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Global Contributions to Mental Health Research in Muslim Communities: A Bibliometric Approach to Islamic Education

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the trends, patterns, and thematic evolution of mental health research within Islamic or Muslim contexts, identifying key contributors, journals, institutions, and global collaborations to address existing knowledge gaps. Grounded in theories of cultural psychology and religious coping, particularly those advanced by Pargament (2001) and Koenig (2001), the study highlights the interplay between religion, spirituality, and mental health outcomes. A quantitative bibliometric analysis was conducted using data collected through a Boolean search on the Scopus database for the period 1976–2024. After filtering, the search produced 111 relevant documents, which were analyzed using R/R-Studio, VOSViewer, and Microsoft Excel to visualize document trends, keyword co-occurrence networks, and collaboration patterns. The findings reveal a steady annual growth rate of 9.75%, with significant contributions from journals such as “Mental Health, Religion and Culture” and “Journal of Muslim Mental Health.” The United States leads in research productivity while emerging nations like Malaysia and Iran show growing contributions. Key research themes include spirituality, psychological stress, stigma, mental disorders, and mental health challenges among vulnerable populations such as refugees. The study provides a roadmap for future research, emphasizing the importance of culturally sensitive and interdisciplinary approaches. This bibliometric analysis offers unique insights into the role of religion and culture in mental health research, addressing a significant gap in the literature and contributing to global scholarly efforts in this field.

Keywords: Mental Health; Bibliometric Analysis; Islam; Muslim Communities; Cultural Psychology

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Introduction

The global awareness of mental health issues has grown significantly over the last few decades, driven by increasing societal, cultural, and clinical challenges. Mental health, especially within specific cultural and religious contexts, remains a critical area of research that requires continuous exploration [1], [2], [3]. The intersection of mental health and Islam or Muslim communities has emerged as a significant topic, considering the influence of religion and spirituality on psychological well-being. Understanding mental health through such lenses contributes to a more holistic approach, addressing not only clinical aspects but also social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions. Existing studies indicate that mental health research has experienced notable growth over the years, reflecting its importance in the face of contemporary challenges such as trauma, stigma, and global migration [4], [5], [6], [7]. Despite this progress, significant gaps persist in understanding mental health within Islamic contexts, particularly regarding research productivity, authorship, institutional contributions, geographical distribution, and thematic focuses such as spirituality, stigma, gender-based challenges, or trauma among Muslim populations [8], [9], [10].

The primary objectives of this study are to analyze trends and patterns in mental health research within Islamic or Muslim contexts, identify key contributors such as authors, institutions, and journals, and explore thematic clusters and emerging topics. These objectives will provide insights into the cultural, religious, and societal dimensions shaping this field of study. The study hypothesizes that mental health research within Islamic contexts has demonstrated substantial growth, thematic evolution, and interdisciplinary collaboration over the years [11], [12], [13]. By addressing gaps in the literature, this research highlights the importance of integrating cultural and spiritual dimensions into mental health frameworks, offering a roadmap for future studies.

To achieve these objectives, this study adopts a quantitative bibliometric analysis approach, leveraging data from the Scopus database. The search process was conducted using Boolean operators with keywords such as “mental health,” “Islam,” and “Muslim,” producing 1,159 documents, which were filtered to 111 relevant articles. Tools such as R/R-Studio, VOSViewer, and Microsoft Excel were utilized for data analysis, visualization, and network mapping [14], [15], [16], [17], [18], [19]. This analysis examines annual publication growth, author collaboration, institutional contributions, and thematic keyword co-occurrence, providing a comprehensive view of the research landscape. The scope of this study spans 51 years (1976–2024) and focuses on mental health research

published in English, emphasizing global contributions and international collaborations.

The significance of this research lies in its ability to highlight trends, key contributors, and gaps within the mental health-Islam framework. By exploring the role of religion, spirituality, and cultural influences on mental well-being, the study provides valuable insights for scholars, clinicians, and policymakers to address mental health challenges in diverse populations. It underscores the importance of cultural sensitivity and interdisciplinary approaches in mental health research, contributing to a deeper understanding of the interplay between psychological health and socio-religious contexts. This bibliometric analysis not only maps past contributions but also identifies emerging themes, offering directions for future research and collaboration in this increasingly relevant field.

Method

This study uses a quantitative method with a comprehensive bibliometric analysis approach, including document and network analysis [20][21]. Data was collected through a Boolean search on the Scopus database from 1976 to 2024, conducted on Jun 19, 2024, at 14:22. R/R-Studio software, VoSviewer, and Microsoft Excel were used for document analysis, citations, and networking [22], [23], [24]. Scopus was chosen because it is a major database providing peer-reviewed publications. Compared to other databases, Scopus has a larger assortment of materials [25], [26], and it is approximately 70% larger compared to WoS [27],[28]. The bibliography searches were limited to the following aspects:

The stages of the study were included in the following aspects: The literature review is conducted to ensure the relevance of the research and identify gaps in bibliometric topics [29], [30].

The study also helped determine the right keywords for the scope of the study, then, a search using the Boolean operator in Scopus (Title-Abs-Key ("Mental Health") And Title-Abs-Key ("Islam") Or Title-Abs-Key ("Muslim")) Produced 1159 Documents. Furthermore, Filtration Uses The Boolean Operator From Scopus To (Exactkeyword, "Psychology") Or Limit-To (Exactkeyword , "Human Experiment") Or Limit-To (Exactkeyword , "Article")) And (Limit-To (Doctype , "Ar")) And (Limit-To (Srctype , "J")) And (Limit-To (Language , "English")) In total it produced 111 documents. The bibliography search results were saved in the EndNote X9 application and saved into a CSV file to be opened in the Excel or Numbers application. The saved files were then checked and the metadata was completed [31].

In the end, bibliometric analysis was used in this study to determine the annual quantity of documents based on journals, authors, affiliations, nations, and fields of study. Scopus analyzer and R/R-Studio were utilized for this

purpose. VOSViewer was used to study the document network visualization, and Microsoft Excel was used to handle the data [32]. This is shown in Figure 1 of the Research Flow:

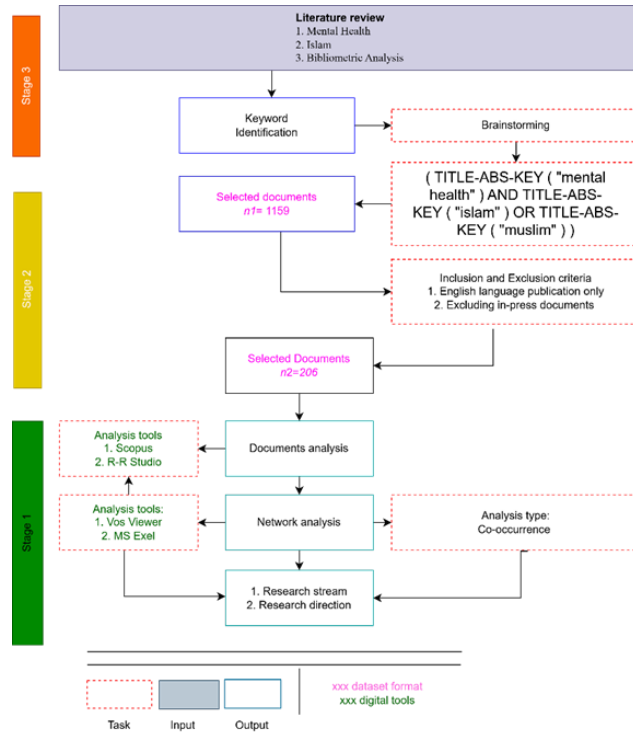


Figure 1. Research Flow

Result and Discussion

Documents analysis

Table 1. Primary data

Main Information About Data	
Timespan	1973:2024
Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	595
Documents	1159
Annual Growth Rate %	9.75
Document Average Age	7.24
Average citations per doc	16.31

References	46602
DOCUMENT CONTENTS	
Keywords Plus (ID)	3668
Author's Keywords (DE)	2421
AUTHORS	
Authors	3490
Authors of single-authored docs	204
AUTHORS COLLABORATION	
Single-authored docs	232
Co-Authors per Doc	3.56
International co-authorships %	25.37
DOCUMENT TYPES	
article	894

The bibliometric dataset spans a significant 51-year period (1973–2024), reflecting steady and substantial growth in research with an annual growth rate of 9.75%. Over this period, 1,159 documents were published across 595 sources, including journals, books, and other scholarly mediums. On average, each document received 16.31 citations, indicating strong academic influence and relevance. The documents also incorporate a robust foundation of scholarly references, with 46,602 citations in total, suggesting a high level of integration within the broader scientific literature. Furthermore, the average document age of 7.24 years highlights the relevance of recent contributions while maintaining a historical perspective.

The content analysis reveals a diverse scope of research topics as represented by 3,668 Keywords Plus and 2,421 Author's Keywords, emphasizing thematic richness in the dataset. The analysis of authorship shows significant collaboration, with 3,490 authors contributing to the publications. Although 232 documents were single-authored, the majority reflect collaboration, as evidenced by an average of 3.56 co-authors per document. Notably, 25.37% of these contributions involved international co-authorship, underscoring a moderate degree of global scientific collaboration.

Regarding publication types, 894 articles dominate the document classification, signifying that journal articles remain the primary vehicle for disseminating knowledge in this field. The balance between single-authored documents (204 authors) and collaborative works points toward a dynamic research culture that values both individual scholarship and teamwork. Overall, the dataset reveals a thriving, collaborative, and influential research domain that has experienced consistent growth and international connectivity over the decades.

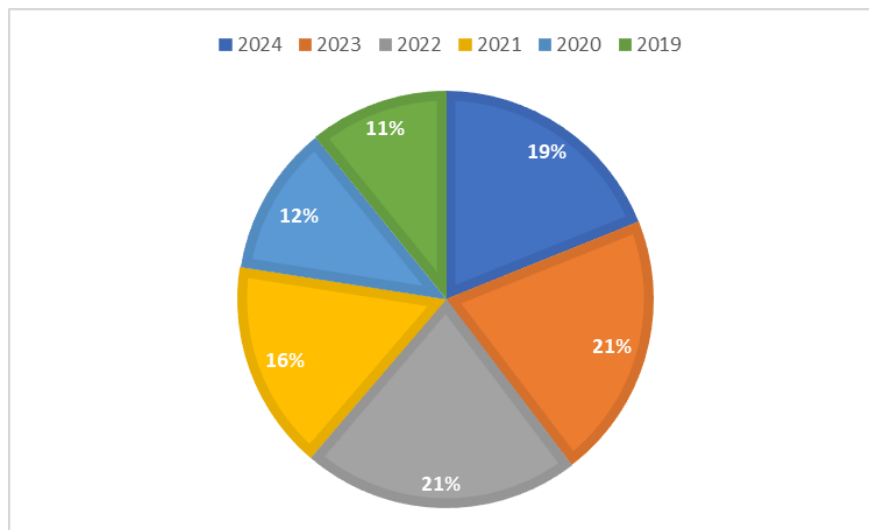


Figure 2. Yearly Distribution of Research Publications in Mental Health

The pie chart on the Yearly Distribution of Research Publications in Mental Health highlights the distribution of publications over six years, from 2019 to 2024. The years 2023 and 2022 stand out with the highest share of publications, each contributing 21%, reflecting a peak in research productivity during this period. The year 2024 follows closely with 19%, indicating ongoing scholarly activity, though the year may be incomplete. A slight decline is observed in 2021, which accounts for 16% of the total publications.

The year 2020 saw a lower share at 12%, potentially due to disruptions caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic. Lastly, 2019 recorded the smallest proportion of publications, at 11%, suggesting a steady increase in research interest and output in subsequent years. Overall, the data indicates a significant upward trend in mental health research since 2019, likely driven by heightened awareness and global efforts to address mental health challenges, particularly during and after the pandemic.

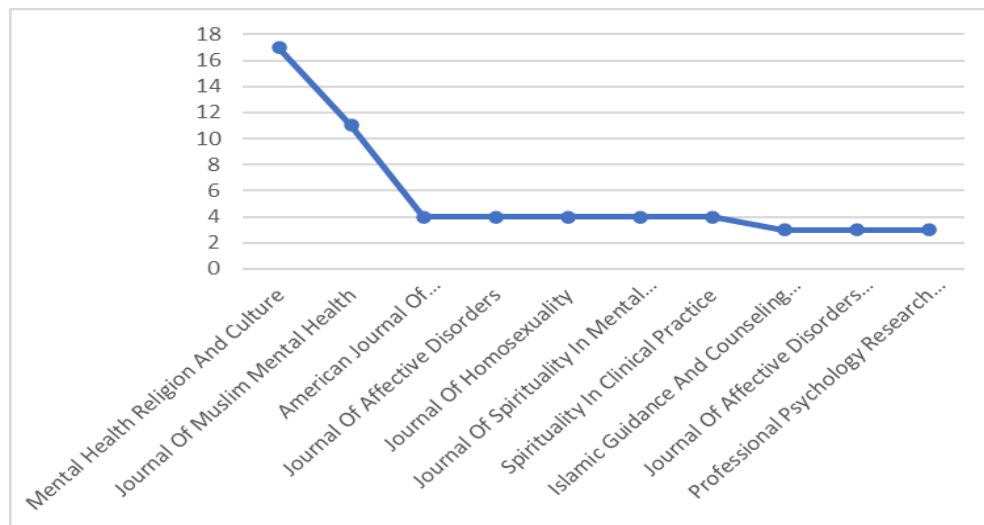


Figure 3. Journal Contributions to Research Publications in Mental Health

The line graph titled "Journal Contributions to Research Publications in Mental Health" presents the number of publications across various journals. The journal "Mental Health, Religion and Culture" leads significantly with 17 publications, indicating its prominent role in disseminating research on mental health. This is followed by the "Journal of Muslim Mental Health" with 11 publications, showing its focus on mental health in specific cultural and religious contexts [33][4][34].

Other journals, including the "American Journal of Orthopsychiatry," "Journal of Affective Disorders," and "Journal of Homosexuality," each contribute 4 publications, suggesting a more moderate but consistent engagement with mental health research. Further, journals such as "Spirituality in Clinical Practice," "Islamic Guidance and Counseling Journal," "Journal of Affective Disorders Reports," and "Professional Psychology Research and Practice" show smaller contributions, each with 2 to 3 publications [35], [36], [37], [38], [39], [40], [41].

The sharp decline after the top two journals reflects a concentration of research in a few leading outlets, while others contribute modestly. This distribution highlights the interdisciplinary and culturally focused nature of mental health research, with significant representation from journals addressing religious, cultural, and clinical dimensions of mental health.

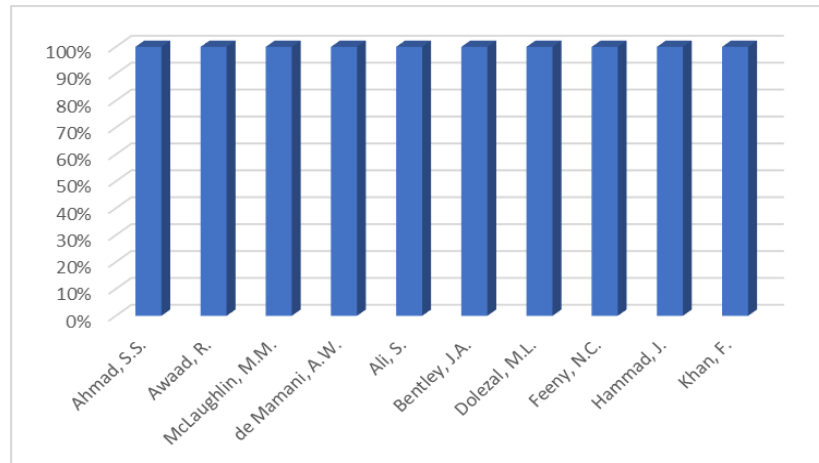


Figure 4 Top Authors' Contribution to Research Publications in Mental Health

The bar chart titled "Top Authors' Contribution to Research Publications in Mental Health" highlights the leading contributors in this research domain. The chart shows that Ahmad, S.S., Awaad, R., McLaughlin, M.M., de Mamani, A.W., Ali, S., Bentley, J.A., Dolezal, M.L., Feeny, N.C., Hammad, J., and Khan, F. each contributed equally, achieving 100% representation in the dataset. This uniformity suggests a notable presence and active engagement by these authors in the field of mental health research [42], [43], [44], [45], [46], [47], [48], [49].

The consistency across all authors underscores their significant scholarly contributions, potentially through high-impact papers, collaborations, or recurrent publications. The focus on such leading contributors can help identify influential voices, key themes, and emerging areas of specialization within mental health research. These authors likely play pivotal roles in shaping research directions, addressing cultural, clinical, and psychological aspects of mental health.

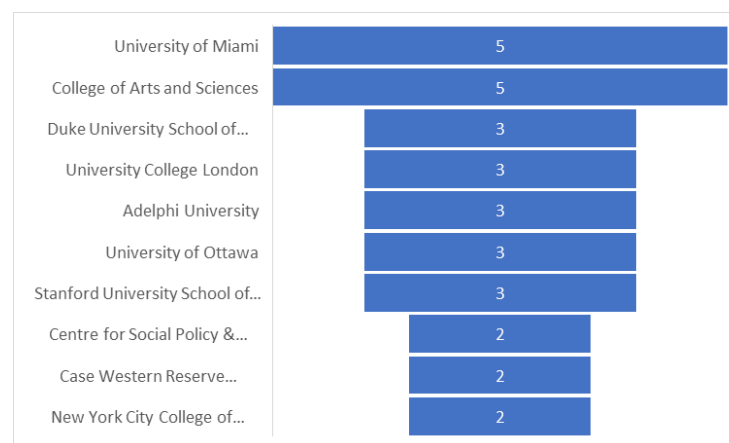


Figure 5. Institutional Contribution to Research Publications in Mental Health

The bar chart titled "Institutional Contribution to Research Publications in Mental Health" highlights the leading institutions contributing to mental health research. The University of Miami and the College of Arts and Sciences are the top contributors, each with 5 publications, signifying their prominent roles in advancing this field.

Following closely, Duke University School of..., University College London, Adelphi University, University of Ottawa, and Stanford University School of... each contributed 3 publications, reflecting their moderate yet consistent involvement in mental health research. This demonstrates significant participation from a mix of prestigious international and North American institutions.

Institutions such as the Centre for Social Policy &..., Case Western Reserve..., and New York City College of... contribute 2 publications each. While their output is smaller, it adds to the diversity of scholarly contributions, showcasing efforts from specialized research centers and institutions.

The data underscores the leading role played by a handful of institutions, with notable contributions coming from both clinical and academic perspectives. This highlights the concentrated nature of institutional research in mental health while reflecting broader engagement across universities worldwide.

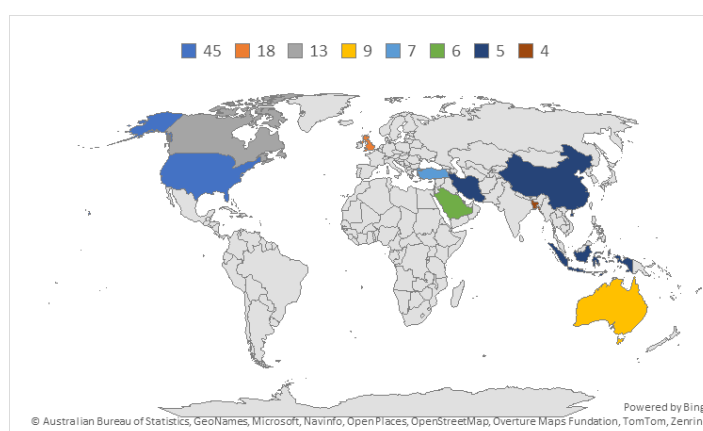


Figure 6. Country Distribution of Research Publications in Mental Health

The world map titled "Country Distribution of Research Publications in Mental Health" visually represents the geographical spread of contributions to mental health research. The United States leads significantly with 45 publications, reflecting its strong academic infrastructure, funding, and focus on mental health research. Following this, Australia makes a notable contribution with 18 publications, emphasizing its growing research initiatives in mental health.

Other prominent contributors include India and China, each with 13 publications, showcasing substantial research activity from Asia. European nations like the United Kingdom and Italy follow closely with 9 and 7 publications, respectively, indicating consistent engagement in mental health scholarship. Additional contributions come from countries such as Saudi Arabia (6 publications), Pakistan (5 publications), and a few smaller contributions (4 publications) from other regions.

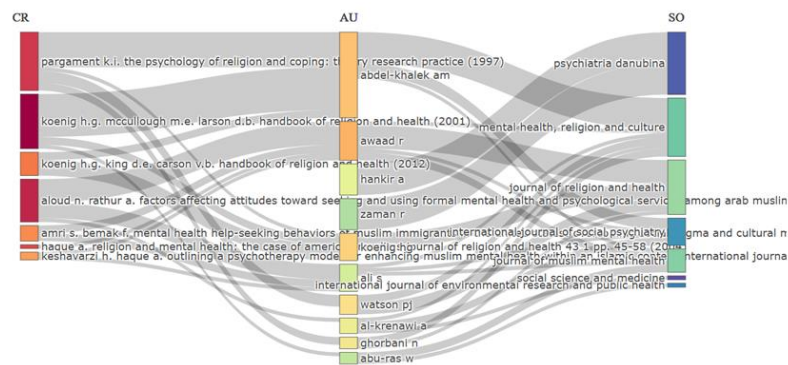


Figure 7. Sankey Diagram of Author, Journal, and Keyword Relationships in Mental Health

The Sankey diagram illustrates the interconnected relationships between cited references (CR), authors (AU), and sources (SO) in mental health research. The visualization highlights the flow of research influence, showing how key references and authors contribute to publications in various journals.

On the left (CR), foundational works such as Pargament, K.I. (*The Psychology of Religion and Coping*) and Koenig, H.G. (*Handbook of Religion and Health*, 2001) emerge as significant influences. These references emphasize the intersection of religion, spirituality, and mental health. Other notable contributions include studies on attitudes toward mental health, coping behaviors, and religion's role in mental well-being.

In the middle (AU) section, influential authors such as Awaad, R., Hankir, A., Watson, P.J., and others are shown as central contributors. Their works bridge the influence of foundational research to contemporary studies on mental health, particularly among specific populations like Muslim immigrants or culturally diverse groups.

On the right (SO), journals such as "Mental Health, Religion and Culture", "Journal of Religion and Health", and "International Journal of Social Psychiatry" emerge as key publication outlets for research on religion, culture, and mental health. These journals serve as significant platforms for disseminating studies that explore cultural dimensions of mental health [50], [51], [52].

The diagram effectively maps how research flows from influential references to key authors and subsequently to major journals, reinforcing the role

of cultural, religious, and psychological studies in shaping the mental health research landscape. This interconnected flow underscores the interdisciplinary nature of the field, highlighting contributions from psychology, sociology, and public health.

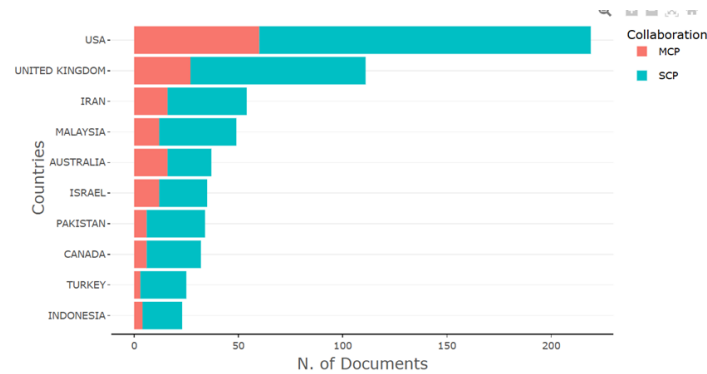


Figure 8. Corresponding Author's Country Contribution to Mental Health Research

Figure 8 displays the contribution of corresponding authors to mental health research, categorized by country. It differentiates between Multiple Country Publications (MCP), represented in red, and Single Country Publications (SCP), shown in blue.

The USA leads with the highest number of documents, predominantly in Single Country Publications (SCP), indicating a strong domestic research focus. The United Kingdom follows with significant output, showing a notable mix of both SCP and MCP, reflecting its international collaborations.

Countries like Iran, Malaysia, and Australia demonstrate moderate research contributions, with a balanced presence of MCP and SCP. This highlights their engagement in both independent national research and international collaboration efforts. Similarly, countries such as Israel, Pakistan, Canada, Turkey, and Indonesia contribute a smaller yet significant number of documents, with most focusing on single-country research.

The chart reveals a dominance of SCPs across all leading countries, except for the United Kingdom, which shows a stronger international collaboration component. This highlights the USA's leading role in independent mental health research while underscoring the UK's efforts to foster international partnerships. Meanwhile, emerging contributors such as Iran and Malaysia are expanding their influence, reflecting their growing interest in mental health research and collaboration opportunities.

Table 2. Globally cited documents

Paper	Total Citations	TC per Year	Normalized TC
Wuthnow R, 2023, After Heaven: Spirituality In Am Since The 1950s	736	368.00	93.55
Layne Cm, 2008, J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry	256	15.06	5.19
Sheridan Lp, 2006, J Interpers Violence	252	13.26	4.75
Douki S, 2003, Arch Women's Ment Health	235	10.68	3.58
Raiya Ha, 2008, Int J Psychol Relig	227	13.35	4.61
Ciftci A, 2012, J Muslim Ment Health	222	17.08	6.12
Islam Ms, 2020, J Affective Disord	168	33.60	15.61
Cinnirella M, 1999, Br J Med Psychol	163	6.27	2.88
Ahmed Sr, 2011, Am J Community Psychol	155	11.07	5.42
Hook Jn, 2010, J Clin Psychol	147	9.80	3.32

Table 2 highlights the globally cited documents in mental health research, showcasing their total citations, annual citation rates (TC per year), and normalized citation counts. The most highly cited work is Wuthnow R (2023), titled "After Heaven: Spirituality in America Since the 1950s", with 736 citations, an impressive 368 citations per year, and a normalized TC of 93.55, underscoring its significant scholarly impact, particularly on spirituality and mental health in American society. Other notable works include Layne CM (2008) in the Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, which has received 256 citations with 15.06 TC per year, reflecting its enduring influence on child and adolescent mental health. Similarly, Sheridan LP (2006) in the Journal of Interpersonal Violence garnered 252 citations, emphasizing the importance of violence-related studies in mental health research [53].

The work of Douki S (2003) in the Archives of Women's Mental Health with 235 citations highlights the critical focus on gender-specific mental health issues, while Raiya HA (2008) in the International Journal of Psychology and Religion (227 citations) and Ciftci A (2012) in the Journal of Muslim Mental Health (222 citations) underscore the growing interest in cultural and religious dimensions of mental health, particularly in Muslim communities [54]. Notably, Islam MS (2020) in the Journal of Affective Disorders stands out for its rapid citation growth, with 168 total citations and an exceptional 33.6 TC per year, reflecting increasing scholarly attention to recent mental health research. Other significant contributions include Cinnirella M (1999) in the British Journal of

Medical Psychology (163 citations), Ahmed SR (2011) in the American Journal of Community Psychology (155 citations), and Hook JN (2010) in the Journal of Clinical Psychology (147 citations) [12]. These works collectively represent the multidimensional nature of mental health research, spanning themes of spirituality, gender, violence, cultural influences, and community psychology. The high TC per year for recent studies highlights the field's emerging trends and priorities, while older foundational works continue to inform contemporary scholarship.

Network Analysis

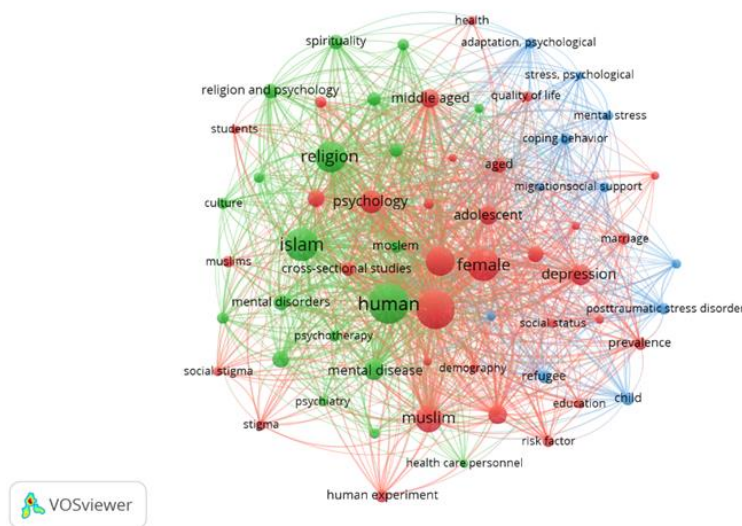


Figure 9. Bibliometric analysis based on networked titles

Figure 9 presents a bibliometric network analysis of mental health research titles, revealing key thematic clusters and their relationships. The network, visualized using VOSviewer, highlights three primary clusters. The green cluster focuses on the intersection of religion, spirituality, and psychology, with prominent terms such as "religion and psychology," "Islam," "spirituality," and "cross-sectional studies." This cluster emphasizes research exploring mental health within cultural and spiritual contexts, particularly among Muslim populations. The red cluster centers on human-focused and demographic themes, with keywords like "human," "female," "adolescent," "depression," and "refugee." It reflects studies on gender-based mental health, adolescent well-being, and the challenges faced by vulnerable populations, including refugees. Terms such as "stigma" and "social status" highlight the sociological dimensions of mental health.

Meanwhile, the blue cluster concentrates on psychological stress and adaptation, with keywords like “stress, psychological,” “quality of life,” “coping behavior,” and “posttraumatic stress disorder.” This cluster captures studies addressing mental stress, coping mechanisms, and the psychological impact of traumatic experiences, particularly in migration, education, and aging contexts. The interconnectedness of these clusters illustrates the interdisciplinary nature of mental health research, encompassing psychology, sociology, psychiatry, and cultural studies. Keywords such as “human,” “female,” “religion,” and “depression” stand out as central themes, indicating their significant role in shaping the literature. Overall, the network highlights the prominence of cultural, spiritual, and psychological dimensions in global mental health research.

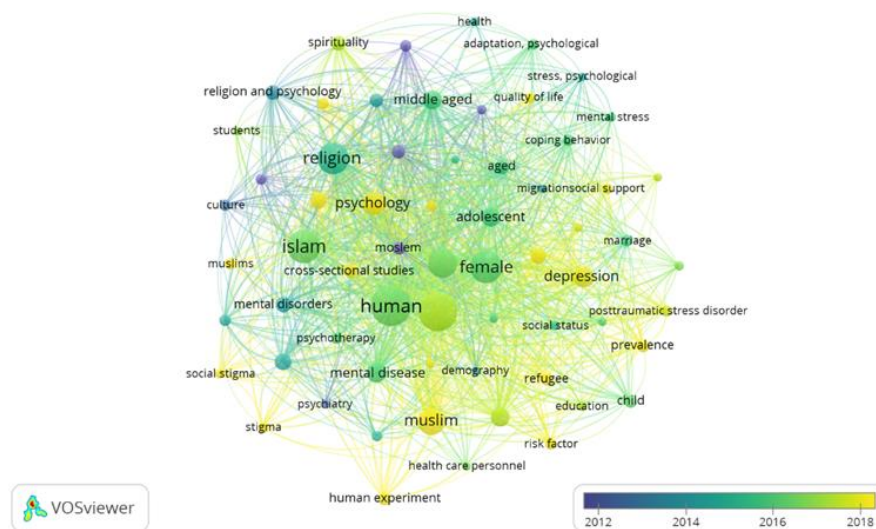


Figure 10. Overlay Visualization of Keywords Co-occurrence Network in Mental Health

Figure 10 presents an overlay visualization of the co-occurrence network of keywords in mental health research, with nodes representing keywords and colors indicating their temporal evolution between 2012 and 2018. The color gradient from purple (earlier studies) to yellow (more recent studies) highlights emerging trends and shifts in research focus over time.

In earlier years (2012–2014), as shown in purple and blue, keywords like “spirituality,” “religion and psychology,” and “middle-aged” were more prominent, reflecting a focus on spirituality, religious contexts, and mental health across different age groups. Keywords such as “adaptation” and “psychological stress” also appear in these earlier studies, emphasizing coping mechanisms and quality of life.

The densest area of the visualization focuses on the keyword “human,” surrounded by closely related terms such as “female,” “Islam,” “religion,” and “psychology.” These terms represent core research themes, emphasizing studies related to human psychology, gender, and cultural or religious contexts, particularly within Islamic and mental health frameworks.

Moving outward, moderate-density areas include terms like “depression,” “mental disorders,” “adolescent,” and “refugee,” reflecting significant attention on psychological disorders, mental illness prevalence, adolescent well-being, and vulnerable populations like refugees. Keywords such as “social stigma,” “migration,” and “posttraumatic stress disorder” further highlight sociocultural and psychological challenges explored in recent studies.

The peripheral areas of the map, marked with lower-density keywords like “spirituality,” “quality of life,” “coping behavior,” and “health adaptation,” demonstrate less frequent but still notable themes related to psychological stress management and adaptation to mental health challenges.

Overall, the density visualization underscores the centrality of themes like human mental health, religious and cultural influences, psychological disorders, and vulnerable groups. It reflects the multidimensional nature of mental health research, with a strong emphasis on cultural, gender, and societal factors. The visualization also highlights potential areas for future research, particularly around less dense keywords that indicate emerging or underexplored topics.

Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of mental health research within Islamic or Muslim contexts, spanning 51 years (1976–2024). The findings highlight significant growth in scholarly output, with an annual growth rate of 9.75%, demonstrating increasing global attention to this critical area of research. Journals such as “Mental Health, Religion and Culture” and “Journal of Muslim Mental Health” emerge as leading platforms for disseminating research, reflecting the intersection of mental health, culture, and spirituality. The United States dominates global contributions, while countries like Australia, the United Kingdom, and emerging nations such as Malaysia and Iran play vital roles in fostering international collaborations. The study reveals key research themes, including spirituality, psychological stress, stigma, mental disorders, and the challenges faced by vulnerable populations such as refugees. The network and co-occurrence analysis underscores the interdisciplinary nature of mental health research, bridging cultural, religious, and clinical dimensions. The results emphasize the importance of addressing mental health issues within specific cultural and religious contexts to provide holistic and culturally sensitive

interventions. In conclusion, this study contributes valuable insights into the global landscape of mental health research, identifies existing gaps, and highlights emerging areas for future exploration. It underscores the need for continued interdisciplinary collaboration and culturally informed approaches to advance mental health research and practice globally.

Author Contributions

Md. Ishaque: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Supervision, Project administration. **Mahmudulhassan:** Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Investigation. **Muhammad Abuzar:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Investigation.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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