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Research Article

A Bibliometric Analysis of Nuclear Energy Research in Türkiye

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Abstract: The present study conducted a bibliometric analysis of articles published in the field of nuclear energy in Türkiye. The search was conducted in the Web of Science database by entering the terms "nuclear energy," "nuclear power," and "atomic energy" in the "topic" section, and was limited to articles in the "document types" section. The search conducted on 4 March 2026 yielded a total of 50,875 articles. In order to identify articles originating from Türkiye, the "Countries/Regions" section was filtered for 'Türkiye' and "Türkiye," resulting in 745 articles.

A comprehensive analysis encompassing author, co-authorship, keyword, institution, year, section, and publication was conducted on the 745 studies. The creation of analysis maps was facilitated by VOSviewer software. The findings demonstrate that the number of publications on nuclear energy in Türkiye has increased significantly in recent years. This increase can be attributed to Türkiye's energy supply security policies and the transition to low-carbon energy sources. A close examination of keyword analyses indicates that the extant literature is characterised by a multidimensional structure with regard to themes. This finding serves to corroborate the hypothesis that a significant proportion of studies focus on the fields of energy economics and energy policies.

Keywords: Nuclear Energy, Bibliometric Analysis, Web of Science, Türkiye

1. Introduction

Since the onset of the Industrial Revolution, the emission of greenhouse gases (e.g. CO_2, CH_4, and N_2O) into the atmosphere has been a direct consequence of human industrial activities. These gases have been identified as contributing factors to the observed gradual increase in global temperatures over time (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC], 2023). Consequently, there has been a considerable increase in research into low-carbon and clean energy sources in recent years. Among these energy sources, nuclear energy, which can be considered an alternative, is regarded as a significant component of the global energy transition due to its high energy density and low carbon emissions (Krūmiņš & Kļaviņš, 2023). In fact, nuclear energy accounts for approximately 9% of global electricity production (International Energy Agency, 2025). Academic studies published on nuclear energy, as demonstrated in Figure 1, demonstrate a consistent increase in the number of articles published in the last two decades in comparison to previous years.

Nevertheless, bibliometric analysis methods are extensively utilised to elucidate the development trends and research networks of this extensive literature. A bibliometric analysis of studies conducted after major nuclear accidents was conducted by examining previous bibliometric studies in the context of nuclear energy (Batur & Alkan, 2024). Another study (Pambudi et al., 2026) performed a bibliometric analysis of research published between 2021 and 2025 on nuclear technology using the Scopus database. Moreover, Agyekum et al. (2025) conducted a bibliometric analysis of studies on public perception and social acceptance of nuclear energy. Another study related to the literature is a bibliometric analysis study conducted for small modular reactors (SMR) (Kim et al., 2025). A survey of the extant literature revealed no studies addressing the topic in the context of Türkiye. The objective of this study is to undertake a bibliometric analysis of nuclear energy studies originating from Türkiye using the Web of Science database. In this study, the distribution of publications by year, the most prolific authors, keyword networks, and collaboration relationships between researchers are analysed to reveal the development trends of nuclear energy literature in Türkiye.

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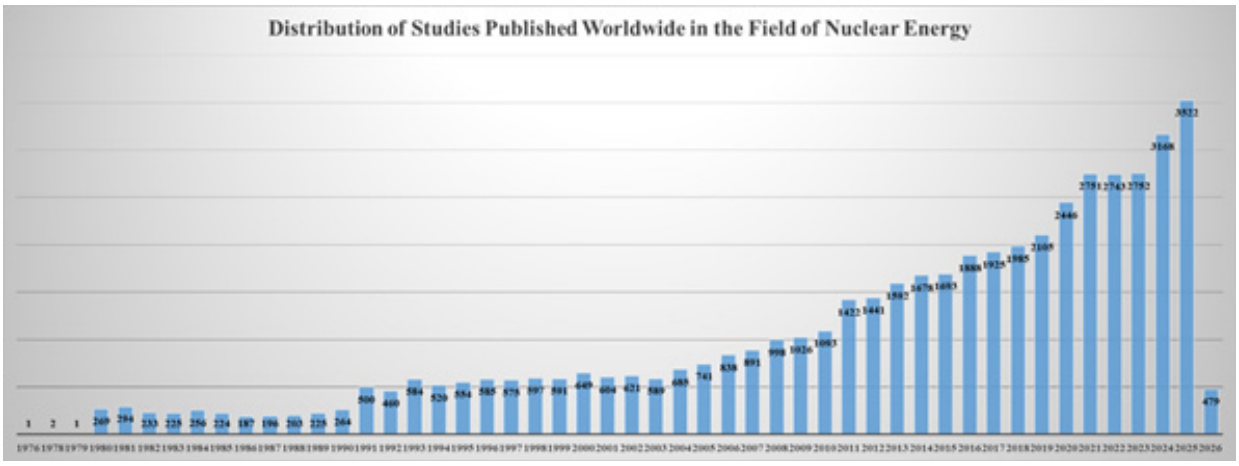
Figure 1

Distribution of Global Studies Published in the Field of Nuclear Energy by Year



Note: (Clarivate Analytics, 2026)

2. Literature Review

A review of extant literature on the subject reveals a paucity of research on the general trends in the field of nuclear energy between 2008 and 2018. However, the study by Obregón et al. (2019) is a notable exception. The findings of the study indicate that China, the US, Japan, and South Korea are at the forefront of countries conducting research in this field. A closer inspection of the studies' subjects reveals a heightened prevalence of terms such as "safety", "risk assessment" and "accident analysis" in studies conducted following the Fukushima incident. Another bibliometric study examined conducted to reveal the general trends and developments in scientific studies published on nuclear energy, covering the period 2012-2022 (Alves Cordeiro et al., 2022). Another study, conducted by Susiati et al. (2025), contains a bibliometric analysis of articles published on site selection for nuclear power plants.

3. Data and Method

The bibliometric data utilised in this study were obtained from the Web of Science Core Collection database. In order to ascertain that database updates had not had an impact on the results, the analysis search was conducted on 4 March 2026. The search terms "nuclear energy," "nuclear power," and "atomic energy" were entered into the "topic" section of the Web of Science database. The results were refined by selecting "article" in the "Document types" section. The initial database search yielded a total of 50,875 articles. In order to obtain the number of articles published with a Turkish address, the "Countries/Regions" section was checked for the options 'Türkiye' and "Türkiye" to ensure that only articles by authors in Türkiye were included. Following the application of the selection and exclusion criteria, a total of 745 articles were obtained on 4 March 2026. Moreover, despite the absence of any temporal constraints, the objective was to undertake a comprehensive investigation of Türkiye's academic endeavours concerning the subject. However, it should be noted that all published articles are in English. Following the comprehensive application of the inclusion and exclusion criteria, a total of 745 publications were incorporated into the final dataset. The exported data was downloaded in plain text file format, and duplicate records were removed. In order to eliminate any potential inconsistencies, author names and institutional affiliations were standardised.

Bibliometric network analyses and visualisations were performed using VOSviewer (1.6.20) (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010) which facilitates the construction and visualisation of bibliometric networks, encompassing co-authorship, co-citation, bibliographic matching, and keyword co-occurrence networks.

4. Findings

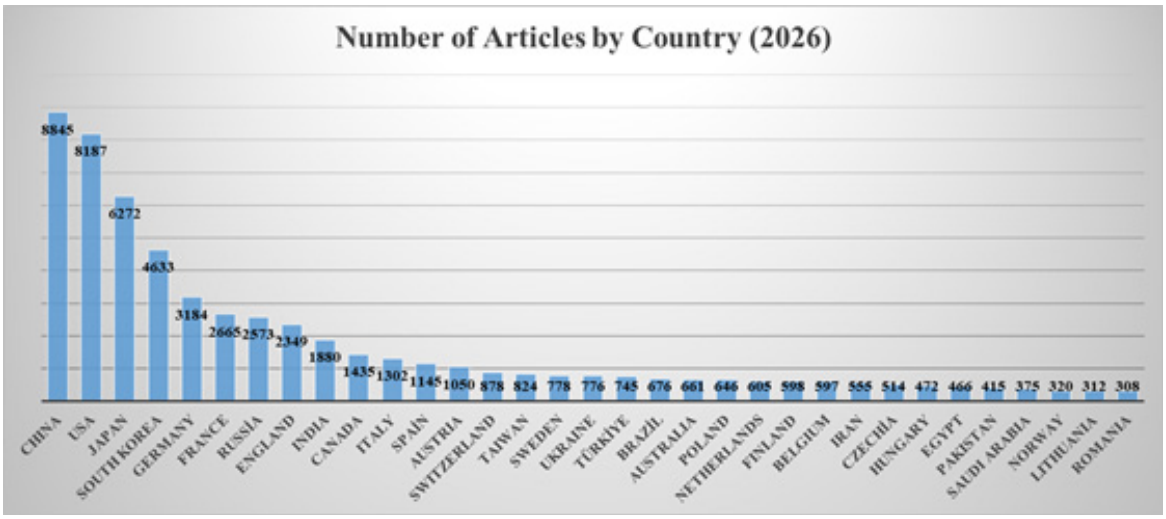
This section will analyse all countries conducting research on "nuclear energy" obtained from the Web of Science database. The primary objective of this section is to examine the status of all countries publishing articles by searching the SCI (Science Citation Index), SSCI (Social Sciences Citation Index), and ESCI (Emerging Science Citation Index) databases.

4.1. General situation of countries

As demonstrated in Figure 2 below, the status of countries publishing articles on nuclear energy worldwide is presented. The analysis results demonstrate that China is the leading country in terms of the number of publications, with a total of 8,845 articles. Moreover, China is currently constructing a total of 37 reactors and operates a total of 60 reactors. The United States is the second most prolific contributor, with 8,187 articles published. At present, there are 94 reactors in operation in the US, and no new reactors are currently under construction. As asserted by the World Nuclear Association (2026), this circumstance may be regarded as a consequence of China's investments in nuclear energy, notably in recent years. Japan follows these two countries with 6,272 articles. Türkiye has published a total of 745 articles in this field.

Figure 2

General Status of Countries Conducting Research on the Subject and Number of Articles



Note: (Clarivate Analytics, 2026)

The total number of studies published in Türkiye on this subject is 745, as demonstrated in Figure 2 above.

4.2. Analysis of studies conducted in Türkiye

4.2.1. Author analysis

The authors who published articles within these 745 studies are shown in Table 1 below. Mustafa Tevfik Kartal was the most prolific author, with a total of 30 articles published. He was followed by İlhan Öztürk, who published 17 articles, and Uğur Korkut Pata, who also published 17 articles. Serpil Kılıç Depren's corpus contains 14 articles.

Table 1

The Number of Articles Published by Authors who have Published Articles on the Subject and the Total Number of Citations they have Received from these Articles

Author Names	Number of Articles	Citations	Current Institutions
Mustafa Tevfik Kartal	30	1624	European University of Lefke
İlhan Öztürk	17	1936	Nişantaşı University
Uğur Korkut Pata	17	1263	Hatay Mustafa Kemal University
Serpil Kılıç Depren	14	476	Yıldız Technical University
Adem Acır	11	70	Gazi University
Tomiwa Sunday Adebayo	11	898	Cyprus International University
Hasan Oğul	10	136	Sinop University
Sümer Şahin	10	148	-
Serhat Yüksel	10	148	Medipol University
Hasan Dinçer	9	148	Medipol University
Sinan Erdoğan	9	402	Hatay Mustafa Kemal University

Table 1(*Continued*)

Abdülhalik Karabulut	9	115	Atatürk University
Derviş Kırıkkaleli	9	538	European University of Lefke
Hacı Mehmet Şahin	9	142	Gazi University
Mehmet Akif Destek	8	1059	Gaziantep University
İbrahim Dinçer	8	491	Yıldız Technical University

Note: (Clarivate Analytics, 2026)

As illustrated in Table 1 above, the following authors have been identified as those who have published the highest number of articles in this field, and as such, have received the greatest number of citations. The authors' current institutions, as determined by the YÖK academic website[1] (Council of Higher Education, n.d.), have also been added to the table. As demonstrated in Table 1 above, the most prolific author in terms of citations is İlhan Öztürk, with a total of 1936 citations. He is followed by Mustafa Tevfik Kartal, who has received 1624 citations. Uğur Korkut Pata is positioned third among the authors in terms of citations, having received 1263 citations. It is also noteworthy that the majority of the authors enumerated in Table 1 above are engaged in research within the domains of energy economics and energy policy.

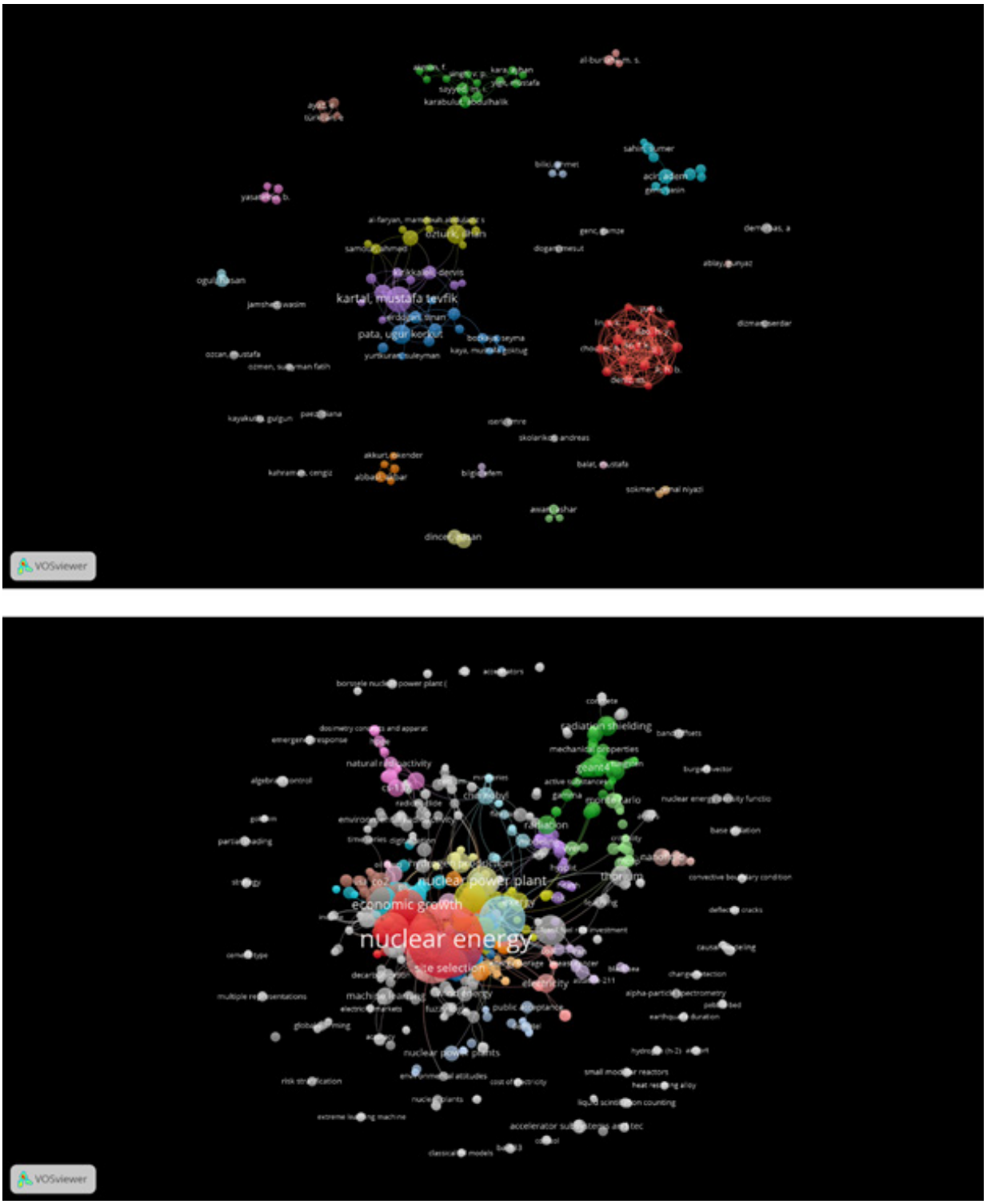
4.2.2. Co-authorship analysis

Figure 3A below visualizes the co-authorship analysis conducted on the VOSviewer application, based on authors who have published a minimum of three articles and received a minimum of five citations. A general examination of the analysis results reveals the presence of numerous small clusters among researchers. This situation demonstrates that the production of nuclear energy literature in Türkiye is predominantly undertaken by small and independent research groups, as opposed to being the responsibility of a small number of large and central research networks. It is evident that the extant literature encompasses both regional and institutional research groups. Nevertheless, the connections between these groups remain restricted. Nevertheless, the cluster containing researchers such as Mustafa Tevfik Kartal and Uğur Korkut Pata on the map has quite dense connections. This phenomenon can be evaluated as follows: while certain researchers establish core production centres in the literature, there is a high level of joint publication production among researchers in the same research group. It is a well-documented phenomenon that these clusters typically form around the same university or institution. Furthermore, the utilisation of different colours in the representation of clusters on the map signifies the presence of specific research groups or thematic teams within the extant literature. For instance, researchers specialising in economics and energy policy frequently congregate within the same clusters. Conversely, researchers in technical and engineering domains exhibit a tendency to congregate in more compact and distinct clusters. This structure is consistent with the disciplinary differentiation revealed in the previous keyword analysis. It is evident that, whilst there is a strong collaborative network in place within the domain of energy economics and policy studies, technical studies are typically undertaken by smaller teams. Moreover, the map also features the names of foreign researchers. For example: The subjects are listed as "Samour, Ahmed"; "Al Faryan, Mamdouh Abdulaziz S"; "Sayyed M.I"; and "Awan Ashar". However, the limited number of these connections indicates that the level of international collaboration in Türkiye's nuclear energy literature is not yet very strong. The following interpretation can be posited: A substantial proportion of studies are conducted within national and local research networks. The enhancement of international co-publications has the potential to increase the visibility of the literature.

[1] https://akademik.yok.gov.tr/AkademikArama/

Figure 3

A) Co-Authorship Analysis B) Analysis of Keywords in Authors' Articles



Note: (Clarivate Analytics, 2026)

4.2.3. Keywords analysis

A further analysis of the keywords present in the works of authors who had published articles related to the subject in the Web of Science database was conducted using the VOSviewer application. The results of this analysis are displayed in Figure 3B above. The analysis results indicate that the most frequently occurring keyword in the articles was "nuclear energy," which was found in 114 articles. The subsequent keywords that were observed to be present in the articles were "renewable energy", which appeared in 56 different articles, and "Türkiye", which appeared in 42 articles. The following keywords are also frequently observed: The following keywords appeared in the articles under

scrutiny: 'CO_2 emissions' (24); 'economic growth' (21); 'nuclear power plant' (19); 'nuclear power' (18); 'energy policy' (16); 'climate change' (14); 'financial development' (12); 'energy consumption' (12); 'ecological footprint' (12); 'energy transition' (10). The keyword 'thorium' appeared in 9 articles, while the keyword 'thorium utilization' appeared in only 2 articles. It is noteworthy that there are few studies published on thorium, a mineral of which Türkiye has significant reserves (International Atomic Energy Agency, 2019).

A thorough examination of Figure 3B demonstrates that the concept of "nuclear energy," which is concentrated in the centre, signifies that the extant literature on the subject has been shaped around a general and comprehensive framework. This finding indicates that a considerable proportion of the studies are conceptual, policy-based, or general in nature. Moreover, an analysis of the colour scheme employed in the keyword analysis discloses the presence of four primary thematic domains. The following are provided:

(a) Policy-Economy Cluster

This particular cluster demonstrates a notable concentration of concepts, including "economic growth" (21), "electricity" (7), "energy" (19), "energy security" (7), and "investment" (6). This structure confirms that the development of nuclear energy in Türkiye has been predominantly driven by considerations of energy economics and policy. It is evident that there is a significant overlap between the fields of energy economics and energy policy, as evidenced by the researchers who conducted the most intensive work in the author analysis section mentioned above.

(b) Technical-engineering cluster

The existence of concepts such as "radiation shielding" (8); "neutron shielding" (8); "Monte Carlo" (7) indicates the presence of engineering and physics-based studies. However, the fact that this cluster is located slightly further from the centre suggests that, although numerically present, it has a more limited network structure compared to policy and economics-oriented studies. Moreover, it is evident that the subject of small modular reactors, which is a subject of extensive study in the broader academic literature, is not frequently addressed in Turkish literature. Indeed, the number of keywords related to the topic of small modular reactors has only appeared on five occasions.

(c) Environmental and Risk Dimension

It is evident that keywords such as "Chernobyl" (7), "natural radioactivity" (7), "environmental radioactivity" (4) and "Fukushima" (4) form a discrete cluster. This finding suggests that the environmental impacts of nuclear energy and the dimension of radiological risk in Türkiye are also being examined by the academic community. The prevalence of the term "Chernobyl" in network analysis is particularly indicative of the continued utilisation of historical nuclear accidents as a reference point in the extant literature.

(d) Spatial and Location Selection Dimension

It is particularly noteworthy that the concept of "site selection" (13) is positioned quite close to the centre. This finding underscores the significance accorded to nuclear power plant site selection studies in the Turkish academic discourse. The appearance of the keywords 'geographical information systems' (5); 'ahp' (5); 'mcdm' (6) also serves to confirm this.

4.2.4. Institutional analysis

Figure 4 provides a visual representation of the institutions responsible for producing articles on the subject. Gazi University has published the highest number of articles, with a total of 91. Gazi University is followed by Istanbul Technical University (ITU) with 72 articles and Yıldız Technical University (YTU) with 59 articles. A comparison of institutions based outside of Türkiye reveals the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan (MSE Azerbaijan) as a notable entity, with a total of 35 articles published. This is followed by Azerbaijan State University of Economics (UNEC), which has published 30 articles, and then by Lefke European University (TRNC) with 32 articles. The American University of Lebanon and Korea University (South Korea) also stand out, with 29 and 18 articles respectively.

A salient finding is that Hacettepe University, which houses Türkiye's inaugural nuclear engineering department, does not figure among the institutions with the highest number of publications

Figure 4

Institutions Publishing Articles on the Subject

Note: (Clarivate Analytics, 2026)

4.2.5. Year analysis

A subsequent examination of the years in which articles related to the subject were published (see Figure 5) reveals that authors in Türkiye generally began publishing more articles in the Web of Science database after 2009. However, the number of articles published between 2009 and 2019 fluctuated. It is evident that these figures have increased even more since 2020, with this growth being consistent and sustained. The year 2025 was the one in which the highest number of articles was published, with a total of 113 articles published. As of 4 March 2026, the date of this analysis, a total of 13 articles related to the subject had been published in 2026.

Figure 5

Year Analysis

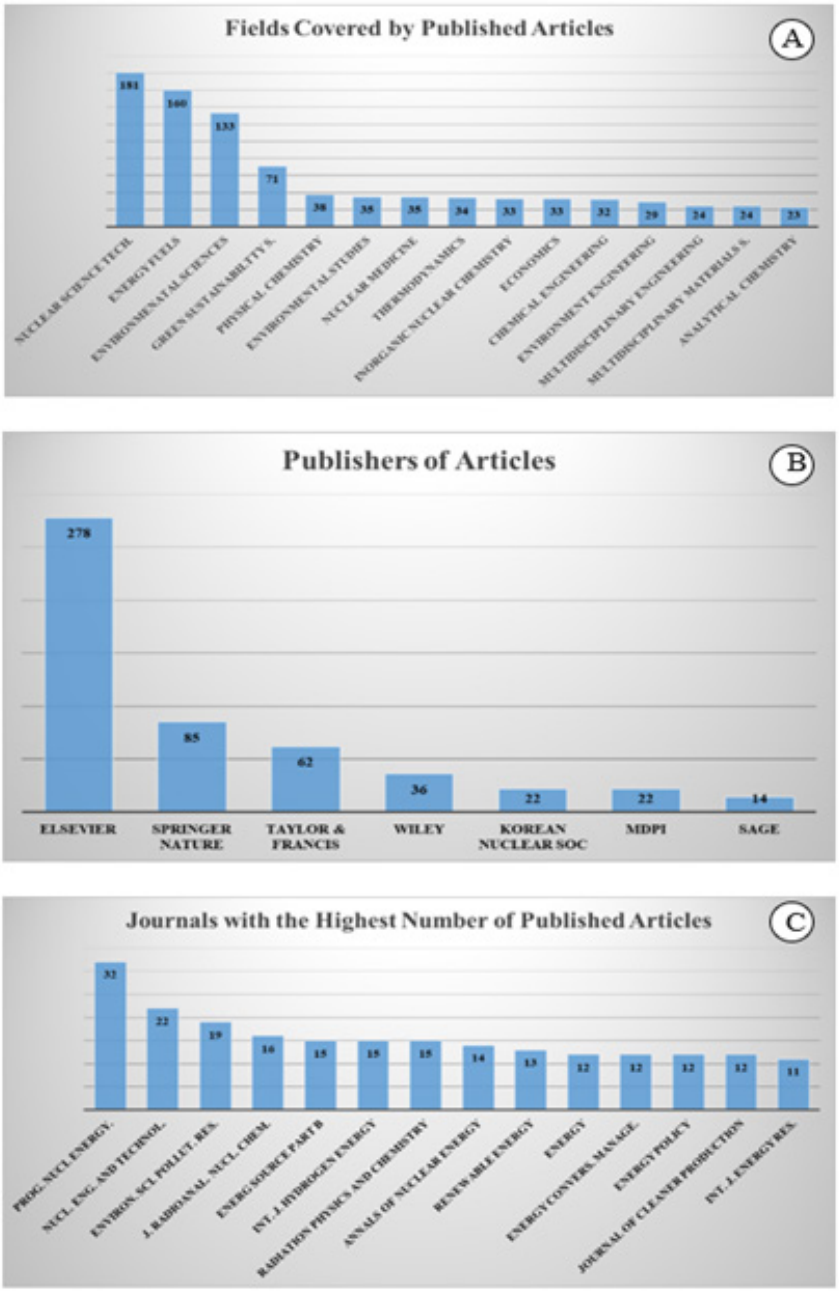
Note: (Clarivate Analytics, 2026)

4.2.6. Subject category analysis

As demonstrated in Figure 6A below, the subjects of the published articles are indicated. The highest number of articles (181) was published in the field of nuclear science and technology, followed by the field of energy fuels with 160 articles. The field of environmental sciences has published 133 articles on the subject of energy fuels.

Figure 6

A) Fields Covered by Published Articles B) Publishers of Articles C) The Journals in which Articles are Most Frequently Published



Note: (Clarivate Analytics, 2026)

4.2.7. Publication analysis

As demonstrated in Figure 6B above, the publishers with the highest number of articles were published are indicated. Elsevier is the publishing house that has published the most articles, with a total of 278 articles. Elsevier is followed by Springer Nature with 85 articles and Taylor & Francis with 62 articles.

As illustrated in Figure 6C above, the names of the journals in which the articles were published are indicated in Figure 6C. The journal "Progress in Nuclear Energy" published the highest number of articles, with 32 publications, followed by the journal "Nuclear Engineering and Technology" with 22 articles.

5. Discussion

The present study conducted a bibliometric analysis of articles published in the field of nuclear energy with a Turkish address using the Web of Science database. An examination of the years in

which the published articles appeared indicates a clear trend of a consistent and gradual increase in the number of articles published over the past five years. Moreover, an examination of the aggregate number of articles published prior to 2020 reveals an absence of a consistent increase in publication frequency. This increase can be attributed not only to rising academic interest but also to the structural transformation process in Türkiye's energy policies. Of particular significance is the initiation of the construction process for the Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant project, which has been in progress for a considerable time, and the heightened visibility of nuclear energy in national development plans. These factors can be regarded as significant incentives for academic production. When examining the publication distributions of articles published prior to 2020, the observed fluctuations can be interpreted as a reflection of nuclear energy being an intermittent and controversial policy area in Türkiye for many years, impacting academic output. Conversely, it has been observed that researchers who publish the most articles are typically those specialising in energy economics and policy. This finding indicates that the approach to nuclear energy in Türkiye is more closely aligned with policy analysis, economic viability, and strategic planning, as opposed to a technical-engineering dimension. This situation also reveals that the issue of nuclear energy in the Turkish context is not merely a technological matter; it is also an area intertwined with multidimensional elements such as external dependency, energy supply security, cost structure, and public acceptance. Conversely, Hacettepe University, despite being home to one of the oldest nuclear engineering departments in Türkiye, does not rank among the leading institutions in terms of the number of publications in this dataset. The finding can be explained by various factors. Firstly, a significant proportion of the nuclear engineering research conducted at Hacettepe University is likely to be published in highly specialised technical journals (e.g. reactor physics, nuclear materials, radiation science). These journals may not be fully captured by a keyword-based search strategy focused on "nuclear energy." Secondly, the current dataset appears to be dominated by studies framed within the perspectives of energy policy, energy economics, and sustainability; in these areas, researchers from engineering, environmental sciences, and interdisciplinary fields may have higher publication visibility. Thirdly, institutional publication patterns may be indicative of differences in research orientation. Hacettepe University's outputs are more technically focused, whereas other institutions are more actively contributing to policy-oriented or interdisciplinary nuclear energy research. These differences highlight the significance of disciplinary scope and indexing strategies in determining bibliometric outcomes.

In addition to the aforementioned points, it is evident that international cooperation remains largely limited. Nevertheless, the Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant offers a strategically significant opportunity to encourage cross-border scientific collaboration. Given its multinational structure, particularly the participation of Russian institutions, Akkuyu has the potential to serve as a research hub for joint publications, technology transfer, and interdisciplinary studies. The absence of a strong co-authorship pattern in the current dataset indicates that this potential has not yet been fully realised and points to a significant gap in research and collaboration. In order to facilitate the further integration of Türkiye into the global nuclear research network, future efforts should concentrate on the promotion of institutional agreements, joint research programmes, and co-authored outputs.

The increasing number of articles in recent years corresponds with Türkiye's strategy of transitioning towards low-carbon and clean energy sources, as part of the country's efforts to address climate change. When evaluated in conjunction with renewable energy sources, nuclear energy is regarded as a complementary and supportive element in the diversification of energy supplies and the achievement of carbon neutrality targets. In this regard, the increase in academic literature is also consistent with the global energy transition discourse. In conclusion, the findings reveal that the literature on nuclear energy in Türkiye has gained momentum in recent years, but has historically shown intermittent development and concentration in certain areas in terms of interdisciplinary distribution. This situation demonstrates both the decisive impact of energy policies on academic production and the fact that nuclear energy research in Türkiye is still in its maturation phase. Conversely, the evaluation of the results of the keyword analysis indicates that the concept of "nuclear energy" constitutes the largest node in the keyword network. This finding suggests that the literature naturally forms a more general and inclusive framework. This situation suggests that a significant dimension of the studies is conceptual and policy-based. The presence of concepts such as "nuclear power plant," "economic growth," "site selection," and "public acceptance" concentrated around the central node reveals that Turkish literature covers not only technical but also economic, spatial, and socio-political dimensions.

6. Conclusion

In this study, the bibliometric structure of nuclear energy literature originating from Türkiye was analysed based on data obtained from the Web of Science database. The findings demonstrate that academic productivity in the domain of nuclear energy in Türkiye has undergone an increase, particularly in the last five years. This situation is analogous to Türkiye's energy supply security policies, the transition to low-carbon energy, and the progress of the Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant project.

A thoroughgoing analysis of keywords reveals that the extant literature on this subject is multi-dimensional in terms of themes. Furthermore, the analysis demonstrates that a significant dimension of the studies lies in the fields of energy economics and energy policies. Moreover, it is evident that the scope of technical-engineering research is more constrained. In addition to these, the research findings also reveal that, despite Türkiye's significant thorium reserves, studies on thorium are underrepresented in the literature. This situation underscores a substantial lacuna in the national literature, distinguishing it from policy-economic analyses and technical-engineering research. It is recommended that future studies place a high priority on interdisciplinary approaches that integrate reactor technology development, fuel cycle analysis, and policy evaluation frameworks. It is imperative to address this disparity to fully realise the strategic potential of thorium and facilitate long-term, sustainable nuclear energy planning in Türkiye. Moreover, the existence of references to environmental risks, radiation safety, and historical nuclear accidents suggests that, within the Turkish context, nuclear energy is regarded not only as a technical means of energy production but also as a socio-economic, environmental, and strategic policy area. However, the existence of spatial decision support systems, multi-criteria decision-making methods, and integrated energy planning approaches indicates that there is not yet a dominant research theme in the literature. It is asserted that future research which develops comprehensive models analysing technical analyses alongside policy and economic assessments will make significant contributions to the literature.

The primary contribution of this study is that it systematically unveils the general course of nuclear energy studies in Türkiye, their thematic concentrations, and potential research gaps. The findings obtained are of considerable interest to both academics and policymakers. From an academic perspective, the study identifies which areas of the literature have reached saturation and which areas are open to further research. Moreover, from a policy standpoint, it elucidates that the discourse surrounding nuclear energy in Türkiye is multifaceted, with research trends exhibiting a strong correlation with the nation's energy strategies. Nevertheless, the study is not without its limitations. One such limitation is the restriction of the analysis to the Web of Science database. Consequently, articles published in various indexes and domestic journals have not been incorporated into the study. Moreover, bibliometric studies, while revealing the quantitative structure of the literature, do not provide a direct evaluation of the depth of the studies' content. Consequently, it is recommended that future research include comparative analysis of different databases and content-based systematic reviews. In conclusion, although there has been a notable increase in the publication of academic literature on nuclear energy in Türkiye in recent years, this has been observed to be concentrated in specific thematic areas. The maturation process of the literature will be advanced by the strengthening of interdisciplinary integration and the increase in research diversity, particularly in the following areas: spatial planning, sustainability, and advanced technology applications.

Article Information Form

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Data availability: The data that underpins the conclusions of this study can be accessed through Web of Science database: https://www.webofscience.com/wos/woscc/basic-search

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