

Qur'anic Studies in the Global Academic Sphere: Bibliometric Mapping of Research Themes, Collaborations, and Emerging Directions

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ABSTRACT

The study of Qur'anic Sciences has long been a central focus within Islamic scholarship, yet comprehensive mapping of its global trajectories, collaborations, and emerging themes remains insufficiently addressed. This study aims to critically analyze the dynamics of Qur'anic Studies in the global academic sphere by identifying dominant themes, evaluating patterns of scholarly collaboration, and exploring the extent to which the field is diversifying into new disciplinary domains. Bibliometric analysis was employed as the primary method, using bibliographic data indexed in Scopus between 2001 and 2025. Harzing's *Publish or Perish* (PoP) facilitated quantitative analysis, while VOSviewer was utilized for visualizing co-authorship networks, institutional clusters, and thematic density. The findings reveal that Qur'anic Studies continues to be shaped by individualistic scholarship, with a low co-authorship rate averaging one author per publication and moderate citation performance, reflected in an h-index of 7 and a g-index of 9. Thematic mapping highlights the persistent dominance of research on tafsir, hermeneutics, and contextual approaches, but also shows emerging directions connecting the Qur'an with education, public health, digital technology, and interfaith dialogue. Geographically, Southeast Asia—particularly Indonesia and Malaysia—emerges as the most productive hub, while Middle Eastern and Western institutions remain influential yet less collaborative across regions. Theoretically, this study underscores a critical paradox: while the field is experiencing thematic diversification, its fragmented networks and limited methodological innovations risk confining Qur'anic Studies to regional silos rather than advancing it as a globally dialogical discipline. Strengthening transnational collaboration, fostering interdisciplinary approaches, and promoting embodied engagement with contemporary issues are necessary steps to reposition Qur'anic Studies as a central node in broader academic and intellectual discourses.

Keywords: *Qur'anic Sciences, Bibliometric Analysis, Research Trends.*

Introduction

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The Qur'an is the central text in Islamic teachings, serving as the primary guide for Muslims in various aspects of life, thought, and spirituality. The study of the Qur'an, or *Qur'anic Studies*, encompasses a broad spectrum of disciplines, ranging from tafsir (exegesis), Qur'anic linguistics, the history of codification, theology, to fiqh (jurisprudence) derived from the Qur'an. Furthermore, contemporary developments highlight how the Qur'an is positioned as a source of ethics and values in addressing the challenges of the modern era, including issues such as pluralism, the environment, gender, education, and technology.¹ With its broad scope, Qur'anic Studies plays a crucial role in exploring the depth of religious teachings, providing practical guidance, and offering perspectives on navigating the complexities of the modern world.

In recent decades, global academic interest in Qur'anic Studies has increased significantly. This phenomenon has been driven not only by growing religious awareness among Muslims, but also by advances in information technology that have facilitated access to primary and secondary sources. Furthermore, the urgency of a more contextual understanding of the Qur'an amid global socio-political dynamics has made this field relevant for interfaith dialogue and intercultural understanding.² Thus, Qur'anic Studies is no longer merely an internal concern of the Muslim community but has become an important gateway for the global community to understand Islamic civilization and its developmental dynamics.

Nevertheless, the development of Qur'anic Studies in the global academic sphere still shows dynamics that need to be studied more systematically. To date, academic debates have tended to focus on comparisons between classical exegetical methodologies and modern hermeneutical approaches, or between philological studies and interdisciplinary approaches.³ Criticism has also been directed at the dominance of Orientalist perspectives, which are considered insufficiently accommodating of the internal epistemological framework of Muslims.⁴ On the other hand, the emergence of research centers in Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia and Malaysia, underscores an increasingly significant epistemological shift in the global discourse. The presence of contextual exegesis and research works from this region indicates that the production of knowledge in Qur'anic Studies is now multipolar, no longer dominated by a single academic tradition.⁵

To understand the structure and direction of a discipline's development, bibliometrics offers a systematic quantitative approach through statistical analysis of scientific publications. This method can reveal hidden patterns, intellectual structures, research trends over time, and

¹ M Anshori, "Trends in Discourse on Qur'anic Studies from an Orientalist Perspective in the West," *Nun: Journal of Qur'anic Studies and Exegesis in the Archipelago*, no. Query date: 2025-05-03 10:08:21 (2018), <https://jurnalnun.iait.or.id/index.php/nun/article/view/35>; Rofiqoh Nurul Ashfiya', "New Direction of the Qur'an Interpretation in Indonesia: A Study of Nadirsyah Hosen's Interpretation on Social Media," *Al-Karim: International Journal of Quranic and Islamic Studies* 2, no. 2 (August 2024): 2, <https://doi.org/10.33367/al-karim.v2i2.5254>; Andri Nirwana A.N. et al., "Mapping Quranic Exegesis Research: Trends, Contributions, and Future Directions," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 13 (January 2025): 319, <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v13i1.1250>.

² H. A. Abdelghfar et al., "A Model for Qur'anic Sign Language Recognition Based on Deep Learning Algorithms," *Journal of Sensors* 2023 (2023), Scopus, <https://doi.org/10.1155/2023/9926245>; M.M. Al Anazi and O.R. Shahin, "A Machine Learning Model for the Identification of the Holy Quran Reciter Utilizing K-Nearest Neighbor and Artificial Neural Networks," *Information Sciences Letters* 11, no. 4 (2022): 1093–102, Scopus, <https://doi.org/10.18576/isl/110410>.

³ M. Amin Abdullah, *Multidisciplinary, Interdisciplinary, & Transdisciplinary: Methods of Religious Studies & Islamic Studies in the Contemporary Era* (Yogyakarta: IB Pustaka, 2020).

⁴ A.N. Andri Nirwana, M. Ali, and A.R.B.S. Senathirajah, "The Intersection of Quranic Studies and Modern Technology: A Bibliometric Analysis of Academic Publications from 2000 to 2024," *Qubaban Academic Journal* 4, no. 4 (2024): 178–90, Scopus, <https://doi.org/10.48161/qaj.v4n4a981>.

⁵ L. Afandi and M.M. Abd Razzak, "The progress of the Quranic scientific exegesis in South-East Asia," *Al-Bayan* 19, no. 2 (2021): 228–56, Scopus, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22321969-12340104>.

collaboration networks among researchers. The application of bibliometrics in Islamic studies is not new, as numerous studies have employed similar analyses to map specific subdisciplines such as tafsir (Qur'anic exegesis),⁶ Qur'anic linguistics,⁷ Islamic education,⁸ and the relationship between the Qur'an and issues such as health or technology.⁹ These studies provide valuable contributions, such as identifying trends in the increase of publications, the dominance of contributions from Southeast Asia, or the emergence of certain universities as productive research centers. However, their limitation lies in their partial focus—highlighting only one subtheme or specific area.

This condition indicates a *research gap* in the form of a need for a more comprehensive mapping of Qur'anic Studies as a global field of study. Overly fragmented analysis of sub-themes causes us to lose a holistic picture of the direction of development, interconnections between fields, and the map of international collaboration.¹⁰ Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by presenting a *global mapping* of Qur'anic Studies based on the latest bibliometric data from Scopus. This approach not only enables the tracking of the most influential academic actors, citation trends, and collaboration patterns but also maps dominant research themes and emerging new directions.

For researchers, the results of bibliometric analysis can help identify research gaps that have yet to be explored, discover potential collaborators with similar research interests, and understand the intellectual landscape of their field. Meanwhile, for academic institutions and policymakers, bibliometric mapping provides a solid data foundation for strategic planning, research resource allocation, research performance evaluation, and the formulation of science development policies.¹¹ The application of bibliometric analysis in the context of Islamic Studies and the Qur'an is not a new concept. Several previous studies have utilized this method to map specific subfields, often by utilizing the Scopus database. Examples include bibliometric analyses on Qur'anic Studies and Tafsir, the development of Qur'anic Studies in general, Qur'anic Exegesis, the relationship between the Qur'an and Health, Qur'anic Linguistics, the Qur'an and Technology, Islamic Studies in general, Islamic Education, Islamic Finance, and others.¹²

These studies consistently report several common findings, such as the trend of increasing publication numbers over time, although it sometimes fluctuates. Southeast Asian countries, particularly Malaysia and Indonesia, often emerge as the most productive contributors in terms of the number of publications. Prominent institutions from these countries, such as the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), University of Malaya (UM), and Universiti Kebangsaan

⁶ Raden Ayu Halima, "Bibliometric Analysis of Quran Recitation Development in Scopus International Database Publications 1974-2024," *Bulletin of Islamic Research* 3, no. 3 (May 2025): 513–26, <https://doi.org/10.69526/bir.v3i3.369>.

⁷ Nadirotul Aini and Nur Aima Shafie, "Trends and Developments in Quranic Linguistic Research: A Bibliometric Analysis Based on Scopus Data," *Journal of Islam and Contemporary Society* 25, no. 2 (August 2024): 1–22, <https://doi.org/10.37231/jimk.2024.25.2.879>.

⁸ Zulfatun Ni'mah, Chelsi Ariati, and Suparman, "Trends in Studies on Islamic Education Pedagogy: A Bibliometric Analysis with Implications for Character Education," *Journal of Islamic Education* 12, no. 1 (June 2023): 35–55, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpi.2022.112.35-55>.

⁹ Akhmed K. Kaleel, Amr Assad, and Mohammed Fyadh, "Quranic Studies Evolution: A Bibliometric Analysis from 1880 to 2023," *Mesopotamian Journal of Quran Studies* 2024 (January 2024): 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.58496/MJQS/2024/001>.

¹⁰ Umi Fadhilah, Kharis Nugroho, and Alfiyatul Azizah, "Development of Al-Qur'an Interpretation Research in the Digital Era: A Bibliometric Approach with R for Statistical Computing," *Proceedings of ISETH (International Summit on Science, Technology, and Humanity)*, 2023, 1498–509, <https://doi.org/10.23917/iseth.4332>.

¹¹ Musyarrafah Sulaiman Kurdi and Muqarramah Sulaiman Kurdi, "Bibliometric analysis in education research: Theory and implementation," *Journal on Education* 3, no. 4 (2021): 518–37.

¹² Nirwana A.N. et al., "Mapping Quranic Exegesis Research: Trends, Contributions, and Future Directions."

Malaysia (UKM), also frequently dominate the list of the most productive affiliations. The use of software such as VOSviewer and R (specifically the Bibliometrix/Biblioshiny packages) has also become the de facto standard in data analysis and visualization.¹³

Although analyses in specific subfields have made valuable contributions, there is a need for a more comprehensive global mapping of the field of "Qur'anic Studies" as a whole, using the latest Scopus data. Previous analyses, which have focused on themes such as Tafsir, Linguistics, or Technology, indicate the ongoing development of specialization within Qur'anic Studies. However, these specialized areas remain interconnected under a larger umbrella. The use of consistent bibliometric methods across these subfields reveals a methodological convergence. Therefore, a broader analysis could synthesize these specialized perspectives, providing a holistic view while still acknowledging the internal diversity revealed by previous studies. This research aims to fill this gap by presenting a structured, data-driven global research map.

Method

This study employs bibliometric analysis methodology as the main approach to explore and map the global development and trends in Qur'anic Studies. Bibliometric analysis is a quantitative method used to measure and analyze scientific literature based on bibliographic data available in indexed academic databases. In this study, the mapping is conducted solely using the Scopus-indexed database. This approach is chosen because it provides an objective overview of the dynamics of research in a specific field, including aspects such as author productivity, source distribution, scientific collaboration, and frequently occurring keywords.¹⁴

In the implementation of this research, two main supporting software tools were used: Harzing's Publish or Perish (PoP) and VOSviewer, each of which has complementary functions and roles. This process was carried out through five systematic and measurable steps aimed at producing an objective, relevant, and academically accountable scientific mapping. The first step begins with defining search keywords, an important phase in determining the direction of literature search. In this stage, the researcher established the phrase "Studi Ilmu Al-Qur'an" as the primary focus, translated into relevant English equivalents such as Qur'anic Studies, Tafsir Studies, Quranic Interpretation, and other similar terms. This step aims to capture various terminological variations commonly used in international publications, thus broadening and making the data coverage more comprehensive and representative.¹⁵

The next step involves conducting the initial search results through the Scopus platform, using previously defined keywords. This process generates an initial dataset, including journal articles, scientific proceedings, books, and other academic documents related to the study of Qur'anic Sciences within a specific time frame, such as from 2001 to 2025. The languages included in the search are focused on English and Arabic, as they are the primary languages for the dis al

¹³ Windi Ayuni, Andri Nirwana, and Ahmad Nurrohim, "Bibliometric Analysis of the Development Map and Research Trends in Qur'anic Studies and Tafseer: A Scopus Database Exploration (1974–2023)," *Journal of Qur'an and Hadith Studies* 12, no. 2 (2023): 95–116, <https://doi.org/10.15408/quhas.v12i2.36191>.

¹⁴ Muhammad Iqbal Nurfauzan and Hanani Faizatunnisa, "Bibliometric Analysis of COVID-19 Research Trends in Indonesia in the Field of Business and Management," *Journal of Business Strategy* 30, no. 2 (2021): 90–100, <https://doi.org/10.14710/jbs.30.2.90-100>.

¹⁵ Pisuko Herawati, Sawitri Budi Utami, and Nina Karlina, "Bibliometric Analysis: Development of Research and Publications on Program Coordination Using Vosviewer," *Journal of Cultural Heritage* 9, no. 1 (2022): 1–8, <https://doi.org/10.31849/pb.v9i1.8599>.

dissemination of Qur'anic studies in the global academic realm. From this, the researcher obtains an initial overview of the volume and types of publications relevant to the study topic.

The third stage involves refining the search results. In this phase, a curation and filtering process is conducted based on pre-established inclusion and exclusion criteria. These criteria include document types (limited to journal articles and scientific proceedings), content relevance to the field of Qur'anic Studies, and the quality of the publication source (in this study, only journals indexed in Scopus quartile Q1 to Q3 are considered). This process aims to enhance the validity of the analysis by involving only literature that is substantially relevant and academically credible, ensuring that the final results accurately reflect the current and real state of the studied field.

The fourth step involves compiling statistics on the initial data. After the data has been filtered, bibliographic information is exported in standard formats such as RIS or CSV for further processing using bibliometric software like VOSviewer, Bibliometrix R, or even Microsoft Excel. This compilation produces initial descriptive statistics, such as the number of publications per year, geographic distribution of authors, institutional affiliations, citation counts, and the frequency of key term occurrences. These statistical data provide a foundation for understanding the structure and dynamics of Qur'anic Studies literature on a broader scale.

The fifth step is data analysis, conducted using a visual and quantitative approach with VOSviewer. In this phase, the compiled data is analyzed to reveal collaboration patterns among authors (co-authorship), citation relationships between authors or documents (co-citation), and co-occurrence of key terms. This analysis also includes the identification of dominant thematic topics within the research period. The results of this analysis are presented in the form of an interactive bibliometric map, which illustrates intellectual networks, prominent research centers, and thematic trends within Qur'anic Studies. Thus, this research not only presents statistical information but also provides a deep understanding of the structure and future direction of Qur'anic Studies research within the context of the global academic community.

2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. The Top 10 Articles Indexed in Scopus Identified through Harzing's Publish or Perish (PoP)

No	Cites	Author	Title	Year	Publication
1	1	J. Pink	Tradition and ideology in contemporary Sunni Qur'anic exegesis: Qur'anic commentaries from the Arab world, Turkey, and Indonesia and their interpretation of Q 5:51 ¹⁶	2010	World of Islam
2	11	Syarif	Understanding the Teaching of Religious Moderation from a Sufistic Perspective and Its Implications for Student Performance ¹⁷	2021	Journal of Social Studies Education Research

¹⁶ Johanna Pink, *Tradition and Ideology in Contemporary Sunnite Qur'anic Exegesis: Qur'anic Commentaries from the Arab World, Turkey and Indonesia and Their Interpretation of Q 5:51*, Brill, January 1, 2010, <https://doi.org/10.1163/157006010X489801>.

¹⁷ Syarif Syarif, "Understanding the Teaching of Religious Moderation from a Sufistic Perspective and Its Implications for Student Performance," *Journal of Social Studies Education Research* 12, no. 4 (December 2021): 4.

3	11	Z.I. Ansari	Scientific Exegesis of the Qur'an ¹⁸	2001	Journal of Qur'anic Studies
4	10	N.B. Ismail	Qur'anic exegesis, reformism, and women in twentieth-century Indonesia ¹⁹	2017	Islamic Studies
5	8	D. Bondarev	Qur'anic exegesis in old Kanembu: Linguistic precision for better interpretation ²⁰	2013	Journal of Qur'anic Studies
6	7	H. Hasan	Polygamy: Uncovering the effect of patriarchal ideology on gender-biased interpretation ²¹	2022	HTS Theological Studies
7	7	M. Daneshgar	The Qur'an in the Malay-Indonesian World: Context and Interpretation ²²	2016	The Qur'an in the Malay-Indonesian World: Context and Interpretation
8	7	L. Afandi	The progress of Quranic scientific exegesis in Southeast Asia ²³	2020	Al-Bayan
9	6	S.A. Acim	The Concept of Fiqh Al-Bī'ah in the Qur'an: A Study of the Quranic Verses on Environment in the Ulama's Views of Lombok ²⁴	2023	Ulumuna
10	6	A. Mustaqim	The epistemology of Javanese Qur'anic exegesis: A study of Ṣāliḥ Darat's Fayḍ al-Raḥmān ²⁵	2017	Al-Jami'ah

Table 2. Citation Metrics – Harzing's Publish or Perish

¹⁸ Zafar Ishaq Ansari, "Scientific Exegesis of the Qur'an," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 3, no. 1 (April 2001): 91–104, <https://doi.org/10.3366/jqs.2001.3.1.91>.

¹⁹ Norbani B. Ismail, "The Quranic Exegesis, Reformism, and Women in Twentieth Century Indonesia," *Studia Islamika* 24, no. 3 (December 2017): 3, <https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v24i3.5187>.

²⁰ Dmitry Bondarev, "Qur'anic Exegesis in Old Kanembu: Linguistic Precision for Better Interpretation," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 15, no. 3 (October 2013): 56–83, <https://doi.org/10.3366/jqs.2013.0114>.

²¹ H. Hasan et al., "Polygamy: Uncovering the effect of patriarchal ideology on gender-biased interpretation," *HTS Theological Studies / Theological Studies* 78, no. 4 (2022), Scopus, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v78i4.7970>.

²² M. Daneshgar, PG Riddell, and A Rippin, *The Qur'an in the Malay-Indonesian World: Context and Interpretation* (books.google.com, 2016), https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=grhTDAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&q=qur%27anic+learning+and+quranic+learning+in+indonesia&ots=BKtyWs_aFR&sig=cZscwUAI2bqvFlisQ51Dz3jdJFM.

²³ Afandi and Abd Razzak, "The progress of the Quranic scientific exegesis in South-East Asia."

²⁴ Subhan Abdullah Acim and Suharti Suharti, "The Concept of Fiqh Al-Bī'ah in the Qur'an: A Study of the Quranic Verses on Environment in the Ulama's Views of Lombok," *Ulumuna* 27, no. 1 (June 2023): 115–40, <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujs.v27i1.694>.

²⁵ Abdul Mustaqim, "The Epistemology of Javanese Qur'anic Exegesis: A Study of Ṣāliḥ Darat's Fayḍ al-Raḥmān," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 55, no. 2 (December 2017): 357–90, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2017.552.357-390>.

Analysis Period: 2001–2025 (24 years)

Metric	Value
Publication years	2001
Citation years	24
Number of papers	114
Total citations	228
Citations per year	9.50 (<i>acc1=23, acc2=10, acc5=1, acc10=0, acc20=0</i>)
Citations per paper	2
Citations per author	228
Papers per author	114
Authors per paper (mean/median/mode)	1.00 / 1.0 / 1
Age-weighted citation rate	60.01 (<i>sqrt=7.75</i>)
Age-weighted rate per author	60.01
Hirsch h-index	7 (<i>a=4.65, m=0.29</i>) – 73 citations = 32.0% coverage
Egghe g-index	9 (<i>g/h=1.29</i>) – 86 citations = 37.7% coverage
PoP hI _{norm}	7
PoP hI _{annual}	0
Fassin hA-index	3

A bibliometric analysis of the global research landscape in the field of Qur'anic Studies from 2001 to 2025, based on data from Harzing's Publish or Perish, reveals an academic dynamic that is relatively conservative and focused, yet shows potential for improvement in both quality and scholarly collaboration in the future. Over the course of 24 years, the analysis recorded 114 publications with a total of 228 citations. This results in an average of 9.50 citations per year and 2.00 citations per article, indicating that each publication receives relatively low but consistent citation attention. The citation rate per author also matches the total number of citations at 228, while the number of articles per author is 114. This demonstrates that the average author contribution is individualistic—with only one author per article consistently (mean/median/mode: 1.00/1.0/1). This reflects a weak level of collaboration in Qur'anic Studies research at the global level, or at least within the publications indexed by the database used.

The age-weighted citation rate (AWCR) of 60.01 reinforces the conclusion that although citation frequency is not quantitatively high, the temporal contribution is quite significant. The square root value (*sqrt*) of 7.75 suggests that the impact of certain articles might be historically stronger, even though this influence is not evenly distributed. From the perspective of the Hirsch index (h-index), a value of 7 with an average citation per contributing article (*a*) of 4.65 and an *m*-index of 0.29 indicates that while some authors have recurring academic impact, the growth rate of this impact is relatively slow. This implies that the field may be experiencing stagnation in terms of scientific visibility and global influence.

The Egghe *g*-index of 9 suggests a slightly higher number of prominent works compared to the h-index. However, the *g/h* ratio of only 1.29 indicates that the citation advantage is not significantly beyond the minimum standard. With a citation coverage of 37.7% (86 out of 228 citations), there remains substantial potential for other studies to enhance citation influence in the

“Indonesia” as an independent node highlights the strengthening of locally contextualized research and Indonesia’s role as one of the emerging centers for Qur’anic Studies. This is evidenced by its connections to themes such as “commentary,” “methodology,” and “academic distribution,” pointing to Indonesia’s scholarly contributions in disseminating discourse and interpretive methodologies at the international level. On another note, terms such as “hermeneutics” and “apologetics” reflect the diversity of theoretical foundations and critical approaches adopted by researchers in their efforts to understand the Qur’anic text. These range from historical approaches to debates surrounding the defense of religious doctrines and interpretive methods.

Overall, the map reveals that Qur’anic Studies is largely centered around the interpretation of meaning, methodological development, and the application of tafsir in various socio-cultural contexts. The high degree of interconnection among topics reflects the growth of interdisciplinary approaches, linking themes such as “guidance,” “conceptualization,” and “contextual approach,” which promote more comprehensive research. Therefore, current research trends are not solely focused on theological or textual aspects but have expanded into critical, historical, and broader socio-cultural analyses. This map demonstrates the evolution of Qur’anic Studies into a diverse and open discipline, characterized by a variety of methodologies, geographical contexts (especially Indonesia), and the integration of modern theories in understanding the Islamic sacred text.

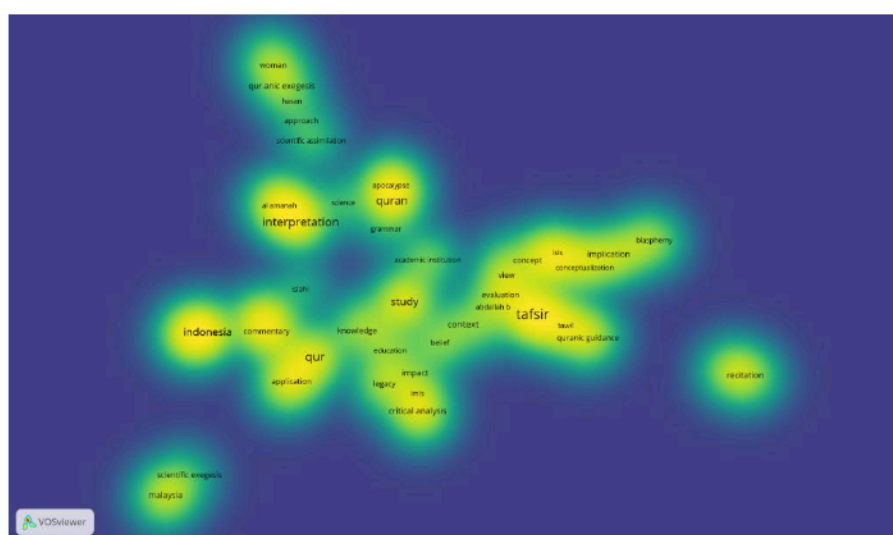


Figure 2. Visualization of the Research Depth (Density) Trend

A bibliometric analysis of the global research map on Qur’anic Studies, visualized through Density Visualization, reveals several clusters of keywords that indicate the main fields of study and thematic tendencies among researchers. It is evident that the keywords “Quran,” “interpretation,” and “tafsir” occupy central positions with the highest density, reflecting a strong scholarly focus on the interpretation of the Qur’anic text and the diverse methods of exegesis. Surrounding these core terms are keywords such as “Qur’anic guidance,” “study,” and “analysis,” which demonstrate academic attention to the application, evaluation, and critical analytical processes involved in understanding the verses. At a glance, one can observe efforts to integrate scientific exegesis, socio-cultural contextual approaches, and contemporary issues—such as “blasphemy,” “implication,” and “conceptualization”—into Qur’anic studies.

Interestingly, there is also notable density around the keywords “Indonesia” and “Malaysia,” suggesting a strong research interest from Muslim-majority countries in Southeast Asia, particularly

in exploring contextual approaches and developing Qur'anic learning methods. This trend is further evidenced by the appearance of keywords like “education,” “critical analysis,” and “logic,” which reflect the growing tendency toward critical thinking in approaching the revealed text. Thus, the overall density map confirms that global Qur'anic Studies do not solely revolve around textual readings but have dynamically expanded to include hermeneutical exploration, interdisciplinary approaches, and the application of Qur'anic values within contemporary realities.

Discussion

The study of the Qur'an has been the center of gravity in the structure of Islamic epistemology since its inception. It not only shaped the tradition of exegesis but also permeated various other disciplines such as law, theology, philosophy, and even mysticism, thereby solidifying its role as the foundation of Islamic civilization.²⁶ However, when this field of study was transferred into the modern global academic sphere, which is more pluralistic, secular, and methodological, epistemological and practical problems emerged that cannot be overlooked.²⁷ One fundamental question is how Qur'anic Studies negotiates with academic structures that prioritize certain parameters, such as publication productivity, international connectivity, and citation influence, which are essentially born from Western social science and humanities traditions. This question becomes increasingly relevant because scholarly authority is no longer determined solely by the depth of internal normative discourse, but also by a field's ability to engage in interdisciplinary and intercultural scientific discourse.

It is in this context that epistemological tensions arise. On the one hand, Qur'anic Studies has a long tradition with distinctive normative, theological, and hermeneutical characteristics. On the other hand, the globalization of science demands the adoption of analytical instruments such as bibliometrics, scientometrics, and network analysis, which are rooted in positivistic epistemology.²⁸ This tension raises critical questions: can bibliometric mapping truly capture the complexity of Qur'anic Studies discourse, which is often interpretive and normative? Or, conversely, does this approach reduce the richness of Qur'anic scholarship to mere numbers, graphs, and trends that risk overlooking substantial dimensions?

Nevertheless, bibliometrics continues to play an important role in uncovering layers of knowledge that are invisible to conventional thematic analysis. It allows us to empirically trace the direction of Qur'anic Studies: which countries dominate publications, which themes are on the rise, how patterns of academic collaboration are formed, and how influential these works are in global discourse.²⁹ From this, it becomes clear that Qur'anic Studies does not exist in a vacuum but

²⁶ Hussein Abdul-Raof, *Theological Approaches to Qur'anic Exegesis: A Practical Comparative-Contrastive Analysis* (London: Routledge, 2012), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203127018>.

²⁷ Ali Suleiman Ali, *A Brief Introduction to Qur'anic Exegesis* (International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), 2017).

²⁸ Kaleel, Assad, and Fyadh, “Qur'anic Studies Evolution”; Halima, “Bibliometric Analysis of Quran Recitation Development in Scopus International Database Publications 1974-2024”; Nurul Latifatul Inayati and Annas Fajar Rohmani, “Bibliometric Analysis of Religious Education Systems in Schools: Trends, Themes, and Future Directions,” *Multicultural Islamic Education Review* 3, no. 1 (2025): 105–20.

²⁹ Ayuni, Nirwana, and Nurrohim, “Bibliometric Analysis of the Development Map and Research Trends in Qur'anic Studies and Tafseer: A Scopus Database Exploration (1974-2023).”

operates within a scientific ecosystem influenced by knowledge politics, disparities in access to resources, and the dominance of certain epistemologies.³⁰

Thus, the urgency of bibliometric studies on Qur'anic Studies is not merely to add quantitative data on publication trends, but also to open up space for criticism of the distribution of global knowledge authority. Are Muslim countries capable of becoming centers of knowledge production, or are they merely consumers and peripheral participants in international academic discourse? Does Qur'anic scholarship from the Islamic world have significant resonance beyond its own community, or is it still trapped within the limitations of language, methodology, and scientific networks? These questions demand serious attention to ensure that Qur'anic Studies is not merely present in statistics but also secures a strategic position within the broader currents of contemporary scholarship.³¹

Substantially, serious gaps in Qur'anic Studies discourse when placed in a global context reveal unresolved epistemological problems. The surge in publications does indicate academic vitality, but the low level of scientific collaboration indicates a tendency toward atomistic development in this field.³² This pattern is reminiscent of the classical tradition of tafsir, which relied on the personal authority of a mufassir, where credibility and legitimacy were more often centered on the figure rather than on a collective discursive network.³³ The critical question that arises is whether this phenomenon is merely a structural legacy of the classical Islamic scholarly tradition, or whether it is more due to the failure of contemporary Muslim scholars to build epistemological bridges with the global research ecosystem based on interdisciplinary collaboration.

From Fazlur Rahman's conceptual framework of the double movement, we can critique that the stagnation in Qur'anic Studies innovation actually lies in the failure to move the text from its historical horizon to a broader ethical horizon. Many publications still focus on literal or limited contextual interpretations, without engaging in the double movement of " " that brings the Qur'an into academic discourse with the challenges of the modern world, such as environmental ethics, gender equality, or global social justice.³⁴ In this regard, Fazlur Rahman's ideas demand the courage to break free from the repetitive reproduction of classical discourse.

Abdullah Saeed, with his contextualist hermeneutics approach, also offers implicit criticism of this condition. For Saeed, the limitations of innovation in Qur'anic studies are not merely methodological problems, but also epistemological problems of courage in negotiating the text with contemporary reality. The entrapment in traditional themes reveals the weakness of academic imagination in bringing Qur'anic Studies into the interdisciplinary realm. However, when read through Saeed's framework, the Qur'an actually demands constant connection with the needs of modern humans, thereby making it relevant in the midst of debates in the social sciences, digital humanities, and even artificial intelligence.³⁵

³⁰ Andri Nirwana et al., "Research Trends in Quranic and Biblical Studies: A Bibliometric Analysis of Islamic and Christian Scholarship (2019–2024)," *Revista Iberoamericana de Psicología Del Ejercicio y El Deporte*, *Revista Iberoamericana de Psicología Del Ejercicio y El Deporte* 19, no. 3 (2024): 343–49.

³¹ Halima, "Bibliometric Analysis of Quran Recitation Development in Scopus International Database Publications 1974–2024."

³² M. Amin Abdullah, "Religion, Science, and Culture: An Integrated, Interconnected Paradigm of Science," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 52, no. 1 (June 2014): 175–203, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2014.521.175-203>.

³³ Kaleel, Assad, and Fyadh, "Quranic Studies Evolution."

³⁴ Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur'an: Second Edition* (University of Chicago Press, 2009).

³⁵ Abdullah Saeed, *Interpreting the Qur'an: Towards a Contemporary Approach* (Taylor & Francis, 2006), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203016770>.

Shahrur adds another critical perspective with his idea of *budud* and his rational-constructive methodology. He rejects traditional interpretations by reading the Qur'an as a text that is open to progressive interpretation. However, looking at current global trends in Qur'anic Studies, it can be said that Syahrur's spirit to go beyond classical repetitions has not found widespread resonance. Many publications still tread safely, maintaining traditional authority without the courage to undertake radical reconstruction. This reveals a "crisis of courage" in contemporary academic discourse.³⁶ Meanwhile, Jasser Auda, with his system-based *Maqasid al-Shariah* concept, also offers a sharp critique of the isolation of Qur'anic Studies from global academic discourse. According to Auda, the study of the Qur'an should not stop at textual analysis but must transform into a systemic framework that interacts with global issues such as sustainable development, human rights, ecology, and technology. The low penetration of Qur'anic Studies into the interdisciplinary realm reveals a failure to apply this systemic approach.³⁷ In other words, if Auda's thinking is taken as a reference, then Qur'anic studies should not only be an "internal religious discourse" but also an "epistemic contributor" to contemporary social sciences and humanities.

The phenomenon of the vitality of Qur'anic Studies publications in Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia and Malaysia, can indeed be interpreted as an articulation of the resurgence of non-Arab centers of scholarship.³⁸ This aligns with the thesis that Nusantara Islam possesses a distinct epistemological appeal that is more contextual with social and cultural pluralism. However, when viewed through a critical lens, the low level of international citations indicates a disconnect from broader global networks. There is a certain paradox: on one hand, there is symbolic resistance against Western hegemony and Middle Eastern dominance, but on the other hand, the limitations in the quality and strategy of publications make it difficult for these contributions to resonate globally.³⁹ Thus, what appears as vitality risks becoming academic isolation that produces discourse for local consumption alone.

An analysis of the frameworks of these great thinkers reveals that the global problem of Qur'anic Studies is not merely a technical limitation of publication or low citation rates, but rather a fundamental epistemological issue: the failure to make a conceptual leap that places Qur'anic studies at the heart of global academic discourse.⁴⁰ In other words, the greatest challenge is not merely how to increase publications, but how to articulate Qur'anic Studies as a discipline that dares to engage in dialogue, collaborate, and contribute epistemically to the contemporary global knowledge landscape.⁴¹

These limitations open up room for more fundamental criticism. First, are Qur'anic Studies still seen as a more theological and normative domain, thus tending to be isolated from broader scientific debates in the social sciences, humanities, and sciences? Second, does the low level of

³⁶ Muhammad Shahrur, *The Qur'an, Morality and Critical Reason* (Brill, 2009), <https://brill.com/edcollbook/title/14878>.

³⁷ Jasser Auda, *Maqasid Al-Shari'ah as Philosophy of Islamic Law* (International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), 2022).

³⁸ Nadzrah Ahmad, "Quranic Exegetical Activities In The Malay Archipelago: A Historical Overview," *Al-Shajarah: Journal of the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ISTAC)* 27, no. 1 (June 2022): 1, <https://doi.org/10.31436/shajarah.v27i1.1392>.

³⁹ Azra Azyumardi, "The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern 'Ulama in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century," *New South Wales: Allen & Unwin*, 2004.

⁴⁰ W Astuti and T Kusakabe, "Pesantren and the Re-creation of Islamic Knowledge through the Qur'anic School System Focusing on Teacher Training Education," *TARBIYA: Journal of Education in Muslim ...*, no. Query date: 2025-04-22 18:18:29 (2016), <https://journal.uinjkt.ac.id/index.php/tarbiya/article/view/3223/0>.

⁴¹ Afandi and Abd Razzak, "The progress of the Qur'anic scientific exegesis in South-East Asia."

academic collaboration indicate epistemological resistance to modern research practices that emphasize collective work, or is it more due to structural factors such as limited access to research funding and language barriers? Third, how can we ensure that the diversification of Qur'anic study themes does not merely result in a variety of topics, but also contributes significantly to the development of theories and methodologies that can strengthen the position of Qur'anic Studies in the global academic landscape?

Thus, Qur'anic Studies in the global era faces a double challenge. First, how to avoid normative isolation that renders it irrelevant amid the tide of interdisciplinary scholarship. Second, how to escape the bibliometric trap that risks reducing the complexity of discourse to mere statistical trends. The middle ground is to articulate Qur'anic Studies as a discipline capable of engaging in dialogue, collaboration, and substantive contribution within the global knowledge landscape. This means that Qur'anic Studies must not remain confined to the reproduction of tradition but must transform into a creative, critical, and visionary epistemological space—so that it is truly present not only in publication statistics but also in the global conversations shaping the direction of contemporary civilization.

Conclusion

The bibliometric analysis of Qur'anic Studies within the period 2001–2025 reveals that the field remains in a somewhat stagnant phase of development, marked by a relatively high volume of publications but accompanied by low citation rates and minimal patterns of academic collaboration. The predominance of single-authored works reflects the classical tradition of tafsir centered on the authority of individual mufasssir; yet, in the contemporary global context, such a pattern weakens the visibility and academic resonance of Qur'anic Studies in the international arena. In other words, despite local vitality—particularly in Southeast Asia, especially Indonesia and Malaysia—the field's contributions have yet to significantly cross epistemological boundaries and penetrate global networks.

From a thematic perspective, the research landscape highlights the dominance of “tafsir” and “interpretation” as mainstream topics, with some enrichment in areas such as social issues, education, gender, and the environment. However, when examined critically, this thematic diversification has not been accompanied by significant methodological or epistemological breakthroughs. Much of the scholarship remains trapped in reproducing classical discourses or limited contextual interpretations, rather than undertaking conceptual transformations as proposed by reformist thinkers such as Fazlur Rahman, Abdullah Saeed, Syahrur, or Jasser Auda. The lack of academic courage to extend tafsir discourse into interdisciplinary domains—such as environmental ethics, human rights, technology, and global justice—indicates the presence of an “epistemic imagination crisis” that hinders Qur'anic Studies from competing with other disciplines in the contemporary knowledge landscape.

Epistemologically, Qur'anic Studies continues to grapple with tensions between its normative-theological traditions and the demands of the global academy, which emphasize quantitative indicators, collaboration, and cross-disciplinary interconnectedness. Bibliometric analysis is useful for mapping research trends, but it simultaneously exposes the critique that Qur'anic Studies often appears more as statistical data rather than as a substantive contribution to global scholarly conversations. The low level of international citations and the weakness of collaborative networks indicate that the field still functions more as an internal discourse of the

Muslim community than as an epistemic contributor to the broader currents of global social sciences and humanities.

Thus, the greatest challenge facing Qur'anic Studies in the global era is not merely increasing publication or citation counts, but cultivating epistemological courage to move beyond classical traditions, negotiate with modern methodologies, and position the Qur'an as an ethical and conceptual resource for global discourse. Should the discipline succeed in transforming itself into a creative, critical, and visionary epistemological space, Qur'anic Studies would not only be registered in citation indexes but also recognized as a significant contributor to contemporary knowledge, shaping the very direction of world civilization.

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