# Tracing the Evolution of Sport Marketing and Sponsorship: A Bibliometric Analysis of Trends and Scholarly Impact in a Leading Journal

## Abstract

**Purpose:** This study aims to explore the emerging trends in sport marketing and sponsorship research by examining theoretical, thematic, and methodological frameworks across time. Articles were classified based on their relevance to the evolution of sport business industry segments, conceptual, intellectual, and social structures, as well as their citation patterns.

**Design/methodology/approach:** The investigation employs a multi-method analytical approach, focusing on research articles published in the prominent International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship (IJSMS) from 2016 to 2023. Data were obtained from Scopus and subjected to bibliometric analysis to elucidate scholarly contributions and thematic evolution over time utilizing R software.

**Findings:** The findings indicated that a significant portion of the articles in the paradigm funnel classification were based on experimental observations and analytical methods. The topics covered ranged from sustainability and social media to esports, Twitter, football fans, loyalty, and spectators. Additionally, there was a focus on relationship marketing and service quality as emerging themes. Also, using quantitative methods, empirical observations, and analytical methods, as well as having multiple authors and longer titles, affected article citations positively.

**Research limitations/implications:** This research will be helpful as a roadmap for researchers in sport marketing and sponsorship. As well as this, scholars will be able to discern how articles about a particular topic have evolved over time through this research.

**Practical implications**: This research offers valuable insights for understanding how sport marketing and sponsorship research has evolved, providing scholars with guidance for future research directions by highlighting historical gaps and niche areas.

**Originality/value:** This comprehensive historical review not only maps the significant themes in sport marketing and sponsorship research but also sheds light on the academic trends that have shaped the field. The findings can help guide scholars toward historically underexplored areas in the literature, aiding in the continued development of the field. While the study highlights key areas such as consumer behavior, sports marketing strategy, and service quality, there remains a lack of focus on interdisciplinary approaches combining sport marketing with emerging fields like sustainability, digital innovation, and social equity. Future research should explore how advanced technologies, such as blockchain, AI, and the metaverse, reshape fan engagement and sponsorship strategies. In addition, researchers could examine the role of sport sponsorships in promoting social equity, diversity, and inclusion, mainly through campaigns that address societal challenges or empower marginalized groups.

**Keywords:** Bibliometric Analysis; Citation Impact; Research Evolution; Sponsorship Trends; Sport Marketing.

# ردیابی تکامل بازاریابی ورزشی و حمایت مالی: یک تحلیل کتاب‌سنجی از روندها و تأثیر علمی در یک مجله برجسته

## چکیده

**هدف:** این مطالعه به بررسی روندهای نوظهور در پژوهش‌های بازاریابی ورزشی و حمایت مالی می‌پردازد و چارچوب‌های نظری، موضوعی و روش‌شناختی را در طول زمان تحلیل می‌کند. مقالات براساس ارتباط آن‌ها با تکامل بخش‌های صنعت کسب‌وکار ورزشی، ساختارهای مفهومی، فکری و اجتماعی، و همچنین الگوهای استنادی‌شان دسته‌بندی شدند.

**طراحی/روش‌شناسی/رویکرد:** این مطالعه از یک رویکرد تحلیلی چندروشی بهره می‌گیرد و مقالات پژوهشی منتشر شده در مجله بین‌المللی پیشرو بازاریابی و حمایت مالی ورزشی بین سال‌های ۲۰۱۶ تا ۲۰۲۳ را مورد بررسی قرار می‌دهد. داده‌ها از پایگاه اسکوپوس استخراج و با استفاده از تکنیک‌های کتاب‌سنجی برای ردیابی مشارکت‌های علمی و تغییرات موضوعی در طول زمان با استفاده از نرم افزار R تحلیل شدند.

**یافته‌ها:** نتایج نشان داد که بخش قابل توجهی از مقالات در دسته‌بندی قیف پارادایم مبتنی بر مشاهدات تجربی و روش‌های تحلیلی بوده است. موضوعات مطرح شامل پایداری، رسانه‌های اجتماعی، ورزش‌های الکترونیکی، توییتر، طرفداران فوتبال، وفاداری و تماشاگران بوده‌اند. علاوه بر این، بازاریابی رابطه‌ای و کیفیت خدمات به‌عنوان موضوعات نوظهور مورد توجه قرار گرفته‌اند. همچنین استفاده از روش‌های کمی، مشاهدات تجربی، روش‌های تحلیلی، همراه با داشتن نویسندگان متعدد و عناوین طولانی‌تر تأثیر مثبتی بر تعداد استنادات مقالات داشته است.

**محدودیت‌ها/پیامدهای پژوهشی:** این پژوهش به‌عنوان یک نقشه راه برای پژوهشگران در حوزه بازاریابی ورزشی و حمایت مالی مفید خواهد بود. همچنین، پژوهشگران می‌توانند با استفاده از این تحقیق، تکامل مقالات مرتبط با یک موضوع خاص را در طول زمان شناسایی کنند.

**پیامدهای کاربردی:** این پژوهش بینش‌های ارزشمندی را برای درک تکامل تحقیقات بازاریابی ورزشی و حمایت مالی ارائه می‌دهد و با برجسته کردن شکاف‌های تاریخی و حوزه‌های خاص، راهنمایی‌هایی برای جهت‌گیری‌های پژوهشی آینده به پژوهشگران ارائه می‌کند.

**اصالت/ارزش:** این بررسی جامع تاریخی نه‌تنها موضوعات مهم در تحقیقات بازاریابی ورزشی و حمایت مالی را نقشه‌برداری می‌کند، بلکه روندهای آکادمیکی را که این حوزه را شکل داده‌اند، روشن می‌سازد. یافته‌ها می‌توانند به پژوهشگران کمک کنند تا به حوزه‌هایی که از نظر تاریخی کمتر بررسی شده‌اند توجه کرده و به توسعه مستمر این حوزه کمک کنند. در حالی که این مطالعه حوزه‌های کلیدی مانند رفتار مصرف‌کننده، استراتژی بازاریابی ورزشی و کیفیت خدمات را برجسته می‌کند، عدم تمرکز بر رویکردهای بین رشته‌ای که بازاریابی ورزشی را با زمینه‌های نوظهوری مانند پایداری، نوآوری دیجیتال و برابری اجتماعی ترکیب می‌کنند، وجود ندارد. تحقیقات آینده باید این نکته را مورد توجه قرار دهند که چگونه فن‌آوری‌های پیشرفته مانند بلاک چین، هوش مصنوعی، و متاورس، تعامل طرفداران و استراتژی‌های حمایت مالی را تغییر می‌دهند. علاوه بر این، محققان آتی می‌توانند نقش حمایت‌های ورزشی را در ارتقای برابری اجتماعی، تنوع و شمول، عمدتاً از طریق کمپین‌هایی که به چالش‌های اجتماعی می‌پردازند یا گروه‌های به حاشیه رانده شده را توانمند می‌سازند، بررسی کنند.

**کلیدواژه‌ها:** بازاریابی ورزشی، تأثیر استنادی، تحلیل کتاب‌سنجی، تکامل پژوهش، روندهای حمایت‌گری مالی.

## 1. Introduction

Scientific publications serve as a repository of knowledge regarding the development of a specific field by elucidating its historical progression and the continued evolution of key trends and issues that are of interest to scholars. According to Pitts et al. (2014), the primary themes or subject areas established through prior research in an academic discipline are reflected in the current body of literature within that field. Over time, the volume of publications dedicated to examining sport through diverse perspectives has increased to elucidate the industry's current state further. One such domain experiencing this growth is sport marketing, which has been driven by an increased recognition of the importance of sport from both economic and social perspectives, as well as the necessity to implement marketing strategies that maximize its potential. This increased research within sport marketing has led to the introduction of novel theories and concepts that have been applied within this context. Consequently, it is imperative to thoroughly examine the theoretical, thematic, and methodological frameworks employed in these studies to provide insights that can inform and shape future research endeavors (Moradi, 2023b).

The significance of sports marketing studies is underscored by the dynamic interplay between sports and marketing strategies, which has evolved substantially over the decades. This evolution can be attributed to the increasing recognition of sports as a potent platform for marketing, leading to a proliferation of research in this field. The role of sports marketing has been elucidated as a dynamic subject area that interconnects academic research, marketing practitioners, and public policy planners, emphasizing its multifaceted nature and the diverse consumer behaviors it encompasses (Coutinho et al., 2021). The integration of marketing strategies within the sports domain has also become imperative for organizations aiming to leverage the expanding global sports industry, which has experienced a surge in sporting activities and consumer engagement (Cheong et al., 2018).

Sports marketing encompasses diverse activities aimed at promoting sports events, teams, and products while leveraging fans' emotional connections with their preferred sports and athletes (Gupta, 2024; da Silva & Casas, 2020). This dual focus on promotion and emotional engagement is crucial for understanding consumer behavior in the sports industry, which has become a multi-billion dollar global market (Aghaei & Moradi, 2016). The evolution of sports marketing reflects broader trends in consumer behavior, technological advancements, and the globalization of sports, necessitating continuous research and adaptation by marketers to meet changing consumer expectations and preferences (Shekhar, 2023; Celik, 2023; Schwarz, 2010).

Historically, sports marketing emerged as a distinct discipline in the late 20th century, coinciding with the rise of sports commercialization and media coverage. The introduction of television as a primary medium for sports broadcasting transformed the landscape, enabling marketers to reach wider audiences and create more sophisticated advertising strategies. This transition was marked by establishing

sponsorship deals, which became a primary revenue source for sports organizations. The integration of sports into the marketing mix has allowed brands to capitalize on the loyalty and passion of sports fans, creating powerful brand associations that can enhance consumer engagement and drive sales (Meir & Scott, 2007; Cornwell & Kwak, 2015).

On the other hand, the role of marketing in sports extends beyond mere promotion; it encompasses strategic brand management, consumer engagement, and the cultivation of community among fans. The concept of tribalism in sports fandom illustrates how personal identity and group affiliation can influence consumer behavior, providing marketers with insights into how to effectively target and engage specific demographics (Meir & Scott, 2007; Lupinek, 2019). Understanding these dynamics is essential for developing marketing strategies that resonate with fans on a deeper level, fostering loyalty, and encouraging participation in sports-related activities. Furthermore, the rise of digital marketing and social media has revolutionized how sports organizations interact with fans, allowing for real-time engagement and personalized marketing efforts that enhance the overall fan experience (Sreepada & Bagchi, 2020; Filo et al., 2015; Singh & Nimkar, 2020).

Moreover, the advent of e-sports and the increasing popularity of virtual sports have introduced new dimensions to sports marketing. As e-sports continue gaining traction globally, marketers are exploring innovative approaches to engage with younger audiences who are more inclined to participate in digital platforms. This shift necessitates reevaluating traditional marketing strategies and developing new frameworks that address the unique characteristics of e-sports consumers (Raggiotto & Scarpi, 2022; Gawrysiak et al., 2020). The integration of technology into sports marketing strategies not only enhances fan engagement but also provides valuable data that can inform future marketing efforts and improve overall effectiveness (Yurtsızoğlu, 2024).

The significance of sports marketing studies also lies in their capacity to inform policy and ethical considerations within the industry. As sports organizations increasingly engage in partnerships with gambling companies and other commercial entities, comprehending the implications of these relationships on consumer behavior and public health becomes paramount. Research in this domain can guide the development of responsible marketing practices that prioritize consumer welfare while simultaneously achieving business objectives (Deans et al., 2017; López-González & Griffiths, 2017; Hing et al., 2015). Furthermore, the examination of corporate social responsibility (CSR) within sports marketing elucidates the potential for sports organizations to contribute positively to society, fostering a sense of community and enhancing their brand image (Dimitropoulos & Vrondou, 2015; Kolyperas et al., 2016).

Berthon et al. (2003) introduced the term "paradigm funnel," which aligns with Kuhn's three focal points of scientific inquiry developed in 1970: the identification of crucial observations (the identification of significant facts), the establishment of links between existing theory and observations (fact-theory

correspondence), and the dissemination of ideas (the articulation of theory). In their work, Berthon et al.'s (2003) concept of the paradigm funnel represents a systematic framework for analyzing, categorizing, and critically evaluating literature. By applying this framework, the quality of previous contributions made specifically within the field of sport marketing can be assessed by examining current themes and trends. This approach facilitates the identification of gaps in the literature and the formulation of new research questions to provide the basis for further field development. Through the utilization of a bibliometric analysis (Donthu et al., 2021), central themes and trends are compiled to evaluate a field or journal's development, potential research prospects, and patterns (Moradi, 2023a). Furthermore, this methodology provides valuable insights into distinctive features and precise details regarding publishing trends (Donthu et al., 2021).

Previous research has employed content analysis and bibliometric analysis in conjunction to facilitate the understanding of research and its evolution over time (Arnull et al., 2021; Goksu et al., 2020). Further studies have utilized the paradigm funnel framework to evaluate both specific journals, such as Daugherty et al. (2017) examining the Journal of Interactive Advertising, and topics of interest, including Confente (2015) analyzing word-of-mouth advertising in tourism research. Moradi (2023b) conducted a bibliometric study on the papers published in the SMQ journal between 2012 and 2022. The objective was to provide empirical evidence that could enhance the existing discourse on the corpus of knowledge in the field of sport marketing. Building upon this foundation, the present study aims to integrate all three techniques and apply them using the International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship (IJSMS) as the unit of analysis. This journal has been the subject of previous backward-forward-looking reviews, such as a retrospective analysis of the state of sports marketing and sponsorship research within IJSMS from 1999 to 2015 (Jin, 2017) and an examination of the bibliographic data published in IJSMS since its inception (Nawaz et al., 2020).

Although IJSMS has been subjected to bibliometric reviews recently (Nawaz et al., 2020), the insights derived from such reviews were less rigorous (e.g., absence of triangulation) than the present review (e.g., presence of triangulation). Therefore, this research aimed to address a gap by integrating bibliometric and content analysis techniques, paradigm funnel, and analysis of citation drivers. To achieve this, three objectives were pursued: (1) update Jin's (2017) retrospective review of articles published in the IJSMS in its first 17 years to provide insight into how the topics and trends have evolved, identify new themes in the theory and practice of sport marketing and sponsorship, and guide research, (2) compare the prior review results by adding in-depth analyses focusing on theoretical frameworks and methodologies and categorizing the collection of articles in the IJSMS based on sport business industry segment, conceptual, intellectual, and social structure analysis, and paradigm funnel, and (3) understand the drivers of citations by empirically investigating which factors affect the citation rates of publications in the IJSMS. In doing so, a comprehensive and multifaceted update and review of the sport marketing and sponsorship field was developed based on the publication data from IJSMS.

This facilitated a more thorough comprehension of the scientific patterns and advancements delineated in the journal. Utilizing bibliometric techniques, content analysis, paradigm funnel, and regression analysis, as is conventional for retrospective reviews, the following research questions were established:

RQ1. What is the status of collaboration (i.e., authors and institutions) for IJSMS?

RQ2. What is the status of the research perspective and statistical methods in the IJSMS?

RQ3. Which are the specific research topics published in IJSMS?

RQ4. What is the relationship between main research topics and methodologies in the IJSMS?

RQ5. How is the method of categorizing and distributing articles in the IJSMS based on the paradigm funnel technique and sport business industry segment?

RQ6. What is the strategic map of research themes in the IJSMS?

RQ7. How did the evolution of research topics happen for IJSMS?

RQ8. What factors are contributing to IJSMS's growing impact in terms of citations?

The findings of this study will provide valuable insights for authors, readers, and editorial board members, enhancing their comprehension of practical contributions to the IJSMS. The present investigation establishes a foundation for evaluating the knowledge domain of the journal by analyzing the connections between IJSMS and other relevant journals and elucidating its knowledge domain. Moreover, its utility for editors lies in its capacity to facilitate the formulation of policies to prioritize publications that have substantially influenced the journal's growth potential. Furthermore, it assists in developing future guidelines for contributors, delineating the specific topics of publications they should endeavor to produce.

## 1.1. *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*

In response to the recommendation of Pitts and Mahony (1997) for a specialized sport marketing journal, the International Journal of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship (IJSMS), published by Emerald Publishing, was established in 1999 to address the increasing demand for such literature in a global context. Since its inception, IJSMS has published articles that rigorously examine substantive issues related to sports marketing and sponsorship, encompassing a diverse range of research approaches across multiple subject areas, theoretical frameworks, research methods, and academic disciplines, yielding a broad spectrum of findings (Jin, 2017). According to information provided on the official IJSMS website, the journal serves as a crucial resource for both academic and industry experts. From an academic perspective, it offers an opportunity to publish high-quality, peer-reviewed research, while practitioners can utilize the findings to analyze critical data, develop strategies, create presentations, and comprehend the evolving industry. Consequently, the mission of IJSMS is to unite scholars and practitioners in a single forum to advance knowledge and understanding of sport marketing and sponsorship through rigorous research endeavors (Desbordes, 2015).

In recent years, several achievements have further demonstrated the pursuit of this objective, including inclusion in the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) and Scopus. According to the Journal Citation Reports of 2022, the impact factor of IJSMS stands at 2.527. Furthermore, the CiteScore of IJSMS in 2022 was recorded as 4.7, and the Australian Business Dean Council (ABDC) has assigned a "B" grade to the journal (Emerald Publishing, 2023). A review of the Scimago report indicates that IJSMS had a h-index of 29 in 2021, demonstrating that authors have made a minimum of 29 citations to 29 articles published in the journal. Additionally, with a Scimago rank of 0.621, IJSMS is positioned within the second quadrant of the Business, Management, and Accounting domains, indicating a notable level of scholarly excellence (SJR, 2023).

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. *Data collection and analysis*

Scopus, a leading database for citations and abstracts within peer-reviewed literature and one of the most widely utilized databases globally, was employed to compile data. This resource provides peer-reviewed publications and high-quality information online, as well as an extensive collection of available documents for review (Moradi, 2023a). The study conducted a search for "International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship" within Scopus, which yielded 481 publications. As this research only considered publications from 2016 through Volume 24, Issue 1 in 2023, articles published between 1999 and 2015 were excluded. Jin (2017) completed a similar comprehensive review of IJSMS via a bibliometric analysis for its first 17 years in publication (i.e., 1999-2015); consequently, those years were omitted from the current study. One of the primary objectives of this research was to provide an update to Jin's original work by incorporating several additional methods (e.g., content analysis, paradigm funnel, and citation drivers) to ensure a more comprehensive and multifaceted review of the key topics and trends featured in IJSMS.

Following the initial search, the subsequent step involved the exclusion of editorials (n = 53) and notes (n = 10) from the document list, thereby reducing the total number of records to 253. The data were subsequently converted into CSV format to facilitate a more comprehensive analysis. The bibliometric and scientometric analyses were conducted using the bibliometrix R-package, selected for its robust statistical algorithms, access to advanced numerical routines, incorporation of data visualization tools, and array of analytical tools and data matrix construction capabilities for performing co-citation, coupling, scientific collaboration, and co-word analyses (Aria and Cuccurullo, 2017).

Through the utilization of multiple methodologies and frameworks (i.e., bibliometric analysis, content analysis, paradigm funnel, and citation analysis), data compiled for this investigation from previously published articles within IJSMS underwent a comprehensive examination that provided insights into contemporary sport marketing trends and identified research gaps that indicate areas where further

investigation should be considered in future studies. Moreover, intercoder reliability was implemented to verify the study's coding procedures and ensure the validity of findings within the data.

## 2.2. *Bibliometric analysis*

Bibliometrics employs data-driven and quantitative methodologies to elucidate a subject's intellectual framework. This approach enhances literature reviews by facilitating pattern identification and analyst evaluation (Moradi et al., 2023b). Durieux and Gevenois (2010) categorize bibliometric indicators into three distinct groups. The first category (i.e., quantity indicators) serves to quantify a researcher's output. The second category comprises quality indicators, which analyze the caliber of a researcher's work, while the third category consists of structural indicators, which assess the relationships among publications, authors, and areas of study.

Citations and co-citations elucidate a field's intellectual foundations. Citation patterns in academic papers may reveal novel relationships and research trajectories, as well as facilitate the examination of connections between cited works (Hota et al., 2020). Like citation analyses, co-citation investigates source linkages to better comprehend an academic discipline's conceptual framework. Such an analysis is predicated on the premise that documents frequently cited together in bibliometric analyses are likely to share certain similarities (Benckendorff and Zehrer, 2013). Collaboration networks may also illustrate the interconnections among authors, institutions, and nations in research, such as universities, departments, and research centers (Aria and Cuccurullo, 2020). Furthermore, co-word analysis compares keywords in scientific journals to ascertain the field's current state and future challenges. This approach facilitates the identification of concepts that are present across multiple documents.

The research design, as illustrated in Figure 1, encompasses the following methodological steps: (1) identifying articles published in IJSMS between 2016 and 2023 (i.e., Volume 24, Issue 1) and indexed in Scopus, (2) applying inclusion and exclusion criteria, (3) conducting a paradigm funnel analysis, (4) performing an intellectual structure analysis, (5) executing a social structure analysis, (6) undertaking an analysis of citations, and (7) interpreting the results.
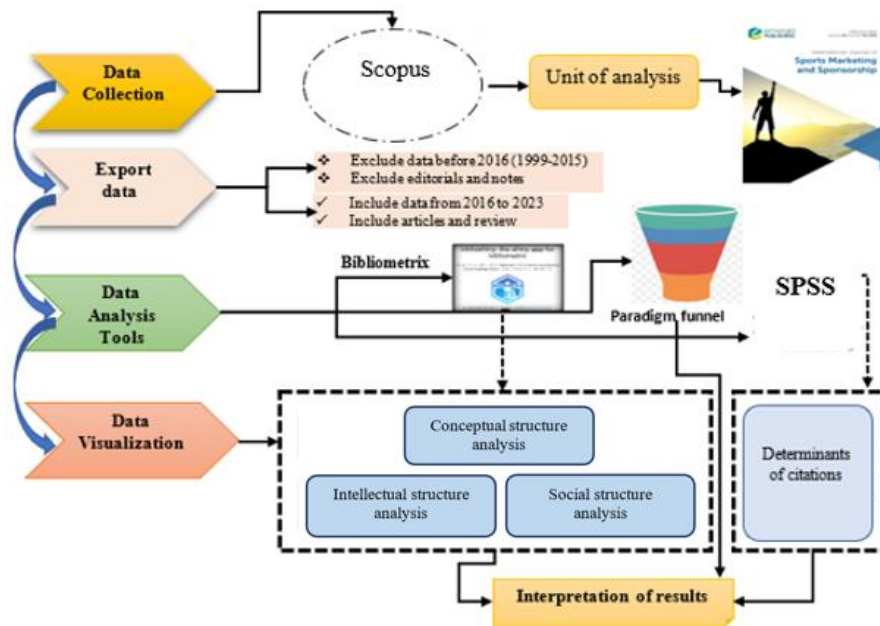
**Figure 1.** The research design of the study.

## 3. Results

This investigation sought a comprehensive review of the IJSMS to elucidate current trends within the sport marketing domain and identify future research opportunities to address existing gaps. Employing multiple data analyses and frameworks (i.e., bibliometric analysis, content analysis, paradigm funnel, and citation analysis), the subsequent findings delineate the multifaceted elements that reflect the most prevalent topics, methodologies, collaborations, and citations within the published research articles.

### 3.1. *The state of collaboration for the IJSMS*

Techniques for creating scientific maps, such as collaboration analysis (RQ1), represent effective methodologies for delineating the connections between researchers who have made significant contributions. Donthu et al. (*2021*) posited that collaboration networks constitute a leading approach to documenting scientific collaborations, as exemplified in Figure 2 illustrates the collaboration network among 21 universities worldwide. The University of Georgia, Florida State University, Seoul National University, and Nanyang Technological University were the four most substantial contributors to IJSMS, with the University of Georgia demonstrating the highest level of international cooperation among all universities. When considering the total scope of international cooperation, Nanyang Technological University from Singapore exhibited a greater degree than any other university through its collaboration with institutions such as Texas A&M University (USA), Loughborough University (England), and Hanyang University (South Korea). In the previous review conducted by Jin (*2017*), the predominance of publishing was represented by universities such as the University of Florida, the University of Massachusetts, Florida State University, and Indiana University.

Furthermore, analyzing co-authorship patterns facilitates the identification of research groups commonly referred to as "invisible colleges". Based on data analysis efforts, the author's network contributing to IJSMS comprised six clusters, further illustrated in Figure 2. The developed map depicts relationships between authors who have collaborated on a minimum of two articles published in the IJSMS, with co-authorship represented as clusters of nodes in the same color within the network. Moreover, the line thickness indicates the extent of collaboration between authors. For instance, Dr. James Jianhui Zhang, Dr. Kevin K. Byon, and Dr. Jerred Junqi Wang have demonstrated significant influence in the scientific collaboration network of researchers and were among the prominent contributors in the clusters.
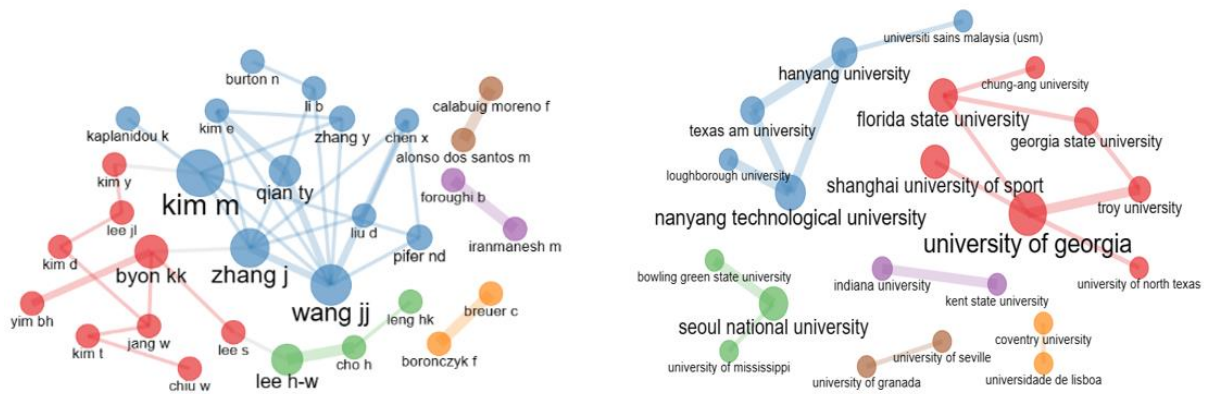


**Figure 2.** Collaboration networks (authors and institutions) of IJSMS.

Furthermore, Table 1 presents the authors' contributions based on the number of co-authorships (RQ1). The analysis revealed that publications in IJSMS were predominantly the result of three co-authors per article (32.41%). Between 2016 and 2020, there was a declining trend in articles published by single authors; however, this trend has exhibited exponential growth in the past two years.

**Table1.** The state of collaboration for author per article per period.

| NA | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | F | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 25 | 9.88 |
| 2 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 11 | 15 | 11 | 12 | 7 | 72 | 28.46 |
| 3 | 7 | 10 | 8 | 9 | 17 | 9 | 19 | 3 | 82 | 32.41 |
| 4 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 11 | 10 | 8 | 8 | 1 | 50 | 19.76 |
| >=5 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 24 | 9.49 |
| %SA | 15% | 14.81% | 14.81% | 13.79% | 4.17% | 9.38% | 10.20% | 0 | 253 | 100.00 |

**Note: %SA** = percentage of single-authored documents; **NA** = No of authors; **F** = Frequency

### 3.2. *Research Perspective and Statistical Methods in IJSMS*

Addressing RQ2 required an analysis of the predominant research perspectives and statistical methods in IJSMS. Using the implemented data analyses, 253 articles were evaluated and further delineated in Table 2. Approximately three-quarters of the articles (i.e., 190) were classified as employing quantitative methods, while 18.97% (i.e., 48) were categorized as utilizing qualitative methods. These

findings corroborate Jin's (*2017*) results regarding the apparent prevalence of quantitative research within the articles published in IJSMS. In this context, Abeza et al. (*2015*) emphasized that quantitative research has historically been more prevalent in sports marketing than qualitative research. Furthermore, less than 6% of the articles employed a mixed-method approach. Abeza et al. (*2015*) additionally noted that mixed methods in sport marketing are still nascent and have received limited scholarly attention. This observation was substantiated by the results presented in this study, as there appears to be a significant research gap in utilizing mixed research methods.

From a statistical perspective, SEM/CFA (i.e., 28.28%), descriptive statistics (i.e., 22.73%), and correlation (i.e., 15.66%) were the most prevalent analyses in studies employing quantitative-predictive analysis. Furthermore, preferred methodologies within qualitative studies encompassed interviews/focus groups (i.e., 45.76%), literature review (i.e., 22.03%), and content analyses (i.e., 11.86%). These findings contrast with the results of Jin's research (2017), which demonstrated the predominance of frequency description, correlation analysis, mean description, factor analysis, regression analysis, ANOVA, and SEM, respectively.

**Table 2.** Research Method.

| Research Method | Frequency | Percentage | Research Method | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Quantitative** | **190** | **75.1** | **Qualitative** | **48** | **18.97** |
| SEM / CFA | 112 | 28.28 | Interview / Focus group | 27 | 45.76 |
| Descriptive statistics | 90 | 22.73 | Literature review | 13 | 22.03 |
| Correlation | 62 | 15.66 | Content analysis | 7 | 11.86 |
| Regression | 44 | 11.11 | Netnography | 1 | 1.69 |
| T-test and ANOVA | 41 | 10.35 | Template Analysis | 1 | 1.69 |
| MANOVA | 8 | 2.02 | Sentiment analysis | 1 | 1.69 |
| ANCOVA | 7 | 1.77 | Fs/QCA | 1 | 1.69 |
| MANCOVA | 7 | 1.77 | ISM | 1 | 1.69 |
| Chi-square | 4 | 1.01 | Other | 7 | 11.86 |
| Other | 21 | 5.30 | Total | 59 | 100.00 |
| Total | 396 | 100.00 | **Mixed Method** | **15** | **5.93** |

**Note:** *Some articles have used multiple statistical methods simultaneously, so the total number of statistical methods in each section (quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods) varies; **Fs/QCA** = Fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis

### 3.3. *Specific research topics in the IJSMS*

To identify the specific research topics highlighted within IJSMS articles (RQ3), the current trends receiving publication were analyzed utilizing the research topic classification developed by Jin (2017) in their review. As articles frequently encompass multiple topics, this study identified and considered only the primary objective of each study for evaluation. Table 3 provides a more detailed breakdown of the categories of most prevalent research topics. Through this analysis, the three most frequently researched topics in IJSMS during this timeframe were "consumer behavior," "sports marketing strategy," and "service quality." Compared to the results published by Jin, there has been a notable shift

in the tendency of researchers to gravitate toward topics such as service quality and sports marketing strategy. While some topics (e.g., sponsorship effects, brand performance, sports event sponsorship) remain consistent with what Jin identified as the topics of interest for researchers in IJSMS, the leading research trends indicate that the most prominent topics have evolved slightly over time.

**Table 3.** Categorizing the collection of articles

| Topics | F | % | Topics | F | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Consumer behavior | 38 | 15.02 | Corporate sponsorship | 8 | 3.16 |
| Sports marketing strategy | 33 | 13.04 | Venue sponsorship | 8 | 3.16 |
| Service quality | 20 | 7.91 | Team sponsorship | 7 | 2.77 |
| Sponsorship effects | 17 | 6.72 | Corporate social responsibility | 6 | 2.37 |
| Brand performance | 17 | 6.72 | Relationship marketing | 5 | 1.98 |
| Sports event sponsorship | 15 | 5.93 | Ambush marketing | 4 | 1.58 |
| Sports and the internet | 12 | 4.74 | Regulation and laws | 4 | 1.58 |
| Celebrity endorsements | 11 | 4.35 | League sponsorship | 3 | 1.19 |
| Fan loyalty | 11 | 4.35 | Alcohol sponsorship | 1 | 0.4 |
| Promotion and advertising | 11 | 4.35 | Corporate image | 1 | 0.4 |
| Business performance | 10 | 3.95 | Sports broadcasting | 1 | 0.4 |
| Commercial sponsorship | 10 | 3.95 | | | |

## 3.4. *Research Topic and Methodology Relationship*

The methodological predispositions of various research topics were mapped utilizing the relationship between specific methods and topic indicators (RQ4). Figure 3 illustrates the relative positions of research topics in relation to a predisposition toward (or away from) quantitative and qualitative methods. Significant differences were observed between individual topics and the selection of research methods, with the issues categorized as quantitative dominant, qualitative dominant, mixed methods, and conceptual. Generally, topics exhibit a predisposition toward either quantitative methods (i.e., lower right quadrant) or qualitative methods (i.e., upper left quadrant) (Valtakoski, 2019; Moradi et al., 2024). For instance, a topic such as ambush marketing tended to employ qualitative methods. In contrast, brand performance, business performance, regulation and laws, consumer behavior, sports event sponsorship, and corporate sponsorship sports marketing strategy were balanced topics investigated using quantitative and qualitative methods. The predominantly quantitative topics included commercial sponsorship, relationship marketing, celebrity endorsements, league sponsorship, and sports broadcasting.
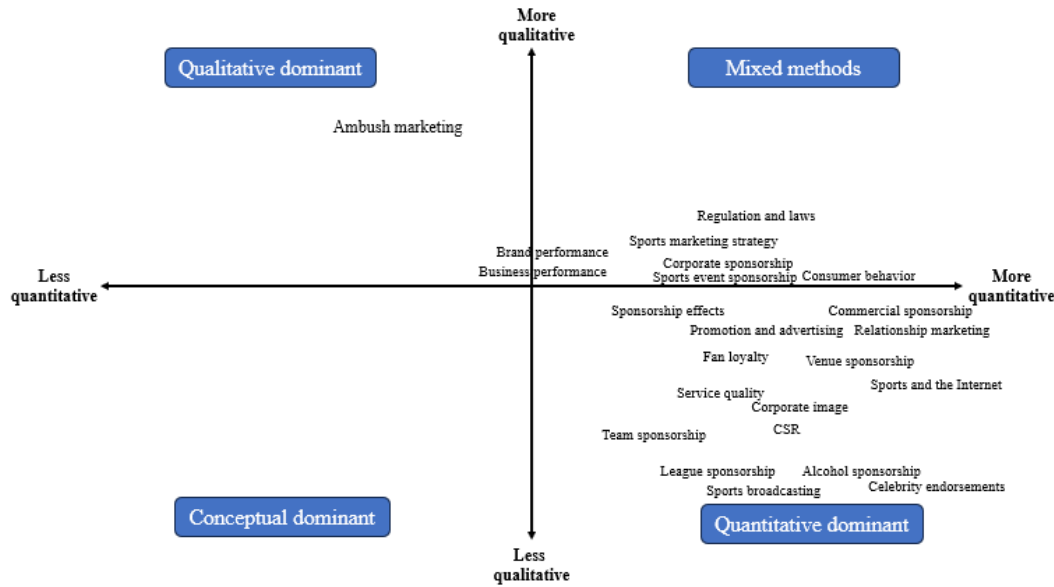
**Figure 3.** Positioning of research topics according to research methods.

To address RQ5, articles in IJSMS were analyzed utilizing both the paradigm funnel technique and the sport business industry segment established by Pedersen et al. (2011). Table 4 delineates how articles were categorized and distributed within this analysis, demonstrating that sport marketing was present in 48 of the 253 (17.98%) articles and represented the most prevalent segment among published studies. Professional sport (i.e., 35 articles, 13.83%) and participants sport (i.e., 33 articles, 13.04%) ranked second and third, respectively, differing from the order featured in previous research. For instance, Peetz and Reems (2011) identified sports marketing, professional sports, and intercollegiate sports as the most prominent topics within the sport business segment, while Pitts (2016), who examined the International Journal of Sport Management, found the order to be collegiate sports, professional, and sport management education.

Furthermore, the articles reviewed in this section have been analyzed utilizing the paradigm funnel technique. According to Berthon et al. (2003), articles can be classified into four distinct categories, each representing a unique perspective on the subject matter being reviewed. The categorization ranges from explicit and observable facts derived from empirical observations to implicit and unobservable facts. This approach facilitates the depiction of knowledge dynamics by examining transitions across the four distinct categories. The initial level encompasses empirical articles that seek to establish fundamental truths through empirical observations of significant and enduring variables (Ziaee & Ferdowsi, 2020). Categorizing previous empirical research enables researchers to identify areas lacking knowledge or attention (Nairn et al., 2007). The subsequent tier pertains to scholarly investigations that employ analytical methodologies to establish connections between empirical evidence and theoretical frameworks (Berthon et al., 2003). At this stage, articles primarily focus on analyses that delve into contemporary perspectives on methodologies (Confente, 2015). The third level of analysis outlined by

Berthon et al. (2003) involves formulating theoretical frameworks and examining empirical hypotheses. This category focuses on scholarly articles that explore specific concepts and the authors who contribute to the advancement of the theory (Ziaee & Ferdowsi, 2020). Finally, the last level of the funnel introduces skepticism toward the foundational assumptions, framework, knowledge, and techniques associated with a paradigm's values and beliefs (Berthon et al., 2003; Daugherty et al., 2017). Consequently, 11 articles were excluded from the review process for not conforming to the quadrilateral funnel paradigm described previously, as they were written by referring to archived texts with no empirical observation or analytical method. Therefore, 242 articles were classified into four categories using the aforementioned technique.

One hundred and eight articles (44.63%) are situated within the most prominent section of the funnel. An examination of the articles at this level provides insight into the appropriateness of the funnel metaphor for this type of review. This level encompasses research focused on observing and documenting criteria or events within a paradigm. Shuv-Ami et al. (2020) characterized their work as the construction and validation of a novel love-hate scale for sports fans, as well as the testing of its antecedents and consequences through empirical research. Likewise, Liu et al. (2017) described their study as an empirical analysis of the effects of sports celebrities' image on consumer engagement via social media and with their endorsed brand. Furthermore, Amenta and Di Betta (2021) employed an empirical analysis to evaluate the effects of a systemic corruption scandal on demand in both the short and long term. Considering these previous studies, the upper portion of the funnel represents the experimental observations that initially draw attention to a phenomenon, and the IJSMS research provided evidence to support these observations. Consequently, each of the 108 articles at this level focused on data generation.

The second level of the funnel represents research that connects data to theory utilizing analytical approaches. The focus here is on ascertaining whether the mechanisms employed to map data to theory are appropriate. Rather than categorizing data, this study examined relationships and identified patterns that could serve as predictors. Although advanced techniques are characteristic of this level, correct theory and order are essential. Ninety-seven articles (40.08%) were assigned to this category and focused on ordering, structuring, and manipulating data. For example, at this level, articles have used various analytical methods, such as two-wave panel analysis (Kinoshita & Matsuoka, 2023), multigroup moderated-mediation analysis (Kim et al., 2022a), Ccmparative analysis (Han et al., 2016), interpretive structural modeling (Memari et al., 2022) importance-performance Analysis (Kim et al., 2016), fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (Ivens et al., 2020), and data envelopment analysis (Chen & Breedlove, 2020), to achieve the set objectives.

According to Berthon et al. (2003), the third funnel level is devoted to research articulating theory development and testing empirical assertions. Given this, thirty-five articles (14.46%) were assigned to

this level because the authors explicitly intended to investigate specific theories. Among the theories used by different researchers at this level are the attribution theory (Kim et al., 2020a), item response theory (Kim et al., 2020b), theory of goal-directed behavior (Yim & Byon, 2020), stakeholder theory (Oh et al., 2019), schema theory (Jensen et al., 2020), stimulus organism response theory (Teng & Bao, 2022), comparative advantage theory (Wang et al., 2018), balance theory (Wang et al., 2022), signaling theory (Jensen et al., 2020), socioemotional selectivity theory (Icekson et al., 2021), social identity theory (Kim & Manoli, 2023b), organismic integration theory (OIT), theory of values-belief-norm (VBN) and gender schema theory (GST) (Channa et al., 2022). Researchers have used the above theories to design their research hypotheses, and the included articles focused on articulating theoretical generative mechanisms and associated empirical propositions.

The fourth level challenges the assumptions associated with the paradigm's values and beliefs by critically examining the core framework, knowledge, or methods established by previous research. Only two (0.83%) of the articles included in the current study were categorized at this level. Zhang et al. (2018) advocated for scholarly inquiries to critically examine broad perspectives of marketing and business operations in the sports industry of emerging economies. In this research, the authors sought to identify the primary challenges in the sport industry of developing economies within a globalized market environment and advance the understanding of how to address such challenges. Wäsche et al. (2021) aimed to present a research approach that contributed to the sustainable development of urban spaces for sports and physical activity by encompassing theoretical reflections and directions for applied research.

**Table 4.** Sorting articles by paradigm funnel levels and sport business industry segments.

| Paradigm funnel levels | Sport business industry segment | F | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Sport Marketing | 48 | 18.97 |
| | Professional Sport | 35 | 13.83 |
| Empirical Observation Level 1 (n = 108, 44.63%) | Participant Sport | 33 | 13.04 |
| | Event Management | 21 | 8.30 |
| | Sport Mktg / Mgmt business | 20 | 7.91 |
| | Sport Communications | 17 | 6.72 |
| Analytical Methods Level 2 (n = 97, 40.08%) | Sporting goods | 17 | 6.72 |
| | International Sport | 15 | 5.93 |
| | College Sports | 13 | 5.14 |
| Specific Theory Level 3 (n = 35, 14.06%) | Other | 8 | 3.16 |
| | Sport Tourism | 8 | 3.16 |
| | Facility Management | 7 | 2.77 |
| Deep Assumptions Level 4 (n = 2, 0.83%) | Health Promotion | 7 | 2.77 |
| | Campus Recreation | 4 | 1.58 |

### 3.5. *Strategic Map of Research Themes in IJSMS*

A thematic mapping approach was employed to depict the prominent themes within IJSMS (RQ6). Figure 4 presents the strategic map, a graphical representation comprising two axes: the degree of development (i.e., density) and the degree of relevance (i.e., centrality), which generate four quadrants corresponding to distinct categories of themes. The connectivity between nodes and centrality indicates the overall significance of a topic. At the same time, the rate at which a network's underlying themes evolve depends on its density and network strengths (Yihua et al., 2022).

Motor themes: The themes in the quadrant are well-developed and form the basis of the journal's research, with centrality and density high among these themes. This quadrant includes the following aspects: team identification, PLS-SEM, advertising, purchase intention, and sport sponsorship.

*Niche themes:* Niche themes are well-defined, specific, and developed within a research area or journal. Positioned within quadrant two, these topics are experiencing rapid development. Based on the results presented in Figure 4, sustainability, social media, esports, Twitter, football fans, loyalty, and spectator sport are the journal's specialized research areas.

*Emerging or Declining themes:* Emerging themes within IJSMS can be found in the third quadrant. These topics embody low centrality and low density and are experiencing a change within the research realm. This study's themes featured within this quadrant included relationship marketing and service quality.

*Basic themes:* Themes defined by low density and high centrality characterize the fourth quadrant. Despite their importance, these themes are not well developed and represent areas where additional research could be valuable to advancing understanding within these topics, comprised of consumer behavior, satisfaction, and motivation.
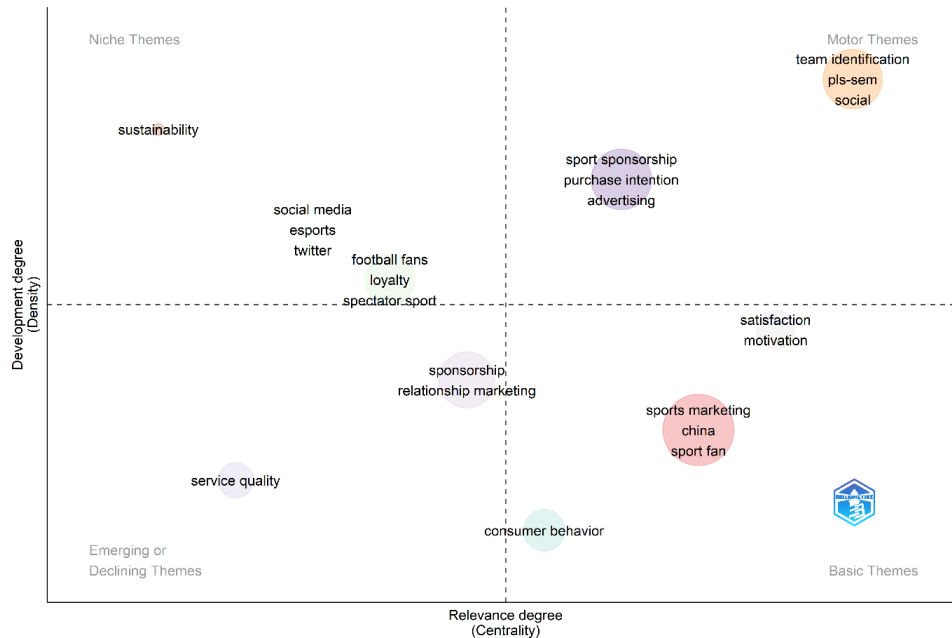


**Figure 4.** Strategic map of sport marketing and sponsorship research themes in the IJSMS.

## 3.6. *Historical evolution of research in IJSMS*

The Sankey diagram examines the temporal movements of popular topics from one time period to another (RQ7) and is useful for understanding the historical evolution of research in a specific field (Bamel et al., 2022). To construct this diagram and depict the historical evolution of sport marketing and sponsorship research topics in IJSMS, this study considered author keywords with a minimum occurrence of two, a minimum cluster frequency of five, and a minimum weight index of 0.12 in the inclusion index weighted by word occurrences. Since the review considered IJSMS scholarship from 2016 to 2023 (i.e., Volume 24, Issue 1), the trajectory was divided into two periods: 2016 to 2019 and 2020 to 2023. The resulting diagram is presented in Figure 5.

From 2016 to 2019, the primary topics within sport marketing and sponsorship articles featured in IJSMS comprised social media, attitude, CSR, sport sponsorship, esports, fitness center, service quality, and sports marketing. These topics represented the foundational research areas within the journal during the initial four-year timespan (i.e., 2016-2019) utilized in this analysis.

Between 2020 and 2023, the major sports marketing and sponsorship topics within IJSMS articles included sports sponsorship, social media, esports, consumer behavior, loyalty, sports marketing, PLS-SEM, and service quality. While some topics such as sport sponsorship, social media, esports, sports

marketing, and service quality continued to be researched, other topics such as attitude, CSR, and fitness centers disappeared and merged with sport sponsorship and social media, respectively. New topics, such as consumer behavior, loyalty, and PLS-SEM, also emerged during this specific period.
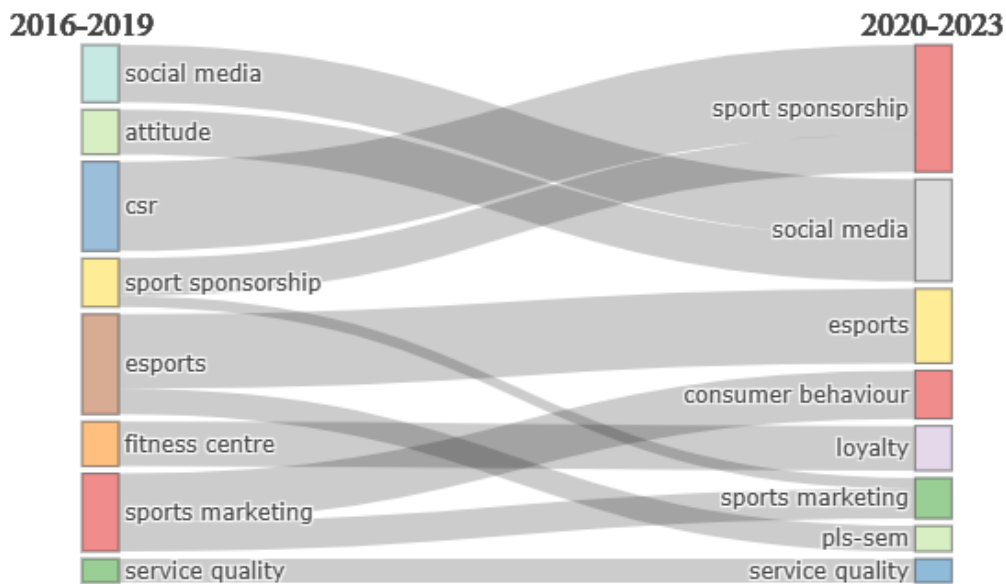


**Figure 5.** Historical evolution of sport marketing and sponsorship research topics in the IJSMS.

### 3.7. *Citations Analysis of IJSMS Articles*

In order to understand the factors contributing to the impact of IJSMS, this effort represents an attempt to explore various article-related characteristics explaining the citations of journal articles (RQ8). Researchers often use citations to determine the level of influence or attention an article has received, which suggests that citations are objective measurements of the impact of a research article within its field (Baker et al., 2021). Stremersch et al. (2007) proposed a theoretical framework founded on three perspectives: universalist, social constructivist, and presentation. Several studies (e.g., Meyer et al., 2018; Stremersch et al., 2015; Valtakoski, 2019) have previously used this framework, which was also relied upon in the current research. To do so, independent variables were grouped according to these theoretical perspectives. Furthermore, the negative binomial regression model was implemented to investigate seventeen predictive variables. The conceptual framework used for this study is further captured in Figure 6.
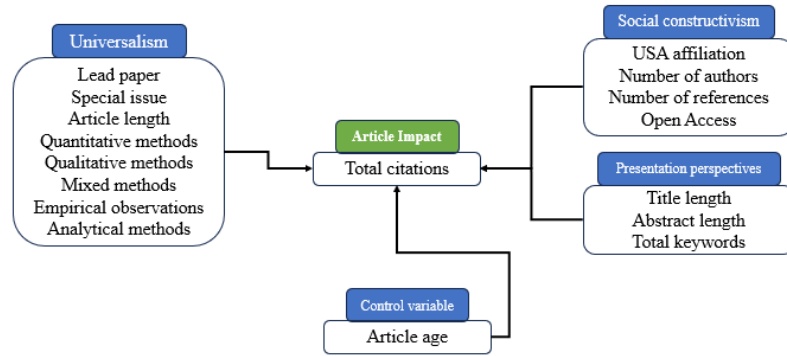
**Figure 6.** Study's conceptual framework.

Furthermore, Table 5 provides a breakdown of the descriptive statistics and analyses conducted for the variables within this study.

**Table 5.** Descriptive statistics of variables.

| Variable | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dependent Variable | | | | |
| Total citations | 0 | 98 | 7.49 | 10.25 |
| Control Variables | | | | |
| Article age | 1 | 7 | 3.33 | 2.007 |
| Demeaned age squared | 0.12 | 13.37 | 4.01 | 4.05 |
| Independent Variables | | | | |
| Quantitative methods | 1 | 32 | 8.30 | 7.31 |
| Qualitative methods | 0 | 13 | 2.22 | 2.89 |
| Mixed methods | 0 | 1 | 0.06 | 0.24 |
| Empirical observations | 0 | 1 | 0.42 | 0.50 |
| Analytical methods | 0 | 1 | 0.38 | 0.49 |
| Special issue | 0 | 1 | 0.18 | 0.39 |
| Lead paper | 0 | 1 | 0.12 | 0.32 |
| USA affiliation | 0 | 1 | 0.48 | 0.50 |
| Number of authors | 1 | 8 | 2.98 | 1.30 |
| Number of references | 21 | 141 | 71.44 | 23.14 |
| Open Access | 0 | 1 | 0.12 | 0.32 |
| Title length | 4 | 28 | 13.75 | 4.11 |
| Abstract length | 94 | 2019 | 242.34 | 144.64 |
| Total keywords | 2 | 11 | 5.19 | 1.13 |
| Article length | 8 | 30 | 17.45 | 3.49 |

Two models were developed to analyze both the control variables in isolation and the relationship between the variables and the total citations. Model 1 reflected solely the control variables, with the negative regression analysis findings validating the possibility of a non-linear relationship between article age and citations. Specifically, the article age variable positively correlated with citation, while the demeaned age squared variable displayed a negative association. These findings are consistent with prior research (Donthu et al., 2021; Varma et al., 2022). In Model 2, the remaining variables were added,

which facilitated examining the relationship between the variables and the total citations. Results indicated that only article length positively correlated with article citations, while quantitative methods, empirical observations, analytical methods, number of authors, and title length negatively correlated with article citations. For a full breakdown of the regression results, please see Table 7.

**Table 6.** Correlations between variables.

| Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Total citation | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Article age | 0.407*** | 1 | | | | | | | |
| 3. Demeaned age | 0.012 | 0.223*** | 1 | | | | | | |
| 4. Quantitative methods | 0.457** | 0.025 | 0.046 | 1 | | | | | |
| 5. Qualitative methods | 0.160 | 0.402* | 0.248 | 0.459** | 1 | | | | |
| 6. Mixed methods | 0.001 | -0.001 | -0.045 | -0.158 | -0.167 | 1 | | | |
| 7. Empirical observations | -0.065 | 0.081 | -0.025 | 0.012 | -0.129 | -0.046 | 1 | | |
| 8. Analytical methods | -0.048 | -0.037 | 0.064 | -0.055 | 0.216 | 0.114* | -0.669*** | 1 | |
| 9. Special issue | 0.017 | -0.020 | 0.030 | -0.229 | -0.133 | -0.032 | -0.007 | -0.075 | 1 |
| 10. Lead paper | 0.132** | 0.084 | 0.056 | 0.446** | .614** | 0.063 | -0.067 | -0.035 | -0.015 |
| 11. USA affiliation | -0.092 | 0.045 | .128* | 0.321 | -0.050 | -0.073 | -0.083 | 0.001 | 0.002 |
| 12. Number of authors | -0.013 | 0.015 | 0.001 | -0.161 | 0.219 | 0.069 | -0.077 | -0.005 | 0.139** |
| 13. Number of references | 0.023 | -0.211*** | -0.171*** | -0.078 | -0.212 | 0.054 | -0.136** | 0.138** | -0.060 |
| 14. Open Access | 0.029 | 0.022 | -0.001 | 0.154 | 0.481** | 0.115* | -0.042 | 0.066 | -0.079 |
| 15. Title length | -0.092 | -0.075 | 0.097 | -0.437** | -0.092 | -0.009 | 0.005 | 0.028 | 0.113 |
| 16. Abstract length | -0.055 | -0.059 | -0.070 | -0.146 | 0.064 | 0.021 | 0.098 | -0.064 | 0.046 |
| 17. Total keywords | -0.076 | -0.061 | 0.172*** | 0.168 | -0.109 | 0.001 | -0.027 | -0.062 | 0.064 |
| 18. Article length | -0.096 | -0.238*** | -0.079 | 0.104 | -0.273 | 0.092 | -0.056 | 0.079 | -0.074 |
| **Variable** | **10** | **11** | **12** | **13** | **14** | **15** | **16** | **17** | **18** |
| 10. Lead paper | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| 11. USA affiliation | -0.009 | 1 | | | | | | | |
| 12. Number of authors | 0.120* | 0.030 | 1 | | | | | | |
| 13. Number of references | -0.074 | -0.049 | 0.114* | 1 | | | | | |
| 14. Open Access | 0.055 | -0.131** | 0.026 | 0.026 | 1 | | | | |
| 15. Title length | -0.091 | -0.133** | 0.069 | 0.106* | -0.037 | 1 | | | |
| 16. Abstract length | 0.057 | -0.065 | 0.096 | -0.132** | -0.031 | 0.045 | 1 | | |
| 17. Total keywords | -0.020 | 0.025 | -0.005 | 0.111* | 0.013 | -0.062 | 0.006 | 1 | |
| 18. Article length | -0.125** | 0.092 | 0.127** | 0.610*** | -0.016 | 0.141** | 0.001 | 0.120* | 1 |

**Notes:** *, **, and *** indicate statistical significance at the 0.10, 0.05, and 0.01 levels of significance, respectively

**Table 7.** Results of negative binomial regression analysis.

| Variables | Model 1 (Control Variables) | | Model 2 (Total Citation) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **B** | **Standard error** | **B** | **Standard error** |
| (Intercept) | 2.102 | (0.095)*** | 3.809 | (0.419)*** |
| Article age | 0.429 | (0.039)*** | - | - |
| Demeaned age squared | -0.09 | (0.018)*** | - | - |
| Quantitative methods | - | - | -0.200 | (0.118)* |
| Qualitative methods | - | - | 0.327 | (0.396) |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mixed methods | - | - | -0.05 | (0.069) |
| Empirical observations | - | - | -4.370 | (1.300)*** |
| Analytical methods | - | - | -6.375 | (2.232)*** |
| Special issue | - | - | -0.592 | (2.287) |
| Lead paper | - | - | 0.357 | (2.313) |
| USA affiliation | - | - | -2.210 | (1.361) |
| Number of authors | - | - | -1.210 | (0.415)*** |
| Number of references | - | - | -0.020 | (0.023) |
| Open Access | - | - | 1.084 | (2.386) |
| Title length | - | - | -0.216 | (0.107)** |
| Abstract length | - | - | -0.004 | (0.007) |
| Total keywords | - | - | -0.320 | (1.089) |
| Article length | - | - | 0.723 | (0.269)*** |
| Log Likelihood | -722.185 | | -51.481 | |
| Akaike's Information Criterion (AIC) | 1450.369 | | 134.961 | |
| Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) | 1460.969 | | 153.129 | |

**Notes:** *, **, and *** indicate statistical significance at the 0.10, 0.05, and 0.01 levels of significance, respectively

## 4. Discussion

To master a field, researchers must spend much time searching and reviewing its background. This type of research allows researchers to access articles in their field quickly (Abdollahnezhad et al., 2024). Through this multifaceted effort, findings elucidate how the journal has made substantial contributions to the sport marketing and sponsorship segments, providing a foundation for scholars to build upon and insights for practitioners to utilize in guiding their actions.

With the increase in collaboration among authors and institutions, this context was examined within IJSMS publications (i.e., RQ1), with the University of Georgia, Florida State University, Seoul National University, and Nanyang Technological University emerging as the four most significant contributors to IJSMS. The University of Georgia has demonstrated the highest level of international cooperation among all universities. The University of Georgia has established partnerships with various institutions worldwide, resulting in diverse research collaborations. These collaborations have contributed to the University's prominent presence within the IJSMS publications. The University of Georgia has established itself as a global leader in sport management and marketing research through its active participation and engagement. It has set a benchmark for international cooperation among universities in the field. One notable partnership is with the Tokyo Institute of Technology in Japan, facilitating in-depth studies on traditional Japanese sports and their marketing strategies. Another influential collaboration is with Shanghai University in China, which has enhanced cross-cultural research on international sporting events' marketing and sponsorship aspects. These diverse collaborations have not only enriched the University's knowledge base but also facilitated student exchange programs and internships, further solidifying the University of Georgia's reputation as a hub for global sport management and marketing research. Meanwhile, Nanyang Technological University in Singapore has

exhibited the greatest diversity in international cooperation. When considering authors individually, Dr. James Jianhui Zhang, Dr. Kevin K. Byon, and Dr. Jerred Junqi Wang have played a prominent role in the scientific collaboration network of researchers.

On the other hand, three co-authors represent the journal's publications most frequently (i.e., 32.41%). This supports the notion that the increasing difficulty of securing publication within high-quality journals has contributed to a substantially more significant proportion of authors collaborating. Indeed, a plausible explanation for the high percentage of three co-authors could be the necessity for diverse expertise and skills to address complex scientific problems. Additionally, the data revealed a significant increase in international collaborations, highlighting the global nature of scientific research and the importance of cross-cultural exchange in advancing knowledge. These findings underscore the evolving dynamics of scientific publication and the growing emphasis on teamwork and interdisciplinary approaches.

The type of research perspectives and statistical methods also provide significant insight into the articles receiving publication in IJSMS (i.e., RQ2). These findings suggest that most articles published in IJSMS employ quantitative methods, indicating a preference for objective and measurable data analysis. The high percentage of articles utilizing interviews/focus groups as a qualitative method indicates the importance of gathering subjective perspectives and insights from individuals in the field.

Current trends reflect the areas of focus within the research being conducted by scholars, as well as the priorities of journals. Therefore, efforts were concentrated on identifying the leading research topics in IJSMS (i.e., RQ3), with "consumer behavior," "sports marketing strategy," and "service quality" representing the three most frequently appearing topics. Furthermore, RQ4 examined the relationship between research topics and methodologies implemented in IJSMS. Through this analysis, findings demonstrated that specific topics can be positioned within particular categories, given the type of methodology used to examine them. For instance, an issue such as ambush marketing has typically been studied using qualitative methods. In contrast, dominant quantitative topics have included commercial sponsorship, relationship marketing, celebrity endorsements, league sponsorship, and sports broadcasting. Specific issues appear more amenable to qualitative research approaches, while others are more suitable for quantitative analysis. This insight is valuable for researchers and practitioners, enabling them to align their research questions with the appropriate methodology for a more comprehensive and insightful study. Additionally, it highlights the importance of considering the research approach when exploring specific topics in the field of sport marketing and sponsorship.

To categorize and distribute IJSMS articles, the paradigm funnel technique and sports business industry segment were utilized (i.e., RQ5). Peetz and Reems (2011) and Pitts (2016) found that intercollegiate sports were among the most frequently studied segments in sports business literature. However, the results from this study challenge that assertion by demonstrating participant sport as one of the primary

focus areas. This shift may indicate an increasing recognition of the significance of marketing strategies in the sport industry. Indeed, the inclusion of participant sport as one of the top-ranked segments underscores the importance of understanding the experiences and behaviors of amateur athletes in the field of sport business. Overall, this study's findings provide new insights into the distribution of IJSMS articles and identify emerging trends in the field. Furthermore, the paradigm funnel technique has facilitated identifying and highlighting articles that prioritize empirical analysis and data generation, thereby enhancing the body of knowledge in the IJSMS.

Key findings from this study were further elucidated using mapping techniques that capture the most frequently appearing elements. The thematic map technique was employed to identify the main themes within IJSMS publications (i.e., RQ6). By visualizing the distribution and clustering of these themes, it became apparent which areas of sport marketing were receiving the most attention and research focus. This information can be valuable for academics and practitioners in the field, as it elucidates the current trends and areas of interest in sport marketing research.

In addition to identifying the main themes within IJSMS articles, the evolution of research topics was also examined (i.e., RQ7). This analysis was conducted by dividing the timeframe of this study (i.e., 2016 to 2023) into two smaller periods (i.e., 2016 to 2019 and 2020 to 2023). Findings indicate that the field of sports marketing has evolved over time to reflect the changing landscape of society and consumer behavior. The continued examination of topics such as sport sponsorship and social media suggests their enduring importance in the field, while the introduction of emerging areas like consumer behavior and loyalty highlights the necessity to adapt to new trends and demands. This dynamic nature of sports management research ensures that the field remains relevant and responsive to stakeholders' ever-changing needs and interests.

Finally, utilizing a negative binomial regression, the factors associated with citations of IJSMS articles were identified to address RQ8. These findings indicate that older articles accumulate more citations, albeit with a diminishing effect as they age. Furthermore, longer articles are more likely to be cited, suggesting that the scholarly community values comprehensive and in-depth research. Specifically, the employment of quantitative methods, empirical observations, analytical approaches, and the presence of multiple authors and longer titles positively influenced article citations. These results underscore the significance of rigorous research methodologies and collaboration in producing highly cited articles. The findings suggest that articles with a robust empirical foundation and extensive analysis are more likely to garner attention and recognition from the scholarly community. Moreover, the involvement of multiple authors may potentially contribute to increased citations.

## 5. Conclusion

The objective of this study was to conduct a comprehensive and multifaceted review of the International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship to identify the primary topics receiving publication in

research, as well as elucidate current research gaps that could serve as focal points for future studies. Data were compiled from Scopus and subsequently subjected to analysis through the bibliometrix software. Employing a bibliometric analysis, a content analysis, the paradigm funnel technique, and a negative binomial regression, a multi-method approach was implemented to provide in-depth insight into the journal's publication trends and consider areas for additional attention. Through this endeavor, context was provided regarding the topics that have maintained a consistent presence within the field, as well as the evolution of emerging areas over time and the relationship between those individual topics and the methodologies implemented. Consequently, further understanding was uncovered in the IJSMS articles, which received the highest number of citations within other journals and the journals in the field most frequently cited within IJSMS publications.

The findings in this study provide valuable insights for scholars, readers, and IJSMS editorial board members by enhancing their understanding of the theoretical and practical contributions resulting from the research. Additionally, the utility of the results for editors lies in their capacity to facilitate policies that prioritize publications that substantially impact and contribute to the journal's growth potential. Furthermore, insight is provided to scholars regarding potential areas of focus for future research, as well as the value that derives from collaboration with others in the field. Through this comprehensive overview of sport marketing and sponsorship research in IJSMS, this work elucidates key trends and developments currently present within these segments to demonstrate how topics have evolved and identify niche and emerging themes that offer further opportunities for investigation. For instance, several recommendations based on emerging topics in sport marketing and sponsorship include:

Sustainability and Environmental Responsibility in Sport Marketing: Investigating the incorporation of sustainability practices into marketing strategies by sports organizations and sponsors and examining the subsequent impact on consumer behavior.

Digital and Social Media Influences on Fan Engagement: Analyzing the role of emerging technologies, such as augmented reality, virtual reality, and AI-driven personalization, in shaping fan experiences and engagement.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Sports Sponsorship: Examining how sponsorship strategies address issues related to diversity and inclusivity to appeal to a broader audience.

Impact of Athlete Activism on Sponsorship and Branding: Evaluating the influence of athlete-led social and political movements on consumer perceptions and sponsorship effectiveness.

E-Sports and Virtual Competitions: Investigating the rapidly growing e-sports sector, sponsorship opportunities, and its unique marketing dynamics.

## 6. Limitations and future directions of research

Although the bibliometric approach benefits the current investigation's retrospective and prospective aspects, it is essential to acknowledge the presence of certain limitations. The primary constraint pertains to the sources utilized for data collection, as data obtained from extensive scientific databases, such as Scopus, are not exclusively designed for bibliometric analysis. Consequently, these datasets may contain unintentional errors that can influence research outcomes. Furthermore, citations extracted from Scopus also represent a limitation. Although Scopus is a reputable citation source, it only aggregates citations from sources that meet its stringent indexing criteria, which restricts the number of citations compiled. An additional limitation of this review is that it draws exclusively from articles and reviews published in IJSMS. While this study attempted to predict the future trends of IJSMS, it predominantly serves as a retrospective examination of the journal's development from 2016 to Volume 24, Issue 1 in 2023 (i.e., Volume 24, Issue 1). Notwithstanding these constraints, meticulous efforts were employed within this review to substantiate the claims made regarding IJSMS and its anticipated future research agenda.

## Disclosure statement and funding

## References

Abeza, G., O'Reilly, N., Dottori, M., Séguin, B. and Nzindukiyimana, O. (2015), "Mixed methods research in sport marketing", *International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches*, Vol. 9 No. 1, pp. 40-56. https://doi.org/10.1080/18340806.2015.1076758

Abdollahnezhad, F., Andam, R., & Rajabi, M. (2024). Bibliometric Analysis of Service Quality in Sports Tourism. Journal of Tourism and Development, 13(1), 262-279.

Aghaei, N., & Moradi, E. (2016). The effect of the perception of leadership style in sport, practices of applying power by coaches and sport commitment on the satisfaction of athletes (Individual and team disciplines). *Organizational Behavior Management in Sport Studies, 3*(10), 77-90.

Amenta, C. and Di Betta, P. (2021), "The impact of corruption on sport demand", *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, Vol. 22 No. 2, pp. 369-384. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSMS-01-2020-0004

Antony, J. and Selvaraju, R. (2019), "Growth, Indexing and Authorship Pattern of Poultry Industry Research Publications", *Journal of Scientometric Research*, Vol. 8 No. 3, pp. 150-155. https://doi.org/10.5530/jscires.8.3.32

Aria, M. and Cuccurullo, C. (2017), "bibliometrix: An R-tool for comprehensive science mapping analysis", *Journal of Informetrics*, Vol. 11 No. 4, pp. 959-975. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joi.2017.08.007

Aria, M. and Cuccurullo, C. (2020), "Science mapping analysis with bibliometrix R-package: An example", https://bibliometrix.org/documents/bibliometrix_Report.html

Arnull, L.G., Kapilashrami, A. and Sampson, M. (2021), "Visualizing patterns and gaps in transgender sexual and reproductive health: A bibliometric and content analysis of literature (1990–2020)", *International Journal of Transgender Health*, (ahead-of-print), pp. 1-16. https://doi.org/10.1080/26895269.2021.1997691

Baker, H.K., Kumar, S. and Pandey, N. (2021), "Five decades of the Journal of Consumer Affairs: A bibliometric analysis", *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, Vol. 55 No. 1, pp. 293-331. https://doi.org/10.1111/joca.12347

Bamel, N., Kumar, S., Bamel, U., Lim, W.M. and Sureka, R. (2022), "The state of the art of innovation management: insights from a retrospective review of the European Journal of Innovation Management", *European Journal of Innovation Management*, Vol. ahead-of-print No. ahead-of-print. https://doi.org/10.1108/EJIM-07-2022-0361

Benckendorff, P. and Zehrer, A. (2013), "A network analysis of tourism research", *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 43, pp. 121-149. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2013.04.005

Berthon, P., Nairn, A. and Money, A. (2003), "Through the paradigm funnel: a conceptual tool for literature analysis", *Marketing Education Review*, Vol. 13 No. 2, pp. 55-66. https://doi.org/10.1080/10528008.2003.11488830

Celik, F. (2023). A bibliometric analysis of sports marketing research in communication. *Pressacademia*. https://doi.org/10.17261/pressacademia.2023.1784

Channa, N.A., Tariq, B., Samo, A.H., Ghumro, N.H. and Qureshi, N.A. (2022), "Predicting consumers' intentions to purchase eco-friendly athletic wear in a moderated model of individual green values and gender", *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, Vol. 23 No. 2, pp. 410-436. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSMS-12-2020-0215

Chen, G. and Breedlove, J. (2020), "The effect of innovation-driven policy on innovation efficiency: Based on the listed sports firms on Chinese new Third Board", *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, Vol. 21 No. 4, pp. 735-755. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSMS-12-2019-0136

Cheong, C., Pyun, D., & Leng, H. (2018). Sponsorship and advertising in sport: a study of consumers' attitude. *European Sport Management Quarterly, 19*(3), 287-311. https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2018.1517271

Confente, I. (2015), "Twenty-five years of word-of-mouth studies: A critical review of tourism research", *International Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol. 17 No. 6, pp. 613-624. https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.2029

Cornwell, T. & Kwak, D. (2015). Sponsorship-linked marketing: introduction to topics. *Journal of Sport Management, 29*(2), 133-136. https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.2015-0055

Coutinho, D., Sousa, B., & Fernandes, P. (2021). The role of e-marketing as in specific contexts of sports tourism, 1-5. https://doi.org/10.23919/cisti52073.2021.9476575

da Silva, E. C., & Las Casas, A. L. (2020). Key elements of sports marketing activities for sports events. *International Journal of Business Administration, 11*(1), 11-21. https://doi.org/10.5430/ijba.v11n1p11

Daugherty, T., Djuric, V., Li, H. and Leckenby, J. (2017), "Establishing a paradigm: A systematic analysis of interactive advertising research", *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, Vol. 17 No. 1, pp. 65-78. https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2017.1326755

Deans, E., Thomas, S., Derevensky, J., & Daube, M. (2017). The influence of marketing on the sports betting attitudes and consumption behaviours of young men: implications for harm reduction and prevention strategies. *Harm Reduction Journal, 14*(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12954-017-0131-8

Desbordes, M. (2015), "Editorial policy", *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship,* Vol. 16 No. 4, pp. 83-86. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSMS-16-04-2015-B007

Dimitropoulos, P. & Vrondou, O. (2015). Corporate social responsibility and firm value in the sport recreation sector: a review. *Business Management and Strategy, 6*(2), 28. https://doi.org/10.5296/bms.v6i2.8542

Donthu, N., Kumar, S., Ranaweera, C., Sigala, M. and Sureka, R. (2021), "Journal of Service Theory and Practice at age 30: past, present and future contributions to service research", *Journal of Service Theory and Practice*, Vol. 31 No. 3, pp. 265-295. https://doi.org/10.1108/JSTP-10-2020-0233

Durieux, V. and Gevenois, P.A. (2010), "Bibliometric indicators: quality measurements of scientific publication", *Radiology*, Vol. 255 No. 2, pp. 342-351. https://doi.org/10.1148/radiol.09090626

Filo, K., Lock, D., & Karg, A. (2015). Sport and social media research: a review. *Sport Management Review, 18*(2), 166-181. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2014.11.001

Gawrysiak, J., Burton, R., Jenny, S., & Williams, D. (2020). Using esports efficiently to enhance and extend brand perceptions – a literature review. *Physical Culture and Sport Studies and Research, 86*(1), 1-14. https://doi.org/10.2478/pcssr-2020-0008

Goksu, I., Ozkaya, E. and Gunduz, A. (2022), "The content analysis and bibliometric mapping of CALL journal", *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, Vol. 35 No. 8, pp. 2018-2048. https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2020.1857409

Gupta, S. (2024). Study on the Effectiveness of Marketing through Sports. *Indian Journal of YOGA Exercise & Sport Science and Physical Education,* 39-43. https://doi.org/10.58914/ijyesspe.2024-9.1.6

Han, D., Mahony, D.F. and Greenwell, T.C. (2016), "A comparative analysis of cultural value orientations for understanding sport fan motivations", *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, Vol. 17 No. 3, pp. 260-276. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSMS-08-2016-016

Hing, N., Russell, A., Vitartas, P., & Lamont, M. (2015). Demographic, behavioural and normative risk factors for gambling problems amongst sports bettors. *Journal of Gambling Studies, 32*(2), 625-641. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10899-015-9571-9

Hota, P.K., Subramanian, B. and Narayanamurthy, G. (2020), "Mapping the intellectual structure of social entrepreneurship research: A citation/co-citation analysis", *Journal of business ethics*, Vol. 166 No. 1, pp. 89-114. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-019-04129-4

Ivens, B., Riedmueller, F. and van Dyck, P. (2020), "Success factors in managing the sponsor–sponsee relationship—a fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis for state-owned enterprises in Germany", *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, Vol. 21 No. 4, pp. 577-596. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSMS-09-2019-0102

Jin, C.-H. (2017), "Retrospection and state of sports marketing and sponsorship research in IJSMS from 1999 to 2015", *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, Vol. 18 No. 4, pp. 363-79. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSMS-04-2016-0002

Kim, A.C.H., Du, J. and James, J. (2022a), "A social epidemiological perspective on local tennis league participation: a multigroup moderated-mediation structural analysis using PLS-SEM", *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, Vol. 23 No. 2, pp. 437-461. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSMS-02-2021-0046

Kim, D., Ko, Y., Lee, J.L. and Kim, Y.C. (2020a), "The impact of CSR-linked sport sponsorship on consumers' reactions to service failures", *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, Vol. 21 No. 1, pp. 70-90. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSMS-01-2019-0011

Kim, D., Lee, J.S., Jang, W. and Ko, Y.J. (2022b), "Does causal reasoning lead to moral reasoning? Consumers' responses to scandalized athletes and endorsements", *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, Vol. 23 No. 3, 465-484. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSMS-09-2020-0161

Kim, K.A., Lee, S. and Byon, K.K. (2020b), "How useful is each item in the Sport Spectator Identification Scale? an item response theory analysis", *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, Vol. 21 No. 4, pp. 651-667. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSMS-01-2020-0001

Kim, S. and Manoli, A.E. (2023b), "From horizontal to vertical relationships: how online community identification fosters sport fans' team identification and behavioural intentions", *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, Vol. 24 No. 1, pp. 1-19. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSMS-09-2021-0188

Kim, S.-k., Yim, B.H., Byon, K.K., Yu, J.-G., Lee, S.-M. & Park, J.-A. (2016), "Spectator perception of service quality attributes associated with Shanghai Formula One: Importance and performance analysis approach", *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, Vol. 17 No. 2, pp. 153-171. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSMS-04-2016-011

Kinoshita, K. and Matsuoka, H. (2023), "Risk and psychological return: a moderating role of COVID-19 risk perception in the impact of team identification on vitality after sport spectatorship in Tokyo", *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, Vol. 24 No. 1, pp. 20-37. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSMS-01-2022-0007

Kolyperas, D., Anagnostopoulos, C., Chadwick, S., & Sparks, L. (2016). Applying a communicating vessels framework to csr value co-creation: empirical evidence from professional team sport organizations. *Journal of Sport Management, 30*(6), 702-719. https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.2016-0032

Kumar, S., Maggino, F., Mahto, R.V., Sureka, R., Alaimo, L.S. and Lim, W.M. (2021), "Social indicators research: a retrospective using bibliometric analysis", *Social Indicators Research*, Vol. 162, pp. 413-448.

https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-021-02847-9

Leung, X.Y., Bai, B. and Erdem, M. (2017), "Hotel social media marketing: a study on message strategy and its effectiveness", *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology*, Vol. 8 No. 2, pp. 239-255. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2017.06.012

Liu, D., Hautbois, C. and Desbordes, M. (2017), "The expected social impact of the Winter Olympic Games and the attitudes of non-host residents toward bidding: The Beijing 2022 bid case study", *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, Vol. 18 No. 4, pp. 330-346. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSMS-11-2017-099

Lombard, M., Snyder-Duch, J. and Bracken, C.C. (2010), "Practical resources for assessing and reporting intercoder reliability in content analysis research projects". Retrieved from http://astro.temple.edu/~lombard/reliability/

López-González, H. & Griffiths, M. (2017). Betting, forex trading, and fantasy gaming sponsorships—a responsible marketing inquiry into the 'gamblification' of English football. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction, 16*(2), 404-419. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-017-9788-1

Lupinek, J. (2019). Tracing the abc's of brand community. *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship, 20*(2), 291-306. https://doi.org/10.1108/ijsms-09-2017-0103

Lupinek, J.M. (2019), "Tracing the ABC's of brand community", *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, Vol. 20 No. 2, pp. 291-306. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSMS-09-2017-0103

MacPhail, C., Khoza, N., Abler, L. and Ranganathan, M. (2016), "Process guidelines for establishing intercoder reliability in qualitative studies", *Qualitative research*, Vol. 16 No. 2, pp. 198-212. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794115577012

McHugh, M.L. (2012), "Interrater reliability: the kappa statistic", *Biochemia medica*, Vol. 22 No. 3, pp. 276-82. https://hrcak.srce.hr/89395

Meir, R. & Scott, D. (2007). Tribalism: definition, identification and relevance to the marketing of professional sports franchises. *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship, 8*(4), 43-59. https://doi.org/10.1108/ijsms-08-04-2007-b006

Memari, Z., Rezaei Pandari, A. and Bemanzadeh, F. (2022), "An interpretive structural model for factors affecting the tax compliance of professional athletes: a case study of football players", *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, Vol. 23 No. 3, pp. 505-526. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSMS-03-2021-0077

Meyer, M., Waldkirch, R. W., Duscher, I., and Just, A. (2018), "Drivers of citations: An analysis of publications in "top" accounting journals", *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, Vol. 51, pp. 24-46. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpa.2017.07.001

Moradi, E. (2023a), "Mapping of Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights themes: a retrospective overview", *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*, Vol. ahead-of-print No. ahead-of-print. https://doi.org/10.1108/JHTI-12-2022-0638

Moradi, E. (2023b), "An Updated Overview of Research Published in Sport Marketing Quarterly (2012 to 2022): A Tri-Method Approach", *Sport Marketing Quarterly* Vol. 32 No. 4, pp. 343-369. https://doi.org/10.32731/SMQ.324.122023.06

Moradi, E., Gholampour, S. and Gholampour, B. (2023), "Past, present and future of sport policy: a bibliometric analysis of International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics (2010–2022)", *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, Vol. ahead-of-print No. ahead-of-print, pp.1-26. https://doi.org/10.1080/19406940.2023.2228829

Moradi, E., Kazemi, N., Salehipour, M. R., Norouzi Seyed Hosseini, R., & Ghaderi, Z. (2024). A quarter-century of contributions to tourism scholarship: tracing historical themes and citation patterns in current issues in tourism. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 1-23. https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2024.2446978

Mukherjee, D., Lim, W. M., Kumar, S., and Donthu, N. (2022), "Guidelines for advancing theory and practice through bibliometric research", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 148, pp. 101-115. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2022.04.042

Nairn, A., Berthon, P., and Money, A. (2007), "Learning from giants-exploring, classifying and analyzing existing knowledge on market research", *International Journal of Market Research*, Vol. 49 No. 2, pp. 257-274. https://doi.org/10.1177/147078530704900208

Nawaz, K., Aslam, T. and Saeed, H.A. (2020), "A bibliometric analysis of international journal of sports marketing & sponsorship", *International Journal of Business and Psychology*, Vol. 2 No. 1, pp. 45-60.

O'Leary, D. E. (2021), "Recent research topics and a bibliometric analysis of JOCEC", *Journal of Organizational Computing and Electronic Commerce*, Vol. 31 No. 1, pp. 78-91. https://doi.org/10.1080/10919392.2021.1885875

Pedersen, P. M., Parks, J. B., Quarterman, J., and Thibault, L. (2011), "*Contemporary sport management (4th ed.)*", Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Peetz, T. B., & Reams, L. (2011). A Content Analysis of Sport Marketing Quarterly: 1992-2011. *Sport Marketing Quarterly, 20*(4), 209-218.

Pitts, B. G. (2016), "Examining the sport management literature: Content analysis of the International Journal of Sport Management", *International Journal of Sport Management*, Vol. 17 No. 2, pp. 1-21. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSMS-09-2019-0095

Pitts, B. G., and Mahony, D. F. (1997), "Identification of resources used in the development of content in masters level sport management courses in American and Canadian Programs", *In annual conference of the North American Society for Sport Management, San Antonio*, TX.

Pitts, B. G., Danylchuk, K., and Quarterman, J. (2014), "A content analysis of the European sport management quarterly and its predecessor the European Journal for Sport Management: 1984–201", *Choregia: Sport Management International Journal*, Vol. 10 No. 2, pp. 45–72. http://www.choregia.org/index.php/issues-archive/30-volume-10-2-2014/123-choregia-10-2-45-72-2014

Pitts, B.G., and Pedersen, P.M. (2005), "Examining the body of scholarship in sport management: A content analysis of the Journal of Sport Management", *The Sport Management and Other Related Topics (SMART) Journal*, Vol. 2 No. 1, pp. 33–52.

Raggiotto, F. & Scarpi, D. (2022). It's not just a game: virtual edgework and subjective well-being in e-sports. *Journal of Interactive Marketing, 58*(2-3), 185-197. https://doi.org/10.1177/10949968221127897

Schiuma, G., Kumar, S., Sureka, R., and Joshi, R. (2023), "Research constituents and authorship patterns in the knowledge management research and practice: A bibliometric analysis", *Knowledge Management Research & Practice*, Vol. 21, pp. 129-145. https://doi.org/10.1080/14778238.2020.1848365

Schwarz, E. (2010). The reciprocal and influential connection between sport marketing and management and the sport sciences. *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing, 7*(1/2), 33. https://doi.org/10.1504/ijsmm.2010.029710

Scott, O.K., Burton, N. and Li, B. (2022), "Sponsor and ambush marketing during the 2018 Commonwealth Games on Twitter and Instagram", *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, Vol. 23 No. 3, pp. 612-627. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSMS-04-2021-0086

Shekhar, S. (2023). Sports marketing and conceptual evolution: a bibliometric analysis. *Sage Open, 13*(3). https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440231192915

Shuv-Ami, A., Toder Alon, A., Loureiro, S.M.C. and Kaufmann, H.R. (2020), "A new love–hate scale for sports fans", *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, Vol. 21 No. 3, pp. 543-560. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSMS-11-2019-0122

Singh, R. & Nimkar, N. (2020). Digital marketing and social media: the growth of sports industry in India. *ATMPH, 23*(17). https://doi.org/10.36295/asro.2020.231740

Sreepada, V. & Bagchi, A. (2020). Impact of social media on the way marketing is done in football clubs. *ATMPH, 23*(17). https://doi.org/10.36295/asro.2020.231751

Stremersch, S., Camacho, N., Vanneste, S. and Verniers, I. (2015), "Unraveling scientific impact: Citation types in marketing journals", *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, Vol. 32 No. 1, pp. 64-77. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijresmar.2014.09.004

Stremersch, S., Verniers, I. and Verhoef, P.C. (2007), "The quest for citations: Drivers of article impact", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 71 No. 3, pp. 171-193. https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.71.3.171

Valtakoski, A. (2019), "The evolution and impact of qualitative research in Journal of Services Marketing", *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 34 No. 1, pp. 8–23. https://doi.org/10.1108/JSM-12-2018-0359

Varma, A., Kumar, S., Lim, W. M., and Pandey, N. (2022), "Personnel Review at age 50: a retrospective using bibliometric analysis", *Personnel Review*, Vol. 52 No. 4, pp. 1291-1320. https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-05-2021-0313

Wäsche, H., Beecroft, R., Trenks, H., Seebacher, A. and Parodi, O. (2021), "Transdisciplinary sport and physical activity development in urban real-world labs", *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, Vol. 22 No. 4, pp. 816-833. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSMS-05-2020-0081

Webber, J. M., Kitzinger, R., Runte, J. K., Smith, C. M., and Mascari, J. B. (2017), "Traumatology trends: A content analysis of three counseling journals from 1994 to 2014", *Journal of Counseling & Development*, Vol. 95 No. 3, pp. 249-259. https://doi.org/10.1002/jcad.12139

Yihua, W., Meng, F., Farrukh, M., Raza, A., and Alam, I. (2022), "Twelve years of research in The International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management: a bibliometric analysis", *International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management*, Vol. 16 No. 1, pp. 154-174. https://doi.org/10.1108/IMEFM-03-2020-0134

Yurtsızoğlu, Z. (2024). Exploring the influence of a competitive environment and marketing trends on sports coaches' attitudes towards advertising. *Physical Culture and Sport Studies and Research, 107*(1), 60-76. https://doi.org/10.2478/pcssr-2025-0006

Zhang, J.J., Kim, E., Mastromartino, B., Qian, T.Y. and Nauright, J. (2018), "The sport industry in growing economies: critical issues and challenges", *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship,* Vol. 19 No. 2, pp. 110-126. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSMS-03-2018-0023

Ziaee, M., and Ferdowsi, S. (2020), "A systematic review of iranian research in the field of geotourism studies", *Geoheritage*, Vol. 12 No. 4, pp. 1-13. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12371-020-00519-7