

**Original Article:****The compliance of Iranian library and information science journals with Thomson Reuters' basic standards****Saeideh Valizadeh-Haghi<sup>1</sup>, Ronak Hamzehei<sup>2, 3\*</sup>**<sup>1</sup>Department of Medical Library and Information Science, School of Allied Medical Sciences, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran<sup>2</sup>Clinical Research Development Unit of Shahid Beheshti hospital, Hamadan University of Medical Science, Hamadan, Iran<sup>3</sup>Student Research Committee, Department of Medical Library and Information Science, School of Allied Medical Sciences, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran\*Corresponding Author: email Address: [rh.hamzehei1371@gmail.com](mailto:rh.hamzehei1371@gmail.com) (Ronak Hamzehei)**ABSTRACT**

Presently, journals are considered as the most important tools of information science and knowledge growth throughout the world. Due to the increase in the number of scientific journals, the selection, evaluation and determination of the authenticity of these resources by the authorized organizations has attached more significance to them. Thus, the present study aims at investigating the compliance of Iranian library and information science journals with basic standards of journal evaluation through Thomson Reuters' viewpoint. This is an applied research, which has been conducted through comparative analysis. It evaluates the authenticity of scientific journals through four basic standards of Thomson Reuters, namely on-time publishing of journals, observing international publishing laws, full-text in English, and peer review. The population of the research includes all the active scientific Iranian journals in the field of library and information sciences (12 journals). Results showed that the mean of correlation ratio between the studied journals and standards was 75%. On-time publishing and full-text in English were observed only in 33% and 58% of the studied journals respectively. However, observing international laws of publishing and peer review are in optimal status. Studies are needed in order to find out the compliance of the other countries' library science journals with international standards, (specially developing ones) to help those countries to identify the existing gaps which will assist them to present their researches in the international level through being indexed in authentic databases. Obviously more research is needed in this area, as Thomson Reuters has published standards other than the basic standards.

**Keywords:** Journal Evaluation; Thomson Reuters; Library and Information Science Journals**INTRODUCTION**

Current researches are based on the results of prior studies. The results should be passed to the future researchers by means of information tools [1]. At the present time, journals are considered as the most important tools of information science and knowledge growth throughout the world [2]. They are also the media through which researchers transfer their experiences, studies, and results of achievements and provide the most up-to-date information in that specialized field [1]. The

information in the journals always causes the development of education and is considered as a source of the latest findings. Furthermore, it's a source of scientific news which is effective in meeting the information needs of people [3]. Therefore, planners in the various areas have always paid special attention to these kinds of scientific products. The increasing number of journals on the one hand and the increasing communities' usage of these sources in most countries such as Iran on the other hand are reasons for the significance of these sources. It

can be stated that journals have had the major role, compared with the other evolutions, in the development of the society and knowledge [2]. Scientific journals should have enough quality and publish quality context so that they could properly deliver the quality information. As a result, journals come into focus of accurate evaluations in order to cause continuous results because of their high value in the educational system of Iran [4]. In general, the scientific journals are the major medium of dissemination of scientific information [5]. They promote the science and technology and publish the new scientific findings of research. Developments in electronic media may increase the number of scientific publications such as scientific journals [5]. Due to the increase in the number of scientific journals, the selection, evaluation and determination of the authenticity of these resources by the authorized organizations has been given more significance [6]. To enhance the quality of scientific journals, it is necessary to meet the standards; yet, unfortunately, the significance of establishing scientific standards has been neglected in Iran. In this vein, one of the international institutes named Thomson Reuters selects authentic publications in the various fields through evaluation process [7]. This institute was founded in 1960 by Eugene Garfield; it focuses on scientometrics and scientific publications. This institute was sold to Thomson Scientific Institute, known as Thomson ISI and today it is known as Thomson Scientific. In order to evaluate and cover the authentic publications, Thomson Reuters Institute considers many qualitative and quantitative factors. One factor is not considered alone but it is the combination of factors and their in-between relationships so that enables the committee to determine the strength or weakness of a journal [8]. Meeting the basic standards for publishing a journal such as on-time publishing, observing the international regulations of publication, full-text in English and peer review is what Thomson Reuters Institute considers to cover the reliable journals on Web of Science Database. Currently, the listed journals in Thomson Reuters and the published articles in these journals are of utmost importance, determining the extent of science production at the global level. Thomson Reuters has committed to provide a comprehensive coverage of the most

important and effective scientific journals of the world to give information to its subscribers.

Web of Science includes 12000 core and internationally and regionally high-quality journals which are in all natural sciences, social sciences, arts and humanities. In this institute, before a journal is rejected or verified, it is evaluated by the evaluation committee who have met the necessary trainings along their responsibility and have enough experience and training in the information sciences. Furthermore, the knowledge of these people is promoted by means of consulting a network of distinguished expert reviewers who may involve in the process of assessment in times of need [8]. The international distribution of various scientific findings should be set in the agenda to accomplish the general policies in science and technology in Iran, to enhance the world rank in science and technology, and to transform Iran to a scientific and technological pole. Thus, planning for organizing and standardizing the scientific publications based on the international standards would be helpful. The scientific productions indexed at the international level are considered as a part of the most important output indicators of science and technology of various countries. To date, and to our knowledge, none is done on evaluating the library and information science scientific journals based on Thomson Reuters basic publishing standards. Thus, by investigating the extent of those journals' adherence to the international standards, the existing gaps will be revealed which will help those involved in publishing them in order to be indexed in the authentic international indexes. Accordingly, the present research investigates the consistency of Iranian library and information science journals based on the basic standards for publishing a journal from the Thomson Reuters' view.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions that guided this study are as follows:

1. How is the condition of Iranian library and information science journals based on on-time publishing?
2. How is the condition of Iranian library and information science journals based on observing the international laws of journal publishing?

3. How is the condition of Iranian library and information science journals based on delivering the full-text in English?
4. How is the condition of Iranian library and information science journals based on the process of peer review?
5. How is the overall condition of Iranian library and information science journals based on Thomson Reuters' basic standards of journal evaluation?

A few researches have been conducted in the case of evaluating the journals of library and information science in Iran. Furthermore, no research has been found to have analyzed research based on the basic standard criteria of Thomson Reuters. In Iran, researches by Gilvari et al.[9] and Izadi and Amirpoor [1] have evaluated the scientific journals in different fields based on ISO standards. Gilvari et al [9] surveyed the concordance of Persian Agricultural journals with ISO publishing standards. The results showed that the concordance of surveyed journals with ISO standards is 53.47%. Furthermore the abstract and keywords section had followed the standards in high level. Izadi and Amirpoor [1] evaluated Persian journals of library sciences using ISO evaluation standards. Their research showed that the compliance of the surveyed journals with the ISO standards is 64%. Moreover, to our knowledge, in other countries no research has been conducted based on the basic standard criteria of Thomson Reuters. Most of the researches in this field such as Kovendi (1975), Singh and Singh (1990), Lopez-Cozar and Perez (1995), Lopez-Cozar (1999), and other similar researches have evaluated journals using ISO evaluation standards [10–15]. In a study in the field of biomedicine, Lopez-Cozar and Perez [12] compared 221 Hispanic publications with ISO standards. Their findings showed that the compliance of the studied journals with ISO standards have not been satisfying. Singh and Singh [11] compared 23 scientific journals of India in the field of library and information sciences with ISO standards. They found that compliance with ISO standards has been raised in newer issues compared with earlier issues. Mahesh and Wadhwa [15] ranked the Indian library and information science journals based on Web of Science. Their study showed that

shows that Annals of Library and Information Studies, DESIDOC Journal of Library and Information Technology, SRELS Journal of Information Management, IASLIC Bulletin etc., are prominent Indian LIS journals.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current study is an applied one, conducted through comparative analysis. The population of the research includes all 12 active scientific research journals in the field of library science, which has been validated by Ministry of Science, Research and Technology of Iran. These journals include: Journal of Mirrors of Heritage, International Journal of Information Science and Information Management, Journal of Information Processing and Management, Research Journal of Librarianship and Information science, Journal of Information and Public Libraries, Journal of Academic Librarianship and Information Research, Journal of Human Interaction and Information, Journal of Science and Technology Policy, Journal of Librarianship and Information, Treasury of Documents Quarterly, Journal of National Studies on Librarianship and Information Organization, and Journal of Librarianship and Information Science (Education Science and Psychology). The data collection tool was a checklist consisting of four criteria (on-time publishing, observing international regulations of publishing, full-text in English and peer review) that have been designed by researchers based on Thomson Reuters's basic publishing standards.

Due to the inaccessibility of printed version of intended journals, the data collection has been conducted through visiting the websites of journals and utilizing the researcher-made checklist. The achieved data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and SPSS version 16 software.

## FINDINGS

The findings of the research are as follows respectively.

Regarding the On-time Publishing criteria, the contents of websites were investigated by the researchers. As seen in Figure 1, only four out of 12 journals (%33) followed the criterion of "on-time publishing".

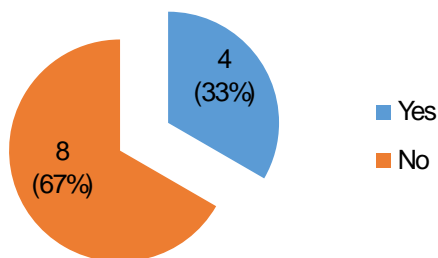


Figure 1. The Extent of observing the Criterion of “On-time Publishing”

In terms of compliance with “International Laws of Publishing” and in response to the second research question, all surveyed journals followed the criteria.

To answer the third research question, as can be seen in Figure 2, seven out of 12 journals (58%) have followed the criterion of “full-text in English”.

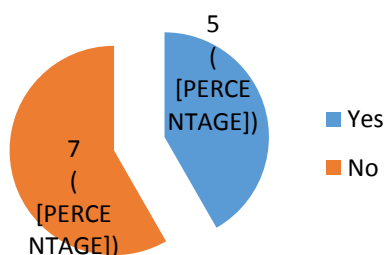


Figure 2. The extent of observing “Full-Text in English”

Regarding the fourth research question, findings showed that all of the surveyed journals have

followed the “Peer Review” criterion.

Table 1. Percentage of journals Compliance with Basic Standards of Thomson Reuters

	Journal name	Percentage of compliance with Basic Publishing Standards
1	International Journal of Information Science and Management	100%
	Journal of Academic Librarianship and Information Research	
2	Mirror of Heritage	75%
	Iranian Journal Of Information Processing and Management	
	Research on Information science& Public Libraries	
	Scientific Journal Human Information Interaction	
	Journal of Science & Technology Policy	
	National Studies on Librarianship and Information Organization	
3	Journal of Studies in Library and Information Science	50%
	Library and Information Research Journal	
	Library and Information Science	
	Ganjine-ye Asnad(The treasure of documents)	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>75%</b>

## DISCUSSION

There are two approaches to increasing the collaboration in producing the global science. First, the necessary preliminaries should be taken through encouragement and necessary investments in order to publish the articles of Iranian researchers in the journals indexed by Thomson Reuters. Second, the scientific journals should be standardized, which in turn, leads to improvement in quality and being indexed on the database of Thomson Reuters. The first approach has been accomplished to some extent in the recent years but there is no breakthrough in the case of the second approach [16]. Since the journals at the international level have a global status and are somehow representative of scientific productions of a country, the Iranian journals must consider the necessary standards for being indexed on the international databases and move towards the scientific productions with the ability of being indexed in the international reliable indexes. The results of this research showed that the compliance of Iranian scientific journals of library and information science with the basic standards of Thomson Reuters is % 75 as they have considered the standard and essential information at a high level. The results do not show any significant difference from Izadi and Amirpoor's findings [1] who reached % 63.42 of the extent of observing the publishing standards of ISO Institute in the library science publications. This represents that the library science journals can be indexed on the international databases through eliminating the shortcomings to reach the standards. However, the present research has evaluated the journals of library science based on the basic standards of Thomson Reuters whereas Izadi and Amirpoor[1] have investigated them based on the ISO Standard. All the analyzed scientific journals of library science have maintained the international laws of publishing and the peer review criteria. Furthermore, they have optimally considered those two criteria. Since the criterion of international laws of publishing such as "appropriate name for journals, descriptive titles and abstracts, full bibliographical information and full address of authors" are in line with the ISO standards, it can be stated that the results of this study is in accordance with the results of Izadi and

Amirpoor [1]. Nevertheless, on-time publishing and full-text in English criteria are not in good condition. While on-time publishing determines discipline of the journal and that of its regular publishing, unfortunately it is paid less attention than other criteria. However, on-time publishing is one of the most important publishing criteria for journals who intend to be indexed in Thomson Reuters. Bear in mind that English is the universal language of science. The major focus of Thomson Reuters is on English written journals. Therefore, it is better if the non-English journals at least provide the article title and abstract in English [8] but the results of the present research showed that none of them contained article title and abstract in English and only two out of 12 journals had bibliographic information of journal in English. According to the results of this research, only two journals, *International Journal of Information Science and Information Management* and *Journal of Academic Librarianship and Information Research* are in proper condition, meeting the basic criteria for publishing. Thus, it is necessary that other library science journals put further efforts in order to comply with the basic publishing standards of Thomson Reuters.

## CONCLUSION

The library science journals should identify the necessary standards for being globalized and achieving the necessary criteria in order to be indexed by Thomson Reuters Institute and be included in Web of Science. Thus, more studies are needed in this regard in order to find out the exact compliance of the Iranian journals of library science with those standards and to take required actions to improve their quality. Furthermore, studies are needed in this regard in order to find out the compliance of the other countries` (particularly developing ones) library science journals with international standards to help those countries to identify the existing gaps which will assist them to present their researches in the international level through being indexed in authentic databases. Given that, the current study investigated the compliance of library and information science journals with Thomson Reuters' Basic Standards. Obviously, more research is needed in this area as Thomson Reuters has published

standards other than the basic standards.

*"The authors declare no conflict of interest"*

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