



A Bibliometric Analysis of Creative Drama Studies in Education

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ABSTRACT

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The aim of this study is to examine the studies on creative drama in education with bibliometric analysis method. The studies constituting the data of the study were obtained from Dimensions, WoS, Scopus and PubMed databases. For this purpose, an extended search was made with the words “creative drama” and “education” and 329 studies were combined in the R program. The combined data were filtered with the Biblioshiny package to consist only of articles in English and Turkish languages and the final number of studies to be analyzed was determined as 87. According to the findings obtained in the research; the year in which the most articles were produced between 1983 and 2024 was determined as 2022. The most cited authors were Hendrix, Eick and Shannon, while the most cited journal was Education and Science. The most used keywords in the studies were education, human, child and drama, and it was concluded that the trend in the studies was in the direction of education, human and women-themed studies. It is thought that this study will provide a general perspective to individuals and researchers interested in the field of creative drama in education. In this study, only article type studies were analyzed. In future studies, different types of studies can be analyzed.

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INTRODUCTION

Children observe and imitate their environment throughout their development. Although Biesta (2008) states in his study that education consists of a complex structure and it is difficult to delimit its purpose, preparing students for life is one of the most comprehensive goals of education. Although educators benefit from children's observations and imitations, the educational environment may sometimes not be directly related to life. Sometimes teaching is carried out through textbooks and sometimes through the materials used. This can create difficulties in creating a connection between what students learn and practice. Various teaching methods are used by educators to create a strong bridge between practice and knowledge. Creative drama is one of these methods.

Today, drama is used in the meanings of “a play played to be written on stage” or “a pathetic event” (TDK, 2025). When the origin of the word is examined, it dates to ancient Greek history and has a general meaning that covers the works of movement and action (Adıgüzel, 2006). The concept of creativity deals with the production of the individual. Creativity is the encounter of a person whose consciousness is concentrated with his/her own world (May, 1988 p.76). The reconstruction of moments from daily life by experts in a drama environment is defined as creative drama (San, 1990). Although creative drama benefits from theater methods, it differs from theater by not having the necessity of text and scenario (Adıgüzel, 2006). The use of creative drama in education brings the educational process closer to life and offers students the opportunity to experience life scenarios and develop their own creativity (Annarella, 1992; Hendrix, et al. 2012; San, 1990). Through creative drama, students gain skills such as generating solutions to problems, empathy, cooperation and transforming ideas into action (Pinciotti, 1993).

Thanks to its versatile nature, creative drama has been the subject of studies in many disciplines of educational research. In the field of mathematics education (Borlat, 2018; Coleman & Davies, 2018; Duran, 2022), science education (Aubusson & Fogwill, 2006; Çokadar & Yılmaz, 2010; Danckwardt, et al. 2018; Dorion, 2009; Ong et al., 2020; Walan & Enochsson, 2019), social studies education (Aykaç & Adıgüzel, 2011; Başbuğ & Adıgüzel, 2019; Öztürk & Sarı, 2018), language education (Brouillette, 2012; Korkut & Çelik, 2021; Mages, 2008; Sağlamlı & Kayaoğlu, 2013).

The relationship between creative drama and many variables has been explored in the aforementioned educational fields. Examples of these variables include creative drama's relationship with individuals' self-efficacy perceptions (Arda Tuncdemir, 2025; Aykaç et al. 2019, Eyüp, 2023); creativity skills (Arda Tuncdemir, 2025; Athiemoolam, 2018), problem-solving skills (Felek, 2023), empathetic thinking skills (Malinina, 2024), communication skills (Dere, 2019), self-regulation skills (Yeterge et al. 2024); speaking and language skills (Tuxtasinova, 2025; Yildirim, 2023); and critical thinking skills (Ormancı & Sasmaz Oren, 2020). In addition, studies have also identified the positive effects of creative drama on facilitating learning and ensuring lasting impact in individuals (Batdi & Batdi, 2015; Kılınçaslan & Özdemir Şimşek, 2015). The use of drama education in positive sciences has been found to improve environmental skills (Aydın & Aykaç, 2016; Demir & Aslan, 2025); positively affect science process skills (İncesu et al., 2025; Dorion, 2009) and develop basic mathematical skills (Şahin & Aykaç, 2018). When considering the social benefits of creative drama, it has been found to help individuals understand gender roles (Baselga et al., 2022; O'Neill and Lambert, 1982; Şeren et al. 2025); positively alters emotional intelligence (Armesto Arias et al. 2025); is effective in preventing peer bullying (Goodwin et al. 2019); and enhances social skills (Freeman et al. 2003). Considering the positive impact that creative drama has on individuals in many situations, the importance of a general overview of research on creative drama in education becomes clear.

Llige and Escudra (2024) conducted a bibliometric analysis of 2148 articles indexed in Web of Science and Scopus databases between 1970 and 2020 in the field of drama. Dawoud et al. (2020) conducted a bibliometric analysis of 35 articles on creative drama in English language education indexed in Web of Science, Science Direct and EBSCO databases between 2010 and 2019. Şengün and

İskenderoğlu (2010) conducted a bibliometric analysis of creative drama research in mathematics education.

In this study, unlike the studies mentioned above, a bibliometric study was conducted for all articles in the field of creative drama and education. The research aims to analyze creative drama articles in the field of education in a holistic manner. In line with this purpose, answers to the following questions were sought:

- How is the distribution of articles published on creative drama in education according to years?
- Which are the 10 most cited articles on creative drama in education?
- How is the reference link of the most cited authors in articles on creative drama in education?
- In which journals have articles on creative drama in education been published the most?
- What are the most used keywords in articles on creative drama in education?
- What is the relationship between the keywords used in articles on creative drama in education?

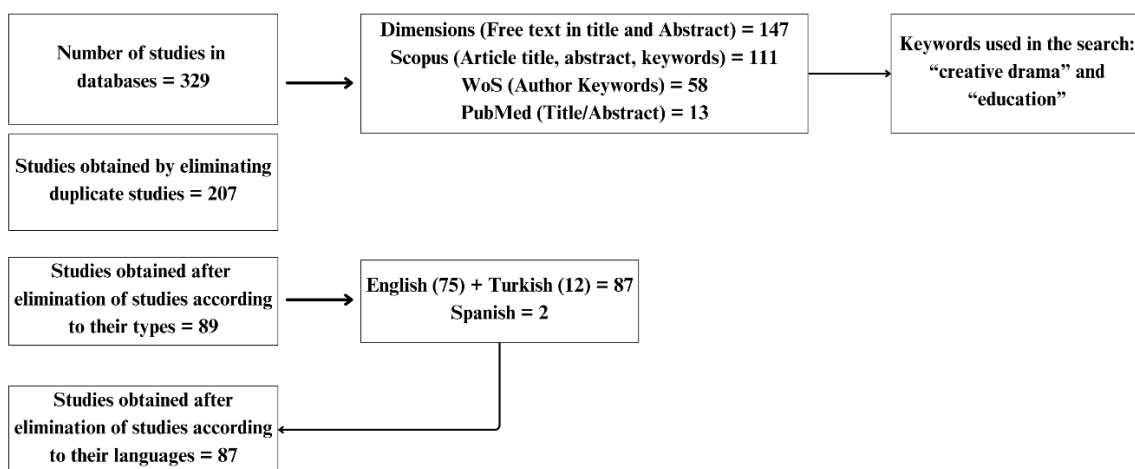
METHOD

This study aims to describe the articles on creative drama in the field of education. For this purpose, the research was designed with a bibliometric analysis method. Bibliometric analysis aims to examine the studies in a particular field and to visualize the relationships between them by revealing the distribution by years, popular authors, institutions, and resources working on the subject, and in this direction, it is used to make sense of large-scale data on the subject, to observe and visualize its development (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Donthu et al., 2021). For this purpose, articles published in Web of Science, Scopus, Dimensions, PubMed, which are databases supported by the R package program, were used as data.

Data Collection

The data of the research were obtained from the databases mentioned above and necessary searches and filtering were made in these databases. The steps of realization of these processes are presented below.

Figure 1. Data collection process



According to the data in Figure 1, English and Turkish articles obtained from Dimensions, Scopus, Web of Science (WoS) and PubMed databases on 22.01.2025 were used in the study. The keywords “creative drama” and “education” were used in all databases. The data obtained were transferred to the bibliometrix package of the R statistical program (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017) and duplicate studies were extracted. As a result of the removal of duplicate data, 210 data were also checked with the Excel program before being analyzed, and 3 duplicate data were filtered a second time. Finally, 207 studies were uploaded to the analysis program, and English and Turkish studies were selected as the research type article and research language. The study was conducted with a total of 87 articles, 75 of which were in English and 12 of which were in Turkish.

FINDINGS

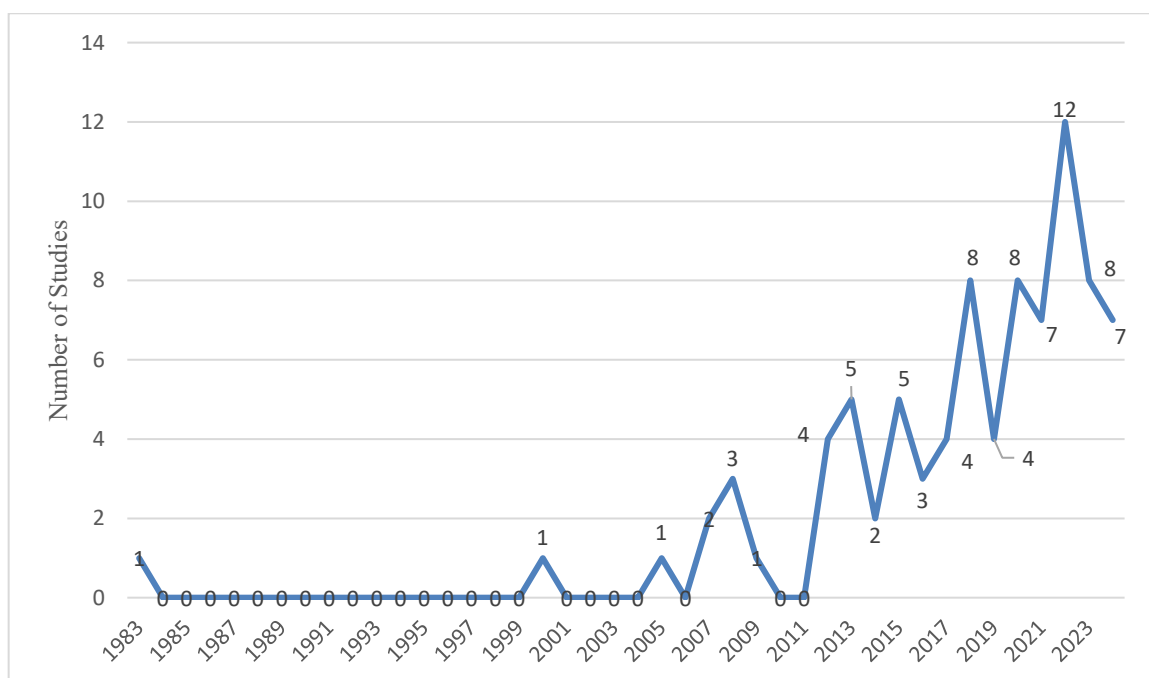
Table 1. Overview of research data

Category	Results
Time interval	1983-2024
Source	70
Document	87
Author	186
Single author documents	19
Average document	7.82

According to Table 1, articles searched in WoS, Scopus, Dimensions and PubMed with the keywords “creative drama” and “education” on 22.01.2025 were found in the range of 1983-2024. It was determined that the first study on creative drama published in these databases was in 1983. In this time period, there are 87 articles in the data set, which includes 70 different sources. While 186 authors worked on the subject, only 19 studies were prepared with a single author. When the distribution of 87 articles between the years of production is analyzed, it is determined that the average age of the research is 7.82 years.

In the databases analyzed in the figure below, the distribution of training studies on creative drama according to years is given.

Figure 2. Distribution of studies by years



According to Figure 2, studies on creative drama in education started with Rosenberg & Pinciotti's (1983) study. Until 2012, the number of studies in the field was limited, while the number of studies has increased since this year. The number of studies, which progressed in a fluctuating structure, experienced the highest number of studies with 12 studies in 2022. Although the first study was conducted in 1983, it is noteworthy that the number of studies has increased since 1999. The increase in the number of studies in a field increases as the effectiveness of the method used becomes apparent. The popularity of research on creative drama in education in the 2000's can also be explained by this reason.

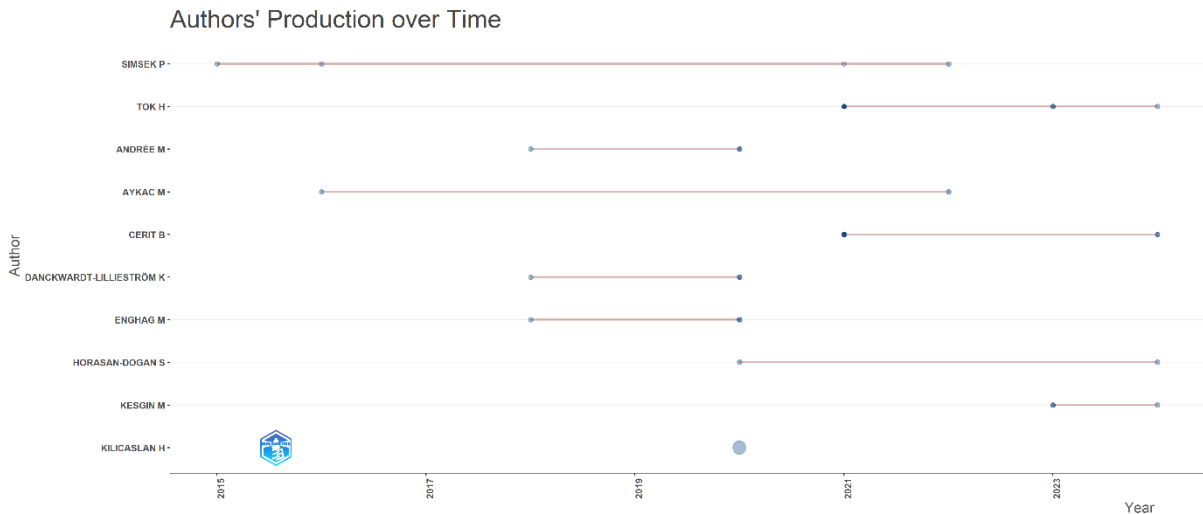
In the table below, data on the 10 most cited studies on creative drama are presented.

Table 2. *Top 10 most cited studies*

Author and year of publication	Title of the study	Journal name	Number of citations
Hendrix, R., Eick, C., & Shannon, D., (2012)	"The Integration of Creative Drama in an Inquiry-Based Elementary Program: The Effect on Student Attitude and Conceptual Learning"	Journal of Science Teacher and Education	40
Mages, 2008	"Does Creative Drama Promote Language Development in Early Childhood? A Review of the Methods and Measures Employed in the Empirical Literature"	Review of Educational Research	35
Hui, A. N. N., Chow, B. W. Y., Chan, A. Y. T., Chui, B. H. T., & Sam, C. T. (2015).	"Creativity in Hong Kong classrooms: transition from a seriously formal pedagogy to informally playful learning"	Education 3-13	21
Erdogan, T. (2013).	"The Effect of Creative Drama Method on Pre-service Classroom Teachers' Writing Skills and Attitudes towards Writing"	Australian Journal of Teacher Education	19
Yücesan, E., & Şendurur, Y. (2017).	"Effects of music therapy, poetry therapy, and creative drama applications on self-esteem levels of college students"	Journal of Poetry Therapy	17
Furman, L. (2000).	"In support of drama in early childhood education, again"	Early Childhood Education Journal	17
Uzunöz, F. S., & Demirhan, G. (2017)	"The effect of creative drama on critical thinking in preservice physical education teachers"	Thinking Skills and Creativity	16
Tok, H. H., & Cerit, B. (2021).	"The effect of creative drama education on first-year undergraduate nursing student attitudes toward caring for dying patients"	Nurse Education Today	15
Ong, K.-J., Chou, Y.-C., Yang, D.-Y., & Lin, C.-C. (2020)	"Creative Drama in Science education: The Effects on Situational Interest, Career Interest, and Science-Related Attitudes of Science Majors and Non-Science Majors"	Eurasia Journal of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education	13
Davis, B. W. (1985)	"The impact of creative drama training on psychological states of older adults: An exploratory study"	The Gerontologist	13

According to the table above, it includes the most cited studies on creative drama in education, the number of citations of these studies, and the author and institution information of the studies. Hendrix, Eick and Shanon's study was the most cited study in the Journal of Science Teacher and Education with 40 citations. Hendrix, Eick, and Shannon (2012) found that the use of creative drama method in 4th and 5th grade science lessons positively affected students' learning outcomes.

In the table below, data on the productivity of the authors who wrote articles on creative drama according to years are given.

Figure 3.Authors' productivity by years

According to Figure 3, the number of studies of the authors who have the most studies in the field of creative drama in education was analyzed according to years. It was determined that Şimşek was the researcher with both the highest number of studies and the longest study interval with 4 studies. In the analyzed data sets, Şimşek's studies started in 2015 and continued at non-fixed intervals until 2022. While Tok was in the table with 3 studies, Kılıçaslan was the only researcher with more than one study in a year.

The following figure presents the citation network relationship between authors who produce research on creative drama.

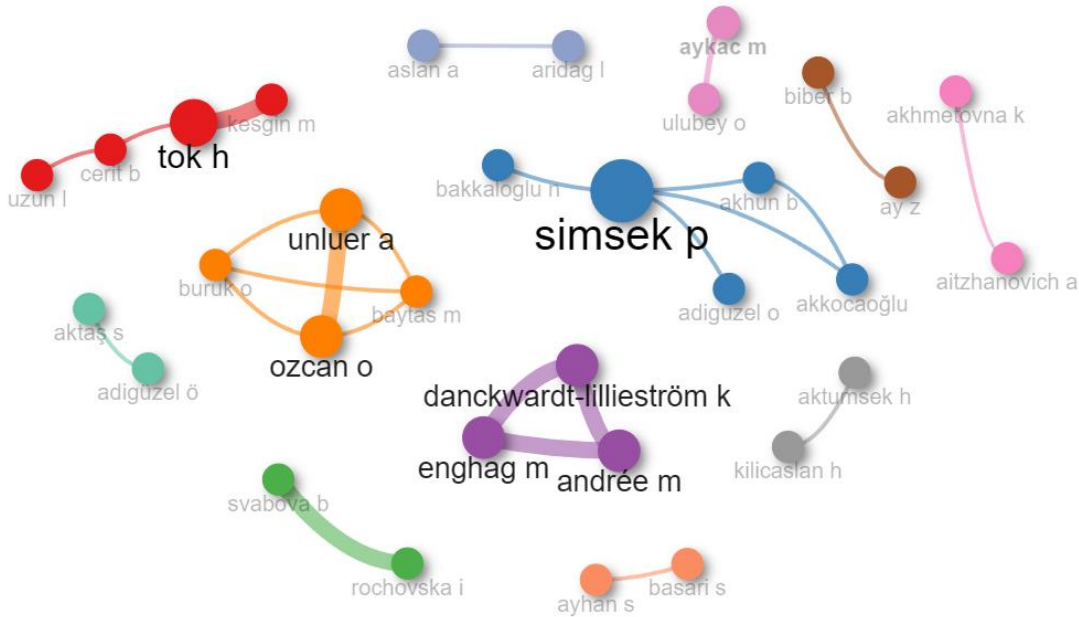
Figure 4. Citation network relationship between authors

Figure 4 shows the reference relationship of the authors of articles on creative drama in education. While Şimşek is the researcher with the highest number of links, the clustering between Ünlüer, Özcan, Baytaş, Buruk and Danckwardt, Enghag, Andrée draws attention.

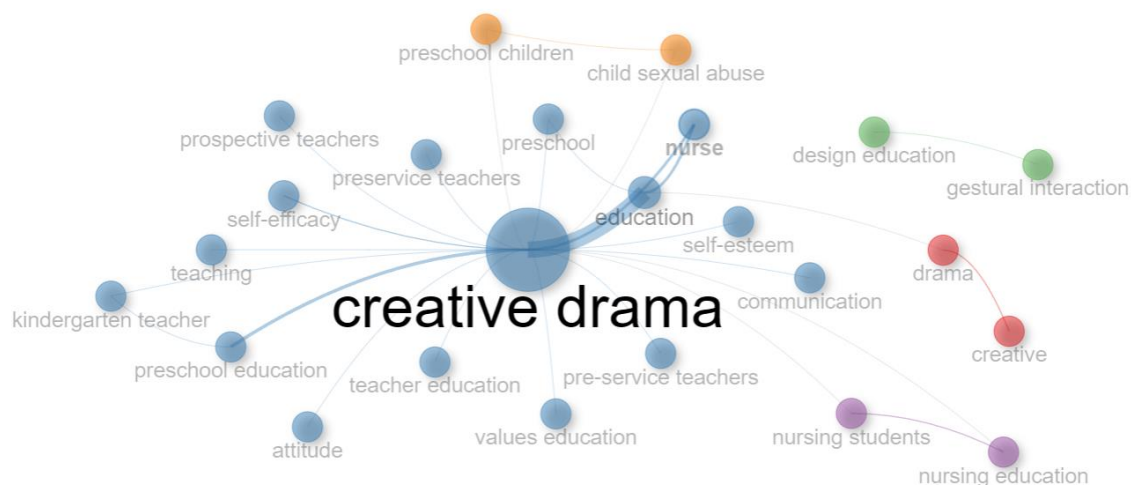
Figure 6. Author keywords relationship

Figure 6 shows the relationship between author keywords in articles on creative drama in education. Author keywords help to create a conceptual framework of a topic (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). Accordingly, the figure above shows the existence of five different clusters. Among these clusters, the presence of creative drama keyword was found to be the highest in the blue cluster. In addition, different keywords such as teacher education, values education, education, pre-school education are also included in this cluster. When the clusters in other colors are examined, it is seen that they do not contain as many keywords as the blue cluster.

The thematic mapping analysis data of creative drama themed studies are presented in the table below.

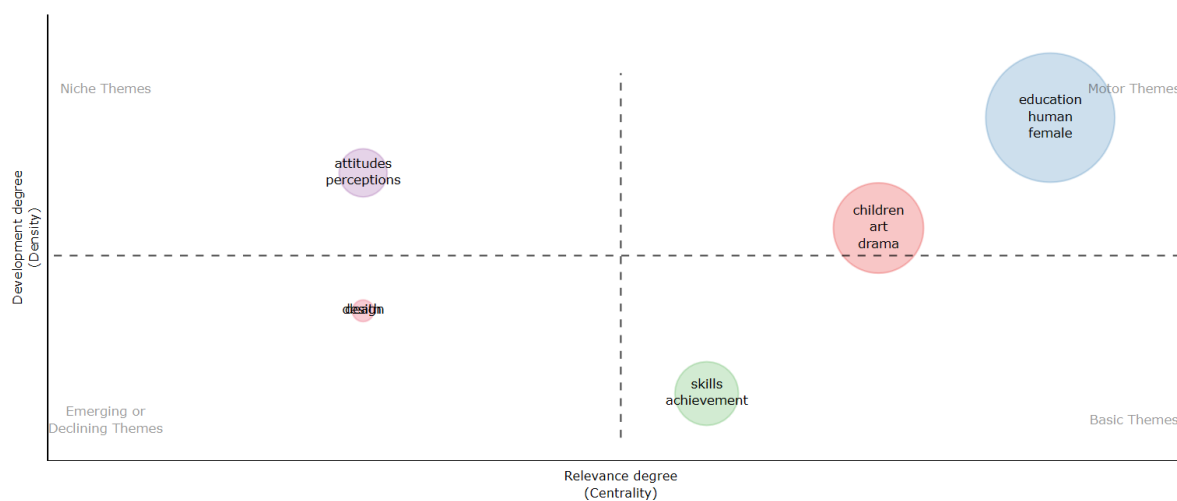
Figure 7. Thematic map of creative drama studies in education

Figure 7 shows the thematic analysis of articles on creative drama in education. In the thematic analysis method, as the value increases on the x and y axis, it represents the upward trend in research, and as the value decreases, it represents the downward trend (Alkhamash, 2023). According to the analysis of the keywords+ option, the keywords education, human and women constitute the upward trend, while the keyword death constitutes the downward trend.

CONCLUSION and DISCUSSION

In this study, studies on creative drama in education obtained from WoS, Scopus, PubMed and Dimensions databases were analyzed by bibliometric method. When the distribution of the studies by years was analyzed, it was seen that the first study was conducted in 1983, but the increase in general was observed since 2012. The fact that the most studies were conducted in 2022 can be interpreted as the return to face-to-face education in the post-pandemic period. When the 10 most cited articles in the databases analyzed are listed, Hendrix, Eick, and Shannon's (2012) study takes the first place. In their study, they measured and reported the effectiveness of creative drama in science lessons. In the study, the authors who conducted the most studies, the reference relationships between these authors and the distribution of their studies according to years were examined. According to the data obtained, Şimşek was determined as the researcher with both the most studies and the most reference links. Danckwardt, et al. (2018) and Danckwardt, et al. (2020) draw attention in author connections with creative drama studies in chemistry education. Ünlüer and Özcan (2013) used creative drama with gestural interactions in their study and Ünlüer et al. (2018) investigated the effectiveness of mime-based education enriched with creative drama. These two studies constitute the link between the authors.

The articles examined in the study were analyzed according to the journals in which they were published the most, and according to the findings obtained, it was proved that the journal in which the most studies were published was Education and Science. The inclusion of Turkish articles in the analysis may have caused the journals in which the most studies were published to originate from Turkey. Çelik (2022) analyzed drama studies in education between 1975 and 2022 in the WoS database and found that Eğitim ve Bilim was the 6th journal with the highest number of studies and Turkey was the 5th country with the highest number of studies. Although Çelik's (2022) data and the data of this study are not the same, the fact that the databases examined and the filtering of the studies obtained by different methods may have caused this difference.

When the most used keywords in the studies are analyzed, the words education, human, women, men, children and drama come to the fore. Llige and Escuadra (2024) conducted a bibliometric analysis of drama studies using WoS and Scopus databases. In their word cloud analysis, the keyword “dramastands out. In addition, keywords such as education, women, human also constitute similar findings of the study. One of the findings of the study is thematic mapping analysis. According to the analysis, while articles on education, human and women are studied more in the field; articles on children, art and drama tend to increase.

The results of thematic mapping analysis show similarities with another result, namely that the most frequently used areas related to creative drama are education, preservice teacher training, preschool education, teacher education, nurse training, teaching, attitudes, values education, self-efficacy, communication, and self-esteem. The use of creative drama in education has been found to contribute to individuals' creativity skills (Arda Tuncdemir, 2025; Athiemoolam, 2018), speaking and language skills (Tuxtasinova, 2025; Yildirim, 2023), cognitive processes such as critical thinking (Ormancı & Sasmaz Oren, 2020), and emotional areas such as empathy, social skills, and communication (Dere, 2019; Freeman et al. 2003; Malinina, 2024) at all levels, from preschool education to teacher training. As the effectiveness of creative drama in teaching abstract concepts, skills, and values becomes more evident in early childhood education, which is the foundational level of education, it is expected that the number of studies incorporating creative drama in this age group will increase. Articles on death, on the other hand, are losing their trend according to the findings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The data for this study were obtained from Dimensions, WoS, Scopus and PubMed databases. Future studies can be conducted by searching different databases.

- In this study, only article type studies were analyzed. In future studies, different types of studies can be analyzed.
- In this study, only studies in English and Turkish were analyzed. In future studies, studies from other languages can also be analyzed.

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