

## Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivational Factors of the Women's Football Team "Super Team"<sup>1</sup>

### Factores Motivacionales Intrínsecos y Extrínsecos del Equipo de Fútbol Femenino "Super Team"

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#### Abstract

**Introduction:** This study analyzes the intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors in female soccer players from the "Super Team" in Medellín. It draws on Self-Determination Theory and cognitive-behavioral psychology to understand how motivation influences athletic performance. **Methodology:** A quantitative, descriptive, cross-sectional design was employed. The sample included 18 players selected through convenience sampling. The Sport Motivation Scale was **administered to assess intrinsic, extrinsic, and amotivational motivation**. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics in Python. **Results:** Findings indicate that intrinsic motivation prevails over extrinsic motivation. Players find satisfaction in learning and personal growth, with low levels of amotivation. **Conclusion:** The study confirms the importance of intrinsic motivation in women's soccer. However, extrinsic factors may also influence athletic development. Further research is recommended to compare results across different populations.

**Keywords:** Physical education, Sport, Psychology, Attitudes

#### Resumen

**Introducción:** El presente estudio analiza los factores motivacionales intrínsecos y extrínsecos en futbolistas femeninas del equipo "Super Team" de Medellín. Se basa en la teoría de la Autodeterminación y la psicología cognitivo-conductual para entender cómo la motivación influye en el desempeño deportivo. **Metodología:** Se empleó un enfoque cuantitativo, con diseño descriptivo y transversal. La muestra incluyó 18 jugadoras, seleccionadas por conveniencia. Se aplicó la Escala de Motivación Deportiva para evaluar la motivación intrínseca, extrínseca y la amotivación. El análisis se realizó mediante estadística descriptiva en Python. **Resultados:** Los hallazgos indican que la motivación intrínseca predomina sobre la extrínseca. Las jugadoras encuentran satisfacción en el aprendizaje y la superación personal, con bajos niveles de amotivación. **Conclusión:** Se confirma la importancia de la motivación intrínseca en el fútbol femenino. Sin embargo, los factores extrínsecos pueden influir en el desarrollo deportivo. Se recomienda ampliar el estudio para contrastar resultados en otras poblaciones.

**Palabras clave:** Educación física, Deporte, Psicología, Actitud

#### Introduction

Sport is one of the most significant social and cultural phenomena in the modern world, attracting a vast number of followers and practitioners across various

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disciplines. In particular, sports practice has been established as a healthy lifestyle habit, both physically and mentally, as it contributes to the prevention of diseases and disorders (WHO, 2022; Dosil, 2008). In this regard, sport has been recognized as an integrative phenomenon that significantly enhances an individual's psychophysiological health (Brohm, 1982). This relates to the emergence of spaces where sports activities have shaped lifestyles, impacting both personal development and physical performance.

Various authors have explored the field of sports sciences; one of them is Carlos Bernabé, who, in his work *The Person Behind the Athlete* (2020), proposes techniques that can be applied not only in sports but also in other aspects of life. Likewise, sports psychology has examined how cognitive processes, particularly motivation, play a fundamental role in athletic development. Among many variables, four pillars of sports performance have been identified: physical, technical, tactical, and psychological skills (Rocha, 2021), with the latter being especially relevant as they include aspects such as motivation, concentration, and anxiety management. Motivation, defined as the athlete's drive toward activity and persistence in achieving goals, is described by Dosil (2007) as the force that enables athletes to persevere, find energy in moments of weakness, and cope with the various demands of sports practice.

Within this context, football, regarded as the king of sports and practiced by over 265 million people (Kunz, 2007; Cesteros, 2024), emerges as a complex field of study. Playing this sport involves various psychological variables, such as attention, perception, memory, and, most notably, motivation, which is essential for the mental training of football players and directly influences their performance. In this regard, identifying motivation levels and their impact on psychological skills and athletic performance is crucial.

In women's football, the expansion of FIFA's development program has driven growth both globally and nationally. In Colombia, the Women's Professional Football League, inaugurated in 2017, has led to a significant cultural shift and increased the popularity of women's football. The women's football club *Super Team Sports*, founded in 2014 in Medellín, is an institution committed to the comprehensive development of its players, providing opportunities in local, national, and international competitions. In this context, the club acknowledges the importance of motivation in athletic development, considering that it can directly influence performance and help players overcome challenges that may affect them.

The research question of this study is: *What are the intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors present in*

*the training environments of the women's football club "Super Team Sports" in Medellín, within the Libre category?* Consequently, the general objective is to analyze the intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors of the athletes. The rationale for this study lies in the concept of motivation, understood as a set of internal and external factors that determine a person's actions. Motivation is essential in sports practice, influencing not only the choice of activity but also the intensity, persistence, and performance level.

This study focuses on motivation in women's football, specifically within a particular club, and aims to provide practical strategies for coaches to influence athletes' motivational development. Additionally, it seeks to generate alternatives that contribute to achieving training objectives and enhancing sports performance, including lifestyle, sleep, diet, studies, and interpersonal relationships (Vora, 2016; Rodríguez & Vaccari, 2023). The research is also expected to serve as a theoretical and practical resource to inspire future studies on the role of motivation in sports, specifically in women's football.

This section will address previous studies that may serve as foundational references for the investigative work presented here. Therefore, attention is given to research that, across various sports contexts, has contributed to developing insights, perspectives, and strategies for approaching motivation in football practice.

In the study conducted by Cruz et al. (2024), the psychosocial factors influencing girls' participation in football in the Autonomous City of Melilla, Spain, were investigated. The study adopted a quantitative, descriptive, non-experimental, and cross-sectional approach. A total of 135 federated female football players from various teams and women's football clubs in Melilla participated. For data collection, three instruments were used: the *Sport Motivation Scale-II* (SMS-II), the *Self-Concept Questionnaire Form 5* (AF-5), and the *Intrinsic Motivation Inventory* (IMI). These questionnaires allowed for the assessment of sports motivation, self-concept, and participants' perception of football as an activity. The results indicated that the perception of football as a playful and social activity has a significant impact on the girls' motivation, surpassing the influence of variables such as religion and self-concept. Factors such as social support, enjoyment, and personal success on the field reinforce this positive perception. Additionally, it was observed that as players grow older, both their interest in the game and intrinsic motivation tend to decline, which may affect their long-term participation in the sport. The study concludes that a positive perception of football is the primary driving force behind girls' engagement in the sport, followed by the psychological

and social benefits that enhance their self-efficacy and social acceptance. Although factors such as religion and a positive self-concept also contribute to motivation, their influence is less significant compared to the perception of the activity itself.

Sanmiguel-Rodríguez (2021) aimed to analyze professional satisfaction among 16 players from a professional football club in Spain. The study employed a quantitative methodology, using a questionnaire that assessed various aspects of participants' professional satisfaction and motivation. The results indicate that although team members generally express satisfaction with their profession, certain elements and factors negatively affect this perception. These factors include the perceived support from the sports management, group cohesion, and team camaraderie. The study concludes that improving satisfaction requires strengthening perceived support from sports management and fostering group cohesion and camaraderie within the team.

Following this line of research, the study by Duclós et al. (2021) examined perceptions of sports motivation among university football players, comparing gender differences using a quantitative design with a sample of 171 university football players (both male and female) from five university teams in the Valparaíso region of Chile. To assess sports motivation, the Chilean version of the Sports Motivation Scale (EMD-2ch) was used, which evaluates six dimensions of motivation in sports. The analyses revealed statistically significant differences between male and female athletes in two of the six scale dimensions. Specifically, female players showed a stronger tendency to feel better about themselves during practice than their male counterparts. The study highlights the importance of considering gender differences in sports motivation, particularly in the university context. The authors suggest that future psychological research on university sports teams in Chile should focus on motivation as a central element in sports practice.

Soto (2022) provides a crucial perspective relevant to this study by investigating motivational factors in a women's futsal team. The research involved 11 athletes aged between 15 and 22 years. To assess motivational factors, the Sports Motivation Scale (EMD) was used, complemented by a sociodemographic questionnaire. The findings indicated that Intrinsic Motivation (IM) prevailed over Extrinsic Motivation (EM) in all evaluated athletes. Additionally, very low levels of amotivation were observed, with scores not exceeding 11. When analyzing data by years of sports practice, players with more than 10 years of experience showed higher levels of IM oriented toward goal achievement

and lower levels of external regulation than other groups. Regarding age classification, athletes over 18 scored higher in all dimensions except for amotivation, where scores remained similar across age groups. The study concludes that players from the women's futsal team of Carmen de Viboral are primarily motivated by intrinsic factors, such as enjoyment and personal satisfaction derived from sports practice. The importance of considering experience and age in designing motivational strategies is highlighted, as these factors appear to influence predominant types of motivation. Promoting intrinsic motivation could contribute to the long-term development and sustained participation in sports within this population group.

Serrano et al. (2022) investigated the motivations and perceived obstacles of female soccer players in the competitive field of Córdoba, Spain. Using a quantitative approach, they applied the *Scale for the Analysis of Motivations and Obstacles for Women in Competitive Soccer* (ESOFUM) to a sample of 189 players from seven clubs in the region. The results indicated that the primary motivation for female soccer players is the pursuit of personal well-being, encompassing health, physical appearance, psychological balance, and social interaction. However, significant obstacles were identified, particularly those stemming from gender stereotypes rooted in a patriarchal culture, including traditional conceptions of femininity and motherhood. Additionally, the study highlighted that precarious economic and working conditions in professional women's soccer serve as barriers that hinder the establishment of a stable sports career for female players. In conclusion, while playing soccer offers multiple benefits to women, structural challenges persist that limit their full development in the sport. The authors emphasize the need to implement measures tailored to the realities of female players, aiming to dignify their participation and transform the traditionally masculinized perception of soccer.

Biscué (2022) also explores the psychological aspects of sports by assessing the motivational factors involved in soccer practice and incorporating variables related to competitive anxiety and sports performance in a women's futsal team. The study adopted an exploratory and descriptive approach with a non-experimental design. Eight players from the representative futsal team of *Fundación Universitaria Católica Lumen Gentium* (Unicatólica) in Cali, Colombia, participated in the research. To assess *Competitive State Anxiety*, the *Competitive State Anxiety Inventory – Revised Version II* (CSAI-2R) was used, measuring the dimensions of somatic anxiety, cognitive anxiety, and self-confidence. Motivation was evaluated using the *Sports Motivation Scale* (EMD),

which assesses intrinsic, extrinsic, and amotivation. Sports performance was recorded using a custom-designed form, which included indicators such as shots on goal and goals scored. The results revealed that players exhibited low to moderate levels of somatic anxiety (scores between 7 and 23) and low levels of cognitive anxiety (scores between 5 and 15). Regarding motivation, high to very high levels of intrinsic motivation were observed (scores between 75 and 85), while extrinsic motivation showed variability (scores between 24 and 82). Amotivation scores were low. A moderate negative correlation was found between anxiety (both somatic and cognitive) and sports performance, indicating that lower anxiety levels were associated with greater effectiveness in execution. On the other hand, self-confidence showed a positive correlation with performance, although to a lesser extent. The study concludes that both motivation and *Competitive State Anxiety* influence the sports performance of female futsal players. The athletes demonstrated the ability to maintain a motivational focus under competitive pressure and leverage their individual skills, contributing to the team's optimal performance.

Finally, this article is framed within cognitive-behavioral psychology, which, since its origins with Watson in 1913, has promoted an objective and experimental view of psychology (Patiño, 2018). Complementing this perspective, *Self-Determination Theory* (SDT) focuses on human motivation and behavioral self-regulation. It proposes that personality development is based on innate psychological needs and consists of four sub-theories: *Cognitive Evaluation Theory*, *Organismic Integration Theory*, *Causality Orientations Theory*, and *Basic Needs Theory* (Ryan & Deci, 2000). These sub-theories address how different conditions can foster positive processes in self-motivation.

Among the key concepts, motivation refers to the energy, direction, and persistence in action, serving as a central element in biological, cognitive, and social regulation. According to Ryan and Deci, "*motivation has been a central and perennial issue in the field of psychology, as it lies at the heart of biological, cognitive, and social regulation*" (p. 3, 2000). Current approaches focus on cognitive aspects and on addressing motivational issues across domains such as work, education, and sports (Stover et al., 2017).

Intrinsic motivation is characterized by the drive to explore and enjoy activities without external rewards. It is related to curiosity and interest in the activity itself, making it essential for learning and personal development. As Ryan and Deci state, "*children, in a healthy state, are active, inquisitive, curious, and playful, even in the absence of specific rewards*" (p. 3,

2000). On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is determined by external rewards and environmental mediators. According to Moreno, this type of motivation "*is determined by rewards or external agents*" (p. 5, 2006). Its complexity lies in how these factors influence persistence and individual well-being, potentially leading to demotivation if they are not aligned with internal desires.

## Methodology

### Type of Study

This study employs a quantitative approach to evaluate sports motivation through data collection and hypothesis testing, following the methodological framework defined by Hernández-Sampieri et al. (2014). It is a non-experimental, descriptive study aimed at characterizing intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors among the players of the *Super Team Sports* club in Medellín. The study does not seek to manipulate variables or establish causal relationships, but rather to identify and analyze players' motivation levels in their real-world context. This design allows for the observation and documentation of motivations without altering participants' behavior, facilitates comparisons with previous research on sports motivation, and provides a reference for future studies with more analytical or experimental approaches.

Additionally, this study follows a cross-sectional design, as data is collected at a single point in time. According to Albán et al. (2020), descriptive research aims to provide a structured understanding of the phenomenon, enabling comparisons with other sources or similar studies. The analyzed variables correspond to specific dimensions of sports motivation, defined within the sample to facilitate an appropriate cross-sectional analysis.

### Participants

This research was conducted with a sample of 18 female football players from the 'Super Team Sports' team, in the open category. The selection of the population is justified by methodological aspects. Firstly, a convenience sampling method was used, meaning that accessible and available participants from the 'Super Team Sports' team in Medellín's open category were selected. By focusing on a specific club, the number of eligible players for the study was limited, reducing the possibility of including a larger sample while still allowing inclusion of the entire population.

Another relevant factor is the group's homogeneity. All participants share similar characteristics in terms of competitive level, experience, and sporting context,

allowing for consistent data collection without the need for a larger sample. Although a larger population would enable more robust statistical analyses, the sample size is sufficient to meet the study's descriptive objectives.

The inclusion criteria required female football players from this team in the open category, while the exclusion criteria excluded players from other categories or from other teams.

Regarding sociodemographic characteristics, the participants are women aged 18 or older with a secondary or higher education level and from the same region as the sports club (Medellín). Data collection took place at the club's facilities, in accordance with ethical considerations regarding confidentiality and informed consent from all participants.

### Materials and Instruments

For data collection in this study, the primary instrument used was the Sports Motivation Scale, based on the sports motivation model by Castillo and Duda (2007). This scale asks participants to answer the question: Why do you participate in your sport? through 28 items distributed across seven subscales, aiming to assess the three types of motivation defined by Deci and Ryan (2000): intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and amotivation.

The psychometric properties of this scale include validity and reliability, previously established in similar studies within the sports field. Data analysis was conducted using Python® version 3.11.5, which enabled descriptive statistical analyses necessary for the research design of this study.

In addition, a sociodemographic questionnaire was administered, which requested only the athletes' age, given that, as an Open Category competition, participation is permitted for players aged 18 years and older.

### Procedure

To achieve the objectives of this research, a series of structured steps and procedures was implemented. First, the previously mentioned sample was selected. The participant selection followed specific inclusion and exclusion criteria, ensuring group homogeneity and allowing the results to reflect the particular characteristics of the studied team. This selection facilitates data interpretation based on the participants' shared characteristics, such as their experience in the sport and their membership in the same sports club.

The data collection instrument was administered in a group session held at the team's facilities, ensuring a controlled environment and allowing researchers to observe the process directly. For this purpose, the

questionnaire was transferred to the Google Forms platform. During a 30-minute session, participants completed the questionnaire in a familiar and comfortable setting, minimizing potential distractions or external biases.

For the analysis of the collected data, a statistics expert was hired to work with Python software, version 3.11.5. Various statistical tests were conducted, including measures of central tendency and dispersion, frequency and distribution analysis, and the calculation of Cronbach's Alpha. This quantitative analysis was essential for identifying, establishing, and characterizing the different motivational factors among athletes, facilitating interpretation of the results in terms of intrinsic, extrinsic, and amotivational motivation.

Additionally, a strict protocol was followed to ensure the confidentiality of the responses and compliance with ethical research principles. The study was conducted respectfully and transparently for the participants, in accordance with Law 1090 of Colombia.

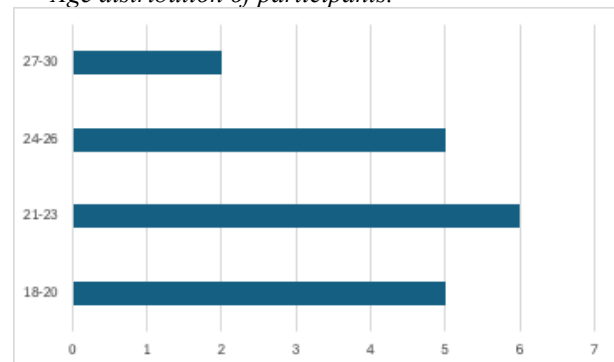
### Results

Figures and tables will be presented to facilitate the interpretation and interaction with the data, which will later allow verification or rejection of the following hypothesis: The athletes' motivation is more influenced by intrinsic factors than by extrinsic factors.

Regarding the sociodemographic data, the majority of participants were in the 21–23 age range. Additionally, an equal distribution of 10 players was observed between the 18–20 and 24–26 age brackets (Figure 1). Lastly, the lowest representation corresponded to the 27–30 age group, with 30 years being the highest age recorded and 18 years the lowest.

**Figure 1.**

*Age distribution of participants.*



*Note: Own elaboration, 2024. Generated through the analysis performed using Excel software, version 2411.*

As observed, Cronbach's alpha exceeded 0.71 for most subscales, indicating that the items exhibit strong correlations with the variable being measured. However, the introjected regulation subscale yielded a value of 0.5, suggesting that the questions do not correlate strongly with the intended variable.

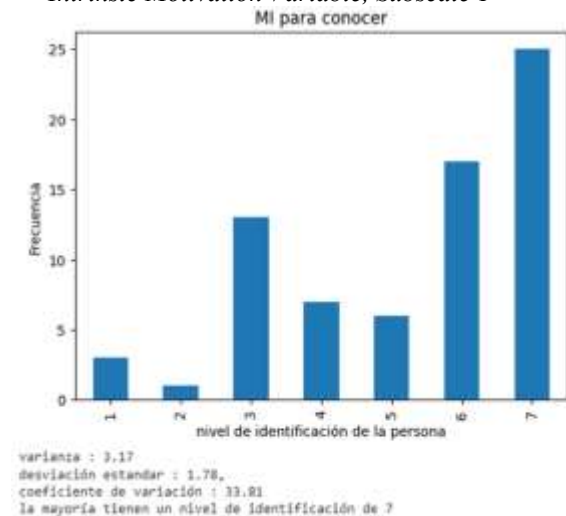
**Table 1.**  
Cronbach's Alpha by Scales

Scales	Subscales	Cronbach's Alpha
Intrinsic Motivation	To know	0,88
	To experience excitement	0,85
	To achieve things	0,72
Extrinsic Motivation	Identified regulation	0,77
	Introjected regulation	0,5
	External regulation	0,83
Amotivation	No motivation	0,81

Note: Own elaboration, 2024. Generated from the analysis using Python software, version 3.11.5.

Regarding the questionnaire results, it is evident that, for Subscale 1, most respondents scored 7 (Figure 2), indicating a high level of interest among athletes in learning and developing new sports skills. Athletes motivated in this dimension enjoy the process of learning techniques and improving their performance.

**Figure 2.**  
Intrinsic Motivation Variable, Subscale 1

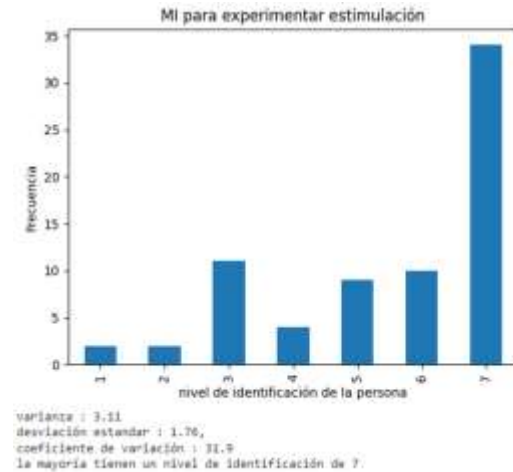


Note: Own elaboration, 2024. Generated from the analysis using Python software, version 3.11.5.

The second subscale assesses athletes' desire for self-improvement and the achievement of personal goals.

This motivation is linked to the enjoyment of facing and overcoming challenges, leading to a sense of competence and effectiveness. The results show that the average response is 7, indicating a high level for this subscale (Figure 3).

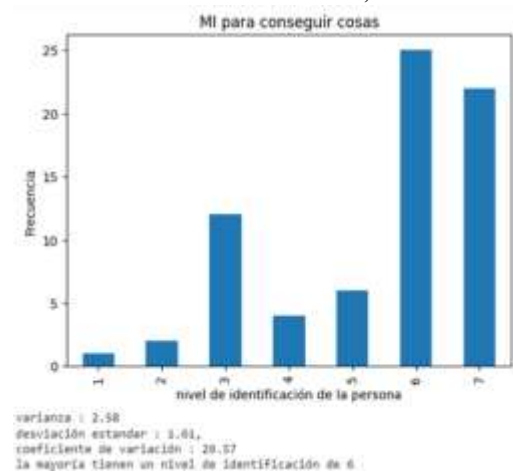
**Figure 3.**  
Intrinsic Motivation Variable, Subscale 2



Note: Own elaboration, 2024. Generated from the analysis using Python software, version 3.11.5.

Finally, a score of 6 is observed in the third subscale, which represents the athlete's interest in experiencing gratifying and stimulating sensations through physical activity, such as the feeling of flow or physical pleasure that arises during sports practice (Figure 4).

**Figure 4.**  
Intrinsic Motivation Variable, Subscale 3

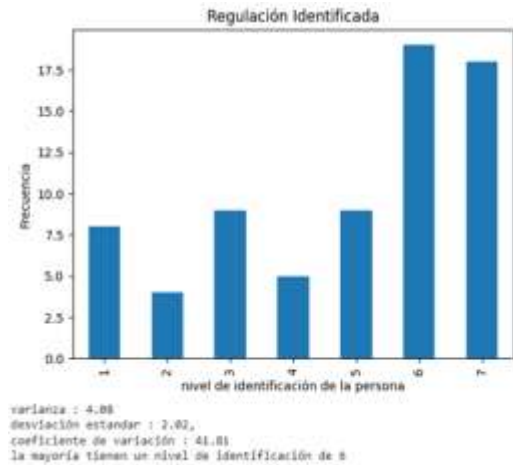


Note: Own elaboration, 2024. Generated from the analysis using Python software, version 3.11.5.

Regarding extrinsic motivation, a score of 6 is observed in the first subscale, indicating a high level of internalization of external goals, where the athlete is motivated by recognizing the personal value of the activity. In this regulation, the athlete understands and

values the benefits of sports for personal development or health, allowing them to participate more autonomously and with less external control (Figure 5).

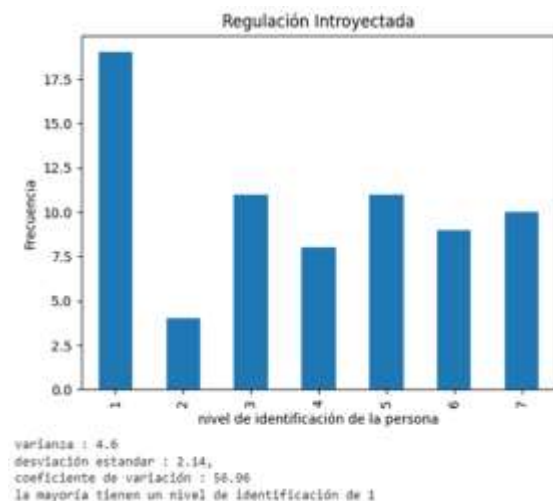
**Figure 5.**  
*Extrinsic motivation, subscale 1*



Note: Own elaboration, 2024. Generated from the analysis using Python software, version 3.11.5.

Figure 6 identifies motivation based on self-imposed pressure or guilt. In this case, the predominant response was 1, indicating that the athletes do not engage in sports to avoid feeling bad about themselves or to meet self-imposed expectations, such as the need to prove their worth or gain social acceptance.

**Figure 6.**  
*Extrinsic motivation, subscale 2*

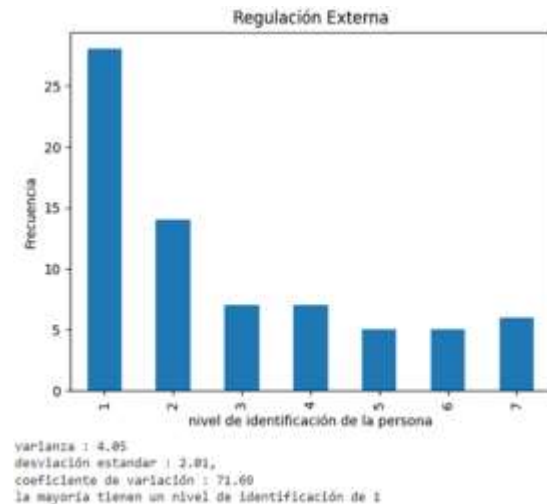


Note: Own elaboration, 2024. Generated from the analysis using Python software, version 3.11.5.

Finally, in the third subscale of extrinsic motivation, it is evident that the athletes' motivation is not influenced by external rewards or punishments, such as prizes,

recognition, or avoiding negative consequences (Figure 7).

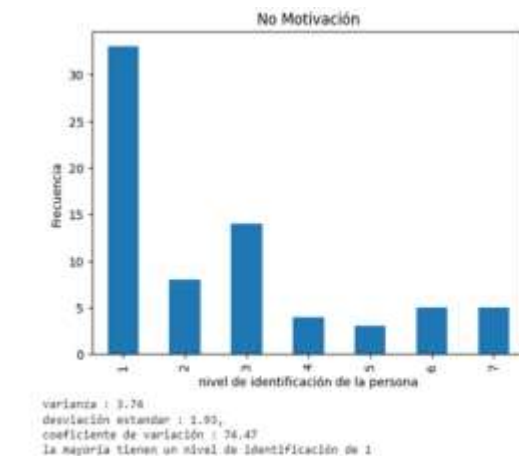
**Figure 7.**  
*Extrinsic motivation, subscale 3*



Note: Own elaboration, 2024. Generated from the analysis using Python software, version 3.11.5.

Regarding amotivation, most participants scored a 1, indicating that the athletes do find reasons to continue practicing the sport and do not experience a general lack of interest. This subscale is important because it may highlight the need for interventions to prevent sports disengagement and promote a more autonomous, sustainable form of motivation over time.

**Figure 8.**  
*Amotivation, subscale 1*

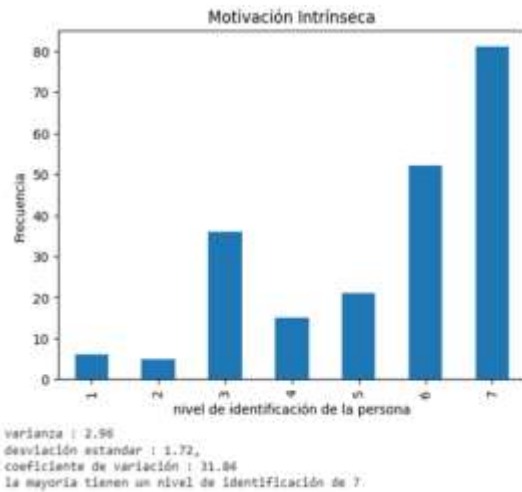


Note: Own elaboration, 2024. Generated from the analysis using Python software, version 3.11.5.

In summary, Figure 9 reveals that the average score for the athletes' intrinsic motivation variables reaches a value of 7, indicating a high level of motivation in this dimension. This result suggests that the athletes are highly driven by internal factors, such as the desire for

self-improvement, the pleasure of learning new skills, and the satisfaction derived from sports practice. A high level of intrinsic motivation is essential for performance and persistence in physical activity, as it fosters commitment and dedication to training and competitions. This finding may have significant implications for designing training programs aimed at further enhancing this motivation among athletes.

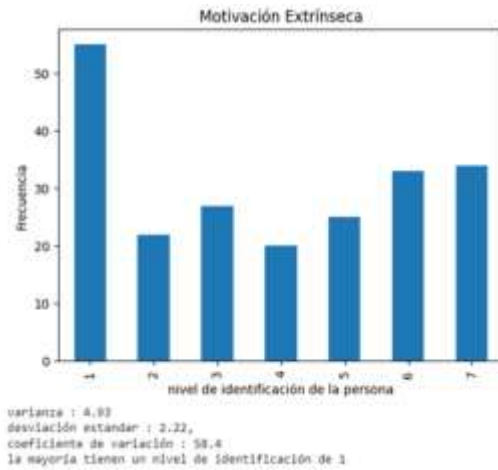
**Figure 9.**  
*Intrinsic Motivation Scale*



*Note: Own elaboration, 2024. Generated from the analysis using Python software, version 3.11.5.*

In contrast, in the case of extrinsic motivation, an average score of 1 is observed, suggesting that athletes exhibit a significantly low level of motivation driven by external factors. This result indicates that, in general, the athletes are not driven by external rewards, such as prizes or recognition, to participate in their sport. Low extrinsic motivation may indicate a preference for the intrinsic aspects of sports, such as self-improvement and personal satisfaction. This trend is essential: low extrinsic motivation may limit interest in achieving external goals, but it can also indicate a deep connection to the activity itself. Understanding this phenomenon is essential for developing strategies to strengthen athletes' motivation, considering that external support and recognition can play a crucial role in their growth and development in the sports field.

**Figura 10.**  
*Extrinsic motivation Scale*



*Note: Own elaboration, 2024. Generated from the analysis using Python software, version 3.11.5.*

### Conclusions

In discussing the results, the findings from the data analysis have been integrated with the principles of cognitive-behavioral theory (CBT), self-determination theory (SDT), and the elements outlined in the conceptual framework, including concepts of motivation, intrinsic motivation, and extrinsic motivation. Firstly, it has been shown that athletes' motivation is intrinsic, driven by an inherent tendency toward personal growth. As Ryan and Deci (2000) stated, the needs for self-motivation, personal integration, and satisfaction are intrinsic. They are associated with the perception of fulfillment and personal enjoyment in sports activity.

SDT, in this context, contributes its "basic needs theory," which can be traced to Abraham Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs. Although in this hierarchy self-actualization and self-esteem appear at the top, for the female soccer players on the "Super Team Sports" team, these needs are of greater relevance. In line with identifying intrinsic motivational factors in the open-category female soccer team from Medellín, it is observed that players' interest in exploring and experiencing stimuli is a key factor. These intrinsic variables, previously analyzed through various questions in the data analysis, are clearly reflected in the responses.

According to Moreno (2006), intrinsic motivation is related to the need to obtain satisfaction from performing an activity without a direct external reward. This statement aligns with the participants' responses, as they emphasize that their primary reason for playing soccer is the way they feel while playing—a personal connection that provides significant intrinsic value. Likewise, this study's findings confirm

the predominance of intrinsic over extrinsic motivation among the soccer players of Medellín's "Super Team." It was found that intrinsic motivation had an average score of 7, indicating that players find satisfaction in learning and personal growth, whereas extrinsic motivation showed considerably lower values. This result is consistent with Soto's (2022) findings, which reported that, among female futsal players, intrinsic motivation prevails over extrinsic motivation and that amotivation is low.

Likewise, it was observed that introjected regulation within extrinsic motivation obtained the lowest score (0.5 in Cronbach's Alpha), suggesting that the players do not practice soccer due to external pressures or self-imposed expectations. The studies by Serrano et al. (2022) and Cruz et al. (2024) highlight the importance of intrinsic motivation in women's soccer while also identifying sociocultural and economic barriers that limit women's participation in sports.

Additionally, the findings align with the research by Sanmiguel-Rodríguez (2021), who identified that support from sports management and group cohesion influence players' motivation and satisfaction. In the case of the "Super Team" squad, the lack of external regulatory influence suggests that recognition and rewards are not predominant factors in players' continued participation on the team. The results indicate that although intrinsic motivation is the primary driver for players, a supportive, recognition-based environment could further enhance their commitment to the sport.

On the other hand, the low level of amotivation (average of 1) supports this argument, indicating that the players do not exhibit disinterest in sports. Viáfara's (2022) study on competitive anxiety and motivation reinforces the idea that high levels of intrinsic motivation are associated with lower anxiety and higher performance. This finding is relevant because it suggests that promoting autonomy and enjoyment in sports practice not only enhances players' motivation but may also contribute to better management of competitive pressure.

Furthermore, this study reveals that intrinsic factors are predominant in the players' motivation, as they value satisfaction and enjoyment in the game, learning new skills, and developing strategies, reinforcing intrinsic motivation as the main element. A general trend in women's soccer toward intrinsic motivational factors is observed, characterized by interest and enjoyment in the activity itself, as well as the development of feelings of mastery, efficacy, and autonomy (Reeve & Deci, 1996; Epstein & Harackiewicz, 1992, cited by Aguilar et al., 2016).

Finally, the research by Rocha (2021) and Rodríguez Feilberg & Vaccari (2023) highlights the importance of a support structure for athletic development. Rocha emphasizes that concentration and anxiety management are key factors for performance, while Rodríguez Feilberg & Vaccari stress the need for educational policies that balance academic and athletic training. In this context, although intrinsic motivation predominates in our study, the implementation of external support strategies is recommended to reinforce players' motivation and ensure the continuity of their sports practice.

The hypothesis proposed in this research, which states that athletes' motivation is more influenced by intrinsic factors than extrinsic ones, has been confirmed. The results show an average identification level of 7 in internal motivation subscales and 1 in external ones, indicating a greater influence of intrinsic factors. However, the difference in responses between the scale item averages suggests that, while intrinsic motivation is dominant, the influence of extrinsic factors cannot be entirely ruled out (Figure 11).

It should be noted that, due to the selected sample, the results cannot be generalized to all women who play soccer. Nevertheless, the findings serve as a foundation for future research models in sports psychology.

**Figure 11.**  
*Hypothesis Testing*



*Note: Own elaboration, 2024. Generated from the analysis using Python software, version 3.11.5.*

One of the central concepts of SDT is that of basic psychological needs, considered universal and essential for well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000, cited by Jiménez-Castuera et al., 2015). These needs include autonomy, competence, and relatedness, with autonomy being the most relevant for the motivation of the analyzed players. Although external factors are not predominant, they have a significant influence, indicating that the social environment can impact motivation depending on the fulfillment of these basic psychological needs. In this context, the hierarchical model of motivation (HMM) demonstrates how social and personal aspects interact to motivate athletes without any incompatibility between them.

For future research, it is recommended to explore specific strategies that promote a balance between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in women's soccer. While the findings show that players find satisfaction in learning and personal growth, it is essential to examine how external factors, such as recognition, financial incentives, and institutional support, can contribute to athlete retention and the sustainable development of the team.

The studies by Serrano et al. (2022) and Cruz et al. (2024) highlight structural and sociocultural barriers that affect women's participation in soccer, including gender stereotypes and precarious economic conditions. In this sense, although intrinsic motivation is key to persistence in sports, addressing extrinsic factors is essential to fostering a favorable environment for the development of women's soccer. Therefore, conducting longitudinal studies to evaluate how female players' motivation evolves over time and at different stages of their sports careers would be valuable. This would enable the identification of potential changes in their motivational needs and the design of personalized interventions to optimize their performance and well-being.

Another relevant aspect for future research is the impact of group cohesion and social support on motivation and sports performance. Previous studies have indicated that a positive team environment influences players' satisfaction and commitment. Investigating perceptions of teamwork, communication, and leadership within the team could provide key insights to improve team dynamics.

Finally, it is suggested that the analysis be expanded to include different contexts and categories of women's soccer, comparing professional, semi-professional, and amateur teams. This would help determine whether the motivational factors identified in this study are generalizable or vary according to the team's competitive level and structural conditions.

Finally, the primary hypothesis has been statistically confirmed, and the study's potential biases and limitations, such as its lack of statistical representativeness, have been acknowledged. Therefore, the findings presented here should be interpreted with caution, underscoring the need for more targeted research on women's soccer. This gap in the literature should be addressed to expand understanding and allow for stronger comparisons in this field.

Eduardo Galeano's reflection (cited by Rodríguez-Maya & Ramos-Ríos, 2008) on the loss of beauty in soccer due to its industrialization contrasts with this research's findings, which emphasize the enjoyment

and intrinsic motivation of female players in practicing the sport.

The differences and similarities between this study and others help contextualize the results, suggesting that the factors of autonomy, competence, and relatedness apply to motivation in other sports and populations. In summary, this study provides valuable insights into intrinsic motivation in women's soccer and opens the door to future research in diverse contexts.

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59