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Public Sentiment About Waqf: Insights from Social Media Analysis with Talk Walker

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to analyze public perceptions of waqf in Islamic finance through social media analysis, with the objective of understanding how societal interactions and demographic factors shape discourse and opinion formation regarding waqf.
Methodology: The research adopts a qualitative–quantitative social media analytics approach grounded in social studies theory and prior literature. Data were collected on September 5, 2024, from multiple social media platforms using the Talkwalker Social Intelligence Platform. The analysis involved monitoring public opinion trends, conducting thematic analysis to identify recurring discourse themes, and applying Social Network Analysis (SNA) to examine interaction patterns related to waqf. Key influencing factors such as language, age, and gender were also examined.
Results: The findings reveal significant trends in public reactions to waqf across social media platforms. Notable shifts in perceptions of waqf-related issues were identified, along with distinct patterns influenced by language use, age groups, and gender. The thematic analysis highlights dominant narratives and concerns surrounding waqf, providing a nuanced understanding of how social interactions shape public perceptions.
Applications/Originality/Value: This study contributes original insights to the literature on Islamic finance and social studies by uncovering the complexity of societal responses to waqf in digital spaces. It demonstrates the value of integrating Social Network Analysis and social media intelligence tools, such as Talkwalker, to examine opinion dynamics and public discourse. The findings offer practical implications for policymakers, waqf institutions, and researchers in designing more effective communication and engagement strategies related to waqf.

Introduction

Waqf is an instrument that has an important role in empowering the people's economy (Fuadi, 2018). Discussions regarding waqf have developed in accordance with the demands of changing times. Starting from classic waqf studies to the latest innovations in waqf development (Iqbal, 2020). In the last few centuries, waqf studies have tended to focus on waqf which has multiple benefits (Hafizd et al., 2022). This means that apart from providing benefits from the form of waqf objects themselves, it is also hoped that there will be other productivity that can be felt and is positively related to the mission of da'wah for the welfare of the people, especially in the field of Islamic economics (Hasanah, 2018).

What stands out about waqf institutions is their role in financing various religious, educational and health activities. For example, in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and several other countries (Nurfaidah, 2016). Various facilities and infrastructure for worship as well as education and health are funded from the proceeds of waqf development (Susanti et al., 2025). The continuity of the benefits of waqf proceeds is possible because of the promotion of productive waqf to support various social and religious activities (Abrori, 2022). Productive waqf generally takes the form of agricultural land or plantations, commercial buildings which are managed in such a way, there are also waqf for food shops, factories, public kitchens, factory machines, baths, etc. (Zunaidi, 2022). So that it brings in profits, part of the proceeds of which are used to finance these various activities (Prayuda, 2022).

This productive waqf is then practiced in various countries until now and the results are used to solve various social and economic problems of the people (Hotman, 2021). Even though Islamic regions were fragmented as a result of colonialism, waqf assets in independent Islamic regions were still well maintained (Sartika Bela, 2020). History proves that waqf that is maintained and developed productively really helps the interests of society (Nurul Faizah Rahmah, 2022). Currently, many countries and institutions manage waqf productively, the benefits of which are truly felt by those who are entitled to it (Ananda, 2024).

Even though the benefits of managed waqf are good, there are still several weaknesses and problems which also pose challenges in developing waqf, especially in Indonesia (Fauzi, 2022). In fact, Indonesia is one of the countries that has quite a lot of waqf assets, but most of it has not been managed unproductively (Rahmatillah et al., 2022). Apart from inadequate management, quite a lot of waqf assets are misappropriated (Muntaqo, 2015). The problem that is one of the challenges in waqf practice is in terms of ownership and management of assets, lack of funding and incomplete recording

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data which can limit the transparency and accountability of waqf management, this is one of the challenges in waqf practice (Rachman & Makkarateng, 2021).

On the other hand, in some situations there are still different sentiments and debates regarding waqf management. Public sentiment around waqf is mostly positive with a focus on existing opportunities and mostly negative caused by various factors, including misunderstanding of its purpose and benefits, lack of trust and confidence in waqf institutions and problems with governance of waqf assets (SHELEMO, 2023). These sentiments reflect the diversity of views and evolving needs in waqf management. The continuous emergence of this debate can influence the management of waqf in the future (Kuri'ain & Winarni, 2022). Therefore, this research seeks to further explore sentiments about waqf. In Islamic economic studies, the integration of social network analysis (SNA) has provided a new perspective in understanding the dynamics of waqf. Studies on this topic show increasing attention to how social networks influence and are influenced by the principles and practices of waqf, especially in the realm of Islamic economics.

Several studies have used SNA to analyze interactions between aspects of waqf and individuals, for example in research on social media sentiment analysis about waqf and education. This research focuses on analyzing public sentiment towards waqf education originating from tweets available on the social media platform Twitter. These studies provide important insights to direct the implementation of more comprehensive waqf education in the future (Sukmana & Rusydiana, 2023). The research results show that India ranks first as the location with the highest tweet activity around waqf education, reaching 656 tweets. 2020 was the highest tweet peak during the research period with 170 tweets. In terms of sentiment polarity, research shows that positive sentiment dominates with a percentage of 48.3%, followed by neutral sentiment at 27.0%, and negative sentiment at 24.8% (Sukmana & Rusydiana, 2023). This reflects that the majority of Twitter users expressed positive views towards waqf education, although a small number expressed negative views (Prayuda, 2022).

Based on several studies found, there has been no research that specifically examines sentiment analysis towards waqf. Therefore, this research aims to gain a deeper understanding of how society and stakeholders respond to and interact with the concept of waqf in general, as well as identifying factors that can influence the development of waqf in the future.

Method

A thorough understanding of waqf can be obtained through social network analysis with the Talkwalker Application. Data collection was carried out over a period of a week, between September 5 2024 and September 9 2024. By identifying the keyword “waqf” and categorizing online discussions, this platform makes it possible to track public opinion and sentiment regarding waqf. The application of algorithms and advanced analysis methods provides a comprehensive picture of how these issues are changing on social media platforms. The findings of this analysis can provide a comprehensive picture of understanding and influence, shifts in public opinion, and the dynamics of discussions in the digital realm today. This approach makes it possible to take the most current and relevant data and identify groups based on the same themes or hashtags, which is the basis of this research (Apriantoro et al., 2024).

The sentiment analysis method regarding waqf uses natural language processing (NLP) which has several main steps. First, tokenization is the process of dividing social media users' texts into smaller language units. Next, syntactic analysis is used to understand sentence structure and word relationships. After that, semantic procedures are used to ascertain the meaning of words and sentences in a particular context (Ananda, 2024). The data processing flow is shown in Figure 1.

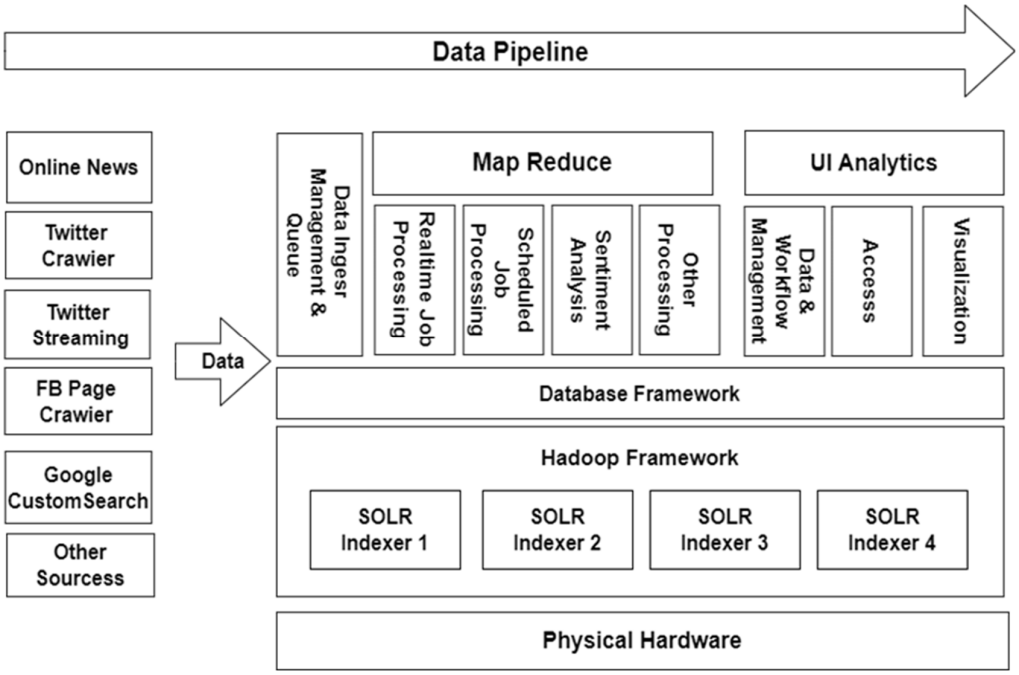

Figure 1. Data flow diagram

The use of classification algorithms for sentiment analysis is critical to this process. The algorithm allows the system to ascertain whether a user's statement or point of view about waqf is positive, negative or neutral. The analysis findings can comprehensively understand how society views waqf.

This approach not only helps in gauging public opinion but also offers stakeholders and decision makers in-depth information to create more powerful discussions. By understanding the dynamics of public sentiment, proactive actions can be taken to raise awareness, improve perceptions, and create better solutions regarding waqf. As a result, this technique becomes a valuable tool for taking a more contextual and community-responsive approach to waqf issues (Ananda, 2024).

Results and Discussion

This research aims to analyze sentiment using the Talkwalker tool on social media platforms. The Social Network Analysis (SNA) method has produced findings that provide in-depth insight into online discussions related to waqf. This sentiment analysis is to describe people's perceptions and views on the topic of waqf. The group of users and readers of these sentiments is very diverse, not only general users, but also includes politicians, practitioners, and even related institutions. This diversity increases the value of the analysis because perspectives on waqf can come from various groups of people with different backgrounds and interests.

Key Metrics

There are significant variations in the level of waqf dynamics from one hour to the next. The dynamic value of waqf fluctuates over time, sometimes reaching peak values and others falling to zero or very close to zero. This can describe shifts in dynamics or certain events that influence the intensity of waqf. Figure 2 shows the results over time.

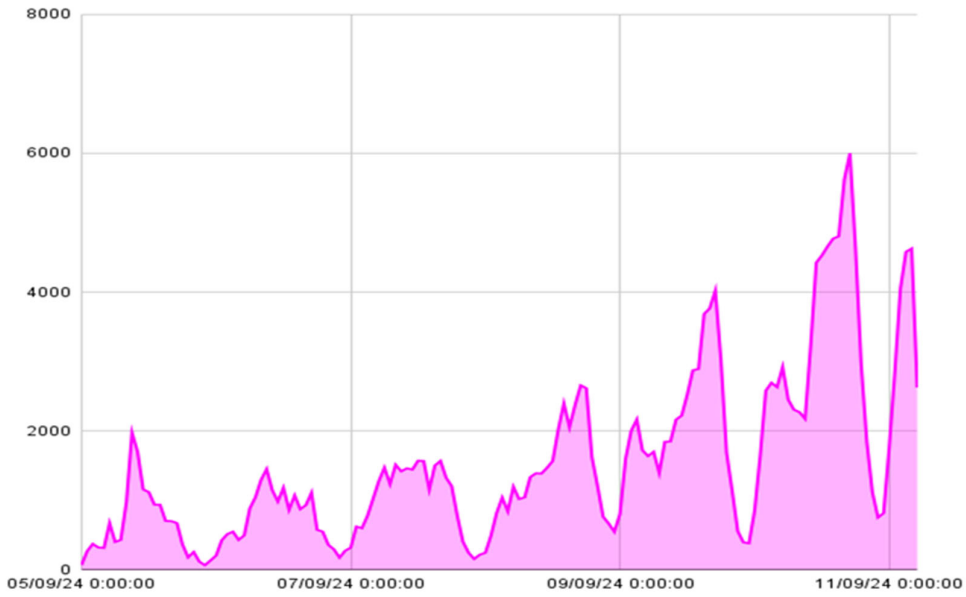

Figure 2. Results over time

Sometimes the waqf value is much higher than other times. One example is on September 10 and 11 2024, at 15:00:00, when the waqf value is 6000. This can be the main focus of additional research. Research to determine what might have happened at that time. Current "n/a" values starting on September 11, 2024 at 01:00:00 indicate that data is not available. This can be caused by many things, such as technical issues or problems in the data collection process. Causal factors must be identified and solutions must be found to analyze the data in more depth. If more data were available, integrating it with existing analyzes could help gain a better understanding of the factors influencing waqf dynamics. Figure 3 shows a visualization of this image with net time sentiment.

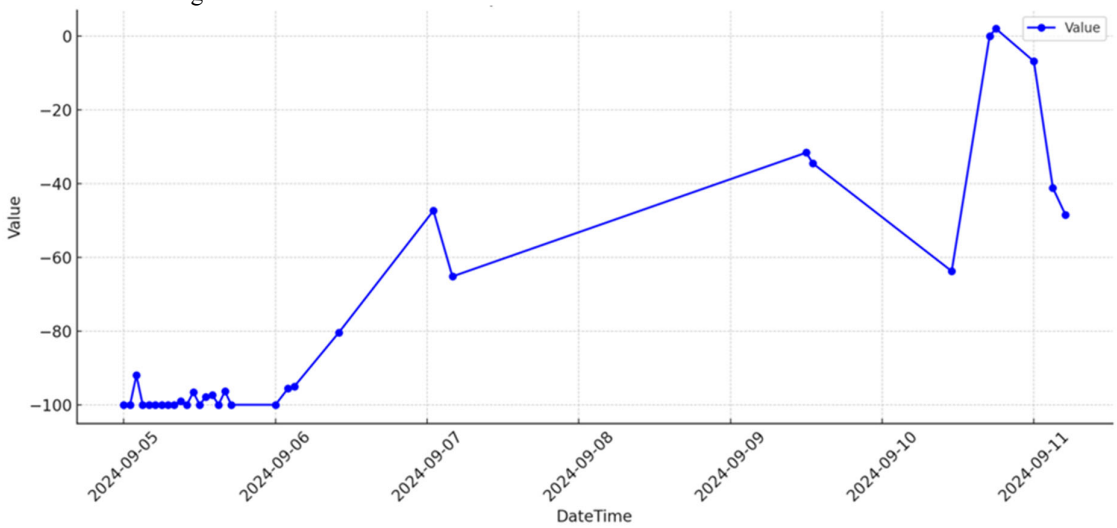

Figure 3. Net sentiment over time

An examination of net sentiment data between September 5, 2024 and September 11, 2024, shows drastic fluctuations and changes in general public opinion. The sentiment range was much more varied in the first period which lasted from September 5 to September 6 2024. At 05.00 September 5 the sentiment line was far below 0%, even reaching -100%. This shows that the majority of conversations or opinions that arise about waqf tend to be negative. The causes can be various, such as certain issues or events that trigger negative public reactions. There was a slight fluctuation between 22.00 on 5 September and 01.00 on 6 September, marked by a shift in sentiment from -100% to -80%. On September 7 2024 at 02.00 the sentiment line rose slightly from -100% to 50%, although there was a slight shift but the sentiment line still showed that there were more negative opinions circulating than positive opinions.

On September 8, 2024 at 08.00, the sentiment line shows more or less stability, although it remains in negative territory. This shows that there are no major events that add new negative sentiment. On September 9 2024 and September 10 2024, there was a significant shift in sentiment from -100% to -10%, although sentiment was still in negative territory, positive conversations began to increase, this shows a change in perception among the public.

Finally, on September 11 2024 sentiment was generally neutral from -100% to 0%, this shows that the amount of positive and negative sentiment has been balanced, or that the previously dominant negative issues have been successfully minimized. The data shows significant changes between favorable and unfavorable opinions, indicating ambiguity and rapid changes in public sentiment.

Main Theme

This image can be seen through the visualization of the top themes in Figure 4.

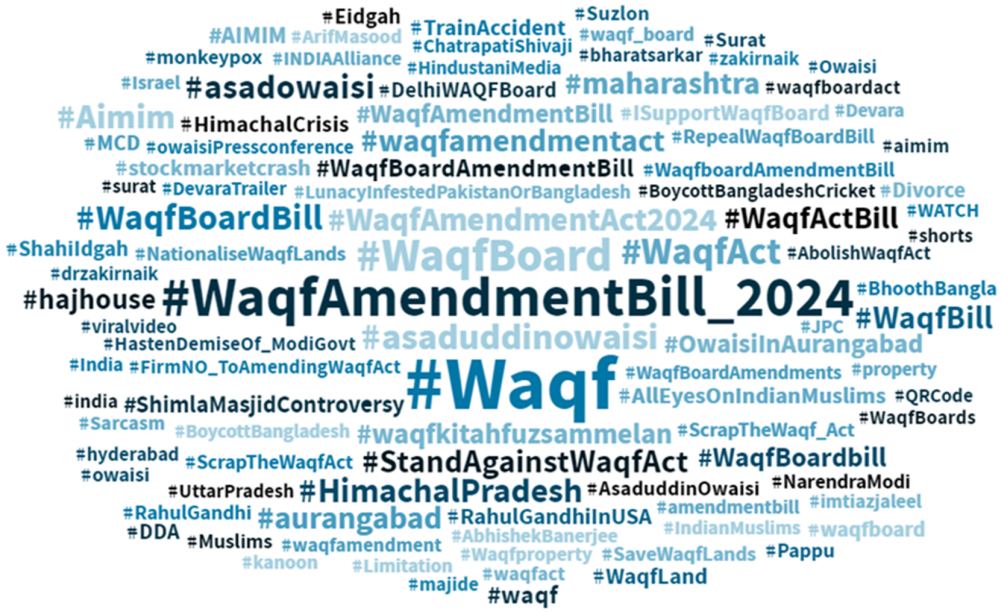

Figure 4. Topics related to hashtags

Hashtags such as #WaqfAmendmentBill_2024 and #Waqf highlight the importance of understanding the dynamics of support on social media in social media network analysis around waqf issues. This indicates a proposed amendment to the law governing waqf assets, especially regarding the management and ownership of Waqf property. Meanwhile, neutrally polarized hashtags such as #WaqfBoard and #WaqfAct are in discussions regarding the regulations of waqf management bodies or institutions. Lower levels of trust in the #StandAgainstWaqfAct feel that the waqf law proposed by the government is considered unfair, threatens property rights, and reduces transparency or accountability in the management of waqf property. This opinion may stem from concerns about the management of Waqf property which is considered to be subject to misuse, so this hashtag is used as part of a campaign to fight waqf policies that are deemed controversial or detrimental.

Demographic

It was revealed that 151,467 more male respondents took part in the survey than 40,872 female respondents. This shows that men's responses dominate and offer alternative points of view, especially on gender issues. Figure 5 shows a gender visualization.

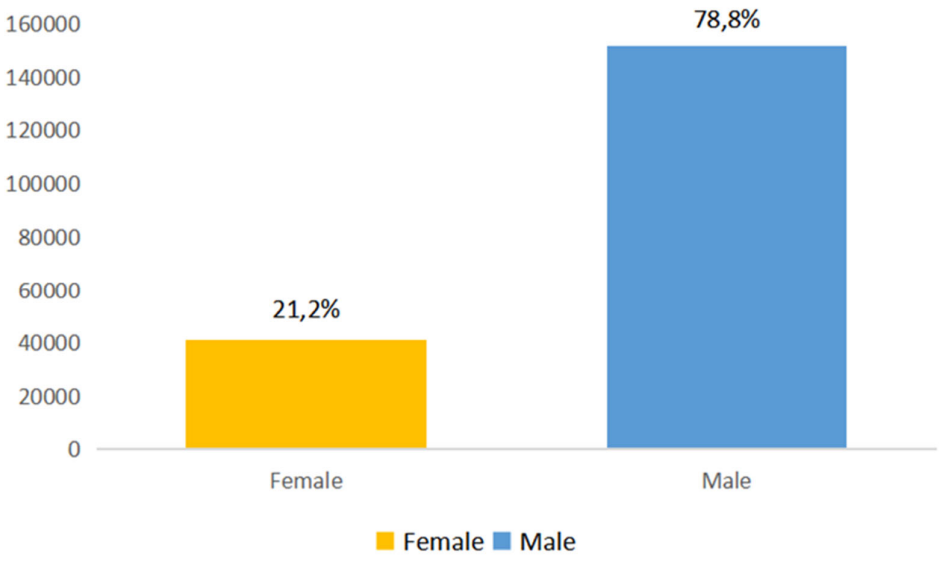

Figure 5. Gender visualization

The inequality in the number of responses between the two genders reflects different perspectives or experiences when interacting regarding waqf. Apart from that, this phenomenon also reflects the gender gap in problems related to waqf. For example, if women respond to waqf much less than men. Because men may be more often involved in discussions about how waqf assets are managed or distributed, while women may be less involved in decision making in this regard. This shows that knowledge or interest in waqf issues related to gender needs to be increased. These results create tactics to increase women's awareness and involvement in waqf-related issues.

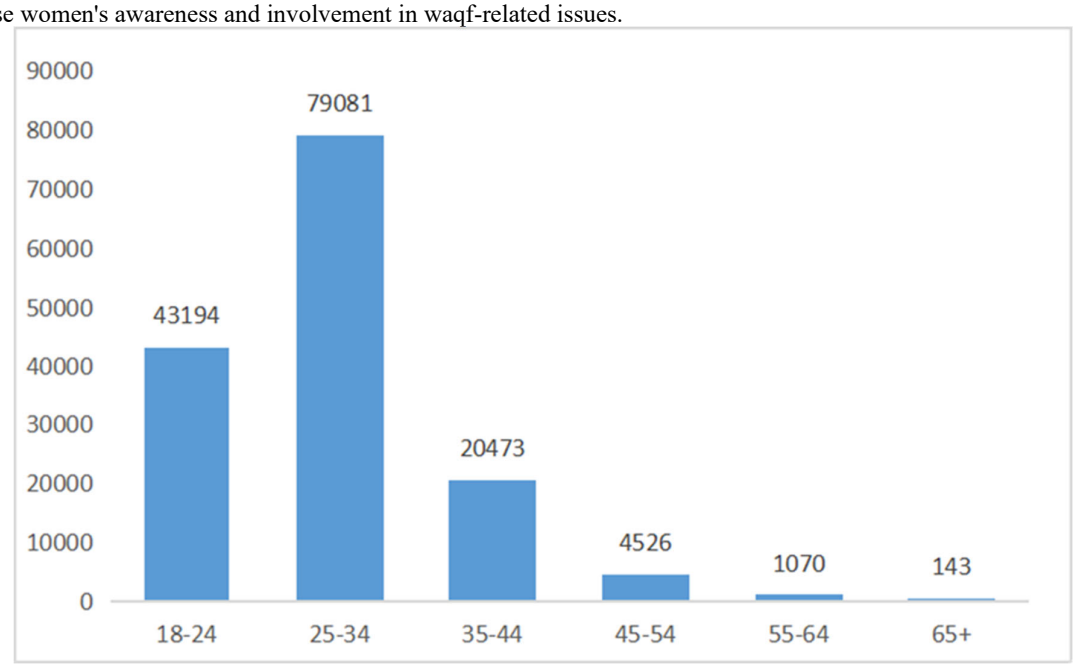

Figure 6. Age distribution

Figure 6 shows the number of respondents was 148,487 people. It was found that the largest age group in the survey was those aged between 25 and 34 years. This shows that this age group is the most dominant group in the survey respondents. Other age groups, including those aged between 18 to 24 years and 35 to 44 years, also dominated well with 79,081 and 20,473 respondents respectively. The fact that these two age groups dominate in relatively large numbers shows that there is a range of ages and different perspectives on waqf, from younger to middle-aged.

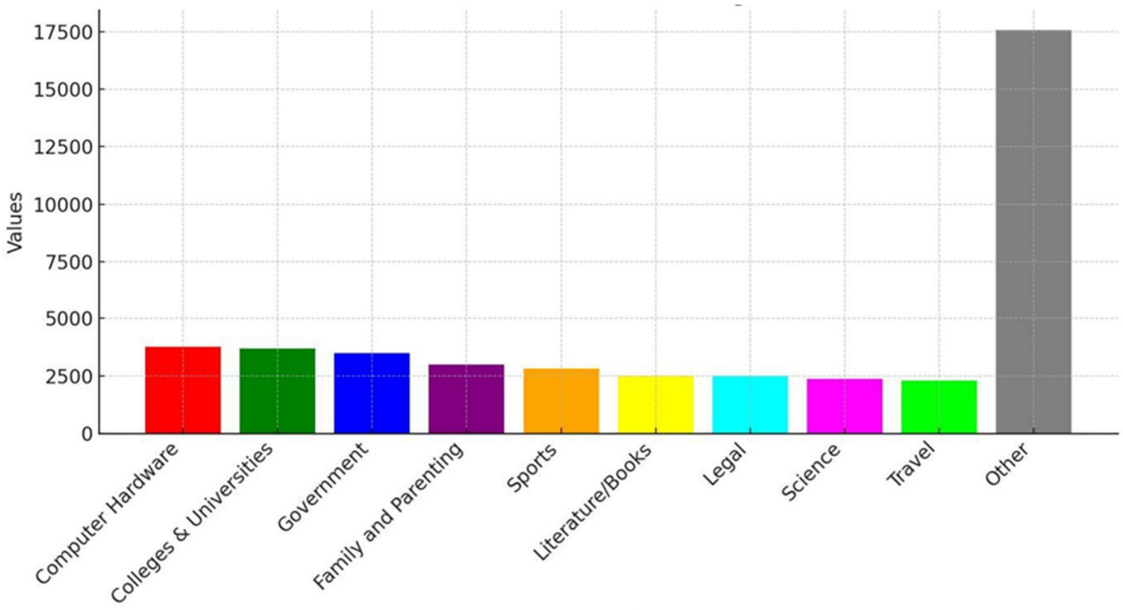

Figure 7. Distribution of interest in various categories

Of interest in Figure 7, the 'other' category with a score of 40% is the largest amount of data in social network analysis about waqf. This suggests that there may be a lot of diverse data that cannot be classified into other specific categories, so it is classified in that category. The 'Computer Hardware' category with a score of 8.5% of the data set, shows that the category focuses on technology endowments, such as computer and hardware endowments for schools or non-profit institutions. This can be useful for helping many people to access technology that is in accordance with the waqf concept in providing long-term benefits.

The ‘Colleges & Universities’ category scored 8% of the data set, indicating that waqf assets can be channeled to support higher education. For example, scholarships funded by waqf or campus infrastructure development through waqf. The 'Government' category scored 7.5% of the data set, indicating that waqf can support general welfare through government assistance in distributing benefits to the wider community, for example building roads, bridges and other infrastructure. The ‘Family and Parenting’ category scored 6.5% of the data set, indicating the endowment of houses or properties that can be used as shelter for underprivileged families.

The ‘Sports’ category scored 6.5% of the data set, focusing on sports facilities that can improve public health, for example endowments for stadiums, sports fields and gyms. The 'Legal' category scored 5.5% of the data collection, which can be directed towards waqf for legal services, such as providing free legal aid for people who cannot afford it and funding legal development programs in the community. The ‘Science’ category scores 5% of the data set, which can focus on scientific development and research such as laboratory facilities, medical research and others. The 'Travel' category scored 5% of the data set, indicating that this category can be related to waqf for travel facilities, such as waqf for rest areas, construction of public facilities or waqf support for religious trips such as Hajj and Umrah.

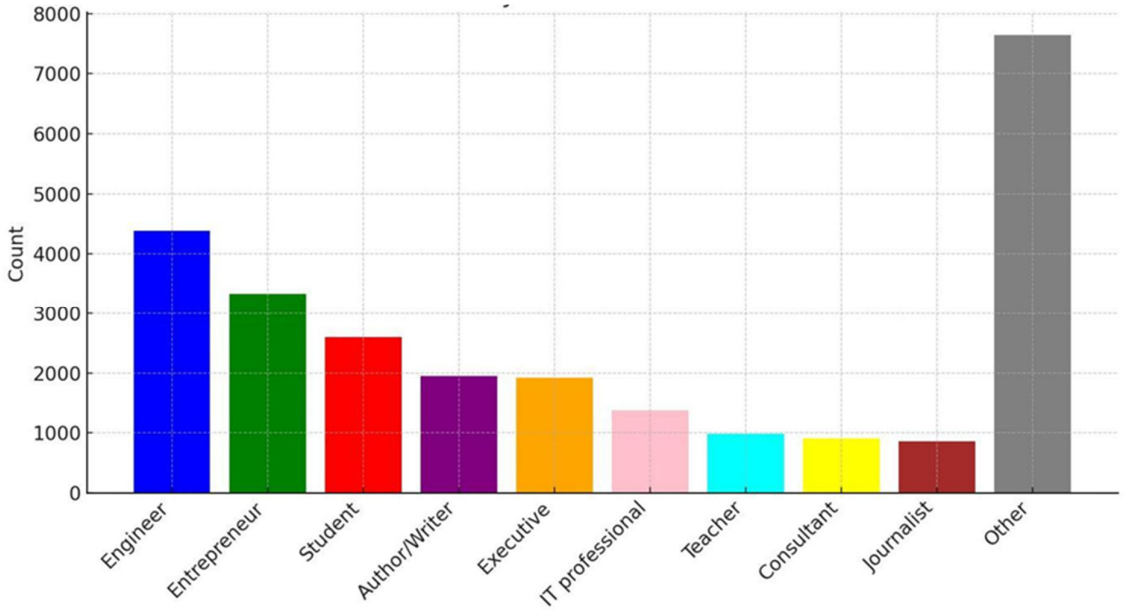

Figure 8. Top jobs

Based on the waqf social network analysis in Figure 8, the 'other' position received the most dominant attention with a score of 30% of the data set, indicating that there are many other roles that are not included in the above categories, reflecting how wide the scope of social involvement is in waqf dynamics. This may include volunteers, philanthropists or individuals from other backgrounds. The second most represented group is ‘engineers’ representing 17% of the data set. This shows their significant role in developing waqf infrastructure, such as mosques, building schools and hospitals. Other professions, including entrepreneurs, students, writers/researchers, executive managers, IT professionals, teachers, consultants and journalists, each represent smaller segments of the population, with similar percentages of 3% and 7%. except, IT professionals at 5%, 'Students' at 10%, and 'Entrepreneurs' at 13%. These figures show a more balanced but significantly lower distribution among these fields. These data show the distribution of participation from various professions in social networks related to waqf.

Conclusion

This study highlights the role of social media especially through SNA analysis with Talkwalker, as a dynamic platform for discussions about waqf. This study reflects the principles of philanthropy and social responsibility in Islam, where people are given the opportunity to contribute to the development and maintenance of the system through their waqf. This research aims to measure the extent of public sentiment towards waqf taken from Talkwalker platform data. The results of this research show that fluctuations in public sentiment were initially very negative but gradually improved towards neutral. This reflects that there is a shift in perception among the public, which may be influenced by efforts to correct negative responses regarding waqf that appeared previously. Apart from that, this research also explores keywords that influence sentiment and topics in waqf discussions on the Talkwalker platform. So, this analysis can provide further understanding of the issues that most attract users' attention and reflect the focus of online conversations related to waqf. These results can provide a valuable contribution in understanding the dynamics and public perception of initiatives in waqf. Future research could explore the integration of sentiment analysis with other data sources, such as cash waqf or productive waqf data, to gain deeper insight into the relationship between public sentiment and the development of waqf in society. Thus, this research can provide a valuable perspective for the development of the waqf sector to make it more relevant to the needs of the times.

Acknowledgement

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