

State of Sport Management Research in the second half of 2022 (July-December):

An Overview

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This introductory article 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 2022 – from July to December. The eight thematic sections that follow cover in sufficient detail research pertinent to different aspects of sport management. Due to a change of editor of the theoretical section, the current issue does not include a review of theories used in sport management research. Nonetheless, the next issue of the SMD will provide an overview of theoretical contributions for 2022. The role of bibliometric analysis, as a computer-assisted quantitative review methodology, is to identify 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 of the introductory article, 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. Between June and December 2022, the ten sport management journals combined published 47 issues with 204 articles written by 676 authors. This is an impressive number of innovative outputs 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 Open Access (OA) ones. The first half of 2022 saw 277 published articles which is 73 more than the 204 produced in the second half, but the percentage of OA articles was less - 19% (53), compared to 33% (68).

It worth reminding ourselves that 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 the previous issues of the SMD including its prohibitive cost for many researchers and institutions. Readers can check out the OA

policy of their targeted journal by using the 'Journal checker tool' <https://journalcheckertool.org/>. In the preceding period there has been a noteworthy change in many journals' 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 10 sport management journals in the second half of 2022 (July-December)

Journal	Founded	Publication frequency / year	Impact factor 2021	Articles No	Open Access No/%
Journal of Sport Management https://journals.humankinetics.com/view/journals/jsm/jsm-overview.xml	1987	5	3.69	24	10/42
Sport Management Review https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rsmr20	1998	5	6.57	15	6/40
International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship https://www.emerald.com/insight/publication/issn/1464-6668	1999	4	2.93	28	6/21
European Sport Management Quarterly https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/resm20	2001	5	4.00	16	6/41
International Journal of Sport Finance https://fitpublishing.com/journals/ijsf	2006	4	0.94	9	0/0
International Journal of Sport Communications https://journals.humankinetics.com/view/journals/ijsc/ijsc-overview.xml	2008	4	N/A	20	3/15
International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/risp20	2009	4	0.69	24	10/41
Journal of Sports Economics https://journals.sagepub.com/home/jse	2011	6	2.22	19	5/26
Communication and Sport https://journals.sagepub.com/home/com	2013	6	3.17	32	11/34
Journal of Global Sport Management https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rgsm20	2016	4	N/A	17	11/54

An important feature of the editorial policy of all journals is the publication of special issues, which are designed to address important themes as well to break 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 the previous issue. Four journals have published special issues which range from conceptual (ESMQ) to innovation (IJSMS), specific sport (i.e., football, JGSM), sport events cultures (C&S), and tracing the evolution of a discipline (i.e., sport economics, JSE). Table 2 shows the journals, special issues and guest editors.

Table 2. Special issues published by selected sport management journals (June-December 2022)

Journal	Special Issue Topic	Editors
European Sport Management Quarterly, 2022, 22(5)	Sport Management: Mission and Meaning for a New Era	Hallgeir Gammelsaeter & Christos Anagnostopoulos
International Journal of Sport Marketing & Sponsorship, 2022, 23(5)	Sport Management, Marketing, and Innovation	Manuel Alonso Dos Santos, Ferran Calabuig Moreno, María Huertas González-Serrano
Journal of Global Sport Management, 2022, 7(3)	Football in China: Vision, Policy, Strategy and Management	David Cockayne, Simon Chadwick & Jonathan Sullivan
Journal of Sport Economics, 2022, 23(6)	20th Anniversary of Journal of Sports Economics	Dennis Coates
Communication & Sport, 2022, 10(6)	Sport and Mediatization: Sports Events and Cultures Across the World	Simon Ličen Thomas Horky Kirsten Frandsen Chuka Onwumechili & Wei Wei

The conceptual and practical appeal of the sport management research is evidenced by the wide range of funding afforded to different research projects. While not all articles provide information about the funding behind the research, the list of

public, commercial and charitable organisations who have offered grants is long and very impressive. Amongst the main funding agencies are the Horizon European Union Framework Programme for Research, the Social Sciences And Humanities Research Council Of Canada (SSHRC), the International Olympic Committee, FIFA, various governmental agencies, German Olympic Sports Confederation, ERASMUS, Australian government and Sport Canada, among others. It is worth mentioning the increasing role of university-funded research, which for example, accounts for 40% of all funded research published in the ESMQ and 25% in the SMR and the JGSM. Research funding is not the only measure used to capture the impact of sport management research. Lis (2020) suggested using the citation analysis as a powerful measure of establishing the impact of journals on the research field. His analysis was limited to a snapshot in 2020 including 154 sources published in 45 outlets.

The bibliometric analysis was conducted using the two major data bases including the Web of Science and Scopus. 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. It ought to be noted though that due to the limited time subject to analysis (6 months), the co-authorship and co-occurrence links reported cannot be representative of the sport management field, rather they ought to be viewed as a snapshot.

Figure 1 below depicts the co-authorship links where two authors had worked together on a publication. Out of 676 authors who published in the ten journals, 70 met the threshold of working together on two documents, and the different colours in figure 1 help see those collaborations.

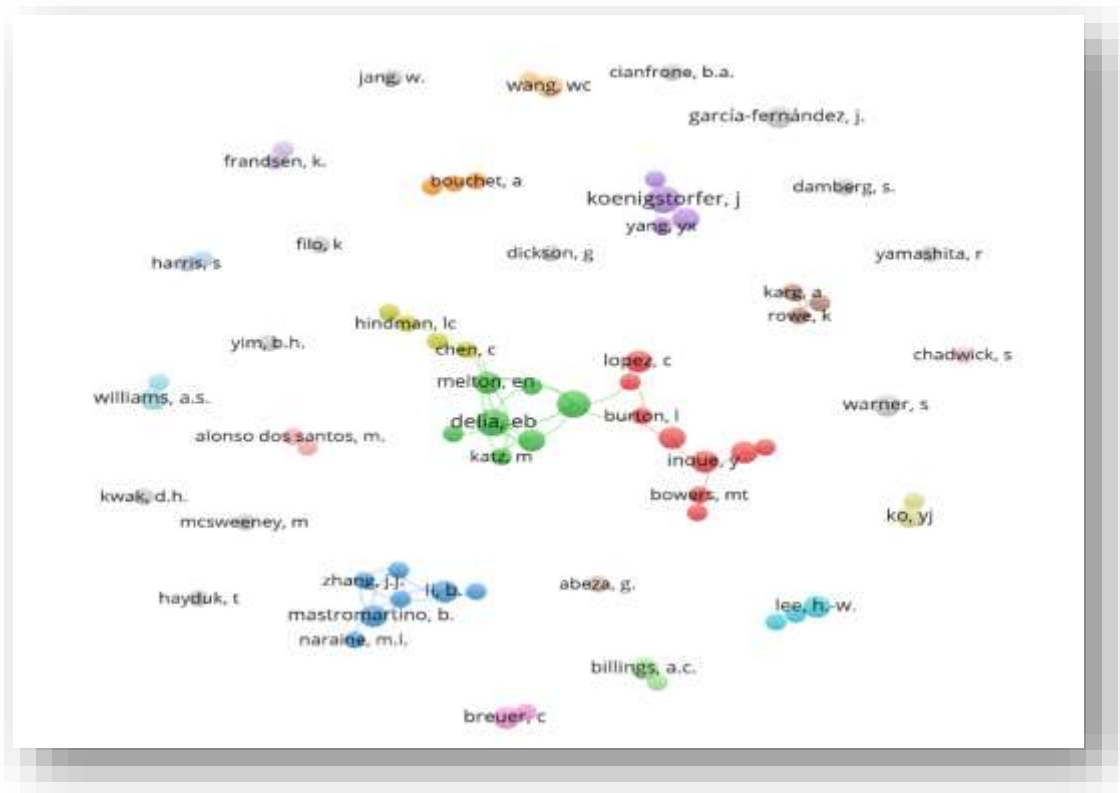


Figure 1. Co-authorship network visualization across ten sport management journals in 2022 (July-December)

The co-occurrence links, representing the number of publications in which two terms occur together can be seen in Figure 2. Out of 297 key words, 186 met the threshold of occurring more than 10 times. The size of the word indicates its weight. Figure 2 also helps to see the distance between two words where the higher the distance the lesser the connectedness. For example, the word ‘effect’ dominated in the research published, followed by ‘athlete’, ‘development’ and ‘fan’. As can be seen, the word ‘athlete’ is closely connected to ‘coach’, ‘care’ and a social medium – ‘instagram’. The word ‘effect’ is linked to ‘attitudes’, ‘behaviour’ and ‘sponsors’. ‘Development’, on its part is very closely related to ‘policy’ and ‘practice’.

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.

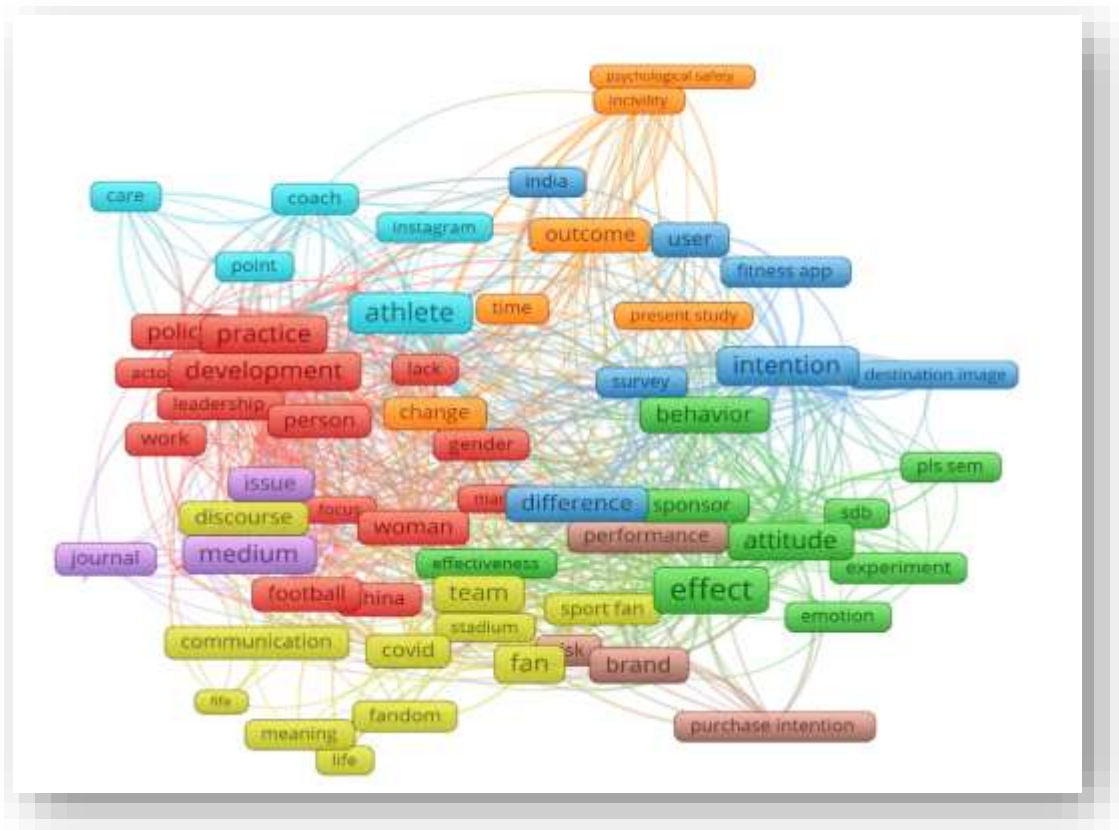


Figure 2. Key words co-occurrence network visualization in ten sport management journals in 2022 (July-December)

While it is acknowledged that the current analysis does not cover all published sport management research, the Sport Management Digest will continue to examine the intellectual structure of the discipline. It is hoped that this analysis will help researchers and practitioners to readily understand who and where conducts what kind of research. This information would also be valuable for devising research strategies of different centres, departments, and universities as well as academic publishers. We also expect that over time, the bibliometric analysis will accumulate sufficient data allowing to draw more comprehensive conclusions about the intellectual structure of the sport management discipline.

Enjoy your exploration of the Sport Management Digest!

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