A Systematic Review and Bibliometric Analysis of the Turkish Doctoral Dissertations Completed in the Fields of Social Sciences and Humanities

Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Alanında Yürütülen Doktora Tezlerinin Sistematik ve Bibliyometrik Analizi

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Abstract: Dissertations conducted in the fields of social sciences and humanities should provide researchers and decision makers with solutions to the problems in academia and contribute to enhancing society's social and economic welfare. The number of scientific publications extracted from dissertations and citations on them is one way to determine how much dissertations contribute to academia, society, and the quality of doctoral education. Systematic review and bibliometric analysis were implemented to understand the contributions of the dissertations to their fields. Through the systematic review, 142 dissertations, completed at 12 Turkish public universities between 2014 and 2017, in the National Thesis Center database of the Turkish Council of Higher Education were derived. The scientific publications extracted from these dissertations and citations to these publications were searched in the databases CoHE Academic, Google Scholar, ResearchGate, ScienceDirect, SCOPUS and Web of Science. Findings of bibliometric analysis indicate that 105 scientific publications were extracted from 142 dissertations, and their citation count was 241. However, these publications were predominantly published and cited in the national low impact factor indexed journals. To understand the reason for this situation, the methods of each dissertation concerning research design, data collection, and data analysis were examined thoroughly. The findings reveal that qualitative research design and secondary data, mostly used in these dissertations, might be the reasons for this issue. Some suggestions were made to reduce the problems identified concerning the quality of the main dissertation outputs.

Keywords: Bibliometric Analysis, Citation Count, Doctoral Dissertations, Social Sciences and Humanities, Systematic Analysis

Özet: Sosyal ve beşeri bilimler alanlarında yapılan doktora tezleri, araştırmacılara ve politika yapıcılara akademideki sorunlara çözüm sunmalı ve toplumun sosyal ve ekonomik refahını artırmaya katkıda bulunmalıdır. Tezlerden elde edilen bilimsel yayın sayısı ve bunlara yapılan atıflar, tezlerin akademiye, topluma ve doktora eğitiminin kalitesine ne kadar katkıda bulunduğunu belirlemenin bir yoludur. Bu amaçla tezlerin alanlarına katkılarını anlamak için hem sistematik inceleme hem de bibliyometrik analiz yapılmıştır. Sistematik inceleme sonucunda Türkiye'deki 12 devlet üniversitesinde 2014-2017 yılları arasında tamamlanan 142 adet tez Türkiye Yükseköğretim Kurulu (YÖK) Ulusal Tez Merkezi veri tabanında yer almaktadır. Ayrıca bu tezlerden çıkarılan bilimsel yayınlar ve bu yayınlara yapılan atıflar CoHE Academic, Google Scholar, ResearchGate, ScienceDirect, SCOPUS ve Web of Science veri tabanlarında taranmıştır. Bibliyometrik analiz bulguları, 142 tezden 105 bilimsel yayının çıkarıldığını ve bunların atıf sayısının 241 olduğunu göstermektedir. Ancak, bu yayınlar ağırlıklı olarak ulusal düşük etki faktörü indeksli dergilerde yayınlanmış ve alıntılanmıştır. Bu durumun nedenini anlamak için her bir tezin araştırma tasarımı, veri toplama ve veri analizi ile ilgili yöntemleri ayrıntılı olarak incelenmiştir. Bulgular, bu tezlerde çoğunlukla kullanılan nitel araştırma deseni ve ikincil verilerin bu soruna neden olabileceğini ortaya koymaktadır. Ardından, ana tez çıktılarının kalitesine ilişkin tespit edilen sorunları azaltmak için bazı temel önerilerde bulunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Atıf Sayısı, Bibliyometrik Analiz, Doktora Tezleri, Sosyal ve Beşeri bilimler, Sistematik Analiz

1. Introduction

Social science and humanities deal with human behavior in its social and cultural aspects as a branch of academic study or science (Greenfeld & Nisbet, 2021). Studies conducted in the field of social sciences and humanities are crucial as they enable people to understand the pro-

found effects they are exposed to owing to digitalization, globalization, and demographic exchange of the population (OECD, 2019) and offer solutions to the matters they face such as climate change, interdependent financial systems, immigration, conflict, and social inequality (OECD, 2018). To illustrate, 1.3 billion people are poor in multi-dimensional aspects, including an excessive number of women and disabled people. Furthermore, 80% of humanity lives below $10 per day. Interconnected socio-economic, environmental, and governance challenges driving people into poverty should be addressed (UNDP, 2022). On the other hand, the global population has nearly doubled in the past 40 years, which has affected the size of rural areas, towns and cities. Today, almost half of the global population lives in cities. Global megatrends such as the climate emergency, demographic change and digitalization are expected to have different impacts on these habitual areas. This requires policy-makers to design efficient and coherent policy-responses that are specific to the areas (OECD, 2020). Hence, social sciences and humanities play an important role in developing solutions to the challenges that humanity faces in the 21st century. As the challenges in the social and cultural aspects are interconnected with each other, the social sciences (e.g., economics, political sciences and civics, psychology and sociology) and humanities (e.g., religion, theology, history and philosophy) integrate numerous disciplines to study human behavior comprehensively.

As known doctoral degree is a leading edge in the learning area. In this degree, researchers should be equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies to extend the literature concerning their fields. Advanced studies like doctoral dissertations need to identify and account for the problems to which people are exposed with regard to social, cultural and economic aspects. They represent the most important outcome in a doctoral program where the researchers are supposed to develop their knowledge, skills and competency in their studying area and to solve the problems they encounter in working and learning environments autonomously or to produce the most innovative ideas in these environments (European Qualification Framework [EQF], 2020; Turkish Qualification Framework [TQF], 2015). Besides, innovation should be brought to science, a new scientific method should be developed, or a known method applied to another field should be conducted in doctoral dissertations (Turkish Graduate Education Regulation, 2016). So, the doctoral dissertations are supposed to contribute to the literature or practices with their findings, implications, and suggestions for researchers and decision-makers.

In particular, researchers who enroll in doctoral programs should take the requisite courses and write and defend their dissertations as a part of these programs. In Türkiye, it is necessary for researchers to submit their master's with a thesis or bachelor's degree, academic personnel and postgraduate education entrance exam scores, as well as foreign language exam scores, and take a scholastic assessment test. In these programs, they are required to take at least seven courses, a seminar, a doctoral qualification exam, a proposal for dissertation and dissertation studies, which equal at least 240 credits in the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). When they fulfill these requirements successfully, they have to complete the program by writing and defending dissertations (Turkish Graduate Education Regulation, 2016). However, they should also demonstrate the accumulation of their practical and intellectual qualifications in their dissertations (Buchanan & Herubel, 1994). In other words, the dissertations somehow certify their authors' knowledge, skills, and competency in their research fields.

This research focuses on social sciences and humanities dissertations because PhD holders in these fields should improve the quality and competitiveness of human capital, play an active role in the organization of social and organizational life and provide creative and innovative solutions for social, cultural and economic issues. Besides, dissertations in the fields are expected to contribute to the development of policies and practices in the social sciences and humanities. Hall (1991) argued that the academic significance of a discipline rests on the quality of doctoral studies, where dissertations are regarded as significant tools for the related discipline to advance scientifically. In particular, an author's impact on his or her field is generally measured based on the number of his or her scientific publications and the citation counts for those publications (Aslan et al., 2021). In this context, the scientific publications generated from dissertations and their citation number can be used in the assessment of the quality of doctoral programs (Cloete et al., 2015; Granovsky et al., 1992). With regard to research design, data collection, and data analysis, the investigation of the methods used in the dissertations can enable researchers to better grasp the factors influencing the quality of doctoral dissertation outputs. Moreover, these analyses can reveal the PhD holders' competence to extend the boundaries of their study fields.

1.1. Significance of the Study

This study focused on dissertations conducted in the fields of social sciences and humanities in the Turkish context because Türkiye deserves a special case with its 83 million dynamic population, which ranks the country 17th in the world (World Bank [WB], 2022a). Overall, Türkiye is the 19th largest economy globally, with a GDP of $719 billion (WB, 2022b). Türkiye has experienced a 13.7% population growth rate during the past 20 years, which has been exposed to rapid urbanization. Although 65% of the population lived in the province and district centers and 35% of them in the towns and villages in 2000, in Türkiye, about 93% of the population lived in the provinces and district centers in 2020 (TÜİK, 2020). Türkiye also hosts the largest refugee population in the world with 3.7 million people, mostly Syrians displaced by the neighboring civil war (Açıkgöz & Günay, 2020; UN Refugee Agency [UNCHR, 2022]). They have caused a number of social, cultural, and economic problems in Türkiye for a long time. For example, unemployment,

income inequality, political conflicts related to the right and left political movements, coup d'etats, terrorism, and migration have been the main social problems in Türkiye since the 1980s. Since these issues are investigated and discussed, and some solutions are proposed for them at the most advanced level in doctorate programs, the doctoral dissertations implemented in the fields of social sciences and humanities in Türkiye were selected as a research subject.

In doctoral programs, as the highest level of education, researchers should personally discover things (Ziman, 1993). This degree requires students to generate original solutions to the research problems they study, have an accumulation of knowledge, and conduct research independently (Sadlak, 2004). Doctoral programs in social sciences and humanities are supposed to train more qualified human capital to contribute to developing policies for the promotion of society's social and economic welfare. Therefore, this study is concerned with the bibliometric analysis of the dissertations conducted in various disciplines in the social sciences and humanities to understand the competency of the researchers' expansion of knowledge in their fields. Bibliometric analysis is widely used to evaluate theses around the world. For instance, Hsieh, Chuang and Wang (2013) analyzed 767 theses on information literacy from 1988 to 2010 in the United States and Taiwan concerning publishing universities, paper growth, author/advisor productivity, type of literacy, and research methods. Moreover, Skinner (2016) examined research topics of doctoral dissertations on distance learning from 2000 to 2014. Additionally, the citation patterns of doctoral dissertations were analyzed by Osman, Alemna and Kumah (2018) and Jayaprakash and Kannappanavar (2015). On the other hand, when looking at the studies for Türkiye, Batur and Özcan (2020) examined 165 theses on critical thinking according to universities, institutes, disciplines, years, program type, method, and subjects between 2015 and 2019. Besides, Çelikkaya and Demirgül (2019) examined 269 theses on regional development in terms of some variables such as the language of theses, PhD holders' and their supervisors' genders, and the distributions of the theses by year. Besides, Sarı and Akıncı (2020) evaluated 14 theses on women and tourism between 1996 and 2017 with regard to the year of publication, university, institute, department, and subject. Moreover, Eskin and Kurt (2020) studied 214 theses on environmental problems in Türkiye between 1978 and 2018 in line with some criteria such as research method, language and departments. Furthermore, in the last two studies, a bibliometric analysis was also used to evaluate the dissertations with regard to their citation patterns.

Aslan et al. (2021) investigated the impact of the Turkish educational dissertations thanks to the scientific impact criterion concerning the scientific publications derived from these dissertations in peer-reviewed indexed journals and their citation counts. Similarly, social sciences dissertations, except education dissertations, were examined using the same method as in that study. Therefore, one aspect of this new study is to see how widely dissertations on social sciences and humanities are recognized in the scientific community and whether they contribute to knowledge in related fields. Since education studies are still one of the core and leading social science disciplines to ensure students are prepared for this new world in the 21st century (Aslan et al., 2021), the findings of these two studies will most likely to complement each other. However, in contrast to the former study, the other aspect of this study is to understand whether there is any relation between the quality of the doctoral study outputs and the data and research methods used in the social science and humanities dissertations. In this way, it is expected to attract researchers' attention to the level of PhD holders' qualifications and their contributions to the literature and practice in the fields of social science and humanities. From this perspective, the answers to the following questions were sought in this study:

RQ1: What is the number of scientific publications extracted from the doctoral dissertations conducted in the fields of social sciences and humanities?

RQ2: What is the citation count of the scientific publications extracted from the doctoral dissertations conducted in the fields of social sciences and humanities?

RQ3: What research methods, data collection tools, and data analysis techniques were used in the dissertations to understand the relations between the citation counts and the scientific publications generated from these dissertations?

2. Method

A systematic review and bibliometric analysis were implemented to examine the doctoral dissertations in the social sciences and humanities. The systematic review was conducted to access the doctoral dissertations completed in the social sciences institutes, which are responsible for implementing graduate studies in social sciences and humanities in Türkiye. A systematic review enables researchers to replicate the review process and come up with the same set of evidence and conclusion. It also includes a comprehensive search of designated databases and requires a thorough process to analyze and synthesize relevant information (Linneluecke, Marrone & Singh, 2020). Through the systematic review, 142 dissertations, completed at 12 Turkish public universities between 2014 and 2017, in the National Thesis Center database of the Turkish Council of Higher Education (CoHE) were derived.

Bibliometric analysis, which is one of the approaches for synthesizing scientific results and information from existing publications with secondary analysis in order to determine the current status and trends (Jing et al., 2015), was conducted to determine the scientific publications extracted from these dissertations and citations to these publications were searched in the databases CoHE

Academic, Google Scholar, ResearchGate, ScienceDirect, SCOPUS and Web of Science.

2.1. Data Collection

Access to the graduate theses is allowed in the National Thesis Center database of the (CoHE) to contribute to science on the condition that the confidentiality orders for them are not taken by the related institutions and organizations (CoHE, 2018). So, almost every thesis holder should share his or her thesis with the researchers on this database. In the present study, the criterion sampling pattern (Aslan, Açıkgöz & Günay, 2021) was considered in the determination of the universities. The sampling pattern involves one university with the highest value with regard to the number of students enrolling in doctoral programs, the number of doctoral program graduates, the number of academics and the number of publications per academic in national and international indexed journals in each region of the 12 Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics-1 (NUTS-1) determined by the European Office for Statistics (EC, 2020). Another characteristic of these universities is that their instruction language is Turkish. So, 12 public universities were taken into account in the current study. Three dissertations from each university were randomly selected for the years of 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017. In other words, each university has a total of 12 dissertations for analyses. They were reached between 15 and 30 June 2021. The dissertations completed between 2014 and 2017 were studied as it might take a long period to publish a scientific study from the social sciences and humanities dissertations and get citations from other researchers.

The study group of the dissertations is listed in Table 1. It consists of 142 dissertations, which were conducted at selected 12 universities, except Gaziantep University, which has only 10 dissertations due to the lack of completed dissertations in 2014. Besides, the distribution of doctoral dissertations is displayed in Table 2. It is understood that the dissertations investigated in this study mostly belong to the disciplines of divinity, economics, literature, business administration, and history, respectively.

Table 1. Number of Doctoral Dissertations by Universities

		Number of the dissertations
University	Ankara	12
	Atatürk	12
	Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart	12
	Çukurova	12
	Dokuz Eylul	12
	Erciyes	12
	Gaziantep	10
	İnönü	12
	Istanbul	12
	Karadeniz Technical	12
	Ondokuz Mayis	12
	Uludağ	12
Total		142

Table 2. Number of Doctoral Dissertations by Social Science and Humanities Disciplines

		Number of the dissertations
Discipline	Business Administration	19
	Communication	2
	Divinity	26
	Economy	27
	Geography	3
	History	15
	International Relations	7
	Law	8
	Literature	20
	Philosophy	4
	Political Science	4
	Radio, Television and Cinema	3
	Sociology	2
	Tourism	
Total		142

2.2. Data Analysis

The doctoral dissertations were examined in terms of their output quality. For this purpose, bibliometric analysis was applied in this study since it is a type of quantitative analysis of publications produced during a specific time and region, as well as the relationships between these publications (TUBITAK Cahit Arf Information Center, 2021). Many studies have utilized this approach to identify the distribution of scientific publications by country, institution, publication type, and research fields in order to get insight into the descriptive characteristics of current studies (Kaya & Erbay, 2020). Therefore, the contributions of the dissertations to knowledge in the field of social sciences with regard to the quantitative measures of scientific publications extracted from the dissertations and citations to them were examined between 10 November and 5 December 2021.

All the dissertations were recorded with their publication year, titles, themes, results, research methods, data collection tools, and data analysis techniques in the Microsoft excel spreadsheet software. They were searched in the related databases to determine for the publications extracted from dissertations and their citation counts.

This study used the same classification as Aslan et al. (2021) to identify the scientific impact value of the indexed journals. The candidates applying for associate professorship in Türkiye get certain scores for the articles they publish in the indexed journals according to this classification. For example, a candidate gets 20 scores for each article published in SSCI indexed journal, whereas he/she get 8 scores in the national publications indexed journals. The algorithm of the determination indexes is based on the scores in this classification. The classification is as follows: the publications indexed in the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), Science Citation Index (SCI), Science Citation Index Expanded (SCI-Expanded), Arts and Humanities Citation Index (ACHI) and Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI) are considered first

order indexes; international publications indexed in), SCOPUS Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) and Index Copernicus are considered second order indexes; national publications indexed in the Turkish Academic Network and Information Center (ULAKBIM), and Turkish Education Index are considered third order indexes (InterUniversity, 2021). However, scientific publications extracted from social science dissertations found in the Google Scholar database or books are classified as separate categories.

Furthermore, the doctoral dissertations were analyzed in terms of their research methods (quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods), data collection tools (documents, surveys, interviews, observation), and data analysis techniques (document analysis, content analysis, statistical analysis, econometric analysis, discourse analysis) to show whether there is a link between the data and method used in the dissertation and the quality of the outputs of the dissertation, in other words, the scientific impact value of outputs.

2.3. Sampling of the Study
108 out of 142 PhD holders in this study still work in various positions at universities, such as associate professor, assistant professor, research assistant, and lecturer; that is, about 76% of the PhD holders work in academia. The others work as administrators, researchers, and teachers in different institutions. While 140 dissertations were written in Turkish, only two of them were English, since they were conducted in the field of English literature.

2.4. Validity and Reliability
Three independent researchers (two associate professors and one assistant professor in the fields of educational sciences, sociology and history) were consulted to provide their thoughts on the determination of the inclusion of the dissertations and their scientific publications and citation counts in the research's implementation during the systematic review and bibliometric analysis stages with regard to content validity. In addition, to enable the validity of the research, attention was paid to the possible relationship between the quality of scientific publications extracted from the dissertations with regard to their research methods, data collection tools, and data analysis techniques.

As for the reliability of the study, other researchers can access all the dissertations examined in this study in the National Thesis Center database of the CoHE, their scientific publications and citation counts in the related databases, which makes them replicate the findings of the study. The bibliometric analysis was retested to check the consistency of the findings by the researchers three weeks later. It was confirmed that the findings were consistent.

3. Findings
This section examined the research questions of this study. Initially, the descriptive features of scientific publications were extracted from the doctoral dissertation in the field of social sciences, and then the citation counts of them were analyzed. Then, the methods applied in the dissertations were presented.

3.1. Descriptive Characteristics of Scientific Publications Extracted from the Dissertations
As showed in Table 3, 105 scientific publications were extracted from 142 dissertations. It is seen that only five scientific publications were published in SSCI, SCI, SCI-Expanded, ACHI, and ESCI indexed peer-reviewed journals, while 14 scientific publications were published in ERIC, EBSCO, DOAJ, and Index Copernicus indexed peer-reviewed journals. 51 scientific publications were published in the national indexed journals. On the other hand, 33 books were produced from the dissertations. Hence, PhD holders generally seem to have difficulty publishing their publications in the first order of international indexed peer-reviewed journals. It appears that they mostly published their scientific publications in the low impact factor indexed journals or published them as books. In brief, the number of publications per dissertation was approximately 0.7 in the field of social sciences.

3.2. Citation Counts of the Scientific Publications Extracted from the Dissertations
The number of citation counts of the scientific publications extracted from the dissertations was 241 (Table 3). The scientific publications published in the third order national indexed journals have 151 (62%) citations. While the scientific publications published in the second order-indexed journals have 80 (33%) citations, those published in the first order-indexed journals have eight (0.3%) citations. Additionally, the number of citations for the books was just two (0.1%). Nevertheless, 70 citations

Table 3. Number of Scientific Publications and Their Citation Counts

Indexed Database	Number of the publications	Citation counts of the publications		
		Master Theses/Doctoral Dissertations	Publications	Total
SSCI, SCI, SCI-Expanded, ACHI, ESCI	5	3	8	11
ERIC, EBSCO, DOAJ, Index Copernicus	14	7	80	87
ULAKBIM, SOBIAD, Turkish Education Index	51	57	151	208
Google Scholar	2	-	-	-
Books	33	3	2	5
Total	105	70	241	311

were also found in the other master theses or doctoral dissertations. The findings reveal that the citations were mostly clustered in the low impact factor indexed journals, similar to the scientific publications.

3.3. Methods of the Dissertations

Table 4 displays that qualitative research methods were used in 94 dissertations (about 66%), quantitative research methods in 46 (about 33%), and mixed research methods in two (1%). The qualitative research method has been widely used in the fields of divinity, literature, linguistics, and history, to name a few. On the other hand, the quantitative research method was conducted in the disciplines of economics and business administration, consecutively.

When the data collection tools in the dissertations are concerned, documents (113, about 79%), surveys (23, about 16%), interviews (8, about 5%) and observations (1, about 0.7%) were used. As a data collection tool, documents were mostly used in the disciplines of economics, divinity, language and linguistics, and history, respectively. According to the survey, people were primarily employed in the disciplines of business administration and divinity, in that order.

As for the data analysis techniques of the dissertations, it is seen that document analysis (89, 62%), statistical analysis like ANOVA, t-test and descriptive statistics (45, about 31%), econometric analysis like panel data and structural equation models (30, 21%), and content or thematic analysis (11, 7%), and were heavily used. While document analysis was widely used in the disciplines of divinity, literature, linguistics, and history, econometric

and statistical analysis were mostly used in economics and business administration.

The findings indicate that social sciences and humanities dissertations in Türkiye mostly used secondary data rather than primary data. Primary data that has been generated by the researcher himself/herself, specially designed for understanding and solving the research problem at hand. However, secondary data means data collected and used by someone else or an institution earlier (Benedictine University, 2022). In the generation of primary data, interviews and surveys are commonly used. On the other hand, document analysis generally includes the internet, libraries, archives, government publications, schools, and organizational reports to produce secondary data. Primary data plays a significant role in extending the boundaries of knowledge. It seems a necessity to examine the dissertations with regard to the research methods, data collection tools, and data analysis techniques to understand the contributions of the dissertations to the formation of primary or secondary data. In the findings, it is understood that secondary data was mostly generated in the dissertations. Therefore, this situation might be one of the reasons why most scientific publications in the field of social sciences were extracted from doctoral dissertations in low-impact factor indexed journals and cited by them in Türkiye.

4. Discussion

In this study, 142 doctoral dissertations completed in various disciplines in the field of social sciences at the 12 Turkish public universities from 2014 to 2017 were exa-

Table 4. Methods of the Dissertations

Disciplines	Research methods			Data collection tool				Data analysis techniques				
	Quanti-tative	Quali-tative	Mixed method	Docu-ment	Sur-vey	Inter-view	Obser-vation	Docu-ment analysis	Statis-tical analysis*	Econo-metric analysis**	Content analysis/ Thematic analysis	Dis-course analysis
Business Administration	16	2	1	6	12	1	-	4	23	8	1	-
Communication	2	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	5	-	-	-
Divinity	5	21	-	19	5	2	-	19	14	-	3	1
Economics	22	5	-	25	2	-	-	5	1	21	-	-
Geography	-	3	-	2	-	1	-	3	-	-	1	-
History	-	15	-	15	-	-	-	15	-	-	-	-
International Relations	-	7	-	7	-	-	-	7	-	-	-	-
Law	-	8	-	8	-	-	-	8	-	-	-	-
Literature & Linguistic	1	19	-	18	1	1	-	17	4	-	2	-
Philosophy	1	3	-	3	-	-	-	3	1	-	1	-
Political Science	-	4	-	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-
Radio, Television & Cinema	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-
Sociology	-	3	-	3	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-
Tourism	-	1	1	-	1	2	1	-	-	1	1	-
Total	47	93	2	112	23	7	1	89	48	30	10	1

*Regression correlation, T-test, ANOVA, Chi-square test, descriptive statistics
** Panel data analysis, Structural Equation Model (SEM)

mined with bibliometric analysis in terms of the number of scientific publications extracted from dissertations and their citation counts. The total number of scientific publications extracted from the dissertations was 105, with 241 citations to them. In brief, the number of publications per dissertation was about 0.7 in the field of social science.

It was found that the number of scientific publications in the first order journals named SSCI, SCI, SCI-Expanded, ACHI, and ESCI indexed peer-reviewed journals, which are abstracted and indexed in the WoS database, was quite low compared to others. Although the number of scientific publications in the second order journals like ERIC, EBSCO, DOAJ, and Index Copernicus databases was slightly higher than the ones in the first order indexed journals, the publications were heavily clustered in the third order national indexed journals. Similarly, Aslan et al. (2021) indicated that most of the scientific publications extracted from the educational field and their citation counts were placed in the third order impact factor indexed journals, and the number of publications per dissertation was about 0.5 in the field of education. Although selected disciplines of social science dissertations in this study performed better than the education dissertations according to the number of publications per dissertation, most of the scientific publications and their citation counts were seen in the low impact factor indexed journals in both fields. Therefore, it can be concluded that the scientific impact of both social science and education dissertations is low and their impact is limited to the national level. Hence, the results of this study and those of Aslan et al. (2021) might complement or support each other. Similarly, Baloğlu and Bilgiç (2021a) investigated the international scientific performance of the Turkish academics' in the WoS database and they put forward that their scientific impact is national rather than international.

One reason why Turkish researcher publications are predominantly published in the low impact national indexed journals could be that the instruction language of the selected universities in this study is Turkish. Dissertations written in Turkish might somehow restrict the PhD holders' publications in the high quality international indexed journals in the databases such as WoS, ERIC, and EBSCO. However, Baloğlu and Bilgiç (2021b) revealed a noteworthy finding concerning the publication performances of the Turkish universities in the WoS: the ratio of the publications generated from the universities whose medium language of instruction is English is about 5% in the WoS. Therefore, it is not a surprising result for the universities in the present study to have low performance in the WoS and other high order international indexed journals. Another remarkable finding is that about one in four PhD holders published their doctoral dissertations as books rather than preparing scientific publications for publication in peer-reviewed indexed journals. It can be easier and more feasible for some academics to publish their studies as books with national publishers because

they are not rigorously subjected to the peer-review process as in the case of international and national peer-reviewed journals. So, the publications extracted from the dissertations in social sciences were largely published in national low impact factor indexed journals and books in Türkiye, which might reduce their scientific impact.

As to the citations to the scientific publications extracted from the dissertations, it is understood that these publications largely received the citations from the national scientific community (62%). Additionally, the dissertations totally received more citations (311) than the ones to the scientific publications extracted from these dissertations (241). This finding is at odds with the ones obtained by Osman, Alemna and Kumah (2018), which found that journal publications get the most citations from dissertation citations. One reason for this conflict could be that the Turkish researchers mostly use the dissertations because of their language. As argued by Alper and Döğer (2021) and Aslan et al. (2021) citation counts measure the impact of scientific studies in the academic world. Thus, it can be deduced that the impact of the PhD holders in social sciences in this study is mostly restricted to the national academic world. The citations to the books produced from the dissertations are also limited. Akçiğit and Özcan-Tok (2020) affirmed this point, indicating that the scientific studies conducted in Türkiye are relatively ineffective at getting citations from the western scientific world. Overall, the impact of these dissertations on the academic world turns out to be considerably confined to the national level.

When the methods of the dissertations are considered, the most commonly used research methods are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research in doctoral dissertations in the field of social sciences in Türkiye. Sökmen (2021) analyzed 55 Turkish articles indexed in the WoS database with regard to social studies education and found that the qualitative research method was notably used in these articles. On the other hand, Aydın, Selvitopu and Kaya (2018) revealed that quantitative methods were remarkably used in the PhD dissertations conducted in the field of the management of higher education in Türkiye. Similarly, Alpaydın and Akın (2014) indicated that quantitative research methods were mostly used in the dissertations conducted in the fields of social and human sciences. The disciplines in which the doctoral dissertations were conducted could influence the PhD holders' choice of qualitative research methods. As for the data collection tools used in the dissertations, it is understood that document analysis and surveys were mostly utilized in social science dissertations. This result is in parallel with the findings of this study regarding research methods in the sense that the qualitative research method was remarkably conducted with a document data collection tool, and therefore, document analysis was considerably used as the data analysis technique of the dissertations. Based on these findings, it can be deduced that the dissertations' contributions to the expansion of knowledge are extremely limited since it is obvious

that social sciences dissertations in Türkiye mostly used secondary data rather than primary data. In addition to that, it might be said that the research methods, data collection tools, and data analysis techniques used in the dissertations might be one of the important reasons for the low quality of their outputs in the scientific world or their low international scientific impact.

Almost three out of every four PhD holders in social science examined in the current study work as academics in various positions at Turkish universities, including associate professor, assistant professor, lecturer, and research assistant. Hence, the findings of this study might be more open to debate concerning their contributions to the social science literature and practice as academics. Actually, Baloğlu and Bilgiç (2021b) indicated that the number of Turkish academics in the first 10,000 WoS rankings is very limited in parallel of this study. To illustrate, 33, 33, 27, 19, and 4 academics in political sciences, sociology, geography, history, and linguistics are involved in the first 10,000 WoS ranking, respectively.

5. Conclusion

The doctoral study outputs and the data and research methods used in the social science and humanities dissertations demonstrate the noteworthy findings concerning the qualifications of the PhD holders. As far as the qualifications of the PhD holders' in the current study according to the research methods, data collection tools, and data analysis they used in their dissertations are concerned, it can be deduced that they do not have the knowledge, skills, and competence at the most advanced level as expected according to the EQF, TQF, and TGER. Much of the course time is allocated to instructions to PhD students in the social sciences doctoral programs in Türkiye, which means that they are less likely to conduct research in their field during their doctoral studies. Therefore, they are less likely to use primary data in their dissertations. Because of this, it appears non-realistic for them to develop higher-order cognitive skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation because they are not

involved in the process of primary data generation. In line with this fact, PhD holders in social sciences cannot be expected to make significant contributions to the international literature or practice in Türkiye.

As a result, some vital paradigm shifts in doctoral programs should be implemented to allow PhD students and researchers to broaden their knowledge in their fields in Türkiye. First of all, a research-based approach should be embraced in doctoral the program. Students and researchers should be required to collect or produce primary data for their research in order to contribute to social and economic well-being and to publish their outputs in highly regarded peer-reviewed journals. Besides, in the appointment of academics in Turkish universities, the scientific publications that are published in the international high impact factor indexed journals that are extracted from their doctoral dissertations should be considered as being an associate professor (Interuniversity Council, 2021). These changes might be thought to enhance the doctoral programs.

5.1. Limitations

The dissertations examined in this study were selected from public universities whose instruction language is Turkish. In future studies, dissertations conducted at both public and private universities where instruction is implemented in English might also be investigated to determine whether there is a significant difference among these universities with regard to knowledge expansion. In the bibliometric evaluation of the dissertations, the supervisors' roles could be searched considering their scientific publications. Furthermore, it is a time-consuming process for authors to publish their studies in peer-reviewed international indexed journals. Hence, this should be taken into account when evaluating the findings.

5.2. Declaration Section

This study received no funding. The study data is available upon request. There are no potential conflicts of interest.

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