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AN INVESTIGATION OF SPORT MANAGEMENT: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS (1979-2022)

Research article

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Abstract

Sports management has been regarded as a key element in the planning process of education of sports and sports organizations, which have particularly evolved on a macro scale with the developing technology and economic growth. Macro development has also been prevalent in incremental scientific studies on sports education and management areas. In the present study, which employs qualitative research design, 1792 documents embracing more than 40 years on sports management in the databases such as Scopus and Web of Science, were analyzed using the bibliometric analysis technique. The findings, while urging upon the inclusive nature of the research, are a prepotent agent in designating the (a) countries, (b) journals, (c) authors, (d) universities and (e) impact factors studying on sports management. The results have revealed that it is in the first three places in the citation and journal ranking of the "Sport Management Review, European Sport Management Quarterly and Journal of Sport Management" journals, where the studies on sports management are at the highest level in 2021 are evaluated. It is clear that the rate of scientific production and citation numbers of America, Australia and United Kingdom is in parallel with the first three journals. While it is obvious that the most cited work belongs to "Funk and James (2001)" in the "Sport Management Review" journal, it proves that the journal order, citation rates, author order and scientific production are parallel for all variables.

Keywords: Sports management, sports education, sports organizations, bibliometric analysis, Scopus and Web of Science databases

1. Introduction

In the historical process, sports management has a jollification and international structure that encapsulates non-profit sports activities and organizations and yields pecuniary support to individuals partaken in sports (Pitts, 2001; Baker & Esherick, 2013). While sports management was dealt with the administration, organization and run of physical education programs in the early 1950s, the focal has been on the management of international sports organizations, sports and sports marketing in the current climate (Slack, 2014). A consequential footstep has been precipitated in training sports managers according as sports management becomes world-embracing and sophisticated (Skinner & Gilbert, 2007). Then, sports management has been approved as the most voguish program of the 1980s (Zeigler, 1987). Consequently, sports management has been connotated as the process of managing sports organizations to facilitate social and economic values via sports in the whole society (Shilbury,



2022). Sports organization management in the twenty-first century embodies distinct techniques and strategies in the contemporary continuum (Hoye et al., 2015).

Besides the fact that sports management is fresh field as an academic discipline (Chalip, 2006), the analysis of sports management programs has terrific cruciality for forthcoming studies (Jones et al., 2008). The researches that have been conducted and scheduled to be studied seek to unveil new inventions while highlighting the awareness in compliance with the conditions of the period. Therefore, the quality of scientific journals is quite circumspect and worthwhile.

The most prime mission of scientific journals is to disseminate interdisciplinary knowledge. While the quality of the scientific journal is bounteous dearworth for scientists, the value of the article is related to the analysis of citation rates, which is a quantitative method. The impact factor of a journal is the best evaluation criterion for that journal (Tsigilis et al., 2010). More particularly, citation analysis is a robust instrument to better understand the scope of a field and to identify journals that publish most of the substantial articles (Shilbury, 2011). Impact factor is a bibliometric sequence that indicates how often an article is cited. The high impact factor and the benefiting from articles are very outstanding in bethinking the ground of a journal in its field. This impression helps scientists to guide their forthcoming studies and upgrade their research. Since citation analysis is a piece of bibliography section of scientific studies, it is enroled the bibliometric section, which is the quantitative study of the literature (Shilbury, 2011a).

Bibliometric analysis is a method so as to research extensively and analyze scientific data on a subject matter. The technique is young and underdeveloped; however, it is benignant for processing large-scale scientific data and generating high research impact (Donthu et al., 2021). For this reason, it is mountingly applied in the scientific world (Ellegaard, 2018). By virtue of its inclusive nature, bibliometric analysis is acknowledged to be used in many fields from entrepreneurship in sports (Gozales-Serrano et al., 2019; Gozales-Serrano et al., 2020), to sports tourism (Jimenez-Garcia et al., 2020; Oliveira et al., 2021) and leadership in sports (Gan and Yusof, 2020). Apart from bibliometric analysis in the field of sports and sports management, statistical power analysis (Parks et al., 1999), which expresses the sample and effect size, is considered to be trenchant in many areas such as content analysis in order to reveal current deficiencies and differences (Pitts et al., 2014; Pitts, 2016) and many Meta-analysis (Thomas & French, 1986), which is used to measure, evaluate and analyze the findings of a large number of studies. Nevertheless, bibliometric analysis has brought a different perspective by revealing the inclusive nature of the studies conducted in the world. From this view point, it goes beyond many research techniques in the literature and it has led to the use of studying, evaluation and analysis techniques together.

2. Method

In this research, studies on sports management were analyzed within the scope of the literature review using the bibliometric analysis method. Although the bibliometric analysis method is based on qualitative research design, the study also includes some numerical findings

relevant to the literature. In the bibliometric analysis method, it is elucidated as an analysis procedure in which qualitative and quantitative methods are employed to appraise the effects of research groups, countries, journals and authors by conducting research on different variables (Krauskopf, 2018). The central data in bibliometric analysis tend to be broad and objective in nature (Donthu et al., 2021). Although the bibliometric analysis method is fundamentally similar to the literature review, it is reconnoitered with statistical methods in tandem with the usage of qualitative methods. Thuswise, it makes available the opportunity to reach more scientific research by going beyond the scope of manual research. While the bibliometric analysis method became prevalent, particularly in the process of attaining scientific studies, databases such as Scopus and Web of Science was rampant, while the number of programs such as R Studio, VOS Viewer, Leximancer, which facilitated the data analysis process, was heightened and made available to researchers. The work flow chart is presented in Figure 1.

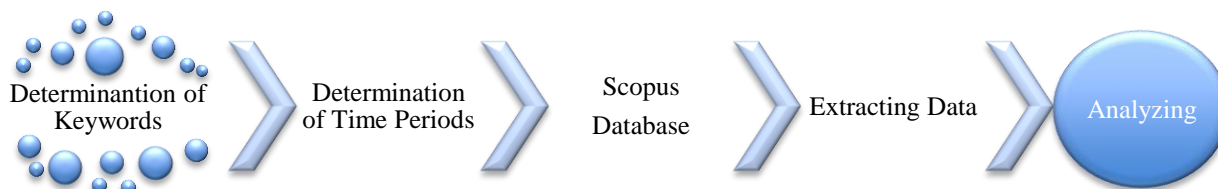


Figure 1. Flow Diagram

In this study, the topic of "sport management" covering the years 1979 and 2022 was analyzed in the Scopus database. The Scopus database has been preferred since it is one of the pivotal databases that provides broad-framed data about under researched fields and is greatly yielded in scanning publications. Search criteria and the acquired data set were analyzed with R Shiny in the Bibliometrix program in R Studio.

Before the analysis, when the keystone findings pertaining to the data of the publications on sports management between 1979-2022 were studied; It comes into open that 1762 documents have 391 different sources (journals, books, etc.), the average number of citations per publication is 7.64, and the annual average number of citations is 1.89 (Table 1). The total number of references was marked as 94066. Incidentally, out of 1762 documents, 1408 were from articles, 100 from books, 92 from book chapters, 35 from conference proceedings, 2 from Conference review, 17 from editorial, 7 from erratum, 5 from notes, and 96 from critical articles (Table 1).

The number of appearances in the documents of 2721 different authors was 4469. While the number of publications with a single author is 319, the number of publications with multiple authors is 2402. It is obvious that the overwhelming majority of the publications are composed of multiple author publications. While the number of authors per publication is 0.648, the

number of documents per author is 1.54. Furthermore, It is understandable that the rate of co-authors per document is 2.54 and the index of collaboration among authors is 1.76 (Table 1).

Table 1. *Descriptive information on data*

DESCRIPTION	RESULTS
<i>Timespan</i>	1979-2022
<i>Sources (Journals, Books, etc.)</i>	391
<i>Documents</i>	1762
<i>Average years from publication</i>	7,64
<i>Average citations per documents</i>	18,1
<i>Average citations per year per doc</i>	1,897
<i>References</i>	94066
DOCUMENT TYPES	
<i>Article; book chapter</i>	1408
<i>Article; book</i>	100
<i>Article; book chapter</i>	92
<i>Conference paper</i>	35
<i>Conference review</i>	2
<i>Editorial</i>	17
<i>Erratum</i>	7
<i>Note</i>	5
<i>Review</i>	96
DOCUMENT CONTENTS	
<i>Keywords Plus (ID)</i>	531
<i>Author's Keywords (DE)</i>	3664
AUTHORS	
<i>Authors</i>	2721
<i>Author Appearances</i>	4469
<i>Authors of single-authored documents</i>	319
<i>Authors of multi-authored documents</i>	2402
AUTHORS COLLABORATION	
<i>Single-authored documents</i>	396
<i>Documents per Author</i>	0,648
<i>Authors per Document</i>	1,54
<i>Co-Authors per Documents</i>	2,54
<i>Collaboration Index</i>	1,76

3. Results

Publications on sports management are presented in Figure 2 by years. The fact that it covers a period of more than 40 years is very substantial in terms of the scope of the research. Sports management has been an escalatory research subject, especially from 1990 to 2021.

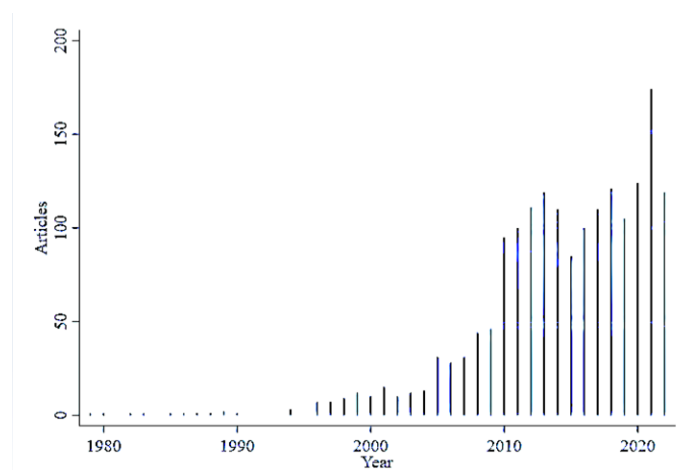


Figure 2. Number of publications by years (1979-2022)

As Figure 2 shows, while the number of publications remained constant from 1979 to 1990, the prevailing trend in the 1990-2021 time period tended to increase. Although it is apparent that 2021 peaked with 174 publications in regards to the number of publications, it should be taken into account that the year of 2022 did not finish and the prospective studies that have been/will be conducted are not kept in the loop. While the year 2021 (174 publications) is the year with the highest number of publications on sports management compared to all years, 2020 ranks second with 124 publications. Over the years, it is catchable that at the least publications (1-3) belong to the years 1979-1994.

Table 2. Top ten journals

Journals	N.O.A
SPORT MANAGEMENT REVIEW	361
EUROPEAN SPORT MANAGEMENT QUARTERLY	167
JOURNAL OF SPORT MANAGEMENT	151
SPORT MANAGEMENT EDUCATION JOURNAL	83
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SPORT MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING	72
TEORIYA I PRAKTIKA FIZICHESKOY KULTURY	41
SPORT BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT: AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL	35
JOURNAL OF GLOBAL SPORT MANAGEMENT	31
JOURNAL OF HOSPITALITY LEISURE SPORT AND TOURISM EDUCATION	29
MANAGING SPORT AND LEISURE	26

Number of Articles; (N.O.A.)

361 articles in the field of sport management were published in Sport Management Review. It is clear that the Sports Management Review, which is in the first place, has two times more articles than the journal that is in the second place, and more than ten times more than the journal that is in the last place. European Sport Management ranks second with 167, Journal of Sport Management ranks third with 151 articles, while Managing Sport and Leisure is tenth place with 26 articles. The journals in which publications related to sports management have been published are introduced in Table 3.

Table 3. *Most cited journals*

Sources	Total Citations
JOURNAL OF SPORT MANAGEMENT	4363
SPORT MANAGEMENT REVIEW	2460
EUROPEAN SPORT MANAGEMENT QUARTERLY	1327
SPORT MARKETING QUARTERLY	1209
INTERNATIONAL REVIEW FOR THE SOCIOLOGY OF SPORT	760
ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT REVIEW	730
JOURNAL OF MARKETING	714
SOCIOLOGY OF SPORT JOURNAL	523
SPORT	518
SPORT IN SOCIETY	482

Citations to journals have great importance for the scientific recognition of the journal. When considering the studies on sports management, the subject of sports management with regard to words and content is in the first three places with 4363 citations by Journal of Sport Management, 2460 by Sport Management, and 1327 citations by European Sport Management Quarterly. It is transparent that Sport in Society is in the last place with 482 in the ranking of the top ten journals.

Table 4. *Featured institutions*

Affiliations	Articles
GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY	83
DEAKIN UNIVERSITY	60
TEMPLE UNIVERSITY	52
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA	49
LA TROBE UNIVERSITY	46
BROCK UNIVERSITY	44
FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY	44
UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA	36
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA	34
LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY	30

The 10 institutions that publish the most on sports management are listed in Table 4. Pursuant to Table 4, Griffith University ranks first with 83 publications, while Deakin University ranks second with 60 publications. Additionally, it is cognizable that Loughborough University is in the last place among the institutions studying on sports management. When we reckon the number of publications in the first and tenth place, it is emergent that the publications are more than two times.

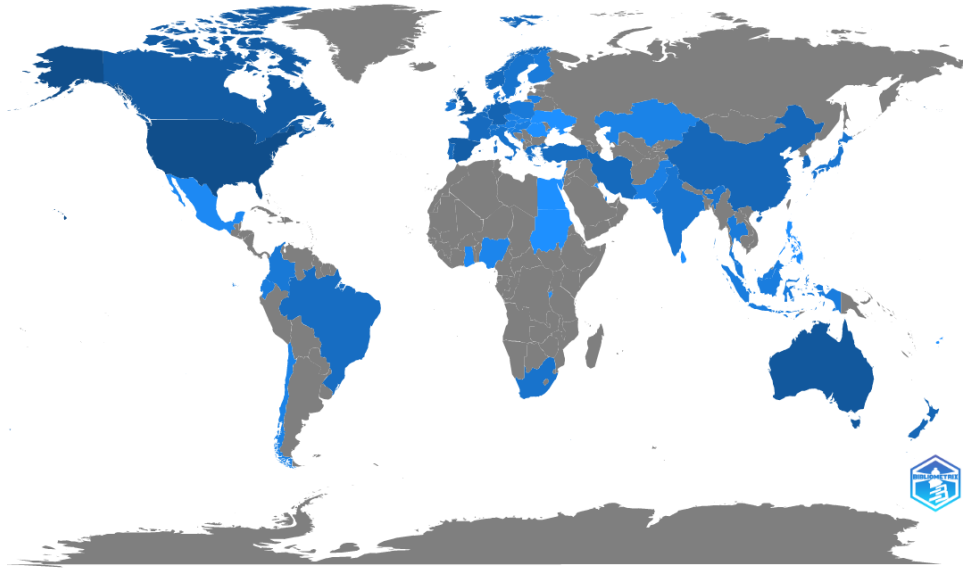


Figure 3. Country scientific production

One of the other momentous issues in sports management is the scientific production of countries. In Figure 3, the dark blue colors on the world map represent the countries that do more scientific studies, the light blue colors refer to the countries that do less, and the gray color reveals the countries that do not study on scientific research. America (1205), Australia (371), United Kingdom(276), Canada(241), Spain(199), Germany (99), New Zealand(78), China(72), Belgium and Iran(55), Norway (54), Portugal(53), South Korea(47), France(46), Turkey(41), Brazil & Netherlands(38), Greece(23) are followed by Italy and South Africa(21). In addition to scientific publications in countries, the citation rates of countries are given in Table 5.

Table 5. *Most cited country*

Country	Total Citations	Average Article Citations
USA	7163	17,6
AUSTRALIA	4308	29,108
UNITED KINGDOM	2337	24,344
CANADA	2001	21,516
GERMANY	1082	24,591
NEW ZEALAND	858	31,778
SPAIN	512	8,0
BELGIUM	412	24,235
DENMARK	367	28,231
NORWAY	316	16,632

Table 6. Top published authors

Authors	Articles
SHILBURY D	23
ZHANG JJ	21
CUNNINGHAM GB	20
FUNK DC	20
RATTEN V	18
DOHERTY A	17
PARENT MM	17
SCHULENKORF N	17
SKINNER J	16
SHAW S	15

In the ranking according to the total citation rates of the countries, it is noticeable that USA is in the first place with 7163 citations, Australia is in the second place with 4308, United Kingdom has 2337 citations, while Norway is in the last place with 316 citations. Moreover, when the total number of citations of the countries and the scientific production of the countries (Figure 3) are scrutinized, it is clear that the first three countries correspond with each other. Another remarkable issue addressed within the context of the research is the prominent authors and the number of publications. Authors are reclaimed in two different ways: considering number of citations and the number of publications. In Table 6, the authors are listed according to the number of publications. From the most published author to the least published author on sports management, Shilbury D, Zhang J.J. and Cunningham G.B. are the most published authors while Shaw S, is at the bottom of the list with 15 articles among Top 10 published authors. A situation has parallelism with the source findings in the top 10 on sustainable consumption and environment is distinguishable in the findings in the list of authors in the top 10. In terms of author, source and number of citations on sports management, Table 7 is more comprehensively explained.

Table 7. Most global cited documents

Articles	Total Citations	TC per Year
FUNK DC, JAMES J, 2001, SPORT MANAGE REV	525	23,8636
SMITH B, 2018, QUAL RES SPORT EXERC HEALTH	438	87,6
GIBSON H J, 1998, SPORT MANAGE REV	381	15,24
FILO K, LOCK D, KARG A, 2015, SPORT MANAGE REV	259	32,375
CHALIP L, 2006, J SPORT MANAGE	241	14,1765
MURRAY D, HOWAT G, 2002, SPORT MANAGE REV	241	11,4762
GIBSON HJ, KAPLANİDOU K., KANG SJ, 2012, SPORT MANAGE REV	217	19,7273
SKINNER J, ZAKUS DH, 2008, SPORT MANAGE REV	201	13,4
RODERICK M, 2006, THE WORK OF PROF FOOTBALL: A LABOUR	191	11,2353
SOTIRIADOU P, BROUWERS J, LE T-A, 2014, ANN LEIS RES	180	20

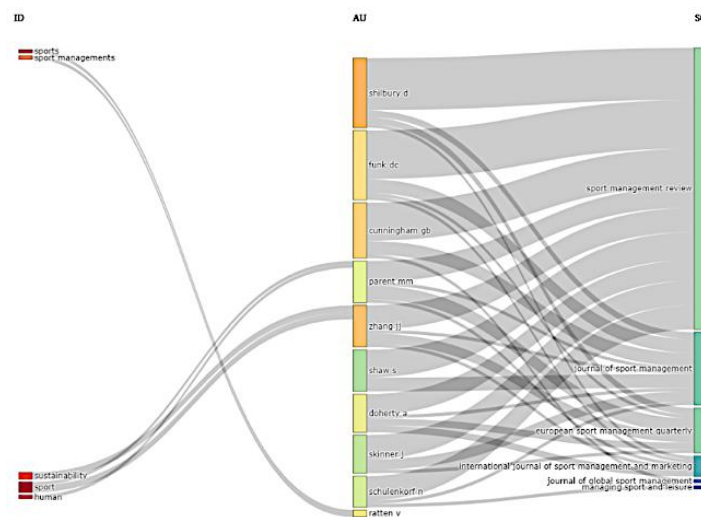
The biggest proof of acceptance of a scientific publication is the number of citations. As the number of citations increases, the universality of the study also develops. Thus, the number of citations is sacrosanct for scientific validity. In the present study, which embraces the subject of sports management; Funk D. C., James J. 2001 (doi:10.1016/S1441-

3523(01)70072-1), the Sport Management Review citation, ranks first with 525 total citations and 23.86 total citations per year. Smith B, 2017 (doi:10.1080/2159676X.2017.1393221) Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health second on the list with 438 total citations, Gibson HJ, 1998 (doi: 10.1016/S1441-3523(98)70099-3), Sport Management Review 381 citations and Sotiriadou P, 2014 (doi:10.1080/11745398.2014.902292), Annals of Leisure Research ranks 10th with 180 total citations. When the 10 most cited publications on sports management are tackled, it is concluded from Table 6 that the two authors in the list are Funk DC with 20 publications and Skinner J with 16 publications.



Figure 4. Word cloud

Although the word cloud is not a method occupied to display the most frequently used words in keywords, it is visible that the frequently used words are large and the less frequently used ones are small (Savaş, 2022). While the most frequently used keywords on the subject of sports management are human and article, the concepts of sustainability, education, perception and sport managements follow up this sequence (Figure 4).



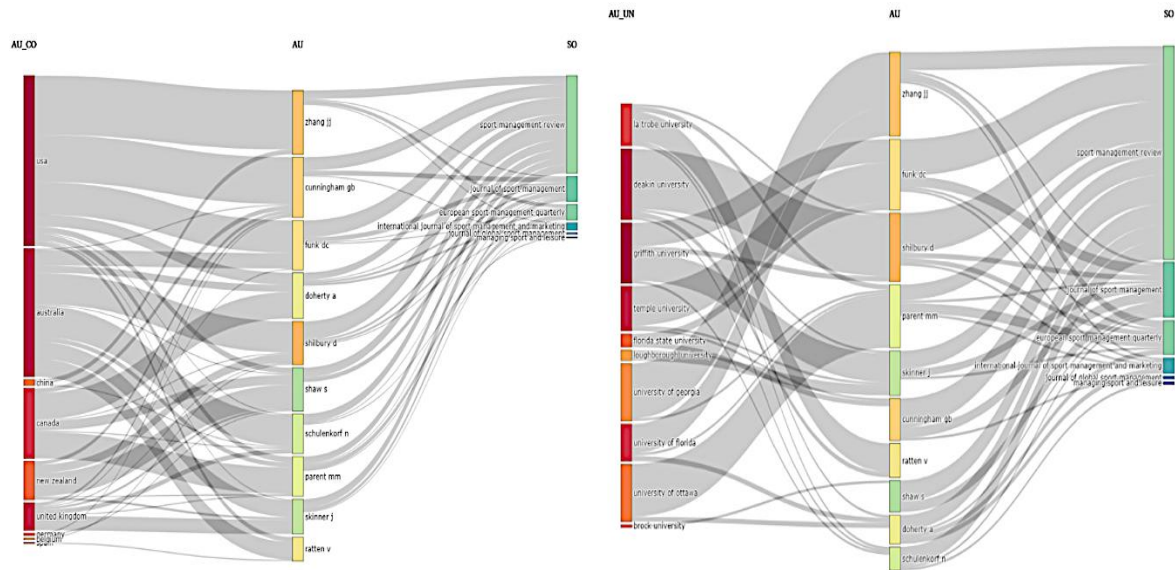


Figure 5. Three-Fields plots

In the first form of Figure 5, which consists of three figures, the sports management literature; it reveals its relationship with the keywords on the left, the authors in the middle, and the sources on the right. Although keywords seem to be quite limited compared to authors and sources; keywords such as sports, sports management, sustainability, sports and people come to the fore. While authors such as Shillbury D., Funk D.C. became prominent, the keywords were mostly matched with Ratten V. on sports and sports management. When envisioned in the context of the sources, the sport management review seems to be the most prominent source on the subject, and the journal of sport management has been admitted as the second source related to the sports management literature.

The middle form of Figure 5 depicts the relationship between sports management literature, country, author and sources. While the United States is the most prominent country, Australia is the second country where publications on the subject are studied. Zhang J.J. Cunningham G.B. become prominent authors in the context of this relationship and the journal sport management review has been the source of more publications than other bibliographies. It has been understood that the Journal of sport management is the second most source of publications.

In the last form of Figure 5, the relationship between the sports management literature, institutions, authors and sources has been evaluated. Universities such as La Trobe University, Deakin University, Griffith University, University of Georgia, University of Ottawa seem to be prominent institutions in the sports management literature. Zhang J.J., Funk, D.C., Shillbury, D. have been regarded as prolific authors. Put it differently, sport management review is in the first place and the journal of sport management is in the second place, and they are prestigious sources in the context of country, author and source.

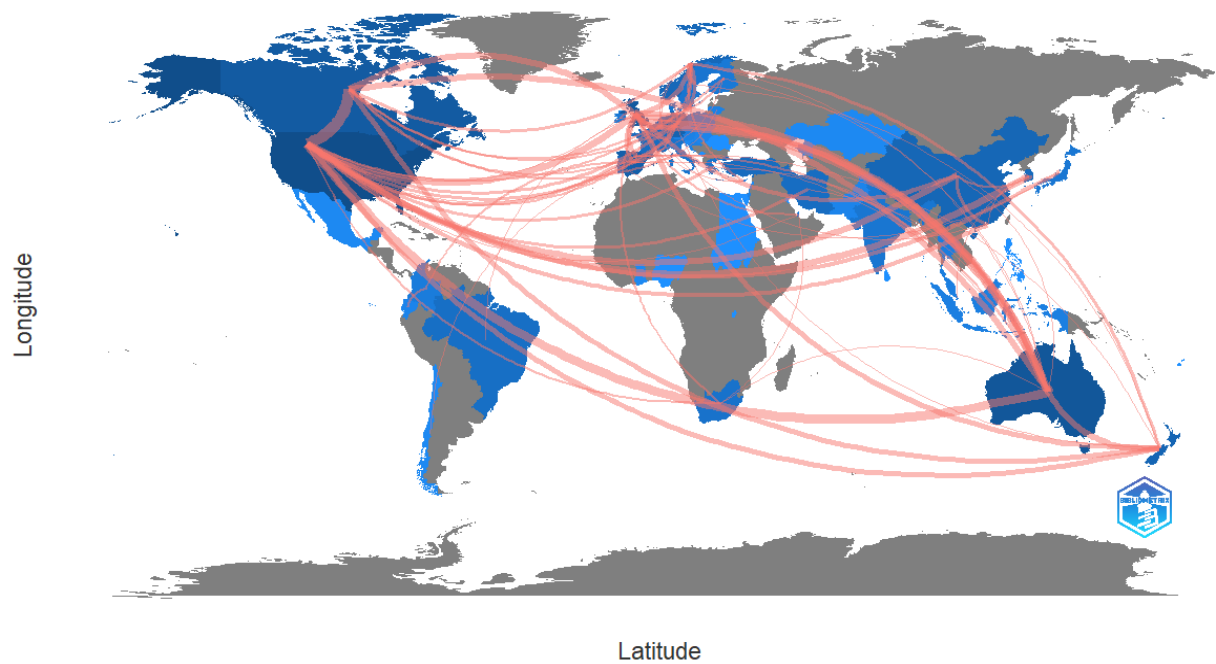


Figure 6. Cooperation between countries

Country-based collaborations among researchers are rendered in Figure 6. It is presented in which countries the researchers collaborate with their colleagues and the color groups are mostly collaborating country groups. The size of the colored circles and the thickness of the lines in Figure 6 expose the size of the common relationship (Nunen et al., 2018). In the studies published on sports management, the most cooperation is between the United States of America, Canada, China and Korea; Other cooperation between countries such as Australia, Germany, United Kingdom, New Zealand, Netherlands, Belgium, South Africa, Denmark, Ireland, Qatar, Finland, Brazil, Spain, Colombia, Ecuador, Lithuania, Chile, Cyprus, Greece, Sweden, Luxembourg and its researchers in Norway are signified to be collaborating among themselves.

4. Conclusion

The necessity for technical, administrative and economic support in many fields has led to the emergence of the concept of management. In order to achieve the determined goals, sports management must be used effectively. The sport subsequently gained national and international features; the concept of management has become a part of sport. While studying on sports management will highlight the inclusive nature of the research, it will contribute to the universality of the study with the bibliometric analysis technique. In particular, if it is fulfilled in a period covering the years 1979-2022, it will guide the future of sports management evaluating its past and recent situation.

Although the debates about where the research on sports management is going and who it serves (Gammelsæter, 2021), the rapid growth of sports management as a discipline reflects the advance in the number of journals and articles (Ciomaga, 2013). As time varies, the establishment of academic associations and the formation of sponsorships for journals conduce

toward booming in academic publications (Cunningham et al., 2021). Although there are too many journals to be taken part in the field of sports management in the twenty-first century, the impact factor, the number of publications and the indexes in which they are scanned have been the criteria that determine the quality of the journals.

Three leading journals, the Journal of Sport Management (JSM), the European Sport Management Quarterly (ESMQ), and the Sport Management Review (SMR) have published a total of nearly 1,800 research articles since 1987 (Gammelsæter, 2021). European Sport Management Quarterly (Gammelsaeter and Anagnostopoulus, 2022), which is one of the leading journals in the field of sports management studies, which has expanded in the last 30 years, draws attention to the Sport Management Review (Cunningham, 2012), which is the leader in sports management by creating a literature review and new theoretical structure.

Since sports management is a dateless concept, we can encounter many studies in the field of sports sciences using bibliometric analysis technique. Sports management with a review of 3 journals in 1987-2010: central themes and trends (Ciomaga, 2013), bibliometric analysis of 4 sports management journals in 1987-2007 (Shilbury, 2011), emotion and sports management in 1989-2009 (Baier-Fuentes et al. et al., 2020), bibliometric analysis of citations to sports management and marketing journals between 1987 and 2007 (Shilbury, 2011a) and the increase in social media in sports (Lopez-Carril et al., 2020). When the researches on sports management are taken into consideration, the time span of the studies and the limited number of journals underline the inclusive nature of our study. As a consequence, while the concept of sports management is developing in the literature as days pass, it is desired to be brought to the fore with an innovative thinking and analysis technique.

5. Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

6. Ethics Committee Approval

This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by of the author. The author confirms that the study does not need ethics committee approval according to the research integrity rules in her country.

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