

# A bibliometric approach to digital innovation in Islamic philanthropy, 2014–2024

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## Abstract

This study aims to analyze research trends related to digital innovation in Islamic philanthropy using a bibliometric approach. By utilizing data from Scopus, the study identifies trends in publications and contributions from researchers, institutions, countries, and key journals within this topic. The analysis used the Biblioshiny application from the Bibliometrix R package, facilitating effective data visualization. The findings indicate that adopting digital technologies, such as blockchain, crowdfunding, and fintech, has significantly expanded the scope of Islamic philanthropy. Indonesia and Malaysia dominate research in this field, with notable contributions from institutions and authors. Keywords such as zakat, waqf, and trust have emerged as central themes. The study identifies thematic clusters, including foundational themes like waqf and zakat, and emerging themes like Shariah compliance, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the field.

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## Public interest statements

This study highlights how countries like Indonesia and Malaysia have emerged as leaders in researching and implementing digital innovations in Islamic philanthropy, focusing on key themes such as trust, zakat, and waqf. Furthermore, the study identifies significant trends and emerging areas, such as Sharia compliance, providing strategic insights into the potential development of digital aspects in Islamic philanthropy studies.



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## Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis tren penelitian terkait inovasi digital dalam filantropi Islam menggunakan pendekatan bibliometrik. Dengan memanfaatkan data dari Scopus, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi tren publikasi, kontribusi peneliti, institusi, negara, dan jurnal utama dalam topik ini. Analisis dilakukan menggunakan aplikasi Biblioshiny dari paket Bibliometrix R, yang memfasilitasi visualisasi data secara efektif. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa adopsi teknologi digital, seperti blockchain, crowdfunding, dan fintech, secara signifikan telah memperluas cakupan filantropi Islam. Indonesia dan Malaysia mendominasi penelitian di bidang ini, dengan kontribusi yang menonjol dari institusi dan penulis tertentu. Kata kunci seperti zakat, wakaf, dan kepercayaan muncul sebagai tema sentral. Penelitian ini mengidentifikasi klaster tematik, termasuk tema dasar seperti wakaf dan zakat, serta tema baru seperti kepatuhan syariah, untuk memberikan pemahaman yang komprehensif tentang bidang ini.

## Pernyataan kepentingan publik

Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi peran inovasi digital, seperti blockchain, crowdfunding, dan fintech, dalam mentransformasi praktik filantropi Islam. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bagaimana negara-negara seperti Indonesia dan Malaysia menjadi pemimpin dalam penelitian dan penerapan inovasi digital di bidang filantropi Islam, dengan menekankan tema-tema utama seperti kepercayaan, zakat, dan wakaf. Selain itu, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi tren utama dan bidang yang tengah berkembang, seperti kepatuhan syariah, yang memberikan wawasan strategis mengenai potensi pengembangan aspek digital pada kajian filantropi Islam.

**Kata kunci:** Islamic philanthropy; digital innovation; bibliometric analysis.

## Introduction

Technological innovation has become a key driver of change across various sectors, including finance and philanthropy, in the digital transformation era. Digital technology enhances efficiency, transparency, and inclusivity in financial services and reshapes how individuals interact with these services. The Islamic financial sector, encompassing both commercial and social finance (Akhter et al., 2023), is no exception to this development. One critical component of Islamic finance is Islamic Social Finance (ISF), which includes philanthropic instruments such as zakat, sadaqah, and waqf, cooperation-based mechanisms like 'qard' and 'kafalah', and Islamic microfinance institutions (Islamic Development Bank, 2020). As an integral part of the Islamic financial system, ISF plays a strategic role in alleviating social and economic disparities through equitable wealth distribution and the economic empowerment of vulnerable groups (Hussin et al., 2024; Kuanova et al., 2021; Lawal & Ajayi, 2019).

Technological advancements have significantly enhanced the role of zakat, sadaqah, and waqf in reducing economic inequality. In the digital era, Islamic philanthropy has substantially transformed by integrating financial technology (FinTech). FinTech facilitates more efficient, transparent, and inclusive management of Islamic philanthropic funds, expanding access to a broader audience (Mufid, 2024; Ninglasari & Muhammad, 2021; Rahman Ramadhan et al., 2023). The rapid growth of FinTech is driven by various factors,

including the rise of the sharing economy, regulatory support from governments, and advancements in information technology (Lee & Shin, 2018).

Digital technology has created new opportunities for optimizing ISF management. Various digital platforms now support Islamic philanthropic transactions, including mobile banking applications (e.g., BSI's M-Banking BYOND), e-commerce platforms (Shopee), e-wallets (LinkAja), and crowdfunding platforms such as Kitabisa (Bank Syariah Indonesia, 2024; Media Indonesia, 2022; Nisaa, 2023). These technologies provide convenience, security, and efficiency in Shariah-compliant transactions while increasing public engagement in fundraising efforts. For example, in 2022, Kitabisa recorded over IDR 821 billion in social funds raised through its digital platform (Yayasan Kita Bisa, 2022), illustrating the significant potential of digitalization in Islamic philanthropic management. With the increasing adoption of digital technology in Islamic philanthropy, academic research on ISF and digitalization has also grown. However, despite the expanding body of literature, comprehensive studies on digital innovation trends and their application in Islamic philanthropic instruments remain limited, particularly when analyzing sources indexed in Scopus. Thus, a systematic analysis is necessary to map existing literature, identify key research trends, and uncover underexplored areas in the field. In this context, bibliometric analysis provides an effective method for systematically exploring literature development. This approach enables researchers to map research trends, identify leading scholars, institutions, and journals, and highlight gaps for future research. By employing bibliometric analysis, this study aims to offer new insights into the contributions of digital innovation to Islamic Social Finance and provide strategic recommendations for future research directions.

## Methods

This study employs a bibliometric approach to analyze trends in research related to digital innovation in Islamic philanthropy. The analysis aims to identify gaps and provide an in-depth overview of research directions that can be further developed in this field. When used correctly, a bibliometric analysis allows for identifying significant research patterns to support the development of specific research areas. Additionally, this method helps map the state of the art in the studied field, guiding researchers in designing research projects with scientific contributions, practical applications, and tangible social benefits (José De Oliveira et al., 2019). In this study, data analysis and visualization were conducted using Biblioshiny, a web-based application from the R Bibliometrix package, along with Microsoft Excel to support additional analysis. Aria and Cuccurullo (2017) explain that this R package features efficient statistical algorithms and high-quality numerical routines, enabling practical data analysis.

The research strategy employed involves several stages, including defining the topic, scope, and feasibility, conducting a data screening process, and selecting relevant articles, as depicted in Figure 1. Each of these steps is explained in detail in the subsequent sections. As part of this strategy, the literature search was conducted systematically using Scopus, one of the world's leading, most reliable, and largest academic databases. Scopus covers many global publications and provides robust interconnected data to obtain relevant references (Elsevier, n.d.). The search was performed on December 19, 2024, using keywords and Boolean operators to filter relevant results. The search query used was: ("Financial Technology" OR "Fintech" OR

"Digital" OR "Blockchain" OR "Digital Innovation" OR "Digitalization" OR "Technology Adoption" OR "Technology" OR "Crowdfunding") AND ("Islamic Social Finance" OR "Zakat" OR "Waqf" OR "Infaq" OR "Sadaqah" OR "Islamic Philanthropy" OR "Islamic Charitable Giving"). Based on the data extracted on December 19, 2024, 210 articles matched the search keywords. After applying a screening process, 69 articles were excluded for not meeting the predefined criteria, leaving 142 articles for further analysis.

The inclusion criteria encompassed articles published between 2014 and 2024 to capture the latest developments in digital innovation within Islamic philanthropy. To ensure the quality of the analysis, the selected publication types were peer-reviewed journal articles and conference proceedings. The included articles had to explicitly discuss digital transformation in Islamic philanthropy, including technological innovations such as fintech, blockchain, and crowdfunding. Only English-language articles were included to ensure broader accessibility and comparability of research findings. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria comprised articles that discussed philanthropy in general without addressing Islamic principles or digital technology, duplicate articles that appeared in multiple searches and were removed to avoid redundancy, editorials, opinion pieces, and news articles that did not contain empirical or bibliometric analysis relevant to the objectives of this study, and articles that appeared in multiple searches.

Following the inclusion and exclusion criteria application, a manual screening process was conducted to ensure that the selected articles were genuinely relevant to the research objectives. This process included reviewing titles and abstracts to confirm that the articles focused on digital innovation in Islamic philanthropy rather than general financial technology. A full-text evaluation was carried out to ensure that the analyzed studies contributed significantly to the research mapping. The selection process was documented using a PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) flow diagram, which recorded the number of identified, included, and excluded articles and the reasons for exclusion. After completing all screening stages, the final dataset consisted of 142 articles, which were analyzed in greater detail. These articles were categorized based on publication year, journal source, country affiliation, keywords, author contributions, and affiliated institutions. They were then thematically analyzed to identify key patterns in research on digital innovation in Islamic philanthropy.

## Results and discussion

### Main Information

Table 1 presents the overall findings from the R Studio software analysis and the technique illustrated in Figure 1. This study, spanning from 2014 to 2024, reveals rapid growth with an annual growth rate of 26.71%. During this period, 142 documents were analyzed from 84 sources, which include journals, books, and other publications. Most of the documents are scientific articles, totaling 107, and have an average document age of 2.01 years, which indicates their high relevance to recent developments. An average of 7.9 citations per document reflects the significant impact of the studies analyzed. The document content comprises 267 keywords generated from data analysis and 439 keywords provided by authors, showing diverse topic coverage. This research involved 443 authors, with most documents

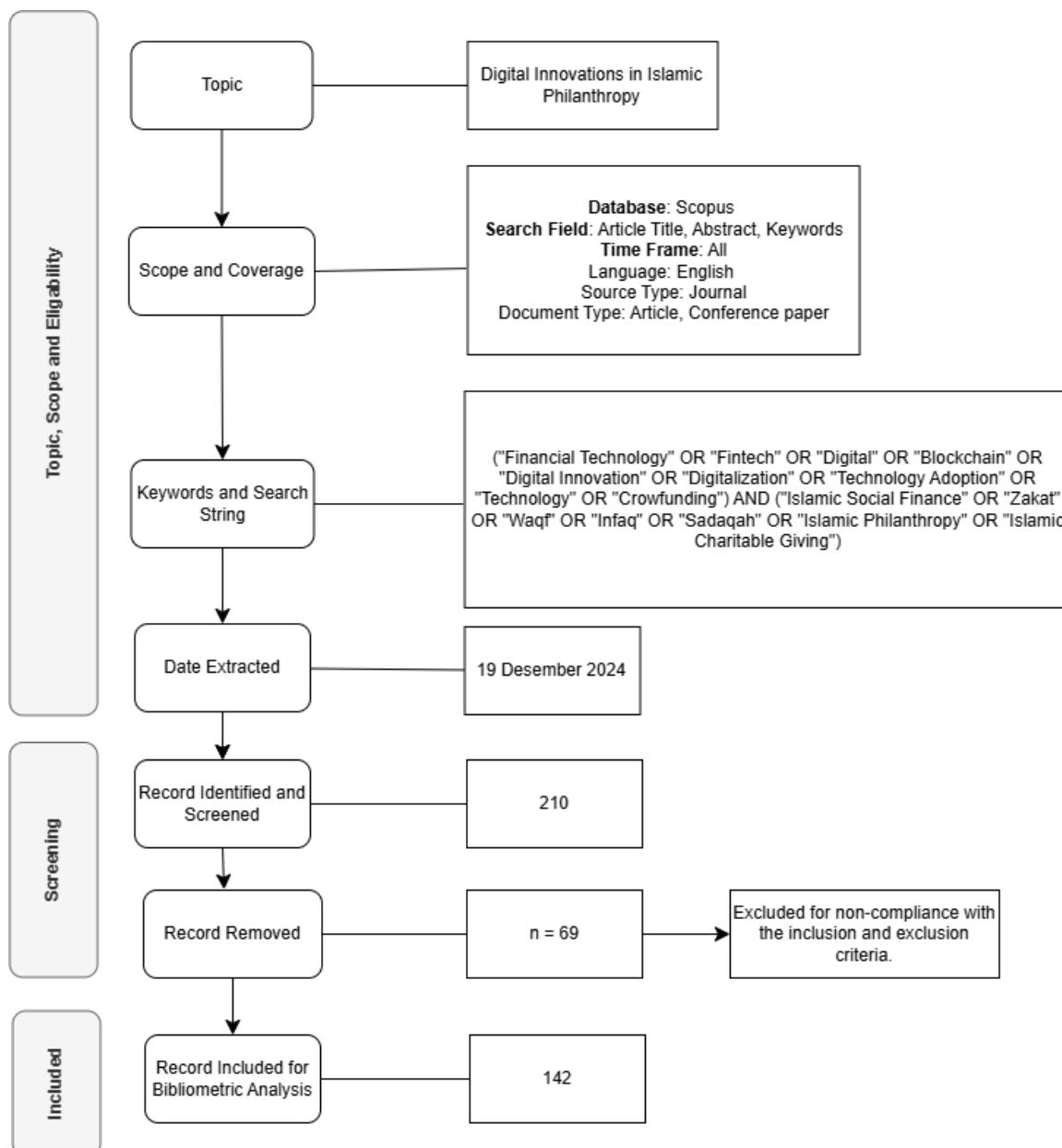
written collaboratively, averaging 3.56 collaborators per document, and 23.94% were international collaborations. The high collaboration rate and the 6,817 references used demonstrate the growing development of this research field, with significant contributions across disciplines and regions.

### Annual Publication Trends

In the early years of 2014 and 2015, the number of published articles was very low, with only three in 2014 and 2 articles in 2015, as shown in Figure 2. No articles were published in 2016 and 2017, indicating minimal research or publication activity during this period regarding digital innovation in the context of Islamic philanthropy. However, the trend began to increase significantly in 2018, with five articles published. A surge in publications was observed in subsequent years: 6 articles in 2019, 10 articles in 2020, and a sharp increase in 2021 with 15 articles. Publication activity peaked in 2023 with 45 articles published, reflecting heightened interest in this field, particularly post-COVID-19 pandemic. Although there was a slight decline in 2024 with 32 articles, this number is still significantly higher than in the early years. Overall, the annual growth rate of publications averaged 26.71%, highlighting the research topic's rapid development and increasing relevance over the last decade. This trend indicates that research in this field has gained more attention, particularly in the period leading up to and following 2020. This increase is likely driven by the growing need for innovation in the research context, including social, economic, and technological factors.

### Most Productive Authors

Figure 3 shows the analysis of the most productive authors in this research topic. Muneeza A is the most prolific author, contributing five articles with a fractionalized contribution of 1.10. Fractionalized contribution calculates an author's contribution to a publication based on the total number of co-authors, where each author is assigned a proportional share of the overall contribution. Bin-Nashwan SA and Sukmana R follow this, each contributing four articles with fractionalized contributions of 1.70 and 1.12, respectively. Other productive authors include Aji HM, Berakon I, and Daud D, each contributing three articles with fractionalized contributions ranging from 0.57 to 0.92. Notably, Hudaefi FA stands out with the highest fractionalized contribution of 2.50 despite contributing only three articles, indicating greater involvement in specific publications. Authors such as Kasri RA, Khalid M, and Kunhibava S have also contributed three articles each, with fractionalized contributions between 0.65 and 1.50. Most authors demonstrate a strong tendency for collaboration, as reflected in the fractionalized values being lower than their total number of articles. This indicates that research in this field involves significant collaboration among authors, collectively advancing the topic.



Source: Adapted based on PRISMA (Moher *et al.*, 2009; Zakaria *et al.*, 2021)

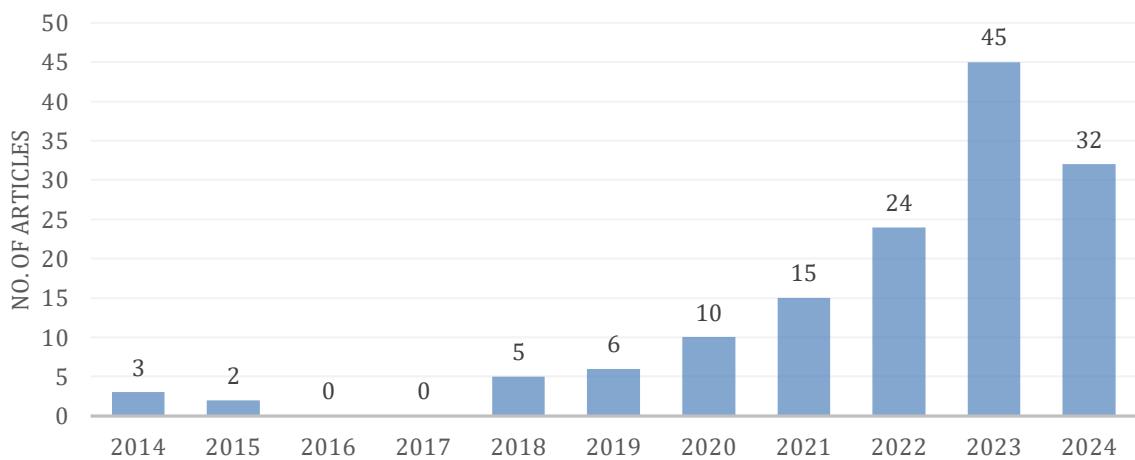
**Figure 1.**

Flow Diagram of The Search Strategy

**Table 1.***Main Information*

| Description                     | Results   |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| Main Information About Data     |           |
| Timespan                        | 2014:2024 |
| Sources (Journals, Books, etc)  | 84        |
| Documents                       | 142       |
| Annual Growth Rate %            | 26.71     |
| Document Average Age            | 2.01      |
| Average citations per doc       | 7.901     |
| References                      | 6817      |
| Document Types                  |           |
| article                         | 107       |
| conference paper                | 35        |
| Document Contents               |           |
| Keywords Plus (ID)              | 267       |
| Author's Keywords (DE)          | 439       |
| Authors                         |           |
| Authors                         | 443       |
| Authors of single-authored docs | 12        |
| Authors Collaboration           |           |
| Single-authored docs            | 14        |
| Co-Authors per Doc              | 3.56      |
| International co-authorships %  | 23.94     |

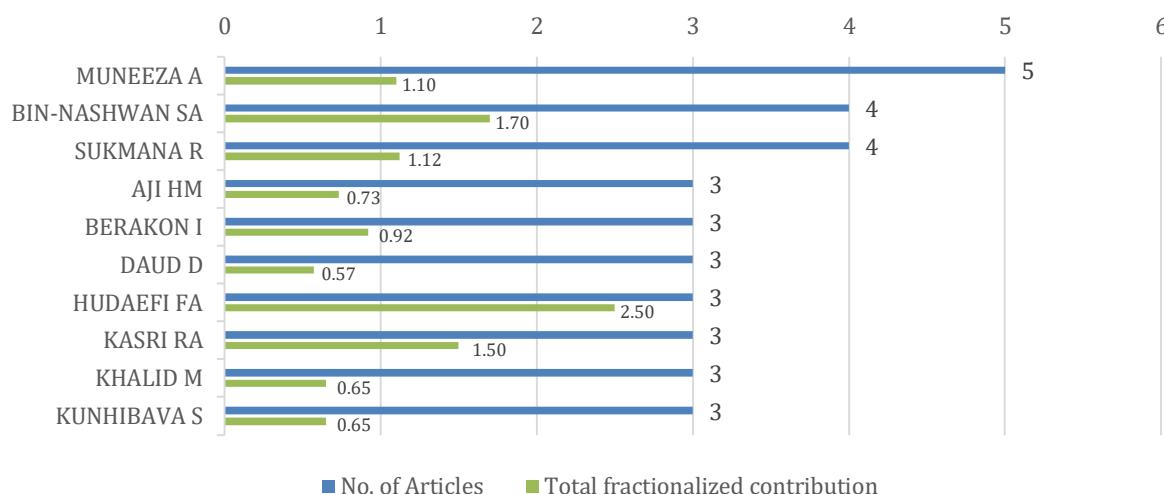
Source: Processed by Author using Biblioshiny (2024)



Source: Authors own work (2024)

**Figure 2.**

*Annual publication trends*



Source: Authors own work (2024)

**Figure 3.**

*Most productive authors*

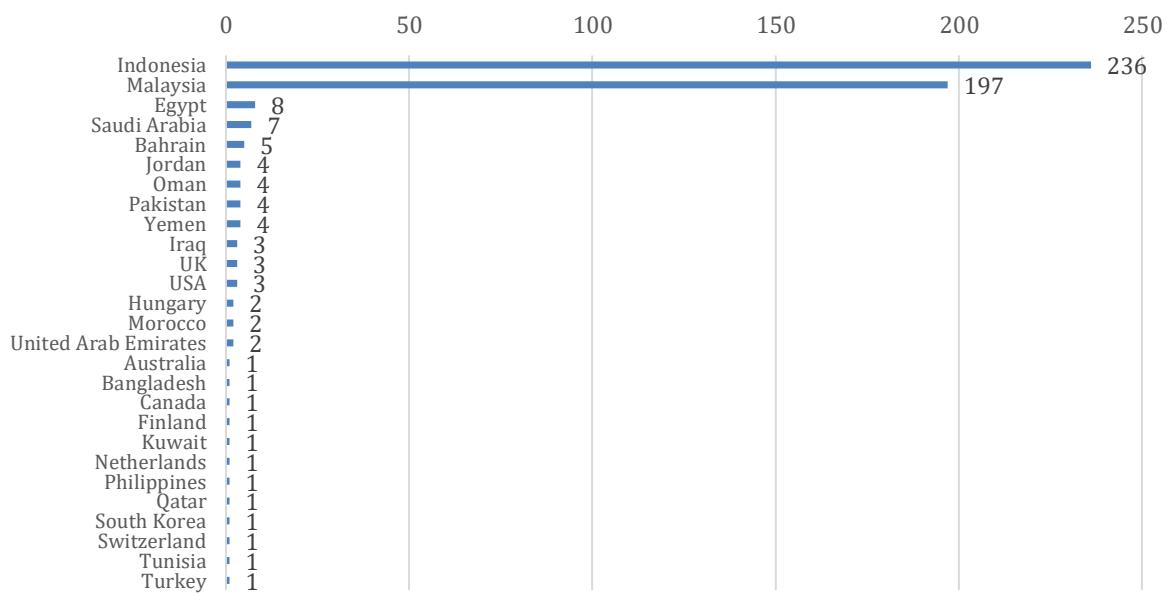
### Most productive countries

Based on the bibliometric data analysis shown in Figure 4, Indonesia ranks first as the most productive country in this research area, with 236 publications. Malaysia follows in second place with 197 publications, highlighting the dominance of these two Southeast Asian countries in the field. Other contributing countries, although with significantly fewer publications, include Egypt, with eight publications; Saudi Arabia, with seven publications; Bahrain, with five publications; and Jordan, Oman, Pakistan, and Yemen, with four publications. Additionally, there are contributions from countries outside the Middle East and Southeast Asia, such as the United Kingdom with three publications, the United States with three publications, and Hungary with two publications. Countries like Australia, Canada, and South Korea contributed one publication, showing limited engagement in this field. This data reflects the dominance of Muslim-majority countries, particularly Indonesia and Malaysia, in this research. Furthermore, as studies on digital innovation in Islamic philanthropy grow, research in non-Muslim countries is also emerging, although with minor yet significant contributions. This demonstrates cross-country collaboration and the potential for expanding the research scope.

### Most productive affiliations

According to the bibliometric data analysis shown in Figure 5, Universiti Utara Malaysia emerges as the most productive institution, producing 20 articles, followed by Universiti Teknologi MARA with 17 articles. Other prominent institutions include the International Islamic University Malaysia, Universitas Airlangga, and Universiti Malaya, each contributing 16 articles. Institutions such as Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, with 15 articles, and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, with 13 articles, also demonstrate high productivity. Several Indonesian institutions have made significant contributions, including Universitas Islam Indonesia with nine articles, Universitas Islam Sultan Agung with eight articles, and Universitas Sebelas Maret with seven articles. This data highlights the dominance of institutions from Malaysia and Indonesia in this field, reflecting a strong focus on relevant research topics in the Southeast Asian region. Additionally, institutions from other regions,

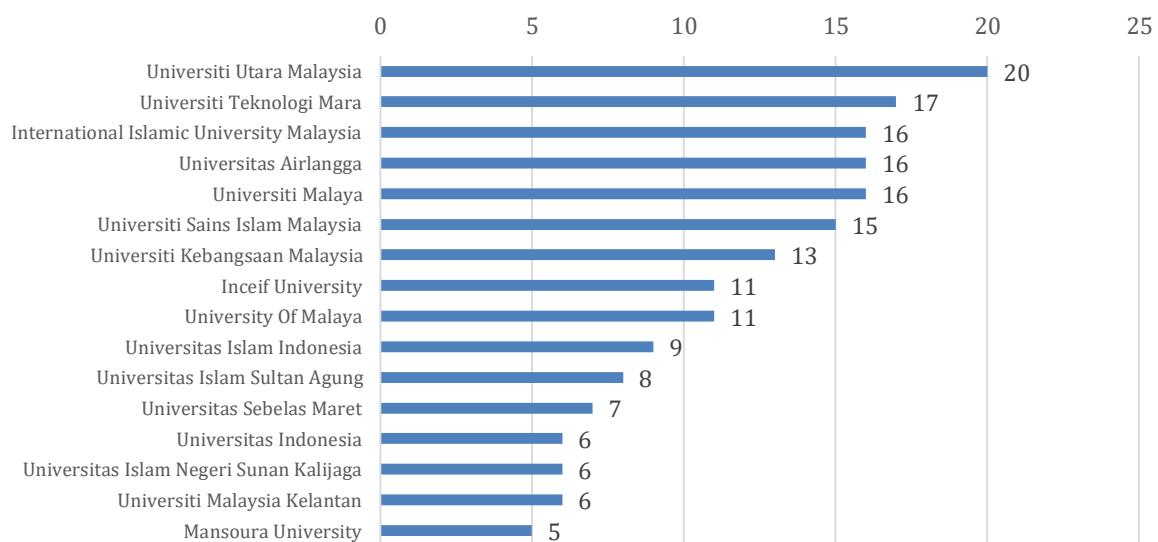
such as Mansoura University in Egypt, with five articles, have contributed to a lesser extent, indicating some international involvement.



Source: Authors own work (2024)

**Figure 4.**

*Most productive countries*



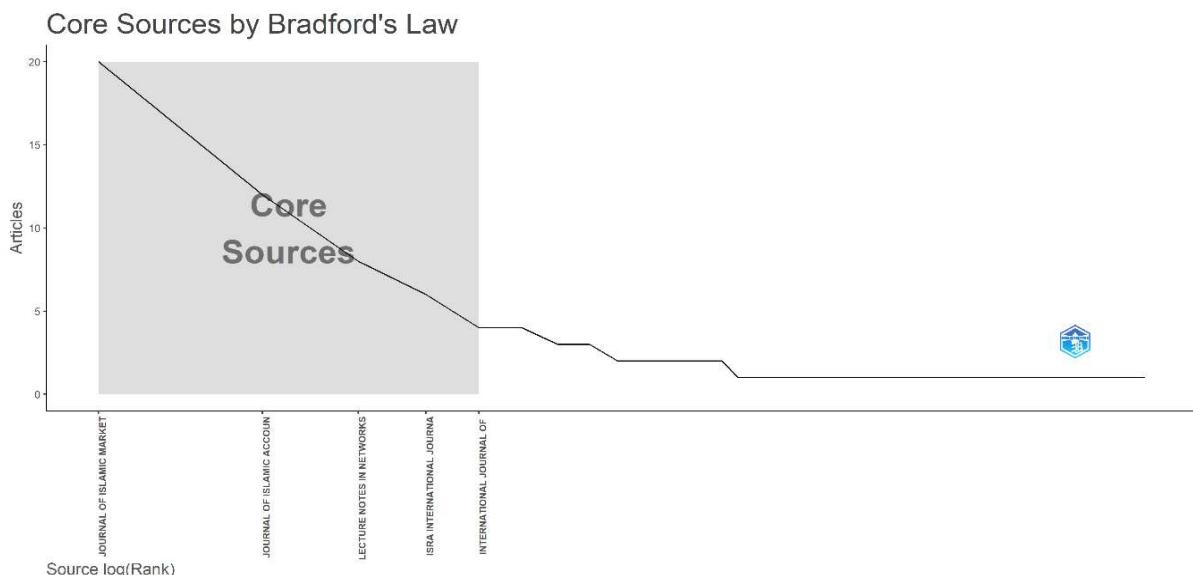
Source: Authors own work (2024)

**Figure 5.**

*Most productive affiliations*

## Most frequent journals

The analysis based on Bradford's Law presented in Figure 6 explains that the core of the literature on digital innovation in Islamic Social Finance focuses on several key journals that serve as primary sources. The figure illustrates the distribution of articles with a descending curve, where the gray area represents the core journals that consistently publish a significant number of relevant articles. Several journals identified as core sources include the Journal of Islamic Market, the Journal of Islamic Account, Lecture Notes in Networks, and others like the ISRA International Journal. These journals exhibit high publication frequencies and are primary references in the related literature. This interpretation underscores the importance of these core journals in forming the foundation of research in the field of digital innovation in Islamic Social Finance. Researchers aiming to explore this topic in greater depth can prioritize literature from these sources to gain relevant and comprehensive insights.



Source: Authors own work (2024)

**Figure 6.**

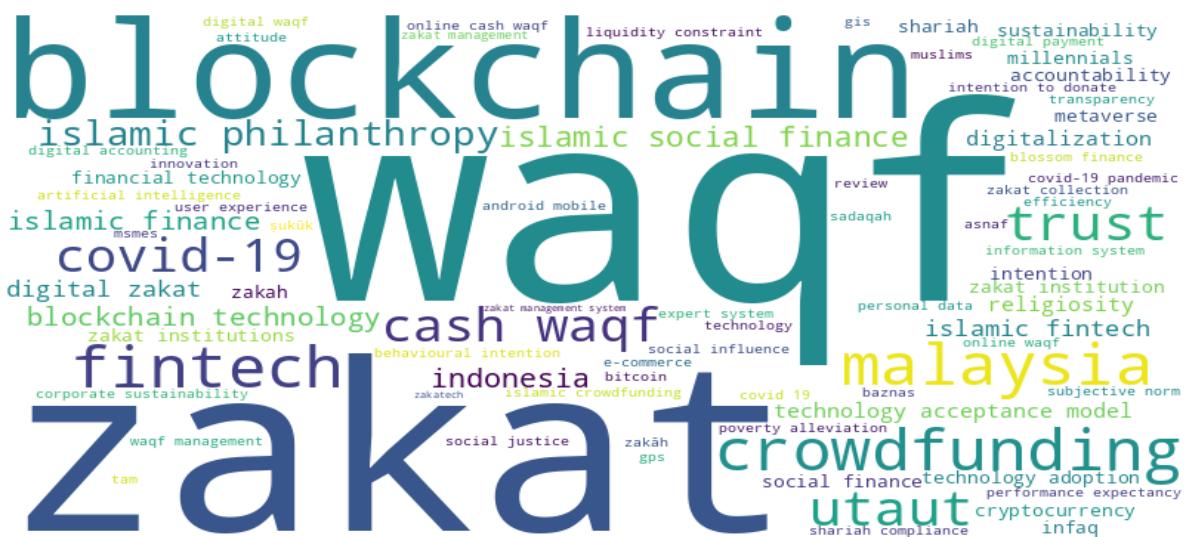
*Most frequent journals*

## Most frequent keywords

This section discusses the most frequently used keywords in research on digital innovation in Islamic philanthropy. As shown in Figure 7, "waqf" and "zakat" are the most dominant keywords, each appearing 24 times. This highlights the central importance of these two concepts in research on Islamic philanthropy. Other keywords, such as "blockchain," "crowdfunding," and "fintech," appear 15 and 13 times, respectively, emphasizing the intense focus on leveraging digital technology to enhance philanthropic activities. The keyword "Malaysia," appearing 13 times, reflects the significant contributions of researchers from the country and highlights Malaysia's role as a center for developing Islamic financial technology. Other frequently appearing keywords, such as "trust" and "UTAUT," each appearing 9 times, as well as "cash waqf" and "COVID-19," each appearing 8 times, reflect emerging issues. Themes such as user trust, technology adoption, and the global pandemic's impact on

philanthropic practices are important highlights of this research. Additionally, keywords like "Islamic social finance," "digital zakat," and "Islamic fintech" indicate efforts to integrate technology with Islamic financial principles.

Terms such as "digitalization," "religiosity," and "technology acceptance model," each appearing 4 times, emphasize the significance of religious beliefs and the use of theoretical models in understanding the technology adoption process. Overall, this collection of keywords provides a clear picture of research directions in digital innovation in Islamic philanthropy. Research in this field continues to evolve, focusing on integrating modern technology, faith-based values, and their impact on social welfare.



Source: Authors own work (2024)

Figure 7.

### Most frequent keywords

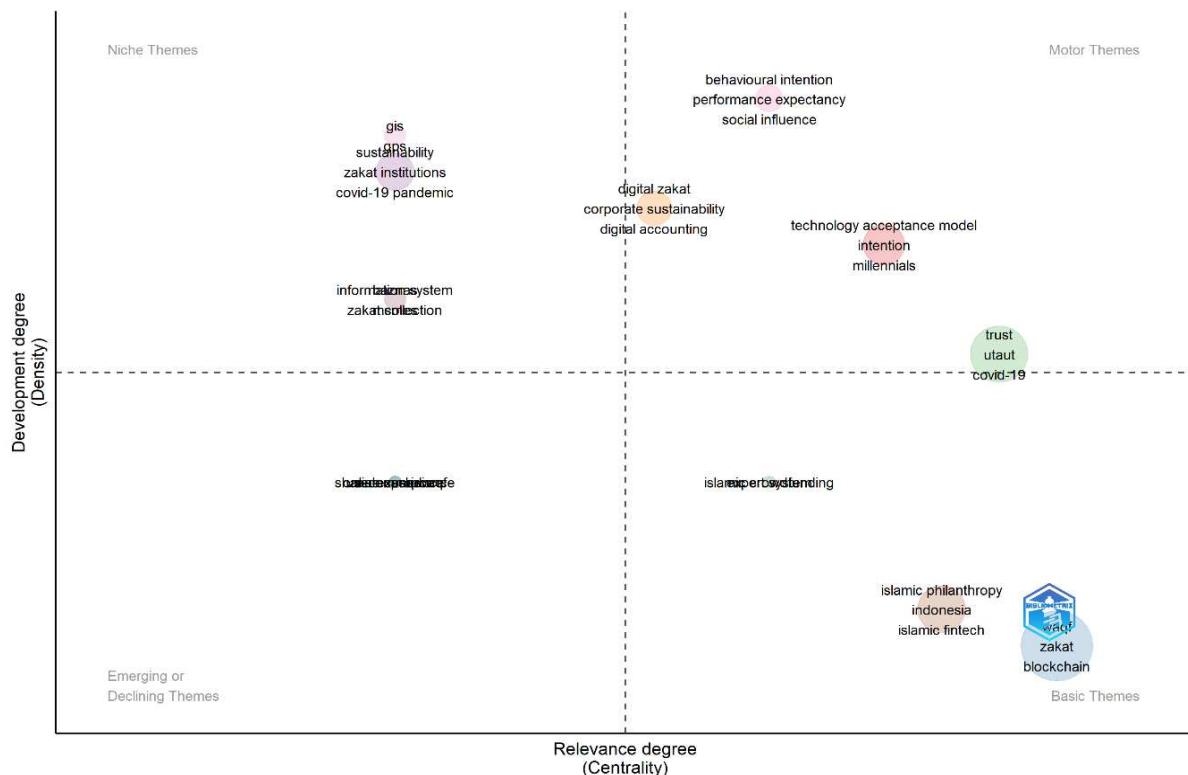
## Thematic analysis

The thematic map presented in Figure 8 illustrates the clustering of research themes in digital innovation in Islamic philanthropy, categorized based on development density and centrality relevance. Each quadrant in this map represents a distinct classification of themes, offering insights into the maturity level of the research and the extent to which these themes are integrated into broader academic discourse. In the context of essential themes, research is dominated by fundamental concepts such as waqf and zakat, which have the highest frequency of appearance in literature. These basic themes are reinforced by the presence of Islamic philanthropy and Islamic fintech contexts, demonstrating integration between traditional concepts and modern technological developments. Indonesia is a significant geographical context in this research, indicating its important role in developing and implementing technology in Islamic social finance systems.

Meanwhile, motor themes demonstrate aspects that serve as primary drivers in research. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) becomes the dominant theoretical framework, specifically focusing on intention factors and millennials as adoption targets. Trust and UTAUT (Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology) emerge as key factors in technology adoption.

The COVID-19 pandemic also significantly impacts a situational context driving digitalization. Behavioral intention, supported by performance expectancy and social influence, shows the importance of understanding factors affecting technology acceptance. Digital zakat, corporate sustainability, and digital accounting reflect digital transformation in zakat management.

In the realm of niche themes, research points toward more specific aspects. GIS and GPS technology demonstrate efforts to integrate geospatial technology in waqf land mapping. Sustainability and strengthening zakat institutions become important focuses, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. As for emerging or declining themes, shariah compliance requires special attention. This indicates the importance of ensuring technological innovation remains aligned with Shariah principles. However, this theme has not yet achieved high density and centrality in research. These thematic patterns illustrate a complex and dynamic research landscape where traditional values meet modern technological innovation. This indicates the need to continue developing a balanced approach between adopting technology and fulfilling Shariah principles in managing zakat and waqf in the digital era.



Source: Authors own work (2024)

**Figure 8.**

*Thematic analysis*

## Conclusion

Research on digital innovation in Islamic philanthropy has shown rapid growth over the last decade, from 2014 to 2024, with an average annual growth rate of 26.71%. The analysis of 142 documents from 84 sources revealed this research's high relevance and impact, as demonstrated by the relatively young average document age of 2.01 years and an average of 7.9 citations per document. This body of research involved 443 authors who engaged in significant collaboration at both national and international levels, collectively contributing a total of 6,817 references.

Geographically, Indonesia and Malaysia dominate this research area regarding publication volume and productive institutions involved, such as Universiti Utara Malaysia and Universitas Airlangga. The most productive authors are Muneeza A, followed by Bin-Nashwan SA and Sukmana R, whose contributions highlight a high level of collaboration among authors. From the keyword analysis, concepts like "waqf," "zakat," and technologies such as "blockchain," "crowdfunding," and "fintech" emerged as primary topics, reflecting a focus on the digitalization of Islamic philanthropy. Themes of trust, religiosity, and technology acceptance also drew significant attention, emphasizing the importance of social aspects in technology adoption.

Further thematic analysis identified several key theme clusters. Basic themes, such as waqf and zakat, dominate the research landscape as foundational concepts. Motor themes, like trust, TAM, and the COVID-19 pandemic, act as primary drivers of digital adoption. Niche themes, such as GIS and GPS, demonstrate promising potential but need further exploration. In contrast, Emerging themes, like shariah compliance, require greater focus to enhance relevance and integration. This research affirms that digital innovation in Islamic philanthropy is a dynamic field with great potential. Further development is needed to strengthen theoretical frameworks, integrate new technologies, and expand interdisciplinary and cross-country collaborations.

## List of abbreviations

- Islamic Social Finance (ISF)
- Financial Technology (FinTech)
- Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT)
- Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

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