



Delivering a hybrid knowledge transfer network model for basketball engagement and development

D2.2 – Needs and Gaps Analysis

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1. Background: About the Basketball-KTN Project

Basketball-KTN aims to actively participate and engage young people in sports in general and actively engage in basketball by introducing a hybrid knowledge transfer tool that will be supported by digital means as well as by face-to-face interventions. The main aim of Basketball Knowledge Transfer Network (Basketball-KTN) is to create a variety of diverse connections to drive positive and consistent change. The consortium is committed to address the societal challenge of 'inclusivity' through basketball engagement, by promoting a healthy lifestyle for children under 18 years old. The project BASKETBALL-KTN focuses on the youth and their continuous and active involvement with Basketball. The overarching aim of the project is to provide equal opportunities through putting together small 'clusters' of twinned clubs and academies to exchange knowledge and experience. This will form the 'Communities of Practice' in Basketball, having as ambition to incorporate more countries and clubs on a Pan-European Level.

The program will be implemented through 4 main pillars of activities:

- Sustainable development of basketball
- Psychological support of young athletes and parents
- Promote and Engage
- Sustainability and legacy



Basketball Knowledge Transfer Network



2. Introduction

2.1. Purpose and Scope of the Document

The purpose of the Needs and Gaps Analysis task was to identify the needs at three levels: young basketball players, their parents and club's staff (coach, manager, secretary, member, etc.). This document should serve to find out the gaps between the needs, the current service provision and development prospects of basketball engagement influenced by trends.

For the realization of this task, first, examples of good practice were collected and previously presented as Good Practices Audit (Task no. 2.1).

Afterwards, two Questionnaires was created and distributed. One questionnaire was created for the athletes, and one for the parents and club's staff. Additionally, Interview Script was created with 7 questions for the basketball experts – coaches, former players, managers, etc. The analysis of the responses, both Questionnaire and Interview, will be presented in this document.

All that will help to identify and create new hybrid model that responds to the needs of athletes, parents and clubs. At the end, it should improve basketball engagement and development of young basketball players and basketball clubs or academies.

3. Good Practices Report

The aim of good practices audit was to identify examples that have possibility to increase the physical engagement of children and to include more them in systematic basketball practice, both in developed and less developed areas. A total of 20 good practices were selected, 4 from each partner country.

It was concluded that there is a wide spectrum of positive examples from basketball clubs and sport organizations across Greece, Serbia, Spain, Italy, and Ukraine. They showcase the diverse initiatives aimed at engaging youth in basketball and also underscore the potential for broader application and scalability across different countries.

Key examples include:

1. Greece: The Annual 3x3 Learning Tournament and the Mini Basketball Handbook focus on skill development and coaching for children, while the Safeguarding Code ensures a safe, discrimination-free environment for all participants.
2. Serbia: Events like the Family Day of Basketball and programs by Basketball Club IKAR empower children, including those with special needs, through tailored training, promoting social inclusion and community bonding.
3. Spain: Programs such as the Basket Cervantes School for Parents and the Solidarity Tournament emphasize family involvement, community engagement, and the social impact of sports, fostering inclusivity and social change.
4. Italy: Initiatives like College Family and International Camps connects rural children with basketball opportunities, addressing dropout rates by prioritizing enjoyment in sports, while College Basketball SSDRL and Dribbling through the City promote lifelong participation in sports and community cohesion.
5. Ukraine: Programs focus on using basketball for social integration and psychological recovery, especially in rural areas and among vulnerable groups, demonstrating the sport's potential to address local challenges and promote well-being.

The document concludes that these initiatives exemplify basketball's role in promoting physical activity, well-being, and social cohesion across different communities. The shared practices can inspire similar projects globally, promoting inclusivity, fairness, and respect through sports.

4. Questionnaire Report

Questionnaires are divided in several sections. Questionnaire for athletes contains personal information, psychological support needs, young athlete development needs and additional feedback with 21 questions in total. Questionnaire for parents/club's staff contain one section more - identifying needs for club development with 18 questions in total. They were applied in 5 countries (partner countries of the project) during the August and September 2024. Research with athletes was done with the prior consent of parents or guardians.

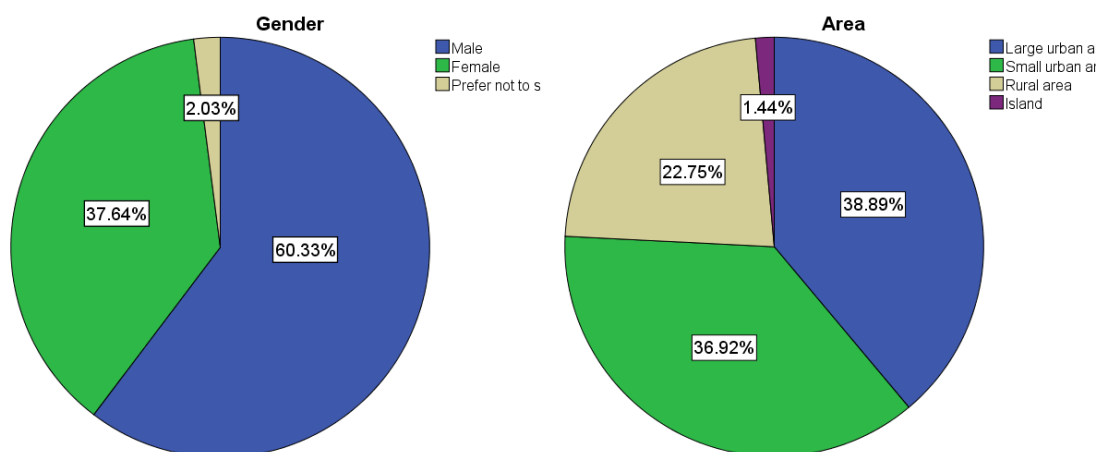
4.1. Personal information

Table 1 shows distribution of the respondents according to the role and country. In total there were 1525 respondents. The smallest number comes from Ukraine, which is expected due to the crisis situation. There are 0.5% respondents from other countries but they are working in the partner countries and they were not excluded from the analysis.

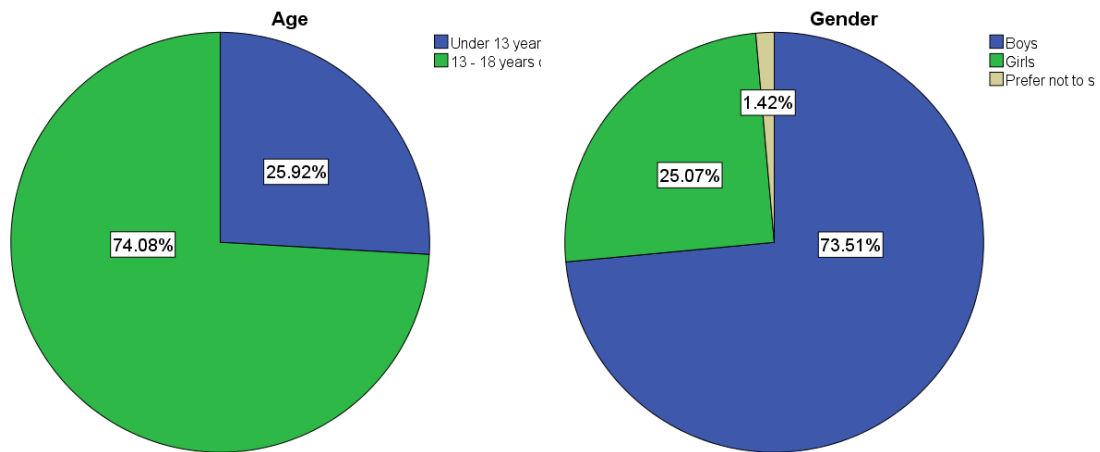
Table 1 – Distribution of the respondents

Responders	Serbia	Ukraine	Italy	Spain	Greece	Other	Total
Parents	147	68	128	72	164	0	579
Club's staff	19	75	30	98	16	2	240
Athletes	191	97	150	118	145	5	706
Total	357	240	308	288	325	7	1.525

More male than female respondents participated in the Questionnaire, and approximately the same number comes from large and small urban area, something less from rural area and island.



A larger number of athletes are from 13 to 18 years old – 74.08%, with only 25.92% under 13 years old. There are almost two thirds more boys than girls athletes with 1.42% of those who did not want to declare.



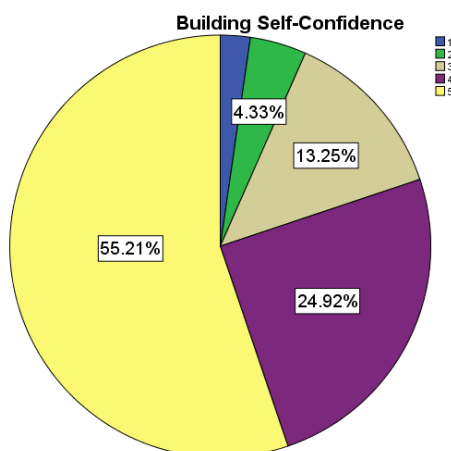
4.2. Psychological Support Needs

Based on the statistical analysis provided, several conclusions can be drawn regarding the psychological support services that all respondents most need, as well as the most effective methods for delivering training.

Psychological Support Needs for Athletes

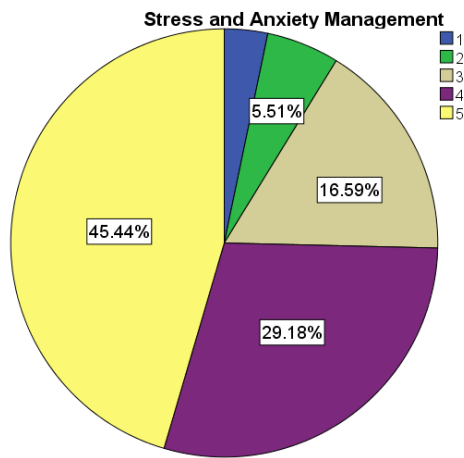
The analysis evaluated the perspectives of three groups—parents, club’s staff, and athletes—on various psychological support services. They are rated from 1 for the least important to 5 for the most important. The chart shows the answers of all respondents in percentage, while the table shows the differences between the groups. The detailed results are presented below:

- Building Self-Confidence:** This is ranked highly across all groups, with parents giving it the highest average score (4.48), followed by club’s staff (4.25) and athletes (4.09). The analysis shows statistically significant differences between the groups, especially between parents and athletes.



Role	N	Mean	Sig.
Parents	579	4.48	.000
Club’s Staff	240	4.25	
Athletes	706	4.09	

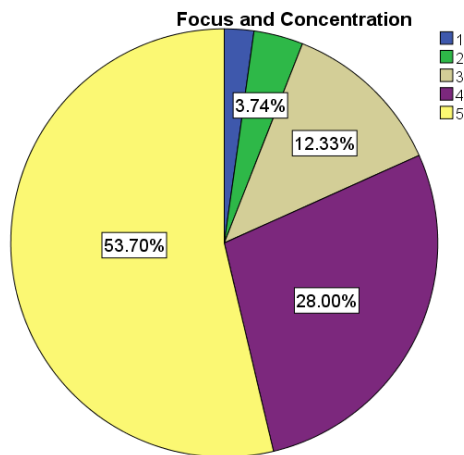
- Stress and Anxiety Management:** Parents again rated this highly (4.31), followed by club's staff (4.15) and athletes (3.87). The difference between athletes and the other two groups is significant ($p < 0.001$), indicating that athletes perceive less need for stress management compared to parents.



Stress and Anxiety Management

Role	N	Mean	Sig.
Parents	579	4.31	.000
Club's Staff	240	4.15	
Athletes	706	3.87	

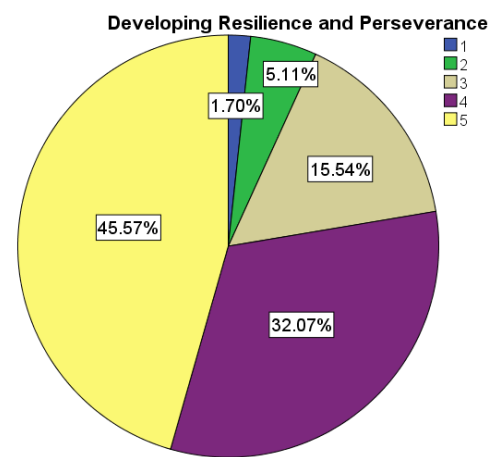
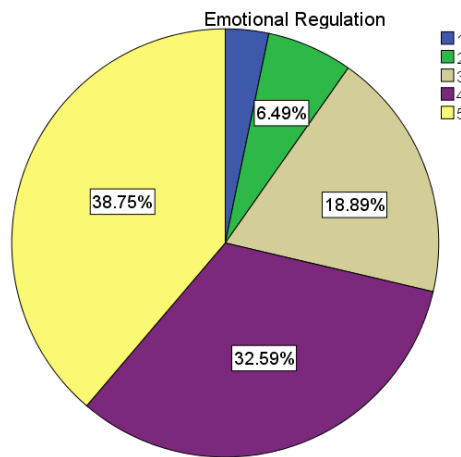
- Focus and Concentration:** While the overall score for this need is high across all groups (4.27), athletes' rating (4.21) is slightly lower than parents (4.39) and club's staff (4.18).



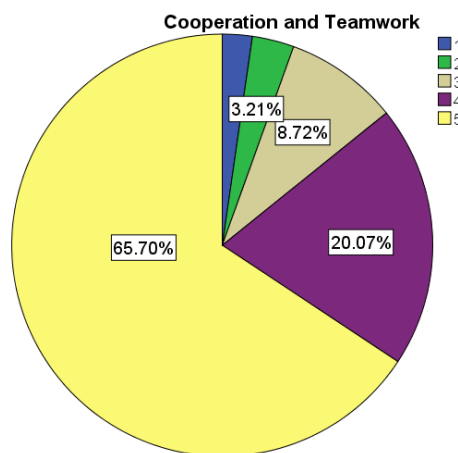
Focus and Concentration

Role	N	Mean	Sig.
Parents	579	4.39	.001
Club's Staff	240	4.18	
Athletes	706	4.21	

- Emotional Regulation and Resilience:** Parents rate emotional regulation (4.26) and resilience (4.38) more important than athletes (3.71 and 3.97 respectively), showing significant differences between groups ($p < 0.001$).



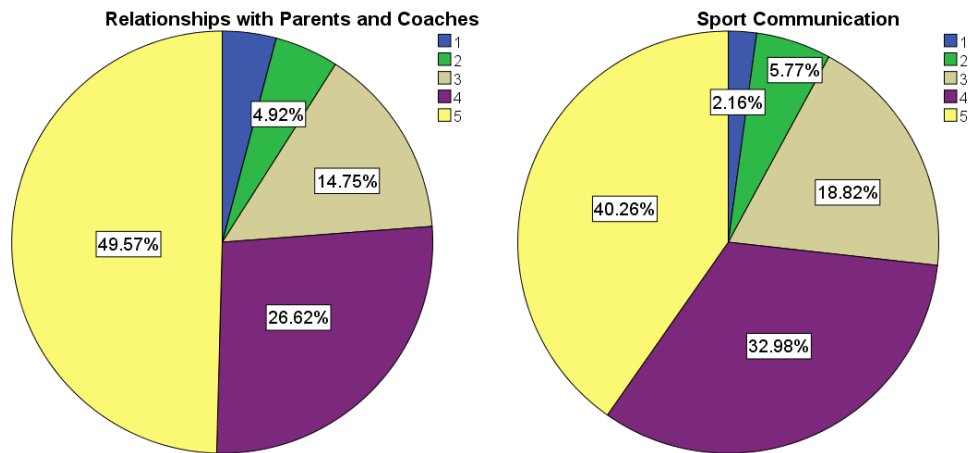
- **Cooperation and Teamwork:** All groups strongly agree on the importance of this skill, with parents rating it the highest (4.63). The differences between parents and athletes (4.32) are statistically significant.



Cooperation and Teamwork

Role	N	Mean	Sig.
Parents	579	4.63	.000
Club's Staff	240	4.32	
Athletes	706	4.32	

- **Relationship with Parents and Coaches and Sport Communication:** Parents rate relationship with parents and coaches (4.26) and sport communication (4.17) more important than athletes (4.05 and 3.94 respectively) and club's staff (4.02 and 3.98 respectively), showing significant differences between groups ($p < 0.001$).
- **Developing Mental Toughness, Personal Responsibility and Relationship, Balancing Academic and Athletic Commitments** was also rated high across all three groups (with total mean of 4.23, 4.03 and 4.06, respectively).

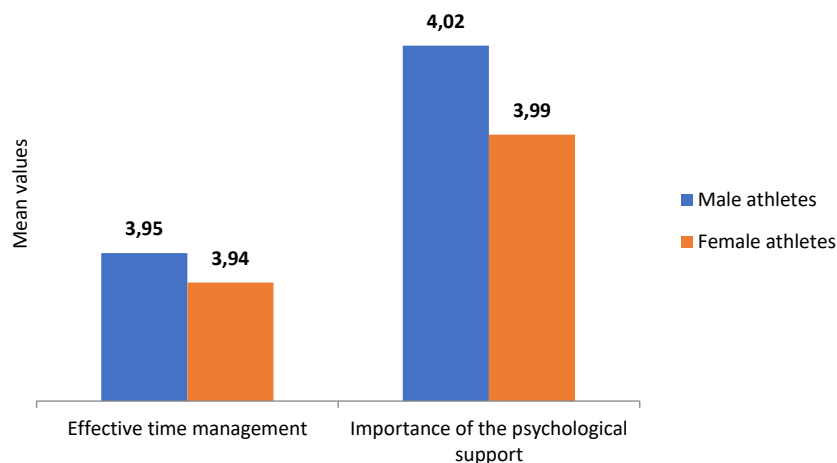


Overall, the analysis reveals that parents consistently rate the need for psychological support services higher than other participants, particularly in areas like emotional regulation, stress management, and resilience.

For questions related to effective time management in balancing between school and sports obligations and the importance of psychological support, athletes were offered the following responses: 1 – not important, 2 – slightly important, 3 – moderately important, 4 – very important, 5 – extremely important. For questions related to the use of social media, athletes were offered the following responses: 1 – never, 2 – sometimes, 3 – often, 4 – very often. For questions related to the interest for lectures that covers sport psychology and how to effectively use social media athletes were offered the following responses: 1 – not interested, 2 – neutral, 3 – interested, 4 – very interested. Here are the main findings comparing male and female athletes:

Both male and female participants rated the importance of effective time management in balancing schoolwork and sports commitments similarly, with mean scores of 3.95 and 3.94 respectively. The t-test confirms that there is no significant difference between genders ($t(694) = 0.135, p = 0.892$), suggesting that both genders consider time management equally important.

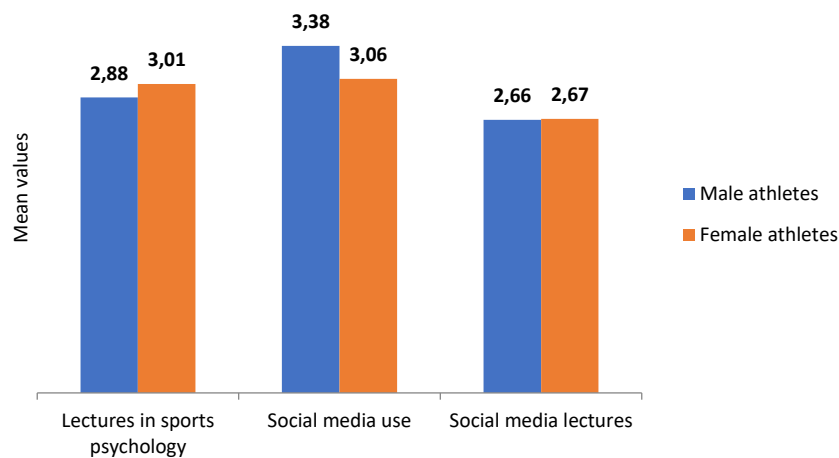
Both males (mean = 4.02) and females (mean = 3.99) rated psychological support, such as stress management and mental health, as very important for their well-being and athletic performance. There is no significant difference between genders ($t(694) = 0.276, p = 0.783$), indicating that both groups similarly value psychological support.



Female participants showed slightly more interest in lectures covering topics such as goal setting, motivation, self-confidence, and mental toughness, with a mean score of 3.01 compared to 2.88 for males. The t-test for equality of means shows a marginal significance ($t(694) = -1.844, p = 0.066$), but when variances are not assumed equal, the difference becomes significant ($p = 0.049$), indicating a small but meaningful gender difference in interest.

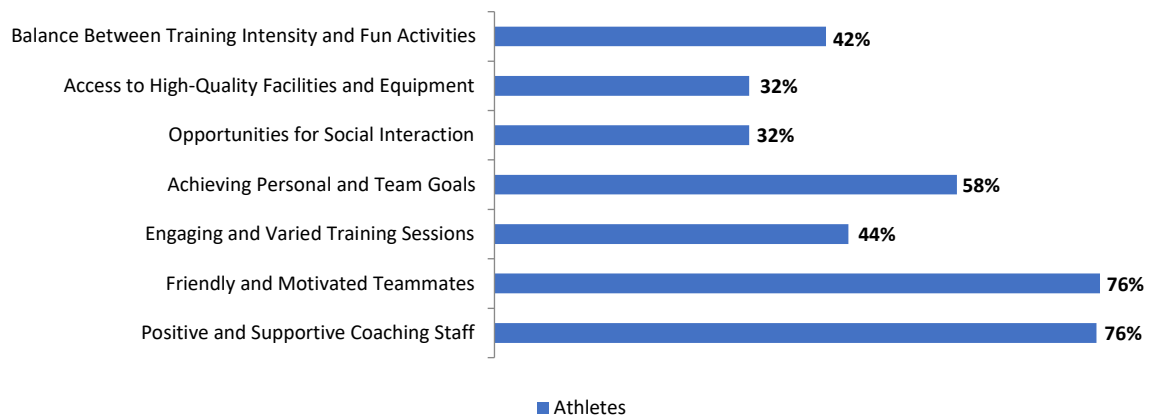
Males (mean = 3.38) reported using social media for basketball content more frequently than females (mean = 3.06). The t-test shows a significant difference between genders ($t(694) = 4.605, p < 0.001$), suggesting that males are more likely to use social media for basketball content.

Both genders reported similar levels of interest in lectures on how to effectively use social media and manage public relations as an athlete, with mean scores of 2.66 (males) and 2.67 (females). The t-test indicates no significant difference between the groups ($t(694) = -0.120, p = 0.904$).



Positive and Supportive Coaching Staff was one of the most important factors for athletes, with 534 responses (76%) indicating it as a key element across all countries. Like coaching staff, having friendly and motivated teammates is a significant factor in athletes' enjoyment, with 537 athletes (76%) indicating its importance. Varied and engaging training sessions were marked by 314 athletes (44%) as a key contributor to their enjoyment. Achieving goals, both personal and team-based, was cited by 410 athletes (58%) as a contributing factor. Social interaction was chosen by 226 athletes (32%) as a significant factor. Access to High-Quality Facilities and Equipment was important to 226 athletes (32%). A balance between intense training and fun activities was highlighted by 294 athletes (42%).

Factors for having good time while training

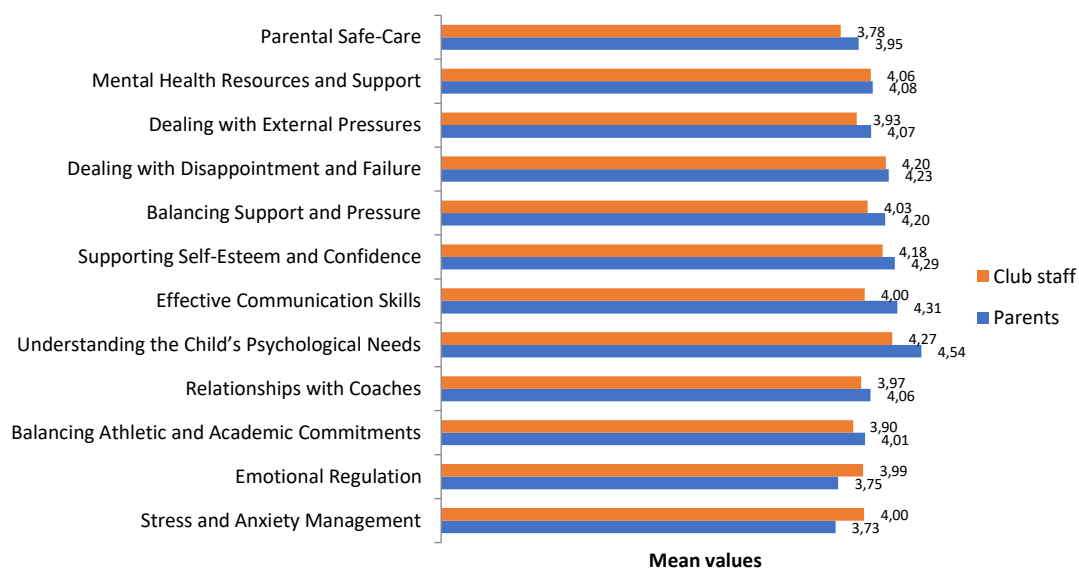


Psychological Support Needs for Parents

The analysis evaluated the perspectives of two groups—parents and club’s staff—on various psychological support services. They are rated from 1 for the least important to 5 for the most important.

The means for both groups (parents and club’s staff) are generally high across all psychological support services, indicating that both groups view these services as important. However, parents consistently rated the need for these services slightly higher than club’s staff, especially in parameters such as Understanding the child’s psychological needs (Parents: 4.54, Club’s Staff: 4.27) and Effective communication skills (Parents: 4.31, Club’s Staff: 4.00), except for the Stress and anxiety management and Emotional regulation which are rated higher by the club’s staff. These differences suggest that certain services are perceived as more critical by parents, while others may be viewed as more necessary by club’s staff. Both parents and club’s staff have similar views on the importance of other psychological support services proposed. These insights can guide decisions on where to allocate resources for psychological support, prioritizing the areas where parents have expressed the greatest need.

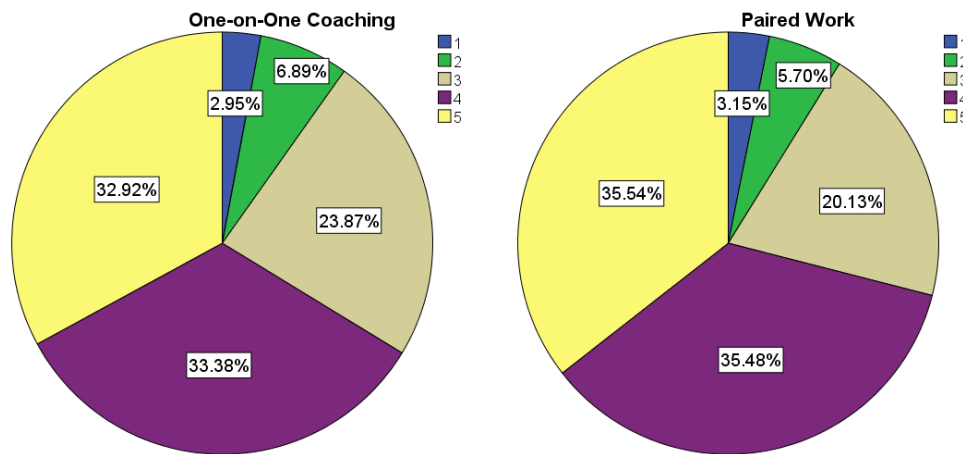
Psychological Support Services



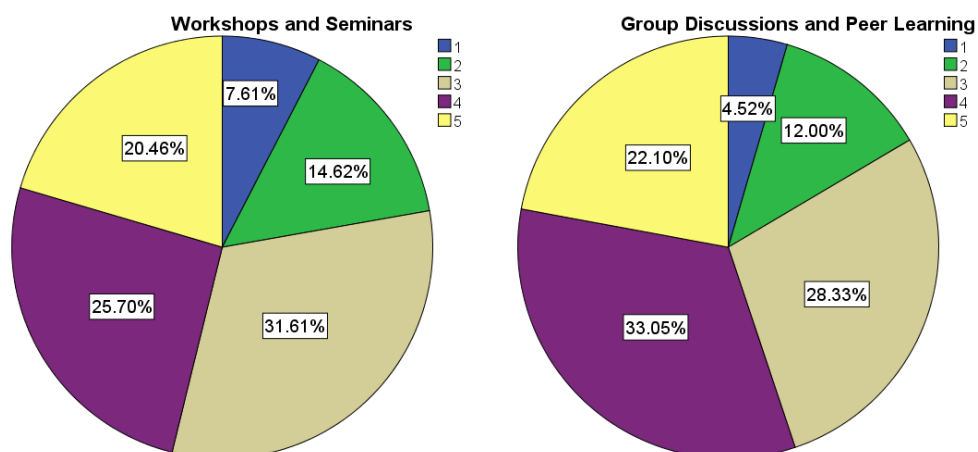
Preferred Training Methods

Regarding the most effective models for delivering training (rated from 1 for the least effective to 5 for the most effective) across three groups - Parents, Club's staff, and Athletes, the key conclusions are:

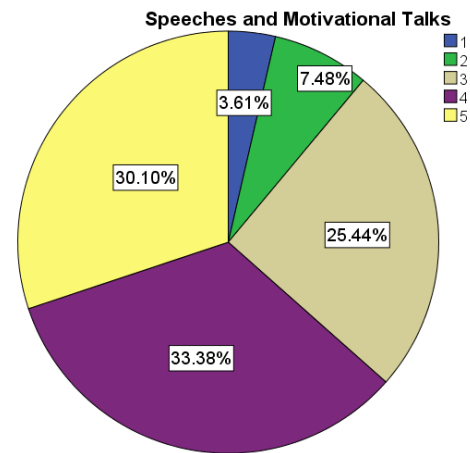
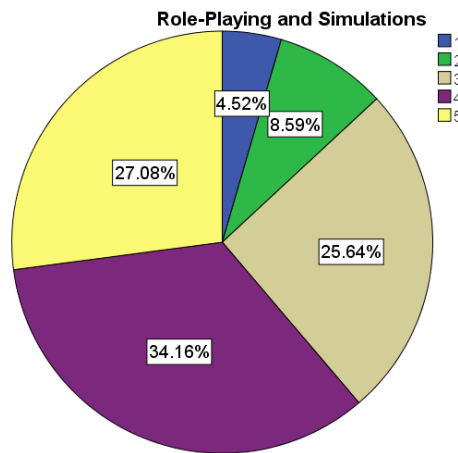
- **One-on-One Coaching and Paired Work** are considered the most effective training methods by all groups with overall mean of 3.86 and 3.95 respectively, with parents rating it the highest (4.02 and 3.97 respectively).



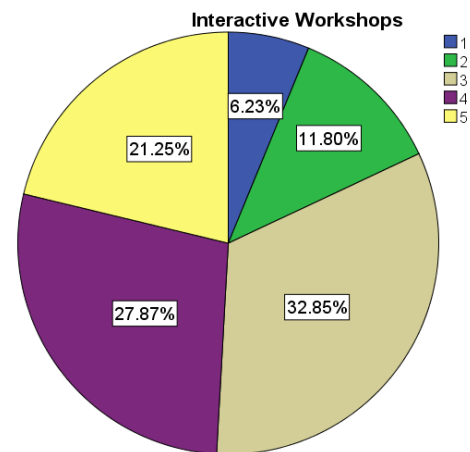
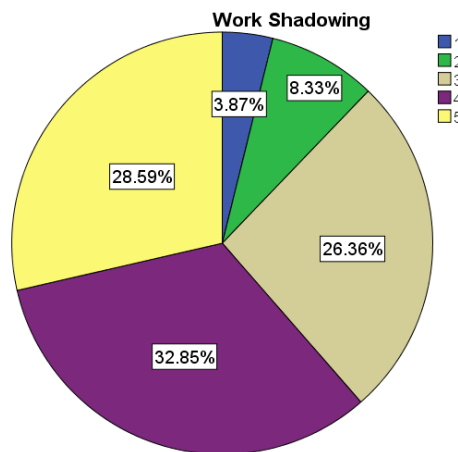
- **Workshops and Seminars** are rated as moderately effective, with parents and club's staff giving higher scores (3.60 and 3.58) compared to athletes (3.10). The difference between groups is significant ($p < 0.001$).
- **Group Discussions and Peer Learning** also showed a similar pattern, with parents and club's staff rating it slightly higher than athletes. However, the overall mean suggests that it is perceived as a beneficial approach (3.56 overall).



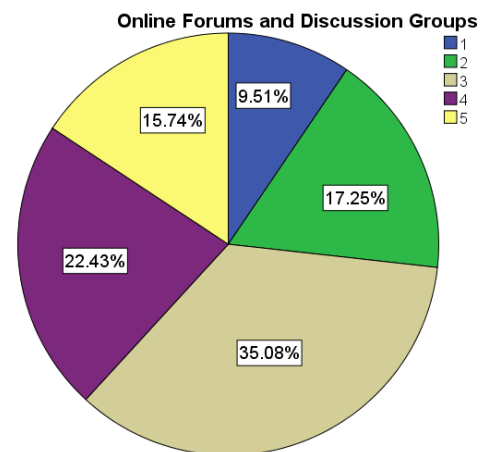
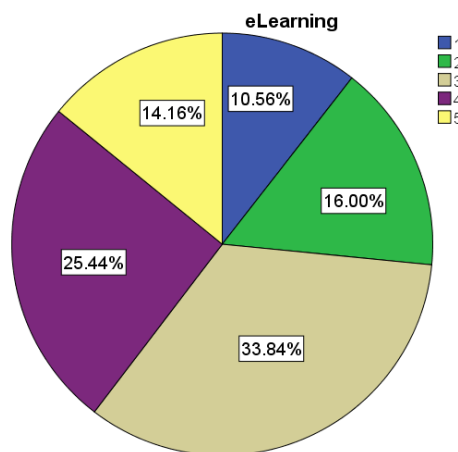
- **Role-Playing and Simulations** are more appreciated by parents (3.81) compared to athletes (3.64), with statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$).
- **Speeches and Motivational Talks** received positive ratings in overall, with no significant differences ($F = 2.101$, $p = 0.123$) among groups.



- **Work Shadowing** is rated similarly by all groups. The overall mean is 3.74.
- **Interactive Workshops** are rated lower by athletes (3.29) compared to parents and staff (around 3.60).



- **eLearning and Online Forums** with overall mean of 3.17 and 3.18 respectively are less favored than other models.



4.3. Young Athlete Development Needs

The next analysis involves several key factors regarding the attitudes and knowledge of parents, club’s staff, and athletes—about various aspects of youth sports, including the balance between education and sports, enjoyment during training, nutrition knowledge, and the importance of ethics in training.

All groups—parents, club’s staff, and athletes—agree on the high importance of balancing education and sport for young athletes, though parents rated it the highest (mean = 4.37) and club’s staff the lowest (mean = 3.94). The difference among these groups is statistically significant ($p < .05$), indicating that the perceptions of different groups are not the same.

Role	N	Mean	St. dev.	F	Sig.
Parents	579	4.37	.764	22.484	.000
Club’s Staff	240	3.94	1.045		
Athletes	706	4.15	.900		

Most respondents across the groups consider fun to be important during training. Parents rated it slightly higher (mean = 4.08), whereas athletes and club’s staff had relatively similar ratings (mean = 3.94 and 3.93, respectively). A significant difference was observed between the groups ($p = .007$), suggesting that while all groups value fun, parents place a slightly higher emphasis on it.

Role	N	Mean	St. dev.	F	Sig.
Parents	579	4.08	.853	4.950	.007
Club’s Staff	240	3.93	.993		
Athletes	706	3.94	.888		

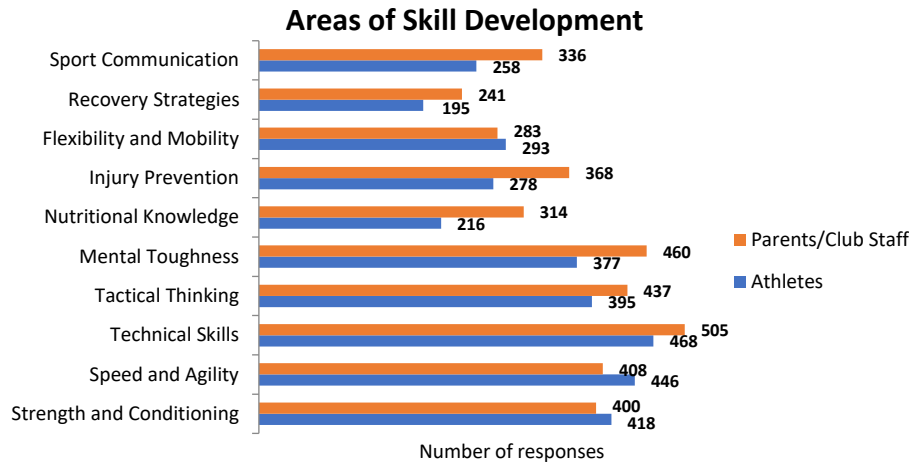
Knowledge about nutrition seems to be moderate across all groups, with athletes reporting slightly higher knowledge (mean = 3.48) compared to parents (mean = 3.40) and club’s staff (mean = 3.43). The difference in the level of nutrition knowledge is not statistically significant ($F = 1.116$, $p = .328$), indicating that all groups have a similar level of understanding.

Role	N	Mean	St. dev.	F	Sig.
Parents	579	3.40	1.023	1.116	.328
Club’s Staff	240	3.43	1.107		
Athletes	706	3.48	.992		

There is a strong consensus among parents that ethics (fair play, anti-doping, violence, etc.) should be discussed during training (mean = 1.21), while club’s staff and athletes are less convinced (1.51 and 1.52, respectively). The difference among groups is highly significant, with a p-value of .000, showing distinct views between parents and other two groups regarding the importance of this issue.

Role	N	Mean	St. dev.	F	Sig.
Parents	579	1.21	.519	40.589	.000
Club’s Staff	240	1.51	.749		
Athletes	706	1.52	.689		

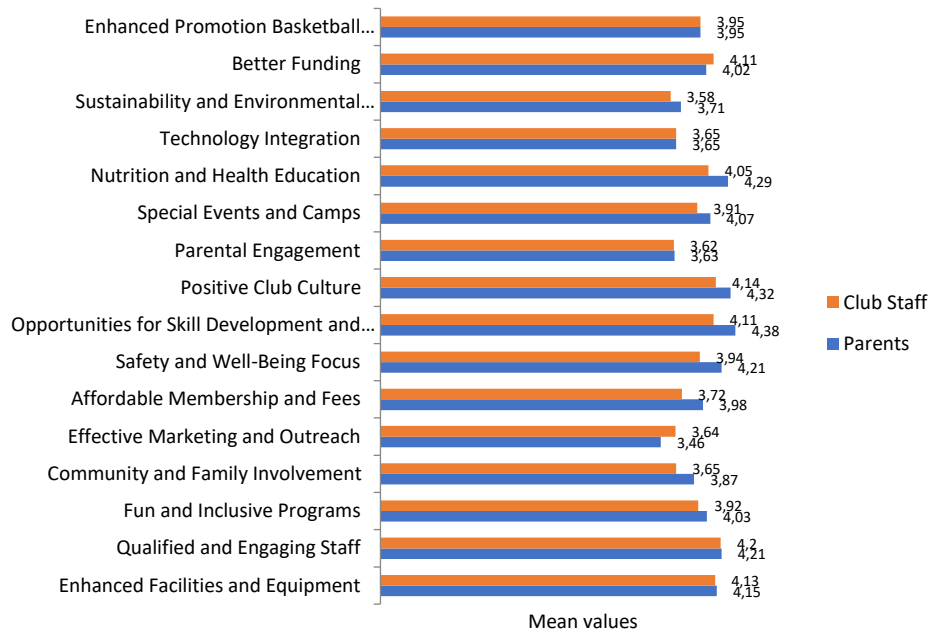
There is consensus between athletes and parents/club’s staff about on which areas of skill development need to be more focus during the training. Both groups agree on the importance of each proposed area. Technical skills received the most support, followed by speed and agility, mental toughness, tactical thinking and strength and conditioning. Injury prevention, sport communication, flexibility and mobility, nutrition knowledge and recovery strategies received slightly less support. These insights can help clubs tailor their development programs to address the specific needs of youth basketball players.



4.4. Identifying Needs for Club Development

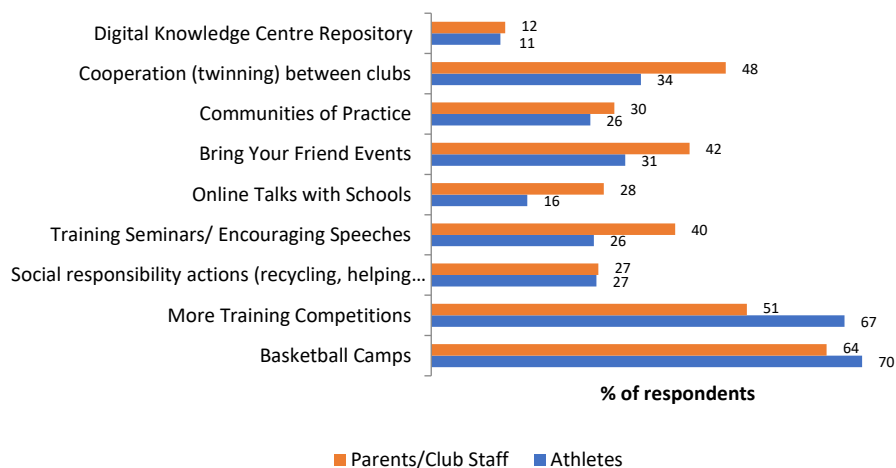
Both parents and club’s staff rated the proposed conditions that are necessary to improve development of basketball players highly across most parameters, with mean scores generally above 3.5, indicating that all conditions are viewed as relatively important for player development. Several parameters showed statistically significant differences between the two groups, indicating that one group perceives the importance of these conditions differently from the other. Parents rated Community and Family Involvement, Affordable Membership and Fees, Safety and Well-Being Focus, Opportunities for Skill Development and Progression significantly higher than club’s staff. Club’s staff rated Effective Marketing and Outreach significantly higher than parents. Rest of the proposed conditions did not show significant differences between the two groups, suggesting that both groups have similar perceptions of the importance of these conditions. The analysis suggests that while both groups agree on the importance of most conditions for player development, there are significant differences in how they prioritize certain areas. These insights can help clubs tailor their development programs to address the specific needs and perspectives of different stakeholders.

Club conditions



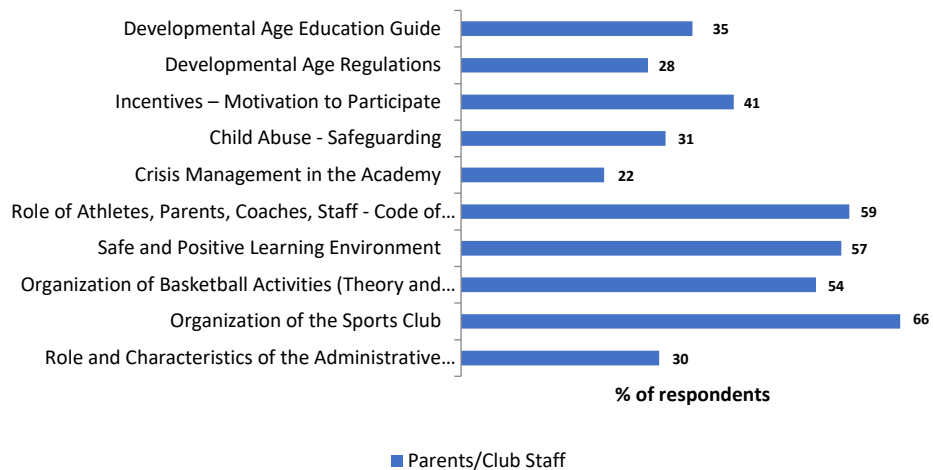
When types of events or activities that would increase engagement and participation in the basketball club is in question there are variations between the two groups – athletes and parents/club’s staff across all parameters. Athletes give greater advantage to the Basketball Camps (percentage of the respondents is 70 and 64, respectively) and More Training Competitions (67% and 51%, respectively). All other proposed events or activities have more support from parents.

Events for increasing engagement

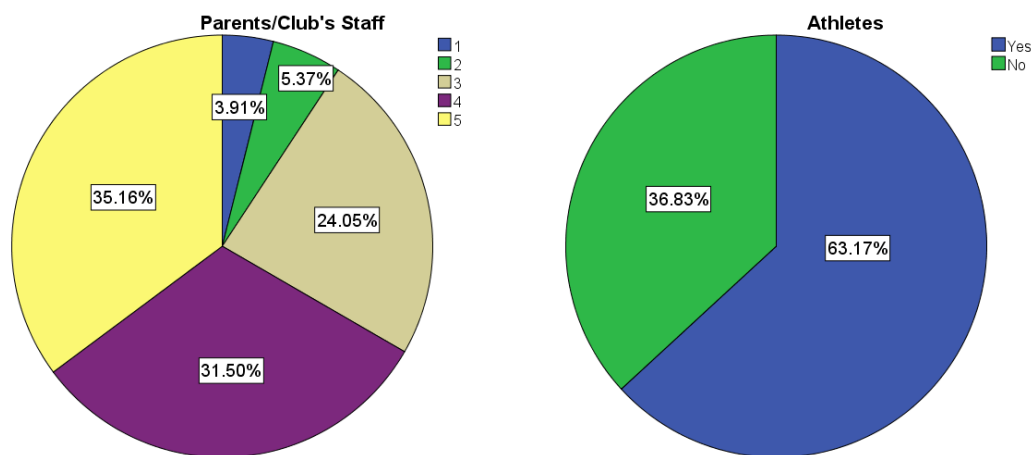


Organization of the Sports Club consistently ranks as the most crucial area across all countries, with the highest total score of 543 responses. Role of Athletes, Parents, Coaches, and Staff - Code of Conduct also appears important, with 480 total responses, indicating widespread agreement about its significance. The Safe and Positive Learning Environment receives high attention across all countries, with a total of 470 responses.

Organizing club areas



According to the opinion of two thirds of parents it seems that Club Twinning is of great importance for the knowledge transfer between clubs (it was rated from 1 for the least important to 5 for the most important). Only 3.9% of them have opinion that Club Twinning is the least important (left chart). Additionally, 63.2% of athletes know what the club twinning is, probably due to the existence of such examples in their environment (right chart).



5. Interview Report

As a part of the Basketball KTN project Needs & Gap analysis each partner had to interview at least 5 experts from their countries in order to try and get as much of an informed opinion on the selected topics as there could be. Interview consisted of 7 questions regarding the topics of:

- Socio-Economic Trends
- Political and Geopolitical Factors
- Environmental and Sustainability Issues
- Legal and Regulatory Landscape
- Technological Advancements
- Globalization and Cultural Trends
- Future Outlook and Challenges

Experts provided a great insight and suggestions about selected topics and their answers will be integrated into the project outcomes. The answers provided will be summarized for easier interpretation and understanding.

Question no. 1: How do you think socio-economic factors such as income inequality, urbanization, or globalization influencing the popularity and development of basketball, both on a local and international scale?

Experts highlighted various socio-economic factors influencing basketball's development and popularity, emphasizing income inequality, urbanization, and globalization. Basketball thrives in urban settings due to accessible public courts and its adaptability to limited spaces, making it a popular street sport in densely populated cities. While urbanization in developing countries boosts basketball's reach, high income inequality can hinder access to facilities and coaching, particularly for lower-income communities. Despite this challenge, basketball remains more accessible than sports requiring extensive equipment, serving as a recreational activity in low-income areas.

Experts noted that poor infrastructure and economic disadvantages in rural areas limit basketball's growth, while urban environments foster development due to proximity and resource availability. Conversely, basketball is recognized for its inclusivity, uniting individuals from diverse backgrounds. Moreover, income inequality affects participation costs, such as club fees and equipment, which can deter families from participating. Urban development has improved access to basketball but must address planning for adequate practice spaces.

Globalization emerged as a key factor enhancing basketball's international reach through player exchanges, increased publicity, and cultural exchanges, fostering local development and interest in the sport. Prominent leagues like the NBA have played a significant role in popularizing basketball globally, allowing for the sharing of knowledge and methodologies. Experts believe globalization is crucial for the sport's growth, generating cultural exchange and opportunities for participants worldwide. Additionally, experts acknowledged gender disparities, noting that men's basketball enjoys greater popularity due to physical performance.

Question no. 2: How do you think political events or policies, such as international relations, national sports regulations or global diplomacy, influence the growth of basketball in different regions of the world?

Experts discuss the current trend of player mobility between international basketball leagues, which is aiding the sport's growth in previously underserved countries. They

highlight the role of political decisions in fostering or impeding this development, noting that support for sports programs and policies that facilitate the entry of international players can rapidly enhance local leagues. Major sporting events have also been seen to improve diplomatic relations.

The discussion touches on globalization, with collaborations between national and supranational entities influencing sports initiatives, including the NBA's outreach in Africa. However, recent conflicts, such as the wars in Ukraine and Gaza, have disrupted basketball, leading to the expulsion of Russian teams and displacement of others to continue competing.

Experts emphasize that politics and sports are intertwined, often serving as a means to navigate and soften political realities. Historical examples demonstrate how basketball helped restore relationships post-conflicts in Europe through the establishment of supranational leagues.

The NBA's growing global influence is viewed as a pivotal factor in basketball's future, with its development leagues and private initiatives aiming to expand the sport's reach. Reliance on public investment is crucial not only for elite players but also for grassroots programs that support the sport's foundation.

International relations are considered vital for cultivating basketball in less developed regions, with favorable treaties potentially enabling players and coaches to benefit from greater resources abroad. Conversely, restrictions, as seen in countries like Cuba, hinder local athletes from advancing their careers.

Ultimately, nations with strong international ties and an investment-friendly outlook are predicted to build solid basketball infrastructures that can thrive over time. Additionally, changes in the political and legal landscape regarding sports betting are recognized as significantly impacting revenue in basketball.

Question no. 3: How do environmental concerns, such as climate change and pressure for sustainability, affect basketball development, including infrastructure, event planning and fan participation?

The text discusses the increasing societal commitment to environmental care, particularly in the context of basketball and sports. It highlights the growing number of eco-friendly events and the rising awareness among fans about environmental issues linked to sports. Experts emphasize the influential role of coaches and staff in promoting sustainable practices at schools and clubs, such as proper material use and resource conservation.

It points out that many sports facilities are not designed with environmental considerations, resulting in inefficiencies and poor infrastructure. While some improvements in energy efficiency and renewable energy use are noted, further changes are needed, primarily driven by government action.

The text also addresses the negative impact of climate change on the economy and sports, suggesting that extreme weather requires increased investment in infrastructure and event planning. Sports organizations are encouraged to raise public awareness and promote sustainability, with examples of teams implementing recycling and solar energy initiatives. Overall, there is a call for greater engagement from leagues and clubs in making sports more environmentally friendly and accessible.

Question no. 4: How have legal and regulatory changes, such as labor laws, athlete contracts and new governance models in sports organizations, influenced the way basketball is structured and developed?

Experts highlight that changes in laws aimed at enhancing the conditions for athletes, coaches, and sports workers seek to professionalize all aspects of basketball, not just

elite clubs. While these changes are generally seen as improvements, they are not always effectively implemented. Stringent regulations can lead to challenges for some clubs, putting them at risk of sanctions or making previously successful projects unviable. Experts advocate for a gradual approach to professionalization, supported by public funding for initial economic, material, and infrastructure needs, as well as facilitating private investment with tax incentives.

Moreover, some countries face issues, such as a lack of experienced coaches due to low salaries and strict contracting laws, which negatively impact the sport's development. The variance in labor and tax laws across nations can create competitive advantages for clubs, highlighting the need for a collective bargaining agreement for grassroots and amateur coaches. Although some improvements in organization and professionalism are noted, the legal framework for non-professional clubs remains inadequate.

Despite the challenges, there have been positive outcomes, including better working conditions and recognition for players, along with increased empowerment regarding personal branding. Recent labor law changes have made it easier for young and minor league players to pursue basketball as a viable career. The introduction of professionally contracted management roles in youth clubs has also created opportunities for qualified individuals to contribute to the sport effectively. Overall, while progress is evident, experts stress the need for tailored regulations that address the unique needs of different sectors within basketball.

Question no. 5: How have technological advances, such as data analytics, wearable technology and streaming platforms, transformed the way audiences play, manage and consume basketball?

Experts believe that the integration of technology in sports, particularly basketball, has significantly advanced both game knowledge and sports management. Digitalization has transformed basketball by making various applications and platforms accessible to fans, thereby enhancing their engagement and curiosity about the sport. Recent technological developments have changed not only gameplay but also training approaches through improved scouting and performance analysis, which aids coaches in optimizing training and game strategies.

Additionally, streaming technologies offer fans the ability to follow games from home, increasing accessibility and potential revenue through subscriptions or sponsorships. Social media also plays a crucial role by promoting clubs' activities and fostering interaction with the public. The use of data analytics further enhances the sport by providing valuable insights for player management and competitive preparation. Overall, technology has fundamentally changed how basketball is consumed, making it more engaging and relevant to fans.

Question no. 6: How have globalization and the cross-cultural exchange of players, coaches and fans influenced the style of play, marketing and growth of basketball worldwide?

Experts discuss the effects of globalization on basketball, highlighting its diversification as countries showcase unique styles. This blending of cultures through players and coaches enriches the game and creates a dynamic global market, driven by marketing and sponsorships. Increased consumption of the sport, both through viewing and merchandise, reflects its growing popularity.

American players have historically influenced international leagues, showcasing their skills and drawing interest in basketball. Recently, a wave of European and international players has moved to the NBA, prompting some teams to adopt more collective and dynamic playing styles reminiscent of European basketball. Meanwhile,

the NBA and NCAA's marketing prowess has helped spread basketball globally, allowing aspiring players worldwide to learn from American techniques. While globalization enhances knowledge and appreciation of basketball, it also poses challenges for national youth development. The influx of international players can hinder the growth of local talent, especially in countries that do not consistently export players. Ultimately, experts conclude that while globalization positively impacts the sport by fostering cultural exchange, it also raises concerns over the commercialization of young players, leading to unrealistic expectations and potential disappointment for aspiring athletes and their families.

Question no. 7: Looking ahead, what do you see as the biggest challenges and opportunities for basketball development in the context of these socio-economic, political, environmental, legal and technological trends?

Experts believe the future of basketball faces diverse challenges and opportunities. Key points include:

1. **Integration of Technology:** There's an expectation for increased use of technology in basketball analysis, management, and marketing, alongside environmental awareness.
2. **Grassroots Development:** A primary challenge is fostering the growth of basketball from the grassroots level, ensuring accessibility for more people to engage in the sport. Experts emphasize the importance of building up from players and clubs to federations.
3. **Infrastructure and Policy:** There are calls for improved infrastructures and legal frameworks to support non-profit basketball associations, as well as the need for homogenizing regulatory policies across regions.
4. **Survival of Competitive Leagues:** Maintaining elite clubs in regional and national competitions is crucial for retaining fan interest and inspiring new players.
5. **Promotion in Education:** Increased collaboration with educational institutions and local entities is vital for promoting basketball and embedding it into academic curricula.
6. **Socioeconomic Inequalities:** Experts express concern over economic disparities in resource allocation, impacting facilities and competitive leagues across different countries.
7. **Emerging Markets:** The potential of emerging basketball markets, such as those in China and some Arab countries, is seen as an opportunity for growth and broader interest in the sport.
8. **Inclusivity and Accessibility:** A unanimous theme is making basketball more accessible and inclusive for all, particularly in less developed regions, ensuring that technological advancements benefit all levels of play—not just professional leagues.

Overall, while the future holds immense potential through technology and globalization, the key challenge remains ensuring equitable access and opportunities across different socioeconomic landscapes.

6. Conclusions

The relationship between school and sports obligations is emphasized in several questions. Among all three groups parents rated the importance of balancing education and sports highest and club staff the lowest. Athletes and club staff recognize the need for balancing school and sport obligation as a psychological support service to help athletes, but perhaps not as strongly as parents do. Parents also indicated the need for support services to help them manage their children's dual commitments. Club staff agreed but at a slightly lower level which reflects a shared understanding of the challenges parents face in supporting their children. At the end, male and female athletes rated the importance of effective time management in balancing school and sport commitments almost identically.

Athletes believe that psychological support is very important for success, and they are very interested in sports psychology lessons, especially female participants. It is in line with the recent study showed that motivational climate created by coach and teammates represent significant predictors of the basic psychological needs for female athletes: need for relatedness, need for competence, and need for autonomy – choice (Trbojevic & Petrovic, 2020). In addition, all respondents believe that the proposed services for psychological support are important for both athletes and parents. Balish et. all. (2014) reported that lack of quality friendships and relationships with coaches is a main factor of dropping out of a sport for youth athletes. Additionally, it was reported that they perceive more pressure and less support than those who continue to participate (Le Bars et. all., 2009; Fraser-Thomas et. all., 2008). Results of the mixed-study review (Chu, T. L., & Zhang, 2019) suggest that coaches, peers, and parents serve different roles in supporting and thwarting athletes' basic psychological needs, which contribute to different degrees of satisfaction and frustration of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in youth sport contexts.

Almost every athlete use social media more or less for watching basketball content, which is in the line with the data of EU that most young people use social media to access information (EU Eurobarometer 2019). Male athletes use social media for basketball content more frequently than female. Interest in social media/public relations lectures are viewed similarly by both males and females. However, almost half of them showed a neutral and disinterested attitude towards learning about the effective use of social media. According to the Neagu et. all. (2021) beside access to ICT equipment, digital inclusion means also more access to training.

The most consistently important factors for enjoyment and having a good time while training across all countries are positive and supportive coaching staff and friendly and motivated teammates, both chosen by 76% of the athletes. Social interaction and access to high-quality facilities were considered less significant, with only 32% choosing these factors. Fun or using fun games during training seems to be very important to all respondents probably due to the belief that in this way children learn more and stay longer in sports. Similar was proposed by experts involved in work with youth basketball players (Georgievski, 2012; Sekeljic, 2006; Jakovljevic & Mandic, 2021).

Nutrition is marked as a very important area that should be paid attention to during training and that can improve the development of the basketball club. However, the respondents' knowledge about nutrition is average, which is in the line of the study showed inadequate nutrition knowledge of basketball players and coaches (Boumosleh et. all., 2021; Escribano-Ott et. all., 2022).

Regardless of the fact that One-on-One and Paired Work received the most support from all respondents, other proposed training models should not be neglected. The development of technique, strength and conditioning, speed and agility should be given extra attention during training more than other proposed abilities and skills.

Respondents don't see the Digital Knowledge Center Repository as an important factor to increase engagement of youth basketball players, probably due to insufficient information about it. Bearing in mind that in recent years the use of digital media such as YouTube (YouTube culture and trends, 2022) and others (Tate et al., 2015; Ammar et al., 2020) has increased in order to increase physical activity, it is certain that the existence of a digital center where there will be only basketball content can contribute to the increased engagement of basketball players as well as the involvement of new young people in sports.

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Appendix 1 – Questionnaire for Athletes

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Age: <input type="radio"/> Under 13 years' old <input type="radio"/> From 13 to 18 years old	Gender: <input type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/> Female <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say
Country: <input type="radio"/> Greece <input type="radio"/> Spain <input type="radio"/> Italy <input type="radio"/> Ukraine <input type="radio"/> Serbia <input type="radio"/> Other	In which area do you live? <input type="radio"/> Large urban area (Big cities) <input type="radio"/> Small urban area (Small towns) <input type="radio"/> Rural area (Small municipalities, village) <input type="radio"/> Island

PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT NEEDS

What type of psychological support services do athletes most need? (Rate them from 1 for The least needed to 5 for The most needed)

	1	2	3	4	5
Building Self-Confidence					
Stress and Anxiety Management					
Focus and Concentration					
Emotional Regulation					
Developing Mental Toughness					
Personal Responsibility and Leadership					
Developing resilience and perseverance					
Cooperation and Teamwork					
Relationships with Parents and Coaches					
Balancing Academic and Athletic Commitments					
Sport communication					

Other (please specify): _____

How important is effective time management to you in balancing your schoolwork and sports commitments?

- Extremely Important
- Very Important
- Moderately Important
- Slightly Important
- Not Important

Would you be interested in lectures that cover topics in sports psychology, such as goal setting, motivation, self-confidence and mental toughness?

- Very Interested
- Interested
- Neutral
- Not Interested

How important do you consider psychological support (e.g., stress management, mental health, performance anxiety) for your overall well-being and athletic performance?

- Extremely Important
- Very Important
- Moderately Important
- Slightly Important
- Not Important

Do you use social media (YouTube, Instagram, Facebook....) for watching basketball contents (games, highlights, training....)?

- Very Often (everyday)
- Often (3-5 days per week)
- Sometimes (less than 3 days per week)
- Never

Would you be interested in lectures on how to effectively use social media and manage public relations as an athlete?

- Very Interested
- Interested
- Neutral
- Not interested

What factors contribute to your enjoyment and having a good time while training in a sports club? (Please select all that apply)

- Positive and Supportive Coaching Staff
- Friendly and Motivated Teammates
- Engaging and Varied Training Sessions
- Achieving Personal and Team Goals
- Opportunities for Social Interaction
- Access to High-Quality Facilities and Equipment
- Balance Between Training Intensity and Fun Activities

Other (please specify): _____

What do you consider the most effective model to deliver the training: (Rate them from 1 for The least effective to 5 for The most effective)

	1	2	3	4	5
Workshops and Seminars: In-Person Workshops, Webinars					
Group Discussions and Peer Learning: Group Therapy Sessions & Roundtable Discussions					
One-on-One Coaching - Personal Counselling, Training, Mentoring Programs					
eLearning					
Work Shadowing					
Paired Work – Working With Another Athlete					
Role-Playing and Simulations					
Online Forums and Discussion Groups					
Interactive Workshops					
Speeches and Motivational Talks					

Other (please specify):

What types of events or activities would increase engagement and participation in your club? (Select all that apply)

- Basketball Camps
- More Training Competitions
- Social responsibility actions (recycling, helping people...)
- Training Seminars/Encouraging Speeches
- Online Talks with Schools
- Bring Your Friend Events
- Communities of Practice
- Cooperation (twinning) between clubs
- Digital Knowledge Centre Repository

Other (please specify): _____

Do you know what is the club twinning?

- Yes
- No

YOUNG ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

How important do you think balancing education and sport is for young athletes?

- Extremely Important
- Very Important
- Moderately Important
- Slightly Important
- Not Important

How significant do you believe having fun during training is for young athletes?

- Extremely Important
- Very Important
- Moderately Important
- Slightly Important
- Not Important

How knowledgeable are you about healthy nutrition and diet for athletes?

- Extremely Knowledgeable
- Very Knowledgeable
- Moderately Knowledgeable
- Slightly Knowledgeable
- Not Knowledgeable

What areas of skill development do you feel need more focus in your training?
(Select all that apply).

- Strength and Conditioning
- Speed and Agility
- Technical Skills

- Tactical Understanding
- Mental Toughness
- Nutritional Knowledge
- Injury Prevention
- Flexibility and Mobility
- Recovery Strategies
- Sport communication
- Other (please specify) _____

Do you think fair play ethics and integrity – against violence, doping, match fixing and safeguarding needs to be discussed and encouraged in training sessions?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK

Do you have any suggestions for improving the cooperation between athletes, coaches, and parents in your club?

Any other comments or feedback?

Appendix 2 – Questionnaire for Parents/Club’s Staff

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Role: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Parent <input type="radio"/> Clubs’ staff (coach, manager, member, etc...) 	Gender: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/> Female <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say
Country: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Greece <input type="radio"/> Spain <input type="radio"/> Italy <input type="radio"/> Ukraine <input type="radio"/> Serbia <input type="radio"/> Other 	In which area do you live? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Large urban area (Big cities) <input type="radio"/> Small urban area (Small towns) <input type="radio"/> Rural area (Small municipalities, village) <input type="radio"/> Island

PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT NEEDS

What type of psychological support services do athletes most need? (Rate them from 1 for The least needed to 5 for The most needed)

	1	2	3	4	5
Building Self-Confidence					
Stress and Anxiety Management					
Focus and Concentration					
Emotional Regulation					
Developing Mental Toughness					
Personal Responsibility and Leadership					
Developing resilience and perseverance					
Cooperation and Teamwork					
Relationships with Parents and Coaches					
Balancing Academic and Athletic Commitments					
Sport communication					

Other (please specify):

What type of psychological support services do parents most need? (Rate them from 1 for The least needed to 5 for The most needed)

	1	2	3	4	5
Stress and Anxiety Management					
Emotional Regulation					
Balancing Athletic and Academic Commitments					
Relationships with Coaches					
Understanding the Child’s Psychological Needs					
Effective Communication Skills					
Supporting Self-Esteem and Confidence					
Balancing Support and Pressure					
Dealing with Disappointment and Failure					
Dealing with External Pressures					
Mental Health Resources and Support					
Parental Self-Care					

Other (please specify):

What do you consider the most effective model to deliver the training: (Rate them from 1 for The least effective to 5 for The most effective)

	1	2	3	4	5
Workshops and Seminars: In-Person Workshops, Webinars					
Group Discussions and Peer Learning: Group Therapy Sessions & Roundtable Discussions					
One-on-One Coaching - Personal Counselling, Training, Mentoring Programs					
eLearning					
Work Shadowing					
Paired Work – Working With Another Athlete					
Role-Playing and Simulations					
Online Forums and Discussion Groups					
Interactive Workshops					
Speeches and Motivational Talks					

Other (please specify):

IDENTIFYING NEEDS FOR CLUB DEVELOPMENT

What conditions are necessary to improve development of basketball players in your club? (Rate them from 1 for The least needed to 5 for The most needed)

	1	2	3	4	5
Enhanced Facilities and Equipment					
Qualified and Engaging Staff					
Fun and Inclusive Programs					
Community and Family Involvement					
Effective Marketing and Outreach					
Affordable Membership and Fees					
Safety and Well-Being Focus					
Opportunities for Skill Development and Progression					
Positive Club Culture					
Parental Engagement					
Special Events and Camps					
Nutrition and Health Education					
Technology Integration					
Sustainability and Environmental Responsibility					
Better Funding					
Enhanced Promotion Basketball Engagement For New Athletes					

Other (please specify):

What types of events or activities would increase engagement and participation in your club? (Select all that apply)

- Basketball Camps
- More Training Competitions
- Social responsibility actions (recycling, helping people...)
- Training Seminars/Encouraging Speeches
- Online Talks with Schools
- Bring Your Friend Events
- Communities of Practice
- Cooperation (twinning) between clubs
- Digital Knowledge Centre Repository

Other (please specify): _____

Which of the following areas, in the context of organizing and managing a sports club, do you believe is most crucial for enhancing its services? (Select all that apply)

- Role and Characteristics of the Administrative Manager
- Organization of the Sports Club
- Organization of Basketball Activities (Theory and Practice)
- Safe and Positive Learning Environment
- Role of Athletes, Parents, Coaches, Staff - Code of Conduct
- Crisis Management in the Academy
- Child Abuse - Safeguarding
- Incentives – Motivation to Participate
- Developmental Age Regulations
- Developmental Age Education Guide

Other (please specify): _____

How important do you think that is the club twinning for the knowledge transfer between clubs? Rate that from 1 for the least important to 5 for the most important.

YOUNG ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

How important do you think balancing education and sport is for young athletes?

- Extremely Important
- Very Important
- Moderately Important
- Slightly Important
- Not Important

How significant do you believe having fun during training is for young athletes?

- Extremely Important
- Very Important
- Moderately Important
- Slightly Important
- Not Important

How knowledgeable are you about healthy nutrition and diet for athletes?

- Extremely Knowledgeable
- Very Knowledgeable
- Moderately Knowledgeable
- Slightly Knowledgeable
- Not Knowledgeable

What areas of skill development do you feel need more focus in your training?
(Select all that apply)

- Strength and Conditioning
- Speed and Agility
- Technical Skills
- Tactical Understanding
- Mental Toughness
- Nutritional Knowledge
- Injury Prevention
- Flexibility and Mobility
- Recovery Strategies
- Sport communication
- Other (please specify) _____

Do you think fair play ethics and integrity – against violence, doping, match fixing and safeguarding needs to be discussed and encouraged in training sessions?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK

Do you have any suggestions for improving the cooperation between athletes, coaches, and parents in your club?

Any other comment or feedback?