



Factors influencing sports dropout rate among adolescent girls: a study on self-perception and sports identity

Factores que influyen en la tasa de abandono deportivo entre las adolescentes: un estudio sobre la autopercepción y la identidad deportiva

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Abstract

Introduction: Adolescence is a crucial period marked by changes at the physical, psychological, emotional and social levels. During this time, adolescent girls' sports dropout rates are particularly high, and they generally engage in sports less often and less regularly than boys do. **Objective:** to analyze self-perception and sports identity among a group of adolescent athletes. **Methodology:** A cross-sectional study was carried out and these variables were recorded using two standardized scales on a sample of 217 registered athletes.

Results: The results showed significant differences between girls and boys in their self-perception of competence, autonomy and sport identity, potentially related to gender-differentiated socialization regarding the traditional concepts of masculinity and femininity. They also showed that gender stereotypes should be abolished to equalize girl athletes' identity development, improve their sporting experience and reduce their dropout rate.

Discussion: These findings emphasize the impact of gendered socialization and stereotypes on girls' self-perception and sports identity. Addressing these issues through targeted interventions could foster more equitable sporting experiences and reduce dropout rates among adolescent female athletes.

Conclusions: The study found lower self-perception and sports identity in adolescent girls, linked to gender stereotypes and androcentric in sports, emphasizing interventions to reduce girls' athlete dropout rates.

Keywords

Adolescence; dropout; girls; sports; sports identity.

Resumen

Introducción: La adolescencia es un periodo crucial marcado por cambios a nivel físico, psicológico, emocional y social. Durante esta etapa, las tasas de abandono deportivo de las adolescentes son especialmente elevadas y, por lo general, practican deporte con menor frecuencia y regularidad que los chicos.

Objetivo: Analizar la autopercepción y la identidad deportiva en un grupo de adolescentes deportistas.

Metodología: Se realizó un estudio transversal y se registraron estas variables mediante dos escalas estandarizadas sobre una muestra de 217 deportistas inscritos.

Resultados: Los resultados mostraron diferencias significativas entre chicos y chicas en su autopercepción de competencia, autonomía e identidad deportiva, potencialmente relacionadas con la socialización diferenciada por género respecto a los conceptos tradicionales de masculinidad y feminidad. También mostraron que los estereotipos de género deberían eliminarse para igualar el desarrollo de la identidad de las niñas deportistas, mejorar su experiencia deportiva y reducir su tasa de abandono.

Discusión: Estos resultados ponen de manifiesto el impacto de la socialización y los estereotipos de género en la autopercepción y la identidad deportiva de las adolescentes. Abordar estas cuestiones mediante intervenciones específicas podría fomentar experiencias deportivas más equitativas y reducir las tasas de abandono entre las atletas adolescentes.

Conclusiones: Este estudio ha evidenciado una menor autopercepción e identidad deportiva en las adolescentes, vinculada a los estereotipos de género y el androcentrismo en el deporte, haciendo hincapié en las intervenciones para reducir las tasas de abandono deportivo de las niñas.

Palabras clave

Adolescencia; abandono; chicas; deporte; identidad deportiva.

Introduction

Adolescence is a stage of changes across all the personal levels as physical, psychological, emotional, and social (Papalia et al., 2019). Some authors, like Eddy-Ives (2014), consider that during this stage adolescents rely on four key milestones: the struggle for independence, concern for body image, peer group integration, and identity development. The psychological changes in adolescence influence self-perception and involve acquiring adult-like characteristics, such as independence and autonomy. Social development emerges through the need to adapt to a changing environment in which the support previously provided by the family is now increasingly sought from peer groups (Alsaker & Flammer, 2006). These physical and psychological changes have a strong impact on emotional development, shaped by the perception of body image, the ability to cope with stress and responses to social expectations (Papalia et al., 2019).

Regular participation in physical activity (PA) and sports during adolescence is directly associated with multiple health and holistic development benefits. An active lifestyle helps prevent chronic conditions such as obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases (Anderson & Durstine, 2019; Leary et al., 2008; Mayr et al., 2020). PA improves cardiorespiratory and metabolic functions (Cristi-Montero et al., 2019) as well as overall physical functioning (Penedo & Dahn, 2005). It also provides psychological benefits like reduced depression symptoms, enhanced self-esteem and stronger psychosocial skills (Spruit et al., 2016), along with cognitive benefits included improved academic performance and executive function (Biddle et al., 2019). Despite widespread awareness of these benefits, multiple studies have shown a significant trend towards unhealthy sedentary lifestyles beginning in adolescence (Bann et al., 2019; Consoni, 2025; Drummond et al., 2022; Logan et al., 2020), especially among females (Eime et al., 2016). The World Health Organization (2024) warns that 80% of adolescents worldwide exhibit insufficient levels of daily PA. PA is commonly classified into organised forms (e.g., sports or ballet) and non-organised forms (e.g., self-directed exercise or free play). However, research indicates that both types of activities decline during adolescence (Gallant et al., 2024). Additionally, studies have also shown that boys engage more frequently in organized physical activities than girls, who also show higher dropout rates during adolescence (Eime et al., 2022; Kopcakova et al., 2015).

A broad range of factors explains the higher sport dropout rates among adolescent girls. These factors include both external and internal influences (Moreno-Vitoria et al., 2024), such as lower social support (Cowley et al., 2021), reduced motor self-esteem and self-perception (Knowles et al., 2014), a poor sports identity (Bevan et al., 2021), the negative effect of gender stereotypes (Drummond et al., 2022; O'Reilly et al., 2023), body image concerns (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997), and the influence of menstruation (Pinel et al., 2022), among others. The present study focuses specifically on self-perception (SP) and sports identity (SI).

SP in sports relates to the perception of competence and autonomy in sporting activities. A negative SP indicates a lack of confidence in one's abilities and autonomy and represents a major barrier to active participation (Cowley et al., 2021; Dawes et al., 2014; Mitchell et al., 2015; Owen et al., 2019). While social relationships and peer acceptance significantly contribute to a positive SP (Morano et al., 2020a), autonomy leads to more favorable self-evaluation, indicating that perceived competence is a core component of SP (Beasley & Garn, 2013). Basic psychological needs (competence, autonomy, and relatedness) are innate, universal and essential for people's health and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Meeting these needs in sports activities fosters a positive or negative SP and has a strong influence on participation and adherence, as individuals need to feel capable of choosing their activities, being competent, and connecting with others during the process (Stover et al., 2017).

As defined by Brewer et al. (1993), SI is the intensity and exclusivity with which a person identifies with the athlete role or the degree to which sports are prioritized over other life activities. SI contributes positively to sports commitment. It benefits both PA participation and performance (Ahmadabady et al., 2014; Altıntaş & Keleceka, 2017), making it a crucial predictor and mediator for sustained sport engagement. Additionally, recent studies have explored SP among young athletes and found that adolescents tend to develop a stronger sense of athlete identity during this stage, after which it gradually declines, and that athletes competing at higher levels develop a greater sense of SI (Edison et al., 2021). Initially conceptualized as a one-dimensional construct (Brewer et al., 1993), SI has evolved into a multidimensional concept, distinguishing between SI properties (descriptive characteristics) and processes



(the dynamic elements that influence SI) (Brewer et al., 2017). These properties include prominence (exclusive or shared involvement in the athlete's role) and contingent self-esteem (the link between self-esteem and sports performance or participation). The processes include self-presentation (effort to present oneself as an athlete) and social reinforcement (role reinforcement by the athlete's social environment) (Brewer et al., 2017).

Given the significance of SP and of SI for engaging and sustaining sport trajectories during adolescence, the aim of this study was to evaluate both SP and SI and to analyze gender differences in a sample of adolescent sports club members.

Method

Participants

A comparative descriptive exploratory cross-sectional study was designed for a non-probabilistic sample of 217 registered athletes in the Valencian Community (Spain) aged 12 to 18 years ($M = 14.59 \pm 1.686$ years). The participation criteria included those aged 12-18 years old and holding a sports federation license in any discipline, belonging to a sports training center dependent on the Valencian government.

Table 1. Descriptive analysis of participant profile

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	98	45.2
	Male	119	54.8
Competition Level	Local	4	1.9
	Provincial	10	4.7
	Regional	55	25.8
	National	104	48.8
	International	40	18.8
Type of Sport	Individual	97	44.7
	Team	120	55.3

Procedure

The sample was accessed through the contact with the Sports Training Center in the Cheste Educational Complex (Valencia, Spain). The research project's objectives and procedures were first explained to the responsible for the athletes. The interested participants were then provided with a participation consent form and instructed to contact only the athletes that met the inclusion criteria. The study was carried out between January and February of 2023. The selected participants were divided into groups of 4 to 6 individuals to complete the questionnaires. All personal data that could identify the athletes were not collected, always ensuring anonymity and confidentiality. Two researchers administered the questionnaire in person and were present to answer any doubts during completion. The average time for completing the questionnaire was approximately 10 minutes and the data collection lasted a total of 8 weeks. The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Instrument

A single questionnaire was administered to assess the two study variables, containing:

Psychological Need Satisfaction in Exercise Scale (PNSE): this measures SP of autonomy, relatedness and competence in sports. Created by Wilson et al. (2006) and validated in Spain by Moreno-Murcia et al. (2011). It includes 18 items, 6 for each need: competence ("I have confidence in doing the most challenging exercises"), autonomy ("I believe I can make decisions in my training"), and relatedness ("I feel connected to my training partners because they accept me for who I am"). The responses were collected on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (false) to 6 (true).

Third-Generation Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS-3G): created by Brewer et al. (2022), this scale is an expanded reconceptualized version of the original AIMS (Brewer et al., 1993). It consists of three correlated but conceptually independent scales: (a) one for the unidimensional sports identity, (b)



an SI property scale with prominence and contingent self-esteem subscales, and (c) an SI process scale with self-presentation and social reinforcement subscales. The instrument includes 21 items scored on a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The scale used in the present study was the Spanish version of the AIMS-3G, recently translated by Pans et al. (2021).

Data analysis

The IBM SPSS Statistics 26 software was used for data analysis. We first carried out a descriptive analysis to calculate means, standard deviations and frequency analyses, followed by an inferential analysis. The normality assumption ($p < 0.05$) was checked by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. After confirming the normal data distribution, multivariate general linear model parametric tests were applied. When multivariate analysis was significant, univariate tests were calculated by the Pillai's trace test. Only items with a significance level below 5% indicated significant differences between boys and girls.

Results

Descriptive and inferential analyses were performed to compare the differences between boys and girls in SP and SI.

The descriptive analysis for SP in sports, measured through the satisfaction of basic psychological needs, showed an overall average of 4.242. The highest scores were in the need for competence ($M = 4.940$), followed by relatedness ($M = 4.537$), while the lowest scores were in the need for autonomy ($M = 3.250$).

To analyze the SP gender differences, inferential analysis was performed. After confirming a normal data distribution, parametric tests were applied, and an SP multivariate analysis of variance was conducted. Significant differences were found between boys and girls in the multivariate contrast. $F(18, 187) = 2.660$; $p < 0.001$; $\eta^2 = 0.204$. Univariate tests were then calculated, and significant differences were found in all the competence and autonomy items, while no significant differences were found in relatedness items (table 2).

Table 2. Univariate Contrast Results (PNSE)

Basic psychological needs	Ítem	Mean girls	SD	Mean Boys	SD	P value	η^2
Competence	1*	4.82	0.984	5.23	0.750	<0.01	0.052
	4*	4.46	1.205	5.11	0.953	<0.01	0.084
	7*	4.50	1.369	5.15	0.994	<0.01	0.070
	9*	4.80	1.062	5.30	0.830	<0.01	0.065
	11*	4.70	1.116	4.90	0.882	<0.01	0.073
	14*	4.53	1.178	5.08	0.978	<0.01	0.062
Autonomy	2*	3.28	1.367	3.95	1.309	<0.01	0.060
	5*	3.43	1.456	3.95	1.588	0.014	0.029
	8*	3.13	1.517	3.62	1.556	0.023	0.025
	12*	3.02	1.515	4.13	1.491	<0.01	0.120
	15*	2.49	1.436	3.28	1.545	<0.01	0.066
	17*	2.02	1.256	2.74	1.406	<0.01	0.067
Relation	3	3.85	1.569	4.05	1.811	0.401	0.003
	6	3.91	1.543	4.17	1.495	0.210	0.008
	10	4.77	1.244	4.90	1.226	0.455	0.003
	13	4.02	1.421	4.40	1.422	0.058	0.018
	16	4.85	1.076	4.97	1.192	0.457	0.003
	18	5.07	1.107	5.32	1.066	0.107	0.013

*Significant differences, $p < .05$.

Note: M: mean; SD: standard deviation; η^2 : partial eta squared.

As can be seen in the table, boys scored significantly higher than girls in their satisfaction with sporting autonomy and competence. In this regard, in general, the items referring to competence were the ones that showed the largest effect size.

In the descriptive analysis, the overall average score for SI items was 5.250. The highest scores were in the social reinforcement subscale ($M = 5.933$), followed by the SI scale ($M = 5.865$) and the contingent self-esteem subscale ($M = 5.610$). The lowest scores were in the SI prominence subscale ($M = 5.068$) and the self-presentation subscale ($M = 3.820$).



Table 3. Univariate Contrast Results (Sports Identity)

Scale	Subscale	Item	Mean girls	SD girls	Mean boys	SD boys	Sig.	η^2
Sports Identity		5	5.99	1.14	6.13	1.23	0.395	0.003
		11	5.86	1.24	6.12	1.07	0.109	0.012
		14*	5.28	1.29	5.70	1.46	0.034	0.022
		18*	5.49	1.39	6.14	1.17	<0.001	0.061
SI Properties	SI Prominence	1	5.02	1.38	5.14	1.26	0.516	0.002
		2	5.10	1.46	5.12	1.48	0.931	0.000
		8*	4.92	1.62	5.43	1.45	0.015	0.028
		10	5.11	1.45	5.21	1.42	0.635	0.001
		13	4.82	1.44	4.75	1.47	0.710	0.001
	Contingent Self-Esteem	6	6.22	1.27	6.31	1.14	0.572	0.002
		7	5.44	1.55	5.27	1.67	0.453	0.003
		15	5.79	1.42	5.42	1.54	0.070	0.016
		16	4.42	1.46	5.17	1.57	0.250	0.006
		Self-Presentation	3	4.11	1.47	4.43	1.53	0.125
12	3.28		1.57	3.68	1.72	0.084	0.014	
17	3.73		1.55	3.75	1.67	0.934	0.000	
19	3.75		1.62	3.79	1.73	0.859	0.000	
Social Reinforc.	4		5.56	1.08	5.50	1.31	0.729	0.001
	9	6.41	1.03	6.50	0.87	0.455	0.003	
	20	6.10	1.17	6.14	1.17	0.829	0.000	
	21	5.71	1.41	5.57	1.37	0.485	0.002	

*Significant differences, $p < .05$.Note: M: mean; SD: standard deviation; η^2 : partial eta squared.

Significant gender differences were found in the multivariate contrast for SI. $F(21, 189) = 2.050$; $p = 0.006$; $\eta^2 = 0.186$, although only three items showed significant differences in the univariate contrast (see table 3).

Discussion

This study analyzed gender differences in SP and SI in a sample of adolescent athletes of around the same level to provide a comprehensive understanding of these factors in individuals starting from similar conditions in both variables.

The PNSE scale was used to measure SP, structured into three dimensions: competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Higher scores were obtained in competence and relatedness dimensions than in previous studies (Franco-Renart & Menerscardi-Royuela, 2020; Méndez-Giménez et al., 2013). This can be attributed to our sample consisting of athletes, unlike the cited studies, which included only secondary school students, some of whom were not active athletes. This meant that their PA and sports experience and their SP in this area might have been more negative than those who maintained their sports trajectory despite the challenges of adolescence. However, in this study the participants reported markedly lower values than previous studies in their satisfaction with autonomy (Morano et al., 2020b; Moreno-Murcia et al., 2011). This could be because the participants trained in a sports training center for skilled athletes, in which the training sessions might have been highly structured, with limited opportunities for self-direction, exploration or improvisation.

Significant gender differences were found in the SP of competence and autonomy, with boys scoring higher. Previous studies also found higher competence satisfaction among boys in organized sports like athletics or handball (Dawes et al., 2014; Morano et al., 2020b). Competence satisfaction in sports requires evaluating performance against standards, either through social comparisons or excellence standards (Morano et al., 2020b). Girls often lack sports role models and compare themselves to their male peers or male references, causing feelings of incapacity or low competence (Mitchell et al., 2015), impacting their SP, effort, and motivation. In this way, the fact that most of the study's female participants trained in mixed-gender groups (both sexes) at a high-performance center alongside their male peers could explain their lower perceived competence in the activities they perform, despite being at equivalent competition levels to their male counterparts. Sports socialization processes are different for boys and girls, affecting their competence SP differently (Morano et al., 2020b). Traditional gender stereotypes associate sports competence traits like strength, aggression, and competitiveness with males and associate traits like sensitivity, sweetness, and passivity with females (Gill, 2007). This constitutes



a barrier for girls who practice sports, as they must develop skills and competencies traditionally associated with masculinity, which hinders their SP of competence in this area. Therefore, it is necessary for coaches and educators working with young athletes to design tasks and sports activities that are adapted to the athletes' competence levels, ensuring moderate challenges and attainable success experiences for all participants. This approach not only fosters a stronger sense of competence in both girls and boys but also enhances their interest and long-term engagement in sport (Liu et al., 2025).

Autonomy SP was also lower among girls, in which the items referred to decision-making in training sessions. Recent studies established a lack of autonomy and decision-making as key barriers to PA for girls (Cowley et al., 2021). This perception contrasts with the increased desire for independence during adolescence due to social changes (Davison et al., 2010). Providing alternatives and autonomous tasks in training sessions could enhance girls' commitment to sports. Moreover, it would be advisable to propose tasks and exercises with different levels or variations, so that each person can autonomously decide at which level to participate (Drummond et al., 2022). However, sports and physical education environments, designed by and for males, often require girls to adapt to structures that are not tailored to their needs (Serra et al., 2019, 2020; Vilanova Soler & Soler Prat, 2012). Although these environments, along with training equipment, tasks, and the methodologies employed in training and physical education sessions are frequently presented as neutral, this presumed neutrality is in fact rooted in a masculine hermeneutic. That is, it reflects the perspective of a male subject who has historically dominated both the design of these spaces and materials, as well as the focus of academic inquiry in the fields of education, training, and performance. Applying research results derived from male participants to girls, without considering their specific characteristics, continues to present significant barriers to real equality in sports (García-Solà et al., 2023). Ensuring autonomy and competence in training contexts is essential for fostering positive SP and motivation among girls in sports.

No significant gender differences were found for the SP of relatedness, in line with previous studies (Morano et al., 2020b). However, women tend to value more the interpersonal dimension of activities. Traditional gender roles emphasize emotional support and expressivity for women, and independence, ambition, and achievement for men (Diaconu-Gherasim & Duca, 2018). Ensuring social connections through sports can be crucial for girls' continued participation (Drummond et al., 2022). This may help explain why the girls in this study did not score lower than the boys, as their residence in a high-performance training center alongside other adolescents of the same age likely provided them with ample opportunities for social interaction within the sporting context. In this sense, proposing collaborative and team-based tasks could be an effective strategy to foster social bonds and reduce dropout rates among adolescent girls, given that participation motivated by social interaction, enjoyment, and skill development has been shown to strengthen SP and social integration in sports (Bevan et al., 2020).

The second variable under study was SI. Various studies have shown that SI is a predictor of sports participation and long-term sports commitment and adherence (Lau et al., 2006; Pot & Van Hilvoorde, 2013). However, few studies have observed differences in SI between men and women, and those that have did not obtain significant results (Lau et al., 2007; Mosqueda-Ortiz et al., 2017). In the present study, significant differences were found in this variable, measured through the AIMS-3G, in two of the scale items (Item 14: "It is in my nature to be an athlete" and Item 18: "I am strongly committed to being an athlete") and in one of the subscale prominence items (Item 8: "Sport is the most important part of my life"). Boys scored higher on the SI scale compared to girls. Other studies also indicate higher SI in men (de Subijana et al., 2015). These differences are associated with various factors, and some studies consider them rooted in differential gender socialization (Eime et al., 2016). SI correlates with orientation to victory and competitive motivation (Tušák et al., 2005). Thus, the higher scores given by boys for SI are understandable if we consider that stereotypical traits traditionally attributed to men and women (Gill, 2007). In this way, boys find continuity and coherence between what sports provide and traditional masculine gender mandates, while girls face the inconsistency between sports and femininity. Consequently, young women, who unconsciously follow gender mandates, internalize that engaging in sports and PA does not align with socially accepted female identity and that those who make different lifestyle choices risk being socially marked (Knowles et al., 2014). This negatively influences the development of a strong SI for adolescent female athletes, which may lead them to distance themselves from the sports context due to the social exclusion they might face and fear of being judged and labeled as masculine or manly (Bevan et al., 2021).



For this reasons it is necessary that from all areas related to sports, and especially from school physical education, efforts are made to abolish gender stereotypes that hinder the identity development of girls as athletes and to highlight the achievements of other women, not only athletes but also relevant professionals in the sports field (Bevan et al., 2021; Serra et al., 2020). It is also important to emphasize that sports spaces not only reproduce masculine ideals surrounding sport but, despite recent social progress toward equality, they remain contexts in which discrimination and vulnerability persist, particularly for women and girls. As Blanco-García (2025) points out, female athletes are more likely to experience discomfort in these settings, as they do not conform to the masculinized norms that define them. Such discomfort often stems from behaviors present within the sports environment, and may manifest through comments, stares, tone of voice, abusive behavior, sexual violence, mockery, or sexist jokes (pp. 206–209). These are everyday occurrences that, although often normalized by the girls themselves, can significantly impact their SP and SI.

Moreover, boys also showed higher prominence in SI (Item 8). Stryker's (1968) identity theory posits that individuals possess as many identities as different networks of relationships, and these identities within the "self" are organized in a hierarchy according to their relevance. The higher the prominence of an identity, in this case SI, relative to other identities, the more likely it is that behavioral choices will align with the social expectations associated with that identity (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Thus, the male participants showed greater exclusivity and commitment to SI compared to the girls, perhaps because they see in the sports context a viable professional outlet and foresee greater possibilities of achieving a position of power and social relevance through sports (Porto, 2009). Women assume that sports and everything associated with it is predominantly male (Ibáñez, 2001) and tend to develop other alternative identities to the sports that allow them more secure and better-paid career opportunities (Bergström et al., 2022; Harrison et al., 2020). The fact that adolescent girls hardly have other women as sports role models who have succeeded in their professional careers makes them more easily dissociate their identity as professional athletes (García-Solà et al., 2023).

Considering that the habits established during adolescence are the best predictors of what will be maintained into adulthood (Kjønniksen et al., 2009; Ligestad & Mehus, 2018), it is essential, that PA and sports practice are maintained during this period, not only to improve health but also to make the sports context an egalitarian and democratic space where women are represented. However, adolescence is a critical stage of human life, highly sensitive to changes, and a key moment for maintaining or abandoning healthy habits or sports careers, especially, as discussed in this study, for girls. Therefore, it is essential that during this stage young women are provided with sessions where they can develop greater autonomy and where tasks that strengthen social bonds and relationships are proposed, as well as activities that are feasible and where they feel efficient and secure, developing a high SP of competence. Additionally, it is necessary to strengthen their SI, and for this, it is crucial that the traits characterizing young women's personal identity align with those characterizing SI. To achieve this, all sectors connected to sport, especially school-based physical education, must actively work to eliminate gender stereotypes and roles that hinder girls' identity development as athletes.

Limitations

The sample consisted solely of active and federated adolescent athletes, which may have biased the results and limited their generalizability to more heterogeneous populations, including less active young people or those who have discontinued their practice. Additionally, most participants came from the same educational center, a controlled environment with a unique pedagogical approach, reducing the diversity of experiences. This may have contributed to the lack of significant differences observed in some variables. Moreover, the relatively small sample size may have affected the statistical power of the analyses. Finally, the exclusive use of quantitative methodology did not allow for an in-depth exploration of participants' subjective experiences. Future research should address these limitations to provide a more comprehensive understanding of self-perception and sport identity during adolescence.

Recommendations for future research

Building on the findings of this study, future research should include more diverse samples, incorporating adolescents with varying levels of physical activity and from different educational and social backgrounds. Increasing the sample size would also be advisable to enhance the statistical power of the anal-

yses and enable more specific comparisons. Additionally, the incorporation of qualitative methodologies, such as interviews or focus groups, would allow for a deeper exploration of the barriers and experiences related to sports participation from a feminist view. This approach would enrich the sociocultural understanding of the issue and support the development of more effective strategies to prevent dropout. Furthermore, future studies could examine variables such as type of sport, competitive level, or family context, as this information could be crucial for better understanding physical activity participation among adolescent girls.

Conclusions

This study explored differences in SP and SI among a mixed group of federated adolescent athletes. The key findings include lower SP and SI among adolescent girls, explained by the different sports socialization processes, persisting gender stereotypes and androcentrism in sports contexts. These results highlight the need for interventions that consider SP and SI factors to reduce the dropout percentage of girls' athletes.

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