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## Education Through Sports of Migrants Sports Professionals in European Countries: A Comparative Study

VB Esguerra<sup>1</sup>, R Solinas<sup>2</sup>, ALF Esguerra<sup>3\*</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

At this time and age, there is increased globalization and professionalization within sports. Athletes increasingly migrate across national borders, searching for work, shaping, and living their athletic and non-athletic development in different countries. However, their knowledge and skills are vital to determine since these upsills will contribute considerably to the success of the sports organization. Hence, a study was conducted to compare the knowledge and skills of migrant sports professionals in Bulgaria [25], Italy [25], and Spain [25] and to determine the expertise of the trainers. The quasi-experimental research design was utilized. A paired sample T-test was used to determine whether the ETS program enhanced the level of knowledge and skills of migrant sports professionals. ANOVA was used to determine the significant differences. Significant differences were observed among the three countries in the migrants' knowledge and skills in the pretest-posttest,  $p=0.000$ . Regarding the trainers, there were significant differences between and among expertise, clarity, culture, time management, and responsiveness. Compared to the pretest-posttest, it showed a significant difference,  $p=0.000$ . This study suggests migrant professionals' knowledge and skills improved after implementing the ETS program.

### INTRODUCTION

The systematic under-representation of migrants in non-playing roles within sports organizations is one of the many facets and compelling issues in the broader challenge of the social exclusion of migrants in Europe. According to Eurostat (2011), as of 2016, there were 20.7 million non-EU nationals residing in European Union (EU) countries, comprising 4.1% of the total EU population. The majority of these migrants were younger than the local population, with the most consistent category being working-age adults.

The available statistical findings also indicate a recrudescence in migrants' flows in coincidence with the still ongoing migration crisis and highlight the significant barriers to be overcome for ensuring a meaningful integration of the newcomers within the labor market and at the societal level in more expansive terms.

EUROSTAT accounts depict a consistent disparity between migrants and locals in access to employability opportunities, with the EU-28 unemployment rate being 8.6 percentage points higher for migrants than for nationals in 2016. Also, 30.3% of migrants in the EU-28 were assessed as being at risk of poverty and social exclusion against 16% of nationals.

Further, the OECD 2015 Report on Migrant Integration illustrates the structural nature of migrants' labor market exclusion, indicating that the youth unemployment rate of the migrant's native-born-offspring is almost 50% higher among youths with native-born parents.

The European Agency for Fundamental Rights reported in 2010 underscores that the under-representation of migrants in responsible positions within sports clubs and associations makes up a substantial component of

a concerning phenomenon of inequality in substantial participation in sports affecting migrants compared to nationals. EU policy documents underline the relevance of sports as an agent of social inclusion for migrant targets and its contribution as an agent of job creation. This is supported by The EU "White Paper on Sport" (2007), which highlights that "sport makes an important contribution to economic and social cohesion and more integrated societies" while also facilitating "the integration into society of migrants and persons of foreign origin." Education through Sport (ETS), defined by the International Sport and Culture Association (ISCA), is a non-formal educational approach that works with sports and physical activities and refers to developing critical competencies of individuals and groups to contribute to personal development and sustainable social transformation. Additionally, ETS aims to integrate sports elements for an educational purpose to address a social issue, develop various competencies and initiate lasting and transversal results.

However, this methodology has yet to be tested on Foreigners and transnational sports managers, coaches, and trainers. They are widely considered an integral part of the workforce of any sports-related activities.

In the three countries, namely: Bulgaria, Italy, and Spain, the ETS was used as a potentially impacting methodology to affect the development of sport managers' profiles in migrants, providing a solution to their under-representation in leadership roles within sports organizations.

This methodology was also used as a new strategy to advance the management skills of sports managers, coaches, and trainers among migrants in their sports

<sup>1</sup> College of Teacher Education, Palawan State University, Puerto Princesa City, Palawan, Philippines

<sup>2</sup> Mine Vaganti NGO via Del Fiore Bianco 13/A, 070100 Sassari, Italy

<sup>3</sup> College of Arts and Humanities, Palawan State University, Puerto Princesa City, Palawan, Philippines

\* Corresponding author's e-mail: [aesguerra@psu.palawan.edu.ph](mailto:aesguerra@psu.palawan.edu.ph)

development programs.

This study was divided into three parts. The first part expounds on the theoretical foundations of the study, delving into a review of academic reflection on the concept and educational potential of ETS. The characteristics and extant needs of the migrant audience of learners concerning academic reflection and available statistical evidence were also explored.

The second part discloses the methodological approach of the research, setting it on the broader theoretical frame the latter intends to establish through a tested experiment. It includes setting a working hypothesis and aim, the structure of the tasks, and the organization of work.

The third part analyzes the experiment's results and the study's general conclusion.

Results show that the acceptability and effectiveness of the ETS methodology during the training and evaluation of the implemented sports programs among the participants is very high.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Migrant integration has gained significant attention in recent years due to the call to "leave no one behind" by the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, including migrants. Despite its increased prominence, the field of migrant integration has been historically polarizing, and related data have been limited primarily to high-income countries. Therefore, it is imperative to conduct more research and gather better data to address the increased interest in migrant integration (Migration Data Portal, 2020).

Integration encompasses various policies and different aspects of migrants' lives. Thus, data on migrant integration cover a broad range of information, including economic, social, cultural, and political spheres of society, the discrimination they face, the impact of policies on migrants' inclusion, and how the public perceives migrants and immigration. Consequently, gathering data on migrant integration can be challenging, and the quality and quantity of available data vary across countries (Migration Data Portal, 2020).

Despite the limited research on migrant integration at the global level, research conducted by the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) on OECD countries shows that migrants in most countries have worse outcomes than the native-born population in areas such as educational attainment and labor market participation. However, identifying trends in migrant integration at the global level is challenging because research on the topic is recent and has primarily been limited to high-income countries or regions (OECD, 2015).

Studies have shown that migrant integration is hindered by persisting barriers to effective integration, with outcomes being influenced by various factors, such as the country of origin, host community context, and skill level of immigrants. Nonetheless, integration appears to improve with the duration of residence in most countries

(OECD, 2015; Huddleston *et al.*, 2013).

Despite the potential benefits of using sports as a means of integration, Solinas (2022) notes that several issues continue to hamper the inclusion of migrants in sports. These issues stem from a lack of accessibility, participation, and discrimination that affect both the migrants and the host European countries. Moreover, migrants are underrepresented in non-playing positions, posing challenges for cultural, educational, and sports development.

Schinke (2011) categorizes the issues faced by migrant personalities in sports into three primary identifiers: community-based problems, cultural-based problems, and sports context problems. The first category involves issues such as homesickness, social isolation, loneliness, and loss of social ties. The second category stems from differences in clothing, meals, language, religion, xenophobia-related issues, and a sense of nationalism in the organization. Finally, the third category includes difficulties in integrating a foreigner within the team, such as fitting in, adapting to new methods, and interacting with the local and native sporting labor force. These issues are prevalent in both the amateur and elite levels of sports.

The cultural gap between host residents and foreign migrants can pose significant challenges for integration and assimilation. A report from the European Commission in 2020 highlighted the lower employment rates of non-EU citizens in the working-age population compared to EU citizens. Specifically, non-EU citizens were under-represented in various occupations, including teaching professionals, business and administration associate professionals, general and keyboard clerks, science and engineering associate professionals, business and administration professionals, and market-oriented skilled agricultural workers. The report emphasized that integration into the host community plays a crucial role in addressing this issue.

In addition to the under-representation of non-EU citizens in certain economic sectors, such as education and human health and social work activities, they were over-represented in other sectors, such as accommodation and food service activities, administrative and support activities, domestic work, and construction. These trends highlight the complexities of the labor market for non-EU citizens, as they face challenges in securing positions in certain sectors while being over-represented in others. The perception of the host community towards migrants is a crucial factor in determining their potential for success and integration. Unfortunately, migrants often face under-rated treatment due to cultural and social differences. To build a community of native and migrant members with equal treatment, they need to share experiences over time, leading to increased mutual understanding and respect. Addressing these issues will be crucial in promoting effective integration and reducing disparities in the labor market for non-EU citizens.

Foreign migrant sports personnel often face limited



opportunities to advance in their careers or develop their managerial skills due to their status as foreigners. However, one potential solution to address this gap is through sports. Sports can facilitate interaction between people from diverse cultural backgrounds and help individuals maintain ties to their cultural groups, aiding in the preservation of their cultural heritage. While evidence suggests that sports participation may also accentuate cultural differences, it serves as a common ground for integration.

Studies have examined the role of sports in promoting integration among individuals and groups with diverse cultural backgrounds. Hatzigeorgiadis (2013) found that existing literature supports the integrative role of sports. Similarly, Atkinson ([2015]) noted a growing interest in using sports to support the integration of migrants and asylum seekers. Walseth and Fasting [2004] further established that sports organizations can serve as miniature societies, enabling members to gain knowledge about the larger society. While sports can serve as a means of promoting integration, more than mere participation in sports is needed to foster true integration. Sports can provide a common ground for individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds to interact, but other efforts must be made to build a community of native and migrant members with equal treatment and respect.

The integration of migrants through sports is gaining recognition as an effective method to foster social inclusion. The European Commission DG Education & Culture, Sport and Multiculturalism [2004] acknowledges the essential role that physical activity and sports play in the integration of newcomers. According to Walseth [2006], sports participation is critical to society's democracy from a broader perspective. Sports are known to be powerful socializers that provide opportunities to develop social and moral values. Donnelly and Coakley [2002] define sports' role in promoting inclusion and social cohesion among diverse nationalities. Through cooperation, cohesion, and friendly competition, sports contribute to shaping and molding necessary social cohesion among diverse cultures.

To increase migrants' participation in positions of responsibility within sports organizations, a methodological approach through sports methods must be developed. One promising strategy is the "Education through Sports" (ETS) methodology. This approach is unique to grassroots sports practice and combines the use of sports with educational benefits for a diverse audience of targets. The ETS methodology is rooted in the theoretical and practical reflections developed by the international grassroots sports network International Sport and Culture Association (ISCA) for sports and non-formal learning educators.

Community capacity building through sports is crucial, according to Edwards (2015). Community-level approaches are increasingly based on the concept of community capacity, which is essential for supporting and promoting community-level health. The sport for

development (SFD) model provides evidence that sports are an essential practice for community development. Therefore, the Education through Sports (ETS) methodology can be used to bridge the gap between the host community and migrants, whose cultural background and social orientation differ on many accounts, resulting in under-rated treatment of the latter.

In addition, participation in sports is a powerful socializer that facilitates the development of social and moral values. Hatzigeorgiadis (2013) found evidence that sports foster interaction between people from diverse cultural backgrounds, helping them maintain ties to their cultural groups and preserving their cultural heritage. However, participation in sports may accentuate cultural differences, causing tensions. Thus, sports alone are not sufficient for fostering integration; instead, sport serves as a common ground for integration.

On the other hand, it is often argued that participation in sports by immigrant youth is critical to their integration into their new host society. According to Lundkvist *et al.* (2020), regardless of immigrant status, youth who were active or beginning to participate in sports engaged in fewer problem behaviors and had more native friends than their peers with the same immigrant status who were not involved in sports. However, because the trajectories were frequently near zero, it is difficult to conclude that sports participation has any discernible effect on social integration in Sweden.

Furthermore, Goudas and Giannoudis (2008) analyze the role of sports in developing life skills and identify many transferable skills to other life domains. The skills include working and performing well under duress, problem-solving, time management, planning, goal setting, constructive response to success/failure, communication, teamwork, and an openness to and acceptance of external feedback. These findings suggest that sports have a broad educational impact beyond the sport itself.

The reviewed literature suggests that sports can play a critical role in the integration of migrants into European countries. Participation in sports organizations can increase immigrants' sense of belonging and promote social cohesion among diverse nationalities. The "Education through Sports" (ETS) methodology can help bridge the gap between the host community and migrants, and community capacity building through sports is essential for community-level health. Additionally, sports can foster interaction between people from diverse cultural backgrounds, help maintain ties to cultural groups, and develop life skills that are transferable to other domains. However, evidence also implies that participation in sports may accentuate cultural differences, eliciting tensions. In summary, the reviewed literature suggests that ETS can be an effective methodology for educating migrants through sports and promoting their integration into European societies.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study examines the effectiveness of the

Education through Sports (ETS) program in improving the knowledge and skills of migrant sports professionals in Bulgaria, Italy, and Spain. A quasi-experimental research design was used, and multiple assessment methods were employed to determine the program's effectiveness.

Experiential learning was utilized to improve the sports skills of the sports professionals in the selected European countries. A survey questionnaire was developed based on the experiential learning cycle of the sports professionals, which was validated by a panel of experts and tested for reliability using Cronbach's alpha. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze and interpret the data.

The one-group pre-test-post-test was employed in the

quasi-experimental part, and tests on assessing normality were conducted to ensure normal distribution of data. Paired sample T-test and ANOVA were used to determine the significant difference in the level of knowledge and skills of the migrant's potential sports managers in the pretest and posttest and among the migrants' overall knowledge and skills as potential sports managers, respectively. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 was used for data analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The respondents' similar mean and standard deviations from the three countries reflected different results in the

**Table 1:** A significant difference in the Level of Knowledge and Skills of the Migrants/potential Sports Managers in the three countries (Bulgaria, Italy, and Spain) as reflected in the Pre-test

Knowledge and Skills	Country	N	Mean	SD	F	Sig.
1. Administration and Human Resource Management in Sport	Bulgaria	26	1.1282	0.16538	30.025	0.000
	Italy	30	2.2556	0.71215		
	Spain	12	2.2500	0.77688		
	Total	68	1.8235	0.79534		
2. Coaching and Mentoring	Bulgaria	26	1.6538	0.13269	43.283	0.000
	Italy	30	3.0556	0.56787		
	Spain	12	2.6944	1.01711		
	Total	68	2.4559	0.85839		
3. Digital Skills for Sports Managers	Bulgaria	26	3.0128	0.74524	7.354	0.001
	Italy	30	3.4778	0.96959		
	Spain	12	2.3056	1.04889		
	Total	68	3.0931	0.98722		
4. Management of Sports Events	Bulgaria	26	1.2436	0.21721	71.408	0.000
	Italy	30	2.8444	0.71777		
	Spain	12	1.3333	0.50252		
	Total	68	1.9657	0.94963		
5. Financial Sustainability Strategies and Mechanisms for Support Organizations	Bulgaria	26	1.5128	0.43442	31.340	0.000
	Italy	30	2.8667	0.98494		
	Spain	12	1.2778	0.52864		
	Total	68	2.0686	1.02629		
6. Marketing and Communication in the Field of Sports	Bulgaria	26	1.5872	0.15722	45.784	0.000
	Italy	30	3.2333	0.72530		
	Spain	12	2.2083	1.01783		
	Total	68	2.4230	0.99014		
7. Good Governance	Bulgaria	26	1.6667	0.13333	101.94	0.000
	Italy	30	3.3056	0.64784		
	Spain	12	1.4722	0.51656		
	Total	68	2.3554	0.97986		

Pre-test to measure knowledge and skills.

Regarding administration and human resource management in sports by migrant sports professionals showed significant differences in the Pre-test ( $p=0.000$ ). Country Spain showed the highest level (mean=2.25,  $sd=0.77688$ ) while the lowest level was Bulgaria (mean=1.1282,  $sd=0.16538$ ).

It implies that the migrant professional workers dealt more with administration and human resource management in sports when compared with Bulgaria and Italy.

Similarly, the table showed that the three countries have significant differences in coaching and mentoring,  $p$ =value of 0.000. Italy showed the highest level (mean=3.0556,  $sd=0.56787$ ), while the lowest level was

Bulgaria (mean=1.6538,  $sd=0.13269$ ). It can be inferred based on the result that the Bulgarian migrant sport professional are more in line in coaching and mentoring than the other two countries.

In like manner, it can be gleaned in the table that there were significant differences between the sports professionals from the three countries in digital skills,  $p=0.001$ . It showed that Italian sports professionals have the highest level of digital skills (mean=3.4778,  $sd=0.96959$ ) while the minor level was from Spain (mean=2.3056,  $sd=1.04889$ ). It can be inferred from the results that Italian nationals are more into capacitating themselves on digital usage as part of their skills when compared with the other sports professionals from Bulgaria and Spain.

Further, it can be observed that there was a significant difference in the management of sports events by the sports professionals from the different countries,  $p=0.00$ . The Italian sports professionals were noted with the highest level of skill and knowledge on the management of sports events (mean=2.8444, sd=0.71777), while the Bulgarians have the least (mean=1.2436, sd=0.217221). The data shows that Italian sports professionals are more proficient in managing sports events.

The analysis showed significant statistical differences in the skill and knowledge of financial sustainability strategies and mechanisms for support organization,  $p=0.000$ . The Italian sports professionals showed the highest level (mean=2.8667, sd=0.98494) while the least was the Spanish (mean=1.2778, sd=0.52864). It also implies that Italian sports professionals are more skilled and knowledgeable on financial sustainability strategies and mechanisms for support organizations when compared with sports professionals from Bulgaria and Spain. Similarly, it was found that there was a significant difference in the level of skill and knowledge on marketing

and communication in the field of sport,  $p=0.000$ . Italy again showed the highest level while the lowest was Bulgaria. Italian sports professionals are trained to have better marketing and communication in sports compared with Bulgaria and Spain.

Lastly, there was also a significant difference in good governance among the sports professionals from the three countries cited,  $p=0.000$ . Again, Italian sports professions were found to have the highest level (mean=3.3056, sd=0.64784) while the lowest was Spain (mean=1.4722, sd=0.51656). The Italians are better at good governance than the other sports professional from Bulgaria and Spain.

The respondents' similar mean and standard deviations from the three countries reflected different results in the Pre-test to measure knowledge and skills.

The computed Mean squares between groups (13.157) are higher than within groups at .132. On the other hand, the  $f$ -value was computed at 100.034, where  $p=0.000$ ; therefore, a significant difference in the overall pre-test results among the three countries was established.

**Table 2:** Significant difference in the Level of Knowledge and Skills of the Migrants' Potential Sports Managers in the three countries (Bulgaria, Italy, and Spain) as reflected in the Post-test

Knowledge and Skills	Country	N	Mean	SD	F	Sig.
1. Administration and Human Resource Management in Sport	Bulgaria	26	4.1410	0.09058	1.971	0.148
	Italy	30	3.8556	0.59489		
	Spain	12	4.0972	0.96258		
	Total	68	4.0074	0.57189		
2. Coaching and Mentoring	Bulgaria	26	3.8397	0.03269	1.921	0.155
	Italy	30	4.0389	0.41450		
	Spain	12	3.8056	0.83434		
	Total	68	3.9216	0.44746		
3. Digital Skills for Sports Managers	Bulgaria	26	4.0385	0.14382	9.834	0.000
	Italy	30	4.5111	0.42646		
	Spain	12	3.8611	0.97916		
	Total	68	4.2157	0.56358		
4. Management of Sports Events	Bulgaria	26	3.8782	.14574	0.382	0.684
	Italy	30	3.8500	.59266		
	Spain	12	3.6944	1.13448		
	Total	68	3.8333	0.61288		
5. Financial Sustainability Strategies and Mechanisms for Support Organizations	Bulgaria	26	4.0385	0.14382	3.436	.038
	Italy	30	4.3000	0.56290		
	Spain	12	3.7500	1.22371		
	Total	68	4.1029	0.65729		
6. Marketing and Communication in the Field of Sports	Bulgaria	26	4.1795	0.19392	3.619	0.032
	Italy	30	4.2667	0.56154		
	Spain	12	3.7222	1.10402		
	Total	68	4.1373	0.62423		
7. Good Governance	Bulgaria	26	3.8718	0.13587	4.722	0.012
	Italy	30	4.2389	0.48083		
	Spain	12	3.7222	1.12442		
	Total	68	4.0074	.60019		

As shown in Table 2, there is no significant difference between and among respondent groups' post-test results from the three countries, namely, Bulgaria, Italy, and Spain, in all areas of administration and human resource management in sport ( $p=0.148$ ), coaching and mentoring ( $p=0.155$ ) and management of sports events (0.684).

Generally, post-test data showed no significant difference in the overall knowledge and skill,  $p=0.098$ . It means that the three countries gained improvements and the same results in the post-evaluation.

After the ETS program, the Bulgarian, Italian, and Spanish sports professionals acquired better knowledge

and skills. Using the ETS program is an effective way of nurturing the capability of sports professionals in the three countries. Regardless of where the professional sports country of origin is, it showed that they do not vary, or the same knowledge and skills were acquired after the inception of ETS.

It also showed improvement of other sports professionals from other countries who were perceived to have lower knowledge and skills in administration and human resource management in sports, coaching and mentoring, and management of sports events.

On the other hand, digital skills for sports managers ( $p=0.000$ ), financial sustainability strategies and mechanisms for sports organizations ( $p=0.038$ ), marketing and communication in the field of sport ( $p=0.032$ ), and good governance ( $p=0.012$ ) showed significant differences. It implies that in this particular,

the sports professionals' knowledge and skills in sports vary relatively.

Even though there was the ETS program, some sports professionals needed help to acquire knowledge and skills in using digital platforms for sports managers, financial sustainability strategies and mechanisms for sports organizations, marketing and communication in sports, and good governance.

It can be inferred that in most of the learning areas, the three countries had varying rates of improvement, but in some learning areas, they had acquired the same rate of improvement. Further, regardless of the rate of improvement of the sports professionals from Bulgaria, Italy, and Spain, ETS had something to do with their improvement. It was a helpful instrument that caters to their improvement as manifested in the means computed and the  $p$ -values.

**Table 3:** Level of Trainer's Expertise in the three countries (Bulgaria, Italy, and Spain) as reflected in the Post-test;

Expertise of trainers	Country	N	Mean	SD	F	Sig.
Expertise	Bulgaria	26	4.9615	0.19612	14.426	0.000
	Italy	30	4.3667	0.61495		
	Spain	12	3.9167	0.99620		
	Total	68	4.5147	0.70165		
Clarity	Bulgaria	26	4.9231	0.27175	18.062	0.000
	Italy	30	4.1333	0.57135		
	Spain	12	3.6667	1.23091		
	Total	68	4.3529	0.80604		
Culturally	Bulgaria	26	4.9231	0.27175	11.441	0.000
	Italy	30	4.1333	0.73030		
	Spain	12	3.9167	1.24011		
	Total	68	4.3971	0.83111		
Time Management	Bulgaria	26	4.9231	0.27175	8.752	0.000
	Italy	30	4.2000	.55086		
	Spain	12	4.4167	1.24011		
	Total	68	4.5147	0.72261		
Responsiveness	Bulgaria	26	4.9615	0.19612	18.636	0.000
	Italy	30	4.5667	0.56832		
	Spain	12	3.5833	1.24011		
	Total	68	4.5441	0.79988		
Mean	Bulgaria	26	4.9385	0.21740	24.135	0.000
	Italy	30	4.2800	0.35076		
	Spain	12	3.9000	0.93614		
	Total	68	4.4647	.61177		

Table 3 presents the comparative assessment of the trainers from the three countries in the post-test based on respondents' ratings. There is a significant difference among the trainers from the three countries in expertise, clarity, culture, time management, and responsiveness.

Trainers in three countries showed high levels of expertise, clarity, culture, time management, and responsiveness resulting in the effective acquisition of knowledge and skills by the participants in these countries.

It can be gleaned that there is a significant difference between and among the trainers from three countries in the areas of expertise ( $p=0.000$ ), clarity ( $p=0.000$ ), culturally ( $p=0.000$ ), time management, and responsiveness, resulting in the effective acquisition of knowledge and

skills by the migrant-participants in the three countries.

The result of this study supports the idea of Kolb (1984) and McLeod (2017) about experiential learning. According to them, the best way to learn things is by having experiences that stick out in the mind and help retain information and remember facts.

In this study, the trainers helped in creating opportunities for the migrant trainees to gain experiences based on the ETS methodology they learned about, and they helped to create environments where migrants learned and experienced new skills at the same time. As can be gleaned from the table, the comparative assessment of the respondent groups' overall knowledge and skills as migrant sports professionals in overall Pre-test and post-



**Table 4:** Significant difference between the overall knowledge and skills of the migrant sports professionals in the Overall Pre-test and Post-test.

Paired Samples Test									
		Paired Differences				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean					
				Lower	Upper				
Pair 1	Overall Pretest - Overall Posttest	-1.72003	.70323	.08528	-1.89025	-1.54981	-20.169	67	.000

test results shows a significant difference with  $p=0.000$ . The significant difference between the overall Pre-test and post-test of the migrant sports professionals means that the ETS program was very effective as an intervention to enhance their knowledge and skills.

These areas include sports administration and human resource management, coaching and mentoring, digital skills for sports managers, sports events management, financial sustainability strategies and mechanisms for sports organizations, marketing and communication in sports, and good governance.

## CONCLUSION

Effecting greater participation of migrants in the position of responsibility within sports organizations is the development of the necessary methodological capacities through sports methods for them to convey the varied set of entrepreneurial attitudes, skills, and instruments composing the sports manager profile. In this study, migrants from Bulgaria, Spain, and Italy showed improvement in the areas of administration and human resource management in sports, coaching and mentoring, digital skills for sports managers, management of sports events, financial sustainability strategies and mechanisms for sports organizations, marketing and communication in the field of sport and good governance. These areas are found to be absent or lacking among the participants before the intervention. The uncertainty of agreement on the respondents' lack of knowledge and skills could result from their lack of confidence in what they perceived as needed to become potential sports managers. Hence, the need for training and interventions will prepare them to be actual sports managers in the future with confidence.

Overall, the respondents agree of acquiring the knowledge and skills in administration and human resource management in sports, coaching and mentoring, digital skills for sports managers, management of sports events, financial sustainability strategies and mechanisms for sports organizations, marketing and communication in the field of sport and good governance. The comparative assessment of the migrants' overall knowledge and skills as potential sports professionals in the overall Pre-test and post-test results shows a significant difference.

On the other hand, the trainers that delivered the ETS program in the three countries have gained and showed a high level of expertise, clarity, culture, time management, and responsiveness, resulting in the effective acquisition

of knowledge and skills by the migrant participants in the three countries.

Thus, creating opportunities for trainees to have experiences based on what they are learning about is vital. In this study, the trainers helped in creating opportunities for the migrant trainees to gain experiences based on the ETS methodology they learned about, and they helped to create environments where migrants learned and experienced new skills at the same time.

As a result, the ETS affected the development of sport manager profiles on migrants, providing a solution to their under-representation in leadership roles within their sports organizations. Therefore, education through sports methodology is an effective intervention program in enhancing the knowledge and skills of the migrants, helping them to upskill their sports manager's profile

. From this point of view, education through sports can be used as a methodology to bridge the gap experienced by both the host community and the migrants whose cultural background and social orientation are different on many accounts resulting in the observed under-rated treatment of the latter. As Edwards (2015) noted, community capacity building through sports is essential for supporting and promoting community capacity building, a critical practice for community development. According to Levermore (2008), this approach is a powerful engine capable of propelling a variety of development initiatives, including human development (physical and psychological benefits), empowerment (often focusing on how sport can empower girls and women), and integration of social groups and the development of social capital.

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