



# A scientometrics-based journal Management framework: A strategic move

Vincenzo Basile<sup>a,\*</sup>, Shahryar Sorooshian<sup>b</sup>, Lucia Pizzichini<sup>c,d</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Department of Economics Management, Federico II University of Naples, Italy

<sup>b</sup> Department of Business Administration, University of Gothenburg, Sweden

<sup>c</sup> Department of Business Administration, Jönköping International Business School, Sweden

<sup>d</sup> Department of Management, Polytechnic University of Marche, Italy

## ARTICLE INFO

### Keywords:

Scientometrics  
Bibliometric analysis  
Journal management  
Editorial board  
Service quality

## ABSTRACT

Managing a scientific journal is a critical and challenging service for academics and practitioners. There must be a way for journal editors to gain a clear picture of their publication's performance and gain insight into how they can make improvements to expand the journal's impact. Knowing the journal's performance and its leading contribution to a particular field can be useful for journal managers readers, authors, and science policymakers. This article presents a management framework informed by scientometrics and bibliometrics as a science that uses statistical techniques to analyze information distribution models, to help journals contribute more to the field by optimum engagement of editorial knowledge and expertise and expanding the boundaries of what is known. We examined one prominent journal as a case study in this paper. The outcomes are used to assess the feasibility of the proposed framework. The top contributions of the case journal are identified systematically, and strategies for potential growth are proposed accordingly. Based on the findings, this study not only provides an overview of the benefits of scientometrics-based journal management but also provides recommendations to strengthen the journal's impact on the field as a contribution to practice. As a result, this article is intended to benefit publishers, journal editors, readers, and policymakers.

## 1. Introduction

The promotion and sale of services is a crucial aspect of the service sector, and service quality is a vital factor that affects customer satisfaction and loyalty [1]. In the scholarly society, academic journals deliver knowledge-intensive services (Martinez-Fernandez, 2010) and are means to spread scientific knowledge (Teixeira, 2018) as publishing papers are an important form of academic communication [2]. According to Valtakoski [3] providing services means offering solutions in terms of a bundle of tacit and explicit knowledge components, in academic journals, this involves the role of editors and reviewers in the publication process. Editors and the editorial board are important functional organizations, as they are the gatekeeper who gives direction, evaluate the manuscripts, monitor the manuscripts' adherence to existing standards [4] and are responsible for the quality of journals [5, 6]. Therefore, as for the service companies, also for academic Journals the quality is the lifeblood that increases the competitive advantage based on the knowledge of their workers [7].

In academic journals, the top management functions are covered by the editorial board whose role is to decide the editorial policy and

contribute to the development of the journal peer-review process [5]. This involves either conducting peer reviews themselves or inviting guest reviewers. Furthermore, Journal editors play a crucial role in the strategic governance of journals and contribute to moving them up in the rankings [8]. Several studies showed that the top management has a great influence on the success of managing knowledge inside and outside the organization (Nguyen & Mohamed, 2011) and their knowledge influences the knowledge valuing and sharing [9–11]. For that reason, the role of the editorial board is very important to improve the quality of journals. According to the knowledge-based theory, knowledge is a unique strategic resource that allows firms to compete in the dynamic environment [12,13], therefore it becomes imperative for journals to value, create and sustain their capacity based on their board's professions. To advance the field of knowledge and provide a tool to manage the journal's performance and its leading contribution to a particular field, this article explores a management framework informed by scientometrics to help journals make a better service quality as well as a greater contribution to expanding the boundaries of knowledge.

Conducting a scientometric study of a particular academic area

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: [vincenzo.basile2@unina.it](mailto:vincenzo.basile2@unina.it) (V. Basile), [shahryar.sorooshian@gu.se](mailto:shahryar.sorooshian@gu.se) (S. Sorooshian), [lucia.pizzichini@ju.se](mailto:lucia.pizzichini@ju.se) (L. Pizzichini).

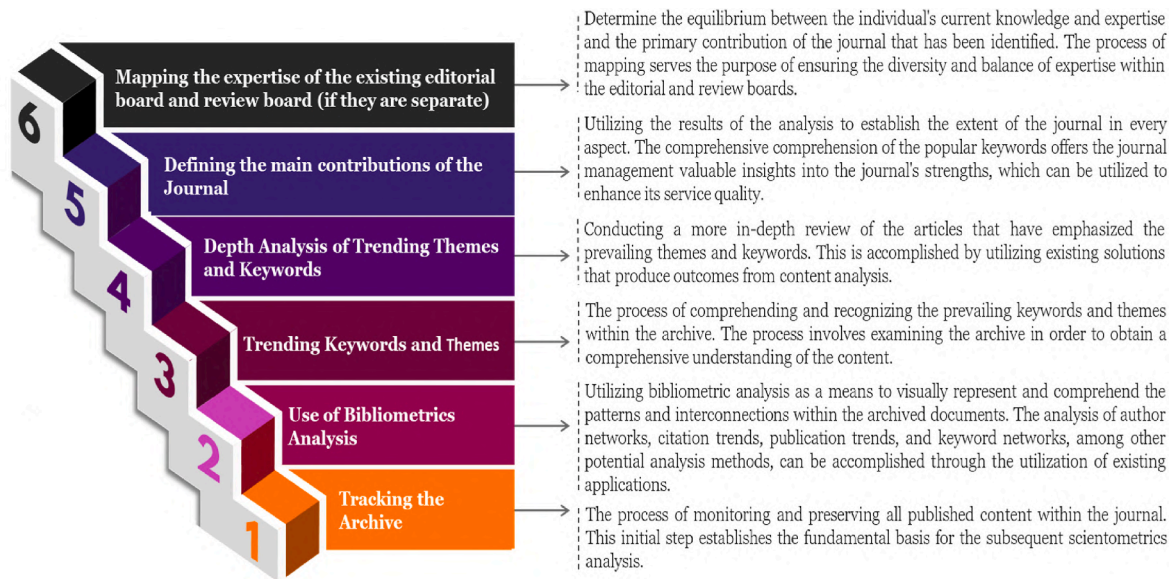


Fig. 1. Journal management framework.

allows researchers to answer their research questions and to continue growing knowledge [14,15]. Indeed, scientometric analysis is a systematic approach to exploring the past, present and future directions [16,17] of the entire intellectual core of a scientific domain instead of concentrating on its works [18]. The scientometric studies are relevant not only for the academics but can contribute to “sensitize, inform and educate internal and external stakeholders on the discipline’s state-of-the-art” [16] highlighting the strength and suggesting to the editorial board potential corrective action for the weaknesses [19]. Nonetheless, there is a growing demand for further investigate the management of scientific journals, also considering the strategic role of the editorial board in knowledge spreading (Baccini & Barbaresi, 2009). To address the need and contribute to knowledge management in the academic journal and provide advancement in Scientometrics research [20], this paper calls for a scientometrics-based and systematic approach.

Scientometrics is a well-established field [21]; within it, bibliometrics is the study of quantifying the number of publication archives using mathematical and statistical methods [22]. The utilization of computational and visual bibliometrics tools facilitates the ability to conduct scientometric reviews (López-Pernas et al., 2023). Despite their considerable potential, these review articles are often overlooked [15]. There are many benefits to using bibliometrics, but the most important is that it is a great tool for evaluating research since it looks at data [23]. Still, previous bibliometrics research mainly investigated topics such as country, institutional and individual-level research productivity, collaborations and citations [24,25], and mainly focusing on a specific area of research [25].

This article argues that, scientometrics reviews can strengthen a journal’s reach and impact if incorporated purposefully within journal management. An effort present editors an opportunity to align their journals with developing scientific landscapes, utilizing bibliometric review articles to effectively navigate the intricacies of knowledge creation and bibliometric measures. It is worth noting that journal management is an ongoing process that requires constant updates and improvements to keep pace with the scholarly society’s demands. The editorial board is responsible for maintaining the standards and knowledge behind the journal’s mission by inviting experts in their respective fields to contribute their knowledge and expertise. However, there is a need for a systematic approach to identify which editors should be invited to ensure that the editorial board is composed of the most suitable experts in their fields.

Currently, there is no, to the best of the authors knowledge,

systematic framework available that reflects this ongoing process of editorial collection and invitation. Journal management requires a thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the services provided. Journal managers must be aware of the quality of their services and continuously strive to enhance it. A data-driven systematic framework that assists journal managers in identifying their strengths can be valuable in this regard. Thus, this article is interested in a scientometrics-based framework that can help journals manage their performance and expand the boundaries of knowledge. As a competitive advantage, the strengths of the services offered play a crucial role in determining service quality; and journal managers must strive to continuously improve these aspects of their services to ensure the scientific community’s satisfaction and loyalty. Creating a systematic data-driven framework for journal managers to pinpoint their areas of excellence can offer a trustworthy approach for enhancing service quality. Such a framework can help journal managers deliver high-quality services that stand out in the scientific community while ensuring that the journal maintains strong editorial support behind the service they provide.

But when there is a lack of literature, how journal management benefit from a systematic framework? This is the research question for this paper. With the research question in hand, the following structure ensures a uniform and organized presentation of this article: Section 2 delves into the methodology, it proposes a conceptual journal management framework as well as introducing a case study to test it. Applying the proposed framework to case yielded the results discussed in Section 3. Section 5 concludes, last, by reviewing the key findings, their implications, and possible future research directions.

## 2. Method

When the available literature is inadequate, conceptual solution suggestions can be a valuable tool for addressing research gaps [26]. In view of this, the current study utilizes the conceptualization and brainstorming results of the authors to put forward a framework that aims to offer journal management a deeper understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their publications. The proposed framework is intended to aid journal managers in improving service quality and maintaining strong editorial support to enhance the delivery of their services.

The proposed framework consists of six steps, as it is presented with Fig. 1.

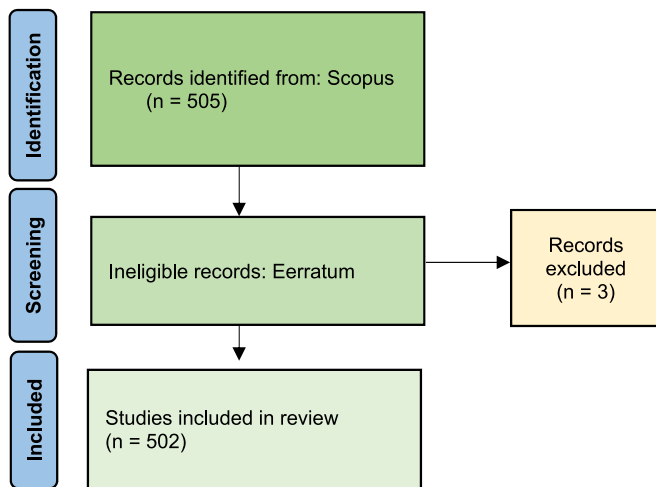


Fig. 2. Process flow diagram for search and filtration.

The proposed framework provides a data-driven and systematic way of managing scientific journals, allowing journal management to make informed decisions that contribute to the growth of knowledge; this framework, only if practical and feasible, can be suggested to journals' managements. Therefore, the next objective of this study is to find out the feasibility of the proposed framework through an in-depth case study. This paper should also illustrate how the framework can be applied to evaluate and improve journal management practices. To test the feasibility of the proposed framework, we conducted a case study of an established scientific journal.

According to reviews [27–29], the European Sport Management Quarterly (ESMQ) is one of the leading journals in communicating the sport management field. This official publication of the European Association for Sport Management is well-regarded for publishing original and well-executed research works in the field of sport management (“European Sport Management Quarterly,” 2022). The ESMQ’s identification 8-digit code (ISSN) is 16184742, and Routledge publishes ESMQ in the United Kingdom (“European Sport Management Quarterly,” 2022). Because of its published articles, the ESMQ has contributed significantly to the sports field in both theory and practice. This level of the journal has high submission rates and is very selective about what it publishes [30], so all submissions are thoroughly reviewed by experts [31]. Such an accurate review process of submitted manuscripts resonates with several great metrics outcomes for ESMQ. For example, Scopus and Web of Science (WOS), the two widely used databases, started to cover ESMQ in 2010 (“scopus.com,” 2021; WOS). In both databases, ESMQ’s annual citations are increasing year after year. In Scopus, ESMQ has an h-index of 44 and a Cite Score of 5.0, indicating a stance to the journal’s productivity and citation impact. Furthermore, the WoS Core Collection’s measurement for showing performance reflects the journal’s impact factor of 3.714 and immediacy index of 0.59. ESMQ has outperformed when compared to some other publishing platforms in the field [30]. Yet, while broad metrics and indexing histories are available, they cannot guarantee the practical value and strength of the publishing platforms [32]; an strategic management can only ensure it. Hence, this platform is chosen for testing the proposed journal management framework. Next section will follow the six steps of the proposed framework and compare the outcomes with the expected results.

### 3. Results and discussion

To respond to the research objective for testing the proposed journal management framework, the authors commented on ESMQ’s contributions using its archive analysis as step 1 of the proposed framework.

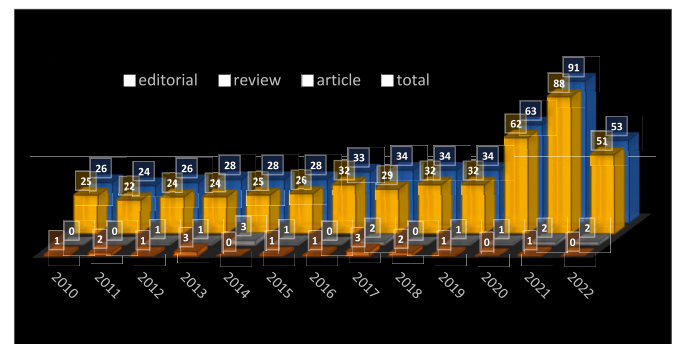


Fig. 3. Publication trends.

“Tracking the Archive of Published Material” is the first step. This archive review is “systematic” because the method for searching and filtering is explicit and reproducible [33]; it is also a repeatable and reusable method [34,35], ensuring the reliability of any conclusions drawn from the synthesizing of published works. It, hence, provides a comprehensive and systematic framework for addressing the existing research by defining the research objectives and questions, collecting literature, and documenting the outcomes [36,37]. Moreover, the selected approach aims to reduce the possibility of bias during literature evaluation while also minimizing the openness of the author’s judgments and results [34]. Systematic review frameworks provide precise protocols for scholars to adhere to at all phases of the process. This approach requires a valid comprehensive protocol that researchers must follow to achieve the aim [34]; thus, the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) protocol [38] for systematic reviews are utilized as presented in Fig. 2. On June 26th, 2022, 505 documents were retrieved from the Scopus database as a result of a search using the journal’s ISSN, including 472 articles, 16 reviews, 14 editorials, and 3 erratums, all in English. A journal published the first archived records in 2010. Erratum’s documents were removed from the collected data. As a result, the total number of documents used in the analysis is 502. Although data for 2022 were not completed and 104 articles were in press (but indexed), they were kept being evaluated due to the time of data collection in the middle of 2022 because they were the most up-to-date scholarly works in the journal. The final search formula was as follows: ISSN (1618–4742) AND (EXCLUDE (DOCTYPE, “er”)).

Furthermore, in the systematic literature review, bibliometric analysis is often used to visualize results (Linnenluecke et al., 2023). ‘Use of Bibliometrics Analysis’ is the second step of the framework proposed by this paper. With the backing of the ScienceScape web solution, VoS-viewer is one of the primary bibliometric tools utilized in this study to assess the collected data. The performed bibliometrics is based on a review of different metrics, including publication trends, identifying contributing publishers, collaboration networks, keyword analysis, and citation analysis; and it provides a better overview of the journal for its readers.

Based on data analysis, Fig. 3 depicts the number of publications over time. The graph also shows the number and publication patterns based on document type and total documents over the years. Before 2016, the total number of publications was less than 30; however, by 2016, the journal had increased the number of publications to 33–34 until 2020. By 2020, the number of documents produced per year had risen from 34 to 63, and by 2021, it had risen to 91. However, the majority of additional publications are articles, and the trend in accepting reviews and writing editorials has not changed significantly.

This journal has published authors from over 45 countries. The authors’ network analysis suggests that a diverse range of authors and collaborations have been published with a balance of newcomers and senior authors. Our analysis found no evidence of a concentrated control over the journal’s publication output by a small group of authors, which

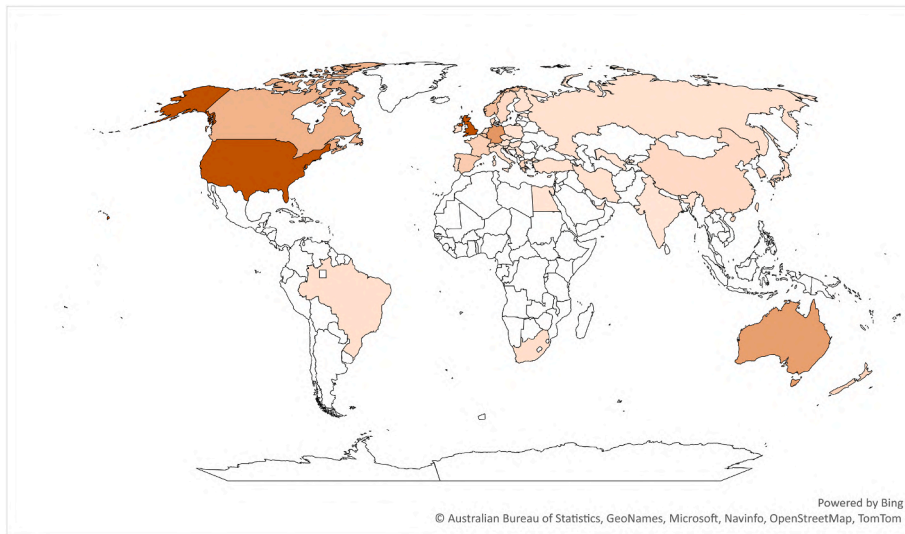


Fig. 4. Contributing countries.

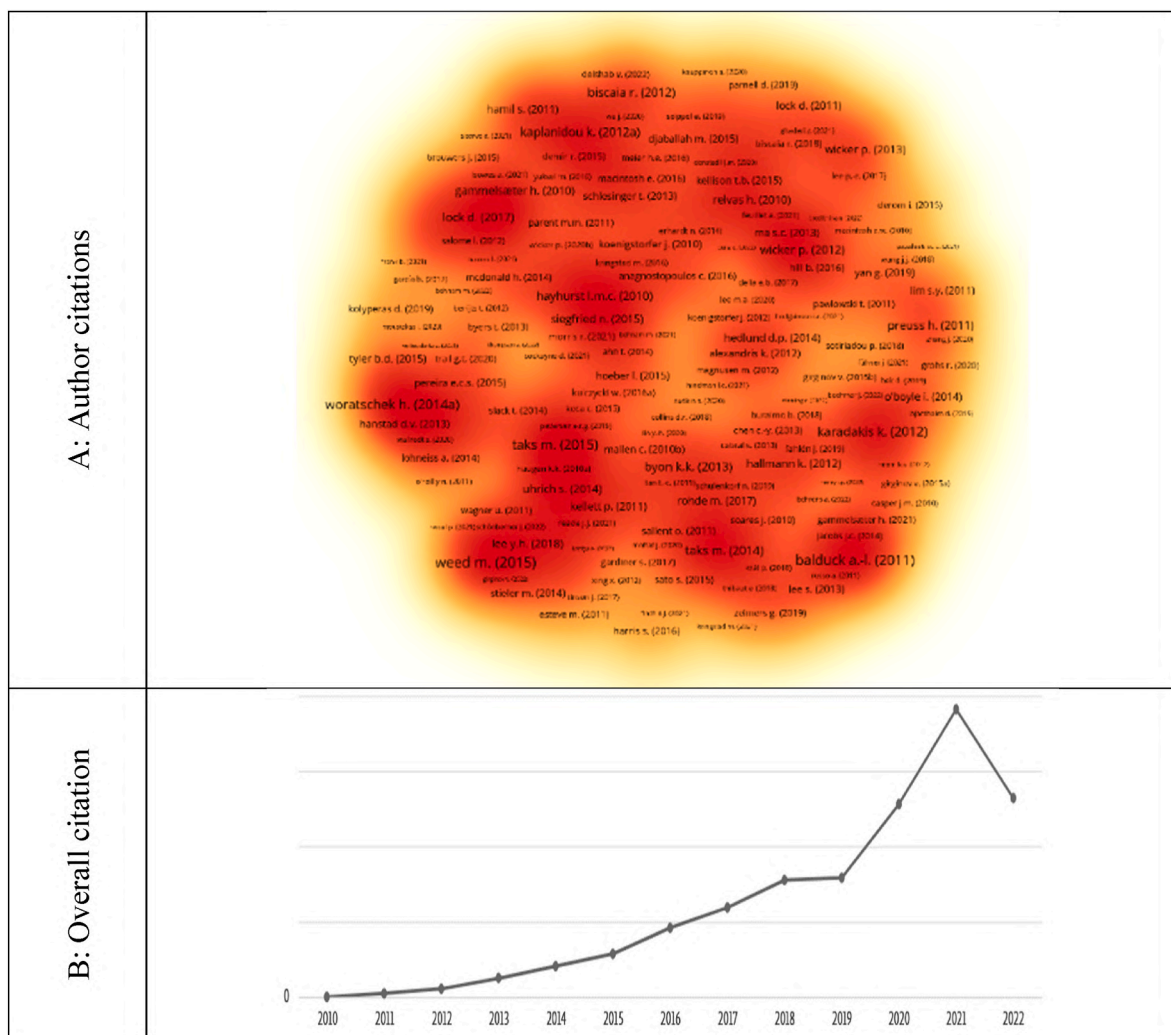


Fig. 5. Citation overview.

supports the journal’s commitment to diversity and inclusivity in its publication practices. Yet, the United States and the United Kingdom are the most active publishers in both phases, with each publishing 130

documents; these two countries are affiliated with 45.81 percent of the total documents. Germany and Australia are the next two countries, with 75 and 69 documents, respectively, despite having significantly fewer



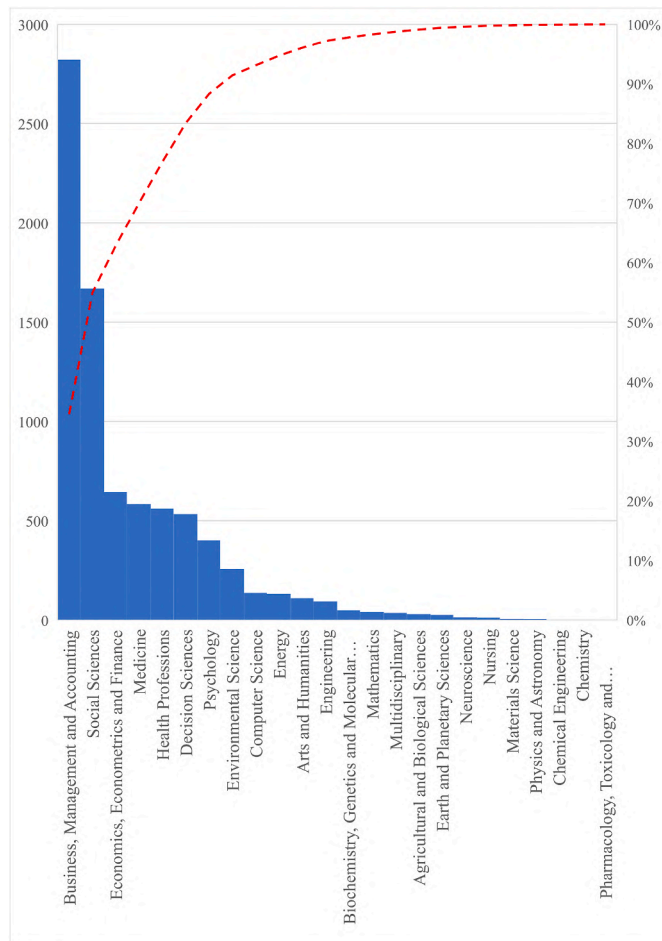


Fig. 6. Fields citing ESMQ outcomes.

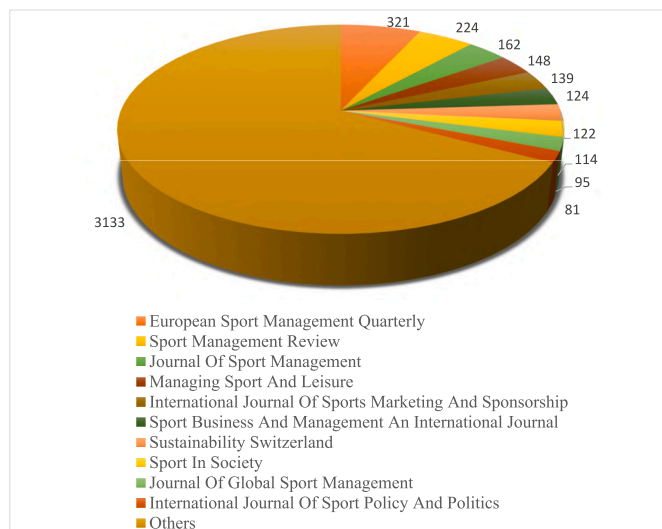


Fig. 7. Users citing ESMQ outcomes.

documents than the top two. An overlay view of the countries reveals that Iran, Japan, Finland, and Sweden are among the newcomers; however, China, Denmark, Canada, and Portugal have been on the list of publishers for some time. However, as illustrated by the publication heatmap in Fig. 4, some countries did not publish in this journal.

If the journal desires, the submission invitation can serve as a

strategy to achieve a more equitable distribution of authors across different geographical locations. Above that, Scopus has recorded 7837 citations for ESMQ outputs, with citations per document ranging from 0 to 154. Here, very similar four top publishing countries are presented to be listed as top citing countries. Fig. 5 depicts the density of citations. Part A of the figure represents the decentralized and balanced author citations received, regardless of country publishers and names of authors. Part B, furthermore, shows how the journal’s citations increase each year.

Fig. 6, however, depicts the distribution of the fields that have cited ESMQ’s outputs with a cumulative line on a subordinate axis as a percent of the total citation. This Pareto-histogram figure shows that ESMQ’s outputs feed a variety of fields, though business research and social sciences are benefiting the most, with more than 50 % of total citations.

Fig. 7 as well includes a list of the top ten publishing platforms, as well as citation counts for the ESMQ’s outputs. The journal’s 321 self-citation is visible here. Therefore, the majority of the top citing platforms are in the field of sport management.

For fining “Trending Keywords and Themes”, step 3 of the proposed framework, text mining has generated frequently used keywords among the citing documents. The most popular keywords have changed over time, but a few have remained at the top for more than a year. Fig. 8 depicts connections between top keywords and year of publication as flows, visually connecting categories with shared items. Correlations are represented by curved lines whose width is proportional to their frequency. Node totals are shown as labels in the figure, for example, 10 in front of the years shows the number of presented top keywords in that particular year, and the number in front of the keywords shows how many years they were top popular. With 9 hits, “Football” is the sport that benefits the most from ESMQ outputs. Besides, the Olympics, with 4 hits, appears to benefit the most from the event.

Further to that, Fig. 9 depicts the evolution of the dataset’s most important keywords that appeared in at least ten documents; the number of documents is indicated in brackets. According to the data, football and sponsorship are the top keywords that have remained popular over time. However, the Olympic games are a reference that occurs every few years but remains a popular keyword; additionally, social media and elite sports are keywords that have recently attracted scholarly attention.

Fig. 10 shows the connected keywords as they appear in the dataset, at least in 3 documents. An overlay view of the keywords’ network reveals that COVID-19, social media, elite sport, and sustainability are recent trends; however, mega-event, commercialization, attendance, attitudes, and job satisfaction have been on the publishers’ list for some time. Furthermore, seven clusters of keywords with visible networks in the document were identified based on data analysis. The background shadow colors of the clusters in the figure categorize the clusters.

According to the keywords used, a few international and many national sports receive very little attention in any way, whereas football is one of the few sports that receives a lot of attention. Inequality is evident not only in focused sports but also in narrowly focused managerial functions and activities. In general, sports management is a field concerned with the management aspects of sporting activities and events, and it is assumed that keywords such as financial, operational, and human resource management receive more attention from the journal, comparable to other sub-fields. Furthermore, because sport evolves for both amateurs and professionals, more attention to the amateur group or public sports is recognized from the keywords utilized in date. Although event management and broadcasting are important in sports, facility management, clubs, and security management are equally important and needed to be among the used keywords. The relationship between sports agencies, supply networks, and outside parties is another neglected area.

The journal has the option to either maintain a limited scope or strategically broaden it in order to cater to its readers. Next, step 4 of the

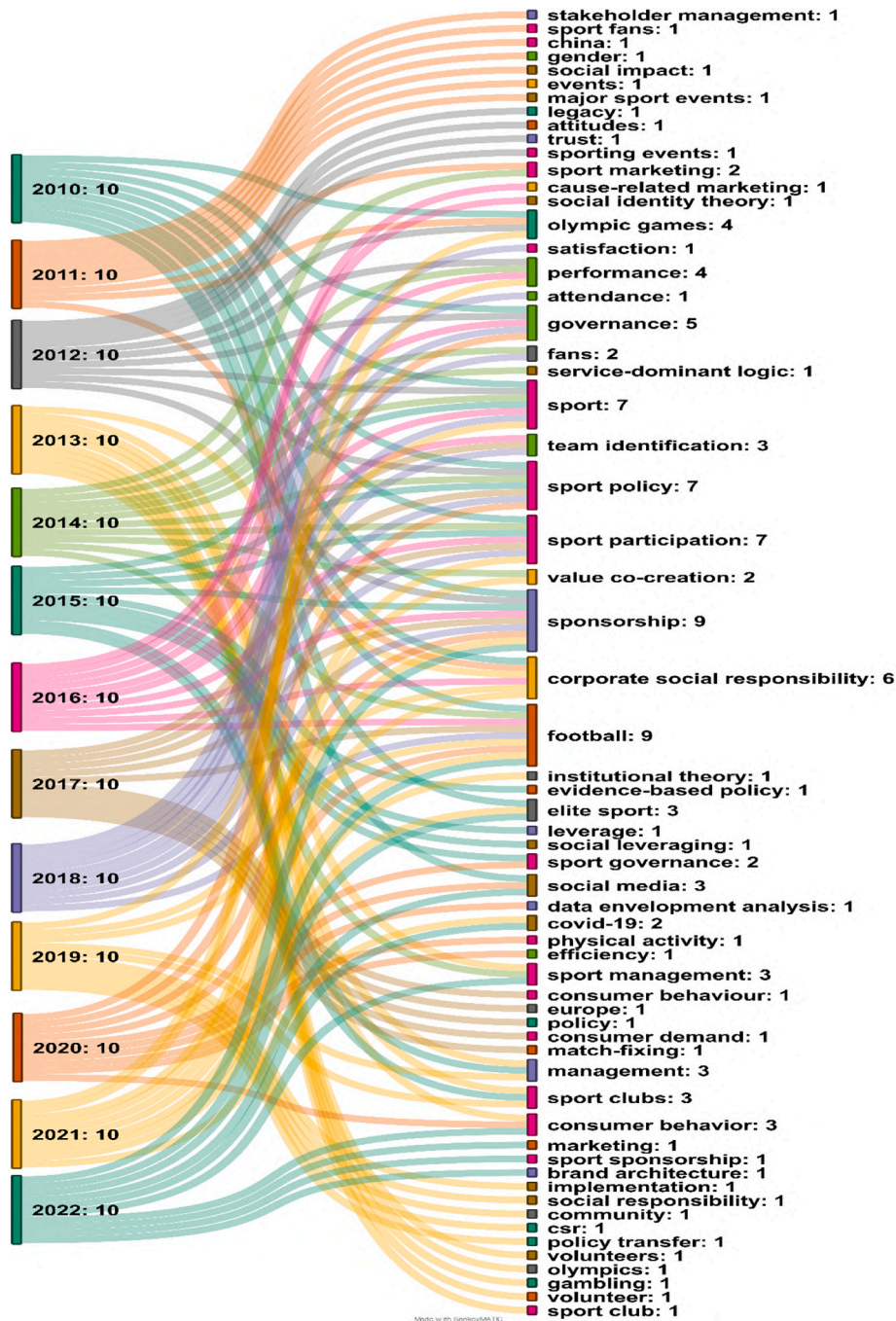


Fig. 8. Yearly top keywords.

proposed framework is the concern, ‘Depth Analysis of Trending Themes and Keywords’. As a result, since Football was the most debated topic highlighted by the bibliometric analysis, it would be useful to learn how ESMQ has contributed to football management, assuming that the field of football research is in the ESMQ’s nascent stage of competition within the competitive landscape of academic journals for attracting authors and readers.

Football was the most mentioned sport in the journal; of course, it is a very popular sport, maybe the most [39] so it expects more attention than less popular sports. Four terms of football, Soccer, American football, and Rugby have overlaps in usage in literature. They are all referring to team sports with two teams of 11 players. The goal of the game is to score more goals than the other team by moving the ball beyond the goal line and into the opposing team’s rectangular-framed

goal. American football is mostly called Rugby, but football is alternatively called Soccer). The rugby ball is formed like a prolate spheroid, whereas the football ball is round; football players typically use their feet to move the ball, whereas rugby players use their hands more. From the ESMQ’s archive search, it is identified that Rugby (or American football) is not a beneficial sport but football (Soccer) is. Hence, adjustment of the initial search formula resulted in ISSN (1618–4742) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (football OR soccer) AND NOT TITLE-ABS-KEY (“American football” OR rugby) AND (EXCLUDE (DOCTYPE, “er”)) that is used to explore the archive via Scopus. 122 documents were among the journal archive that used ‘football’ in the title, abstract, or list of keywords. Fig. 11 displays the results of the distribution analysis of published works overtime, as step 5 of the framework, ‘Defining the Main Contributions of the Journal’. This section uses this set of

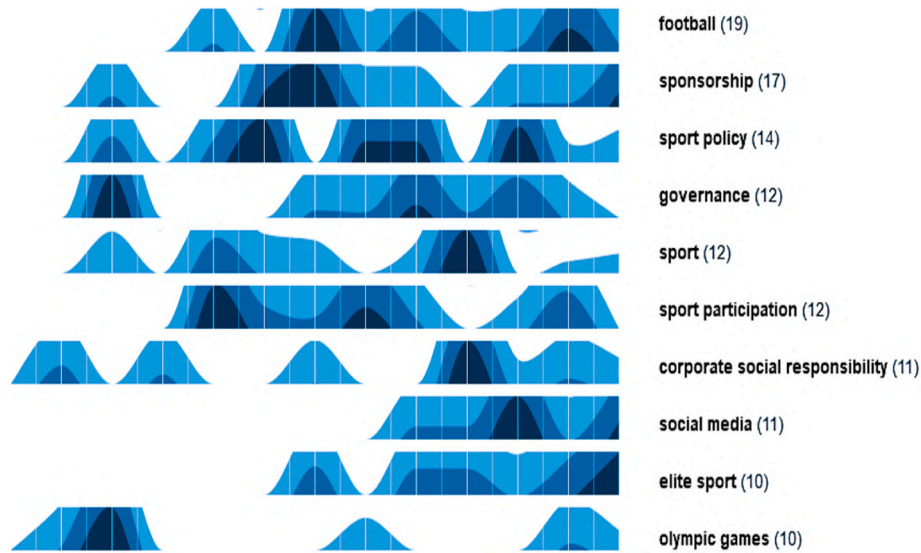


Fig. 9. Keyword trends.



Fig. 10. Keywords' connections.

documents published by the ESMQ to explore how football management has been treated.

These 122 documents have fed 1524 Scopus-indexed documents as a reference; Although many of them (with 142 documents) were self-cited by ESMQ, other top users were Sports Business And Management An International Journal (with 68 documents), and Sport Management Review (with 65 documents). As Fig. 12 shows, from the 122 published documents, repeating keywords rather than football or soccer are sponsorship, corporate social responsibility (CSR), fans, and social media. In management, a system approach is used to refer to activities in three phases, inputs, processes, and outputs [40]. In football, inputs can refer to player training, team formation, budget distribution, and other operations that prepare a team to play. Furthermore, Process may refer to game performance, league scheduling and management, event

security management, and other acts that affect team performance. Finally, the output phase pertains to fan pleasure, attracting new sponsors, and the results that can be obtained following a sporting event. Many of the keywords in Fig. 12 are placed in the output phase. As a result, the other two system phases require further care.

Besides bibliometric measures, the abstracts of the 122 articles gathered are examined using Nvivo12 software. The output of this step is to yield a deeper view of how ESMQ contributed to football management with reference to its archived publication. For the validity of the approach taken by this paper, Sinkovics [41] referred to whom VoS-viewer acts as a valuable tool for mapping a body of literature and identifying promising concepts, but NVivo allows users to delve into the context of those concepts and provide additional insights. For enhancing the foundations for theorizing through bibliometric mapping, he says



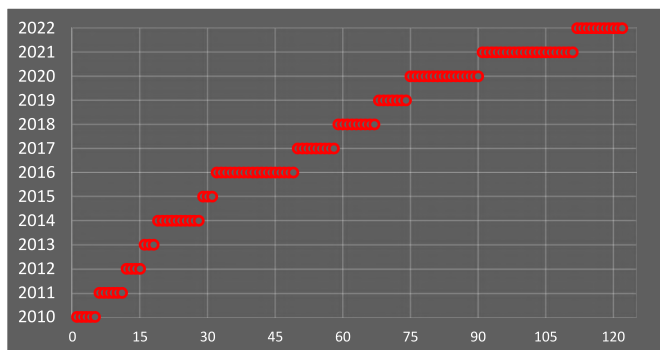


Fig. 11. Keywords for citing documents.

both applications are required, and they complement each other beautifully.

The use of content analysis as a research method allows for providing new insights increases the understanding of a specific phenomenon, and gains a broader and more condensed description of the phenomenon [42]. Incorporating the input data from the abstracts, then systematically organizing it with clearly defined codes leads to the identification of themes and the drawing of conclusions [43]. The authors chose to formulate codes to (1) identify the focus area to determine what in football and what in football management gets contributed by each document, (2) address what was the methodological frameworks used in each paper, and (3) identify the potential added value to the practice and/or knowledge. Table 1 demonstrates that the searching concepts that are closely connected to the themes the authors set out to investigate; as a recommended stage [44]. The table gives a representation of the direct and indirect relationships between concepts used.

Fig. 13 shows the analysis's findings regarding the concentration of published documents on management-related activities, with 59 publications focusing on marketing the highest and only 5 or 6 documents on planning and operational management-related studies the lowest focus in these parts. While Fig. 14 depicts the main concepts published related to the management of football-related activities.

Next, the sub-concepts published related to the management of football-related activities have been identified. In marketing, consumer behaviour and relationship marketing are the prominent sub-fields of work, followed by organizational marketing, brand management, and event marketing. While strategic management and corporate social responsibility (CSR) are the primary fields of study in governance, financial governance in the field of financing, strategic planning in the field of planning, and operational performance in the field of operations are the sub-fields that attract the most attention.

Fig. 15 displays the analysis results concerning the concentration of published documents on football-related activities, where fan reactions and sports organizations are of primary concern. In addition, investing in football, participating in sports competitions, board roles, and team identification are important topics frequently studied. Lastly, since topics such as gender equality, sponsor reputation, sports tourism, team involvement, and doping in sports have been studied very little, they create a gap in the literature for future studies.

The majority of football-related studies, 67 documents, claimed to contribute to the football management knowledge, while the rest were seen to add to the actual practice of managing the sport. Methodologically, the attention of these 122 documents was more on the quantitative research approach. Most of the articles, 68 %, were related to quantitative research, and only about 27 % of the weight is assigned to qualitative studies. However, five of the recorded articles stated in the abstract that they used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The regression model and structural equation modelling come to the fore in quantitative research, based on the analysis, and interviews in qualitative research, and the combination of the regression

model, experimental method, and case study in mixed research draws attention in published documents.

From the proposed framework by this paper, "Mapping the Expertise of the Existing Editorial Board" left to be discussed. This paper proposed a journal management framework and the objective for this case study was to test its feasibility. From the case study results, ESMQ's main strength is identified by implementing the framework so addressed where this case journal better contributed to the field of sport management as a guide for readers and authors as well as provide inputs for the journal management team and editors, where Table 2 details.

This paper discovered the ESMQ's strengths and weaknesses as a result of feasibility of its proposed framework. Contributors to the journal have been recognized and evaluated critically. We identified, the journal has contributors from all over the world, but findings highlight a higher concentration from mainly western countries. This evidence can be related also to the main topic addressed by reviewed articles, as football is one of the most popular sports, especially in Europe. Therefore, as a journal management guide, the ESMQ can open to special issues focused on specific contexts and topics to enhance the attractiveness and the spread of the journal worldwide. We showed that the existence of ESMQ benefits the football sport, tourism, and event management industries the most. Although football was the most beneficial sport, our analysis revealed that not all football-related technical and managerial activities benefited from the sport's popularity. Indeed, the analysis reveals that papers concentrated mainly on marketing research, especially relationship marketing, leaving space for other topics like leadership, planning, and operations to be further investigated. As well as findings from keyword analysis suggest as the recent trends of social media, elite sport and sustainability are topics that need to be further investigated. Moreover, the tested framework had potential to uncover information that could have implications for sports policymaking, and sports-supporting publishers. Until now, it appears that the future of ESMQ is brighter in certain sports, as well as specific sport management functions and activities than in other fields of sport management research. Missing elements reduce effectiveness rates, but missing coverage refers to the need for increased efficiency. Overall, we found that ESMQ is now moving at a reasonable pace, however, it is promising, requiring editors to better deal with its coverage barriers.

The last step, step 6, involves mapping the existing expertise of the editorial and review boards to identify the balance of knowledge and expertise in relation to the main contributions of the journal. This step shows how successfully the journal can addresses its scope needs. Despite this, the journal's management is entrusted with this task to ensure the assignment's accuracy. The management team has knowledge about the editorial/review team's competence, the extent to which each member is involved with reviewing articles, and the overall scope of work. If the level of editorial competency does not align with the hiring of a new team, then the remedy is to consider employing a new team. Working with guest editors and special issues, and partnerships with established conferences are among other means that journal editors have to direct the journal's contribution and balance the scholarly output. An alternate approach to achieving a balance between the competence of the editorial board and the submitting paper could involve publishing editors and overseeing the authors' contributions [45].

In short, in the academic publishing world, journals must identify and emphasize the ways in which they add to the existing body of knowledge and practical application. This is a strategic way for journals to put their attention to distinguish itself within the competitive landscape, thus gaining a sustainable competitive advantage based on their past performance. The scientific community has high expectations, and our proposed framework supports those expectations while also fostering substantial advancements in journal's niche scope. Via this paper, in particular, the testing of the proposed framework shows the ESMQ publishing platform's premier contributions to sport



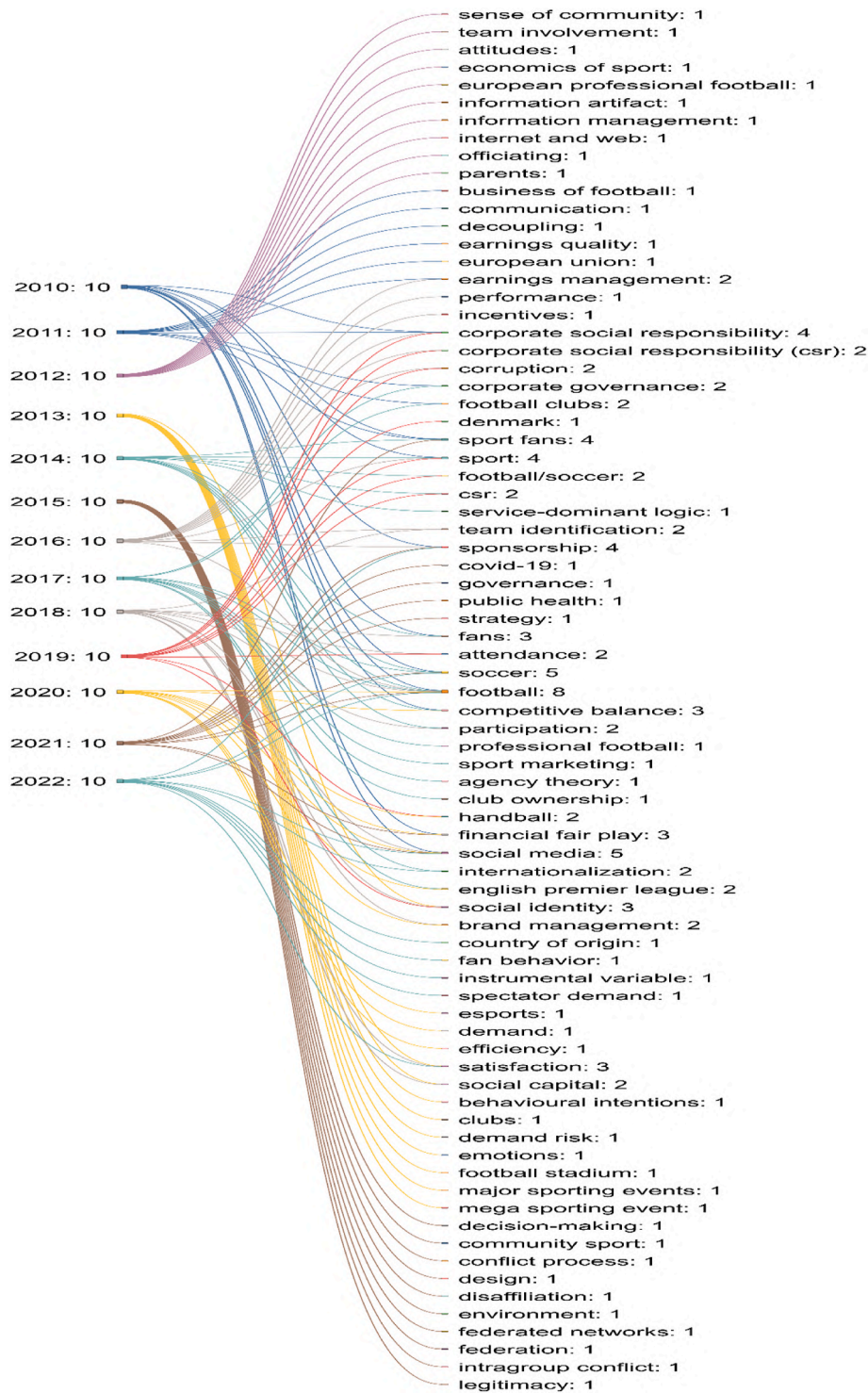


Fig. 12. Football management keywords over time.

management, as well as a managerial roadmap for potential development. The proposed framework by this article was tested with the ESMQ and found to be a feasible tool for managing scientific journals and expanding the boundaries of knowledge. The results also highlighted the potential of this framework to sensitize, inform, and educate internal and external stakeholders on the discipline's state-of-the-art.

#### 4. Conclusion

Journals are the primary medium for creation and dissemination of

scientific knowledge [6] and for connecting readers and researchers together [2,46]. To have a manuscript published in a top-ranked journal bring prestige to researcher as it can affect the access to research grants, tenure, and promotion [47]. However, the ever-increasing number of publications [48,49] has made it challenging for readers to find the information they need [49], and at the same time the editorial board has to guarantee the high quality of the journal [7]. There are so many journals out there that make it hard for editorial boards to remain influential and competitive. The above-mentioned phenomena emphasize the need for journal management frameworks. Thus, with the goal of better

**Table 1**  
Themes and searching concepts.

Themes	Concepts	Sub-Concepts
<b>Focus area(s)</b>	Football Topic(s) [football] Management Topic(s)	– <i>Financing; Operations; Marketing; Planning; and Governance</i>
<b>Methodology</b>	Qualitative Quantitative Mixed method	– – –
<b>Added value (s)</b>	Contribution(s) to Knowledge Contribution(s) to Practice	– –

managing scientific journals in mind, this article presented a framework, then, using an in-depth case study, this research investigated the framework’s feasibility. Practical tools for managing journals are severely lacking, and, as a result, the proposed framework addresses the field’ need. The framework makes it easy to add strategic features that will make a journal more influential. It provides a methodical way for journal editors to evaluate their publication’s impact and identify areas that could be enhanced. Applying the framework to a journal case study revealed its practical usefulness by revealing the journal’s strengths and improvement opportunities.

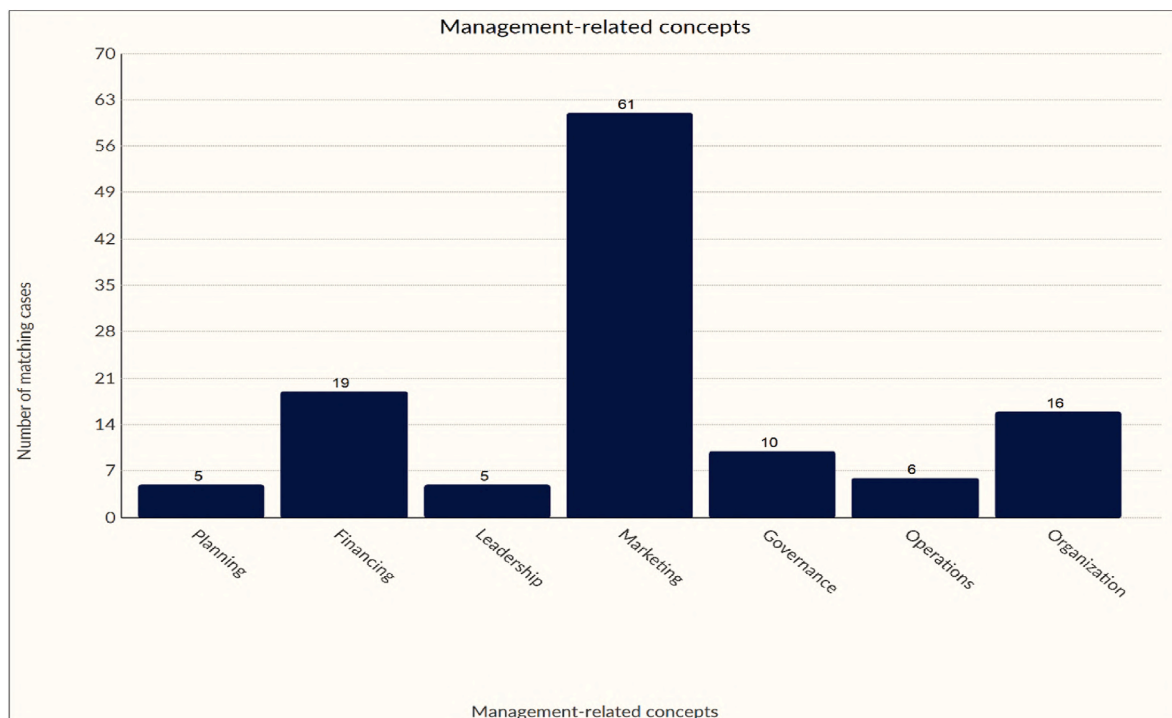
To the best of the authors’ knowledge, there has been very few data-driven frameworks to aid journals, despite the wealth of knowledge in scientometrics and bibliometrics areas. This is making the proposed framework a valuable contribution that brings innovation to the field. Not only it is likely that literature benefit from the suggested scientometrics-based framework, but also individuals in the publishing, editing, reading, and policymaking industries can benefit greatly from this framework. The framework can help journal editors gain a clear picture of their publication’s performance. By providing a structured way to strategic contributions, the framework helps with making informed decisions to improve the service quality and scientific impact of journal outcomes. Still, the journal archive data availability and quality for analysis are crucial to the framework’s performance.

Problems with data availability and quality necessitate the investigation of alternate methods. The outlined future research will play a crucial role in validating and improving the framework, ensuring its continued usefulness and effectiveness for academic publishers. Additionally, the authors propose future research projects that will evaluate the impact of implementing the framework over a period of time in order to evaluate changes in journal performance metrics, thereby providing empirical evidence of the effectiveness of the framework.

Lastly, but certainly not least, it is necessary to give careful consideration to the more general challenges that may have an impact on the effectiveness of the framework. Contributing factors include the ever-increasing speed of technological development, novel approaches to publishing, the subjective nature of data analysis, differences in cultural norms and institutional structures, and the difficulties associated with involving a diverse group of stakeholders. Yet, for now, when tested on a single journal case, this article’s limitation in its framework’s generalizability along with the necessity for larger-scale validation become recommended. The authors recommend that future studies take into account the limitation mentioned above by comparing journals from different fields, sizes, and regions. Also, to see how journal performance metrics change over time, longitudinal studies are a must. In addition, it is advised to involve stakeholders in order to collect qualitative feedback on how the framework has affected journal management practices. The goal of these steps is to thoroughly evaluate the framework’s effectiveness and determine its suitability for the varied academic publishing sector. The authors also acknowledge the need for additional validation beyond what ESMQ has done. Applying the framework to a wider variety of academic journals will help us understand its generalizability and effectiveness better. To improve both the academic and social spheres, it is important to conduct surveys and interviews with a wide variety of stakeholders to learn about their experiences with journal management practices and the practical effects of the framework.

**Authors statement**

The manuscript has not been published nor is it under consideration for publication elsewhere.



**Fig. 13.** Football management keywords over time.

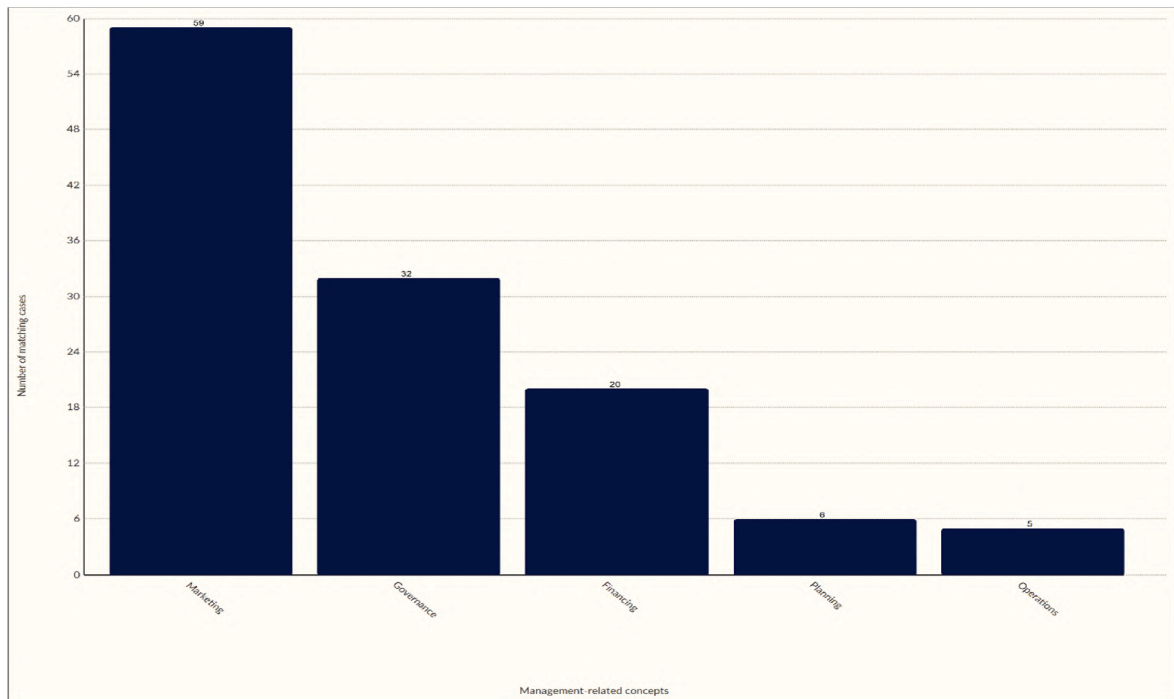


Fig. 14. Management of football-related activities.

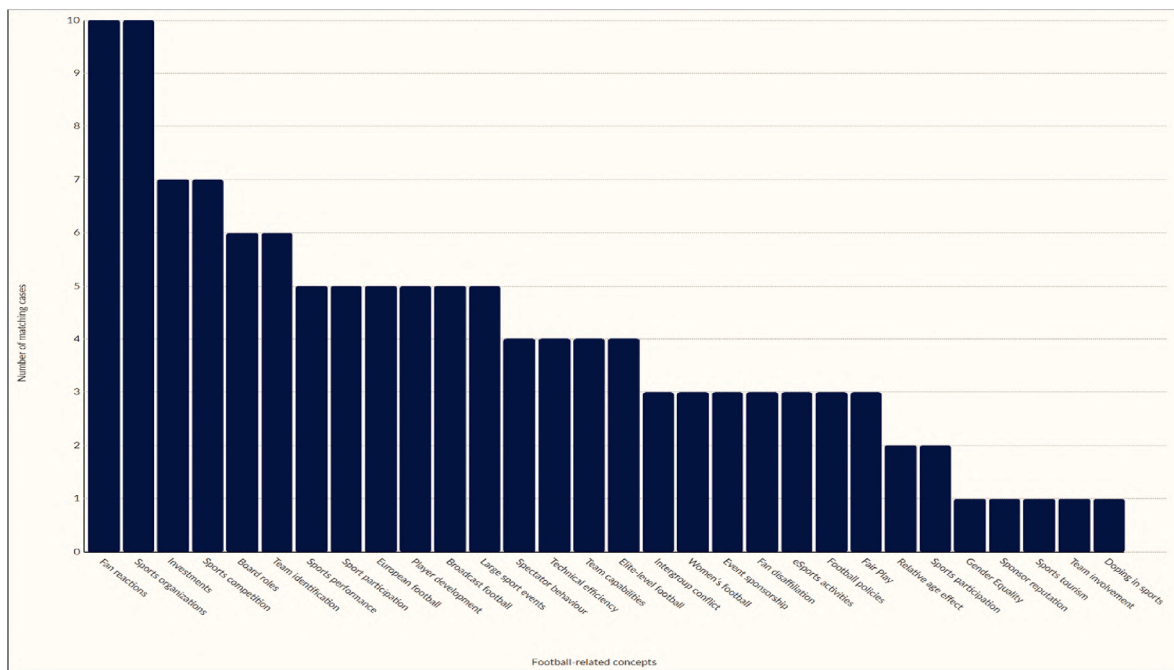


Fig. 15. Football-related activities.

We have no conflicts of interest to disclose.  
All Authors have read and approved the final version.

**CRedit authorship contribution statement**

**Vincenzo Basile:** Writing – review & editing, Visualization, Supervision, Formal analysis, Data curation. **Shahryar Sorooshian:** Writing – original draft, Methodology, Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Data curation. **Lucia Pizzichini:** Writing – original draft, review & editing, Supervision, Formal analysis, Data curation.

**Declaration of competing interest**

None.

**Data availability**

Data will be made available on request.



**Table 2**  
Research outcomes.

Methodology	Quantitative	Regression model Structural equation modelling Survey Panel data analysis Experimental research Ordinary least squares Econometric model Factory analysis Event study Cluster analysis Monte Carlo simulation Data envelopment analysis Partial least squares Social network analysis Best–Worst method	Contribution type	Practice	Improving financial direction Decision making in management Practices for risk management Performing competitive strategies Practicing sport related policies
	Qualitative	Interviews Experimental research Action research Grounded theory research Autoethnography Ethnographic research Thematic analysis Literature review Case study Content analysis Document analysis		Knowledge	Sponsorship practices Information management practices Innovative marketing strategies
	Mixed	Literature review and regression analysis Literature review and case study Case study and regression analysis Experimental research and regression model			Consumer behaviour in marketing Investment strategies Brand development strategies Customer engagement strategies Approaches to effective board management Managing CSR
Management-related concepts	Marketing	Consumer behaviour Relationship marketing Organizational marketing Brand management Event marketing Sponsorship Decision process Social media marketing Broadcast advertising Pricing strategy International marketing	Football-related concepts	Fan reactions Sports organizations Investments Sports competition Board roles Team identification Sports performance European football	Elite-level football Intergroup conflict Women’s football Fan disaffiliation Event sponsorship eSports activities Fair Play Football policies
	Governance	Strategic management Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Stakeholders’ management Leadership Innovation management			
	Financing	Financial governance Financial performance		Sport participation Player development Broadcast football Large sport events Spectator behaviour Technical efficiency Team capabilities	Relative age effect Gender Equality Sponsor reputation Sports participation Sports tourism Doping in sports Team involvement
	Planning	Financial economics Strategic planning Marketing planning Compensation			
	Operations	Operational performance Financial operations			

**References**

[1] Yee RW, Yeung AC, Cheng TE. An empirical study of employee loyalty, service quality and firm performance in the service industry. *Int J Prod Econ* 2010;124(1): 109–20.

[2] Gong K. The influence of discipline consistency between papers and published journals on citations: an analysis of Chinese papers in three social science disciplines. *Scientometrics* 2023;1–18.

[3] Valtakoski A. Explaining servitization failure and deservitization: a knowledge-based perspective. *Ind Market Manag* 2017;60:138–50.

[4] Youk S, Park HS. Where and what do they publish? Editors’ and editorial board members’ affiliated institutions and the citation counts of their endogenous publications in the field of communication. *Scientometrics* 2019;120(3):1237–60.

[5] Liwei Z, Chunlin J. Social network analysis and academic performance of the editorial board members for journals of library and information science. *COLLNET J Sci Inf Manag* 2015;9(2):131–43.

[6] Wu D, Lu X, Li J, Li J. Does the institutional diversity of editorial boards increase journal quality? The case economics field. *Scientometrics* 2020;124:1579–97.

[7] Serenko A, Bontis N, Booker L, Sadeddin K, Hardie T. A scientometric analysis of knowledge management and intellectual capital academic literature (1994–2008). *J Knowl Manag* 2010.

[8] Petersen J, Hattke F, Vogel R. Editorial governance and journal impact: a study of management and business journals. *Scientometrics* 2017;112(3):1593–614.

[9] Del Giudice M, Maggioni V. Managerial practices and operative directions of knowledge management within inter-firm networks: a global view. *J Knowl Manag* 2014.

[10] Donate MJ, de Pablo JDS. The role of knowledge-oriented leadership in knowledge management practices and innovation. *J Bus Res* 2015;68(2):360–70.

[11] Wang S, Noe RA. Knowledge sharing: a review and directions for future research. *Hum Resour Manag Rev* 2010;20(2):115–31.

[12] Grant RM. Toward a knowledge-based theory of the firm. *Strat Manag J* 1996;17 (S2):109–22.

- [13] Spender JC. Organizational knowledge, learning and memory: three concepts in search of a theory. *J Organ Change Manag* 1996;9(1):63–78.
- [14] Holsapple C. Decisions and knowledge. *Handb Decis Support Syst* 2008;1:21–53.
- [15] Blümel C, Schniederermann A. Studying review articles in scientometrics and beyond: a research agenda. *Scientometrics* 2020;124(1):711–28.
- [16] Serenko A. Knowledge sabotage as an extreme form of counterproductive knowledge behavior: the perspective of the target. *J Knowl Manag* 2020;24(4):737–73.
- [17] Hassan MK, Rabbani MR, Brodmann J, Bashar A, Grewal H. Bibliometric and Scientometric analysis on CSR practices in the banking sector. *Rev Financ Econ* 2023;41(2):177–96.
- [18] Sidorova A, Evangelopoulos N, Valacich JS, Ramakrishnan T. Uncovering the intellectual core of the information systems discipline. *MIS Q* 2008;467–82.
- [19] Serenko A, Jiao C. Investigating information systems research in Canada. *Can J Adm Sci Rev Canad Sci Adm* 2012;29(1):3–24.
- [20] Basile V, Giacalone M, Cozzucoli PC. The impacts of bibliometrics measurement in the scientific community A statistical analysis of multiple case studies. *Rev Eur Stud* 2022;14:10.
- [21] Chen C, Song M. Visualizing a field of research: a methodology of systematic scientometric reviews. *PLoS One* 2019;14(10):e0223994.
- [22] Xue Y. Towards automated writing evaluation: a comprehensive review with bibliometric, scientometric, and meta-analytic approaches. *Educ Inf Technol* 2024; 1–42.
- [23] Sahni S, Kaurav RPS. What? Why? When? How? Where? Of technology-based bibliometric review. *Advancing Methodologies of Conducting Literature Review in Management Domain* 2023;2:79–101. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S2754-586520230000002005>.
- [24] Manning LM, Barrette J. Research performance management in academe. *Can J Adm Sci Rev Canad Sci Adm* 2005;22(4):273–87.
- [25] Ülker P, Ülker M, Karamustafa K. Bibliometric analysis of bibliometric studies in the field of tourism and hospitality. *J Hospit Tour Insights* 2023;6(2):797–818.
- [26] Sorooshian S. Formulation of a grey sequence and an optimization solution to present multi-layer family networks. *Mathematics* 2023;11(1):144. <https://doi.org/10.3390/math11010144>.
- [27] Baier-Fuentes H, González-Serrano MH, Alonso-Dos Santos M, Inzunza-Mendoza W, Pozo-Estrada V. Emotions and sport management: a bibliometric overview. *Front Psychol* 2020;11:1512.
- [28] Gammelsaeter H, Anagnostopoulos C. In: Sport management: mission and meaning for a new era, vol. 22. Taylor & Francis; 2022. p. 637–42.
- [29] Torres-Prunonosa J, Plaza-Navas MA, Díez-Martín F, Prado-Roman C. The sources of knowledge of the economic and social value in sport industry research: a co-citation analysis. *Front Psychol* 2020;11:629951.
- [30] Walker J, Wood G. Methodology. *Academic journal guide*; 2021. p. 2021.
- [31] Sorooshian S. Peer review art. *Ital J Med* 2017;11(4):424–5.
- [32] Sorooshian S. Indexing versus journal ethics. *Sci Eng Ethics* 2019;25(3):981–3.
- [33] Pickering C, Byrne J. The benefits of publishing systematic quantitative literature reviews for PhD candidates and other early-career researchers. *High Educ Res Dev* 2014;33(3):534–48.
- [34] Smith R, Spaaij R, McDonald B. Migrant integration and cultural capital in the context of sport and physical activity: a systematic review. *J Int Migrat Integrat* 2019;20(3):851–68.
- [35] Yang ECL, Khoo-Lattimore C, Arcodia C. A systematic literature review of risk and gender research in tourism. *Tourism Manag* 2017;58:89–100.
- [36] Mollah MRA, Cuskelly G, Hill B. Sport tourism collaboration: a systematic quantitative literature review. *J Sport Tourism* 2021;25(1):3–25.
- [37] Thomson A, Hayes M, Hanlon C, Toohey EK, Taylor T. Women's professional sport leagues: a systematic review and future directions for research. *Sport Manag Rev* 2022;1–24.
- [38] Moher D, Liberati A, Tetzlaff J, Altman DG, Group P. Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses: the PRISMA statement. *Ann Intern Med* 2009;151(4):264–9.
- [39] Lepschy H, Wäsche H, Woll A. How to be successful in football: a systematic review. *Open Sports Sci J* 2018;11(1).
- [40] Sorooshian S, Abbaspour A, Jahan A. A system view to the risks of COVID-19 vaccination project. *Appl Syst Innovat* 2022;4.
- [41] Sinkovics N. Enhancing the foundations for theorising through bibliometric mapping. *Int Market Rev* 2016.
- [42] Pitts B, Pedersen PM. Examining the body of knowledge in sport management: a content analysis of the. *J Sport Manag* 2005.
- [43] Maguire M, Delahunt B. Doing a thematic analysis: a practical, step-by-step guide for learning and teaching scholars. *All Irel J High Educ* 2017;9(3).
- [44] Ligita T, Nurjannah I, Wicking K, Harvey N, Francis K. From textual to visual: the use of concept mapping as an analytical tool in a grounded theory study. *Qual Res* 2022;22(1):126–42.
- [45] Sorooshian S. Crisis management by journal editors: case of COVID-19. *J Kor Med Sci* 2020;35(37).
- [46] Wakeling S, Spezi V, Fry J, Creaser C, Pinfield S, Willett P. Academic communities: the role of journals and open-access mega-journals in scholarly communication. *J Doc* 2018.
- [47] Matherly M, Shortridge RT. A pragmatic model to estimate journal quality in accounting. *J Account Educ* 2009;27(1):14–29.
- [48] Correia AMR, Teixeira JC. Reforming scholarly publishing and knowledge communication: from the advent of the scholarly journal to the challenges of open access. *Online Inf Rev* 2005.
- [49] Sorooshian S, Kumar S. Contrived publications and COVID-19 communication noise. *Ital J Med* 2020;14:247–8.

Vincenzo Basile is Doctor Europaeus in Business Science  
 Academic Editor PLOS One  
 Editorial Board Member of JAQM; IJSMIT and APJ  
 Review Editor for Frontiers in Sustainability  
 Section Editor for Journal of Economic Analysis, J. of Atmosphere  
 And Ocean Environment and Marine and Environment  
 Editorial Board Peer Reviewers for the Journal of Financial  
 Technology and Business Innovation  
 Lecturer for the MASTER IN MARKETING & SERVICE MANAGEMENT

Shahryar has his BSc, MSc, and PhD in industrial engineering, along with an MBA certificate in business analytics. In 2016, he became an accredited management consultant and, in 2018, passed the required assessments to become a certified professional in engineering management. later, he also became a Lean Six Sigma belt holder and a certified graduate technologist. He has worked in industries, business schools, and universities in a variety of roles ranging from consultant to lecturer and professor.

**Lucia Pizzichini, Ph.D.**, is Assistant Professor in Business Administration at the Jönköping International Business School (Sweden) and researcher at the Management Department at Polytechnic University of Marche (Italy). Since 2016 she is a visiting researcher at the School of Business, Economics, and Law at the University of Gothenburg and she has been Lecturer at Dalarna University (Sweden). She earned the Italian National qualification as Associate Professor in 2023. Her research interests focus on strategic marketing, service marketing and management and digital transformation. She is a reviewer for several international academic journals and her research have been published in international journals such as the International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management, International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management, and in several book chapters edited by Springer and Edward Elgar Publishing.