Applied Project Submission Form

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Harvard Referencing shall apply.

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Development of a new sport in Ireland, Volleyball

Research by

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May 2025

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Abstract

This research explores the development of volleyball in Ireland, as the sport is still in its early stages of growing compared to the national sporting landscape. Drawing on 16th years of international experience and guided by academic theory and community engagement, the aims of the study are to identify effective strategies for increasing the exposure, participation, visibility, and sustainability of the sport. Some of the key themes of the research are multiculturalism, grassroots infrastructure, youth engagement, digital marketing and social media. A mix methods research was used with stakeholders like, supporters, players, coaches, referees who helped through qualitative and quantitative insights.

The findings indicate that while there is a strong social and well being mental health value in volleyball, the accessibility and affordability of facilities is one of the biggest challenges for it to reach and encourage people to get involved. The research concludes that integrating multiculturalism practices, improving facility access, and leveraging digital content are crucial areas to promote volleyball in Ireland.

The project offers practical recommendations for Volleyball Ireland and principal stakeholders to build stronger and more sustainable presence in their local states to impact the national levels to make the sport grow.

Tables Acronyms

FIVB International Federation of Volleyball

CEO Chief Executive Operations

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Chapter I

1.1 Introduction

Volleyball is a global sport recognized by millions of people all over the world where participants cross borders to play, watch and be part of it. However, its presence in Ireland is still underdeveloped. Volleyball in Ireland has not yet achieved the development and structural support, public and youth engagement seen in other European countries. This project pretends to address this lack by exploring new strategies for promoting and growing the sport in Ireland.

This initiative is inspired by the researcher's professional experience of personal involvement in volleyball, reaching over 18 years between Mexico and Ireland. Given that offers valuable cultural insight and firsthand understanding of the volleyball industry and its potential impact, not only on a physical and well-being but also how this influences social cohesion and youth development. Being the main questions of this research:

What is the best way to grow and develop volleyball in Ireland?

1.2 Rationale for the Study

The purpose of this research is to build a bridge for the gap between volleyball's low exposure and its significant benefits and potential in Ireland through evidence collected from stakeholders collaboration and the recommendations to nail the aim. Some of the key observations are:

a) Undervaluation of volleyball in Ireland: lack of facilities, funding and media attention afforded to the traditional Irish sports such as Gaelic football, rugby and hurling.

b) Lack of engagement with young generations: through its team orientation and health benefits, volleyball shows itself as a huge platform for encouraging physical activity among young people.

c) Untapped potential for commercial growth: by implementing the right strategies, volleyball coil reaches a niche in the Irish society to become a good industry, specially through sponsorships leveraging digital channels, to help club development.

1.3 Research Aims and Objectives

The main aim of this research is: *To identify and implement the most adequate strategies to promote and develop volleyball in Ireland,* through relevant topics to achieve the main objective.

Thus, the research question is:

What would be the best way of developing volleyball in ireland?

In order to answer that, the research used the following themes by aims and sub-questions:

Theme 1. Multiculturalism in sports.

Aim: To find how multiculturalism contributes to volleyball's growth in Ireland

Sub-question: How has multiculturalism influenced sports development in Ireland?

Theme 2. Sports in Ireland as an Industry and Business.

Aim: To analyse the scenery of Irish sports and identify how volleyball is structured as a business commercial industry.

Sub-question: What are the main challenges facing volleyball clubs and players today?

Theme 3. The development of Volleyball.

Aim: To identify successful strategies from European countries with strong volleyball culture and assess their adaptability to Ireland.

Sub-question: What can Ireland learn from the volleyball development models used in Europe?

Theme 4. Digital Marketing in Sports in Europe.

Aim: To examine the digital marketing role in sports and determine the most effective strategy for growing volleyball in Ireland.

Sub-question: How can digital marketing strategies increase volleyball's visibility and engagement?

Theme 5. Social benefits of introducing young generations into sports.

Aim: To explore the physiological, physical and social benefits of sports participation and the role of belonging of a volleyball team.

Sub-question: What social benefits does volleyball provide for young participants?

1.4 Information Gathering and Data Collection

This research used mixed-methods techniques by quantitative and qualitative research. The quantitative research collects data from stakeholders including players, coaches, supporters and volunteers, via google forms that include structure questions like scales, multiple choice, ranking, and demographic questions. While the qualitative technique conducted via face to face where the participants were significant stakeholders involved in the development of volleyball in Ireland, players and coaches and the questions involved are about challenges, growth strategies and personal experience in the volleyball.

1.5 Expected Outcomes

This research has the objective to produce actionable insights to help volleyball and clubs in

Ireland to grow nationally. Some of the key expected outcomes are:

1. Strategies for multicultural integration.
2. Development model tailored for volleyball in Ireland based on European case studies.
3. Identification of growth barriers.
4. Recommendations for digital channels strategies.
5. Evidence of social and psychological benefits.

1.6 Chapters Overview

This section highlights chapter by chapter overview of the project. Chapter I shows the introduction of the research, as mentioned in the above information. It also gives what the research is about, the purpose and motivation of it, the aims and themes focus. Chapter II, introduces the literature review on the key themes that provides theoretical support and benchmarking context to this research. Following Chapter III, that is the methodology, which describes the mixed methods and research design and also details about the data collection, sampling strategy and ethical considerations. Next, Chapter IV, results and its analysis where explain the findings of both techniques, integrate results with the literature review, highlight the gaps, and use visual graphics to support the interpretation. Finally, Chapter V, conclusions and recommendations which summarize key conclusions, propose actionable recommendations based on the findings.

Chapter II

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews key academic literature and articles linked to the development of volleyball in Ireland. The literature review is organized around five key themes which were born from the research objectives: multiculturalism in sports, the industry of sport in Ireland, development of volleyball in Europe, the role of digital marketing in sport promotion, and the social benefits for youth engagement in sports. Each of the themes is supported by academic resources and industry publications to support a theoretical foundation for the research.

2.2 *Theme 1. Multiculturalism in sports.*

Multiculturalism in sports has helped to increase the level of competence in each sport no matter what category and what country is the one who is welcoming new players from another part of the world. This characteristic also includes the acceptance, adaptability, and inclusion of diverse types of cultures which affect the dynamic of the team, leadership, representation, competition and club development.

According to Frontiers.org (2022) sports are able to create a community between people of different countries who are united by one passion in common no matter where they are from or their different background. Thanks to this, multiculturalism has helped to develop and improve in different aspects such as; better understanding between each other, exposing diverse type of cultures and how they can develop a mutual respect, tolerance, inclusion, giving the power to increase and create different ways of leadership and supporting where the language and

cultural breach make no difference (Bulatova N, 2018).

Carron (2022), says that independent of the benefits created by supporting multiculturalism in sports the challenges of this is the way you introduce it, either as a synergy and holistic like *we together are one and only* or as an emphasising their specific differentiator between one culture to another, any of them has its own benefits to introduce the diversity of cultures in sports welcoming all people involved in the club no matter which position they are performing on it; players, coaches, staff, volunteers, any single member of the club, contributes on this.

Multiculturalism also has been helping on the growth of the economy of each country because it brings with it global audiences, which means revenue income increased and some examples of it are all the most famous teams in the world which had adopted the diversity of cultures to add value to get more sponsorships in the whole sport industry around the globe (Teodonno, 2021).

Janssens, J. (2014) based on his article *The significance of sports clubs within multicultural society. On the accumulation of social capital by migrants in culturally "mixed" and "separate" sports clubs,* affirm that foreign (immigrants, migrants) members of clubs are capable to allocate more capital, new network, different types of skills and improve new ways of developing existing roles or opening new ones.

After saying the benefits and challenges of having multiculturalism in Sports, it proves the importance of it in this research given that, to identify the benefits of it in clubs, as I have been experienced how multiculturalism is able to develop and support a whole sport in a country that it is welcoming them and together are building a new chapter in the Volleyball history in Ireland given that so far "74% of adult volleyball players in Ireland are foreign nationals,

representing 64 different nationalities." (FIVB, 2024).

2.3 ***Theme 2. Sports in Ireland as an Industry and Business.***

According to Anon (2021) from the Federation of Irish Sport, the sport industry has been growing in the last 10 years which means that it has converted into one of the most important areas of the Irish economy, society and also bringing new technologies and some innovation with the industry which benefits the country and if we convert this into a numbers based on O'Mahony (2021), the industry has reach in Revenue, Economic impact and Challenges of developing a new sport in Ireland:

- Savings for the government based on health per capita because of prevention of disease by practising a sport is nearly 0.4bn of Euros a year.
- People who volunteer in sports events are reducing the spending of wages by 1.5bn euros a year Sport For Business (2021).
- People involved in the industry tent to expend in clothes, sport equipment, activities related to fitness, races, matches, etc., around 3.3bn of euro a year.
- There are at least 64,000 jobs in the industry (O'Mahony, 2021).
- The Tax Revenue is 194 Euro returning back from every 100 euro spent from the government (Anon, 2021).
- Delaney (2005) also ensures that the inversion of sport creates more sense of community, promotes mental health, generates social engagement and decreases the feeling of loneliness in individuals.

Therefore the numbers and facts above of Sports in Ireland as an Industry and Business the

most common challenges are the lack of infrastructure to host elite events or professionalise the emerging ones such as Basquetball, Volleyball, Table Tennis. Also, just a couple of years ago Ireland implemented a double the funding that they were giving to sports and the goal now is to double the 111 million of euros by 2027 according to the National Sports Policy (2019).

However, Delaney (2005) established that one of the most significant challenges for emerging sports and even for the elite ones is that they depend a lot on volunteers which means that will be hard to face when the association of the sport or the club is not engaging efficiently with its stakeholders.

Given that sports industry is one of the principal sectors of grow in Ireland which has the opportunity to include the technological sector to fulfil the lack of infrastructure in the country to provide saver places to develop new sports by giving accessible access and facilities to clubs and also by supporting in equal economic way as the way the industry is growing.

2.4 ***Theme 3. The development of Volleyball.***

The European Volleyball Confederation (CEV, 2024) was found in 1963 which helps to centralise the volleyball in Europe where the first countries of joining were Soviet, Unio, Czechoslovakia and Poland who were the pioneers on developing a professional volleyball leagues in Europe followed from Italy, France, Turkey and Spain, the CEV is the responsible of organising tournaments, leagues and championships in Europe.

These countries had been improving their leagues InsideCEV, (2021) based on contracts with introducing multiculturalism in their teams by promoting the introduction of sponsorships, merchandising and broadcasting such as EuroVolleyTV, while CEV suggested taking advantage of the social media channel to reach young generations. In the Professional Volleyball league in

Italy they started to have the strategy of Joint Venture between the FIVB and the CVC Capital Partners helping to improve the visibility in social media. (Ward. S, 2021).

The fact that professionalisation in the Volleyball Irish league seems to be far away does not mean that it is not on the way given that it already has a solid community and the clubs could improve their engage and promotion by following the example of Italy and Poland who had been doing a great job on it and an example of that is their commercial strategies like:

- Fan engagement
- Sponsorship
- Digital marketing
- Media Rights Optimization

This according to Ward (2021) and CEV (2024) who agreed that the key success factor of developing and introducing a new league or sport is by using the digital tools to create fan experience in every event and match which has been the priority to generate sponsors visibility for the stakeholders creating also a loyalty to the community and the club or league FIVB (2021). However sponsorships are playing a crucial role here because as having a partnership in this case the Polish volleyball league with PKN Orlen became the beginning of a long-term relationship between each other to make the volleyball industry growing.

Therefore here are some of the most successful marketing strategies to develop the volleyball in Europe used by Poland and Italy which are:

- Engagement through social media channels: highlights of the results and update of clubs table, lifestyle of the athletes and coaches, and behind the training and games which make a feeling of pertinence with their audience.

- Use of live videos on social media channels.
- Personalise dynamics such as quizzes, polls or videos one to one between players and fans or stakeholders.
- Implementing new technologies such as phantom cameras during matches.

Now we can see the approach of some of the top leagues in Europe to develop Volleyball in their own countries through a good strategic management and social media with the help of innovation and technology could increase the visibility of the sport.

2.5 ***Theme 4. Digital Marketing in Sports in Europe.***

As far as we see nowadays the digital world is part of our day by day, then digital marketing is implicit in it. As we mentioned above, sports are using technologies and that is where most of the magic is applied, and where the engagement with stakeholders is solved as one of the most common challenges to increase the development of new sports could be stuck.

“One of key factors of the impressive growth rate is communication and media’s ubiquitous presence and impact on the sport market” Byon. Key, 2021. The key of this is creating a synergy between all the digital channels that are involved such as social media platforms, apps, websites, and collaborations to create a personalised message between the club and fan to increase their engagement and loyalty.

Some of the following success campaigns show how a good implementation of storytelling, cross-over between platforms and community-driven process could increase the fan loyalty and club visibility.

The football club Liverpool FC’s had the campaign “This Means More” where they target the working-class audience and their approach was based on storytelling where they share values

and culture which are part of their identity, creating an emotional connection. (Neven, 2018). By making the fans create videos of the team participating in categories such as “most family-friendly”, “most innovative” where some of the most impactful challenges according to Liverpool (2021).

Another 2 success cases of storytelling engage and personalise approach with the stakeholder are the 2 campaigns from the UEFA Euro 2016 and 2022. During 2016 their campaign of #WePlayStrong had the objective to get more players joining football all around Europe. How do they make it? Well, through emotional storytelling which showed the values, stories, challenges from both sides of the story; players, coaches and supporters. (We Play Strong, 2024).

While their campaign during 2022 was also based on storytelling they focused on gender equity and the adoption of multiculturalism where the main characters were the players adventure coming from different countries to make their dreams true connecting a generating engagement with more and more stakeholders.

Despite the fact of challenger of funding to develop a new sport are huge, digital marketing contrast with that by giving easy access to create visibility by content-driving on through one of the best strategies storytelling showing the power of it when is applicated in the right way to the audience who tend to get involved when they share values and identity.

2.6 *Theme 5. Social benefits of introducing young generations into sports.*

Young generations in Ireland are having emotional and physical problems, such as anxiety, metal stress, drinking; smoking problems and suicide attempts (Rcsi, 2024). According to Nolan, A. and Smith, E. (2020) in their research of *Clusters of Health of Behaviours Among Young Adults In Ireland* discover that at least 21% of young generation in Ireland are involved in drugs and

smoke while 36% are related with no physical activity considering that the schools are one of the principal factors of influence in this population of having a good or misconduct behaviour.

European Union (2024) says that the importance of supporting current and new sports in the EU is crucial for the growth of social inclusion and it is even more important for those who are in a vulnerable situation given that practising or joining a club or team could decrease the effect of anxiety and loneliness.

McNichols (2024), suggests that sports give people the chance to create better opportunities in life by taking them away from dangerous environments such as gangs, drugs, alcohol. The benefits of developing and introducing more sports into schools give the opportunity to increase the sense of community building a strong and safe place for the individuals that are involved in it (Murphy. P, 2024).

Given that the Minister of State for Sport, Brendan Griffin and Mary O'Connor CEO of the Federation of Irish Sport (2019) said that they recognize the impact of develop and promote sports in Ireland because of the benefits of it are great for the society such as, health, good behaviour, individual inclusion and affirm again their commitment of increase the budget and funding for the god of society, economy and health. And that is why this is important for this research "Sports are a reflection of the society" (Sports for Development and Peace., 2003, p3).

2.7 Summary

The literature review clearly supports the strategic potential of volleyball in Ireland across different appendices such as: cultural diversity integration, community development, digital engagement, and youth engagement empowerment. While volleyball is still growing or

emerging in Ireland, the existing academic research provides a capable foundation to create sustainable growth strategies for the sport.

Chapter III

3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the research technique applied for this project on the development of volleyball in Ireland. It discusses the philosophy of the research, design, sampling strategy, data collection and the process of the data analysis. The methodology has been tailored to integrate qualitative and quantitative techniques, to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the current landscape of volleyball in Ireland and its potential to grow.

3.2 Research Philosophy

This research applied a pragmatic paradigm that allows the approach of mix methods to answer practical and real world questions. Given that, pragmatism supports positivist ex. quantitative; research and interpretivist; ex. qualitative research, which allows to analyse in a precise way depending on the context insights (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

3.3 Justification of the adoption of the method

The use of mixed methods technique, aligns with the research questions which is the one that determines the method (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). This approach brings flexibility and ensures a comprehensive landscape of how volleyball can be developed in Ireland by analyzing quantitative and qualitative questions from stakeholders perspective.

A deductive and inductive logic through surveys based on the themes from the literature review, while interviews permit emerging insights over theoretical suppositions and integration of results according to (Bryman, 2016).

3.4 Outline of sampling technique and sample size

3.4.1 Quantitative Sample

The survey was shared through WhatsApp groups with focus stakeholders of volleyball in Ireland which resulted in a quickie and efficient way of responses from volleyball members such as players, administrative people from clubs, referees, supporters and coaches.

3.4.2 Qualitative Sample

For the interviews, a selected group of people based on experience, such as captains, players, coaches, members of the national team and the most important clubs in Ireland. They were chosen because of their first hand experience and the offer of insights into the structure of the sport and its potential growth.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

3.5.1 Surveys

Surveys included closed and scaled questions, conducted online using google forms.

3.5.2 Interviews

Semi-structured questions were used with the aim to allow flexibility and provoque open discussion. Some of the key topics: the current state of volleyball in Ireland, digital marketing and its impact on stakeholders, cultural diversity and infrastructure, cost and investment. All the

interviews were conducted in person and were recorded with a formal consent for transcription and analysis.

Stakeholder Table			
CODE	**POSITION**	**SETTING**	**EXPERIENCE**
PV01	Captain and player of one of the biggest volleyball clubs in Ireland.	Artane Beaumont	More than 20 years of experience in volleyball and more than 8 in volleyball in Ireland.
LB02	Player and chair assistant of one of the biggest clubs in Ireland, and coach assistant of a national Irish team.	Tallaght University	More than 25 years as an international player and more than 8 years of experience in volleyball in Ireland.
JR03	Referee, coach and ex player of one of the biggest clubs in Ireland and youth developer programme players.	Tallaght University	With more than 20 years of international experience in volleyball. And more than 9 years of experience in volleyball in Ireland.

3.6 Analysis method applied

Thematic Table *PV01*	
PV01 Themes	**Keywords in Interview**
Theme 1. Multiculturalism in sports.	• A lot of foreigners, multi-culturally speaking those people from other cultures bring the experiences from their countries or from their own culture to ireland that means that ireland also adapts those needs outside and they um they can see how other other volleyball countries are being developed. • Still volleyball in ireland is still facing um lack of standards so people maybe sometimes leave volleyball because they don't meet their standards
Theme 2. Sports in Ireland as an Industry and Business.	• Foreigners and even Irish people are not willing to volunteer, and if so, they want to participate to get paid. • The fact that volleyball in Ireland is volunteered is reducing the chances to grow volleyball. • So financial resources as well is an obstacle. • Cost for players is very expensive.

Thematic Table *PV01*	
Theme 3. The development of Volleyball.	• There are no courts to play, clubs are in need of courts, they need to rent halls of schools or they need to rent courts that have other sports, so they're really busy with other sports, basketball, humble, cricket, whatever, so they need to find space for volleyball. So that's one thing, and also costs. • But maybe they are a little bit more of a monetary reward would be more encouraging to play in clubs to participate more and to at the end to improve the level of volleyball. • It's definitely grown in Ireland, it's just in transition. At some point it will be visible in other countries as how it is in Italy, how it is in Poland, how it is just because those countries have had the sport for many many years compared to Ireland.
Theme 4. Digital Marketing in Sports in Europe.	• Marketing is a big asset and they need to hit big organizations to get big sponsors. • Little sponsors help, but they will never cover what is the need for volleyball, if volleyball in Ireland grows.

Thematic Table *PV01*	
	• Nowadays social media because people are spent most of the time on those platforms and that makes volleyball visible for everybody. • But maybe they are a little bit more of a monetary reward would be more encouraging to play in clubs to participate more and to at the end to improve the level of volleyball.
Theme 5. Social benefits of introducing young generations into sports.	• I think nowadays the well-being or the mental health is a very empowered point in life. I think it's a trend topic in these days. • So volleyball I think is a key point to have in our lives, especially for young players and not only for mental health but also involves the dietary lifestyle. • I think you develop other parts of your mental health, such as socializing or interacting with other people or how to achieve one goal within teamwork rather than playing as one. • But maybe they are a little bit more of a monetary reward would be more encouraging to play in clubs to

Thematic Table *PV01*	
	participate more and to at the end to improve the level of volleyball.

Thematic Table *LB02*	
LB02 Themes	**Keywords in Interview**
Theme 1. Multiculturalism in sports.	• Taken over by a lot of foreigners like us coming where in our country like in Italy or Mexico or Spain or it's a very popular sport. • we are working with different cultures and it's a small society within the court. So it helps to build people and to get them ready for what is the society outside. • So for me, we are foreigners but on court and within volleyball we feel one family. So it's actually what is the society outside because Ireland is now so multicultural.
Theme 2. Sports in Ireland as an Industry and Business.	• And one of the biggest obstacles at the moment I believe is the lack of halls available and as well old costs involved in this sport.

Thematic Table *LB02*	
	• There is nothing that the government is helping to develop, at least for small events. • In the bigger picture Volleyball Ireland itself has been now getting some funds from the Volleyball International Association, Federation actually, and we have had lots of help. • So all the costs that we are paying currently are really high for the sport but I think it's an Irish thing. • For each kid, 350 for football, it's loads of money. Per year. Lots of money. Yeah. It's like a thousand something per kid to do sport. • On your own shoulder. So this is the support from the bigger government is not there. • If someone, if a big company is sponsoring someone and that's the best channel to put it out there. So marketing, I guess, it's selling products online, you know, selling and it's building more interest. • something that can happen in the next maybe 10 years. I don't see at the moment that, honestly, that any one of us would get paid to.

Thematic Table *LB02*	
Theme 3. The development of Volleyball.	• Back in Italy for example if you're playing volleyball you don't pay for the hall at all. It's given by the school so by probably the city hall of the city that you play on and that helps a lot. • Plus the patrol, you know, going to the venue. Even this, like, you know, you have to always provide. • I think about Italy, I feel like, you know, that you get this sponsorship for, of course, here as well as for universities, which are very expensive. • And here it would be really nice if they could start at least a new person, for example. She is going to get free membership for Volleyball Ireland.
Theme 4. Digital Marketing in Sports in Europe.	• I've seen that social media has a huge impact. • I can scroll, and I can gather some ideas for my drills. I have lots of support as well online, because there are groups of coaches. • The quality lately of the Reels, for example, it's just amazing. It's very entertaining. He shows the sport is very vibrant.

Thematic Table *LB02*	
	• There is always something that will wow you. • But when you're looking up to someone and say, I would like to do that. • Yeah, to inspire you. To inspire, to do better, to want to be someone.
Theme 5. Social benefits of introducing young generations into sports.	• I think sports in the young people should be a must because again it helps to work in a society with people from different cultures, trying to solve problems together, don't be afraid, you know, for confrontation, is building resilience when you lose a game and try to go back and win it again, you know, the next time. • It shows commitment and discipline to have respect for someone that dedicates. • So, sports for the young kids should be any type of sport will help development. I think for a better future of the young generation as well. Yeah, I think it's extremely important.

Thematic Table *JR03*	
JR03 Themes	**Keywords in Interview**
Theme 1. Multiculturalism in sports.	• I think the development in volleyball Ireland is thanks to the multiculturalism that it has, because we have a huge community of Brazilian people, which are well known for having a huge, or a very good level of volleyball worldwide. • I think that's really the people coming from other countries that are helping volleyball Ireland to develop, to develop the level of their players, the national squads, and bringing the level up.
Theme 2. Sports in Ireland as an Industry and Business.	• I think the facilities when it comes to fine facilities either for training or matches is very very hard. Many of them charge like very expensive fees even for like an hour or two. • I think facilities is the most common obstacle. • Students that are obviously not working and they are facing financial problems to pay the fees that are needed.

Thematic Table *JR03*	
	• And starting from the club fees that are like, this is nobody's doing any profit of it
Theme 3. The development of Volleyball.	• I have once had multiple titles as a coach with the teams I am working with no nothing has been given to us beside the medal and obviously you know the recognition that you have at the end. • For example there are multiple players that they just kind of go to competitions because they have like remuneration economically and that would be a really really good thing to bring to the volleyball Ireland maybe I don't know that when you can go to play somewhere else or a phone for their team or uniforms or something.
Theme 4. Digital Marketing in Sports in Europe.	• The strategy on social media, it's like, I think it's the most relevant part, because like behind us are the times where people used to kind of communicate these things in. Now, everything is in social media. • I think it's very, very important and that really makes the difference.

Thematic Table *JR03*	
Theme 5. Social benefits of introducing young generations into sports.	• I have been working with young players and then these people struggle in many ways, social wise, so they have problems from the background, they are coming from areas where they are just in a very fine line between going a bad way or playing volleyball so this really, really, I could say is very important and it has a great impact in the youth.

Thematic Coding Analysis	
Themes & Coding	**Keywords in Interview table combined**
Theme 1. Multiculturalism in sports.	• **PV01** A lot of foreigners, multi-culturally speaking those people from other cultures bring the experiences from their countries or from their own culture to ireland that means that ireland also adapts those needs outside and they um they can see how other other volleyball countries are being developed.

Thematic Coding Analysis	
	• **LB02** Taken over by a lot of foreigners like us coming where in our country like in Italy or Mexico or Spain or it's a very popular sport. • **JR03** I think the development in volleyball Ireland is thanks to the multiculturalism that it has,
Theme 2. Sports in Ireland as an Industry and Business.	• **PV01** The fact that volleyball in Ireland is volunteered is reducing the chances to grow volleyball. • **PV01** So financial resources as well is an obstacle. • **PV01** Cost for players is very expensive. • **LB02** And one of the biggest obstacles at the moment I believe is the lack of halls available and as well old costs involved in this sport. • **LB02** There is nothing that the government is helping to develop, at least for small events. • **JR03** I think the facilities when it comes to fine facilities either for training or matches is very very hard. Many of them charge like very expensive fees even for like an hour or two. • **JR03** I think facilities is the most common obstacle.

Thematic Coding Analysis	
Theme 3. The development of Volleyball.	• **PV01** It's definitely grown in Ireland, it's just in transition. At some point it will be visible in other countries as how it is in Italy, how it is in Poland, how it is just because those countries have had the sport for many many years compared to Ireland. • **LB02** Back in Italy for example if you're playing volleyball you don't pay for the hall at all. It's given by the school so by probably the city hall of the city that you play on and that helps a lot. • **JR03** For example there are multiple players that they just kind of go to competitions because they have like remuneration economically and that would be a really really good thing to bring to the volleyball Ireland maybe I don't know that when you can go to play somewhere else or a phone for their team or uniforms or something.
Theme 4. Digital Marketing in Sports in Europe.	• **PV01** Nowadays social media because people are spent most of the time on those platforms and that makes volleyball visible for everybody.

Thematic Coding Analysis	
	• **PV01** Marketing is a big asset and they need to hit big organizations to get big sponsors. • **LB02** I've seen that social media has a huge impact. • **LB02** Yeah, to inspire you. To inspire, to do better, to want to be someone. • **JR03** The strategy on social media, it's like, I think it's the most relevant part, because like behind us are the times where people used to kind of communicate these things in. Now, everything is in social media.
Theme 5. Social benefits of introducing young generations into sports.	• **PV01** I think you develop other parts of your mental health, such as socializing or interacting with other people or how to achieve one goal within teamwork rather than playing as one. • **PV01** I think nowadays the well-being or the mental health is a very empowering point in life. I think it's a trend topic these days. • **LB02** I think sports in the young people should be a must because again it helps to work in a society with people from different cultures, trying to solve problems

Thematic Coding Analysis	
	together, don't be afraid, you know, for confrontation, is building resilience when you lose a game and try to go back and win it again, you know, the next time. • **JR03** I have been working with young players and then these people struggle in many ways, social wise, so they have problems from the background, they are coming from areas where they are just in a very fine line between going a bad way or playing volleyball so this really, really, I could say is very important and it has a great impact in the youth.

3.7 Ethical section

Ethics by conducting this project are taken seriously, that is why for this research all participants were informed about the confidentiality of the questionnaires and the interviews. Provided informed consent before their participation, this research complied ethical standards by ensuring complete anonymity and confidentiality, voluntary participation, the right to withdraw at any time without any punishment or penalization and the correct and professional use of the data storage and handling. An ethical form was uploaded already as a part of the research process.

3.8 Limitations of the Methodology

The sample size of the survey covers 47 people which may limit the generalizability, the integration of non-stakeholders could enriche the research and they were not involved in this sample. Despite these limitations, the use of both techniques provided a strong and balanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities in the development of volleyball in Ireland.

Chapter IV

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the results between qualitative and quantitative research, , in order to compare the findings from the data collected from surveys, interviews and literature review. The main objective of the data collection was to find the gaps in the landscape of volleyball in Ireland to understand its situation and what are the best strategies to develop the sport based on the stakeholders experience.

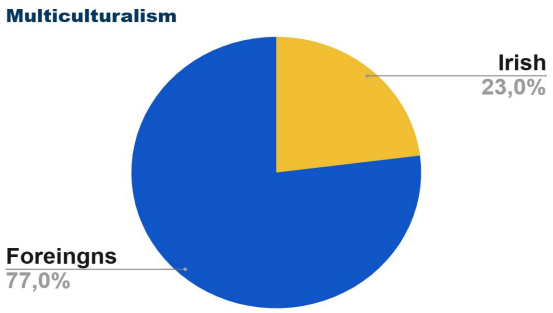
Data collection was carried out between the 3th of April and 15th of April of 2025, with an interaction of 47 responses through google forms questionnaire and 3 participants for interviews, all of them first hand stakeholders of volleyball in Ireland. As mentioned before in Chapter III, this research approach combines methods with the objective to bring flexibility which permit emerging insights over theoretical suppositions and integration of results according to (Bryman, 2016).

As mentioned before, this chapter will analyse the findings from the primary research in comparison with the secondary research to create a triangulation process (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). In order to organise the triangulation through the analysis, this chapter presents the relations between the questions related to each key theme and some quotes from the participants, who were coded as a: PV01, LB02 and JR03. To find a full transcript of an interview consult the appendix part where you also will be able to find the Informed Consent Form that was sent to interviewees.

4.2 Analysis and Triangulation[1]

4.2.1 *Theme 1. Multiculturalism in sports.*

1. *Primary Research*



Graphic a[2]

"Thanks to foreign people Volleyball has been growing over the last years and we are the ones who are building and bringing the engagement and level up because of our experiences back in our countries" ***PV01.***

"People from different cultures, trying to solve problems together, don't be afraid, you know, for confrontation, is building resilience"***LB02.***

The survey *(graphic a)* also shows that more that 77% of expats involved in volleyball in Ireland are bringing their experience over here into the sport.

2. *Secondary Research*

[1] Consider that the explanation of the finding is presented in the following order: 1. Primary Research, 2. Secondary Research to finalise 3. Results Compared per each theme.
[2] See List of figures & Appendix from p.90

According to Frontiers.org (2022) sports are able to create a community between people of different countries who are united by one passion in common no matter where they are from or their different background. Janssens, J. (2014) affirm that foreign (immigrants, migrants) members of clubs are capable of allocating more capital, new network, different types of skills and improve new ways of developing existing roles or opening new ones.

3. *Results Comparison*

As Frontiers.or 2022 sais, ***PV01***, ***LB02*** and surveys, showed that multiculturalism at least in Volleyball in Ireland is building a huge community who is the one that is leveling up the level through their own experiences back in their countries implementing new skills into the sport as Janssens, J (2014) support. Multiculturalism is helping volleyball to develop new ways of integrating society and building a strong mixed community, and as discovered in the results are the ones who are pushing the sport to the next level, bringing their own experiences into Irish society.

4.2.2 *Theme 2. Sports in Ireland as an Industry and Business.*

1. *Primary Research*

The three subjects interviewed, agreed that the funds given to volleyball in Ireland is not enough to growth the sport:

"We don't get any payment even as a player, coach, referee or club, and getting sponsorships is very hard because of the lack of exposure" ***PV01.***

*"All that we are investing in time and equipment is on our own shoulders and as the sport is still growing, it is hard to get sponsors"****LB02.***

"We do not get any money or remuneration even if you win the national league, there is not anything else than medals and trophies" ***JR03.***

2. *Secondary Research*

According to Anon (2021) from the Federation of Irish Sport, the sport industry has been growing in the last 10 years which means that it has converted into one of the most important areas of the Irish economy. Delaney (2005) also ensures that the inversion of sport creates more sense of community, promotes mental health, generates social engagement and decreases the feeling of loneliness in individuals. While the National Sports Policy (2019) is funding Irish sports, the goal now is to double the 111 million euros by 2027

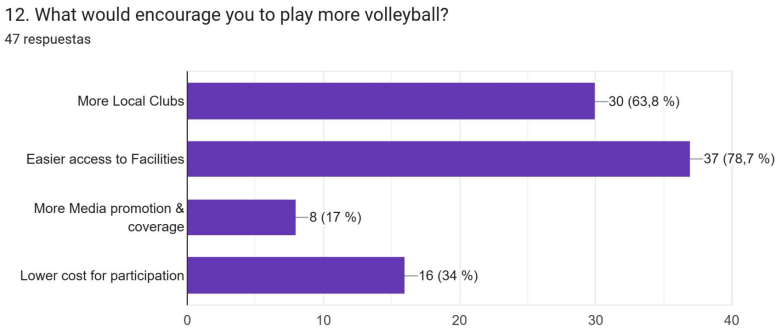
3. *Results Comparison*

By comparing the researchers even when the National Sports Policy assures the increase of investing in sports and Delaney shows that sports are good to build community, the participants all agree that there is no economic benefit that clubs, or stakeholders in general gets to promote the sport. However that money does not seem to appear somewhere according to the sample, given that the lack of financial support is one of the biggest challenges for volleyball to

grow, even when the reports from the Federation Irish Sport ensures that sports are one of the main industry por Ireland, the economic support seems not to be there, or at least not for volleyball. The previous quotes from participants ***PV01***, ***LB02*** and ***JR03,*** demonstrate this point.

4.2.3 *Theme 3. The development of Volleyball.*

1. *Primary Research*



Graphic b[3]

"Are so many people who stop joining Volleyball because of the high cost of the sport and also the lack of facilities and their expensive price". ***PV01.***

"The lack of facilities and the cost are one of the most often challenges that we are facing". ***LB02.***

While surveys also find that 78.7% of the participants agreed, that would be willing to participate more if there were more access to facilities.

2. *Secondary Research*

[3] See list of figures & Appendix from p.90

In the Professional Volleyball league in Italy they started to have the strategy of Joint Venture between the FIVB and the CVC Capital Partners helping to improve the visibility in social media. (Ward. S, 2021). Sherry et al. (2016) emphasize the need for accessible, affordable facilities to foster sport development.

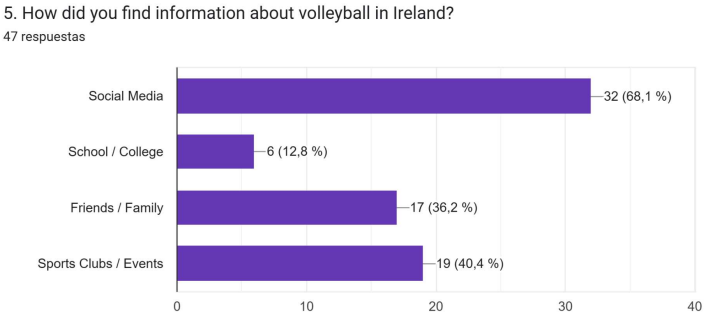
3. *Results Comparison*

Sherry (2016) emphasizes the importance of accessible and affordable facilities that is a remarkable issue in volleyball in Ireland nowadays supported by the participants ***PV01***, ***LB02*** and in the survey, then this is backed up between each other, in Secondary to Primary research. The fact that stakeholders have to deal with the basics to practice the sport such as a lack of facilities and the excess of cost for them is another key point of the slow and hard growth of the sport as shown in *graphic b.* Taking in consideration the survey research, demonstrate as well the interest of stakeholders for structure training programs[4] with a preference of an affordable or free access to develop pathways for coaches, clubs, players, referees at all levels.

4.2.4 *Theme 4. Digital Marketing in Sports in Europe.*

1. *Primary Research*

[4] See Appendix from p.90



Graphic c[5]

> *"I believe that Volleyball Irelad has improved a lot in their marketing and that is helping the sport to grow"* ***PV01.***

Also 68% of the people in the survey showed that they are getting informed about it through Social media.

2. *Secondary Research*

"One of key factors of the impressive growth rate is communication and media's ubiquitous presence and impact on the sport market" (Byon. Key, 2021). By making the fans create videos of the team participating in categories such as "most family-friendly", "most innovative", cases of storytelling engage and personalise approach where some of the most impactful challenges according to (Liverpool, 2021).

3. *Results Comparison*

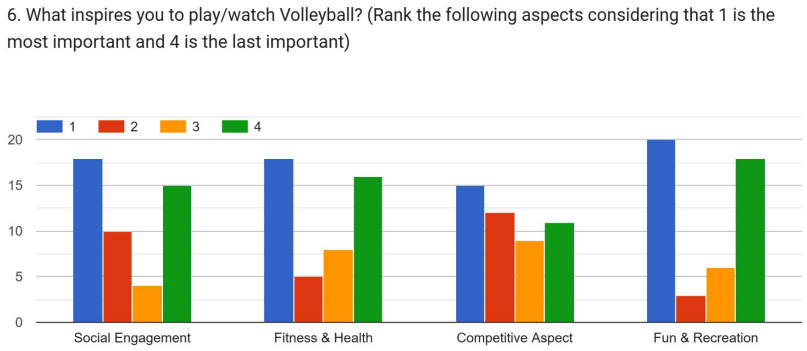
The Primary Research backs up Byon. Key 2021 & Liverpool 2021, which means that digital marketing is one of the key factors nowadays to engage and build the sport, through storytelling including all stakeholders. De fact that digital marketing as supported by ***PV01*** in volleyball is

[5] See list of figures & Appendix from p.90

crucial to engage with stakeholders and the efforts of volleyball Ireland on making this more professional are opening the door to welcome new participants in the sport, however, the weaknesses on digital marketing from local clubs still being a barrier for the sport to still grow or expand its horizons to a new and local targets.

4.2.5 *Theme 5. Social benefits of introducing young generations into sports.*

1. *Primary Research*



Graphic d[6]

"I have been working with young players…so they have problems from the background, they are coming from areas where they are just in a very fine line between going a bad way or playing volleyball so this, I could say is very important and it has a great impact on the youth" ***JR03.***

"I think nowadays well-being or mental health is a very empowering point in life. I think it's a trend topic these days". **PV01**

The Survey shows as well that at least 55.3% agreed that Volleyball has helped to build personal confidence and mental health.

[6] See list of figures & Appendix from p.90

2. *Secondary Research*

European Union (2024) says that the importance of supporting current and new sports in the EU is crucial for the growth of social inclusion and it is even more important for those who are in a vulnerable situation. Given that the Minister of State for Sport, Brendan Griffin and Mary O'Connor CEO of the Federation of Irish Sport (2019) said that they recognize the impact of develop and promote sports in Ireland because of the benefits of it are great for the society such as, health, good behaviour, individual inclusion and affirm again their commitment of increase the budget and funding for the god of society, economy and health.

3. *Results Comparison*

The primary research and Secondary research agreed and backed up each other by showing that sports help society and individuals to build a well-being, social environment, and mental health. It also demonstrates how playing a sport could impact the lives of young people by making a decision between becoming a member of a team or taking the wrong way to the drugs because of their environment as ***JR03*** mentioned in the quote above.

Chapter V

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study sets out to explore the best way of implementing strategies for developing and promoting volleyball in Ireland with the purpose of leveraging the richness of multiculturalism which is helping to get the sport popular. However, the lack of facilities is being a barrier for them to grow. Furthermore, the digital marketing that is being implemented by Volleyball Ireland is inspiring people to get involved in the sport and it is generating engagement with the stakeholders, nevertheless, marketing by clubs has to be developed to reach new and local audiences. Volleyball is opening the doors to foreign people and viceversa to get integrated into Irish society which translates into mental health and well-being. The study has developed some key conclusions:

a) Multiculturalism as a motivation for growth: With more than 75% of foreign people participating in the sport, volleyball offers a unique opportunity in the diversity of Irish society which builds community.
b) Lack of accessibility to facilities: Participants rated volleyball facilities as expensive and hard to get with a desire to have more local clubs.
c) Digital Presence is growing but underutilized: While Volleyball Ireland is nailing the engagement through social media, specially instagram, local clubs are underestimating the power of it and it has to be optimized to engage and attract more people and convert clicks into participants, even potential sponsorships.

d) Health and social benefits: As a key strong motivator to join the sport especially among young people given that volleyball creates a feeling of belonging to a tribu that supports mental health individuals.

5.1 Limitations

Although there is a lot of literature review of the impact of sports in society, as a business and in the physical and psychological way, there is very little about the benefits of volleyball itself, however the development of the research aims at the purpose thanks to the participation of the stakeholders and the comparison of sports literature review.

5.2 Recommendations

Leverage Multicultural Communities: Create a partnership with multicultural organizations such as international students groups to host multicultural events and create storytelling through digital campaigns.

Explore the Expansion and Facility Access to club Development: Build partnerships with schools, colleges, universities to encourage volleyball formation in local communities.

Push and Increase Digital Strategies: Prioritize content creation on social media platforms through storytelling by selecting club ambassadors to reach young generations.

Promote the Mental Health of Benefits of Volleyball: Increase the mental health content, teamwork and community-belonging through the ambassadors.

Set Partnership with Local Businesses: Explore partnerships with local businesses who share values and mission for exchange of exposure in social media through the established clubs.

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