

PROFILING ZAKAT DISTRIBUTION LITERATURES: A BIBLIOMETRIC LENS

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ABSTRACT

Background and Purpose: Zakat aims at alleviating poverty through the equitable dissemination of wealth and the fostering of a prosperous Muslim community. To fulfil zakat divine objectives, zakat distribution issues in the contemporary system must be properly identified and discussed to safeguard the welfare of both zakat recipients and zakat payers. This study focuses on uncovering the publication trend in the zakat distribution field. In addition, this study explores the most influential source titles and publications. Lastly, this study also examines the profiling of author themes in zakat distribution research, its evolution and the co-occurrence of the themes.

Methodology: This study conducted bibliometric analysis using biblioMagika® and VOSViewer. The Scopus database serves as the primary data source. OpenRefine, was used to clean, harmonize, and transform unstructured Scopus data that corrects discrepancies in English, including synonyms, spellings, and plural. The analysis on the publication trend, source title, publication and authors theme was performed using biblioMagika®. VOSviewer software is subsequently employed in the study to identify the co-occurrence and clusters of the themes.

Findings: 136 publications were included in the study after screening, cleaning and harmonization process. It is found that the number of publications and citations fluctuates between the year 2011 and 2025. The highest publications were in the year 2024, while the highest citations were in the year 2020. *Jurnal Pengurusan* is the most influential source title, while “Zakat Institutions in Malaysia: Problems and Issues” is the most cited publication in the study. The analysis using biblioMagika® reveals that “zakat”, “zakat distribution”, “asnaf”, “zakat institutions” and “Malaysia” are the author themes stated in more than 10 publications. “Zakat”, “zakat distribution” and “asnaf” are influential and well-established themes with over two hundred citations. These themes are viewed as mature and ongoing, with most related research published around the year 2018. The network visualisation map depicts that “zakat”, “zakat distribution”, and “asnaf” are closely connected to each other, with “zakat” listed as the core topic in zakat distribution studies. The VOSviewer further clustered the themes into eight clusters, each consisting of between three and seven themes that construct a research structure.

Contributions: The review provides information on the evolution of the authors’ theme in zakat distribution, which provides future insights into zakat distribution issues.

Keywords: Zakat distribution, bibliometric, author themes, temporal and citation impact, cluster visualization.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Zakat is a financial obligation that designates a portion of specific wealth to eligible recipients (Abu Bakar et al., 2014; Al-Qardawi, 2011). Zakat functions as a mandatory charitable system designed to mitigate poverty by facilitating the fair distribution of wealth from the wealthy to the impoverished and needy, thereby promoting a thriving Muslim community (Kholis & Mugiyati, 2021; Maghfirah, 2021; Rusydiana & Al-Farisi, 2016; Zainal et al., 2016).

The disputes among zakat experts concerning the significance of zakat in the modern context necessitate emphasis through comprehensive research (Al-Qardawi, 2011). The core focus of current zakat research encompasses zakat management, poverty, collection, distribution (Johari et al., 2015; Rusydiana & Al-Farisi, 2016), and institutions (Rusydiana & Al-Farisi, 2016). Several countries face difficulties in optimizing zakat funds because of ineffective zakat policies and management systems, as well as varying schools of thought, which have a detrimental impact on both zakat collection and distribution (Bashir & Haji Ali, 2012; Hidayatullah & Priantina, 2018; Masyita, 2018; Muhammad, 2019; Rosele et al., 2022).

Beneficiaries of zakat argue that the allocation of zakat resources is neither comprehensive nor fair, while zakat payers express their doubts about the effectiveness of zakat organizations in administering these funds (Hidayatullah & Priantina, 2018; Masyita, 2018; Muhammad, 2019; Owoyemi, 2020; Rosele et al., 2022). Zakat institutions have difficulties, especially when beneficiaries become excessively dependent on zakat funds for their sustainability (Tuan Mahmood et al., 2021).

This study focuses on uncovering the publication trend in the zakat distribution field. In addition, this study explores the most influential source titles and publications. Lastly, this study also examines the profiling of author themes in zakat distribution research, its evolution and the co-occurrence of the themes.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Zakat Distribution

The distribution of zakat requires thorough and thoughtful planning, as it plays a crucial role in improving the living standards and well-being of the needy and impoverished (Osmera et al., 2021). The Quran outlines eight specific groups who are entitled to receive zakat, ensuring fairness and purpose in its allocation. These categories are mentioned explicitly in Surah Al-Tawbah, verse 60. They include: *al-fuqara'* (those in extreme poverty), *al-masakin* (those in need), *'amilin* (individuals assigned to collect zakat), *muallaf al-qulub* (new converts to Islam), *ar-riqab* (people in slavery), *al-gharimin* (those in debt), *fi sabilillah* (those striving in Allah's cause), and *ibn al-sabil* (travelers in need). This Quranic directive emphasizes that zakat is meant to support these eight categories, thereby alleviating financial difficulties and enhancing their quality of life.

﴿ إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَاتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْعَامِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا وَالْمُؤَلَّفَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَالْغُرْمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَأَبْنِ
﴿ السَّبِيلِ قَرِيبَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ ۖ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴾

Which means, “Zakat expenditures are only for the poor and for the needy and for those employed to collect [zakat] and for bringing hearts together [for Islam] and for freeing captives [or slaves] and for those in debt and for the cause of Allah and for the [stranded] traveller - an obligation [imposed] by Allah. And Allah is Knowing and Wise” (al-Quran. Al-Tawbah: 60). According to Ibn Kathir’s interpretation of *Surah Al-Tawbah*, verse 60, priority in the distribution of zakat should be given to the destitute (*al-fuqara*) and the poor (*al-masakin*), as their urgent needs and dependence on assistance make them more deserving than other eligible groups. Ibn Kathir (1998) emphasizes that zakat resources should first be directed toward those in the most critical financial situations before being distributed to the remaining categories of recipients.

2.2 Bibliometric Studies on Zakat Distribution

In delineating the research landscape related to zakat, prior research utilizing Bibliometric analysis is an instrument to evaluate biographic data on zakat publication. Bibliometric analysis is a rigorous process that decodes and maps large amounts of unstructured data by examining a variety of research constituents (Donthu et al., 2021). To date, prior studies have predominantly neglected bibliometric evaluations of zakat distribution research. The preliminary investigation utilizing the search string allintitle: bibliometric zakat distribution yielded no results in the Google Scholar database. The terms disbursement, circulation, and division, when used synonymously with distribution, also yield no corresponding documentation.

This study has precisely delineated its analytical parameters and identified 41 bibliometric studies related to the term zakat/zakah in the Google Scholar database (e.g., Alshater et al., 2021; Apriliyah & Fianto, 2022; Wahyudi et al., 2022, to name a few), with four studies specifically addressing zakat management (Ahmad et al., 2023; Sawandi & Aziz, 2021; Warizal et al., 2023). Conversely, the Scopus database has only 27 publications with titles, abstracts, or keywords that include the terms bibliometric and zakat or zakah. Table 1 presents a summary of a few prior bibliometric analysis research using the search domain of zakat and zakah.

Table 1: Summary of previous bibliometric analysis studies

Author	Domain/Search Strategy	Data Source	Time frame	Total publications examined
Alshater et al. (2021)	“Zakat” and “Zakah”	Scopus database	1969 to 2020	224
Sawandi & Aziz (2021)	zakat management “or” zakat and management and (zakat distribute* or zakat collect*	Science Direct	1991 to 2020	470
Wahyudi et al. (2022)	“zakat” or “zakah”	Scopus database	1969 to 2021	405
Apriliyah & Fianto (2022)	"Zakat" or "Zakah" or "Islamic tax"	Q1, Q2, and Q3 journal in Scopus database	2009 to 2020	87
Warizal et al. (2023)	“Productive zakat”, “science” “technology”	Scopus database	2015 to 2022	338
Ahmad et al. (2023)	“zakat” and “management”	Scopus database	2004 to 2023	226
Khalifah et al. (2024)	“zakah”	Scopus database	1964 to 2021	632
Baehaqi et al. (2025)	(“accountabilit*”) and (“zakāt” or “zakāh” or “zakat” or “zakah”) or "Islamic charity OR Muslim charity or Muslim NGO"	Scopus and WoS databases	2014 to 2023	24

3.0 RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Search Strategy and Data Cleaning

The Scopus database serves as the primary data source. This database has been employed in numerous previous studies due to its advanced research capabilities and the presence of a vast number of multidisciplinary publications from reputable publications (Alshater et al., 2021).

The initial search query (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("zakat distribut*" OR "zakah distribut*" OR "ZAKAT DISBURS*" OR "ZAKAH DISBURS*" OR "ZAKAT CIRCULA*" OR "ZAKAH CIRCULA*" OR "ZAKAT DIVIS*" OR "ZAKAH DIVIS*")) yielded a total of 140 publications, covering from 1993 to 2025 (as of June 22, 2025). The substitution of the term distribution, encompassing disbursement, circulation, and division, has increased the volume of publications. Synonymous terms obtained from a thesaurus are incorporated into the search string until no further matching publications are identified. Scopus database contains only one publication from 1993, while there are no publications on zakat distribution from 1994 to 2010. Thus, with 139 publications altogether, the analysis focuses on those published between 2011

and 2025. The screening and cleaning process was executed, resulting in the removal of three publications due to their irrelevance to the topic of discussion (Figure 1).

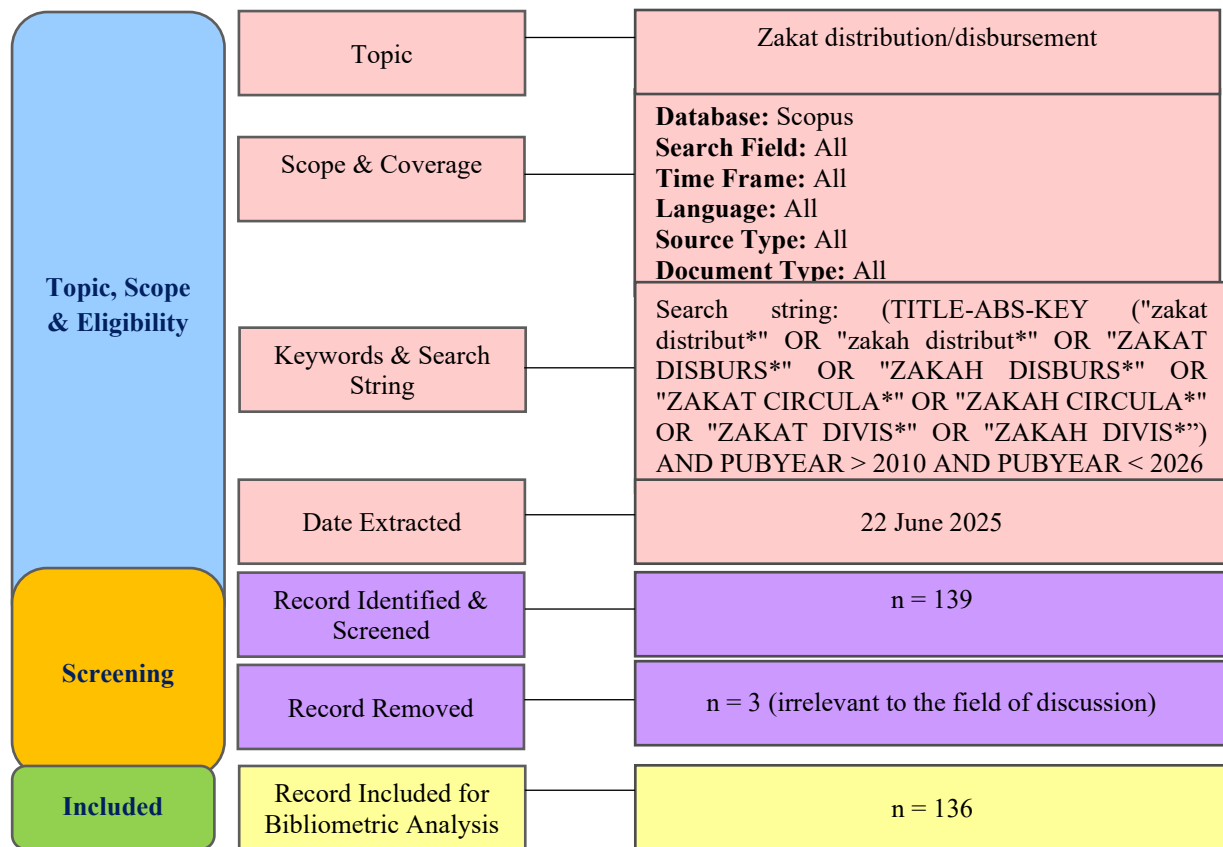


Figure 1: Flow diagram of the search strategy
 Source: Zakaria et al. (2021), Moher et al. (2009)

The data were subsequently harmonised utilizing OpenRefine, an application that enables the cleansing, harmonisation, and transformation of unstructured data, correcting discrepancies in English, including synonyms, spellings, and plurals (Ahmi, 2024). The thematic elements from the truncated Scopus list were thoroughly filtered to remove inconsistencies and residual errors.

3.2 Data Analysis

All 136 publications that are obtained after the cleansing and harmonization process are used for the data analysis. The analysis of the publication profile and authors theme were performed using biblioMagika®. This research instrument is a sophisticated Excel spreadsheet that is specifically designed for bibliometric analysis, with an emphasis on the productivity and impact of publications (Ahmi, 2024). The study concentrated on uncovering the publication trend in zakat distribution through analysis on the number of publications and citations within the time frame. In addition, the investigation on the most influential source titles and publications is conducted by analyzing the number of citations. Subsequently, the study examines the profiling of author themes in zakat distribution research, its evolution, and the co-occurrence of the themes by evaluating the number of documents and citations for the authors' themes over the average publication years. Lastly, the VOSviewer software is subsequently employed in the study to identify the co-occurrence and clusters of the themes.

4.0 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Data Descriptions

Over 15 years, 451 authors contributed to 136 publications, resulting in an average of 3.32 authors per publication. Seventy-point five eight percent of the publications have been cited, revealing that 96 publications draw the attention of scholars. Furthermore, 839 citations were produced over this period, averaging 8.74 citations per cited publication and 59.93 citations annually. The h-index of 15 and the g-index of 23 indicate that these publications are impactful. The citation sum within h-Core indicates that the h-indexed publications have been cited 738 times (Table 2). This counts for almost 88% of the total citations, indicating that zakat distribution is an ongoing scholarly discussion with a stable citation pathway. These indices show that these publications are highly influential.

Table 2: Data descriptions

Main Information	Data
Publication Years	2011 - 2025
Total Publications	136
Citable Year	15
Number of Contributing Authors	451
Number of Cited Papers	96
Total Citations	839
Citation per Paper	6.17
Citation per Cited Paper	8.74
Citation per Year	59.93
Citation per Author	1.86
Author per Paper	3.32
Citation sum within h-Core	738
<i>h</i> -index	15
<i>g</i> -index	23
<i>m</i> -index	1.000

Source: Generated by the author(s) using biblioMagika® (Ahmi, 2024)

There are 121 publications in English, 12 in Malay, two in Arabic, and two in Indonesian. One publication was written using dual language. A total of 104 publications about zakat distribution are predominantly in the form of articles. Subsequently, the next most significant publications consist of conference papers (16 publications) and book chapters (11 publications), while only five publications are in the form of reviews (Table 3).

These publications have been disseminated in various types of publishing. One hundred and eight publications are of journal papers, whilst 13 publications are conference proceedings. A journal is a publication that undergoes a series of evaluations and is designated an ISSN. Conversely, conference proceedings encompass detailed reports from conferences, meetings, symposiums, seminars, and workshops. Both categories of publications constitute the primary sources incorporated in the database. Other source groups, including books (entire volumes or monographs), book series (serial publications with a collective title), and commercial journals (periodicals resembling magazines), each constitute less than ten percent of the total (Table 3).

Table 3: Language, source types and document types

Language	Total Publications	Source Types	Total Publications	Document Types	Total Publications
English	121	Journal	108	Article	104
		Conference		Conference	16
Malay	12	Proceeding	13	Paper	
Arabic	2	Book	7	Book Chapter	11
Indonesian	2	Book Series	6	Review	5
		Trade Journal	2		

Source: Generated by the author(s) using biblioMagika® (Ahmi, 2024)

4.2 Publication Trend

The abundance of publications and citations over 15 years is depicted in Figure 2. A rise in the quantity of publications is observed between 2017 and 2021. Even though the quantity of publications decreased in 2022, it multiplied in the subsequent year. In 2024, the total number of publications increased, surpassing 25, the highest number recorded in a single year. Since the data from the Scopus database is only as of June 22, 2025, there has been progress in the number of publications for the year 2025.

In contrast, though the number of publications is low between the years 2011 and 2016, the publications are considered impactful publications, as the citations are relatively high in those years. The citations of the publications attained their peak in 2021, suggesting that the publications published that year are influential and of interest to scholars. The figure suggests that the number of citations increased from 2019 to 2021, followed by a substantial decrease in 2022. The pattern observed in publication numbers was also reflected in the doubling of the number of citations in 2023. However, the number of citations in the years 2024 and 2025 decreases, which might be due to the time lag of citation accumulation.

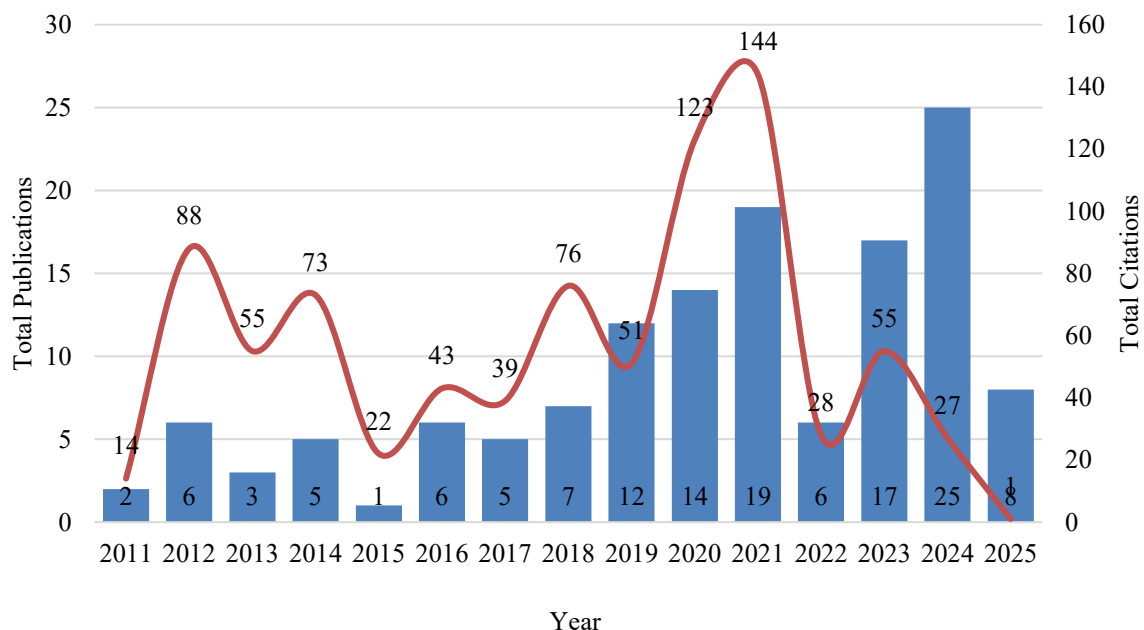


Figure 2: Number of publications and citations over years

The trends signify that there is no alignment between research productivity (number of publications) and scholarly impact (number of citations). Although the number of publications is high in certain years, the average number of citations per publication might be considerably

low. For example, for the year 2021 (with the highest number of citations), the average citation per publication per year is just 7.58, as compared to the year 2015 (lowest number of publications), with an average of 22 citations per publication (Figure 2). This finding shows that the growing interest in zakat distribution might not influence the scholarly impact in the field.

4.3 Most Influential Source Title and Publication

Table 4 lists the most influential source title based on its total citation. *Jurnal Pengurusan* is the prominent journal with the highest citations. Despite having a smaller number of publications than *Jurnal Ekonomi Malaysia* and *Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research*, the publication is deemed to be more impactful in the domain of zakat distribution. Notably, both *Jurnal Pengurusan* and *Jurnal Ekonomi Malaysia* are published by Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. The *International Journal of Civil Engineering and Technology*, with 71 citations, and *Global Journal Al-Thaqafah*, with 70 citations, ranked second and third, respectively, on the list. Meanwhile, the subsequent most influential sources (*Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research*, *International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management* and *Journal of Islamic Marketing*) are all published by Emerald Publishing.

In terms of citations per cited publication, *Global Journal Al-Thaqafah* scored the highest citations over two publications. This is followed by *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, *International Journal of Civil Engineering and Technology*, *COVID-19 and Islamic Social Finance*, *Asian Social Work and Policy Review* and *International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management* with more than 20 citations per cited publications. This result shows that these publications are highly influential in academic discussion. *Jurnal Pengurusan*, *Global Journal Al-Thaqafah*, *Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research*, *International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management*, *Jurnal Ekonomi Malaysia* and *International Journal of Economics and Financial Issues* were found to actively publish documents on zakat (Alshater et al., 2021; Sawandi & Aziz, 2021; Wahyudi et al., 2022).

The h-index of four signifies that four publications in both *Jurnal Pengurusan* and *Jurnal Ekonomi Malaysia* are cited at least four times. In general, there is no significant difference in the h-index of the listed source title, which ranged from 1 to 4. On the other hand, the g-index of six by *Jurnal Ekonomi Malaysia* signifies that six publications in the journal cumulatively have been cited at least 36 times.

Table 4: 20 Most influential source titles by total citations

Source Title	TP	NCP	TC	C/P	C/CP	h	g
Jurnal Pengurusan	4	4	77	19.25	19.25	4	4
International Journal of Civil Engineering and Technology	3	3	71	23.67	23.67	3	3
Global Journal Al-Thaqafah	2	2	70	35.00	35.00	2	2
Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research	5	5	67	13.40	13.40	3	5
International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management	3	3	60	20.00	20.00	3	3
Journal of Islamic Marketing	2	2	58	29.00	29.00	2	2
Asian Social Science	3	3	48	16.00	16.00	3	3
Jurnal Ekonomi Malaysia	6	4	46	7.67	11.50	4	6
International Journal of Economics and Financial Issues	2	2	34	17.00	17.00	2	2
COVID-19 and Islamic Social Finance	1	1	23	23.00	23.00	1	1
Asian Social Work and Policy Review	2	1	22	11.00	22.00	1	2
Middle East Journal of Scientific Research	2	2	22	11.00	11.00	2	2
Journal of Islamic Monetary Economics and Finance	1	1	12	12.00	12.00	1	1
Humanities and Social Sciences Reviews	2	2	12	6.00	6.00	2	2
Conference Proceedings - 6th International Conference on Information Technology and Multimedia at UNITEN: Cultivating Creativity and Enabling Technology Through the Internet of Things, ICIMU 2014	1	1	11	11.00	11.00	1	1
Journal of Critical Reviews	3	3	11	3.67	3.67	2	3
Samarah	3	3	10	3.33	3.33	2	3
Journal of Governance and Regulation	1	1	10	10.00	10.00	1	1
Jurnal Teknologi (Sciences and Engineering)	1	1	9	9.00	9.00	1	1
International Journal of Professional Business Review	1	1	8	8.00	8.00	1	1

Note: TP=total number of publications; NCP=number of cited publications; TC=total citations; C/P=average citations per publication; C/CP=average citations per cited publication; h=h-index; g=g-index.

Source: Generated by the author(s) using biblioMagika® (Ahmi, 2024)

On the other hand, Table 5 lists the most influential publication title based on its total citations. These publications were published within the year 2011 and 2025. “Zakat institution in Malaysia: Problems and issues” written by Ab Rahman et al. (2012) is the most influential publication in zakat distribution, with a total of 61 citations. This is followed by “Distribution management of zakat fund: Recommended proposal for *asnaf riqab* in Malaysia” by Rosli et al. (2018) with 51 citations. In fact, publication entitled “Role of zakat to eradicate poverty in Malaysia” and “Effects of human needs based on the integration of needs as stipulated in *maqasid syariah* and Maslow’s hierarchy of needs on zakah distribution efficiency of *asnaf* assistance business program” were both published in *Jurnal Pengurusan*, the most influential source title as mentioned beforehand.

Table 5: Twenty most influential publications

Author(s)	Title	Source Title	Total Citations
Ab Rahman et al. (2012)	Zakat institution in Malaysia: Problems and issues	Global Journal Al-Thaqafah	61
Rosli et al. (2018)	Distribution management of zakat fund: Recommended proposal for <i>asnafriqab</i> in Malaysia	International Journal of Civil Engineering and Technology	51
Wahyuni et al. (2021)	The effects of good governance and fraud prevention on performance of the zakat institutions in Indonesia: A Shari'ah forensic accounting perspective	International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management	40
Hudaefi & Beik (2021)	Digital zakah campaign in time of Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia: a netnographic study	Journal of Islamic Marketing	38
Saad et al. (2020)	Business zakat compliance behavioral intention in a developing country	Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research	37
Embong et al. (2013)	Role of zakat to eradicate poverty in Malaysia	<i>Jurnal Pengurusan</i>	34
Zainal et al. (2016)	Reputation, satisfaction of zakat distribution, and service quality as determinant of stakeholder trust in zakat institutions	International Journal of Economics and Financial Issues	24
Rabbani et al. (2021)	Artificial intelligence and natural language processing (NLP) based FinTech model of Zakat for poverty alleviation and sustainable development for Muslims in India	COVID-19 and Islamic Social Finance	23
Aziz et al. (2020)	The nexus between zakat and poverty reduction, is the effective utilization of zakat necessary for achieving SDGs: A multidimensional poverty index approach	Asian Social Work and Policy Review	22
Mohd Ali et al. (2015)	The effectiveness of Zakat in reducing poverty incident: An analysis in Kelantan, Malaysia	Asian Social Science	22
Zakaria & Malek (2014)	Effects of human needs based on the integration of needs as stipulated in <i>maqasid syariah</i> and Maslow's hierarchy of needs on zakah distribution efficiency of <i>asnaf</i> assistance business program	<i>Jurnal Pengurusan</i>	22
Mutamimah et al. (2021)	ICT-based collaborative framework for improving the performance of zakat management organisations in Indonesia	Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research	21
Ahmad & Yahaya (2023)	Islamic social financing and efficient zakat distribution: impact of fintech adoption among the <i>asnaf</i> in Malaysia	Journal of Islamic Marketing	20
Wahid et al. (2017)	Financial management and zakat distribution efficiency performance:	<i>Jurnal Ekonomi Malaysia</i>	20

Zakaria (2014)	A comparison among state Islamic religious council in Malaysia The influence of human needs in the perspective of <i>Maqasid al-Syari'ah</i> on Zakat distribution effectiveness	Asian Social Science	19
Abd Rahman & Ahmad (2011)	Entrepreneurship development strategy for poor and needy recipients on capital assistance through zakat distribution	<i>Jurnal Pengurusan</i>	14
Wan Hassan et al. (2017)	The management of zakat distribution in the practice of fatwa in Terengganu, Malaysia	International Journal of Civil Engineering and Technology	14
Wahid & Ahmad (2014)	Factors influencing the confidence level of the zakat distribution: Study on the Muslim community in Selangor	<i>Jurnal Ekonomi Malaysia</i>	14
Hudaefi et al. (2020)	Zakat And SDG 6: A Case Study of Baznas, Indonesia	Journal of Islamic Monetary Economics and Finance	12
Johari et al. (2013)	The roles of Islamic social welfare assistant (zakat) for the economic development of new convert	Middle East Journal of Scientific Research	12

4.4 Author Themes

The biblioMagika® analysis indicates that the themes of zakat, zakat distribution, *asnaf*, zakat institutions, and Malaysia are the prevalent author themes in the field. This discovery corresponds with the conclusions reached by Wahyudi et al. (2022), Apriliyah and Fianto (2022), and Supriani et al. (2022). Zakat is the theme that is highly stated by the authors, with a total of 59 publications, facilitating a systematic analysis of the progression of themes and trends in zakat distribution research. This is followed by the theme of zakat distribution (45 publications) and *asnaf* (30 publications). The theme of zakat institutions also plays an important role in zakat distribution. This is proven by a total of 18 publications that discuss the theme zakat institution in zakat distribution publications (Figure 3).

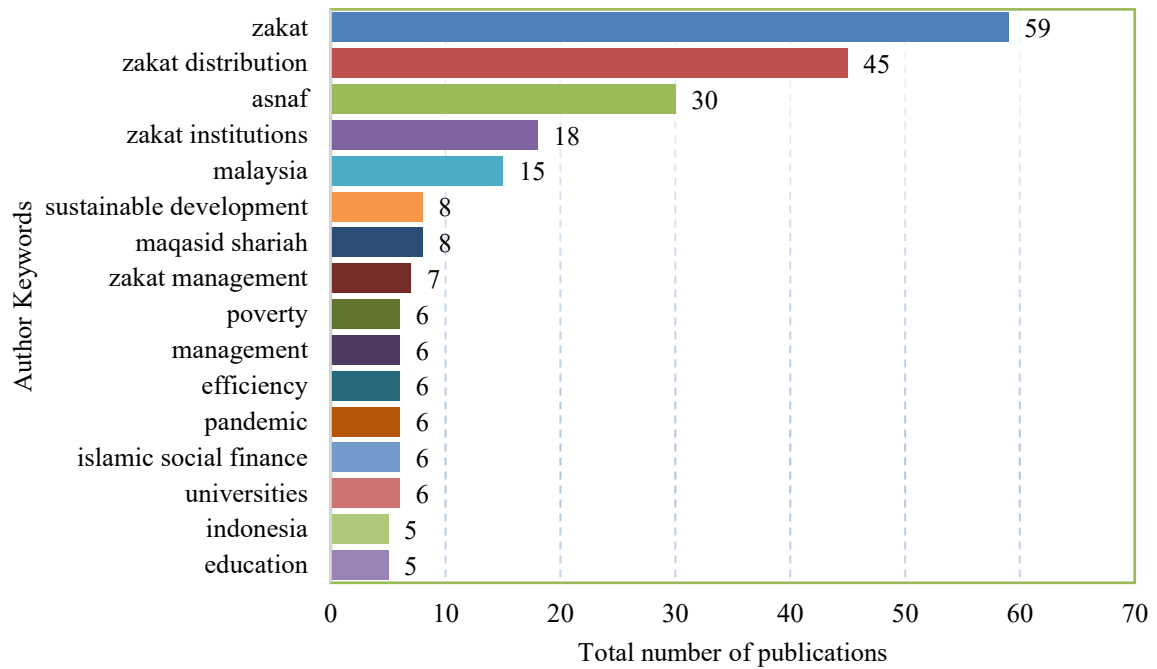


Figure 3: Authors' theme with publication frequency

The theme sustainability development and *maqasid syariah* are two emerging concerns in the zakat distribution field. Both themes are discussed in eight publications, followed by zakat management. The theme poverty, management, efficiency, pandemic, Islamic social finance, universities, Indonesia and education are underrated, with only six publications. There might be potential research to be conducted on the integration of these themes in zakat distribution studies. Notably, the theme Malaysia and Indonesia are often referenced in terms of underscoring their prominence as the foremost nations in worldwide zakat study.

4.5 Evolution of the Keywords

Figure 4 depicts the time horizon and scholarly influence of the author's themes. Zakat and zakat distribution are the most influential and well-established themes with over 300 citations. These themes are viewed as mature and ongoing, with most related research published around the year 2020. Additionally, the theme *asnaf* is being used in 30 publications and received significant citations. The theme is also considered as a mature theme since it is the pioneer theme in the field of study. Moreover, *asnaf*," which refers to zakat recipients, is a crucial component in the distribution of zakat.

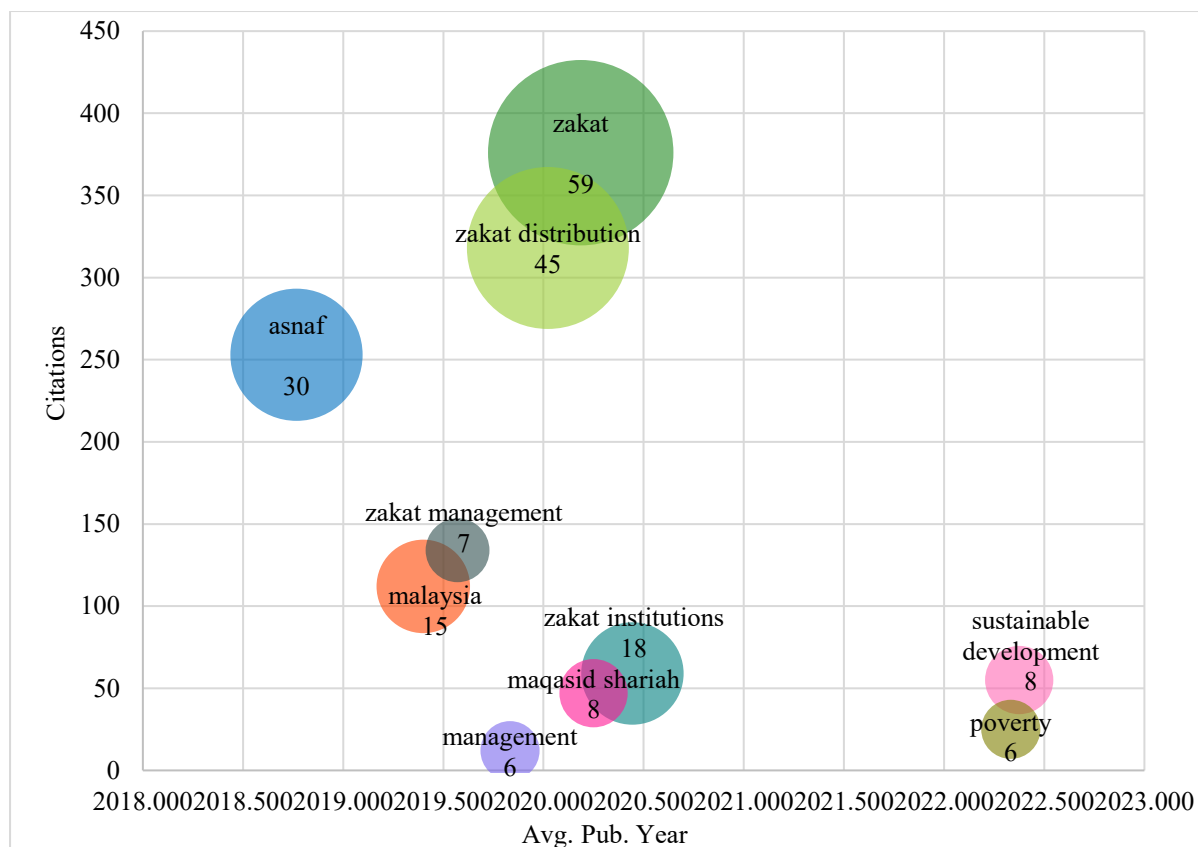


Figure 4: Temporal and citation impact of top 10 most cited author keywords (Min. Freq. = 5, Bubble Size = Publications)

Notably, the theme zakat management, Malaysia, zakat institutions, *maqasid shariah*, and management were first employed in publications between the years 2018 and 2020. These themes are current in zakat distribution studies yet receive minimal scholarly attention, which is represented by the low number of citations. The theme Malaysia appeared in over 10 papers, with more than 100 citations, underscoring its importance in the zakat distribution studies. Sustainable development and poverty are two emerging concerns in the realm of zakat distribution. Despite low citation counts and publication frequencies, these themes suggest that scholars are extending their focus towards broader socio-economic and developmental aims in zakat distribution.

4.6 Cluster Visualization

VOSviewer generates the network visualization map that illustrates the connections between themes in zakat distribution and the author themes as shown in Figure 5. Co-occurrence analysis is crucial in examining potential intersections of themes and providing conceptual structure of zakat distribution (Ahmi, 2025). The study only includes 29 themes with a minimum of three occurrences for further analysis.

The sizes of the nodes correspond to theme frequency, with the larger nodes indicating higher importance and occurrence. The theme zakat emerges as the biggest node on the map, signifying its prominence in the zakat distribution studies. This is followed by the theme zakat distribution and *asnaf*. Meanwhile, the theme zakat institution and Malaysia represent the third important theme in zakat distribution study. *Maqasid shariah*, sustainable development, Islamic social finance, zakat management, universities, poverty and management are relatively of similar importance. Other themes such as zakat funds, inequality, socio-economic and state Islamic religious council show lesser importance in the academic discussion.

Alshater et al. (2021) and Apriliyah and Fianto (2022) found that zakat distribution, zakat management and Indonesia are among the themes commonly used by the scholars under the arm of zakat distribution. Wahyudi et al. (2022) identified the theme zakat distribution as a core theme within the accountability cluster. In the meantime, Warizal et al. (2023) discovered that in their examination of technology-based zakat administration, Malaysia is a theme associated with zakat distribution within the same cluster. Khalifah et al. (2024) stated that between the years 2014 and 2020, zakat institutions, zakat distribution, and zakat management are among the most frequent themes in zakat publications.

The distance between each node indicates the connectivity between each theme. The closer the distance, the higher the connectivity of the themes. The themes zakat and *asnaf* are closely connected, while the theme zakat distribution is closely connected to *asnaf*, Malaysia, pandemic and *maqasid syariah*. It can also be seen that in the discussion of zakat and zakat distribution, one of the important themes that is highly connected to the themes is *asnaf* (Figure 5). As the discussion on zakat distribution primarily focuses on the recipients of zakat, *asnaf* is a compulsory theme in scholarly discussions on zakat distribution.

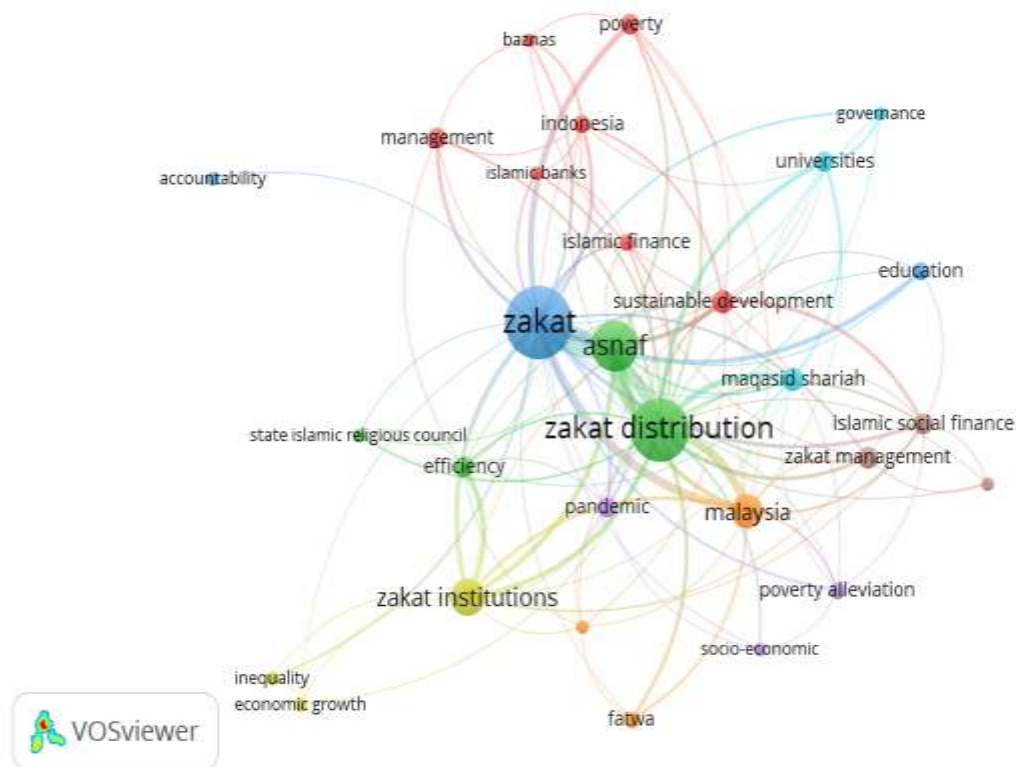


Figure 5: Network visualization map

In addition, the thickness of a link indicates a stronger relationship between themes. The thick link between the theme zakat distribution and *asnaf* followed by the theme zakat and *asnaf* indicates that there is a robust connection between these pairs. It is later followed by zakat and zakat distribution. The link strength as shown in Table 6 indicates the association strength between 29 themes in the analysis. The theme zakat which appears in 59 publications, shows the highest link strength and number of links. This is followed by zakat distribution and *asnaf* with total link strength of 75 and 47, respectively. Interestingly, the number of publications may not have a direct impact on the total link strength (see for example the theme *Baznas* with 3 publications has higher total link strength as compared to the theme accountability).

Table 6: List of author themes

Keywords	Links	Total link strength	Publication
Zakat	28	82	59
Zakat distribution	26	75	45
Asnaf	13	47	30
Zakat institutions	13	27	18
Malaysia	13	33	15
Sustainable development	14	21	8
Maqasid syariah	10	16	8
Zakat management	8	12	7
Islamic social finance	10	16	6
Efficiency	9	13	6
Universities	8	13	6
Management	6	9	6
Poverty	7	13	6
Pandemic	10	13	6
Indonesia	9	13	5
Education	5	8	5
Islamic finance	7	9	4
Poverty alleviation	7	9	4
Fatwa	4	7	4
Accountability	2	3	3
Socio-economic	4	5	3
Inequality	3	4	3
Islamic banks	4	6	3
Economic growth	4	4	3
Baznas	5	7	3
Zakat funds	7	7	3
Governance	4	6	3
Collaboration	4	4	3
State Islamic religious council	4	5	3

Source: Generated by the author(s) using biblioMagika® (Ahmi, 2024)

These themes are further grouped into eight clusters (Table 7). These clusters represent themes that frequently co-occur (which indicate their relatedness) based on distinct algorithm (Ahmi, 2025). The first clusters focus on the roles of Islamic banks, Islamic finance and Baznas in combating poverty while promoting sustainable development in Indonesia. This cluster consists of the theme Baznas, Indonesia, Islamic banks, Islamic finance, management, poverty and sustainable development. Meanwhile the second cluster focuses on the role of the state Islamic religious council in ensuring efficient zakat distribution to *asnaf*. This cluster consists of the theme *asnaf*, efficiency, state Islamic religious council and zakat distribution. The third cluster focuses on accountability and education in zakat, while the fourth cluster focuses on inequality, economic growth and zakat institutions. The third until the eighth cluster consists of only three themes respectively. These clusters provide emerging areas for future research in zakat distribution.

Table 7: Clusters of author themes

Clusters	Themes			
Cluster 1	Baznas	Indonesia	Islamic banks	Islamic finance
	Management	Poverty	Sustainable development	
Cluster 2	Asnaf	Efficiency	State Islamic religious council	Zakat distribution
Cluster 3	Accountability	Education	Zakat	
Cluster 4	Economic growth	Inequality	Zakat institutions	
Cluster 5	Pandemic	Poverty alleviation	Socio-economic	
Cluster 6	Governance	Maqasid syariah	Universities	
Cluster 7	Fatwa	Malaysia	Zakat funds	
Cluster 8	Collaboration	Islamic social finance	Zakat management	

5.0 CONCLUSION

The advancement of technology and improved awareness of zakat obligations have boosted zakat distributions. Although its influence in the current economic landscape remains disputable, effective zakat distribution is anticipated to eradicate poverty and enhance the socioeconomic status of Muslims. Consequently, scholars must thoroughly assess the matters concerning zakat distribution to guarantee that zakat achieves its sacred objective. The rising number of publications in the Scopus database indicates that zakat distribution is attracting scholarly interest. Indeed, numerous debates are derived from influential publications, evident by their substantial citation counts. Furthermore, there is robust support from influential publications including *Jurnal Pengurusan*, *International Journal of Civil Engineering and Technology*, *Global Journal Al-Thaqafah*, *Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research*, and *International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management*, which actively disseminate scholarly discourse on zakat management.

This paper provides research on the landscape regarding zakat distribution, highlighting key themes and research gaps. By leveraging these insights, zakat institutions, policymakers, and scholars can cooperate to enhance the effectiveness of zakat as a social welfare tool, thus fulfilling its sacred purpose of reducing poverty and promoting economic justice. Nonetheless, since this study exclusively utilises the Scopus database as its principal data source, future research could enhance the scope by using additional databases and extending the temporal framework for a more comprehensive examination. In addition, the search string can also include other relevant terms such as zakat allocation and zakat expenditure.

With the advancement of Islamic finance towards Industry 5.0, the adoption of artificial intelligence systems is crucial for enhancing current Fintech and profiling mechanisms for zakat payers and beneficiaries (Rabbani et al., 2022; Syed et al., 2020). Artificial intelligence is expected to improve efficiency and reduce processing time in zakat collecting and distribution. Nonetheless, the incorporation of artificial intelligence in zakat distribution study requires additional investigation.

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