

RESEARCH TRENDS IN SPORT MANAGEMENT AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS WITH RECOMMENDATIONS

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Summary

This study aims to analyze research trends in the field of sport management based on studies published in the three most influential journals, namely Sport Management Review (SMR), Journal of Sport Management (JSM), and European Sport Management Quarterly (ESMQ), which are indexed in the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI). In contrast to previous trend analyses, this study takes a different approach by examining the disciplinary background, research methods, and phenomena within the field of sport management. A total of 1,667 papers published from 1987 to 2023 were analyzed, and the findings are as follows: The disciplinary background of sport management research shows a predominant influence of management studies, with sociology consistently accounting for approximately 30% of the research. Psychology, although rare in the past, has shown a continuous increase over time, while economics and public administration each represent less than 10% of the research. In terms of research methods, experiential studies account for over 90% of the total, and quantitative research is more prevalent than qualitative research. The study of sport phenomena focuses more on spectator sports than participation sports, with a particularly high proportion of research on professional sport phenomena. The field of management phenomena can be categorized into management, marketing, industry, and leisure and tourism phenomena. In the management category, human resources and organizational behavior research are the most active, while sponsorships and consumer behavior research dominate the field of marketing research.

Keywords: Sport management, Global research trend, Literature review.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to analyze international research trends in sports management to understand the achievements and limitations of the field, and to propose future directions and strategies for sports management researchers. In particular, this study examines the foundational disciplines that serve as the background for applied research in sports management, and analyzes the key research phenomena and methodologies. Through this analysis, the study aims to introduce notable research topics for sports management researchers to focus on in the future and to provide useful insights for mastering and teaching effective research methodologies.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study analyzed the top three journals in the field of sports management based on their Impact Factor among international SSCI-listed journals: Sport Management Review, Journal of

Sport Management, and European Sport Management Quarterly. The scope of the analysis covered all research articles published from the first issue of each journal up until 2023. Specifically, Journal of Sport Management, the oldest of the three, was analyzed from its inception in 1987, Sport Management Review from 1998, and European Sport Management Quarterly from 2000, examining all research articles published up to 2023. The analysis focused on the background academic disciplines, research methods, and sports management phenomena presented in each paper.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the background disciplines of sports management papers revealed that business administration constituted the largest proportion at 35.7% (595 papers), followed by sociology at 28.7% (479 papers), and psychology at 22.2% (370 papers). Public administration and economics each accounted

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* Khoa Quản lý TDTT được thành lập theo quyết định số 391/QĐ-ĐH1-TC ngày 14 tháng 9 năm 2007
* Đội ngũ giảng viên nhiều kinh nghiệm: PGS, tiến sỹ, thạc sỹ trong các lĩnh vực chuyên ngành trực tiếp giảng dạy.
* Chương trình đào tạo đa dạng, phong phú; cơ hội việc làm hấp dẫn trong các doanh nghiệp, cơ quan - tổ chức, hiệp hội – CLB thể thao, các cơ sở giáo dục....



Sports management is currently a popular major at Bac Ninh Sports University of Viet Nam

for similar proportions, 6.3% (105 papers) and 5.8% (96 papers), respectively. The trend analysis of background disciplines indicated that sociology had a relatively higher proportion in the 1980s and 1990s. Although its proportion decreased over time, it continued to maintain a steady presence at around 30%. In the case of psychology, it showed a steady increase and has recently become one of the dominant background disciplines in sports management, along with business administration and sociology.

In the analysis of research methods in sports management, empirical studies accounted for 91.7% of the total research, while conceptual studies constituted only 8%. Most conceptual studies were conducted before the 2010s, and in recent sports management papers, conceptual studies have become rare, comprising less than 5%. Among empirical studies, quantitative research made up 52.1%, and qualitative research accounted for 38.4%. Mixed-method studies, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches, were only 2.3%.

In terms of sports phenomena, 26% (416 papers) of the research addressed participatory sports, while 74.0% (1,187 papers) focused on spectator sports, indicating a much larger proportion of research on spectator sports. Among spectator sports, professional sports constituted the highest proportion at 57.1%, followed by amateur sports at 34.2%, and mega sports events at 8.7%. Additionally, studies related to teams, leagues, and organizations accounted for 37.1%, fan-related studies for

18.6%, and athlete-related studies for about 7.8%. For participatory sports, research from the perspective of participants accounted for 52.6%, while studies from the perspective of providers made up 47.4%, showing a relatively balanced distribution.

The analysis of management phenomena was categorized into management and administration, marketing, industry, and leisure & tourism. In the management and administration category, human resource management accounted for the largest proportion, followed by organizational behavior, management strategy, governance and policy, communication, and facilities. In the marketing category, sponsorship-related papers constituted the largest proportion at 33.9%, followed by consumer behavior (24.3%), marketing strategy (15.8%), and media-related studies (13%).

CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to identify the research trends in sports management and propose future research directions and improvement strategies by conducting an in-depth quantitative and qualitative analysis of all research papers published in the journals with the longest history in the field, Journal of Sport Management (JSM), and those with high Impact Factor (IF) and citation counts, Sport Management Review (SMR) and European Sport Management Quarterly (ESMQ). The key findings are as follows:

First, the majority of sports management papers are rooted in business administration,

sociology, and psychology. In particular, business administration accounts for the largest proportion, followed by sociology and psychology. The proportion of these background disciplines has changed over time. Sociology had a relatively high proportion in the 1980s and 1990s, but its share has decreased recently. In contrast, psychology has shown a steady increase and now holds a significant share alongside business administration and sociology.

Second, in terms of research methods, empirical studies dominate, while conceptual studies make up a very small proportion. In fact, recent sports management papers rarely include conceptual studies. Among empirical studies, quantitative research has the largest share, followed by qualitative research, while mixed-method research combining both approaches accounts for a much smaller share.

Third, the analysis of sports phenomena shows that papers focused on spectator sports represent the largest proportion. Among spectator sports, professional sports take up the largest share, followed by amateur sports and mega sports events. Furthermore, research on sports teams, leagues, and organizations is the most common, while research on fans and athletes also holds a consistent share. In the context of participatory sports, research from the participant's perspective and the provider's perspective is almost evenly split. In terms of management phenomena, human resources account for the largest share, followed by organizational behavior, governance and policy, management strategy, communication, and facilities. In marketing, sponsorship is the most frequently studied phenomenon, followed by consumer behavior, marketing strategy, and media research.

This study aimed to understand the achievements and limitations of the sports management field and propose future directions and strategies for researchers. By examining the relationship between sports management as an applied discipline and its foundational disciplines, as well as analyzing core research phenomena and methods, this study sought to provide useful insights for sports management

researchers in identifying significant future research topics and mastering effective research methodologies. This study moves beyond traditional trend analyses, which merely presented opinions based on paper distribution over time, by offering new research directions and ideas along with concrete examples, enhancing its academic value.

However, the vast amount of data selected for the scope of this study limited the ability to conduct more detailed and specific analyses. Additionally, time and resource constraints meant that other sports management journals were not included. Despite these limitations, the findings, discussions, and recommendations of this study are expected to provide valuable information and guidelines for scholars and practitioners in the field of sports management.

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