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An Analytical Overview of the Studies on the Life Studies Lesson: Bibliometric Analysis Based on Web of Science Database

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ABSTRACT

The primary school period is a very important period to prepare the individual for the next level of education, adapting to his/her environment and social life, and academic success. One of the most important lessons in primary school in Türkiye is life studies lessons. Through life studies lesson, students complete and organize the information they learn from their families or learn the social information they could not learn from the family at school. Therefore, the qualitative and quantitative features of scientific studies carried out in the field of life studies are very important. In the literature, no study has been determined, which analytical examination of life studies has been carried out. The purpose of this research is to examine the life studies lesson and research in the Web of Science (WoS) database from an analytical point of view. Depending on the purpose, in this research, case study design, one of the qualitative research methods, was used. In order to cover the last half-century period in the data collection phase of this research, the life studies lessons' studies in the WoS database between 1971-2022 were examined. The data collected in this research was used "WOS viewer" software (version 1.6.18.0). After searching in the WoS database, 1798 studies were identified. Among these identified studies, it was limited to 94 studies within the scope of "education/educational research". One of results of this research, is that more studies were carried out in the field of Life studies in the US and Türkiye.

Keywords: Life studies lesson, Bibliometrics studies, Web of Science.



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Introduction

Societies today are changing at an incredible rate. In some fields, changes are seen almost from year to year, even from month to month. It is unthinkable for individuals to be stagnant in a society where such rapid development and change takes place. It is a vital necessity for the individual, who is a social being, to keep up with the social changes. This necessity brought by the modern age requires competence in many areas such as knowledge, skills, attitudes, perceptions, thoughts and values. The best way to acquire these competences is through education. Because education is a systematic process and its purpose is to prepare the individual for the society in which he/she lives in the best way possible. Of course, education starts in the family with birth, but this education is more coincidental and unplanned. This education, which the individual receives in the family, cannot be considered sufficient on its own as it is not standardized and evaluated from various perspectives (Ocak and Beydoğan, 2005). Therefore, a more planned training is needed. Planned and systematic education begins with the primary school life of the individual. The primary school period is a very important period to preparing the individual for the next level of education, adapting to his/her environment and social life, and academic success (Ocak and Beydoğan, 2005). Primary school uses lessons as an intermediary while fulfilling this important role.

One of the most important lessons in primary school in Turkey is life studies lessons. Life studies lesson has been included in all primary school programs since the first years of the Republic. However, this lesson was developed in primary school programs in 1924, 1926, 1936, 1948, 1968, 1998, 2005, 2009, 2015 and finally 2018, depending on the needs (Ekmen, 2019). With the effect of historical changes and developments in Life Studies lesson programs, it is aimed to create a basic framework and to be intertwined with life and to combine the school environment with life. The main purpose of this lesson is to apply the skills learned in the daily life of the student in the school environment (Aykaç, 2011).

Through life studies lesson, students complete and organize the information they learned from their families or learn the social information they could not learn from the family at school. It is possible for students who begin to primary school to establish connections between their daily lives and their learning, and to acquire skills as a result of experiencing what they have learned through life studies lessons. At the same time, this lesson helps students become good citizens, helps them internalize social norms and plays a major role in acquiring adaptive skills (Çanak, 2019; Yılmaz and Göçen, 2019). Tay (2017) gave a comprehensive definition of the life studies lesson. To summarize, according to the author, the life studies lesson is a course that gives students the characteristics of a good person and a good citizen in the globalizing world, and tries to provide students with the knowledge of life. However, due to the scope and content of life studies lesson, there are many different definitions in the literature. According to Baysal (2006), the life studies lesson is a course that prepares students for life, gives them a sense of responsibility as individuals and teaches their duties to the individual. On the other hand Kabapınar (2014) defines it as a lesson that includes subjects that will help the student to know himself, takes its subjects from the environment and family, and is based on the individual's prior experiences. According to Gültekin (2015), life studies lesson based on collective teaching approach is a versatile basic life lesson that provides individuals with basic knowledge, skills and habits according to their developmental characteristics, and enables children to get to know themselves and their environment. Based on these definitions, it is seen that the life studies lesson definitions focuses on some basic notions. From this point of view, if a short and concise definition is to be made, the life studies lesson can be expressed as a course in which the skills to adapt to the environment and basic knowledge of life are given in a systematic way.

In terms of the content of the life studies lessons, it is stated that it is very effective in preparing the students for life and in gaining many competencies such as knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviors and values required in this preparation stage (Tay and Ünlü, 2014). The main objectives of the life studies lesson were finally stated in the 2018 curriculum with 8 basic skills. These skills can be summarized as (Ütkür-Güllühan and Bekiroğlu, 2022):

1. Basic life skills
2. Self-knowledge
3. Leading a healthy and safe life

4. Absorbing the values of the society in which one lives
5. Being sensitive to nature and the environment
6. Doing research
7. Production
8. Patriotism

Additional, the main purpose of the life studies lesson is to enable students to acquire basic life skills and to enable them to develop positive individual characteristics (Şimşek, 2014). At the same time, it is stated that this lesson aims to prepare the student for life by focusing on the events and phenomena in life. The life studies lesson uses the learner's close environment and other disciplines to achieve these goals (Çelik, 2020).

Based on all this information, it is aimed that individuals get to know and use social values, get to know the natural environment, lead a healthy life and gain knowledge, skills, behaviors and thoughts on similar subjects with life studies lessons (Güven and Püsküllü, 2017). Life studies lesson is a course that supports the holistic development of the student as the individual starts his/her school life. Because of this nature, it is directly or indirectly related to some other disciplines. When the literature related to this lesson is examined, it can be said that the scope of this course is human, nature and society (Çelik, 2020). From this point of view, it is seen that the scope of this lesson is quite wide. However, despite the importance of this comprehensive lesson, it is difficult to say that it has been studied thoroughly and in depth. In this context, how the status of quality and quantity of the studies on the life studies lessons emerges as an important research question. Therefore, in this research, besides the quantitative situation in the Web of Science (WoS) database, where qualified studies are published, the status of life studies lessons' studies in many other aspects has been examined. With this aspect, it is thought that this study can make a contribution to the field.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research is to examine the life studies lesson and research in the *Web of Science (WoS)* database from an analytical point of view. For this purpose, answers to the following questions were sought: In WoS;

- What is the numerical distribution of academic studies published in the field of life studies lesson by years?
- What is the numerical distribution of academic studies published in the field of life studies lesson according to the languages in which they are published?
- What is the numerical distribution of academic studies published in the field of life studies lesson according to document types?
- What is the numerical distribution of the academic studies published in the field of life studies lesson according to the institutions of the authors?
- What is the numerical distribution of academic studies published in the field of life studies lesson by countries?
- What is the numerical distribution of academic studies published in the field of life studies lesson according to co-authored collaboration studies?
- What is the number of citations of academic studies published in the field of life studies lesson by years?
- What are the most frequently used keywords in academic studies published in the field of life studies lesson?

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to the studies in the WoS database between 1971-2022 and scanned using the keywords "life studies" or "life science". On 26/05/2022, the keywords "life studies" or "life science" were searched in the WoS database and 1798 studies were identified. Among these identified studies, it was limited to 94 studies within the scope of "education/educational research".

Methods and Materials

Model of the Research

In this study, case study design, one of the qualitative research methods, was used. Case studies are distinguished from other methods by their limitations, importance, availability of resources, observability, in-depth data acquisition and analysis possibilities. However, the most important feature is to investigate one or more situations in depth (Duff, 2008; Woodside, 2010; Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2021). In addition to these features, the case study design can be used to make decisions in very complex situations or to explain cause-effect relationships (Yin, 2003). In this study, the case study design was preferred as it was aimed to reveal the current situation by examining the academic articles made within the scope of life studies lesson in terms of some variables.

Data Collection Tools

In order to cover the last half-century period in the data collection phase of this research, the life studies lessons' studies in the WoS database between 1971-2022 were examined. WoS is an initiative of the Thomson Reuters Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) (Chadegani, Salehi, Yunus, Farhadi, Fooladi, Farhadi and Ebrahim, 2013). It is stated that there are over 37,000 scientific journals and more than 171 million articles indexed in WoS (Yeşiltaş and Yılmaz, 2021). Using the keywords "life studies" or "life science" in this database, articles suitable for various criteria were obtained from the academic articles found.

Analysis of Data

The data collected in this research was used WOSviewer software (version 1.6.18.0). The data obtained in the research were analyzed by descriptive analysis method. Descriptive analysis is a type of qualitative data analysis that include summarizing and interpreting the collected data in accordance with predetermined categories (Özen and Hendekçi, 2016). According to Yıldırım and Şimşek (2016), descriptive analysis is carried out in 4 basic stages: This stages are creating a framework, processing the data, defining the findings, and finally interpreting the findings. In this study, academic studies accessed from the WoS database were processed via computer software in accordance with the purpose of the research and the data obtained were classified. Tables and figures were used in the classification process. In the last stage, these classified findings were obtain and interpreted.

Ethical Considerations

In this study, documents were examined. For this reason, the research is exempt from the ethical board and was carried out in accordance with research and publication ethics.

In this study, all rules stated to be followed within the scope of "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive" were followed. None of the actions stated under the title "Actions Against Scientific Research and Publication Ethics", which is the second part of the directive, were not taken.

Findings

The distribution of 94 scientific studies related to the Life studies lesson in the WoS database searched within the scope of the research by years is given in Figure 1.

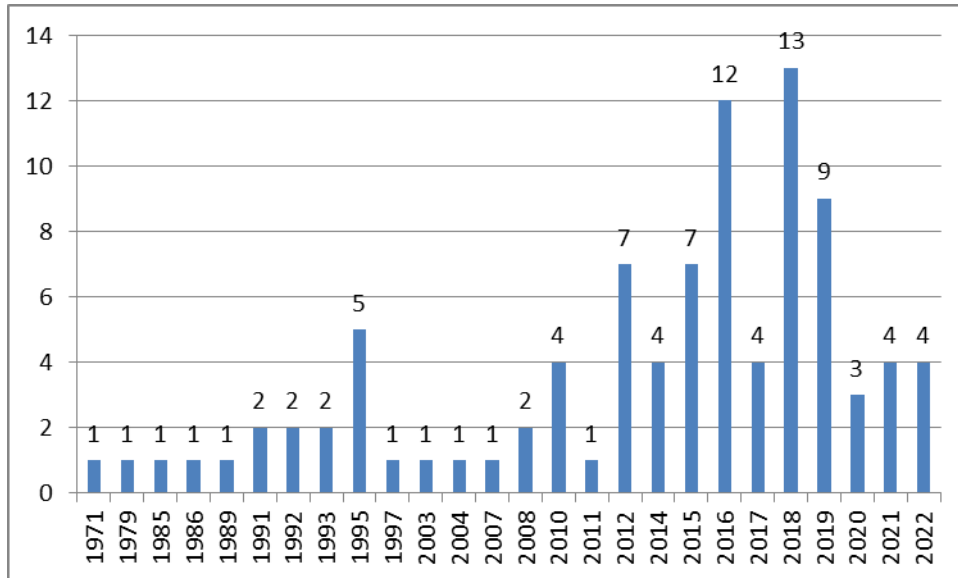


Figure 1: Distribution of studies on Life studies lesson by years (WoS, 26/05/2022).

As seen in Figure 1, 94 scientific researches searched in the WoS database related to the Life Science lesson were examined. According to the data in the figure examined, it is seen that a small number of scientific studies were carried out from 1971 until the 2010s, but the number of studies increased in the last 20 years. At the same time, the years in which the most studies were conducted were 2018 (f=13), 2016 (f=12) and 2019 (f=9).

The distribution of 94 scientific studies related to the Life studies lesson in the WoS database searched within the scope of the research, according to the languages in which they were published, is given in Figure 2.

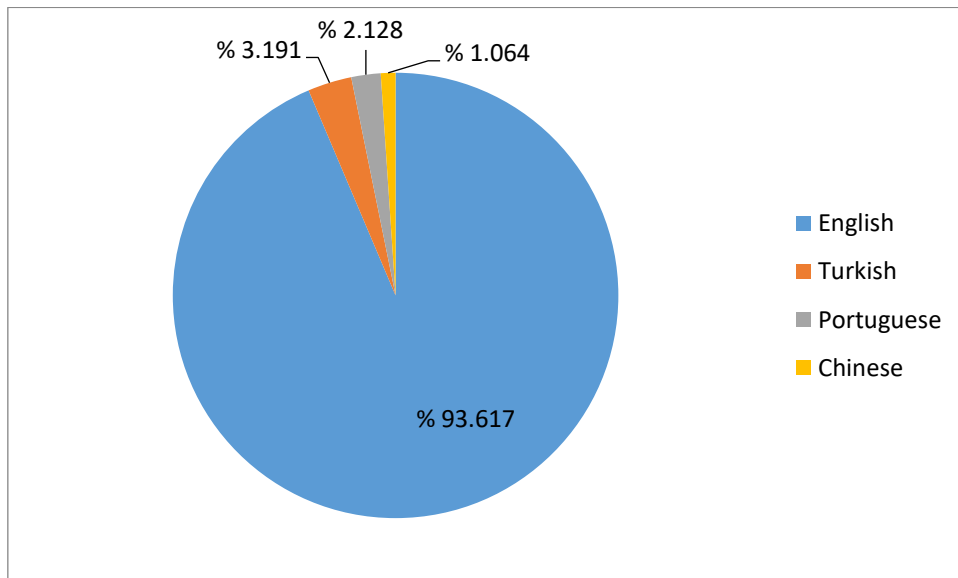


Figure 2: Distribution of the studies on the Life Studies lesson according to the language of works (WoS, 26/05/2022).

When Figure 2 is examined, it has been determined that scientific studies related to the life studies lesson are published in 4 different languages in the WoS database. Of the 94 studies reviewed, 93.61% were published in English. In second place is Turkish (3.19%); Portuguese (2.12%) ranks third and Chinese (1.06%) last.

The distribution of 94 scientific studies related to the Life Science lesson in the WoS database searched within the scope of the research by document types is given in Figure 3.

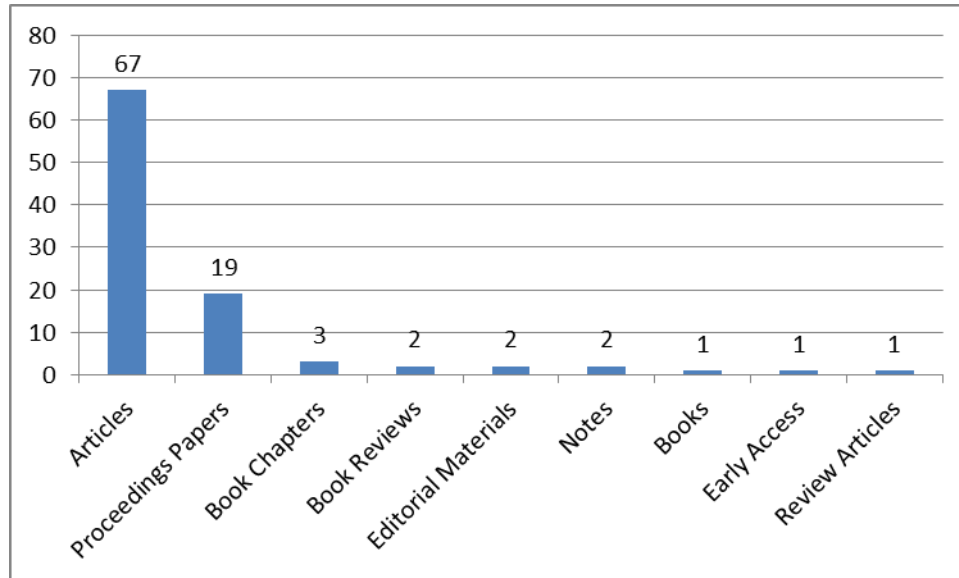


Figure 3: Distribution of the researches about the Life Studies lesson according to the document type (WoS, 26/05/2022).

When Graph 3 is examined, it has been determined that there are 9 different types of publications: articles, papers, book chapters, book reviews, editorial texts, notes, books, early access, review articles. When the works in the figure are examined, it has been determined that the most number of articles (f=67) and papers (f=19).

The distribution of the authors who published on the Life studies lesson field in the WoS database searched within the scope of the research, according to the institutions they are affiliated with is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of authors according to the institutions they are affiliated with in the studies on the Life Studies lesson (WoS, 26/05/2022).

| Affiliations | (f) | % |
|---|-----|------|
| Purdue University | 6 | 6.38 |
| Purdue University System | 6 | 6.38 |
| Purdue University West Lafayette Campus | 6 | 6.38 |
| Universitat Politècnica de València | 5 | 5.31 |
| University of Georgia | 4 | 4.25 |
| University of North Carolina | 4 | 4.25 |
| University System of Georgia | 4 | 4.25 |
| League of European Research Universities Leru | 3 | 3.19 |
| University of Helsinki | 3 | 3.19 |
| University of Minnesota System | 3 | 3.19 |

When the institutions to which the authors publishing in the field of life studies lesson are examined, a total of 136 institutions have been identified. Purdue University and its components (f=18) are at the forefront of these institutions. Universitat Politècnica de València is in second place and University of Georgia is in third place (Table 1). The top 10 of the 14 Turkey-based institutions listed in this category and the ranking of these institutions among 136 institutions are given in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Distribution of Turkey-based authors conducting research on life studies lesson according to the top 10 institutions they are affiliated with and the ranking of these institutions among 136 institutions (n) (WoS, 26/05/2022).

| <i>n</i> | Affiliations | (f) | (%) |
|----------|---------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| 13 | Gazi University | 2 | 2.12 |
| 14 | Ordu University | 2 | 2.12 |
| 23 | Usak University | 2 | 2.12 |
| 24 | Adnan Menderes University | 1 | 1.06 |
| 40 | Dicle University | 1 | 1.06 |
| 43 | Firat University | 1 | 1.06 |
| 47 | Hacettepe University | 1 | 1.06 |
| 48 | Harran University | 1 | 1.06 |
| 53 | Istanbul University Cerrahpasa | 1 | 1.06 |
| 70 | Recep Tayyip Erdogan University | 1 | 1.06 |

According to Table 2, it is seen that the institutions the authors are affiliated with are distributed in a balanced way in the studies carried out on the Life Studies lesson in universities in Turkey. Among 136 institutions working on life studies lesson, 14 institutions based in Turkey were identified. In this table, which is based on the first 10 institutions out of these 14 institutions, the universities that publish the most are; they are listed as Gazi University (4), Ordu University (4) and Usak University (4).

The distribution of the Life Studies lesson in the WoS database searched within the scope of the research according to the countries that publish is given in Table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of the Life Studies lessons' studies by countries (WoS, 26/05/2022).

| Countries/Regions | f | % |
|--------------------------|----------|----------|
| USA | 37 | 39.362 |
| Turkey | 12 | 12.766 |
| Spain | 6 | 6.383 |
| Finland | 4 | 4.255 |
| Peoples R. China | 4 | 4.255 |
| South Africa | 4 | 4.255 |
| Germany | 3 | 3.191 |
| Japan | 3 | 3.191 |
| Australia | 2 | 2.128 |
| Austria | 2 | 2.128 |

A total of 24 countries were identified when the countries that carried out life studies lessons' studies were examined within the scope of the research, and the first 10 of these countries are given in the table. When the data in Table 3 are examined, USA (f=37) is the leading country in the field of life studies, Turkey (f=12) is the second and Spain (f=6) is the third. Based on these data, it is seen that approximately half of the studies on life studies lesson are made from USA and Turkey. Figure 4 of the collaboration of these countries working in the field of life studies lesson is given below.

The distribution of the Life Studies lesson in the WoS database searched within the scope of the research according to the countries working in the co-authorship collaboration is given in Figure 4.

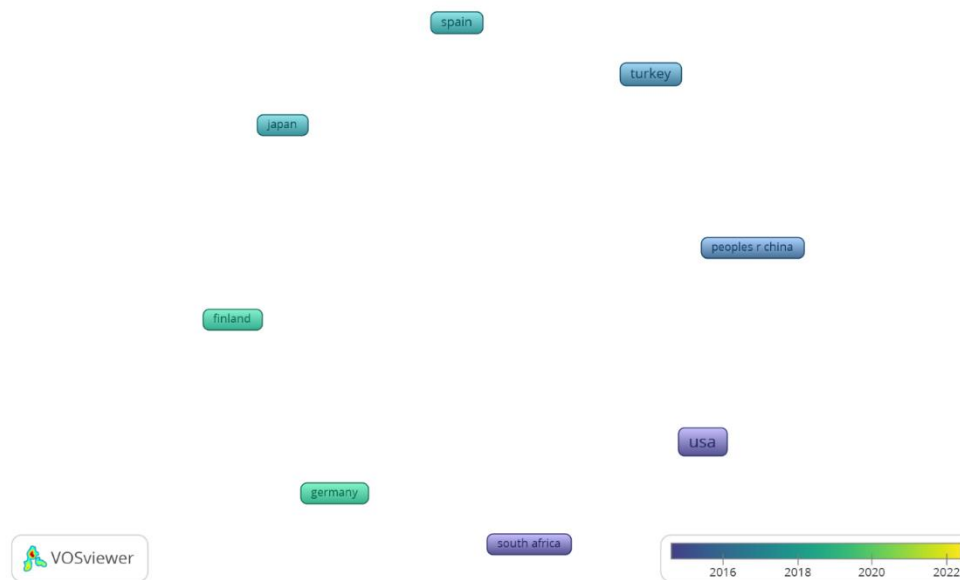


Figure 4: Countries working in collaboration in the field of life studies lesson

In the co-authorship analysis of published academic studies on life studies lesson, cross-country collaboration is shown in figure 4. When the number of publications from among this 24 countries was selected as the minimum value, 8 of the studies were met the threshold value. As a result of the analysis, as can be seen from the figure, cross-countries collaboration related to the life studies lesson could not be determined.

The distribution of the Life Science lesson in the WoS database searched within the scope of the research according to the number of citations by years is given in Table 3.

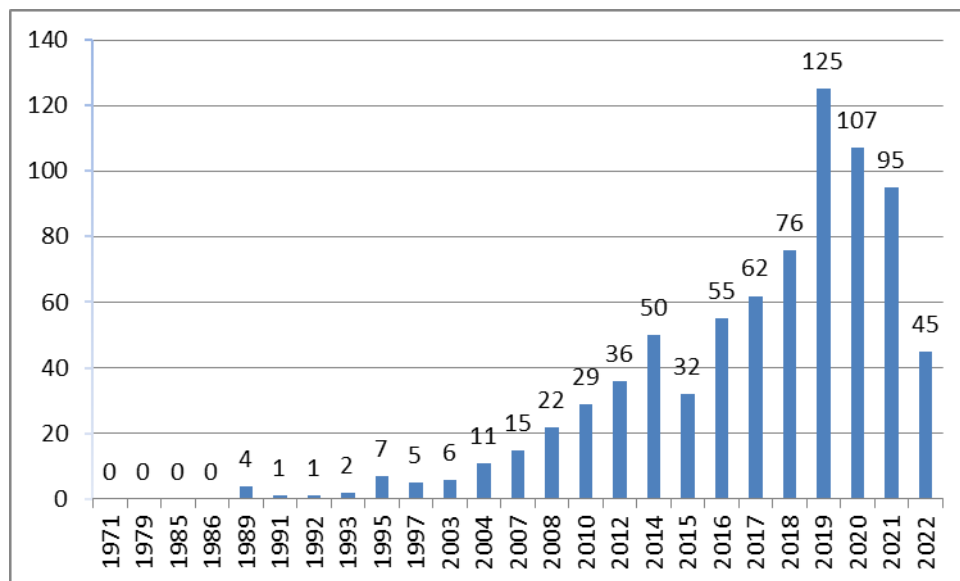


Figure 5: Number of Citations by Years

The number of citations by years of academic works on life studies lesson in the category of educational research in WoS is shown in figure 5. According to these data, no recorded citation information was found from 1971 to 1989. For the years including the period from 1989 to 2003, the citations were

below 10. There has been a quantitative increase in the years following this year. In 2019, it reached its peak with 125 citations.

The distribution according to the keywords related to the Life studies lesson in the WoS database searched within the scope of the research is given in Figure 6.

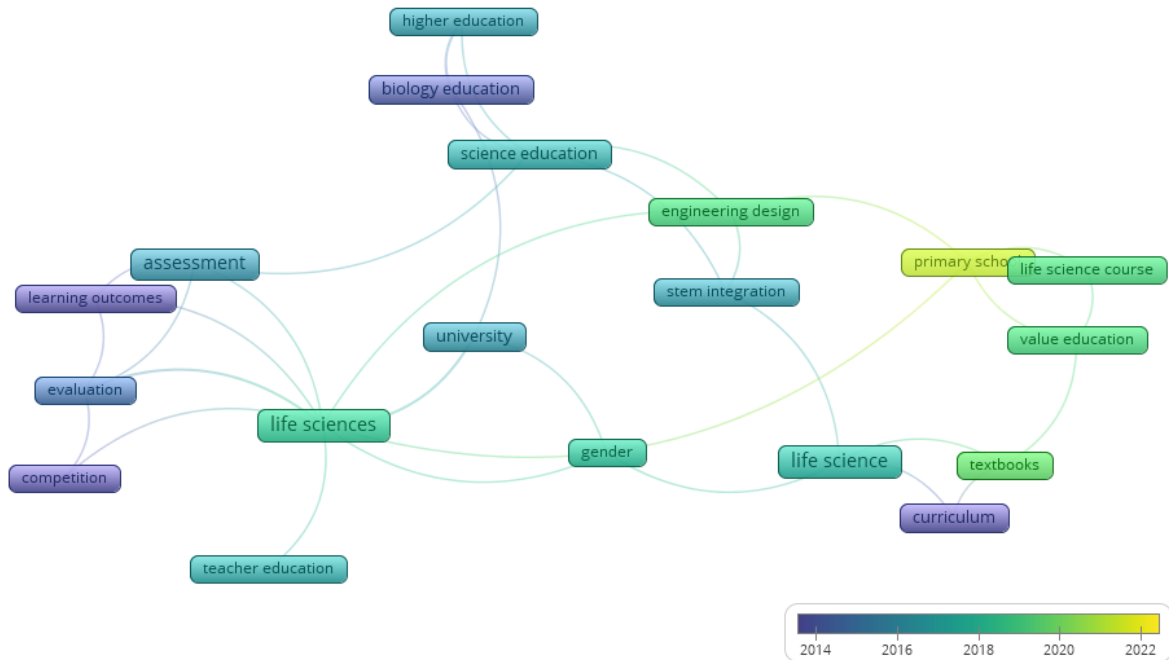


Figure 6: Keywords

When the keywords in Figure 6 are examined, it is seen that the word "life science" is in the foreground among the most used words in studies on life studies lessons. When Figure 6 is examined, it has been determined that academic studies related to life studies lessons are gathered under 5 clusters according to the cluster analysis in the keyword network figure. The most frequently used keywords in these clusters are listed as "life science(s) (f=16)", "science education (f=3)", "primary school (f=2)", textbook (f=2). All of these keywords except "primary school" were used intensively before 2020, while the keyword "primary school" started to be used up to date after 2020. In addition, it is listed as "life science(s) (tls=15), evaluation (tls=5), Science education (tls=5), assessment (tls=4) with the highest total link strength (tls).

The data indicating the frequency of the keywords used in academic publications related to the Life Science lessons are presented in the word cloud image below.

According to the results of this research, when the distribution of educational research in the field of life studies lesson is examined by years, the most published years are 2016 and 2018. When Figure 1 is examined, it is seen that the distribution of studies according to years is unstable. The reason for this may be that some subjects have become popular in some years and have become the focus of researchers. For example, one of the topics that researchers frequently work on in 2018 is value education (Karasu-Avcı and Ketenoğlu-Kayabaşı, 2018; Öztürk and Özkan, 2018; Yaşaroğlu, 2018; Komalasari and Saripudin, 2018; Johansson, Emilson and Puroila, 2018). Parallel to the distribution of the studies according to the years in which they were published, the distribution of the number of citations is seen similarly. Accordingly, in the years when the publications increased, the number of citations also increased (Figure 5). This is the nature of scientific research, because as the number of publications increases, the number of studies that are read, examined and cited also increases.

When we look at the distribution of the published studies according to languages, it is seen that the majority of them are in English. This may be due to the fact that English is accepted as the language of science and international indexes are published in English. There are advantages as well as disadvantages of this finding. The studies of cross-cultural publications using a single language can be positively in terms of reaching many researchers from different cultures. However, this situation can be considered as a suppressive factor on the visibility of other languages.

Among the research findings, the highest rate in terms of the type of published studies is articles, and the second is proceedings papers. These two types of publications are the types of publications that researchers frequently use. One reason for this can be thought of as scientific journals and congress/symposiums supporting these types of publications. When the literature is examined, it is seen that there are many studies (Fernández, Lozano and Cuenca, 2020; Jiménez, Prieto and García, 2019; Samul, 2020; Sönmez and Bozdoğan, 2020; Yeşiltaş and Yılmaz, 2021) that reach similar results.

When the institutions to which the authors are affiliated are examined, it is seen that Purdue University and the components affiliated to this institution are in the first place. Based on this finding, it can be said that Purdue University supports more authors in this field than other institutions (Table 1). It is seen that a more balanced situation has emerged in terms of the number of publications in Turkey (Table 2). Gazi University, Ordu University and Uşak University are in the top ranks in Turkey. It may be the main reason for the emergence of a more balanced situation in Turkey, as the life studies lesson and other lessons are applied as standard throughout the country. In parallel with these findings, when we look at the countries that publish in the field of life studies, USA comes first and Turkey comes second. There are studies that reached similar results in the literature (Samul, 2020; Julia, Supriatna, Isrokatun, Aisyah, Hakim and Odebode, 2020; Bozdoğan, 2020; Yeşiltaş and Yılmaz, 2021). These findings support each other. Despite these findings, there has been no collaboration between countries (Figure 4). This situation reveals that researchers have almost no linked networks with researchers from different countries. When the results of this research are analysed as a whole, there has not been enough research on the life studies lesson, which is very important lesson in primary school. Accordingly, the number of citations is also low. In addition, it is seen that there is no collaboration between USA and Türkiye, the two countries that publish the most studies in the field of life studies. Based on these results, it can be recommended to carry out more studies in international collaboration. This research was carried out by examining the WoS database. Therefore, it may be suggested to conduct research using different databases such as ERIC, H.W. Wilson Database, Scopus, TR Dizin etc.

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