Vol. 7, 2026
Journal of Medical Library and Information Science
https://doi.org/10.22037/jmlis.v7i7.49792
Citation: Razmgir M, Malgard SH, Pormojdegani M, Kalhori Z, Asadzandi SH. Scientometric comparison of Web of Science health-related publications on Islam and Christianity. J Med Libr Inf Sci. 2026; 7: e80.
Original Article

Scientometric Comparison of Web of Science Health-Related Publications on Islam and Christianity

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Abstract

Received: 14 Aug 2025
Accepted: 12 Apr 2026

Keywords:
Scientometrics
Publications
Health sciences
Medicine
Islam
Christianity
Web of Science

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Introduction: The relationship between religion and health has attracted increasing scholarly attention, especially regarding Islam and Christianity as the world's two largest religions. This study aimed to compare health-related scientific publications on Islam and Christianity indexed in the Web of Science (WoS) using a scientometric approach.

Methods: This descriptive quantitative study employed scientometric analysis and co-authorship network mapping. Bibliographic data were retrieved from the WoS Core Collection on May 20, 2022, using search strategies based on key religion-related terms (e.g., Islam, Muslim, Quran; Christianity, Christian, Bible) combined with health- and medicine-related keywords. After screening titles and abstracts to remove irrelevant records, the remaining data were exported in TXT format and analyzed using EndNote, Microsoft Excel, and VOSviewer. Publication trends, citation patterns, prolific countries, organizations, journals, authors, and keyword and co-authorship networks were examined.

Results: A total of 3,747 Islam-related and 2,756 Christianity-related health publications were included. Pakistan, the USA, and Iran were the leading producers of Islam-related publications, while the USA, England, and India were most productive for Christianity. The Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association was the most prolific journal for Islam, and Mental Health, Religion & Culture ranked first for Christianity. Co-authorship networks showed broader international collaboration in Christianity-related research, while collaboration in Islam-related publications was more concentrated. Despite growth in publication output in both Islam- and Christianity-related health research, citation impact did not increase proportionally in either domain.

Conclusion: Health-related publications on Islam and Christianity have grown across the past decade; however, their citation impact remains limited. Strengthening research quality, visibility, and international collaboration may enhance the overall contribution of religion-and-health scholarship.

Introduction

Understanding the impact and development of academic research requires examining its scientific output, specifically in interdisciplinary areas, such as religion and medicine (1, 2). Religion has long been a central component of human societies, and symbols of religious practices can be traced back to the earliest human communities (3, 4). Among world religions, the monotheistic traditions of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism attribute their teachings to divine revelation (5). These three faiths,

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known as Abrahamic religions, share a common origin in the tradition of Abraham (6).

In health sciences, the relationship between religion and health has also been of interest for centuries (7). Regardless of being sick or healthy, people have always sought a healthier life throughout history due to their inner desire for health. Furthermore, sick people have eagerly sought health, and healthy people have tried to improve their health to enjoy greater well-being. Since the time of Hippocrates, there has been, more or less, the belief that God is both a healer and a source of knowledge for physicians. In addition, people have regarded doctors as a means to diagnose, treat, and cure patients. In medical and health sciences, it is believed that spiritual and religious issues are crucial to understanding everyone's health-related habits, attitudes, and beliefs, specifically patients (8).

Despite the great importance of religion and health, some modern platforms, particularly social media, have become venues for misinformation and oversimplification of religious teachings (9). For example, ignorant and uneducated people occasionally express religious and ideological issues in a novel way with exciting language, and by subverting religious beliefs (particularly those related to Islam) and promoting wrong beliefs, they try to make people doubt these beliefs (10). Given the importance and role of religion, mainly monotheistic religions, in promoting health, researchers should publish reliable information in scientific journals and evaluate the already published scientific sources so that they may avoid the spread of false information or the presentation of a misrepresented view of Islam and other divine religions (5).

Scientometrics is a common and popular scientific method for evaluating the characteristics and publication process of scientific resources in a specific field (11). It provides key information, such as the productivity of countries, authors, and organizations, the distribution of scientific publications, and the trends and patterns of publication of scientific resources (12). Several scientometric studies have been conducted in religion-related fields. For example, research trends in Qur'anic and Biblical studies show increasing international collaboration and multidisciplinary contributions (13). Co-word analyses in the field of religion and health have identified major themes such as spirituality and health, mental health, and medical ethics (8). Scientometric studies in Islamic scholarship have reported fluctuations in citation patterns, identified prolific authors and journals, and highlighted frequent key terms such as "Islam", "Islamophobia", and "religion" (14) Additional studies have examined Islamic economics (15), religion and entrepreneurship (16), scientific output on religion and health (17), spirituality and depression (18), and Qur'an and Hadith research (19).

Although various aspects of religion have been studied using scientometric approaches, based on the authors' review of the existing literature, no study has yet explicitly compared health-related scientometric indicators between Islam and Christianity. Given that Islam and Christianity together account for a substantial proportion of the global population approximately 60% according to recent demographic reports (20, 21), and considering the influential role of religious beliefs in shaping health-related behaviors worldwide, conducting such a comparative analysis is both relevant and timely.

Therefore, evaluating the scientific output related to Islam and Christianity in the context of health can highlight similarities and differences in publication trends, citation patterns, and collaboration networks. This can assist researchers, journal editors, and policymakers in enhancing the quality and visibility of research in this area. Accordingly, the present study aims to compare scientometric indicators of health-related publications on Islam and Christianity indexed in the WoS from 2013 to 2022.

Methods

This descriptive quantitative study was conducted using scientometric techniques and co-authorship network analysis. All data were retrieved from the WoS Core Collection.

Search Strategy

Two separate advanced search strategies were used to identify health- and medicine-related publications

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on Islam and Christianity. Searches were performed on May 20, 2022.

Search string for Islam and health/medicine:

TS = ((Islam* OR Quran* OR "Holy Quran" OR Qur'an* OR Koran* OR al-Quran OR Muslim* AND (Medicin* OR medical OR treatment* OR Therapeutics OR Therapy OR health* OR cure* OR heal* OR shifa))

Search string for Christianity and health/medicine:

TS = ((Christian OR Christians OR Christianity OR Orthodox OR Jesus OR Christ OR Bible) AND (Medicin* OR medical OR treatment* OR Therapeutics OR Therapy OR health* OR heal* OR cure*))

Time Span

The publication period was limited to 2013-2022 because:

1. The total number of documents retrieved without time restrictions was excessively large.
2. A preliminary inspection of WoS showed a significant increase in publications related to both religions after 2013.

Initial Retrieval and Screening

A total of 4,812 Islam-related and 3,504 Christianity-related records were initially retrieved.

Screening was conducted in two stages:

1. **Title screening** to exclude clearly irrelevant records (e.g., unrelated humanities, linguistics, and non-health religious studies)
2. **Abstract screening** to ensure direct relevance to medicine or health.

After the screening process, the final datasets included:

- 3,747 documents related to Islam and health/medicine
- 2,756 documents related to Christianity and health/medicine

Screening was independently performed by two researchers, and disagreements were resolved through discussion until consensus was reached.

Inclusion criteria:

- Articles directly related to medicine, public health, mental health, or clinical/health behavior.
- Publications addressing Islam or Christianity as a primary variable.
- Indexed in WoS Core Collection during 2013-2022.

Exclusion criteria:

- Publications that focused exclusively on theological, historical, or linguistic discussions without any explicit relation to medical or health-related concepts, as determined through title and abstract screening.
- Records with insufficient metadata, defined as missing essential bibliographic information, such as authors' name (s), publication year, journal title, or abstract.

Data Extraction and Analysis

The final WoS datasets were exported in plain-text (TXT) format. These files were imported into EndNote, Microsoft Excel, and VOSviewer.

- Duplicate records identified and removed using EndNote software.
- Excel was used for frequency distributions (year, country, institutions, and authors).
- VOSviewer was used to generate co-authorship, organizational collaboration, country collaboration, and keyword co-occurrence maps.

VOSviewer Settings

To increase consistency and map quality, the following settings were applied:

- Counting method: Full counting.
- Minimum number of occurrences of a keyword: 5
- Minimum number of documents per author/ country/organization: 3
- Visualization types: Network visualization, overlay visualization, and density visualization.

Figures produced by VOSviewer were manually adjusted (labels, colors, and cluster visibility) to ensure readability.

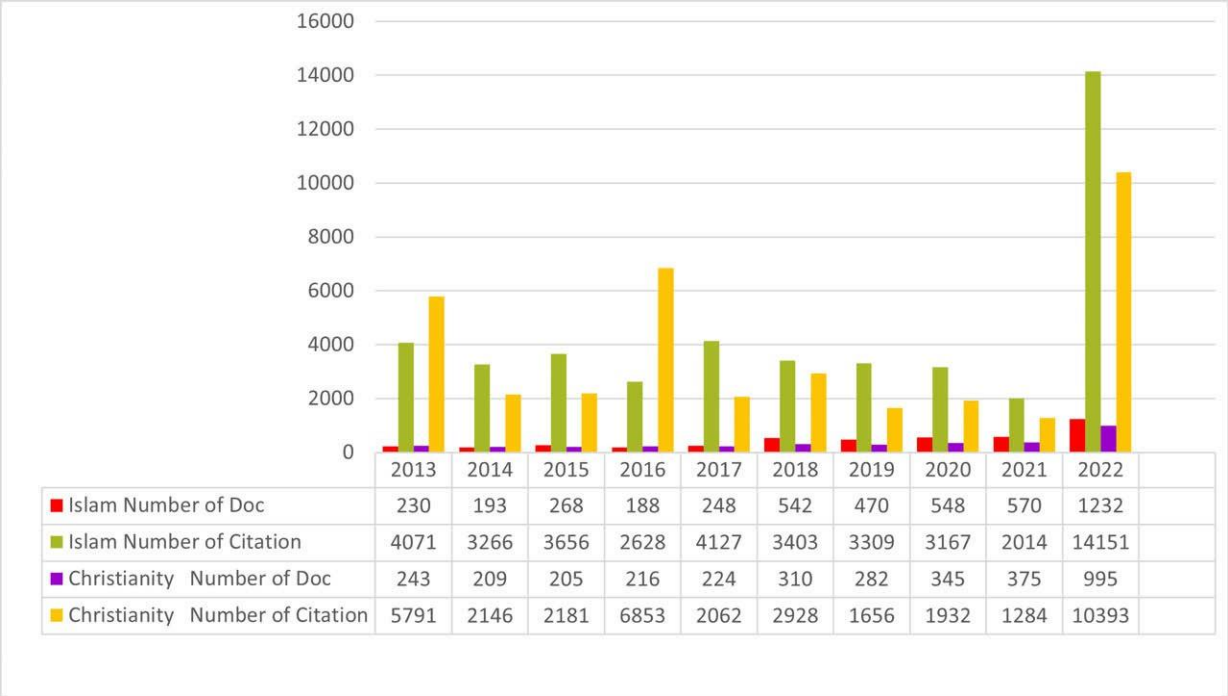
Results

A total of 3,747 Islam-related health publications and 2,756 Christianity-related health publications were identified. The studies were analyzed based on publication year, country, organization, authorship, and keyword networks.

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Publications and Citations over the Years

Figure 1 displays the trend of the articles' publication and citations related to health- and medicine-related publications on Islam and Christianity from 2013 to 2022.



	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Islam Number of Doc	230	193	268	188	248	542	470	548	570	1232
Islam Number of Citation	4071	3266	3656	2628	4127	3403	3309	3167	2014	14151
Christianity Number of Doc	243	209	205	216	224	310	282	345	375	995
Christianity Number of Citation	5791	2146	2181	6853	2062	2928	1656	1932	1284	10393

Figure 1. The trend of the articles' publication and citations about health- and medicine-related publications on Islam and Christianity from 2012 to 2022

As shown in Figure 1, the annual publication trend for Christianity-related health research was relatively stable and linear, whereas Islam-related health publications showed noticeable fluctuations across the decade. Although both fields experienced growth after 2018, the increase was more pronounced in Islam-related publications, particularly in 2022 (1232 records).

Citation counts also varied considerably across years. Christianity-related publications received the highest citations in 2013 and 2016, while Islam-related publications peaked in 2013 and 2017. Citation counts were analyzed to describe publication impact across years and countries in both domains.

Prolific Countries

Figure 2 presents the geographical distribution of publications related to Islam and Christianity in medicine.

In Islam-related research, Pakistan, the United States, and Iran were the top three contributing countries, with Pakistan demonstrating a substantially higher publication output compared to other nations. In contrast, in Christianity-related publications, the United States, England, and India ranked highest in terms of research output.

The United States received the highest number of citations in both domains. It should be noted that in the visual network map, some leading countries (e.g., Iran and the United Kingdom) appear less prominent due to node overlap, despite their substantial contribution.

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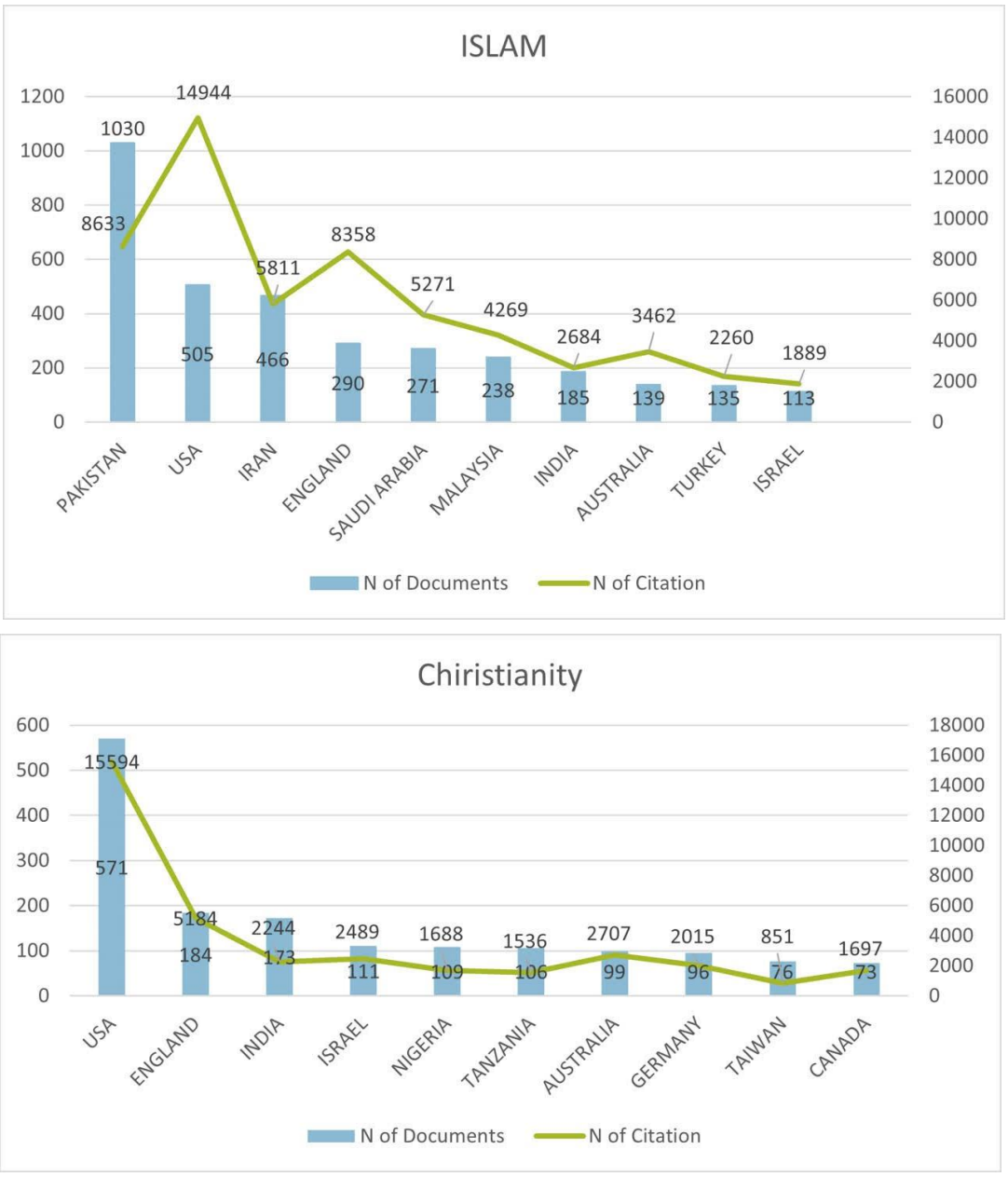


Figure 2. Prolific countries in terms of publications on Islam & Christianity in medicine from 2013 to 2022

Country Co-authorship Analysis

The country co-authorship network analysis was carried out to visualize the extent of cooperation between countries and influential countries. Figure 3 displays the collaborative networks of countries related to Islam and Christianity in medicine, respectively.

Based on Figure 3, a coherent collaborative network (69 nodes) was formed for Islam-related health publications. The larger nodes in this network—such as Pakistan, the United States, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, and Italy—represent countries with higher collaboration strength. In contrast, Christianity-related publications formed a broader collaborative structure, in which the United States, England, Saudi Arabia, and India appeared as the largest nodes.

The larger nodes indicate countries with higher collaboration strength rather than higher publication counts. In total, 69 countries contributed to the Islam-related dataset, and 69 countries contributed to the Christianity-related dataset.

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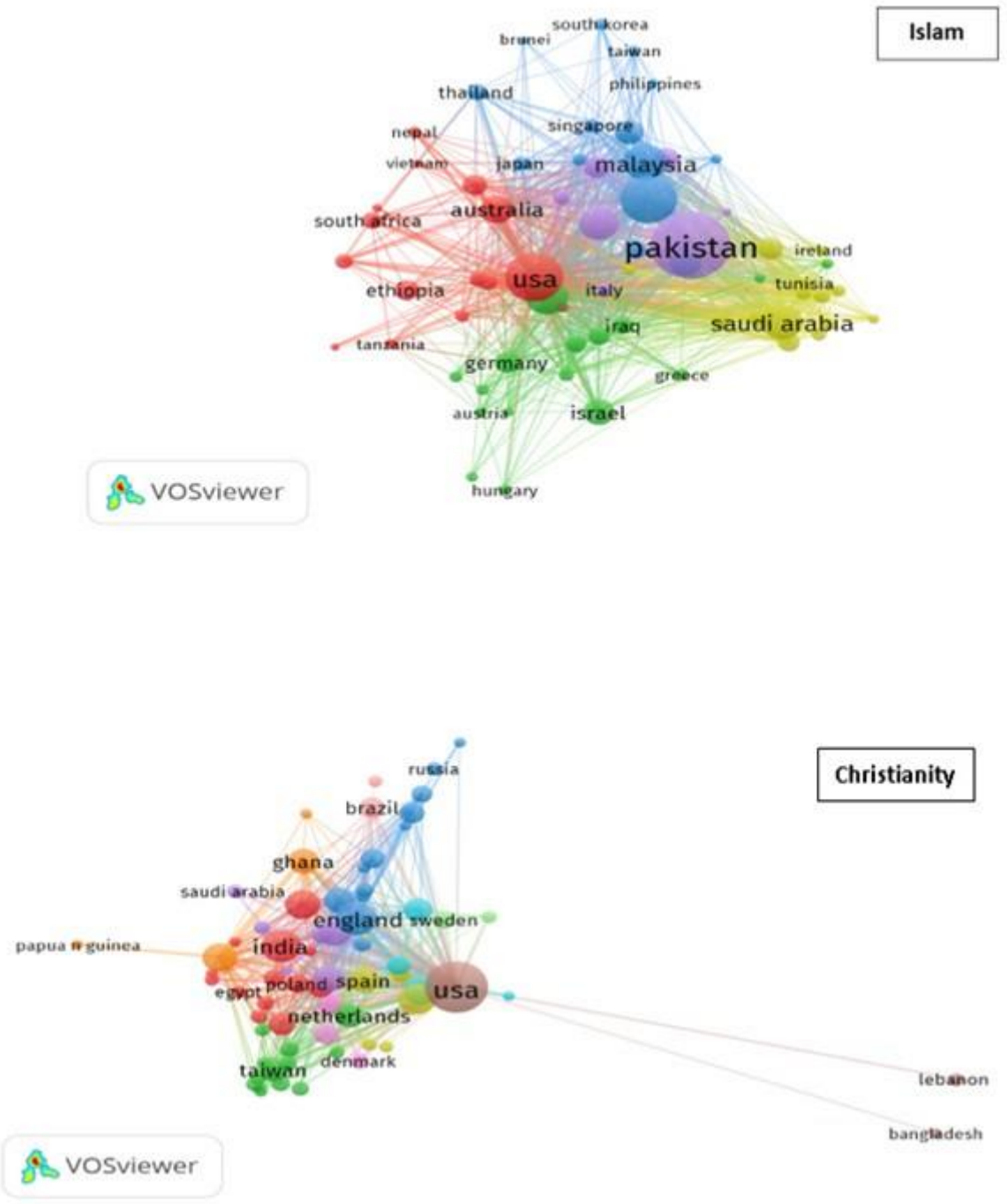


Figure 3. The co-authorship network of countries on Islam & Christianity in medicine from 2013 to 2022

Prolific Organizations

Figure 4 presents the most prolific universities in these two fields and the number of citations received by these organizations over 10 years (2013-2022). For Islam-related health research, Tehran University of Medical Sciences produced the highest number of articles, while RLUK Research Libraries received the highest number of citations. For Christianity-related health publications, Christian Medical College Hospital, CMCH Vellore, and RLUK Research Libraries were the most productive institutions, although the University of London received the most citations. Overall, more than 220 institutions contributed to the publications in both fields.

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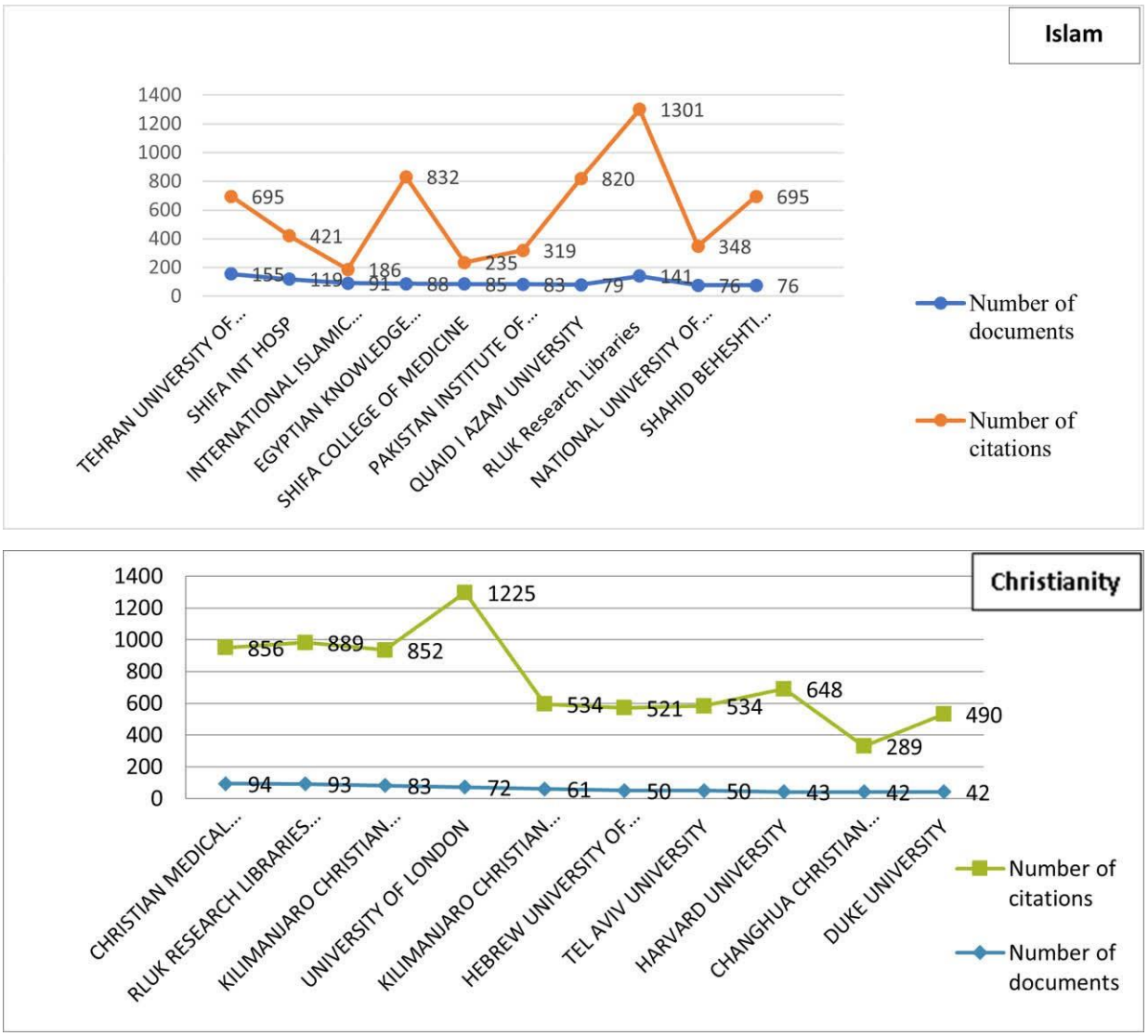


Figure 4. Prolific universities in terms of publications on Islam and Christianity in medicine from 2013 to 2022

Figures 5 illustrates the co-authorship networks between organizations related to Islam and Christianity in medicine.

The network associated with Islam in medicine was extensive, comprising 14 clusters and 328 nodes. Tehran University of Medical Sciences and Shifa Hospital demonstrated the highest levels of collaboration and acted as intermediary organizations within this network.

In comparison, the organizational collaboration network related to Christianity in medicine was more concentrated, forming 16 clusters with 241 nodes. Christian Medical College & Hospital and Changhua Christian Hospital exhibited the highest levels of cooperation among organizations in this domain.

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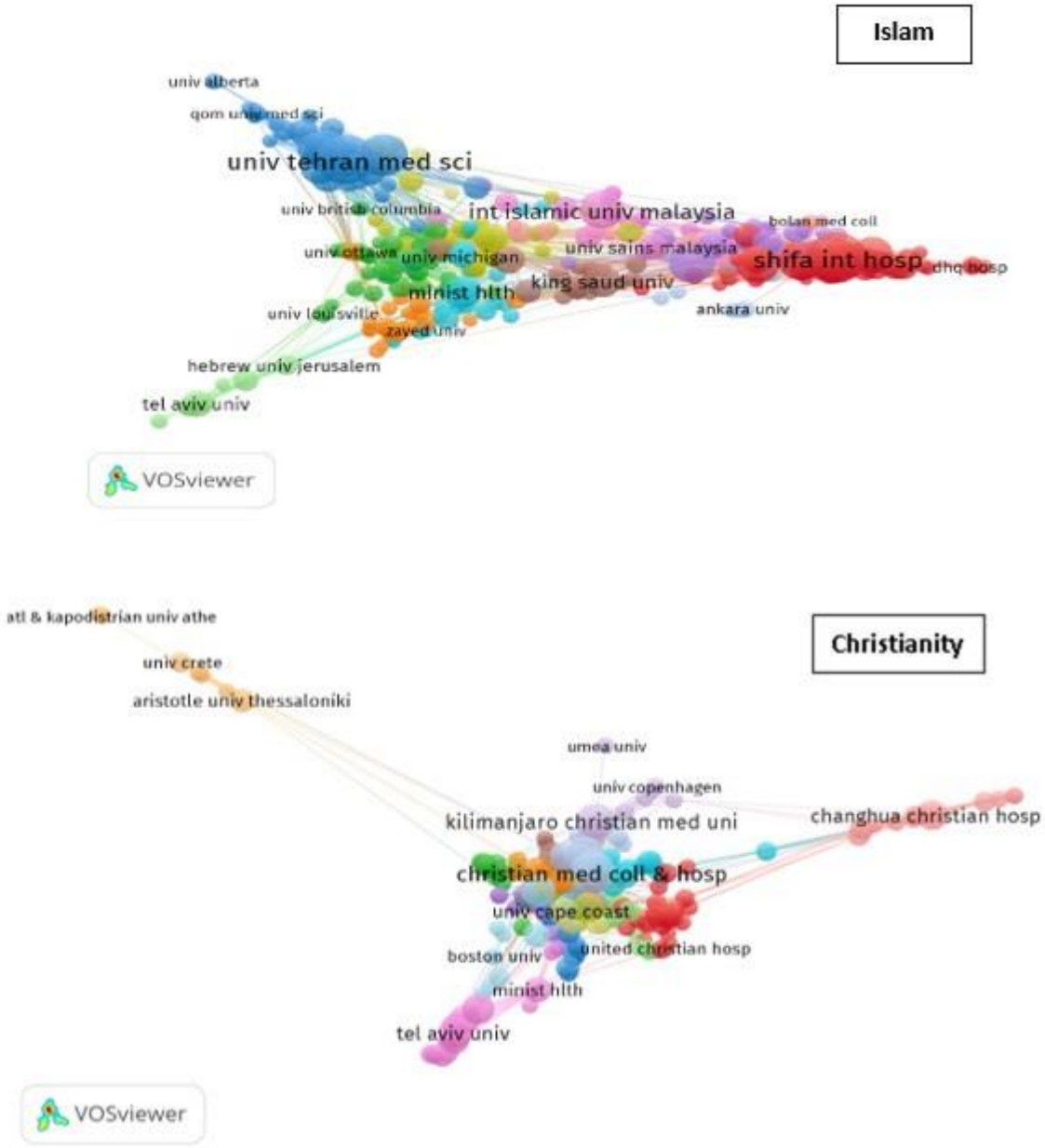


Figure 5. The co-authorship network of organizations on Islam in medicine from 2013 to 2022

A total of 2,761 journals published Islam-related health documents and, 2,808 journals published Christianity-related health documents. As shown in Table 1, the Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association is the most prolific journal in Islam-related health domain and as shown in Table 2, Mental Health, Religion & Culture is the most prolific journal in Christianity-related health domain.

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Table 1. Top 10 prolific journals publishing documents related to Islam & Christianity in medicine from 2013 to 2022

10 Prolific Journals Related to Islam in Medicine	No. of related documents	Journal Impact Factor Quartile	Journal Impact Factor (JIF)
Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association	225	Q4	0.8
Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal	158	Q3	1.9
Pakistan Journal of Medical Health Sciences	128	No	No
JCPSP Journal of the College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan	97	Q3	0.8
Rawal Medical Journal	88	Q4	0.2
Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences	68	Q2	1.7
International Medical Journal Malaysia	63	Q4	No
Bmj Open	52	Q2	2.3
Cureus	52	Q3	No
Indo American Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences	47	No	No

Table 2. Top 10 prolific journals publishing documents related to Christianity in medicine from 2013 to 2022

10 Prolific Journals Related to Islam in Medicine	No. of related documents	Journal Impact Factor Quartile	Journal Impact Factor (JIF)
Mental Health Religion Culture	52	Q4	0.8
BMJ Open	36	Q2	2.3
Biochimica et Biophysica Acta Molecular Basis of Disease	29	Q1	4.2
BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth	28	Q1	2.7
Linacre Quarterly	28	Q4	0.5
Journal of Christian Nursing	21	Q4	0.6
Journal of Clinical and Diagnostic Research	16	No	0.2
BMC Womens Health	15	Q2	2.7
Journal of Pain and Symptom Management	14	Q2	3.5
Social Science Medicine	14	Q1	5

Table 3 presents the most prolific authors in Islam- and Christianity-related health publications. In the field of Islam-related health research, Khan, A. and Padela, A.I. were the most prolific authors, each with 37 publications. In contrast, in Christianity-related health research, Mmbaga, B.T. was identified as the most prolific author, with 24 publications.

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Table 3. Prolific authors on Islam & Christianity in medicine from 2013 to 2022

Rank	Prolific authors on Islam		Prolific authors on Christianity	
	Author	Number of publications	Mmbaga, BT	Number of publications
1	Khan, A	37	Seidu, AA	24
2	Padela, AI	37	Ahinkorah, BO	22
3	Ali, S	34	Rosmarin, DH	19
4	Ahmad, S	34	Mahande, MJ	19
5	Ahmed, S	32	Pirutinsky, S	15
6	Khan, S	24	Lee, KH	13
7	Khan, SA	20	Cha, YS	10
8	Ahmed, A	19	Chang, YJ	10
9	Ali, A	19	Kang, G	9
10	Naseem, S	14	Mmbaga, BT	7

Figure 6 illustrates the co-authorship networks of authors related to Islam and Christianity in medicine. The Islam-related author collaboration network consisted of 53 nodes organized into 12 clusters, indicating a relatively limited level of collaboration among authors. Khokhar Nasir was identified as the author with the highest number of collaborative links in this domain. In comparison, the author collaboration network related to Christianity in medicine was considerably weaker, forming only 2 clusters with 8 nodes, reflecting very limited co-authorship and collaboration among researchers in this field.

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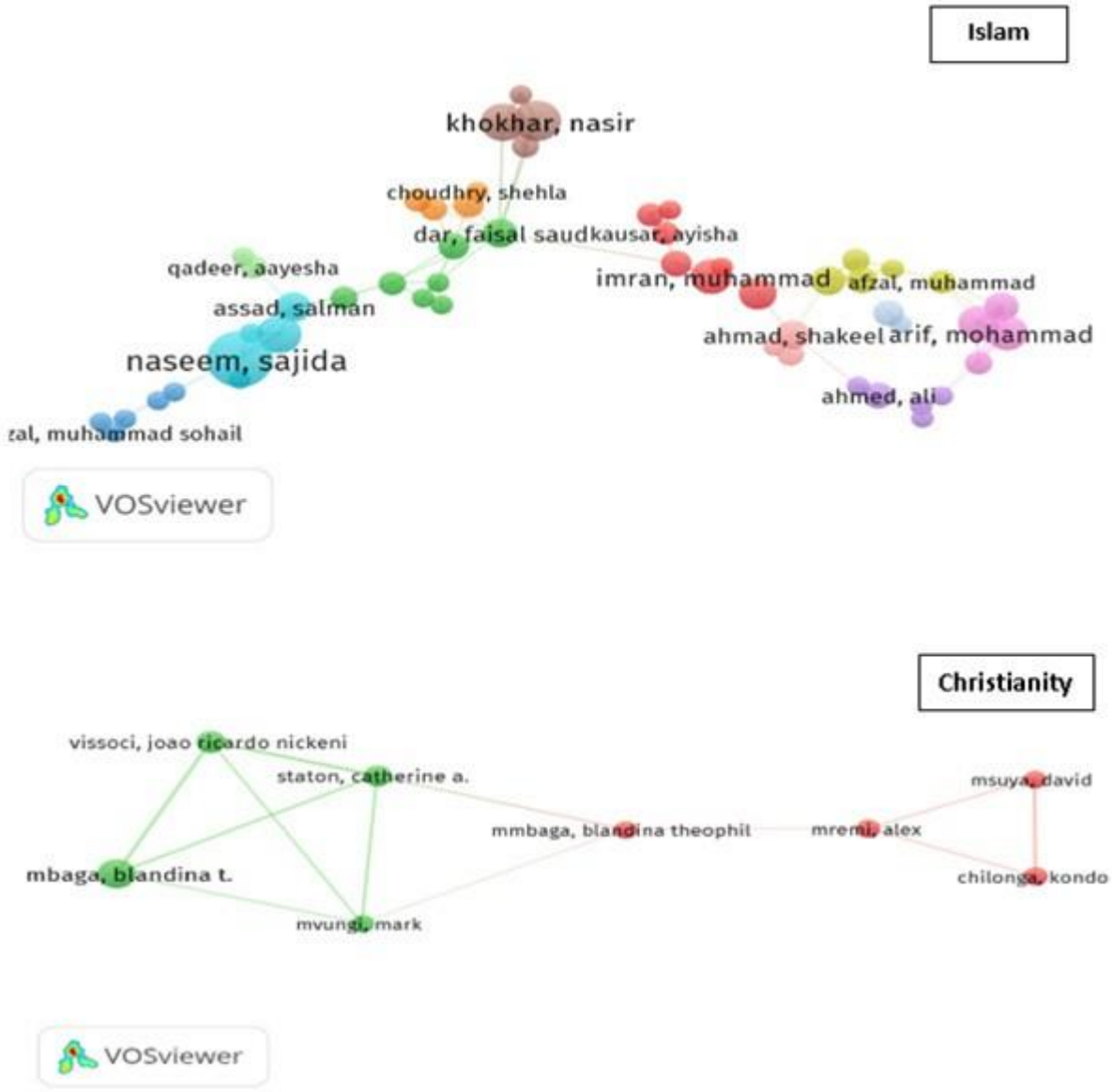


Figure 6. The co-authorship network of authors on Islam & Christianity in medicine from 2013 to 2022

Figure 7 presents the density visualization of frequently used keywords related to Islam and Christianity in medicine. In both domains, keywords associated with spirituality, mental health, and depression demonstrated the highest density, highlighting their central role in the literature. In Islam-related health publications, terms such as Ramadan, risk, and health were particularly prominent. In contrast, Christianity-related health publications most frequently emphasized keywords including prevalence, spirituality, and mental health.

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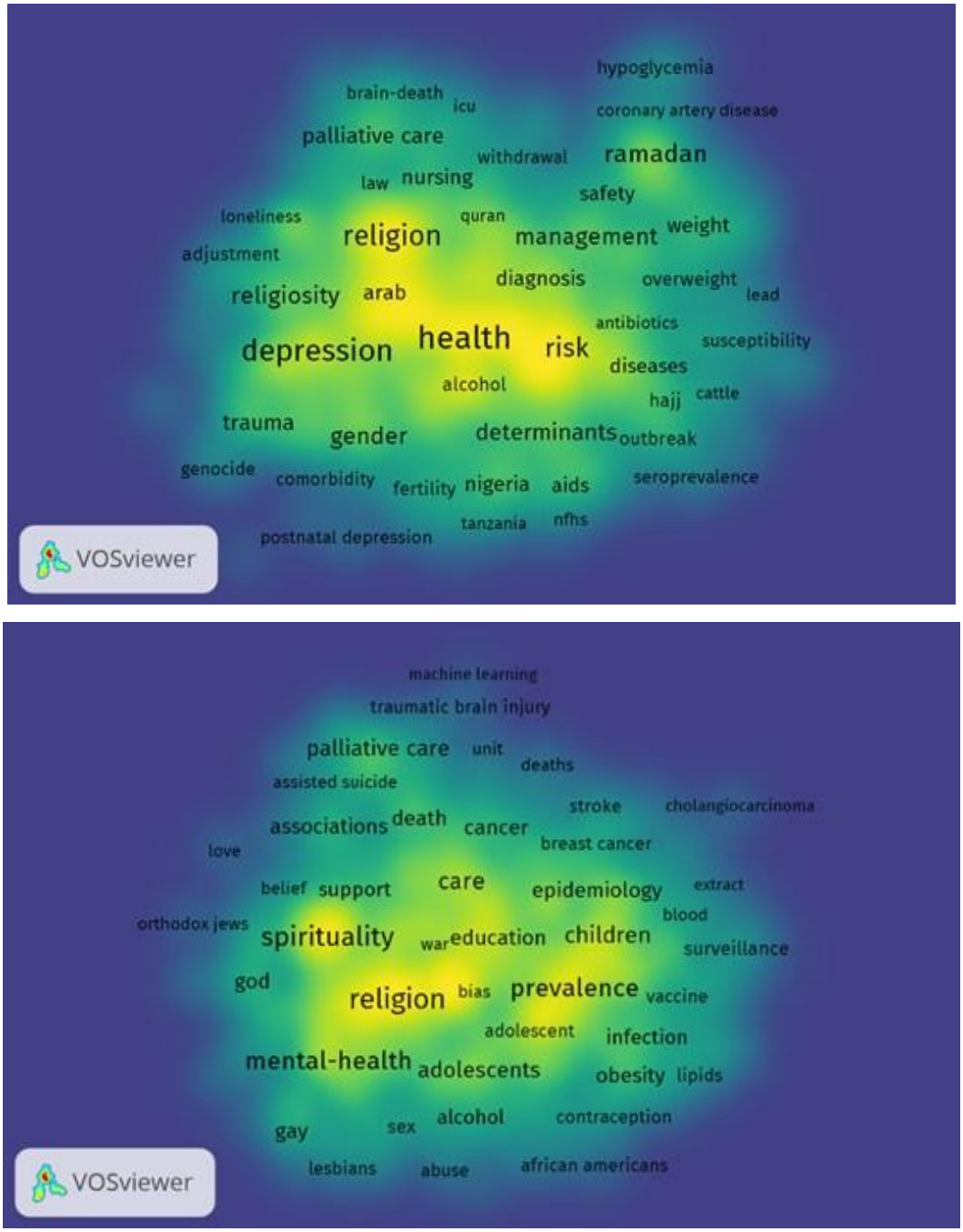


Figure 7. Density visualization of keywords on Islam & Christianity in medicine from 2013 to 2022

Discussion

The present study conducted a scientometrics analysis to examine and compare the medical publications related to two major religions worldwide. According to the Pew Research Center and World Population Review, Christianity and Islam are the most popular religions worldwide, respectively, with an estimated 2.38 (31%) and 1.91 billion (25%) adherents (2). However, researchers expect Islam to nearly overtake Christianity by 2050 (20).

The results revealed that 3,747 and 2,756 documents were published on medical sciences related to Islam and Christianity from 2013 to 2022, respectively. According to the results of this study, both domains experienced growth, although Christianity-related publications showed a more linear trend, while Islam-related outputs experienced noticeable fluctuations over time. Pakistan was the most prolific country regarding medical publications on Islam; the USA and Iran were the next most productive countries. However, this interpretation required alignment with the Results section. The revised results

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indicate that Pakistan's productivity is high, but the explanation about its Muslim population (21) should be supported by citation or presence in the results. Therefore, to remain consistent with the findings, only productivity-based comparisons were retained here without demographic extrapolation.

Further analysis showed that most of the top journals publishing Islam-related health research were ranked in lower quartiles (Q3-Q4) and had low or unavailable impact factors, often below 1. In contrast, Christianity-related publications were more frequently published in higher-ranked journals (Q1-Q2) with higher impact factors, reaching up to 5. These differences in both quartile ranking and impact factor may partly explain the higher citation impact observed for Christianity-related publications in the results. Previous studies have also emphasized the dominant role of Western countries in producing high-impact research in religion-related health fields (22, 23). Furthermore, in line with the results section, the Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association was the most prolific source for Islam-related health publications, whereas Mental Health, Religion and Culture was the leading journal for Christianity-related research. The analysis of journals showed that Islam-related health publications were more concentrated within a smaller group of core journals, as indicated by the relatively high output of the top 10 prolific journals listed in the results section. In contrast, Christianity-related publications were distributed across a wider range of journals, reflecting greater dispersion of research outlets. This pattern is consistent with Bradford's law, affirming that the majority of publications in a field tend to cluster within a limited number of core journals (24).

Based on the density visualization of keyword analysis, it was revealed that "depression", "risk", and "Ramadan" for Islam and "mental health", "spirituality", and "prevalence" for Christianity were trends of research. These results are consistent with those of Nadi-Ravandi (22), showing that depression was the most common trend of Islamic studies in healthcare publications.

This study's findings indicate that although both Islam- and Christianity-related health publications have grown during the examined period, certain religious topics remain understudied within the health literature. This gap is reflected in the thematic concentration observed in the keyword analysis, where only a limited set of concepts dominated each domain. These patterns suggest that additional research is needed to address religious themes that are less represented in current scientific outputs.

Several limitations should be considered. First, this study was restricted to the WoS Core Collection, and publications indexed in other major databases were not included. Second, the keyword-based search strategy may have excluded relevant studies that did not explicitly mention religion-related terms in their titles or abstracts. Third, the analysis was limited to the 2013-2022 period and does not reflect longer-term historical trends. Fourth, citation counts are influenced by publication age and database indexing rather than solely reflecting research quality. Finally, the visualization thresholds applied in VOSviewer may have led to the exclusion of authors, institutions, or countries with lower publication frequencies.

Conclusion

This scientometric study compared health-related publications on Islam and Christianity indexed in the WoS from 2013 to 2022 and identified distinct publication, citation, thematic, and collaboration patterns across the two domains. Islam-related health research demonstrated higher publication volume but greater temporal fluctuation and stronger concentration in lower-ranked journals. In contrast, Christianity-related publications exhibited more stable growth, broader international collaboration at the country level, and greater representation in higher-impact journals, which may partly explain observed citation differences.

Keyword analysis revealed thematic concentration in both domains, with Islam-related research focusing primarily on depression, risk, and fasting practices, while Christianity-related studies emphasized spirituality, mental health, and prevalence-based clinical themes. These patterns suggest that religion-and-health scholarship, although expanding, remains conceptually clustered around a limited set of topics.

Overall, while both religions are substantially

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represented in health research, structural disparities in journal quality, collaboration patterns, and thematic diversity persist. Future research should prioritize broader international collaboration, diversification of research themes, and publication in higher-impact venues to enhance the scientific robustness and global visibility of religion-and-health scholarship. Policymakers and research institutions are therefore encouraged to support more comprehensive and multidisciplinary investigations into the health-related dimensions of Islamic and Christian teachings.

Declaration

Acknowledgment

The authors would like to thank the reviewers for their comments, which have helped improve the quality of the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Ethical Statement

All ethical considerations in publication and research have been taken into account.

Funding and Support

None.

Authors' Contribution

All authors contributed to the study conception and design. Material preparation was performed by Razmgir M, data collection was performed by Pourmojdegani M, and data analysis were performed by Asadzandi SH and Malgard SH. Kalhori Z, contributed to literature review and manuscript editing.

The first draft of the manuscript was written by all authors and they commented on previous versions of the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

None.

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