



Repositioning Waqf as an Islamic Legal and Social Institution: A Global Bibliometric and Thematic Review (1975–2025)

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ABSTRACT

This study repositions waqf as an Islamic legal and social institution by mapping the evolution, intellectual structure, and thematic development of global waqf scholarship from 1975 to 2025. Using a mixed-method review, it integrates bibliometric analysis and thematic content analysis of 319 Scopus-indexed journal articles, supported by Google Scholar triangulation. The results show a major acceleration of publications after 2010, alongside a shift from doctrinal-historical studies toward governance- and finance-oriented research. Four dominant thematic clusters emerge: cash waqf, governance and accountability, Islamic social finance integration, and institutional management. However, the literature remains geographically concentrated, collaboration networks are fragmented, and empirical impact evaluation is still limited. The study highlights critical gaps for strengthening Islamic legal theory, socio-legal analysis, and evidence-based waqf governance reform.

INTRODUCTION

Waqf is among the most durable institutions in Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh al-mu'āmalāt*), operating not merely as a pious endowment but as a legally structured mechanism to institutionalize public welfare across time. Normatively, waqf rests on the principle of *taḥbīs al-aṣl wa tasbīl al-manfa'ah*: the endowed corpus is preserved, while its usufruct is perpetually directed to designated charitable or public purposes under Shari'ah rules (Kahf, 2010). This construction positions waqf as a distinctive Islamic legal institution in which normative obligations, ethical commitments, and social objectives converge within a coherent juridical architecture (Çizakça, 2009).

Historically, waqf has also functioned as a living social institution embedded in Muslim communities. Across periods and regions, waqf financed education, healthcare, religious services, municipal and urban infrastructure, and poverty relief, thereby sustaining social order and communal resilience beyond state capacity (Çizakça, 2001). In many Muslim societies, especially in Southeast Asia, waqf's institutional trajectory reflects layered interactions among Islamic legal norms, local customary practices, colonial legal legacies, and contemporary state regulation (Hooker, 1984 & Bowen 2003). Waqf therefore constitutes not only a doctrinal category of Islamic law, but also a socio-legal phenomenon shaped by legal pluralism and governance adaptation.

In the last two decades, waqf has regained strategic visibility through its integration into Islamic social finance and development agendas. Innovations such as cash waqf, productive waqf, and digitally facilitated waqf have expanded waqf's functional scope beyond traditional immovable assets, improving liquidity and enabling broader public participation (Ahmed, 2014). These developments amplify regulatory and governance questions—particularly accountability, transparency, disclosure, and institutional design—because waqf increasingly intersects with modern administrative frameworks and performance expectations (Wilson, 2000).

Parallel to these transformations, academic scholarship on waqf has grown rapidly, with noticeable acceleration since around 2010. Bibliometric and hybrid reviews consistently show that contemporary waqf research is dominated by themes of cash waqf, governance, accountability, disclosure, and waqf's role within Islamic social finance and sustainable development (Aghilasse Kashi et al, 2024). Yet, the literature remains structurally fragmented. Much of the evidence is concentrated geographically (with strong dominance by Malaysia and Indonesia in Scopus-indexed outputs) and often segmented into single-country case studies or sector-specific discussions, limiting comparative legal insights and theoretical consolidation (Aghilasse Kashi et al., 2021). Moreover, despite rising volume, several reviews underline persistent methodological gaps, including limited empirical evaluation, social impact assessment, and sustained development of waqf within Islamic legal theory and socio-legal analysis (Mohamed Aslam Haneef et al., 2020).

This study addresses these limitations by conducting a global bibliometric and thematic review of waqf research from 1975 to 2025, using Scopus-indexed peer-reviewed journal articles and triangulation support from Google Scholar.

By explicitly repositioning waqf as an Islamic legal and social institution, the study maps the evolving intellectual structure of waqf scholarship, identifies dominant and emerging themes, and isolates persistent gaps relevant to Islamic legal theory, socio-legal inquiry, and evidence-based policy reform. Accordingly, the study asks: (1) How has the intellectual structure of global waqf research evolved between 1975 and 2025? (2) What dominant and emerging themes characterize waqf scholarship within Islamic legal and social discourse? and (3) What critical research gaps should inform future Islamic legal studies and waqf governance reform?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Prior research and debate (supporting vs. challenging patterns)

Bibliometric evidence indicates that waqf scholarship has shifted from relatively sparse and doctrinally oriented outputs toward a rapidly expanding, finance- and governance-focused research stream. A thirty-year Scopus-based bibliometric study (1990–2020) categorizes waqf research into: (i) waqf fundamentals, (ii) cash waqf, and (iii) applications of waqf in Islamic social finance—while explicitly highlighting insufficient depth in foundational/theoretical work relative to waqf’s potential (Norhazlin Md Noor, 2021). More recent Scopus-based analysis (1975–2023) employing VOSviewer and Bibliometrix confirms thematic consolidation around cash waqf, waqf in Islamic social finance and sustainable development, accountability, and governance/disclosure; it also reports that Malaysia and Indonesia dominate influential countries, institutions, and authors (Aghilasse Kashi et al., 2024). Sector-specific bibliometric studies on cash waqf (e.g., 1979–2022) reinforce the same direction: strong growth and clustering around collection, governance, and institutional mechanisms, indicating that financial innovation has become a main driver of waqf research visibility (Siti Mashitoh Mahamood et al, 2023).

However, the literature does not uniformly imply intellectual maturity. Empirical governance studies—particularly in Malaysia—suggest that disclosure and transparency practices remain inconsistent across institutional types, and that governance quality is a recurring constraint on performance and legitimacy (Haron et al, 2020). This line of evidence supports the claim that scholarship may be expanding faster than robust empirical evaluation and impact measurement. Hybrid review work published recently also maps clusters and gaps, implying that fragmentation persists in concepts, methods, and cross-regional comparative designs (Shofiati, N. et al., 2025). Taken together, prior research broadly supports a “growth-with-fragmentation” narrative, although some studies point to widening thematic coverage (e.g., sustainability and integration with modern finance), which could be read as early signs of consolidation rather than mere fragmentation.

Theoretical lens: Scientific Field Mapping

This study adopts a Scientific Field Mapping perspective (often framed as knowledge structure theory in bibliometrics/scientometrics), which treats scholarship as a measurable social system: publications represent knowledge outputs; citations and co-citations represent intellectual influence and lineage;

co-authorship represents collaboration structures; and keyword co-occurrence represents evolving thematic attention (Thelwall, 2015). Within this lens, a mature field typically demonstrates (i) sustained growth, (ii) identifiable thematic clusters, (iii) stable collaboration networks, and (iv) accumulating theoretical cores. Conversely, fragmentation is reflected in weak cross-cluster integration, high regional concentration, and limited methodological diversification.

Hypotheses

H1 (Growth acceleration). Waqf publications increased significantly after 2010 compared to the pre-2010 period, reflecting waqf's reintegration into Islamic social finance and development agendas.

H2 (Thematic shift). The thematic emphasis of waqf scholarship shifted over time from "fundamentals/doctrinal history" toward "cash waqf-governance-accountability-disclosure-Islamic social finance/SD" clusters.

H3 (Geographic concentration). Global waqf scholarship is disproportionately concentrated in a limited set of countries (especially Malaysia and Indonesia), producing higher productivity and network centrality relative to other regions.

H4 (Methodological imbalance). Despite publication growth, empirical evaluation and impact assessment remain underrepresented relative to conceptual, descriptive, or normative outputs, contributing to methodological fragmentation.

Contextual framework

The proposed framework links macro drivers → research production → knowledge structure outcomes. Macro drivers include: (i) policy emphasis on Islamic social finance and sustainability, (ii) institutional innovations (cash/productive/digital waqf), and (iii) governance reforms and accountability pressures (Aghilasse Kashi et al., 2024). These drivers are expected to influence (a) publication volume by year (testing H1), (b) keyword thematic evolution and cluster emergence (testing H2), and (c) country/institution dominance and collaboration network centrality (testing H3).

Methodological imbalance (H4) is assessed by classifying article types and extracting method indicators through thematic/content coding aligned with bibliometric clusters (Shofiatin, N. et al., 2025). This framework enables the study to interpret scient metric patterns as socio-legal signals: how legal-institutional change reshapes scholarly agendas, and how scholarship, in turn, indicates gaps for Islamic legal theory-building and evidence-based governance reform.

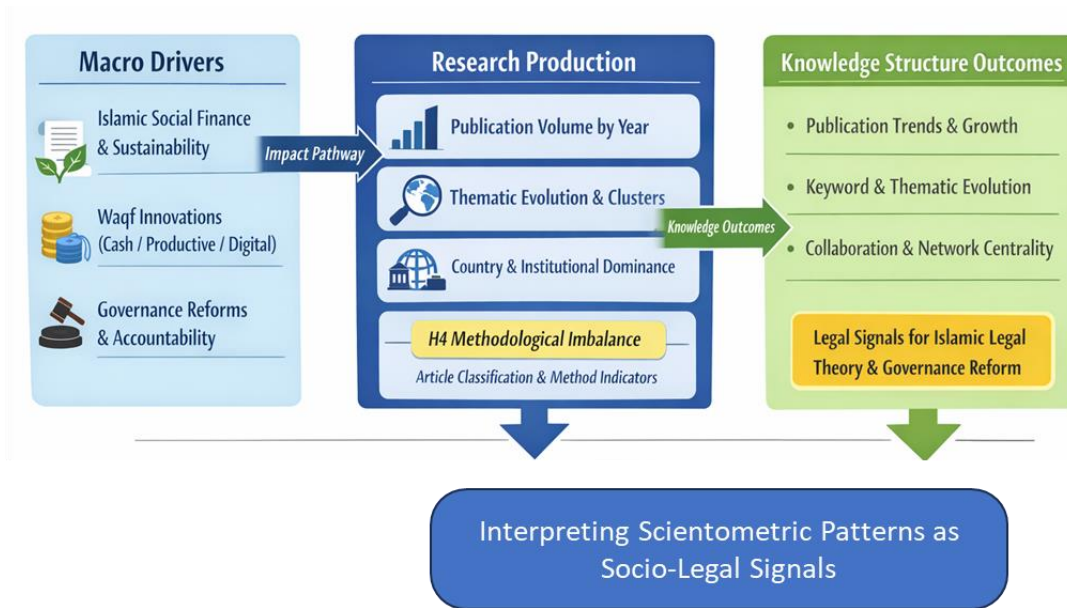


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a socio-legal research design integrating bibliometric analysis and thematic content analysis to examine the evolution of waqf scholarship as an Islamic legal and social institution. The socio-legal approach is adopted to situate waqf not merely as a doctrinal subject of Islamic jurisprudence, but as a living legal institution shaped by regulatory frameworks, social practices, and governance arrangements within Muslim societies (Banakar, 20215). This approach allows the study to bridge normative Islamic legal analysis with empirical patterns of academic knowledge production.

The research applies a mixed-method review design, combining quantitative bibliometric techniques with qualitative thematic interpretation. Bibliometric analysis is used to map publication trends, citation structures, collaboration networks, and keyword co-occurrence, while thematic analysis is employed to interpret these patterns within an Islamic legal and socio-institutional context (Massimo Aria and Corrado Cucurullo, 2017). This combination enables the identification of dominant paradigms, emerging themes, and structural gaps in waqf studies that are relevant to Islamic legal theory, governance, and policy reform.

From a legal perspective, bibliometric findings are interpreted through the lens of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh al-mu'āmalāt*) and socio-legal theory, particularly concepts of legal pluralism, institutional governance, and the interaction between normative law and social practice (Griffiths, 1986). Accordingly, the method does not merely describe publication patterns, but analytically connects them to the evolving discourse on waqf regulation, accountability, and institutional performance.

Bibliographic data were collected primarily from the Scopus database, selected due to its standardized metadata, extensive journal coverage, and suitability for citation-based and network analysis. Scopus is widely used in

socio-legal and interdisciplinary legal research to ensure consistency and comparability of bibliometric indicators (Naveen Donthu et al., 2021). To minimize database bias and capture regionally published scholarship, Google Scholar was used in a limited triangulation capacity to identify potential omissions, particularly from Southeast Asian journals, without integrating citation counts across databases to avoid metric distortion (Anne-Wil Harzing and Satu Alakangas, 2011). The unit of analysis consists of peer-reviewed journal articles published between 1975 and 2025 in English and Indonesian, reflecting the dominant languages of waqf scholarship and Islamic legal discourse in Southeast Asia. The scope and boundaries of the data sources are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Data Sources and Scope of the Study

Aspect	Description
Primary database	Scopus
Secondary database	Google Scholar (triangulation only)
Time span	1975–2025
Document type	Peer-reviewed journal articles
Language	English, Indonesian

Data retrieval was conducted using Boolean search queries applied to the *TITLE-ABS-KEY* fields in Scopus. The search strategy incorporated core and derivative waqf-related terms covering legal, institutional, managerial, and developmental dimensions of waqf. These terms were selected to reflect both classical Islamic legal concepts and contemporary governance discourse (Kahf, 2003). The conceptual structure of the search keywords is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Search Keywords and Boolean Logic

Concept	Keywords
Waqf	waqf, Islamic endowment
Management	waqf management, waqf governance
Innovation	productive waqf, cash waqf, digital waqf
Development	Islamic social finance, SDGs, sustainable development

The initial search yielded 645 records. These records were subjected to a staged screening process involving title review, abstract assessment, and keyword evaluation. Manual filtering was applied to remove duplicates, peripheral references, and publications in which waqf was not a substantive object of analysis. The inclusion and exclusion criteria guiding this process are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Publication year	1975–2025	Outside time range
Document type	Journal articles	Books, proceedings
Language	English, Indonesian	Other languages
Relevance	Substantive waqf studies	Peripheral mentions

Following this process, 319 articles were retained for final analysis.

Bibliographic metadata were extracted in CSV and BibTeX formats, including authorship, institutional affiliation, publication year, abstracts, author keywords, index keywords, and citation counts. The extracted metadata fields are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Extracted Bibliographic Metadata

Metadata	Description
Authors	Author names
Affiliation	Institutional affiliation
Keywords	Author and index keywords
Citations	Total citation counts

Bibliometric analysis was conducted using VOSviewer and the Bibliometrix/Biblioshiny package in R. These tools were employed to generate visualizations of publication growth, co-authorship networks, keyword co-occurrence maps, and citation-based influence indicators. Analytical thresholds, such as minimum numbers of documents or citations for network inclusion, were defined within the software environment and applied consistently across analyses (Nees Jan van Eck and Ludo Waltman, 2010).

Following bibliometric mapping, a thematic content analysis was performed to interpret bibliometric clusters within an Islamic legal and socio-legal framework. This qualitative phase followed a staged coding process consisting of: (1) initial topic identification, (2) thematic grouping, and (3) consolidation into higher-order themes related to Islamic law, governance, and social institutions (Saldaña, 2016). The resulting thematic classification framework, which guided the organization of the Results and Discussion section, is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Thematic Classification Framework

Theme	Sub-themes
Legal studies	Regulation, governance
Economics	Productive waqf, cash waqf
Technology	Digital waqf, fintech
Institutional	Management, performance

Throughout this process, bibliometric findings were interpreted in relation to Islamic legal norms and socio-legal dynamics, ensuring that the analysis remained grounded in the juridical and institutional character of waqf.

To ensure transparency and reproducibility, all analytical steps – including search queries, screening decisions, data cleaning procedures, and software settings – were systematically documented. While bibliometric analysis inherently reflects publication and citation biases, triangulation with thematic interpretation and legal analysis mitigates these limitations by contextualizing quantitative patterns within normative and institutional frameworks (M. M. Alshater et al., 2022).

RESEARCH RESULT

Publication Output and Longitudinal Evolution (1975–2025)

The bibliometric analysis identified 645 waqf-related journal articles indexed in Scopus between 1975 and 2025, of which 319 articles met the inclusion criteria for substantive analysis. This longitudinal distribution demonstrates a clear transformation of waqf scholarship from a marginal field into an increasingly institutionalized domain within Islamic legal and socio-economic research (Norhazlin Md Noor et al., 2021). Two broad publication phases were identified:

Table 6. Phases of Publication Growth in Waqf Studies (1975–2025)

Phase	Period	Characteristics
Early phase	1975–2009	Low output; doctrinal and historical focus
Expansion phase	2010–2025	Rapid growth; governance and policy orientation

Source: Authors' calculation based on annual publication output trend (Scopus 2010–2024) using Bibliometrix descriptive indicators.

A substantial acceleration in publication output was observed from approximately 2010 onward, with an estimated growth rate of 12.61% annually between 2010 and 2024. This increase is consistent with the broader rise of Islamic social finance discourse, regulatory reforms, and sustainability-oriented development agendas in which waqf is increasingly framed as a strategic institutional instrument (Aghilasse Kashi et al., 2024).

Table 7. Trends and Phases of Scientific Publication Growth on Waqf (1975–2025)

Analytical Aspect	Time Period	Description of Findings
Annual publication trend	1975–2009	Low, unstable, and scattered output; dominance of normative and descriptive studies
	2010–2025	Consistent and significant growth linked to Islamic social finance and sustainability
Publication growth rate	2010–2024	Estimated annual growth of approximately 12.61%
Growth phases	1970s–early 2000s	Early stage with limited thematic integration
	Since ~2010	Acceleration stage with thematic diversification

Source: Authors' country productivity analysis based on Scopus affiliation data (1975–2025), processed in Bibliometrix and VOSviewer.

Geographic and Institutional Concentration

The geographic distribution of waqf scholarship reveals pronounced concentration. Malaysia contributes the largest number of publications, followed

by Indonesia, while contributions from Africa, Central Asia, and Muslim-minority jurisdictions remain limited.

Table 8. Top Contributing Countries and Institutions

Rank	Country	Publications	Leading Institution
1	Malaysia	155	International Islamic University Malaysia
2	Indonesia	41	Universitas Islam Negeri
3	United States	29	—
4	United Kingdom	19	—
5	Germany	15	—

Source: Authors' co-authorship network mapping (VOSviewer: co-authorship by country and author; minimum threshold applied as described in Methods section).



Figure 2. Top Contributing Countries and Institutions

Collaboration Networks

Co-authorship network analysis shows moderate but fragmented collaboration patterns. Collaboration clusters are largely regional and concentrated among a limited number of countries and institutions, while cross-regional cooperation remains relatively limited.

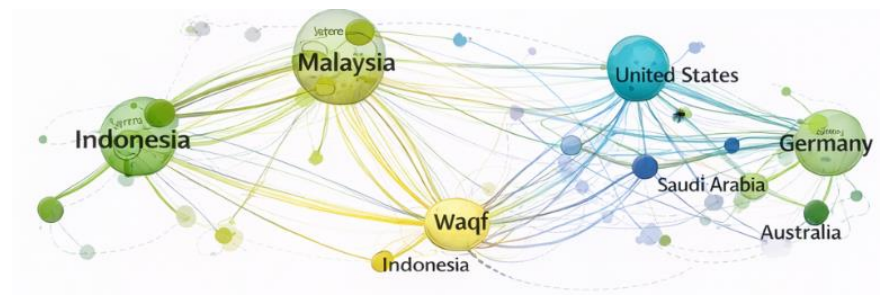


Figure 3. Co-authorship Network

Thematic Structure of Waqf Studies

Keyword co-occurrence and thematic mapping identify four dominant research themes, as summarized below.

Table 9. Dominant Themes in Waqf Studies

Theme	Core Legal and Social Focus
Cash waqf	Financial mobilization within Islamic law
Governance	Regulation, accountability, legal reform
Islamic social finance	Integration with zakat and finance law
Institutional management	Organizational performance and compliance

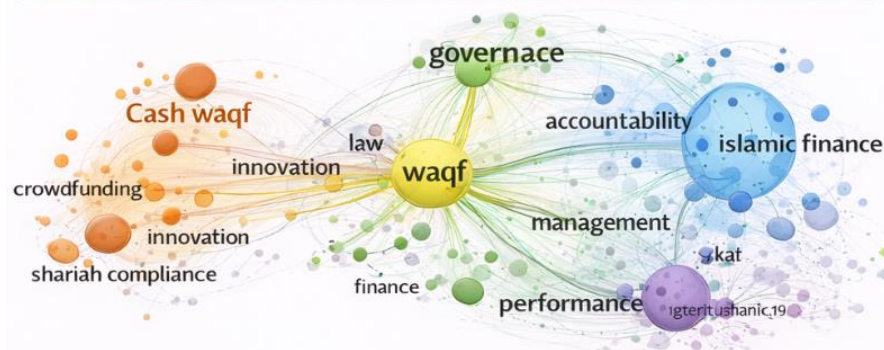


Figure 3. Keyword Co-occurrence / Thematic Cartography

Note: Authors' citation analysis (Scopus citations; top cited documents and sources), triangulated with Google Scholar for robustness.

Influential Works and Citation Structure

Citation analysis indicates that a small number of foundational works continue to exert disproportionate influence on waqf scholarship. Highly cited publications are dominated by historical and normative studies, largely published between the late 1970s and early 2000s.

Table 10. Highly Cited Foundational Works

Author	Year	Focus	Journal	Citations
Kuran	2001	Public goods and waqf under Islamic law	<i>Law and Society Review</i>	778
Sadeq	2002	Waqf and poverty alleviation	<i>IJSE</i>	109
Singer	2008	Charity and Islamic institutions	<i>IJMES</i>	542
Mandaville	1979	Cash waqf controversy in Ottoman Empire	<i>IJMES</i>	406

DISCUSSION

Evolution of Waqf Scholarship as an Islamic Legal and Social Institution (1975–2025)

The results confirm a longitudinal transformation of waqf scholarship from a primarily accelerating doctrinal domain into an increasingly policy-oriented and institutionalized research field. During the early phase (1975–2009), waqf publications were limited and predominantly focused on classical jurisprudence, historical practices, and normative interpretation (Çizakça, 2000). Empirical inquiry, comparative legal analysis, and governance evaluation were relatively

scarce, suggesting that waqf scholarship initially functioned mainly as an extension of fiqh discourse rather than as an applied socio-legal research field (Kuran, 2001).

A paradigmatic shift becomes visible after 2010, as publication growth accelerates substantially. This pattern is consistent with the repositioning of waqf within Islamic social finance, regulatory reform agendas, and sustainability discourse (Kashi et al., 2004). From a socio-legal perspective, this shift suggests that waqf is increasingly conceptualized not merely as a static charitable mechanism, but as a dynamic legal institution that can respond to contemporary governance, accountability, and social justice challenges (Kahf).

Geographic Concentration and Its Implications for Comparative Islamic Legal Research

The strong concentration of waqf scholarship in Malaysia and Indonesia reflects the existence of enabling legal infrastructures, institutional investment, and state-supported Islamic finance ecosystems (Kashi et al., 2024). Malaysia's dominance, in particular, aligns with its proactive regulatory reforms and institutional architecture supporting waqf development and research production (Norhazlin Md Noor et al., 2021).

However, this concentration also reveals structural imbalances in global Islamic legal knowledge production. Underrepresentation of Africa, Central Asia, and Muslim-minority jurisdictions limits the diversity of regulatory experiences captured in waqf scholarship. Consequently, comparative legal insights remain constrained, and theoretical generalization risks being built disproportionately on Southeast Asian institutional assumptions (Hooker, 1984).

Fragmented Collaboration Networks and Nationally Bounded Knowledge Production

The co-authorship network shows fragmented collaboration, with clusters largely shaped by regional proximity and national academic ecosystems. From the sociology of law perspective, such fragmentation indicates that waqf scholarship remains strongly influenced by domestic legal environments, producing inward-looking analyses that are less connected to cross-jurisdictional debate (Tamanaha, 2001).

This pattern constrains opportunities for transnational policy learning and comparative Islamic legal reform. Strengthening cross-regional collaboration would likely improve theoretical synthesis, methodological diversification, and the development of globally relevant governance frameworks (Thelwall, 2017).

Thematic Consolidation: Cash Waqf, Governance, and Islamic Social Finance

The thematic structure indicates that waqf research is increasingly driven by cash waqf, governance, accountability, and integration into Islamic social finance. The prominence of cash waqf reflects its compatibility with contemporary financial regulation, institutional liquidity needs, and scalable participation mechanisms (Sadeq AbulHasan M., 2002). Governance-related themes further indicate sustained scholarly concern with legal oversight, compliance, transparency, and accountability (Haron et al., 2020).

Nevertheless, several substantively important themes remain marginal, including social impact evaluation, beneficiary rights, dispute resolution

mechanisms, and judicial or administrative enforcement. From an Islamic legal standpoint, these areas are essential because waqf is not merely an instrument of fundraising but a normative institution that produces legal relationships, rights, obligations, and accountability structures (Kamali, 2003).

Citation Dominance and the Persistence of Classical Paradigms

The citation structure shows that highly cited works remain dominated by historical and normative scholarship. While these foundational texts provide essential doctrinal grounding, their continued dominance also signals limited theoretical renewal in contemporary Islamic legal thought on waqf (Singer, 2008). Contemporary legal challenges such as regulatory harmonization, digital waqf governance, dispute resolution, and rights-based accountability have not yet generated equally influential theoretical contributions (Kashi et al., 2024).

This imbalance suggests that the field's intellectual development is uneven: rapid growth in volume and applied themes is not always accompanied by parallel advancement in Islamic legal theory-building (Norhazlin Md Noor et al., 2021).

Research Gaps and Implications for Islamic Law and Governance Reform

Three interrelated gaps emerge from the findings:

1. Geographic gap: limited representation of diverse regulatory contexts restricts comparative Islamic legal analysis.
2. Theoretical gap: insufficient development of contemporary Islamic legal theory on waqf beyond classical jurisprudence.
3. Methodological gap: dominance of descriptive and normative approaches with limited empirical evaluation of effectiveness and social impact.

These gaps reinforce the urgency of repositioning waqf scholarship within maqāṣid al-sharī'ah, legal pluralism, and evidence-based regulatory reform. Strengthening socio-legal methods and empirical impact assessment would enhance the contribution of waqf studies to lawmaking, judicial reasoning, and institutional governance in Southeast Asia and beyond (Jasser Auda, 2008).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study repositioned waqf as an Islamic legal and social institution by mapping the evolution, intellectual structure, and thematic development of global waqf scholarship from 1975 to 2025 through an integrated bibliometric and thematic review. Based on Scopus-indexed journal articles triangulated with Google Scholar, the findings demonstrate that waqf research has shifted from a marginal and predominantly doctrinal discourse into an increasingly institutionalized field within Islamic legal, governance, and socio-economic studies.

In response to the first research question (RQ1), the study shows that the intellectual structure of waqf scholarship evolved through two major phases: an early period (1975–2009) characterized by low and scattered output with historical and normative dominance, and an expansion period (2010–2025) marked by consistent growth, thematic diversification, and stronger engagement with contemporary governance and policy debates. This confirms that the

growth of waqf scholarship is not merely quantitative, but also reflects a transformation in the field's orientation toward institutional and regulatory concerns.

Regarding the second research question (RQ2), thematic mapping identifies four dominant clusters shaping contemporary waqf scholarship: cash waqf, governance and accountability, Islamic social finance integration, and institutional management. The prominence of these themes indicates that waqf is increasingly framed as a strategic instrument for financial mobilization and socio-economic development, rather than being treated solely as a classical charitable institution. At the same time, the thematic structure suggests that emerging concerns related to innovation and institutional performance are expanding, particularly as waqf intersects with sustainability agendas and modern administrative expectations.

With respect to the third research question (RQ3), the study highlights persistent gaps that constrain theoretical consolidation and comparative legal insight. These include geographic concentration of publications in a limited number of countries, fragmented cross-regional collaboration networks, and methodological imbalance marked by the limited use of empirical evaluation and social impact assessment. Citation patterns further indicate that foundational historical and doctrinal works continue to dominate influence, while contemporary challenges such as regulatory harmonization, digital waqf governance, beneficiary rights, and dispute resolution have not yet generated equally influential theoretical contributions.

Overall, this study contributes to Islamic legal scholarship by clarifying the global knowledge structure of waqf studies and demonstrating that waqf scholarship is expanding under strong governance and Islamic social finance paradigms, yet remains constrained by uneven regional representation and limited empirical maturity. Future research should therefore strengthen comparative Islamic legal analysis across jurisdictions, advance socio-legal and maqāsid-based theoretical development, and prioritize evidence-based approaches to evaluate legal effectiveness, accountability mechanisms, and social outcomes. Strengthening these dimensions is essential for ensuring that waqf operates as a legally accountable and socially responsive institution capable of supporting sustainable welfare and justice in contemporary Muslim societies.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

This study has several limitations. First, the bibliometric dataset relies primarily on Scopus-indexed journal articles, which may underrepresent waqf scholarship published in local journals, books, policy reports, and non-indexed outlets, particularly from Africa, Central Asia, and Muslim-minority jurisdictions. Second, although Google Scholar was used for triangulation, citation metrics were not integrated across databases to avoid distortion, which may limit cross-platform comparability. Third, bibliometric mapping captures patterns of productivity, influence, and thematic clustering, but it cannot fully measure the substantive legal quality of arguments, the effectiveness of regulatory frameworks, or the real-world social impact of waqf institutions.

Fourth, keyword-based searches may exclude relevant studies that discuss waqf indirectly or use alternative terminologies.

Future research should expand data sources by incorporating additional databases and grey literature to improve geographic and linguistic coverage. Comparative socio-legal studies across diverse jurisdictions are also needed to strengthen theoretical generalization and identify transferable governance models. In addition, empirical impact evaluation should be prioritized through mixed-method designs, including field surveys, institutional audits, and outcome-based measurement of beneficiary welfare. Finally, further studies should deepen Islamic legal theory development on contemporary waqf issues, particularly regulatory harmonization, digital waqf governance, dispute resolution, and rights-based accountability.

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