

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

An Overview

Vassil Girginov

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

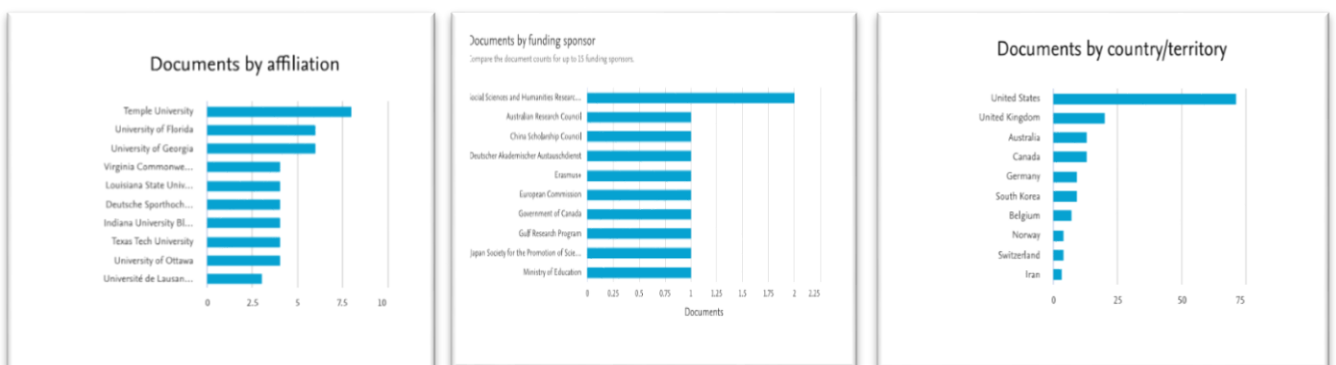
Journals' special issues play an important role in addressing important themes and in breaking new grounds in the field. The positive impact of journals' special issues in sport management and sociology was analysed by Scelles (2021) and discussed in previous issues. Three journals have published special 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)

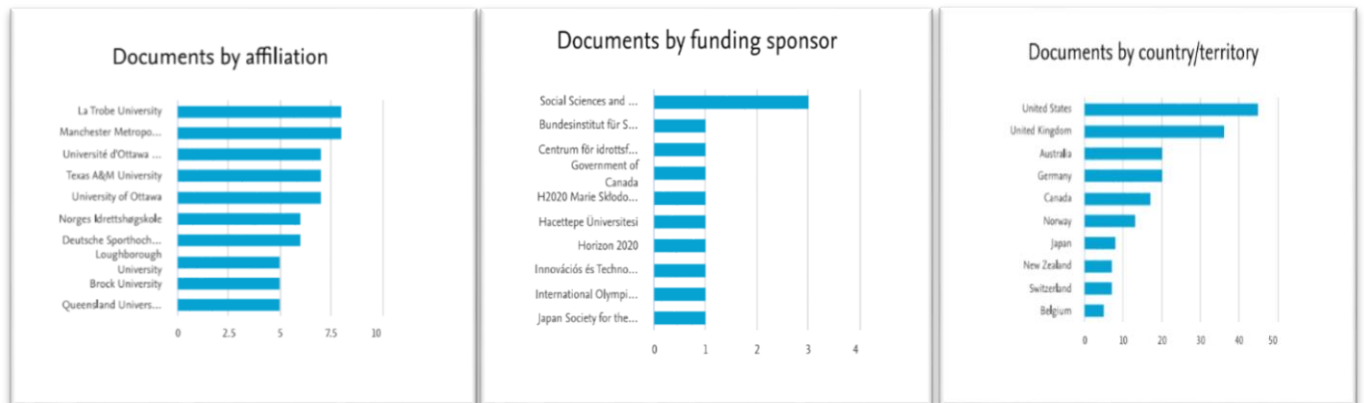
Journal	Special Issue Topic	Editors
Journal of Sport Management, 2023, 37(5)	Name, Image, and Likeness and the National Collegiate Athletic Association	Steven Salaga, Natasha Brison, Joseph Cooper, Daniel Rascher, and Andy Schwarz
European Sport Management Quarterly, 2023, 23 (6)	Advancing understanding 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



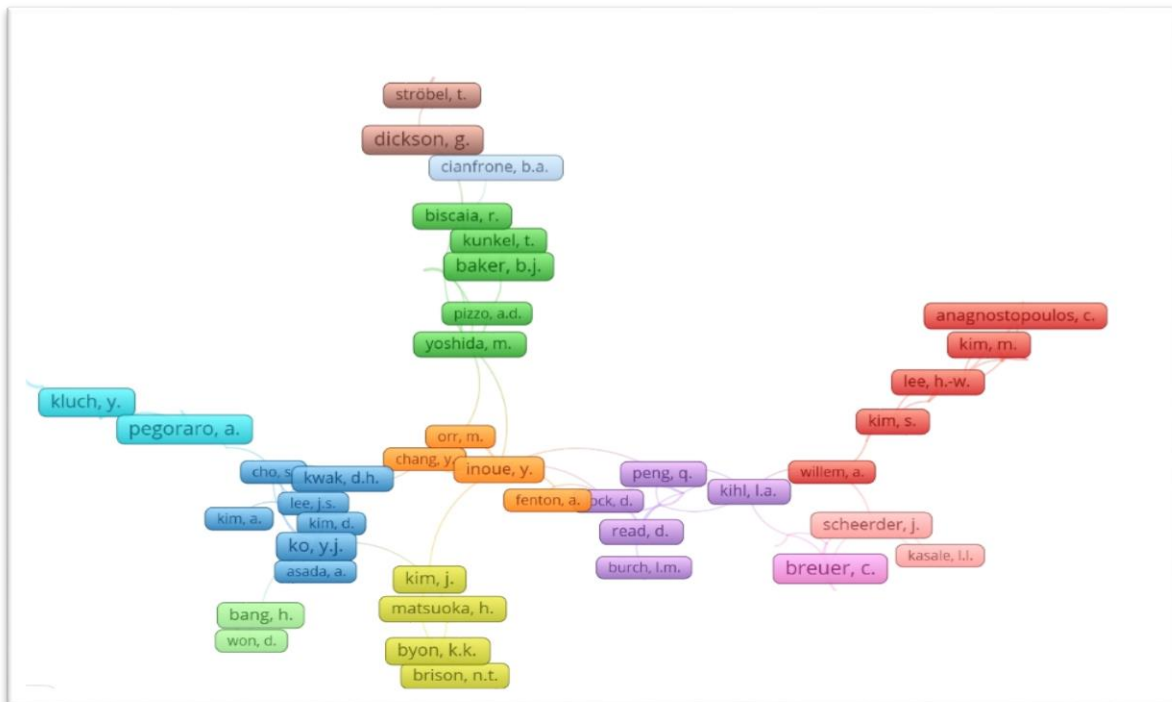
Figures 4, 5 and 6 Authors' institutional affiliation, research funding sponsor and country in the European Sport Management Quarterly



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.

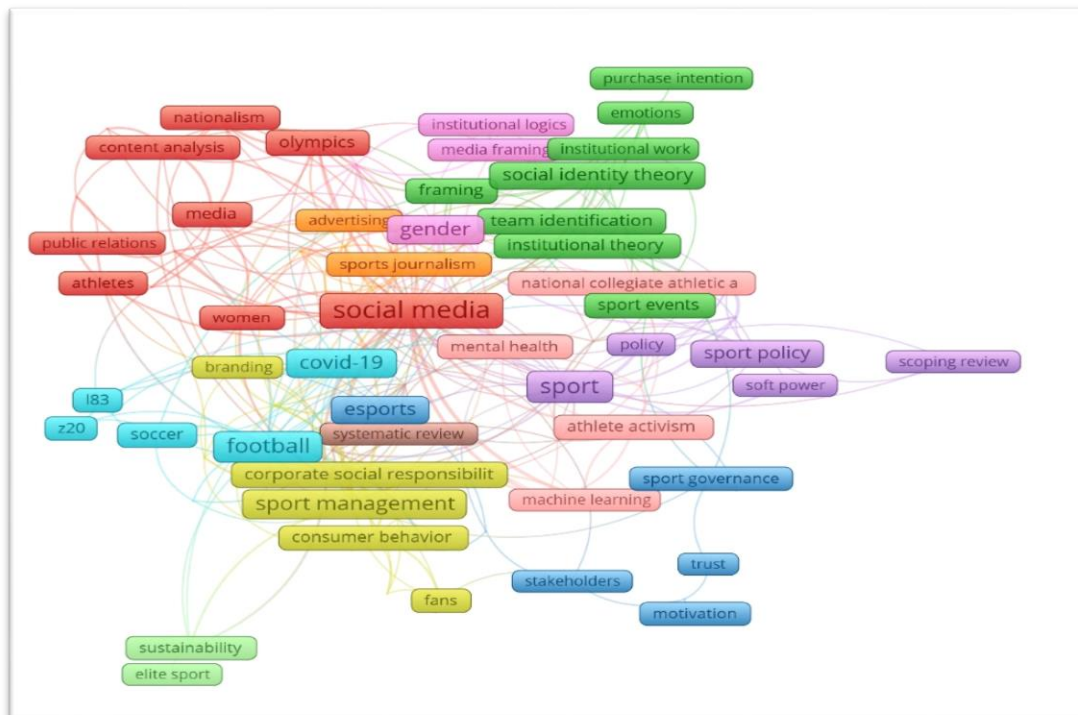
Figure 7. Co-authorship network visualization across ten sport management journals in 2023



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!

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Research Methodologies in Sport Management

James Skinner

Introduction

This paper reviewed the ten most popular sport journals in regard to their research design. The publications under review were published between September 2023 and February 2024. Table 1 provides a summary of the methodological approaches used in the respective journals.

Table 1: Summary of Methodological Approaches

Journals	Mixed	Qualitative	Quantitative	Total
Communication & Sport	-	25 (incl. two intros and one editorial)	4	29
European Sport Management Quarterly	2	19 (incl. one intro)	11	32
International Journal of Sport Finance	-	2 (incl. one Intro and one essay)	8	10
International Journal of Sport Marketing and Sponsorship	1	7	28	36
International Journal of Sport Communication	1	12 (incl. two industry interviews, one commenatry, one book reviews)	3	16
International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics	2	16 (incl. two reports)	4	22
Journal of Global Sport Management	2	12	10	24
Journal of Sport Economics	-	-	22	22
Journal of Sport Management	-	6 (incl. one lecture)	4	10
Sport Management Review	-	3	3	6

Overall Total	8	102	97	207
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Aligned with what was found in previous reviews, the deployment of qualitative and quantitative research approaches was quite balanced. Nevertheless, qualitative research articles were more prevalent in this Sport Management Digest review, as demonstrated in Figure 1:

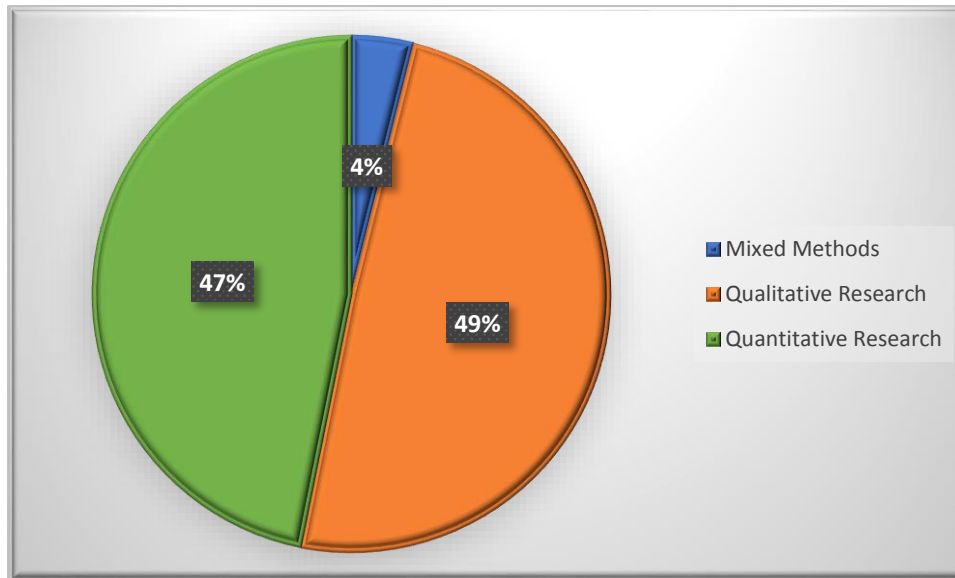


Figure 1: Distribution of Methodological Approaches

Figure 2 demonstrates that the percentage of qualitative research has gradually increased over the past three SMD editions, and is the preferred selected research design.

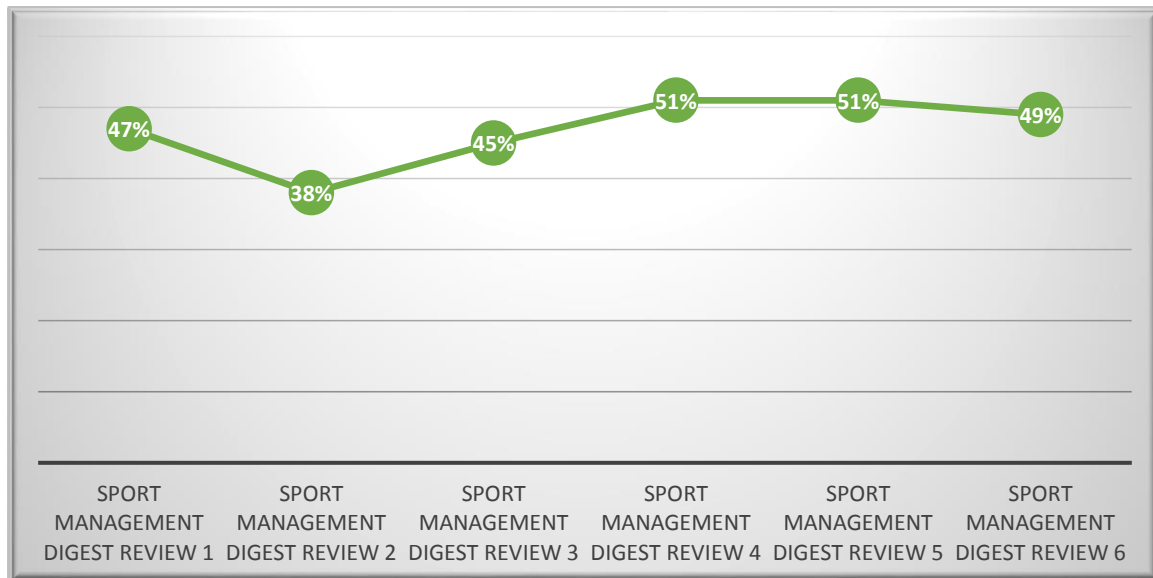


Figure 2: Sport Management Digest Review - Comparison of Qualitative Research (in %)

Similar to the previous reviews, a mixed-method design remains somewhat under-applied, as most researchers commit to either a quantitative or qualitative design. The most prominent methodological approaches in this review are listed in the Table 2 and resemble approaches found in previous Sport Management Digest Reviews:

Table 2: Methodological Approaches

Quantitative Approaches	Qualitative Approaches
Survey	Case Study
Panel Data	(Semi-Structured) Interviews
Experimental Study	Focus Groups
Content Analysis	(Critical) Commentary
Regression Analysis	Thematic Analysis
Structural Equation Modelling/ Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling	Content Analysis
Ordinary Least Squares	Conceptual Review
	Textual Analysis
	(Critical) Discourse Analysis
	Systematic Review

Table 1: Overview of Most Common Data Collection and Analysis Techniques

For this review, five papers were selected for a more detailed presentation. Full details of these papers can be found in the referecne section. In addition, an annotated bibliography of six papers is included at the end of this review to provide more insights into the topics and research designs deployed in the selected journals.

Are They Really Chinese? Examining Chinese Audiences' Emotions and Perceptions Toward Naturalized Athletes at the 2022 Winter Olympics (Li et al., 2024)

There has been an increase in the number of athletes who have changed their nationality to maximize their chances to compete in international competitions due to sport becoming more globalised. To maximize its chances at its home-hosted Winter Olympic Games, the Chinese government authorized many foreign-born athletes to gain Chinese citizenship to compete for China. The authors of this study explored how Chinese social media users perceived foreign-born athletes during the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympic Games.

With the popularity of social media, the authors decided to utilise social media content to understand the social identity issues of different groups. According to them, using social media to measure the public has three advantages: directly gathering opinions from users without any framing effects, a wide range of data could be reached, and cost-effective. For this study, the authors collected data from Weibo, a Chinese social media platform and the primary microblogging service in China with 582 million monthly active users. Sentiment analysis was conducted on collected Weibo posts to examine Chinese spectators' emotions towards foreign-born Chinese athletes. Sentiment analysis is commonly used in social studies to identify sentiments, opinions, and emotions about a given subject and/or topic.

The study's findings indicated that Chinese spectators generally had positive emotions toward the Olympians in this study. Online discussions mainly focused on three topics:

expressing their attitudes toward these athletes, questioning the legitimacy of the strategy, and discussing athletes' heritage and cultural identities. The authors claimed that they hoped to broaden readers' understanding of the sport migrant issue in China, the perceptions of foreign-born athletes who take on Chinese citizenship, and the sentiments that Chinese consumers have of these athletes at the 2022 Winter Olympic Games in Beijing.

Managing and sustaining cross-sector leveraging partnership in the post-event era: a case study of a provincial parasport collective (Lu & Misener, 2023)

The authors of this study aimed to examine the formation and collaborative dynamics of a cross-sector leveraging partnership group, the Provincial Parasport Collective (PPC), after the event took place. By doing so, they focussed on investigating (1) factors contributing to post-event collaboration, (2) strategies, structures, and leadership mechanisms for the collaboration process, (3) and challenges PPC partners encountered in the post-event era.

In this research, the authors deployed a longitudinal, qualitative case study approach to understand how an event-leveraging collaborative group functions and evolves in the post-event stage. A case study research design seemed promising, as it provides an in-depth investigation of a process occurring in a specific setting. To understand how to sustain strategic cross-sector alliances in a post-event context, unravelling the processes through which partner collaboration unfolds over time is essential. Data related to the PPC were collected from 2016 to 2020. They included various organisational archival documents and eight interviews with representatives of member organisations who contributed to the PPC in the post-event stage.

The authors deployed Gioia et al.'s (2013) holistic inductive approach to generate themes and subthemes on collaborative formation, processes, structures, and perceived challenges for the data analysis. In more detail, the analysis consisted of an

interactive three-step process. During the first step, archival data and interview transcripts were thoroughly read, reviewed, and openly coded to assign appropriate descriptive phrases and/or category labels. During the second step, the authors devoted extensive effort to recursively iterate between descriptive codes generated in the first step and theoretical concepts related to cross-sector collaboration. This step aimed to assess whether the emerging themes convey existing and/or new theoretical concepts that could explain the empirical materials. The last and third steps focussed on identifying broader themes and reducing second-order codes to more aggregated themes.

The study's findings showed that the PPC's ongoing collaboration was shaped by a combination of institutional field, local community, and organisational levels of conditions. The results also revealed challenges during the collaboration process, including group size, lack of cross-pillar communication, and changing momentum over time. With their findings, the authors shed light on cross-sector partnership sustainability and provide practical suggestions about the tactics for supporting ongoing strategic alliances.

The failure to co-host the Seoul 1988 Summer Olympics: a diplomacy “of small steps” influenced by international opinion (1985–88) (Mousset et al., 2023)

Despite diplomatic constraints between South Korea and North Korea in the broader context of the Cold War in the 1980s, a proposal for the potential co-hosting of the 1988 Summer Olympics between Seoul (South Korea) and Pyongyang (North Korea) emerged. As a result, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) organised a series of joint meetings to facilitate North Korean participation in the Games while preventing any action that might undermine the Games' organisation. While the talks ultimately proved to be a failure, they did influence sports diplomacy, as the negotiations showed that there could be compromises to the host city principle enshrined in the IOC Olympic Charter.

The study's analysis was based on 92 articles, allowing the authors to compare the discrepancy between the official discourse and how the same information was relayed and discussed in the international press. Several indicators were utilised to extract text information and select or systematically exclude articles that eventually guided the analysis. The authors selected articles dealing with the elements negotiated in diplomatic discussions (events or sports, the creation of a unified Korean team, ceremonies, cultural programmes and the creation of two organising committees), the rhetorical justifications specific to negotiations (the use of history, peace, unity of the Koreas or between socialist countries, the 'apolitical' nature of sport, etc.) between the different stakeholders (IOC, NOCs of North or South Korea, written press, etc.), and the scope of their discourse (internal and/or external communication to the written press, secret discussions, etc.). The analysis of sources (institutional or print) was based on Fairclough's three-dimensional model for critical discourse, and the content, structure and context of the published sources were used to provide contextual analyses.

The authors concluded that despite the negotiations to co-host the 1988 Summer Games ultimately failing, the exchanges between and positions of the two Koreas show how sport was leveraged as a tool for recognition and political supremacy during the Cold War. The Olympics proved itself an arena for sports diplomacy. However, the political context of overlapping crises between South and North Korea is a reminder that this is only possible if political cooperation already prevails.

Zimbabwe Premier Soccer League in the Context of COVID-19 (Dandah & Chiweshe, 2023)

In this study, the authors examined the emerging impact of COVID-19 on soccer in the Zimbabwe Premier Soccer League (ZPSL). It highlighted how football leagues with historical challenges of funding and a lack of disaster preparedness have been impacted by the pandemic.

The data collection was based on desk research, focusing mainly on newspaper articles and online stories. In total, 40 newspaper articles and online reports were purposively selected between February and July 2020, as during this time, the researchers could understand the dynamics of COVID-19 within the football sector in Zimbabwe. The majority of articles were drawn from major newspapers in Zimbabwe, including the Herald, Chronicle, Newsday, Daily News, Standard, and Sunday Mail. The researchers also adopted some characteristics of netnography research as it involved data collection and analysis in digital contexts. The data was analysed using thematic analysis to explore the emerging narrative around football in COVID-19. According to the authors, thematic analysis was helpful in summarising key features of their large dataset, as it forced them to take a well-structured approach to handling data, helping to produce a clear and organised final narrative.

The data analysis revealed themes related to the negative impact of COVID-19 on local teams, players, and administrators. Another central theme was the responses of football authorities in Zimbabwe to COVID-19. The findings also revealed how COVID-19 entrenched and worsened the already existent economic and political challenges facing football in Zimbabwe, which included poor financial sustainability of clubs, poor administration, corruption, lack of sponsorship, and a general malaise of the sport in the country.

The challenges of harmonising anti-doping policy implementation (Read et al., 2023)

The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) directs Olympic anti-doping policy, seeking to harmonise anti-doping policy globally; however, the realisation of consistent implementation among different regions comes with its challenges. The authors of this study aimed to analyse different types of intersignatory variation in anti-doping policy implementation and identify practical solutions to address these imbalances.

The authors deployed a qualitative research design and collected data from the Regional Anti-Doping Programme (RADO). The RADO programme was introduced to

provide training and operational support for developing National Anti-Doping Organisations (NADOs) to ensure that anti-doping policy is correctly implemented and assist NADO members in reaching sustainable self-governance. In total, 22 individuals voluntarily participated in a semi-structured interview: 12 RADO managers, two RADO managers who responded to questions in a translated questionnaire, seven RADO board members, and one board member who completed a translated questionnaire. Sometimes, participants preferred to respond to the questions by writing in their first language rather than participate in an English interview. In these cases, the interview questions were translated, and responses were translated back to English by a bilingual speaker. The selected methodology enabled the authors to collect data on their research question, providing opportunities for additional topics to emerge. Every RADO program was represented, ensuring the sample was heterogeneous and diverse.

Following reflexive thematic analysis, the authors identified four thematic categories explaining inter-signatory variation in anti-doping implementation: (1) socio-geographic, (2) political, (3) organisational, and (4) human resources. Based on the analysis, the authors suggested how potential policy-implementation gaps occur and provided recommendations to improve anti-doping policy implementation.

Annotated Bibliography

- 1. Burdsey, D., Michelini, E., & Agergaard, S. (2023). Beyond Crisis? Institutionalized Mediatization of the Refugee Olympic Team at the 2020 Olympic Games. *Communication & Sport*, 11(6), 1121-1138.**

The authors of this article investigated the Refugee Olympic Team (ROT) and the opportunities that arose for refugee athletes. In more detail, they examined the changing intertwinements between broader social dynamics and mediated constructions of refugees. They considered the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) representation of the ROT around the 2020 Games. The authors investigated a catalogue of articles published on the IOC's website by deploying a critical discourse analysis. Their findings indicated four discursive themes: 1. The saving, healing and transformative power of Western sporting capital and the Olympic Games; 2. The ROT epitomises the Global North's inclusivity and benevolence; 3. Refugee athletes as offering hope and inspiration to other refugees; and 4. The neoliberal ideal that "hard work pays off" and "you can overcome everything" in and through sport.

- 2. Fujak, H., Ewing, M. T., Newton, J., & Altschwager, T. (2023). Professional athlete responses to new product development: A dialectic. *European sport management quarterly*, 1-22.**

In this article, the authors examined athletes' perceptions of a new sport product innovation, which has significantly impacted their profession. They further explored athletes' demands, opportunities, and tensions arising from this product. The authors highlighted the need to provide athletes with a voice and to put them at the centre of data collection. By doing so, they deployed semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 25 professional male cricketers competing in two of the world's most prominent professional T20 cricket leagues. Interviews were thematically coded to reveal central athlete perspectives, and representative quotes were used to support the analysis. The article highlighted two main findings: First, professional athletes internalised a consumer demand for entertainment from the advent of T20 cricket, resulting in modifications to their frontstage self-presentation. Second, despite the significant financial opportunities that T20 cricket affords, athletes emphasise the intrinsic interpersonal benefits of product innovation. The findings are particularly significant to athlete branding work in that they illustrate how professional athlete self-presentation can be influenced by performative pressures emerging from consumer-driven product innovation.

- 3. Armstrong, C. G., Davies, M., Blaszk, M., & Pegoraro, A. (2023). The Kraken Awakens: Exploring the Digital Launch of a New Sport Team Brand During a Global Pandemic. *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 1(aop), 1-11.**

This article investigated the public's response to the digital brand launch of the Seattle Kraken. The authors utilised agenda-setting theory and content and social media analyses. Through the data collection, the authors identified an initial digital sentiment around the brand and the reach of the virtual conversations. In more detail, the Kraken encouraged favourable conversation about the team by setting the agenda and encouraging consumers to engage with content at specific times during the launch. The article concluded that through agenda setting, Seattle Kraken could effectively launch its new brand while setting the stage for positive brand association development.

- 4. Hong, H. J., & Minikin, B. (2023). An international analysis of career assistance programmes for high-performance athletes. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 15(4), 705-724.**

The authors of this study aimed to offer a comprehensive analysis of Career Assistance Programmes (CAPs) available for high-performance athletes across the

globe. With that, they hoped to address the current state of resources for athletes' career development and transitional periods. The authors examined 23 sport organisations spanning five continents, focusing on aspects such as CAPs' accessibility, objectives, content, delivery personnel, practitioner training, and self-evaluation methods. The authors utilised web-based data collection and research tours and employed a deductive content analysis. The results showed resources available to high-performance athletes whilst also identifying service gaps, necessitating policies to support a broader range of athletes. Due to that, the authors advocated for expanding services and ensuring equitable access to resources for athletes at varying performance levels.

5. **Mamo, Y. Z., & Anagnostopoulos, C. (2023). Stakeholders' "voice" through social media: the case of corporate social responsibility in sport. *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, 24(5), 1002–1020.**

In this article, the authors examined the social outcomes of corporate social responsibility (CSR) by building on social exchange theory and social media analytics. To stress the importance of this research, the authors highlighted that previous (CSR) research mainly revolved around the "usual target" (that is, fans and consumers) that invest money, time and energy in supporting their teams in isolation while largely ignoring individual members of the public. Thus, the authors aimed to incorporate members of the general public into the stakeholder ecosystem by empirically examining their perceptions of sport organisations' CSR activities. For that, they collected historical data from CSR-focused Twitter accounts of six professional leagues (i.e., @nbacares, @nflplay60, @InspireChange, @thewnbp, @Pr_nhl, @Mlsworks and @Mlbsocial) and assessed whether and how the public expresses positive, neutral and negative perceptions. Their findings showed that all CSR-related accounts received more positive tweets about their initiatives than negative ones.

6. **Keaton, A. C. (2023). An interpretative phenomenological analysis of Black women Diversity and Inclusion Leaders in sport organizations. *Journal of Sport Management*, 1(aop), 1-14.**

Athletic Diversity and Inclusion Officers (ADIOs) are novel leadership positions in sport that create and sustain diverse, inclusive, and equitable athletic departments. Interestingly, Black women have assumed many of the Division I ADIO positions. Thus, they seek to lead inclusionary efforts in an organisational field with sustained issues of gender and racial exclusion. The authors of this study applied a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to investigate what it means to be a Black woman ADIO who leads diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives in gendered and racialised Division I collegiate athletic departments. The phenomenological approach put the subject of the study at the centre of data collection, which demonstrated three dominant themes: (a) the ADIO position elicits the Strong Black Woman stereotype, inducing emotional

fatigue; (b) Black women ADIOs are positioned as athletic departments' conscience, often interpreting substantive and symbolic diversity, equity, and inclusion practices; and (c) Black women ADIOs centre their perception of affirmative prescriptions of Black womanhood in an attempt to withstand the adverse realities of ADIO leadership.

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Sport Governance and Policy

Dr Shushu Chen

Introduction

The past few months have witnessed the publication of several interesting and useful papers on the topic of sport policy and governance. Those familiar with the selection criteria of the Sport Management Digester will know that, preferably, empirical research papers that significantly enhance our understanding of policy and governance are chosen. This is rather than papers that merely apply a particular policy or governance theoretical concept/framework, as is the case with this issue. However, it is worth noting that three comprehensive reviews have been published in the past half-year or so. Readers may wish to pursue these titles further and enjoy their own reading.

- Ashley Thompson, Erik L. Lachance, Milena M. Parent & Russell Hoye (2023). A systematic review of governance principles in sport, *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 23:6, 1863-1888, DOI: 10.1080/16184742.2022.2077795
- Ralph Ramos, Veerle De Bosscher, Aurélie Pankowiak & Christian Wisdom Valleser (2023) Contexts shaping the development and success of elite sport systems: a scoping review, *Sport Management Review*, 26:5, 649-676, DOI: 10.1080/14413523.2023.2171276
- Erfan Moradi, Sajad Gholampour & Behzad Gholampour (2023) Past, present and future of sport policy: a bibliometric analysis of International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics (2010–2022), *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 15:4, 577-602, DOI: 10.1080/19406940.2023.2228829

In this current issue, five studies from top journals in our discipline are highlighted below. Three of the studies were conducted by British research teams, one from Canada, and one from the US. These studies typically employed document analysis approaches, with or without the supplementation of qualitative interview data. They cover the following topics: an analysis of Canadian sport policy over the past decade, Chinese football policy reform, an analysis of community sport and health policy and programmes in the UK, policy regarding transgender athletes in the US,

and a conceptual paper on the understanding of good governance in sport. Key theoretical frameworks/concepts employed include Kingdom's Multiple Streams Approach for policy analysis, policy implementation, figural sociology, and the multiple governance framework.

The following discussion provides a concise overview of these selected five papers.

Detailed Review

The study conducted by Duffell, Haycock, and Smith in 2023 examines the link between community sport and health policy in England, centring on the "Get Healthy Get Active" initiative spearheaded by Sport England. Utilising a qualitative methodology, the research includes interviews with policymakers, representatives from a professional football charity (Everton in the Community), and individuals participating in the GHGA-funded programme, Active Blues. This approach facilitates an in-depth analysis of how the initiative was developed, and implemented, and its impact as seen through the eyes of various stakeholders. The focus of this study is a detailed look at how the figural sociology framework helps us understand the complicated ways in which community sport and health policy sectors interact and influence each other. The authors discuss Sport England's attempts to bring community sport activities in line with public health goals, showing how these efforts are shaped by wider policy changes and a growing emphasis on making decisions based on evidence. This issue becomes even more pressing in times of financial cutbacks, which have led to changes in how community sport projects are funded and prioritised. The study's main discoveries point out the difficult and often strained relationships between those working in community sport and health policy. It shows how differences in power and reliance affect the development and implementation of sport programmes aimed at improving health. The authors note the hurdles Sport England faces in dealing with these issues and highlight creative ways it has tried to get more people, especially men, interested in physical activity through the use of professional football's widespread appeal.

The study by Peng and colleagues critically explores the hurdles encountered in executing youth football policies in China. This comes in the wake of the ambitious 2015 national football reform, which aimed at making China a global football powerhouse. The research employs a detailed case study approach, grounded in a

critical realist view, and uses semi-structured interviews with key figures in youth football to deeply understand these implementation challenges. The findings point to significant policy clashes, mainly stemming from poor coordination and unclear roles among educational bodies, football associations, and professional clubs. This misalignment leads to confusion and inefficiencies in the system. Through the lens of the Policy Conflict Framework, the paper carefully dissects the cognitive and behavioural aspects of these policy clashes, bringing to light the differing values, beliefs, and goals of the involved stakeholders. This article makes a substantial contribution to policy execution, especially in scenarios where sport development goals overlap with educational and societal values.

In his discussion article "The Numbers Game: Quantifying Good Governance in Sport," Girginov presents a conceptual paper that delves into the intricate process of developing, implementing, and evaluating three international and two national governance codes. Through his analysis, Girginov uncovers that, despite the good intentions behind these governance codes—aimed at fostering transparency, accountability, and efficiency—their actual application tends to increase the complexity of organisations and poses threats to the independence of sports bodies. He critiques the move towards a meta-governance model that applies uniform standards and measures across the board, which may overlook the distinct needs and circumstances of various sport organisations. Girginov points out the substantial effort and resources needed to comply with these codes, questioning whether this investment genuinely leads to better or more independent governance structures. His article adds to the conversation on sport governance by challenging the effectiveness of using metrics as a tool for ensuring good governance. He calls for a more tailored, sport-specific approach that respects the variety among sport organisations and their governance requirements. This piece is especially insightful for those involved in policymaking, administration, and research within sport governance, as it sheds light on the shortcomings of current approaches to quantification and proposes new avenues for research and policy-making.

Harris and colleagues' study delves into how different US states handle the issue of transgender athletes competing in school sports. They use Kingdon's multiple streams approach to sort state actions into four categories: states that have passed restrictive laws, those currently considering such laws, states that have not

acted, and one state that has adopted supportive laws for transgender athletes. The study points out that national groups have been actively trying to shape state policies by drawing attention to high-profile events in sports, courts, and politics related to transgender athletes. The research uncovers a clear political split, with states led by Republicans often pushing laws that exclude transgender athletes, claiming to protect the fairness and safety of cisgender female athletes. This move contrasts with states that promote inclusive policies or have not pursued any legislation, highlighting the tension between politics, societal values, and sport policy. Harris and colleagues' research adds an important perspective to discussions on sport policy and governance, by pointing out the shortcomings of exclusionary policies and advocating for sport bodies to lead the way in creating fair and inclusive policies. This study stresses the importance of finding a balance that respects the rights and dignity of all athletes, including those who are transgender.

In their recent article, Parent and Jurbala share insights from their experience with the challenges of putting the Canadian Sport Policy 2012 into action. Their study, based on a detailed look at how sport policies are managed at different levels and sectors, uncovers the complex issues involved in rolling out a national sport policy. They discuss the obstacles created by unclear policies, disagreements among different groups involved, and the struggle to balance encouraging sport participation with the pursuit of excellence. The article questions the effectiveness of trying to reach wide agreement on policies in systems where power is spread across different levels, pointing out that grand plans often fall short when it comes to actual results. One of the main points they make is that while vague policies might help get various stakeholders on board, they make it harder to carry out these policies effectively and hold people accountable. This often leads to a situation where there's more talk than action. Parent and Jurbala argue that for policies to work, they need to have clear, practical goals and enough resources and money behind them. They also stress the value of looking closely at the entire policy process, including the personal experiences of those involved, to get a better grasp of the challenges and conflicts in implementing policies. Their findings highlight the need for a thoughtful review of how sport policies are made and call for a unified effort to make sure these policies achieve their intended goals.

Conclusion

The collection of reviews we've explored provides a deep dive into the evolving landscape of sport policy and governance, uncovering a series of important trends and challenges across different contexts. One key takeaway is the growing intertwining of sport and health policies in the UK, a trend that is likely mirrored in programme deliveries. The "Get Healthy Get Active" initiative stands as a prime example of how sport initiatives are increasingly being seen through the lens of public health, signalling a shift towards policies that bridge multiple societal goals. This convergence points to the necessity for policies that are holistic and integrated, though it also highlights the complexity of aligning various stakeholders and agendas towards unified outcomes.

Another significant point is the persistent challenges in policy implementation across different governance levels, as evidenced by the studies on Chinese football reform and the Canadian Sport Policy. These challenges are multifaceted, involving logistical hurdles as well as deeper issues related to stakeholder values, goals, and power dynamics. Such complexities underscore the need for nuanced approaches to policy execution that account for the diverse interests and perspectives involved.

The concept of good governance in sport has progressed rapidly, yet there's a clear call for more thoughtful theoretical development. Girginov's critique of governance codes and further review reveals the tension between noble intentions and their practical implications. This suggests a moment for reflection and refinement in governance practices to ensure they are genuinely effective and tailored to the unique needs of sport organisations.

In sum, these studies shed light on the dynamic nature of sport policy and governance, highlighting achievements and ongoing obstacles. Moving forward, embracing a balanced, informed approach that acknowledges the complexity of stakeholder relationships and the specificities of different sporting contexts will be key to crafting impactful and sustainable policies and governance structures.

Annotated Bibliography

Duffell, T., Haycock, D., & Smith, A. (2023). Exploring the increasing interdependence of community sport and health policy in England. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 15(4), 603-618. DOI: 10.1080/19406940.2023.2228800.

This article provides novel insights into the evolving synergy between community sports and health policies within the English context, particularly through the lens of Sport England's Get Healthy Get Active (GHGA) initiative. It underscores the intricate power dynamics and partnerships at both local and national levels, highlighting how Sport England, despite its leadership role in coordinating community sport, relies significantly on external health organisations to achieve its objectives. The study, based on interviews with strategic policymakers, a professional football charity, and participants of the GHGA-funded Active Blues programme, reveals the challenges and dependencies that emerge from the intersection of sport and public health sectors. The findings suggest a nuanced understanding of community sport's contribution to public health, emphasising the need for evidence-based approaches to support the efficacy of sport as a tool for health promotion amidst austerity and shifting policy landscapes.

Girginov, V. (2023). The numbers game: quantifying good governance in sport. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 23(6), 1889-1905. DOI: 10.1080/16184742.2022.2078851.

This article provides an in-depth analysis of the increasing trend towards quantifying good governance in sport organisations. Girginov examines the production, governance, and study of quantification processes in sport governance, utilising a conceptual and position paper approach to scrutinise three international and two national governance codes. The paper sheds light on the significant amount of work required for the development of these codes, their impact on compliance and organisational behaviour, and the complexities involved in their implementation. It critically evaluates the effectiveness of quantification as a tool for governance, arguing that it may not promote self-governance but rather induces meta-governance, raising questions about the autonomy of sport organisations. The study calls for a critical reassessment of the uncritical acceptance of governance codes, advocating for a sport-focused model that respects the unique value systems, local traditions, and institutional frameworks of sport organisations.

Harris, S., Jedlicka, S., Pielke Jr, R., & Ryan, H. (2023). The politics of exclusion: Analysing U.S. state responses to interscholastic transgender athletes. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 15(4), 757-778. DOI: 10.1080/19406940.2023.2242878.

This paper examines the legislative actions against transgender athletes' participation in U.S. interscholastic sports, using Kingdon's multiple streams approach for analysis. The study categorises states into four groups based on

their legislative actions: states with enacted legislation preventing transgender participation, states with introduced legislation, states with no action, and one state with progressive legislation. It highlights the influence of national-level interest groups in policy diffusion and the role of sporting, judicial, and political focusing events in highlighting the perceived problem of transgender inclusion in sports. The findings suggest that these dynamics lead to symbolic politics, driven more by partisan contestation than by addressing the actual issue, calling for alternative solutions to outright exclusion.

Parent, M. M., & Jurbala, P. R. (2023). The process of implementing a multi-level and multi-sectoral national sport policy: cautionary lessons from the inside. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 15(4), 635-653. DOI: 10.1080/19406940.2023.2228824.

This paper provides a critical reflection on the implementation and monitoring of the Canadian Sport Policy (CSP) from 2012 to 2022, through an insider perspective. It discusses the challenges encountered in implementing a national sport policy within a complex governance context, emphasising the role of policy ambiguity, stakeholder conflicts, and the juxtaposition of participation and performance objectives. The authors utilise a multi-governance framework to explore these issues, offering insights into the practical difficulties of implementing broad, consensus-driven policies in federated systems. The study underscores the importance of aligning policy development, implementation, and evaluation, and suggests that resources and dedicated funding are crucial for policy success. It contributes to the understanding of sport policy implementation in multi-level governance systems, highlighting the need for clarity, accountability, and effective stakeholder engagement in policy processes.

Peng, Q., Chen, Z., Li, J., Houlihan, B., & Scelles, N. (2023). The new hope of Chinese football? Youth football reforms and policy conflicts in the implementation process. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 23(6), 1928-1950. DOI: 10.1080/16184742.2022.2083649.

This article investigates the implementation of youth football policies in China post the 2015 national football reform, exploring the extent to which contextual and organisational factors have facilitated or constrained the effective policy implementation. Employing 23 semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, the study identifies significant policy conflicts arising from the ambiguous roles and responsibilities across different youth football pathways (i.e., education system, football associations, and professional clubs). The findings highlight the challenges of aligning multiple stakeholders' interests and objectives, suggesting a need for clearer governance structures and collaborative efforts to enhance youth football development. This research contributes to understanding the complexities of sport policy implementation in a rapidly changing socio-political context, offering insights into the interplay between education, sport governance, and policy conflicts.

Sport Economics Research: New Perspectives on the Demand for Sport

Joel G. Maxcy

Introduction

All papers considered in this section of the digest come from the issues dated in the second half of 2023 and were published in the pre-selected journals. Of these journals, two are exclusively dedicated to sport economics related research, the *Journal of Sports Economics* (JSE), which is the official Journal of the *North American Association of Sports Economists* (NAASE) and the *International Journal of Sport Finance* (IJSF), which is the official journal of the *European Sport Economics Association* (ESEA). Furthermore, sport economics research is regularly published in either of four sport management journals, i.e., the *European Sport Management Quarterly* (ESMQ), the *Journal of Sport Management* (JSM), the *Sport Management Review* (SMR) and the *Journal of Global Sport Management* (JGSM). The following list provides a summary of overall forty-eight identified papers covering sport economics related research that have been published in either of these seven journals, from January to June 2023:

JSE (V24 Issues 6-8): 15 papers, with all 15 covering sport economics related research,

IJSF (V18 Issues 3 & 4): 10 papers, with all 10 covering sport economics related research,

ESMQ (V 23 Issues 4-6): 30 papers, with 4 covering sport economics-related research,

JSM (V37 Issues 3 - 6): 23 papers, with 2 covering sport economics related research,

SMR (V26 Issues 4 & 5): 16 papers, 2 covering sport economics related research,

JGSM (V8 Issues 3 & 4): 16 papers with 3 covering sport economics related research.

The thirty-six sports economics related papers are classified in seven categories:

Labor markets (such as league restrictions on player mobility; player and coach hiring, dismissal and contracts, performance and incentives; transfer markets; salary determinants; discrimination): 3 papers.

Performance Analysis (such as home advantage, tournament effects, and behavioral sport economics such as the effect of travel, home field, etc. on performance): 3 papers.

Demand for Sport (the determinants of stadium attendance, TV viewing): 11 papers.

Sport and Vice (financial analysis of sports gambling markets, effects of law and policy on sports wagering, doping and sport outcomes): 2 papers.

Finance & Ownership (such as the financial returns to investment sport, sport and financial markets, public finance and economic impact): 10 papers.

Miscellaneous: (other not classified topics): 7 papers.

New assessments on the demand for sport

Demand for sport is a relatively broad area, but analysis of demand is fundamental to the economics of sports. At one time analysis of demand focused almost exclusively on spectator attendance at major team sport events and contests like football in Europe and Baseball in North America (see Borland and MacDonald, 2003). However, in recent years analysis of demand has expanded to consider the demand for viewing other sports and consumption of sport via media e. g. Buraimo and Simmons (2015). The demand for hosting mega events by countries, regions, and cities has received much attention. Additionally, the demand to participate in sport and recreational activities has received attention from some sports economists. Nonetheless, a concept that dates to the seminal sport economics papers (Rottenberg, 1956 & Neale, 1964) the effect of “uncertainty of outcome” continues to

receive much attention, with four papers covered by this review addressing the effect of outcome uncertainty on demand.

Rottenberg's (1956) uncertainty of outcome hypothesis (UOH) is indeed one of the most considered topics sports economics analyses of demand. Numerous studies have investigated fans' responses to outcome uncertainty in various professional and international sports contexts. Borland & MacDonald, (2003) provide a thorough review to that point in time. Within literature, the unpredictability of game-level outcomes has been primary in understanding fans' preferences to the choice of attending a game. For instance, Schreyer and Ansari (2021) found that about one-fourth of the attendance demand studies focused on identifying the effect of outcome uncertainty. Studies, including Hyun et al. discussed below, have likewise identified a U-shaped relationship between the home team quality and attendance. However, recent research on the UOH and attendance demand has more often found evidence contradicting Rottenberg's original assumptions on fan preferences. This has been observed for various professional sports leagues where a higher attendance was detected when the predictability of the game outcome was more certain for the home team's win (Coates & Humphreys, 2010). A possible explanation for this phenomenon is that fans are more willing to attend games with certain game outcomes, that is, when the home team is deemed to be the winner (Sung & Mills, 2018). Humphreys and Zhou (2015) developed a model to identify fan preferences, including the baseline utility from attending games, utility from a home team win, preference for uncertain outcomes, and loss aversion. Their model indicates that consumer preferences for uncertain outcomes and loss aversion are conflicting.

Selected Article Discussion

From the *JSE*, Sport Management USA-based professors Hyun, Jones, Jee, Jordan, Du, and Lee test uncertainty of outcome given game quality in the National Basketball Association (NBA). They find a noteworthy distinction in the relationship between outcome uncertainty and attendance for high-quality games so that the relationship between high quality game and attendance was that was only marginally significant. On the other hand, for low quality games, a positive correlation was found between outcome uncertainty and attendance. Greater the uncertainty corresponded

to higher game attendance. While the attendance at nonhigh-quality games was influenced by uncertainty, high-quality games attracted fans regardless of the outcome uncertainty.

Korean Professors Sung and Pyun explore uncertainty of outcome, also in the *JSE*, via the relationship between season ticket purchasers—those who purchase the full set of tickets prior to the season—and those who buy individual game tickets in the top Korean football (soccer) league (daily buyers). They find discrepancy in demand between daily ticket purchasers and season ticket holders with respect to outcome uncertainty, preference for home team success, team performance, geographical distance between competing teams, and weekend games. Their results suggest that season ticket holders care less about their team's performance and outcome uncertainty than the daily ticket purchasers. This study is of importance because almost all prior research on demand has focused on attendance with little concern as to how those attending are divided between full season and single game purchases. This even though season ticket sales are of great importance to and marketed aggressively by clubs. The finding that the two groups have much different preferences in terms of expected game characteristics is valuable information to future research on the demand for sports.

Korean researchers Oh, Lee, and Jang extend uncertainty of outcome and demand analysis to esports and the Overwatch League, a popular spectator game available for viewers on the streaming platform Twitch. The authors' data examines viewership throughout the matches. Interestingly they find increased uncertainty of outcome during the match adds to viewership, but pre-match estimates do not show higher uncertainty to increase viewers.

Annotated bibliography

Hyun, M., Jones, G. J., Jee, W., Jordan, J. S., Du, J., & Lee, Y. (2023). Revisiting the Uncertainty of Outcome Hypothesis and the Loss Aversion Hypothesis in the National Basketball Association: Adding a Predicted Game Quality Perspective. *Journal of Sports Economics*, 24(8), 1076–1096.

Abstract: The unparalleled popularity of major professional sports leagues in the United States has led to numerous sold-out events, regardless of the uncertainty surrounding the game's outcome. This phenomenon prompts us to examine the relationship between outcome uncertainty and attendance, specifically in matchups between high-quality teams compared to games involving lower-quality teams in the National Basketball Association (NBA). Based on our analyses, we have discovered a notable distinction in the relationship between outcome uncertainty and attendance in high-quality games. When analyzing high-quality games, we observed a linear relationship between these two variables that was only marginally significant. Conversely, when exploring nonhigh-quality games, a U-shaped relationship emerged between outcome uncertainty and attendance. While the attendance of nonhigh-quality games was influenced by varying levels of uncertainty, high-quality games attracted fans irrespective of the outcome uncertainty. This research provides valuable insights into the factors that contribute to the popularity and attendance of NBA games.

Sung, H., & Pyun, H. (2023). Disaggregated Attendance Demand: Comparing Daily Ticket Purchasers and Season Ticket Holders in K-League 1. *Journal of Sports Economics*, 24(6), 717–736.

Abstract: This study investigates differences in the preferences of daily ticket purchasers and season ticket holders, focusing on outcome uncertainty. Using unique game-level attendance data of both daily ticket purchasers and season ticket holders for every team in the Korean top-tier professional soccer league, we find heterogeneity in demand between daily ticket purchasers and season ticket holders with respect to outcome uncertainty, preference for home team success, team performance, geographical distance between competing teams, and weekend

games. Our results suggest that season ticket holders do not care as much about their team's performance and outcome uncertainty as daily ticket purchasers do.

Reilly, P., Solow, J. L., & von Allmen, P. (2023). When the Stars Are Out: The Impact of Missed Games on NBA Television Audiences. *Journal of Sports Economics*, 24(7), 877–902.

Abstract: Using the 2018–2019 NBA season, we examine the causes and effects of star players missing games. Focusing on 19 star players, we find that injury, proximity to the end of season, games on consecutive days, and opponent quality lead to missed games. We then estimate a model of NBA television audience size using granular data from nationally broadcast games. Doubling the proportion of star players missing games reduces TV audience by approximately 6.5 million household viewings per regular season. A rough estimate of the advertising revenue lost due to stars missing games is between \$15 and \$20 million per season.

Oh, T., Lee, S., & Jang, H. (2023). Outcome Uncertainty and ESports Viewership: The Case of Overwatch League. *Journal of Sports Economics*, 24(8), 971–992.

Abstract: The uncertainty of outcome hypothesis (UOH) explains the consumption determinants of sports fans in professional sporting events. However, only limited studies exist in the esports field, and the relationship between UOH and spectatorship in esports is still unclear. This study examined the UOH in esports by analyzing the number of viewers of an esports league on an internet-based streaming platform (Twitch). We measured within-game and ex-ante expected game uncertainty and estimated their effects on the number of real-time viewers. The results show that within-game uncertainty significantly impacts the number of viewers, but ex-ante expected game uncertainty did not.

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Borland J., MacDonald R. (2003). Demand for sport. Oxford Review of Economic Policy, 19(4), 478–502.

Buraimo B., Simmons R. (2015). Uncertainty of outcome or star quality? Television audience demand for English Premier League football. *International Journal of the Economics of Business*, 22(3), 449–469.

Coates, D., & Humphreys, B. R. (2010). Week to week attendance and competitive balance in the National Football League. *International Journal of Sport Finance*, 5(4), 239–252.

Humphreys, B. R., & Zhou, L. (2015). The Louis–Schmelling paradox and the league standing effect reconsidered. *Journal of Sports Economics*, 16(8), 835–852.

Neale, W. C. (1964). The peculiar economics of professional sports: A contribution to the theory of the firm in sporting competition and in market competition. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 78(1), pp. 1-14.

Rottenberg, S. (1956). The baseball players' labor market. *The Journal of Political Economy*, 64(3), 242–258.

Schreyer, D., & Ansari, P. (2021). Stadium attendance demand research: A scoping review. *Journal of Sports Economics*, 23(6), 749–788.

Sung, H., & Mills, B. M. (2018). Estimation of game-level attendance in major league soccer: Outcome uncertainty and absolute quality considerations. *Sport Management Review*, 21(5), 519–532.

Sport Leadership

Zack J. Damon

Introduction

This edition of Sport Management Digest's Sport Leadership section leads off with a review of the leadership research published in 2023. Since the previous edition, one work by Kang and Svensson (2023a) was published that related to sport leadership in the *Journal of Sport Management* (JSM). When reviewing the selected journals for this issue of Sport Leadership, it became apparent that compared to other content areas, leadership research in and around sport can be sporadic in nature. With one article for the current issue, it appears that an overarching trend for sport leadership research is that topics come in clusters. Much of the recent research has focused on shared leadership, social construction of leadership, and the intersection of leadership with groups or organizations around the world. As such, the current edition will review the work of Kang and Svensson (2023a) and then present a recap of sport leadership research from 2023 to illustrate the current trends and where the research stream may head next.

Advances in Sport Leadership Research

Kang and Svensson (2023a) continued their line of research, which examines shared leadership within the sport-for-development (SFD) context. While their previous work examined the benefits of shared leadership in the SFD space (Kang & Svensson, 2023b), their more recent work honed in on identifying the antecedents of shared leadership around the sport for development and peace (SDP). They accomplished this work through 30 semi-structured qualitative interviews involving personnel from two SDP collaboratives under a larger SDP umbrella foundation, the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation. Through an inductive coding process for data analysis, Kang and Svensson (2023a) identified four antecedents for shared leadership for SDP. These themes included strategic planning, support from vertical leaders, shared events, and personal characteristics of members. Within the strategic planning theme were several approaches to help facilitate strategic

planning as an antecedent to shared leadership. These approaches were designated multiple leaders, collective decision-making, and leadership transitions in the collaboratives. Of note is the collective decision-making and designation of multiple leaders as these approaches naturally lead into a shared leadership model where leadership functions are distributed across all members in a group rather than the traditional vertical leadership model of one central leader (Kang & Svensson, 2023a).

Kang and Svensson's (2023a) findings bring to light an underexplored area of shared leadership, that is the "how" behind creating or developing shared leadership, specifically in the SDP space. As the authors noted, much of the shared leadership research in sport is still in the early stages of understanding and application. However, as their research contributed to this stream, scholars in the sport leadership context now have several antecedents to use as a framework or comparison as shared leadership research evolves. Kang and Svensson (2023a) contributed key theoretical benefits to the shared leadership stream by identifying antecedents to shared leadership. Further, as the authors mentioned, there are significant practical implications for their work as well. Notably, SDP organizations continue to explore and desire ways to create and enhance shared leadership in their organizations, especially considering that some organizations may be limited on resources. Thus, being able to not only garner the benefits of the individual leaders feeling more invested in the organization through shared leadership, but the organization also itself can save resources or strain on leadership through this model by not having to hire additional personnel or risk burnout of leaders that may come from a traditional vertical leadership structure.

Overview of Sport Leadership

Throughout 2023 sport leadership research has spanned various contexts and methods as scholars continue to make strides in expanding our knowledge of sport leadership across the world. For example, Kang and Svensson (2023a; 2023b), O'Boyle et al. (2023), and Saxe et al. (2023) all used qualitative methods to examine leadership and yet, the contexts spanned Australia, US National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), and SPD organizations. Additionally, van Dalfsen et al. (2023) relied on quantitative methods to examine and develop a scale for measuring

shared leadership in youth sport in the Netherlands. Further illustrating the various contexts that were studied through sport leadership in 2023 are the specific organizations that made up the above-mentioned studies. O'Boyle et al. (2023) focused on board members of an Australian nonprofit sport organization. Saxe et al. (2023) specifically explored turnover in NCAA Division I swim coaches. Kang and Svensson (2023a; 2023d) examined US-based SDP organizations or collectives for both of their works, and as mentioned above, van Dalfsen et al. (2023) took to studying youth sport and shared leadership.

Reviewing the sport leadership research noted in this current edition as well as the previous edition led to several key insightful trends of what scholars have deemed important by seeing what areas continue to be studied. The SDP space is one that has garnered scholarly interest for quite some time (Welty Peachey et al., 2015) and continues to offer a rich context through which to explore both traditional and non-traditional approaches to leadership (Kang & Svensson, 2023a). Beyond the SDP organizations, shared leadership also remains at the forefront of several studies (Kang & Svensson, 2023a; 2023b; van Dalfsen et al., 2023). Shared leadership will continue to be an area of interest, particularly in different contexts and cultures as scholars push the boundaries of what traditional leadership theories and concepts have helped us to understand and where emerging leadership theories and concepts, such as shared leadership and followership can fill in gaps and help sport leadership evolve (Damon et al., 2022). Further, the contexts across the world, which present unique opportunities to explore leadership through different structures continues to add valuable insights to sport leadership, such as the work done by O'Boyle and colleagues (2023). In countries such as Australia where sport governing boards are common and influential, it is paramount to continue to explore how members of these boards view, enact, and understand leadership given their keen role in shaping sport for an entire country (or significant sections of a country). Another area that represents a logical sport context to study leadership in and around is youth sport, as van Dalfsen et al. (2023) have done. As the next potential generation of sport leaders or societal leaders, examining the leadership structures and teaching that surround youth sport participants around the world can be of importance. Enhancing leadership, such as through shared leadership at the youth level may have a positive impact on youth sport participants and we can then start to

understand through more longitudinal work just how impactful leadership around youth sport can be later in life. Lastly, as we seem to move away from the foundational ways of examining leadership in sport organizations, such as the input-output type of quantitative methods where a leadership style is the input variable and some mix of leader or follower or organizational outcomes represent the output variable(s), we see specific foci of leadership's influence. Saxe et al. (2023) represent one such specific focus as their work on occupational turnover of coaches enlightens areas in sport where leaders may begin to or already have explored leaving the industry to being more conscious of turning over positions given the continued development of leadership job-related stressor placed on leaders, such as NCAA coaches.

Conclusion

Overall, while this current edition of Sport Leadership surrounded one article from our selected journals, it offered the opportunity to connect all sport leadership research from these journals throughout 2023 and bridge some themes from 2022. Looking ahead, sport leadership continues to offer emerging areas of research with both theoretical and practical implications. It would seem easy to forecast a continued emphasis on shared leadership in the near future, possibly in different contexts that have yet to be studied. Governing boards of sport entities also continue to offer a natural context through which sport leadership can be studied or used as a lens to study acting leaders in national sports. Lastly, as we continue to emerge from COVID-19 and face outcomes such as burnout and turnover among sport practitioners, sport leadership research will need to be keen on factors contributing to this trend as well as factors that may potentially mitigate this trend. Also, of interesting note is to monitor which sport contexts may be most susceptible to turnover and burnout and which contexts are less susceptible to these phenomena, and how we can study these organizations to potentially help the leaders and organizations facing increasing turnover and burnout.

Annotated Bibliography

Kang, S., & Svensson, P.G. (2023). *The antecedents of shared leadership in sport for development and peace collaboratives*. *Journal of Sport management*, 37(6), 417-428. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.2022-0303>

Researchers from the US examined SDP collaboratives for potential antecedents to shared leadership. Through semi-structured qualitative interviews with 30 participants, the authors were able to identify four antecedents. These four antecedents were strategic planning, support from vertical leaders, shared events, and personal characteristics of members. The study added contributions to the academy's understanding of shared leadership by being one of the first to examine what themes or factors contribute to allowing shared leadership to be developed in a sport organization.

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Kang, S., & Svensson, P.G. (2023a). The antecedents of shared leadership in sport for development and peace collaboratives. *Journal of Sport management*, 37(6), 417-428.

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Saxe, K., Beasley, L., Taylor, E., & Hardin, R. (2023). An investigation into voluntary occupational turnover of sport employees using the transtheoretical model of change. *Journal of Sport Management*, 37(4), 256-271.

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Sport Marketing and Sponsorship

Dongfeng Liu

Introduction

At least 48 articles can be identified across the pre-selected journals for the sport marketing and sponsorship section (some articles are included here to avoid duplication of presentation) for the second half of 2023. These publications come from 5 different journals, and IJSMS remains the journal with the most publications (19) followed by ESMQ (16) and SMR (5). Additionally, both JSM and JGSM have four publications respectively.

Advances in Sport Marketing and Sponsorship

Table 1 captures the variety of topics and themes addressed by the 48 articles and it can be seen that the majority of these publications (34) are about sport marketing related topics, and the rest about sport sponsorship. In line with previous issues, consumer and fan behaviour remain the most focused topics in sport marketing research with at least ten articles devoted to fan behaviour studies and another 8 to general sport consumer behaviour. With respect to sport sponsorship, while sponsorship mechanisms and effectiveness continues to garner scholarly attention, human brand and endorsement effectiveness has become a new burgeoning research area. In addition, at least 7 articles from the marketing area are also about athlete branding, making human branding and endorsement the most prominent niche area for this issue. Accordingly, five articles on this topic area have been selected and reviewed in detail.

Table 1. Selected Publication in Sport Marketing and Sponsorship

Areas	Topics	Author(s)	Quantity
Sport marketing (34)	League product development	Fujak, Ewing, Newton & Altschwager	1
	Digital marketing	Stegmann, Nagel & Ströbel	1
	Consumer behavior	Yoshida, Sato, Pizzo & Kuramasu	8

		Papadimitriou, Apostolopoulou & Patrick	
		Temerak & Winklhofer	
		Hussain & Cunningham	
		Chang, Lim, Kim & Oh	
		Pedragosa, Biscaia, Naylor, Hedlund & Dickson	
		AbouRokbah & Salam	
		Ock & Hwang	
	sports advertisement	Lee, Potter & Han	3
		Lee	
		Ni, Kuo, Chang, Wu & Chen	
	Media promotion	Hu, Cottingham, Shapiro & Lee	2
		Wang	
	Fan behavior	Sveinsona, Deliaa, Mansfieldb & Calow	10
		Yağız & Özer	
		Kościótek	
		Wang, Mao & Smith	
		Kim & Gower	
		Behnam, Dickson, Delshab, Gerke & Nikou	
		Statz, Bogina, Schmult & Gordon	
	Stegmann, Matyas & Ströbel		
	Cornwell, Pappu & Setten		
	Schlimm & Breuer		
Athlete branding	Bredikhina, Sveinson, Taylor & Heffernanc	7	
	Mogaji & Nguyen		
	Noh, Ahn & Anderson*		

		Bredikhina, Gupta & Kunkel*	
		Cocco, Kunkel, Baker*	
		Hu, Siegfried, Cho & Cottingham	
		Lee & Bang	
	<i>Sports fashion and sustainability</i>	Kopplin	1
	Nation branding through events	Rookwood & Adeosun	1
Sport sponsorship (14)	Gambling sponsorship	Hing, Rockloff & Matthew Browne	1
	Sponsorship effectiveness and mechanism	Chang & Kwak	4
		Herold, Breuer	
		Centracchio, Popp, Jensen	
		Mondt, Lee, Shapiro & Morse	
	Sponsorship strategy	Siegfried	1
	Human brand and endorsement effectiveness	Frank & Mitsumoto	5
		Su, Guo, Wegner, Baker*	
		Dunn & Nisbett	
		Sato, Ko, Kim & Lee*	
Williams & Heo			
Sponsorship communication	Beek, Hoecke & Derom	1	
Sponsorship drivers	Abdolmaleki, Mohammadi, Babaei, Soheili, Dickson & Funk	1	
Charity event sponsorship	Fechner, Filo, Reid & Cameron	1	
Total		48	

Note: * refers to articles reviewed in detail.

Beginning July 1, 2021, National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) student-athletes across the US obtained the right, through state laws and institutional policies, to profit from the commercial use of their name, image, and likeness (“NIL”). This historical NIL rule heralded a new era of collegiate athletes marketability in the States, changing the landscape of NCAA sports business forever. It is estimated that collegiate athlete NIL deals during the second year of the NIL era were worth \$1.14 billion (Opendorse, 2022). The new wave of collegiate athlete endorsement also served as the background for the recent burgeoning academic interest in athlete branding. In the first paper, Cocco et al. (2023) examined the effects of personal branding factors and institutional factors on the potential social media NIL value of men’s and women’s college basketball athletes. Through a linear regression analysis with data collected from the Instagram accounts of the athletes prior to the start of the NIL era in college athletics, the study confirmed positive associations between competitive level of play, strength of the university brand, playing men’s (vs. women’s) basketball, number of posts on Instagram, and verified account status with the social media NIL value of collegiate athletes. There is no relationship between the quality of an athlete’s Instagram biography or local market factors and athletes’ social media NIL value. The study extends the concept of college sport brand relationships into the wider sport brand ecosystem and environment, and provides an enhanced understanding of sport brand architecture and athlete influence on personal brand value.

Also focusing on social media value of athletes, the second article seeks to examine the factors that influence athlete brand growth on social media during a high-profile non-league event. Following the sport brand ecosystem framework (Kunkel & Biscaia, 2020), Bredikhina et al. (2023) conducted a multiple linear regression analysis with longitudinal behavioral data, namely social media following and tagging behavior of athletes in the context of tennis Laver Cup, and constructed a sociogram to visualize brand networking of athletes and the event. The study indicated that athletes’ pre-existing following size, the event’s social media activities, and athletes’ ‘coopetitive’ relationships with other participating athletes were predictors of athletes’ follower growth. This research highlights the importance of non-league sport events with representative teams as strategic opportunities for athletes to grow their social media brands through vertical and horizontal brand relationships.

In the third article, Noh et al. (2023) applied Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET) with data collected through in-depth, unstructured interviews from 24 individuals to explore consumers' perceptions of two athletes' engagements in social and political advocacy. The authors concluded that lifestyle, relationship effort, and role model make a difference in creating unique brands. The study also generated three categories for athletes' engagements in advocacy: (a) views toward advocacy, (b) sport as platforms for advocacy, and (c) ambassadors. The findings provide additional conceptual insights into athlete brand image, demonstrating the feasibility of ZMET in sport consumer studies.

In a related study, Dunn & Nisbett (2023) seeks to examine how consumers respond to social statements made by both companies and sports celebrities and how those reactions influence consumer perceptions of associated brands. The authors utilized a pre-test/post-test experimental design to gather responses to pro-social messages from both athletes associated with a brand and messages directly from the brands. The results showed that messages from celebrities were evaluated as being more important than similar messages directly from the company. Meanwhile, para-social relationships between the consumer and the celebrity endorser were found to increase brand support and favorable message evaluation. Additionally, while para-social relationships did not directly influence feelings of reactance, the effects on message evaluation did lead to a decrease in reactance to pro-social messages.

In the final article, drawing from cognitive dissonance theory and associative memory network model, Sato et al. (2023) examined how pre-scandal associations and scandal types interactively influence consumer judgment and negative electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) through online experiments. The study revealed that when performance-related scandals emerged, consumers made more negative blame judgment of athletes with salient performance association, relative to pro-social association. Inversely, when performance-unrelated scandals occurred, athletes with salient pro-social association were more likely to be blamed. Regarding eWOM, consumers generate more negative eWOM when athletes with pre-performance associations are involved with performance-related scandals. The findings highlighted the importance of understanding the cognitive dissonance that consumers may experience in the cases of athlete scandals, and provided practical implications for managers and agencies of athlete celebrities.

Despite the relative long tradition of athlete endorsement practice and a significant body of work about it, there is still limited understanding of endorsement effectiveness, contributing factors as well as underlying mechanism. The arrival of NIL era along with social media and digital transformation as well as the ever-changing social and political environment only adds further complexity to athlete endorsement, providing particularly fertile ground for research.

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Kunkel, T., & Biscaia, R. (2020). Sport brands: Brand relationships and consumer behavior. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 29(1), 3–17.
<https://doi.org/10.32731/SMQ.291.032020.01>

Annotated bibliography

Noh, Y., Ahn, N. Y., & Anderson, A. J. (2023). Do consumers care about human brands?: A case study of using Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET) to map two athletes' engagements in social and political advocacy. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 23(6), 1732-1758.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2023.2273351>

The collaborative study by scholars from Seoul National University, Bournemouth University, and Texas A&M University investigated how athlete engagements in various forms of advocacy contribute to leveraging their distinctive image. The authors conducted 24 in-depth, unstructured interviews about two NFL athlete brands, Michael Bennett and Jason Pierre-Paul, and draw upon Keller's consumer-based brand equity, Arai et al.'s athlete brand image models, and the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET) to capture the deep-seated emotions of consumers. The findings revealed that athletes' actions in athletic performance, attractive appearance, and marketable lifestyle contributed to improving their brand image. Athlete attention to lifestyle, relationship efforts, and role models emerged as crucial factors in creating unique athlete brands. Additionally, three themes of views toward advocacy, sports as platforms for advocacy, and ambassadors were identified in athletes' active involvement in social

and political movements. They also uncovered that the metaphors of Michael Bennett included a microphone and sports drink, while iron or metal indicated Jason Pierre-Paul's metaphors. However, the study acknowledged limitations regarding sample size feasibility and transferability of ZMET in a sports context. The authors recommend subsequent researchers employ the ZMET procedure on a larger participant pool to examine consumers' sentiments and attitudes toward potential athletes' engagement in advocacy.

Bredikhina, N., Gupta, K., & Kunkel, T. (2023). Superboosting the athlete social media brand: events as an opportunity for follower growth. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 23(6), 1819-1842. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2022.2074497>

This comprehensive research by scholars from Temple University examined what factors influenced athlete brand growth on social media during the Laver Cup, a high-profile non-league event with representative teams. They collected longitudinal behavioral data on Instagram and utilized a multiple linear regression with a wild-cluster bootstrap-SE and the sports brand ecosystem framework to test and explain relationships. The findings underscored the significance of pre-existing follower size and user tagging with athletes and events for follower growth, highlighting strategic opportunities for social media brand architecture in non-league sports contexts. Although posting frequency and competition days showed no positive associations with athlete following on social media, future research could re-investigate the boundary conditions of such effects. This study contributes to sports brand theory and practice, emphasizing the instrumental role of brand networking in athlete social media growth.

Cocco, A. R., Kunkel, T., & Baker, B. J. (2023). The influence of personal branding and institutional factors on the name, image, and likeness value of collegiate athletes' social media posts. *Journal of Sport Management*, 37(5), 359-370. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.2022-0155>

These three authors from the University of Louisville and Temple University came together to examine the effects of personal branding factors and institutional factors on the potential social media name, image, and likeness value (i.e., NIL

value) of men's and women's college basketball athletes from the State of California. They collected 907 Instagram accounts and used linear regression to estimate the associations. The findings showed positive associations between competitive level of play, strength of the university brand, playing men's (vs. Women's) basketball, number of posts on Instagram, and verified account status with the social media NIL value of collegiate athletes. There was no relationship between the Instagram biography of athletes, the local market population and competition, and the social media NIL value of athletes. The study contributes new insights into factors associated with the social media brand value and extends knowledge related to the sports brand ecosystem and environment. However, future research remains to expand the geographic and sports scope to explore the impact of conference and sports affiliation on the social media NIL value for avoiding selection bias.

Schartel Dunn, S., & Nisbett, G. S. (2023). When celebrity endorsements collide with social activism: exploring athlete celebrity endorsements, social issues and brand perception. *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, 24(3), 558-569. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSMS-01-2023-0010>

In this collaborative study, researchers from Winona State University and the University of North Texas investigated consumer responses to social statements from companies and sports celebrities and examined their impact on perceptions of associated brands. They utilized a pre-test and post-test experimental design with 253 participants and found that consumers encountering messages on social issues they deem significant experienced reduced psychological reactance and formed more positive brand perceptions. Notably, messages from sports celebrities carried more weight than those directly from the brand. Consumers with higher levels of para-social relationships with the message source led to more positive evaluations, resulting in diminished psychological reactance and enhanced brand perceptions. While the study offered guidance for brands in pro-social messaging, given the use of real athletes and information in this experiment, the pure effects of research relationships remain to be further explored by scholars.

Sato, S., Ko, Y. J., Kim, D., & Lee, J. S. (2023). The effects of pre-scandal associations of athlete endorsers and scandal types on consumer blame and

eWOM. *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, 24(4), 814-833. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSMS-07-2022-0139>

In this cooperative study, researchers from Waseda University, University of Florida, Pukyong National University, and Yonsei University delved into the interactive effects of pre-scandal associations and scandal types on consumer judgment and negative electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). Guided by cognitive dissonance theory and the associative memory network model, the authors used fictitious materials to conduct two online experiments for testing hypotheses. In the first experiment, the authors analyzed 146 data with a t-test and confirmed varying levels of dissonance across conditions. In the second experiment, employing Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA) and PROCESS Model 8 with 189 data, the authors revealed that in performance-related scandals, consumers made more negative blame judgments of athletes with salient performance associations, but in performance-unrelated scandals, athletes with pro-social associations were more likely to be blamed. Moreover, consumers generated more negative eWOM when athletes with pre-performance associations were involved in performance-related scandals. The study underscores the nuanced dynamics of consumer judgment and eWOM in the context of athlete scandals and emphasizes the need for practitioners to understand cognitive dissonance and its implications. However, the examination of pre-scandal associations in this study was independent. Therefore, future research can explore interactive effects between associations on consumers' information processing and judgment.

Sport Communication

Gashaw Abeza

Introduction

The Sport Communication section of the *Sport Management Digest* has examined a broad array of communication and sport related topics in its last five issues. These topics have been featured in leading journals including *Communication and Sport*, *International Journal of Sport Communication*, *Journal of Sport Management*, *Sport Management Review*, *European Sport Management Quarterly*, and *the Journal of Global Sport Management*, among others. The examination underscores the growing interest and active engagement in expanding the knowledge base within the field of sport communication. Starting with the first issue (of SMD's sport communication section), the journal addressed the media representation of disability, mental illness, and women in sport, along with the details of sport media coverage and consumption. Moving to the second issue (Issue #2), the scope expanded to include discussions on the connections between sport and politics, the impacts of COVID-19, race, and the significant role of mega-events in media stories. The third issue (Issue #3) continued with gender representation, the challenges for sport journalists, and the complex interactions between social media and sport psychology. The fourth issue (Issue #4) turned its attention to media content creation, the influence of media on sport, fan culture, and ethical concerns around doping and politics in sport. The latest issue (Issue #5) covered how sport and media construct cultural and national identities across different regions.

Current developments in sport communication

Continuing the trend, the sport management research community actively contributed to the field of sport communication from September 2023 to March 2024 (Issue #6), with the publication of over 51 articles across various journals. During this review period, the two leading journals in communication and sport, namely *Communication and Sport (C&S)* and *International Journal of Sport Communication (IJSC)*, were highly active. C&S published 18 research articles across two issues, along with 8 articles in a special issue, while IJSC released 9 research articles in Volume 16, Issue 4, and 16 scholarly commentaries in its special issue. As mentioned, during the period of the 6th issue, these journals introduced two special

issues. IJSC's special issue (Vol. 16, Issue 3) focused on social media and sport, and C&S's special issue (Vol. 12, Issue 1) explored the mediating the East Asian era of the Olympic Games (2018-2022). This digest begins by summarizing the special issues from both journals, before turning its attention to the original research works published in their regular issues.

The C&S special issue (Vol 12 Issue 1) on "Mediating the East Asian Era of the Olympic Games (2018-2022)" offers a broad exploration of the intersection between sport, media, and geopolitical dynamics during three consecutive Olympic Games held in East Asia, namely the Olympic Games held in PyeongChang, Tokyo, and Beijing. Edited by Koji Kobayashi, John Horne, Younghan Cho, and Jung Woo Lee, and featuring 8 original research by 13 authors, the issue presented a range of studies that address themes such as the political framing of the Games by international media, the cultural and national identity implications of athlete naturalization, and the nuanced portrayal of athletes across different national contexts. Additional topics include the challenges faced by journalists in reporting critically on the Games, the strategic communication employed in crisis situations like the COVID-19 pandemic, and the role of the Olympics in nation branding and regional diplomacy. The studies shed light on how the Olympic Games have served as a focal point for discussing broader issues of political tension, national pride, and the global sport landscape's influence on societal perceptions and international relations.

The IJSC special issue on social media and sport, co-edited by Gashaw Abeza and Jimmy Sanderson, offered a comprehensive exploration of the evolving relationship between social media and sport studies. Featuring 16 scholarly commentaries by 25 leading researchers from 21 universities across five countries, this issue examined current trends, challenges, and developments in the field, aiming to advance knowledge and encourage future research. The contributions cover a wide range of topics, including brand communities, dynamic content research, relationship marketing, brand management, consumer behavior, and the impact of social media on athlete welfare and legal issues. Each scholarly commentary presented fresh perspectives, innovative methodologies, and critical insights. This issue did not only highlight gaps in the literature but also offered constructive discourse within the sport communication community, challenging prevailing theories and proposing new research directions.

In the two regular issues of C&S (Vol 11 Issue 5 and Vol 11 Issue 6) reviewed for this issue, the journal published a total of 18 research articles. The two issues focused on themes that range from gender identity and representation, national identity and consumer behavior, to the nuanced dynamics of media representation and bias. Specifically, the articles examine how gender, especially transgender athletes' participation, challenges traditional narratives and draw out media controversies, alongside examining the influence of national sentiments in consumer responses to advertising. Additionally, the articles address the ways in which auditory qualities impact media representation, investigate the complex relationship between sport entities and their fan bases, and examine the portrayal of athletes in media to reflect on broader societal values and tensions. Through diverse lenses—ranging from the business strategies of sport organizations to the portrayal of gender, national identity, and the role of corporate sponsorship in shaping athlete identity—the articles highlight the multi-layered impact of sport on society and culture, offering insights into the continuing dialogue around equity, representation, and community engagement within the sport domain.

Similarly, in the issue (Vol 16 Issue 4) under review of the IJSC, the journal published a total of 9 research articles. The research articles covered topics that can be broadly categorized into six common themes surrounding the interactions between sport and media/social media, the societal and political dimensions of sport, fan behavior and motivation, representation and perception in sport, cultural and generational influences, as well as visual representation and branding in the sport context. These research works highlight a multidimensional exploration of sport in contemporary society, emphasizing the significant interplay between sport, media, and the public.

The two journals combined published a total of 27 original research works covering topics that fall under six broadly categorized but inter-related themes, namely:

- a) Consumer behavior,
- b) Equity, diversity, and inclusion
- c) Global perspectives and international relations
- d) Media narratives and gender identity
- e) Social issues and activism in sport
- f) Technology and digital media in sport

From the six identified themes, this issue of SMD focuses on the topic of media narratives and gender identity. Under this specific theme, five articles have been identified. These articles explored the intricate relationship between sport, gender, and media, and contributed by 12 authors from 8 universities (Arizona State University, Brock University, Miami University, University of Delaware, University of Kentucky, University of Maryland, University of Waikato, Xiamen University). Among the methodological approaches employed in these articles are: content analysis of articles, sentiment analysis of Twitter content, narrative thematic analysis, and coding airtime mentions for quantitative content analysis. Although the studies have not clearly explained their theoretical and/or conceptual framework adopted, some of them were influenced by framing theory. Brief summary of the articles is presented next.

Scovel, Nelson, and Thorpe's (2023) study examined the role of the media in framing transgender participation in sport. The authors contended that media framings are influential, pushing readers to choose a side in a divisive debate instead of promoting more detailed, ethical, and compassionate reactions to a complicated matter. In the second article, Xu (2023) explored how Twitter users perceived the inclusion of trans athletes at international sporting events by empirically examining the Twitter network of Laurel Hubbard, the first out trans female athlete in Olympic history. The author found that there was a predominantly negative reaction on Twitter towards Laurel Hubbard's participation in the Olympics, highlighting the influential role of social media influencers and the segmented nature of online discussions. Third, Zanin et al. (2023) attempted to document the lived experiences of TGNC athletes within the binarized structures of sport. The study revealed common themes of gender challenges and discrimination within sport's binary structures, along with counter-narratives that challenge these structures, highlighting the need for changes in sport narratives to promote gender inclusion beyond the binary. Forth, Scott, Li, and Bingaman (2023). examined how an official free-to-air Australian broadcaster portrayed male and female athletes who participated at the 2018 Commonwealth Games. The study reported that despite some progress in media coverage and discourse surrounding female athletes, male athletes still received significantly more coverage during the 2018 Commonwealth Games, highlighting ongoing issues of gender equity in sport media portrayal in Australia. Last, Yang (2023) investigated how Chinese news outlets use different

beliefs and ideas to justify the roles and statuses they assign to two female sport stars. The study revealed how Chinese media uses ideological narratives to portray athletes Quan Hongchan and Gu Eileen differently, reflecting the state's ambitions and navigating tensions between socialist values and neoliberal ideals in constructing national sport heroes. Collectively, the studies explore the intersection of gender, media representation, and public perception in sport, ranging from the framing of transgender athletes' participation to the portrayal of male and female athletes in media and the lived experiences of transgender and gender non-conforming athletes in competitive sport.

Annotated bibliography

Scovel, S., Nelson, M., & Thorpe, H. (2023). Media framings of the transgender athlete as “legitimate controversy”: The case of Laurel Hubbard at the Tokyo Olympics. *Communication & Sport, 11(5)*, 838-853.

These three researchers from the University of Maryland and University of Waikato investigated how media coverage frames transgender participation in sport, focusing on Laurel Hubbard's participation in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. Through a content analysis of 620 articles across three distinct phases surrounding Hubbard's Olympic debut, the study uncovers how journalists employ polarizing strategies—such as sourcing practices, the invocation of science, and policy questioning—to frame transgender athletes' participation as a "legitimate controversy." The analysis reveals a notable absence of Hubbard's personal perspective, with a preference for "authoritative" sources that challenge her participation and the relevant International Olympic Committee policies. The authors contend that such media approach encourages divisive debates over more nuanced discussions, highlighting journalists' significant influence in shaping public discourse around the inclusivity of sport spaces. The findings underscore the media's power in framing complex issues in ways that may either restrict or expand the inclusivity of sport.

Xu, Q. (2023). Competing as the first out transgender female Olympian: A twitter network analysis of Laurel Hubbard during the 2020 Tokyo games. *Communication & Sport, 11(5)*, 854-878.

This researcher from the University of Kentucky investigates the Twitter discourse on Laurel Hubbard, the first openly transgender woman to compete in the Olympics, during the 2020 Tokyo Games. Utilizing R programming, the author collected and analyzed 20,977 tweets related to Hubbard, followed by a sentiment analysis aided by Python and TextBlob. The study sheds light on public sentiment and perceptions regarding the inclusion of transgender athletes in international competitions, providing empirical insights into the Twitter network's reaction to Hubbard's historic participation. The analysis contributes valuable understanding to the discourse surrounding transgender athletes' roles in sport, highlighting the broader implications for inclusion and representation in international sporting events.

Zanin, A. C., LeMaster, L. T., Niess, L. C., & Lucero, H. (2023). Storying the gender binary in sport: Narrative motifs among transgender, gender non-conforming athletes. *Communication & Sport*, 11(5), 879–904.

Researchers from Arizona State University explored the lived experiences of transgender and gender non-conforming (TGNC) athletes through a dual-layered narrative analysis. This study documented the stories of 20 TGNC athletes, highlighting recurring themes such as gender sanctioning, survival within binary gender constructs, transition and disclosure, and gender affirmation. The analysis went further to dissect the structural narratives that perpetuate binary gender norms in sport, revealing both the exclusion of non-binary athletes and the emergence of counter narratives that challenge these binary constraints. By examining these personal and structural narratives, the study offers insights into the potential for reshaping sport narratives to embrace gender inclusivity beyond traditional binaries, suggesting significant theoretical and practical implications for fostering a more inclusive sporting environment.

Scott, O., Li, B., & Bingaman, J. (2023). Still battling for equity: Examining biological sex portrayals through the lens of the Gold Coast during Australian prime time coverage of the 2018 Commonwealth Games. *Communication & Sport*, 11(6) 1058–1079.

These authors from Brock University, Miami University, and the University of Delaware, explored the portrayal of male and female athletes by Australia's Seven Network during the 2018 Commonwealth Games. Their study, which examined over 31 hours of prime-time coverage, assessed clock-time, name mentions, and verbal descriptions of athletes to understand the evolution of gender portrayals in major sporting events broadcast in Australia. Adopting a coding approach that considered the athletes' sex, ethnicity, nationality, sport, and ability status, the researchers aimed to evaluate progress in gender representation. The findings indicated a continued dominance of male athletes in terms of airtime and an ambiguous portrayal of female athletes, despite some positive shifts in media discourse. The study concludes that, despite advancements, achieving media equity between male and female athletes in sports remains a challenge, underscoring the need for further efforts towards gender equality in sports broadcasting.

Yang, X. (2023). Incommensurability between “filial daughter” and “all-capable princess”: Discursive legitimation in chinese media coverage of Quan Hongchan and Gu Eileen. *Communication & Sport*, 1(6) 1080–1101.

This author, from Xiamen University, explored the ideological underpinnings in the portrayal of two Chinese female athletes, Quan Hongchan and Gu Eileen, by the national media, drawing from a comprehensive analysis of 449 articles about Quan, 353 about Gu and ten articles about both persons. Employing critical discourse analysis, the author investigated how these athletes' identities are framed within China's aspirations to be a sporting superpower and achieve the "China Dream." The study identified a dichotomy in media representations: Quan is depicted as a "socialist filial daughter," symbolizing a mobilization call to the youth for national commitment, while Gu is presented as a "neoliberal all-capable princess," reflecting a strategy to mitigate elite discontent and foster a cosmopolitan outlook. These portrayals, embodying contrasting societal values and expectations, highlight the complex practices Chinese media engage in to legitimize divergent athlete identities in support of state ideologies. This research illuminates the nuanced and multifaceted ways through which media narratives contribute to the broader discourse of national identity, cultural values, and global aspirations in contemporary China.

The Geography of Sport Management Research in 2023

Xiaoyan Xing

Introduction

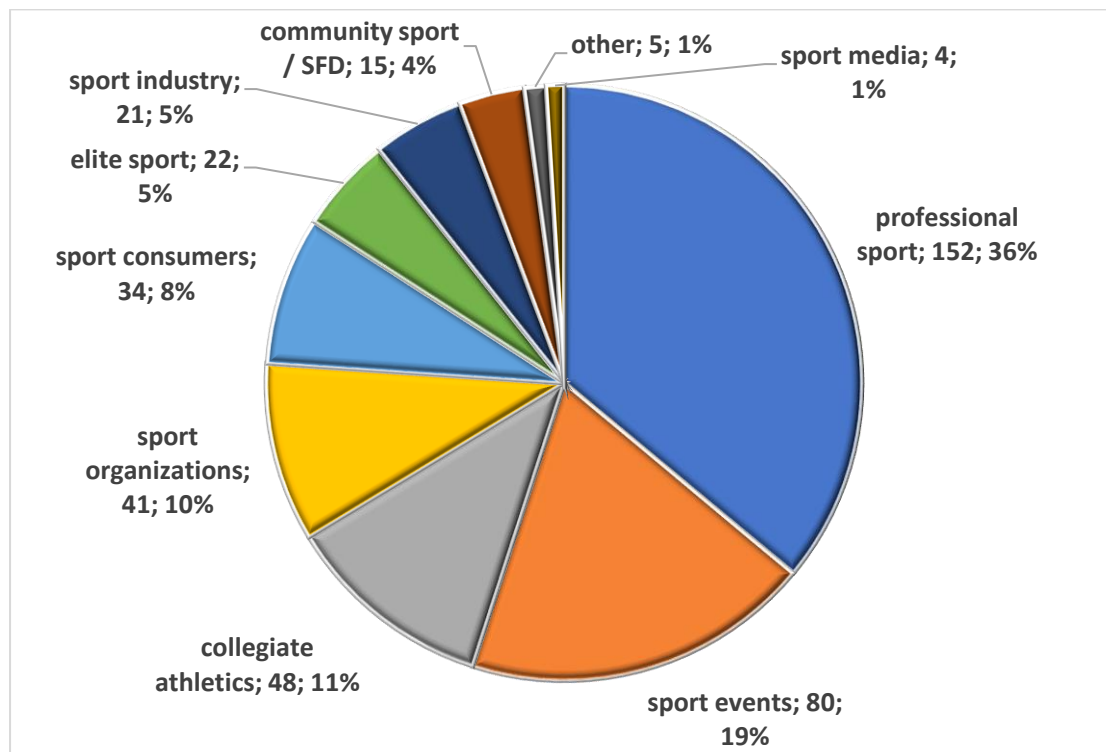
This analysis explores the geographical landscape of sport management (SM) research based on empirical articles published in the 10 target journals in 2023. The 508 articles published in 2023 comprised 422 empirical studies and 86 non-empirical pieces such as reviews, conceptual works, commentaries, editorials, and interviews. This analysis specifically focuses on the 422 empirical articles. The coding protocol employed remains consistent with previous reports on the geography of SM research in past issues of the Sport Management Digest (SMD). Concluding observations are offered at the end, integrating insights gleaned from the 2022 analysis, given the ongoing nature of this examination.

Geography of the SM research settings

We examined the settings of SM research by concentrating on sport domains or specific sports. Geographic distributions of these two setting dimensions were then mapped by correlating sport domains or specific sports with the continents where the study settings were located. To recap, the 10 sport domains are professional sport, collegiate athletics (also school sport in general), sport events (including all types such as mega-events, major-events, and mass participant sport events), sport organizations (including non-profit sport clubs, national and international sport organizations), community sport/sport for development (SFD), elite sport (also competitive sport), sport industry (also commercial sport), sport consumers (including spectators, participants, and consumers of a general nature), sport media (mainly the sport media sector), and others.

Among the 422 empirical articles, 36% pertained to the domain of professional sport, followed by sport events (19%), collegiate athletics (11%), sport organizations (10%), sport consumers (8%), elite sport (5%), sport industry (5%), community sport/SFD (4%), and 1% each in the sector of sport media or others (Figure 1).

Figure 1. The distribution of sport domains



Additionally, approximately 15% of the empirical articles (63) utilized media content data, such as social media posts, to investigate research questions across various sport domains, including professional sport (25), sport events (21), collegiate athletics (6), elite sport (5), sport organizations (3), sport industry (2), and community sport/SFD (1).

Articles in each domain were situated in specific continents. As illustrated in the last row of Table 1, the highest number of articles were located in North America (40%), followed by Europe (22%), Asia (16%), and Oceania (4%). Additionally, 9% of the articles were conducted in cross-continental settings, and 7% in international settings.

Africa (2%) and Central and South America (1%) had the fewest number of articles among the continental settings.

Table 1. Sport domains across continental contexts

Continental context									
Sport domain	NA	EU	OC	AS	AF	CSA	CC	IN	Total
professional sport	69	35	6	20	2	0	12	8	152
	45%	23%	4%	13%	1%	0%	8%	5%	100%
sport events	13	17	4	22	3	2	9	10	80
	16%	21%	5%	28%	4%	3%	11%	13%	100%
collegiate athletics	44	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	48
	92%	0%	2%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
sport organizations	10	14	3	6	2	0	1	5	41
	24%	34%	7%	15%	5%	0%	2%	12%	100%
sport consumers	18	6	0	6	0	0	2	2	34
	53%	18%	0%	18%	0%	0%	6%	6%	100%
elite sport	0	9	1	2	0	0	6	4	22
	0%	41%	5%	9%	0%	0%	27%	18%	100%
sport industry	7	2	0	6	0	0	4	2	21
	33%	10%	0%	29%	0%	0%	19%	10%	100%
community sport / SFD	6	6	1	0	1	0	1	0	15
	40%	40%	7%	0%	7%	0%	7%	0%	100%
sport media	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	5
	20%	20%	0%	20%	20%	0%	20%	0%	100%
other	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Total	170	92	16	66	9	2	36	31	422
	40%	22%	4%	16%	2%	1%	9%	7%	100%

Note: NA = North America; EU = Europe; OC = Oceania; AS = Asia; AF = Africa; CSA = Central and South America; CC = Cross-continental; IN = International.

Table 1 also presents the distribution of domains across continental contexts. The following patterns emerge. Firstly, the North American setting contributed the highest number of articles in the domains of professional sport, collegiate athletics, sport consumers, and sport industry. Secondly, the European setting produced the greatest number of articles in the domains of sport organizations and elite sport. Thirdly, the Asian setting featured the highest number of articles in the domain of sport events. Fourthly, North America and Europe shared the number of articles in the domain of community sport/SFD. Lastly, studies conducted in cross-continental or international

settings tended to focus on the domains of professional sport, sport events, and elite sport.

When considering the **specific sport(s)** linked to the identified sport domain in a given study, football (soccer) continued to hold the top spot in popularity, followed by multi-sport events like the Olympic Games and Pan-American Games, basketball, American football, baseball, e-sport, and others. At the other end of the spectrum, 13 sports were featured in only one or two articles this year. These sports include golf, wrestling, car racing, biathlon, swimming, handball, skiing, badminton, volleyball, wheelchair rugby, surfing, skateboarding, and darts. Finally, nearly 40% of the articles were situated in a multi-sports context or did not specify the specific sports associated with the identified sport domain (Figure 2).

Figure 2. The distribution of specific sports

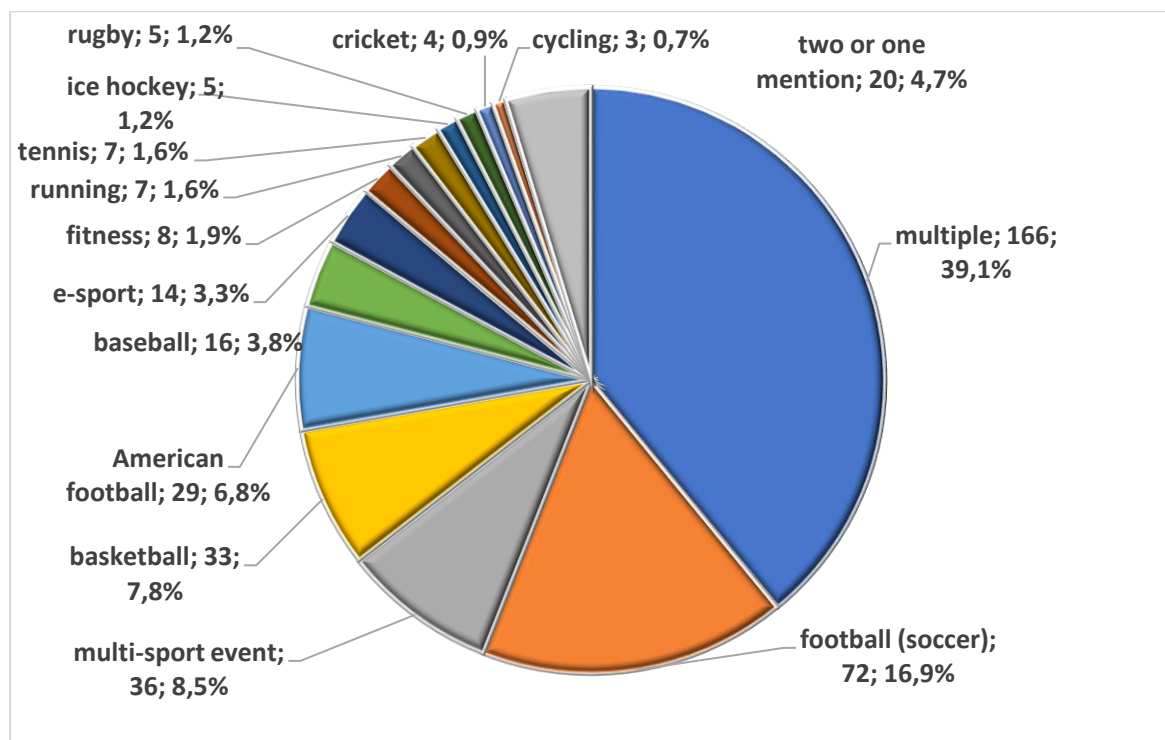


Table 2 plotted the top 11 sports against continent contexts, yielding the following insights. Firstly, the largest number of articles spotlighting the sport of football (soccer) contextualised in Europe, followed by North America and Asia. Secondly, North America boasted the highest number of articles featuring sports such as American football, baseball, basketball, and ice hockey. Thirdly, a notable number of articles highlighting multi-sport events were discovered in Asia. Lastly, in less frequented continental settings, Africa featured 3 articles on football (soccer) and 1 article on running, while Central and South America housed 2 articles on multi-sport events.

Table 2. Specific sport by continental context

Continental context									
Sport	NA	EU	OC	AS	AF	CSA	CC	IN	Total
football (soccer)	10	41	2	10	3	0	2	4	72
	14%	57%	3%	14%	4%	0%	3%	6%	100%
multi-sport	8	5	2	12	0	2	5	2	36
	22%	14%	6%	33%	0%	6%	14%	6%	100%
basketball	22	0	0	7	0	0	4	0	33
	67%	0%	0%	21%	0%	0%	12%	0%	100%
American football	28	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	29
	97%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
baseball	11	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	16
	69%	0%	0%	31%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
e-sport	4	2	0	2	0	0	3	3	14
	29%	14%	0%	14%	0%	0%	21%	21%	100%
fitness	2	2	0	4	0	0	0	0	8
	25%	25%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
tennis	2	1	0	1	0	0	1	2	7
	29%	14%	0%	14%	0%	0%	14%	29%	100%
running	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	2	7
	14%	14%	0%	14%	14%	0%	14%	29%	100%
ice hockey	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
rugby	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	1	5
	0%	0%	20%	40%	0%	0%	20%	20%	100%

Note: NA = North America; EU = Europe; OC = Oceania; AS = Asia; AF = Africa; CSA = Central and South America; CC = Cross-continental; IN = International.

Geography of SM knowledge production

Each empirical article examined was authored by a research team and published in a specific journal. This information provides insights into the geographical distribution of SM knowledge production. Subsequently, two sets of analyses were reported: (1) the association between the continental contexts of the articles and the continental location of the authors' institutional affiliations, and (2) the distribution of the continental contexts of the articles published by the ten targeted journals.

Regarding the geographical location of authors' institutional affiliations, the following patterns emerged (Table 3):

Firstly, the majority of articles set in North America (88%) were produced by author teams affiliated with North American institutions.

Secondly, author teams with European institutional affiliations produced the majority of articles situated in the European context (83%).

Thirdly, for articles in the Oceania context, 56% of them were authored by researchers affiliated with institutions based in the same continent.

Fourthly, the majority of articles in the Asian context were either produced by research teams affiliated with Asian institutions (35%) or by collaborative teams drawing authors with affiliations spanning continents (30%).

Finally, cross-continental research teams were not only responsible for the highest number of articles in both cross-continental (72%) and international contexts (55%), but also contributed to the greatest number of articles situated in the Africa context (67%).

Table 3. Continental context versus author institutional affiliation

Continental context	Author institutional affiliation						
	NA	EU	OC	AS	AF	CC	
NA	150	6	1	2	0	11	170
	88%	4%	1%	1%	0%	6%	100%
EU	4	76	1	0	0	11	92
	4%	83%	1%	0%	0%	12%	100%
OC	1	4	9	0	0	2	16
	6%	25%	56%	0%	0%	13%	100%
AS	6	10	5	23	2	20	66
	9%	15%	8%	35%	3%	30%	100%
AF	1	2	0	0	0	6	9
	11%	22%	0%	0%	0%	67%	100%
CSA	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
	0%	0%	50%	0%	0%	50%	100%
CC	5	3	1	1	0	26	36
	14%	8%	3%	3%	0%	72%	100%
IN	1	11	1	1	0	17	31
	3%	35%	3%	3%	0%	55%	100%
Total	168	112	19	27	2	94	422
	40%	27%	5%	6%	0%	22%	100%

Notes: 1. NA = North America; EU = Europe; OC = Oceania; AS = Asia; AF = Africa; CSA = Central and South America; CC = Cross-continental; IN = International. 2. Author institutional affiliations in cross-continental authorships covered all six continents.

An analysis of the geographical distribution of continental contexts across the 10 targeted journals reveals the following patterns (Table 4):

To begin, 8 out of the 10 journals—JSM (71%), SMR (52%), IJSMS (49%), IJSF (38%), IJSC (52%), JSE (51%), C&S (39%), and JGSM (36%)—published their highest number of articles within the North American context. However, this pattern was somewhat anticipated, considering that 40% of the 422 empirical articles were situated within this geographical sphere.

Secondly, ESMQ (36%) and IJSPP (29%) published the greatest number of articles set against backgrounds in Europe, likely owing to the journals' European origin.

Thirdly, out of the 66 articles rooted in the Asian context, 19 were featured in IJSMS, followed by ESMQ (12), C&S (8), IJSPP (6), and JGSM (6).

Fourthly, ESMQ boasted the highest number of articles either applying a cross-continental context (7 out of 36) or an international context (8 out of 31), underscoring its global outlook.

Finally, it is worth noting that while articles situated in African or Central and South American contexts were generally evenly distributed across the journals, IJSPP contributed to 3 out of 9 articles focusing on the African context.

Table 4. Continental contexts of articles from the 10 journals

Continental context									
	NA	EU	OC	AS	AF	CSA	CC	IN	Total
JSM	22	2	2	2	0	0	3	0	31
	71%	6%	6%	6%	0%	0%	10%	0%	100%
SMR	15	2	3	4	1	0	2	2	29
	52%	7%	10%	14%	3%	0%	7%	7%	100%
IJSMS	27	7	0	19	0	0	1	1	55
	49%	13%	0%	35%	0%	0%	2%	2%	100%
ESMQ	20	30	3	12	2	1	7	8	83
	24%	36%	4%	14%	2%	1%	8%	10%	100%
IJSF	6	5	0	2	0	0	1	2	16
	38%	31%	0%	13%	0%	0%	6%	13%	100%
IJSC	16	4	1	4	1	0	5	0	31
	52%	13%	3%	13%	3%	0%	16%	0%	100%
IJSPP	6	11	3	6	3	1	4	4	38
	16%	29%	8%	16%	8%	3%	11%	11%	100%
JSE	21	8	0	3	0	0	3	6	41
	51%	20%	0%	7%	0%	0%	7%	15%	100%
C&S	21	12	3	8	0	0	6	4	54
	39%	22%	6%	15%	0%	0%	11%	7%	100%
JGSM	16	11	1	6	2	0	4	4	44
	36%	25%	2%	14%	5%	0%	9%	9%	100%
Total	170	92	16	66	9	2	36	31	422
	40%	22%	4%	16%	2%	0%	9%	7%	100%

Note: NA = North America; EU = Europe; OC = Oceania; AS = Asia; AF = Africa; CSA = Central and South America; CC = Cross-continental; IN = International.

Concluding observations

Drawing from the analyses of the 342 empirical articles published in 2022 and the 422 articles in 2023, we present the following observations regarding the geography of sport management research over the past two years.

Firstly, within the 10 domains contextualising sport management research, professional sport stands out as the most frequently utilized setting by researchers, followed by the domain of sport events. Notably, there has been a significant decrease in the number of articles contextualized in the sport media sector, dropping from 5% in 2022 to just 1% in 2023. However, it is crucial to highlight that this decline does not diminish the importance of media in sport management research. Indeed, a considerable number of articles across domains (13.5% in 2022, 15% in 2023) have chosen to address their research questions by analysing content arising from the media sphere.

Concerning the continental distribution of sport management research contexts, North America and Europe emerged as the most popular locations for studies, followed by Asia. Notably, there has been a reduction in the number of empirical articles contextualized in Oceania, declining from 7% to 4% over the two years. Meanwhile, articles applying a cross-continental context have increased from approximately 4% to 9%, indicating a growing trend of global collaboration in sport management research.

In terms of sport settings, the greatest number of sport management studies have been associated with settings involving multiple sports. Among studies focused on a single sport in their contexts, football (soccer) emerged as the most popular, followed by basketball and American football. Notably, more than a dozen sports appeared in only one study each over the two years. These sports include badminton, boxing, darts, disc golf, drag racing, free diving, gymnastics, horse racing, netball, parkour, skateboarding, softball, taekwondo, wheelchair basketball, and wheelchair rugby.

Regarding the geographical distribution of authors' institutional affiliations, the majority of empirical articles have been conducted by author teams affiliated with institutions based in North America, followed by those based in Europe. Additionally,

a significant number of empirical articles have been completed by research teams with institutions located across different continents. It is encouraging to note that in 2023, 72% of the empirical studies contextualized in cross-continental settings were achieved by cross-continental research teams, which is a significant increase from the approximately 40% observed in 2022.

Finally, the 10 journals have shown variation in the distribution of continental settings among the articles they publish, with articles set in North American contexts taking up the largest portion of publishing space. Meanwhile, the two journals rooted in Europe (ESMQ, IJSP) tend to accept the greatest number of articles set in European contexts while maintaining a broad global perspective by showcasing a fair number of articles contextualised in the Global South. Articles set in Asian contexts, though fewer in number compared to those set in North America and Europe, have primarily found their publishing home in IJSMS, followed by ESMQ and JGSM.