MODESTUM

**Review Article**

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# What is the sustainable personal development? Why is it relevant for the world future?

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| ARTICLE INFO | ABSTRACT |
|---|---|
| | The aim of this study is to conduct a comprehensive review of the literature on the conceptualization of sustainable personal development (SPD) and its relevance to the future of the world. A systematic literature search was conducted in five stages, involving the screening of 367 studies. The study employed bibliometric and in-depth content analyses. This offers a novel and replicable approach to systematization and analysis. The SPD, a relevant term used in the academic literature, is conceptualized, and a significant contribution is made to the field of knowledge and sustainability. This integral concept is associated with social development on a global scale, given that sustainability initiatives originate with each individual. Conversely, the associated elements facilitate the identification of significant relationships that could inform future research initiatives in academia, business, and the wider world.<br><br>**Keywords:** sustainability, physical stability, psychological stability, emotional stability, social stability, intellectual stability, professional stability |

## INTRODUCTION

Sustainable personal development (SPD) is as physical, psychological/emotional, social and intellectual stability (Shabdenova et al., 2022). This is one of the best descriptions of the term, given that there is no established consensus according to the literature review. For example, to date, the SPD has been analyzed though the perspective of the sustainable education (Boyanova et al., 2021; Komleva, 2022; Xu & Shan, 2021), the body image in adolescents (Fernandez et al., 2023), or the social influence of the media (Shabdenova et al., 2022). But there was not a clear analysis of the term conceptualization.

A thorough review of the literature on SPD provided insights into existing research and allowed us to identify the challenges posed by past studies. All studies related to SPD have been considered, with the aim of carrying out an exhaustive study. This has enabled us to establish elements of integration, to understand the concept and to have more enriching multi-faceted analyses. On this sense, a clear conceptualization will allow to propose new practical and research directions for the future world.

Therefore, one of the gaps identified in the literature was the knowledge void, that indicates that the literature analyzed is not clear about the concept (Müller-Bloch & Kranz, 2014).

The other gap is the action-knowledge conflict, which means that the information collected is not organized to understand the concept and to reflect the action (Müller-Bloch & Kranz, 2014). Moreover, according to the authors knowledge, there is no extant literature review on this term to date, so this research is one of the first. Consequently, this study uses the SPD approach to makes significant contributions to the sustainability future. Under these considerations, the research questions (RQs) are as follows:

**RQ1.** What is the conceptualization of the SPD, considering the existent literature?

**RQ2.** How is SPD relevant to the world future?

The changes that have taken place in recent years have manifested in a variety of ways. This encompasses not only climate change and changes in nature, but also technological advancements. If we do not encourage people to consider sustainability from a personal perspective, as a means of complementing and developing their personal growth, the resulting changes will be negligible. Conversely, if each person takes responsibility for themselves and their actions, these changes can be exponential. This is closely related to Self-Determination Theory, which is one of the most widely used theories in research on this topic. Consequently, conducting studies using this approach is relevant.

## Significance of the Study

This study is of significant value and contributes to theoretical and practical knowledge in the personal, social, sustainable, educational, and political fields. The development of a comprehensive framework facilitates the integration of essential elements and enhances the understanding of the related factors that enable the development of a sustainable development plan.

Conversely, this research is being conducted because sustainable development is a relevant topic that requires further study. Most studies to date have focused on sustainable development from a business or political perspective, but few consider that this sustainable development must begin with the individual. In reality, if we consider this from a logical standpoint, those who occupy positions within government or work for organizations are people. Therefore, adopting an innovative approach, while still exploring but not yet systematizing the topic, will be a good starting point for future policies, actions, and studies. A review of relevant research indicates that certain articles address this perspective; therefore, organising and systematizing them will allow us to understand what has been studied to date and what remains to be explored in the future. Furthermore, this research is based on previous studies, with the aim of identifying patterns, similarities, and relevant points that may be important for sustainable development.

Therefore, the objective of this research is to provide a solid study, grounded in previous research, by introducing a term that has been used in the literature but not explored in depth. In this sense, the study provides a comprehensive overview of the related research. Furthermore, this research intends to establish a solid foundation for subsequent investigations, with the individual placed at the core of these efforts. Additionally, it will provide valuable insights to inform the development of educational, labor, and governmental policies.

In this case, the objectives include:

- to conceptualize the SPD, considering the existing literature and
- to investigate the relevance of the SPD to the future of the world.

In this sense, this research is novel and original, given that previous studies do not present the same foundation as that developed in this investigation. Furthermore, previous studies do not conceptualize what SPD is. Although some mention this term or relate some of the words considered within it, there is no complete articulation or understanding of its meaning. Thus, this research contributes to the state of the art by understanding the current state of knowledge regarding SPD at a specific moment in time, exploring in depth the categories, methodologies, results and theories, identifying duplications or contradictions, and knowledge gaps (Dambietz, 2022; Londoño, 2016). All of this is carried out through a systematic and rigorous process, critically analyzing the information. Therefore, this research is not limited to already known information, and the existing knowledge gap must be addressed clearly.

## Structure of the Paper

The structure of this paper is organized to provide a comprehensive analysis of the SPD. The introductory section outlines the research objectives and sets the significance of the study as the background and context. The methodology section describes the research design, data collection methods and analysis techniques, providing clarity on how the study was conducted. The results present the findings according to the research objectives, separated by topics, to facilitate the reading of the paper, as present theories identified in the papers analyzed. The discussion identifies similarities, as contradictions identified in the literature. The conclusions close the paper, presenting certain limitations as future research. This study presents **Appendix A**, which includes a list of theories and authors identified in the literature search, as a list of terms and authors with a direct citation.

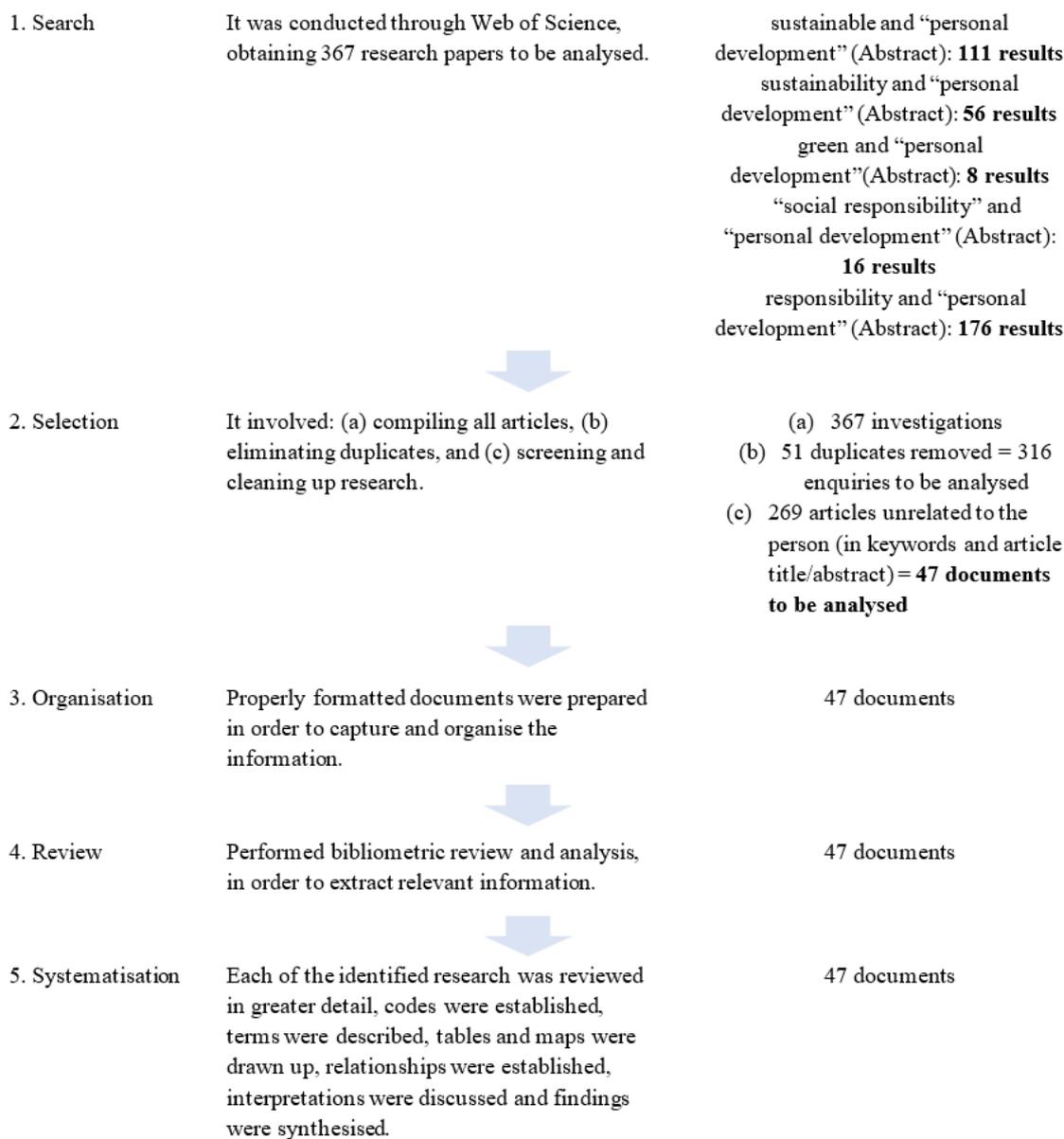# METHODOLOGY

## Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative and qualitative integrative review design to explore and synthesizing existing knowledge on SPD through an interdisciplinary lens. The purpose is not to generate new primary data, but to develop a comprehensive conceptual framework based on previously existing literature, allowing a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study. The review emphasizes context-specific insights while exploring and identifying in depth: by categories, methodologies, results, theories, identifying duplications or contradictions, gaps in knowledge.

To answer the RQ formulated, the study followed the five-step sequence (see **Figure 1**) recommended by the literature (Aguinis et al., 2023; Paul & Criado, 2020). The five steps are

(1) search,

(2) selection,

(3) organization,

(4) review, and

(5) systematization.

## Literature Search (Step 1)

The initial search stage was conducted through a relevant database, Web of Science (WoS), which provides the most comprehensive citation by source and includes a large amount of older scientific literature from 1900 (Universidad de Valladolid, 2025). The search terms were [sustainable and "personal development"], [sustainability and "personal development"], [green and "personal development"], ["social responsibility" and "personal development"], and [responsibility and "personal development"] (see **Figure 1**). An additional search was also carried out with the OR connector: "sustainable" OR "personal development" OR "sustainability" OR "green" OR "social responsibility" OR "responsibility". Of the searches carried out, the first one proved to be the most accurate, leading to the consideration of a total of 367 research papers at this stage. It is important to note that no filters have been established regarding language or year.

| 1. Search | It was conducted through Web of Science, obtaining 367 research papers to be analysed. | sustainable and "personal development" (Abstract): **111 results**<br>sustainability and "personal development" (Abstract): **56 results**<br>green and "personal development"(Abstract): **8 results**<br>"social responsibility" and "personal development" (Abstract): **16 results**<br>responsibility and "personal development" (Abstract): **176 results** |
| 2. Selection | It involved: (a) compiling all articles, (b) eliminating duplicates, and (c) screening and cleaning up research. | (a) 367 investigations<br>(b) 51 duplicates removed = 316 enquiries to be analysed<br>(c) 269 articles unrelated to the person (in keywords and article title/abstract) = **47 documents to be analysed** |
| 3. Organisation | Properly formatted documents were prepared in order to capture and organise the information. | 47 documents |
| 4. Review | Performed bibliometric review and analysis, in order to extract relevant information. | 47 documents |
| 5. Systematisation | Each of the identified research was reviewed in greater detail, codes were established, terms were described, tables and maps were drawn up, relationships were established, interpretations were discussed and findings were synthesised. | 47 documents |

**Figure 1.** Workflow diagram (Source: Author´s own elaboration, considering the literature from Aguinis et al., 2023; Paul & Criado, 2020)

### Data extraction

To systematize the review process, structured data was extracted from the WoS platform. This not only allows for systematization but also enables any researcher to replicate the study and arrive at similar results. Through this process, 367 research papers were obtained according to the previously established search criteria. Data such as author, year of publication, document type, abstract, number of citations and journal were extracted from these papers.

### Selection (Step 2)

The second selection stage allowed for the compilation of all research from all previous searches, the elimination of duplicates, as well as the sifting and purging of research that did not correspond to the definition identified at the outset. This allowed us to identify 47 related research studies, which in turn enabled the term to be understood and described in a more precise and appropriate way.

### Data selection

It was noted that a number of the documents collected in the databases appeared to be duplicates; therefore, these duplicates (51 documents) were removed, leaving 316. Furthermore, it was observed that several of these documents were unrelated to the person concerned, and so these 269 documents were also removed, as they did not correspond to the phenomenon under study. This process resulted in cleaner data compared to the initial process, yielding a final set of 47 documents.

### Quality assessment

The databases for each search have been downloaded, so records of these searches are available. The studies were evaluated based on their relevance to the study's objective. The 47 documents to be analyzed were selected based on their methodological rigor, their relevance to the present research, and their contribution to the existing literature on the topic under analysis.

## Organization (Step 3)

The third stage, organization, involved preparing the documents in the appropriate format to capture and organize the information. The process was established through a series of intermediate stages, which included organising them using a spreadsheet and processing all the searches found in a BibTeX format using the WoS tool. This involved entering only the refined light, ensuring efficiency and accuracy in the data processing. This enabled us to adapt the appropriate databases to the required format for the next step.

### Data organization

The 47 documents were organized from two perspectives. Firstly, the database was prepared for bibliometric analysis, which is part of the quantitative analysis in this study. Secondly, the data were organized for content analysis, which is part of the qualitative analysis. In this regard, two databases containing the same information were used, but they were processed independently.

## Review (Step 4)

The fourth stage of the review consisted of a bibliometric review and analysis, with the aim of extracting relevant information related to the study. This stage has been beneficial as it has enabled new perspectives to emerge on the subject of the SBD. The use of R Studio, Bibliometrix and Biblioshiny was instrumental in the extraction of information, which was then prepared using the Excel program. This process enabled the presentation of the results to be clearer and more understandable.

### Data analysis and codification

Firstly, a bibliometric analysis was conducted. The results of this investigation are presented in this document. This process yielded bibliometric data such as author/abstract/keyword relationships, word clouds, tree maps, most frequent words, word frequency over time, thematic maps and clusters, among others. Secondly, a content analysis was performed to obtain more specific information about the content of each document, as provided by the bibliometric analysis. The content analysis of each study yielded information about the type of research (empirical, theoretical, etc.), theories, and relevant topics. This facilitated the identification of current findings and future research directions, as well as clarified definitions.

As is evident from the analysis of the information, recurring codes and concepts have been identified. The triangulation of information was facilitated by the use of both quantitative and qualitative analysis. This approach enhances the rigor and support of the research. This has been the preliminary step before systematization.

## Systematization (Step 5)

Finally, the implementation of a systematic approach enabled a more thorough examination of each of the identified research studies, encompassing coding, the description of pertinent terms, the elaboration of tables, maps, relationships, and the discussion of interpretations and synthesis of findings. The discussion was conducted with specialists who were able to provide their professional opinion on the term under study. This fifth part builds on the previous step, offering a more comprehensive approach to the written material.

### Identifying relationships and patterns

Following the initial step, the next stage was to establish relationships between the codes and concepts. Tables and maps were used to facilitate this process. The results of the analysis were then submitted to the researchers for their consideration and input. This process confirmed that the established relationships were robust and consistent, and that the findings were coherent with all the previous work.

### Validity and reliability

The study triangulates quantitative and qualitative data, lending strength to its findings. Furthermore, the methodological process has been reviewed by experts to ensure consistency of results. Furthermore, the study utilizes databases, tables, summaries and diagrams supported by reliable academic research.

# RESULTS

## Conceptualization of the SPD Considering the Existent Literature

### Data and scientific production related with the SPD

The compiled metadata contained 47 documents. These corresponded to 34 years (1990 to 2024), with 44 sources and 155 authors. Single-authored documents were 11, with 12.77 international co-authorship and 3.32 co-authors per document. A total of 1,668 references were identified in the research, with an average document age of 8.74 and an average of 10.6 citations per document.

As illustrated in **Table 1**, it is important to note that the most globally cited documents are from Fuchs (2007), Quill and Williamson (1990), Savage et al., (2015), and Tsey et al. (2005). The citations per year were not very high, with Fuchs (2007) and Lejeune (2021) standing out in total citations per

**Table 1.** Most global cited documents (Adapted from Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017)

| 1st author | Year | Journal | doi | TC | TCY | NTC |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fuchs, T. | 2007 | Psychopathology | 10.1159/000106468 | 103 | 5.72 | 1.93 |
| Quill, T. E. | 1990 | Archives of Internal Medicine | 10.1001/archinte.150.9.1857 | 90 | 2.57 | 1.00 |
| Savage, E. | 2015 | International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education | 10.1108/IJSHE-10-2013-0132 | 39 | 3.90 | 1.86 |
| Tsey, K. | 2005 | Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health | 10.1111/j.1467-842X.2005.tb00059.x | 33 | 1.65 | 1.00 |
| Helsing, D. | 2008 | Harvard Educational Review | 10.17763/haer.78.3.888l759g1qm54660 | 31 | 1.82 | 1.00 |
| Ketterer, F. | 2014 | BMC Family Practice | 10.1186/1471-2296-15-119 | 22 | 2.00 | 2.20 |
| Lejeune, C. | 2021 | International Journal of Human Resource Management | 10.1080/09585192.2018.1510848 | 21 | 5.25 | 4.85 |
| Force, A. | 2018 | Sustainability Science | 10.1007/s11625-017-0448-y | 18 | 2.57 | 1.00 |

**Table 1 (Continued).** Most global cited documents (Adapted from Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017)

| 1st author | Year | Journal | doi | TC | TCY | NTC |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Frunza, S. | 2017 | Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies | NA | 16 | 2.00 | 1.03 |
| Onyx, J. | 2006 | Australasian Journal on Ageing | 10.1111/j.1741-6612.2006.00154.x | 16 | 0.84 | 1.00 |
| Moore, Z. E. | 2017 | Current Opinion in Psychology | 10.1016/j.copsyc.2017.05.016 | 15 | 1.88 | 0.97 |
| Wamsler, C. | 2022 | Global Sustainability | 10.1017/sus.2022.11 | 11 | 3.67 | 2.28 |
| Amani, J. | 2022 | SAGE Open | 10.1177/21582440221109586 | 7 | 2.33 | 1.45 |
| Goel, P. | 2023 | Online Information Review | 10.1108/OIR-04-2021-0205 | 7 | 3.50 | 2.63 |
| Wright, D. J. | 2021 | International Journal of Pharmacy Practice | 10.1093/ijpp/riab025 | 6 | 1.50 | 1.38 |
| Jiao, S. | 2022 | Sustainability | 10.3390/su14169918 | 5 | 1.67 | 1.03 |
| Franco-Sola, M. | 2020 | Revista Iberoamericana de Ciencias de la Actividad Física y el Deporte | 10.24310/riccafd.2020.v9i1.8307 | 5 | 1.00 | 1.67 |
| Spry, N. | 2014 | Australian Journal of Adult Learning | NA | 5 | 0.45 | 0.50 |
| Jiao, S. | 2022 | Sustainability | 10.3390/su141912619 | 4 | 1.33 | 0.83 |
| Zhou, J. | 2021 | Perceptual and Motor Skills | 10.1177/00315125211029237 | 4 | 1.00 | 0.92 |
| Predoiu, R. | 2020 | Archives of Budo | NA | 4 | 0.80 | 1.33 |
| Sergeeva, M. G. | 2019 | Revista Praxis Educacional | 10.22481/praxisedu.v15i34.5796 | 4 | 0.67 | 4.00 |
| Wright, P. D. | 2007 | British Dental Journal | 10.1038/bdj.2007.586 | 4 | 0.22 | 0.07 |
| Volkova, E. N. | 2015 | Psikhologicheskii Zhurnal | NA | 3 | 0.30 | 0.14 |
| Leontiev, D. A. | 2014 | Voprosy Psikhologii | NA | 3 | 0.27 | 0.30 |
| Nieman, M. | 2010 | Tydskrif vir Geesteswetenskappe | NA | 3 | 0.20 | 1.00 |
| Bullock, K. | 1995 | Educational Studies | 10.1080/0305569950210301 | 3 | 0.10 | 1.00 |
| Semper, J. V. O. | 2021 | Sustainability | 10.3390/su13179995 | 2 | 0.50 | 0.46 |
| Manyeneng, L. G. | 2021 | Health SA Gesondheid | 10.4102/hsag.v26i0.1404 | 2 | 0.50 | 0.46 |
| Cheang, C. C. | 2021 | Frontiers in Psychology | 10.3389/fpsyg.2020.583319 | 2 | 0.50 | 0.46 |
| Anson, D. W. J. | 2016 | English in Australia | NA | 2 | 0.22 | 1.00 |
| Bernier, C. | 1999 | Relations Industrielles-Industrial Relations | 10.7202/051251ar | 2 | 0.08 | 1.00 |
| Saleh, S. S. | 2023 | Expert Systems | 10.1111/exsy.13307 | 1 | 0.50 | 0.38 |
| Mukhina, V. S. | 2022 | Kulturno-Istoricheskaya Psikhologiya-Cultural-Historical Psychology | 10.17759/chp.2022180110 | 1 | 0.33 | 0.21 |
| Oleinik, T. A. | 2022 | Information Technologies and Learning Tools | 10.33407/itlt.v87i1.4171 | 1 | 0.33 | 0.21 |
| Pilishvili, T. S. | 2021 | Obrazovanie i Nauka-Education and S | 10.17853/1994-5639-2021-4-126-156 | 1 | 0.25 | 0.23 |
| Kovalchuk, I. A. | 2021 | Psychology and Law | 10.17759/psylaw.2021110107 | 1 | 0.25 | 0.23 |
| Criswell, E. | 2000 | Journal of Humanistic Psychology | 10.1177/0022167800403006 | 1 | 0.04 | 1.00 |
| Doody, O. | 2024 | Journal of Clinical Nursin | 10.1111/jocn.17315 | 0 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Fernandez, P. | 2023 | Sustainability | 10.3390/su151310061 | 0 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Al-Jameel, O. S. | 2021 | Journal of Organizational Behavior Research | 10.51847/AwYKqLNzuU | 0 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Liudmila, L. N. | 2020 | Voprosy Istorii | 10.31166/VoprosyIstorii202010Statyi71 | 0 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Ariyan, M. A. | 2019 | Yazyk i Kultura-Language and Culture | 10.17223/19996195/46/11 | 0 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Ivanova, Z. | 2019 | International Journal of Applied Exercise Physiology | NA | 0 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Sidorchuk, I. | 2019 | European Journal of Sustainable Development | 10.14207/ejsd.2019.v8n3p203 | 0 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Gokool-Ramdoo, S. | 2009 | International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning | NA | 0 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Glaskin, M. | 1991 | Engineering–London | NA | 0 | 0.00 | 0.00 |

Note. TC: Total citations; TCY: Total citations per year; & NTC: Normalizaed total citations

year, followed by Savage et al. (2015) and Wamsler et al. (2022). The list also identifies publications related to the search term in recent years (years 2022 and 2023) (**Table 1**).

Other analyses included authors (AU), abstracts (AB_TM) and keywords (DE). This facilitated the identification of relationships and concentrations (see **Figure 2**). The abstracts containing terms such as development, personal, learning, study, gap, training and students are of particular interest. The key words include personal development, health, development, gap year, motivation, competences, personal growth, personal, intrinsic interest, personality, achievement, and responsibility.

**Figure 2** is very insightful because, in addition to the data presented, it provides guidance on the interrelationships between the terms. Additionally, it provides valuable insights into the definition of the SPD, its related concepts, and the methodological approaches employed in its study.

Following the analysis, the next step was to identify the sources of this research. This involved considering the most cited journals and the authors' affiliations to determine which countries are conducting the most research on this topic. The research identified the most frequently cited journals in the following order: Sustainability-Basel (18 articles), Frontiers in Psychology (16), Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences (12), Journal of Sustainable Tourism (11), Handbook of Distance Education (9), International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education (9), Nature Human Behavior (9).

With regard to the most relevant affiliations, these correspond to: Minzu University of China, Nizhny Novgorod State Linguistic University, University of East Anglia, University of Public Navarra, Academy of Law and Management of the Federal Penitentiary Service of Russia, Arizona State University, Majmaah University, Near East University, Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University,
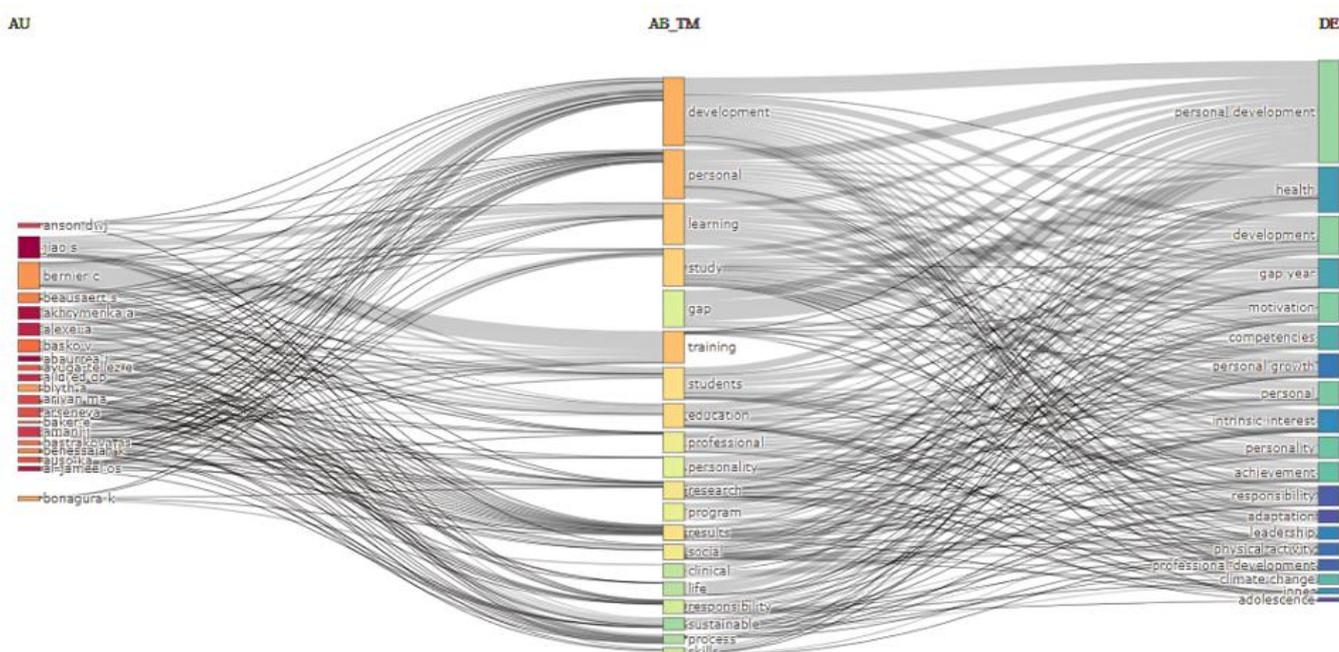
**Figure 2.** Authors (AU), abstracts (AB_TM), and keywords (DE) (Adapted from Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017)

| Affiliation | Articles |
|---|---|
| Minzu University of China | 4 |
| Nizhny Novgorod State Linguistic University | 4 |
| University of East Anglia | 4 |
| University of Public Navarra | 4 |
| Academy of Law and Management of the Federal Penitentiary Service of Russia | 3 |
| Arizona State University | 3 |
| Majmaah University | 3 |
| Near East University | 3 |
| Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University | 3 |
| Oviedo University | 3 |
| Shanghai University of Sport | 3 |
| University of Liège | 3 |



**Figure 3.** Most relevant affiliation and countries' scientific production (Adapted from Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017)
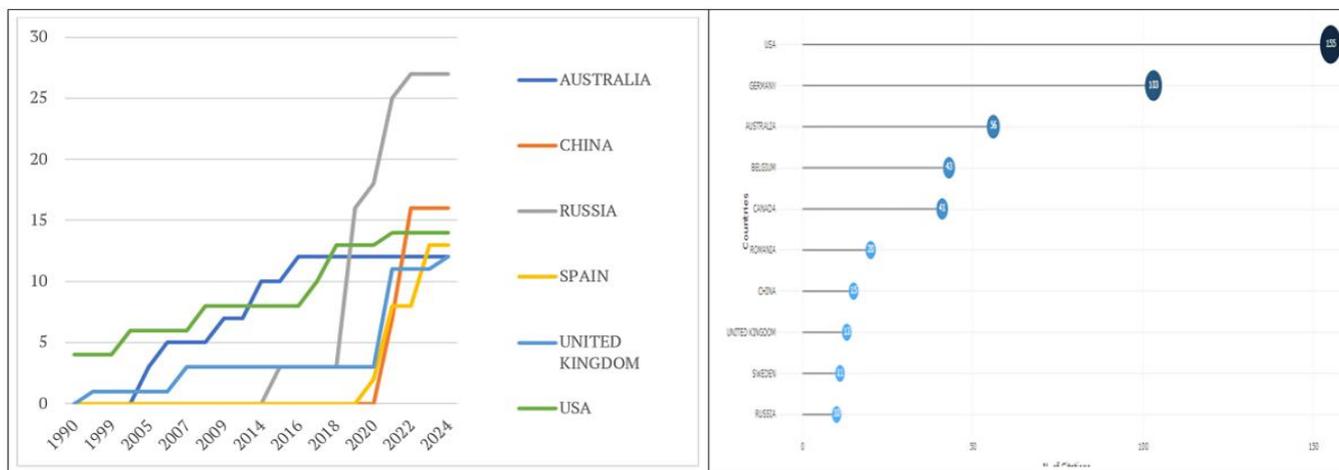


**Figure 4.** Countries' production over time and most cited countries (Adapted from Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017)

University of Oviedo, Shanghai University of Sport, and University of Liège (see **Figure 3**).

In this context, the most prominent scientific productions are sourced from Russia, China, United States, Spain, United Kingdom, Australia (see **Figure 3**) and the most cited countries in these publications correspond to the United States, Germany, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Romania, China, United Kingdom, Sweden, Russia, among others (see **Figure 4**). It is noteworthy that the most relevant affiliations (affiliations correspond to the countries of China, Russia, United Kingdom,
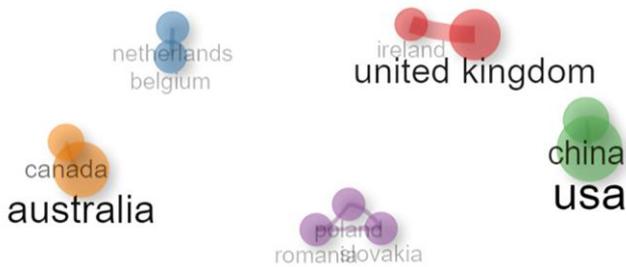
**Figure 5.** Collaboration network (Adapted from Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017)

could be perceived that they engage in research in a highly collaborative manner. However, the analysis of collaboration networks revealed something different. The largest collaborative networks are the United States with China, followed by Australia and Canada, United Kingdom with Ireland. Poland, Romania and Slovakia are the only trinomial identified. In parallel are the Netherlands and Belgium (see **Figure 5**).

In this sense, it appears that research islands have formed among these countries. There is a possibility that this could be attributable to collaborative networks, agreements, or shared interests.

Spain, United States, Saudi Arabia, Cyprus, Belgium, which differ in part with the countries with the highest scientific production and the most cited countries.

While the preceding analysis provides information regarding countries in terms of production and citations, it

*Most relevant terms related with the SPD*

Following a more in-depth analysis, it was decided that the most frequent terms should be identified. These are presented in different ways in **Figure 6**, with the respective graphs being



| Words | N° |
|---|---|
| performance | 3 |
| students | 3 |
| adult | 2 |
| behavior | 2 |
| competences | 2 |
| education | 2 |
| engagement | 2 |
| impact | 2 |
| intrinsic motivation | 2 |
| metaanalysis | 2 |
| nurses | 2 |
| self-determination | 2 |
| sport | 2 |
| adaptation | 1 |
| addiction medicine | 1 |
| adolescents | 1 |
| alcohol | 1 |
| association | 1 |
| associations | 1 |
| attachment | 1 |
| attrition | 1 |
| authentic leadership | 1 |
| autobiographical memory | 1 |
| barriers | 1 |
| big 5 | 1 |
| caffeine | 1 |
| competence | 1 |
| components | 1 |

| | |
|---|---|
| connection | 1 |
| conservation | 1 |
| construction | 1 |
| country | 1 |
| development hrd practices | 1 |
| dissociation | 1 |
| doctoral degrees | 1 |
| eating-disorder | 1 |
| ecotourism | 1 |
| efficacy | 1 |
| emotional intelligence | 1 |
| empowerment | 1 |
| energy drink consumption | 1 |
| experience design | 1 |
| experiences | 1 |
| fatigue | 1 |
| feedback | 1 |
| fitness | 1 |
| garden | 1 |
| gender | 1 |
| global burden | 1 |
| health | 1 |
| higher-education | 1 |
| insomnia | 1 |
| intentions | 1 |
| intervention | 1 |
| learners | 1 |

| | |
|---|---|
| learning-motivation | 1 |
| life | 1 |
| management | 1 |
| manova | 1 |
| mediation | 1 |
| mentor | 1 |
| misuse | 1 |
| models | 1 |
| mortality | 1 |
| motivation | 1 |
| motivational climate | 1 |
| motivations | 1 |
| national-survey | 1 |
| needs | 1 |
| nursing-homes | 1 |
| open online courses | 1 |
| outcomes | 1 |
| patient-centeredness | 1 |
| peer | 1 |
| phd | 1 |
| phenomenography | 1 |
| philosophy | 1 |
| portfolio assessment | 1 |
| predictors | 1 |
| primary-care | 1 |
| ratings | 1 |

| | |
|---|---|
| readiness | 1 |
| reasons | 1 |
| regional identity | 1 |
| reliability | 1 |
| resources | 1 |
| risk-assessment | 1 |
| satisfaction | 1 |
| sedentary behavior | 1 |
| sitting-time | 1 |
| social media | 1 |
| society | 1 |
| stewardship | 1 |
| student | 1 |
| supervisor | 1 |
| sustainability | 1 |
| symptoms | 1 |
| teachers | 1 |
| terms | 1 |
| time | 1 |
| trial | 1 |
| university | 1 |
| validity | 1 |
| values | 1 |
| wildlife tourism | 1 |
| workforce | 1 |
| world | 1 |
| youth | 1 |

**Figure 6.** Word cloud, tree map, and most frequent words (Adapted from Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017)
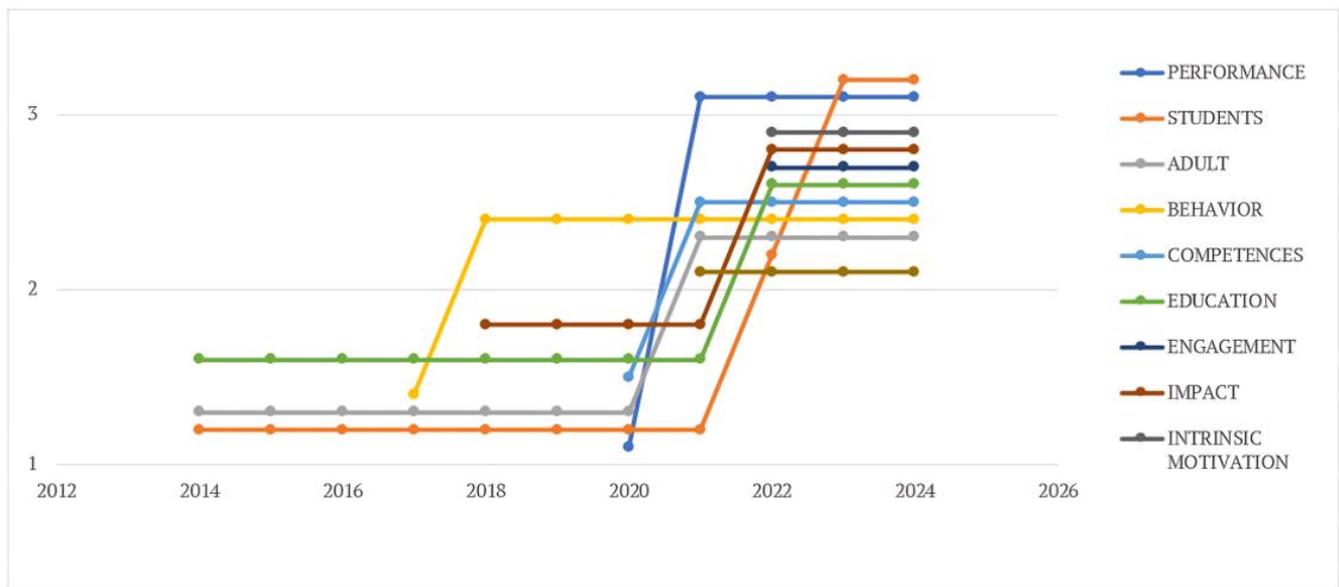
**Figure 7.** Words' frequency over time (Adapted from Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017)
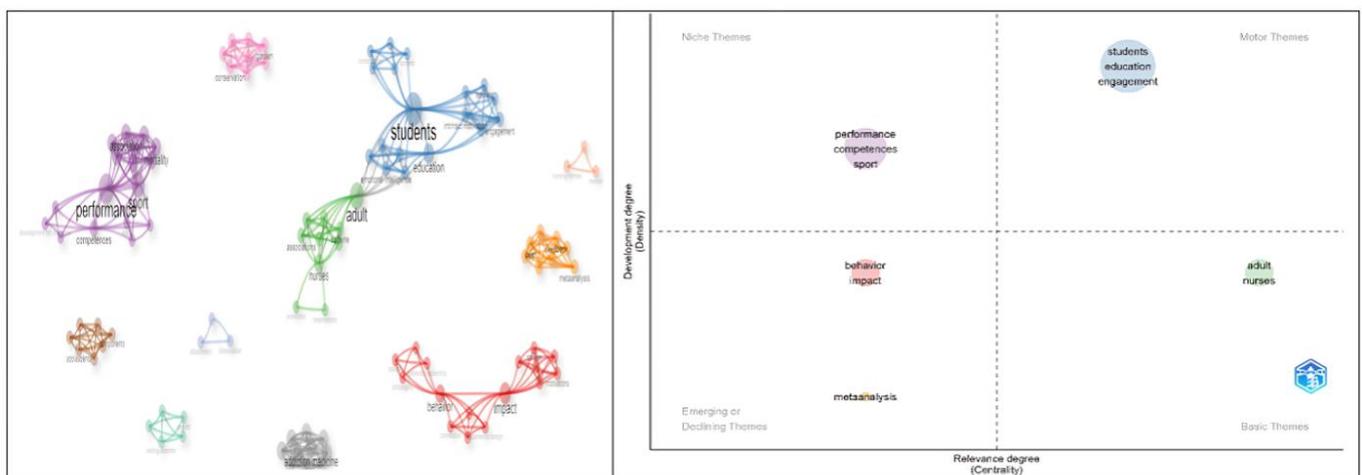


**Figure 8.** Thematic map and clusters (Adapted from Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017)

equivalent. The analysis of the terms identifies the most commonly used keywords: performance (3), students (3), adult (2), behavior (2), competences (2), education (2), engagement (2), impact (2), intrinsic motivation (2), meta-analysis (2), nurses (2), self-determination (2), and sport (2). In order to analyze the relationships between terms, all those that appeared were included. This approach ensures the findings are transparent and facilitates a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships established in the subsequent results. This approach provides transparency, consistency, and robustness.

As term analysis on its own is not sufficient to understand how these have emerged over time, this more comprehensive approach was adopted. This process enabled the identification of periods based on term appearance. For example, in 2014, education, adult and students were identified in relation with the SPD. In 2017, behavior appeared. In 2018, impact appeared. In 2020, competence vand performance. In 2021, the term meta-analysis appeared. And in 2022: intrinsic motivation and engagement. This analysis is of particular interest as it demonstrates how the SPD has been analyzed

over time. Furthermore, it is important to note the manner in which the previously presented terms have appeared and related to each other (**Figure 7**).

The subsequent analysis outlines more complex relationships on the terms previously presented (see **Figure 8**). First, the thematic map provides relevant information on the relationships of the terms. The largest node is students, which is related to education, intrinsic motivation, engagement, emotional intelligence, teachers, barriers, consideration. This node is associated with adult, which is linked to emotional intelligence, caffeine, associations, nurses, workforce, experiences. Another significant node is behavior and impact, which are linked to connection and experience design; in this behavior is also associated with philosophy, society and authentic leadership; and on the other hand impact is related to motivation and attrition. Performance is another node related to mortality, association, competences, development of hard practices and big 5. There are other nodes on a smaller scale, which can be found in **Figure 8**. Secondly, cluster analysis provides information on the grouping of terms according to their level of relevance and development, offering

**Table 2.** Terms definitions

| Term | Definition | Authors considered |
|---|---|---|
| Sustainable personal development | Integral and sustainable growth of the individual and their environment, through a process of continuous improvement of their competences. It encompasses physical, psychological/emotional, social, intellectual and professional aspects, promoting resilience and adaptability in a global context of constant change. | Bullock and Jamieson, (1995), Savage et al. (2015), Shabdenova et al. (2022), Wright and Franklin (2007) |
| Personal development | It is an important continuous improvement process that promotes growth in competencies and considers sustainability. | Savage et al. (2015) |
| Development | It involves overcoming complex problems, starting from the personal sphere, that generate growth. | Wiek et al. (2011), Wright and Franklin (2007), Zhou et al. (2021) |
| Personal | An individual's self-concept, including their internal conditions and how he control his environment to achieve his goals. | Zhou et al. (2021) |
| Competences | Knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable successful action in relation to the problems, challenges and opportunities related to global sustainability, through collaborative action. | Savage et al. (2015), Wiek et al. (2011) |
| Students | Those who can mobilize change. | Savage et al. (2015) |
| Achievement | Results generated through effort. | Zhou et al. (2021) |
| Authentic leadership | A leadership style is necessary for successful, sustainable implementation. | Savage et al. (2015) |
| Barriers | Obstacles that hinder or prevent progress or goal achievement, both in personal and professional contexts. | Wright and Franklin (2007) |
| Physical stability | State of balance and health of the body, essential for overall well-being and sustainable personal development. | Zhou et al. (2021) |
| Psychological/ emotional stability | Ability to maintain a healthy mental balance and have a sustainable personal development. | Shabdenova et al. (2022) |
| Social stability | Ability to maintain a social mental balance and have a sustainable personal development. | Shabdenova et al. (2022) |
| Intellectual stability | Ability to maintain a healthy intellectual balance and have a sustainable personal development. | Shabdenova et al. (2022) |
| Engagement | Level of involvement and internal motivation. | Zhou et al. (2021). |
| Health | State of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not just the absence of disease. | Zhou et al. (2021). |
| Impact | Significant effects or consequences of an action or event on individuals, groups or in the world. | Wright and Franklin (2007) |
| Intrinsic motivation | Internal drive to perform an activity for personal satisfaction and self-interest, rather than for external rewards. | Jiao and Liang (2022) |
| Learning | Acquiring competences to enhance sustainable personal development. | Bullock and Jamieson (1995) |
| Motivation | A set of internal and external reasons that influence a person's decision to act. | Bullock and Jamieson (1995), Wright and Franklin (2007) |
| Performance | The quality and effectiveness with which a person completes a task or activity, influenced by its competences and motivation. | Zhou et al. (2021) |
| Personal growth | Continuous process of self-improvement and self-development though personal strategies. | Bullock and Jamieson (1995) |
| Responsibility | Ability to assume and fulfil obligations and duties, being aware of the consequences. | Bullock and Jamieson (1995) |
| Self-determination | A personal control. | Zhou et al. (2021) |

four quadrants. The emerging or declining themes identified are behavior, impact and meta-analysis. In basic themes are adult and nurses. In motor themes: students, education and engagement. And in niche themes: performance, competence, sport.

### Content type, definitions of terms, and relationships identified with the SPD

The research identified was coded by content type. Seven were found to contain case studies, one mathematical research, one theoretical research, 15 conceptual studies and 23 empirical studies. This classification allowed an analysis to be made for each type of content and to identify findings. Among the most mentioned theories in the articles were: self-determination theory (4 researches), grounded theory (3), goal setting theories (2), psychological statistical theory (2), socio-educational theory (2), theory of change (2), learning theory (2), interactional theory (2). Other theories are mentioned only once and in only one article (see Appendix A).

To identify the terms to be defined, we considered the information from the keywords (see **Figure 2**), the words that were most repeated in the abstracts (see **Figure 4**), as well as word cloud, tree map and most frequent words (see **Figure 6**), words' frequency over time (see **Figure 7**) and thematic map and clusters (see **Figure 8**), among others that were relevant. It was decided to remove those terms that did not need to be defined (such as nurse, adult, association, among other similar terms), in order to have a more limited list related to the study. **Table 2** presents a summary of these terms.

**Table 3** shows the results of the different research studies. It summarizes what is indicated in them, and it considers the definitions presented, as well as the bibliometric analysis carried out. Experts in this field have also looked at this analysis. They did this to check that the things that were found were correct.

**Table 3** will help to analyze how the SPD is relevant to the world future. Considering the literature review, the SPD includes the following aspects: psychological or emotional, social, intellectual and professional, promoting resilience and

**Table 3.** Relationship table

| Physical stability | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Health | Patient-centeredness | |
| sport | nursing-homes | |
| fitness | symptoms | |
| conservation | addiction medicine | |
| ecotourism | eating-disorder | |
| wildlife tourism | energy drink consumption | |
| garden | alcohol | |
| | caffeine | |
| | sedentary behavior | |
| | sitting-time | |
| | fatigue | |
| | attrition | |
| | insomnia | |
| | mortality | |
| **Psychological/emotional stability** | | |
| Life orientation | Personal behavior | Performance |
| personal philosophy | personality | motivation |
| personal | values | intrinsic |
| development plan | autobiographical | motivation |
| resources | memory | self- |
| time | emotional | determination |
| risk-assessment | intelligence | authentic |
| reliability | empowerment | leadership |
| satisfaction | feedback | barriers |
| | gender | dissociation |
| **Social stability** | | |
| Social behavior | World philosophy | |
| connection | society | |
| experience design | world | |
| impact | construction | |
| | global burden | |
| **Intellectual and professional stability** | | |
| Basic-education | Higher-education | Management |
| teachers | university | development |
| engagement | learners | HRD practices |
| experience design | learning- | mentor |
| competences | motivation | supervisor |
| | doctoral degrees | workforce |
| | | experiences |
| | | engagement |
| | | motivational |
| | | climate |
| | | associations |
| | | adaptation |
| | | consideration |

adaptive capacity in a global context of constant change (Bullock & Jamieson, 1995; Savage et al., 2015; Shabdenova et al., 2022; Wright & Franklin, 2007). It is also relevant to note that SPD includes a short- and long-term personal development planning project, which can enhance motivation, skills and responsibility as part of learning, under a comprehensive and adaptive training (Bullock & Jamieson, 1995; Savage et al., 2015; Wiek et al., 2011; Wright & Franklin, 2007).

In summary, the findings reveal an interrelationship between the terms. A more detailed review of these terms and the theories presented in this study indicates that the theory most closely related to SPD is self-determination theory. This theory has been studied not only in the psychological field but also in the educational and sustainability fields (Amani et al., 2022; Cheang et al., 2021; Jiao & Liang, 2022; Jiao et al., 2022). In addition, there is a relationship with the other theories that

have been identified. Moreover, this theory identifies three psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Furthermore, these needs enhance intrinsic motivation, self-regulation, and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

## Relevance of the SPD to the World Future

### Prior analysis to identify the relevance of the SPD to the world future

**Figure 9** presents the previous analyses and other analysis made using Bibliometrix. In the left side we can see the different analysis considered to reach the results presented in the right side. As the results indicate, the SPD is related to the personal development, but also to the individual's environment, considering the impacts generated. It implies a continuous process of integral and continuous growth, with means improvement. The impacts are not only personal, as literature indicates, either to the environment. Literature is diverse in terms if the studies conducted until now, and some of them consider the future elements (Savage et al., 2015; Semper et al., 2021). In light of the diversity of elements indicated in the literature, it will be possible to conduct more precise future research on which of them has a greater impact on SPD. The literature does not yet offer a clear picture in this regard. Furthermore, the categories and topics presented will facilitate future studies to be conducted on which ones have the greatest impact on businesses and the world. Conversely, the study enables us to ascertain which areas of research have been explored thus far and which areas remain unexplored.

### The SPD and the world future in terms of future research initiatives

**Academy:** Future research could focus on evaluating the long-term effectiveness of personal development plans (PDPs) and analyzing their impact on both immediate academic and professional performance and on the life trajectory of individuals. It is also important to investigate how SPD programs, in the academy or in other circumstances, can be adapted and applied in different cultural contexts. This will allow us to better understand the specific needs of diverse populations and to design more inclusive and effective strategies. Future research could explore ways to more effectively integrate SPD into educational curricula, and the impact of this integration on students' personal and professional development.

**Business:** Further research could also examine how SPD influences organizational well-being and employee loyalty, identifying human resource management strategies that can maximize these benefits. Furthermore, technological advances are pivotal in examining the potential of digital tools and online platforms to encourage SPD. This encompasses the utilization of extensive online courses, SPD applications and assorted educational technologies.

**The world:** Future research could also examine how SPD influences the climate change, the pollution, the wars, and other threats to the world. This will be allowed to identify new strategies that can maximize benefits. The world does not change just because a few countries do, nor because companies change. The world can change if each individual generates
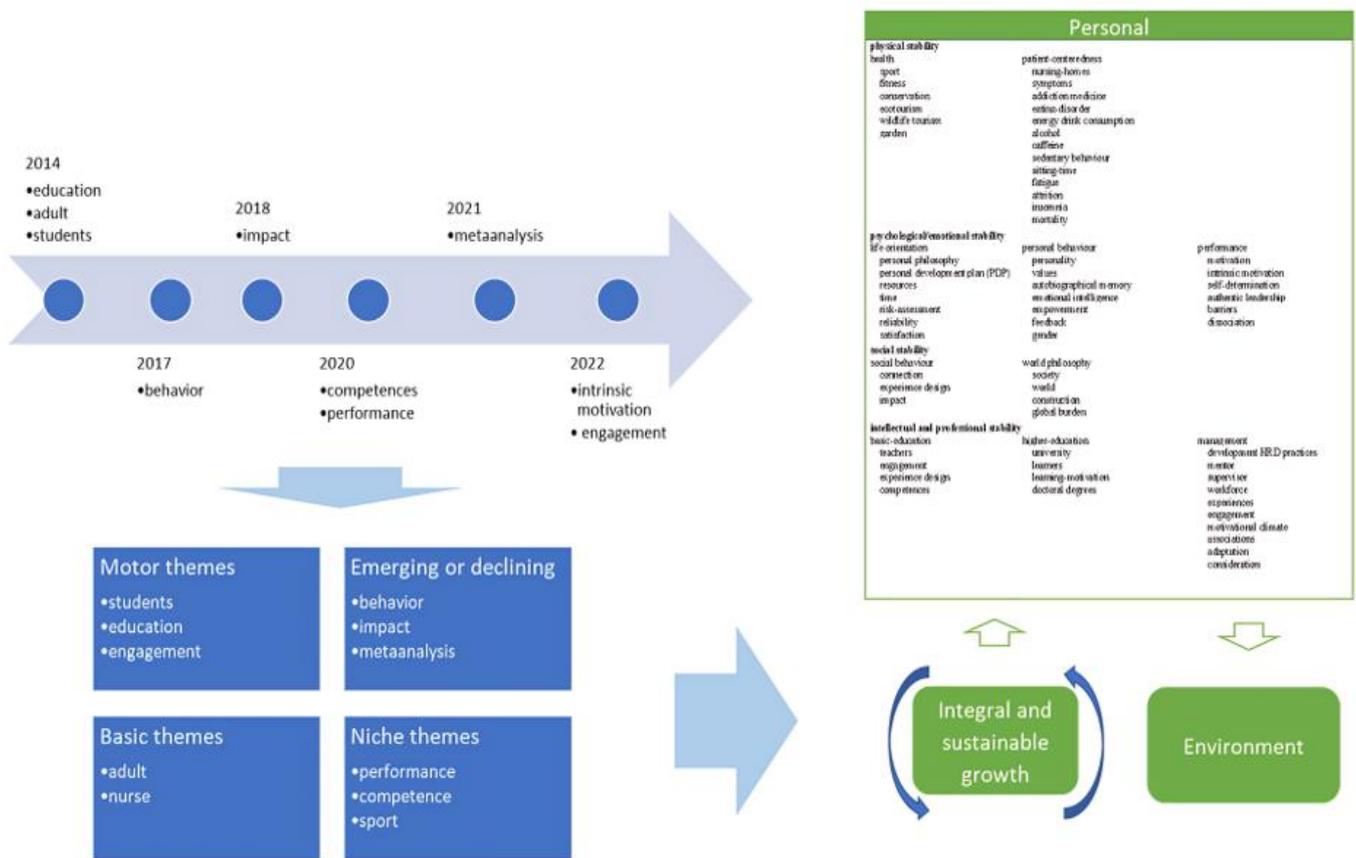
**Figure 9.** Relationship maps (Source: Author's own elaboration)

change and a significant impact, and this can be measured. The SDGs will not be achieved significantly if people do not generate an SPD.

SPD is a multidimensional concept that necessitates a combination of continuous learning, adaptive reflection, individual motivation and a deep connection to the environment. The research offers insight into how various strategies and practices can contribute to SPD, providing a framework for future research. An SPD strategy is a comprehensive approach that necessitates the collaboration of various stakeholders, including educational institutions, employers and policymakers. Future research should concentrate on adapting and improving these approaches to ensure that all individuals have the opportunity to develop in a holistic and sustainable way.

## DISCUSSION

The literature review allowed us to conceptualize and unify the SPD definition. It consists of the integral and sustainable growth of the individual and his or her environment, through a process of continuous improvement of his or her competencies. It encompasses aspects such as physical, psychological/emotional, social, intellectual and professional, promoting resilience and adaptability in a global context of constant change (Bullock & Jamieson, 1995; Savage et al., 2015; Shabdenova et al., 2022; Wright & Franklin, 2007).

The findings suggest a strong alignment between self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and other studies in this field, despite the absence of direct attention to this theory in these previous studies. The following are some illustrative examples. According to Quill and Williamson (1990), the five general requirements for personal growth are as follows: self-awareness, sharing feelings and responsibilities, self-care, developing a personal philosophy and coping skills. In contrast, Mukhina and Melkov (2022) identified the concept of the phenomenology of personal development and being. They indicated that a person's inner position is an essential basis for the formation of civic identity. This should include the following: the valuational attitude towards the reality of the objective and spiritual world, the subject-subject attitude towards natural reality and which requires valuing natural diversity, the reality of image-sign consciousness with special importance of civic consciousness and identity, the reality of social and normative space (especially towards civil rights and duties, laws, etc.), the reality of the inner space of the individual which presupposes taking responsibility for one's own development (having an integral and committed personality).

Conversely, it is crucial to ascertain the factors that contribute to the achievement of SPD. Consequently, research in this area has concentrated on leadership styles. However, it should be noted that this is insufficient without a PDP, as some studies have shown. In terms of leadership styles, Saleh and Auso (2023) identified that transformational leadership influences competitive advantage, which contributes to increased competitiveness and sustainable development. As can be seen from the literature review, SPD involves the implementation of a PDP. For example, Bullock and Jamieson's

(1995) research on secondary school students shows that they can generate significant changes in motivation, communication skills and responsibility for learning. These PDPs are not only effective in academic contexts, but also have a lasting impact on personal development, promoting autonomy and self-management. The writing of these and the identification of educational needs highlights the importance of continuous reflection and adaptive learning in the professional environment (Wright & Franklin, 2007).

Conversely, this development plan must be long-term and require constant motivation. Research by Glaskin (1991) and Bernier (1999) emphasized the need to integrate management development and proactive long-term and strategic training. This needs to be a long-term, strategic and proactive investment for the adaptability and competitiveness of organizations, as well as for the sustainable development of the individual. This perspective highlights the importance of generating benefits for the employee as well as for the company, fostering continuous personal and professional growth. On the other hand, researchers have indicated that different types of motivation have a significant impact on academic performance, and gender differences may influence these outcomes (Jiao & Liang, 2022; Jiao et al., 2022). Intrinsic interest, learning situation, social responsibility and personal development are relevant to learning (Jiao & Liang, 2022), as well as the cultivation of autonomy, school-family interaction (Jiao et al., 2022). Therefore, educational approaches that consider individual and contextual motivations are necessary to foster SPD.

The experiences presented in previous research suggest that a great deal of effort would be needed on what would be the SPD. Lessons learned from a personal development program delivered to thousands of women identified key findings on women's self-esteem, emotional intelligence, purpose and mobilization; for whom their purpose and mobilization were intertwined with social connectedness and helping other women (Spry & Marchant, 2014). On the other hand, a prison experiment showed interesting results, when psychological training attempted to address the following key challenges: developing reflective capacity; awareness of both their own feelings, emotions, motives and actions and the actions of those around them; developing awareness of their own value and importance; building a positive self-concept (to alleviate neurotic manifestations); building interiority–responsibility for one's own behavior in situations arising during professional performance; mastering knowledge of social and psychological interactions and communication skills; development of one's own service motivation and motivational maturity; development of personal and intellectual maturity in Service officers (Kovalchuk et al., 2021). Furthermore, the findings identified by Nieman (2010) showed a variety of benefits enjoyed by students as a result of a gap year: personal growth and development of life skills (growth, independence, responsibility and confidence); improve interpersonal and communication skills; and acquire a broader world view and perspective on life. Conversely, nature-based tourism emphasizes how such experiences can encourage sustainability and environmental education by fostering a connection with the natural environment. This connection enhances environmental awareness and fosters

personal growth, cultivating a sense of responsibility and pro-sustainability agency (Force et al., 2018). Education in sustainability effectively improves confidence and key skills, so SPD must include a strong educational and training focus on sustainability (Savage et al., 2015).

The SPD cannot be considered in isolation; experiences that promote it and allow this to be possible must also be considered. For example, nature-based tourism highlighted how experiences can promote sustainability and environmental education by connecting people to their natural surroundings. This connection enhances environmental awareness, as well as fosters personal development by cultivating a sense of responsibility and pro-sustainability agency (Force et al., 2018). Sustainability education is effective in improving confidence and key competencies, so SPD should include a strong sustainability education and training component (Savage et al., 2015). For example, the long-term effectiveness of a non-formal co-curricular educational program based on an ecological garden in developing awareness, attitudes and behaviors in favor of sustainability among university students identified findings about there was an enhancement in the level of knowledge and skills, which was followed by an increased environmental awareness, the facilitation of personal growth and improved professional development. (Cheang et al., 2021). Also, physical activity (PA) is strongly associated with health and well-being across the lifespan; so after a study with regressions and bootstrapping to test the hypotheses on the main effect of personal control on health across the lifespan, it was found that individuals' self-reported PA was related to their health status (mediator) and was positive mediating effect of PA and was positive when an individual's educational level was high (moderator of educational attainment) and negative when an individual's educational level was low (Zhou et al, 2021).

However, studies also indicate that the results of research to date have not been entirely successful. Despite the clear benefits of SPD, there are challenges that need to be addressed. Al-Jameel and Salhi's (2021) research on employee loyalty reveals that competencies, human relations and personal development do not have a significant impact on employee loyalty, suggesting that human resource management practices need to be re-evaluated and improved to foster more effective and meaningful personal development. Studies on civic maturity formation (Ivanova, 2019) and health risks for nurses working and studying part-time (Manyeneng et al., 2021) indicate that SPD must also consider civic and wellbeing aspects to be truly holistic and effective. On the other hand, probably one of the terms that most closely resembles SP is innovability (De La Vega & Barcellos de Paula, 2021), but that is a broader concept.

In summary, it is vital to identify a concept that can align personal development with sustainability if we are to address the global challenges we face. Research has identified literature on this topic, but the lack of clarity in definitions and interpretations remains a concern (Cheang et al., 2021; Savage et al., 2015). Its conceptualization is pivotal in elucidating its meaning, as outlined in the literature, and in demonstrating how personal development can engender substantial changes for global sustainability. For instance, in various sectors, the SDGs have been proposed as guidelines to be followed by

nations, companies and organizations (Ramirez et al., 2021, 2023). However, it is important to recognize that change cannot be driven by regulations alone; it requires personal motivation from each individual. The change that each person can make from their own identity generates personal impacts that go beyond regulatory limits and creates a sense of responsible living (Cheang et al., 2021; Kovalchuk et al., 2021; Mukhina & Melkov, 2022; Nakama & Rojas, 2023). In this sense, education and organizational training can generate significant changes that truly have a multiplier effect, with sustainability in mind (Bernier, 1999; Force et al., 2018; Glaskin, 1991; Jiao & Liang, 2022; Nieman, 2010; Wright & Franklin, 2007). It is important to acknowledge that contemporary global challenges are also of a social, psychological and emotional nature (Manyeneng et al., 2021). This is precisely why SPD focuses on addressing these issues at their core. This assertion is further substantiated by extant literature on the subject. Furthermore, this research indicates future lines of investigation to be considered within a sustainable approach.

## CONCLUSIONS

SPD emerges as a holistic and continuous approach that focuses not only on academic or professional growth, but also on the emotional, psychological and social development of the individual. The research reviewed shows that programs such as PDPs, proactive and strategic training, and educational initiatives in sustainability are crucial to fostering this type of development. The integration of these programs in academic and professional contexts has been shown to improve motivation, communication skills, and responsibility, which are fundamental aspects of personal and professional growth.

As with other studies, this one is subject to certain limitations. One of these relates to the database used. While the information has been sourced from reputable academic research, future research could consider other reliable sources. Conversely, the analysis exclusively addresses the RQs that were posed. Consequently, future research could entail more detailed analysis and expansion on the results achieved by considering the references in this research. Furthermore, quantitative studies related to the topics covered in this study could be included.

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# APPENDIX A

**Table A1.** List of theories and authors

| Theory | Authors | Article title | Source title | PY |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Self-determination theory | Jiao, S.; Liang, F. | Sustainable development of high school English learners in China: Motivation and its impact on their English achievement | Sustainability | 2022 |
| | Jiao, S.; Jin, H.; You, Z.; Wang, J. | Motivation and its effect on language achievement: Sustainable development of Chinese middle school students' second language learning | Sustainability | 2022 |
| | Cheang, C. C.; Ng, W. K.; Wong, Y. S. D.; Li, W. C.; Tsoi, K. H. | Planting a seed of experience–Long term effects of a co-curricular ecogarden-based program in higher education in Hong Kong | Frontiers in Psychology | 2021 |
| | Amani, J.; Myeya, H.; Mhewa, M. | Understanding the motives for pursuing postgraduate studies and causes of late completion: Supervisors and supervisees' experiences | Sage Open | 2022 |
| Grounded theory | Wamsler, C.; Osberg, G. | Transformative climate policy mainstreaming–Engaging the political and the personal | Global Sustainability | 2022 |
| | Savage, E.; Tapics, T.; Evarts, J.; Wilson, J.; Tirone, S. | Experiential learning for sustainability leadership in higher education | International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education | 2015 |
| | Ketterer, F.; Symons, L.; Lambrechts, M. C.; Mairiaux, P.; Godderis, L.; Peremans, L.; Remmen, R.; Vanmeerbeek, M. | What factors determine Belgian general practitioners' approaches to detecting and managing substance abuse? A qualitative study based on the I-change model | BMC Family Practice | 2014 |
| Goal setting theories | Ketterer, F.; Symons, L.; Lambrechts, M. C.; Mairiaux, P.; Godderis, L.; Peremans, L.; Remmen, R.; Vanmeerbeek, M. | What factors determine Belgian general practitioners' approaches to detecting and managing substance abuse? A qualitative study based on the I-change model | BMC Family Practice | 2014 |
| | Lejeune, C.; Beausaert, S.; Raemdonck, I. | The impact on employees' job performance of exercising self-directed learning within personal development plan practice | International Journal of Human Resource Management | 2021 |
| Psychological statistical theory | Jiao, S.; Liang, F. | Sustainable development of high school English learners in China: Motivation and its impact on their English achievement | Sustainability | 2022 |
| | Jiao, S.; Jin, H.; You, Z.; Wang, J. | Motivation and its effect on language achievement: Sustainable development of Chinese middle school students' second language learning | Sustainability | 2022 |
| Socio-educational theory | Jiao, S.; Liang, F. | Sustainable development of high school English learners in China: Motivation and its impact on their English achievement | Sustainability | 2022 |
| | Jiao, S.; Jin, H.; You, Z.; Wang, J. | Motivation and its effect on language achievement: Sustainable development of Chinese middle school students' second language learning | Sustainability | 2022 |
| Learning theory | Moore, Z. E.; Bonagura, K. | Current opinion in clinical sport psychology: From athletic performance to psychological well-being | Current Opinion in Psychology | 2017 |
| | Lejeune, C.; Beausaert, S.; Raemdonck, I. | The impact on employees' job performance of exercising self-directed learning within personal development plan practice | International Journal of Human Resource Management | 2021 |

Note. PY: Publication year

**Table A2.** List of terms and authors

| Term | Textual description |
|---|---|
| Sustainable personal development | Shabdenova et al. (2022): "Different thematic approaches to individual development (psychological/emotional, social and intellectual stability)." (p. 605)<br>Savage et al. (2015): "The program's focus on 'personal' was intentional in the program design. Based on participants' feedback, the inclusion of personal development exercises was a critical element for successful sustainability leadership development." (p. 692) |
| Personal development | Savage et al. (2015): "The third theme, personal development, is notable, as it is not a typical focus of sustainability in higher education, but held high importance to participants." (p. 692); "… appears to nourish growth in the five key sustainability competency areas." (p. 699) |
| Development | Wiek et al. (2011): "The field's development is a response to existing and anticipated complex problems including climate change, desertification, poverty, pandemics, war—all featuring high degrees of complexity, damage potential, and urgency, and all having no obvious optimal solution." (p. 203)<br>Zhou et al. (2021): "The self-reported physical and mental health of children and adolescents is of great importance for their personal growth and plays an important role in national talent training." (p. 2002)<br>Wright and Franklin (2007): "Each plan is personal and helps to direct an individual's learning, specifically in relation to professional development." (p. 43) |
| Personal | Zhou et al. (2021): "High personal control can be a vital part of an individuals' self-concept, enhancing their beliefs that they can control their own environment to achieve important life goals." (p. 2000) |
| Competences | Wiek et al. (2011): "competencies in sustainability, these are complexes of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable successful task performance and problem solving with respect to real-world sustainability problems, challenges, and opportunities." (p. 204)<br>Savage et al. (2015): "With a heightened personal understanding, students are better equipped to engage in collaborative learning, collective action and the development of key sustainability competencies." (p. 700) |
| Students | Savage et al. (2015): "Sustainability students often get overwhelmed and immobilized by the magnitude of challenges present in their daily lives." (p. 700) |
| Achievemet | Zhou et al. (2021): "Based on these results, the choice to participate in PA is related to individual differences in personality and education, and efforts to encourage PA should consider these factors." (p. 2009) |
| Authentic leadership | Savage et al. (2015): "This finding echoes … that authenticity and managing emotion appropriately are essential to complexity leadership for successful implementation of sustainability." (p. 699) |
| Barriers | Wright and Franklin (2007): "Pringle stated that, 'significant events, because they are de facto emotionally charged and compel one to take stock, may be powerful motivators to change behaviour providing that the potential for them to provoke a barrier of defensiveness is removed.'" (p. 43) |
| Physical stability | Zhou et al. (2021): "Individuals with high (versus low) levels of personal control would be most likely to improve their lifelong health by engaging in more physical activity." (p. 2001) |
| Psychological/ emotional stability | Shabdenova et al. (2022): "Different thematic approaches to individual development (psychological/emotional, social and intellectual stability)." (p. 605) |
| Social stability | Shabdenova et al. (2022): "Different thematic approaches to individual development (psychological/emotional, social and intellectual stability)." (p. 605) |
| Intellectual stability | Shabdenova et al. (2022): "Different thematic approaches to individual development (psychological/emotional, social and intellectual stability)." (p. 605) |
| Engagement | Zhou et al. (2021): "However, when their level of personal control is high, individuals have a motivating internal force … that facilitates their engagement in PA." (p. 2000) |
| Health | Zhou et al. (2021): "Prior studies have shown that physical activity (PA) is strongly associated with lifelong health and well-being." (p. 1998) |
| Impact | Wright and Franklin (2007): "Significant events are those events that have an impact upon us." (p. 43); "As they are significant, ie they make an impact, they can be powerful motivators for change." (p. 43) |
| Intrinsic motivation | Jiao and Liang (2022): "Intrinsic motivation has been defined as an activity performed for the intrinsic satisfaction it provides rather than for some external outcome". (p. 4) |
| Learning | Bullock and Jamieson (1995): "PDP aims to enhance personal control of learning." (p. 307) |
| Motivation | Wright and Franklin (2007): "As they are significant, ie they make an impact, they can be powerful motivators for change." (p. 43)<br>Bullock and Jamieson (1995): "The paper examines levels of motivation among students." (p. 307); "One overarching aim of such innovations has been greater motivation and empowerment of learners by means of enhanced careers guidance and personal control of learning." (p. 307) |
| Performance | Zhou et al. (2021): "They concluded that PA was positively correlated with occupational performance within the law-enforcement community." (p. 1999) |
| Personal growth | Bullock and Jamieson (1995): "PDP provides resources for individual support and strategies for personal improvement." (p. 307) |
| Responsibility | Bullock and Jamieson (1995): "Claims were made that one-to-one discussion helps students to take increased ownership of their own actions and personal development." (p. 320) |
| Self-determination | Zhou et al. (2021): "We proposed that individuals with high (versus low) levels of personal control would be most likely to improve their lifelong health by engaging in more physical activity." (p. 2001) |