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Research Paper

An analysis of the thematic network in the field of sociology in Iran

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ABSTRACT

Science visualization techniques can give us better understanding of the structure and patterns of scientific activities. The purpose of this article is to create the co-occurrence network of words and concepts found in indexed articles written by authors active in the field of sociology, in Islamic World Science Citation Database. the goal was to study the level of activity among researchers in sociology and to provide an overview of the hot topics in this field. this research falls under the category of applied research. Utilizing the scientometrics approach, Data was visualized and analyzed using network analysis techniques. The research community includes all sociology journal articles indexed ISC from 1390 to 1400. The analysis of the findings revealed that the thematic network of Iranian sociology has high coherence and the topics of women's studies and religion are the main topics in the Iranian sociology, and based on the indicators of the network analysis, it has high betweenness centrality. To enhance the diversity of Iranian sociology more focus should be placed on neglected areas such as sports sociology medical sociology, and rural sociology. It is important that the scientific network of sociology articles be visualized in future studies. To track changes in publication themes over time. sociological journals could also consider publishing special issues on the neglected fields highlighted in this paper.

Keywords: Interdisciplinarity, co-word analysis, scientific visualization, scientific disciplines; sociology

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INTRODUCTION

It is believed that solving today`s social problems cannot be done with single-disciplinary knowledge alone; today`s issues require broadening views and applying all available tools and capacities in all scientific disciplines. This is why many organizations and research centers are investing heavily in increasing interdisciplinary communication in the field of sociology. It is also believed that interdisciplinary relationships will lead to the emergence of new scientific fields. The more scientific fields are connected, the more ideas will flow. As a result, many studies have been conducted to measure the degree of interdisciplinary relationships in various scientific disciplines, especially in sociology.

Visualizing scientific disciplines considers to be one of the most privileged activities to demonstrate the number of interdisciplinary relationships in science. According to experts this method provides the best understanding of the structure and relationships between fields which is useful to identify widely or less discussed research topics. And in macro level it helps managers and investors with their future research planning. Many articles have illustrated connections between scientific documents in order to examine the scope of interdisciplinary relationships in a scientific field. Reviews on research background show that while the number of research studies in the field of visualization is large most of the attention has been directed to areas other than sociology.

METHODOLOGY

From the stand point of usability this research is a form of applied research. Utilizing the scientometrics approach, Data was visualized and analyzed using network analysis techniques. VosViewer and Gefi were selected as visualization software for their high information representation power and high graphic quality. Our research community consists of all journal articles in the field of sociology indexed in the ISC database from 1390 to 1400. It is important to note that while there are numerous publications in the field of sociology in this database, not all issues of these journals were fully indexed, i.e., with the titles, abstracts and keywords. Journals lacking this information were excluded from our study. Ultimately twelve sociology journals with the required information were extracted from the ISC database and thoroughly examined. These twelve journals were reviewed and information pertaining to the title, abstract and keywords of each article was recorded in an Excel file resulting in 2822 articles prepared for visualization. A matrix of keywords was created in Excel, and then input into Vosviewer for data representation and network visualization.

RESULTS

Results showed that the growth trend of articles in this field is slow but steady increasing. approximately half of the articles (48%) focused on the city of Tehran, while Isfahan, Gilan, Khorasan Razavi, Khuzestan and Ardabil were chosen as

research contexts in other papers. In the developed network women, social capital and religion appear to be more prominent than other nodes. The interdisciplinary nature of the communication network in Iranian sociology is high complex with various topics and concepts such as women`s studies, religion, education, higher education, identity, social capital, citizenships, urban space, politics, media and social networks. topics like leisure time, public rights, community health, collective vitality, media literacy, tourism and music were less emphasized. Women exhibit the highest degree of centrality indices compared to other nodes. Indicating their significant role in connecting different topics, and their close relationship with all other nodes in the network many scholars have written articles linking women to various topics. Based on the discussions, papers were categorized into 26 groups. cultural sociology (13%), then sociology of science and technology (9%) and urban sociology (8%) have been discussed more than others.

CONCLUSION

According to network data, over the past decade, a wide range of topics have been discussed in Iranian sociology papers. Given that sociology encompasses all aspects of sociology, it was expected that the network would have a broad range of disciplinary connections. The most discussed topics included religion, communication government affairs, ethnicity and identity. conversely topics such as art, architecture, libraries, library sciences, and museums were neglected. In the field of religious studies, the social approach to religion is crucial as society considers religion as a set of beliefs, ethics and regulations that are beneficial for governing social affairs and human development. Women and religion emerged as powerful topics in the network due to their high degree of betweenness centrality, acting as bridges connecting other topics. Researchers exploring women and religion often delve into other societal issues enhancing cohesion within the network of Iranian society articles. The coherence and integration of Iranian sociological activities heavily rely on the topics of women and religion. therefore, it is recommended to focus on improving the quality of articles within these areas. Additionally disciplines like rural sociology, sports sociology and health and medicine sociology are discussed in less than one percent of articles; despite the importance in Iranian society. There is a need to pay more attention to health and medicine issues, as well as rural sociology. Sport sociology is another neglected topic it established links with other nodes such as quality of life, cultural development, youth, tourism and women. Despite sports being a significant social phenomenon in Iran there is a lack of diversity in articles on this topic. To enhance the diversity of Iranian sociology more focus should be placed on neglected areas such as sports sociology medical sociology, and rural sociology. It is important that the scientific network of sociology articles be visualized in future studies. To track changes in publication themes over time. sociological journals could also consider publishing special issues on the neglected fields highlighted in this paper.

NOVELTY

The innovative aspects of this study are as follows:

1) utilizing visualization technique to demonstrate the level of interdisciplinarity in the field of sociology in order to show the importance of interdisciplinarity in researches.

2) Emphasis on increasing the interdisciplinary activities of Iranian sociology authors.

3) identifying subjective gaps in Iranian sociology paper for future researches.

4) This research also had limitations including:

5) The data were analyzed quantitatively, potentially obscuring certain aspects from the author`s perspective.It is suggested that busy and busy nodes should also be taken into consideration in terms of quality.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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