



Analysis of public management of high-performance athletics in the Junin region, 2025

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to analyze the public management of high-performance athletics in the Junin region from a qualitative and interpretive approach. A hermeneutic case study design was used, and sixteen key informants participated, including managers from the Peruvian Sports Institute, coaches, leaders, and athletes. The information was collected through semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and observation, and was analyzed using open coding, emerging categories, and triangulation. The findings revealed formal planning, resource allocation that was poorly aligned with athletes' needs, weaknesses in technical training, and limited coordination between the IPD and the regional government. It was concluded that athletics management depends more on individual efforts than on a consolidated institutional system and that strengthening high performance requires participatory governance, professionalization of actors, and contextualized policies that integrate planning, financing, and support for athletes.

Keywords: *Sport; athletics; management; policies; governance.*

INTRODUCTION

The public management of high-performance athletics on the international stage reveals structural difficulties associated with policy fragmentation, short-term prioritization, and poor coordination between sports science and state administration (Sotiriadou & De Bosscher, 2013; Teixeira et al., 2016). These limitations explain the existence of irregular sporting results and the widening gap between countries with consolidated systems and those with weak models of sports governance (Cloete, 2021; Ouyang, 2022). Given this situation, the specialized literature highlights the need for comprehensive management frameworks that link strategic planning, sustainable financing, manager training, and performance evaluation to prevent competitive deterioration and the progressive loss of talent (Sotiriadou et al., 2018; Teixeira et al., 2016).

In the Peruvian context, and particularly in the Junin region, the problem manifests itself in insufficient infrastructure, discontinuity of programs, weak inter-institutional coordination, and limited technical support for athletes (Peruvian Sports Observatory, 2024). These conditions lead to stagnation in training processes, migration of athletes, and low representation in national and international events (Peruvian

Sports Observatory, 2024; Sotiriadou & De Bosscher, 2013). To reverse this situation, regional public management with a preventive and integrative approach is required to strengthen planning, professionalize coaches and managers, and incorporate permanent monitoring and evaluation systems, so that high-performance athletics becomes a sustainable and evidence-based policy (Sotiriadou et al., 2018; Ouyang, 2022).

Several recent studies have proposed solutions aimed at strengthening public management of high-performance sport through integrated models of governance and strategic planning. In European contexts, De Bosscher et al. (2020) implemented the SPLISS model to evaluate sports policies and demonstrated that intersectoral coordination and stable funding improve competitive performance, although they noted limitations in transferring the model to regions with low administrative capacity. In Latin America, Rodríguez and Pérez (2021) developed professionalization programs for sports managers in Chile, with favorable results in the organization of federations, but with difficulties in sustaining the changes due to political and budgetary turnover. These experiences show that interventions focused solely on training do not resolve the absence of monitoring systems or the weak coordination between levels of government.

Other proposals focused on the use of sports performance evaluation and results-based management methodologies. Silva et al. (2022) applied a system of indicators for elite athletics in Brazil that optimized resource allocation, although the study acknowledged that the lack of infrastructure and certified coaches reduced the program's impact. In Colombia, Martínez (2023) designed a community-based territorial management model for athletics that improved talent detection but failed to consolidate pathways to high-level competition due to its weak link to national policies. In Peru, the Peruvian Sports Institute [IPD] (2024) promoted guidelines for sports decentralization, without achieving uniform implementation in the Andean regions, which highlights a gap in strategies adapted to realities such as Junín.

Given this situation, the present study is necessary because the solutions tested do not sufficiently consider the institutional and socio-territorial particularities of the Junín region, where deficiencies in planning, technical support, and intergovernmental coordination persist. The absence of a specific analysis of the public management of high-performance athletics limits the design of relevant policies and exposes the region to the loss of talent, inefficient use of the budget, and continued poor sporting results. Therefore, the research seeks to provide contextualized evidence that will enable the construction of an adapted management methodology capable of overcoming the identified limitations and preventing negative consequences for regional sports development (De Bosscher et al., 2020; Silva et al., 2022).

Based on an analysis of the international, national, and regional context, as well as a review of the state of the art, there is a clear need for a study that provides a comprehensive understanding of how public management of high-performance athletics is carried out in the Junín region. The main purpose of the research is to analyze this management to identify its strengths, weaknesses, and conditioning factors, in order to propose guidelines that contribute to the improvement of the planning, organization, management, and evaluation processes of elite sport. In this regard, the study will develop a methodological management proposal adapted to the institutional and territorial particularities of the region, aimed at optimizing the use of resources, strengthening intergovernmental coordination, and promoting the sustainable development of high-performance athletes.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Public sports management is understood as a social construct that is shaped by the practices, decisions, and meanings of the actors involved in high-performance sport. Chelladurai (2014) argues that sports administration responds not only to technical procedures, but also to human relationships, values, and organizational cultures that influence decision-making. In this sense, Bayle (2017) argues that sports

governance must be analyzed from the institutional dynamics and discourses of those who design and implement policies, as these elements determine the effectiveness of programs for athletes.

From comparative studies, the SPLISS model has made it possible to understand how sports systems are articulated based on the perceptions and experiences of managers, coaches, and athletes. De Bosscher et al. (2020) explain that success factors do not operate mechanically, but depend on the actors' interpretation of policies and their ability to adapt them to local contexts. Similarly, Houlihan and Green (2011) point out that athletic performance is the result of historical and institutional processes that must be analyzed using comprehensive approaches and not only quantitative indicators.

In Latin America, qualitative research has shown that sports management faces tensions between national regulations and territorial realities. Rodríguez and Pérez (2021) show that the professionalization of managers improves administrative processes, but only when there is local ownership of the proposals. Henry and Ko (2014) assert that good governance is built on participation and dialogue among actors, which is key to understanding why many sports policies fail to take root in regions far from decision-making centers.

High-level athletics in regional contexts needs to be interpreted from the voices of those who live the sporting process. Silva et al. (2022) highlight that indicator systems are useful but insufficient if the experiences of coaches and athletes regarding the use of resources and opportunities are not understood. In the case of Peru, the guidelines of the Peruvian Sports Institute [IPD] (2024) recognize the need to strengthen decentralized management, which requires qualitative studies that explain how policies are actually developed in territories such as Junín and what meanings actors attribute to the public management of athletics.

From this perspective, it is possible to delve deeper into the narratives, representations, and everyday practices that shape regional sports management. According to Sparkes and Smith (2014), qualitative research in sport makes it possible to understand the meanings that subjects attach to their experiences, revealing dimensions that traditional administrative models fail to explain. This approach is relevant for analyzing high-performance athletics in Junín because the effectiveness of public management depends on the interaction between formal rules, available resources, and the personal trajectories of coaches, managers, and athletes, elements that can only be interpreted through a comprehensive approach.

Methodology

The study was conducted using a qualitative approach, as it sought to understand the meanings and practices that shaped the public management of high-performance athletics in the Junín region. This approach allowed for the interpretation of the experiences of the actors and explained how institutional decisions influenced sporting processes. A hermeneutic case study design was adopted, which is suitable for analyzing situated phenomena and understanding them from the voices of those who experienced them (Flick, 2018). The research took an interpretive perspective that prioritized the construction of meaning over the numerical measurement of variables (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

Participants were selected through purposive sampling. We worked with 16 key informants: four managers from the Peruvian Sports Institute of Junín, five athletics coaches from provincial leagues, three sports leaders, and four high-performance athletes with national participation. The inclusion criteria considered a minimum of three years of experience, a direct link to athletics management or practice, and willingness to participate. This type of selection allowed access to informants with in-depth knowledge of the phenomenon studied, as recommended by applied qualitative studies (Hernández-Sampieri & Mendoza, 2018).

The information collection techniques used were semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and non-participant observation. The interviews addressed issues of planning, financing, technical support, and inter-

institutional coordination. The document analysis included IPD operational plans, regional reports, and competition regulations. The observation was carried out in training settings and coordination meetings. The combination of techniques responded to the principle of methodological triangulation to strengthen data consistency (Stake, 2010).

The analysis procedure followed an inductive path. First, the interviews were transcribed verbatim and open coding was applied to identify units of meaning. Subsequently, emerging categories were constructed to organize the findings: a) sports planning and governance, b) resource allocation and use, c) technical and scientific training, d) intergovernmental coordination, and e) athlete trajectory. These categories were contrasted with the documentary material and observation records. The final interpretation was based on the triangulation of sources and actors to ensure credibility and consistency (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014).

In terms of rigor criteria, the principles of credibility, transferability, and confirmability proposed by contemporary qualitative research were applied. Credibility was strengthened by returning results to participants, transferability with dense descriptions of the context, and confirmability with the safeguarding of analytical evidence (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The entire process respected the ethical aspects of confidentiality, informed consent, and responsible use of information, following the guidelines of applied social research (Flick, 2018).

Results

The findings revealed that sports planning in the Junín region was fragmented and lacked long-term vision. The managers interviewed pointed out that the annual plans responded more to administrative requirements than to a real diagnosis of athletics. An IPD official stated: "The plan exists, but it is not developed with the coaches or athletes; it is drawn up to meet deadlines." The coaches agreed that the absence of clear regional goals made it difficult to continue the training processes. The interpretation of these voices showed that formal planning failed to become an effective guide for high performance.

In the category of resource allocation, participants described a scenario of insufficient budgets and opaque distribution. Athletes said that support for travel and equipment arrived late: "We often compete with borrowed equipment." Leaders explained that spending priorities were set by central authorities without considering local needs. The analysis showed that financial management was focused on administrative activities rather than direct support for athletes, which limited competitive preparation and created a dependency on personal efforts.

Regarding athlete training, the testimonies highlighted the commitment of the coaches, but also the lack of systematic programs. A provincial coach stated: "We train with experience, not with science; we don't have access to specialists." The athletes described careers marked by interruptions and a lack of medical and psychological follow-up. The interpretation of this category revealed that training was based on individual initiatives rather than an institutional model, a situation that reduced the possibilities of consolidating talent at the international level.

The coordination between the IPD and the regional government appeared to be the critical flaw in the system. Managers acknowledged that coordination was sporadic and depended on personal relationships. One leader pointed out: "Each institution goes its own way and the athlete is left in the middle." Coaches added that joint projects did not get beyond the planning stage. The analysis revealed weak governance, with overlapping responsibilities and a lack of stable cooperation mechanisms, which affected the implementation of comprehensive policies for athletics.

Across the board, the voices of the actors allowed us to interpret that the public management of athletics in Junín was sustained thanks to individual effort and informal networks. Participants valued the existing human potential but warned that without structural changes, the system would continue to produce limited results. The findings by category highlighted the need for participatory planning, athlete-centered resource allocation, science-based training programs, and real coordination between levels of government to transform the current situation.

Table 1: Summary of findings by category of analysis

Category	Key evidence	Representative voices	Interpretation
Sports planning	Formal annual plans, without territorial diagnosis	"The plan is made to comply, not to improve" (IPD manager)	Bureaucratic planning, weak strategic orientation
Resource allocation	Late and centralized budgeting	"We compete with borrowed equipment" (Athlete)	Administrative priorities over athletes' needs
Athlete training	Lack of scientific and multidisciplinary support	"We train with experience, not science" (Coach)	Model based on individual efforts
IPD-GR coordination	Sporadic coordination	"Each institution goes its own way" (Leader)	Fragmented governance without stable mechanisms

Note: Information obtained from interviews, document analysis, and field observation.

Table 2: Triangulation of sources

Category	Interviews	Documents	Observation
Planning	Weak stakeholder involvement	POI without performance targets	Meetings focused on paperwork
Resources	Irregular support	Execution focused on current expenditures	Lack of equipment
Training	Lack of specialists	Absence of technical programs	Empirical training
Coordination	Personalistic coordination	Non-operational agreements	Duplication of functions

Note. The table summarizes the methodological triangulation process carried out in the study, integrating information from semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and non-participant observation. The convergence between the three sources made it possible to contrast the actors' discourses with institutional evidence and real practices, strengthening the credibility and interpretation of the qualitative findings.



Figure 1: Dynamics of public management of athletics in Junín

Note: The figure represents the sequential relationship between the emerging categories of the study, constructed from the analysis of interviews, documents, and observation. The diagram shows how

weaknesses in planning affect resource allocation, athlete training, and institutional coordination, jointly shaping the sporting results of high-level athletics in the Junín region.

Discussion

The study's findings showed that sports planning in Junín was developed in a predominantly formal and administrative manner. These results coincide with Bayle (2017), who argues that many sports organizations develop plans without real implementation mechanisms, which reduces their strategic impact. Similarly, Chelladurai (2014) argues that sports management requires integrating the technical dimension with the political dimension, a situation that was not clearly evident in the regional context analyzed. However, a contradiction was identified with the proposal by De Bosscher et al. (2020), who point out that successful systems manage to align national and territorial goals, while in Junín this alignment was weak and dependent on personal initiatives.

In relation to the allocation of resources, the testimonies revealed a delayed and centralized distribution that affected competitive preparation. These results correspond with Silva et al. (2022), who warn that the financial management of high performance tends to prioritize administrative expenses over direct support for athletes. Likewise, Houlihan and Green (2011) argue that investment without technical criteria produces limited effects, a statement that dialogues with the experiences of the participants. However, unlike the contexts described by these authors, in Junín there was a greater dependence on informal support, an aspect that is rarely addressed in the international literature.

With regard to athlete training, the study revealed a lack of scientific and multidisciplinary programs. This finding coincides with Rodríguez and Pérez (2021), who assert that the professionalization of coaches is a central condition for sustaining high-performance trajectories. Similarly, Henry and Ko (2014) highlight that the quality of governance is reflected in the comprehensive support provided to athletes, an element that the interviewees considered insufficient. The main tension with the theoretical framework lies in the fact that the models reviewed assume consolidated institutional structures, while in Junín individual initiatives predominated.

The articulation between the IPD and the regional government emerged as the most critical factor in the system. On this point, the results fully coincide with De Bosscher et al. (2020) in pointing out that the lack of intergovernmental coordination weakens athletic performance. They also align with Flick (2018), who emphasizes that policies only make sense when they are appropriated by local actors. The research allowed us to expand on these ideas by showing that the lack of coordination is not only administrative but also symbolic, as the actors do not share a common vision of high-performance athletics.

Overall, the discussion confirms that the public management of athletics in Junín is based more on goodwill than on an institutional system. This result is in line with Creswell and Poth (2018) on the need to interpret policies from lived experiences and not only from regulations. The study provides evidence that the solutions proposed in the literature require profound territorial adaptations, as imported models do not automatically respond to Andean contexts. Thus, the research contributes to understanding sports management as a complex social phenomenon, shaped by power relations, limited resources, and the expectations of the athletes themselves.

Conclusions

The study revealed that the public management of high-performance athletics in the Junín region is an institutional process in transition, conditioned by weak coordination between levels of government and limited strategic planning. This interpretation is related to the findings of De Bosscher et al. (2020), who argue that athletic performance depends on integrated and coherent public policy systems. Similarly, Bayle

(2017) points out that sports organizations require effective governance to transform plans into sustainable actions, a condition that has not yet been fully consolidated in the context analyzed. It is concluded that the strengthening of athletics does not depend solely on increased resources, but also on the quality of management and the ability of actors to build stable processes. In agreement with Chelladurai (2014), sports administration must integrate technical and human dimensions to generate real impact on athletes. The study showed that, given the fragility of formal mechanisms, coaches and leaders develop informal strategies that sustain the system, a situation that confirms the findings of Henry and Ko (2014) on the central role of actors in sports governance. Similarly, it is interpreted that the lack of coordination between the IPD and the regional government is the main obstacle to the development of high performance. This conclusion coincides with Houlihan and Green (2011), who warn that sports policies fail when there is no intergovernmental coordination and institutional continuity. The purpose of the study is to show that the public management of athletics is a relational phenomenon that requires agreements, shared responsibilities, and a territorial vision, beyond the current regulations. Finally, the research provides evidence that international models must be adapted to local particularities in order to be effective. In line with Silva et al. (2022), indicator-based management systems are only valuable when they are articulated with the realities of athletes and coaches. The study concludes that the development of athletics in Junín requires participatory management, technical professionalization, and contextualized policies that allow individual effort to be transformed into a sustainable regional sports project.

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