ISLAMIC AND ARABIC ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN MALAYSIA: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF PUBLICATION TRENDS AND SCHOLARLY IMPACT (2005-2025)

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Abstract:

This study investigates bibliometric trends in Islamic and Arabic academic research in Malaysia from 2005 to 2025, addressing the increasing scholarly interest and the need to map the intellectual landscape of this field. Despite the global significance of Islamic and Arabic studies, there remains a lack of comprehensive quantitative analysis specific to Malaysia's research output. To fill this gap, the research employed a systematic methodology, utilizing the keywords "Islamic," "Arabic," and "research" to retrieve relevant literature from the Scopus database. Data cleaning and refinement were conducted using OpenRefine, while Scopus Analyzer and VOSviewer software facilitated in-depth bibliometric analysis, including co-authorship, citation, and keyword mapping. The final dataset comprised 310 peer-reviewed journal articles, ensuring a focused and high-quality sample. The analysis revealed notable growth in publication volume over the two decades, with a strong emphasis on interdisciplinary themes such as Islamic economics, education, and language studies. Co-authorship networks highlighted Malaysia's central role in regional and international collaborations, while keyword co-occurrence analysis identified evolving research hotspots and thematic clusters. The results underscore the dynamic and interconnected nature of Islamic and Arabic academic research in Malaysia, providing valuable insights into prevailing trends, influential contributors, and emerging areas of interest. In conclusion, this bibliometric study not only charts the development and scholarly impact of the field but also offers a foundation for future research directions and policy formulation in Islamic and Arabic studies.

Keywords:

Arabic Research, Islamic Research, Malaysia

Introduction

The field of Islamic and Arabic academic research in Malaysia has seen significant growth and development over recent years. This expansion is evident in various domains, including Islamic finance, Islamic economics, and Islamic education. Malaysia, alongside Indonesia, has emerged as a leading contributor to Islamic research, driven by a conducive research environment and strong institutional support. The International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) and other public universities have played pivotal roles in advancing this field, producing a substantial volume of scholarly work and fostering international collaborations(Mahsusi et al., 2024)(Abd. Wahab et al., 2023)(Haque et al., 2020). This introduction aims to provide an overview of the bibliometric trends in Islamic and Arabic academic research in Malaysia, highlighting key areas of focus, influential contributors, and emerging research themes.

Islamic research in Malaysia has experienced a notable increase in publication output, particularly in the areas of Islamic finance, economics, and education. Bibliometric analyses reveal that Malaysia is one of the most productive countries in Islamic research, with significant contributions from institutions like the International Islamic University Malaysia(Mahsusi et al., 2024)(Haque et al., 2020). The research output spans various subfields, including Shariah governance, Islamic banking, and Halal management, reflecting the diverse interests and expertise of Malaysian scholars(Abd. Wahab et al., 2023)(Aspiranti et al., 2023). The increasing trend in publications is supported by a robust academic infrastructure and a growing number of specialized journals and conferences dedicated to Islamic studies(Haque et al., 2020)(Aspiranti et al., 2023).

The bibliometric studies highlight several key contributors and collaborative networks within the Malaysian Islamic research community. Prominent scholars such as M. Kabir Hassan and institutions like the International Islamic University Malaysia have been instrumental in shaping the academic discourse in this field(Tijjani et al., 2020)(Mohamad, 2024). Collaborative efforts are evident in co-authorship patterns and international partnerships, particularly with scholars from countries like Saudi Arabia, the United States, and Indonesia(Mohamad, 2024)(Agustina & Majid, 2021). These collaborations have facilitated the exchange of knowledge and the development of interdisciplinary research, further enhancing the global impact of Malaysian Islamic research(Mohamad, 2024)(Agustina & Majid, 2021).

Several emerging research themes have been identified in the bibliometric analyses of Islamic research in Malaysia. Topics such as Islamic finance, Shariah governance, and Halal management are gaining prominence, reflecting the evolving needs and interests of the academic and industry communities(Abd. Wahab et al., 2023)(Aspiranti et al., 2023). Additionally, there is a growing focus on integrating modern pedagogical approaches with traditional Islamic education, addressing contemporary challenges in areas like renewable energy and digital finance(Nirwana, 2024)(Almustafa, 2025). These emerging themes indicate a dynamic and responsive research landscape, poised to address both local and global issues through the lens of Islamic principles and values(Nirwana, 2024)(Almustafa, 2025).

In summary, the bibliometric trends in Islamic and Arabic academic research in Malaysia demonstrate a vibrant and expanding field, characterized by significant growth, influential contributors, and emerging research themes. This overview provides a foundation for

understanding the current state and future directions of Islamic research in Malaysia, offering valuable insights for researchers, policymakers, and academic institutions.

Despite the significant growth and development of Islamic and Arabic academic research in Malaysia, several critical research gaps persist that necessitate this comprehensive bibliometric analysis. These gaps span methodological, theoretical, and practical dimensions, highlighting the urgent need for a systematic examination of publication trends and scholarly impact in this field.

First, there is a notable lack of comprehensive bibliometric studies that systematically analyse the Islamic and Arabic academic research landscape in Malaysia over an extended period.(Sa'idu & Hassan, 2023) While numerous studies have examined specific aspects of Islamic research, such as Islamic finance, education, or halal studies, there remains an absence of holistic bibliometric analyses that provide a complete picture of publication trends, citation patterns, and scholarly networks across the entire spectrum of Islamic and Arabic studies.(Machali & Suhendro, 2022) This fragmentation limits researchers' ability to understand the broader intellectual trajectory and interconnections within the field.

The existing literature reveals significant methodological challenges in conducting Islamic research. Studies have identified problems with the clarity of Islamic research methodology frameworks, with scholars criticizing the theoretical and methodological foundations as incomplete.(Sa'idu & Hassan, 2023) The absence of standardized methodological approaches specific to Islamic studies has resulted in researchers often relying on conventional Western research methodologies, which may not adequately address the unique epistemological foundations of Islamic scholarship.(Abu Bakar et al., 2022) This methodological gap creates inconsistencies in research quality and limits the development of authentic Islamic research paradigms.

Research has shown that most Islamic studies programs in Malaysia still lack adequate materials and resources for Islamic research methodology, particularly when compared to other countries like Indonesia.(Affandi et al., 2011) The scarcity of literature on Islamic research methodology has resulted in unclear theoretical frameworks and inadequate training for researchers in this field.(Sa'idu & Hassan, 2023)

Furthermore, there is a limited understanding of interdisciplinary connections within Islamic and Arabic studies. The existing research tends to focus on isolated domains without exploring the interconnections between various fields such as Islamic finance, education, law, and social sciences.(Ismail, 2021) This compartmentalization prevents a holistic understanding of how Islamic scholarship contributes to broader academic discourse and societal development.

The research landscape suffers from insufficient systematic documentation of scholarly achievements and impact within Malaysian Islamic and Arabic studies. While individual institutions like the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) have made significant contributions, there is no comprehensive mapping of the collective scholarly output across all Malaysian institutions engaged in Islamic research.(Norman et al., 2024) This lack of systematic documentation hinders the ability to assess the true scope and impact of Malaysian Islamic scholarship on the global academic stage.

Additionally, there are significant gaps in understanding collaboration patterns and knowledge networks within the Malaysian Islamic research community. Although some studies have identified key contributors and international partnerships, there is limited analysis of how these collaborations have evolved over time and their impact on research quality and innovation.(Irhammudin Ibrahim et al., 2024)

From a practical standpoint, there is a critical need for evidence-based policy development in Islamic higher education and research. The absence of comprehensive bibliometric data limits policymakers' ability to make informed decisions about research funding, institutional development, and strategic planning for Islamic studies programs.(Asma' Wardah et al., 2025) This gap is particularly significant given Malaysia's ambition to position itself as a global hub for Islamic scholarship and education.

The research also reveals substantial gaps in understanding the socio-economic impact of Islamic research in Malaysia. While there is growing recognition of the importance of Islamic studies in national development, particularly in areas like Islamic finance and halal industry, there is insufficient empirical evidence to demonstrate the actual contributions of academic research to these sectors.(Lada et al., 2023)

This bibliometric analysis addresses these critical gaps by providing a systematic examination of publication trends, scholarly impact, and research networks in Islamic and Arabic studies in Malaysia from 2005-2025. By filling these knowledge gaps, this study will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the field's evolution, inform policy decisions, and provide valuable insights for future research directions in Islamic and Arabic academic research.

The findings from this analysis will not only benefit researchers and academic institutions but also support Malaysia's broader strategic objectives of becoming a leading centre for Islamic scholarship and education in the global academic community.

Research Question
1. What is the scholarly impact and subject area productivity of Islamic and Arabic academic research in Malaysia from 2005 to 2025?
2. Which articles within this field are the most highly cited during this period?
3. What are the institutional and national affiliations of the authors of these highly cited articles?
4. Which keywords are most frequently used in Islamic and Arabic academic research in Malaysia, and what do they reveal about prevailing research themes?
5. Which countries are most frequently represented in co-authorship and institutional affiliations within this body of research?

Methodology
Bibliometrics comprises the systematic collection, organization, and analysis of bibliographic information derived from scientific publications (Alves et al., 2021; Assyakur & Rosa, 2022; Verbeek et al., 2002). In addition to fundamental metrics like identifying key journals, publication years, and prominent authors (Wu & Wu, 2017), bibliometric analysis also employs advanced methods such as document co-citation analysis. Conducting a thorough literature review necessitates a careful and iterative process of selecting appropriate keywords, searching the literature, and performing detailed analysis, which together facilitate the creation of a

comprehensive bibliography and ensure reliable outcomes (Fahimnia et al., 2015). Accordingly, this study concentrated on high-impact publications, as these offer valuable perspectives on the theoretical foundations of the research area. To guarantee data reliability, SCOPUS was utilized as the principal database for data collection (Al-Khoury et al., 2022; di Stefano et al., 2010; Khiste & Paithankar, 2017). Furthermore, to uphold quality standards, the analysis was limited to articles published in peer-reviewed academic journals, intentionally excluding books and lecture notes (Gu et al., 2019). Publications were sourced from Elsevier's Scopus, recognized for its extensive coverage, and included works published between 2005 and 2025 for further examination.

Data Search Strategy

The bibliometric search strategy for this study was systematically constructed to yield a robust and relevant dataset on Islamic and Arabic academic research in Malaysia. Using Scopus, the search string TITLE ((islamic OR arabic) AND research) was applied, with results limited to English-language journal articles published between 2005 and 2025, and only including works at the final publication stage. This approach ensures the inclusion of peer-reviewed, high-quality research, and aligns with established standards in bibliometric methodology. The use of targeted keywords and Boolean operators enhances the specificity of the search, capturing literature that directly addresses the core themes of Islamic and Arabic research.

Based on these carefully defined criteria—outlined in Table 2, which excludes non-English works, pre-2005 publications, non-journal literature, and in-press articles—the search yielded a total of 310 related articles. This dataset reflects the current and most impactful research trends in the field, providing a comprehensive foundation for analysis. By focusing exclusively on finalized journal articles in English, the study ensures both the accessibility and academic rigor of the literature reviewed, facilitating nuanced insights into the productivity, influence, and thematic evolution of Islamic and Arabic academic research in Malaysia over the past two decades.

Table 1: The Search String

Scopus	TITLE ((islamic OR arabic) AND research) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English")) AND (LIMIT-TO (SRCTYPE , "j"))

Table 2: The Selection Criterion Is Searching

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Language	English	Non-English
Time line	2005 – 2025	< 2005
Literature type	Journal (Article)	Conference, Book, Review
Publication Stage	Final	In Press

Data Analysis

Bibliometrics comprises the systematic collection, organization, and analysis of bibliographic information derived from scientific publications (Alves et al., 2021; Assyakur & Rosa, 2022; Verbeek et al., 2002). In addition to fundamental metrics like identifying key journals, publication years, and prominent authors (Wu & Wu, 2017), bibliometric analysis also employs advanced methods such as document co-citation analysis. Conducting a thorough literature review necessitates a careful and iterative process of selecting appropriate keywords, searching

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VOSviewer, developed by Nees Jan van Eck and Ludo Waltman at Leiden University, Netherlands (van Eck & Waltman, 2010, 2017), is a widely adopted software for bibliometric analysis and visualization. The tool is designed to facilitate the construction of network visualizations, clustering of related items, and the generation of density maps, making it suitable for examining co-authorship, co-citation, and keyword co-occurrence networks. Its interactive interface and ongoing updates provide efficient and dynamic handling of large datasets, allowing for the computation of various metrics and the customization of visual outputs. VOSviewer's compatibility with multiple bibliometric data sources enhances its value for exploring complex research domains.

One of its notable strengths is the transformation of intricate bibliometric data into visually accessible maps and charts, with a particular emphasis on network visualization and clustering. This enables users to efficiently analyze patterns such as keyword co-occurrence and citation relationships, regardless of their level of expertise. The continuous development of VOSviewer ensures its relevance and effectiveness in bibliometric research, offering flexibility in metrics computation and visualization customization. Its adaptability to different types of bibliometric data, including co-authorship and citation networks, positions it as a versatile tool for in-depth research analysis. For this study, datasets including publication year, title, author name, journal, citation count, and keywords were extracted from the Scopus database, covering the period from 2005 to 2025, and analysed using VOSviewer version 1.6.20. The software's VOS clustering and mapping methods facilitated the creation of bibliometric maps. VOSviewer offers an alternative to the Multidimensional Scaling (MDS) approach, focusing on positioning items within low-dimensional spaces so that the distance between any two items accurately reflects their relatedness and similarity (van Eck & Waltman, 2010).

While VOSviewer shares this objective with MDS (Appio et al., 2014) , it differs in its normalization approach, using association strength (AS_{ij}) to normalize co-occurrence frequencies, calculated as:
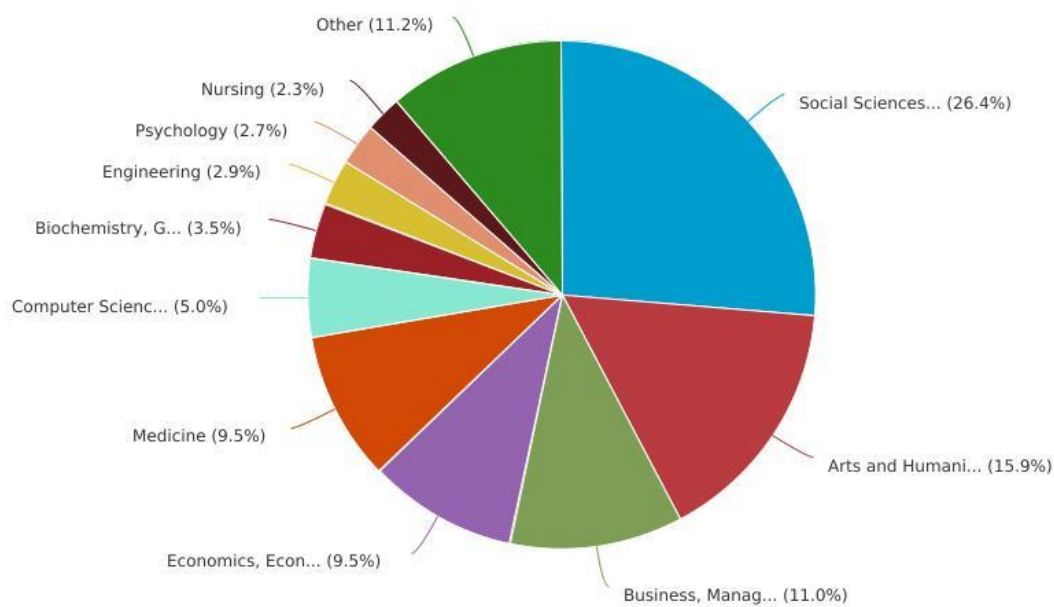
$$AS_{ij} = \frac{C_{ij}}{w_i w_j}$$

This measure is proportional to the ratio between the observed co-occurrences of items i and j and the expected co-occurrences under the assumption of statistical independence (Van Eck & Waltman, 2007).

Result and Discussion

What Is the Scholarly Impact and Subject Area Productivity of Islamic and Arabic Academic Research in Malaysia from 2005 To 2025?

Figure 1: Scholarly Impact and Subject Area Productivity

Figure 1 illustrates the scholarly impact and subject area productivity of bibliometric data spanning 2005 to 2025, revealing distinct patterns in Malaysian Islamic and Arabic academic research distribution. The analysis demonstrates that Social Sciences dominates the research landscape, accounting for 26.4% of all published documents, which underscores the field's inherent focus on societal structures, community dynamics, and social phenomena within Islamic contexts. Arts and Humanities emerges as the second most productive domain at 15.9%, reflecting the scholarly emphasis on cultural preservation, historical analysis, and linguistic studies that form the foundational pillars of Islamic and Arabic scholarship.

The prominence of Business, Management and Accounting (11%) and Economics, Econometrics and Finance (9.5%) collectively represents a substantial 20.5% of research output, indicating Malaysia's strategic positioning as a global leader in Islamic finance and Shariah-compliant business practices. This concentration aligns with the country's ambition to establish itself as an international hub for Islamic banking and finance innovation. Notably, Medicine's equal representation at 9.5% suggests a significant scholarly engagement with health sciences, likely encompassing Islamic medical ethics, traditional healing practices, and the integration of Islamic principles with contemporary healthcare delivery systems.

Other subject areas such as Computer Science (5%), Biochemistry, Genetics and Molecular Biology (3.5%), Engineering (2.9%), Psychology (2.7%), and Nursing (2.3%) have a comparatively lower representation. This distribution highlights a multidisciplinary approach but underscores that the core focus remains on social, cultural, and economic dimensions. The

relatively modest presence of STEM fields may indicate either a lower integration of Islamic and Arabic perspectives in these areas or a smaller research community engaging in such intersections. Overall, the data demonstrates a robust scholarly output in fields directly linked to the human and social dimensions of Islam and Arabic studies in Malaysia, while also pointing to emerging, though less dominant, contributions in science and technology-related disciplines.

Which Articles Within This Field Are the Most Highly Cited During This Period?

Table 3: Most Cited Articles

Authors	Title	Year	Source title	Cited by
Aliyu S.; et. al. (Aliyu et al., 2017)	Islamic Banking Sustainability: A Review of Literature and Directions for Future Research	2017	Emerging Markets Finance and Trade	105
Al-Amer R.; et. al. (Al-Amer et al., 2016)	Language translation challenges with Arabic speakers participating in qualitative research studies	2016	International Journal of Nursing Studies	64
Dikko M. (Dikko, 2016)	Establishing construct validity and reliability: Pilot testing of a qualitative interview for research in takaful (Islamic insurance)	2016	Qualitative Report	92
Khraim H. (Khraim, 2010)	Measuring Religiosity in Consumer Research From an Islamic Perspective	2010	Journal of Economic and Administrative Sciences	81
Ali B.H.; et. al. (Ali et al., 2009)	Biological effects of gum arabic: A review of some recent research	2009	Food and Chemical Toxicology	368
Nassif A.B.; et. al. (Nassif et al., 2021)	Deep learning for Arabic subjective sentiment analysis: Challenges and research opportunities	2021	Applied Soft Computing	77
El-Masri M.; et. al. (El-Masri et al., 2017)	Successes and challenges of Arabic sentiment analysis research: a literature review	2017	Social Network Analysis and Mining	70
Ariffin N.M.; et. al. (Ariffin et al., 2009)	Risks in Islamic banks: Evidence from empirical research	2009	Journal of Banking Regulation	64
Abedifar P.; et. al. (Abedifar et al., 2015)	Islamic banking and finance: Recent empirical literature and directions for future research	2015	Journal of Economic Surveys	120
Oueslati O.; et. al. (Oueslati et al., 2020)	A review of sentiment analysis research in Arabic language	2020	Future Generation Computer Systems	181

The bibliometric data from 2005 to 2025 reveals that the most cited articles in Islamic and Arabic academic research in Malaysia span a diverse range of interdisciplinary topics. The article with the highest citation count is "Biological effects of gum arabic: A review of some recent research" by Ali B.H. et al. (2009), cited 368 times, highlighting the significant impact of research at the intersection of Islamic studies and health sciences. This is followed by highly cited works in Islamic finance, such as Abedifar P. et al.'s "Islamic banking and finance: Recent empirical literature and directions for future research" (2015) with 120 citations, and Aliyu S. et al.'s "Islamic Banking Sustainability: A Review of Literature and Directions for Future Research" (2017) with 105 citations. These patterns reflect Malaysia's strategic emphasis on Islamic finance and its prominent role as a research and industry leader in this field. Other notable articles address empirical risks in Islamic banking, construct validity in Islamic insurance research, and consumer religiosity, each attracting substantial academic attention and citation.

In parallel, the table shows a strong and growing scholarly interest in Arabic language research, particularly in computational linguistics and sentiment analysis. For example, Oueslati O. et al.'s "A review of sentiment analysis research in Arabic language" (2020) garnered 81 citations, and Nassif A.B. et al.'s "Deep learning for Arabic subjective sentiment analysis: Challenges and research opportunities" (2021) received 77 citations.

These articles demonstrate the integration of advanced computational methods and artificial intelligence into Arabic studies, reflecting both global research trends and Malaysia's commitment to digital transformation in the humanities. Additionally, research on language translation challenges and literature reviews on sentiment analysis further illustrate the multidisciplinary approach prevalent in the country's academic landscape. Overall, the most cited articles indicate a robust engagement with both traditional Islamic economic themes and contemporary issues in Arabic language technology, underscoring Malaysia's dynamic and evolving research priorities in these fields.

What Are the Institutional and National Affiliations of the Authors of These Highly Cited Articles?
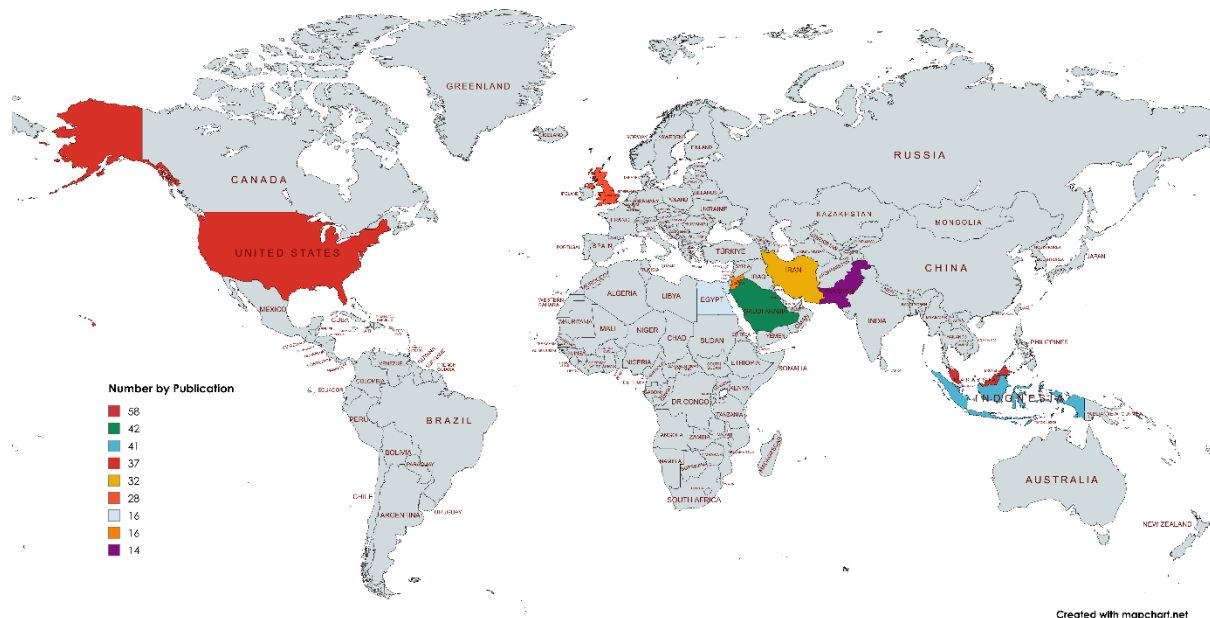

Figure 2: Institutional and National Affiliations

Figure 2 demonstrates the institutional and national affiliations of academic publications in Islamic and Arabic studies from 2005 to 2025, revealing a highly internationalized research landscape characterized by substantial contributions from diverse geographical regions. The analysis indicates that the United States dominates the publication output with 58 publications, followed by Malaysia (42 publications), the United Kingdom (41 publications), and Indonesia (37 publications).

This notable performance by Malaysia and Indonesia underscores Southeast Asia's emerging prominence in Islamic and Arabic scholarship, reflecting the region's robust academic infrastructure, strategic government investment in research development, and growing institutional capacity within these specialized fields. The substantial representation of Western countries, particularly the United States and United Kingdom, demonstrates sustained scholarly engagement with Islamic and Arabic studies beyond traditional Muslim-majority regions, likely attributed to multicultural academic environments, extensive international research collaborations, and the global significance of these research domains in contemporary academic discourse.

In the Middle East, Iran (32 publications), Saudi Arabia (28), and Iraq (16) continue to play pivotal roles, contributing substantial research output that reflects their historical and cultural centrality to Islamic studies. Pakistan (14) also appears as a notable contributor in South Asia. The bibliometric data demonstrates that Malaysia, in particular, stands out as a regional leader, surpassing even some Middle Eastern countries in publication volume. This trend may be attributed to Malaysia's strategic initiatives to position itself as a hub for Islamic education and research, as well as its engagement with international academic networks. Overall, the data highlights a dynamic, multi-polar scholarly landscape in Islamic and Arabic studies, with Malaysia emerging as a key player bridging Southeast Asian and global research communities.

Which Keywords Are Most Frequently Used in Islamic and Arabic Academic Research in Malaysia, And What Do They Reveal About Prevailing Research Themes?
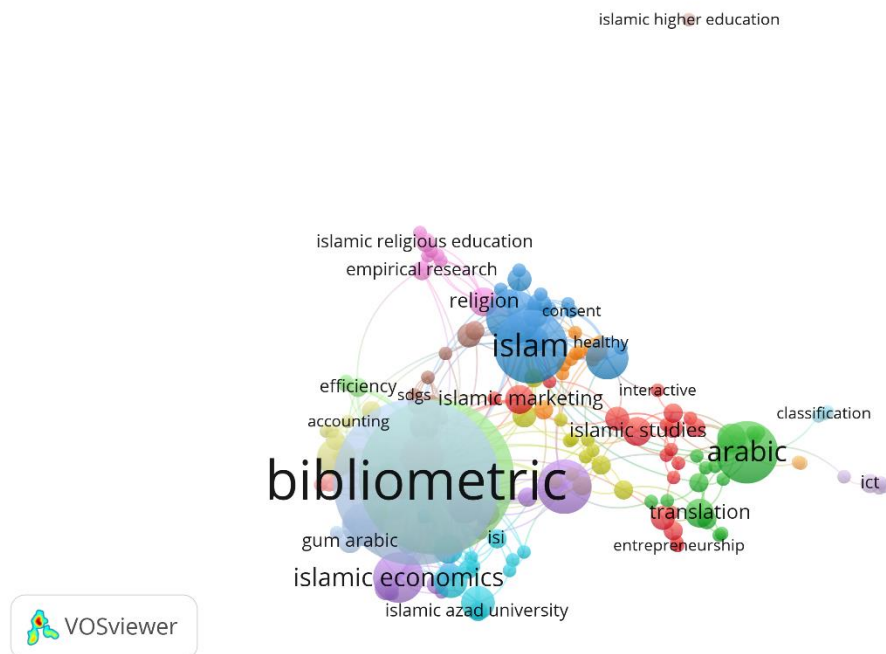

Figure 3: Keyword Co-Occurrence Network

Figure 3 presents a keyword co-occurrence network generated through VOSviewer analysis, revealing the thematic architecture and conceptual landscape of Islamic and Arabic academic research in Malaysia from 2005 to 2025. The visualization demonstrates that "bibliometric" emerges as the most dominant keyword, reflecting the field's methodological evolution toward systematic analysis of publication patterns and scholarly impact assessment, which corresponds to the broader academic trend of employing evidence-based approaches to map disciplinary boundaries and research trajectories.

The keyword network exhibits distinct thematic clusters surrounding the central "bibliometric" node, with "islamic economics," "islam," "arabic," and "islamic studies" forming prominent interconnected domains. This clustering pattern indicates the multidisciplinary nature of the research landscape, where traditional religious scholarship intersects with contemporary academic methodologies to create hybrid knowledge frameworks.

Particularly noteworthy is the substantial presence of specialized keywords such as "islamic marketing," "translation," and "islamic religious education," which appear as significant nodes within the network. These keywords collectively demonstrate the field's remarkable thematic diversity, encompassing economic theory, linguistic studies, pedagogical research, and religious scholarship, thereby illustrating how Malaysian Islamic and Arabic studies have evolved beyond conventional boundaries to address contemporary societal needs and global academic discourse.

The network structure also reveals several interconnected cluste"s that refle"t specific research niches. For example, the green cluster around "arabic" connects with keywords like "translation," "classification," and "ict," pointing to a focus on language technology and linguistic studies.

The blue cluster centered on "islam" links with "religion," "empirical research," and "islamic religious education," underscoring ongoing interest in theological and educational issues. Other notable keywords such as "efficiency," "sdgs," "accounting," and "entrepreneurship" suggest that contemporary issues like sustainable development and business are also being integrated into Islamic and Arabic research. The presence of "gum arabic" and "islamic azad university" indicates both specific subject matter and institutional collaboration. Overall, the visualization demonstrates a vibrant, interconnected research ecosystem in Malaysia, with bibliometric analysis serving as a key tool for understanding and navigating the evolving landscape of Islamic and Arabic studies.

Which Countries Are Most Frequently Represented in Co-Authorship and Institutional Affiliations Within This Body of Research?
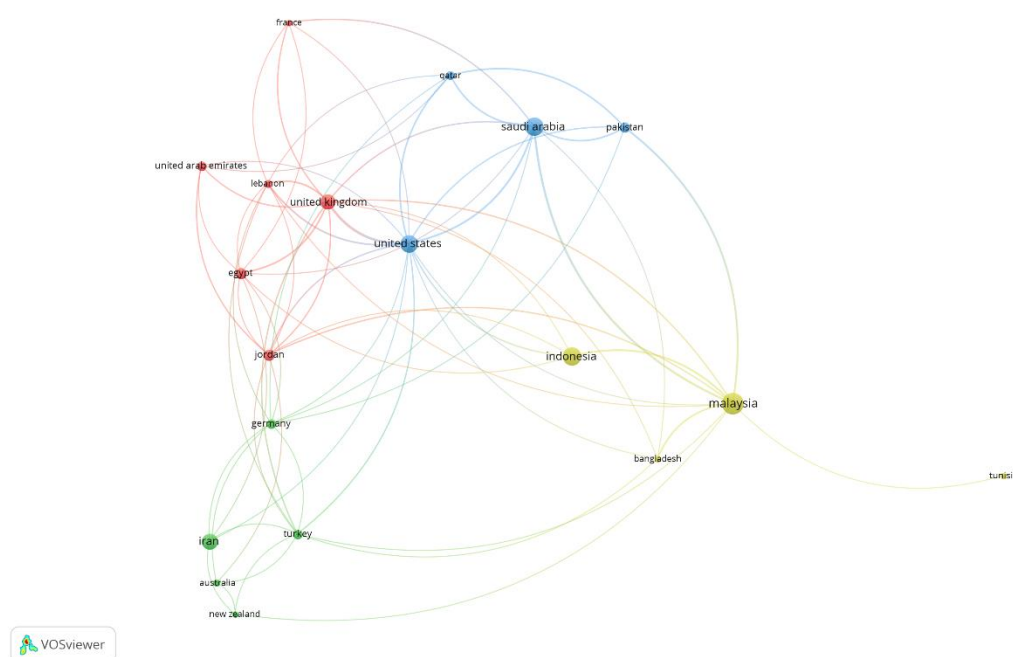

Figure 4: Co-Authorship Network for Islamic and Arabic Academic Research in Malaysia

Figure 4 depicts the co-authorship network for Islamic and Arabic academic research in Malaysia from 2005 to 2025, revealing an extensive, globally interwoven research community. Malaysia stands out as the central hub, facilitating strong collaborative ties with regional neighbors such as Indonesia and Bangladesh, as well as with North African partners like Tunisia. The pronounced linkages with fellow Southeast and South Asian countries underscore the depth of regional academic alliances. Beyond these areas, Malaysian researchers engage actively with institutions in the Middle East—particularly in Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Turkey—and maintain significant partnerships with European scholars in the United Kingdom and

Germany, thereby highlighting Malaysia's key role in nurturing diverse, transcontinental scholarly collaborations.

The network also demonstrates significant cross-continental collaborations, with the United States and United Kingdom serving as major hubs that connect multiple countries across different regions. These Western countries are linked to both Middle Eastern and Asian research partners, reflecting the globalized nature of Islamic and Arabic studies. The presence of countries like France, Germany, Australia, and New Zealand further illustrates the widespread international interest and participation in this field. Overall, the co-authorship map underscores Malaysia's strategic position as a bridge between regional and international research communities, facilitating the exchange of knowledge and expertise in Islamic and Arabic academic research.

Conclusion

This comprehensive bibliometric analysis systematically mapped and evaluated the scholarly landscape of Islamic and Arabic academic research in Malaysia from 2005 to 2025, examining publication trends, influential works, collaborative networks, and thematic developments to address critical questions regarding scholarly impact, subject area productivity, citation patterns, institutional affiliations, research themes, and international collaboration scope.

Key Findings and Academic Contributions

The findings demonstrate substantial growth in publication output, with research predominantly concentrated in social sciences (26.4%), arts and humanities (15.9%), and business-related fields, while maintaining a robust multidisciplinary character through significant contributions from health sciences and technology sectors. Citation pattern analysis identified highly influential works, particularly in Islamic finance, economics, and Arabic language technology, establishing Malaysia's authoritative position in these specialized domains.

The institutional and geographical mapping reveals Malaysia's pivotal role as both a regional leader and an international bridge for scholarly collaboration, with strategic partnerships extending across Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Western countries. The prevalence of keywords such as "bibliometric," "Islamic economics," and "Arabic" underscores both methodological sophistication and the field's dynamic, evolving research landscape.
Critical Implications for Academic Institutions

For academic institutions, these findings provide a strategic roadmap for enhancing research excellence and international competitiveness. Universities should prioritize the development of specialized research centres focusing on high-impact areas such as Islamic finance, Arabic language technology, and interdisciplinary social sciences research. The strong showing in bibliometric methodologies suggests institutions should invest in advanced research analytics capabilities to maintain their competitive edge in evidence-based scholarship.

Institutional leaders should leverage Malaysia's demonstrated strength in international collaboration by establishing formal partnerships with identified high-performing countries, particularly focusing on Southeast Asian regional networks while expanding relationships with Middle Eastern and Western institutions. The multidisciplinary nature of successful research indicates the need for cross-departmental collaboration structures and interdisciplinary

research incentives to foster innovation at the intersection of traditional Islamic studies and contemporary academic disciplines.

For policy makers, this analysis reveals critical opportunities to position Malaysia as the global hub for Islamic and Arabic scholarship. The documented growth trajectory and international recognition suggest that strategic government investment in this sector could yield significant returns in terms of soft power, educational tourism, and knowledge economy development.

Policy interventions should focus on creating enabling frameworks that support the identified research strengths while addressing emerging needs in digital humanities, Islamic fintech, and contemporary Islamic social sciences. The strong regional collaboration patterns indicate potential for Malaysia to lead Southeast Asian Islamic research consortiums, requiring diplomatic and educational policy coordination to maximize this regional influence.

Government funding policies should prioritize research areas demonstrating both academic excellence and practical applications, particularly Islamic economics, halal industry research, and Arabic language technology, which show clear pathways to economic impact and societal benefit. Funding strategies should adopt a tiered approach that recognizes the field's demonstrated strengths while fostering emerging areas of potential. Primary funding priorities should support established high-impact domains including Islamic finance research, Arabic computational linguistics, and social sciences research that addresses contemporary Islamic society challenges.

Secondary funding streams should target emerging interdisciplinary opportunities revealed by the bibliometric analysis, particularly at the intersection of health sciences and Islamic ethics, technology applications in Islamic education, and sustainable development from Islamic perspectives. The strong international collaboration patterns suggest that funding mechanisms should specifically incentivize international partnership development through joint research grants, visiting scholar programs, and collaborative infrastructure investments.

This bibliometric analysis establishes a robust foundation for evidence-based decision making in Islamic and Arabic academic research development. The documented growth trajectory, international recognition, and collaborative strength position Malaysia uniquely to become the preeminent global centre for Islamic scholarship, provided that institutions, policy makers, and funding organizations align their strategies with these empirical insights.

The path forward requires coordinated action across academic, governmental, and financial sectors to leverage Malaysia's demonstrated strengths, address identified gaps, and capitalize on emerging opportunities in this dynamic and increasingly important field of scholarship. Success in implementing these recommendations will not only advance academic excellence but also contribute significantly to Malaysia's knowledge economy and global influence in Islamic and Arabic studies.

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