

MAPPING THE ISLAM NUSANTARA DISCOURSE: BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF CONCEPTUAL STRUCTURE AND KEY DEBATES

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Abstract

This study was motivated by the rapid development of the discourse on Islam Nusantara in academic literature, contrasted with limited efforts to systematically map its intellectual structure and conceptual debate patterns. The purpose of this study is to map the intellectual structure of Islam Nusantara studies, identify its theoretical foundations, and reveal the primary directions of conceptual debates that have developed in scientific literature. Using a bibliometric analysis method, this study examines 1,653 articles indexed by Scopus between 2017 and 2024, analyzed via the Bibliometrix tool through Biblioshiny. The results show that publications on Islam Nusantara have experienced significant annual growth. The thematic map reveals that the main discourse of Islam Nusantara centers on the relationship between Islam, human values, and religion as a social practice, while themes of Islamism, Islamic law, and nationality occupy an emerging or declining position. Furthermore, keyword network analysis demonstrates a strong connection between the religious, social, and political dimensions within the study of Islam Nusantara. This study concludes that Islam Nusantara in contemporary scientific literature is constructed primarily as a humanistic, moderate, and contextual discourse on Islam, rather than solely as an ideological-political project, and remains open to the development of more specific micro and thematic studies. Future research should explore digital Islam Nusantara, gender, youth, and pesantren globalization. Applying longitudinal bibliometrics

and regional comparisons will enhance the field's theoretical depth, empirical richness, and global relevance.

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh pesatnya perkembangan wacana Islam Nusantara dalam literatur akademik, yang kontras dengan masih terbatasnya upaya untuk memetakan struktur intelektual dan pola perdebatan konseptualnya secara sistematis. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk memetakan struktur intelektual studi Islam Nusantara, mengidentifikasi landasan teoretisnya, serta mengungkap arah utama perdebatan konseptual yang berkembang dalam literatur ilmiah. Dengan menggunakan metode analisis bibliometrik, penelitian ini memeriksa 1.653 artikel terindeks Scopus antara tahun 2017 dan 2024, yang dianalisis menggunakan alat Bibliometrix melalui Biblioshiny. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa publikasi tentang Islam Nusantara mengalami pertumbuhan tahunan yang signifikan. Peta tematik mengungkapkan bahwa wacana utama Islam Nusantara berpusat pada hubungan antara Islam, nilai-nilai kemanusiaan, dan agama sebagai praktik sosial, sementara tema Islamisme, hukum Islam, dan kebangsaan berada pada posisi yang baru muncul (emerging) atau menurun (declining). Lebih lanjut, analisis jaringan kata kunci menunjukkan hubungan yang kuat antara dimensi keagamaan, sosial, dan politik dalam studi Islam Nusantara. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa Islam Nusantara dalam literatur ilmiah kontemporer dikonstruksikan secara utama sebagai wacana Islam yang humanis, moderat, dan kontekstual, bukan semata-mata sebagai proyek ideologis-politik, serta tetap terbuka bagi pengembangan studi mikro dan tematik yang lebih spesifik. Penelitian masa depan harus mengeksplorasi Islam Nusantara digital, gender, pemuda, dan globalisasi pesantren. Penerapan bibliometrik longitudinal dan perbandingan regional akan meningkatkan kedalaman teoretis, kekayaan empiris, dan relevansi global dari bidang ini.

Keywords: *bibliometric analysis; contemporary Islamic discourse; intellectual structure; Islam Nusantara; thematic mapping*

Introduction

In recent decades, the term Islam Nusantara has emerged as one of the most dynamic discourses within the landscape of Indonesian Islamic thought. This concept emphasizes the importance of indigenizing and contextualizing Islamic teachings within the socio-cultural realities of the Malay Archipelago, reflecting the historical encounter between universal Islamic values and local wisdom (van Bruinessen, 2018). However, despite growing attention toward Islam Nusantara in academic discourse, studies that systematically map its theoretical foundations and intellectual genealogy using data-driven methodologies remain critically limited (Mamat, 2026). Most existing research

focuses on historical, theological, or sociological analysis, but few explore how the structures of scholarly communication and conceptual networks within this discourse have been formed and evolved over time (Dwijayanto & Choirin, 2025).

This gap is particularly significant given the rapid growth of digital publication platforms and open-access journals in the last two decades, which has significantly accelerated the production of scientific literature on Islam Nusantara (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). Academic discussions on this topic are no longer confined to printed books or limited scholarly forums but are widely disseminated through national and international journals. This massive growth of publication poses both opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, it enriches the diversity of perspectives and expands global access to Indonesian Islamic thought. On the other hand, it also creates information overload, making it increasingly difficult for researchers to systematically identify dominant theories, influential figures, and major research trends within this field (Donthu et al., 2021). Without a systematic, bibliometric mapping approach, the development of Islam Nusantara studies risks becoming scattered and repetitive, with weak integration between past and contemporary scholarship.

The intellectual tradition of Islam in the Malay world developed through interactions among Arab, Persian, Indian, and European civilizations, forming a plural and dynamic epistemic space. Since the 7th century CE, Islam entered the Nusantara region through Arab Muslim merchants who peacefully spread the religion along trade routes (Azra, 2013; Imaduddin, 2021). This accommodative process of Islamization toward local cultures gave birth to a distinctive intellectual tradition in which knowledge and spirituality interacted with the diverse traditions of local societies (van Bruinessen, 2018). In Indonesia, this intellectual heritage was embodied in educational institutions such as pesantren, which since the era of the Walisongo have played a vital role in embedding Islamic values grounded in knowledge and local culture (Fadhly, 2018).

In contemporary Indonesian discourse, Islam Nusantara has become a significant point of debate not only in academic circles but also in public, socio-political, and religious arenas (Burhani, 2017; Woodward et al., 2013). The term is frequently positioned as an alternative understanding of Islam that emphasizes moderation, tolerance, and cultural accommodation in contrast to transnational and puritanical interpretations (Mietzner & Muhtadi,

2018). This debate intensified especially after Islam Nusantara was officially promoted in national religious forums, such as Nahdlatul Ulama congresses, and subsequently gained broader public attention (Feillard & Madinier, 2011). As a result, Islam Nusantara is no longer solely an academic concept but also a living discourse that intersects with identity politics, nationalism, and religious authority in Indonesia.

From the perspective of knowledge development, Islam Nusantara is constructed through various academic disciplines, including history, anthropology, theology, sociology, cultural studies, and Islamic studies (Fauzia, 2017). Each discipline contributes its own analytical lens in interpreting the relationship between Islam and local traditions. This multidisciplinary character shows that Islam Nusantara is not a single unified theory, but rather an umbrella concept that accommodates diverse scientific approaches and interpretations. However, this diversity also contributes to the complexity and fragmentation of the discourse.

Furthermore, the position of Islam Nusantara within the global discourse of Islam also deserves special attention. In the last decade, Indonesia has frequently been presented as a model of moderate Islam in the international arena (Assyaukanie, 2009; Menchik, 2016). Islam Nusantara is often associated with peaceful coexistence, religious tolerance, and cultural diversity, which are highly relevant to contemporary global challenges such as religious extremism, radicalism, and identity conflicts (Feener et al., 2016; Hilmy, 2013). This global relevance indicates that Islam Nusantara is not merely a local phenomenon, but also a conceptual contribution of Indonesia to the broader Islamic civilization. Nevertheless, to strengthen its academic legitimacy at the global level, Islam Nusantara requires a solid theoretical foundation and a clearly mapped intellectual genealogy (Akhiyat, 2017).

The novelty of this study lies in its application of bibliometric co-citation analysis and science mapping techniques to systematically reconstruct the intellectual architecture of Islam Nusantara scholarship—an approach that has not been previously employed in this field (van Eck & Waltman, 2010). Unlike narrative or historical reviews, this method enables a data-driven, objective visualization of how ideas, authors, and debates are interconnected within the scientific literature (Cobo et al., 2011). Through co-citation patterns, it is possible to identify which authors, works, and theories are most frequently referenced together, indicating their central role in shaping the discourse (Small, 1973). This approach does not only reveal the dominant schools of

thought but also exposes the marginal or emerging perspectives that may not yet be fully recognized (Chen, 2017).

Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by conducting a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of publications related to Islam Nusantara. The main objectives of this research are to (1) map the intellectual structure of Islam Nusantara studies, (2) identify their theoretical foundations and key contributing authors, and (3) uncover the conceptual debates that define their epistemological boundaries. Through this approach, the study seeks to provide a systematic understanding of the scholarly landscape surrounding Islam Nusantara and to strengthen its position within the broader context of contemporary global Islamic thought.

Method

This study uses a descriptive-bibliometric approach combined with science mapping techniques to explore the discourse of Islam Nusantara in scientific literature. Descriptive bibliometrics focuses on quantifying publication patterns, productivity, and citation trends, while science mapping visualizes the intellectual and conceptual structure of a research field through network analysis, thematic clustering, and co-occurrence patterns (Donthu et al., 2021; Zupic & Čater, 2015). This dual approach was chosen for its ability to systematically map the distribution patterns of scientific publications, identify research trends, describe relationships between researchers, institutions, and key concepts, and reveal the underlying structure of knowledge production in Islam Nusantara studies (Moral-Muñoz et al., 2020).

The research data was obtained through several stages. First, the Scopus database was selected as the main source, given its broad global coverage, rigorous indexing standards, and reputation as a trusted academic journal index in various fields of science (Baas et al., 2020). While other databases such as Web of Science, Dimensions, and Google Scholar offer valuable coverage, Scopus was prioritized due to its structured metadata, comprehensive citation tracking, and compatibility with Bibliometrix software (Pranckutė, 2021). Web of Science has more selective coverage but overlaps significantly with Scopus; Dimensions includes grey literature that may reduce data quality; and Google Scholar lacks standardized metadata necessary for rigorous bibliometric analysis (Martín-Martín et al., 2018). Therefore, Scopus provides the most reliable and methodologically consistent dataset for this study.

Second, articles were searched using the keywords "Islam Nusantara"

or "Islam in Indonesia" or "Indonesian Islam," in the time span of 2017-2024, covering publications in the last eight years. The search focused on the document type "Article," and there were no language restrictions in this process. Third, the articles were exported in BibTeX format, which included complete citation information, bibliographical information, and keywords. These steps resulted in a total of 1,653 articles that met the criteria.

Table 1. Data Source Collection

Category	Information
Research Database	Scopus
Time Range	2017-2024
Language	No language restrictions
Keyword Search	"Islam Nusantara" OR "Islam in Indonesia" OR "Indonesian Islam"
Document Type	"Article"
Data Extraction	Exported in BibTeX format with citation information, bibliographic information, and keywords.
Number of Samples	1653

Prior to analysis, the raw bibliographic data underwent a rigorous cleaning and standardization process to ensure data validity and reliability (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). This process included: (1) author name disambiguation: variations in author names (e.g., "Zuly, Q.", "Qodir, Z.", "Qodir Zuly") were manually unified to ensure accurate attribution of publications (Caron & van Eck, 2014); (2) keyword unification: keywords with similar meanings but different spellings or forms (e.g., "Islamic law" vs. "Sharia law," "Indonesia" vs. "Indonesian context") were standardized to avoid fragmentation in network analysis (Zhang et al., 2016); (3) removal of incomplete records: articles with missing essential metadata (e.g., no abstract, no keywords, or incomplete citation data) were excluded from the final dataset to maintain analytical integrity (Mongeon & Paul-Hus, 2016); and (4) duplicate detection: duplicate entries resulting from database export errors were identified and removed (Franceschini et al., 2016).

These data cleaning procedures are crucial in bibliometric research to minimize bias, enhance the accuracy of co-occurrence and co-citation networks, and ensure that the findings reflect genuine patterns of scholarly communication rather than data artifacts (Zhu & Liu, 2020). After the data was successfully cleaned and standardized, it was analyzed using Biblioshiny. It is part of the Bibliometrix R package (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017).

The analysis covered several aspects: (1) performance analysis: citation analysis to assess the impact of existing publications, identification of the most productive authors, and evaluation of the most relevant sources (Hirsch, 2005); (2) science mapping: network analysis to describe the relationships between authors (co-authorship network) and the relationships between keywords (keyword co-occurrence network), which aimed to reveal the main themes and conceptual structure in this field of research (van Eck & Waltman, 2014); (3) thematic mapping: visualization of research themes based on centrality and density to identify motor themes, niche themes, emerging/declining themes, and basic themes (Cobo et al., 2012); and (4) descriptive analysis: identification of publication patterns based on year, researchers with the most significant contributions, and the important roles of institutions and countries in this research (Bornmann & Mutz, 2015). The results of all these analyses were then visualized in the form of network maps, thematic maps, and trend graphs, which facilitated the interpretation of the research findings and enabled a comprehensive understanding of the intellectual structure of Islam Nusantara studies (Chen, 2017).

Finding and Discussion

Growth in Scientific Article Production

The Annual Scientific Production graph illustrates the growth of publications on Islam Nusantara from 2017 to 2024, showing how academic interest in this topic has expanded and entered broader scientific discussions (Bornmann & Mutz, 2015). Figure 1 demonstrates a consistent upward trend throughout the research period, indicating that Islam Nusantara has increasingly gained scholarly attention and become more established as a field of study (Dwijayanto & Choirin, 2025). The steady rise in publications reflects the progressive development of scientific discussions on this theme across various academic disciplines.

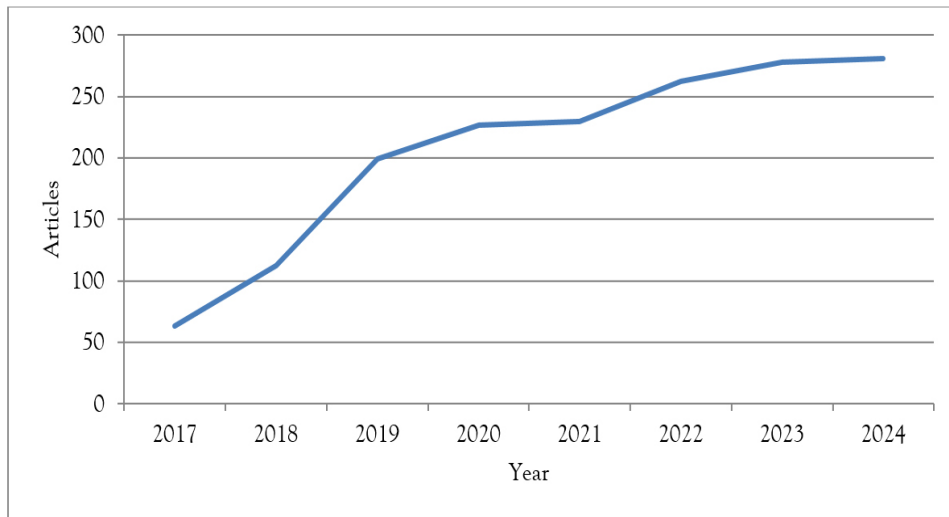


Figure 1. Growth in scientific article production

In the early stage, publication numbers were relatively low. In 2017, only 63 articles discussed Islam Nusantara, showing that the discourse was still in its introductory phase and had not yet become a major academic focus (Imaduddin, 2021). Research networks were still limited, resulting in minimal representation in scientific literature. In 2018, publications increased significantly to 112 articles, marking the beginning of stronger scholarly interest. The growth became more substantial in 2019, when the number of publications reached 199. This increase indicates that Islam Nusantara began occupying a strategic position in studies of Islam, culture, and identity, attracting wider academic attention (Burhani, 2017).

The upward trend continued in subsequent years, with 228 publications in 2020 and 231 in 2021. This pattern reflects sustained academic engagement and suggests that Islam Nusantara research had entered a more mature phase of development (Fauzia, 2017). Growth remained stable from 2022 to 2024, with 261 publications in 2022, 278 in 2023, and a peak of 281 publications in 2024.

This continuous increase reflects the institutionalization of Islam Nusantara as a recognized academic field (Woodward et al., 2020). The expansion also suggests the emergence of new research networks, interdisciplinary collaborations, and methodological diversification (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). However, this quantitative growth raises questions regarding the theoretical depth and

conceptual maturity of the discourse. It remains important to assess whether the increase in publications represents genuine conceptual advancement or merely thematic repetition and descriptive saturation, an issue further explored in citation analysis (Bornmann & Haunschild, 2017).

Analysis of Average Citations per Year

Figure 2 illustrates changes in the average number of citations received by publications on Islam Nusantara from 2017 to 2024, showing periods of strong academic attention and periods of weaker influence (Hirsch, 2005). In 2017, the average citation per article was around 1.37, reflecting the early stage of Islam Nusantara discourse in scientific literature. Although publication numbers were still limited, an initial reference network had already formed, indicating growing scholarly interest. A significant increase occurred in 2018, when the average citation rose to 1.83, suggesting that Islam Nusantara gained broader academic recognition during this period (Isacson & Rubenstein, 2002). Articles published at that time became important references in discussions on identity, religious practices, and Islamic culture in Indonesia, positioning Islam Nusantara within wider academic debates (van Bruinessen, 2013).

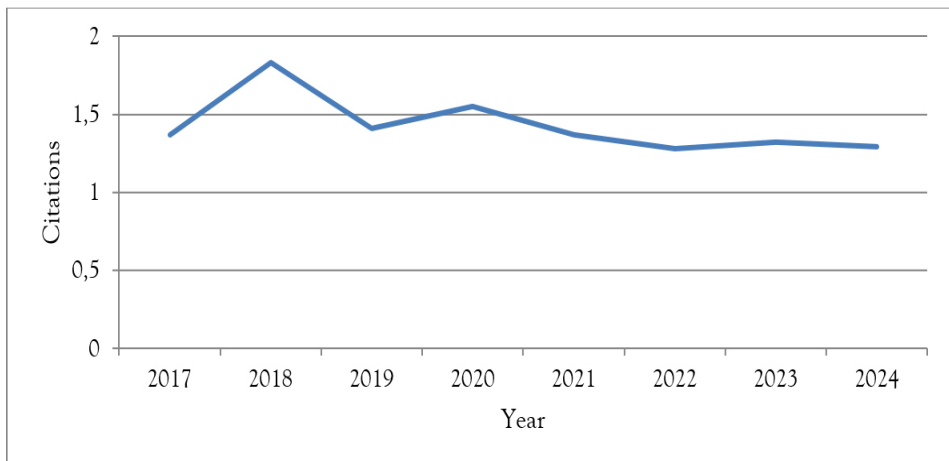


Figure 2. Average citations per year

After reaching its peak in 2018, citation averages declined in 2019 and continued to weaken in subsequent years. Although there was a slight increase in 2020, citation rates remained relatively low and stable from 2021 to 2024, ranging between 1.28 and 1.37 citations per article. By 2023 and 2024,

citation influence approached its lowest level. This decline, despite increasing publication numbers, raises concerns about thematic repetition and limited theoretical innovation in the field (Bornmann & Haunschild, 2017). Many recent studies appear descriptive or normative, focusing on historical narratives or institutional practices without introducing strong analytical frameworks, thereby limiting citation impact (Tahamtan & Bornmann, 2019; Nicolaisen, 2007; MacRoberts & MacRoberts, 2018).

However, recent publications from 2023–2024 have had limited time to accumulate citations, creating a natural time lag effect (Wang, 2013). The expansion of the field may also have produced thematic specialization and fragmentation, reducing cross-citation among subfields (Leydesdorff & Rafols, 2009). Overall, this pattern suggests that Islam Nusantara studies require stronger theoretical, methodological, and integrative approaches to produce more influential and foundational scholarship (Donthu et al., 2021; Zupic & Čater, 2015).

Analysis of Most Relevant Sources

Table 2 presents the publication channels that contribute the most articles on Islam Nusantara, highlighting journals that function as key centers for knowledge production and discourse development in the field (Venable et al., 2016). The Journal of Indonesian Islam occupies the dominant position with 61 documents, confirming its major role in shaping discussions on Islam Nusantara. Its high publication count indicates that the journal has become a primary platform for conceptual and empirical studies on the topic (Fauzia, 2017). The Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies follows with 45 documents, reflecting strong scholarly interest in contemporary Islamic issues related to Islam Nusantara. Other important contributors include Al-Jami'ah with 36 documents and HTS Theologische Studies or Theological Studies with 33 documents, both of which provide theological and religious perspectives on the discourse (Woodward et al., 2013).

Table 2. Most relevant sources

No.	Document	Year	Journal	Citations
1	Power TP	2018	<i>Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies</i>	161
2	Che Mat NF	2020	<i>Journal of Travel Medicine</i>	127
3	Bourchier D	2019	<i>Journal of Contemporary Asia</i>	118

No.	Document	Year	Journal	Citations
4	MD Mukitul Islam K	2019	<i>PLOS ONE</i>	105
5	Hadiz VR	2018	<i>Journal of Contemporary Asia</i>	86
6	Tran TD	2019	<i>Journal of Affective Disorders</i>	78
7	Fossati D	2019	<i>Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs</i>	74
8	Ascarya A	2022	<i>International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management</i>	72
9	Adawiyah WR	2017	<i>Journal of Management Development</i>	67
10	Eskin Mehmet	2019	<i>Psychiatry Quarterly</i>	66

Several additional journals contribute through historical and cultural approaches. *Studia Islamika* and *Indonesia and the Malay World* each published 22 documents, indicating that Islam Nusantara is also discussed within broader Southeast Asian studies (van Bruinessen, 2018). This diversity shows that Islam Nusantara extends beyond Islamic studies into history, culture, and regional studies. However, the publication pattern also reveals that the discourse remains largely Indonesia-centric. The dominance of Indonesian journals such as *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, *Al-Jami'ah*, and *Studia Islamika* suggests that the discourse is mainly produced within Indonesian academic networks and has limited visibility in mainstream international Islamic studies journals (Akhiyat, 2017). Although journals such as *HTS Theologische Studies* and *Indonesia and the Malay World* provide some international exposure, Islam Nusantara has not yet achieved strong recognition in global Islamic scholarship (Assyaukanie, 2009).

The dominance of the *Journal of Indonesian Islam* has important implications for the internationalization of the discourse (Feillard & Madinier, 2011). While the journal provides a crucial platform for consolidating Islam Nusantara scholarship, this concentration may also create an echo chamber effect that limits broader international engagement (Menchik, 2016). To strengthen international recognition, scholars should publish more in high-impact international journals, adopt comparative frameworks, expand English-language publications, and build collaborative global research networks (Mietzner & Muhtadi, 2018; Hilmy, 2013; Feener et al., 2016). Without these efforts, Islam Nusantara risks remaining regionally confined despite

its potential contributions to global debates on moderation, pluralism, and cultural accommodation in Islam (Burhani, 2017).

Author Analysis

Table 3 presents the distribution of the most productive authors who contributed to the discourse on “Islam Nusantara” from 2017 to 2024. Overall, the data show that scholarly interest in this topic is supported by a group of authors who consistently publish across years, creating a stable foundation for the development of this research field. The author with the highest number of publications is Qodir Zuly, with a total of 11 documents, making him the most dominant figure in shaping academic discussions surrounding Islam Nusantara. His productivity reflects a sustained engagement with the topic and indicates his significant influence in framing key arguments and debates within this field (Fauzia, 2017). He is followed by Rosidi Imron, who produced 9 documents. Although slightly fewer, this number still demonstrates strong research activity and suggests that he is one of the central contributors whose works help broaden the scholarly understanding of Islam Nusantara. Meanwhile, Abdullah Irwan and Jubba Hasse each have 8 publications, showing that they also play important roles in expanding theoretical and empirical perspectives related to Islamic practices, identity, and socio-religious dynamics in the Indonesian context (Woodward et al., 2013).

Table 3. Author Analysis

Rank	Author	Number of Documents
1	Qodir Zuly	11
2	Rosidi Imron	9
3	Abdullah Irwan	8
4	Jubba Hasse	8
5	Millie Julian	7
6	French Doran C	6
7	Hefner Robert W	6
8	Hidayah Nur	6
9	Purwono Urip	6
10	Slama Martin	6

In addition to these leading authors, several other scholars contributed consistently, including Millie Julian, French Doran C, Hefner Robert W,

Hidayah Nur, Purwono Urip, and Slama Martin, each with publications. Although their publication numbers are slightly lower, their collective work still provides substantial enrichment to the field. Their contributions often introduce interdisciplinary angles—ranging from anthropology and cultural studies to religious sociology—which helps diversify the academic conversation around Islam Nusantara (van Bruinessen, 2018). The presence of international scholars such as Julian Millie, Doran C French, Robert W Hefner, and Martin Slama is particularly noteworthy, as it indicates that Islam Nusantara is attracting attention beyond Indonesian academic circles. These scholars bring comparative perspectives, theoretical frameworks from global Islamic studies, and methodological rigor that enrich the discourse (Menchik, 2016). However, the relatively small number of publications by international scholars compared to Indonesian researchers suggests that the field is still primarily driven by local academic networks.

Taken together, the distribution of author productivity shows that research on Islam Nusantara is supported by a combination of highly productive scholars and a broader group of authors with steady contributions. This pattern suggests that the topic has both established experts and a growing network of researchers who continue to engage with the discourse. The relatively balanced spread of publications also indicates that interest in Islam Nusantara is not dominated by a single scholar alone, but is instead shaped collaboratively, making the field dynamic and continuously evolving (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). This collaborative nature of the field reflects a healthy intellectual ecosystem where multiple voices contribute to the ongoing development and refinement of Islam Nusantara scholarship, ensuring that the discourse remains vibrant and responsive to emerging questions and challenges.

Analysis Most Global Cited Documents

The finding shows the most cited articles in Islam Nusantara studies, highlighting the works that have had the strongest influence on subsequent research (Table 2). Highly cited articles generally play an important role in shaping scholarly discourse, introducing key concepts, and stimulating debate within the literature (Garfield, 1972). The most cited article is Power TP (2018), which discusses Islam Nusantara in relation to the Indonesian economy and has received 161 citations. This work is frequently referenced in discussions concerning identity, history, and conceptual debates surrounding Islam Nusantara (Burhani, 2017). The second most cited article is Che Mat NF (2020)

with 127 citations, focusing on Islam Nusantara in the context of religious journeys in Asia. This article is widely cited because it broadens discussions of Islam Nusantara, especially regarding the interaction between local and international Islam (Feillard & Madinier, 2011). In third place is Bourchier D (2019) with 118 citations, which examines socio-political perspectives on Islam Nusantara. Other notable works include Hadiz VR (2018) with 105 citations, Tran TD (2019) with 80 citations, and Eskin Mehmet (2019) with 66 citations.

The dominance of these highly cited studies reveals several important patterns in the intellectual structure of Islam Nusantara scholarship. First, the most influential works generally approach Islam Nusantara from socio-political, economic, and cultural perspectives rather than purely theological or normative viewpoints, reflecting the field's interdisciplinary appeal (Fauzia, 2017). This suggests that Islam Nusantara gains broader scholarly attention when discussed within wider social science frameworks, positioning it as a multifaceted phenomenon with important social, political, and economic implications. Second, articles that introduce new analytical frameworks, challenge existing assumptions, or synthesize diverse perspectives tend to receive higher citations because they function as conceptual foundations and intellectual references for later studies (Small, 1973). These works help establish the theoretical language and methodological approaches that shape the direction of future scholarship.

Third, several highly cited works are written by internationally affiliated scholars or published in internationally recognized journals, demonstrating the importance of global engagement and international publication networks in increasing citation impact (Mietzner & Muhtadi, 2018). This pattern indicates that Islam Nusantara scholarship benefits from comparative and cross-cultural perspectives that connect Indonesian Islamic thought with broader global discussions. Fourth, articles published in 2018–2019 have naturally accumulated more citations because they have existed longer than more recent publications, reflecting the temporal advantage common in citation patterns (Wang, 2013).

However, the relatively modest citation counts, with the highest reaching only 161 citations, suggest that Islam Nusantara scholarship has not yet produced major theoretical breakthroughs that fundamentally reshape the broader field of Islamic studies (Tahamtan & Bornmann, 2019). This indicates that the discourse may still be in a consolidation phase where foundational concepts

are being refined and debated, while paradigmatic works that define the field's intellectual identity have yet to emerge (Kuhn, 2002).

Analysis Words' Frequency over Time

The changing frequency of keywords in Islam Nusantara research over time, showing both consistently used terms and keywords that increased in certain periods. This pattern reflects the development of research focus within the discourse of Islam Nusantara (Callon et al., 1983). Among all keywords, Islam appears most frequently and shows a significant increase from 2017 to 2024. This trend indicates that Islam remains the central theme in academic discussions on Islam Nusantara (Imaduddin, 2021), particularly in relation to Islamic identity, religious practices, and cultural discourse in Indonesia. The keyword Islamic Law also demonstrates a notable increase in recent years, reflecting growing scholarly interest in Islamic legal studies within the Nusantara context (Hilmy, 2013). Meanwhile, the keyword Indonesia shows a steady but gradual increase, indicating continuing interest in the relationship between Islam and Indonesian national identity (Burhani, 2017).

The frequency of the keyword **Islamism** has increased in recent years, reflecting growing scholarly interest in Islamic political ideology and its role in socio-political contexts (Assyaukanie, 2009; Feener et al., 2016). Other keywords, such as **Religion**, **Human**, and **Article**, exhibit slower growth but remain consistently present, indicating sustained attention to religious, humanistic, and scholarly dimensions within Islam Nusantara studies (Woodward et al., 2013). These temporal patterns reveal broader intellectual and social transformations in the field. The rising prominence of **Islamic Law** suggests a shift from predominantly cultural and anthropological perspectives toward more normative and jurisprudential discussions (Hafidz, 2021). This trend reflects increasing scholarly concern with how Islamic law is interpreted and negotiated within Indonesian Muslim communities in response to contemporary social realities.

The growing frequency of the keyword *Article* reflects the increasing volume of empirical studies and case-based research, suggesting that Islam Nusantara scholarship is moving beyond purely theoretical or historical discussions toward more evidence-based approaches through methodological diversification (Dwijayanto & Choirin, 2025). This development indicates the maturation of the field, as scholars increasingly support their arguments with systematic empirical investigations rather than relying exclusively on normative

The second cluster, closely linked to the keyword Indonesia, includes democracy, political Islam, nationalism, Indonesian Islam, and Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*). This cluster shows that Islam Nusantara scholarship is also strongly shaped by socio-political and national discourses within the Indonesian context (Burhani, 2017). Scholars show significant interest in the interaction between Islam, politics, nationalism, and the role of *pesantren* in constructing Indonesian identity (Hafidz, 2021). The relationships among these keywords demonstrate the complexity of integrating Islam with Indonesian socio-political life and national culture (Woodward et al., 2013).

The interaction between the two clusters is particularly important for understanding the intellectual structure of Islam Nusantara studies. Although the clusters appear distinct, they are not isolated from one another. This raises the question of whether Islam Nusantara scholarship is divided between normative-theological and socio-political approaches or whether both perspectives complement each other within a broader framework (Leydesdorff & Rafols, 2009). The network analysis supports the second interpretation because bridging keywords and cross-cluster relationships indicate active scholarly efforts to connect religious and political dimensions (Cobo et al., 2011). Rather than creating fragmentation, this relationship demonstrates a productive interaction between different analytical perspectives that enrich the field.

The bridging role in Figure 3 distinguishes Islam Nusantara from transnational Islamist movements that prioritize universal Islamic norms over local contexts, as well as from secular nationalist perspectives that marginalize religion (Menchik, 2016). By maintaining strong connections to both religious and national themes, Islam Nusantara provides an intellectual framework that values both Islamic authenticity and Indonesian cultural specificity without subordinating one to the other. The presence of “Islamic boarding schools” (*pesantren*) within the socio-political cluster, while remaining connected to religious themes, highlights the important role of *pesantren* as institutions that integrate Islamic education, local culture, and national identity (Hafidz, 2021). *Pesantren* function not only as educational institutions but also as spaces where Islam Nusantara discourse is practiced, transmitted, and continuously negotiated (van Bruinessen, 2018). These institutions connect theological and political discussions with everyday social realities, ensuring that Islam Nusantara remains grounded in the lived experiences of Indonesian Muslim communities.

The keyword “religious moderation” (*moderasi beragama*) appears within the normative-theological cluster but is also connected to the socio-political cluster, showing that moderation operates as a conceptual bridge between theology and practical socio-political engagement (Hilmy, 2013). This reflects the argument of Islam Nusantara proponents that moderation is not merely a political strategy but is deeply rooted in Islamic theological and jurisprudential traditions (Feener et al., 2016). As a bridging concept, moderation allows scholars to connect normative religious analysis with empirical socio-political discussions, demonstrating that these dimensions are interconnected rather than separate fields of inquiry.

Overall, the co-occurrence network demonstrates that Islam Nusantara scholarship is characterized not by sharp discursive polarization but by a dynamic integration of religious, cultural, and political dimensions (Fauzia, 2017). Islam Nusantara functions as a bridging framework that encourages dialogue among different scholarly traditions and perspectives rather than reinforcing division (Feillard & Madinier, 2011). This integrative character represents both a strength and a challenge. It enables multidimensional analysis capable of capturing the complexity of Indonesian Islamic life, while also requiring scholars to balance normative commitments with contextual realities. The ability of Islam Nusantara scholarship to maintain this balance without fragmentation represents one of its most distinctive intellectual contributions.

Thematic Map

The conceptual structure of studies on Islam Nusantara demonstrates a clear distinction between core and peripheral themes. The motor themes quadrant (Figure 4) is characterized by high centrality and density, the dominant cluster consists of the keywords Islam, human, and religion, indicating that the discourse of Islam Nusantara is primarily framed around the relationship between Islamic values, human dimensions, and religion as a socio-cultural system (Cobo et al., 2011). The prominence of these themes suggests that Islam Nusantara scholarship does not focus solely on theological concerns but instead positions Islam as a lived social practice closely connected to humanity, moderation, and religious life within society. This orientation reinforces the idea that Islam Nusantara functions as a socio-religious discourse integrating Islamic teachings with human dignity, ethical values, and everyday religious experiences (van Bruinessen, 2018). Such a perspective reflects the long-standing

influence of traditional Islamic scholarship in the Nusantara region, especially the pesantren tradition, which emphasizes spirituality, morality, and ethical conduct rather than rigid legalism or political ideology (Hafidz, 2021).

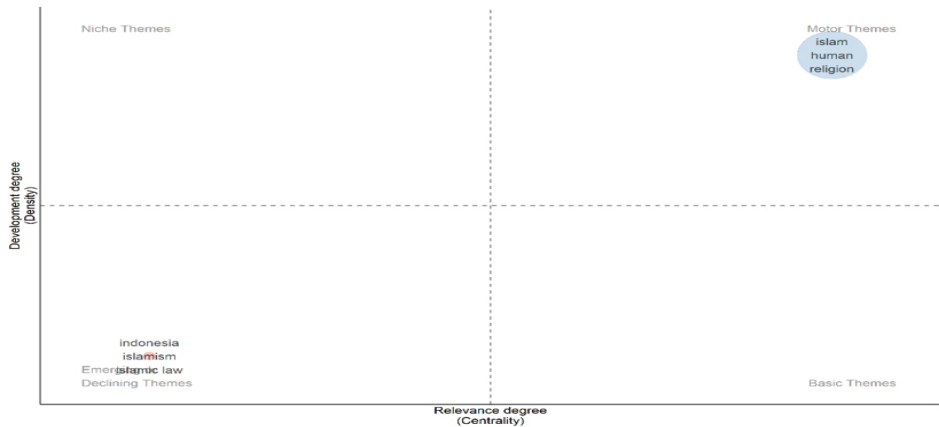


Figure 4. Thematic map

In contrast, the emerging or declining themes quadrant, characterized by low centrality and density, contains the cluster of *Indonesia*, *Islamism*, and *Islamic law*. This positioning suggests that themes related to political Islam, legal formalism, and national ideological debates are no longer central to the development of Islam Nusantara discourse or are currently undergoing a transitional phase (Assyaukanie, 2009). The placement of *Islamic law* and *Islamism* indicates that contemporary scholarship is increasingly moving away from legalistic and ideological-political approaches in favor of contextual and humanistic perspectives. This shift may reflect an academic response to the rigidity of transnational Islamist movements that prioritize formal legalism over cultural accommodation (Menchik, 2016), as well as a growing interest in lived religion and everyday social practices (Fauzia, 2017). At the same time, it distinguishes Islam Nusantara from both Islamist activism and secular nationalism. Furthermore, the absence of major clusters in the niche and basic themes quadrants suggests that the field remains concentrated on broad macro-level discussions and has yet to develop highly specialized areas of inquiry (Moral-Muñoz et al., 2020).

The thematic structure identified in this mapping reflects the cultural ethos of Islam Nusantara, which is grounded in four key principles: *tawassut* (moderation), *tasamuh* (tolerance), *tawazun* (balance), and *i'tidal* (justice). *Tawassut*

emphasizes avoiding extremism in religious understanding and practice, *tasamuh* encourages acceptance of religious and cultural diversity, *tawazun* highlights the balance between religious principles and social realities, and *i'tidal* prioritizes justice and human welfare. The strong centrality of the themes “human” and “religion” demonstrates that academic discourse on Islam Nusantara is closely aligned with these normative principles (Feillard & Madinier, 2011). These values are deeply embedded in Indonesian Islamic traditions, particularly within pesantren institutions and local Muslim communities. The relationship between “human,” “religion,” and “Islam” in the motor themes quadrant can be observed in three important dimensions. In pesantren education, Islamic learning focuses on moral character, Islamic learning focuses on moral character (*akhlaq*), spirituality (*tasawuf*), and social responsibility rather than merely emphasizing legal doctrines or textual knowledge (Hafidz, 2021). In religious practices, rituals such as *tahlilan* and *maulid* integrate Islamic and local traditions, rituals such as *tahlilan*, *maulid*, and *ziarah kubur* integrate Islamic liturgical traditions with local cultural expressions, creating a communal and emotionally connected religious experience (van Bruinessen, 2013). In social ethics, Islamic teachings are interpreted through local wisdom, Islamic teachings are interpreted through local wisdom (*kearifan lokal*), emphasizing social harmony, mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), and deliberative conflict resolution (*musyawarah*) (Woodward et al., 2013). These practices contribute to the formation of a religious culture that is simultaneously Islamic and uniquely Indonesian.

The absence of significant clusters within the niche and basic themes quadrants highlights important opportunities for future research. Because the field has not yet developed highly specialized subfields or robust theoretical foundations, scholars have substantial room to expand the study of Islam Nusantara in more focused and technical directions (Moral-Muñoz et al., 2020). Future studies could examine specific communities, institutions, and practices to provide deeper insight into how Islam Nusantara operates across diverse local contexts. There is also a need for stronger theoretical development that moves beyond descriptive accounts toward more systematic conceptual frameworks (Dwijayanto & Choirin, 2025). In addition, underexplored topics such as Islamic finance, halal certification, Islamic education, and digital Islam within the Nusantara context deserve greater attention due to their growing relevance in contemporary Indonesian Muslim society. Expanding research in these areas would enhance both the theoretical depth and practical relevance

of Islam Nusantara studies.

Overall, the thematic mapping confirms that Islam Nusantara is positioned in the scientific literature as a moderate, humanistic, and contextual Islamic discourse that departs from rigid ideological, political, and legalistic paradigms. This positioning reflects both the historical development of Islam in the Nusantara region, characterized by ethical practice and cultural accommodation, and contemporary efforts to formulate an Islamic discourse capable of addressing challenges such as pluralism, globalization, and modernity (Feener et al., 2016). By emphasizing human dignity, social harmony, and contextual interpretation, Islam Nusantara offers a distinctive model of Islamic thought that avoids both rigid fundamentalism and secular liberalism, preserving religious authenticity while embracing cultural diversity.

Trend Analysis

The keyword analysis reveals that the academic discourse on Islam Nusantara is dominated by the words “Islam” and “Indonesia” (Figure 3). This prominence underscores that the core research focus remains the concept of Islam and its application within the Indonesian context (Imaduddin, 2021). The central appearance of these terms indicates that discussions are heavily shaped by studies on Islamic identity in Indonesia and how the religion is interpreted within local social and political frameworks (Burhani, 2017). This persistent emphasis confirms that the discourse is fundamentally preoccupied with Islamic identity in relation to the Indonesian nation, mirroring continuous debates regarding authenticity, modernity, and cultural adaptation (Feillard & Madinier, 2011). Ultimately, the enduring dominance of these keywords indicates that Islam Nusantara is primarily understood as an interaction between universal Islamic principles and particular Indonesian realities.

Furthermore, medium-frequency words such as “article,” “human,” “female,” and “male” highlight persistent subtopics within the field, even if they are less intense than the primary themes (Fauzia, 2017). Specifically, the moderate presence of “female” and “male” signals an expanding scholarly interest in gender issues within Islam Nusantara (Rinaldo, 2013). Researchers are increasingly examining how Islam Nusantara addresses gender equality, women’s rights, and the specific roles of women within religious institutions and practices (Robinson, 2009). This focus represents a crucial development, elevating a dimension of Islamic discourse that was historically marginalized but is now recognized as vital for understanding contemporary Muslim societies.

Meanwhile, the prominence of “article” underscores that journal publications serve as the primary mode of scholarly communication in this domain, verifying findings from broader source analyses (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). This methodological trend impacts the velocity of knowledge circulation, the dynamics of academic debate, and the reach of research findings.

Ultimately, this thematic diversification across social, gender, and methodological dimensions proves that the discourse on Islam Nusantara is dynamic, continuously evolving alongside shifting social issues, theoretical frameworks, and research interests (Woodward et al., 2013). This expanding scope reflects a maturing discipline that actively responds to modern realities. As the field develops, it increasingly tackles contemporary challenges—such as gender relations, digital media, environmental ethics, and global Islamic movements—while preserving its core inquiry into the synthesis of Islamic values and Indonesian cultural identity. This ongoing evolution ensures that Islam Nusantara remains a vibrant and adaptive framework for understanding Indonesian Islam.

Conclusion

This study aims to map the intellectual structure, identify the theoretical foundations, and uncover the main conceptual debates surrounding the discourse of Islam Nusantara through a bibliometric co-citation approach. The findings demonstrate that the scholarly landscape of Islam Nusantara is dominated by a rapidly growing body of publications, indicating that this field has evolved into a significant and increasingly established domain of academic inquiry. However, the growth in publication volume is not followed by a proportional increase in citation impact, suggesting that while interest is expanding, the consolidation of highly influential theoretical works remains limited.

The thematic structure reveals that the core discourse of Islam Nusantara is strongly centered on the interrelation between Islam, human, and religion, positioning Islam Nusantara primarily as a humanistic, socio-religious, and contextual interpretation of Islam. This confirms that the central epistemological orientation of Islam Nusantara emphasizes moderation, cultural accommodation, and the integration of religious values with social realities. In contrast, themes related to Islamism, Islamic law, and Indonesia appear in the emerging or declining quadrant, indicating a relative reduction in their central role or their presence in a transitional phase within contemporary debates. This finding answers the main research question by confirming that Islam Nusantara is

currently constructed less as an ideological-political project and more as a socio-cultural and humanitarian religious discourse.

Through co-occurrence and source analysis, this study also reveals that the discourse of Islam Nusantara is shaped by a combination of Islamic studies, socio-political studies, legal perspectives, and cultural approaches, with key journals and a relatively stable group of productive scholars functioning as the main hubs of knowledge production. Nevertheless, the absence of strong niche themes indicates that micro-level, specialized, and technical studies remain underdeveloped. This reflects a conceptual concentration at the macro-theoretical level, leaving substantial opportunities for future empirical and methodological diversification.

As a contribution to knowledge, this research offers the first comprehensive bibliometric mapping that systematically visualizes the intellectual structure, communication patterns, and conceptual evolution of Islam Nusantara studies over the last eight years. Unlike previous historical or normative studies, this research provides an objective structural overview of how ideas, authors, and debates are interconnected within the scientific literature.

For future research, it is recommended that scholars expand investigations into underexplored niche areas such as digital Islam Nusantara, gender perspectives, youth religiosity, and the transformation of pesantren in the era of globalization. Further studies may also apply longitudinal bibliometric techniques and comparative regional analyses to examine how Islam Nusantara interacts with broader Southeast Asian and global Islamic discourses. Such directions are essential to strengthen the theoretical depth, empirical richness, and international relevance of Islam Nusantara as a dynamic field of Islamic thought.

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