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AN ANALYSIS OF KOREAN DIGITAL CULTURE PUBLICATIONS BASED ON DATABASE KCI (KOREAN CITATION INDEX)

Abstract. The article analyzes scientific researches on the topic of Korean digital culture. The analysis was conducted based on a bibliometric review of the Korean Citation Index (KCI) database. Currently, there are scientific studies based on bibliometric analysis of data extracted from the international databases Scopus and Web of Science. However, issues related to bibliometric analysis based on Korean scientific databases remain insufficiently studied in the academic community. This aspect determines the scientific novelty of this study.

The purpose of the study is to examine the main directions, trends and research priorities in the study of Korean digital culture. The approach used includes collecting, processing and analyzing data, including publications, citations and keywords, as well as studying well-known journals in this field. As a result of the analysis, the main research topics were identified, such as the popularization of Korean culture (K-Culture) through digital platforms, digitalization of traditional cultural practices and the development of technology. The findings highlight the importance of digital culture as an important component of the contemporary cultural and technological landscape of South Korea, as well as the prospects for further research in this area. The results of the bibliometric analysis can be used to objectively assess the scientific productivity of research institutions in the context of the development of digitalization of culture in the Republic of Korea.

Key words: digital policy, South Korea, cultural content, KCI database

Introduction

South Korea's digital culture is a unique phenomenon. It plays an important role in shaping the country's social and economic processes. The academic environment in South Korea has also recently been actively studying the process of digitalization in all spheres of life. Among Korean scientific databases, KCI occupies an important academic role among researchers. It is similar to such international databases as Scopus, and Web of Science and covers the humanities, natural sciences, medicine and other fields. Often, through publications in this database, the academic activity of scientists and researchers is taken into account.

A big plus of KCI is free access to its data sets and the ability to access Korean scientific articles. On the other hand, a limitation can be considered that users can only find scientific works by Korean researchers, which narrows the circle of users of the database. In addition, most scientific papers are written in Korean, which also limits users in terms of the language barrier. However, due to such features, the database is very useful for researchers in the field of Korean studies.

Currently, scientific papers are actively distributed using bibliometric analysis of certain topics. The use of this method and analyses in scientific papers leads to an understanding of the role and level of relevance of the topic at the academic level. Thanks to the analysis, it is possible to calculate modern trends and changes in a certain topic and obtain the results of active scientific institutions in this area. The authors Park Seon Young, Melvyn W. B. Zhang, Choi Jiun, You Je Sung, Young Seon Joo, Kong Taeyoung, Ko Dong Ryul, Chung Sung Phil and others used this method of analysis for such topics as, research on the impact of internet games on human life in Korea, medical research, and human resource management, etc. At the same time, for a more

effective presentation of the obtained results, authors use VoSviewer, and CiteSpace programs. However, it is also necessary to take into account that bibliometric analysis of scientific papers does not always give accurate results on a certain research topic. Since have their limitations as a study of only a certain period and the choice of one or two databases for analysis.

Digital policy in Korea is a debated topic in academic circles. The topic of digital policy is considered from different angles, starting from the introduction of necessary new technologies into human life to the country's global digital programs. The authors Hwang and Lee consider the topic of digital leadership in South Korea. They note that South Korean companies use digital leadership to improve sustainability and operational efficiency. In addition, the authors agree that the popular genre of Hallyu (Korean Wave) has great importance in the country's digitalization policy (Hwang, Lee, 2022). This is also confirmed by the author Holroyd, who says that South Korea has successfully combined digital technologies with creative industries, including K-pop and online games. This contributed to the creation of a global digital content market (Holroyd, 2019). Another author Yoon studies the modern trend of digital content - mokbang. According to the author, phenomena such as mukbang (food streaming shows) illustrate how digital media are reimagining basic needs as a form of cultural expression among young people (Yoon, 2023).

Research on digital culture in Korea shows how cultural contexts and digital platforms transform consumer behavior, visual identity, and public discourse. Park and Lee (2019) conducted a comparative analysis of digital consumerism between South Korea and the United States, finding that cultural differences in online product reviews significantly influence user behavior in digital marketplaces (Park, Lee, 2019). At the intersection of culture and digitalization, Hananto (2020) explores the incorporation of Korean culture into brand design in other countries such as Indonesia through popular elements such as tteokbokki. This highlights the influence of Korean culture on the formation of local identities through creativity (Hananto, 2020). At the same time, digital platforms play an important role in social interaction and public reflection. Lee et al. (2023) analyze social media comments related to abuses in South Korean sports, showing how digital media can amplify public attention to social issues and contribute to the formation of collective opinion (Lee, Addison, Achyut, Evan, 2023).

These studies demonstrate how digital culture combines consumer experiences, creative industries, and social discourses, transforming them into multi-layered cultural phenomena. In the academic world, South Korea's digital culture has significant relevance due to its global influence. Academic studies of Korean digital culture include the study of K-pop, K-dramas, e-sports, and metaverses. The country's digital culture can serve as an example of the successful interaction of technology and culture.

In addition, interest in this topic is growing due to its role in changing social and economic processes. Korea's experience in integrating innovative technologies such as 5G, virtual reality, and artificial intelligence is becoming an object of analysis for specialists in the fields of sociology, economics, media communications, and cultural studies.

Materials and methods

Bibliometric approaches have become firmly established as scientific specializations and are an essential component of research evaluation methodology, especially in scientific and practical disciplines (Ellegaard, Wallin, 2015). Bibliometric methods can detect the trend of a field and predict the future development boundary of a discipline, which helps improve the efficiency of research and clarify the direction of research. By searching literature in KCI and analyzing it, this study tries to find the research dynamics in the field of Korean digital culture. Discourse analysis was also used to study the topic of digital culture in scientific texts.

The literature analysis in this study covers the period from 2015 to 2025 using the built-in analytical program of the KCI database. The following questions will be answered:

1. What are the publication rates by field of study?

2. What are the publication trends from 2015 to 2025?
3. Which scientific journals are the top ones for publishing articles on the research topic?
4. Which Korean academic institutions actively contribute?

This study provides a relatively objective and reliable analysis in terms of gaining a quick understanding of a field. Through a structured analysis of a large amount of literature information, it can infer trends over time, research topics and present results on the relevance of a large number of extant studies, among others (Donthu, Kumar, Mukherjee, Pandey, Lim, 2021).

The literature for this study is based on the core collection of the Korean Citation Index database. This database collaborates with the National Research Foundation of Korea and describes of the most important regional contents from South Korean researchers. At the same time, Web of Science operates regional databases, which include KCI. The database contains more than 2,000 journals on the following topics: engineering, business economics, general therapy, arts and humanities, science technology, sports science, history, public administration, construction technology, etc. It contains research papers from 1980 to the present and is used in an academic environment, providing access to unique capabilities for analyzing scientific data in a single interface. This study aims to examine the development of the topic of Korean digital culture over the past 10 years. The main subject terms available for the literature search were “cultural content”, “digital culture of Korea”, and “digital culture”. A total of 2,222 results were obtained using the filter from 2015 to 2025. Based on the analysis of these data, the following results were obtained.

In the scientific literature on the importance of data analysis based on scientific databases was studies by the works of such authors as Grinev A. V., Ardashkin A. B., Sidorenko D. V., Ivanov D. V., Devyatko I. F., Akoev M. A., Markusova V. A., Moskaleva O. V., Pislyakov V. V., Volegov V. S., Mansurov V. A., Ivanova E. Yu. and others. These scientists draw attention to the influence of bibliometric data analysis on the social development of science and its role in the management of scientific activity, emphasizing the importance of its application for optimizing scientific processes and assessing the effectiveness of scientific research. At the same time, similar studies are actively conducted abroad, where the leading authors in the field of bibliometric analysis are Beccera G., Ratovicius C., Lewandowska K., Jessica A. Koos, Asquer A., Krachkovskaya I., Erlend K. J., Nazarovets S., Mryglod O. and others. Their works focus on the features of natural, social and humanitarian sciences, which emphasizes the universality and importance of using bibliometrics for the analysis and evaluation of scientific products in the international context.

Results and discussions

The topic of digitalization of culture is becoming increasingly widespread in scientific research, which is associated with the rapid development of technologies and their implementation in various areas of cultural activity. Scientists study how digital platforms and databases help to preserve cultural heritage, as well as how they change the ways of interacting with art and cultural resources. This topic covers issues of preserving historical objects, accessibility of cultural materials via the Internet, as well as the impact of digital technologies on the dissemination of cultural forms and their transformation in a global context. Research in this area is becoming especially relevant in connection with the development of international projects and the introduction of innovative methods in museum affairs, archiving and cultural diplomacy.

The Korea Citation Index (KCI) plays a key role in the Korean academic landscape by indexing research publications in fields ranging from medicine to the humanities. It helps maintain the high standard of academic journals and publications and ensures their visibility and accessibility to both domestic and international researchers. Publications in KCI-indexed journals are considered high-quality and influential in the academic community. KCI also facilitates the assessment and analysis of research quality, which helps universities and research institutions track the impact of their publications. In addition, the database enhances scientific collaboration by facilitating the

exchange of knowledge and ideas between Korean scientists and the research community around the world.

Trends by subject field. The diagram (Figure 1) shows articles in different subject areas related to the research topic "digital culture". The leading positions are occupied by the fields of "Arts and Kinesiology" (575 articles), "Social Sciences" (561 articles) and "Humanities" (543 articles). These research areas are the most widely covered. The category "Interdisciplinary Research" also stands out, with 383 articles published, indicating a growing interest in integrating knowledge from different disciplines.

Less attention is paid to engineering (83 articles), natural sciences (48 articles), medicine and pharmacy (21 articles), and marine agriculture and fisheries (8 articles). This may indicate the specificity of these areas in the context of digital culture and the limited number of studies touching on them. The diagram illustrates how attention is distributed differently to individual fields of science within the framework of the topic of digital culture.

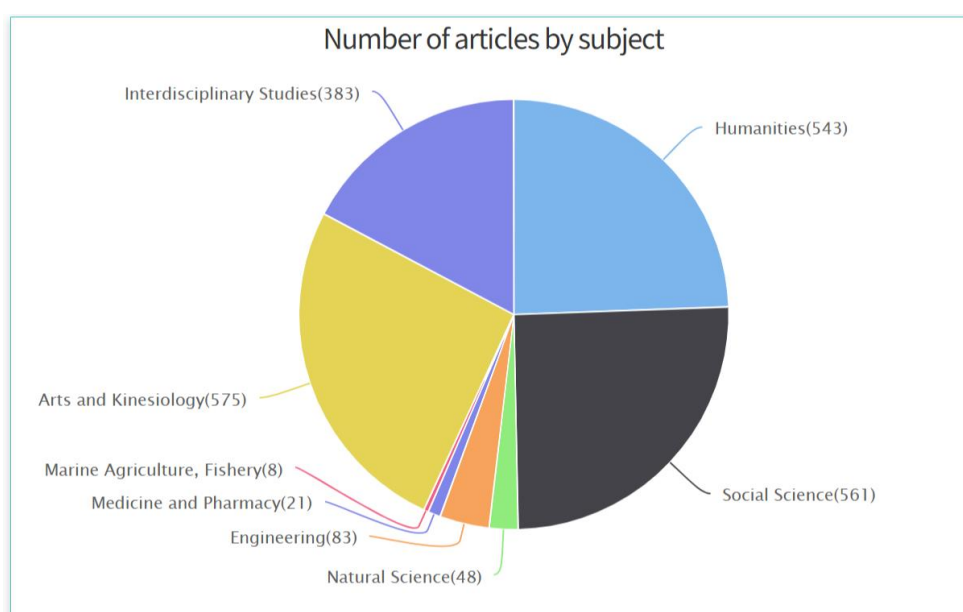


Figure 1. Study fields of the research topic

The diagram highlights the diverse focus of research on digital culture, with the majority of publications concentrated in the fields of "Arts and Kinesiology," "Social Sciences," and "Humanities." This indicates a strong interest in exploring digital culture from social, cultural, and artistic perspectives. The notable presence of "Interdisciplinary Research" further emphasizes the increasing integration of knowledge from various domains. However, the relatively low number of articles in engineering, natural sciences, medicine, and other specialized areas suggests that these fields are less engaged with the topic, potentially due to the specific nature of digital culture about them. This distribution reflects the evolving landscape of digital culture research, where certain disciplines are more actively contributing to the discourse than others.

Research on culture in the humanities highlights the importance of interdisciplinary approaches that integrate technology, law, medical science, and cognitive science. Kasperovsky and colleagues (2020) describe the development of "participatory epistemology" through civic projects in the humanities, where digital technologies make scientific research accessible to a wider audience. Visual humanities, according to Münster and Terras (2019), demonstrate new possibilities for analyzing images and visualizations in disciplines such as art history and archaeology, expanding the application of digital methods to culture. At the intersection of law and humanities,

Branco and Izzo (2017) explore the impact of legal and cultural contexts on contemporary society, including engagement with art and music. These studies demonstrate how the humanities can influence professional fields by becoming a link between knowledge and its practical application.

Trends of original papers. The bar chart (Figure 2) shows the number of published articles on the topic of digital culture from 2015 to 2025 in the KCI. The largest number of articles falls in 2024 - 366 publications, which may indicate a growing interest in this topic in recent years. In 2023, 295 articles were published, and in 2022 - 347, which also confirms a steady increase in scientific activity in this area. In 2021, there is a decline to 257 articles, but since 2020 (209 articles), a gradual increase in the number of publications is visible.

From 2016 to 2019, the number of articles varies from 141 to 165, indicating a low level of attention to the topic of digital culture during this period. The smallest number of publications falls in 2025 (only 1 article), which is explained by the fact that this article was prepared in January 2025. The overall trend shows a significant increase in interest in the study of digital culture since the early 2020s, which may be due to the digitalization of various spheres of life and the acceleration of scientific research in this area.

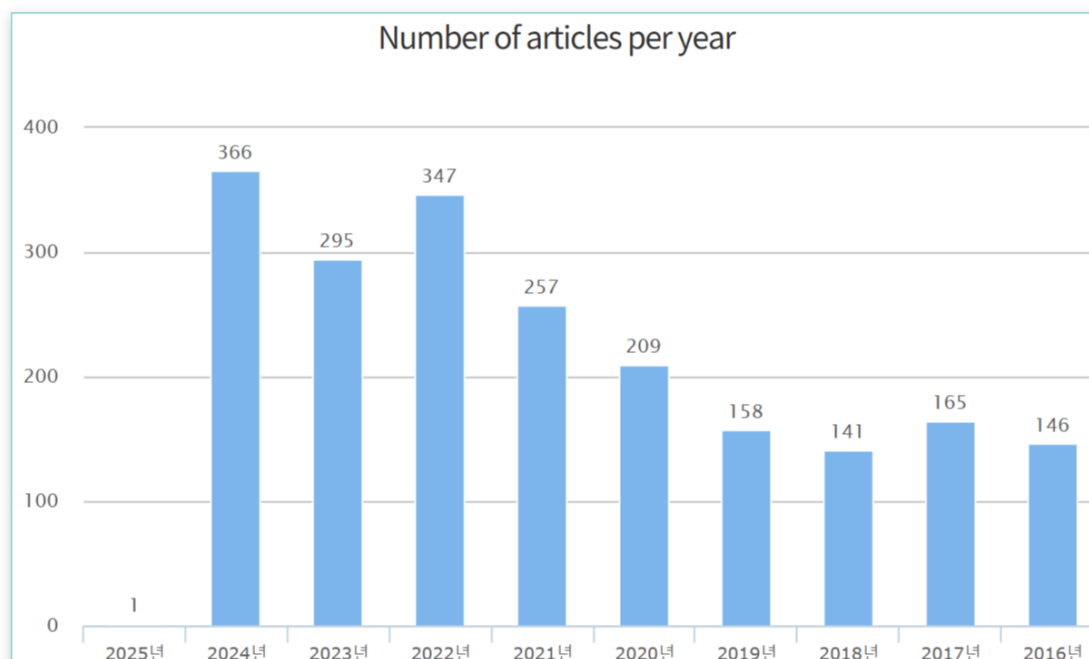


Figure 2. Publication of articles on the research topic (2015-2025)

Consequently, the bar chart demonstrates a significant upward trend in the number of publications on digital culture from 2015 to 2025, particularly since the early 2020s. The peak in 2024 with 366 articles suggests a growing academic interest, which is further supported by the steady increase in 2023 and 2022. Although there was a slight decline in 2021, the overall trajectory highlights a marked rise in research activity. The lower number of publications from 2016 to 2019 reflects the earlier limited attention to the topic. This growing focus on digital culture is likely driven by the rapid digitalization of various sectors and an accelerated pace of scientific inquiry in this field.

Scientific institutions on the topic of digitalization of culture. The chart (Figure 3) shows the distribution of the number of articles on digital culture published by researchers from different universities. Chungang University leads the way with 73 articles, followed by Ewha University (65 articles) and Kyunghee University (62 articles). Hanyang University and Hongik University also show high activity, with 61 and 54 articles, respectively. This indicates that these institutions are actively involved in digital culture research.

Less active, but still significant for the topic, universities are Seoul National University (39 articles), Chonbuk National University (31 articles), and Seoul University of Science and Technology (27 articles). The overall picture shows that digital culture research spans a wide range of universities, with the most significant contributions from leading educational institutions, which may be related to their research strength and funding.

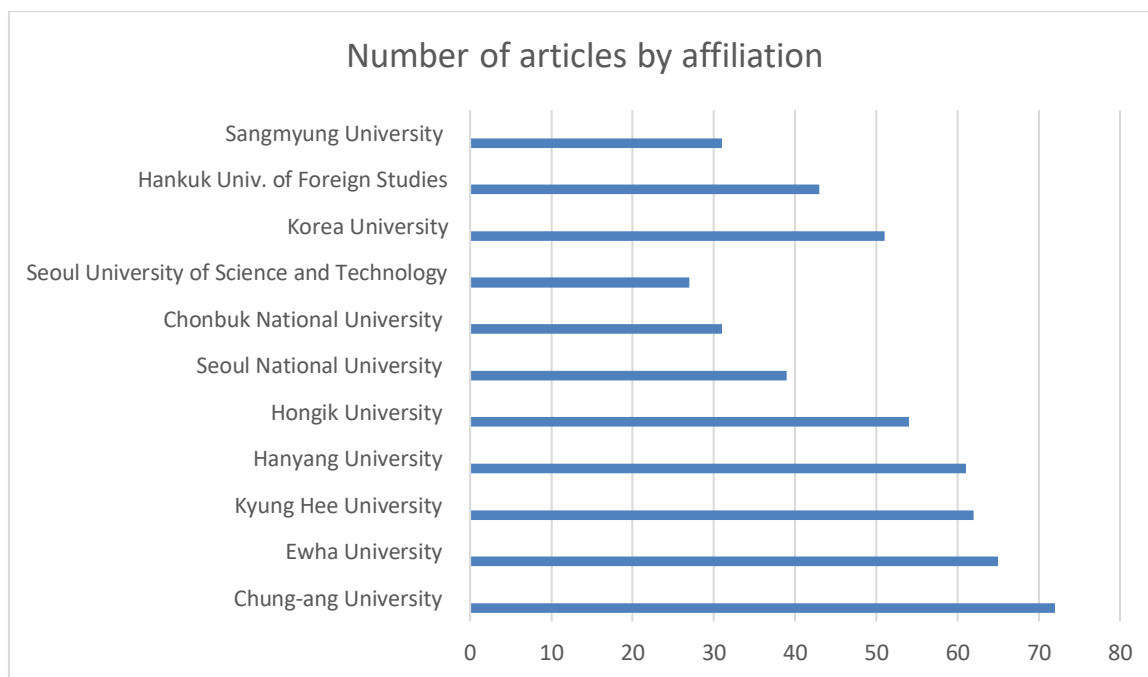


Figure 3. Publications on the topic of digital culture by scientific institutions (2015–2025)

In conclusion, the chart shows that Chungang University, Ewha University, and Kyunghee University lead in digital culture research. Hanyang University and Hongik University also contribute significantly. Other universities like Seoul National University have a smaller but notable presence. Overall, leading universities with stronger research capabilities dominate the field.

Leading journals in the field of humanities. Among the leading journals in the field of humanities, the topic of digitalization of culture occupies a significant place. The influence of new technologies and artificial intelligence is evident in the analysis of the most cited publications. The table (Table 1) presents articles that are actively cited within the humanities, the content of which is closely related to modern technological changes and global transformations caused by the introduction of new technologies and the use of artificial intelligence.

Table 1. Leading journals by number of citations

Rank	Journal title	Pub.year	Volume	Article title	Cited by
1	Journal of Korean Language Education	2021.12	32(4)	A Study on a Korean Speaking Class Based on Metaverse – Using Gather.town	109
2	Writing Research	2023.03	(56)	ChatGPT has Changed the Future of Writing Education – Focusing on the response of writing education in the era of artificial intelligence	80

3	Humanities Contents	2021.09	(62)	A Preliminary Study on Concept and Types of Metaverse: Focusing on the Possible World Theory	73
4	Korean Language and Literature	2023.03	82(82)	The advent of ChatGPT and the response of Korean language education	63
5	Journal of the Korea English Education Society	2023.02	22(1)	Exploring the potential of using ChatGPT as a content-based English learning and teaching tool	61

The table presents an analysis of the five most cited articles in various journals on education, language, and technology. The article with the highest number of citations (109) was from the “Journal of Korean Language Education” (2021.12), which examines the use of the Gather.town platform for teaching Korean in the metaverse. This highlights the growing interest in using innovative digital technologies such as the metaverse in educational practices. The second and fourth places are occupied by articles on the impact of ChatGPT on education, demonstrating the importance of artificial intelligence in changing teaching methods, including writing practice and learning Korean.

The topics of the articles indicate active research on the intersection of technology and humanities, with an emphasis on educational technology. For example, a paper from “Writing Research” (2023.03) with 80 citations and a paper from “Journal of the Korea English Education Society” (2023.02, 61 citations) focus on the application of ChatGPT to writing and language learning, reflecting the impact of artificial intelligence on traditional teaching approaches. There is also interest in theoretical issues of the metaverse, as represented by a paper from “Humanities Contents” (73 citations) focusing on possible worlds theory. This diversity of topics highlights the importance of integrating technology into humanities research and educational practices.

In total, there are 632 scientific journals in the KCI database by 2022. Among the top 100 keywords in the humanities (Table 2), the top five include the word “cultural content,” which is part of digital culture. Table 2 shows keywords that frequently appear in humanities research, along with their occurrences in the selected field and the total number of articles using them. The most popular keyword is “Artificial Intelligence” (93 articles in the selected field, 3,984 overall), highlighting the humanities’ interest in studying the impact of technology. It is followed by “Identity” (79/3,023), “Translation” (73/1,790), and “Cultural Content” (65/1,264), reflecting attention to issues of identity, cultural interpretation, and content creation. Topics related to “Korean War” (71/1,287) and “COVID-19” (59/3,696) reveal an interest in historical and contemporary crises. The less common keyword “Shipbuilding” (56/990) may indicate highly specialized research. The table reflects the diversity of topics in the humanities, including cultural, historical, and technological aspects.

Table 2. Humanities Keyword Index

Ran k	Keyword	Articles in selected field	Total articles
1	Artificial Intelligence	93	3,984
2	Identity	79	3,023
3	translation	73	1,790
4	Korean War	71	1,287

5	Cultural Content	65	1,264
6	covid-19	59	3,696
7	shipbuilding	56	990

Cultural content plays a key role in digital culture, acting as a link between traditional cultural practices and new technologies. With the development of the Internet and digital platforms, culture has gained the ability to spread globally, reaching a wide audience and creating new forms of interaction. Music, cinema, literature, art and other cultural objects are transformed into digital formats, allowing users not only to consume but also to create and share content.

In addition, digital culture contributes to the emergence of new forms of cultural expression, such as memes, blogs, video blogs, online games and social networks. This changes traditional approaches to culture, erasing the boundaries between the author and the audience, and creating new forms of creativity and communication. Cultural content is becoming not only a means of entertainment, but also an important tool for shaping public opinion, exchanging ideas and supporting cultural identities in the digital age.

The cultural landscape of Korea is a rich tapestry woven with diverse elements, each contributing to the nation's unique identity. Researchers have delved into the intricate dynamics of this cultural ecosystem, exploring the revitalization of cultural prototype content and the role of the content industry in shaping national identity (Hur, 2010; Chae, Lee, Lee, 2021). The impact of Korean cultural content on consumer behavior and cultural trends is another area of scholarly interest.

Conclusion

Digital policy and culture in Korea are actively discussed in the academic field. This includes analyzing the role of media, technology, and cultural exchange in disseminating Korean content worldwide. This study used a bibliometric method to analyze publications in a Korean database. The data were collected with a time limitation from 2015 to 2025 using “digital culture” and related search terms, ensuring the selection of keywords and data consistency. Despite the limitations of analyzing only one database on the topic and having time restrictions, the data analysis provides some insight into the digital transformation in the academic field. It contributes to a comprehensive understanding of various aspects. The results of this study provide basic baseline data for an in-depth analysis of the continuous development of digital technologies and their impact on academic society. In addition, the results can serve as an important reference for strategic planning and policymaking related to digital transformation.

Firstly, digital culture research is mainly concentrated in the fields of arts, social sciences and humanities, which reflects the interest in studying the topic from social, cultural and artistic positions. The low number of publications in engineering, natural sciences and medicine indicates less active involvement in these fields, possibly due to the specificity of the topic, which is not always directly related to their research subjects. It is recommended to continue supporting research in the field of digital culture, given the growing interest in the topic of digitalization. It is also important to focus on the analysis of factors that contribute to the acceleration of scientific research in this area, which can contribute to a deeper understanding of the impact of digital technologies on various spheres of life.

Secondly, it is safe to say that many articles on the topic of digital culture in Korea are highly cited. Namely, the topic of discussion in the articles on artificial intelligence occupies a leading position. And among scientific institutions, not the most famous at first glance recognizable South Korean universities are actively engaged in publishing scientific papers in the field of digitalization of culture. But some universities surpass these prestigious universities. Thus, the conducted analysis shows a growing interest in the topic of digitalization in the South Korean academic environment.

The obtained results demonstrate that modern research focuses not only on the implementation and use of new technologies but also on the creation of a metaverse. This confirms that in the future, digitalization can develop in new directions, covering more and more areas of scientific knowledge.

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АНАЛИЗ КОРЕЙСКОЙ ЦИФРОВОЙ КУЛЬТУРЫ НА ОСНОВЕ БАЗЫ ДАННЫХ KCI (KOREAN CITATION INDEX)

Аннотация. В статье анализируются научные исследования по теме корейской цифровой культуры. Анализ проводился на основе библиометрического обзора базы данных Korean Citation Index (KCI). В настоящее время существуют научные исследования, основанные на библиометрическом анализе данных, извлекаемых из международных баз Scopus и Web of Science. Однако вопросы, связанные с проведением библиометрического анализа на основе корейских научных баз данных, остаются недостаточно изученными в академическом сообществе. Данный аспект обуславливает научную новизну представленного исследования.

Цель исследования состоит в изучении основных направлений, тенденций и исследовательских приоритетов в изучении цифровой культуры Кореи. Используемый подход включает сбор, обработку и анализ данных, включая публикации, цитирования и ключевые слова, а также изучение известных журналов в этой области. В результате проведенного анализа определены основные исследовательские темы, такие как популяризация корейской культуры (K-Culture) через цифровые платформы, цифровизация традиционных культурных практик и развитие технологии. Выводы подчеркивают значимость цифровой культуры как важного компонента современного культурного и технологического ландшафта Южной Кореи, а также перспективы дальнейших исследований в данной области. Результаты проведенного библиометрического анализа могут быть использованы для объективной оценки научной продуктивности исследовательских учреждений в контексте развития цифровизации культуры в Республике Корея.

Ключевые слова: цифровая политика, Южная Корея, культурный контент, база данных KCI

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KCI(KOREAN CITATION INDEX) ДЕРЕКТЕР БАЗАСЫ НЕГІЗІНДЕ КОРЕЙ ЦИФРЛІК МӘДЕНИЕТТІ ТАЛДАУ

Аннотация. Мақалада корей цифрлық мәдениеті тақырыбы бойынша ғылыми зерттеулер талданады. Талдау Korean Citation Index (KCI) деректер базасына библиометриялық шолу негізінде жүргізілді. Қазіргі уақытта Scopus және Web of Science халықаралық дерекқорларынан алынған мәліметтерді библиометриялық талдауға негізделген ғылыми зерттеулер бар. Дегенмен, корей ғылыми деректер базасы негізінде библиометриялық талдау жүргізуге қатысты мәселелер академиялық қоғамдастықта әлі де зерттелмеген. Бұл аспект ұсынылған зерттеудің ғылыми жаңалығын анықтайды.

Бұл зерттеудің мақсаты корей цифрлық мәдениетін зерттеудегі негізгі бағыттарды, тенденцияларды және зерттеу басымдықтарын зерттеу болып табылады. Қолданылатын әдіс жарияланымдарды, дәйексөздерді және кілт сөздерді қоса алғанда деректерді жинауды, өңдеуді және талдауды, сондай-ақ осы саладағы танымал журналдарды зерттеуді қамтиды. Талдау нәтижесінде сандық платформалар арқылы корей мәдениетін (K-Culture) танымал ету, дәстүрлі мәдени тәжірибені цифрландыру және технологияны дамыту сияқты негізгі

зерттеу тақырыптары анықталды. Қорытындылар Оңтүстік Кореяның заманауи мәдени және технологиялық ландшафтының маңызды құрамдас бөлігі ретінде цифрлық мәдениеттің маңыздылығын, сондай-ақ осы саладағы әрі қарай зерттеулердің перспективаларын көрсетеді. Жүргізілген библиометриялық талдау нәтижелерін Корея Республикасындағы мәдениетті цифрландыруды дамыту жағдайында ғылыми-зерттеу мекемелерінің ғылыми өнімділігін объективті бағалау үшін пайдалануға болады.

Кілт сөздер: цифрлық саясат, Оңтүстік Корея, мәдени контент, КСІ деректер базасы

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