

# Analysis of sport management subjects in university Sports Sciences degrees in Spain

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## ABSTRACT

Sport management field has been growing in recent years and more Sport Sciences graduates are employed within this field. For that reason, it seems interesting to analyse the current situation of the sport management subjects within the Sports Sciences Degrees to enhance sport graduates' employability into this area. This paper aims to offer an overview of sport management subjects enclosed by the Sports Sciences degrees, both in public and private Spanish universities. A total of 219 subjects related to sport management were extracted from the website of the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities and data was codified and analysed using descriptive and content analysis. Results showed that there is no significant difference between the number of subjects taught in public and private universities, but there are differences in the academic structure (evaluation type, contents taught or compulsory and optional subjects). In addition, this analysis reveals the need to balance the contents related to sports management besides to include sport tourism, entrepreneurship, sustainability, gender perspective or Information and Communication Technology content to adapt students' skills to the needs of today's society.

## 1. Introduction

In recent decades, the sports sector has seen a great development, not only in terms of participants, but also in terms of the supply of different sports services and infrastructures (Ros-Castello et al., 2019). This growth can be explained by the change in the status of sport in society, from being seen as a leisure option to being related to health and wellbeing and thanks to the increase in economic activity and investment dedicated to sport (Calabuig-Moreno et al., 2008; Salgado-Barandela et al., 2019). This increase in sport consumption and the diversification of sport practice have led to the appearance of a wide variety of job opportunities related to the sport sector in a very important way (Silva-Piñero, 2020), both in the public and private sectors (Ros-Castello et al., 2019), so that the professional needs of the graduate in Sports Sciences (hereinafter, SS) have changed.

As this sector has been developed and diversified, different regulations have appeared related to academic qualifications for accessing certain jobs related to the sports sector (Pérez-Villalba et al., 2016). Hence, nowadays, there are many professional fields in which graduates find a place for their professional development, including teaching, coaching, management, health, performance and leisure (National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation [ANECA], 2005). However, according to Ibáñez (2008, p. 41),

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“teaching, management, technical direction, sport, physical conditioning, health, leisure and recreation and research are fields in which the SS graduate does not have sufficient training”.

This is a worrying fact, since the training of SS graduates needs to be adapted and connected to the demands and transformations of the labour market and professional performance in Physical Activity and Sport (Campos-Izquierdo & Martín-Acero, 2016). In fact, in recent years, according to Michavila et al. (2018), employability has become one of the pillars of the new educational model of higher education and one of the priorities of universities within the framework of the European Higher Education Area (hereinafter, EHEA), promoting a teaching-learning model aimed at the acquisition of competences. With this in mind, it is increasingly essential to have information on the labour market insertion and career paths of graduates in order to be able to strategically design curricula. For this reason, it becomes essential to know if the sport management subjects taught within the SS Bachelor's Degrees, and the contents presented in each, are adequate to ensure the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competencies. They will facilitate and ensure the employability and quality of the training received by future graduates.

In this context, ANECA is the main body responsible for assessing the suitability and appropriateness of Spanish degrees, using indicators related to labour market insertion and the competences acquired throughout their development, always in accordance with Spanish legislation (Michavila et al., 2018). In this sense, Michavila et al. (2018) highlight the importance of these competences and the role they can play in promoting factors such as productivity, competitiveness, innovation and cohesion, among others.

A point to consider in training and assessment plans is the transition of university students to the labour market to offer high levels of quality. For this reason, it should be emphasised that labour market integration is an aspect that corresponds to the university, which is the mediating entity between the social construct and vocational training (García-Fernández et al., 2013). Thus, “the training-employment binomial must lead to a correspondence between the training required by the jobs and the training provided by the university centres” (Amador-Ramírez, 1997, p. 64). Once studied the professional profile and competences that a sport manager possesses and should possess (e.g., Gómez-Tafalla & Núñez-Pomar, 2011; Wohlfart et al., 2020), it is also important to study how the training that future professionals receive is adapted to these market and societal needs and to what extent sport management training programmes meet these expectations. This aspect is the starting point in the development of the present research.

Bearing in mind that university education must be adapted to the demands of the labour market, some elements of analysis are set out, as indicated by Amador-Ramírez (1997). It is necessary to have a good knowledge of the professional profiles, their tasks and functions in order to prepare qualified and competent professionals. It is also important that the organisation and management of Physical Activity (hereinafter, PA) acquires a preponderance, without forgetting the areas of greatest incidence in School Physical Education and competitive sport.

Considering the different areas of insertion that ANECA (2005) analyses for SS graduates, Gambau (2014) identifies sport management as the first professional opportunity among SS graduates. Students are also aware of the scarce public offer related to teaching, and it is for this reason that management appears among the first options they opt for (García-Fernández et al., 2013). Even so, sport management remains a relatively young and constantly evolving discipline, that requires the presence of adequately trained professionals with a specific body of knowledge who are capable of performing a job in the field of sport management (Méndez-Rial, 2014; Tortosa-Martínez et al., 2010). However, it may be the least developed among the different curricula (Gambau, 2014). This demonstrates the need to deepen the analysis of curricula related to sport management, not only to increase the specific literature on this subject, but also to enhance the development of sport management as an academic discipline (Gallardo-Guerrero et al., 2021).

This study aims to carry out an analysis of the subjects related to sport management that are taught in the SS Bachelor's Degree at Spanish universities, with the intention of discovering the position of sport management training within this degree. Three different research questions (RQ) are proposed:

RQ1. What is the academic structure of the sport management subjects in the SS Bachelor's Degree at the Spanish universities (number of sport management subjects per university, number of credits of these subjects, online or on site, compulsory or optional subjects, distribution and number of topics per sport management subject)?

RQ2. How is being evaluated the training in sport management subjects in the SS Bachelor's Degree at the Spanish universities (continuous or final evaluation, weight of the exam and differences in evaluation between compulsory and optional sport management subjects)?

RQ3. What are the contents of the teaching guides of the sport management subjects in the SS Bachelor's Degrees at Spanish universities and to what extent do they provide emergent and transversal contents for the development of today's society?

In this way, one of the goals is to discover what content should be learnt by students of the Bachelor's Degree in SS in order to subsequently develop their functions as possible future sport managers, and to improve the employability of future SS graduates. This kind of studies are encouraged, for example, by Seifried et al. (2021) when suggest that future studies should continue to explore the ways in which sport management programmes and schools of business integrate, and the number of sport management programmes in colleges and schools of business and their corresponding growth or impact, the emergence and maintenance of industry partnerships, and the trends in courses and specialisations offered.

The relationship between the contents of sport management subjects and some latent areas in today's society: sustainability, entrepreneurship, tourism, the gender perspective and the use of Information and Communication Technologies (hereinafter, ICT) are also analysed. These topics could have a great impact on the development of sports services in the coming times (Campillo-Sánchez et al., 2021; González-Serrano et al., 2019; Gregori et al., 2020; Pérez-Flores and Muñoz-Sánchez, 2018; Piedra, 2019; Valcarce et al., 2016).

The information presented in this study may be of great relevance to address the growing difficulties related to the labour market

insertion of SS graduates due to the mismatch between the training received and the requirements of the jobs within the Spanish context. It also serves as a starting point to analyse the state of sports management teaching in an international context, showing a clear picture of sports management teaching in Spain. This study could be useful to compare it with other countries and it would allow to know if there is a homogeneous education, that help improving university training in sports management in a more global way. The search for homogeneity and internationalisation in higher education has its beginnings, in Europe, through the Bologna Declaration, whose objectives were to establish the EHEA and to promote the European system of higher education worldwide (EHEA, 1999). In this way, the present study, mapping the Spanish context, initiate and contribute to the pursuit of this common goal, and to fulfil the objectives of the Bologna Process, established by the EHEA (1999). Some of these objectives are the adoption of an easily understandable and comparable degree system, the promotion of European cooperation in quality assurance and the promotion of the necessary European dimensions in higher education. This research fits with Jones et al. (2008) perspective on that analysis of sport management programmes is important for potential students as well as for the future development of sport management as an academic discipline.

## 2. Theoretical framework

### 2.1. University studies of sport: evolution of the Bachelor's Degree in SS in Spain

The first law on Physical Education (hereinafter, PE) was Law 77/1961 of 23 December (p. 18,125), which proclaimed “the right and duty of Spaniards to physical education as an essential part of the health and welfare of the people, and so that through it they can obtain the benefits implied by the generalised practice of sport”. Likewise, in this same law, PE is definitively established as a fundamental part of Spanish education and, furthermore, the practice of sport is contemplated as its natural projection, freeing the concept from any restricted or private nuance and returning it to the full Spanish society.

Law 77/1961 of 23 December 1961 provides several chapters for the regulation of PE. Among them, it is worth highlighting the importance of the sixth chapter, which sets out the creation of the National Institute of Physical Education (hereinafter, INEF). Article 15 of the aforementioned law establishes the legal conditions of the INEF in the training and further training of PE teachers and sports coaches, as well as scientific research, among others.

In the 1970s, through the General Education Act of 1970, the situation of the Teacher Training Centres in PE was regulated, and an important step was taken towards the recognition of their academic level, although they were still dependent on an administrative body far removed from the university teaching world, which made it difficult to integrate the INEF into the university (Universidad

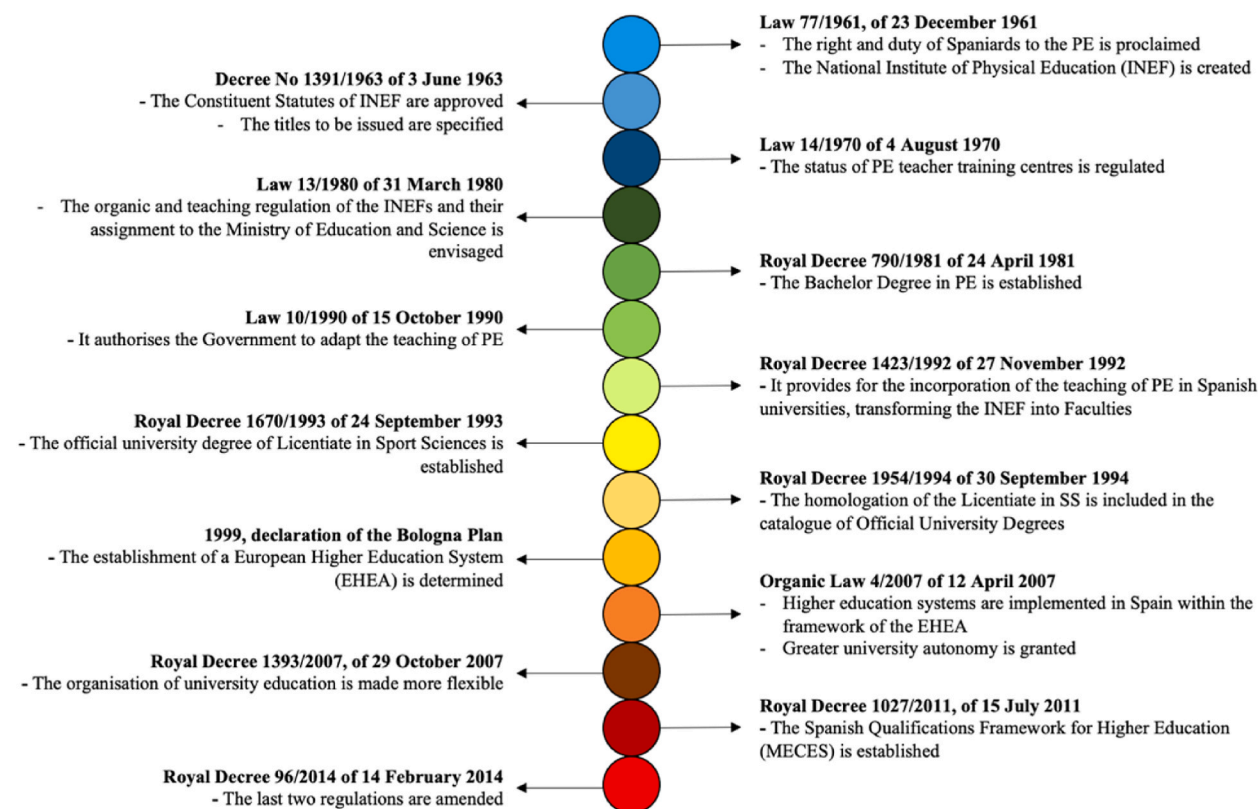


Fig. 1. Evolution of laws and decrees on PE studies.

Politécnica de Madrid [UPM], 2021). It was not until 1980, when Law 13/1980 of 31 March 1980 on Physical Culture and Sport was enacted, that the organic and teaching regulation of the existing INEFs (Madrid and Barcelona) and their assignment to the Ministry of Education and Science was envisaged. In 1981, by means of a Royal Decree, the Bachelor Degree in Physical Education was established (ANECA, 2005). From that time onwards, and until the new study guidelines were approved, the degree comprised two university cycles, the first lasting three years and the second two years. The first one led to the award of a Diploma and the second to the award of a Bachelor's Degree in Physical Education (UPM, 2021).

Subsequently, in the 1990s, different laws and royal decrees on sport were passed that affected university studies in PE. This evolution can be seen in Fig. 1, which shows the most relevant laws, decrees, and changes in the evolution of these studies over the last few decades. It is worth highlighting, in the 1990s, Royal Decree 1670/1993 of 24 September, through which the Ministry of Education and Science established the official university degree of Bachelor of Sports Sciences (ANECA, 2005). The title of Bachelor in Physical Education was changed, as the term "Sports Sciences" was more appropriate to encompass the physical-sports fact, which was evolving from a linear and homogeneous structure to a multiple and heterogeneous one, and which had to be taken into account when designing university education (UPM, 2021).

In 1999, as Muñoz-Cantero and Mato-Vásquez (2014) explain, a significant change was initiated with the materialisation of the Bologna Declaration, which determines the establishment of a European system of higher education by 2010, a teaching project in the EHEA. In Spain, it became effective with the Organic Law 4/2007 of 12 April, in which a firm commitment is made to:

The harmonisation of higher education systems within the framework of the European Higher Education Area and assumes the need for a profound reform in the structure and organisation of teaching, based on three cycles: Bachelor, Master and Doctorate. This is a response to the desire of the university community to establish the 11 principles of a common area based on mobility, recognition of qualifications and lifelong learning (p. 16,241).

After the implementation of this law, which is still in force in 2022, the EHEA transparency tools in higher education in Spain are the European Credit Transfer System (hereinafter ECTS) and the European Diploma Supplement (Salaburu et al., 2011). Organic Law 4/2007, of 12 April, also grants greater university autonomy, so that the universities themselves are the ones who create and propose, in accordance with the established rules, the courses and degrees they offer and award, and are no longer subject to the existence of a prior catalogue established by the Government.

Subsequently, Royal Decree 1393/2007 of 29 October 2007 adopted a series of measures to make the organisation of university education more flexible. These measures promote curricular diversification and allow universities to take advantage of their capacity for innovation, strengths and opportunities, as well as being compatible with the EHEA. The new organisation of university courses, apart from responding to a structural change, also promotes a change in teaching methodologies, which focuses on the student learning process. The traditional approach based on content and teaching hours is extended to include the acquisition of competences by students.

In this new framework of higher education, the guidelines set out oblige universities to have their own quality systems for the development of university degrees, for which the evaluation of the teaching guides is important, which must respond to the elements that the study plan must have (Muñoz-Cantero & Mato-Vásquez, 2014).

## 2.2. Sport management in the SS Bachelor's Degrees in Spain

During the evolution of the SS, the training of the sport manager has been shaped as a specialisation in an improvised and rather late manner (Rodríguez-Romo et al., 2002). Sport management, as it is understood today and still considered a young discipline (Méndez-Rial, 2014), was originated at the beginning of the 20th century, but it is in the 21st century when it was consolidated as a specific area of the SS, distinguishing its two aspects: professional and scientific. This is also supported by Seifried et al. (2021), who discovered that sport management serves as home to multiple research centres and other entrepreneurial initiatives.

There are several reasons that justify a greater need for the training of sport managers, such as the important and growing role of public institutions in the promotion of sport, materialised among other aspects in the construction of an extensive network of public sports facilities in recent decades and in the development of regional and municipal competences in this area (Padierna-Cardona, 2019; Rodríguez-Romo et al., 2002; Salgado-Barandela et al., 2019). Each country, at European and global level, has a different system of sport organisation (Petry et al., 2004), so that management, at different territorial levels and in public-private terms, may differ from other countries.

Thus, sport management stands out for the increase that has taken place in this area of professional insertion, over the last few decades, compared to other areas. It has currently positioned itself as the second job option for PA and sport professionals, surpassing the field of coaching (Pérez-Villalba et al., 2016). As Skinner and Gilbert (2007) stated, the push for curriculum coverage as a driving force in sport management education creates challenges for sport management educators who aspire to cultivate a critical thinking and issues-based approach to teaching and learning. For this reason, it is important to examine the field of sport management education in the university since, as Gambau (2014) indicates, it is possibly the least developed professional outlet in the curricula with respect to the number of subjects.

This visible growth over the last decades in the Spanish university context, specifically in the SS, can be compared to the situation that sport management has experienced in the international context. In the USA, for example, sport management studies have had a different trajectory, as explained by Seifried et al. (2021). Despite the growth, in the USA, it has not only been the faculties of health/kinesiology sciences (comparable to the SS in Spain) the only that have taught management programmes, but also business schools. Specifically, in this North American context, by 2010, the number of sport management programmes in colleges or schools of business increased to 25%, and sport management degrees are available at over 500 schools in the USA (Seifried et al., 2021). In

Germany, among other European countries, it also exists specific sport management programmes (51 in 2020), for undergraduate and graduate studies, some of them organised in SS faculties and sometimes at faculties of economics or business administration (Wohlfart et al., 2020). Although it is a relatively new field under construction, especially in the Spanish university context, the growth of study programmes in sport management is evident, both at an independent level or integrated in other more generic programmes. This explains that sport management is not a completely defined field, without historical consistent academic structures, which requires a certain consensus among higher education institutions to determine what will allow this field to evolve in the same direction worldwide.

### 2.3. The profile of the sports manager and the importance of his or her academic backgrounds

In the professional dissemination report on the labour market situation of university graduates in SS in 2019 (COLEF, 2019), it can be seen that teaching continues to be the area of work where most professional practice in the field of sport is carried out, despite having decreased over the years due to diversification. In this sense, the professionals in the sector who work in teaching are those who work most in the public sphere and with greater job stability, most of them being civil servants or permanent employees.

As for sports management, it is found in both the public and private spheres, but in both there is a predominance of civil servant and permanent contracts. In this way, sport management is considered to be one of the best paid and with the lowest number of multi-occupations, together with teaching (COLEF, 2019). The COLEF (2019) confirms that the factor of job stability has conditioned and continues to condition in a decisive way the choice of professional field (Sánchez & Rebollo, 2000).

Sport management, based on the fulfilment of the aims of an organisation, company or action, aims to seek the greatest benefits, not only economic, but that can also and should be obtained through sport and its practice (López-Carril et al., 2019). That is why, in order for a sport manager to achieve the best performance -balance between benefits and costs, of all kinds, not only economic-he or she must know which are the components with which to work (Mestre-Sancho, 2013). In this way, the fact that sports entities have become an entity that generates a lot of income, gives great importance to the academic preparation of the sports manager.

The professionalisation of the sector implies a greater investment in human resources, and this leads to the emergence of more figures than the sports coordinator, manager and director (Méndez-Rial, 2014). All this has contributed to creating a very diverse situation in which to offer an increasingly specialised offer with quality guarantees (González-Naveros et al., 2020).

The constant transformation of society demands an adaptation of the university, as well as an adaptation of university education to the expectations of social demand and the labour market (Amador-Ramírez, 1997; Cancela & Ayán, 2010; López-Carril et al., 2019). Added to the basic training that the manager must have, it is advisable that he/she possesses specific knowledge related to sport. Specifically, on administration, organisation, legislation and economics/finance; group dynamics, applied sociology, marketing and public relations; maintenance and technologies, such as statistical data processing (Mestre-Sancho, 2013). At the same time, they must be able to achieve the objectives they have set themselves, be able to make decisions and have competences in personnel and teamwork. In this sense, Salgado-Barandela et al. (2019) group the competences of the sport manager into four components, identifying: organisation, interaction, reflection and leadership. The sports manager must also be characterised by certain personal qualities, such as: ability to lead, diplomacy, flexibility, personality, ability to delegate functions, communicative nature, dynamism, creativity, self-criticism, loyalty, foresight and knowing how to be respected (Mestre-Sancho, 2013). Similarly, Salgado-Barandela et al. (2019) talk about skills, which for Mestre-Sancho (2013) are personal qualities, pointing out: decisiveness, management, motivation, initiative and communication.

Considering the above, it is important that the sports manager has multidisciplinary training, as he or she must possess a large number of competencies and skills of a diverse nature, as well as being sufficient to carry out these tasks and meet the expectations demanded by the current practice (Gómez-Tafalla & Núñez-Pomar, 2011). Salgado-Barandela et al. (2019) highlight the lack of an adequate delimitation of the functions of sport managers and a correct configuration of the job position. On the other hand, Mestre-Sancho (2013) defines the elements that constitute sport management, knowing that management, applied to sport, becomes a process that requires the coordinated and interdependent action of various factors that the manager must be aware of. Mestre-Sancho (2013) differentiates between two elements (see Table 1):

Mestre-Sancho (2013, p. 4) explains that the figure of the sport manager is defined as “a suitably trained and prepared person,

**Table 1**  
Elements for the sports manager to be aware of.

Basic or primary	Secondary
The sporting needs and aspirations of the population	Statistics and accounting
Sporting and non-sporting legislation applicable to sport	Sport marketing and dissemination
Sport organisations and those responsible for them	Sport documentation
Planning as a working method	Group dynamics and public relations
Budgets or economic resources	New technologies and their possibilities for management
Sport programmes	
Sport facilities	
Sport technicians	
Ethics and values in sport	
The environment and its protection	

Source: Mestre-Sancho (2013).



dedicated to the exercise of their profession by carrying out the functions of management, applied to sport".

The sport industry is comprised of various organisational settings offering a diverse range of employment opportunities (Seifried et al., 2021), and thus, education plays an important role in the future of this industry. As Skinner and Gilbert (2007) explain, the role for sport management educators is to develop their students' ability to link thought and action using a two-stage process. These two-stage process consist on: (1) reflective thinking, when they need to objectively reflect on their subjective ability to think, know and act and are then able to be reflexive; and (2) praxis, which goes beyond the objective/subjective unity of reflexive thinking towards individuals applying theory to practice.

Been known the role that education plays, it is also important, for the sector, that educative institutions go through the same direction. In this sense, in USA, for instance, core content areas were also established to provide undergraduate students with the common body of knowledge necessary in sport management. These programmes include: behavioural dimensions in sport, management and organisational skills in sports, ethics in sport management, marketing in sport, communication in sport, finance in sport, economics in sport, legal aspects of sport, governance in sport, and field experience in sport management (Skinner & Gilbert, 2007). It is important for the sports industry and sport management field that studies, in higher education level in an international context, try to follow the same way, for a positive future development. For this purpose, the following research has been done in order to map the situation of sport management studies in Spain.

### 3. Method

For this study, a qualitative, cross-sectional and descriptive study was carried out through the content analysis research method, analysing the curriculum of all Spanish universities (public and private) in which the degree of SS is taught. Within these, all the subjects corresponding to the field of sports management were selected, including those subjects related to the direction, management and/or administration of sports entities, the design and/or coordination of sports activities of any kind, economic or personnel management, maintenance of facilities, supply or marketing and promotion of any sports entity, following the classification of sports management according to ANECA (2005). For the present analysis, subjects related to recreation have also been taken into account. This is due to the fact that in the ANECA's book of the Physical Activity and Sports Sciences Degree it brings together management and recreation as a unified field (Gambau, 2014).

#### 3.1. Sample

The sample of this study is made up of a total of 219 subjects related to sport management taught in public (67.58%) and private (32.42%) Spanish universities that taught the degree of SS.

#### 3.2. Instrument

For the collection of information, a record sheet was designed to include each of the variables under study, adapted from Gallardo-Guerrero (2021), as well as including those variables considered interesting for the present study (Table 2).

#### 3.3. Procedure

This study was carried out during the months of February and March of 2021. All Spanish universities offering the degree in SS

**Table 2**  
Record sheet variables and options.

Variable	Options
1-Autonomous Community	Numeric
2-University ownership	Public or private
3-Attendance	Online, blended or presential
4-Academic course	1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th or 5th
5-Semester	1st or 2nd
6-Character of the subject	Compulsory or optional
7-Number of credits	Numeric
8-Number of teachers	Numeric
9-Evaluation system	Continuous, final or mixed
10-Exam Weighting	Numeric
11-Weighting of work	Numeric
12-Attendance Weighting	Numeric
13-Number of topics	Numeric
14-Type of subject	Typology
15-Content on sustainability	Yes or No
16-Content on entrepreneurship	Yes or No
17-Content on gender perspective	Yes or No
18-Content on Tourism	Yes or No
19-Content about ICTs or technology	Yes or No

during the academic year 2020–2021 were selected through the website of the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities (QEDU), which lists the official studies that have been verified by the Council of Universities and their joint programs, and does not include their own degrees.

As a result of the search, a total of 56 records were obtained, of which 48 were used after discarding some of them for not corresponding to the SS degree, for being double degree programs, for appearing as affiliated institutions and/or for appearing as duplicate institutions. Once the search was completed and determined the final list of universities that corresponded to the characteristics described above, we proceeded to the analysis of the curriculum of each of them to subsequently select those subjects that included in the title the words “Management”, “Sports management”, “Sports equipment and/or facilities”, “Sports events”, “Organisation of sports services”, “Sports management”, “leisure”, “recreation”, as well as those with content related to the field of management of sports companies and/or services such as “Sports marketing”, “Sports legislation” or “Creation and/or Administration of sports companies”. A total of 219 subjects were obtained. These keywords were identified by a group of experts formed by university professors of sports management subjects in the degree of SS and in postgraduate courses related to sport management.

Once these subjects were detailed, all the information available through the web pages of the universities themselves was analysed and the information contained in the teaching guides of each of them was analysed. However, it was not possible to obtain all the information of interest, either because it was not possible to have direct access to their teaching guides or because their information was not fully developed. Therefore, in relation to the content of the subjects, it was only possible to obtain information on 178 of the subjects. Once all the details of interest had been analysed, all the information was entered in the aforementioned record sheet (see Fig. 2).

### 3.4. Statistical analysis

After purification of the data matrix obtained through the registration sheet, the data were dumped and analysed through the IBM SPSS statistical program (v.25) performing a descriptive analysis of each of the existing categories and variables, in addition to analysing through contingency tables and Chi-Square tests to determine whether there was a statistically significant relationship between various variables. Comparison tests of column proportions with a significance level of less than 0.05 and the value of the contingency coefficient (C) were also used to test the intensity of the association or the size of the effect of the related variables.

## 4. Results

In order to clarify the results obtained, they have been divided into three different sections, distinguishing between the academic structure, the evaluation of the subjects and the contents of the subjects analysed.

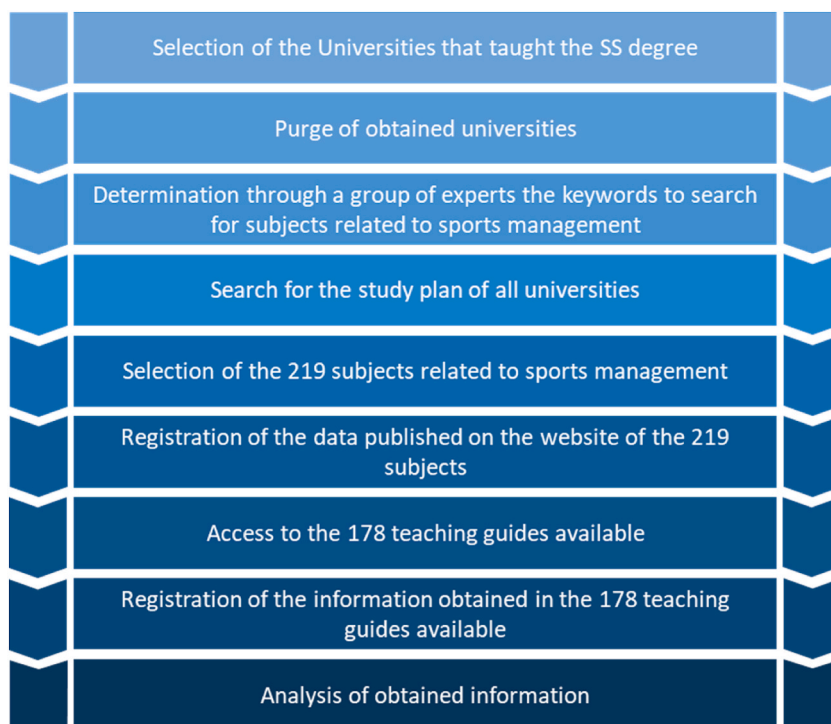


Fig. 2. Followed procedure diagram.

#### 4.1. Academic structure of sport management subjects

On the one hand, with regard to the analysis of the 48 universities that taught the SS degree, it can be observed that all of them are distributed among 13 autonomous communities. The communities of Madrid, Catalonia, Andalusia and the Valencian Community have the most universities with ten, seven, six and six respectively. If this analysis is carried out by provinces, most of the faculties of SS are located as the only option in each of these, with the exception of the province of Madrid, which stands out for having ten universities; Barcelona and Seville with four each; Valencia with three and Murcia and Alicante with two universities each.

On the other hand, if we analyse the number of management-related subjects taught in each of the provinces, we observe that Álava, Barcelona, Castellón and Zaragoza have the highest number of management-related subjects, while Almería, Guipúzcoa and Salamanca have the lowest frequency of management-related subjects (see Fig. 3).

As for the relationship between the universities and the number of subjects taught, of the total number of subjects analysed, it can be seen that more than half of the universities (58%) include four or five subjects related to management in their curriculum, highlighting the University of Barcelona (Catalonian INEF) where up to 12 subjects are offered and the Pontifical University of Comillas, which only offers one subject that responds to the title of "sports management".

If we consider the ownership of the universities, 31 of the 48 universities analysed are public universities compared to the remaining 17 that are private, in this sense, 67.58% of the subjects analysed ( $n = 148$ ) are taught in public centres compared to 32.42% that are taught in private centres ( $n = 71$ ) and we obtain an average of 4.77 subjects taught per public university ( $SD = 1.80$ ) compared to an average of 3.94 ( $SD = 1.98$ ) in private universities.

Regarding the attendance in the subjects, it is observed that most of them (98.63%;  $n = 216$ ) are taught on site, detecting statistically significant differences ( $p = 0.012$ ) between the subjects taught by public and private universities, being the public universities the ones that teach more subjects on site. Of these subjects, 53.88% are compulsory ( $n = 118$ ), while the remaining subjects are optional (46.12%;  $n = 101$ ). Likewise, only 1.37% ( $n = 3$ ) of the subjects are available in the on-line modality, these being taught only by private centres.

Concerning the distribution of the subjects throughout the degree of SS, we can see that 91.78% of the total number of subjects analysed are distributed between the third ( $n = 89$ ) and fourth year ( $n = 112$ ) and that in the public university we find a similar number of subjects in both years. In the private university the number of subjects related to sports management doubles from the third to the fourth year. In addition, significant differences ( $p \leq 0.001$ ) were also observed in the nature of the subjects, being mostly compulsory in the third year and becoming mostly optional in the fourth year (see Table 3).

In reference to the period in which each subject is taught within each course, it can be observed that 48.31% of these subjects are taught in the first four-month period with a mostly compulsory nature. And that 44.94% are taught in the second term, with a very similar frequency between optional and compulsory subjects. We also found that only 2.25% of the subjects are taught on an annual basis ( $n = 4$ ) and the remaining 4.49% ( $n = 8$ ) are taught in both semesters.

Regarding the number of credits established for each subject, we can find a wide range of options that vary from three to nine credits. The most common option is six credits (83.15%;  $n = 148$ ), followed by subjects with three credits, which only represents 7.30% ( $n = 13$ ). Likewise, significant differences ( $p \leq 0.001$ ) were found between the nature of the subjects and the number of credits of the subjects (Table 4).

Regarding the number of topics among which each subject is divided, a great diversity in the number of topics can be observed, with 28 being the subject with the most topics. However, 64.03% of the subjects ( $n = 114$ ) have less than 8 topics, with five being the most frequent number of topics among the subjects analysed. Significant differences ( $p < 0.05$ ) can also be observed between the number of topics per subject between public and private universities, being the most common to find subjects with eight topics or more in public universities and five topics or less in private universities.

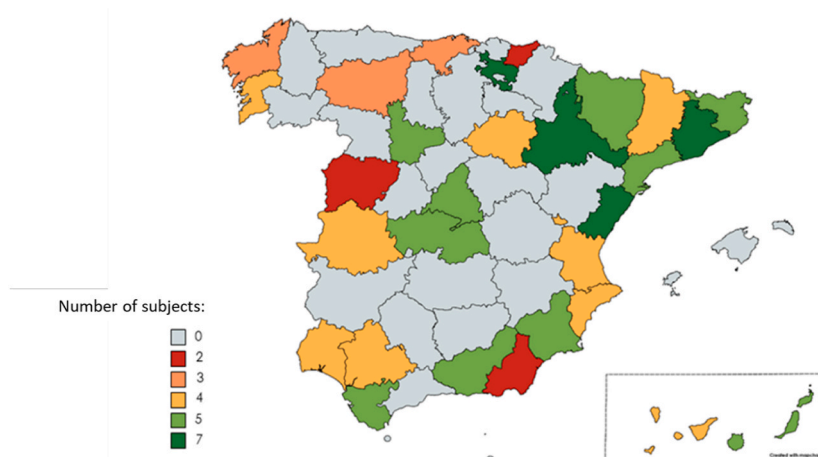


Fig. 3. Average frequency of number of management subjects taught by universities in the Spanish provinces.



**Table 3**

Academic structure of sport management subjects between public and private universities.

Academic structure		Public		Private		Sig.	Total	
		N	%	N	%		N	%
<b>Presentiality</b> $X^2= 6,340$ , $C=,168$	Presential	148	67,58 <sup>(B)</sup>	68	31,05	,012*	216	98,63
	Presential or online	0	0,00	3	1,37		3	1,37
<b>Course</b> $X^2= 6,340$	1st course	1	0,46	2	0,91	,086	3	1,37
	2nd course	9	4,11	3	1,37		12	5,48
	3rd course	67	30,59	22	10,05		89	40,64
	4th course	68	31,05	44	20,09		112	54,14
	3rd or 4th	3	1,37	0	0,00		3	1,37
<b>Period</b> $X^2= 7,834$ , $C=,205$	1st semester	59	33,15	27	15,17	,050*	86	48,31
	2nd semester	64	35,96 <sup>(B)</sup>	16	8,99		80	44,94
	both (optional)	3	1,69	5	2,81 <sup>(A)</sup>		8	4,49
	Annual	3	1,69	1	0,56		4	2,25
<b>Number of credits</b> $X^2= 9,799$	3,0	11	6,18	2	1,12	,081	13	7,30
	4,0	0	0,00	2	1,12		2	1,12
	4,5	5	2,81	4	2,25		9	5,06
	6,0	107	60,11	41	23,03		148	83,15
	7,5	2	1,12	0	0,00		2	1,12
	9,0	4	2,25	0	0,00		4	2,25
<b>Number of topics</b> $X^2= 9,858$ , $C=,229$	4 topics or less	34	19,1	13	7,30	,043*	47	26,40
	5 topics	15	8,43	14	7,87 <sup>(A)</sup>		29	16,29
	6 topics	14	7,87	5	2,81		19	10,67
	7 topics	13	7,30	6	3,37		19	10,67
	8 topics or more	53	29,78 <sup>(B)</sup>	11	6,18		64	35,96

Note: (A) (B) Results are based on bilateral tests with a significance level,05. For each significant pair, the key of the category with the lower column proportion appears below the category with the higher column proportion;  $X^2$  = Chi-square; C = contingency coefficient; \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p \leq 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p \leq 0.001$ .

**Table 4**

Academic structure of sports management subjects between compulsory and optional subjects.

Academic Structure		Compulsory		Optional		Sig.	Total	
		N	%	N	%		N	%
<b>Presentiality</b> $X^2= 0,200$	Presential	116	52,97	100	45,66	,655	216	98,63
	Presential or online	2	0,91	1	0,46		3	1,37
<b>Course</b> $X^2= 73,433$ , $C=,501$	1st course	3	1,37	0	0,00	,001***	3	1,37
	2nd course	12	5,48	0	0,00		12	5,48
	3rd course	72	32,88 <sup>(B)</sup>	17	7,76		89	40,64
	4th course	31	14,16	81	36,99 <sup>(A)</sup>		112	51,14
	3rd or 4th	0	0,00	3	1,37		3	1,37
<b>Period</b> $X^2= 5,061$	1st semester	50	28,09	36	20,22	,167	86	48,31
	2nd semester	39	21,91	41	23,03		80	44,94
	both (optional)	5	2,81	3	1,69		8	4,49
	Annual	4	2,25	0	0,00		4	2,25
<b>Number of credits</b> $X^2= 7,261$ , $C=,321$	3,0	0	0,00	13	7,30	,001***	13	7,30
	4,0	2	1,12	0	0,00		2	1,12
	4,5	5	2,81	4	2,25		9	5,06
	6,0	86	48,31 <sup>(B)</sup>	62	34,83		148	83,15
	7,5	2	1,12	0	0,00		2	1,12
	9,0	3	1,69	1	0,56		4	2,25
<b>Number of topics</b> $X^2= 7,261$	4 topics or less	22	12,36	25	14,04	,125	47	26,40
	5 topics	14	7,87	15	8,43		29	16,29
	6 topics	8	4,49	11	6,18		19	10,67
	7 topics	14	7,87	5	2,81		19	10,67
	8 topics or more	40	22,47	24	13,48		64	35,96

Note: (A) (B) Results are based on bilateral tests with a significance level,05. For each significant pair, the key of the category with the lower column proportion appears below the category with the higher column proportion;  $X^2$  = Chi-square; C = contingency coefficient; \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p \leq 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p \leq 0.001$ .

#### 4.2. Evaluation of sport management subjects

It can be observed that the most frequently used type of evaluation is the combination of continuous evaluation and final evaluation (81.46%;  $n = 145$ ), with continuous evaluation being the least common type of evaluation (18.54%;  $n = 33$ ) among the analysed teaching guides (see Table 5).

Within both evaluation approaches, it can be observed how the weighting of the exam varies greatly, obtaining results ranging from the non-existence of this exam to the weighting of 100% of the exam grade. Furthermore, the range from 30 to 49% of the final grade is the most frequent type of weighting, with significant differences ( $p < 0.05$ ) being observed in the weighting of the exam in the final grade between the compulsory and optional subjects (Table 6).

Similar to the previous paragraph, we also found significant differences ( $p \leq 0.01$ ) between the compulsory and optional subjects in terms of the weighting of the assignments. And although a great variety is also found among the different subjects analysed, we can observe that the most frequent weightings are those that account for 50–69% of the final grade, followed by the group of 30–49% of the final grade.

On the other hand, class attendance does not affect the final grade in most of the subjects analysed or does so below 10% of the final grade (77.53%;  $n = 138$ ), although among those in which it is valued, the most common (12.92%;  $n = 23$ ) is that it accounts for only 10% of the final grade. Furthermore, significant differences ( $p < 0.05$ ) can also be observed between public and private universities.

#### 4.3. Contents of sport management subjects

If we analyse the content of the teaching guides in which the subjects taught in the management courses are included, they can be classified into six different categories: (1) sport event management (SEM), (2) sport equipment and sport facilities management (SFM), (3) legal foundations in sport management (LF), (4) sport entity management (SPEM), (5) leisure and recreation management (LRM) and lastly (6) marketing (SMK).

Among the different subjects analysed, the contents related to the management of sports entities are the most present ( $n = 89$ ), followed by the leisure and recreation management ( $n = 26$ ), the legal foundations in sports management ( $n = 23$ ) and the sports equipment and facilities management ( $n = 20$ ). The categories of content least worked on in the subjects are those related to sport marketing ( $n = 11$ ) or sport event management ( $n = 9$ ).

Taking into account the ownership of the universities and the nature of the sport management subjects, significant differences ( $p < 0.05$  and  $p \leq 0.01$  respectively) can be found between the categories of the contents of the subjects. In this sense, we observe the category of leisure and recreation management is significantly more present in public universities and the category of sports marketing significantly more present in private universities (Tables 7 and 8).

Among the content taught in these subjects (see Table 9) we can find that only 11.24% of the subjects analysed have content related to sport tourism ( $n = 20$ ), mainly all of them within the category of leisure and recreation management. In this same line up to 15 subjects (8.43%) teach contents related to entrepreneurship, mostly within the category of management of sports entities, 13 subjects (7.30%) that have content related to ICT divided between the categories of management of sports entities, sports marketing and management of sports facilities and equipment. Related to sustainability, we found a total of 12 subjects related to sustainability (6.74%) divided among four of the six categories and only one subject (0.56%) with content on gender perspective within the category of legal foundations in sports management.

Table 10 shows that in the contents taught in management subjects, most of the subjects that teach contents related to sport tourism are found in public universities ( $n = 19$ ; 10.67%), with the nature of these subjects being very similar between compulsory and elective subjects. Similarly, with regard to contents related to entrepreneurship, we can find that most of the subjects that teach contents related to entrepreneurship are found in public universities ( $n = 12$ ; 6.74%), with a very similar frequency between compulsory and

**Table 5**  
Evaluation of sport management subjects between public and private universities.

Evaluation		Public		Private		Sig.	Total	
		N	%	N	%		N	%
<b>Evaluation type</b> $X^2 = 1,585$	Continuous	21	11,80	12	6,74	,208	33	18,54
	Final	0	0,00	0	0,00		0	0,00
	Continuous and final	108	60,67	37	20,79		145	81,46
<b>Exam weighting</b> $X^2 = 7,236$	<10%	22	12,36	4	2,25	,204	26	14,61
	10–29%	13	7,30	8	4,49		21	11,80
	30–49%	45	25,28	13	7,30		58	32,58
	50–69%	31	17,42	14	7,87		45	25,28
	70–89%	15	8,43	10	5,62		25	14,04
	>89%	3	1,69	0	0,00		3	1,69
<b>Assignments weighting</b> $X^2 = 10,069$	<10%	3	1,69	0	0,00	,073	3	1,69
	10–29%	9	5,06	10	5,62		19	10,67
	30–49%	35	19,66	13	7,30		48	26,97
	50–69%	36	20,22	16	8,99		52	29,21
	70–89%	29	16,29	6	3,37		35	19,66
	>89%	17	9,55	4	2,25		21	11,80
<b>Attendance weighting</b> $X^2 = 7,413$ ; $C = ,200$	<10%	106	59,55 <sup>(B)</sup>	32	17,98	,025*	138	77,53
	10%	15	8,43	8	4,49		23	12,92
	>10%	8	4,49	9	5,06 <sup>(A)</sup>		17	9,55

Note: (A) (B) Results are based on bilateral tests with a significance level,05. For each significant pair, the key of the category with the lower column proportion appears below the category with the higher column proportion;  $X^2$  = Chi-square;  $C$  = contingency coefficient; \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p \leq 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p \leq 0.001$ .

**Table 6**  
Evaluation of sport management subjects between compulsory or optional subjects.

Evaluation		Compulsory		Optional		Sig.	Total	
		N	%	N	%		N	%
<b>Evaluation type</b> $X^2 = ,104$	Continuous	19	10,67	14	7,87	,747	33	18,54
	Final	0	0,00	0	0,00		0	0,00
	Continuous and final	79	44,38	66	37,08		145	81,46
<b>Exam weighting</b> $X^2 = 14,322$ ; $C = ,273$	<10%	7	3,93	19	10,67 <sup>(A)</sup>	,014*	26	14,61
	10–29%	12	6,74	9	5,06		21	11,80
	30–49%	30	16,85	28	15,73		58	32,58
	50–69%	30	16,85	15	8,43		45	25,28
	70–89%	16	8,99	9	5,06		25	14,04
	>89%	3	1,69	0	0,00		3	1,69
<b>Assignments weighting</b> $X^2 = 15,235$ ; $C = ,281$	<10%	3	1,69	0	0,00	,009**	3	1,69
	10–29%	12	6,74	7	3,93		19	10,67
	30–49%	32	17,98	16	8,99		48	26,97
	50–69%	30	16,85	22	12,36		52	29,21
	70–89%	16	8,99	19	10,67		35	19,66
	>89%	5	2,81	16	8,99 <sup>(A)</sup>		21	11,80
<b>Attendance weighting</b> $X^2 = ,745$	<10%	75	42,13	63	35,39	,689	138	77,53
	10%	12	6,74	11	6,18		23	12,92
	>10%	11	6,18	6	3,37		17	9,55

Note: (A) (B) Results are based on bilateral tests with a significance level,05. For each significant pair, the key of the category with the lower column proportion appears below the category with the higher column proportion;  $X^2$  = Chi-square;  $C$  = contingency coefficient; \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p \leq 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p \leq 0.001$ .

**Table 7**  
Sport management subject's category between public and private universities.

Content categories in the subjects		Public		Private		Sig.	Total	
		N	%	N	%		N	%
<b>Categories</b> $X^2 = 14,447$ ; $C = ,274$	SEM	6	4,65	3	6,12	,013*	9	5,06
	SFM	11	8,53	9	18,37		20	11,24
	LF	17	13,18	6	12,24		23	12,92
	SPEM	68	52,71	21	42,86		89	50,00
	LRM	23	17,83 <sup>(B)</sup>	3	6,12		26	14,61
	SMK	4	3,10	7	14,29 <sup>(A)</sup>		11	6,18

Note: (A) (B) Results are based on bilateral tests with a significance level,05. For each significant pair, the key of the category with the lower column proportion appears below the category with the higher column proportion; SEM-sport event management, SFM-sport equipment and sport facility management, LF- legal foundations in sport management, SPEM-sport entity management, LRM-leisure and recreation management, SMK- sport marketing;  $X^2$  = Chi-square;  $C$  = contingency coefficient; \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p \leq 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p \leq 0.001$ .

**Table 8**  
Sport management subjects' categories between compulsory or optional subjects.

Content categories in the subjects		Compulsory		Optional		Sig.	Total	
		N	%	N	%		N	%
<b>Categories</b> $X^2 = 16,893$ ; $C = ,294$	SEM	1	1,02	8	10,00 <sup>(A)</sup>	,005**	9	5,06
	SFM	15	15,31	5	6,25		20	11,24
	LF	17	17,35	6	7,50		23	12,92
	SPEM	50	51,02	39	48,75		89	50,00
	LRM	10	10,20	16	20,00		26	14,61
	SMK	5	5,10	6	7,50		11	6,18

Note: (A) (B) Results are based on bilateral tests with a significance level,05. For each significant pair, the key of the category with the lower column proportion appears below the category with the higher column proportion;  $X^2$  = Chi-square;  $C$  = contingency coefficient; \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p \leq 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p \leq 0.001$ .

optional subjects.

It can also be observed that in those subjects that teach content related to ICT of the 13 subjects found, eight are taught in public centres and five in private centres. Likewise, we found the same number of subjects with contents related to sustainability between public centres ( $n = 6$ ) and private centres ( $n = 6$ ). Finally, we found that the only subject in which gender-related content is included is in a public centre and is mandatory.

**Table 9**

Frequency of management subject content by subject category.

Content about ...	Category in which the subjects are included													
	SEM		SFM		LF		SPEM		LRM		SMK		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Sustainability	1	11,11	3	15,00	0	0,00	4	4,49	4			15,38	0	6,74
Entrepreneurship	1	11,11	0	0,00	0	0,00	14	15,73	0	0,00	0	0,00	15	8,43
Gender perspective	0	0,00	0	0,00	1	4,35	0	0,00	0	0,00	0	0,00	1	0,56
Sport Tourism	1	11,11	1	5,00	0	0,00	1	1,12	17	65,38	0	0,00	20	11,24
IC Technologies	0	0,00	2	10,00	0	0,00	8	8,99	0	0,00	3	27,27	13	7,30

**Table 10**

Frequency of the contents of management subjects between public and private universities and compulsory or optional subjects.

Content about ...	Public		Private		Compulsory		Optional		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Sustainability	6	3,37	6	3,37	6	3,37	6	3,37	12	6,74
Entrepreneurship	12	6,74	3	1,69	7	3,93	8	4,49	15	8,43
Gender perspective	1	0,56	0	0,00	1	0,56	0	0,00	1	0,56
Sport Tourism	19	10,67	1	0,56	9	5,06	11	6,18	20	11,24
IC Technologies	8	4,49	5	2,81	6	3,37	7	3,93	13	7,30

## 5. Discussion

To date, several works have extensively studied the profile of the sport manager and the competencies that he/she should have (García-Fernández et al., 2013; Gómez-Tafalla & Núñez-Pomar, 2011; Mestre-Sancho, 2013; Salgado-Barandela et al., 2019; Tortosa-Martínez et al., 2010). However, there had been no in-depth analysis of the training received by this professional profile in SS degree studies, so there was a need to reflect on the skills acquired by a sports manager and see if they are adapted to the needs of the current sports sector (Gallardo-Guerrero et al., 2021) and to find out whether this training has content related to the areas of sustainability, entrepreneurship, sport tourism, gender perspective or the use of ICTs. According to the RQ1, the findings have shown that there are no significant differences between the number of sports management subjects taught by public centres versus those taught by private centres. This is consistent with the results of studies found in the literature on the analysis of subjects in the sports sector (Conesa-Ros & Angosto, 2017; Gallardo-Guerrero et al., 2021; Morales et al., 2017). However, in the analysis of the subjects taught between public and private universities, statistically significant differences have been found related to the presence of the subjects, with public universities requiring higher attendance.

In relation to the period in which the subjects are taught, this is something up to the internal distribution and structure of each faculty. It can be observed that in the case of public universities, they are taught mainly in the second semester period, and in private universities they are available in both semesters' periods on a dominantly optional basis. In fact, there is a greater number of subjects taught per subject in public universities and fewer in the case of private universities.

Regarding the analysis by the nature of the subject (elective or compulsory), the results are very similar to those of the authors Gallardo-Guerrero et al. (2021), with significant differences being observed between the course in which these subjects are taught, with the third course having the most compulsory subjects and the fourth course having the most optional subjects. Likewise, differences are also observed between the compulsory subjects with six credits compared to the rest of the options in this variable.

In relation to the evaluation of the subjects, answering RQ2, it is evidenced that the highest weight for the grading of the subjects is supported by the essays between 50% and 69%, followed by the weighting of the exam between 30% and 49% of the final grade relegating in last place the attendance, being this grade 10% or less of the final grade. In this sense, the results coincide with those of the previous studies (Conesa-Ros & Angosto, 2017; Morales et al., 2017). However, they differ from those of the study by Gallardo-Guerrero et al. (2021) which find a greater weight in the grading of exams than in the grading of the essays. In addition, statistically significant differences are found in the weighting of attendance between public and private universities, with the group with a weighting of less than 10% having the greatest weight in public universities and the group with a weighting of more than 10% in private universities. In the same way, statistical differences are also found between the weighting of the exam and essays between compulsory and optional subjects, with a grade lower than 10% being the one with the highest statistical weight in exams, and a grade higher than 89% in the case of essays, in optional subjects.

In the analysis of the categories of management subjects, there is a predominance of subjects related to the sports entity's management, with differences in the number of subjects taught in public and private universities. In this sense, the category of leisure and recreation management is the most important in public universities and the category of sports marketing in the case of private universities. In contrast, the results of Tortosa-Martínez et al. (2010) that concluded that there is no content related to sports marketing within the subjects taught in the degree of SS, despite the fact, these contents are part of the competencies of sport managers (Gallardo-Guerrero et al., 2021; Gambau, 2014; García-Fernández et al., 2013; Gómez-Tafalla & Núñez-Pomar, 2011; Michavila et al., 2018; Pérez-Villalba et al., 2016).

Regarding the contents related to sports management subjects, according to RQ3, the scarce presence of contents related to sport tourism, entrepreneurship, the use of ICT, sustainability or the gender perspective can be highlighted. Education in these topics is becoming increasingly important because it can improve the employability of students. As [González-Serrano et al. \(2021\)](#) pointed out, in terms of entrepreneurial education, although it has been introduced in universities in recent years, its integration into sports education is still scarce, and is needed to continuously developing this kind of transversal contents, among others mentioned, that will increase and improve students' background and labour market opportunities.

The content related to sport tourism is the most present among the management subjects and those related to the gender perspective the least present. This scarce presence of these contents is remarkable given the need to connect the training of future sport managers with professional performance, the labour market and the needs of society ([Campos-Izquierdo & Martín-Acero, 2016](#); [Gómez-Tafalla & Núñez-Pomar, 2011](#); [Mestre-Sancho, 2013](#); [Pérez-Flores & Muñoz-Sánchez, 2018](#)). Especially, if we consider the importance of this type of content in a society that is increasingly technological and concerned with sustainability ([Campillo-Sánchez et al., 2021](#); [Valcarce et al., 2016](#)), where the gender perspective and entrepreneurship can be an advantage that facilitates the innovation of sports products and services that meet the demands and expectations of consumers ([González-Serrano et al., 2019](#); [Piedra, 2019](#)).

### 5.1. Theoretical contributions

The findings of this study present several theoretical and practical implications to improve the competences and skills of future sport managers and thus, improving the employability and reducing the unemployment rates of future SS graduates. As youth unemployment is an issue of great interest and concern both at the national level and in the rest of European and global society, the situation in Spain is worrying, as can be seen comparing youth unemployment data (under 25 years of age), standing at 27.90% by mid 2022, compared to the average of 13.60% for EU countries ([Statista, 2022](#)). For this reason, it is important that, from the Spanish university system and, specifically, from the aspect of higher education studies, students are trained in those aspects that are most relevant in society and the labour market and that allow them to differentiate themselves from the rest in order to be able to find jobs opportunities.

This study provides information of great importance, at different levels, with a view to improving the employability and job opportunities of higher education SS students in Spain, from the perspective of the competences acquired and learning contents that are and should be studied in higher education degrees throughout the country. This study presents the academic structure of sport management subjects in the SS Bachelor's Degree in a European Union country. The findings showed that the proportion of sport management subjects is low in relation to the total number of subjects taught in the SS Bachelor's Degree in Sport Management. Most of the management subjects are taught on a face-to-face basis, with an equal number of compulsory and elective sport management subjects, and they are mainly taken during the third or fourth year of this degree. Due to the fact that the Bologna plan has been in place in the countries of the European Union since year 1999, these findings may be similar to those of other EU countries. Nevertheless, it is recommended that other studies be conducted to replicate the same in other EU and non-EU countries in order to compare the findings.

This research also present information on the evaluation system of sport management subjects in the Spanish SS Bachelor's Degrees. It is highlighted that although the continuous evaluation together with the final evaluation is the most common type of evaluation, there is no consensus among the evaluation of the same. This finding could be a starting point for future studies to evaluate the most appropriate way to evaluate them. Finally, the main contents taught in sport management subjects are presented. In this way, a scarcity of contents related to technologies, sustainability or the gender perspective is highlighted. This fact is worrying since those contents that are transversal and applicable both to sports management and to the development and improvement of society (entrepreneurial skills, sustainability, equality and gender perspective, ICT, etc.), are those that will allow future professionals to differentiate themselves in the labour market and contribute greater value to the organisations or companies to which they belong. Transversal competences and contents that facilitate autonomy and adaptation to new demands are highly valued in the labour market ([García et al., 2009](#)).

Thus, this study, beyond offering an analysis of the current situation of sport management education in university degrees in Spain, this study aims to set a precedent in the sport management literature in terms of methodology and approach. This study proposed a prior step to future research that seeks to analyse sport management education, as well as to work on the development, improvement and renewal of teaching guides and training programmes.

### 5.2. Practical implications

Regarding the practical implications, the findings of this study highlights the need of a greater inclusion of sport management subjects; or the creation of specific degrees in sport management, as has already been initiated in some private higher education centres in Spain, or as in other European or non-European countries, where there are specific itineraries or degrees in sport management. For instance, in Germany, which there is a total of 27 university degrees in sport management ([Wohlfart et al., 2020](#)). This need lies in the fact that sport management is one of the main professional opportunities chosen by SS graduates, not only in Spain ([Campos-Izquierdo, 2019](#)), but also in other countries like United States. In this country, students choose sport management programmes because of the existing job availability, prestige of sport managers and the quality and convenience of the sport management programmes at the university where they study ([Barnhill et al., 2018](#)).

It is important, with a view to the future of SS graduates and, specifically, of those who work in sport management, that those responsible for the design and modification of the study plans of the different modules consider the importance of the emerging topics



in the society. They should begin to include them in the different subjects, in order to provide students with resources that will enable them to increase their knowledge of these subjects. Specifically, regarding these emerging topics, the introduction of contents related to ICT, entrepreneurship, sustainability, and gender equity are needed.

First of all, it is important to remark that the sport industry is increasingly being influenced by technology innovation for its global competitiveness, and it is something evident in sport in a variety of contexts including from the playing, consuming and spectator experience (Ratten, 2020). Ringuet-Riot and James (2013) consider the sport industry one of the most technologically innovative due to the way technology is used in many different ways. In the sport industry, technological innovation is an important part, and it gives the connection to health, education and tourism (Zeimers et al. (2019). Moreover, the social nature of sport requires the use of technology particularly in a digital and online format (Zeimers et al., 2019). In this vein, López-Carril et al. (2019) express this present and future need to train students in SS, and specifically in sport management, to acquire skills and knowledge that will enable them to apply technologies to the sport sector. In this way, this study highlights the importance of introducing this topic and the following in the study plans in sport management and SS.

Secondly, the introduction of entrepreneurship education in sport management subjects is becoming increasingly important because it can also improve the employability of students. Despite entrepreneurship education has been introduced in universities in recent years, its integration into sports education is still scarce (González-Serrano et al., 2021), what is corroborated by the results obtained in the present study. In this vein, Ratten and Jones (2018) found a gap in the current sports education curricula that can be filled by entrepreneurship education. Sports managers must be enterprising to stay ahead of their competitors (Ratten & Ratten, 2011), and it is a reality that more graduates with entrepreneurial skills are now in demand due to the characteristics of this sector and the current economic market (González-Serrano et al., 2017). This trend and the importance of the entrepreneurship education is in line with some measures taken by the European Commission, where its Entrepreneurship Action Plan 2020 states that education must be linked to reality through the use of practical learning models based on experience and through the knowledge and experience of current entrepreneurs (González-Serrano et al., 2021).

Thirdly, when considering entrepreneurship education, it is also necessary to mention the sustainable entrepreneurship. Sustainability is something important in today's society agenda, and of course for the future. SS Bachelor's Degrees have to meet these society needs and provide the students with both knowledge and tools to deal with the challenges of the labour market and society. As Ordiñana-Bellver et al. (2022) points out, sustainable entrepreneurship, and specially sports entrepreneurship, can be a way to contribute to the achievement of the United Nations 2030 Agenda, which is the international plan that pursues overall sustainable development, through 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Sustainability has become a must topic in society, with the sports industry being no exception (Lindsey & Darby, 2019). The point of introducing entrepreneurial and sustainability content in sport management subjects goes hand in hand with Strachan (2018) reiteration of the importance and value of an education rich in sustainable values for a sustainable future. In line with this point, Ordiñana-Bellver et al. (2022) calls for an essential education rich in sustainable values that involves and brings social and civic values and is committed to create new ways of operating a business from a sustainable perspective.

Fourthly, according to these SDGs and the findings obtained in this study, other scarce content in the education in sport management and, in general in SS, is the gender equality and balance. Specifically, the SDG 5 is named "Gender equality", based on achieving gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. Its main goals include ending all forms of discrimination against all women and girls worldwide, ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life, or enhancing the use of enabling technology (ICT), to promote women's empowerment, among others (United Nations, 2015). The university plays an important educative role in the training of future generations from the perspective of gender equality. In future SS graduates, such training is a necessity and a requirement for the development of a society and a sports sector in which traditional gender models, relations and all that they entail are transformed (Lleixà-Arribas et al., 2020). To include this training, specifically in the field of sport management, it has to be committed to the incorporation of critical reflection and the provision of tools for change, as this is an unavoidable task for university centres (Lleixà-Arribas et al., 2020). Despite the fact that sport and physical education continue to be disciplines that reflect and reproduce situations of gender discrimination (Devís et al., 2005), they are areas that can also be ideal spaces for addressing the change of traditional gender models and relations (Vizcarra & Peiró, 2018).

## 6. Conclusions

In the Spanish universities analysed, there is no great difference between the number of subjects related to sport management taught in public and private universities in the SS Bachelor's Degrees. However, there are certain differences in the academic structure, the type of evaluation and the contents of these between public and private universities, as well as between optional and compulsory subjects.

Through the analysis of the teaching guides related to sports management, it has been possible to classify the contents between management of sports events, management of sports equipment and facilities, legal foundations in sports management, management of sports entities, management of leisure and recreation and sports marketing. Evidence of the predominance of subjects related to the management of sports entities and the scarce training obtained by graduates in subjects related to sports marketing or the organisation of sports events has been found.

This study reveals the current situation of the training received by graduates in the SS Bachelor's Degree and shows the need to restructure the subjects taught related to sports management. There is a need to balance all the contents in the training of future sports managers and including specific content on sport tourism, entrepreneurship, sustainability, gender perspective and ICTs. All that

changes are needed to meet the current social needs in order to improve the skills of graduates in all areas of sports management and increasing the value of this type of training in the labour market, as López-Carril et al. (2022) highlight when talking about the sports industry demands on mastery of digital skills from future professionals, what is something that has been enhanced by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, in this search for a better and adequate training in sport management, it is important and necessary to find a consensus and homogeneity throughout the academic community about those contents, methodologies and evaluation systems that are considered basic and essential for subsequent professional development in positions related to sport management. This represents a future challenge for researchers and academics in the field of sport management from the worldwide.

Last, but not the least, it is important to note that the main limitation of this study is the difficulty in accessing the teaching guides of all the subjects in the different universities. This is because access to them was not available, or because they were not fully developed, which could mean that a complete analysis of all the sports management subjects and their contents of the undergraduate degrees in SS in Spain was not being carried out. This study focuses only on the analysis of the contents of sport management subjects in SS Bachelor's Degrees in Spanish universities, so it does not show a complete reality of their situation worldwide. Therefore, it would be of great interest for future studies to replicate this study in different countries in order to make comparisons between the two and to have a more global vision of sport management education in SS Bachelor's Degrees.

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## Credit author statement

Alberto Vidal-Vilaplana: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal Analysis, Writing – Original draft. Cristian Gregori-Faus: Data curation, Formal Analysis, Writing – Original draft, Software. David Parra-Camacho: Formal Analysis, Project Administration, Writing – Review & Editing, Methodology, Supervision. María H. González-Serrano: Resources, Methodology, Writing – Review & Editing, Visualization.

## Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

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