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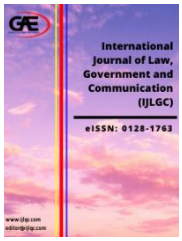

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A BIBLIOMETRIC STUDY OF ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN ISLAMIC INHERITANCE IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract:

This study presents a bibliometric analysis of scholarly publications on Islamic inheritance (Faraid) in Malaysia, focusing on key issues and research challenges within the field. Islamic inheritance represents a critical aspect of Islamic law, yet in the Malaysian context, it faces complexities arising from legal pluralism, cultural influences, and administrative inconsistencies. Despite its importance, there is limited systematic evaluation of the academic trends and patterns associated with this topic. To address this gap, this study applies a bibliometric approach to explore research developments, co-authorship patterns, keyword occurrences, and country-level contributions related to Islamic inheritance. A structured search was carried out using Scopus as the main data source, focusing on three primary keywords: Islamic, inheritance, and succession. The search targeted peer-reviewed journal articles published in English between 2020 and 2025. The dataset was refined and cleaned using OpenRefine, while analysis and visualization were performed using Scopus Analyzer and VOSviewer. A total of 78 documents met the inclusion criteria and were analyzed to identify publication trends, highly cited articles,

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influential authors, commonly used keywords, and active co-authorship networks. The results reveal that Indonesia and Malaysia are the most active contributors to the topic, with "inheritance," "Islamic law," and "Islamic inheritance" being the most frequently occurring keywords. However, co-authorship collaboration remains limited across countries. The findings also highlight that while interest in Islamic inheritance is growing, the research is still fragmented and concentrated within specific regions. This study contributes to the understanding of academic developments in Islamic inheritance research and provides direction for future studies by identifying research gaps, promoting cross-country collaboration, and encouraging a more integrated and multidisciplinary approach to addressing the challenges surrounding Faraid in Malaysia.

Keywords:

Islamic Inheritance, Inheritance, Succession

Introduction

Islamic inheritance, known as Faraid, is a crucial aspect of Islamic law that governs the distribution of a deceased Muslim's estate among their heirs. In Malaysia, the administration of Islamic inheritance is subject to both federal and state laws, creating a complex legal landscape. Despite the clear guidelines provided by Faraid, numerous challenges and issues persist in the effective management and distribution of inheritance properties. These challenges include a high volume of unclaimed and frozen assets, lack of awareness and understanding of inheritance laws among Muslims, and administrative inefficiencies. This paper aims to explore the issues and challenges associated with Islamic inheritance in Malaysia and propose potential solutions to improve the current system.

One of the most significant challenges in the administration of Islamic inheritance in Malaysia is the high volume of unclaimed and frozen assets. The value of these assets has increased dramatically over the years, from RM40 billion in 2009 to RM60 billion in 2013 (Shafie et al., 2017; Shafie et al., 2015). This accumulation of unclaimed properties is counterproductive and represents a significant economic loss for the nation. The primary reasons for this issue include delays in claiming inheritance rights, family disputes, and lack of awareness among heirs about their entitlements (Mokhsin et al., 2023 ; Zulkifli et al., 2018) .

A major contributing factor to the challenges in Islamic inheritance is the lack of awareness and understanding among Muslims regarding the need for estate planning and the principles of Faraid. Many Muslims mistakenly believe that their assets will be automatically distributed according to Faraid without any need for proactive planning (Shafie et al., 2017). This misconception leads to delays and complications in the distribution process, resulting in unclaimed and frozen assets. Additionally, there is a lack of knowledge about the roles and responsibilities of inheritance agencies, further complicating the resolution of disputes (Hasbullah et al., 2021).

The administration of Islamic inheritance in Malaysia is also hindered by inefficiencies within the legal and administrative framework. The dual justice system, which requires Muslims to navigate both civil and Syariah courts, often leads to confusion and delays in the estate administration process (Md Said et al., 2021) . The limited jurisdiction of Syariah courts and the overlapping responsibilities of various administrative bodies further exacerbate these

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inefficiencies (Haydar Ali Tajuddin & Yatim, 2021; Mohamed Shith & Mohamed Adil, 2016). Moreover, the lack of a centralized system for managing inheritance cases contributes to the prolonged settlement of estates (Hasbullah et al., 2021) .

To address these challenges, several solutions have been proposed. One suggestion is the establishment of a Faraid One-Stop Centre (FOSC), which would consolidate all inheritance management agencies under one roof, streamlining the process and reducing delays(Hasbullah et al., 2021). Another approach is the implementation of the takharuj principle, which allows heirs to mutually agree on the distribution of property, thereby avoiding the rigid constraints of Faraid and facilitating smoother estate management (Ahmad et al., 2017). Additionally, the development of educational tools, such as mobile apps, can help increase awareness and understanding of Faraid among Muslims, ensuring that they are better prepared to manage their inheritance (Zulkifli et al., 2018).

The administration of Islamic inheritance in Malaysia faces several significant challenges, including unclaimed and frozen assets, lack of awareness, and administrative inefficiencies. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach, including the establishment of centralized management systems, the implementation of flexible inheritance principles, and the development of educational tools. By improving the current system, Malaysia can ensure a more efficient and equitable distribution of inheritance properties, benefiting both individuals and the broader community.

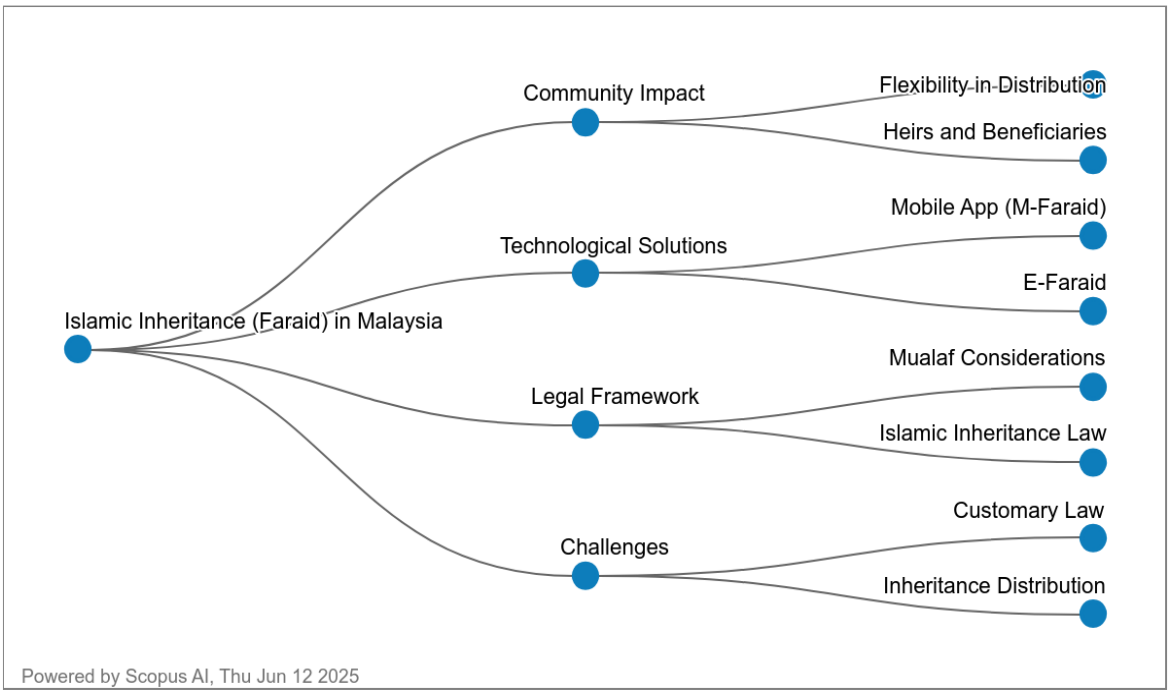

Figure 1: Concept Map of Islamic Inheritance (Faraid) in Malaysia
Source: Scopus

Research Question

1. What are the publication trends in Islamic inheritance research over the past decade?
2. Which articles have received the highest citation counts in this field?
3. Which ten countries are the leading contributors to research on Islamic inheritance?

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4. What are the most frequently used keywords in the literature, and how have these keywords evolved over the last ten years?
5. Which countries have the strongest co-authorship collaborations in this area?

Methodology

Bibliometric analysis is a structured approach used to gather, organize, and examine bibliographic data obtained from scientific publications. (Alves et al., 2021; Assyakur & Rosa, 2022; Verbeek et al., 2002). It goes beyond basic statistical measures, such as determining publication sources, years, and leading authors, by incorporating advanced techniques like document co-citation and keyword co-occurrence analysis (Wu & Wu, 2017). A thorough bibliometric study involves a systematic and iterative process that includes selecting suitable keywords, conducting an extensive literature search, and applying detailed analytical methods to ensure the accuracy and relevance of the findings. (Fahimnia et al., 2015).

In this study, emphasis was placed on high-impact publications, as they often offer deeper theoretical insights and reflect significant developments within the field of Islamic inheritance (Faraid). The data were sourced exclusively from Elsevier's Scopus database, chosen for its extensive coverage and reliability as an indexing platform (Al-Khoury et al., 2022; di Stefano et al., 2010; Khiste & Paithankar, 2017). To ensure the scholarly quality of the dataset, only journal articles were included, while non-journal materials such as books, conference proceedings, and lecture notes were excluded (Gu et al., 2019). The final dataset comprised publications from January 2020 to December 2023, allowing for a focused analysis of recent research trends and influential works within the specified timeframe.

Data Search Strategy

The data search strategy for this bibliometric study was conducted using the Scopus database, one of the largest and most reputable indexing platforms for peer-reviewed literature. An advanced search string was employed—TITLE ((islamic OR muslim) AND (inheritance OR succession)) AND PUBYEAR > 2019 AND PUBYEAR < 2026 AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "English"))—to specifically target journal articles with titles referencing Islamic or Muslim inheritance or succession, published between 2020 and 2025. This focused approach ensured that only relevant, recent, and high-quality academic works were included in the dataset. The use of title-level filtering increased the thematic precision of the articles selected for analysis, reinforcing the bibliometric study's relevance to current issues and trends in Islamic inheritance research.

In addition to the search query, specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were established to refine the dataset. Only articles written in English were included, as English remains the primary language of global academic discourse, while non-English publications were excluded to maintain linguistic consistency. The timeline was set from 2020 to 2025, ensuring that the analysis reflects contemporary developments in the field. Moreover, only journal articles were considered for inclusion to ensure the academic rigor of the sources; conference proceedings, books, and review articles were excluded due to their differing peer-review standards and scholarly impact. These criteria led to a refined and manageable dataset suitable for in-depth bibliometric analysis, providing a reliable foundation for examining publication trends, key contributors, keyword evolution, and research collaborations in the field of Islamic inheritance (Faraid).

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Table 1: The Search String

Scopus	TITLE ((islamic OR muslim) AND (inheritance OR succession)) AND PUBYEAR > 2019 AND PUBYEAR < 2026 AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English"))

Source: Scopus

Table 2: The Selection Criterion Is Searching

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Language	English	Non-English
Time line	2020-2025	< 2020
Literature type	Journal (Article)	Conference, Book, Review

Source: Scopus

Data Analysis

Data sets in PlainText format, including publication year, title, author names, journal, citations, and keywords, were obtained from the WoS database for the period between 2010 and December 2020 and were analysed using VOSviewer software version 1.6.15. This software was used to analyses and generate maps using the VOS clustering and mapping techniques. VOSviewer serves as an alternative to the Multidimensional Scaling (MDS) method. (Van Eck and Waltman, 2010) and it is similar toMDS approach in terms of its aim which is focussed on placement of items in low-dimensional area in such a manner that the relatedness and similarity of any two items is reflected accurately by the distance between them (Appio et al., 2014). Unlike MDS, which focuses on calculating similarity measures like the Jaccard index and cosine similarity, VOS applies a more appropriate method for normalizing co-occurrence frequencies (Van Eck and Waltman, 2007), such as association strength (ASij), which is computed as follows:

$$AS_{ij} = \frac{C_{ij}}{w_i w_j}$$

which is "proportional to the ratio between the observed number of co-occurrences of items *i* and *j*, and the expected number of co-occurrences assuming that the occurrences of *i* and *j* are statistically independent." (Van Eck and Waltman, 2010, p. 531). Using this index, VOSviewer arranges items on a map by minimizing the weighted sum of squared distances between all item pairs. As noted by Appio et al. (2016), the LinLog/modularity normalization method was applied. In addition, visualization techniques in VOSviewer were used on the data set to reveal patterns based on mathematical relationships, enabling analyses such as keyword co-occurrence, citation analysis, and co-citation analysis. Using this index, VOSviewer positions items on a map by minimizing the weighted sum of squared distances between all pairs of items. According to Appio et al. (2016), the LinLog/modularity normalization was implemented. Furthermore, by applying visualisation techniques through VOSviewer to the data set, patterns built on mathematical relationships were uncovered and analyses such as keyword co-occurrence, citation analysis and co-citation analysis were performed. Keyword co-occurrence analysis allows for the exploration of research area development over a specific

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period (Zhao, 2017) and is effective in identifying popular topics across various fields (Li et al., 2016). In contrast, citation analysis is valuable for uncovering key research issues, emerging trends, and methodologies, as well as examining the historical significance of a discipline's core focus (Allahverdiyev and Yucesoy, 2017). Document co-citation analysis is one of the frequently applied bibliometric methods (Appio et al., 2016; Fahimnia et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2015) and its result is map dependent on the network theory to identify relevant structure of data (Liu et al., 2015).

Result and Discussion

What Are The Publication Trends In Islamic Inheritance Research Over The Past Decade?

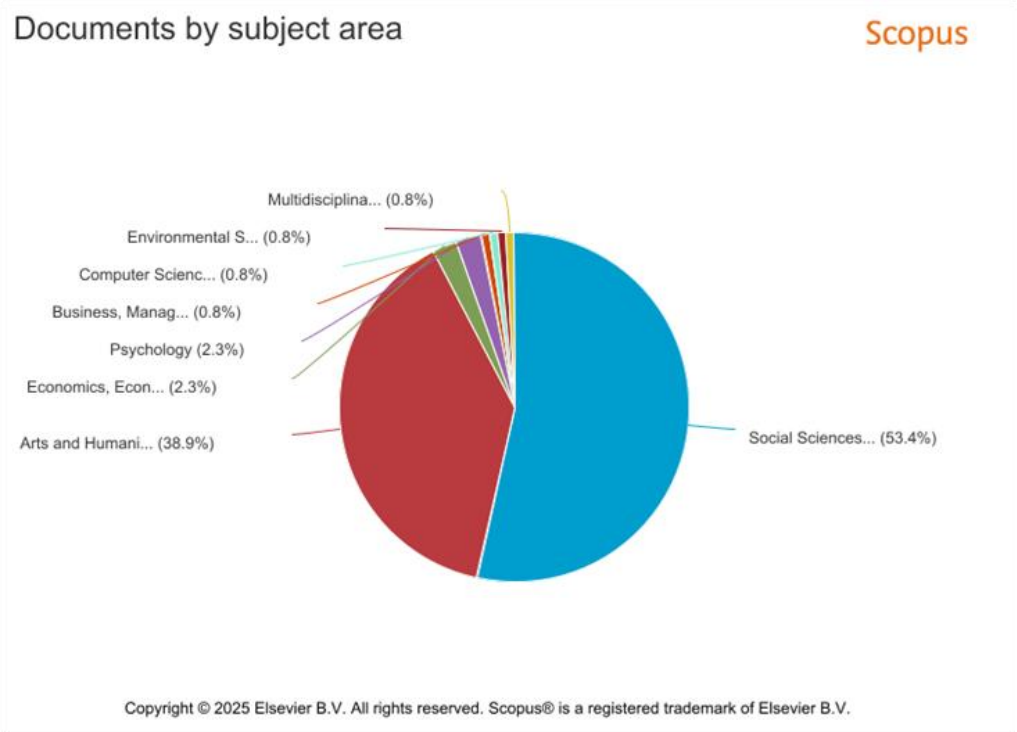

Figure 2: Trend of Research in Islamic Inheritance by Subject Area
Source: Scopus AI

Table 3: The Subject Area of Research

Subject Area	Number of Document	Percentage (%)
Social Sciences	70	53.4
Arts and Humanities	51	38.9
Economics, Econometrics and Finance	3	2.3
Psychology	3	2.3
Business, Management and Accounting	1	0.8
Computer Science	1	0.8
Environmental Science	1	0 .8
Multidisciplinary	1	0.8

Source: Scopus

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The bibliometric distribution of documents related to Islamic inheritance (Faraid) in Malaysia between 2020 and 2025 reveals a dominant focus within the field of Social Sciences, which accounts for 53.4% of the total publications. This suggests that Faraid is extensively explored from sociological, legal, and policy-oriented perspectives, reflecting its strong interconnection with societal norms, family structures, and legal systems in a pluralistic society like Malaysia. Arts and Humanities follow with 38.9%, indicating significant scholarly interest in the religious, cultural, and historical dimensions of Islamic inheritance. This concentration highlights the enduring importance of Faraid as a subject deeply rooted in Islamic jurisprudence, theology, and traditional practices that require contextual and interpretative scholarship.

In contrast, the remaining subject areas show minimal representation, with each contributing less than 3% of the total documents. Economics, Psychology, and Business-related disciplines collectively indicate a growing but limited interest in examining Faraid through the lens of financial implications, behavioural dynamics, and administrative efficiency. The inclusion of fields like Computer Science and Environmental Science, although marginal (0.8% each), may signal emerging interdisciplinary approaches, such as digital estate management systems or environmental assets in inheritance planning. However, the stark concentration in Social Sciences and Arts and Humanities underscores a research gap and an opportunity to encourage broader, integrative scholarship that includes technological, financial, and psychological aspects of Islamic inheritance.

Which Articles Have Received The Highest Citation Counts In This Field?

Table 4: Most Cited Authors

Authors	Title	Year	Source title	Cited by
Djawas M.; Hasballah K.; Devi S.; Kadir M.A.; Abda Y.	The Construction of Islamic Inheritance Law: A Comparative Study of the Islamic Jurisprudence and the Compilation of Islamic Law	2022	Juris: Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah	37
Assaad A.S.; Qudsy S.Z.; Hasyim B.; Badollahi M.T.; Haddade A.W.	Gender Equity in Inheritance System: The Collaboration of Islamic and Bugis Luwu Customary Law	2022	Al-Ihkam: Jurnal Hukum dan Pranata Sosial	23
Reskiani A.; Tenrilawa D.F.; Aminuddin; Subha R.	Reform Methods of Islamic Inheritance Law in Indonesia in Jurisprudence	2022	Juris: Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah	21
Basri H.; Miswar A.; Hasan H.; Pabbajah M.; Khalik S.	Inheritance Rights of Women in Makassar Society: A Study of Living Qur'an and its Implications for Islamic Law	2022	Samarah	19

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Karjoko L.; Jaelani A.K.; Tegnan H.; Glaser H.; Hayat M.J.	Islamic Court's Approach to Land Dispute in Inheritance Cases	2021	Ahkam: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah	17
Zubair A.; Latif H.; Hariyanto A.F.D.	The Construction of Inheritance Law Reform in Indonesia: Questioning the Transfer of Properties through Wasiat Wājibah to Non-Muslim Heirs	2022	Samarah	13
Hamdani F.F.R.S.; Pebrianti S.; Dzulhijjah L.; Maricar H.M.	Traditional Law vs. Islamic Law; An Analysis of Muslim Community Awareness in Inheritance Issues	2022	Al-Ahkam	13
Ridwan	Gender Equality in Islamic Inheritance Law: Rereading Muhammad Shahrur's Thought	2022	Al-Manahij: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam	12
Elfia; Sari S.M.R.; Ikhwan; Bahar M.; Shalihin N.	Patterns for Settlement of Punah Inheritance Disputes In the Community of Nagari Salareh Aia from the Perspective of Islamic Law	2022	Al-Ihkam: Jurnal Hukum dan Pranata Sosial	12
Zouaoui S.; Rezeg K.	Islamic inheritance calculation system based on Arabic ontology (AraFamOnto)	2021	Journal of King Saud University - Computer and Information Sciences	12

Source: Scopus

Based on the citation data, the most cited article is *"The Construction of Islamic Inheritance Law: A Comparative Study of the Islamic Jurisprudence and the Compilation of Islamic Law"* by Djawas et al., published in 2022 in *Juris: Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah*, with 37 citations. This article's prominence reflects the academic significance of comparative legal analysis in understanding Islamic inheritance frameworks. By juxtaposing classical Islamic jurisprudence with Indonesia's Compilation of Islamic Law (Kompilasi Hukum Islam), the authors provide a critical lens into the harmonization and divergence between traditional religious interpretations and contemporary codified Islamic legal practice. Its higher citation count suggests that it has become a key reference for scholars investigating legal reform, codification, and consistency in the application of Faraid across different jurisdictions.

The focus on comparative jurisprudence also points to a broader trend in inheritance law studies—where legal pluralism and reformative discourse are increasingly central. The strong citation performance of this article highlights the scholarly demand for in-depth legal critiques that not only address textual sources but also contextualize them within national legal systems.

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Moreover, the fact that this article and others in the top-cited list originate from Southeast Asia (especially Indonesia) underlines the regional vibrancy and ongoing legal discourse around Islamic inheritance, which may have parallels and implications for the Malaysian context as well.

Which Ten Countries Are The Leading Contributors To Research On Islamic Inheritance?

Figure 3: Countries Lead Contributors to Research on Islamic Inheritance
Source: Mapchart.net

Table 5: Ten Countries Leading Research on Islamic Inheritance

Country/Territory	Number	Percentage (%)
Indonesia	56	71.79
Malaysia	11	14.10
Pakistan	3	3.85
South Africa	3	3.85
Belgium	2	2.56
Brunei Darussalam	2	2.56
Hungary	2	2.56
Netherlands	2	2.56
Nigeria	2	2.56
United States	2	2.56

Source: Scopus

The data reveals that Indonesia is the most dominant contributor in scholarly publications on Islamic inheritance (Faraid), with 56 publications (71.79%), far surpassing all other countries. This significant output demonstrates Indonesia's strong academic interest in Islamic legal studies, particularly in inheritance law, which is likely driven by its demographic, institutional, and legal context. The presence of many Islamic universities and the formal integration of Syariah principles into national law through instruments like the *Kompilasi Hukum Islam* have

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created a fertile ground for research in this area. The focus on issues such as gender equity, customary law integration, and legal reform in Faraid reflects both theoretical and practical concerns, making Indonesian publications a key reference point in the field.

Malaysia, with 11 publications (14.10%), holds the second position, highlighting its considerable contribution to the discourse on Islamic inheritance, particularly given its dual legal system and the complexities surrounding the administration of Muslim estates. The remaining countries—Pakistan, South Africa, Belgium, Brunei Darussalam, Hungary, Netherlands, Nigeria, and the United States—each contribute a small but notable portion, ranging from 2.56% to 3.85%. These contributions indicate a growing international and interdisciplinary interest in Faraid studies, extending beyond traditionally Muslim-majority contexts. This global participation suggests that issues related to Islamic inheritance are becoming increasingly relevant in diverse socio-legal environments, possibly in response to migration, multicultural legal systems, and the need for comparative legal analysis.

What Are The Most Frequently Used Keywords In The Literature, And How Have These Keywords Evolved Over The Last Ten Years?

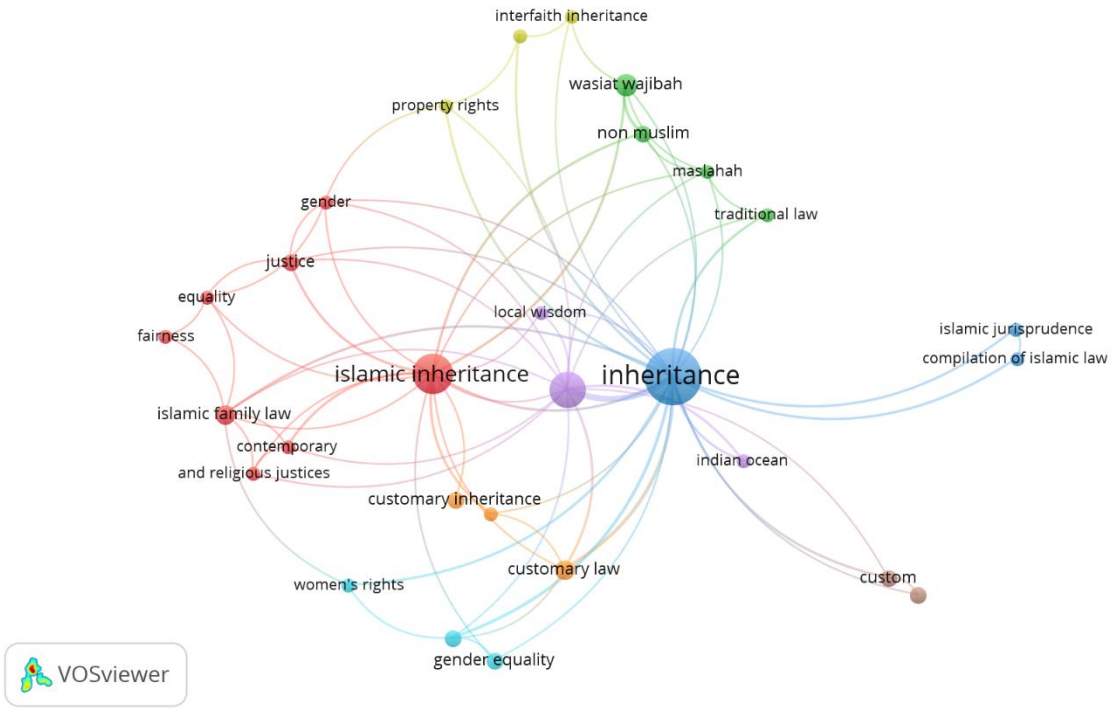

Figure 4: Network Visualization Map of Keywords' Co-Occurrence
Source: VOSviewer

The bibliometric analysis using VOSviewer reveals that "inheritance" is the most dominant keyword in the field of Islamic inheritance studies in Malaysia, with 41 occurrences and a total link strength of 30. This indicates a central thematic focus on inheritance as a general concept, which is foundational in discussions on Faraid. Other closely linked terms such as "Islamic inheritance" (19 occurrences, 13 link strength) and "Islamic law" (15 occurrences, 19 link strength) further emphasize the legal-religious nature of the discourse. The high linkage of "Islamic law" suggests it plays a critical bridging role in connecting multiple subtopics,

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signifying its importance as a framework underpinning the analysis of inheritance in a Malaysian Islamic context.

A notable trend in the keyword network is the emergence of culturally specific and contested terms like "customary law", "custom", and "legal pluralism". Although these terms show lower occurrences (between 3 to 4), their link strength (especially 8 for "customary law") reflects their strategic importance in connecting with other core topics. These keywords highlight the interplay and sometimes tension between Syariah-based inheritance systems and traditional or civil legal systems, especially in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country like Malaysia. Similarly, the appearance of "non-Muslim" and *"wasiat wajibah"* reflects concern over inclusivity and adaptation of Islamic inheritance laws to Malaysia's diverse demographic, particularly concerning converts *(muallaf)* and interfaith family situations.

Another layer of complexity is introduced through emerging social issues, such as "justice", "gender equality", and *"sharia"*. These keywords, though appearing less frequently, point to evolving discourses in the Islamic inheritance framework — particularly in response to critiques of fairness and equity, especially for women and non-heirs under the classical Faraid structure. The presence of "Islamic family law" reinforces this shift toward contextualizing inheritance within broader family and societal structures. This signals a growing academic interest not only in the doctrinal validity of inheritance laws but also in their social application and reform in Malaysia's plural legal landscape.

Which Countries Have The Strongest Co-Authorship Collaborations In This Area?

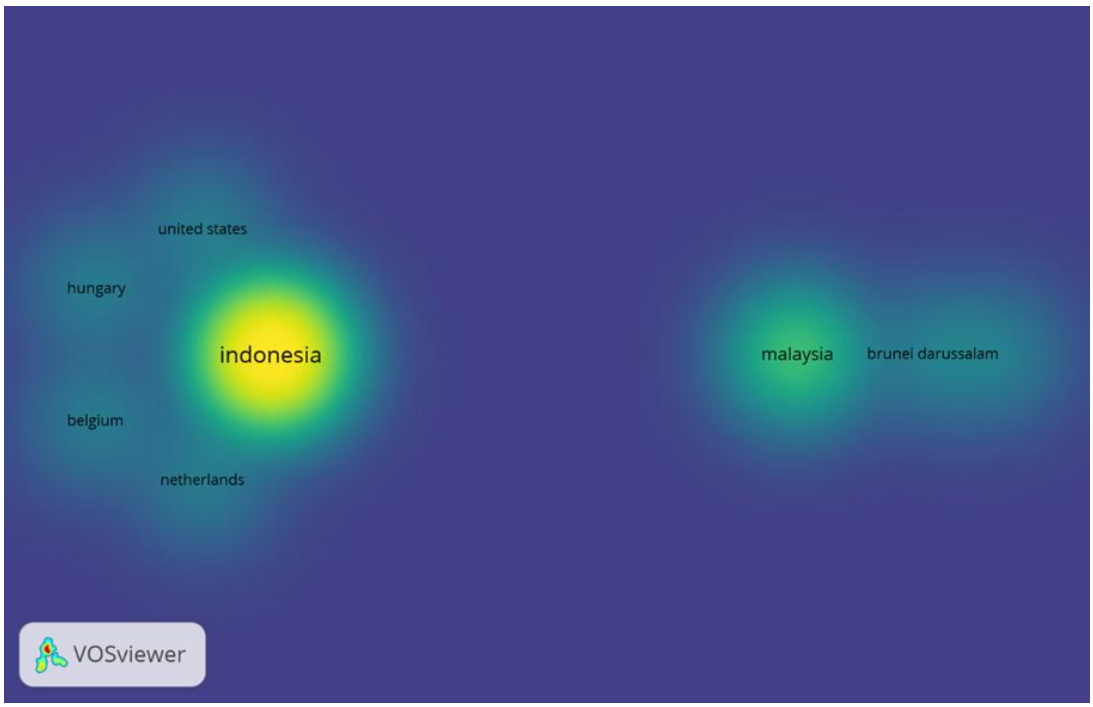

Figure 5: The Strongest Country Co-Authorship Collaborations
Source: VOSviewer

The co-authorship analysis reveals Indonesia as the most prominent country contributing to the bibliometric landscape on Islamic inheritance (Faraid) in Malaysia, with 56 documents and a total of 330 citations. This indicates a significant research collaboration or influence between

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Indonesia and Malaysia, likely reflecting shared cultural, religious, and legal contexts within the Muslim-majority countries in Southeast Asia. Indonesia's high total link strength (11) further underscores its central role in fostering international research networks, which could be attributed to cross-border academic partnerships, regional conferences, or joint research initiatives focused on Islamic inheritance issues.

Malaysia, as the focal country of the study, shows a modest research footprint in this dataset with 11 documents and 13 citations, alongside a total link strength of 8. Despite a smaller output relative to Indonesia, Malaysia's presence indicates localized scholarly activity and possibly a concentrated research community addressing Faraid. The relatively lower citation and link strength figures suggest limited international collaboration or dissemination, highlighting opportunities for enhancing research visibility and fostering stronger global partnerships to enrich the discourse on Islamic inheritance laws in Malaysia.

Other countries such as Brunei Darussalam, Hungary, Nigeria, Belgium, Netherlands, and the United States exhibit minimal contributions, with only a few documents and low citation counts. Their lower total link strengths reflect limited collaborative links within the dataset, possibly due to geographical, linguistic, or research focus differences. Notably, Pakistan and South Africa also appear with three documents each but show negligible citations and link strength, indicating emerging or less integrated research efforts in this field. These patterns suggest that while Indonesia plays a central role in the international research network on Islamic inheritance, there remains considerable scope to expand collaboration with other countries, promote knowledge sharing, and enhance the impact of research on Faraid in Malaysia.

Conclusion

This study set out to explore the bibliometric landscape of scholarly research on Islamic inheritance (Faraid) in Malaysia, with a specific focus on identifying key trends, influential works, leading contributors, and collaboration patterns within the field. Guided by a series of research questions, the analysis sought to determine publication trends, top-cited articles, major contributing countries, frequently used keywords, and co-authorship dynamics over the period from 2020 to 2025. The purpose was to map the intellectual structure of the field and highlight emerging themes and challenges relevant to the administration and discourse surrounding Islamic inheritance.

The findings indicate a growing academic interest in Faraid, particularly within the domains of social sciences and religious studies. Indonesia emerged as the most prolific contributor, followed by Malaysia, suggesting a regional concentration of expertise in Southeast Asia. Keywords such as "inheritance", "Islamic inheritance", and "Islamic law" were the most prominent, reflecting the legal-religious focus of the literature. However, the presence of terms like "gender equality", "customary law", and "legal pluralism" points to an expanding scope that addresses social justice and legal integration. Despite increased output, the analysis also revealed a fragmented research landscape with limited international co-authorship and collaboration, especially outside the dominant countries.

This study offers valuable contributions by systematically mapping the state of research in Islamic inheritance and uncovering thematic and geographical patterns. It provides new insights into how scholarly discussions have evolved and where future emphasis might be directed. These findings can inform policy discourse, encourage interdisciplinary integration,

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and guide legal reforms related to inheritance practices. In practical terms, the results may assist educational institutions, legal practitioners, and policy bodies in identifying knowledge gaps and collaborative opportunities.

However, certain limitations were present, including the restriction to English-language journal articles and a sole reliance on the Scopus database, which may exclude relevant but non-indexed or regional publications. Future studies could broaden the scope by incorporating multilingual sources, expanding temporal coverage, or integrating databases such as Web of Science and Dimensions. Further exploration into the impact of inheritance practices on socio-economic outcomes and the use of digital legal technologies may also enrich the research.

Overall, the significance of this study lies in its ability to highlight the dynamics and direction of Islamic inheritance research in Malaysia. Bibliometric analysis proves to be a valuable tool in understanding the evolution of scholarship, revealing key contributors and underexplored areas, and ultimately supporting the development of a more integrated and responsive academic and legal framework surrounding Faraid.

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