

RESEARCH TRENDS ON EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY AND ISLAMIC VALUES: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

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Abstract: Employee productivity has become a central concern for organizations seeking sustainable performance, yet the integration of Islamic values into productivity research remains fragmented and insufficiently synthesized. Despite growing interest in Islamic management, Shariah principles, and faith-based organizational practices, there is limited comprehensive mapping of how this field has evolved, which creates a gap in understanding its intellectual structure and research direction. This study aims to unveil research trends on employee productivity and Islamic values through a bibliometric analysis. Data were collected from the Scopus database using advanced search techniques with the keywords employee, productivity, Islamic and Shariah, resulting in a final dataset of 588 documents. The Scopus Analyzer was employed to generate preliminary statistical insights and publication trends, while Microsoft Excel and OpenRefine were used to clean, standardize and harmonize the bibliographic data. VOSviewer and MapChart were utilized to construct network visualizations of keyword co-occurrence and country collaborations. The findings reveal a significant growth in publications, particularly after 2010 with strong contributions from Indonesia, Malaysia and Iran. Keyword analysis identifies “Islamic values,” “productivity,” “employee performance” and “organizational commitment” as dominant themes, while collaboration networks highlight Malaysia as a central research hub. The study concludes that the field has evolved from macro-level Islamic finance discussions toward more organization- and employee-centered productivity research, demonstrating increasing global collaboration and interdisciplinary integration. This bibliometric mapping provides a structured foundation for future empirical and theoretical advancement in Islamic management and productivity studies.

Keywords: Islamic value, employee productivity, bibliometric analysis.

Introduction

Employee productivity is a critical factor in the success of any organization. It encompasses the efficiency and effectiveness with which employees perform their tasks, contributing to the overall performance and competitiveness of the organization (Arifin et al., 2023). In recent years, there has been growing interest in understanding how different cultural and religious perspectives influence employee productivity. One such perspective is the Islamic viewpoint, which offers unique insights into work ethics, motivation, and management

practices. Moreover, Islamic values are still rarely and insufficiently integrated into productivity research. Although numerous studies have examined Islamic work ethics, leadership and employee performance, existing evidence remains fragmented across different disciplines, including Islamic finance, human resource management and organizational behavior. To date, no study has systematically mapped the intellectual structure, thematic evolution and global collaboration patterns of this research domain. A bibliometric approach is therefore appropriate because it enables the identification of publication trends, influential studies, conceptual themes and research gaps that cannot be comprehensively captured through conventional narrative literature reviews. Consequently, this study provides a holistic overview of the evolution of research on employee productivity and Islamic values while identifying future directions for scholarly development.

Literature Review

The influence of Islamic values on employee productivity is multifaceted and encompasses aspects such as work ethics, motivation and management styles. Islamic work ethics, derived from the Quran and Hadith, emphasize principles such as honesty, integrity and diligence. These values are believed to enhance employee engagement, job satisfaction and organizational commitment, which in turn positively affect productivity (Arifin et al., 2023; Ateeq et al., 2025; Hamzah et al., 2021). For instance, a study on Islamic work ethics found that they significantly influence task performance and organizational citizenship behaviour, highlighting the importance of ethical conduct in achieving high productivity (Ateeq et al., 2025; Mohammad et al., 2015).

Motivation from an Islamic perspective also plays a crucial role in enhancing employee productivity. Islamic teachings advocate for a balance between material and spiritual well-being, which can lead to higher levels of motivation and job satisfaction. Studies have shown that Islamic spirituality, along with the concepts of reward, punishment and justice, are powerful motivators for Muslim employees (Bhatti et al., 2016; Hasan Al-Banna et al., 2013). These elements not only drive employees to perform better but also foster a sense of responsibility and ownership for their work (Bhatti et al., 2016; Mariyana & Annaufal, 2024).

Leadership and management styles within an Islamic framework further contribute to employee productivity. Islamic leadership principles, such as Shura (consultation), Amanah (trust), and Taqwa (piety), promote a supportive and ethical work environment. Research indicates that leaders who embody these values can significantly enhance employee motivation, satisfaction and overall performance (Abdelwahed et al., 2025; Farihin, 2023). For example, a study on Islamic leadership in educational institutions found that adherence to Islamic values in leadership practices led to a positive organizational culture and improved employee performance (Farihin, 2023). During economic downturns, Islamic banks manage to achieve better productivity than their conventional counterparts, driven by sound Islamic leadership and management practices (Wahid & Harun, 2019).

Moreover, the concept of mutual relations between employers and employees, as emphasized in Islamic teachings, highlights the importance of fairness and justice in the workplace. This reciprocal relationship, based on mutual respect and ethical conduct, is essential for maintaining high levels of productivity. Studies have highlighted those Islamic principles of work relations, such as fairness in wages and non-exploitation, contribute to a more committed and productive workforce (Ahmed Haj Ali et al., 2018; Kunarti et al., 2024).

In conclusion, the integration of Islamic values and principles into organizational practices can significantly enhance employee productivity. By fostering a work environment

that emphasizes ethical conduct, motivation and supportive leadership, organizations can achieve higher levels of performance and employee satisfaction. Future research should continue to explore the various dimensions of Islamic perspectives on employee productivity to develop a comprehensive understanding of their impact on organizational success.

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual structure of employee productivity from Islamic perspectives, highlighting four key domains namely Islamic organizational values, Islamic leadership, Islamic work ethic and Islamic work culture. These domains collectively shape productivity through the integration of moral, spiritual and behavioural dimensions grounded in Islamic teachings. Islamic organizational values connect with concepts such as work motivation, self-efficacy, individual performance and policy implications emphasizing a holistic system that aligns personal and organizational objectives. Islamic leadership enhances commitment and productivity through ethical guidance. Meanwhile, the Islamic work ethic promotes diligence, fairness and accountability as intrinsic motivators for performance. Moreover, Islamic work culture fosters balance, satisfaction and unity within the workplace to reinforce moral integrity and collective well-being.

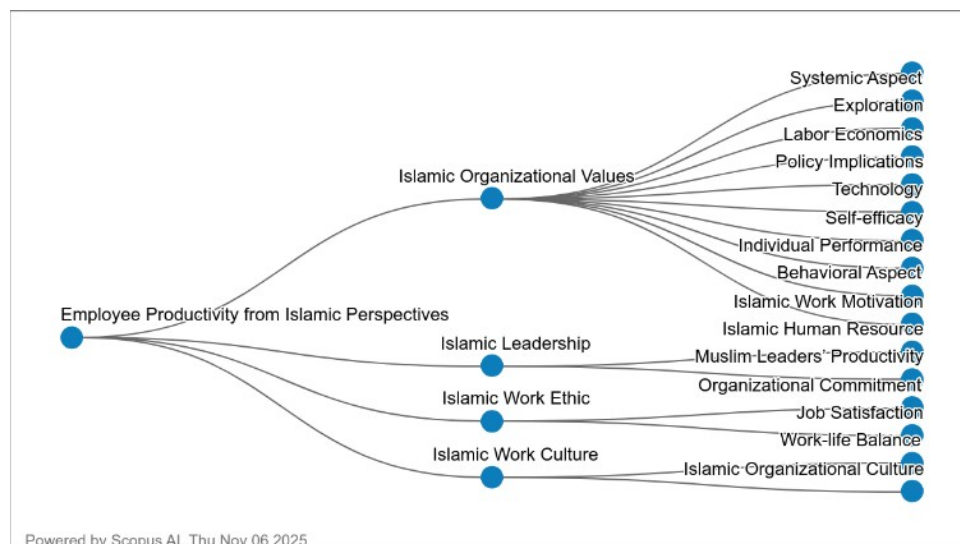


Figure 1. Concept Map of Employee Productivity from the Islamic Perspective

Overall, the framework highlights that productivity in an Islamic context extends beyond economic efficiency encompassing moral excellence, social justice and spiritual fulfilment in achieving organizational success. Thus, this study aims to address the following research questions.

- RQ1: What are the publication patterns and trends in research on employee productivity from the Islamic perspective over time?
- RQ2: What are the top ten most cited articles in this research domain?
- RQ3: Which countries have made the highest contributions to publications in this field?
- RQ4: What are the most frequently occurring keywords in existing literature?
- RQ5: How are international research collaborations structured through co-authorship networks among countries?

Methodology

Bibliometrics represents a systematic and quantitative approach to collecting, organizing and interpreting bibliographic information derived from scholarly publications (Alves et al., 2021; Assyakur & Rosa, 2022; Verbeek et al., 2002). Beyond descriptive indicators such as publication counts, influential authors and source journals (Wu & Wu, 2017), bibliometric research also employs advanced analytical methods. These include document co-citation analysis to uncover the academic structure, thematic evolution and research dynamics within a scientific domain. Conducting a rigorous literature review requires a systematic, methodical process that involves refining search keywords, performing comprehensive retrieval and critically evaluating results to establish a robust, credible knowledge base (Fahimnia et al., 2015). Following this principle, the present study focused on high-impact publications that offer meaningful insights into the theoretical underpinnings and knowledge architecture shaping the field. To ensure data precision and reliability, Scopus served as the primary data source, given its extensive global coverage and bibliometric compatibility (Al-Khoury et al., 2022; di Stefano et al., 2010; Khiste & Paithankar, 2017). The dataset was retrieved through Elsevier's Scopus database and comprises publications from 1983 to 2025. Additionally, the analysis included all relevant sources such as peer-reviewed journal articles, books and conference papers to ensure comprehensive coverage of the study (Gu et al., 2019). Subsequently, Microsoft Excel and OpenRefine were utilized to conduct thorough data cleaning and standardization in order to address any inconsistencies, removing duplicates and enhancing the accuracy and integrity of the final analytical results (Hill, 2016).

3.1 Data search strategy

The bibliometric data for this study were obtained from the Scopus database using the advanced search function, selected for its extensive coverage and data reliability. The search string applied was TITLE-ABS-KEY ("employee productivity" OR "employee performance" OR "productivity" OR "work performance" OR "labour productivity") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Islamic" OR "Shariah" OR "Quran" OR "Islam") AND PUBYEAR > 1982 AND PUBYEAR < 2026, with data accessed in November 2025 as depicted in Table 1. The search string was applied to the title, abstract and keyword fields to ensure comprehensive retrieval of studies on employee productivity from the Islamic perspective.

Table 1. The search string

Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY ("employee productivity" OR "employee performance" OR "productivity" OR "work performance" OR "labour productivity") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Islamic" OR "Shariah" OR "Quran" OR "Islam") AND PUBYEAR > 1982 AND PUBYEAR < 2026 Access date: November 2025
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Table 2 presents the inclusion criteria, covering documents published between 1983 and 2025. This comprehensive search yielded a total of 588 publications related to employee productivity and the Islamic perspective. The retrieved studies reflect the growing academic interest in integrating Islamic values with productivity research. Overall, the dataset forms a

robust foundation for analyzing publication trends and examining the intellectual and thematic evolution within this field.

Table 2. The selection criterion

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Timeline	1983 – 2025	2026 and above

4. Result

4.1 Data analysis

The bibliometric analysis and visualization in this study were conducted using VOSviewer, a specialized software developed by Nees Jan van Eck and Ludo Waltman at Leiden University, Netherlands. Recognized as one of the most widely adopted tools in bibliometric research, VOSviewer facilitates the construction, analysis, and visualization of bibliometric networks (van Eck & Waltman, 2010; Van Eck & Waltman, 2007). It enables researchers to explore intricate connections among publications, authors, journals and keywords through intuitive network maps and clustering algorithms. The software's capability to perform co-authorship, co-citation and keyword co-occurrence analyses enables an in-depth understanding of intellectual structures and the evolution of knowledge within a field. Its user-friendly interface, frequent updates and compatibility with various bibliographic formats make it an essential instrument for science mapping and bibliometric studies.

For this research, bibliographic data including publication year, title, author names, journal sources, citation counts and keyword information were extracted from the Scopus database in PlainText format, covering works published from 1983 to 2025. Before analysing the dataset, the process of data cleaning was done through Microsoft Excel and OpenRefine, which found that out six out of 588 datasets were anonymous and 28 were off topic. After that, the cleaned dataset was analyzed using VOSviewer version 1.6.20, which applied advanced clustering and mapping techniques to visualize bibliometric relationships. Unlike traditional Multidimensional Scaling (MDS) approaches that rely on similarity indices such as cosine or Jaccard coefficients, VOSviewer uses a distance-based positioning method that arranges items in a low-dimensional space according to their relatedness (Appio et al., 2014; van Eck & Waltman, 2010). Its methodological strength lies in employing the association strength (AS_{ij}) normalization measure, enhancing the precision and interpretability of the generated network structures as follow (1):

(1)

which measures the proportional relationship between the actual co-occurrence frequency of items i and j and the expected frequency that would occur if the two items were statistically independent (Van Eck & Waltman, 2007).

4.2 Findings

1. What are the publication patterns and trends in research on employee productivity from the Islamic perspective over time?

The number of documents published each year, showing the annual trend of research output in this field over time as depicted in Figure 2. The publication trend on employee productivity and Islamic values shows a clear growth pattern over time. From 1988 until 2006, the number of studies was very low with only one or two publications per year, which indicates that the topic was still new and not widely explored. Interest began to increase gradually in 2007 and grew more noticeably between 2009 and 2012, when publications rose from eight to 24 documents. This increase suggests that more researchers started to see the importance of linking Islamic values with workplace productivity. During this period, Islamic economics and management studies were also expanding, particularly in Muslim-majority countries, which helped bring more attention to Islamic work ethics and organizational practices. Although there were slight ups and downs between 2013 and 2018, the overall pattern remained increasing, showing that the field was becoming more stable and more researchers were contributing to it.

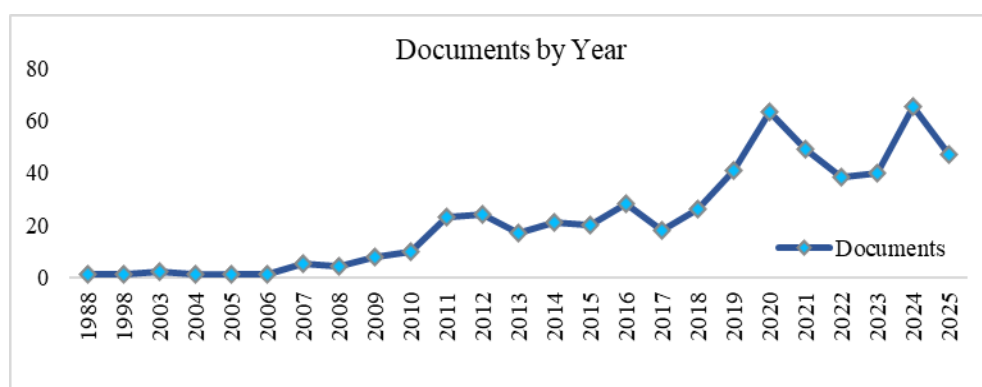


Figure 2. Number of documents based on year of publication

A strong rise can be seen from 2019 onward with a sharp peak in 2020 and the highest number recorded in 2024. One of the reasons for this surge is the COVID-19 pandemic, which made organizations focus more on employee well-being, ethical leadership and meaningful work. Many scholars began exploring how Islamic values such as trust, responsibility and fairness could help improve productivity during difficult times. Another reason is the growing interest in digital transformation and sustainable management, where researchers are looking for value-based approaches to strengthen organizations. The slight decrease in some years, including 2025 is likely due to normal publication cycles and incomplete database updates rather than a real decline in interest. Overall, the results show that this research area has moved from a small niche topic to an active and growing field of study.

2. What are the top ten most cited articles in this research domain?

The top ten cited articles are the intellectual foundation of research linking Islam and productivity is strongly dominated by Islamic finance and banking studies as shown in Table 3. The most cited work is by Rudnyckyj (2009) with 240 citations which discusses Islam within broader economic transformation, which attracted wide attention beyond management scholars including anthropology and development studies. Similarly, Ahmed (2010) and several other highly cited papers focus on financial crises, banking efficiency, macroeconomic performance and financial stability. Articles published in reputable journals such as the Journal of Applied Econometrics and Economic Modelling also gained strong visibility because they apply rigorous quantitative methods and address globally relevant issues such as the global financial crisis. This explains why finance-oriented studies receive higher citations since they appeal to a broader academic audience and are connected to major global economic events.

Table 3. Most cited article

No.	Authors	Title	Year	Source title	Cited by
1	(Rudnyckyj, 2009)	Spiritual economies: Islam and neoliberalism in contemporary Indonesia	2009	Cultural Anthropology	240
2	(Ahmed, 2010)	Global financial crisis: an Islamic finance perspective	2010	International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management	138
3	(Mukhlis et al., 2022)	Religious capital and job engagement among Malaysian muslim nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic	2022	HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies	113
4	(Gheeraert & Weill, 2015)	Does Islamic banking development favor macroeconomic efficiency? Evidence on the Islamic finance-growth nexus	2015	Economic Modelling	87
5	(Sufian, 2007)	The efficiency of Islamic banking industry in Malaysia: Foreign vs domestic banks	2007	Humanomics	87
6	(El-Gamal & Inanoglu, 2005)	Inefficiency and heterogeneity in Turkish banking: 1990-2000	2005	Journal of Applied Econometrics	83
7	(Ur-Rehman et al., 2022)	Intellectual capital efficiency and bank performance: Evidence from Islamic banks	2022	Borsa Istanbul Review	81
8	(Alexakis et al., 2019)	Performance and productivity in Islamic and conventional banks: Evidence from the global financial crisis	2019	Economic Modelling	69
9	(Raja et al., 2020)	When ethics create misfit: Combined effects of despotic leadership and Islamic work ethic on job performance, job satisfaction, and psychological well-being	2020	International Journal of Psychology	61
10	(Banna et al., 2022)	Islamic banking stability amidst the COVID-19 pandemic: the role of digital financial inclusion	2022	International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and	58

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However, more recent highly cited articles show a clear expansion toward employee-level and organizational themes. For example, Raja et al. (2020) and Mukhlis et al. (2022) examine Islamic work ethic, religious capital, job engagement, psychological well-being and performance, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. These studies gained attention because the pandemic increased interest in employee resilience ethics and meaningful work. The presence of topics such as intellectual capital, digital financial inclusion and job performance also indicates that the field is gradually integrating human resource management with Islamic values. The citation pattern shows that earlier studies mainly focused on macroeconomic and banking topics. More recent research places greater attention on workplace productivity and employee behaviour, indicating a shift toward practical organizational issues.

3. Which countries have made the highest contributions to publications in this field?

The leading countries in terms of publication output were shown in Figure 3. The country distribution shows a strong concentration of publications in Muslim majority countries, particularly Indonesia with 161 publications and Malaysia with 136, followed by Iran with 81. This pattern indicates that research on employee productivity and Islamic values is largely driven by contexts where Islamic principles are deeply embedded in social, economic and institutional systems. Indonesia and Malaysia in particular have well-established research ecosystems in Islamic economics, Islamic finance and Islamic management that are supported by government policies, universities and dedicated research centers. The strong presence of Pakistan, Turkey and Saudi Arabia further reinforces the idea that scholars in these countries are actively exploring how Islamic values influence workplace behavior, productivity and organizational performance within their own socio-cultural environments.

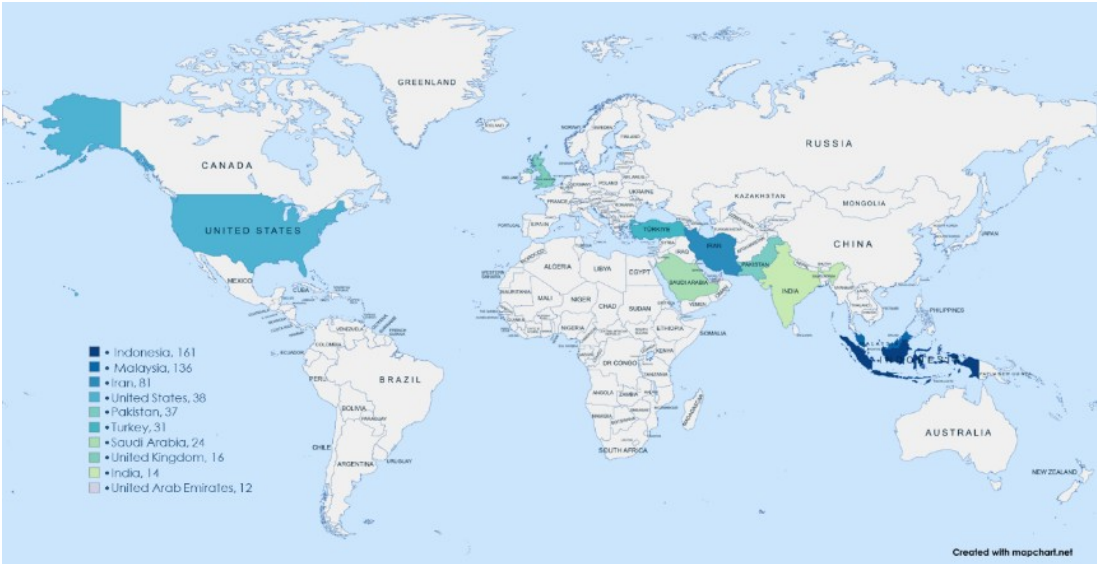


Figure 3. Country mapping based on the number of publications

Concurrently, the presence of the United States and the United Kingdom, although lower in number, reflects the growing global academic interest in Islamic management and finance, especially within business schools and interdisciplinary research settings. These countries often

5. How are international research collaborations structured through co-authorship networks among countries?

The network visualization map of co-authorship among countries is shown in Figure 5. Co-authorship analysis by countries in VOSviewer examines collaboration patterns between countries based on shared authorship in published documents. When authors from different countries co-write a paper, a collaborative link is formed between those countries. The size of each node represents the number of publications produced by that country, while the thickness of the connecting lines indicates the strength of collaboration. Using the full counting method means that each co-authored publication is counted equally for all participating countries. From a total of 57 countries identified in the dataset, only those with at least five publications were included, resulting in 23 countries meeting the threshold. With a minimum cluster size of five, seven clusters were generated, representing groups of countries that frequently collaborate with one another.

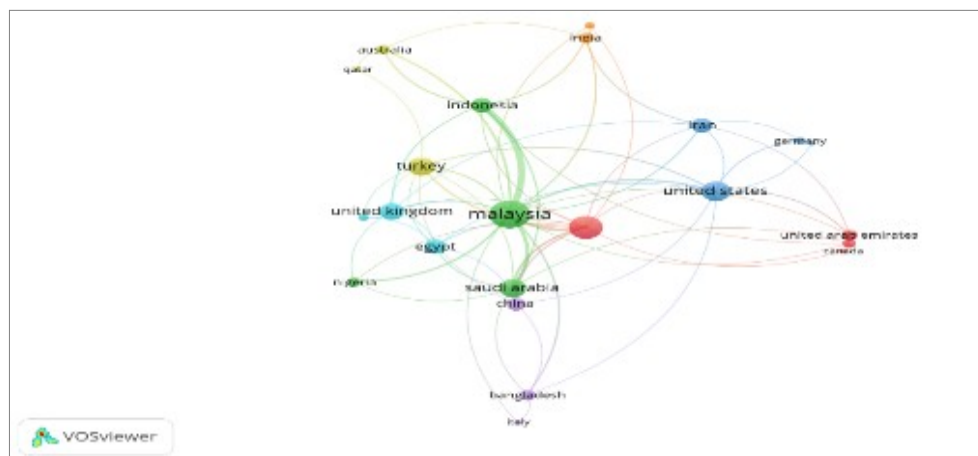


Figure 5. Network visualization map of co-authorship by countries'

The findings show that Malaysia appears as a central collaboration hub, strongly connected with countries such as Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom and others. This indicates its active role in international research networks. The United States and Iran also demonstrate strong linkages within their respective clusters, reflecting broader global and regional academic influence. The presence of both Muslim-majority and Western countries in interconnected clusters suggests that research on Islamic values and productivity has expanded beyond regional boundaries and attracted global scholarly interest. This collaboration pattern contributes to the body of knowledge by promoting cross-country perspectives, enhancing methodological diversity and strengthening the international visibility and development of research in Islamic management and productivity studies.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The bibliometric analysis examines the development, intellectual structure and collaboration patterns in research on employee productivity and Islamic values. The study addressed key questions related to publication trends, influential articles, leading contributing countries, dominant keywords and international co-authorship networks within this domain. Using a dataset of 588 publications retrieved from the Scopus database covering the period from 1983 to 2025, the analysis applied bibliometric mapping and visualization techniques to provide a

systematic overview of the field. The findings indicate a clear upward trend in publications, particularly after 2010, with a notable surge during the period surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. Highly cited works were initially concentrated on Islamic finance, banking efficiency and macroeconomic issues. Meanwhile, more recent studies increasingly focus on employee performance, organizational commitment, job satisfaction and workplace ethics. The country analysis shows strong contributions from Indonesia, Malaysia and Iran, while collaboration networks highlight Malaysia as a central hub connecting both Muslim-majority and Western countries. Keyword co-occurrence mapping further demonstrates a shift from finance-oriented themes toward organizational and behavioural perspectives.

Beyond these descriptive findings, this bibliometric analysis offers three important insights into the field's evolution. First, research on Islamic values and productivity has gradually shifted from macroeconomic and Islamic banking perspectives towards employee-centred organizational studies. This shift suggests that scholars increasingly recognize employee behaviour and ethical management practices as important drivers of organizational productivity. Second, Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia and Malaysia, has emerged as the primary knowledge hub, reflecting strong institutional support and sustained scholarly interest in Islamic management research. This suggests that the region will continue to shape future theoretical and empirical developments in Islamic management and provides an important context for comparative international research. Third, the growing integration of Islamic values with organizational behaviour, employee well-being and sustainability suggests that future productivity research should adopt more holistic frameworks that incorporate ethical, behavioural and organizational dimensions rather than focusing solely on economic performance. Collectively, these findings reveal the intellectual evolution of the field and highlight emerging directions for future research.

This study contributes to the literature by providing a comprehensive bibliometric overview of research on employee productivity and Islamic values. The findings offer valuable insights for researchers in identifying emerging research opportunities and for practitioners in integrating Islamic ethical principles into productivity strategies. Future research should expand the analysis using additional databases and advanced bibliometric techniques, while empirical studies are encouraged to examine the role of Islamic values across diverse industries and emerging contexts such as digital transformation and artificial intelligence.

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