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MAPPING RESEARCH TREND ON WILLINGNESS TO CONTRIBUTE TO EDUCATIONAL WAQF FUNDS IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION: A BIBLIOMETRIC STUDY

Nor' Azurah Md Kamdari^{1*}, Mohamad I'sa Abd Jalil², Mohd Rahimie Abd Karim³

¹Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi Mara Kampus Rembau, Cawangan Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

 noraz013@uitm.edu.my


 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5170-8891>


²Faculty of Business Economics and Accountancy, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Malaysia

 isa@ums.edu.my

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3891-8418>

³Faculty of Business Economics and Accountancy, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Malaysia

 rahimie@ums.edu.my

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-1380-8044>

*Corresponding Author

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Abstract:

Educational waqf has emerged as a strategic instrument for financing higher education, particularly in response to declining public funding and increasing institutional costs. Despite the growing attention to waqf within Islamic social finance, studies on individuals' willingness to contribute to educational waqf funds remain fragmented, with limited integration of research trends, thematic development, and collaboration patterns. This study seeks to systematically chart the development and intellectual architecture of studies concerning willingness to contribute to educational waqf in higher education institutions. A bibliometric approach was employed using Scopus as the primary data source. An advanced search approach centered on the keyword "educational waqf" was implemented, yielding a final corpus of 140 peer-reviewed journal articles spanning the period from 2008 to 2026. The dataset underwent preprocessing and cleansing through OpenRefine, whereas descriptive statistical examination was executed via Scopus Analyzer. Subsequent network mapping and co-occurrence investigations were conducted with VOSviewer to delineate thematic clusters and interconnections within the literature. The results demonstrate a marked escalation in publication output, especially after 2020, reaching its highest point in 2025, which reflects a growing academic focus on educational waqf as a sustainable financing mechanism. Citation analysis highlights a concentration of influential studies in areas such as Islamic finance, socio-economic development, and higher education funding. Keyword co-occurrence results identify dominant themes including waqf, Islamic

finance, and higher education, alongside emerging topics such as cash waqf, philanthropy, and sustainable development. Additionally, country-level collaboration analysis indicates that Malaysia, as well as Indonesia, emerges as the most prominent contributors, each supported by robust and well-established research networks. In general, the findings suggest that research on educational waqf is progressively developing into a dynamic and cross-disciplinary domain, and future studies should emphasize broader geographical coverage, longitudinal approaches, and deeper integration of behavioral and financial perspectives.

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Keyword:

Education Waqf, Education Waqf fund, Higher Education Institution



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Introduction

Educational waqf has resurfaced as a strategic instrument to finance higher education amid declining public budgets and rising study costs. Empirical and bibliometric studies show a rapid expansion of waqf and wider Islamic social finance research, with education consistently highlighted as a key beneficiary sector (Aldeen, 2021; Alshater et al., 2021; Aziz & Noh, 2019; Mahat et al., 2025). Within this landscape, willingness and intention to contribute to educational waqf funds, especially in higher education institutions, have become a central research focus, both conceptually and empirically.

Across higher education settings, most studies build on behavioural and philanthropic theories to identify psychosocial and socio-economic drivers of waqf giving. Drawing on the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), studies conducted within Malaysian polytechnics as well as a public university consistently indicate that attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control serve as significant determinants of individuals' intentions to contribute to education waqf funds (Akhter et al., 2023; Nor et al., 2023; Khadijah et al., 2017). Religiosity regularly appears as a strong motivational factor, shaping positive attitudes and commitment toward waqf-based educational support among staff, students, and young working adults. Other determinants include understanding or knowledge of waqf, social culture, altruism, personal satisfaction, and marketing or communication methods, which show mixed significance across contexts (Mohamed & Akande, 2025; N et al., 2025; Huda et al., 2023; Juliana et al., 2024). Socio-economic variables income, debt level, and prior experience with waqf also influence willingness to donate, with higher income and lower debt associated with greater contribution propensity in educational waqf schemes (Al-Daihani, 2021; Juliana et al., 2024). These findings underscore that willingness to contribute is multidimensional, integrating faith, social influence, financial capacity, and informational factors.

Emerging Directions: New Segments, Instruments, and Thematic Extensions

Recent empirical work extends the focus beyond traditional donor groups and conventional waqf types. Studies of students and millennial generations explore cash waqf and specialized schemes, such as institutional cash waqf accounts and green waqf, revealing that financial attitudes, waqf literacy, and environmental concern can shape intentions alongside religiosity and education level (Hassama & Ismail, 2024; Juliana et al., 2024; Anggara & Faradisi, 2025). In higher education-linked contexts, philanthropic commitment traits among young working adults show altruism, religiosity, as well as personal satisfaction function as principal explanatory drivers behind the continuity of waqf dedication directed toward university funding (Daud et al., 2025). Alumni of private higher education institutions also display significant roles for altruism and trust rather than knowledge alone in shaping endowment or waqf intentions (Latif et al., 2022). Cross-country evidence from Thailand and Kuwait indicates that income, debt burden, and organizational context interact with religiosity and TPB constructs to influence willingness to support Islamic schools and higher education via waqf (Al-Daihani, 2021; Khadijah et al., 2017). Collectively, these studies suggest that research trends are moving toward nuanced segmentation (students, staff, alumni, millennials), innovative instruments (cash waqf, educational endowment, green waqf), and integrated models that combine psychological, socio-economic, and institutional factors.

The literature shows that educational waqf in higher education has become an important but still specialized area within waqf and Islamic philanthropy research. Empirical studies consistently indicate that intention and willingness to contribute are shaped by religiosity, social influence, perceived control, altruism, and financial and informational factors, while bibliometric analyses document a geographically concentrated yet rapidly growing body of work around waqf, education, and social finance (Aziz & Noh, 2019; Al-Daihani, 2021; Akhter et al., 2023; Aldeen, 2021). However, existing studies are often cross-sectional, focused on single institutions or countries, and rarely integrated with advanced bibliometric mapping of donor behavior themes. For a study titled “Mapping Research Trend on Willingness to Contribute to Educational Waqf Funds in Higher Education Institution,” these gaps justify a combined bibliometric and content-analytic approach to trace how determinants of willingness have been conceptualized, which populations and regions have been studied, and where theoretical and empirical blind spots remain. Such work can conclude by positioning educational waqf not only as a financial alternative for higher education, but also as a research field in need of broader geographical coverage, longitudinal designs, and deeper integration between behavioral models and the evolving international discourse on Islamic social finance as well as sustainable development.

Research Question

1. How has the annual publication output on educational waqf developed and changed between 2008 and 2026?
2. Which articles are the most influential in educational waqf research, as measured by citation impact?
3. What are the dominant and emerging research themes of educational waqf based on keyword co-occurrence analysis?
4. What are the patterns of international research collaboration in educational waqf, as revealed through country-level co-authorship networks?

Methodology

Bibliometric analysis refers to the structured process of gathering, arranging, and scrutinizing bibliographic information extracted from academic literature (Alves et al., 2021; Assyakur & Rosa, 2022; Verbeek et al., 2002). In addition to conventional descriptive measures such as publication venues, chronological publication patterns, and prominent contributing authors, bibliometric methodologies further extend to sophisticated analytical procedures, including co-citation analysis at the document level (Wu & Wu, 2017). Conducting a comprehensive literature review necessitates an iterative and systematic workflow that involves meticulous keyword determination, exhaustive database querying, and thorough interpretive assessment. Such a structured approach supports the construction of a well-founded literature base and strengthens the dependability of the resultant insights (Fahimnia et al., 2015). In line with this, the current investigation prioritizes publications of high scholarly impact, given that these works offer meaningful contributions to the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings of the research field (Al-Khoury et al., 2022; di Stefano et al., 2010; Khiste & Paithankar, 2017). To safeguard data precision and uniformity, the Scopus database served as the principal repository for data extraction. Moreover, to preserve academic rigor, the dataset was restricted exclusively to peer-reviewed journal articles, with books and lecture notes deliberately omitted (Gu et al., 2019). Leveraging Scopus, which is widely acknowledged for its extensive indexing coverage, relevant publications spanning from 2008 through December 2026 were retrieved for further analysis.

Data Search Strategy

The data acquisition procedure for this bibliometric investigation was carried out through the Scopus database by implementing a well-defined and reproducible search framework. As indicated in Table 1, the search string *TITLE-ABS-KEY (education waqf)* was utilized to identify and retrieve pertinent scholarly works containing the designated keywords across the title, abstract, and keyword metadata fields. In order to improve the precision and topical alignment of the resulting records, the search was subsequently narrowed by confining the subject classifications to Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, as well as Business, Management and Accounting. Furthermore, the retrieval was restricted to publications in the English language to ensure consistency in interpretation and analysis. This systematic query yielded a sum of 140 documents, which constituted the initial dataset subjected to further screening and analysis.

Subsequently, a screening process was implemented based on the selection criteria outlined in Table 2 to guarantee that only studies of strong quality and appropriate contextual relevance were included. The inclusion criteria comprised publications written in English and categorized within the specified subject areas, while non-English documents and studies outside these domains were excluded. This filtering approach was essential to maintain the thematic focus and methodological rigor of the study, particularly given the interdisciplinary nature of waqf research within education. By applying these clearly defined criteria, the research safeguards the consistency, reliability, as well as academic relevance of the concluding dataset utilized for bibliometric analysis.

Table 1: The Search String

Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY (education waqf) AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , “SOCI”) OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , “ARTS”) OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , “BUSI”)) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , “English”))
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Table 2: The Selection Criterion is Searching

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Language	English	Non-English
Subject	Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities, Business, Management and Accounting	Others
Timeline	2008 – 2026	<2008

Data Analysis

VOSviewer is a broadly utilized and highly accessible instrument for bibliometric examination, created by Nees Jan van Eck and Ludo Waltman at Leiden University (van Eck & Waltman, 2010, 2017). This software is purpose-built to support the mapping and interrogation of scientific publications, providing sophisticated capabilities for generating network visualizations, grouping interconnected items into clusters, and producing density-based graphical representations. Its flexible design allows for the investigation of multiple forms of bibliometric relationships, such as co-authorship patterns, co-citation linkages, and keyword co-occurrence structures, thereby enabling an extensive and multidimensional understanding of scholarly domains. Equipped with an interactive user interface alongside ongoing developmental updates, VOSviewer improves both the effectiveness and scalability of large-scale bibliometric investigations. In addition, its functionality for calculating bibliometric metrics, tailoring visual representations, and merging datasets from various sources further strengthens its status as a powerful and dependable tool within academic research contexts.

A principal advantage of VOSviewer is its capacity to convert intricate bibliometric datasets into visually coherent and readily interpretable representations. The tool is particularly proficient in conducting network-oriented analyses, especially in grouping interconnected elements, detecting patterns of keyword co-occurrence, and generating density-based visualisations. Its user-friendly interface is designed to support both early-stage and advanced researchers, enabling efficient comprehension of shifting research trajectories. Ongoing enhancements also keep VOSviewer at the leading edge of bibliometric mapping, providing flexible analytical functions applicable to diverse data frameworks, including co-authorship structures and citation networks.

In this study, bibliographic records consisting of publication year, article title, author names, source journals, citation frequencies, and keywords were extracted in PlainText format from the Scopus database, encompassing publications from 2008 through December 2026. The resulting dataset was then processed using VOSviewer version 1.6.20. By applying VOS mapping and clustering procedures, the software facilitated the generation and analysis of bibliometric network structures. As an alternative to Multidimensional Scaling (MDS),

VOSviewer adopts a mapping strategy that places items within a low-dimensional representation, where inter-item distances correspond to the intensity of their relationships (van Eck & Waltman, 2010). While this approach is conceptually aligned with MDS (Appio et al., 2014), the VOS methodology is distinguished by its underlying normalization framework, which is specifically designed for co-occurrence data through measures such as association strength, (AS_{ij}), defined as follows (Van Eck & Waltman, 2007):

$$AS_{ij} = \frac{C_{ij}}{W_i W_j}$$

which is described as being “proportional to the ratio between on the one hand the observed number of co-occurrences 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).

Result and Discussion

There are 4 research questions being discussed in this section.

RQ1: How Has The Annual Publication Output On Educational Waqf Developed And Changed Between 2008 And 2026?

The publication trend indicates a relatively slow development of research on willingness to contribute to educational waqf funds in the early years, followed by a notable acceleration in recent periods. Based on **Table 3** and **Figure 1** between 2014 and 2016, the number of publications remained minimal, reflecting limited scholarly attention and possibly a lack of structured frameworks or empirical data in this niche area. A gradual increase began in 2017, with 15 publications (10.71%), suggesting growing academic interest, likely driven by increased awareness of alternative financing mechanisms in higher education. However, this growth was not entirely consistent, as fluctuations were observed between 2018 and 2020. This inconsistency may be attributed to the emerging nature of the field, where research agendas were still being shaped and integrated across disciplines such as economics, management, and social sciences.

A more pronounced upward trend is evident from 2021 onwards, peaking significantly in 2025 with 30 publications (21.43%), followed by 2024 with 19 publications (13.57%). This surge reflects a heightened global and regional emphasis on sustainable education financing, particularly in the context of post-pandemic recovery, where higher education institutions faced financial constraints and began exploring philanthropic instruments such as waqf. The increasing relevance of behavioral theories, such as willingness and intention to contribute, has also contributed to expanding research in this domain. Additionally, improved data accessibility and the growing adoption of quantitative and bibliometric methods may have facilitated more publications. The slight decline in 2026 is most plausibly attributable to the fact that the year's records have not yet been fully indexed, rather than reflecting a genuine reduction in research output. Taken as a whole, the trend demonstrates a transition from a nascent research area to a rapidly expanding field with strong contemporary relevance.

Table 3: Annual Distribution of Publications on Educational Waqf Funds (2008–2026)

Year	No. of Publication	Percentage (%)
2026	3	2.14
2025	30	21.43
2024	19	13.57
2023	9	6.43
2022	13	9.29
2021	16	11.43
2020	9	6.43
2019	9	6.43
2018	5	3.57
2017	15	10.71
2016	1	0.71
2015	2	1.43
2014	1	0.71
2013	3	2.14
2012	1	0.71
2011	1	0.71
2010	2	1.43
2008	1	0.71

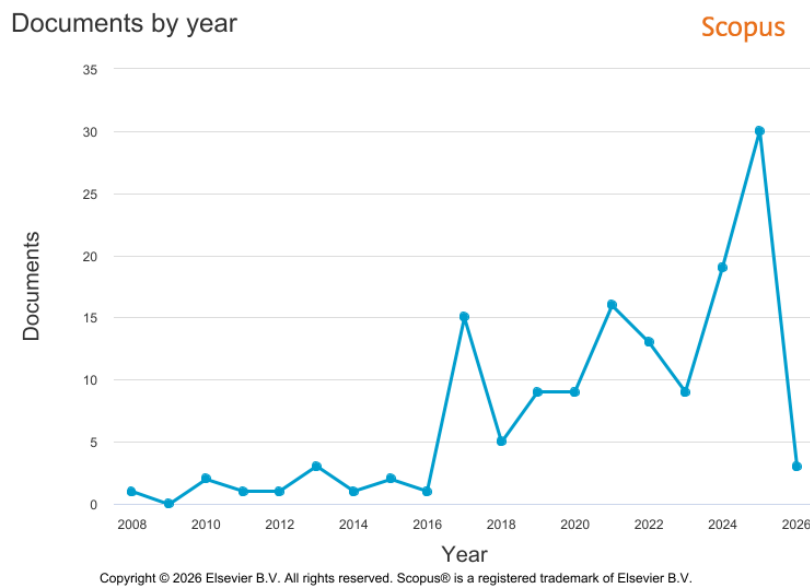


Figure 1: Annual Publication Trends in Educational Waqf Studies Indexed in Scopus (2008–2026)

RQ2: Which Articles Are The Most Influential In Educational Waqf Research, As Measured By Citation Impact?**Table 4: Most Cited Author**

No	Authors	Title	Year	Source title	Cited by
1	Ismail Abdel Mohsin (2013)	Financing through cash-waqf: a revitalization to finance different needs	2013	International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management	123
2	Razak (2020)	Zakat and waqf as instruments of Islamic wealth in poverty alleviation and redistribution: Case of Malaysia	2020	International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy	69
3	Rahman & Dean (2013)	Challenges and solutions in Islamic microfinance	2013	Humanomics	56
4	Mahamood & Ab Rahman. (2015)	Financing Universities Through Waqf, Pious Endowment: Is It Possible?	2015	Humanomics	40
5	Mohd Thas Thaker et al. (2020)	Cash Waqf Model For Micro Enterprises' Human Capital Development	2020	ISRA International Journal of Islamic Finance	37
6	Ghazaleh (2011)	Held in Trust: Waqf In The Islamic World	2011	Held in Trust: Waqf In The Islamic World	31
7	Zarkasyi (2020)	Imam Zarkasyi's Modernization Of Pesantren In Indonesia: (A Case Study Of Darussalam Gontor)	2020	Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies	31
8	Abu Talib et al. (2020)	An Institutional Perspective For Research In Waqf Accounting And Reporting: A Case Study Of Terengganu State Islamic Religious Council In Malaysia	2020	Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research	29

9	Yasin et al. (2023)	Waqf And Sustainable Development Law: Models Of Waqf Institutions In The Kingdom Of Saudi Arabia And Indonesia	2023	Ijtihad: Jurnal Wacana Hukum Islam dan Kemanusiaan	27
10	Medias et al. (2021)	A Systematic Literature Review On The Socio-Economic Roles Of Waqf: Evidence From Organization Of The Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Countries	2021	Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research	27

Table 4 presents the top 10 most cited articles in the domain, revealing a strong concentration of influential studies within themes of Islamic finance, socio-economic development, and institutional frameworks of waqf. The most highly cited article is by Ismail Abdel Mohsin (2013), with 123 citations, emphasizing cash waqf as a revitalized financial instrument, followed by Razak (2020) with 69 citations on zakat and waqf in poverty alleviation. This pattern indicates that studies linking waqf to broader economic and social outcomes tend to attract closer scholarly attention, as they offer practical and policy-relevant implications. Additionally, articles published in established journals such as the *International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management*, *Humanomics*, and *Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research* demonstrate higher citation impact, suggesting that journal reputation and indexing visibility significantly influence citation performance. Older publications, such as those from 2013 and 2015, also show higher citation counts, reflecting the cumulative advantage effect, where earlier works have had more time to be recognized and cited within the academic community.

Furthermore, **Table 4** highlights that recent publications (e.g., 2020–2023) are also gaining traction, although their citation counts remain comparatively lower due to limited exposure time. Thematically, highly cited studies tend to focus on applied and interdisciplinary aspects of waqf, including microfinance, human capital development, and higher education financing. For instance, the work by Mohd Thas Thaker et al. (2020) on cash waqf for micro-enterprises and Mahamood and Ab Rahman (2015) on university financing through waqf reflect growing interest in integrating waqf into contemporary economic systems. This suggests that the relevance and applicability of research topics play a critical role in driving citations. In contrast, more niche or context-specific studies, such as case-based institutional analyses, tend to receive moderate citations. Overall, the findings from **Table 4** suggest that influential work within this field is distinguished by strong theoretical contributions combined with practical relevance, interdisciplinary scope, and publication in high-visibility academic outlets.

RQ3: What Are The Dominant And Emerging Research Themes In Educational Waqf Based On Keyword Co-Occurrence Analysis?

Figure 2 presents the keyword co-occurrence network generated using VOSviewer, highlighting the intellectual structure of research on educational waqf. The keyword “waqf” emerges as the most dominant term, exhibiting the greatest frequency and strongest link

strength, which underscores its pivotal position as the core theme connecting various research streams. This is followed by closely related terms such as “Islamic finance,” “cash waqf,” “higher education,” and “sustainable development goals,” which form the primary clusters within the network. The strong co-occurrence of these keywords suggests that contemporary studies increasingly position waqf within broader financial and developmental frameworks, particularly linking it to sustainable financing mechanisms and institutional applications in higher education. The presence of “endowment” and “Islamic social finance” further reinforces the conceptual overlap between traditional philanthropic instruments and modern financial systems, indicating an ongoing integration of religious-based financing into mainstream academic discourse.

Moreover, **Figure 2** reveals the emergence of interdisciplinary and application-oriented themes, as evidenced by keywords such as “Islamic microfinance,” “philanthropy,” “social welfare,” and “zakat.” These terms indicate that waqf research is not confined to theoretical discussions but is increasingly associated with socio-economic development goals as well as poverty reduction initiatives. The emergence of governance-oriented terminology, including phrases like “waqf management” as well as “educational administration,” suggests a growing focus on institutional efficiency and effectiveness, which is critical for enhancing donor willingness and fund sustainability. Additionally, the linkage between “higher education” and “financing” highlights the rising importance of waqf as an alternative funding source for universities. Overall, the network structure demonstrates a shift from traditional religious discourse toward a more integrated, policy-relevant, and impact-driven research agenda, where waqf is positioned as a strategic tool for achieving broader developmental objectives.

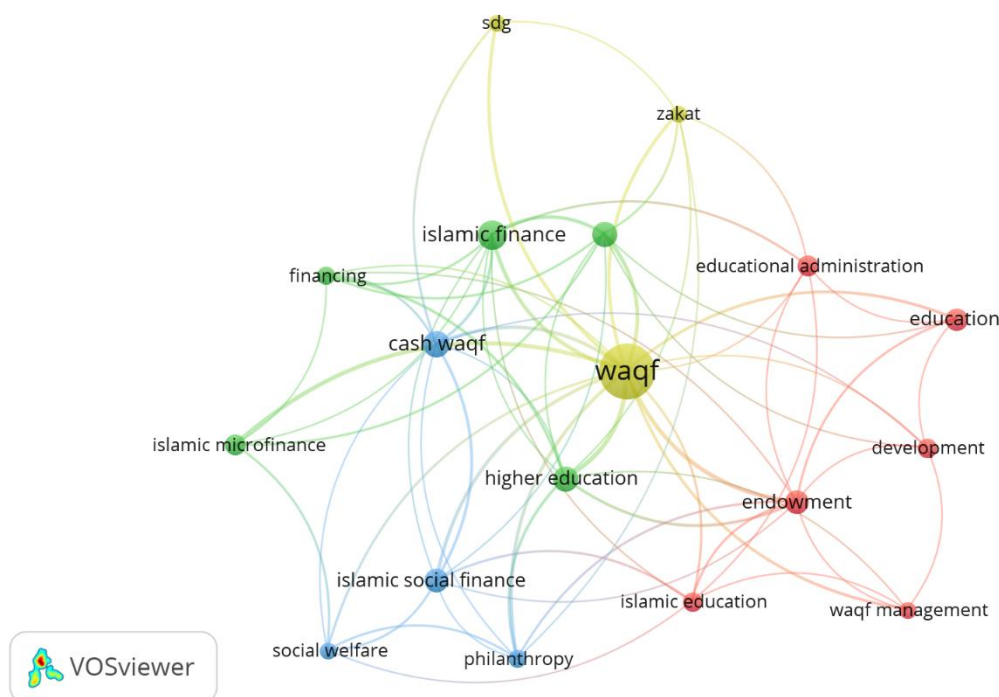


Figure 2: Network Visualization Map Of Keywords' Co-Occurrence

RQ4: What Are The Patterns Of International Research Collaboration In Educational Waqf, As Revealed Through Country-Level Co-Authorship Networks?

Figure 3 presents the country-level co-authorship network produced through VOSviewer, revealing the geographical distribution and collaborative intensity in educational waqf research. Malaysia stands out as the leading contributor, producing 63 documents and accumulating 633 citations, while also recording the highest total link strength at 17, indicating both strong research productivity and extensive international collaboration. This prominence can be attributed to Malaysia’s well-established institutional framework for Islamic finance and waqf, as well as strong government and academic support in advancing waqf-based education funding. Indonesia is positioned as the second most influential country, evidenced by 37 scholarly publications and notable link strength (11), reflecting its large Muslim population and increasing scholarly focus on Islamic philanthropy. Meanwhile, countries such as Saudi Arabia and Turkey show moderate contributions, which may be linked to their historical and institutional relevance in waqf practices, although their collaborative networks appear less extensive compared to Southeast Asian countries.

Furthermore, **Figure 3** reveals that while some non-Muslim-majority countries, such as the United States, contribute to the literature, their total link strength remains relatively low, suggesting limited collaboration within this specific research domain. Similarly, Nigeria and Pakistan demonstrate moderate levels of productivity and citations, indicating emerging interest but comparatively weaker integration into global research networks. These patterns suggest that educational waqf research is geographically concentrated in regions where Islamic finance ecosystems are more developed and institutionally supported. The differences in total link strength observed between countries highlight differences in international collaboration, implying that stronger academic networks and cross-border partnerships, particularly in Malaysia and Indonesia, are instrumental in elevating both research visibility as well as citation influence.

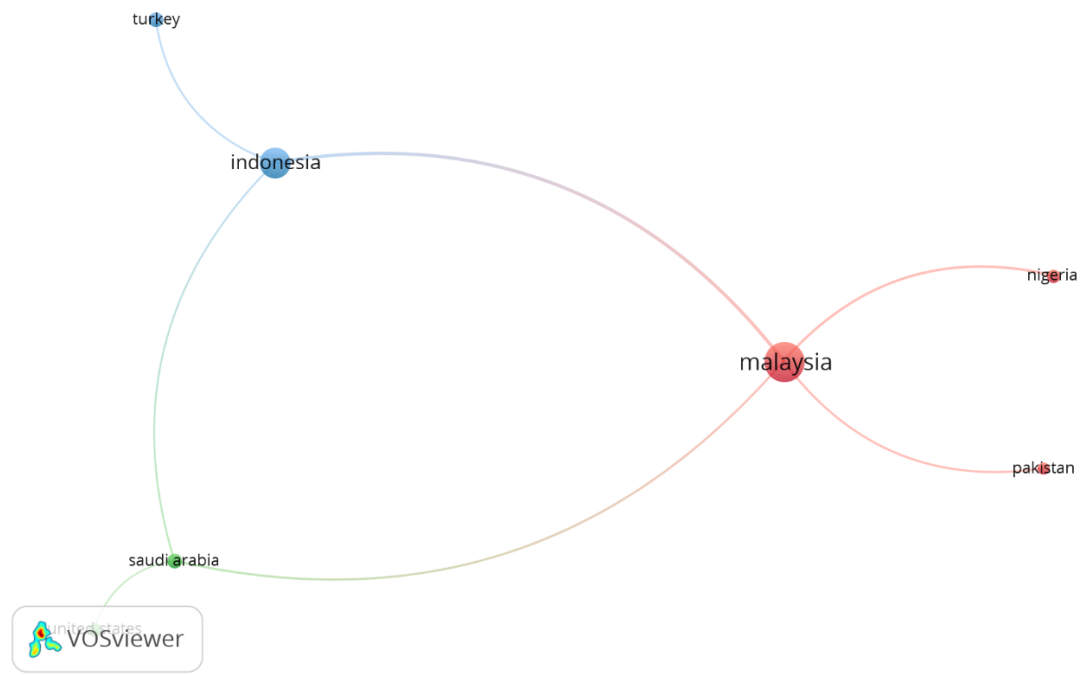


Figure 3: Country Co Authorship Network Patterns Of Educational Waqf Research

Conclusion

The findings indicate that research on educational waqf has experienced a gradual transition from a limited and fragmented field into a more established and rapidly expanding area of study. A clear increase in publication output was observed, particularly in recent years, indicating an expanding scholarly and applied engagement with alternative financing mechanisms for higher education. Citation analysis reveals that the most influential works are generally those that connect waqf with broader socio-economic and financial issues, suggesting that interdisciplinary relevance contributes to higher scholarly impact. In addition, keyword co-occurrence analysis highlights that core themes such as waqf, Islamic finance, and higher education remain dominant. In contrast, newer themes, including cash waqf, philanthropy, and sustainable development, have begun to emerge. The collaboration analysis further shows that research activities are geographically concentrated, with certain countries demonstrating stronger productivity and networking intensity than others.

This study enriches the existing literature by providing a systematic mapping of research trajectories while also delineating the principal thematic developments and collaboration networks that characterize the field. It further advances current scholarly understanding by integrating bibliometric techniques with the context of donor behavior in educational waqf, a domain that has, to date, received relatively limited structured and comprehensive examination. The findings provide useful insights for policymakers, higher education institutions, and waqf administrators in designing more effective strategies to enhance participation and sustainability of waqf funding. From a practical perspective, understanding the drivers of contribution and the evolution of research themes may assist in improving awareness, governance, and engagement strategies in real-world applications.

Certain limitations warrant acknowledgement. The analysis was confined to a single database and restricted exclusively to English-language scholarly journal articles, which may have resulted in the omission of relevant studies published in other languages or retrieved from alternative information sources. In addition, the reliance on bibliometric indicators may not fully capture the depth and contextual nuances of individual studies. Future research could extend this work by drawing on multiple databases, broadening inclusion to diverse document types, and applying mixed-method approaches to gain deeper insights into behavioral and institutional dynamics. Longitudinal and comparative studies across different regions are also recommended to enhance the generalizability of findings.

In summary, this study indicates that scholarly inquiry into the willingness to contribute to educational waqf funds is evolving into a dynamic and interdisciplinary field with increasing academic relevance. Bibliometric analysis proves to be a valuable method for identifying underlying patterns, emerging trends, as well as gaps within the literature, providing a foundation for future investigations. Continued research in this area is essential to strengthen theoretical development and support the practical implementation of educational waqf as a sustainable financing mechanism in higher education.

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