



## Global research on sport tourism in commerce, management, tourism, and services : bibliometric analysis

*Investigación global sobre turismo deportivo en el comercio, la gestión, el turismo y los servicios : análisis bibliométrico*

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### Abstract

**Introduction and Objective:** This study analyzes trends in publications, citations, researcher activities, and co-occurrence visualizations on sport tourism using bibliometric analysis. The aim is to identify patterns in research development, explore emerging topics, and highlight research gaps, particularly the connection between sport tourism and sports events, as well as cultural preservation policies. **Methodology:** Data from the Scopus database, covering the period from 2000 to 2023, were analyzed using Dimensions and VOSviewer software. The analysis followed the PRISMA flowchart (identification, screening, and feasibility) and focused on articles related to sport tourism in the fields of commerce, management, tourism, and services.

**Results:** The highest number of publications occurred in 2021, while the fewest were published in 2000. Co-occurrence network visualization revealed a strong link between sport tourism and sports events, but little connection to cultural preservation policies, indicating a research gap. Overlay visualization shows a trend towards the intersection of the sports industry and health tourism. Density visualization highlights high-density topics like sport tourism and event tourism, while topics such as sport heritage and nostalgia in sport tourism have low density. **Conclusion:** Future research should explore low-density topics, such as sport heritage and nostalgia in sport tourism, which remain underexplored and present potential areas for further investigation.

### Keywords

Bibliometric, commerce, global research, management, services, sport tourism.

### Resumen

**Introducción y Objetivo:** Este estudio analiza las tendencias en publicaciones, citas, actividades de los investigadores y visualizaciones de co-ocurrencia en el turismo deportivo mediante un análisis bibliométrico. El objetivo es identificar patrones en el desarrollo de la investigación, explorar temas emergentes y resaltar brechas de investigación, particularmente la conexión entre el turismo deportivo y los eventos deportivos, así como las políticas de preservación cultural.

**Metodología:** los datos de la base de datos Scopus, cubriendo el período de 2000 a 2023, fueron analizados utilizando los programas Dimensions y VOSviewer. El análisis siguió el diagrama de flujo PRISMA (identificación, selección y viabilidad) y se centró en artículos relacionados con el turismo deportivo en los campos de comercio, gestión, turismo y servicios.

**Resultados:** El mayor número de publicaciones se registró en 2021, mientras que el menor número ocurrió en 2000. La visualización de redes de co-ocurrencia reveló una fuerte relación entre el turismo deportivo y los eventos deportivos, pero poca conexión con las políticas de preservación cultural, lo que indica una brecha en la investigación. La visualización de superposición muestra una tendencia hacia la intersección entre la industria deportiva y el turismo de salud. La visualización de densidad destaca temas de alta densidad como el turismo deportivo y el turismo de eventos, mientras que temas como el patrimonio deportivo y la nostalgia en el turismo deportivo tienen baja densidad.

**Conclusión:** Las investigaciones futuras deberían explorar temas de baja densidad, como el patrimonio deportivo y la nostalgia en el turismo deportivo, que siguen siendo poco investigados y presentan áreas potenciales para investigaciones adicionales.

### Palabras clave

Bibliometría, comercio, turismo deportivo, gestión, investigación global, servicios.

## Introduction

The global tourism industry has experienced a paradigm shift in its focus, with increasing emphasis on sustainability and responsible practices (M. X. Chang et al., 2022; Mazza, 2023; Xu et al., 2023; Yang, Lo, et al., 2020). The integration of sustainable practices in the tourism industry has become a major concern in recent years, driven by increasing awareness of the environmental and social impacts of tourism activities (Espino-Rodríguez & Taha, 2022; Nunkoo et al., 2023). In exploring the tourism potential, researchers propose a new concept that includes sports elements in tourism development plans (H. J. Gibson, 1998; Weed, 2007; Weed & Chris, 2004). Sports tourism is a new field created by the merger of sports and tourism industries, which is a new form of tourism based on sports resources, which aims to improve physical health and attract people's interest in physical and recreational activities, so sports tourism is a way to develop tourism (Aicher et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2013).

Sport can act as an attraction that facilitates an authentic experience of a destination (Higham & Hinch, 2018). Thus, sporting events are an effective tool to attract the interest of tourists living in different countries and cultures (Derom & Ramshaw, 2018). Not only major sporting events such as the Olympics and Paralympics, but also regional sporting events can show the authenticity of local culture and identity (Higham & Hinch, 2018), and provide spectators with experiences of cultural heritage sporting events (McCartney & Osti, 2007; Pinson, 2017; T. Zhang et al., 2019). Some researchers argue that sports activities or events are the main reason for travel (Deery et al., 2004; Epitropoulos et al., 2003; Pigeassou et al., 2003; Sofield, 2003; Zauhar, 2004). The origins of sports tourism are closely related to sports, which originated as competitions and performances. Its roots date back to ancient Greece in the 20th century, marking the dynamic development of this branch of tourism that uses sports performances as the main purpose of travel (Ratkowski & Ratkowska, 2018).

The potential for sports tourism in Indonesia is very large because of the many beautiful natural attractions. After the pandemic, people will prefer to exercise and travel in open spaces and nature. This opportunity must be utilized as much as possible for Indonesia, which has beautiful nature. Natural resources, both land and sea, and cultural traditions of society are important things to consider in the industrialization and commercialization of sport tourism in socio-economic development and increasing the economic and social value of sport (Li & Jiang, 2013). According to the formula, the users of sports tourism are from all age groups, including teenagers, children and adults or the elderly. To support this, future development efforts are needed to improve the welfare of the surrounding community and people in general. However, the sustainability of sports tourism depends on the level of local development, the number of tourists, the size of the community, tourism development and the ability to build a local sports identity for residents and tourists (Mazza, 2023). This certainly requires proper studies and important criteria that must be fully integrated into the development management system to reflect the characteristics and connotations of sports tourism (Yang, Chuang, et al., 2020).

A systematic evaluation is needed to mirror other meta-analyses of sport tourism research to date (H. Gibson, 2013a; Weed, 2009). The advantage of this research is that it examines the studies specific to sport tourism, content that has not been explored before (Van Rheenen et al., 2017). However, the analytical studies of previous reviewers are very different in that the journey presented at several different times is caused by: lack of coherence in research on sports tourism, lack of agreement on basic concepts and assumptions about the nature of the relationship between sport and tourism, the range of perspectives of the reviewers, the aims and objectives of the review, and the nature of the research review and synthesis process itself (Weed, 2009). Therefore, researchers want to review sport tourism globally and its relationship with the fields that accompany it.

## Method

### Study Design

The research design used in this study is content analysis. Content analysis is a systematic and objective research method used to describe and measure phenomena (Krippendorff, 2018). This method analyzes documents and allows researchers to filter words or phrases into content-related categories (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). A meta-review is simply part of a systematic review of original research articles (Heal,

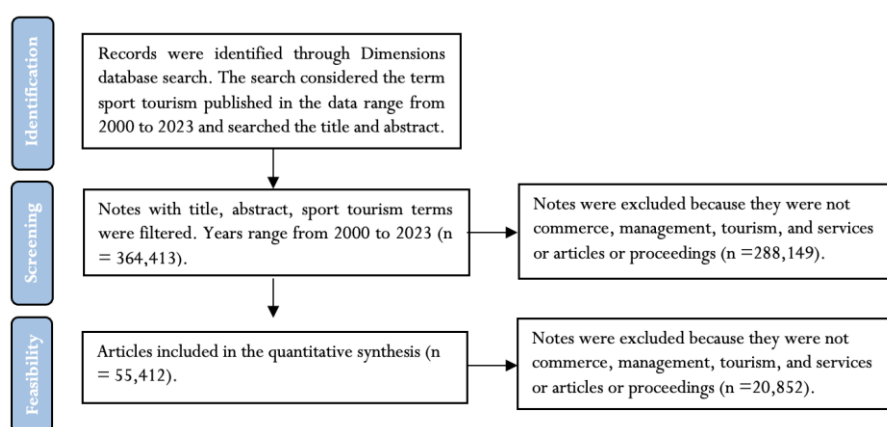
2009; Ruddy & House, 2005; Serenko & Bontis, 2004). Then, bibliometric analysis was used to conduct this study in order to describe and present ideas visually and verbally across publications, as well as identify research trends in a field (Ganesha et al., 2019; Grimshaw et al., 2021; Pierpaoli & Ruello, 2018; Salman et al., 2022). The data were obtained from publications which were extracted from the <https://app.dimensions.ai/> site, collected on June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023. To make data analysis easier, researchers use a framework Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) method (Grimshaw et al., 2021; Olina et al., 2024; Rethlefsen & Page, 2022). This method was used to extract articles from the Dimensions database with sport tourism topics and keywords in commerce, management, tourism, and services.

The first stage in the PRISMA method is to define the eligibility criteria for the article to be included in systematic observation. This criterion helps researchers to focus on publications that have a significant impact in the field being studied, so that the results of the analysis can provide deeper insights into research trends and patterns. The second stage is to conduct a literature search. The selection of literature is based on the criteria that have been set. This process involves assessing the quality and relevance of each article. Once the relevant article has been selected, the next step is to collect data. The data collected can include information about the number of citations, the year of publication, the type of publication, and author collaboration. This systematic data collection allows researchers to conduct in-depth quantitative analysis, which is at the heart of bibliometric analysis (Gronthy et al., 2023). The final stage in the PRISMA method is the synthesis and reporting of results.

## Procedures

Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) method (Grimshaw et al., 2021; Olina et al., 2024; Rethlefsen & Page, 2022) was used to extract articles from the Dimensions database with sport tourism topics and keywords in commerce, management, tourism, and services. The PRISMA method is divided into 3 parts: Identification, Screening, and Feasibility (Olina et al., 2024; Rethlefsen & Page, 2022). First, in stage 1 (identification), the identification section includes a box to record the number of records identified through database searches, with a total of 364,413 records identified considering the term sport tourism, published in the data range from 2000 to 2023 and searched in title and abstract. Then, stage 2 (filtering) produced 76,264 records by selecting the article publication type, so that 20,852 records were excluded. And then, stage 3 (feasibility) resulted in a final sample of 55,412 articles. This final sample was then analyzed using VOSviewer, a computer program for creating and viewing bibliometric maps.

Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram



## Results

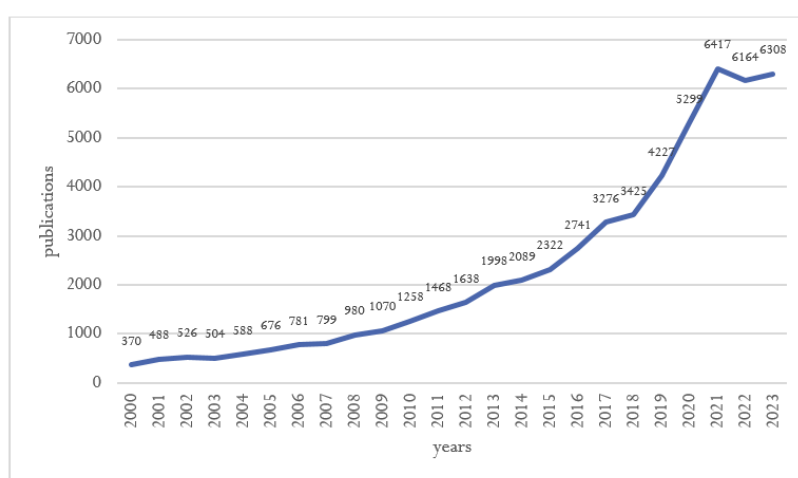
This section describes bibliometric analysis on the topic of sport tourism extracted from <https://app.dimensions.ai/> in the year range from 2000 to 2023. Where bibliometric analysis is a form of meta-analysis of research data that can help researchers in studying bibliographic content and analysis of citations from articles published in journals and other scientific works (Fitria et al., 2022;

Gómez-Calvo et al., 2024; Kuzior & Sira, 2022; Muhammad, 2024; Pahwa et al., 2022). This section describes the results and discussion of the analysis of the topic of sport tourism, which focus on the number of publications, citation trends, journals with the most publications, researcher trends, network visualization for co-occurrence, overlay visualization for co-occurrence, density visualization for co-occurrence, on the topic of sport tourism (Olina et al., 2024; vanEck & Waltman, 2010; J. Zhang et al., 2024).

### *Number of publications*

A search for scientific articles published on the subject of sport tourism from 2000 to 2023 yielded 55,412 articles, with an exponential increase from year to year. The lowest number of publications occurred in 2000 with 370 publications. Meanwhile, the most publications occurred in 2021 with 6417 publications. It can be seen that the publication rate increased from year to year, but decreased slightly in 2022, but increased again in 2023. The average number of publications was 2308.83. Thus, sport tourism is an interesting topic for research. presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Number of publications on sport tourism from 2000 to 2023

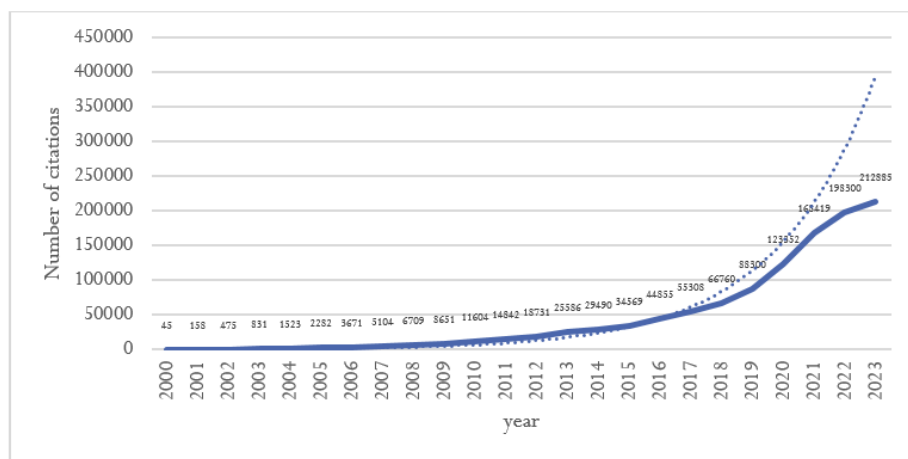


### *Citations Trend*

The number of citations on sport tourism from 2000 to 2023 is 1,112,450, increasing exponentially from year to year. The lowest number of citations occurred in 2000 with 45 citations. Meanwhile, the highest number of citations occurred in 2023 with 212,885 citations. In the data obtained from Dimensions, a publication entitled "Analysis of the contribution of sport events to sustainable development: Impacts, support, and resident's perception". found that perceptions of the positive and negative impacts of small and medium scale sporting events were predictors of perceptions of their contribution to sustainable urban development. Similarly, it was found that perceived positive impacts were a stronger predictor of contribution to sustainable development than perceived negative impacts. In this case, managing the maximization of positive social impacts must be the main goal of sports event organizers to increase the public's positive perception of the contribution of sports events to sustainable development, so in planning sports event organizers must consider the support of local residents to increase their contribution to sustainable urban development (Parra-Camacho et al., 2023). This article was published on Heliyo, Science Direct, which is indexed by Scopus as being in the first quartile (Q1) with a 2023 SJR of 0.62. Bibliometric analysis provides information on the impact of research, where studies are ranked based on the citations received (Pahwa et al., 2022).

Thus, this article has an impact such that it can be used as a reference in research that examines the topic of sport tourism. The number of citations per year is shown in Figure 3.

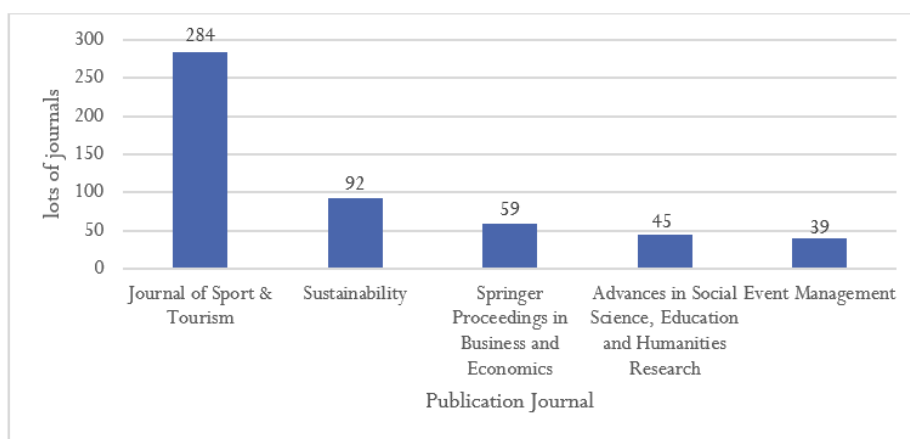
Figure 3. Number of citations for sport tourism from 2000 to 2023



### *Journals with the most publications*

The number of publications based on the keyword sport tourism that occupy the top 5 journals can be grouped as follows: Journal of Sport & Tourism ranks first among journals containing the keyword sport tourism with 284 articles, followed by Journal of Sustainability with 92 articles. Thus, the Journal of Sport & Tourism is the most relevant journal for the topic of sport tourism, as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Number of publications on sport tourism topics in journals

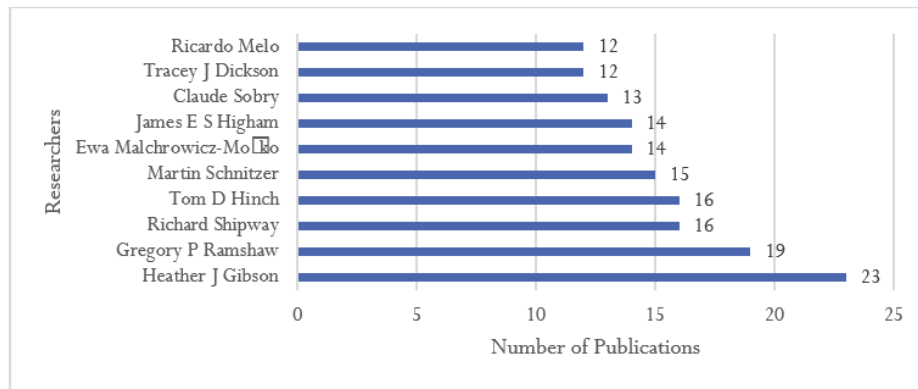


### *Researchers Trend*

The number of publications based on researchers (10 largest) is as follows: Heather J Gibson (University of Florida, United States) ranks first based on authors with 23 articles on sport tourism (Buning & Gibson, 2018; S. Chang & Gibson, 2011; H. Gibson, 2013c; H. J. Gibson, 2003; H. J. Gibson et al., 2003, 2012, 2018; Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010, 2012; Qi et al., 2009; Walker et al., 2013). Next is Gregory P. Ramshaw (Clemson University, United States) with 19 articles (Cho et al., 2014, 2017; Gammon et al., 2017; Gammon & Ramshaw, 2013; Hinch & Ramshaw, 2014; Ramshaw & Gammon, 2005, 2017; Ramshaw & Hinch, 2006). Meanwhile, the third position is Richard Shipway ((King et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2016; Miles & Shipway, 2020; Ritchie et al., 2009; Shipway, 2007, 2018; Shipway et al., 2016; Shipway & Fyall, 2013; Shipway & Jones, 2007; Shipway & Kirkup, 2010; Shipway & Stevenson, 2012). Thus, Heather J. Gibson and Gregory P. Ramshaw are the most productive researchers on the topic of sport tourism, this is shown in Figure 5.



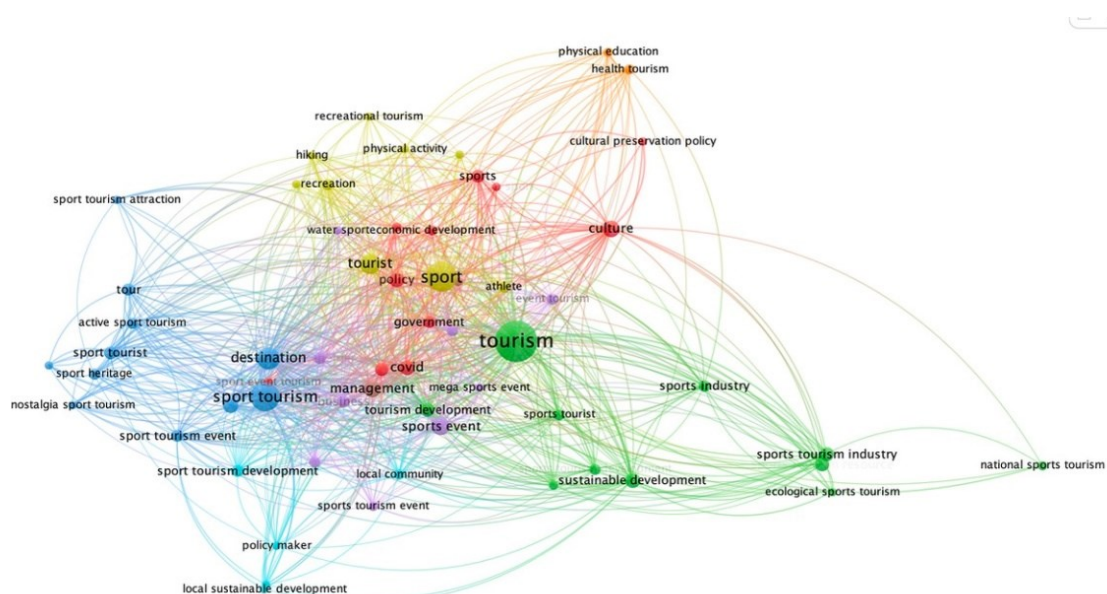
Figure 5 Number of publications on sport tourism topics from researchers.



### Network visualization for co-occurrence aspect

VOSviewer provides a network visualization map for co-occurrence, there are 60 terms, 8 clusters, 810 links, and a link strength of 19779. Furthermore, the 60 terms are grouped into 8 clusters consisting of Cluster 1 (11 terms), Cluster 2 (11 terms), Cluster 3 (11 terms), Cluster 4 (9 terms), Cluster 5 (9 terms), Cluster 6 (5 terms), Cluster 7 (2 terms), and Cluster 8 (2 terms). In Figure 1.6, two terms connected by a line indicate that the two terms appear together in a title and abstract. Conversely, two terms not connected by a line indicate that the two terms do not appear together in the title and abstract. Thus, this network visualization can be used by researchers to identify emerging areas of the research domain (Lam et al., 2022). For example, terms such as sport tourism are related to sport tourism events, and sport is related to sport tourism development, but sport tourism is not related to cultural preservation policies. Thus, another novelty for the research on sport tourism can be obtained through the research on sport tourism related to cultural preservation policy. In the same way, another novelty is that sport tourism is linked to national sport tourism. This is shown in Figure 1.6.

Figure 6 Network visualization on the topic of sport tourism

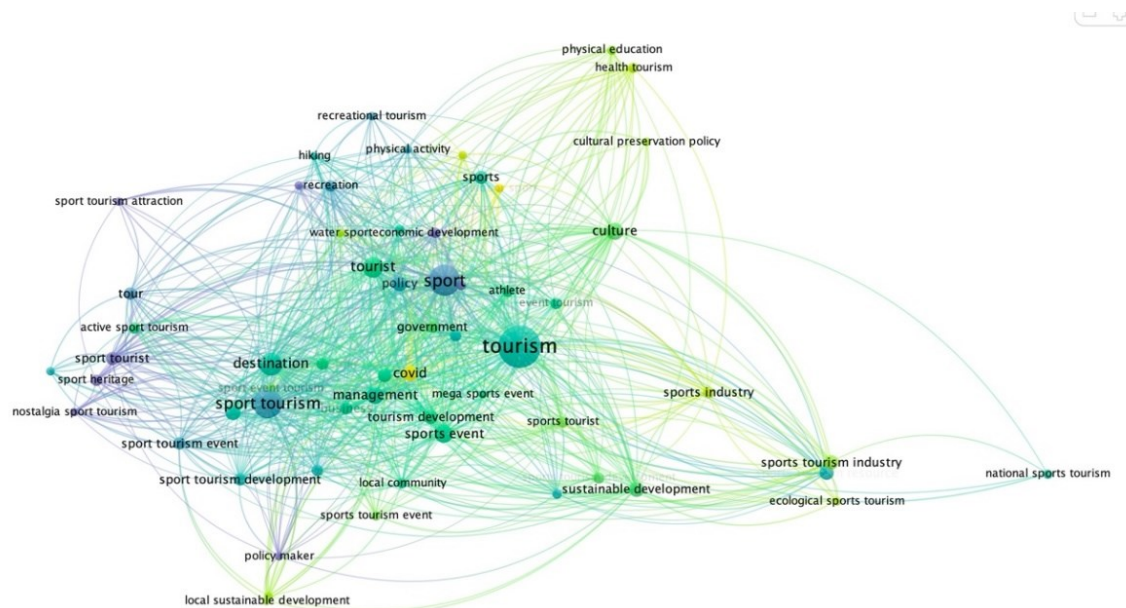


### Overlay visualization for co-occurrence aspect

Similarly, VOSviewer provides an overlay visualization map to see the trend of research titles related to sport tourism from 2000 to 2023 with 60 terms, providing an analysis that yellow indicates current research interest. Thus, the current research trend in sport tourism is yellow terms. For example,

outdoor sports are related to covid, and sports industry is related to health tourism. This is illustrated in Figure 7.

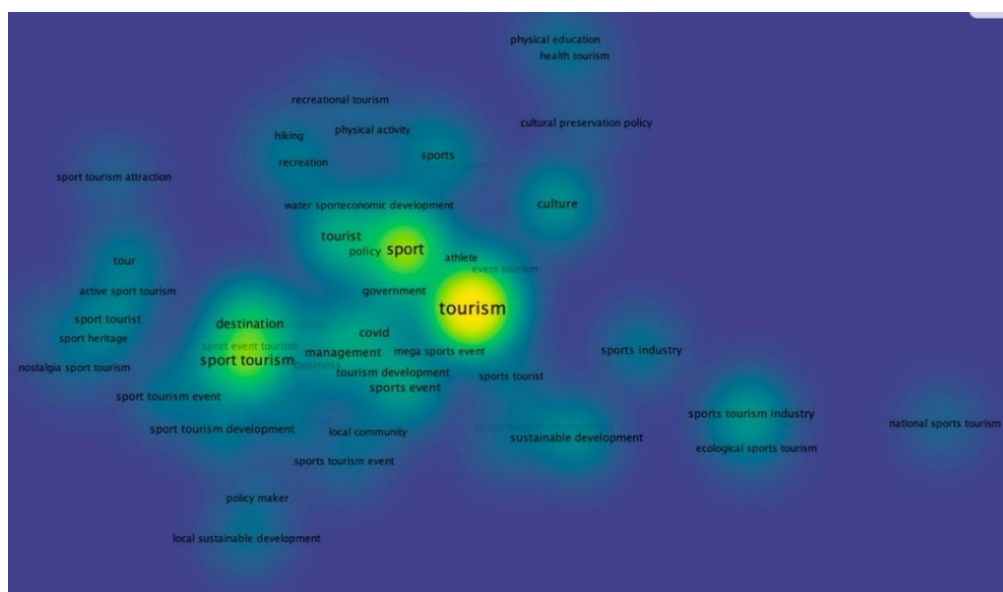
Figure 7. Overlay visualization on the topic of sport tourism



### *Density visualization for co-occurrence aspect*

In addition, VOSviewer also displays a density visualization map for co-occurrence. Of the 60 terms presented on the topic of sport tourism, the visualization of the level of research density is shown by a certain color. Items with high weight and density are seen around the yellow dot, which means that the topic has been widely used in previous research, such as sport tourism and sport event tourism, on the other hand, low weight and density are seen around the blue dot, which means that the topic is still little used in previous research, such as sport heritage tourism and sport tourism nostalgia. Thus, the recommended next research topics related to sports tourism are topics that have density visualization in the low category. This can be seen in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Density visualization on the topic of sport tourism



## Discussion

The relationship between sport and tourism is multifaceted. It covers the areas of health, recreation, and leisure management; they have cognitive value and are also important in the economic field (Homafar, Honari, Heidary, Heidary, & Emami, 2011; Mishra, Rout, & Sahoo, 2021; Ratkowski & Ratkowska, 2018; Suhel & Bashir, 2018; Wijijayanti, Agustina, Winarno, Istanti, & Dharma, 2020; Wissink, 2023). Active sports tourism, sports event tourism, and nostalgic sports tourism are classified in the literature as types of sports tourism (Tomik et al., 2014). The concept of sports tourism must be narrowed down to those who passively participate in all types of sports events and are actual participants in these events, where the effectiveness of the tourism product requires the development of long-term strategies in sustainable development and needs to consider economic and social aspects (Ratkowski & Ratkowska, 2018). Bibliometric analysis can handle large amounts of unstructured data from scientific databases and provide factual and objective information in the form of citation metrics (Lam et al., 2022). For bibliometric analysis researchers, it helps to identify emerging areas and future directions of the research field with the help of visualization tools in developing research directions as a step in sustainable development.

The period from 2000 to 2023 has witnessed a diversification of topics within sports tourism, including the socio-cultural impact of events, the role of technology, and sustainability implications. For example, have proposed conceptual frameworks that integrate the various dimensions of sport and tourism, emphasizing their interconnectedness. These frameworks have been instrumental in guiding further research, particularly in understanding the implications of sports tourism on local economies and cultures. A significant trend identified in the literature is the increasing emphasis on sustainability in sports tourism. Studies have shown that the environmental and social impacts of hosting large-scale sporting events are important considerations for researchers and practitioners. (Kim et al., 2015) developed a scale to evaluate the perceived social impacts of these events, highlighting the need for a structured approach to assessing these impacts. This focus on sustainability is further supported by the findings of (Mair & Whitford, 2013), who explored emerging trends in event research and underscored the need to integrate sustainability into event planning and management.

During this period, there was also a noticeable increase in the number of articles published on sports tourism, indicating a growing interest in the field (Jiménez-García, Ruiz-Chico, Peña-Sánchez, & López-Sánchez, 2020). This trend is reinforced by the observation that collaboration in sports tourism research has contributed to the field's development, with a noticeable increase in publications since 2011 (Mesci et al., 2021). This interdisciplinary approach not only broadens the scope of the research but also enhances the applicability of findings in various contexts. Another important area of interest is the role of technology in shaping sports tourism. The rise of digital platforms and social media has transformed the way events are marketed and enjoyed. Research has begun to explore how this technology affects participant engagement and destination choice, reflecting broader trends in consumer behavior. This is particularly relevant in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has accelerated the adoption of virtual experiences in sports tourism.

In addition to these thematic trends, bibliometric analysis highlights key contributors and institutions in this field. The identification of prolific authors and their networks provides insights into the collaborative nature of sports tourism research. This interconnectedness among researchers encourages a dynamic exchange of ideas and methodologies, further propelling the field forward. As we look to the future, some gaps in the literature remain. For example, although there has been substantial research on the economic impact of sports tourism, less attention has been paid to the long-term sustainability of these events and their impact on local communities.

## Conclusions

A bibliometric analysis of sports tourism research conducted between 2000 and 2023 reveals a dynamic and evolving field characterized by a diverse range of themes, interdisciplinary approaches, and a growing emphasis on sustainability and psychological factors. As the landscape of sports tourism continues to evolve, ongoing research is essential for addressing emerging challenges and opportunities, thereby ensuring the field's continued relevance and impact.





Future studies would benefit from a longitudinal approach that systematically assesses the sustainable impact of sports tourism initiatives over time. Furthermore, integrating qualitative methodologies with existing quantitative approaches can provide a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the sports tourist experience. By capturing the subjective dimensions of participation and engagement, researchers can delve deeper into the motivations, challenges, and satisfaction levels of individuals involved in sports tourism activities.

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