

Research Paper

Citation Review and Scientific Visualization of Articles Published in the Iranian Rehabilitation Journal (IRJ) 2003-2023 in the Scopus Database



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ABSTRACT

Objectives: Accurate scientific planning and societal macro policies require reviewing and evaluating research output. Scientometrics offers a valuable approach for assessing the activity of journals that publish a majority of scientific productions. This study aims to analyze the scientific activity of the Iranian Rehabilitation Journal (IRJ) by examining its publication history in the Scopus database.

Methods: This bibliometric analysis adopts a scientometrics approach and includes all documents published in IRJ indexed in the Scopus database. Data collection and analysis were performed using VOSviewer and Excel software.

Results: IRJ has been active since 2003, initially publishing seven articles in the Scopus database. The journal boasts an H-index 11 and has produced 701 documents over 20 years. The citation score for the journal in 2022 was approximately 0.6. The University of Social Welfare and Rehabilitation Sciences had the highest number of affiliated articles (n=395). The most productive author was "Dadkhah" with 42 documents; the most cited author was "Masah". Most documents are articles written in English, and the most frequently used keyword is "Rehabilitation".

Discussion: This study offers an overview of the status of IRJ, indicating an increasing trend in the number of documents published and citations received since its establishment. The research findings can serve as a road map for researchers in the field of rehabilitation, providing valuable insights for future studies.

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Highlights

- Results assist in formulating scientific and research policies and guidelines.
- They analyze scientific communication and citation patterns.
- Results conduct quantitative and qualitative evaluations of scientific sources and publications.
- They assess output, efficiency/performance, and scientific impact.

Plain Language Summary

This research provides valuable guidance for researchers seeking to effectively use available research facilities and resources. The study offers an overall view of the current state of the Iranian Rehabilitation Journal (IRJ).

Introduction

Scientific journals represent essential tools for publishing findings in the field of workforce health. Generally, researchers find publishing articles in specialized journals more interesting for different reasons such as novelty, concise content, high rapid transmission, faster printing and distribution, and introduction of the latest research [1]. Evaluating scientific research stands as a pivotal factor, serving as an honest viewer to spot the strengths and weaknesses of the knowledge production process. Such assessments inform editors and organizers of the publications regarding the current situation of the publication, thereby helping them make better decisions [2]. Therefore, given the remarkable role of journals and published articles, evaluating and scientifically reviewing journals is imperative as one of the methods of providing new information. In this context, scientometrics emerges as one of the most prevalent and text-based methodologies in the scientific appraisal of journals [1].

In scientometrics, the citation analysis method has long been served to check researchers' scientific effectiveness. Employing a diverse array of scientometrics indicators is one of the methods of measuring the impact and quality of research. These metrics range from traditional metrics (publication count, journal impact factor, and article citation count) as well as new web-based metrics to evaluate the quality of research [3]. However, the findings derived from cited articles are often subject to a significant time lag. It takes a long time for a scientific work to be published and indexed in citation databases and then the received work citations to be thoroughly examined [4].

By conducting scientometrics, it is feasible to assess the number of scientific productions, the quality and effectiveness of these productions, and the national and international position of a publication compared with other publications in the same field. In addition, by conducting citation studies on journals, one can ascertain the number of citations received by journal articles in relation to other research outputs and consequently identify highly cited papers. The findings of such studies provide a comprehensive picture of individuals, institutions, countries, and the issues discussed in the publication. Practitioners can use these data for future planning and policies. Today, thousands of scientific journals are published in different fields worldwide, and their evaluations require detailed and expert analysis and review [5]. Top of Form

As an interdisciplinary field, Scientometrics examines various subjects due to its wide scope. It deals with all quantitative aspects of science and scientific research. This quantitative evaluation stands as a pivotal factor in the development and progress of science, enabling maximum productivity in financial and human resources [6]. A scientific map creates a spatial representation of how fields, specialists, and their articles are connected [7].

In a review study, Ardiansyah et al. [8] conducted a scientific mapping of concrete composites as radiation shields. This paper offers a comprehensive bibliometric analysis to shed light on the evolution of concrete composite as a radiation shielding research from its first publication in 1949 to October 26, 2022. This study was conducted based on the Scopus database, analyzing a total of 541 documents. The study data were visualized using the VOSviewer and Tableau to facilitate bibliometric analysis and scientific mapping. The research showed a consistent increase in published papers (mostly ar-

ticles) in recent years. Some countries demonstrate significant productivity and influence within their country/region with the broadest range of partners. This study also presents the most contributed journals and the most frequently cited documents. In addition, keyword analysis was carried out to find the hotspots on this research topic. This paper helps scholars to understand the evolution of concrete composite as a radiation shielding research from a bibliometric perspective. It inspires them to develop new concrete composite with high stability absorption properties from waste or natural material as alternatives to lead-based concrete.

Donthu et al. [9] conducted a study titled “forty-five years of journal of business research: A bibliometric analysis”. The investigation was carried out as the *Journal of Business Research (JBR)* reached its 45th year of publishing in 2017. They analyzed the journal’s impact, prominent topics, and most prolific authors, including their affiliated institutions and countries, using bibliometric techniques. Using network analysis within VOSviewer software, they grouped JBR publications into six clusters. Then, by employing Gephi software, the co-authorship and bibliographic couplings of authors and their affiliated institutions and countries, co-citations of journals, and co-occurrence of author-specified keywords were generated.

Top of form

Nandiyanto et al. [10] performed a bibliometric analysis of material research in an Indonesian journal using VOSviewer. This study was undertaken to analyze the scope of research on materials using a bibliometric review and data mapping process. Research data on materials were obtained from databases from selected journals in Indonesia. The search uses a search engine containing data on all related journal articles. The search methodology was based on a topic area with titles, keywords, and abstracts pertinent to the study material. The mapping process was done using VOSviewer. A total of 60 relevant articles were found. The results showed that the most studied study material fell within the 2016-2021.

Meanwhile, the “acid” term in chemistry emerged as the most frequently discussed material. In terms of contributing countries, Indonesia emerged as the leading country with 43 articles. Indonesia also exhibited the most links with other countries, namely 8 links. Through VOSviewer, we analyzed how many articles have been published about the material and its relation to the topic area. This review can provide a reference point for further research related to materials.

Huchang Liao et al. [11] conducted a study titled “a bibliometric analysis and visualization of medical big data research”. This study aimed to explore the current status of medical big data through visualization analysis of journal papers related to MBD (medical big data). We analyzed 988 references downloaded from the *Science Citation Index Expanded* and the *Social Science Citation Index* databases from *Web of Science*, encompassing data from “all years”. The GraphPad Prism software, version 5, VOSviewer software, version 1.6.19 were used for data analysis. This paper presents a plethora of findings concerning annual trends, the prominent figures players at journal and institute levels, the citations and H-index at the country level, the keywords distribution, highly cited papers, the co-authorship status, and the most influential journals and authors. This study points out the development status and trends of MBD. It can help people in the medical profession to get a comprehensive understanding of the state of the art of MBD. It also holds reference values for researching and applying MBD visualization methods.

Our primary aim is to conduct a comprehensive scientific analysis of the *Iranian Rehabilitation Journal (IRJ)* throughout its publication history in the Scopus database.

Materials and Methods

This work constitutes a bibliometric analysis conducted in the Scopus database. The research community included all documents published in the *IRJ* across various years in the Scopus database. In this research, the data collection tool and method was an Internet search conducted within the Scopus database.

Several databases are employed for bibliometric studies, including *Web of Science*, *Microsoft Academic*, *Crossref* [6], and *Scopus* database. In this study, we used *Scopus*, the world’s largest abstract and bibliographic database. Some researchers argue that *Scopus* is a robust alternative to *Web of Science* for bibliometric analysis [12] because it is designed for bibliographic search and citation data extraction [13, 14]. In addition, *Scopus* has a broader coverage of social science research compared to *Web of Science* [15].

Indeed, this wider coverage of journals also leads to a wider range of citations. Within this study, we sought to determine the trend of publications, distribution of citations, the most cited articles, and the most productive and cited authors of the countries in the *IRJ*. Moreover, this study incorporated analyses of researchers’ co-authorship patterns, co-occurrence of keywords, and

co-citation of sources. The co-authorship map offers insights into author collaborations and their organizational affiliations to discover cooperation networks. The co-occurrence map, on the other hand, considers the most important keywords used in the documents, effectively structuring the research field conceptually. The map aids in understanding the basic patterns of published papers. The co-citation map also takes into account the possible thematic similarity of documents. Co-citation occurs when two papers are simultaneously cited by a third document [16]. This study used co-citation to identify authors and references cited by IRJ articles.

Co-authorship simply means scientific communication between two or more authors to create a scientific work. It stands as one of the most tangible and documented forms of scientific cooperation and the most formal manifestation of collaboration between authors in the production of scientific research. When studying the co-authorship network nodes among authors, it becomes evident that authors who work in similar fields often exhibit joint efforts in volume and coherence [17].

Co-occurrence analyses reveal the frequency of words and the most important research topics of a field. One of the effective methods of scientometrics in drawing scientific maps is co-lexical analysis, which many researchers adopt as a powerful tool to discover knowledge within citation databases [18].

Co-citation serves as a valuable tool to draw a map of the intellectual structure of a research field. Co-citation examines the frequency of two sources that have been cited together (two sources appeared together in the reference list of a new article); these two sources are called co-citations. The extent of co-citation source sharing is determined by the number of articles referencing both co-cited documents. Co-citation, in essence, represents similarity, the conceptual and cognitive connection between two authors, two journals, or two documents [19].

In recent decades, Iran has witnessed significant growth in rehabilitation programs, ushering major changes in providing services across medical, social, educational, and professional fields. Along with the development of services in a center-based approach with experts and experienced therapists, community-based rehabilitation has been welcomed as a new method of providing services, endorsed as a national plan. Regrettably, despite major achievements in various aspects of disability issues, few articles have been published in languages other than Farsi about these growing activities [20].

Recognizing the dearth of information in these fields, the [University of Social Welfare and Rehabilitation Sciences](#) has taken the initiative to publish the IRJ. This endeavor tries to fill this gap within the framework of its goals and objectives, and aims to provide a forum for discussion and exchange of information. Disability-related issues hold particular relevance within the Iranian context, mostly public relations activists, academics, and fans. The journal's scope includes a wide array of fields, including clinical and academic research pertinent to different groups with special needs, physical and mental rehabilitation, epidemiological studies on disabling conditions, professional and socio-medical aspects of rehabilitation, quality of life, and disability.

Results

Information of all journal issues from the [Scopus](#) database was extracted from the database on July 10, 2023, and stored in CSV (comma-separated values) format in an Excel file. The relevant maps and tables were generated using VOSviewer mapping software (Figures 1, 2 and 3). The ensuing data analysis encompassed citation analysis, co-authorship analysis, and co-occurrence analysis (co-citation analysis) using Microsoft Excel and VOSviewer software. In this research, the entire research community was investigated, with keywords entered into the specialized search field for the journal title (Tables 1, 2, 3). Then, the extracted information was entered into the software, and according to the research objectives, tables, maps, and diagrams were generated. The search strategy in this research is as follows: SRCTITLE (Iranian AND rehabilitation AND journal) (Figures 4 and 5).

Figure 1 depicts a graphical presentation of IRJ papers published each year. This journal has a total of 701 documents published in the [Scopus](#) database. In its inaugural year, 2003, the journal published 7 papers, all of which were related to rehabilitation and social welfare. Over the years, about 640 articles contributed to this field. This graph shows that this journal was at the peak of publishing related documents in 2015.

Table 1 lists the top authors with their number of documents, citations, and links. The table lists the top 10 authors out of 1673 in this journal. Notably, Massah O, with 20 articles and 79 citations, and Dadkhan A, with 27 articles and 70 citations, are at the top. The strength of the links next to each author's name indicates a connection between the author and other authors in the same subject area. In this context, Biglarian A, with a connection power of 78, and Massah O, with a link strength of 76, have the most connections in the authoring network.

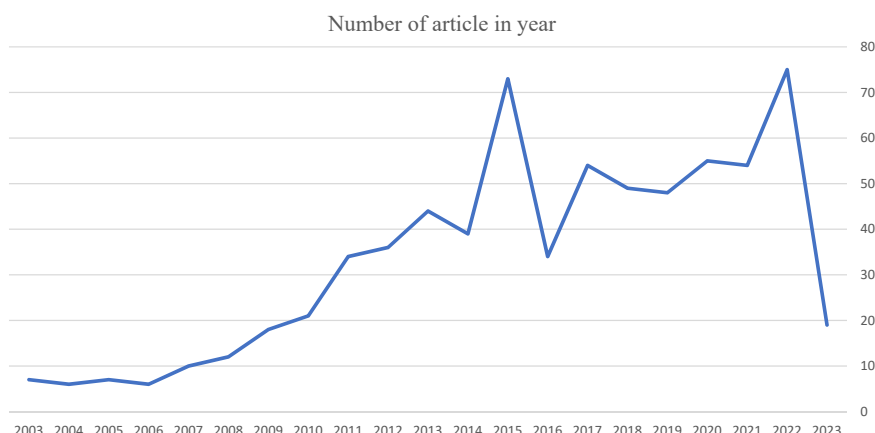


Figure 1. Number of documents published in different years in IRJ

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As shown in Figure 2, out of the 710 documents published in this journal, the majority are related to original research (n=640), then reviews (n=32), editorials (n=27), and letters (n=2). Original research is the dominant subject matter in all health professions documents.

According to the Table 2, the top 10 articles in terms of citations have been identified. Since articles citation rates are affected by the passage of time, a typical article will reach its highest citation rate in almost 10 years. Among the 640 articles published by this journal, the most cited article, entitled “social participation and mental health among older adults in Iran”, was published in 2014 with 26 citations. As of 2022, the average citation rate per article stands at 0.6. It is worth noting that the SJR (Scimago journal rank) of this journal in 2022 is 0.146, while the

SNIP (source normalized impact per paper) for the same year of this journal is 0.196.

Figure 3 shows the number of citations received by documents from this journal, divided by the total number of documents published in IRJ. The chart shows the evolving trend of the average number of times documents published in the journal over the past two, three, and four years that have been cited in the current year. It is noteworthy that from 2003 to 2009, the articles received no citations. Since 2020, however, the high-quality published articles received significant citations.

As indicated in Table 3, the top 15 countries based on the rate of co-citation with this journal are listed. Among the collaborative countries, Iran (n=569) holds the most

Table 1. Co-citation rate of IRJ authors

Author	Document	Citations	Total Link Strength
Massah O	20	79	76
Dadkhah A	27	70	60
Sajedi F	18	66	43
Effatpanah M	3	49	10
Vameghi R	15	48	50
Khandan M	7	45	24
Kamali M	14	43	34
Rassafiani M	10	43	40
Biglarian A	20	38	78
Gharib M	12	38	31

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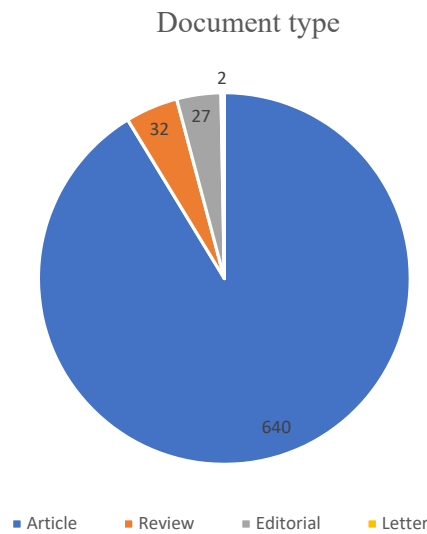


Figure 2. Type of document published in IRJ

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international cooperation, with 1123 citations and 59 connections. Australia is next, with 12 documents and 40 citations. Switzerland and America are in the next ranks with the same citations. Concerning the level of cooperation between organizations, the [University of Social Welfare and Rehabilitation Sciences](#) stands at the top of cooperating organizations with 395 publications, followed by the [Iran University of Medical Sciences](#) with 67 publications.

on the most citations. Iran emerged as the largest partner country with 569 documents, and 1122 citations are at the top of the partner countries in this journal. Following Iran, Australia ranks next with 40 documents. English serves as the dominant language of the publication of documents in this journal. Considering at least one document, there are about 30 partner countries.

Figure 4 highlights the top countries in terms of intra-network co-citations and the number of documents published in this journal. This map encompasses 30 countries by considering at least one specific document for each country. We sorted the obtained information based

This map comprises 16 items, 11 clusters, 24 links, and 69 strong links. Each cluster has different numbers of items related to each other and makes the links in the map. For example, Iran is in cluster one with 15 links.

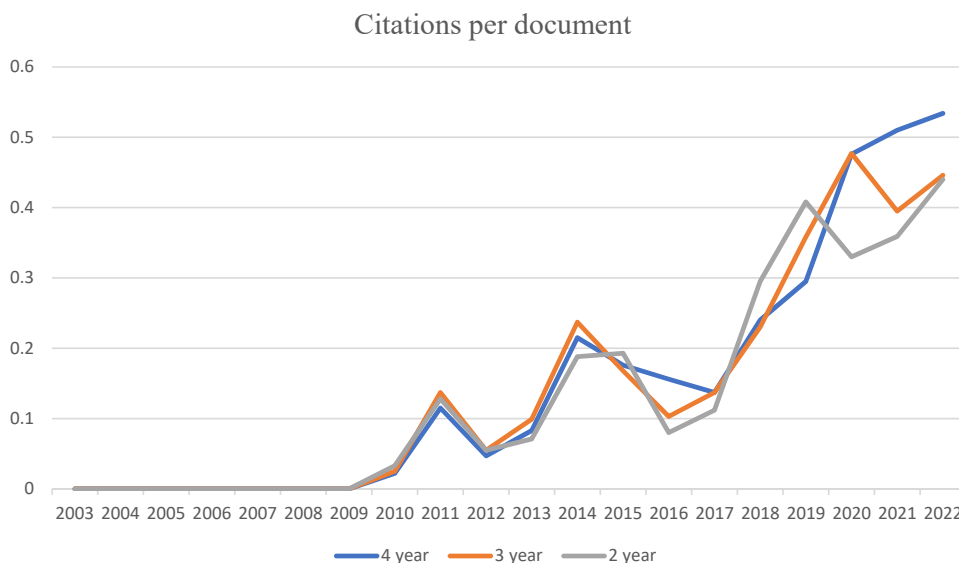


Figure 3. Citations per document in IRJ

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Table 2. Highly cited articles published in IRJ

Title	Authors	Year	Cite
Social participation and mental health among older adults in Iran [21]	Rashedi V, Gharib M, Yazdan AA	2014	26
Patient safety climate and its affecting factors among rehabilitation health care staff of hospitals and rehabilitation centers in Iran-Tehran [22]	Khammar A, Poursadeghiyan M, Marioryad H, Alimohammadi M, Khandan M	2019	19
Hypertonicity in children with cerebral palsy: A new perspective [23]	Rassafiani M & Sahaf R	2011	19
Matrix model for methamphetamine dependence among Iranian female methadone patients: The 1 st report from the most populated Persian Gulf country [24]	Massah O, Effatpanah M, Shishehgar S	2017	17
Research paper: Amphetamine type stimulants use in the adult population of Tehran: Implications for long term rehabilitation [25]	Rafiey H, Ghaderi S, Morovat B, Mahjoub A, Massah O	2017	16
Matrix model as an intensive rehabilitation in three methadone services in Iran [26]	Sami S, Effatpanah M, Morad A, Massah O	2017	16
Evaluation of safety climate factors-A macro ergonomics approach: A case study in Iran [27]	Khandan M, Vosoughi S, Maghsoudipour M	2012	15
Comparing the results of developmental screening of 4-60 months old children in Tehran using ASQ & PDQ [28]	Shahshahani S, Vameghi R, Azari N, Sajedi F, Kazemnejad A	2011	15
Internet addiction in high school students and its relationship with the symptoms of mental disorders [29]	Mohammadkhani P, Alkasir E, Pourshahbaz A, Dehkordi FJ, Sefat ES	2017	14
Post stroke life in Iranian people: Used and recommended strategies [30]	Dalvandi A, Ekman SL, Bagher Maddah SS, Khankeh HR, Heikkilä K	2009	13
Perceived maternal parenting self-efficacy: Translation and face validation with Iranian mothers of hospitalized pre-term neonates [31]	Aliabadi F, Borimnejad L, Kamali M, Rassafiani M, Nazi S	2013	12
The effect of perceptual-motor training on motor skills of preschool children [32]	Sajedi F & Barati H	2014	11
Stuttering prevalence among Kurdish-Farsi students; effects of the two languages' similarities [33]	Mohamadi H, Nilipour R, Yadegari F	2008	10
Behavior-based safety approach at a large construction site in Iran [34]	Oostakhan M, Mofidi A, Talab AD	2012	10
Cerebral palsy: Motor types, gross motor function and associated disorders [35]	Soleimani F, Vameghi R, Rassafiani M, Akbarfahimi N & Nobakht, Z	2011	10
Barriers and challenges of implementing telerehabilitation: A systematic review [36]	Rabanifar N & Abdi K	2021	9
Relationship between laterality and handedness with the higher order sensory functions and manual dexterity of the elderly [37]	Azad A, Taghizadeh G, Ghorbanpoor H, Lajevardi L, Farhadian M	2017	9
Wheelchair design and its influence on physical activity and quality of life among disabled individuals [38]	Ebrahimi A, Kazemi A, Ebrahimi A	2016	9
A comparison of linguistic skills between Persian cochlear implant and normal hearing children [39]	Rahimi M, Sadighi F, Razeghi S	2013	9
The Iranian SF-12 Health Survey version 2 (SF-12v2): Factorial and convergent validity, internal consistency and test re-test in a healthy sample [40]	Rohani C, Abedi HA, Langius-Eklöf A	2010	9

Figure 5 was generated in the software by considering a maximum of 25 articles and at least one citation for each author. Within this range, about 1673 authors were identified in this journal. The obtained information was sorted based on the authors with the highest citation counts. The map displayed above, and the table of authors have

also been compiled as a result of this analysis. This map encompasses 795 items and 38 clusters. In this case, the collective strength of the links is about 1302. Inside each cluster, the number of documents and links are specified. For example, 42 items (authors) are in the first cluster.

Table 3. Rate of co-citation of partner countries in the publication of IRJ

Country	Document	Citation	Total Link Strength
Iran	569	1123	59
Australia	12	40	14
Sweden	5	28	3
United States	20	26	26
India	16	15	1
United Kingdom	8	14	8
Nigeria	6	12	0
Italy	2	8	2
Germany	4	6	4
Iraq	10	5	1
Kuwait	4	3	5
South Korea	1	3	1
Malaysia	5	2	4
Pakistan	10	2	4
Indonesia	4	2	0

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These writers have been placed in one cluster due to their significant commonalities in their works. The number of links determines the relationship between the authors, with higher connection strength indicating a stronger relationship between the authors. For example, in cluster 29, Dadkhah has 46 links and 60 strong connections, publishing 27 documents. In this map, Dadkhah, with 27 articles, is the most prolific author, and Massah O, is the most cited author, with 20 articles and 79 citations.

The keyword co-occurrence map was generated with the default setting of 1771 keywords and considering the co-occurrence of at least one keyword. Notably, the keyword “rehabilitation” has emerged with 32 co-occurrences and 83 links, followed by the keyword “quality of life” with 28 co-occurrences and 74 links and the keyword “children” with 24 co-occurrences and 62 links. This map has 48 clusters, 862 items, and 2777 links. The first cluster has 364 items and 3241 links. “Rehabilitation” is in cluster 37 with 32 co-occurrences (Figure 6).

Discussion

This research yielded a comprehensive bibliometric analysis and visualization study of IRJ, which can be a suitable road map for all researchers in the subject field of the journal. This review determined the most cited articles, authors, institutions, and countries partnering with this journal.

IRJ has been indexed in the Scopus citation database with an H-index of 11 since 2003. Analyzing the conceptual structure of a leading scientific journal in a research field holds significant application for users, readers, and academics in understanding the intellectual and thematic structure of that journal. Until today, bibliometric and scientometrics studies have not been undertaken for this journal.

The publication process and receiving citations of this journal have been growing since its inception, indicating a commitment to maintaining and enhancing the quality of its articles. Carey et al. have also pointed out in their research that over time, the number of publications, citations, and downloads of *Journal of Religion and Health (JORH)* articles has increased significantly. Furthermore, they identified prominent journals and diverse contributions to studying religion, spirituality, and health [41].

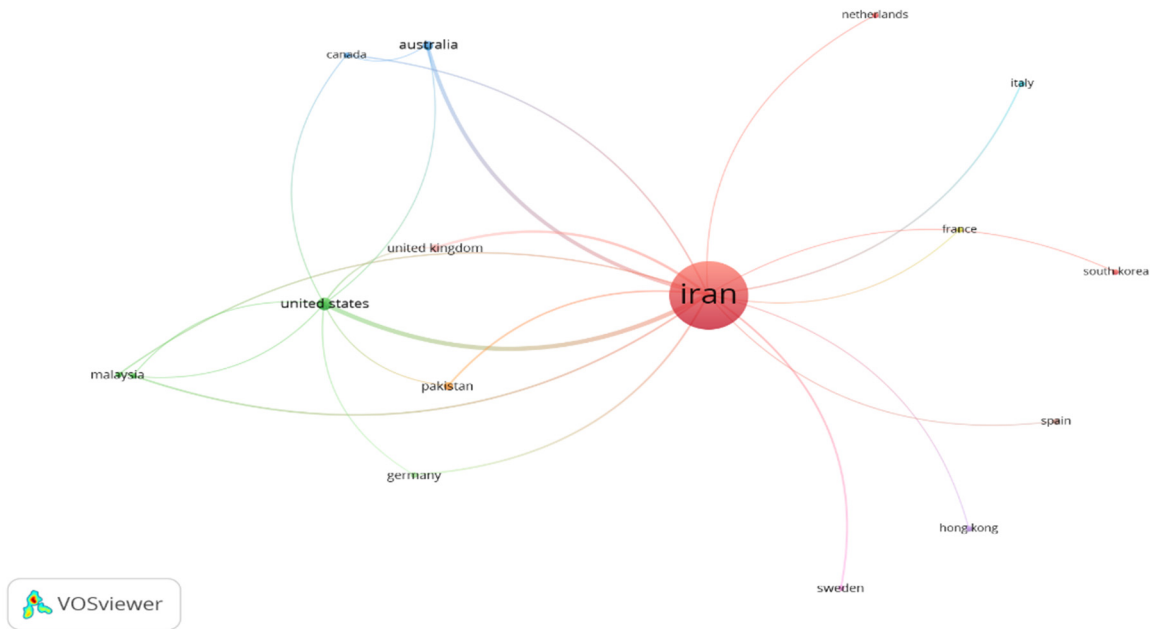


Figure 4. Participation and cooperation of different countries with the IRJ

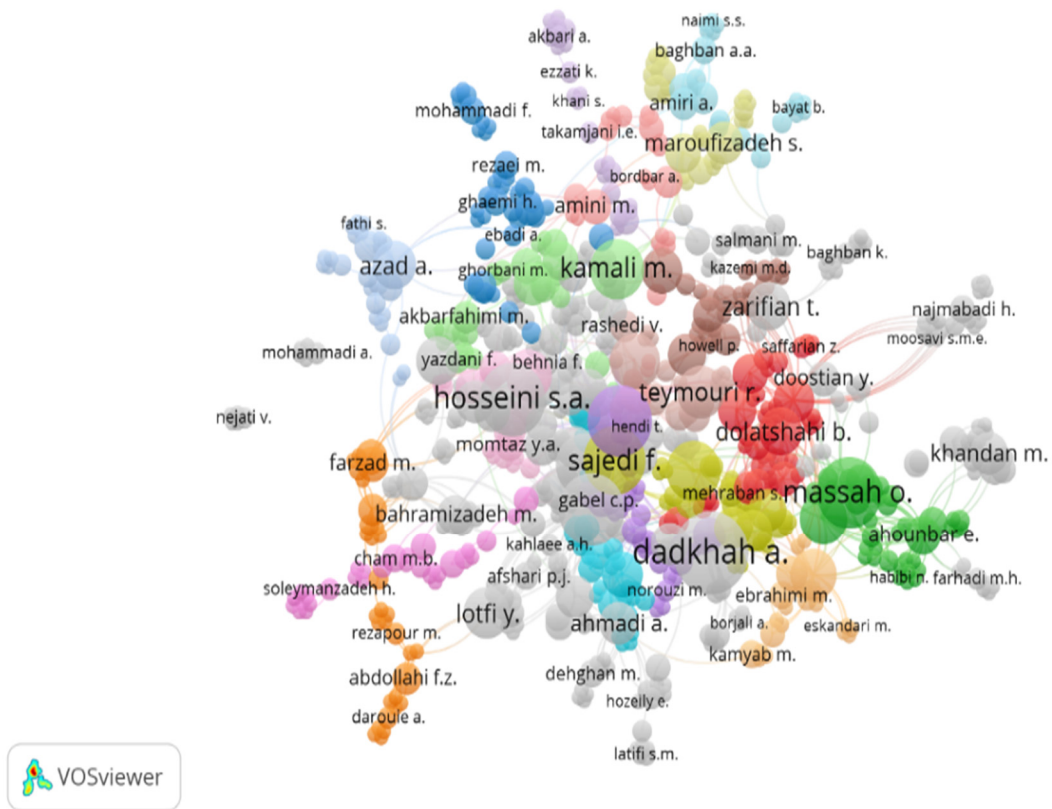


Figure 5. Scientific map of IRJ authors and collaboration within the network

Authors' contributions

Data collection: Marzieh Golchin and Anahita Giti;
Data analysis: Anahita Giti; Writing the article: All authors.

Conflict of interest

The authors declared no conflict of interest.

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