Mapping research visibility in Islamic banking: an altmetric perspective on scholarly attention and digital engagement

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Abstract

The study explores research visibility beyond conventional citation metrics in Islamic banking research. It focuses on online attention and broader research impact. The study uses a positivist philosophy, an archival strategy, a mono-method quantitative design, and a longitudinal horizon. We extract the data from the Dimensions database and screen using PRISMA 2020. The final sample includes 225 ABDC-indexed articles from 78 journals published between 1986 and 2024. Spearman correlation, bibliographic coupling, and descriptive analysis were conducted using SPSS 27, VOSviewer, and Excel. Publication output increased substantially after the mid-2000s. Citation impact peaked in 2016, while altmetric attention increased during 2021–2023. NCIT shows a strong positive association with Mendeley readership (ρ = 0.753) and a moderate positive association with NAAS (ρ = 0.632). X (formerly Twitter) and Mendeley are the dominant platforms. Five thematic clusters represent the intellectual structure of Islamic banking research. The findings support the use of multiple indicators to assess research visibility and impact.

Keywords: *Islamic banking; Altmetrics; Bibliographic coupling; Correlation; Research impact*
JEL Classification: *G21; C83; Z12*

Suggested Citation:
Siddiqui, T. A., Ranjan, P., Jain, P. & Chaurasia, A. (2026). Mapping research visibility in Islamic banking: an altmetric perspective on scholarly attention and digital engagement. *International Journal of Accounting, Business and Finance*, *5*(2), 69-87. https://dx.doi.org/10.55429/ijabf.v5i2.308

1. Introduction

In the last few years, Islamic banking has become increasingly prominent due to its global growth, evolving regulatory frameworks, and growing role in financial stability and ethical banking (Islamic Financial Services Board, 2025). Islamic finance has grown substantially, reaching global assets of USD 4.9 trillion in 2023. It is projected to reach USD 7.5 trillion by 2028, driven by continued demand for Shariah-compliant banking and capital market products (London Stock Exchange Group [LSEG] & Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector [ICD], 2024). Islamic banking institutions now operate across Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Europe within both fully Islamic and dual banking systems (Islamic Financial Services Board, 2025). This expansion has stimulated growing scholarly interest in governance, financial performance, efficiency, risk behaviour, and institutional stability in Islamic financial institutions (Hassan & Aliyu, 2018). Existing studies have examined several dimensions, including governance and Sharī'ah governance (Abdullah et al., 2015; Elamer et al., 2020; Mollah et al., 2017), risk management and financial stability

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(Abedifar et al., 2013; Hassan et al., 2019; Ibrahim & Rizvi, 2018), performance and efficiency (Johnes et al., 2014; Ousama et al., 2019; Zarrouk et al., 2016), disclosure and reporting practices (El-Halaby & Hussainey, 2016; Maali et al., 2006; Vinnicombe, 2010), corporate social responsibility and sustainability (Aliyu et al., 2016; Dusuki, 2008; Farook et al., 2011), comparative analyses of Islamic and conventional banking systems (Abedifar et al., 2013; Khediri et al., 2015; Pappas et al., 2017), customer behaviour and adoption (Amin et al., 2011; Oladapo et al., 2022), economic growth and financial development (Abduh & Omar, 2012; Gheeraert, 2014; Hachicha & Ben Amar, 2015), and capital structure and regulatory frameworks (Archer & Karim, 2006; Aysan et al., 2017). Broader theoretical and literature syntheses have also examined the development of Islamic banking research (Abedifar et al., 2015; Napier, 2009). Existing research has mainly used conventional empirical, efficiency, econometric, and review approaches to examine these substantive dimensions. These include regression models, panel-data techniques, efficiency analysis, data envelopment analysis, risk models, structural equation modelling, content analysis, and systematic literature reviews (Abedifar et al., 2015; Aliyu et al., 2016; Ranjan & Chaurasia, 2025; Hassan & Aliyu, 2018; Johnes et al., 2014; Oladapo et al., 2022; Ummer Farooque & Ranjan, 2025). These approaches have substantially advanced the understanding of the development and performance of Islamic banking. However, they primarily examine the content and performance of Islamic banking rather than the visibility and broader impact of the research produced in this field. As a result, limited attention has been given to how Islamic banking research is disseminated, engaged with, and recognised beyond traditional citations. This limitation highlights the need for measures that can capture the wider attention and dissemination of Islamic banking research beyond its conventional scholarly recognition.

Therefore, altmetrics offer a relevant approach for examining this broader dimension of research impact, as they capture attention and engagement beyond conventional citation counts (Borgohain et al., 2024; Priem et al., 2012; Galligan & Dyas-Correia, 2013). They capture indicators such as the Altmetric Attention Score (AAS), Mendeley readership, and mentions across platforms such as X, blogs, news outlets, and Facebook (Costas et al., 2015; Sedighi, 2023). Altmetric analysis has been applied in several fields, including physics (Shrivastava & Mahajan, 2023), chemistry (Chi et al., 2019), psychology (Nabavi, 2024), library science (Cho, 2021), education (Wong et al., 2024), and medicine (Orimi et al., 2024). These studies report both positive and negative relationships between altmetric and citation-based indicators across different platforms and engagement measures (Cho, 2021; Orimi et al., 2024; Shrivastava & Mahajan, 2023; Wong et al., 2024). However, this broader research-impact perspective remains insufficiently examined in Islamic banking research. The present study, therefore, addresses this gap by examining the evolution, relationships, digital distribution, and intellectual structure of Islamic banking research through bibliometric and altmetric analysis. To address this gap, the present study formulates the following research questions:

RQ1. *How have publication output, citation impact, and altmetric attention in Islamic banking research evolved?*

RQ2. *How is Normalised Citation Impact (NCIT) associated with (i) Mendeley readership and (ii) the Normalised Altmetric Attention Score (NAAS)?*

RQ3. *How is digital attention to Islamic banking research distributed across different platforms, publishers, and user profiles?*

RQ4. *What major intellectual and thematic clusters characterise Islamic banking research based on bibliographic coupling?*

The remainder of the paper will be organised as follows. The theoretical background is given in Section 2. Methodology is discussed in Section 3. The results are presented in Section 4. Findings and discussions are provided in Section 5. The conclusion and implications are in section 6. Lastly, section 7 outlines the study's limitations and future research directions.

2. Theoretical background

The present study utilised several theoretical frameworks to conceptualise the present work, namely social capital theory, diffusion of innovation theory, and signalling theory. The social capital theory describes how individuals or organisations gain value from their relationships, networks, and social connections (Bourdieu, 1986). In this context, altmetrics and Mendeley readership represent digital forms of social capital, indicating how Islamic banking research circulates within academic and public networks beyond traditional citations. Further, diffusion of innovation theory explains how new ideas spread over time through communication channels within a social system (Rogers, 2003). Within this study, Islamic banking research is disseminated through traditional academic citations and digital platforms such as X and Mendeley. This perspective is complemented by signalling theory, which explains how observable indicators reduce information asymmetry and shape perceptions of value (Spence, 1973). In this study, citation counts, Mendeley readership, and Altmetric Attention Scores function as signals of research relevance and impact. By analysing their relationships, the study interprets these metrics as informational signals that help assess the scholarly and societal visibility of Islamic banking research.

3. Methodology

The research onion framework guides the methodological choices for this study, which consists of research philosophy, approach, strategy, method, time horizon, and data analysis (Saunders et al., 2019). The study is positivist because it examines measurable research impact indicators, such as Normalised Citation Impact (NCIT), Normalised Altmetric Attention Score (NAAS), and Mendeley readership. Further, it follows a structured quantitative approach. The study traces temporal trends, relationships among research impact indicators, platforms, and user groups for digital attention, and the intellectual structure of Islamic banking research. In accordance with this quantitative approach, the research method is an archival approach using secondary sources, including bibliographic and altmetric records. The unit of analysis is the scholarly publication. The study uses a mono-method quantitative design with a longitudinal time horizon from 1986 to 2024. Secondary data were retrieved from the Dimensions database, and the identification, screening, and inclusion of studies were guided by the PRISMA 2020 guidelines (Page et al., 2021) (see Figure 1). Eligibility criteria, data processing, indicator normalisation, statistical analysis and bibliographic coupling are described in subsequent sections.

3.1. Identification of studies

The present study retrieved bibliographic and altmetric data from the Dimensions database, which was selected for providing integrated bibliographic and Altmetric Attention Score (AAS) information (Mouratidis, 2019). The search terms were identified from previous literature on Islamic banking and selected to provide broader coverage of publications using different forms of Islamic banking terminology. In the same sense, the search used the following keywords ("Islamic banking" OR "Islamic bank" OR "Islamic banks") combined by the Boolean operator 'OR'. The search was conducted in the title and abstract fields. The search was conducted on a single reference date, 24 August, 2025, to limit potential bias from ongoing database updates. Only peer-reviewed journal articles were retained to ensure the

analytical corpus consisted of peer-reviewed scholarly work. The initial search yielded 18,737 records. To ensure disciplinary relevance, the results were limited to the "Commerce, Management, Tourism, and Services" subject category, as it directly encompasses banking, financial services, commerce, and management aspects of Islamic banking research. This restriction removed 7,058 records, leaving 11,679 records for further screening.

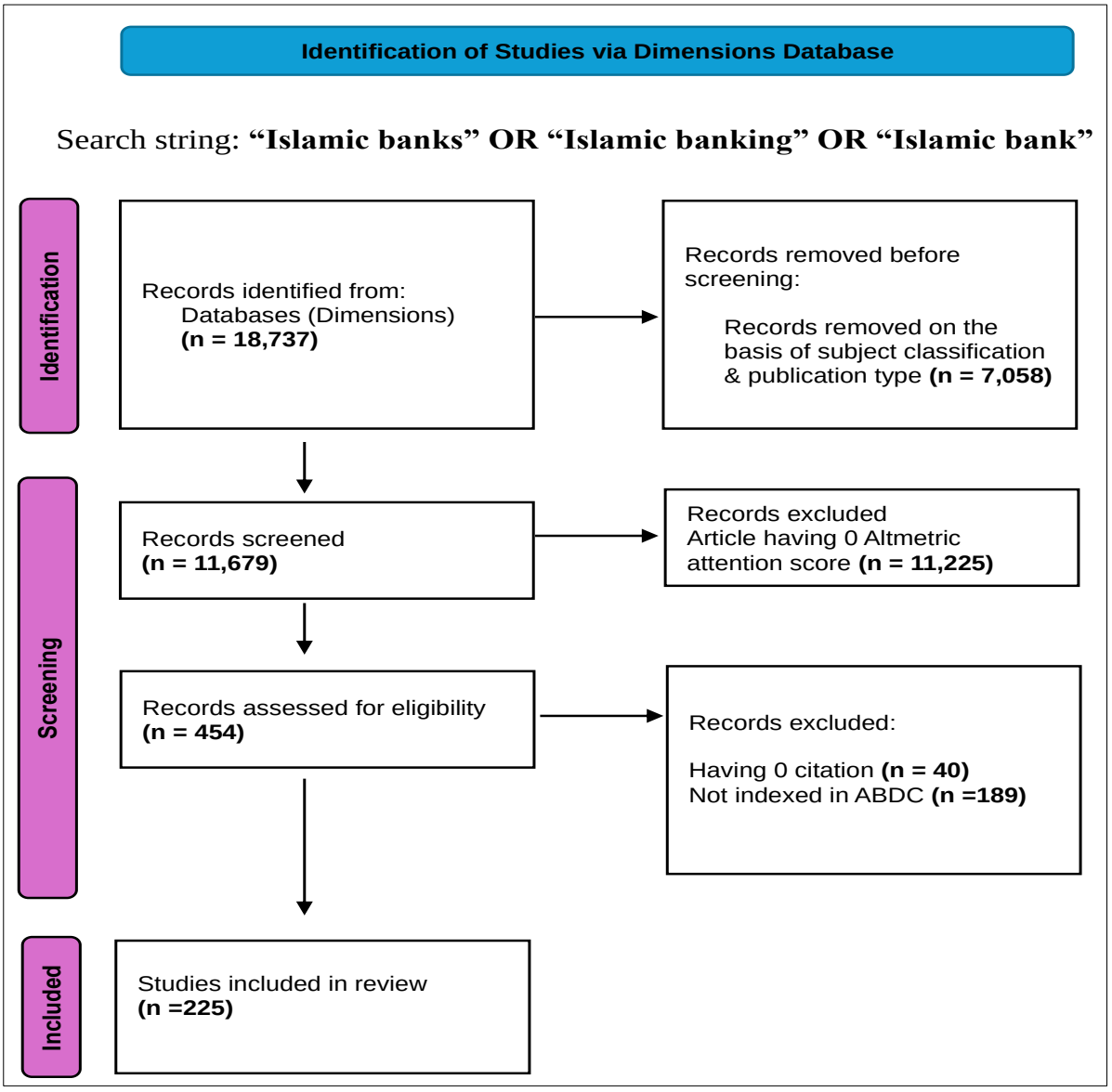


Figure 1. PRISMA flow diagram of article selection

3.2. Screening of studies

Of these, 11,679 studies were screened, based on the metadata available in the database. Studies with a zero Altmetric Attention Score (AAS) were removed because they did not capture any measurable online attention for the altmetric analysis. This step eliminated 11,225 studies, leaving 454 records for further assessment. We then removed 40 entries that had zero citations, since the study also analyses research impact via citations. The remaining studies were assessed for ABDC indexing. A total of 189 studies were excluded because they were not indexed in the ABDC-listed journals. This screening process resulted in 225 studies for inclusion.

3.3. Inclusion criteria

The final sample consisted of 225 ABDC-indexed journal articles that were published in 78 journals between 1986 and 2024. As no relevant publication meeting the defined search and eligibility criteria was identified before 1986; thus, 1986 represents the starting point of the final study period. The year 2024 has been chosen as the cut-off because recent publications have had less time to accumulate citations and online attention. This difference in exposure time could affect the comparability of observed research impact across publications. The ABDC criterion was applied as an additional journal-quality filter, restricting the final corpus to publications in journals included in a recognised, tiered journal-quality classification. The selected articles were then subjected to the planned quantitative analyses. For these analyses, VOSviewer was used to map the intellectual structure of the field through bibliographic coupling (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010), while SPSS was used to statistically assess relationships among the study indicators. Excel was used to organise and process the data and perform basic calculations. Together, these tools supported the network, correlation, and quantitative analyses conducted in the study.

3.4. Altmetric data processing

The extracted records were reviewed to identify the available altmetric fields for each publication and retain the indicators required for the planned analyses. The available altmetric information was organised into article-level and platform-level measures. AAS and Mendeley readership were used as the principal measures of digital and academic attention, respectively. Platform-level information was examined to assess the distribution of attention across outlets and user profiles, while citation counts were retained for comparison with altmetric indicators. Publisher information was retained for publisher-level comparisons and the normalisation of citation and altmetric indicators. To perform the descriptive, correlation, and bibliographic coupling analyses, the resulting variables were structured accordingly.

3.5. Normalisation of indicators

Citation (CIT) counts and Altmetric Attention Scores (AAS) can vary across publishers. Therefore, normalisation was applied to improve comparability across the 78 journals included in the study. This procedure also reduces the influence of publisher-level differences on citation and altmetric indicators (Bornmann, 2014; Thelwall et al., 2013). The normalisation process for AAS and CIT across 78 journals was carried out using the following formulas:

The Normalised Citation Impact (NCIT) for journal *j* was calculated as:

$$NCIT_j = \frac{C_j}{\bar{C}_p} \tag{1}$$

where C_j represents the total citations received by journal *j*. The term $\bar{C}_p$ represents the average citations for journals associated with publisher *p*. It was calculated as:

$$\bar{C}_p = \frac{\sum C_p}{N_p} \tag{2}$$

where $\sum C_p$ represents the total citations received by all journals associated with publisher *p*, and N_p represents the number of journals associated with publisher *p*.

Similarly, the Normalised Altmetric Attention Score (NAAS) for journal *j* was calculated as:

$$NAAS_j = \frac{AAS_j}{\overline{AAS_p}} \tag{3}$$

where AAS_j represents the total Altmetric Attention Score of journal j. The term $\overline{AAS}_p$ represents the average AAS for journals associated with publisher p. It was calculated as:

$$\overline{AAS}_p = \frac{\sum AAS_p}{N_p} \quad (4)$$

where $\sum AAS_p$ represents the total AAS across all journals associated with publisher p, and N_p represents the number of journals associated with that publisher.

Thus, NCIT and NAAS express journal-level citation impact and altmetric attention relative to their respective publisher-level averages. This normalisation facilitates comparison across journals while reducing the influence of publisher-level differences on the observed impact indicators.

4. Results

4.1. Publication, citation, and altmetrics trends:

The number of publications, citations, and AAS related to Islamic banking research during 1986-2024 is shown in Table 1 and Figure 2. The number of publications was relatively low until the mid-2000s, but increased dramatically in 2021, reaching 35 articles. The impact of the total number of citations peaked in 2016 (1,458 citations), showing accumulated recognition in the field. Altmetric attention, in contrast, had risen more recently, particularly in 2021 (AAS = 218) and 2023 (AAS = 130), indicating a higher level of visibility and online engagement of the field.

Table 1. Publication, citation, and altmetric trends in Islamic banking research

Year	Number of Articles	Total Citations	Total AAS
1986	1	131	1
1988	1	121	6
1989	1	223	1
1994	1	295	3
1999	1	13	3
2003	1	19	3
2006	2	432	6
2007	2	183	4
2008	3	440	9
2009	2	119	7
2010	5	1369	12
2011	6	736	12
2012	9	374	21
2013	4	923	18
2014	12	1069	17
2015	12	830	26
2016	18	1458	41
2017	13	717	32
2018	13	735	24
2019	23	1232	63
2020	20	451	43
2021	35	887	218
2022	17	438	24
2023	13	160	130
2024	10	36	21

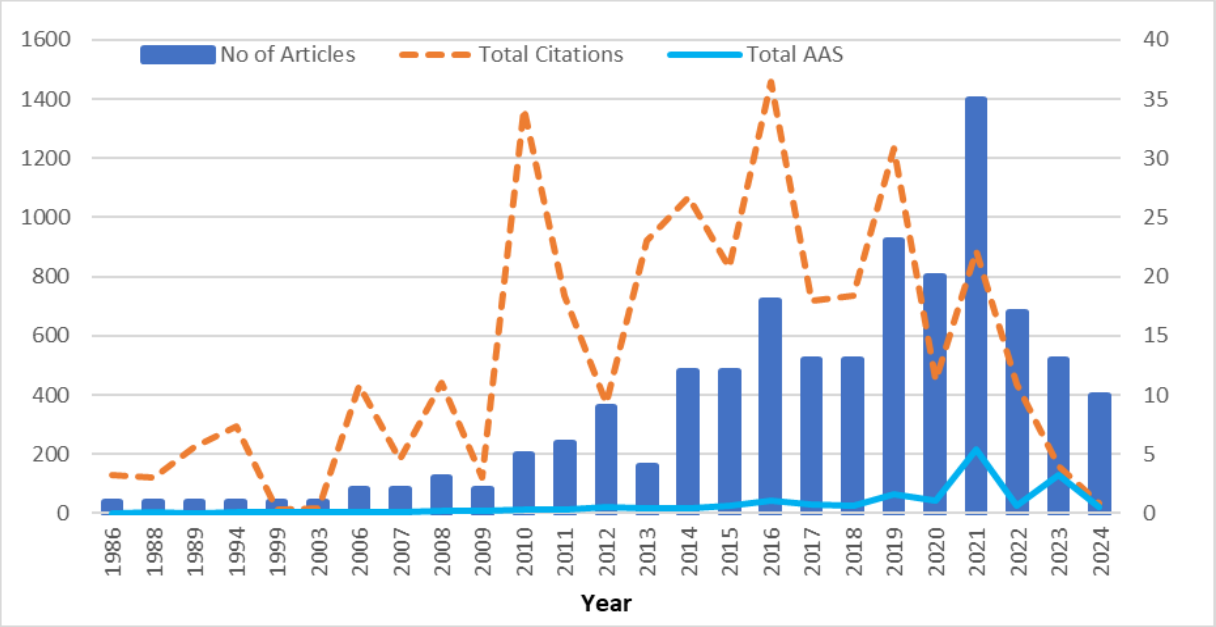


Figure 2. Annual trends in publications, citations, and altmetric attention

4.2. Relationship between normalised citation impact and Mendeley readership

The Spearman rank correlation between Normalised Citation Impact (NCIT) and Mendeley readership across 78 ABDC-listed journals is presented in Table 2. Spearman's rank correlation was employed because the NCIT, NAAS, and Mendeley readership data were highly positively skewed and not normally distributed. Therefore, a rank-based measure was used to explore monotonic associations among research impact indicators. The results show a strong and statistically significant positive association between NCIT and Mendeley readership (ρ=0.753, $p<0.01$, two-tailed). This indicates that journals with higher normalised citation impact tend to have higher Mendeley readership. The finding implies a positive relationship between scholarly recognition and academic readership in Islamic banking research.

Table 2. Spearman rank correlation between NCIT and Mendeley readership

Variables	NCIT	Mendeley	N
NCIT	1.000	0.753**	78
Mendeley	0.753**	1.000	78

Note: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

4.3. Relationship between normalised altmetric attention score and normalised citation impact

The Spearman rank correlation between the Normalised Altmetric Attention Score (NAAS) and the Normalised Citation Impact (NCIT) across 78 ABDC-listed journals is shown in Table 3. The results show a moderate and statistically significant positive association between NAAS and NCIT (ρ=0.632, $p<0.01$, two-tailed). This indicates that journals with closer normalised altmetric attention tend to have higher normalised citation impact. The findings indicate that a positive relationship exists between digital attention and scholarly impact in the field of Islamic banking.

Table 3. Spearman Rank Correlation Between NCIT and NAAS

Variables	NCIT	NAAS	N
NCIT	1.000	0.632**	78
NAAS	0.632**	1.000	78

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

4.4. Digital platforms driving online attention and research dissemination in Islamic banking

The distribution of altmetric outlets across major publishers for Islamic banking research is shown in Table 4. Emerald Group Publishing has the highest digital engagement, especially on X (371 users) and Mendeley (35,324 readers), making it very visible across these public and academic platforms. Elsevier is also highly represented, particularly in terms of Mendeley readership (16,175) and policy sources. In contrast, publishers like Springer, Wiley-Blackwell and MDPI have moderate academic readership and relatively little activity on broader social platforms. Overall, it seems that engagement is unevenly distributed among a handful of major publishers, with Mendeley and X as the most important dissemination channels.

Table 4. Distribution of altmetric outlets across publishers

Publisher	Altmetric Outlet						
	Mendeley	**X**	**Policy Sources**	**Wikipedia**	**Facebook**	**News**	**Other Altmetric Outlets***
Elsevier	16,175	40	8	4	5	3	3
Academy of Management	180	8	0	0	0	0	1
Emerald Group Publishing	35,324	371	11	18	18	12	9
Inderscience Enterprises Ltd.	95	0	1	0	0	0	0
INFORMS	424	6	0	4	2	0	0
MDPI	1,877	11	0	3	1	0	2
Oxford University Press	974	4	0	0	4	0	0
Palgrave Macmillan	511	2	0	3	0	0	1
Sage Publications	1,433	25	0	4	0	0	1
Springer International Publishing	4,009	18	1	1	4	0	1
Taylor & Francis	1,536	7	2	0	1	0	0
Wiley-Blackwell Publishing	3,261	17	4	6	4	0	3
World Scientific Publishing	135	0	1	0	0	0	0

Note: Other Altmetric Outlets include Blogs, CiteULike, Bluesky, YouTube, Google+, and Peer Review Sites.

Table 5 shows the demographic distribution of X users among publishers. The analysis indicates that members of the public account for the majority of engagement for the majority of publishers, especially Emerald Group Publishing (144) and Elsevier (25). Other leading scientific involvement is relatively low but significant in Elsevier (18) and Sage Publications (13). The contribution of science communicators in the outlets is minimal, and the total representation is low. These findings indicate that X's involvement in Islamic banking studies is primarily social, and relatively few academic scientists and professional communicators are engaged.

Table 6 presents the distribution of professional status among Mendeley readers across publishers. The results indicate that the highest percentage of readership is dominated by students and especially PhD, Master and Bachelor students, as well as a sizable percentage of readership made up by the "Unknown category of users. Emerald Group Publishing and Elsevier record the highest overall readership, with strong representation from students and lecturers. Senior academic positions like professor and Associate Professor are only slightly represented by a handful of publishers. This trend indicates that early-career researchers and students more frequently read research on Islamic banking than by senior academics.

Overall, the results summarised in Tables 4 to 6 suggest that Islamic banking research is predominantly visible on specific platforms. X covers public attention and social involvement, while Mendeley is more of an academic platform adopted by students and lecturers. In contrast, uptake among senior scholars is relatively low across publishers, suggesting an uneven pattern of digital engagement among professional groups.

Table 5. X user demographics across publishers

Publishers	X User Demographic Background		
	Members of the public	Science communicators (journalists, bloggers, editors)	Scientists
Academy of Management	5	2	1
Elsevier	25	0	18
Emerald Group Publishing	144	1	17
Inderscience Enterprises Ltd.	0	0	0
INFORMS	1	0	0
MDPI	5	6	0
Oxford University Press	4	0	0
Palgrave Macmillan	2	0	0
Sage Publications	16	3	13
Springer International Publishing	14	1	3
Taylor & Francis	6	0	1
Wiley-Blackwell Publishing	10	4	3
World Scientific Publishing	0	0	0

Table 6. Mendeley reader demographics across publishers

Publisher	Readers by professional status								
	PhD Student	Bachelor Student	Lecturer	Master Student	Doctoral Student	Unknown	Senior Lecturer	Researcher	Other Professional Statuses*
Academy of Management	32	10	12	21	12	66	0	0	27
Elsevier	5,887	3,769	6,515	5,433	1,879	29,510	619	322	7,538
Emerald Group Publishing	6,065	3,875	6,663	5,588	1,916	30,217	632	326	7,771
Inderscience Enterprises Ltd.	8	10	8	7	0	45	0	6	11
INFORMS	57	6	24	18	20	140	0	9	50
MDPI	4	1	1	0	0	17	1	1	0
Oxford University Press	142	77	87	107	44	369	0	0	148
Palgrave Macmillan	73	64	57	52	19	185	4	0	57
Sage Publications	144	77	160	106	33	581	7	6	134
Springer International Publishing	425	206	422	382	165	1,809	37	32	529
Taylor & Francis	119	76	177	112	38	793	34	0	187
Wiley-Blackwell Publishing	393	217	289	296	104	1,446	24	18	466
World Scientific Publishing	21	4	14	14	8	59	0	0	15

Note: Other Professional Statuses represents the sum of Other, Unspecified, Student > Postgraduate, Professor > Associate Professor, Professor, and Librarian from the original Mendeley demographic data.

4.5. Bibliographic coupling and thematic structure of Islamic banking research

Figure 3 presents the bibliographic coupling of the document network generated using VOSviewer (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010; Rahisha et al., 2025; Kumari & Jaiswal, 2024). The analysis began with 225 ABDC-indexed articles. A minimum threshold of 62 citations was

used to ensure that the bibliographic coupling analysis was limited to the most highly cited publications with sufficient scholarly visibility. From this threshold, 66 articles satisfied the citation criterion, out of which 63 articles formed the largest connected component and were used for network visualisation. This network identified five major thematic clusters, which constituted the essence of the intellectual structure of Islamic Banking research.

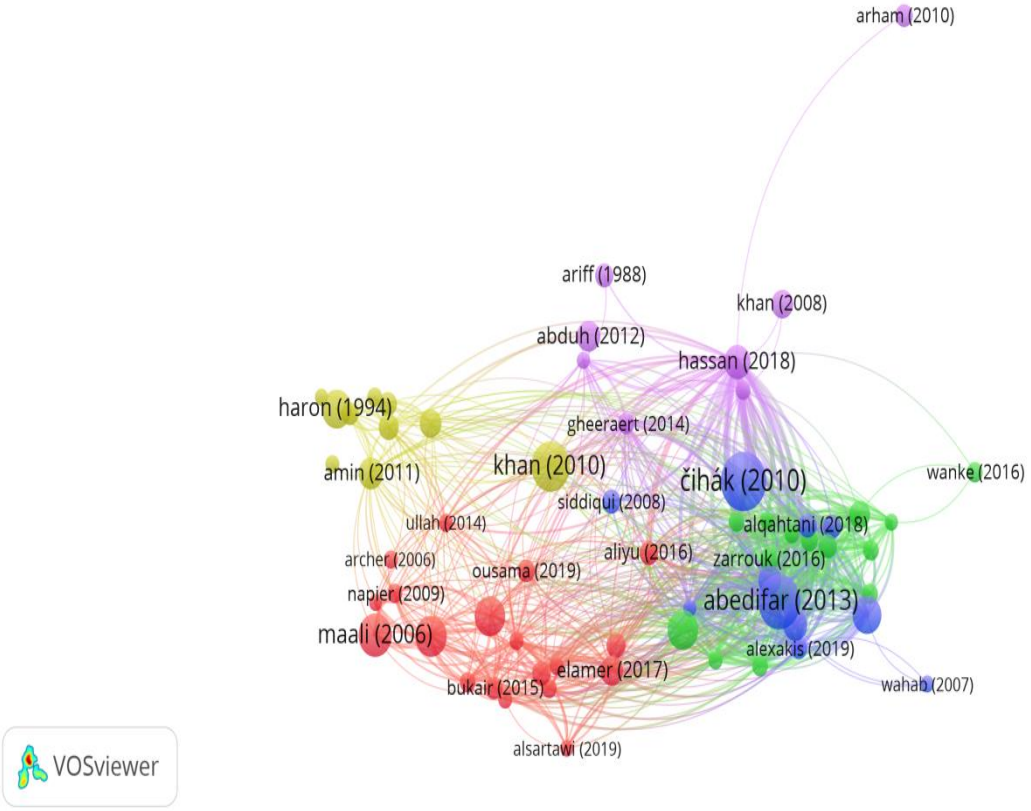


Figure 3. Bibliographic coupling network of Islamic banking research

4.5.1. Cluster 1 (Red): Governance, compliance, transparency, and ethical accountability in Islamic banking

Cluster 1 centres on the dimensions of governance, compliance, transparency, and ethical accountability in Islamic banking. Napier (2009) discusses the basis of Islamic accounting, whereas Maali et al. (2006) evaluate the concept of social reporting and identify gaps in disclosures concerning social justice and community development. Vinnicombe (2010) constructs a compliance index to assess the extent to which Islamic banks comply with AAOIFI standards, and El-Halaby and Hussainey (2016) examine the antecedents of this compliance across banks. Ullah (2014) points to Sharī'ah governance as a factor that ensures transparency and trust in Islamic banking activities. Several studies analyse the corporate governance and disclosures. Bukair and Abdul Rahman (2015) and Musleh Alsartawi (2019) indicate that the performance of Islamic banks depends on the board structure and independence. Neifar and Jarboui (2018) examine the governance mechanisms that influence risk disclosure. Mallin et al. (2014) and Farook et al. (2011) focus on the disclosure of corporate social responsibility in Islamic banks, whereas Abdullah et al. (2015) examine voluntary disclosure practices. Other research is on the quality of financial reporting and internal governance control. Quttainah et al. (2013) and Mersni and Ben Othman (2016) investigate earnings management in Islamic banks, whereas Ginena (2014) relates Sharī'ah risk to governance. There is also research on ownership and financial performance (Ben Slama Zouari and Boulila Taktak, 2014) and on risk-sharing and capital structure (Archer and Karim, 2006). Lastly, the literature highlights the significance of governance, intellectual

capital, and sustainability in enhancing Islamic banking institutions (Elamer et al., 2020; Ousama et al., 2019; Aliyu et al., 2016).

4.5.2. Cluster 2 (Green): Comparative performance, stability, and governance of Islamic and conventional banks

Cluster 2 focuses on the comparative performance, stability, and governance dimension of Islamic and conventional banks. Ibrahim and Rizvi (2018) demonstrate that Islamic banks sustain financing growth in crisis periods without excessive risk-taking. Trinh et al. (2020) and Ibrahim (2016) investigate governance patterns and lending practices, demonstrating variations between the Islamic and traditional banking systems. There are several studies that revolve around risk governance and efficiency. Rahahleh et al. (2019) survey progress in risk management in Islamic finance, whereas Aljughaiman and Salama (2019) examine the importance of board-level risk governance. The authors Kamarudin et al. (2016) and Saeed and Izzeldin (2016) focus on the relationship among governance, efficiency, and risk in banking systems. Competition, profitability and stability are examined in other studies. Azmi et al. (2019) and Zarrouk et al. (2016) focus on relationships between competition and profitability, whereas Khediri et al. (2015) contrast the financial nature of Islamic and conventional banks. The literature also focuses on banks' efficiency and resilience to crises (Boubaker et al., 2023; Wanke et al., 2016) and examines the impact of diversification and governance (Paltrinieri et al., 2021; Mollah et al., 2017). It has also been demonstrated that asset-backed financing is associated with lower nonperforming loans among Islamic banks (Alandejani & Asutay, 2017). All these studies raise the differences and similarities between Islamic and conventional banking systems in terms of governance, risk management and performance.

4.5.3. Cluster 3 (Blue): Efficiency, risk, and stability dynamics in Islamic and conventional banking systems

Cluster 3 examines the efficiency, risk, and financial stability dimensions of Islamic and conventional banking systems. Johnes et al. (2014) compare the performance of Islamic and conventional banks and find that Islamic banks exhibit high managerial efficiency. Pappas et al. (2017) compare the survival of Islamic banks and state that their failure risk is lower. The article by Siddiqui (2008) analyses the Islamic financial contracts and their impact on the bank performance and risk management. Several studies dwell on financial stability in the banking systems. Alqahtani and Mayes (2018) explore Islamic banks in the context of the Global Financial Crisis and note greater resilience among smaller banks. Abedifar et al. (2015) summarise empirical studies on Islamic banking performance, whereas Cihak and Hesse (2010) examine cross-country banking stability and find that smaller Islamic banks exhibit greater stability. Changes in regulation and risk management dynamics are considered in other studies. Aysan et al. (2017) examine depositor behaviour following deposit insurance reforms. Hassan et al. (2019) compare the liquidity and credit risks of Islamic and conventional banks. In their article, Alexakis et al. (2019) investigate productivity and performance during the Global Financial Crisis. Wahab et al. (2007) present the concept of governance and structural concerns about the Islamic insurance models. In contrast, Abedifar et al. (2013) also use global banking data to report lower credit risk for smaller Islamic banks. Taken together, these studies indicate the influence of efficiency, risk management, and institutional structures in Islamic banking systems and their stability.

4.5.4. Cluster 4 (Yellow): Customer awareness, perceptions, and behavioural intentions toward Islamic banking

Cluster 4 examines the customer awareness, perceptions, and behavioural intention dimension of Islamic banking. Islam and Rahman (2017) examine awareness and intentions

to use Islamic banking among Indian Muslims and find low awareness and high interest in adoption. In their research, Rammal and Zurbruegg (2007) investigate the level of awareness of Islamic banking products among Australian Muslims and point to a lack of knowledge about Shari'ah-compliant finance. Haron et al. (1994) discuss factors influencing bank patronage and demonstrate that the quality of service and the bank's image determine customers' choice of bank. Awan and Bukhari (2011) examine customer requirements when choosing Islamic banks and find that service quality and product features tend to take precedence over purely religious interests. Some studies examine behavioural and technological factors of the adoption of Islamic banking. Oladapo et al. (2022) compare customers' perceptions of FinTech adaptability in Islamic banking, whereas Amin et al. (2011) focus on the factors affecting the intention to use Islamic personal financing. Khan (2010) critically reviews the debate on whether Islamic banking operations are very different from those of conventional banking models. Other research is interested in digital, religiosity, and stakeholder views. Yasin et al. (2020) investigate the significance of online brand experience in shaping customers' intention to share Islamic banking content on social media. In an examination of the impact of religiosity, trust, and information sources on the choice of Islamic banks, Usman et al. (2017) assess these factors. Dusuki (2008) discusses the attitude of stakeholders towards the aims of Islamic banking and underlines the significance of the correspondence between banking activities and the principles of maqasid al-shariah.

4.5.5. Cluster 5 (Violet): Growth, development, and economic impact of Islamic banking

Cluster 5 examines the growth, development, and economic impact dimension of Islamic banking. In their review, Hassan and Aliyu (2018) pinpoint the areas of research that include governance, performance, and financial well-being, which are among the most important in Islamic banking. Some studies examine the connection between Islamic banking and economic growth. According to Hachicha and Ben Amar (2015), the banking system in Malaysia is examined, and the authors report that Islamic banks' financing has a positive impact on short-term economic growth. On the same note, Abduh and Omar (2012) establish a two-way relationship between economic growth and the development of Islamic banking in Indonesia. Gheeraert (2014) demonstrates that Islamic finance facilitates the development of the banking sector and enhances financial inclusivity without crowding out traditional banking operations. The general institutional and global maturation of Islamic banking is explored in other studies. The globalisation of Islamic finance is discussed by Khan and Bhatti (2008), and the early history of its development is traced by Ariff (1988). Other studies delve into the ethical and financial aspects, such as Islamic marketing principles (Arham, 2010) or capital, risk and efficiency in Islamic and conventional banks (Miah and Sharmeen, 2015).

5. Findings and discussion

The results show that Islamic banking research has grown not only in scholarly terms but also in digital visibility. However, after the mid-2000s, publication output began to rise and peaked in 2021. Citation impact was highest in 2016, while Altmetric attention was observed to be highest during 2021–2023. This temporal difference implies that scholarly recognition and online attention follow different paths. It also highlights the complementary use of altmetrics to measure forms of engagement not captured by citation counts (Costas et al., 2015; Sedighi, 2023). The correlation results further explain these patterns. NCIT demonstrates a robust positive correlation with Mendeley readership ($\rho = 0.753$; $p < 0.01$), suggesting that publications with higher citation impact will also receive greater academic readership. This aligns with previous studies that have shown positive correlations between Mendeley readership and citation metrics (Costas et al., 2015; Wong et al., 2024). The association between NCIT and NAAS is moderate ($\rho = 0.632$, $p < 0.01$). Therefore, online

attention is related to scholarly impact, but less strongly than academic readership. Previous studies have similarly reported varying relationships between altmetric and citation indicators across platforms and disciplines (Cho, 2021; Shrivastava & Mahajan, 2023). The results suggest that academia readership and online attention are two related but separate dimensions of research visibility. The findings at the platform level show important audience segmentation. A large proportion of Mendeley users are students and lecturers, whereas X is mostly comprised of members of the public. The number of scientists and science communicators is comparatively small among X users. At the publisher level, the digital attention is also skewed towards a few publishers, especially Emerald and Elsevier. This means digital visibility results not only from the platform used but also from the publisher through which the research is published. In terms of Social Capital Theory, these are differentiated patterns of academic and public engagement (Bourdieu, 1986). On the other hand, the Theory of Diffusion of Innovation describes how research knowledge is disseminated to different segments of the audience via various channels of communication (Rogers, 2003).

These are complemented by bibliographic coupling in document analysis, which provides intellectual context for these results. It reveals five clusters that focus on Governance and Sharī'ah compliance, Islamic and conventional banking performance, risk and stability, customer behaviour, and economic development. These themes are consistent with the established areas identified in previous reviews (Abedifar et al., 2015; Aliyu et al., 2016; Hassan & Aliyu, 2018). Their coexistence suggests that Islamic banking research is not limited to institutional and financial perspectives but also encompasses behavioural and developmental aspects of Islamic banking. The coupling structure, therefore, represents a broad and interrelated set of intellectual insights in the field. Signalling Theory offers an additional interpretation. Citations, Mendeley readership, and Altmetric attention can serve as observable signals of the relevance and visibility of research (Spence, 1973). Their varied relationship shows that no single indicator fully reflects the impact of research. Overall, the results indicate that the development of Islamic banking research has followed an increasingly structured intellectual path, alongside a differentiated digital dissemination trajectory. As Social Capital Theory illuminates networked engagement, Diffusion of Innovation Theory explains channel-based dissemination, and Signalling Theory explains the different types of information signified by varying numbers of impact indicators.

6. Conclusion & implications

The present study will make a valuable contribution to the field of Islamic Banking research by applying a broader measure of impact that integrates conventional bibliometric and altmetric indicators. It integrates NCIT, NAAS and Mendeley readership to represent different aspects of scholarly and digital engagement. The results show that research impact in Islamic banking is not limited to conventional citation-based assessments but also encompasses academic readership, online interest, and the field's intellectual development. In addition, a theoretical contribution is given by linking the different patterns of research impact with three complementary viewpoints in the study. In the context of Islamic banking, Social Capital Theory emphasises academic and public networks in the circulation of Islamic banking research. Diffusion of Innovation Theory explains how research knowledge spreads through various communication channels and platforms.

Furthermore, "signalling theory" elucidates the mechanisms behind citations, readership and altmetric attention as signals of research relevance and visibility. These views provide a broader perspective on the dissemination, engagement, and recognition of Islamic banking research. The study also provides implications for researchers, editors, research

institutions, and Islamic banking institutions. It recommends that research visibility can be measured through citation indicators, alongside readership and altmetric indicators, by researchers and by journal editors. The identified research themes provide Islamic banking institutions with a means to monitor potential trends in governance, risk, customer behaviour, and Islamic banking inclusion. Research institutions can also utilise platform-specific dissemination strategies to improve the dissemination of Islamic banking research to academic and non-academic audiences. The findings also have policy implications for policymakers and regulators. Dominant themes are governance, risk, stability, and customer-related issues, which are very familiar in today's Shariah context, particularly regarding customer protection, governance, and risk oversight.

Furthermore, the observed functions of digital platforms highlight the importance of an appropriate pathway for disseminating research knowledge to a wider audience. Research that addresses existing and emerging challenges in Islamic banking, such as governance, regulation, and financial inclusion, can be supported by funding agencies. Based on the findings, the specific practical and policy implications are displayed in Table 7. To sum up the study's findings, the evolution of academic interest in Islamic banking has yielded an intellectual structure as well as various academic, digital, and other forms of engagement. The findings validate the adoption of multiple research impact indicators to gain a holistic overview of the recognition, dissemination and engagement of Islamic banking research in academia and beyond.

Table 7. Practical and policy implications of the findings

Empirical Evidence	Practical Implications	Policy Implications
Publication and altmetric activity increased sharply during 2021–2023.	Researchers, journals, and research institutions can strengthen digital dissemination strategies to improve the visibility and reach of Islamic banking research.	Funding agencies can support research addressing emerging issues in Islamic banking, including governance, regulation, and financial inclusion.
Strong positive relationship between NCIT and Mendeley readership ($\rho = 0.753$).	Researchers and journal editors can consider Mendeley readership alongside citations when assessing academic engagement and research visibility.	Research evaluation frameworks may consider Mendeley readership as a complementary indicator of academic engagement.
Moderate positive relationship between NAAS and NCIT ($\rho = 0.632$).	Researchers and institutions can use altmetric indicators alongside citation measures to monitor broader research visibility.	Altmetric Attention Scores should be treated as complementary indicators of research visibility rather than substitutes for citation-based assessment.
X primarily drives online attention, while Mendeley readership is concentrated among students and lecturers.	Researchers and institutions can use platform-specific dissemination strategies to effectively reach academic and broader audiences.	Policymakers and research institutions can strengthen appropriate digital knowledge dissemination channels to communicate Islamic banking research.
Governance, risk, stability, and customer behaviour are prominent thematic clusters.	Islamic banking organisations can use these research areas to identify knowledge relevant to governance, risk management, customer engagement, and financial inclusion.	Policymakers and regulators should strengthen Shariah governance, risk oversight, and consumer protection mechanisms.

7. Limitations and future research directions

While this study offers useful insights into the visibility and impact of Islamic banking research, it has some limitations. First, the analysis is limited to ABDC-listed journals, which may omit useful studies from other journals. Second, the research uses a single database, which could restrict the entire coverage of the literature. Thirdly, the study

will focus on a few publishing companies and will fail to capture the differences in publishing policies in other sources. By addressing these limitations in future studies, a broader perspective on research visibility and dissemination in Islamic banking can be attained. Table 8 outlines six possible research questions for future studies in this area.

Table 8. Directions for future research

Research area	Future research question	Key studies indicating the gap
AAOIFI compliance and Sharīʾah governance	FRQ1: How does compliance with AAOIFI standards vary across regions in Islamic banking systems?	Vinnicombe (2010); El-Halaby & Hussainey (2016); Farook et al. (2011)
AAOIFI compliance and Sharīʾah governance	FRQ2: How does AAOIFI compliance influence bank performance, disclosure quality, and risk-taking in Islamic banks?	Vinnicombe (2010); El-Halaby & Hussainey (2016); Farook et al. (2011)
Sharīʾah board structure and monitoring effectiveness	FRQ3: How do Sharīʾah board size, independence, expertise, and governance mechanisms affect earnings management, transparency, and corporate governance outcomes in Islamic banks?	Bukair & Abdul Rahman (2015); Quttainah et al. (2013); Ginena (2014)
Risk, efficiency, and financial stability	FRQ4: How do Islamic banks differ from conventional banks in terms of risk-taking, efficiency, and financial stability across financial crises and regulatory environments?	Ibrahim & Rizvi (2018); Saeed & Izzeldin (2016); Azmi et al. (2019); Alqahtani & Mayes (2018)
Islamic banking development and economic impact	FRQ5: To what extent does Islamic banking development contribute to economic growth, financial inclusion, and SME financing in countries with fully Islamic and dual banking systems?	Gheeraert (2014); Abduh & Omar (2012); Hachicha & Ben Amar (2015)
Customer awareness, behaviour, and adoption	FRQ6: How do awareness, religious motivation, trust, service quality, and technological adoption shape customer intention and usage of Islamic banking products across regions?	Islam & Rahman (2017); Rammal & Zurbruegg (2007); Amin et al. (2011); Oladapo et al. (2022)

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding information

The authors declared no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Acknowledgments

The authors are grateful to the chief editor, the editorial team, and anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments and suggestions, which significantly improved the quality of this article.

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