

## Unravelling the Threads: Bibliometric Exploration of Islamic Family Law Research in Southeast Asia (2004-2024)

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**Abstract:** *This study takes a closer look at how research on Islamic family law in Southeast Asia has evolved between 2004 and 2024, with the goal of understanding how this field has grown and where it might still fall short. Using bibliometric analysis and tools like Vosviewer to map out research trends, the study shows that countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore have been particularly active in producing studies on Islamic family law. In fact, these nations are leading the way, contributing significantly to the global conversation. However, despite this impressive research activity—based on an analysis of 1,091 documents from Scopus—many of the most pressing issues, such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance, still lack comprehensive solutions. The research so far has provided valuable insights, but it hasn't fully addressed the complexities that Muslim families face in these areas. Looking forward, the study suggests that future research needs to dig deeper into the dynamics of Islamic family law and focus on finding practical solutions to these ongoing challenges. By doing so, scholars can create a more responsive legal framework that better meets the real-life needs of Muslim families in Southeast Asia, ensuring that research has a meaningful impact on everyday family life.*

## Introduction

Islamic family law plays a vital role in shaping and maintaining the well-being of Muslim communities. However, as Nasution & Nasution (2021) point out, it often struggles to fully address the many complex issues families face. According to Anggraeni (2023), this challenge stems from a dilemma in applying the law: the balance between protecting individual rights and adhering strictly to Sharia principles. This tension becomes even more complicated as family issues evolve in the context of the ongoing social changes within Muslim societies. As a result, it's clear that research on Islamic family law needs to take a fresh approach, finding ways to better navigate these complexities and address the new challenges brought on by an increasingly dynamic social landscape (Abdullah et al., 2024). With this in mind, the present study not only tracks research on Islamic family law from 2004 to 2024 but also evaluates how the focus of these studies has evolved in Southeast Asia, using data from the Scopus database to gain a deeper understanding.

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Research on Islamic family law in Southeast Asia has generally focused on three main areas. The first area is the values and norms within Islamic family law (Aslati et al., 2024; Elmali-Karakaya, 2022; Utami, 2020). Elmali-Karakaya (2022) explains that how people understand norms around marriage and divorce is shaped by both religious interpretations and local cultural traditions. The second area is the practical application of family law (Abdillah et al., 2023; Barkah et al., 2022; Rachmadhani et al., 2024). According to Barkah et al. (2022), one of the biggest challenges in applying family law is that many people don't fully understand the regulations, leading to practices that don't always align with the law. The third area focuses on law enforcement (Nasyiah, 2024; Sugitanata et al., 2022; Vahed, 2022). Nasyiah (2024) points out that even though there are regulations in place for family law, the gap between what's written and what happens in real life often leaves Muslim communities uncertain about how to resolve their family law issues.

Overall, research on Islamic family law in Southeast Asia from 2004 to 2024 has concentrated on three main areas: values and norms, the application of the law, and law enforcement. Regarding values and norms, Nuroniyah (2020) emphasizes how cultural beliefs and societal perspectives shape family law practices. In terms of applying the law, however, many challenges arise during implementation in real-life situations, often leading to unfair outcomes in cases involving marriage, divorce, and inheritance (Maimun et al., 2024). Additionally, law enforcement is a critical factor that influences how effectively Islamic family law is practiced and its overall impact on communities (Nasyiah, 2024). While these studies have shed light on important issues within Islamic family law, there remains a pressing need for more thorough analysis to effectively tackle these challenges. This research aims to fill that gap by evaluating the development and trends in Islamic family law research in Southeast Asia, utilizing a bibliometric analysis based on articles published in the Scopus database.

Research on Islamic family law in Southeast Asia from 2004 to 2024 uncovers a variety of complex and ever-evolving challenges. Despite efforts to explore values and norms, application, and law enforcement, there remain significant gaps in how these laws are implemented, which need to be examined more closely (Fernando et al., 2024). This study zeroes in on a bibliometric analysis to pinpoint both the progress made and the shortcomings in the current literature, particularly in the Scopus database. By using this approach, we can identify research trends and shed light on areas that have been overlooked. Additionally, the study argues that the rapid social and cultural changes in society have not been adequately reflected in the research on Islamic family law, suggesting that existing studies have not fully addressed the contemporary issues that are emerging.

### **Method**

This study takes place in an increasingly complex environment where global policies and societal responses often spark controversy, especially when it comes to family issues like divorce, marriage, and inheritance distribution. In light of this, the research aims to explore and evaluate the literature surrounding Islamic family law in Southeast Asia from 2004 to 2024, using

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data from the Scopus database. Three main reasons guide the decision to focus on Islamic family law. First, it's a crucial theme that has been somewhat overlooked in research over the past two decades in Southeast Asia. Second, the contextual nature of Islamic family law—both in theory and practice—makes it a fascinating topic worthy of deeper investigation. Finally, the issues within Islamic family law are fundamental for understanding and assessing societal views and policies. These considerations form the foundation of this research, which seeks to dive into and evaluate studies on Islamic family law over the last twenty years through a comprehensive search of articles in the Scopus database.

This study takes a qualitative descriptive approach that utilizes bibliometric analysis to explore and evaluate research on Islamic family law. Bibliometric analysis is instrumental in identifying and revealing trends and developments in the field, especially within the Southeast Asian context, by leveraging a wide range of scientific data (Fernando et al., 2024). Additionally, Farroh and Busro (2023) highlight that this analysis can effectively map out cumulative scientific knowledge, enabling a detailed observation of research trends and productivity in Islamic family law. By using this approach, bibliometric studies can provide valuable recommendations and establish a strong foundation for evaluating the field, identifying knowledge gaps, and generating innovative ideas that contribute to the empirical, methodological, and theoretical growth of Islamic family law. Therefore, this research specifically aims to focus on bibliometric analysis to assess how productive research in Islamic family law has been in Southeast Asia over the past twenty years.

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TITLE-ABS-KEY (islamic AND family AND law) AND PUBYEAR > 2004 AND PUBYEAR < 2024 AND (LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Indonesia") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Malaysia") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Singapore") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Thailand") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Brunei Darussalam")) AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA, "SOCI") OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA, "ARTS")) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (PUBSTAGE, "final")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "English"))
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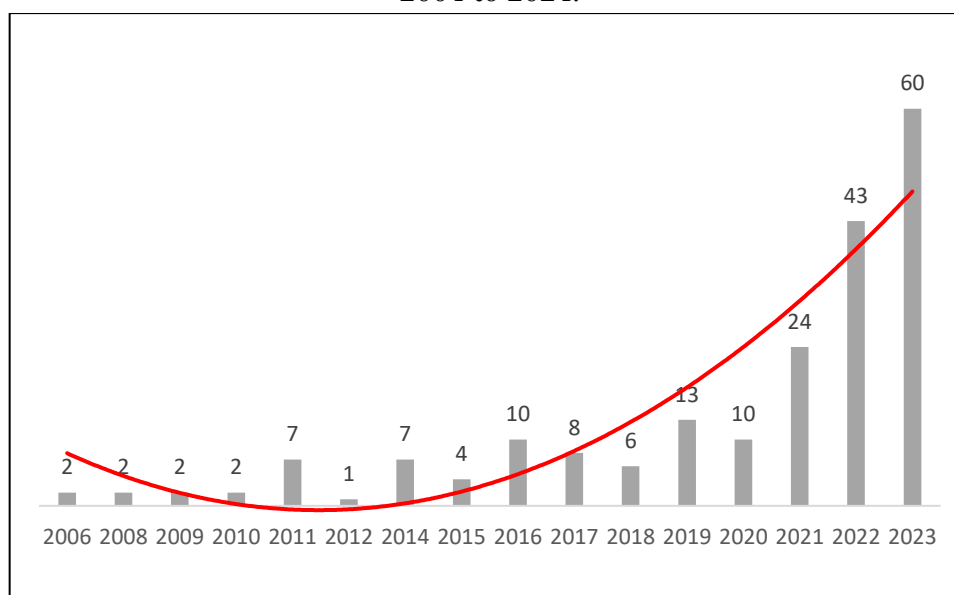
The process of identifying, limiting, and including data from the Scopus database over the past two decades (2004-2024) involved several careful steps. The collected data was then exported in various formats, including RIS (Research Information System), CSV (Comma Separated Values), and BibTeX (Bibliography LaTeX), all sourced from the Scopus database. Following this export, the data underwent a random analysis using the VOSviewer application. In simpler terms, the data described in this study represents visualizations in the form of images, graphs, diagrams, and tables that illustrate ten distinct patterns of research on Islamic family law from the Scopus database during the last two decades. This systematic approach allowed the study to draw conclusions about the exploration and evaluation of trends, patterns, and developments in Islamic family law research over the 2004-2024 period based on Scopus data.

## Results and Discussion

### Documents on Islamic Family Law Research in Southeast Asia from 2004 to 2024

After searching through the Scopus database and narrowing down the focus to publications on Islamic family law research from 2004 to 2024 in Southeast Asian countries, we can explore and evaluate the trends in this field. This thematic analysis is based on the number of published documents during this time frame, providing valuable insights into how research has evolved. The findings are visually represented in Figure 1 and Table 1.

**Figure 1.** Documents on Islamic family law research in Southeast Asia from 2004 to 2024.



Source: Scopus database, 2024

Figure 1 illustrates the trends in publications on Islamic family law research across Southeast Asian countries from 2004 to 2024, based on a total of 201 documents sourced from the Scopus database. The graph reveals some interesting patterns in the number of publications each year. Initially, from 2006 to 2010, there were only two documents published in each of those years. However, we saw a gradual increase in the following years, with seven documents published in both 2011 and 2014, four in 2016, and ten that same year. As we moved into the later years, publication numbers fluctuated, with eight documents in 2017, six in 2018, and a rise to thirteen in 2019. A notable surge occurred in 2020, which saw ten documents published, but this was just the beginning. In 2021, the number jumped to twenty-four, followed by forty-three in 2022, and it peaked at sixty publications in 2023. Overall, the data from 2004 to 2024 highlights three key trends in Islamic family law research in Southeast Asia. First, 2023 stands out as a landmark year with the highest number of publications at sixty, reflecting an increasing interest in the subject. Second, 2021 marked another significant moment with a notable rise in output,

while, on the other end of the spectrum, 2012 was the year with the fewest publications, with only one document released.

**Table 1.** Countries in Southeast Asia with the most publications.

Rank	Country/Region	Number of Article
1	Indonesia	140
2	Malaysia	60
3	Singapura	7
4	Thailand	3
5	Brunei Darussalam	1

Source: Scopus database, 2024

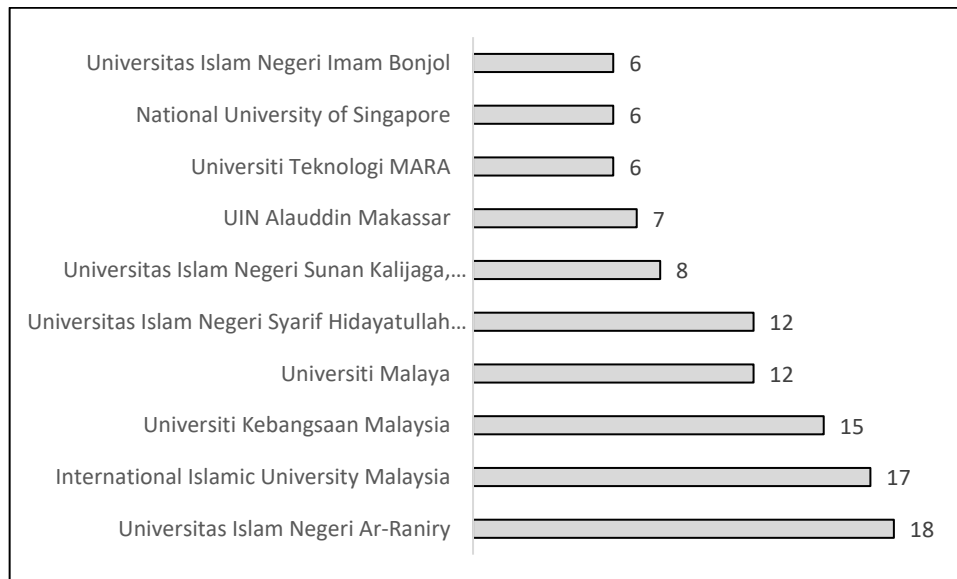
Table 1 highlights the five Southeast Asian countries that have been the most active in publishing research on Islamic family law over the last two decades, drawing from a total of 203 publications found in the Scopus database. Indonesia takes the lead with an impressive 140 publications, showcasing its significant contribution to the field. Following Indonesia, Malaysia comes in second with 60 publications, reflecting a solid commitment to exploring this important area of law. Singapore, while not as prolific, has still contributed with 7 publications, while Thailand and Brunei Darussalam have published 3 and 2 documents, respectively.

From these figures, we can discern three notable trends in Islamic family law research across these countries. First, Indonesia clearly stands out as the most active nation in this field, making substantial strides with its 140 documents. Malaysia also shows considerable engagement, placing it among the active contributors with 60 publications. In contrast, Thailand and Brunei Darussalam appear to be lagging behind, indicating a need for increased focus on Islamic family law research in these nations.

### **Affiliations and Sources of Publications on Islamic Family Law Research**

To uncover the affiliations and sources that consistently contribute to publications on Islamic family law research, this study takes a closer look at the ten institutions and journals that have been the most prolific in this field over the past two decades in Southeast Asia. The findings are illustrated in Figures 2 and 3, highlighting where significant research activity has taken place.

**Figure 2.** 10 Affiliates that are active in research publications.

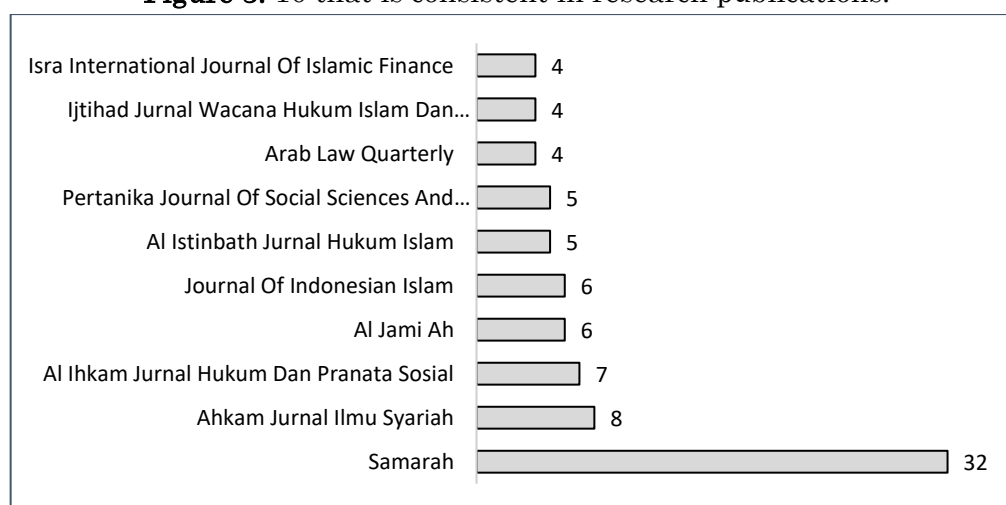


Source: Scopus database, 2024.

Figure 2 presents a diagram showcasing the ten most active affiliations in publishing research on Islamic family law over the past two decades, based on article searches in the Scopus database, totaling 107 publications. The data reveals that UIN Imam Bonjol, the National University of Singapore, and Universiti Teknologi MARA each contributed six publications, while UIN Alauddin published seven. UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta had eight publications, and UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta and Universiti Malaya both published 12. The International Islamic University Malaysia followed with 17 publications, while UIN Ar-Raniry led the list with 18 publications.

From these ten affiliations, three important trends emerge regarding their contributions to Islamic family law research over the past two decades. Firstly, UIN Ar-Raniry stands out as the most active institution, producing 18 publications. Secondly, Universiti Malaya and UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta are also notable, each with 12 publications. Lastly, affiliations such as Universiti Teknologi MARA, the National University of Singapore, and UIN Imam Bonjol are identified as the least active, each contributing only six publications.

**Figure 3.** 10 that is consistent in research publications.



Sumber: Scopus database, 2024.

Figure 3 illustrates a diagram highlighting the ten sources that have consistently published research on Islamic family law over the past two decades, based on article searches in the Scopus database. The findings indicate that Isra International Journal of Islamic Finance, Ijtihad: Jurnal Wacana Hukum Islam Dan Kemanusiaan, and Arab Law Quarterly each contributed four publications. The Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities and Al Istibath: Jurnal Hukum Islam both published five documents. The Journal of Indonesian Islam and Al Jami'ah followed with six publications each, while Al Ihkam: Jurnal Hukum Dan Pranata Sosial had seven publications, and Ahkam: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah contributed eight. The standout was Samarah, with a total of 32 publications.

From these ten sources, three key trends emerge regarding their contributions to Islamic family law research over the past two decades. Firstly, Samarah is the leading journal, boasting the highest number of publications at 32. Secondly, both Al Jami'ah and the Journal of Indonesian Islam are noteworthy for their substantial output, each with six publications. Lastly, Arab Law Quarterly, Ijtihad: Jurnal Wacana Hukum Islam Dan Kemanusiaan, and Isra International Journal of Islamic Finance rank as the least active sources, each contributing only four publications.

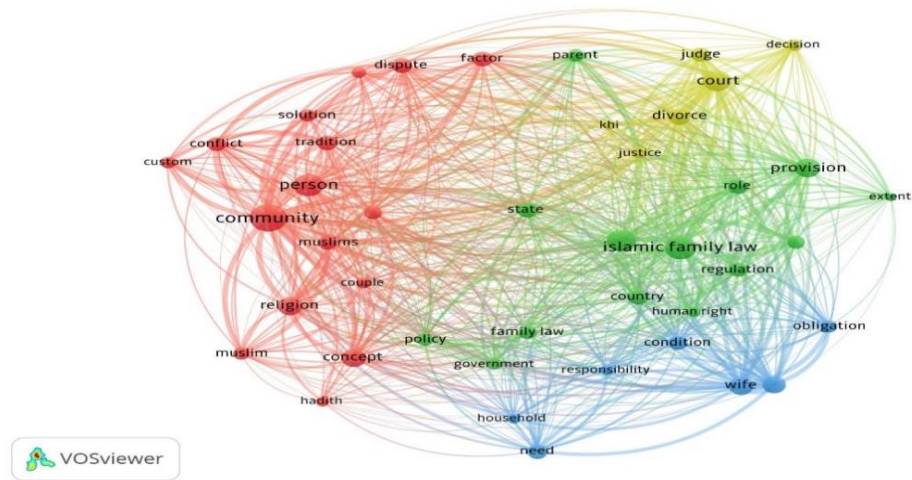
### **Patterns of Interconnectedness Among Various Entities in the Publication of Islamic Family Law Research**

To explore the trends in Islamic family law research publications over the last two decades in Southeast Asia, this study identifies the frequency of relevant keywords that frequently appear. Using VOSviewers, we created entity-based cluster visualizations to illustrate these connections. You can see these visualizations in Figures 4, 5, and 6.

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**Figure 4.** Network visualization of Islamic family law studies.



Source: Authors' analysis by VOSviewer 2024.

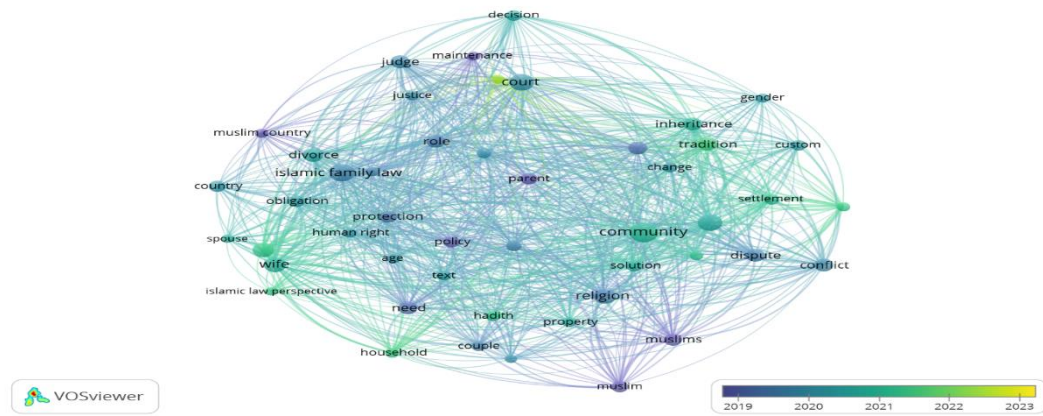
Figure 4 provides a fascinating network visualization of Islamic family law studies in Southeast Asian countries, highlighting four distinct clusters that reveal the most frequently used keywords in research publications over the past two decades. The first cluster, marked in red, encompasses terms like Change, community, concept, conflict, couple, custom, dispute, factor, hadith, implementation, Muslim, Muslims, person, religion, solution, and tradition, reflecting the diverse aspects and cultural dimensions surrounding Islamic family law. In the second cluster, represented in green, we see keywords such as Child, country, extent, family law, government, human rights, Islamic family law, parent, policy, protection, provision, regulation, role, and state, emphasizing the legal and societal frameworks that shape family law within the Islamic context. The blue cluster features keywords like Condition, household, husband, obligation, responsibility, and wife, shedding light on family roles and relationships. Lastly, the yellow cluster includes terms such as Court, decision, divorce, judge, justice, and KHI, illustrating the judicial processes and legal considerations integral to Islamic family law. Overall, this visualization underscores the interconnectedness of these themes and paints a comprehensive picture of the ongoing discourse surrounding Islamic family law in Southeast Asia.



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**Figure 5.** Overlay visualization of Islamic family law studies.

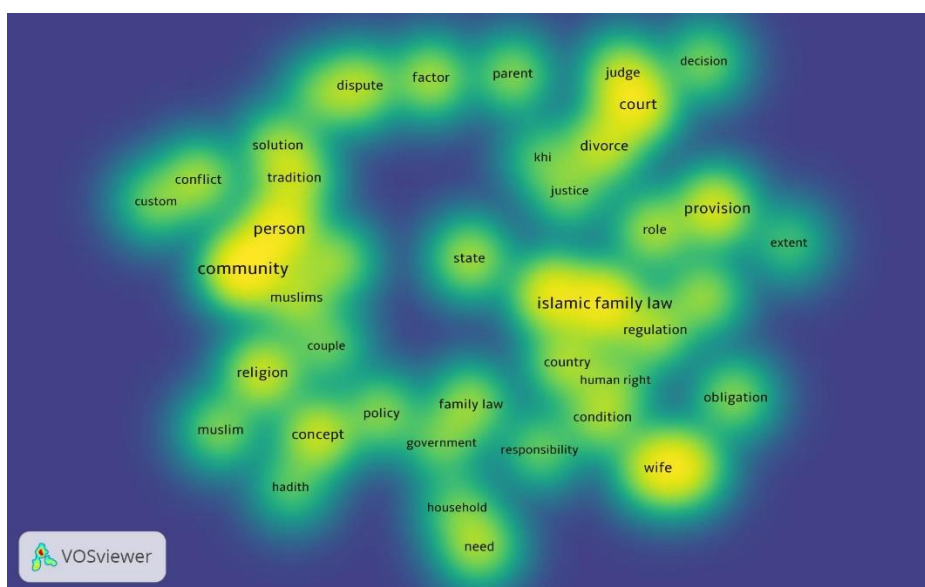


Source: Author's analysis by VOSviewer in 2024

Figure 5 showcases an overlay visualization of family law studies in ASEAN countries, illustrating the keywords that have emerged most frequently in research publications over the last two decades, with a particular focus on the past five years. In 2019, the landscape was dominated by terms such as child, victims, development, protection, factor, violence, divorce, abuse, mediation, and maintenance, reflecting the pressing issues that families face today. The following year, 2020, brought a shift in focus, with keywords like spouse, wife, obligation, property, divorce, child, domestic violence, practice, couple, and family taking center stage. This change highlighted an increasing interest in the roles and responsibilities within family structures.

In 2021, researchers began to explore theoretical dimensions more deeply, as seen in the emergence of keywords such as form, wife, theory, factor, divorce, mediation, victim, protection, development, and abuse. The conversation continued to evolve in 2022, with new keywords like child marriage, decision, health, abuse, violence, protection, perpetrator, practice, Islamic family law, and experience addressing critical contemporary issues. By 2023, the focus expanded further, incorporating terms like customary law, inheritance, tradition, practice, child, crime, victims, divorce, criminal law, and mediation. This rich array of keywords illustrates the dynamic and multifaceted nature of family law research in ASEAN countries, capturing the ongoing shifts in priorities and themes as scholars respond to the complexities of family life and legal frameworks in the region.

**Figure 6.** Density visualization of Islamic family law studies



Source: Author's analysis by VOSviewer in 2024

Figure 6 offers a density visualization of Islamic law studies in Southeast Asian countries, showcasing four key ranges of keywords that frequently appear in research on Islamic family law. The first range, highlighted in solid yellow, features 16 keywords, including change, community, concept, conflict, couple, custom, dispute, factor, hadith, implementation, Muslim, Muslims, person, religion, solution, and tradition. These terms encapsulate the essential themes and ongoing discussions in the realm of Islamic family law.

The second range, depicted in standard yellow, contains keywords like child, country, extent, family law, government, human rights, Islamic family law, parent, policy, protection, provision, regulation, role, and state. This range reflects the broader societal context and legal frameworks that impact family law practices across the region. The third range, shown in light yellow, includes keywords such as condition, household, obligation, responsibility, and wife, which highlight the dynamics within family structures and the roles individuals assume. Finally, the fourth range, illustrated in green, features keywords like court, decision, divorce, judge, justice, and KHI (*Kompilasi Hukum Islam*), focusing on the judicial aspects of Islamic family law.

Overall, this visualization effectively captures the diverse themes and priorities that have emerged in Islamic family law research over the past two decades, providing valuable insights into the evolving landscape of this important field.

### Subject and Focus of Family Law Research Publications

To delve into the subjects and focal points of family law research publications, this study takes a closer look at the ten most relevant and frequently cited articles from the past two decades in Southeast Asia. This thematic evaluation aims to highlight the key discussions and trends in the field, as detailed in Table 2.

**Table 2.** 10 Most relevant subject areas.

No	Subject Areas	Total
1	Social Sciences	187
2	Arts and Humanities	99
3	Economics, Econometrics and Finance	17
4	Psychology	7
5	Business, Management and Accounting	6
6	Environmental Science	5
7	Medicine	3
8	Engineering	1
9	Nursing	1
10	Pharmacology, Toxicology and Pharmaceutics	1

Source: Adopted from Scopus database in 2024.

Table 2 highlights the top ten subject areas that have focused on Islamic family law research over the past two decades, with a total of 327 areas identified through article searches in the Scopus database. Among these, the subject areas of Pharmacology, Toxicology, and Pharmaceutics, Nursing, and Engineering each have one publication. Medicine has three, while Environmental Science contributes five publications. Business, Management, and Accounting has six, and Psychology features seven publications. Arts and Humanities stands out with 99 publications, and Social Sciences takes the lead with 187 publications. This reveals some important trends: Social Sciences is the dominant area in Islamic family law studies, showcasing a robust 187 publications; Arts and Humanities also plays a significant role with 99 publications; in contrast, Engineering, Nursing, and Pharmacology, Toxicology, and Pharmaceutics are the least represented fields, each with just one publication.

### Discussion

The findings of this research reveal a remarkable growth in studies on Islamic family law in Southeast Asia between 2004 and 2024. Out of the 203 documents identified through the Scopus database, countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore have emerged as leaders in this field, consistently contributing to publications on Islamic family law during this two-decade span. Notably, institutions such as Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry, International Islamic University Malaysia, and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia stand out for their significant contributions, particularly through well-respected journals like *Samarah*, *Ahkam Jurnal Ilmu Syariah*, and *Al-*

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Ihkam Jurnal Hukum dan Pranata Sosial. This upward trend in research is not just a statistic; it carries important implications for addressing family-related issues in the future. Furthermore, the study highlights a dynamic interplay among key players in the field, showing how the topics and focus of family law publications in Southeast Asia have evolved in response to social changes and local needs over the past two decades.

The productivity of research on Islamic family law in Southeast Asia over the past two decades, from 2004 to 2024, reveals interesting patterns through three types of visualizations. First, the network visualization showcases 16 interconnected keywords that highlight the key themes within Islamic family law studies, demonstrating how closely related these topics are (Figure 5). Most of these keywords are found in the social sciences, indicating a broad interdisciplinary approach to this area of research (Table 2).

Second, the overlay visualization points out ten central keywords that frequently appear in publications on Islamic family law (Figure 6). This highlights contemporary trends, particularly within the arts and humanities subject area (Table 2). Lastly, the density visualization groups research themes around 16 dominant keywords, illustrating the consistent relevance of these topics in Islamic family law studies (Figure 7). The themes are often explored within the social sciences and arts and humanities, which significantly contributes to the substantial number of publications in this field.

Islamic family law is a set of rules based on Sharia that governs important aspects of family life, such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance rights (Maimun et al., 2024). Its primary aim is to create fairness and balance within family relationships, safeguarding the rights and responsibilities of each member and ensuring that everyone fulfills their duties according to Islamic teachings (Abdillah et al., 2023). The foundation of these laws draws from the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the reasoning of scholars, all while being tailored to fit the unique social and cultural contexts of local communities (Sabreen, 2020).

These regulations cover essential matters like the minimum age for marriage, divorce processes, and how to divide inheritance, all designed to promote family harmony and stability (Ainiyah and Muslih, 2020; Muharrani et al., 2024; Panigoro, 2023). In this way, Islamic family law serves as an important tool for addressing issues related to marriage, divorce, and inheritance, offering a flexible framework that can adapt to the changing social dynamics found in various Muslim communities.

Research on Islamic family law in Southeast Asia over the last two decades, from 2004 to 2024, reveals a notable complexity within the field. However, it also highlights significant gaps in applying these concepts and practical interventions. According to Zaki (2018), many studies tend to concentrate on the dynamics of legal application, often overlooking comprehensive solutions to the challenges faced in this area. This calls for a shift in research focus to better address the emerging issues in family law. Additionally, Fernando et al. (2024) stress the importance of enhancing the measurement and analysis of family-related problems in both theoretical and practical contexts. This approach will allow research on family law issues in Southeast Asia to progress in a more empirical, methodological, and theoretical

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manner. Ultimately, it's essential for future studies to move beyond merely normative discussions and to respond more effectively to the ever-changing social dynamics and needs of the community.

As society changes, the challenges related to Islamic family law have also become more complex and varied. Miftahudin (2023) emphasizes that research on family issues, particularly within the realm of Islamic family law, should move in a new direction. This means not just explaining and analyzing the existing problems but also proposing effective models to address family issues through a legal framework that is both responsive and accommodating. This study evaluates the trends in Islamic family law research across Southeast Asia from 2004 to 2024, highlighting the need for an applied approach to contemporary challenges in this field. Given the increasing intricacy of family-related issues in the future, it is essential to conduct thorough and systematic evaluations of Islamic family law, which calls for a more comprehensive research agenda. The findings of this study open up new avenues for future research that focuses on practical policy implementations aimed at effectively enhancing the welfare of individuals involved in these legal matters.

### **Conclusion**

This study emphasizes the fluctuations in themes and focus within Islamic family law research publications across Southeast Asia over the last two decades. Countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore have emerged as the most active contributors in this field, particularly in the realms of social sciences and arts and humanities. However, despite the volume of research, the focus and findings have not effectively addressed the pressing family issues at hand, leaving room for various misconceptions, both ideologically and in practice. The insights gained from this exploration serve as a basis for recommending that future studies delve deeper into the factors and implications surrounding these misconceptions in Islamic family law, ultimately aiming to enhance family welfare.

The application of responsive and inclusive Islamic family law has great potential to improve family well-being in the future, especially regarding issues like divorce, marriage, child custody, and inheritance. This study suggests that stakeholders should leverage research findings on Islamic family law as a foundation for reflecting on the actions and policies implemented by authorities to address the core challenges families face. The insights from this research can also help scholars pinpoint and address the gaps present in Islamic family law studies conducted over the last two decades in Southeast Asia, focusing on empirical, methodological, and theoretical aspects. By taking a more holistic approach, we can gain a deeper understanding of both the concepts and practices of Islamic family law, paving the way for more effective solutions to the fundamental issues families encounter. In doing so, Islamic family law can evolve and provide relevant answers to the social challenges that continue to arise.

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