

**Positioning of Federate Sports in Portugal:
Handball, Basketball, Roller Hockey and Volleyball**

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Context

Sport is constituted by a multiplicity of activities with different purposes, concepts and cultural representations.

Before the increase of supply, Sports Federations need to understand the practitioners in relation to the several possibilities of practice and to position their sports according to their competitors.

In this context, the purpose of this study is the positioning of team federate sports (handball, basketball, roller hockey and volleyball). According to Lindon et al., (2002) [1], it is intended to identify, differentiate and analyse the distinctive features of the sport's image which allow the practitioner to place it in relation to the others.

Methods

An analysis model (questionnaire) was constructed formed by five dimensions (resources, accessibility, sport attributes, image and personal motivations) in a total of fifty items, represented in table 1.

Resources	Accessibility	Sport Attributes	Image	Personal Motivations
Proper facilities Human resources with kindness Adequate equipment Representatives with leadership Dynamic sports clubs Responsible sports associations Managers with adequate training Adequate quantity of training facilities Enough finance Coaches with adequate training	Timetable Price Place Good accesses Training time Access to people with special needs Safety Convenient game dates Good system of public transport Facilities near the residence	Innovation Cooperation Convenient norms Physical contact Competitiveness Challenge Originality Specialization Strong athletic component Well-being	Credibility Publicity Attractive name of the sport Awareness Sport spectacle Organise big events International successes Ratio quality/price Tradition in the country's culture Leaders in management	Self-esteem Image of an active life style Ascendancy to the podium Combating stress Social recognition Status Tradition in the family Pleasure in the practice Friends influence Belonging to the group

Table 1: Items of the dimensions

The data were collected by questionnaire formed by closed and open-ended questions.

The documentary analysis and the treatment of the answers to the open-ended questions from the questionnaire were made through the thematic analysis of the content of the type "logical-semantic", as it was suggested by Bardin (1977) [2], with the categorization being accomplished by the combination of the a priori and posterior process through analytical induction (Vala, 1990) [3].

The treatment of the closed questions, from the questionnaire, was accomplished through the descriptive statistics, using parameters of central tendency and dispersion. In the inferential statistics it was used the discriminant analysis in order to identify clusters of attributes on which the sports differ and the factor analysis in main components in order to summarise the central dimensions for each sport (Aaker, Kumar, & Day, 2001) [4].

The sample is constituted by sports managers and technicians from the Portuguese Federations of handball, basketball, roller hockey and volleyball, in a total of 47 individuals.

Results

Concerning the identification of the different sports the results show that in general all the sports are considered semi-professional and team sports, although some of the enquired mention the amateur and socio-ludic. However, basketball, according to its representatives, is identified by having a professional component.

In Portugal the results show that the media aren't always sensible to what is more popular. In general, the sports are referred to as relatively mediatic but very popular in the national context.

In relation to the differentiation of the sports we can see that handball appears as a sport whose main differences are the international successes and the quality/price ratio of the dimension image and the pleasure in the practice of the dimension personal motivations.

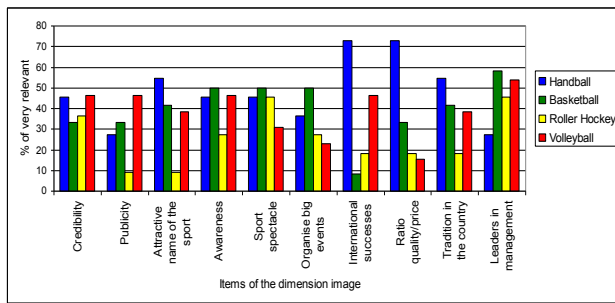


Figure 1: Parameter *very relevant* to the items of the dimension image

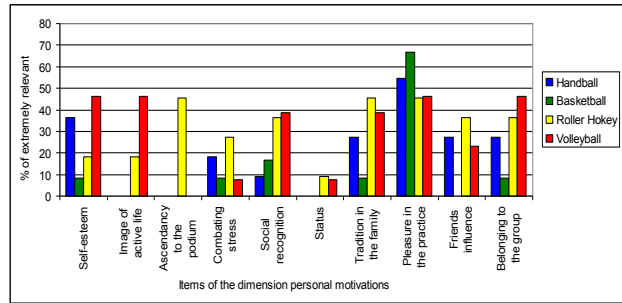


Figure 2: Parameter *extremely relevant* to the items of the dimension personal motivations

Basketball shows representative figures in all dimensions in general, except in the dimension accessibility. However it is in the items friends influence, self-esteem and possibility of belonging to the group of the dimension personal motivations that it is positioned.

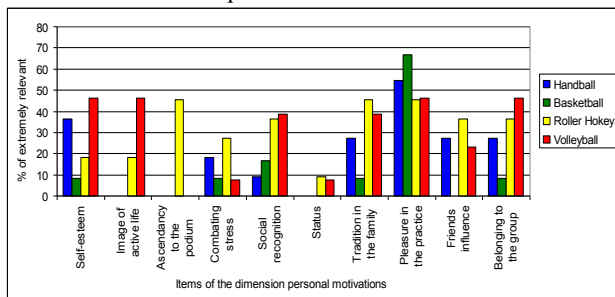


Figure 3: Parameter *extremely relevant* to the items of the dimension personal motivations

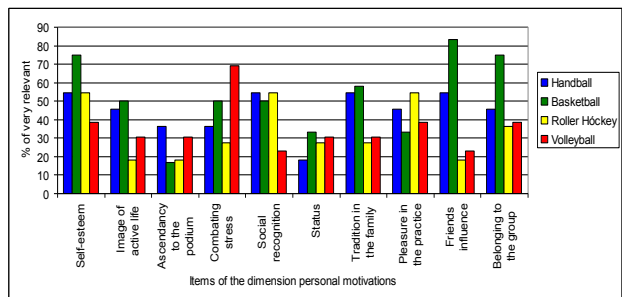


Figure 4: Parameter *very relevant* to the items of the dimension personal motivations

Roller hockey positions itself in the items of international successes, tradition in the country's culture and awareness of the dimension image. This sport also differs in the dimension accessibility, once it is the most expensive sport in terms of equipment.

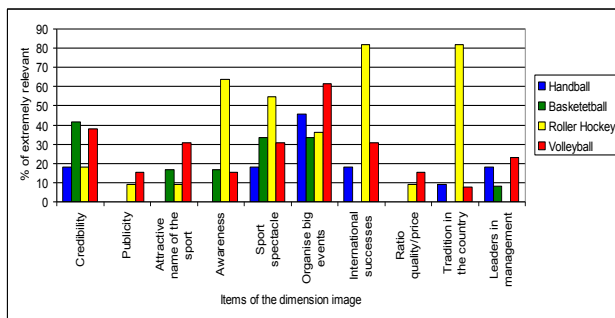


Figure 5: Parameter *extremely relevant* to the items of dimension image

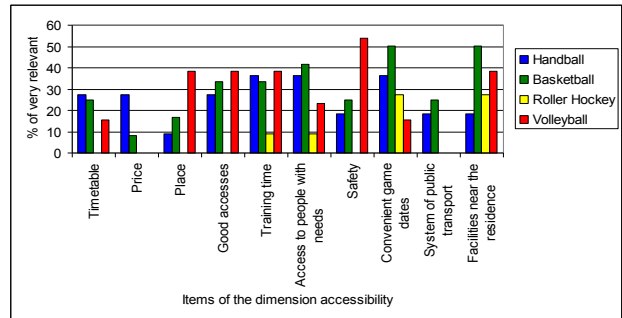


Figure 6: Parameter *very relevant* to the items of the dimension accessibility

Volleyball, like basketball, shows representative figures in all the dimensions in general, although it differs in competitiveness and innovation of the dimension sport attributes, in human resources with kindness, adequate equipment and managers with adequate training of the dimension resources and also in the ability to organize big events of the dimension image.

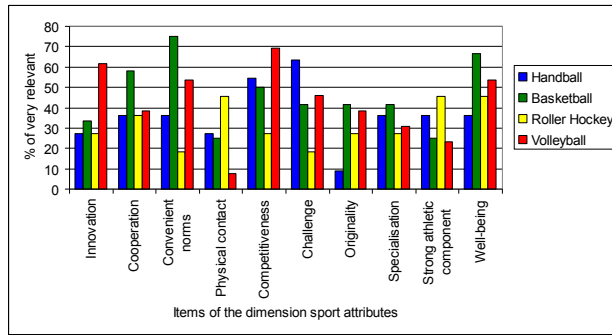


Figure 7: Parameter very relevant to the items of the dimension sport attributes

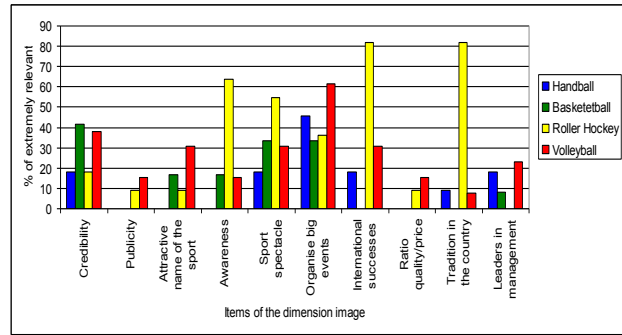


Figure 8: Parameter extremely relevant to the items of the dimension image

The sports show little differences, although the inferential analysis revealed two different factors between the several sports. One of these factors includes the international successes and the ability to organise big events (dimension image). Another differentiating factor is the high degree of specialisation of each sport (dimension sport attributes) and the tradition in the country's culture (dimension image).

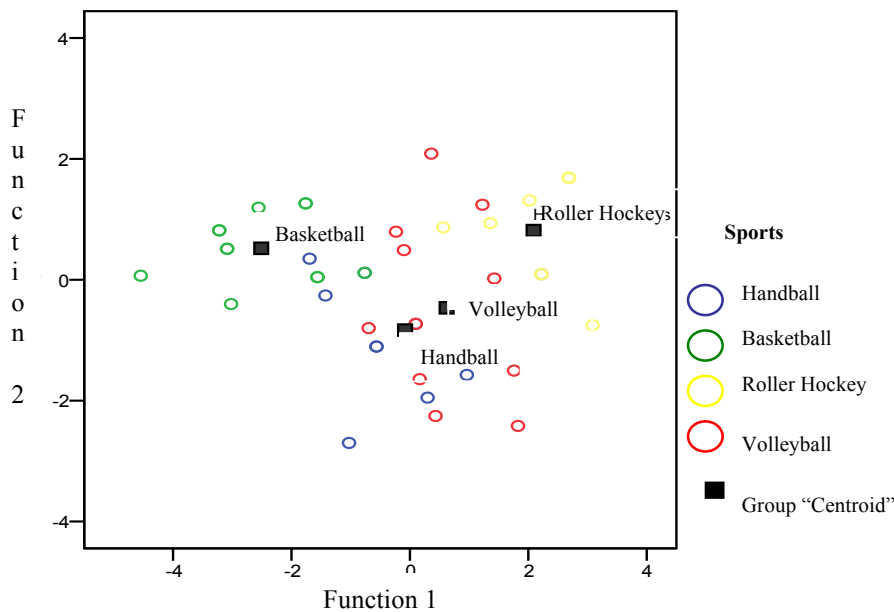


Figure 9: Perceptual Map

Through the analysis of the perceptual map we can easier see the discriminant ability of each function, Kotler et al., (2002) [5], over the positioning of the different sports from this study.

In this way, we have handball positioned closer to the function 1, formed by the items international successes (dimension image), ability to organise big events (dimension image), representatives with leadership (dimension resources) and awareness (dimension image).

Basketball positions itself clearly in the function 2 with the particularity of having all its points concentrated near the centroid. This function includes the items high degree of specialisation (dimension sport attributes), tradition in the country's culture (dimension image), challenge (dimension sport attributes) and originality (dimension sport attributes).

Roller hockey, in its turn, shows the centroid with the highest value both in function 2 where the dimension image is dominant and in function 1 where the dimension sport attributes is dominant. We must mention however that its positioning appears clearer in function 1.

Finally volleyball appears much dispersed from its centroid, which gives the idea of not having a clear positioning but on the contrary that it divides itself into the two functions. However, its centroid tends to get closer to the function where the dimension sport attributes is dominant. We should also mention that in the map volleyball and handball invade the same space, showing that these sports have similar characteristics.

Through the analysis we can see a large quantity of items available in each dimension, not only with different items within the same dimensions, but also items crossed between each other and even with the dimensions accessibility and its items, resources and its items and personal motivations and its items, showing that they don't establish differences between the sports. From this, we conclude that there could still exist other different functions, that is, positioning strategies still to fulfil or even to explore.

Discussion and Implications

In Portugal, handball, basketball, roller hockey and volleyball differ in few attributes.

According to the sample, these attributes belong to dimensions relevant in the differentiation: personal motivations (self-esteem and pleasure in the practice) and image (ability to organise big events).

Roller hockey appears as a distinct team sport because it is tradition in the country's culture and it is the most expensive sport in terms of equipment acquisition for the practice.

In the presence of these results, the Federations ought to reposition their sports, clearly differentiating their services in order to obtain real competitive advantages.

References

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