

SURVEY

A Systematic Literature Mapping on Using Blockchain Technology in Identity Management

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ABSTRACT Although blockchain is an emerging technology, it has been applied in a lot of domains by leveraging its features. Traditional identity management systems have many issues regarding security and privacy of personal data. Blockchain has the potential to mitigate and avoid such issues by creating trust among the parties involved in the system while reducing reliance on third-party authorities. The first blockchain-based identity management solutions were launched in 2016. Since then, due to high demand, numerous primary and experimental studies, and initiatives have been carried out to provide solutions to this research topic. Along with that, there are also a lot of secondary studies to overview the current state of research on this topic. However, the number of systematic research articles is still limited and each research has its limitation. Through this study, we provide a novel systematic literature including categorization of studies into predefined categories (domain, research type, place of publication), analysis of publication frequency, co-authorship, number of papers citing each paper of all studied papers. Comparing to other systematic literature mapping studies, our paper provides a more comprehensive view of the studied articles. In particular, we analyze the number of citations, which no study has ever done. In this research, we studied 361 papers published from January 2009 to April 2022 in four big databases (IEEE Explore, ACM Digital Library, ScienceDirect, Springer Link), the largest number of articles studied compared to previous researches. The obtained results show that most of the articles under validation research type (providing solution and implementing that solution but not in real-world scenarios) propose solutions/systems, models/schemes and architectures to address general problems. We also find that the majority of authors works alone or collaborate in a separate group and co-work in only one paper. This shows that there is no long term collaboration in blockchain-based identity management, and thus subsequent publications presenting real-world blockchain-based identity management products do not exist.

INDEX TERMS Blockchain, identity management, decentralization, self-sovereign identity, systematic mapping.

I. INTRODUCTION

The identity is a mean to differentiate a holder (citizen, business, administration) from any other. In this increasingly digital-led world, most people have at least one digital identity that helps them to prove electronically that they are who they claim to and thus get access to services. Instead of using traditional physical document (such as a passport, a driver's license or a government-issued ID), the digital identity verifies that an identity matches their real-world identity using

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e-mail address, username – password ... The digital identity has its advantages in eliminating use of physical documents, but it has also some disadvantages that come from the fact that it is mostly stored in central repositories and managed by third-party entity. Centralized storage is risky and a target for hackers. Data managed by third-party entity leads to privacy issues. Therefore, it is necessary to introduce new strong Identity Management (IdM) solutions to deal with these issues.

Identity management (IdM), also known as identity and access management (IAM) allows only authorized people to have access to the services provided to them. In an IAM

system, there are two principal actors: users and service providers (SP). Each user is provided an account and the means to demonstrate to SP that he is the owner of that account. There is an issue in managing identity of user as each user usually has a lot of digital identities corresponding to different SPs. It means that users must memorize many username/password couples or they use same password many accounts. It is unsecure and influences the users' privacy. There have been scandals about the security lack and leakage of users' personal data due to hacking or as companies holding the user's identity sell or use it for purposes not authorized by the user. To overcome problems of existing IdM systems, it is necessary to have solutions applying new technologies that minimize, even eliminate central storage and do not depend on third-party entity. This is where blockchain - distributed ledger technology comes into play.

Blockchain-based IdM solutions have been around since 2016. Since then, there has been a lot of primary research on this topic [1], [2], [3], [4], [5], [6]. Along with that, there are also a lot of secondary studies to overview the current state of research on this topic ([7], [8], [9], [10], [11], [12], [13], [14]). However, the number of systematic research articles is still limited ([15], [16], [17]). Through this study, we provide a systematic mapping study including categorization of studies into predefined categories (domain, research type, place of publication), analysis of publication frequency, co-authorship of all the identified studies. In this research, we studied 361 papers published from January 2009 to April 2022 in four big databases (IEEE Explore, ACM Digital Library, ScienceDirect, Springer Link).

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. In section II, some basic concepts of IdM system and blockchain are presented. Section III presents related work regarding secondary studies that are most related to our work as well as highlights differences of our work in comparison to them. In Section IV, we describe the research methodology in details, and respective results are presented by answering the research question in Section V. Discussions with in-depth analysis about the results will be given in Section VI. In the last section, we present our conclusions.

II. PRELIMINAIRES

In this section, we will introduce some basic concepts that contribute to a blockchain-based IdM system: definition of IdM, IdM models, IdM system requirements, building blocks of blockchain, blockchain types as well as applications of blockchain.

A. IDENTITY MANAGEMENT

Identity and access management (IAM), also known as identity management (IdM), is a combined term used to create, manage digital and electronic user identities, and regulate user access to on-premises and in-cloud assets of an organization [18]. IAM and IAM tools work to secure systems and sensitive data. They do this through: Password management; two-factor and multi-factor authentication;

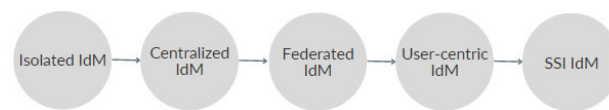


FIGURE 1. The evolution of IdM models.

provisioning software; reporting and monitoring applications; biometrics; behavior analytics [18].

IdM - an interesting topic of research - is increasingly attracting attention in today's digital world where the majority of the population has a digital identity. Nowadays IdM system plays an important role, therefore, there are many standards, frameworks, criteria that help ensure right operations of this kind of system. We may list here some such as: the Security Assertion Markup Language (SAML) [19], the Web Services Federation (WS-Fed) [20], the Identity Federation Framework (ID-FF) [21], and the Identity Web Services Framework (ID-WSF) [22], the Open Authentication (OAuth) [23], and the OpenID [24]. In spite of these standards, frameworks and criteria, traditional IdM systems have inherent issues when users have to memorize a lot of passwords while using many IdM systems. To address these issues, there have been many IdM models proposed ([25], [26]). We can classify them into five categories: Isolated IdM; Centralized IdM; Federated IdM; User-centric and Self-Sovereign Identity (SSI). The evolutions of this five models is presented in Fig. 1.

1) IdM SYSTEM MODELS

- **Isolated IdM:** In this model, user identity data belongs to each service provider. It means that the identities of this service provider cannot be used in other service providers. This model is very simple to implement. However, it has some following limitations: (1) it cannot scale when number of SPs increases and (2) the users need to remember their identity information for every single SP, or face the risk of insecurity when using the same identity information.
- **Centralized IdM:** There is only one common identity provider in the trusted domain in this model. This means that in the same trusted domain, the user utilizes only one identifier and credential to access to all service providers. Therefore, it should be careful to select the identifier.
- **Federated IdM:** In this type of model, there is a trusted model and a federation including multiple identity providers. This model enables their users to use the same identity information for all service providers within the federation. For example, a user of Facebook can choose to sign in to another website using either their identity information for the website or their Facebook account information.
- **User-centric IdM:** This type of model empowers users to control their own digital identities. Users have the right to select their credentials when responding to an authentication or attribute requester and it gives users

more rights and responsibility over their identity information [27].

- **SSI:** In the self-sovereign Identity model, the ownership of data is given to users in order to enable them to control their personal data and increase transparency of the system. The benefit of using this model for users is possibility to control their information without depending on third parties. This avoids data lost or misuse of sensitive information.

2) IdM SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

To build a good IdM system, there are several requirements to satisfy [28]. In this section we enlist some of them and explain each requirement very briefly.

- **Security:** An IdM system manages access to different services such as social network activities, blogging, and emailing, Government services, online banking, e-commerce activities, etc. For each service, there are different levels of security. Therefore, to ensure right operations for each service, a minimum security is required.
- **Privacy:** Nowadays, it is very important to protect the privacy of user, user identity. Configuring a IdM with mechanisms by which privacy can be guaranteed (such as Privacy Enhancing Technologies) should allow protecting user privacy and user identity.
- **Interoperability:** If any IdM system can well interoperate with other existing systems, it should be a very good system.
- **Truthworthiness:** A successful IdM system needs to demonstrate to users its truthworthiness in order for users to trust it. From the user's point of view, they must also trust the system to provide sensitive personal information.
- **Affordability:** Price is a crucial factor in attracting users for a new system. Therefore, the price of a new system should not be higher than that of existing systems. In addition, providing new features is also appreciated for a new system.

B. BLOCKCHAIN TECHNOLOGY

Blockchain was an emerging technology introduced in 2009 by Satoshi Nakamoto with its first whitepaper about "Bitcoin" [29]. A blockchain is a distributed database or ledger that is shared among the nodes of a computer network [30]. Blockchain is a peer-to-peer network and makes transactions transparent through its consensus mechanism [29]. Transactions after including in blockchain will be never deleted or modified. By leveraging this feature and consensus mechanism of blockchain, this technology can be used to eliminate participation of central authorities and used for decentralized solutions.

To understand more about blockchain, we will describe terms that are most mentioned while talking about

blockchain: block, node, consensus, Merkle tree, mining, smart contract, incentive.

- **Block:** is a building block of blockchain - a set of transactions happened in the peer-to-peer network. It's also considered as a page of the distributed ledger of blockchain. A block is added to the blockchain after processing a mechanism called "consensus".
- **Node:** is a computer representing the owner of transactions [31], and participates to validate and store the complete history of transactions on the network.
- **Consensus:** is utilized to preserve agreement among the nodes in the network [32]. Through this, consensus algorithms establish reliability and trust in the Blockchain network. Most popular consensus of blockchain enlisted are: proof-of-work, proof-of-stake, Practical Byzantine Fault Tolerance...
- **Mining:** Mining is the process by which new block is created and added to the blockchain [33]. The node who is responsible for this process is called "miner". Mining also serves to secure the blockchain system against fraudulent transactions or transactions spending the same amount of bitcoin more than once, known as a double-spend [33].
- **Merkle tree:** is a efficient and secure structure to encode data about transactions in blockchain. It also allows for efficient and secure verification of content in a large body of data.
- **Smart contract:** A "smart contract" is simply a program that runs on a blockchain. It's a collection of code (its functions) and data (its state) that resides at a specific address on the blockchain [34].
- **Incentive:** when a miner completes mining a new block of blockchain, he gains some forms of incentives.

III. RELATED WORKS

In order to deal with issues of traditional IdM systems (central storage and reliance on third-party authorities), blockchain technology has been applied in this field. By leveraging the concepts of distributed immutable ledgers and consensus mechanism of blockchain, it is easy to implement distributed identity by providing a trusted online storage of digital identities, credentials, and revocation registries [78].

Although blockchain-based IdM is still a new research topic, there is already a lot of primary research on the topic. Along with that, there have also been many secondary studies analyzing and synthesizing them to give an overview of this research topic [15], [16], [17], [31], [36], [37], [38], [39], [40], [41], [42]. Of the secondary papers mentioned above, only [15], [16], [17], [41], [42] presented search strategies. And to the best knowledge of the authors, there are few secondary studies [15], [16], [17] that perform Systematic Mapping Study (SMS) with description about their search strategy.

Rathee and Singh [15] provided a systematic mapping of 30 primary studies published from 2009 to 2021. The aim of

this research are: 1) find out the research trends in IdM using blockchain, 2) understand the challenges in IdM and report whether block-chain can solve the IdM challenges, 3) scrutinize and understand how the different frameworks of IdM would deal with security, integrity, and privacy problems, 4) know about initiatives taken for IdM using blockchain, 5) which consensus algorithms are popular among blockchains, 6) know about the research projects going on in the field of IdM using blockchain. They concluded that blockchain technology has possibility to address inherent issues of conventional IdM systems with some challenges about privacy and interoperability to overcome in the future with more researches.

In [16], a systematic mapping of 120 studies from 2009 to 2021 was adopted to provide a coarse-grained overview of decentralized and Self-Sovereign Identity. In addition, this study structures the research area by identifying, analyzing, and classifying the research papers according to pre-defined parameters (their contribution, application domain, IT field, research type, research method, and place of publication). They also provided insights into trends, demographics, challenges, gaps, and opportunities for future research. The results of this study show that the research articles mainly provide new solutions and models, which are only researched and implemented in test environment, not many studies have put them into practice. Most articles focus on general rather than a specific domain.

Reference [17] presents a rigorous systematic mapping and systematic literature review covering theoretical and practical advances in Self-Sovereign Identity of 57 studies from 2016 to 2021. In order to construct a classification scheme of identified studies, the authors defined and answered four research questions. This classification scheme was used to categorize and review publications. They also discussed about open challenges of SSI.

In [41], a systematic review of 36 research efforts and patents that introduce SSI applications was conducted by Liu et al. In particular, authentication, privacy, and trust aspects were assessed. The results show that some issues and implications still exist after integrating blockchain technology. Issues arise when users lose their blockchain identities and when they need to change them and the cost of SSI integration and existing systems.

In [42], a systematic review of 43 blockchain-based SSI market offerings was presented. However, the authors did not describe how to select them. In this review, these 43 offerings were assessed using 75 criteria including compliance and liability, end-user experience, technology, implementation, integration and operation criteria. The results of the review show that no reviewed application meets all criteria and no SSI solution has the maturity of conventional IAM offerings; a production-level integration standard (such as OAuth [23] and SAML [19]); and OS-level integration.

In [38], a survey about traditional and blockchain-based IdM systems for IoT devices was presented by Zhu and Badr. This survey identified solutions and challenges focusing on

authentication, privacy, trust and performance. The authors concluded that SSI solutions are necessary for IoT devices by its nature and it should be careful to use public blockchain while storing and maintaining in IoT devices, therefore we could use private blockchain as an alternative.

There are three surveys that produced similar outputs [31], [37], [40]. The all three did not describe their search strategy. They all focused on the blockchain framework and the type of the blockchain network (public, private, permissionless, permissioned, consortium) that are used in the surveyed works. In particular, 8 SSI offerings were reviewed by Gilani et al. [31]. The review presented in detail about which offering support selective disclosure of personal information. It detailed also the way to manage cryptographic keys and blockchain-specific details (how to store credentials, on or off ledger). Besides, Kaneriya and Patel [37] reviewed 6 SSI systems as well as proposed enhancements for each system to perform in the future. Lastly, in [40], 15 applications were reviewed by Lim et al. The applications are for-profit and non-profit company-made, government-related, and open-source ones. The authors emphasized that it is ideal to apply SSI solutions to proper user-centric, secure and cost-effective IAM.

Another work [36] does not specify the way to select the reviewed works. It reviewed 10 SSI systems using blockchain by analysing their attendance to the ten principles of SSI [43]. They analysed in details which principle each paper satisfies.

In [39], Mühle et al. proposed “four basic components of SSI”: identification, authentication, verifiable claims and attribute storage. As a result, they conducted a discussion about how research works and market offerings try to provide solutions for each of four components.

Among all the secondary studies mentioned above, the studies [15], [16], [17] are the most related to our research. Based on them, we combined the strengths and eliminated disadvantages of each study to create our own. Our study covers more papers than all the three studies (361 papers compared to 30, 120 and 57 relatively). Comparing to [15] and [17], our research provides more information about demographics and a classification of research papers into predefined categories (application domain, contribution, research type and identity type). [16] does not include co-authorship network and not analyse number of citations.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As far as, there are a lot of primary studies on identity management using blockchain. As mentioned in the previous section, although there are few secondary studies on this topic, there are only three systematic mapping studies ([16], [17], [15]). Each has its own limitations that need to be improved. In order to provide a novel coarse-grained overview that could complete the gaps of previous researches, the author follows a popular method called “systematic mapping” presented by Peterson et al. [44]. In detail, we perform the following steps:

- 1) Defining the objectives of research (section IV-A)
- 2) Determining research questions (section IV-B)
- 3) Constructing search strategy and conducting a search in order to identify relevant papers (section IV-C)
- 4) Defining selection criteria (inclusion and exclusion) to filter only relevant papers (section IV-D)
- 5) Constructing a classification scheme (section IV-E)
- 6) Presenting classification results using maps (section V)
- 7) Discuss in detail of all results (section VI)

The steps are described in details in the following sections.

A. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

As mentioned above, this research's purpose is to obtain a novel coarse-grained overview and an appropriate classification of existing research papers in the literature. Besides, this research also provides insights about trends, demographics, relationship between authors and co-reference network of the identified papers.

B. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

According to the objectives defined in the previous section, we obtain the research questions (RQ) and sub-questions as followings:

- RQ1: What are the trends and demographics of research papers?
 - RQ1.1: How many papers are published each year?
 - RQ1.2: Where are they published (conference / journal ...)?
 - RQ1.3: Which countries invest the most in this topic based on the organizational affiliation of the researchers?
 - RQ1.4: What is the co-authorship network of the identified papers?
 - RQ1.5: How does the community pay attention to the all the identified papers (reflected in the number of articles that cite these articles)?
- RQ2: What do the papers focus on?
 - RQ2.1: What are main contributions of research papers in identity management?
 - RQ2.2: In which domain are blockchain-based identity management solutions applied?
- RQ3: What are the research types and identity types of the papers?
 - RQ3.1: In which type of research should each paper be classified?
 - RQ3.2: What is the ratio between SSI and decentralized identity among all identified papers?

C. SEARCH STRATEGY

According to the objectives defined in the previous section, we propose a research strategy.

First of all, a database to collect research papers is provided. Among a lot of scientific databases in the field of computer science, we decided to select four biggest ones, IEEE Xplore, ACM, Science Direct, and Springer Link.

To obtain research papers dealing with identity management using blockchain technology, we defined the following keywords: “blockchain identity”, “self sovereign identity”, “self sovereignty”, and their variants.

Each database has its own specific search engine, so we conducted an appropriate search string for each one. We limited our search in papers using English from January 2009 to April 2022.

Table 1 describes search string and number of papers found for each database.

D. SELECTION CRITERIA

Selecting relevant papers from the brut results obtained in section C is a mandatory step. To do that, we applied a set of inclusion and exclusion criteria. These criteria are presented in details in Table 2.

We removed papers that did not meet the inclusion and exclusion criteria described in Table 2 by firstly year and type of publication, and then screening title, abstract, keywords, and full-text of papers.

By doing that, we finally got 361 papers that fulfill all criteria.

E. CLASSIFICATION SCHEME

In order to answer the research questions described in Section B, we defined a classification scheme that classifies studied papers into several categories: 1) contributions, 2) domain, 3) place of publication, 4) type of research, 5) year of research, 6) state of author.

There are some sub-categories in each category. These relationships are described in Table 3. These categories are almost similar to ones in [16] with some little adjustments in **domain** and **contribution**. Although, in [16], the authors did not describe them in details so that readers cannot know how the identified papers were classified. In this research, we will fill this gap to help readers and other researchers have a clearer view in this point.

It is very clear to understand most of categories, except “contribution” and “type of research”. We explain briefly here how to categorize papers into different sub-categories basing on its contribution.

- **Architecture, platform, pattern, model/schem, framework, protocol, system/solution:** papers propose a new architecture, platform, pattern, model/ scheme, framework, protocol, system/solution of IdM system respectively.
- **Specifications:** papers give specifications for a IdM system.
- **Method/Methodology:** papers present a method/ methodology to propose solutions for IdM system, or method/methodology of research.
- **Existing solutions:** mostly review, survey papers give an evaluation about existing solutions for IdM system.

TABLE 1. Search string and number of papers found in each database.

Database	Search string	Sub-total	Total
IEEE	("Abstract": "blockchain" OR "self-sovereign" OR "block-chain" OR "selfsovereign" AND "identity") OR ("Document Title": "blockchain" OR "self-sovereign" OR "block-chain" OR "selfsovereign") AND "identity") OR ("Author Keywords": "blockchain" OR "self-sovereign" OR "block-chain" OR "selfsovereign" AND "identity") AND ("Index Terms": "identity")	736	742
	("Document Title": "self-sovereign identity" OR "self sovereign identity" OR "self-sovereignty" OR "self sovereignty") OR ("Abstract": "self-sovereign identity" OR "self sovereign identity" OR "self-sovereignty" OR "self sovereignty") OR ("Author Keywords": "self-sovereign identity" OR "self sovereign identity" OR "self-sovereignty" OR "self sovereignty") AND ("Index Terms": "identity")	97	
ACM	Keywords: "blockchain" OR "block-chain" OR "selfsovereign" OR "self-sovereign" AND "identity"	72	72
Science Direct	Title, abstract or author-specified keywords: ("blockchain" OR "self-sovereign" OR "block-chain" OR "selfsovereign") AND "identity"	109	109
Springer Link	identity AND blockchain AND (blockchain OR self-sovereign OR block-chain OR selfsovereign) Title contains: identity	136	257
	self-sovereign identity OR self sovereign identity OR self-sovereignty OR self sovereignty	138	

TABLE 2. Selection criteria.

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Papers mentioning identity management using blockchain • Papers written in English • Papers published between January 2009 and April 2022 • Papers are in conferences, journals, magazines, symposiums, workshops, forums, congresses and summits • Primary and second studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies in a book • Mentioning identity management not using blockchain • Papers in form of summary, poster and powerpoint presentations

TABLE 3. Categories and sub-categories for classification scheme.

Contribution	Domain	Place of publication	Type of research	Year of research	State of author
Architecture	Education	Conference	Conceptual research	From 2009 to 2022	All states in the world
Platform	Government	Journal	Solution proposal		
Pattern	Healthcare	Symposium	Validation research		
Model/Scheme	Smart city	Magazine	Evaluation research		
Framework	Banking and financial	Workshop	Opinion paper		
Protocol	Industry	Summit	Experiential paper		
System/solution	IoT	Forum			
Specifications	Supply chain	Congress			
Method/Methodology	Transport				
Existing solutions	General				
Use of decentralized identity	Other				
Definition/Concepts					
Challenges and opportunities					
Other					

- **Use of decentralized identity:** papers mention use of decentralized identity, application of decentralized identity in different domains.
- **Definition/Concepts:** papers present new definitions/concepts of IdM systems.
- **Challenges and opportunities:** papers discuss about challenges and opportunities of integrating blockchain to IdM systems.

For “Type of research”, we followed the classification proposed in [16] and [45] which defined six types of research papers: Conceptual research, Solution proposal, Validation research, Evaluation research, Opinion paper, and Experiential paper.

- **Conceptual research:** focus on concepts and include a new way of looking and thinking. They usually contain proposals for new perspectives on a theoretical level.

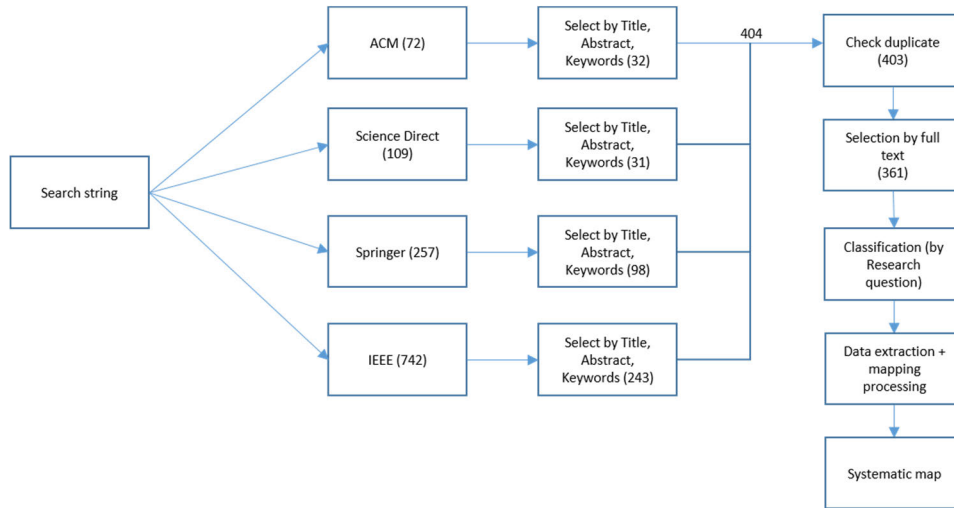


FIGURE 2. Research process with number of papers in each step.

- **Solution proposal:** contain a proposal for a novel or significantly improved solution, like architecture, model, framework, etc., without full-blown validation or implementation of the proposed solution
- **Validation research:** contains validation of the proposed solution, either by prototyping, conducting an experiment, simulation, mathematical analysis, mathematical proof of properties, etc., but has not been used in real- world scenarios.
- **Evaluation research:** is firstly the proposed solution implemented and tested in real-world scenarios. In addition, unlike [16], we slightly modified by classifying papers that evaluate existing solutions in this type.
- **Opinion paper:** contain the author’s personal viewpoint on a given subject, either positive or negative
- **Experiential paper:** consist of lessons learned and a description of the author’s personal experience in using, for instance, a framework, a tool, a system, or other solutions.

Depending on its nature, one paper may be classified into one or more categories and sub-categories as long as it satisfies the requirements.

The next section will present the results of this classification of all identified papers.

The research process with number of papers obtained after processing each step is described in Fig. 2.

V. RESULTS AND SYSTEMATIC MAPS

Applying all steps of the research process presented in Section IV, we obtained all relevant papers that meet all criteria and classified them into respective categories and sub-categories described in Table 3. Besides, we also constructed co-authorship network of all identified papers to have an insight about the relationship between authors.

In next sections, we present obtained results by answering the three research questions mentioned in the previous section.

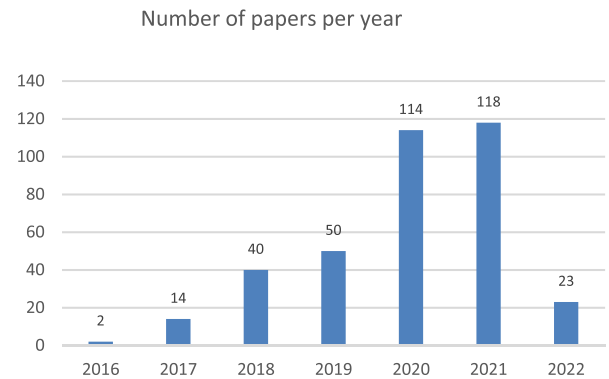


FIGURE 3. Number of papers over years.

A. DEMOGRAPHY

Fig. 3 presents the number of papers published in each year from 2016 (RQ1.1). No papers dealing identity management using blockchain in our four databases is found before this time. We can see that number of papers increases year by year from 2 papers in 2016 to 118 papers in 2021. This shows that this topic of research is interesting and attracts researchers.

In order to answer RQ1.2, we got information about place of publication of each paper then classified it into one of eight type (Conference, Journal, Symposium ...). The results are showed in Fig. 4. And Fig. 5 presents number of papers in each place of publication (we only show top fourteen places with the most papers). For a short conclusion, most papers were published in conferences and journals, majority of IEEE database.

To address RQ1.3, we counted number of papers for each active states based on the organizational affiliation of the authors. The obtained results are presented in Fig. 6 where we can see that China, India, and USA invest most in this field.

For RQ1.4, we need to have the authors’ name of all identifier papers. It’s quite hard to construct a co-authorship

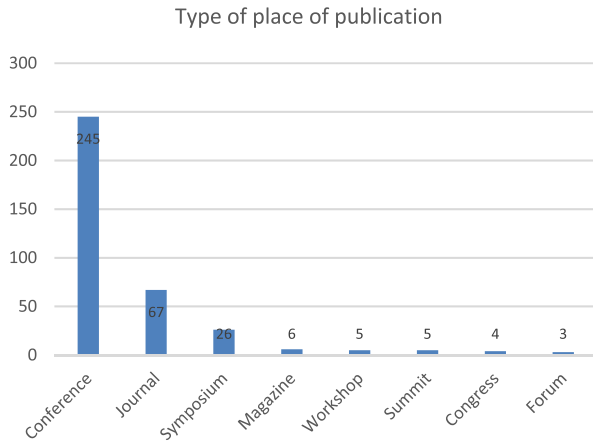


FIGURE 4. Number of papers by type of place of publication.

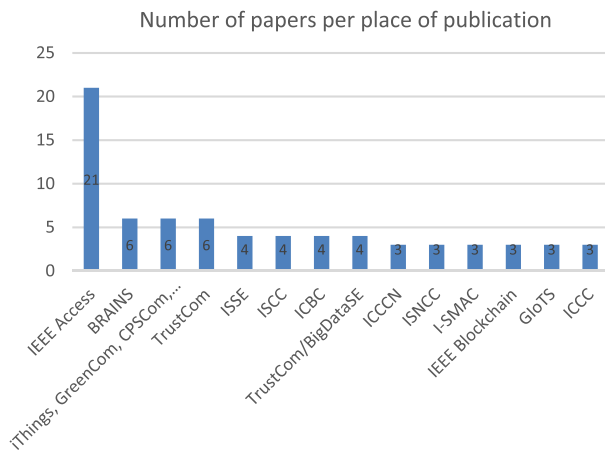


FIGURE 5. Number of papers per place of publication.

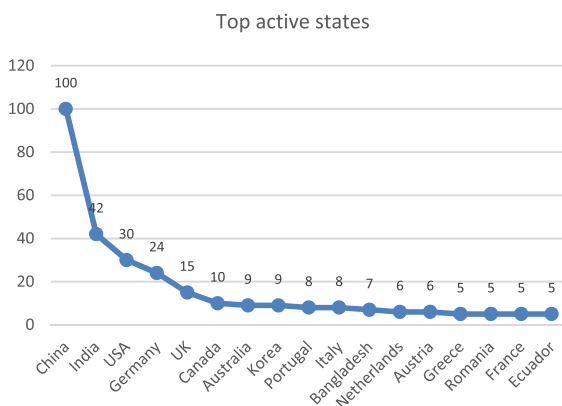


FIGURE 6. Number of papers of the top active states, according to authors' affiliation.

network [46] of 361 papers. As it would result in a tangled and hard-to-see network. So, we divided their authors in two

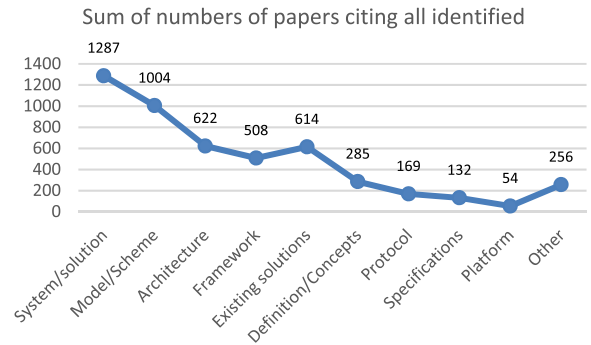


FIGURE 7. Sum of numbers of citing all identified papers by contribution.

set. The first one contains all authors who cooperate together within only one paper. The resulting network graph of this case is showed in Fig. 13 using Gephi [47]. The second one contains the remaining authors who co-work in at least two papers or at least one author of one paper co-works with other authors in one other paper. Fig. 14 presents results of this case. Authors and co-works between them are represented by vertex and edges respectively. In this weighted undirected graph, the weight of edges is proportional to number of co-works between two authors. The results obtained show that mainly groups of authors still work individually (alone or a separate group) and co-work in only one paper.

It is interesting and useful for readers to know how the community pays attention to the selected articles (Q1.5) as at least it can be an instruction for them to choose which publication to read and publish their research paper in IdM based on blockchain. To have the information about that, we have to know how many other papers refer to each article. To do that, we analyse the papers that are cited by from 50 other papers as they are able to reflect the overall of 361 papers. We focus only on the following aspect: contribution, domain, states based on the organizational affiliation of the authors, database and place of publication of the selected papers. The results obtained are shown in Fig. (7-12). For a short conclusion, we can see that papers providing new systems/solutions and models/schemes as well as papers dealing with general issues gain the greatest interest of readers and IEEE is the best place to read and publish papers in this topic of research. More discussion in details will be presented in Section VI.

B. SUBJECT OF INTEREST

This section will answer RQ2 and its sub-questions, focus on the subject of interest of the studied papers.

In order to address RQ2.1 and RQ2.2 relating main contributions and application domains of all the identified papers, firstly we need to classify them into categories defined in Table 3. Then we constructed a classification maps (Fig. 15 and Fig. 17) that represent the relationship between contributions and domains.

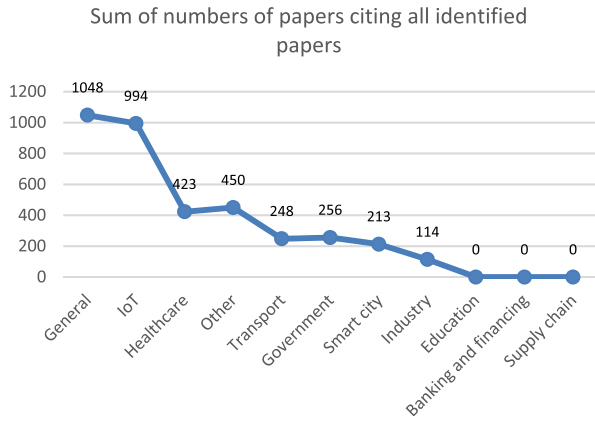


FIGURE 8. Sum of numbers of citing all identified papers by domain.

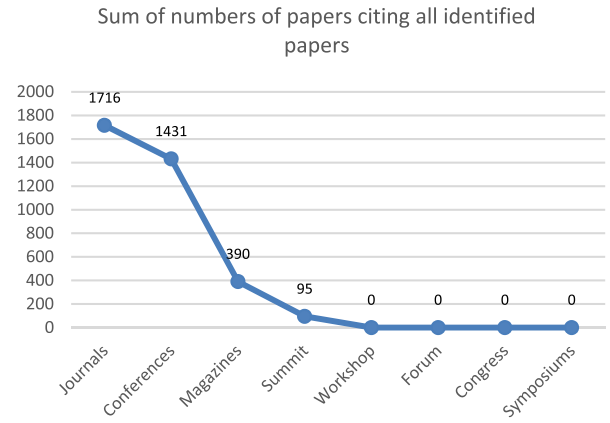


FIGURE 11. Sum of numbers of citing all identified papers by place of publication.

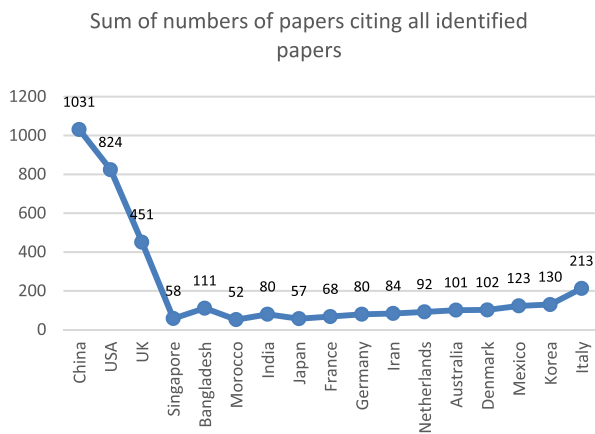


FIGURE 9. Sum of numbers of citing all identified papers by state of author.

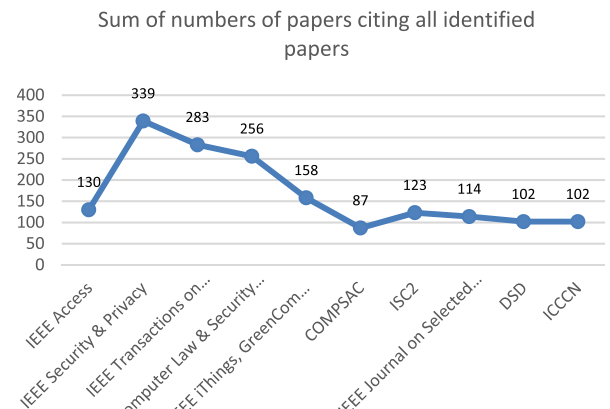


FIGURE 12. Sum of numbers of citing all identified papers by title of publication.

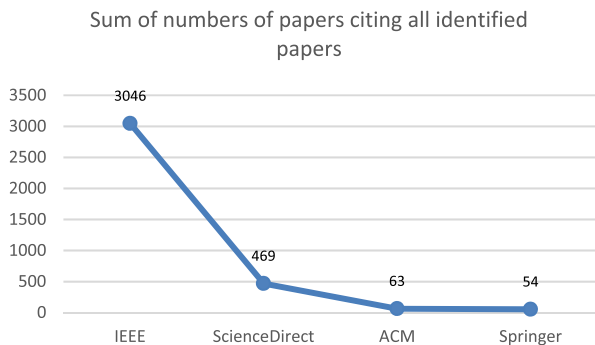


FIGURE 10. Sum of numbers of citing all identified papers by database.

The results in Fig. 11 show that articles mainly provide new system/solution, architecture, framework and model/scheme. It is shown also that most papers deal with general issues not focusing on a specific domain. Besides, IoT gains also momentum when there are 61 papers in this domain

C. RESEARCH TYPES AND IDENTITY TYPES

Similarly, to answer RQ3.1 about research type, we presented the results of classification in Fig. 16 and Fig. 18.

Regarding the ratio between decentralized identity solutions and SSI solutions among all studied papers (RQ3.2), the classification map is presented in Fig. 16 and Fig. 19.

For Fig. 17 - 19, instead of just counting the number of papers corresponding to each cell, we show which paper is in which cell. This helps readers and other researchers have more information in details.

VI. DISCUSSION

In the previous section, we presented several results that help us answer the research questions described in Section IV-B. This section, we will analyse these results in details.

As shown in Fig. 3, we can observe that the number of annual publications (RQ1.1) increases greatly year by year (from 2 studies in 2016 to 118 studies in 2021). Although the search is limited to publications since 2009, the actual results

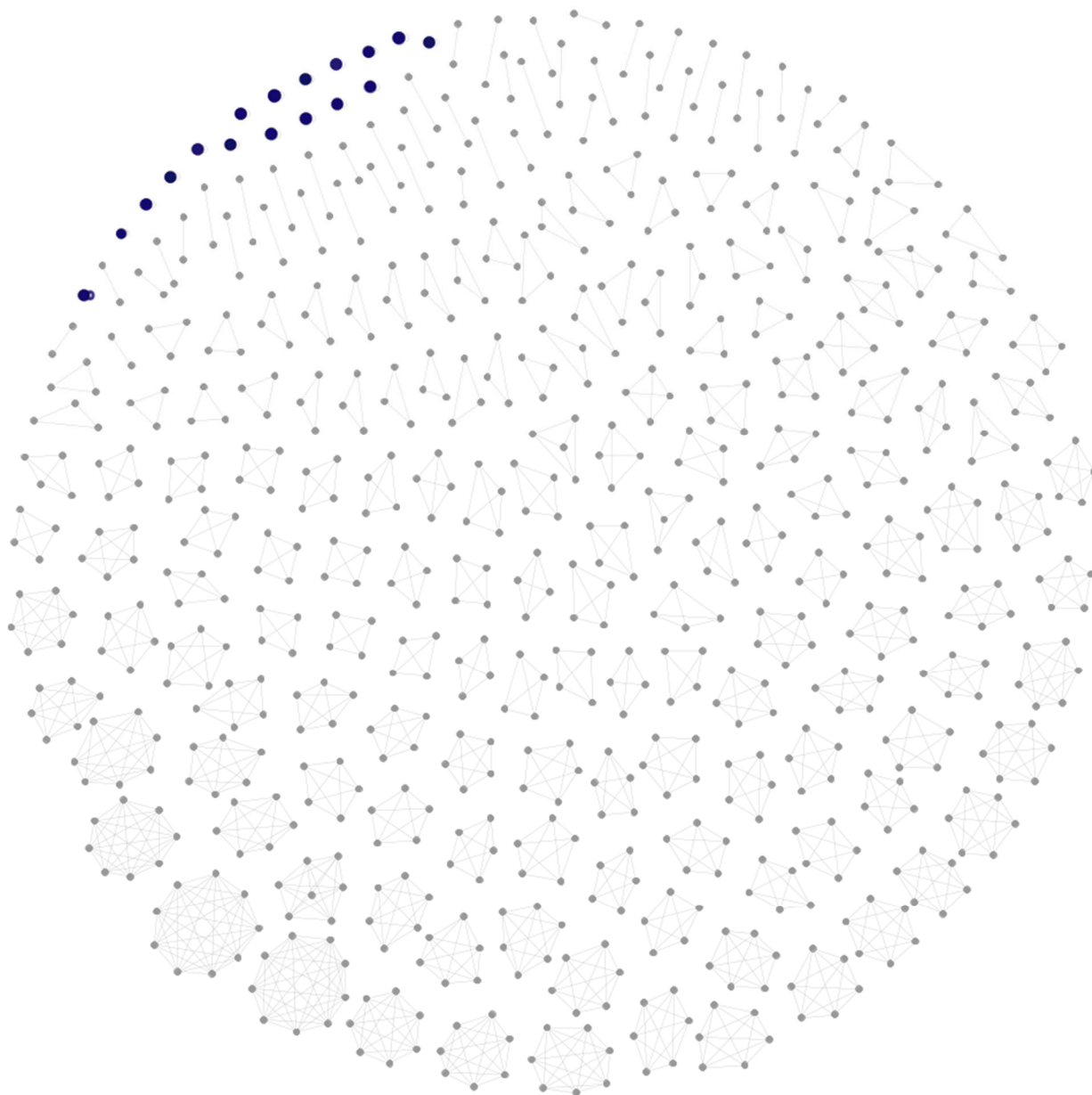


FIGURE 13. Co-authorship network graph where there is no relationship between groups of authors.

show that IdM using blockchain has attracted attention and development since 2016.

The number of articles in 2016 was only 2. By 2017 the number of articles was up to 14, increased 7 times; from 2017 to 2018 increased from 14 to 40; 2018 to 2019 from 40 to 50. In 2020 increased dramatically from 50 to 118. The number of articles in 2020 and 2021 is nearly equal, possibly due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, IdM using blockchain is of outstanding interest. Paper number 2022 is less than 2021 due to limited search to April 2022.

Regarding the distribution of articles among databases, we have: 235 papers come from IEEE Explore (65.1%); 73 papers from Springer Link (20.22%); 28 papers ACM (7.76%), and the remaining 25 papers from ScienceDirect (6.95%). For question RQ1.2, the majority of articles were published in the proceedings of the conferences (245 papers, 67.86%); 67 papers in journals (18.56%); 26 papers in symposium (7.2%), and the rest are distributed among magazines, workshops, forums, summits, congresses. As for the place of publication, these 361 papers were published in 252 publications. Specifically, in the publications, IEEE Access has the

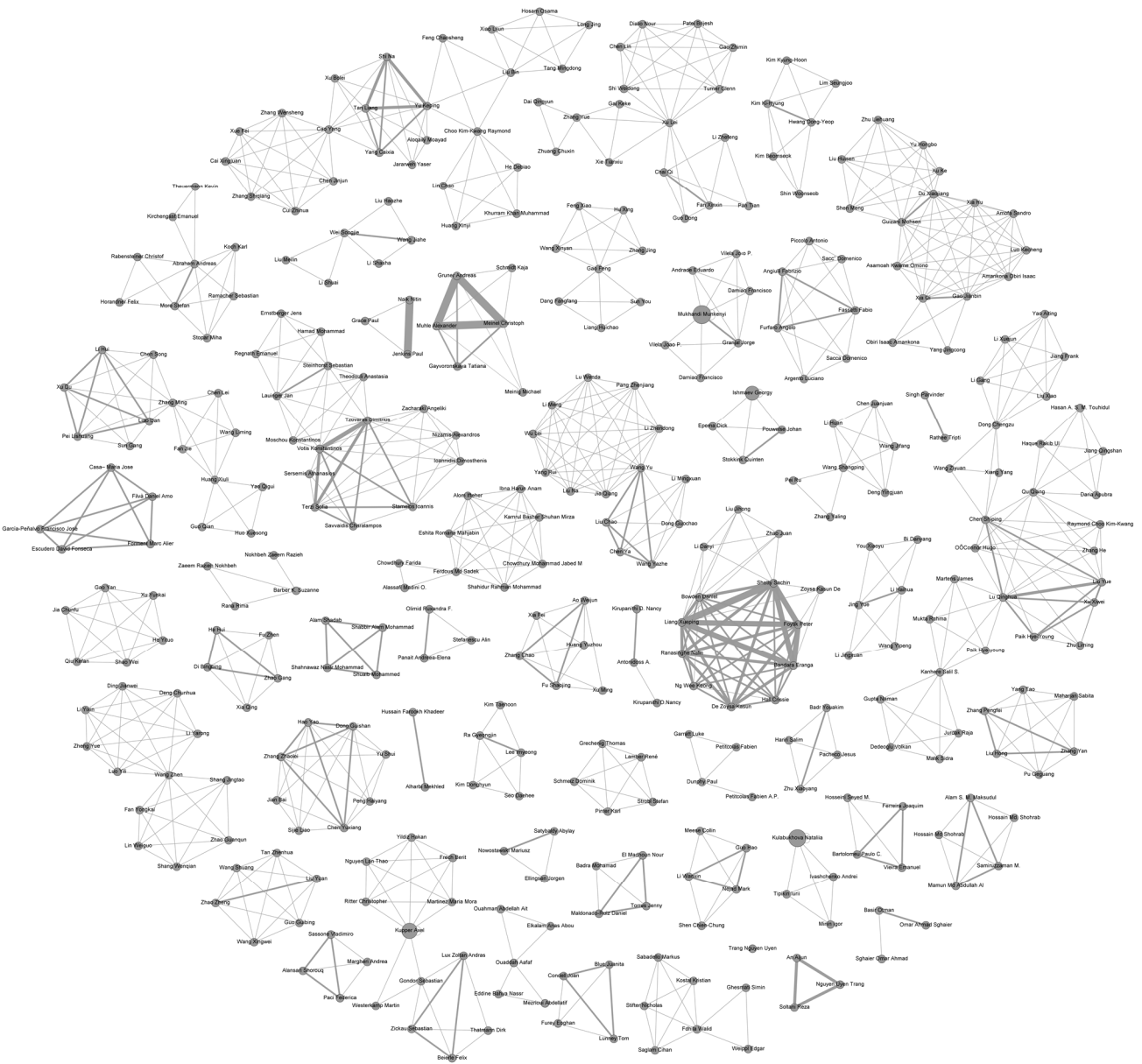


FIGURE 14. Co-authorship network graph, where vectors represent authors and edges the co-authorship of one or more works.

highest number of papers (21 papers, equivalent to 5.82%). For the remaining publications, the number of papers published is 6 or less. Specifically, there are 3 publications with 6 papers; 4 publications have 4 papers; 12 publications with 3 articles; the rest mostly consists of 2 papers and 1 papers. This distribution is shown in Fig. 5 with the top 14 publications with the most articles. Due to the large number of publications (252 publications) but limited research length, we cannot list all of them.

As in section V, we commented that China, India, and USA are the countries (RQ1.3) with the most blockchain-based IdM research according to our search results. In which, China leads with 100 papers (27.7%), followed by India with 42 papers (11.6%), USA with 30 papers (8.3%), Germany (24 papers, 6.6%), and UK (15 papers, 4.2%). For the remaining remaining countries, each country contributed less than 10 papers. The full list of contributing countries is listed in Table 4.

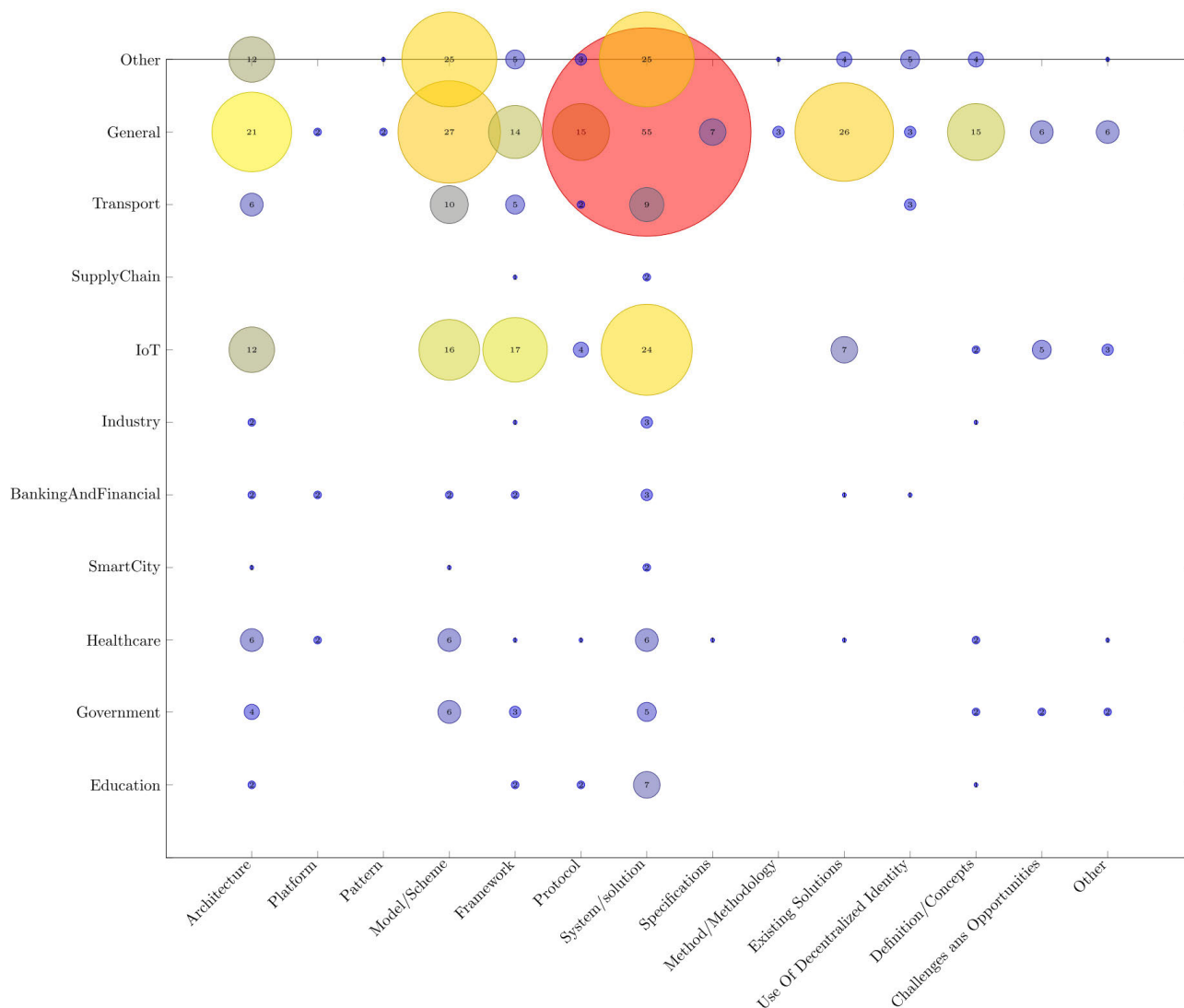


FIGURE 15. Classification map, representing the intersection between papers' contribution and domain.

Regarding the collaboration of authors of the papers included in the study (RQ1.4), based on Fig. 13 and Fig. 14, we can see that mainly groups of authors still work individually (alone or a separate group) and co-work in only one paper. Specifically, in Fig. 13, there are 22 authors working alone; 44 groups of 2 authors; 42 groups of 3 authors; 50 groups of 4 authors; 34 groups of 5 authors; 17 groups of 6 authors; 5 groups of 7 authors; 1 group of 8 authors, and 2 groups of 9 authors.

From Fig. 14, we can see that the authors with the most papers is Naik Nitin and Jenkins Paul with 7 papers, of which 6 are the co-works of two authors and one paper shared by two people together with Grace Paul. Besides, there is another group of authors who also have 7 papers, which are Gruner Andreas, Muhle Alex, and Meinel Christophe. They co-worked in all 7 papers including 2 with Gayvoron Skaya and one with Schmidt Kaja, one with Meinig Michael. The

authors have published 6 papers including Liang Xueping and Shetty Sachin, of which both authors collaborated in all six papers and 5 papers were the co-works of the two authors with Bandara Eranga. Next, two authors jointly published 4 papers, namely Votis Konstantinos and Tzovaras Dimitrios. Lu Quinghua also published 4 papers, of which 3 papers were made with Liu Yue and combined with many other authors to create a large network. Similarly, Yu Keping also published 4 papers in which 3 papers were combined with Shi Na and Tan Liang, and combined with other authors to create a complex web. The trio of An Aijun, Nguyen Uyen Trang, and Soltani Reza combined in 3 papers.

In Fig. 14, some nodes are larger in size as the authors do some papers alone.

Regarding to the interest of researchers in blockchain-based IdM (RQ1.5), we analyse number of papers referring the identified papers in each category. We focus the papers with

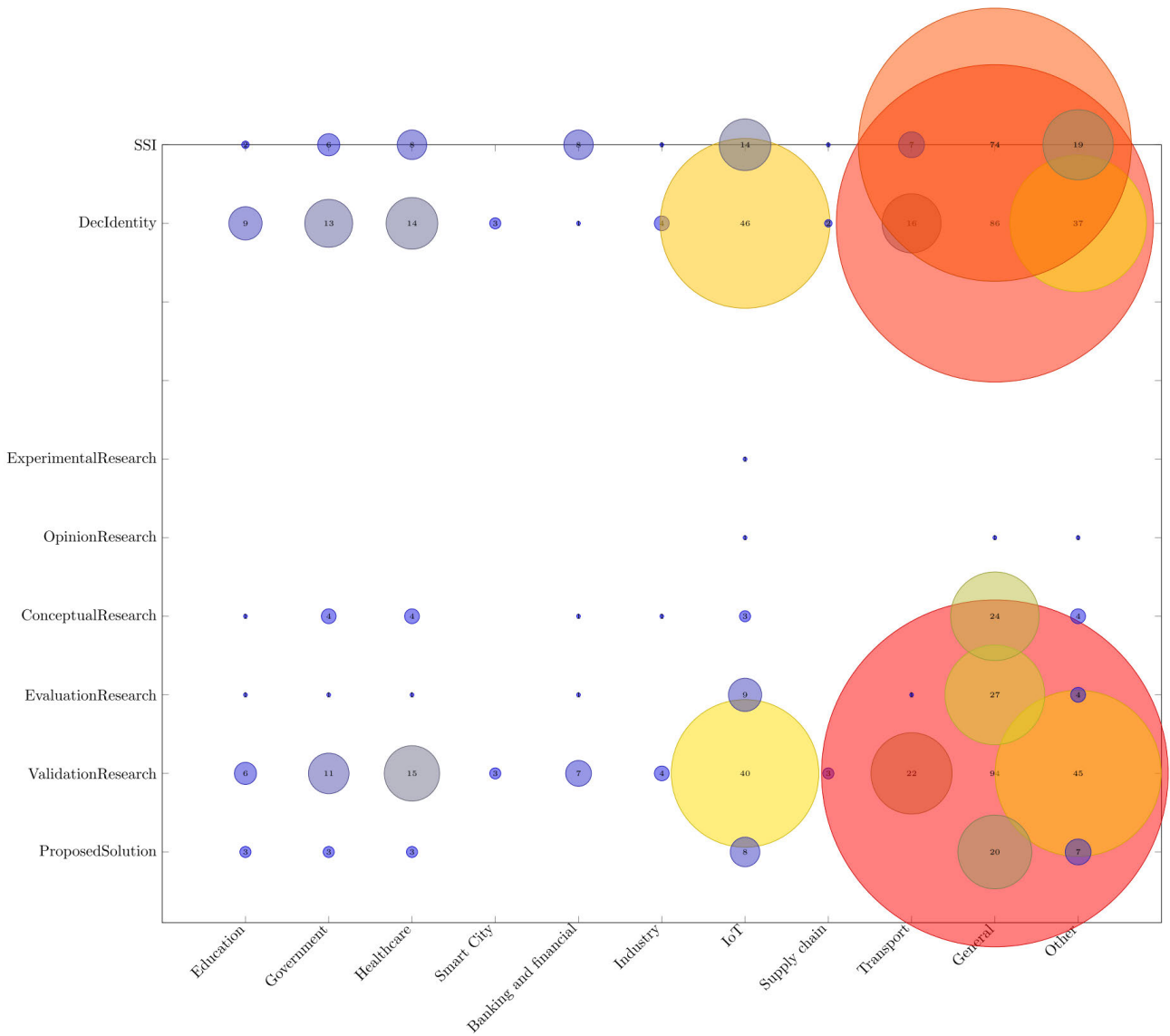


FIGURE 16. Classification map, representing the intersection between papers' domain and research type and identity type.

more than 50 citations. They are [4, 13, 14, 42, 48, 49, 60, 63, 67, 70, 79, 92, 105, 113, 123, 124, 133, 139, 146, 165, 166, 201, 206, 207, 209, 213, 227, 236, 263, 317, 319, 325, 330, 380, 386]. A summary of ten most cited articles is presented in Table 5. Observing Fig. 7, we can see that the greatest interest is for articles providing new systems/solutions (cited in 1287 articles in total), followed by articles providing new models/schemes (1004 times), architecture (622 times), framework (508 times), existing solutions (614 times). Readers seem to pay less attention to the remaining categories: Definition/Concepts (285 times), Protocol (169 times), Specifications (132 times), Platform (54 times), Other (256 times). Concerning the domain of the identified papers, through Fig. 8, we can find out that the papers mention general issues attract the most interest of researchers as they are cited in 1048 papers. Another domain that also attracts many articles

referencing it is IoT (994 times). With Fig. 9, we can observe that the papers of the authors from China, USA, and UK gain the greatest appeal of readers with the number of articles referencing them, respectively 1031, 824, 451. Observing Fig. 10, we can see that IEEE seems to be the best and the biggest database for readers and rerearchers of blockchain-based IdM when papers published in IEEE are cited by 3043 papers in 3659 papers. Fig. 11 shows that papers published in conferences, journals, and magazines gain most attraction from readers. Last but not least, observing Fig. 12, we can see that publications of IEEE make up the majority of the top publications with the most referencing papers, especially IEEE Access, IEEE Security & Privacy, and IEEE Transactions on Services Computing.

Concerning the contribution of the identified papers (RQ2.1), observing Fig. 15 and Fig. 17, it can be seen that

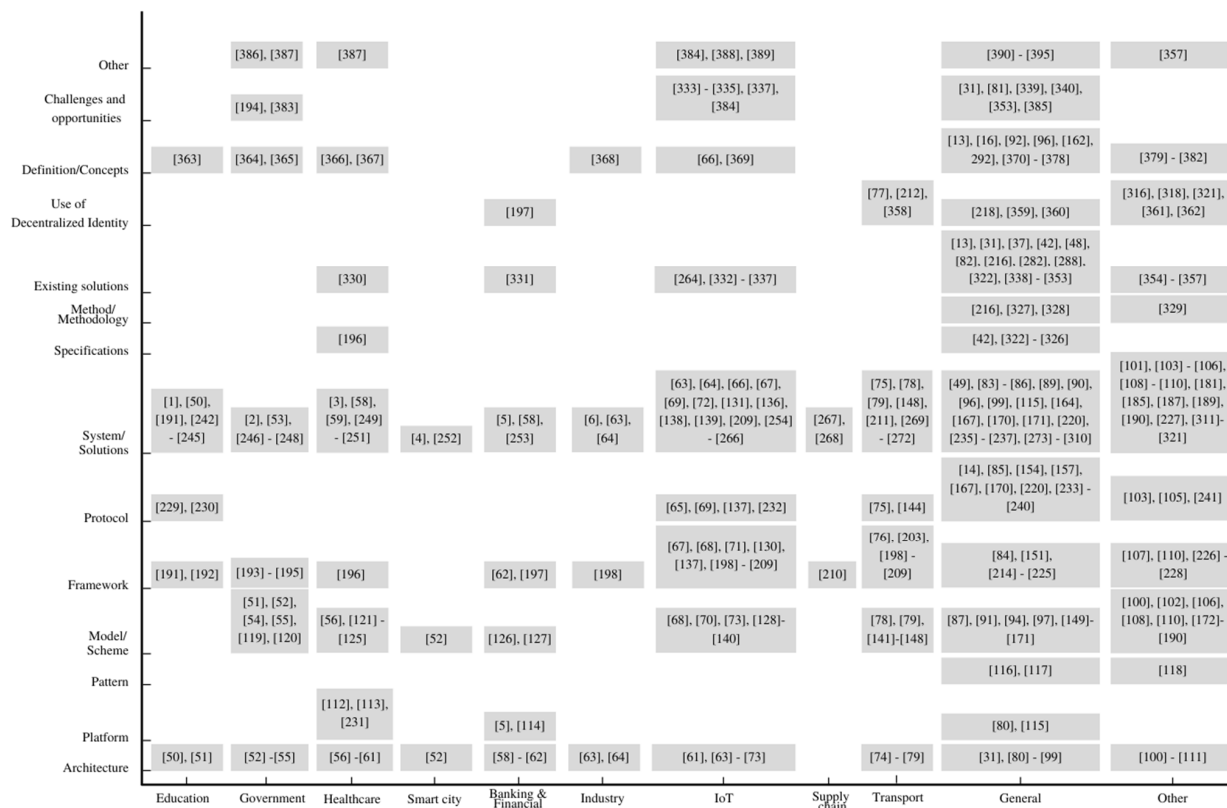


FIGURE 17. Classification map for papers' contributions and domain.

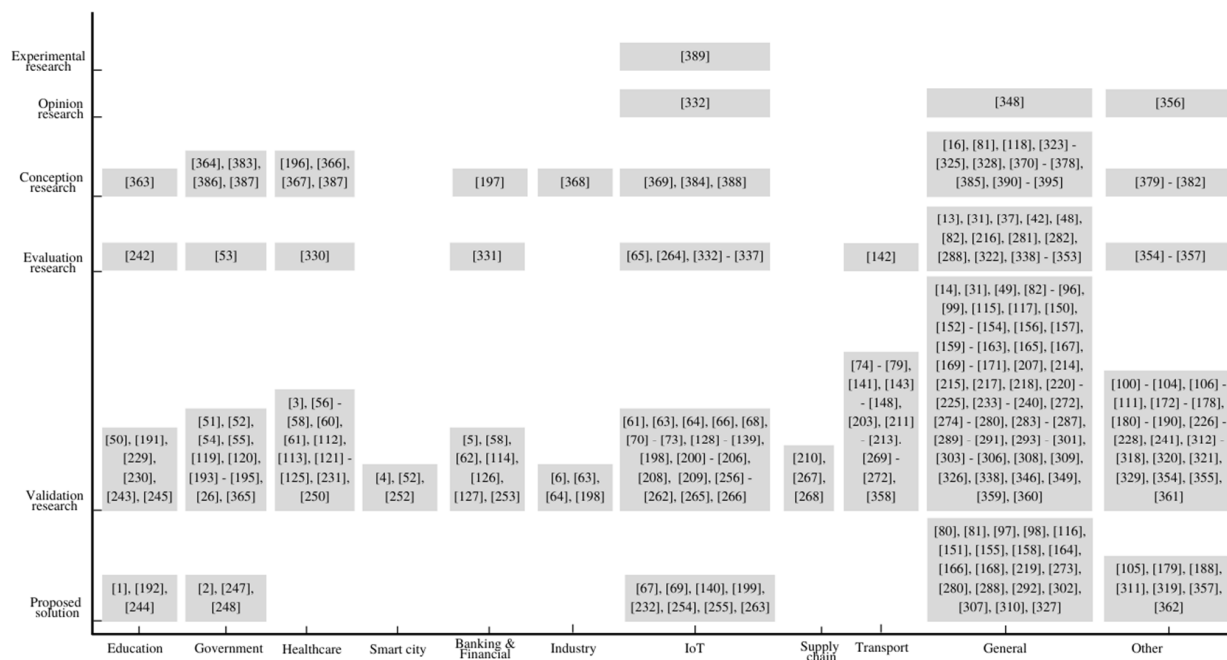


FIGURE 18. Classification map for papers' domain and research type.

the articles mainly provide new system/solution (139 papers, 38.5%), architecture (64 papers, 17.73%), framework (49 papers, 13.57%), and model/scheme (92 papers, 25.48%).

This result was similarly reflected in paper [16]. For the remaining categories, there are less papers focusing on: platform, pattern, protocol, specifications, method/methodology,

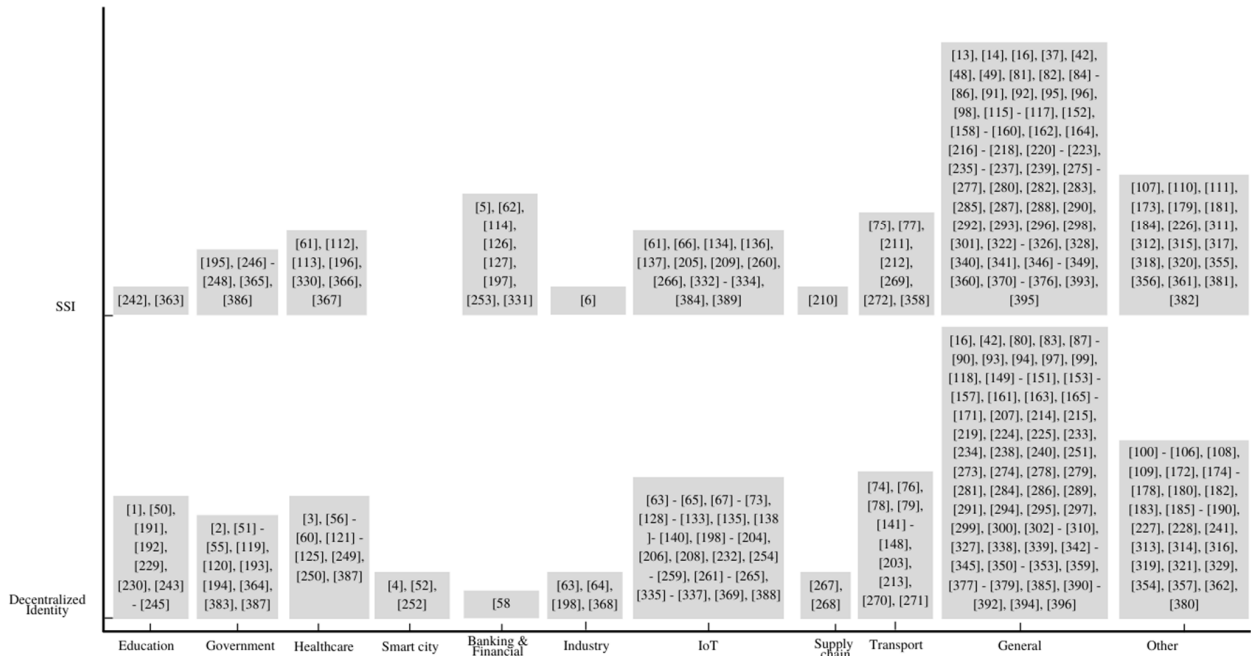


FIGURE 19. Classification map for the type of identity (decentralized or SSI) on which papers focus, regarding domain.

TABLE 4. List of states in each database (with SD standing for ScienceDirect, SL for Springer Link, Per. for Percentage).

States	SD	SL	ACM	IEEE	Total	Per.
China	10	22	11	57	100	27.7%
India	1	12	1	28	42	11.6%
USA	3	6	3	18	30	8.3%
Germany	2	4		18	24	6.6%
UK	0	1	1	13	15	4.2%
Canada				10	10	2.7%
Australia	1	3		5	9	2.5%
Korea				9	9	2.5%
Italy	1	3		4	8	2.2%
Portugal			3	5	8	2.2%
Bangladesh		2		5	7	1.9%
Netherlands		3	1	2	6	1.7%
Austria		3		3	6	1.7%
Greece		0	1	4	5	1.4%
Romania		2	1	2	5	1.4%
France		1		4	5	1.4%
Ecuador				5	5	1.4%
Morocco			1	3	4	1.1%
Japan		1		3	4	1.1%
Malaysia	1	0		3	4	1.1%
Saudi Arabia	2			2	4	1.1%
Northern Ireland				3	3	0.8%
Brazil		1		2	3	0.8%
Spain		0	2	1	3	0.8%
Denmark	1	1		1	3	0.8%
Switzerland			1	2	3	0.8%

States	SD	SL	ACM	IEEE	Total	Per.
Sweden		1	1	1	3	0.8%
UAE	1			1	2	0.6%
Belgium		1		1	2	0.6%
Myanmar		1		1	2	0.6%
Singapore				2	2	0.6%
Turkey	1			1	2	0.6%
Taiwan	1			1	2	0.6%
Norway		1	1		2	0.6%
Russia		2			2	0.6%
Slovenia				1	1	0.3%
Egypt				1	1	0.3%
Mexico				1	1	0.3%
Algeria				1	1	0.3%
Qatar				1	1	0.3%
Iran				1	1	0.3%
Sri Lanka				1	1	0.3%
Pakistan				1	1	0.3%
Senegal				1	1	0.3%
Luxembourg				1	1	0.3%
Thailand				1	1	0.3%
Ireland				1	1	0.3%
Indonesia				1	1	0.3%
Serbia				1	1	0.3%
Iraq				1	1	0.3%
Rwanda		1			1	0.3%
New Zeland		1			1	0.3%

use of decentralized identity, challenges and opportunity. Secondary studies mainly review and survey in order to

compare and evaluate existing solutions of this research topic. In addition, they also provide views and perspectives on the

TABLE 5. Summary of ten most cited articles from 361 selected articles.

Article	Summary
[48]	The article introduce the emerging landscape of DLT-based IdM and evaluate three representative proposals-uPort, ShoCard, and Sovrin-using the analytic lens of a seminal framework that characterizes the nature of successful IdM schemes.
[133]	In this paper, a blockchain based multi-WSN authentication scheme for IoT is proposed. The nodes of IoT are divided into base stations, cluster head nodes and ordinary nodes according to their capability differences, which are formed to a hierarchical network. A blockchain network is constructed among different types of nodes to form a hybrid blockchain model, including local chain and public chain. In this hybrid model, nodes identity mutual authentication in various communication scenarios is realized, ordinary node identity authentication operation is accomplished by local blockchain, and cluster head node identity authentication are realized in public blockchain. The analysis of security and performance shows that the scheme has comprehensive security and better performance.
[386]	In December 2014, Estonia became the first nation to open its digital borders to enable anyone, anywhere in the world to apply to become an e-Resident. Estonian e-Residency is essentially a commercial initiative. The application of blockchain to e-Residency has the potential to fundamentally change the way identity information is controlled and authenticated. This paper examines the legal, policy, and technical implications of this development.
[4]	The platforms supporting the smart city applications are rarely implemented from scratch by a municipality and/or totally owned by a single company, but are more typically realized by integrating some existing ICT infrastructures thanks to a supporting platform, such as the well known FIWARE platform. This work proposes a novel solution for distributed management of identity and authorization policies by leveraging on the blockchain technology to hold a global view of the security policies within the system, and integrating it in the FIWARE platform. A detailed assessment is provided to evaluate the goodness of the proposed approach and to compare it with the existing solutions.
[70]	In this paper, BlendCAC, a blockchain-enabled decentralized capability-based access control is proposed for the security of IoTs. The BlendCAC aims at an effective access control processes to devices, services, and information in large scale IoT systems. Based on the blockchain network, a capability delegation mechanism is suggested for access permission propagation. A robust identity-based capability token management strategy is proposed, which takes advantage of a smart contract for registration, propagation, and revocation of the access authorization. In the proposed BlendCAC scheme, IoT devices are their own master to control their resources instead of being supervised by a centralized authority. Implemented and tested on a Raspberry Pi device and on a local private blockchain network, the experimental results demonstrate the feasibility of the proposed BlendCAC approach to offer a decentralized, scalable, lightweight, and fine-grained AC solution to IoT systems.
[319]	This paper focuses on utilizing blockchain technology to introduce a new ID as a service (IDaaS) for digital identity management. The proposed blockchain-based ID as a service (BIDaaS) is explained with one practical example that shows how the proposed BIDaaS works as an identity and authentication management infrastructure for mobile users of a mobile telecommunication company.
[380]	This research is a systematic mapping review with the goal of collecting all relevant existing research of Digital Identity on Blockchain technology implemented in a smart city environment. The objective of this paper is to understand the current research topics, challenges, and future directions of these areas from the technical point of view. It is expected that this paper can stimulate interest in theory and practice to further discussions and research in these areas.
[63]	To preserve the privacy of devices in Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT), this paper designs an identity management mechanism, which can realize that devices being authenticated remain anonymous. Besides, session keys between two parties are negotiated, which can secure the subsequent communications. Extensive experiments have been conducted to show the effectiveness and efficiency of the proposed mechanism.
[13]	This paper aims to achieve the first formal and comprehensive step toward an academic investigation of self-sovereign identityby providing the first-ever formal and rigorous treatment of the concept of self-sovereign identity using a mathematical model. This paper examines the properties that a self-sovereign identity should have and explores the impact of self-sovereign identity over the laws of identity. It also highlights the essential life-cycles of an identity management system and inter-relates how the notion of self-sovereign identity can be applied in these life-cycles. In addition, the paper illustrates several envisioned flows involving a self-sovereign identity leveraging blockchain technology covering different aspects of an identity management system.
[123]	This paper proposes a system for identity and access management using blockchain technology to support authentication and authorization of entities in a digital system. A prototype demonstrates the application of blockchain in identity and access management using the Hyperledger Fabric framework. It provides a proof of concept based on a use case concerning Electronic Health Records from the healthcare domain where an immutable and auditable history is desired for data concerning patients. Basic authentication and authorization operations are able to execute in 2-3 seconds with an initial size of blockchain of about 3.8 MB covering physicians in Denmark.

challenges and opportunities of applying blockchain to IdM. Also in Fig. 15 and Fig. 17, we see that most papers deal with general issues with 156 papers (43.21%), not focusing on a specific domain (RQ2.2). This is really reasonable as with a new research topic like blockchain-based IdM, it is necessary to have a general knowledge and research to lay the foundation for application in specific domains. The obtained results show that IoT attracts a lot of attention from researchers (61 papers, 16.9%). This may be as IoT is a growing domain and device identification is gaining strong interest. In addition, transport is also researched together with healthcare. Some other domains gather also momentum such as: education, government, smart city, banking, supply chain, industry.

For RQ3.1, observing Fig. 16 and Fig. 18 shows that the majority of papers are validation research (241 papers, 66.76%), proposed solution (44 papers, 12.19%), evaluation research (44 papers, 12.19%), and conceptual research (40 papers, 11.08%). There are very few papers of other types of research (experimental research, opinion research). This seems obvious as blockchain-based IdM is still a nascent topic, with few real-world applications yet.

For RQ3.2, different from the results in paper [16], the number of articles mentioning decentralized identity (223 papers, 61.77%) is greater than ones mentioning SSI (140 papers, 38.78%). The results are obviously seen in Fig. 16 and Fig. 19.

Notice that the total of all percentages does not equal 100% as there are some papers that discuss about more than one sub-category.

VII. CONCLUSION

In today's digital world, identity management is of great interest as almost everyone owns several digital identities. Traditional identity management systems expose many disadvantages in terms of security and privacy of personal data. Users are increasingly aware of these weaknesses, and they expect solutions that allow them to be autonomous in controlling their identities and reduce their reliance on third parties.

Blockchain was born in 2009. With its own characteristics, it has been applied in many fields of technology and life. Therefore, the application of blockchain to identity management was also discussed in 2015 and has attracted more and more research and development. With the increasing amount of research as primary papers, it is essential to have secondary articles that analyze and synthesize them in order to have a systematic view on this research topic.

Therefore, in this study, we want to provide a systematic mapping to provide a comprehensive systematic view of blockchain-based IdMs through classifying them by contribution, application domain, identity type, and research type. In addition, we also provide an anthropological analysis as well as the trend of papers on this topic. To do that, we studied 361 papers from 4 databases (IEEE Explore, ScienceDirect, ACM, and Springer Link). The obtained results show that the number of studies increases greatly over the years.

The year 2020 marks a breakthrough in numbers, which can be explained by the outbreak of the covid-19 pandemic which has increased the demand for decentralized identity management. Regarding the place of publication of papers, published papers are mostly concentrated in conference proceedings, journals, and symposiums. The publication with the most published articles is IEEE Access. The countries with the most research papers are China, India, and the USA. Concerning the interest of readers in the topic of blockchain-based IdM, the most interesting papers are the paper proposing model/solution and model/scheme, papers dealing with general solution and IoT. Papers published in conferences and journals, majority in IEEE attract most readers were most cited.

The papers mainly belong to validation research and solution proposal types. The papers focus on general solutions, not specific to any specific domain. For specific domains, there is more prominence in IoT, transport as well as healthcare. Most of the papers focus on proposing solutions, architecture, framework, model / scheme.

From the results of this work, in the future, we may focus on analysing SSI and decentralized identity solutions and models for IoT devices in expecting to conduct insights of this narrow research domain. As according to our research results, IoT is increasingly gain momentum in this period.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No Conflict of interest.

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