



**Erasmus+**

**Sport Chapter**

**Collaborative Partnership**

**DEVELOPING SPORT ADMINISTRATION COMPETENCES**

**ADMINS**

**Analysis on the educational needs of sports administrators**



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## I. Project Introduction

Having recognized the importance of sport regarding the physical and psychological well-being of an individual, the European Union has started incorporating sport into EU policies and initiatives. More specifically, sport-related issues were firstly addressed in a comprehensive manner by the EU in the White Paper on Sport, adopted by the European Commission in 2007, by setting out policy guidelines in the field of sport. However, it was not until the Lisbon Treaty 2009, Article 6 and 165, that its importance was legally acknowledged and became one of the EU objectives. Taking cue from White Paper on Sport and Lisbon Treaty, The European Commission's Communication "Developing the European Dimension in Sport", published in January 2011, proposed concrete actions related to societal role of sport which covers issues that directly affect the citizens, the economic dimension of sport, and the organisation of sport, which covers the aspects dealing with the political and legal framework for the sport sector. As it was mentioned in the Principles of good governance in sport, it is of great importance to attract new generations of administrators, as well as technology and IT. Like many other professions today, administrative employees of sport organisations are not only "administrators", because their job position requires a wide range of knowledge and competences.

To ensure a real European dimension, project "Developing Sport Administration Competences (ADMINS) has confirmed a strategic partnership with one sport confederation, one sport association, two academic institutions and two NGO's with rich experience in sport projects.

The main objective of the project "DEVELOPING SPORT ADMINISTRATION COMPETENCES (ADMINS)" addresses the need of fostering the job-related skills and competences of sports administration employees, who in turn strengthen the capacities of sports organisations and contribute to better governance in sports.



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## II. Report presentation.

This report serves to do the preliminary research on the educational needs of sport administrators, and its results will enable experts to create curriculum specifically for that target group. The main aspects included in the report are the following:

- A definition of the profile of sport administrators that will take part in this project including a detailed description of their characteristics and needs to prevent the potential research shortcomings;
- The Identification of the most suitable administrators who can be involved in this project (exact number);
- A methodology of the research developed in accordance with the project proposal and educational modules will be developed;
- Survey data collected on the educational needs of sport administrators using a questionnaire in English;
- An analysis of the data and interpretation of the results to give ground to customizing the curriculum for the educational modules intended for sport administrators.





### III. Cross-country desk research

Each national report on Research on upskilling needs of Sport Administrator in this section contains the national landscape, the sport administrator educational framework, policy documents analysis, the conclusions, and the references of the country in study.

#### 1. Croatia

##### Sport Administrator national landscape

Sport today is a massive social phenomenon and plays a major role in the economy. Sports accounts for almost 3% of the global economic activity, in the European Union the figure is thought to be around 1% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and in the UK sport is thought to generate around 2,5 % of GDP. Estimates for the US indicate that sport is worth 300\$ billion per annum to the US economy (Chadwick & Arthur, 2008).

Every sports organization seeks to achieve both sporting and business goals, in order to achieve this, it is necessary that every sports organization is managed and administered by professionally trained staff who have the competence to perform all the specific business processes associated with sports organization.

However, in the current Croatian legislation, the definition of a sport administrator is not provided. In other words, there is no specific qualification requirement that a sport administrator must meet to successfully perform his/her job. This notion represents the main problem in Croatian sports where we find administrators of different profiles and professions performing the job without enough training and competences to do so. The main reason why administrators in Croatian sports





come from different backgrounds is the lack of an adequate schooling system for sports administrators, until the very recent.

Although, the role of sport administrator is not specifically defined in the law, many sports organizations are regularly announced job openings for the role of sport administrator (for example Croatian football club HNK Hajduk <https://hajduk.hr/pdf/natjecaj--sport-ski-administrator/332>).

The education of sport administrators is in the function of efficient performance of administrative tasks in sports, all with the aim of increasing the quality of work and organization of office operations in sports organizations. However, one of the key development problems in Croatian sports is the insufficient number of educated professional staff in sports, and one of the basic developmental, and thus educational needs is the increase in the number of educated professional / administrative staff.

According to the provisions of Article 21 of the Sports Act in the Republic of Croatia, legal sport entities must have professional management and administrative roles, i.e. educated persons. Namely, sports organizations are obliged to comply with the legal regulations of the European Union, which includes professional staff in management and administrative functions ("Official Gazette" n. 71/2006).

All in all, given the current state of sports administration in Croatia, it is necessary to strengthen and improve education to get the demanding profiles of people who have the role of sport administrators in Croatia. Croatia lacks enough competent staff to manage Croatian sports, and there is also a lack of systematically designed training programs and sports educations around sport management and administration.

## Sport management educational framework

The development and continuous training of staff in administrative functions are the key determinants of future success of sports organizations in Croatia. It is important to note that in



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recent years, there have been some positive changes happening in the curriculum of the professional study of Sports Administrators at universities and other higher education institutions in Croatia.

ASPIRA College of Sports Management (Zagreb), as the first higher education institution in Croatia that trains professional staff for managerial and administrative functions in sports organizations, has recently launched an education program for administrator in sports organizations (sports administrator).

The program contains the following courses: Introduction to the economics of sport, Sports marketing, Entrepreneurship in sports, Financial business in sports, Legal affairs in sports, Office operations in sports organizations, Business communication, Safety, and security at work.

PAR University College (Rijeka) also offers a training program for administrators in sports organizations that is based on practical examples and workshops, intended for all those who want to acquire new and improve existing knowledge. The program enables the acquisition of basic knowledge in the field of sports administration necessary for quality work and development of sports organizations.

Upon completion of the program, each student who successfully completes all the elements of knowledge and skills testing receives a Certificate of training for the job of administrator in sports organizations.

Employees in Croatian sports organizations are "mostly managers and hires who come from politics, economic activities, media public etc., who are most often not qualified to conduct sports" (Bartoluci & Škorić, 2009: 127). Studies show that only 18% of respondents (employees in sports organizations) had professional education, mostly those who had obtained bachelor or master's degree at the universities.

According to relevant research conducted among the chief secretaries of sports organizations in Croatia (Papić, 2010), it has been found that a typical secretary performing the specific business



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processes that appear in the management of a sports organization has completed a high school after which he/she has not been further educated.

### National policy documents regarding Sport Administration

As previously mentioned, in Croatia there is no state regulation that regulates the profession of the sports administrator, nor the job of sport m administrator. In other words, there is no specific qualification requirement that a sport administrator must meet to successfully perform his/her job.

The Sports Act in the Republic of Croatia ("Official Gazette" n. 71/2006), determines the system of sports and sports activities, professional activities in sports, sports competitions, financing of sports, supervision, and other important issues. According to the provisions of Article 21 of the Sports Act in the Republic of Croatia, legal sport entities must have professional management and administrative roles, i.e. educated persons. Namely, sports organizations are obliged to comply with the legal regulations of the European Union, which includes professional staff in management and administrative functions ("Official Gazette" n. 71/2006).

The National Sports Program ("Official Gazette" n. 98/19) is a document which determines the goals and tasks of the development of sport, the activities necessary for the implementation of these goals and determines the holders of development and measures to control its implementation. The new Program applies to the period 2019 to 2026.

### Conclusions

Croatian legislation should follow the modern trends and define the minimum conditions and description of the work activities of the sport administrators.



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Strategic planning should include the most important stakeholders in Croatian sports and of course, consider the needs of sport as a whole and the individual needs of sports administrators at different levels. Namely, the Croatian sports system is structured so that not all sport administrators need the same competences (for example, a sports administrator in a club or a national alliance). They also must consider their work experience in sports and the work they do. Although every sports administrator should invest in his knowledge, resistance is inevitable, and his overcoming should systematically promote the idea of continuous training from sports management. Alternatively, compulsory upgrading and training programs for administrators in sport organizations may be introduced. However, it is unclear how this would have a real impact on those who are being taught under compulsion. Voluntary reporting and participation in such programs would certainly be more effective, and it is recommended to work on raising awareness rather than imposing on-going education as an obligation.

On the good side, answering the evident needs of sports organizations, the number of systematically designed training and education programs for sport administrators in Croatia are rising. However, it should be noted that human resources development is a long-lasting process whose results cannot be detected in a short time and cannot be easily measured. Like any other strategic goal, an integral part of the strategy should be indicators of the success of such educational programs that would provide indicators for possible subsequent changes and upgrading of educational programs.

The existing project could have a positive impact on the change in the field of sports administration in Croatia, especially about whom this profession is intended. Although Croatia does not face the problem of refugees at a global level, such as some other EU countries, Croatia has a multitude of national minorities who can also benefit from this approach by facilitating social integration through the activities of the current project, and of course be prepared to work with socially vulnerable minorities is crucial because we are never certain about the transitional waves of migrants in the near future and this is certainly one good example of how to provide them with necessary care and inclusion into society via sport.



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## 2. Italy

### Sport Administrator national landscape

In Italy, the Sport Administrator is more commonly called as Sport Manager. The two titles are often used to refer to the same program. Nowadays the development of the sports sector is connected to the technological and industrial innovations, coming from other environments, which use the sports industry as a platform to do business or to interact with fan communities.

Sport has progressively acquired a high economic and social impact by contributing to the EU's gross value added and employing millions of people. In Italy, it is one of the few sectors in constant



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growth and is affected by the economic crisis to a lesser extent than the rest. The sports market is, to all intents and purposes, able to offer companies that face it with the right strategies, a business with guarantees of return on investment.

The growing complexity of the Sport Industry requires new professionals able to combine passion with technical and managerial knowledge for business development. The profession of sports manager, consolidated in Anglo-Saxon countries, is now also a reality in Italy not only of large organizations, but also of an increasing number of companies, clubs, federations, event organizers, associations and sports facilities.

A Sports Administrator works with sports organizations to define their vision and a mission with the target to create programs that are profitable, beneficial to athletes and successful both on and off the field.

Sports Administrators can collaborate directly with the sports trainers giving advices and directions also regarding the sports contents on the field. Anyway, usually Sport Administrators are more specialize in areas like law and contract negotiations, marketing, public relations, or finance. Here below a specific list of possible occupations:

- Athletic Director;
- Sports Executive;
- Media Relations Director;
- Guest Services Manager;
- General Manager;
- Advertising Sales Director;
- Facilities Director;
- Accounting or Finance Manager.

The profile of the Sport Administrator could be related to macro-level management, as an organizational manager, or like micro-level tasks such as finance, budgeting, marketing, or law.

As far as employment forecasts are concerned, there was a 7.2% change from 79,799 in 2014 to 85,537 in 2018.





There is an increasing demand for Sports Administrators interested in working in organizations that have expertise in sports marketing, production, marketing and distribution of sports products, in communication agencies that organize events and promotional campaigns, but also in sports teams and institutions.

The required skills for a Sport Administrator are often extremely focused on the technical knowledge, also deriving from other professional experiences, always up to date.

Considering the turnover generated by sport, it is easy to understand the reasons why companies and companies directly or indirectly operating in the sports industry need professional management, based on a highly entrepreneurial matrix.

### Sport management educational framework

According to statistics, the sports sector generates sales that have a high impact on the GDP of our country. The same data confirm a growth in the sector, which is less affected by the crisis than other market sectors.

This means that sport, in addition to its 'physical' dimension, is currently considered for its 'economic' potential, thus becoming a real industry. To fully understand the opportunities related to the world of sport, it is necessary to analyse a few numbers relating to the year 2018:

- 4.5 million athletes registered with the federations recognised by CONI (Italian Olympic Committee);
- 70,000 members;
- over 1 million sports operators (technical managers, competition officials and collaborators in various capacities) who provide support and support for corporate and federal organisations.



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Among the most important schools for sports management training in Italy there are Business School based in Milan and Rome, which offers Full Time and Part Time Masters. These courses are organized by a famous Italian finance editor or well-known universities that provides an innovative path addressed to both managers and professionals in the sports sector that uses a training mix based on distance learning integrated with classroom lessons, group work, case studies, simulations, testimonials and a personalized virtual classroom where you can consult the virtual library and discuss with teachers. Another important option is provided by the University of Bologna, the oldest, and one of the most prestigious in Europe. The Master's degree course is on the management sports activities and it lasts 2 years.

There are also a couple of online Bachelor in Sports and Motor Activities Management organized by an Italian telematics university. Even in this case the duration is 24 months.

Most of the proposals are in northern Italy or in the capital, Rome. In the south of the country, a degree course in sports management is planned at the university of Naples, but there do not seem to be many other options in the neighbouring regions. In all cases a person who wants to obtain certification in this area as a prerequisite must have a high school diploma. In the case of master's degrees, even a bachelor's degree. For former athletes it is not enough to have a successful track record in their own sport, they also need a certain school curriculum depending on the course they want to attend.

In many cases the person in charge of the Sport Administrator tasks are ex former professional or semi-professional athletes. Although from the point of view of technical skills, they must possess multidisciplinary know-how, including economic, legal, and marketing knowledge.

A Sport Administrator needs to know how the institutional aspects of companies work; he or she must have up-to-date and in-depth knowledge of marketing and promotion in order to manage the media aspect of sport; he or she must have a solid foundation in matters relating to accounting and human resource management.





Since it is a profile that interfaces with various types of subjects, he must have strong communicative and relational skills. What insiders call social media management has become fundamental for teams, federations, and athletes.

## National policy documents regarding Sport Administration

The profession of sports manager does not provide for specific regulations. To reprise the role, there are no qualifications, qualifications, and even fewer professional registrations. In addition, the basis of the Italian sports organisation is mainly made up of sports associations and clubs.

Since it is a managerial professionalism operating in a sector, regulated by peculiar dynamics, in addition to a university background it is important to acquire a specific preparation through specialization courses. Unfortunately, in some cases, it causes the tasks of the sports manager to be covered by people who do not have the necessary training and skills to deal with them.

A Sport Administrator can work as a freelancer, self-employed or employee.

## Conclusions

The complexity of the Italian sports phenomenon includes professional companies that require increasingly professional and entrepreneurial management, but, above all, a galaxy of small associations related to amateur sports that have few organizational and self-management skills.

Since sport is capable of emotionally involving fans and enthusiasts, it is an exceptional advertising vehicle for a company, especially for those that produce consumer goods, as they need to present themselves to the public. For large multinationals, putting their name alongside a champion or a



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sporting event becomes an instrument through which to create a feeling of sympathy and a transfer of positive values towards the public. This awareness and complexity of the world of sport has led to the creation of numerous master's courses in Italian universities, specifically oriented towards the development of professional figures capable of operating in the multifaceted world of sport.

The training courses that characterize the courses organized for Sports Administrators seem to reinforce once again the figure of the Manager destined to a world of profit and gain. In reality, in an environment full of emotions such as sport, economic values, although significant and essential, must be able to coexist and highlight the primary values of sport, a social phenomenon and integration between peoples of all races and religions.

In the Italian university panorama there was a need to train managers able to provide a corporate reading of this phenomenon, starting from an overall view of sport, in order to be able to know and reflect on the tastes and orientations of "customers" in constant transformation, on the increasingly onerous costs, on the necessary financing, on the organization of events and clubs, but also on the competitive and moral importance of the figure of the athlete. This applies not only to the large professional society with high business intensity, but also to the small amateur society. Managing all these activities is not easy and specialized managers, better if young and prepared, are increasingly sought after.

The Sports Manager must possess organizational, regulatory, management and cultural knowledge and skills that allow him to move in a rapidly changing and expanding environment. On the other hand, the economic dimension of many amateur or small-to-medium companies does not allow to fully invest in a figure like that of the Sport Administrator.

The recent crisis in the sports sector, caused by the health emergency of Covid-19 and its protocols, which in many cases limit the practice of sport, will certainly affect in the near future and in the medium term in relation to the employment capacity of sports administrators. However, the resulting decrease in sponsorship revenues will ensure that profits are sought through other resources. In this case, more than ever before, the figure of the sports manager can





make the difference in knowing how to reorganize a sports club, a sports centre, a federation, a body or any reality that orbits in the sporting sphere.

What is probably missing for the Sports Administrators is a recognition that allows them to have a defined status in the sports market. It is often difficult to understand the importance of an all-round professional in all facets of a sports organisation.

Italian legislation should establish a register as is already the case for many professionals. In this way, the sports manager could put himself in a different position on the market and make the importance of his role understood, especially at a time like today (2020).

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### **3. Spain**

## Sport Administrator national landscape



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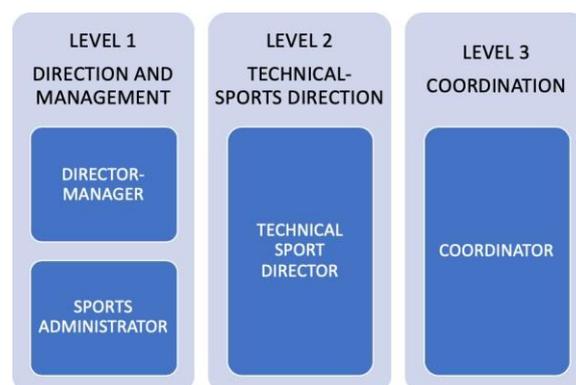


Although there is no consensus concerning the definition of Sport Administrator, as it depends of each of the professional regulations enacted by some of the Autonomous Communities in Spain, according to the Law 3/2018, of March 26, ordering the practice of sports professions in the Region of Murcia, the sports director is defined as any professional sports person who directs, organizes and manages physical and sports activities and sports-related human resources in a center, service, facility or sports entity, both public and private ownership, and always applying the knowledge and techniques of the physical activity and sports sciences, as well as instrumental knowledge.

It corresponds to these professionals to carry out the following functions:

- a) The direction, coordination, planning, programming, control, monitoring and evaluation of physical and sports activities.
- b) The direction, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the activity carried out and the provision of services by other sports professionals regulated by this law without detriment to their autonomy, competence, and responsibility in their professional practice.

Concerning the different professions related to sports direction-management, we can identify three different levels (Gambau, 2017) (Figure 1):



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*Figure 1. Levels of professions related to sports direction in Spain (Gambau, 2017).*

The report of the European project NASME, shows that in Spain the professionalization of the sports management took place at an extremely late stage, and there is no pattern or consensus on the training and skills needed by these professionals. The conclusions suggest that sport management in Spain has developed differently from other European countries since there is no culture of sport management outside the branch of sport sciences. In other countries the sport manager is a figure more linked to the classic business environment, whereas in Spain is seen as a sports professional, more focused on the development and analysis of services or products (García-Unanue, 2016).

Nowadays, they consider that effective managers are necessary for success, the ability to adapt as a significant competitive improvement and a greater importance to innovation versus cost reduction for long-term success (Gallardo & García-Unanue, 2020). Likewise, there are still differences between private and public sports managers regarding innovation, as the latter have greater difficulty or flexibility in incorporating it effectively (García-Unanue, 2016).

Concerning the most developed competencies of sports managers, they are related to communication and planning skills, as well as knowledge about the sports environment. However, those related to data management, innovation and technological problems are ranked below average, although when analyzing the most important in the future, the results show an increasing importance of those related to big data, analysis, and digitalization (Gallardo & García-Unanue, 2020).

## Sport management educational framework

Nowadays, many courses are offered in Spain to train future Sports Administrators, ranging from the most basic or specialization ones, to those offered in Higher Education.



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At university level, although the degree in Physical Activity and Sport Sciences was offered in 51 Spanish universities during 2018/2019 and includes subjects related to sport management (usually between 12 and 36 ECTS), only 2 universities offer a Sport Management Bachelor degree, both private.

Although the curriculum of the bachelor's degree in Physical Activity and Sports Sciences clearly includes subjects concerning sports management, the number of ECTS is low. The Master's Degrees in Sport Management have become the only possible option for the initial training of these specialists (Gambau, 2017).

These Master's degrees (about 46) are mainly offered at private institutions. We can differentiate between the so-called Official Master's Degree and the master's degree not offered under this condition. Both are postgraduate masters and require a university degree to be taken. The main difference is that, the official ones, allow the students to enroll in a PhD program, are adapted to European Higher Education Area and recognized by public bodies, whereas the others are private degrees, professionally oriented and do not provide access to PhD programs.

Finally, concerning the PhD degrees in Sport Management, they do not exist in Spain, as they are general PhD in Sport Sciences (around 30 different programs in Spain), being able to choose from several topics to study.

According to the results of the Spanish report of the European project NASME, there are currently people working in the area with educational studies other than sport management, mainly those related to business management, economy, and marketing.

In this respect, Spain does not have a national regulation of sport professions, being some Autonomous Communities those who have begun to regulate it in their territory, such as the Region of Murcia, by Law 3/2018, of March 26.

With respect to the qualification required for being a Sports Director, it establishes:

1. To practice the profession of Sports Director, a professional qualification is required



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that can be accredited by means of a degree in Physical Activity and Sports Sciences.

2. When the professional activity is carried out within the framework of a single sport modality, those who accredit the professional qualification by means of a Sports Technician diploma of the corresponding sport modality and speciality may also practice the profession.

3. In the event that the professional activity is carried out within children's and/or young people's free time activities, those persons who have the official accreditation corresponding to the diploma concerning to free time activities management or direction, may practice the profession of Sports Director as long as the physical and sports activity does not exceed 10% of the total general programming of the activity, and its main objective is the promotion of educational and recreational leisure, not a purely sporting purpose.

### National policy documents regarding Sport Administration

Article 148 of the Spanish Constitution of 1978 establishes that the Autonomous Communities may assume competences in the promotion of sport and the appropriate use of leisure. Therefore, the competencies in sports matters, which had been centralized until that moment, were transferred to the Autonomous Communities as they requested them.

This means that, although there is legislation at national level, it is necessary to take into account the regulations of each of the Autonomous Communities, often not finding a consensus or general line that allows a common path to be followed in the development of national sport.

Although there is a wide legislative framework, and will depend on the functions to be carried out by the sports administrator, the following policies are some examples of some of the regulations worth considering:



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## NATIONAL POLICIES

- Law 10/1990, of October 15, of Sport.
- Royal Decree 1835/1991, of December 20, about Spanish Sport Federations.
- Royal Decree 1251/1999, of July 16, about Sports Anonymous Societies.
- Organic Law 3/2013, of June 20, of protection of the athlete's health and the fight against doping in sport.
- Royal Decree 203/2010, of February 26, approving the Regulations for the prevention of violence, racism, xenophobia, and intolerance in sport.
- Royal Decree 1363/2007, of October 24, establishing the General Regulation of the Sports Education of Special Regime.
- Royal Decree 971/2007, of July 13, about high level athletes and performance.
- Royal Decree 1591/1992, of December 23, on Sports Discipline.
- Organic Law 3/2018, of December 5, of Personal Data Protection and guarantee of digital rights.
- Royal Decree 1006/1985, of June 26, regulating the special employment relationship of professional athletes.
- Law 31/1995, of November 8, of Occupational Risks Prevention.
- Law 7/85, of April 2, Regulating the Bases of the Local Regime.
- Royal Legislative Decree 2/2015, of October 23, approving the consolidated text of the Workers' Statute Law.
- Law 45/2015, of October 14, of Volunteering.
- Law 27/2014, of November 27, of Corporate Income Tax.
- Royal Legislative Decree 1/2007, of November 16, approving the revised text of the General Law for the Defence of Consumers and Users and other complementary laws.

## REGION OF MURCIA POLICIES (as an example, different for each Autonomous Community)



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- Law 8/2015, of March 24, of Physical Activity and Sport in the Region of Murcia.
- Law 3/2018, of March 26, which orders the practice of sport professions in the Autonomous Community of the Region of Murcia.

It should be noted that the new Spanish Sports Law is expected to be enacted in the coming months as is currently in the preliminary draft stage. This will allow to update the existing one, which dates from 1990, adapting it to the new sport reality of the country, something that the stakeholders of the sector were demanding for years.

## Conclusions

Sport Administrators must adapt to the great changes that sports management has undergone in Spain, that goes from focusing on the public administration, to the rise of the private sector (Gallardo, 2017). Despite this, García-Unanue (2016) suggests that the level of professionalization and knowledge among sports managers in the public and private sectors is remarkably similar, although the public ones have much less room for innovation and development.

Therefore, it is necessary to change the mentality about the competences that must be developed by Sport Administrators, supporting a multidisciplinary approach, and reducing the importance of the classic management competences, to promote analysis and technological development skills for sports planning and management.

The report of the European Project NASME shows that there is a need to standardize higher education in Sport Management, as there is too much variety and too little clarity in sports management curricula. Although the profile of sports managers should theoretically have clear competences, at present there are many ways to reach these positions, and each one includes completely different skills and competences. In addition, these differences are emphasized even more when compared with the rest of European countries. Therefore, it is necessary to determine a profile of learning outcomes and competences that should be covered in the training of all Sport





Administrators, which in Spain is being directed towards an analyst specialized in sports markets and a designer and evaluator of products, delegating more classical functions of management, such as human resources or accounting.

Therefore, in addition to the knowledge and techniques established by Gambau (2017), such as analysis and diagnosis, strategic and tactical planning, project planning, and its implementation, monitoring and evaluation, analytical and technological skills should be further developed. The latter show the greatest shortages and difficulties, but at the same time are included in the topmost important competences for the future, including analytics, data interpretation, market research and digital marketing.

Therefore, training should not only be carried out through higher education, but also be compatible with a model of continuous training through e-learning projects to guarantee the updating of knowledge and to adapt to the changing environment of sport management, even differentiating between itineraries such as federative sport, spectator sport, private sport management and public administration.

For this purpose, investment in R+D+i in sports management should be made so that companies can adapt and strengthen themselves in the face of change, as well as broaden the scope of study. In this respect, Spain is in 7th position worldwide in terms of publications related to sports management, although most are led by economists (Calabuig, 2017), so research in other branches of knowledge is necessary.

Finally, the NASME report determines that in Spain only 22.34% of women hold Sport Administration positions. Therefore, environments that facilitate gender equality this position must developed.

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#### **4. Sweden**

##### **Sport Administrator national landscape**

Sport Administrator as a professional role and/or occupation is rarely used in Sweden. Instead, the term 'idrottsledare' [sport leader] has become an umbrella term for all individuals involved in leading, managing, administering Swedish voluntary organized, non-profit, and membership-based club sport, both professionally and as volunteers. The term includes all positions with involved with the delivery of sport activities such as leader, coach, board member, official, judge/umpire/referee



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and similar. According to the Swedish Sports Confederation (2019a), the current number of individuals taking on such roles are 882,000. Given this all-encompassing term, it has been notoriously difficult to assess the number of individuals working or effectively functioning as a sport administrator. Some attempts have been made though, such as the one by Fahlén (2015) in which he calculated that some 5,500 individuals were employed in sport clubs and about half of them performed administrative duties, resulting in some 2,250 individuals. Another way of approaching it, albeit providing an even more rough estimate, could be to use the total number of sport clubs in Sweden (some 20,000) and assume that each and every one of them has administrative duties that requires attention. It should be noted though, that provided the comparatively low level of professionalization in Swedish sport, most of these services would probably be provided by volunteers, not viewing themselves as sport administrators.

Considering the difficulties surrounding the task to define the Swedish sport administrator, it is equally difficult to describe the development of its role and possible proliferation. However, it is fair to assume that the professional sport administrator is a modern phenomenon since professional sport was prohibited in Sweden until 1967 (Fahlén, 2006). As noted above though, this does not mean that administrative duties were not performed before that. It means, however, that since creating profit from sport was illegal, it was also exceedingly difficult for sport organizations (especially sport clubs) to raise the means necessary to have administrators on the payroll. But with the abolition of the amateur rules it became more viable to hire professional staff. Admittedly, this was possible also before 1967, but provided the comparatively small revenues available (e.g. due to restrictions on advertising and the absence of broadcasting rights), this was a possibility conferred to only a small number of very large clubs and national sport organizations. As for more specific developments of the sport administrator's role and numerical expansion, we are limited to anecdotal evidence. Svensson (2019) for example has shown how staff functions in a Swedish football club evolved from a small number of generalist roles in the 1960's to many specialist roles during the 2010's. Even though no official statistics exist, extrapolating this example would involve an exponential increase also in the number of sport administrators.





## Sport management educational framework

Given the elusive character of the Swedish sport administrator described in the above, it is also difficult to define the total supply of courses provided to cater for its needs. It can, however, be described in general terms by consulting the three main actors offering education associated with the delivery of sport activities: 1. Higher education institutions; 2. Folk high schools; and 3. Adult education associations.

1. Study programmes for sport managers at bachelor's and master's levels are provided by a handful of the Swedish universities. The aim of these programmes is to develop competencies fit to solve the tasks commonly associated with the work of a sport administrator. Students graduating from these programmes are often found in national and regional sport organisations, in municipal sport and leisure authorities and in managing positions in private companies such as gyms and fitness clubs.
2. A few of the Swedish folk high schools have a specific profile focusing on programmes and courses preparing for employments in sport-related organizations. Spanning from shorter courses to longer programmes, some of these offers are also aiming at developing the competencies required to work professionally with sport administration.
3. One of the approximately ten adult education associations in Sweden is tied to the Swedish Sports Confederation, the umbrella organization federating 72 national sport federations, 19 regional sports federations, some 20,000 sport clubs and 3,1 million members. In this capacity it offers shorter courses useful for sport administrators.

The institutional landscape of Swedish sport alluded to in the above has established and maintained sport as being an activity pursued, organized, led and administered in the domains of the voluntary, third or civic sector (Fahlén & Stenling, 2016). This means that the 3.1 members of the voluntary organized, non-profit, and membership-based club sport are to large extent managed and





administered by themselves. Testament to this are the numbers showing how 18 % of the population is working as volunteers in a sport organization, and the fact that 882,000 have roles as leaders, coaches, board members, officials, etc. (Riksidrottsförbundet, 2019a). Compared to the rough numbers accounted for initially, this suggests that many of the administrative duties in Swedish sport are performed by non-professionals. With no specific statistics available, it is difficult to assess the proportions of professional staff versus non-professionals. It is, however, reasonable to assume that professional sport administrators are mainly found in large sport clubs, regional and national sport federations. In smaller sport clubs and even in the smallest national sport federations, administrative duties are instead performed by voluntary board members, other members such as the sport participants themselves or their parents. The fact that 38 % of the Swedish sport clubs are considered as small clubs (<50 members) and 36 % as medium-sized clubs indicates that a vast majority would not have the funds necessary to cover the costs associated with having a sport administrator employed.

### National policy documents regarding Sport Administration

Swedish sport is governed only implicitly via the government funds allocated to the Swedish Sports Confederation (Fahlén & Stenling, 2016). This tax funded financial support constitutes a third of sport clubs' revenues and is granted in exchange for the realisation of social policies on public health and the fostering of democratic citizens. The implicit character of the governance mechanisms in play stipulate that the government decides on the extent and the purpose of the funding, and the recipient determines the details of the distribution and administration. Thus, the contract does not detail any conditions pertaining to sport administration specifically. However, being a recipient of government funds it is expected that sport has to comply with the same standards regarding accountability, ethics and transparency that are applied to other public domains, even though voluntary organised and membership-based club sport is not a public domain per se (Fahlén & Stenling, 2016).



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Internally, Swedish sport is governed by a policy programme decided on by the biennial national meeting for elected representatives that constitute the SSC general assembly in a representative democracy. The programme (Riksidrottsförbundet, 2019b) contains little in terms of policies for sport administration specifically. There are, however, a few claims that have bearing on administrative matters. One is that all sport activities should adhere to international conventions on human rights, children's rights, and sustainable development. Another is that all sport activities arranged within the framework of the Swedish Sports Confederation should be voluntary organized, non-profit, and membership based. This means that any individual sport club member can, by the club's annual meeting, be elected to represent the club at the annual meeting of the regional sports federation. If elected to the board of the regional sports federation, the individual can in turn be elected representative in the national sport federation for the given sport. If elected to one of these two boards, the individual can be elected to the board of the Swedish Sports Confederation and to represent the sport in question in international federations. This representative democracy is often referred to as one cornerstone of Swedish voluntary and membership-based club sport. Another cornerstone is that all leadership duties should as far as possible be based on commissions of trust and not on employments. This means that most tasks associated with running a club are solved by club members without payment. That is, being a coach, a treasurer or a groundskeeper is a non-paid commission club member take on to keep the club running.

For sport administration, these aspects carry with them a specific set of conditions a sport administrator must consider. One is that it is not given that taking on administrative duties renders an employment or even remuneration. Another is that being a sport administrator, paid or volunteer, means that you must adhere to public administration standards regarding accountability, ethics, and transparency, and to international conventions governing individual integrity.





## Conclusions

Based on the national specifics detailed in the above, advices for improving the current situation could be framed in two ways. The first emphasizes the non-profit and voluntary character of Swedish sport and focuses on making current educational offers within the frameworks of adult education associations more appealing, accessible and tailor-made for individuals already volunteering as or aspiring to volunteer as a sport administrator. The upside of such a route is that it would be a comparatively cheap alternative for the sport organization benefitting from an increased competence and for the individual developing it. The comparatively low-cost stems from the possibilities to construct awfully specific needs-based content that thereby could be kept limited in scope and thus also in time. In addition, activities offered within the adult education association framework are eligible for government subsidies that alone would make any content cheaper. One downside of such an alternative is that the incentives in place for the individual potentially engaging in such learning activities might not be enough to entice acting or aspiring sport administrators. We know that one main driver for individuals to offer their services to a sport club is that their own children participate in the club's activities (Fahlén & Ferry, 2018) and that being involved in the actual sport practice is the preferred service to offer. From that, and from similar findings (Fahlén, 2017), we can assume that administrative services are not the primary option for individuals considering to volunteer. Thus, the expectations on individuals taking courses to develop their administrative competencies must be kept reasonable.

Another way of approaching the current situation acknowledges the professionalization trend driving much of the developments in Swedish sport (Stenling & Fahlén, 2009) and focuses instead on increasing the number of staff with formal degrees in sport administration position. The upside of such a route is again that the actual cost for formal degrees would be placed on the government's





bill since higher education in Sweden is tax funded. Paradoxically, the obvious downside is that it is in fact a comparatively expensive solution due to the simple fact that individuals with formal degrees tend to expect formal employments and salaries. So even if the government is covering the costs for a degree, employing a trained sport administrator is too expensive for many sport organizations. Raising funds to cover costs for such an employment, in turn, would probably increase membership fees, and demand more volunteer work from the membership cadre in efforts to recruit more sponsors.

Either way, increasing competence tends to drive costs. So, the key question to consider is where to locate them. In a Swedish perspective and based on the voluntary traditions permeating Swedish sport, the first alternative is arguably the most feasible alternative. Not least because the second alternative would be more pervasive to the sport club practice since it would increase costs for participation to the extent that sport might not be accessible for all.

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## **IV. Analysis of the online survey results**

The consortium conducted a study relative to sports club administrators using a self-developed online questionnaire. The study addresses the following issues:

- 1) To determine the competencies needed by managers;
- 2) To identify curricula content areas which would aid in the professional preparation of athletic club managers for purposes of developing a sport management curriculum.

Respondents served as a jury of expert's panel reviewing material to be included in data collection instrument. Respondents were given a checklist of competencies and course content areas and were asked to rate each item in terms of the five-point Likert scale provided.

There were 120 respondents, 30 from each participating country (Croatia, Italy, Croatia, and Sweden).

The ages of the participants range from 25 to 63, with peaks on age 42 (11 participants) and 35 (10 participants).

Regarding the respondents' gender, 63% of the participants who indicated their gender are male.

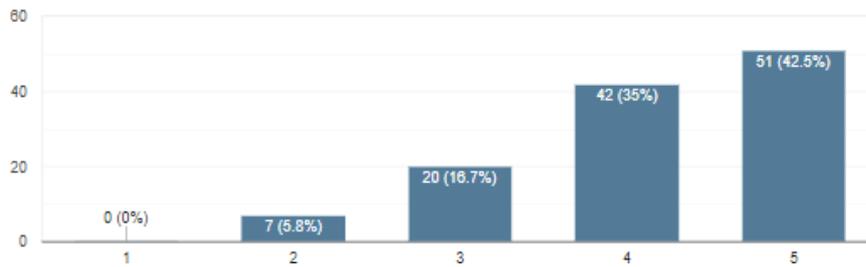
### **IV. 1. COMPETENCY (skill or knowledge to perform activity)**

The first section of the survey contains a series of competences (knowledge and skills) researchers in this study determined are needed by sports managers. Our panel of experts rated each competence as follows: 1 Unnecessary 2 Little importance 3 Average importance 4 Very important 5 Essential. The following graphs depict their ratings.

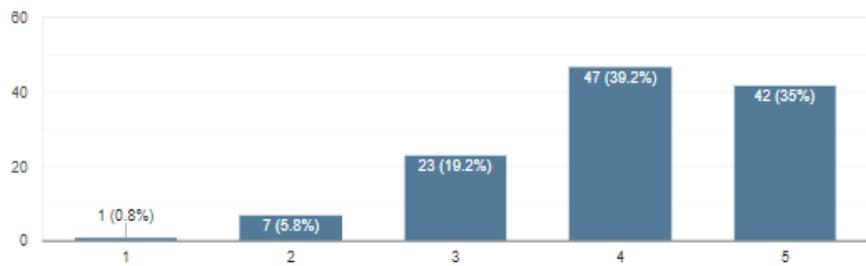




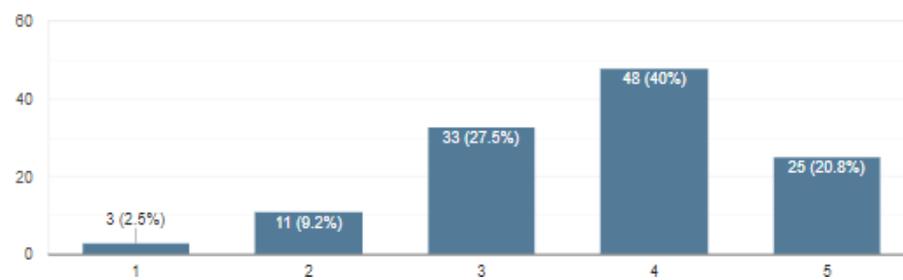
### Budget preparation



### Program development



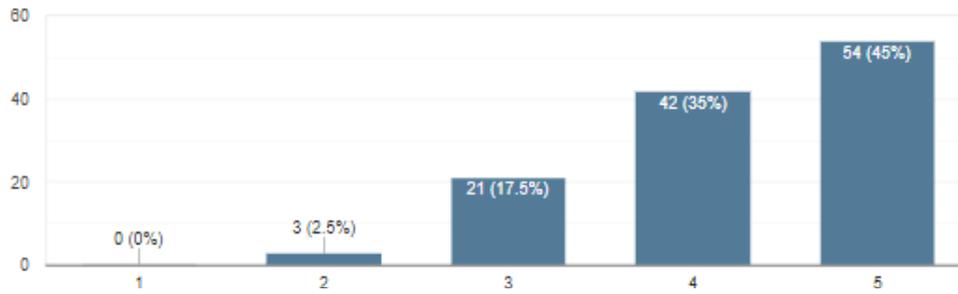
### Complaint handling



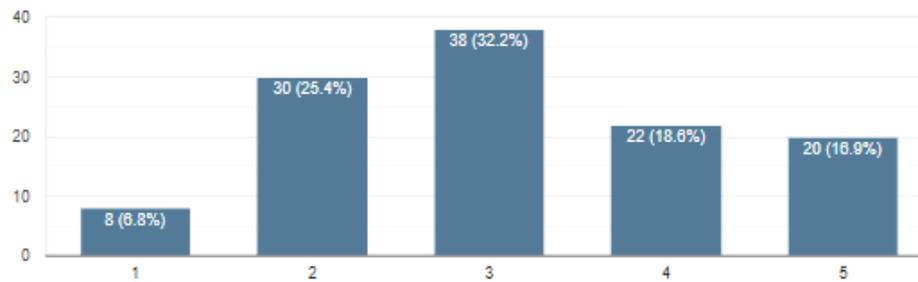
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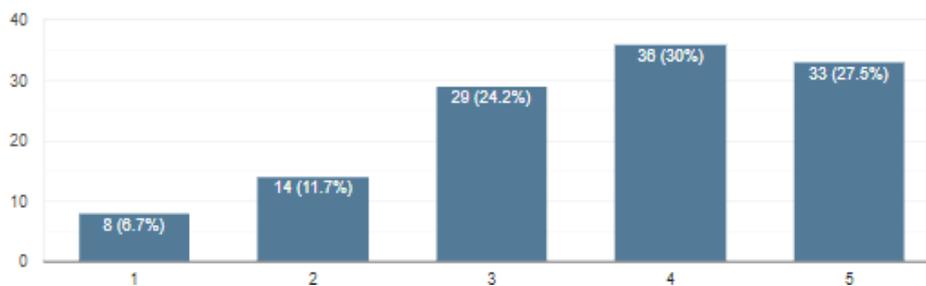
### Time management



### Equipment repair and procedure



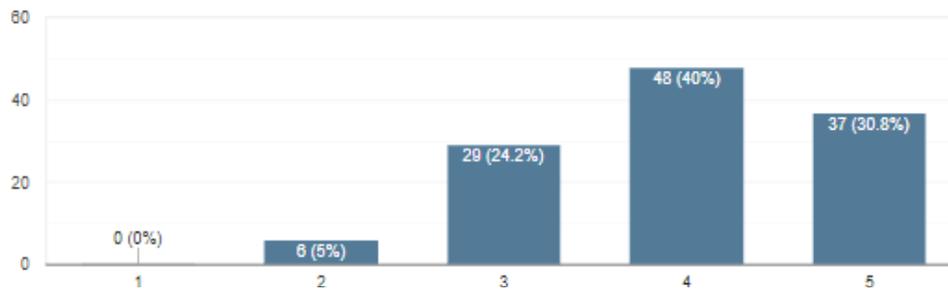
### First Aid and Safety procedures



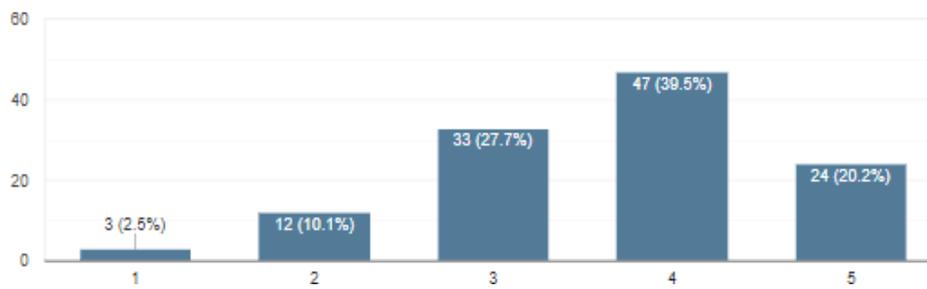
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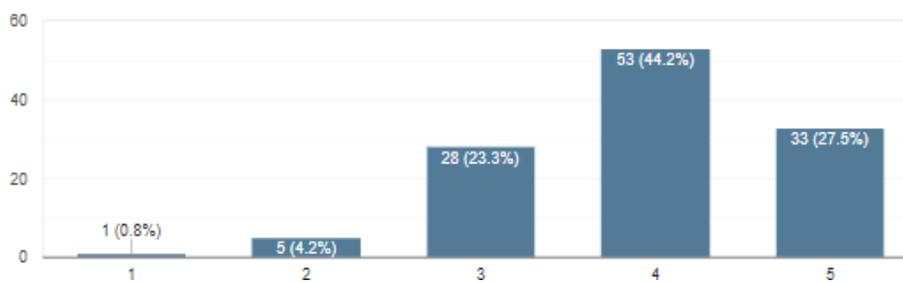
### Contracting policies and procedures



### Participation in professional workshops



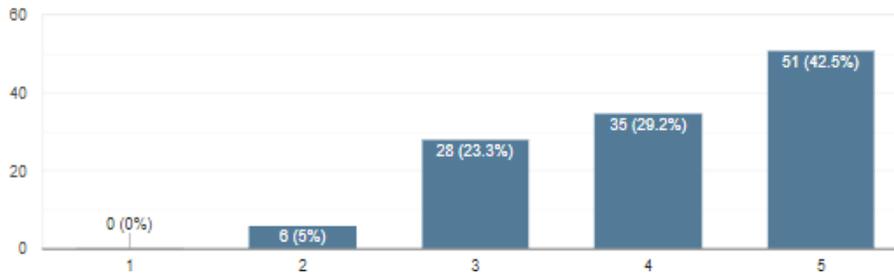
### Writing Skills



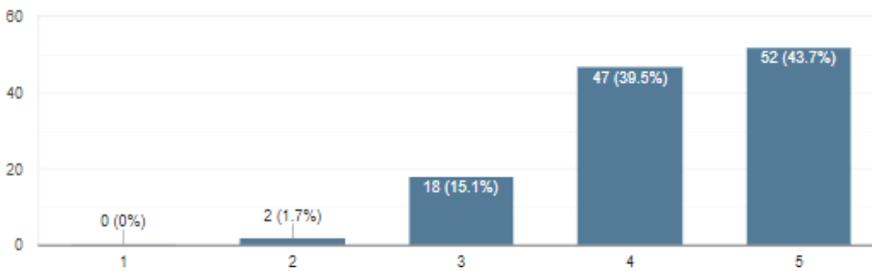
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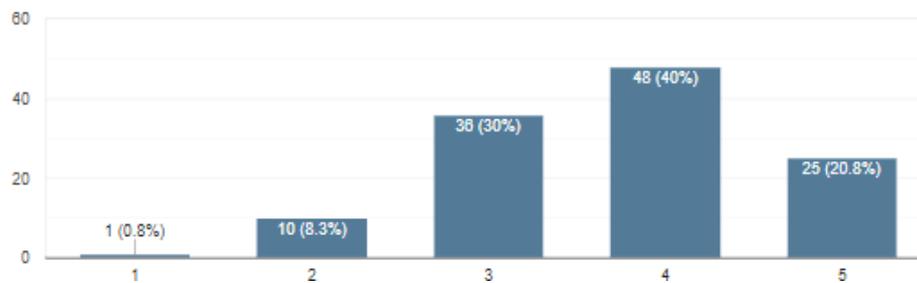
### Public speaking



### Knowledge of sports



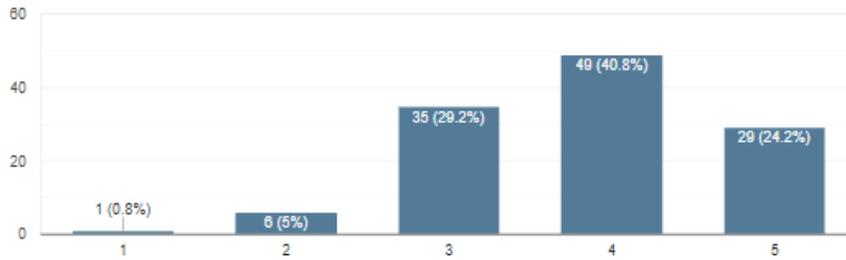
### Business evaluation



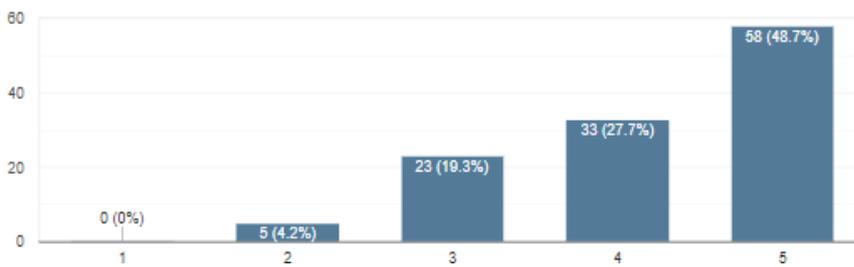
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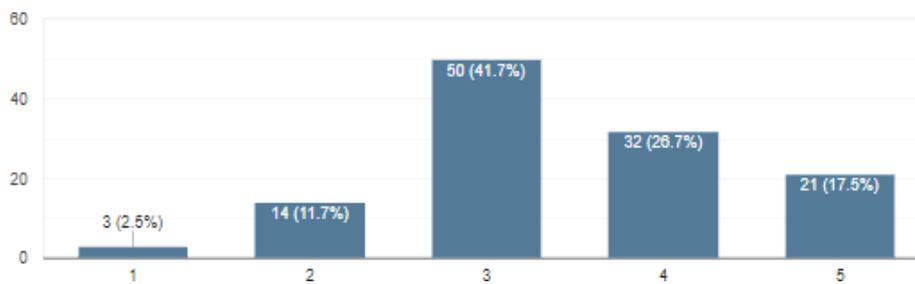
### Employee Evaluation



### Legal liability and responsibility



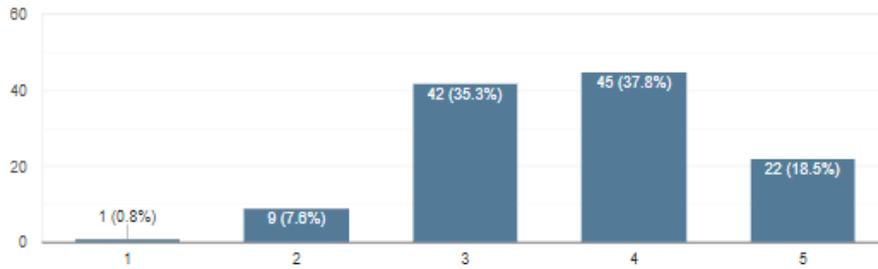
### Pricing fees and charges



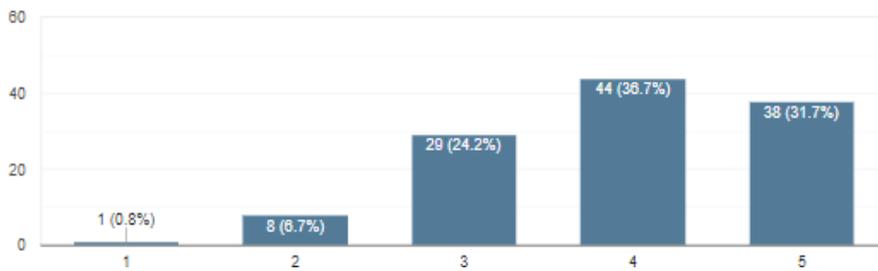
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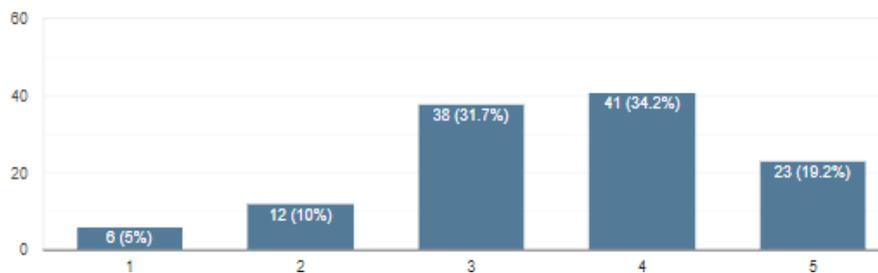
### Marketing



### Allocation of resources (money, space, etc.)



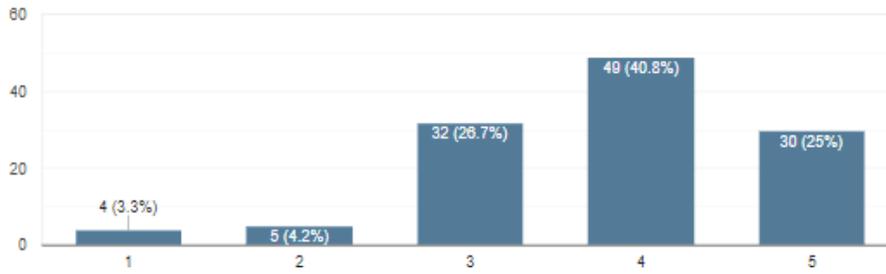
### Hiring of employees



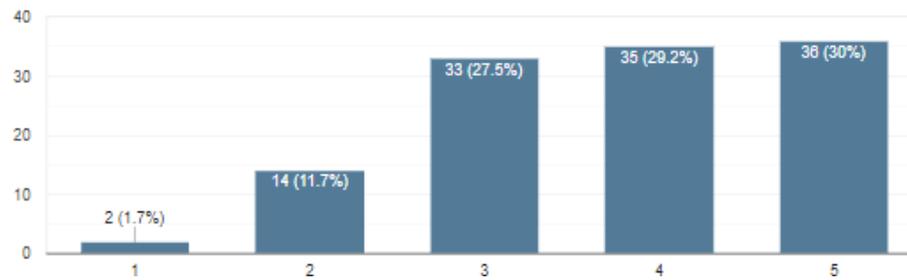
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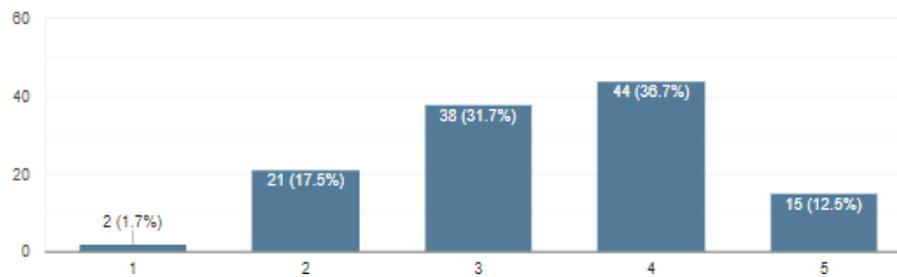
### Structure of organizations



### Facility management



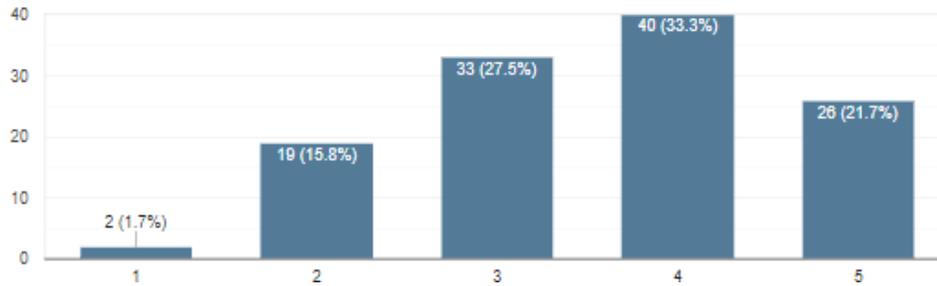
### Design performance measures



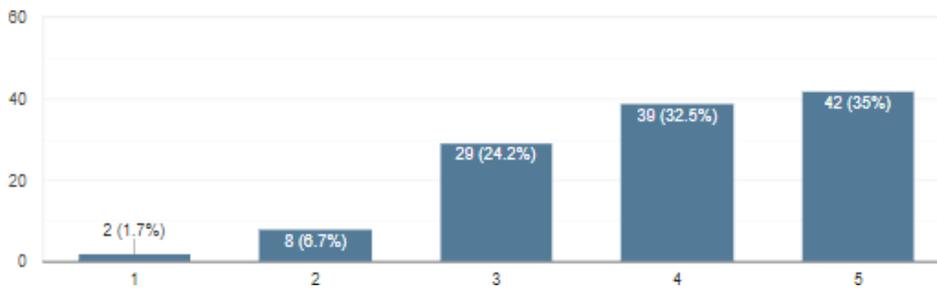
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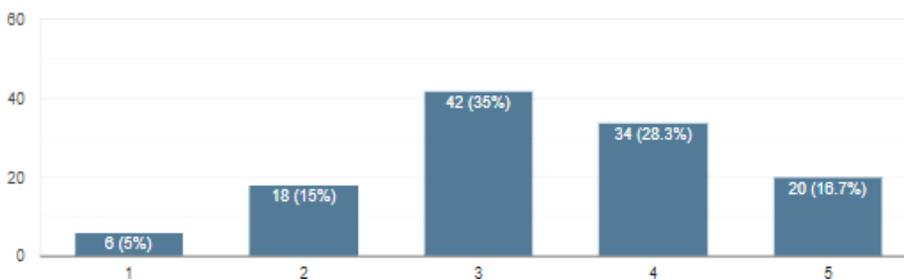
### Job Analysis



### Communication with clientele



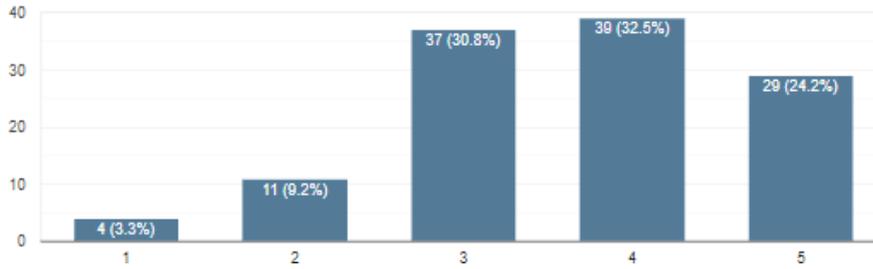
### Feasibility studies



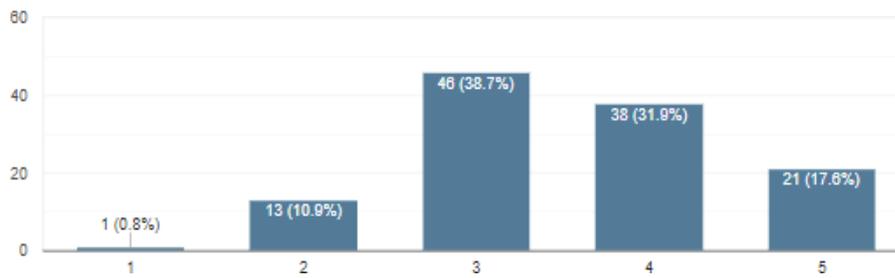
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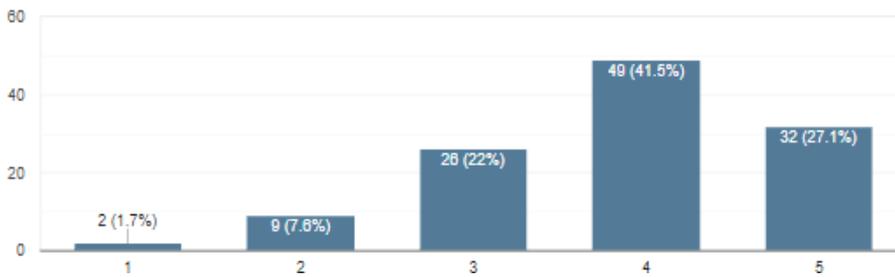
### Accounting and bookkeeping



### Advertising



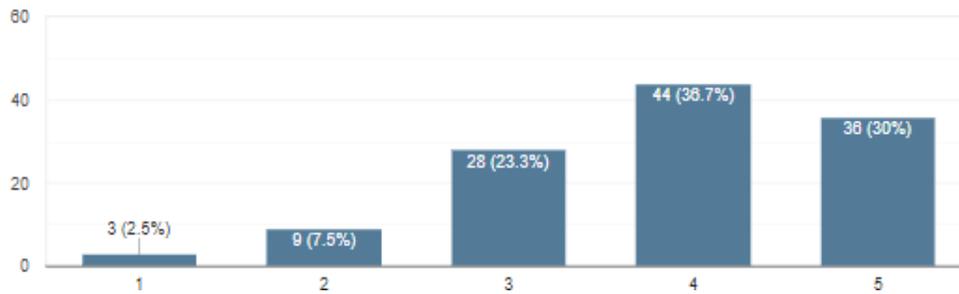
### Program goals and objectives



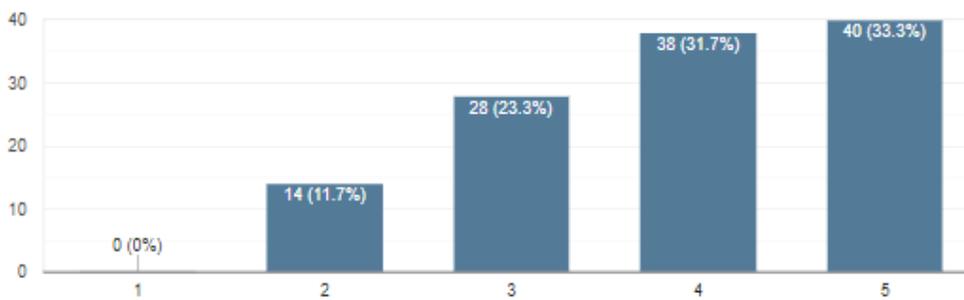
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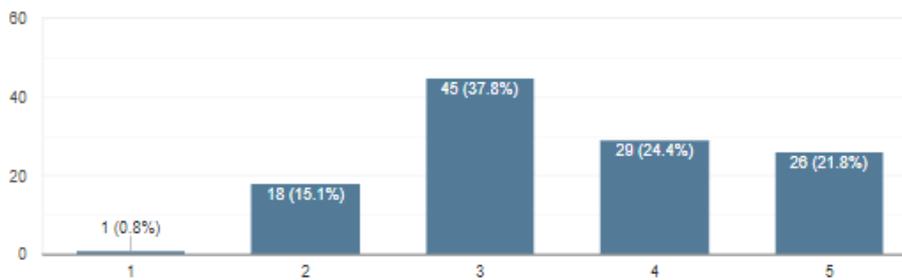
### Supervision of staff and personnel



### Security policies and procedures



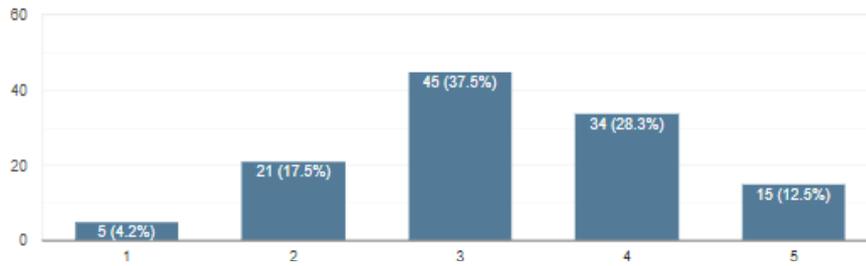
### Facility scheduling



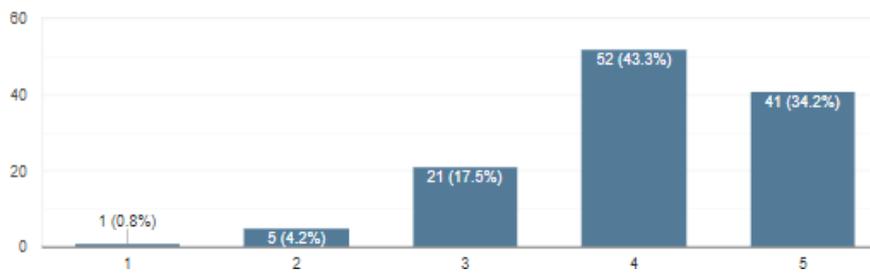
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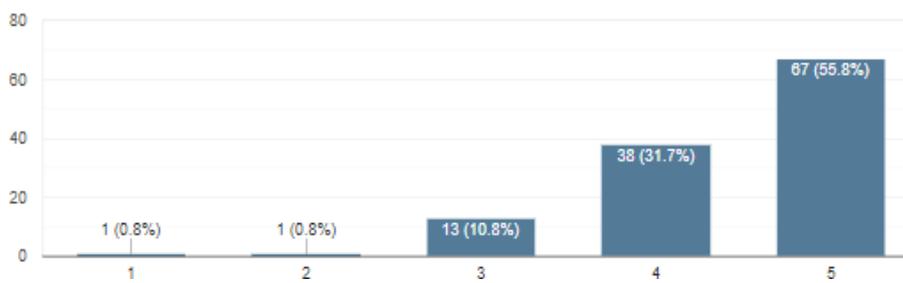
### Purchasing of supplies



### Employee motivation



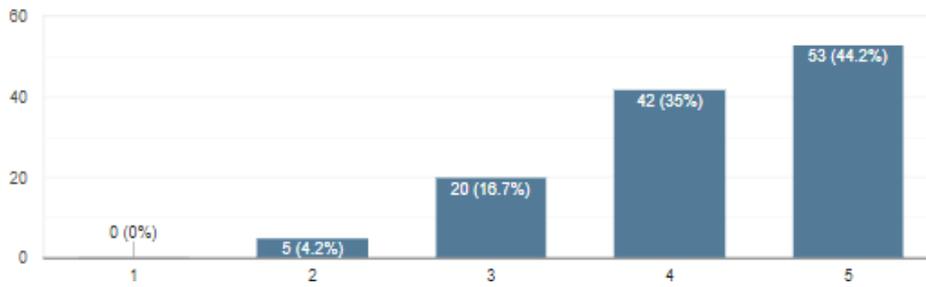
### Decision making



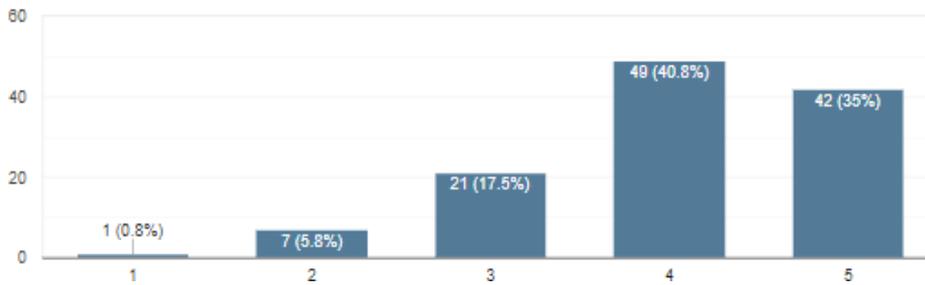
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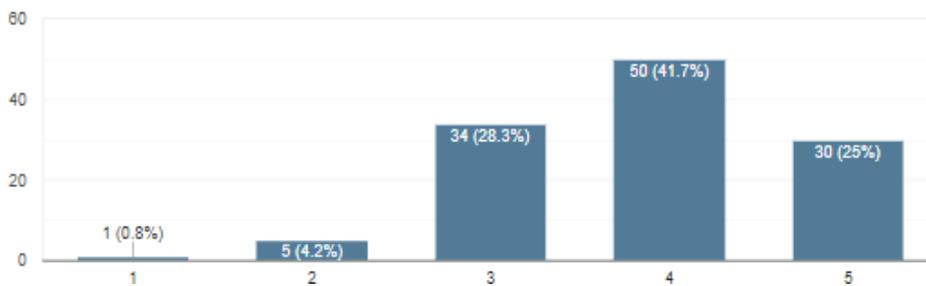
### Staff communications



### Strategic planning



### Business and management procedures



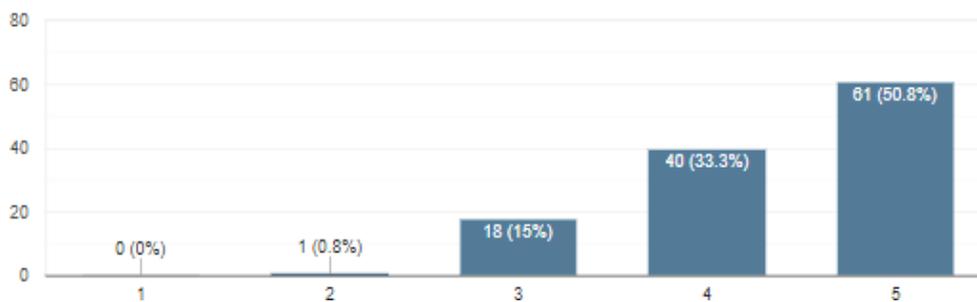
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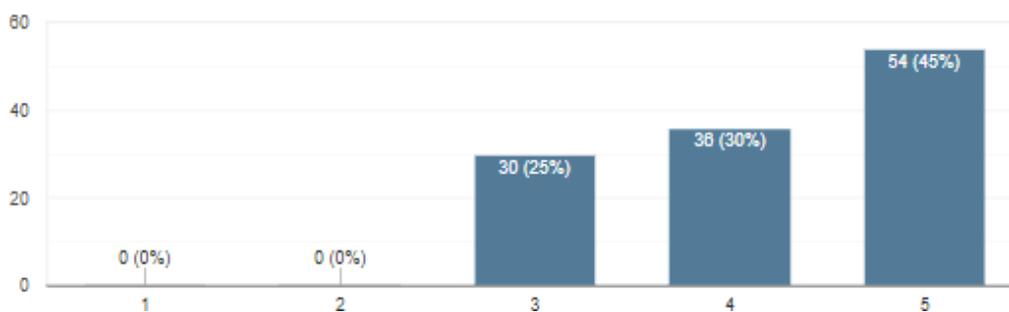
## IV. 2. EDUCATIONAL CONTENT AREAS

In this section, researchers identified curricula content areas which would aid in the professional preparation of athletic club managers for purposes of developing a sport management curriculum. Our panel of experts rated each content area as follows: 1 Unnecessary 2 Little importance 3 Average importance 4 Very important 5 Essential. The following graphs depict their ratings.

Administration of sport

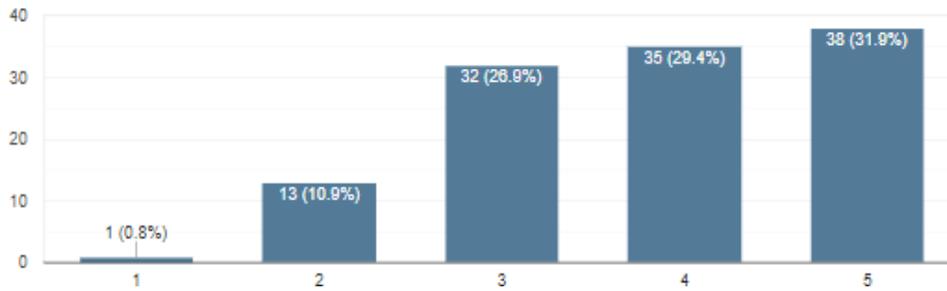


Leadership & management in sport organizations

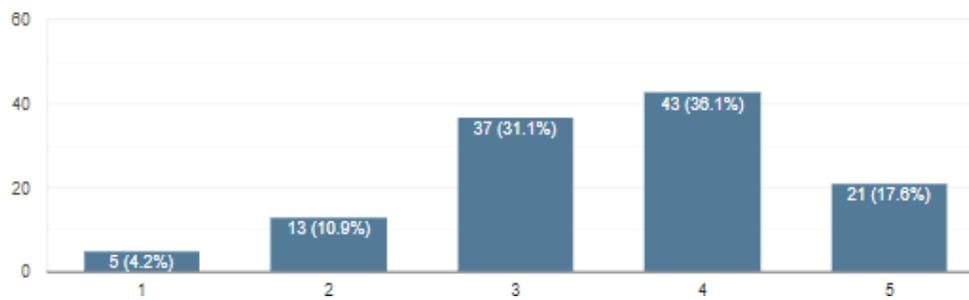




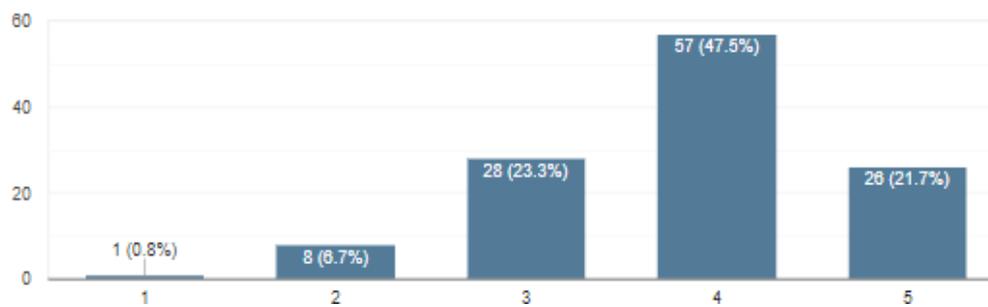
### Facilities and equipment management



### Adult development



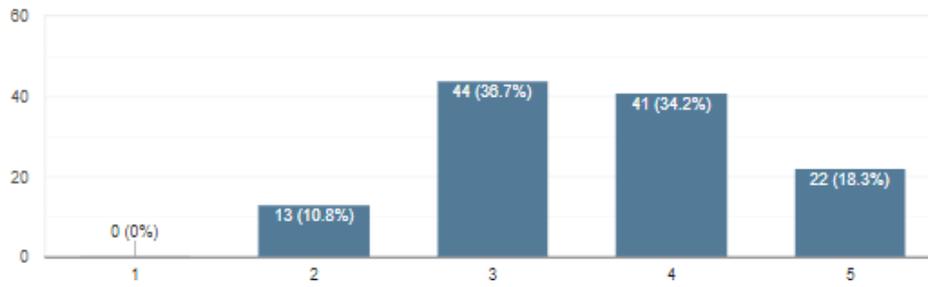
### Business management



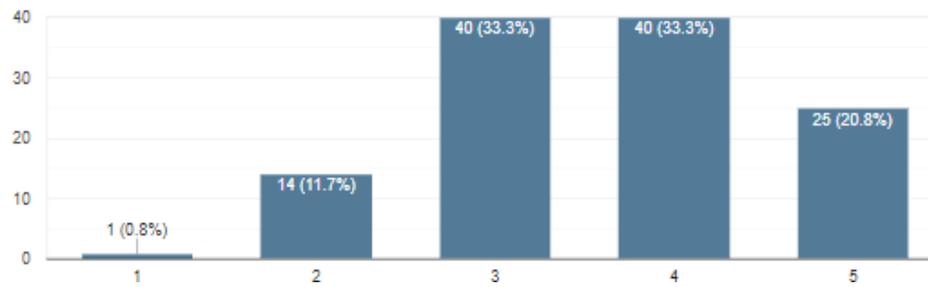
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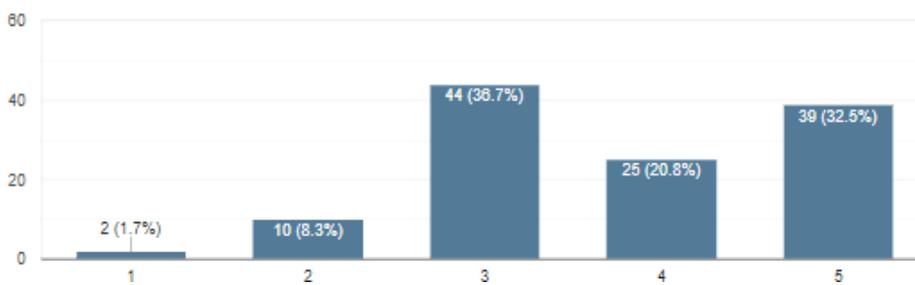
### Marketing



### Accounting



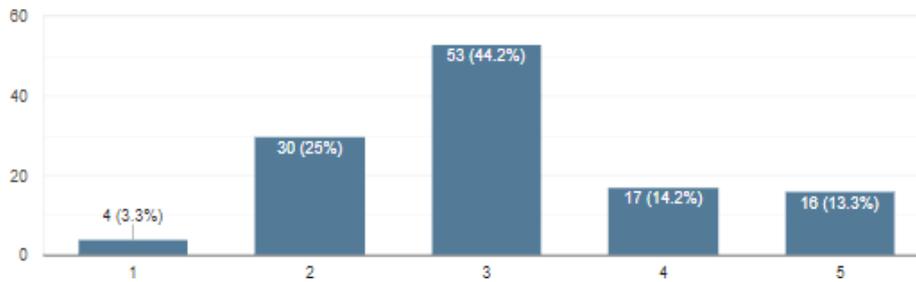
### Philosophy of sport



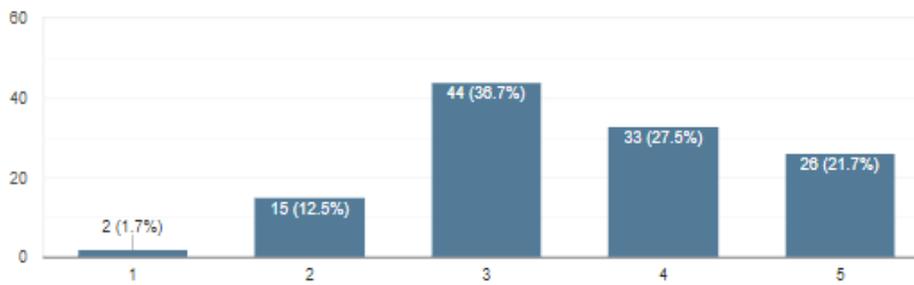
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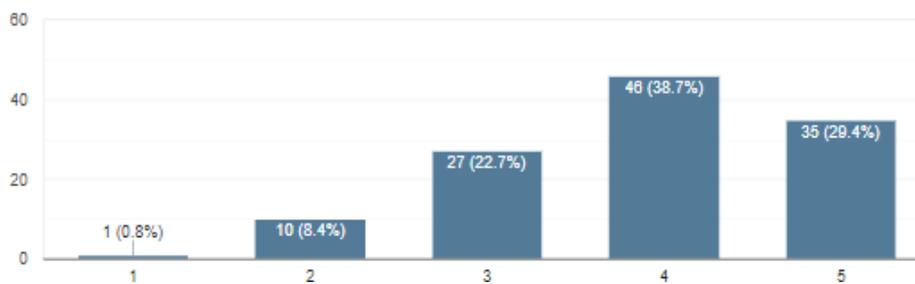
### History of sport



### Sociology of sport



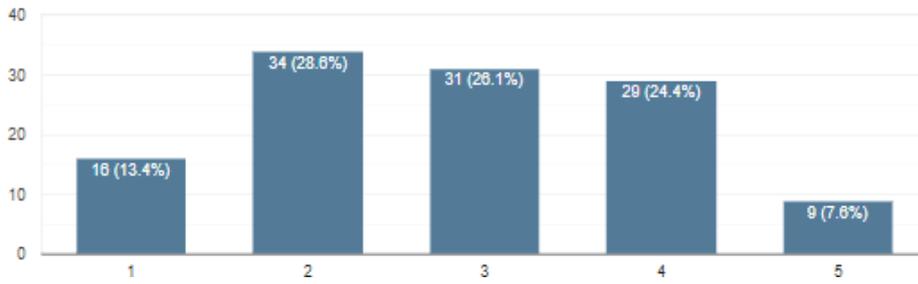
### Public relations



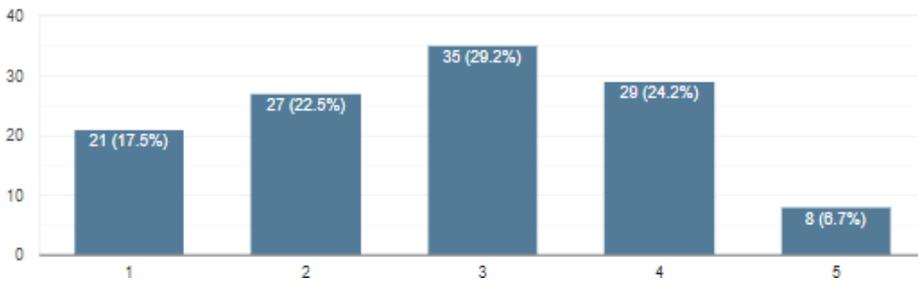
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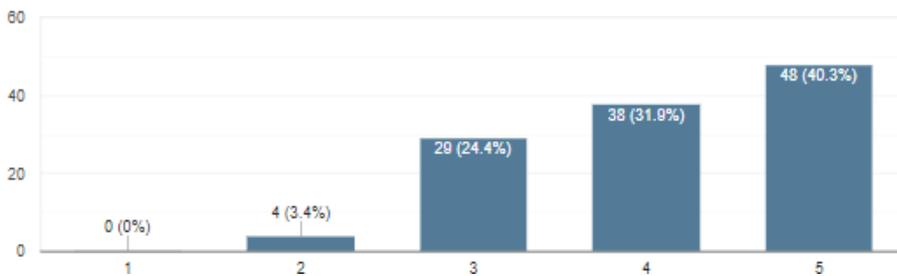
### Political science



### Journalism



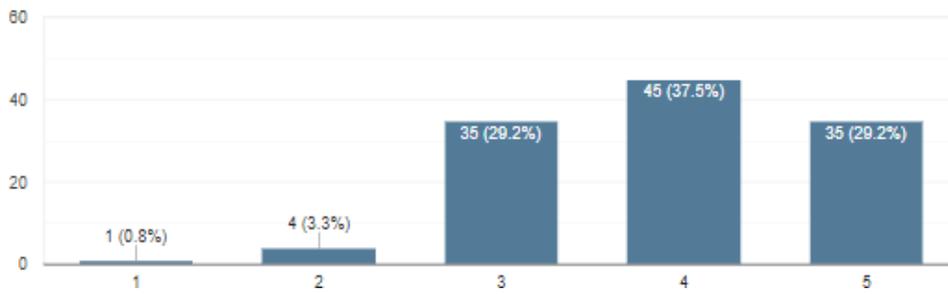
### Communication skills (speaking)



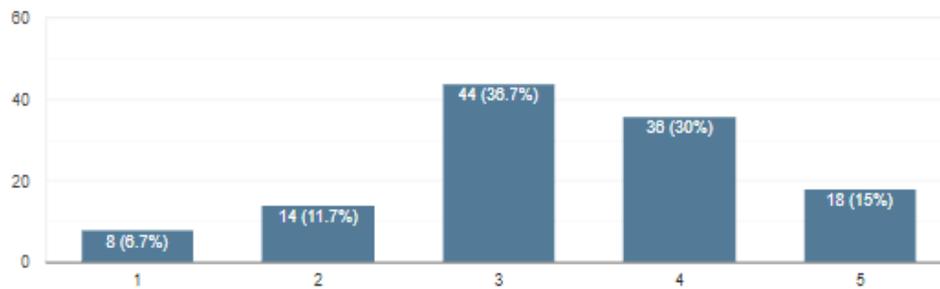
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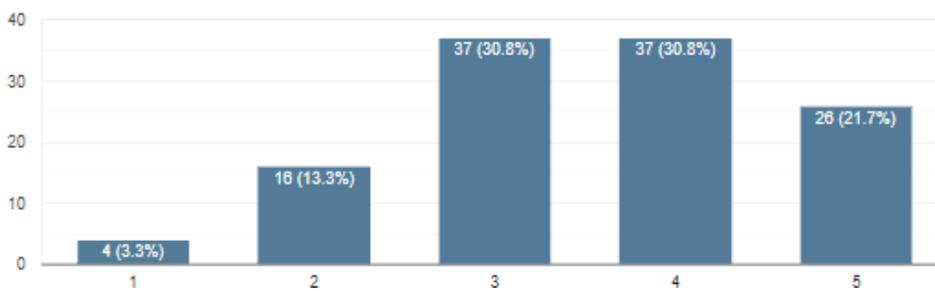
### Communication skills (writing)



### Adult education



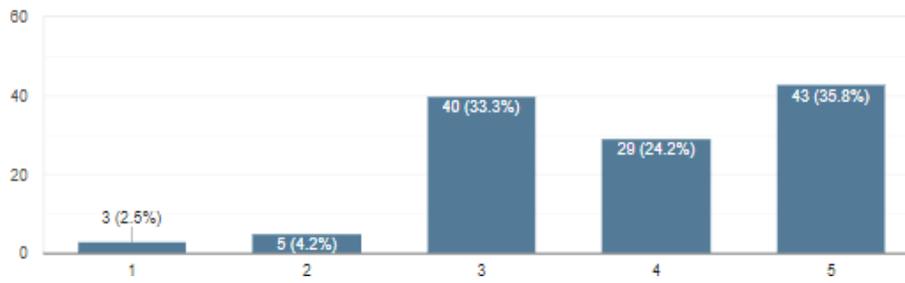
### Physical activity for the aging adult



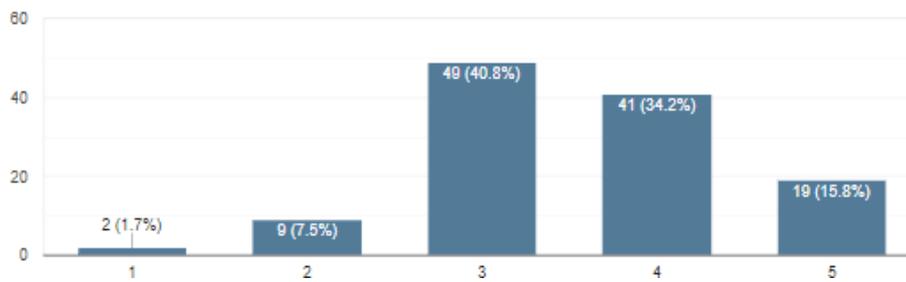
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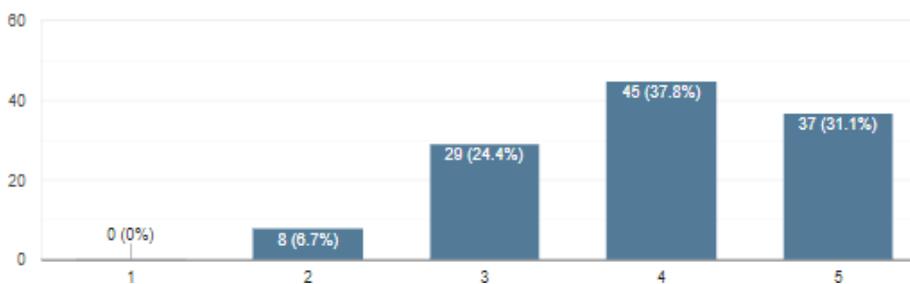
### Health aspects of physical activity



### Business labor relations



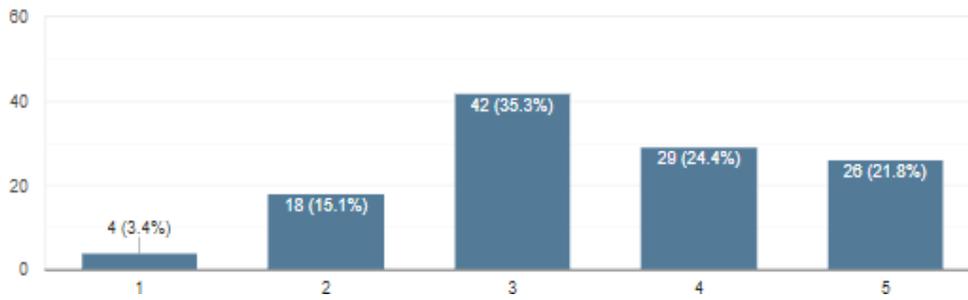
### Legal aspects of sport



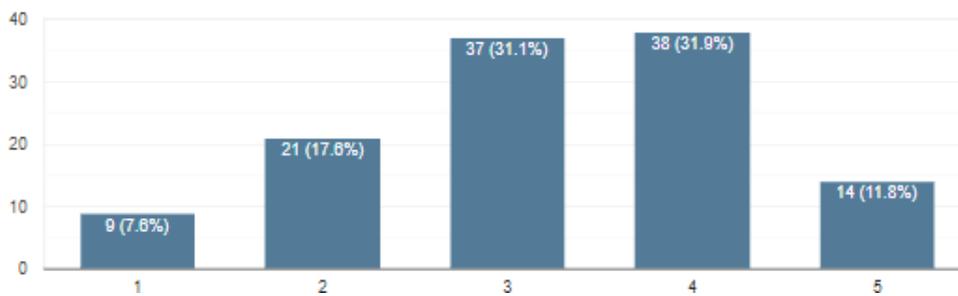
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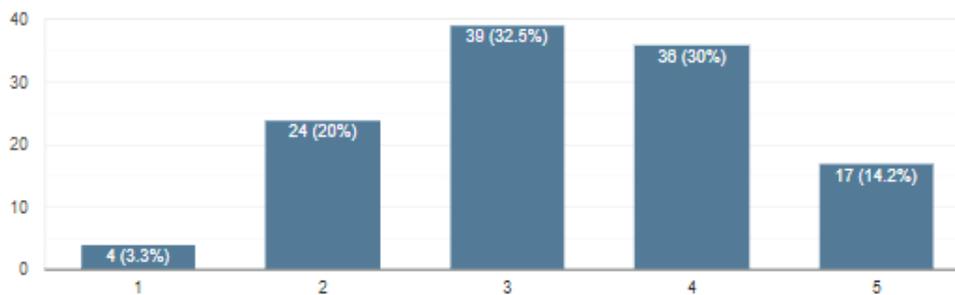
### Facility design and management



### Statistics



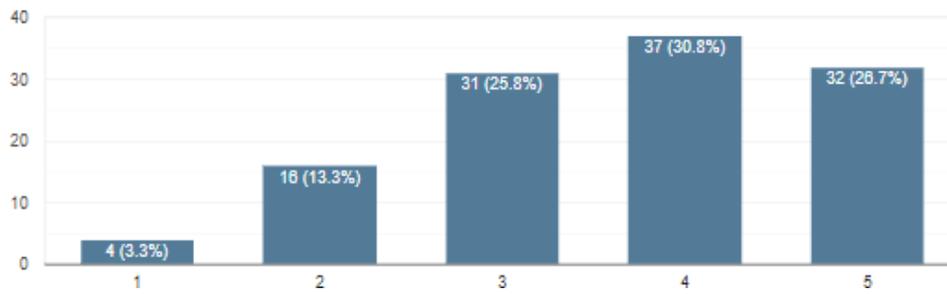
### Sales communication



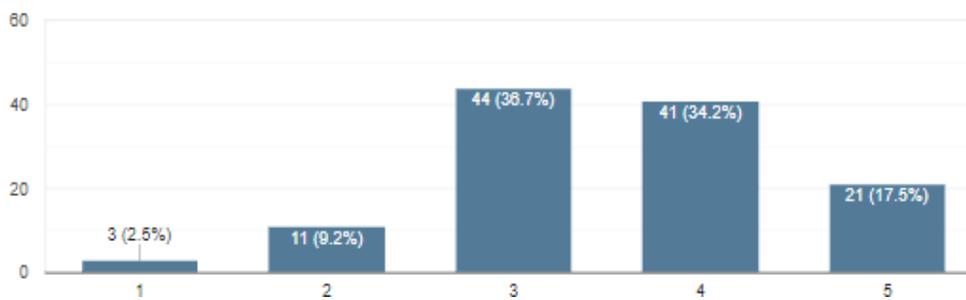
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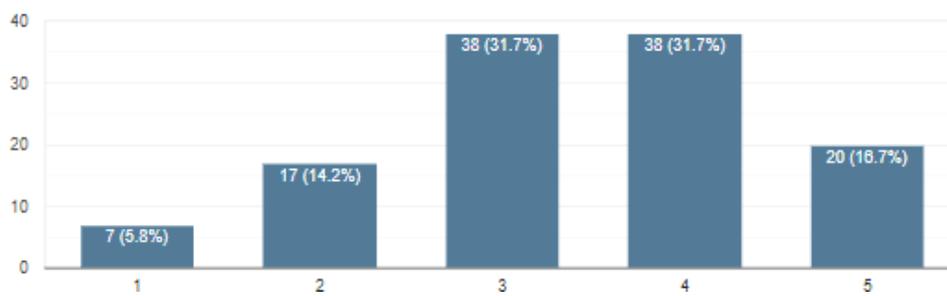
### Program planning for youths



### Economics



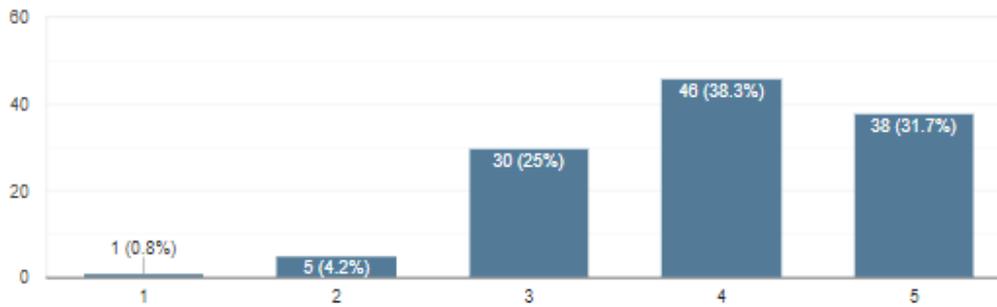
### Disabled populations



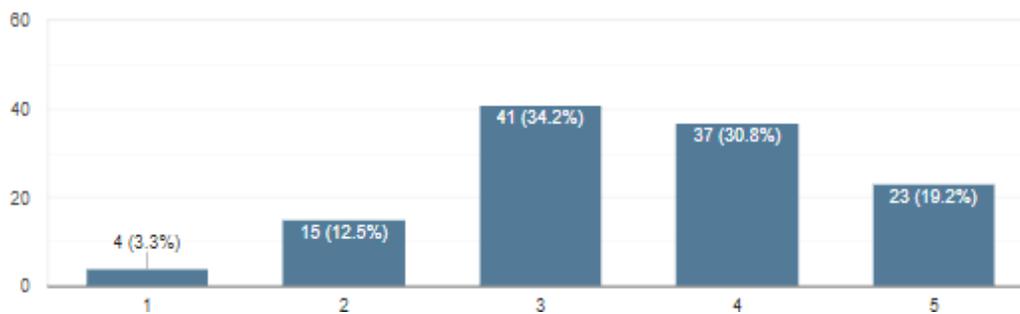
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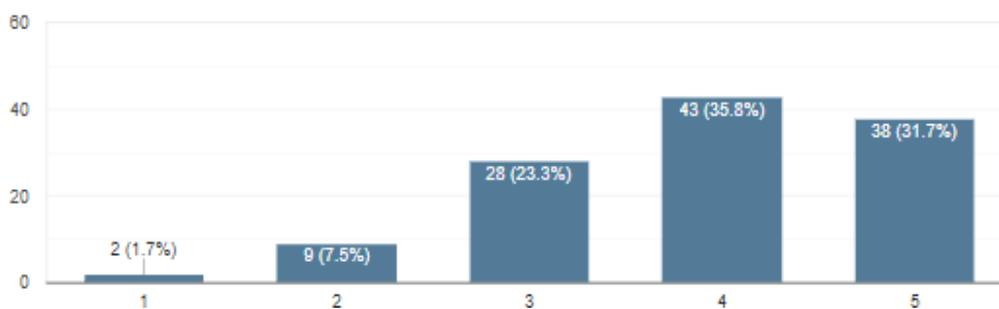
### Budgeting



### Business law



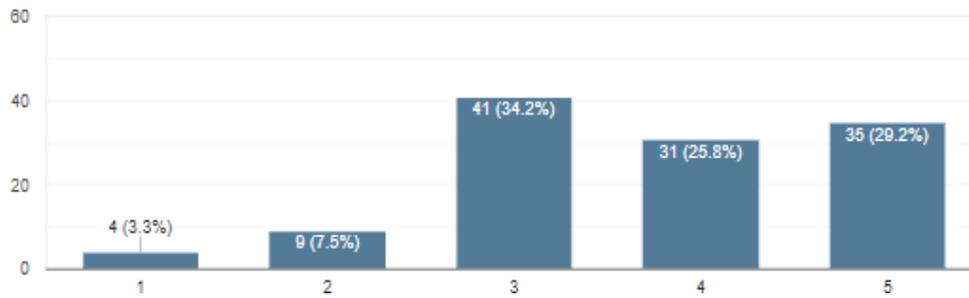
### Financing



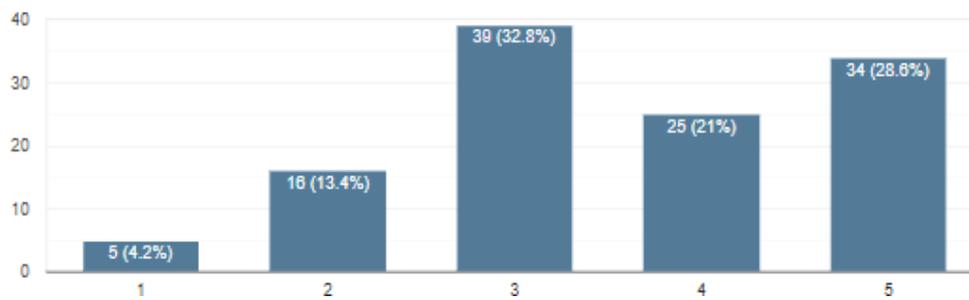
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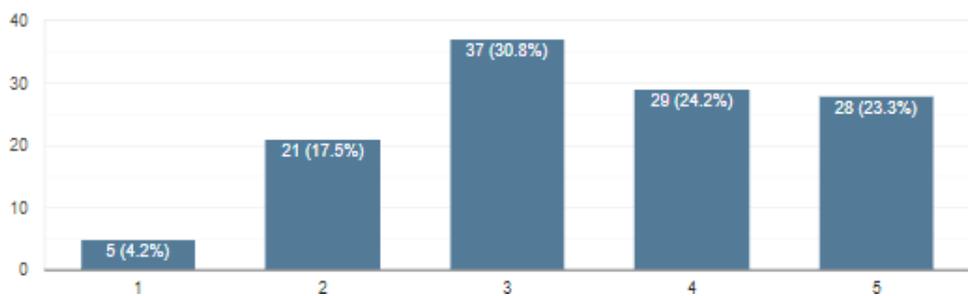
### Psychology of sport



### Physiology of exercise



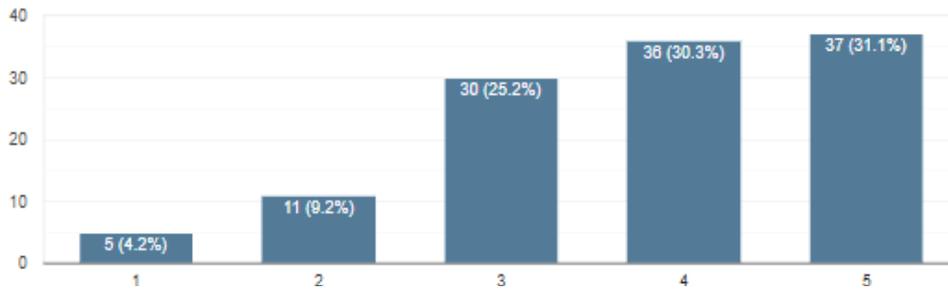
### Sports in European (country specific) Culture



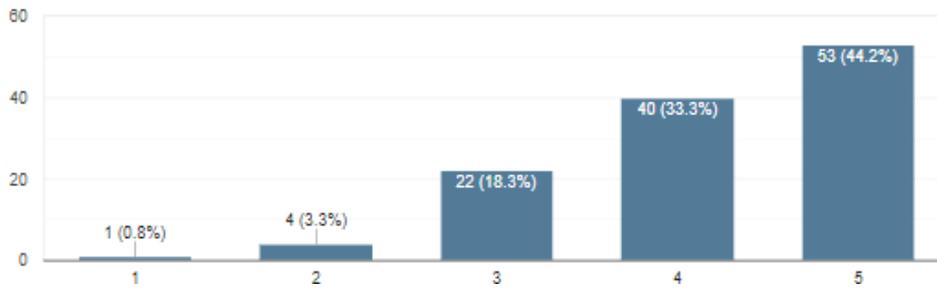
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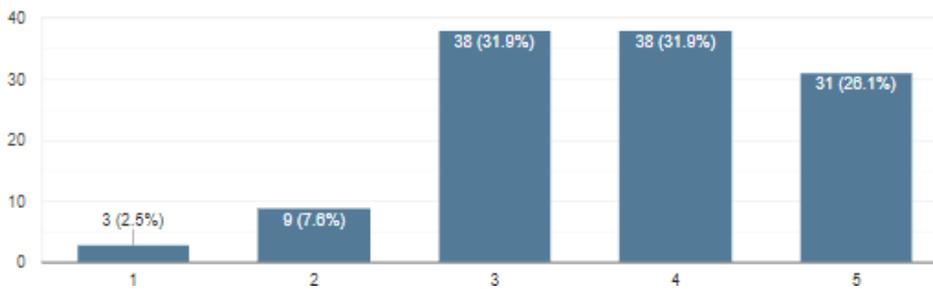
### Sport law



### Introduction to sport management



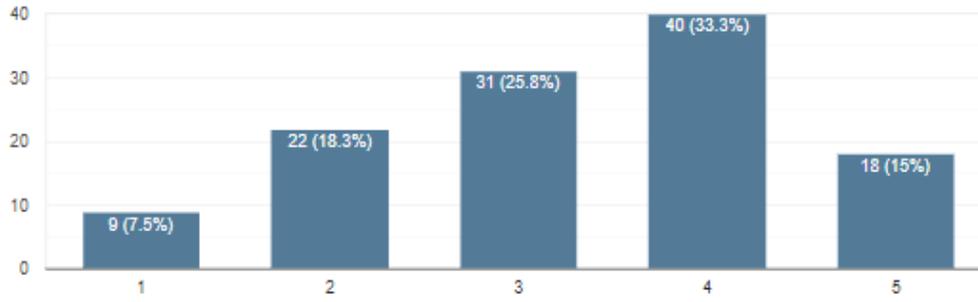
### Computer application/utilization



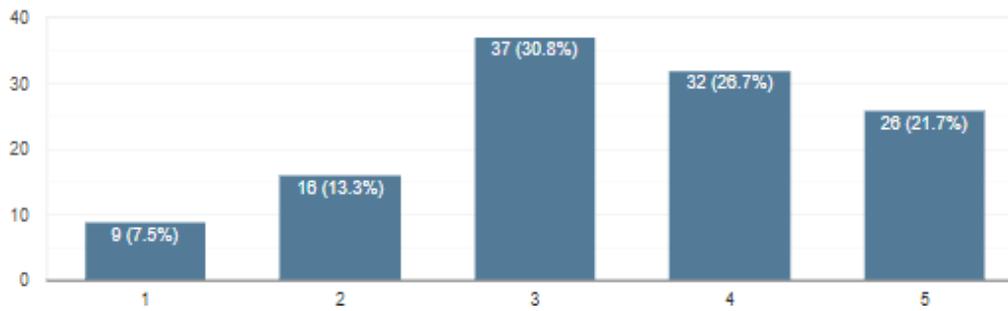
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### Research interpretation/utilization



### Internship in management



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### IV. 3. Findings

The competences the majority of the participants in this study considered essential for sports managers are budget preparation (42.5%), time management (45%), public speaking (42.5%), knowledge of sports (43.7%), legal liability and responsibility (48.7%), facility management (30%), communication with clientele (35%), security policies and procedures (33.3%), decision making (55.8%), and staff communication (44.2%).

The rest of the competences are mainly considered very important or of average importance. However, a small percentage indicated they believe equipment repair and procedures (6.8%), First Aid and Safety procedures (6.7%), and feasibility studies (5%) are unnecessary knowledge and skills for sports administrators.

The curricula content areas the majority of the participants who responded to this survey considered essential for sports managers include administration of sports (50.8%), leadership and management in sports organizations (45%), facilities and equipment management (31.9%), communication skills (40.3%), sports law (31.1%), and Introduction to sports management (44.2%).

Surprisingly, although in quite small percentages, there are a lot of curricula content areas that participants rated an unnecessary for administrators in the field of sports. Some of them are: sports in European culture (4.2%), sports law (4.2%), adult education (6.7%), history of sport (3.3%), business law (3.3%), research interpretation and utilization (7.5%), internship in management (7.5%), journalism (17.5%), adult development (4.2%), political science (13.4%), physical activity for the aging adult (3.3%), disabled populations (5.8%), computer application and utilization (2.5%), Psychology of sport (3.3%), Statistics (7.6%), facility design (3.4%), sales communication (3.3%), program planning for youth (3.3%), economics (2.5%), and physiology of exercise (4.2%).

The competences and content areas reported as essential have to do generally with management of external aspects such as delegation and performance management, project process management, managing execution, coaching and developing talent, managing differences and conflicts.





## V. Conclusions

The complexity of sports organisations requires increasingly professional and entrepreneurial management. In response to the evident needs of sports organizations, the number of systematically designed training and education programs for sport administrators is rising across Europe. However, some of the training courses and education programs organized for Sports Administrators seem to reinforce once again the figure of the Manager destined to a world of profit and gain. In reality, in an environment full of emotions such as sport, economic values, although significant and essential, must be able to coexist and highlight the primary values of sport, a social phenomenon and integration between people of different ethnic, gender, ability and religious backgrounds. Furthermore, it should be noted that human resources development is a long-lasting process and the results are not always short term and cannot be easily measured.

Sport Administrators must adapt to the great changes that sports management has undergone that goes from focusing on the public administration, to the rise of the private sector and be aware that the level of professionalism, knowledge and skills among sports managers in the public and private sectors must be similar, although the public ones has much less room for innovation and development. Therefore, it is necessary to change the mentality about the competences that must be developed by Sport Administrators, supporting a multidisciplinary approach, and reducing the importance of the classic management competences, to promote analysis and technological development skills for sports planning and management. Sports managers must consider Program (youth or adults) planning, computer application and utilisation, research interpretation, and statistics essential curriculum areas in the professional development.

Another aspect that emerged in this study is the acknowledgement of the professionalization trend driving much of the development in Sports in European countries. This trend focuses on increasing the number of staff with formal degrees in sport administration positions. The downside of such route is cost and time to obtain formal degrees. Paradoxically, this is in fact a comparatively





expensive solution due to the simple fact that individuals with formal degrees tend to expect formal employments and salaries. Hence, even if the governments cover the costs of a degree like in many EU countries where higher education is tax funded, employing a trained sport administrator is too expensive for many sport organizations. Financing the costs of such employment probably would require an increase in membership fees and demand more volunteer work from the membership in efforts to recruit more sponsors.

The main objective of the project “DEVELOPING SPORT ADMINISTRATION COMPETENCES (ADMINS)” is to address the content areas, skills and competences of sports administration employees that have not been considered as much in the past and can strengthen the capacities of sports organisations and contribute to better governance in sports. Such content areas, skills and competences are more analytical or internally rooted, For instance, problem analysis, critical thinking, decision making, innovation, professional expertise, cross-cultural agility, teamwork and team building, customer focus, inspiring others, business acumen, drive for results, learning agility/development, interpersonal skills, and strategic thinking.



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