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Sport Practice Motives of Brazilian Pupil-Athletes

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Abstract

Some surveys have pointed out that only a portion of young people practice sports with some regularity, and that of those who start sport practice, there is a high rate of abandonment. In this sense, experts indicate that understanding the motives that lead to sport practice could be an important way to understand this phenomenon, especially for young ages. The expectation is that this publication can provide important information on motivational indicators related to sports practice in young ages, which may contribute significantly to the expansion of new knowledge in the area, offering a new option to aid future studies on the theme, in addition to assisting in intervention actions in the school context and in the scope of exercise and sport. Thus, the present chapter aims to present conceptual approaches that support research involving sports practice motivation in young ages. In addition, the study brings data from one of the largest investigations of sport practice motives of Brazilian pupil-athletes.

Keywords: Motivation, adolescent, school sport

1. Introduction

When any Brazilian child or adolescent is asked why they practice sports, it is common to hear: "Because I want to be a rich and famous player"; "Because my parents want me to practice sport"; or "Because I like to play with my friends". Although there are obviously other reasons, taken together these certify that sport is one of the most evident phenomena of modern society. Introduced as an extracurricular aspect, school sport enables motivation of students in the academic context, helping in the acquisition of habits of study, aiming at a healthy lifestyle and a harmonious structure in school and athletic life.

The study of what leads people to practice physical activity and sport started in the late 1970s, and is considered a fundamental area of sport psychology [1]. Currently, new perspectives for physical activity and sport, such as adherence, prevalence, continuity, physical and mental well-being, among other themes, justify the importance of the study of motivation [2].

In an epistemological context, motive comes from the Latin word *motivus*, while motivation is derived from *motus*, a verb conjugated in the past participle of *movere*, which depicts the idea of movement. Therefore, motives would be purposes that compel the individual to act in a certain way, whereas motivation is associated with the stimuli and feelings that lead someone to practice the selected actions to achieve a certain goal. Motives are directional elements of the behavior in question, that is, a relevant approach of motivation, but not motivation itself [2].

In the sports psychology scenario, the most accepted direction by experts is the interactional model of motivation for sports [3]. According to this theoretical model, motivation for sports is subordinated to an interaction between personality (personal factors) and environmental factors (situational factors) [3]. The components of personal factors are represented by personality, needs, interests, and goals. On the other hand, the elements of situational factors are related to style of technical leadership, attractiveness of facilities, and history of victories and defeats of the team. The importance of personal and situational factors can be changed throughout life according to current needs and opportunities [3].

In general, motivation is basically analyzed through a combination of theories. From this perspective, more than 30 options of motivation theories are found in the literature that seek to explain the guiding principles that govern the motivational profile that someone can present to adhere and/or remain in a specific activity [4]. In short, theories are based on a spectrum ranging from models that assign the individual a mechanistic position, such as a passive being subject to the influence of environment, to models with a cognitive-social approach that highlights the active role of the individual as an agent [4]. However, there are still two motivation theories considered in the theoretical framework for the study of motivational factors for sports practice: achievement goal theory [5] and self-determination theory [6]. Both theories have been used to gain a more detailed understanding of motivational factors in the context of physical education and sport.

Originally developed for the school context, achievement goal theory is based on subjective interpretation of success, being applied in two perspectives called task orientation and ego orientation. From the perspective of task orientation, a tendency to define and interpret success and competence is referenced by the individual himself. On the other hand, ego orientation assumes that competence and success of the individual are linked to performance, aimed at a demonstration of superior capacity.

Self-determination theory is an organicist approach of motivation, it enhances the interaction between a person and environment, seeking the evolution of internal personal resources for the development of personality and behavioral self-regulation [6]. According to this theory, motivation is categorized as intrinsic, extrinsic, and amotivation [6]. These different types of motivation are organized as a continuum, where the level of autonomy decreases when directed from amotivation towards intrinsic motivation.

It is important to note that the state of the art in sport psychology in Brazil is considered an emerging area. In reference [7], the prevalence of investigations on motivation was highlighted at Brazilian scientific conferences between 2010 and 2012, with most of these studies come from Physical Education. In addition, there is growing concern about participation in the sports context, as sports practice has been identified as an important element in the education and socialization of children and adolescents [8].

In this sense, the student-athlete is primarily inserted in a sport training activity related to different levels of competitiveness (local, regional, national, and international) projecting a possible professionalization or just development of biopsychosocial aspects; concomitantly, the student-athlete develops their schooling. This dual career must be characterized by a successful combination of education, training, or work with sport, which allows the individual to reach their full potential in life. In addition, dual career management composes policy guidelines for schooling and sports systems in some countries in Asia, the USA, Canada, and Australia [9].

Due to the content of this chapter, it is necessary to clarify the definition of some concepts. For example, student-athlete is an athlete recognized by an elite sport organization and registered as a student in a higher education institution. A pupil-athlete is an athlete recognized by an elite sport organization and registered

as a pupil in secondary education institution [10]. The information presented in this chapter is related to this population: pupil-athletes.

Unlike some European and Asian countries, in Brazil, there is a lack of studies involving aspects related to pupil-athletes. The term pupil-athlete can be characterized by two social attributions linked to the individual themselves. These attributions involve two fields: school and sport. Both demand attitudes and behaviors recognized by each of the institutions they represent (schools and clubs). The union of these fields results in the intersection of two scenarios that have a common goal: the possibilities for a promising future, since the development of the young person as a citizen and future professional is directly associated with the support provided by these two scenarios [11].

Undoubtedly, it is necessary to understand the cultural proportions when it comes to investment in education and sport at various levels. For example, if we think of a dual career as a management process, in the European context, it is possible to understand the intrinsic reasons that eventually lead the pupil-athlete to prioritize school education. On the other hand, in the Brazilian scenario, the school education opportunities are uneven. Thus, investment in a sports career can be considered a unique opportunity for those who see no future for a successful school career and/or who have a recognized talent for sport.

Generally, physical activity for children starts in the school environment, characterized not only by practical physical education classes, where playful aspects are emphasized, but also by organized and systematic sports practice. For most children, sports practice reaches its peak at approximately 12 years of age [12]. In this perspective, it is highlighted that a contingent of 67.3% of young Brazilians play sports or declare themselves to be practicing physical activity [13]. However, some international surveys have pointed out that only a portion of children and adolescents practice sports with some regularity, and among those who start sports, there is a high drop-out rate [14–16]. A very important problem for professionals working with the issue of sports participation in young ages is understanding the reasons that lead children and adolescents to participate in sports [17].

In this sense, experts point out that these reasons could be considered as relevant aspects to start the practice of sports, to explain permanence in the sport, and to reduce the cases of drop-out, since they are determined as key to controlling human behavior [15, 18]. Furthermore, identifying and measuring the size of the reasons for sport practice at young ages could offer the best possible environment for pupil-athletes to enhance their experiences, i.e., a favorable motivational climate [19]. As the main hypothesis of the study, it is expected that the pupil-athletes evaluated value the motivational aspects related to physical fitness, due to the benefits of sport practice for health and well-being, especially in children and adolescents, which have been widely described in the scientific literature [20, 21]. Thus, the objective of this Brazilian investigation was to identify the reasons for the sports practice of pupil-athletes in different sports according to sex, age, and training time.

2. Research characteristics

For the preparation of the study, a database was used, which was supported by the cross-sectional research project entitled "Physical abilities of young people practicing different sports: relationship between psychosocial dimensions and somatic maturation". This project was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the State University of Londrina in accordance with the norms of Resolution 196/96 of the National Health Council on research involving human beings report no. CEP/UEL 007/2014. In view of the objectives established for the study, a comparative associative strategy was used, with a cross-sectional design.

The reference population for the study was pupil-athletes who were part of the final phase of the Paraná School Games 2017, phases A (15 to 17 years of age) and B (up to 14 years of age). According to the Sports Department of the State of Paraná, 6000 pupil-athletes participated in this stage of the games. For the selection of the sample, the casual non-probabilistic method was used. Those responsible for the athletes were informed about the nature, objectives, and procedures of the study and signed a Free and Informed Consent Form allowing the pupil-athletes to participate in the research. Through ratification of the free and informed consent term, 2014 pupil-athletes (1050 girls and 964 boys) agreed to participate in the present study.

The data related to the reasons for the practice of sports were obtained through the application of the PMQ instrument (Participation Motivation Questionnaire). Originally designed in English [22], and subsequently validated, translated, and adapted for use in young Brazilian athletes [23], the PMQ is the most prominent instrument in the area and is composed of 30 questions equivalent to the list of possible reasons that could lead athletes to practice sports, grouped into eight reasons for practicing sports: (a) social recognition; (b) group activity; (c) physical fitness; (d) emotion; (e) competition; (f) technical competence; (g) affiliation; and (h) fun. To complete the questionnaire, the respondent indicates the degree of importance that most applies to their sport practice, using a five-point Likert scale (1 = “not important” to 5 = “very important”).

The PMQ instrument translated and adapted to the Portuguese language achieved good psychometric performance compared to the sample of the present study, presenting high Cronbach's alpha coefficients calculated for the generated motivation factors. The confirmatory factor analysis with Varimax rotation enabled the generation of eight motivating factors that, together, can explain the proportion of variance by close to 67%. The factorial solution generated was similar to the original [22] and most of the published studies using the same experimental design. The participants also answered a document with general questions, such as: age, sex, sport they practice, training time, date of the assessment, date of birth, name of the school where they study, and city where they live.

The instrument was applied individually to each pupil-athlete by a team of researchers at the athlete community center (resting place available for athletes during competition days), in a room with tables and chairs provided by the Paraná Sports Department, in order to avoid situations of pre- or post-competition stress. This place is in a different area from the location where the games took place. The researcher submitted the questionnaire to each pupil-athlete, together with verbal instructions for completing the questionnaire correctly. Any doubts expressed by the athlete were answered by the researcher responsible for the delivery of the questionnaire, in such a way as to leave no more doubts about how to complete the questionnaire.

3. Results and discussion

The characteristics of the pupil-athletes with respect to the phase of the competition in which they participated, as well as age (age groups were created for the analyses; G1, G2, and G3), training time, and other information are described in **Table 1**. The final categorization was performed according to practice of the game and category, subdivided into team and individual sports. Individual sports evaluated were athletics, badminton, cycling, rhythmic gymnastics, judo, Olympic wrestling, swimming, shuttlecock, skateboarding, taekwondo, table tennis, and chess. Team sports evaluated were basketball, soccer, futsal, handball, volleyball, and beach volleyball.

Within the individual sports, a high proportion of athletics (15.2%) was observed, followed by chess (7.5%), judo (2.8%), beach volleyball (2.3%), table

tennis (2.2%), and badminton (2.2%), respectively. For team sports, the highest proportion was futsal (18.3%), followed by volleyball (17.8%), handball (16.9%), and basketball (11.3%), respectively.

Information regarding the reasons for sports practice of the pupil-athletes is described in **Figure 1**. The greatest importance was placed on the Technical Competence dimension (4.40 ± 0.70), followed by the Competition dimension (4.26 ± 0.88). The Physical Fitness dimension was next in the sequence of reasons for the practice of sports, to which the pupil-athletes assigned a great degree of importance (4.05 ± 0.92). For the presentation of the next results, it is important to emphasize the categorization performed for the age groups of the participants of this study.

Figure 2A shows the reasons for the sports practice of pupil-athletes between 10-12 years of age and their comparisons. In the same way, **Figure 2B** identifies the results

		GIRLS (n = 1050)	BOYS (n = 964)	ALL (n = 2014)
PHASE	A	405 (38.6%)	459 (47.6%)	864 (42.9%)
	B	645 (61.4%)	505 (52.4%)	1150 (57.1%)
AGE	(G1) 10-12 years	170 (16.2%)	100 (10.4%)	270 (13.4%)
	(G2) 13-14 years	671 (63.9%)	539 (55.9%)	1210 (60.1%)
	(G3) 15-17 years	209 (19.9%)	325 (33.7%)	534 (26.5%)
TRAINING TIME	≤ 2 years	412 (39.2%)	409 (42.4%)	821 (40.8%)
	3-4 years	327 (31.1%)	250 (25.9%)	577 (28.6%)
	5-6 years	205 (19.5%)	148 (15.4%)	353 (17.5%)
	≥ 7 years	106 (10.1%)	157 (16.3%)	263 (13.1%)
SPORTS	INDIVIDUAL	204 (19.4%)	250 (25.9%)	454 (22.5%)
	TEAM	846 (80.6%)	714 (74.1%)	1560 (77.5%)

Table 1.
 General characteristics of the student-athletes analyzed in the study.

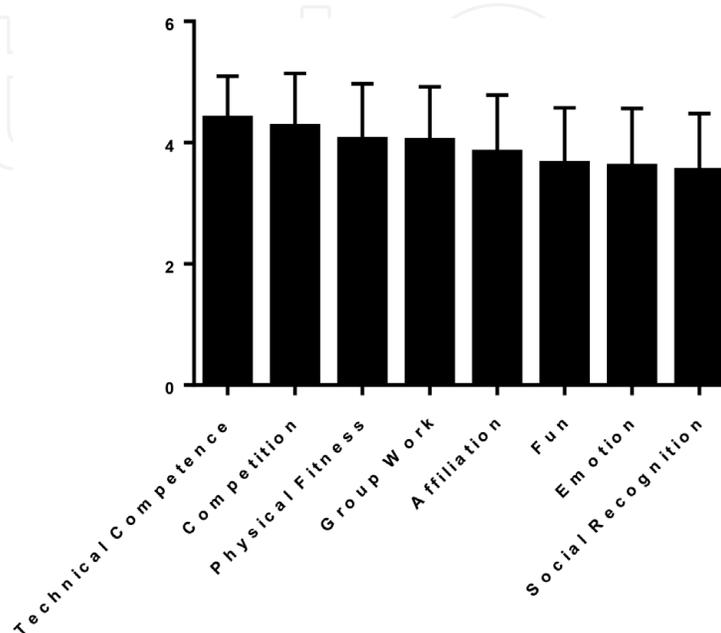


Figure 1.
 Sports practice motives of the student-athletes.

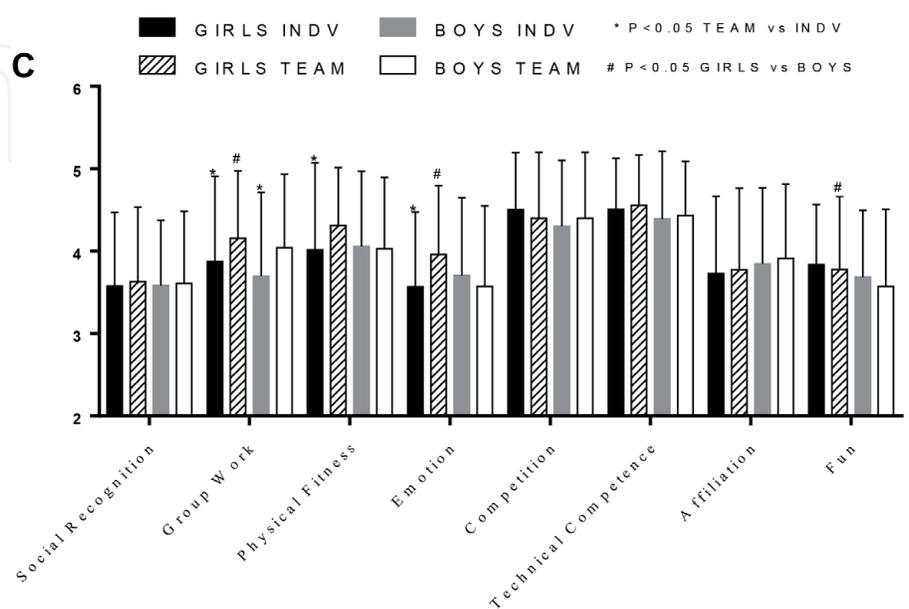
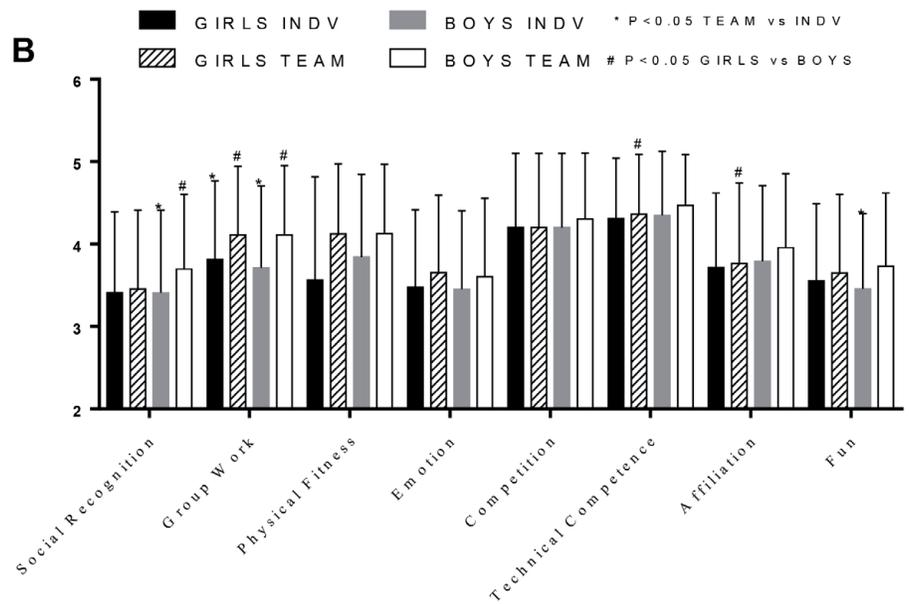
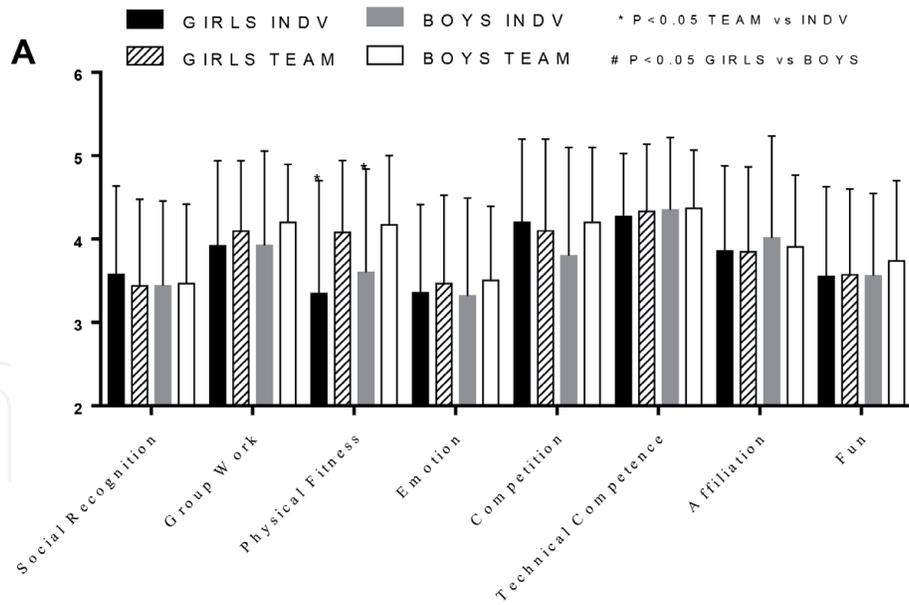


Figure 2. Sports practice motives of the student-athletes aged 10-12 years (A), 13-14 years (B), 15-17 years (C).

of pupil-athletes between 13-14 years of age and, finally, **Figure 2C** presents the data pupil-athletes between 15-17 years of age.

The only significant difference found in **Figure 2A** was in relation to the Physical Fitness dimension in both sexes when comparing the individual and team sports. The younger pupil-athletes, who participated in the individual sports, attributed a lower degree of importance (3.37 ± 1.35) to the question of maintaining fitness or being in good physical condition.

The Social Relationship dimension showed a significant difference for boys compared to girls (**Figure 2B**), since boys ascribed a higher degree of importance (3.69 ± 0.91). In addition, the dimensions Group Activity (4.11 ± 0.83), Technical Competence (4.47 ± 0.62), and Affiliation (3.95 ± 0.90) presented a significant difference for boys when compared to girls. The data on the comparison between the individual and team sports were significantly smaller for boys practicing individual sports (**Figure 2B**) for the dimensions Social Recognition (3.40 ± 1.01), Group Activity (3.71 ± 0.99), and Fun (3.46 ± 0.91). Still in this outcome, however, for the most experienced pupil-athletes (**Figure 2C**), significantly smaller data were found for boys in the Group Activity dimension (3.69 ± 1.02). With reference to girls in this comparison, Physical Fitness (4.02 ± 1.05) and Emotion (3.57 ± 0.91) presented significantly lower values.

Another significant difference between the sexes was identified in the Social Recognition dimension (3.69 ± 0.91), where the boys attributed more importance than the girls to this dimension (**Figure 2B**). For the dimensions Technical Competence (4.36 ± 0.73) and Affiliation (3.76 ± 0.98), the girls participating in team sports declared less significant importance when compared to boys (**Figure 2B**). Girls who participated in team sports had a significantly higher result than boys of the same category (**Figure 2C**), especially for Group Activity (4.16 ± 0.82), Emotion (3.96 ± 0.84), and Fun (3.78 ± 0.88). Likewise, girls who participated in individual sports had higher scores than boys in the same category (**Figure 2C**) for the Group Activity dimension (3.88 ± 1.03).

The final analysis of the results is unique up to the present moment in research related to motives for sports practice and, specifically, for this instrument. To complete the questionnaire, the respondent indicates the degree of importance that best applies to their sport practice, using a five-point Likert scale (1 = "not important" to 5 = "very important"). Therefore, the frequency of responses greater than or equal to 4 on the five-point Likert scale was analyzed according to divisions between boys and girls, individual and team sports, 10-12 years, 13-14 years, and 15-17 years of age (**Table 2**). Thus, the highest percentage of most positive responses was for Technical Competency for boys between 10-12 years of age (81.8%) and female athletes of team sports between 15-17 years of age (79.9%).

Firstly, it is important to note that none of the studies analyzed and used for the discussion of this work mention the term pupil-athlete, that is, a large part of the research performed for the purpose of establishing the reasons for sports practice is carried out with young people already included in the systematized practice of training. In Brazil, despite the limited literature on this theme, the young person who is distinctive in the sport begins their sports career in school, through school games or championships.

When analyzing the results of the present study with pupil-athletes, it is notable that the reasons for the practice of sport in pupil-athletes, in general, are similar to some other studies, which also obtained results showing that the dimensions Competition and/or Technical Competence are the most important for the practice of sports [24–26]. This finding should not be seen as unusual, since it is totally understandable that this population has a preference for reasons that are associated with success in the sporting context. This intensified search for success in sports can

DIMENSIONS	&	10-12 years		13-14 years		15-17 years	
		%	IND	TEAM	IND	TEAM	IND
Social Recognition	GIRLS	39.4%	33.6%	30.6%	29.3%	32.0%	36.5%
	BOYS	27.3%	32.1%	30.6%	39.7%	31.6%	34.6%
Group Work	GIRLS	54.5%	57.7%	40.5%	57.6%	46.0%	60.4%
	BOYS	63.6%	52.6%	43.2%	55.8%	38.5%	53.4%
Physical Fitness	GIRLS	36.4%	54.0%	42.1%	60.4%	60.0%	62.9%
	BOYS	45.5%	61.5%	45.9%	58.4%	55.6%	55.3%
Emotion	GIRLS	27.3%	32.1%	24.8%	32.0%	26.0%	48.4%
	BOYS	22.7%	25.6%	25.2%	31.5%	36.8%	30.3%
Competition	GIRLS	57.6%	57.7%	59.5%	57.5%	70.0%	66.7%
	BOYS	45.5%	55.1%	54.1%	60.5%	62.4%	64.9%
Technical Competence	GIRLS	66.7%	67.9%	60.3%	70.2%	76.0%	79.9%
	BOYS	81.8%	70.5%	69.4%	72.0%	76.9%	73.1%
Affiliation	GIRLS	42.4%	47.4%	37.2%	39.6%	34.0%	43.4%
	BOYS	59.1%	44.9%	42.3%	47.0%	41.0%	47.1%
Fun	GIRLS	39.4%	34.3%	33.1%	34.9%	36.0%	44.0%
	BOYS	31.8%	39.7%	23.4%	36.7%	30.8%	31.3%

Table 2. Frequency of responses greater than or equal to 4 on the five-point Likert-type scale between boys and girls, individual and team sports, 10-12 years, 13-14 years, and 15-17 years of age.

give meaning to the lives of children and adolescents, both as pupils and as athletes, as there is a significant index of pupil-athletes who become socially known for their potential in sports and attract interest from talent scouts in the sports field [24]. Thus, it is possible that many students will ascend economically via competitive sport. For the pupil-athletes themselves and their caregivers, this outcome has a directly proportional relationship with the school sports system [27].

Likewise, reference [26] demonstrates that aspects related to perception of success, winning, being good in a sport, or only gaining approval from parents, are important motivating factors for adolescents to join sports practice. Since the study associates the reasons for the practice of sports and physical activity, the authors believe that from the aforementioned motivating factors it is possible to direct intervention projects aiming at a large scale increase in the level of physical activity of adolescents.

In addition, it also disregards the result of the most important reasons for the practice of sports being related to the search for improvement and maintenance of technical skills. Some investigations [25] direct attention to the dimensions that were pointed out with a lesser value of importance in this study: Affiliation and Emotion. There are hypotheses that these dimensions associated with intrinsic motivation could be responsible for the decision to practice a sport modality [28].

For example, one of the reasons that may explain the result of the present study is the possible ambition of pupil-athletes to become professional athletes in the future, making the systematized practice of training an important opportunity for students seeking social and financial ascension. This fact may change the school environment related to intrinsic (learning-oriented) motivation into an environment linked to the view that the sole purpose of sport is elevation of the social status of the victors and the search for social recognition and prizes (extrinsic rewards).

Some authors argue that the intrinsic motivation for the practice of sports is strongly associated with issues related to quality of life and health, confirming a relevant factor for the accomplishment of activities [28–30]. Moreover, they affirm that the dissemination of the practice of sport as a health promoting agent, optimizing quality of life, contributes to greater appreciation of the Physical Fitness dimension. In reference [29], young people usually care about health and seek a healthy lifestyle to acquire or maintain health and strength and develop better physical conditioning, as well as being concerned about the aesthetic issue.

In relation to the comparison of the reasons for the practice of sport among girls and boys, a contradictory result was identified regarding the scientific literature. In the present study, the boys valued the Social Relationship dimension more than the girls. This result is in contrast to another research [31, 32]. That is, for this result to be possible there is a paradigm shift in the reasons for the practice of sport between girls and boys, even if this tendency is analyzed empirically.

Another counterpoint observed in this study compared to the literature was the number of girls and boys participating in sports competitions, as the number of girls participating in this study, and consequently sporting competitions ($n = 1050$) was higher than the number of boys ($n = 964$). In reference [32] boys are more likely to have more consistent motivational factors than girls. However, the authors point out that the existing theories provide divergent perspectives on the possibility of variation in the reasons for sports practice based on the participants' sex.

The comparison between the reasons for the practice of sports and the age range of the pupil-athletes presents the Emotion dimension as more valued when compared between the phases of the competition. That is, significant differences were found in student-aged athletes. These results contradict the outcomes of other studies [25, 33].

In reference [34], younger age pupil-athletes value, to a considerably greater degree, the reasons for the practice of sports related to fun, recreation, and playfulness, and later these reasons will give rise to factors related to competition and acquisition of technical skills. This finding may be a result of the impact of socialization by age group, as, normally, these children and adolescents are situated in the period of maturity, making up the final stage of basic education: high school. It is probable that this impact of socialization is manifested in the reasons for the practice of sport for girls and boys.

Still in relation to age, the literature highlights this factor as being inversely proportional to the level of physical activity, i.e., the level of physical activity tends to decrease with increasing age, especially in the period of adolescence [35, 36]. Although the Competition and Technical Competence dimensions, in general, were the most valued in this study, the fact that pupil-athletes start practicing sports for different reasons and remain in the habit of this practice when older is justified by participation in training and competitions that are organized and systematized [37].

In reference [38], these types of practice are considered more effective for maintaining and even increasing levels of physical activity. That is, regardless of the more valued reasons for the practice of sports by the pupil-athlete, participation in training and competitions makes it possible to raise the level of physical activity of the athlete and, consequently, improve aspects related to health.

In order to provide more theoretical support for the question of the way in which the type of sport can be an important motivator for practice, it is possible to base this vision on a cultural approach. Since high-level athletes from some countries are considered as a reference for the children of these countries, the young people can mirror the attitudes of these high-end athletes, starting with the practice of the same sporting modality as the reference athlete.

Considering the relationship between training time and the phases of the competition, it was possible to contrast some data on the reasons for the practice of sports and age group. In reference [33] pupil-athletes included in younger age groups tend to show more interest in the recreational aspects of the sport, valuing playfulness, and this behavior tends to decrease in pupil-athletes of more advanced ages.

However, this behavior was not reproduced in the present study, since the pupil-athletes located in the group with more than two years of training identified to a greater intensity with social motives and teamwork, team spirit. This finding points to the recognition of the importance of group coexistence by pupil-athletes with more advanced age, as well as identification with their peers and an emphasis on personal relationships in the group in which they are included.

The specialized literature on this subject, identified through the databases selected for review studies [39, 40], confirms the importance of production in this area, evidencing an increase in scientific production. Although the majority of the identified studies present terms such as young athlete or athlete of a young age, scientific productions that address issues related to pupil-athletes are scarce, especially in Brazil.

Another unique characteristic of the present study is the analysis of the frequency of the reasons for sports practice attributed by pupil-athletes using higher values of importance on the Likert scale (frequency of responses greater than or equal to 4 on the five-point Likert scale, which are the maximum values for importance indicated by pupil-athletes). Thus, high importance for the reason Technical Competence was verified for both girls between 10-12 years of age and boys between 15-17 years of age, regardless of the type of sport. This conclusion corroborates with the conclusions of several studies presented in this article [27, 28].

This information on school and sport is considered significant as this study is one of the few that involves issues of psychology and sport in a population with a specific terminology: the pupil-athlete. In addition, there is the possibility of social attributions linked to the two fields associated with this population, sport and school, being strong influencers of the reasons for the practice of physical activity. Although the current study presents a different object of study, reasons for the practice of sport by pupil-athletes, it is worth noting the existence of some limitations that must be considered when analyzing the results.

Even though the number of pupil-athletes evaluated is considerably higher than many studies [40], generalization of the results is still limited, impeding the representativeness of the results to other pupil-athletes, from other states or countries. In addition, the fact that the instrument used is considered self-report, means the possibility of the reasons for practicing sport being overestimated or underestimated should be considered.

The results demonstrate that the pupil-athletes participating in the School Games in Paraná assigned greater importance to aspects related to improvement in technical skills, coping with challenges and exposure to risks, learning new skills, and moving to a higher level. The hypothesis supported by the study for this outcome is the bottleneck that exists in school competitions, where only the best athletes advance to the next stages, and finally, only the best pupil-athletes will reach a national level.

It should be noted that, in Brazil, the number of studies with this specific sample, pupil-athletes, is very limited, added to which, when there are particularities, such as how to identify the reasons for the sports practice of this population, the number of studies at the national level is even scarcer. The strong point of this study is precisely this particularity, since this theme has implications for social importance, where the scientific knowledge produced will contribute to knowledge of the most relevant aspects for the adoption of physical activity and sport practices.

4. Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to provide contact with scientific information regarding school-age sport and its characteristics, as well as psychological aspects related to the motives and motivation for sports practice and the peculiarities of the pupil-athlete. In this sense, considering these determinants of sport psychology is fundamental for the design and implementation of appropriate interventions to increase the contingent of physically active young people.

When appropriating concepts linked to the understanding of motivation and its relationship with adherence and abandonment of sport practice in young ages, we believe in the important role of engagement of the social agents that integrate this scenario. Parents, teachers, and coaches significantly influence the motivation for achievement of children and adolescents and can create atmospheres to intensify this achievement and neutralize learned impotence.

In addition, school sport is one of the most effective ways to provide pupil-athletes with attitudes, values, knowledge, and understanding for their participation in society throughout their lives. Based on theoretical models and the research results presented it is possible to develop intervention strategies that support individual needs and differences, in order to enhance the adherence and psychological well-being of pupil-athletes so that they can benefit from an active and healthy lifestyle.

The result of this chapter showed that pupil-athletes assigned greater importance to less self-determined motives. Therefore, these motives are generated by the task and the activity itself, not by the enjoyment that the activity can provide. Interventions in this context should be offered in order to address these motivational demands, providing higher socio-affective quality in training routines, allowing a greater chance to present and future adherence to the sport practice.

Finally, we have pointed out four fundamental observations derived from the theories and results presented in this chapter aiming at this adherence to the practice sport. First, pupil-athletes are motivated by both internal traits and situations. Second, it is important to understand the pupil-athletes' motives to facilitate involvement. Third, develop a structure of different situations to meet the needs of pupil-athletes is also important because it can modify behaviors that affect motivation. Fourth, the social agents involved (parents, teachers, and coaches) play a key role in the motivational environment. Since the motives may change over time, we must continue to monitor the motives for sport practice of pupil-athletes in order to have a consistent effort to promote a good discernment regarding the actions for adherence of the practice sport.

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