

## World Gymnaestrada: reasons to join a massive gymnastics festival

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### Abstract

**Background:** The Mass Participation Sporting Events (MPSE) have multiplied throughout the 20th century, consolidating themselves as an important socio-cultural phenomenon in the contemporary society. In this sense, the gymnastics festivals have been an integral part of the gymnastics community since the last two decades of the 19th century and even currently represent a prominent venue for promoting sports participation. **Purpose:** This study analyses participants' motivation to join the XVI World Gymnaestrada (WG) held in Dornbirn (Austria) in 2019, one of the most important international non-competitive gymnastics festivals. **Materials and methods:** Using a quantitative approach, the Goal Content for Exercise Questionnaire (GCEQ) was applied to 1024 participants (813 females and 211 males), aged 18 to 85 years, and statistically analysed using a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). Gender, age group, and amount of WG participation were treated as between-subject factors, while the GCEQ factors (Social Affiliation, Image, Health Management, Social Recognition, and Skill Development) were used as dependent variables. **Results:** Social Affiliation is the most important motivational factor, followed by Skill Development and Health Management. Motivational factors varied according to the age group and the number of participations in the WG. **Conclusions:** The most relevant motivational factors for participating in this event are intrinsic factors, which corroborates WG's non-competitive nature and reveals different interests to join this gymnastics festival. In addition, more frequent WG participation increases the importance of Social Affiliation. These data reveal the importance of non-competitive sporting events and long-term participation, especially for fostering social relationships between participants.

**Keywords:** sport participation, motivation, Gymnastics for All, non-competitive events

### Introduction

Sporting events have played an essential role in modern society, contributing to individual and social development (Kaplanidou, 2021; Merkel, 2015; Teare & Taks, 2021; Thomson, Kennelly & Toohey, 2020). Recent studies reinforce the importance of Mass Participation Sporting Events (MPSE) in promoting sports participation locally and globally (Hillman *et al.*, 2021). In fact, MPSE have been fostering the most different experiences for participants, bringing together thousands of people with a common interest, strengthening social relationships, and contributing to cultural exchange (Raimondi *et al.*, 2021). Thus, the multiple benefits that sport festivals bring to the community involved have motivated social development and the promotion of the participants' quality of life (Getz & Page, 2019), as it is possible to notice in the particular field of gymnastics (Taeymans *et al.*, 2010; Patrício, Bortoleto & Carbinatto, 2016; Wichmann, 2017).

Different approaches have been used to understand the impacts of MPSE on its participants and its host communities. In addition to the economic benefits, which are already attested by previous studies (Perić, 2018; Zhou & Kaplanidou, 2018), these events can offer social earnings such as the increase in cohesion and identity of the local community, socialization, groups togetherness, and subjective well-being, besides the educational and cultural benefits (Getz & Page, 2019). The MPSE get more relevance in promoting sports tourism (Wichmann & Jarvis, 2015; Getz & Page, 2019). Therefore, MPSE seem to have an important social role and be a "catalyst for socio-economic development" (Yolal *et al.*, 2016).

Among the research themes developed on these sporting events, what interests us more is the motivation to take part in these events. As already mentioned, MPSE could have impacts on different levels, such as personal, social, and political, and the effect on a personal level comprises motivation (Coleman & Sebire, 2017). Recent studies have highlighted that factors affecting motivation are multifarious and can be different in different sports and physical education contexts. Both intrinsic (e.g., health, skills, and social affiliation) and extrinsic (e.g., appearance or social recognition) factors are constantly approached by different tools to measure the motivation in high-performance sports, in physical activity and exercise programs, in sports initiation at clubs and schools, in Physical Education lessons, in MPSE, and in the sport events volunteers (Cid *et al.*, 2019; Castro-Sanchez *et al.*, 2018; Chu & Zhang, 2018). As concerns MPSE, which brings together several different people and interests

in the context of Sports Participation, the motivations could be even more assorted (Buning & Walker, 2016; Coleman & Sebire, 2017).

The MPSE seem to be a relevant phenomenon to discuss some contemporary demands such as health maintenance, social development, educational values of sports, and sports participation (Funk *et al.*, 2011; Gardner *et al.*, 2017; Wichmann, 2015), being included in the agenda of many organizations as UNESCO and International Olympic Committee. For that reason, the motivations for participating in MPSE have constituted an important scientific topic (Coleman & Sebire, 2017) but also can be a prerequisite to support the development of organizational strategies and to reinforce some of the benefits provided by these events (Tsai *et al.*, 2015). Thus, we noticed a significant development of tools to investigate this subject, as highlighted by Raimondi, Lawrence and O'Reilly (2021). Among them, the redacted version of the Goal Content for Exercise Questionnaire (GCEQ) (Sebire *et al.*, 2008) validated its ease of application and efficiency in measurement. Those protocols have supported a better understanding of sports participation, discriminating demographic, geographic aspects, and age, among other variables and trends (Kurniawan *et al.*, 2022; Gut *et al.*, 2021).

In that regard, a particular interest has been noted on how massive gymnastics events have become a gear for motivating sports participation (Patricio & Carbinatto, 2023; Bortoleto *et al.*, 2019; Wichmann, 2015, 2017). In its context, one of the most recognized international festivals in the gymnastics field is the World Gymnaestrada (WG), organized by the International Gymnastics Federation (FIG) in partnership with different National Gymnastics Federation. The WG is a non-competitive event and the largest gymnastics festival in the number of participating countries (Wichmann, 2015). Celebrated since 1953, it has been held every four years. Its last edition was hosted in Dornbirn (Austria) in 2019, having 65 countries and more than eighteen thousand participants. Based on Gymnastics for All (GfA) principles, the WG is an opportunity to perform group gymnastics gathering all ages in a one-week event (FIG, 2021).

Based on that, a preliminary study was carried out in the WG 2015 edition (Bortoleto *et al.*, 2019). Both intrinsic and extrinsic factors were part of the motivation for participating in the event, emphasizing Social Affiliation and Skill Development (intrinsic) and Social Recognition (extrinsic). These results, together with other findings such as the low male participation and the maintenance of motivation by people who have already participated in several editions of WG, led to our decision to run another study, enriching the theoretical framework and enlarging the sample to strengthen the data analysis. Thus, this study aimed to analyse what motivated people to participate in the WG 2019 edition, exploring some intrinsic and extrinsic motivational aspects.

## Material & methods

### Participants

Based on the data provided by the WG official report (WG, 2019) and the registration system (Gymnaplana) used by the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) in the 2019 edition, 18.021 participants joined the event. All participants aged 18 years or older were eligible to participate in the study.

An invitation to a post-event online survey available in 4 languages (English, German, Portuguese and Spanish) was emailed to all Head of Delegation (HoD) responsible for all participants for each National Federation. It was requested to the HoD to forward the invitation to all Group Leaders and regular participants. This process happened two weeks right after the event. The documentation provided informed that participation was voluntary and that participants should sign online the Consent Term before filling out the survey. As mentioned, only adults 18 years or older were considered.

After eight weeks, the study sample reached 1024 participants, 78.17% (813) female, and 21.82% (211) male, corresponding to 9,88% of the adults at the WG2019. The average age was 43.7 years, comprising respondents aged 18 to 85. The cultural and geographic diversity was considered in the data collection, gathering participants from 32 (49,2%) of 65 National Federations represented at the event, from all five continents.

### Measures and Procedures

The *Goal Content for Exercise Questionnaire* (GCEQ) (Sebire *et al.*, 2008) was used for data collection, which measures people's endorsement of five groups of exercise goals (co-called goal content), separated into intrinsic and extrinsic pursuits: social affiliation, health management, skill development (intrinsic goals) and social recognition and image (extrinsic goals). The GCQE comprises 20 items that had to be rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 ('not at all important') to 7 ('extremely important').

The access link to the online questionnaire was sent by the official GfA Committee of the International Gymnastics Federation email to all Heads of Delegation (HoD) of the National Federations who participated in the WG2019. Based on different validated versions of the questionnaire (Sebire *et al.*, 2008; Antunes *et al.*, 2017; Sicilia *et al.*, 2017), the GCEQ was available in four languages to take into account the multiple nationalities of participants: English, German, Portuguese and Spanish. The survey was available online for over four months. Among the 1056 responses, 1024 were considered valid, 400 in German (39.06%), 340 in English (33.20%), 219 in Portuguese (21.38%), and 65 in Spanish (6.34%). All procedures of this study respect the ethical framework established by the Declaration of Helsinki (DoH).

### Data Analysis

Data were analysed statistically using software *Statistica* (version 13.5, Copyright 1984-2018 TIBCO Software Inc.). We calculated a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) with *gender* (female vs. male), *age group* (18 to 29 years [younger people] vs. 30 to 59 years vs. > 60 years [older people]), *amount of WG participation* (one vs. two/three vs. more than four) as between-subject factors, and *Social Affiliation*, *Image*, *Health Management*, *Social Recognition*, and *Skill Development* as dependent variables. Partial eta-squared ( $\eta_p^2$ ) was calculated as effect size for all significant effects. In addition, observed power was calculated for all significant overall effects. Fisher LSD posthoc test was calculated to explore the structure of the significant effects.

### Results

Results revealed that *Social Affiliation* is the most important motivational factor for participants, followed by *Skill Development* and *Health Management*. *Social Recognition* and *Image* were rated less important.  $F(4, 4092) = 1239.7, p < .001$  (see Table 1).

Table 1. Means and standard errors of the GCEQ subscales

Variable	Values (Means $\pm$ SE)
<i>Social Affiliation</i>	5.15 $\pm$ 0.05
<i>Image</i>	2.59 $\pm$ 0.05
<i>Health Management</i>	3.89 $\pm$ 0.05
<i>Social Recognition</i>	3.03 $\pm$ 0.05
<i>Skill Development</i>	4.86 $\pm$ 0.05

Three overall significant main effects and three overall significant interaction effects. First, there were overall significant effects of *age group* (Wilks' lambda = .94,  $F(10, 2004) = 6.27, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .030$ , observed power = .99), of *gender* (Wilks' lambda = .98,  $F(5, 1002) = 2.56, p = .026, \eta_p^2 = .013$ , observed power = .79), and of *amount of WG participation* (Wilks' lambda = .97,  $F(10, 2004) = 2.27, p = .013, \eta_p^2 = .011$ , observed power = .93) on the dependent variables. Second, there was an interaction effect of *age group*  $\times$  *gender* (Wilks' lambda = .98,  $F(10, 2004) = 2.09, p = .022, \eta_p^2 = .01$ , observed power = .90), an interaction effect of *age group*  $\times$  *amount of WG participation* (Wilks' lambda = .96,  $F(20, 3324.21) = 2.10, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .012$ , observed power = .99), as well as an interaction effect of *gender*  $\times$  *amount of WG participation* (Wilks' lambda = .98,  $F(10, 2004) = 1.89, p = .042, \eta_p^2 = .010$ , observed power = .87) on the dependent variables.

Inspecting the univariate results revealed, that *Social Affiliation* predominantly varied as a function of *age-group* ( $F(2, 1006) = 5.55, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .011$ ), *amount of WG participation* ( $F(2, 1006) = 3.36, p = .034, \eta_p^2 = .007$ ), as well as *age-group*  $\times$  *amount of WG participation* ( $F(4, 1006) = 3.92, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .015$ ). *Health Management* varied as a function of *age-group* ( $F(2, 1006) = 11.42, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .022$ ), and *gender* ( $F(1, 1006) = 10.05, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .01$ ). *Social Recognition* varied as a function of *age-group*  $\times$  *gender* ( $F(2, 1006) = 3.527, p = .030, \eta_p^2 = .007$ ), as well as *age-group*  $\times$  *amount of WG participation* ( $F(4, 1006) = 3.39, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .013$ ). Finally, *Image* varied as a function of *age group* ( $F(2, 1006) = 7.53, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .014$ ). There were no effects on *Skill Development*.

*Social Affiliation* was rated significantly higher by people between 30 and 59 years ( $Mean \pm SE: 5.28 \pm 0.09$ ), compared to younger people ( $4.65 \pm 0.19$ ), and older people ( $4.92 \pm 0.13$ ; see Figure 1). People with one WG participation ( $4.74 \pm 0.12$ ) rated *Social Affiliation* significant lower compared to people with two or three ( $5.16 \pm 0.10$ ) or more than four WG participation ( $4.95 \pm 0.17$ ). Younger people with one WG participation rated *Social Affiliation* higher ( $5.02 \pm 0.12$ ) compared to people with one WG participation who were older than 60 years ( $4.15 \pm 0.32$ ), and younger people with two or three WG participations rated *Social Affiliation* lower ( $4.82 \pm 0.16$ ) compared to people with two or three WG participations who were between 30 and 59 years old ( $5.41 \pm 0.16$ ). Finally, people who were more than 60 years old and reported one WG participation rated *Social Affiliation* lower ( $4.15 \pm 0.32$ ) compared to people who were more than 60 years old and reported two or three ( $5.25 \pm 0.19$ ), or more than four WG participations ( $5.35 \pm 0.13$ ).

*Health Management* was rated lowest by people between 18 and 29 years ( $3.04 \pm 0.22$ ) compared to people between 30 and 59 years ( $3.80 \pm 0.11$ ) and people over 60 years ( $4.31 \pm 0.15$ ). Furthermore, *Health Management* showed generally higher ratings in females ( $4.02 \pm 0.07$ ) compared to males ( $3.41 \pm 0.17$ ).

*Image* was rated lowest in people between 18 and 29 years ( $2.08 \pm 0.20$ ), compared to people between 30 and 59 years ( $2.57 \pm 0.10$ ) and people over 60 years ( $2.98 \pm 0.13$ ). *Social Recognition* was rated lowest in young males ( $2.12 \pm 0.38$ ) compared to all other subgroups, as well as higher in younger people with WG participation ( $3.15 \pm 0.12$ ) compared to younger people with two or three WG participations ( $2.46 \pm 0.17$ ), and lower in older people with one WG participation ( $2.73 \pm 0.34$ ) compared to older people with four or more WG participations ( $3.50 \pm 0.14$ ).

## Discussions

The results for the five different motivating factors addressed in the GCEQ corroborate the findings of our preliminary study carried out at WG2015 (Bortoleto *et al.*, 2019), showing Social Affiliation as the primary motivating factor. This finding reinforces the relevant social development role observed in GfA activities (Patricio & Carbinatto, 2023; Menegaldo & Bortoleto, 2020; Wichmann & Jarvis, 2015). It also indicates that group performance in gymnastics could be considered an important physical activity for the development and maintenance of social bonds between its participants.

Motivational factors such as Skill Development and Health Management also repeat the results from previous studies (Bortoleto *et al.*, 2019). The overall scores seem to be in accordance with the GfA philosophy promoted by the Gymnastics for All Committee of the International Gymnastics Federation (FIG), which includes the 4F's principles: Fun, Fitness, Fundamentals, and Friendship (FIG, 2021). Precisely, Skill Development indicates how important it is to learn and develop the gymnastics "fundamentals" for the WG participants. Hence, it is understood that participation in the WG is driven by the social aspects (Social Affiliation) but also by "doing gymnastics," by "performing choreographies," and even by more informal moments, such as the intervals of the event's schedule, when it is possible to socialize with people from other groups, countries, and cultures for through gymnastic movements (e.g., a backstage handstand or collective acrobatics challenges, final rehearsal of the different festivals, opening, and closing ceremonies). In this way, WG provides other moments to perform and watch gymnastics, which seems to be directly related to the motivations guiding participation.

Almost like a "common language" for participants from different nationalities, the gymnastics skills in the WG's context and, more specifically, in the GfA field also deserve attention. As a non-competitive event, a characteristic also largely rooted in the GfA activities, WG allows the participation of different age groups and people with very different gymnastic skills. GfA, as an activity that involves doing gymnastics in leisure and massive participation context (Correa *et al.*, 2021), admits heterogeneous groups in its festivals – from groups formed by former high-performance gymnasts to groups composed of older adults without much gymnastics background, which can be understood as a late sports initiation (Belli & Galatti, 2021). Thus, WG fosters diversity in gymnastics by combining different skill levels, technical styles, and cultural background.

For this reason, the WG participation can be associated in multiple ways with Skill Development and similarly it can also build different bridges with Health Management. By showing themselves motivated by this factor, the participants confirm the relationship exhaustively proven in the scientific literature between physical activity and the gain and maintenance of health and well-being (Keith, 2022; Milton *et al.*, 2022). However, when we discuss health in the GfA context, it is possible to extend the traditional vision about health aspects, going beyond the easily observable benefits of physical activity, such as improving conditioning. When we talk about GfA and events like WG, we are in front of opportunities to develop this expanded health, focused on physical well-being, the psychological, emotional, and above all, social dimensions connected to the quality of life (FIG, 2021). Thereby, it is possible to identify an alignment among Health Management, and Social Affiliation factors since the collective potential of GfA is, on the one hand, the greater motivation for adherence and maintenance of GfA activities (Menegaldo & Bortoleto, 2020), and on the other hand, one of its main benefits when considering the multiple facets of health and well-being nowadays (Zuckerman *et al.*, 2021; Kim, Kim & Fontes-Comber, 2020; Andersen, Ottesen & Thing, 2019).

When we crossed the factors with the variables of gender, age group, and number of participations in WG, we had relevant associations for all factors, except for Skill Development. First, about Social Affiliation, we found that participants between 30 and 59 years old have higher scores for this factor than the other age groups (under 30 and over 60). In addition, when combining the number of participations in the event with the Social Affiliation, more experienced people in WG (that is, those who have a greater number of participations in this gymnastics festival) are also more motivated by this social aspect. Among the elderly, Social Affiliation is greater for those who have participated in two or three editions of the WG than for those who have participated in only one. These data reinforce the pilot study results regarding consecutive participation in different WG editions (Bortoleto *et al.*, 2019), which indicates that the motivation to participate in WG can be maintained even after different experiences at the event.

Concerning Social Affiliation, participating in more and more editions seems to contribute to fostering social ties among the participants, which emphasizes the importance of the social dimension of GfA. The WG participation seems to reinforce friendships and social ties as crucial components for GfA long-term participation (Menegaldo & Bortoleto, 2020). The long-term adherence to sports and physical activities programs is profoundly connected to motivation (Pazit *et al.*, 2021; Sánchez-Torres *et al.*, 2021; Middleton *et al.*, 2013). In that regard, this data related to long-term participation deserves our attention because the physiological, psychological, social and well-being benefits that are regularly "promised" by physical activities and sports programs depend on regular and extended participation. The analyses support that WG seems to be a compelling event to promote long-term (maybe a life-term) gymnastics participation.

Regarding Social Recognition, we found the same relationship seen in Social Affiliation with the number of WG participations, especially among the elderly, since people with two or more participations present this

motivating factor greater than people with only one WG experience. Although it is a factor of extrinsic motivation, Social Recognition composes the social factors from GCEQ with Social Affiliation. With this perspective in mind, we could easily ask ourselves: why is Social Affiliation so much higher among WG participants than Social Recognition?

Despite representing different motivational factors, Social Recognition is connected to issues such as a sense of belonging and other social aspects that can interfere in Social Affiliation driven by friendship and social ties. Recognition could also be thought of at different levels – within its gymnastics group, its National Delegation, and at the event overall, in occasions to get together performances and leisure. Despite all this, the difference between these two “social factors” seems to be explained by the intention to participate in WG, considering that it is not a festival where the best performances are highlighted or publicly recognized. Hence, motives such as “To gain approval from others,” “To impress others,” and “So that others recognize me as an exerciser” – some of the ones that constitute the Social Recognition factor in the GCEQ – seem to not be linked with the WG philosophy (FIG, 2021) and that is why they are less important reasons to participate than Social Affiliation, which is strongly connected with non-competitive gymnastics festivals (Menegaldo, 2022; Wichmann, 2017; 2015; Mechbach & Waneberg, 2011).

The Health Management factor also has an interesting association with the age group, as the motivation for questions related to this intrinsic factor is lower among the younger ones (and the same was observed about the Image factor). This data seems reliable since it is expected that the older the age group, the greater the concern with issues related to the quality of life, well-being, and, therefore, participation in physical activity programs as a way of health maintenance (Malm *et al.*, 2019; Langhammer *et al.*, 2018). In addition, the male participants also have significantly lower values of this factor than the female participants.

Something that deserves our attention is that there were no effects on Skill Development when crossing the variables of gender, age group, and WG participation. Especially about the age group and considering that WG has all levels of gymnastics performances, the “stability” of this motivational factor seems to indicate a fascinating fact that is related to the GfA diversity. As mentioned before, groups with very different profiles participate in this gymnastics festival, live together, and watch each other during a week without divisions according to technical criteria. In this sense, the high and stable motivation of Skill Development indicates that the WG and, consequently, the GfA allow the different levels of gymnastic skills and provide an atmosphere where people remain motivated regardless of these differences. This tends to be interesting because it goes against trends toward standardization of performances and categorization of participants into age and gender groups, which is still common and recurrent in other massive sports events.

Previous studies on participation in competitive sports indicate gender as a relevant factor (Ong, 2017). However, our study reveals another pattern regarding the WG with almost 83% of WG participants being women (and 78.17% of the study sample). Probably, the major female participation seems to be associated with the historical development of gymnastics (Mechbach & Waneberg, 2011). Moreover, other studies argue that in several gymnastics’ disciplines, especially in the competitive Artistic Gymnastics and Rhythmic Gymnastics, participation is also primarily female, showing this may be a more general trend not only concerning a non-competitive event. It suggests participation in gymnastics requires attention from authorities in the opposite direction to what is often debated on gender equality in sport (Sotiriadou & Haan, 2019; Wheaton & Thorpe, 2018), demanding more attention to male participation.

Current literature reinforces intrinsic motivations as an essential factor for sports participation and its long-term adhesion (Seghers *et al.*, 2014). It also points out that the permanence in different sports practices is often associated with extrinsic rewards (prizes, medals, or better ranking) (Raimondi *et al.*, 2021). As mentioned, our results show a high intrinsic motivational rate and low score for extrinsic motivations, similar to that found by Coleman and Sebire (2017) when they studied what they called non-elite MPSE. Although the WG is an event based on gymnastics group performance, it seems that the performance outcomes do not become a strong motivational aspect. Consequently, external recognition, formal comparisons, and performance standards seem to lose importance for the respondents. In addition, intrinsic motivation remains at a high level for different age groups<sup>1</sup>.

Despite a more significant female participation, the heterogeneity of WG practitioners seems to represent a relevant feature of this study. Most of the available studies about motivation analyse “homogeneous” populations, such as athletes of the same sport, or with the same age group, from the same country or region (e.g., Sicilia *et al.* (2017) with a sample of 384 university students; Seghers *et al.* (2014) with schoolchildren; Gillison *et al.* (2011) with adolescents). Although it is of great interest to describe sports participation of certain groups, these studies often do not allow us to understand the motivational dynamics of multi-age practices, as is the case with GfA (Wichmann, 2017). Our study analysed a highly heterogeneous population (32 different countries, from 18 to 85 years of age), which is a common characteristic in several MPSE worldwide.

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<sup>1</sup>In this study, the population under 18 years, who also participate in the WG (approx. 42,5 %), was not analysed. This could be the main limitation of our research because they may show other trends on participation, as already discussed in other sports (Eime *et al.*, 2020).

## Conclusions

The non-competitive nature of WG allows for multi-age participation and enormous diversity (social, aesthetic, geographic, cultural) among participants. Together with a group performance, this type of MPSE seems to minimize the emphasis on the individual performance, promoting an experience of collective sports participation, coinciding with the principles that guide GfA activities (Patrício & Carbinatto, 2023; Menegaldo, 2022; Menegaldo & Bortoleto, 2020; Wichmann & Jarvis, 2015). This social experience reflects, therefore, a particular motivation of the participants to practice sports beyond the events.

The analysis of motivation for participating in WG2019 showed us that the most prominent motivating factors were the intrinsic ones (Social Affiliation, followed by Skill Development and Health Management). Emphasis on Social Affiliation could strengthen relationships between members of the same group and between participants from other delegations and nationalities. Intrinsic goals are also positively related to autonomous motivation (Seghers *et al.*, 2014).

This finding allows us to say that WG seems to be a successful event for the promotion of sports participation, especially because the absence of objective comparison, recognition through medals, awards, and rankings seems to allow more space for a collective experience of sports participation (Menegaldo & Bortoleto, 2020). In this sense, the interaction between people from different cultures and the possibility of doing sports (“gymnastics”) without focusing on extrinsic reward seems to foster social relationships and, consequently, the emergence of friendship and the feeling of belonging (Patrício & Carbinatto, 2023). In addition, these findings gained more importance as the data also confirm that motivation related to Social Affiliation increases as people participate in more WG editions.

The MPSE, as mentioned by Chalip (2006), boost social relationships through group sports practice, a relevant condition for the debate on the involvement in contemporary sport. Studies on sports participation are often guided by the perspective of high-performance sport (competitive, selective, and mediatic), relegating the importance of non-competitive sport. Therefore, we agree with Teare and Taks (2021) that longitudinal studies may contribute to a better understanding of non-competitive MPSE development.

Based on these findings, it is possible to argue that MPSE represent an important contemporary sociocultural phenomenon that requires greater attention from the scientific community.

## Conflicts of interest

The authors report there are no competing interests to declare.

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