

A Systematic Review of Volunteer Motivation and Satisfaction in Disability Sports Organizations

Antonio Muñoz-Llerena ^{1,2} , Salvador Angosto ^{1,3,*}, Carlos Pérez-Campos ⁴  and Virginia Alcaraz-Rodríguez ^{2,5} 

¹ Department of Physical Education and Sports, University of Seville, 41013 Seville, Spain; amllerena@us.es

² Research Group "Social Inclusion, Physical Education and Sport, and European Policies in Research" (HUM-1061), University of Seville, 41013 Seville, Spain; virginia.alcaraz@ddi.uhu.es

³ Research Group "UMUSPORT" (EB05-01), University of Murcia, 30720 San Javier, Spain

⁴ Campus Capacitas, Universidad Católica de Valencia, 46001 Valencia, Spain; carlos.perez@ucv.es

⁵ Department of Integrated Didactics, University of Huelva, 21007 Huelva, Spain

* Correspondence: angosto@us.es; Tel.: +34-868889242

Abstract: Volunteering in sports for people with disabilities is a crucial element for social inclusion and development. Therefore, this systematic review aims to analyze the existing literature on the motivation, satisfaction, engagement, and commitment of volunteers in sports for people with disabilities. Following PRISMA guidelines, a comprehensive search was conducted across four databases, the Web of Science, Scopus, PsycInfo, and SportDiscus, resulting in the inclusion of 16 studies. The geographic distribution showed the existence of studies on all continents, particularly in Europe and Asia, and most studies were quantitative. The findings revealed that volunteer motivation was predominantly intrinsic, driven by values, understanding, and personal growth, with less emphasis on extrinsic factors such as career advancement. Satisfaction levels were generally high, particularly among student volunteers, who also showed strong future intentions to continue volunteering. As a conclusion, there was a limited number of studies exclusively focused on volunteers participating in sports for people with disabilities. This review highlights the need for more research on diverse types of disabilities and the development of inclusive policies and training programs to enhance volunteer experiences. The study underscores the importance of recognizing both personal and professional motivators to effectively recruit and retain volunteers in sports organizations supporting people with disabilities.

Keywords: volunteer motivation; disabilities; disabled sports; volunteer satisfaction; sports volunteering; social inclusion; volunteer engagement



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1. Introduction

Volunteering holds significant relevance in society, being one of the largest social phenomena globally, as it greatly contributes to improving the well-being of the population [1]. The sports sector has not been immune to this trend, with sports volunteering playing a crucial role in the development of sports organizations and events. The United Nations Volunteer Report [2] estimates that there are approximately 862 million volunteers worldwide, representing 15% of the population. In contrast, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) [3] estimates that voluntary participation among its member countries is 18.9%, with the United States, New Zealand, Norway, the Netherlands, and Canada, having the highest participation rates, ranging from 25% to 30%. In Europe, the European Union Commission [4], through the Eurobarometer, reported that the intention to engage as a sports volunteer in the next two months was 10%.

Volunteering is a widespread activity worldwide; however, despite a common understanding, there is no universal definition of volunteering [5]. The United Nations Volunteers [6] states that volunteering can take various forms and have different designations or meanings depending on the context in which it occurs. The United Nations [7] defined volunteering as one of the vital forces of today's society, describing it as the non-profit contribution individuals make to the well-being of their neighbors, community, or society at large. This definition prompts reflection on the importance of volunteering for the well-being of the population, especially the most disadvantaged sectors, such as people with disabilities [1]. In this context, volunteering becomes a crucial element of social, environmental, and economic transformation, ensuring a significant impact on the mindset, attitudes, and behaviors of the involved population [8]. Thus, volunteers position themselves as agents of change and promoters of sustainable development. Voluntary action transcends civic engagement and is based on continuous support, rather than being sporadic or spontaneous actions [9,10].

1.1. Motives for Volunteering

Voluntary participation cannot be explained by a single factor or motive; it is influenced by numerous factors simultaneously and differently in each individual [11]. Volunteers are driven by prosocial factors [12], making motivation key to understanding why an individual decides to volunteer and how they act to achieve a specific goal [13]. The motivational profile of sports volunteering includes characteristics such as a passion for sports, interpersonal skills, willingness to dedicate time and effort, adaptability, and commitment to diversity and inclusion [14]. Additionally, Kim et al. [15] suggest that establishing close and good relationships between an organization and volunteers will promote greater motivation and performance in their tasks.

Motivation has been the primary aspect evaluated in the scientific literature on volunteering [16]. For example, Dunn et al. [17] identified 33 studies that measured motivation in episodic events in various contexts (social, sports, educational, health, or cultural) and found 67 studies that used motivation scales in sports and social organizations. Another systematic review on studies using the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) scale was developed by Chacón et al. [18], finding 67 studies using this scale in sports, social, assistance, or educational organizations. Lastly, a systematic review specifically on volunteer motivation in the context of sports events [19] found 33 quantitative and/or qualitative studies measuring motivation in sports events of different sizes between 1995 and 2015. In another more recent review, Angosto et al. [20] identified 30 studies analyzing volunteer motivation and its relationship with future intentions up to 2020.

1.2. Dynamics of Volunteer Motivation

Volunteer motivation can vary over time, changing as volunteers develop their own work. Kenyatta and Zani [21] consider these changes necessary for individuals to continue deciding to volunteer. As previously mentioned, there is no single factor that promotes an individual to volunteer; instead, there are multiple motives, which are complex to identify [14]. Therefore, various instruments appear in the literature to evaluate the motives for participation in general or sports volunteering.

One of the first instruments developed was the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) [22]. These authors identified the following six different motives in volunteering, which are values, social, career, understanding, protective, and personal enhancement. This scale considers functional theory for its design, evaluating the general motivation of volunteers. Although it has been used in the context of sports [23–28], Kim et al. [29] created a shorter adaptation of this instrument to be applied in the sports sector (MVFI).

Parallel to the VFI, Farrell et al. [30] proposed the Special Event Volunteer Motivation Scale (SEVMS). This scale, adapted to sports volunteering, determined the existence of the following four factors, which were solidarity, purposive, external traditions, and commitment. This instrument has been used in some subsequent studies on sports events [31–34] and has also been adapted by other authors [35–39]. Lastly, another specific and widespread scale for sports volunteering is the Volunteer Motivation Scale for International Sporting Events (VMS-ISE) [40,41]. Initially, the authors identified the following six different motivations, which were values expression, patriotism, interpersonal contacts, career orientation, personal growth, and extrinsic rewards. Subsequently, Bang and Ross [14] adapted the scale by modifying the patriotism motive to community involvement and identified a seventh motive directly related to sports, which is “love of sports.” Numerous studies have used both scales to evaluate volunteer motivation in sports events [15,42–47].

1.3. Volunteer Satisfaction

Volunteer satisfaction can be assessed from different perspectives, such as leisure satisfaction or job satisfaction [48]. Among these, job satisfaction may provide a better understanding of why a volunteer may be satisfied with their tasks. Locke [49] defined job satisfaction as a “pleasurable emotional state resulting from the perception of one’s work as fulfilling or enabling the fulfilment of one’s important work values, provided that these values are compatible with one’s needs” (p. 1304). Job satisfaction in volunteering is closely linked to factors associated with expectations, actual experiences, and personal motivations [30,50].

Various studies have employed different scales to measure volunteer satisfaction. For instance, Galindo-Kuhn and Guzley [51] developed the Volunteer Satisfaction Index, identifying the following five factors, which are task assignment, organizational support, quality of communication, effectiveness of participation, and group integration. Boezeman and Ellemers [52] assessed volunteers’ job satisfaction based on the three following basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

It is important to note that the main rewards volunteers receive are often intangible and intrinsic, and it is reasonable that volunteers may derive satisfaction from different sources compared to paid workers [53]. Chelladurai [54] considered job satisfaction as the attitude one has about their job, which is influenced by various factors that differ from person to person. For example, two individuals in the same work environment, holding the same position, may have different levels of satisfaction.

Several studies have attempted to identify aspects that influence volunteer satisfaction [20]. Farrell et al. [30] found that volunteers’ expectations regarding communication with other volunteers, recognition received, diversity of activities, and physical facilities were important predictors of volunteer satisfaction. Finkelstein [55] demonstrated that satisfaction with motives positively and significantly influences volunteer satisfaction; the more volunteers feel their motivations are met, the higher their satisfaction.

Outside the context of sports, Lee et al. [56] suggested that intrinsic motivations and patriotism positively and significantly affect volunteer satisfaction. Volunteers who viewed volunteering as a civic responsibility were more motivated by internal fun, interest, and curiosity, leading to higher satisfaction [57]. In university volunteering, the motives of career, social, compression, and enhancement significantly predict satisfaction [26].

Satisfaction varies according to psychological contract motivations, with volunteers reporting high levels of satisfaction at regional events in Australia [45]. Angosto et al. [58] found that understanding, protective, and social motives significantly influenced university volunteering. Recent studies have also shown the significant influence of volunteer motivation in sports events on satisfaction [59–61].

1.4. Volunteering in Sports for People with Disabilities

Volunteering in entities working with people with disabilities offers an enriching experience for both volunteers and beneficiaries [62]. Motivations for participation include the desire to contribute to the well-being and inclusion of these individuals, as well as the opportunity to develop new personal and professional skills, participate in activities that promote social cohesion, and experience emotional satisfaction and a sense of purpose [63,64].

Therefore, sports volunteering with people with disabilities is key to social inclusion and development for both people with disabilities and the volunteers themselves. Dickson et al. [39] considered that sports volunteering contributes to supporting inclusion while allowing sports volunteers to gain more experience and better develop their personal skills by feeling part of a cause. These altruistic motivations of volunteering also focus on the desire to contribute to the community and ensure the success of sports activities for these populations with disabilities [31,65]. Additionally, altruism is also associated with a desire for personal growth, especially in the fields of sports and health, where volunteers can acquire practical skills and improve their knowledge in working with people with disabilities [66].

Another perspective on the role of sports volunteering in entities and events involving people with disabilities is the support and emotional or social support provided to these populations, strengthening their confidence, self-esteem, and sense of belonging [67], which promotes greater well-being for the participants. Kappelides and Spoor [68] also highlight the existing organizational and attitudinal barriers to the integration of people with disabilities into sports volunteering programs. These authors indicated that to overcome these barriers, it is necessary to provide adequate training to volunteers to promote greater inclusion and social acceptance of these groups as equals. However, the extent of research on sports volunteering and disability within the scientific literature is unknown. Therefore, the aim of this study was to conduct a systematic review to identify existing publications in scientific literature that analyze the commitment, motivations, perceptions, and/or satisfaction of sports volunteers participating in organizations supporting people with disabilities in their physical and sports activities. The research question of this study was: what is the attention received in scientific literature by studies related to the motivation and perception of sports volunteering in organizations or sports events exclusively involving people with disabilities?

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Data Source and Search Protocol

This study followed the reference guidelines set out in the PRISMA statement for systematic reviews and meta-analyses [69], and specifically the PERSiST (implementing PRISMA in Exercise, Rehabilitation, Sport Medicine and Sports science) guidelines [70]. The review protocol was registered in the Open Science Framework (OSF.io) Registry (<https://doi.org/10.17605/osf.io/z3wsp>) [71].

The search was conducted using four different databases: the Web of Science, Scopus, PsycInfo, and SportDiscus. The final search was conducted on 9 October 2024. The search was designed with reference to three different types of descriptors, related to either the population (volunteers), the outcome (motivation, satisfaction, engagement, or commitment), and the context (sports for people with disabilities). Descriptors were applied and combined using Boolean operators, as detailed in Table 1, while Table 2 shows the complete search protocol utilized in each database.

Table 1. Descriptors of the review.

Type of Descriptor	Search Terms
Volunteerism	“Sport Volunteer” OR sport volunteer* OR “Sport volunteer*” OR Sport Voluntar* OR “Sport Voluntar*” OR sport volunteerism OR volunteering
Outcome	Motivation OR motives OR motiv* OR Satisfaction OR Commitment OR Engagement
Context	disabilit* OR disable* OR impair* OR handicap* OR “adapt* sport*”

Table 2. Search protocol.

Database	Search Protocol
Web of Science	“Sport Volunteer” OR sport volunteer* OR “Sport volunteer*” OR Sport Voluntar* OR “Sport Voluntar*” OR sport volunteerism OR volunteering (Topic) and Motivation OR motives OR motiv* OR Satisfaction OR Commitment OR Engagement (Topic) and disabilit* OR disable* OR impair* OR handicap* OR “adapt* sport*” (Topic)
Scopus	(TITLE-ABS-KEY (“Sport Volunteer” OR sport AND volunteer* OR “Sport volunteer*” OR sport AND voluntar* OR “Sport Voluntar*” OR sport AND volunteerism OR volunteering) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (motivation OR motives OR motiv* OR satisfaction OR commitment OR engagement) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (disabilit* OR disable* OR impair* OR handicap* OR “adapt* sport*”))
PsycInfo	(“Sport Volunteer” OR sport volunteer* OR “Sport volunteer*” OR Sport Voluntar* OR “Sport Voluntar*” OR sport volunteerism OR volunteering) AND (Motivation OR motives OR motiv* OR Satisfaction OR Commitment OR Engagement) AND (disabilit* OR disable* OR impair* OR handicap* OR “adapt* sport”)
SportDiscus	(“Sport Volunteer” OR sport volunteer* OR “Sport volunteer*” OR Sport Voluntar* OR “Sport Voluntar*” OR sport volunteerism OR volunteering) AND (Motivation OR motives OR motiv* OR Satisfaction OR Commitment OR Engagement) AND (disabilit* OR disable* OR impair* OR handicap* OR “adapt* sport”)

2.2. Study Selection

Regarding selection criteria, studies were included in the review if they presented the following characteristics: peer-reviewed empirical research manuscripts; addressed motivation, satisfaction, or commitment in sports volunteering; carried out in sports for people with disabilities or in sports organizations that worked with people with disabilities; published in the 21st century (2000–2025); and written in English, Portuguese, or Spanish. Furthermore, studies were not included if: they were gray literature (conference proceedings, dissertations, books, book chapters, etc.) or theoretical/review studies; they did not address motivation, satisfaction, or commitment in sports volunteering; they were not carried out in sports for people with disabilities or in sports organizations that worked with people with disabilities; the full text was not available for access; they were published before 2000; and they were written in a language different from English, Portuguese, or Spanish.

Once the search of the four databases was completed, duplicate articles were removed. After that, an initial screening of the title and abstract was carried out, and relevant studies

were sought for retrieval. Next, full texts were read to identify those that met the inclusion criteria, which were included in the systematic review.

The first and last authors carried out the first screening, working independently. When discrepancies or doubts about the suitability of the study arose, the differences were resolved through a discussion between them and the second author. After that, full texts were retrieved and analyzed by the first, second and last authors independently, and differences were discussed until they reached an agreement. The selection process was carried out using the Rayyan (<https://rayyan.ai>) platform.

2.3. Methodological Quality Assessment

For the evaluation of methodological quality, different instruments were considered according to the study type. For quantitative studies, the consolidated standards of reporting trials (CONSORTs) checklist designed by Schultz et al. [72] and adapted by Angosto et al. [73] was used. In the case of qualitative studies, the standards for reporting qualitative research (SRQR) tool, proposed by O'Brien et al. [74], was employed. Finally, mixed-method articles were analyzed with an adaptation of these two checklists to form a combined one. Each study was independently scored by two reviewers who evaluated the different sections that comprise the studies and scored each item with 1 if the study met the criterion, and 0 if it did not. Disagreements between the reviewers were resolved by reviewing and discussing the original study until reaching a consensus ($n = 4$).

2.4. Data Extraction

Data were collected in a Microsoft Excel sheet, introducing the following data blocks: (1) Academic data: (a) year of publication, considering its inclusion in a journal issue; (b) authors; (c) location, considered as the institution location of the first author; and (d) the journal. (2) Research data: (a) sample data such as size, gender proportion, age, proportion of the sample with academic studies or actively employed, and marital status (single/married); (b) type of sample volunteering with the organization/events/students and type of organization analyzed such as sports event, organization (disability, recreation, or sports, among others), or university; (c) the design used, considering whether the study is quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-method, and the measurement instruments; (d) other aspects analyzed, such as the theoretical foundation, analysis techniques for data interpretation, and study variables; and (e) study implications or other relevant results. The data extracted from each analyzed study can be observed in Table A1 (academic data), Table A2 (sample characteristics), and Table A3 (methodology and results) in Appendix A.

3. Results

Figure 1 shows the PRISMA 2020 flow diagram, created using the Shinyapp online tool by Haddaway et al. [75]. A total of 1962 documents were obtained from the database search. After eliminating 13 duplicates, 984 manuscripts were screened, and 28 were evaluated. Finally, 16 studies were included, while the remaining 12 were excluded for different reasons, such as they did not address sports for people with disabilities ($n = 3$), volunteerism ($n = 2$), or any of the variables ($n = 1$); they did not differentiate between adapted and non-adapted sports in the results ($n = 5$); or they were conference proceedings and not peer-reviewed research articles ($n = 1$). The PRISMA 2020 checklist can be found in the Supplementary Materials.

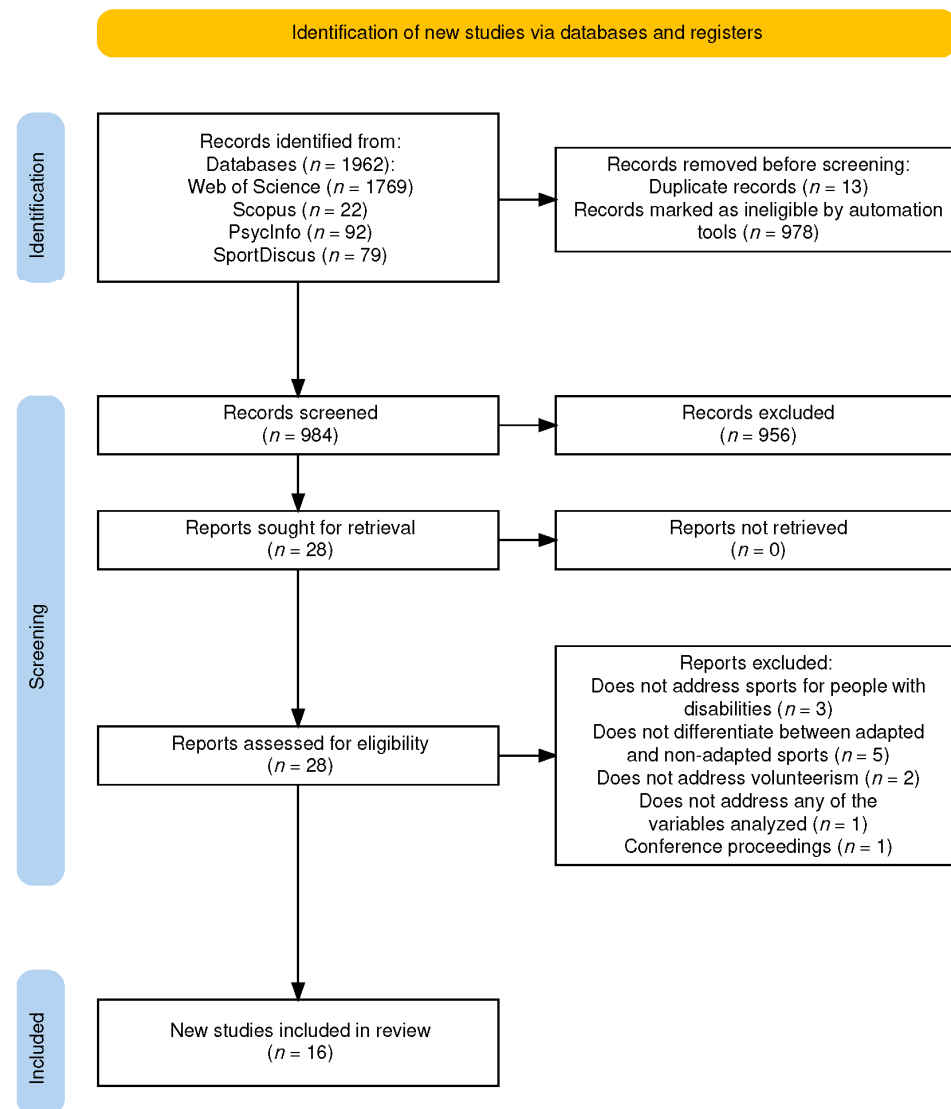


Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram.

3.1. Methodological Quality Analysis

To assess the methodological quality of the 16 evaluated articles, it was found that the quantitative studies ($n = 11$) all scored appropriately (between 12 and 14 points out of a total of 20 points). No article scored below 10 points. Regarding the methodological quality of the four qualitative studies, all scored equal to or above 17 points out of a total of 21 points. Finally, the mixed-method article scored 22 points out of a total of 34. The individual methodological quality analysis of each article is shown in Table A4 (quantitative studies), Table A5 (qualitative studies), and Table A6 (mixed methods studies) in Appendix B.

3.2. Bibliometric Analysis

The results showed that addressing motivation and other factors of volunteering in sports activities for people with disabilities has received little attention in the scientific literature (Table 3). Although the first study dates to 2007, only 16 studies have been identified, with only 3 articles published in the last three years. The year 2018 had the highest number of publications with three, while the years 2010, 2011, 2015, and 2023 had two publications each.

Table 3. Publication year of the included studies.

Year	2007	2010	2011	2014	2015	2018	2019	2020	2021	2023
N Studies	1	2	2	1	2	3	1	1	1	2

Regarding the location of the publications (Table 4), it was observed that publications came from all five continents. Europe had the highest number of publications with six articles, with Spain being the only European country with more than one study ($n = 2$). Asia had five articles, three of which came from Malaysia, which is the same number of studies as those published in the USA. Oceania and Africa had one publication each.

Table 4. Studies published per country.

Country	Number of Studies Published
Austria	1
China	1
England	1
Korea	1
Malaysia	3
New Zealand	1
Portugal	1
South Africa	1
Spain	2
Switzerland	1
USA	3

Analyzing the publication domains of the studies, most studies were published in journals related to sports management or hospitality ($n = 5$), with four studies published in the field of disability and two in the field of volunteering. The journals with the most studies, with two publications each, were *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly*, *African Journal for Physical, Health Education, Recreation and Dance*, and *Voluntas* (Table 5). Research on volunteers in sports for people with disabilities appears in a diverse range of academic journals, spanning sports management, therapeutic recreation, general volunteerism, and more. However, there is little evidence of these perspectives being integrated. For instance, only a few studies grounded their work in established theory, and cross-domain collaboration is limited. This suggests an opportunity to enrich practical understanding by promoting an interdisciplinary approach.

Table 5. Studies published per journal.

Journal	Number of Studies Published
Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly	2
African Journal for Physical, Health Education, Recreation and Dance	2
Anales de Psicología	1
Disability and Rehabilitation	1

Table 5. *Cont.*

Journal	Number of Studies Published
European Sport Management Quarterly	1
Leisure Sciences	1
Materiales para la historia del deporte	1
PLoS ONE	1
Revista Intercontinental de Gestão Desportiva	1
Sport Management Review	1
Therapeutic Recreation Journal	1
Tourism and Hospitality Planning & Development	1
Voluntas	2

3.3. Type of Volunteering, Contextual Characteristics, and Theoretical Framework

Table 6 shows the characteristics and number of studies in relation to the type of volunteering, organization, and disability. Of all the studies, a total of six included volunteers participating in sports events, another six analyzed volunteers from sports organizations, and the remaining four studies selected student volunteers as their sample. The type of organization showed a wide variety of organizations or institutions analyzed (Table 6), with sports/recreational organizations being the most prominent ($n = 4$), followed by national or international events with three studies each. The analysis also considered organizations for people with disabilities ($n = 2$) or those caring for this population ($n = 1$).

Table 6. Type of volunteering, organization, and disability.

Characteristic	N	%
<i>Type of sample</i>		
Event volunteers	6	37.50
Organization volunteers	6	37.50
Students	4	25.00
<i>Type of organization</i>		
Care organization	1	6.25
Disabled organization	2	12.50
International Sport Event	3	18.75
National and International Sport Event	2	12.50
National Sport Event	3	18.75
Sport and recreation organizations	4	25.00
University	1	6.25
<i>Type of disability</i>		
Autism Spectrum Disorder	1	6.25
Different types of disabilities	5	31.25
Intellectual disabilities	6	37.50
Physical disabilities	2	12.50
Severe mental health disorders	1	6.25
Not reported	1	6.25

The scope of current volunteer programs and research in sports for people with disabilities reveals areas where greater inclusivity is needed. Notably, a narrow range of disability types has been addressed in many volunteer initiatives studied. A large pro-

portion of the programs focused on individuals with mental or developmental disabilities ($n = 6$; e.g., volunteers supporting Special Olympics events), whereas relatively few dealt with physical or sensory disabilities. A total of five studies considered populations with different types of disabilities, and two studies analyzed sports volunteering with people with physical disabilities. This imbalance highlights a gap in opportunities and support for volunteers working with the full spectrum of disability communities. It suggests that sports organizations should broaden their approach and develop more inclusive policies and program offerings.

The results also indicated that 68.8% of the studies did not rely on a theory or model to develop the study, with only five studies utilizing one. The models or theories used were the following: social cognitive theory, competence model, integrated conceptual framework and consistency theory, functional theory, and self-determination theory.

3.4. Characteristics of the Sample

Analyzing the sample of the studies, it was observed that the total sample analyzed was 2682 volunteers, with an average of 179 volunteers per study. Most studies, except for two, had a higher proportion of females' volunteers than males. The average proportion of females was 62.7%, while that of males was 37.3%.

The average age was 29 years and was reported in a total of ten studies. Two studies indicated age ranges, and two studies only reported the minimum and maximum age of the volunteers. The education level of the volunteers with university studies was 49.3% ($n = 10$), considering five studies that had students with an average representation of 70.6%.

Marital status was only indicated in a total of five studies, with data indicating that 55.1% of the volunteers were married and 35.5% were single. A total of 41.6% were full-time workers, considering the average from five studies.

3.5. Data Collection and Analysis

Considering the research methodology, the majority were quantitative studies ($n = 11$), followed by qualitative studies ($n = 4$), with one mixed-methods study. This dominance of quantitative methods provides broad trends and correlations but may miss some depth in understanding volunteer experiences. Notably, the few qualitative studies included in the review offered rich insights into the personal and emotional dimensions of volunteering. These nuanced findings from qualitative work highlight the value of using mixed-methods insights when evaluating volunteer programs. Leveraging mixed methods and interdisciplinary perspectives stands out as a valuable way to translate research findings into effective, evidence-based practices for managing volunteers in sports programs for people with disabilities.

Regarding the tools used for data collection, four studies utilized semi-structured interviews or the Special Event Volunteer Motivation Scale (SEVMS), followed by the Volunteer Functional Inventory (VFI) with three studies. One study used the Motivation Volunteer Scale (MVS), and three did not report the tool used. The most used data analysis procedure in the studies was descriptive analysis ($n = 8$), followed by comparative analyses ($n = 6$) and exploratory or confirmatory factor analyses ($n = 5$). Three qualitative studies used thematic analysis.

3.6. Variables and Analysis of the Results

Table 7 shows the different variables analyzed in the studies. A total of 23 variables were analyzed, with motivation being the most analyzed variable in the literature ($n = 13$). Other variables analyzed more than once were satisfaction ($n = 4$), future intentions ($n = 3$), and participation facilitators, participation barriers, and experience ($n = 2$ each).

Table 7. Variables included in the studies.

Variable	Number of Studies
Motivation	13
Satisfaction	4
Future intentions	3
Participation facilitators; Participation barriers; Experiences	2
Benefits; Challenges; Comfort; Commitment; Competence; Drop-out; Perceptions; Personal outcomes; Physical conditions; Potential solutions; Program impact; Recognition; Responsibility with tasks; Rewards; Societal attitudes	1

Across the studies, volunteer motivation in adapted sports contexts was found to be predominantly intrinsic. This intrinsic motivational profile suggests that volunteers derive satisfaction from meaningful engagement rather than external rewards. As such, organizations can design volunteer programs that nurture these internal motivators. For example, they can provide roles that allow volunteers to witness the positive impact of their work and develop their skills.

Although career-oriented motives were not primary drivers, recognizing the competencies volunteers gain (through certificates, references, or opportunities for leadership) can complement intrinsic rewards. Subtly integrating such volunteer competence recognition into programs not only validates volunteers' personal development but may also attract a broader range of volunteers who value both altruistic and career-related benefits. Satisfied volunteers are more likely to remain committed, so prioritizing these aspects is key to fostering a stable, engaged volunteer base for sports programs involving people with disabilities.

Several studies also pointed to the presence of barriers that can hinder the participation of people with disabilities in sport volunteering activities. Common challenges identified were interpersonal and structural barriers, such as communication difficulties, negative attitudes, or the limited accessibility of facilities and equipment. The findings emphasize that proactively mitigating such barriers is a practical necessity. For instance, providing disability-awareness training and adaptive resources to volunteers was noted as one effective strategy to overcome attitudinal and organizational barriers.

Additionally, the cultural context in which volunteering takes place emerged as an important consideration. The studies spanned multiple continents, and there is evidence that motivations and perceptions of volunteering can vary across cultures. For example, one comparison found significant differences in what drove volunteers in Malaysia, South Africa, and the United States, suggesting that cultural values and norms shape volunteer motivations. Sport organizations would benefit from integrating cultural sensitivity into program design—tailoring recruitment messages, recognition practices, and management styles to fit the cultural backgrounds of volunteers. By broadening inclusivity and cultural responsiveness, volunteer programs in adapted sports can attract diverse volunteers and better meet the needs of all participants, ultimately creating a more accessible and supportive environment for volunteer engagement.

The analysis of the results of the studies considered the type of volunteering according to the volunteering context (organization, event, or students). In general, considering the motivation of the volunteers as the variable most analyzed in the studies (13/16), some

similarities can be observed between the motivational profile of volunteers participating in sports organizations and those participating in sports events.

3.6.1. Sports Organizations

The results of the studies analyzing volunteering in organizations showed that the motivational factors with the highest scores were related to values, understanding, and enhancement. Conversely, the least evaluated motivational factors were career, protective, or external traditions. This indicates that volunteer motivation was predominantly intrinsic compared to extrinsic factors. Additionally, sports volunteers who were involved in organizations that work with people with disabilities showed great comfort and positive perceptions towards them.

Considering other variables, the level of satisfaction among sports volunteers in organizations in the analyzed studies was high, while social attitudes and acceptance towards people with disabilities increased after volunteering labor. Personal development was a factor highlighted by the qualitative studies analyzed, as well as improved personal well-being of sports volunteers. Finally, the emotional aspects also had a significant influence on sports volunteering in organizations, as volunteers witnessed the progress of people with disabilities. This is an important differentiator compared to volunteering in sports events as it is more continuous and not eventual, allowing for a clearer and more progressive observation of how people with disabilities progress in the different organizations.

3.6.2. Sports Events

The analysis of the motivational profile of studies evaluating volunteering in sports events showed a high tendency towards purposive and solidarity among sports volunteers. Purposive is a motivational factor closely related to values [15]. Thus, the most prominent motivational factor was the same as for volunteering in organizations. Understanding also stood out with good scores in the analyzed studies. Just like volunteering in organizations, the lowest evaluated motivational factors were commitment and different extrinsic motivational factors such as family or external traditions, and protective factors. Unlike sports organization volunteering, enhancement among volunteers in sports events was not highly valued.

Volunteer experience and personal development were also highlighted by volunteers at sports events when working with people with disabilities. The altruism (or social) factor and helping others were also important aspects when working with people with disabilities. Regarding the proportion of volunteers satisfied or very satisfied with sports event volunteering, percentages around 30% were reported, being lower than the satisfaction in sports organizations. Moreover, future intentions to repeat the experience were high among most sports volunteers who participated in sports events for people with disabilities. However, there was a lack of specific volunteer training programs to improve the participation of volunteers in more sport activities connected with people with disabilities.

3.6.3. Students

Finally, the student population stood out compared to the other two types of volunteering, with motivation primarily focused on solidarity and helping others. In this context, solidarity was related to improving interpersonal contacts or meeting new people. Purposive or values was the second most highlighted factor for students when participating in volunteering. In other words, intrinsic motivations have a significant influence on university sports volunteers compared to extrinsic motivations such as job seeking or career, which obtained low percentages. Student volunteering showed the highest levels of satisfaction with sports volunteering with people with disabilities compared to sports volunteers that were involved in organizations or events. In particular, university student

volunteers stood out with exceptionally high satisfaction rates. Many student volunteers were motivated by solidarity and community support, and they experienced considerable fulfillment through their roles. This fulfillment translated into a strong commitment from student volunteers to continue volunteering in the future. Future intentions to repeat the experience also had a high value for university students.

According to these results, a gap was identified in the current literature about the integration of specific aspects directly linked with how to work with people with disabilities in sporting events and activities. Ensuring adequate orientation, support, and feedback can help maintain this alignment. For instance, comprehensive training and education for volunteers emerged as a crucial factor in keeping engagement high.

4. Discussion

The aim of this study was to conduct a systematic review to identify existing publications in the academic literature that analyze the motivation, perception, commitment, and/or satisfaction of sports volunteers participating in organizations or events supporting people with disabilities in their physical and sports activities. Volunteering is a global movement with vital importance in non-profit, non-governmental organizations. However, the results obtained showed a limited number of publications focused on evaluating volunteering in sports activities for people with disabilities.

Since the publication of the 1st study in 2007, only 16 investigations had been identified in this field. Although specific reviews have been published related to general [17,18] or sports volunteerism [19,20,76], sports for people with disabilities and adapted sports have received little to no attention. This lack of studies highlights a significant gap in the literature that requires attention and development, considering the growing importance of volunteering in inclusive recreational and sports contexts that use physical activity and sports as an element of inclusion.

4.1. Geographic and Disciplinary Characteristics

The geographic distribution of studies showed contributions from all five continents, particularly Europe. Spain was the only European country with more than one study [77,78], while both Malaysia [31–33] and USA [66,79,80] had the highest number of publications with three. This suggests that, although there was global interest, research in this area may be more developed in certain regions. Asia and America also contributed, while Oceania and Africa showed minimal representation. This inequality in geographic representation may indicate differences in the attention and importance given to special populations at risk of social exclusion, such as people with disabilities, considering the cultural context [81].

Many publications focused on journals in the field of sports management and hospitality. This was due to the fact that volunteer management in sports is framed within sports management rather than in the context of inclusion or volunteering. Expanding and disseminating knowledge in interdisciplinary fields could benefit sports volunteering in an interdisciplinary manner. Publications in journals specializing in disability and volunteering were limited, suggesting an opportunity to expand the scope of research into these areas [82].

4.2. Methodological and Contextual Approaches

The methodology presented in the several articles has been predominantly quantitative [31–33,65,77–79,83–86], while qualitative studies [9,68,80,87] and mixed-methods studies [66] were proportionally fewer. The lack of qualitative studies might have limited the depth of understanding of volunteers' experiences. Qualitative methodologies are essential for capturing emotional and motivational nuances that are not always reflected in

quantitative data [88]. It should be highlighted that a greater number of studies that include qualitative methodology have been published in recent years compared to quantitative studies focusing on sports activities for people with disabilities.

The lack of diversity in addressing different types of disabilities has also been notable. Intellectual disability was the most analyzed, with a focus on events like the Special Olympics, which may reflect a need for more research on other disabilities [89]. On the other hand, the higher female representation aligned with evidence found in most studies on sports volunteering analyzed in previous research [20], especially when addressing populations of university students [35,58]. In this study, several studies evaluating sports volunteering in the Paralympic Games were identified; however, they were not considered as the analyses did not differentiate them from volunteer participation in the Olympic Games in the results [36,39,90–92].

4.3. Motivational Factors

In terms of motivations, findings indicated that volunteers were primarily driven by intrinsic factors both in organizations [9,66,79,87] and in sports events [31–33,65,83–85]. Other studies have also evidenced the prevalence of motivational factors such as values and understanding, in contrast to extrinsic factors [93,94]. This was encouraging, as it suggests that volunteering can be seen as an enriching and meaningful activity for personal development, communication skills, and community participation [78,79,85].

However, it is also important to consider how extrinsic factors could be complemented to attract a broader audience. It should be emphasized that Khoo and Engelhorn [32] found that male volunteers tended to favor extrinsic factors such as family tradition more than female volunteers. The commitment to altruistic help for people in vulnerable situations was fundamental in some studies [32,65,78,80,86]. The cultural factor has also been shown to be a key aspect in determining the motivational profile in sports volunteering, as traditions and cultures in different continents and countries vary greatly depending on the context. Thus, Khoo et al. [31] found significant differences in motivation among volunteers participating in events in Malaysia (Asia), South Africa (Africa), and the United States (America).

4.4. Barriers and Facilitators

It is also important to consider that volunteering with these populations developed in therapeutic recreational organizations could influence the level of comfort of volunteers and their attitude towards people with disabilities [79]. Epiney et al. [9] highlighted the existence of different facilitators to promote participation in this type of volunteering, such as the role of the coach, group cohesion, external social support, and the creation of appropriate sports programs for people with disabilities. Thus, the experience in outdoor activities such as sailing has been observed to have a positive social and psychological impact on people with disabilities [87].

Communication has also been treated as an important factor when working with people with disabilities. Creating open facilities and two-way communication to consider the needs of people with disabilities would help achieve better volunteering and greater participation [68]. Nieto et al. [78] identified that the perceived impact of the volunteer is closely linked to the level of the organization's program, such as training, long-term contact with people with autism, or responding to their needs.

Additionally, different studies have identified different barriers to sports volunteering participation in activities for people with disabilities, such as interpersonal, intrapersonal, or structural factors [9]. The lack of policies and practices that promote the accessibility

of people with disabilities to sports activities was another aspect identified in the literature [87].

The lack of qualifications of the professionals responsible for activities was an important factor that must be considered, since a lack of regulation in the professional labor market results in those responsible not having adequate training [77,95]. Non-profit organizations must have the obligation to adequately train and educate both staff and volunteers in the culture of inclusive workspaces [68]. Recognizing both personal and professional motivations is essential for effective recruitment, adequate program development, and interdisciplinary connection [66].

4.5. Satisfaction

The overall satisfaction of volunteers was high, and their attitude towards people with disabilities improved after the volunteering experience [9,85,86]. This suggests that volunteering not only benefits those who receive help but can also have a positive impact on the volunteer community [93]. Rodriguez and Soares [85] evidenced that despite a clear lack of volunteering culture among the participants analyzed in their event, they expressed high satisfaction associated with their intentions to continue volunteering in the future. In this line, Wu et al. [86] also found that job satisfaction significantly influenced the intention to repeat the experience in the future and was as a mediator between motivation and future intentions. Sanders and Balcanoff [66] made recommendations to increase volunteering, such as expanding training opportunities, developing interprofessional opportunities for collaboration in other fields, and improving communication systems related to logistics. Furthermore, by recognizing and accurately valuing the contributions of volunteers, sport organizations and policymakers can develop more effective strategies for promoting and supporting volunteering in sports [96].

4.6. Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study had some limitations. Firstly, some descriptive data extracted from different studies was obtained by calculating the average of all item scores that make up the motivational factor. Secondly, a limitation was the use of different scales, which may have complicated the association of different motivational factors of each instrument based on the similarities outlined by Kim et al. [15]. Many studies used adaptations of reference scales, generating new questionnaires. Other limitations typical of this type of study include publication bias, as scientific journals tend to publish studies with statistically significant results, overlooking studies that have not found relevant results. Regarding location bias, although studies published in three languages (English, Spanish, and Portuguese) were considered, there may be other studies published in different languages that were excluded. Lastly, a final limitation may be inclusion bias, as the inclusion and exclusion criteria established in this study may have excluded some studies that provided quantitative data on volunteer motivational factors in sports events.

Finally, this study emphasizes the need for further research on volunteering in sports activities for people with disabilities. Addressing this lack of research would not only enrich the existing literature but also provide valuable information for designing more effective and satisfying volunteer programs. In conclusion, it is imperative that future studies focus on developing a body of knowledge encompassing diverse methodologies, contexts, and types of disabilities to promote a more comprehensive and effective understanding of sports volunteering.

5. Conclusions

One of the main conclusions drawn from this systematic review is the limited number of studies exclusively focused on evaluating the motivation or perception of volunteers participating in sports activities or events specifically for people with disabilities. The attention has been equally divided between organizations and sports events. The analyzed organizations are not specific to disability, and people with mental disabilities receive more attention from researchers than other types of disabilities.

The geographic distribution shows the existence of studies on all continents, particularly in Europe and Asia. Most studies are quantitative in nature; however, the qualitative studies are more recent. Few studies have been developed with a theoretical model base to support them, and a wide variety of tools have been used to analyze motivation.

Finally, the results indicate that volunteer motivation is focused on intrinsic factors rather than extrinsic ones. Sports volunteering involved in organizations or sports events has a motivational profile focused on intrinsic factors such as values, while students are more focused on altruism. The level of satisfaction is higher among students than among volunteers in organizations and sports events, and they show a high intention to repeat the experience.

5.1. Theoretical Implications

The sports sector plays a significant role in contemporary society, being regarded not only as a practice but also as a lifestyle and a source of commercial interest [97]. In recent years, due to institutional efforts to generate inclusive policies, such as the 2030 Agenda's Goal 4 on Quality Education, it is essential to value research lines that advocate for disadvantaged groups and initiatives aimed at improving attitudes towards people with disabilities, ultimately enhancing their quality of life [98].

Despite the extensive literature on volunteer motivation, much of it focuses on general contexts without considering the specificities of people with disabilities. General motivation literature addresses broad themes but does not delve into the particularities related to experiences of social exclusion, struggles for accessibility, and negative attitudes that individuals with disabilities may face in their daily lives. This study is indispensable because without a deep understanding of the specific motivational factors of people with disabilities and the volunteers who work with them, there is a risk of applying general models that do not fit their needs and realities.

In summary, the contribution of this manuscript lies in its ability to go beyond the general literature on motivation by highlighting the specific research needs related to the motivation of individuals working with people with disabilities. Through a critical and reflective approach, this study identifies and addresses knowledge gaps, fostering a greater understanding of how social, psychological, and structural factors affect motivation in this group. Without this type of research, there is a risk of applying universal motivational theories that fail to capture the complexities of the motivation of those working with people with disabilities.

5.2. Practical Implications

Based on the results of this systematic review, several recommendations can be proposed for sports organizations to enhance the experience of sports volunteers, particularly in programs involving people with disabilities.

1. Enhancement of volunteer programs to attend volunteers and participant needs. Given the predominance of intrinsic motivation among volunteers, organizations should prioritize personal growth opportunities and emphasize value-based aspects of sports volunteering to increase volunteer satisfaction and retention.

2. Development of inclusive policies in sport and/or people with disabilities organizations. The lack of diversity of the types of disabilities suggests a need for developing more inclusive policies and programs that address a broader spectrum of disabilities, extending beyond mental disabilities to those such as deafness or physical disabilities.
3. Improve comprehensive training and education. The development and adequate training and education for both staff and volunteers is needed to underscore the importance of implementing volunteer training programs to improve the quality of volunteer engagement and the effectiveness of sports programs for people with disabilities.
4. Promotion of interdisciplinary research. Encouraging interdisciplinary research and collaboration could expand the scope of knowledge and facilitate the integration of different research fields such as sports management, psychology, social work, studies about disabilities, or volunteerism.
5. Mitigation of barriers to increase participation among people with disabilities. Identifying and addressing barriers to participation, such as interpersonal and structural factors, could enhance accessibility for people with disabilities in the sport volunteering programs, benefiting inclusivity.
6. Integration of volunteer competences recognition for career development. While intrinsic factors are predominant, incorporating a recognition of the competencies developed by each volunteer could enhance their career development opportunities and could attract a broader audience to volunteer.
7. Integrate cultural sensitivity in sports volunteers program design. Considering cultural differences in motivation, organizations should structure their volunteer programs to align with the cultural contexts of their volunteers, potentially increasing engagement and effectiveness.
8. Using mixed-methods insights in the assessment of sports volunteering programs. The valuable insights gained from qualitative studies highlight the importance of analyzing it together with surveys to have a better understanding of the emotional and motivational issues of volunteers to design more empathetic and supportive volunteer environments.

Implementation of these evidence-based recommendations could significantly enhance the efficacy of sports volunteer programs, particularly those involving people with disabilities, and contribute to the advancement of inclusive sports practices.

Supplementary Materials: The following supporting information can be downloaded at: <https://www.mdpi.com/article/10.3390/disabilities5020033/s1>, Supplementary File S1: PRISMA 2020 Main Checklist and PRISMA Abstract Checklist.

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Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Appendix A

Table A1. Academic data of each study.

Authors	Year	Location	Journal	Type of Volunteer	Type of Organization	Type of Disability
Collier et al. [79]	2015	USA	Therapeutic Recreation Journal	Organization volunteers	Sport or recreation organizations	Different types of disabilities
Epiney et al. [9]	2023	Switzerland	PLoS ONE	Organization volunteers	Disabled organization	Severe mental health disorders
Grimaldi-Puyana et al. [77]	2018	Spain	Materiales para la historia del deporte	Organization volunteers	Sport or recreation organization	Intellectual disabilities
Kappelides and Spoor [68]	2018	New Zealand	Sport Management Review	Organization volunteers	Sport or recreation organizations	Intellectual disabilities
Khoo and Engelhorn [32]	2011	Malaysia	Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly	Event volunteers	National Sport Event	Intellectual disabilities
Khoo and Engelhorn [33]	2007	Malaysia	Tourism and Hospitality Planning & Development	Students	International sport event	Different types of disabilities
Khoo et al. [31]	2011	Malaysia	African Journal of Physical, Health Education, Recreation and Dance	Event volunteers	National and international sport event	Different types of disabilities
Kim et al. [83]	2010	Korea	European Sport Management Quarterly	Event volunteers	National sport event	Intellectual disabilities
Kumnig et al. [84]	2014	Austria	Voluntas	Event volunteers	International sport event	Intellectual disabilities
Labbe et al. [87]	2019	England	Leisure Sciences	Organization volunteers	Disabled organization	Physical disabilities
Nieto et al. [78]	2015	Spain	Anales de Psicología	Students	University	Autism Spectrum Disorder
Rodrigues and Soares [85]	2020	Portugal	Revista Intercontinental de Gestão Desportiva	Event volunteers	International sport event	Different types of disabilities
Sanders and Balcanoff [66]	2021	USA	Disability and Rehabilitation	Organization volunteers	Care organization	Different types of disabilities
Surujlal [65]	2010	South Africa	African Journal for Physical, Health Education, Recreation and Dance	Event volunteers	National and international sport event	NR
Wekesser et al. [80]	2023	USA	Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly	Students	Sport or recreation organizations	Physical disabilities
Wu et al. [86]	2015	China	Voluntas	Students	National sport event	Intellectual disabilities

Note. NR—Not Reported.

Table A2. Sample characteristics of each study.

Authors	Year	Sample	Male (%)	Female (%)	Average Age	University Studies (%)	Student (%)	Marital Status (% Single)	Marital Status (% Married)	Occupation (% Workers)	Previous Experience
Collier et al. [79]	2015	63	39	61	31	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Epiney et al. [9]	2023	15	47	53	36	60	20	NR	NR	NR	4 years
Grimaldi-Puyana et al. [77]	2018	112	47.2	52.8	NR	45.4	NR	55.7	33.3	NR	NR
Kappelides and Spoor [68]	2018	10	60	40	18–64	60	NR	NR	NR	NR	5 years
Khoo and Engelhorn [32]	2011	289	35	65	20– (6.0%); 20–39 (16%); 40–59 (54.0%); 60+ (24.0%)	70.2	NR	NR	NR	57	100
Khoo and Engelhorn [33]	2007	301	38.2	61.8	21	NR	97	NR	NR	NR	13.3
Khoo et al. [31]	2011	742	33.3	66.7	33.3	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	46.4
Kim et al. [83]	2010	224	33.9	66.1	18–25 (16.8%); 26–30 (14.9%); 31–55 (57.9%); 55–65 (9.3%); 66+ (0.9%)	87.5	NR	11.8	88.2	86.5	NR
Kumnig et al. [84]	2014	167	22.3	77.7	25.1	83.3	NR	38.8	61.2	NR	NR
Labbe et al. [87]	2019	18	67	33	20–70	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Nieto et al. [78]	2015	230	11	89	NR	0	100	NR	NR	NR	NR
Rodrigues and Soares [85]	2020	74	39.2	60.8	34.6	27	36	56	16	10	39.2
Sanders and Balcanoff [66]	2021	48	37.5	62.5	31.7	NR	NR	NR	NR	13	4.5 years
Surujlal [65]	2010	152	27	73	32.1	59.2	NR	NR	NR	62.4	93
Wekesser et al. [80]	2023	105	29.5	70.5	24.3	0	100	NR	NR	NR	NR
Wu et al. [86]	2015	180	30	70	20.64	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR

Note. NR—Not Reported.

Table A3. Methodology data and results of each study.

Authors	Year	Method	Variables	Tool	Theory	Data Analysis	Results	Findings
Collier et al. [79]	2015	Quantitative	Motivation; Comfort; Future intentions; Societal attitudes	VFI	Social Cognitive Theory	Descriptive; Comparative	Motivation: Higher scores for values (29), understanding (28), and enhancement (24). Lower scores for career (19) and protective (18). The volunteer experiences reported increased comfort levels and more positive perceptions of people with disabilities. Interaction with DP significantly improves the feeling of reward when helping, comfort with the interaction, and noticing the person more than the disability. Social attitudes towards people with ASD improved in the post-assessment compared to the pre-assessment, especially when perceiving a higher level of communication and feeling of comfort with the person with ASD.	Volunteering in therapeutic recreation programs can positively influence volunteers’ comfort levels and attitudes towards people with disabilities. Volunteers were primarily driven by altruistic motives and a desire for personal growth.

Table A3. Cont.

Authors	Year	Method	Variables	Tool	Theory	Data Analysis	Results	Findings
Epiney et al. [9]	2023	Qualitative	Perceptions; Motivation; Participation Barriers; Participation Facilitators; Personal outcomes	Interview	Competence model	Thematic analysis (deductive coding)	Motivation: (i) for others: promoting IMHD physical activities (60%), enabling IMHD to succeed (33%), doing something meaningful (47%); (ii) for themselves: enjoying the activity (73%), gaining experience and skills (60%). Challenges and barriers: (i) intrapersonal: mental state (73%), motivation/apathy (73%), physical fitness (53%), medication side effects (33%); (ii) structural: timing and location of sports programs (40%); (iii) interpersonal: group composition (53%); (47%), social support (60%); (iv) external social support: support from immediate environment (47%); (v) sports program: appropriate level of difficulty (47%), gratification (87%), personal development (73%), witnessing participants' success (47%). Results for coaches: satisfaction and gratification (87%), personal development (73%), witnessing the success of participants (47%).	The study identified various challenges and barriers to participation in voluntary sport programs for people with mental health disorders, including intrapersonal, structural and interpersonal factors. Facilitators of participation included the role of coaches, group cohesion, external social support and appropriate sport programs. Personal characteristics of coaches, such as professional experience, methodological expertise, self-experience and social skills, were crucial to the success of the programs. Coaches were motivated by both altruistic reasons and personal benefits, and reported positive outcomes from their participation, including satisfaction, witnessing participants' success and personal development. The study emphasizes the need for specialized training and support for coaches working with people with mental health disorders in sport settings.
Grimaldi-Puyana et al. [77]	2018	Quantitative	Recognition; Responsibility with tasks; Physical conditions; Rewards; Satisfaction	NR	NR	Descriptive	Volunteers and workers are moderately satisfied with their activity and their extrinsic motivation, but their intrinsic motivation is moderately high. Workers reported high satisfaction compared with volunteers.	The high number of workers who carry out their activity as volunteers and without related qualifications in the population of this study shows the need to regulate the sports sector. This lack of regulation in the labor market will continue to incorporate poorly qualified professionals, and consequently could harm sports services for athletes with intellectual disabilities.
Kappelides and Spoor [68]	2018	Qualitative	Benefits; Barriers; Challenges; Potential solutions	NR	NR	Descriptive	Incorporating volunteers with a disability has several benefits including social acceptance, social inclusion and personal development. Some barriers to volunteering are identified including negative attitudes, personal factors, organizational factors and lack of social inclusion.	The organizations need to create an environment that facilitates open, two-way communication with volunteers with a disability about their needs and wants. The organizations should be training and educating all volunteers and staff around an inclusive workplace culture.
Khoo and Engelhorn [32]	2011	Quantitative	Motivation	SEVMS	NR	EFA; Multivariate	Motivation scores: Purposive (4.26); Solidary (3.42); Commitments (2.68); Family Tradition (2.58); External Traditions (2.54).	Males are high punctuation in Family Traditions and External Traditions, while female are high scores in purposive and commitments.
Khoo and Engelhorn [33]	2007	Quantitative	Motivation	SEVMS	NR	EFA	Motivation scores: Solidary (4.37); Purposive (4.36); Commitment (3.77); Free Time (3.34); Family Tradition (2.47)	NR
Khoo et al. [31]	2011	Quantitative	Motivation	SEVMS	NR	Comparative	Malasia motivation score: Solidary (4.48); Purposive (4.23); Commitments (3.71); External Traditions (3.02) South Africa motivation score: Solidary (4.05); Purposive (4.05); Commitments (3.14); External Traditions (2.61) USA motivation score: Purposive (3.84); Solidary (3.39); Commitments (2.61); External Traditions (2.43)	Several motivational items show differences between countries.
Kim et al. [83]	2010	Quantitative	Motivation	Modified VFI	NR	CFA; Multivariate; Comparative	Motivation scores: Value (6.25), Understanding (5.62), Social (4.50), Career (3.52), Protective (3.25), Enhancement (4.74)	Values and Understanding are the two factors most evaluated according with the previous literature. Volunteers in the special-needs event had higher motivation in all six factors than the national and local event. Like the international event, the special-needs event might be considered to a great opportunity for volunteering.

Table A3. Cont.

Authors	Year	Method	Variables	Tool	Theory	Data Analysis	Results	Findings
Kumrig et al. [84]	2014	Quantitative	Motivation	MVS	Integrated conceptual framework and consistency theory	Regression	Motivation scores: Value (5.20); Understanding (4.73); Personal Development (4.59); Community Concern (4.02); Steam Enhancement (2.40)	Volunteers with high psychological well-being report high values in Value and Understanding and low values in Esteem, Enhancement and Community Concern.
Labbe et al. [87]	2019	Qualitative	Participation; Commitment; Drop-out	Interview	NR	Analysis of data collection, describing the discourse of participants	Two main themes were identified. (1) “Anchors away: reasons for setting sail”, described the benefits of adaptive sailing including learning opportunities, leaving disability onshore, challenging stigma, building a community and engaging with nature. (2) “Running ashore”: challenges with program delivery and logistics”, acknowledged the various issues encountered, including issues around accessibility, equipment, scheduling, safety management, and volunteers/volunteering. Volunteers note the benefits for people with disabilities, the barriers of space and materials for practice, the importance of support and that much remains to be done.	The benefits that sailors with disabilities derived from their involvement in adaptive sailing, showed how outdoor leisure can have a positive psychological and social impact on people with disabilities. The identified barriers to outdoor leisure activities that people with disabilities may encounter, the facilitators may provide insights for the policies and practices that support access.
Nieto et al. [78]	2015	Quantitative	Motivation; Satisfaction	Motivation and satisfaction—APUNTATE Impact Questionnaire for Volunteers	NR	Descriptive; Comparative	The main reason volunteers stated for enrolling in this program was to help others in 70% ($n = 98$) of the cases. The remaining 30% stated that they enrolled to improve their own training. The overall satisfaction with the program stated by the volunteers was very high for 50.9% of them and quite high for 43.9%. No significant differences were found in the compensation between satisfaction and the type of degree/main motivation.	The perceived impact of volunteers is closely linked to the level of organization of the program, the most valuable being: (a) the program provides ongoing training and support; (b) the program facilitates long-term contact with people with ASD and their environment; (c) the program offers the opportunity to learn to anticipate and respond appropriately to the needs and preferences of the people they support; (d) formal and informal recognition of volunteering improves their employment prospects. Volunteers perceived that their participation had a very high impact on their personal development, their social and communication skills, their professional development and their perception of their social contribution. The results of this study clearly suggest that the success and effectiveness of volunteer programs supporting the leisure of people with ASD depend on several factors related to both the design of the supports provided and the structure of the program itself.
Rodrigues and Soares [85]	2020	Quantitative	Motivation; Satisfaction; Future intention	Downward & Ralston Survey	NR	Descriptive; Comparative; Correlation; Regression	Motivation scores: Highest values: Personal experience (3.86), Community involvement (3.71), Personal development (3.31). Lowest values: Tradition of volunteering (2.35), Opportunity to work (2.46). Satisfaction: Most stated that they were satisfied, very satisfied or extremely satisfied (17.1%, 25.7% and 37.1%, respectively). Future intentions: 75.8% stated that they would be willing to repeat the volunteering experience.	Significant differences in Job Opportunity, Volunteering Tradition, Esteem, Egoism between pre- and post-evaluation. Job opportunities and volunteering tradition were devalued after the event, while self-esteem and egoism were valued more. The organization of the adaptive sport event played a crucial role in promoting learning, personal development, and community participation. Despite the lack of a strong volunteering culture among participants, the event fostered a high degree of satisfaction and a willingness to volunteer again in the future.

Table A3. Cont.

Authors	Year	Method	Variables	Tool	Theory	Data Analysis	Results	Findings
Sanders and Balcanoff [66]	2021	Mixed methods	Motivation; Experience;	VFI, Interview	Functional Theory	Quantitative: Descriptive; Comparative; Correlation Qualitative: Thematic analysis (deductive coding)	Volunteers in the adapted skiing program were driven by a mix of personal and professional motives. While altruistic values, personal growth, and learning about the participants were key for all volunteers, college students placed a higher value on career-related benefits and gaining experience in their field. Volunteers found the experience rewarding and emphasized the importance of seeing the children's progress, the positive emotional connections formed, and the opportunity to apply their skills and to learn from others.	Recommendations to improve volunteering: (i) expand training opportunities; (ii) develop interprofessional opportunities for collaboration in other fields; (iii) improve communication systems related to logistics. Motivations for volunteering are multidimensional and may be related to the ages and life stages of volunteers. Experienced volunteers were motivated by their values to serve beneficiaries, but appreciated social interaction with younger volunteers, mentoring opportunities, and outdoor fun. Significant differences in motivational factors were greater in students than in long-term volunteers. Recognizing both personal and professional motivators is essential for effective recruitment, program development, and fostering interprofessional collaboration within adaptive sports programs.
Surujlal [65]	2010	Quantitative	Motivation	SEVMS	NR	Descriptive; EFA	Motivation scores: Altruism (4.39), Interaction and achievement (4.05), Diversion (3.80), External influence and free time (2.62). Less than 20% of volunteers expected to be rewarded for their participation.	The results also showed that the decision to volunteer was a personal one that was not based on external factors. The research highlights the importance of altruism and self-improvement as key motivators for volunteers in the context of disability sporting events in South Africa. It also highlights the importance of creating opportunities for volunteers to learn, grow and feel fulfilled through their contributions.
Wekesser et al. [80]	2023	Qualitative	Experience; Motivation; Program impact	Interview	NR	Descriptive statistics Thematic analysis (inductive coding)	Seven major themes were developed relative to participants' perceptions of their volunteer experiences: (a) volunteer motivation; (b) diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI); (c) program design and practice experience; (d) challenges; (e) relationship building; (f) personal and professional growth; and (g) transformative experience.	Participants described different motivations that led them to make the decision to volunteer, from intrinsic (e.g., fun) to extrinsic (e.g., to boost their resume). In the program, volunteers had ample opportunities to socialize with both non-disabled volunteers and people with disabilities, were regularly challenged, and were influenced by a unique program design and hands-on experience. All these processes occurred in a program environment that fostered DEI values. This process of growth and learning sparked a volunteer's transformative experience, which in some cases, resulted in more intrinsic reasons to continue participating.
Wu et al. [86]	2015	Quantitative	Competence; Motivation; Satisfaction; Future intention	NR	Self-determination Theory	CFA	Intrinsic motivation (5.87), Satisfaction (6.29), Future intentions (6.20)	Intrinsic motivation was a partial mediator for the relationship between competence and job satisfaction. Job satisfaction positively influenced intention, and it acted as a full mediator in the relationship between intrinsic motivation and intention.

Note. VFI—Volunteer Functions Inventory; MVFI—Modified Volunteer Functions Inventory; SEVMS—Special Event Volunteer Motivation Scale; MVS—Motivation Volunteer Scale; CFA—Confirmatory Factor Analysis; EFA—Exploratory Factor Analysis; IMHD—Individuals with Mental Health Disease; ASD—Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Appendix B

Table A4. Methodological quality assessment of quantitative studies.

[illegible]

Table A4. Cont.

Item	Section/Topic and Checklist Item	Collier et al. [79]	Grimaldi- Puyana et al. [77]	Khoo and Engelhorn [33]	Khoo and Engelhorn [32]	Khoo et al. [31]	Kim et al. [83]	Kumming et al. [84]	Nieto et al. [78]	Rodrigues and Soares [85]	Surujlal [65]	Wu et al. [86]
Results												
Outcomes and Estimation												
9	A table or figure showing outputs of analysis more relevant of study	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Discussion												
Interpretation												
10	Interpretation consistent with results, balancing benefits and harms, and considering other relevant evidence	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Limitations												
11	Study limitations, addressing sources of potential bias, imprecisions, etc.	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1
Practisal Implication												
12	Main applicability to results of study	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Other Information												
Funding												
13	Sources of funding and other support, role of funders	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL SCORE (Max. 20 points)		13	12	12	13	12	13	13	14	12	14	13

Table A5. Methodological quality assessment of qualitative studies.

Item	Section/Topic and Checklist Item	Epiney et al. [9]	Kappelides and Spoor [68]	Labbé et al. [87]	Wekesser et al. [80]
Title and Abstract					
1a	Identification of the type of study.	0	0	0	0
1b	Overview structured in objective, method, results and conclusions.	1	1	1	1
Introduction					
2a	Scientific background and explanation of the relevant rationale or theories.	1	1	1	1
2b	Specific objectives or hypotheses.	1	1	1	1
Method					
3a	Qualitative approach and research paradigm.	0	1	1	1
3b	Researcher characteristics and reflexivity	1	0	1	1
3c	Context—settings and factors	1	1	1	1
3d	Sampling strategy.	1	1	1	1
3e	Ethical issues—consent	1	0	1	1
3f	Data collection—procedural details.	1	1	1	1
3g	Data collection instruments and technologies.	0	1	1	0
3h	Units of study—number and relevant characteristics of participants or documents.	1	1	1	1
3i	Data processing—transcription, management, security, integrity, data integrity, data coding and anonymisation.	1	1	1	1
3j	Data analysis with specific focus.	1	1	1	1
3k	Techniques to improve the reliability and credibility of data analysis.	1	1	1	1
Results					
4a	Data synthesis and interpretation	1	1	1	1
4b	Link to empirical data—evidence, citations.	1	1	1	1
Discussion					
5a	Integration with previous work, implications, transferability and contributions.	1	1	1	1
5b	Limitations.	1	1	1	1
Other					
6a	Conclusions and potential sources of influence.	1	1	1	1
6b	Sources of funding and other support.	0	0	1	0
TOTAL SCORE (Max. 21 points)		17	17	20	18

Table A6. Methodological quality assessment of mixed methods studies.

Item	Section/Topic and Checklist Item	Sanders and Balcanoff [66]
Title and abstract		
1a	Identification of the type of study.	1
1b	Overview structured in objective, method, results and conclusions.	1
Introduction		
	Rationale and objectives	
2a	Scientific background and explanation of the rationale.	1
2b	Specific objectives or hypotheses.	1
Method		
Quantitative section		
3a	Eligibility criteria for participants.	0
3b	Settings and locations where data were collected.	1
3c	A table of baseline demographic characteristics.	0
Sample size		
3d	Sample size has been determined	0
3e	If applicable, explanation of how the sample size was determined.	0

Table A6. Cont.

Item	Section/Topic and Checklist Item	Sanders and Balcanoff [66]
Procedure		
3f	The procedure has sufficient detail to allow replication, including how and when they were administered.	1
Instruments or tools		
3g	Fully defined primary and secondary outcome measures, including how and when they were assessed.	1
3h	Use of validity and reliability tools.	1
Implementation		
3i	Who did each part of the study.	0
Statistical methods		
3j	Statistical methods used to analyse the results	1
3k	Use of methods of analysis additional to the purpose of the study	0
Qualitative section		
3l	Qualitative approach and research paradigm	0
3m	Researcher characteristics and reflexivity	0
3n	Context—settings and factors	1
3ñ	Sampling strategy	1
3o	Ethical issues—consent	1
3p	Data collection—procedural details	1
3q	Data collection instruments and technologies.	1
3r	Units of study—number and relevant characteristics of participants or documents.	1
3s	Data processing—transcription, management, security, integrity, data integrity, data coding and anonymity.	0
3t	Data analysis with specific focus.	1
3u	Techniques to improve the reliability and credibility of data analysis.	0
Results		
Quantitative section		
4a	A table or figure showing the results of the most relevant analyses of the study.	1
Qualitative section		
4b	Synthesis and interpretation of data.	1
4c	Link to empirical data—evidence, citations.	1
Discussion		
Interpretation		
5a	Interpretation consistent with results, implications, transferability and contributions.	1
Limitations		
5b	Limitations of the study.	1
Conclusions		
6a	Main applicability of the study results.	1
6b	Practical applications	0
Other		
Funding		
7	Sources of funding and other support, role of funders	0
TOTAL SCORE (Max. 34 points)		21

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