



## A Content Analysis of the *Journal of Intercollegiate Sport*: 2008-2022

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Within the sport management discipline, college sport is a heavily researched area with many scholarly articles published in various academic journals. Such popularity has led to the creation of academic outlets focused exclusively on intercollegiate athletics such as the *Journal of Intercollegiate Sport (JIS)*, which began in 2008. Because of the demand and creation of vehicles to disseminate college sport-focused research, it is vital to analyze the scholarly contributions found in these periodicals to identify what research has been conducted to identify potential strengths, weaknesses, and gaps. Such an analysis provides both scholars and educators with information regarding completed areas of research as well as potential gaps on a particular subject. Thus, the purpose of this project is to examine the content found in *JIS* from 2008 to 2022 to reveal its strengths, weaknesses, and areas where it can improve in the future.

**Keywords:** College-Sport Focused Research, Content Analysis, Methodology

The college sport industry has gone through momentous change over the last two decades. Recent headlines involving college athletes include conference realignment (Gibbons, 2023), media rights agreements (Draper & Blinder, 2020; Rittenberg, 2022), rising coach salaries (Barnwell, 2021), student-athlete activism (Lyles, 2020), gender inequality (Rose, 2021), sexual assault and harassment (Schuster, 2021), mental health issues (Bernabe, 2022), transgender athlete participation (Robinson, 2022), name, image, and likeness (NIL) compensation for student-athletes (Moody, 2021), and various types of abuse (e.g., hazing, physical, emotional, etc.). These topics and others allow for debate and discussion by stakeholders found within the college athlete landscape such as media pundits, administrators, student-athletes, and fan nations (e.g., Kurrass, 2020; Osborne et al., 2020). Likewise, academic scholars



find the intercollegiate sport industry to be a fruitful one to apply countless research methodologies and theoretical frameworks as many scholarly outlets publish articles dedicated to intercollegiate sport (Miller et al., 2019; Peetz & Reams, 2011; Pitts, 2016; Pitts et al., 2014).

College sport's popularity among scholars has also led to the creation of several academic outlets dedicated to researching the industry which includes the *Journal of Intercollegiate Sport (JIS)*. Beginning in 2008, *JIS* (n.d.) is an interdisciplinary journal containing peer-reviewed research impacting intercollegiate athletics from the sciences, social sciences, humanities, and professional field perspectives. Its overall goal is to present research that crosses traditional academic boundaries and challenges current practices while maintaining an informative focus versus an editorial one. Unlike other college sport focused publications, *JIS* was launched in collaboration with the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and its Scholarly Colloquium (Kretchmar, 2008). Both initiatives were made possible with support from former NCAA President Myles Brand and were funded by the NCAA until 2013 (Fields & Cunningham, 2013). The colloquium's original concept was to establish an environment to foster ideas and scholarship to help guide policy development on issues impacting higher education and college athletics. Kretchmar (2009) believed "the Colloquium and the journal are designed to stimulate good research on intercollegiate athletics—regardless of the Division or philosophy under which they operate and regardless of the kind of institution in which they take place" (p. 4). However, NCAA Chief Operating Officer Jim Isch believed the colloquium was not meeting this goal and ceased the event (Grasgreen, 2013). Additionally, NCAA leadership expressed concern *JIS* had narrow distribution as the governing body purchased a large majority of copies and distributed them to faculty athletics representatives at member schools (Steinbach, 2013).

Despite these setbacks, *JIS* continued to operate as an outlet for high-quality, scholarly articles examining intercollegiate sport from numerous disciplines and perspectives (Fields & Cunningham, 2013). As a semiannual publication, *JIS*'s mission is "to stimulate, encourage, and promote study, research, and writing related to intercollegiate athletics; to demonstrate the relevance of research for reform efforts in intercollegiate athletics; [and] to support core values of higher education in relationship to intercollegiate sport" (Kretchmar, 2008, p. 5). Today, the journal publishes its volumes in an open-access online platform sponsored by the University of Kansas (Burton & Welty-Peachey, 2019). However, *JIS* maintains the rigor and quality that helped it become an important outlet for intercollegiate sport scholarly work, publishing over 200 manuscripts. Due to its longevity and status as a channel for college sport research, it is necessary to assess *JIS*'s content regarding topics researched, methodologies utilized, authorship demographics, and identify areas requiring future scholarly assessment. Thus, the present study seeks to examine the content of the *Journal of Intercollegiate Sport* from 2008 to 2022 and assess what research has been conducted to reveal potential strengths, weaknesses, and gaps.

Because academic journals contain information communicated by scholars and utilized by academics and practitioners, it is necessary to monitor these outlets on

occasion to recognize trends and identify how research has advanced (Pitts et al., 2014; Van Doren & Heit, 1973). The present inquiry adheres to past sport management journal assessments and provides those interested in college sport-focused matters an inventory of the body of literature found within this discipline as well as authorship characteristics, methodology application, and under-represented themes (Oddy & Bason, 2017; Pitts, 2016). Using the Williams et al. (2020) framework for analyzing intercollegiate sport academic publications, the present work assesses the content focus, industry segments studied, gender and racial focus of research, research methods utilized, athletic governing body emphasis, and sport application of *JIS* research articles to identify potential topic saturation and encourage future submissions in less researched areas.

## Literature Review

As an academic discipline, sport management is an established research area covering a diverse set of topics, developing its own core concepts, and producing knowledge for practitioners to better complete professional tasks (Zelenkov & Solntsev, in press). It has grown exponentially over the past two decades with over 400 undergraduate programs and 200 graduate programs (Miller et al., 2023; Pierce et al., 2022). However, the field is still relatively young and striving to authenticate its credibility within the academic community (Pitts et al., 2014). Scholars argue a field can achieve its desired authenticity through discourse and development of the field's ontology, which is the body of fundamental information needed by all in the profession, and epistemology, which represents the manner for how one uses reason to understand information (Pitts et al., 2014; Shapiro & Pitts, 2014). Ontology and epistemology within the sport management discipline is disseminated through conference papers and proceedings, books, curriculum, and, most importantly, academic journals (Pitts, 2016).

Academic journals "serve as forums for the introduction and presentation of new research as well as for scrutiny and critique of existing works" (Miller et al., 2019, p. 139). These publications communicate information, facilitate conversations and relationships among researchers, build information archives, and offer practical and theoretical implications within an academic discipline (Oddy & Bason, 2017; Pedersen & Pitts, 2001). Knowledge generated from these outlets consistently and constantly expand and develop as new items are introduced, creating a continually evolving ontology and epistemology (Pitts, 2016). However, the field's knowledge may be incomplete as certain areas are underdeveloped or missing due to the discipline's young age (Williams et al., 2020). Thus, in-depth examinations of an academic journal's content provide scholars perspective on the credibility of extant research while developing a comprehensive body of literature through identifying strengths, weaknesses, topic over-saturation, and areas not being explored (Pitts et al., 2014; Pitts, 2016).

Numerous scholars have evaluated sport management journals, discovering important trends and issues surrounding academic content (Oddy & Bason, 2017; Peetz

& Reams, 2011; Pitts et al., 2014). For example, the most popular sport management periodical analyzed has been the discipline's primary outlet: the *Journal of Sport Management (JSM)*. In assessing *JSM*'s articles published between 1987 and 2003, Pitts and Pedersen (2005) found 38% of all articles covered management and organizational skills, nearly double the attention garnered by the second most studied content area, sport marketing. They also noted the most popular industry segment to examine was intercollegiate athletics (39.5%) followed by participant sport (13.3%) and professional sport (12.8%). *JSM* has received additional analysis regarding criteria such as trends and issues (Zelenkov & Solntsev, in press), detailed topics (Shapiro & Pitts, 2014), author collaboration (Quarterman et al., 2006a; Quatman & Chelladurai, 2008), and employed methodologies (Quarterman et al., 2006b).

Other journals receiving similar examination include *European Sport Management Quarterly (ESMQ)*; Pitts et al., 2014), the *Journal of Legal Aspects of Sport (JLAS)*; Miller et al., 2019), the *International Journal of Sport Management (IJSM)*; Pitts, 2016; Quarterman et al., 2013), *Sport Marketing Quarterly (SMQ)*; Peetz & Reams, 2011; Williams et al., 2023), and *Sport, Business and Management: An International Journal (SBM)*; Oddy & Bason, 2017). Like Pitts and Pedersen (2005), other journal content analyses have identified numerous trends and issues for the field's journals such as identifying college athletics as a popular industry segment for scholars to conduct research (Miller et al., 2019; Peetz & Reams, 2011).

Concurrently, academic journals primarily focusing on intercollegiate sport were established including *JIS* and the *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics (JIIA)* as well as outlets tangential to the segment (e.g., *Journal of Amateur Sport*, *Journal for the Study of Sports and Athletes in Education*, etc.). Despite trends showing dedicated support for college sport research, *JIIA* is the only college sport research journal to receive content assessment. Specifically, Williams et al. (2020) reviewed all *JIIA* scholarly articles published from 2008 to 2019, revealing a disproportionate emphasis on the NCAA higher levels (e.g., Division I General, Division I-Football Bowl Subdivision) as over 40% of papers covered this area. Additionally, the journal produced a high percentage of articles covering coaching and administrative issues as an industry segment (38.3%) and social context as a content area (33.0%; Williams et al., 2020). The details from this study were beneficial as it led to future publications in the under-researched areas identified in *JIIA* including health promotion (Ryan et al., 2022), policy and legal aspects (Corr et al., 2023) and issues surrounding Division II and Division III schools, as well as National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) institutions (Jolly et al., 2023; Moore & Abbe, 2021; Taylor et al., 2022). Likewise, the *Journal of Athlete Development and Experience (JADE)* launched a special issue focused on the NCAA Division III student-athlete development and experience (Hodges & Darwin, 2022; Stokowski et al., 2022).

With a high demand for intercollegiate athletic research and the importance of exploring under-researched industry areas, it is necessary to assess the contributions of *JIS* to determine how it influences the colleges sport field from a research perspective. Thus, the present study examines the content found within *JIS* to take stock on the general state of college sport-focused research, authorship attributes, research

methodology use, and over- and under-saturated topics. Additionally, this analysis provides scholars, editorial board members, and scholarly organizations ways to address potential research gaps found within the current body of knowledge and improve the overall quality and standing of *JIS* as an academic outlet.

## Method

The present study employs a content analysis methodology to examine the general characteristics found within *JIS*'s publications. With the overall goal to "provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study" (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992, p. 314), content analyses allow scholars to compress copious amounts of text into categories for examination in a systematic and replicable manner (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Krippendorff, 1980; Krippendorff & Bock, 2008). While the methodology acts as a word count for classification purposes mechanically, content analyses should be viewed to expose and illustrate the focus of individual, group, institutional, or social attention (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Past scholars have employed content analysis methodology in similar studies assessing journal publications, both within sport management and other disciplines (Miller et al., 2019; Peetz & Reams, 2011; Pitts, 2016; Pitts et al., 2014; Williams et al., 2020). It is performed in three main steps upon identification of the study construct (Riffe et al., 2005). First, researchers determine a representative content sample such as a journal's publication history. Next, scholars train independent coders to use a developed category system to help distinguish differences found within the content and determine reliability within agreed-upon category rules. Finally, the data are analyzed to identify emblematic patterns as well as various noteworthy relationships among the content descriptors (Riffe et al., 2005).

### Coding Procedures

Using these recommended steps, the present study identified all articles published within *JIS* from 2008 to 2022 including one special issue in 2021 ( $N = 236$ ). The journal is publicly available through the *JIS* website (<https://journals.ku.edu/jis/index>) as it shifted to an open-access model in 2019 with all articles available electronically (Burton & Welty-Peachey, 2019).

Two researchers (two master's students) were trained by the primary authors (two professors) in the coding process and independently analyzed the collected data within a specified time period. The primary authors have utilized content analysis methodology with several studies analyzing academic journals as well as assessing various areas of the collegiate sport landscape (Williams et al., 2020, 2023). Comparatively, the coders were engaged in the sport management field and were knowledgeable of the content analyzed due to time spent within the college sport industry. The primary researchers used Cohen's Kappa, a popular index for measuring chance-corrected agreements between observers when using nominal data, to review coding consistency and reliability (Berry & Mielke, 1988). Fleiss (1981) argued scores above 0.75 are considered excellent. The present study found all categorical

variables earned scores between 0.80 and 0.95, consistent with past studies (Oddy & Bason, 2017; Peetz & Reams, 2011; Pitts, 2016). This high reliability finding is understandable “as most of the material coded was manifest in nature” (Pedersen & Pitts, 2001, p. 8).

## **Measures**

### ***Authorship and Editors***

Like past sport management journal assessments, the present work examined contributing author demographics. These demographic items included the number of authors involved with an article, author gender, and author university affiliation in terms of its Carnegie Classification. Identifying these characteristics details the number of authors who contribute college-sport focused scholarship and actively seek publication within *JIS*, the author gender, and potential research activity level of authors. When gender could not be determined by name, the researchers accessed author profiles found on their institutional affiliation’s website. Comparatively, Carnegie Classification is considered a strong predictor of scholarly output with authors desiring publication in strong research outlets (Seifried et al., 2019). Williams et al. (2020) argued evaluating these characteristics helps authors make submission decisions and assist journal managers in planning future issues that intend to advance content variety. In the present study, the researchers also analyze editorial positions which include editor, associate/section editor, guest editor, and editorial board members. These positions were measured by number, gender, and type of editorial position. Though *JIS* articles are widely available, past records of editorial board membership are scarce, limiting the investigation to publicly available records only. Regardless, assessing a journal’s editorial board can provide better understanding of the decision makers affiliated with *JIS* in its leadership roles.

### ***Content and Methods***

The present investigation focused solely on peer-reviewed, research articles in original and special issues of the journal published between 2008 and 2022 as opposed to other content found in the journal (e.g., editorial notes, book reviews, etc.). Each article was reviewed and categorized based on its content area, sport industry segment, college and sport emphasis, and gender focus. Additionally, many sport management scholars called for publishing more critical, race-based work in the field’s journals, providing a diverse and inclusive environment (Singer et al., 2022). Thus, articles were analyzed for focusing on Black, Indigenous, and other racialized communities. Pitts (2016) established that assessing what past activities have been studied by scholars allow future researchers guidance as to what subjects receive high volume and which subjects need more attention. Like Williams et al. (2020), this assessment established content area categories based on the Commission on Sport Management Accreditation (COSMA; 2016) curriculum guidelines. However, the present work combined certain subjects within these categories due to potential overlap. As such, content area was classified in the following categories: (a) Communication and Media; (b) Economics, Finance, and Accounting; (c) Education

and Field Experience (e.g., advising, curriculum, practicum/internship); (d) Ethics, Governance, and Law; (e) Management and Organizational Skills; (f); Marketing; (g) Sport Business in the Social Context (e.g., behavioral and social issues); and (h) areas not categorized by COSMA.

Likewise, the present work defined *JIS* articles based on the sport business industry segments created by Pedersen and Thibault (2018). Because its scope is dedicated to U.S. intercollegiate sport, only segments found within the college environment were used. These segments include campus recreation, coaching and administration, communication, education, event and facility management, health promotion, participant sport, sport law, sport marketing and sales, and sport sociology. Further, the present research reviewed whether each article maintained a dedicated focus to an athletic governing body and/or division as well as a college sport. Regarding governing body, the present work identified if an article maintained an exclusive focus on an NCAA division (i.e., Division I, Division II, or Division III), NCAA subdivision (i.e., Division I-Football Bowl Subdivision; Division I-Football Championship Subdivision), or other intercollegiate sport governing body such as the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA). Similarly, the researchers determined if a particular sport (e.g., football, men's basketball, women's basketball, baseball, softball, etc.) was the primary focus of an article. Finally, the researchers determined whether content contained an emphasis on male or female sports, or sport businesses, and/or racial perspectives.

The present work also employed a descriptive analysis of the scholarly articles contained within the described timeline, serving as this study's unit of analysis. Data collected include the publication year and number of pages per article. Additionally, this analysis identified the appropriate research methodology classification (i.e., qualitative, quantitative, mixed) and common types of analyses that were employed within these classifications. For example, common qualitative measures include interviews, observations, case studies, historical analysis, and legal analysis. Comparatively, quantitative measures include factor analysis, t-test/analysis of variance (ANOVA), chi-square, correlation, regression, multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA) and analysis of co-variance (ANCOVA). Williams et al. (2020) determined this detail provides potential authors a breakdown of methodologies employed by a journal's past works which can help draw attention to those which may be underrepresented.

## Findings

*JIS* has published 15 annual volumes between 2008 and 2022 with most volumes containing two issues. However, only one issue was published in 2019 and 2020 while 2021 saw three issues released. This third issue was a special release covering details on the Myles Brand Era at the NCAA. As such, the present study found *JIS* content comprised of 236 scholarly articles. Table 1 provides an annual distribution of the number of articles found in each volume and their length. Because the journal has shifted to an open-access style, it does not have consistency regarding

the number of articles published annually. *JIS* published 15.7 articles each year with 2019 and 2020 having the least articles published (5 and 6, respectively) and 2010 with the most (24). The 2021 special issue contains 15 articles with content averaging 16.0 pages per article. The average length for each publication was 17.32 pages and ranged from two to 34 pages. In total, 4,088 pages of original research have been produced during the time frame analyzed. Furthermore, Harzing's (2007) *Publish or Perish* found *JIS* content has been cited 5,529 times, averaging 22.28 cites per article. Comparatively, *JIAA* articles in the same time frame have been cited 5,724 times and average 19.40 citations per article. While *JIAA* has more citations collectively, *JIS* articles receive more citations per manuscript.

## Authorship

Across the 236 articles analyzed, *JIS* content represents the work of 372 unique scholars with articles ranging from one to nine authors. Ninety-seven articles contained solo authorship (41.10%) while an additional 60 possessed two authors (25.2%) and another 49 had three authors (20.76%). The remaining articles featured 18 collaborations between four authors (7.63%), six articles featuring five authors (2.54%), three containing eight authors (1.27%) and one each possessing six, seven, and nine authors respectively (0.42%). The high amount of solo authorship clashes with Quatman and Chelladurai's (2008) findings of a substantial decrease in solo authorship in the sport management discipline. However, the high amount of single author projects can be linked to the journal's decision to publish papers from the NCAA Scholarly Colloquium during its existence (Kretchmar, 2008). Between 2008 and 2013, the first *JIS* issue of the year would exclusively contain papers and presentations from the Scholarly Colloquium. These six issues contain 74 articles, 60 of which are single authored. When this content is removed from the population, solo authorship is found in 37 papers only (22.83% of 162 remaining papers) while articles with two (54 articles; 33.33%) and three (44 articles; 27.16%) authors do not see significant decreases. As such, Quatman and Chelladurai's (2008) assessment regarding increases in two to three authorship collaborations is supported within *JIS* articles.

Table 2 assesses authors' genders and university affiliations within the published manuscripts. Genders and university affiliations were verified by the researchers by accessing information for each individual author found on university websites. In total, male authorship appeared on 310 papers (60.55%) while female authorship appeared on 202 papers (39.45%). Regarding lead authorship, male researchers were more frequently listed as first authors ( $n = 153$ ; 64.83%) compared to their female peers ( $n = 83$ ; 35.16%). When assessing the 97 projects with individual authorship, 68 (70.10%) feature male scholars with the remaining 29 (29.89%) produced by females. Comparatively, second, third, and fourth authorship is more balanced between male and female scholars but still favors male authorship. Male second authorship was found in 77 articles (55.39%) and female second authorship in 62 papers (44.61%). Third and fourth authorship follow similar patterns but return to a high male majority in articles with five or more authors. These manuscripts possess





a three-to-one ratio of male to female authors with males appearing as fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, or ninth author on 22 papers (78.57%) while females appear only six times (21.43%).

Concurrently, authors were grouped into one of seven categories based on their academic institution's Carnegie Classification. Like *JIA* (Williams et al., 2020), many lead authors publishing in *JIS* have affiliations with Research Level 1 (R1) institutions ( $n = 138$ ; 58.47%). Interestingly, authors from institutions not affiliated with Carnegie represent the second highest author affiliation ( $n = 39$ ; 16.52%). These scholars are instead affiliated either with practitioner companies, such as consulting firms or sport organizations, or with universities not found in the United States. The next largest grouping were authors affiliated with Master's Level 1 (M1) Universities ( $n = 24$ ; 10.16%), followed by Research Level 2 (R2) Universities ( $n = 22$ ; 9.32%), Research Level 3 (R3) Universities ( $n = 9$ ; 3.81%), and Master's Level 2 (M2) and Master's Level 3 (M3) Universities ( $n = 2$ ; 0.85% respectively). Second authorship follows this same pattern with R1 Universities ( $n = 93$ ; 66.91%) representing the majority, followed by non-ranked institutions ( $n = 16$ ; 11.51%) and R2 Universities ( $n = 13$ ; 9.35%). Third and fourth authorship are also led by R1 University affiliation but exhibit more balance between R2 University and non-ranked institution affiliation.

## Editors

Past academic journal content analyses have studied the general make-up of editors, associate editors, review board members, and known guest editors (Peetz & Reams, 2011; Pitts et al., 2014; Williams et al., 2020). Pitts (2016) argued editors and board members serve as “gatekeepers” for publication in the journal, possessing implicit and explicit influence over what, who, when material is published. Many of these journals have maintained historical records of both current and past editorial board members. Unfortunately, *JIS* does not have a complete history available of its editorial board.<sup>1</sup> As such, the present study analyzes the available information on current and past board members as well as guest reviewers that have published in the journal as some editors have made that a point of emphasis. Since *JIS* was founded, five individuals have served as editor-in-chief with each person serving at least three years in the role. Four of these editors (80.00%) were male. The journal has also used Associate Editors in the past, but only three individuals, one male and two females, could be confirmed to serve in this capacity. Currently, *JIS* does not employ an Associate Editor. Further, two guest editors (one male and one female) were employed for *JIS*'s 2021 special issue on the Myles Brand Era of the NCAA. Regarding current members, the editorial board is comprised of 21 members: 11 men (52.38%) and 10 women (47.62%). Moreover, 16 (76.19%) members have articles published in the journal. An additional 24 individuals (16 men or 66.67%; eight women or 33.33%) were past members of the board with 18 (75.00%) featured in at least one publica-

<sup>1</sup> The available information was obtained from former editors Drs. R. Scott Kretchmar, George Cunningham, and Jon Welty Peachey, and current editor Dr. Matt Huml. We would like to thank them for their help in this process.

tion. Finally, 17 researchers were identified as serving in a guest reviewer capacity, 14 male (82.35%) and three female (17.65%), with eight (47.06%) having published in the journal.

## Content

Table 3 displays the journal's focus areas of research in terms of sport management content area, sport business industry segments, college sport governing association/division, and college sport focus. Like past content analyses (Oddy & Bason, 2017; Pitts, 2016; Williams et al., 2020), Sport Business in the Social Context is *JIS*'s most popular content area as it covers almost half of all articles ( $n = 114$ ; 48.31%). However, the second most popular content area is Economics/Finance/Accounting ( $n = 30$ ; 12.71%), which is traditionally a less frequent research topic (Pitts, 2016; Pitts et al., 2014; Williams et al., 2020). Projects involving Management and Organizational Skills are the third highest content area ( $n = 25$ ; 10.59%). Conversely, past content analyses of sport management journals have more balance between their top two content areas while *JIS* has favored projects with Social Context foci. Other areas receiving attention in the journal were Education/Field Experience ( $n = 23$ ; 9.75%) and Ethics/Governance/Law ( $n = 22$ ; 9.32%). All other content areas received minimal focus.

Regarding industry segment, the present study incorporates the college sport industry segments established by Williams et al. (2020). Like their findings, Coaching and Administration ( $n = 70$ ; 29.66%) issues are the most studied industry segment within *JIS*. Sport Sociology ( $n = 61$ ; 25.85%) is the second most popular segment followed by Education ( $n = 32$ ; 13.56%), Participant Sport ( $n = 24$ ; 10.17%), and Sport Law ( $n = 14$ ; 5.93%). The remaining college sport industry segments received minimal to no focus within *JIS* articles. Comparatively, over half of the *JIS* articles ( $n = 125$ ; 52.97%) assess issues involving non-NCAA and non-NAIA governing bodies or concern numerous college sport governing organizations. When the NCAA and its divisional structure is assessed, *JIS* authors analyze issues impacting NCAA Division I as a whole ( $n = 71$ ; 30.08%), followed by Division I-FBS ( $n = 19$ ; 8.05%) and Division III ( $n = 10$ ; 8.05%). Only one article (0.42%) focuses on the NAIA exclusively while the remaining 10 (4.24%) are concerned with other NCAA divisions. Additionally, many projects do not exclusively emphasize one individual sport but possess focus on either multiple sports or do not concentrate on any specific sport ( $n = 210$ ; 88.98%). For content involving one sport exclusively, football is the most popular ( $n = 20$ ; 8.47%) while other sports like men's and women's basketball, baseball, and softball receive minimal to no coverage.

In terms of gender focus, the present work incorporates past content analyses determining whether manuscripts possessed a focus on one primary gender (Oddy & Bason, 2017; Pitts, 2016; Williams et al., 2020). For example, projects involving male sports or activities (e.g., football, basketball, etc.) possess a male focus while works dedicated toward female sports or activities (e.g., softball, women's basketball, etc.) maintain a female focus. Papers with no identifiable gender bias are categorized as neither/both. Based on this classification style, *JIS* content tends

**Table 3***Focus Areas of Research*

Item	<i>N</i>	%
<b>Sport Management Content Area</b>		
Social Context	114	48.3
Economics/Finance/Accounting	30	12.7
Management/Organizational Skills	25	10.6
Education/Field Experience	23	9.7
Ethics/Law	22	9.3
Other Area	12	5.1
Marketing	6	2.5
Communication/Media	4	1.7
<b>Industry Segment</b>		
Coaching and Administration	70	29.7
Sport Sociology	61	25.8
Education	32	13.6
Participant Sport	24	10.2
Health Promotion	15	6.4
Sport Law	14	5.9
Other Segment	7	3.0
Sport Marketing and Sales	6	2.5
Communication	4	1.7
Event/Facility Management	3	1.3
Campus Recreation	---	---
<b>Association/Division</b>		
Other/Multiple	119	50.4
NCAA Division I General	74	31.4
NCAA Division I-FBS	21	8.9
NCAA Division III	10	4.2
NCAA Division II	8	3.4
NCAA Division I-FCS	3	1.3
NAIA	1	0.4
<b>Sport</b>		
No Focus	210	89.0
Football	20	8.5
Men's Basketball	4	1.7
Baseball	1	0.4
Softball	1	0.4

not to have exclusive gender foci on projects ( $n = 177$ ; 75.00%). Comparatively, male sport-focused articles ( $n = 35$ ; 14.83%) have greater representation than female sport-focused content ( $n = 24$ ; 10.17%) but is more balanced in this regard than *JIIA*.

Finally, this research examines racial focus of articles based on calls for advancing critical, race-based content (Singer et al., 2022). The data were considered possessing racial focus if race was a significant element to a manuscript (e.g., theoretical framework, variable application, etc.). *JIS* published 46 articles with racial focus (19.49% of population). Further analysis shows Black/African American racial studies were the most popular racial focus ( $n = 32$ , 13.55% of population; 69.56% of racial focus) while other groups (e.g., Asian, Hispanic, Native American, etc.) received minimal coverage.

## Methods

Research methodologies employed by the 236 research articles is presented in Table 4. The researchers first coded the scholarly works based on their general methodological category (e.g., quantitative, qualitative, mixed, other) and then assessed popular methodological applications within the general category. The results indicate *JIS* favors qualitative research ( $n = 86$ ; 36.44%), differing from past content analyses on sport management journals (Peetz & Reams, 2011; Pitts, 2016; Pitts et al., 2014; Williams et al., 2020). While the journal does have a sizeable collection of quantitative articles ( $n = 53$ ; 22.46%), the present study identifies 85 (36.02%) contributions that are neither quantitative nor qualitative. Many of these articles with non-qualitative and non-quantitative methodology are more akin to commentary or responses ( $n = 70$ ; 82.35%) to other works or conceptual-based manuscripts ( $n = 13$ ; 15.29%). While other journals may publish a few of these article types, the concept of featuring these works is tied to publishing content featured at past NCAA Scholarly Colloquiums. After the colloquium and NCAA partnership ended, *JIS* shifted to publishing scholarship featuring more traditional methodologies. Regarding types of analyses, interviews are the most frequent methodology for qualitative studies ( $n = 62$ ) followed by historical measures ( $n = 20$ ), case study application ( $n = 19$ ), and content analysis ( $n = 16$ ). For quantitative works, descriptive measures were commonly utilized ( $n = 44$ ) followed by t-Tests/ANOVAs ( $n = 27$ ) and regression analysis ( $n = 22$ ). All other quantitative and qualitative forms of analysis identified received minimal application.

## Discussion

Academic journals improve their standing by soliciting and publishing high quality content as more researchers become familiar with the outlet (Williams et al., 2020). Within the 15 volumes reviewed in this study, *JIS* has published an average of 15.6 articles annually. Measuring journal quality can be based on several factors such as publisher quality, acceptance rates, editorial board reputation, publishing researcher reputation, journal age, readability, originality, relevance, applicability, and how the journal directs future research (Shilbury & Rentschler, 2007). However,

**Table 4***Research Methods*

Research Method	<i>N</i>	% of Total	% of Type of Research
<b>Quantitative*</b>	53	22.5	
Descriptive	44	18.6	83.0
t-Test/ANOVA	27	11.4	50.9
Regression	22	9.3	41.5
Chi-Square	19	8.1	35.8
Correlation	19	8.1	35.8
Other	15	6.4	28.3
Factor Analysis	10	4.2	18.9
MANOVA	8	3.4	15.1
ANCOVA	1	0.4	1.9
<b>Qualitative*</b>	86	36.4	
Interviews	62	26.3	72.1
Historical	20	8.5	23.3
Case Studies	19	8.1	22.1
Content Analysis	16	6.8	18.6
Other	12	2.9	14.0
Legal	11	4.7	12.8
Observations	10	4.2	11.6
<b>Mixed Methods</b>	12	5.1	
<b>Other</b>	85	36.0	
Commentary/Response	70	29.7	82.3
Conceptual	13	5.5	15.3
Other	2	0.8	2.4

\*Note - Articles may contain more than one type of analysis. As such, these figures will not equal 100%

measuring a journal's knowledge use through its citation and impact factors can provide scholars a fair estimate as to how many read and use it (Pitts et al., 2014).

The present study utilized Harzing's *Publish or Perish* (2007) citation data to manually calculate an impact factor based on *JIS* articles published in 2019 and 2020 ( $n = 11$ ) and the number of times these items were cited by indexed journals in 2021 ( $n = 20$ ). This calculation resulted in a one-year impact factor of 1.82, which is less than the impact factors for *ESMQ* (1.89), *JSM* (2.36), and *SMR* (3.34) during the same period (North American Association of Sport Management, 2019). This result is understandable as these outlets are considered the premier journals of the sport management discipline and receive content covering a vast array of subjects (Peetz

& Reams, 2011; Pitts et al., 2014). However, *JIS*'s impact factor is also lower than *JIIA*'s (2020) self-reported one-year impact factor of 3.15. As such, scholars conducting college sport research may prefer sending their works to *JIIA* as opposed to *JIS* due to the better metrics, even though both journals are cited similarly.

Regarding author gender composition, both *JIS* and *JIIA* hold comparable ratios of approximately 60% male to 40% female (Williams et al., 2020). This ratio is also similar to past analyses on *JSM* (61% male and 36% female) and *JLAS* (65% male and 35% female) and substantially more balanced than *ESMQ* (78% male and 22% female), *IJSM* (78% male and 22% female), *SMQ* (79% male and 20% female), and *JSE* (95% male and 5% female). Additionally, *JIS* solicits more balance regarding lead authorship, possessing a 65% to 35% male to female ratio. Other journals like *JIIA* (71% male and 29% female) and *SBM* (77% male and 23% female) favor more male lead authorship. Pitts (2016) argued the gender composition of authors is parallel to the ratio of male to female researchers publishing in these areas. While gender authorship is an area in need of additional analysis, the present work finds *JIS* maintains an authorship diversity that other outlets have not replicated. Authors from underrepresented genders should feel encouraged to submit their work to *JIS* because of the favorable gender composition. The journal should continue to foster greater gender balance in its authorship and could potentially use this element as a tool to solicit future submissions, potentially for special issues.

Corresponding with its gender tendencies for authorship, the current *JIS* editorial board is relatively balanced. This makeup differs from other journal editorial boards, which are primarily male dominated. For example, the *SMQ* and *JIIA* editorial boards retain higher percentages of male reviewers than female reviewers with the *JIIA* board employing a four to one male to female ratio (Peetz & Reams, 2011; Williams et al., 2020). While the journal has assembled a gender-balanced editorial board, only one female has served as *JIS* editor-in-chief, which is consistent with other sport management journals. Conversely, Williams et al. (2020) noted *JIIA* employed one female as co-editor between 2008 and 2019—and for a short duration. This finding led the CSRI Executive Board to solicit applications for future co-editors from underrepresented groups such as women and other minoritized groups. *JIS* should endeavor to maintain the gender balance among its editorial board and its future editors and associate editors. Further, current and future editors should be cognizant of the power dynamics upon serving these roles as an editorial decision “can change the fate of a journal significantly over time” as “the personality, reputation, and work habits of the lead editor play major roles in setting the editorial tone” (Anderson, 2014, p. 1). With *JIS* content averaging 15.6 articles annually, editors and board members should be receptive to content beyond their individual backgrounds and maintain objectivity to increase output and avoid any negative stigma about the journal overall.

Author affiliation is another important item to consider as researchers employed by universities with high Carnegie Classification rankings are more likely to pursue publication in academic journals (Yamamoto, 2004). Scholars working at universities have a general expectation to produce research to help them achieve tenure and

promotion, with very high and high research-intensive universities demanding their tenure-track and tenured career faculty to produce high quality research (Fairweather, 2005; Seifried et al., 2019). *JIS* sees lead authorship (67.80%) and second authorship (76.26%) from R1 and R2 institutions at a comparable rate to *JIIA* (69.40% and 73.80% respectively) as well as similar rates of accepted works with first and second author affiliations from lower-ranked and non-ranked Carnegie institutions (*JIS* - 32.20% as first author; 23.74% as second author; *JIIA* - 30.58% as first; 26.19% as second; Williams et al., 2020). Though the author representation from smaller and non-Carnegie institutions is high compared to other journals, having publications from these underrepresented affiliations helps *JIS* achieve its stated mission of stimulating, encouraging, and promoting the study of intercollegiate athletics and demonstrating the relevance of research for reforming college sport (Kretchmar, 2008). As such, *JIS* should continue to invite submissions from these underrepresented affiliations to differentiate from other journals. Additionally, the journal may consider Williams et al.'s (2020) suggestion of special issues centered on underrepresented schools to show practical and theoretical impacts on under emphasized areas of college sport.

In terms of subject, *JIS* has a strong focus toward Sport Business in a Social Context with nearly half of its papers in this area. *JIIA* also popularizes this content area but has greater focus in Management and Organizational Skills, Education/Field Experience, and Marketing (Williams et al., 2020). Both *JIS* and *JIIA* publish articles addressing the Coaching and Administrative research area at a high rate (29.66% and 38.35%, respectively). However, *JIS* contrasts with its peer by publishing more works involving Sport Sociology perspectives (25.85%) whereas *JIIA* is geared towards Participant Sport (16.02%; Williams et al., 2020). This differentiation is beneficial to *JIS* readers and potential authors as it is an established repository for intercollegiate sport sociology works. Further, this specialization ties directly with *JIS*'s mission as contributions are centered on "broader psychological, social, or philosophical factors that impact sport in higher education" (*JIS*, n.d., para. 3).

Both *JIS* and *JIIA* have found ways to differentiate from one another and establish distinct identities. However, each journal should not allow one subject or industry segment to become substantially populated over others as it would likely cause the outlet to lose its reputation as representing college sport in its entirety. Considering *JIS*'s stated focus and scope involves contributing "further research and understanding of intercollegiate athletics, as well as provid[ing] ideas on how to improve or change current policies and practices," relevant and current issues in intercollegiate athletics must be well represented. Therefore, *JIS* should craft special issues dedicated to popular subjects or industry segments within the college sport field that will encourage manuscript submission to the journal, while promoting variety of college sport industry research. Three current topics warranting special issues could include NIL impact, policies involving recruitment and retention of student-athletes (i.e., transfer portal), and mental health implications for student athletes. Authors should be encouraged to study these topics within popular and underrepresented contexts.

Most research found in *JIS* and *JIIA* is primarily oriented through an NCAA



perspective as it is the largest and most influential college sport association. Given its special relationship with the NCAA and its Scholarly Colloquium (Kretchmar, 2008), it is understandable why *JIS* has strong NCAA -related research representation. However, *JIS* has also published papers involving other college sport governing bodies such as Canadian Interuniversity Sport (e.g., Aughey et al., 2011; Chard & Potwarka, 2017). Because it has proven to be a strong outlet for non-NCAA material, the journal should continue accepting such submissions. Likewise, *JIS* and *JIIA* exhibit similar patterns of publishing articles that are not focused solely on one college sport. For those articles covering a sport exclusively, football and men's basketball are the most prevalent, likely due to their status as revenue-generating sports (Wanless et al., 2019). *JIS*'s main investigative subject area of Social Context can provide opportunities for scholars to analyze these sports and others not adequately represented. For example, additional analysis concentrated on non-revenue-generating sports and recent developments for student-athletes would make solid contributions to extant literature.

In addition to special issues on popular topics, it is important to expand the scope of journal topics beyond popular areas of investigation to allow for better understanding of the college sport industry and its various segments. Past research argues that the introduction of special issues dedicated to under researched areas helps boost their overall appeal (Williams et al., 2020). *JIS* should mirror the practice of other journals to develop special issues involving underrepresented subject areas, or underrepresented contexts in popular areas. As an example, a special issue on NIL and women's sport could be beneficial to increase content on sports outside of football and men's basketball. However, increased focus on an underrepresented area must be weighed against the subject's citation potential. Moed (2010) explains citation potential considers how often papers within a discipline cite other papers within a particular time frame. If a special issue does not involve an area that will solicit future citation, it will not be successful.

Finally, *JIS* has shown a higher preference for qualitative research as opposed to quantitative works. While qualitative research is valuable and should still be conducted, scholars note a focus on quantitative methodologies within a discipline can help improve its overall standing in the academic community (Funk, 2019; Kassarian & Goodstein, 2010). As such, *JIS* should encourage quantitative research submission but be careful not to neglect meaningful qualitative research contributions. Instead, we suggest *JIS* support a broad variety of methodologies that most aptly address the research questions being investigated. Additionally, scholars acknowledge sport management is a premier discipline to feature mixed methodology studies (Abeza et al., 2015; Rudd & Johnson, 2010; van der Roest et al., 2015). *JIS* has published a few studies with mixed methodologies and should continue to explore ways to encourage further utilization of such approaches. More specifically, college sport serves as an ideal vehicle for scholars to employ mixed methodologies. For example, future scholars wanting to explore conference realignment and its impact on Olympic sport student-athletes can be surveyed collectively to measure their attitudes with a small collection of participants contributing to a focus group. Likewise, a mixed

method approach could explore how NIL activity impacts student-athlete identity foreclosure upon the athlete's transition to an inactive non-sport role. By soliciting more mixed methodology studies, *JIS* can indirectly solicit collaboration between quantitative and qualitative researchers while directly improving its quality metrics.

## Conclusion

The *Journal of Intercollegiate Sport* (n.d.) is a vital academic outlet for research involving college sport that “crosses traditional academic boundaries and challenges current views and practices while maintaining an informative rather than editorial focus” (para. 1). The present study finds this mission is being achieved but needs further remediation to meet its peer journals. The present analysis shows a high concentration within the Social Context subject with other areas not receiving as much attention. With countless events impacting the college sport industry that involve various business segments of the industry, subjects explored under the Social Context framework could be adjusted to incorporate frameworks in underrepresented areas like Management and Organizational Skills, Governance and Law, and Marketing. For example, studies detailing hazing or physical abuse on student-athletes can be explored from a Governance and Law perspective as well as a Participant Sport or a Health Promotion assessment.

To help attract these projects, the *JIS* editorial board should explore special issues geared toward underrepresented content areas and subjects. As an example, Singer et al. (2022) found 3.5% of *JSM* articles published from 2010 and 2020 focused on race, which is substantially lower than *JIS* has printed in a similar time frame. While *JIS* benefits from drawing a diverse array of research under the college sport umbrella, special issues dedicated to race and diversity issues in college sport could address Singer et al. (2022) concerns on the dearth of race-focused publications. Additionally, Elsevier (n.d.) notes special issues increase journal visibility and establish fast publication times for authors if the topic is popular. For example, *JIS*'s 2021 special issue drew an additional 10 articles and led it to publish its highest volume output of 25 articles that year. Special issues can also help recruit noteworthy scholars to serve in an editorial capacity, which would help boost the legitimacy and authenticity of the journal.

Along with special issues, Williams et al. (2020) suggested journals identify scholars who are employed or have been employed with the editorial board that possess knowledge on the underrepresented areas of the journal and encourage submissions. Similarly, *JIS* editorial board members should identify scholarship presented at academic conferences and promote the journal as a viable home for research. Williams et al. (2020) argued that while some conference attendees seek publication through journals like *JIS* and *JIAA*, many feel their work is not suitable for submission. The *JIS* Editorial Board can reduce potential disconnect by providing workshops and other tutorials to help researchers craft their work for publication. This tool would be very valuable to doctoral students and young professionals who

identify the journal as a viable outlet for their scholarship and needing help with publication. These resources can also help improve journal visibility and its perceived authenticity while providing valuable tools to researchers.

Though these are areas where *JIS* needs to improve, we also suggest the journal continue strategies that make it an important outlet for college sport research. *JIS* scholarship has been cited over 5,000 times and averages over 20 citations per published article (Harzing, 2007). Further, the journal has proven to be an important home for scholars exploring the college sport industry through a Social Context. These elements should not be ignored but rather complement our recommendations. Because of college sport's continual evolution, journals like *JIS* will be needed to help inform the public on potential issues surrounding the industry and ways in which scholars can identify changes impacting the lives of practitioners and student-athletes involved with it.

### Limitations and Future Research

The present research's findings are limited to the content analysis methodology and the journal only. However, future research can expand on this analysis in several capacities. First, both this work and Williams et al. (2020) have analyzed content in the leading college sport-focused journals. With intercollegiate athletics seen as a popular area of study (Miller et al., 2019; Peetz & Reams, 2011; Pitts, 2016; Pitts & Pedersen, 2005; Pitts et al., 2014), future research should conduct deeper analysis to see what segments of college sport are highly researched in the top sport management journals. Second, the present work provides solutions to help improve paper visibility for increased citations as authors desire their work to be referenced by other scholars. Yet, this research does not engage in a citation analysis to assess the popularity of article subjects that receive the most citations as well as where these articles are cited. Additionally, future researchers could utilize the Quatman and Chelladurai (2008) social network model to assess collaboration trends among college sport scholars. Finally, additional content analyses on current sport management journals are needed to assess the trends regarding subject matter, methodology, and other unique elements to the over 100 outlets that still exist. Only a few have been critically examined. As such, future research should continue to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the journals in the sport management discipline to gain a better understanding of the knowledge scholars provide both theoretically and practically.

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