



A Review of Studies Conducted in the Field of Sports Diplomacy

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Abstract

This study aims to examine publications on sports diplomacy in the Web of Science (WoS) database, underscore its growing significance, provide data to support future research, and offer a perspective on how Türkiye can employ sports diplomacy more effectively at the global level. Firstly, data belonging to 107 research articles on sports diplomacy were accessed from the WoS database. Data analysis was done with the VOSviewer package program. By analyzing the distribution of articles on sports diplomacy by years, it was seen that the first publication was revealed in 2006, there was a significant increase in the number of publications in 2013, and the number of publications peaked in 2023. The top 15 rankings of the number of publications and citation data shows that; the most cited article with 25 citations was “Japan's Sporting Diplomacy: The 1964 Tokyo Olympiad”, the first ranked author with 9 publications and 61 citations was “Dubinsky, Yoav”, the first ranked journal with 8 publications and 59 citations was “Place Branding and Public Diplomacy”, the first ranked institution with 8 publications was “Bond Univ”, and the first ranked institution with 52 citations was “Univ Oregon”. In the inter-institutional collaboration network; the clusters in red have the most collaboration with 7 clusters, and in the ranking of countries with the most publications and citations; the USA was the first country with 20 publications and 185 citations. In the common keyword network; the red clusters had the highest number of keyword networks with 9 keywords, and in the author co-citation analysis, the red clusters had the highest number of citation networks with 27 authors. In conclusion, although numerous studies on sports diplomacy exist in the Web of Science (WoS) database, Türkiye is absent from the top 15 rankings and lacks visibility in inter-institutional collaborations. This limited presence is attributed to an inadequate understanding of sports diplomacy, its ineffective global application, and the failure to develop impactful policies.

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Spor Diplomasisi Alanında Yapılan Çalışmalara Yönelik Bir İnceleme

Öz

Bu çalışmada, Web of Science (WoS) veri tabanında spor diplomasisi ile ilgili yapılan makaleleri incelemek, spor diplomasisinin önemine vurgu yapmak, yapılacak olan çalışmalara veri sağlamak ve ülkemizin spor diplomasisini, küresel ölçekte daha etkin kullanılmasına yönelik bir bakış açısı ortaya koymak amaçlanmıştır. İlk olarak WoS veri tabanından spor diplomasisi ile ilgili 107 araştırma makalesine ait verilere ulaşılmıştır. Verilerin analizi, VOSviewer paket programı ile yapılmıştır. Yapılan analizler sonunda spor diplomasisi ile ilgili makalelerin yıllara göre dağılımı incelendiğinde; 2006 yılında ilk yayının yapıldığı, 2013 yılında yayın sayısında ciddi bir artış olduğu, 2023 yılında ise yayın sayısının zirveye çıktığı görülmüştür. Yayın sayısı ve atıf verilerinde ilk 15 sıralamaya bakıldığında; 25 atıfla en çok atıf alan makale “Japan's Sporting Diplomacy: The 1964 Tokyo Olympiad”, 9 yayın ve 61 atıfla ilk sıradaki yazar “Dubinsky, Yoav”, 8 yayın ve 59 atıfla ilk sıradaki dergi “Place Branding and Public Diplomacy”, 8 yayınlı ilk sıradaki kurum “Bond Univ”, 52 atıfla ilk sıradaki kurum “Univ Oregon” olmuştur. Kurumlar arası iş birliği ağında; 7 kümeyle en fazla iş birliği kırmızı renkteki kümeler, en fazla yayın ve atıf alan ülke sıralamasında; 20 yayın ve 185 atıfla ilk sıradaki ülke ABD olmuştur. Ortak anahtar kelime ağında; 9 anahtar kelime ile en fazla kelime ağı kırmızı kümeler, yazar ortak atıf alma analizinde ise 27 yazarla en fazla atıf ağına sahip kırmızı kümeler olmuştur. Sonuç olarak, Web of Science (WoS) veri tabanında bibliyometrik analiz yöntemi kullanılarak spor diplomasisi ile ilgili birçok yayın yapıldığı ancak makalelerin tablo verilerinde Türkiye’nin ilk 15 sıralamada yer almadığı görülmüştür. Kurumlar arası iş birliği ve şekillerin verileri incelendiğinde de ülkemizin etkin olarak yer edinmediği görülmüştür. Uluslararası arenada ülkemizin spor diplomasisi çalışmalarının yetersiz ve etki alanının düşük olmasının kaynağında; ülkemizde spor diplomasisinin tam olarak anlaşılmadığı, bu gücün uluslararası arenada etkin kullanılmadığı ve farklı toplumlar üzerinde etki yaratacak politikalara dönüştürülmediği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

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INTRODUCTION

Nations conduct public diplomacy activities to maintain their presence on a global scale and establish spheres of influence. Since the Cold War era, diplomatic activities in international relations have been carried out through various platforms. Public diplomacy and its subcomponents have increasingly become a significant and influential force, bolstered by technological advancements. Through public diplomacy tools, states aim to influence the emotions and thoughts of other societies and develop policies aligned with their national interests (Yağmurlu, 2007).

Public diplomacy encompasses the continuously developed and implemented policies aimed at communicating a nation's values, its assumed mission, and envisioned goals to other countries, as well as enhancing international relations. Public diplomacy, which is employed to secure a place in the international arena and to safeguard national interests, is carried out through various means and methods (Köksoy, 2015).

The 21st century marks an era in which many traditional practices have become obsolete. Public diplomacy, too, has moved away from its conventional functioning, giving way to digital platforms, social media, and cyber communication tools. In contrast to previous centuries, when influencing societies and individuals often involved coercion and pressure, many objectives are now achieved effortlessly and without cost through social media platforms. This shift has altered the classical paradigm of the 21st century, making the soft power tools possessed by nations even more critical (Özkan, 2015).

Public diplomacy has become a foreign policy instrument of increasing importance, which must be conducted with new approaches and mechanisms beyond traditional methods in international relations. In our changing and evolving world, foreign policy tools that have gained significance are transforming and developing in line with the requirements of the age. Nations that effectively utilize public diplomacy can exert significant influence on a global scale. The emergence of new actors and the adoption of new approaches in our globalizing world are rendering strategies between countries more comprehensive. This newly formed world order has necessitated the abandonment of traditional public diplomacy methods and the adoption of new approaches (Kömür, 2020).

The emergence of new technologies has made it more difficult to shape perceptions, influence societies, and guide target audiences through public diplomacy, thereby increasing the tendency to resort to alternative public diplomacy tools (Poyraz & Dinçer, 2016).

As can be seen, these developments have also brought about a transformation and change in public diplomacy. It is observed that states aspiring to global power and hegemony make more active and effective use of these emerging new understandings of public diplomacy. The Republic of Türkiye was late in adapting to the developments in this field and in implementing new public diplomacy approaches through globally effective and strategic policies. However, in recent years, Türkiye has become more influential in foreign policy by effectively utilizing public diplomacy and its subfields (Kocabıyık, 2019).

Public diplomacy, from a broad perspective, encompasses all the policies determined and implemented by states on national and international platforms with the aim of safeguarding national interests. Sports diplomacy, which constitutes the focus of this study, is an effective type of diplomacy that operates under the umbrella of public diplomacy and is also employed as a form of soft power. Sports diplomacy, implemented through strategic plans to influence societies across many parts of the world, has found resonance and application on a global scale. In our present era, sports diplomacy, which carries a peaceful mission of bringing societies together, has become a significant power (Korkut, 2022).

Today, sports have emerged as a supranational value. Factors such as a country's ability to train successful athletes on a global scale, host mega sports events, and produce high-quality goods and services in the sports industry are considered elements that strengthen sports diplomacy. The United States was the first country to actively use sports diplomacy within its public diplomacy framework, employing sports ambassadors effectively to influence different societies and build a positive image (Yağmurlu, 2019).

Sports diplomacy, at the same time, is utilized in international relations as a subfield of public diplomacy. As an element of soft power, sports diplomacy serves as a highly effective tool for states on the international stage. It enables them to promote their traditional sports, enhance their global recognition, showcase their athletic achievements, create positive impacts on societies, and, most importantly, address negative perceptions (Özbey, Doğan, & Çolakoğlu, 2021).

Sports diplomacy encompasses all activities carried out through strategic plans and programs aimed at achieving foreign policy objectives by creating a positive image of the country or transforming negative perceptions into positive ones in other societies and states, through sports organizations and functions, and via athletes, federation officials, and ministry representatives. In this context, the integration of strategically determined policies into sports diplomacy contributes to the creation of a global center of attraction. By leveraging the soft power of sports, it becomes easier and more cost-effective to protect national interests on the international stage and to establish a positive image among different societies. This is rooted in the fact that sports diplomacy utilizes a universal language and embodies shared emotions across the world. In this way, states enhance their global recognition and spheres of influence through sports diplomacy (Bostancıoğlu, 2023).

In their study, Nygård and Gates (2013) addressed sports diplomacy and highlighted that sports represent a significant element of soft power. Soft power is a type of diplomacy widely used in contemporary foreign policy, enabling the implementation of ideas and practices that cannot be imposed by force but are voluntarily adopted. The political mechanism actively utilizes sports diplomacy as a tool to achieve political outcomes. As a subfield of public diplomacy, sports diplomacy is described as being built on four fundamental components: the first is image-building, the second is establishing dialogue, the third is fostering trust, and the fourth is promoting reconciliation. Their study also emphasizes that when these components

of sports diplomacy are implemented correctly and in a coordinated manner, it can achieve the success of creating a sphere of influence on a global scale.

Civelek and Yalın (2022) emphasized in their study that sports diplomacy plays a key role in shaping positive public opinion on the international stage, highlighting the significant contributions of sports events organized by countries in this regard. They particularly noted that Türkiye's successful execution of various sports events has helped reverse negative perceptions about the country. As an example, they pointed to Türkiye's successful hosting of the Formula 1 Motor Sports event, which served as a major promotional tool. The study underscored how this event significantly increased Türkiye's global recognition and contributed to the creation of a positive image.

As can be seen, public diplomacy, which is used as a tool for communication and interaction by nations, is carried out through various elements. Among these elements, often referred to as soft power tools, sports diplomacy holds a prominent place. Sports diplomacy is a powerful force that transcends language, religion, race, and ideology, embodying a universal language that promotes peace, love, tolerance, and the spirit of Fair Play within societies. Türkiye's organization of traditional Central Asian sports under the banner of the "Nomad Games" is a notable achievement of sports diplomacy. Additionally, efforts to promote Turkish culture and foster influence among Turkic States are considered strategic steps toward creating a global impact (Korkut, 2022).

The United States is among the leading states that benefit from sports diplomacy and the soft power of sports to shape global public opinion. Particularly through its globally scaled sports organizations, the United States has attracted considerable attention on the international stage and has established itself as a significant center of attraction, successfully creating a positive image among different societies through sports diplomacy. During the Cold War era, the United States effectively utilized sports diplomacy and the soft power of sports in its pursuit of global power. By deploying its globally successful athletes as sports ambassadors through the Department of State, the U.S. implemented strategic initiatives within the framework of foreign policy in alignment with national interests, which generated substantial influence over various societies and positively impacted public opinion in favor of the United States. Over time, Qatar also recognized the soft power potential of sports and began to attach importance to sports diplomacy. Since 1990, Qatar has hosted major sports events in the country, achieving significant influence on the international stage. Additionally, the State of Qatar became renowned for its large-scale investments in sports, succeeded in transferring prominent athletes to the country, and actively utilized sports diplomacy. In doing so, it increased its visibility on international platforms and evoked a sense of sympathy among different societies (Çetin, 2022).

Sports diplomacy, actively employed by states to achieve political objectives and influence societies, has recently been utilized with increasing effectiveness. It is also a cost-effective yet highly impactful tool with a wide sphere of influence (Korkut, 2022).

As understood, sports diplomacy is an effective type of diplomacy that transcends borders, possesses supranational power and leaves a profound impact on societies. The effective implementation of sports diplomacy is achievable through quality sports education and well-crafted state policies (Özsarı et al., 2018).

In a study conducted by Göksu (2019), it was stated that athletic achievements and high-quality sports events contribute to the effective implementation of sports diplomacy. It was also emphasized that Türkiye's geopolitical position, human resources, young population, cultural richness, and warrior society traits make it a strong player in soft power diplomacy.

Çetin (2022) in a study, mentioned that countries that recognized the soft power of sports in the 1900s took strategic steps to leverage this power. In the study, it was highlighted that leaders like Mussolini and Hitler were among those who effectively utilized the soft power of sports and sports diplomacy. The study also noted that organizations such as the International Olympic Committee and the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), which have become increasingly popular today, have institutionalized and branded themselves, possessing a significant influence over global societies.

Çetin (2022), also provided examples of leaders and states that have effectively utilized sports diplomacy. He mentioned that President Mandela conducted an influential sports diplomacy campaign by stating, "There is no difference between black and white," using rugby as a platform. He also highlighted that Qatar, through its effective sports diplomacy, made strategic moves such as acquiring the "Beln Sport" television channel under the "Al Jazeera" network, which created a significant global impact.

De-San-Eugenio, Ginesta, and Xifra (2017) discussed the achievements of sports diplomacy in their study, highlighting the 2013 "Barcelona Peace Tour" as a successful example of sports diplomacy. They explained that the event not only played a significant role in resolving issues between two opposing groups in Barcelona but also served as an inspiration for civil society organizations. The study emphasized the importance of using sports diplomacy activities as a soft power tool to establish a peaceful understanding, showcasing its successful implementation in this context.

This study aims to emphasize the importance of sports diplomacy, reveal the scope and impact of academic studies related to sports diplomacy, and provide data that will contribute to future research in the field. Therefore, it became necessary to examine academic works related to sports diplomacy in the WoS database up to the present. Through this review, bibliometric analyses of studies related to sports diplomacy were conducted, and the findings obtained are presented in the study.

METHOD

Research Design

In this study, 107 research articles published in the WoS database related to sports diplomacy were collected and examined using the bibliometric analysis method. Bibliometric analysis is used as a method that provides a visual presentation of the results obtained by introducing

some limitations to the studies conducted in the light of statistical data (Pritchard, 1969). Bibliometric analysis reveals the visualization of the cognitive structure of the field with visual mapping techniques (Cobo, López-Herrera, Herrera-Viedma & Herrera, 2011). From another perspective, bibliometric studies are a method that provides visual and qualitative data by determining certain measurements and making some classifications (Polanco, 1995). Bibliometric analysis is a study method that is widely used in academic studies and visualizes the data by making mappings (Özel & Kozak, 2012).

Data Collection

In the first stage of data generation, bibliometric analyses of the articles to be included in the research were created with 4 criteria: field-specific keyword, time period, document type, and research area. In the second stage, “sports diplomacy” was written in the keyword field, the starting year for the time period was not determined, while 2023 was marked as the end date, only articles were written in the document type and the research category was determined as “sports research”. In the third stage, the “Topic” research area was selected in the WoS database and the scanning started and 107 studies were reached. When the criteria for the studies to be included in the research were applied in the fourth stage, this number decreased to 94. In the last stage, these articles were transferred to the computer in “Plain text file” format, and the data set of the study was obtained.

Analysis of Data

Thanks to the VOSviewer feature, the relationships between bibliometric data can be examined more easily. In this study, in which data were obtained through the bibliometric method, no specific starting date was determined for studies related to sports diplomacy in the Web of Science (WoS) database at the initial step; however, since the study commenced at the end of 2024, the year 2023 was designated as the end date, and graphical data were obtained accordingly. In the second step, citation analysis examines the most cited articles, authors, journals, institutions, and countries related to the subject of sports diplomacy. Co-author analysis reveals the authors, journals, institutions, and countries that have published the most articles related to the subject of sports diplomacy. Co-citation analysis reveals the researchers who are cited together on the subject of sports diplomacy. In the third step, co-word analysis examines the common keyword networks used by the authors in the articles published on the subject of sports diplomacy. In the fourth and final step, several graphs, tables, networks, and maps were created based on the results obtained from the bibliometric data.

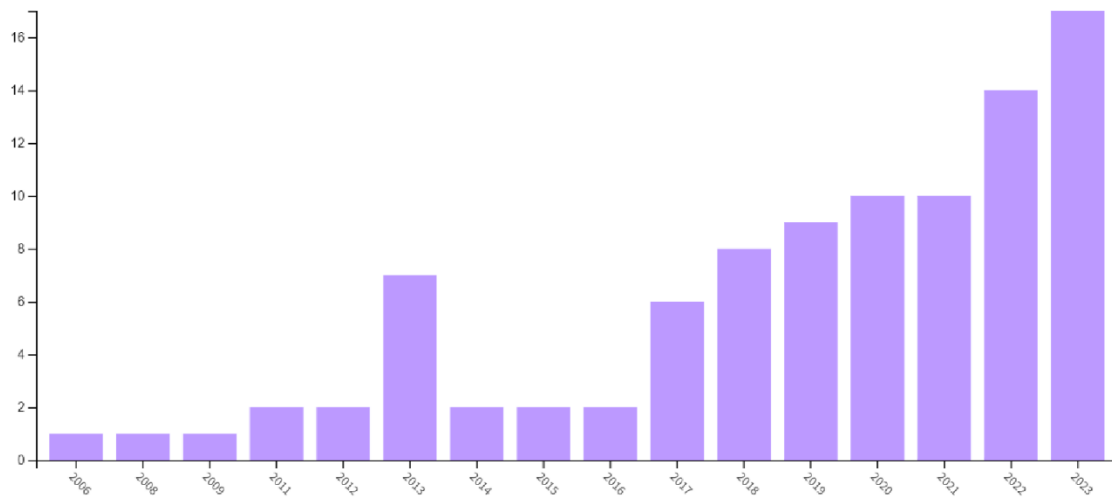
Bibliometric studies are a research method that aims to reveal the development and trend aspects of field-specific academic studies over the years within the framework of certain rules, comparison of citations, authors, institutions, journals, and collaboration networks (Yalçın, 2010).

FINDINGS

In this study, bibliometric analysis of studies on sports diplomacy among journals in the WoS database was conducted.

Distribution of Articles on Sports Diplomacy by Years

In this research, the distribution of studies related to sports diplomacy by years was analyzed by looking at the results of the data obtained from the WoS database. The findings of the research are shown in graph 1 below.



Graph 1. Distribution of articles by years

When Graph 1 is examined, it is seen that the first publication related to the subject of sports diplomacy in the WoS indexes was published in 2006. A parallel increase in publications was observed from 2006 to 2009, there were parallel increases in publications with a small increase in 2011 and 2012, a serious increase was observed in 2013, parallel decreases occurred again between 2014 and 2016, and the levels of 2011 and 2012 were reached again. There were gradual serious increases between 2017 and 2019, and the increases in the number of publications increased one more step in parallel between 2020 and 2021. There was a serious increase in 2022 compared to 2020 and 2021, and the real peak in the number of publications was seen in 2023. The peak in the number of publications in 2023 is believed to be due to the increasing interest in the topic, the understanding of the cost-effectiveness and influence of sports diplomacy, the positive outcomes achieved by states aspiring to global power through the effective use of sports diplomacy, and most importantly, the realization that emerging new technologies and approaches demonstrate the inadequacy of traditional diplomacy methods and processes.

Most Cited Articles on Sports Diplomacy

Based on the results of the data obtained from the WoS database, information on the top 15 most cited articles on the subject of sports diplomacy is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Most cited articles

| Articles | | Total Citations | Citation Average |
|----------|--|-----------------|------------------|
| 1 | “Abel, J. R. (2012). Japan's sporting diplomacy: The 1964 Tokyo Olympiad. <i>The International History Review</i> , 34(2), 203-220.” | 25 | 1,92 |

| | | | |
|----|--|----|------|
| 2 | “Dubinsky, Y. (2019). From soft power to sports diplomacy: A theoretical and conceptual discussion. <i>Place Branding and Public Diplomacy</i> , 15(3), 156-164.” | 24 | 4 |
| 3 | “McDonald, M. G. (2015). Imagining neoliberal feminisms? Thinking critically about the US diplomacy campaign, 'empowering women and girls through sports'. <i>Sport in Society</i> , 18(8), 909-922.” | 24 | 2,4 |
| 4 | “Deos, A. (2014). Sport and relational public diplomacy: The case of New Zealand and Rugby World Cup 2011. <i>Sport in Society</i> , 17(9), 1170-1186.” | 19 | 1,73 |
| 5 | “Polley, M. (2006). The amateur ideal and British sports diplomacy, 1900-1945. <i>Sport in History</i> , 29(3), 450-467.” | 19 | 1 |
| 6 | “Johnson, J. A. (2018). Taekwondo and peace: How a killing art became a soft diplomacy vehicle for peace. <i>International Journal of the History of Sport</i> , 35(15-16), 1637-1662.” | 17 | 2,83 |
| 7 | “Cha, V. (2013). The Asian games and diplomacy in Asia: Korea-China-Russia. <i>International Journal of the History of Sport</i> , 30(10), 1176-1187.” | 17 | 1,42 |
| 8 | “Carter, T. F., & Sugden, J. (2012). The USA and sporting diplomacy: Comparing and contrasting the cases of table tennis with China and baseball with Cuba in the 1970s. <i>International Relations</i> , 26(1), 101-121.” | 17 | 1,31 |
| 9 | “Abdi, K., Talebpour, M., Fullerton, J., Ranjkesh, M. J., & Jabbari Nooghabi, H. (2018). Converting sports diplomacy to diplomatic outcomes: Introducing a sports diplomacy model. <i>International area studies review</i> , 21(4), 365-381.” | 16 | 2,29 |
| 10 | “Skey, M. (2023). Sportswashing: Media headline or analytic concept? <i>International Review for the Sociology of Sport</i> , 58(5), 749-764.” | 15 | 5 |
| 11 | “Xifra, J. (2009). Building sport countries' overseas identity and reputation: A case study of public paradiplomacy. <i>American Behavioral Scientist</i> , 53(4), 504-515.” | 14 | 0,88 |
| 12 | “Abdi, K., Talebpour, M., Fullerton, J., Ranjkesh, M. J., & Nooghabi, H. J. (2019). Identifying sports diplomacy resources as soft power tools. <i>Place Branding and Public Diplomacy</i> , 15, 147-155.” | 13 | 2,17 |
| 13 | “Jang, H., & Lee, Y. H. (2016). A business analysis of Asian baseball leagues. <i>Asian Economic Policy Review</i> , 11(1), 95-112.” | 13 | 1,44 |
| 14 | “Qingming, Z. (2013). Sports diplomacy: The Chinese experience and perspective. <i>Hague Journal of Diplomacy</i> , 8(3-4), 211-233.” | 13 | 1,08 |
| 15 | “Dubinsky, Y. (2019). Analyzing the roles of country image, nation branding, and public diplomacy through the evolution of the modern Olympic movement. <i>Physical Culture and Sport Studies and Research</i> , 84(1), 27-40.” | 12 | 2 |

When Table 1 is examined, it is seen that the most cited article is “Japan's Sporting Diplomacy: The 1964 Tokyo Olympiad” (Abel, Jessamyn R. 2012) with 25 citations. This study examines Japanese sports diplomacy specifically in the 1964 Olympics held in Tokyo.

The article with the highest average citation performance is “Taekwondo and peace: How a killing art became a soft diplomacy vehicle for peace” (Johnson, John A. 2018) with 2.83 citations. This study examines the use of taekwondo as a form of soft diplomacy by the Republic of Korea and later by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea since its inception in 1955.

Researchers with the most Publications and Citations on Sports Diplomacy

According to the results obtained from the Wos database, information about the top 15 researchers who published the most on the subject of sports diplomacy is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Researchers with the most publications

| | Authors | Number of Publications | Number of Citations |
|----|---------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | Dubinsky, Yoav | 9 | 61 |
| 2 | Murray, Stuart | 8 | 27 |
| 3 | Kobierecki, Michal Marcin | 4 | 20 |
| 4 | Doczi, Tamas | 2 | 3 |
| 5 | Garamvolgyi, Bence | 2 | 3 |
| 6 | Eaton, Joseph | 2 | 4 |
| 7 | Krasnoff, Lindsay Sarah | 2 | 5 |
| 8 | Pulleiro Mendez, Carlos | 2 | 8 |
| 9 | Strozek, Piotr | 2 | 18 |
| 10 | Johnson, John A | 2 | 21 |
| 11 | Abdi, Kambiz | 2 | 29 |
| 12 | Fullerton, Jami | 2 | 29 |
| 13 | Nooghabi, Hadi Jabbari | 2 | 29 |
| 14 | Ranjesh, Mohammad Javad | 2 | 29 |
| 15 | Leite, Emanuel | 1 | 1 |

According to the results of the sports diplomacy data in Table 2, the most productive researchers stand out as having the most articles related to the subject of sports diplomacy. “Dubinsky, Yoav” with 9 publications, “Murray, Stuart” with 8 publications, and “Kobierecki, Michal Marcin” with 4 publications are the most productive researchers in the Table. The publication numbers of the other researchers in the table vary between 2 and 1.

According to the results obtained from the WoS database, information about the top 15 most cited researchers on the subject of sports diplomacy is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Most cited researchers

| | Authors | Number of citations | Number of publications |
|---|-------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | Dubinsky, Yoav | 61 | 9 |
| 2 | Abdi, Kambiz | 29 | 2 |
| 3 | Fullerton, Jami | 29 | 2 |
| 4 | Nooghabi, Hadi Jabbari | 29 | 2 |
| 5 | Ranjesh, Mohammad Javad | 29 | 2 |
| 6 | Murray, Stuart | 27 | 8 |

| | | | |
|----|---------------------------|----|---|
| 7 | Abel, Jessamyn R. | 25 | 1 |
| 8 | Mcdonald, Mary G. | 24 | 1 |
| 9 | Johnson, John A. | 21 | 2 |
| 10 | Kobierecki, Michal Marcin | 20 | 4 |
| 11 | Deos, Anthony | 19 | 1 |
| 12 | Polley, Martin | 19 | 1 |
| 13 | Strozek, Piotr | 18 | 2 |
| 14 | Carter, Thomas F. | 17 | 1 |
| 15 | Cha, Victor | 17 | 1 |

When looking at the data in Table 3; the researcher with the most citations on sports diplomacy is “Dubinsky, Yoav” with 61 citations. The authors who are in the second, third, and fourth places with 29 citations are “Abdi, Kambiz”, “Fullerton, Jami”, “Nooghabi, Hadi Jabbari” and “Ranjesh, Mohammad Javad”. In addition, the authors with the most publications on the subject can be shown as the most productive and influential researchers. When Table 3 is evaluated in terms of citation average performance, it is striking that “Abel, Jessamyn R.” stands out with 25 citations despite having only one article related to the relevant subject.

Journals with the most Publications and Citations on Sports Diplomacy

Based on the results obtained from the WoS database, information on the top 15 journals that published the most on the subject of sports diplomacy is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Journals with the most publications

| | Journals | Number of publications | Number of citations |
|----|--|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | “Place Branding and Public Diplomacy” | 8 | 59 |
| 2 | “International Journal of the History of Sport” | 8 | 57 |
| 3 | “International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics” | 6 | 24 |
| 4 | “International Area Studies Review” | 5 | 24 |
| 5 | “Physical Culture and Sport Studies and Research” | 4 | 16 |
| 6 | “Sport in Society” | 4 | 55 |
| 7 | “Hague Journal of Diplomacy” | 4 | 18 |
| 8 | “Communication & Sport” | 3 | 2 |
| 9 | “Soccer & Society” | 3 | 1 |
| 10 | “Journal of Global Sport Management” | 2 | 11 |
| 11 | “Third World Quarterly” | 2 | 4 |
| 12 | “Sport in History” | 2 | 24 |
| 13 | “International Politics” | 1 | 10 |
| 14 | “Managing Sport and Leisure” | 1 | 4 |
| 15 | “International Review for the Sociology of Sport” | 1 | 15 |

According to the results obtained from Table 4; the journal with the most publications is “Place Branding and Public Diplomacy” with an average of 8 publications and 59 citations, while “International Journal of the History of Sport” is in second place with 8 publications, and “International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics” is in third place with 6 publications.

These journals stand out as the journals with the most publications in the field of sports diplomacy. One of the striking findings of the research is that “Sport in Society” with 4 publications and 55 citations, “Sport in History” with 2 publications and 24 citations, “International Review for the Sociology of Sport” with 1 publication and 15 citations, despite having a low number of publications contain a high number of citations.

According to the results obtained from the WoS database, information about the top 15 most cited journals related to the subject of sports diplomacy is shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Most cited journals

| | Journals | Number of Citations | Number of Publications |
|-----------|--|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | “Place Branding and Public Diplomacy” | 59 | 8 |
| 2 | “International Journal of the History of Sport” | 57 | 8 |
| 3 | “Sport in Society” | 55 | 4 |
| 4 | “International History Review” | 25 | 1 |
| 5 | “International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics” | 24 | 6 |
| 6 | “International Area Studies Review” | 24 | 5 |
| 7 | “Sport in History” | 24 | 2 |
| 8 | “Hague Journal of Diplomacy” | 18 | 4 |
| 9 | “International Relations” | 17 | 1 |
| 10 | “Physical Culture and Sport Studies and Research” | 16 | 4 |
| 11 | “International Review for the Sociology of Sport” | 15 | 1 |
| 12 | “American Behavioral Scientist” | 14 | 1 |
| 13 | “Asian Economic Policy Review” | 13 | 1 |
| 14 | “Journal of Global Sport Management” | 11 | 2 |
| 15 | “Scottish Affairs” | 11 | 1 |

When looking at the data in Table 5; “Place Branding and Public Diplomacy” is in first place with 59 citations, “International Journal of the History of Sport” is in second place with 57 citations, and “Sport in Society” is in the third place with 55 citations. When these journals are examined in terms of publication, citation, purpose, and scope, they can be shown as among the most productive and influential journals in the field of sports diplomacy. At the same time, the most published and cited authors are “Dubinsky, Yoav, 2019”, “Johnson, John A. 2018” and “Cha, Victor, 2013”.

Institutions with the most publications and citations on Sports Diplomacy

Based on the results obtained from the WoS database, information on the top 15 institutions that have published and cited the most on the subject of sports diplomacy is shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Institutions with the most publications and citations

| | Institutions | Article Number | Number of citations | | Institutions | Number of citations | Article Number |
|----------|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|---|---------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | Bond Univ | 8 | 27 | 1 | Univ Oregon | 52 | 8 |
| 2 | Univ Oregon | 8 | 52 | 2 | Univ Tennessee | 29 | 3 |

| | | | | | | | |
|----|---------------------|---|----|----|--------------------------|----|---|
| 3 | Univ Edinburgh | 7 | 19 | 3 | Fum | 29 | 2 |
| 4 | Univ Tennessee | 3 | 29 | 4 | Oklahoma State Univ | 29 | 2 |
| 5 | Univ Lodz | 3 | 12 | 5 | Bond Univ | 27 | 8 |
| 6 | Tongji Univ | 3 | 1 | 6 | Bowling Green State Univ | 25 | 1 |
| 7 | Sun Yat-Sen | 2 | 8 | 7 | Harvard | 25 | 1 |
| 8 | Fum | 2 | 29 | 8 | Penn State Uni | 25 | 1 |
| 9 | Oklahoma State Univ | 2 | 29 | 9 | Georgia Technol Inst | 24 | 1 |
| 10 | Univ Phys Educ | 2 | 3 | 10 | Keimyung Univ | 21 | 2 |
| 11 | Keimyung Univ | 2 | 21 | 11 | Univ Edinburgh | 19 | 7 |
| 12 | Soas Univ London | 2 | 5 | 12 | Univ Otago | 19 | 1 |
| 13 | Scottish Govt | 1 | 11 | 13 | Univ Southampton | 19 | 2 |
| 14 | UK Natl Lottery | 1 | 11 | 14 | Georgetown Univ | 17 | 1 |
| 15 | Univ Toronto | 1 | 11 | 15 | Univ Brighton | 17 | 1 |

By examining Table 6, it is seen that “Bond University” is the most productive institution with 8 articles and 27 citations, while “Oregon University” is the second institution with 8 publications. In addition, it is seen that “Tongji University” could not achieve the same success in the number of citations despite having 3 publications. When Table 6 is examined in terms of citation ranking; “Oregon University” is the first institution with 52 citations, while the other institutions with the most citations are “University of Tennessee”, “FUM” and “Oklahoma State University” with 29 citations, which are in the second, third and fourth places, respectively. It is striking that institutions such as “Bowling Green State”, “Harvard”, and “Penn State” with 25 citations, and “Georgia Institute of Technology” with 24 citations have high citations despite having 1 publication.

Analysis of Collaboration Between Institutions Publishing on Sports Diplomacy

According to the results of the data obtained from the WoS database, 100 institutions related

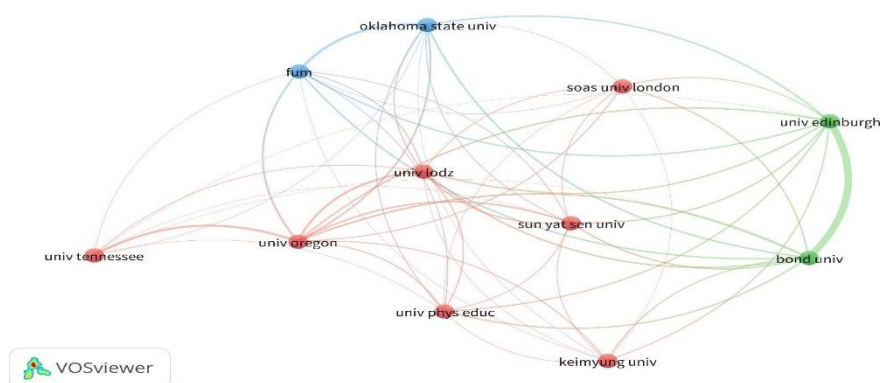


Figure 1. Inter-institutional collaboration network

to the subject of sports diplomacy were reached, and when the criterion of having at least 2 publications was determined, the 11 institutions with the strongest cooperation stood out. The networks with the most cooperation are shown in Figure 1.

When Figure 1, which presents information on inter-institutional collaboration, is examined, it is seen that there are three different colored clusters. This situation in the figure means that there is a stronger collaboration between institutions of the same color. The most intense collaboration is in the red cluster. The institutions with a strong collaboration network are; “Soas London University”, “Lodz University”, “Oregon University”, “Phys Education University”, “Keimyung University”, “Tennessee University” and “Sun Yat-sen University”. In the green clusters, “Edinburgh University” and “Bond University”, in the blue clusters, “Oklahoma University” and “Fum University” are the prominent institutions in the inter-institutional collaboration network.

Countries with the most Publications and Citations on Sports Diplomacy

According to the results of the data obtained from the WoS database, information about the top 15 countries that have published the most and received the most citations on the subject of sports diplomacy is shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Countries with the most publications and citations

| Countries | | Article Number | Number of Citations | Country Name | | Number of Citations | Article Number |
|-----------|--------------|----------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------|----------------|
| 1 | USA | 20 | 184 | 1 | USA | 185 | 20 |
| 2 | Austria | 11 | 28 | 2 | South Korea | 65 | 6 |
| 3 | Scotland | 8 | 30 | 3 | England | 64 | 7 |
| 4 | England | 7 | 64 | 4 | İran | 32 | 4 |
| 5 | South Korea | 6 | 65 | 5 | Scotland | 30 | 8 |
| 6 | China | 5 | 22 | 6 | Austria | 28 | 11 |
| 7 | Spain | 5 | 22 | 7 | China | 22 | 5 |
| 8 | İran | 4 | 32 | 8 | Spain | 22 | 5 |
| 9 | Poland | 3 | 12 | 9 | New Zealand | 19 | 1 |
| 10 | Hungary | 3 | 4 | 10 | Japan | 15 | 2 |
| 11 | Japan | 2 | 15 | 11 | Canada | 13 | 2 |
| 12 | Canada | 2 | 13 | 12 | Poland | 12 | 3 |
| 13 | Portugal | 2 | 6 | 13 | Portugal | 6 | 2 |
| 14 | South Africa | 2 | 3 | 14 | Hungary | 4 | 3 |
| 15 | Mexico | 2 | 2 | 15 | South Africa | 3 | 2 |

By analyzing the results of Table 7, the USA stands out as the most productive country with 20 publications. When we look at the other most productive countries related to the subject; “Austria” is in second place with 11 publications, “Scotland” is in third place with 8 publications, “England” is in fourth place with 7 publications, and “South Korea” is in fifth place with 6 publications. When Table 7 is examined in terms of citations, “USA” is again in first place with 185 citations and stands out as the most effective country. When we look at the other countries that stand out in terms of the number of citations, “South Korea” is in second place with 65 citations, “England” is in third place with 64 citations, “Iran” is in fourth place with 32 citations, and “Scotland” is in fifth place with 30 citations.

Common Keyword Analysis of Authors Publishing on Sports Diplomacy

According to the results of the data obtained from the WoS database, when the publications included in the research related to the subject of sports diplomacy were examined, a total of 248 different authors used common keywords. A criterion of using these keywords at least twice was determined. As a result of these criteria, 34 different common keywords emerged.

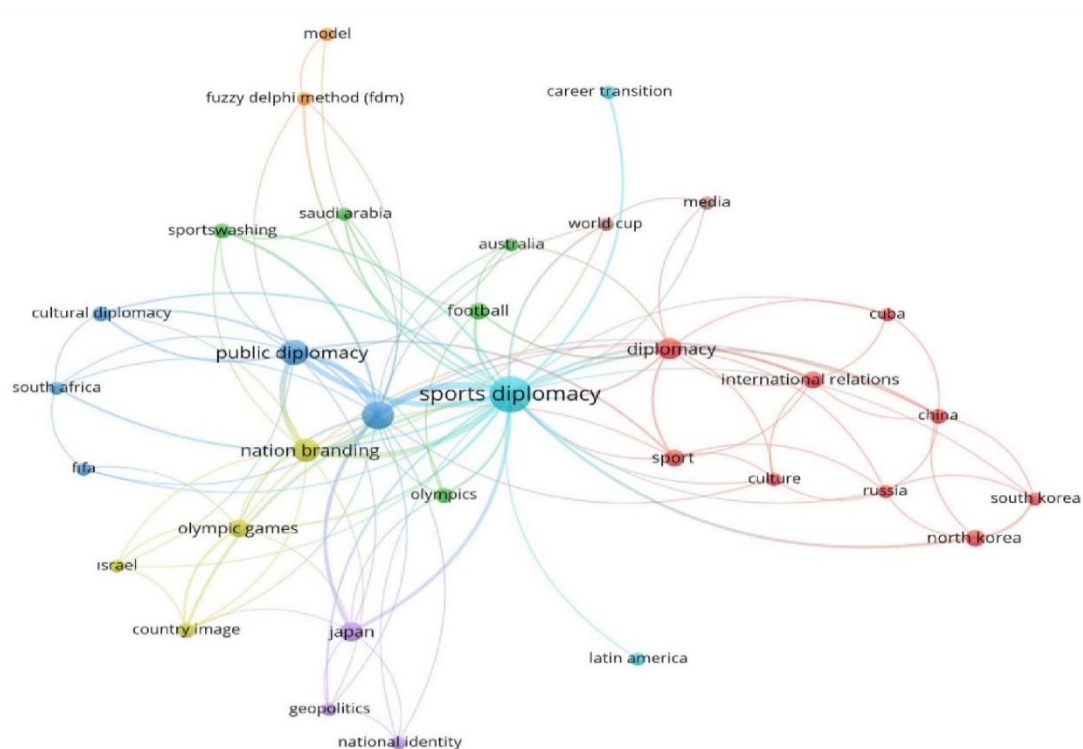


Figure 2. Common Keyword Network

The common keyword analysis network related to sports diplomacy is shown in Figure 2.

According to Figure 2, which shows the keyword network most used by authors related to Sports Diplomacy, 8 different colored cluster groups stand out among 34 keywords. The densest cluster which is the red cluster, contains 9 keywords, while the least dense cluster, the brown one, contains 2 keywords. In dense red clusters; “Diplomacy”, “International Relations”, “China”, “Cuba”, “Sport”, “Culture”, “Russia”, “North Korea” and “South Korea”

keywords, and in the brown clusters with the least density; “World Cup” and “Media” stand out.

Co-Citation Analysis of Authors, Publishing on Sports Diplomacy

In the author co-citation analysis based on WoS data, 3065 cited authors were reached. When the criterion of receiving more than 5 citations was determined, 69 authors were achieved. The author co-citation network of these authors is visualized in Figure 3.

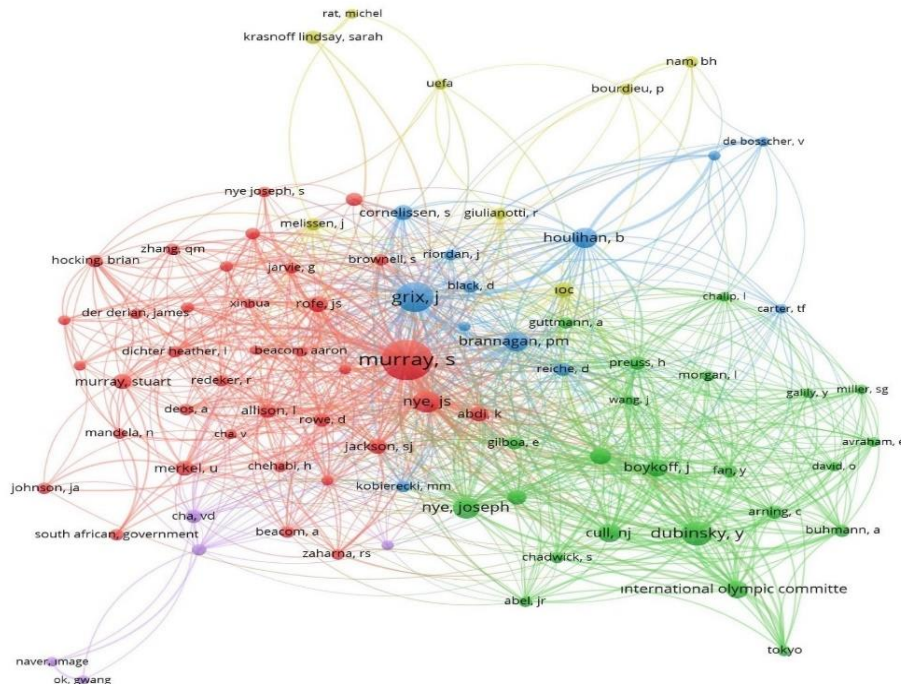


Figure 3. Co-Citation Network of Authors

Figure 3 shows the networks of co-cited authors. These networks consist of 5 clusters with different colors. In the densest cluster which is the red one, “Murray, S”, “Nye, Js”, “Abdi, K” and “Rofe, JS” stand out with 27 clusters. The least dense clusters are “Cha Vd”, “Never, Image”, and “Ok, Gwang”. Researchers who are co-cited together are in the same cluster and are closer to each other. Researchers in the blue cluster are in the middle of other clusters, which means that they are in close collaboration with other clusters. This situation can be explained as being cited together with researchers in other clusters.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, research articles on sports diplomacy were examined using the bibliometric analysis method from the Web of Science (WoS) database. Beside this, the importance of sports diplomacy was emphasized and it was aimed to provide data for studies on sports diplomacy in the future.

Firstly, when the data in Graph 1, which shows the distribution of sports diplomacy studies by years, is examined, it is seen that the first publication related to sports diplomacy in the WoS indexes was published in 2006. A parallel increase in publications was observed from 2006 to 2009, parallel increases in publications occurred again with a small increase in 2011 and

2012, a serious increase was observed in 2013, and a decrease was observed again between 2014 and 2016, reaching the levels of 2011 and 2012. There were gradual serious increases between 2017 and 2019, and the increases in the number of publications increased one more step in parallel between 2020 and 2021. There was a serious increase in 2022 compared to 2020 and 2021, and the real peak in the number of publications was seen in 2023.

It is seen that countries use sports diplomacy very widely to introduce their national values to other countries therefore, sports diplomacy is taking more place in academic studies (Dubinsky, 2019). Murray (2012) highlighted in his study that there are existing research efforts in the field of sports diplomacy; however, he pointed out that these efforts remain insufficient. He emphasized the importance of discussions among sports and diplomacy theorists to make this field more comprehensible.

According to the results of the data obtained from the WoS database, when Table 1, which contains information about the 15 most cited articles on the subject of sports diplomacy, is examined, it is seen that the most cited article is “Japan's sporting diplomacy: The 1964 Tokyo Olympiad” with 25 citations. This study examines Japanese sports diplomacy specifically in the 1964 Olympics held in Tokyo. The article with the highest average citation performance is “Taekwondo and peace: How a killing art became a soft diplomacy vehicle for peace” with an average of 2.83 citations. The aforementioned study discusses the use of taekwondo as a form of soft diplomacy by the Republic of Korea and later by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea since its inception in 1955 (Table 1).

According to the results of the data obtained from the WoS database, when Table 2, which includes information on the top 15 researchers who have published the most on the subject of sports diplomacy is examined, the most productive researchers, due to having the most articles on the subject of sports diplomacy, are; “Dubinsky, Yoav” in the first place with 9 publications, and “Murray, Stuart” in the second place with 8 publications. These researchers are followed by “Kobierecki, Michal Marcin” with 4 publications. The publication numbers of the other researchers in the table vary between 2 and 1 (Table 2).

According to the results of the data obtained from the WoS database, when Table 3, which includes information on the 15 most cited studies on the subject of sports diplomacy, is examined; the researcher with the most citations on the subject of sports diplomacy is “Dubinsky, Yoav” with 61 citations. The authors who are in the second, third and fourth places with 29 citations are “Abdi, Kambiz”, “Fullerton, Jami”, “Nooghabi, Hadi Jabbari” and “Ranjesh, Mohammad Javad”. In addition, the authors with the most publications on the subject can be seen as the most productive and influential researchers. When Table 3 is evaluated in terms of citation average performance, it is striking that the author “Abel, Jessamyn R” stands out with an average of 25 citations despite having an article related to the relevant subject (Table 3).

In a study conducted by Methlagl (2022), it was seen that the authors with the most articles and the most citation numbers were the same people. As a result, it is concluded that the results of studies on sports diplomacy were parallel to the results of our study.

According to the results obtained from the WoS database, when Table 4, which includes information about the top 15 journals that have published the most on the subject of sports diplomacy, is examined; “Place Branding and Public Diplomacy” is the journal with the most publications with an average of 8 publications and 59 citations, while “International Journal of the History of Sport” is in second place with 8 publications, and “International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics” is in third place with 6 publications. These journals stand out as the journals with the most publications in the field of sports diplomacy. One of the striking findings of the research is that “Sport in Society” with 4 publications and 55 citations, “Sport in History” with 2 publications and 24 citations, “International Review for the Sociology of Sport” with 1 publication and 15 citations, contain a low number of publications but a high number of citations (Table 4).

According to the results obtained from the WoS database, when Table 5, which contains information about the 15 most cited journals related to sports diplomacy, is examined; “Place Branding and Public Diplomacy” is in first place with 59 citations, “International Journal of the History of Sport” is in second place with 57 citations, and “Sport in Society” is in third place with 55 citations. When these journals are examined in terms of both the number of publications and citations and the purpose and scope of the journal, they can be shown as among the most productive and influential journals in the field of sports diplomacy. At the same time, most of the authors who have published and received the most citations have published in these journals. “Dubinsky, Yoav.”, “Johnson, John.” and “Cha, Victor.” are the prominent authors (Table 5).

In recent years, sports diplomacy, which has gained significant attention in academic studies, has been presented and discussed in numerous congresses, meetings, seminars, and symposiums. Notable among these are efforts such as “PD Magazine,” “Oxford Handbook on Modern Diplomacy,” as well as contributions from organizations like the “2012 International Studies Association Conference in San Diego”, the “British International Studies Association Conference in Edinburgh” and the “Hague Journal of Diplomacy”. These entities have recently prioritized and contributed to the development of studies in sports diplomacy (Murray, 2013a).

According to the results obtained from the WoS database, when Table 6, which includes information on the top 15 institutions that have published the most on the subject of sports diplomacy, is examined, “Bond University” is the most productive institution with 8 articles and 27 citations, while “Oregon University” is the second institution with 8 publications. In addition, it is seen that “Tongji University” could not achieve the same success in the number of citations despite having 3 publications. When Table 6, which includes information on the top 15 institutions that have received the most citations, is examined, the institution that is ranked first in the citation ranking with 52 citations is “Oregon University”. In addition, this institution is ranked second in the ranking with the most publications in this field with 8 publications. Therefore, it stands out as the most productive and effective institution in terms of the number of publications and citations. When we look at the other institutions with the most citations, the institutions that are ranked second, third, and fourth with 29 citations are “Tennessee University”, “FUM” and “Oklahoma State University”. It is noteworthy that institutions such as “Bowling Green State”, “Harvard” and “Penn State” with 25 citations, and

“Georgia Institute of Technology” with 24 citations have only 1 publication but still receive high citations (Table 6).

Countries have made important cooperation agreements on sports diplomacy. The "Baseball Diplomacy" signed between the United States and Cuba is an agreement made to eliminate ideological and political differences. "Ping Pong Diplomacy" between China and the USA, "hockey diplomacy" between Canada and the USSR, and "cricket diplomacy" between India and Pakistan are seen as important cooperation agreements in sports diplomacy (Kobierecki, 2017).

When Figure 1, where information on inter-institutional collaboration is given, is examined, it is seen that there are clusters in three different colors. The fact that the institutions of the same color are close to each other means that there is a very strong collaboration between them. According to the data in Figure 1, the most intense collaboration is in the red cluster. When the clusters in the red group are examined, it is seen that the most collaboration is between “Soas London University”, “Lodz University”, “Oregon University”, “Phys Education University”, “Keimyung University”, “Tennessee University” and “Sun Yatsen University”. While looking at the institutions with less collaboration, it is evident that in the green clusters, “Edinburgh University” and “Bond University”, and in the blue clusters, “Oklahoma University” and “Fum University” have less collaboration in the inter-institutional collaboration network (Figure 1).

According to the results obtained from the WoS database, when Table 7, which includes information on the top 15 countries that have published the most on the subject of sports diplomacy, is examined, the USA stands out as the most productive country with 20 publications. Austria is in second place with 11 publications, Scotland is in third place with 8 publications, England is in fourth place with 7 publications and South Korea is in fifth place with 6 publications. When Table 7, which includes information on the top 15 countries that have received the most citations, is examined; the USA with 185 citations, stands out as the most effective country in terms of citations. Later on, it is seen that South Korea is in second place with 65 citations, England is in third place with 64 citations, Iran is in fourth place with 32 citations and Scotland is in fifth place with 30 citations. In addition, the importance that the USA attaches to sports diplomacy can be understood from the publications they have produced and the citations they have received (Table 7).

Based on the data obtained, it can be observed that the United States and other modern countries stand out in terms of the number of publications and citation averages related to sports. In another study by Büyükbaykal and İli (2020) on the concept of e-sports, it was noted that Sweden ranked first with 74 studies, followed by the United States with 67 studies. Additionally, they emphasized the significance of high-quality publications creating a global impact by pointing out that New Zealand, despite having only one publication, had an impressive citation average of 49.

When we examine the source of the United States’ success in sports diplomacy and the field of sports, it becomes clear that it stems from the global power competition with the Soviet Union (USSR). During this period, the use of soft power elements was regarded as a less

costly and more impactful approach. In another study, the use and effects of soft power elements were described as follows.

Victories and diplomatic successes achieved with hard power elements have always had an important place in history. The global power hegemony of the USA and USSR during the Cold War period of the 19th century initiated new diplomatic processes. The importance of culture, tourism, art, cinema, music, gastronomy, and sports diplomacy, which are called soft power elements, increased and great effects could be created on different societies by using these diplomatic elements. In particular, the Marshall Plan of the USA was used strategically and successfully in creating a positive perception of European states and especially Turkish society (Trunkos & Heere, 2017).

Another state that effectively utilizes the soft power of sports and sports diplomacy is Australia, which has also been a subject of academic studies, with its significance frequently emphasized.

Murray (2013a) mentioned in his study that Australia is a state with great land wealth. However, despite having a small population, being far away from many states, and continuing its existence as a colonial state in the past, today it is seen to be among the leading countries in sports achievements, effectively using the soft power of sports and transforming sports diplomacy into national interests. This state, which deeply embraces sports and integrates them into all aspects of life, even perceives sports as a religion. Murray (2013b) also emphasizes in his study that sports diplomacy holds great importance for Australia, highlighting that the country has established significant influence through sports diplomacy in nations such as Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, and the Solomon Islands.

According to Figure 2, which includes the word network for the most frequently used keywords by the authors on Sports Diplomacy, 8 different colored cluster groups stand out among the 34 keywords. The densest cluster, which is the red cluster, contains 9 keywords, while the least dense cluster, the brown one, contains 2 keywords. In the dense red clusters; the keywords “Diplomacy”, “International Relations”, “China”, “Cuba”, “Sport”, “Culture”, “Russia”, “North Korea” and “South Korea” and in the brown clusters, where the density is the least, “World Cup” and “Media” stand out (Figure 2).

Figure 3 shows the networks of authors who are co-cited together. This network consists of 5 clusters with different colors. The densest cluster is the red one with 27 clusters. The authors in the red cluster are; “Murray, S”, “Nye, Js”, “Abdi, K” and “Rofe, Js”. The least dense cluster is the purple cluster which consists of authors such as “Cha VD”, “Never, Image”, and “Ok, Gwang”. Researchers who are co-cited together are located in the same cluster and closer to each other on the network map. Researchers in the blue cluster are located in the middle of other clusters. This means that they are in close collaboration with other clusters or in other words, it can be explained as being cited together with researchers in other clusters (Figure 3).

Recently, countries have been using sports as a socio-political and soft power element. Sports and their functions, which create great effects in the branding of countries, have become the most important element of public diplomacy (Dubinsky, 2019). Actors, artists, and athletes

who take an active role in sports diplomacy can create global effects. Football, which has become a global game in particular, is seen as a very important soft power tool that affects all societies and is used by states as a means of inference (Rofe, 2016).

The foundation of sports diplomacy can actually be traced back to the concept of soft power introduced by the American bureaucrat Joseph Nye before 1990. During that period, the concept of soft power increasingly highlighted the soft power of tourism, culture, and sports. After this period, when the foundation of sports diplomacy and the soft power of sports were established, this power was actively utilized by many states and developed into a form of soft power and effective diplomacy through which national interests were achieved, continuing to the present day (Allen Pigman & Simon Rofe, 2014).

Joseph Nye, the pioneer of soft power, also emphasized the importance of cultural and political influences in creating a center of attraction and appeal in the international arena. He stated that soft power would contribute to the more lasting and effective conduct of foreign relations and would serve as a less costly and more efficient diplomatic tool (Grix & Brannagan, 2016).

In his work on soft power, American diplomat Joseph Nye explained that states can create a positive global image through sports diplomacy and the soft power of sports. In particular, Germany's hosting of the 2006 FIFA World Cup had a significant contribution to creating a positive impact on societies through sports diplomacy activities (Grix & Houlihan, 2014).

When examining the content and impacts of the studies conducted, it has been observed that sports diplomacy has become an important element in nations' foreign policies and is utilized as an effective tool in line with national interests. Furthermore, the data obtained indicates that greater emphasis should be placed on sports diplomacy to improve strained international relations and elevate existing relations to a higher level. The recent rise in the popularity of sports diplomacy has also become a subject of academic research, enhancing the quality and scope of these studies.

As a conclusion, by examining the data of this study, it has been observed that while many publications related to sports diplomacy were made in the Web of Science (WoS) database using bibliometric analysis, Türkiye did not rank among the top 15 in the table data used as criteria. When examining the data and networks on inter-institutional collaboration, it has been also found that our country was similarly not active. The reason for Türkiye's insufficient sports diplomacy efforts and low influence on the international stage is believed to stem from the fact that sports diplomacy is not fully understood in the country, this power is not effectively utilized internationally, sports diplomacy has not been transformed into policies that would impact different societies, and most importantly, Turkish academics have not produced inclusive works verbally and in writing on international platforms.

An examination of countries that utilize sports diplomacy effectively reveals that they adopt a system in which meritocracy is prioritized and both theoretical and practical experience are valued. This system is characterized by the presence of autonomous and effective sports federations, well-established institutions and organizations in the field of sports, structured systems for training sports managers, the strategic promotion of successful athletes as sports

ambassadors, the presence of expert personnel specialized in sports diplomacy, and strong representation in foreign missions.

Based on this approach and functioning, it is considered necessary for our country to adopt these principles and prioritize a merit-based system. When examining the structure of sports in Türkiye, it is observed that politics and sports, along with their respective dynamics, are often intertwined in a relationship of mutual interest. To minimize such interactions, benefit from the soft power of sports on a global scale, and enhance the effectiveness of sports diplomacy, it is deemed essential to take developed societies as examples, to adopt a new perspective and operational model, and to ensure the permanence of these approaches and practices through legal regulations.

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