

## **Waqf for welfare: A bibliometric analysis of research trends in Scopus-indexed journals**

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### **ABSTRACT**

**Purpose** — *This study aims to analyze the map and direction of research development in the field of waqf for welfare improvement in Scopus-indexed publications.*

**Method** — *This research employs a quantitative approach. The population for this study consists of articles indexed by Scopus from 2014 to 2023, with a sample size of 77 articles focused on waqf for welfare improvements. The analysis technique applied in this study involves bibliometric analysis, utilizing the VOSviewer application.*

**Result** — *The results indicate a rise in the average number of publications per year. The peak productivity in waqf for welfare themes occurred in 2019, with 15 studies identified. In the realm of research on waqf, cash waqf, and Malaysia emerge as the most prevalent themes for welfare improvement. Three clusters were identified: cash waqf for maximizing prosperity in society and economics, the opportunities and threats of cash waqf, and the beneficiaries of waqf, impacting not only individuals but also the state.*

**Novelty** — *This study represents the first bibliometric review focusing on the specific theme of waqf for welfare development, aiming to fill gaps in existing research.*

**Keywords:** bibliometrics, research direction, waqf, welfare improvement

### **INTRODUCTION**

According to Law No. 41 of 2004, Article 5, the utilization of waqf assets recommended by Allah SWT and the Prophet Muhammad is defined as waqf. The article specifies that the potential and benefits of waqf assets extend beyond worship purposes and contribute to public welfare. Waqf serves four primary purposes: firstly, it functions as an effective wealth transfer system; secondly, it addresses the shortage of social facilities; thirdly, it represents Allah SWT's worship through acts such as waqf and charity, multiplying good deeds; and fourthly, it reflects the character of the individual making the waqf (Purwaningsih & Susilowati, 2020).

Waqf stands out as one of the most potent Islamic financial instruments capable of enhancing the quality of life within communities if utilized effectively. In other words, waqf can serve as a source of funds for Muslims, catering to religious, social, and economic needs (Khusaeri, 2015). Allah SWT elucidates the concept of waqf in Surah Ali Imran verse 92.

*"You will not attain to perfect righteousness until you spend some of the wealth that you love. And whatever you spend, Allah knows it" (Q.S. Ali-Imran: 92)*

When properly developed and managed, waqf can yield significant benefits for society, particularly in addressing poverty—a pervasive challenge in many developing countries. As of November 2019, waqf land in Indonesia totaled 50,079.97 hectares (Ariani, 2015). The predominant use of waqf land remains for places of worship, with 44.65% allocated to mosques and 28.23% to musala. However, a substantial portion of waqf land remains undeveloped for economic purposes. The potential for enhancing community welfare through productive management and development of waqf land is evident. Research indicates that well-managed Islamic philanthropic activities in Indonesia can play a significant role in poverty reduction (Realita & Anggoro, 2019).



One effective approach to promoting waqf development is through research. Understanding the evolution of waqf practices is crucial. Research areas should encompass the management of waqf assets, the impact of waqf institutions on community welfare, their role in poverty alleviation, and other pertinent aspects. This targeted research is essential for devising more effective development strategies. Recognizing the significance of waqf in addressing economic challenges faced by Muslims, particularly poverty, numerous articles and researchers have delved into this subject. This study aims to examine the progression of research on waqf, particularly focusing on poverty alleviation and welfare (Husniyah, 2019).

In 1992, researchers initiated the writing of waqf articles, and since then, the body of waqf literature has steadily grown, currently comprising 126 documents indexed by Scopus. This substantial collection of articles may pose a challenge for researchers to stay informed about existing research and determine relevant research topics. Consequently, there is a need for bibliometric analysis to systematically map the conceptual structure of these articles, fostering efficient research development and contributing to knowledge enhancement, particularly in the domain of waqf for welfare improvements.

Bibliometric analysis is a branch of bibliographic analysis premised on the idea that researchers should connect or integrate their work with other research. Through bibliometric analysis, researchers can uncover insights into the evolution of literature, including the number of publications, article topics, research methodologies, and author productivity (Prasetyo, 2021). This approach facilitates progress in developing knowledge within the chosen theme. Bibliometric analysis serves as a means to observe research across various publications, encompassing both national and international articles (Mubarrok & Rahmawati, 2020). It is a vital component of research methodology that assesses the diverse literature generated by research. The goal of this analysis is to identify trends in research over time and map the knowledge structure of the topic, pinpointing potential research gaps (Tupan & Rachmawati, 2018). The current study focuses on bibliometric analysis within waqf studies for poverty alleviation from 2014 to 2023, as there is a notable scarcity of studies utilizing bibliometric analysis in the field of Islamic economics, especially those related to waqf.

Research employing the bibliometric method within the theme of waqf is still relatively scarce. Prior studies in this realm have used general and simplistic keywords. For instance, Rusydian (2019) conducted a bibliometric analysis of articles published and indexed by Scopus with the keyword "waqf" from 2010 to 2019, identifying 104 articles and grouping them into several clusters to map the development of waqf research. Another study by Sukmana (2020) utilized data from reputable journals to aid the government in formulating policies for economic and social development. This study, employing keywords like "waqf," "awqaf," and "Islamic endowment fund," identified 63 articles after eliminating predatory journals and selecting those with a predominant focus on waqf. Furthermore, Ninglasari (2021) specifically examined the cash waqf theme, using data exclusively from the Web of Science. However, there is a notable absence of research utilizing the bibliometric method to explore waqf for welfare improvement literature.

To address this gap, the present research aims to contribute to bibliometric studies on waqf for welfare improvement. This study offers an overview of literature in this area by mapping and visualizing data retrieved from the Scopus database.

## **METHOD**

This research adopts a quantitative approach, employing bibliometric analysis to explore the qualitative dimensions of scientific research (Wallin, 2005). The study relies on secondary data, specifically articles sourced from the Scopus database using keywords such as "Waqf," "Waqaf," or "Islamic endowment," limited by additional keywords like "Welfare," "Prosperity," or "Well-being." The search, conducted on January 2, 2024, yielded 126 articles spanning the years 1992 to 2023. In the subsequent bibliometric analysis, inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied, considering only articles from journals issued between 2014 and 2023. Following the screening process, 77 articles were identified and selected as the focus of this research.

The bibliometric analysis techniques employed in this study align with those used in previous research by Kumar et al. (2019). However, for data processing, the research diverges from HistCite and BibExcel software and opts for VOSviewer.

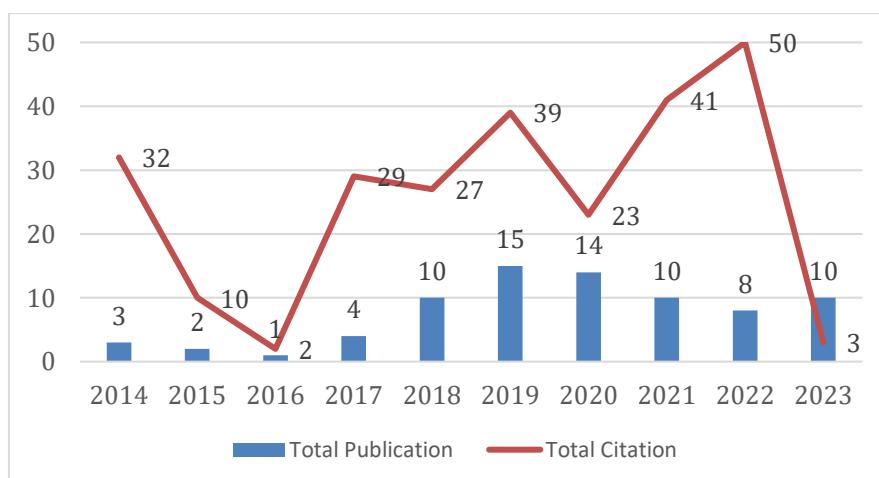
The methodology follows a step-by-step approach outlined by Udomsap & Hallinger (2020), utilizing the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis) framework. The five key steps encompass finding data, appraising data based on specified criteria, synthesizing or digitizing articles, analyzing the data through bibliometric methods, and visualizing the data using VOS Viewer. This comprehensive methodology aims to provide a robust foundation for exploring the landscape of waqf research for welfare improvement.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Main findings

A total of 77 Scopus journal publications focusing on waqf in welfare improvement were identified from 2014 to 2023. The publication trend exhibited fluctuations over this period, with 2019 emerging as the most productive year, yielding 15 articles. Notably, the highest citation count for a single article was recorded in 2022, reaching 50 citations from a pool of 8 articles. This highlights the exceptional quality and impact of the articles published during that particular year.

**Figure 1.** Total publications and citations during 2014 to 2023



Source: Processed data (2023)

The number of publications demonstrated substantial growth from 2018 to 2023, evident in the increasing volume of publications per year reaching dozens. Notably, an intriguing pattern emerged in the total citations, with the highest count recorded in 2022. Typically, the growth in total citations is expected to be inversely proportional to the total publications, as articles published over a more extended period tend to accumulate more references. However, in this study, an interesting deviation was observed, as the total citations showed a general direct proportionality to the total publications.

**Figure 2. Documents by subject**

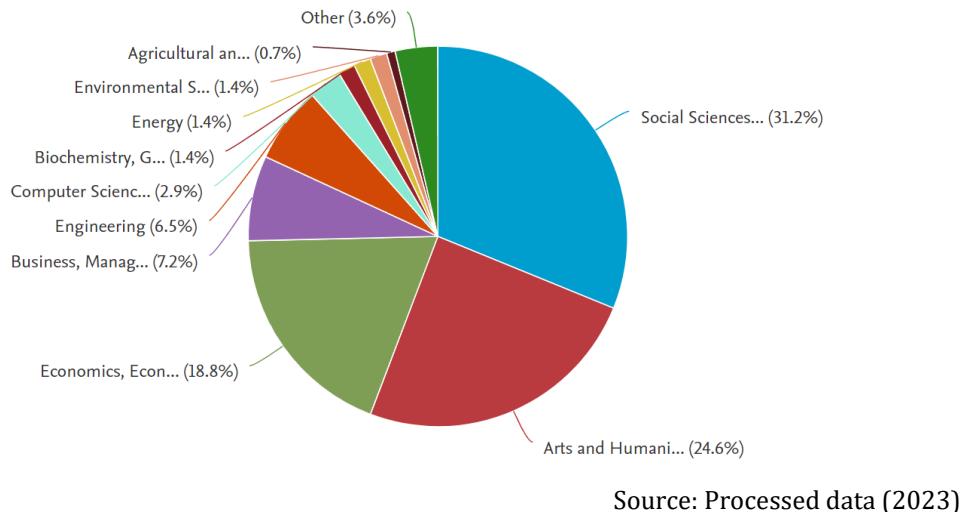


Figure 1 depicts three primary fields associated with waqf publications aimed at improving welfare. The largest contribution, totaling 43 documents, comes from the field of social sciences, followed by 34 documents in the arts and humanities, and 26 in the field of economics, econometrics, and finance.

This study identified a collective effort involving 176 authors, affiliated with 46 institutions spanning 16 countries, contributing to the advancement of this topic through publications in Scopus-indexed journals. Table 2-5 provides a detailed breakdown of the most prolific authors, institutions, journal sources, and countries, categorizing them based on the number of contributions.

**Table 1. Document by author**

Author	Documents
Ascarya, A.	4
Abubakar, L.	3
Lita, H.N.	3
Masrifah, A.R.	3
Ab Rahman, A.	2
Alam, M.M.	2
Asni, F.	2
Harrieti, N.	2
Kasdi, A.	2
Mat Rani, M.A.	2

Source: Processed data (2023)

The most prolific author in the field of socio-economic science is Ascarya, A., a Professor affiliated with the University of Darussalam Gontor and a senior researcher at the Central Bank in Indonesia. Ascarya, A. holds the distinction of being the most productive author with four publications, garnering a total of 36 citations. His most cited article, titled "The role of Islamic social finance during the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia's economic recovery," has received 25 citations.

Apart from Ascarya, three other authors have each contributed three articles to the body of literature on waqf for welfare improvement. These authors include Abubakar, L. and Lita, H.N. from Padjajaran University, along with Masrifah, A.R. from the University of Darussalam Gontor. Notably, all four authors are based in Indonesia.

**Table 2.** Documents by institution

Affiliation	Documents
Universiti Teknologi MARA	9
Universitas Padjadjaran	7
University of Darussalam Gontor	5
International Islamic University Malaysia	4
Universitas Airlangga	4
Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia	4
Institut Agama Islam Tazkia	3
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia	3
Universiti Utara Malaysia	3
Universiti Malaya	3

Source: Processed data (2023)

The top three most productive institutions contributing to waqf publications for welfare improvement are Universiti Teknologi MARA, leading with 9 articles, followed by Padjadjaran University with 7 articles, and the University of Darussalam Gontor with 5 articles. Notably, the list of the ten most productive institutions is exclusively composed of establishments from Malaysia and Indonesia.

**Table 3.** Document by journal

Journal	Documents
Global Journal Al Thaqafah	6
Journal Of Islamic Monetary Economics And Finance	5
Journal Of King Abdulaziz University Islamic Economics	4
Qualitative Research In Financial Markets	3
Journal Of Islamic Accounting And Business Research	3
International Journal Of Islamic And Middle Eastern Finance And Management	3
International Journal Of Innovation Creativity And Change	3
International Journal Of Ethics And Systems	3
Padjadjaran Jurnal Ilmu Hukum	2
Opcion	2

Source: Processed data (2023)

Among the 77 sample articles, the journal that emerged as the most prolific publisher of waqf research for welfare improvement was Global Journal Al Thaqafah, with a total of 6 articles. The second position was secured by the Journal of Islamic Monetary Economics and Finance, which published 5 articles. The third-largest contributor to the publication of waqf articles related to welfare was the Journal of King Abdulaziz University Islamic Economics, with a total of 4 articles.

**Table 4.** Documents by country

Country	Documents
Indonesia	34
Malaysia	29
Bangladesh	4
Germany	3
United Kingdom	3
Brunei Darussalam	2
India	2
Nigeria	2
Qatar	2
Saudi Arabia	2

Source: Processed data (2023)

A total of 19 countries have contributed to the collection of documents, reflecting a global interest in the theme of waqf for welfare improvement across several continents. Notably, the three most active countries in terms of publishing on this theme are Indonesia with 34 articles, Malaysia with 29 articles, and Bangladesh with 4 articles. It's intriguing to observe that among the top ten most productive countries in terms of publications, seven are nations with the largest Muslim populations. This observation suggests that the discussion on waqf holds particular interest and significance for Muslim-majority countries.

To identify the most dominant themes discussed in waqf literature related to welfare improvement, a Co-occurrences Analysis, also known as Co-word Analysis, was employed. Author keywords were chosen as they effectively encapsulate the content of the articles, as highlighted by Comerio and Strozzi (2019). Co-occurrences, in this context, refer to instances where two keywords appear together in an article, indicating a relationship between the corresponding concepts, as described by Baker et al. (2020). This analytical approach is instrumental in determining the prevalent themes that capture the attention of researchers. The analysis of keywords plays a crucial role in gauging performance, tracking innovation, and assessing the flow of information, as emphasized by Wormell (2000).

**Table 5.** Number of studies on the role of waqf on poverty

Keywords	Occurrences	Total Link Strength
Waqf	26	108
Cash waqf	13	50
Malaysia	7	43
Islamic Social Finance	4	31
Islamism	2	29
Zakat	3	26
Charity	2	25
Indonesia	3	25
Finance	2	22
Islamic microfinance	4	22

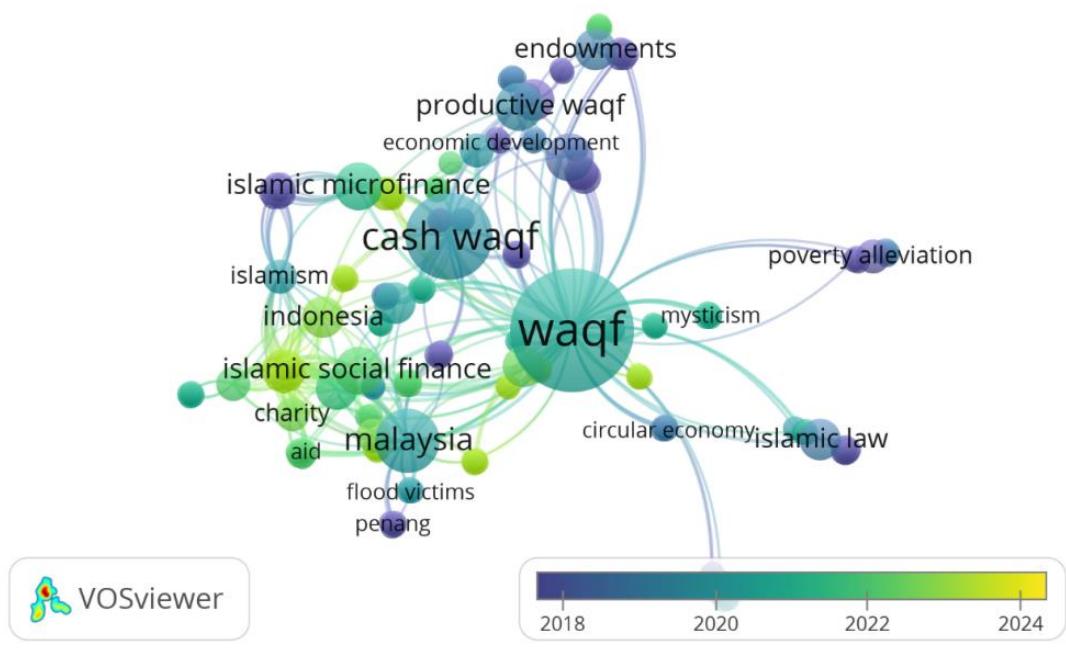
Source: Processed data (2023)

To discern the popularity of keywords in the 77 articles, their strength of relationship was assessed. The greater the value, the more pronounced the interest of researchers in a particular research theme. The three most popular keywords are identified as Waqf, Cash Waqf, and Malaysia. The top keyword, Waqf, encompasses 26 keywords with a total link strength of 108. Cash Waqf follows in second place with 13 keywords and a total link strength of 50, while Malaysia secures the third position with 7 keywords and a total link strength of 43. This analysis

provides valuable insights into the focal points capturing researchers' attention within the waqf literature related to welfare improvement.

In the visual representation, nodes are illustrated as small circles, symbolizing articles, journals, authors, or countries that are the subjects of analysis. The connecting lines, known as edges, depict relationships between nodes. The proximity of two nodes not only signifies their relationship but also conveys the strength of that relationship. The thickness of the line connecting nodes indicates the strength of their relationship; thicker lines denote stronger connections. Additionally, the size of the circle points corresponds to the number of documents citing them—the larger the circle, the greater the number of citations for that particular node. This visual depiction provides an effective means of understanding the relationships and significance of elements within the analyzed network.

**Figure 3.** Overlay visualization of co-occurrences



Overlay analysis reveals that the most dominant recent studies, particularly those emerging in the range of 2023, are characterized by keywords such as Waqf, Cash Waqf, Malaysia, Islamic Social Finance, Islamism, Zakat, Charity, Indonesia, Finance, and Islamic Microfinance.

To discern trends in research development, co-citation analysis has been employed. This analysis, based on cited referencing, has revealed three distinct clusters in the literature related to waqf on welfare improvements. These clusters are identified as the red cluster, green cluster, and blue cluster.

## Discussion

Co-citation analysis, a method introduced by Small in 1973, gauges the frequency with which two articles are cited together. In bibliometric networks, this analysis unveils the intellectual structure of a field, showcasing its development and direction (Rossetto et al., 2018; Liu et al.,

2015). The assumption is that when two publications are similar and cited together, they likely share related subject matter (Hjørland, 2013).

In order to discern trends in research development, researchers utilized clustering, forming several clusters to identify patterns of interrelation and collaboration (Xu et al., 2018). Each cluster, a set of closely related nodes, is assigned a different color to illustrate its thematic focus (Eck & Waltman, 2014). This co-citation analysis resulted in three distinct clusters in waqf literature for welfare improvements: the red cluster, green cluster, and blue cluster.

The red cluster primarily delves into the role of cash waqf in enhancing social and economic growth. It explores how cash waqf can empower impoverished communities, fostering independence and dignity. Economically, it is seen as a catalyst for entrepreneurship through interest-free loans, with potential as a financial product to fund diverse goods and services globally, benefiting both individuals and countries.

The green cluster focuses on the opportunities and threats of waqf in community empowerment. It highlights the potential of waqf social finance to fund projects alleviating poverty in developing countries. However, challenges include the diminishing value of capital, emphasizing the importance of protective measures such as takaful funds and profit equalization reserves for microfinance institutions.

The blue cluster revolves around the application of waqf to support state needs. Historically, the waqf system provided essential services without cost to the state. Modernizing this system could lead to significant reductions in government expenditure, downsizing of the state sector, and elimination of usury. The potential lies in cash waqf, not only in financing religious fields but also in funding global necessities like education, health, social services, commercial activities, basic infrastructure, and widespread employment.

In summary, the clusters highlight the significance of cash waqf as an innovative product in waqf literature for welfare improvement. This approach has both opportunities and threats and extends benefits not only to individuals but also to groups, including the state. It presents a potential solution for countries heavily reliant on debt instruments for budget financing.

## **CONCLUSION**

This research aims to create a development map of waqf literature on welfare improvements, illustrating the increasing trend in Scopus-indexed publications on this topic over the years. The peak productivity in waqf for welfare studies was observed in 2019, with 15 studies published. The predominant themes in this research field include Waqf, Cash Waqf, and Malaysia, constituting common threads in investigations on waqf for welfare improvement. The broader thematic landscape encompasses Waqf, Cash Waqf, Malaysia, Islamic Social Finance, Islamism, Zakat, Charity, Indonesia, Finance, and Islamic Microfinance. The study identifies three clusters: cash waqf for maximizing prosperity in society and economics, exploring opportunities and threats of cash waqf, and investigating the beneficiaries of waqf for both individuals and the state.

This study holds significance for various stakeholders. Firstly, for researchers, it serves as a reference for future studies by highlighting gaps and limitations in existing literature, encouraging the production of high-quality work. Secondly, practitioners and regulators can use the findings to inform policies, fostering collaboration between researchers, practitioners, and regulators in shaping the future of Islamic banks. Lastly, the research contributes to the body of waqf literature, enriching the understanding of this field.

While providing a comprehensive picture of waqf research on welfare improvement through bibliometric analysis and structured literature review, the study acknowledges certain limitations. It solely relies on the Scopus database for data collection, leaving room for future research to explore additional databases such as the Web of Science and Google Scholar. Furthermore, the study's scope could be expanded by incorporating narrower themes within Islamic economics and finance in subsequent investigations.

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