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Article in *Journal of Physical Education and Sport* · September 2018

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## Job profile and motivation of workers in sports programs with intellectual functional diversity

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Published online: August 31, 2018

(Accepted for publication July 15, 2018)

DOI:10.7752/jpes.2018.s3205

### Abstract:

Nowadays, there is no knowledge about the job profile and motivation of people who work with intellectually disabled athletes. Therefore, the aim of this study was to determine the job profile and general motivation of employees in organizations who work with athletes with intellectual disabilities. The sample consisted of the human resources of entities for intellectually disabled people (n=112); most of them were between 31 and 35 years old (47.2% men and 52.8% women) and their civil state was mostly single. In general, the results show that these workers are mostly hired (55.6%), with at least 10 years of experience (38.9%), a weekly shift of 1-5 hours (31.4%) and work scattered hours (38.9%). They also stated to be satisfied and practice their profession mainly motivated by their will to help others (80.6%).

**Key words:** management, sports, human resources, profile, intellectual disability.

### Introduction

The proliferation of employment in the sports sector is a reality. In the year 2000, the Spanish Sports Council (SSC) reported 200,000 job positions. Nowadays, this growth is not debated; it is a consequence of the increase of sports practice in the Spanish population, according to the survey of sports habits (SSC, 2015; SSC, 2000). Likewise, this phenomenon has caused an increase in the consumption of products and services of physical activities and sports (Barranco, Grimaldi-Puyana, Crovetto, Barbado, & Boned, 2015). Thereby, the professional schools are demanding better professionalism and qualifications in order to improve the quality of the services provided (Chamorro, 2010; Garrigós-Gabilondo, 2001).

However, organizations and human resources (HR) in adapted sports are totally unknown in the scientific literature. The main research lines have been mostly focused on health from a medical and therapeutic perspective, on sports training from the approach of high performance, on the dissemination of and access to sports practice from the perspective of equality and integration, and on sports as a tool for social inclusion (Pérez-Tejero, Reina-Vaillo, Raúl & Sanz-Rivas, 2012).

There are also authors like López-López and Luna-Acoras (2010), who stated that there are studies related to HR in the sports sector from the late twentieth century until the last decade, which focused on the characteristics of HR in physical activity and sports science, classifying them into demographic, labour, structural and educational studies. These studies analysed specific job positions, such as sports managers, sports instructors, sports trainers and physical education teachers. The most current studies, in the last five years, focused on sports professionals, such as “*Analysis of the working differences between sports managers with and without a university degree in physical activity and sports science*” (Barranco et al., 2015), “*Employment situation of sports managers in externalised services*” (Grimaldi-Puyana, Fernandez-Gavira and García-Fernández, 2013), “*Professional profile of employees in Spanish fitness centres*” (Boned, Felipe, Barranco, Grimaldi-Puyana & Crovetto, 2015), and “*Job satisfaction of employees in sports and recreational activities in active tourism*” (Grimaldi-Puyana, Sánchez-Oliver, Alcaraz-Rodríguez & Pérez-Villalba, 2017; Gálvez-Ruiz, Grimaldi-Puyana, Sánchez-Oliver, Fernández-Gavira & Garcia-Fernandez, 2017).

However, regarding people who work with intellectually disabled athletes, there is a lack of information about the profile and characteristics of this group. Currently, neither the professional profile nor the people who manage, carry out and develop these roles are identified. Thereby, in order to perform a general diagnosis in the population of adapted sports, particularly in intellectual disability, there is a challenge to overcome: the lack of reliable indicators and instruments to locate the context of such analysis with workers of this sector, where the

experiences in the scope of physical activity and sports are scarce and restricted to studies focused on high performance and federative licenses of the so-called sports for the disabled (SSC, 2010). Therefore, the aim of this study was to analyse the profile and motivation of employees in sports entities for people with intellectual disabilities, and it will undoubtedly contribute to the real knowledge of the conditions and characteristics of this scope.

## Material and methods

### Sample

Table 1 shows the sample categorised by gender, age and relevant sports training of employees in sports entities dedicated to athletes with intellectual disabilities (n=112). As can be observed, there is a larger percentage of workers within the age range of 31 to 35 years (average age=33.4 ±6.8 years), of whom 47.2% were men and 52.8% were women. Most of them were single (55.6%) and 33.3% were married, whereas a minority were divorced or lived with a partner. The analysis of the training/education of the participants revealed that 61.1% did not have any studies related to physical activity and sports; on the other hand, 16.7% claimed to have a diploma in “*Special Sports Teaching*” (Advanced Sports Technician or Sports Technician), 15.7% had “*Vocational Training*” (Advanced Technician in Recreation and Entertainment of Physical and Sports Activities, or Technician of Physical and Sports Activities in the Natural Environment) and 6.5% had a *university degree* (Degree in Physical Activity and Sports Science, or Teaching Speciality in Physical Education).

Table 1. Distribution of the sample according to gender, age and relevant sports training (n=112)

| <b>Gender</b>                   | <b>%</b> |
|---------------------------------|----------|
| Men                             | 47.2     |
| Women                           | 52.8     |
| <b>Relevant sports training</b> |          |
| Special Sports Teaching         | 16.7     |
| Vocational Training             | 15.7     |
| University Degree               | 6.5      |
| <b>Age</b>                      |          |
| 16 to 20 years                  | 7.7      |
| 21 to 30 years                  | 16.7     |
| 31 to 40 years                  | 33.3     |
| 41 to 50 years                  | 22.2     |
| 51 to 60 years                  | 11.1     |
| Over 61 years                   | 8.9      |

*Note: Data expressed as percentages*

### Method

This is a transversal study in which the gathering of data was carried out through an online questionnaire. To this end, different organizations related to sports with intellectually disabled people were asked for collaboration. The employees of these organizations answered the questions through the online application, and the information was automatically loaded to a database in the statistical software SPSS v.21. Socio-demographic, labour and motivation data were collected.

### Data analysis

With the aim of obtaining relevant information about employees of sports entities dedicated to athletes with intellectual disabilities, first of all, the socio-demographic and labour data were analysed. To this end, a frequency analysis expressed in percentages was conducted, whereas the rest of the variables were subjected to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov’s normality test, showing a normal distribution. Then, descriptive analysis tests were carried out (means and standard deviations), establishing a 95% confidence level. For the analysis of the data, the statistical software SPSS v.21 was used.

## Results

Table 2 shows the variables related to the characteristics and working conditions of the analysed employees. As can be observed, there are similar percentages of paid workers and volunteers (52.8% and 47.2%, respectively). Regarding experience, most of the participants claimed to have more than 10 years of experience (38.9%), with a weekly schedule between 1 and 10 hours (52.8%), and a minority stated to work full-time (8.3%). With respect to the type of contract, 30.6% were indefinite full-time for 12 months, 22.2% were indefinite part-time by seasons, and 2.8% were self-employed.

Table 2. Socio-demographic characteristics of the workers (n=112)

| Type                | Characteristics             | %    |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|------|
| Worker type         | Volunteer                   | 47.2 |
|                     | Paid Worker                 | 52.8 |
| Years of experience | >1 to 3                     | 1.9  |
|                     | 1 to 3                      | 11.1 |
|                     | 4 to 6                      | 13.9 |
|                     | 7 to 9                      | 22.2 |
|                     | 10 and more                 | 38.9 |
| Weekly hours        | 1 to 10                     | 52.8 |
|                     | 11 to 20                    | 11.1 |
|                     | 21 to 30                    | 8.3  |
|                     | 31 to 40                    | 27.8 |
| Schedule            | Flexible at their choice    | 13.9 |
|                     | Continuous shift            | 22.2 |
|                     | Scattered hours in the week | 38.9 |
|                     | Weekends                    | 16.7 |
|                     | Split shift                 | 8.3  |

Note: values expressed as percentages

In order to determine the motivation that drives workers of sports entities for people with intellectual disabilities, they were asked the following question (Diagram 1): *What is the main motivation of being part of a sports entity for people with intellectual disabilities?* The following answers were obtained in the following order: *helping others* (80.6%), *I love sports* (8.3%), *knowing sports events from within* (5.6%), *being close to elite athletes* (3.1%) and *a friend encouraged me to participate* (2%).

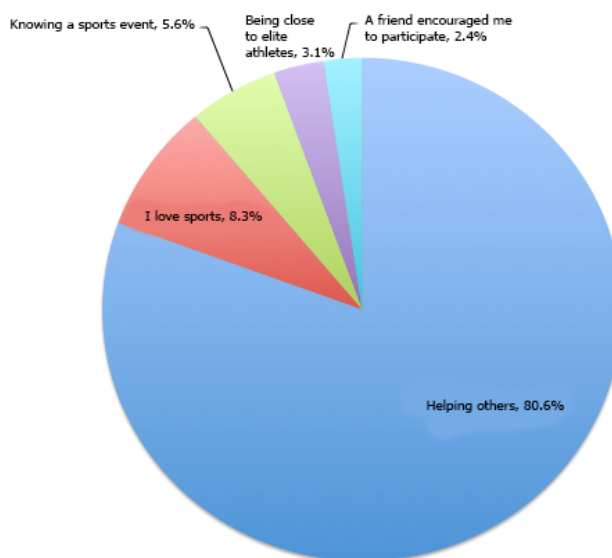


Diagram 1. Main motivation of employees

### Discussion

After analysing the average participant age of other studies with similar characteristics, it becomes clear that this is a young sector, around 35 years, which is similar to the age found in this study (Gallardo & Campos, 2011; López-Viñaspre, Rodríguez & Boned, 2003). However, there are other studies in the sports field with fitness employees, whose age varied depending on the job position (Boned et al, 2015). For instance, the average age of sports technicians ranges between 20 and 29 years, whereas those who work in management and administration are between 31 and 40 years old (Fisekçioğlu & Duman, 2010; INCUAL 2008). Furthermore, it can be asserted that most of the sample in the present study did not have academic or professional training related to physical activity and sports, like those professionals who work in active or sports tourism (Grimaldi-Puyana et al., 2017), or those presented by Barranco et al. (2015) who work as sports managers, which is against regulatory obligations (Catalonia, 2008; La Rioja, 2015; Extremadura, 2015; & Andalusia, 2016). The data of the present study are similar to those found in Turkey, where the profession is not regulated, and only 30% of sports employees have some training related to sports (Fisekçioğlu & Duman, 2010; Sekendiz, Koçak & Korkusuz, 2009). Regarding sex, no predominant gender was found in this study; in fact, in view of the results, it could be said that there was parity

between the two genders. This is not in line with what has been found in most studies of similar characteristics, which describe a totally masculinised sector (Boned et al., 2015; Chinchilla & León, 2005; García-Fernández & Sañudo-Corrales, 2009; Gómez-Tafalla, 2003; López de Viñaspre, Rodríguez-Romo & Boned, 2003; Martínez-DelCastillo, Campos-Izquierdo, Pablos & Sánchez-Mestre, 2008).

### Conclusions

The findings of this study show the profile of a worker (fairly equal number of men and women) with an average age of 34 years and extensive experience, who works mainly without academic or professional training related to sports (Advanced Sports Technician or Sports Technician; Advanced Technician in Recreation and Entertainment with Physical and Sports Activities or Technician of Physical and Sports Activities in the Natural Environment; or Degree in Physical Activity and Sports Science, or Teaching Speciality in Physical Education). Half of them are volunteers, mainly motivated by their will to help others, and most of those who receive a salary for their work have a part-time, seasonal, indefinite contract.

The main limitation of the present study was the fact that the sample was not selected by simple random sampling, which was due to the difficulty to access this type of information in these organizations. In addition to this, there is no list of registered workers in this sector, thus, it cannot be asserted that the sample was representative. As a future research line, the authors propose to analyse the job satisfaction of workers comparing those who are volunteers and those who are paid.

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