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From Embodied Cognition Theory to the Physical Education Classroom: A Semantic Analysis of Sport and Exercise Science Research

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ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Support - No support.

Review stage at the time of initial registration - Completed but not published.

Conflicts of interest - None declared.

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Amendments - This protocol was registered with the International Platform of Registered Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Protocols (INPLASY) on 26 November 2026 and was last updated on 26 November 2026.

INTRODUCTION

Review question / Objective This study aimed to characterize the evolution of embodied cognition research in sport and exercise science, identify its central topics and their structural relationships, and examine how distinct lines of inquiry gradually came to form a continuous, interconnected body of knowledge.

Condition being studied Not applicable.

METHODS

Participant or population Not applicable.

Intervention Not applicable.

Comparator Not applicable.

Study designs to be included We retrieved records from four indexes in the Web of Science Core Collection (WoSCC), namely the Science Citation Index Expanded (SCIE), the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), the Arts & Humanities Citation Index (AHCI), and the Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI).

Eligibility criteria To preserve the contextual information needed for document embedding while maintaining interpretable topic labels, we processed the corpus in two ways. For embedding, we retained the original syntax and word order so that the transformer model could capture contextual relationships, whereas for topic representation we converted the text to lowercase, removed numerals and special punctuation, and used the built-in English stop-word list in scikit-learn's CountVectorizer to remove high-frequency function words such as "the," "of," "and," "in," and "to" before applying c-TF-IDF.

Information sources We retrieved records from four indexes in the Web of Science Core Collection (WoSCC), namely the Science Citation Index Expanded (SCIE), the Social Sciences Citation

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Index (SSCI), the Arts & Humanities Citation Index (AHCI), and the Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI).

Main outcome(s) Institutional library coverage limited the search to publications from 1985 through July 2026, yielding 2,156 records. Restricting the results to English yielded 2,103 records, of which 1,808 were classified as articles or reviews and were exported as plain text using the "Full Record and Cited References" option to create the initial corpus.

Quality assessment / Risk of bias analysis Not applicable.

Strategy of data synthesis Not applicable.

Subgroup analysis Not applicable.

Sensitivity analysis Not applicable.

Country(ies) involved China; Spain.

Keywords Embodied Cognition Theory; Physical Education; Semantic Analysis; Sport and Exercise Science.

Contributions of each author

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