Llopis-Goig, R.; García-Alcober, M.P.; Capsí, J. (2023) ORGANISATIONAL RESOURCES AND VOLUNTEERING. A STUDY FOCUSED ON SPANISH SPORTS CLUBS. Revista Internacional de Medicina y Ciencias de la Actividad Física y el Deporte vol. 23 (93) pp. 428-445. **DOI:** https://doi.org/10.15366/rimcafd2023.93.028

ORIGINAL

ORGANISATIONAL RESOURCES AND VOLUNTEERING. A STUDY FOCUSED ON SPANISH SPORTS CLUBS

RECURSOS ORGANIZACIONALES Y VOLUNTARIADO. UN ESTUDIO REFERIDO A LOS CLUBES DEPORTIVOS ESPAÑOLES

Llopis-Goig, R.[1]; García-Alcober, M.P.[2] & Capsí, J.[3]

[1] Doctor en Sociología. Catedrático de Sociología de la Facultad de Ciencias Sociales de la Universidad de Valencia (Spain) ramon.llopis@uv.es

[2] Doctora en Economía. Profesora de la Facultad de Derecho, Empresa y Ciencias Políticas de la Universidad CEU Cardenal Herrera (Spain) maria.garcia3@uchceu.es

[3] Doctor en Ciencias del Deporte. Profesor de la Facultad de Ciencias de la Actividad Física y el Deporte de la Universidad Católica de Valencia (Spain) josep.capsi@ucv.es

Spanish-English translator: Emily Caitlin Lily Knox, emily_knox2@hotmail.co.uk

Código UNESCO / UNESCO code: 6399 Otras especialidades sociológicas / Other sociological specialities
Clasificación Consejo de Europa / Council of Europe classification: 16. Sociología del deporte / Sociology of Sport

Recibido 23 de agosto de 2022 **Received** August 23, 2022
Aceptado 28 de octubre de 2023 **Accepted** October 28, 2023

ABSTRACT

The functioning and survival of sports clubs depends to a large extent on their ability to recruit and retain the volunteer staff with whom they carry out their day-to-day operations. This paper examines the initiatives undertaken by Spanish sports clubs for this purpose and the organizational resources that condition the implementation of such initiatives. The empirical basis comes from a sample of 433 clubs. Categorical principal components analysis enabled the classification of initiatives for recruiting and retaining volunteer staff into four groups: economic, relation, formal and informative. Categorical regression analysis revealed the differential influence of size, age, economic capital, professionalization, habitat and democratic culture on each of these groups.

The findings of the present study have implications for the management of volunteering at Spanish sports clubs.

KEY WORDS: volunteering, sports clubs, recruitment, organizational resources.

RESUMEN

El funcionamiento y supervivencia de los clubes deportivos depende en gran medida de su capacidad para reclutar y conservar al personal voluntario con el que llevan a cabo sus actividades diarias. Este artículo examina las iniciativas que llevan a cabo los clubes deportivos españoles con tal propósito y los recursos organizacionales que condicionan la puesta en marcha de tales iniciativas. La base empírica procede de una muestra de 433 clubes. El análisis de componentes principales categóricos ha permitido clasificar las iniciativas de reclutamiento y conservación del personal voluntario en cuatro grupos: económicas, relacionales, formales e informativas. El análisis de regresión categórica ha mostrado la influencia diferencial del tamaño, la edad, el capital económico, la profesionalización, el hábitat y la cultura democrática en cada una de ellas. Los hallazgos de este estudio tienen implicaciones para la gestión del voluntariado en los clubes deportivos españoles.

PALABRAS CLAVE: voluntariado, clubes deportivos, reclutamiento, recursos organizacionales.

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the main characteristics inherent to sports clubs is that they are non-profit in nature. Alongside this, the voluntary affiliation of their members and democratic nature of decision-making processes could should also be mentioned. Whilst such clubs are free to turn to (and often do) public subsidies they are mainly funded through their own resources, which gives them autonomy to set their own goals. Nonetheless, it is the voluntary aspect of the services these sports clubs provide that makes them particularly unique. Due to this, their functioning and survival largely depends on their ability to recruit and retain the individuals who run tasks in a voluntary way (Ibsen & Seippel, 2010), in other words, who engage out of their own will and without receiving any type of reward (although the club can compensate them financially for expenses incurred in relation to travel, food, materials, insurance or training, amongst other things).

The recruitment and retention of volunteer staff is, therefore, essential for the functioning and survival of sports clubs (Østerlund, 2013). Demographic changes, the reduction of public grants and the intensification of competition from for-profit sporting entities have increased the importance of volunteering as a critical resource of sports clubs (Gumulka et al., 2005; Wicker & Breuer, 2013b). Indeed, previous work to have questioned clubs about the challenges they face as organizations has highlighted recruitment and retainment of volunteering staff as one of the main challenges (Cuskelly, 2005; Gumulka et

al., 2005; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Seippel, 2004; Wicker, 2017). A recent study at European level (Breuer et al., 2017) showed the recruitment of volunteering staff at different levels to be one of the main threats to sports clubs in the majority of examined countries. Although interest in this research topic is virtually non-existent in Spain (Devís et al., 2010; Martínez-Lemos & Romo-Pérez, 2015), research into volunteering in sport is dominated by work targeting the identification of sociodemographic traits (Cuskelly, Hoye, et al., 2006; Ringuet et al., 2008; Wicker & Hallmann, 2013), volunteer motivation (Kim, 2018; Nichols et al., 2016; Schlesinger & Gubler, 2016), aspects modulating volunteer commitment to sports clubs (Emrich et al., 2014; Hallmann, 2015; Pérez & García-Montes, 2007; Schlesinger et al., 2013; Schlesinger & Nagel, 2018; Wicker & Hallmann, 2013). and the individual benefits provided by volunteering in terms of socialization, personal growth and wellbeing (Cuskelly, 2008; Heinemann, 1999).

Even more scarce, however, is work conducted into the recruitment initiatives run by sports clubs to encourage volunteering. Some such works have focused on aspects such as the influence of organizational support (Cuskelly & Hoye, 2013) and different organizational practice in relation to such initiatives (Cuskelly, Taylor, et al., 2006; Østerlund, 2013). Other studies have shone a spotlight on the influence of resources and club structure (Wicker & Breuer, 2013b, 2014) or economic resources (Coates et al., 2014). Cuskelly et al. showed that sports clubs that less often employ tools for planning, training and support face more issues when it comes to recruiting volunteering staff (Cuskelly, Taylor, et al., 2006). On the other hand, Østerlund examined the influence of different organizational practices on the recruitment of volunteering staff and showed that involving them in decision making (Østerlund, 2013), delegating tasks to them, recognizing the work they carry out, communicating with them through electronic processes and having a recruitment strategy available all improved recruitment.

In a similar sense, (Wicker & Breuer, 2013a, 2013b, 2014) highlighted that sports clubs that counted on a planning strategy, a training plan, greater income and a better collaborative climate faced fewer challenges at the time of recruiting and retaining volunteer staff. Coates et al. (2014) identified that challenges related to the financial state of the cub and volunteer staff recruitment were closely related (Coates et al., 2014). More recently, Seippel et al. showed that the perception of existing problems held by European sports clubs, including that related to the oversight of volunteers, depended to a large extent on their organizational capacity and resources (Çiçek et al., 2021; Seippel et al., 2020). Although some studies conducted at a European level have identified the main actions carried out by sports clubs to attract voluntary staff (Breuer et al., 2017), at the time of writing, no such study has examined the influence of organizational resources on recruitment initiatives or the retention of volunteering staff. This, therefore, constitutes the main overall aim of the present work. This aim is relevant for various reasons. Firstly, has already mentioned, many sports clubs are facing problems related with volunteering (Cuskelly, 2005; Gumulka et al., 2005; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Seippel, 2004; Wicker, 2017). Secondly, it has been found that the initiatives run by clubs to address these issues continue to be based on personal and informal decisions

(Schlesinger & Weigelt-Schlesinger, 2013), which are often substantiated on reactive and poorly planned actions (Schlesinger et al., 2015). Thirdly, when sports clubs strive to find solutions to issues such as volunteer recruitment, they often turn to strategies which have previously been attempted or they copy those of other clubs without reflecting on the type of action that would be most appropriate to their interests (Schlesinger et al., 2015). Fourthly, as noted by some previously conducted studies (Østerlund, 2013; Studer & Von Schnurbein, 2013), volunteer staff recruitment initiatives are often conditioned by the organizational resources available to sports clubs. In conclusion, volunteer staff provide a critical resource to sports clubs and, therefore, it is important to identify the organizational resources that facilitate recruitment and retention, with these largely depending on organizational capacity (Gwozdz et al., 2020).

The concept of organizational capacity, introduced by Hall et al. (2003), includes three types of capacity, namely, human, economic and structural (Hall et al., 2003). These capacities depend on the resources available to each club to meet their goals (Wicker & Breuer, 2011). Amongst the resources found to contribute to human capacity, the number of members and individuals employed by the club are found. With regards to economic capacity, resources to stand out include income per member and the balance between income and expenses. Finally, examples of structural capacity include the antiquity of the club, in other words, the number of years passed since its inception, in addition to its sports facilities, quality of social relationships and the degree to which the club involves its members in important decisions. This latter example also constitutes and indicator of the club's democratic culture (Seippel et al., 2020).

In accordance with that discussed above, the present work examines: a) The initiatives carried out by Spanish sports clubs to attract and increase loyalty amongst volunteer staff, and b) examine the organizational characteristics or resources the determine the delivery of these initiatives. These two main aims are addressed through three specific objectives. Firstly, to identify the types of initiatives carried out by sports clubs with the aim to recruit and retain sport volunteers. Secondly, to examine the influence of the organizational resources available to clubs (human, economic and structural) on the number of initiatives delivered. Thirdly, to examine the influence of organizational resources on the different types of recruitment and retention initiatives used to target sports volunteers. Following determination of the theoretical approach and research aims, next, the methodological approach and technical characteristics of the research are presented. Following this, results are presented before moving on to the discussion and conclusions.

2. METHOD

Data on which the present study is founded came from the *Social Inclusion and Volunteering in Sports Clubs in Europe* (SIVSCE) project, funded by the Erasmus+ program (Breuer et al., 2017). Within this project, an online questionnaire was administered to the presidents and directors of sports clubs. In order to administer the questionnaire in Spain, a register of the emails of the

sports clubs of six autonomous regions was used (Andalusia, Madrid, La Rioja, Asturias, Valencia and Navarra). The target population was made up by 8608 clubs, of which it was possible to make contact with 6045 clubs. Some clubs were not reached due to emails not being up to date, repeated or containing typographical mistakes. Fieldwork was conducted between the 15th of October and the 29th of November 2015. Between these two dates, two reminders were sent out (on the 3rd and 16th of November). The final obtained sample with which the present study was conducted pertained to 433 sports clubs. The dependent variable was recorded through a battery test which collected information on ten types of volunteer recruitment and retention initiatives. With regards to the independent variables, these were provided by antiquity (years passed since club inception), size (number of club members), degree of urbanization (size of the local area in which the club headquarters are located), level of professionalization (presence of paid management staff at the club), economic capital (club's average income per member) and democratic culture (involvement of members in the important decisions taken by the club).

Five categorical regression analyses were performed to address the research aims. These analyses took, as the dependent variable, the four types of volunteer recruitment and retention initiatives identified previously via categorical principal component analysis of the battery test of the ten aforementioned phrases. To these four types of initiative, an overall initiative index was added that was obtained by summing together the different types of actions performed by each club. In the case of the latter, it would have been possible to have employed either categorical or linear regression, however, given that the outcomes obtained by both procedures did not meaningfully differ, it was decided to employ the former. This enabled more homogenous interpretation of the overall set of obtained outcomes.

3. RESULTS

A total of 79.4% of Spanish sports clubs relied on at least one initiative to recruit and retain volunteer staff, whilst 20.6% did not make use of any such initiative. A total of 18.4% employed one initiative, whilst 19.9% employed two, 16.9% employed three, 10.8% employed four and 13.3% employed five or more. Relational or informative type initiatives (to encourage or motivate verbally) most stood out (46%) as being the most commonly employed initiative. This was followed by others which opted to inform members about expectations in relation to their contribution (36.4%), organize parties and volunteer meets (32.4%), and inform the parents of children or young members about the expectations of the club with regards to their contribution and enactment of voluntarily tasks (26.1%). A highly similar proportion of clubs sought to attract new volunteers through their own member and volunteer networks (25.2%).

Further, one in five clubs offered their volunteers rewards in the form of sporting equipment or reduced membership fees (22%), whilst one in ten paid for volunteers to complete training and obtain sports qualifications (12.7%). In addition, 10.4% of clubs relied on an individual who, whether as a volunteer or in a paid capacity, assumed specific responsibility over the management of

volunteers. Finally, 7% sought to recruit volunteers by posting adverts on their social network profiles or webpages, whilst 3.8% conformed to a written document that detailed their recruitment strategy for volunteers (Breuer et al., 2017; Llopis-Goig & García-Alcober, 2020; Llopis-Goig & Sola, 2017). With the aim of identifying the empirical structure formed from the data obtained following examination of these ten recruitment and retention initiatives for volunteer staff, a dimensionality reduction technique was applied. This technique also optimized the operationalization of data and facilitated later performance of dependence analysis. For this, categorical principal component analysis was employed (CATPCA). This is a multivariate statistical technique that enables the number of dimensions of a set of variables to be reduced, even in the case that some variables are nominal in nature. This was the case with the variables gathered from the aforementioned battery test, whose responses were dichotomously recorded. Categorical principal components analysis is a procedure based on scaling techniques which assigns scale values to variables that are ordinal or nominal in nature. In this way, it is possible to reduce the dimensionality of a set of variables measured on different scale types, whilst also considering the maximum degree of variation (Meulman et al., 2004). Application of CATPCA suggested the existence of four dimensions which explained 57.5% of the variance produced by the ten initial variables (see table 1).

Table 1: Categorial principal components analysis of initiatives adopted by Spanish sports clubs to recruit and retain volunteer staff

	C.1	C.2	C.3	C.4
The club pays for volunteers to take training or gain qualification (e.g., courses, licenses, etc.)	.844	.047	-.081	.075
The club rewards its volunteers with benefits in kind (e.g., no payment of membership fee, reduced membership fees, subsidized sport equipment etc.)	.725	.141	.159	.133
The club tries to recruit volunteers from outside existing club members (e.g., through advertising vacant positions on the webpage, social media profile…)	-.268	.637	-.176	.317
The club mainly recruits through the networks of current volunteers and members	.148	.627	.003	.043
The club encourages and motivates its volunteers verbally (talking with the volunteers, convincing them to carry on, etc.)	.364	.579	.353	-.040
The club arranges parties and social gatherings for the volunteers to strengthen group identity	.146	.454	.405	-.089
The club informs members that they are expected to contribute with voluntary work	-.087	.230	.750	-.015
The club informs parents of children who are members that they are expected to contribute with voluntary work	.128	-.203	.726	.133
The club has a volunteer or paid staff member with specific responsibility for volunteer management	.058	-.098	.165	.798
The club has a written strategy for volunteer recruitment	.147	.232	-.084	.657
Explained variance	15.3%	15.2%	14.8%	12.2%

Source: Developed by the authors. Unit: Rotated component loadings. Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization.

Table 1 presents the loadings pertaining to rotated components (Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization). The first component, responsible for 15.3% of variance, was positively saturated by two types of initiatives. These initiatives included paying voluntary staff to complete training and obtain qualifications, on the one hand, and the giving of payment in kind, on the other. In consideration of the characteristics of both initiatives, it was decided to name this component *economic initiatives*.

The second component groups together four initiatives. Specifically, recruitment via advertisements on social network profiles or webpages, encouragement and verbal motivation, the organization of parties and meets and, finally, recruitment via volunteer and member networks. These initiatives are all relational in nature in the sense that they recreate and are based on sociability. For this reason, this second component, responsible for 15.2% of variance, was named *relational initiatives*.

The third component groups together two types of initiatives that tend to inform members or the parents of enrolled children about the expectation for them to contribute to club activities in a voluntary capacity. This component explained 14.8% of variance and was denominated *informative initiatives*. Finally, another two types of actions pertaining to delegating the responsibility to manage volunteers to an individual and having a written volunteer recruitment strategy, positively loading onto a fourth component.

This fourth component explained 12.2% of model variance. This component was named *formal initiatives*. After conducting CATPCA and in accordance with obtained outcomes, we proceeded to develop four indices which grouped together different recruitment initiatives with the aim of using these as dependent variables in later analysis. Each of these indices were estimated by summing the variables established previously via CATPCA. Together with these four indices, a further index was calculated which was named *number of club initiatives.* This index was the product of adding together all of the initiatives ran by each club.

Taking a multivariate perspective, in order to examine the concurrent influence of the independent variables on different types of recruitment and retention initiatives targeting volunteer staff, categorical regression (CATREG) was used. This was deemed to be the most appropriate statistical technique given the ordinal nature of indices developed to describe different types of initiatives. It concerns a statistical procedure that quantifies categorical data by assigning numerical values to the categories.

From this, a linear regression equation is produced that fits the transformed variables. Categorical regression extends conventional approximation by scaling nominal, ordinal and numerical variables simultaneously (Pérez, 2009).

With regards to the independent variables, in accordance with the aims proposed in the first section, five variables were used which included the main organizational resources of the sports club (antiquity [years lapsed since inception of the club], size [number of club members], urbanization [size of the

local area in which the club is located], professionalization [presence of paid management staff], financial capital [income per member] and democratic culture [involvement of members in important decisions]. Table 2 presents descriptive statistics pertaining to the dependent and independent variables.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics

DEPENDENT VARIABLES	MEAN	SD	RANGE	N
Total number of initiatives	2.36	1.86	[0:9]	422
Economic initiatives	0.38	0.64	[0:2]	422
Relational initiatives	1.14	1.07	[0:4]	422
Formal initiatives	0.14	0.39	[0:2]	422
Informative initiatives	0.65	0.75	[0:2]	422
Independent variables (scale)	Mean	SD	Range	n
Antiquity (years since inception of the club)*	12.40	16.53	[0:108]	341
Size (number of members)*	114.95	370.58	[2:5927]	404
Urbanization (size of local area)	4.46	1.80	[1:7]	425
Financial capital (income per member)*	321.76	1781.62	[0:30000]	327
Democratic culture (member involvement socios)*	4.27	0.87	[1:5]	423
Independent variables (nominal)	Yes	No	Range	n
Professionalization (paid staff)	8.8%	91.2%	[1:2]	422

** Calculated prior to performing logarithmic or quadratic transformation.*

The first, second and fourth independent variables were quantitative in nature and were submitted to logarithmic transformation (Napierian logarithm) in order to correct for positive asymmetry (Cea d'Ancona, 2002). The fifth independent variable was submitted to quadratic transformation given that it presented negative asymmetry. With regards to the third (ordinal) and sixth (nominal) independent variables, both were directly entered into analysis given that they did not present either of the issues reported above.

Prior to proceeding to CATREG analysis, the absence of multicollinearity between the independent variables was checked and confirmed. For this, tolerance and variance inflation (VIF) factors were calculated (see table A in the appendix). The highest tolerance values produced corresponded to the degree of urbanization (size of local area) and financial capital (income per member), whilst the lowest values corresponded to the variables describing club size (number of member) and antiquity (years of existence).

In any case, all tolerance values were high and significantly different from 0.20, suggesting the absence of multicollinearity. With regards to FIV values, all were recorded to be below the reference value of 5.0, also suggesting the absence of multicollinearity (Cea d'Ancona, 2002). In order to confirm the absence of collinearity between independent variables, a second type of analysis was conducted by estimating eigenvalues and condition

numbers (see table B of the appendix). Eigenvalues indicate the number of independent dimensions pertaining to examined variables.

In the present study, eigenvalues pertaining to dimensions 5, 6 and 7 produced values close to zero. In any case, turning attention to the condition numbers, although the value pertaining to dimension 7 exceeded a value of 10, pointing to moderate collinearity, all other values were found to be far from the reference value of 30 which would indicate sever collinearity (Cea d'Ancona, 2002). All of the above means that the collinearity detected by statistical procedures was scarce and so it was not necessary to apply additional measures to the outcomes of the analysis.

Table 3 presents the outcomes produced by the different regression analyses. With the exception of the relational initiatives index, all models produced significant outcomes with regards to the analysis of variance. The first model included the total number of volunteer recruitment initiatives as the dependent variable. Analysis outcomes show a significant influence of three variables, namely, club size (β=.154), financial capital (β=.149) and democratic culture at the club (β=.132).

The Pratt index of relative importance (IRP) pertaining to the three variables reached a value of 81.5%. This may indicate that, the bigger the size of the club, greater financial capital and greater democratic culture, the higher the number of initiatives used by the club to recruit and retain volunteer staff. In the case of financial initiatives, the size of the club also constituted a predictor of the adoption of such initiatives (β=.101), although financial capital (β=.189) and professionalization of the club (β=.122) were more influential in this regard.

These three variables together produced a relative importance outcome of (IRP) 88.5%. Thus, higher levels of professionalization, financial capital and a bigger club size increase the likelihood that the club will put into place initiatives of a financial nature to recruit and retain volunteer staff. With regards to relational initiatives, the present model did not produce any significant outcomes (F=1.381; p=.221), although a significant outcome was produced in relation to the democratic culture (β=.126). Professionalization of the club was found to be a determinant of formal initiatives (β=.159), alongside size of the local area surrounding the club headquarters (β=.122), financial capital (β=.104) and club antiquity (β=.096). These variables obtained IRP values of 39.2%, 23.1%, 20.0% and 16.8%, respectively.

These outcomes highlight that a greater extent of professionalization, size of surrounding local area, financial capital and years of existence of the club lead to a greater likelihood of a determined club carrying out volunteer recruitment and retention initiatives that are formal in nature.

Finally, the size of the club (β=.178; IRP=38.9%) was shown to be the greatest determinant of whether or not informative initiatives were adopted, however, the club's financial capital (β=.156; IRP=28.5%) and democratic culture (β=.139; IRP=18.6%) should also be considered alongside this.

Table 3: Categorical regression analysis of the types of initiatives used to recruit and retain volunteering staff at Spanish sports clubs

MODEL SUMMARY	NUMBER OF INITIATIVES		ECONOMIC INITIATIVES		RELATIONAL INITIATIVES		FORMAL INITIATIVES		INFORMATIVE INITIATIVES	
Multiple R	.270		.295		.138		.281		.280	
R^2	.073		.087		.019		.079		.079	
Adjusted R^2	.060		.074		.005		.066		.060	
F (ANOVA)	5.59***		6.77***		1.38		6.10 ***		6.05 ***	
Variables	Beta (error)	IRP	Beta (error)	IRP	Beta (error)	IRP	Beta (error)	IRP	Beta (error)	IRP
Antiquity	.060 (.052)		.061 (.056)		-.010 (.050)		.096 (.054) *	16.8%	.056 (.054)	
Size	.154 (.056) **	34.8 %	.101 (.054) *	17.2%	.084 (.054)		.016 (.063)		.178 (.049) ***	38.9%
Urbanization	.010 (.049)		-.009 (.047)		-.009 (.052)		.122 (.046) **	23.1%	-.067 (.047)	
Professionalization	-.060 (.049)		.122 (.060) *	24.1%	.010 (.034)		.159 (.075) *	39.2%	.032 (.038)	
Financial capital	.149 (.049) **	32.0 %	.189 (.050) ***	47.2%	-.014 (.049)		.104 (.043) **	20.0%	.156 (.046) **	28.5%
Democratic culture	.132 (.048) **	14,7 %	-.024 (.051)		.126 (.048) *	73.9%	.010 (.050)		.139 (.043) **	18.6%

**** p<.001; ** p<.01; * p<.05. IRP = Pratt index of relative importance. Number of valid cases: 224. Note: The variables antiquity and size obtained p-values that were slightly higher than 0.05 in the models corresponding to formal and financial initiatives, respectively.*

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The present work provides evidence that the most typically adopted initiatives by Spanish sports clubs to recruit and retain volunteer staff correspond to relational and information-based approaches. This compares to a much more restricted use of finance-based initiatives or those directed towards formal planning processes or burocrotic retionality which, according to various previously conducted studies, are far more effective (Cuskelly, Taylor, et al., 2006; Østerlund, 2013; Wicker & Breuer, 2014). Further, it serves to highlight that one in five clubs (20.6%) reported not running any type of activity in this regard, whilst more than half (55.2%) reported adopting only between one to three of the ten examined initiatives.

From this, it can be concluded that Spanish sports clubs take little action when it comes to attracting volunteering staff and that the few actions they do take are mostly relational and pertain to the context of personal engagement and sociability. With regards to the first study aim, present outcomes demonstrate that the volunteer staff recruitment and retention initiatives run by Spanish sports clubs can be classified according to four groups: financial, relational, formal and informative.

Financial initiatives include actions such as the club paying the costs of volunteer staff training, courses for them to obtain qualifications, or offering some type of payment in kind. *Relational* initiatives pertain to various types of approaches to recruiting volunteer staff through existing volunteering networks, encouraging them and verbally motivating them, via social network profiles or webpages and by organizing parties and meets. *Formal* initiatives pertain to strategies based on formal or administrative rationality such as, for example, delegating the responsibility for coordinating volunteer staff to a single individual or employing a written volunteer recruitment strategy. Finally, *informative* initiatives correspond to strategies consistent with informing members or the parents of enrolled children about the expectations of the club for them to contribute through volunteer work.

With regards to the second study aim, present outcomes highlight the close relationship that exists between recruitment and retention initiatives targeting volunteer staff and the organizational resources on hand to sports clubs. More specifically, conducted analysis shows the existence of a positive linear association of the size of the club, financial capital and the democratic culture at the club with the overall number of volunteer staff recruitment and retention initiatives adopted by the club. This may be due to the fact that volunteer staff recruitment initiatives arise as a necessary response to the growth of the sporting entity (Barrett et al., 2018). A greater number of members tends to imply a greater need for voluntary personnel and, from this, it is logical that a higher number of initiatives is likely to be put into action (Cuskelly, Hoye, et al., 2006). On the other hand, larger clubs have less capacity to recruit automatically through spontaneous or non-systematic directives given that, the bigger the club, the less willing members are to perform tasks voluntarily (Nichols et al., 2005; Schlesinger & Nagel, 2013; Sharpe, 2006) This situation makes them more likely to put into action initiatives to entice volunteer staff that clubs that are smaller in size. In another sense, clubs with greater financial capital have more resources available and, therefore, are able to design and plan a greater number of initiatives, specifically targeting the recruitment and retention of volunteer staff. Finally, a more predominant democratic culture also predicts a stronger orientation towards the adoption of initiatives to recruit volunteer personnel. One possible reason for this may be due to the fact that allowing members to participate in decision making helps to achieve greater engagement and, at the same time, leads to greater commitment and alignment with the organizational needs and aims of the club.

With regards to the third study aim, present outcomes highlight that greater financial capital, professionalization and club size, in this order, increase the likelihood of the club putting initiatives in place that are *economic* in nature. Logically, when an organization has more financial resources available, it makes sense that they will dedicate a portion of these resources to putting initiatives in place that will secure a critical resource for their survival. Both recent changes to legislation on volunteering and the growing demand for quality by users and members, have led to volunteer staff taking on greater importance at clubs. Law 45/2015, passed on the 14th of October, recognizes the right of volunteers to be compensated for the expenses they incur through their volunteering activities and to receive appropriate information about how to

perform their activity. This being said, service users (classes, facilities, competitions, events…) are increasingly demanding with regards to the training of the individuals in charge of activities.

Volunteer staff training and technical qualifications are also synonymous with prestige of the organization and, therefore, compensation for the expenses incurred by these aspects is increasingly an aspect that cannot be ignored by sports clubs. Professionalization, in other words, the presence of paid staff at the club could have a demotivating effect on volunteer staff. In line with the extent to which their commitment to the club is selfless and tends to be founded on the expectation of reciprocity, the introduction of paid work could generate conflict.

One way of tackling such potential conflicts could be to offer financial rewards to volunteer staff. It is not a coincidence that larger clubs are more likely to lean on initiatives that are financial in nature. The requisite of reciprocity within such clubs is more likely to be weaker, with less stringent group cohesion also tending to emerge. This, in turn, could decrease the sense that one's efforts are corresponded. In addition, as club size increases so too does the heterogeneity of members and the likelihood that they may act out of personal interest. In order to avoid this situation, clubs may turn to initiatives to attract volunteer staff that are based on material rewards.

Analysis pertaining to *relational initiatives* did not produce significant outcomes. This suggests that these types of initiatives are not conditioned by the organizational resources on hand at the sports club. This outcome may be due to the fact that these types of initiatives are run by most clubs, regardless of their characteristics and, therefore, no meaningful differences exist between specific approaches. Nonetheless, outcomes did also demonstrate that clubs with a more democratic culture are more likely to adopt initiatives of this nature. In consideration of the fact that democratic culture was inferred through engagement of members in decision making and given that engagement promotes internal cohesion, it can be concluded that more internally cohesive clubs will be more likely to put relational initiatives in place. Such initiatives a linked to interpersonal relationships and meetings with relatives and close others.

The likelihood of adopting *formal initiatives* increases in more professionalized clubs and clubs located in urban settings, with greater financial capital and antiquity. Sports clubs were deemed to be more professional when they counted on paid management staff. These characteristics tends to point to the adoption of strategies aimed at increasing organization efficiency, for instance, by delegating work and developing standard procedures (Amis & Slack, 1996; Scott & Davis, 2007). In the sports clubs setting, such strategies are translated into delegating the responsibility to manage volunteer staff to a single individual or elaborating a document in which this strategy is laid out. Secondly, the size of the local surrounding area also conditions the adoption of formal initiatives.

This is likely explained by the fact that it is easier to reach volunteers in rural settings (Schlesinger & Nagel, 2013). Indeed, some studies have indicated that the inhabitants of municipalities with a total population of between two and five thousand participate in 2.17 times more activities relating to sports volunteering than those who reside in municipalities with more than half a million inhabitants (Balish et al., 2018). Thirdly, the reasons behind which greater financial capital predicts a greater likelihood of turning to formal initiatives are similar to those noted in the case of financial initiatives. This is because, whilst the actions inherent to them do not necessarily mean a financial outlay, the fact that the club has more income available assists them to put such initiatives into place and continue to run them. On the other hand, the fact that older clubs are more likely to develop formal initiatives is related with the greater extent to which their organizational structures are consolidated and the standardization of their operating procedures. This is outlined by the lifecycle theory of organizations.

Finally, club size, financial capital and democratic culture were found to be the strongest determinants of the adoption of *initiatives* that are *informative* in nature. These outcomes highlight that clubs with a greater number of members have a greater tendency to recruit volunteers by informing their members and their relatives about the expectations they hold for them to engage in voluntary activities. In this way, this approach concerns a type of action that appeals to the sense of responsibility of individuals in relation to their clubs and highlights the confidence of these clubs in their own networks, with this confidence increasing in line with the size of the club. This confidence may be related with the greater democratic culture inherent to clubs that develop informative initiatives, with outcomes pertaining to the inclusion of this variable in the model also being significant.

The present study was subject to a number of limitations which should also be outlined. Firstly, the survey used to provide the empirical basis of the work contained limited information about the organizational resources available to participating sports clubs. Secondly, the proportion of variance explained by the regression models was relatively small. Nevertheless, this limitation should be considered in light of the fact that the present study was only focused on the influence of clubs' organizational resources, however, other external aspects or those related to the individual characteristics or members could also influence the number and type of volunteer recruitment initiatives adopted.

Thirdly, the present study made it possible to examine the influence of a set of organizational resources on the number and type of initiatives adopted by sports clubs. This being said, the available information only enables limited conclusions to be suggested with regards to the motives behind this impact. It is necessary to carry out further qualitative analysis in order to uncover the mechanisms behind these relationships.

A number of implications can be derived from the present research findings which apply to the management of volunteering staff at sports clubs. These clubs tend to turn to informal outreach or relational approaches and only

very rarely target volunteer staff recruitment and retention through well-planned approaches, formally elaborated procedures or by compensating volunteering expenses. This situation is conditioned by factors such as being a small club, having limited financial resources and not being very professionalized. Nonetheless, adopting and putting such initiatives into place does not necessarily require a club to be large in size, have extensive financial resources or be highly professionalized. Volunteering could also be promoted by supporting staff training on strategic development matters. This would enable any club and, especially, smaller clubs with fewer economic resources and lacking in professionalization, to benefit from more effective actions which bring a critical resource to the club.

Basically, these actions consist of: a) Elaborating a document that lays out the volunteer staff recruitment strategy; b) Delegating responsibility to oversee volunteering-related issues to one or more club members; and c) Offering incentives to volunteering staff in terms of both training and compensation for expenses incurred by performing volunteer tasks. These recommendations should also be considered by public administrations seeking to promote sport associationism as they could promote and favor its implementation. The inclusion of these recommendations within activities performed with a degree of regularity such as, for example, the training of sports directors, and considering them when public grants are given out or support and guidance services are given to sports clubs.

FUNDING AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The present article was completed within the *Social Inclusion and Volunteering in Sports Clubs in Europe* project funded by the Erasmus+ program run by the European Commission [grant number 2014-3140/004]. The first author was the principal investigator of this project in Spain. We acknowledge the valuable contributions of all European partners in the delivery of the project. We also acknowledge Iñaki Sola, a member of the Spanish research team, for their early suggestions regarding the article.

6. REFERENCES

Amis, J., & Slack, T. (1996). The size-structure relationship in voluntary sport organizations. *Journal of Sport Management*, *10*(1), 76-86.

Balish, S. M., Rainham, D., & Blanchard, C. (2018). Volunteering in sport is more prevalent in small (but not tiny) communities: Insights from 19 countries. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, *16*(2), 203-213.

Barrett, D., Edmondson, L., Millar, R., & Storey, R. (2018). *Sports Club Volunteering 2018*. https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/sirc-se-sports-club-volunteers-report.pdf?VersionId=JlTZP10e0j_9kzTQYOF3InPLGuAvMEVn

Breuer, C., Feiler, S., Llopis-Goig, R., & Elmose-Østerlund, K. (2017). *Characteristics of European sports clubs. A comparison of the structure,*

management, voluntary work and social integration among sports clubs across ten European countries. University of Southern Denmark.

Cea d'Ancona, M. A. (2002). *Análisis multivariable. Teoría y práctica en la investigación social*. Síntesis.

Çiçek, E., Avşar, D., Yeldan, H., & Manaşırlı, M. (2021). Otoliths atlas of 77 fish species from the Iskenderun Bay, Northeastern Mediterranean Sea. *FishTaxa*, *19*, 9-55.

Coates, D., Wicker, P., Feiler, S., & Breuer, C. (2014). A bivariate probit examination of financial and volunteer problems of non-profit sport clubs. *International journal of sport finance*, *9*(3), 230-248.

Cuskelly, G. (2005). Volunteer participation trends in Ausltarlian sport. In *G. Nichols y M. Collins (eds.), Volunteers in sports clubs*. Leisure Studies Association.

Cuskelly, G. (2008). Volunteering in community sport organizations: Implications for social capital. In *M. Nicholson and R. Hoye, Sport and social capital*. Elsevier.

Cuskelly, G., & Hoye, R. (2013). Sports officials' intention to continue. *Sport Management Review*, *16*(4), 451-464.

Cuskelly, G., Hoye, R., & Auld, C. (2006). *Working with volunteers in sport: Theory and practice*. Routledge.

Cuskelly, G., Taylor, T., Hoye, R., & Darcy, S. (2006). Volunteer management practices and volunteer retention: A human resource management approach. *Sport Management Review*, *9*(2), 141-163.

Devís, J., Valenciano, J., Villamón, M., & Pérez, V. (2010). Disciplinas y temas de estudio en las ciencias de la actividad física y el deporte. *Revista Internacional de Medicina y Ciencias de la Actividad Física y del Deporte*, *10*(37), 150-166.

Emrich, E., Pitsch, W., Flatau, J., & Pierdzioch, C. (2014). Voluntary engagement in sports clubs: A behavioral model and some empirical evidence. *International review for the sociology of sport*, *49*(2), 227-240.

Gumulka, G., Barr, C., Lasby, D., & Brownlee, B. (2005). *Understanding the capacity of sports and recreation organizations. A Synthesis of Findings from the National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations and the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating*. Imagine Canada.

Gwozdz, A. M., Black, S. A., Hunt, B. J., & Lim, C. S. (2020). Post-thrombotic syndrome: Preventative and risk reduction strategies following deep vein thrombosis. *Vascular & Endovascular Review*, *3*, e15.

Hall, M., Andrukow, A., Barr, C., Brock, K., de Wit, M., Embuldeniya, D., Jolin, L., Lasby, D., Lévesque, B., Malinsky, E., Stowe, S., & Vaillancourt, Y. (2003). *The Capacity to serve: A qualitative study of the challenges facing Canada's nonprofit and voluntary organizations.* Canadian Centre for Philanthropy.

Hallmann, K. (2015). Modelling the decision to volunteer in organised sports. *Sport Management Review*, *18*, 448-463.

Heinemann, K. (1999). *Sociologia de las organizaciones voluntarias: el ejemplo del club deportivo*. Tirant lo Blanch

Ibsen, B., & Seippel, Ø. (2010). Voluntary organized sport in Denmark and Norway. *Sport in Society*, *13*(4), 593-608.

Kim, E. (2018). A systematic review of motivation of sport event volunteers. *World Leisure Journal*, *60*(4), 306-329.

Llopis-Goig, R., & García-Alcober, M. P. (2020). Spain: Conviviality, social relationships and democracy at the basis of Spanish sports clubs' culture. In *S. Nagel, J. Scheerder, B. Ibsen & K. Elmose-Østerlund (ed.), Functions of Sports Clubs in European Societies*. Springer.

Llopis-Goig, R., & Sola, I. (2017). *Inclusión social, voluntariado y clubes deportivos en Europa*. Nau Llibres.

Martínez-Lemos, I., & Romo-Pérez, V. (2015). El sector privado del deporte en España. Relación con población, producción y renta. *Retos*, *28*, 71-77.

Meulman, J. J., Van der Kooij, A. J., & Heiser, W. J. (2004). Principal components analysis with nonlinear optimal scaling transformations for ordinal and nominal data. In *D. Kaplan (ed.), The Sage handbook of quantitative methodology for the social sciences*. Sage.

Misener, K., & Doherty, A. (2009). A case study of organizational capacity in nonprofit community sport. *Journal of Sport Management*, *23*(4), 457-482.

Nichols, G., Knight, C., Mirfin-Boukouris, H., Uri, C., Hogg, E., & Storr, R. (2016). *Motivations of sport volunteers in England: A review for Sport England*. Sport England.

Nichols, G., Taylor, P., James, M., Holmes, K., King, L., & Garrett, R. (2005). Pressures on the UK voluntary sport sector. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, *16*(1), 33-50.

Østerlund, K. (2013). Managing voluntary sport organizations to facilitate volunteer recruitment. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, *13*(2), 143-165.

Pérez, C. (2009). *Técnicas estadísticas multivariantes con SPSS*. Garceta.

Pérez, I., & García-Montes, M. E. (2007). Voluntarios deportivos versus profesionales remunerados. *Retos*, *11*, 5-10.

Ringuet, C., Cuskelly, G., Zakus, D., & Auld, C. (2008). *Volunteers in sport: Issues and innovation*. A report on a research-based consultancy project for NSW Sport and Recreation. Griffith University.

Schlesinger, T., Egli, B., & Nagel, S. (2013). 'Continue or terminate?'Determinants of long-term volunteering in sports clubs. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, *13*(1), 32-53.

Schlesinger, T., & Gubler, R. (2016). Motivational profiles of sporting event volunteers. *Sport in Society*, *19*(10), 1419-1439.

Schlesinger, T., Klenk, C., & Nagel, S. (2015). How do sport clubs recruit volunteers? Analyzing and developing a typology of decision-making processes on recruiting volunteers in sport clubs. *Sport Management Review*, *18*(2), 193-206.

Schlesinger, T., & Nagel, S. (2013). Who will volunteer? Analysing individual and structural factors of volunteering in Swiss sports clubs. *European journal of sport science*, *13*(6), 707-715.

Schlesinger, T., & Nagel, S. (2018). Individual and contextual determinants of stable volunteering in sport clubs. *International review for the sociology of sport*, *53*(1), 101-121.

Schlesinger, T., & Weigelt-Schlesinger, Y. (2013). "Coaching soccer is a man's job!"–The influence of gender stereotypes on structures for recruiting

female coaches to soccer clubs. *European Journal for Sport and Society*, *10*(3), 241-265.

Scott, W. R., & Davis, G. F. (2007). *Organizations and organizing: Rational, natural and open systems perspectives*. Routledge.

Seippel, Ø. (2004). The world according to voluntary sport organizations: voluntarism, economy and facilities. *International review for the sociology of sport*, *39*(2), 223-232.

Seippel, Ø., Breuer, C., Elmose-Østerlund, K., Feiler, S., Perényi, S., Piątkowska, M., & Scheerder, J. (2020). In troubled water? European sports clubs: Their problems, capacities and opportunities. *Journal of Global Sport Management*. https://doi.org/10.1080/24704067.2020.1806493

Sharpe, E. K. (2006). Resources at the grassroots of recreation: Organizational capacity and quality of experience in a community sport organization. *Leisure sciences*, *28*(4), 385-401.

Studer, S., & Von Schnurbein, G. (2013). Organizational factors affecting volunteers: A literature review on volunteer coordination. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, *24*(2), 403-440.

Wicker, P. (2017). Volunteerism and volunteer management in sport. *Sport Management Review*, *20*(4), 325-337.

Wicker, P., & Breuer, C. (2011). Scarcity of resources in German non-profit sport clubs. *Sport Management Review*, *14*(2), 188-201.

Wicker, P., & Breuer, C. (2013a). Exploring the critical determinants of organisational problems using data mining techniques: evidence from non-profit sports clubs in Germany. *Managing Leisure*, *18*(2), 118-134.

Wicker, P., & Breuer, C. (2013b). Understanding the importance of organizational resources to explain organizational problems: Evidence from nonprofit sport clubs in Germany. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, *24*(2), 461-484.

Wicker, P., & Breuer, C. (2014). Exploring the organizational capacity and organizational problems of disability sport clubs in Germany using matched pairs analysis. *Sport Management Review*, *17*(1), 23-34.

Wicker, P., & Hallmann, K. (2013). A multi-level framework for investigating the engagement of sport volunteers. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, *13*(1), 110-139.

APPENDIX

Table A: Collinearity statistics

	Tolerance	VIF
Age	.797	1.255
Size	.773	1.293
Urbanization	.929	1.077
Professionalization	.886	1.129
Financial capital	.894	1.118
Democratic culture	.959	1.043

Table B: Collinearity diagnostics

	EIGENVALUES	CONDITION	CONSTANT	PROPORTION OF VARIANCE					
				E	T	U	P	CF	CD
Dimension 1	5.602	1.000	.00	.01	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Dimension 2	.875	2.530	.00	.00	.00	.00	.89	.00	.00
Dimension 3	.237	4.858	.00	.65	.00	.07	.00	.00	.05
Dimension 4	.129	6.594	.00	.00	.00	.41	.02	.01	.45
Dimension 5	.079	8.409	.01	.32	.25	.39	.00	.10	.16
Dimension 6	.061	9.616	.00	.00	.35	.05	.02	.64	.00
Dimension 7	.017	17.986	.98	.02	.39	.08	.07	.24	.34