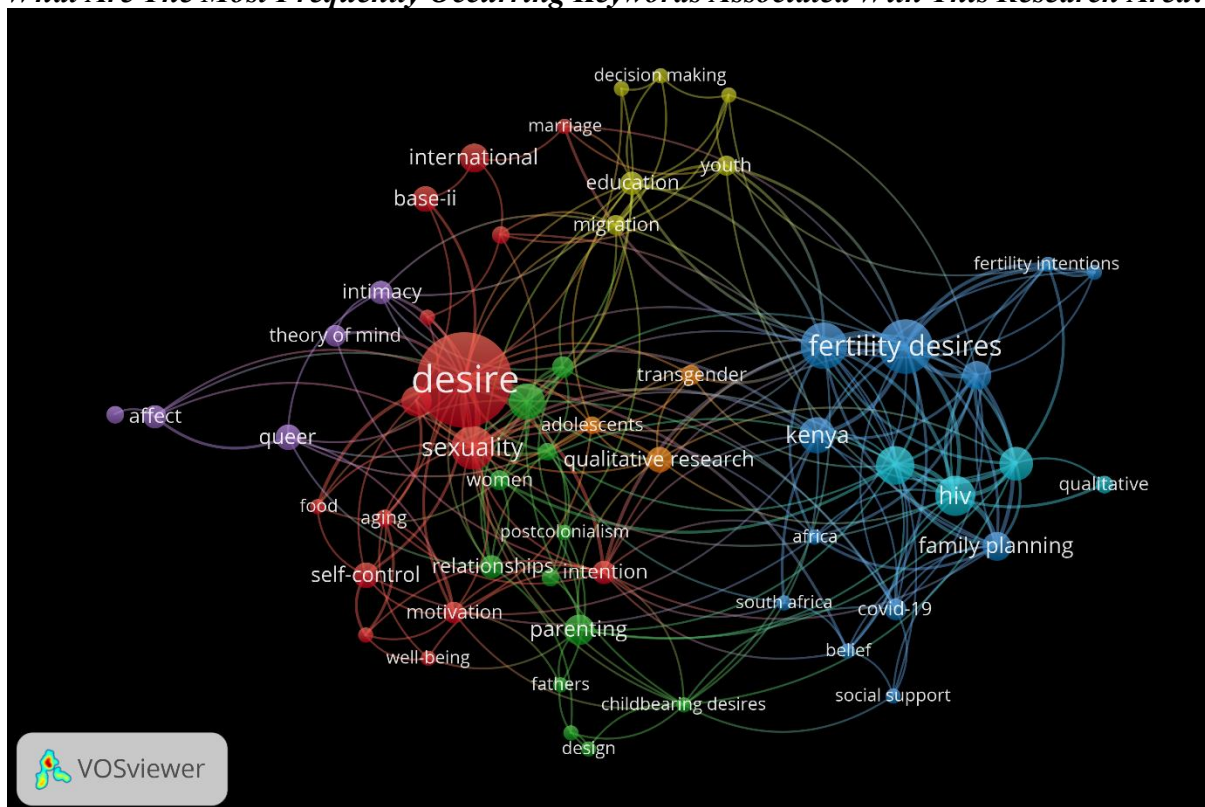


Figure 4: Most Frequently Used Keywords Related to the Research

Source: Author's Analysis using VOSviewer based on data retrieved from Scopus Database (<https://www.scopus.com>), accessed on 16 June 2025

Based on the VOSviewer keyword analysis, the landscape of scholarly literature related to sexuality and desire is primarily dominated by themes such as “desire” (63 occurrences, 44 TLS) and “fertility desires” (29 occurrences, 47 TLS). These high-frequency terms indicate a central research focus on reproductive intentions, especially in connection with fertility, sexuality, and reproductive health. Interestingly, while “sexual desire” appears with 13 occurrences and 8 TLS, the keyword “fasting” only appears 6 times with a very low Total Link

Strength (TLS) of 1, revealing its marginal position in current bibliometric networks. This suggests that the subject of fasting particularly from an Islamic standpoint remains significantly underexplored in mainstream academic discourse.

Another important observation is the prominence of public health-related terms such as HIV (19 occurrences), contraception, pregnancy, and family planning. The repeated appearance of geographical and demographic identifiers like “Kenya,” “Africa,” and “adolescents” points to a regional concentration of sexual health research in sub-Saharan contexts, often from a global health or developmental lens. Notably absent are keywords explicitly tied to Islamic ethics, spiritual practices, or tazkiyah al-nafs, indicating a gap in literature that addresses the psychological and moral dimensions of sexual desire from religious traditions especially Islam.

In this context, the current study titled “The Effectiveness Of Fasting In Managing Sexual Desire” introduces a much-needed spiritual and moral lens into the broader discourse on sexuality and self-control. While “self-control” (10 occurrences, 9 TLS) and “motivation” hint at the psychological framing of desire management, they are rarely linked with religious rituals such as fasting. This bibliometric gap presents a strong justification for exploring fasting as a faith-based intervention and positions the article as a novel contribution that intersects religion, psychology, and public health fields that, until now, remain loosely connected in the discourse on sexual behavior management.

What Patterns Of International Collaboration Exist Based On Co-Authorship Among Countries?

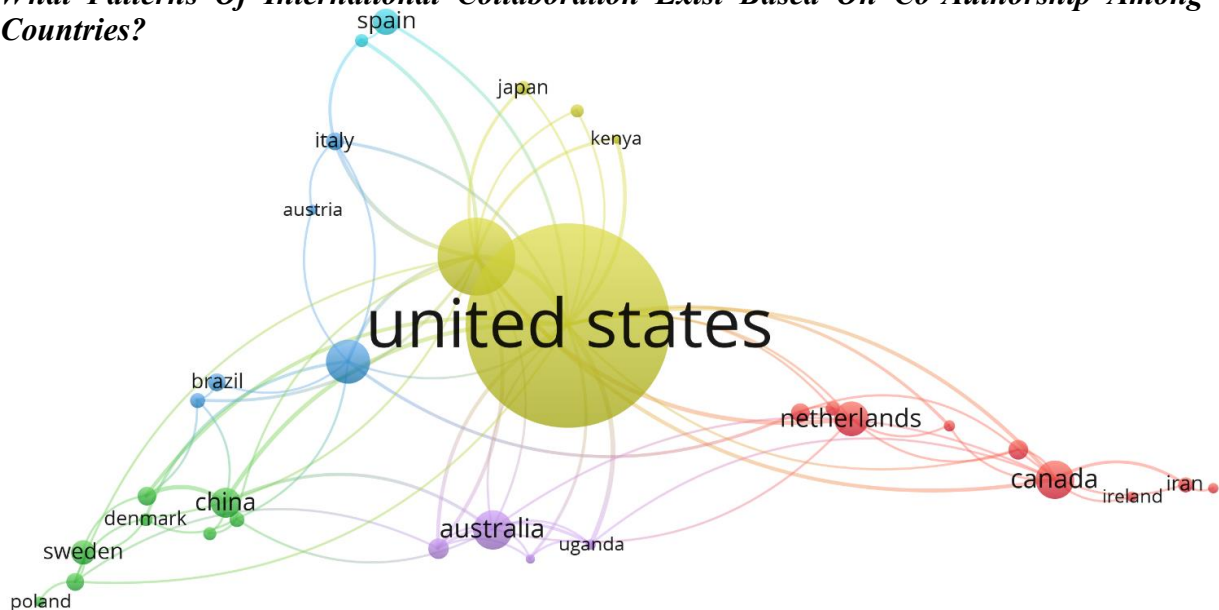


Figure 5: The Co-Authorship Network Reveal About Collaboration Among Countries

Source: Author's Analysis using VOSviewer based on data retrieved from Scopus Database (<https://www.scopus.com>), accessed on 16 June 2025

The co-authorship analysis based on country collaboration reveals significant disparities in research contributions to the topic of fasting and sexual desire from an Islamic perspective. The United States dominates with 270 documents, 2,923 citations, and a total link strength of 45, indicating its leading role in both productivity and influence. The United Kingdom follows with 78 documents and 961 citations, showcasing strong academic engagement, while Canada, China, and Germany demonstrate moderate contributions with lower but notable citation counts and link strengths. This suggests that Western countries, particularly the U.S. and U.K., are the primary hubs for research on this topic, likely due to their advanced academic infrastructure and interdisciplinary interest in Islamic studies, health, and behavioral sciences. Despite the dominance of Western nations, some non-Western countries, such as South Africa, Uganda, and Iran, exhibit noteworthy collaboration, albeit with fewer documents and citations. For instance, Uganda has a high total link strength (10) relative to its low document count (6), indicating strong international ties despite limited output. Similarly, Iran, with 10 documents, reflects growing scholarly interest in Islamic perspectives within its regional context. However, the minimal contributions from predominantly Muslim-majority countries like Turkey, Indonesia, and Malaysia despite the topic's religious relevance suggest a gap in localized research or underrepresentation in global academic networks.

The data also highlights discrepancies between research output and impact. For example, Portugal and Spain have relatively few documents (8 and 20, respectively) but high citations (468 and 513), implying their studies are highly influential. Conversely, countries like Brazil and India produce more documents (12 and 14) but receive fewer citations (21 and 57), indicating lower visibility or impact. This disparity underscores the importance of fostering international collaborations to enhance research dissemination and credibility, particularly for regions where Islamic scholarship on fasting and sexual desire remains underrepresented.

Conclusion

This study set out to explore scholarly trends and research patterns relating to the effectiveness of fasting in managing sexual desire from an Islamic perspective through bibliometric analysis. Key questions were addressed concerning subject area distribution, the most cited articles, top contributing countries, frequently occurring keywords, and patterns of international collaboration. The aim was to better understand how this topic has evolved in the academic landscape and where future contributions might be directed.

The analysis revealed that scholarly interest is concentrated mainly within the disciplines of social sciences, arts and humanities, medicine, and psychology, with relatively minimal contributions from core Islamic studies. While high-frequency keywords included terms such as “desire,” “fertility,” and “sexuality,” the term “fasting” was notably less common, highlighting a research gap. The United States and the United Kingdom emerged as dominant contributors, with strong citation counts and collaboration networks, indicating a Western-led exploration of behavioral and spiritual themes. The visualized networks also showed limited involvement from Muslim-majority countries, suggesting underutilization of the topic within regions most closely tied to its religious and cultural relevance.

This analysis contributes to the field by drawing attention to the intersection between Islamic spiritual practices and contemporary issues of self-regulation and moral conduct. It emphasizes the need for further empirical and theoretical work that integrates Islamic teachings such as fasting and *tazkiyah al-nafs* with broader academic discussions in psychology, health, and behavioral science. The findings may inform the development of religiously grounded

interventions in areas such as sexual ethics, youth behavior, and psycho-spiritual therapy. However, the study is limited by its reliance on Scopus-indexed data and English/Arabic language filters, potentially excluding relevant regional scholarship. Future research should consider expanding database sources, including grey literature, and adopting deeper content analysis to address these limitations. Overall, the findings affirm the value of bibliometric analysis in tracing academic development and identifying gaps, and they encourage further interdisciplinary engagement with Islamic frameworks in addressing modern ethical and behavioral challenges.

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