

Conceptions for establishing the selection standards for deaf and hard-of-hearing school athletes from immediate perspective

Concepciones para establecer las normas de selección de atletas escolares sordos hipoacusticos de perspectivas inmediata.

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ABSTRACT

Structuring the classification norms for school athletes diagnosed as deaf and hard of hearing, based on a new conception of evaluative adaptations, in order to facilitate a better selection of athletes with immediate potential, taking into account their abilities, was the main objective of this research. For this purpose, the results of different levels of competition were considered. The theoretical methods used were analysis-synthesis, deductive-inductive reasoning, and abstract-concrete reasoning to characterize the current state of the problem under study and to shape the new conception of evaluative norms. The empirical methods of measurement and observation, through the results of the different tests, allowed for the evaluation of the effectiveness of the proposed approach.

Keywords

Deaf; Hearing impaired; Assessment standard.

RESUMEN

Estructurar las normas para la clasificación de atletas escolares diagnosticados como sordos e hipos acústicos, partiendo de una nueva concepción de adecuaciones evaluativas, de manera que propicie una mejor selección de los atletas con perspectivas inmediatas, teniendo en cuenta sus potencialidades constituyó el objetivo principal de esta investigación, para la cual se tomaron en consideración los resultados de diferentes niveles de competencias. Se utilizarán como métodos teóricos: análisis-síntesis, deductivo-inductivo, de lo abstracto-concreto, para caracterizar el estado actual del problema objeto de estudio y conformar la nueva concepción de las normas evaluativas. Los métodos empíricos permitieron valorar la efectividad de la propuesta.

Palabras clave

Sordos; Hipo acústico; Norma de evaluación.

INTRODUCTION

Adapted sport is a branch of sport and physical activity that addresses the needs of individuals with disabilities, aiming to optimize their abilities to improve their quality of life and facilitate independent performance.

It encompasses all students who, for various reasons, experience difficulties that prevent them from progressing in their learning or overall development like others. They require support to achieve their goals, and their personal and social circumstances present them with considerable obstacles.

In the sports education of deaf athletes, throughout the history of Pedagogy, Psychology, Linguistics, Sociolinguistics, and other related sciences, the issue of communication has been highly controversial. The debate continues regarding the appropriate methods, procedures, trends, and/or sports models for their training process, considering the potential of deaf individuals to access information, knowledge, physical education, and sport with equal opportunities to hearing individuals.

In this regard, Pascual (2009) points out that hearing loss is called deafness or hearing impairment, depending on the degree of loss or an individual's communication ability.

Thus, this author defines deafness as: “if a person cannot understand speech using only their ears, with or without the assistance of a hearing aid. It is a matter of communication and social acceptance that is more closely associated with speech impairment and specific learning disabilities (...)” (Pascual, 2009, p. 113). Furthermore, she considers that hearing impairment is related to difficulty, but does not imply a complete lack of understanding of speech using only the ears, with or without the assistance of hearing aids.

In another vein, it is acknowledged that the achievements of sports for people with disabilities are due to the participatory system, where competitive events have been designed and organized by school age groups, corresponding to their potential level of participation from school age, thus facilitating their transition to the adult category. All of the above means that each year, registration for each sport is validated to build a pool of athletes with disabilities and identify them as immediate prospects.

In this regard, a problematic situation exists related to the standards required to evaluate the results achieved and determine their classification as Immediate Prospect Athletes (IPAs). These standards are the same as those used for able-bodied athletes. Therefore, we believe the following **DEFICIENCY** exists: there is no standard for evaluating deaf and hard-of-hearing athletes to classify them as IPAs.

All of the above led to the formulation of the following **SCIENTIFIC PROBLEM**: How to determine the standards for evaluating deaf and hard-of-hearing athletes with immediate potential in the school category? Consequently, the **OBJECT OF STUDY** was determined to be: the sports evaluation process in athletics.

The relevance of this scientific problem lies in the need to establish evaluative standards that correspond to each event in which school-aged children with disabilities participate, according to their category, thus allowing for a more scientific evaluation that is appropriate to the type of disability.

To address the problem, the following **OBJECTIVE** was proposed: to establish standards for validating enrollment in athletics, taking into account the disabilities of school-aged children. The **SCOPE OF ACTION** is defined as: the standards for selecting athletes with disabilities (API) who are deaf or hard of hearing in school-aged categories.

The **IDEA TO BE DEFENDED** is defined as: if a new evaluation standard is established for classifying athletes with disabilities (API) in the enrollment validation process for deaf and hard-of-hearing students in the school-aged category, then a more objective selection process can be carried out, enhancing the continuity and systematic development of athletes with disabilities. To achieve the objectives, the following **SCIENTIFIC TASKS** were planned:

1. Determination of the theoretical and methodological foundations that support the new evaluative approach for selecting deaf and hard-of-hearing school-age athletes as having immediate potential in athletics (API).
2. Diagnosis of the current state of the evaluative approach for selecting deaf and hard-of-hearing school-age athletes as having immediate potential in athletics.
3. Epistemological foundation for the evaluative approach for identifying deaf and hard-of-hearing school-age athletes as having immediate potential in athletics.
4. Assessment of the feasibility and scientific value of the research results.

The theoretical methods used were: dialectical-materialist, analysis-synthesis, inductive-deductive, and systemic-structural-functional. The empirical methods included: document analysis, interviews, and user criteria. Finally, the mathematical methods employed were: descriptive statistics using percentage calculations; and absolute and relative frequency in processing the interviews and the criteria of the consulted specialists using the SPSS-23 program (Statistical Product and Service Solutions).

RESULTS

The literature review confirmed that the tests and standards that validate enrollment in each school year for conventional sports are established with the following characteristics:

1. The rules are structured by area of competition, gender, and school category, each with its specific characteristics. These categories include sprints, jumps, distance running, throws, and multi-events.
2. There is one category for continuing athletes and another for new entrants starting in 2023. Scores are awarded on a scale of five points, descending from the time and mark achieved. It should be noted that in races, the score is inversely proportional to the time achieved.
3. This document lacks a rationale explaining the criteria used in its creation.

These same tests and standards are applied to athletes with disabilities, which is why the evaluation process is considered to lack the necessary fairness. Furthermore, some athletes with disabilities achieve results superior to those of able-bodied athletes; an example is the multiple Olympic champion Omara Durand.

However, this work focuses on deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals, indicating the need to draw on different reference points to understand the problem to be addressed.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Cuba to the United Nations Office at Geneva and the International Organizations based in Switzerland submitted the comments of the Government of the Republic of Cuba regarding paragraph 21 of Human Rights Council resolution 25/20 on the right of persons with disabilities to education.

The comments emphasize that the Cuban State considers the needs of persons with disabilities essential and has therefore implemented a development strategy based on the principles of freedom, equity, social justice, and inclusion. Its objective has been to place the human being at the center of attention, fostering their integral development and self-realization. It has also been based on the concept of people with disabilities as subjects of inviolable rights with certain limitations in their abilities.

In this sense, the 1976 Constitution of the Republic of Cuba established an inclusive legal framework applicable to all citizens of the country without distinction or discrimination. Article 43 (now Article 42 of the current Constitution) enshrined the rights of citizens, namely: to enjoy education in all educational institutions in the country, from primary school to universities, which are the same for everyone:

- To receive assistance in all health institutions.
- To live in any sector, zone, or neighborhood of the cities.
- To be served in all public service establishments.
- To use, without separation, maritime, rail, air, and road transport.
- To enjoy the same resorts, beaches, parks, social clubs, and other centers of culture, sports, recreation, and leisure.

Similarly, he pointed out that there are three Cuban non-governmental organizations that constitute an essential link in the defense, guidance, promotion, respect, and exercise of the rights of people with disabilities, both for their members and for society in general. These are: the Cuban Association of the Physically Disabled (ACLIFIM), the National Association of the Blind and Visually Impaired (ANCI), and the National Association of the Deaf of Cuba (ANSOC). These organizations provide people with disabilities a framework for participation in the political, social, and economic life of the country with full freedom.

Therefore, other essential references are taken into consideration for the proposed new regulations for the selection of Supportive Care Providers (ACPs) for school athletes.

From a philosophical perspective, the dialectical-materialist method was considered, taking into account the laws, principles, and categories that formulate the most general laws of the development of nature, society, and thought in constant movement and transformation. In conjunction with the above, the pedagogical and didactic principles addressed by Ruiz (1985) are adopted, specifically the Principle of Attention to Age and Individual Particularities, which is consistent with addressing disability. From a psychological perspective, Vygotsky's (1960) sociocultural approach must be considered, which states that each person internalizes culture through learning processes with progressive mastery of objects and ways of acting, thinking, and feeling in each historical context. Therefore, the concept of the zone of proximal development is adopted, which is simply the distance between the level of potential development and the near future development. Thus, emphasis should be placed on understanding the athlete's potential and stimulating its development. This is particularly applicable to students with disabilities.

Some characteristics to consider in deaf and hard-of-hearing school athletes are summarized in:

- They require direct attention from the earliest years because other vestibular disorders can arise, such as imbalance, decreased stability, poor coordination, difficulty walking, etc.

- Specialized training should be developed from childhood to establish fundamental knowledge. Exercises require a specific approach to strengthen the body and exert a positive influence on the circulatory and respiratory systems; develop skills, build confidence, improve coordination, and contribute to language development.
- Children with hearing impairments are restless due to their need for sensory input and because excitation predominates over inhibition; physical activities and sports can provide the necessary sensory stimulation.

Therefore, based on sociological foundations as proposed by Velázquez (2004), it is assumed that sport is one of the few avenues for social mobility, offering social prestige and, consequently, values and interests that enable the achievement of records, victories, or titles.

There are three types of hearing impairment, as noted by Pascual (2009):

1. **Hearing impairment:** This is a decrease in hearing due to an obstruction in the middle and outer ear that limits the normal passage of sound.
2. **Sensorineural hearing loss:** This is related to the inner ear, where sensory receptors convert sound waves into neural impulses that reach the brain to be interpreted. Damage or degeneration occurs in the tiny nerve endings of this inner ear, making it the easiest to rehabilitate.
3. **Mixed hearing loss:** This occurs when both sensorineural and sensorineural hearing loss are present simultaneously.

Depending on the extent of the damage, they are classified as follows:

Slight (15 to 30 dB HL)

Moderate (31 to 50 dB HL)

Severe (51 to 80 dB HL)

Profound (over 81 dB HL)

DISCUSSION

Following the previously presented conceptions formulated by various authors on the research topic, the proposed structure is adopted to achieve the stated objective.

To this end, the results achieved by participating athletes in different competitions will be evaluated. Statistical procedures will be applied to obtain values, and based on these values, the required marks and times will be established to determine the API (Athlete Performance Index) for deaf and hard-of-hearing athletes, as follows:

Table: Results of deaf and hard-of-hearing athletes. 13-14 year age category.

No	Resultados el año				
Atletas	80 m/p	150 m/p	400 M/P	Saltabilidad	Lanz. Pelota
1					
2					
3...					
Estadígrafos					
Máximo					
Mínimo					
X					
DS					
CV					

Tables will be compiled as many times as necessary for each year of competition and competitive category, and these will be summarized in a final table containing the values to be considered for establishing the rules and classification.

General summary table of statistical values

No	Resultados de cada año			
Estadígrafos	2020	2021	2022	2023
Máximo				
Mínimo				
X				
DS				
CV				

CONCLUSIONS

The relevance of this study will allow for the fairest possible selection process, taking into account each disability and using as parameters the historical results achieved by Cuban athletes, which will serve as a reference for the selection of athletes with immediate potential.

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