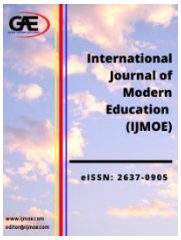
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SACRED TEXT DISPOSAL AND SUSTAINABLE WASTE MANAGEMENT: MAPPING THE GLOBAL RESEARCH LANDSCAPE THROUGH BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

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Abstract:

The disposal of sacred texts presents a distinctive sustainability challenge because environmentally responsible waste-management practices must be reconciled with religious prescriptions, cultural sensitivities, and the preservation of textual sanctity. Despite growing scholarly attention to sustainable waste management and religion–environment interactions, the intellectual structure, research development, and collaborative landscape surrounding sacred-text disposal remain insufficiently understood. This study therefore provides a bibliometric analysis of the global literature on sacred text disposal and sustainable waste management, identifying publication trends, influential contributors, geographical patterns, thematic structures, and international research collaboration. Bibliographic records were retrieved from the Scopus database using an advanced search strategy structured around three principal concepts: sacred text, disposal, and management, incorporating relevant synonymous and related terms. Following data screening and cleaning using Scopus Analyzer and OpenRefine, 262 publications spanning 1973 to August 2026 were retained for analysis. VOSviewer was subsequently employed to conduct keyword co-occurrence and country-level co-authorship network analyses. The findings reveal substantial recent growth in the field, with 138 publications (52.67%) appearing between 2019 and August 2026, and annual output reaching its highest level in 2025, at 29 publications (11.07%). Geographically, the United States was the

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leading contributor with 66 publications (25.19%), followed by the United Kingdom (25; 9.54%), Indonesia (23; 8.78%), and Malaysia (18; 6.87%). Keyword mapping revealed a heterogeneous intellectual structure connecting religion and sacred-text scholarship with human-centered, computational, historical, and environmental research, while country co-authorship patterns indicated uneven international collaboration. Overall, the findings characterize sacred-text disposal and sustainable waste management as an emerging, interdisciplinary, yet conceptually fragmented research domain. Greater integration of religious principles, waste-management technologies, circular-economy strategies, and cross-country collaboration is required to develop sustainable disposal frameworks that simultaneously safeguard environmental objectives and the religious sanctity of sacred materials.

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Keyword:

Disposal, Management, Sacred Text

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Introduction

Sacred text disposal is not merely a technical problem of waste removal; it is a theological and environmental question shaped by how religious communities understand the material life of holy words. Islamic and Jewish traditions alike show deep concern for the treatment of sacred writings, and Muslim debates over worn copies of the Qur'an developed around several accepted methods, including burning, washing, shredding, and burial, with later scholars framing worn texts as analogous to human corpses that deserve respectful burial (Shamsy, 2022). Across religions, this logic is not unique to Islam: traditions of book burial appear in Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Sikhism, and Islam, often treating texts as bodies, relics, or living carriers of sanctity rather than inert objects (Cummings, 2022). The Qur'an, in particular, is widely treated as a set-apart object governed by adab, including ritual purity in handling and physical elevation above ordinary books, which helps explain why disposal practices are judged not only by method but also by intention and reverence (Larsson et al., 2024). Recent ethnographic work also shows that even in an age of digitization, many communities continue to locate sacred efficacy in the handwritten or materially transmitted manuscript itself, suggesting that the problem of disposal persists because physical texts still carry ritual agency that digital copies often do not (Sobirin, 2025).

This religious materiality complicates modern waste management because sacred objects enter disposal systems designed for efficiency, sanitation, and scale rather than for reverence, symbolism, or ritual constraints. A recent systematic review of Quranic literature disposal describes the field as a balance among theological, cultural, and environmental factors and argues that conventional respectful methods remain important but are no longer sufficient for contemporary conditions (Mobin et al., 2025). That review also identifies recurring needs for stricter governance, standardized, theologically robust guidelines, awareness campaigns, and

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investment in biodegradable or other environmentally safer technologies, indicating that sacred text disposal increasingly requires institutional design rather than private piety alone (Mobin et al., 2025). Historical and contemporary evidence further warns that burning itself is morally ambiguous: it can function as a legitimate reverential disposal method within a ritual framework, but in other contexts book burning has been tied to oppression, censorship, persecution, and religious extremism, making intention central to how the act is interpreted (Agyapong, 2023; Larsson et al., 2024; Mobin et al., 2025). An adequate introduction to sacred text disposal must therefore begin from a double recognition: holy books are matter, but they are not treated as mere matter; they become waste, but not ordinary waste.

The sustainability challenge becomes sharper when sacred practices are situated within wider religious environments that already generate substantial material burdens. Research on ritual and pilgrimage settings shows that sacred sites and events can produce large volumes of unmanaged waste, and these burdens are often intensified by modern materials such as plastics, packaging, and chemically treated supplies. In Bali, sacred areas are reported to be experiencing ecosystem degradation due to unmanaged ritual waste, dominated by non-organic materials that pollute soil and water, and to weak technical regulation and the absence of spiritually grounded sorting systems, which are identified as key drivers (Yanti, 2026). During the 2023 Arba'een pilgrimage in Karbala, waste audits documented 7,900 tonnes of food waste and 4,000 tonnes of plastic waste over 20 days, showing the scale at which devotional gatherings can intersect with unsustainable consumption (Kadum et al., 2025). Conceptual work on pilgrimage and religious tourism similarly argues that mass religious mobility contributes to waste accumulation, yet is often insulated from blame because narratives of transcendence can foster denial, indifference, or helplessness toward environmental harm (Shinde & Olsen, 2022). Comparable tensions are evident at Christian prayer sites in Ghana, where insufficient bins, environmentally disruptive infrastructure, and poor visitor practices have led to visible ecological degradation despite the landscape's spiritual purpose (Boamah, 2025).

These findings matter for sacred text disposal because they show that respectful treatment cannot be isolated from the broader infrastructures through which religious waste is sorted, collected, processed, and symbolically interpreted. Religious values often contain strong environmental ethics, but multiple studies emphasize that these values do not automatically translate into sustainable behavior without sustained education, practical systems, and institutional support. In Indonesia, ethnographic research found that consistent religious teaching and effective sermon communication can help form environmental ethics capable of changing waste behavior, especially when transcendental values are made practical rather than merely textual (Soekiswati et al., 2024). Policy work in Bali makes a similar case, proposing that standard operating procedures for sacred-area waste management be integrated with eco-theological education, standardized ceremonial materials, and local sorting infrastructure, enabling a shift from a linear to a circular model (Yanti, 2026). Studies of pilgrimage management add that religious leaders have unusual power to legitimize waste reduction as moral duty, while municipal authorities contribute logistics, regulation, collection systems, signage, and educational tools; the evidence suggests that the most effective interventions arise from collaboration between these domains rather than from either one alone (Kadum et al., 2025).

Seen in this light, the disposal of sacred texts becomes a test case for a larger model of faith-grounded sustainability in which ritual respect and ecological responsibility are treated as

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mutually reinforcing rather than oppositional. Reviews of Quranic disposal explicitly call for interfaith cooperation, stronger oversight, community education, and eco-friendly frameworks that preserve sanctity while reducing environmental damage (Mobin et al., 2025). Legal scholarship on sustainable waste governance in Indonesia likewise argues that Islamic environmental jurisprudence offers actionable principles such as prevention of harm, public welfare, stewardship, and environmental protection, and that embedding these principles in law and policy can increase both legitimacy and public acceptance (Contemporary et al., 2025). Proposed reforms include increased public funding, participatory regulation, faith-based financing tools, and partnerships with religious networks to build coherent governance rather than fragmented responses to disposal (Contemporary et al., 2025). Evidence from religious tourism management points in the same direction, with structured waste management and green technology improving sustainable destination performance at a mosque tourism site in Batam (Lapotulo et al., 2025). An extended discussion of "Sacred Text Disposal and Sustainable Waste Management" should therefore frame disposal not solely as the end of a text's life, but as part of a wider religious ecology in which manuscripts, rituals, institutions, infrastructures, and environmental limits meet. The central challenge is to design disposal practices that maintain adab toward sacred words while preventing the sacred from becoming a source of avoidable ecological harm (Mobin et al., 2025).

Research Question

RQ1: How has the volume of scholarly publications on sacred text disposal and sustainable waste management evolved from 1973 to August 2026?
RQ2: Which publications are the most influential in sacred text disposal and sustainable waste management research, as measured by citation impact?
RQ3: Which countries are the leading contributors to sacred text disposal and sustainable waste management research in terms of publication output and citation performance?
RQ4: What are the dominant and emerging research themes in sacred text disposal and sustainable waste management research, as revealed through keyword co-occurrence analysis?
RQ5: What patterns of international research collaboration characterize sacred text disposal and sustainable waste management research, as revealed through country-level co-authorship network analysis?

Methodology

Bibliometric analysis provides a systematic and quantitative approach to the collection, organization, and evaluation of bibliographic information derived from scholarly publications (Alves et al., 2021; Assyakur & Rosa, 2022; Verbeek et al., 2002). Beyond conventional descriptive indicators, such as publication trends, leading publication outlets, and influential authors (Wu & Wu, 2017), bibliometric analysis incorporates advanced techniques, including document co-citation analysis, to reveal the intellectual structure, knowledge foundations, and evolutionary patterns of a research field. The robustness of such an analysis depends substantially on a transparent and iterative methodological process encompassing the formulation and refinement of search terms, systematic database retrieval, screening of relevant records, and rigorous evaluation of the resulting bibliographic dataset. These procedures facilitate the construction of a reliable and reproducible body of literature from which meaningful patterns and relationships can be identified (Fahimnia et al., 2015).

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Accordingly, the present study prioritized high-quality scholarly publications that could provide substantive insights into the conceptual and theoretical foundations of the research domain. Scopus was selected as the primary bibliographic database because of its extensive multidisciplinary coverage, structured citation information, and suitability for bibliometric data retrieval and analysis (Al-Khoury et al., 2022; di Stefano et al., 2010; Khiste & Paithankar, 2017). To enhance the dataset's scholarly consistency, the analysis was restricted to peer-reviewed journal articles, while non-journal document types, including books and lecture notes, were excluded (Gu et al., 2019). Using Elsevier's Scopus database, relevant publications addressing sacred text disposal and sustainable waste management published between 1973 and August 2026 were systematically retrieved and compiled into the final bibliographic dataset for subsequent performance analysis and science mapping.

Data Search Strategy

The data collection strategy was designed to achieve broad yet conceptually structured coverage of the literature on the disposal of sacred texts and sustainable waste management. Scopus was selected as the bibliographic source because its multidisciplinary coverage is particularly appropriate for a research domain that intersects religious studies, records and information management, waste management, environmental sustainability, governance, and cultural heritage. The search covered publications from 1973 to 2026 and was restricted to English-language records, with no initial restrictions on source type, document type, or subject area. This inclusive strategy was important because the disposal of sacred texts remains an interdisciplinary and comparatively fragmented research domain; imposing narrow disciplinary or document-type restrictions at the retrieval stage could therefore have excluded relevant contributions outside conventional environmental or religious-studies classifications. The Boolean search strategy further strengthened conceptual coverage by integrating three complementary keyword clusters: terminology representing sacred texts (e.g., "Quran," "Mushaf," "Bible," and "religious scripture*"); end-of-life and disposal practices (e.g., "recycling," "burning," "shredding," "ritual disposal," and "waste management"); and institutional or managerial dimensions (e.g., "governance," "policy," "regulation," "guidelines," "system*," and "implementation"). The inclusion of spelling and terminology variants also reduced the likelihood of missing publications because of differences in religious, disciplinary, or indexing conventions. Collectively, this three-dimensional search architecture operationalizes the field as an intersection between sacred materials, disposal practices, and institutional management, thereby providing a defensible conceptual boundary for the bibliometric dataset rather than relying on a single narrowly defined disposal term.

The search retrieved 302 records, which were subsequently screened and cleaned before bibliometric analysis. A total of 40 records (13.25%) were removed as duplicates or substantively irrelevant to the research topic, yielding a final analytical corpus of 262 publications (86.75% of the initially retrieved records). The relatively high retention rate indicates that the Boolean strategy achieved a reasonable balance between sensitivity and topical specificity: it was sufficiently broad to capture heterogeneous terminology yet remained highly relevant to the study's conceptual scope. Nevertheless, the exclusion of approximately one in eight retrieved records demonstrates why bibliometric investigations should not rely exclusively on automated database retrieval, as keyword co-occurrence can identify publications that contain relevant terminology without substantively examining sacred-text disposal or its management. Manual or predefined relevance screening therefore serves as an important quality-control mechanism to reduce conceptual noise and strengthen the validity of

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subsequent analyses of publication trends, geographical productivity, intellectual structure, and thematic development. At the same time, restricting the dataset to Scopus and English-language publications introduces acknowledged coverage limitations, particularly because practices concerning the Qur'an, Bible, and other sacred texts are extensively in Arabic, Malay, Indonesian, Hebrew, Japanese, and other languages, as well as in locally indexed sources. Consequently, the final corpus of 262 records should be interpreted as a systematically constructed representation of the Scopus-indexed English-language scholarly landscape, rather than an exhaustive inventory of global knowledge on the disposal of sacred texts. This distinction strengthens the study's methodological transparency and provides an appropriate basis for interpreting the subsequent bibliometric findings within clearly defined database, linguistic, temporal, and conceptual boundaries.

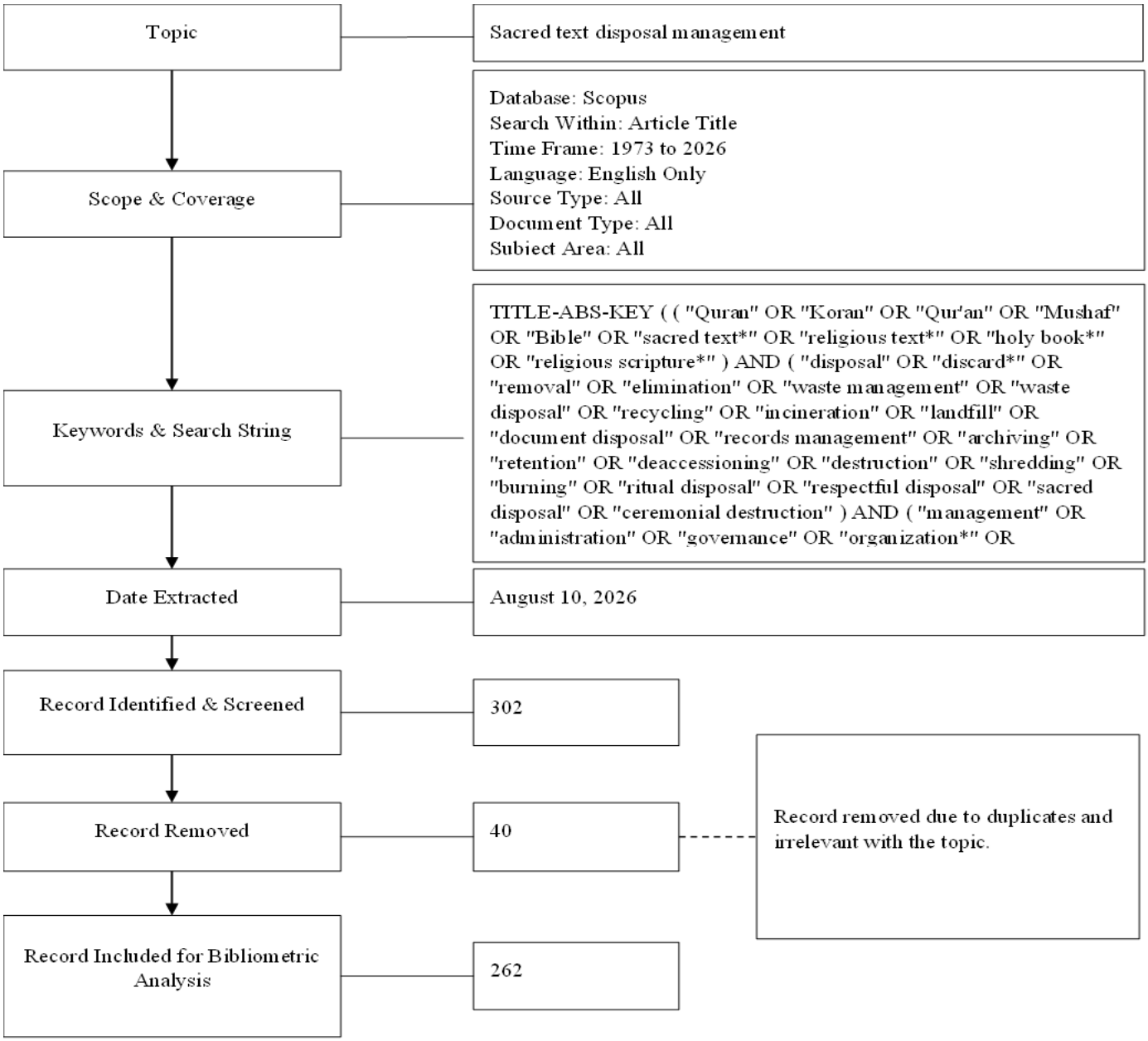


Figure 1: Bibliometric Data Search Strategy, Screening Process, and Study Selection
Source: Author's own compilation

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Data Analysis

VOSviewer is specialized bibliometric mapping and visualization software developed by Nees Jan van Eck and Ludo Waltman at Leiden University in the Netherlands (van Eck & Waltman, 2010, 2017). It has been widely adopted in bibliometric and scientometric research for its ability to construct, visualize, and interpret complex relationships within large bibliographic datasets. The software supports several forms of science mapping, including co-authorship, co-citation, bibliographic coupling, citation, and keyword co-occurrence analyses, thereby enabling researchers to examine the social, intellectual, and conceptual structures of a research domain. Through network, overlay, and density visualizations, VOSviewer transforms multidimensional bibliometric relationships into interpretable graphical representations in which nodes represent analytical entities, such as authors, documents, sources, countries, or keywords. At the same time, links and their associated strengths indicate the relationships among these entities. Its clustering algorithm further organizes strongly related items into distinct groups, facilitating the identification of major knowledge structures, thematic concentrations, and patterns of scholarly interaction (van Eck & Waltman, 2010, 2017).

A principal advantage of VOSviewer is its ability to simplify complex bibliometric networks without obscuring their underlying relational structure. In network visualization, the relative size of an item generally reflects its assigned weight, whereas the proximity between items indicates their degree of relatedness; strongly associated items tend to be positioned closer together. Clustering techniques subsequently partition these interconnected items into groups based on their relational strength, thereby allowing dominant research communities or thematic structures to be identified. Overlay visualization can also reveal temporal or other attribute-based variations across a network, whereas density visualization highlights areas with particularly high concentrations of interconnected items. These complementary functions are especially valuable for an interdisciplinary field such as sacred text disposal and sustainable waste management, where relevant scholarship may be distributed across religious studies, environmental management, sustainability, records management, cultural heritage, and waste-management research. VOSviewer therefore provides an appropriate analytical environment for identifying not only the most prominent bibliometric entities but also the structural relationships through which the field has evolved.

For the present study, bibliographic records covering publications from 1973 to August 2026 were retrieved from the Scopus database and prepared for bibliometric analysis. The dataset included key metadata, including publication year, document title, author information, source title, citation information, and author and index terms. Following data screening and cleaning, the final dataset was imported into VOSviewer version 1.6.20 to construct and examine bibliometric networks. VOS mapping and clustering procedures were applied to investigate relationships among the selected bibliometric units and to identify prominent clusters within the research landscape. Depending on the analytical objective, the resulting maps were interpreted in terms of item weight, link strength, total link strength, spatial proximity, and cluster membership. This analytical procedure provided a systematic basis for examining the structure and development of scholarship on sacred-text disposal and for identifying influential contributors, interconnected research communities, and dominant or emerging thematic areas. Methodologically, VOSviewer applies the visualization of similarities (VOS) mapping technique, which positions bibliometric items in a low-dimensional space so that the distance between two items reflects their degree of relatedness (van Eck & Waltman, 2010). Although VOS mapping shares conceptual similarities with multidimensional scaling (MDS) (Appio et

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al., 2014), the approaches differ in their optimization and normalization procedures. VOS mapping is specifically designed to represent similarity relationships derived from bibliometric networks and is therefore particularly suitable for co-occurrence and other relational bibliometric data. Before mapping, the strength of relationships between items can be normalized using association strength (AS), which corrects for differences in the overall occurrence frequencies of individual items (van Eck & Waltman, 2010), (Van Eck & Waltman, 2007). For two items (i) and (j), association strength can be expressed as:

$$AS_{ij} = \frac{C_{ij}}{w_i w_j}$$

where (c_{ij}) represents the observed number of co-occurrences between items (i) and (j), while (w_i) and (w_j) represent the total occurrence or weight of items (i) and (j), respectively. A higher association-strength value therefore indicates a stronger normalized relationship between the two items. This normalization is particularly important in bibliometric networks because frequently occurring keywords, highly productive authors, or heavily represented sources may otherwise dominate the network solely because of their absolute frequencies. By combining association-strength normalization with VOS mapping and clustering, the present study provides a structured representation of the conceptual, intellectual, and collaborative landscape of research on the disposal of sacred texts and sustainable waste management (van Eck & Waltman, 2010), (Van Eck & Waltman, 2007).

Result and Discussion

***RQ1**: How Has The Volume Of Scholarly Publications On Sacred Text Disposal And Sustainable Waste Management Evolved From 1973 To August 2026?*

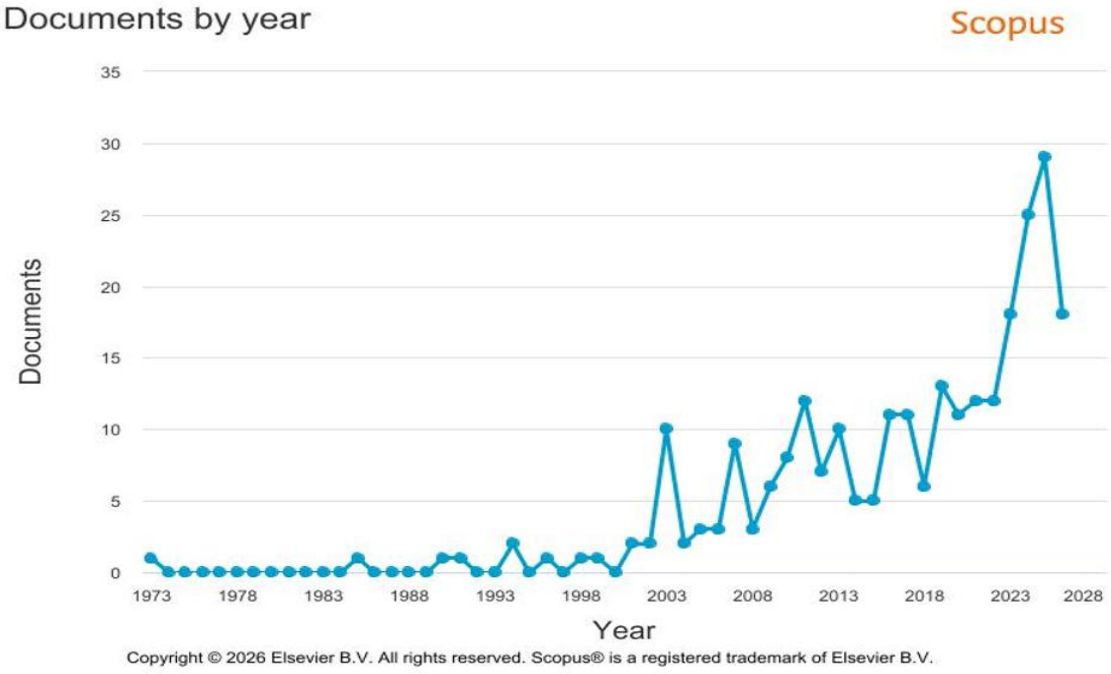


Figure 2: Trend of Research in Augmented Reality by Years

Source: Author's own compilation

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The publication trend from 1973 to August 2026 demonstrates a clear transition of research on sacred text disposal and sustainable waste management from a highly fragmented niche into a more visible interdisciplinary field. Of the 262 publications represented in the dataset, scholarly activity was extremely limited during the formative period from 1973 to the late 1990s, with many years recording no publications and isolated contributions appearing only in 1973, 1985, 1990, 1991, 1994, 1996, 1998, and 1999. This pattern suggests that the disposal of sacred or religious materials was historically treated primarily as a theological, ritual, cultural, archival, or preservation issue rather than as a distinct environmental management research problem. A noticeable transition occurred after 2000, particularly with 10 publications in 2003 (3.82%), nine in 2007 (3.44%), 12 in 2011 (4.58%), and 10 in 2013 (3.82%). Although publication output subsequently fluctuated, these increases indicate a gradual broadening of scholarly attention toward the intersection between religion, material culture, waste practices, environmental responsibility, and the management of deteriorated religious materials. The fluctuations between 2003 and 2018 also suggest that the field had not yet developed into a stable and consolidated research domain; instead, publications were likely dispersed across disciplines such as religious studies, environmental management, waste management, conservation, records and information management, cultural heritage, and sustainability. Thus, the early and intermediate stages of the publication trajectory can be interpreted as a period of conceptual formation and disciplinary convergence, during which the relationship between the sanctity of religious texts and their environmentally responsible end-of-life management gradually emerged as a researchable sustainability issue.

A much stronger growth pattern is evident from 2019 onward, signalling what may be regarded as the expansion and emerging consolidation phase of the research domain. Publications increased from 6 in 2018 (2.29%) to 13 in 2019 (4.96%), followed by consistently higher output during 2020-2023, then reaching 25 publications in 2024 (9.54%) and a historical peak of 29 in 2025 (11.07%). Importantly, 18 publications had already been recorded by August 2026 (6.87%); because 2026 represents only a partial publication year, this figure should not be interpreted as evidence of declining scholarly interest. Collectively, 2019-August 2026 accounts for 138 publications, or approximately 52.7% of the entire dataset, meaning that more than half of all identified publications appeared within the most recent eight-year period. This concentration provides strong bibliometric evidence that the field has gained substantial contemporary relevance. Several interconnected developments plausibly explain this acceleration: growing international emphasis on sustainable consumption and production, circular-economy principles, environmentally responsible waste management, and increasing recognition that religious and cultural values influence environmental behavior. Sacred texts create a particularly complex sustainability problem because conventional disposal practices may be environmentally efficient yet religiously unacceptable, while traditional practices such as burning or burial may preserve religious dignity but raise questions concerning emissions, land use, resource recovery, and environmental sustainability. Consequently, recent scholarship increasingly concerns itself with reconciling religious sanctity with environmental responsibility, including recycling, material recovery, environmentally sensitive destruction, institutional collection systems, and community disposal services. The strong post-2019 growth therefore indicates not merely an increase in publication volume, but a broader intellectual shift toward integrating religious ethics, household behavior, waste-management infrastructure, and sustainability. This trajectory also reveals an important research opportunity: despite rapid recent growth, the relatively modest cumulative literature suggests that sacred text disposal remains an emerging and insufficiently consolidated research field, providing a strong justification for further empirical investigation of sustainable disposal

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practices, behavioral intention, institutional governance, and culturally and religiously acceptable circular-economy solutions.

***RQ2**: Which Publications Are The Most Influential In Sacred Text Disposal And Sustainable Waste Management Research, As Measured By Citation Impact?*

The citation analysis reveals a highly uneven distribution of scholarly influence within the dataset, with the most highly cited documents originating from markedly different disciplinary contexts. Caenn, Darley, and Gray (Mohammed & Emil Larsen-Reindorf, 2020) hold the leading position with Composition and Properties of Drilling and Completion Fluids (2011), which has accumulated 439 citations, substantially exceeding those of Mohammed and Larsen-Reindorf (Neuwirth, 2003) (96 citations) and Neuwirth (Marcella & Greenfield, 2002) (84 citations). The later seventh edition by Caenn, Darley, and Gray (Kamarulzaman & Saifuddeen, 2010) also appears among the ten most-cited records, with 64 citations. Other highly cited contributions include Marcella and Greenfield (Caenn et al., 2016) on cyber forensics (67 citations), Kamarulzaman and Saifuddeen (Monroe, 2011) on Islam and harm reduction (58 citations), Monroe (Gutierrez et al., 2014) on biblical texts and Israelite ritual practices (55 citations), Gutierrez et al. (Middlemas, 2006) on faith-based health intervention (51 citations), Middlemas (Machida et al., 2003) on templeless Judah (50 citations), and Machida et al. (Caenn et al., 2011) on atmospheric CO_2 (40 citations). This substantial disciplinary heterogeneity is analytically important because it suggests that the retrieved corpus extends beyond literature directly addressing the disposal of sacred texts. In particular, highly cited publications on drilling fluids, cyber forensics, menstrual hygiene, diabetes prevention, and atmospheric science appear to have entered the dataset because individual words contained in their titles, abstracts, or indexed keywords satisfied different components of the broad Boolean search expression. Their high citation counts should therefore not automatically be interpreted as evidence of intellectual influence on sacred-text disposal research. Rather, they illustrate a fundamental distinction between citation impact within the retrieved dataset and conceptual relevance to the focal research domain. The exceptionally high citation count of Caenn et al. (Mohammed & Emil Larsen-Reindorf, 2020), for example, is more plausibly attributable to the established scientific and industrial importance of drilling-fluid research than to its contribution to sacred-text disposal or sustainable management of religious materials. Consequently, citation frequency alone provides an insufficient basis for identifying the intellectual foundations of this emerging field; highly cited records should also be evaluated for topical relevance, citation context, and substantive connection to the research questions.

Conversely, several records demonstrate considerably stronger conceptual alignment with the religious and sacred-text dimensions of the study despite having lower absolute citation counts. Neuwirth's (Marcella & Greenfield, 2002) examination of the relationship between the Qur'an and history, with 84 citations, is the most prominent Qur'an-focused contribution among the ten records, while Monroe (Gutierrez et al., 2014) and Middlemas (Machida et al., 2003) offer perspectives on biblical texts, ritual practices, sacred spaces, and religious traditions. Kamarulzaman and Saifuddeen (Monroe, 2011) further demonstrate the intersection of Islamic principles with contemporary social and policy problems. In contrast, Gutierrez et al. (Middlemas, 2006) illustrate how religious institutions and spirituality can shape community-based practices. These contributions may provide contextual or theoretical insight into the broader treatment of religious values, sacred materials, and institutionally mediated behavior. However, they should not necessarily be classified as core studies of the disposal of sacred texts. More importantly, the absence of a strongly cited publication explicitly centered on

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sacred text disposal and sustainable waste management suggests that the field has yet to establish a consolidated, highly cited intellectual core. This finding is consistent with the previously observed temporal pattern, in which a substantial proportion of publications emerged only in recent years; newer studies have had considerably less time to accumulate citations than publications released in the early 2000s or 2010s. The results therefore support two complementary interpretations: first, the topic remains an emerging and interdisciplinary research domain drawing conceptually from religious studies, environmental management, cultural practices, records management, and sustainability; second, the presence of highly cited but weakly related records exposes potential search-string noise that should be addressed through rigorous relevance screening. For a Q1-level bibliometric study, this distinction is critical because the intellectual structure of the field should be established not merely by ranking citation counts, but by triangulating citation performance with direct thematic relevance, co-citation relationships, bibliographic coupling, and keyword co-occurrence patterns. Such an approach would prevent citation-rich peripheral publications from disproportionately shaping the field's interpretation while allowing genuinely influential research on sacred texts, religiously appropriate disposal practices, and sustainable management to emerge more clearly. The details of the cited article are shown in Table 3

Table 1: Top 10 Most Cited Publications in Sacred Text Disposal and Sustainable Waste Management Research

No	Authors	Title	Year	Source title	Cited by
1	Caenn R.; Darley H.C.H.; Gray G.R. (Caenn et al., 2011)	Composition and Properties of Drilling and Completion Fluids	2011	Composition and Properties of Drilling and Completion Fluids	439
2	Mohammed S.; Emil Larsen-Reindorf R. (Mohammed & Emil Larsen-Reindorf, 2020)	Menstrual knowledge, sociocultural restrictions, and barriers to menstrual hygiene management in Ghana: Evidence from a multi-method survey among adolescent schoolgirls and schoolboys	2020	PLoS ONE	96
3	Neuwirth A. (Neuwirth, 2003)	Qur'an and History - A Disputed Relationship: Some Reflections on Qur'anic History and History in the Qur'an	2003	Journal of Qur'anic Studies	84
4	Marcella A.J., Jr.; Greenfield R.S. (Marcella & Greenfield, 2002)	Cyber forensics: A field manual for collecting, examining, and preserving evidence of computer crimes	2002	Cyber Forensics: A Field Manual for Collecting, Examining, and Preserving Evidence of Computer Crimes	67

5	Caenn R.; Darley H.C.H.; Gray G.R. (Caenn et al., 2016)	Composition and Properties of Drilling and Completion Fluids: Seventh Edition	2016	Composition and Properties of Drilling and Completion Fluids: Seventh Edition	64
6	Kamarulzaman A.; Saifuddeen S.M. (Kamarulzaman & Saifuddeen, 2010)	Islam and harm reduction	2010	International Journal of Drug Policy	58
7	Monroe L.A.S. (Monroe, 2011)	Josiah's Reform and the Dynamics of Defilement: Israelite Rites of Violence and the Making of a Biblical Text	2011	Josiah's Reform and the Dynamics of Defilement: Israelite Rites of Violence and the Making of A Biblical Text	55
8	Gutierrez J. et al. (Gutierrez et al., 2014)	Health, Community, and Spirituality: Evaluation of a Multicultural Faith-Based Diabetes Prevention Program	2014	The Diabetes Educator	51
9	Middlemas J. (Middlemas, 2006)	The Troubles of Templeless Judah	2006	The Troubles of Templeless Judah	50
10	Machida T. et al. (Machida et al., 2003)	Vertical and meridional distributions of the atmospheric CO2 mixing ratio between northern midlatitudes and southern subtropics	2003	Journal of Geophysical Research: Atmospheres	40

Source: Author's own compilation

***RQ3**: Which Countries Are The Leading Contributors To Sacred Text Disposal And Sustainable Waste Management Research In Terms Of Publication Output And Citation Performance?*

The geographical distribution of publications indicates that research on sacred text disposal and sustainable waste management is concentrated in a relatively small number of countries but reflects distinct religious, cultural, and environmental contexts. The United States is the dominant contributor with 66 documents (25.19%), representing approximately one-quarter of the entire dataset and producing more than twice the output of the United Kingdom, which ranks second with 25 publications (9.54%). This substantial US contribution can reasonably be attributed to its large and diverse academic research system, strong scholarship in religious studies, environmental sustainability, waste management, conservation, library and information science, and material culture, as well as its religiously pluralistic population. The

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United Kingdom's second position similarly reflects its established research traditions in religious studies, heritage conservation, environmental management, and sustainability. More importantly for the religious dimension of the topic, Indonesia ranks third with 23 publications (8.78%), followed closely by Malaysia with 18 (6.87%). Their prominent positions are particularly significant because both countries have large Muslim populations and institutional environments in which the respectful handling of the Qur'an and other Islamic materials has practical religious and societal importance. In these settings, disposal of sacred texts is not simply a conventional waste-management problem: religious prescriptions regarding the sanctity of Qur'anic verses can restrict ordinary disposal and require culturally acceptable methods, such as controlled burning, burial, destruction of printed copies, or management by authorized institutions. The relatively high contributions of Indonesia and Malaysia therefore demonstrate how local religious practices and practical disposal challenges can become important drivers of scholarly production, while simultaneously creating opportunities to investigate how traditional religious requirements can be reconciled with contemporary principles of resource conservation, recycling, and environmental sustainability.

The remaining countries further demonstrate the interdisciplinary and multi-religious character of the research landscape. Israel contributes 14 publications (5.34%), which is noteworthy given the importance of appropriate treatment and disposal of sacred writings within Jewish traditions, including practices associated with the preservation or retirement of religious texts. Its position, therefore, reinforces the argument that the disposal of sacred texts should be conceptualized beyond any single religion. Germany accounts for 12 publications (4.58%), while Japan contributes 11 (4.20%), Australia 10 (3.82%), and India and Sweden each contribute 9 publications (3.44%). Their presence may reflect different but complementary research orientations, including waste-management technologies, environmental sustainability, conservation of cultural and religious heritage, circular-economy practices, and the study of religion and material culture. India is especially relevant because its religious diversity provides a distinctive setting for examining the treatment of sacred materials across Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Buddhist, Christian, and other communities.

In contrast, Japan offers another important cultural context in which religious objects and texts may be managed through established ritual practices. Sweden, Germany, and Australia may contribute more strongly from sustainability, environmental policy, recycling, and heritage management perspectives. Collectively, the top ten countries account for 197 documents (75.19%), revealing a substantial geographical concentration of scholarship. This concentration suggests that the field is being shaped by two complementary forces: countries where sacred-text management has strong religious and cultural significance, such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Israel, and India, and countries with highly developed research systems in sustainability and environmental management, such as the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Australia, Sweden, and Japan. At the same time, the limited representation of many Muslim-majority and other religiously diverse countries exposes an important geographical research gap. Future bibliometric and empirical research should therefore encourage greater cross-country collaboration, particularly between countries possessing strong sustainability expertise and those where sacred-text disposal is an everyday religious-management concern, to develop disposal approaches that simultaneously protect religious sanctity, cultural values, environmental sustainability, and circular-economy objectives.

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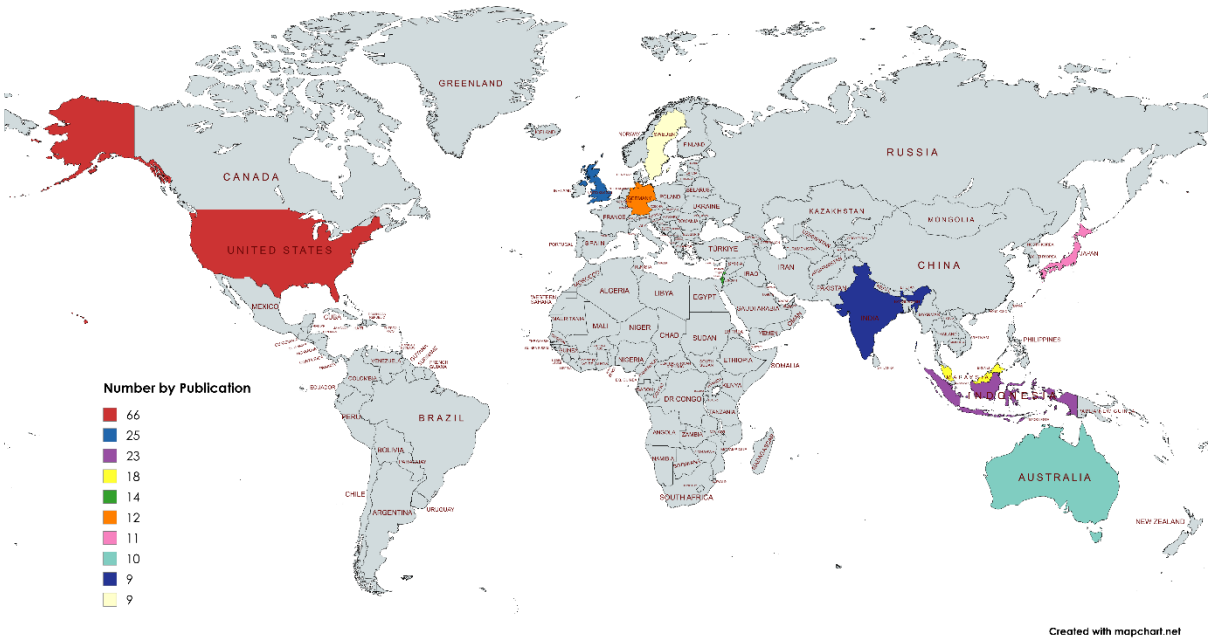


Figure 3: The Keyword Co-Occurrence Network

Source: Author's own compilation

Table 2: The Keyword Co-Occurrence Network

Country/Territory	Documents	Percentage
United States	66	25.19
United Kingdom	25	9.54
Indonesia	23	8.78
Malaysia	18	6.87
Israel	14	5.34
Germany	12	4.58
Japan	11	4.20
Australia	10	3.82
India	9	3.44
Sweden	9	3.44

Source: Author's own compilation

RQ4: What Are The Dominant And Emerging Research Themes In Sacred Text Disposal And Sustainable Waste Management Research, As Revealed Through Keyword Co-Occurrence Analysis?

As illustrated in Figure 3, the keyword co-occurrence network reveals a heterogeneous and interdisciplinary knowledge structure, with *human* emerging as the most frequently occurring and strongly connected keyword (21 occurrences; total link strength [TLS] = 56), followed by *article* (13; TLS = 37) and *male* (9; TLS = 37). The prominence of *human*, together with *adult* (6; TLS = 27), *female* (6; TLS = 24), and *male*, indicates a substantial human- and population-oriented component within the retrieved literature, suggesting that sacred texts and religion are frequently examined in relation to individual behavior, social practices, health, education, or community contexts. More substantively aligned with the study's conceptual focus, religion

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records eight occurrences and a relatively high TLS of 25, while Bible records six occurrences and a TLS of 19. Their comparatively strong connectivity suggests that religious concepts occupy an important bridging position within the network rather than functioning as isolated subjects. Nevertheless, the absence of terms such as *sacred text disposal*, *Quranic disposal*, *waste management*, *recycling*, or *sustainability* among the most frequently occurring keywords is itself an important finding. It indicates that the literature has not yet converged on a standardized vocabulary to describe the sustainable disposal of sacred texts. Instead, the intellectual landscape remains dispersed across broader religious, social, technological, historical, and environmental discourses. This fragmentation supports the argument that sacred text disposal and sustainable waste management remain an emerging research intersection rather than a fully consolidated bibliometric field, with its conceptual boundaries still being formed through contributions from multiple disciplines.

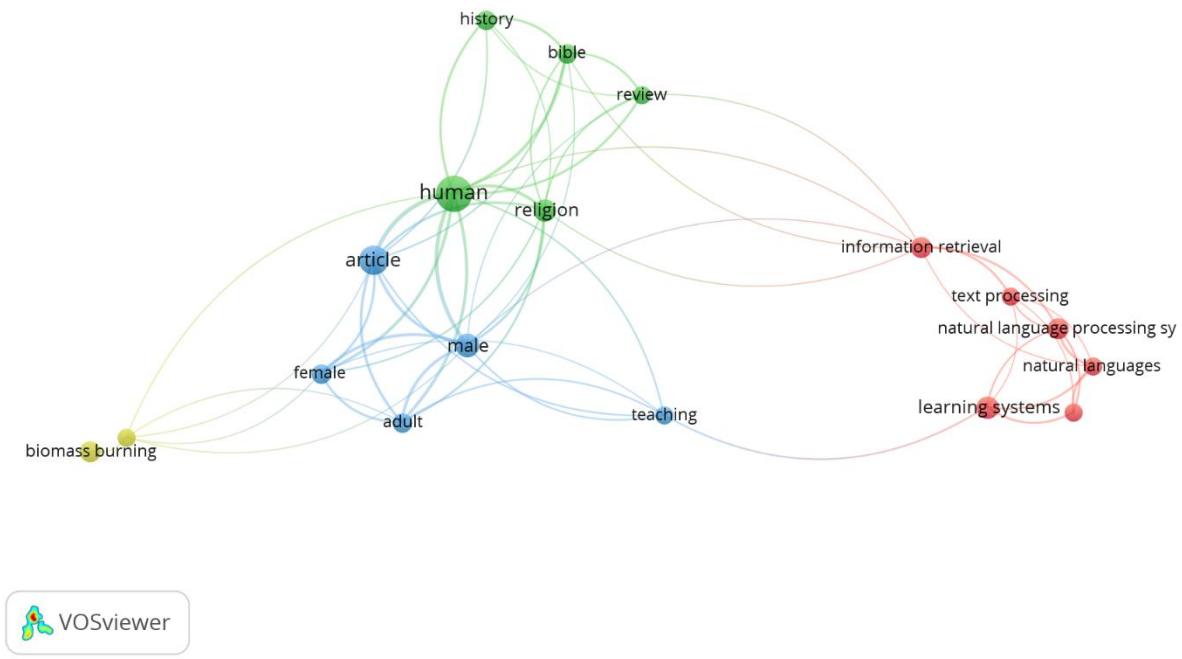


Figure 4: Network Visualization Map Of Keywords' Co-Occurrence
Source: Author's own compilation

A second notable pattern in Figure 4 is the visibility of technology-oriented keywords, particularly learning systems (8 occurrences; TLS = 11), natural language processing systems (7; TLS = 14), information retrieval (7; TLS = 12), deep learning (5; TLS = 10), natural languages (5; TLS = 12), and text processing (5; TLS = 8). Their presence indicates a distinct computational and information science strand within the dataset, most likely associated with the analysis, retrieval, classification, interpretation, or processing of religious and textual materials rather than with their physical end-of-life management. Similarly, history (6; TLS = 12) and teaching (5; TLS = 11) reflect humanities and educational perspectives, whereas biomass burning presents an especially revealing contrast: despite seven occurrences, it records

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a TLS of only 2, indicating that it is comparatively weakly integrated with the broader keyword network. This distinction demonstrates why occurrence frequency should not be interpreted in isolation from network connectivity; a keyword may appear repeatedly yet remain peripheral to the field's principal intellectual structure. Collectively, these patterns reveal a research landscape characterized by thematic fragmentation and weak integration between religious-text scholarship, technological text analysis, human-centered research, and environmental disposal perspectives. This fragmentation identifies a significant opportunity for future scholarship to establish stronger conceptual connections among sacred-text management, religiously acceptable disposal practices, environmental impacts, recycling technologies, circular-economy principles, and sustainable waste governance. At the same time, the prominence of several generic or peripheral indexing terms suggests that keyword harmonization and careful relevance screening are essential when interpreting the network, particularly because database-assigned terms can influence co-occurrence structures without necessarily representing the central conceptual focus of individual publications.

***RQ5**: What Patterns Of International Research Collaboration Characterize Sacred Text Disposal And Sustainable Waste Management Research, As Revealed Through Country-Level Co-Authorship Network Analysis?*

As illustrated in Figure 5, the country-level co-authorship network shows that the scholarly landscape of sacred text disposal and sustainable waste management is characterized by substantial geographical concentration but comparatively uneven international collaboration. The United States occupies the most prominent position, contributing 66 documents, receiving 733 citations, and recording the highest total link strength (TLS = 17). Its simultaneous dominance in productivity, citation impact, and collaborative connectivity suggests that the United States functions as an important hub for knowledge production and networking within the retrieved literature. The United Kingdom follows with 25 documents, 191 citations, and a TLS of 7, while Indonesia contributes 23 documents and 84 citations with a TLS of 5. Malaysia, with 19 documents, 119 citations, and a TLS of 4, also demonstrates substantial research activity, reinforcing Southeast Asia's importance in this research landscape. The relatively strong representation of Indonesia and Malaysia is particularly meaningful because the management of religious texts, especially the respectful handling of Quranic materials, has direct cultural, institutional, and religious significance in Muslim-majority societies. Israel similarly records 14 documents and 135 citations (TLS = 3), potentially reflecting scholarship associated with sacred writings and Jewish religious traditions. Collectively, these results suggest that national research productivity is shaped by two overlapping drivers: the research capacity of countries with well-established academic systems and the contextual relevance of sacred-text management in societies where religious materials have substantial cultural and ritual importance. Nevertheless, document productivity does not correspond uniformly with collaborative strength, indicating that publication volume alone cannot adequately represent a country's structural position within the international research network.

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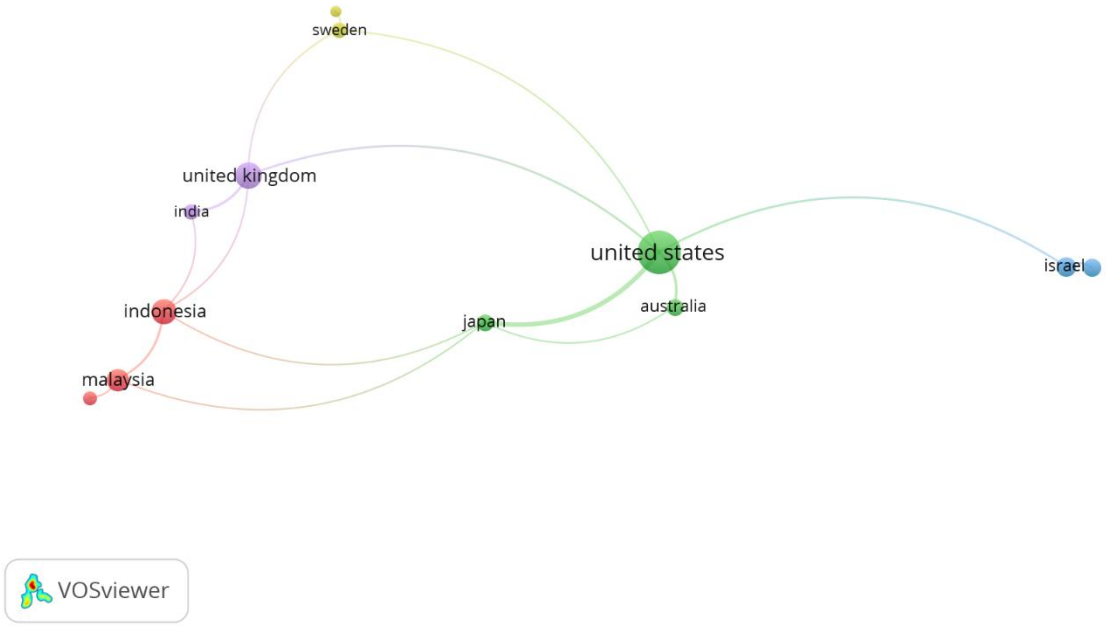


Figure 5: The Country-Level Co-Authorship Network
Source: Author's own compilation

The most striking evidence of this distinction in Figure 5 is provided by Japan, which produced only 11 documents but achieved 130 citations and a TLS of 12 which the second-highest collaborative strength after the United States. Japan therefore appears considerably more internationally connected relative to its publication volume, suggesting that a smaller but highly collaborative research portfolio can occupy a strategically important position within the network. In contrast, Germany produced 12 documents and received 92 citations but recorded a TLS of only 1, while Saudi Arabia similarly exhibited limited connectivity (7 documents; 32 citations; TLS = 1). More notably, Canada and South Africa recorded a TLS of 0, despite producing 7 and 5 documents, respectively, indicating that their publications were not connected through the country-level co-authorship relationships captured under the selected VOSviewer thresholds. India (TLS = 4), Australia (TLS = 4), Sweden (TLS = 3), and Denmark (TLS = 1) occupy intermediate positions, reflecting varying degrees of international engagement. These disparities reveal a broader structural weakness in the field: although sacred-text disposal and sustainable waste management have relevance across religious, cultural, environmental, and geographical contexts, international research collaboration remains relatively fragmented. This is particularly significant because sustainable approaches to sacred-text disposal require integrating knowledge from religiously contextualized countries, such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Israel, India, and Saudi Arabia, with expertise in waste management, environmental sustainability, technological innovation, and circular-economy systems available in other research-intensive nations. Accordingly, Figure 5 supports the argument that the future development of this emerging field would benefit from stronger cross-country and interdisciplinary research partnerships, particularly collaborations that connect

religious and cultural knowledge with expertise in environmental management. Such partnerships could facilitate comparative studies, harmonize conceptual terminology, improve the transferability of sustainable disposal technologies, and contribute to the development of environmentally responsible approaches that remain sensitive to diverse religious requirements.

Conclusion

This bibliometric study mapped the development, intellectual structure, geographical distribution, thematic orientation, and collaborative patterns of research related to sacred text disposal and sustainable waste management. The analysis addressed five principal dimensions: the evolution of publication output, citation influence, geographical contribution, dominant and emerging themes, and international co-authorship. Based on the final corpus of 262 Scopus-indexed publications covering 1973 to August 2026, the findings indicate that the field has evolved from a small, fragmented body of scholarship into a growing interdisciplinary research area. Publication activity remained limited in earlier decades but expanded considerably in recent years, with 138 publications representing approximately 52.7% of the dataset published between 2019 and August 2026. The highest annual output was recorded in 2025 with 29 publications, followed by 25 in 2024, while 18 publications had already appeared by August 2026. This pattern indicates increasing scholarly attention to the intersection between sacred materials, religious values, environmental responsibility, and contemporary waste-management practices.

The geographical and citation analyses further demonstrate that research activity is concentrated within a relatively limited group of countries. The United States emerged as the largest contributor, followed by the United Kingdom, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Israel. The strong positions of Indonesia and Malaysia are particularly relevant because the management and respectful disposal of Quranic materials have direct religious, cultural, and institutional significance within Muslim-majority settings. At the same time, citation analysis revealed that the most highly cited records were not necessarily the publications most directly related to sacred-text disposal. Some highly cited documents originated from peripheral disciplinary areas, suggesting that citation frequency should be interpreted alongside topical relevance rather than treated as an independent measure of intellectual influence. This result also reflects the interdisciplinary nature of the retrieved literature and indicates that the conceptual boundaries of sacred-text disposal research remain insufficiently consolidated.

The keyword co-occurrence analysis provides further evidence of this conceptual fragmentation. Human-centered terms were highly visible, while religion and the Bible maintained meaningful positions within the network. Computational themes involving information retrieval, natural language processing, deep learning, learning systems, and text processing were also present. However, core concepts such as sustainable disposal of sacred texts, circular economy, religious waste management, environmentally responsible disposal, and Quranic disposal did not dominate the keyword structure. This suggests that relevant knowledge currently exists across separate religious, technological, historical, social, and environmental research streams rather than within a mature and unified research domain. Country-level co-authorship analysis similarly revealed uneven international integration. The United States recorded the strongest collaborative position, while Japan demonstrated substantial connectivity relative to its smaller publication output. In contrast, several productive countries displayed comparatively weak international links. These patterns indicate that

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research productivity, citation influence, and collaborative strength represent different dimensions of scholarly performance and should therefore be interpreted collectively.

The findings contribute to the emerging literature by positioning sacred-text disposal as an issue that extends beyond religious practice or conventional waste management. The management of worn, damaged, obsolete, or unwanted sacred materials involves interactions among religious requirements, cultural values, environmental impacts, institutional governance, records management, technological processes, and sustainability principles. From a practical perspective, this understanding has implications for religious authorities, waste-management organizations, policymakers, libraries, archives, places of worship, community organizations, and households. Sustainable solutions should not focus exclusively on technical efficiency. Disposal systems also need to preserve the dignity and sanctity of religious texts while considering the environmental consequences of burning, burial, shredding, recycling, material recovery, and other treatment methods. Greater cooperation between religious authorities and environmental-management stakeholders may therefore support the development of disposal procedures that are both religiously acceptable and environmentally responsible. This approach also creates opportunities to examine appropriate recycling technologies, dedicated collection services, standardized procedures, public education, and circular approaches for materials that cannot enter ordinary waste streams. The manuscript's introductory discussion similarly identifies the need to reconcile respect for religion with environmental responsibility through stronger governance, education, infrastructure, and safer environmental practices.

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting these findings. The dataset was obtained exclusively from Scopus and restricted to English-language publications, so relevant studies indexed in other databases or published in Arabic, Malay, Indonesian, Hebrew, Japanese, or other languages may not be represented. This limitation is particularly important because sacred-text practices are deeply embedded in local religious and cultural traditions, which may be documented in regional publications. The broad search terminology also generated records that satisfied combinations of search terms but were only indirectly related to the central topic, as demonstrated by several highly cited publications from unrelated or peripheral disciplines. Future studies should therefore refine the search strategy and combine bibliometric mapping with systematic content analysis to distinguish core literature on sacred-text disposal from peripheral records. Comparative analyses using additional databases could improve coverage, while future empirical research should examine individual religious traditions, disposal technologies, environmental consequences, regulatory frameworks, institutional arrangements, household behavior, and cross-country differences. Greater attention should also be directed toward the relationship between traditional disposal methods and circular-economy principles, particularly the feasibility of recycling and material recovery without compromising religious requirements.

Overall, the analysis demonstrates that the disposal of sacred texts and sustainable waste management constitute an emerging yet still fragmented interdisciplinary research area. Its recent growth in publications indicates increasing recognition that the end-of-life management of sacred texts cannot be understood solely as a religious obligation or an ordinary waste-management activity. A more integrated research agenda is required to connect religious knowledge with environmental science, waste management technology, records management, behavioral research, public policy, and circular economy thinking. Bibliometric mapping provides an important foundation for this development by revealing where knowledge is

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concentrated, where collaboration remains limited, and which themes require greater scholarly attention. The long-term significance of this research, therefore, lies in advancing disposal systems that protect the sanctity of sacred materials while reducing environmental burdens, thereby strengthening the connection between religious responsibility and sustainable resource management.

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