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Islamic Social Finance and the SDGs: Bibliometric Mapping of Scientific Publications (2019–2025)

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Abstract

This study aims to map the development of research on Islamic Social Finance (ISF) and its relationship with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Using a bibliometric approach, this study analyzed 33 scientific articles published between 2019 and 2025 in 23 Scopus-indexed international journals. Bibliometric analysis was conducted using the Bibliometrix package and Biblioshiny interface in R to examine publication trends, authorship patterns, citation performance, and thematic structures within the literature. The results reveal a growing research interest in the field, with an annual publication growth rate of 14.04%. The average number of authors per document is 3.45, while the international collaboration rate reaches 48.48%, indicating substantial global academic engagement. The average age of publications is 1.97 years, suggesting that the topic is relatively recent but rapidly expanding. In addition, the average number of citations per article is 13.36. Keyword analysis identifies the dominance of terms such as Islamic social finance, Islamic finance, sustainable development goals, SDGs, waqf, and zakat. Network visualization further reveals three major thematic clusters: Islamic philanthropy and social development, the Islamic financial system in a global context, and governance and institutional performance. This study contributes to the growing body of literature by providing a comprehensive overview of the intellectual structure and research trends in ISF–SDGs studies. The findings offer valuable insights for researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to identify emerging research directions and strengthen the role of Islamic social finance in supporting sustainable development initiatives.
Keywords: *Islamic Social Finance; Sustainable Development Goals; Sustainability.*

A. INTRODUCTION

The world is currently facing two significant, interrelated, and complex challenges, namely the socio-economic crisis and the environmental crisis (AA Jan et al., 2021; Shahid et al., 2024). Social inequality, structural poverty, and rampant financial exclusion are persistent problems in many developing countries. At the same time, environmental degradation, climate change, and declining quality of life due to the exploitation of natural resources exacerbate the situation (Mahadi et al., 2019; Tlemsani et al., 2025). To address these challenges, the international community has agreed on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) launched by the United Nations (UN) in 2015 (Aziz et al., 2025; Mohd Zain et al., 2024). The SDGs comprise 17 main goals and 169 targets, encompassing economic, social, and environmental aspects, and serve as a global development agenda aimed at ending poverty, reducing inequality, and protecting the Earth by 2030 (A. Jan et al., 2023; Wahyudi & Leny, 2024). In its implementation, the success of the SDGs does not only depend on the capacity of the state and government (Shaikh et al., 2025; Yusuf & Maryam, 2024), but also requires support from the private sector, financial institutions, civil society, and value-based institutions, including Islamic financial institutions (Ayub et al., 2024; Khandakar et al., 2025).

One approach with great potential to support the achievement of the SDGs is Islamic social finance (Al-Daihani et al., 2025; Tok et al., 2022; Yesuf & Aassouli, 2020). This concept refers to a financing system that originates from sharia-based social funds, such as zakat, waqf, sadaqah, qard hasan, and other forms of Islamic philanthropy (Haji-Othman et al., 2021; Iqbal, 2025; Jafar & Zafar, 2025; Majid et al., 2024). The main characteristics of Islamic social finance are its orientation towards distributive justice, concern for vulnerable groups (Abduh, 2019; Khan, 2019), as well as the principle that wealth should not only circulate among certain circles (Amin et al., 2024; Hasnat et al., 2025). In the context of development, these instruments can be utilized strategically to support poverty alleviation programs (SDG 1), increasing access to education (SDG 4), empowering the community economy (SDG 8), and reducing social inequality (SDG 10) (Abdul Khir et al., 2025; Timur et al., 2025). Moreover, Islamic social finance has advantages because it is rooted in Islamic spiritual and ethical values that emphasize harmony between individual interests and collective well-being (Budalamah et al., 2019; A. Jan et al., 2023; Rusydiana et al., 2022).

Despite the growing recognition of the relevance and potential of Islamic social finance in supporting sustainable development, academic research exploring the link between Islamic social finance and the SDGs remains limited systematically. While some previous studies have addressed the effectiveness of instruments such as waqf and zakat in the context of empowering the community's economy, or their contribution to social infrastructure development, the majority of these studies have been partial, descriptive, or normative (Amin et al., 2024; Rusydiana et al., 2022; Zain et al., 2019; Hidayat et al., 2024; Nurhasanah et al., 2023). Studies that specifically map how the relationships between concepts, themes, and research directions on Islamic social finance and the SDGs develop in the scientific literature are still rare. Yet, such mapping is crucial for identifying scientific trends, research gaps, and potential cross-disciplinary integration that could strengthen the role of Islamic social finance in the global development agenda.

Based on this background, this study was conducted with the primary objective of conducting a bibliometric mapping of scientific publications discussing Islamic social finance about the Sustainable Development Goals. The bibliometric approach was chosen because it can provide a quantitative and systematic overview of the development of the literature, such as publication trends, geographic distribution of authors, international collaborations, dominant keywords, and the thematic structure formed within the academic literature network. Through this analysis, the researcher seeks to answer several important questions: to what extent has the topic of Islamic social finance developed within the framework of sustainable development? What are the main themes and keywords that dominate this discourse? How can the relationships between concepts in the literature be grouped into specific clusters?

The primary motivation of this research is to provide a comprehensive, data-driven mapping of the dynamics and structure of academic literature related to this emerging topic. By understanding how research is developing, who the key actors in publications are, and what the dominant and under-explored themes are, opportunities for collaborative research and development of Islamic financial policy can be further expanded. Furthermore, this research is also expected to serve as an essential reference for academics, practitioners, policymakers, and Islamic financial institutions in designing more evidence-based strategies to support the achievement of sustainable development goals. The novelty of this research lies in its systematic, bibliometric-driven approach to exploring the scientific space connecting two important entities: Islamic social finance and the SDGs. Unlike previous studies, which tend to be normative or narrative in nature, this research offers a visualization of keyword networks, an analysis of annual publication trends, and a map of the distribution of country and institutional contributions, which are rarely the primary focus of similar studies. In other words, this research not only contributes to theoretical understanding but also provides a useful analytical tool for interpreting the epistemic dynamics in the field of contemporary Islamic finance studies. This mapping is expected to open new space for the integration of Islamic finance, public policy, social development, and global governance oriented toward justice and sustainability.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Islamic Social Finance

Islamic Social Finance (ISF) is a sharia-based social finance system that aims to achieve social welfare through wealth distribution and redistribution mechanisms grounded in the principles of justice, solidarity, and welfare. The main instruments in Islamic Social Finance include zakat, infaq, alms, waqf, and sharia microfinance, which serve as a means of poverty alleviation, economic empowerment, and improving social welfare. Various studies have shown that zakat and waqf play a strategic role in reducing economic inequality, increasing the income of low-income communities, and supporting the development of the education, health, and productive business sectors. Furthermore, the development of digital technology has driven the transformation of Islamic Social Finance management through digital platforms that increase transparency, accountability, and efficiency in the collection and distribution of Islamic social funds. The integration of Islamic Social Finance instruments with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is also gaining attention for its potential to address socio-economic problems, including poverty, income inequality, and financial inclusion (Al-Daihani et al., 2025). Therefore, Islamic Social Finance functions not only as an instrument of religious philanthropy but also as a mechanism for sustainable economic development oriented towards the welfare of society at large.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a global development agenda agreed upon by the United Nations in 2015 to achieve sustainable development by 2030. The SDGs consist of 17 goals covering various aspects of development, such as eliminating poverty, improving the quality of education, ensuring good health, promoting gender equality, decent work and economic growth, reducing inequality, and protecting the environment (Mohd Zain et al., 2024). The main goal of the SDGs is to balance economic growth, social welfare, and environmental sustainability so that the needs of the current generation can be met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In the context of Islamic Social Finance, instruments such as zakat, infaq, alms and waqf are considered to have a significant contribution in supporting the achievement of various SDGs goals, especially in the aspects of poverty alleviation (No Poverty), elimination of hunger (Zero Hunger), quality education (Quality Education), good health (Good Health and Well-being), and reduction of disparities (Reduced Inequalities) (Aziz et al., 2025). Thus, Islamic Social Finance is an instrument that can support sustainable development in an inclusive and fair manner.

C. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a quantitative bibliometric approach to map the development of scientific research on Islamic Social Finance (ISF) and its relationship to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Bibliometric analysis is widely used to quantitatively evaluate the characteristics and evolution of scientific literature, including publication growth, citation patterns, collaboration networks, and thematic structure within a specific research domain. This approach was chosen because it allows for a systematic and objective assessment of research trends and provides a comprehensive overview of the intellectual landscape of ISF–SDGs studies (Ben Jedidia & Ghroubi, 2024). The data used in this study were obtained from the Scopus database, which was selected for its extensive coverage of high-quality, peer-reviewed international publications and its frequent use in bibliometric research. Data collection was conducted using the following search string: ("Islamic social finance" OR "Islamic finance" OR waqf OR zakat) AND ("SDGs" OR "sustainable development goals" OR "sustainable development"). The search was limited to journal articles published between 2019 and 2025. This period was chosen to capture the latest developments in research linking Islamic Social Finance to the global sustainable development agenda, following the growing international attention to the SDGs. To ensure the dataset's relevance and quality, a structured screening process based on the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework was applied. The screening process consisted of four stages: identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and final inclusion. Publications were included if they met the following criteria: (1) published in a Scopus-indexed journal, (2) written in English, (3) available in full text, and (4) explicitly addressing the relationship between Islamic Social Finance and the SDGs. Conversely, conference proceedings, book chapters, editorials, review notes, duplicate papers, non-English publications, and studies that addressed Islamic finance or sustainable development separately without a clear connection between the two themes were excluded.

The initial search yielded a larger set of publications. After removing duplicate entries and screening titles, abstracts, and keywords, the remaining articles were evaluated against predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. This process resulted in a final dataset of 33 eligible articles published in 23 scholarly journals. While the number of articles appears relatively small, this reflects the topic’s specific nature and the stringent selection criteria applied. This study intentionally focused on publications that explicitly examine the relationship between Islamic Social Finance and the SDGs, rather than on the broader literature on Islamic finance or sustainable development in isolation. Bibliometric analysis was conducted using the Bibliometrix package and the Biblioshiny interface in the R programming environment. These tools were used to process bibliographic data and generate descriptive and network-based visualizations. Several bibliometric indicators were analyzed, including annual scholarly output, annual publication growth rate, average number of authors per document, collaboration index, international collaboration rate, document age, citation performance, and keyword frequency. Additionally, network analysis was conducted to examine the field’s conceptual structure using keyword co-occurrence mapping. The findings were visualized using annual publication trend graphs, country-specific scholarly output maps, word clouds, and keyword co-occurrence networks. This visualization facilitates the identification of key research themes, relationships between key concepts, and emerging research directions. Thematic mapping reveals three dominant clusters in the literature: Islamic philanthropy and social development, the role of the Islamic financial system in achieving sustainable development, and governance and institutional performance. Through this approach, this study provides a comprehensive overview of the evolution, intellectual structure, and future research opportunities in the field of Islamic Social Finance and the SDGs.

D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Article Classification

Article classification analysis is the first step in understanding the characteristics of the emerging literature on Islamic social finance and its relationship to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This section presents information on the number and trends in publications, the journal sources used, and the level of scientific collaboration during the analysis period.

Sample General Information

General information regarding the sample articles analyzed in this study is presented as follows:

Figure 1. Main Information
Source: R-Packages (2025)

Figure 1 presents a comprehensive bibliometric overview of publications on Islamic Social Finance (ISF) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) published between 2019 and 2025. During this period, 33 scientific documents were identified and published across 23 academic sources, indicating that research on the ISF–SDGs nexus has attracted attention from a diverse range of journals in Islamic finance, sustainability, economics, and social development. The annual growth rate of publications reached 14.04%, indicating a positive, consistent increase in scholarly interest in this research area. This growth reflects the growing recognition of Islamic Social Finance as a potential mechanism to support sustainable development initiatives and address socio-economic challenges. The dataset involved 103 authors, demonstrating a broad research community contributing to this field. However, only three authors produced single-authored publications, while the majority of studies were conducted collaboratively. This finding indicates that research on Islamic Social Finance and SDGs is highly collaborative and often requires interdisciplinary perspectives involving finance, economics, social policy, and development studies. The average number of authors per document was 3.45, further confirming the prevalence of teamwork and knowledge sharing among researchers. International collaboration was also substantial, reaching 48.48% of all publications. This suggests that nearly half of the studies were co-authored by researchers from different countries, highlighting the global relevance of the ISF–SDGs agenda. Such collaboration may facilitate the exchange of diverse perspectives, methodological approaches, and practical experiences across regions, thereby enriching knowledge development in this field.

In terms of research themes, the analysis identified 143 author keywords, indicating considerable diversity in the topics and concepts explored within the literature. The large number of keywords suggests that the field encompasses multiple dimensions, including Islamic philanthropy, zakat, waqf, financial inclusion, poverty alleviation, sustainability, governance, and social welfare. Furthermore, the 33 publications collectively cited 1,760 references, reflecting a strong theoretical foundation and demonstrating that current studies build upon a substantial body of prior knowledge. The average age of the documents was 1.97 years, indicating that the literature is relatively recent and that scholarly attention to the relationship between Islamic Social Finance and SDGs has intensified in recent years. This finding confirms that the topic remains an emerging research area with significant opportunities for further investigation. In addition, the average citation rate of 13.36 citations per document suggests that the publications have achieved a reasonable level of academic visibility and influence. The citation performance indicates that studies in this area are increasingly being recognized and referenced by other researchers, reflecting the growing importance of Islamic Social Finance within discussions on sustainable development and social impact.

Most Relevant

Most Relevant Sources refers to a list of scientific journals with the highest number of publications in the analyzed data corpus. This section reveals the thematic focus of each journal and its involvement in the development of literature on Islamic social finance and its relationship to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The list of most relevant sources is presented below.

Table 1. Most Relevant Sources

Sources	Articles
International Journal of Ethics And Systems	5
Al-Shajarah	3
Journal of Islamic Accounting And Business Research	3
International Journal of Islamic And Middle Eastern Finance And Management	2
Journal of Cleaner Production	2
Al-Ihkam: Journal of Law and Social Institutions	1
Arab Gulf Journal of Scientific Research	1
Asian Social Work And Policy Review	1
Estudios De Economia Aplicada	1
Heliyon	1
Information Discovery and Delivery	1
International Journal of Sustainable Development and Planning	1
Journal of Chinese Economic and Business Studies	1
Journal of Ecohumanism	1
Journal of King Abdulaziz University, Islamic Economics	1
Malaysian Journal of Sharia and Law	1
Manchester Journal of Transnational Islamic Law and Practice	1
Multidisciplinary Reviews	1
Paper Asia	1
Review of Economics and Finance	1
Revista De Gestao Social E Ambiental	1
Singapore Economic Review	1
Sustainability (Switzerland)	1

Source: R-Packages (2025)

Based on the publication source data in Table 1, the articles analyzed in this study were published in various journals relevant to ethics, systems, Islamic finance, accounting, sustainability, and law and social policy. The International Journal of Ethics and Systems had the most publications, namely five articles, followed by Al-Shajarah and the Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research, which published three articles each. Meanwhile, several other journals, such as the International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management and the Journal of Cleaner Production, contributed two articles each. The rest came from various other leading journals, each contributing one article, such as Al-Ihkam: Journal of Law and Social Institutions, International Journal of Sustainable Development and Planning, and Sustainability (Switzerland). This variety of publication sources indicates that the research topic has a broad, multidisciplinary scope, spanning ethics, economics, Islamic law, sustainability, social policy, and the environment. It attracts the attention of researchers worldwide.

Annual Scientific Production

Annual Scientific Production describes the number of scientific publications produced annually in a specific field of study or by a particular author. This analysis aims to observe the development of scientific productivity over time, identify upward or downward trends, and evaluate the consistency of research contributions. Through annual visualizations, readers can easily understand the dynamics of research development in the context under study. In this study, the Annual Scientific Production data are illustrated as follows.

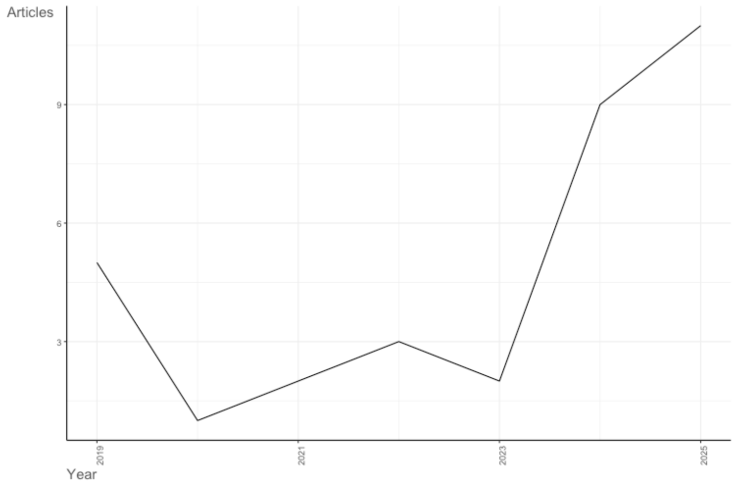

Figure 2.
Annual Scientific Production
Source: R-Packages (2025)

Figure 2 shows a graph of Annual Scientific Production, indicating the trend in the number of scientific publications per year from 2019 to 2025. The graph shows that in 2019, there were approximately 5 articles published, followed by a significant decline in 2020 to only about 1 article. The number of publications gradually increased again in 2021 and 2022, although still at a relatively low level (around 2–3 articles per year). This trend changed drastically in 2024, when scientific production surged significantly to 9 articles. The peak occurred in 2025 with the highest number of publications, namely, more than 10 articles. This pattern indicates increased researcher attention and interest in related research topics, especially in the last two years, as reflected in the rapid growth in the number of publications.

Country Scientific Production

The Country Scientific Production analysis aims to identify contributions to scientific publications by authors' countries of origin. This information provides an overview of the geographic distribution of research activity in Islamic social finance and its relevance to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In addition to reflecting the global distribution of academic interest, this analysis demonstrates each country's level of involvement in the development of the topic under study. Data on scientific contributions by the author's country are presented below.

Figure 3.
Country Scientific Production

Figure 3 shows the distribution of Country Scientific Production, which is the distribution of scientific publication contributions based on the author's country of origin. It can be seen that publication production is not concentrated in one region, but is spread across several countries in North America, Europe, the Middle East, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. Countries marked in light to dark blue indicate varying levels of contribution intensity. The United States appears to be one of the most active contributing countries, along with several countries in Eastern Europe, Turkey, and countries in the Middle East such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Furthermore, India also plays a significant role as a center for publication production in South Asia. In Southeast Asia, Indonesia appears to dominate scientific publication contributions, followed by Malaysia. This diverse distribution of countries demonstrates the existence of cross-country and regional collaboration, demonstrating that the research topics studied have global appeal and are relevant for discussion across various geographic and cultural contexts.

Mapping Results

The mapping results in this study present a thematic visualization depicting the conceptual structure of the literature related to Islamic social finance and its relationship to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The mapping was conducted through keyword analysis to identify the most dominant terms, patterns of interconnectedness between concepts, and thematic clusters formed in scientific publications. This visualization provides a deeper understanding of the primary focus, development direction, and potential for multidisciplinary integration in the analyzed studies. The mapping results are presented as follows.

Word Cloud

A word cloud is a visual representation of a collection of words taken from a specific text or data set, where the size of each word indicates its frequency or level of occurrence. The more frequently a word appears, the larger its size in the word cloud display. This visualization helps readers quickly and intuitively identify key themes, keywords, or dominant topics. With an attractive design, a word cloud not only clarifies information but also enhances the appeal of the data presentation. In this study, this can be illustrated as follows.

Figure 4.
Word Cloud
Source: R-Packages (2025)

Figure 4 is a word cloud visualization that presents a mapping of the most frequently appearing keywords in scholarly studies on Islamic social finance and their relationship to the Sustainable Development Agenda. The size and placement of the words reflect the frequency and significance of each concept in the analyzed data corpus. The term "Islamic social finance" is the most dominant, reflecting that this topic is at the heart of discussions in various academic literature examining the contribution of the Islamic financial system to global social and economic issues. Its close relationship with keywords such as "Islamic finance," "sustainable development goals," and "SDGs" indicates that research in this field does not stand alone but rather exists within a global development framework oriented toward social welfare, poverty reduction, and environmental sustainability. Words such as "waqf" and "zakat" indicate the importance of traditional Islamic social finance instruments, which have significant potential in supporting development goals, particularly in wealth distribution and empowering marginalized communities. Meanwhile, the presence of terms such as "corporate social responsibility," "financial performance," and "governance approach" reflects that approaches to Islamic finance are increasingly adopting the principles of good governance and integrating social values within a modern management framework.

Furthermore, the emergence of concepts such as "*maqasid al-shariah*" and "sustainability" indicates that the discourse on Islamic social finance is not only focused on the technical aspects of finance, but is also heavily influenced by philosophical and normative approaches rooted in sharia principles, particularly in achieving the primary objectives of Islamic law, which include the protection of religion, life, intellect, descendants, and property. Furthermore, geographical terms such as "Malaysia," "Indonesia," and "United Nations" demonstrate that this phenomenon has received widespread attention, both within Muslim-majority countries and at the international policy level. Malaysia and Indonesia, for example, have been pioneers in developing institutional and policy frameworks that support the integration of Islamic finance into national sustainable development agendas. Meanwhile, references to the UN and the SDGs demonstrate that Islamic social finance is increasingly positioned as an alternative, inclusive, and ethical global financial system, capable of bridging spiritual values and the development needs of the modern world. Thus, this word cloud serves not only as a visual tool, but also as a conceptual representation that shows how broad and multidimensional scientific attention is to the strategic role of Islamic social finance in supporting socially, economically, and morally sustainable development in various parts of the world.

Co-occurrence Network

A co-occurrence network is a visualization that depicts the relationships between keywords or terms that frequently appear together in a dataset or literature. This network helps identify thematic relationships, conceptual collaboration patterns, and clusters of related topics. The more regularly two keywords appear together, the stronger the relationship shown in the network. This analysis helps map the structure of knowledge and uncover research directions in the field under study. In this study, the co-occurrence network can be illustrated as follows.

Figure 5.
Co-occurrence Network
Source: R-Packages (2025)

Figure 5 presents a keyword co-occurrence network that illustrates the intellectual structure and thematic relationships within the literature on Islamic Social Finance (ISF) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The network reveals three major clusters, indicating that research in this field has evolved into several interconnected streams rather than a single dominant theme. The presence of multiple clusters demonstrates the multidisciplinary nature of Islamic Social Finance research, integrating perspectives from Islamic philanthropy, financial systems, sustainability studies, governance, and organizational performance. The green cluster is centered around the keywords "Islamic social finance," "sustainable development goal," and "waqf." This cluster highlights the dominant role of Islamic philanthropic instruments in achieving sustainable development objectives. The close relationship between these keywords suggests that researchers increasingly view waqf and other social finance instruments not merely as charitable mechanisms but as strategic development tools capable of addressing long-term socio-economic challenges such as poverty alleviation, education, healthcare provision, and community empowerment. The prominence of this cluster indicates that the literature increasingly positions Islamic Social Finance as a development-oriented framework rather than a purely religious or charitable practice.

The red cluster, which includes keywords such as "Islamic finance," "Islamic microfinance," and "SDGs," reflects the growing integration of Islamic financial systems with global development agendas. This cluster suggests that researchers are expanding the discussion beyond traditional social finance instruments toward broader financial inclusion and sustainable economic development. The strong connections among these terms indicate that Islamic financial institutions are increasingly perceived as important actors in supporting SDGs through ethical financing, inclusive financial services, and poverty reduction initiatives. The emergence of Islamic microfinance within this cluster further emphasizes the role of Islamic finance in empowering underserved communities and enhancing access to financial resources. The blue cluster, represented by keywords such as "financial performance," "corporate social responsibility," and "sustainable development goals," demonstrates an emerging research focus on governance, accountability, and institutional effectiveness. This cluster suggests a shift from discussing Islamic Social Finance solely as a social instrument toward evaluating its organizational and managerial outcomes. Researchers increasingly examine how governance quality, transparency, accountability, and social responsibility practices influence the effectiveness of Islamic financial institutions in delivering sustainable development outcomes. The presence of financial performance within this cluster also indicates that sustainability and social impact are no longer viewed as separate from organizational performance but as complementary dimensions of institutional success.

The network structure further reveals that Islamic Social Finance functions as a central connecting node linking philanthropic instruments, financial systems, and governance mechanisms. This finding suggests that achieving the SDGs through Islamic Social Finance requires an integrated approach that combines social fund mobilization, effective institutional management, and sustainable financing strategies. The strong interconnections among waqf, Islamic microfinance, corporate social responsibility, and financial performance indicate that sustainable development outcomes are not generated by isolated instruments but through the interaction of multiple institutional and financial mechanisms. From a managerial perspective, the network highlights the importance of collaboration among Islamic financial institutions, zakat agencies, waqf boards, and policymakers. Managers should not view zakat, waqf, and other Islamic social finance instruments as independent programs but as components of a broader development ecosystem. Integrating governance practices, performance measurement systems, and sustainability-oriented strategies may enhance the effectiveness of Islamic Social Finance initiatives in contributing to SDG targets. Therefore, the co-occurrence network not only maps existing research themes but also illustrates the evolution of Islamic Social Finance from a philanthropic mechanism to a strategic framework for sustainable and inclusive development.

Thematic Map

Thematic Map analysis is used to evaluate the thematic structure of the analyzed literature based on the density and centrality of each theme. Through this visualization, we can identify the main themes that dominate academic discourse, specific but evolving themes, and emerging themes. Thus, the Thematic Map provides strategic insights into the strength and relevance of each topic in the context of Islamic social finance and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) studies. The thematic mapping is presented below.

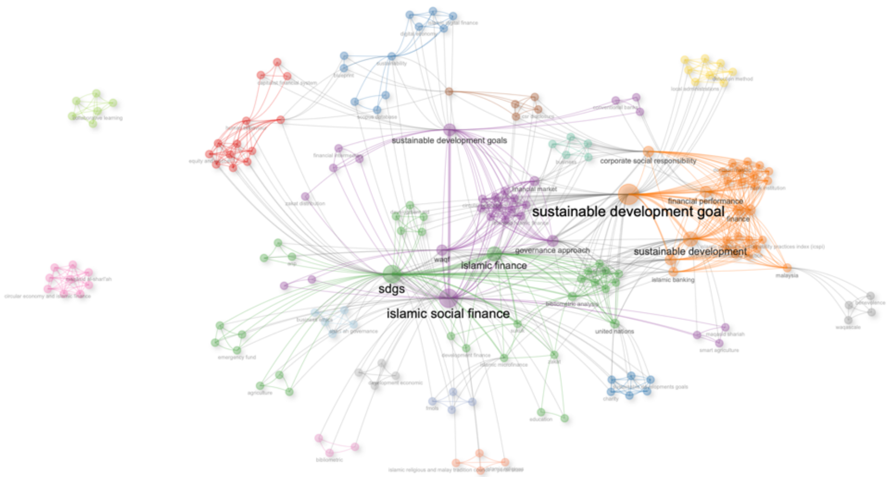

Figure 6.
Thematic Map
Source: R-Packages (2025)

Figure 6 presents a thematic map that illustrates the conceptual structure and maturity of research themes within the Islamic Social Finance (ISF) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) literature. Unlike the co-occurrence network shown in Figure 5, which focuses on the relationships among keywords, the thematic map provides insights into the relative importance and developmental stage of research themes. The map categorizes themes based on two dimensions: centrality, which reflects the degree of interaction of a theme with other themes in the research field, and density, which indicates the internal development and cohesion of a theme. The thematic map reveals that Islamic Social Finance, SDGs, and Islamic finance occupy a central position within the literature, indicating that these themes serve as the intellectual foundation of the research field. Their high centrality suggests that they are strongly connected to various other topics and play a crucial role in shaping the overall direction of research. This finding demonstrates that discussions on Islamic Social Finance are increasingly framed within the broader context of sustainable development rather than being treated solely as a religious or financial issue.

Themes related to sustainable development, corporate social responsibility, and governance appear as well-developed and highly connected topics. Their prominence suggests a growing scholarly interest in examining how Islamic financial institutions incorporate sustainability principles into organizational strategies, accountability mechanisms, and social responsibility initiatives. This trend indicates a shift from traditional discussions of Islamic philanthropy toward broader concerns regarding institutional effectiveness and long-term developmental impact. In contrast, themes associated with waqf, Islamic microfinance, and financial performance represent more specialized areas of study. Although these themes may have lower centrality compared to the core themes, they demonstrate considerable potential for future development. The positioning of these topics suggests that researchers are increasingly interested in evaluating how specific Islamic social finance instruments contribute to poverty reduction, financial inclusion, and socio-economic empowerment. Their growing presence in the literature indicates emerging opportunities for both theoretical advancement and practical implementation.

The thematic structure also highlights the evolution of Islamic Social Finance research from a predominantly charity-based perspective toward a more integrated development framework. Rather than focusing solely on the collection and distribution of social funds, contemporary studies increasingly emphasize governance quality, institutional performance, sustainability outcomes, and measurable social impact. This transformation reflects a broader recognition that Islamic Social Finance can serve as a strategic mechanism for achieving inclusive and sustainable development objectives. From a managerial perspective, the thematic map provides valuable insights into priority areas for future policy and organizational action. Managers of Islamic financial institutions, zakat agencies, and waqf organizations can use these findings to identify emerging themes that warrant greater institutional attention, particularly in governance, impact measurement, financial inclusion, and the integration of sustainable development. The map further suggests that organizations capable of integrating traditional Islamic social finance instruments with modern sustainability practices may be better positioned to contribute effectively to SDG achievement. Therefore, the thematic map not only captures the intellectual structure of the field but also highlights future research directions and strategic opportunities for practitioners and policymakers.

E. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that Islamic Social Finance (ISF) has emerged as a rapidly growing research area and is increasingly recognized as a strategic instrument for supporting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The bibliometric mapping reveals that the field encompasses a wide range of themes, from traditional Islamic social finance instruments such as zakat and waqf to contemporary issues including corporate social responsibility, financial performance, governance, and *maqasid al-shariah*. The diversity of keywords and the interconnection among research themes demonstrate the multidisciplinary nature of the field and highlight the potential of Islamic Social Finance as a mechanism for promoting inclusive and sustainable development. Furthermore, the increasing publication trend and the high level of international collaboration indicate growing global interest in the role of Islamic Social Finance in addressing socio-economic challenges and advancing sustainable development objectives.

Despite these contributions, this study has several limitations. The analysis was based on a relatively small number of publications and covered a limited period from 2019 to 2025, which may not fully capture the long-term evolution of the research field. In addition, bibliometric analysis primarily focuses on quantitative patterns in the literature and does not provide an in-depth evaluation of the content, quality, or contextual implications of individual studies. Future research is therefore encouraged to integrate bibliometric methods with qualitative approaches, such as systematic literature reviews or content analysis, to gain deeper insights into theoretical developments, research gaps, and practical applications. Further studies may also examine the implementation and impact of Islamic Social Finance programs in developing countries, particularly regarding poverty alleviation, financial inclusion, and reducing social inequality. From an academic perspective, the findings provide a comprehensive overview of the intellectual structure, research trends, and emerging themes within the ISF–SDGs literature, thereby offering a foundation for future scholarly investigations. From a practical and managerial perspective, the results suggest that managers of Islamic financial institutions, zakat agencies, and waqf organizations should strengthen governance practices, enhance cross-sector collaboration, and optimize the utilization of Islamic social finance instruments to support SDG-aligned programs. The identified thematic clusters may serve as a strategic reference for designing sustainable initiatives that improve social welfare, promote financial inclusion, and maximize the developmental impact of Islamic Social Finance within local and global communities.

F. REFERENSI

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