

Menstruation in sports sciences: Bibliometric evaluation of studies in National Thesis Center

Spor bilimlerinde menstruasyon: Ulusal Tez Merkezi'ndeki çalışmaların bibliyometrik değerlendirmesi

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to conduct a bibliometric analysis of graduate theses containing the word "menstruation" published in the field of sports sciences in Turkey until today. In this research, which is structured on a qualitative basis, the graduate theses included in the National Thesis Center were used. The necessary data were collected for the study to be carried out by analyzing the content. The research is limited to Decrees published between 1991 and 2024. A total of 28 graduate theses, 21 of which are master's degree and 7 of which are doctoral, were included in the research by conducting examinations with the keyword menstruation. The theses were classified in detail in terms of various parameters and a bibliometric profile was created. The data obtained within the scope of the research were analyzed by percentage and frequency descriptive statistics with SPSS 20.0 program. As a result of the studies, it was seen in the theses how menstruation period and hormonal changes of female athletes have an impact on their performance, how physiological responses differ during exercise, and the effects of menstrual phases on various physiological, psychological and performance parameters in athletes were examined. It is thought that the examination of the graduate theses obtained within the scope of menstruation along with the obtained data will contribute to this field and shed light on the researchers who will conduct studies in this field later.

Keywords: Bibliometric analysis, menstruation, sports, national thesis center

Öz

Bu araştırmanın amacı, Türkiye'de spor bilimleri alanında bugüne kadar yayımlanmış "menstruasyon" sözcüğünü içeren lisansüstü tezlerin bibliyometrik analizini yapmaktır. Nitel bir temelde yapılandırılan bu çalışmada, Ulusal Tez Merkezi'ne dâhil edilen lisansüstü tezler kullanılmıştır. İçerik analizi yapılarak çalışmanın yapılabilmesi için gerekli veriler toplanmıştır. Araştırma, 1991-2024 yılları arasında yayımlanmış lisansüstü tezler ile sınırlıdır. Menstruasyon anahtar sözcüğü ile incelemeleri yapılarak 21'i yüksek lisans, 7'si doktora olmak üzere toplam 28 lisansüstü tez araştırmaya dâhil edilmiştir. Tezler çeşitli parametreler açısından ayrıntılı bir şekilde sınıflandırılarak bibliyometrik profili oluşturulmuştur. Araştırma kapsamında elde edilen veriler SPSS 20.0 programı ile yüzde ve frekans betimsel istatistikleri ile analiz edilmiştir. Yapılan çalışmalar sonucunda tezlerde kadın sporcuların menstruasyon dönemi ve hormonal değişikliklerinin performanslarına nasıl etki ettiği, egzersiz sırasında fizyolojik tepkilerin nasıl farklılaştığı ve menstrüel evrelerin sporcularda çeşitli fizyolojik, psikolojik ve performans parametrelerine etkilerinin incelendiği görülmüştür. Menstruasyon kapsamında elde edilen lisansüstü tezlerin elde edilen verilerle birlikte incelenmesinin bu alana katkı sağlayacağı ve bundan sonra bu alanda çalışma yapacak araştırmacılara ışık tutacağı düşünülmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: bibliyometrik analiz, menstruasyon, spor, ulusal tez merkezi

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Introduction

The menstrual cycle is a biological event that healthy women experience regularly every month, and various changes occur in the female reproductive system and many other tissues of the body as a result of the effects of hypothalamus, pituitary and ovarian hormones (Constantini et al., 2005). This cycle, which can cause women to face various difficulties in their daily lives, especially in the field of sports and physical activity, covers two main phases: the follicular phase and the luteal phase, during which hormone levels fluctuate. In addition to reproductive function, it is known that female sex hormones affect a large number of other cardiovascular, respiratory, thermoregulatory and metabolic parameters (Julian et al., 2017). Therefore, at each stage of the menstrual cycle, during the month of a cycle, it can theoretically affect sports performance in different ways. However, the effects of the menstrual cycle (and associated hormonal fluctuations) on sports performance have largely not been taken into account (Bruinvels et al., 2017). Understanding the impact of the menstrual cycle on exercise in women is critical for sports professionals and coaches to ensure optimal health and well-being, as well as prescribe training appropriately (Knowles et al., 2017). In particular, estrogen can affect the cardiovascular system, substrate metabolism, and the brain (Constantini et al., 2005). However, progesterone and other progestins seem to mainly affect thermoregulation, ventilation, and fuel selection and use for energy needs (Constantini et al., 2005). All these factors associated with the menstrual cycle can affect athletic performance. In addition, October Dec, O'Brien, Rapkin, Dennerstein, and Nevatte (O'Brien et al., 2011) proven psychological and behavioral symptoms associated with the menstrual cycle may include fatigue, drowsiness, poor coordination, and concentration, all of which are factors that can affect sports performance.

Although the menstrual cycle potentially affects a number of physiological and psychological structures, as highlighted earlier, it is still an open environment in which the menstrual cycle is discussed equally with other physiological determinants of sports performance (Bruinvels et al., 2017). This lack of consideration is due to limited research in this area or Findlay et al. as highlighted by, it can be attributed to various factors arising from athletes' individual experiences with menstrual cycles and their discomfort with talking about this topic with members of their support networks (Findlay et al., 2020). She has stated that female rugby players feel uncomfortable when chatting about their menstrual cycle with male support staff. Although women still try to hide that they are menstruating or experiencing premenstrual symptoms, this negative attitude towards menstruation is reinforced by byproducts and the media. It is important to recognize that through the power of advertising and social media, the messages put out by large companies can affect perceptions. Many ads for menstrual products have a consistent theme, namely emphasizing the importance of privacy, implying the need to avoid pollution and social embarrassment (Tingle & Vora ,2018). This is a strong message to readers and viewers that they should keep evidence of menstruation out of sight (Kishali et al., 2006). The relationship between menstrual cycle and sports in Turkey has been the subject of many Decrees, as well as physical and psychological changes, it has been among the topics researched in order to optimize athletes' performance Decently and their training according to this performance. In this research, bibliometric analysis of graduate theses containing the word "menstruation" published in the field of sports sciences in Turkey until today has been carried out.

Bibliometrics is a comprehensive method in which quantitative and qualitative analyses are performed that reveal the elements that contribute to a special field of study and the cooperation and communication between these elements (Song et al., 2019).

Dec. The term bibliometry is an analysis technique first defined by Pritchard in 1969, and its use has gradually increased since 1970 (Hood & Wilson, 2001; Pritchard, 1969). The fact that bibliometric analysis is transparent, systematic, and reproducible contributes to improving the quality of reviews. These analyses help to examine the general outlines of the subject for the researcher (Zupic & Cater, 2015). Bibliometric research sheds light on future studies because it shows the general direction of research, reveals the field literature in that field, and provides information about the latest developments (Mishra, 2014).

Materials and Methods

The research model

In general, two methods are used in the examination of scientific studies. These are the processes aimed at analyzing branches of science or fields and publishing scientific publications, the method of scientific analysis, and the method of bibliometric analysis performed in accordance with the efficiency of academic studies and an overview (Özkan, 2015).

There are many national and international studies in which various parameters such as the general structure and type of content of thesis studies, the university where it was published, the number of pages, the institute of the main branch of science are examined. However, there has not been a research that deals with the subject of exercise in sports sciences in graduate theses. Therefore, this study is very important to create a bibliometric perspective of academic studies in which the concept of training in the field of sports sciences is discussed, especially graduate theses. In the study, the graduate theses obtained from the Dec National Thesis Center database on menstruation in the field of sports sciences between 1991 and 2023 were examined from a bibliometric perspective according to various variables such as university, institute, science / department, type, number of pages, city where the studies were published, year of the thesis, keywords, subject and gender of the researcher.

Collection of data

The data obtained in the research were prepared in the field of sports with the word "menstruation" in the title and searched in the databases of the Dec National Thesis Center. The Decrees and articles reached as a result of the search have been tabulated by placing them in various groups. the theses reached, including the year 2024, are statistically shown as frequency and percentage.

All the studies in the field of sports that have included the word menstruation up to today have been thoroughly screened, previous studies have been systematically evaluated, inclusion and exclusion criteria have been determined. All theses containing the word menstruation in the title in the field of Sports sciences in the National Thesis Center have been included in the research. All theses containing the concept of menstruation that are published in the National Thesis Center and are not included in the field of sports sciences are excluded.

Analysis of data

The data collected within the scope of the research were analyzed using percentage (%) and frequency (f) methods descriptive statistical methods using SPSS 25.0 program.

Results

Table 1 Distribution of the Authors According to Their Gender.

		f	%
Gender	Woman	24	85,7
	Man	4	14,3
	Total		100,0

When the gender distribution ratios of the theses written about menstruation in the field of sports sciences are examined in Table 1, it is observed that 24 of the 28 theses were written by women and 4 by men. 85.7% of the theses carried out in this context were written by women authors and 14.3% by men authors.

Table 2 Distribution of the Theses according to the Published Years

		f	%
The Year It was Published	1991	1	3,4
	1993	1	3,4
	1997	1	3,4
	1999	1	3,4
	2000	2	6,9
	2001	1	3,4
	2002	1	3,4
	2003	1	3,4
	2004	2	6,9
	2005	1	3,4
	2006	1	3,4
	2009	1	3,4
	2010	1	3,4
	2011	1	3,4
	2012	1	3,4
	2014	2	6,9
	2016	1	3,4
	2018	1	3,4
	2019	1	3,4
	2021	1	3,4
	2023	2	6,9
	2024	3	10,3
	Total	28	100,0

When the distribution of theses according to the published years is examined in Table 2, when the distribution rates of theses written about menstruation in the field of sports sciences are examined by years, 3 theses were published in 2024, 2 theses were published in 2023, 2014, 2004 and 2000, and 1 thesis was published in the remaining years. The percentage distribution of these values showed a distribution of 10.3% in 2024, 6.9% in 2023, 2014, 2004 and 2000, and 3.4% in the remaining years.

Table 3 Distribution of Theses according to Institutes

		f	%
Institutes	Institute of Health Sciences	21	75,9
	Graduate School of Education	3	10,3
	Institute of Social Sciences	2	6,9
	Institute of Educational Sciences	2	6,9
	Total	28	100,0

When the Distribution of Theses according to Institutes is examined in Table 3, 21 theses have been published at the Institute of Health Sciences, 3 at the Institute of Postgraduate Education, 2 at the Institute of Social Sciences, and 2 at the Institute of Educational Sciences. The percentage distribution of these values was distributed as Institute of Health Sciences 75.9%, Institute of Postgraduate Education 10.3%, Institute of Social Sciences 6.9%, Institute of Educational Sciences 6.9.

Table 4 Distribution of the Theses according to the Departments

		f	%
Department of Medical Sciences	Coaching Education	7	24,1
	Physical Education and Sports	15	51,7
	Physical Education and Sports Teaching	3	11,2
	Sports Science and Technology	2	10,3
	Sports Medicine	1	3,4
	Total	28	100,0

When the Distribution of Theses according to the Departments is examined in Table 4, it is seen that the Department of Physical Education and Sports has published the most theses as the department where 15 theses have been published, followed by 7 theses in the Department of Coaching Education, 3 theses in the Department of Physical Education and Sports Teaching, 2 theses in the Department of Sports Science and Technology, 1 thesis in the Department of Sports Medicine. It was determined that these published theses were distributed as a percentage of 51.7% in the Department of Physical Education and Sports, 24.1% in the Department of Coaching Education, 11.2% in the Department of Physical Education and Sports Teaching, 10.3% in the Department of Sports Science and Technology, 3.4% in the Department of Sports Medicine.

Table 5 Universities where the Theses were Published

		f	%
Universities	Ankara University	1	3,4
	Celal Bayar University	2	6,9
	Cumhuriyet University	1	3,4
	Gazi University	3	10,3
	Hacettepe University	4	13,8
	Kırşehir Ahi Evran University	1	3,4
	Marmara University	2	6,9
	Muğla University	1	3,4
	Ondokuz Mayıs University	5	20,7
	Sakarya University	2	6,9
	Selcuk University	2	6,9
	Sinop University	1	3,4
	Uludağ University	1	3,4
	Yüzüncü Yıl University	1	3,4
	Total	28	100,0

Table 5 shows the Universities where the Theses were published, Ondokuz Mayıs University 5, Hacettepe University 4, Gazi University 3, Celal Bayar University 2, Marmara University 2, Sakarya University 2, Selcuk University 2, Ankara University 1, Cumhuriyet University 1, Kırşehir Ahi Evran University 1, Muğla University 1, Sinop University 1, Uludağ University 1, Yüzüncü Yıl University 1 thesis has been published. The percentage distribution of theses to universities is 20.7% at Ondokuz Mayıs University, Hacettepe University 13.8%, Gazi University 10.3%, Celal Bayar University 6.9%, Marmara University 6.9%, Sakarya University 6.9%, Selcuk University 6.9%, Ankara

University 3.4%, Cumhuriyet University 3.4%, Kırşehir Ahi Evran University 3.4%, Muğla University 3.4%, Sinop University 3.4%, Uludağ University 3.4%, Mayıs University 20.7%, Hacettepe University 13.8%, Gazi University 10.3%, Selcuk University 6.9%, Ankara University 3.4%, Uludağ University 3.4%, Uludağ University 3.4%, Uludağ University 3.4%, Uludağ University 3.4%, Uludağ University 3.4%, Uludağ University 3.4%, Yüzüncü Yıl University accounts for 3.4%.

Table 6 Distribution of Theses according to the Cities where they were Published

		f	%
City	Ankara	8	27,6
	Bursa	1	3,4
	İstanbul	2	6,9
	Kırşehir	1	3,4
	Konya	3	10,3
	Manisa	2	6,9
	Muğla	1	3,4
	Sakarya	2	6,9
	Samsun	5	20,7
	Sinop	1	3,4
	Sivas	1	3,4
	Van	1	3,4
	Total	28	100,0

When the Distribution of the Theses according to the Cities where they were Published was examined in Table 6, it was found that Ankara 8, Samsun 5, Konya 3, Istanbul 2, Manisa 2, Sakarya 2, Bursa 1, Kırşehir 1, Muğla 1, Sinop 1, Sivas 1, Van 1 thesis. the percentage equivalents of these distributions are Ankara 27.6%, Samsun 20.7%, Konya 10.3%, Istanbul 6.9%, Manisa 6.9%, Sakarya 6.9%, Bursa 3.4%, Kırşehir 3.4%, Muğla 3.4%, Sinop 3.4%, Sivas 3.4%, Van 3.4%.

Table 7 Distribution of Theses according to the number of pages

		f	%
Number of Pages	0-99	25	86,2
	100-199	3	10,3
	200-299	1	3,4
	Total	29	100,0

When the distribution of theses according to the number of pages is examined in Table 7, it is seen that there are 25 theses in the range of 0-99 pages, 3 theses in the range of 100-199 pages, 1 thesis in the range of 200-299 pages. The percentage distribution of theses according to the number of pages corresponds to 86.2% of theses in the range of 0-99 pages, theses in the range of 100-199 pages correspond to 10.3%, and theses in the range of 200-299 pages correspond to 3.4%.

Table 8 Distribution of Theses by Type

		f	%
Type of Thesis	Post graduate	21	75,0

Postgraduate	7	25,0
Total	28	100,0

When the distribution of the theses according to the type is examined in Table 8, it is seen that there are 21 Master's theses and 7 Doctoral theses. The percentage distributions of the type of theses are Master's Degree 75%, Doctorate 7%.

Table 9 Distribution of Theses according to their Subjects

	N	%
The effect of menstruation on anaerobic power and active jumping performance in adolescent volleyball players	1	3,6
The effect of acute aerobic exercise on body composition determined by hand-to-foot and foot –to-foot bioelectric impedance method at different phases of menstrual cycle	1	3,6
The relationship of plasma leptin levels in ballerinas with eating habits, menstrual cycle patterns and endocrine factors	1	3,6
The effect of menstruation on speed, strength and endurance in female handball players	1	3,6
The effect of menstruation on aerobic capacity, strength and flexibility in female athletes	1	3,6
The effect of ovulation on performance in female athletes	1	3,6
Investigation of the effect of menstruation and post-menstrual periods on speed and endurance performance in female students of the department of physical education	1	3,6
The effect of menstrual phases on well-being level and performance in elite female athletes	1	3,6
The effect of acute exercise on oxygen saturation during menstrual period in female athletes in different branches	1	3,6
Analysis of menarche ages, menstrual cycle characteristics and reproductive hormones of athletes in different branches	1	3,6
Comparison of the effect of menstrual cycle periods on performance and some physiological parameters in young athletes and non-athletes	1	3,6
Comparison of physiological responses to YO-YO intermittent recovery test applied in menstrual and early follicular phases in female handball players	1	3,6
Comparison of blood lactate and ammonia measurements after maximal exercise test during menstrual period in female athletes	1	3,6
Investigation of lower limb strength and balance in menstrual cycle in female athletes	1	3,6
Investigation of menstrual cycle and eating attitude behaviors in female athletes	1	3,6
The effect of different phases of the menstrual cycle on some performance parameters in female athletes	1	3,6
The effect of menstruation on speed and endurance in female athletes	1	3,6
The effect of high-intensity short-term loading on postural control during the menstrual phases	1	3,6
Investigation of the effect of menstrual periods on women's sports performance	1	3,6
The validity of Sensewear Armband in the evaluation of different levels of energy expenditure during menstrual cycle	1	3,6
The effect of menstrual cycle on running economy: Caloric evaluation	1	3,6
The effect of menstrual phases on aerobic, anaerobic capacity, pain threshold and pain tolerance in elite volleyball players	1	3,6
The effect of menstruation on anaerobic power	1	3,6
The effect of menstrual cycle on knee proprioception	1	3,6
Evaluation of premenstrual syndrome conditions of female athletes in weightlifting sports and other sports branches	1	3,6
The effect of menstruation on performance in athletes	1	3,6
Examination of progesterone level in luteal phase in athletes and sedentary	1	3,6
The effects of sports on stress levels and problem solving skills of high school students during menstruation period	1	3,6
Total	28	100,0

When Table 9 is examined, when the distribution rates of the topics of the theses written about menstruation in the field of sports sciences are examined, it is seen that the theses are distributed with their own specific topics at a rate of 3.6% each.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study was conducted in order to create a general framework of the subject by considering the graduate theses containing the keyword menstruation published in the

field of sports sciences in Turkey from a bibliometric point of view until today. It is thought that the findings and results obtained in the study will contribute to the researchers who will conduct studies in this field. The theses were scanned according to the inclusion criteria determined by the researcher in the National Thesis Center database and the theses were reached.

The fact that 24 of the 28 theses on menstruation written in the field of sports sciences in the National Dissertation Center database were written by women and 4 by men shows that women are more interested in this topic than men, and the reason for this situation may be that women are more interested in this topic due to their gender roles in society and/or individual experiences.

The fact that there are 3 theses in the research in 2024 and 2 theses in 2022 shows that the interest in the subject has increased in recent years. The reason for this increase can be shown as an increase in awareness about the health of female athletes in the field of sports. It is thought that the rarer distribution of studies in the past years is due to the emptiness of the subject in the field.

In the distribution of theses according to institutes, the theses prepared at the Institute of Health sciences stand out. 21 of the 28 theses were prepared in health sciences. Since the concept of menstruation is a biological and physiological subject, the theses prepared are concentrated in the field of health sciences. Considering the contribution and reasons of the graduate school of education to the field, it can be said that this institute is more focused on education and this topic should include a pedagogical approach. It is observed that this issue receives less attention in the institutes of social sciences and educational sciences. Although menstruation may seem to be a condition directly related to health, in fact, many components can have an impact on women's menstruation processes. It can be said that the institutes of social sciences and educational sciences can also approach this issue sociologically and educational-oriented, so they can contribute.

It can be said that the reason why the department of physical education and sports ranks first in the distribution of theses in the department with 15 theses published is due to the fact that the department of physical education and sports is a widespread sub-discipline in universities. Taking the second place of the department of coaching education with 7 theses, it can be said that increasing physiologically based menstrual research is needed in the performances of female athletes.

It can be said that Ondokuz Mayıs University has a role in being a pioneer in the field of sports related to the subject, with a share of 20.7% in total theses. It is observed that Hacettepe University makes a contribution of 13.8%, and Gazi University's rate of 10.3% ranks third. It is observed that there are fewer studies in other universities in the distribution of theses. Regulating and increasing the opportunities of universities in terms of resources and support may increase the number of studies to be conducted on the subject in this area.

In the distribution of theses, Ankara and Samsun appear as the provinces where the most graduate theses on this subject are prepared. The publication of fewer theses at universities in smaller cities may indicate that these cities need more support on the subject in academic terms.

It can be said that the theses have a short and concise structure in terms of the number of pages. The fact that 86% of theses are in the range of 0-99 pages means that theses in this field are usually short. However, the fact that theses are generally short is a sensitive situation that should be considered regardless of the quality of the content.

It is seen that 21 of the theses are master's theses. The fact that most of the menstruation topic in sports science is done at the graduate level can be related to the

fact that master's theses are usually practical and practice-oriented, short-term, limited and specific studies. It shows that 7 doctoral theses in the field are quite small in terms of the number of studies in this field. Increasing the number of doctoral theses is also very important in terms of shedding light on academic developments and research in the field.

Although the subject titles of the theses are rarely similar to each other, it is noteworthy that they are original theses in terms of meaning and content, but the number of theses is quite small compared to other subjects in sports sciences. The number of studies on menstruation in the field of sports sciences should be increased. It is thought that this study, in which the current situation is revealed, will help researchers who will conduct research on the subject.

Kısaltmalar / Abbreviations

None.

Beyanlar / Declarations

Etik Onay ve Katılım Onayı / Ethics approval and consent to participate

Bu çalışmanın hazırlanma ve yazım sürecinde "Yükseköğretim Kurumları Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği Yönergesi" kapsamında bilimsel, etik ve alıntı kurallarına uyulmuş olup; toplanan veriler üzerinde herhangi bir tahrifat yapılmamış ve bu çalışma herhangi başka bir akademik yayın ortamına değerlendirme için gönderilmemiştir. Makale ile ilgili doğabilecek her türlü ihlallerde sorumluluk yazara aittir. Çalışmanın gerçekleştirilmesi için Mardin Artuklu Üniversitesi Girişimsel Olmayan Klinik Araştırmalar Etik Kurulu'nun 18/02/2025 tarih ve 2025/2-47 sayılı kararıyla alınmıştır

During the preparation and writing of this study, the principles of scientific integrity, ethics, and citation, as stipulated in the "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive," were fully observed; no falsification was made on the collected data, and this study has not been submitted to any other academic publication platform for evaluation. The author bears full responsibility for any potential violations regarding the article. It was taken with the decision of Mardin Artuklu University Non-Interventional Clinical Research Ethics Committee dated 18/02/2025 and numbered 2025/2-47

Veri Ve Materyal Erişilebilirliği / Availability of data and material

Bu çalışmanın bulgularını destekleyen veriler, makul talepler üzerine sorumlu yazardan temin edilebilir. Veri seti yalnızca akademik amaçlar için erişilebilir olacak ve verilerin herhangi bir kullanımı, orijinal çalışmayı referans gösterecek ve katılımcıların gizliliğini koruyacaktır.

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. The dataset will be accessible only for academic purposes, and any use of the data will recognize the original study and maintain the confidentiality of the participants.

Çıkar Çatışması / Competing interests

Yazarlar, bu makalede sunulan çalışmayı etkileyebilecek herhangi bir çıkar çatışması veya kişisel ilişkiye sahip olmadıklarını beyan etmektedirler.

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Yazar Katkıları / Authors' Contribution Statement

Study Design M.A.U., T.C., L.C.-Data Collection M.A.U., T.C., L.C.-Literature Review M.A.U.-Article Writing M.A.U., T.C., L.C.-Analysis Study was conducted by M.A.U

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