

Sport Management Digest
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State of Sport Management Research in the first half of 2024 (January - June):

An Overview

Vassil Girginov

The current issue of the Sport Management Digest (SMD) provides a bibliometric analysis of the research published in the 10-sport management journals in the first half of 2024 – from January to June. The four thematic sections that follow, cover in sufficient detail research pertinent to different aspects of sport management. Owing to some editors stepping down and the time needed to replace them, we were unable to include a review of sport management theoretical developments, ethics research, leadership and communications which will be made available as soon as possible. Bibliometric analysis is the main tool used in science mapping, which allows to reveal the social, intellectual and organisational structure of sport management as a discipline. Bibliometrics is an established computer-assisted quantitative review methodology, which identifies core research or authors, as well as their relationship. It provides valuable relational information on the topic, which helps significantly enhance our understanding of the overall state of the sport management discipline.

Following the established format, the present overview of research in the field of sport management focuses on three interrelated areas including a bibliometric analysis, theoretical and practical appeal of research, as measured by the funding received by different studies, and the democratization of knowledge, as exemplified by the number of studies published under the Open Access (OA) regime.

The first half of 2024 saw 228 published articles in 28 issues across the ten journals, which is 20 less than the 248 produced in the second half of 2023. These outputs were produced by a diverse group of researchers including established and upcoming scholars as well as PhD students. Table 1 shows the ten journals and the number of articles per journal including the OA ones. However, a positive has been the increase of percentage of OA articles to 23% (52), compared to 19% (49) in the second half of 2023. The International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship and European Sport Management Quarterly have been well ahead of the rest of the journals in this regard with 26% and 25% of their content published OA respectively. Xiaoyan Xing's review in this issue offers a details analysis of the geography of sport management publications.

Table 1. Total number of articles and Open Access ones published in the 10 sport management journals in the first half of 2024 (January - June)

Journal	Founded	Publication frequency / year	Impact factor 2023	Articles No	Open Access No / %
Journal of Sport Management https://journals.humankinetics.com/view/journals/jsm/jsm-overview.xml	1987	5	3.5	15	4 / 12
Sport Management Review https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rsmr20	1998	5	4.1	22	1 / 4
International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship https://www.emerald.com/insight/publication/issn/1464-6668	1999	4	2.5	34	9 / 26
European Sport Management Quarterly https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/resm20	2001	5	3.9	40	10/25
International Journal of Sport Finance https://fitpublishing.com/journals/ijsf	2006	4	1.1	8	0/0
International Journal of Sport Communications https://journals.humankinetics.com/view/journals/ijsc/ijsc-overview.xml	2008	4	1.8	19	1/5
International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/risp20	2009	4	2.8	20	8/40
Journal of Sports Economics https://journals.sagepub.com/home/jse	2011	6	2.1	26	3/12
Communication and Sport https://journals.sagepub.com/home/com	2013	6	2.7	27	4/15
Journal of Global Sport Management https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rgsm20	2016	4	2.2	1.7	2/12

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

been addressed in earlier issues of the SMD including its prohibitive cost for many researchers and institutions. Nonetheless, it is important to keep stressing this issue as it plays a critical role in shaping the knowledge in the field and its utilization. Readers can check out the OA policy of their targeted journal by using the ‘Journal checker tool’ <https://journalcheckertool.org/>. Advances in digital technology and publishing have made it possible for journals to change their publication policy, particularly those published by Taylor & Francis (5 of the journals in the table). Editors and authors have now been instructed that there is no longer a cap on articles word count, which is typically between 8,000-10,000 words. This means that authors could use the greater word allowance to expand on different sections of their papers including the use of more illustrations.

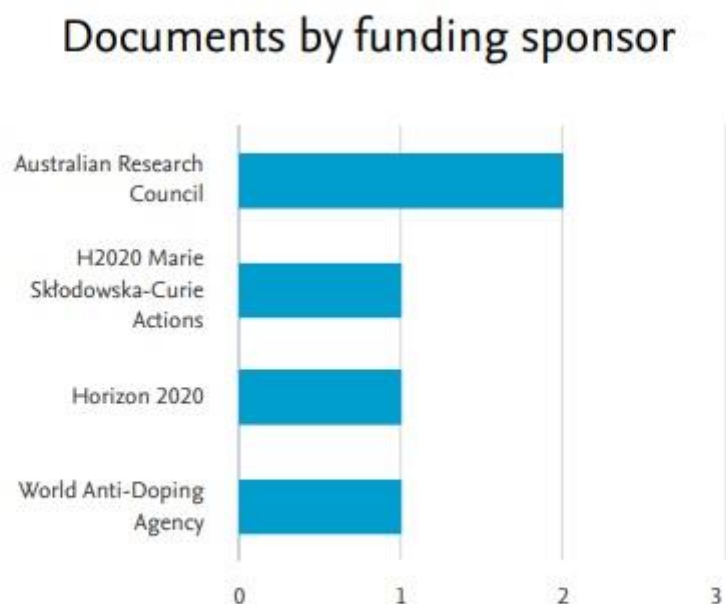
Journals’ special issues serve the important role of trailblazers because they submit for discussion topical and issues likely to shape research and policy agendas in the field of sport management. The positive impact of journals’ special issues in sport management and sociology was analysed by Scelles (2021) and discussed in previous issues. Three out of the ten journals reviewed in the SMD have published special issues addressing agency and institutions in sport, mediating the Olympics and social media theory and practices. Eleven editors were responsible for soliciting, reviewing and editing these special issues. Individually and collectively, these special issues make a significant contribution to advancing our knowledge and the field of sport management in general. Table 2 shows the journals, special issues and guest editors.

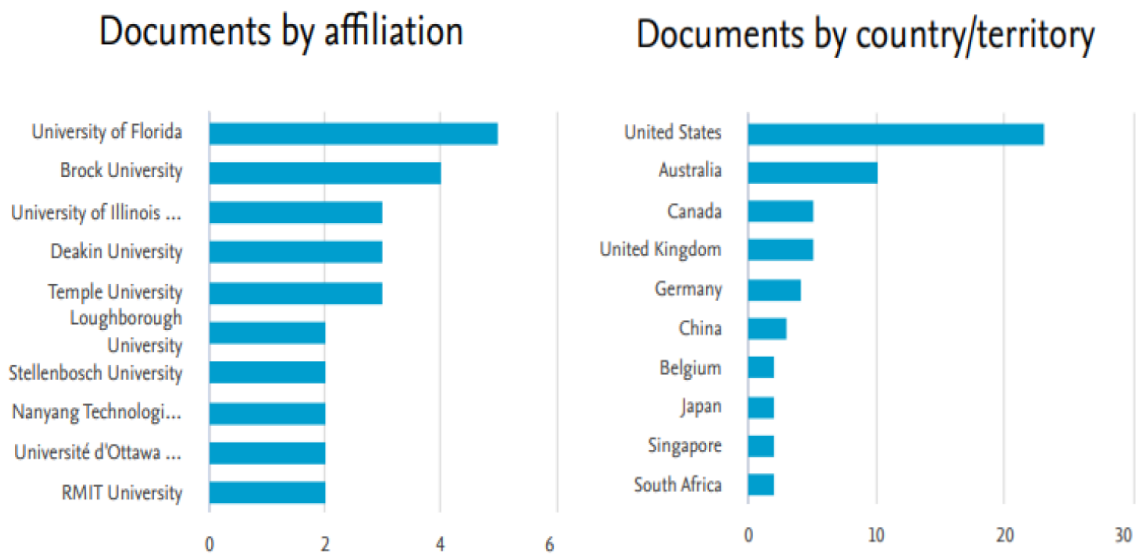
Table 2. Special issues published by selected sport management journals (January - June 2024)

Journal	Special Issue Topic	Editors
European Sport Management Quarterly 2024 24 (1)	Agency and Institutions in sport https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/16184742.2023.2292102	Mathew Dowling, Jonathan Robertson, Marvin Washington, Becca Leopkey & Dana Ellis
Communication in Sport 2024 12 (1)	Mediating the East Asian Era of the Olympic Games (2018-2022)	Koji Kobayashi, John Horne, Younghan Cho & Jung Woo Lee
International Journal of Sport Communications 2024 17 (1)	Social media and Sport Research: Empirical Examinations Showcasing Diversity in Methods and Topics https://journals.humankinetics.com/view/journals/ijsc/17/1/article-p1.xml	Jimmy Sanderson & Gashaw Abeza

A measure of the conceptual and practical relevance of sport management research to policy makers, practitioners and various public and private bodies is the funding provided to different research projects, which underpin the empirical studies published in the SMD. Naturally, the funding picture of current research is by no means complete due to lack of information about the external funding behind the research, but it does allow to note the geography and institutional support of sport management scholarly activities. The research published in the first half of 2024 was supported by several public and private agencies including the EU Horizon 2000 call, World Anti-Doping Agency, Australian Research Council and others. Figures 1 and 2 below provide a breakdown of the funding sources, countries and authors' affiliation who published in four journals including the Journal of Global Sport Management, Journal of Sport Management, and International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing and the European Sport Management Quarterly. A proxy measure of the relationship between external funding of sport management research and its theoretical and practical appeal is the increased impact factor of most sport management journals in the sample including citation as a powerful measure of establishing the impact of journals on the research field (see Lis, 2020 analysis).

Figures 1. Research funding sponsor and country in the Journal of Global Sport Management, Journal of Sport Management, and International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing





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

The bibliometric analysis was conducted using the Scopus data base which provides access to all ten journals included in the SMD. As with previous issues, science mapping and visualization was achieved with the help of the VOSviewer software (van Eck & Waltman, 2020). The aim was to examine the strength of the links between sport management research by looking into the co-authorship links (i.e., the number of publications two researchers have co-authored), co-occurrence links (i.e., the number of publications in which two terms occur together), and the bibliographic coupling links (i.e., the number of cited references two publications have in common). The strength of the link is represented by a positive numerical value where the higher the value the stronger the link. The results are visualised in two figures (3 & 4) and capture all articles published in 2024. Thus, the co-authorship and co-occurrence links reported represent the sport management for the entire 2024 as it has not been possible to isolate the publications for the first six months only.

Figure 3 below depicts the co-authorship links where two authors had worked together on a publication. Out of 708 authors who published in the ten journals, 37 met the threshold of working together on three documents, and the different colours in figure 3 help see those collaborations. As can be seen, there have been six clusters of authors, who have

collaborated on various projects and publications. However, it is worth noting that only five authors have actually collaborated while the rest of the clusters do not appear to be connected. Billings, Sanderson and Brown have the strongest links of 10, 7 and 6 respectively.

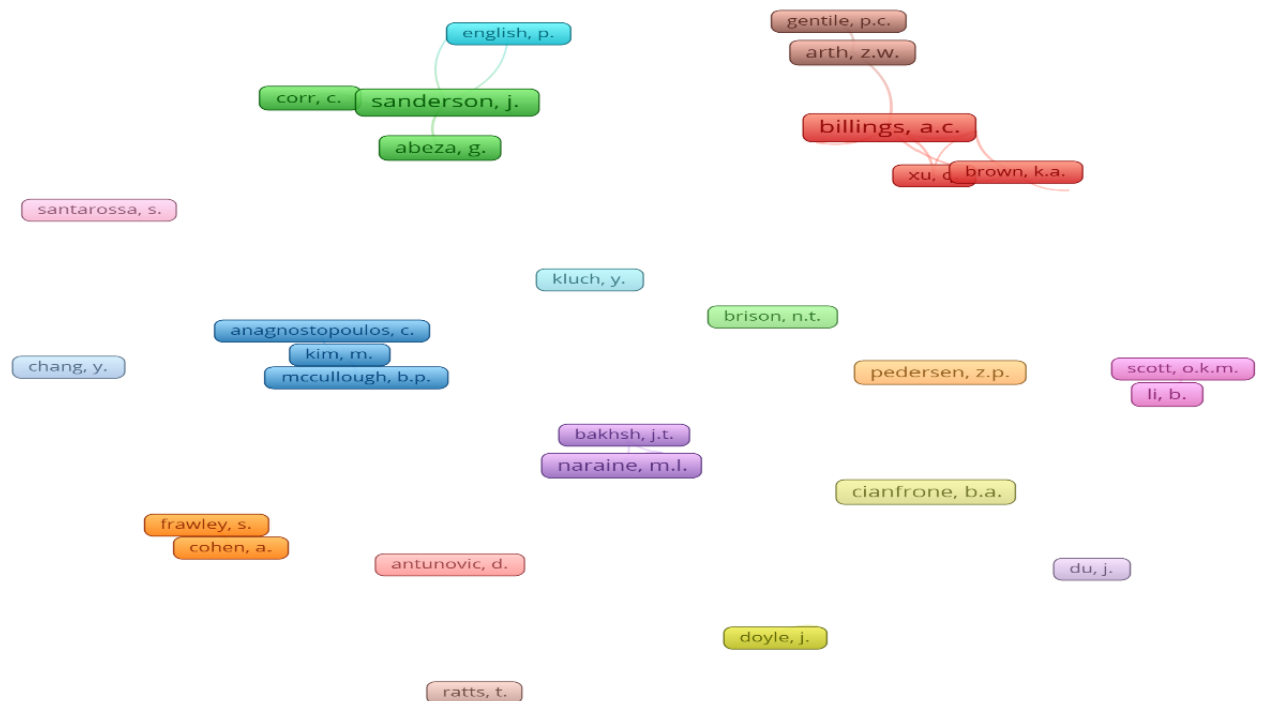


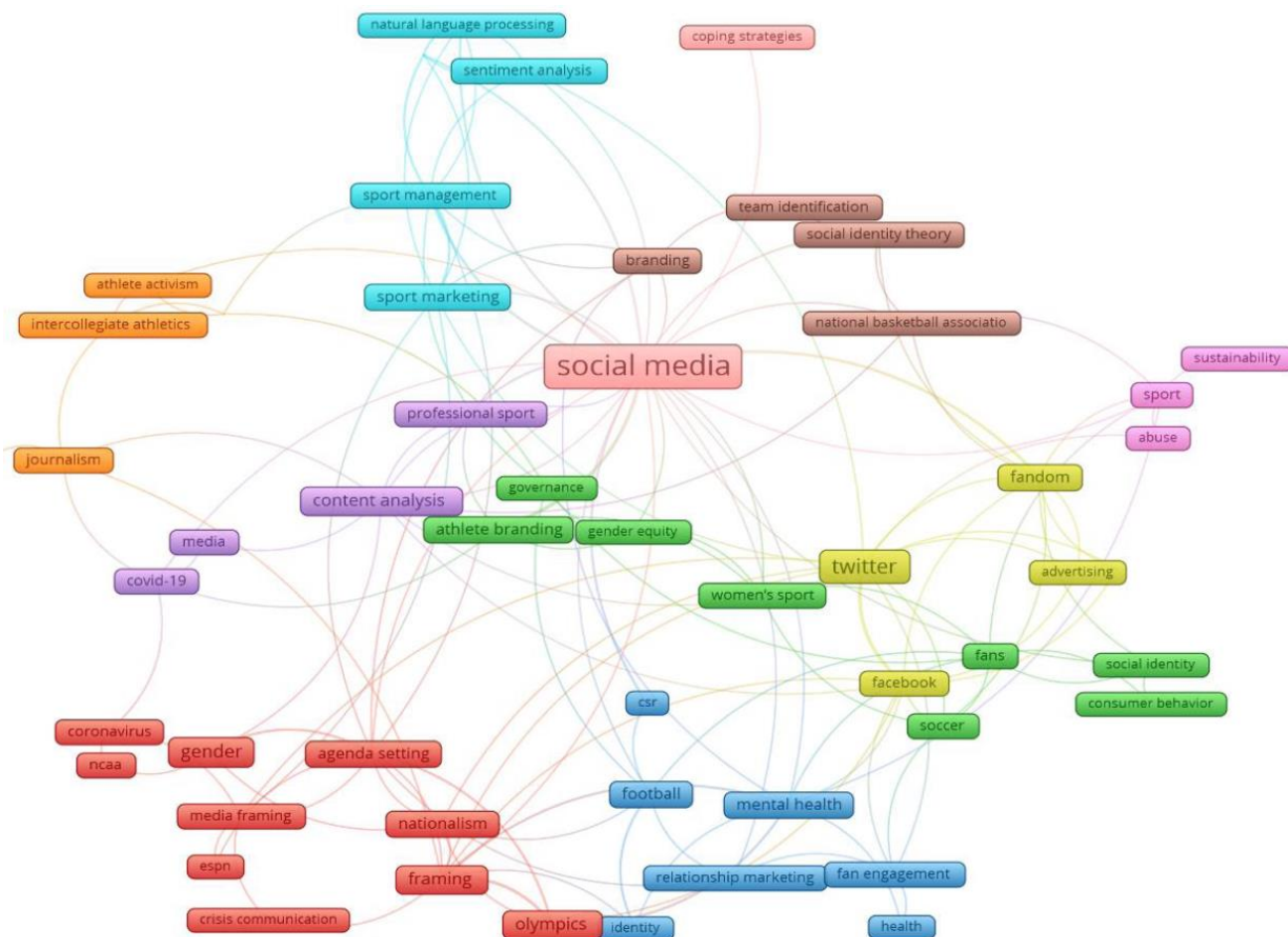
Figure 3. Co-authorship network visualization across ten sport management journals in 2024

The co-occurrence links, representing the number of publications in which two terms occur together can be seen in Figure 4. Out of 916 key words, 25 met the threshold of occurring more than 5 times. The size of the word indicates its weight, and the number of links its strength. Like previous reviews, the words ‘social media’ showed the greatest strength of 18, followed by agenda setting and framing each with strength of 11. The dominance of word occurrence of ‘social media’ can be attributed in part to the very high number of articles (46) published in the two sport communications journals which account for 20% of the total number of articles published in this period. Figure 4 also helps to see the distance between two words where the higher the distance the lesser the connectedness. For example, the word ‘social media’ dominated in the research published, followed by ‘agenda setting’, ‘framing’, ‘professional sport’ and ‘content analysis’. As figure 4 reveals, the words ‘social media’ are closely connected to ‘professional sport’, ‘branding and ‘sport marketing’. This analysis helps build a picture of the role of social media in shaping agenda and perceptions about sports and consumers’ preferences as well as its role as a main tool of modern sport marketing. It is also important to acknowledge the role of social media in

raising awareness about wider social issues concerning mental health and corporate social responsibility.

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

Figure 4. Key words co-occurrence network visualization in ten sport management journals in 2024



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

Enjoy your exploration of the Sport Management Digest!

References

- 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*: 1-15.
- 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 review investigated the ten most popular sport journals in relation to their research study designs. The publications under review were published between March and September 2024. Table 1 provides a summary of the methodological approaches used in the respective journals:

Table 1: Summary of Methodological Approaches

Journals	Mixed	Qualitative	Quantitative	Total
Communication & Sport	1	22 (incl. 4 intros and 1 essay)	14	37
European Sport Management Quarterly	3	29(incl. one intro)	23	55
International Journal of Sport Finance	-	-	8	8
International Journal of Sport Marketing and Sponsorship	1	8	41	50
International Journal of Sport Communication	1	35 (incl. 1 intro, 2 interviews, 1 commentary, 1 case studies, 15 book reviews)	9	45
International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics	2	28 (incl. two reports)	3	33
Journal of Global Sport Management	3	14	12	29
Journal of Sport Economics	-	1(one obituary)	23	24
Journal of Sport Management	-	9	12	21
Sport Management Review	1	16	13	30

Overall Total	12	162	158	332
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Similar to previous reviews, qualitative and quantitative research approaches were quite balanced. Qualitative research articles were slightly more prevalent in this Sport Management Digest review, indicating a very marginal difference as demonstrated in Figure 1.

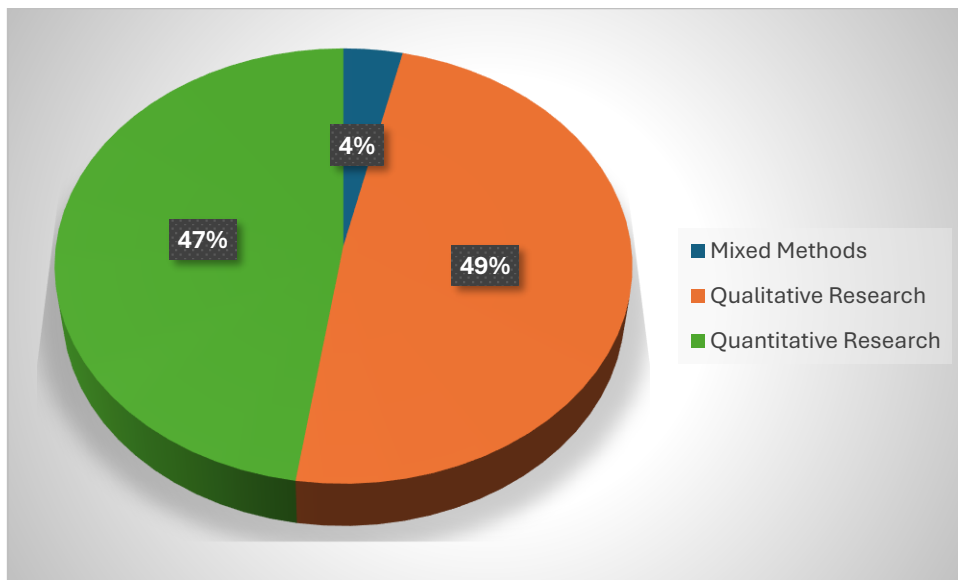


Figure 1: Distribution of Methodological Approaches

The percentage of qualitative research remained almost the same between the last six reviews and the current one.

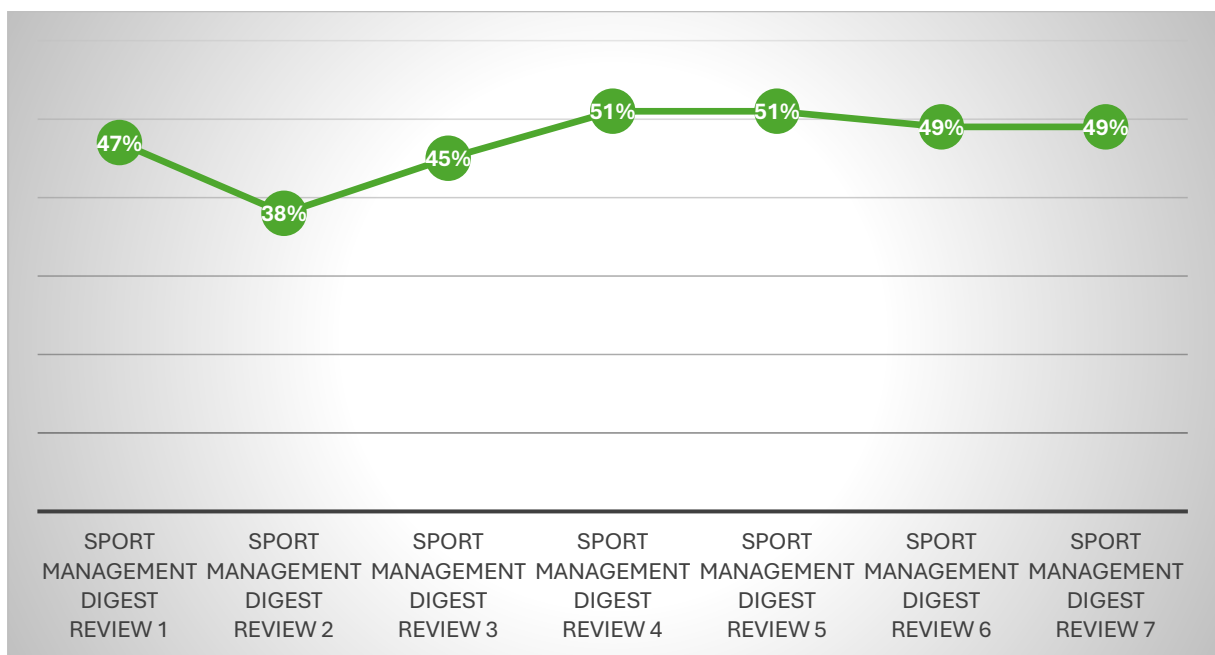


Figure 2: Sport Management Digest Review - Comparison of Qualitative Research (in %)

Also, as found in the previous reviews, a mixed method design remains somewhat under-applied, as most researchers tend to commit to either a quantitative or qualitative design. For most quantitative designs, surveys were deployed and analysed using different statistical methods. Three articles applied a Fuzzy-Set Qualitative Comparative Analysis, a technique categorised as a quantitative approach with a case-oriented character. In addition, some quantitative articles embraced the power of machine learning and utilised this approach in their data analysis.

For the qualitative analyses, the most prominent approach to collecting data was grounded in (semi-structured) interviews and focus groups. Analytical approaches included thematic and content analysis. Nevertheless, other approaches such as commentaries, conceptual reviews, critical discourse analysis, phenomenology, and ethno- and netnography were also utilised.

For this review, five papers were selected for a detailed presentation. In addition, an annotated bibliography of ten papers is included at the end of this review to provide more insights into the topics and research designs deployed in the selected journals.

Success interrupted: exploring how supporters interpret their team's success in a postponed competition (Lock et al., 2024)

This study sought to examine how Liverpool Football Club (LFC) fans perceive their team's success amid competition delays caused by COVID-19. It focused on two primary objectives. The first was to assess how fans judge success when their team's performance records remain unaffected, yet the competitive environment undergoes substantial changes, such as possible league cancellations and shifts in competition format. The second objective was to explore why winning a championship matters significantly to fans' perceptions of their in-group status, beyond merely holding a large points lead.

The researchers used a netnographic, qualitative study that analyses online discussions within specific communities to observe genuine discussions among supporters in their natural online environment. This context provided a rich understanding of how fans expressed their feelings and thoughts about their team's success amidst the uncertainty

of the league's status. Ethical clearance was obtained for the study, and the authors acknowledged the challenges of netnographic research, where forum users did not anticipate their contributions would be analysed, as such, protections were put in place. The authors analysed 15,193 posts from a LFC supporter's fan-owned forum between 11 March and 3 June 2020. This period was chosen because it included the highest level of uncertainty regarding the team's status as potential champions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The analysis involved a theoretical thematic approach, in which they conducted three rounds of coding to thoroughly examine the posts, focusing on how supporters discussed their team's success and the implications of the postponement.

The findings produced three key themes that illustrate how Liverpool Football Club (LFC) supporters interpreted their team's success during the postponement of the English Premier League. These themes are (1) Immortalisation of Status, where supporters felt that winning the championship would permanently solidify their status as the best team for the 2019-2020 season; (2) The Asterisk, a theme that emerged from the supporters' concerns about the legitimacy of the championship if it were to be awarded under unusual circumstances, such as the league's postponement; (3) Moments of Celebration, a theme suggesting that supporters anticipated winning the championship would create a moment of collective celebration, uniting players, coaches, and fans in a shared experience of joy and solidarity.

Overall, the results indicate that context plays a significant role in how supporters evaluate their team's success, revealing that winning a championship is not just about objective performance but also about the subjective experiences and emotions tied to that success.

Exploring Perceptions of Performance Support Team Effectiveness in Elite Sport (Stewart et al., 2024)

Elite sport organisations are increasingly recruiting sophisticated performance support teams to optimise athlete performance. These teams commonly comprise sports medicine and sports science personnel (e.g. physiotherapists, sport scientists, strength and conditioning coaches, nutritionists, psychologists). Whilst the multidimensional nature of team effectiveness has been investigated in other domains, research on performance

support teams in elite sport is sparse. This study aimed to understand how performance support teams function effectively in elite sports.

The researchers employed a phenomenological study design to examine the experiential and lived dimensions of team effectiveness among performance support team members within elite sports. This methodological approach was deemed appropriate for elucidating the nuanced and subjective factors that influence team dynamics and overall efficacy, thus facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the topic. Eighteen participants were purposely selected, all of whom engage with elite athletes or teams across a range of sports, including English Premier League Football, Formula One, and the Summer and Winter Olympic Games. The focus groups, comprising members from the same team, were intentionally homogenous to mitigate potential conflict during discussions. A semi-structured interview guide piloted before implementation directed the discussions across four key themes: team understanding, team structure and composition, processes influencing effectiveness, and facilitators and barriers to effectiveness. The data analysis process involved verbatim transcribing digitally recorded sessions, followed by reflexive thematic analysis, utilising QSR NVivo 12 software.

The inductive approach employed in this analysis prioritised researchers' reflective and interpretive engagement, identifying four predominant themes and associated sub-themes pertinent to team effectiveness. The analysis revealed four principal themes deemed essential to the effectiveness of performance support teams: (1) Team Structure: The findings indicate that a judicious balance of diversity and homogeneity among team members is crucial. A strong preference for a non-hierarchical, horizontal organisational framework was emphasised; (2) Team Member Attributes: This theme encompasses attributes such as role proficiency, open-mindedness, adaptability, and humility; (3) Shared Mental Model: This includes elements such as shared objectives, comprehension of roles, and contextual awareness; (4) Social Capital: This theme encompasses trust, respect, cohesion, and communication. The study concludes that a comprehensive understanding and proactive addressing of these four themes can significantly enhance the effectiveness of performance support teams within elite sports contexts.

Athletes' participation in the National Anti-Doping Organisations of Germany and Poland: democratic governance? (Fiege & Zembura, 2024)

The researchers investigated the level of democratic governance in the National Anti-Doping Organisations (NADOs) of Germany and Poland, focusing on athletes' participation within these organisations. The researchers aimed to address concerns about the lack of transparency and effectiveness in anti-doping governance and to explore how athletes' involvement in decision-making might impact governance outcomes. The study specifically sought to assess and compare the status quo of athlete involvement in the German (NADA) and Polish (POLADA) anti-doping organisations, aiming to identify areas for improvement in fostering democratic processes.

A mixed-methods sequential explanatory design was used, incorporating document analysis and in-depth expert interviews to collect quantitative and qualitative data. The document analysis evaluated selected indicators from Geeraert's (2021a) NADGO tool, which assesses governance standards. Subsequently, expert interviews with key stakeholders provided insights into organisational practices and the challenges of enhancing athlete participation. The interview guide was grounded in academic literature and policy documents on athletes' rights, participatory frameworks in sport governance, and anti-doping initiatives. The justification for adopting mixed methods was that its capacity to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of established governance structures and the nuanced perceptions of stakeholders ensured a thorough evaluation of democratic processes within National Anti-Doping Organizations (NADOs).

The analysis revealed differences in how NADA and POLADA approach athletes' participation, with Germany's NADA showing a higher degree of democratic inclusion than Poland's POLADA. NADA fulfilled more democratic governance indicators, providing athletes with voting rights on supervisory boards and incorporating their feedback into policy debates. In contrast, POLADA's involvement of athletes was less formalised and relied more on advisory roles with limited decision-making power. The findings highlight challenges related to athletes' resources, the institutionalisation of representation, and operational independence in enhancing democratic governance across national anti-doping frameworks.

Targeted Social Media Harassment: A Comparative Analysis of Toxicity Directed at Men and Women Sports Reporters (Johnson et al., 2024)

The research examined the challenges women sports journalists encounter online, particularly on platforms like X (formerly Twitter). This inquiry originated from recognising that women in sports journalism experience harassment that is unique in both magnitude and nature, often shaped by societal expectations and gender biases. The researchers sought to explore variations in the frequency, nature, and content of harmful posts directed at male versus female sports reporters. Their goal was to address a gap in comparative studies by determining whether women sports reporters face greater or distinct forms of toxicity compared to their male peers.

Researchers performed network analysis alongside comparative quantitative content analysis of sports reporters, focusing on women and men with substantial national followings. They examined nearly 350,000 Twitter mentions over 12 years, employing a stratified random sampling method to ensure both genders were equitably represented among journalists. The team utilised Google's Perspective API to evaluate the toxicity of the tweets, which assigns a score between 0 and 1, indicating the likelihood of toxicity (with a higher score indicating more toxicity). Furthermore, a network analysis was conducted using the Leiden algorithm to delve into the social dynamics surrounding toxic behaviour. The methodology prioritised quantifying the occurrence and context of toxic mentions while exploring differences in toxicity levels and themes based on the journalist's gender. By integrating network analysis and the Perspective API, the researchers thoroughly investigated toxicity's qualitative and quantitative aspects, shedding light on how gender impacts online harassment in sports journalism. The choice of methods was justified to maintain consistency in data collection, representation, and analysis, acknowledging that online toxicity is a complex issue that can vary significantly with audience dynamics and journalist characteristics.

The results revealed no significant difference in the percentage of toxic posts directed at male and female sports reporters; however, the content of these toxic mentions varied sharply by gender. Posts targeting male reporters were often linked to sports-related themes. In contrast, those aimed at female reporters frequently included references to gender, sexual assault, and derogatory comments on appearance or credibility.

Sports ambassadors and destination image: a fuzzy set analysis (Vila-López et al., 2024

Vila-Lopez et al. (2024) wanted to understand the impact of sports ambassadors on a country's image as a tourism destination. They aimed to identify the essential traits that enable sports celebrities to enhance a destination's appeal, focusing specifically on Spain. The research centred around three primary questions: which traits are the most influential in shaping a destination's image, whether these traits vary across different product categories, and whether there are significant differences in perceptions between tourists and locals. By addressing these questions, the authors intended to offer insights that could help destination marketing organisations utilise the influence of sports ambassadors to cultivate a favourable national image.

The researchers conducted a fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) with 187 participants, including tourists and residents. fsQCA combines qualitative and quantitative data to identify causal conditions leading to specific outcomes. Unlike traditional correlation-based methods, it uses set-theoretic relationships and Boolean logic to examine various factors influencing Spain's destination image. fsQCA captures the complexities of real-world scenarios and supports "equifinality," showing that different factors can yield the same outcome, thereby highlighting diverse pathways to a positive destination image. This method enabled the researchers to pinpoint particular configurations of attributes, such as trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness, across various sports categories, including football, tennis, and marathon running. Each participant completed a questionnaire designed to measure their perceptions of these attributes, which were calibrated to assess their significance in shaping the image of Spain. The application of fsQCA was justified based on its ability to integrate qualitative data and acknowledge various pathways to attain the same outcome, accurately representing the complexity involved in destination image formation.

The results revealed that specific attributes of sports celebrities were critical to enhancing Spain's image, with trustworthiness and expertise emerging as the most important across all sports categories. Attributes related to attractiveness were generally less significant and, in some cases, even counterproductive. Football players were identified as the most influential in shaping Spain's image, particularly for tourists, while marathon runners held significance for residents.

Annotated Bibliography

- 1. Yoo, J. J., Min, B., & Koh, Y. (2024). Cross-national news narratives of the Paralympic games: Computational text analysis of the media coverage in the United States and South Korea. *Communication & Sport, 12*(2), 230-253.**

The study investigated how media coverage of the Paralympic Games in the United States and South Korea reflects national cultural values, specifically individualism in the U.S. and collectivism in South Korea. Researchers collected two decades of news articles about the Paralympics from major newspapers in both countries. They used Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) topic modelling to identify themes and patterns in the coverage. They found that U.S. media emphasised narratives of individual athletes overcoming disability, known as the “supercrip” narrative, aligning with an individualistic cultural orientation. In contrast, South Korean media highlighted government support for the Paralympics as part of national efforts, promoting a collective image. This study contributed to cross-cultural media analysis by showing how cultural values influence representations of athletes with disabilities, and it underscores the potential of computational analysis in revealing thematic trends across large data sets.

- 2. Tickell, S., Sobral, V., & Meier, H. E. (2024). Finding a niche in digital plenitude: Sport media strategies of smaller European football leagues. *European Sport Management Quarterly, 24*(4), 876-897**

This paper investigated the impact of digital disruption on the sports media landscape, focusing particularly on smaller European football leagues. It addressed these leagues' challenges, such as increased global competition and evolving consumer behaviours. By conducting a comparative case study involving eight leagues, the authors employed document analysis and expert interviews to assess how they have adapted their business models to account for digital transformation. Key strategies include collective marketing of overseas rights, leveraging local cultural significance, and diversifying media channels. Despite their limited resources, findings showed that these leagues are creating a hybrid model that balances traditional broadcasting partnerships with innovative digital approaches like streaming and selling betting rights. The study emphasised these leagues' need to cultivate a “digital mindset” and maintain flexibility in an unpredictable future sports media environment.

3. Sun, J. Y. (2024). Free Agent Migration in the Korean Professional Baseball League: To Move or Not to Move. *International Journal of Sport Finance*, 19(2), 89–109. <https://doi.org/10.32731/IJSF/192.052024.02>

Sun (2024) examined free agent migration in the Korean Professional Baseball League (KBO) and utilised an econometric probit model to analyse data from 2000 to 2018, focusing on pitcher and hitter mobility patterns. They classified players as pitchers or hitters and used a binary dependent variable to measure the probability of a free agent moving teams. Variables included player characteristics (e.g., age, handedness), performance metrics (such as WAR), contract factors (e.g., length, signing bonuses), and team attributes like home city population and revenue. To enhance robustness, the model specifications were tested with alternative performance measures, including past WAR ratios. The study also explored the influence of market size and financial compensation on mobility, revealing significant findings on contract length, signing bonuses, and player productivity as predictors of transfer decisions.

4. Jorgensen, M. P., Hagopian, M. A., Mainwaring, L., & O'Hagan, F. T. (2024). Match official experiences with the blue card protocol in amateur rugby: Implementing rowan's law for concussion management. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 16(2), 291-306

This research on the Blue Card protocol in amateur rugby employed Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to explore the experiences of six Canadian rugby match officials with this concussion management tool. The researchers conducted semi-structured interviews, directing participants through discussions on concussion awareness, the Blue Card protocol, and risk management within rugby. Data analysis adhered to a five-stage IPA process, where researchers coded and progressively refined emerging themes like "Community Engagement" and "Comfort with the Blue Card." The findings suggested support and resistance patterns in the rugby community and assessed how personal experiences and liability issues impacted officials' comfort levels.

5. O'Reilly, N., Paras, C., Gierc, M., Lithopoulos, A., Banerjee, A., Ferguson, L., ... & Faulkner, G. (2024). Nostalgia-based marketing campaigns and sport participation. *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, 25(3), 664-683

This study used an exploratory sequential mixed-methods approach to investigate how nostalgia-based marketing influences sports participation. Initially, they conducted a

qualitative secondary analysis of five focus groups with diverse demographics to collect unprompted insights regarding nostalgic connections to ParticipACTION's Body Break campaign. This analysis informed the creation of a quantitative survey in the second phase, which was distributed online to 1,475 adults across Canada. Through path analysis, the researchers tested a model to understand the relationships among nostalgia, brand resonance, and sports engagement. This systematic two-stage design facilitated a deep thematic analysis, followed by extensive statistical validation, highlighting how effective nostalgia can be in encouraging physical activity among different generational groups.

6. Kim, K. (2024). Conceptualization and Examination of the Push-Pull-Mooring Framework in Predicting Fitness Consumer Switching Behavior. *Journal of Global Sport Management*, 9(1), 39–61.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/24704067.2021.2013128>

Kim (2024) utilised a mixed-methods sequential design grounded in the push-pull-mooring (PPM) framework to examine fitness consumer switching behaviour. Study 1 employed qualitative open-ended questions to identify relevant push (negative factors of current services), pull (positive alternatives), and mooring (factors deterring switching) influences specific to fitness centres, resulting in a higher-order reflective-formative PPM model. Study 2 followed with a quantitative analysis, utilising a two-wave survey to test the relationships within the PPM framework empirically. Partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was applied to measure the impact of these factors on actual switching behaviour and to assess mooring effects as moderators. This design contextualised the PPM framework, providing insights into fitness consumer loyalty and migration drivers. The study found that push and pull factors significantly increased the likelihood of switching behaviour among fitness consumers, while mooring effects reduced this likelihood and moderated the influence of push and pull factors, indicating that strong attachments to current fitness centres can mitigate switching even when consumers perceive better alternatives.

7. Li, J., Sun, S., & Ho, M. S. (2024). Immediate Impacts of Air Pollution on the Performance of Football Players. *Journal of Sports Economics*, 25(6), 753–776.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/15270025241260031>

To analyse the immediate impacts of air pollution on football player performance in the Chinese Football Association Super League, Li et al. (2024) employed a two-stage least squares instrumental variable (IV) approach. Using air pollution data from monitoring stations combined with game data from 1,440 matches between 2014 and 2019, the researchers estimated the causal effects of pollution on player productivity, measured primarily through the number of passes. The IV approach used wind direction and long-range pollution transmission as instruments to address potential endogeneity issues. Findings indicated that a 1% increase in air pollution led to a 0.101% reduction in passes, with significant variation based on player fitness and home-field advantage.

8. Sveinson, K., & Macaulay, C. D. (2024). Selling Gender Through Kids' Sport Team Merchandise: A Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis. *Journal of Sport Management*, 38(4), 240-256. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.2023-0114>

Recent research on team-branded fan apparel has started to reveal the communicative meanings associated with fan clothing, focusing on its gendered aspects. The study built on earlier work by analysing children's sport fan apparel through a social semiotics lens. The authors examined 377 items from 14 teams across seven major U.S. leagues. Utilising a feminist perspective and multimodal critical discourse analysis, it reveals how organisational practices and frameworks are expressed through the discourses and meanings found in the marketing of these products. The findings highlighted the existence of both gender-segregated and seemingly gender-neutral discourses, along with notions of "good parenting" that suggest purchasing these items reflects parenting values. The study concluded that to promote gender equity and inclusivity, sports organisations need to critically evaluate their internal gendered practices to align their marketing materials and products with these objectives.

9. Pape, L., Koenigstorfer, J., & Casper, J. (2024). Sport teams' promotion of plant-based food consumption among fans. *Sport Management Review*, 27(1), 150-174. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14413523.2023.2259146>

Using a two-part survey methodology, Pape et al. (2024) analysed the influence of sports teams' promotion of plant-based diets on fans' sustainable food choices. In Study 1, 799 fans from 12 teams with environmental food initiatives were surveyed to measure awareness of these initiatives, fan-team personality alignment, and team value internalisation. Study 2 employed an experimental survey design, manipulating team

identification levels among 356 fans of a single team (Boston Red Sox) to assess how varying identification impacts awareness and plant-based consumption. The findings revealed that fans with strong team identification were more likely to align with the team's sustainable food practices. In contrast, lower identification levels correlated with a perceived personality gap, negatively impacting plant-based consumption despite high initiative awareness.

10. Carlini, J., Thomson, A., O'Neil, A., & Green, A. (2024). Understanding the interplay between event communications and local business decision-making using signalling theory: the case of the 2018 Commonwealth Games. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 24(2), 428–448.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2022.2125996>

This study investigated the influence of event communications on local business decision-making during the 2018 Commonwealth Games. Utilising signalling theory, Carlini et al. (2024) analysed the impacts of messages by conducting 38 in-depth interviews with Gold Coast business professionals from various sectors, including tourism, hospitality, and property development. Through inductive thematic analysis with NVivo software, they identified patterns in business perceptions and their responses. The study examined how the event's information asymmetry affected businesses' ability to leverage the Games. It revealed that exaggerated forecasts and vague messaging led to unrealistic expectations, often causing operational losses. The findings suggest that enhancing the quality of event information and its contextual relevance could improve the effectiveness of future event-driven economic strategies.

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Sport Governance and Policy

Dr Shushu Chen

Introduction

The field of sport governance and policy has seen some important development, particularly in response to the increasing complexity of multi-level governance frameworks, the need for inclusivity, and the demand for more efficient management practices.

This section brings together eight academic articles that each offer useful insights into different aspects of sport governance and policy. These articles were selected for their contributions to understanding the multifaceted nature of governance, with particular attention to individual, organisational, and institutional influences. The studies cover a wide range of topics, including the role of individual board members in shaping governance at the community level, the challenges faced by organisations in implementing global anti-doping policies, and the impact of regional and national policies on health promotion through sport.

Collectively, these articles contribute to a more nuanced understanding of governance in sport, emphasising the interplay between strategic priorities and operational constraints, the influence of personal values and experiences on governance outcomes, and the importance of context-specific policy frameworks. This review synthesises the key findings from each article, with a focus on how they advance the theoretical and practical discourse in sport governance and policy.

Papers in this Section Review

Kerwin et al. (2024) examine how the personal experiences and behaviours of individual board members influence governance in Canadian community-level sport organisations. Using a qualitative ethnographic method, the researchers observed six boards over the course of a year and conducted interviews with 30 board members. The study identifies three main themes: the tension between operational and strategic priorities, the differing senses of community among board members, and the impact of individual power on board coherence. One of the key findings is that many boards prioritise operational tasks—such as handling registration issues—over long-term strategic planning. This operational focus often stems from individual assumptions and values, which can create power imbalances on the board. Long-tenured members tend to hold significant influence, marginalising newer members and limiting the board's

ability to make cohesive, strategic decisions. The study also highlights the fragmentation in governance priorities caused by differing personal connections to the board and community. These personal influences lead to governance stagnation, where operational concerns take precedence over strategic goals. Kerwin et al. argue that traditional governance models, which focus solely on structure, overlook the crucial role of individual experiences in shaping governance outcomes. They call for policies that account for these individual influences to promote more inclusive and effective governance practices.

Van Hoye et al. (2024) investigate how national and local policies in Ireland support health promotion within sport clubs, which have the potential to act as health-promoting environments. Using the Health Promoting Sports Clubs National Audit Tool, the authors conducted a content analysis of 17 policy documents and interviewed 12 key policymakers. The study identifies 49 policy actions targeting health promotion in sport but highlights that many of these initiatives focus on individual health behaviours, such as physical activity and gender equity, rather than adopting a holistic, settings-based health promotion model. The research finds that most policies emphasise health education instead of making systemic changes within sport clubs to improve health promotion. This fragmented approach leads to inefficiencies in the coordination and monitoring of policies, resulting in limited impact at the community level. Despite strong policy frameworks, the lack of coordinated national efforts means that many sports clubs struggle to implement health-promoting practices effectively. The authors call for more comprehensive, cross-sectoral coordination and improved evaluation mechanisms to better integrate health promotion into sport clubs. Additionally, the findings suggest that health sector policies are more aligned with a settings-based approach, while other sectors lag in adopting such comprehensive strategies. Van Hoye et al. conclude that future policies should adopt a more integrated approach, considering sport clubs as holistic environments for health promotion.

Brazier et al. (2024) explore how professional sport clubs in England deliver health and wellbeing programmes within local communities and evaluate the effectiveness of their monitoring and evaluation practices. The study identifies 176 health and wellbeing programmes across football, rugby, and cricket leagues, with the English Football League and Premier League clubs representing for the majority. Despite the high volume of programmes, only a small percentage report measurable health outcomes, and the evaluation of their impact is often anecdotal, relying heavily

on engagement metrics rather than formal data. Most impact reports focus on case studies and participant engagement, while rigorous methods for measuring health improvements are largely absent. The research highlights a critical gap in standardised monitoring and evaluation frameworks, which limits the ability to assess the true public health impact of professional sport club programmes. The authors call for more structured partnerships between professional sport clubs and public health authorities to develop robust evaluation methods that can better demonstrate the health benefits of these initiatives. By improving monitoring and evaluation practices, professional sport clubs could play a more integral role in national health promotion strategies, particularly in addressing issues like physical inactivity and mental health.

Rich et al. (2024) examine the influence of regional policy on the structuration of organisational fields in the context of multi-level sport governance in Ontario, Canada. Using an instrumental case study methodology, they analyse 88 policy documents from 1995 to 2021 to explore how regional governments shape sport policy implementation. The findings reveal that regional policymakers play a crucial role in distributing resources and shaping accountability within sport governance. Specifically, the study identifies two main themes: the changing role of sport and the emphasis on accountability and responsibilities. Regional policy, influenced by administrative changes and shifting ideas about governance, repositions sport as a tool for economic development, particularly through tourism and community-building initiatives. This shift has implications for the roles and responsibilities of sport organisations, which are increasingly expected to operate self-sufficiently with reduced government support. The study highlights the importance of understanding regional actors' agency within the broader multi-level governance framework, noting that regional policy significantly impacts how sport organisations navigate financial and operational pressures. Rich et al. call for further research on the role of regional policy in shaping sport institutions and emphasise the need for policy frameworks that account for regional differences, particularly in decentralised systems like Canada's.

McRae et al. (2024) critically examine whether Canadian national sport organisations are adequately addressing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, particularly Call #90, which focuses on anti-racism education and the inclusion of Indigenous peoples in sport policies. Through semi-structured interviews with 10 participants from eight national sport organisations and a document analysis of their safe sport and equity policies, the study reveals several key issues. First, many

national sport organisations assume that their existing equity, diversity, and inclusion policies are already inclusive of Indigenous peoples, negating the need for specific anti-Indigenous racism policies. However, the research finds that this assumption often masks the systemic racism faced by Indigenous athletes, with policies alone proving insufficient to address these deeply rooted issues. Comprehensive education and resources are deemed necessary to complement existing policies. Despite some awareness of these challenges, the study highlights that Sport Canada has not made the Call#90 a priority, resulting in a lack of funding and coordinated efforts toward reconciliation. The article critiques this lack of urgency, noting that it perpetuates settler colonialism by framing reconciliation as optional. McRae et al. call for mandatory anti-Indigenous racism training and stronger government mandates to ensure that national sport organisations meaningfully engage with the Call#90 recommendations.

Moreno et al. (2024) analyse the tension between policy designers ("thinkers") and implementers ("doers") in Chile's sport policy reforms from 2001 to 2022. The study draws from interviews with policymakers and a review of legislative documents to explore the reforms related to the National Institute of Sport and the Ministry of Sport, established in 2013. A key theme is the dichotomy between the Ministry of Sport, responsible for policy design, and the National Institute of Sport, tasked with policy implementation. The reforms, influenced by New Public Management, aimed to modernise the public sector but led to conflicts with existing discretionary practices carried over from earlier institutions. This friction between technocratic reforms and clientelist practices weakened the reforms' long-term impact. The study highlights persistent issues, such as political appointments and short-term agendas, which have impeded effective governance and created instability between the two bodies. Additionally, the analysis points to the challenges in balancing political motives, such as hosting mega-events like the 2023 Santiago Pan American Games, with the need for more efficient and sustainable sport administration. Despite efforts at reform, Chile's sport governance remains constrained by historical legacies and political structures that limit the potential for lasting institutional change. Moreno et al. argue that future reforms should consider the complex interaction between rules, practices, and narratives to better navigate the challenges of institutional change in the sport sector.

Read et al. (2024) explore the complexities of harmonising anti-doping policy implementation across diverse global regions, focusing on the challenges encountered by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA). The study centres on the Regional Anti-

Doping Organisations (RADOs) and uses semi-structured interviews with 22 RADO staff members and board representatives to identify factors that hinder consistent policy implementation among National Anti-Doping Organisations (NADOs). Four main themes emerge: socio-geographic, political, organisational, and human resource variations. Socio-geographic challenges include inadequate internet infrastructure, language barriers, and varying levels of athlete education, all of which impede the effective dissemination of anti-doping policies. Political challenges involve conflicts between national sporting priorities and anti-doping compliance, while organisational hurdles highlight the lack of operational independence for many NADOs, which are often integrated into government or sporting bodies. Additionally, human resource shortages and frequent staff turnover further complicate policy enforcement, particularly in developing regions. The study argues that WADA's top-down governance model does not adequately address these localised challenges, recommending a shift towards more flexible strategies, such as enhanced collaboration between RADOs and the sharing of resources to support compliance.

Peng et al. (2024) explore the process of depoliticising football governance in China following the 2015 national football reforms. Using documentary analysis and semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, the study examines the decoupling of the Chinese Football Association (CFA) from the General Administration of Sport of China to grant the CFA more autonomy. However, the study reveals that this depoliticisation process was incomplete, with re-politicisation occurring through the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) influence within the CFA's leadership structure. The authors highlight three levels of depoliticisation—macro, meso, and micro—each of which involved different strategies to reduce government control. Despite the official reforms, the CCP retained significant influence, with the Party Committee embedded within the CFA, thereby maintaining oversight of key decisions. This created a tension between the desire to decentralise control and the reality of continued political oversight. The research contributes to understanding governance reforms in authoritarian contexts, illustrating how attempts at depoliticisation can be undermined by political realities, leading to a process of re-politicisation.

Conclusion

The collective contributions of the reviewed articles provide valuable insights into the evolving complexities of sport governance and policy. These studies emphasise

the challenges of balancing strategic priorities with operational demands, the influence of individual actors within governance structures, and the broader implications for policy formulation and practice within sport management.

One key theme is the tension between *strategic* and *operational* governance. Kerwin et al. (2024) reveal that community-level sport governance often suffers from a misalignment between long-term strategic goals and the day-to-day operational tasks that dominate board discussions. This misalignment is also evident in Moreno et al.'s (2024) analysis of Chilean sport reforms, where policy designers ("thinkers") and implementers ("doers") clash over governance priorities, leading to instability and weakened reform efforts. Both studies suggest that future governance models must account for the operational realities that constrain strategic decision-making in order to create more sustainable policies.

The role of policy in health promotion and equity also emerges as critical to sport governance. Van Hoye et al. (2024) examine how Irish sports clubs function as health-promoting environments but highlight the fragmented and inefficient implementation of health policies. Similarly, Brazier et al. (2024) identify significant gaps in the monitoring and evaluation of health and wellbeing programs run by English professional sports clubs. Both studies call for stronger partnerships between sport organisations and public health authorities, as well as the development of standardised frameworks for evaluating the impact of health initiatives. These findings underscore the need for a more integrated approach to health promotion through sport, which can maximise the potential of sport organisations as drivers of public health.

The importance of accountability and responsibilities is also a recurring theme. Rich et al. (2024) highlight how regional policymakers in Ontario, Canada, shape governance outcomes by shifting responsibilities onto sport organisations, requiring them to navigate financial and operational challenges with minimal government support. McRae et al. (2024) extend this discussion to the issue of equity in Canadian sport, showing that many national sport organisations have failed to fully engage with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. This failure, particularly around anti-Indigenous racism, stems from the assumption that existing equity policies are sufficient, without creating specific anti-racism initiatives. Both articles stress the need for greater accountability in governance and the development of policies that genuinely address issues of inclusion and equity.

Lastly, the challenges of global governance 'harmonisation' are addressed by Read et al. (2024), who examine the difficulties the WADA faces in enforcing consistent anti-doping policies across different regions. The study calls for more flexible, region-specific approaches to ensure compliance, highlighting the importance of tailoring global policies to local contexts. Similarly, Peng et al. (2024) analyse the partial depoliticisation of football governance in China, revealing that political oversight continues to shape governance despite official reforms. Both studies suggest that governance models in sport must strike a balance between maintaining global standards and adapting to local political, cultural, and organisational realities.

Future research can continue exploring these intersections, particularly focusing on how governance structures can better integrate inclusivity, accountability, and sustainability into sport management practices.

Annotated Bibliography

Kerwin, S., Trussell, D. E., Cheevers, R., Ritondo, T., & McClean, C. (2024). A critical examination of how experiences shape board governance at the community level of sport. *Sport Management Review*, 27(2), 197-212.

This article investigates how individual board members' behaviours and experiences shape governance in community sport organizations. Through an ethnographic study of six community sport boards in Canada, the authors found that board governance is influenced by dualities between operational and strategic tasks, the varying sense of community among members, and the power of individuals in shaping structural coherence. The research highlights the challenges of balancing top-down mandates with local community priorities, emphasising how individual assumptions and relationships can dominate governance processes, potentially leading to fragmentation. This study contributes to sport governance literature by offering insights into how individual board member values and interactions influence the effectiveness of governance at the community level.

Van Hoye, A., Lane, A., Vuillemin, A., & Woods, C. (2024). An exploration of national and local policies supporting health promoting sports clubs in the Republic of Ireland. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 16(2), 271-290.

This article examines how national and local policies in the Republic of Ireland support the development of Health Promoting Sport Clubs. Using the National Audit Tool, the

authors analyse 17 policy documents and conduct 12 interviews with policymakers to identify how policies are framed, evaluated, and implemented. The study finds that while policies from sectors like health and sport include health promotion actions, they often focus on narrow topics such as physical activity and gender equity, rather than a holistic, settings-based approach. The research highlights the need for better coordination and more comprehensive policy frameworks to enhance the role of sport clubs in health promotion.

Brazier, J., Foster, C., Townsend, N., Murphy, J., Northcote, M., & Smith, A. (2024). Mapping the provision and evaluation practices of local community health and wellbeing programmes delivered by professional sports clubs in England. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 16(1), 39-58.

This study provides an in-depth review of health and wellbeing programmes delivered by professional sport clubs in England. It maps 176 programmes and 36 impact reports from clubs across several major sports, including football, rugby, and cricket. The article highlights significant inconsistencies in how these programmes are evaluated, with most clubs relying on anecdotal case studies and limited use of measurement tools. The authors argue that more comprehensive monitoring and evaluation practices are needed to align these programmes more closely with national health policy goals. By presenting a detailed analysis of current practices, the study contributes to discussions on how professional sport clubs can be more effectively integrated into public health promotion.

Rich, K. A., Nelson, G., Borgen-Flood, T., & Pegoraro, A. (2024). Regional policy and organisational fields in multi-level sport governance. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 24(1), 51-71.

This article explores the role of regional policy in shaping organisational fields within multi-level sport governance in Canada, with a particular focus on Ontario. It examines how political changes, regional government actions, and policy directions impact the structure of sport institutions and their policy implementation processes. Through a critical policy analysis of 88 documents spanning 1995–2021, the study identifies two major themes: the evolving role of sport in governance, and the accountability structures imposed on sport organisations. The research highlights how regional

policies significantly influence the availability of resources, strategic priorities, and the relationships between various levels of governance.

McRae, N., Giles, A., & Hayhurst, L. (2024). Safe sport for whom? Are national sport organisations addressing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action for sport through safe sport policies? *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 16(2), 235-253.

This article critically examines whether National Sport Organisations in Canada are addressing anti-Indigenous racism and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action for sport through their Safe Sport policies. Through semi-structured interviews with staff from eight National Sport Organisations and policy analysis, the authors identified three key discourses: the exclusion of anti-Indigenous racism in safe sport policies, the need for education and resources beyond policy, and the lack of prioritisation of the calls by Sport Canada. The findings reveal significant gaps in how National Sport Organisations address reconciliation, perpetuating settler colonialism through inaction. The study advocates for more explicit anti-Indigenous racism policies and culturally relevant training within safe sport initiatives.

Moreno, D., Sam, M. P., & Jackson, S. J. (2024). Sport policy reforms in Chile: The tension between 'doers' and 'thinkers'. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 16(1), 21-38.

This study examines the evolution of sport policy in Chile from 2001 to 2022, focusing on the tension between "thinkers" (policymakers) and "doers" (implementers). Using institutional theory, the authors analyse the effects of reforms, particularly the creation of the National Institute of Sport (IND) and the Ministry of Sport (MINDEP). Through interviews with policymakers and document analysis, the study reveals that the dichotomy between thinkers and doers—created by New Public Management (NPM) reforms—has caused friction, accountability issues, and challenges in delivering effective sport policy. This research provides a critical lens for understanding institutional change in sport governance in developing countries.

Read, D., Skinner, J., Smith, A. C. T., Lock, D., & Stanic, M. (2024). The challenges of harmonising anti-doping policy implementation. *Sport Management Review*, 27(3), 365-386.

This article explores the implementation challenges faced by the World Anti-Doping Agency in harmonising global anti-doping policies. Focusing on the disparities between National Anti-Doping Organisations, the study identifies socio-geographic, political, organisational, and human resource factors as key drivers of inter-signatory variation. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 22 Regional Anti-Doping Organisation representatives, and a thematic analysis was conducted to uncover the main barriers to policy harmonisation. The findings suggest that variations in resources, political agendas, and regional cultural differences significantly impact compliance, resulting in unequal policy implementation across different countries. The study contributes to sport governance literature by highlighting the complexities involved in enforcing uniform anti-doping standards in a diverse international context.

Peng, Q., Chen, S., & Berry, C. (2024). To let go or to control? Depoliticisation and (re)politicisation in Chinese football. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 16(1), 135-150.

This article explores the Chinese government's attempts to depoliticise football governance, focusing on the 2015 reform aimed at separating the Chinese Football Association (CFA) from government control. Using a combination of documentary analysis and interviews with CFA officials, the authors trace the complex processes of depoliticisation and subsequent repoliticisation, showing how the government has been reluctant to fully relinquish control over football governance. The study reveals that despite initial efforts to reduce political interference, repoliticisation occurred through the retention of key decision-making powers within government-appointed bodies, reflecting a broader tension between autonomy and state control in Chinese sport governance. This work provides critical insights into the dynamics of sport governance in authoritarian contexts.

Analysis of Sport Economics and Sport Finance Research: New Perspectives on the Demand for Sport

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Introduction

All papers considered in this section of the digest come from the ALL issues of 2024 and were published in the pre-selected journals. Of these journals, two are exclusively dedicated to sport economics and finance 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 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 identified papers covering sport economics related research that have been published in these seven journals, from January through December 2024:

JSE (V25 Issues 1-8): 42 papers, with all 42 covering sport economics related research,
IJSF (V19 Issues 1- 4): 16 papers, with all 16 covering sport economics related research,
ESMQ (V 24 Issues 1-6): 54 papers, with 11 covering sport economics-related research,

JSM (V38 Issues 1 - 6): 41papers, with 7 covering sport economics related research,
SMR (V27 Issues 1 - 5): 38 papers, 5 covering sport economics related research,
JGSM (V9 Issues 3 & 4): 40 papers with 3 covering sport economics related research.

The eighty-four sports economics related papers are classified in eight 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): 12 papers.

Effects of League Rules & Organization (effects on demand, individual and team performance, match or game outcomes, competitive balance) 8 papers

Performance Analysis (such as home advantage, tournament effects, and behavioral sport economics such as the effect of travel, home field, etc. on performance): 10 papers.

Demand for Sport (the determinants of stadium attendance, TV viewing): 16 papers.

Sport and Vice (financial analysis of sports gambling markets, effects of law and policy on sports wagering, doping and sport outcomes): 5 papers.

Finance & Ownership (such as the financial returns to investment sport, sport and financial markets, public finance and economic impact): 6 papers.

Gender Issues in Sport (women in sport, gender identity and sport policy, gender discrimination policy) 14 papers

Miscellaneous: (other not classified topics): 14 papers.

The Economics of Gender Issues in Sport

The interest in gender in sport was preeminent in 2024. In the USA the “Caitlin Clark” effect, propelled women’s basketball viewership to new heights first at the college level and then in the WNBA as Ms. Clark entered that professional league. With that attention came new debate on how women were paid and treated relative to their male peers. Moreover, with increasing questions about gender identity and the binary nature of sport participation along gender lines, the debate on who is eligible to participate in women’s sport intensified.

The subject was not lost on academic research. As noted above 14 papers addressed the economics of gender issues in 2024. There were numerous other papers in the sport management journals addressing gender issues in sport from other perspectives. The Journal of Sports Economics devoted a full issue (V25, 8) to the 50th Anniversary of the Title IX law which mandated equal opportunities for American women in all educational programs and led to an burst of sport offerings for women in secondary schools and colleges across the USA. All papers in the *Journal of Sport Management’s* 6th issue of 2024 (V 8, 6) focused

on examining gendered experiences in sport management. Of the six papers in that issue two were authored or co-authored by sports economists and included in the counts above.

Selected Article Discussion

From the JSE Title IX issue, Economists Michael Leeds and Eva Leeds point out that women's sports have received little attention from economists. The first 20 years of the Journal of Sports Economics found that less than 8% of the papers published in the journal's dealt with women's sports. Lisa A. Giddings, Professor of Economics at the University of Wisconsin, La Crosse provides an excellent synopsis of the current issues in women's sports in the USA. She appraises the origins and amendments to Title IX and its effects on girls and women in sports and beyond. Importantly she surveys the present issues including the participation by nonbinary, and transgender athletes and the regulatory efforts to balance fairness and inclusiveness. Lastly, Giddings considers racial issues in women's sports and compensation in men's versus women's sports. Concluding she notes that the benefits of participating in women's have not been conferred unequally. Women of color are concentrated mainly in basketball and track. Sports that require greater financial input, to secure access are populated mainly by white athletes. Legislative bodies begun to address DSD and transgender athletes and their participation in women's sports recently, but it's not clear how states and other governing bodies will ultimately address the delicate balance of inclusion and fairness when it comes to intersex and transgender women. Economists Nola Agha, David Berri, Courtney Paulson, and Stacey Brook find that besides men, which is well documented, NCAA women athletes are exploited as well. They show that women college softball players were worth far more than the value of their compensation by their colleges.

Moving to Europe, in 1971 Great Britain's Football Association rescinded a 50-year prohibition on women's soccer. Sports economists Pamela Wicker, Paul Downward, and Tim Thormann study how the opportunities for women to partake in football (soccer), in both formal and informal levels, contributes to their wellbeing. Interestingly the authors find that soccer participation adds more to the wellbeing of women than of men.

Sport management professors Liz Taylor, Katherine Sveinson, and Laura Burton consider the challenges faced by women working in the sport industry. Gender regimes as the conceptual framework, utilizes the experiences of gender-based violence and sexual harassment within sport organizations. Their findings show the influence of multilevel

relationships to gender-based violence and sexual harassment experienced by women is impacted by the presence of gender regimes. The authors contend that institutional-level failures to protect women characterize organizational achievement and reinforces gender regimes. The resolute containment of these incidents maintains a gender/power hierarchy.

Annotated bibliography

Leeds, M. A.; Leeds, E. M. (2024) "And Yet...": Title IX Fifty Years on An Introduction. *Journal of Sports Economics*, [s. l.], v. 25(8), 895–903.

Abstract: The half-century since Title IX was enacted has seen an explosion of opportunities for women and girls. While Title IX has opened doors in a wide array of areas, it will always be associated primarily with women's sports. The effect on women's sports has indeed been profound. Participation and funding has ballooned at all levels, from grade school to the professional ranks. Still, much remains to be done, as participation, attitudes, and support of girls' and women's sports continue to lag behind those of boys and men. The articles in this volume examine the growth of a variety of women's sports in the wake of Title IX. Collectively, they show how much has been achieved and how much remains to be done.

Giddings, Lisa A. 2024. "Serena, Simone, and Semenya: After 50 Years, the Past, Present, and Future of Title IX." *Journal of Sports Economics* 25 (8): 904–18.

Abstract: This article reviews the origins and amendments to Title IX, its effects on girls and women in sports and beyond, as well as men and male sports in the United States. It goes on to explore current issues facing the law including intersex, nonbinary, and transgender athletes as well as recent regulatory attempts to balance fairness and inclusiveness in the legislation such as its effect on women of color, and equal pay in professional sports

Agha, N., Berri, D., Brook, S. L., & Paulson, C. (2024). Exploitation in College Sports: No Longer Just a "Man's Game." *Journal of Sports Economics*, 25(8), 965–988.

Abstract: Previous studies of college athlete compensation have generally focused on the "revenue sports" of football and men's basketball. Hence, wage exploitation is often considered a "man's game." In the 50 years since Title IX, many women's college sports have reported millions of dollars in revenue, suggesting wage exploitation is possible in college softball. Data on 19,760 athletes from 294 universities from 2012 to 2021, combined with two different sources of athletic revenue reach the same conclusion: wage exploitation exists in college softball. Furthermore, thousands of players generate more revenue in college than the wages they are likely to earn playing professional softball.

Downward, P., P. Wicker, and T. F. Thormann. (2024). "The Well-Being and Social Value of Playing Soccer for Women and Men." *Journal of Sports Economics* 25 (8): 1003–24.

Abstract: This study examines the well-being and social value of playing different forms of soccer for men and women by employing the compensating variation approach to survey data from eight European countries. Framed by the desired objective of Title IX, this research assesses possible gender differences in the social benefits of sport. Social values are higher than the well-being derived from playing soccer, with the values of both being greater for women. Less formal forms of soccer yield generally higher monetary values than the competitive 11-a-side format. As the marginal returns are greater, investment should promote women's engagement and more informal playing opportunities.

Taylor, E., Sveinson, K., & Burton, L. (2024). "If This Is What Working in Sports Is, I Want Absolutely No Part of It": Women's Experiences With Sexual Harassment in Sport Organizations. *Journal of Sport Management*, 38(6), 383–398.

Abstract: There is a plethora of recent examples from the sport industry that situate sport organizations as contributing to sexual violence against women (e.g., Phoenix Suns, Nike). Though research has shown that these issues exist in sport, little work has focused on the impacts of gender-based violence and sexual harassment. Therefore, utilizing gender regimes as our conceptual framework, we explored how experiences of gender-based violence and sexual harassment within sport organizations work to perpetuate the gender inequality in sport workplaces. Findings illustrate the influence of a multilevel relationship to

the gender-based violence and sexual harassment experienced by women is impacted by the presence of gender regimes and use of containment strategies to conceal this abuse. Thus, we argue that institutional-level failures to protect women represent organizational success, which reinforces gender regimes and the purposeful containment of these incidents maintains the gender/power hierarchy.

The Geography of Sport Management Research in the first half of 2024

Xiaoyan Xing

Introduction

We continued our analysis of the settings in which sport management (SM) research occurs, as well as the geographical distribution of SM knowledge production for articles published in the first half of 2024 across the ten targeted journals. Our analysis focuses specifically on the research context; therefore, we only included studies that collected first-hand empirical data related to specific settings, while excluding reviews, conceptual papers, and other types of publications. During the covered period, we collected a sample of 239 published articles, of which 196 were empirical studies. To maintain consistency in our analysis, we utilized the same coding protocol for examining the geography of SM research that was previously employed in earlier issues of the Sport Management Digest (SMD).

Geography of the SM research settings

We explored the geography of SM research settings along two dimensions: **sport domains** and **individual sports**. We also charted each dimension against the continents where the research was conducted to achieve a geographical understanding.

We use the term "**sport domain**" to refer to the various forms through which sport is delivered, as well as the key stakeholders involved in these processes. To recap, the 10 **sport domains** are professional sport, collegiate athletics (also school sport in general), sport events (including all types such as mega-events, major-events, and mass participant sport events), sport organizations (including non-profit sport clubs, national and international sport organizations), community sport / sport for development (SFD), elite sport (also competitive sport), sport industry (also commercial sport), sport consumers (including spectators, participants, and consumers of general nature), sport media (referring to the

organizations and professionals responsible for producing sport media content but not the content itself), and the other.

Several clarifications should be provided regarding the coding protocol for sport domains. Firstly, the domains are not strictly mutually exclusive. To address this issue, we adhere to a specific-first rule in our coding protocol. For instance, we code studies examining spectators of specific sports event(s) to the domain of sport events, games of professional league(s) to the domain of professional sports, and organizational behaviour of athletic departments in the NCAA to the domain of collegiate athletics. Indeed, a specific sport domain, such as sport events, can provide a context for examining SM topics that range from event legacy and leveraging to media presentation and framing, social media, marketing, sponsorship, national identity, soft power, public support, economic issues, doping, and more.

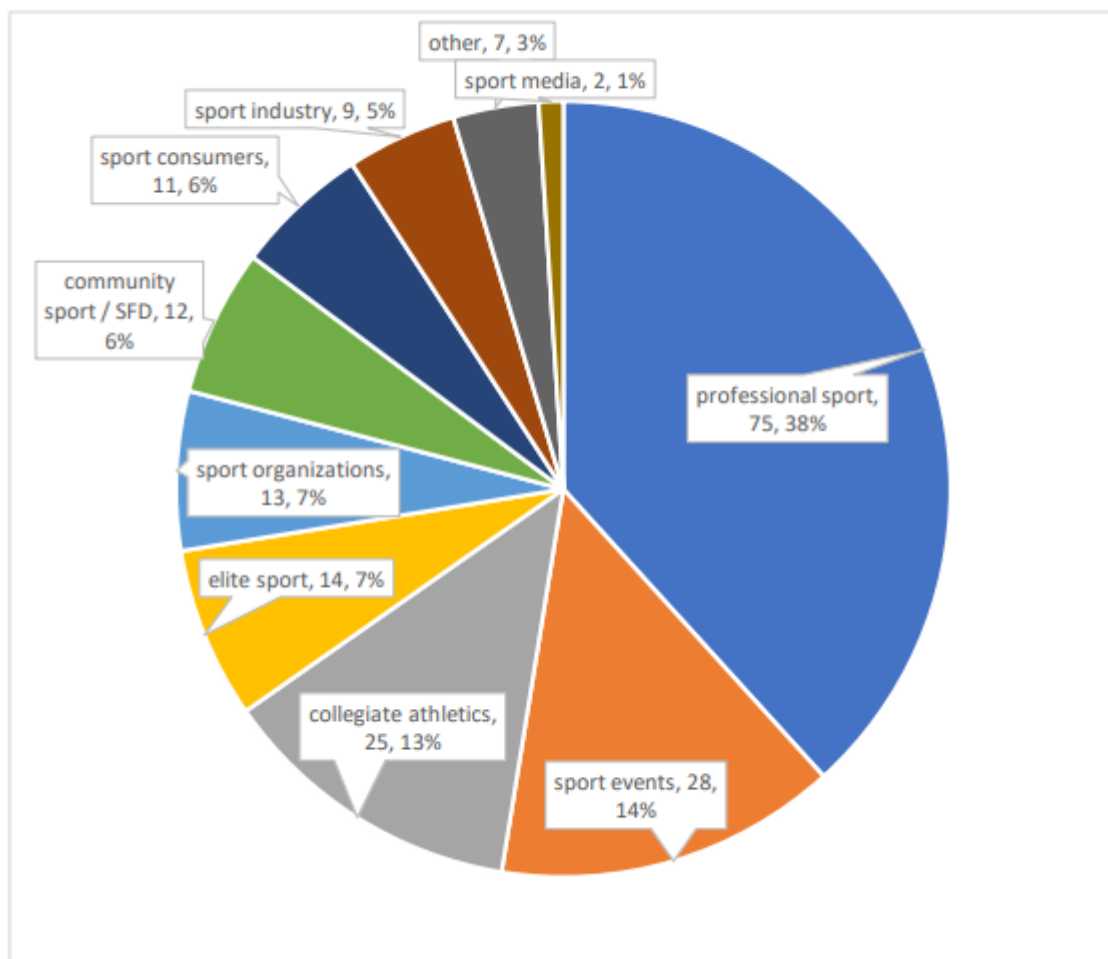
Secondly, when a study examines the psychology and behaviour of general sport consumers—such as participants, fans, or spectators—who do not belong to a specific domain context (e.g., professional sport, collegiate athletics, sport events), the study will be coded to the domain of sport consumers. Similarly, if a study focuses on the consumers of a specific sport without further specifying the associated domains, it will also be coded to the domain of sport consumers. For example, a study examining the motives and demographics of individuals who watch various online gaming streams would fall into this category.

The third note relates to the domain of sport media. We differentiate the sector of sport media production from the media content itself. Studies analysing selected media content to address research questions will be noted for their use of media content as a primary data source but coded to the sport domain that gives rise to this media content. For example, a study examining how media coverage of a major sporting event portrays athletes with disabilities compared to able-bodied athletes will be coded under the domain of sport events. Additionally, the study will be coded into an additional category to reflect its use of media content as a data source or its placement within a mediated context.

As illustrated in Figure 1, 38% of the 196 empirical articles published in this period focused on the domain of professional sport, followed by sport events (14%), collegiate athletics (13%), elite sport (7%), sport organizations (7%),

community sport/sport for development (6%), sport consumers (6%), and the sport industry/commercial sport (5%). The remaining two domains each accounted for a small percentage. This distribution pattern across the ten sport domains has remained consistent in our analyses published in previous issues of SMD, particularly highlighting the predominance of a professional sport context in addressing various SM research questions.

Figure 1. The distribution of sport domains



In terms of utilizing media content as a data source, 13% (26) of the examined articles fall into this category. These articles are distributed across the following domains: professional sport (13), sport events (8), collegiate athletics (3), and elite sport (2).

Table 1 reports the distribution of sport domains across continental contexts. North America continues to be the continental context with the highest number of articles (44.9%), followed by Europe (24.0%) and Asia (15.8%). Studies situated in an international context accounted for 6.6% of the total. Oceania and cross-continental contexts contributed 3.1% and 2.6% of the studies, respectively. The presence of studies situated in Africa (2.0%) and Central and South America (1.0%) remains minimal.

The domain distribution across continental contexts revealed the following features:



The highest number of articles in the domain of professional sport originated from North America, followed by Europe and Asia.



During the covered period, all studies situated in collegiate athletics came from North America.



Asia continues to lead in the number of articles in the domain of sport events, with North America and Europe also being significant contributors to this domain.



Europe has the highest number of articles in the domains of sport organizations and elite sport.



North America also accounted for the greatest number of articles in the domains of community sport/SFD and sport consumers.

Table 1. Sport domains across continental contexts

Continental context									
Sport domain	NA	EU	OC	AS	AF	CSA	CC	IN	Total
Professional	36	19	2	11	1	0	1	5	75
Sport (%)	48.0	25.3	2.7	14.7	1.3	0.0	1.3	6.7	100.0
Sport events	6	6	1	9	0	1	2	3	28
(%)	21.4	21.4	3.6	32.1	0.0	3.6	7.1	10.7	100.0
Collegiate	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	25
Athletics (%)	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Elite sport	1	6	1	3	0	0	1	2	14
(%)	7.1	42.9	7.1	21.4	0.0	0.0	7.1	14.3	100.0
Sport	3	6	1	1	0	1	0	1	13
Organizations (%)	23.1	46.	7.7	7.7	0.0	7.7	0.0	7.7	100.0
Community	5	3	0	1	2	0	0	1	12
sport / SFD (%)	41.7	25.0	0.0	8.3	16.7	0.0	0.0	8.3	100.0
Sport	4	3	0	2	1	0	1	0	11
Consumers (%)	36.4	27.3	0.0	18.2	9.1	0.0	9.1	0.0	100.0

Sport industry	3	2	0	3	0	0	0	1	9
(%)	33.3	22.2	0.0	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.1	100.0
Other	3	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	7
(%)	42.9	28.6	14.3	14.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Sport media	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
(%)	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Total	88	47	6	31	4	2	5	13	196
(%)	44.9	24.0	3.1	15.8	2.0	1.0	2.6	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.

In terms of the specific sports that contextualized the sports management research settings, a significant portion of articles (37%) were situated in a multi-sports context or did not specify particular sports associated with the sport domain (see Figure 2). In studies set within a multi-sport context, the common combination of sports typically includes those associated with professional leagues, such as American football, soccer, basketball, ice hockey, and baseball.

As illustrated in Figure 2, soccer remained the most popular sport as SM research settings, followed by multi-sport events (typically associated with the Olympic and Paralympic Games), American football, basketball, e-sports, baseball, and running. Sports that appeared in only one article during this period included cricket, mixed martial arts (MMA), tennis, car racing, Australian football, and judo.

Figure 2. The distribution of specific sports

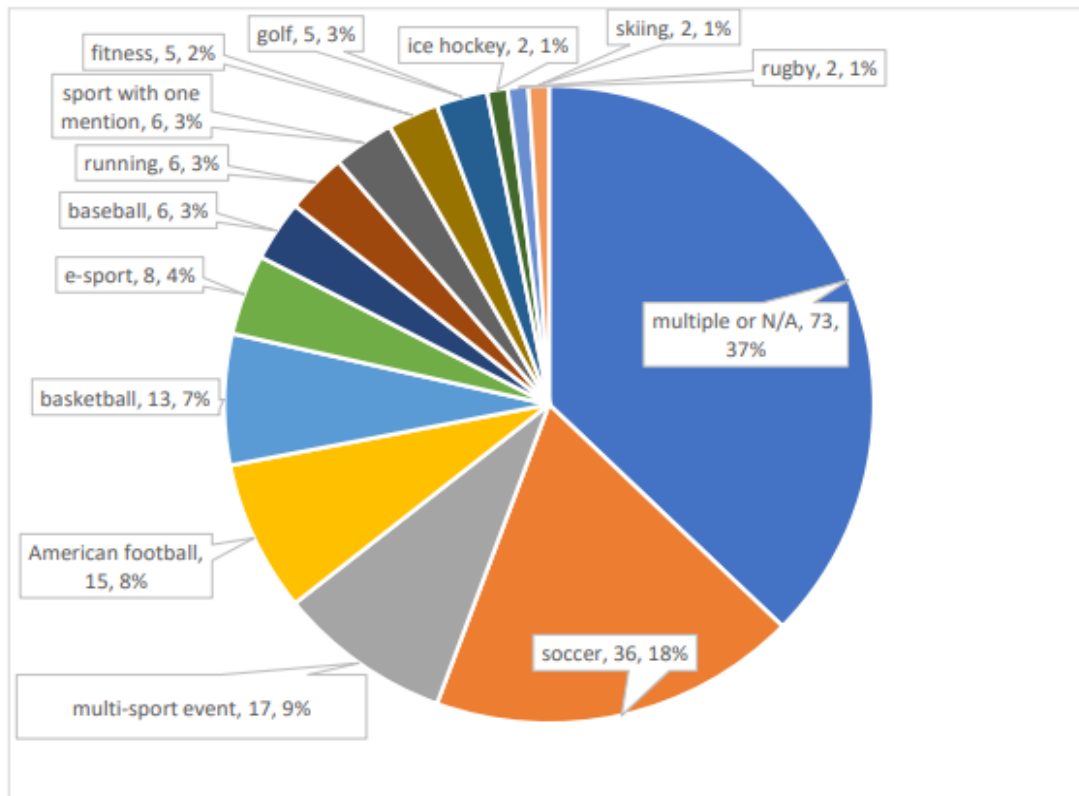


Table 2 presents the continental distribution of the top nine sports featured in the articles published during this period. It is not surprising that Europe continues to account for the majority of articles focusing on soccer (association football) in research settings, while North America hosts all articles using American football as the study setting and the majority of those on basketball. A significant number of articles related to multi-sport events, such as the Olympic and Paralympic Games, primarily originate from Asia, followed by North America. With the upcoming inauguration of the first Olympic E-sports Games in 2025 in Saudi Arabia, research in the e-sport context continues to gain traction, with North America and Asia being the leading regions for these articles.

Table 2. Specific sport by continental context

Continental context									
Sport	NA	EU	OC	AS	AF	CSA	CC	IN	Total
soccer	4	19	0	6	3	0	1	3	36
multi-sport event	4	2	1	6	0	1	2	1	17
American football	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15
basketball	12	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	13
e-sport	3	1	0	3	1	0	0	0	8
baseball	4	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	6
running	3	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	6
fitness	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	5
golf	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	5

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

The geography of SM knowledge production addresses two key questions: (1) What is the relationship between the continental context of the articles and the geographical location of the authors' institutional affiliations? and (2) How are the articles published by the ten targeted journals distributed geographically in terms of their continental contexts?

In addressing the first question, we focus on three patterns of the geographical context-author relationship: (1) consistent geographical alignment between context and author location, (2) inconsistent geographical alignment, and (3) cross-continental collaborative authorship, which may either concentrate on a single continental context or span multiple continents.

As illustrated in Table 3, articles based in the Global North are most likely to demonstrate a consistent geographical alignment with authors affiliated with

institutions on the same continent. The percentages for these articles are 89.8% for North America, 85.1% for Europe, and 66.7% for Oceania, respectively.

Table 3. Continental context versus author institutional affiliation

Continental context	Author institutional affiliation						
	NA	EU	OC	AS	AF	CC	
NA	79	2	0	0	0	7	88
NA (%)	89.8	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.0	100.0
EU	1	40	0	1	0	5	47
EU (%)	2.1	85.1	0.0	2.1	0.0	10.6	100.0
OC	0	0	4	0	0	2	6
OC (%)	0.0	0.0	66.7	0.0	0.0	33.3	100.0%
AS	5	4	1	8	0	13	31
AS (%)	16.1	12.9	3.2	25.8	0.0	41.9	100.0
AF	1	1	0	0	1	1	4
AF (%)	25.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	25.0	100.0
CSA	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
CSA (%)	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
CC	0	1	1	1	0	2	5
CC (%)	0.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	0.0	40.0	100.0
IN	3	5	0	0	0	5	13
IN (%)	23.1	38.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	38.5	100.0
Total	89	53	8	10	1	35	196
Total (%)	45.4	27.0	4.1	5.1	.5	17.9	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. To address the second question, we analyse the distribution of continental contexts in the articles published by the targeted journals during the covered period.

Conversely, articles set in the Global South are more likely to exhibit inconsistent geographical alignment. Notably, both articles from Central and South America were authored by researchers based in Oceania. Among the four articles focused on Africa, only one exhibited consistent geographical alignment.

Finally, a significant number of articles featuring cross-continental collaborative authorship were found in studies based in Asia (13), followed by North America (7), and those utilizing an international context (5).

For articles featuring a North America context, JSM (57.1%), SMR (52.0%), IJSC (52.6%), JSE (57.7%), and C&S (53.6%) have published a higher proportion of these articles compared to the average for the journals (42.9%).

Articles situated in Europe with an average percentage of 20.8% across the ten journals, are more likely to appear in ESMQ (35.9%), IJSF (37.5%), and IJSP (35.3%).

Table 4. Continental contexts of articles from the 10 journals

Continental context									
	NA	EU	OC	AS	AF	CSA	CC	IN	Total
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.

IJSMS contributed the largest portion of articles situated in an Asian context with a percentage of 47.6% in relation to the journal average of 14.6%. Articles with an Asian context also tends to appear in JGSM (18.2%) and IJSC (15.8%).

Articles using a cross-continental setting are mainly housed by IJSC (15.8%), JSM (14.3%), JSE (11.5%) and ESMQ (7.7%).

Conclusions

This analysis found that the 196 articles published by the ten SM journals in the first half of 2024 exhibit pattern of research settings and SM knowledge production consistent with findings published in previous SMD issues. Most notably, the domains of professional sport, sport events, and collegiate athletics, along with the sports of soccer, American football, and basketball, are the most likely to provide the settings for SM research. Most of these studies are situated in North America, followed by Europe and Asia. In terms of knowledge production, articles set in the Global North tend to have aligned locations between the study's continental context and the authors' affiliated institutions, whereas inconsistent alignment is more likely to be observed in articles set in the Global South. Additionally, cross-continental authorship is most prevalent in articles situated in an Asian context. The journals' preferences for studies in various contexts generally reflect their geographical origins, with North American journals, such as JSM, and European journals, such as ESMQ, publishing the highest number of articles based in their respective continents. Nonetheless, while JGSM is the only Asian journal, studies situated in an Asian context can readily find publishing outlets in journals based in other continents. Notably, among the articles covered in this analysis, the highest number focused on Asia has been published by IJSMS, whose publisher is based in the UK, followed by ESMQ.