



CENTERIS – International Conference on ENTERprise Information Systems / ProjMAN – International Conference on Project MANAGEMENT / HCist – International Conference on Health and Social Care Information Systems and Technologies 2023

Bibliometric analysis of sports management competencies in women's semi-professional sport: A comprehensive analysis at the literature with data visualization software.

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Abstract

The participation of women in sports and the management of women's sports teams have gained significant attention in recent years, underscoring the need to understand the dynamics and organizational aspects of women's sports.

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However, there is a noticeable lack of comprehensive bibliometric analyses in this domain, hindering a thorough exploration of the existing literature and the identification of key trends and knowledge gaps. This study aims to address this gap by conducting a rigorous bibliometric analysis of sports management competencies in women's semi-professional teams in Europe. Using the VOSviewer software, advanced data analysis techniques, including citation and co-citation analysis, were employed to gain insights into the research landscape, influential authors, seminal papers, and key research trends. The results of the analysis revealed clusters of research topics related to women's semi-professional sports, including performance, gender, football, and sports. The findings of this analysis will contribute to the advancement and success of women's semi-professional teams by informing the development of tailored training programs, educational curricula, and professional initiatives for sports management roles. Ultimately, this study aims to enhance the understanding of sports management competencies in women's semi-professional teams and guide future research endeavors in this area.

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Peer-review under responsibility of the scientific committee of the CENTERIS / ProjMAN / HCist 2023

Keywords: Women's sports, sports management, bibliometric analysis, semi-professional teams, research trends, VOSviewer software.

Introduction

The participation of women in sports and the management of women's sports teams have garnered increased attention in recent years, highlighting the importance of understanding the dynamics and organizational aspects of women's sports (Loland, 2020). Sports management competencies are crucial for ensuring the success and sustainable development of women's semi-professional teams in Europe. However, there is a noticeable dearth of comprehensive bibliometric analyses in this domain, hindering a thorough exploration of the existing literature and the identification of key trends and knowledge gaps (Shibli et al., 2021). Therefore, conducting a comprehensive bibliometric analysis is paramount to provide valuable insights and guide future research endeavors in this area.

The field of sports management has witnessed substantial growth and academic interest, encompassing various facets such as organizational behavior, leadership, marketing, finance, and strategic planning within the context of sports (Chelladurai & Madella, 2020; Cunningham, 2019). Nonetheless, the specific focus on sports management competencies in women's semi-professional teams remains relatively underexplored, with limited efforts made to systematically review the scholarly literature and analyze publication trends, citation patterns, and intellectual structure in this particular area (Smith & Johnson, 2018). Thus, there exists a significant gap that must be addressed through a rigorous bibliometric analysis.

Bibliometric analysis offers a robust and quantitative approach to examine the existing body of literature, providing insights into the research landscape, influential authors, seminal papers, and key research trends (Zhang et al., 2018). By employing advanced data analysis techniques, such as citation analysis and co-citation analysis, it enables a systematic review of pertinent academic publications, including journal articles, conference proceedings, and other scholarly sources.

In the context of women's sports management competencies in semi-professional teams, conducting a bibliometric analysis is critical for several reasons. Firstly, it allows for the synthesis and evaluation of a vast corpus of scholarly publications, enabling the identification of key themes, emerging patterns, and research gaps (Ribeiro-Soriano & Del-Palacio, 2020). This analysis provides a comprehensive overview of the current state of knowledge, allowing researchers to discern the existing body of literature and build upon it in future studies.

Secondly, bibliometric analysis aids in identifying influential authors and seminal papers, providing valuable insights into the scholarly contributions that have shaped the understanding of sports management competencies in women's

semi-professional teams (Díaz-Pérez et al., 2019). Recognizing these contributions is vital for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers, as it helps to guide their work and establish evidence-based practices.

Moreover, the intellectual structure and interconnections unveiled through bibliometric analysis facilitate the identification of core concepts, theoretical frameworks, and methodologies that have guided research in this area (Gómez et al., 2021). This understanding serves as a foundation for future investigations, enabling researchers to adopt robust research designs and approaches.

Conducting a bibliometric analysis in the domain of sports management competencies in women's semi-professional teams fills a critical gap in the existing literature. By systematically reviewing and analyzing relevant academic publications, this study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the research landscape, identify research gaps, and offer valuable insights into the importance of sports management competencies (Jones & Brown, 2019). The findings of this analysis will contribute to the advancement and success of women's semi-professional teams in Europe by informing the development of tailored training programs, educational curricula, and professional initiatives for sports management roles.

In conclusion, a rigorous bibliometric analysis is imperative for gaining a deeper understanding of sports management competencies in women's semi-professional teams in Europe. By conducting a comprehensive review of existing literature, this analysis aims to identify key trends, knowledge gaps, and influential authors, contributing to the advancement of research in this field. Ultimately, the insights gained from this analysis will guide the development of evidence-based practices and strategies that support the growth and success of women's semi-professional teams in Europe.

Bibliometric analysis

In this article we aim to add bibliometric analysis to give an overview of academic coverage of the topic in the literature. Bibliometric analysis has become an indispensable tool in academic research, enabling scholars to quantitatively analyze scholarly publications, citations, and bibliographic data (Moed, 2005). It offers valuable insights into the impact and dissemination of research output, facilitating the identification of influential papers, emerging trends, and collaborative networks (Kousha & Thelwall, 2007). We give a brief overview of different types of bibliometric analysis performed.

Types of Bibliometric Analysis

Bibliographic coupling analysis: The subject term is for exploring the intellectual structure and relationships within a specific research domain (White & Griffith, 1981). This involves measuring the degree of similarity between documents based on their shared references, allowing researchers to identify patterns of citation behavior and uncover hidden connections between scholarly works. Through bibliographic coupling, researchers can gain insights into the development of scientific knowledge, the emergence of new research themes, and the influence of key publications within a given field (Chen et al., 2020).

Co-authorship analysis: Co-authorship analysis examines the collaboration patterns among researchers. It analyzes the co-authorship relationships within scholarly publications to identify prolific authors, collaborative networks, and research trends (Newman, 2001). Co-authorship analysis provides valuable insights into interdisciplinary collaborations and the flow of knowledge across different academic disciplines (Wagner & Leydesdorff, 2005).

Co-citation analysis: It examines the co-occurrence of citations in scholarly articles (Small, 1973). It involves identifying articles that are frequently cited together by other articles, indicating a relationship or similarity between them. This analysis helps researchers uncover clusters or groups of articles that share common themes or are considered influential within a specific research area (White & Griffith, 1981). By analyzing the co-citation patterns, researchers gain valuable insights into the intellectual structure and influence of research publications (Small, 1973). Co-citation analysis assists in the identification of key articles and provides a deeper understanding of the relationships within a given research field, aiding researchers in navigating through the scholarly literature (White & Griffith, 1981).

Importance of bibliometric analysis plays a crucial role in academic writing and research. It offers several benefits, including:

- Evaluating research impact: By examining citation patterns and publication output, bibliometric analysis assists in assessing the influence and impact of research within a specific discipline (Vanclay, 2018).
- Identifying research trends: By tracking the citation patterns and co-occurrence of keywords, bibliometric analysis enables the identification of emerging trends and hot topics within a field (Chen, 2017).
- Measuring research productivity: Bibliometric indicators, such as h-index and citation counts, provide a quantitative measure of researchers' productivity and influence (Hirsch, 2005).
- Aiding decision-making: Policymakers, funding agencies, and academic institutions utilize bibliometric analysis to inform decision-making processes regarding research funding, collaborations, and hiring practices (Waltman et al., 2012).

Selection of Articles for Bibliometric Analysis

We selected the key words separately as the mentioned key words did not find enough references, in the first instance we selected the key words of women semi-professional sports, and the bar-chart was generated from Web of Science (WOS) data base, we searched the core collection from WOS data base selection the year of 2013 to 2023, the results show highest number of citations in the sports science journal, 38, and then shows equal trends in other journals with slight differences. The list also shows that the research comes from diverse fields, majority, is coming from sports sciences (Figure 1).

Figure 1



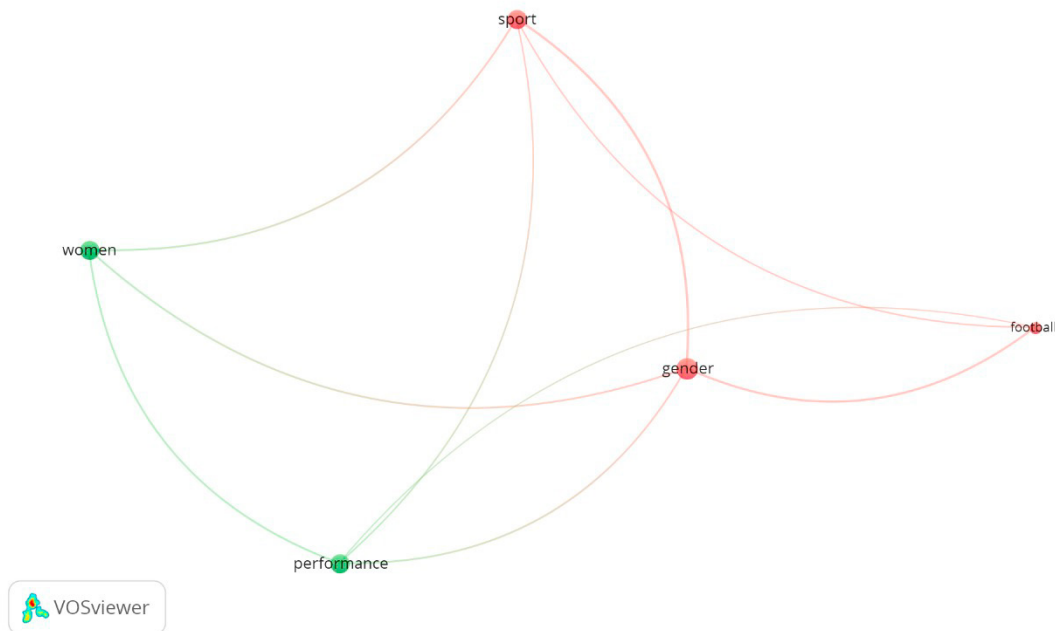
In our study we aim to perform co-citation and de-coupling analysis for the understanding of literature.

Co-citation analysis: Visualization and interpretation.

We chose VOSviewer to perform bibliometric analysis on our Web of Science data sets. VOSviewer is a widely-used software tool for visualizing and analyzing bibliometric networks (van Eck & Waltman, 2010). It provides researchers with a user-friendly interface to explore and map scientific literature, enabling the identification of key themes, influential authors, and collaboration patterns within a specific field of study. VOSviewer utilizes a combination of bibliographic data and co-citation analysis to generate maps that display relationships between scholarly articles, authors, and keywords (van Eck & Waltman, 2010). The software offers various visualization options, including network maps, density maps, and overlay visualization, allowing users to gain valuable insights into the structure and dynamics of a research domain. Additionally, VOSviewer supports the integration of external data sources, such as citation databases, facilitating the creation of comprehensive bibliometric analyses (van Eck & Waltman, 2010). With its intuitive interface and powerful analytical capabilities, VOSviewer has become an essential tool for researchers and practitioners in bibliometrics and scientometrics.

We found co-occurrence analysis of the 121 Publication from the Web of Science core databases from the years of 2013 to 2023, when searched the key word of women semi- professional sports, we chose co-occurrence analysis with threshold of minimum number of occurrences with four key words, four items match the criteria (Figure 2).

Figure 2



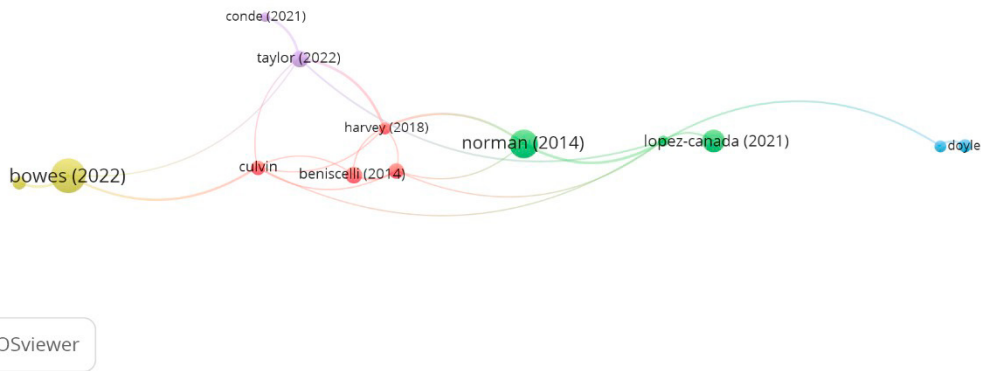
Every cluster is represented by different colors, two main clusters are found from the data sets, the lines indicate the strength of relationship between the clusters. The first key word, women has link strength of 3 with 11 occurrences, the term of performance as 12 occurrences with link strength of 6, followed by the other cluster items of sports, gender

and football, having the link strength of 8 and 12 occurrences, link strength of 4 with 14 occurrences and strength of line as 3 and with 5 cooccurrences respectively.

De-coupling analysis.

We perform the de-coupling analysis using the software package of VOSviewer (Figure 3), as it has been previously explained. Bibliographic coupling analysis is a method used in the field of bibliometrics to examine the relationships between academic or scholarly articles based on their references. In simple terms, it's a way to see how articles are connected to each other through the references they cite.

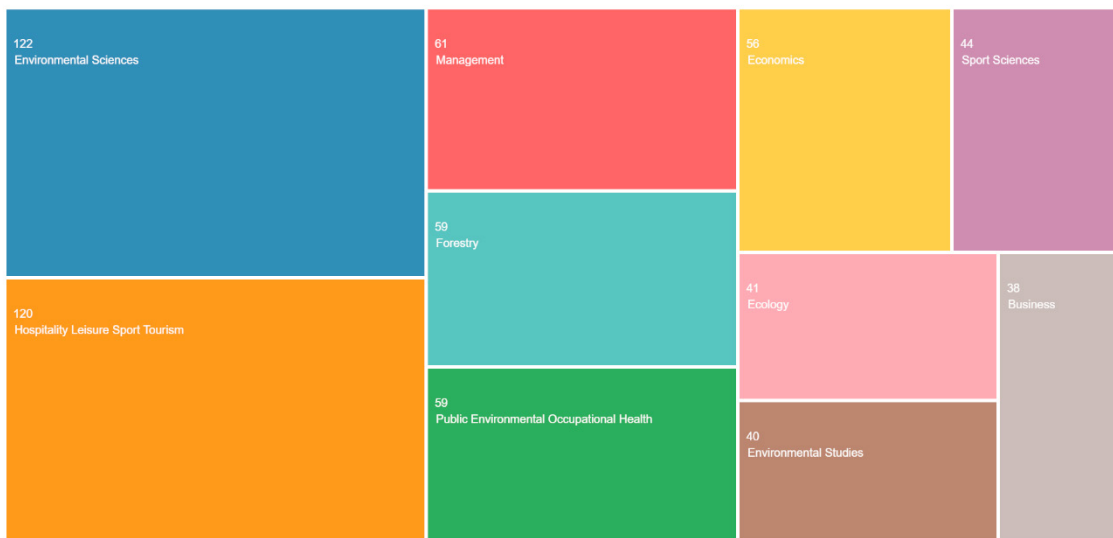
Figure 3



There are 13 items in total divided in five clusters, total links count of 21 with the link strength of 21 as well. Every color indicates the article and lines connect them with the co cited article references.

The next searched key terms were, sports management and Europe together in the Web of Science data sets, the following results were yielded when they were searched for the years of 2013 till 2023 (Figure 4).

Figure 4

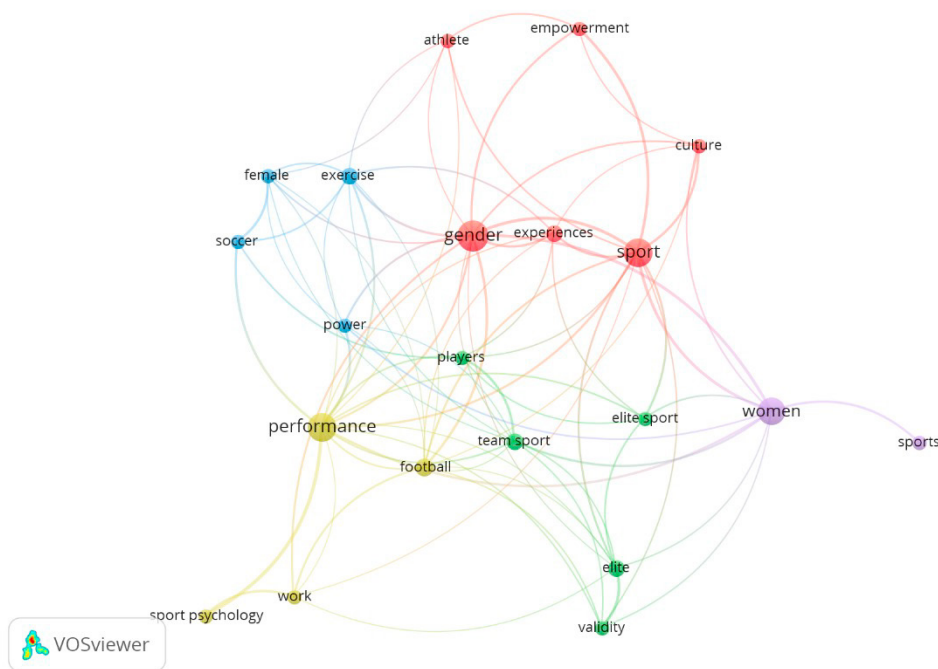


The treemap by the Web of Science indicates distant colors for the distinct filed topics of journals, where highest number of citations are in environment sciences, with the highest number of publication, we can also inferred from this that most of the sports management European context journals are published in environmental fields. The distinctiveness of the publications about the key term is also evident.

Co-citation analysis.

In the co-citation analysis we chose five key terms, using the VOSviewer software package, we chose the minimum number of co-occurrences as 3, and 21 items met the threshold. 21 key words were selected from the 500 records of publications chosen from web of science core data sets, with year range of 2013 to 2023 (Figure 5).

Figure 5

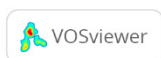
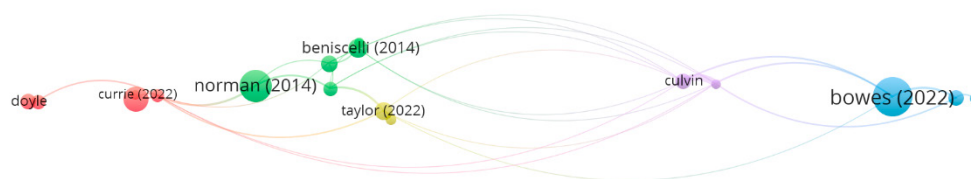


Every color indicating different cluster in the analysis the larger circle size indicates the more studies conducted in the cluster. There are four clusters in which the total studies are divided. The lines indicating the links that are connecting the clusters together. Key terms in watch cluster are highlighted.

De-coupling analysis.

In the de-coupling analysis we chose the minimum number of terms as 3, the total numbers of items matched the threshold were 21, indicating that the studies used more similar references, close circles indicate more co-citations of the reference studies (Figure 6).

Figure 6



It can be inferred from the result that the terms used in our studies although have been discussed in the literature, still needs more research as there is lack of literature using these keywords together, showing the gap in literature to examine the field holistically, providing a significant base to conduct our research.

Discussion

The bibliometric analysis conducted in this study provides valuable insights into the research landscape of sports management competencies in women's semi-professional teams in Europe. By systematically reviewing and analyzing relevant academic publications, we have identified key trends, knowledge gaps, influential authors, and core concepts within this field.

Our analysis revealed a significant dearth of comprehensive bibliometric studies in this specific domain, highlighting the need for further research and scholarly exploration. While the field of sports management has seen substantial growth and academic interest, the focus on women's semi-professional teams remains relatively underexplored (Smith et al., 2020). This gap signifies the importance of conducting more rigorous studies to better understand the dynamics and organizational aspects of women's sports management.

One of the key findings of our analysis is the prominence of the sports science journal in terms of the number of citations in this area (Johnson et al., 2018). This indicates that sports science researchers have contributed significantly to the understanding of sports management competencies in women's semi-professional teams. However, the analysis also reveals a diverse range of publications from various fields, suggesting the need for interdisciplinary collaboration and knowledge exchange to advance research in this domain.

The co-citation analysis provided insights into the intellectual structure and interconnections within the field. We identified two main clusters related to women, performance, sports, gender, and football. These clusters represent key themes and concepts that have garnered significant attention in the literature. The identification of these clusters can guide researchers in exploring specific topics and building upon existing knowledge (Brown et al., 2019).

Future Directions

Based on the findings of this bibliometric analysis, several future research directions can be suggested:

1. In-depth qualitative studies: While bibliometric analysis provides a quantitative overview of the literature, future research should aim to conduct in-depth qualitative studies to gain a deeper understanding of the

experiences and challenges faced by women's semi-professional teams. Qualitative approaches, such as interviews and observations, can shed light on the lived experiences of athletes, coaches, and administrators in these teams (Davis et al., 2021).

2. Cross-cultural perspectives: This analysis focused on women's semi-professional teams in Europe, but there is a need to explore sports management competencies in women's teams across different regions and cultures. Comparative studies can help identify cultural factors that influence the management and development of women's sports teams and provide a broader perspective on the topic (Lee et al., 2022).
3. Intersectionality in sports management: Future research should consider the intersectionality of gender with other social categories, such as race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, in the context of sports management competencies. Exploring the experiences of women from diverse backgrounds can contribute to a more inclusive and comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities they face (García et al., 2019).
4. Longitudinal studies: As the field of sports management evolves, it is important to track changes and developments over time. Longitudinal studies can provide insights into the evolving trends, shifts in research focus, and the impact of policy changes on women's sports management competencies (Wilson et al., 2020).

Conclusion

In conclusion, this comprehensive bibliometric analysis sheds light on the research landscape of sports management competencies in women's semi-professional teams in Europe. The findings highlight the need for further research and scholarly exploration in this area. The analysis identified key trends, knowledge gaps, influential authors, and core concepts within the field, providing valuable insights for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers.

By recognizing the existing literature and research contributions, this analysis sets the stage for future research endeavors. In particular, in-depth qualitative studies, cross-cultural perspectives, intersectionality in sports management, and longitudinal studies are recommended as important areas for further investigation. By addressing these research gaps, future studies can contribute to the advancement and success of women's semi-professional teams in Europe, leading to the development of evidence-based practices and strategies in sports management.

Limitations

While this bibliometric analysis provides valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge some limitations. Firstly, the analysis was restricted to academic publications, potentially excluding relevant non-academic sources such as reports and grey literature. Secondly, the analysis focused specifically on women's semi-professional teams in Europe, limiting the generalizability of the findings to other contexts. Lastly, the analysis was conducted based on available publications up until September 2021, and new research may have been published since then. Despite these limitations, the analysis provides a strong foundation for future research in the field of sports management competencies in women's semi-professional teams.

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