

Trends in Sport Motivation Research: A Bibliometric Study on Scopus Database

*Spor Motivasyonu Araştırmalarındaki Eğilimler: Scopus Veri Tabanında Bibliyometrik Bir Çalışma*Güven DERE¹¹ İstanbul Rumeli Üniversitesi, Spor Bilimleri Fakültesi, İstanbul, TÜRKİYE /guven.dere@rumeli.edu.tr / 0000-0002-6506-7674

Abstract: Sports motivation is a basic instinct that guides and sustains human behavior. After the 1970s, psychologists interested in sports and exercise began investigating motivations for starting, participating in, and quitting sports. This study aims to examine the subject of sports motivation with a descriptive screening model. The screening model aims to reveal trends in the literature by analyzing the current situation in a certain period. Bibliometric analysis, a quantitative research method, was used. The findings show that academic studies in sports motivation have increased over time, with a significant increase, especially after 2019. Keyword network analysis revealed the multidisciplinary structure of the field and its various components. In addition, cross-country collaboration analyses show that academic partnerships have increased over time and that some countries have come to the forefront in this field. Reviews of cited publications revealed that the most cited studies include theoretical models, scale development, and large-scale empirical research. This study evaluated academic developments in sports motivation from a general perspective and determined the basic trends.

Keywords: Sports, sports motivation, bibliometric analysis.

Özet: Spor motivasyonu, insan davranışını yönlendiren ve sürdüren temel bir içgüdüdür. 1970'lerden sonra spor ve egzersizle ilgilenen psikologlar spora başlama, spora katılma ve sporu bırakma motivasyonlarını araştırmaya başladılar. Bu çalışma, spor motivasyonu konusunu tanımlayıcı tarama modeli ile incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Tarama modeli, belirli bir dönemdeki mevcut durumu analiz ederek literatürdeki eğilimleri ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Nicel araştırma yöntemlerinden bibliyometrik analiz kullanılmıştır. Bulgular, spor motivasyonu alanındaki akademik çalışmaların zamanla arttığını, özellikle 2019'dan sonra önemli bir artış olduğunu göstermektedir. Anahtar kelime ağ analizi, alanın multidisipliner yapısını ve çeşitli bileşenlerini ortaya koymuştur. Ayrıca, ülkeler arası iş birliği analizleri, akademik ortaklıkların zamanla arttığını ve bazı ülkelerin bu alanda ön plana çıktığını göstermektedir. Atıf alan yayınların incelenmesi, en çok atıf alan çalışmaların teorik modeller, ölçek geliştirme ve büyük ölçekli ampirik araştırmalar içerdiğini ortaya koymuştur. Bu çalışma, spor motivasyonundaki akademik gelişmeleri genel bir bakış açısıyla değerlendirmiş ve temel eğilimleri belirlemiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Spor, spor motivasyonu, bibliyometrik analiz.

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INTRODUCTION

Motivation, which is the basis of human behavior, initiates it and ensures its continuation. Psychologists interested in sports and exercise have also been interested in the motivations for starting, participating in, and quitting sports since the 1970s (Brunstein, 1993; Cresswell et al., 2003; Murcia, Gimeno, & Coll, 2008).

Luthans (2015) stated that the meaning of needs, drives, and incentives and their relationships are key to understanding the motivational process, which begins with a physiological, psychological deficiency or need and activates a behavior or an impulse toward a goal and incentive. Motivation processes can be defined by psychological structures that stimulate, direct, and regulate achievement behavior (Tenenbaum & Eklund, 2020:3). Researchers interested in the subject have particularly focused on these concepts when expressing the term motivation. It is evaluated that human behaviors related to the subject should be taken into consideration when explaining sports and sports motivation, which are of interest to humans.

Regular play and exercise in sports activities are associated with many positive outcomes, including increased fitness, increased vitality, increased self-esteem, and reduced risk of serious illness (Bouchard, Blair, & Haskell, 2007; Pelletier, Vallerand, & Sarrazin, 2007). Although most individuals are aware, to some extent, of the positive outcomes associated with sports activity, many individuals stop participating in sports each year (Sarrazin, Boiché, & Pelletier, 2007). A significant amount of research has been conducted on sports motivation to understand why some athletes show a persistent desire to continue in sports while others lose interest (Vallerand, 2001; Assumpção Harris et al., 2020; Özkurt, 2023; Barcala-Furelos, 2025). Sports motivation, a special section within the general concept of motivation, deals with the functioning of these forces concerning sports, especially those that enable the individual to exert effort and achieve success in physical activity and sports. In sports, not only physical development but also personal goals,

discipline, and psychological resilience are important. For this reason, sports motivation is of critical importance in terms of both challenging the individual's physical limits and developing mentally. Sports motivation (SM) has a very extensive literature as a field that examines the psychological factors that affect individuals' intentions and decisions to do sports, the effort they show in sports activities, and their continuity (Vallerand, 2001; Erdem and Çakmak Yıldızhan, 2024). SM is a concept that is evaluated as an interaction of internal and external factors and is explained by many theoretical approaches. Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination Theory, Vroom's (1964) Expectancy Theory, Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory, and Nicholls' (1989) Achievement-Motivation Approach are the basic theories for understanding SM.

Athletes' motivation levels are affected by many factors such as individual characteristics, social environment, awards, and personal goals. Current research shows that SM is shaped not only by internal and external factors but also by individual self-efficacy, emotional well-being, and technological tools. SM researchers who consider these effects have tried to explain the subject by using general motivation theories and current approaches. The most common of these is Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination Theory (SDT). Addressing the differences between people's intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, the theory states that individuals who engage in sports more autonomously result in longer-term participation and higher success (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

SDT provides a comprehensive framework for understanding both extrinsic and intrinsic motivations that sustain sports participation and how various motivations are differentially associated with sports participation and the benefits derived from it (Hagger & Chatzisarantis, 2007; Standage & Ryan, 2012; Vallerand, 2007). Intrinsic motivation refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable, while extrinsic motivation refers to

using something as a means to achieve a goal (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Research has shown that athletes achieve longer-term success with their intrinsic motivation (enjoyment, development) rather than individuals motivated solely by extrinsic rewards, and it has been found that when intrinsic motivation increases, athletes experience less burnout and exhibit higher performance (Pelletier et al., 2001). In extrinsic motivation, the individual who participates in sports is positively affected by factors such as awards or external recognition (Ryan & Deci, 2000). According to SDT, extrinsic motivations are related to situations where individuals will receive rewards or avoid punishment. However, it is evaluated that the level of continuity in such motivations is low, and individual performance can only increase in the short term.

Vroom's (1964) Expectancy Theory (ET) is another important theory on the subject. ET suggests that individuals' desire to act is based on three basic factors: expectancy, instrumentality, and value (Vroom, 1964). The combination of these three factors determines the degree of effort individuals show to achieve a certain goal. According to Vroom (1964), people shape their motivation by evaluating the probability of achieving success by making an effort, the value of the success that will reward them, and how accessible the reward is. OT provides an effective model for understanding sports motivation. In the process of achieving a goal, athletes consider how their success is related to material and spiritual pleasures such as championships, medals, and social acceptance, and their beliefs about how valuable these rewards are. OT explains how people's decisions to initiate effort are related to the rewards they expect (Vroom, 1964). As a motivational theory, OT tries to understand the factors that affect whether individuals will make an effort to achieve a certain goal. Studies that utilize this theory in the context of sports motivation show that athletes who aim for high success tend to increase their performance. However, from another perspective, extrinsic rewards also have a control side, and when the intrinsic motivation levels of athletes decrease, the use of these rewards by coaches has reflected positively on the performance of athletes. (Vallerand & Losier, 1999).

Another theory that sports science researchers use to explain sports motivation is Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1986). Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) aims to explain how individuals develop behaviors through their interactions with their environment, personal beliefs, and social learning processes. The theory states that individuals' beliefs in their competence (self-efficacy) have a strong effect on their motivation regarding the subject they are interested in. According to Bandura, individuals' beliefs about performing a certain task affect their feelings of self-efficacy, which in this context can be considered to determine their interest in sports. Research shows that individuals' sense of self-confidence increases both their motivation and performance (Bandura, 1986). The basic assumption of SCT in sports motivation is that athletes' behaviors when they are successful are a result of their perception of success in different dimensions. This theory states that to understand athletes' motivation, we need to understand what success means to them (Moran, 2004).

Achievement Goal Theory (Nicholls, 1984), which was first developed to explain educational success, was later put into practice in the sports environment. Achievement Goal Theory expresses the personal meaning of behavior and how success and failure are perceived individually (Singer, Hausenblas, & Janelle, 2001). According to Nicholls (1992); the defined feature of success motivation is based on the

view that the person perceives his/her abilities. According to Hanrahan and Cerin (2009), how individuals define success is related to the targeted behavior and motivation. In the studies conducted, it has been determined that task and ego-related goals are found in every athlete to a certain degree and that the combination of two independent success thoughts describes athletes (Jagacinski & Nicholls, 1984; Nicholls, Cobb, Yackel, Wood, & Wheatley, 1990). Athletes have goals that they consider valuable, and they can engage in various behavioral tendencies to achieve them (Altıntaş, 2015). Sports psychologists who are thinking of explaining the differences in understanding success have continued their studies on the goal of success in this context (Duda and Hall, 2001; Dweck, 1986; Maehr and Nicholls, 1980; Nicholls, 1984; Roberts, 1993). The concept of goal in sports means that the athlete is motivated to achieve his/her individual goals and task goals, and the motivational climate of the sports environment has an effect on the achievement of these goals (Duda, 1989; Nicholls, 1984; Papaioannou, 1994).

The most popular approach in sports and physical activity, achievement goal theory (Tenenbaum & Eklund, 2020:3), assumes that the individual is a rationally acting, intentional, goal-oriented organism and that achievement goals govern achievement beliefs and guide subsequent decision-making and behavior in achievement contexts. In theory, it is argued that to understand individuals' motivation, the function and meaning of achievement behavior for the individual should be calculated and the purpose of the action should be understood (Tenenbaum & Eklund, 2020:3). This study aims to reveal the main trends, prominent authors, studies, and academic collaborations in the field by conducting a bibliometric analysis of the academic literature on sports motivation. As a result of the study, it is aimed to help sports motivation researchers by providing information about trends, major authors, and their publications on the subject.

In line with this general framework in the literature, a bibliometric analysis was carried out in the study based on the Scopus database.

METHODS

In this study, a descriptive scanning model was employed to investigate the topic of sports motivation. The scanning model was preferred to reveal the current situation of a certain period and to analyze trends in the literature. Bibliometric analysis, one of the quantitative research methods, was applied in the study. Bibliometric analysis is a method for understanding the general dynamics in a specific research field by examining the production, distribution, and impact of scientific studies with statistical and mathematical methods. Within the scope of this analysis, a systematic examination of academic publications, citations, and other information sources in the literature is provided. In addition to determining trends in the research field, bibliometric analysis provides the opportunity to evaluate scientific productivity and effectiveness through bibliometric criteria such as the number of publications, number of citations, and h-index (Van Raan, 2005; Zupic & Cater, 2015; Waltman, 2016; Donthu et al., 2021).

The data for this study were collected on January 29, 2025, using the Scopus database. Scopus is considered a reliable scientific source internationally because it indexes peer-reviewed journals with high academic quality standards (Aksnes et al., 2019). During the data collection process, the keywords 'sport' and 'motivation' were used to search the 'title,' 'keyword,' and 'abstract' fields in the Scopus database. Only articles containing the specified keywords in

these fields and meeting the defined criteria were included in the sample. Book chapters, conference proceedings, editorial articles, and other non-article publication types were excluded from the scope of this study. No time restrictions were imposed. The earliest publication year was automatically determined based on the oldest study in the dataset, resulting in a publication range extending back to 1977. Thus, a total of 505 articles published within a broad time frame encompassing both the historical development of past literature and current trends were included in the analysis. This approach provided the opportunity to examine the temporal changes in trends in the literature from a holistic perspective.

VOSviewer 1.6.20 software was used to analyze and visualize bibliometric data. VOSviewer is a software widely used in scientific mapping and bibliometric analysis processes and provides the opportunity to examine trends, subject clusters, research collaborations, and citation networks in the scientific literature in detail (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010). Thanks to the visual mapping features offered by the program, the relationships between concepts were revealed, and the network analysis of author keywords was performed.

The obtained results were visualized using the VOSviewer program using scientific mapping and clustering methods. In this context, clusters separated by color codes clearly show how key concepts in the literature are related to each other. The obtained network structure contributes to determining the general trends of research on sports motivation and directs future studies in this field.

Since the study was conducted using the bibliometric analysis method, ethics committee approval is not required. Since bibliometric analysis is a method based on the systematic examination of existing scientific data, it does not include any experimental intervention. Therefore, the data collection and analysis process was carried out within the framework of ethical rules.

The findings regarding the analysis of the data obtained within this scope are presented in the conclusion section.

RESULTS

Within the scope of this research, a search was conducted in the Scopus database by selecting the "title", "keyword", and "abstract" fields and using "sport" and "motivation" as keywords. Within the scope of this search, bibliometric analysis was performed using the VOSviewer 1.6.20 statistical program. As a result of the analysis, a total of 505 studies were identified, and the data covers the period from 1977 (first record) to 2025. The first record started with one publication in 1977 and 1979 and continued at a low level in the 1980s. Again, only one or two publications were made in 1983, 1984, and 1988.

Especially in the 2000s, a significant increase in the number of publications was observed. While a limited number of publications were made until the mid-2010s, a significant acceleration in research is observed as of 2019. As of 2020, the increase in the number of publications continued and reached its highest level in 2023. In 2024, it is noteworthy that there was a slight decrease compared to the previous year, but there is still a high number of publications compared to previous years. For 2025, only one publication was recorded because the year has not yet ended.

In general, it can be said that academic interest has been increasing since 2019 and that the studies conducted in this field have gained significant momentum, especially after 2020. The year 2023, when the number of publications peaked, stands out as the period in which this interest is most intense. Although the slight decline in 2024 shows that the interest in the field of research has followed a fluctuating course, there is potential for this number to increase with the addition of new studies in 2025.

It includes visualizing author keywords using network analysis and examining the relationships between concepts. This method, which reveals the connections between the keywords of scientific studies, helps to determine the main topics and relationships between themes and sub-fields in a specific research area. Network analysis reveals a holistic map of the studies conducted through nodes (concepts) and connections (relationships between concepts). At this point, the keyword analysis of the studies on "sports motivation" is presented in Figure 1.

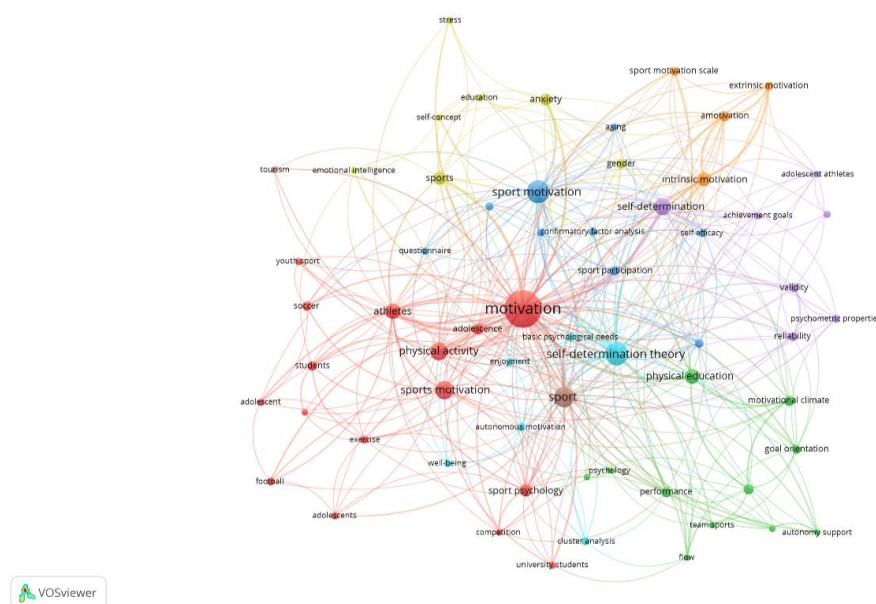


Figure 1. Keyword network analysis

The network analysis of the author's keywords revealed a structure containing 62 elements and 379 connections. In the analysis, it is seen that the key concepts are grouped around eight different clusters. The concept of "sports motivation" stands out as the main subject that is located at the center of the network and creates the most intense connection with other concepts. The first cluster, which is the largest cluster, is concentrated on terms related to sports and physical activity, such as "physical activity," "sports psychology," "sports motivation," and "athletes." The second cluster focuses on motivational structure and team dynamics such as "autonomy support," "coach," "motivational climate," and "team sports." The third cluster includes concepts related to scientific assessment tools such as "measurement,"

"questionnaire," and "psychometric properties." The fourth cluster includes psychological factors such as "anxiety," "emotional intelligence," and "stress." The fifth cluster is focused on achievement and psychometric validity elements such as "achievement goals," "self-determination," and "reliability." The sixth cluster includes elements related to self-determination theory, such as "autonomous motivation," "basic psychological needs," and "well-being." The seventh cluster includes types of motivation, such as "amotivation," "intrinsic and extrinsic motivation," and the eighth cluster addresses the connection between "sports" and "tourism." This analysis comprehensively reveals the multidimensional structure of the subject of motivation and its relationship with different disciplines.

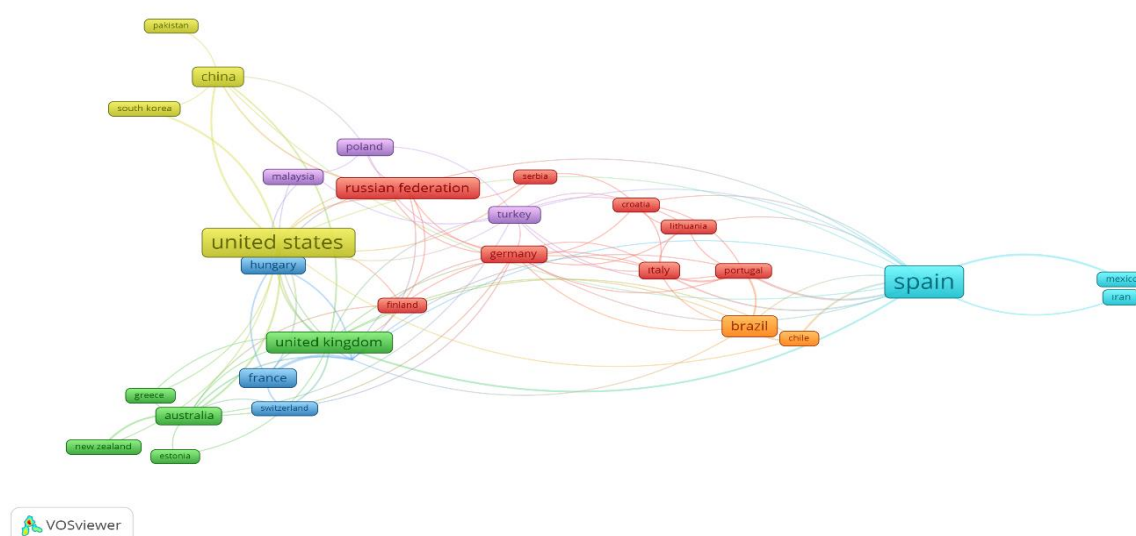


Figure 2. Co-authorship countries

The cross-country co-authorship network visualizes the global collaborations of academic studies conducted with the keyword "sports motivation". This network, created with a minimum of five publication criteria, reveals the density and connection strength of scientific collaborations between different countries. It is observed on the map that certain countries are located in the center and have more connections. Spain stands out as the country with the largest node and attracts attention with its large-scale international collaborations. The USA, the United Kingdom, and Germany are among the other central countries that play an important role in scientific collaborations and have large connection networks.

Table 1. Co-authorship countries

Country	Documents	Citations
Spain	84	1553
United States	68	2361
United Kingdom	32	1933
Canada	29	1436
Australia	23	1121

It is seen that there is a strong network, especially among European countries. Italy, Germany, Russia, and Türkiye appear to be directly related to each other. From Asia, China and South Korea are also involved in international academic collaborations and have established connections with countries such as Pakistan and Malaysia. From Latin America, Brazil and Chile have closer relations with Spain and Portugal. This distribution shows that regional research dynamics and factors such as language and cultural similarities can affect academic collaborations. In general, it can be seen that studies on "sports motivation" increasingly involve international collaboration, with certain countries taking a central position and contributing to the formation of a global scientific network. While there are strong connections between countries with the highest academic productivity, it is observed that some countries have a more limited place in this network. This analysis also sheds light on the formation of potential collaborations for future research.

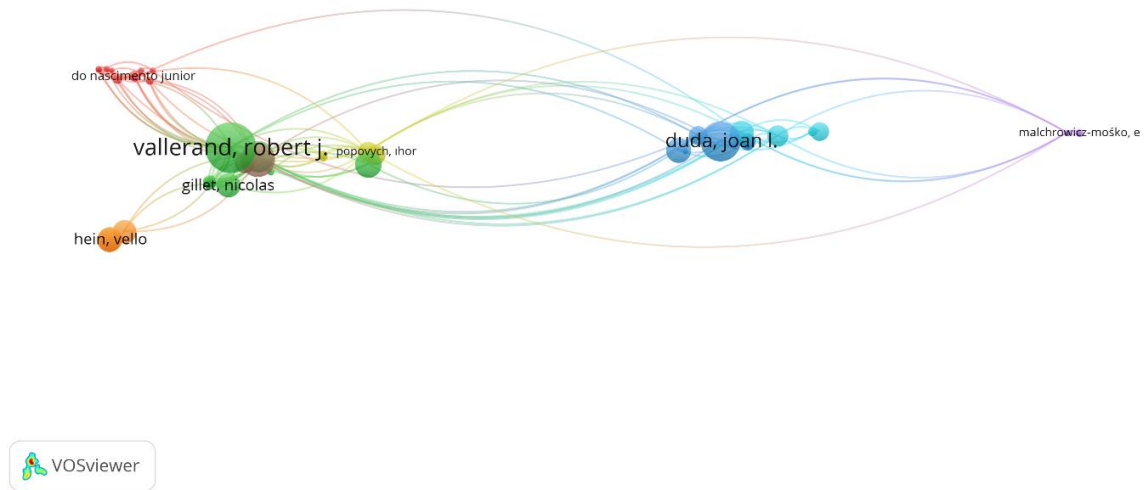


Figure 3. Citation of authors

The author citation analysis network visualizes which researchers cite the most academic studies conducted with the keyword “sports motivation” and the connections between these authors. In this network analysis, which was created according to the criteria of at least 3 publications and 10 citations, authors who are influential in their field and widely cited were determined.

Robert J. Vallerand stands out as one of the most powerful nodes in the network and is among the authors with the most academic impact, with 1103 citations and 8 publications. He is followed by Joan L. Duda (715 citations, 5 publications) and Ken Hodge (569 citations, 5 publications). These researchers are considered to have developed the basic theories in the field of sports motivation and made significant contributions to the literature. Names such as Chris Lonsdale, Luc G. Pelletier, Konstantinos Alexandris,

and Antonio Baena-Extremera also stand out with their remarkable citation numbers.

Authors such as Vallerand, Duda, and Hodge are seen to be central in the network and have strong connections with other researchers. This shows that these authors constitute a knowledge center in the scientific field and that their work is referenced by many academics. In addition, the connections between the authors provide information about joint studies and academic collaborations. Baena-Extremera is among the researchers with the highest academic productivity, with 12 publications, but lags behind other strong nodes in terms of the total number of citations. Overall, this analysis reveals academic productivity and citation dynamics on sports motivation, revealing that certain authors are pioneers in the scientific field. These studies, which have gained an important place in the literature and received high citations, continue to guide future research.

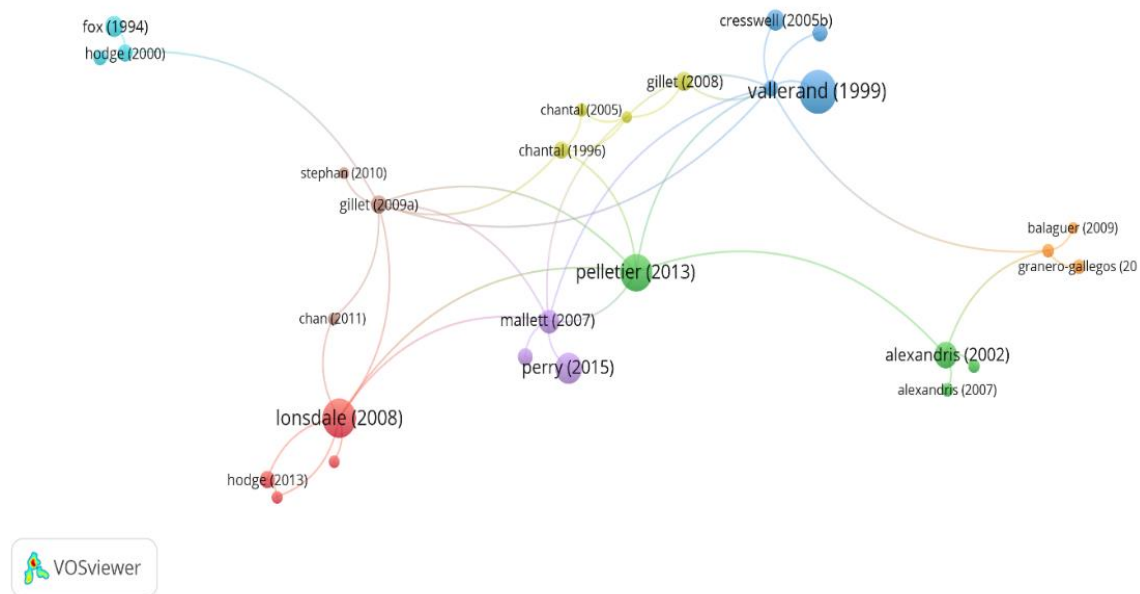


Figure 4. Citation documents

The citation documents network visualizes the most cited articles of academic studies conducted with the keyword "sports motivation" and the connections between these articles. This analysis, created with a minimum 50 citation criterion, shows in which academic context the studies considered important in the literature interact and which studies are among the main references. In the network, Vallerand (1999) stands out as the most cited article and occupies a central position with 385 citations. This study is considered to be one of the basic theories in the field of sports motivation and is frequently referenced in the literature. Other studies, such as Lonsdale et al. (2008) (329 citations), Adie et al. (2008) (317 citations), and Fredricks (2005) (300 citations) are also among the important sources in the field with high citations. Especially Pelletier (2013) (296 citations), Adie et al. (2012) (250 citations) and Perry (2015) (223 citations) stand out as other references that have made significant contributions to the literature on sports motivation.

When the network structure is examined, it is seen that certain articles have more connections and establish strong relationships with other studies. Vallerand (1999), Pelletier (2013), and Alexandris (2002) studies have a wide impact in the academic literature with their high number of connections. These studies provide important contributions to theories and measurement tools of sports motivation and form the basis for other studies. In addition, it is seen that studies such as Lonsdale (2008) and Adie (2008) are connected and therefore focus on similar topics. In general, this analysis reveals which academic sources feed the studies in the field of sports motivation and which studies direct the scientific field. Highly cited articles generally include theoretical models, scale development studies, and extensive empirical research. In this context, these articles are considered important references that will form the basis of future research for researchers working on sports motivation.

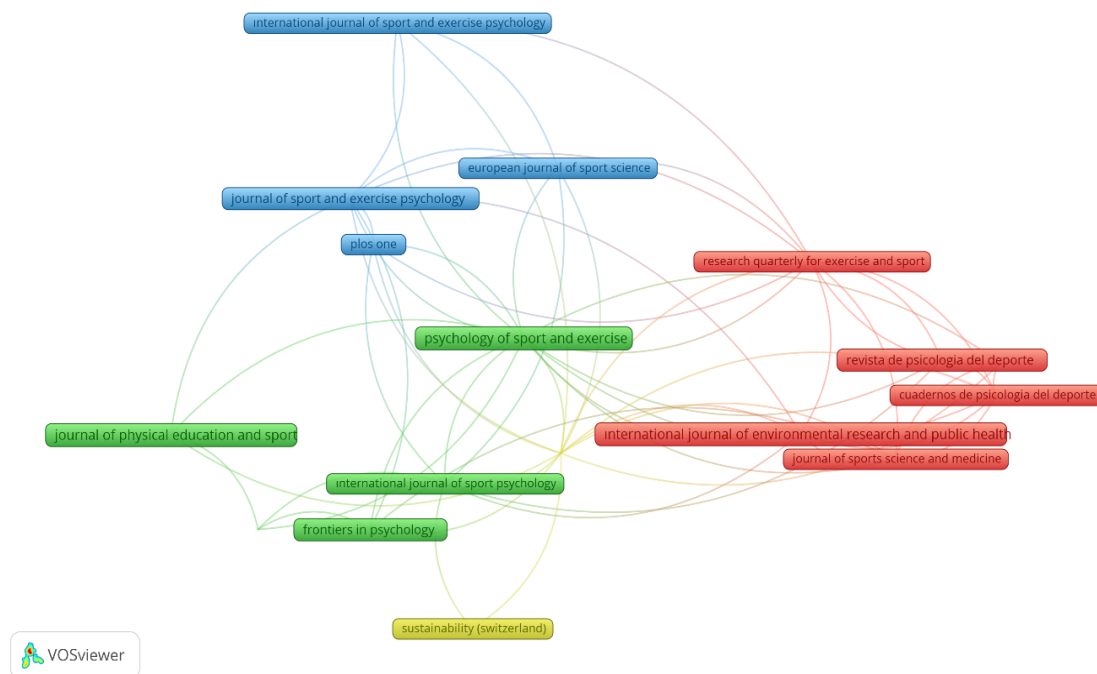


Figure 5. Citation sources

The citation sources network visualizes the most cited journals of academic studies conducted with the keyword "sports motivation" and the relationships between these journals. This analysis, which is created with a minimum of 5 publications and 50 citations, determines important academic sources in the field and shows which journals play a leading role in sports motivation. In the network analysis, the journal *Psychology of Sport and Exercise* stands out as the most cited source with 18 articles and 1624 citations. This journal hosts widely referenced studies on sports psychology and motivation and is indexed in the SSCI index. Sources such as the *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology* (10 articles, 1289 citations) and *Perceptual and Motor Skills* (16 articles, 344 citations) are also among the publications with high academic impact and are indexed in the SSCI index. These journals have a wide literature that

includes theoretical and empirical studies on sports motivation.

In the network, it is seen that sources such as *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* (19 articles, 299 citations), *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport* (5 articles, 238 citations), and *Revista de Psicología del Deporte* (12 articles, 222 citations) also provide important academic contributions to the subject of sports motivation. Journals such as the *International Journal of Sport Psychology*, *European Journal of Sport Science*, and *Frontiers in Psychology*, in particular, stand out with their large number of publications and high citation numbers. When the connections between the journals are examined, it is seen that journals such as *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, and *Perceptual and Motor Skills* are in a central position and have established strong academic relationships with other journals. This situation shows that these sources constitute

the basic information network in the field and are the basic references for studies on sports motivation.

Table 2. Citation Sources.

Source	Citations	Documents
Psychology of Sport and Exercise	1622	18
Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology	1288	10
Perceptual and Motor Skills	343	16
International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	299	19
Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport	238	5

In general, this analysis reveals which academic sources feed the research in the field of sports motivation and which journals have the highest academic impact. While Psychology of Sport and Exercise and Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology stand out as the most cited journals in the field, other journals also provide important academic contributions in regional and thematic contexts. In this context, these sources are considered important references that will form the basis of future research for researchers working on sports motivation.

In this context, the place of the results in the literature, their relationship with theoretical frameworks, and their possible contributions to future research are discussed in the discussion section.

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to reveal the main trends, prominent authors, studies, and academic collaborations in the field by conducting a bibliometric analysis of the academic literature on sports motivation. The results of the bibliometric analysis reveal how academic studies in the field of sports motivation have developed over time, which theoretical approaches are dominant, and which academic focus areas have received more attention.

The findings revealed that academic interest in sports motivation has increased over time and that there has been a significant acceleration in the number of publications, especially after 2019. Since the 1970s, different theoretical approaches have been developed in the field of sports motivation, and in particular, Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination Theory and Vroom's (1964) Expectancy Theory have become among the basic theories that guide the literature. The differences between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation put forward by Deci and Ryan have been considered a key concept for understanding sports motivation and have determined the direction of studies in the field.

Keyword network analysis revealed that the field of sports motivation has a multidisciplinary structure and consists of different components. Concepts such as "physical activity," "sport psychology," "athletes," "motivational climate," "achievement goals," "intrinsic motivation," and "extrinsic motivation" stand out as the most frequently used and closely related basic components in the literature. These analyses show that the subject of sports motivation is not only composed of individual factors but is also part of a broad area that includes social and environmental elements.

Furthermore, cross-country co-authorship analyses have shown that academic collaborations in the field of sports motivation have increased over time and that certain countries are central to this field. Spain, the USA, and the UK are among the countries where academic studies on sports motivation are most intensive. In Europe, countries

such as Germany, France, and Turkey have also been found to have established important connections within the academic network.

Author citation analyses have identified the researchers who have had the greatest academic impact in the field of sports motivation, and it has been observed that names such as Robert J. Vallerand, Joan L. Duda, and Luc G. Pelletier stand out among the most cited studies. These researchers are among the academics who have developed the basic theories in the field of sports motivation and shaped the literature.

The analysis of the cited publications showed that the most cited articles generally included theoretical models, scale development studies, and extensive empirical research. It was determined that studies based on Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory were widely used. In particular, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factors have formed the basis of many studies in the field of sports psychology and have helped to determine the factors that ensure the continuity of participation in sports.

This study makes a significant contribution to the field as it is one of the most up-to-date and comprehensive bibliometric analyses of sports motivation literature. The main trends in the literature, theoretical structures, and academic collaborations have been systematically mapped. Thus, researchers have been allowed to evaluate the current situation and determine strategic directions for future studies. In particular, the relationships between key concepts have been revealed, and the groundwork has been laid for the identification of new research areas and the encouragement of interdisciplinary studies.

In conclusion, this study has determined the main trends by conducting a bibliometric analysis of the academic literature in sports motivation and evaluated the academic developments in this field from a general perspective. The findings obtained show that sports motivation should be addressed in both individual and social aspects and that academic studies are increasingly becoming interdisciplinary. In this study, only data obtained from the Scopus database were used. This situation constitutes a certain limitation as it may cause some important studies in the literature to be excluded from the analysis. In the future, the inclusion of different databases such as Web of Science, PubMed, or Google Scholar in the studies will provide a more holistic and comparative perspective on the field. In addition, the use of methods such as qualitative data analysis, content analysis, or meta-synthesis in addition to bibliometric analysis will enable the development of more in-depth and multi-dimensional approaches to the subject of sports motivation. Interdisciplinary studies that examine how motivational processes interact with psychological, sociological, and physiological factors, in particular, will contribute to the theoretical development of the field. In addition, it will also shed light on the development of policies and programs for implementation. Global studies that encourage more collaboration and data sharing among researchers will allow the scientific knowledge in the field of sports motivation to deepen even further. It is thought that the findings obtained in this study can guide future academic research.

Ethics Statement: In this article, the research process was conducted in accordance with the journal's writing guidelines, publication principles, research and publication ethics, and ethical standards of the journal. The author bears full responsibility for any potential violations related to the article.

Conflict of Interest: There is no personal or financial conflict of interest between the authors in the present study.

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Çalışmanın Amacı

Bu çalışma, spor motivasyonu üzerine akademik literatürün bibliyometrik analizini yaparak alandaki ana eğilimleri, önde gelen yazarları, çalışmaları ve akademik iş birliklerini ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Çalışmanın sonucunda, konu hakkındaki eğilimler, önemli yazarlar ve yayınları hakkında bilgi sağlayarak spor motivasyonu araştırmacılarına yardımcı olmak amaçlanmaktadır.

Araştırma Problemleri

Bu araştırmada, spor motivasyonu alanındaki akademik çalışmaların gelişimi, teorik yönelimleri ve bilimsel iş birlikleri bibliyometrik bir analiz yöntemiyle incelenmiştir. Spora katılım, sporu sürdürme ve bırakma süreçlerinde etkili olan motivasyonel faktörler uzun yıllardır araştırmacılar tarafından ele alınmış olmasına rağmen, bu alandaki akademik eğilimlerin, en çok alıntılanan çalışmaların ve uluslararası bilimsel iş birliklerinin sistematik bir çerçevede değerlendirilmediği görülmüştür. Bu doğrultuda araştırmada, aşağıdaki sorulara yanıt aranmıştır:

1. Spor motivasyonu ile ilgili akademik çalışmaların zaman içindeki gelişimi nasıl gerçekleşmiştir?
2. Bu alanda en fazla kullanılan teorik çerçeveler ve kavramlar hangileridir?
3. Hangi ülkeler ve araştırmacılar, spor motivasyonu alanında öne çıkmaktadır?
4. Akademik iş birlikleri ve atıf ağları hangi yapısal özellikleri göstermektedir?
5. En çok alıntı yapılan çalışmaların öne çıkan temaları nelerdir?

Literatür Araştırması

Spor ve egzersiz ile ilgilenen psikologlar da 1970'li yılları takiben spora başlama, katılım ve bırakma ile ilgili güdülerin neler olduğu konusu ile ilgilenmektedirler (Brunstein, 1993; Cresswell vd., 2003; Murcia vd., 2008). İngilizce ve Fransızca "motive" kelimesinden türetilen "Motive" teriminin Türkçe karşılığı güdü, saik veya harekete geçirici olarak tanımlanabilir (Eren, 2013).

Spor motivasyonu (SM), bireylerin spor yapma niyet ve kararlarını, spor aktivitelerinde gösterdikleri çabayı ve sürekliliği etkileyen psikolojik faktörleri inceleyen bir alan olarak oldukça geniş bir literatüre sahiptir.

Deci ve Ryan'ın (1985) Öz belirleme Kuramı, Vroom'un (1964) Beklenti Teorisi, Bandura'nın (1986) Sosyal Bilişsel Teorisi ve Nicholls'ın (1989) Başarı-Motivasyonu Yaklaşımı, SM' nu anlamaya yönelik temel teorilerdir. Bunlardan en yaygın olanı Deci ve Ryan'ın (1985) Öz belirleme Kuramı (Self-Determination Theory, SDT)' dir.

Yöntem

Bu çalışmada spor motivasyonu konusunu incelemek amacıyla betimsel tarama modeli kullanılmıştır. Çalışmada nicel araştırma yöntemlerinden biri olan bibliyometrik analiz uygulanmıştır. Bibliyometrik analiz, araştırma alanındaki eğilimleri belirlemenin yanı sıra yayın sayısı, atıf sayısı ve h-indeksi gibi bibliyometrik ölçütler aracılığıyla bilimsel üretkenliği ve etkinliği değerlendirme olanağı sunmaktadır (Van Raan, 2005; Zupic ve Cater, 2015; Waltman, 2016; Donthu vd., 2021).

Çalışmanın verileri 29.01.2025 tarihinde Scopus veri tabanında "spor" ve "motivasyon" anahtar kelimeleri kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Scopus, yalnızca yüksek kalite

standartlarına sahip akademik dergileri indekslediği için oldukça güvenilir bir veri kaynağı olarak tercih edilmiştir (Aksnes vd., 2019). Tarama, Scopus veri tabanındaki "başlık", "anahtar kelime" ve "özet" alanlarında yapılmış, 1977-2025 yılları arasında yayınlanmış 505 çalışma belirtilen kriterleri karşıladığı için örnekleme dahil edilmiştir.

Bibliyometrik verileri analiz etmek ve görselleştirmek için VOSviewer 1.6.20 yazılımı kullanılmıştır. Programın sunduğu görsel haritalama özellikleri sayesinde kavramlar arasındaki ilişkiler ortaya çıkarılmış ve yazar anahtar kelimelerinin ağ analizi yapılmıştır.

Elde edilen sonuçlar bilimsel haritalama ve kümeleme yöntemleri kullanılarak, VOSviewer program aracılığı ile görselleştirilmiştir.

Sonuç ve Değerlendirme

Bulgular, spor motivasyonuna yönelik akademik ilginin zamanla arttığını ve özellikle 2019'dan sonra yayın sayısında önemli bir ivmelenme olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. 1970'lerden bu yana spor motivasyonu alanında farklı teorik yaklaşımlar geliştirilmiş ve özellikle Deci ve Ryan'ın (1985) Öz Belirleme Teorisi ve Vroom'un (1964) Beklenti Teorisi literatüre rehberlik eden temel teoriler arasında yer almıştır. Deci ve Ryan tarafından ortaya atılan içsel ve dışsal motivasyon arasındaki farklar, spor motivasyonunu anlamak için temel bir kavram olarak kabul edilmiş ve alandaki çalışmaların yönünü belirlemiştir.

Anahtar kelime ağı analizi, spor motivasyonu alanının multidisipliner bir yapıya sahip olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. "Fiziksel aktivite", "spor psikolojisi", "sporcular",

"motivasyonel iklim", "başarı hedefleri", "içsel motivasyon" ve "dışsal motivasyon" gibi kavramlar literatürde en sık kullanılan temel bileşenler olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Ayrıca, ülkeler arası ortak yazarlık analizleri, spor motivasyonu alanındaki akademik iş birliklerinin zamanla arttığını ve belirli ülkelerin bu alanda merkezi olduğunu göstermiştir. Spor motivasyonu üzerine akademik çalışmaların en yoğun olduğu ülkeler arasında İspanya, ABD ve İngiltere yer almaktadır. Yazar atf analizleri, spor motivasyonu alanında en büyük akademik etkiye sahip araştırmacıları belirlemiş ve Robert J. Vallerand, Joan L. Duda ve Luc G. Pelletier gibi isimlerin en çok atf alan çalışmalar arasında öne çıktığı görülmüştür.

Atf yapılan yayınların analizi, en çok atf alan makalelerin genellikle teorik modeller, ölçek geliştirme çalışmaları ve kapsamlı ampirik araştırmaları içerdiğini göstermiştir. Deci ve Ryan'ın Öz Belirleme Teorisine dayalı çalışmaların yaygın olarak kullanıldığı belirlenmiştir.

Sonuç olarak, bu çalışma spor motivasyonu alanındaki akademik literatürün bibliyometrik analizini yaparak ana eğilimleri belirlemiş ve bu alandaki akademik gelişmeleri genel bir bakış açısıyla değerlendirmiştir. Elde edilen bulgular, spor motivasyonunun hem bireysel hem de toplumsal açılardan ele alınması gerektiğini ve akademik çalışmaların giderek disiplinler arası hale geldiğini göstermektedir. Gelecekte, motivasyonel süreçlerin psikolojik, sosyolojik ve fizyolojik faktörlerle nasıl etkileşime girdiğine dair daha kapsamlı araştırmalar yapmak, spor motivasyonu hakkındaki teorik ve uygulamalı bilgiye önemli katkılar sağlayacaktır.