

**SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW OF 21st CENTURY MARITIME SILK ROAD:
A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS**Res. Asst. Mehmet Serdar ÇELİK * Assoc. Prof. Didem ÖZER ÇAYLAN (Ph.D.) * **ABSTRACT**

One Belt One Road (OBOR) project cover approximately sixty-five percent of the world population and One Road is one of the main sites of the project, including the sea route. The purpose of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road (MSR) is to increase the trade volume between western and eastern ports, especially Chinese ports. MSR will also help economic cooperation between participating countries and increase connectivity between ports located through the route of the project. There is only one OBOR related review article in the literature however, there is no MSR review article. To fill this gap, the main aim of this study is to find out and examine MSR-related articles that contain a perspective of the context, vision, and geographical coverage of the initiative in terms of Bibliometric Analysis factors. The systematic literature review has been applied to obtain secondary data from Scopus, Science Direct, Web of Science, and Springer link websites to create our sample. Hsieh and Shannon's (2005) method was applied in this review article as a qualitative research approach. In this research, Petticrew and Roberts's (2008) research model was applied to eliminate unnecessary articles with respect to the study's research criteria. In the research process of the study, 45 out of 224 articles were selected to cover our main research objectives. As a result, this study provides content analysis to classify selected 45 MSR articles that cover different subjects such as transport infrastructure, challenges, and opportunities of MSR, maritime security, port network, transport connectivity, environmental issues. Besides, evaluation of the articles year by year that form our sample was given in a detailed way in the research. The main contribution of this study is grouping the selected MSR articles in terms of their subjects and explaining common points to give ideas to researchers about the studied subjects related to the MSR initiative. For future research, academics and researchers may focus on the methodologies of the MSR-related articles.

Keywords: Maritime Silk Road, 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, New Maritime Silk Road, Systematic Literature Review, Bibliometric Analysis.

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21. YÜZYIL DENİZ İPEK YOLUNUN SİSTEMATİK LİTERATÜR DERLEMESİ: BİBLİYOMETRİK BİR ANALİZ

ABSTRACT

Bir Kuşak Bir Yol (BKBY) projesi dünya nüfusunun yaklaşık olarak yüzde altmış beşini kapsamaktadır ve Tek Bir Yol, deniz yolunu içine dahil eden projenin ana kısımlarından biridir. 21. Yüzyıl Deniz İpek Yolu'nun (DİY) amacı, başta Çin limanları olmak üzere batı ve doğu limanları arasındaki ticaret hacmini artırmaktır. DİY katılımcı ülkeler arasında ekonomik işbirliğine yardımcı olacak ve proje güzergâhı boyunca bulunan limanlar arasındaki bağlanabilirlik oranını artıracaktır. Literatürde BKBY ile ilgili tek bir derleme makalesi vardır ancak DİY ile ilgili derleme makalesi yoktur. Bu boşluğu doldurmak için, çalışmanın temel amacı, Bibliyometrik Analiz faktörleri açısından DİY'nun bağlamı, vizyonu ve coğrafi kapsamı ve perspektifini içeren makaleleri bulmak ve analiz etmektir. Örneklemimizi oluşturmak için Scopus, Science Direct, Web of Science ve Springer bağlantılı web sitelerinden ikincil veriler elde edilerek sistematik literatür taraması uygulanmıştır. Bu derleme de literatür taramasında, nitel araştırma yaklaşımı olarak bilinen Hsieh ve Shannon (2005) yöntemi uygulanmıştır. Bu araştırmada Petticrew ve Roberts'in (2008) araştırma modeli, araştırma kriterlerine göre gereksiz makalelerin elenmesi için uygulanmıştır. Çalışmanın araştırma sürecinde 224 makaleden 45'inin temel araştırma hedeflerimizi kapsadığı görülmüş ve örneklemimiz bu şekilde oluşturulmuştur. Sonuç olarak, bu çalışma, ulaştırma altyapısı, DİY'in zorlukları ve fırsatları, deniz güvenliği, liman ağı, ulaşım bağlantısı ve çevre sorunları gibi farklı konuları kapsayan seçilmiş 45 DİY makalesini sınıflandırmak için content analizinden oluşur. Ayrıca araştırmada örneklemimizi oluşturan makalelerin yıldan yıla değerlendirilmesi detaylı bir şekilde verilmiştir. Bu çalışmanın literatüre katkısı, DİY girişimi ile ilgili çalışılan konular hakkında araştırmacılara fikir vermek için seçilen DİY makalelerini konuları açısından gruplamak ve ortak noktalarını açıklamaktır. Gelecekteki araştırmalar için, akademisyenler ve araştırmacılar DİY ile ilgili makalelerin metodolojilerine odaklanabilirler.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Deniz İpek Yolu, 21. Yüzyıl Deniz İpek Yolu, Yeni Deniz İpek Yolu, Sistematik Literatür Taraması, Bibliyometrik Analiz.

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1. INTRODUCTION

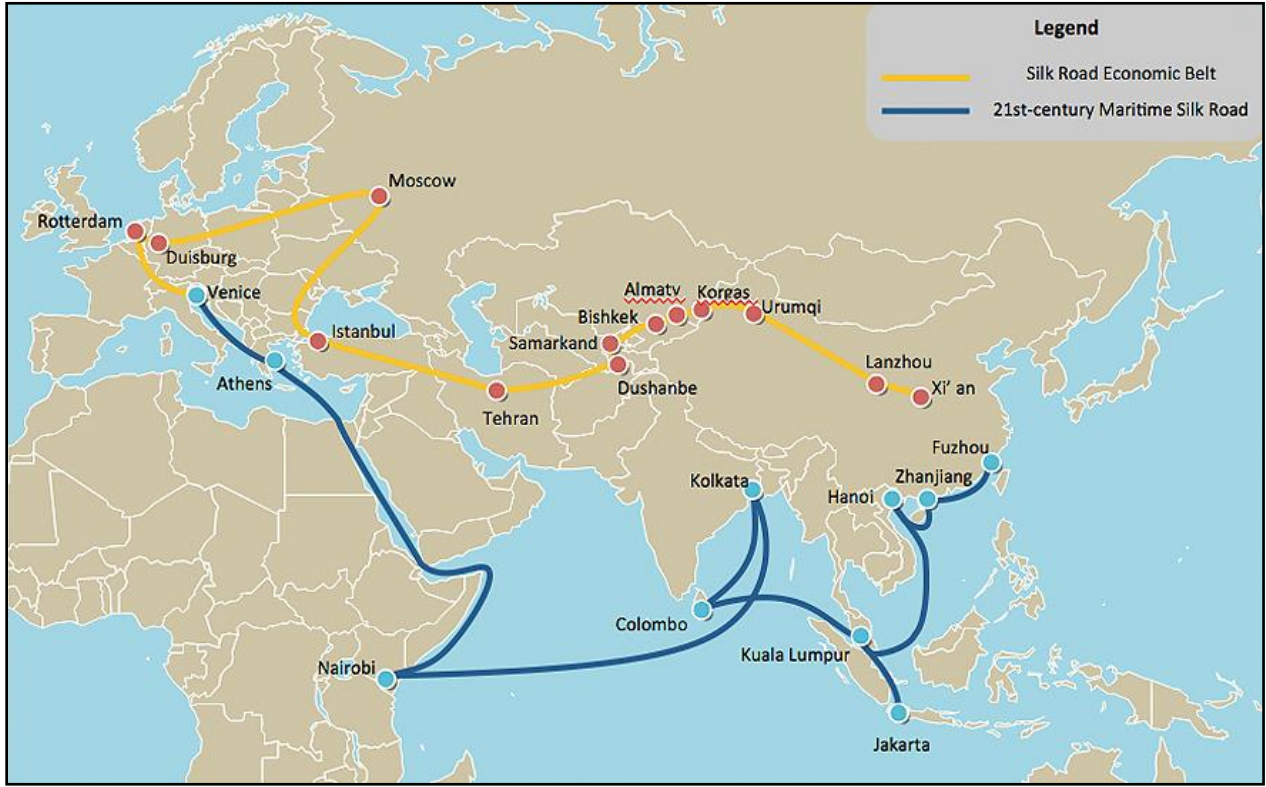
Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is contained of the MSR and Silk Road Economic Belt, the routes of the initiatives will link to more than 65 nations, making up around 35% of the world's trade, 62% of the global population, and more than 30% of the globe's GDP. This tremendous initiative covers energy, telecommunications, health, and education facilities, as well as railways, highways, and port

infrastructure projects (LBIA, 2017). MSR, as planned by China, will improve the link between the East Asia region, Europe, and the Mediterranean Sea. China's government initiated the so-called “New Maritime Silk Road” initiative as concentrated at port development and improvement of trade routes in the Eastern Mediterranean region, Southeast Asia area, and the Indian Ocean. China's participation in seaports and other maritime-related infrastructures can be seen in programs of gigantic transport infrastructure projects under the "Belt and Road Initiative" program. Sea lanes, road, railways, and aerial way developments complement each other and jointly open up new trade routes between regions (Misiągiewicz, 2017). MSR would be its proposed maritime equivalent, establishing a maritime corridor via a system of linked seaports and different infrastructure systems (Toktomushev, 2019).

From the past to the present, shipping has always had a crucial role in world development. Past and current developments of trade activities show that maritime trade’s role is crucial for the movement of cargo worldwide. Over five decades, global trade has increased approximately 1,700% and shipping has been the main transportation mode among all transportation varieties. MSR will boost the importance of maritime trade all over the world therefore, future growth of shipping trade will shape the global economy deeply (Lam et. al., 2018).

In November 2012, the Chinese government announced the first declaration of MSR. To protect their maritime rights, interests, and maritime transportation along the routes of Chinese maritime trade, MSR has been announced in the speech of President Hu Jintao (Len, 2015). The exact route of MSR is not certain therefore some port cities will be added or ejected through the direction of the project. There are few documents related to Maritime Silk Road port cities hence the route of MSR will be designated in the coming years completely (Nouwens, 2019). The current route of the MSR began from Fuzhou, then goes to South Asia through Zhanjiang, Hanoi through South China Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur via Malacca Strait Indian Ocean Colombo, Kolkata, Nairobi, Athens, and the route ends in Venice which is a significant transport hub city in Europe (Figure 1) (Blanchard, 2017)

Figure 1. 21st Century Maritime Silk Road



Source: GASS, 2020

Sea part of the OBOR initiative which is called the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road not only intends to help development stages of neighboring states of China but also could find a solution for disputed matters in respect to South China territorial sea problems (Cigui, 2014).

Underdeveloped ports will take advantage of the MSR initiative hence one of the significant aims of the project is improving the infrastructure of seaports along the MSR direction. Chinese companies and other entrepreneurs invest in Eastern Mediterranean, Indian Ocean, and South-East Asia ports heavily from the start of the initiative. For instance, COSCO (China Ocean Shipping), one of the Chinese state-owned companies invest to develop infrastructure and the hinterland of the Piraeus port, which is the main part of the MSR (Putten and Meijnders, 2015). MSR will be a cooperation chance among China and participating countries of MSR in respect to economic and infrastructure development. China may use MSR as a soft power to improving diplomatic relations between member countries of MSR. This initiative not only supports economic and diplomatic relations between countries but also will help to improve the political and cultural aspects of participating countries. (Jiang and Fu, 2018). This enormous project helps the Chinese economic development process and MSR countries take advantage of different transport infrastructure investments to ensure better connectivity between economic corridors of the initiative hence countries may attend to the project in the future (Karim, 2015).

The first stage of the study includes OBOR-MSR relations and explaining of the MSR initiative. The second stage of the study indicates methods of study and explains how they were implemented in this study. The third stage of the study mention about context, vision, and geographical coverage of the MSR initiative. The fourth stage of study includes related articles of the MSR studies, publications per year with journal names, and classification analysis of MSR articles in terms of their subjects. Common points of the selected MSR articles were analyzed in this section. The last section of the study is the conclusion and recommendation stage of the study.

2. METHODOLOGY

This section of the research explains the methodology of the study. The aim of the research was explained in a detailed way. The research process of the study shows the stages of the methodology process.

2.1. Research Objectives

This research intends to fill this gap of literature, addressing the following two main research questions:

- 1) What are the specific topics that mainly mention MSR articles?
- 2) From the perspective of context, vision, geographical coverage, what are the common points of related MSR articles?

2.2. Research Design

A systematic literature review was adopted in this study. This research contains general information related 21st Century Maritime Silk Road to understand the articles of MSR. Qualitative content analysis Hsieh and Shannon (2005) method was preferred to search related articles in the MSR literature. This study mainly focuses on Context, Vision, Geographical coverage topics of the MSR.

2.3. Sources of Data

In this study, the secondary source was obtained from Web of Science, Science Direct, Scopus, and Springer Link websites. To complete missing parts of the general view of the MSR google scholar database has been analyzed from the perspective of the global approach of the project.

2.4. Inclusion Criteria

- Articles between the years 2013 and 2021 were examined in this study. The first announcement of the 'Maritime Silk Road' project was in 2013 hence this time interval consists of our sample of the study.

- This study analyzes only English-written articles.

2.5. Exclusion Criteria

- Articles written in other languages than English were not included in this study.
- Articles that use Chronological/bibliometric analysis and systematic literature review that related to MSR subjects were excluded from our sample.
- Reports, commentaries, conference papers, book/book chapters, letters, editorials, grey literature (e.g. unpublished theses and dissertations), and web sources were not included in the study.
- Old Silk Road researches and historical articles that mention Ancient Silk Road topics were excluded from the sample of the study.
- In Google Scholar database research, articles with only abstracts were excluded from our sample.

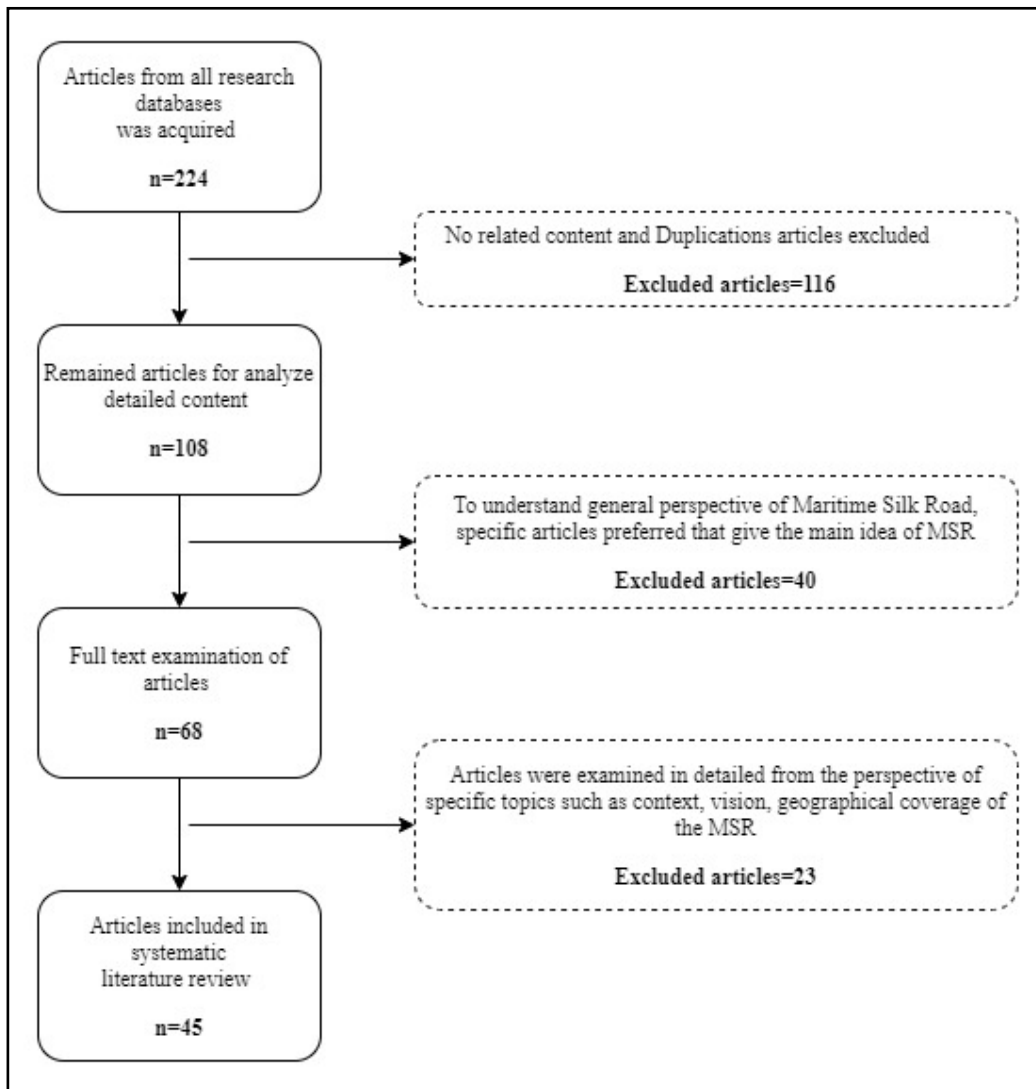
2.6. Search Strategy

One of the most popular systematic literature review approaches Petticrew and Roberts's (2008) research model was applied for the search of data in this research. This approach lean-to keyword search of the literature. In the search string of the study ‘‘OR’’ was used to specify articles that mention MSR in Boolean operator. **Search String** of the Study is ‘‘(Maritime Silk Road) OR (New Maritime Silk Road) OR (21st Century Maritime Silk Road)’’

There are several articles, which have the title of 21st Century Maritime Silk Road however most of them do not mention MSR topics, articles have only the title of MSR for purpose of taking the attention of researchers. To reach the right number of articles all keywords were researched in different alternative combinations. In the literature of the MSR articles ‘sea part’ classification was highly popular in the researcher's studies to describe Maritime Silk Road subjects, therefore the ‘sea part’ description was also examined in the selected MSR articles.

In the first step, 224 articles were reached with the help of the above-mentioned databases and search engines such as Science Direct, Scopus, Web of Science, and Springer link websites. In the second step, articles' abstracts and titles were compared with their content. This research shows that 116 articles that use 21st Century Maritime Silk Road or other similar titles have no connection between the article's abstract and the content of MSR. In the third step, after the detailed analysis of 108 Articles, only 68 articles are related to the main content of the MSR, which gives specific detailed information about the project. The last part of the research process shows that there is only 45 article mention about general perspective and topics of the MSR such as general perspective, context, vision and geographical coverage of the MSR (Figure 2). This study was carried out between October and December 2020.

Figure 2. Research Process



Source: Authors own elaboration

2.7. Data Analysis

This study provides the classification of 45 articles in terms of their subject and gives common points of the selected MSR articles. Especially Context, Vision, Geographical Coverage of the topics were analyzed to give the main idea of the articles that relate to MSR.

3. BACKGROUND OF THE 21ST CENTURY MARITIME SILK ROAD: CONTEXT, VISION, GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

The main aim of this research is to find out and analyze MSR-related articles that contain a perspective of the context, vision, and geographical coverage of the initiative in terms of Bibliometric Analysis factors. Briefly, information was given related to these topics to understand of scope of the article completely.

3.1. The Context

The Economic Corridor of the One Road Project refers to MSR, which is the second part of the OBOR. As mentioned before, the 'One Belt' part intends to intensify mainly road and railway trade between participating countries however the 'One Road' will try to strengthen maritime trade among European ports and Chinese ports (Wolf, 2016). The existing port and planned port of MSR projects will cover almost all significant trade locations in the world. The not only land part of the project is important but also sea part of the project is very critical for the Chinese government and member countries of BRI. If the existing railroads and port hinterlands could integrate with the planned transportation infrastructure systems of the MSR initiative, integration and connectivity will be the main success story of MSR (MERICS, 2019).

The Silk Road was the only point that contact between the two extremes of the Eurasian continent for several centuries. This path gives opportunity by supporting the trade of silk and other products to countries, which was essential in the development of Chinese civilization, the Indian region, Iran, the Arabian Peninsula, and European lands. The encounters between monks, merchants, soldiers, pilgrims, and simple citizens of different countries, assist interactions between people and the creations of cultural exchanges therefore MSR and Economic Belt may undertake this responsibility. MSR was the first international maritime trade route that was announced by the Chinese authority in the last decades (Zhaoming, 2014). From the ancient history of China to colonialism; Chinese silk, ceramics, and other goods have been transported through this significant trade route that links China to the Southeast Asia region, Indian region, European land, and Middle East (Till, 2016). Landside of the OBOR initiative was known by every country in the world hence it has historical background however MSR is one of the new seaborne trade projects that will help China's ambition. (Dooley, 2012).

3.2. The Vision

MSR will support the economic power of the China in Southeast Asia region also; this initiative has significant geostrategic and political effects to direct diplomatic relations among the participating countries. The size of the Chinese economy has great potential to implement a hegemonic authority across the regions, covering different perspectives of international interest with policies in the Asia region (Stuart-Fox 2004). China is trying to rejuvenate its maritime power and re-establish it as a strong middle kingdom at the center of global transportation flow and international relations, by incorporating historically important parts of the ancient Sea Silk Route into its BRI strategy (Rai, 2016). Historical ties of the Maritime Silk Road allow the Chinese government to reemerge its maritime power as a regional leader. Not only does China intend to control Southeast Sea but also they want to influence all sea trade route between Asia and Europe (Fasslabend, 2015).

3.3. Geographical Coverage

The route of MSR is not certain therefore countries that part of the MSR could be different after the announcement of the updated list of the MSR. Main directions have been described along the routes of the MSR such as the eastern direction towards the western part of America and another significant route flows towards European countries via the Arctic Ocean area and the Norwegian Sea along to the Baltic Sea and the North Sea. Articles and related documents mainly focus on two routes of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road; ships head towards South Asia and the Southeast region via the Strait of Malacca go through the Indian Ocean area and reach Africa's east coast. This direction has another extend that goes along the European countries through Suez Canal and Mediterranean region by sea. The last route of the MSR is east through the first island region to Oceania and South Pacific (Nouwens, 2019).

4. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

After the completion of the research process of the study 45 articles were analyzed in terms of the Bibliometric Analysis concept. These articles cover all related MSR subjects to understand the context, vision, and geographical coverage of the MSR perspective. In the next steps of the study, articles that mention MSR-related subjects were analyzed regarding content and classification analysis.

4.1. Publications per Year with Journal Name

Although the MSR initiative was announced in 2013 there are no articles related to our scope of study in that year. The table shows that between 2014 and 2020, there are 45 MSR articles written in different journals. Most of the articles were published in 2018 that includes the number of 14 publication and this part consist of %31 part of the all MSR related article in our article list. Between 2014 and 2016 there are only nine articles were published hence researchers may have expected action about the project or there is only limited information about the project in this time duration. Maritime Policy & Management journal is the top of the journals that has more publications at MSR-related articles. Journal of Contemporary China, International Journal of China Studies, Transportation Research, Sustainability Journal, and Geopolitics journal has more than one article published in the list however other journals have only one article in terms of MSR studies (Table 2).

Table 1. Evolution of the number of MSR related publications in journals

Journal	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
American Scientific Research Journal for Engineering, Technology, and Sciences							1	1
Island Studies Journal							1	1
International Journal of Geo-Information							1	1
Maritime Policy & Management Complexity				2	2		1	5
Journal of Public Affairs							1	1
Sustainable Computing: Informatics and Systems						1		1
Sustainability journal						1		1
National Nature Science of China						1		1
International journal of environmental research and public health						1		1
Mathematical Problems in Engineering						1		1
International Communication of Chinese Culture						1		1
Journal of Contemporary China					2			2
Transport Reviews					1			1
Ocean and Coastal Management					1			1
The Asian Journal of Shipping and Logistics					1			1
International Journal of China Studies			1					1
The Chinese Economy					1			1
Transportation Research					2			2
Sustainability					1	1		2
The Pacific Review					1			1
Panoeconomicus					1			1
Social Sciences in China				1				1
Journal Of Humanities And Social Science				1				1
Atmospheric and Oceanic Science Letters				1				1
Geopolitics				4				4
Journal of Contemporary East Asia Studies			1					1
The Review of International-Affairs			1					1
The Chinese Journal of Global Governance			1					1
Strategic Discourse on the People's Republic of China			1					1
The Asia Pacific Journal		1						1
Pacific Focus		1		1				2
History Research	1							1
International Journal of Maritime Science and Technology					1			1
Total	1	2	5	10	14	7	6	45
%	2	5	11	22	31	16	13	100

Source: Authors own elaboration

4.2. Classification Analysis of MSR Articles in terms of their Subjects

From the perspective of context, vision, and geographical coverage of the selected MSR studies, 24 different subjects were mentioned in the 45 articles. ‘Challenges and opportunities of the MSR’ and analysis of MSR in a different subject such as destination, finance, aim, political subjects are the most popular titles in written articles.

The investment strategy of MSR, oil transport, maritime security, energy security, the operation efficiency of ports, port terminal operators, port cooperation, port competitiveness, transport connectivity, logistic connectivity subjects of the selected articles was examined in only one article.

There is a close relation between transport infrastructure and investment strategy of the MSR in terms of the development process of the initiative hence transport infrastructure and investment strategy of MSR subjects were evaluated in the same sub-category.

It is hard to separate between Oil transport, naval diplomacy, maritime security, energy security subjects to each other in terms of security aspects, therefore, every subfactor of these issues was examined in the same column.

Ports are key elements of the MSR project however only seven articles mention port subjects such as operational efficiency of ports, port network, port terminal operators, port cooperation, port competitiveness.

On the other hand, one of the main purposes of the MSR initiative is increase connectivity between east and west transport routes however there is only 3 article related with connectivity aspect in transport and logistic connectivity subcategories.

In this study, popular 'issues' subjects in the literature, related to the MSR initiative were classified in four different sub-categories; environmental issues, South China Sea issues, Chinese domestic issues, Indian Ocean issues.

From the perspective of China, one of the significant aims of the MSR is to fix its relation with neighboring countries hence South Asian countries and the ASEAN organization's opinions about China and MSR initiative are very important for the Chinese government. Southeast Asian countries' responses to the MSR and ASEAN-MSR relation column show the articles that mention these subjects.

India has a negative attitude against the MSR initiative and this is a real problem for China to implement its policy towards MSR in the Asia region. Indian perspective to MSR articles focus on this negative approach mainly.

Marine Science and technology articles were referred to Chinese policy about the marine resource in open seas areas. There are only two articles that mention these subjects in the table (Figure 3).

Table 2. Diversity of subject area in MSR studies

Subject	Number of Articles	Authors	Major issue
1.Transport Infrastructure	2	Joseph-Harris, S. (2020), Lee, P. T. W., Hu, Z. H., Lee, S. J., Choi, K. S., & Shin, S. H. (2018)	Infrastructure investments are the main part of the MSR initiative.
2.Investment Strategy of MSR	1	Wang, L., Zheng, Y., Ducruet, C., & Zhang, F. (2019).	
3.Challenges and Opportunities of MSR	10	Joseph-Harris, S. (2020)., Rahman, Z. U. (2020)., Feng, L., Liu, L., & Zhang, H. (2019)., Yang, B., & Zhuo, Z. (2019)., Lam, J. S. L., Cullinane, K. P. B., & Lee, P. T. W. (2018)., Jiang, X., & Fu, Y. (2018)., Blanchard, J. M. F., & Flint, C. (2017)., Jianren, L. (2016)., Lim, A. C. H. (2015)., Karim, M. A. (2015).	Challenges and Opportunities of MSR were analyzed from different perspectives for the global subjects of the MSR.
4.Oil transport	1	Xiao, Y., Chen, Y., Liu, X., Yan, Z., Cheng, L., & Li, M. (2020).	There is a close relationship between energy security and maritime security in terms of the MSR development process.
5.Naval Diplomacy of MSR	2	Suri G. (2016), Yen-Chiang Chang (2018) Chang, Y. C. (2018).	
6.Maritime Security	1	Weihai, L. (2017).	
7.Energy security	1	Len, C. (2015).	
8.Operation efficiency of ports of MSR	1	Huang, T., Chen, Z., Wang, S., & Jiang, D. (2020).	Ports are one of the key elements for the MSR route hence Chinese government and companies invest in ports in different member states of MSR.
9.Port Network	3	Hu, Z. H., Liu, C. J., & Tae-Woo Lee, P. (2020)., Ruan, X., Feng, X., & Pang, K. (2018)., Chen, D., & Yang, Z. (2018).	
10.Port terminal operators	1	Wang, L., Zheng, Y., Ducruet, C., & Zhang, F. (2019).	
11.Port Cooperation	1	Feng, L., Liu, L., & Zhang, H. (2019).	
12.Port competitiveness	1	Peng, P., Yang, Y., Lu, F., Cheng, S., Mou, N., & Yang, R. (2018).	Ports are one of the key elements for the MSR route hence Chinese government and companies invest in ports in different member states of MSR.
13.Shipping network	2	Mou, N., Liu, C., Zhang, L., Fu, X., Xie, Y., Li, Y., & Peng, P. (2018)., Jiang, L., Jia, Y., Zhang, C., Wang, W., & Feng, X. (2019).	Container trade and the direction of MSR were analyzed regarding the shipping network.
14.Transport connectivity	1	Hu, Z. H. (2019).	'Connectivity' has critical importance for the MSR project to connect the MSR route between east and west.
15.Logistic connectivity	1	Wei, H., & Sheng, Z. (2018).	
16.Environmental issues	2	Yu, X., Chen, H., & Li, C. (2019)., Qiu, X., Wong, E. Y., & Lam, J. S. L. (2018).	There are four different 'issue' categorizations in our selected articles.
17.South China Sea issues	2	Kayembe, E. A.(2017)., Hui-Yi, K. T. (2016).,	
18.Chinese Domestic issues	2	Zhang, X. (2017)., Yoshikawa, S. (2016).,	
19.Indian Ocean issues	2	Suri, G. (2016).	

Table 2. Continues

Subject	Number of Articles	Authors	Major issue
20.Southeast Asian countries responses to the MSR	3	Chen, S. (2018)., Blanchard, J. M. F. (2018)., Chung, C. P. (2018)., Jiang, X., & Fu, Y. (2018).	From the perspective of the Chinese government, One of the significant aims of the MSR is close relations with South Asian countries.
21.ASEAN-MSR relation	2	Jianren, L. (2016)., Yeoh, E. K. K., Chang, L., & Zhang, Y. (2018).	
22.Analyzing MSR from a different perspective	10	Koboević, Ž., Kurtela, Ž., & Vujičić, S. (2018)., Blanchard, J. M. F. (2018)., Blanchard, J. M. F. (2017)., Jianren, L. (2016)., Koboević, Ž., Kurtela, Ž., & Vujičić, S. (2018)., Blanchard, J. M. F. (2018)., Palit, A. (2017)., Blanchard, J. M. F., & Flint, C. (2017)., Dimitrijević, D., & Jakanović, N. (2016).	Destination, finance, aim, politic, and other related subjects were examined in selected articles.
23.Indian perspective to MSR	2	Chung, C. P. (2018)., Palit, A. (2017).	India is one of the strongest countries in Asia hence the negative position of India to develop MSR may change calculations.
24.Marine science and technology	2	Gao Lan. (2014)., Luo, Y., Wang, D. X., Pan, G., Zhang, Z. Q., Wng, W. Q., & Yao, J. L. (2017).,	Chinese authorities give importance to these areas to reach energy resources in the sea.

Source: Authors own elaboration

4.3. Content analysis of the MSR Articles with regards to their Common Points

Karim (2015), Blanchard (2018) and Feng et. al (2019) mention about win-win mutual benefit will be key advantageous for both the Chinese government side and other member countries of the MSR at this tremendous project. Economic cooperation of the MSR countries will help improve port infrastructure and transport projects of the economic corridors of the MSR (Table 3). Connectivity is another important topic of the project and experts claim that after the complement of the infrastructure project, the connectivity rate of the maritime transport between east and west will increase significantly.

Most of the articles related to MSR are mention about energy security policy of China. Yoshikawa (2016), Koboevic et. al. (2018), and Chang (2018) give attention to the oil transport routes of China which have significant importance for the Chinese government to protect their sovereignty rights. Energy transportation from the Middle East and Africa is very critical for China therefore from the perspective of Suri (2016), Xiao et. al. (2020) and Blanchard (2018) military strategy of the Chinese government will do everything to secure the route of the MSR. Dimitrijevic and Jakanović (2016) explain that Not only does China intend to secure an energy transportation route between East and West but also they intend to secure the stability of its borders and maritime rights (Table 3).

Marine source, one of the substantial topics for MSR because different articles refer how its importance and how MSR affects the utilization of marine sources along the route of the project. Yu et. al. (2019), NMF (2017), Luo et. al. (2017), and Li (2017) claim that MSR may develop cooperation,

support trade activities in the industry, ensure access to different kinds of marine resources and provide resource and energy development (Table 3).

Every country has a positive or negative approach to the MSR project hence from the perspective of Blanchard and Blanchard (2017), member and non-member countries of MSR will determine the project's success. Nouwens (2019) examine that European countries see the MSR project as an intangible and unrealistic project however ISPSW (2016) claims that China has the potential to achieve this tremendous project and they intend to try cooperating with all member countries in the MSR route in terms of transportation infrastructure. According to Zhang (2017), it is still unclear that the project will be short-lived or China will be the next world power instead of the USA.

ASEAN organizations in Southeast Asia will have been influenced by the MSR concept in the next decades (Lam et. al., 2018). Len (2015) claims that ASEAN could lose its power in the Southeast Asia region because Chinese investment has the potential to change asymmetrical power in the region however according to Jainren (2016), MSR has not only negative impact on the ASEAN organization but also initiative has several positive impacts such as economic, transport and diplomatic cooperation in the area. Yeoh et. al. (2018) expect that Malaysia's geographical position will be very significant for the MSR route because MSR routes go through the Malacca strait that one of the critical choke points for Malaysia in the region.

Table 3. Common points of the MSR articles

Articles	Subject	Articles	Subject
Karim (2015), Blanchard (2018), Feng et. al. (2019)	Participating countries of the MSR and the Chinese government will take advantage of the benefits of the initiative.	Yoshikawa (2016), Koboevic et. al. (2018), Chang (2018), Dimitrijevic and Jokanović (2016)	Protect oil transport routes along the MSR is important for the Chinese government.
Suri (2016), Xiao et. al. (2020), and Blanchard (2018)	MSR policy and the military strategy of China have close ties to protect the route of the project.	. Yu et. al. (2019), NMF (2017), Luo et. al. (2017), Li (2017)	Providing resources and energy development could ensure with the help of the MSR initiative. MSR will help cooperation and trade activities in the Chinese and neighboring countries' industries.
Jiang et. al. (2019), Joseph-Harris (2020), Ruan et. al. (2018)	Trade, cultural activities, and communication could ensure among China and European countries after the implementation of the MSR project. Ports will be very significant to make this connection between east and west.	Lam et. al. (2018) and Ruan et. al. (2018),	One of the important topics of the MSR initiative is connectivity. Increase the connectivity rate between transport routes is the natural duty of the Chinese authorities. Shipping networks are another significant topic for the MSR initiative.
(Lam et. al., 2018). Yang and Zhuo (2019) and Wang et. al. (2019)	Transport infrastructure investment and construction are very important for MSR's strategy.	Hui-Yi (2016) and RSIS (2015)	This New Silk Road project will help reinstate the Old Silk Road project in terms of reach potential international markets for China.
Dimitrijević and Jokanović (2016), Jiang and Fu (2018), Feng et. al. (2019) and Chang (2018)	Internationalization of Chinese currency, excess production of Chinese products, and transport capacity problem are the economic purpose of the MSR initiative	Lim (2015) and Koboevic et. al. (2018)	Statistics show that China is the second-largest trade partner in the Africa continent hence African countries are very important for China and MSR

Source: Authors own elaboration

Jiang et. al. (2019), Joseph-Harris (2020) and Ruan et. al. (2018) explain that MSR will be an important passage between east and west for communication, trade and cultural activates between regions hence ports will be a key element to ensure make a connection along the MSR direction. From the perspective of Lam et. al. (2018) and Ruan et. al. (2018), connectivity and shipping network are other important topics for MSR therefore Chinese infrastructure project is intended to increase the connectivity rate between member countries of the MSR and complete missing parts of the shipping network along the route.

According to Lam et. al. (2018), logistic performance and logistics connectivity are two key factors to help the development of the MSR process therefore Chinese companies invest in underdeveloped countries of MSR. There are different kinds of logistic activities in the hinterland of investment ports hence logistic performance of the inland area will increase thanks to the improved connection between transport modes. Yang and Zhuo (2019) and Wang et. al. (2019) claim that construction is a key strategy for MSR; Southeast Asia, Central Asia, Europe, and Africa will have been connected with help of the investment strategy of the Chinese government in terms of both economic cooperation and political ties (Table 3).

The historical tie of MSR was explained in some articles that mention the MSR context. Hui-Yi (2016) and RSIS (2015) indicate that this transport project will reinstate of old Silk Road, which goes along the South China Sea area and European coastal areas. Southeast Asia area, Middle East, and South Asia have vital importance for trade routes. Clemens (2015) claims that reviving the Od Maritime Silk Road and New MSR will give China access to potential markets of international trade routes.

Dimitrijević and Jokanović (2016), Jiang and Fu (2018), Feng et. al. (2019), and Chang (2018) mention the aim of the MSR and how this huge initiative changes the trade activities in the direction of the project. The economic purpose of the MSR is to solve critical problems of China such as transport capacity, excess production, and internationalization of Chinese currency. Despite the domestic problems, MSR will support trade relations of the Chinese government with neighboring countries and it will help secure its borders (Table 3).

Lim (2015) and Koboevic et. al. (2018) explain that Chinese companies invest in several countries and continents such as Africa that one of the critical trade routes for MSR. After the Chinese infrastructure project and different infrastructure investments, the Chinese initiative has become the second-largest trade partner for African countries such as Senegal, Gabon, Mozambique, Tunisia, Tanzania, Ghana, and Djibouti. Wei (2016) explains that Russia is another key player in acceptance of the Economic Belt and Silk Road of the initiative hence China should have good relations with Russia to complete all infrastructure investment and transport alternatives of the OBOR project. Dian (2012) analyze show that even though USA against MSR, China may find other players to cooperate and show his presence in the regions.

South China Sea dispute is the main problem for the development process of the MSR therefore According to Cigui (2014) China intends to fix its image to have good relations with its neighboring countries in South China. Len (2015) claims that the MSR initiative will chance to repair the Chinese bad image for both ASEAN countries and South China neighbors. Not only 'Blue economy' idea has been encouraged with port infrastructure projects by Chinese investors but also sea-lane safety has been ensured.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study analyzes all articles related to MSR in specific perspectives such as context, vision, and geographical coverage in terms of Bibliometric Analysis factors. Not only certain subjects were researched but also the scope and concept of MSR were explained in this study. 21st Century Maritime Silk Road is a new term for academic research and several researchers don't have enough information to research specific subject related with MSR hence this study fills this gap and assist to researchers about different MSR subjects. Despite the Belt part of the project is more tangible, the MSR project is at its designing stage however, several port infrastructure projects are in progress. This study shows the main topics explained by authors between 2012 - 2021. This data set may help researchers to fill missing points of the MSR initiative.

Petticrew and Roberts's (2008) research model was applied to eliminate unnecessary articles with respect to the study's research criteria. The qualitative content analysis method of Hsieh and Shannon (2005) was preferred to search related articles in the MSR literature. This study includes a classification analysis of MSR articles in terms of their subject and a content analysis of the MSR articles regarding their common points. In the research process of the study, 45 out of 224 articles were selected. Selected articles of the study cover subjects such as transport infrastructure, challenges, and opportunities of MSR, maritime security, port network, transport connectivity, environmental issues. Besides, evaluations of the articles year by year that form our sample were given in detail.

This study answers these research questions (i) what are the specific topics that are mainly mentioned in MSR articles? (ii) from the perspective of context, vision, geographical coverage, what are the common points of related MSR articles? The main contribution of the study is grouping the selected MSR articles in terms of their subjects and explain common points of the articles to give ideas to researchers about studied subjects related to the MSR initiative.

There is only one limitation criterion for the study. Articles with only abstracts were excluded from our sample. For future research, academics and researchers may focus on methodologies of the MSR-related articles to analyze. This study has determined previous topics related to MSR and has shown unstudied topics of MSR to create opportunities for new researches about unaddressed subjects.

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Literatür Taraması / <i>Literature Review</i>	Çalışma için gerekli literatürü taramak / <i>Review the literature required for the study</i>	Arş. Gör. Mehmet Serdar ÇELİK Doç. Dr. Didem ÖZER ÇAYLAN

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