



Issues in Japanese University Athletics: A Scoping Study

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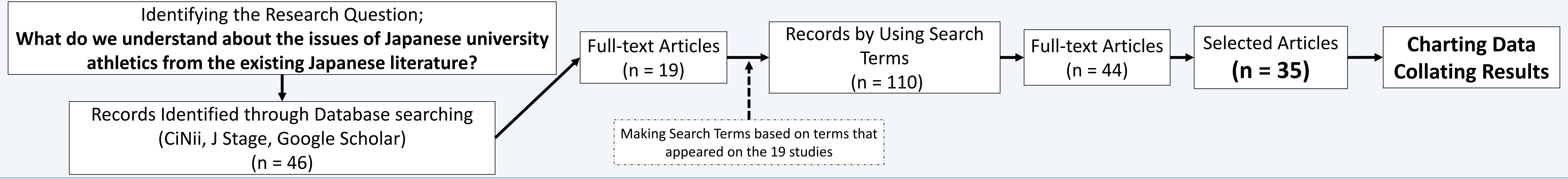
Introduction

- Recently, the interest in university athletics and student athletes has been seen and is showing an increasing trend in Japan.
- In 2016, Japanese government approved the "Japan Revitalization Strategy" and one of the goals of the strategy was the "Setting up an appropriate domestic framework for promoting university sports" as a part of the "Pioneering the future for the sport industry." (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 2016)
- After the "Japan Revitalization Strategy" was approved, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) held the "Conference on Promoting University Athletics" and decided to establish the Japanese version of NCAA for development of university athletics. (MEXT, 2016)
- In 2019, Japan Sports Agency (JSA) established "Japan Association for University Athletics and Sport (UNIVAS)" which is an umbrella organization for governing university athletics as the Japanese version of NCAA. (JSA, 2019)
- Furthermore, in the final report of the "Conference on Promoting University Athletics", MEXT mentioned that it is necessary not only to establish the Japanese version of NCAA but also to develop athletic system within university for development of university athletics. (MEXT, 2017)
- To develop athletic system within university, it is important for each university to understand the issues about university athletics and student athletes in Japan.
- However, there is less research which cover the issues of university sports in Japan.

'This study investigates the comprehensive view of the issues in Japanese university sports'

Method

- We conducted a scoping study designed to examine the state of research about issues in university sports in Japan.
- Scoping study is a map rapidly the key concepts underpinning a research area and the main sources and types of evidence available (Arksey and O'Malley, 2005).
- As a specific methodological guideline, we followed Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) framework, which was elaborated by Levac et al. (2010).



Result

Issues	Definition	Authors	Articles
The Position of University Sports	University athletics in Japan are extracurricular activities and not recognized as an organization within a university, which often leads to problems such as unclear responsibility systems, accounting opacity, and delays in responding to unexpected accidents.	(Onishi, 1978) (Osawa, 1982) (Ishikawa, 1994) (Yamamoto, 2009) (Miyara, 2010) (Nagakura, 2016) (Sato, 2017) (Hagiwara et al., 2017) (Tsukahara, 2018) (Mori, 2018) (Saito, 2018) (Aotake et al., 2020)	12 (34.3%)
Establishment of Umbrella Organization for University Sports	University athletic organizations in Japan are needed to establish umbrella organization because there is a separate student federation for each sport, each federation does not work, and they do not have a full-time staff member (teachers serve concurrently).	(Inoue et al., 2001) (Sugiyama, 2003) (Sugiyama, 2004) (Inoue et al., 2010) (MEXT, 2016) (Ikeda et al., 2017) (Udagawa et al., 2019)	7 (20%)
Safety Obligations of Universities	Because of the unclear definition of extracurricular activities, safety obligations of universities in university athletics is violated whether university sports are considered "a part of the educational activities" in universities, and the judges are different in each court.	(Kato, 1999) (Minamikawa, 2004) (Ozawa, 2007)	3 (8.6%)
Management of the Athletic Clubs/ Teams	The management issues of the university athletic clubs are: "Taiikukai (Athletic Association within a university)" which supervise university athletic clubs is positioned as the students' independent organizations; the coaching relies on volunteer work of enthusiastic coaches who are also a teacher; they have a dual responsibility to be coach/teacher; and these lead to power dual structures, responsibility shifting, and unclear management responsibility.	(Muraki, 1995) (Ono, 2018) (Ono, 2019)	3 (8.6%)
Career Development for Student Athletes	It is important for student-athletes to establish a dual career and keep balance with academics and athletics so that it is necessary to prepare the system supporting student-athletes and clear the position of student-athletes and university athletics within the university.	(Okamoto, 2004) (Arai et al., 2018) (Tsukahara, 2019)	3 (8.6%)
Governance of Sport Organizations in University	The governance of the athletic organization within the university does not work and the rights and responsibility are not clear due to extracurricular activities even though the university recognized university athletics has an important role for student's recruitment strategy and promoting school spirit.	(Ono et al., 2015) (Inaba, 2019)	2 (5.7%)
Improvement of International Competitiveness	The depression of international competitiveness is related to the level of student-athletes in university. The issues that decline the level of university athletics include a lack of funds, insufficient facilities, the treatment (salary payment and guarantee) of coaches and coaching systems, and decentralization of the talent athletes due to increasing the number of universities.	(Fukuyama, 1981) (Matsui et al., 1981)	2 (5.7%)
Governance of Sport Federations	The student sports federations have been absorbed within the sports federations and lost their power due to suppression by the sports federations and authority. Besides, the student sports federations are made up of students and teachers who belong to their extracurricular activities and are often pressured by the sports federations.	(Ueno, 2018)	1 (2.9%)
University Admission System	In Japan, several universities have a recommendation system for athletes to study. While it is an important strategy to support amateur athletes in Japan, especially private universities use this system to secure students (keep their income).	(Ono et al., 2017)	1 (2.9%)
Development of the Sports Environment (Equipment, Facilities)	In order to improve extracurricular sports activities, it is necessary to maintain athletic facilities and promote the efficient use of facilities, and to provide the sports environment for exercise freely.	(Namikawa, 1994)	1 (2.9%)

Discussion

- Out of 35 studies, only 2 are original research papers, the others are symposium, papers published in the bulletin, and so on.
- Among all, 34% of the total is on the position of the university athletics (n = 12), followed by the establishment of an umbrella organization at 20% (n = 7).
- The research on the position of the university athletics has been active since 2016.
- Although the "position of sports in university athletics" has been actively discussed since 2016, it has been discussed since the 1970s, and the issue has not changed over the years with "the position of extracurricular athletic activities within universities should be clear".

'The issues except the "position of sports in university athletics" are often caused by unclear positioning of the university athletics, therefore the "position of sports in university athletics" is the most important issue'

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