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## RESEARCH TREND IN HADITH TEXT CRITICISM: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

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### Abstract:

This study explores the evolution and current research trends in Hadith text criticism through a bibliometric approach, addressing the limited understanding of its development in contemporary academic discourse despite its foundational role in classical Islamic scholarship. The primary objective is to map the scope, thematic orientation, and scholarly networks associated with research on the evaluation and authentication of Hadith texts. To achieve this, bibliographic data were extracted from the Scopus database using the keywords "hadith text" and "criticism," resulting in a dataset of 149 journal articles

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published between 1970 and 2025. The data were cleaned and standardized using *OpenRefine*, analyzed for productivity trends and subject area distribution via the Scopus Analyzer, and visualized using *VOSviewer* to examine co-authorship networks, keyword co-occurrence, and citation patterns. The findings indicate that research in Hadith text criticism is predominantly situated within the disciplines of Social Sciences and Arts and Humanities. Core thematic areas include *matn* criticism, authentication, and fabrication, suggesting sustained scholarly engagement with traditional evaluative frameworks. In terms of geographical distribution, the majority of contributions originate from Southeast Asia and the Middle East, with an observable yet limited expansion in international collaborations. Overall, this study provides a comprehensive overview of the structural and thematic dimensions of Hadith criticism research, underscoring both the enduring relevance of classical methodologies and the growing incorporation of modern analytical tools.

**Keywords:**

Hadith, Text Criticism, Bibliometric, Analysis, Scopus Database

**Introduction**

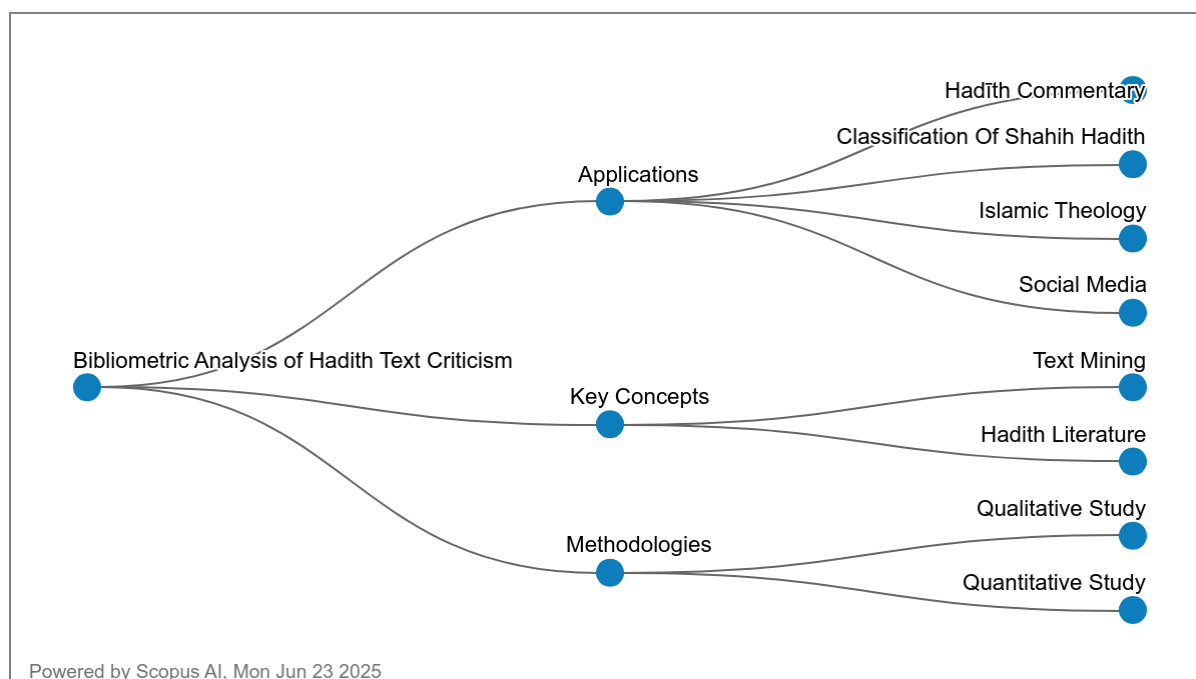
Hadith text criticism is a crucial aspect of Islamic scholarship, focusing on the evaluation and authentication of the sayings and actions attributed to the Prophet Muhammad. This field has evolved significantly over time, with scholars developing various methodologies to assess the authenticity of Hadiths. Traditional methods, such as the *sanad* (chain of narrators) and *matan* (content) criticism, have been foundational in this discipline. However, contemporary approaches, including bibliometric analysis, are now being employed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of Hadith studies. Bibliometric analysis, a quantitative method for reviewing literature, offers insights into the development and trends within the field, highlighting the contributions of different scholars and the evolution of methodologies over time (Marvi & Foroudi, 2023), (Toaza & Esztergár-Kiss, 2024), (Saputro et al., 2023). This article is written to analyze the trend of critical study of Hadith texts using bibliometric analysis. It aims to serve as a reference point for future researchers interested in exploring this field further, by identifying research patterns, thematic focuses, and key contributors.

The traditional methods of Hadith criticism primarily involve the evaluation of the *sanad* and *matan*. Scholars like Ibn al-Qayyim Al-Jauziyyah have laid down principles for critiquing the text, emphasizing the importance of both the chain of transmission and the content (Ramchahi, 2020), (Ismail et al., 2014). Over time, new methods such as the *Kashf* method, which is particularly recognized among Sufi scholars, have been introduced. This method involves spiritual practices to gain divine insights into the authenticity of Hadiths, showcasing the diversity in approaches within Islamic scholarship (Afabih & Junianto, 2022). Additionally, the integration of artificial intelligence and natural language processing techniques has emerged as a modern approach to Hadith classification and mining, demonstrating high accuracy in categorizing Hadiths based on their content (Saloot et al., 2016), (Alias et al., 2024).

Bibliometric analysis has become an essential tool in understanding the landscape of Hadith studies. This method involves the statistical analysis of publications to map the development and trends within the field. Studies have shown that bibliometric analysis can reveal the most

influential works, key themes, and the evolution of research methodologies over time (Marvi & Foroudi, 2023), (Saputro et al., 2023), (Maulani & Widuri, 2024). For instance, a bibliometric study on Hadith-related publications in the Web of Science database highlighted the concentration of research on theological aspects, with fewer studies focusing on economic and financial implications (Hassan et al., 2024). This indicates a potential area for future research, emphasizing the need for a more interdisciplinary approach in Hadith studies.

In conclusion, the field of Hadith text criticism has a rich history of methodological development, from traditional *sanad* and *matan* evaluations to modern techniques involving artificial intelligence and bibliometric analysis. The integration of these diverse approaches not only enhances the accuracy and efficiency of Hadith authentication but also broadens the scope of research within Islamic studies. Bibliometric analysis, in particular, provides valuable insights into the trends and gaps in the literature, guiding future research directions and fostering a more comprehensive understanding of Hadith scholarship (Marvi & Foroudi, 2023), (Toaza & Esztergár-Kiss, 2024), (Saputro et al., 2023). As the field continues to evolve, the combination of traditional and contemporary methods will likely lead to more robust and nuanced evaluations of Hadiths, contributing to the preservation and understanding of Islamic heritage.



### Research Question

1. What is the overall influence and research productivity within this topic, and which subject areas are most prominent?
2. Which articles have received the highest number of citations, indicating their impact and significance in the field?
3. Which are the top 10 countries ranked by the number of publications related to this topic?
4. What are the most frequently used keywords and themes that characterize this research area?

5. What are the patterns of international collaboration, particularly co-authorship networks, based on countries?

### Methodology

Bibliometrics entails the systematic collection, organization, and analysis of bibliographic data drawn from scholarly literature (Alves et al., 2021; Assyakur & Rosa, 2022; Verbeek et al., 2002). Beyond fundamental indicators such as the identification of influential journals, publication chronology, and notable contributors bibliometric analysis provides deeper insights into the structure and dynamics of scientific research (Wu & Wu, 2017) it also employs advanced methods like document co-citation analysis. A thorough literature review relies on a systematic and iterative process that involves selecting appropriate keywords, searching relevant literature, and conducting detailed evaluations. This structured approach ensures a comprehensive and reliable overview of the research landscape (Fahimnia et al., 2015).

In this study, emphasis was placed on high impact publications, as they offer valuable insights into the theoretical foundations of the field. To maintain data integrity, Scopus was used as the primary database for sourcing literature (Al-Khoury et al., 2022; di Stefano et al., 2010; Khiste & Paithankar, 2017). Furthermore, to ensure scholarly quality, only peer-reviewed journal articles were included, while books and lecture notes were excluded (Gu et al., 2019). The dataset, drawn from Elsevier's Scopus which offers extensive coverage spans publications from the year 1970 through 2025 for analysis.

### Data Search Strategy

The study employed a structured screening process to define the search terms used for article retrieval. It began by querying the Scopus database using the following parameters TITLE (hadith OR hadis OR hadits OR ( "hadith text" ) OR matan OR matn AND criticism OR analysis OR study OR evaluation OR authentication OR review ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( DOCTYPE , "ar" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( SRCTYPE , "j" ) ), thereby assembling 149 articles. These articles, published in various languages, spanned the period from 1970 to 2025. All articles meeting the inclusion criteria were incorporated into the bibliometric dataset for comprehensive analysis.

**Table 1: The Search String**

SCOPUS	TITLE ( hadith OR hadis OR hadits OR ( "hadith text" ) OR matan OR matn AND criticism OR analysis OR study OR evaluation OR authentication OR review ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( DOCTYPE , "ar" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( SRCTYPE , "j" ) )
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**Table 2: The Selection Criterion Is Searching**

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Language	English, Turkish, Malay, Arabic, Indonesian, Spanish, Persian, Chinese	-
Time line	1970 – 2025	< 1970
Document type	Journal (Article)	Conference, Book, Review
Publication Stage	Final	-

## Data Analysis

VOSviewer is a user-friendly bibliometric analysis tool developed by Nees Jan van Eck and Ludo Waltman at Leiden University, Netherlands (van Eck & Waltman, 2010, 2017). It is widely used for visualizing and interpreting scientific literature through the construction of intuitive network maps, the clustering of related elements, and the generation of density visualizations. The software supports a range of analyses, including co-authorship, co-citation, and keyword co-occurrence networks, enabling researchers to gain a holistic view of scholarly landscapes. With its interactive interface and ongoing updates, VOSviewer facilitates the efficient exploration of large-scale bibliometric datasets. Its ability to compute key metrics, produce customizable visual outputs, and integrate with various data sources makes it an essential tool for scholars aiming to uncover patterns and trends within complex research domains.

VOSviewer stands out for its ability to convert complex bibliometric data into visually accessible maps and charts. Specializing in network visualization, the software effectively clusters related items, analyzes keyword co-occurrence, and produces informative density maps. Its intuitive interface caters to both novice and experienced researchers, facilitating efficient exploration of research landscapes. Ongoing development keeps VOSviewer at the forefront of bibliometric tools, offering robust metric computations and customizable visual outputs. Its flexibility in handling various types of bibliometric data such as co-authorship and citation networks makes VOSviewer a highly versatile and essential resource for scholars aiming to gain deeper and more meaningful insights into their fields of study

Datasets comprising information on the publication year, title, author name, journal, citation, and keywords in PlainText format were procured from the Scopus database, spanning the period from 2004 to December 2024. These datasets were then analyzed using VOSviewer software version 1.6.19. Through the application of VOS clustering and mapping techniques, this software facilitated the examination and generation of maps. Offering an alternative to the Multidimensional Scaling (MDS) approach, VOSViewer focuses on situating items within low-dimensional spaces, ensuring that the proximity between any two items accurately reflects their relatedness and similarity (van Eck & Waltman, 2010). In this respect, VOSViewer shares a similarity with the MDS approach (Appio et al., 2014). Diverging from MDS, which primarily engages in the computation of similarity metrics like cosine and Jaccard indices, VOS utilizes a more fitting method for normalizing co-occurrence frequencies such as, the associatio strength ( $AS_{ij}$ ) and it is calculated as (Van Eck & Waltman, 2007):

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

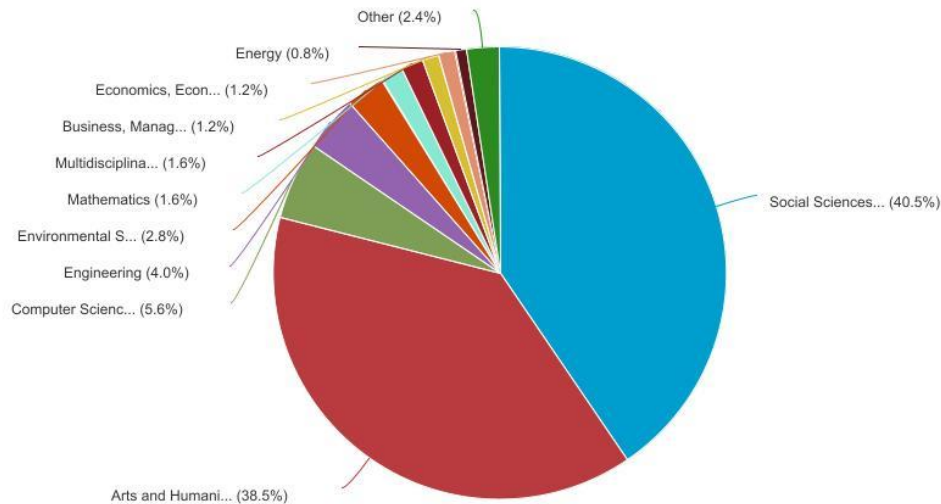
which is “proportional to the ratio between on the one hand the observed number of cooccurrences of i and j and on the other hand the expected number of co-occurrences of i and j under the assumption that co-occurrences of i and j are statistically independent” (Van Eck & Waltman, 2007).

## Findings

*What Is the Overall Influence and Research Productivity Within This Topic, And Which Subject Areas Are Most Prominent?*

Documents by subject area

Scopus



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**Figure 1: Documents by Subject Area**

Source: Scopus Database

**Table 3: Documents by Subject Area**

Subject Area	Number Of Documents	Percentage %
Social Sciences	102	40.47
Arts And Humanities	97	38.49
Computer Science	14	5.55
Engineering	10	3.96
Environmental Science	7	2.77
Mathematics	4	1.58
Multidisciplinary	4	1.58
Business, Management And Accounting	3	1.19
Economics, Econometrics And Finance	3	1.19
Energy	2	0.79
Agricultural And Biological Sciences	1	0.39
Biochemistry, Genetics And Molecular Biology	1	0.39
Chemical Engineering	1	0.39
Dentistry	1	0.39
Earth And Planetary Sciences	1	0.39
Psychology	1	0.39
Total	252	100

Source: Scopus Database



The bibliometric analysis reveals that the majority of research output in Hadith text criticism is concentrated within the **Social Sciences (40.47%)** and **Arts and Humanities (38.49%)**, collectively accounting for nearly 79% of all publications. This distribution reflects the inherently interdisciplinary nature of Hadith studies, which often require engagement with historical, linguistic, and sociocultural perspectives. The prominence of these two subject areas also suggests that Hadith criticism is still primarily anchored in traditional Islamic scholarship and humanistic approaches, such as textual analysis, historical verification, and hermeneutics. The increasing presence of Social Sciences indicates a growing trend of contextualising Hadith studies within contemporary social frameworks.

This trend can be attributed to the foundational nature of Hadith studies in Islamic tradition, where the methods of sanad (chain of transmission) and matan (content) analysis have long been grounded in historical, linguistic, and theological inquiry. As modern academic institutions adopt these classical studies into structured programs, they are naturally situated within faculties of Islamic studies, social sciences, and the humanities. Additionally, the interpretive nature of Hadith criticism aligns more closely with qualitative research paradigms, which dominate these subject areas. The shift towards contextualising Hadith in social settings such as in ethics, law, and cultural practices has further solidified its position in these disciplines.

Beyond the dominant fields, there is a noticeable but limited presence of technical and scientific disciplines. **Computer Science (5.55%)**, **Engineering (3.96%)**, and **Environmental Science (2.77%)** suggest emerging applications of digital tools, such as computational linguistics, AI-based authentication, or semantic analysis in Hadith research. The appearance of disciplines like **Mathematics**, **Psychology**, and **Dentistry**, albeit minimal, may indicate experimental or interdisciplinary overlaps, possibly in data modelling or cognitive approaches to textual understanding. However, their low percentages show that the integration of Hadith criticism into STEM fields remains nascent. This data indicates a promising avenue for future cross-disciplinary research that could enhance both the analytical depth and accessibility of Hadith studies.

### ***Which Articles Have Received the Highest Number of Citations, Indicating Their Impact and Significance in the Field?***

**Table 4: Top Ten Most-Cited Publications in Hadith Scholarship**

Authors	Title	Year	Source title	Cited by
Brown J.A.C.(Brown, 2008)	How we know early hadīth critics did matn criticism and why it's so hard to find	2008	Islamic Law and Society	49
Lucas S.C. Azmi A.M.; Al-Qabbany A.O.; Hussain A.(Lucas, 2008)	Where are the legal hadīth? A study of the Musannaf of Ibn Abī Shayba	2008	Islamic Law and Society	35
	Computational and natural language processing-based studies of hadith literature: A survey	2019	Artificial Intelligence Review	33

Kister M.J.(Kister, 1970)	'A bag of meat' : A study of an early hadīth	1970	Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies	25
Sumsion J.(Sumsion, 2003)	'Bad days don't kill you; They just make you stronger': A case study of an early childhood educator's resilience; [Les mauvais jours ne vous tuent pas; Ils vous rendent plus fort': Une étude de cas sur la re'sistance d'un e'ducateur de la petite enfance]; ['Los Días Malos no Matan; Acaban por Hacerlo más Fuerte a Uno': Un caso de estudio sobre la resistencia de un educador de la primera infancia]	2003	Internationa l Journal of Early Years Education	24
Brown J.A.C.(Brown, 2008)	The rules of matn criticism: There are no rules	2012	Islamic Law and Society	22
Hansu H.(Hansu, 2009)	Notes on the term mutawātir and its reception in hadīth criticism	2009	Islamic Law and Society Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research	17
Tlemsani I.; Marir F.; Majdalawieh M.(Tlemsani et al., 2020)	Screening of Murabaha business process through Quran and hadith: a text mining analysis	2020		17
Yusoff Y.; Ismail R.; Hassan Z.(Yusoff et al., 2010)	Adopting hadith verification techniques in to digital evidence authentication	2010	Journal of Computer Science	16
Melhim M.H.A.; Al- Shurman Y.M.; Zainelabdin F.A.; Rabab'a Y.A.; Bani Saeed R.A.; Rababah M.A.(Melhim et al., 2023)	ISIS' Miscontextualization of Hadīth through the Strategic Linguistic Propaganda: A Socio- political Analysis	2023	Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization	12

Source: Scopus Database



The top 10 most cited articles reveal a strong scholarly interest in both traditional and modern approaches to *Hadīth* studies. Articles by Brown (2008, 2012) and Lucas (2008), all published in *Islamic Law and Society*, lead the citation count, reflecting the significance of methodological studies in classical *Hadīth* criticism, particularly surrounding *matn* (content) analysis and the legal relevance of early collections. Kister's 1970 article remains influential despite its age, underscoring the enduring value of foundational historical analyses. Collectively, these works demonstrate that critical engagement with early *Hadīth* texts continues to be central to the field, especially in legal and historical contexts.

This trend can be explained by the academic need to revisit and reinterpret classical *Hadīth* methodologies in light of both historical developments and contemporary scholarly standards. Researchers frequently cite foundational works like those of Brown, Lucas, and Kister because they provide deep analytical frameworks that are still relevant for understanding textual integrity and legal utility in *Hadīth* literature. Their emphasis on *matn* criticism, a less explored but essential component in early scholarship, offers critical insights that continue to shape modern debates on authenticity and interpretation. The high citation count reflects the continued relevance of these methodological contributions across multiple subfields of Islamic studies.

At the same time, the list shows an emerging trend of interdisciplinary research, particularly involving computational methods and socio-political analysis. Azmi et al.'s (2019) survey on NLP based studies and Tlemsani et al.'s (2020) text mining of *murabaha* processes reflect a growing integration of AI and data science into Islamic studies. Additionally, more recent works like Melhim et al. (2023) examine the manipulation of *Hadīth* in contemporary contexts, highlighting the relevance of *Hadīth* in modern political discourse. This shift suggests a diversification of research focus from classical textual criticism to digital authentication and ideological critique marking an expansion in both the scope and tools of *Hadīth* scholarship.

### ***Which Are the Top 10 Countries Ranked by The Number of Publications Related to This Topic?***

**Table 5: Top 10 Countries by Number of Publications on Hadith Studies**

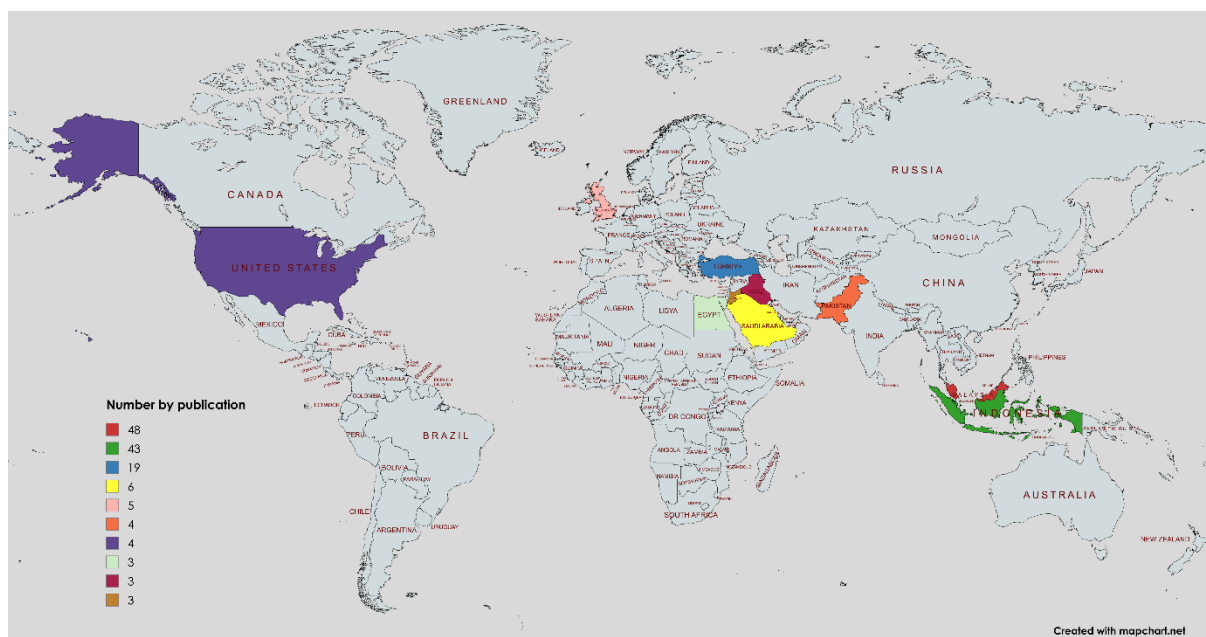
Country/Territory	Number of Publication	Percentage %
Malaysia	48	32.2
Indonesia	43	28.8
Turkey	19	12.7
Saudi Arabia	6	4.0
United Kingdom	5	3.3
Pakistan	4	2.6
United States	4	2.6
Egypt	3	2.0
Iraq	3	2.0
Jordan	3	2.0

Source: Scopus Database

The data shows that Malaysia and Indonesia are the leading contributors to hadith-related research, accounting for a combined **61%** of the total publications. Malaysia holds the top spot with **48 publications (32.2%)**, followed closely by Indonesia with **43 publications (28.8%)**. This dominance reflects strong institutional and scholarly interest in Islamic studies within Southeast Asia, possibly driven by government support, academic funding, and integration of Islamic scholarship into national education systems. Turkey, in third place with **19 publications (12.7%)**, also demonstrates a solid research presence, likely supported by its historical and academic engagement with Islamic tradition.

This trend can be explained by the increasing formalization of Islamic studies in Southeast Asia, where universities in Malaysia and Indonesia have actively incorporated Hadith studies into their curricula at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The establishment of dedicated research centres, Islamic research grants, and publication incentives has also encouraged a surge in scholarly output in this field. Furthermore, the integration of Islamic knowledge with modern research methodologies such as bibliometric analysis has enabled academics in these countries to produce research that aligns with both traditional scholarship and contemporary academic standards. These factors collectively position Malaysia and Indonesia as emerging leaders in global Hadith scholarship.

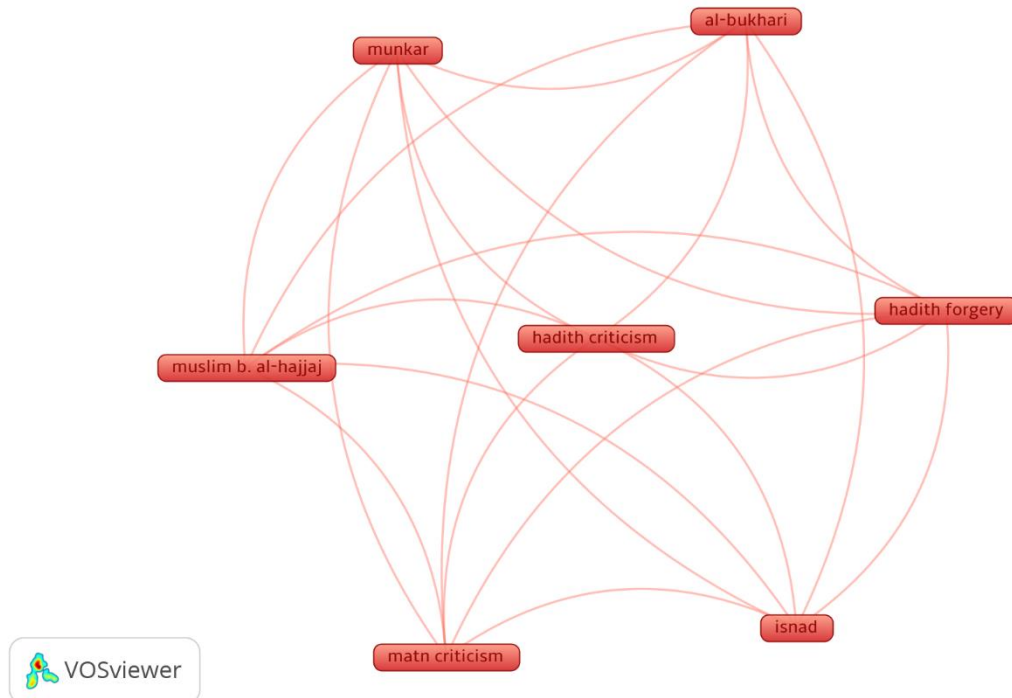
In contrast, countries traditionally associated with classical Islamic scholarship such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Iraq show relatively lower publication numbers, each contributing less than 5% individually. Western countries like the United Kingdom and the United States appear modestly with **5 and 4 publications respectively**, suggesting limited but meaningful involvement in the field, possibly through interdisciplinary or historical approaches. The overall distribution highlights a geographical shift where Southeast Asia emerges as a central hub for contemporary *Hadith* research, while contributions from the Middle East and the West remain present but less prominent.



**Figure 2: Top 10 Countries by Number of Publications on Hadith Studies**

Source: mapchart.net

### *What Are the Most Frequently Used Keywords and Themes That Characterize This Research Area?*



**Figure 3: Main Themes and Keywords in Hadith Criticism**

Source: VOSviewer

The keyword co-occurrence map generated using VOSviewer provides a clear representation of the central themes in contemporary Hadith text criticism. At the heart of this network is the term “*hadith criticism*”, which is strongly associated with related concepts such as “*isnad*”, “*matn criticism*”, and “*hadith forgery*”. This pattern underscores the scholarly emphasis on a comprehensive approach that evaluates both the transmission chain and the textual integrity of Hadiths. The presence of the term “*munkar*” further reflects a focus on identifying and categorizing weak or disputed narrations within the tradition.

Prominent classical scholars such as al-Bukhari and Muslim bin al-Hajjaj also feature prominently within the network, highlighting the continued relevance of their methodologies in present-day Hadith scholarship. Their strong connections to keywords like “*hadith forgery*” and “*matn criticism*” indicate that current academic discourse remains deeply rooted in foundational texts, while simultaneously engaging with modern critical perspectives on authenticity and reliability.

In summary, the network illustrates a complex and interconnected research landscape, characterized by both traditional continuity and evolving analytical approaches. The frequent co-occurrence of keywords points to an interdisciplinary trend that merges classical Islamic scholarship with contemporary textual analysis. This suggests a maturing field that not only preserves its foundational frameworks but also adapts to address broader historical, theological, and methodological questions within Hadith studies.

### *What Are the Patterns of International Collaboration, Particularly Co-Authorship Networks, Based on Countries?*



**Figure 4: Mapping Global Research Collaboration in Hadith Scholarship**

Source: *VOSviewer*

The VOSviewer visualization depicting patterns of international collaboration in Hadith text criticism highlights significant disparities in global scholarly engagement. The United States emerges as the most prominent and centrally positioned node, indicating its substantial involvement in international co-authorship and academic partnerships within this field. Its central placement and larger node size suggest that U.S.-based researchers have established broader and more frequent collaborative connections compared to counterparts from other countries.

In contrast, countries such as Malaysia, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Jordan, and Australia are represented as smaller, isolated nodes, reflecting limited engagement in international co-authorship networks. Despite their cultural and academic relevance to Islamic scholarship, particularly in the study of Hadith, these countries appear to operate more independently, with minimal visible collaboration among each other or with leading contributors such as the United States. This pattern underscores a fragmented research landscape and a lack of cohesive global integration in Hadith-related academic discourse.

The absence of strong interconnections among institutions in Muslim-majority countries points to an underutilized potential for regional and international cooperation. Enhancing cross-national collaborations, particularly among countries with deep-rooted Islamic traditions, could lead to more inclusive and representative scholarship. Promoting such partnerships would not only enrich methodological diversity but also help balance the scholarly influence currently

concentrated in Western academic institutions, thereby contributing to a more globally connected research community in Hadith studies.

## Conclusion

This study aimed to map the scholarly landscape of Hadith text criticism by examining publication trends, thematic focus, citation impact, and patterns of international collaboration through bibliometric methods. The primary objective was to identify the extent of research productivity, key subject areas, influential works, dominant keywords, and collaborative networks within this field. By analyzing 149 articles indexed in the Scopus database between 1970 and 2025, the study offers a comprehensive overview of the intellectual development and emerging directions in Hadith criticism.

The analysis revealed that most research is concentrated in the Social Sciences (40.47%) and Arts and Humanities (38.49%), confirming the field's grounding in classical Islamic scholarship and humanistic inquiry. A smaller but growing body of literature engages with computational approaches and interdisciplinary applications, indicating the field's gradual expansion into digital and applied contexts. Citation data highlighted key contributions from scholars working on matn criticism, legal hadith evaluation, and more recently, computational and socio-political analyses. Malaysia and Indonesia led in publication output, signaling Southeast Asia's growing role in Islamic studies. However, patterns of co-authorship showed limited international collaboration, particularly among Muslim-majority countries, with the United States emerging as the most connected node in global academic networks.

Based on these findings, several practical directions are recommended. Academic institutions should prioritize the development of interdisciplinary research platforms that integrate classical Islamic studies with emerging technologies such as AI, text mining, and digital humanities. Efforts should also be made to strengthen international collaborations, especially among scholars from Muslim-majority countries, through joint conferences, co-authored publications, and research consortia. Furthermore, curriculum designers could incorporate modules on digital methods and bibliometric analysis in Islamic studies programs to equip students with modern tools for Hadith research. Greater inclusion of underrepresented regions and themes such as Hadith's implications in science, economics, and psychology can also enrich the field's diversity and global relevance.

The study contributes to Hadith research by providing a structured, data-driven understanding of how the field has evolved, where scholarly energy is concentrated, and which areas remain underexplored. These findings may inform institutional priorities, curriculum design, and future academic projects. Nevertheless, the research is limited by its reliance on a single database and exclusion of non-English and non-indexed literature. Future studies may benefit from including additional sources and qualitative assessments to capture deeper scholarly nuances. In conclusion, bibliometric analysis has proven to be a valuable tool for uncovering structural patterns and guiding scholarly attention in Hadith studies, promoting further academic engagement and interdisciplinary collaboration in this essential area of Islamic knowledge.



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