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Looking Back on its Fiftieth Year - Bibliometric and Scientometric Analysis of the Articles Published in the Journal of Psychology and Theology from 1996 to 2022

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Abstract

The Journal of Psychology and Theology was started in 1973 when the growth of psychology encroached into the arena of Theology, thereby aiming to integrate the two. **Objective and approach:** As the journal completes its 50th year, this study reviews its journey through a bibliometric and scientometric analysis of the articles available in the Scopus database (26 years) using four analyses – publication, citation, network, and thematic. **Result and discussion:** The results show that 70% of the top contributing institutions were Christian institutions, and the USA contributed to 90% of the articles. The top three keywords were 'Virtues', 'Positive Psychology', and 'Integration', showing how positive psychology bridged the two fields. Factorial analysis segregated the topics into two main groups: Values and Beliefs. Keywords co-occurrence network generated 5 clusters – Subject Integration, Theoretical Integration, Positive Psychology, Spirituality, and Clergy and its Issues. **Recommendation:** To increase author networking and articles featuring theological perspectives from other continents and other faiths.

Keywords: Psychology, Theology, Integration, Bibliometrics, Scientometrics.

1. Introduction

The Journal of Psychology and Theology (PTJ), published by Rosemead School of Psychology of Biola University, was started in 1973 when the theories, methods, and data of psychology proliferated and seeped into the domain of the church and theology. An urgent need was seen to integrate the two fields to benefit society, the clergy, and mental health professionals. According to the journal's website, this quarterly peer-reviewed journal aims to communicate "scholarly thinking on the interrelationships of psychological and theological topics of study, and to consider the application of these interrelationships in a variety of contexts such as mental health counseling, education and training, organizational leadership, and Christian ministry." (https://journals.sagepub.com/aims-scope/PTJ). According to SCImago Journal Rank (SJR), PTJ is ranked in the top 10% of journals under Religious Studies (47th out of 506 journals) and 170th rank in

Psychology out of 275 journals. The journal is about 49% similar to Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health (43% similar), and 41% similar to Mental Health, Religion and Culture (Scimagojr, 2022).

In 1973, during the formation of the journal, the model for the total integration of psychology and theology planned was based on seven common areas outlined: Theology Proper-Science of Psychology, Anthropology-Personality, Hamartiology-Pathology, Christology-Counselor, Soteriology-Growth, Ecclesiology-Social Psychology, Eschatology -Hope, and Expectation and Purpose (Narramore, 1973).

Twenty-three years later, in 1996, the year it was listed in Scopus, Narramore, the chief editor, again writes, *We have yet* to study as deeply as we can human experiences such as fear, guilt, hostility, repentance, and forgiveness. We have not done nearly enough work on the dynamics of faith development and spiritual formation. We have barely scratched the surface of developing one or more thoroughly scripturally consistent theories of personality, let alone a broad general theory of human behaviour. And we have not made major contributions to the theological work of the church by exhaustively exploring the psychological implications of the major doctrines of the Christian faith."

As the journal is set to complete its 50th year of existence, this study aims to perform a bibliometric and scientometric analysis of the documents published from 1996 to 2022 (26 years) in PTJ. This article aims to achieve the following objectives: (1) identify the top and most influential scholars in terms of journals, countries, and affiliations, (2) study co-authorship relations and collaboration status, 3) analyse the journal's main areas of focus and contribution and 4) suggest improvements based on the findings.

2. Data & Methods

Bibliometrics, first proposed by Pritchard in 1969, is a fast-growing scientific field that uses mathematical and statistical tools to analyze academic literature statistically and describes patterns in the publication in a particular field (Senel & Alkan, 2017). This study's bibliometric analysis consists of (1) performance analysis and (2) sciences mapping. The performance analysis explores the performance of the journal's constituents (authors, affiliations, citations, and countries), while the science mapping explores constituents' relationships. Bibliometric analysis of topics gives an insight into its trend, major subsections, researchers, and findings, such as in Publications during Covid-19 (Gupta, Dhawan & Kappi, 2023), Sports and Psychology (Coimbra et al., 2022), and Technology in Psychology (Flujas-Contreras et al., 2022).

Bibliometric analysis of a journal gives an understanding of the performance of the journal over time and in comparison to other journals, thereby seeing the areas they have explored over time and the diversity in approach towards the topic. Some examples are the study of Spanish Psychology Journal (Quevedo Blasco, 2021), Annual Review of Legal Psychology (Tortosa-Perez, 2021), Journal of Consumer Psychology (Kurnaz, 2020), Operations Management Research (Dhiaf et al., 2021), International Orthopeadic Journal (Vaishya et al., 2023) and Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology (Allik, 2013).

The data for the study was collected through a search in the Scopus database using the title of the journal (Thomson

Reuters, New York, NY, USA). Even though the journal was started in 1973, it was indexed in the 1990s. As there were some skips in indexation coverage until 1996, this study covers the articles published from 1996 to 2022 (two articles dated before 1996 were removed). Citation and bibliographic information, along with the abstract, keywords, and references for all 702 articles, were downloaded as a CSV file. Analyses were performed using MS Excel, Biblioshiny through R Studio and VOSviewer.

3. Results and Discussion

We present the analyzed data under four headings: 1) Publication Analysis (documents, authors, institutions, countries) 2) Citation Analysis (citation trends, most cited articles, references, sources) 3) Network Analysis (interrelationship between authors and countries), and 4) Thematic Analysis (factor and cluster analysis of keywords).

3.1. Publication Analysis

Between 1996 and 2022, the journal published 702 documents.

According to the type of documents in PTJ, the majority were original articles (586, 83.5%), followed by reviews (93, 13.3%) and editorial materials (11, 1.6%). The annual growth rate was 10.85%, and the average number of citations per document was 9.346. This journal has an SJR indicator of 0.305 and an H-index of 37, which indicates that 37 papers have each received 37 citations or more, thus indicating the quality and the quantity of publications.

Figure 1 shows the yearly number of publications. There is an average of about 25 articles per year, with four peaks (1997, 2006, 2012, and 2021) and a year (2016) when there was a dip.

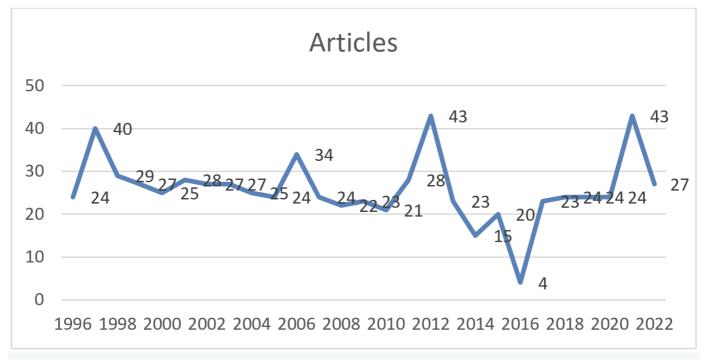


Fig. 1. Number of publications according to years

Authors and Institutions: Over 26 years, there were 1020 authors, of which 233 (22.8%) were authors of singleauthored documents. Regarding authors' collaboration, of the 702 documents, we found that 47% (331) were singleauthor documents. International co-authorship was 3.14%, and the co-authors per document were 2.27. With the growing trend of collaboration among authors in recent years, this is lower than similar journals, which had most of their articles published after 2000.

The top five authors of the journal are given below in Table 1. Table 1 gives their h-index and the number of articles. The h-index (h) indicates h number of publications cited at least h times. It predicts that a minority of authors usually publish the majority of articles and that a high-frequency rate indicates authors' satisfaction with repeating their experience and publishing in the same journal.

Table 1. The top 5 authors of the journal					
from 1996 to 2022					
	Authors	h_index	Articles	AF*	
1	Hall M.E.L.	7	26	9.91	
2	Mcminn M.R	9	26	9.89	
3	Worthington E.L.	9	24	6.41	
4	Davis D.E.	7	20	4.44	
5	Hook J.N.	6	17	3.49	

*Articles Fractionalized

Table 2 lists the top 10 institutes that contributed to the journal. These ten institutions have contributed to 69% of the total publications in the last 26 years, and seven are Christian institutes.

Table 2. The top 10 institutes in the Journal of Psychologyand Theology

	Affiliation	Articles	%
1	Biola University, California, USA*	102	14.6%
2	Wheaton College, Illinois, USA*	77	11.0%
3	Regent University, Virginia, USA*	64	9.1%
4	Georgia State University, USA	47	6.7%
5	George Fox University, Oregon, USA*	44	6.3%
6	Virginia Commonwealth University, USA	41	5.9%
7	Roberts Wesleyan College, NY, USA*	40	5.7%
8	University Of North Texas, USA	26	3.7%
9	Seattle Pacific University, USA*	22	3.1%
10	Graduate School Of Psychology, USA*	20	2.9%

*Christian Universities

Biola University had the highest number of publications, contributing 14.6% to the total publications, followed by Wheaton University (11%) and Regent University (9.1%). All the top institutions are from the USA. The publisher of this journal, Biola University, USA, has the highest number of publications. A similar result was found in the Journal of Infection and Public Health (Krauskopf, 2018), where the journal's publisher, King Saud Bin Abdulaziz University of Health Sciences, was the top contributor. The United States contributed to almost 90% of the documents, followed by three commonwealth countries that accounted for 8.6%, as seen in Table 3. Since most of the publications were contributed by authors from the USA, the journal itself cannot claim to be international. The journal must attract manuscripts from other countries if it wants to be international.

Table 3 ranks the top 5 countries affiliated with PTJ authors in terms of publications between 1996 and 2022

Table 3.				
	Country	Documents	Citations	
1	USA	631 (89.9%)	6001	
2	Canada	27 (3.8%)	134	
3	UK	19 (2.7%)	161	
4	Australia	15 (2.1%)	164	
5	Netherlands	5 (0.7%)	39	

3.2. Citation Analysis

This section explores the citation trend over the years, as well as the most cited articles, references, and sources. The average number of citations per document is 9.346. The trend over the last 26 years is given in Figure 2.

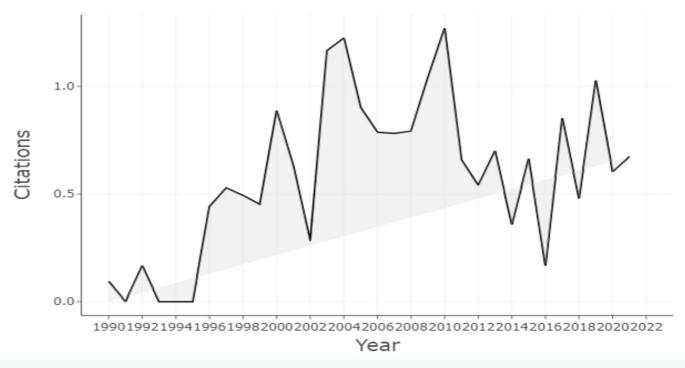


Fig. 2. Number of citations according to years

The ten most cited journal articles in the last 26 years are given in Table 4. Four of the ten articles dealt with measurement scales or issues- Attachment to God Inventory, Image of God Inventory, Spiritual Assessment Inventory, and Measuring Religion and Spirituality; another four articles dealt with spirituality. The table also has the total citations for these articles. All the top 10 cited articles were published before 2005, and it has no visibility for the recent articles, which states that it has not attracted articles on contemporary issues.

Table 4. The 10 most cited PTJ articles between 1996 and 2022



Article	Authors	Year	TC*	TC/yr
Attachment to God: The Attachment to God Inventory, Tests of Working Model Correspondence, and an Exploration of Faith Group Differences	Beck R, McDonald A	2004	205	10.8
Spirituality's Potential Relevance to Physical and Emotional Health: A Brief Review of Quantitative Research	Larson DB; Larson SS	2003	134	6.7
Measuring the Image of God: The God Image Inventory and the God Image Scales	Lawrence RT	1997	117	4.5
The Initial Development and Factor Analysis of the Spiritual Assessment Inventory	Hall TW, Edward KJ	1996	109	4.0
Forgiving Usually Takes Time: A Lesson Learned by Studying Interventions to Promote Forgiveness	Worthington EL, Kurusu TA, Collins W, Berry JW, Ripley JS, Baier SN	2000	93	4.0
Meaning, Purpose, and Religiosity in at-Risk Youth: The Relationship between Anxiety and Spirituality	Davis TL, Kerr BA, Kurpius SER	2003	91	4.6
Measuring Religion and Spirituality: Where are we and where are we Going?	Slater W, Hall TW, Edwards KJ	2001	91	4.1
Personal Spirituality as a Moderator of the Relationship between Stressors and Subjective Well-Being	Fabricators AN, Handal PJ, Fenzel LM	2000	91	4.0
Attachment to God and Implicit Spirituality: Clarifying Correspondence and Compensation Models	Hall TW, Fujikawa A, Halcrow SR, Hill PC, Delaney H	2009	74	5.3
Impact of Treatment on God Image and Personal Adjustment, and Correlations of God Image to Personal Adjustment and Object Relations Development	Tisdale TC, Key TL, KJ Edwards, et al.	1997	71	2.7

*Total Citation **Total citation per year

Among the 10 most cited references for the journal (Table 5), Allport's Personal Religious Orientation and Prejudice of 1967 stood first at 22 citations. Another article from the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology that was cited often was Intrinsic and Extrinsic Religiousness by Donahue (1985). Four of these top-cited references were from the Journal of Psychology and Theology.

Table 5. The10 most cited references for articles between 1996 and 2022

	Cited References	Citations
1	Allport, G.W., Ross, J.M., Personal Religious Orientation And Prejudice (1967) Journal Of Personality And Social Psychology, 5, Pp. 432-443	22
2	Hall, T.W., Edwards, K.J., The Spiritual Assessment Inventory: A Theistic Model And Measure For Assessing Spiritual Development (2002) Journal For The Scientific Study Of Religion, 41, Pp. 341-357	15
3	Donahue, M.J., Intrinsic And Extrinsic Religiousness: Review And Meta-Analysis (1985) Journal Of Personality And Social Psychology, 48, Pp. 400-419	13
4	(1994) Diagnostic And Statistical Manual Of Mental Disorders (4th Ed.), Washington, DC: Author	12
5	Beck, R., McDonald, A., Attachment To God: The Attachment To God Inventory, Tests Of Working Model Correspondence, And An Exploration Of Faith Group Differences (2004) Journal Of Psychology And Theology, 32 (2), Pp. 92-103	12
6	Beck, R., McDonald, A., Attachment To God: The Attachment To God Inventory, Tests Of Working Model Correspondence, And An Exploration Of Faith Group Differences (2004) Journal Of Psychology And Theology, 32, Pp. 92-103	12
7	Brokaw, B.F., Edwards, K.J., The Relationship Of God Image To Level Of Object Relations Development (1994) Journal Of Psychology And Theology, 22, Pp. 352-371	12
8	Shults, F.L., Sandage, S.J., (2006) Transforming Spirituality: Integrating Theology And Psychology, Grand Rapids, Mi: Baker Academic	12
9	Ethical Principles Of Psychologists And Code Of Conduct (1992) American Psychologist, 47, Pp. 1597-1611	10
10	Ellison, C.W., Spiritual Well-Being: Conceptualization And Measurement (1983) Journal Of Psychology And Theology, 11, Pp. 330-340	9

The ten most cited sources are given in Table 6. Among them, the most cited is the PTJ itself, followed distantly by other journals. Of the remaining nine journals, five are related to well-known psychology journals, while two are journals exploring psychology and religion, and the other two are journals concerned with religion/spirituality. Journals with high Impact Factors (over 5.0) have lower self-citation rates (*McVeigh, 2010*)

Table 6. The ten most cited sources for articles between

1996 and 2022				
	Sources	Articles		
1	Journal Of Psychology And Theology	1071		
2	Journal For The Scientific Study Of Religion	479		
3	Journal Of Personality And Social Psychology	452		
4	Journal Of Psychology And Christianity	449		
5	American Psychologist	295		
6	Mental Health	170		
7	Journal Of Counseling Psychology	153		
8	Psychology Of Religion And Spirituality	132		
9	Professional Psychology: Research And Practice	131		
10	Pastoral Psychology	121		

3.3. Network Analysis

Network analysis shows the connectivity between authors and keywords based on their frequency. The network analysis map was generated from VOSviewer software. Figure 3 shows the author network of the most productive authors of PTJ. The size of the circles indicates the number of publications, and the thickness of the connecting lines indicates the frequency of collaboration; the colors show the different clusters of networking. Accordingly, there are seven clusters among the most productive authors.

Figure 4 shows the network among the countries from which the authors come. The United States is the most productive country, and networking starts from there to other countries. Connections between other countries are present, such as Australia with China and South Africa, and England with Greece and the Netherlands, but they are much weaker.

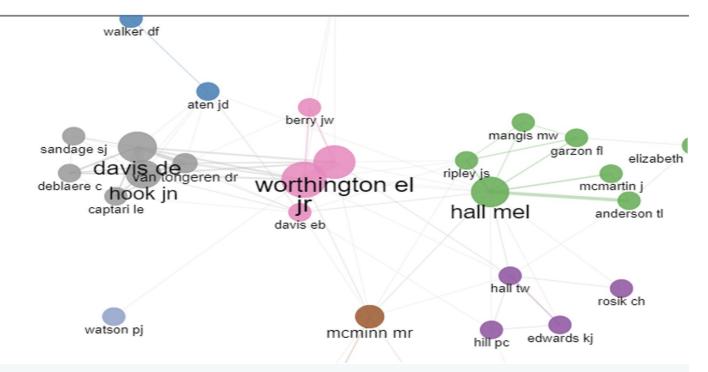
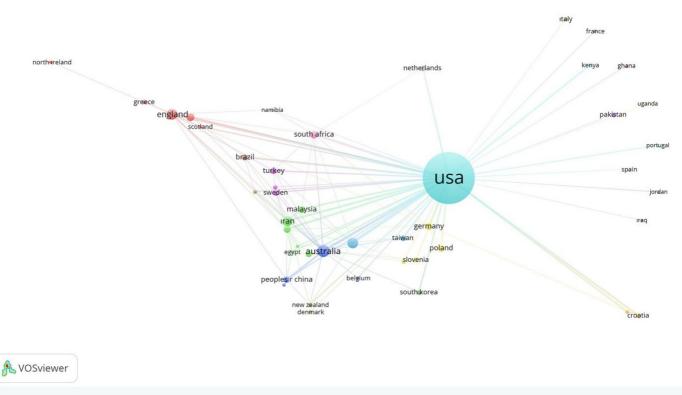


Fig. 3. Authorship network of the most productive authors. Source: Biblioshiny using Scopus database





3.4. Content Analysis

Content analysis of the journal documents gives an overview of the topics discussed in PTJ over the last 26 years. It includes keyword analysis, factor, and cluster analysis.

3.4.1. Keyword, Factor and Cluster Analysis

We detected 390 keywords and 47 Keyword Plus used over these years. Keywords Plus, generated by an automatic computer algorithm, are words or phrases frequently appearing in the titles of an article's references and not necessarily in the article's title or as Author Keywords (Garfield, 1990; Garfield & Sher, 1993). Analysis of all the keywords segregates the topics into two main groups: Factor 1 (the pink one in Figure 5) includes a set of words such as 'peace', 'humility', 'joy', 'well-being', 'resilience', 'life satisfaction', 'flourishing', 'mindfulness', 'ministry'- which indicate *values* or way/ state of being. Even words with opposing meanings, such as 'stress', 'burnout', and 'anxiety', indicate states of being, even if undesirable or to be avoided. Factor 2 included concepts such as 'religious belief', 'existentialism', 'dogmatism', 'intellectual humility', and 'fundamentalism', - which overall indicate 'beliefs'. Factor 1, which reflects the focus of psychology, is more prominent than Factor 2, which leans toward theology.

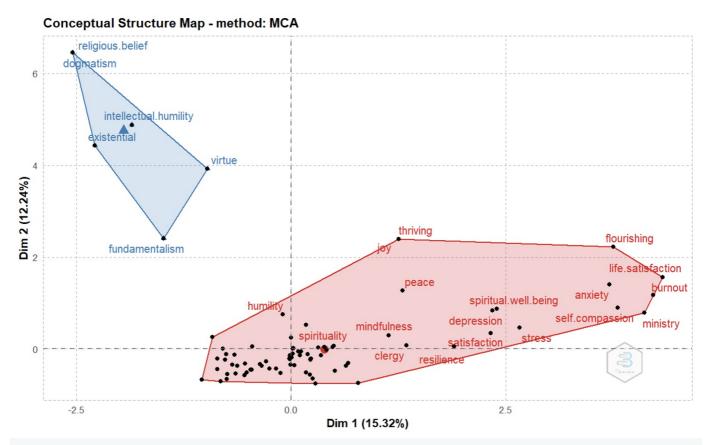


Fig. 5. Conceptual Structure Map of OMR major themes, Source: VOSviewer using Scopus database.

The top 10 keywords of the journal are given in Table 7. The importance of Positive Psychology to the journal comes out in the first two keywords, while the remaining focus is on the integration between psychology and spirituality/ religion/theology.

Table 7. The ten most frequent keywords inpublications between 1996 and 2022

	Words	Occurrences
1	Virtues	18
	Positive Psychology	17
3	Integration	16
4	Psychology Of Religion	15
5	Philosophical Integration	11
6	Theologically Oriented Articles	11
7	Spirituality	8
8	Theoretical Integration	8
9	Integration On Paradigms	7
10	Psychology And The Church	7

Figure 6 contains a word cloud with the 50 most frequent keywords. The size of the keywords in the figure indicates the frequency of the keywords in the dataset. 'Virtues', as seen in Table 7, is the most frequent. Keywords that do not make it into the top 10 but have appeared here include 'multicultural issues', 'resilience', 'cultural humility', 'cross-cultural research', and 'burnout'.

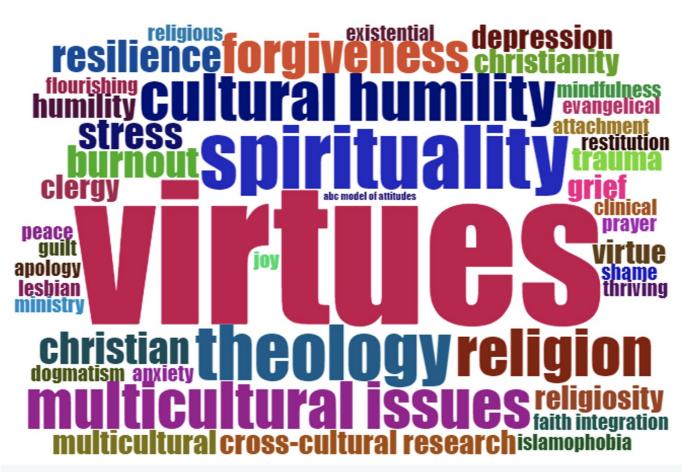


Fig. 6. Word cloud of top 50 keywords. Source: Biblioshiny using Scopus database

While the factor analysis gave a view into the overall clustering of keywords, to achieve a deeper conceptual understanding of the next-level interrelationships among the keywords, a network of keywords based on their co-occurrence was created using VOSviewer (Figure 7). Only keywords that occurred at least four times were used, and based on those criteria, 31 keywords were selected. The total strength of these 31 keywords' co-occurrence links with other keywords was calculated, and the keywords with the greatest total link strengths were selected to form main conceptual clusters. In this figure, the primary keywords are represented as nodes. The size of a node and label indicates the frequency of a keyword in the dataset, whereas the thickness of the lines indicates the co-occurrence frequency between keywords. A close cluster of the same colored nodes and their links represents a theme (Michailidis, 2022). Five

• The biggest Cluster 1 (red color) stood distant from the other four. Based on the keywords of the nodes and links, it dealt with the concept of integrating psychology with Spirituality and Religion. The theme of this cluster was named "*Integration*".

conceptual clusters are revealed in this figure. Three clusters are of almost equal size, while the other two were smaller.

- Cluster 2 (green) dealt with the "method of integration" through theoretical, philosophical, and theological integration.
- Cluster 3 (yellow) included 'positive psychology', 'virtue', 'forgiveness', 'multicultural', and 'interpersonal' issues, and this
 theme was named "*Positive Psychology*". Positive psychology, in some ways, is the 'new Christianity' that integrates
 psychology and spirituality. This cluster also connected "Integration" to the "Psychology of Religion".
- Closely connected to cluster 2 is cluster 4, which included 'spiritual growth/ spiritual well-being', and 'spiritual formation/direction and was named "*Spirituality*".
- The last and smallest cluster 5 involved 'clergy', 'resilience', 'burnout', and 'Christian psychology', and it was named "*Issues of the Clergy as a profession*'. Interestingly, 'humility' connects the clergy and positive psychology to integration.

From the timeline, the initial attempts to find common ground between Psychology and Theology were to look at theoretical and philosophical integration between Theology and Psychology. There was also a focus on spiritual growth and formation, an overlap area of psychology and theology. With the growth of positive psychology after 2000 AD, this branch of psychology became the possible path for connecting the two focus subjects. Later attempts were made to connect the two subjects further through possible integration in other areas – intercultural humility in various forms (cultural humility, intellectual humility) that promote working beyond boundaries, other religions, etc.

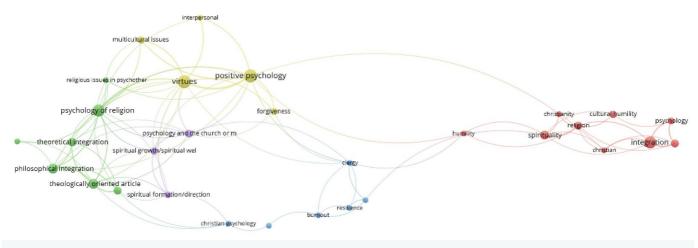


Fig. 7. Author keywords network of PTJ articles. Source: VoSviewer using Scopus database

4. Discussion

The Journal of Psychology and Theology was started in the early 70s when, due to the growing importance of Psychology, it was noticed that the process of 'curing sick souls' was moving from the church to the doorsteps of psychologists and other mental health professionals." (Narramore, 1973). The journal aimed to help evangelical Christians in "the process of integration... serving as a forum for exchanging ideas and information relating to the integration of psychology and scripture."

A summary of its performance over the last 26 years follows- From 1996 to 2022, the Journal of Psychology and Theology published 702 documents. The annual growth rate of the journal was 10.85%, and the average citation per document was 9.346. Eighty-three percent of the 702 documents were original articles. The total number of authors who contributed to the journal was 1020. There were 331 single-authored articles. International co-authorship is 3.14%, and co-authors per document were 2.27. Hall MEL was the top author. Biola University, with 14.6% of the documents, was the top institution that contributed to PTJ. The USA was the most productive, with 89.9% of the documents to PTJ. The article 'Attachment to God: The Attachment to God Inventory' by Beck R and McDonald A was the most cited PTJ article. Allport's Personal Religious Orientation and Prejudice of 1967 was the most cited reference. The Journal of Psychology and Theology itself was the most cited source. Three hundred ninety author keywords were detected as being used over these years. 'Virtues', 'Positive Psychology and 'Integration' were the top 3 keywords. Factorial analysis of all the keywords segregates the topics into two main groups: Values and Beliefs. Based on co-occurrences, the keywords fell into 5 clusters – Subject Integration, Theoretical Integration, Positive Psychology, Spirituality, Clergy, and its Issues.

PTJ has, over the years, had special issues on the topics of humility (cultural and intellectual), clinical integration, forgiveness, and virtues, covering areas that fall in the intersection of Psychology and Religion. In the 26 years that followed his 1996 editorial, the PTJ has made attempts to explore most of the areas listed by Narramore - forgiveness, guilt, anxiety, grief (Figure 6 - world cloud); so too, 'spiritual formation' and 'faith development' (Figure 7). A 'theory of personality'- scripturally consistent or general- has not come up in the analysis.

When comparing PTJ to the two journals it was most similar to, we can estimate its current performance over the last five years. Sage lists PTJ as having a 5-year impact factor of 0.954 and an overall impact factor of 0.82. In contrast, the Journal of Religion and Spirituality (JRS) has a 5-year impact factor of 3.901 and an overall impact factor of 3.673, and the Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health (JSMH) has an impact factor of 1.08. The impact factor is commonly used to evaluate the relative importance of a journal within its field and to measure the frequency with which the "average article" in a journal has been cited at a particular time. (Sharma et al., 2014). In terms of citation, comparing PTJ with the two other journals (JRS and JSMH), we find that the h index of PTJ is 37, while that of JRS is 41, and that of JSMH is 14. The h-index of a publication is the largest number (h) of articles that were cited at least h times each. During the last five years, the non-citable to citable journal article ratio was 1:41 for PTJ, while for the JRS, it was 1:88, and for the JSMH, it was 1:20. The international collaboration percentage of the PTJ in the last five years (2018-2021) is 4.49 while that for the Journal of Religion and Spirituality (JRS) is 17.01 and that for the Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health (JSMH) is 16.03. (Scimagojr.com)

From the results of the above analysis, some of the possible suggestions for the journal's future are: 1. Focus on having contributions to the journal from outside the USA. Currently, we see that the USA accounts for 90% of the articles in the journal, and Biola University alone accounts for 14.6%. To qualify as an international journal, there is an urgent need for articles and collaborations with other countries. 2) Increase the inclusion of perspectives on Christianity from a non-western or non-US world, such as from South America, Asia, and Africa, where there is a high percentage of Christians. 3) Exploration of how the other religions, their theology, and practices impact the mental health of the individual and society. A search in the titles of all the articles of the journal reveals no articles on Islamism, Buddhism, Hinduism, or Jainism. 4) Exploration of the interconnections between different religions and how they impact culture 5) Increase focus on 'relationships', which is core to Psychology as well as to Christianity (through its several commandments and early church tenets). The keywords that came up focused on virtues and other attributes of the individual rather than on relationships. 6) Current perspectives of the layman regarding the contribution or role of the church and other religions towards their mental well-being and quality of life. Does the church have to evolve with the changing times? How can it continue to remain relevant to modern man?

5. Conclusion

As the Journal of Psychology and Theology completes its 50th year of existence, a Bibliometric and Scientometric analysis of the last 26 years gives an insight into its journey in terms of the main contributors to the journal, its impact, the themes explored and possible areas to explore in its journey ahead. This paper thus provides a comprehensive review that could enable the readers and contributors in the area to engage in further discussions.

6. Limitations

Only one database was used to search for the articles, and only articles from 1996 were taken. The discussions are based

primarily on the metadata extracted from the database search and not on an internal understanding of the journey undertaken by the journal; misinterpretations are possible.

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