

**Sport Management Digest**  
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## **State of Sport Management Research in the first half of 2023 (January - July):**

### **An Overview**

**Vassil Girginov**

This introductory article of the Sport Management Digest (SMD) provides a bibliometric review of the research published in the 10-sport management journals in the first half of 2023 – from January to July. The eight thematic sections that follow cover in sufficient detail research pertinent to different aspects of sport management. As promised, the current issue includes a theoretical section, but due to technical reasons we were unable to include the review of sport communication research, which will be made available as soon as possible. The role of bibliometric analysis, as a computer-assisted quantitative review methodology, is to identify core research or authors, as well as their relationship. It provides valuable relational information on the topic, which helps significantly enhance our understanding of the overall intellectual structure of the sport management discipline.

Following the established format of the introductory article, the present overview of research in the field of sport management focuses on three interrelated areas including a bibliometric analysis, theoretical and practical appeal of research, as measured by the funding received by different studies, and the democratization of knowledge, as exemplified by the number of studies published under the Open Access (OA) regime. In the first half of 2023, the ten sport management journals combined published 43 issues with 297 articles. This is a significant number of outputs compared to the previous six months. A diverse group of researchers contributed to the field including established and upcoming scholars as well as PhD students. Table 1 shows the ten journals and the number of articles per journal including the Open Access (OA) ones. The first half of 2023 saw 297 published articles which is 93 more than the 204 produced in the second half of 2022, but the percentage of OA articles was less - 12% (47), compared to 19% (53). Xiaoyan Xing in this issue offers a very 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

publicly 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 10 sport management journals in the first half of 2023 (January - July)

Journal	Founded	Publication frequency/year	Impact factor 2021	Articles No	Open Access No/%
<b>Journal of Sport Management</b> <a href="https://journals.humankinetics.com/view/journals/jsm/jsm-overview.xml">https://journals.humankinetics.com/view/journals/jsm/jsm-overview.xml</a>	1987	5	3.69	21	2/0
<b>Sport Management Review</b> <a href="https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rsmr20">https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rsmr20</a>	1998	5	6.57	30	2/0
<b>International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship</b> <a href="https://www.emerald.com/insight/publication/issn/1464-6668">https://www.emerald.com/insight/publication/issn/1464-6668</a>	1999	4	2.93	32	4/0
<b>European Sport Management Quarterly</b> <a href="https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/resm20">https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/resm20</a>	2001	5	4.00	51	10/0
<b>International Journal of Sport Finance</b>	2006	4	0.94	10	0/0

<a href="https://fitpublishing.com/journals/ij-sf">https://fitpublishing.com/journals/ij-sf</a>						
<b>International Journal of Sport Communications</b>	2008	4	N/A	41	4/10	
<a href="https://journals.humankinetics.com/view/journals/ijsc/ijsc-overview.xml">https://journals.humankinetics.com/view/journals/ijsc/ijsc-overview.xml</a>						
<b>International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics</b>	2009	4	0.69	23	10/4	
<a href="https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ris-p20">https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ris-p20</a>						
<b>Journal of Sports Economics</b>	2011	6	2.22	26	5/23	
<a href="https://journals.sagepub.com/home/jse">https://journals.sagepub.com/home/jse</a>						
<b>Communication and Sport</b>	2013	6	3.17	32	6/0	
<a href="https://journals.sagepub.com/home/com">https://journals.sagepub.com/home/com</a>						
<b>Journal of Global Sport Management</b>	2016	4	N/A	31	4/0	
<a href="https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rgsm20">https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rgsm20</a>						

The 10 journals under review continued publishing special issues, which are designed to address important themes as well to break new grounds in the field. Sport management journals' special issues have a positive impact on developing the field (Scelles, 2021). Three journals have published special issues addressing environmental matters in sport (ESMQ), diversity, equity and inclusion (IJSMS), and a critical examination of sport communication scholarship (IJSC). 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 (January-July 2023)

Journal	Special Issue Topic	Editors
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<b>European Sport Management Quarterly, 2023, 23(1)</b>	<i>Environmental matters in sport: sustainable research in the academy</i>	Tim Breitbarth, Brian P. McCullough, Andrea Collins, Anna Gerke & David M. Herold
<b>International Journal of Sport Marketing &amp; Sponsorship, 2023, 24 (1)</b>	<i>Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Sport Marketing</i>	Antonio Williams, Natasha Brison, Ann Pegoraro
<b>International Journal of Sport Communications 2023</b>	<i>Social Media and Sport Communication: Critiquing the Scholarship</i>	Gashaw Abeza and Jimmy Sanderson

Sport management research continues to asserts its conceptual and practical appeal to policy makers, practitioners and various public and private bodies as evidenced by the funding provided to different research projects. 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. A number of public and private agencies supported research including the Australian Research Council, Ministry of Education, Gulf Research Program, Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, National Research Foundation of Korea, Social Sciences and SSHRC. Scholars from the following countries including United States, Canada, Australia, United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, Poland, and South Korea were successful in attracting funding support. 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 SM journals in the sample including citations as a powerful measure of establishing the impact of journals on the research field (see Lis' 2020 analysis).

The bibliometric analysis was conducted using the two major data bases including the Web of Science and Scopus. As with previous issues, science mapping

and visualization was produced 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 three figures. It ought to be noted though that due to the limited time subject to analysis (6 months), the co-authorship and co-occurrence links reported cannot be representative of the sport management field, rather they ought to be viewed as a snapshot.

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

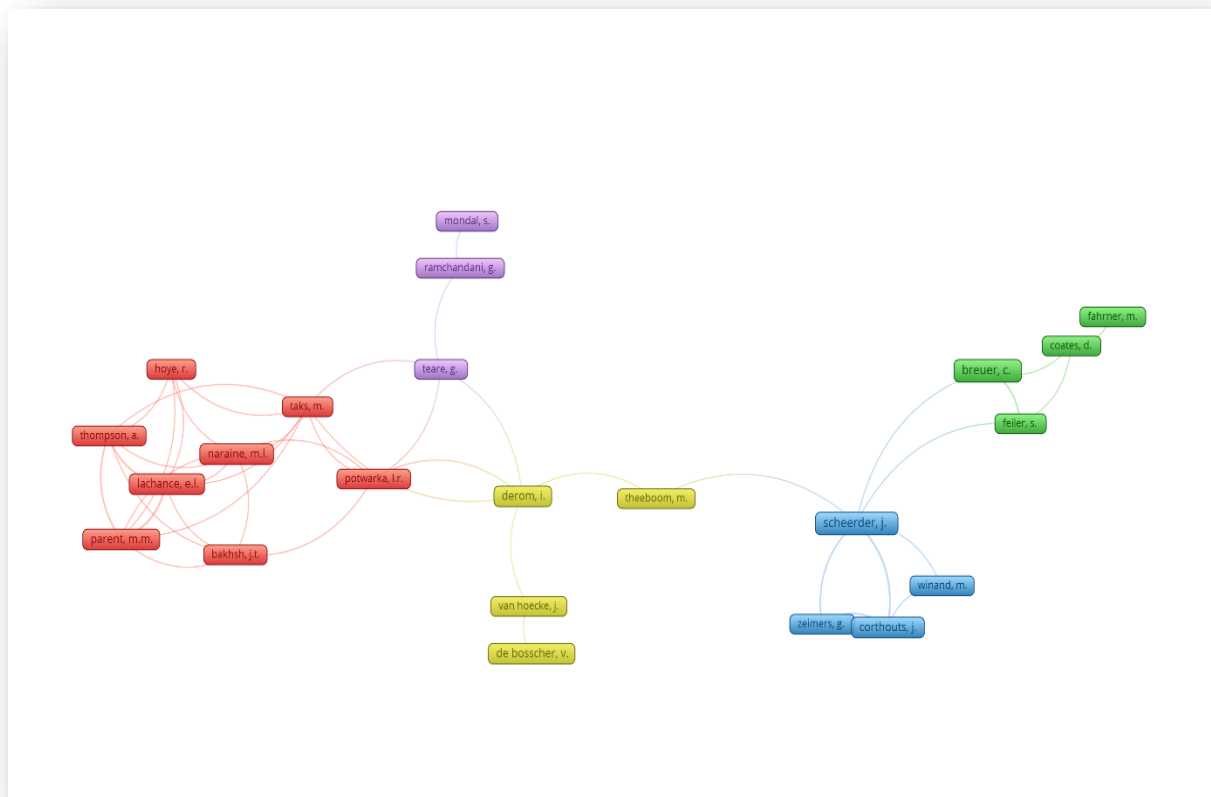


Figure 1. Co-authorship network visualization across ten sport management journals in 2023 (January – July)

The co-occurrence links, representing the number of publications in which two terms occur together can be seen in Figure 2. Out of 1118 key words, 45 met the threshold of occurring more than 10 times. The size of the word indicates its weight. Figure 2 also helps to see the distance between two words where the higher the distance the lesser the connectedness. For example, the words ‘Olympic Games’, ‘athletes activism’, ‘social media’ were both interrelated and dominant in the research. They were complemented by ‘football’, ‘esports’ and ‘sponsorship’, which were also closely related to each other. A similar cluster of interrelated key words appears around ‘Covid19’, ‘computers’ and ‘management’.

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

Figure 2. Key words co-occurrence network visualization in ten sport management journals in 2023 (January - July)

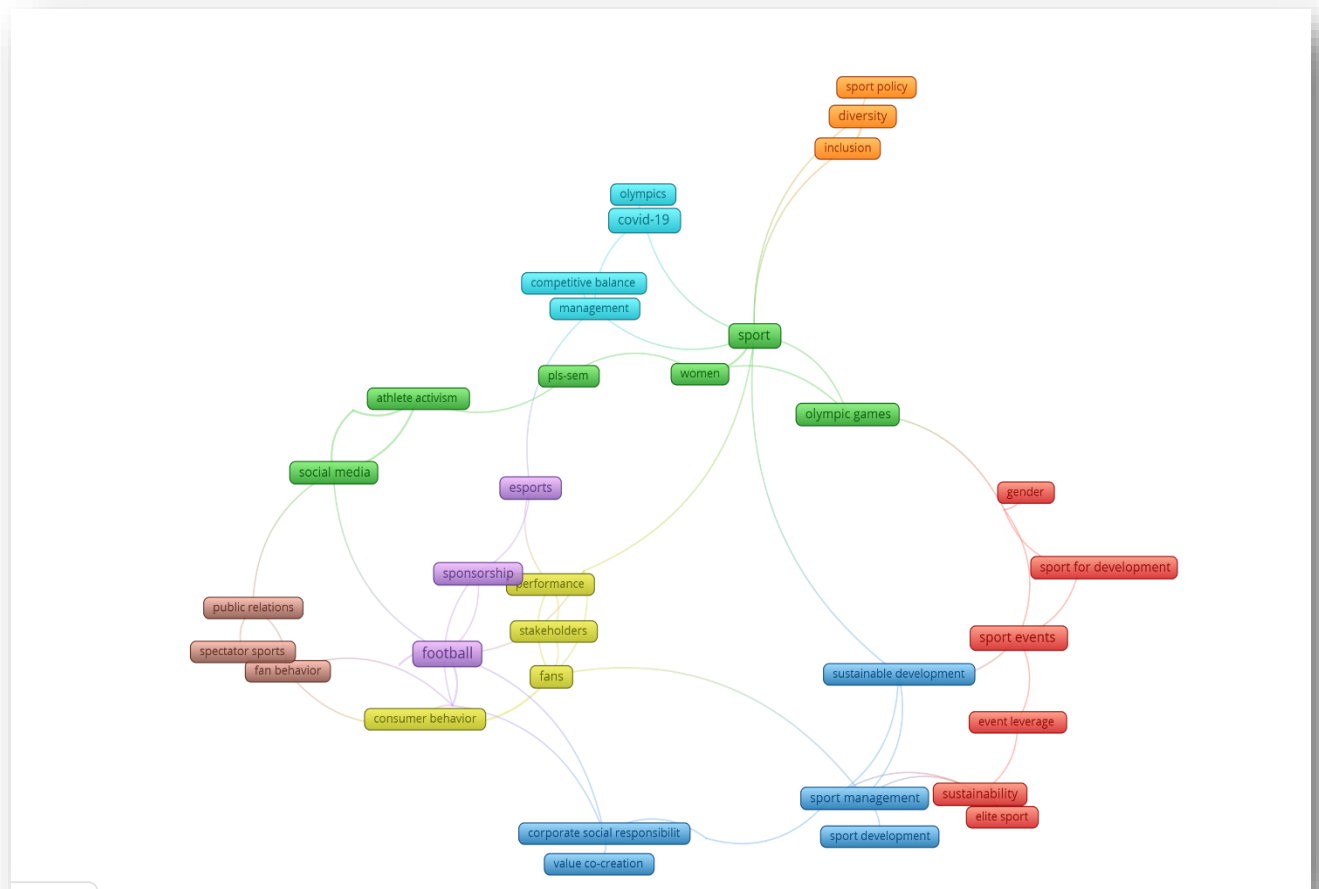


Figure 3 represents the full bibliographic coupling where out of 6059 citations 146 met the threshold of occurring at least 10 times.





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Lis, A. (2020). Sport management: Bibliometric study of key sources titles in the research field. *Journal of Physical Education and Sport*, 20 (4), 2423-2430.

Scelles, N. (2021). Impact of the special issues in sport management and sociology journals, *Managing Sport and Leisure*, DOI: 10.1080/23750472.2021.2008267

Van Eck, N. J., & Waltman, L. (2020). Software survey: VOSviewer, a computer program for bibliometric mapping. *Scientometrics*, 84(2), 523-538.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-009-0146-3>

# Research Methodologies in Sport Management

*James Skinner*

## Introduction

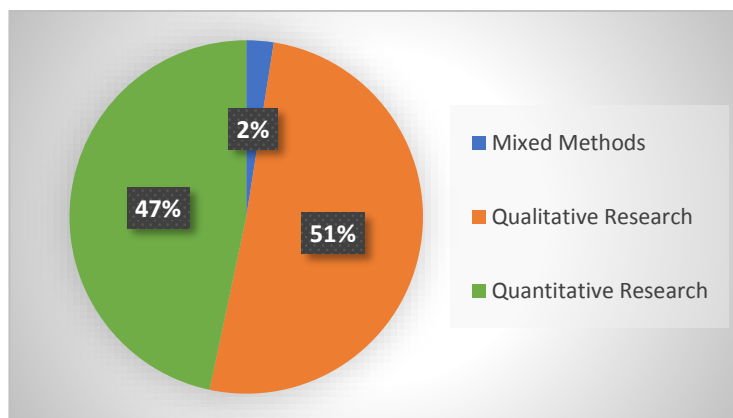
This paper reviewed the ten most popular sport journals concerning their research design. The publications under review were published between March and August 2023, and Table 1 summarises the methodological approaches used in the respective journals:

<b>Journals</b>	<b>Mixed</b>	<b>Qualitative</b>	<b>Quantitative</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Communication &amp; Sport</b>	1	21 (incl. three editorials)	8	<b>30</b>
<b>European Sport Management Quarterly</b>	3	25 (incl. one editorial)	34	<b>62</b>
<b>International Journal of Sport Finance</b>	-	-	8	<b>8</b>
<b>International Journal of Sport Marketing and Sponsorship</b>	1	6 (incl. one editorial)	13	<b>20</b>
<b>International Journal of Sport Communication</b>	-	38 (incl. one editorial, two book reviews, and one media review)	6	<b>44</b>
<b>International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics</b>	-	10 (incl. one book review)	1	<b>11</b>
<b>Journal of Global Sport Management</b>	-	3	2	<b>5</b>

		(incl. one editorial)		
<b>Journal of Sport Economics</b>	-	-	21	<b>21</b>
<b>Journal of Sport Management</b>	1	8 (incl. one editorial and one lecture)	9	<b>18</b>
<b>Sport Management Review</b>	-	11	10	<b>21</b>
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>240</b>

*Table 1: Summary of Methodological Approaches*

Similar to the previous reviews, the employment of qualitative and quantitative research approaches is quite balanced. Nevertheless, qualitative research articles have been more popular in this Sport Management Digest review, as demonstrated in Figure 1:



*Figure 1: Distribution of Methodological Approaches*

When looking at the past five reviews, the percentage of qualitative research has gradually increased, with this and the previous review having more qualitative research papers than quantitative papers.

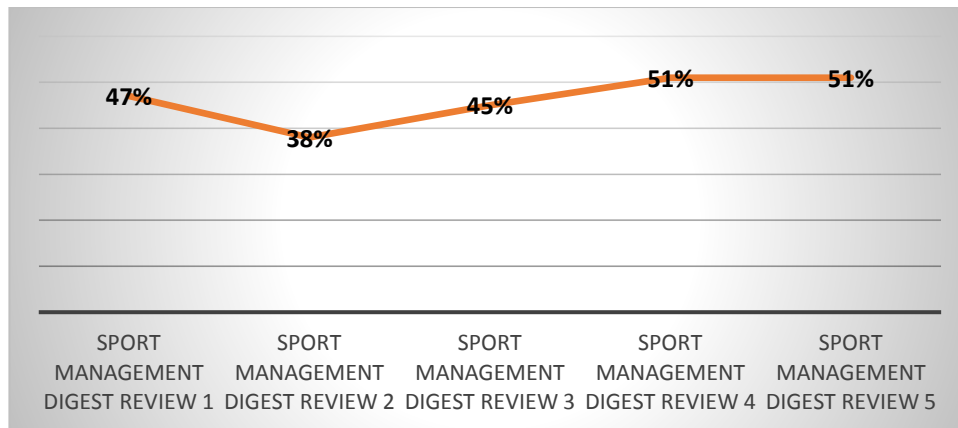


Figure 2: Sport Management Digest Review - Comparison of Qualitative Research (in %)

Continuing the trends identified in previous reviews, a mixed method design was rarely applied. The methodological approaches employed a variety of data collection and analysis techniques, as shown in Table 2:

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
Regression Analysis	Textual Analysis
	(Critical) Discourse Analysis
	Systematic Review

Table 2: Overview of Most Common Data Collection and Analysis Techniques

The following section selected six papers from the above journals for a more detailed discussion. All reviewed articles focussed on the topic of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) and aimed to enhance our insights into its application to a sport context. In addition, an annotated bibliography of six papers has been included at the end of this review.

**Professional Sport and Initial Mental Health Public Disclosure Narratives (Elsay et al., 2023)**

Despite the routine of disclosing reasons for absences from professional sporting career activities to the media (e.g. press statements, media interviews, team websites, social media posts), there is a general absence of disclosure as soon as the reasons relate to mental health concerns. Indeed, players seem to struggle to define, describe, and conceptualise their mental health issues whilst maintaining privacy when undergoing assessment and treatment. Therefore, the authors of this study sought to examine communication strategies by exploring first/initial public mental health disclosure narratives produced by players and sporting organisations across several professional sports via media interviews, press statements, and social media posts.

The authors employed an ethnomethodological approach and conversation analysis (CA) to examine official public statements. They have selected seven professional sport players from different sports, including British football/soccer (Lenny Pidgeley), American football (Everson Griffen; Brandon Brooks; Brandon Marshall), cricket (Marcus Trescothick; Sarah Taylor), and basketball (Imani Boyette). The players shared different diagnoses and the authors' analysis focused on (in)voluntary accounts produced by teams or players themselves during their careers. In more detail, they have analysed the players' narratives to categorise and explain their predicament by focussing on the following guiding questions:

- What was the context of the first known disclosure? Why was the disclosure made now?
- Who performs the disclosure?
- What platform was used to release the information and what form did the disclosure take? (e.g., personal/team social media posts, press statements, press conferences, media interviews, etc.)
- What was the impact and consequences of the disclosure for the player? We encourage readers to view available videos alongside the analysis

The data analysis indicated how some players disclose partial or proxy public announcements (due to a desire to mask issues or delayed help-seeking and assessment). In contrast, others prefer fuller disclosure of the problems experienced, including diagnoses, ongoing treatment, and therapy regimes.

### **Partnerships in collegiate sport clubs: a social exchange perspective (Czekanski et al., 2023)**

Sport clubs are usually quite complex organisations that amateur athletes lead. The amateurs not only play for the club but also run the day-to-day activities and interact with internal and external actors. According to the authors, the actions and responsibilities of club members are well researched. However, little is known about these clubs' relationships with other internal and external actors. Therefore, this study

investigated exchange relationships within collegiate sport clubs (CSCs) by focusing on the following research question: *What are the characteristics and outcomes of the social exchange relationships within CSCs?*

The authors have applied a social constructivist epistemological lens to answer their research question. They employed a qualitative research approach by conducting focus groups with representatives from 29 clubs and interviews with four recreation professional staff at three universities across the United States. For this study, three CSC programs across the US were selected. The researchers then recruited 68 sport club executives representing 29 individual CSCs. The club sizes ranged from 15 to 100 members, with an average membership of approximately 36. Additionally, four recreational sport professional staff across University A (n = 2), University B (n = 1), and University C (n = 1) participated. Staff members represented department director, program director, and program coordinator roles, covering all prominent administrative positions overseeing CSC.

The insights from focus groups and interviews were analysed using a thematic analysis approach and their findings indicated that multiple exchange relationships exist within CSCs. Primary importance was placed on the relationships between the club's executive board and club members, and the club members and the university. Further, they found that each exchange relationship contributes to specific desirable outcomes for the engaged actors that could not be had without the exchange partner.

### **Role Model or Quitter? Social Media's Response to Simone Biles at Tokyo 2020 (Doehler, 2023)**

During the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, Simone Biles withdrew from several gymnastics events mid-competition, citing her mental health issues. As a result, Biles, one of the most successful athletes in the world, faced intense scrutiny from the world's media and the public immediately after her withdrawal. To understand how the public reacted, the authors of this study analysed the Facebook narrative surrounding her withdrawal.

The authors collected a range of Facebook posts from four public Facebook pages: Simone Biles (her official and verified account), Fox News and CNN (American news outlets), and Bleacher Report (an international news outlet that focuses on sport and sport culture). The authors justified their choice of sources given their pages' widespread appeal to sport fans, amassing 63.3 million Facebook followers combined. Twenty-nine posts were sourced across the four pages. All comments were collected from the posts on 1 June 2022 using the Facepager software, an application for automated data retrieval on JSON-based APIs. Ahead of the analysis, the authors

screened the data to exclude comments that 'tagged' another Facebook user but contained no further text, comments not written in English and comments that only included emojis. The final dataset consisted of 87,714 comments: Simone Biles (n = 30,673 across two posts), Fox News (n = 37,476 across eleven posts), CNN (n = 14,856 across eleven posts), and Bleacher Report (n = 4,709 across five posts). The authors analysed the comments by deploying a thematic analysis approach supported by the qualitative software Leximancer.

The study's findings suggested a polarising narrative, with many users supporting Biles and consequently engaging in broader discussions surrounding athlete mental health. Others condemned her action, suggesting she quit on the biggest sporting stage.

### **An intersectional Foucauldian analysis of Canadian national sport organisations' 'equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) policies and the reinscribing of injustice (Peers et al., 2023)**

Equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) policies have become increasingly important in national sports organisations. In Canada, these organisations have increasingly been incentivised to create their own policies within the national inclusive sport mandates framework. Despite this, most people from equity-denied groups continue to experience erasure, denial, and ignorance when engaging within Canada's sporting system, not despite such policies but sometimes because of them. Therefore, this study aimed to review EDI policies across Canadian national sport organisations.

The study's sample consisted of 143 policy documents available online. Nine were national policies, acts, or frameworks (e.g., Canadian Sport Policy 2012) and 134 were organisation-specific policies (e.g., Judo Canada – Gender Equity Policy). The authors deployed a Foucauldian discourse analysis involving analytical tools developed throughout Foucault's various archaeologies and genealogies to analyse the documents. They first identified every equity-related statement within each of the 143 policy documents through Foucault's subject-knowledge-power analytic triangle, which included:

- Analysing the kinds of subjects (e.g., the disabled person) being (re)produced and governed through the statement and its pre/prescriptions.
- Analysing how dominant knowledge (e.g., charity discourse) and knowledge systems (e.g., science) are being leveraged to render the statement and its author intelligible and authoritative
- Theorising the power effects of statements, with particular focus on the ways they served to (il)legitimise existing inequitable systems, (in)action substantive institutional and practice-based changes and dis/qualify particular inclusion and equity claims.



Based on the analysis, the authors created a model explaining common ways EDI policies can reproduce the exclusions they seek to address. Their first theme, Reproducing the Status Quo, included Alleging Inclusivity and Refusing Accountability subthemes. The subthemes of Erasing, Problematising, and Hedging were discussed in their second theme of Reproducing the Excludable Other.

**Sponsorship and social justice: brand positioning on diversity and inclusion in sport marketing during the 2020 UEFA European Football Championship (Beek et al., 2023)**

This study aimed to identify contextual changes in communications, social activism, and perceptions of commercialisation and to what extent these have changed the dynamics in sport sponsorship. In more detail, the authors have investigated the sponsorship and social justice patterns within the context of one major sport event.

In doing so, the authors deployed a single case study by focusing on the UEFA EURO 2020 and the efforts of multinational companies concerning their adaptation of their sponsorship communications to express corporate values on inclusion and diversity during the event. This event was chosen due to its popularity and ability for sponsors to use its platform for global reach. Consequently, the authors investigated the sponsorship activations of the twelve official sponsors by analysing sponsorship expressions on the LED boarding during every tournament match. In addition, data on sponsorship characteristics and brand positioning was collected for every sponsor to define relevant factors to understand the differences in sponsorship communications.

The authors have constructed a dataset with three elements for this study, focussing on (a) the role of sponsorship characteristics on brand positioning, (b) the role of sponsorship on social justice, and (c) sponsorship activations on diversity and inclusion. The characteristics of the sponsors included relevant aspects of their core business and origins that were collected from company websites, such as the geographic origins of the sponsors, the corporate strategy on its diversity and inclusion, and related corporate documents (e.g., reports, press releases) to identify company values. Sponsorship activations were investigated by visual data collection using a multimethod frame and data triangulation for the convergence of multiple sources of evidence. The authors analysed over 90,000 press photos and 51 official match videos that clarified the dynamics of brand positioning, sponsorship characteristics from the perspective of globalisation patterns, and different sponsorship approaches in different geographical, social, and political contexts.

The findings revealed that during UEFA EURO 2020, five official sponsors changed their sponsorship activations. According to the authors, adjustments were made in sponsorship expressions to position the brand on diversity and inclusion.

### **How do elite sport organizations frame diversity and inclusion? A critical race analysis (Gardner et al., 2023)**

This study aimed to investigate how elite sport organisations frame diversity and inclusion. According to the authors, sport organisations frequently present themselves as committed to diversity and inclusion by creating policies, programmes, and other initiatives. Nevertheless, this image of diversity and inclusion is often not reflected in organisational practices, given that white men primarily dominate leadership positions.

For this reason, the authors utilised the principles of critical race theory as a framework to analyse documents produced by the National Basketball Association (NBA), Major League Baseball (MLB), National Football League (NFL) and the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC). In doing so, they employed the qualitative content analysis design of Ethnographic Content Analysis (ECA). The ECA approach is interactive, as the foundation for inquiry requires researchers to immerse themselves in the documents so that the perpetual emergence of frames and themes occurs throughout the discovery process. The authors have selected primary documents for this study, which were characterised as diversity-related materials (e.g., statements, policies, programs) on the official NBA, NFL, MLB and USOPC websites. Both the terms “diversity” and “inclusion” were included in the search, as organisations often use these terms interchangeably. In addition, the lead investigator examined each organisation’s official website page-by-page to look for relevant materials, such as diversity and inclusion statements, policies, programs, photos, and other documents. Sixty-six documents were identified for this study’s analysis, constituting approximately 7,500 words of text and 125 images, figures, or illustrations. All documents were loaded into QSR NVivo 12 software for data analysis.

Data analysis consisted of multiple stages following the principles of ECA. In the first stage, the researchers spent one week immersing themselves in each organization’s content, totalling four weeks of analysis. For the second stage, the investigators searched for specific codes and themes related to each frame. The third stage focussed on reviewing the content to identify racialised diversity discourse specifically. The researchers regularly conferred throughout the data analysis process to reconcile diverging interpretations and reach consensus on findings. In their findings, the researchers found that the terms “racism” or “sexism” did not appear once in the organisation’s materials despite the publishing of numerous policies, programs, events, and other initiatives to promote diversity and inclusion. The authors concluded

that if organisations fail to recognise and address the structural causes of inequality, any initiatives they promote are unlikely to foster meaningful progress for social justice.

### **Annotated Bibliography**

1. **Brown-Devlin, N., Brown, K. A., Britt, B. C., & Adamson, A. C. (2023). What inspired that tweet: A comparative analysis of official and stakeholder-enacted crisis responses during the Urban Meyer/Zach Smith scandal. *Communication & Sport*, 11(2), 265-287.**

In this paper, the authors investigated the relationship between stakeholder enacted crisis communication and organisational crisis response. They employed a textual analysis and identified head coach Urban Meyer's reputation repair strategies in his four public statements regarding the Zach Smith scandal. In addition, the authors analysed 10,000 tweets from Ohio-based stakeholders to examine the extent to which stakeholders mirrored through their social media networks. Their results highlighted the behavioural patterns of stakeholders' engagement: *rallying together using the ingratiation and reminder strategies, mirroring some of Meyer's official strategies; and utilizing their strategies to attribute blame to other external parties.*

2. **Chadwick, S. (2022). From utilitarianism and neoclassical sport management to a new geopolitical economy of sport. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 22(5), 685-704.**

The author contemplated in this study whether it is time to look at sport differently in today's changing world. In more detail, he researched whether scholars should now be thinking about a new geopolitical economy of sports. In order to explore different perspectives, the author developed a commentary based on literature drawn from sport management, geography, politics, and economics. Chadwick concluded that the world, specifically sport in the twenty-first century, is encountering profound changes. Many of these changes will shape human existence for at least the next fifty years. Reasons for that included the global economic and political shifts challenging the established Western order.

3. **O'Boyle, I., Shilbury, D., & Ferkins, L. (2023). Leadership in and out of the sport boardroom: new empirical insights. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 23(1), 188-206.**

In this paper, the authors explored how intra-board leadership at the national level influences the overall leadership capacity of a federal network. They adopted a qualitative case study method and focussed on a national sport organisation within the Australian nonprofit sport industry. They conducted 12 interviews with the organisation's current and former board members to gain new insights into leadership practice within the governance of not-for-profit sport. Interviews were analysed using

an interpretive process. The authors concluded with several suggestions for future research to increase understanding and refine, test, critique, and elaborate upon the findings of their work.

4. **Karlsson, J., Bäckström, Å., Kilger, M., & Redelius, K. (2023). Looks, Liveliness, and Laughter: Visual Representations in Commercial Sports for Children. *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 16(2), 178-186.**

In sports, much attention is directed toward how media represent elite sports and sport stars. However, less attention is directed toward children's sports. The authors of this study explored and analysed visual representations of children on sport businesses' websites. To do so, the authors conducted an interpretative content and discourse analysis with a sample of 697 images of sporting children. Their findings indicated that the ideal customer is a white, physically active, able, and slim boy or girl. The authors concluded that consumer culture seems to reproduce and preserve existing normative frameworks rather than producing alternative norms and ideas about children's sport.

5. **Shulze, J., Marquez, M., & Ruvalcaba, O. (2023). The biopsychosocial factors that impact esports players' well-being: A systematic review. *Journal of Global Sport Management*, 8(2), 478-502.**

In this paper, the authors reviewed the biopsychosocial risks of participation in eSports. In doing so, they used the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines to systematically review the existing literature on risks to the well-being of amateur and professional eSports players. Their literature review surfaced several biopsychosocial risk factors associated with eSports, such as poor nutrition, caffeine supplementation, physiological arousal, injury, pain, stress, maladaptive coping, cognitive fatigue, gaming addiction, mental ill-health, harassment, and racism. These findings were used to inform support staff members and industry professionals in the eSport environment.

6. **Sveinson, K., & Hoerber, L. (2022). Fashion versus comfort: Exploring the gendered marketing messages of sport team licensed merchandise. *Journal of Sport Management*, 37(3), 165-178.**

The authors in this study explored the marketing messages of sport fan merchandise and the resulting implied gendered and fan performances. In doing so, the authors employed a multimodal critical discourse analysis. They analysed the top 20 T-shirts for men and women for five National College Athletic Association institutions on their official e-commerce sites. The authors examined the text descriptions, visual images, and messages perceived when combining text and visuals. They found that the marketing messages of clothing items rely heavily on traditional discourses of femininity and masculinity, placing gender performances as more relevant to fan

performances for women. The study concluded that atypical designs suggest alternative gender and fan performances, but they continue to indicate that gender identity is central to clothing appearance and messaging to consumers.

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# **Sport Governance and Policy**

*Dr Shushu Chen*

## **Introduction**

Sport governance and policy persist as focal points of scholarly inquiry, owing to their intricate interplay and their capacity to exert a significant societal imprint. The current section provides a nuanced synthesis of seven seminal articles, each contributing significantly to the understanding of these intricate fields. A thorough examination has been conducted of articles published in the selected journals over the past six months. From this review, seven papers have been identified and highlighted due to their strong relevance and direct contributions to the field of policy and governance. Every paper is subjected to a subject evaluation, encompassing its methodological rigour, empirical findings, and broader societal implications, thereby furnishing a multi-dimensional understanding of the complexities inherent in sport governance and policy.

These works delve into an eclectic range of topics, from the imperatives of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) within sport organisations to the exigencies of crisis management amid the COVID-19 pandemic, and from the architecture of governance to the dynamism of policy transitions and enactments. By focusing on papers that are particularly relevant to policy and governance, this review intends to offer a streamlined platform for a quick digest of the latest literature.

## **Papers Reviewed**

In an incisive exploration of policy implementation and the topic of inclusivity, Christiaens and Brittain (2021) employ a qualitative, multi-case study methodology, aiming to unpack the intricate challenges of implementing inclusion policies for



disabled people in the UK amongst non-disabled voluntary community sports clubs. The study reveals that perceptions of ableism significantly influence how inclusion is conceptualised and implemented across various sports clubs and organisations. Such perceptions, in turn, affect the willingness and ability of disabled individuals to engage in these settings. The study distils three categories of inclusion outcomes: parallel inclusion, full inclusion, and choice. It also proposes four methods that stakeholders can employ or need to consider to realise these outcomes: facilitating inclusion, removing obstacles, creating opportunities, and building mutual identity. With respect to the nuances of policy implementation, the study underscores that the actual understanding and application of inclusion policies often rest on ableist foundations, irrespective of their original aims. Therefore, it advocates for sports organisations to strategically incorporate provisions for disability and to engage directly with disabled communities, as opposed to taking a passive stance.

Also relevant to the topic of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), Peers, Joseph, Chen et al. (2023) utilise an intersectional Foucauldian framework to dissect EDI policies within Canadian National Sport Organisations. Their rigorous examination of 143 policy documents both advances theoretical paradigms and furnishes actionable insights. In their work, the authors formulated a model elucidating how EDI policies may paradoxically perpetuate the exclusions they aim to mitigate, calling for 'reproducing the status quo' and 'reproducing the excludable other'. Regarding practical applications, the research team has generated practitioner-oriented resources that not only critique existing issues but also propose viable policy alternatives. These resources have been extensively disseminated and are accessible for scholarly review at the following: <https://www.recreation-collective.com/sport-policy.html>.

Ferguson, Hassan, and Kitchin (2023) examined the factors that either facilitated or hindered the effective scaling of programme success to a broader context, focusing on the intersections between policy, community, and individual elements relevant to Sport for Development and Peace (SfD&P) in Northern Ireland. The research identifies a three-tiered pathway in the sporting sector that expands from traditional sport development to inclusive sports and then to SfD&P. It finds that unclear structures and a task-oriented approach limit the sector's potential for impactful outcomes. Furthermore, the paper finds that there's a need for a common language and framework, as disparities between policy and practice could lead to duplication and manipulation, undermining the effectiveness of measures. In terms of the implications for policy, the study suggests the need for clearer roles, responsibilities, and language to bridge the gap between policy and actual practice. The study also highlights the opportunity for renewed policy cohesion through outcomes-based strategies, especially as the public sector increasingly recognises the role of sport in achieving governmental outcomes.

Set against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, Girginov, Chen, Alhakami et al. (2023) conduct a discourse analysis to critically compare and elucidate the complexities inherent in governmental responses within the realm of sports policy of five countries – China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, the UK and the USA. The article probes into the strategies employed by national governments in leveraging policy tools to influence governance, accessibility, and consumption patterns in the sports sector during the pandemic. Despite ideological differences, all five governments under study emphasised the importance of exercise and sport for individual and societal well-being as a countermeasure to the pandemic's effects. However, this acknowledgement was not paralleled by an equivalent policy capacity

to bolster the sports sector. A discernible preference for elite sports over community-based activities was noted across all governments. The scope and limitations of governmental interventions in the sports arena are determined not solely by the degree of centralisation but also by pre-existing systemic frameworks and the government's chosen method of engagement with the sports sector. Thus, governmental responses to a crisis in the sports sector are intrinsically influenced by the established systems preceding the emergency. Their work is especially pertinent, furnishing policymakers with robust strategies for navigating complex crises.

The following three papers are relevant to the topic of sport governance.

Parent, Hoye, Taks et al. (2021) re-examine the typologies of governance design in sport organisations, focusing specifically on Canadian National Sport Organisations (NSOs). The results yield an empirically grounded taxonomy of governance design archetypes, revealing four distinct clusters—Board-led, Executive-led, Professional, and Corporate. In terms of implications, the findings enrich our understanding of the heterogeneity in NSO governance. They provide a framework for researchers to analyse changes over time in non-profit sport organisations and enable a more holistic comparison of NSOs' governance structures. For practitioners, the archetypes offer benchmarks for performance optimisation. The study also suggests that national sport funding agencies should consider this governance diversity when providing resources and guidelines for improvement.

Examining the power dynamics that influence sport governance, Stenling, Fahlén, Strittmatter et al. (2023) identify the 'gatekeepers' in the governance structures. Specifically, the authors aim to build an understanding of the operational

mechanisms of Nomination Committees in the sports sector and explore their influence on board composition. The study holds significance for its potential to illuminate the procedures that underpin power dynamics within sports organisations. Employing telephone interviews with Nomination Committees from 64 Swedish national sports organisations as its research methodology, the paper identifies six key stages in the Nomination Committees process and three critical factors—degree of formalisation, network reliance, and transparency—that could shape board composition in sports organisations. Although the study serves as a baseline and does not explore the direct impact of these aspects, it sets the stage for future research to delve into their role in shaping governance structures. Overall, the study calls for the necessity of examining governance functions within their specific institutional settings.

Lastly, Turconi and Shaw (2023) delve into the complexities inherent in governance reforms through a longitudinal case study. The focal point of the research was to scrutinise the discourses shaping the interpretation and application of the UK's Equality Standard: A Framework for Sport. The study employed discourse analysis within a critical paradigm framework. The findings indicate that while the Equality Standard offers NGBs a foundational structure for equality initiatives, it falls short in addressing the nuanced debates concerning power relations and equality. The results of the study indicate a departure from the 'zero-sum game' notion, previously critiqued by other scholars, which posited that sport leaders often view equality as attainable only by sacrificing business interests like profit. This shift in discourse suggests a possibility for a more nuanced approach to achieving equity in sport, one that harmonises social justice imperatives with business considerations.

## Conclusion

The compilation of seven papers explored in this review collectively unfurls a rich and intricate tapestry of scholarly contributions that significantly enhance our multi-dimensional grasp of sport governance and policy. Each paper distinguishes itself through its unique offerings—whether in the realm of theoretical paradigms, empirical richness, or pragmatic ramifications.

In the scope of this review, the array of methodological approaches featured in the collected papers—ranging from case-study frameworks and discourse analysis to longitudinal designs and qualitative methodologies—underscores the necessity for an interdisciplinary lens in addressing the intricate issues inherent in sport governance.

Moreover, the focus on specific, implementable suggestions throughout these papers—ranging from calls for uniform governance structures to targeted advice for crisis management, as well as customised blueprints for inclusion and nuanced strategies for policy execution—adds a tangible dimension to scholarly debates. These contributions serve as valuable guides for policymakers and practitioners, providing a balanced blend of theoretical insights and empirical evidence to support effective and just governance approaches.

## Annotated Bibliography

**Christiaens, M., & Brittain, I. (2021). The complexities of implementing inclusion policies for disabled people in UK non-disabled voluntary community sports clubs. *European Sport Management Quarterly*. DOI: 10.1080/16184742.2021.1955942**

The authors, affiliated with multiple universities, use a multi-case study approach to examine the complexities organisations face in implementing inclusion policies for disabled people in the UK. The paper provides a nuanced understanding of the practical challenges and offers a compelling case for a tailored approach to policy implementation, thereby having broad

implications for the practice of sport governance.

**Ferguson, K., Hassan, D., & Kitchin, P. (2023). Policy transition: public sector sport for development in Northern Ireland. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 15(2), 211–228. DOI: 10.1080/19406940.2023.2183976**

Researchers from various academic institutions employ longitudinal analysis to delve into the intricacies of policy transition within sport organisations in Northern Ireland. The paper identifies various factors influencing such transitions and serves as an operational guide for those involved in policy transition and implementation. It is particularly impactful for its focus on the practical implications, providing a pathway for effective policy shifts in sport governance.

**Girginov, V., Chen, S., Alhakami, F., et al. (2023). Government policy responses to Covid-19 in sport: a comparative study of China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, UK and the USA. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 15(2), 229–248. DOI: 10.1080/19406940.2023.2197001**

Researchers from various universities utilise discourse analysis within a critical paradigm to explore how five different governments responded to the Covid-19 pandemic in the sports sector. The paper navigates through the complexities of policy formulation and implementation during a crisis. It serves as a guidepost for policymakers by adding empirical depth to crisis management in sport governance, particularly in how policies are formulated and implemented during unprecedented challenges.

**Parent, M. M., Hoye, R., Taks, M., et al. (2021). National sport organisation governance design archetypes for the twenty-first century. *European Sport Management Quarterly*. DOI: 10.1080/16184742.2021.1963801**

The authors, scholars from multiple institutions, adopt a case-study approach to investigate governance structures within National Sport Organisations. They identify inconsistencies in governance designs across different organisations, and advocate for a standardised approach. The paper is particularly impactful for its two-pronged contribution: providing empirical data to inform better governance practices, and calling for a more harmonised, standardised approach to governance in sport organisations.

**Peers, D., Joseph, J., Chen, C., et al. (2023). An intersectional Foucauldian analysis of Canadian national sport organisations' 'equity, diversity, and inclusion' (EDI) policies and the reinscribing of injustice. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 15(2), 193–209. DOI: 10.1080/19406940.2023.2183975**

The authors, affiliated with multiple academic institutions, use an intersectional Foucauldian framework to analyse EDI policies within Canadian National Sport Organisations. They scrutinise 143 policy documents, focusing on the underlying governance mechanisms that shape these policies. The study provides a comprehensive database that serves as a robust platform for future research. The paper is invaluable for its dual contribution: advancing theoretical paradigms by fusing intersectionality and Foucauldian theories,

and providing actionable insights for policy formulation and implementation.

**Stenling, C., Fahlén, J., Strittmatter, A. M., & Skille, E. (2023). The gatekeepers of sport governance–nomination committees' shaping potential in national sport organisations' board composition processes. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 23(2), 586–603. DOI: 10.1080/16184742.2021.1897640**

Researchers from various institutions take a qualitative approach to identify the 'gatekeepers' in sport governance. The study fills a critical gap in the existing literature by shedding light on the power dynamics that shape governance structures. The paper is seminal for its focus on the need for transparent checks and balances within sport organisations, providing a pathway for governance reforms.

**Turconi, L., & Shaw, S. (2023). 'Turning the tanker around'. Examining the requirements, interpretations and implementation of The Equality Standard: a Framework for Sport. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 23(2), 447–466. DOI: 10.1080/16184742.2021.1879190**

The authors, affiliated with multiple academic institutions, employ a longitudinal case study to investigate the challenges and complexities of changing governance structures within sport organisations. The paper provides a comprehensive understanding of the lengthy and intricate processes involved in governance reforms. Its call for a strategic, long-term approach makes the paper an essential resource for both academic and practical applications.

# 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 first 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 1-5): 26 papers, with all 26 covering sport economics related research,

*IJSF* (V18 Issues 1 & 2): 9 papers, with all 9 covering sport economics related research,

*ESMQ* (V 23 Issues 1-3): 46 papers, with 7 covering sport economics related research,

*JSM* (V37 Issues 1&2): 25 papers, with 2 covering sport economics related research,

*SMR* (V26 Issues 1 -3): 22 papers, 2 covering sport economics related research,

*JGSM* (V8 Issues 1 & 2): 25 papers with 2 covering sport economics related research.



The forty-eight 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): 4 papers.

**Performance Analysis** (such as home advantage, tournament effects, and behavioral sport economics such as the effect of travel, home field, etc. on performance): 11 papers.

**Demand for Sport** (the determinants of stadium attendance, TV viewing): 9 papers.

**Sport and Vice** (financial analysis of sports gambling markets, effects of law and policy on sports wagering, doping and sport outcomes): 8 papers.

**Finance & Ownership** (such as the financial returns to investment sport, sport and financial markets, public finance and economic impact): 12 papers.

**Miscellaneous:** (other not classified topics such as the impact of the COVID Pandemic on various aspects of sport): 4 papers.

### **New assessments on finance and ownership in sports**

Given financial assessments, it is clear that sport leagues clubs franchises and organizations are becoming increasingly sophisticated as we move into the century's third decade. Once rather insular and archaic in terms of finance, sport has opened to more disparate investment, including foreign investors. In turn we have seen modernized financial approaches to sport, from applications to ticket sales and media contracts to opening the doors to private equity investment. In turn the value of investing in sports appears to be growing at record rates and the existing major sport leagues and organizations are the beneficiaries. Advanced finance from private equity investment in sports to innovative pricing for sport tickets reflect some of the recent research in sport economics discussed in this report.

The past two years have seen several blockbuster transactions for sports clubs and franchises, with sales price record seemingly broken with every transaction. In June 2022, the English Premier League (EPL) club Chelsea FC sold for a record \$3.1 billion to a group led by PE investor Clearlake Capital. In August 2022, a group of investors led by Walmart heir Rob Walton acquired the

Denver Broncos of National Football League (NFL) for a new record price of \$4.65 billion. In February 2023, NBA owners approved Matthew Ishbia's acquisition of the Phoenix Suns for a league-record \$4 billion, nearly double the prior mark for an NBA sale, which was \$2.35 billion that Joe Tsai paid for the Brooklyn Nets in 2019. In July 2023, an investor group led by the owner multiple professional clubs, Josh Harris, finalized the purchase of the NFL's Washington Commanders for just over \$6 billion, a nearly 30% increase over the Broncos sale price, which had been the high-water mark for a team in any sport. The 2020s have also seen an increased interest in sports leagues, clubs and organizations seeking funding from nontraditional sources, including Private Equity (PE) funders and Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF), which invests funds on behalf of the Government of Saudi Arabia.

The NFL and NBA, for example historically had only allowed individuals to own shares in teams, have now come to embrace a wider range of investors. In 2021 the NBA changed ownership rules so that PE providers may acquire up to 20 per cent of an NBA club. The PIF meanwhile invested significantly in professional golf so as to force a merger with the PGA. Additionally, the Saudi PIF have made major investments in Formula 1 racing, football and golf. They have attempted major investments at the highest levels of world football (soccer) as shown in the 2021 purchase of the EPL's Newcastle FC and a 2023 contract offer at record value to superstar Lionel Messi. The latter transaction was not completed as Messi signed with the MLS Miami club.

Moreover, there is renewed interest on the impact and associated controversies surrounding the public finance of sport facilities. The NFL Buffalo Bills, in November 2022, earned a pledge of \$850 million from the state of New York to fund a new stadium which will have a total price tag of over \$1.5 Billion. The state's share represented the largest public contribution ever for an NFL facility. However, in April 2023, the city of Nashville, Tennessee upped the public spending record with a promise of \$1.26 billion toward a new stadium for the hometown NFL Titans. This will represent the largest public subsidy for a stadium in U.S. history.

The fundamental reshaping of finance and investment in sport in the 2020s is not lost on sports economics researchers. Though none of the papers published this year directly address these most recent sport transactions more articles, a total of

twelve, published in the most recent six months were focused on finance and ownership that any other of the above listed sport economics categories.

### **Selected Article Reviews**

From the *IJSF*, Spanish economists Cordero, Corral, Gomez-Gonzalez, and Polo ask in the title: Does Foreign Investment Affect Sporting and Managerial Efficiency? The authors point out that foreign investment in European football clubs has increased in recent years, and that more than half of the clubs in England's top two divisions (EPL and Championship League) are now managed by foreign owners. The accepted hypothesis the test is that foreign owned clubs perform worse than their domestically owned rival clubs. For this paper the test is both a sporting performance evaluating how well the club performs on the field relative to expectations. And an evaluation of the club's financial performance measures (managerial efficiency). Ultimately and employing cutting edge analytical and econometric techniques the findings reveal results suggest rejecting the null hypothesis; there are not significant differences between domestic- and foreign-owned clubs in either on-field or managerial performance.

The financial tool of option pricing, well-known if not notorious in financial and commodity markets, but not until very recently familiar in sport is addressed in the February 2023 issue of *JSE*. Berkowitz and Rotthoff apply financial options theory to sports ticket markets. In this case the option is that the consumer purchasing an event ticket has the option to resell that ticket at fair market value rather than be limited to the "face value" of the ticket. This options practice has become more common with the development of the secondary ticket resale market. The more flexible pricing option for buyers increases the value of tickets at the primary sale and gives the primary buyer a more valuable asset if they choose a secondary sale. The empirical results find that the use of pre-sale options in the primary market increases club profits, as they increase primary prices for the more valuable commodity. However, they also find that this strategy also increases consumer utility—making both parties to the transaction better off. Thus, the efficiency gains and profit gains make *incorporating options* with selling, as opposed to just selling, an optimal strategy.

To segue from private to public finance we consider the *JSM* article *The Utility of Including Regular Sport Team Events in Event Portfolios* by Australian researchers Sobral, Fairley, and O'Brien. The authors put forth that *event portfolios* are used by local destination managers manage their community's collection of events. However, sport events such as those played by professional sport teams in a sport league are not typically included in event portfolios. Employing qualitative methods, the authors find that teams and events (asset components) can and may well contribute to achieving the local event portfolio's objectives. They assert that sport teams and events provide content and regular communications with key target markets.

The economic impact of stadiums and sport events, or the lack thereof, has been a staple of sports economic research since the 1990s. Routinely the economic analysis finds little evidence that sports stadiums or events drive economic development in a city or region. Nonetheless, the topic continues to receive attention as evidenced by Salgado-Barandela, Barajas, and Sanchez-Fernandez article in the *IJSF*. They consider a novel facet to this research by studying whether economic impact of a sport event is different in small cities. It has been deliberated that a major event in a small city may put that location "on the map" and result in greater than normal economic impacts for smaller cities hosting events. But is this actually true? A key component of economic impact is that money earned at an event is the spent and then re-spent within the host community creating the important multiplier effect (also known as indirect spending) of economic impact. Leakages— that is the money earned at an event that is re-spent outside the host city or region— are a critical factor in EI analysis, as leakages, especially first round leakages, reduce the multiplier's value. The authors suggest that small population cities are more susceptible to leakages, because they have less commerce and thus spending opportunities than larger cities. Using a case study as the analytical tool, a comparison was made between a small city that hosted basketball and kickboxing events, and an adjacent larger city. The results confirmed the hypothesis and identified higher-than-average attendee expenditure in the larger and more developed city which is adjacent to the host city. Overall, the current case study highlighted the importance of considering the existence of leakages thus multipliers may be overstated and the idea that smaller cities may have an economic development advantage in hosting events, may in fact be exaggerated.

Last, Geoffrey Propheter offers a paper somewhat more favorable to the development potential of stadiums. He tests the *facility amenity theory*, which suggests when a team or club moves to a new facility real estate values (home prices) rise near the new facility and likewise drop in the vicinity of the former venue. Increasing real estate values are positive in that they may increase property tax revenue for the city. A case study in the San Francisco Bay area where the NBA's Warriors moved from Oakland to a new arena in the Mission Bay neighborhood in the city of San Francisco was employed. Propheter found some evidence, when Euclidean not walking distance is used to determine proximity to the stadium. He found that with that specification of distance, home values did rise in near the new arena Mission Bay. This his results though hardly overwhelming, to support the facility amenity theory. Oakland neighborhoods near the former arena, The Oakland Coliseum were not examined to see if home prices fell in those neighborhoods. All in all his results are not a particularly convincing argument for the benefits of public stadium finance.

Finance is becoming increasingly important in sport. As the value of sport products escalates, so does the demand for more and better financing opportunities, and more sophisticated methods of finance. Doubtless the events of the past year including record sales transactions for clubs, surges in foreign investors, and stadium finance will continue to draw the attention of sports economics experts.

### **Annotated bibliography**

1. Cordero, J.M., del Corral, J., Gomez-Gonzalez, C., and Polo, C. (2023) Does Foreign Investment Affect Sporting and Managerial Efficiency? The Case of English Football Clubs *International Journal of Sport Finance*. 18 (2) 71–83.

**Abstract:** The number of foreign owners in football clubs has recently increased in Europe and especially in England. This study aims to analyze whether clubs owned by foreign investors show different parameters of sporting and managerial efficiency. We use data on expected performance (from betting odds), wage costs, and the results of football clubs in the English Premier League (EPL) and English Football League Championship (EFL) over 13 seasons. We estimate different measures of efficiency using three alternative methods: expected vs. actual performance index, nonparametric conditional data envelopment analysis (DEA), and stochastic frontier,

while considering foreign ownership as an exogenous factor. Our results suggest that there are not significant differences between domestic- and foreign-owned clubs.

2. Berkowitz, J.P., and Rotthoff, K.W. (2023). Real Options Applied to Consumer Goods: Maximizing Profits and Fan Welfare. *Journal of Sports Economics*. 24 (2) 139-158.

**Abstract:** The use of pre-sale options for tickets is underutilized in sports. In this study, we show that the use of pre-sale options increases profits, but also increases consumer utility— making both parties better off. Thus, the efficiency gains and profit gains make incorporating options with advanced selling, as opposed to just advanced selling, an optimal strategy. Through this ticket pricing strategy, the organizer can realize a significant increase in profits from a separating equilibrium pricing strategy while simultaneously consumer welfare increases as fans know, with certainty, they have tickets to the game if their team participates. If these options were offered by participants instead of the organizer it also allows the participant to smooth their revenues over time.

3. Propheter, G. (2023). Sports Facilities as a Housing Amenity: Do Prices Follow Facilities? *Journal of Sports Economics*. 24 (4) 443-474.

**Abstract:** The sports facility amenity theory predicts that when facility sites change, home prices nearer the prior site decline while home prices nearer the new site increase. Using home sales data in the vicinity of two proposed facility sites for the Golden State Warriors in San Francisco, the data are generally supportive of the amenity theory. The study also shows that Euclidean and walking distance can yield dissimilar treatment effect sizes, thus compelling researchers to justify their distance measurement choice. Finally, the data provide weak support that home buyers respond to changes in facility re-designs towards increased public benefits.

4. Salgado-Barandela, J., Barajas, A., and Sanchez-Fernandez, P. (2023). Geographical Distribution of Economic Impact: Sporting Events in Small Cities. *International Journal of Sport Finance*. 18 (2), 45–53.

**Abstract:** There are limitations in determining the economic impact of sporting events that need to be considered. One of these is represented by first-round leakages. This work focuses on explaining first-round leakages in the economic impact of sporting events on small cities. Seeking to identify this type of leakage, we estimated the spatial distribution of the economic impact of two small-sized events organized in a town with a population of 24,248 inhabitants. The results showed a first-round leakage exceeding €300,000 and identified higher average attendee expenditure in a more developed city adjacent to the host city. Moreover, an exploratory analysis concerning the influence of leakage in final spending was performed. Finally, the elements that would increase the probability of leakage were studied. Overall, the current case study highlighted the importance of considering the existence of leakage.

5. Sobral, V., Fairley, S., and O'Brien, D. (2023) The Utility of Including Regular Sport Team Events in Event Portfolios. *Journal of Sport Management*. 37 (1). 15-26.

**Abstract:** Event portfolios are a useful way for destination managers to holistically manage their community's collection of events and, through strategic integration and common objectives, more effectively produce benefits. However, regular sport events such as those played by professional sport teams in a sport league have received little attention from event portfolio managers and researchers. Understanding the value and utility of sport team event assets can inform the successful integration of these events into event portfolios. This research used qualitative methods to examine how team asset components can contribute to achieving event portfolio objectives. The results have significance for event tourism researchers and practitioners and demonstrate that contributions are largely founded on the focal professional sport league structure, which provides constant content and regular communications with key target markets. Analysis of the findings led to the development of a model on the utility of including team events in an event portfolio.





## Sport Leadership

Zack J. Damon

### Introduction

This edition of Sport Management Digest's Sport Leadership section includes a total of four articles. There is one article each from *Sport Management Review* (SMR), *Journal of Sport Management* (JSM), *Journal of Global Sport Management* (JGSM), and *European Sport Management Quarterly* (ESMQ). Each article deals directly with a leadership-based research context or theory, or investigates those in leadership positions, such as coaches.

The current compilation of articles offers a mostly qualitative approach to studying leadership as three out of the four articles used a qualitative methodology. While the articles primarily used qualitative approaches, they did span three different countries: including the US, Netherlands, and Australia. Kang and Svensson (2023) used an interpretative qualitative design with semi-structured interviews while also examining the content of documents related to their context; a US based sport-for-development (SFD) organization. O'Boyle et al. (2023) performed a qualitative case study with a focus on current and former board members of an Australian nonprofit sport organization. Next, Saxe et al. (2023) also used an interpretative qualitative design to explore occupational turnover among former US National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) Division I swim coaches. The final article in the current collection used various quantitative techniques to develop a scale aimed to measure shared leadership in the youth sport context in the Netherlands (van Daltsen et al. 2023). While the current articles skew mostly as qualitative in nature, the cultural contexts that were examined offer a broad array around the world. As detailed above, the contexts included in the current collection include Australia nonprofit sport organization, US SFD organization, the Netherlands youth sport context, and the NCAA Division I context, illustrating a variety of cultural contexts across the world.

The following section provides a discussion on the highlights of each reviewed paper with synthesis to each other or the greater sport leadership research stream where appropriate.

### Advances in Sport Leadership Research

Saxe et al. (2023) applied the Transtheoretical Model of Change (TTM) in a novel approach to understanding sport employees' experience of occupational turnover, with a specific aim towards NCAA Division I swim coaches. While the TTM had been utilized in the health behavior and management disciplines for a variety of applications (Grant, 2010; Pennington, 2022), its primary use in sport has revolved around understanding fan attendance (Musgrave et al., 2021) and an athlete's decision and process to retire from a sport (Park et al., 2012). Since the TTM had been successfully applied in these previous contexts and given its framework to

better understand an individual's processes and decision-making thinking behind a significant behavior change, it proved to be an appropriate framework for Saxe and colleagues to use in understanding coaches' voluntary turnover.

Through semi-structured interviews, Saxe et al. (2023) carried out an interpretive qualitative design to gather insights from former Division I swim coaches. Through a thematic analysis process of the data, they found that the coaches carried out the TTM's sequence of: precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, and maintenance. However, a valuable contribution from Saxe and colleagues' work is the discovery of a "tipping point" part of the TTM sequence after contemplation and before preparation. While the authors noted that each coach took a different timeline to work through the sequence of the TTM in their turnover process, the tipping point provided unique insight into why a coach would leave their role, especially after having been in the role for considerable time. The tipping point boiled down to an aspect in the decision-making process for the participants in the contemplation phase where "they could or would no longer endure the aforementioned frustrations they experienced in the contemplation phase" (Saxe et al., 2023, p. 264). Often, the frustrations would be homed in by the participants after their season with corresponding emotions intensifying over time. The reasons for the frustration spanned multiple factors for each participant, such as family issues or priorities, a breaking point in coaching, missing major life events, and desperation for a change. Both theoretical and practical implications from Saxe et al.'s. (2023) work shed light on using the TTM in future research to understand the behavior of coaches and other sport leaders, particularly related to leaving their roles. A key practical implication is realizing that others in similar positions have gone through and will go through phases of the TTM as stressors related to the coaching profession intensify. Thus, those supervising coaches would be well-served to communicate better with their coaches about life situations as well as seek out ways to improve coaching conditions and help minimize tipping points, which lead to the voluntary occupation turnover.

While Saxe et al. (2023) concentrated on adult coaches, van Dalftsen et al. (2023) studied youth football players (under the age of 17 years old) in the Netherlands to better understand shared leadership at the youth level while also having developed the Youth Athlete Shared Leadership (YASL) scaled. As the only quantitative based study in the current edition, van Dalftsen et al. (2023) not only advanced a new scale but also one in an area of shared leadership, which continues to emerge in both management leadership (Day et al., 2006) and sport management leadership (Billsberry et al., 2018). Further, another unique aspect of van Dalftsen and colleagues' work is the emphasis to understanding the antecedents of shared leadership at the youth sport participant level. Conversely, much of the shared leadership work around sport had been centered on adult team or management contexts (van Dalftsen et al., 2023).

Having used the Shared Professional Leadership Inventory for Team (SPLIT) created by Grille and Kauffeld (2015) and the Six Natural Leaders Questionnaire (SNLQ) by Van Vugt and Ahuja (2011) as the foundation for their work, van Dalftsen et al. (2023) were able to adopt these to the youth football context in the

Netherlands. After both exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were performed on the data as well as related analyses to ensure validity and robust testing, van Dalen and colleagues' results illustrated three factors to comprise the YASL: steering, coaching, and intervening. The steering factor included aspects centered on communication among the group to make sure tasks were completed, traditions of the group were upheld, and ensuring that new members knew the group's norms. The coaching factor consisted of the notion of support from player-to-player, helping each other handle conflicts, and not letting each other down. Lastly, the intervening factor centered on communication in the team related to solving any confrontations and having open communication about what is desired and what is not desired. van Dalen et al's. (2023) novel work to quantify shared leadership at the youth sport level allows future researchers to continue to explore the phenomenon at this level and use the YASL as a way to examine shared leadership's influence on a variety of youth sport outcomes. From a practical standpoint, this work allows coaches of youth sport teams to recognize the need to allow all players opportunities to share in the leadership responsibility, not just the formal leaders while recognizing that traditional hierarchical leadership structures may not be the best suited.

Continuing with the study of shared leadership in sport, Kang and Svensson (2023) examined its benefits and challenges in the SFD context. Specifically, Kang and Svensson (2023) performed a qualitative study with semi-structured interviews along with analysis of the SFD organization's documents. Kang and Svensson (2023) noted similar needs as van Dalen et al. (2023) did in regard to a greater emphasis on understanding shared leadership's role in the sport leadership realm. However, Kang and Svensson (2023) also noted how the SFD context has grown considerably in recent years and thus, a greater need for understanding the leadership processes and constructs in the SFD context to keep up with the growth. Further, a key benefit of Kang and Svensson's recent work is how it built off of previous research, which had called for additional work on investigating how a collaborative approach to leadership in SFD organizations can help them navigate leadership challenges (Kang & Svensson, 2019). This current work specifically looked to find out how SFD leaders perceived a shared leadership approach, and what challenges or benefits such an approach provided for the organization.

Through their findings of analyzing 30 semi-structured interviews and SFD documents, Kang and Svensson (2023) uncovered five themes related to the benefits of shared leadership in SFD: collective impact, network capacity, collective learning, shared responsibilities, and cohesion. These themes illustrated the ways in which a non-hierarchical leadership approach specifically benefitted or improved the leadership process in the US SFD organizations in the study. The themes which emerged related to the potential challenges of shared leadership in SFD were challenging leadership dynamics, a lack of understanding what shared leadership is, inconsistent quality of leadership engagement, and various levels of information sharing throughout the organization. Kang and Svensson's (2023) findings show the push versus pull type of effect at play as the SFD organizations in their study weigh the benefits of shared leadership against the challenges. While some participants noted the positive to sharing in the leadership responsibilities and increasing the

leadership network's capacity, these were also confounded by worry over the challenges related to those in leadership positions and the power dynamics in the current setup as well as those who may be unaware of shared leadership compared to the traditional leadership styles and models currently in place. Implications from this work span both practical and research areas. For practical implications a key note is how shared leadership offers tangible benefits and not ones that would have zero impact on improving SFD practitioners' work. On the research side of implications, Kang and Svensson noted the need to expand who is captured in data collection as leaders in SFD organizations from different levels or from different areas may view the benefits and challenges of shared leadership differently.

The last article in the current edition centers on leadership among a governing board in an Australian nonprofit sport board. O'Boyle et al. (2023) performed 12 semi-structured interviews to gain insights into the relationship between intra-board leadership at a national board level to the leadership capacity across a federal network (inter-board). Similar to the previously noted shared leadership, O'Boyle and colleagues integrated collective leadership in their framework. Collective leadership spawns from a social construction of leadership approach (Billsberry et al., 2018) while also spanning a multilevel process approach to leadership (Welty Peachey et al., 2015), and along with previous leadership research on governing boards in Australia, provided a context-specific framework for this case study. Through the thematic analysis of their data, O'Boyle et al. (2023) found four main themes emerged: leadership roles of the board, intra-board collective leadership, inter-board collective leadership, and leadership behaviors and actions across individuals and organizationally.

Expanded findings related to the above themes included an ambiguous understanding of what leadership roles in sport governance boards pertain to beyond the fundamental functions of the governance board itself. O'Boyle et al. (2023) also found that collective leadership did not always span across the network compared to the intra-board collective leadership. This resulted in stunted growth of collective leadership culture at the inter-board network. Ultimately, a significant benefit of O'Boyle and colleagues' (2023) work is the advancements made to the working model of leadership in non-profit sport governance put forth by O'Boyle et al., 2019. The specific refinements to the model include a need to distinguish the roles on the boards between governance roles and leadership roles. Further refinement included the need to trust and share information across both intra and inter-board contexts. Specifically, sharing information would increase trust across the boards and help embed collective leadership across board members. Lastly, O'Boyle et al. (2023) offered refinement to the previous model based on their current case study to emphasize four leadership theory underpinnings to continue to explore in future research: leader-member exchange, shared leadership, collective leadership, and facilitative leadership. Each of these four theoretical underpinnings would help address areas of growth of understanding in future iterations of the model, such as interpersonal relationships through leader-member exchange, which could positively address the issue of inter-board collective leadership following intra-board collective leadership.

## Conclusion

Overall, the current collection of articles offered a focus primarily on emerging areas of leadership in sport as it relates to shared leadership. Three of the four articles incorporated shared or collective leadership as the main sport leadership theory, which may signal a continued shift of research focus in the field away from the traditional leadership styles to these emerging theories and approaches to incorporate non-formal leadership positions into leadership practice. The work of O'Boyle et al. (2023) related to governance boards in Australia denotes the importance of how understanding leadership within governance structures and duties will shape how an entire country's sport governance and leadership network work together from board to board. Kang and Svensson (2023) and van Dalfsen et al. (2023) furthered the emphasis on shared leadership across US SFD contexts and youth sport in the Netherlands, respectively. Both studies added significant information to the growing sport management shared leadership foundation and no doubt will be building blocks for future research in this area. Lastly, Saxe et al. (2023) delved into the voluntary turnover phenomenon of US NCAA Division I swim coaches; a key topic as turnover across multiple sport organizations and levels of leadership continues to be a troubling issue as societies continue to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic and working conditions are evaluated by employers and employees alike in sport.

## Annotated Bibliography

*Kang, S., & Svensson, P. G. (2023). The benefits and challenges of shared leadership in sport for development and peace collaboratives. Sport Management Review, 26(3), 383-404. DOI: 10.1080/14413523.2022.2085430*

Researchers from the US explored the concept of shared leadership within sport-for-development organizations in the US. Through a qualitative approach with semi-structured interviews, themes related to benefits and challenges of shared leadership in the sport-for-development organizational context emerged. Themes related to benefits included collective impact, network capacity, collective learning, shared responsibilities, and cohesion while themes related to challenges were challenging leadership dynamics, a lack of understanding what shared leadership is, inconsistent quality of leadership engagement, and various levels of information sharing throughout the organization.

*O'Boyle, I., Shilbury, D., & Ferkins, L. (2023). Leadership in and out of the sport boardroom: New empirical insights. European sport management quarterly, 23(1), 188-206. DOI: 10.1080/16184742.2020.1838591*

Researchers from Australia investigated collective leadership in Australian nonprofit sport governance boards. Through a qualitative approach with semi-structured interviews, their findings included intra-board collective leadership

potentially being disconnected from inter-board collective leadership from governance board to governance board throughout the federation. Such a disconnect can lead to issues in trust and communication. However, the study advanced a previous model which detailed the integration of various leadership theories to Australian sport governance boards.

*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.*

Researchers from the US took to studying voluntary turnover of sport employees at the US NCAA Division I level. Specifically, the study looked at former Division I swim coaches and concluded that a new tipping point phase in the Transtheoretical Model of Change to be a key finding in why and how sport employees voluntarily leave their positions. While the rest of the model's phases were also found, this tipping point phase is one that provides a foundation for future research to expand beyond Division I swim coaches.

*Van Dalfsen, G., Van Hoecke, J., Westerbeek, H., & De Bosscher, V. (2023). The development of a scale to measure shared leadership in youth sport. Journal of Global Sport Management, 8(1), 73-94.*

Researchers in the Netherlands examined the notion of shared leadership in youth football across teams in the Netherlands. Using previous scales that individually studied aspects of teams and leadership, respectively, the researchers were able to combine items and statistically validate them as a new scale to measure and assess youth shared leadership in sport. The YASL provides further insight into the growing body of literature related to shared leadership in sport, with a novel approach to examine it at the youth sport level.

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Kang, S., & Svensson, P. G. (2019). Shared leadership in sport for development and peace: A conceptual framework of antecedents and outcomes. *Sport Management Review*, 22(4), 464–476.

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Kang, S., & Svensson, P. G. (2023). The benefits and challenges of shared leadership in sport for development and peace collaboratives. *Sport Management Review*, 26(3), 383-404.

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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.

Van Dalfsen, G., Van Hoecke, J., Westerbeek, H., & De Bosscher, V. (2023). The development of a scale to measure shared leadership in youth sport. *Journal of Global Sport Management*, 8(1), 73-94.

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## Sport Marketing and Sponsorship

*Dongfeng Liu*

### Introduction

At least 39 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 first half of 2023. These publications come from 5 different journals, and IJSMS is the journal with the most publications (17) followed by ESMQ (8 articles). Additionally, both JSM and JGSM have five publications, and SMR has four.

### Advances in Sport Marketing and Sponsorship

Table 1 captures the variety of topics and themes addressed by the 39 articles and it can be seen that the majority of these publications (31) 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 new context such as Esports and environment continuing to grow. With respect to sport sponsorship, articles continued to be published on topic areas related to sponsorship mechanisms, sponsorship effectiveness, sponsorship evaluation, ambush marketing, corporate social responsibility (CSR), etc.

**Table 1. Selected Publication in Sport Marketing and Sponsorship**

Areas	Topics	Author(s)	Quantity
Sport marketing (31)	Athlete branding	Liu, Baker III & Leopkey (2003)	1
	Brand communication	Sears, Cianfrone & Kellison (2003)	1
		Aicher, Heere, Odio & Ferguson (2003)	
	Consumer behavior	Kim, Lopez & Drayer (2003)	
Sveinson & Toffoletti (2003)			
Sveinson & Hoerber (2003)			
		Glaveli, Papadimitriou, Karagiorgos & Alexandris (2003)	10

	Jones, Byon, Williams & Pedersen (2003)	
	Wang & Chiu (2003)	
	Kim, Park & Yoon (2003)	
	Dart (2003)	
	Park & Lee (2003)	
Environment protection and fan behavior	Kellison & Cianfrone (2003) Cayolla, Escadas, Biscaia, Kellison, Quintela & Santos (2003)	2
Esports (consumer behavior)	Lefebvre, Djaballah & Chanavat (2003)* Rietz & Hallmann (2003)* Chou, Jang, Ma, Chang & Byon (2003)*	3
Fan behavior	Qian, Matz, Luo & Zvosec (2003) Asada & Kob (2003) Schellenberg & Gaudreau (2003) Tinson, Sinclair & Gordon (2003) Sun, Chien & Weeks (2003) Uhrich, Behrens, Kang, Matsuoka & Uhlendorf (2003) Kim & Manoli (2003) Latypova & Matsuoka (2003) White, Williams, Dwyer & White (2003) Kinoshita & Matsuoka (2003)	10
Service quality review	Biscaia, Yoshida & Kim (2003)	1
Sport advertisements	Brison, Baker III, Byon & Evans (2003)	1
Sporting event giveaway items	Asada & Arai (2003)	1

	Sports betting	Dwyer, Shapiro & Drayer (2003)	1
Sport sponsorship (8)	Ambush marketing	Lin, Chen, Chou & Yeh (2003)	1
	CSR	Herold, Harrison & Bukstein (2003)	1
	Sponsorship mechanism (Esport)	Huettermann, Trail, Pizzo & Stallone (2003)*	
		Hwang, Watanabe & Nagel (2003)*	3
		Schönberner & Woratschek (2003)	
	Sponsorship effectiveness	Dos Santos, Sánchez-Franco, Torres-Moraga & Moreno (2003)	1
	Sponsorship evaluation	Jensen, Wakefield & Walkup (2003)	1
	Value co-creation	Cook, Biscaia, Papadas, Simkin & Carter (2003)	1
Total			39

**Note:** \* refers to articles reviewed in detail.

With the rise of Esports and its growing economic and social influence, academic research around it has also seen steady growth in recent years. This issue will focus on this emerging sport and five studies related to marketing and sponsorship of Esports will be reviewed in detail.

In the first paper, Rietz and Hallmann (2023) conducted a systematic review on Esports to evaluate motivation and intention in online and on-site spectatorship. Based on an in-depth analysis of 25 empirical studies examining Esports spectatorship, the review showed significant antecedents for motivation to watch Esports online and on-site, and the detected motives may differ between motivation to spectate traditional sports or Esports and within Esports, but not all studies concluded similarities.

While the first article examines Esports from a spectator's perspective, the second one focuses on players behaviour. Based on a online survey study with data collected from adult Esports players from China's Taiwan, Chou, et al (2023) seek to

explore flow and clutch together to measure psychological states and the impact on the purchase intention of in-game items, as well as the interacting effects of playing frequency, duration, and skill level with technical platforms (i.e. PC and mobile). The results show that, across PC and mobile participants, casual gamers with low playing frequency and duration have firm purchase intention when they have a clutch experience, but flow experience hinders their purchasing intention. In addition, hardcore gamers' (with high playing frequency and duration) psychological states are clearly distinguished according to technological platforms, as flow experience is the most effective on PC for their purchase intention, while both flow and clutch states are important on mobile devices.

In the third article, Lefebvre et al. (2023) conducted a thematic analysis to analyse how Esports divisions of professional clubs can be deployed, with data collected through semi-structured interviews with managers responsible for Esports activities with 28 professional clubs from 24 countries. They identified the specific dynamic capabilities DCs, internal (i.e. microfoundations) and external factors which enable the deployment of Esports strategies. They also describe the outcomes for each step of the deployment process, which leads to the building of a preliminary model of professional football clubs' involvement in Esports.

The final two articles studied Esports under sponsorship context. In their article published in IJSMS, Hwang et al.(2023) aim to examine the impacts of brand congruity of in-game brand placement on Esports consumers' implicit and explicit memory. Using an experimental design (N =224) with an automobile racing game, NASCAR Heat 5. the study revealed that ads on virtual billboards in the video game primed participants to create an implicit memory. In addition, in-congruent brands that were not very familiar to gamers provided greater impact than congruent brands.

In the final article, Huettermann et al. (2023) seek to evaluate Esports consumers' perceptions of non-endemic sponsorship by adapting a well established sport sponsorship model to the context of Esports to test key relationships' salience to sponsors. They find that nonendemic sponsors can benefit from Esports team sponsorship through enhanced attitudes, perceived goodwill, and product purchase intentions. In addition, the study shows that there is only a small effect of Esports brand attitude on attitude toward the sponsor, yet a larger effect on perceived goodwill and product purchase intentions.

Despite growing scholarly work devoted to Esports, there are still fundamental questions about how the field is unfolding (Reitman et al., 2020), and it remains an area with great research opportunities. Future studies around marketing and sponsorship of Esports should continue to explore the differences between Esports and traditional sports and advance our understanding of the uniqueness of this emerging sport (if it can be called a sport).

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Reitman, J., Anderson-Coto, M., Wu, M., Lee, J. and Steinkuehler, C. (2020). Esports Research: A Literature Review. *Games and Culture* 15 (1): 32-50.

## Annotated bibliography

**Lefebvre, F., Djaballah, M., & Chanavat, N. (2023). The deployment of professional football clubs' Esports strategies: a dynamic capabilities approach. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2020.1856165>**

In this study, Lefebvre, Djaballah, and Chanavat (2023) investigate the deployment of Esports strategies by professional football clubs through the lens of the dynamic capabilities (DC) framework. The researchers address the gap in understanding how football brands can effectively leverage Esports activities. Employing a qualitative approach, the study involves a thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with managers responsible for Esports activities across 28 professional clubs from 24 countries. The findings highlight the essential internal and external factors that facilitate the deployment of Esports strategies. The study also outlines the strategic objectives emerging from the sensing phase, the strategic choices clubs made to

seize Esports opportunities, and the creation of new value sources. The implications emphasize the need for Esports managers to precisely define their strategic objectives, optimize resource allocation (including Esports players), and integrate Esports more cohesively into the core value chain of football clubs. This study contributes to a preliminary model for professional football clubs' engagement in the Esports domain.

**Huettermann, M., Trail, G. T., Pizzo, A. D., & Stallone, V. (2023). Esports sponsorship: An empirical examination of Esports consumers' perceptions of non-endemic sponsors. *Journal of Global Sport Management*, 8(2), 524–549. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24704067.2020.1846906>**

Huettermann, Trail, Pizzo, and Stallone (2023) explore the effectiveness of sponsorships by non-endemic organizations within the Esports domain. By adopting a sports sponsorship model developed by Biscaia et al. to the context of Esports, the researchers aim to evaluate the relationships between Motivation for Sport Consumption and Purchase Intention to Sponsor Products. Through empirical examination of 382 participants, the study reveals that non-endemic sponsors stand to gain from sponsoring Esports teams, leading to improved Esports brand attitudes, perceived goodwill, and intentions for product purchase. Notably, the study identifies a limited effect of Esports brand attitude on sponsor attitude but a more substantial influence on purchase intentions. This finding suggests that firms with restricted marketing budgets can harness increased goodwill and purchase intentions by engaging in low-cost sponsorship opportunities with emerging Esports teams. Overall, the study contributes valuable insights into the dynamics of Esports sponsorships and highlights potential benefits for non-endemic sponsors in the rapidly evolving Esports landscape.

**Rietz, J., & Hallmann, K. (2023). A systematic review on spectator behavior in Esports: why do people watch? *International Journal of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship*, 24(1), 38–55. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijms-12-2021-0241>**

Rietz and Hallmann (2023) present a comprehensive systematic review for investigating spectator behavior, offering insights into the psychology of consumer behavior in both Esports live streaming and event attendance and providing a clear understanding of the factors influencing consumer behavior in both online and on-

site engagement in the rapidly growing field of Esports. Employing the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Protocols (PRISMA), the researchers chose SCOPUS and Google Scholar as the social science databases for data collection. Twenty-five papers met the inclusion criteria, the majority taking quantitative approaches, establishing theoretical frameworks to examine online Esports spectatorship. The findings reveal significant motivators for engaging with Esports content, including fanship, tension release, entertainment, escapism, and unique features like chat and direct communication. Despite the extensive analysis, no conclusive consensus emerges regarding the distinctions between online, on-site Esports and traditional sports spectatorship. The authors suggest the potential for a comparative approach to explore contextual, structural, and demographic cues that may result in an improved grasp of the motivation behind Esports spectatorship.

**Hwang, Y., Watanabe, N. M., & Nagel, M. (2023). Effects of in-game brand congruity on Esports consumers' implicit and explicit memory. *International Journal of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship*, 24(1), 108–128. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijsms-03-2022-0085>**

Hwang, Watanabe, and Nagel (2023) explore the impact of in-game brand congruity on implicit and explicit memory among Esports consumers. Employing a 2x2x2 experimental design with NASCAR Heat 5, an automobile racing game, the research engages 224 participants in assessing the effects of brand congruity on memory. The authors utilize the statistical analyses of MANOVA and logistic regressions to test hypotheses. The findings reveal that advertisements on virtual billboards in video games prime participants to develop implicit memory. Surprisingly, incongruent brands unfamiliar to gamers demonstrate a more pronounced impact than congruent brands. This study contributes novel insights by being the first to examine implicit and explicit memory in the Esports domain. Furthermore, the research addresses previous inconsistencies by investigating the role of brand congruity. However, future research should further consider the effects of time duration, ethnicity, gender, and the generalization of findings on causal inference.

**Chou, S., Jang, W., Chun, S., Chang, C., & Byon, K. K. (2023). Is mobile gaming a new pillar of Esports? Exploring players' in-game purchases in PC and mobile platforms by using flow and clutch. *International Journal of Sports***



**Marketing & Sponsorship, 24(2), 311–332. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijms-07-2022-0134>**

Chou, Jang, Chun, Chang, and Byon (2023) utilize flow theory to examine the interaction effects of playing frequency, playing duration, and players' skill levels on both PC (League of Legends - LOL) and mobile (League of Legends: Wild Rift - LOLWR) versions of the same Esports title. Based on data collected from 930 valid responses, the researchers employ confirmatory factor analysis and multiple regression (PROCESS macro, Model 3) for analysis. The study yields two significant findings. First, for both PC and mobile participants, casual gamers with low playing frequency and duration demonstrate a high intention to make in-game purchases when they experience a clutch scenario. However, the flow experience impedes their purchase intention. Second, hardcore gamers with high playing frequency and duration display distinct psychological states across platforms. For the PC platform, flow experience significantly influences purchase intention, while both flow and clutch states have a pronounced influence on purchase intention in the mobile platform. It is worth noting that further studies should distinguish the concepts of flow and clutch through more refined and precise measurements.

# Sport Management Ethics and Integrity

Andy Harvey

## 1. Introduction

Six papers are included in this review. Two papers examine the ongoing issue of anti-doping in sport. One article discusses emerging proposals to establish Sports Integrity Agencies. Under the theme of equalities, one paper looks at homophobia in sport and a second paper examines racism in sport. A final article reviews the current state of academic knowledge in respect to online hate.

In this review, two articles are drawn from each of *Communication and Sport*, the *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, and *Sport Management Review*. Scholars included in the review are working in Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

## 2. Anti-doping

Doping remains a critical problem for sports ethics and integrity and anti-doping research and scholarship has often followed the priorities of the World Anti-Doping Authority (WADA) and national anti-doping bodies. These have included changes to the World Anti-Doping Code in 2021 and the consequent emphasis on investigations, sanctions and preventative measures, including biological passports. It is therefore welcome that some researchers are working outside these parameters to investigate other important aspects of anti-doping for sports management. Two articles published in the *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics* take, as the subjects of their research, actors who are often overlooked in the anti-doping literature.

Martinelli *et al* (2023) report on research funded by the European Union's Erasmus + programme that has been derived from a ten-year research plan, turning their attention to how self-described 'clean athletes' perceive their own representation and support within the anti-doping system. The purpose of the study examined the ways that clean athletes have been and continue to be personally affected by doping and anti-doping measures. Using a secondary qualitative analysis, the following research question was identified: 'in what ways are clean athletes personally affected by others' actual or suspected instances of doping and anti-doping rule violations, and by aspects of the anti-doping system?' (p. 6). The secondary analysis, an emerging qualitative research technique, was conducted on a multinational parent dataset which examined issues around the meaning of 'clean sport' and the idea of the 'clean athlete'. The study is welcome since it focuses on what ought to be one set of beneficiaries of the anti-doping system – i.e., those athletes that play by the rules.

Using Braun and Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis, the study found that clean athletes felt that they continued to be harmed through co-existence with dopers. This harm included being denied some of the material gains of sport, such as medals and

prize money. A fascinating aspect of this harm was the unrealistic standards that clean athletes set themselves, and the sense of failure they experienced, as they attempt to compete with other athletes who later turned out to be cheating. The research also found that the anti-doping system itself was not geared toward supporting clean athletes but 'was more regularly experienced as unfair, demanding, inflexible, non-cooperative, and even unsafe' (11). A final theme was that clean athletes experienced significant anxiety in terms of following the rules especially around inadvertent ingestion of a banned substance. Nevertheless, they also expressed a strong desire for the rules to be applied with zero tolerance for any breaches, suggesting that many athletes are somewhat conflicted on this aspect of the anti-doping regime.

In the same edition, Shelley *et al* (2023) investigate anti-doping in elite long distance running from the perspective of agents, sponsors and event organisers, asking the question as to whose job it is to prevent doping offences in the sport. Also using qualitative reflexive thematic analysis to understand the data collected from agents (n=8), race organisers (n=3) and major brand sponsors (n=2) they found that not all commercial sponsors felt responsible for anti-doping measures. Addressing a significant gap in the literature, the specific research questions asked: "1) How is doping in elite distance running perceived by the agents, race organisers, and sponsors who work in the sport?, 2) What actions are taken by the agents, race organisers, and sponsors to influence doping-risk in distance running?, and 3) What future actions could be taken by agents, race organisers, and sponsors to further influence doping-risk in distance running" (p.27). The results of the analysis of the interview data were organised into three main themes. Firstly, the importance of the environmental framework of elite distance running and the contexts in which it takes place and attendant doping risks. Secondly, how long-distance athletes are recruited by agents into the sport was considered critical. Particular criticism was made of agents with funding from major sponsors who did not undertake due diligence in the recruitment of young runners or did not monitor or mentor them effectively. Thirdly, the research participants believed that they had a significant degree of first-hand knowledge and experience with doping cases and anti-doping polices which could be put to good use to help prevent doping violations.

### **3. Sports Integrity Agencies**

Demands for overarching sports integrity agencies to oversee and coordinate the fight against corruption and to promote and protect sports integrity have grown much stronger over the past year. For example, Play the Game, a Danish-based organization that promotes democracy, transparency and freedom of expression in sport, has recently published an experts' report that calls for a global sports integrity body.<sup>1</sup> Underlining the difficulties that might be posed in respect of the development and implementation of such a body, an important intervention by Kihl (2023) in *Sport*

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<sup>1</sup> [ClearingSport: Almost 200 experts call for an agency against corruption and crime in world sport \(playthegame.org\)](https://playthegame.org/clearing-sport/)

*Management Review* foregrounds the complexities of designing national sports integrity systems (NSIS) where there are so many differences in the way sports are governed and managed in each country.

The author takes on the daunting task of presenting a conceptual framework of an NSIS that can be operationalised in different countries and across many cultures. She defines an NSIS as “an intentionally designed set of operational institutions, policies, practices, agencies, and actors responsible for promoting and safeguarding the integrity of an NSO” (p. 32). Focusing on the need for coherence and integrated systems that allow for multiple points of accountability, she argues that “NSOs should possess the flexibility to develop and implement their integrity system based on their country’s guiding principles, sport governance structure, existing institutions, stakeholder input, and the nature of their country’s interactions” (p.32).

Kihl’s detailed analysis has the potential to position an NSIS – or any similar global agency – on clear conceptual principles that take into account the relevant internal and external institutions, their sphere of influence, and the relationship between both practices and processes. What is also clear is that such a system requires a great deal of shared understanding of the scope of an NSIS and how it works within complex governance landscapes and ethical frameworks.

#### **4. Equalities**

##### **a) Homophobia in football**

Football has often been associated with the construction of a robust and assertive form of heterosexual masculinity and a site of virulent homophobia. Football has traditionally been an important cultural practice through which boys and men could demonstrate a hypermasculinity that was founded on a deep antipathy towards homosexuality. However, in the past fifteen years this research narrative has started to change in complicated, divergent, and often contradictory ways. Harvey (2017)<sup>2</sup> identified two camps which have emerged within and outside of academia that are publishing significantly different research results. On the one side there are academics and activist groups who continue to find that sport remains a highly homophobic environment that is unwelcoming to those who identify as LGBTQ+. On the other side of the debate are a group of sport sociologists who have been finding much reduced levels of homophobia in sport settings. Different research questions, methodologies and interpretations of data may play a part in the divergence of the research findings. It should be observed that while some researchers find reduced homophobia, they also note the persistence of heterosexism where teammates and others are assumed to be heterosexual.

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<sup>2</sup> Harvey, A. (2017). ‘Academics v activists: making sense of homophobia in male team sport’. In Kilvington, D, and Price, J. (eds.) *Sport and Discrimination*. London: Routledge.

A new study by Cleland *et al* (2023) is a welcome intervention into this debate as it may help to partially answer the question as to why different findings might be found in this space. Their research deployed an online survey of football fans (n=2663) which asked about the presence of, what the writers rather coyly term, 'homosexually themed language' at matches. Usefully utilising theoretical frameworks developed in masculinity studies, notably Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity and Anderson's theory of inclusive masculinity, the authors found a paradox that exists within the community of football fans. While 95% would support a gay player at their club, 41% have heard language they consider to be homophobic, while 37% believe such language is not intentionally hostile but interpret it as playful and humorous banter. Further, a small number of respondents continued to hold extreme homophobic attitudes. The authors attribute this apparent paradox to cultural lag where the use of homophobic language trails behind support for gay players.

### **b) Racism in sport**

Critical race theory (CRT) continues to prove to be a powerful tool to explain the intractability of racial discrimination and prejudice in sport, enabling scholars to unearth the structural conditions and systems that produce and maintain White hegemony in the management and governance of sports. In their document review of equalities policies in four major sports governing bodies (SGB) in the United States (Major League Baseball, National Basketball Association, National Football League and the US Olympic and Paralympic Committee), Gardner *et al* (2023) found that ambitious-sounding statements about race (and gender) equalities to be found on the SGB websites were not adequately underpinned by sufficient attention to the structural causes of inequality. Each of the SGBs framed their equalities policies, programmes and interventions in different ways. As the authors state, "the primary findings indicated that the entities framed diversity as *inclusion* (NBA), as a micro-level, *individual* matter (NFL), as *representation* (MLB) and as the effective *management* of athletes and the workplace (USOPC)" (356). In doing so, the SGBs fail to mention the existence of racism within their sport and fail to challenge the structural inequalities that persist. The authors conclude that the SGBs are primarily engaged with impression management rather than tackling ingrained racism in an effective way.

## **5. Online hate**

Online hate in sports is a significant issue that has gained prominence in recent years. The advent of social media and online platforms has provided a forum for fans and supporters to express their opinions and emotions. While these platforms can be beneficial for promoting team and individual brands, they have also become breeding grounds for hate speech, cyber bullying, and harassment. The possibility of online anonymity, enabling users to create fake accounts and hide behind usernames makes it easier for them to engage in abusive behaviour without facing any consequences. Athletes, especially those in high-profile positions, are often the targets of online hate.

They may receive abusive messages, threats, or derogatory comments about their performance, appearance, or personal lives. This not only may affect their mental well-being but can also have a negative impact on their performance and enjoyment of sport.

Given the recent interest in online hate in sport, a scoping review of existing research by Kearns *et al* (2023) provides a useful benchmark for the present state of academic knowledge and identifies avenues for possible future research. Basing their study on 41 journal articles, the authors found that hate speech was found across different sports, although many papers focussed on association football given its global popularity and the intense rivalries that are a feature of the game. Much of the hate was directed towards athletes although some was also directed towards other fans. Race and other personal identities were often the subject matter of online hate. The issue of anonymity was discussed in many of the papers although the authors offer a nuanced approach, noting that some online hate is perpetrated by users with full transparency.

## **6. Conclusions**

Anti-doping and the problematics that arise in anti-doping policy remain a topic of critical interest to sports management scholars with no indication that this productive seam of enquiry will end any time soon. The same might be said for work in anti-discrimination and equalities. The articles by leading scholars into Sports Integrity Agencies and online hate research show that academics are keen to explore vibrant new territories that are of great interest to policymakers thus demonstrating the relevance of scholarly interventions in these important areas.

## **Annotated Bibliography**

**Cleland, J., Cashmore, E., Dixon, K., & MacDonald, C. (2023). Analyzing the Presence of Homosexually-Themed Language Among Association Football Fans in the United Kingdom. *Communication & Sport*, 11(3), 551–569.**

The article highlights some of the weaknesses in earlier research that denied homophobic intent when 'homosexually themed language' was used in specific contexts but interpreted as non-homophobic. Those earlier scholars often failed to properly take into account the way such language may be received by those outside of the specific social group in which the language was deployed. This research, which involves a large-scale survey of football fans, helps to complicate the picture, showing that homophobia exists within a matrix of gendered norms and cultural expectations. Overall, the article confirms how social attitudes have changed to become more LGBTQ+ positive while also showing how a homophobic hegemonic masculinity still lingers among a small minority of football fans, while many others remain complicit to the hegemonic project while claiming not be homophobic themselves. The article will

be of use to sports managers and policymakers in refining their efforts to make football a more inclusive space for LGBTQ+ supporters.

**Gardner, A., Love, A., & Waller, S. (2023) How do elite sport organizations frame diversity and inclusion? A critical race analysis. *Sport Management Review*, 26(3), 339-360.**

The article draws on a wide array of theoretical traditions, notably critical race theory, that enables the authors to expose the superficiality of equalities policies, programmes and initiatives in four major US sport's governing bodies. Framing their equality work in ways that do not address structural or systemic conditions enables those SGBs to appear to take the issue of racism far more seriously than they actually do. Of particular interest is the authors' reference to cultural theorist, Sara Ahmed, who introduced the idea of a 'non-performative speech act' – i.e., speech or text that is not designed to make any real difference but exists purely for pretending to do so.

**Kearns, C., Sinclair, G., Black, J., Doidge, M., Fletcher, T., Kilvington, D., Liston, K., Lynn, T., & Rosati, P. (2023). A Scoping Review of Research on Online Hate and Sport. *Communication & Sport*, 11(2), 402–430.**

This welcome scoping review of the academic study of online hate in sporting contexts offers an opportunity for sports managers and wider policymakers to obtain an accessible overview of the state of the problem in order to develop measures to confront it. The authors usefully identify a possible future research agenda, namely, “broadening the scope of research beyond Western sporting contexts; further analysis of under-examined prejudices; research that is cognisant of characteristics of specific sports and their relationship with online hate; further focus on more niche and image-based social media platforms; greater use of primary research techniques; and exploration of the links between incidences of online abuse and organised hate groups” (420). It is an agenda that promises rich returns and the possibility to inform effective and necessary interventions into a problem that is challenging sports management and regulators.

**Kihl, L. A. (2023) Development of a national sport integrity system. *Sport Management Review*, 26(1), 24-47.**

Kihl's article provides a conceptual blueprint for the establishment of national sports integrity systems that can be applied universally. While she focusses mostly on the theoretical frameworks that are needed to ensure that the system is coherent and effective, the article has the potential to help sports and national authorities to develop their own system based on sound principles that consider the nuances to be found in every country's sport and wider contexts. The system clearly outlines the internal sports network and the actors' “suggested operational integrity tasks at strategic, systems and operational levels” (p.41). The article is most insightful in conceptualising the relationships that exist between the definition of sport integrity, integrity management and the overall working of a national system. It is recommended reading

for policy-makers and practitioners who are interested in how to establish an integrity system.

**Martinelli, L. A., Thrower, S.N., Heyes, A., Boardley, I. D., Backhouse, S. H., & Petróczi, A. (2023) The good, the bad, and the ugly: A qualitative secondary analysis into the impact of doping and anti-doping on clean elite athletes in five European countries, *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 15(1), 3-22.**

The article usefully focusses on the experience of doping and the anti-doping regime of self-described 'clean athletes'. The research found that 'clean athletes' are affected in myriad and sometimes unexpected ways. Critically, the athletes believed that the efforts by anti-doping officials to 'catch cheats' skewed the programmes away from work that support clean athletes who often felt taken for granted. For policymakers, this finding could help them restructure anti-doping measures, including education, to prioritise support for the clean athlete as well as continued efforts to prevent doping.

**Shelley, J., Thrower, S. N., & Petróczi, A. (2023) Whose job is it anyway? A qualitative investigation into the influence of agents, race organisers, and sponsors on the risk of doping in elite distance running, *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 15(1), 23-44.**

Complementing the article by Martinelli *et al* (*supra*), the piece adds a new layer of understanding to the contextual environment in which doping and anti-doping takes place in elite distance running, a sport that has some of the highest known doping violations. The data collected was from a relatively small sample size which makes generalisations difficult. Nevertheless, the researchers have discovered that the burdens of anti-doping measures are not uniformly distributed across the sporting landscape. Commercial organisations appear not to regard anti-doping as their responsibility despite the commercial value of the sport resting, in large part, on its credibility in the eyes of the public and broadcasters. The authors conclude by hoping that their study will help governing bodies to establish better partnership working with sponsors, agents and event organisers in their work against doping in long distance athletics.



# The Geography of Sport Management Research in the first half of 2023

*Xiaoyan Xing*

## Introduction

The analysis on the geography of sport management (SM) research mainly concerns the settings in which SM research takes place and the geographical distribution of SM knowledge production. To allow such an analysis, we only include empirical studies grounded in specific contexts. There were 265 articles published by the 10 targeted journals in the first half of 2023, 226 of which were empirical and the other 39 were literature review, conceptual paper, book review, interview and so on. The 226 empirical articles were included in this analysis. We applied the same coding protocol for the geography of SM research in the previous *Sport Management Digest* (SMD) issues.

## Geography of the SM research settings

We examined the geography of the SM research settings along two dimensions: **sport domains** and **specific sports**. We further plotted each dimension against the continents in which the studies took place, in order to gain a geographical perspective.

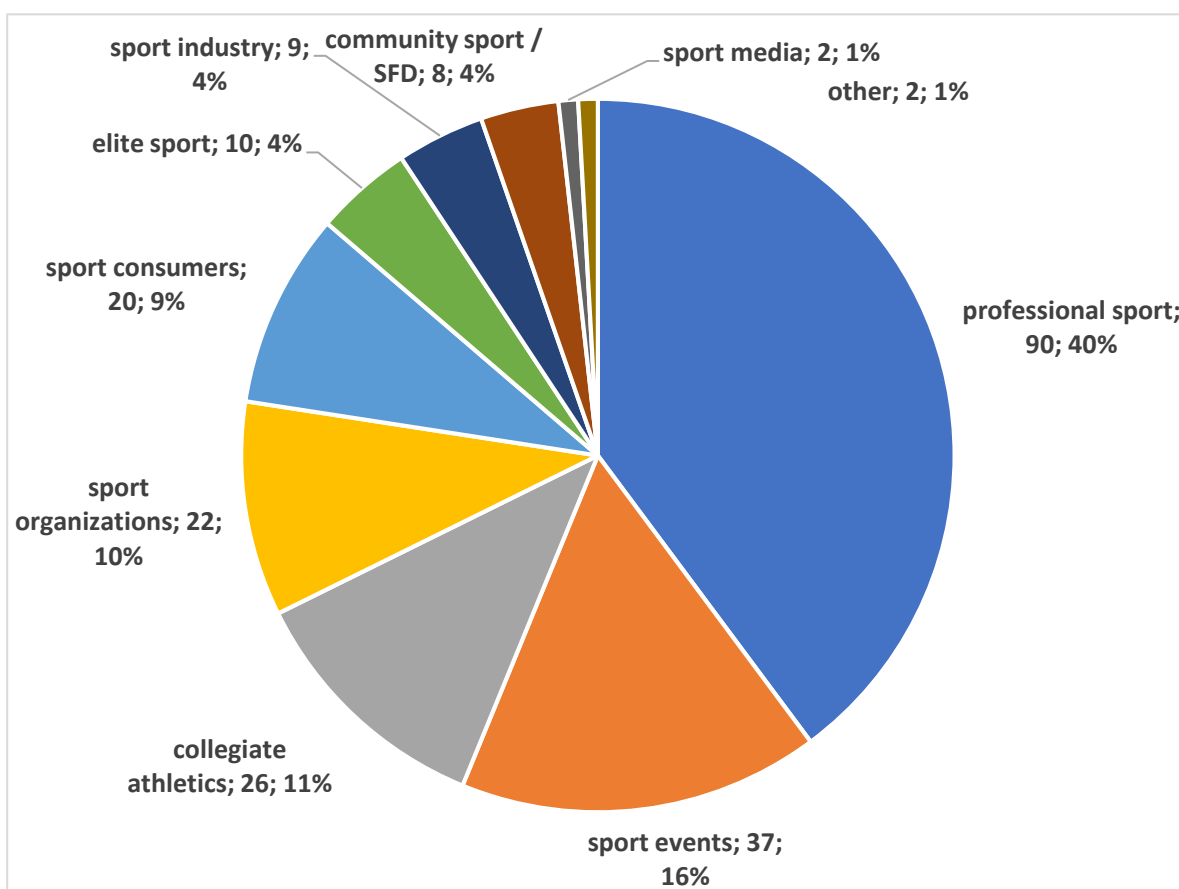
The 10 **sport domains** are professional sport, collegiate athletics (also school sport in general), sport events (including all types such as mega-events, major-events, and mass participant sport events), sport organizations (including non-profit sport clubs, national and international sport organizations), community sport / sport for development (SFD), elite sport (also competitive sport), sport industry (also commercial sport), sport consumers (including spectators, participants, and consumers of general nature), sport media (mainly the sport media sector), and others. The domains are not mutually exclusive in a strict sense. To address the issue, we follow the rule of specific-first. For instance, studies examining spectators of specific sport event(s), games of professional league(s), or organization behaviour of athletic departments in NCAA are respectively coded to the domains of sport events, professional sport, and collegiate athletics. Thus, a given sport domain such as professional sport may give rise to studies addressing an array of SM research topics as shown in our annual analysis published in the previous SMD issue. On the other hand, only when the consumption target participants in a given study is general in nature

or about a specific sport, for instance, e-sports, the study will be coded to the domain of sport consumers.

Sport media is another domain requiring some explanations. The symbiotic relationship between media and sport has been well recognized and the media has played a pervasive role in sport management. Given the highly mediated environment in which sports operate, media contents, be it generated by the media coverage, sport organizations, athletes, or the end users, render valuable insights for SM knowledge production. Those media contents are typically triggered by a focal event in a professional sport league, or revolved around a sport event. In these instances, we coded the studies to the domains of 'professional sport' or 'sport events', but noted that they took place in a mediated context. There were **33** articles (15% of the total) situated in mediated contexts while the rest were falling in the domains of professional sport (12), sport events (9), collegiate athletics (4), sport organizations (3), elite sport (3), community sport / SFD (1), and sport industry (1).

As shown in Figure 1, 40% of the 226 empirical articles published in the first half of 2023 were in the domain of professional sport, followed by sport events (16%), collegiate athletics (12%), sport organizations (10%), and sport consumers (9%). The other five domains each accounted for a small percentage. Overall, this distribution of sport domains is similar to the empirical articles published in 2022 by the ten targeted journals.

**Figure 1. The distribution of sport domains**



**Table 1. Sport domains across continental contexts**

Sport domain	Continental context								Total
	NA	EU	OC	AS	AF	CSA	CC	IN	
professional sport	44	15	6	13	0	0	7	5	90
	48.9%	16.7%	6.7%	14.4%	0.0%	0.0%	7.8%	5.6%	100.0%
sport events	5	6	2	11	1	2	5	5	37
	13.5%	16.2%	5.4%	29.7%	2.7%	5.4%	13.5%	13.5%	100.0%
collegiate athletics	23	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	26
	88.5%	0.0%	0.0%	11.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
sport organizations	6	8	3	1	1	0	1	2	22
	27.3%	36.4%	13.6%	4.5%	4.5%	0.0%	4.5%	9.1%	100.0%
sport consumers	11	4	0	2	0	0	2	1	20
	55.0%	20.0%	0.0%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	5.0%	100.0%
elite sport	0	7	0	0	0	0	1	2	10
	0.0%	70.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	20.0%	100.0%
sport industry	4	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	9
	44.4%	22.2%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
community sport / SFD	3	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	8
	37.5%	37.5%	12.5%	0.0%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
sport media	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
other	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	100.0%

Total	97	47	12	33	3	2	17	15	226
	42.9 %	20.8 %	5.3%	14.6 %	1.3%	.9%	7.5%	6.6%	100.0 %

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

Table 1 shows the distribution of sport domains across the **continental contexts**. For the general pattern of continental distribution, North America served as the continental context with the greatest number of articles (42.9%), followed by Europe (20.8%), Asia (14.6%), and Oceania (5.3%). The pattern is also consistent with the year of 2022. Articles with international contexts largely remained the same (7.6% in 2022 vs. 6.6% in this period). However, articles applying cross-continental contexts raised from 3.8% in 2022 to 7.5% in the first half of 2023. Also noteworthy is the minimal presence of Africa (1.3%), and Central and South America (0.9%).

The domain distribution across continental contexts revealed the following features:

First, the greatest number of articles in the domain of professional sport came from North America, followed by Europe, and Asia.

Second, North America dominated the domain of collegiate athletics (88.5%). The continent also had the greatest number of articles in the domain of sport consumers.

Third, same as 2022, the Asian contexts supplied the greatest number of articles in the domain of sport events. The domain of sport events was again the only domain with articles coming from all six continents.

Fourth, Europe featured the greatest number of articles in the domains of sport organizations and elite sport.

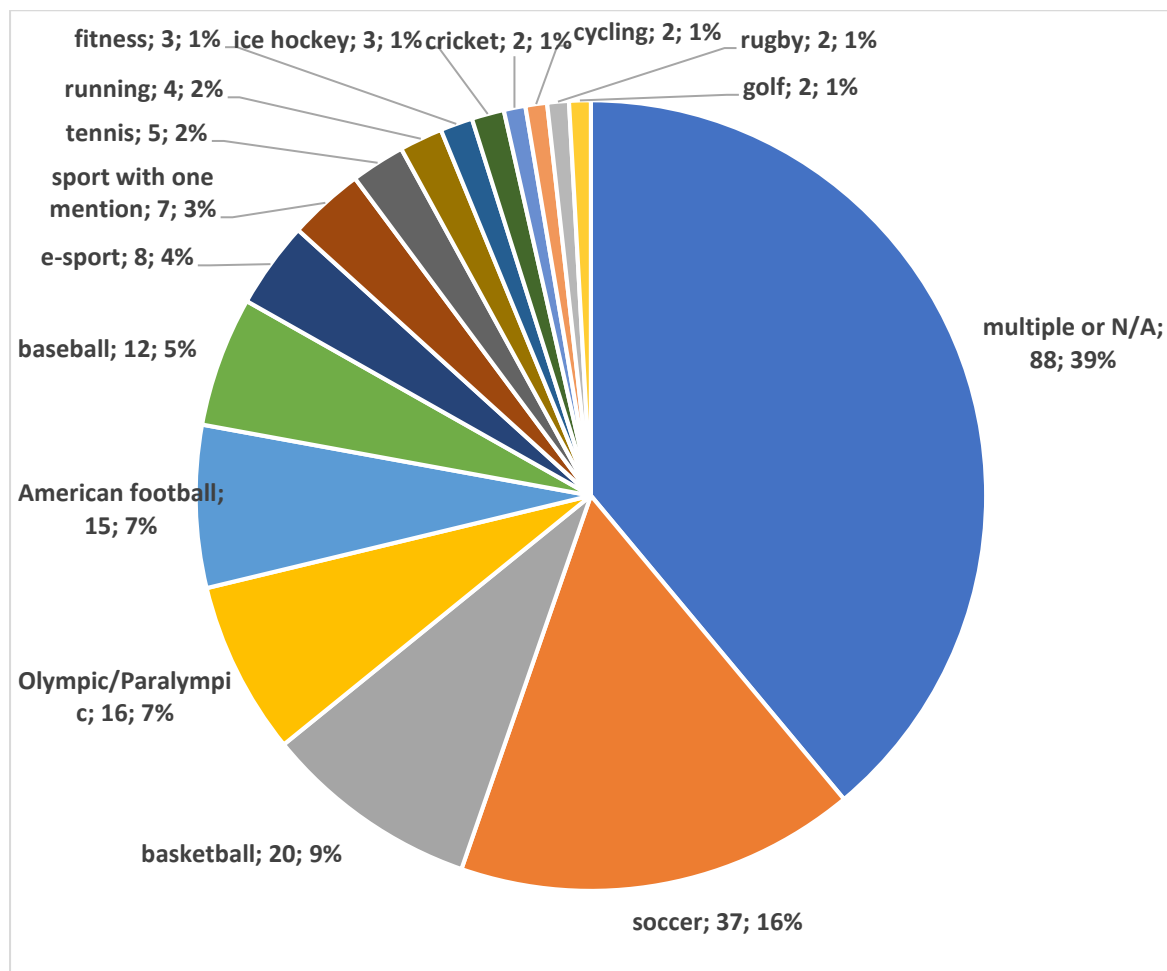
Finally, as noted above there was a surge in articles with cross-continental contexts. These articles mainly fell into the domains of professional sport and sport events.

Regarding the **specific sports** that contextualised the SM research settings, a large portion of articles (39%) utilized a multi-sports context, or did not specify the sports in association with the sport domain (see Figure 2). In a few instances, the information of the sport was intentionally omitted in order to protect anonymity. For instance, a

study situated in professional sport may choose not to reveal the name and sport of the league.

As shown in Figure 2, football (soccer) continued to be the most popular sport for SM research settings, followed by basketball, Olympic/Paralympic, American football, baseball, and e-sports. In reflection, Olympic/Paralympic represents an array of sports included in the competition programme of these Games, corresponding to the domain of sport events with Olympic/Paralympic Games serving as the research setting. Finally, sports that only appeared in one article during this period were wrestling, boxing, **biathlon**, **disc golf**, car racing, **wheelchair basketball**, and swimming. It is encouraging to see that the less researched sports such as disc golf, wheelchair basketball, biathlon entered the radar of SM research.

**Figure 2. The distribution of specific sports**



An examination of the continental distribution of the top six sports revealed that Europe housed most of the articles with football (soccer) featuring in research settings whereas North America was home for articles featuring American football, basketball, and baseball. It is also interesting to note that a great number of articles set in Olympic/Paralympic Games came from Asia, probably crediting to the fact that the continent hosted three consecutive Games (PyeongChang 2018, Tokyo 2020, and Beijing 2022). Finally, e-sports continued to garner interests from SM researchers. Studies situated in e-sports settings covered the continents of North America, Europe, Asia, as well as cross-continental or international settings (see Table 2).

**Table 2. Specific sport by continental context**

Sport	Continental context								Total
	NA	EU	OC	AS	AF	CS A	CC	IN	
<b>Football (soccer)</b>	8	21	2	2	0	0	2	2	37
<b>basketball</b>	13	0	0	5	0	0	2	0	20
<b>Olympic/Paralympic</b>	3	2	0	6	0	2	3	0	16
<b>American football</b>	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15
<b>baseball</b>	7	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	12
<b>e-sports</b>	2	1	0	2	0	0	1	2	8

**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**

We approached the geography of SM knowledge production by examining (1) the association between the articles' continental context and the continental location of the author's institutional affiliation, and (2) the distribution of the continental contexts of the articles published by the ten targeted journals.

Following the previous analyses, we are mainly interested in three patterns of **geographical context-author association**: (1) consistent context-author geographical location, (2) inconsistent context-author geographical location, and (3) cross-continental collaboration. Using cultural psychology and anthropology perspectives, we revealed a consistent pattern that helps to grasp tacit meanings grounded in the local culture derived from the research setting as the authors are likely to be native to the culture. An inconsistent pattern suggest a misalignment between the hidden cultural assumptions in the research setting and the researchers entering the site as outsiders. Nonetheless, there are also cases that although the pairing of the authors' institutional affiliation and the geographical context of the study indicates an inconsistency, the authors in fact are well conversed with the culture of the research setting because of their cultural origin. For instance, although some authors teach and research in USA institutions, they are South Koreans and conduct research using South Korean settings. Finally, the pattern of cross-continental collaboration is popular in SM research (20.8% of the total articles). This pattern may enjoy the advantage of incorporating both emic and etic perspectives when deciphering local meanings (Pike, 1967).

As shown in Table 3, the majority of articles with geographical settings in the Global North enjoyed a consistent pattern in context-author geographical location (NA: 79.4%; EU: 72.3%; OC: 75.0%). On the other hand, articles with settings located in the Global South tended to have an inconsistent pattern (AF: 100%; CSA: 50%; AS: 33.3%). The pattern of cross-continental collaboration represents a desired form of SM knowledge production allowing due cultural sensitivity, assuming that at least one author in the research team is native to the culture of the research context. Over 20% of the article in the covered period assumed a knowledge production pattern of cross-continental collaboration, particularly in the Global South (AS: 42.4%, 14 articles; CSA: 50%, 1 article). It is also encouraging to observe that a sizable portion of articles with



cross-continental settings were produced by cross-continental author teams (CC: 41.2%).

**Table 3. Continental context versus author institutional affiliation**

Continental context	Author institutional affiliation					
	NA	EU	OC	AS	CC	
NA	77	6	1	2	11	97
	79.4%	6.2%	1.0%	2.1%	11.3%	100.0%
EU	1	34	1	0	11	47
	2.1%	72.3%	2.1%	0.0%	23.4%	100.0%
OC	1	0	9	0	2	12
	8.3%	0.0%	75.0%	0.0%	16.7%	100.0%
AS	6	4	1	8	14	33
	18.2%	12.1%	3.0%	24.2%	42.4%	100.0%
AF	1	2	0	0	0	3
	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
CSA	0	0	1	0	1	2
	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%	100.0%
CC	5	3	1	1	7	17
	29.4%	17.6%	5.9%	5.9%	41.2%	100.0%
IN	1	11	1	1	1	15
	6.7%	73.3%	6.7%	6.7%	6.7%	100.0%
Total	92	60	15	12	47	226
	40.7%	26.5%	6.6%	5.3%	20.8%	100.0%

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.

The distribution of continental contexts of the articles published in the 10 targeted journals are shown in Table 4. As mentioned above, the greatest number of articles in

the covered period were conducted in North American context (42.9%), followed by Europe (20.8%) and Asia (14.6%). With such a geographical distribution, the ten journals tended to assign their pages to articles contextualized in North America, particularly JSM, SMR, IJSC, C&S, and JSE. Notably, journals with European connections (ESMQ, IJSP, IJSF) published the greatest number of studies contextualised in Europe while the greatest number of articles contextualised in Asia appeared in IJSMS.

**Table 4. Continental contexts of articles from the 10 journals**

	Continental context								Total
	NA	EU	OC	AS	AF	CSA	CC	IN	
JSM	12	2	2	2	0	0	3	0	21
	57.1%	9.5%	9.5%	9.5%	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%	0.0%	100.0%
SMR	13	2	3	3	1	0	1	2	25
	52.0%	8.0%	12.0%	12.0%	4.0%	0.0%	4.0%	8.0%	100.0%
IJSMS	7	4	0	10	0	0	0	0	21
	33.3%	19.0%	0.0%	47.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
ESMQ	9	14	3	5	1	1	3	3	39
	23.1%	35.9%	7.7%	12.8%	2.6%	2.6%	7.7%	7.7%	100.0%
IJSF	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	8
	37.5%	37.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	100.0%
IJSC	10	2	1	3	0	0	3	0	19
	52.6%	10.5%	5.3%	15.8%	0.0%	0.0%	15.8%	0.0%	100.0%
IJSPP	4	6	2	1	0	1	1	2	17
	23.5%	35.3%	11.8%	5.9%	0.0%	5.9%	5.9%	11.8%	100.0%
JSE	15	4	0	1	0	0	3	3	26
	57.7%	15.4%	0.0%	3.8%	0.0%	0.0%	11.5%	11.5%	100.0%
C&S	15	6	0	4	0	0	2	1	28
	53.6%	21.4%	0.0%	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%	7.1%	3.6%	100.0%
JGSM	9	4	1	4	1	0	1	2	22

	40.9%	18.2%	4.5%	18.2%	4.5%	0.0%	4.5%	9.1%	100.0%
Total	97	47	12	33	3	2	17	15	226
	42.9%	20.8%	5.3%	14.6%	1.3%	.9%	7.5%	6.6%	100.0%

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

## Conclusions

This analysis found that the geography of research settings and SM knowledge production of the 226 articles published by the ten SM journals in the first half of 2023 assumed patterns similar to the year of 2022, with authors affiliated with institutions in the Global North publishing the majority of articles contextualised in the Global North. Meanwhile, it is notable that a sizable number of articles (20.8%) were produced through cross-continental collaboration with authors from the Global South in the research team, particularly authors based in Asia. In fact, Asia (14.6%) was the third most popular continental context for SM research, after North America (42.9%) and Europe (20.8%). As a general trend, e-sports continue to garner interests from SM researchers, being the sixth most popular sport in the SM research settings. Finally, sports for disabled people such as wheelchair basketball debuted in SM research settings since the inception of the analysis of the geography of SM research in 2021.

## 1. References

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