

GLOBAL TRENDS IN ISLAMIC BANKING RESEARCH DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has generated significant challenges for the banking sector and stimulated growing scholarly attention to Islamic banking and its resilience during periods of crisis. This study aims to examine the development, publication trends, and emerging research themes of Islamic banking literature during the COVID-19 pandemic. A quantitative bibliometric approach was employed using 200 documents retrieved from the Scopus database covering the period from 2020 to 2023. The bibliometric data were analyzed using Publish or Perish and VOSviewer to identify publication trends, leading journals, prolific authors, citation patterns, and relationships among research keywords. The findings show that Islamic banking research remained active throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, with 200 relevant documents identified during the study period. The Journal of Islamic Marketing was the most productive source, while several Islamic banking and finance journals also made substantial contributions to the literature. The citation analysis identified the most influential publications and authors, while keyword network analysis revealed multiple research clusters related to Islamic banking, customer behavior, sustainability, efficiency, digitalization, and other emerging themes. Overall, the findings demonstrate that COVID-19 expanded the research landscape of Islamic banking and encouraged scholars to explore the sector from broader financial, technological, social, and strategic perspectives. The study provides a systematic overview of the evolution of Islamic banking research during the pandemic and identifies potential directions for future research.

Keywords:

Islamic banking; COVID-19; bibliometric analysis; Scopus; VOSviewer

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1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic generated an unprecedented global economic disruption, affecting financial institutions, businesses, households, and economic activities across countries. The implementation of lockdowns, restrictions on mobility, supply-chain disruptions, declining business activities, and rising uncertainty created substantial challenges for the financial sector (Clarida, Duygan-Bump, & Scotti, 2021). Banks were particularly exposed to the consequences of the pandemic because economic contractions affected borrowers' repayment capacity, financing quality, liquidity conditions, profitability, and overall financial stability. At the same time, the pandemic accelerated the adoption of digital financial services as financial institutions sought to maintain service delivery while minimizing physical interaction. These developments

stimulated considerable academic interest in understanding how financial institutions responded to the economic and technological challenges created by COVID-19 (Nwoke, 2024).

Within this context, Islamic banking represents an important component of the global financial system. Islamic banks operate according to Shariah principles, including the prohibition of interest (*riba*), excessive uncertainty (*gharar*), and gambling (*maysir*), while emphasizing risk sharing, asset-backed transactions, and ethical financial activities (Akhter, 2015). The distinctive characteristics of Islamic banking have generated substantial scholarly attention regarding its resilience, stability, performance, risk management, and contribution to economic recovery during periods of crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic provided a particularly important setting for examining these characteristics because Islamic banks faced the same macroeconomic pressures as conventional banks while simultaneously operating within a specific Shariah-based institutional framework (Hammoudeh, Ajmi, & Balcilar, 2025).

The pandemic subsequently expanded the scope of Islamic banking research beyond traditional issues of financial performance and stability. Studies published during this period examined various dimensions, including bank resilience, credit and financing risk, liquidity, profitability, efficiency, financial stability, digital transformation, fintech adoption, Islamic social finance, Shariah governance, and the role of Islamic banking in supporting economic recovery (Tandos, 2025). The crisis also increased scholarly interest in the interaction between Islamic banking and broader sustainability-related issues, including financial inclusion, social welfare, responsible finance, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Qiu, 2025). Consequently, COVID-19 can be viewed not only as an economic shock but also as a catalyst that influenced the thematic and methodological development of Islamic banking scholarship.

Despite the rapid expansion of studies related to Islamic banking and COVID-19, the existing literature remains fragmented across different journals, countries, institutions, research themes, and methodological approaches (Hasan, 2025). Individual studies have primarily focused on specific aspects of the pandemic, such as the financial performance of Islamic banks, their resilience compared with conventional banks, the impact of COVID-19 on Islamic financial markets, or the role of digitalization in maintaining financial services. While these studies provide valuable insights, examining them individually makes it difficult to identify the broader intellectual structure and evolution of the research field. In particular, there is limited systematic evidence regarding which themes have received the greatest scholarly attention, which countries and institutions have contributed most significantly, how researchers and publications are interconnected, and which emerging topics may shape future Islamic banking research (Hasan, 2025).

Bibliometric analysis provides an appropriate approach for addressing these limitations by systematically mapping the development and intellectual structure of a research field through quantitative analysis of scientific publications (Raza & Economics, 2024). Bibliometric techniques can identify publication trends, influential articles and authors, leading journals, institutional and country collaboration patterns, citation structures, keyword co-occurrence, and emerging research themes. Such an approach is particularly relevant for the COVID-19 period because the rapid growth of pandemic-related publications makes it difficult to evaluate the development of the literature through conventional narrative reviews alone. By mapping the knowledge structure of Islamic banking research during this period, bibliometric analysis can

provide a more comprehensive understanding of how the academic community responded to the unprecedented crisis.

However, existing bibliometric studies in Islamic finance have generally examined the broader development of Islamic banking or Islamic finance without specifically isolating the COVID-19 pandemic as a distinct period of scholarly development (Osei, Cherkasova, & Oware, 2023). As a result, the global research trends, intellectual structure, collaboration patterns, and emerging themes specifically associated with Islamic banking during the pandemic remain insufficiently mapped. This gap is important because the pandemic represented a unique period in which financial resilience, digital transformation, risk management, Islamic social finance, and sustainability became increasingly interconnected. A focused bibliometric investigation can therefore reveal whether these issues represented temporary responses to the crisis or contributed to longer-term transformations in the Islamic banking research agenda.

Accordingly, this study aims to examine the global trends and intellectual development of Islamic banking research during the COVID-19 pandemic using a bibliometric approach. Specifically, the study analyzes publication growth, influential publications, authors, journals, countries, and institutions; examines collaboration networks among researchers and countries; identifies the dominant and emerging research themes through keyword analysis; and maps the intellectual structure of the literature. By providing a systematic overview of the field, this study contributes to the Islamic banking literature by clarifying how COVID-19 shaped scholarly priorities and identifying potential directions for future research. The findings are expected to benefit researchers, academic institutions, policymakers, and Islamic financial industry stakeholders seeking to understand the evolution of Islamic banking scholarship in response to a global crisis.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Islamic banking has become an important component of the global financial system, operating according to Shariah principles that prohibit *riba* (interest), *gharar* (excessive uncertainty), and *maysir* (gambling), while emphasizing risk sharing, asset-backed transactions, ethical investment, and social responsibility (Rudiansyah, 2020). These distinctive characteristics have encouraged extensive academic research on Islamic banking, particularly concerning financial performance, stability, efficiency, risk management, governance, and its contribution to economic development. Over time, Islamic banking research has expanded from issues related primarily to Shariah compliance and banking operations toward broader discussions of financial resilience, technological transformation, financial inclusion, sustainability, and crisis management (Alwi, Parmitasari, & Syariati, 2021); (Ghaemi Asl, Rashidi, & Ghorbani, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic represented a major disruption to the global financial system and created significant challenges for banking institutions. Restrictions on economic activities, declining household and business income, supply-chain disruptions, and heightened economic uncertainty affected borrowers' repayment capacity and consequently influenced financing quality, liquidity, profitability, and financial stability. Islamic banks were not isolated from these pressures (Cai, 2025). The pandemic therefore generated considerable scholarly interest in examining whether the distinctive characteristics of Islamic banking could contribute to greater resilience during periods of economic and financial stress. Research during this period examined

Islamic banks' financial performance, stability, financing risk, liquidity, efficiency, and their comparative resilience relative to conventional banks (Amir, 2020).

The pandemic also changed the research agenda surrounding Islamic banking by accelerating the importance of digital transformation. Social-distancing policies and restrictions on physical interaction encouraged banks to expand digital channels, mobile banking, online transactions, fintech services, and other technology-enabled financial solutions (Ha, Le, & Nguyen, 2025). Consequently, digitalization became an increasingly important topic within Islamic banking research. Studies examined the relationship between digital financial services, financial inclusion, customer behavior, operational efficiency, and banking resilience. In this context, digital transformation was increasingly understood not only as a technological development but also as a strategic response that enabled Islamic financial institutions to maintain service delivery and customer relationships during the crisis (Amir, 2020).

Another important research direction that emerged during the pandemic concerns the role of Islamic social finance. The economic consequences of COVID-19 disproportionately affected vulnerable households, micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises, and communities with limited access to financial resources. Islamic social finance instruments such as zakat, waqf, and other Shariah-based mechanisms consequently attracted greater scholarly attention because of their potential contribution to poverty alleviation, social protection, financial inclusion, and economic recovery. This development further expanded the scope of Islamic banking and finance research by connecting financial intermediation with broader social, economic, and sustainability objectives (Huda & Nasution, 2021).

The COVID-19 crisis also stimulated research on sustainability and responsible finance. The disruption highlighted the importance of financial institutions' ability to respond to environmental, social, and economic challenges while maintaining financial stability. Within Islamic banking, these concerns are particularly relevant because the principles of Islamic finance emphasize ethical transactions, social justice, responsible investment, and the avoidance of activities that generate social harm (Cahyono, Siregar, & Wati, 2021). As a result, research during and after the pandemic increasingly explored the relationship between Islamic finance, sustainability, social responsibility, and broader development objectives.

The rapid expansion and diversification of Islamic banking research during the COVID-19 period have created a complex body of literature that is difficult to understand through individual studies alone (Mubarak, Wibowo, Utomo, & Rahman, 2025). Bibliometric analysis provides an appropriate methodological approach for systematically mapping the development and intellectual structure of a research field. Through publication and citation analysis, bibliometric methods can identify influential publications, authors, journals, institutions, and countries, while network-based techniques can reveal patterns of collaboration, intellectual relationships, and thematic development. Keyword co-occurrence and thematic analysis can further identify dominant research topics and emerging areas of scholarly interest (Wang, Yang, Chen, & Han, 2022).

Bibliometric studies have increasingly been applied to Islamic banking and Islamic finance to examine the evolution of the field. Previous studies have mapped publication trends, influential authors and journals, country and institutional contributions, citation structures, and research themes. These studies demonstrate that Islamic banking research has developed into a

multidisciplinary field encompassing banking performance, financial stability, governance, risk, technology, sustainability, and social finance. However, existing bibliometric research varies substantially in terms of research scope, database coverage, publication period, keyword formulation, and analytical techniques (Handoko, 2020).

Research specifically related to COVID-19 has further demonstrated the rapid development of Islamic banking and Islamic finance scholarship. Previous bibliometric studies have examined publications addressing Islamic banking and finance during the pandemic and identified important themes related to financial resilience, digital transformation, Islamic social finance, financial markets, and economic recovery. Nevertheless, much of the existing literature combines Islamic banking with the broader Islamic finance domain, potentially limiting the ability to identify the specific intellectual development of Islamic banking research during the pandemic. Differences in research periods and analytical approaches also produce different representations of the global research landscape.

Therefore, a focused bibliometric examination of Islamic banking research during the COVID-19 pandemic remains relevant. Such an analysis can provide a systematic understanding of how the pandemic influenced scholarly attention, which themes became dominant, which topics emerged, and how researchers, institutions, and countries contributed to the development of the field. By integrating publication trends, citation patterns, collaboration networks, and thematic structures, the present study seeks to provide a comprehensive representation of the global development of Islamic banking research during the COVID-19 pandemic and to identify potential directions for future research.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a bibliometric analysis to systematically examine the global development and research trends in Islamic banking during the COVID-19 pandemic. Bibliometric analysis is appropriate for this study because it enables the quantitative evaluation of a large body of scientific literature and provides an objective overview of publication trends, influential publications, research collaborations, and thematic developments within a specific research field. The analysis focuses on identifying the intellectual and thematic structure of Islamic banking research published during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The data were obtained from the Scopus database, which was selected because of its broad coverage of peer-reviewed international publications and its extensive bibliographic and citation information. The literature search was conducted using keywords related to Islamic banking and the COVID-19 pandemic. The search strategy was designed to capture publications specifically addressing Islamic banking in the context of the pandemic while minimizing irrelevant records. The search string included combinations of terms such as “Islamic bank*”, “Islamic banking”, “Shariah bank*”, “COVID-19”, “COVID19”, “coronavirus”, and “pandemic”. The search was limited to publications published during the COVID-19 period and indexed in Scopus.

Following the initial retrieval process, the identified records were screened to ensure their relevance to the research objectives. Duplicate records and publications that were not directly related to Islamic banking and the COVID-19 pandemic were excluded from the final dataset. The bibliographic information collected included publication title, authors, year of publication, journal, affiliation, country, citation information, keywords, abstract, and references. The final

dataset was subsequently exported from Scopus in a format compatible with bibliometric analysis software.

The bibliometric analysis was conducted using VOSviewer to visualize and analyze relationships among publications, authors, countries, institutions, and keywords. The analysis included co-authorship analysis to identify collaboration patterns among researchers and countries, citation analysis to identify influential publications and authors, and keyword co-occurrence analysis to identify the dominant research themes within the literature. In addition, bibliographic coupling and co-citation analyses were employed where applicable to identify intellectual relationships among publications and the underlying knowledge structure of the research field.

Keyword co-occurrence analysis was used to identify clusters of research topics and to examine how different themes were connected during the COVID-19 period. The frequency and strength of keyword associations were used to determine the most prominent topics and thematic clusters. The resulting bibliometric networks were interpreted based on the relationships among nodes, links, and clusters, allowing the study to identify both established research themes and emerging areas of scholarly interest.

To provide a more comprehensive interpretation of the research evolution, the study also employed temporal analysis to examine changes in publication patterns and thematic emphasis throughout the observation period. The combination of performance analysis and science mapping enables the study to move beyond simply counting publications and citations toward understanding the intellectual structure, collaboration patterns, and thematic evolution of global Islamic banking research during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The methodological framework of this study therefore consists of four main stages: literature identification, data screening and preparation, bibliometric analysis, and interpretation of the resulting bibliometric networks. This approach provides a systematic and reproducible basis for examining global trends in Islamic banking research during the COVID-19 pandemic and for identifying potential research directions emerging from the literature.

4. RESULT

4.1. Publication Growth and Research Trends

The bibliometric analysis reveals the development of global research on Islamic banking during the COVID-19 pandemic and demonstrates how scholarly attention toward the subject evolved in response to the unprecedented global health and economic crisis. The annual distribution of publications provides an initial indication of the intensity and development of academic interest in the relationship between Islamic banking and COVID-19. Changes in publication output across the observation period also reflect the changing priorities of researchers as the pandemic developed and its implications for financial institutions became increasingly visible.

The emergence of COVID-19 generated substantial uncertainty across the global financial system and encouraged researchers to investigate how financial institutions responded to the disruption. Within the Islamic banking literature, the pandemic created a particularly important research context because Islamic banks were required to maintain financial intermediation while facing declining economic activity, changes in customer behavior, financing pressures, liquidity challenges, and heightened uncertainty. Consequently, the publication trend can be interpreted

as an indication of the growing scholarly effort to understand the capacity of Islamic banks to maintain their operations and financial stability during an exceptional period of global disruption.

The development of publication output also indicates that Islamic banking research during the pandemic was not restricted to the immediate financial consequences of COVID-19. As the crisis evolved, scholarly attention expanded toward a broader range of issues associated with the transformation of the banking industry. Early research was largely concerned with the direct consequences of the pandemic, including financial performance, bank stability, financing risk, liquidity, profitability, and the comparative resilience of Islamic and conventional banks. These topics were particularly relevant because the deterioration of economic conditions could directly affect borrowers' ability to meet their financial obligations and consequently influence the quality of bank financing.

As the pandemic continued, research attention increasingly incorporated technological and digital dimensions of Islamic banking. Restrictions on physical mobility and face-to-face interactions encouraged financial institutions to accelerate the adoption of digital banking channels and technology-based financial services. This development contributed to the emergence of research themes related to digital banking, fintech, digital financial inclusion, online financial services, and technological innovation. The publication trend therefore reflects not only an academic response to the financial consequences of COVID-19 but also growing interest in how the crisis accelerated structural changes within the banking industry.

Another important development concerns the increasing attention to the social role of Islamic finance. The economic consequences of the pandemic affected vulnerable households, small businesses, and communities with limited financial resources. This situation encouraged researchers to examine the potential contribution of Islamic social finance and Shariah-based financial instruments to economic recovery and social welfare. Consequently, research on Islamic banking during the pandemic became increasingly connected with issues such as zakat, waqf, financial inclusion, poverty alleviation, social protection, and sustainable economic development. This broader research orientation demonstrates that the pandemic encouraged scholars to examine Islamic banking not only as a financial intermediary but also as part of a wider Islamic economic and social system.

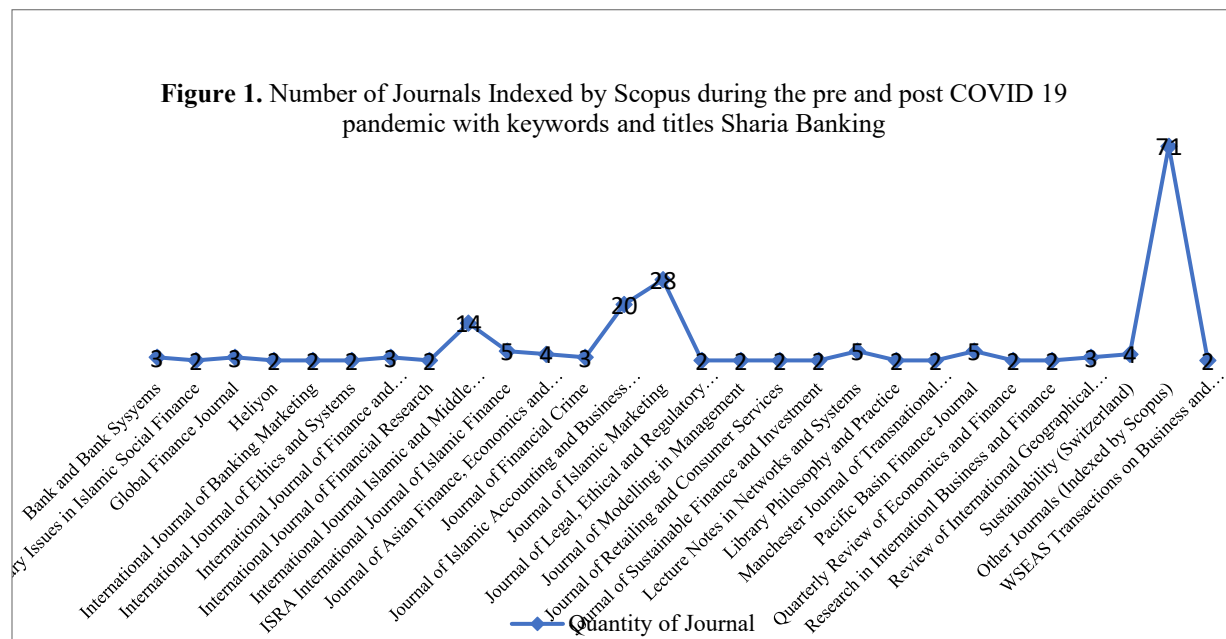
The publication trend further suggests an increasing integration between Islamic banking and sustainability-oriented research. The pandemic highlighted the importance of financial institutions' ability to respond to economic, social, and institutional shocks while maintaining long-term stability. Within Islamic finance, this issue is closely related to the principles of ethical finance, social justice, responsible investment, and the broader objectives of Shariah. As a result, sustainability, responsible finance, and social responsibility gradually became interconnected with discussions of Islamic banking resilience and post-pandemic recovery.

The evolution of research output can therefore be understood as a progression from crisis identification toward crisis adaptation and transformation. At the beginning of the pandemic, researchers primarily sought to understand the immediate effects of COVID-19 on Islamic banks and financial markets. Subsequently, attention shifted toward the mechanisms that could enable Islamic banks to adapt to changing economic and technological conditions. This included greater consideration of digitalization, fintech, financial inclusion, risk management, social finance, and

sustainable development. Such a transition indicates that the pandemic served as an important catalyst for broadening the scope of Islamic banking research.

Furthermore, the distribution of publications across the observation period provides an indication of the responsiveness of the academic community to emerging financial challenges. A growing number of studies suggests that COVID-19 became an important research agenda within Islamic banking, particularly because the crisis provided an opportunity to reassess the resilience and adaptability of Shariah-based financial institutions. The concentration of research within particular years may also reflect the availability of new empirical data, the publication of policy responses, and the increasing recognition of the longer-term consequences of the pandemic for banking systems.

Overall, the publication growth demonstrates that COVID-19 represented an important period in the development of Islamic banking scholarship. The research agenda expanded from conventional concerns regarding financial performance and stability toward a more multidimensional examination of resilience, digital transformation, financial inclusion, Islamic social finance, sustainability, and economic recovery. This development suggests that the pandemic did not merely generate a temporary increase in research activity but also contributed to the emergence of new conceptual and thematic connections within the field. The subsequent analysis of authors, countries, institutions, citations, and keyword networks provides further evidence of how this expanding research community was structured and which themes became particularly influential during the COVID-19 period.



4.2 Most Productive Authors, Journals, and Institutions

The analysis of author productivity identifies the researchers who contributed most actively to the development of Islamic banking research during the COVID-19 pandemic. The

distribution of publications among authors provides an overview of the concentration of scholarly contributions within the research field and highlights the researchers who have demonstrated sustained interest in pandemic-related Islamic banking issues. Authors with a relatively high number of publications can be considered important contributors to the development of knowledge in this area, particularly because their repeated contributions may indicate established research expertise and continuing engagement with the subject.

The productivity pattern among authors also provides insight into the structure of the emerging research community. A concentration of publications among a limited number of researchers may indicate the presence of core scholars who have played a central role in developing research on Islamic banking and COVID-19. At the same time, the presence of a broader group of authors with fewer publications suggests that the pandemic attracted researchers from different academic backgrounds and geographical locations. This pattern is important because COVID-19 created an interdisciplinary research environment in which banking, Islamic finance, economics, financial technology, risk management, and social finance increasingly intersected.

The contribution of highly productive authors is particularly relevant for understanding the development of research themes during the pandemic. Researchers who published repeatedly during the observation period may have contributed to the identification of important research questions, methodological approaches, and conceptual perspectives. Their publications may also have influenced subsequent studies through citation relationships and academic collaboration. Therefore, author productivity should not be interpreted solely in terms of the number of publications but also as an indication of the researchers' involvement in shaping the intellectual development of the field.

The analysis of journal productivity provides a complementary perspective on the dissemination of Islamic banking research during the COVID-19 pandemic. The distribution of publications across journals identifies the principal academic outlets through which research findings were communicated to the international scholarly community. Journals publishing a relatively large number of relevant studies can be regarded as important publication venues for researchers interested in Islamic banking, Islamic finance, banking stability, financial technology, and crisis-related financial research.

The concentration of publications in particular journals may also reflect the interdisciplinary character of COVID-19-related Islamic banking research. While some studies are published in specialized Islamic finance and Islamic banking journals, other contributions may appear in journals focusing on economics, finance, banking, business, sustainability, technology, and social sciences. This distribution indicates that the impact of COVID-19 on Islamic banking was not treated as an isolated financial issue but was examined from multiple disciplinary perspectives.

Journal productivity can further be interpreted in relation to the development of research themes. Journals that consistently publish studies concerning Islamic banking during the pandemic may provide important platforms for discussions of financial resilience, digital transformation, fintech, Islamic social finance, risk management, and sustainability. The presence of Islamic banking research across different journal categories demonstrates the

growing integration of Islamic finance scholarship with broader debates in the international financial and economic literature.

Institutional productivity provides another important dimension of the analysis. The institutional distribution identifies universities and research organizations that have contributed substantially to the development of Islamic banking research during the COVID-19 period. Institutions with a high number of publications may reflect the presence of established Islamic finance research centers, specialized academic programs, experienced researchers, or institutional support for international research collaboration.

The institutional analysis also helps identify the geographical centers of Islamic banking scholarship. Institutions located in countries with well-developed Islamic financial sectors are expected to play an important role in producing research on pandemic-related Islamic banking issues. However, contributions from institutions outside traditional Islamic finance centers are also important because the COVID-19 crisis affected financial institutions globally. The involvement of researchers from different institutional and geographical backgrounds therefore contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the pandemic's implications for Islamic banking.

The relationship between productive authors and institutions further illustrates the organization of the research community. Highly productive authors may be affiliated with institutions that have established research networks and strong international connections. These institutional environments can facilitate collaboration, data access, research funding, and publication activities. Consequently, the concentration of research within particular institutions may contribute to the formation of influential research clusters within the broader Islamic banking literature.

Overall, the analysis of authors, journals, and institutions demonstrates that Islamic banking research during the COVID-19 pandemic developed through a combination of established Islamic finance scholarship and broader interdisciplinary research communities. Productive authors contributed to the expansion of knowledge, leading journals provided important platforms for dissemination, and research-intensive institutions supported the development of the field. Together, these patterns provide an important foundation for understanding the global research landscape and are complemented by the subsequent analysis of country contributions, international collaboration, citation impact, and thematic networks.

Table 1. Author ranking during the covid19 pandemic

No	Author	Publications	Citations
1	D. Suhartanto	3	31
2	S. Azmat	3	16
3	S.V. Shamsudheen	3	7
4	J. Bananuka	2	26
5	M. Yasin	2	18
6	M. K. Hassan	2	17
7	H. Mohd Thas Thaker	2	15
8	M. B. Zafar	2	12
9	H. Sudarsono	2	6
10	N.M. Nomran	2	6

4.3 Citation Analysis and Influential Publications

Citation analysis was conducted to identify publications that have received the greatest scholarly attention within the field of Islamic banking research during the COVID-19 pandemic. Citation counts provide an important indicator of the visibility and academic influence of individual publications because frequently cited studies are more likely to have contributed to subsequent scholarly discussions. In the context of this study, citation analysis is particularly useful for identifying the publications that have become important references in understanding the implications of COVID-19 for Islamic banking and related areas of Islamic finance.

The citation distribution provides an overview of the intellectual impact of research published during the observation period. Publications with higher citation counts can be regarded as influential contributions because they have attracted greater attention from subsequent researchers. However, citation frequency should not be interpreted exclusively as a measure of research quality. Citation patterns may also be influenced by publication year, journal visibility, accessibility, research topic, methodological approach, and the size of the research community. Nevertheless, citation analysis remains a useful bibliometric indicator for identifying publications that have played a prominent role in the development of a particular research field.

The most influential publications identified through the analysis generally address the major challenges faced by financial institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic. These include the effects of the pandemic on bank performance, financial stability, financing risk, liquidity, resilience, and the ability of Islamic financial institutions to respond to economic uncertainty. Such publications provide an important empirical and conceptual foundation for subsequent studies seeking to understand whether Islamic banks demonstrated distinctive characteristics in dealing with the economic consequences of the crisis.

One important group of highly cited studies focuses on the resilience and stability of Islamic banks during the pandemic. These studies attracted scholarly attention because the pandemic provided an opportunity to examine the ability of Islamic financial institutions to absorb and respond to an unprecedented external shock. Research examining financial stability, profitability, efficiency, and financing performance contributed to broader discussions regarding the comparative resilience of Islamic and conventional banking systems. The prominence of these topics in citation networks indicates that financial resilience was one of the central concerns of Islamic banking research during the pandemic.

Another important group of influential publications concerns digital transformation and financial technology. The rapid transition toward digital financial services during COVID-19 created significant changes in customer behavior and banking operations. Studies addressing digital banking, fintech, digital financial inclusion, and technology adoption therefore became increasingly relevant to the academic discussion. Their influence reflects the recognition that technological transformation was not simply a response to temporary mobility restrictions but also represented a potential long-term transformation of financial service delivery.

The citation structure also highlights research related to Islamic social finance and economic recovery. The severe socioeconomic consequences of the pandemic increased interest in the capacity of zakat, waqf, and other Islamic social finance instruments to support vulnerable communities and facilitate economic recovery. Publications addressing these issues contributed to an expanding understanding of Islamic finance as a mechanism that extends beyond

conventional financial intermediation. The scholarly attention received by such studies suggests that the social dimensions of Islamic finance became increasingly important during the pandemic.

In addition, influential publications demonstrate growing connections between Islamic banking, sustainability, and responsible finance. The pandemic encouraged researchers to reconsider the broader role of financial institutions in addressing economic and social challenges. Within Islamic finance, these discussions are closely related to the principles of ethical investment, social justice, risk sharing, and responsible financial activities. Consequently, studies linking Islamic finance with sustainability and broader development objectives contributed to the diversification of the research agenda during the COVID-19 period.

The citation relationships among influential publications also provide evidence of the intellectual foundations of the research field. Highly cited studies often serve as reference points for subsequent research, creating intellectual connections among different research themes. Publications examining the financial consequences of COVID-19 may subsequently be connected with studies on resilience, risk management, digital transformation, financial inclusion, and social finance. This interconnectedness demonstrates that the development of Islamic banking research during the pandemic was multidimensional rather than confined to a single research perspective.

Furthermore, citation analysis can reveal the extent to which pandemic-related Islamic banking research was connected with the broader literature on banking and finance. Highly cited publications may draw upon established theories and empirical findings from conventional banking research while simultaneously incorporating Islamic banking principles and institutional characteristics. This interaction contributes to the integration of Islamic banking research into wider international discussions concerning financial stability, crisis management, technological innovation, and sustainable finance.

The identification of influential publications also provides an important basis for understanding the development of subsequent research themes. Publications that received substantial scholarly attention may have helped establish particular research questions as important areas of investigation. Their findings and conceptual approaches can subsequently be extended through different datasets, countries, methodologies, and theoretical perspectives. Therefore, citation analysis does not merely identify the most frequently referenced publications but also helps reveal the knowledge foundations from which new research directions have emerged.

Overall, the citation analysis demonstrates that influential research during the COVID-19 pandemic was concentrated around several interconnected concerns, particularly financial resilience, banking stability, risk management, digital transformation, Islamic social finance, financial inclusion, and economic recovery. These themes reflect the major challenges confronting Islamic financial institutions during the pandemic and demonstrate how the crisis broadened the scope of Islamic banking scholarship. The citation structure consequently provides evidence that COVID-19 contributed to the formation of a diverse and interconnected intellectual landscape, which can be further examined through co-citation, bibliographic coupling, and keyword co-occurrence analyses.

4.4 Keyword Co-occurrence and Thematic Clusters

Keyword co-occurrence analysis was conducted to identify the major research themes and conceptual relationships within the literature on Islamic banking during the COVID-19 pandemic. This analysis examines the frequency with which keywords appear together across publications and uses these relationships to identify groups of closely connected research topics. Keywords that frequently occur within the same publications are assumed to reflect related research interests and therefore provide an indication of the conceptual structure of the literature. The resulting network enables the identification of dominant themes as well as emerging areas that have received increasing scholarly attention during the pandemic.

The keyword network demonstrates that COVID-19-related Islamic banking research developed around a number of interconnected themes rather than a single dominant research issue. The central position of terms associated with COVID-19, Islamic banking, Islamic finance, and financial institutions reflects the primary focus of the literature. These core keywords are connected to more specific concepts concerning banking performance, financial stability, risk, digitalization, fintech, financial inclusion, and Islamic social finance. The connections among these terms indicate that researchers approached the pandemic from financial, technological, institutional, and social perspectives.

One of the prominent thematic dimensions concerns the relationship between COVID-19 and the financial performance of Islamic banks. Keywords associated with bank performance, profitability, efficiency, financial stability, and risk indicate substantial scholarly attention to the financial consequences of the pandemic. The disruption of economic activities created uncertainty regarding borrowers' repayment capacity, financing quality, liquidity, and profitability. Consequently, researchers examined how Islamic banks responded to these pressures and whether their distinctive operational and contractual characteristics contributed to their ability to withstand the crisis.

A closely related thematic dimension concerns financial resilience and risk management. The occurrence of COVID-19 provided an opportunity to evaluate the capacity of Islamic financial institutions to absorb external shocks and maintain financial stability. Keywords related to risk, resilience, financing, credit risk, liquidity, and stability demonstrate the importance of crisis-management issues within the research landscape. The strong conceptual relationship between these keywords suggests that the pandemic shifted scholarly attention toward understanding not only the consequences of financial disruption but also the mechanisms through which Islamic banks could maintain stability under uncertain conditions.

Another important cluster is associated with digital finance and financial technology. The pandemic accelerated the adoption of digital banking services because restrictions on physical interaction encouraged customers and financial institutions to rely increasingly on online channels. Consequently, keywords related to fintech, digital banking, digital transformation, technology adoption, mobile banking, and digital financial services became increasingly connected within the literature. This thematic development indicates that digitalization was viewed as an important component of the banking industry's response to the pandemic and potentially as a long-term transformation of Islamic financial services.

The keyword network also reveals a strong relationship between digitalization and financial inclusion. The increased reliance on digital financial services during the pandemic

created opportunities to expand access to financial products and services, particularly for customers who faced geographical or physical barriers. Within Islamic banking, this relationship is particularly important because digital platforms can facilitate access to Shariah-compliant financial services while simultaneously improving operational efficiency and customer convenience. The co-occurrence of digital finance, fintech, and financial inclusion therefore demonstrates the emergence of technology as an important mechanism connecting banking resilience with broader socioeconomic objectives.

Islamic social finance represents another significant thematic dimension within the keyword network. Research associated with zakat, waqf, social finance, poverty alleviation, and economic recovery reflects the broader social consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. The crisis affected vulnerable communities and small businesses, creating demand for alternative mechanisms of social and financial support. The emergence of Islamic social finance within the research landscape indicates that scholars increasingly examined the capacity of Islamic financial instruments to contribute to social protection and post-pandemic economic recovery.

The thematic structure further demonstrates the connection between Islamic banking and sustainability-oriented research. Concepts related to sustainability, social responsibility, responsible finance, and economic development are increasingly connected with Islamic finance and Islamic banking. This relationship reflects the compatibility between the ethical principles of Islamic finance and broader discussions concerning sustainable and socially responsible financial systems. The pandemic appears to have strengthened this connection by highlighting the importance of financial institutions' social and economic responsibilities during periods of crisis.

The network structure also indicates that Islamic banking research during COVID-19 was closely connected with the broader Islamic finance literature. The frequent co-occurrence of Islamic banking, Islamic finance, COVID-19, financial performance, and financial stability suggests that researchers often examined Islamic banks within the wider context of the Islamic financial system. This relationship demonstrates the interdisciplinary nature of the field and indicates that the boundaries between Islamic banking, Islamic finance, fintech, social finance, and sustainability research became increasingly interconnected during the pandemic.

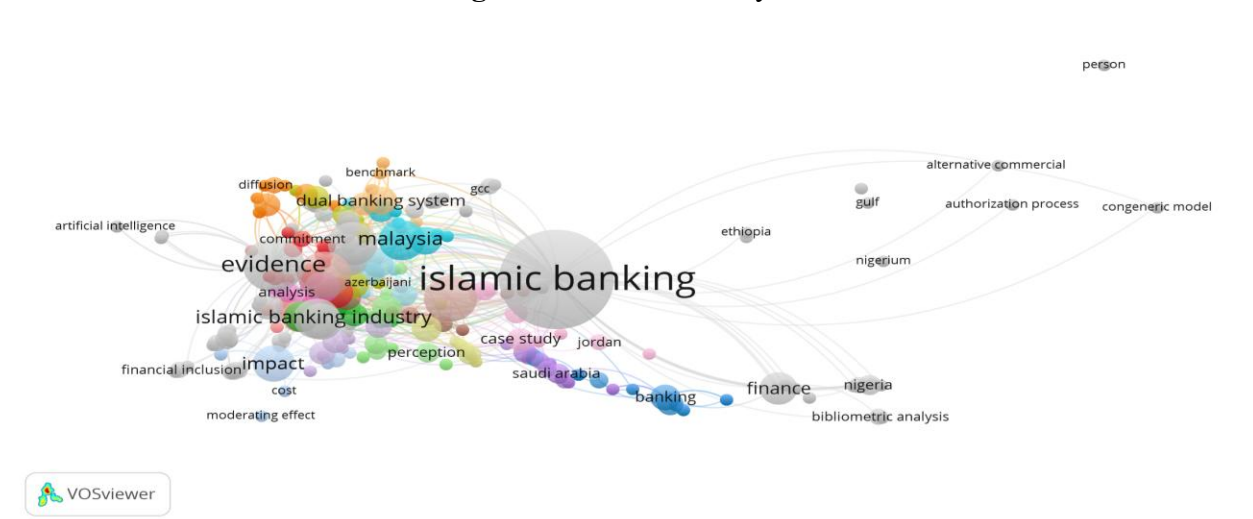
From a temporal perspective, the thematic development suggests a movement from immediate crisis-related concerns toward adaptation and transformation. Initial research attention was largely directed toward the direct financial consequences of COVID-19, including performance, stability, liquidity, and risk. As the pandemic progressed, the research agenda increasingly incorporated digital transformation, fintech, financial inclusion, Islamic social finance, sustainability, and recovery. This shift indicates that researchers gradually moved from assessing the immediate impact of the crisis toward investigating how Islamic financial institutions could adapt to structural changes in the post-pandemic environment.

The relationships among the thematic clusters demonstrate that the COVID-19 pandemic generated a multidimensional research agenda in Islamic banking. Financial resilience is connected with risk management, digital transformation is connected with financial inclusion, while Islamic social finance is connected with economic recovery and social welfare. These relationships suggest that the development of Islamic banking research during the pandemic cannot be adequately understood by examining individual themes independently. Instead, the

research field developed through interactions among financial, technological, social, and sustainability-related dimensions.

Overall, the keyword co-occurrence analysis demonstrates that pandemic-related Islamic banking research extends substantially beyond conventional concerns regarding banking performance and financial stability. The literature encompasses a broad range of interconnected themes, including COVID-19, Islamic finance, digital finance, fintech, financial inclusion, risk management, financial resilience, Islamic social finance, sustainability, and economic recovery. The resulting thematic structure illustrates how the pandemic served as a catalyst for the diversification of Islamic banking research and created new connections between traditional banking concerns and emerging issues related to technology, social development, and sustainable finance.

Figure 1. Network Analysis



5. DISCUSSION OF ANALYSIS RESULTS

The findings of this study demonstrate that the COVID-19 pandemic has become an important catalyst in shaping the development of global Islamic banking research. The bibliometric analysis indicates that scholarly attention during the pandemic was not limited to assessing the immediate financial consequences of COVID-19 but gradually expanded toward broader questions concerning resilience, technological transformation, financial inclusion, Islamic social finance, sustainability, and economic recovery. This development suggests that the pandemic created a multidimensional research environment in which traditional Islamic banking issues became increasingly connected with emerging financial, technological, and socioeconomic challenges.

The growth in research publications during the observation period reflects the importance of COVID-19 as a significant external shock for Islamic financial institutions. The pandemic challenged banks through declining economic activity, increased uncertainty, changes in customer behavior, financing pressures, and potential deterioration in asset quality. The substantial academic attention given to Islamic banking during this period can therefore be understood as a response to the need to evaluate whether Islamic banks were able to maintain

financial stability while operating under extraordinary economic conditions. The findings are consistent with the broader crisis literature, which emphasizes the importance of financial resilience, liquidity management, risk mitigation, and institutional adaptability during periods of economic disruption.

The prominence of financial performance, stability, and risk-related themes in the keyword network indicates that the initial research agenda was strongly influenced by the immediate financial consequences of the pandemic. This finding is theoretically important because Islamic banks, despite operating according to different contractual and Shariah principles, remain exposed to macroeconomic shocks that affect borrowers, businesses, and financial markets. The pandemic therefore provided an important empirical setting for examining the extent to which Islamic banking characteristics influence institutional resilience. The attention given to profitability, financing risk, liquidity, and stability demonstrates that researchers considered the financial consequences of COVID-19 to be central to understanding the performance of Islamic banks during the crisis.

At the same time, the findings suggest that Islamic banking research gradually moved beyond the traditional analysis of financial performance. The emergence of digital finance, fintech, and digital transformation as interconnected research themes indicates that COVID-19 accelerated scholarly interest in technological adaptation. Restrictions on physical interaction forced financial institutions to increase their reliance on digital channels, and Islamic banks were required to maintain financial services while ensuring accessibility and Shariah compliance. The growing connection between Islamic banking and digital transformation therefore suggests that technology became an important dimension of institutional resilience rather than simply an operational innovation.

The strong relationship between digital finance and financial inclusion provides another important interpretation of the findings. Digital banking technologies can reduce geographical and physical barriers to accessing financial services and may therefore contribute to broader financial inclusion. This is particularly relevant for Islamic banking because the expansion of digital platforms can potentially increase access to Shariah-compliant financial products among customers who are geographically distant from physical branches. The findings consequently indicate that the pandemic strengthened the conceptual relationship between technological innovation and the social objectives of Islamic finance.

The emergence of Islamic social finance as an important research theme further demonstrates the broader transformation of the research agenda. COVID-19 generated significant socioeconomic consequences, particularly for vulnerable households, small businesses, and communities with limited access to financial resources. Researchers consequently examined how zakat, waqf, and other Islamic social finance instruments could support economic recovery and social welfare. The prominence of these themes indicates that Islamic finance research increasingly considered financial institutions within a wider socioeconomic framework rather than focusing exclusively on commercial banking performance.

This finding is particularly relevant to the underlying philosophy of Islamic finance. The emphasis on social justice, ethical financial activities, risk sharing, and socioeconomic welfare provides a conceptual foundation for examining the role of Islamic finance during a crisis. The

pandemic therefore created an opportunity for researchers to revisit the broader social objectives of Islamic financial institutions and investigate how Islamic banking and social finance could contribute to economic recovery. The increasing integration of these themes suggests that the COVID-19 crisis strengthened the connection between Islamic finance and social development.

The increasing appearance of sustainability-related themes also indicates a broader transformation in Islamic banking research. The pandemic highlighted the vulnerability of economic and financial systems to systemic shocks and encouraged greater attention to long-term resilience and responsible financial practices. Within Islamic finance, sustainability-related discussions are closely associated with ethical investment, social responsibility, responsible resource allocation, and the broader objectives of Shariah. The emergence of sustainability within the research landscape therefore suggests that researchers increasingly viewed Islamic banking as part of a broader discussion concerning responsible and sustainable financial development.

The findings concerning productive authors, journals, and institutions further suggest that Islamic banking research during the pandemic developed through established academic networks as well as new interdisciplinary collaborations. The participation of researchers from different institutional and geographical backgrounds indicates that COVID-19 created a global research environment. The pandemic was a common global shock, allowing researchers from different countries to investigate similar problems while using different institutional settings and datasets. Such international engagement can contribute to comparative research and facilitate the transfer of knowledge concerning banking resilience, digitalization, and financial recovery.

The citation analysis provides additional evidence regarding the intellectual development of the field. Highly cited publications tend to focus on issues that were particularly important during the crisis, including financial stability, resilience, digital transformation, and the role of Islamic finance in economic recovery. This indicates that the research community was particularly interested in understanding both the immediate consequences of COVID-19 and the mechanisms through which Islamic financial institutions could adapt to the changing environment. Highly cited studies consequently provided intellectual foundations for subsequent research and helped establish key themes within the pandemic-related literature.

The thematic relationships identified through the keyword network are particularly important because they demonstrate that the research field has become increasingly interconnected. Financial resilience is linked to risk management, digital transformation is associated with financial inclusion, while Islamic social finance is connected with social welfare and economic recovery. These relationships suggest that the major research themes should not be viewed independently. Instead, the COVID-19 pandemic encouraged researchers to examine how financial, technological, and social dimensions interact in determining the resilience and future development of Islamic banking.

The overall findings therefore support the view that COVID-19 represented more than a temporary disruption to Islamic banking. It functioned as a catalyst for the transformation of the research agenda. The literature evolved from an initial focus on crisis impacts toward broader discussions of adaptation, innovation, inclusion, sustainability, and long-term resilience. This thematic transformation is significant because it suggests that several research areas that gained

prominence during the pandemic may continue to shape Islamic banking scholarship beyond the crisis itself.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings contribute to the understanding of Islamic banking by demonstrating how Shariah-based financial institutions are increasingly examined through multiple theoretical and disciplinary lenses. Traditional perspectives on banking stability and financial performance are now increasingly combined with perspectives concerning technological innovation, financial inclusion, social finance, and sustainability. This convergence broadens the theoretical scope of Islamic banking research and creates opportunities for future studies to integrate financial and non-financial dimensions within a single analytical framework.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that Islamic financial institutions should consider resilience as a multidimensional capability. Maintaining financial stability during a crisis requires not only adequate risk management and liquidity but also technological readiness, customer accessibility, operational flexibility, and social responsiveness. The growing connection between these themes in the academic literature indicates that future Islamic banking strategies may increasingly depend on the ability of financial institutions to integrate digital innovation with Shariah principles and broader social and sustainability objectives.

Overall, the discussion confirms that global Islamic banking research during the COVID-19 pandemic developed along several interconnected dimensions. Financial resilience and stability remained fundamental concerns, while digital transformation, fintech, financial inclusion, Islamic social finance, sustainability, and economic recovery increasingly expanded the boundaries of the field. The findings demonstrate that COVID-19 served as a significant catalyst for intellectual diversification and thematic integration in Islamic banking research. This evolution provides an important foundation for identifying future research directions and understanding how Islamic banking scholarship may continue to develop in response to future global crises and structural changes in the financial system.

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