

Redress Mechanism In The Financial Dispute Resolution: A Bibliometric Analysis

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Abstract

Conflicts between consumers and financial service providers have intensified due to complex transactions and diverse financial products in a digital economy. Traditional courts are often costly and slow, prompting interest in alternative dispute resolution (ADR) methods like mediation, arbitration, and online dispute resolution. This study conducts a bibliometric analysis of 224 Scopus-indexed articles (2000–2024) to explore trends and themes in financial dispute resolution. Using VOSviewer, keyword networks were visualized. Findings show growing interest in ADR, consumer protection, and regulatory reform. Despite limitations to Scopus data, this study offers insights for future research and policy development in financial redress mechanisms.

Keywords: ADR; Arbitration; Consumer; Dispute.

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1.0 Introduction

A new era of legislative and institutional reforms to facilitate Shariah-compliant financial transactions has begun with the rapid globalization of Islamic finance. The introduction of Islamic banking to nations like Nigeria introduced formerly uncommon legal issues, particularly relating to the resolution of disputes. The Islamic banking licenses validity case, as described by Oseni (2015), is a landmark in Islamic finance litigation and highlights the necessity of a prolonged dispute resolution process that is tailored to the unique principles of Islamic finance. The ability of the legal framework to facilitate the growth of the sector is significant, particularly in the Middle East, where mobilizing foreign direct investment that respects Shariah is crucial.

Nomenclature

A radius of

B position of

C further nomenclature continues down the page inside the text box

Malaysia, which is often regarded as a global leader in Islamic banking, presents a valuable case study for developing a practical institutional and legal framework for resolving disputes. By strengthening regulatory procedures and institutionalizing dispute resolution mechanisms to meet the specific requirements of Islamic banking, Malaysia has made significant advances, according to Oseni and Ahmad (2016). Other nations are encouraged to follow Malaysia's leadership in Islamic finance, which these changes have reinforced. Shariah-based decisions are given legitimacy by the Shariah Advisory Council's (SAC) legal recognition under Sections 55–58 of the Central Bank of Malaysia Act 2009; nevertheless, the council's role is limited to expert verification rather than the making of judicial decisions (Markom & Yaakub, 2015).

Overutilization of court cases, often without regard for the values in Shariah, is a persistent issue in most nations. Civil judges may not be equipped with the necessary skills to interpret Islamic law theory. However, they are provided with training on traditional banking transactions, as revealed by Markom and Yaakub (2015). This disconnection highlights the need for alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms, such as arbitration and mediation, to deliver improved and context-specific outcomes. Countries like Tanzania, during their early stages of Islamic banking development, would benefit from learning from Malaysia and the UK how to create ADR institutions that do not have systemic inefficiencies in the long run, according to Hikmany and Oseni (2016).

More clearly drafted Islamic banking contract dispute resolution clauses are needed, as indicated by empirical research in Malaysia. Oseni, Adewale, and Zain (2016) revealed substantial variations in consumer comprehension of legal terms used in Islamic financial products, indicating that most consumers of Islamic financial products are uncertain about their rights and options for dispute resolution. This disparity highlights the importance of multi-layered channels of dispute resolution, such as mediation and arbitration, prior to litigation, and can erode people's trust in the system. In the same vein, Oseni, and Omoola (2015) advocate for the integration of information and communication technology (ICT) in online dispute resolution (ODR), which can enhance accessibility and expedite the settlement process, particularly on online banking platforms.

The imposition of dispute resolution mechanisms under Islamic finance is crucial for its sustainability and customer confidence. The viability of an Islamic multi-tiered system based on traditional concepts such as the muhtasib model is highlighted through Malaysia's reforms, notably the Financial Ombudsman Scheme (FOS) (Ali et al., 2015). There will be a need for robust Shariah-compliant legal structures to resolve disputes as Islamic banking expands in both developed and emerging economies. This introduction lays the foundation for a more detailed examination of how nations can implement best practices to meet their specific needs and legal systems.

2.0 Methodology

This study employed a bibliometric method, extracting information from the Scopus database. The following search query was utilized: TITLE-ABS-KEY ("finance" OR "Islamic" OR "banking" OR "Islamic finance" OR "Islamic banking") AND ALL ("online dispute resolution" OR "ODR"). The objective of this study was to acquire appropriate research on redress mechanisms in financial dispute resolution. 224 articles published from 2000 to 2024 were examined. Visualization tools, such as the VOS viewer, were employed by the researchers to map keyword co-occurrence patterns and examine the structure, evolution, and emerging trends in this field. This facilitated a deeper understanding of the intellectual landscape and thematic development of the subject.

3.0 Results and Findings

The VOSviewer visualization provides valuable insights into the intellectual culture and thematic evolution of financial dispute resolution. It portrays a mesh of sophisticated yet intertwined lines of inquiry, ranging from traditional ADR systems and Islamic finance regulation to emerging technologies and principled governance frameworks.

The visualized map produced using VOSviewer illustrates the intellectual structure of the scholarly literature on financial dispute resolution and redress mechanisms, based on the co-occurrence of keywords in 224 peer-reviewed articles indexed in the Scopus database between 2000 and 2024. The network analysis reveals several thematic clusters, each representing a major research domain or area of scholarly interest. The nodes (keywords) are sized based on frequency, and their spatial proximity indicates thematic closeness or co-occurrence relationships, while the lines represent link strength.

Figure 1 presents two distinct types of network visualizations generated using VOSviewer to analyze the conceptual structure of the literature. The network visualization of text co-occurrence illustrates the relationships between frequently used terms found within the titles and abstracts of the selected articles. This analysis helps identify recurring language patterns, general themes, and conceptual trends across the literature. The size of each node reflects the frequency of the term's appearance, while the proximity and thickness of the connecting lines indicate the strength of co-occurrence between terms. This visualization provides a broader, more descriptive overview of the discourse in financial dispute resolution.

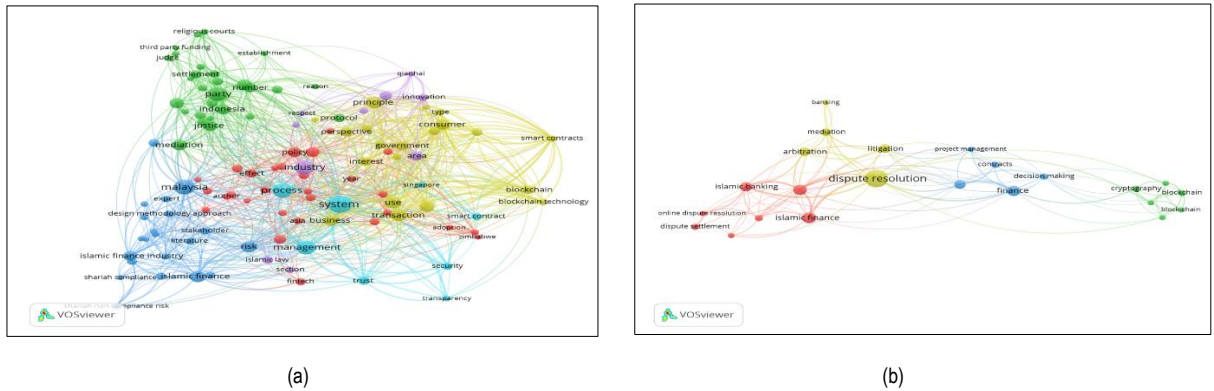


Fig. 1. (a) The Network Visualization Represents A Co-Occurrence Map of Text; (b) The Network Visualization of Keyword Co-Occurrences
(Source: Vosviewer)

3.1 Central Cluster – System, Process, Industry, and Use (Red Cluster)

The red cluster is situated at the centre of the visualization, indicating its prominence in the research landscape. Keywords such as "system," "process," "industry," "use," "effect," and "policy" are highly interconnected and recurrent, suggesting that much of the literature focuses on systemic approaches and policy-level analysis of redress mechanisms. This reflects the increasing scholarly concern with designing efficient processes for financial dispute resolution and understanding how they function within broader industrial and regulatory systems.

Terms like "transaction" and "business" in this cluster underscore the relevance of practical, real-world applications, pointing toward studies that analyse disputes arising from business transactions and the processes used to resolve them. The presence of "management" and "risk" further supports the idea that operational risk and risk mitigation strategies form an integral part of these studies.

3.2 Green Cluster – Mediation, Party, Justice, Indonesia, and Religious Courts

The green cluster focuses on alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms and justice frameworks, particularly within specific regional or religious contexts. Keywords like "mediation," "justice," "party," "settlement," "judge," and "religious courts" suggest a rich body of literature that explores non-litigious paths for resolving disputes, including traditional courts, religious tribunals, and community-based systems. The frequent appearance of "Indonesia" points to the prominence of case studies or regulatory discussions within this country, likely tied to the use of religious courts in Islamic finance-related disputes. The inclusion of "third party funding" and "establishment" indicates interest in institutional support and funding mechanisms for ADR, revealing an evolving area of research on how mediation and arbitration can be made more accessible through policy and financial backing.

3.3 Blue Cluster – Malaysia, Islamic Finance, Shariah Compliance, and Stakeholders

The blue cluster centres on Islamic finance, Malaysia, and Shariah-compliance. Keywords such as "Malaysia," "Islamic finance," "Shariah compliance," and "Islamic law" signal that a significant portion of the literature deals with dispute resolution in the context of Shariah-based financial systems. Malaysia, being a global hub for Islamic finance, naturally emerges as a key focus of the studies. This cluster also features terms like "stakeholder," "approach," "design methodology," and "expert," suggesting a research orientation that integrates theoretical, methodological, and stakeholder perspectives to analyse compliance risks and dispute management strategies in Islamic financial products. The presence of "risk" and "non-compliance" reflects scholarly attention to the potential legal, reputational, and financial consequences of violating Shariah principles in finance.

3.4 Yellow Cluster – Blockchain, Consumer, Technology, and Smart Contracts

The yellow cluster reveals a forward-looking, technology-driven theme in the literature. Keywords like "blockchain," "blockchain technology," "smart contracts," "adoption," "consumer," and "transparency" highlight a growing research trend exploring how emerging technologies can transform dispute resolution in the financial sector. The cluster suggests strong interest in Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) platforms, decentralized finance (DeFi), and automated enforcement of dispute outcomes via smart contracts. Other terms such as "innovation," "government," "area," and "type" imply cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary approaches, where researchers investigate how public and private sectors can collaborate to implement trustworthy, secure, and efficient financial redress systems. Additionally, the keyword "Singapore" signals geographical diversity and highlights Southeast Asia's rising importance in tech-driven financial reform. The mention of "Zimbabwe" suggests comparative perspectives or the inclusion of emerging markets in the discourse on regulatory innovation and access to justice.

3.5 Purple Cluster – Principle, Protocol, Perspective, and Government

The purple cluster, though smaller, introduces a more conceptual and normative focus. Keywords like "principle," "protocol," "perspective," and "interest" suggest academic discussions grounded in ethics, legal theory, and policy design. These studies likely examine how financial redress systems should be structured based on underlying principles of fairness, due process, and proportionality. The inclusion of "government" underscores the state's regulatory and legislative role in shaping and enforcing dispute resolution systems that align with public interest and protect consumer rights.

3.6 Turquoise Cluster – Security, Trust, Transparency

Though numerically fewer, keywords in this category such as "trust," "security," and "transparency" are thematically significant. They refer to core values and conditions of any effective system of dispute resolution, but especially in a digital framework. With more fintech platforms and ODR mechanisms gaining popularity, these values acquire precedence as metrics for determining the usefulness and ethical soundness of technological interventions. These terms are also likely to intersect with problems raised under the yellow cluster (blockchain/technology) and reinforce the demand for secure and resilient digital infrastructure for financial redress in the future.

The frequency of words such as "system," "process," "industry," "use," and "transaction" shows a strong focus on operational and systemic efficiency, while those clusters focusing on Islamic finance and technology are indicative of broadening niche topics being researched more intensively. The occurrence of regionally specific words such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, and Zimbabwe shows that the literature is both international and regional. Generally, this visualization captures the interdisciplinary and dynamic nature of financial dispute resolution research and suggests a lot of scope for future research in areas such as cross-border ADR integration, legislative reforms, and consumer-centric digital redress websites.

The VOSviewer network visualization in Figure 2 provides a graph view of keyword co-occurrence among dispute resolution mechanisms literature in the context of Islamic finance, conventional legal procedures, and new technologies such as blockchain. The network is organized into several color-coded clusters representing different thematic fields in terms of frequency and keyword strength association. Node size is a measure of keyword salience, while edge thickness (links) is a measure of strength of co-occurrence relationships between terms. The purpose of this analysis is to dismantle the thematic significance of the map and provide a conceptual understanding of the research terrain.

3.7 Central Cluster – Dispute Resolution as the Core (Yellow Cluster)

At the centre of the map is the master keyword "dispute resolution," a hub with multiple areas of reference. Its placement at the centre highlights its original importance in the literature. Directly related keywords to it are "litigation," "arbitration," "mediation," and "project management." This cluster represents traditional means of dispute resolution, indicating the central conflict between court-based and alternative processes. The presence of litigation underscores the continued relevance of legal processes in financial disputes, whereas mediation and arbitration suggest enhanced focus on alternative dispute resolution (ADR) frameworks. These modes are consistently analysed for their potential to offer faster, cheaper, and local resolutions, particularly in complex financial transactions.

Banking also appears to be closely related, so financial institutions would be common targets for dispute resolution discussion. The network organization here implies rich academic debate on how banking operations, enforcement mechanisms of contracts, and measures to prevent disputes mutually affect one another in both litigation and ADR frameworks.

3.8 Red Cluster – Islamic Finance and Digital Redress

On the left side of the map, a red group indicates a topically unified group dealing with Islamic finance, Islamic banking, and e-dispute. It represents a specific niche of scholarship that explores the area of overlap between religion-based financial systems and modern digital tools for dispute resolution.

Islamic banking and Islamic finance are synonymous but distinct terms. The cluster suggests an increasing academic endeavor to understand how disputes within Shariah-compliant banks are resolved, particularly in light of the frailties of secular litigation in resolving religiously grounded precepts. The development of online dispute resolution (ODR) and dispute settlement as these terms suggest is indicative of an increasing online trend here in which technology is being utilized to make far-off, low-cost, and efficacious redress mechanisms compatible with Islamic sensibilities. The intersection of arbitration, Islamic finance, and web-based conflict resolution is a hybrid where both ancient religious frameworks and modern technological resources are utilized simultaneously to settle financial disputes. This emerging trend may be a sign of the establishment of custom-designed platforms for the settlement of conflicts under the Islamic banking systems, especially in Malaysia and the Gulf States where these systems are dominant.

3.9 Blue Cluster – Finance, Contracts, and Decision-Making

To the right of the yellow cluster in the middle is a blue cluster centered on "finance," "contracts," and "decision making." This area of the map suggests an academic focus on the transactional and management concerns of financial services and the tensions that arise in them. The connexion of finance with contracts implies that the great majority of conflicts arise out of the interpretation, enforcement, or breach of contracts give a conclusion which is congruent with empirical patterns in financial services. The extension to decision making and project management implies that the literature also makes reference to the governance and strategic processes that institutions use to pre-empt or resolve disputes internally prior to using legal or ADR systems. This grouping is crucial because it closes the gap between the technical (contractual/legal) and the organizational (strategic/managerial) approaches to conflict resolution. The interdisciplinary nature of this field implies inputs from law, finance, and management studies as well.

3.10 Green Cluster – Blockchain, Cryptography, and Technological Innovations

To the far right of the map is a group of green words surrounding "blockchain," "cryptography," and related topics. This group indicates growing academic focus on technological advancements and how they are applied to resolve financial conflicts. Blockchain technology, characterized by its decentralization, transparency, and immutability, is increasingly being viewed as a way to enhance levels of trust and reduce levels of conflict in financial transactions. Cryptography combined with blockchain gives emphasis to security and integrity—a requirement when dealing with smart contracts and decentralized financial networks. The quite strong but isolated connections of this cluster to the broader map indicate that technology-enabled dispute resolution is an innovative theme of interest but one which is somewhat divorced from mainstream Islamic finance discourse or traditional ADR. Connections between blockchain and contracts and finance, however, demonstrate nascent efforts to incorporate smart contracts into traditional dispute management efforts. Such convergence can reshape the manner in which financial redress schemes are constructed, especially where speed and automation are necessary.

3.11 Cross-Cluster Intersections and Emerging Directions

Cross-cutting themes emerge at the intersection of these clusters. Arbitration, for instance, connects traditional methods of dispute resolution and novel applications in Islamic finance and technology. Project management crosses organizational decision-making with broader legal and financial concerns. Such intersections provide fertile ground for cross-disciplinary research, particularly for exploring ways technology (such as blockchain or ODR platforms) may be architected to fit within Islamic juridical frameworks, or the way project-based finance instruments tackle complex contractual conflicts between jurisdictions. The VOSviewer keyword co-occurrence map provides an insightful perspective on the thematic profile and evolving priorities in the field of financial dispute resolution. The central location of dispute resolution guarantees its position as a unifying research topic, supported by eclectic but interdependent themes. While one camp relies on a mature corpus of literature in conventional and Islamic finance-driven frameworks of resolution, an emergent body of research is building on the other side across blockchain- and digital-centric resolutions. The map further shows an increasing emphasis on interdisciplinary solutions that integrate legal, technological, managerial, and ethical considerations. These trends suggest that future academics will gain more from further examination of how technology, religious teachings, and regulatory reform can be harmonized to deliver more efficient, participatory, and world-relevant mechanisms of redress for financial injustices.

4.0 Discussion

The keyword co-occurrence analysis reveals a number of prevailing themes in financial dispute resolution, especially in Islamic finance. Core concepts including dispute resolution, Islamic finance, arbitration, mediation, and blockchain indicate the increasing complexity of financial ecosystems and the various mechanisms developing to resolve surfacing conflicts. The foregrounding of mediation and arbitration confirms a shift from traditional litigation in tandem with global calls for faster and Shariah-compliant redress mechanisms (Oseni & Ahmad, 2016). These mechanisms are particularly important in Islamic finance, where the traditional legal mechanisms may not fully encapsulate the moral and contractual sensitivities of Shariah principles (Oseni, 2015).

Malaysia's centrality in the keyword network, along with terms like regulation, Shariah, and advisory council, marks its position as a frontrunner in the institutionalization of Islamic financial dispute resolution. The legal status of the Shariah Advisory Council (SAC) under the Central Bank of Malaysia Act 2009 provides a modelled template for integrating Shariah expertise within the national legal system (Markom & Yaakub, 2015). On the other hand, countries like Nigeria and Tanzania are faced with the challenge of less developed institutional frameworks, whereby they over-rely on court systems that are poorly equipped to handle Islamic jurisprudence (Hikmany & Oseni, 2016). The advent of online dispute resolution (ODR), blockchain, and cryptography is evidence of an increasing interest in the use of technology for promoting access, efficiency, and transparency in financial dispute resolution. These innovations, if embedded wisely within Shariah frameworks, are able to advance justice and inclusion for consumers in Islamic and conventional finance (Oseni & Omoola, 2015). Empirical studies in Malaysia, however, indicate that legal jargon in Islamic banking contracts still remains a hindrance to consumer understanding, with more transparent clauses and consumer education initiatives being needed (Oseni, Adewale & Zain, 2016).

5.0 Conclusion

Bibliometric analysis shows financial dispute resolution and especially digital and alternative solutions are of growing international scholarly attention. Publication trends reveal the demand for effective and accessible redress mechanisms in the new financial landscape. This is driven by prolific contributions of core authors and theme diversification in research. The findings have significant implications for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers interested in improving dispute systems. With increasingly digitized and sophisticated financial markets, the establishment of inclusive, efficient, and technology-enabled redress mechanisms is more important than ever to ensure consumer rights and regulatory effectiveness.

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Paper Contribution to Related Field of Study

This paper contributes to the field by mapping global research trends and highlighting the growing role of digital and Shariah-compliant dispute resolution in the evolving financial services sector.

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