

icSEP 2018
International Conference on Sport, Education & Psychology

MOTIVATION FOR FEMALE FUTSAL PRACTICE

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Abstract

What are the female motivations to practice futsal? This study was undertaken to answer this question. Motivational studies highlight the reasons why young people engage in regular physical activities. The interest in physical activity is associated with the occupation of free time or with health and physical, psychological and social well-being. The objectives of this study were to identify the sports motivations that lead the athletes to the practice of indoor soccer and to discover to what extent age, years of competition and club where the modality is practiced motivates the athletes to practice this sport. A quantitative, descriptive-correlation and cross-sectional design was applied. A questionnaire of motivation for sports activities (QMAD), with 30 motivational items was used to collect data on 53 randomly selected female indoor soccer players from clubs in Viseu, Portugal. No significant difference was found in mean ordering between groups, which does not confirm our hypothesis that the older athletes present superior motivation indexes for the practice of futsal compared to that of the younger athletes, meaning that age is not a variable that explains motivation for practice. Differences between clubs is significant in relation to physical form, general affiliation, specific affiliation, and general motivation. It is only in the motivation due to the status that the differences between the groups are significant, which confirms the hypothesis in this factor, but does not confirm it in the remaining ones. The findings of this study make it possible to provide some contribution to enhance the motivation for female futsal athletes.

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Keywords: Motivation, female gender, futsal.



1. Introduction

Futsal is a sport derived from Hall Football. There are few differences between these two sports but this kind of sport presents itself as a complex and dynamic game, due to the multiplicity of factors that directly affect the psychomotor action and the unfolding of the game itself. Up until 1983, futsal was exclusive to the male gender and only men had the right to engage in this sport. Since then, it has been extended to women. Brazil was the pioneer in this change, followed by other states in South America and Europe. Nowadays, women's futsal is played almost all over the world, even though it does not project a masculine image. As in almost all sports, in futsal there is a male dominance; nevertheless, more and more women are interested in engaging in sports in general and futsal in particular. Women are increasingly identifying the benefits of sports, whether for health or aesthetics, or for a more social or personal taste. Nonetheless, what are the female motivations for practicing this modality? This is one of the questions, perhaps the most important one, which we propose to answer through this study. The fact is that there are few studies about female futsal, as it is still a sports modality with little visibility in the media and consequently, in society in general. The fact that we, the researchers are sportspersons and live with this reality, as well as the fact that this topic relates to our academic background and to our personal tastes, were the primary reasons that motivated us to carry out this study.

Of the many studies carried out within this scope, it is important to highlight those who seek to identify the reasons why young people engage in regular physical activity. When choosing a specific activity, we do not do it in a random way, since behind this choice lies something or someone that consciously or unconsciously compels us to choose to engage in any activity. An interest or simple curiosity about a physical activity is usually associated with leisure time occupation or related to physical, psychic and social health and well-being, thus responding to our individual and social needs (Pereira, 1997). However, these needs are not experienced in the same way by all individuals, and therefore, variables arise due to several factors such as age, gender, context, momentum, trends, social, economic, cultural trends and others (Cratty, 1983; Horn, 1992; Carvalho, 1994, cited in Pereira, 1997 & Batista, 2013). Still, in general, young people reveal similar reasons for engaging in physical activity (Serpa, 1991). We all know that doing physical activity is critical to one's health. The benefits to health are significant, as are the psychological aspects involved, since the desire and interest in performing physical activity is the result of a set of personal factors that influence the level of satisfaction, or lack of it, to what concerns the activity.

Despite knowing this, many people find it difficult to resume or maintain regular physical activity. The practice of some type of regular physical activity or sport requires some incentive, or rather, motivation. The practice of a sport is one of the most efficient ways to bring people closer together. Nowadays, and increasingly, it is through this activity that teenagers and adults meet to talk, to get to know each other and to strengthen bonds of friendship or even to increase their circle of friendships. In this perspective, physical activity also becomes an important source of satisfaction with regard to social relationships, working with self-esteem and coexistence in a group, bearing in mind that most people seek sport for high competitiveness, which is highly motivating. Bergamini (1997) proposes that motivation be a chain of events based on the desire to reduce an internal state of imbalance, based on the thought and belief that certain actions should serve this purpose, causing the individuals to act in such a way that will lead them to the desired aims. It is important to consider the existence of individual and cultural differences between

subjects when referring to "motivation". Motivation is a topic that is highly researched in experimental psychology.

Through the analysis of several researches it can be verified that the unknown internal desires, which present themselves as needs, are boosters of activities that lead the individual to take on this or that behaviour (Pereira, 1992). According to Vroom & Deci (1979), motivation depends greatly on the physiological impulses and gratification that are provided by them. And without encouragement, there is no good performance. Motivation, according to Samulski (2002), for the practice of sports, depends on the personality of each person and of physical environment factors such as facilities, engaging tasks, challenges and social influences. Over time, in a person's life, values change, the importance of the motivational factors already mentioned change as well, depending on the needs and opportunities. In relation to personal factors, each person has two motivational tendencies: the tendency to look for success and the tendency to avoid failure (Weinberg & Gould 1999, cited in Samulski, 2002). The reason for seeking success is defined as the ability to experience pride and satisfaction in performing tasks, while the reason for avoiding failure is determined as the ability to experience shame and humiliation as a consequence of it. A person's behaviour is influenced by the interaction of these two motivational trends. For Samulski (2002), the motivation for sporting performance is influenced by several factors, which are personal, situational, generated trends, emotional reactions and performance behaviour. Therapeutic measures are designed for people who perform sports to help overcome psychic problems and social conflicts, which are applied with the purpose of improving personal abilities and transforming extrinsic (external) motivation into intrinsic (internal) motivation. Motivation, according to Becker (2000), is a very important factor in the pursuit of any goal by the human being. Coaches acknowledge this fact as being crucial, both in practice and in competitions. Therefore, motivation is a basic element for the athlete to follow the coach's guidelines and carry out daily practice.

Girls playing football is a problem because it is a recent achievement and still little studied. In order to better understand this transition process, it is necessary to conceptualize and reflect on the "sex" category. Until the mid-nineteenth century, female education was confined to the development of aspects related to the ability of accompanying the husband publicly in social life. The transition from a domestic education to schooling emerged as a response to the needs imposed by the modern industrial society. This new society imposed on women a role of socializing with their children, that the purely domestic education could not guarantee. It was necessary for the woman to convey to her children the values of the progress of modern society. The educational system evolved from a segregated school model, in which gender roles are sharply divided, to a mixed model school. This current model is based on values such as equal rights in education for all, gender-mixed classes, cultural homogeneity, gender equality at a psychological and pedagogical level (Gomes, Silva & Queirós, 2000).

The literature argues that this model allows for equal access, but does not allow for equal opportunities, since equality is interpreted as uniformity. According to social learning theories, individuals learn what is considered appropriate for each sex through the process of socialization. According to these authors, this process makes it possible for a set of learning skills to be carried out through which boys and girls internalize behaviours, personality traits, social roles, and develop their own feelings and awareness of their masculinity and femininity, that is, they develop their gender identities. Before we continue our

study, it is essential to correctly delimit the concept of sex and the concept of gender. This distinction between sex and gender has allowed a breakthrough in understanding the differences between men and women. The concept of sex refers to the biological dimension and the concept of gender to the social dimension. Martelo (2000) states that sex is an inherent biological category of the individual. Gender is a social category, it is a set of social norms imposed on individuals constituting a model of psychosocial identity for the female sex and for the male sex. In fact, according to Monge et al. (1999), primary and secondary learning is conducted within the framework of a stereotyped notion marked by what is known as traditional social roles. According to Martelo (2000), sexual stereotypes are models for assessing the attitudes and behaviours of men and women, which are disseminated from generation to generation. For Lirgg (1991), quoted by Gomes et al. (2000), there is evidence that stereotypes will have a major influence on the way an individual thinks, which may limit the ability of effort and persistence in activities that are not appropriate to a specific gender. Neto (1999) states that the male stereotype is associated with certain patterns of superiority, such as independence, assertiveness and dominance. On the other hand, behaviours related to submission, expressiveness and orientation towards others are not expected. While boys are expected to behave in the exploration of spaces, a brief and aggressive behaviour towards other children, girls are expected to have a behaviour of observation, imitating behaviours that are usually preceded by communication.

Gender expectations, with which most adults in our society continue to work, are not determined at birth. Boys and girls are not born with a specific knowledge that they should behave in a particular way in order to be accepted by society. This behaviour is learned, and learning begins after birth. According to Gomes et al. (2000), the idea of diversity applied to education, is associated with the idea of promoting coexistence in difference. Thus, the concept of Equity in Education rises, which is based on the respect for the unique characteristics of each subject. Gomes (2001) states that coeducation in the subject of Physical Education of Sport translates into the value of motor activities and experiences associated with the female cultural model, so that both boys and girls experience them, thus not acquiring the male model as the only one or the prevailing one. According to Talbot (1990), "Physical Education and Sport in School should promote a variety of movement experiences for both boys and girls, countering gender stereotypes associated with physical and sports activities, and allowing all girls who attend school to acquire basic knowledge and skills, so as to participate in sports, dance or other activities; no other system or program that promotes sports, no matter how elaborate it may be, is capable of being that comprehensive of the female youth population" (cited by Silva & Almeida, 2001, 4, 75-85). The warning is given by Talbot (2001), in which young women need more support from the school and the educational system to enter the sporting world. Girls, unlike boys, do not acquire these behaviours and skills, through family, friends, commercial and public sectors. Thus, they depend on the school to acquire these types of behaviour. Biological differences are identified as the cause of differences in performance, as well as differences in expectations for boys and girls. They are real, but should be carefully considered so that they are not taken as the only reason to justify the differences between boys and girls. Whenever this might happen, myths start to appear (Talbot 1990), which may or may not depend on generalized observations, but instead might become very difficult to counter. For instance, these myths are generated by the acceptance that collective

sports are more suitable for boys than girls, or that girls do not like vigorous physical exercise during puberty (Talbot 1990).

Moreover, it can also be that, in collective sports, boys dominate regardless of motor skill differences between boys and girls (Siedentop, 1991). For Gomes et al. (2000) it is necessary that teachers, in particular, review the programs, contents, activities, teaching methods, equipment and conditions, in order to accommodate their practices with the needs of their students. For Bain (1985) & Gomes et al. (2000), the hidden curriculum comprises a set of norms, values, beliefs that teachers do not plan and which are transmitted in an unspoken way to the students through the learning climate and the process of teaching-learning. According to Dodds (1985), cited in Gomes et al. (2000), the hidden curriculum refers to tactical and silent messages, to written and spoken language, to norms and values that are transmitted in Physical Education and in accordance with Siedentop (1991), the teacher hierarchizes the subjects and objectives according to the beliefs that he/she has developed over the course of his/her life about Physical Education, the students, about the importance of content in relation to others and even with regards to the teaching methodology (Gomes et al., 2000). The expectations that boys and girls have about their performance may come from, according to Gomes et al. (2000), the different reactions of their teacher in situations of success/failure. According to the same authors, the boys' failure is explained by lack of effort or motivation.

On the other hand, the girls' failure is justified by the lack of skills. Additionally, the mistake of one girl is then generalized to the entire female gender, whereas the failure of a boy is considered individual (Alario-Trigueiros et al., 1999). The success situations of the girls are considered to be fortuitous (Alario-Trigueiros & Martinez, 1999, cited in Gomes et al., 2000; Trigueiros et al., 1999). According to Pimental (1991), Physical Education teachers are aware of differences in attitudes, interests and aptitudes between male students and female students. Despite this, they have a tendency of approaching the activity in the same way for the all students. For this reason, the teacher encounters participations that vary from the qualitative and quantitative point of view. What might happen is favouritism of the best students to the detriment of the not so good ones, thus making the differences in progression worse when it comes to learning. Sporting modalities are much more important, while cooperation and rhythmic activities are secondary. This means that the content is generally appreciated more by boys than by girls. Seldom are there traditionally female activities present in the classroom (Gomes et al., 2000). The participation of boys and girls in different sports, both inside and outside the school, has increased. Nonetheless, most physical activities continue to be identified with the male or female universe. Strength activities are usually associated with boys, and those that imply flexibility and coordination for girls (Gomes et al., 2000 & Soares et al., 2015).

From very early on, there are activities that are perceived by young people as being more appropriate for one sex or the other. When someone takes part in an activity that is supposedly characteristic of the opposite gender, he/she might get a strange reaction. He/she can even be the target of verbal discrimination such as: "you look like a girl", "girly girl" (in the case of the boys) or "Tomboy" (in the case of the girls). As referred by Gomes et al. (2000), these homophobic verbal behaviours may cause them to stay away from their activities. Siedentop (1991) also states that teachers often make stereotypical statements: "She does it quite well for a girl" or "Girls won't be able to do as many push-ups as the boys." Teachers need to be aware of how they distribute attention and ensure that all learners have equal learning opportunities as

well as the same quality of learning. Teachers need to be aware of the messages implied in their language and their interactions with students. It is important for teachers to avoid labelling "female" or "male" activities (Siedentop, 1991). Physical Education, based on the principle of integral education, should provide experiences that are neither explicitly nor implicitly based on gender stereotypes, thus leading to the elimination of prejudices.

2. Problem Statement

The overall objective of this study is to identify and understand the sporting motivations that lead female athletes to play futsal as well as to what extent age, years of competition and the team where the futsal is practiced motivate the athletes to practice this sport.

3. Research Questions

What sporting motivations influence female futsal athletes? To what extent does age, the years of competition and the team where the sport is practiced motivate the female athletes in this sporting activity?

4. Purpose of the Study

Our intention is to identify the sporting motivations that influence female athletes in the practice of futsal and to understand to what extent age, the years of competition and the team where futsal is played motivate these athletes. By identifying these factors, this study may help to promote futsal among young females in a non-discriminatory way, and also provide insights to Physical Educators regarding the potential among female students to excel in this sporting modality.

5. Research Methods

This is a quantitative study, working on a descriptive-correlation and cross-sectional design. In accordance with the objectives of the study, an intentional non-probabilistic sample composed of 53 female athletes from different teams in the region who play futsal was used. Regarding the instrument applied, a questionnaire was used to collect the data to be used to answer the research questions and objectives defined for this study. The questionnaire was made up of two distinct parts: the first collected data related to demographic variables with 9 items such as age, sex, literacy level, as well as items within the scope of sports characterization (function, technical qualifications, years of practice, ranking and competition. The objective of the second part of the questionnaire was to measure the dependent variable. For this, we used items related to motivation for sports activities from the QMAD (Serpa & Frias, 1992) which consists of 30 questions related to motivation for sports activities, in this case, playing futsal.

6. Findings

The results show that the highest percentage (30.2%) of the participants in this study was in the 17-19 age group, followed by the 25-32 age group. The remaining age groups 15-16 years and 20-24 years present percentages of 20.8% and 22.6%, respectively. (see tables 1 & 2).

Table 1. Age statistics of study participants

Variáveis	Min	Max	Média	Dp	Sk/erro	K/erro	CV
Total	15	32	20.74	4.53	1.89	-1.05	21.84%

Table 2. Distribution of age groups

Age groups	Nº	%
15 – 16 years old	11	20.8
17 – 19 years old	16	30.2
20 – 24 years old	12	22.6
25 – 32 years old	14	26.4
Total	53	100.0

The practice time of this modality ranges from 1 to 12 years, with an average of 4.45 years with a 95% confidence interval between 3.50 years and 5.40 years, and a standard deviation of 3.37 years. From the results presented, we observed that the highest percentage of respondents (35.9%) performs this sport between one and two years, but a very similar percentage (34.0%) has already been doing it between 5 and 12 years. The least representative group is the one who has been playing it between 3 and 4 years with 30.2%. (see tables 3 & 4)

Table 3. Statistics of the years of practice and of the modality

Variáveis	Min	Max	Média	Dp	Sk/erro	K/erro	CV
Total	1	12	4,45	3.37	2.53	-0853	75.73

Table 4. Distribution of futsal practice years

Years practice futsal	Nº	%
1 - 2 Years	19	35,8
3 – 4 Years	16	30,2
5 – 12 Years	18	34,0
Total	53	100.0

Among the aspects considered to be of minor or little importance for doing sport lies the excuse to get out of one's home, with 26.4% and 52.8% of respondents, respectively. Moreover, travelling with 39.6%, the influence of family and friends (35.8%), receiving prizes (34.0%), the feeling of being important (50.9%), being well-known (54.7%) and fundamentally being acknowledged and having prestige with 58.5%, are also issues of little importance for the study sample. We observed that the average values obtained in the different items oscillate between 1.98 in the item "excuse to leave the house" and 3.60 in the item "to improve technical abilities". In fact, it is in the items related to technical performance such as "teamwork", "learning new techniques", and "team spirit", among others, that the highest mean rates are observed. The binomial test reveals that the probability of playing futsal being very important or totally

important is 100.0%, with statistically significant differences in "improving technical skills", "being able to be with friends", "learning new techniques", "being in shape" and "having fun". On the other hand, the probability of being acknowledged and having prestige (66.0%), being well-known (64.0%), feeling important (58.0%) and having an "excuse to leave the house" (79.0%) are aspects of no or little importance to female futsal athletes. In the results obtained, we found that 47.2% of the athletes display poor motivation regarding sports activities, with a moderate motivation of 26.4% and the same percentage for high motivation. (see table 5)

Table 5. Statistics regarding the motivation for the futsal practice

Variáveis	Min	Max	Média	Dp	Sk/erro	K/erro	CV
Statute	11	28	20.22	3.35	0.006	0.961	16.56
Physical form	11	16	12.62	1.25	4.520	2.120	9.90
Competition	3	8	6.09	0.88	0.570	-5.280	14.40
General Affiliation	7	12	9.24	1.01	3.280	5.000	10.90
Technical competence	8	12	9.98	0.95	0.544	0.458	9.51”
Specific Affiliation / Team	9	16	12.43	2.36	0.648	-0.357	12.36
Emotions	5	12	9.11	1.03	-3.724	9.925	11.31
Pleasure / free time occupation	7	12	8.90	1.13	3.119	1.352	12.70
General Motivation	68	115	88.62	8.24	1.926	3.302	9.30

The second research question for this study was “To what extent does age, the years of competition and the team where the sport is practiced motivate the female athletes in this sporting activity?”

Regarding the research question on whether older athletes have higher motivation indexes for playing futsal than younger athletes, the results showed that the age group between 25 and 32 years old has a higher motivation level than the other groups when it comes to playing futsal due to social status, competition, the specific affiliation and team, emotions and the general motivation of the sport itself. On the other hand, the younger age group with ages between 15 and 16 years presents higher mean orders than the other groups with respect to the general affiliation, technical ability and pleasure/occupation of the free time that the practice of this modality has to offer. The intermediate age group, aged 17-19 years, does sports more for their physical shape. However, the difference in mean ordering between groups is not significant, which does not confirm the hypothesis formulated, that is, age is not a variable that explains the motivation for playing futsal. (see table 6)

Table 6. Kruskal Wallis test among age groups and motivation for futsal practice

groups	Age	15 - 16	17 - 19	20 - 24	25 - 32	X ²	p
		Average order	Average order	Average order	Average order		
Motivation factors							
Statute		27.05	21.78	24.33	35.21	6.228	0.101
Physical form		26.23	30.06	25.50	25.39	1.255	0.740
Competition		25.68	25.50	26.25	30.39	1.484	0.686
General Affiliation		30.14	27.06	24.38	26.71	1.416	0.702
Technical competence		31.05	24.81	24.04	28.86	2.010	0.570
Specific Affiliation / Team		26.77	26.00	21.96	32.64	3.367	0.338
Emotions		27.77	24.75	25.71	30.07	1.534	0.674
Pleasure / free time occupation		29.45	25.41	25.58	28.11	0.697	0.874
General Motivation		28.45	24.53	20.17	34.54	6.221	0.101

Concerning the research question whether the rates of motivation for the practice of futsal differ according to the team where this sport is held, the differences among the teams are only significant in terms of physical shape, general affiliation, specific and team affiliation and general motivation, which confirms hypothesis in these factors, but not in the remaining ones. In the question if athletes who have played futsal for more years have higher motivation indexes than athletes who have played it for less years, the results showed that only with regard to motivation due to status are the differences between the groups significant, which confirms the hypothesis “the older athletes present superior motivation indexes for the practice of futsal compared to the younger athletes” but does not confirm this in the other hypothesis. (see table 7)

Table 7. Kruskal Wallis test between sports clubs and motivation to practice futsal

Sports clubs	AAV	UEST	PEN	FTelha	Mortag	Crasto	X ²	p
	Average order							
Motivation factors								
Statute	27.88	29.04	17.35	28.92	30.57	29.85	5.014	0.414
Physical form	33.56	37.25	20.50	23.75	23.29	20.50	14.910	0.011
Competition	29.50	32.96	21.30	25.50	25.50	25.50	5.675	0.339
General Affiliation	35.81	34.33	19.20	23.50	23.50	23.50	15.897	0.007
Technical competence	29.13	29.96	20.05	24.58	32.79	26.10	4.421	0.491
Specific Affiliation / Team	34.94	38.75	10.45	22.33	24.57	27.60	22.267	0.000
Emotions	27.06	35.71	23.00	26.83	26.29	21.10	9.102	0.105
Pleasure / free time occupation	37.75	31.38	16.50	25.83	23.93	26.50	10.975	0.052
General Motivation	32.56	37.96	9.65	26.00	28.64	26.20	19.934	0.001

7. Conclusion

The sample we selected was made up of 53 female futsal athletes. As mentioned before, due to ethical-deontological reasons and since the size of the sample would easily allow the identification of the athletes who voluntarily participated in the study, data pertaining to the technical qualifications and academic qualifications, as well as the level of competition that the athletes perform was omitted.

The age of the athletes participating in this study ranged between a minimum age of 15 years and a maximum of 32. The time dedicated to this sporting modality ranged from 1 to 12 years, with the mean being 4.45 years. The items with significant statistical differences are "improving technical skills", "being with friends", "learning new techniques", "being physically fit", and "having fun." Samulski (2002) also points out that, doing sports depends on the personality of each individual and factors of the physical environment such as facilities, engaging tasks, challenges and social influences. For the item "learning new techniques", Weinberg (2001) points out that an athlete's self-esteem is directly related to his/her motivation, to feeling competent, to feeling that he/she has control over learning and skill performance, and that this will increase his/her satisfaction, his/her pride and his/her happiness.

Regarding the research questions, it was verified that "age" is not a variable that explains the motivation for the practice of futsal. According to Fernandes (2000), it is important to remember that an individual's levels of motivation or his/her degrees of responsiveness are directly interconnected with gender, age, level, ranking and type of intelligence, and even at a cultural level, one's social and economic situation. Still, Cratty (1983), Horn (1992) and Carvalho (1994) cited by Pereira (1997), state that individual and social needs are not felt in the same way by all individuals and, therefore, vary according to several factors such as age, sex, context, momentum, trend, social, economic, cultural and others. The differences between the teams are only significant with respect to "physical shape", "general affiliation", "specific affiliation and team" and "general motivation".

According to Becker (2000), motivation is a very important factor in the achievement of any objective. This factor is recognized by coaches both in practices and in competitions, which makes it a fundamental element for the athlete to follow the coach's practice sessions. Accordingly, Marques (2003) affirms that practice is repetitive and the tournaments and competitions are demanding with regard to achieving good results on the part of the whole sporting community. This is why it must also come from the inside out, because if the process is reversed then the cost will be very high, resulting from the wear and tear of the athlete in a short period of time. Hellschien (1991) quoted by Roberts & Treasure (1995), states that the success of the young athlete depends mainly on three factors: the quality of the coach, the athletes themselves and the athletes' parents. Taking the theories of these authors into consideration, we see that the coach and the entire sports community are a fundamental aspect in the motivation of the athlete. According to the results of the study, we observed that "team affiliation" and "being physically fit" vary from team to team, and the most consistent athletes consider the "physical shape" to be the most important for motivation. Whereas in other teams, with lower scores, there was a focus on "team affiliation" as the main motivational point. Thus, the results of this study concur with the theories mentioned in the work carried out. In relation to the last question, it was only found that "status" is an important aspect for motivation. The athletes with more years of Futsal practice chose this item as the most important.

According to Vroom & Deci (1979) motivation depends on the physiological impulses and acknowledgment that are provided by them. And without encouragement, there is no good performance. Motivation, according to Samulski (2002), throughout one's life, values change, as do the importance of the aforementioned motivational factors also change depending on the needs and opportunities. Although no author refers directly to "status", the athletes' social needs encompass "acknowledgment", "gratification" and "achieving results", factors that promote the construction of a social status by the athletes. According to this perspective and analysing the results obtained in the study, the athletes with more experience in the competition value these social factors more than the athletes with less experience in the competition, going against the theories mentioned by the previously mentioned authors.

Finally, despite the limitations of this study, we believe that in some way, we can contribute to the development, growth and motivation for female futsal athletes.

Acknowledgments

This work is financed by national funds through FCT - Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia, I.P., under the project UID/Multi/04016/2016. Furthermore, we would like to thank the Polytechnic Institute of Viseu and CI&DETS for their support.

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