

## Comparative study of job satisfaction in workers with a degree in Physical Activity and Sports Science

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### Abstract:

Job satisfaction is the favourable or unfavourable subjective feeling through which workers perceive their job. Numerous studies show the significant relationship between job satisfaction, motivation, performance and the quality of services. Thereby, the success of a sports organization depends upon the internal client to a great extent. However, job satisfaction an important subjective emotional variable that has been poorly evaluated in the sports sector. The aim of this study was to compare five professional profiles with a degree in Physical Activity and Sports Science, through the Herzberg's theory of job satisfaction. The sample consisted of 974 university graduates from the entire Spanish territory with a degree in Physical Activity and Sports Science who had a relevant position in this field (69.8% men; 30.2% women), of whom more than half were in the age groups of 26 to 30 years (33.8%) and 31 to 35 years (23.4%). Based on the findings of this study, there were differences in job satisfaction between workers of Physical Activity and Sports Science according to the professional scope (teaching, management, fitness, training/high performance and other scopes).

**Key words:** job satisfaction; human resources; sports science; qualifications..

### Introduction

In recent years, the Spanish sports system has undergone important changes that manifest in the fact that the population that practices sports had doubled in the last fifteen years, which means that, already in 2015, over half of the population were doing sport (García-Ferrando & Llopis-Goig, 2017). Current data provided by the Eurobarometer on sport and physical activity of 2018 indicate that 40% of Europeans practice sport, at least, once a week (European Commission, 2018).

This scenario has fostered the sports industry and the job opportunities related to it (Campos-Izquierdo, González-Rivera, & Taks, 2016). With the increasing diversification of sports products and services into several dimensions (Del Villar, 2005; García-Fernández, Gálvez-Ruiz, Velez-Colon, & Bernal-García, 2016), these require specialized professionals in different areas (Sánchez & Rebollo, 2000). In this sense, there is a heterogenous classification of professionals in sports science (Gambau, 2011), where there is consensus in the idea that the job market is diversified, fundamentally in teaching, management, health and training/performance (Planas, Reig, & Ticó, 2003; Pérez, 2015; Viñas & Pérez, 2014).

Such trend has generated new employment niches within the sports field (Pérez, Vilanova, & Grimaldi-Puyana, 2016), although it cannot be asserted that these have been accompanied by a suitable labor legislation (García, Lago, & Fernández, 2011; Grimaldi-Puyana, 2015). Due to this, the working conditions of these professionals are poor in many cases, as their education and experience are poorly valued (Gambau, 2011). In fact, in order to guarantee a quality service, the key is to have qualified personnel who are also satisfied with their job (Grimaldi-Puyana, 2015; Grimaldi-Puyana, Fernández-Gavira, & García-Fernández, 2013; Fernández-Gavira, Oliver-Sánchez, Grimaldi-Puyana, García-Fernández, & García-Fernández, 2018; Singh & Surujlal, 2006).

Thereby, the concept of satisfaction has been a topic of great scientific interest since the 1960s, from which the number of studies published has increased in different areas (Anaya & Suárez, 2004; Martín, Campos-Izquierdo, Jiménez & Martínez, 2007). Likewise, among Spanish publications, it is worth highlighting recent studies about job satisfaction in workers and volunteers that work with disabled athletes (Grimaldi-Puyana, Sánchez-Oliver, & Alcaraz-Rodríguez, 2018), sports and recreational activities in active tourism (Grimaldi-Puyana, Sánchez-Oliver, Alcaraz-Rodríguez, & Pérez-Villalba, 2017), models that measure organizational culture and job satisfaction in fitness centres (Gálvez-Ruiz, Grimaldi-Puyana, Sánchez-Oliver, Fernández-Gavira, & García-Fernández, 2017), sports technicians in padel and swimming (Sánchez-Alcaraz, Gómez-Parra, & García, 2014), and beach lifeguards (Sánchez-Alcaraz, 2012). Furthermore, there are studies published in the

last decade that assess job satisfaction in sports technicians (Gil & Zubimendi 2006; Koehler, 1988; Medina, Ceballos, Giner & Marqués, 2009), and others from the 1990s, about sports instructors of university programs in California (Snyder, 1990), and Li (1993), who analysed the job satisfaction of sports technicians in Chinese schools. Despite these publications, there is no bibliographical consensus about the concept of job satisfaction, although it could be defined as a positive emotional state about the subjective perception of the job experiences of workers (Aamont, 2010; Casas, Repullo, Lorenzo & Cañas, 2002; Shafqat-Naeem, Hashmi, & Hussain-Naqvi, 2010).

On the other hand, a deep understanding of the organization regarding the management models, organization types, trends, workers and job satisfaction can help achieve a competitive advantage. However, this understanding does not guarantee efficiency and effectiveness for the organization, thus, managing the knowledge acquired will also involve adapting it, in order to meet the objectives established by the organization (Theriou & Chatzoglou, 2008). As stated by Sánchez-Alcaraz (2012) in their study about the job satisfaction of beach lifeguards, having motivated staff who are satisfied with their job increases clearly their performance and the quality of the service they provide, and it decreases absenteeism, accident rate and the probability of staff moving to other organizations. Therefore, in the sports sector, knowing and understanding job satisfaction is also a decisive variable in the management of human resources, as stated by Bernabé, Campos-Izquierdo and González (2016) with a direct relationship with service quality. Thus, from the perspective of organizational development, improving the job satisfaction of employees favours personal relationships (Rodríguez, Paz-Retamal, Lizana, & Cornejo, 2011), as well as the quality perceived by the worker of an organization, also known as internal client (Bernal-González, Pedraza-Melo, & Sánchez-Limón, 2015).

In view of the above, the aim of this study was to analyse the differences in the job satisfaction of internal clients with a degree in Physical Activity and Sports Science (PASS) between different professional scopes: Teaching/Education=TEED, Management=MANA, Health/Fitness=HEFI, Training/High Performance=TRHP, Other scopes= OTSC, adapted to what was established in the plenary session nº 83 of the COLEF (2016), and based on CIUO-08/CNAE-09/CON-2011.

## **Material and method**

### *Procedure*

This is a transversal study with a convenience, non-probability sampling. The gathering of the data was carried out through an on-line questionnaire, designed and created jointly with the official school of physical education graduates. Information was gathered from 1,216 collegiate members, all of whom who worked in the field of physical activity and sports were selected.

### *Participants*

The sample consisted of 974 graduates in PASS who work in the entire Spanish territory (69.8% men and 30.2% women), of whom more than half were in the age groups of 26 to 30 years (33.8%) and 31 to 35 years (23.4%). With respect to the type of activity they developed, in the following order, 40.9% were in Teaching/Education (TEED), 28.5% in Health/Fitness (HEFI), 14.5% in Management (MANA), 10.5% in Training/High Performance (TRHP) and 5.6% in Other Scopes (OTSC). In the analysis by gender, it was observed that TRHP was the most masculinised activity, with 83.3% men (n=85) and 16.4% women (n=17), followed by MANA, with 74.5% men (n=105) and 25.5% women (n=36), and then TEED, with 68.1% men and 31.9% women, HEFI, with 66.2% men and 33.8% women, and OTSC, with 63.6% men and 36.7% women.

With regard to the relationship between age and scope/activity, generally a predominantly young sector was observed, mainly within the range of 26 to 35 years, of whom 60.3% of the TEED professionals had the oldest age (31 to 46 years), followed by MANA, and on the other hand, HEFI (34.9%) and TRHP (35.3%) had the youngest age ranges (26 to 31 years). Secondly, a mostly public scope was observed in TEED (62.3%), compared to HEFI (67.6%), TRHP (54.9%) and OTSC, which were mostly private (58.2%). Interestingly, MANA was fairly distributed into the public and private sectors (46.8% public; 41.8% private).

Regarding working conditions, the employees with a degree in PASS had an indefinite contract (31.2%), followed by temporary contract (28.4%), public workers (19.3%), and in a lower percentage, self-employed (15.8%), grant holders (3.6%) and other types of contract (1.6%). According to the distribution by scope, there was a higher percentage (70%) of public and indefinite contracts in TEED (public worker=38.2%; indefinite contract=30.4%) and MANA (public worker=19.9%; indefinite contract=51.1%). For instance, there were higher percentages of temporary contracts in HEFI (33.5%) and ENAR (38.2%), and in these two scopes, indefinite contracts were observed in the same percentage (20.6%).

With respect to the working hours per week, globally, 59.8% of the sample work over 35 hours, whereas 49.2% work part-time, with 37% working 21 to 35 hours and 22.7% serving less than 20 hours per week. According to the distribution by scope, it was observed that, 78% of workers in MANA carry out their job for 35 hours per week, followed by OTSC (50.9%), and in similar proportions HEFI (33.8%), TEED (33.4%) and TRHP (26.5%). In the analysis of salaries, there were high percentages in the ranges of 1,501-2,000 euros (24.5%) and 1,001-1,500 euros (22.2%). However, in the analysis of salaries by scope, there were higher salary ranges in TEED (39.2%=1,501-2,000 euros; 27.6%=2,001-2,500 euros), followed by MANA (32.6%=1,501-

2,000 euros; 30.5%=2,001-2,500 euros). In a second salary range level were HEFI (26.3%=751-1,000 euros; 25.5%=1,001-1,500 euros) and OTSC (23.6%=1,001-1,500 euros; 21.8%=751-1,000 euros), and the lowest salary range was observed in TRHP when compared to the rest of the scopes (36.2%=up to 500 euros; 19.6%=751-1,000 euros) (Table 1).

Table 1. Distribution of the participants by scope, job position, age, sector, contract type, weekly hours and salary.

	TEED		MANA		HEFI		TRHP		OTSC		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
<b>Gender</b>												
Male	271	68.1	105	74.5	184	66.2	85	83.3	35	63.6	680	69.8
Female	127	31.9	36	25.5	94	33.8	17	16.7	20	36.7	294	30.2
Total	398	40.8	141	14.4	278	28.5	102	10.4	55	5.6	974	100
<b>Age</b>												
From 18 to 25 years	8	2	5	3.5	56	20.1	27	26.5	11	20	107	11
From 26 to 30 years	54	13.6	29	20.6	97	34.9	36	35.3	6	10.9	222	33.8
From 31 to 35 years	82	20.6	38	27	74	26.6	15	14.7	19	34.5	228	23.4
From 36 to 40 years	82	20.6	28	19.9	33	11.9	13	12.7	8	14.5	164	16.8
From 41 to 45 years	76	19.1	22	15.6	11	4	6	5.9	4	7.3	119	12.2
From 46 to 50 years	45	11.3	8	5.7	4	1.4	3	2.9	4	7.3	64	6.6
From 51 to 55 years	32	8	7	5	2	.7	1	1	2	3.6	44	4.5
From 56 to 60 years	14	3.5	1	.7	0	0	1	1	1	1.8	17	1.7
More than 61 years	5	1.3	3	2.1	1	.4	0	0	0	0	9	0.9
Total	398	40.8	141	14.4	278	28.5	102	10.4	55	5.6	974	100
<b>Sector</b>												
Public	248	62.3	66	46.8	61	21.9	14	13.7	17	30.7	406	41.7
Charter School	87	21.9	7	5	15	5.4	4	3.9	4	7.3	117	12
Private	63	15.8	59	41.8	188	67.6	56	54.9	32	58.2	398	40.9
Associative/federate	0	0	6	6.4	14	5	28	27.5	2	3.6	53	5.4
Total	398	40.8	141	14.4	278	28.5	102	10.4	55	5.6	974	100
<b>Type of contract</b>												
Public worker	152	38.2	28	19.9	3	1.1	2	2	3	5.5	188	19.3
Indefinite	121	30.4	72	51.1	74	26.6	21	20.6	16	20.6	304	31.2
Temporary	110	27.6	20	14.2	93	33.5	39	38.2	15	27.3	277	28.4
Self-employed	8	2	20	14.2	89	32	19	18.6	18	32.7	154	15.8
Grant holder	6	1.5	1	.7	6	2.2	1	1	2	3.6	16	1.6
Other	1	.3	0	0	13	4.7	20	19.6	1	1.8	35	3.6
Total	398	40.8	141	14.4	278	28.5	102	10.4	55	5.6	974	100
<b>Weekly hours</b>												
1 to 5 hours/week	3	.8	1	.7	11	4	3	2.9	1	1.8	18	1.8
6 to 10 hours/week	14	3.5	2	1.4	28	10.1	11	10.8	1	1.8	55	5.6
11 to 15 hours/week	17	4.3	10	7.1	16	5.8	17	16.7	0	0	52	5.3
16 to 20 hours/week	33	8.3	4	2.8	33	11.9	14	13.7	7	12.7	97	10
21 to 25 hours/week	56	14.1	3	2.1	30	10.8	10	9.8	7	12.7	107	11
26 to 30 hours/week	64	16.1	11	7.8	35	12.6	14	13.7	3	5.5	119	12.2
31 to 35 hours/week	78	19.6	0	0	31	11.2	6	5.9	8	14.5	134	13.8
Over 35 hours/week	133	33.4	110	78	94	33.8	27	26.5	28	50.9	392	59.8
Total	398	40.8	141	14.4	278	28.5	102	10.4	55	5.6	974	100
<b>Salary</b>												
0 to 250 euros	2	.5	2	1.4	18	6.5	19	18.6	2	3.6	43	4.4
251 to 500 euros	6	1.5	1	.7	46	16.5	18	17.6	5	9.1	76	7.8
501 to 750 euros	18	4.5	7	5	39	14	10	9.8	9	16.4	83	8.5
751 to 1000 euros	17	4.3	13	9.2	73	26.3	20	19.6	12	21.8	135	13.9
1001 to 1500 euros	71	17.8	46	32.6	70	25.5	16	15.7	13	23.6	216	22.2
1501 to 2000 euros	156	39.2	43	30.5	21	7.6	11	10.8	8	14.5	239	24.5
2001 to 2500 euros	110	27.6	16	11.3	7	2.5	3	2.9	4	7.3	140	14.4
Over 2501 euros	18	4.5	13	9.2	4	1.5	5	4.9	2	3.2	41	4.3
Total	398	40.8	141	14.4	278	28.5	102	10.4	55	5.6	974	100

Notes: Teaching/Education=TEED; Management=MANA; Health/Fitness=HEFI; Training/High Performance=TRHP; Other Scopes=OTSC

**Instrument**

To determine the levels of job satisfaction, the Overall Job Satisfaction scale (Warr, Cook, & Wall, 1979) was used, which is a simple tool whose Spanish version was validated by Boluarte (2014). It was originally created in the United Kingdom with the aim of analysing the satisfaction of workers, regardless of their training or scope. The instrument has three second-order dimensions and fifteen first-order dimensions. The second-order dimensions are: intrinsic satisfaction (IS) = appreciation for the work done, responsibility, aspects related to the contents of the task, etc.; extrinsic satisfaction (ES) = job organization, schedule, physical conditions of the job, etc.; and total satisfaction (TS). The first-order dimensions are: working conditions (Q1), freedom to choose their own working method (Q2), co-workers (Q3), appreciation for the work well done (Q4), closest superior in rank (Q5), responsibility assigned (Q6), salary (Q7), the chance to use their capacities (Q8), relationships between management and employees in their organization (Q9), their possibilities of promotion (Q10), the way in which the organization is managed (Q11), the attention paid to the suggestions made (Q12),

working schedule (Q13), the variety of tasks performed at work (Q14) and their employment stability (Q15). The answers are presented in a Likert scale with seven options, from 1 (very unsatisfied) to 7 (very satisfied).

#### Data analysis

Firstly, for the data separated by socio-demographic and working scopes, a frequency analysis expressed in percentages was conducted, whereas for the analysis of job satisfaction, mean values and standard deviations were presented, with the latter being subjected to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov's normality contrast. Secondly, since the goal was to analyse the differences in the job satisfaction of the internal PASS client distributed by activity scope, an ANOVA test was carried out to determine the differences between the established groups, using the Games-Howell's post-hoc contrast test, since the Welch's statistic showed statistically significant differences in intrinsic, extrinsic and total satisfaction.

#### Results

Table 2 presents the second-order variables of the satisfaction of the internal clients grouped by scopes. The analysis of the differences by scopes revealed higher values in total satisfaction for MANA (M=76.46), followed by TEED (M=75.18) and TRHP (M=73.30), as *moderately satisfied*, vs HEFI (M=69.03) and OTSC (M=67.29), who were *indifferent*. With respect to intrinsic satisfaction, MANA (M=36.24) followed by TRHP (M=36.09) were *moderately satisfied*, vs HEFI (M=33.63) and OTSC (M=32.07), who were *indifferent*. Likewise, in extrinsic satisfaction, all the scopes were found to be *moderately satisfied*, although TEED (M=40.01) and MANA (M=40.21) showed values close to *satisfied*. However, the differences were not statistically significant in intrinsic satisfaction when comparing the internal clients by scopes. On the contrary, statistically significant differences were observed ( $p < 0.05$ ) with a higher average in extrinsic satisfaction of the internal clients when comparing TEED (M=40.01) with HEFI (M=35.40) and OTSC (M=35.21). Likewise, there were higher mean values in extrinsic satisfaction when comparing MANA (M=40.21) with HEFI (M=35.40). Furthermore, there were statistically significant differences in total satisfaction ( $p < 0.05$ ) with higher mean values in TEED (M=75.18) vs HEFI (M=69.01), and in MANA (M=76.46) vs HEFI (M=69.03) and OTSC (M=67.46).

Secondly, the first-order variables adapted to the 1-7 scale showed that the participants were *indifferent* in intrinsic factors such as appreciation for the work well done (Q4) and the attention paid to suggestions made by them (Q12). They were also *indifferent* in extrinsic factors such as closest superior in rank (Q5), relationship between the management and the employees of the organization (Q9), the way in which the organization is managed (Q11), work schedule (Q13) and employment stability (Q15). However, in items related to salary (Q7) they were *moderately unsatisfied*. On the other hand, they were *moderately satisfied* in intrinsic factors such as freedom to choose their own working method (Q2), responsibility assigned (Q6), the chance to use their capacities (Q8) and the variety of tasks performed in their jobs (Q14), as well as in extrinsic factors like the physical working conditions (Q1) and their co-workers (Q3).

Moreover, with respect to the second-order variables and attending to the main differences, the salary (Q7) obtained the level of *moderately unsatisfied* in HEFI (M=3.74), TRHP (M=3.58) and OTSC (M=3.60), compared to TEED (M=4.76) and MANA (M=4.37), where the participants were *indifferent*. It is also worth highlighting the differences in the variable possibilities of promotion (Q10), which was lower in TEED (M=3.77), HEFI (M=3.77) and OTSC (M=3.43), compared to MANA (M=4.05) and TRHP (M=4.24). Regarding the way in which the organization is managed, the lowest mean values were found in HEFI. However, the highest mean value for the freedom to choose their own working method was found in TRHP (M=6.03), whereas the lowest mean values in employment stability were found in HEFI (M=3.70) and OTSC (M=3.90).

Table 2. Variables of job satisfaction grouped by scope

	Variable	Mean (Standard Deviation)					
		TEED	MANA	HEFI	TRHP	OTSC	Total
1 <sup>st</sup> Order	Q1	5.32(1.55)	5.54(1.39)	4.49(1.74)	5.21(1.53)	5.14(1.58)	5.22(1.59)
	Q2	5.90(1.27)	5.62(1.47)	5.56(1.71)	6.03(1.37)	5.43(1.74)	5.78(1.48)
	Q3	5.35(1.53)	5.56(1.47)	5.33(1.80)	5.59(1.59)	5.38(1.72)	5.40(1.62)
	Q4	4.57(1.69)	4.70(1.68)	4.61(1.97)	4.75(1.84)	4.27(1.84)	4.60(1.79)
	Q5	4.97(1.80)	5.01(1.81)	4.48(2.11)	5.27(1.87)	4.69(2.04)	4.85(1.93)
	Q6	5.55(1.38)	5.82(1.23)	5.14(1.84)	5.70(1.64)	5.25(1.73)	5.47(1.57)
	Q7	4.76(1.55)	4.37(1.71)	3.74(1.84)	3.58(1.88)	3.60(1.73)	4.22(1.77)
	Q8	5.51(1.43)	5.43(1.43)	5.12(1.79)	5.46(1.63)	4.61(1.89)	5.22(1.60)
	Q9	4.89(1.69)	5.06(1.64)	4.58(2.05)	4.96(1.76)	4.41(1.93)	4.81(1.82)
	Q10	3.77(1.96)	4.05(1.99)	3.77(2.14)	4.24(1.91)	3.43(2.03)	3.85(2.02)
	Q11	4.03(1.72)	4.33(4.33)	3.94(2.01)	4.10(1.67)	4.00(1.88)	4.05(1.81)
	Q12	4.44(1.69)	5.03(1.52)	4.43(1.98)	4.74(1.90)	4.40(1.92)	4.55(1.80)
	Q13	5.47(1.50)	5.03(1.86)	4.11(1.90)	4.76(1.75)	4.07(1.76)	4.87(1.81)
	Q14	5.41(1.41)	5.53(1.40)	4.87(1.87)	5.14(1.69)	4.65(1.83)	5.20(1.62)
	Q15	5.19(2.01)	5.29(1.68)	4.23(2.01)	3.70(2.07)	3.90(2.11)	4.70(2.06)
2 <sup>nd</sup> Order	IS	35.17(8.16)	36.24(8.26)	33.62(10.89)	36.09(9.56)	32.07(10.43)	34.80(9.36)
	ES	40.01(8.71)	40.21(8.33)	35.40(10.77)	37.21(10.05)	35.21(10.36)	38.16(9.76)
	TS	75.18(16.16)	76.46(15.90)	69.03(20.93)	73.31(18.82)	67.29(20.04)	72.97(18.35)

Notes: Teaching/Education=TEED; Management=MANA; Health/Fitness=HEFI; Training/High Performance=TRHP; Other Scopes=OTSC

### Discussion and conclusions

This study analysed the job satisfaction of PASS graduates, concluding that, with respect to extrinsic satisfaction, all the groups were moderately satisfied, whereas in general satisfaction it was the professionals in management ( $M=76.46$ ), followed by teachers ( $M=75.18$ ) and performance trainers ( $M=73.30$ ) who were moderately satisfied compared to those who work in health/fitness ( $M=69.03$ ) and other scopes ( $M=67.29$ ), who were “indifferent”. In this sense, most of the workers surveyed showed positive values toward general satisfaction (Grimaldi-Puyana et al., 2018; Grimaldi-Puyana et al., 2017; Sánchez-Alcaraz et al., 2014 and Sánchez-Alcaraz, 2012). However, no study was found in the sports science literature that divides the analysis of job satisfaction by scopes; thereby, the conclusions could not be compared to those of other authors.

The results show that there were significant differences only between the groups divided by professional scope in general satisfaction and extrinsic satisfaction, and no statistically significant differences were found between the different groups in intrinsic satisfaction. Therefore, it could be inferred that the differences found in the analysed job satisfaction of PASS workers are more closely related to the characteristics of the job tasks and less to the intrinsic aspects of the worker, which is in line with Perez et al. (2016). Of the results obtained from each variable in the different professional scopes, it can be observed that these have their own characteristics. Thereby, those who work in training/high performance value more positively the freedom to choose their own working method and the possibilities of promotion; however, they perceive employment stability negatively.

The aim of this study was to analyse the differences in the job satisfaction of internal clients with a degree in PASS by scopes; in this sense, it can be concluded that, although their professional development is framed within the sports sector, the casuistry and characteristics of each scope, which are very different from one another, determine the job satisfaction of the worker, with those in management and teaching being the most satisfied employees. Regarding the limitations, this study used convenience, non-probability sampling. It would have been more appropriate to apply a simple random sampling; however, the authors decided to use the former due to difficulties in handling the databases, derived from the new data protection regulation.

Lastly, this study has a clear applicability, especially for the departments of human resources of sports organizations, since it helps better understanding the working characteristics of this type of workers and shows their weaknesses depending on their scope. Furthermore, this work has a practical application in management, as a starting point to analyse the job satisfaction of other workers in the sports sector and for comparative analyses with other European countries, and even in workers with similar characteristics from other continents. Future studies could analyse the relationship between the job satisfaction of workers (internal clients) and the quality perceived by the users of the sports service provided (external clients).

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