

A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH TRENDS ON GENDER AND SUSTAINABILITY: FUTURE RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

Gender inequality, one of the obstacles to the development and prosperity of countries, is among the world problems that need urgent solutions. Increasing the power of women, who have the potential for social transformation and innovation, plays an essential role in ensuring a more equitable and sustainable development. Therefore, studies on the interaction and the dynamics that feed each other between sustainability and gender inequality are considered necessary for today's modern world. This study aims to conduct a bibliometric analysis of studies on the relationship between sustainability and gender inequality. The bibliometric analysis method, which includes statistical methods used to understand the citation relationships and publication trends of the studies, was used in the research. First, an extensive database search was conducted on the Web of Science (WoS) using the keywords 'women's equality' and 'sustainability' between 1998 and 2022, and 373 relevant papers were identified. The bibliographic information of the selected papers was then collected and recorded. This information includes authors, journals, year of publication, titles, and other bibliographic details. Then, the data obtained were evaluated by statistical analysis. The findings reveal that the scientific studies in the field gained momentum after 2015 and are predominantly in English. Moreover, regarding the field distribution of studies, it can be safely said that more publications are made in environmental areas, and Spain has the highest number of publications.

Keywords: Sustainability, Gender, Sustainable Development Goals, Gender Equality, Bibliometric Analysis.

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of sustainability is thought to encompass relatively more tangible areas such as protecting natural resources, combating climate change, energy and water management. However, gender inequality, a reality and a problem in societies today, is also an essential sociological field that finds its place under the umbrella of sustainability.

The concept of gender is generally accepted as a field that refers to the differences between men and women in society in terms of gender-based roles, identities, and power relations. At this point, the problem of equality, which is as old as human history, has become one of the most critical problems in society, especially with its prevalence in social life (Dökmen 2006). For this reason, the problem of equality is among the issues that are expected

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to find solutions in the plans of countries. In other words, preventing gender-based inequality, which is a crucial issue both internationally and nationally and is accepted as a part of sustainable development, is important in terms of democratization and increasing the level of development of countries.

As a result, it is clear that the relationship between sustainability and gender inequality should be understood in depth, and policies and strategies that integrate these two areas should be adopted. For this reason, in this study, a bibliometric analysis of the studies linking sustainability and gender inequality was conducted. It is envisaged that this study will serve as an important reference source for relevant stakeholders, policymakers, and practitioners by depicting the current state of research emphasizing the interaction between sustainability and gender inequality.

Conceptual Framework

The problem of equality has been a question of values and principles concerning individuals and societies since the dawn of humanity. Social inequalities and existing forms of inequality are so widespread that the idea that inequality is inevitable has been naturally internalized (Gözütok et al. 2017). The concept of equality, which has various types, is defined in three ways by the Turkish Language Association (TDK). The first is "the state of two or more things being equal, equivalence," and the second is "the state of no distinction between people in terms of laws." The last is "the state of no distinction between people in terms of social and political rights, regardless of their physical and mental differences" (TDK 2022).

In this context, gender equality, which means the ability of individuals living in society to live equally without being marginalized regardless of their gender, sexual identity, or sexual orientation (Turan & Şen 2014; Öcal 2021), comes to the fore. First, it is possible to state that the issue differs from the perception of pure gender. As the sociologist British writer Ann R. Oakley stated in her book "Sex, Gender, and Society" published in 1972, while the phenomena of male and female are described by biological sex, the concept of gender defines the meanings and expectations that society attributes to the gender binary (Vatandaş 2007). Gender inequality, which means that these perceptions and responsibilities imposed on individuals by society are unequal (Erikli 2020; Çumur 2021), creates various discrimination and inequalities against women (Esen et al. 2017).

Sustainability requires the sustainable management and use of natural resources. The Brundtland Report, first published in 1987, defines 'sustainable development' as development

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that meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The report states that all countries, developed or not, should determine their economic and social development within the framework of "sustainability" and that sustainability concretely refers to the concept of social justice and equality between generations and within the same generation.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the latest in a series of developments that are considered milestones in the evolution of the concept of sustainable development (Demiray 2017). The SDGs are the new paradigm for development and have the potential to address structural barriers and promote gender equality, social justice, and peace in general. The SDG agenda is based on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) launched in 2000, which aim to reduce poverty, hunger, disease, and gender inequality (Montiel 2018). The MDGs define the core values of the 21st century in terms of international relations as freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature, and shared responsibility. Under the equality heading of the MDGs, the guarantee of equal rights and opportunities for women and men is included (Toksöz & Memiş 2018).

In this context, sustainability goals aim for a world where people's equality, justice, and human rights are respected. At this point, gender equality emerges as a fundamental element in achieving these goals. Scientific studies on these two fields, which interact and feed each other, are valuable in this respect. Research on the subject generally focuses on the role and participation of gender in areas such as climate change, the use of natural resources, and sustainable development. In addition, the importance of women's inclusion in environmental sustainability policies and their effective participation in decision-making processes is also emphasized.

In Türkiye, gender inequality is also found to exist intensely in women throughout the country (Sönmez 2021). According to the research results, gender inequality in Turkey stems from the socio-cultural structure of the region, education and employment opportunities, health opportunities, and political representation (Özveren & Dama 2010). In Turkey, economic participation and political representation are the areas where gender inequality is felt the most, while inequality is seen less in education and health (Özdemir 2021).

On the other hand, many organizations are working to access and analyze better data in order to emphasize the importance of gender inequality. Many other organizations have developed a variety of new indicators, including the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap

Index, the OECD's Social Institutions and Gender Index, and, most recently, the SDG Gender Index (Gök & Gök 2023). Since 2015, according to the latest Sustainable Development Report (2023), which tracks progress on the Sustainable Development Goals and includes the SDG Index and Dashboards, Turkey has ranked 72nd out of 166 countries with a score of 70.8.

More specifically, women's participation in economic, social, and political decision-making is considered under the fifth sustainable development goal, "Gender Equality" (Calabrese et al. 2018). Focusing on achieving gender equality and women's rights at all levels of society, SDG 5 addresses every detail, from women's labor and employment to strengthening the position of women and girls.

Realizing SDG 5 requires not only declarations of principle but also specific initiatives. Although much progress has been made in women's rights and their strengthening in today's societies, gender inequality remains an unresolved problem (Jütting et al. 2008).

Although there has been a significant increase in the number of female employees from the past to the present, there have not been sufficient improvements in working conditions, equal pay, and advancement in the profession (Yüksel & Ören 2018). When the report on Türkiye's sustainable development performance (2023) is examined in terms of gender equality, it is observed that there has been no improvement in the labor force participation rate, the ratio of women to men in education, and the parliament.

On the other hand, the almost sevenfold increase in the number of annual publications over the last decade highlights the growing interest in gendered change in international development (MacArthur et al. 2021). In this context, it is possible to say that research and studies on gender inequality and its solutions have recently been related to the concept of sustainability. It is seen that research on gender inequality, which is among the sustainable development goals defined as world problems, has gained momentum with the evolution of the concept of sustainability.

A study examining gender equality under each sustainable development goal (Women 2021) shows the state of play in the world based on data from 2021. According to the research, gender-related indicators for each global goal have been identified, and it draws attention to the global increase in inequalities, especially due to COVID-19. The research proves with numerical indicators the state of being left behind for women and girls, evaluated under different goals such as hunger, quality education, clean water and energy, decent work, and climate action.

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In another study examining the impact of gender on sustainable development, researchers analyzed the different roles and experiences of women and men in areas such as climate change, natural resource use, and food security. The findings showed that women play an important role in environmental sustainability and are influential locally in issues such as the conservation of natural resources, agricultural production, and combating climate change (Leach 2015).

A book study on this topic investigated the role of women in sustainability in various societies in Asia and Latin America. The researchers examined the impact of gender in areas such as environmental sustainability, urbanization, and agricultural production through case studies. The findings showed that women have an important role in achieving community sustainability goals in these regions. Using their local knowledge and experience, women offer innovative solutions on issues such as natural resource management, energy efficiency, and combating climate change (Cruz-Torres & McElwee 2012).

In another paper highlighting the relationship between gender and sustainability in Nordic countries, researchers analyzed the gender impact of sustainability policies in areas such as energy, water management, and transportation. The findings showed that women in Nordic countries play an important role in energy efficiency, renewable energy projects, and transportation planning. Policies designed with women's participation have the potential to achieve more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable outcomes.

Ultimately, "gender equality" and "sustainability" are fields of study that have received academic attention and attention. There are many studies on these two concepts in the literature. However, limited studies have been examined using the bibliometric analysis method.

In a study conducted within this framework, a bibliometric analysis was conducted using the Scopus database with the keywords gender diversity and corporate sustainability. The study used two hundred forty-two research articles, and various scientific techniques such as citation analysis, co-citation analysis, co-occurrence analysis, keyword analysis, content analysis, etc., were utilized using VOS viewer and Biblioshiny. The analysis also helped identify the themes' intellectual development and growth over the last two decades. The analysis also sheds light on future-oriented issues such as sustainability reporting, environmental performance, and decision-making (Singhania et al. 2023).

Another bibliometric study examined the gender balance and differences among the first authors in SDG5-focused research during the first five years after the introduction of gender

inequality (SDG 5) in 2016. Compared to other SDGs, it is observed that relatively fewer scientific publications were produced in the SDG5 area, and female first authors dominated these publications. The research emphasizes the importance of increasing gender diversity in SDG5-related studies for sustainable development (Shang et al. 2022).

In another study, developments in boardroom gender diversity (BGD) and corporate social responsibility (CSR) research were analyzed using keywords such as "gender equality," "sustainable development," and "corporate social responsibility." A bibliometric analysis was conducted as a co-occurrence analysis based on 1961 peer-reviewed articles published in the Scopus database between January 1966 and April 2021. Cluster analyses were conducted, highlighting the impact of gender diversity on CSR or sustainability initiatives. The results revealed that the number of publications on GWF and CSR has been steadily increasing, and a significant increase has been observed since 2010 (Alhosani & Nobanee 2023).

Another study investigates the bibliometric characteristics of scientific production in the field of gender studies in the period 2011-2020. The data on scientific productions were obtained from the Scopus database, and statistical analysis was carried out using R Studio, MS Excel, and VOS Viewer. A total of 7619 scientific products were published during the study period, and it was found that there was a 238% increase in the number of publications on gender equality in the last decade. It was found that most of the research (73.87%) was published as journal articles, with the USA and the UK leading in the distribution of research production by country (Majumder et al. 2021).

A study tracking the publication careers of nearly six million male and female researchers from 1996-2018 provides a bibliometric analysis of gender differences in scientific careers. The study observed a trend in the percentage of women starting their careers as publishing researchers, rising from 33% to nearly 40% after 2000, with men producing, on average, 15% to 20% more publications than women (Boekhout et al. 2021).

In another study on intercultural communication and gender equality in the Web of Science (WoS), CiteSpace was used to apply a bibliometric methodology to 2728 English language articles. Following cluster analysis and time series analysis, this study highlights the ongoing relevance and increasing trend of publications and details the critical authors, institutions, and research countries on this topic (Luo & Jiang 2023).

As a result, gender inequality, which is included in the sustainable development plans of countries and seen among world problems, is among the goals to be solved. Therefore, it is

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of great importance to increase the status and equality of women in society for the world's nations to reach a level of prosperity and to ensure sustainability in the development of countries. This relationship between sustainability and gender equality is fundamental for a more just, inclusive, and sustainable world. Empowering women, increasing their participation, and adopting equitable policies and strategies play an important role in achieving sustainability goals.

This research aims to reveal the general situation on the subject by examining scientific publications on gender and sustainability with bibliometric analysis through the Web of Science (WoS) database. Bibliometric analyses have been conducted in many fields and subjects by evaluating WoS data in our country and the world. However, no bibliometric study has been found to analyze the concepts of gender and sustainability. For this reason, it is thought that the analysis of studies in which gender equality and sustainability issues, which are defined as one global problem, are evaluated together will contribute to researchers and practitioners in terms of providing new data and concretizing the solutions developed.

Material and Method

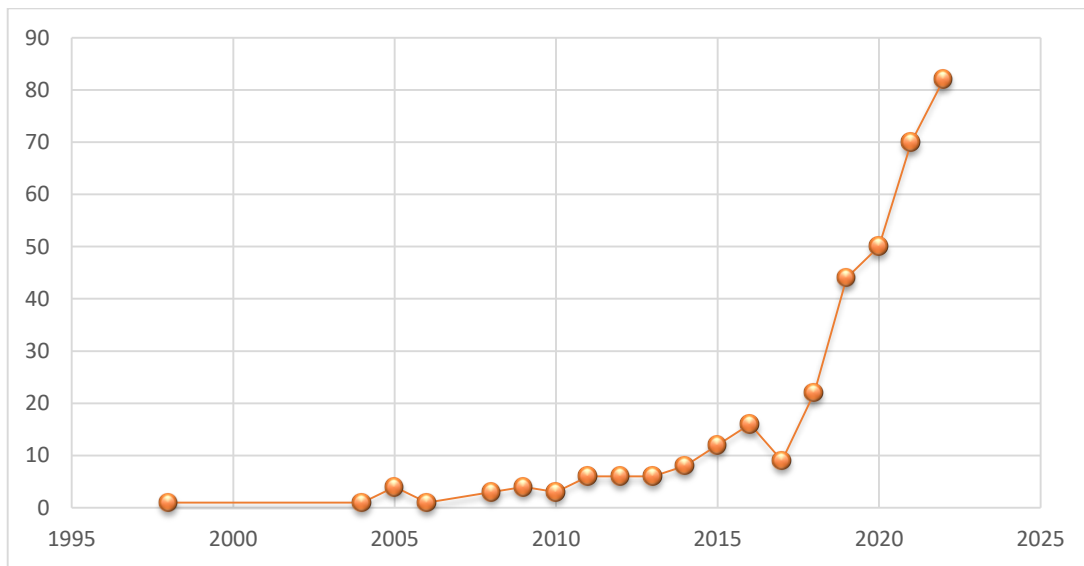
This study examined bibliographic information and citation relationships of a specific topic in the literature using bibliometric analysis. Bibliometrics is a method used in the analysis of published articles. It allows us to examine the relationships between sources, publication trends, authors' influence, and scientific publications' general characteristics. In recent years, different types of research have been conducted with bibliometric analyses according to countries, institutions, subject-based, citation-based, author, or article numbers. In these studies, which are mainly aimed at revealing general trends according to a particular discipline or subject, situation determinations are made. The first step of the study is to compile the relevant literature on the subject. A broad database search used the keywords 'women's equality' and 'sustainability' and identified relevant articles. WoS database was used in this search, and the period between 1998- 2022 was filtered. Then, the bibliographic information of the 373 identified studies was collected and recorded. This information includes authors, journals, publication year, title, and other bibliographic details. Statistical methods were then applied to understand citation relationships and publication trends. Citation data were collected and analyzed, including the distribution of publications by year, the distribution of publications by the language of writing, the distribution of publications by field, the top journals and publishers in the field, and the distribution of the most cited publications. These analyses revealed

important information such as trends in the literature, popular topics, citation networks, and the impact of articles.

Findings

In this study, which examined 373 studies in total on the Web of Science where the fields of sustainability and gender are associated, "distribution of publications by years," "distribution of publications by the language of writing," "distribution of publications by field," "journals with the most publications in the field and their publishers," The research findings were analyzed under a total of 9 headings: "distribution of the most cited publications," "authors publishing the most in the field," "institutions publishing the most in the field," "distribution of the most cited research authors," "publication density of countries."

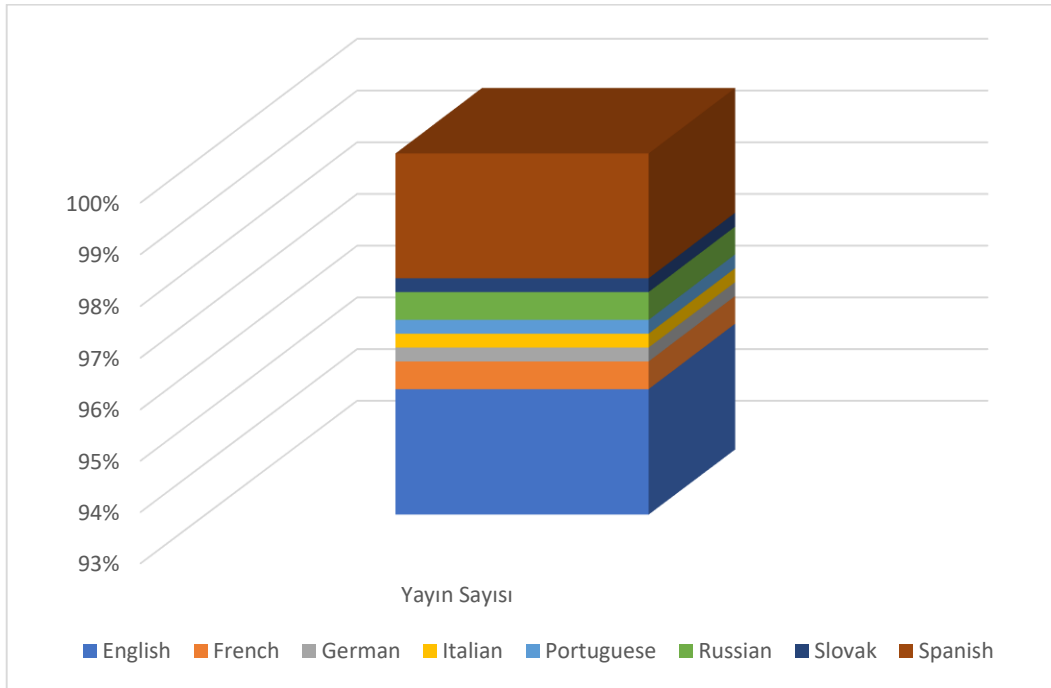
First of all, as can be seen in Graph 1, it is observed that the studies in Web of Science linking the fields of sustainability and gender equality started in 1998. Between 1998 and 2022, publications in this field generally showed no regular increase. Although only one research was conducted in the field in 1998, this number became widespread, with 82 different studies in 2022. It is seen that the research gained momentum, especially after 2015.



Graph 1. Distribution of Publications by Year

Secondly, as shown in Graph 2., there were only 373 studies on gender equality and sustainability in Web of Science in the relevant period. The language used in the publications is predominantly English with 95%, followed by Spanish with 2%, and Russian and French with 0.5% each in the third and fourth places. In addition, there is no Turkish publication in the field between 1998 and 2022.

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Graph 2. Distribution of Publications by Language

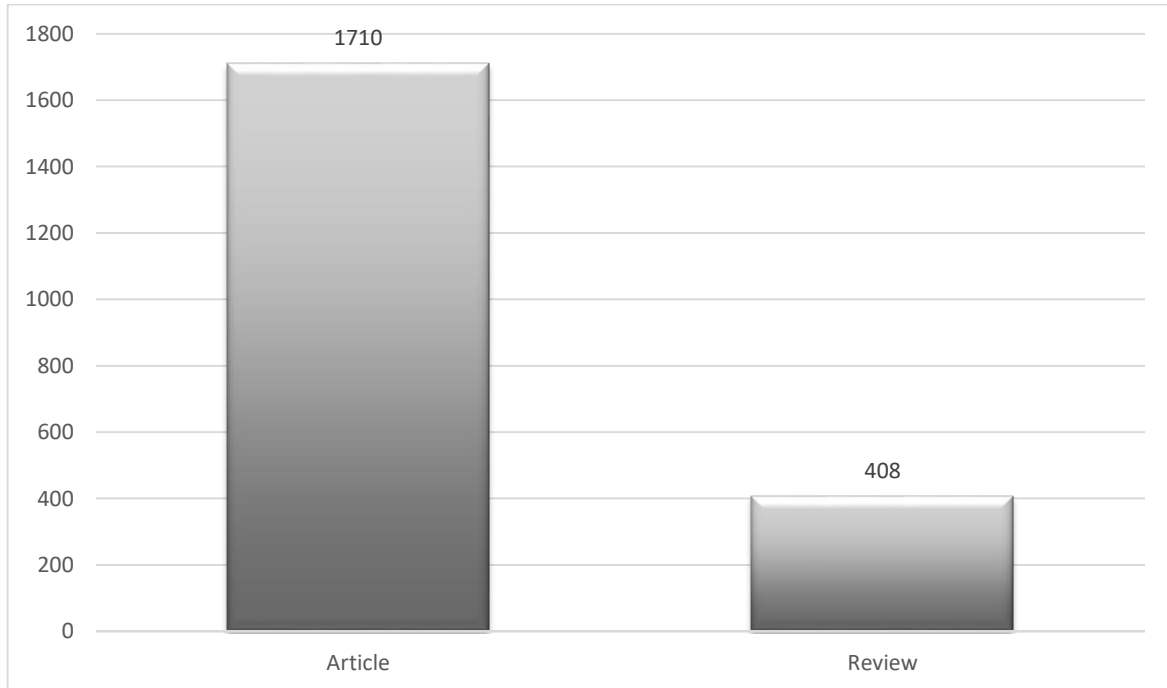
When the distribution of 373 studies on gender equality and sustainability in the Web of Science is examined according to the field of study, it is seen that 20% of the studies (154 publications) were conducted in the field of 'environmental studies.' When we look at the distribution of the other publications according to the field of study, 19% (148 publications) were in the field of 'green sustainable science technology,' 19% (147 publications) were in the field of 'environmental sciences', 4% (33 publications) in the field of 'management' and 1% (8 publications) in the field of 'urban studies' (See Table 1).

Table 1: Distribution of Publications by Field

Web of Science Categories	% of 373	Record Count
Environmental Studies	20,00	154
Green Sustainable Science Technology	19,22	148
Environmental Sciences	19,09	147
Management	4,29	33
Business	3,25	25

Women Studies	2,34	18
Economics	1,95	15
Education Educational Research	1,82	14
Development Studies	1,56	12
Geography	1,30	10
Hospitality Leisure Sport Tourism	1,30	10
Social Sciences Interdisciplinary	1,17	9
Urban Studies	1,04	8
Others	21,69	7

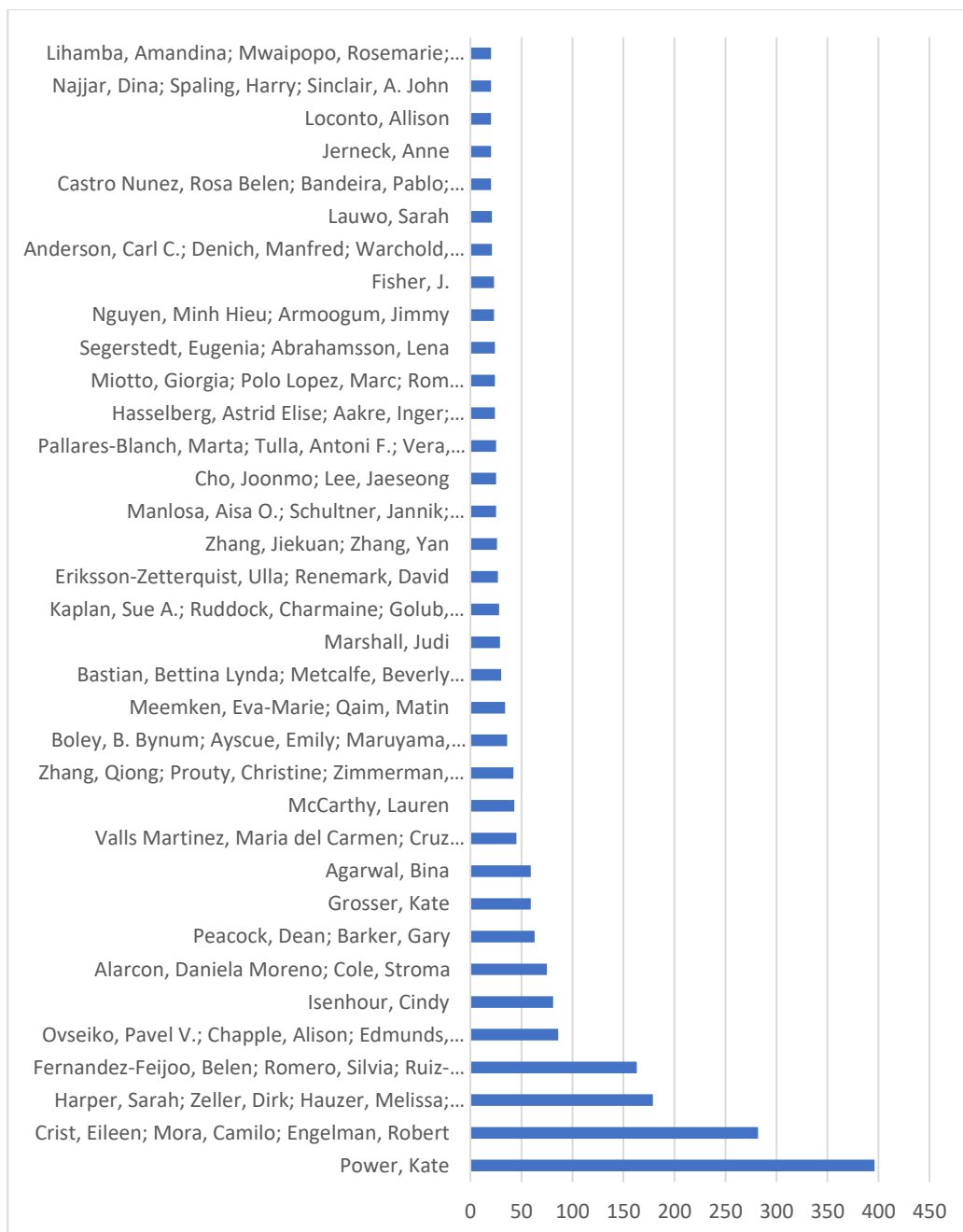
Most of the cited studies in these fields (1710 citations) were based on 'article' type publications. 'Review' type publications received fewer citations (408 citations) than research articles. In Graph 3., the number of the most cited studies of these types is given with their authors;



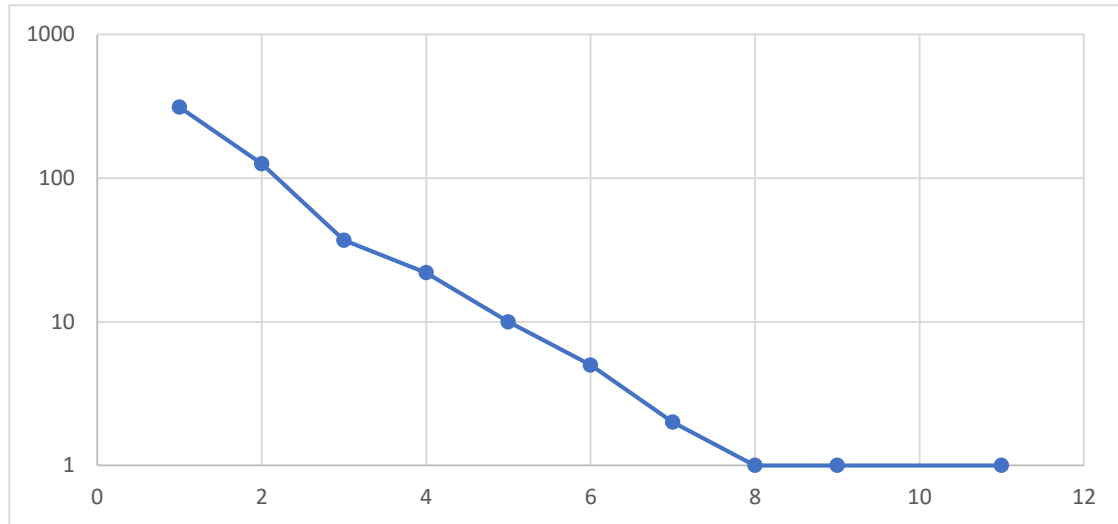
Graph 3. *Distribution of Most Cited Publications Type*

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According to Graph 4., 396 out of 1710 citations to the 'Article' type within the scope of the research were made to Power, K. with the highest rate. In this sense, it is possible to say that the relevant author has pioneering research in the field. Among the publications in the 'Review' type in Web of Science, the researchers who were cited with the highest rate (282 citations) were Crist, E. et al. The scientists with the least number of citations (24 citations) are Segerstedt, E. and Abrahamsson, L. The citation distribution of the related studies is shown in detail in Graph 4 below



Graph 4. *Distribution of the Most Cited Research Authors*



Graph 5. Institutions Publishing the Most Research in the Field

According to Graph 5, when the number of institutions with the highest number of publications in the field is analyzed, it is seen that there are 312 institutions with only one publication, 126 with two publications, and 37 with three publications. On the other hand, according to the data in the Web of Science, there is only one institution with 11 publications in the field. In addition, it is seen that 1140 researchers in the Web of Science have one publication in this field. On the other hand, the number of authors with three publications in this field is only 6.

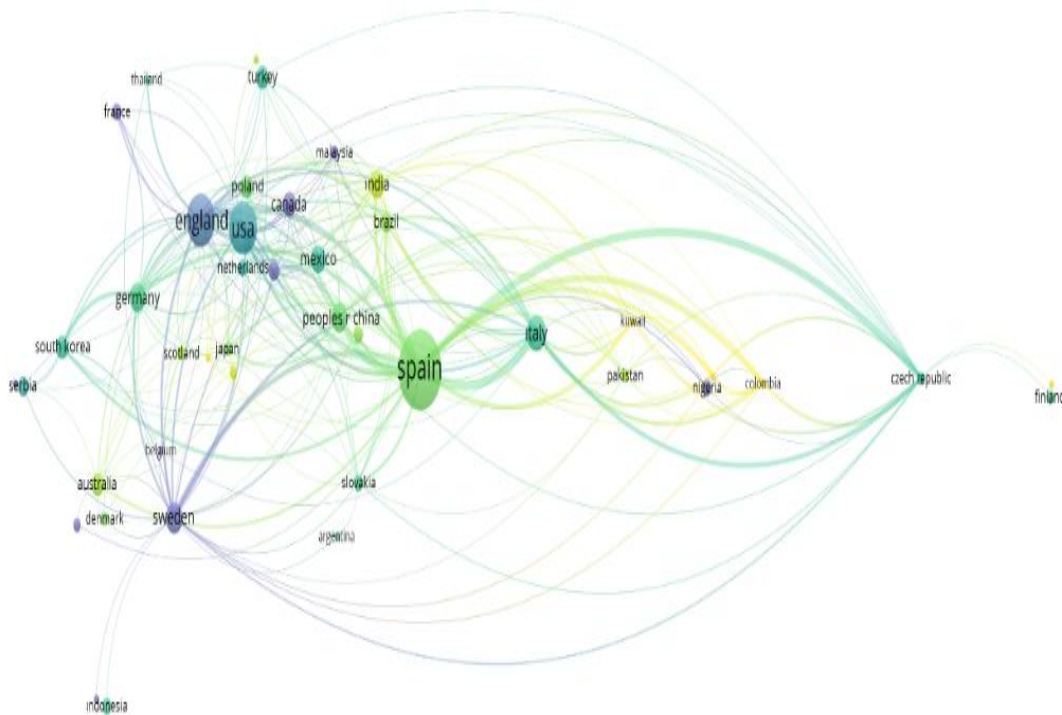


Figure 1. Publication Density of Countries

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When the publication density of countries is analyzed for 373 studies on gender equality and sustainability in Web of Science, it is seen that Spain has the highest number of publications. England ranks 2nd in terms of research conducted between 1998-2022, while the third country with the highest publication density is the USA.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

When women have equal rights and opportunities with men, sustainability efforts can be more equitable and inclusive. In other words, increasing women's economic and political participation can lead to more efficient and equitable use of resources. For this reason, the role of women in sustainability has the potential to promote social transformation and support innovation. In this respect, gender equality and sustainability are seen as two directly related fields. When the research on these fields is examined, it is seen that the scientific studies carried out have gained momentum, especially after 2015, and are predominantly available in English. In addition, the rate of multiple publications on the relevant field by institutions and researchers who conduct studies/publications in this field is quite low. Since the belief that women can offer innovative solutions to sustainability problems with their local knowledge, skills, and experiences will pave the way for women's active participation in decision-making processes and enable the formulation of more inclusive sustainable policies and strategies, it would be beneficial to continue diversifying research in this field on a country, regional and cultural basis (to minimize the variable effects of different dynamics).

Ethical Declarations

Ethics Committee Approval: Ethics committee approval is not required since the study does not involve human or animal research.

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest in this study.

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Author Contributions: All authors acknowledge that they participated in the design, execution, and analysis of the manuscript and approved the final version.

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