

State of Sport Management Research in the second half of 2023 (July - December):

An Overview

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The current issue of the Sport Management Digest (SMD) provides a bibliometric review of the research published in the 10-sport management journals in the second half of 2023 – from July to December. The six thematic sections that follow cover in sufficient detail research pertinent to different aspects of sport management. Owing to technical reasons we were unable to include a review of sport management theoretical developments and ethics research, which will be made available as soon as possible. Bibliometric analysis is an established computer-assisted quantitative review methodology, which identifies core research or authors, as well as their relationship. It provides valuable relational information on the topic, which helps significantly enhance our understanding of the overall intellectual structure of the sport management discipline.

Following the established format, the present overview of research in the field of sport management focuses on three interrelated areas including a bibliometric analysis, theoretical and practical appeal of research, as measured by the funding received by different studies, and the democratization of knowledge, as exemplified by the number of studies published under the Open Access (OA) regime. In the second half of 2023, the ten sport management journals combined published 23 issues with 248 articles. This is a significant number of outputs which is on par with previous years. These outputs were produced by a diverse group of researchers including established and upcoming scholars as well as PhD students. Table 1 shows the ten journals and the number of articles per journal including the OA ones. The first half of 2023 saw 248 published articles which is 49 less than the 297 produced in the first half of 2023, but the percentage of OA articles was higher - 19% (49), compared to 12% (47). Xiaoyan Xing's review in this issue offers a details analysis of the geography of sport management publications.

As discussed in previous issues, the OA publication policy reflects an important imperative for the democratisation of knowledge, which suggests that all publically and privately funded research ought to be made freely available for users.

The challenges of the OA policy have been addressed in earlier issues of the SMD including its prohibitive cost for many researchers and institutions. Nonetheless, it is important to keep stressing this issue as it plays a critical role in shaping the knowledge in the field and its utilization. Readers can check out the OA policy of their targeted journal by using the ‘Journal checker tool’

<https://journalcheckertool.org/>. Advances in digital technology and publishing have made it possible for journals to change their publication policy, particularly those published by Taylor & Francis (5 of the journals in the table). Editors and authors have now been instructed that there is no longer a cap on articles word count, which is typically between 8,000-10,000 words. This means that authors could use the greater word allowance to expand on different sections of their papers including the use of more illustrations.

Table 1. Total number of articles and Open Access ones published in the 10 sport management journals in the second half of 2023 (July - December)

Journal	Founded	Publication frequency / year	Impact factor 2023	Articles No	Open Access No/%
Journal of Sport Management https://journals.humankinetics.com/view/journals/jsm/jsm-overview.xml	1987	5	3.6	16	1/6
Sport Management Review https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rsmr20	1998	5	4.1	16	3/18
International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship https://www.emerald.com/insight/publication/issn/1464-6668	1999	4	2.5	36	2/5
European Sport Management Quarterly https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/resm20	2001	5	3.9	49	20/41
International Journal of Sport Finance https://fitpublishing.com/journals/ijsf	2006	4	1.1	10	0/0
International Journal of Sport Communications https://journals.humankinetics.com/view/journals/ijsc/ijsc-overview.xml	2008	4	1.8	31	2/9
International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/risp20	2009	4	2.8	22	8/36
Journal of Sports Economics https://journals.sagepub.com/home/js	2011	6	2.1	15	5/33

Communication and Sport https://journals.sagepub.com/home/com	2013	6	2.7	29	4/14
Journal of Global Sport Management https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rgsm20	2016	4	2.2	24	4/17

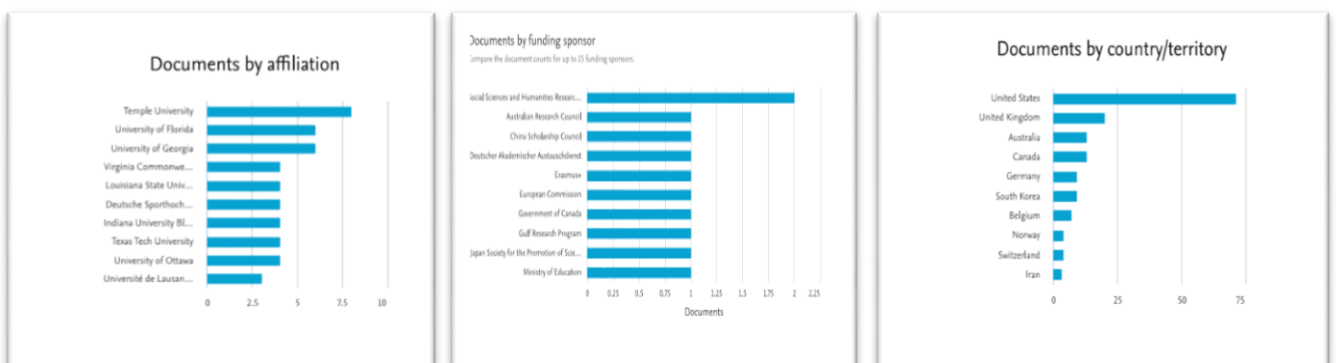
Journals' special issues play an important role in addressing important themes and in breaking new grounds in the field. The positive impact of journals' special issues in sport management and sociology was analysed by Scelles (2021) and discussed in previous issues. Three journals have published special issues addressing individual-level brand management in sport (ESMQ), [name, image, and likeness and the National Collegiate Athletic Association](#) (JSM), and the impact of global economic downturn on sport management (JGSM). Fourteen editors were responsible for soliciting, reviewing and editing these special issues. Individually and collectively, these special issues make a significant contribution to advancing our knowledge and the field of sport management in general. Table 2 shows the journals, special issues and guest editors.

Table 2. Special issues published by selected sport management journals (July-December 2023)

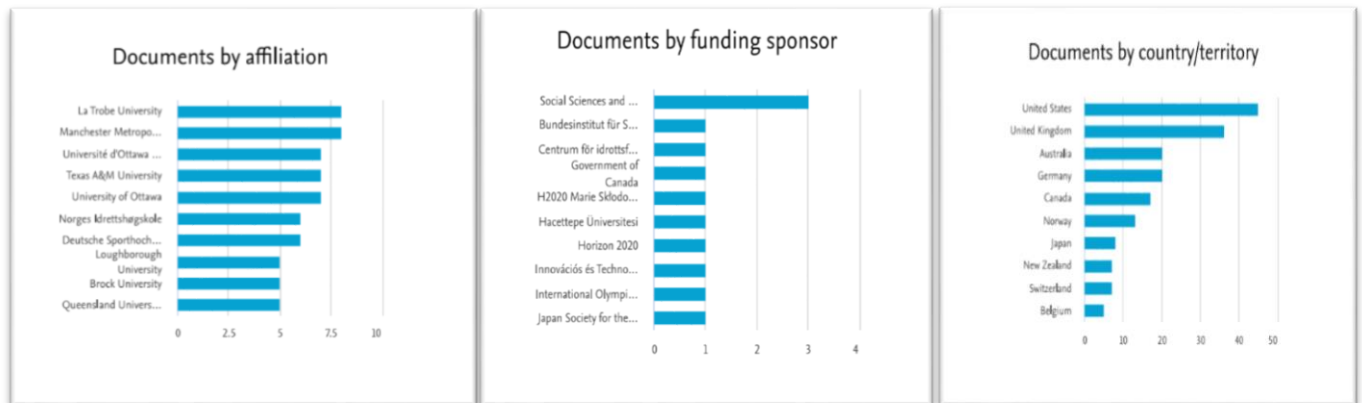
Journal	Special Issue Topic	Editors
Journal of Sport Management, 2023, 37(5)	Name, Image, and Likeness and the National Collegiate Athletic Association	Steven Salaga, Natasha Brison, Joseph Cooper, Daniel Rascher, and Andy Schwarz
European Sport Management Quarterly, 2023, 23 (6)	Advancing understanding of individual-level brand management in sport	Jason Doyle, Thilo Kunkel, Yiran Su, Rui Biscaia & Bradley J. Baker
Journal of Global Sport Management, 2023, 8 (3)	The Impact of Global Economic Downturn on Sport Management	Daniel Parnell, Paul Widdop, Anthony May & Danny Fitzpatrick

A measure of the conceptual and practical relevance of sport management research to policy makers, practitioners and various public and private bodies is the funding provided to different research projects, which underpin the empirical studies published in the SMD. Naturally, the funding picture of current research is by no means complete due to lack of information about the external funding behind the research, but it does allow to note the geography and institutional support of sport management scholarly activities. The research published in the second half of 2023 was supported by several public and private agencies including the EU Horizon 2000 call, International Olympic Committee, SSHRC and others. Figures 1-6 below provide a breakdown of the funding sources, countries and authors' affiliation who published in four journals including the Journal of Global Sport Management, Journal of Sport Management, and International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing and the European Sport Management Quarterly. A proxy measure of the relationship between external funding of sport management research and its theoretical and practical appeal is the increased impact factor of most sport management journals in the sample including citation as a powerful measure of establishing the impact of journals on the research field (see Lis, 2020 analysis).

Figures 1, 2 and 3 Authors' institutional affiliation, research funding sponsor and country in the Journal of Global Sport Management, Journal of Sport Management, and International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing



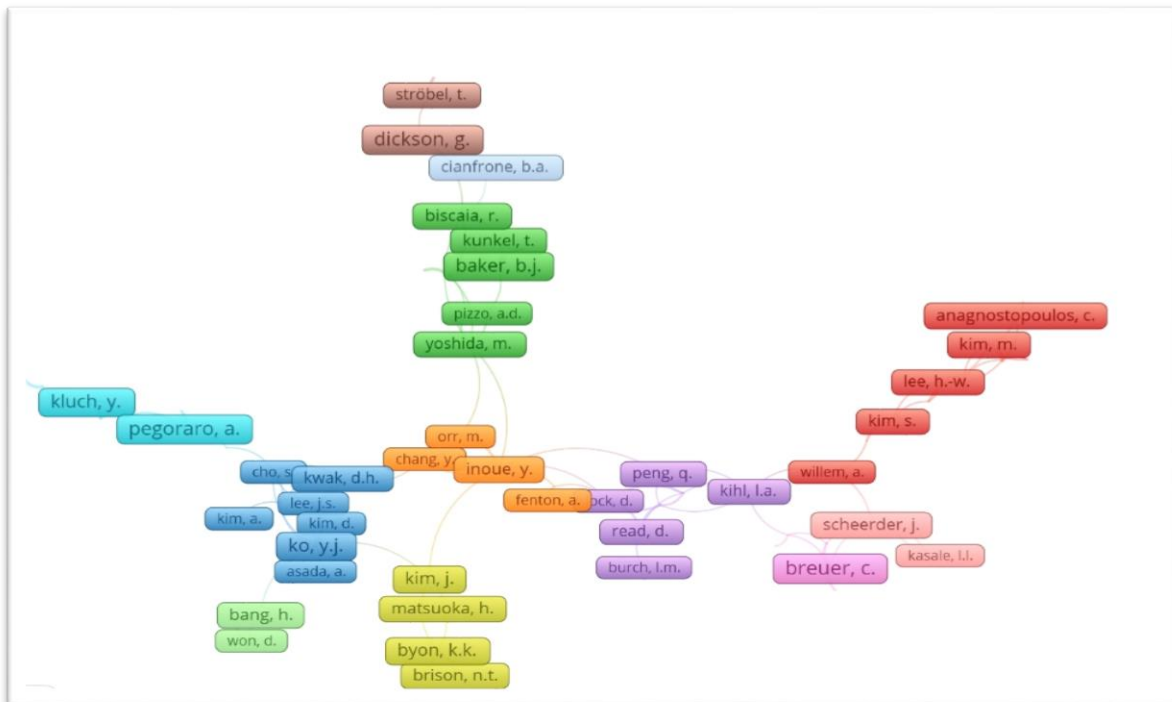
Figures 4, 5 and 6 Authors' institutional affiliation, research funding sponsor and country in the European Sport Management Quarterly



The bibliometric analysis was conducted using the Scopus data base which provides access to all ten journals included in the SMD. As with previous issues, science mapping and visualization was achieved with the help of the VOSviewer software (van Eck & Waltman, 2020). The aim was to examine the strength of the links between sport management research by looking into the co-authorship links (i.e., the number of publications two researchers have co-authored), co-occurrence links (i.e., the number of publications in which two terms occur together), and the bibliographic coupling links (i.e., the number of cited references two publications have in common). The strength of the link is represented by a positive numerical value where the higher the value the stronger the link. The results are visualised in two figures (7 & 8) and capture all articles published in 2023. Thus, the co-authorship and co-occurrence links reported represent the sport management field in 2023.

Figure 7 below depicts the co-authorship links where two authors had worked together on a publication. Out of 1472 authors who published in the ten journals, 152 met the threshold of working together on three documents, and the different colours in figure 7 help see those collaborations. As can be seen, there have been ten clusters of authors, who have collaborated on various projects and publications.

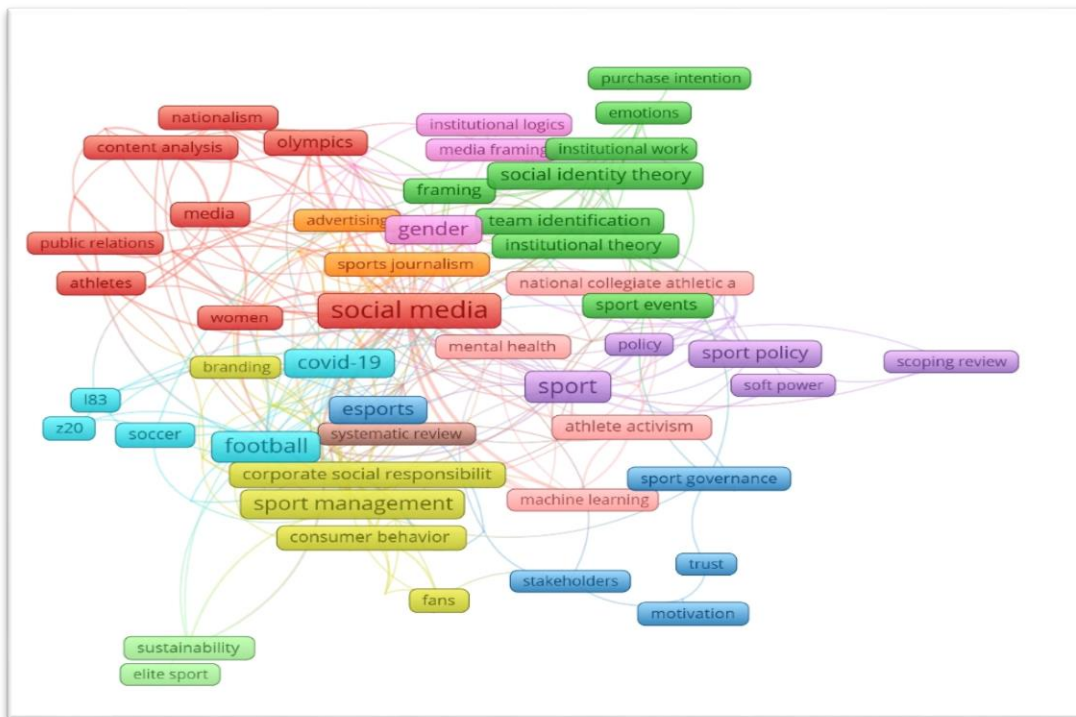
Figure 7. Co-authorship network visualization across ten sport management journals in 2023



The co-occurrence links, representing the number of publications in which two terms occur together can be seen in Figure 8. Out of 2221 key words, 87 met the threshold of occurring more than 5 times. The size of the word indicates its weight. Figure 8 also helps to see the distance between two words where the higher the distance the lesser the connectedness. For example, the word ‘social media’ dominated in the research published, followed by ‘gender’, ‘Covid-19’, ‘sport policy’ and ‘e-sports’. As figure 8 reveals, the words ‘social media’ are closely connected to ‘women’, ‘public relations’ and ‘nationalism’, and help build a picture of the role of social media in promoting nationalistic discourses in the context of the Olympics and women’s participation. On the other hand, sport policy is connected to ‘soft power’ in the context of major sport events, and also helps to conclude that host cities and countries use major events to project soft power. ‘Sport management’ has also been closely associated with corporate social responsibility.

The power of the different types of networks and the author co-citation (ACC) analysis lies in their ability to reveal the intellectual structure of the sport management discipline.

Figure 8. Key words co-occurrence network visualization in ten sport management journals in 2023



It ought to be noted that the SMD does not claim to provide a comprehensive analysis of sport management research globally as many studies get published outside the selected 10 journals included in this review. We do hope, however, that the Sport Management Digest offers valuable guide to scholars, practitioners and students of sport. The high-level summaries included in this issue can serve as an entry point for understanding the intellectual structure of the discipline, the authors and centres responsible for producing the studies as well as the topical issues discussed. It is hoped that it will help in stimulating debates and in informing decisions about research projects and teaching strategies.

Enjoy your exploration of the Sport Management Digest!

References

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