

Metamorphosis of Islamic Studies Research (1941-2023): A Bibliometric Analysis

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Abstract

It has been 82 years since the first publication of Islamic studies in Scopus indexed journal. Today there is a total of 1033 documents published in the scientific database, and it is interesting to see how the discussions within the field have been developing over time. Using the combination of the biblioshiny package in Rstudio and the VOSviewer, this study found that Tottoli leads the greatest number of publications in Islamic studies, the country analysis revealed that the USA publishes the most, Journal of Qur'anic Studies is leading in terms of Scopus-indexed journals, and Islamic education has been the topmost in terms of keyword statistics analysis. It concluded that Islamic education as a research topic has been continuously rising to date and Islamic education among others is gaining so much attention among writers in the scientific literature. In conclusion, this study empirically revealed the dynamism of Islamic studies in terms of individual brilliance, national engagement, textual relevance, and the rising focus on education as the trajectory of Islamic studies.

Keywords: *Islamic Studies, bibliometric analysis, RStudio Bibliometrix.*

Introduction

Islamic studies is a field of inquiry that is multidisciplinary in nature. Because of the width and depth of its scope, it is extremely difficult to manually track its development over the past years. This study attempted to make use of available latest developments in the field of data analysis in order to come up with empirical findings about the trajectory of Islamic studies over time. It critically analyzed the most influential authors in the field, most cited works in Islamic studies, leading countries that produce scientific articles, topmost journals that contributed to the spread of the discipline, the quantity of publications over a certain period, and the burning issue of the time within the realm of Islamic studies.

Review of Related Literature

In 2016, an article titled: "A bibliometric analysis of contributions in Islamic studies (journal): 2009-2011" was published. Focusing on 91 scholarly journal articles, it focused on the distribution of article, gender, authorship pattern, and citation index. It found that male authors coming from Pakistan have the greatest number of publications in Islamic studies compared with the rest of the world. The majority of the articles were single-authored, and books were cited 67.36% more compared to journal articles. (Hussain et al., 2016) With 91 documents reviewed, it may not be able to offer the whole picture about the research topic as the list of scholarly publications about Islamic Studies is far larger than the number of documents analyzed by the authors.

In the same year, Attallah published a bibliometric analysis of classics in Middle Eastern and Islamic studies. It focused on the citation counts of the 122 documents it reviewed to find the most academically quoted authors in the field of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies. The author concluded that citation tracking is affected by a limited period of time in available indexed journals (e.g. Scopus 1960+), other journals published before 1960 were not indexed in Scopus (e.g. Google Scholar) while some authors are self-citing. (Attallah, 2016) Limited by only handful of data collected for analysis, the findings may not be so robust to capture vast available published article in Islamic studies in Scopus indexed journals.

In 2022, Mustofa and Mustofa published an article titled: "The Bibliometric Analysis of Islamic Studies Research and New Media Based on Biblioshiny". It found the most frequent keywords, influential authors, and most impactful journals that talked about Islam studies in the past two decades

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from 2012 to 2020. The findings are also limited to only fifty documents published in Scopus-indexed journals.(Mustofa & Mustofa, 2022)

In the following year, in an article titled: “Systematic Review Studi Islam: A Bibliometrics Analysis (1941-2022)” Latuconsina (2023), used bibliometric analysis obtained from 948 scholarly papers about Islamic Studies from Scopus. The "Bibliometrics" R program was mostly utilized for the content analysis. Their result showed the Most Relevant Sources, Most Productive Authors, Most Cited Publications, and Most Relevant Keywords. Thematic analysis and country collaboration analysis were also included in science mapping. By dividing the complete bibliographic information, they were able to emphasize their theme analysis.(Latuconsina, 2023) This research is one of the most thorough bibliometric re-analysis of Islamic studies conducted to date.

Methodology

This study used bibliometric analysis of published articles about Islamic studies in journals indexed by Scopus. As shown in figure no. 1, this study analyzed data from 1941 to 2024, it scrutinized a total of 1033 documents coming from 667 different sources, 1530 authors, 593 co-authors with an average of 6.8% international co-authors, 1.71 co-authors per document, 2,076 keywords, 65,097 references, 9.05 average years of age per document and lastly, 4.99 average citations per document. using Microsoft Excel, VOSviewer, and R statistical software. The findings of this study were limited to the authors' involvement in publication, affiliation statistics, country participation, keyword statistics, journal statistics, and yearly trends in order to empirically analyze the data.



Figure 1. Preliminary data

Image: Rstudio software generated

Results and Discussions

Annual Scientific Production

In this study, annual scientific production refers to the yearly production or publication of the authors on the scientific journals, in this case those that have been indexed in Scopus database.(Şenyapar, 2023) For the purpose of this study, it investigated the frequency of the word Islamic studies appearing in the database. From the 1033 documents investigated, it revealed that the keyword Islamic Studies first appeared in the Scopus-indexed journal in 1941. There was no succeeding publication in the same database following that year until 1946. On a general noted, figure no. 2 also indicated that there has been a mostly continues growth of publication about Islamic studies published in Scopus indexed journals. It also revealed that in 2014 there was a sudden downtrend in the number of publications on the same field. Further investigation indicated that the downtrend was caused by a shift of the world attention to political unrest in the Middle East brought about by the Arab Spring and the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). During these times, it is understandable should authors started to drop the keyword Islamic studies and started to used terms that has a political and/or military connotations in it like, Islamic polity, Islamic political thought, Islamic insurgency, Jihad and the likes. Nevertheless, the trend started to pick up an upward direction again in the following years as the situation started to gradually become stable. Five years later in 2020, the number of publications about the same subject matter had reached approximately the same level with when it started to drop and now started to rise again.

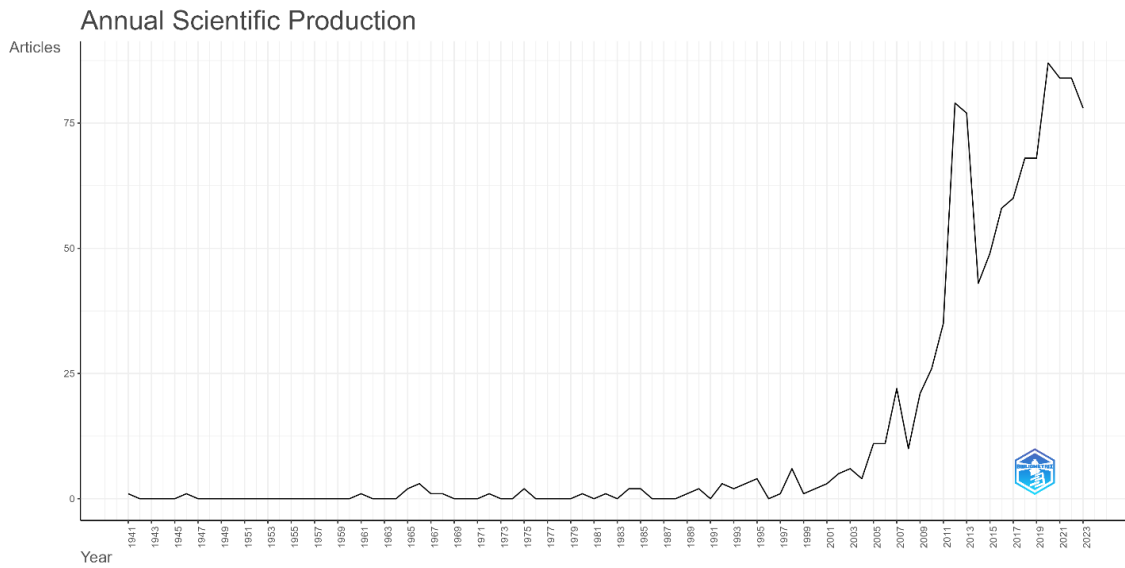


Figure 2: Annual Scientific Production

Journal participation

Journal participation measures the number of published scientific articles about Islamic. It shows the most popular journal among authors to share their findings about the study. Within 5 minimum number of appearance set from 667 journals that published Islamic studies research topic, it appeared that at least 21 journals have met the threshold, using Treemap visualization, figure no. 3 revealed that the Journal of Qur'anic Studies got the lion share with a total of 36 publications and thus ranked 1st in the list, this is followed by Religions journal that has a total of 20 documents published about Islamic Studies that made it to the top 2nd from the list while the Muslim World ranked 3rd for having 19 publications that with keywords Islamic Studies being used.

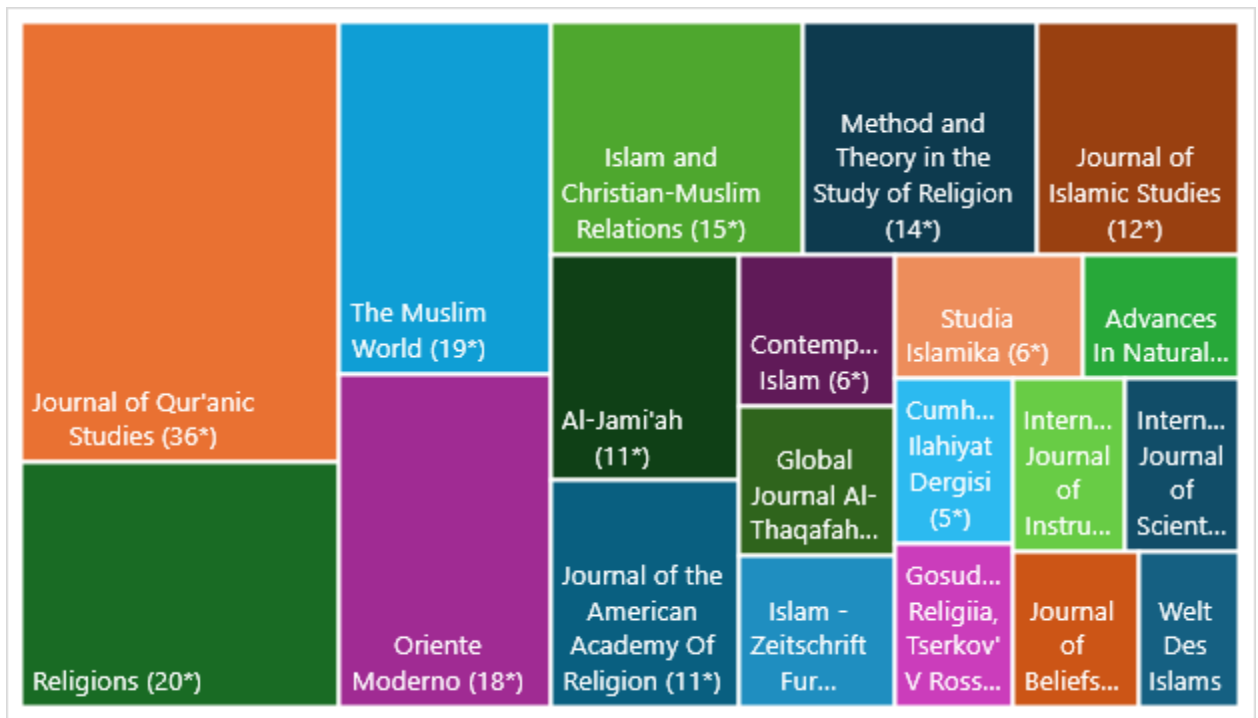


Figure no. 3: Treemap of Journal participation

Note: * = number of documents published

Affiliation statistics

This portion illustrates the institutions leading in discussion about Islamic Studies published in Scopus database. Figure no. 4 shows that of 1222 organizational affiliations and a minimum of 4 documents default requirement to be included in the analysis, only 6 have met the threshold. It finds that the Università Degli Studi Di Napoli L'Orientale in Italy published 7 documents and ranked 1st for having the most number of published article about Islamic Studies in Scopus indexed journals. SOAS, University of London ranked 2nd with 5 documents in the database while tied up in the 3rd rank were University of Amsterdam, Netherlands University of Chicago, United States, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, United States, University of Toronto, Canada with 4 published documents respectively.

Interestingly, although Università Degli Studi Di Napoli L'Orientale has the most published article in the field it ranked last in the citation rank due to the fact it did not gain much citations while on the other hand, the University of Amsterdam ranked 1st citation after being cited at least 37 times in the Scopus indexed journals, the University of North Carolina ranked 2nd for being cited 30 times and landing on the top 3rd was SOAS, University of London for being cited 27 times in the database.

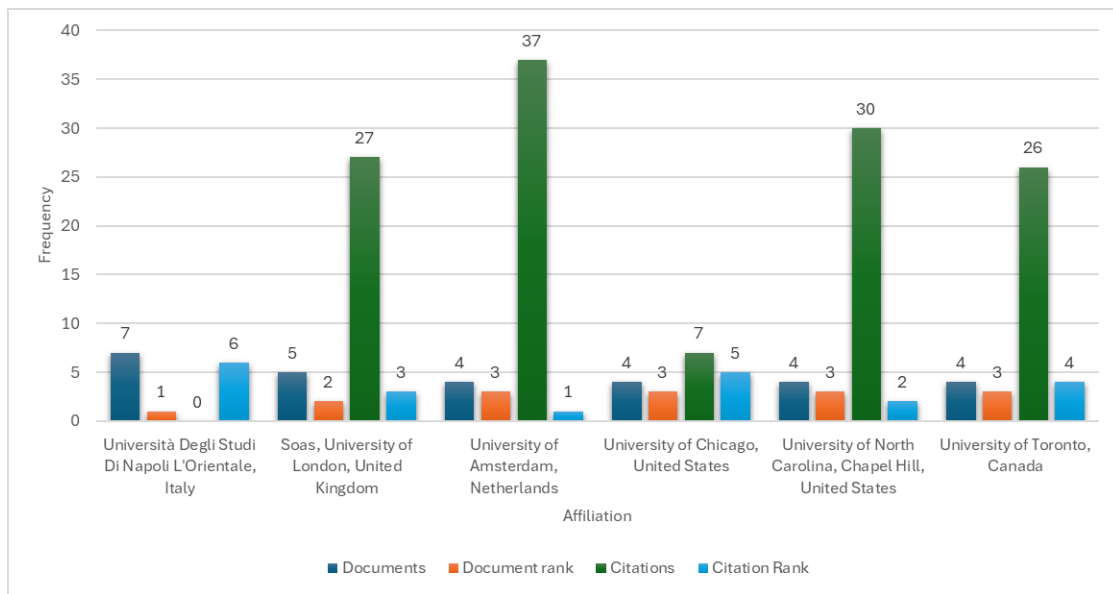


Figure 4. Affiliation Statistics

Authors involvement

This section contains the involvement of authors in publishing Islamic studies in Scopus indexed journals. This study used the default settings of VOSviewer software which automatically includes in the finding authors with at least 5 published article.(Pinheiro et al., 2018) The data shows that of 1530 authors, only 4 met the threshold. As shown in table 1, Tottoli R ranked 1 with 16 documents published journals indexed in Scopus, he is followed by Hughes A.W. with 7 documents and not too far behind him is Tibi B. who ranked 3rd with 6 published documents and lastly Jung D. ranked 4th after publishing 4 documents in the same indexed journals. The findings that Tottoli R as the top author the contributed the most in publication of Islamic studies in Scopus indexed journals is in consistent with the findings of Latuconsina in 2022.(Latuconsina, 2023)

Table 1. Authors involvement in publishing articles in Scopus indexed journals that talks about Islamic studies.

Author	Documents	Rank
Tottoli R.	16	1
Hughes A.W.	7	2
Tibi B.	6	3
Jung D.	5	4

Country participation

The leading country that published articles about Islamic studies in the Scopus indexed journals were also analyzed. The data showed that of 82 countries participated in publication about Islamic Studies in the database, only 34 met the threshold pursuing the default settings of VOSViewer with 5 minimum number of documents in the database. It found that the greatest number of publications in the field of Islamic Studies per country is coming from the United States of America which ranked 1st with a total of 185 document publications. It is followed by the United Kingdom which ranked 2nd with a total of 122 publications; Indonesia with 104 documents and Malaysia at 103 they ranked 3rd and 4th respectively. The findings of this study contradict that of Hussain *et. al*'s study who find that Pakistan was the leading country in publication about Islamic studies. This could be explained by the fact that Hussain *et.al* published the article in 2016 and the data was only from 2009 to 2011. The difference of 13 years in had made significant difference between the findings of this study and the aforementioned study.

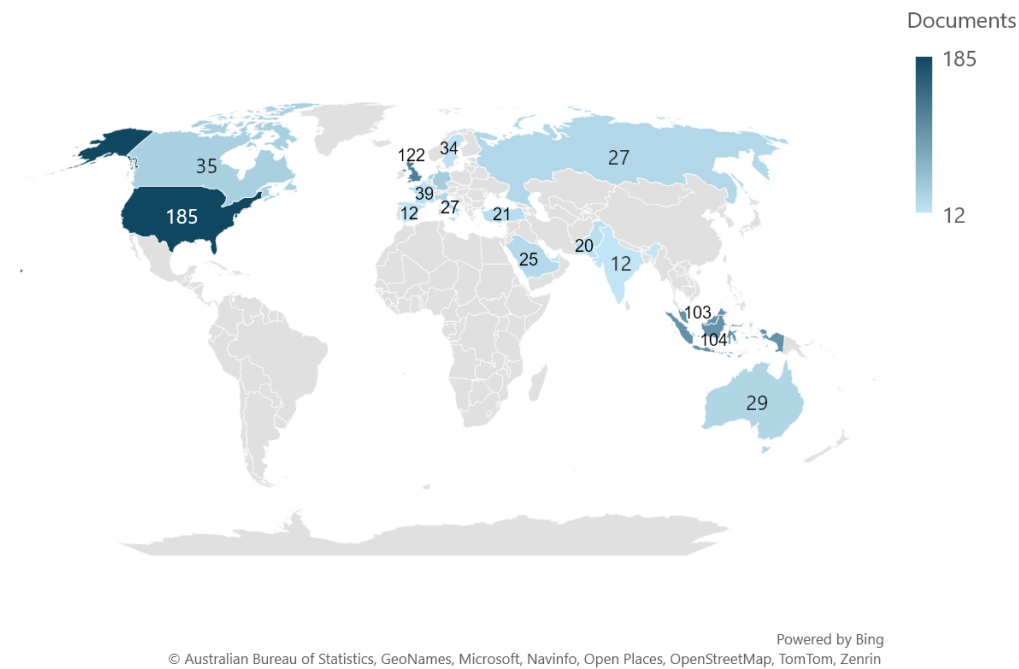


Figure 5: Country Statistics

Three-field Plot shows the volume of publications about certain topic in Islamic studies taking into account the author on one hand and the country on the other hand. Rectangular diagrams are used to depict relevant elements in a variety of colors. The height of the rectangle shows how several features—like nations, sources, well-known writers, author-keywords, etc.—relate to one another. The rectangle's size indicates the number of relationships between its constituent parts. (Fatehi et al., 2020; Kumar et al., 2021)

Figure 6 shows the relationship between country, keywords and authors. It revealed that the top 3 most keywords used by the authors per country are Islamic studies, Islam and Islamic education. Given that Islamic studies and Islam naturally appears in the keywords, it found that Islamic education tops the findings and Indonesia, the US and United Kingdom have the most published documents about Islamic education. The findings that indicated Indonesia tops the country producing research output about Islamic education in Scopus indexed journals is in conformity with the study of Jannah, Hakiman and Ramdahan in 2022.(Jannah et al., 2022)

is Islamic education and it has been on the constant rise since 2007 and continuedly growing up to date.

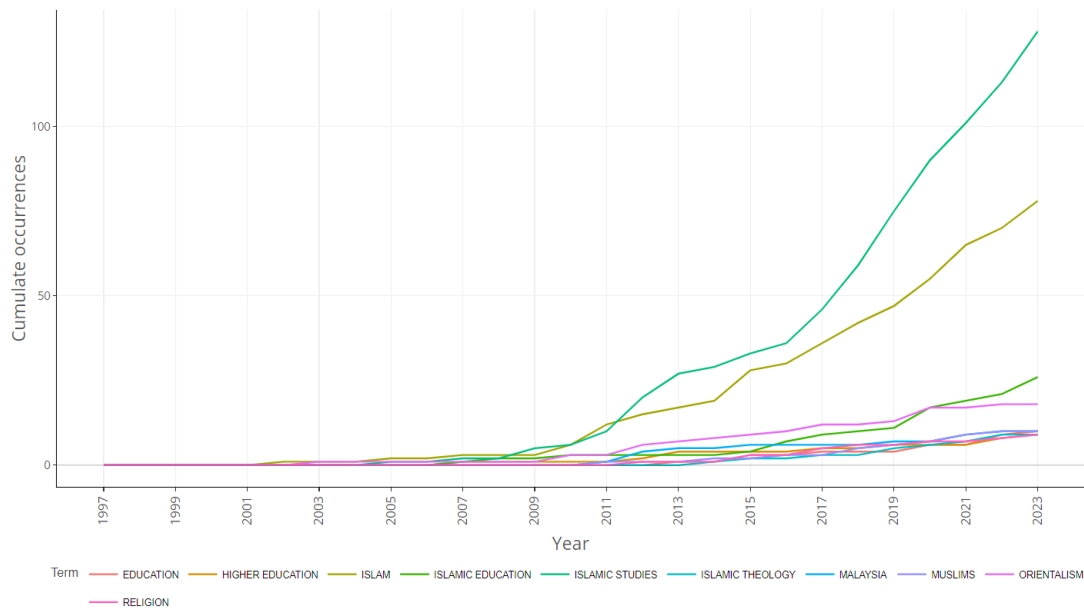


Figure no. 8: Words frequency over time

Conclusion

One significant finding is the role of Turkey as represented by Tottoli in contributing to research on studies. This highlights the environment within Turkey and calls for further exploration into what factors contribute to this scholarly productivity. Possible factors could include an infrastructure, support, from the government or thriving cross cultural collaborations. Also, the leading role of the United State in terms of publication output raises incites about scientific productivity output. None of the Middle Eastern Muslim countries top the search about Islamic studies not because Muslim scholars are not producing enough, they have been producing scholarly outputs by hundreds of thousands since the day of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) but the methodology used were mostly not following the rules of the game as specified by the Western authors. This suggest that the Muslim scholars have their own methodology, and it is interesting to see how these methods can be used as matrix in order to measure the development of Islamic studies over time from the own perspective. The dominance of the Journal of Qur’anic Studies from among the scientific literature indicated that the discussion about Islamic studies stayed within the fundamental text of Islam. Finaly, the rise of Islamic education as the top keyword signifies a growing interest in pedagogical practices, curriculum development, and the challenges and opportunities facing Muslim educational institutions worldwide. This trend aligns with contemporary concerns about social justice, religious literacy, and the role of education in shaping future generations of Muslims.

Beyond these observations, this analysis highlights a larger and critical points: Islamic studies is not static discipline that is confined only to past paradigms or limited within certain country borders. It is a dynamic landscape, ever evolving depending on the needs of the time and space. Being multi-disciplinary nature within the bounds of social sciences means that it can cut across topics where ethics and morality is integral part of the discipline.

Credit authorship contribution statement

Najeeb Razul Sali: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Data curation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. **Nasrudin M. Datucali** Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Supervision, Data curation, Project administration, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

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