

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.122.12650

66 YEARS OF RELIGIOUS RESEARCH IN MARKETING: WHAT DOES LITERATURE HAVE TO REVEAL?

Fourat Ben Amor¹, Amel Dakoumi Hamrouni^{2*}, Hatem Dellagi³

¹ Higher Institute of Management of Sousse, University of Sousse, Tunisia. Fourat.benamor@isgs.rnu.tn,
<https://orcid.org/0009-0009-1524-3877>

² College of Buisness Administration, Dar Uloom University, Saudi Arabia. A.hamrouni@dau.edu.sa,
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4032-0423>

³ Faculty of Economic Sciences and Management of Tunis, University of Carthage, Tunisia.
Hatemdellagi7@gmail.com, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7239-0605>

Received: 29/09/2025

Accepted: 30/11/2025

Corresponding Author: Amel Dakoumi Hamrouni
(a.hamrouni@dau.edu.sa)

ABSTRACT

Over the past 66 years, religion has had a wide impact on marketing, including ethics, consumer behavior, and market dynamics. This bibliometric study of 744 Scopus-indexed publications from 1959 to 2025 shows how the field has changed over time and shows that there are geographic and topic imbalances. The U.S., Malaysia, and Indonesia make up 41% of all output. The Journal of Islamic Marketing has the highest H-index (39), showing that Southeast Asia is the most important theme. Even though it has been growing steadily (3.96% a year). Islamic issues (such as halal and Sharia finance) make up 37.77% of studies, whereas non-Abrahamic religions (such as Buddhism and Hinduism) make up less than 2%. Quantitative methods are used more often than qualitative ones, with Structural Equation Modeling (24.6%) being the most common. Ethnography (2.02%) is one of the least common. Bibliographic coupling finds six groups: (1) Religion and Tourist Behavior, (2) Ethical Behavior, (3) Cultural Consumption, (4) The Halal Industry, (5) Financial Services, and (6) Durable Behavior. This study had marked several discussions about the existent geographical disparities of the literature, the dominance of Islamic themes, and the major reliance on quantitative methodologies in the field.

KEYWORDS: Religion, Marketing, Bibliometric Analysis, Performance Analysis, Bibliometric Coupling.

1. INTRODUCTION

Religion continues to be a major yet understudied force affecting modern marketing, influencing ethical frameworks, consumer behavior, and global market dynamics (Izberk-Bilgin & Belk, 2024; Oliveira & Neto, 2014). Throughout the last six decades, religion has evolved from specialized investigations of religiosity as a consumer trait to a multidisciplinary discipline tackling themes like Islamic finance, spiritual branding, and the ethical consequences of marketizing faith (Agarwala *et al.*, 2019; Kamarruddin & İşlek, 2023). However, this fast growth has resulted in fragmented research with studies separated by religious tradition, geographic bias, or theoretical lens (Block *et al.*, 2020; Minton, 2023). The lack of comprehensive, longitudinal analysis hides the intellectual structure, topic priorities, and maturation of the field, a gap this study fills by using a tripartite bibliometric approach analyzing 744 Scopus-indexed papers in a time frame of 66 years.

In marketing research, the historical trajectory of religion shows four distinct eras. Early works (1959–1990) presented religion as a static variable by using religiosity measures to test its effect on different behavioral variables (Al-Hyari *et al.*, 2012). These studies drew criticism over time for confusing extrinsic religiosity with intrinsic religiosity (Minton, 2023). The expansion era (1991–2010) witnessed the rise of Islamic marketing as a distinct subfield, driven by Southeast Asia's economic ascension, studies of halal certification, Sharia-compliant banking, and Muslim consumer behavior have emerged (Badi'ah *et al.*, 2024). At the same time, religious market theory positioned faith groups as rivals in a worldwide spiritual market (Oliveira & Neto, 2014). Post-2010 diversification saw the field divided into niches, including religious tourism and critiques of "spiritual consumerism" (Izberk-Bilgin & Belk, 2024), while 68% of research was generated from the U.S., U.K., Indonesia, and Malaysia which confirms the geographic disparities of the field (Block *et al.*, 2020). The current phase (2021–2025) marks an introduction to several technologies in this field, such as technology's disruptive role—AI-driven religious analytics, blockchain-based zakat platforms, and COVID-19's redefining of Islamic ethics (Judijanto *et al.*, 2024).

Despite this development, the debate persists about the fragmentation of religion. First, the ambiguity accorded to religion in cross-cultural comparisons: Religion (structured beliefs) is commonly confused with spirituality (individualized faith), which may complicate the investigation of this

variable (Minton, 2023; Pradhita, 2024). Second, many critiques note that branding sacred actions, such as halal tourism, may endanger cultural authenticity (Uula & Maziyyah, 2022). Third, the predominant geographic and cultural disparities of the field where the Islamic studies predominate concealing different religions such as Buddhist, Orthodox Christian, and Indigenous spirituals (Aivaz & Petre, 2024). These strains reflect more general criticisms in marketing research, where thematic diversification outpaces conceptual clarity (Gundolf & Filser, 2013).

Furthermore, when investigating bibliometric studies related to religion and marketing, we noticed several limitations. Prior reviews, such as Gundolf and Filser (2013), have focused solely on citation. Hence, the research was also elaborated in 2013, which may be missing analysis and have several important changes. Furthermore, Sofyan *et al.* (2024) focused their study on Islamic ethics, neglecting comparative frameworks. Most importantly, none of the studies have used bibliometric coupling to map thematic evolution with co-word analysis of keywords to unravel the religion/marketing field's complexity.

The research problem addressed in this study is the diverse nature of the literature regarding religion and marketing, where disparate studies have often developed in isolation. This diversification reduces the ability of scholars to fully recognize the cumulative impact and potential of religion in nurturing marketing practices. To address this issue, the study is guided by the following research questions: (1) What are the key thematic clusters within the field of religion and marketing? (2) What are the main influential publications, authors, countries, and papers? (3) What are the main methodologies and techniques used to investigate religion?

This study fills several gaps in the literature through a three-pronged bibliometric analysis. First, the elaboration of a performance analysis that quantifies the productivity of authors, institutions, and journals and their impact to expose geographic and institutional power dynamics. Second, the rule-based keyword classification technique was used to analyze different abstracts and, eventually, to trace the diverse methodologies and techniques used in religion research. Third, a bibliometric coupling was used to group articles by shared references and to reveal different intellectual communities and their evolution.

This paper is structured as follows: Section 2 describes the approach comprising methodological

procedures and Scopus data extraction. Performance analysis, keyword classification analysis, and bibliographic coupling networks are found in Section 3. Section 4 is dedicated to discussing the different results obtained. Finally, section 5 attributed to the conclusion and examines limitations and future directions.

2. METHOD

Through this study, we aim to examine the literature related to religion in the marketing field. To conduct this investigation, we have chosen to use bibliometric analysis, a type of research that employs quantitative methods to analyze and interpret the characteristics and patterns of scientific literature (Benckendorff and Zehrer, 2013; Ferreira et al., 2014; Donthu et al., 2021; Mortazavi et al., 2021; Öztürk et al., 2024). These techniques are more effective than traditional literature reviews in providing insights due to their ability to reduce researcher subjectivity (Bhattacharyya & Verma, 2020). Furthermore, bibliographic data analysis, such as the number of citations, the impact factor of the journals in which articles are published, and collaboration patterns among authors (Ferreira et al., 2014; Donthu et al., 2021; Mortazavi et al., 2021; Öztürk et al., 2024). Following this idea, Donthu et al. (2021a) describe bibliometric analysis as the application of quantitative techniques to bibliographic data. These studies can provide insights into research productivity, impact, and trends in a particular field. Furthermore, they can also be used to identify key factors across various domains and ensure the quality and relevance of scientific literature. Bibliometric studies have been widely used in numerous scientific research fields, including key account management (Kumar et al., 2019), entrepreneurship (Block et al., 2020), business-to-business marketing (Backhaus et al., 2011), religious marketing (Pop and Pop, 2023), management (Rodríguez and Navarro, 2004; Hashemi et al., 2022), and digital marketing (Krishen et al., 2021).

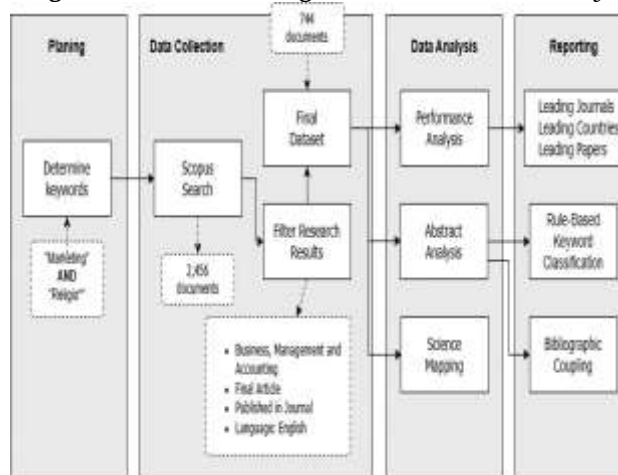
2.1. Data Collection

To establish the study dataset, we utilized the Scopus database. The selection of Scopus is to ensure a comprehensive data capture following its large interdisciplinary coverage. We followed the method outlined by Verma and Gustafsson (2020) and Öztürk et al. (2024) to identify relevant documents using the specific search string: TITLE-ABS-KEY("Religio*" AND "Marketing").

The search string was applied to titles, abstracts, and keywords to ensure comprehensive coverage.

Additionally, the keywords "Religio*" AND "Marketing" were chosen to capture variations (e.g., religiosity, religious) while maintaining focus on marketing.

Figure 1: Research Design For Bibliometric Study.



In order to identify relevant articles, we searched for academic papers' titles, abstracts, and keywords on the 18th of March, 2025. As outlined in Figure 1, this initial search returned 2,456 documents. We then narrowed down the database to include only documents in business, management, and accounting. Based on this selection, the number of studies decreased to 1,104 documents. Moving forward, we excluded every document that isn't an article in its final stage published in a peer-reviewed journal, to have a dataset of 748 articles. We subsequently, limited the language used only to English to have a final database of 744 papers.

2.2. Data Analysis

To conduct this bibliometric study, we followed a four-step process founded on the guidelines introduced by Öztürk et al. (2024). The first step consists of defining the aim of the research by clarifying exactly the objective of the study to define keywords to be used. The second step consists of collecting related data in marketing fields through keyword searches in the Scopus database. Thirdly, the application of performance analysis to measure and classify the contributions of authors and journals and science mapping techniques to identify relationship networks between authors, papers, concepts, and citations. Authors' influence was assessed via the h-index, which balances productivity and citation impact (Hirsch, 2005), and the g-index to prioritize highly cited works (Egghe, 2006). The performance analysis was conducted using the bibliometric R package Biblioshiny, which facilitated macro-level productivity metrics

(Mukherjee et al., 2021).

Consecutively, to analyze abstracts, we used rule-based keyword classification, which is a text analysis technique that relies on predefined logical rules to categorize data (Jackson, 1999). To execute keyword classification, we predefined lists of keywords, shown in Table 1, curated for five major religions (Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism). For each abstract, the algorithm checks for the presence of keywords from each religion's list using substring matching. If keywords from multiple religions are detected, the article is labeled "Multiple Religions." If no religion-specific keywords are found but generic terms like "religion" or "religious" appear, the article is labeled "Overall Religion". Articles with no relevant keywords are labeled "Not Specified."

keywords but containing generic religious terms are classified separately to distinguish between general and non-religious discussions.

Table 1: Keywords Of Rule-Based Classification.

Religion	Keywords
Islam	islam, islamic, muslim, mosque, halal, ramadan, quran, sharia, takaful
Christian	christian, church, jesus, bible, catholic, protestant
Judaism	jewish, judaism, kosher, synagogue, torah
Hinduism	hindu, hinduism, temple, karma, dharma
Buddhism	buddhist, buddhism, temple, buddha

For single or multiple Religions, the priority is given to detecting overlaps (e.g., an abstract mentioning both "halal" and "church" is flagged as "Multiple Religions". Abstracts lacking religion-specific

For executing science mapping techniques, specifically bibliographic coupling, we used VOSviewer which enabled micro-level thematic network visualization, ensuring a holistic analysis. Science mapping techniques are used to better understand the research landscape and identify areas where further investigation may be needed (Singh et al., 2020). According to Öztürk et al. (2024), bibliographic coupling analyzes the relationships among citing publications to understand the development of present knowledge by converging cited publications into a cluster that represents a common theme in a research field. Finally, the last step in the process involves reporting and interpreting findings and results.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Performance Analysis

3.1.1. Summary Statistics

Table 2: Scopus Dataset Summary.

Description	Results
Timespan	1959:2025
Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	233
Documents	744
Annual Growth Rate %	3,96
Document Average Age	8,71
Average citations per doc	28,13
References	42295
Keywords Plus (ID)	355
Author's Keywords (DE)	2293
Authors	1675
Authors of single-authored docs	148
Single-authored docs	166
Co-Authors per Doc	2,57
International co-authorships %	25,54

As presented in Table 2, the dataset used covers a period of 66 years from 1959 to 2025, including 744 documents from 233 different sources, which demonstrate a wide range of topics and disciplines involved. The field has been growing steadily, with an annual growth rate of 3.96%, and an average document age of 8.71 years indicating a relevant recent research field. The high average of 28.13 citations per document highlights the influence and importance of these studies in the academic world. The dataset is supported by 42,295 references, which suggests a strong foundation of prior work in the field.

The diversity of topics is evident with the high number of 355 keywords and the 2,293 keywords provided by authors, pointing to a variety of research focuses. Focusing on collaboration in this field, 1,675 authors contributed to the research. On average, each document has 2.57 co-authors, and 25.54% of the collaborations are international, which indicates the global nature of the work. All 744 documents are peer-reviewed articles, ensuring the quality and reliability of the research of the dataset.

This dataset represents an active and developing field, marked by its impact, collaborative spirit, and wide-ranging topics. It provides a solid basis for understanding current trends and guiding future research.

3.1.2. Journal Performance

Table 3: The Fifteenth Most Influential Journal.

Rank	Journal	H-Index	G-Index	M-Index	TC	NP
1	Journal of Islamic Marketing	39	65	2,438	5263	170
2	Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics	12	20	0,6	497	20
3	Journal of Business Ethics	11	15	0,282	788	15
4	Journal of Business Research	11	14	0,229	873	14
5	International Marketing Review	10	12	0,476	695	12
6	Journal of Consumer Marketing	10	12	0,278	1052	12
7	Journal of Macromarketing	10	11	1	250	11
8	International Journal of Consumer Studies	7	10	0,304	203	10
9	International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management	7	8	0,389	612	8
10	Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research	7	12	0,875	152	13
11	Marketing Theory	7	7	0,5	201	7
12	Psychology and Marketing	7	8	0,538	301	8
13	European Journal of Marketing	6	8	0,188	378	8
14	International Journal of Bank Marketing	6	6	0,429	107	6
15	Journal Of Management, Spirituality and Religion	6	7	0,353	293	7

The analysis of journal performance shown in (Table 3) introduced the Journal of Islamic Marketing (JIMA) as the leading source in the field of research of religion in marketing, with an H-Index of 39, a G-Index of 65, and a significant total of 5,263 citations, indicating a major influence and productivity. Following second, the Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics (APJML) which holds a respectable position with an H-Index of 12 and 497 citations, indicating moderate impact and contribution to the literature. The Journal of Business Ethics and the Journal of Business Research both demonstrate moderate influence, with H-Indices of

3.1.3. Countries Performance

11 and total citations of 788 and 873, respectively, though their lower M-Indices suggest slower growth in influence over time. The International Marketing Review, on the other hand, rounds out the fifth with an H-Index of 10 and 695 citations, showing steady growth in impact, as indicated by its relatively higher M-Index of 0.476. Collectively, these journals represent the most influential and productive sources in the field, with the Journal of Islamic Marketing standing out as the dominant leader. Their strong performance draws attention to their importance as key resources for researchers in the marketing/religion field.

Table 4: The Ten Most Producing Countries.

Country	Frequency	Frequency Ratio (%)
USA	312	17%
Malaysia	242	13%
Indonesia	203	11%
India	125	7%
UK	119	6%
Australia	114	6%
Pakistan	71	4%
China	55	3%
Turkey	45	2%
Iran	42	2%

For the countries' scientific production, the USA precedes the list with 312 publications, reflecting its leading role in the research field, likely due to its strong academic infrastructure and global collaborations. Malaysia follows closely with 242 contributions, showcasing its active engagement, particularly in areas like Islamic marketing. Indonesia ranks third with 203 publications,

demonstrating its significant presence in research related to religion and culture. India and the UK round out the top five with 125 and 119 publications, respectively, showing their growing academic output and influence in the field. Together, these countries represent the most active contributors, driving the advancement of research in this area.

3.1.4. Authors' Impact On The Field

Table 5: Authors' Local Impact On Religion And Marketing.

Author	H index	G index	M index	TC	NP	PY start
MINTON EA	10	16	0,909	348	16	2015
VITELL SJ	7	7	0,259	989	7	1999
BUTT MM	5	5	0,357	479	5	2012
ARLI D	4	7	0,444	73	7	2017
EL-BASSIOUNY N	4	5	0,308	183	5	2013
HENDAR H	4	4	0,444	154	4	2017
JAFARI A	4	4	0,286	148	4	2012
LEONG VS	4	4	0,4	83	4	2016
MUHAMAD N	4	5	0,4	85	5	2016
SINGHAPAKDI A	4	4	0,148	699	4	1999
WILSON JAJ	4	5	0,25	254	5	2010
AMIN H	3	3	0,176	478	3	2009
CABANO FG	3	3	0,75	28	3	2022
CHAIRY C	3	3	0,5	64	3	2020
DEB M	3	3	0,3	61	3	2016
HAMED S	3	3	0,231	33	3	2013
HANDRIANA T	3	3	0,5	92	3	2020
HAQ F	3	3	0,176	170	3	2009
HENDERSON JC	3	3	0,13	481	3	2003
HUSSIN N	3	3	0,3	161	3	2016

Based on the date of data collection (March 18,

3.1.5. Most Cited Papers

Table 6: Most Cited Ten Publications Regarding Religion And Marketing.

Ra nk	Title	Authors	Year	Total Citation s	TC per Year	Normali zed TC
1	Relationship marketing in consumer markets: antecedents and consequences.	Sheth, Jagdish N., and Atul Parvatlyar.	1995	1057	34,10	2,56
2	Predicting intention to choose halal products using theory of reasoned action.	Lada Suddin, Geoffrey Harvey Tanakinjal, and Hanudin Amin.	2009	388	22,82	4,42
3	Consumer religiosity and retail store evaluative criteria	McDaniel Stephen W., and John J. Burnett	1990	368	10,22	1,53
4	Controlling social desirability bias.	Larson Ronald B.	2019	359	51,29	14,75
5	Intention to choose Halal products: the role of religiosity."	Mukhtar Arshia, and Muhammad Mohsin Butt.	2012	317	22,64	6,29
6	Religious contrasts in consumer decision behaviour patterns: their dimensions and marketing implications.	Delener Nejdet	1994	284	8,88	1,90
7	Antecedents, consequences, and mediating effects of perceived moral intensity and personal moral philosophies.	Singhapakdi Anusorn, Scott J. Vitell, and George R. Franke	1999	274	10,15	3,54
8	On the meaning and measurement of religiosity in consumer research.	Wilkes Robert E., John J. Burnett, and Roy D. Howell	1986	270	6,75	1,64
9	Islamic tourism and managing tourism development in Islamic societies: the cases of Iran and Saudi Arabia.	Zamani-Farahani Hamira, and Joan C. Henderson.	2010	268	16,75	7,01
10	Consumer animosity: a literature review and a reconsideration of its measurement.	Riefleer Petra, and Adamantios Diamantopoulos.	2007	259	13,63	5,98

The most cited papers in the extracted dataset have had a profound impact on the

2025), we ranked the authors according to their h-index, a metric that effectively captures both the quantity and quality of scholarly output. The h-index was chosen because it balances productivity (number of publications) and impact (citations received), thereby providing a more comprehensive measure of academic influence than either metric alone. In Table 5, MINTON EA, who began publishing in 2015, exhibits a considerably higher H-index (10) and G-index (16) with 348 total citations across 16 publications, underscoring a robust and concentrated scholarly impact. In contrast, Vitell SJ emerges as the author with the highest total citations (TC = 989) despite a relatively modest H-index of 7 and G-index of 7, indicating that his work has achieved widespread recognition over a prolonged period since his publication onset in 1999. Other authors such as BUTT MM and ARLI D, with h-indices of 5 and 4 respectively, further illustrate the diverse trajectories of academic performance. This ranking underscores the relevance of the h-index in assessing scholarly achievement, as it not only accounts for the volume of research but also its resonance within the academic community.

religion/marketing literature, each contributing to key areas of research. Sheth and Parvatlyar's 1995 paper, "Relationship marketing in consumer markets: antecedents and consequences," stands out with a significant 1,057 citations on Scopus, establishing a foundational framework for understanding consumer relationships and influencing countless studies in marketing. Lada et al. (2009) work, "Predicting intention to choose halal products using theory of reasoned action," has been pivotal in exploring religiosity's role in consumer behavior, particularly in halal markets, with 388 citations and a high citation rate per year (22.82). McDaniel and Burnett's 1990 paper, "Consumer religiosity and retail store evaluative criteria" remains a seminal reference with 368 citations, offering early understanding into how religiosity influences consumer preferences. Larson's (2019) paper, "Controlling social desirability bias" has rapidly gained influence with 359 citations and an exceptional citation rate per year (51.29), addressing critical methodological challenges and enhancing research rigor across disciplines. Finally, Mukhtar and Butt's 2012 study, "Intention to choose Halal products: the role of religiosity," has significantly advanced understanding of religious influences on consumer behavior, with 317 citations and a strong citation trajectory. Collectively, these papers highlight the persistent importance of considering religiosity in consumer behavior.

3.2. Approaches and Analysis Techniques to Study Religion

3.2.1. Religions Investigated and Research Approaches

Table 7 shows the publication count according to the different religions investigated in the articles' dataset. In total, 288 articles do not focus on religion as a concept, with an article ratio of 38.71%. Furthermore, Table 7 reveals that most articles in the dataset selected are related to Islam (281 articles), which makes it the most productive religion in terms of publications with an article ratio of 37.77%. We found that 38 published articles were related to more than one religion; most frequently, Christianity and

Islam were investigated as the religions of interest in these articles. Moreover, articles related to Buddhism, Judaism, and Hinduism were modest with a consecutive number of 8 articles, 2 articles, and 1 article with a cumulative articles' ratio of 6.32%.

Table 7: Most Investigated Religions In The Literature.

	No of Articles	Articles Ratio (%)
Overall Religion	288	38.71
Islam	281	37.77
Christianity	66	8.87
Multiple Religions	38	5.11
Buddhism	8	1.08
Judaism	2	0.27
Hinduism	1	0.13
Not Specified	60	8.06

Table 8 shows different methods adopted to examine religion in marketing. Overall, quantitative techniques predominate with a percentage of 48.12% of all papers, especially in studies on Islam where 61.21% (172 articles), which indicates strong empirical-focused research. Qualitative methods, while less common, are frequent in research on Buddhism (62.5%) and Hinduism (100%), thus, the small sample sizes for these religions (8 and 1 articles, respectively) limit broader conclusions. Christianity stands out for its high proportion of articles with unspecified methods (40.91%), suggesting potential gaps in methodological transparency. Mixed methods remain underutilized (12.23% overall), despite their slight prominence in studies on Islam (15.3%) and multiple religions (13.16%). Notably, Judaism and Hinduism are severely underrepresented (2 and 1 articles), highlighting research gaps. Additionally, nearly a third of articles in the "Overall Religion" category (32.99%) and a quarter of all studies (25.54%) lack methodological clarity, underscoring inconsistencies in reporting practices across the literature. These patterns emphasize methodological imbalances, transparency challenges, and disparities in scholarly attention across religious traditions.

Table 8: Research Approaches by Religion.

	Qualitative Methods		Quantitative Methods		Mixed Methods		Not Specified	
	No of articles	% of articles	No of articles	% of articles	No of articles	% of articles	No of articles	% of articles
Buddhism	5	62,5	2	25	1	12,5	0	0
Christianity	13	19,7	20	30,3	6	9,09	27	40,91
Hinduism	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
Islam	28	9,96	172	61,21	43	15,3	38	13,52
Juadaiism	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	100

Multiple Religions	7	18,42	19	50	5	13,16	7	18,42
Not Specified	3	5	33	55	3	5	21	35
Overall Religion	48	16,67	112	38,89	33	11,46	95	32,99
Total	105	14,11%	358	48,12%	91	12,23%	190	25,54%

3.2.2. Analysis Techniques Used To Investigate Religion

Table 9 examines methodological trends in analysis techniques used in articles in the dataset. Generally, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is the most used technique with a percentage of 24.6% (183 articles), reflecting a preference for statistical modeling to explore religion. Partial Least Squares (PLS) 6.99% (52 articles) and Factor Analysis 5.91% (44 articles) also indicate a focus on multivariate analysis, which reflects a dominance of adoption of quantitative methods in table 7. Furthermore, Table 9 highlights the moderate use of qualitative methods interviews with a percentage of 13.31% (99 articles), ethnography 2.02% (15 articles), and grounded theory 0.81% (6 articles), confirming the limited engagement with immersive qualitative methods.

Table 10 represents different religions and their adoption of analysis techniques. Research about Islam is driven by a strong empirical data-driven research culture, with a dominance of quantitative methods SEM (33.45%), PLS (12.46%), and Factor Analysis (8.54%). However, research in articles related to Islam is reflected by a moderate use of qualitative methods like interviews (13.88%) and content analysis (3.91%). Furthermore, when examining research techniques used In Christianity research, a reliance on descriptive statistics (24.24%)

and interviews (12.12%) can be identified, with a limited adoption of Structural Equation Modeling contrary to Islam. Articles that took the concept of religion as an overall variable have a higher tendency to use SEM (17.71%) and Interviews (13.19%), which suggest a mix of exploratory and basic quantitative work. Finally, research in multiple religions balances several techniques like SEM (31.58%) with interviews (18.42%), reflecting a hybrid approach to comparative religious studies.

Table 9: Most Used Data Analysis Techniques.

	No of Articles	Articles Ratio (%)
Structural Equation Modeling	183	24,6
Interviews	99	13,31
Descriptive Statistics	89	11,96
PLS	52	6,99
Factor Analysis	44	5,91
Regression Analysis	43	5,78
Content Analysis	30	4,03
Case Study Analysis	29	3,9
Correlation Analysis	22	2,96
Focus Groups	19	2,55
ANOVA/MANOVA	17	2,28
T-tests	15	2,02
Ethnography	15	2,02
Cluster Analysis	12	1,61
Grounded Theory	6	0,81
Not Specified	69	9,27%

Table 10: Data Analysis Techniques By Religion.

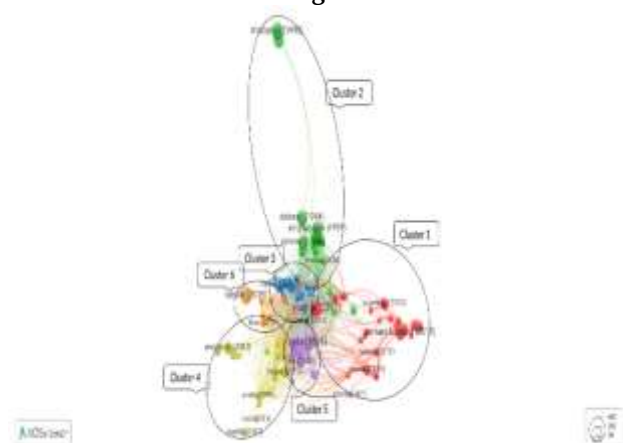
	Islam		Christianity		Buddhism		Overall Religion		Multiple Religions	
	No of Articles	Articles Ratio (%)	No of Articles	Articles Ratio (%)	No of Articles	Articles Ratio (%)	No of Articles	Articles Ratio (%)	No of Articles	Articles Ratio (%)
Structural Equation Modeling	94	33,45	6	9,09	1	12,5	51	17,71	12	31,58
Regression Analysis	24	8,54	3	4,55	0	0	13	4,51	1	2,63
Factor Analysis	24	8,54	0	0	0	0	15	5,21	2	5,26
ANOVA/MANOVA	6	2,14	1	1,52	0	0	9	3,12	1	2,63
Descriptive Statistics	32	11,39	16	24,24	0	0	33	11,46	5	13,15
Correlation Analysis	13	4,63	0	0	0	0	6	2,08	1	2,63
Content Analysis	11	3,91	7	10,61	1	12,5	9	3,12	1	2,63
Interviews	39	13,88	8	12,12	2	25	38	13,19	7	18,42
Focus Groups	5	1,78	3	4,55	0	0	8	2,78	2	5,26

Case Study Analysis	8	2,85	5	7,58	0	0	15	5,21	1	2,63
Cluster Analysis	3	1,07	1	1,52	0	0	7	2,43	0	0
T-tests	9	3,2	1	1,52	0	0	4	1,39	0	0
PLS	35	12,46	0	0	1	12,5	9	3,12	2	5,26
Ethnography	3	1,07	2	3,03	3	37,5	7	2,43	0	0
Grounded Theory	1	0,36	0	0	0	0	5	1,74	0	0
Not Specified	0	0	13	19,67	0	0	59	20,5	3	7,92
Total	281	100	66	100	8	100	288	100	38	100

3.3. Themes Analysis

To identify connections between research articles based on shared references, we employed a bibliographic coupling approach with fractional counting, using association as the normalization method. This method was applied to a sample of 744 publications retrieved from Scopus. To ensure the relevance and impact of the analyzed papers, we refined the dataset by retaining only those with a minimum of 50 citations, resulting in a subset of 108 articles. Further refinement was conducted to ensure coherence, excluding papers that lacked meaningful connections, which yielded a final dataset of 101 articles. For each paper, a bibliographic coupling strength score was calculated, with higher scores indicating greater similarity between articles. To maintain consistency in the analysis, clustering parameters were set to a minimum of 10 articles per cluster, and smaller clusters were merged (Van Eck and Waltman, 2013). This process led to the identification of six distinct clusters. The resulting network graph, presented in Figure 2, highlights each group with encircled clusters for ease of identification.

Figure 2: Main Themes In Marketing Treating Religion.



When examining the top-cited papers within each cluster, it becomes evident that all groups are centered around the conceptual frameworks of

religion and their intersection with various societal domains. However, each cluster highlights a distinct area of research focus.

Cluster 1: Religion and Tourist Behavior

This cluster regroups papers that discuss the influence of religiosity on the preferences of tourists, especially regarding halal-compliant services such as food, accommodation, and prayer facilities. Different research indicates that the acceptance of halal tourism by non-Muslim tourists depends on cultural sensitivity and customized marketing strategies (Jia, 2020; Battour et al., 2018). Religiosity fosters loyalty among Muslim tourists and enhances word-of-mouth recommendations (Abror et al., 2020). Integrating religious beliefs into tourism offers is crucial for businesses to address this expanding consumer segment. Moreover, this cluster regroups the different aspects influencing religious tourists' decision-making. Essentially, this cluster is centered on Islamic marketing principles, specifically halal tourism and adherence to Islamic regulations in the tourism business.

Jia and Chaozhi (2020) highlighted the difference between Islamic and non-Islamic halal tourism frameworks by exploring the different needs in a non-Islamic destination. Furthermore, Battour et al. (2018) examine non-Muslim tourists' perceptions of halal tourism in Turkey and Malaysia, which led to identify six different factors that shape their judgement, including food, lodging, and transportation. Moreover, Abror et al. (2020) demonstrated the religiosity variable as a mediator in tourism marketing outcomes by investigating its impact on Muslim-friendly tourism, revealing that religiosity affects customer engagement, contentment, and word-of-mouth referrals.

Cluster 2: Religion and Ethical Behavior

This cluster assembles different papers that treat the thematic subject of ethical behavior of consumers and the impact accorded to religion. These studies have indicated the role of religion and religious values in guiding consumer ethical behavior, especially in situations involving ethical difficulties or contentious products. Religiosity serves as a significant deterrent to unethical activities, including

the acquisition of counterfeit goods (Quoquab et al., 2017; Jiang et al., 2019). Vitell (2009) and Singhapakdi et al. (1999) emphasize the role of religious beliefs in establishing moral frameworks that direct customers in ethically difficult circumstances.

Quoquab et al. (2017) examined different ethical antecedents of counterfeit products' purchase intentions and highlighted the role of religiosity in reducing the counterfeits' consumption. Additionally, Jiang et al. (2019) extended the link between ethical consumption and religiosity and drew attention to the role of extrinsic and intrinsic religiosity in moral consumption and its role in preventing luxury products' counterfeits consumption. Moreover, Vitell (2009) examined the influence of religion on business and consumer ethics, accentuating its effect on ethical decision-making and the significance of religious beliefs in forming moral judgments. Singhapakdi et al. (1999) studied the antecedents and implications of perceived moral intensity, disclosing that religion mainly influences ethical intentions in a context of ethical problems.

Cluster 3: Religious and Cultural Consumption

This cluster examines the influence of religious and cultural identity on consumption behaviors. Leading studies in this domain have investigated the impact of consumers' religious identities and affiliations on brand loyalty and consumption behaviors, especially in markets where religion is a delicate subject. Religious identity significantly influences consumer behavior, evidenced by boycotts of brands associated with geopolitical crises (Ahmed et al., 2013; Al-Hyari et al., 2012) and the efficacy of religious symbols on packaging (Bakar et al., 2013).

Sandikci and Ekici (2009) demonstrate that ideological resistance to brands frequently originates from religious or political convictions. Swimberghe et al. (2009) linked the consumer religious commitment to store loyalty and complaint intentions and demonstrated the role of religiosity in enhancing trust in faith-aligned brands. Ahmed et al. (2013), in a study focusing on Malaysian consumers boycotting U.S. products, have concluded the role of religiosity in amplifying animosity-driven boycott, which connects the religious identity of the consumer to the geopolitical consumption behavior. The same investigation was carried out by Al-Hyari et al. (2012) in Saudi Arabia, which analyzed the role of religiosity in boycotting Danish brands have linked religious identity to consumption behavior. Moreover, in a study focusing on Muslim consumers, Bakar et al. (2013) investigated the impact of religious

symbols on product packaging, revealing that these symbols considerably affect purchase intentions, particularly for products with little symbolic value. Besides, brand rejection could be motivated by political ideology as well as religious identification. This suggestion was examined by Sandikci and Ekici (2009), who investigated politically motivated brand rejection, emphasizing the impact of religious and political ideology on consumer opposition to specific brands, especially those linked to predatory globalization or religious extremism.

Cluster 4: The Halal Industry

This cluster examines customer intentions to acquire halal products (e.g., cosmetics, food) and the influence of religiosity, certification, and trust. Certification and trust in halal labeling are essential for Muslim consumers (Elseidi, 2018; Iranmanesh et al., 2020). Religiosity and moral obligation enhance purchase intentions, including among non-Muslims (Haque et al., 2015). Aoun and Tournois (2015) propose a comprehensive approach to branding that incorporates spiritual and ethical aspects, whereas Vanany et al. (2020) emphasize the importance of culturally specific marketing strategies.

By applying the Theory of Planned Behavior to Halal food purchasing in the UK, Elseidi (2018) confirmed the role of Halal certifications on products in driving Muslim consumers' intentions. Furthermore, Iranmanesh et al. (2020) extended the work of Elseidi (2018) and applied the TRA to Halal food willingness-to-pay, resulting in the identification of religious self-identity and trust as mediators to the purchase intention of Halal food. In the same current, Handriana et al. (2020) tested the impact of religiosity, brand image, and certification on Halal cosmetic purchase with millennial women, in which they highlighted the role of these variables in boosting the purchase behavior. Aoun and Tournois (2015) also examined the branding of halal cosmetics, emphasized the significance of spiritual and ethical aspects in product positioning. Their research reveals essential aspects, like sustainability and inclusion, that enhance holistic branding. In another context, Vanany et al. (2020) tested the Halal food adoption in Indonesia, which led to identifying religiosity, trust, and moral obligation as key drivers to the product adoption. Finally, in a cultural context, Haque et al. (2015) investigated non-Muslim consumers' perceptions of halal food in Malaysia, a study in which they revealed the impact of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on purchase intentions.

Cluster 5: Religion and Financial Services

This cluster examines the acceptance and attitudes

toward Islamic financial products, such as mortgages, insurance, and credit cards. Religiosity and trust are essential to the acceptance of Islamic financial services (Aziz et al., 2019; Jamshidi & Hussin, 2016). Research such as that conducted by Amin et al. (2014) illustrates that Shariah compliance and religious satisfaction influence customer choices. Taib et al. (2008) demonstrate that society and religious standards affect the adoption of Islamic mortgages. Aziz et al. (2019) tested the role of religiosity and trust in the Islamic insurance system “Takaful”, which led to identifying trust as a mediator to the relation between religiosity and purchase intention of the service. In earlier studies, the Technology adoption model and religiosity were tested by Jamshidi and Hussin (2016) in Islamic credit card adoption. The results pointed out the role of religiosity in enhancing the perceived usefulness of the service, which validates religiosity in technology adoption models. Taib et al. (2008) investigate the acceptance of declining partnership home finance in Malaysia, demonstrating that religious and societal factors substantially influence customer intentions. Furthermore, Amin et al. (2014) framed the theory of Islamic consumer behavior, highlighting the influence of religiosity and Shariah compliance on preferences for Islamic mortgages. Their research presents the Maqasid al-Shariah Index (MSI) and Religious Satisfaction (RS) as primary determinants of Muslim customer behavior.

Cluster 6: Religion and Durable Behavior

This cluster examines the impact of religiosity on pro-environmental behavior, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and institutional legitimacy. While religiosity can amplify pro-environmental concerns (Bhuiyan et al., 2018), its impact varies across contexts. Minton et al. (2019) find that purity-focused religiosity favors restrictive diets over sustainability, whereas Leary et al. (2016) note that non-religious consumers often prioritize environmentalism more strongly.

Minton et al. (2019) tried to investigate the effect of religiosity on sustainable behavior and food choice. The studies’ results suggest that purity-driven religiosity favors sustainable restrictive diets. Furthermore, Bhuiyan et al. (2018) examined the moderating effect of religiosity on pro-environmental behavior and concluded that religiosity amplifies the environmental concerns of the individual. In contrast context, Leary et al. (2016) tested the influence of religiosity on environmental stewardship and determined that non-religious consumers prioritize sustainability more than religious ones.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. Geographic Disparities

The performance analysis highlights a significant geographic imbalance in productivity, with the U.S. contributing 17% of publications, followed by Malaysia 13%, and Indonesia 11%. While the U.S. leads in raw output, its research often treats religion as a peripheral variable, focusing on broad consumer behavior (e.g., McDaniel & Burnett, 1990). In contrast, Malaysia and Indonesia dominate thematically, with an output centered on Islamic marketing—halal certification, Sharia finance, and Muslim consumer ethics reflecting their socio-economic priorities (Badi'ah et al., 2024). This Islamic focus is institutionalized through journals like the *Journal of Islamic Marketing (JIMA)*, which alone accounts for 23% of the field’s citations (5,263 citations). However, this geographic-thematic asymmetry marginalizes non-Abrahamic religions (e.g., Buddhist, Indigenous spirituality). Author-level metrics further reveal this divide: Minton EA (U.S., H-index = 10) addresses religiosity-spirituality confluences, while Butt MM (Pakistan) and Amin H (Malaysia) specialize in halal consumption, yet their work circulates primarily within Islamic journals. The field’s growth (3.96% annually) thus mirrors a “two-speed” trajectory, a rapid Islamic specialization in Southeast Asia versus a fragmented dissociated from religion studies in different parts of the world. Unlike Ali et al. (2025), our methodology, performance analysis, and bibliographic coupling exposed structural biases. Africa and South America contribute <5% of studies, and non-Islamic journals marginalize religion as a core variable. This complements Ezech & Dube (2025), which critiques geographic bias in green tourism but neglects the commercial-religious interplay central to clusters like Halal tourism.

4.2. Dominance Of Islamic Themes

Bibliometric coupling reveals six clusters, all heavily influenced by Islamic themes and geographic bias. Cluster 1 (Religion and Tourist Behavior) focuses on halal tourism in Malaysia/Indonesia (Battour et al., 2018; Abror et al., 2020), with 89% of studies analyzing Muslim-majority destinations. Cluster 4 (The Halal Industry) and Cluster 5 (Religion and Financial Services) further underscore this Islamic dominance, as 92% of articles originate from Southeast Asia or the Gulf, emphasizing Sharia compliance (Aziz et al., 2019) and halal certification (Elseidi, 2018). Even Cluster 2 (Religion and Ethical Behavior), though theoretically broad,

predominantly tests Islamic ethics (e.g., Quoquab et al., 2017's work on counterfeit goods in Malaysia). Non-Islamic contexts are conspicuously absent: only 3% of clusters address Christian, Hindu, or Indigenous spirituality, and regions like Europe or Latin America are virtually unrepresented. This geographic-thematic lock-in perpetuates a feedback loop: Islamic journals (e.g., JIMA) prioritize region-specific topics, which in turn attract scholars from Muslim-majority countries, further marginalizing global perspectives. For instance, Cluster 6 (Religion and Durable Behavior) examines religiosity's environmental impact but samples only Muslim-majority nations (e.g., Bhuian et al., 2018's Saudi study), ignoring Buddhist or Hindu environmental ethics.

This contrasts with Ezeh and Dube (2025), which links religiosity to eco-spirituality but lack our critique of Islam-centric fragmentation. While Ali et al., (2025) uses structured topic modeling (STM) to map Islamic trends, our bibliographic coupling exposes intellectual silos: Cluster 5 (Islamic Finance) ignores cross-religious parallels (e.g., Islamic vs. Jewish banking), and Cluster 4 (Halal Industry) risks cultural commodification a concern that Ali et al., (2025) raised for green tourism but failed to address in commercial contexts.

4.3. A Methodological Imbalance Toward Quantitative Approaches

The religion-marketing field exhibits a pronounced reliance on quantitative methodologies, with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) emerging as the dominant analytical technique, accounting for 24.6% of all articles. This preference is particularly stark in Islamic marketing research, where SEM features in 33.45% of studies, reflecting a disciplinary emphasis on hypothesis testing and predictive modeling. For instance, SEM's ability to map complex relationships between variables—such as religiosity, halal certification trust, and purchase intent—aligns with the commercial urgency of understanding Muslim consumer behavior in rapidly expanding halal markets (Lada et al., 2009; Mukhtar & Butt, 2012). Complementary techniques like Partial Least Squares (PLS, 6.99%) and Factor Analysis (5.91%) further reinforce this quantitative bias, offering tools to handle smaller sample sizes (PLS) or distill multifaceted constructs like “spiritual consumption” into measurable dimensions (Factor Analysis). While these methods provide rigor and generalizability, their hegemony risks reducing religiosity to quantifiable metrics, potentially oversimplifying culturally embedded practices—

such as Ramadan shopping rituals or Hindu pilgrimage expenditures—that defy linear measurement.

Conversely, qualitative techniques remain underutilized, even in contexts where they could yield transformative insights. Interviews (13.31%) and ethnography (2.02%) are sparingly employed, despite their potential to unpack nuanced cultural dynamics. For example, Buddhism's emphasis on mindfulness and ethical consumption—a theme explored in just 8 articles—could benefit profoundly from ethnographic immersion to explore how monastic principles shape consumer choices in markets like Thailand or Sri Lanka. Similarly, Hinduism's solitary representation (1 article) underscores a missed opportunity to apply narrative analysis or participant observation to rituals like Diwali gift-giving, which blend spirituality, family traditions, and economic exchange. Even in Christianity-focused research, where interviews (12.12%) and descriptive statistics (24.24%) dominate, the reliance on exploratory approaches over theory-building methods like grounded theory (0%) limits depth. This methodological conservatism perpetuates a cycle where “hard” data is privileged over rich, context-specific narratives, marginalizing traditions that prioritize experiential or communal dimensions of faith.

The implications of this imbalance are twofold. First, quantitative dominance may sideline non-Abrahamic religions, whose spiritual practices (e.g., Buddhist ahimsa or Hindu karma) resist reduction to Likert scales. Second, the field risks overlooking emergent trends—such as the rise of “spiritual but not religious” consumers—that demand qualitative exploration to decode motivations and values. To bridge this gap, mixed-methods designs could marry SEM's predictive power with ethnography's contextual depth, as seen in rare cases like Zamani-Farahani and Henderson's (2010) work on Islamic tourism. By diversifying analytical tools, the field can better capture religion's multifaceted role in shaping global markets, from halal hashtags to yoga-branded wellness economies.

5. LIMITATIONS

Despite the methodological rigor, the study is subject to various flaws. Firstly, the reliance on the Scopus database and the search query may have resulted in the removal of some of the relevant data indexed in alternative databases or published in languages other than English, thereby introducing a potential selection bias. Secondly, while bibliometric analysis significantly reduces researcher subjectivity

via quantitative metrics, it cannot capture the nuanced qualitative information that may be critical for understanding contextual factors and the theoretical underpinnings of religious influence in marketing. The decision to restrict the dataset solely to papers focused on business, management, and accounting may have limited the disciplinary scope, excluding interdisciplinary viewpoints that could enhance the analysis. Ultimately, the analysis of bibliographic coupling, although systematically applied, is still slightly reliant on the selected clustering parameters and normalization techniques, which may influence the specificity of thematic differentiation.

5.1. Future Research Directions

To advance the scholarly discourse on religion and spirituality in marketing, future research should consider a multi-pronged approach. Expanding the dataset to include multiple databases and non-

English publications could provide a more comprehensive and culturally diverse perspective on the topic. Integrating qualitative research methods, such as content analysis, case studies, or interviews, alongside quantitative bibliometric techniques would facilitate a richer interpretation of the underlying theoretical and contextual nuances. Furthermore, longitudinal studies examining the evolution of thematic clusters over time could yield insights into the shifting paradigms and emerging trends within the field. Comparative cross-cultural analyses may also prove beneficial in understanding how religious values influence marketing practices in different socio-cultural environments. Lastly, the development and application of more advanced analytical tools, including network analysis and machine learning techniques, could enhance the precision of thematic classification and uncover latent patterns in literature, thereby driving future innovations in both theory and practice.

Funding: This research was funded by the General Directorate of Scientific Research & Innovation, Dar Al Uloom University, through the Scientific Publishing Funding Program.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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