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MAPPING INTELLECTUAL LEGACY: BIOBIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF WILLIAM R. ROFF'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO MALAY-ISLAMIC THOUGHT

PEMETAAN LEGASI INTELEKTUAL: ANALISIS BIOBIBLIOMETRIK TERHADAP SUMBANGAN WILLIAM R. ROFF KEPADA PEMIKIRAN MELAYU-ISLAM

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ABSTRACT

In academia, the twin pillars of career advancement are the production and publication of scholarly works. These publications are not mere formalities. They serve as vital benchmarks of academic achievement and play a decisive role in professional recognition. For scholars, the ability to navigate these challenges is a testament to their intellectual rigor, ultimately solidifying their expertise and reputation within specialised fields. In the context of Malay-Islamic thought, scholars from both the region and the West have made profound contributions. Luminaries such as Hamka, Graf, Braginsky and Roff exemplify this intellectual engagement. This paper seeks to deepen the discourse on Malay-Islamic thought by shedding light on the contributions of non-native scholars, Roff. Despite his significant influence, Western scholars like him often receive less attention in this domain. By drawing on data from the physical and digital resources, this study offers a comprehensive biobibliometric analysis of Roff's remarkable academic journey. This study uses mixed methods that integrates quantitative bibliometric analysis with qualitative biographical analysis. The findings reveal that Roff's prolific output and sustained engagement over a span of 53 years exemplify a remarkable standard of scholarly excellence. His active participation in professional bodies and extensive publication record underscore the critical role of academic output in establishing authority and advancing knowledge dissemination. For aspiring academics, Roff's achievement exemplify the highest standards of scholarly maturity and intellectual contribution. Recognising such milestones is not only essential for honouring individual achievement but also for inspiring the next generation of scholars to aspire toward similar heights of academic distinction.

Keywords : Roff, Malay Thought, Islamic Thought, Malay World, Biobibliometric Analysis

ABSTRAK

Dalam akademik, dua tonggak utama dalam kemajuan kerjaya ialah penghasilan dan penerbitan karya ilmiah. Penerbitan ini bukan sekadar formaliti, sebaliknya berfungsi sebagai penanda aras penting terhadap pencapaian akademik dan memainkan peranan yang signifikan dalam pengiktirafan profesional. Keupayaan seseorang sarjana untuk mengemudi cabaran ini mencerminkan ketelitian intelektualnya, sekaligus mengukuhkan kepakaran serta reputasi dalam bidang pengkhususan masing-masing. Dalam konteks pemikiran Melayu-Islam, para sarjana dari rantau ini mahupun dari Barat telah memberikan sumbangan yang signifikan. Tokoh-tokoh seperti Hamka, Graf, Braginsky dan Roff merupakan contoh keterlibatan intelektual yang mendalam. Makalah ini bertujuan memperluas wacana pemikiran Melayu-Islam dengan meneliti sumbangan sarjana bukan tempatan, khususnya Roff. Meskipun pengaruhnya besar, sarjana Barat seperti beliau sering kali kurang mendapat perhatian dalam bidang ini. Berdasarkan data daripada sumber fizikal dan digital, kajian ini menawarkan analisis biobibliometrik yang komprehensif terhadap perjalanan akademik Roff. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah campuran yang menggabungkan analisis bibliometric secara kuantitatif dengan analisis biografi secara kualitatif. Dapatan menunjukkan bahawa hasil penulisan Roff yang prolifik serta penglibatan berterusannya selama 53 tahun menjadi model kecemerlangan akademik. Penyertaannya yang aktif dalam pelbagai badan profesional dan rekod penerbitan yang luas menegaskan peranan penting penerbitan ilmiah dalam membina autoriti akademik yang menyebarluaskan pengetahuan. Sebagai iktibar untuk para sarjana yang sedang membina kerjaya, pencapaian Roff mencerminkan tahap kematangan ilmiah dan sumbangan intelektual yang tinggi. Pengiktirafan terhadap pencapaian sedemikian bukan sahaja penting untuk menghargai sumbangan individu, malah berperanan sebagai sumber inspirasi kepada generasi sarjana akan datang untuk mencapai tahap kecemerlangan akademik yang setanding.

Kata Kunci : Roff, Pemikiran Melayu, Pemikiran Islam, Alam Melayu, Analisis Biobibliometrik

INTRODUCTION

In the academic world, two essential pillars of career advancement are the writing and publishing of scholarly works. Asmah Haji Omar (2006) highlights that these activities are highly valued within academia, serving as critical channels for the transmission of new knowledge to a specialised audience through well-crafted reading materials or references. This recognition underscores the role of scholarly publications in driving intellectual discourse and ensuring the continued growth of academic fields.

Scholarly production also acts as a benchmark for measuring career achievements in academia. Research by Kiriakos and Tienari (2018) and Faisal and Ainul (2016) suggests that quantity of published works plays a vital role in assessing academic success. Furthermore, these outputs are often tied to university policies, influencing promotions and performance evaluations (Norzaini Azman et al., 2012). The intricate process of publishing with esteemed

publishers adds another layer of challenge, turning academic writing into a rigorous pursuit that demands persistence and excellence.

Despite being a routine aspect of academic life, writing presents challenges for both novice and experienced scholars. Gendron (2019) notes that new academics often struggle to navigate the complexities of scholarly writing. These difficulties are compounded by the pressures to meet institutional expectations and produce high-quality research. Paradoxically, even senior academics tasked with mentoring others may unintentionally create additional obstacles, causing confusion or discouragement (Kiriakos & Tienari, 2018). Such situations can lead novice writers to lose interest, highlighting the critical importance of cultivating resilience and determination in the face of these challenges. Success in this arena not only demonstrate an academic's expertise but also serves as a testament to their growth and mastery of their field.

The contributions of scholars to specific disciplines further illustrate the transformative power of academic writing. In the field of Malay-Islamic thought, numerous prominent academics, both local and international have significantly enriched the discourse. Figures such as Roff (1980), Winstedt (1981), Asmah Haji Omar (1986), Khoo Kay Kim (1991), Braginsky (2004), and Graf (2011) have produced works that continue to shape the intellectual landscape of the region. Their writings serve as a foundation for ongoing scholarly exploration, emphasising the universal appeal and significance of Malay-Islamic thought.

While William R. Roff's scholarship has undeniably enriched the study of the Malay world, it is important to acknowledge that his work has not been immune to critique. Scholars such as Isfihani (2024) have positioned Roff within the orientalist tradition, suggesting that his intellectual project subtly advanced a Eurocentric framing of Nusantara thought. Yet, as Ooi Keat Gin (2024) contends, such critiques risk becoming formulaic, echoing a broader pattern of skepticism directed at European scholars engaged in Southeast Asian studies.

This divergence in scholarly opinion underscores the need for a more nuanced and critical reassessment of Roff's oeuvre. Rather than dismissing his contributions through the lens of postcolonial critique alone, it is imperative to engage with his work in its full complexity, examining both its historical context and its enduring influence on the field. Such

an approach allows for a more balanced and intellectually honest appraisal, one that neither uncritically venerates nor reductively condemns.

Ultimately, a comprehensive re-evaluation of Roff's intellectual legacy is not only warranted but necessary. By situating his scholarship within a broader historiographical and epistemological framework, future studies can move beyond binary judgments and instead foster a more rigorous and transparent understanding of his place in the canon of Malay world studies.

This paper aims to contribute to this evolving discourse by emphasising the often-overlooked contributions of non-local scholars, particularly Western academics. Roff, a pioneer in this field, exemplifies the impactful role of non-local writers in advancing Malay-Islamic world studies. By highlighting Roff's work, this study seeks to demonstrate that the richness of Malay-Islamic thought has drawn the attention of a global academic audience, fostering a cross-cultural exchange of ideas. This perspective not only enriches the field but also underscores the enduring relevance and universal appeal of Malay-Islamic world scholarship, serving as an inspiring call to action for academics to pursue excellence in their contributions to the global intellectual community.

METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative bibliometric analysis with qualitative biographical and content analysis. This approach allows for a comprehensive examination of both the measurable impact and the intellectual substance of Roff's contribution to Malay-Islamic thought.

To acquire the relevant research data on Roff's publications, the primary source utilised was the database maintained by the Centre of South East Asian Studies (CSEAS) at the School of Asian and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. This database, designed to catalogue the works of visiting researchers and professorial associates at SOAS, included records of Roff's publications during his tenure as a visiting professor (Professorial Research Associate) before his passing in 2013. The authenticity of this data is underscored by its review by Paul Kratoska, Publishing Director at NUS Press, and verification by SOAS.

In addition to the CSEAS database, extensive cross-checking was performed to validate the publications attributed to Roff. Physical copies of books, journal articles,

conference papers and proceedings were obtained from libraries, both domestic and international. For online articles, verification was conducted through resources such as the Malaysian Academic Library Union Catalog (MALcat) and the Malaysian Academic Library's Institutional Repositories (MALRep), which facilitate comprehensive searches across Malaysian libraries. International databases, including Cambridge Core, Directory of Open Access Journals, EBSCO Discovery Service, Emerald, ProQuest Education Journals, SpringerLink, Web of Science, JSTOR, and Google Scholar, were also consulted. To ensure accuracy, the findings were further corroborated through notes personally documented by the author while attending a series of Roff's discourses during his tenure as an Honorary Fellow at the Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies (IMES) at the University of Edinburgh between 2004-2005. These firsthand observations provide valuable insights into Roff's intellectual engagements, reinforcing the depth of his scholarly contributions and the significance of his academic discussions during this period.

The primary objective of this biobibliometric study is to measure productivity, trends, publication patterns, and academic collaboration. Similar studies have been undertaken with comparable objectives. One of the earliest examples is Scheile's (1991) study, which assessed the publication productivity of U.S. academics writing on social work issues. Scheile concluded that productivity was influenced by factors such as personal inclination, diligence, and professional seniority.

In Malaysia, Tiew (1999) conducted the first biobibliometric study, analysing the publication patterns of Dato' Khoo Kay Kim. This study highlighted key aspects such as journal selection, language choice, and thematic focus, ultimately concluding that Dato' Khoo Kay Kim's writings on Malaysian history served as seminal reference materials. Similarly, Srengeinz and Savanur (2006) analysed the publication patterns of N. Rudraiah, a mathematics professor at Bangalore University, over 45 years. Koleya and Sen (2006) focused on the scientific publications of B. N Koley in physiology, examining a nine-year span.

In Pakistan, Kousar and Mahmoud (2010) studied the scholarly works of Syed Jalaluddin Haidar from 1968 to 2008, considering factors like language choice, number of pages, journal selection, and keyword usage. More recently, Ahmad Faisal and Ainul Mardhiah (2016) documented the writings of Zulkifli Mohd Yusoff, noting his expertise in

Qur'anic studies, while Ahmad Faisal and Nurul Afiqah (2020) analysed the works of Joni Tamkin Borhan, whose 56 articles on Islamic economics demonstrated notable academic authority.

Building upon this tradition, the current study adopts a similar research design to examine the contributions of Roff. This paper explores Roff's impact on the discourse surrounding Malay-Islamic thought through a comprehensive biobibliometric analysis of his works. By delving into Roff's scholarly legacy, this study seeks to uncover the unique qualities that distinguish his contributions and offer fresh insights into his academic career.

ROFF'S LIFE AND WORK

Between 2003 and 2006, the author[1] pursued a PhD at IMES, seizing the opportunity to actively participate in Roff's lectures and discussions. This engagement provided invaluable insights into Roff's perspectives on the historical development of *tajdid* in the Malay world, enriching the author's understanding of the subject through direct academic interaction with him. His seminal work, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, is particularly notable for its frequent use of the terms *Kaum Muda* and *Kaum Tua*. Although initially perceived as novel, these terms have since been widely adopted by other scholars and now constitute essential terminology in the study of *tajdid* within the Malay world (Adnan, 1998). The concepts articulated in this foundational text continue to serve as a crucial reference for emerging researchers seeking to engage with Roff's enduring scholarly perspective on the subject.



Figure 1: William R. Roff
(Laffan et.al., 2013)

Roff: Sailor, Scholar and Husband

[1]The author referred to here is Mohd Farid Mohd Sharif. He pursued his PhD thesis under the supervision of Professor Dr. Yasin Dutton, with sponsorship from Universiti Sains Malaysia and Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam Malaysia.

Roff was born in Bearsden, East Dunbartonshire, Scotland, in 1929. In 1978, he married Sue, a local resident, and the couple had two daughters. Known affectionately as “Bill” among his peers, Roff embarked on his formal education in his twenties. Following the completion of his studies, he spent six years working as a seaman with the British & Burmese Steam Navigation Company (Laffan et al., 2013). His maritime career afforded him extensive opportunities to travel throughout the Malay world and engage with its diverse communities. These interactions cultivated a profound interest in the region’s cultures and societies, ultimately motivating him to explore the complexities of Southeast Asian life in greater depth.

Driven by his insatiable curiosity, Roff relocated to New Zealand to pursue higher education at Victoria University of Wellington, where he demonstrated academic excellence in history and anthropology. His opportunities for academic advancement expanded when he secured a position as a journalist and newsreader at a national broadcasting company. The income from this role provided him with the financial means to support both his undergraduate and postgraduate studies (Roff, 2013).

During his decade in New Zealand, Roff’s academic engagement with history and anthropology deepened significantly, shaping the trajectory of his intellectual pursuits. A pivotal influence during this period was the scholarship of Singaporean historian Emily Sadka, whose work provided critical insights that steered his research focus. Additionally, exposure to the writings of esteemed scholars such as A.H. Johns, Soepomo, Jit and Patricia Uberoi further nurtured his intellectual curiosity about Southeast Asia. This convergence of scholarly influences ultimately led Roff to pursue a doctoral degree, directing his research toward Malay thought, a decision that would define his lifelong academic contributions (Laffan et al., 2013).

Roff’s residency in Klang, Selangor, around 1959 proved pivotal to the development of his research. Residing with Tuan Haji Abdul Karim, a local Malay, Roff gained invaluable firsthand insights into Malay culture and customs (Ooi Keat Gin & King, 2024). Through oral histories and personal documents generously shared by his host, he was able to gather primary data that became foundational to his doctoral dissertation. In addition to his exploration of Malay culture, Roff delved into the influence of Middle Eastern Islamic thought on the Malay world. His engagement with Muhammad Zaki Badawi, an Egyptian

scholar and advisor to the Malayan Islamic College, further illuminated the profound impact of Muhammad Abduh's ideas on the renewal thought in the Malay context (Laffan et al., 2013).

Upon completing his doctoral studies at the Australian National University (ANU), Roff was appointed as a lecturer at the University of Malaya, where he served from 1965 to 1969 (Roff, 2013). During this tenure, he further advanced his research on Malay society, notably through fieldwork conducted in Kelantan. After four years at the University of Malaya, Roff received an invitation to join the faculty of history at Columbia University. This appointment represented a pivotal milestone in his academic career, underscoring the international recognition of his contributions to the fields of history and anthropology.

During his tenure at Columbia University, Roff actively engaged in a wide range of academic activities, including seminars, forums and conferences. He was frequently invited to deliver keynote addresses on topics pertaining to Islam and Malay world, further cementing his reputation as a leading scholar in these fields (*The Courier*, 2013). Roff also served as a mentor to numerous graduate students, supervising the research of prominent scholars such as Sumit Mandal, Azyumardi Azra, Muhammad Kamal Hassan, Usha Sanyal and Badriyah Haji Saleh (Laffan et al., 2013). His aspiration to become a preeminent scholar of Islamic and Malay world was realised in 1973 with his appointment as a full professor at Columbia University.

Roff continued his illustrious academic career as a Professor of East Asian Studies at Columbia University until his retirement in 1991. Following his return to Scotland, he was honoured with several prestigious appointments, including Honorary Fellow at IMES, Honorary Professor at CSEAS and Professor Emeritus at Columbia University (Roff, 2013). Even in retirement, Roff remained intellectually active, sustaining his engagement with the field and contributing to scholarly discourse.

Much of the initial recognition for Roff's academic work came from his colleagues at ANU and Columbia. For instance, Harry J. Benda hailed *The Origins of Malay Nationalism* as a "pioneering work in Malay history" (Laffan et al., 2013). This seminal work has since become a foundational text for scholars studying Southeast Asia. Roff's reputation was further solidified with the publication of an article in the prestigious *Indonesia* journal, in

which he examined the activities of Malaysian and Indonesian student associations in Egypt. This article significantly contributed to his scholarly standing (Laffan et al., 2013).

Roff's extensive body of work encompassed a wide range of topics within Malay and Southeast Asian studies, including Malay thought, Islamic thought in the Malay world, politics, society, economics and Malay journalism. His scholarship was distinguished by its elegant prose and rigorous analysis. Among his notable contributions, his articles on the controversy surrounding dog saliva in Kelantan (Roff, 1983) and on Za'ba's leadership of the Selangor Malay Association (Roff, 1968) garnered widespread attention and recognition from scholars globally (Laffan et al., 2013).

Roff firmly established himself as a preeminent scholar of Southeast Asian thought, playing a pivotal role in advancing research on the Malay world and fostering collaboration among scholars in the field. Among his many contributions, Roff co-edited the groundbreaking volume *In Search of Southeast Asia* alongside David P. Chandler, John R. W. Smail and David K. Wyatt. Widely regarded as a seminal work, this publication has had a profound and lasting impact on Southeast Asian studies, shaping the trajectory of subsequent scholarship and solidifying Roff's enduring legacy as a leading figure in the field (Hillenbrand, 2013).

His appointment as an Honorary Fellow at IMES was a pivotal addition to the institution, enhancing its academic stature and appeal. His distinguished reputation drew numerous Southeast Asian doctoral students, particularly from Malaysia and Indonesia, who sought his mentorship. Throughout his tenure, Roff supervised over 20 doctoral candidates, earning widespread respect not only as an eminent scholar but also as a dedicated mentor and colleague. His guidance and intellectual support were instrumental in shaping the academic trajectories of these scholars, leaving a lasting impact on the field and solidifying his legacy as a transformative figure in Southeast Asian studies.

In the years leading up to his death, Roff found both solace and inspiration in the city of Edinburgh. He often visited the Waverley Steps, a grand staircase linking Princes Street to Waverley Station, and spent time with friends and former students at the cafe within the Balmoral Hotel. These gatherings were marked by stimulating discussions on various Islamic issues, reflecting Roff's enduring intellectual engagement. Roff passed away on May 3, 2013,

after a prolonged illness. His death was deeply mourned by the academic community, which remembered him not only as a dedicated scholar, writer, and mentor but also as a warm and affable colleague (Hillenbrand, 2013).

ROFF'S SCHOLARLY CONTRIBUTIONS AND BIOBIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

This study employs a biobibliometric analysis to systematically evaluate Roff's scholarly contributions, providing a quantitative assessment of his research output. By examining publication frequency, including journals, book chapters, books, and conference proceedings, alongside authorship patterns and total page count. This analysis offers valuable insights into Roff's academic productivity and influence. The inclusion of tables enhances the clarity of the findings, enabling a comprehensive understanding of the scope and impact of his work. Through this approach, the study aims to underscore Roff's enduring legacy and his significant contributions to Southeast Asian and Islamic studies.

YEAR	JOURNAL	BOOK	BOOK	PROCEEDI	TOTAL
1960s	9	9	1	0	19
1970s	10	8	3	1	22
1980s	5	8	3	0	16
1990s	6	2	1	2	11
2000s	6	7	3	3	19
2010s	8	0	0	1	9
Total					96

Table 1: Scholarly Contribution

Table 1 provides a comprehensive overview of Roff's scholarly output from the 1960s to the 2010s. Over the course of his prolific 53-year career, he produced a total of 96 publications, including journal articles, book chapters, books, and conference proceedings. His most productive period was the 1970s, during which he published 22 works. A detailed analysis of his contributions reveals a total of 44 journal articles, 34 book chapters, 11 books, and 7 conference proceedings, underscoring the breadth and depth of his academic impact.

NO. OF	1960S	1970S	1980S	1990S	2000S	2010S	TOTAL
1	16	19	11	8	12	7	73
2	2	1	3	2	4	2	14
3 ≥	1	2	2	1	3	0	9

Table 2: Authorship Patterns

Table 2 presents data on Roff's authorship patterns from the 1960s to the 2010s, highlighting his strong preference for independent research. Of his 96 publications, 73 were sole-authored, while 14 involved two co-authors, and 9 were collaborative works with three or more co-authors. This distribution suggests that Roff predominantly chose to work independently, possibly to maintain greater control over the articulation of his ideas and to better navigate constraints such as word or page limits. While the precise motivations behind this preference remain uncertain, his extensive body of sole-authored work underscores his intellectual autonomy and commitment to individual scholarship.

PAGE	1960S	1970S	1980S	1990S	2000S	2010S	TOTAL
20 ≤	11	6	5	4	8	9	42
20 ≥	8	16	11	7	11	1	54

Table 3: Total Page Count

Table 3 indicates that the majority of Roff's publications, totalling 54, exceeded 20 pages, while 42 were shorter in length. The shorter works primarily consisted of journal articles and book chapters, such as "On Going into the Field" in the *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* and "The Ins and Outs of Hadhrami Journalism in Malaysia, 1900-1941: Assimilation or Identity Maintenance?" in *The Hadhrami Diaspora in Southeast Asia*. In contrast, his longer works were predominantly books and substantial book chapters. Notable examples include *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, a full-length monograph, and "The Origins and Early Years of the Majlis Agama Kelantan", a comprehensive chapter in the edited volume *Kelantan: Religion, Society and Politics in a Malay State*. This data underscores Roff's ability to produce both concise analytical pieces and extensive, in-depth studies, reflecting the breadth and depth of his scholarly contributions.

Roff's Publishing Patterns in Malay World

Roff's extensive publication record underscores his stature as a leading scholar in Malay world. Spanning multiple genres from the 1960s to the 2010s, his prolific output reflects a sustained and deep intellectual engagement with the field. His commitment to scholarly writing emerged early in his academic career as a university student in New Zealand and continued to define his professional trajectory. Roff's dedication to research and publication earned him widespread recognition, leading to prestigious academic appointments. His tenure at the University of Malaya (1965–1969) marked a crucial phase in his career, after which he

joined Columbia University, where his scholarly contributions were further acknowledged through his promotion to professor. His enduring impact on Southeast Asian and Islamic studies attests to both the depth of his expertise and the significance of his academic legacy.

Roff's academic contributions were widely recognized, leading him to produce a steady stream of scholarly works on various aspects of Southeast Asia. His notable articles include "Whence Cometh the Law? Dog Saliva in Kelantan, 1937" and "The Conduct of the Hajj from Malaya, and the First Malay Pilgrimage Officer". His seminal work, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, is often cited as his magnum opus. While Southeast Asia remained his primary focus, Roff also ventured into broader Islamic studies, as evidenced by articles such as "Islamic Movements: One or Many?" and "An Argument About How to Argue", which delved into Middle Eastern issues.

After his appointment as a professor at Columbia University, Roff's scholarly output soared to new heights in the 1970s. It was during this period that he became a fixture in the university's archives and libraries, often seen poring over colonial-era manuscripts with a meticulous intensity that colleagues fondly recalled. This prestigious role propelled his academic productivity, leading to the publication of 22 works over the decade, many of which became foundational texts in the field. While his pace slowed somewhat in the 1990s, especially after his retirement from Columbia, his intellectual curiosity never waned. Even in retirement, he continued to write with the same fervour, producing 11 more publications. The 2000s marked a resurgence in his academic contributions, driven by his appointment as Professor Emeritus at Columbia University and his additional roles as an Honorary Fellow at IMES and CSEAS. In the final years, between 2010 to 2013, Roff remained deeply engaged in scholarly discourse, publishing nine more works before his passing. His career trajectory is a testament to an unwavering commitment to knowledge, a legacy of scholarship that continues to inspire.

Roff's preference for solo authorship is a distinctive feature of his academic writing. Of his 96 total publications, more than half were authored independently, suggesting that he valued the autonomy and freedom that solo writing offered in structuring and developing his discussions. This inclination is not merely a personal preference but reflects Roff's deep engagement with the material, allowing him to convey his perspectives and ideas more directly. For example, in his paper *"Nasehat*: Distance and Authority in a Malay Sultanate*"*,

Roff shares an insightful encounter with Captain Muhammad Ali, the Royal Guard of the Pahang Palace, who was widely known for his strict demeanor. However, Roff's personal experience with Ali was notably different, leading him to hypothesise that such courteous treatment may be characteristic of Malay officials' interactions with Europeans. Similarly, in *"*Patterns of Islamization in Malaysia, 1890s-1990s: Exemplars, Institutions, and Vectors*"*, Roff explores the development of Islam in Malaysia by introducing three analytical categories: exemplars (religious figures), institutions (religious organizations), and vectors (media). These categories were purposefully crafted as frameworks for further academic inquiry, reflecting Roff's methodical approach to scholarship. His ability to devise distinctive terminologies for analysis is a hallmark of his academic rigor, and this approach is indicative of the depth and originality that he consistently brought to his research.

Roff's scholarly output exhibits a clear preference for works exceeding 20 pages, a pattern that reflects the inherent demands of academic writing rather than incidental variation. The length of an academic publication is often dictated by the complexity of the research, the nature of the data, and the requirements of different publication formats. Just as an architect tailors blueprints to the scale of a structure, ranging from a compact residence to an expansive skyscraper, scholars must adjust the depth and breadth of their work based on the subject matter and the constraints of the medium. Some studies necessitate extensive field reports, statistical analyses, and visual data, requiring greater page lengths, while others, particularly those centred on textual analysis or narrowly focused themes, demand brevity. Additionally, publication genres impose their own constraints; journal articles, conference proceedings, book chapters, and monographs each adhere to specific editorial policies regarding length. Although Roff never explicitly commented on his publication lengths, the variation in his works suggests a deliberate adaptation to these academic and editorial factors. For instance, his article "Customary Law, Islamic Law, and Colonial Authority: Three Contrasting Case Studies and their Aftermath", published in *Islamic Studies*, spans only seven pages due to its focused scope. In contrast, his article "Pondoks, Madrasas, and the Production of 'Ulama in Malaysia"*,* published in *Studia Islamika*, extends to 20 pages, reflecting its broader analytical framework. The distinction between books and book chapters further underscores this genre-based variability, while Roff's edited volume *Kelantan: Religion, Society and Politics in a Malay State* comprises 371 pages, his book chapter "Murder as an Aid to Social History: The Arabs in Singapore in the Early Twentieth Century" is confined to 16 pages. This nuanced

approach to publication length highlights Roff's ability to navigate different scholarly platforms while maintaining the depth and rigor characteristic of his work.

CONCLUSION

In academia, formal recognition is a key indicator of authority and intellectual maturity. Like a master craftsman, a scholar's expertise is validated through institutional acknowledgment. This recognition, reserved for those at the pinnacle of their profession, is typically awarded based on exceptional academic contributions, peer recognition, and demonstrated seniority (Norzaini Azman et al., 2012). While criteria vary, one constant remains: the production of scholarly works. Academic publishing is not a mere formality, it is the foundation of authority, influence, and leadership (Kiriakos et al., 2018). The frequency and impact of publications shape scholarly reputation, institutional prestige, and societal advancement. Hence, institutions globally prioritise scholarly output as a core criterion for academic recognition, reinforcing the link between research and distinction.

This paper highlights Roff as a distinguished academic figure, whose scholarly achievements exemplify the criteria for academic recognition. His intellectual maturity and profound influence in the field of Malay world, combined with his role as a mentor and model for students, colleagues, and the wider academic community, underscore his significance. By analysing his publication patterns since the 1960s, Roff's scholarly trajectory serves as both an exemplar and an inspiration for emerging academics striving to expand their intellectual contributions on national and international stages. His extensive body of work not only reinforces his academic authority but also represents a vital contribution to the advancement of knowledge, emphasizing the enduring impact of rigorous and dedicated scholarship.

Roff embodies the dedication of a professor deeply committed to academia, demonstrated not only through his prolific scholarly output but also through his active engagement in various professional and academic communities. His involvement spanned multiple regions, including New Zealand, Scotland, the United States, and Malaysia, where he contributed to intellectual discourse and academic development. Through mentoring and guidance, he shared his extensive research experience and commitment to community service with students and fellow academics, fostering a culture of intellectual growth. The hallmarks of a distinguished scholar and professor are evident in Roff, as reflected in the excellence of

his publications and the recognition he received, including testimonials from peers that attest to his profound academic influence.

The findings of this study hold significant implications for both theoretical discourse and the academic profession. Specifically, they underscore several key points: first, the biobibliometric analysis presented in this paper indirectly affirms Roff's scholarly authority, highlighting his exclusive recognition as a professor in the field of Malay world. Second, this study reinforces the biobibliometric method as a valuable tool for assessing academic excellence, particularly in relation to the scholarly output expected of a professor, one who not only produces credible research but also disseminates knowledge to students and peers through publications. Finally, these findings offer valuable insights for young academics, emphasising the importance of impactful knowledge transfer through scholarly writing and publication.

This biobibliometric study has examined Roff's publication patterns over his 53-year academic career, providing valuable insights into his scholarly contributions through an analysis of his publication list. However, certain methodological limitations must be acknowledged, particularly regarding the validity of findings that rely heavily on third-party sources for a comprehensive record of his works. While this publication list serves as a crucial document in highlighting Roff's achievements in writing, it alone cannot fully capture the intellectual depth, evolving thought patterns, or personal wisdom that shaped his scholarship. Therefore, further in-depth studies are necessary to analyse the substantive discussions within Roff's writings, offering a more nuanced understanding of his intellectual legacy. Ultimately, this study reaffirms the significance of Roff's contributions while underscoring the need for continued exploration of his impact on Malay world and beyond.

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